

The Monthly Newsletter of the AAUW - Medford Area Branch

<http://medford-nj.aauw.net/>

AAUW's Mission

Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research

President's Message

This is my final message as president, as Elsie Behmer and Helen O'Neill take over as co-presidents as of July 1. It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with all of you for the past four years. Not that I'm going far, as I will continue to coordinate the newsletter and serve as finance officer! See the full previous and coming roster of officers in this newsletter.

Our two inspiring scholarship winners joined us for our May dinner, along with their guests, Wandy's fiancée, Pablo Leon, and Valerie's advocate, Cathi Rendfrey. They were delightful company and Jasmine did a wonderful job, as always, on the meal and service. We look forward to following the progress and success of both women in their educations and careers.

Please don't forget to get in your 2014 dues to June Ramondetta before the end of the month.

Sign up now to join us at the Riversharks on June 20. It will be a fun evening and add a few dollars to our scholarship fund. If you need help signing up, contact Mary Strickler or me.

Thanks for all you do and have a great summer.

Mary Ann Brookes

Mark Your Calendar

Friday, June 20, 7:05 pm AAUW at the Riversharks
Campbell Field

[Sign up now!](#)

June 30 - AAUW Annual Dues Needed
Write the check now!

Planning Ahead:

We are off for the summer, but meetings restart in September, with the general meetings each 2nd Tuesday of the month & Lit Group meeting each 3rd Tuesday

Member Greetings

Happy Birthdays over the summer to:

Janet Mee	June	2
Barbara Zeuli	June	7
Carol Guarnieri-Palermo	June	25
Mary Ann Brookes	July	19
Lila Cleaver	July	23



Congratulations to both of the inspiring women who were awarded our 2014 Scholarships for non-traditional students!



Wandy Rivera, 38, of Burlington City is no stranger to AAUW Medford Area. She was awarded the branch's scholarship in 2012. She since did well enough to receive an Associate's degree at Burlington County College in accounting and business administration and merit a second scholarship this year.

"I am the first in my family to have gotten a degree. I'm proud of that."

She is currently enrolled at Wilmington University, which has a branch located at Burlington County College, to work towards a BA degree in accounting.

The single parent of three sons – Jaden, 4, Fabian, 14, and Gabriel 21 – Wandy moved from Trenton to Burlington six years ago so that her children "would have a better education and safer environment." Her pastor, Israel Lugo Jr, who wrote the recommendation letter for the scholarship, said Wandy "often serves as a clear moral and intellectual standard to which her friends aspire."

Wandy found within herself the strength and determination to care for her family, continue her studies in college and also work as a customer service representative in the state's Division of Taxation. She wants to be an accountant or an auditor with the department.

"Ever since high school I've loved math and figures. Now I'm getting the chance to study more and eventually have a career in the area I love," she said.

She tells her children to go to school now while they are young, before being married and having children. "It's easier to get your education when you don't have all these other responsibilities."



Valerie Tomaszewski, 45, has three children, two with special needs, and a husband with a severe traumatic brain injury. She lost her home in 2010, the same year her mother died. She was also forced to leave college to take care of her family, including her husband who had several surgeries. Instead of being bitter, she says, "I'm trying to get my life together. I'm on my own."

That spirit and determination is what members of the Medford area branch of AAUW, the American Association of University Women, saw in Valerie's application for a \$1,000 scholarship when deciding to award her one of its two scholarships for 2014.

Valerie, of Bordentown, did complete one semester at Kean College but even with a 3.8 GPA average, she had to leave to care for her husband. His construction company collapsed in the 2008 economic downturn in housing. He then trained as a double decker tour bus operator but was in a deadly accident two weeks after he started. It left him with a brain injury and subsequent strokes that required multiple surgeries, physical therapy and now supervised care.

In the fall, Valerie will be enrolled in the College of New Jersey. She will do this as she cares for daughter Julianna, 5, and sons Matthew, 8, and John, 12, and visiting her husband John in a nursing home in central Jersey. She wants a BA degree in English to become a high school teacher, possibly in an ESL program (English as a second language).

"I'm excited about going back to school. Finally, I feel that this is about me."

Public Policy

U.S. House Makes Bipartisan Progress against Human Trafficking

The U.S. House of Representatives [passed](#) five bills (HR 3610, 4058, 4573, 3530, and 4225) that make rare bipartisan progress to end human trafficking. AAUW supports the approaches of the bills, which would increase support for trafficking survivors and give additional powers to law enforcement. Tuesday's success could not have happened without [AAUW members' work](#) to end human trafficking, so thanks to all!

Bits and Pieces

-On Tuesday, May 20, the Employee Benefit Research Institute [released](#) a report showing women lag behind men in total retirement savings. Part of the retirement savings gap is due to the gender wage gap, which results in women making and receiving smaller retirement contributions on average than men.

- The National Institutes of Health [announced](#) on Wednesday that clinical trials must include female laboratory rats. The new guideline intends to eliminate gender bias from scientific research. The lack of a female variable in lab studies has led to adverse drug effects on women after products have been released, a harm which the NIH seeks to mitigate.

- Learn more about this issue and the need for gender balance in animal studies on [AAUW's blog](#).

- On Monday, May 19, Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO) spoke at the first of three roundtables to discuss Clery Act and Campus SaVE Act compliance on university campuses. Sen. McCaskill is working on draft legislation that would make university responses to campus sexual assault more transparent and engaging, instead of just a "check the box" process that some universities have taken.

Lynne

Thanks Received

Jane Weston, the Director of Community Relations at Medford Leas sent a thank you note to the members of our branch acknowledging our generous donation of \$100 in support of the Barton Arboretum and Nature Preserve which encompasses both the Medford and Lumberton Campus.

This contribution helps them "to further develop the Arboretum which is open to the public, and to continue to provide horticultural and natural interest programming to our residents, as well as groups and individuals throughout the New Jersey and greater Delaware Valley area."

Lit Group

We concluded the 2013-2014 year with yet another lively discussion focusing on the novel by Elizabeth Strout, *Amy and Isabel*. The literature group will be taking the next few months off, but will reconvene again in September. If anyone has any suggestions for future reads, either fiction or nonfiction, please forward them to Helen or Rose Mary. See you in September!

Helen O'Neill and Rose Mary Bland

Time For Annual Dues

National, state and local dues remain the same as last year. Our annual dues are therefore \$65.00. (\$49 national, \$10 state, \$6 for our local branch).

Please mail your payment to:

AAUW Medford Area
c/o June Ramondetta
Treasurer
119 Bracken Road
Medford, NJ 08055

If you need to supply new or additional application info, please contact June or download the pdf form from our website at:

<http://medford-nj.aauw.net/files/2013/06/ApplicationDuesForm.pdf>

New Branch Officer Slate

Along with our current board members, below are the incoming officers and chairpersons based on the election results from our April meeting. The new assignments will take effect officially as of July 1, 2014.

Congratulations and Thanks to all for your support and for all that you do!

2012/14 Executive Board
President Mary Ann Brookes
VP Membership Lila Cleaver
VP Programs Bea Chawla, Sylvia Teahan
Treasurer June Ramondetta
Secretary
Public Policy Lynne Poag
Legal Advocacy Fund Tina Wetterau
Scholarship & Fundraising Mary Strickler
Literature Group Rose Mary Bland, Helen O'Neill
Hospitality Rose Mary Bland
Public Relations Rita Manno
Newsletter Coordinator Mary Ann Brookes

2014/16 Executive Board
Co-Presidents Elsie Behmer, Helen O'Neill
Co-VPs Membership Lila Cleaver, June Ramondetta
Co-VPs Programs Cid Richards, Lynne Poag, Dian Hattrick
Treasurer Mary Ann Brookes
Secretary Bea Chawla
Public Policy Lynne Poag
Legal Advocacy Fund Tina Wetterau
Scholarship Cynthia Sosnowski
Literature Group Co-Chairs Helen O'Neill, Rose Mary Bland
Hospitality Rose Mary Bland
Public Relations Mary Strickler
Newsletter Coordinator Mary Ann Brookes

NOTE: As discussed in our meeting, note that Fundraising has been split off from Scholarship, as we currently run mainly the one event, the Book & Author Brunch. As they replace usual monthly meetings, the brunch and dinner events will be coordinated under Programs.

**AAUW-Medford Area Branch
Membership Roster**



By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.



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