

## BRANCH MEETING

**October 5, 2026**

**7:00 p.m. Gather, refreshments**

**7:15 p.m. Call to order**

**7:30 p.m. Program**

**Shrewsbury Historical Society**

**419 Sycamore Avenue**

**Shrewsbury 07702**

As we revealed in the September issue of *NetWorks*, our first meeting of the year will be focused on the views and experiences in higher education of our two guest speakers, Elaine Hansen and **Joe Bertolino**.

We hope that you will join us.



Accessed: 7 September 2026  
Source: Wikipedia



Accessed: 7 September 2026  
Source: Google search

## Presidents' Message

Dear Members,

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at the first meeting of 2026- 2027! We encourage you to bring a friend, neighbor, or family member. Let's work on growing our branch's membership by introducing new people to the wonderful community of Northern Monmouth County Branch.

This month we are going to feature another woman who was instrumental to education. This is a woman from early history - Fatima al-Fihri.

Fatima al-Fihri founded the oldest continually operating university in the world in Fez, Morocco.



Born in the city of Qairouan, Tunisia in the 9th century, Fatima was raised with a love of learning and knowledge. Fatima's father, Muhammad al-Fihri al-Qayrawwani, was a successful Arab merchant, from the Bedouin tribe of Quraysh.

Her family later immigrated to Fez, Morocco, as the city had grown into a hub of culture, arts, and scholarship.

Fatima became very wealthy after the deaths of her brother, father, and husband. Instead of using her wealth to become a merchant like her father, Fatima used her inheritance to build the Al-Qarawiyyin Mosque complex, including a *madrassa*, or educational institution.

Fatima named the mosque after her birthplace, the city of Qairouan, Tunisia. Qarawiyyin

means "belonging to the people of Qairouan."

She laid the cornerstone for the Mosque and school in 859 CE near the spice market in Fez. An ambitious project, work was most likely completed in two years. Fatima contracted highly skilled architects, artists, and engineers, used the finest materials, and oversaw every aspect of the architecture and craftsmanship.

The structure follows classical Islamic architectural layout: a center tiled courtyard with a fountain for ablutions, an arcade framing the courtyard for ventilation, a minaret for the call to prayer, and a large prayer hall. She also included a library and private prayer hall for women.

Over time, the Qarawiyyin madrasa developed into an institution of higher learning that attracted famous scholars from all over the Muslim world. During its golden age in the Medieval period, the university was an intellectual hub teaching logic, mathematics, theology, science, medicine, and many other subjects.

The mosque and madrasa most likely became a degree-granting institution around the 10th or 11th century. Although historians are unsure of the exact years that it became a university, most can agree that Al-Qarawiyyin was the world's first-degree granting institution and a leading center of scientific debate and scholarship.

The University of al-Qarawiyyin (officially joining the modern Moroccan university system in 1963) still operates today maintaining the style of education where students are taught by engaging in interactive discussions while sitting in a semi-circular format. It has been recognized by UNESCO as the oldest continuously operating, degree-granting educational institution in the world.

Happy back to school! See you soon!  
Heather and Peggy, Co-Presidents

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*Membership Is Everyone's Responsibility*

Dues notices for the 2026-2027 year were sent out in May. If you have not already paid, please send your check or pay on our branch website so we can keep your membership active.

Co-Membership Directors:  
Mary Lea Burden  
Judy Kramer

## PUBLIC POLICY NEWS AND RESOURCES



### Take Action!

- ☐ NMCB will participate in the **T. Thomas Fortune Foundation's We the People: Walk for Democracy** in Red Bank this Sunday, September 27, from 3-5 p.m. The walk will advocate for voter participation, protection of the United States Constitution and civil and human rights, and the preservation of a free and fair press. Rain date is Sunday, October 12. [Register here.](#)
- ☐ **No Kings:** Vote Early -- rally on Saturday, October 17, 1-3 p.m., at Asbury Avenue & Green Grove Road, Tinton Falls. Find more information at [www.nokings.org](http://www.nokings.org).  
☐ Please keep in mind that when you are speaking out on behalf of AAUW, you must remain nonpartisan and align with AAUW's mission and priorities.
- **Running & Winning**  
Planning has begun for the 18th Running & Winning Workshop for young women who are juniors in area public high schools. R&W is a one-day event that helps the students understand that women can run for and hold elective office. They meet local women who currently or recently held elective office and

then work in small groups with students from other high schools to prepare and give presentations that students seeking positive changes to challenges within a school might give to a local school board.

In 2008, when NJ had no female representatives in the US Senate or House of Representatives, R&W was developed by the League of Women Voters; Bobbie Goldstein, an active member of the local LWV, recruited NMCB, the Junior League of Monmouth County, and the Red Bank Chapter of Hadassah to collaborate. The Central Jersey Club is now a fifth sponsor. To date, more than 1,000 students from northern Monmouth County have participated in R&W.

If you would like to help young women understand what it is like to run for elective office or just better understand the importance of voting, the R&W Steering Committee would welcome you to join us in preparing and presenting R&W 2027 next spring. Current NMCB members are **Theresa Blackburn, Judy Kramer, and Marian Wattenbarger**.

Contact Marian at  
[mcwattenbarger@comcast.net](mailto:mcwattenbarger@comcast.net).

- Economic Empowerment Webinars  
Although the gender pay gap narrowed in 2025, women continue to earn thousands of dollars less than men each year, with Black women losing ground. AAUW is pairing advocacy for system change with these free webinars:
  - ☐ Money Smart Foundations – Wednesday, October 14, 5-6pm
  - ☐ Work Smart: Know Your Value and Get Paid – Wednesday, October 21, 5-6pm
  - ☐ Start Smart – Wednesday, November 4, 5-6pm[Register here](#) for upcoming webinars. And please share this important resource with family, friends, and students.

Nancy Butler, NMCB Public Policy Director

## Study Group News

Dear Friends,

Interested in joining an established Study Group? Check with the Chairs in the groups listed below. Those attending are required to be members in good standing. Guests may attend three meetings before being required to join AAUW. Here are your current possibilities.

Lynda Griffith, Study Group Director

### Art History

**Friday, October 16, 2026**

**10:15 am - 2:30 pm**

Walking tour, lunch, PowerPoint presentation

Learn the momentous history of Asbury Park, the "City-by-the Sea," through its exemplary structures and and dynamic histories, presented by **Susan Rosenberg**, AAUW member and Asbury Park Historical Society docent.

Email with details will be sent to all members. All are welcome. Call or text for more information.

If you have any questions, contact the co-chairs:

Joan Fruchter

Barbara Withers

### French Conversation

Our group enables women with a good knowledge of the French language to maintain their fluency through some language structure reviews and conversations with other members on different topics. Upon the recommendation of our members, we have now added a literary component to some of our meetings.

To keep up with the needs of our members, we

will be meeting once a month (the second Thursday at 7:30 p.m.) through Zoom.

Members are encouraged to participate (orally or written) at the monthly meetings.

If anyone is interested in joining the group, please contact the chair for further information. Newcomers are always welcome.

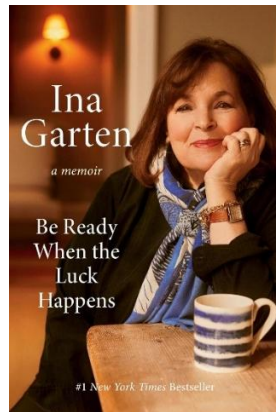
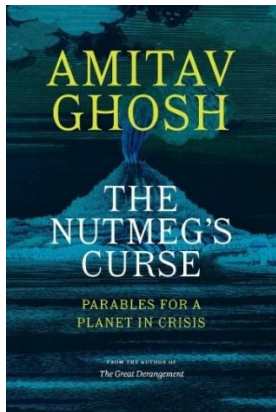
Chair: Jeannine Maloney

## Insights Into Our Times

The October 13th meeting at 2 p.m. will be held at the home of Judy Kramer to discuss *The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis* by Amitav Ghosh. Please RSVP in early October to let Judy know if you plan to attend.

Our November 10th meeting, 2 p.m., at the home of Kathy Olsen, 17 Warren Dr., Aberdeen, will focus on Ina Garten's memoir, *Be Ready When the Luck Happens*.

The *Insights* book group meets for discussion on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June.



New Members are always welcome. Contact chair, Kathy Olsen for more information.

## Russian Literature

We discuss classic novels and short stories from the golden age of Russian literature. Most of the books can be downloaded online and the discussions are often supplemented

with interesting, pertinent videos.

We meet monthly by zoom on the 3rd Thursday at 1 pm.

Our discussions range from biographical information about the authors to the style in which the material is written to how the themes of the novels and short stories relate to their times and to today.

New participants are welcome!

Contact study group chair:  
Stephanie Rose

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*NetWorks* is published by the Northern Monmouth County Branch of AAUW. The copy deadline for the November issue of *NetWorks* is Thursday, October 22, 2026. Send info to Karen Topham.

Send address changes, names of prospective members, membership applications and checks, and questions about non-receipt of the newsletter to:

Judy Kramer and Mary Lea Burden, Membership, Co-directors  
P.O. Box 398, Red Bank, NJ 07701 [aauw.nmcb@gmail.com](mailto:aauw.nmcb@gmail.com)

Our electronic mailing list enables us to inform you about opportunities for AAUW members that arise too late for publication in *NetWorks*. You can be sure that we carefully evaluate each notice before we send it out.

Please note that the use of the branch email list is for branch activities only. Members wishing to share other information with branch members are invited to submit a notice to the "Networking" column in *NetWorks*.

Something to share? Please send the information to Karen Topham for the September *NetWorks*.

## Book Sale Book Sale Book Sale

Old First Church  
69 Kings Highway, Middletown  
Lower Level, outside stairs  
732-275-2237

Open: **Saturdays:** 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Thursdays:** 10 a.m. - Noon  
(except for holiday weekends)

Donate: Saturdays: 10 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Thursdays: 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Thursdays

Our AAUW Used Book Sale re-opened on September 12. We have a great supply of books, CDs, DVDs, vinyl records, puzzles and games, and wonderful volunteers, but need more customers.

Many thanks to Harry Hodum for repairing, yet again, the Book Sale sign; to Don Burden for clearing the "jungle" along the stairway, to **Mary Lea Burden, Sonia Dorn, Ellen Jackson, Barbara Withers, Margaret Graf, Bernadette Mendez**, and others for helping with sorting and shelving this summer. Mary Lea did a lot to get the book sale ready to open! And to **Ruth Hodum** for always stepping up where needed!

Please spread the word! We need more customers! Book sale posters will be available at the Book Sale for posting at your local library, club house, etc. If you would like some posters mailed to you, just let Irene Gibson know.

Check our website for donation policies. Donations are accepted when we are open on Thursdays and Saturdays.

All profits from the Book Sale help provide scholarships for local women and girls.

There are many wooden and metal bookshelves for the taking. They are NOT freestanding so need to be leaned on something or nailed to the wall.

Dimensions:  
5 1/2" deep  
32" wide  
72" high



## SAVE THE DATE

### UPCOMING BRANCH MEETING

November 2, 2026

Shrewsbury Historical Society

419 Sycamore Avenue

7:00 Gather and Refreshments

7:15 Call to Order

7:30 Program



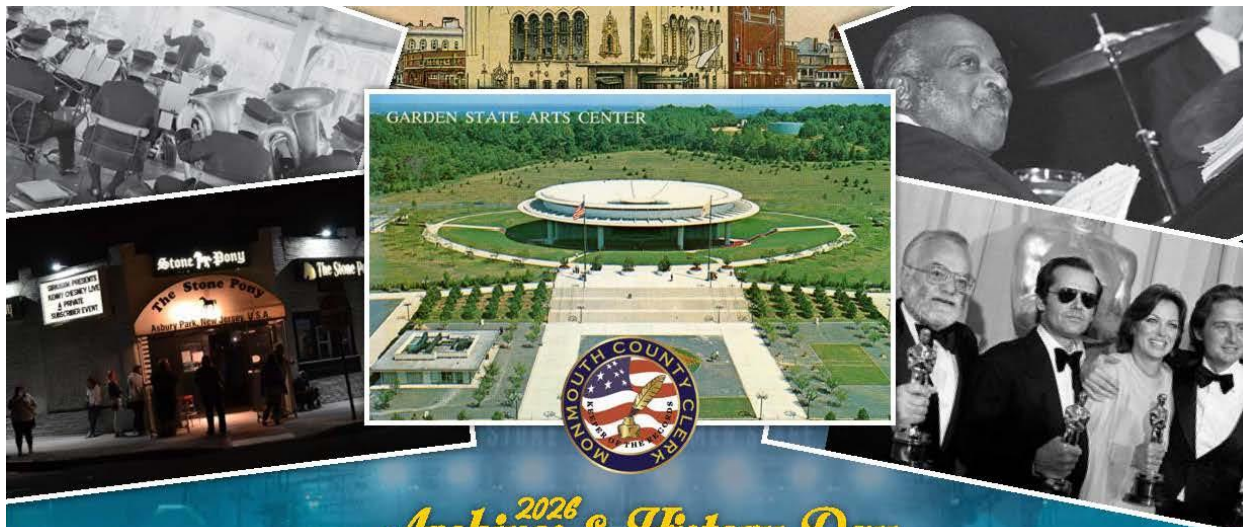
## BOSCOV'S SHOPPING PASSES ARE BACK!

The passes (which are still only \$5.00) will be available at the Book Sale, at the October Branch meeting, or by contacting Ruth Hodum. She will mail you the requested amount.

This is an easy and stress-free Branch fundraiser. The \$5.00 cost of the pass is pure profit for the Branch.



Correction: Dr. Bertolino's name was spelled incorrectly on page 1 of the September 2026 issue.



*2026 Archives & History Day*  
**CREATIVE HERITAGE:**  
**ARTS & CULTURE IN MONMOUTH COUNTY**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2026**

9 A.M. TO 1:30 P.M.

Robert J. Collins Arena at Brookdale Community College  
 Lincroft, New Jersey

<https://tinyurl.com/MCArchivesDay>



You are cordially invited to 2026 Archives & History Day featuring:

- Exhibit & Catalog
- 50+ Local and State Historical Organizations
- Photo Scanning Station Visitors may bring up to 3 photos
- Awards Presentation
- Activities for Children



Keynote Speaker

**Gilda Rogers**

Professor, Author  
 and Journalist



Presented by  
 Monmouth County Clerk Christine  
 Giordano Hanlon & The Monmouth  
 County Clerk's Office Archives Division  
[MonmouthCountyArchives.com](http://MonmouthCountyArchives.com)

The Monmouth County Clerk's Office  
 Market Yard — 33 Mechanic Street  
 Freehold, NJ 07728  
 732-431-7324  
[MonmouthCountyClerk.com](http://MonmouthCountyClerk.com)



**Join AAUW. Turn Your Values Into Action!**  
**Be part of a powerful community**  
**advancing equity for women and girls.**

Over 30,000 members and hundreds of Local Branches – AAUW is in your community!

### What Does AAUW Do?

Your membership isn't just symbolic — it's how change happens.

- **Drive real impact:** Support policies, programs, and research that expand opportunities for women and girls.
- **Grow your network and influence:** Connect with a nationwide community of leaders, advocates, and professionals who support and elevate one another.
- **Build skills that advance your career:** Gain access to training in salary negotiation, leadership, and financial literacy.
- **Take action — locally and nationally:** From community programs to federal advocacy, your voice helps shape the future.
- **Belong to something bigger:** Join a movement that has been advancing equity and education for more than a century.

### Why Now?

At a time when gender equity is under pressure, your voice — and your action — matter more than ever.

### What You Make Possible

As an AAUW member, you help:

- Expand educational opportunities for women and girls
- Advance research that shines a light on inequities and solutions

- Support advocacy that promotes economic security and gender equity
- Strengthen a nationwide community working to create lasting change

### What do AAUW Branches do?

Local branches organize efforts like:

- Public presentations and forums.
- Career exploration programs for girls.
- Undergraduate scholarships.
- Fundraisers for mission-based programming.
- Interest and social groups to share camaraderie and interests.

### Who can be a an AAUW Member?

- People with a bachelor's, associates, and/or graduate degree or equivalent.
- Individuals, colleges and universities who believe in AAUW's mission.

Scan to learn more about our  
membership options:  
[act.aauw.org/whyjoin](http://act.aauw.org/whyjoin)



### Join AAUW and Explore Branch Options!

Local Branch: Northern Monmouth County Branch

Contact Email: <http://www.aauw-nj-nmcb.org/Contactus.php>



## AAUW's 5 Calls to Action

Ready for your next step? Check out ways to stay engaged in the fight.



AAUW has been transforming women's lives for more than a century. Join us: **AAUW National Dues:** \$76 (National), \$18.81 (Students), \$1,520 (Lifetime).



Interested in AAUW's stance on issues happening in the world of education? Stay informed on the issues shaping women's futures and register for an AAUW webinar.



Take action with AAUW's Action Network — together we can defend women's rights and ensure that education remains a powerful path to equity and opportunity.



Share these calls to action with your friends, family, and community — we're strongest together.



Give generously to AAUW and support our mission of advancing gender equity for women in higher education.

Visit:  
[aauw.org/5acts](https://aauw.org/5acts)



*THE SHREWSBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

*INVITES YOU TO AN*

*AUTUMN HARVEST PARTY*



*at the home of*

*Betsy Schmalz Shaheen and Tim Shaheen*

*20 Buttonwood Drive*

*Sunday, October 11, 2026*

*4:00 pm to 7:00 pm*

*\$50.00 per person*

Please complete the information below and send to:

The Shrewsbury Historical Society

P. O. Box 333

Shrewsbury, New Jersey 07702

Venmo accepted – Shrewsbury Historical Society

\_\_\_\_\_ will attend at \$50.00 per person

\_\_\_\_\_ unable to attend

I am enclosing a tax-deductible donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please respond on or before October 5, 2026



American Association of University Women  
Northern Monmouth County Branch  
P.O. Box 398  
Red Bank, NJ 07701

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. In principle and in 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.

Membership is open to any graduate holding an associate degree or equivalent, baccalaureate, or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university.

AAUW-NMCB is designated as a 501(c)(3) organization. All donations to the branch, as well as to the national organization, are fully tax-deductible. AAUW is a highly rated charity.

## AAUW Used Book Sale



The store is located at:  
Old First Church  
69 Kings Highway  
Middletown

**Open:** Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
through June.

Thursdays from 10 a.m. to Noon through  
June.

**Donations:** Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Thursdays 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

(The sale is closed on holiday weekends.)

Have you been missing  
AAUW's *Outlook* magazine that used  
to arrive in the mail?

Go to [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org). At the bottom of  
the home page, sign up for news and  
updates with your email address and  
zip code.

## Stay Connected!

AAUW [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org)

AAUW-NJ <https://aauwnj.org>

AAUW-NMCB [www.aauw-nj-nmcb.org](http://www.aauw-nj-nmcb.org)

Branch phone 732-275-2237

AAUW Action Network [www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/two-minute-activist/](http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/two-minute-activist/)



Join AAUW-NMCB on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/AAUW.NMCB/>