

## AAUW - NMCB December Branch Meeting

**Monday, December 4, 2023  
3:30 p.m. -5:30 p.m.**

Shrewsbury Historical Society  
419 Sycamore Ave.  
Shrewsbury, NJ 07702

**COME SEE HOW ART  
CAN AMAZE AND INSPIRE!**

### “REDUCE — REUSE — RECYCLE”

Assemblage artist LISA BAGWELL has been creating art from beach cleanups and friends' households for over 20 years. Using collected materials, Lisa will help us create a small (or large) assemblage of our own to display as we reflect on our own relationship to climate change and the environment.

**JOIN US FOR A FUN AFTERNOON!**

Holiday Refreshments



Climate Fact

It takes 450 years for one plastic bottle to decompose.

—World Wildlife Fund



Seahorse 2009 Beach Trash

<https://www.lisabagwell.com/home/portfolio/>  
accessed: 30 November 2023

## Presidents' Message

Dear Members and Friends,

December is a month of holidays and we wish each of you joy in the special days that you celebrate. At the end of December, we will welcome 2024 with the hope that it will hold peace for nations at war and reconciliation, or at least steps towards reconciliation, for individuals and families as well as nations in conflict.

We have a gift to ask of you in this season and that is the gift of your time to support AAUW's

mission in whatever way you can. Here are some things we ask you to consider:

- Sign up for the Two-Minute Activist online and let your elected officials hear from you about your priorities.
- Volunteer to be part of the spring luncheon committee or to help the committee by soliciting donations for baskets and inviting your friends to attend.
- Give time to the Used Book Sale by sorting books on Thursdays or selling them on Saturdays. If you can't work on site, you might help schedule those who can, and don't forget to tell your friends and family about this great source for books, CD's and DVD's, and puzzles.
- Participate in making Running & Winning possible for young women, high school juniors from area public high schools, by volunteering to be a facilitator or helping with the setup or joining the Steering Committee.
- Help with the distribution of the Book Awards that the branch gives each spring to the girl graduating with the highest math grades in 22 local high schools.
- Consider helping this branch select local participants to attend Tech Trek NJ, once again to be offered in person for rising 8th-grade girls. The goal is to encourage girls to consider future careers in STEM and to take the classes that keep the doors to those careers open for them.

There are other ways that you can help this branch advocate for gender equity and support women and girls pursuing educational goals. Please contact us by a call or email and let us know if you would like to participate in any activities listed here or if you want to learn more about other ways that you can make a difference.

In the darkest days of the year, we celebrate holidays with light. Today we celebrate and thank each of you who helps light the lives of

women and girls by advancing AAUW's mission.

Marian & Heather

Marian Wattenbarger

Heather Balczarek

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### NMCB November Branch Meeting Report

"All Hands on Deck!  
The ERA is Within Our Grasp"



Our Branch meeting held on November 6 was an engaging and informative session centered around the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). The meeting began with refreshments coordinated by **Judy Kramer** and **Susan Gelber**. A warm welcome from our co-presidents, and a statement from **Nancy Butler**, Public Policy Director, set the tone for an evening of discussion and action. The program was led by **Laura Bagwell** a new member of our Branch. She guided attendees through the significance of the ERA and the current state of its progress.

**ERA Overview:** Laura provided a comprehensive overview of the Equal Rights Amendment, detailing its history, purpose, and the journey it has taken through legislative processes over the years.

**Current Status:** Laura discussed recent developments, legislative efforts, and the groundswell of support for ratification.

**Importance of ERA:** Laura underscored the importance of the ERA in the context of

achieving gender equality. She highlighted key areas where the ERA would make a significant impact, such as employment, education, and legal rights.

The meeting concluded with a discussion of actionable next steps. Laura outlined specific ways in which AAUW members could contribute to the ongoing efforts to ratify the ERA, including contacting legislators, organizing community events, and leveraging social media for advocacy. She provided a comprehensive “Action Task List for the ERA” that we each took home.

Here are some highlighted points from the “Action Task List”:

- **SIGN THE NATIONAL PETITION for the EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT**

77,000 signatures and counting!  
Sign and share on your socials!

<https://www.sign4era.org/?shoreNJNOW>

- **CONTACT YOUR REP. TO SIGN ONTO HJ Res 25 Discharge petition removing the deadline from the ERA preamble. (SJRes4)**  
NJ cosponsors: KIM/ PALLONE / PASCARELL / PAYNE / WATSON  
COLEMAN / GOTTHEIMER / NORCROSS / MENENDEZ / SHERRILL  
<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

- **Contact your Senators Booker and Menendez to THANK them for voting for SJ Res 4 and cosponsoring SJ Res 39!**

A) SJ Res 4, A Joint resolution removing the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment

B) SJ Res 39, The ERA has been validly ratified and is enforceable as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution, and the Archivist, Colleen Shogan, must certify and publish the ERA without delay as the 28th Amendment.

- Ask NJ Assembly and Senators to ask NJ to pass a resolution to Tell Congress to Pass the ERA now.
- Call the White House and demand that more be done now to get the ERA passed. There is no time to wait, and there is no time to take the eye off the ball. Democracy demands it. The time is now.

The White House: (202) 456-1111

### **TALKING POINTS for postcards or when making a call:**

- There is widespread common sense support for the ERA: “...a majority of Democrats and Republicans – whether they identify as feminists or not – say it is very important for women to have equal rights with men. Similarly, majorities in both partisan coalitions support adding the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.”

(Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2020/07/14/most-americans-support-gender-equality-even-if-they-dont-identify-as-feminists/>)

- 85% of United Nations member states currently have explicit constitutional provisions that prohibit discrimination based on sex and/or gender. Women in the US have no guarantee of equality in the Constitution.

(Source: [https://msmagazine.com/2023/05/15/democracy-usa-womens-rights-abortion/?omhide=true&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=everyaction&emci=dd192c69-290a-ee11-907c-00224832eb73&emdi=e5e64f5a-b30a-ee11-907c-00224832eb73&ceid=957787](https://msmagazine.com/2023/05/15/democracy-usa-womens-rights-abortion/?omhide=true&utm_medium=email&utm_source=everyaction&emci=dd192c69-290a-ee11-907c-00224832eb73&emdi=e5e64f5a-b30a-ee11-907c-00224832eb73&ceid=957787))

The event served as a catalyst for increased activism within the community and reinforced AAUW’s dedication to promoting equity and justice for all.



Laura Bagwell (l) discusses Action Tasks with Mary Lea Burden (r) photo: Barbara Withers

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## Upcoming 2024 Branch Meetings Save the Dates

JANUARY 2024 No Meeting

FEBRUARY 2024 via Zoom  
Wednesday, February 21, 7:30 p.m. - Madam C. J. Walker: Her Story and Her Legacy. Guest speaker A'Lelia Bundles, biographer and great-great-granddaughter of Madam Walker; and a member of New Voices Foundation, which supports today's women of color entrepreneurs. Honoring Black History Month. Virtual. Sponsored by AAUW NJ. Information on how to register will be sent to all members in February.

MARCH 2024  
Interbranch hosted by Northern Ocean Branch. Date TBD.

If you have an idea for a program or would like to help with program planning, please contact me.

Barbara Withers  
Program Coordinator



## Book Sale Book Sale Book Sale

Our Used Book Sale was very fortunate to have two wonderful Brookdale students from one of Professor Roseanne Alvarez's classes helping for 20 hours each as they fulfilled a Community Service commitment. It was great to have their help.

We're hoping some of our members will bring their holiday shopping lists to the Book Sale. We have thousands of books for every age in every category plus CDs, DVDs, vinyl records, and puzzles.

The Book Sale will be closed December 23, 28, and 30.

New times: Saturdays, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.;  
Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. - Noon.

Where: Old First Church, 69 Kings Highway, Middletown; lower level.



## Membership Matters

### Membership Report

*Membership is Everyone's Responsibility*

The yearbook will be mailed shortly. Please look it over and let us know of any corrections/omissions etc. Use the blank pages to add any additions or changes during the year that are published in NetWorks. At the December 4<sup>th</sup> branch meeting, which is open to the public, we are having a *Shape the Future* event in which new members may join at ½ the price of National dues. The special rate is \$62.00 instead of the \$98.00 price of Regular dues. Of this price, \$50.50 is tax deductible. **We can only take cash or a check at this one-day event.** So please

bring any friends who are not already members of AAUW as this is a great opportunity for them to join.

**New address:**  
Madeline Fedak

Membership Co-directors:  
Mary Lea Burden  
[Maryleaanddon@verizon.net](mailto:Maryleaanddon@verizon.net)  
Judy Kramer  
[drjudykramer@gmail.com](mailto:drjudykramer@gmail.com)

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## Study, Action, Interest Groups

### Study Group News

#### Art History

We realize that this time of year is very busy for our members, so we have decided to plan closer to home. Please find the information for December's branch meeting on page 1 and join us there for a fun way to create our own art.

Our study group met at the Long Branch Arts & Cultural Center on Saturday, November 18. Artist Shari Epstein demonstrated collage painting—a technique she developed in her Hurricane Sandy series and that she continues to use.

The demonstration was in conjunction with the Monmouth Arts presentation of the Charles Sills Memorial Group Art Exhibit: *Reinvention*. The exhibit included works by NMCB members **Lisa Bagwell** and **Marilyn Baldi**.



Shari Epstein demonstrates collage painting.  
photo: Barbara Withers



photo: Marion Giles

Anyone interested in joining our study group should contact one of the chairs. We will let you know what's in the works for 2024. We always welcome new members.

Contact the Chairs:  
Joan Fruchter

Barbara Iwanski

Barbara Withers

## French Conversation

Our group enables women with a good knowledge of French to maintain their fluency through language structure reviews and conversations with other members on different topics.

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

Chair: Jeannine Maloney

## Insights into Our Times

Insights will meet on Tuesday, December 12, to discuss *Secrets of the Sprakkar: Iceland's Extraordinary Women* by Eliza Reid, 2022.

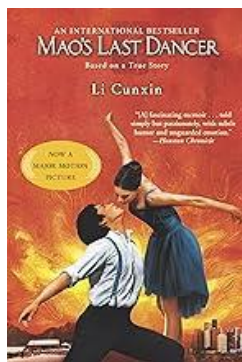
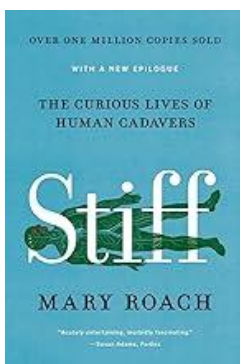
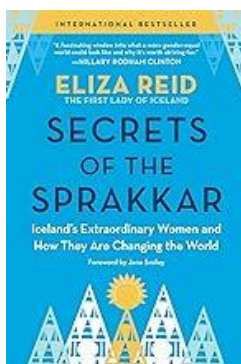
Upcoming:

January 9: *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* by Mary Roach, 2004.

February 13: *Mao's Last Dancer* by Li Cun Xin, 2003.

Contact chair, Kathy Olsen, for more information.

New members are welcome.



## Russian Short Stories

The Russian Literature Group meets on the third Thursday of each month from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., via Zoom. This year we will be reading the short stories of Leo Tolstoy, one of the greatest writers of all time. Please contact me if you are interested.

Contact Study Group Chair: Stephanie Rose

## PUBLIC POLICY

“All children should have equal opportunity to succeed. ...The latest findings show that Black students are more likely to attend schools staffed with law enforcement but without counselors, social workers, nurses, or school psychologists. Law enforcement in schools doesn't lead to safer schools: it leads to students with disabilities and students of color being disproportionately criminalized. Just look at the numbers:

- Black girls make up 16% of the female student population but were 39% of girls arrested in school.
- Native American girls had a school arrest rate 3.5 times that of White girls.
- Students with disabilities were arrested at a rate 2.9 times that of students without disabilities.

“Let's be clear: Disproportionately high disciplinary rates for students of color and students with disabilities constitutes discrimination. This is why AAUW supports the Counseling Not Criminalization in Schools Act.”

...

This Act “establishes a \$5 billion grant program to invest in school districts that remove law enforcement so that schools can provide adequately trained personnel and trauma informed services to improve the learning environment for children and prohibits the use

of federal funds to support the hiring, recruitment, and placement of police officers on K-12 school campuses.”

--Meghan Kissell,

AAUW

This Act was reintroduced in early November by Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (D-MA-07), Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT), and Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ), and others. Among the numerous cosponsors is Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ-12). The legislation is supported by many organizations, including AAUW.

**[TAKE ACTION: Ask your member of Congress to support federal funding for school counselors, nurses and social workers, not school-based law enforcement.](#)**

Nancy Butler, Public Policy Director



*NetWorks* is published by the Northern Monmouth County Branch of AAUW. Please submit copy to Karen Topham, Editor.

Due dates for *NetWorks* copy for Volume 68 are as follows:  
Tuesday 30 January for February/March 2024  
Monday 25 March for April 2024  
Tuesday 23 April for May 2024  
Tuesday 28 May for June 2024

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)

## Writers Corner

(There are writers among our members, and we would love for you to share some of your work in upcoming issues of *NetWorks*. Please submit your work to Karen Topham, [kptopham@gmail.com](mailto:kptopham@gmail.com).)

Midmorning Maundering  
by Karen Topham

Throat as woolly as a cowboy's blanket  
on a hot prairie night,  
In the kitchen, salt added to a glass  
of warm water,  
stirred,  
gargled.

Wrapped in a blue plaid comforter,  
a nest made of cushions  
on the rose-flowered couch,  
maybe sleep would come.

In dreams, the dry touch of an angel's kiss.  
Dare eyes to open!  
Is some eternal being standing guard?  
A shadowy specter?  
Be sensible, Dreamer!  
Open yourself to the vision!  
But the dream is unfinished . . .

Try!

Who is that gentleman standing nearby,  
a steaming cup of spicy lemon chai proffered?  
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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 next *NetWorks*.



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.

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## 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

**Donations:** Saturdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.;  
Thursdays 10 a.m. to Noon

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 the  
newsletter with your email address and  
zip code.

## Stay Connected!

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

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

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/)



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