



AAUW NetWorks

Monthly newsletter of the Northern Monmouth County (NJ) Branch
American Association of University Women

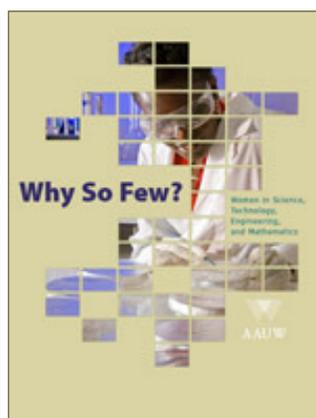
Volume 57, Number 5

March 2013

Why So Few?

What is STEM? Why is it a hot issue?

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics are fields that are very important for success on both individual and national levels in the competitive global economy, as well as in jobs in health care, engineering, math, and the sciences.



The United States ranks 17th in the world in terms of student performance out of a group of 50 countries studied.

There were 7.6 million STEM workers in the U.S. in 2010, representing 1 out of 18 workers. STEM workers earn on average 26% more than workers in other fields, according to the Economics & Statistics Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Girls' achievement in STEM subjects is well below that of boys, although girls are catching up in math. However, success in math does not seem to lead to success in the other three fields or to interest in pursuing careers in those fields.

Why does it matter to us? AAUW's mission is to "advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research." Our unifying focus is: "Breaking through Barriers for Women and Girls." In the words of one board member, "it seems like a no brainer." Surely it is an obvious area for our branch to address.

(continued on page 7)

Interbranch Program

"Eleanor Roosevelt Social"

Thursday, March 14, 7:30 p.m.
Barkalow Middle School Library
498 Stillwells Corner Road, Freehold
(the library is toward the back of the building)

Kati Beddow Brower will perform
"Eleanor Roosevelt, Shaping a Life, the Early Years."

The Freehold Area Branch of AAUW invites us and the Northern Ocean County Branch to join them for a meeting, the performance, punch, and desserts.
"White gloves ... not required!"

Please contact Mary Lea Burden or Laura Noll for information about car-pooling.



Board Meeting

Monday, February 25, 7:30 p.m. at Kensington Court,
864 Shrewsbury Avenue, Tinton Falls.
All branch members are welcome to attend.



Sobel Program Rescheduled

The Dava Sobel program at Monmouth University originally planned for November 1 has been rescheduled for Thursday, April 11, in Wilson Hall. Sobel, the author of *Galileo's Daughter: A Historical Memoir of Science, Faith, and Love*, will speak at 4:30. Her presentation will be preceded at 3:30 by a special screening of the NOVA-PBS documentary *Galileo's Battle for the Heavens*.

Please refer to your November *NetWorks* for more information, including a review of *Galileo's Daughter*.

BRANCH OFFICERS 2012-2013

Co-Presidents	Barbara Iwanski Joan Spring
Program VP	Annette Benanti
Study Group VP	Susan Gelber
Membership VPs	Mary Lea Burden Laura Noll
Development VP	Ruth Hodum Joanne McWilliams
Public Policy VP	Rekha Datta
Communication VPs	Caroline O'Neil Catherine San Filippo
Finance VP	Pat Miller
Co-Recording Secretaries	Mary Ann Anderl Alice MacPhee

NetWorks is published monthly except January, July, August, and September by the Northern Monmouth County Branch of AAUW. Items for the April issue are due on March 10 to: Nancy Butler, Editor

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 use of the branch e-mail 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*.

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

Did you know ... ?

"About as many girls as boys leave high school prepared to pursue science and engineering majors in college. Yet fewer women than men pursue these majors. ...By graduation, men outnumber women in nearly every science and engineering field, and in some, such as physics, engineering, and computer science, the difference is dramatic, with women earning only 20 percent of bachelor's degrees." (*Why So Few?*, AAUW, 2010)

Presidents' Message

Happy Tibetan New Year to all of you! We were delighted by the large turnout of members and guests on February 11, despite the fog, for our branch program on that topic by member and art historian **Barbara Lipton**. All in attendance were enthralled by her wonderful slide presentation and vast knowledge of Tibetan culture, not to mention her acquaintance with the Dalai Lama. Her explanation of the influence of Tibetan culture on the surrounding geographic areas, notably the Sikkim region of northern India, was enlightening. Thanks to you, Barbara, for sharing your knowledge, as well as to **Annette Benanti** for coordinating the program and to **Karen Topham** for her tasty themed refreshments, despite the absence of the traditional yak butter for the chai tea.

NMCB has many other members with great talents and a variety of life experiences, which we encourage you to share with us at future branch meetings. Future issues of *NetWorks* will include the date of our annual planning meeting, held in the early summer, at which any member can suggest a program, or contact the program VP if you cannot be there in person.

Our annual coffee for new and prospective members on January 27 was very successful. We were happy to welcome several new members and 11 guests, who we hope will join our branch. Our gratitude goes to membership co-VPs **Mary Lea Burden** and **Laura Noll** for arranging and organizing this event in their usual efficient manner, complete with "cheat sheets" to help branch officers explain their roles and branch activities.

Instead of our regular monthly branch meeting, we will be participating in the annual Interbranch program on March 14. Hosting duties rotate among the three cooperating branches: ours, Freehold Area, and Northern Ocean County. This year Freehold is hosting. The topic is Eleanor Roosevelt in her younger years, and we encourage everyone to attend and get acquainted with members of our Interbranch partners. Contact our membership co-VPs if you need a ride or want to carpool.

Looking ahead, our April 8 branch meeting will be held at Brookdale Community College and will focus on the issue of "Why So Few? The STEM Initiative." A panel of women in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) will examine why American women are underrepresented in STEM fields, and how we can motivate and encourage more girls and women to choose these fields for their careers. In addition, we will be welcoming this year's three college scholarship recipients, as well as last year's NCCWSL participants.

NMCB will be participating in a fundraiser called "Dining for Dollars" at Bertucci's restaurant in Hazlet on April 18. Flyers will be available soon at the Book Sale, at branch meetings, and by contacting Joan Spring. Our

branch will receive a 15% rebate on all checks for those dining there on April 18, so we hope you will enjoy a meal there and bring your friends and families. This is an easy and delicious way to earn money for our branch.

An e-mail from the Association has reminded us that this year NMCB is celebrating its 85th year! A short commemoration is being planned, most likely at our June branch meeting. More details will be forthcoming.

Joan Spring
Barbara Iwanski
Co-Presidents

Study, Action, Interest Groups

Advanced Spanish Conversation

Meets: 1st Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Contact: Anita Damien

Some of us are native-born, and others are Spanish majors from American universities. We serve brunch, followed by different programs about Spanish culture. We have a covered-dish supper with our spouses in late spring. Call for meeting details.

Art History

Meets: Contact chair
Contact: Mary Anne Anderl

We meet to study and discuss global art of all periods and genres through member presentations and visits to museums, galleries, and outdoor art exhibitions. New members are welcome!

Drama

Meets: Wednesday, March 20, 1 p.m., at Marjorie Levy's in Shrewsbury
Contact: Marjorie Levy

We study plays, classical and modern, and attend performances when feasible. This year we plan to subscribe to Two River Theater in Red Bank. Prospective members are welcome to attend a meeting and/or join the group for a matinee or weekend performance. Call/e-mail for details.

French Conversation

Meets: 2nd and 4th Thursdays, 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Contact: Kate Wellauer

Our group enables women with a good knowledge

of the French language to maintain their fluency through conversation with other members, many of whom are native-born speakers. Others were educated in France or were French majors at American universities. We all strive to improve our skills, meeting on a rotating basis for lunch at a member's home. We encourage more AAUW members to join us. Call or e-mail chair for meeting details.

French Intermediate

Meets: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. to noon
Contact: Anne Morrison

This group offers an opportunity to those with some experience in French to read, write, translate, and speak the language. French culture, customs, and current events are topics for our lively discussions. New members are very welcome! Call/e-mail for meeting details.

German Conversation

Meets: Twice a month on Mondays, 9:30-noon
Contact: Walli Rosen

Our members come from German-speaking countries, or have learned to speak German as an additional language. Our common goal is to improve our German language skills. We read about/discuss current events, contemporary German literature, and stories of common interest as suggested by members. Call for meeting details. New members are welcome.

Insights

Meets: Tuesday, March 12, 7:30 p.m.
Topic: *The Assassin's Accomplice* by Kate Clifford Larsen and/or *Killing Lincoln* by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard
Contact: Ruth Hodum

This *nonfiction book group* focuses on current issues, with special attention to topics affecting women and books written by women. New members are very welcome! Contact chair for location.

Literature

Meets: Thursday, March 21, 1 p.m. at Carol York's in Middletown
Topic: *The Sense of an Ending* by Julian Barnes
Contact: Regina Sieben

Our group selects *literary fiction or an occasional memoir* to read during the year. A different member acts as a leader each month and presents background and critical appraisal of that month's selection. We welcome new members. Please contact chair for meeting details.

Book Corner



We know so little about North Korea. It remains a most secretive, totalitarian, and closed state, known mostly for its fearsome nuclear tests. In *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*, award-winning journalist Barbara Demick sheds light on the country by following the lives of six North Korean citizens over 15 years—a chaotic period that saw the death of its cult leader Kim Il-sung and a devastating famine that killed one-fifth of the population. Add to this a second book selection about North Korea, *Escape from Camp 14*, by journalist Blaine Harden. We hear the story of Shin Dong-hyuk, who knew nothing of civilized behavior; he saw his mother as a competitor for food and was indoctrinated by guards to inform on his family. Both books offer hope in that we witness courageous individuals risking death to escape this highly repressive state.

— Cathy San Filippo

Movies and More

Meets: Tuesday or Wednesday evening

Contact: Kate Bigg

Cinema in Red Bank and discuss it afterwards at the Broadway Diner. Contact chair to be put on the list for receiving details, usually the week before. Please join us!

Writing Group

Meets: Thursday, March 28, 12:30-3:30 p.m.

at Caroline O'Neil's, W. Long Branch

Contact: Caroline O'Neil

This group welcomes anyone interested in *writing of any kind*, such as memoir, poetry, fiction, or essays. Members range from those who write all the time to those who think it might be time to begin, and many stages in between. We begin with lunch provided by different people each month. The main meeting begins with a journal exercise; then anyone who has a piece of writing to share, short or long, reads it and listens to responses from the group, directed or not, as the writer prefers. Come and see if this is something that would appeal to you! Contact Caroline for info.

Insights Group Takes Action

Several years ago, after reading Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's *Half the Sky*, members of the Insights Group decided to make a donation to a worthy women's cause.

This past December, we collected \$185 to donate to One World Women's Health-Sierra Leone in association with Africa Surgery, Inc. The donation will go directly toward the building of the maternity ward at the Holy Spirit Hospital. Monmouth County ob/gyn doctors travel to Africa and are members of this association, including founder Nina Seigelstein, M.D. For further information, go to www.oneworldwomenshealth.org.

Membership

Coffee and Conversation for New and Prospective

Members: We had a most successful get together on Sunday afternoon, January 27, at the Shrewsbury Historical Society. We had a total of 11 new and prospective members and nine board members attend. Many thanks to all the board members who attended and took part in the program. We have two new members as a result of the coffee, and several others have indicated they would like to join.

New Members:

Please welcome new members **Ethel Grewen** and **Ingrid Spears** to our branch. Add their contact information to your yearbook, along with the other membership updates listed below.

Ethel T. Grewen

Ingrid Spears

Renewed Members:

Welcome back to the following renewing members:

Lisa Frost-Goodall

Margaret Lyford

Genoveva G. Smith

Tax deduction for AAUW dues - a reminder when it comes time to prepare your taxes: \$46.00 of the Regular National AAUW dues of \$49.00 is tax de-

ductible for payments made to “AAUW,” our 501(c)(3) charitable organization; \$3 of Regular dues is not tax deductible as it goes to support the AAUW Lobby Corps and election-related activities. The State and Branch portions of membership dues are not tax deductible.

If you need a ride to a branch meeting or activity, please call one of us.

Mary Lea Burden
 Laura
 Co-Membership VPs

Among Ourselves

Jean Carmody died on January 22 at the age of 88. A graduate of Marquette University and the University of Chicago, she had a career in public health and medical social work, focusing on tuberculosis control. Jean joined NMCB in 2005 and was active in the French Conversation Group. We extend our sympathy to her family and friends.

We extend our sympathy to **Sherri Rao**, who recently lost her father.

Two board members are new grandmothers! Congratulations to **JoAnne McWilliams** and her husband Jack on the birth of their new granddaughter in Tokyo. And congratulations to **Joan Spring** and her husband Peter on the birth of their first grandchild, Rayah Spring Harris, on December 14 in Silver Spring, MD.

Public Policy Updates

President Obama Calls for passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act: In his State of the Union Address, President Obama called for Congress to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act. This is one of AAUW’s top legislative priorities, and an issue about which our community has been advocating for years.

Short-Term Deficit Reduction to Further Delay Sequester: With slim chances that Congress will pass a large deficit reduction package to replace the across-the-board spending cuts known as the sequester by

New study/action group forming: STEM

Monthly meetings to learn more, plan more, launch more. Meetings will be at different locations/homes as decided by group, on day/time decided by group, with a chair or rotating chairs, to be determined by group. The goal would be to gain information and determine project(s) to pursue, beginning with the PowerPoint presentation of *Why So Few?* Susan Boyce will serve as consultant/initial facilitator. Contact her for more information.

March 1, President Obama called on Congress to pass a short-term package of spending cuts and tax reforms instead.

AAUW recognizes that these are tough budgetary times, but we call on Congress to come together around a balanced approach to deficit reduction that does not include the harmful spending cuts of sequestration. AAUW is opposed to these harmful spending cuts that attempt to balance the nation’s budget on the backs of vulnerable Americans, including students, women, and working families.

White House Petition for Equal Rights Amendment Reaches Goal: Last month advocates for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) submitted a “We the People” petition to the White House to encourage the Obama administration to support efforts to ratify it. The ERA holds that “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.” The amendment was passed in 1972, but fell three states short of the 38 states needed to ratify it.

Report: Some NCLB State Waivers Weaken Civil Rights Commitments of the Law: A new report from The Education Trust shows that although some states used their No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act waivers to pursue innovative strategies for closing the achievement gap, other states essentially neglected the student achievement and accountability goals that



AAUW Book Sale

69 Kings Highway, Middletown
Hours: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays
Donate: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays

were a central piece of NCLB.

AAUW maintains that the only way to fix the No Child Left Behind/Elementary and Secondary Education Act is through reauthorization. AAUW encourages the Obama administration to hold those seeking and receiving waivers accountable for the success of all students by requiring additional efforts to close achievement gaps and detailed demonstration of how they will prepare our children for college and rewarding careers as a condition of these waivers.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATES

Senate Approves Violence Against Women Act:

The Senate voted to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by a 78-22 vote. Originally passed in 1994, VAWA is a major anti-domestic violence law whose renewal last year was postponed. It now is being considered by the House.

AAUW is a strong supporter of this VAWA reauthorization, particularly because it includes campus safety provisions that will ensure that institutions of higher education have comprehensive procedures in place to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Obama Names CEO Sally Jewell for Interior Secretary: President Obama nominated Sally Jewell, chief executive of Recreational Equipment Inc., as the next secretary of the interior. Jewell is the first woman the president has announced for his second-term Cabinet.

20 Years Later, Family and Medical Leave Act Continues to Benefit Families, Employers:

To mark the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), there is a new report about the landmark bill's use and impact. Signed in 1993 by President Bill Clinton, the FMLA allows workers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for family and medical leave, including caring for a newborn or a seriously ill child, spouse, or parent.

AAUW will continue to speak up for women and families and work with Congress and the White House to advance timely improvements to FMLA.

RESOURCES FOR ADVOCATES

Sign Up Your Friends and AAUW Colleagues for Action Network: Visit the Take Action page of the AAUW website <http://capwiz.com/aauw/home/> where members and non-members alike can sign up for Action Network. It is an excellent way to introduce potential members to AAUW's advocacy.

Rekha Datta
Public Policy VP



Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

In an era when women are increasingly prominent in medicine, law, and business, why are there so few women scientists and engineers? This AAUW research report presents compelling evidence that can help explain this puzzle. Profiles of eight key research findings point to environmental and social barriers — including stereotypes, gender bias, and the climate of science and engineering departments in colleges and universities — that continue to block women's participation and progress in STEM. Download the complete report at www.aauw.org/research.

For more information, or to become involved in this issue, contact Annette Benanti.

See page 5 for details about a new STEM study/action group forming in NMCB.

Why So Few? (continued from page 1)

It seems that the gender split begins in elementary school but widens in middle school. A significant amount of research about the causes of this lack of interest on the part of girls is assembled in AAUW's research report *Why So Few?* The short answer to that question is: "perceptions and unconscious beliefs about gender in math and science."

Some relevant points:

- A 2009 poll of 8- to 17-year-olds showed 24% of boys and 5% of girls were interested in engineering. Of college-bound 13- to 17-year-olds, 74% of boys thought computer science or computing would make a good major; only 32% of girls agreed.
- While girls have made impressive gains in the last 50 years, even in fields like business, law, and medicine, the progress has been much slower in engineering, computer science, and physics.
- There is a wide gender gap in the spatial skills necessary for success in STEM. Yet in this area specific training can easily make the difference.
- The social, college, and workplace environments work against girls and women in STEM areas, often because of bias, conscious or otherwise.

Recommendations include encouraging girls to have a more flexible mindset about intelligence; exposing girls to successful role models in math and science; teaching students and teachers about stereotypes. Schools and workplaces can cultivate a culture of respect; performance standards and expectation can be made clear; girls can be encouraged to take calculus, physics, chemistry, and computer science in high school; spatial skills can be developed from an early age with construction toys and hand-held models.

So where do we come in? Most of us are non-STEM people, but surely there are ways we can help on the local level, beginning by finding out what is needed.

- We can establish contacts with middle school science and math teachers, to find out about their experience of the "gender divide" and their perceptions about how to raise girls' interest in pursuing STEM subjects in high school and how to prepare them to succeed.
- We can talk to the girls at High Tech HS, the #1 STEM school in the U.S., where 42% of the students are girls. How did they get there? How do they think more girls could be encouraged?
- We can talk to and work with the members of the Women's Engineering, Science, and Technology

Club (WEST) at Brookdale CC and see what suggestions they have. Branch members **Susan Boyce**, **Annette Benanti**, **Doris Hudak**, and **Barbara Williamson** have met with members of the math department who are sponsoring STEM activities. BCC has an existing mentor program and speakers bureau, to which Susan has offered her services. There are also monthly talks by people in the field. Susan worked at Bell Labs, various start-up companies, and Microsoft, and has gathered colleagues to help promote STEM.

- We can find out more about The Stars Challenge, a science enrichment program for 6th through 8th graders that is hosted by Monmouth University, which also sponsors a science competition and a summer camp at Sandy Hook. This year the leaders of two of the three winning teams were girls. We can talk to them and find out how and why they became involved.
- We can follow leads on AAUW Spotlight on STEM, including information on what other branches are doing, and get some ideas there. *(See AAUW.org)*
- We can join up with the Girl Scouts. In Monmouth County, scouts have established a robotics team, Neon Spirit, that in its first year came in 4th out of 36 teams competing in the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) LEGO League competition. The league promotes robotics and STEM activities. FIRST engages in mentor-based programs that build science, engineering, and technical skills. It stresses "the importance of recognizing girls' courage, confidence, and character to make this world a better place through hands-on engineering and science projects." *(Information from Jersey Shore Girl Scouts webpage)*

Our April branch meeting will be a panel discussion on how can we motivate and encourage girls and women to excel in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. It will be held on Monday, April 8, at 7:30 p.m. at Brookdale CC. Also, see page 5 about a new STEM study/action group forming.

— Caroline O'Neil





AAUW NetWorks
Northern Monmouth County Branch
P. O. Box 398
Red Bank, NJ 07701

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Thursday, March 14, Interbranch Program: "Eleanor Roosevelt, Shaping a Life, the Early Years" with Kati Beddow Brower

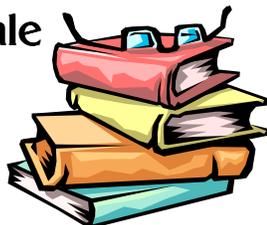
AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

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

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

AAUW Book Sale

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



Open: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays
Donations: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays
To volunteer: Contact Anne Morrison
Information: Viki Mischenko, Chair
732-933-4855

All profits go to local scholarships for women and to the AAUW Educational Foundation for fellowships for women.

Stay Connected!

AAUW www.aauw.org
AAUW-NJ www.aauwnj.org
AAUW-NMCB www.aauw-nj-nmcb.org
Branch phone 732-933-4855

AAUW Action Network

<http://capwiz.com/aauw/home/>



AAUW, AAUW-NJ, and NMCB are now on Facebook. Check them out!

Meeting cancellation information:

Listen to 94.3 FM.
