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AAUW State College-sponsored Penn State Forum speaker explores *Education for a Multicultural Democracy*



Forum Speaker
Dr. Na'ilah Nasir



A small group of AAUW State College Branch members met speaker Dr. Na'ilah Nasir, President of the Spencer Foundation, ahead of the Forum event.

Left, bottom up: Leslie Laing, Michele Crowl, Charlene Harrison, Naana Nti.
Right, bottom up: Rebekah Grmela, Dr. Nasir, Mary Dupuis, Sally Kalin.



Twenty-five branch members attended the Forum talk. **Left to right:** Sally Kalin, Betsy Vernon, Connie Schroeder (back), Pat Nicholanco, Chriss Schultz (back), Vasundara Varadan, Carol Hodes, Susan Chyczewski, Nancy Weinreb, Candace Davison, Christy Bartley, Nina Cowart.



Star Campbell arranged for the Penn State Humphrey Fellows to attend the Forum lunch. **Left to right:** *Quratulain Talpur – Pakistan; Andrea Mateos – Mexico; Shehreena Gulamani – Pakistan; Duyen Le -Vietnam; Star Campbell - AAUW, Humphrey mentor; Nermin Salah -Egypt; Gabi Mezelova – Slovakia.*



Kendra Fonash, 2022 Branch scholarship recipient with Suzanne Kerlin.

View Dr. Nasir's slide show: [Education for a Multicultural Democracy](#)



Election results: what happened to the proposed constitutional amendments? And other happy developments

One aspect of the election results hasn't gotten play in the press: as a practical matter, the proposed constitutional amendments we wrote about in the fall effectively are dead. Amendments must be passed in two consecutive sessions, by both Houses of the Pennsylvania Legislature, before they appear on your ballot. The amendments were passed in the session ending this month, by Republican majorities in each house. Now that Democrats have recaptured the State House, the odds of the required passage in this session are approximately zero.

Here's another great thing. We anticipate the Democrats will elect the first woman Speaker of the House—but that's not assured, and could take some time to unfold. The reason is that the Democrats hold a majority by one seat. One member died just before the election and the special election to replace him may or may not be held February 7, due to a jurisdictional squabble. Another member, Summer Lee, won a seat for Congress while also being reelected to her State House seat. She must resign by January 3, the date of the Congressional swearing-in. Yet still another House member, Austin Davis, was reelected to the House while also being elected Lt. Governor. He must resign by the Pennsylvania swearing-in on January 17.

All three seats are safely Democratic, but with the vacancies, the question becomes, on what

date are the elections for Speaker held? We don't know when all the special elections to fill the vacancies will occur. We only know that the last date possible is primary election day, but we don't know when that is, either, as the primary calendar hasn't been set. Other complications exist, but it should work out in the end. The current Democratic Leader, Rep. Joanna McClinton, is likely the Speaker in the fullness of time. Speaking of women advancing in elective office, when Pennsylvania Rep. Summer Lee is sworn into Congress, she will become the 5th Congresswoman from Pennsylvania. All are Democrats. Nationwide, next year 12 states will have women governors, an increase from the current nine.

We have a way to go for equality in elective office, but this is what progress looks like. Raise a glass!

--Dianne Gregg and Mary Dupuis, Public Policy Co-Chairs



Cyber charter school funding needs to be revised

Although the 2015 revision of the school funding formula is based on enrollment, problems persist with cyber charter school funding. The problem is that our state's 14 cyber charter schools receive the same funding as the public schools even though they are online operations with lower expenses than brick-and-mortar schools. In Pennsylvania, schools receive funding on a per-student basis, which means that both brick-and-mortar and

cyber charter schools receive the same per-pupil funds from the district, minus certain categories of spending and federal funds. When a child leaves for a charter school, district expenses do not decrease; "fixed costs" remain, such as debt, salaries, building maintenance, utilities, and transportation.

Thus, cyber charters receive funding that is approximately double their actual cost. These excess public funds are used for executive compensation, advertising, and management fees, while student achievement and graduation rates in cyber charters remain considerably lower than regular public schools. To date, no cyber charter school has ever achieved a passing score on the state school performance profile rating system. To limit the non-educational spending, Pennsylvania needs a formula for cyber charter schools that eliminates excesses and reflects the actual cost of operation. More information on this issue can be found at [Education Voters PA Charter Reform Priorities](#).

--Carol Hodes, AAUW State College Education Chair



Ten Thousand Villages fundraiser with AAUW State College breaks all records

We have wonderful news from Kieran Holland, Ten Thousand Villages State College store manager and AAUW State College member. He reports that in addition to assisting with their mission to help artisans in developing countries, the November 18-20 AAUW State College event was “the most successful Community Shopping Event ever for our Village.” It netted **\$679.67** for AAUW State College.

Thank you to all of the branch members who volunteered and shopped at the event! Heartfelt thanks to Ten Thousand Villages for inviting us to partner with them. Next year’s Community Shopping Event with Ten Thousand Villages will take place **November 3-5, 2023**. In the meantime, think of Ten Thousand Villages year-round when it is time to purchase a special gift.



Luncheon with Humphrey Fellows set for February 13

Mark Your Calendar! AAUW State College and the Penn State Humphrey Fellows will sponsor *International Perspectives on Women in Society* on **Monday, February 13, from 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. at The Graduate State College** (formerly the Atherton Hotel). Event co-sponsors include Altrusa International Centre County, the Community Diversity Group, and Soroptimist International of Centre County. The event features a panel discussion with two of the current year’s Humphrey Fellows: **Abby-Gail Sharonne Blanchard** from Suriname, and **Shehrena Gulamani** from Pakistan. Registration, including lunch buffet, is \$23. For details see: [February 13 Humphrey Fellows program flyer](#)

--Naana Nti, AAUW State College Program Committee

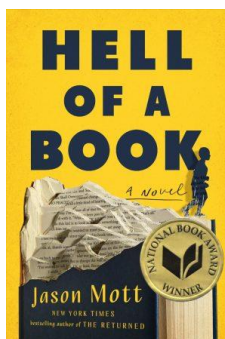


Join LinkedIn – a great network

We are all about creating opportunities for AAUW State College members to network and connect! A recent addition to our professional offering is the ability to follow and engage with other State College members via our local Branch LinkedIn page. Please follow along for updates and opportunities to collaborate: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/aauw-statecollege/>

--Rebekah Grmela, Social Media Lead

DIVERSITY CORNER



¡ADELANTE! Book Club to meet Thursday, December 15

Our ¡ADELANTE! diversity book club will meet next **Thursday, December 15 at 2:30 p.m.** The group will discuss *Hell of a Book* by Jason Mott. A 2021 National Book Award Longlist Selection, this is a story of racism, police violence, and the hidden costs to Black Americans and to America as a whole.

Questions: info@aauwstatecollege.org **Join:** [December 15 Registration](#)



Celebrating diverse December holidays

[Diversity Resources – December Calendar](#)

December 16-24: Las Posadas - The religious festival of Las Posadas is primarily celebrated in Latin American countries, Mexico, and Spain. Some Hispanics in the United States also celebrate this festival. The festival is a reenactment of Mary and Joseph traveling to various homes in the community that are designated as “inns.” After the reenactment, there is a celebration.

December 18-26: Hanukkah - Hanukkah is an 8-day, 8-night celebration in the Jewish faith honoring the triumph of their ancestors over the Syrian Greeks. To see the “Festival of Lights” observed, ask to join in a night of celebrations with a Jewish friend’s family.

December 21: Winter Solstice/Yule - The Winter Solstice is known as Yule to those practicing the Pagan and Wiccan faiths. The day marks the longest night of the year and the return of the sun. You can celebrate Yule by lighting a Yule log, making an evergreen wreath, having a nature-based treat, and decluttering your space.

December 25: Christmas - Christmas is an important Christian holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. In many countries Christmas is often celebrated as a secular holiday by people of all faiths.

December 26: Kwanzaa - Kwanzaa is an 8-day celebration of life that is inspired by the African harvest celebrations. The holiday was created by American professor of African Studies, activist, and author Maulana Karenga. It has been celebrated since the 1960s.

“You must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right.” –Rosa Parks

(In 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white person; her arrest sparked the modern civil rights movement in the U.S.)

--Naana Nti, AAUW State College Diversity Chair



Branch award submissions due January 16

We need YOU to help us recognize our hard-working volunteer members by looking around at who is actively supporting the branch and submitting a nomination(s) for the awards described below. Nominations should include a brief paragraph on how the person, group, or organization meets the award criteria.

Nominations should be sent to [Chriss Schultz](#) and [Suzanne Kerlin](#), Awards Committee Co-Chairs, by **January 16, 2023**.

Outstanding Woman Award

The Outstanding Woman Award recipient is a AAUW State College member who has given meritorious service to the branch and to the community over multiple years. Awardees for the past five years include: 2018–Carol Hodes; 2019–Sue Johnston; 2020–Mary Dupuis; 2021–Cindy Hall and Sally Kalin; 2022–Naana Nti.

Making a Difference Award

This award honors a member who made a significant contribution to AAUW State College within the past year. The recipient exemplifies the spirit of AAUW and need not be a branch officer or committee chair. Recent recipients include: 2019–Michele Crawl; 2019–Star Campbell; 2020–Ann Echols; 2021–Dina Liberatore; 2022–Estelle Call.

Gateway to Equity Award

The Gateway to Equity Award honors an individual, group, or organization that by action and philosophy has promoted AAUW’s mission of advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, or research. Past recipients include: 2018–Hubert Humphrey Fellowship Program; 2019–Interfaith Human Services; 2020–Fair Districts PA Centre County; 2021–Carol Eicher and the Community Diversity Group; 2022–Ten Thousand Villages State College.

Centre County Council for Human Services

The CCCHS Award honors an individual who has devoted outstanding volunteer service to an organization. The recipient will be recognized at the April CCCHS Volunteer of the Year Banquet dinner. Past recipients include: 2018–Jennifer Karch; 2019–Angie Hay; 2020–Suzanne Kerlin and Sherry Crassweller; 2021–Ann Echols; 2022–Jordan Glover.

--Chriss Schultz and Suzanne Kerlin, AAUW State College Awards Co-Chairs

WELCOME new members

Liz Kopco

lcambren01@gmail.com



I'm a first-generation daughter of Mexican immigrants and was born and raised on the south side of Chicago. I obtained my B.S. in Health Sciences from Aurora University. I was an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship recipient and received my Ph.D. in Cellular & Molecular Biology from North Dakota State University. For my dissertation, I studied how insulin signaling in insects changes during starvation periods, like overwintering. I continued my research on bees at Penn State University as a postdoc but my passion has always been focused on diabetes. I now work full-time as a content manager for Beyond Type 1, a diabetes non-profit, where I use my background in biology and personal experience as a person with type 2 diabetes to advocate and educate the community.

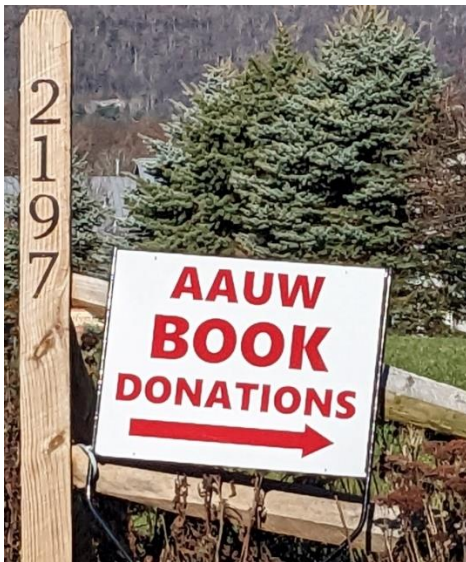
When I'm not doing advocacy work, I'm working as an accountability health coach or hiking with my husband and terrier, Burberry. I chose to rejoin AAUW because it made all the difference for me when I was in grad school. It was the first time I moved away from my hometown and AAUW helped give me a support system where I had no one. I became highly involved on the board of the Fargo-Moorhead AAUW branch in North Dakota. As a new Pennsylvanian, I've found myself missing the sense of community that a branch provides. I'd love to help on committees and even join the Board in the future.



Rebecca Mugridge - rlmugridge@gmail.com

For the past seven years, I have served as Dean of Libraries at the University of Albany, part of the State University New York. Currently on sabbatical and planning to retire in December 2023, I moved to the State College area over the summer of 2022. Prior to that, I served in other library positions at the University of Albany, Penn State, Robert Morris University, and the University of Pittsburgh. I have a B.A. from Penn State, an MLS from Pitt, and an MBA from Robert Morris.

Now living in Boalsburg, I am researching and writing on a variety of topics related to library management and looking forward to volunteering at the Used Book Workshop and Sale.



Needed! Book donations for Used Book Workshop

2197 High Tech Road (near University Park Airport)

Deposit books in outdoor bins 24/7

OR, for help bringing books inside:

Mondays 6 - 8 p.m.

Tues./Wed. 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

To learn more about book donation:

https://aauwstatecollege.org/used_book_sale_donations/

Check out the new directional signs leading to the workshop - on the corner of High Tech Road across from the airport and also about ½ mile down High Tech on the right. From there, head to the blue donation bins.



We need a Used Book Sale volunteer scheduler

Used Book Sale Chairs **Donna Trapp** and **Mary Ann Blair** are seeking a branch member(s) to schedule volunteers for the **May 13-16, 2023** sale. This is a great behind-the-scenes job and critical to the success of the sale. The first call for volunteers will go out in February and scheduling will continue up to the sale.

Contact [Donna Trapp](#) for details.



Nominations sought for leadership positions

The newly appointed Nominations Committee (see board actions, p. 9) is seeking nominations for branch officers for

2023-2025. Please convey suggestions to committee chair [Mary Dupuis](#). The name(s) of those nominated and their nominators will be kept confidential and the final slate will be presented to the board at the April 3 board meeting.



Website updaters needed for web team

Are you comfortable with WordPress or willing to enhance whatever knowledge you have? Our goal is to have each member of the Web Team assume responsibility for updating a couple of pages (there are 25) on the website. Team members will work closely with the Board member responsible for the content in their area. If you can help, contact [Sally Kalin](#).



Book Lovers And Writers Unite!

Branch member **Carline Crevecoeur** is an avid reader and a member of at least four book clubs. She is a published author ([Pressure Makes Diamonds](#) (2021)), and when not reading a book, she's listening to one. She is also a member of the [Nittany Valley Writers' Network](#), described as "a sharing, supportive community linking local writers of all genres and levels of experience." Learn more: [Nittany Valley Writers' Network](#). Contact Dave at dmarvin14@msn.com for details.

Speaking of books, at the Penn State Forum Lunch, AAUW-sponsored speaker Dr. Na'ilah Nasir provided a strong endorsement for [The Sum of Us](#) (2021) by Heather McGhee. According to the Times, the book "tallies the cost of racism for Everyone—not just for people of color."



Pennsylvania Commission for Women seeks nominations for Female Veteran's Day

The Pennsylvania Commission for Women is seeking nominations for a Female Veterans Day Ceremony in March. Nominations are due **January 6**. Details: [Nominate a Female Veteran for Recognition](#)



Recent AAUW State College board actions

The Board of Directors met on November 7 and the Executive Board met on December 3. Their actions included:

- Expressed appreciation to Suzanne Kerlin for producing the 2022-2023 *Handbook/Directory* and to Connie Schroeder for her informative and timely *Branch Bulletin*.
- Acknowledged Vasundara Varadan for obtaining the new professional Zoom program and Naana Nti for her support of Zoom the past two years.
- Approved the 501 c (4) budget for 2022-23. The 2021-22 budget was audited.
- Approved the appointment of the 2022-23 Nominating Committee. Members are Mary Dupuis (convenor), Carol-Beth Book, Sherry Crassweller, Nancy Weinreb, and Amy Wilson.
- Discussed engaging former members of the Clearfield and Lock Branches.
- Approved a mid-year Community Action Grant to Bellefonte Reads for \$1500.
- Determined that the Branch "watch party" on the AAUW PA program on reproductive rights with a follow-up discussion will be held in January at Vasundara Varadan's home.
- The annual program featuring women from the Humphrey Fellows program will be held February 13th at the Graduate.

- Discussed a new team approach to marketing and communications, especially for the web updates and social media.
- Updated Board members on the Used Book Sale. The Workshop has been sold to Continental Real Estate Mgmt., Inc., which will honor our lease through June 2024. The new Penn State parking charges for the 2023 sale will be \$540 with increases to follow. The sale will close at 7 p.m. on Bag Day. A volunteer coordinator (s) is still needed.
- Agreed to a new timeline for the *Strategic Plan* and recommended possible team members for the four themes.
- With the concurrence of the Community Action Grant Committee, approved a repurposing of the Community Action Grant originally to be used for a Centre Safe program to the purchase of retail gift cards to meet the needs of women and children victimized by domestic abuse.
- The next General Board meeting will be January 9th.

--Sally Kalin, Immediate Past Co-President

Have You Heard?

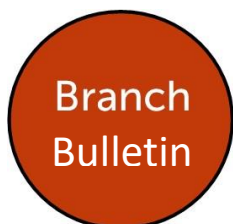
Since retiring from her position as Executive Director of Centre Safe, branch member **Anne Ard** has a new email address, anneard@comcast.net.

Condolences to the family of **Mary Haight**, former AAUW State College member, who died on November 5, 2022. She was a member of the branch until 2015, and continued after that as a volunteer at Move-in Night of the book sale with her daughter Molly. [Mary Haight Obituary](#)

Condolences to the family of **Felicia Lewis**, former AAUW State College member, who died on November 6, 2022. Felicia was an active member of AAUW State College for several decades. She was a strong advocate of programming that encouraged women to participate in municipal government. Felicia served on State College Borough Council and became the first woman mayor of State College, in 2009. [Felicia Lewis Obituary](#)

Condolences to new member **Rebecca Mugridge**, whose husband, Michael Macintosh, died on October 27, 2022. [Michael Macintosh Obituary](#)

Branch Bulletin dates



Items for inclusion in the next issue should be sent to *Branch Bulletin* Editor [Connie Schroeder](#) by **Monday, January 2**. The issue will be sent **by January 9**. Bulletins are available at www.aauwstatecollege.org under News at https://aauwstatecollege.org/blog_gender_equity/.