

# AAUW Pittsburgh Branch

The Newsletter of American Association of University Women - Pittsburgh Branch

Issue No. 60

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November 2015

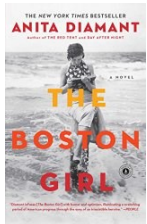
Patricia Byerly, Editor

## November Program

Please come and join us in the APB (AAUW Pittsburgh Branch) Book Discussion Group's next book discussion. All branch members are welcome. You can even bring family and friends if they are interested.



This meeting of the APB Book Discussion Group will be held at the PAA and begin promptly at 10:00 a.m. Coffee and pastries will be provided at no cost.



The book selected is the *Boston Girl* by Anita Diamant.

I purchased my copy from Amazon.com but I am sure you can find a copy at your local public library.

See the article on the next page about the book.



### About the Author . . .

**Anita Diamant** (born June 27, 1951) is an American author of fiction and non-fiction books. She has published five novels, the most recent of which is "The Boston Girl," a New York Times bestseller, and is best known for her 1997 novel, *The Red Tent*, a *New York Times* best seller. She has also written six guides to contemporary Jewish practice: *The New Jewish Wedding*, "The New Jewish Baby Book," *Living a Jewish Life*, "Choosing a Jewish Life," "How to Raise a Jewish Child," and "Saying Kaddish." A collection of her personal essays, "Pitching My Tent," is also in print.

Diamant spent her early childhood in Newark, New Jersey, and moved to Denver, Colorado, when she was 12 years old. She attended the University of Colorado Boulder and transferred to Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, where she earned a bachelor's degree in Comparative Literature in 1973. She then went on to receive a master's degree in English from State University of New York at Binghamton in 1975.

Sources: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anita\\_Diamant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anita_Diamant)



The November meeting will be held on Saturday, November 14, 2015 at the PAA in Oakland located at:

4215 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

The meeting will start at 10:00. Coffee and pastries or cookies will be served. No cost.

### About AAUW

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.

Because AAUW is a 501(C)(3) charitable membership organization, most of your national dues are tax deductible on your personal federal income tax return.

### AAUW MISSION

AAUW advances equity for Women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

### Be a Member Detector!

New members are the lifeblood of every organization, including ours.

We encourage everyone to invite their friends, relatives, co-workers, and neighbors to our meetings throughout the year.



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***The Boston Girl*** by Anita Diamant

Ron Charles is the editor of The Washington Post's Book World. For a dozen years, he enjoyed teaching American literature and critical theory in the Midwest, but finally switched to journalism when he realized that if he graded one more paper, he'd go crazy.

Anita Diamant's new novel, "The Boston Girl," comes to us as the transcript of a tape-recorded monologue delivered by an 85-year-old woman named Addie Baum. Addie is cheery, alert and full of needlepointed wisdom. If this allegedly spontaneous memoir is any indication, she's also the most well-organized 85-year-old woman in the world. Asked by her granddaughter to talk about how she got to be the person she is today, Addie takes us back to 1900, the year she was born. From there, she leads us through a series of episodes that have all the color and vibrancy of a plastic bouquet.

Addie was the plucky daughter of immigrants who escaped starvation and violence in Russia to settle in a tiny Boston apartment. "In 1915, there were four of us living in one room," she begins. "We had a stove, a table, a few chairs, and a saggy couch that Mameh and Papa slept on at night." They eat a lot of potatoes and cabbage. Deeply suspicious of America's loose culture, at home Addie's parents speak only Yiddish, mostly to bicker. Her mother, in particular, is a joyless hag. She criticizes Addie for wasting her time studying and staying in school: "She's already ruining her eyes from reading. No one wants to marry a girl with a squint." That's Mameh in a nutshell, which is where she stays throughout this novel, huddled and bitter, tossing off worn aphorisms and barbs about everyone else's failures. (Does Mameh turn sweet and loving on her deathbed? Such is the suspense that electrifies "The Boston Girl.")

Addie, of course, finds ways to escape her parents' suffocating expectations. She joins a reading club for Jewish girls. There she meets a better class of people, who introduce her to games and books and leisure activities that would scandalize her mother: lawn tennis, archery, croquet! She has to ask what the word "hiking" means. She's excited to see a wicker chair for the first time. One of her friends has the cutest dimples in the world. We're a long way from "The Red Tent," that feminist novel of biblical proportions that propelled Diamant onto the bestseller list in 1997. (This week's Lifetime miniseries based on the novel surely sparked new interest.) But here, in early 20th-

century Boston, Diamant strictly observes the rituals of the American immigrant story, which is not necessarily a problem. After all, that archetypal form offers a standard foundation while remaining flexible enough to accommodate an infinite variety of interior design.

At this late date, though, the demands of originality in the immigrant story, both in plot and style, are high — higher, alas, than this pleasant, undemanding novel is willing to reach. For instance, although Addie's father is a respected man in the temple and young Addie is aware of the anti-Semitic currents running around her, Diamant makes little effort to address issues of faith or ethnic prejudice. Instead, Addie's anecdotes are mostly charming, sweet tales one might hear while trapped with grandma for an afternoon in the retirement-home dining room. (Try the Jell-O; it's good.) Long stretches of "The Boston Girl" are so predictable that AARP should sue for defamation.

It's not as though serious, even wrenching events don't arise in these pages. Addie's desperately anxious older sister flits about like a character from "The Glass Menagerie."

A young man Addie dates has been ruined by post-traumatic stress disorder, which doctors tell him to deal with by not talking about what he remembers. And there's rape, abortion, suicide and all manner of thwarted dreams — other people's, at least. But Diamant insists on packaging these incidents in neat little chapters that admit none of the messiness or indeterminacy of lived experience. World War I, the flu of 1918, the Minnesota orphan train, Southern lynchings — they're all blanched in the warm bath of Addie's sentimental narrative. A reference to the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti immediately gives way to an engagement party. Later, an abusive man is murdered — probably by an ax — but Addie concludes that episode by crowing, "I had pie for breakfast every day for the rest of the summer." My hopes rose for a taste of "Sweeney Todd," but no.

"The Boston Girl" suffers most from its refusal to acknowledge the complexity of memory and oral history. Addie claims, "I've forgotten a lot more than I like to admit," but without hesitation, repetition or unconscious revelation, she delivers happy recollections from the 1920s with more detail and dialogue than I can recall from breakfast. On the tight, shiny surface of this narrative, there's so little tremor of real life. Without letting us hear the resonance of actual reminiscence and the timbre of authentic speech, the novel moves along without moving us.

**AAUW Pittsburgh Branch  
Elected Officers &  
Committee Chairs**

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Newsletter Editor - Pat Byerly  
Scholarship Committee - Bernie Cerasaro  
Knit Wits - Karin Neilson  
Show-Goers - Marci Henzi

**Daylight Saving Time Ends**

Daylight Saving Time ends at 2:00 a.m. Sunday, November 1, 2015. The clocks will “fall back” an hour to Standard Time, meaning brighter mornings but darker evenings.



Daylight saving time began in the United States during World War I, primarily to save fuel by reducing the need to use artificial lights. Although some states and communities observed daylight saving time between World War I and World War II, it was not observed nationally again until World War II.

Of course, World War II is long over. So why do we still observe daylight saving time?

The Uniform Time Act of 1966 provided the basic framework for alternating between daylight saving time and standard time, which we now observe in the United States. But Congress can't seem to resist tinkering with it. For example, in 1973 daylight saving time was observed all year, instead of just the spring and summer. The system of beginning DST at 2 AM on the first Sunday in April and ending it at 2 AM on the last Sunday in October was not standardized until 1986. The rules changed again in 2007. DST now begins on the second Sunday of March and ends the first Sunday in November.

Source: <http://www.standardtime.com/>

**Upcoming Programs**

*Submitted by Karin Neilson, VP Programs*

Ladies, we have some interesting events in the 2015-2016 membership year.

Back by popular demand, on **Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>** we will once again meet at The Café at the Frick for their High Tea. It's fun, and the café is always beautifully decorated for the holidays. I hope you will be able to join us this year. (Please see details below.)

January is the traditional month for us to award our scholarship monies. The Scholarship Committee is working diligently on securing and reviewing applications, but the **Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup>** luncheon meeting at the PAA will include the presentation of the funds as well as an overview of how the money will be used by the recipient.

We will not have an event in February but the **Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>** morning meeting at the PAA will include The Book Discussion as well as a craft project. Stay tuned to future newsletters for Pat's review of that month's book selection.

There will not be a membership meeting in April. But on **Saturday, May 14<sup>th</sup>** we will have our final membership meeting for the year. There is no program listed at this time; please watch future newsletters for the details.

Please remember to respond to Pat's requests for reservations at our meetings; we need an accurate head count for each meeting so there are enough chairs, supplies, and food for all.

**Sunday**, December 13, 2015 - In lieu of our regular meeting, interested members will be meeting at **The Café at the Frick** for High Tea. **We will meet at the Café at 3:00 pm.** The price for the regular tea is \$18/person and if you choose to have the Royal Tea (which includes champagne or wine), the price is \$25/person. You can decide which you want once you arrive.



The Café at the Frick is located at 7227 Reynolds St, Pittsburgh, PA 15208 (412-371-0600). Free parking is available. Deadline for reservations is December 4. Contact Karin or Pat to reserve your seat at the Tea.

**Directions:** Coming from Pittsburgh on Penn Ave turn right onto S Homewood Ave. Enter the next roundabout and take the 3rd exit onto Reynolds St. Parking is on the left and The Café is behind the parking lot.

## Applicious Fundraiser



At the September meeting, we had samples of **Applicious** hand-dipped chocolate apples and pretzels to promote an ongoing fundraiser towards our Scholarship Fund. Each 5-layer treat consists of a layer of vanilla caramel, two layers of milk chocolate, and a layer of your choice of cashews, pecans, M&M or Reese's Pieces, drizzled on top with white or peanut butter chocolate. Pricing for our fundraiser are as follows: Large Apples, \$12.50; Small Apples, \$10; Pretzels, \$4. If you would like to purchase treats for delivery to you at the November meeting please contact Marci Henzi **no later than November 8.**



## NOVEMBER CRAFT

During the second half of our November branch meeting Karin Neilson will teach us how to make Christmas Tree ornaments out of twigs and ribbons. This is a very easy craft and takes very little materials. If you have any ribbon laying around that you would like to use, please feel free to bring it to the meeting.



## YEARBOOKS

Yearbooks are ready. You can pick up your copy by coming to any branch meeting. Meetings are held in September, November, January, March, and May.

## Sherwood Forest Farms Fundraiser



This was a very successful fundraiser for us last year and we are repeating it again this year. The brochures and order forms were distributed at the September branch meeting as well as emailed to every branch member. These gift items are beautiful and will spruce up your home or office for the holidays. Please consider either selling or purchasing one or two of the gift items.

All orders (payment must be included) must be mailed to me (Pat Byerly) no later than November 1. Gift items will be delivered directly to the addresses provided on the order.

## Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)



New hats, mittens, scarves, and socks as well as gently used coats are being collected again this year to be distributed to human service agencies and shelters throughout Westmoreland County. Cash donations will also be accepted to purchase new items.

This is a Make a Difference Day Project sponsored by RSVP of Westmoreland County.



Donations will be collected at our November meeting.

## WESTERN DISTRICT MEETING

Saturday, November 7, 2015  
10 AM—1:30 AM

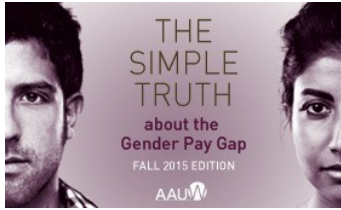
This meeting will be held at the Butler County Community College Cranberry Campus located at 250 Executive Drive, Cranberry Township, PA 16066

Keynote speaker Susan Frietsche, Senior Staff Attorney, Pennsylvania Women's Law Project on Current Status of Gender Equity Issues on the State and Federal levels.

RSVP ASAP to [aauwpawest2@gmail.com](mailto:aauwpawest2@gmail.com) or call (412) 784-9441.



## The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap (Fall 2015)



You've probably heard that men are paid more than women are paid over their lifetimes. But what does that mean? Are women paid less because they choose lower-paying jobs? Is it because more women work part time than men do? Or is it because women have more caregiving responsibilities?

AAUW's *The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap* succinctly addresses these issues by going beyond the widely reported 79 percent statistic. The report explains the pay gap in the United States; how it affects women of all ages, races, and education levels; and what you can do to close it.

You can download the full report at <http://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>

## Poll: Tell the U.S. Treasurer Who Should Be on the New \$10 Bill



To commemorate 100 years since the passage of the 19th Amendment, which secured women the right to vote, the U.S. Treasury has announced plans to put a woman on the \$10 bill in 2020. While the bill won't be circulated for another five years, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Treasury Jacob Lew has called on Americans to submit their suggestions for the redesign of the \$10 bill, including what the bill should look like and who should be on it.

Go to <http://www.aauw.org/2015/09/16/who-should-be-on-the-new-10-bill/> to see the results. Barbara McClintock is in the lead with Eleanor Roosevelt a close second. I am not sure at this time when the final result will be announced.

## SHOW-GOERS

By Marci Henzi

Small groups of our members will be stepping out to see three shows this holiday season. Tickets have been purchased and we will set out on Sunday, November 15 to see the classic Agatha Christie mystery *The Mousetrap* performed live at the Legacy Theatre in Allison Park. The second show we have lined up is the wonderful *Latshaw Pops' Christmas Memories* this year being performed at the Palace Theatre in Greensburg on Sunday, December 6. On Saturday, December 12 we will return to the Legacy to celebrate Frank Sinatra's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday at a tribute show called *Sinatra: A Century of Song*. I feel so fortunate to have friends in our branch with which to celebrate this most wonderful time of the year!



Tickets need not be purchased in advance to see a performance of *The Nutcracker* at the Carnegie Performing Arts Center where our member Monica Ryan is Artistic Director. This year the dates are December 4, 5, 6 and 11, 12, 13. I know I will want to go on the 4<sup>th</sup>. Do you care to join me?

## TECH TREK/TECH SAVVY

Marci Henzi will be the Pittsburgh branch's representative at next year's event to be held in May. More details will be released as the event develops. The North Hills-McKnight branch is taking the lead. ALCOA has given AAUW-PA an \$18,000 grant for this event.

Thank you Marci for taking on this endeavor!!