

The Best of Both Worlds



AAWE at 60



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*Cover photo: The Friendship Tree, April 2021, Ranelagh Gardens, Paris.
 Lisa Chontos and son Sandro, Janine Brimbal, Cobi Camberlein, Clara
 Siverson and daughter Abby, Pam Combastet (photo Ania Audi)*



Introduction

Our faithful ship, our rock, our home, our community, this AAWE – the closest thing we have to roots and family on this other side of the pond – 60 years on, aren't we proud of her? Look at what has been accomplished with AAWE. She has advocated on citizenship and voting rights for us and our children. She has raised our profile as Americans living overseas. She has supported our efforts to raise bilingual children. She has been our safe place, our network, and has surrounded us with dear friends, holiday traditions, and fun.

It was thirty years ago when I first joined AAWE, and I have seen the changes in the club's demographics and the evolution of its activities. Thirty years ago, many fewer members worked outside their home. Children occupied a great and wonderful space in the club. The speaker luncheons and teas of lore have been replaced with coffee meet-ups, happy hours, peer groups, special interest groups, and social media groups. Today, AAWE gets tucked in to the little schedule gaps wherever busy members can fit it in. We are still the reference in bilingual education for families like ours, yet the social, support, and connection aspects of AAWE have become even stronger.

Much of the hard advocacy work has been accomplished, but there are challenges that lie ahead. Should we become involved in taxation and banking issues? Advocate for voting rights for those of our children who are "stateless" and can vote nowhere? Revive the refugee task force to make a difference for women and children in our local community via our

philanthropic giving and volunteering? What would be your answer to these questions? We'd like your input!

As we look ahead to our next thirty years, and as your current president, I'm all in favor of working hard to make AAWE sustainable with a significant increase in membership to lighten the fundraising load. What could motivate others to join and become active members? What motivates you to add your own value to AAWE? Imagine if AAWE, with its 520+ mostly American women, were no longer there. What would you do?

I hope we will continue to move forward, ever evolving, but always conscious of our wonderful legacy of committed and dynamic women. Let's be inspired by that legacy. Let's raise our hands more and engage. Let's spread the love, make our welcome genuine and warm to all individuals, and help new members find that first AAWE activity they can commit to, and kindle friendships along the way. An AAWE like this will have a future for us all.

As you read the following history of the Association, hopefully you will not only be inspired, but exhilarated. Stirred by this club's accomplishments and wide scope of activities, we hope that the "AAWE story" motivates you to join in and engage. You will be writing the history of the Association in the decades to come.

BETH AUSTIN
AAWE PRESIDENT, APRIL 2022

The First 30 Years

*"Sometime in 1960, after living in France for thirteen years, I finally found a friend, an American girl, who like myself was married to a Frenchman...AAWE really began with a question. How many other American women were married to Frenchmen and what about American citizenship for their children?" Phyllis Michaux, **Both Worlds**, 1991, founder and AAWE's first President.*

In 1991, as part of AAWE's 30th anniversary celebration, a history was compiled entitled *Both Worlds*. Edited by Virginia Vittoz, this publication paid tribute to the evolution of AAWE over three decades. Herewith, a condensed summary:

In March of **1961**, Phyllis Michaux put a classified ad in the European edition of *The New York Herald Tribune*. Fifteen women answered. Within six months the group grew to 40; Gertrude de Gallaix drew up a "constitution"; and AAWE was born. The group began with Halloween, Thanksgiving, and the Fourth of July themed parties for AAWE children. Long-time residents served as ambassadors for the newly arrived, and charter flights were organized for trips "home". Addressing immediate concerns, three committees were formed: Education, Citizenship, and Bilingualism. AAWE member Ruth Métraux, a psychologist, spoke on the emotional aspect of bilingualism, surveying members and compiling AAWE's first bilingualism report.

In **1963**, AAWE opened a lending library of books in English. Our proposed name "The American Wives of Frenchmen" was eschewed in favor of the "Association of American Wives of Europeans" as Jean De-tière (wife of a Belgian), took the helm as President in 1964. Edith Saint Léger's Education Committee publicized the need for scholarships for dual-national children, securing two full scholarships at American institutions the very first year. Judy Marie's Bilingualism group reported on several studies concluding that bilingualism was neither harmful nor confusing to children.

Georgina Grandpierre took on the presidency in **1965**. Lunches at France-Amériques featured speakers such as *The New Yorker's* Janet Flanner; Laurence Wylie, author of *Village in the Vaucluse*; playwright Robert Thomas; Claude Terrail owner of the restaurant Tour d'Argent; and Leon Zitron, then France's leading TV and radio commentator. AAWE voted to join the umbrella organization FAWCO (Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas). In **1966**, an AAWE 5th anniversary party was sponsored by Ricard, the famous maker of pastis.

When Sonja Minçbère became president in **1967**, citizenship issues were at the forefront. Voting in a foreign election was no longer an expatriating act under American law, but unfortunately, a dual national serving in the army of one country was not exempt from service in the other. AAWE children gathered at the Grand Palais for a visit of the historic Tutankhamun exhibition, while members were privy to an exclusive behind the scenes guided tour.

Babette Sciandra took over as president in **1969**

intent upon creating AAWE events for members to "just make friends". The Education Committee drew up a list of private schools in the Paris area (with members' commentary) and organized a meeting in order for AAWE children to share their US university experiences. Michèle Gompel managed a Memorial Day lunch for the USO with 473 in attendance. A "Vicarious Vacation" event was a big hit with members sharing slides and home movies of exotic vacations. AAWE member Jeanne Kaqueler designed a logo for the club. AAWE established the American Dual National Citizenship Committee in 1969 to finance AAWE's *amicus curae* brief for the US Supreme Court's Bellei case concerning transmission of nationality to children born outside the US with one American parent.

When Vicky Wormser took over the gavel in **1970**, events included an Embassy Tea hosted by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, as well as luncheons with speakers such as Henri de Turenne (documentary film maker), and world famous "Alexandre" (THE hairdresser for princesses and presidents). The Education Committee compiled a list of camps, summer scholarships and reduced-fare flights. AAWE obtained a small office in the association France-Amériques. Phyllis Michaux personally delivered over 40 letters from AAWE members concerning dual citizenship to Senator Edward Kennedy's Washington office. The 20th Biennial FAWCO Conference was jointly organized by AAWE and AWG (American Women's Group in Paris) welcoming over 120 delegates. To avoid raising dues, AAWE organized its first fundraising events – a bake sale and talent show.

Lise Wilma Small was elected President in **1972** and focused on lobbying Congress regarding residency requirements in the nationality bill. Through individual member donations, a lawyer was engaged to represent AAWE in Washington, and a letter-writing campaign began. (The Nationality Act was finally amended by Congress that year.) Spearheaded by Phyllis Michaux and a group of AAWE members, the Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO) was founded in **1973** to work on a range of issues. A "Saloon and Dance Hall Shindig" was organized for teenagers, as well as a family Father's Day Picnic with baseball. Luncheon speakers included Eamon Kennedy, Irish Ambassador to France; Louise Weiss, a founder of the French women's rights movement; and

Pierre "Mr. Cinema" Tchernia, French film producer.

Laura Dondey launched her presidency in **1974**, with a tea at the residence of the American Ambassador, John Irwin III. AAWWE was offered new office space at France-Amériques shared with the group "France-Haiti". Monthly luncheon speakers included screen star Geneviève Page, and Christian Millau of the *Gault et Millau* guides. A panel of outside experts led an AAWWE member discussion of a woman's role in a bicultural family.

As **1975** was the UN designated "Year of the Woman," the theme of the FAWCO interim conference was "The American Woman Abroad". Workshop topics included how clubs could help "minorities" in their membership (the elderly, the very young, divorcees and widows). Education Chair Virginia Vittoz created a documentation center to explain the French educational system. Two one-act plays were written and performed by AAWWE members. A very popular "Gambling Soirée" was held to raise funds for Association des Paralysés de France. Sonja Minçbère conceived the idea of the "Operation Teabag" project to support the passage of the Overseas Voters Rights of 1975 concerning absentee balloting procedures. Recalling the Boston Tea Party of 1776, and the infamous cry "no taxation without representation", a campaign was launched (AAWWE joined by other American groups) to write letters to members of Congress with a tea bag attached as a graphic reminder.

Olive Lorsignol was elected President in **1976**, a busy year: AAWWE's 15th anniversary and the American Revolution Bicentennial. The teabag campaign succeeded (mail sent to the congressional committee on this issue exceeded five to six times the usual); overseas Americans got the right to vote in Federal elections. Lucy Laederich organized a "Vins de France" wine-tasting; the proceeds covering a travel stipend for an American student to work on a bicentennial *chantier* in France. A group of AAWWE families celebrated the Bicentennial by visiting the châteaux of the descendants of French nobles who fought in the US War of Independence.

Olive visited US colleges, pleading the case for dual national scholarships; Sweet Briar College announced an AAWWE scholarship. The new Women's Outlook committee established a list of job offers for members. Luncheon speakers included René Goscinny, best known for the *Astérix* series. As citizenship efforts had depleted our coffers, Olive came up with the idea of a Christmas Bazaar fundraiser, and Sophie Belouet took over as chair. AAWWE and AARO co-hosted an international conference on citizenship in **1977**. A vernissage cocktail party was held at the new Centre Pompidou with AAWWE artists exhibiting their own works of art for the event.

Sally Benoist was elected president in **1978** at a general meeting which highlighted AAWWE's Playreaders performing Lois Maréchal's *The Tolstoi Drama*. A Citizenship Action Day was organized to encourage members to write to Congress in support of the Citizenship Bill. After President Carter signed the new bill in **1979** (the citizenship of children born abroad with one American parent was no longer conditional), AAWWE celebrated with a jubilant luncheon at La Main

à la Pâte. AAWWE produced its very first cookbook, edited by Joan Mamin. Ruth Métraux presided over workshops on the Bicultural Family addressing tolerance, religious perception and the role of the father in bilingualism. Janine Chastel took a group of AAWWE children to the Salon de l'Agriculture. A discussion/debate on southeast Asia was held with distinguished guests Prince Souvanna-Phouma of Laos, and journalist Olivier Todd. US Ambassador to France, Arthur A. Hartman, was the featured speaker at a well-attended luncheon, AAWWE members were received by Madame Bernadette Chirac, wife of the mayor of Paris, for a tour of the Hôtel de Ville. The *AAWWE Literary Review*, a collection of essays, short stories, and poetry, edited by Jacqueline Guéron, was published.

Energetic **Lucy Laederich** took over the presidency in **1980**. AAWWE published the "College Education in the United States as Experienced by Dual Nationals" edited by Harriet Frankel, Gaby Taub and Cynthia Lassere de Vézeronce. Cultural outings included visits to the Picasso, Monet and Dali exhibitions, and a day trip to Brussels for the Bruegel show. A "potluck" Thanksgiving was organized with Lydia Delaunay roasting the turkeys. Sweet Briar College once again offered an AAWWE dual national scholarship joined by another from Washington and Lee University. AAWWE and WICE (Women's Institute for Continuing Education) sponsored a seminar "Adapting to a New Culture". In **1981**, a "Casino Royale" fundraiser supported the Golden Anniversary FAWCO conference co-hosted in Paris by AAWWE and AWG. Over 170 delegates attended this conference. Keynote speaker was journalist Christine Ockrent discussing media differences in the US and Europe. AAWWE celebrated our 20th anniversary with a gala reception at the US Embassy residence. Our second AAWWE Cookbook was hot off the presses in time for the Bazaar. The Board set up an SOS Fund for members with serious emergencies.

In **1982**, the presidential gavel was turned over to **Ceci Pose**. AAWWE welcomed Ambassador Evan Galbraith and his wife to a luncheon in their honor. While board game activities like Monopoly and checkers were scheduled for 8- to 13-year-olds, the Women's Outlook committee developed a soul-searching "Who Are You?" meeting. AAWWE's Citizenship committee worked on projects to standardize overseas voting procedures. Luncheons featured speakers such as perfumer Robert Gonnon, the most celebrated "nose" in the world, and presentations by the couture houses of Nina Ricci and furrier Gérard Babbín. In 1983, psychologist and AAWWE member Pepita Kauffman gave a workshop at the FAWCO conference entitled "Growing Older Abroad". The serious subject of drug addiction in French lycées was addressed in a meeting with representatives of the association Le Patriarche. AAWWE also organized a "College Night" with representatives from 30 American colleges and universities. Finally, after years of sharing space, AAWWE had its own office at Pershing Hall, on rue Pierre Charron in the 8th arrondissement.

Financial wizard and former president of AAWWE's Investment Club, **Joy Margerit** brought her expertise to the presidency in **1984**. AAWWE announced two

grants: a vocational award open to an AAWE child for a scientific, scholastic, or creative project; and an AAWE member grant to "help finance a dream". AAWE also began donating to FAWCO Foundation's education award in the name of founding member Gertrude de Gallaix. As part of Women's Outlook, member Sherry Gabay led a discussion on the constraints women experience if they need to move to follow either their own or a husband's career. The Education Committee, headed by Kathie Beau, organized a talk by AAWE member and education specialist, Nancy Magaud, on the differences between the French and American educational systems. WICE and AAWE co-hosted the first "Which School is Right for My Child?" event with participation from the leading bilingual schools. Member Roxanne Pavaneau led AAWE children in a Reading Process Workshop, and Bilingualism Chair, Tarina Esclapez, organized a joint meeting with WICE on "Growing Up Bilingual". AAWE asked the Parsons School of Design to announce a competition (with monetary prize) for the student who could create a prize-winning logo for AAWE. The AAWE Board voted to replace its original charter with By-laws.

In **1986**, new president **Virginia Pilpoul** sought a consistent "new look" for all publications, letterheads, and even the brass plaque on the door of AAWE's new roomier office at Pershing Hall. The Citizenship committee sponsored a letter-writing campaign to Congress urging support of a bill which would reduce the residency requirements for passing on American citizenship. Alice Jouve gave courses in medieval art and civilization. Special activities ranged from flower arranging, to fish cookery, to watching Halley's comet. Author and member Polly Platt led seminars on adapting to life and language in France (why one should say "Bonjour Madame" and not just a "Bonjour"). Thanks to the Florence Gould Foundation, a program of summer study grants was set up for AAWE children as a means of becoming better acquainted with their American heritage. Psychologist and member Ellen Grandsard spoke on the practical differences of cross-cultural marriages. Julia Fainsilber led a private tour of the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie designed by her husband, renowned architect Adrien Fainsilber. The *AAWE Guide to Education*, edited by Carolyn White-Lesieur and Anita Tassel, was published in time for AAWE's 25th anniversary celebration at the Cercle de l'Union Interalliée.

In **1988**, new president **Irene Checler** adjusted the hours of activities to accommodate working members, while not forgetting the 52% of the membership with children under the age of three. Both Rebecca Bouygues and Kathleen Choiset organized Valentine's Day parties for the little ones, as well as a trip to a Left Bank theatre to see *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*. Playgroups were set up in Paris and the suburbs, and Peggy Paul Cavallier organized an "All About America" children's event. Diane Dumortier, Anita Tassel and Charlette Soto put together a College Information Pack to help children prepare for US universities. The AAWE Book Discussion Group met to discuss modern American novels with political or social implications. A workshop was organized by

Women's Outlook focusing on legal questions with attorney and member Kathie Claret. Mayor Jacques Chirac unveiled the Paris Liberty Flame at Alma, a symbol of Franco-American friendship. AAWE's name was inscribed as a donor. The Christmas Bazaar was moved to the more spacious Académie Diplomatique Internationale. Through Jane Lepauw's tombola organization, a donation was made to the Cousteau Society for an environmental clean-up in Alaska.

By the time that **Carolyn White-Lesieur** took on the presidency in **1990**, the club had grown to over 500 members whose ages ranged from 20 to 80. Events were organized with speakers such as Simone Veil, French health minister best known for the 1975 law that legalized abortion (*Loi Veil*), as well as author and editorialist William Pfaff. Gabrielle Varro sent out an educational questionnaire following up on AAWE children she had polled twenty years before. AAWE members enjoyed a formal dinner with Ambassador Walter J.P. Curley, as well as a vibrant "Hooray USA" party with rock n' roll dance lessons. AAWE's 30th anniversary was documented in the publication *Both Worlds* summarized by Carolyn: "... this book celebrates the 30 years of an association of very talented and wonderful American Wives of Europeans. Rendezvous in 2021!"

BEATRICE DESPER
& KRISTINA DIDOUAN

Remarkable Women

PHYLLIS MICHAUX 1922-2015



The Americans among us whose experience in living abroad began within the last 20 years or so may have little idea of the role that AAWE has played in ensuring some of our basic civil rights. When my son was born in Vichy in 1998, there was no question in my mind that he was an American citizen. When I easily cast my first absentee ballot in the Congressional elections of 2010 from Dakar, Senegal, it did not occur to me that in previous years and not so long ago, I would have had no right to do so.

The credit for the hard-fought changes in American policy that resulted in this ease of access can be spread among many women and men. But a clear-cut beginning can be traced to 1961, when Phyllis Michaux (Mrs. Raoul, in the style of the time), placed an advertisement in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune* to determine interest from "American wives of Frenchmen resident in France to discuss problems specific to them – among others their civil rights."

For the next 32 years, Phyllis would become intimately familiar with certain provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act, some of which she memorized in the first years of introducing AAWE to the American and Franco-American communities in Paris. She and other founding members reached out to other women to support their energy and vision, and the result was major changes to American law that benefit Americans around the world today.

As the wife of a Frenchman and a young mother, Phyllis wanted her children to have both an American

and a French identity and citizenship. Beginning with a foundation of American traditions such as Halloween parties and play groups, AAWE, under Michaux's leadership, learned how to organize and lobby, fundraise, and connect with other Paris-based interest groups. The results include the right of overseas citizens to vote in federal elections (1976) and unconditional citizenship rights for American children born abroad (1978).

"What a legacy Phyllis left!" recalled Kathleen de Carbuccia. "First, the family – eight French grandchildren... many of whom have worked or studied in the US and have US nationality. And so many other children who have the opportunity to do the same. Many times Phyllis told me these children would be the hope of the future—so attractive, intelligent, bilingual, and bicultural. She was convinced that US decision makers only had to look at this new, international generation to see what an asset they would be as citizens.

"She made friends everywhere.... She wanted to know their stories and she remembered them. She didn't make a big effort to be polite but she always tried to be helpful, which could mean anything from giving citizenship advice to reading their palms. Even more remarkable is the fact that she did not make enemies. At least I never heard of any.... She may have annoyed people with her prodding, she may have stepped on some toes in Washington, but she did it with well-worded arguments and without animosity."

SHARON NOSSITER

Remarkable Women

GERTRUDE DE GALLAIX 1905-1989

During the 50th anniversary year of AAWE, then-president Wendy Leyland astutely observed that if AAWE remained an evolving and innovative association over five decades, it was because our founding members built into the rules the necessity for change. As Wendy noted, "It's not always the easiest route, but we do it because we know it keeps us growing and vibrant."

The structure of AAWE's by-laws, as well as those of other notable American organizations in Paris, are thanks to Gertrude de Gallaix, a founding member not only of AAWE, but of the American Women's Group in Paris (AWG Paris) as it reconstituted itself after World War II, the Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO), and the Council for the English Speaking Community (CESC) in Paris. She drafted by-laws or statutes for those organizations, as well as for the Junior Guild of the American Cathedral in Paris and the FAWCO Foundation.

As noted in *Both Worlds, Retrospective of the Association of American Wives of European 1961-1991*, "If Phyllis remained the inspiration for AAWE, Gertrude de Gallaix was surely its architect. A particularity of AAWE members was that we were all confirmed 'non-clubwomen'. But AAWE was different and so was Gertrude. A no-nonsense parliamentarian, Gertrude showed us how to do things as they should be done: motions, committees, minutes of the meetings, annual reports, the works. But the discipline was stimulating and the results quickly began to show."

Gertrude was born in Chicago to a family of German heritage and learned French from a governess. A 1927 Smith College graduate, she traveled to France where she met her husband, a young Franco-Belgian lawyer. Her particular aptitude for languages served her well as she helped her husband in his law practice, translating legal documents. After his death in 1949, she stayed on and continued translating legal documents, particularly company charters and by-laws. This experience subsequently benefited many organizations as she became a pillar of the American

community in Paris.

In 1968, Gertrude de Gallaix was honored with the Woman of Conscience Award, presented in New York City to twenty American women, including Mrs. Dean Rusk and Mrs. Martin Luther King. The award was for the support of human rights. Gertrude was the only award winner living outside the United States. Since her death in 1989, AAWE has honored Gertrude's memory by contributing to a FAWCO Foundation award originally established by her family as an Education Award. It is now known as The FAWCO Foundation Humanities Award in Memory of Gertrude de Gallaix.



AAWE's Major Accomplishments

AAWE was created to solve a problem. This ethos of finding solutions and sharing them with others has informed the association's work and activities throughout its six decades. An entire book could be written about AAWE – indeed, our founder Phyllis Michaux related some major highlights of AAWE's distinguished history in her book *The Unknown Ambassadors – A Saga of Citizenship*. Others, such as Michael Adler and Kathleen de Carbuccia, have written extensively and eloquently about AAWE's efforts to change US citizenship laws. You will learn still more about other achievements from the articles in this magazine. The following is, then, but an overview of the major milestones in our association's six decades. Some were achieved in concert with other organizations such as FAWCO and AARO, others were AAWE's alone, but all are part of AAWE's collective DNA.

US Citizenship Legislation

Changing US citizenship laws to ease the transmission of US nationality to children born outside the US to one American parent was one of Phyllis Michaux's chief concerns when she founded AAWE. Thanks to Phyllis's vision and perseverance, this goal was accomplished after years of effort and collaboration with a number of people and several other organizations. AAWE's *amicus curae* brief in the famous *Belletti* case before the US Supreme Court (1969-1972) played a key role. After several setbacks and partial gains, on October 10, 1978 Congress eliminated "the US law that required our children to reside in the US for two to five years by age 26 in order to keep the US citizenship they were born with — for children born overseas after 1952. With a stroke of the President's pen, the 'conditional' part of our children's citizenship simply disappeared.... Having won the battle to abolish 'conditional' citizenship, we turned our attention to an equally serious issue: the limitations US law imposed on overseas American parents' eligibility to transmit US citizenship to their children born overseas.... After six years of effort we were able to reduce requirements to transmit US citizenship. This was incorporated in the Citizenship Reform Act of 1986. The good news was that the residency requirement for transmission of US citizenship was reduced from ten years [five of which had to be after age 14] to five years [two after age 14]. The bad news was that Americans abroad still had a significant hurdle to overcome to transmit their US citizenship to their children. In spite of many hours of work by overseas groups from all over Europe, this provision remains the law to this day." (Kathleen de Carbuccia, *Inspiring Women*, Spring 2019)

Right to Vote From Overseas – Tea Bag Campaign

In addition to the injustice of US citizenship laws affecting overseas Americans, Phyllis and other AAWE members were also concerned with the inability of American citizens outside the US to vote absentee. AAWE, AARO, the American Chamber of Commerce, FAWCO and a number of other American groups outside the US joined forces to advocate for legislation to domicile and residence requirements as pre-conditions for absentee voting in federal elections. In 1975, former AAWE President Sonja Minçbère, who was also a former President of FAWCO, joined up with Phyllis to launch a letter-writing campaign to US Representatives including a tea bag and the following text:

"In 1773 there was a tea party in Boston Harbor
because of no representation,
In 1975, we mail you this tea bag because of the
Overseas Voters Rights Act,
So that in 1976 we will be able to vote for you.
Support H.R.-3211 and S.-95."

President Gerald Ford signed the bill into law on January 2, 1976, thereby beginning direct political life for Americans living overseas.

College Night/College Day

The first College Night was held in October 1983, the brainchild of the late Olive Lorsignol. The event was revived in October 1986 and held annually thereafter until Covid-19 intervened in 2020. In 2003 the AAWE Education/Bilingualism Committee, with the advice of educators and college counselors, nurtured a collaboration with the Council of International Schools (CIS) whereby CIS would take over the administrative tasks and AAWE would provide local volunteers. Eventually renamed the Paris International University Fair, the event grew to be one of the largest university fairs in Europe. College Day consistently has been one of AAWE's major services to the greater community.

Which School is Right for My Child?

The biennial school fair "Which School is Right for My Child?" was the outgrowth of discussions among AAWE members on how to choose a school and how to share that useful information more widely. In 1984, members of the AAWE Education Committee were approached by members of WICE and asked if AAWE would like to hold a joint event inviting "principals and/or top administrators of leading bilingual schools in the Paris region to present analyses of the schools' programs." The committee thought it was a great idea. The first "Which School is Right for My Child?" was held in January 1985 and subsequently

held every other year, growing in size as bilingual and Anglophone schools proliferated in the Paris area. It has continued through 2022, including an elaborate publication, *Paris Parents*.

AAWE Guide to Education

A logical corollary of that first school fair was a compilation of schools suitable for bilingual/bicultural children. It was this event and the handout of information about participating schools that germinated the idea to put together a more comprehensive guide to schools which offered English classes at the level of a bilingual child. A questionnaire for AAWE members revealed other schools and it was interesting to see the variety of experiences, degrees of bilingualism and the different paths taken by AAWE members' children. In October 1986, the first *AAWE Guide to Education* was ready. The initial printing sold out quickly. Three years later, in 1989, work began on a Second edition, ready by May 1990; a Third in 1992, a Fourth in 1995, a Fifth in 1998, a Sixth in 2003, a Seventh in 2006, and an Eighth edition in 2013. Most recently, the Ninth edition appeared in 2021. Over the decades, the *AAWE Guide to Education in France* has become AAWE's flagship publication and has become a source of pride and prestige for the association.

Living in France/Vital Issues

AAWE members' concerns, of course, have always extended beyond citizenship, voting, and educating their children. Navigating life in France is not straightforward, and AAWE members decided to pool their collective wisdom on "how to survive of officialdom while living in France" in a comprehensive book, *AAWE Living in France*, published in 1993. Topics ranged from marriage to divorce to wills and inheritance, via employment and real estate. Subsequent editions were published in 2000 and 2005 as *Vital Issues*.

Mission/Vision Statements

AAWE's first strategic planning committee was created in 2008, and its first project was to write a Mission Statement and a Vision Statement for the association. After surveying a diverse cross-section of AAWE's membership, the committee identified the values that define AAWE and that matter most to members. On this foundation, they thoughtfully crafted the Mission and Vision Statements which the association still uses today.

Beyond the Bac

Given the perennial popularity of and demand for the *AAWE Guide to Education in France*, the Education Committee determined that there was a need for a separate publication devoted to higher education options for students educated in France. The first edition of *Beyond the Bac* was published in 2011 after extensive research; it brought together in one place a wealth of information on higher education that

did not exist elsewhere as a whole, even in French. The book featured an exhaustive explanation of the French university system and *grandes écoles*, as well as US, British, Canadian and Australian universities and how to apply to them. *Beyond the Bac* was completely updated and expanded in 2020, reflecting an overhaul of the French university system as well as the proliferation of English-language programs in Europe, and added a chapter on university options in the Netherlands.

Name Change and Rebranding

For many years, the "W" in AAWE's original name was a source of debate. It resonated with some members, who identified precisely as "American Wives of Europeans", while other members chafed at the "W word", and still other women did not join the association because of the name. Several referenda were conducted to determine whether members wanted to change the name and if so, to what. At long last, in 2016 after work carried out by Presidents Jill Jacquot and Pamela Combastet, the members of AAWE voted to change the association's name to the "Association of American Women in Europe", retaining the acronym and the AAWE "brand" while becoming more inclusive.

The logical next step after changing AAWE's name was to update the association's logo, branding and visual communication. During 2016-17, President Deborah Lillian led a diverse committee in a "deep dive" into AAWE's essence. Working with professional brand consultants, the Rebranding Committee developed a chic and striking new logo as well as a complete visual "new look".

Schlesinger Library Donation

Thanks to Carolyn White-Lesieur's efforts, in January 2019 AAWE's historical archive of *AAWE News* and records joined the collection of the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University. The Schlesinger Library "is considered the leading center for scholarship on the history of women in the United States" (www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/schlesinger-library) and holds one of the preeminent collections on American women's history. AAWE's records illuminate the lives of American women who have made their lives outside the US.

Community and Support

The fabric of AAWE has been woven from many achievements, large and small. Throughout the decades, AAWE has created a community and given its members a sense of belonging and being understood. Individual acts of kindness and support – a friendly smile to a newcomer, a job opening, an amusing mother-in-law anecdote – all add up to complement the major milestones. As AAWE's Mission Statement notes, AAWE aims to "support its members at all stages of life."

SALLIE CHABALLIER

History of AAWE Publications

As the club celebrated its 60th anniversary, AAWE Publications marked its 35th. In October 1986, the first *AAWE Guide to Education* appeared in print to an enthusiastic public. Finally, a manual explaining the intricacies of the French school system in the *lingua franca* of English and listing Paris area schools offering some English language instruction! It certainly had appeal in a city of international organizations and a growing American community. The book received press coverage (in *Le Point* and *Enfants* magazines and on French radio), and multiple reprints sold out quickly, 1600 in all – still the record for sales of any single AAWE book edition! A second, updated version was already in the works within four years; and subsequent editions followed in 1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2003, 2006, 2013 and 2021 – all thanks to scores of member volunteers who researched, wrote, vetted, proofread and secured cooperation from schools and organizations to produce this unique publication.

This pioneering book, which launched AAWE into publishing and gave it greater visibility in the anglophone community in France, might not have been realized but for the vision of a particular board in 1986, who gave the project the go-ahead and approved funding for its printing. AAWE Publications was thus born as a serious club undertaking, one that brought in income, too, although it would not have its own committee or board position for another two decades. The *Guide* along with subsequent publications – *AAWE Living in France* (1993), *AAWE Vital Issues* (1999, 2005), *Let Them Eat Cake* (1999, 2003, 2010) and *Beyond the Bac* (2011, 2020) would have certainly pleased the first public relations committee of 1962,

who sought visibility for AAWE to advance their agenda of interests and goals.

Although publishing was not in the minds of the club's founding members in 1961, the seeds of AAWE publications were surely sown in the group's early meetings. In December 1961, as reported in the third club news bulletin, programs were already in discussion to address bilingualism in children, as well as the legal aspects of French marriages, testaments and wills in France and in the US. The fledgling club's committees grew organically, as projects gained focus and attracted volunteers to steer them.

For example, 1964 saw the establishment of the bilingualism committee and the expansion of the originally designated scholarship committee into the Education Project for Dual Nationality Students. The latter group, called the education committee by the end of the decade, sought to secure scholarships and consideration for admission to US colleges for dual national children – at a time when many AAWE children were still attending playgroups together! Over the following 20 years, these two industrious committees had amassed so much knowledge through their programs, surveys and sheer diligence that it was destined to find its way onto printed pages shared with a wider audience than AAWE. The *AAWE Guide to Education* burst onto the scene just a year after the inaugural "Which School is Right for My Child?" program, organized jointly by AAWE and WICE (Women's Institute for Continuing Education) in 1985, and two years after the first AAWE "College Night," which gathered 30 representatives of US colleges and universities in a panel discussion on



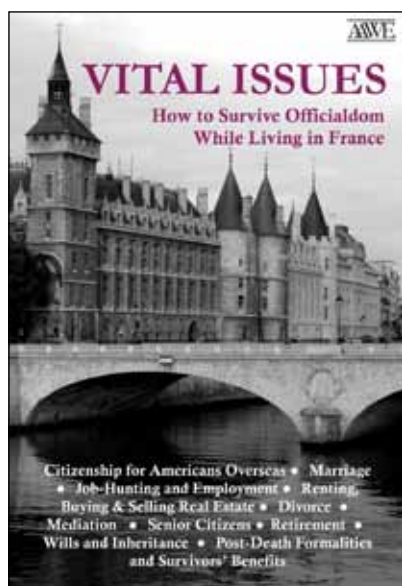
Helen Shavit, Elaine Rothman, Carol Guisse, Sallie Chaballier, Henrietta Flinn, Wendy Leyland, Janis Kaas, Janine Brimbal, Rebecca Bouygues, Lise Ducrey, Jude Smith. Seated: Kathleen Choiset and grandson

"Why College in the US?" Fast forward to 2011 – and 26 college fairs later, when information about post-bac study opportunities, in France and abroad, had outgrown the confines of the original guide and warranted its own separate publication, *Beyond the Bac – Higher Education in France and Abroad*. Its revised second edition appeared in 2020 and was the first club publication to be sold on Amazon.

Over its lifetime, AAWF regularly produced printed matter on subjects of interest to its members, such as the 1979 AAWF *Literary Review Volume 1*, a collection of members' creative work, which was quickly followed by *Volume 2* in 1981. A multi-year-long project of the bilingualism committee, beginning in 1965 and ultimately involving 244 AAWF children ages 3 to 30, culminated in the 1980 publication, *Bilingualism and Franco-American Children*. This 54-page booklet selling for seven francs reprinted under one cover, *A Study of Bilingualism Among Children of US-French Parents* (1965) and *A Survey of Bilingualism in Franco-American Children of the AAWF* (1971), as well as a new piece by an AAWF member doing research on this specific topic, *Le Bilinguisme des Enfants Franco-Américains*; the last was a socio-linguistic analysis of the results of a questionnaire and survey conducted within the AAWF cohort. This information also gave rise to the printing and free distribution of *The Revised Guidelines on Bilingualism* (1972) to help parents in fostering bilingualism at home. Among more recent endeavors is the 2009 brochure, *Education and Franco-American Children*, the result of a two-year long AAWF education committee survey. But to track backwards in history, the first AAWF "commercial publication" was arguably the 1965 printed time schedule for students wishing to apply to American colleges and universities, which sold for two francs.

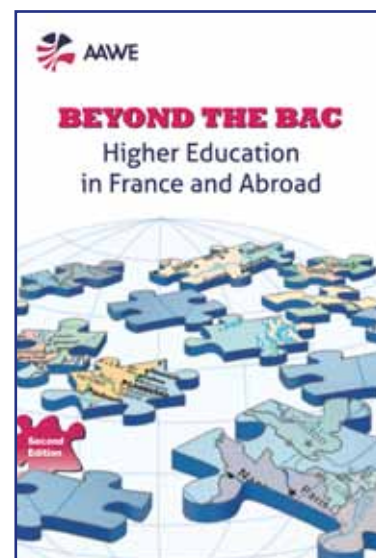
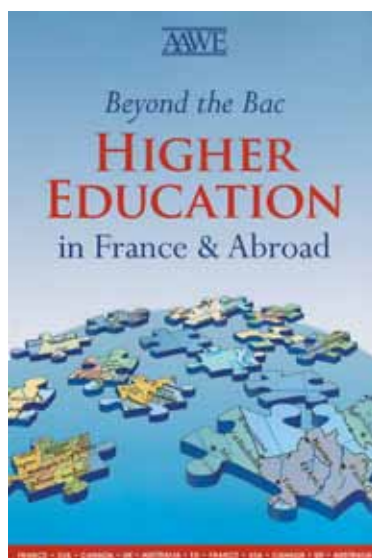
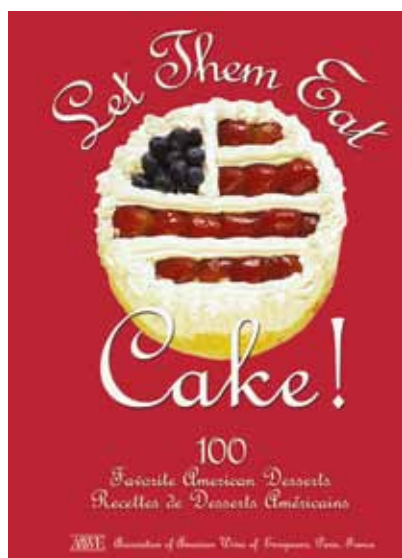
The first AAWF cookbook counts among the club's early home-made editions; it sold out at the second Christmas Bazaar held in 1978, and its successor, at the 1981 bazaar. Today's members might blush, even blanch, at one of its recipes: "How to Cook a Husband." The popularity of these self-printed books may have spurred the later project of a bilingual dessert cookbook, *Let Them Eat Cake*, professionally printed in 1999 and marketed to profit at subsequent bazaars. It was an ambitious undertaking, mobilizing many volunteers to contribute recipes, translate and test them, verifying the accuracy of US-European measurement conversions. Its third reprint is still available!

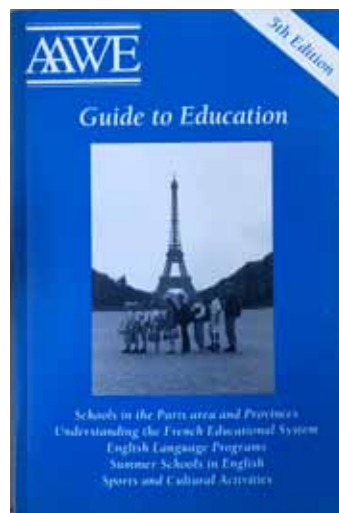
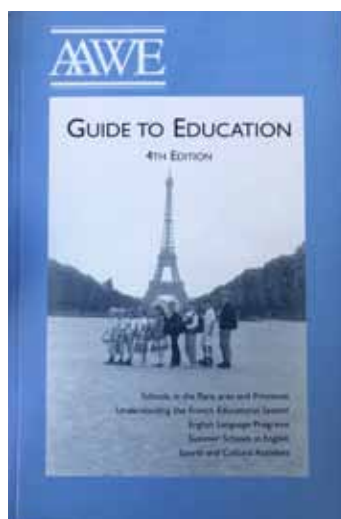
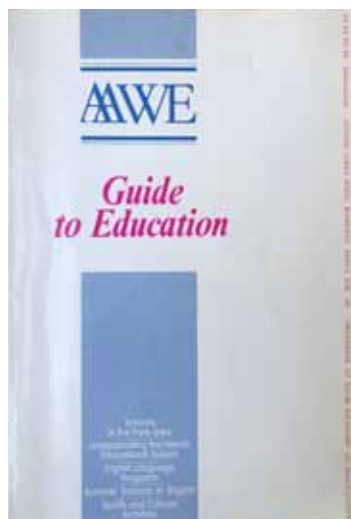
The overwhelming success of the *Guide*, AAWF's first book with an ISBN reference – so catalogued at the US Library of Congress, undoubtedly paved the way for further significant publishing ventures. *Living in France* and



two subsequent, expanded editions under the new title *Vital Issues: How to Survive Officialdom While Living in France*, treated legal issues that had long preoccupied AAWF members, and which resonated with a wide readership. Already in April 1962, an American attorney had briefed the budding membership of 45 on the legal aspects of Franco-American marriages, and later, in October, a US State Department representative spoke to them on citizenship issues affecting US women abroad. By 1965, grown to 133 members, AAWF had already formed a citizenship committee focused on "such matters as nationality, voting, taxes, marriage and divorce laws, and military service." The Women's Outlook Project, founded in 1977 to promote professional opportunities for members, hosted a series of discussions in 1983 on "Women Abroad in Crisis Situations," and in 1989, invited attorneys to talk about inheritance, wills and divorce as they affected dual nationality families. AAWF learned to leverage the resources of its membership and the community to gain and share information on these subjects that would provide the foundation for AAWF *Living in France* and AAWF *Vital Issues*.

AAWF's publications have historically been concretizations of its members' initiatives to explore interests or to examine issues that concerned, and sometimes confounded them. Its books have always been the fruition of many years of membership activity. Sixty years on, that activity continues, but AAWF is adapting to

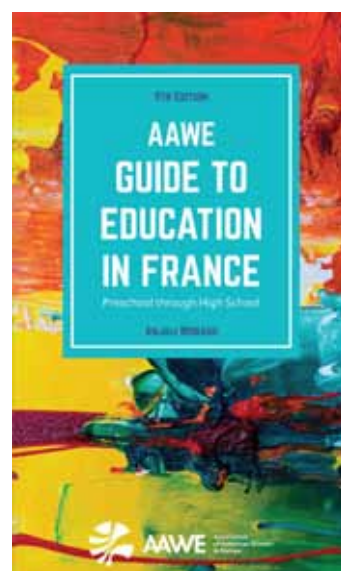
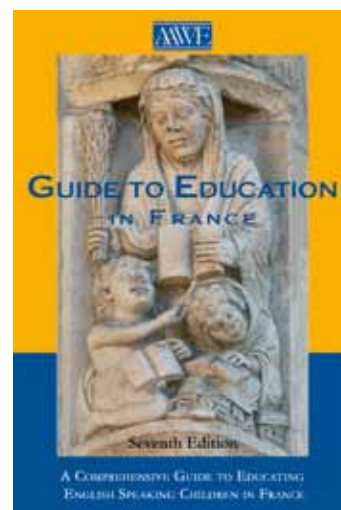
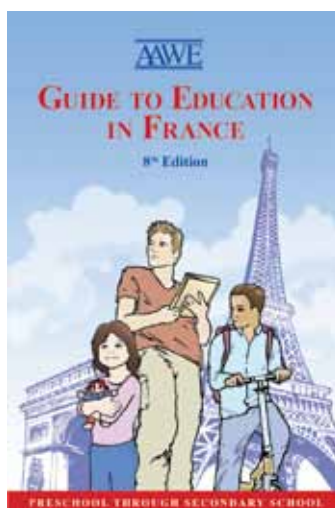
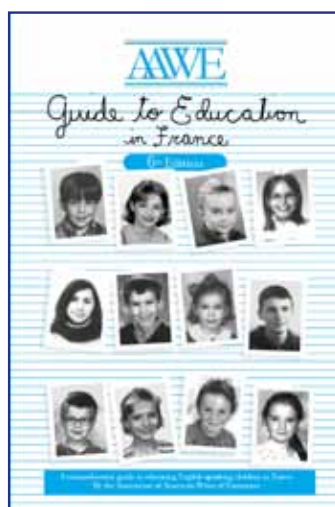




changes in how information is shared, and printed matter is necessarily giving way to the supremacy of digital. AWE's latest print publications have been free magazines produced as support material to its events. The glossy *Paris Parents*, with a new issue distributed at each "Which School is Right for My Child?" fair since 2018, features material related to bilingualism education and parenting issues. In 2019, another ad-funded magazine supported the inaugural AWE retirement fair "Retire and Thrive," whose enthusiastic participation augurs well for the future of the club and its publications, too.

AAWE may be reaching retirement age, but it is clearly not slowing down. Taking stock of 60 years of activity, it can be proud that its publications have contributed to the aspiration of the nascent club in 1961 as reported in its second newsletter: "...as the AAWE grows in importance it will take its place in the American community in Paris and we will be called upon to offer our services or to participate in various projects of other American or Franco-American organizations. This is important for the future of our association."

JANIS KAAS



What AAWE Means to Me



AAWE means knowing you are not alone in this wonderful and frustrating country. ... Knowing that I have something in common with a few hundred other women is comforting. *Patricia Ruff*

I feel a sense of family, considering mine is so very far away. *Nini Pellet*

... and the simple, unadulterated fun of Handicrafts. *Nan de Laubadère*

... people in similar situations, American optimism, a "CAN-do" spirit... Over the past 30 years, I've had the pleasure of seeing AAWE change, evolve, and remain a remarkable association. *Barbara Wilmet*

... Friends, support when I needed it, the warm chuckle of some of my best friends that reminds me of a community of spirit. *Lucy Laederich*

... AAWE means not having to explain anything. *Sally Lecomte*

Where else could you find such a talented concentration of women who are devoted to their family, their work, their activities and who are constantly upbeat? *Luisa Couaillet*

Luckily AAWE is part of the population in Paris because I sincerely doubt that I could have survived my first 48 years here without the friendships and the bit of Americana the club has brought me (2001)...

AAWE replaced what I missed most about America – the ease with which we got along, the complicity and the simplicity. If only AAWE had been around in 1952! (2021) *Vicky Wormser*

... I was asked to an AAWE tea. This became my best day since I had arrived in Paris. *Selma Masclet*

... If Michael Adler says save your kids' boarding passes for citizenship purposes, I save them. If Esther Askienazy or Persis Gouirand give an easy recipe, I read it. Sometimes, I even make it! If Barbara Stern says tick this box on the absentee ballot, I do it. Thank you, AAWE. *Alice Parte*

To me AAWE means "service." ... super people have served the members with activities, support and, sometimes, sympathy. *Barbara Ginsbach*

Our American culture is the glue that bonds us together and makes friendship so much easier. *Anita Owens*

AAWE means to me my friends, period, and that's a very big period. I find it hard to imagine my life here without them, and I would never have met them without AAWE.... *Shirley Benoît*

Friends who know what it's about. *Holly de Montmarin*

... I wonder, if I had stayed in the US would I have had the same quality of lifestyle or the privilege of knowing so many extraordinary women? I don't think so.
Irene Checler

... In short, the best of both worlds! *Richard L. Vasquez*

I enjoy bringing our children to holiday parties and finding opportunities to expose them to small glimpses of my native culture. I enjoy welcoming newcomers to France and sharing my experience with them as much as I adore listening to the wise advice of those who moved here long before me. Women helping women, that's what AAWWE means to me.
Elizabeth Soubelet

My AAWWE sisters and I speak the same American Franglais, and we support and care about each other. The club itself is an anchor for our vibrant, replanted lives here in France. *Janet Rubinstein*

I joined AAWWE for support at a difficult time in my life.... I found not only friends, but people whom I can do projects with to make a difference in my community and in the world. *Clara Siverson*

A Home away from Home! *Stephanie Jalinos*

... it's a warm and open community, within which (together with the US Girl Scouts and the American Library in Paris) my 2 and 3 year-old daughters grew into beautifully spirited young women now 18 and 20 – where they were able to enjoy their American heritage, culture and values alongside other Franco-American “kids,” including understanding their citizenship rights and responsibilities. *Deyi Tcherdakoff*

I love the way we moved our club activities online with such success, variety and imagination during the Covid confinement period. *Beth Austin*

It is my safe circle of sisters where I can let my hair down. *Jane MacDonald*

AAWWE thinks of those things unique to our situation that I don't realize are important – until they are!
Michelle Bennani-Smires

Confinement highlighted to me how AAWWE really IS my support network in Paris. I've never felt closer to others than now with our frequent Zoom meet-ups.
Corinne Ott

I am far from my biological sisters, and my AAWWE friends are like my surrogate sisters. You all “get” me, in a way that I think comes from a shared background. *Mary Ellen Wessinger*

When I was just 34 and suddenly lost my dear first husband, it was my friends at AAWWE who dropped everything to come out to where I lived in the Paris suburbs with cherries, soup, and tons of support.

They connected me to a lawyer who gave me excellent advice and helped me come through an unspeakable experience stronger and wiser. Thank you, Pamela Combastet, Liz Gueyffier, Julia Furman, Wendy Stern, and Jane Marion. Thank you, AAWWE. *Lisa Chontos Seguin*

I met my core group of American girlfriends in Paris through AAWWE. I love that even now, after years of missing club events (due to full time jobs and babies), we still see each other regularly to catch up and just do life together. It's been a real blessing to have half a dozen other under-35-year-old moms dealing with all the trials and joys of bicultural marriages, bilingual kids, buying houses & doing taxes abroad, etc. as best friends. I'll be forever grateful to AAWWE for introducing us all. *Erin Laurent*

AAWWE means the world to me: My two best friends, opening the door to my wonderful professional career, myriad resources to guide me when faced with seemingly insurmountable problems. Knowledgeable women; open, giving and ready to befriend when I'm in need. Gratitude fills my heart. *Nancy Sayer*

New Initiative

THE BOOKNIKS: “Bookniks” celebrated its 20th Anniversary in 2021. Who would have thought that the original group of five booklovers meeting monthly would grow to over 25. An original Booknik would by now have read 197 books ranging from the bestsellers to the classics.

Sometimes AAWWE authors themselves joined the discussion, such as Hilary Kaiser, Jean Lesieur and Harriet Welty. The group was honored twice by the presence of world-renowned Russian translators Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky to discuss *Anna Karenina* and *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*.

Nan de Laubadère was moderator for the first ten years. Kathy Auzas, Pam Combastet, Jane Marion, Pat Finifter, Erika Chabbi and Nancy Le Balc'h have all led the group. Current moderators are Beatrice Desper and Linda Crappe.

During the pandemic, Bookniks went on Zoom making it possible for non-resident members to join the sometimes heated and always enjoyable discussions.

Remarkable Women

OLIVE LORSIGNOL 1930-2017

So many aspects of AAWWE that we take for granted today were dreamed of and fulfilled by Olive.

With a strong interest in bilingualism, higher education, and fundraising, her influence is still fundamental for AAWWE. In the larger American community, she was part of the original Women's Task Force that created WICE, the Women's Institute for Continuing Education.

When Olive arrived in Paris in 1960 with three small children, a Smith College friend, Isabelle Michel, alerted her to a talk on bilingualism for AAWWE members. Olive's son Marc was deaf in one ear and his nursery school, pediatrician, and family had all told her not to speak English to him. Thus started Olive's first mission with AAWWE. She researched and worked on bilingualism for years, producing *The Survey of Bilingualism in Franco-American Children of the AAWWE* in 1971. AAWWE played its part in completely reversing attitudes towards bilingualism.

In response to members' concerns that our children have a path towards higher education in the States, Olive conceived and organized the first College Night in Paris. These students have moved from the "dilemma of the dual-national student" in the 1960s to being prized as bilingual, bi-national applicants today.

While Olive was President of AAWWE, she conceived a new idea for fundraising – the Christmas Bazaar – in 1977 to cover the deficit caused by the Citizenship Conference hosted by AAWWE that year. Today, over 40 years later, the Bazaar Winter Festival remains AAWWE's prime fundraising event.

Then, in 1978, with the creation of WICE, she joined its first Board and developed the arts program, which she headed until 2001. She shared her passion



for art with AAWWE, leading memorable tours to Chartres and to Monet's Giverny. She later initiated the AAWWE Sketch Group.

Her interests soon moved towards AAWWE Seniors. She dreamed of creating our own PARC: a Paris American Retirement Community. "Phyllis Michaux had that in mind before we did, and it still hasn't happened...but a lot else has!" said Olive. She was very active in the Seniors Group, today a group of vibrant women who meet for lunches, talks and outings.

In 2009, when AAWWE was facing a serious deficit, Olive had the brilliant idea of holding an auction. There have been half a dozen AAWWE Auctions since then, several with a professional auctioneer, always in beautiful venues, assuring AAWWE's financial well-being.

When Olive saw a need, she'd move mountains – project by project – to meet that need or enlist the right person to do it. When Olive was determined, she was pretty hard to refuse.

Many AAWWE members consider Olive their mentor as she'd encouraged them to use their strengths for the greater good: AAWWE and the American community in Paris.

"I feel blessed," Olive once said. "It is not right for some people to be so lucky and others not. If you are lucky enough to be in the favored few, you must go after all that comes your way."

In the words of Sally Benoist, "The club would not be what it is now without Olive's imagination, enthusiasm, tenacity, and ability to inspire others."



Remarkable Women

LUCY STENSLAND LAEDERICH 1944-2019

Tributes poured in after Lucy Laederich passed away on February 1, 2019 at the age of 74.

Originally from NYC, born to Swedish-American parents, Lucy held degrees from the University of Saskatchewan (BA), the University of California at Berkeley (MA), and continued her graduate studies at the University of Washington in sociology and French. Lucy moved to France in 1970 on a Fulbright grant. She was a mother and grandmother of dual-national children, and worked as a freelance translator for many years.

Lucy served as AAWWE President (1980-81), FAWCO President (1999-2001), and longtime FAWCO US Liaison, which involved frequent advocacy and meetings in Washington, often at her own expense. She also served two terms (2012-16) as President of the Association of Americans Resident Overseas (AARO).

A leading and powerful non-partisan advocate for the rights of Americans abroad, Lucy focused on voting rights and election reform. She was instrumental in setting up the bipartisan Americans Abroad Caucus in Congress, and was the motor behind establishing the annual Overseas Americans Week. She was involved in the drive to get overseas Americans counted in the US Census.

Lucy was particularly proud of her work to get overseas Americans included in the 2002 Help America Vote Act and making the improvements that led to the 2010 Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act, allowing us all to vote in American elections.

Some of Lucy's many contributions to AAWWE: New Members ('76), First Vice President ('78), President ('80), Women's Outlook, SOS Fund, Garden Parties ('82-'85).

From Lucy's friends at AAWWE

Lucy's ego was in inverse proportion to her charisma. Lucy was about us; she did what she did for all of us, which only made her even more charismatic.

Sallie Chaballier

Lucy was a force of nature. There's no other way to describe her. She was so smart, so witty, so upbeat. She was an inspiration and a mentor to so many people.

Nan de Labaudère

...back in the late 70s ...I had come to admire the many qualities of this dynamic young woman juggling volunteer work with raising two young children while living quite a distance from Paris, and working part time. She was eager to help the American community and worked tirelessly advocating voting and citizenship rights for Americans abroad. ...we at AAWWE are indeed fortunate to have known this beautiful, exceptional person and to have been able to share her goals and work alongside her.

Sally Benoist



Photo My-Linh Kunst

How lucky we American women abroad were to have Lucy! She could have turned her talents to some other cause; Lucy committed her free time to pulling together, maintaining, and often leading so many American associations. She brought to these causes her talent for inclusion, her warmth, and conscientiousness. I never saw her lose patience — she could be dismayed by a setback but never angry.

After all-day FAWCO meetings, it was in Lucy's hotel room that we always congregated to laugh and sum up because she was eager to continue, and she had the bottle of Scotch. Her door was always open wherever she happened to be, in Paris, Bordeaux, or Washington, DC.

Kathleen de Carbuccia

WE CAN VOTE IN US ELECTIONS

"Lucy was a fierce and devoted advocate who worked to ensure Americans living overseas in all corners of the world could participate in US elections. Through her service with AARO as well as FAWCO, Lucy brought together US voters living abroad with the information and resources to fully participate in our democracy.... her advocacy had no borders and her work impacted civilian Americans across the globe. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Lucy during her exemplary career, and her efforts leave a legacy of election access that each of us should emulate." *Thomas Hicks, US Election Assistance Commission Chairman, Washington, DC*

Christmas/Holiday Bazaar

The AAWE Christmas Bazaar was initiated in 1977 by AAWE President Olive Lorsignol at the Salle de Neuilly to add some needed cash to our coffers and offer a friendly, family-style get-together. In 1983, with the advent of the Tombola raffle, we were able to start donations to charitable organizations.

The Bazaar was originally held on a weekday, with setup the evening before. AAWE families, friends and neighbors participated to find holiday bargains and home-baked American goodies.

The fundraiser moved several times, including to L'Académie Diplomatique on avenue Hoche, the American Cathedral, and a basketball court! During this time there was an elaborate system of rummage captains – members both in Paris and in the suburbs, who would accept donations and get them to the Bazaar venue.

In 1997 the AAWE Christmas Bazaar expanded to a three-day event and was held at the Forum de Grenelle. More space, more time and way more merchandise required paying for storage and for movers, security guards and such. We held a members' and VIP cocktail and early bird sale Friday evening after set up.

The Stands remained more or less the same: Baked Goods, Books, Boutique and Accessories, Brocante, Kids' Clothes and Toys, Handicrafts, Men's Clothing, Publications, Snack Bar, Women's Clothing and the Tombola. Handicrafts, the longest running stand (1979) continues under Charlene Labro's steadfast guidance.

Some of the fabulous raffle prizes included round-trip tickets to New York, a portrait by an artist, cinema tickets and one year, a barrel of bottles of wine. At the onset all the proceeds from the Tombola and a generous share of the Bazaar proceeds went to charitable organizations. Notably among the very many groups were the Gertrude de Gallaix Humanities Award, the English Language Library for the Blind and SOS Help.

In 2011 we streamlined the event and moved to the American Church for a one-day public sale, starting with setup on Friday, followed by the traditional cocktail and members' only sales, and public opening Saturday only. In 2018, we renamed the event as Winter Festival.

We overcame many challenges in our 42 years: transportation strikes, public safety concerns after several terrorist attacks in Paris and in the US, sleet storms, demonstrations, the transportation company that went bankrupt a day prior to the move... More recently in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic, the Bazaar was cancelled for the first time in its long history. Mini-Bazaars sprung up after the pandemic.

Despite all this, second only to membership dues, the Bazaar has been AAWE's largest income generator and has allowed us to donate over 132,478€ to charities.



There are easily a hundred volunteers needed to pull off this event. After the Bazaar was over, work would begin immediately for the next year's Bazaar. We estimated at one point that two-thirds of AAWE members participated in one way or another.

We were the precursors in recycling and up-cycling. Our handcrafters regaled us with decorative items that sparked joy.

Nothing says American hospitality more than food. Homemade chili, potato salad, coleslaw, hot-dogs, pizza and beer from the snack bar crews who smilingly filled orders. We also tried mac and cheese and a variety of quiches.

Top that off with the delicious desserts, cookies and cakes from the Baked Goods stand or get your goodies to go from the most gorgeously decorated sugar cookies to cinnamon buns to pecan pie to brownies — you name it, AAWE members contributed it.

None of this would have been possible without all the volunteers who made this event a true FUNdraiser. A family-friendly, joyful get together, cooperation at its highest in a multi-generational way. For some it was the only time they saw one another, for others it was a year-long project. But for all, it was a way to expand our activities, remain in our office and continue to share, grow and further develop our Mission and Vision statements.

ANN LEPRÊTRE



Handcrafters: four decades of pins and needles

In the late seventies, a small group of AAWE needle-point enthusiasts began meeting to exchange pointers and socialize while sewing. The first actual handicrafts stand was put together in preparation for the association's second Christmas Bazaar at the Salle de Neuilly in 1978.

In the 1980s, there were two handicrafting sections: one in the western suburbs led by Charlene Labro, the other in Paris headed up by Annette Fayard. They were followed by leaders Nancy Le Balc'h and Sue Jacob, then Sharon Boudet in Saint Germain-en-Laye. A succession of "Handicraft Mothers" have since directed the pack (Isabelle Dusastre, Kathy Auzas, and Kathy Duvnjak).

Handicrafts is AAWE's longest-running regular activity group. Continuity and regular weekly contact have built strong bonds and loyalty to AAWE. Over the years (in addition to felt elves, quilts, potholders, aprons, and throw pillows), the group has given AAWE four Presidents, two Honorary Members, two Treasurers, at least ten Vice Presidents, two Bazaar Chairpersons and numerous members of the Board. It was once estimated that over the years the Handicrafts group had raised more than 50,000€ for the club. They still meet once a week to create, craft, and catch up...donating their time and talents to AAWE's fundraising efforts.



Kathy Auzas, Sharon Boudet, Deborah Berzon and Nancy Le Balc'h handicrafting in the 90s

Bazaar Chairs through the years

1977	Sophie Belouet	1999	Corrine Slama, Kitty de Zwart
1978-80	Janet Dubois	2000	Corrine Slama, Kitty de Zwart
1981	Mary Brodbeck	2001-02	Terry Duchêne
1982	Janine Chastel, Annette Fayard, Kristin Gardel	2003	Terry Duchêne and Christi Franchet
1983	Robin Dufour	2004-06	Ann Leprêtre
1984	Irene Checler, Ceci Pose, Joy Chezaud	2007	Ann Leprêtre and Liz Lenfantin
1985	Carol Gustin, Chilla Heuser-Rousselle	2008	Liz Lenfantin
1986	Robin Dufour, Vivian Wohl	2009	Liz Lenfantin, Claudia Roux
1987	Barbara Brechet	2010	Ann Leprêtre (our last year at the Forum)
1988	Erika Chabbi, Jane Lepauw	2011	Wendy Stern, Marianne Calegari at the American Church
1989	Marissa Roufousse, Sharyn Vermot-Gaud	2012	Pam Combastet
1990	Marian Cullen-Verclytte	2013	Pam Combastet
1991-92	Barbara Ginsbach	2014	Rosemary Cheylus
1993	Wendy Sussman Stern	2015	Jill Jacquot
1994-95	Susan Marchand	2016	Jill Jacquot, Pam Combastet
1996	Marie-Louise Cusack and Nancy Janin	2017	Deborah Lillian, Leslie Charbonnel and Ann Leprêtre
1997-98	Sylvie Château-Colombier at Forum de Grenelle	2018-19	Rosemary Cheylus

Fundraising Auctions

The first Fundraising Auction charted new territory of innovation for AAWE.

It was the brainchild of Olive Lorsignol in 2009 when the club was facing a deficit. This was the second time Olive had come to the rescue of AAWE since her creation of the Christmas Bazaar for the very same reason 30 years earlier.

It was held at Kathleen de Carbuccia's lovely avenue Foch apartment. Champagne cocktails, a buffet, music, a "Lucky Wishing Tree," a Silent and Live Auction, made the evening a great success.

The five auctions held during the following decade garnered teams of hard-working volunteers and proved to be an essential component in bolstering the club's reserves during years when membership was slipping.

IN 2010, a tented garden overlooking the Champs de Mars was the location, at Danielle and Dick Johnson's extraordinary early-20th-century apartment. The organizers – Olive, Elizabeth Chase, Susan Boullier, and Milla Darcy – planned the June affair, which featured the artwork of Jean Nestares and John Springs, Lindsey de Ovies and Aviva Brooks.

The majority of donated lots came from AAWE members: vacations in Le Touquet and the Dordogne, a day on a barge along the Seine, Asian cooking lessons, life coaching, golf and flying lessons.

Emma Skoble and Holly Hasegawa co-chaired the **MAY 2011 AUCTION** at the Johnsons' during AAWE's 50th anniversary year. Emma tells the story of her adventure: "I still remember collecting the 68 items on sale that day. *pell mell*: Pierre Cardin donated a red coat; the Director of the Château de Versailles offered a private tour of the secret apartments; film producer Jérôme Revon donated a huge photo composition, and L'Hôtel, the Saint Germain hotel where Oscar Wilde spent his last days, offered a package stay. Marianne Calegari Hansen, Lori Zembinski Chalabi, Milla Darcy and Janine Brimbal jumped in to help in the preparation process. Lisa Aidan, Missy Leiby, and Aviva Brooks helped put together a professional

brochure. Liz Lenfantin catered the event. With the help of over 50 volunteers, the auction raised funds for AAWE on a par with the best of Christmas Bazaar earnings."

THE JUNE 2012 AUCTION, chaired by Grace Wong Folliet and her twelve-member Committee, was held at the Hôtel de Vanssay with G.H. Mumm the exclusive champagne sponsor, catered by Liz Lenfantin, with numerous volunteers.

Sonic Swing, the all-women jazz ensemble, including AAWE's Janine Brimbal and Caroline Zach-Guillou, kicked off the evening. Maîtres Hubert-Patrick Cheval and Charlotte van Gaver presided over the Live Auction with a Silent Auction, Raffle Prizes, and a Wine Tree Raffle with wines donated by the AAWE Board. It was well attended by 130 members, spouses and friends, and raised funds for AAWE and the charities AAWE supports.

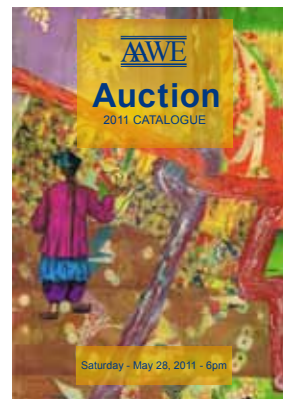
IN 2015 the auction was suggested by Olive Lorsignol, chaired by Julia Fainsilber, co-chaired by Olive, and spearheaded by the Seniors at Kathleen de Carbuccia's. This streamlined auction ended up with a triple-header: An online auction that ran for 23 days received countless bids and a silent auction proposed a Treasure Chest Lottery. AAWE singer Kay Bourguine provided lovely jazz interludes for the over 100 participants.

2018 WAS A NIGHT IN OLD HOLLYWOOD Silent Auction at Kathleen's. The evening was chaired by Ann Leprêtre, with a decor imagined by Sumner Hargrove and finger food provided by Leslie Charbonnel and her gourmet team, with musical entertainment by Kay Bourguine.

Members found outside donors and contributed lots. Members' offerings included a Day at the Drouot Auction House, interior decorating consultation, college coaching, Pilates' and Yoga classes.

In recognition for stepping up to run the auction, Ann Leprêtre was presented with the Spirit of Olive Award at the AGM that year.

EMMA SKOBLE



Raphaël Monnot wins the 1900 bottle of cognac (2010)

Kerry Halferty Hardy at the 2011 Auction, modeling the Pierre Cardin red coat



Fundraising team at the 2012 auction Marianne Hansen, Doris Folliet, Wendy Stern, Peggy Simon, Emma Skoble, Auction Chair Grace Wong Folliet, Nan de Laubadère, Pam Combastet, Elizabeth Gueyffier, Terry Duchêne

Children's Activities

In a statement in *France Soir*, our founder Phyllis Michaux summarized a mission goal for AAWE: *"faire connaître à nos enfants la vie américaine.... [en leur apprenant] les coutumes et les fêtes américaines.....ils connaîtront l'essentiel des constitutions des deux pays."* Remember, in those days, there was little available either in English or about American culture, so AAWE filled this gap. This was a great attraction then – and now – to being an AAWE member. And who better to meet this challenge than teams of American women who, it is well known, can organize anything with success.



In Our Homes

In earlier years, gatherings were held mostly in members' homes. Imagine, in 1973, a Saloon & Dancehall Shindig, a Ghouls and Ghosts party, a cookie baking evening, and then a Fathers' Day baseball game. Over the years, members have continued creating environments where our children have interacted with others of their age, allowing them to participate in American activities like their cousins do in the States. We had storytelling hours at Pat's, iced Valentine cookies with Terry, and picked strawberries at the farm led by Margaret. Here our children met other American families, and found that Mom was not the only crazy woman forcing them to speak American English.

Those were the "old" days. Now it's much easier to find English in our daily world. But it is not always the same for American culture, and for that AAWE still holds the reins. The year's calendar typically includes an Easter party, a late-spring baseball game, and a year-end holiday event. In autumn, the Halloween Party is THE event of the year. In the days when airplane baggage was not weighed, members would bring back from the USA summer suitcases full of Halloween candy and party favors to serve up at AAWE bashes. Here in the suburbs, a trip to the local



farm yielded 100 pumpkins (!) for door prizes. And USA Girl Scout volunteers make for great role models. The party fun creates lots of memories...nostalgia for the parents looking back at cute photos, but also, hopefully, for their children too. These AAWE activities also allow our children's French friends to become acquainted with celebrations "à l'américaine".

Kids' Nite Out

Now there's one last children's event you may not realize existed. It was Kids' Nite Out, a wonderful fun time on a much smaller scale dedicated to our children 8-11 years old who were too old to be with the little kids yet could party in the evening. Again, AAWE moms put together enjoyable pre-teen themes. And if you ask our now-grown-up generation of participants, they will all tell you the best memory from KNO is the pizza dinner and the BINGO game !



AAWE continues to bring American culture to our children through these activities as best we can with the demands of the modern age. And it's worth it. Not only so our children can feel comfortable being bicultural, but also for those organizing, as we have bonded into several generations of moms who remained friends, watching our children grow up with a choice of stepping into a French or American world. Just as Phyllis said: "*[Nos enfants] joueront à la pétanque aussi bien qu'au baseball.*" Thank you, AAWE.

DEBORAH BERZON, TERRY DUCHÈNE, MARGARET JENKINS, LISE DUCREY, ANN LEPRÊTRE, JILL JACQUOT



Faces of AAWWE





Grants and Awards

FAWCO Grants and Awards

The Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas (FAWCO), was founded in 1931 to bring together women living outside the United States. The FAWCO Foundation is the philanthropic arm of FAWCO. It was created in 1967 and granted the first scholarships for Education in 1972 to encourage peace through the knowledge and understanding that comes from education and exposure to different cultures. Any member or child of a FAWCO member club could apply, and AAWE is honored to have had many winners among its members or children. The range of Awards is vast and varied allowing high-achieving recipients to pursue academic studies, vocational studies, skills enhancement, Continuing Education or a Dual Cultural Award for children and grandchildren.

Later on, in 1985, disaster relief funds were distributed as requested by member clubs for disasters such as floods or earthquakes. Eventually, such funding was renamed the "Relief and Development Fund" to reflect a focus on more long-term projects. Renamed again, more recently, as the "FAWCO Foundation Development Grants", highlighting the desire to fund projects and programs nominated by member clubs that could be sustainable and would have an immediate impact on the people served.

AAWE Summer Study Awards

For many years, AAWE children benefitted from a yearly grant from the Florence Gould Foundation to cover participation in a Summer program of their choice, either academic or non-academic, in the States. This program has been continued through the generosity of the Richard R. Hallock Foundation, encouraging Franco-American children of AAWE members to become better acquainted with their American heritage.

AAWE Special Award

Established through AAWE member contributions, the award is given when the fund reaches a substantial sum. Awarded to an AAWE member to realize



Winners of the 2001 AAWE Special Award were announced at the 40th anniversary luncheon: Dianne Henning (left) for advanced courses in HTML and vector animation, and Hilary Kaiser (right) for her book on French war brides of World War I "doughboys".

a dream, personal or professional. In 2011, it was renamed after our Founder as the "Phyllis Michaux Award". Recipients have been:
2001: Dianne Henning, Hilary Kaiser
2004: Mary-Ellen Wessinger
2011: Kathleen Marshall, Aimée Froom Lévy-Thiebaut

Distinguished Service Award

Established in 1986, the Distinguished Service Award was given to members who had made an exceptional contribution to the association and/or devoted unusually important amounts of time to AAWE over a number of years. Members who have received the "Union Franco-Américaine" medal from the Monnaie de Paris are:

1986: Spurgeon Boyd, Janet Dubois, Harriet Frankel, Gertrude de Gallaix, Charlene Labro, Phyllis Michaux
1989: Ruth Falby
1991: Lucy Laederich, Virginia Vittoz
2009: Pat Danahey-Janin, Nancy Hoca, Janis Kaas, Barbara Sprzeukouski, Carolyn White-Lesieur

Honorary Members

Finally, another category of distinction is our Honorary Member status. These are people who have been persons of distinction in fields of interest to the Association, and individual AAWE members, at the invitation of the President and after approval by the Board.

Honorary Members are Michael Adler • Virginia d'Albert Lake • Adele Annis • Kathleen de Carbuccia • Kristina Didouan • Harriet Frankel • Myriam Hallock • Charlene Labro • Olive Lorisognol • Ruth Métraux • Russell M. Porter • Angelika Schneider • Andrew Sundberg.

AAWE recipients of Development Grants from the FAWCO Foundation

2009: Hope Through Education, co-sponsored by IWC Torino and AWA Vienna – \$4500 granted to The Mercy Children's Center, Bumala, Western Kenya, nominated by Janis Kaas. The Mercy Centre provides a safe haven for AIDS orphans. This grant provided a much needed electrical hookup, basic lighting facilities and a computer center at the new Bumala school facility.

2018: AWC The Hague Creating Better Futures – \$4500 granted to Kitchen for Rural Kenyan Catering Program, Rafiki Ya Maisha; Chepkanga Kenya, nominated by Claire Mathijssen. Provided funding to Rafiki Ya Maisha, an NGO that raises money for two schools in Kenya. Funds used to construct a teaching kitchen at Sergioek Vocational Training Center in Chepkanga to improve professionalism, as well as the self-esteem of the students.

2019: Pam Dahlgren Educating Africa's Children – \$5500 granted to Les Amis de Hampaté Bâ, Tools for Equal Opportunities: Tutoring Disadvantaged Girls in Niamey, Niger, nominated by Sher Betz. Financed a tutoring program with specialized remediation teachers in small groups in key subjects, providing training and ensuring the girls have equal opportunities to find employment and break the cycle of poverty. CAROLYN WHITE-LESIEUR

FAWCO Foundation Education Awards			Amount
1985	Mark Lellouch	Frieda Bacigalupo Natali Memorial Award	\$1000
1985	Christina de Caix		
1987	Laura Fainsilber	Foundation Merit Award	\$1000
1988	Alexander Dumortier	First Merit Award	\$5000
1988	Marc Bataillon	First Achievement Award	\$1000
1990	Laurence Dumortier	Additional Merit Award	\$2000
1991	Aimee Kahan	Second Merit Award	\$5000
1992	Christine Buckingham Rolland	Federation Award	\$3000
1992	Jennifer Colomb	Silver Anniversary Award	\$8000
1993	Stéphanie Boutin	Gertrude de Gallaix Achievement Award	\$4000
1994	Balthazar Alessandri	First Merit Award	\$8000
1994	Caroline Fichtenberg	First Achievement Award	\$8000
1994	Catherine Brahic	Dual Cultural Award	\$1000
1994	Celina Ramjoue	Second Merit Award	\$4000
1996	Charlotte Stobbs	Gertrude de Gallaix Achievement Award	\$4000
1999	Sarah Taub	Gertrude de Gallaix Achievement Award	\$3000
1999	Phyllis Michaux	Carol Buswell Volunteer Award	\$500
2001	Dianne Henning	Ruth St. John Federation Award	\$2500
2002	Melanie Ramjoue	Gertrude de Gallaix Achievement Award	\$3000
2004	Daniel Brimbal	Frieda Bacigalupo Natali Memorial Award	\$3000
2004	Theresa Rousseau	Ruth St. John Federation Award	\$2500
2004	Victoria Roth	Dual Cultural Award	\$2500
2005	Margaret Mallon Pujol	Angelica Award for Volunteerism	\$500
2006	Nelly Buchet Deak	Dual Cultural Award	\$3000
2009	Christian Kaas	Humanities Award	\$5000
2010	Maxime Penaud	Dual Cultural Award	\$3000
2015	Pat Danahey Janin	AWC Basel Award for University Degree Study	\$5000
2016	Adrien Cabantous	First Humanities Award, sponsored in part by AAWE Paris, in memory of Gertrude de Gallaix	\$4000
2017	Margaret Jenkins	The FAWCO Foundation 50th Anniversary Members' Award, sponsored by Counselors of The FAWCO Foundation, FAWCO, FAUSA	\$5000
2018	Tammy Sas-Mayaux	AWC Hamburg Continuing Education Award	\$4000
29 Awards			\$101 500

HALLOCK AWARDS

		Program
2007	Christopher Roth	Academic Pre-College summer Program at Brown University
	Benjamin Chaballier	Non-Academic Kingsley Pines, Maine
2008	Vanora Rolland	Academic Early College Program Art Institute of Chicago
	Floriane Borel	Non-Academic Maine Teen Camp
2009	Elisa Leser	Academic Yale University Exploration Program
	Marielle Coutrix	Academic Sara Lawrence College Summer intensive program in Visual Arts
2010	Leo Janin	Academic ID Tech, C++ Camp, Stanford University
	Michael Berzon	Non-Academic Power Chord Academy, Loyola University Chicago
2011	Annabelle Monnot	Academic Brown Environmental Leadership Lab
	Clovis Bessières	Non-Academic Outward Bound
2012	Ben Ghiglione	Academic Putney School Summer Program
	Kieran Janin	Non-Academic CVTC Tennis Camp
2013	Sara Leser	Academic Yale University Exploration Program
	Sarah Bourge	Academic Putney School Summer Program
2014	Lauren Flamenbaum	Academic Yale University Exploration Program
	Emma Ghiglione	Academic Putney School Summer Program
2015	Christine Bourge	Academic Yale University Exploration Program
	Emma Newman	Non-Academic Rustic Pathways Service Project
2016	Claire Colbatzky	Academic Young Artists of America Intensive Musical Theatre Camp
	Julia Connelly	Academic Visual Art Summer Institute at Boston University
2017	Matti Kruger	Academic Buck Rock's Performing and Creative Arts Camp
	Emma Pruvost	Non-Academic ARCC service and adventure camping program
2018	Alexandra Bouffard	Academic Youth Immersion Language Program
	Carlotta Barone-MacDonald	Non-Academic School of Rock, Brooklyn
2019	Sophie Lisbonis	Academic UCLA's Blueprint Psychology Program
	Fanny Scherer	Non-Academic Camp Encore/Coda in Sweden, Maine
2020	Mira Dinari	Academic Intensive: Mini-Med School at Tufts
	Nathan Bouquet	Non-Academic East Junior Elite Select Camp/USA Triathlon Wheaton College

AAWE Presidents: Marissa Roufosse

PRESIDENT 1992-1994

As befits a president who was previously the Cultural Affairs chairman, one of Marissa Roufosse's first Messages encouraged attendance at AAWE activities. "Your attendance at any one of our activities provides all of us on the Board with ideas and a chance to pulse your thoughts and feelings. Your attendance is one of the biggest compliments and satisfaction a Board member can have after graciously spending long volunteer hours to plan an event," she wrote.

Her presidency coincided with the opening of the Musée Americain in Giverny, and she and fellow AAWE member Jane Marion worked closely with the executive director to recruit volunteers for the museum's VIP opening.

However Marissa's presidency involved much more than activities. During her term, it was announced that all tenants would have to leave Pershing Hall, the 8th arrondissement address that provided space for several American organizations. Nine months later, her Annual Report confirmed a new address! "...a complex task it was to find another centrally located office offering the convenient and spacious rooms we had in Pershing Hall," she said.

AAWE was offered rent-free space by the Franco-American Foundation Maréchal Foch, at the Pavillon Balsan in Suresnes.

She and the new part-time secretary Holly de Montmarin oversaw that move as well as a later upgrade of office equipment – fax machine, stamp machine and a new computer program for the membership files.

AAWE publications was another big part of her presidency. During that time, the third edition of the *AAWE Guide to Education*, led by former president Carolyn White-Lesieur, was published as well as the second edition of *AAWE By-laws, Rules and Regulations*. A committee was formed to produce an AAWE cookbook. And the first edition of *AAWE's Living in France*, with chapters on Retirement, Divorce, Wills and Inheritance, and Work in France, was launched at Brentano's Bookstore on May 11, 1993.

Marissa, who first joined AAWE in 1988, had plentiful and varied experience with AAWE prior to becoming President. As well as Cultural Activities chair, she had also been Christmas Bazaar co-chair, Advertising Manager for the 30th anniversary album, and active on the Christmas Bazaar Proceeds Committee and Nominating Committee.

And she will always be remembered for her Tex-Mex Chili recipe which has been enjoyed by so many at the Christmas Bazaar through the years.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1992-1994

President Marissa Roufosse / **VP (Programs)** Anne-Marie Leroy, Jane Marion / **VP (Office)** Nancy Janin / **Treasurer** Deborah Dutilh, Katia Robinson / **Recording Secretary** Nancy Le Balc'h / **PR/Corresponding Secretary** Margaret Vuillet, Sally Lefevre / **Membership** Patricia Pera, Cobi Camberlein / **Hospitality** Soheila Yousefi / **Nominations** Cheryl Petit, Jeanne Senouillet / **FAWCO Rep** Marie Claire Vallet / *AAWE News Editor* Anita Mallick / *Advertising* Barbara Brechet, Sally Lecompte / *Assistant Treasurer* Tarina Esclapez / *Bazaar Director* Barbara Ginsbach / *Bilingualism/Education* Phyllis Barbe / *Parliamentarian* Lois Beaudet / *Children's Parties* Barbara Levi, Linda Jenkins / *Citizenship* Roberta Beardsley, Claire Mathijssen / *Computer* Rosemary Cheylus / *Cultural Activities* Cynthia Allen / *Historian* Katherine Benoun / *Mailing* Geneviève Orgueil / *New Member Teas* Nancy Brune / *Seniors* Julie Lemoine / *Women's Outlook* Sheila Guyot Sutherland, Andrea Bowman-Moore / *Special Advisor* Nancy Garès

Positions in bold type are on the Executive Committee. *Positions in italics* are appointed Board members.

New Initiative

The **WORKING WOMEN'S HAPPY HOUR** was the brainchild of Beth Austin who joined AAWE in the spring of 1991. Working full-time, her goal was to bring together members whose schedules did not allow them to participate in daytime AAWE events, enabling them to meet on a regular basis. All members were welcome – you didn't have to be working outside of your home to attend. The very first "WWHH" (as it fondly became known over the years) took place at Harry's Bar on June 4, 1991. These much-appreciated social events were organized in the numerous American or English-speaking bars and restaurants common at the time in Paris. Whether gathering in a Tex-Mex joint or the Plaza Athénée, members were faithful to the concept. One of the favorite venues was the Hilton Hotel rooftop bar (with complimentary hot hors d'oeuvres buffet and the fantastic view on the Eiffel Tower). Beth continued to organize the Happy Hours for the next 13 years.

Jane Marion

PRESIDENT 1994-1995



Marissa Roufosse, AAWE President 1992-94; US Ambassador to France Pamela Harriman; AAWE President Jane Marion 1994-95 at a special AAWE Welcome Luncheon organized for the Ambassador at the Cercle Militaire, October 1993

On a wintry February afternoon in 1994, the AAWE gavel passed to Jane Marion at the AGM held at the Académie Diplomatique on avenue Hoche. Jane joined AAWE in 1989, becoming active when she headed an all-AAWE volunteer team to help with the grand opening of the new Musée Américain at Giverny.

As VP Programs in 1993, her background as a US diplomat in Paris was an asset when AAWE invited Pamela Harriman, President Clinton's new Ambassador to France, to a welcome luncheon at the Cercle Militaire in October 1993. Members were delighted to accept Ambassador Harriman's return invitation to a cocktail buffet at the Ambassador's Residence, where we received a warm welcome, and admired part of the Ambassador's well-known art collection.

AAWE continued to enjoy office space free of charge at the Fondation Foch in Suresnes, and Cobi Camberlein graciously hosted our monthly Board meetings at her apartment in Paris.

AAWE News Editor Susan Hess-Logeais designed a new format for the publication. Every month, the front cover changed colors and the center photo was different. Susan introduced "Free Speech", a column open to any member who wanted to air her views. We had our own "new look", and the days of contracting out the layout were over.

Vice President Nancy Brune planned a whirlwind of activities for our members. She organized monthly evenings at the opera or the ballet, arranged a visit to the auction house Drouot, and offered members a fascinating visit to the Osmothèque ("House of Perfumes") in Versailles, which holds a unique collection of historic French perfumes assembled and protected for the first time in history.

In June, in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings on the Normandy beaches, AAWE and the other principal American and Franco-American associations in Paris helped sponsor

a commemorative concert and reception at Les Invalides. We also arranged a trip to Omaha Beach.

On June 23, AAWE and the American Club of Paris hosted a luncheon at the Cercle Interallié, featuring American fashion designer Oscar de la Renta.

Also In June, Sue Jacob hosted our annual Garden Party and BBQ. Charlene Labro once again organized the delicious barbecue!

At the rentrée, AAWE organized a family outing to Giverny. A new Ecology Committee was established, and we learned that baby powder contains asbestos, and that mothballs are toxic.

Eve Bark organized a delicious AAWE Thanksgiving at Les Noces de Jeanette restaurant. We enjoyed being together, and not doing the cooking or cleaning up!

In December, we held a Cider and Christmas Caroling Party chez Kathy Fabre, and also visited the exhibit *Paris et les Parisiens à travers les Siècles*, at the Musée Carnavalet. To ensure a very festive holiday season, Taittinger invited AAWE members to a December wine-tasting at Les Caves Taittinger in Neuilly, where we enjoyed this lovely reception and good cheer.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1994-1995

President Jane Marion / **First VP** Nancy Brune / **Second VP** Kathy Fabre / **Treasurer** Karen Parnet / **Recording Secretary** Phyllis Barbe / **PR/Corresponding Secretary** Sally Huet / **Membership** Cobi Camberlein / **Hospitality** Andrea Bowman-Moore / **FAWCO Representative** Holly Warner / **Nominations** Alys Bazire / **AAWE News Editor** Susan Hess-Logeais / **Advertising** Sally Lecomte / **Bilingualism/Education** Carol Marechal, Tara Whitbeck / **Parliamentarian** Lois Beaudet / **Children's Parties** Sylvie Château, Isabelle Dusastre / **Cultural Activities** Jean Gindreau-Davidson / **Historian** Lana Murawiec / **New Member Teas** Sarah Baldwin-Beneich / **Seniors** Julie Lemoine

Persis Gouirand

PRESIDENT 1995-1997

"It's hard for me to speak of AAWE without becoming emotional, for I personally have benefited from my membership in this organization in so many ways." So wrote Persis Gouirand in her first President's Message to the membership, April 1995.

She went on to lead the club during the longest one-term presidency on the record, 28 months, from April 1995 through June 1997. This was due to the Board's decision in November 1995 to synchronize AAWE's calendar with that of the French school system so that incoming Board members did not have to take on new commitments in the middle of the year.

Persis made excellent use of her 28 months as President. At that point, AAWE offices were still at the Hôpital Foch and Board meetings were held at members' homes. Cheap underground parking and the establishment of a free book exchange were a draw for members to visit the AAWE premises in Suresnes.

One of the first big innovations during her tenure was the purchase of a Macintosh Power PC to be used as the central computer for all of AAWE's publications, "existing and future". This was of particular import to Persis as she had previously (1981-1984) served as newsletter editor. Working with news editor Sarah Colton, three new columns were initiated in the News: Opening Up, Citizenship News, and the popular Miss Manners.

Persis also oversaw the 35th anniversary of AAWE. "I am proud to say that the Association is in excellent health and spirits, getting bigger and better with each passing year," she wrote in January 1996.

In the March 1996 Annual Report, she noted the popularity of a relatively new activity, the Working Women's Happy Hour. "Timed to fit between professional and family obligations, held in Parisian watering holes ranging from the basement of Harry's Bar to the rooftop room of the Hilton Hotel, this monthly activity has flourished under the benign patronage of Beth Austin since its inception."

The Professional Women's Network launched in October 1996 with a lunchtime seminar on the subject of "Balancing Personal and Professional Life: The Entrepreneurial Option," with speaker Margaret Millian. At that time, 66 percent of the membership worked outside the home. The network was intended as a friendly resource for women sharing some of the same preoccupations – French vs. American management styles, labor law and trends, maternity leave, etc.

Persis Gouirand, AAWE President 1995-96, with Peggy (Plessas) Hall, AAWE President 1997-99, at the AAWE Children's Party, October 1995



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1995-1997

President Persis Gouirand / **First VP** Nancy Brune, Soheila Yousefi (pro-tem) / **Second VP** Kathy Fabre, Sandra Renard (pro-tem) / **Treasurer** Karen Parnet, Marie-Jeanne King (pro-tem) / **Recording Secretary** Nancy Hoca / **Corresponding Sec/PR** Brooke Wizel, Kristina Didouan / **Hospitality** Janet Dubois, Barbara Frankenhuis / **Membership** Charlene Labro / **FAWCO Rep** Holly Warner, Mary de Vachon / **Nominations** Nancy Le Balc'h, Carolyn White-Lesieur / **Parliamentarian** Maria Le Berre, Erika Chabbi / **Historian** Lana Murawiec / **Education/Bilingualism** Gay Mazzanti, Barbara Ginsbach / **Kid's Night Out** Janine Brimbal / **New Member Teas** Lucy Hervier / **AAWE News Editor** Sarah Colton / **Advertising** Luisa Couailliet / **Children's Parties** Margaret Ghiglione, Peggy Plessas / **Seniors** Isabelle Michel / **Citizenship** Michael Adler / **Job Clearing House** Claire Simon / **Professional Women's Network** Avivah Wittenberg-Cox / **Special Activities** Eve Bark / **Christmas Bazaar** Marie-Louise Cusack, Nancy Janin / **Assistant Treasurer** Nancy Machiah

Peggy (Plessas) Hall

PRESIDENT 1997-1999

During my term, with roughly 550 members and still growing, AAWE was going strong.

In one of my earlier messages as President, I wrote, "For an American woman living in France and married to a European, wanting to make contact socially and/or professionally with others of her kind, AAWE is THE place to be. There is no other association that reaches such specific ends by such a variety of means. Through all of our activities and meetings, whether educational or recreational, the ultimate goal is that we SUPPORT one another in our particular status as American citizens, women, wives, mothers, professionals, and 'Ambassadors'."

Indeed, our founder Phyllis Michaux's book, *Unknown Ambassadors*, had made a profound impact on me, and in large part had influenced my decision to take on the responsibility, despite my having two young children and working outside the home.

We were active in the community, collaborating with the American Embassy and Consulate to ensure that the support network for American citizens continued to thrive, and sharing information and exchanging invitations with other Paris-based, English-speaking groups, such as AWG. Barbara Stern was working on voting registration while Michael Adler advocated on citizenship issues, and Lucy Laederich was our staunch representative in FAWCO. In 1997, Charlene Labro was named as the sixth Honorary Member of AAWE.

We were upholding traditions, marking American holidays for children and adults alike, and enjoying social events such as Embassy concert teas and Christmas cocktail parties. Carolyn White-Lesieur's team published the 5th edition of the *AAWE Guide to Education*. Kristina Didouan was a dynamic *News* editor, giving us all chuckles with her "Remains of the Desk". And Sylvie Château was spearheading the organization of the popular and profitable Christmas Bazaar.

We were raising money, not only for our needs but also for charities and for worthwhile projects. For example, AAWE participated in funding the monument, "*Parole Portée, à la mémoire des victimes du terrorisme*", which was an initiative of the association SOS Attentat. It can be visited today in the gardens at Les Invalides.

We were trying to keep up with changing times and juggle responsibilities. Many of us were working outside the home. We had an active Professional Women's group, a Professional Directory, and a Job Bank. Beth Austin continued the Working Women's Happy Hour. And we were already having debates about the name of our association, many of us wanting to replace "wives" with "women"!

I will always be grateful to my dear fellow members who devoted their time and energy during that period, to the benefit of the other members and for the betterment of the association.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1997-1999

President Peggy Plessas / **VP (Programs)** Susan Marchand & Karen Guetta, Sylvie Château-Colombier / **Second VP (Office)** Sandra Renard, Caroline Zach-Guillou / **Treasurer** Stephanie de La Rochefoucauld / **Recording Secretary** Irene Checler / **PR/Corresponding Secretary** Nan de Laubadère / **Membership** Karen Parnet & Nancy Brune, Nancy Janin / **Hospitality** Barbara Frankenhuis / **FAWCO Representative** Beverly Laflamme / **Nominations** Soheila Youssefi, Candice Johnson / *AAWE News Editor* Kristina Didouan / *By-Laws/Parliamentarian* Charlene Labro / *Christmas Bazaar* Sylvie Château-Colombier / *Citizenship* Michael Adler / *Education/Bilingualism* Gay Mazzanti, Melita Dawson-Campaignolle / *Working Women's Happy Hour* Beth Austin / *Children's Activities* Margaret Jenkins Ghiglione / *Professional Women's Network* Avivah Wittenberg-Cox, Susan Lucas-Conwell / *Advertising* Hayden Maître / *Seniors* Isabelle Michel

Kristina Didouan

PRESIDENT 1999-2001

AAWE's Fortieth Anniversary...let's not forget friendship

"... Thank you to our AAWE founders for recognizing that sometimes we just need 'someone to talk to'." – Kristina Didouan, President. *AAWE News*, October 2000.

AAWE celebrated its 40th birthday in 2001 with a gala luncheon (complete with baked Alaska) at Le Cercle National des Armées, and the announcement of the winners of the AAWE Special Award (Hilary Kaiser and Dianne Henning).

With over half the membership using email, we launched the weekly AAWE Announcements, AAWE eGroups Forum chat room, and our very first website. Accompanying this online push, VP Administration Caroline Zach-Guillou undertook a thorough reorganization of office files and administrative guidelines, as well as our compliance with French laws regarding 1901 associations.

More and more working women were joining our ranks. Thus the Career Corner Committee revamped AAWE's Job Bank – extending services to job seekers and offering knowledge-sharing workshops for those engaged in a career move or an entrepreneurial project. The success of the AAWE Professional Women's Network led to the Cercle Suédois becoming a fixed location for monthly luncheons with leading Franco-American businesswomen. AAWE also used the venue for events for the general membership hosting speakers such as André Bossard, ex-Secretary General of Interpol, who fascinated our group with his discussion on "Women and Crime".

The association engaged in a whirlwind of publishing efforts with Barbara Frankenhuis and Persis Gouirand devoting their energies towards AAWE's dessert cookbook *Let Them Eat Cake*, and Lois Beaudet and her team re-editing AAWE's *Living in France* (rechristened *AAWE Vital Issues*). AAWE's Professional Directory, brainchild of Advertising Chair Janis Kaas, not only became our second largest fundraising source, but a grapevine of insider recommendations on community professionals and businesses.

AAWE's Education Committee and WICE teamed up to produce "Which School is Right for My Child?" school fair, and talks were initiated with the Richard M. Hallock Foundation to discuss a full four-year scholarship to Oberlin College for the child of an AAWE member.

Our dream of a central Paris headquarters for AAWE has come true!

Thanks to Fondation Foch President (and AAWE member) Candy Berloty, AAWE benefitted from seven years of rent-free office space at the Hôpital Foch in Suresnes, enabling us to build up enough of a nest



egg to think of moving back into central Paris (as requested by a majority of our membership responding to "The Six Minute What I Want to get out of AAWE Survey" circulated in November 1999).

In March 2001 we received confirmation that AAWE would be allotted office space on the first floor of the Mona Bismarck Foundation, fulfilling our democratized dream of offering every AAWE member "two rooms with a view" overlooking the Eiffel Tower.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 1999-2001

President Kristina Didouan / **Vice President (Administration)** Caroline Zach-Guillou / **Vice President (Programs)** Sylvie Château-Colombier, Kathy Fabre / **Treasurer** Stephanie de la Rochefoucauld, Nan de Laubadère (pro tem), Nancy Janin / **Recording Secretary** Irene Checler / **Corresponding Secretary/PR** Barbara Frankenhuis, Elizabeth Debreu / **Membership** Nan de Laubadère / **Hospitality** Lucy Hervier / **FAWCO Representative** Virginia Pilpoul, Judy Marie / **Nominations** Katia Robinson, Terry Duchêne / **By-Laws/Parliamentarian** Charlene Labro / **Citizenship** Kathleen de Carbuccia, Michael Adler, Elizabeth Debreu / **Professional Women's Projects** Susan Lucas-Conwell / **Historian** Sally Benoist / **Special Events** Hayden Maitre / **Children's Committee** Mary-Ellen Wessinger / **Kid's Night Out** Deborah Berzon, Ann Leprière / **AAWE Bazaar** Corinne Slama & Kitty de Zwart / **Advertising** Janis Kaas / **AAWE News Editor** Margaret Ghiglione / **Development** Nancy Brune / **Education/Bilingualism** Melita Dawson-Campaignolle, Margaret Momber / **New Member Events** Sarah Colton / **Website** Stephanie de la Rochefoucauld / **Seniors** Isabelle Michel

Corinne Slama

PRESIDENT 2001-2003

I had the honor of being president from May 2001 to May 2003. After eight years in Suresnes, our office moved to the Mona Bismarck Foundation overlooking the Seine and the Eiffel tower. This milestone was initiated by the previous president Kristina Didouan and her board, and was organized and carried out with enthusiasm. Imagine! Moving back to Paris, to the elegant Foundation on the avenue de New York. For the first time, we had an elegant clubhouse where we could hold most activities.

The new board rolled up their sleeves and put AAWE through two years of what AAWE is all about. Twenty years later, when I look back on those two years what first comes to the surface is not a catalogue of events, but the essential role of every board member, every officer, and the dedicated volunteers. In other words people, each playing a part in the *partition* whose finality is to accompany us in our lives in France.

I was honored to have been alongside volunteers who helped events come to life. Amongst them, Nanci Rivière who with Kim Powell put together AAWE's first silent art auction, *Spring into Art*, gathering an amazing group of AAWE artists who generously donated one of their art works to the association.

Communications took some big steps. The AAWE website was up and running thanks to office assistant Dianne Henning. Kristina Didouan was back as AAWE News Editor, and the News page count took a leap from 28 to 40 pages. The one-page "Euro for your Thoughts" has today expanded to personal essays oftentimes spanning several pages.

Other highlights of my term: The Embassy office praised AAWE's work on citizenship law reform.



Caroline Zach-Guillou announced the AAWE Seniors' Oral History Project. By 2004, twenty interviews of our older members had been carried out and transcribed by our members.

Many others were looking after AAWE, as the association continued to organize Embassy teas, speakers, Bazaars, childrens' parties as well as being a source of useful information on life in France, with publications such as *Vital Issues*. We were only starting on emails and smart phones (I believe we still didn't have the latter), but we were getting the job done. I look back humbly but with some amusement as I now access AAWE's brilliant website.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2001-2003

President Corinne Slama / **VP Programs** Kitty de Zwart, Margaret Jenkins Ghiglione (pro-tem), Persis Gouirand / **VP Office** Margaret Ghiglione, Terry Duchêne / **Treasurer** Nancy Janin / **PR/Corresponding Sec** Carol Pouchol / **Recording Secretary** Barbara Wilmet / **Membership** Nan de Laubadère / **Hospitality** Hayden Maitre, Kristen Azuelos / **FAWCO Rep** Virginia Pilpoul / **Nominations** Persis Gouirand, Kristina Didouan / **By-Laws/Parliamentarian** Charlene Labro / **Seniors** Laura Dondey, Olive Lorsignol / **Special Events** Kristen Azuelos, Lynn Green-Rutanen / **Career Corner** Tina Heintz / **Publications** Margaret Jenkins Ghiglione, Carol Pouchol / **Archivist** Caroline Zach-Guillou / **Education/Bilingualism** Margaret Momber / **AAWE News Editor** Kristina Didouan / **New Members** Theresa Rousseau / **Advertising** Diane Cizeron / **Citizenship** Michael Adler / **Children's Committee** Deborah Berzon / **Historian** Kim Powell

9/11

A heart-stopping moment for the world occurred in New York City the morning of September 11, 2001 when two airplanes crashed into the 110-floor World Trade Center. Another plane hit the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and a fourth crashed in rural Pennsylvania. Nearly 3000 people lost their lives and more than 6000 others sustained injuries from this deadly terrorist act.

Honorary Member Adele Annis of The American Aid Society praised the generosity of AAWE members who answered her call to help their fellow Americans stranded in Paris. Members responded by putting up Americans they had never met, as best they could – even if it meant sleeping bags on the floor – offering solace to the traumatized travelers.

Messages poured into the AAWE office that day and in the days that followed. An October 2001 *News Flash* was dedicated to publishing the voices of AAWE members reacting to ... "the pain, the anger, the disbelief, the incredible hurt that all of us were left with," wrote AAWE President Corinne Slama.

For the first time in my life, I understand what it means to "feel American." **Ellen Lebel**

We longed to be "home," but there were no flights. We tried to call our family in the States but we couldn't get through. Having left my son at the NYU dorm, my immediate reaction was to find out if he was okay. All communications were down. He saw the two towers go down. I am still in the States stuck at the airport with thousands of others. **Sally Lecomte**

...here in Lyon...sympathy from French friends and neighbors. (I even received a phone call from the girl who washes and trims my dog). Do Americans back home know that the village churches tolled the bells at noon today? **Anne Mazin**

...The family has come together this weekend to be with each other, to come to terms with what has happened. **Marissa Roufosse**

...It is truly inspiring to receive support coming from Americans and Europeans. ... It is always difficult to express solidarity from afar, but AAWE seems to be doing it in true American style with courage and compassion. **Pam Perraud**

As a mother of daughters with Arabic names, I sincerely hope that violent reactions will not break out against innocent people. We all need to remain calm and wait, and discourage emotional reactions from others. **Betty Abugheida**

...My French family and friends have shown such solidarity and emotion and support that I felt closer than ever to my French entourage. Wednesday's Le Monde "Nous sommes tous américains" was written on the front page. **Pam Izard**

...It took me forever to reach my son in New York. ... On Thursday we were walking down Fifth Avenue. ... He was proudly pointing to the gorgeous skyline of "his" city. Now all he has to do is look up and see that nothing is the same. **Emmanuelle Le Bigre**

Honorary Member **Michael Adler** (living in Seattle) shared her thoughts from afar: ... *you might be aching to be here in the US to be 'solidaire' with everyone here, but please know that a piece of me is aching to be there with you – to be American in that special sense that we are American when we are 'there.'* *The world is very big and it is very small all at the same time. I miss and I love my AAWE family.*

Nan de Laubadère

PRESIDENT 2003-2005

Almost twenty years ago I was asked to be AAWE President but it seems as if it were yesterday. My husband and daughters were not particularly encouraging but my son, in college in the States and volunteering in his dorm and in a voter watch initiative, made it clear that I had inspired him to volunteer and I needed to buck up and say yes. I was horrible at remembering people's names and petrified of public speaking. I thought those two things would prevent me from taking on the job but I said yes and hope history will be kind to me. AAWE had settled into its new home in the Mona Bismarck Foundation only two years earlier and was an extremely "well-oiled machine." We were so lucky to be able to have meetings and events in what was Mona's glamorous bedroom with a view of the Eiffel Tower. My board was made up of an exceptional group of women, all of whom did their "jobs" superbly and allowed AAWE to continue running smoothly.

I was proud to represent AAWE in the community and at two wonderful FAWCO conferences. We published a 6th edition of the *AAWE Guide to Education in France* and the 2nd edition of the bilingual *Let Them Eat Cake* dessert cookbook (I was not in favor

of the title, finding it somewhat insulting to our host country, but democracy won the day). We had two concerts and "Teas" at the American Ambassador's residence in Paris; Joanne Dauphin was ordained Deacon at the American Cathedral; we held a Mois de la Photo exhibition in the AAWE Reception Room in which thirteen members participated, and office manager Dianne Henning superbly ran the office, the website and helped publish the postal mailed newsletter that back then came out six times a year.

We held two very successful Bazaars, thanks to dedicated volunteers and the exceptional guidance of Terry Duchêne, two annual garden parties, events for all interests and age groups, cocktail parties, outings, visits and more. There were well-attended discussions about caregiving from a distance, applying for French nationality, and marital regimes. My three kids answered questions that formed three fun "President's Messages" and still make me proud. I now live in the States most of the year but keep AAWE close in my heart, following online, through Zooms with friends and actively contributing to handicraft sales. I wish AAWE continued health and success.

Lawrence, Alexia and Lara with Nan. At the time: Lawrence, 20, Alexia, 15, Lara, 12.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2003-2005

President Nan de Laubadère / **VP Programs** Pat Danahey Janin / **VP Office** Nancy Hoca / **Treasurer** Barbara Sprzeuzkowski / **Membership** Diane Cizeron / **Hospitality** Kristen Azuelos, Maria Guarte-Pinay / **Recording Sec** Theresa Rousseau, Persis Gouirand / **PR/Corresponding Secretary** Nancy Janin / **FAWCO Rep** Caroline Zach-Guillou / **Nominations** Beth Austin, Theresa Rousseau / **By-Laws/Parliamentarian** Charlene Labro / **Seniors** Olive Lorisignol, Joy Margerit / **Publications** Janis Kaas / **Historian** Barbara Wilmet / **Special Events** Kristen Azuelos, Lynn Green Rutanen / **Archivist/Oral History Project** Caroline Zach-Guillou / **AAWE News Editor** Kristina Didouan / **Children's Activities** Jan Browman Barnes, Jill Jacquot / **E-Advertising** Joanne Combes / **Display Advertising** Andrea Lamar-saude / **Education/Bilingualism** Sallie Chaballier / **Career Corner** Tina Heintz / **Citizenship** Kathleen de Carbuccia / **Bazaar** Terry Duchêne / **New Member Events** Theresa Rousseau / **Special Awards** Beth Austin

Kim Powell

PRESIDENT 2005-2008

During Kim Powell's three years as AAWE president, she oversaw important occasions celebrating the club's 45th anniversary, and the Christmas Bazaar's 30th anniversary, evidence of the steadfastness of our members.

"With such a rich history and solid foundation, it is not a difficult task to pave the way for the future," she wrote in her first Message from the President.

At the end of her tenure – the years just flew by, she said – Kim looked back at successes not only in established events and committees, but also new or revived initiatives such as EWE Nite (Ex-Wives of Europeans), Mom's Night Out, the establishment of the Hallock Award, and club members' first participation in La Parisienne (6km run for breast cancer). Special interest groups were formed around quilting, sketching and photography, and Block Parties were revived!

The arts received a lot of attention during her tenure. There were exhibitions at the AAWE office of the works of many members. Kathy Giannini, Catherine Julian, Aviva Brooks Kruger, Lindsey de Ovies, Peggy Paul-Cavallier, Françoise Amic, Kathleen Marshall and Stacey Jaco McMahon to name a few, as well as photographers Sally Benoist, Dianne Henning, Ann Leprière, Ellen Moinard, Ellie Sigler, and Kim herself. And the Quilting group got its recognition with an exhibition in May 2008 in which Ellie Sigler (busy woman!), Julie Nauman, Nan de Laubadère, Carol Ann Komly, Marianne Calegari Hansen, Terry Duchêne, and Kathy Auzas participated.

One day Kim found five little boxes at the office, wrapped and ready for presentation. They turned out to be "Union Franco-Américaine" medals from the Monnaie de Paris that had been created for AAWE's Distinguished Service Award established in 1986 to honor members who made exceptional contributions. She duly presented them to Nancy Hoca "for her discretion, professionalism and joyful spirit as VP Administration," Barbara Sprzeuzkouski for leadership and guidance as AAWE Treasurer, Pat Danahey-Janin for her role in public relations representing AAWE in the community and Carolyn White-Lesieur and Janis Kaas "for their significant roles in establishing and making our publications the community resources they are today."

Kim was active in many different organizations at the time in Paris and held many positions within AAWE, but found the job of President the most rewarding.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2005-2008

President Kim Powell / **Vice President Office** Nancy Hoca, Erika Chabbi / **Vice President Programs** Carol Pouchol, Hilary Baron-Bessières (VP Calendar Coordinator) / **Vice President Events** Kim Petyt / **PR/Corresponding Secretary** Pat Danahey Janin / **Recording Secretary** Alice Grevet, Nancy Sayer / **Treasurer** Barbara Sprzeuzkouski, Deyi Tcherdakoff / **FAWCO Rep** Nan de Laubadère / **Membership** Sallie Chaballier / **Hospitality** Maria Guarte-Pinay, Persis Gouirand / **Nominations** Beth Austin, Janis Kaas, Wendy Leyland / **By-Laws/Parliamentarian** Charlene Labro / **Children's Events** Geraldine Borde-Ruderman, Michele Frédéric / **AAWE News Editor** Sarah Colton / **Citizenship** Kathleen de Carbuccia / **Hospitality** Persis Gouirand / **New Member Events** Liz Lenfantin / **Bazaar** Liz Lenfantin, Ann Leprêtre / **Seniors** Olive Lorisgnol, Betty Abugheida / **Art Exhibit Coordinator** Lindsey de Ovies Vermeulen / **Education/Bilingualism** Helen Shavit / **Working Women's Happy Hour** Beth Austin / **E-Advertising** Joanne Combes / **Children's Parties** Jill Jacquot / **Display Advertising** Andrea Lamarsaude / **Cultural Events** Catherine Manos, Julie Nauman / **New Member Events** Hilah Smith-Kato, Theresa Rousseau / **Career Corner** Sandra de la Taille

Sallie Chaballier

PRESIDENT 2008-2010

It was both an honor and a big responsibility to be elected President of AAWE in 2008. I had previously served on the AAWE Board as Education/Bilingualism Chair and Membership Chair, but as President I quickly learned that I needed to have a 360-degree view of the association. I took office as AAWE was nearing the end of its first half-century and I was very mindful both of the club's history and its future. Before leaving office, I made sure to lay the groundwork for AAWE's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2011.

Setting goals and planning ahead were two important concepts I had learned from a workshop for FAWCO Club Presidents when I represented AAWE as incoming President at the FAWCO Conference of 2008. Both principles were to prove invaluable during my term. I was amazed to learn more than I ever could have imagined about finances, as economic worries for members as well as the club loomed large after the financial crisis of 2008.

One of my major priorities was creating a Strategic Planning Committee (initially called Long-Term Planning) to establish a framework for looking ahead. This committee, expertly chaired by Pat Danahey Janin, conducted a SWOT analysis of the association, surveying the club's strengths and weaknesses. The committee also crafted the Mission Statement and Vision Statement which still serve the association today.

Budgetary concerns inspired the Board to be creative and innovative in an effort to retain membership levels and interest without raising dues. Thanks to a dedicated Board and volunteers who ensured a regular schedule of events designed to appeal to our varied cohorts of members, AAWE ran like clockwork. Our elegant reception room enabled us to continue to have exhibitions of members' art, sculpture and quilts, as well as monthly happy hours.

A few highlights:

- A celebration of Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with Pam Perraud;
- A Regional Meeting for FAWCO Region 3;
- A citizenship evening with AAWE founder Phyllis Michaux, Michael Adler and Kathleen de Carbuccia;
- Representing AAWE at the "Americans in Paris" event at the Jardin d'Acclimatation;
- Creating a Facebook page for the club and a private Facebook group for members, bringing AAWE into the world of social media;
- I was honored to represent AAWE at Memorial Day observances and community events, and I continued to coordinate Paris College Day;
- We were sad to lose office manager Missy Leiby but welcomed Christopher D'Arcy, the first (and only) man to hold the job;
- A particular delight for me was the visit of translators Larissa Volokhonskaya and Richard Pevear to the AAWE Bookniks to discuss their brilliant translation of *Anna Karenina*.
- One of the high points of my term was the Fun(d)raising Auction in 2009 which put the club's finances back in the black. This festive event, held at Kathleen de Carbuccia's elegant apartment, was the brainchild of Olive Lorsignol, who had come up with the wonderful idea of the Bazaar decades earlier. I had the pleasure of awarding Olive with Honorary Membership in AAWE at the end of my term.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008-2010

President Sallie Chaballier / **VP Administration** Erika Chabbi / **VP Events** Danielle Johnson / **VP Program Coordinator** Hilary Baron-Bessières / **Treasurer** Deyi Tcherdakoff, Wendy Leyland / **Recording Secretary** Shelli Chavet / **PR/Corresponding Secretary** Kerry Halferty Hardy / **Membership** Lisa Aidan / **Hospitality** Kit Desjacques / **FAWCO Rep** Nan de Laubadère / **Nominations** Lynn Green-Rutanen, Patsy Gorlier / **By-Laws/Parliamentarian** Charlene Labro / **AAWE News Editor** Sarah Colton / **Advertising** Casey Oakley / **Art Exhibit Coordinator** Lindsey de Ovies / **Bazaar** Liz Lenfantin, Claudia Roux / **Children's Events** Michele Frédéric, Geraldine Borde-Ruderman / **Career Corner** Jessica Abarca Couderc / **Citizenship** Kathleen de Carbuccia / **Education/Bilingualism** Helen Shavit / **Historian** Jane Marion / **Long Term Planning** Pat Danahey Janin / **New Member Events** Lucy Hervier / **Seniors** Olive Lorsignol, Betty Abugheida / **Assistant Treasurer** Deyi Tcherdakoff

Wendy Leyland

PRESIDENT 2010-2012

My first Message from the President summarized the work of the president and board as "Celebration, Security, and Enjoyment": "Celebration" referring to the festivities for the upcoming 50th anniversary; "Security" to the planning for new, sustainable, and increased revenue sources; and "Enjoyment" to the pleasure that members take in their friendships and activities.

I felt very privileged to have served as AAWWE President from 2010-2012, during our association's 50th anniversary year. Together with the wonderful planning committee composed of numerous past presidents and other volunteers, we organized three major events throughout the year. In April 2011, a Gala event at the Hôtel de Talleyrand with over 300 guests started off the year. Highlights from the evening included a keynote address by Susan Tolson, wife of the US Ambassador to France, and a speech by our Founding Member, Phyllis Michaux. Many of the original Founding Members were also in attendance, which was quite special.

In the autumn of 2011, we had a luncheon at the elegant salons of the Cercle Républicain with guest speaker author Diane Johnson [*Le Divorce*] and a final evening get-together at the Mona Bismarck Foundation reception room in December to mark the end of the year of celebrations.

Unfortunately, 2011 was also a year of downsizing. We had to move our office to a smaller space at the Foundation, and the Bazaar moved to the American Church (from 700m² of space to 250.)

Several other activities to help commemorate our 50th anniversary theme of "Women – Accomplishments – Community" included an anniversary history video, an exhibition featuring the recipients of the FAWCO Education Awards, and the presentation of the Phyllis Michaux Award 2011 to two members: Aimée Froom Lévy-Thiebaut to work on her book of photographs of the Luxembourg Gardens, and painter Kathleen Marshall.

Apart from these events, AAWWE continued with its regular annual program calendar, including the second annual AAWWE Auction fundraiser in the summer. This event was first organized in 2009 by the venerable longtime member, past-president and finally Honorary Member, Olive Lorsignol, in order to close



Wendy with Ambassador Rivkin's wife Susan Tolson at AAWWE's 50th Anniversary Celebration Party

a much-needed funding gap in our association's finances. Auctions continued for the next few years and created a wonderfully fun way to highlight members' skills, interests, and giving spirit, while raising funds.

Other notable highlights: Josh O'Donovan replaced Christopher D'Arcy as office manager. Sarah Colton handed over the AAWWE News editorship to Jane Mobbille, writer, editor, coach. From AAWWE News, there was Pat Danahey Janin's three-part series on Volunteering, and a four-part series on Citizenship Milestones by Michael Adler and Kathleen de Carbuccia.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2010-2012

President Wendy Leyland / **VP Administration** Erika Chabbi, Sue Orsoni / **VP Calendar Coordinator** Hilary Baron-Bessières, Patsy Gorlier / **VP Events** Danielle Johnson / **Treasurer** Beth Austin / **Membership** Liz Lenfantin, Rosemary Cheylus / **PR/Corresponding Sec** Lise Ducrey / **Recording Secretary** Shelli Chavet, Nan de Laubadère / **Hospitality** Lisa Aidan, Liz Lenfantin / **FAWCO Rep** Sallie Chaballier / **Nominations** Milla Darcy, Deyi Tcherdakoff / **By-Laws/Parliamentarian** Charlene Labro / **Career Corner** Jessica Abarca Couderc / **Seniors** Betty Abugheida, Olive Lorsignol / **Children's Events** Karin Benguigui, Marie Bogataj / **Fundraising** Susan Boullier, Elizabeth Chase Rochette / **Cultural Events** Leslie Charbonnel / **Strategic Planning** Pat Danahey Janin / **Citizenship** Kathleen de Carbuccia / **AAWE News Editor** Jane Mobbille / **Advertising** Jennifer Hobson / **Bazaar Chair** Ann Leprêtre / **Historian** Jane Marion, Deborah Lillian / **Publications** Helen Shavit / **Education/Bilingualism** Jude Smith, Denise Van Veen / **Bazaar** Wendy Stern, Marianne Hansen

The original AAWWE members, at the 50th anniversary celebration

Left: Barbara Marcovich, Phyllis Michaux (founder) and Vivienne Fortier, (with Patsy Gorlier and Peter Kenton, standing behind)
Right: Ruth Chartier, Isabelle Michel and Judith Marie



Jill Jacquot

PRESIDENT 2012-2014



It was a privilege and a joy, as well as a challenge to serve as President of AAWE from 2012-2014. I say privilege and joy because I served with a group of intelligent, well-spoken, motivated women who shared one goal: the successful running of this incredible association. And they knew how to do it well! I often referred to my role as Orchestra Conductor, just making sure that all the talent we had was working together: working toward keeping AAWE the home away from home it is for so many of us, ensuring that what members wanted they could find, and ensuring the longevity of AAWE through fundraising activities. Certainly, my experience on this front was not unique, though very special to me.

I say challenging because during my time as President, we tackled a few issues that had been around for a while. We looked into the possibility of changing our status to *intérêt général* so that we could offer tax deductions for donations. A question which had been lingering, and we finally managed to put to rest. We also clarified our financial position with an accountant specialized in French associative law.

My proudest achievement as the "Conductor" of the Board was the changing of our By-laws to liberate us from the word "wives." There was a strong desire to modernize AAWE's image and sense of being at the same time. Though it made sense in our original By-laws to emphasize the need to be a "wife of a European," both laws and society had changed. We wanted to keep the uniqueness of AAWE's membership of women who have primarily made their homes and their lives in Europe, specifically France, while recognizing that women had the right to be members regardless of their marital status.

Changing our By-laws to include as regular members any American woman living or with the right to

live in France long-term was the first step to being able to change our name from the Association of American Wives of Europeans to the Association of American Women in Europe. This step was taken by the next Board, presided by Pamela Combastet. I am very proud to have been a part of this very important step in our history.

Other noteworthy activities and achievements during my term: A fundraising auction at the Hotel Vanssay, headed by Auction Chair Grace Wong-Folliet and her team, earning a stunning sum of 16,400€ for the club. Senior lunches continued with a new venue graciously offered by Cobi Camberlein in her home. A writing group Write Now! got underway, and more and more there was a focus on citizenship and societal concerns such as gender violence, US Laws on tax reporting, and citizenship for our grandchildren. Editors Helen Shavit, Jude Smith and Denise van Veen presided over the 8th edition of the *AAWE Guide to Education in France*.

New Initiative

The **FRIDAY MISSION LUNCH** Program was started in 2013 through the efforts of AAWE Vice President Sue Orsoni, and specifically Leslie Charbonnel, who took on the responsibility of planning, shopping and cooking each fifth Friday in a month with co-chef Liz Lenfantin and a group of five AAWE members. This program was financially supported by AAWE and the synagogue Kehilat Gesher in collaboration with the American Cathedral. The idea was to provide a hot lunch in a welcoming and convivial setting for those in need. Approximately 60-65 individuals are served at tables set with real silverware, plates, etc. No one is ever refused a hot meal; those who do not have a seat, are given a takeaway meal.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2012-2014

President Jill Jacquot / **VP Administration** Sue Orsoni, Milla Darcy / **VP Events** Liz Lenfantin / **VP Calendar Coordinator** Patsy Gorlier / **Treasurer** Beth Austin, Wendy Stern / **Recording Secretary** Nan de Laubadère, Beatrice Desper / **PR/Corresponding Secretary** Lise Ducrey / **Membership** Rosemary Cheylus / **Hospitality** Mary Brodbeck / **FAWCO Rep** Sallie Chaballier, Deborah Lillian / **Nominations** Nancy Le Balc'h, Leslie Charbonnel / **By-Laws/Parliamentarian** Kristina Didouan / **AAWE News Editor** Jane Mobbille / **Auction** Grace Wong Folliet / **Bazaar** Pamela Combastet / **Children's Events** Marie Bogataj, Karin Benguigui, Gail Bourner / **Citizenship** Kathleen de Carbucia / **Cultural Events** Leslie Charbonnel / **Education/Bilingualism** Jude Smith, Denise Van Veen / **Historian** Deborah Lillian / **Publications** Helen Shavit / **Seniors** Persis Gouirand / **Strategic Planning** Jane Marion, Wendy Stern, Sallie Chaballier, Wendy Leyland

Pamela Combastet

PRESIDENT 2014-2016

What would I say about my presidency? I'm the daughter of AAWE member Rhunette Terrasson and grew up with the community, the pride and awareness that being an AAWE member gave her.

It was my honor to have been asked to be AAWE president and to follow in the footsteps of the many admirable women who preceded me.

But truth be told, it wasn't always easy. I think we were fully "tested" as a club throughout the year of 2015.

We lived through the loss of our beloved founder, Phyllis Michaux, on June 29, 2015. We experienced the pain and fear of terrorist attacks in Paris that same year, first at the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* on January 7, and then the multiple shootings at the Bataclan concert hall and throughout Paris on November 13. Following these horrible events, we realized that Americans might be targets. And yet here we are, as we continue to honor Phyllis's legacy.

We also had some fun during those years! Our fundraisers were always great places to shop, and just after the Bataclan shootings, I remember a rousing chorus of *La Marseillaise* during that year's Holiday Bazaar at the Members Private Evening.

During my tenure, the Seniors took charge of a fundraiser and organized an auction that was held at a member's very large apartment – another incredible chance for some great buys!

But please do not think it was all about shopping! More important, and the one thing I am proudest of, is that we changed the name of our association: rather than remain "Wives of Europeans" we became the Association of American Women in Europe. My Board and I were able to build on the careful and solid steps taken by earlier presidents and, with the support of the AAWE membership, to change our name.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014-2016

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That name change best reflects who we are and how we have grown and changed through our years together. It also maintains and nourishes our deep, thriving commitment to each other as women, and to the country we live in.

During these years, the *AAWE News* continued to inform members about pertinent issues which directly impacted many, like citizenship for our grandchildren and the ever-growing concern and confusion over US tax and compliance laws.

One noteworthy *AAWE News* issue was dedicated to our children's school life and education (March/April 2016), including an informative essay about bullying and one mother's three-part moving essay about her child's autism. Under leader Beatrice Desper and later me, the Write Now! group thrived, contributing more personal essays and poems to the *AAWE News*. These included tough issues on violence towards women and domestic abuse. The Refugee Task Force was also started during the 2015 refugee crisis, and AAWE continues to be involved.

New Initiative

CULTURAL EVENTS: The city of Paris offers a rich bouquet of cultural wonders. Over the years members have been treated regularly to organized visits and guided tours. A few noteworthy outings: the Salons de Réception at the Mairie de Paris, the Salon Dorée of the Banque de France, the Hôtel Lauzun on île St Louis, the American Ambassador's Residence, French fashion houses and their sublime artisan suppliers, the National Sèvres porcelain Factory, the Paris Mosque, a Tea Ceremony in a Japanese garden. Leslie Charbonnel has been organizing these visits for the past decade, taking over from members Marissa Roufosse, Eve Bark, Hayden Maître, Kristen Azuelos, Lynn Green-Rutanen, Catherine Manos and Julie Neuman.

Deborah Lillian

PRESIDENT 2016-2018

"Whew – hard to believe it's been a year since we sat together in this very room and voted to change our name. Happy Anniversary, American Women in Europe!" Those were my opening remarks at the 2017 Annual General Meeting, as I summarized the first year of my presidency.

With the new name in place, we turned our attention to rebranding AAWE. The goal was to consolidate the many facets of AAWE, as well as to create a new momentum following the name change. A committee was formed to define our image. Working with a noted international branding company, we arrived at a carefully formulated position, image, and new logo with its focus on biculturalism.

A new name and a new image called for a new website. Again, we worked with an expert to create a beautiful site that reflects us admirably, while echoing the marketing position we'd arrived at.

I'm a big fan of FAWCO, so I was delighted by several achievements during my second year as President. AAWE had a record representation at the Interim Meeting in The Hague (with our Nan de Laubadère winning best costume at Foundation Night!). Tammy Mayer received a FAWCO Foundation Education award, and Claire Mathijsen's project, the Sergoek Vocational Center in Kenya, was the recipient of a Development Grant. Ann Salsbury and Clara Siverson of the Refugee Task Force held a workshop. FAWCO Conference veterans asserted it was the "best workshop ever".

One of our most exciting accomplishments during my term was the forming of our partnership with the Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute. All our publications will be in the library's holdings (see p 43).

Smaller gatherings in members' homes continued with interesting speakers such as feminist author and historian Marilyn Yalom (*How the French Invented Love*) who spoke at Julia Fainsilber's.

Over 40 women from AAWE, WICE, and the Smith Club gathered after the March 29, 2017 passing of our beloved member Olive Lorsignol to share their memories of Olive, known for her charm, warmth, vision, generosity, and wisdom. The tributes comprise an album, *Celebrating Olive Lorsignol*, available on the AAWE website.

A heartfelt article in *AAWE News* called on the children of members to become members themselves. At last count (Spring 2020) there were 17 members of AAWE children. Speaking of children, at least two couples we know of with AAWE moms have tied the marital knot!

Personal essays continued to be an integral part of the *News*. Among the many interesting articles in Editor Jane Mobbille's *News* was Janis Kaas's three-part Reflections on Life in the US, her thoughtful testimony of the many pros and cons of returning "home" to live.



New Initiative

In 2018, the **"SPIRIT OF OLIVE" AWARD** was established to perpetuate the memory of AAWE Past President and Honorary Member Olive Lorsignol, recognizing her decades-long service and inspiration for our association. This award acknowledges the grassroots volunteerism of an individual member who, following in the footsteps of Olive, has demonstrated exceptional "beyond the call of duty" service for AAWE during the year. The timing of the award and choice of the recipient is proposed by the AAWE President and approved by the Board. Award winners to date: Ann Leprêtre 2018, Rosemary Cheylus 2019, Tammy Mayer 2020, Andrea Lamarsaude 2021.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2016-2018

President Deborah Lillian / **VP Administration** Beth Austin, Leslie Charbonnel / **VP Events** Ellen Terrien, Susan Maine-Descamp / **Treasurer** Barbara Sprzeuzkouski / **PR/Corresponding Sec** Denise Pruvost / **Recording Sec** Patricia di Bartolomeo, Thais Palluau / **Membership** Lauren Weinberg, Stephanie Jalinos / **Membership Mentoring** Amy Dutailly, Ann Leprêtre (pro tem) / **FAWCO Rep** Karen Darmon, Michelle Parker (pro tem) / **Nominations** Helen Shavit, Liz Lenfantin, Sarah Gramer (pro tem) / **Parliamentarian** Kristina Didouan / **Volunteers** Janine Brimbail / **Citizenship** Kathleen de Carbuccia / **Cultural Events** Leslie Charbonnel / **Web Editor, Asst. Treasurer** Beatrice Desper / **Seniors** Julia Fainsilber, Jane Marion / **Architectural Highlights** Danielle Johnson / **Historian** Ann Leprêtre / **AAWE News Editor** Jane Mobbille / **Calendar Coordinator** Meredith Presson / **Children's Events** Clara Siverson & Sarah Gramer / **Speakers Bureau** Emma Skoble / **Education/Bilingualism** Jude Smith, Denise van Veen / **Bazaar** Jill Jacquot, Pamela Combastet / **Professional Networking** Susan Maine-Descamp / **Strategic Planning** Sallie Chaballier

Clara Siverson

PRESIDENT 2018-2020

Being president of AAWE was an incredible experience.

So much was happening around us. There was a US election coming up, and 2020 was also the 100th anniversary of American women's right to vote, which FAWCO encouraged us to celebrate.

Impacting AAWE directly in 2019 were the *gilets jaunes* marching in Paris, disrupting our Winter Festival – but not closing it down! And in March of 2020 the first Covid lockdown began.

During those years our clubhouse remained at the Mona Bismarck Foundation as it transitioned and was renamed the American Center for Art and Culture. My first challenge as president was to ensure that we maintained a strong friendship, aligning our cross-cultural cohesion with the direction of the ACAC. My other challenge centered upon engaging “younger members,” and increasing our membership numbers.

On a personal level, I directed my energies towards encouraging AAWE's humanitarian involvement by combining our energies with FAWCO. Internationally-minded Americans need to see the benefits that they can draw from the voice FAWCO gives us at the UN.

Rosemary Cheylus organized the “Little Black Dress Party” fundraiser in June 2019. She also chaired the 2018 and 2019 fundraising Bazaars, now renamed “Winter Festival”, working well beyond her job description. In recognition of her efforts, Rosemary received AAWE's “Spirit of Olive” Award for Volunteer Service.

Jude Smith, Helen Shavit and their Education and Publication committees spent the better part of these two years revising *Beyond the Bac*. Citizenship Chair Kathleen de Carbuccia organized several meetings in cooperation with AARO and with the US Consulate in Paris on various citizenship issues.



New Initiative

The **AAWE REFUGEE TASK FORCE** was founded in 2016 in a spirit of generosity and a desire to enrich the lives of others while also enriching our own lives. Today, the Task Force provides a forum for cross-organizational information-sharing, allowing resources to be quickly identified to fill the evolving needs of those arriving from distant, and often dangerous places, to begin new lives in our community. Besides AAWE, participating associations include Every Child is a Gem, Compassion Without Borders, Association Pierre Claver, American Library in Paris, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Paris, American Church in Paris, American Cathedral, FAWCO.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018-2020

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Regan du Closel with financial and material donations packed and ready for refugees in the north of France.

Beth Austin

PRESIDENT 2020-PRESENT

The reason I volunteer is to help organizations work better, so when I was asked to be President, my goal was clear: bring about renewal for AAWE which will then create member sustainability and help us attain financial sustainability.

The pandemic pushed us to think outside of the box and adapt very fast. Clara brilliantly led the way to Google Hangouts and Zoom, helping members step into their new reality of a club online. The Telephone Tree that spring, and the volunteer survey reminded us all how much the personal touch resonated with our members. Creating connection amongst members and spreading the love encouraged current members to stay, and the positive buzz attracted new members.

To create Connection, AAWE stayed "open" during summer 2020. We started the Career Change support group as well as the new Younger Wonders group and the BBX Sisterhood (Baby Boomers and Gen X) group in order to federate members for the 25-50 and the 45-to-65-year olds through "live and immediate" connection on WhatsApp. Both Children's Events and a new Telephone tree started up in spring 2021. Online content was very creative: speaker series, coffee meet-ups, "See You at Six". Of special note is the 60th anniversary virtual party which over 135 members attended. Creating a fun virtual party was a big challenge, but the team's hard work, digging through our archives and finding just the right photos, then finding the right songs, gathering 30-second birthday-wish videos from our past presidents and from our community partners...well, it all came together! Truly everyone who attended had a good time and appreciated being able to relive six decades of memories.

For Outreach, we renewed contact with the US Consulate, co-sponsoring with AARO. We worked with AWG American Women's Group and WIC Women's International Club for "Les Historiennes", and shared the Myth of Racial Color-Blindness with Message. We worked with AWG and CESC, the Council for the English-Speaking Community, on finance issues for non-profits, and negotiated a win-win partnership with the American Library, lowering their fees for our members.

On Professionalization, we obtained GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) consent from all members for data and images. We created a Volunteer database, used Google Workspace to store board documents and Gmail addresses for board members, established a good practices document on our 1901 non-taxable status, created a database on codes and passwords for our media and apps. We also did some parliamentary housekeeping, including creating more latitude to do needed membership drives.

In Development, "Les Historiennes" series has been a delight and a financial bonus. The 9th edition

New Initiative

The **AAWE TELEPHONE TREE** is a volunteer initiative introduced in 2020 by Barbara Ginsbach during the Covid confinement intended to reach out with a "...how are you?" to all members of the club. The telephone tree was a huge success, enjoyed by both on both sides of the telephone line. It is a great way to connect with different members, learn more about the history of the club, and brighten someone's day!

of the *AAWE Guide to Education in France* generated advertising revenue. The online boutique for Handicrafts and AAWE merchandise partially replaced the Winter Festival.

George Floyd's death made us realize we had work to do. Some AAWE members participated in a "Rewire your Racial Consciousness" course. A "Welcoming Diversity" work group started monthly meetings. A Diversity & Inclusion Chair was added to the board. AAWE wants to make sure that all are welcomed and will feel welcome within our club, from all backgrounds, from all identities, from all different perspectives.

On Communications, we had to learn how to "brand" our activities with fun logos. We created two smashing new postcards. Our public presence on our Instagram and FB pages increased through regularly listing our member activities. *Inspirelle* and *Connexion* newspaper ran articles on our 60th year. The Unitarian Universalist church which runs the Rewire program featured our Paris group on its blog.

Lastly, two wonderful volunteers, Andrea Lamarsaude and Silvia Sabino, designed and built a new updated website. It is a treasure trove of information on all aspects of AAWE for members and the public. It is constantly kept up to date by our Web Manager Andrea Lamarsaude, and is the space for members to find everything AAWE in one place.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020-2022

President Beth Austin / **VP Administration** Rebecca Park / **VP Programs** Jill Clément / **Treasurer** Jennifer Hua / **Recording Secretary** Barbara Ginsbach, Janine Brimbal (pro tem), Lillian Rollins / **Membership** Rosemary Cheylus / **Communications Secretary** Nadine Flamenbaum, Claire Simon, Meghan McCarroll (pro tem) / **Development** Jeri Yoshida, Pauline Lemasson / **Diversity & Inclusion** Jane MacDonald / **FAWCO Rep** Michelle Parker / **Nominations** Pamela Combastet, Sarah Gramer / **By-Laws/Parliamentarian** Jill Jacquot / **AAWE News Editor** Jane Mobbille / **Archivist** Barbara Sprzeuzkouski / **Calendar Coordinator** Leslie Charbonnel / **Children's Events** Amy Dutailly & Tonya Love-Lamorte / **Citizenship** Kathleen de Carbuccia / **Cultural Events** Leslie Charbonnel & Gillian Denavit / **Higher Education** Jude Smith / **Membership Mentoring** Lucy Hervier / **Professional Networking** Sara Gori / **Publications** Helen Shavit / **Seniors** Cobi Camberlein & Barbara Wilmet / **Speakers Bureau** Emma Skoble / **Volunteers** Erin Moffett / **Younger Wonders** Eilean Ellison / **Web Managers** Andrea Lamarsaude & Silvia Sabino, Andrea Lamarsaude

AAWE News

The very first written interclub communication appeared in 1962 soon after AAWE's founding, a much-appreciated mimeographed sheet simply referred to as the "Bulletin". Over the next six decades, the *AAWE News* remained a constant in terms of keeping us together. Herewith, reminiscences from four past editors:

As a child, it was my ambition to one day be a journalist (I wrote a newsletter for the family describing the activities of the family cat and the antics of my little sister.) In 1980, my dream came true when I became the Editor of the *AAWE News*, collaborating with three other members and an illustrator to put out a monthly issue informing members of upcoming events as well as reporting on past ones. The first newsletters were pretty much a one-woman, back-to-kindergarten operation; I put together the pages by cutting and pasting articles both typed and handwritten, then delivering the pages to our printer in Asnières, to proofread the finished proofs a few days later. The final copies were then delivered to our office in Suresnes, and our volunteer mailing team took over, stuffing and sealing and taking the copies to the post office (this much I guess has not changed). I really loved this job, and years later I decided to tackle new technology with AAWE's very first "Senior Cyber-sheet" with news of interest to our older members.

PERSIS GOUIRAND, EDITOR, 1980-87

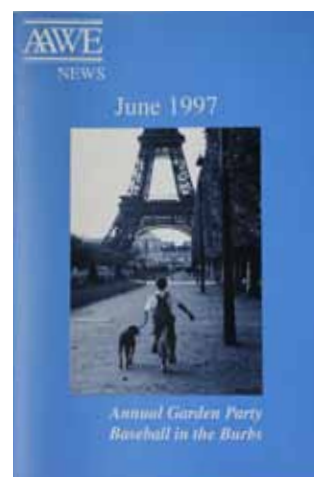
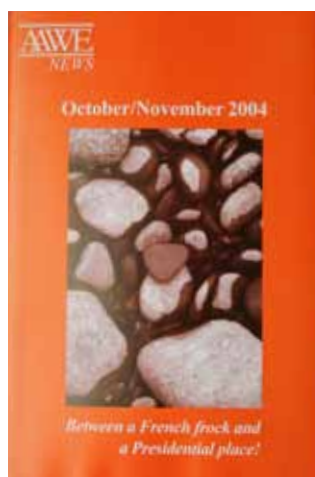
I have lots of emotions attached to my first stint as *AAWE News* Editor. I had just returned to Paris after seven years in the States, my husband was re-building his business, and I was helping my three daughters navigate re-entry to the French school system. AAWE had just taken a "big leap" by purchasing its first computer, a Power Mac, a choice guided by the geekiest of our team, former *News* Editor Susan Hess-Logeais. We could now type articles and transmit them to "disquettes" which fit into a slit on our computers. Our data could be transported by physically carrying these discs across town in our handbags (like state

secrets) to be inserted into the AAWE office computer. In terms of layout, we would first print and then, using the same ol' trick former *News* Editor Persis Gouirand and I had developed years earlier, we would hold the cut-out articles down with our elbows and fix them in place with scotch-tape. (Note: etymological origin of the term, "cut and paste".)

During editorial meetings, everybody brought something to eat, there was always at least one bottle of wine, and we got the job done. Articles were about our events, scholarships, charity recipients, the celebration of AAWE's 35th anniversary (April 1996), and a few rubrics we made up as we went along, including "Citizenship News", and a "Miss Manners" column by Harriet Welty Rochefort. Though working hard, we also had time for all sorts of silliness, including a monthly award for the person or persons who made the biggest mistake in a given issue. Thinking back, I realize we were doing what women have always done, helping each other survive, and making a community out of it.

SARAH COLTON, EDITOR, 1995-1997, 2006-2010

Although appreciated, our rent-free offices in Suresnes were difficult to reach for many members, thus our newsletter became the glue holding our association together, "the clubhouse you can hold in your hand". With nine issues per year, we hired a part-time layout coordinator, Dianne Henning, an AAWE member who after volunteering for the task discovered her hidden talents for computer technology and graphic design. As more members went online, we began the weekly e-announcements to publicize upcoming events. This made room in the *News* for more generalized articles such as the "Question of the Month" where we broached the sacred to the profane, ranging from "How did you meet your Frenchman?", to "What do you think about the French cleaning tool – the serpillière?" (The amount of socio-psychological philosophising one could glean from the humblest of subjects was amazing.) We were able to attract a really crack editorial team (including Luciana Tomasi,



the best copy editor I have ever encountered, truly a "proofer of the proof-readers"). Some of the same proof-readers are still wielding their red pens today.

KRISTINA DIDOUAN, EDITOR, 1997-99, 2001-2006

When Sarah Colton asked me to take on the job of Editor of AAWE News, it didn't take me very long to say "yes". I explained why in my very first Editorial in January 2011:

"For years, as soon as the AAWE News arrived, I dropped whatever I was doing to read it cover to cover, unable to stop, like eating a whole quart of chocolate mint ice cream in one sitting. Once finished, the News stayed in my reading pile until it was replaced by the next issue – my security blanket – within arm's reach."

For the past decade, I have worked hand in hand with Production Editor Josh O'Donovan, and three Photo Editors, Deborah Lillian, Ania Audi, and Chantal Mistral-Bernard, assisted by five section editors, a regular contributor, and the proofreading team. Today's AAWE News is a members-only quarterly

magazine running from 52 to 60 pages, printed inexpensively on glossy paper in A5 format. The majority of members receive the News in paper format; a minority receives it digitally. Past issues of the News are available in the Members-Only section of our website. My primary goal has been to create an inviting communication tool which reflects the dynamism of the club and contributes to a feeling of belonging and participation among members. Between 60 and 70 members – (i.e. 12 to 15 percent of our membership) – are directly involved. As I have said before:

"...the News is a platform to share AAWE's vision and talent. And it is on paper! With a shelf life, a distinct smell, and glossy pages to touch and turn. The News is a feast for the eyes that doesn't involve incessant blue backlight, but rather the soft light of a dove-grey Paris sky. And may I add that you can read it safely in the bathtub and access it deep in a metro tunnel!"

JANE MOBILLE, EDITOR, 2011-PRESENT



Preparing the AAWE Collection: Sally Benoist, Jane Marion, Julia Fainsilber, Kristina Didouan, Caroline Zach-Guillou, Helen Shavit, and Carolyn White-Lesieur

AAWE Archives at Harvard's "Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study"

AAWE holds a wealth of publications documenting the lives and accomplishments of American women residing in France. In January 2019, we entered into a legal agreement with Harvard's "Radcliffe-Schlesinger Library on the History of Women," establishing this esteemed research institution as the archival depository for AAWE's newsletters and other publications. (AAWE's archives will be joining those of notable Americans such as Angela Davis, Betty Friedan, Julia Child, and Susan B. Anthony.) We are fortunate that AAWE history will be preserved in a temperature-regulated vault, available on demand to future generations of academic researchers.

This donation was the brainchild of Carolyn White-Lesieur, AAWE President 1990 and 1991, who initiated negotiations with the Library, and supervised the collection of sixty years of newsletters and other publications. AAWE is indebted to Carolyn for her long-standing commitment to this project, and to the Library's Marilyn Dunn, Executive Director, and Kathryn Jacob, Curator of Manuscripts, who immediately saw the inherent worthiness of AAWE's archival material. A special thanks to Kristina Didouan, Parliamentarian 2012-2020, and to Helen Shavit and Barbara Sprzeuzkouski for preparing the 1961-1975 newsletters, as well as Josh O'Donovan (who photographed every page of the bound copies) and Radcliffe alumna, Sally Benoist, from whom we first learned about the Schlesinger Library.

In April 2019, the AAWE Board voted to create a Standing Committee to oversee the annual AAWE archival deposit. Researchers may freely access the AAWE Collection with the exception of newsletters published within the prior 20 years. Due to the Board's concern for members' privacy, these more recent newsletters may be consulted only with special written consent of AAWE. As the collection is stored offsite, 36 hours advance notice is required.

To see the catalogue of our AAWE Collection, visit <https://hollisarchives.lib.harvard.edu/repositories/8/resources/9002>

To see other women and organizations archived, visit the Schlesinger Library website: www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/schlesinger-library

Office Managers



Rae Leffman

Rae Leffman - from September 1991 to Fall 1992 (at Pershing Hall)

Our first Office Manager was Rae Leffman. AAWE's membership had been growing steadily and talk began about hiring someone part-time for the office. Although volunteers came into the office, we recognized that it was evolving into a paid position.

Rae Leffman, an AAWE member, had all the qualifications. And at one time, she had worked for Phyllis Michaux at the American Chamber of Commerce in Paris. Daniel, her husband, worked for Siemens, and they had two children. As always, we found the help we needed within the Club. Rae handled the mail, the telephone calls, and the membership applications. She established a good filing system where there had been none, put the office in shipshape, and volunteered to do more than her duties required. She helped Barbara Ginsbach with the Bazaar that year on avenue Hoche, typed up much of the 3rd edition of the *AAWE Guide to Education...* on a typewriter... She also worked with Barbara to revive AAWE College Night. We were fortunate to have someone with such enthusiasm and initiative. We were very sorry to see her leave when a full-time position was offered to her at the International School of Paris.



Charlene Labro, Dianne Henning, and Nancy Hoca

Holly de Montmarin - 1991-2000

AAWE member Holly de Montmarin became our new part-time Administrative Assistant in 1992. After receiving her French Baccalauréat in France, Holly, a native Californian, returned to the US, graduating from Middlebury College. She married Alain and they settled in Italy, where Holly graduated from the *Academia delle Arti Applicate* with a degree in interior design. Over 15 years, she and her family (including children William, Thomas and Josephine) moved every two years. In each post she held various positions in American, French and international organizations before settling in Paris in 1991.

Holly's arrival coincided with AAWE's move to Suresnes and an investment in a much-needed computer and laser printer.



Holly de Montmarin

A former president said, "Her generous nature embodied what we hoped others would feel and appreciate about our club via the office phone: AAWE is a friendly and supportive club of both its members and the Franco-American community." When Holly left to pursue her other interests, one former president said, "We might have lost our Administrative Assistant, but Holly remains a devoted AAWE member and an inspiring, faithful friend to us all."

Dianne Henning - 1997-2007

Dianne Henning began working on the *AAWE News* as a volunteer. Newly arrived in France, she lived near our office at the Fondation Foch, and wanted to learn publication layout. As the job became more time-consuming, she was hired as a paid part-time layout coordinator, and later as the office assistant. This AAWE position eventually led to a career as a graphic designer and dedicated involvement in Joomla (publishing web content). Dianne was an exceptional copy writer. If you look back to some of the most clever or amusing touches in the *News*, these were more than likely a product of her own talent, wit, and great sense of humour. She was instrumental in putting together the questions of the month, and overseeing the nine issues a year we published in those days. As a member of AAWE, Dianne still volunteered her time and was behind a number of well-received initiatives including the EWEs (Ex-wives of Europeans).



Missy Leiby

Missy Leiby - 2007-2009

Long-time AAWE member Missy Leiby became our office manager after Dianne resigned. Extensive experience in publishing, first-rate skills in graphic design and her technical know-how proved invaluable in preparing the AAWE News, which underwent a redesign and format change. She also redesigned and launched a new AAWE website.

As Office Manager, Missy helped the Vice President for Administration to review all the various contracts with our suppliers (insurance, office supplies, telephone, postage/mailings. Production and mailing costs were substantially reduced during that time.

Our members knew they could always count on Missy for help with administrative matters and AAWE activities. In the fall of 2009, Missy left AAWE for a new position with an international organization, near her home in Versailles.



Christopher D'Arcy with his daughters at the Bazaar

Christopher D'Arcy - 2009-2010

AAWE received a number of applications for the Office Manager job after Missy's resignation. All but one of the applicants were women, but the search turned up a young man who had worked at Message for its magazine, and he seemed to be the best candidate. AAWE wondered how the membership would react. But Christopher's ready smile and outgoing personality charmed us, and he sometimes brought his family to our events. He made his mark especially in overseeing the production and printing of the AAWE News and other publications. Because of his expertise, the printing costs dropped considerably. Christopher left to move to Washington DC.

Josh O'Donovan – since Oct 2010

After Christopher's departure, we had the good fortune to hire one of Christopher's former colleagues from Message, Josephine ("Josh") O'Donovan.

Josh keeps our office running smoothly and provides a smiling welcome to all members. She answers our questions, listens to our plans, gives information that helps us, and encourages us to volunteer! Josh also is an enthusiastic working participant at many of our events, and has a big hand in their success. In so many ways, Josh is the "glue" which keeps us together.

Preparing the AAWE News for publication has long been an important task for our office managers, and Josh took it on with expertise and aplomb. She is the major production coordinator, producing a first rate magazine. In addition, she has successfully solicited paid advertising, for the News and other AAWE publications she has produced. She proposed the creation of *Paris Parents* magazine to accompany the Which School Fair, as well as the *Retire & Thrive* magazine and event.

Over the years, Josh has had a key role in making a modern, content-full, interactive website and has organized tutorials for members.

During the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns when all the administrative work was done remotely, Josh provided full technical support from home.

As VP Administration Erika Chabbi, recently commented, "We couldn't have asked for a better personality in all ways to handle our 500 women, and the increasingly technological and administrative tasks."

JANE MARION



Josh O'Donovan

AAWE and FAWCO



FAWCO (the Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas) connects AAWE members to nearly 10,000 other women in about sixty sister clubs on six continents. This global network gives AAWE members a window on the world and an avenue for collective engagement beyond our daily lives and local concerns. AAWE Founder Phyllis Michaux recognized early on that FAWCO would be a valuable partner in her efforts to change US citizenship laws. Thanks to founding AAWE member Gertrude de Gallaix, who had served as FAWCO President (1957-1959), Phyllis was aware of FAWCO and its global reach, as well as its citizenship committee. AAWE joined FAWCO in 1965, and over the decades FAWCO has served as an ally in advocacy and a source of support for AAWE and its members.

FAWCO is the oldest and largest organization of civilian Americans abroad and plays a vital role in the worldwide community of overseas Americans. It has been in the forefront of efforts to secure voting and citizenship rights for overseas Americans and was instrumental in creating the bipartisan Americans Abroad Caucus in Congress as well as the annual Overseas Americans Week. FAWCO's US Issues Committees in different countries work to provide timely information on Citizenship issues, Voting from Overseas, and Tax and Banking matters. In normal (non-COVID) years, a FAWCO delegation goes to Washington for Overseas Americans Week in cooperation with AARO. FAWCO helps our voices be heard in Washington.

In addition to its advocacy for overseas Americans, FAWCO was recognized by the United Nations as an NGO in 1995 and received special consultative status in 1997. FAWCO's consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Commission (ECOSOC) makes it one of only about 4500 NGOs with that status out of millions of NGOs worldwide. FAWCO works within the United Nations and the NGO community in support of women and girls, health, human rights, education and the environment. This provides



Back: Sue Orsoni, Wendy Leyland, Julia Fainsilber, Sallie Chaballier, Pam Perraud, Janine Brimbal. Front Andrea Offner, Deborah Lillian, Kathy Araujo, Ellen Lebel

an important opportunity for AAWE members to have a voice and make an impact on a global level. Thanks to the FAWCO connection, in normal years, AAWE members are able to attend the annual meetings of the Committee on the Status of Women at UN headquarters in New York. They are also eligible to serve as FAWCO UN representatives, and as participants on FAWCO's Global Issues Teams working on UN issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals. AAWE has gained in prestige through its affiliation with a global women's NGO.

Club support is a keystone of FAWCO. Concretely, FAWCO provides many resources to AAWE's members and their children, including scholarships, development grants for charities AAWE supports, free workshops, fundraising ideas, networking opportunities, youth programs, member enrichment workshops and more. Further, FAWCO offers expertise and support for the AAWE Board: board development workshops, a free library of best practices, a network of other clubs willing to share their best practices, and support and ideas for club Presidents at conferences,



AAWE member Claire Mathijsen and co-founder Elizabeth Turnoi from Rafiki Ya Maisha participate on a FAWCO-sponsored panel at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, New York, 2019





FAWCO Target Chair Johanna Dishongh, Louise Greeley-Copeley, FAWCO President My-Linh Kunst, Guest Speaker Patti O'Neill, Suzanne Wheeler, Sallie Chaballier, AAWE President Jill Jacquot at the 2013 Regional Conference hosted in Paris by AAWE.

as well as throughout the term. Last but not least, AAWE members, their children, and charities they support have received more than any other FAWCO member club to date, —well over \$100,000 — in Education Awards and Development Grants from the FAWCO Foundation. In addition, the FAWCO Foundation administers the Hallock Awards program for AAWE, enabling members' children to benefit from spending a summer in the US.

Over the years, a number of AAWE members have served on the FAWCO and/or FAWCO Foundation Boards. Notably, Gertrude de Gallaix was President both of FAWCO (as a member of AWG Paris) and the FAWCO Foundation; Sonja Minçbère, Lucy Laederich and Sallie Chaballier served as FAWCO President; and Suzanne Wheeler was FAWCO Foundation President. In addition, Lucy Laederich served for many years as FAWCO US Liaison and Pam Perraud was FAWCO's second UN/NGO Director.

Belonging to FAWCO means that AAWE is part of something bigger: our association does not exist in a vacuum but is part of the global community of overseas Americans and part of a dynamic global network of international women. There is synergy in FAWCO: ideas, inspiration, purpose. FAWCO connects AAWE to other civil society organizations around the world and shows us that civil society matters. FAWCO helps AAWE members make their voices heard, it gives us resonance. We can all make a difference in our communities and, together, our voice is stronger. FAWCO, now in its 90th year, was founded in the spirit of "enlightened women working cooperatively together", an ethos that also informs AAWE and its work. May both organizations continue to support each another for many years to come!

SALLIE CHABALLIER

Education and Bilingualism at AAWE

One of AAWE's flagship issues from the very beginning has been helping its members — and the American and international community — navigate the challenges of education in France and foster their children's bilingualism. As AAWE Founder Phyllis Michaux wrote, "My husband and I needed to know how to raise our children so they would have equal ability in both languages. We wished to prepare them to span the Atlantic, to take advantage of their dual-culture background. We wondered how other French-American families were coping with this same predicament" (*The Unknown Ambassadors - A Saga of Citizenship*, page 14). Over the decades, that fundamental question gave rise to a host of activities and publications intended to help parents and children alike. An exhaustive history of AAWE's Education and Bilingualism efforts would merit its own publication, but this brief overview aims to summarize the highlights.

AAWE has long been a pioneer in education and bilingualism not just for its members but also for the Anglophone and international communities in Paris. Among the earliest activities reported in the AAWE Bulletin were a panel discussion on children's bilingualism in February 1962 and research into US college scholarships for dual nationality children. The late Harriet Frankel and Ruth Métraux were the driving forces behind the Education Committee and then the Bilingualism Committee, both established in AAWE's early years and eventually combined. Those committees, subsequently merged into the Education/Bilingualism Committee, conducted research and organized events on a wide range of topics — from bilingualism to teaching children to read in English to US university admissions — that continue to interest AAWE members and their families today.

Which School is Right for My Child?, the now-biennial school fair first held in 1985, was the outgrowth of discussions among AAWE members on how to choose a school and how to share that useful information more widely. In 1984, members of the AAWE Education Committee were approached by members of WICE and asked if AAWE would like to hold a joint event inviting "principals and/or top administrators of leading bilingual schools in the Paris region to present analyses of the schools' programs." The committee thought it was a great idea. Thus, the first "Which School is Right for My Child" was held in January 1985 and eventually held every other year, growing in size as bilingual and Anglophone schools proliferated in the Paris area. It continued through 2022, including an elaborate publication, *Paris Parents*, in 2018, 2020 and 2022. In addition to providing a huge community service and promoting AAWE's standing in the international community, the school fair proved to be a strong source of revenue for AAWE.

The AAWE Guide to Education (AAWE Guide to

Education in France as of the 6th edition), now in its 9th edition, established and burnished AAWE's reputation as a go-to source for information on education matters for American and international families living in France. The first edition, published in 1986, was the brainchild of Carolyn White-Lesieur and the outgrowth of the first "Which School is Right For My Child?" school fair held in early 1985.

As Carolyn recalls, "Our initial idea was to rate the schools, a sort of 'Gault et Millau' guide. One AAWE member urged us not to do that. A school's reputation could be made or broken by such a book... smaller schools had tight budgets and could not afford adverse ratings. Besides, one school's approach could be perfect for one child but not for another. So, out went the idea of rating the schools. The guide would help parents find the answer to 'Which School is Right for MY child?'."

We were curious about AAWE members' experiences with schools, from *Petite Section* to university. Where had their children gone to school, how bilingual were they, did they stay in France after the *Bac* or did they go to an American university or other? We devised a questionnaire and sent it to all AAWE members. This questionnaire revealed other schools and it was interesting to see the variety of experiences, degrees of bilingualism and the different paths taken by AAWE members' children.

In October 1986, the first AAWE Guide to Education was ready. The initial printing sold out quickly. We kept reprinting and reprinting, eventually selling nearly 1600 copies of the First edition. Subsequent updated and expanded editions appeared at regular intervals up to the 8th edition in 2013. Most recently, a shorter Ninth edition was published in May 2021. New editors brought new energy and brilliant ideas for new articles and included many more schools, not just in the Paris area but all over France. AAWE has been fortunate to have members willing to sacrifice much time and effort into a very fastidious job of collecting the school information. Many reminder letters were sent, and phone calls made. AAWE members carefully researched and wrote articles. Then, the proofreading and accuracy of information checks began while others drummed up advertising to offset costs. Once printed, a new task was announcing the availability of a new edition to the wider community and handling the mail orders or lugging them to education events. It has always been a huge undertaking, a labor of love, by many dedicated AAWE members and well worth the effort, knowing how important education and bilingualism have always been to AAWE and the anglophone community."

Education/Bilingualism Surveys and Studies

Ruth Métraux was director of the United Nations



Jude Smith, Helen Shavit and Denise van Veen



Denise van Veen, Lise Ducrey, Sallie Chaballier, Wendy Zambalas, Michelle Lennen, Helen Shavit, and Henrietta Flinn

Nursery School in Paris for many years. She was the original pioneer of bilingualism in AAWWE, guiding the first steps of bilingual study within AAWWE with a publication in 1965. Other early projects included "A Study of Bilingualism Among Franco-American Children" by Judy Marie, Harriet Frankel and Nancy LeFloch (1967), "A Survey of Bilingualism in Franco-American Children of the AAWWE", a follow-up study by Olive Lorsignol (1971) and "Revised Guidelines on Bilingualism" (1972). Gabrielle Varro's analysis of the data obtained in these reports as well as her own survey were published in her book *La Femme Transplantée* (1984) and later translated in *The Transplanted Woman* (1988). Gabrielle Varro subsequently published an article in the early 2000s, "Does Bilingualism Survive the Third Generation?" based on her 1990's survey of AAWWE members' children and the prior findings of Ruth Métraux, Judy Marie and Olive Lorsignol in their respective studies. Thanks to the stability of the AAWWE community she was able to analyze the course of bilingualism over a span of thirty years.

Among the Education/Bilingualism committee's studies focusing on education was the AAWWE Education Survey conducted in 2007-2008. The survey captured the education status and school paths of AAWWE children between the ages of 3-26. Language use in the home, type of school attended, foreign language options chosen, history of changing schools, and country where higher education was pursued, were among the many queries. The results, reported in the AAWWE brochure, "Education and Franco-American Children" informed the creation of the new AAWWE publication devoted to higher education, *Beyond the Bac*, published in 2011, as well as the 8th edition of the *AAWWE Guide to Education in France*, published in 2013. The survey offers the reader a great deal of insight into the language and education choices of Franco-American families living in France at that time.

College Night/College Day

The first College Night was held in October 1983. It was started with the idea in mind of bringing useful information about American higher educational opportunities to AAWWE members' children. It was held four times then stopped. In March 1990, the late

Olive Lorsignol came to AAWWE President Carolyn White-Lesieur to ask that AAWWE revive the event. A College USA Committee was formed by the AAWWE Education Committee and included the college counselors for EABJM, the American School of Paris, the Lycée International of St Germain en Laye, and the International School of Paris. The 5th College Night was held in October 1991; the event became College Day on a Sunday afternoon in 1994 and was held every year subsequently until Covid-19 cancelled the 2020 edition. As long as AAWWE administered College Day, the College USA Committee collected fees from participating institutions; those funds were disbursed as modest scholarships to students from five bilingual schools in the Paris area.

The late Barbara Ginsbach single-handedly coordinated College Day from 1993 to 2003, when her professional responsibilities precluded her continuing in the role. Education/Bilingualism Chair Sallie Chaballier, with the advice of educators and college counselors in AAWWE, nurtured a collaboration with the Council of International Schools (CIS) whereby CIS would take over the administrative tasks, including collecting fees, and AAWWE would provide local volunteers. Beginning in 2004, AAWWE partnered with CIS to coordinate increasingly large and well-attended Paris College Days. Eventually renamed the Paris International University Fair, the event grew to be one of the largest university fairs in Europe. Due to the cancellation of this event in 2020 and 2021, AAWWE organized a series of Zoom events, "Looking Beyond Your Bac", centered on university admissions in France, the US, Canada, the UK, Ireland, and the Netherlands.

Beyond the Bac

Given the growing size of successive editions of the *AAWWE Guide to Education in France*, it became clear to AAWWE's Education Committee that a separate publication was called for to address higher education options for high-school students educated in France. The first edition of *Beyond the Bac: Higher Education in France and Abroad* was published in 2011 after extensive research; it brought together in one place a wealth of information on higher education that did not exist elsewhere as a whole, even in French. The book featured an exhaustive explanation of the French university system and *grandes écoles*, as well

as US, British, Canadian and Australian universities and how to apply to them. *Beyond the Bac* was completely updated and expanded in 2020, reflecting an overhaul of the French university system as well as the proliferation of English-language programs in Europe, and added a chapter on university options in the Netherlands.

Education Events

Over the years, the Education/Bilingualism Committee has organized a wide range of events, from "brown bag lunches" to presentations and panel discussions intended to inform AAWE members on topics of interest and concern. Instilling and maintaining bilingualism, coping with the French education system, and university admissions preparations and procedures have been issues of perennial interest over the decades. Panels of students discussing their education choices and eventual paths have drawn particularly strong audiences.

It is normal that over time, our interests or concerns evolve, both as individuals and collectively. Whereas in the early years of AAWE, the bilingualism committee focused on promoting bilingualism in children, in subsequent years the focus shifted to bilingual education, then pursuing university study in the US, and so on. With the widening acceptance of bilingualism as an advantage rather than a hindrance for the developing child, members sought guidance for other pressing education concerns. One such area was educating children with special needs. Co-Editor Janis Kaas researched and wrote the first article about special needs in the *Guide's* 7th edition to give a path forward for parents of children with dyslexia and other learning challenges, as well as of gifted children, with input from people with first-hand experience in these matters - parents and professionals both. The 8th edition of the *AAWE Guide to Education in France* expanded coverage of resources for children with special needs to several chapters. Talks addressing different learning challenges were organized, and more recently, a new initiative to accompany the 9th edition of the *AAWE Guide to Education in France*, AAWE's *Education Insights* blog was launched, where education-related digital articles are regularly posted.

A relatively more recent area of interest that reflects the evolving demographics of our association is bilingualism in aging. In 2006 the Education/Bilingualism Committee teamed up with the Seniors Committee to organize a talk, "Bilingualism in Aging: Friend or Foe?" by Helen Shavit who went on to give a workshop on the topic at the FAWCO Regional Meeting in Lyon in 2007.

Other events co-organized with the Seniors Committee around that time centered on the themes of biculturalism and cultural identity. "State of the Union: Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Europe", featured a fascinating presentation by renowned sociolinguist, Elizabeth Lanza and research sociologist, Gabrielle Varro. The following year, a private screening of the film, "From Language to Language", a documentary that addresses bilingualism and identity in the creative process, spurred reflection and discussion

among the participants.

AAWE's Education/Bilingualism Committee always believed in sharing our wealth of knowledge with the Anglophone community here in Paris. The successful school fairs, "Which School is Right for My Child?" and Paris College Day began this process and spread to include collaborations with WICE, Message and other organizations in the community.

In 2009, Helen Shavit, Jude Smith, and Denise van Veen began a partnership with the American Library in Paris to offer education-related evening talks open to the public. Topics ranged from encouraging reading, bullying and harassment, adolescence, language acquisition, oppositional children, and raising children in the digital age, presented by experts in the field from psychologists, teachers, and technologists. AAWE explored the educational gambit from maternelle through university studies. The community benefited from panel discussions with teachers and parents on "Moving up to CP" and "Moving up to Collège," events which originally had been joint initiatives with Message.

In 2010, AAWE began a collaboration with the OECD to bring worldwide expertise on education issues ranging from the PISA studies of international education, arts education, and trends in the field. In addition, we explored environmental issues after the COP 21 conference in 2016 and economic challenges in 2017. While these were well attended, our "standing room only" events centered on the work of journalist Peter Gumbel and his analysis of the French education system. AAWE collaborated with him starting in 2010 with his book *On achève bien les écoliers*, then in 2013 with *Elite Academy*, followed in 2015 with *French School Without Tears*. AAWE launched two of its own publications at the ALP – the *AAWE Guide to Education in France*, 8th edition, and the first edition of *Beyond the Bac: Higher Education in France and Abroad*. Recently, we held a Zoom talk on bilingualism in conjunction with the ALP continuing this important strategic partnership.

Education and bilingualism have been center stage at AAWE for the past 60 years. May the impressive work of all those past contributors be continued with a new generation for the next 60 years or more.

SALLIE CHABALLIER, JANIS KAAS, HELEN SHAVIT,
JUDE SMITH, CAROLYN WHITE-LESIEUR

Our French Story

MEMORIES OF WORLD WAR II

A number of Seniors have shared their memories of World War II with AAWE over the years, whether it be in the Oral History Project interviews starting in 2003, at a Seniors' Meeting, or for various articles in the AAWE News.

Some AAWE members, such as Phyllis Michaux and Vivienne Fortier saw active service in France during the war. Others had spouses or in-laws who fought, while still others had personal reminiscences of what it was like during the Occupation and after Liberation.

PHYLLIS MICHAUX was first married to an American pilot who had joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1941. When he was killed on duty in the spring of 1943, Phyllis, a 21-year-old widow, decided to join the US Women's Army Corps (WACs). After basic training, she was sent to Europe with the Office of Strategic Services and set sail for Britain on an overcrowded troop ship. A corporal in the army, she worked in the OSS offices in London as a secretary during the V-I, or buzz-bomb, raids. In November 1944, following the liberation of Paris, she was posted to Paris. She remembered seeing deportees from the camps arriving at the Orsay Train Station and the jubilation of VE-Day, May 8, 1945 on the Champs-Élysées. After Paris, she was sent by the OSS to Wiesbaden, Germany, then back to London. In October 1945, she was discharged out of Fort Dix, New Jersey. "There was no fanfare, no flags, no medals, no room for women veterans in the colleges in the New York City area," she said. "Sorry, but we must save the places for the boys," they were told.

AAWE HONORARY MEMBER, VIRGINIA D'ALBERT-LAKE, fell in love with France and with a Frenchman, Philippe d'Albert-Lake. When WWII broke out, the married couple moved between Paris and Nesles. In 1943, their local baker asked for help with some lost Allied airmen. Thus began their involvement with the French Resistance, ferrying downed pilots to safety. Shortly after D-Day, Virginia was arrested by the Gestapo. On the way to headquarters, she managed to eat the list she carried of members of the French Resistance. Virginia eventually landed in the Ravensbruck concentration camp. She survived through grit and determination. After 11 terrible months, weighing only 78 lbs, Virginia was reunited with her husband. Her courage and valuable contributions were recognized with medals and honors from the French, the Americans, the Belgians, the British. Virginia's heroic story is detailed in her diary and post-war memoir, edited by Judy Barrett Litoff: *An American Heroine in the French Resistance: The Diary and Memoir of Virginia D'Albert-Lake*, 2006.

VIVIENNE FORTIER, a dietician, was mobilized by the US army during the war. She was first sent to England in November 1943 and then to France after the Normandy landings. Working at the Lycée Claude Bernard, which had been used as barracks and

a hospital, first for German troops and then, after the liberation of Paris for American soldiers of the 2nd Armored Division, she spent about nine months in Paris.

BETTY BRUGNON When Betty married her French husband in February 1940, he was on active duty as an officer in the French army but got a short leave for the wedding. He returned to the war and was made a prisoner of war and sent to a camp in Austria. Luckily, as an officer, he was not used for forced labor. Betty did not see her husband again until the war ended in 1945. During the German Occupation, she lived with her in-laws in Brunoy, a town south of Paris. She remembered how they and another family each owned half a cow. The family planted potatoes and beans and had several fruit trees. Betty was able to save some of her sugar ration and a neighbor had extra fruit, so they joined the two and made jam. She said it was difficult to get news reports on the progress of the war, since the local press and radio were controlled and radio stations from abroad were jammed. Betty's husband and his fellow POWs were released from their camp in Austria and started out on foot across Germany, where they were eventually picked up by the American military and sent back to France. He arrived back at the Gare d'Austerlitz one evening and found Betty there to meet him.

CECI POSE's mother-in-law was the only paid doctor working at the Red Cross in Paris at the time of the war. Since she had connections with a children's home in the Jura, she was able to arrange for Jewish children to go there to be hidden. In 1944, she was denounced (probably by someone at the Red Cross), and was sent to Fresnes prison. As she had three small children and a grandmother to take care of, she was released, but had to report to the police every day while her case was pending. A friend who was a French veteran of WWI and who spoke German managed to get acquainted with someone at the German administrative office, and after weeks got friendly enough with him so that the Germans showed him a list of people who were scheduled to be deported, and he removed the name of Dr Thérèse Pose from the list.

*Vivienne Fortier (left)
with Luisa Couaillet*





Vicky and Marcel Wormser and family at their 65th wedding anniversary

NANCY SAYER's father-in-law, Pierre Sayer, a 37-year-old doctor and the mayor of the town of Châtel sur Moselle in the Vosges, eastern France, was head of a local Resistance group. Three weeks after the liberation of Paris in August 1944, Châtel became the scene of a ferocious battle between the French Second Armored Division and German panzers and infantry battalions. The town was liberated by the 2nd Division, which was then immediately ordered to retreat and push on to the east. The Germans recaptured Châtel in a counter-attack. Sayer had been urged to leave with General Leclerc and his 2nd Division, but made the fatal decision to stay, feeling it his duty to be with his townspeople. A group of French militia came to his home and turned him over to the Gestapo. He was shot the following day, September 19, along with four other members of the Resistance in the forest of Epinal. His body was found and identified only nine months later.

VICKY WORMSER was born and grew up as a child in Antwerp. When Belgium was overrun by the Germans, Vicky's mother, who had a doctor's certificate declaring she had TB and needed to be in a warm climate, eventually obtained a visa to go to Nice in unoccupied France with her children. Vicky's father was not allowed to go with them, but he later paid a *passeur* to take him to the Free Zone. Unfortunately,

the *passeur* betrayed him, and Vicky's father was imprisoned in Bourges in the Occupied Zone. He was later freed because his wife had obtained an American visa for him and his family, and he was allowed to travel in transit through unoccupied France to Nice and on to America, via Spain and Portugal with his family. Many years later, Vicky became AAWWE President.

GERTRUDE DE GALLAIX Luckily, during the Occupation, Gertrude de Gallaix spoke French well enough to pass as a French woman, instead of an American, to the Germans, and nobody in her neighborhood betrayed her. Times were hard, and most of the time she felt "hungry, cold and afraid". Like many other Parisians, when she saw her first American soldier after the liberation, she threw her arms around him and cried out, "You've come at last." Gertrude went on to become a founding member of AAWWE and AARO, charter member of the American Women's Group in Paris and President of FAWCO and the FAWCO Foundation.

LILLIAN CARRIÈRE remained in Paris during the Occupation, living with her French mother and American father, who had false French identity papers.

JUDITH GENTIL Because she feared being sent to an internment camp if her American citizenship was discovered while she and her two children were living in Paris, Judith Gentil hid her American passport in the garden, procured false French identity papers and moved to Rambouillet, where nobody knew her. She reminisced about the day (August 17, 1944) when American tanks arrived in Rambouillet and later feeding the troops fresh tomatoes from her garden. When Judith returned to Paris after the war ended, she dug up her passport, which had expired, and went to the consular service of the American Embassy to get a new one. Unfortunately, the staff at the Embassy wouldn't replace it. They said she had forfeited American citizenship by using French identity papers, even if they were false. Undaunted by this unfairness, Judith nevertheless went on to become an active member of the American community in Paris, joining AAWWE and serving as president of ACWO (American Catholic Women's Organization).

HILARY KAISER

"Lest we forget" – the only "Americans" in town

"The flags usually arrive in April, then the two of us spend a few weeks packing and mailing in time for US Memorial Day; it is, however, getting harder and harder for us to do...."

AAWE member Richard Vasquez was no doubt only musing out loud when he mentioned his flag project at a 1999 AAWWE Seniors' Lunch. It was not Richard's intention to ask for help. As a volunteer for the American Memorial Day Association, each year war veteran Richard and his French wife dutifully rolled one American flag, and one French flag (with cover letter), into mailing tubes to be dispatched to the mayors of more than a hundred small French towns.

The flags were destined to decorate the isolated graves of fallen American soldiers of World Wars I and II. While full-scale Memorial Day Services are held at American war cemeteries in Europe, the AOMDA flag distribution honored the lonely Americans whose remains rest in smaller, village cemeteries. In most cases, these soldiers are the only "Americans" in town.

Stirred by Richard's explanation of the project, AAWWE volunteers jumped in to help putting together an assembly line system to rival Henry Ford, AAWWE's annual "Flag Rolling" afternoon became a tradition for nearly a decade. Indeed, those involved remember with emotion the year when a tearful Lillian Carrière by chance discovered the whereabouts of the grave of a lost relative after glancing at one of the cover letters. AAWWE's flag rolling volunteers were even filmed as part of a documentary on Memorial Day activities around the world.



AAWE members in 2006 getting busy rolling, packing and waving the red, white and blue!

A WORD FROM OUR PARTNERS

Pierre-André Clément

I can see through my wife's involvement [Jill is presently VP Programs] that AAWE is a great place to meet people we have a lot in common with and find an American community that can be missing abroad. It provides help and support for practical aspects of life in France for Americans, as well as opportunities to learn about new topics or activities. I have personally attended a few AAWE events with Jill which I have always enjoyed, and I particularly appreciate the opportunity to meet other spouses of Americans.

I've participated in some events, like American Founding Fathers' Footsteps with Anna Eklund-Cheong. We met with Alice Jouve at the end and bought the book she wrote with her late husband Daniel, *Paris: Birthplace of the U.S.A.* We also enjoyed a children's meetup and picnic. It will be nice to have a place where our son Elliott can experience American holidays and traditions with other kids living the same bilingual/bicultural life. He's only 1 so we haven't been able to fully enjoy AAWE children's activities yet. But we are planning on it!



Pierre-André and Jill Clément with Elliott

Jean Lesieur

AAWE? *Ah oui!* A(a)WESome! One of the best inventions by and for American women, their spouses, companions, children, friends, since Ernest Hemingway writing and drinking his way through many a moveable feast, since James Baldwin, Richard Wright and others finding a hospitable refuge in Paris, Josephine Baker sheltering resistance fighters and orphans in Dordogne, Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo in *À Bout de Souffle*, Jackie Kennedy charming Charles de Gaulle.

For more than forty years now, I have had the privilege of being a partner and witness to this beautiful trip that AAWE has operated, orchestrated, facilitated, guiding so many people from cultural shocks to universalist common values in a foreign land.

I have seen my wife develop lifelong friendships



Carolyn and Jean

there. I have seen her getting inspired to such a point that she committed endless supplies of her time and her intelligence to helping others, because she felt she was being helped by them (full and proud disclosure: among other feats, she initiated the *AAWE Guide to Education* more than thirty-five years ago).

I have seen my children grow there, socially, culturally, bilingually, becoming truly Franco-American, opening up to the ideal of a world *sans frontières*. I have also seen myself develop friendships, enlarge my knowledge of the world and human relations (not to mention my humility lesson when I had to build, from wood, a pathetically ugly and underperforming miniature car for some AAWE cub scouts derby. But AAWE also allowed me to accomplish a dream: being Santa Claus for one night).

Priceless! For where can you find at your finger tips such a bottomless tool box for life: advice and activities for children, for seniors, wives, husbands, mothers, fathers, readers, players, gardeners, needers, helpers... ? My wife and I were part of it. My children were part of it. My grandchildren are coming soon.

Maurice Michel

This photo of the two of us was taken in Danielle Johnson's garden. I believe it was in June 2010. The occasion was an AAWE fundraising auction. The weather was perfect, the champagne flowed, friends abounded... Nan de Laubadère had offered her

Maurice and Isabelle



spacious villa in Le Touquet/Paris-Plage, for a week. The bidding was animated, going up and up! All of a sudden Maurice joined the game, made the highest bid, and that was it. It's the first, perhaps the only time I ever saw Maurice making such a rash decision, (especially without consulting me!). But it was for a good cause, and our family did enjoy a wonderful week in a lovely setting.

My husband Maurice passed away in January 2019. Many of you (especially old-time members) knew him well, and I would like to share with you his unique relationship with AAWE.

When AAWE was launched in 1961, Maurice and I had been married for five years and were living in France. Phyllis Michaux's *Herald Tribune* ad (in April, I believe), corresponded exactly to my situation: an American with a French husband.

From the beginning, Maurice approved of the idea. He must have realized that my belonging to an American group would make it easier for me to adjust to living in France. Also, he enjoyed the friends I had there, and was favorably impressed by the dynamics of our group. We seemed to him attractive, interesting, intelligent, and especially fun to be with. Their husbands – Claude, Pierre, Yves, Jean, to mention just those of the very first years – became his friends as well.

In spite of his presence at many of the events, I don't think any of you ever heard him speak a word of English. He would explain that it was the fault of his present English teacher (me!), the proof being that throughout the years he made no linguistic progress whatever. He greatly appreciated the fact that all of us (as opposed to friends in the States) could speak French reasonably well.

He considered terribly amusing the fact that being married was the element which brought us together to form an association. He loved explaining to French friends and family what the AAWE was all about. He called us "*les Mames*" – "*Les Malheureuses Américaines Mariées à des Européens*" – and got a good laugh each time.

So when he might object to my over-involvement in our many AAWE projects, I would remind him that if I belonged to such a wonderful association, it was thanks to him! He sincerely admired all that was being achieved and was rather flattered to be a part of this success.

ISABELLE MICHEL (AAWE NEWS MAY/JUNE 2019)

Alain Morisset

Beverly joined AAWE in the early 1980s when we were living in Brussels. An AAWE member friend had often talked about what a wonderful organization it was, so Beverly joined as a non-resident member. Though Beverly was an active member of the American Women's Club of Brussels and had many European friends, she found something in the AAWE that she rarely found elsewhere – a perfect fit – a group of American women married to Europeans like herself.

After a meeting or luncheon with AAWE members when she happened to be in Paris, she would tell me what a delight it had been to have instant rapport with women with whom she did not have to think twice before speaking. This was reassuring to her.

Over the years she also brought home lots of information and advice from AAWE citizenship meetings which kept us abreast of laws and regulations concerning the American citizenship of our two bicultural children. When Beverly decided to obtain French citizenship in 1992, she was reassured by Michael Adler of the AAWE citizenship committee that all would go well and that she could retain her American nationality. AAWE has always had her back.

The last few years, she has received good advice about FBAR and FATCA requirements and regulations. A few years ago we attended a meeting at the Hôtel Talleyrand moderated by AAWE where the American Consul gave helpful explanations to the expatriate audience.

Since retiring to La Rochelle sixteen years ago, Beverly has not been able to participate in many AAWE activities. But since the Covid crisis, she has attended Zoom lectures on French literature and culture organized by AAWE as well as meetings of the new English teachers' group organized by Janine Brimbal.

One of her favorite activities are the Seniors' lunches which she has attended when she's in Paris.

So, what do I think of AAWE? In my opinion, it is a great organization filled with friendly, energetic, cosmopolitan Americans who have kept my wife happy. And a happy wife makes a happy husband, *n'est-ce pas? Vive la AAWE!*



Alain and Bev celebrating their 70th birthdays.

Reflections

Vive la Continuité et la Communauté!

What does it mean for an American women's club to exist 60 years? That's two generations and when I think of generations, I think of change: changes in societal dynamics, life experiences, leisure activities, technology, ways of thinking, and aspirations. Born in 1962, just a year after AAWWE was created, I grew up when women's clubs were in full swing. My own mother went bowling with women, played cards, was part of the PTA, and the church group. Today so much has changed and yet the benefits of gathering remain a constant.

The life experiences of AAWWE's founder, Phyllis Michaux, were very different from my own and those of many members today. Although society has changed, the club has managed to stay true to its founding tenets: AAWWE has always strived to be as open as possible to American women of all walks and in all stages of life – a notable feat amidst a number of clubs that are based on social status and income. AAWWE remains vigilant that members, their children and grandchildren have access to American citizenship, understand the value of a bilingual education and maintain a link to American traditions and culture. These constants have become the base upon which our members are able to consolidate their multi-cultural lives.

Yet, change affects AAWWE's volunteer base and membership. Volunteerism, a staple in American civic life, has declined while the need for volunteers keeps rising. Volunteering brings people together for a common cause. It also connects people to key issues facing their communities and generates physical and mental health benefits. Numerous AAWWE members work full-time, have different American identities, raise their children bilingually if not tri-lingually, and get their American cultural connections through technology which allows communication with family at home. Members can take part in causes and professionalized groups, in-person and on-line, for almost every interest area in their lives.

Women are busy, but are they connected to the wider issues that affect their lives and to a community like AAWWE willing to address them simply and practically? AAWWE is a unique group to address both the personal and the wider societal picture.

What AAWWE represents personally for each of us is a little different. For many it is the long-lasting friendships, the shared identities, the common adjustments to life in France or Europe. However, for all of us, I might venture to say, AAWWE represents a knowledge resource, a space to be oneself, a continuation of our own development as women and all the other identities we hold (ethnic, religious, as wives, partners, friends, mothers, colleagues...). I believe the 60-year anniversary is a good marker to take stock of the purpose and the pertinence of the club today. It is

not too hard to see that AAWWE is a unique gathering space for each of us to check in and explore important life developments and issues in the midst of some very volatile societal dynamics.

I ask again, what does it mean for an American women's club to exist 60 years? Collectively as a social institution, women's clubs have been at the heart of key changes in society. AAWWE is no exception. Often founded in a woman's home, women's clubs have encouraged personal development, addressed issues linked to "domestic" life and expressly avoided religious and political topics. However, many of the same women in these clubs have been involved in "public" causes which over the years have included the suffrage movement, the civil rights movement and education reform.

Doesn't this sound familiar? What did Phyllis Michaux and her successors identify as issues in their own lives that they sought to change? The personal and public are often intertwined. When we read the AAWWE newsletter we find stories of life trajectories tied up in historical events. We are offered multiple examples and support groups on how to deal with life transitions, education, disability, violence, and divorce. We meet our own members engaged in various causes. Indeed, women have often been at the forefront of necessary change, and they have pointed to the issues that need addressing.

While this club was born in a different era, it continues to embrace America's tradition of volunteerism and AAWWE's founding principles. It also must evolve and face new challenges. Whether you call it a social outlet, leadership, activism, or just plain self-interest, being part of and supporting a women's club is engaging with our evolving society and staying in touch with the realities of the everyday life of women and families. It is accepting generational changes and welcoming new ways of being, gathering and doing. There's always fun to be had and friendships to develop, but I also invite members to keep in mind the incredible opportunity we have to engage and bridge not only our countries but also our generations and our evolving roles in society.

I'm a long timer, so I guess one could call me a veteran. I have come to see the club as my staple, one of the constants in my life. It is a forum in which I can be myself and meet inspiring and active women to learn, engage with, and understand those issues that affect us all. Reflecting on 60 years of AAWWE makes me realize the symbolic importance of the club's longevity and the personal importance of its continued relevance to my life. I hope you will join me in celebrating and supporting the club so it may continue to be at the heart of women's lives while embracing the spirit of American volunteerism and new ways of living and being. *Vive la continuité et la communauté!*

PAT DAHANAY JANIN

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