

## The Road to Tech Trek

**Leslie Carson**

**Prudence Bradley, Shelly Ostrowski**, and I recently finished interviewing four Union County seventh grade girls for Tech Trek. Sponsored by AAUW, Tech Trek is a one week science and math summer camp for rising eighth grade girls. Founded in 1998, it is held at 21 locations across the United States; the NJ Tech Trek is held at Stockton University in Galloway.

Summit College Club, the only AAUW branch in Union County, is responsible for interviewing the Union County applicants. Each applicant has been nominated by a math or science teacher; the program accepts only one nomination per **school**. Nominees must then fill out the application and write an essay. This year, 105 NJ girls applied, and every county in the State will be represented in the 60 selections.

The SCC interviewers receive the applications on line and set up interviews with each girl and one of her parents. At the interviews we ask standard questions of the girls and their parents. Examples are, “Why do you want to attend Tech Trek?” and, for a parent, “How do you feel about your daughter being away from home for a week?” But the interviewers ask their own questions, too, and read between the lines. We listen for the little extras; we watch body language.

This year for the first time we could not interview in person at the Union Library, so we conducted



*Tech Trekkers working on an experiment, 2018*

phone interviews. Once we were satisfied that we had sufficient information, we rated each candidate and sent our recommendations in.

The Tech Trek leaders in Atlantic County choose the successful 60 applicants. All the others receive wait-list letters. Girls are chosen not only for their passion for STEM but also for their ability to handle a week on their own and for their diversity. Tech Trek seeks girls who might otherwise not have this kind of opportunity. Each accepted family pays a token \$50. The actual cost per girl is \$1000 - \$1500, so money must be raised through grants and donations. Through our Foundation, Summit College Club has donated to Tech Trek in the past.

The rewards of being an interviewer are enormous. We love bringing the girls out as they are often shy with us at first. Their parents are thrilled that their daughters have been nominated and are eager to answer our questions. When we ask, parents usually say that they first discovered their daughters’ interest in

STEM subjects early on, when the girls were tots and they liked to build, or when they asked a great many questions. One dad recalled that his two year old began noticing patterns in everyday things. That reminded us of Katherine Johnson of **Hidden Figures** fame.

At Tech Trek, girls just barely into their teens get a chance to do interesting projects in math and the sciences; to meet and become friends with other girls who share their interests; to interact with adult women scientists; and to be part of a special (and fun!) activity away from home. Not bad for 13-year olds! Who knows how far all this will take them!

**Addendum.** Unfortunately, because of the Covid 19 health crisis, the 2020 Tech Trek camp has had to be rescheduled. Girls chosen for 2020 will now attend the camp from July 18 to 24 in the summer of 2021; the girls chosen next spring will attend during the following week, July 25 to 31, 2021.



*In the spring of 2018, Marylou Moitto and I interviewed Union County applicants for Tech Trek*

*for the first time. All the applicants impressed us, but Saniya White was our clear, first choice. That fall, at Baltusrol, a grown up Saniya spoke with enthusiasm and intelligence about her summer experience.*

## SCC Doings (& Un-doings)

On April 13, **Hedy Tukey** skillfully led the Board of Directors through their first electronic meeting. The Board “zoomed” through the agenda, seeing and hearing one another on screen. One benefit of our new normal was that **Leslie Carson** in Florida was able to “attend” the meeting.

The Scholarship Reception in early June has been cancelled in observance of Governor Murphy’s decree for social distancing. **Even so, the scholarships themselves will be awarded.** The June *Bulletin* next month will have all the details.

As has already been announced, the **2020 Spring Book Sale** has been cancelled; the dates of the **2021 Book Sale** will be announced soon.

We usually vote in person to ratify the slate of candidates for the next year’s SCC and SCCF officers. This year, that will be impossible, so the slate will go out to members in print, via either email or mail.

The **day trip** to the home of Alice Paul has been cancelled for this spring but may be rescheduled for next year.

Luckily, next year looks as if it will be busy! For starters, our **Opening Luncheon** will happen at Baltusrol on September 12. The program is a special treat: one of our newest SCC members, **Jee-Hoon Krska**, will tell us about her program teaching piano to schoolchildren in Newark--with a live demonstration. Save the date!

November 8 will now mark our **100th anniversary** (and then some!) **gala** at the Summit Hotel. (If you purchased a ticket or two to the event on April 5th, you’re already signed up for November 8th.)

There’s much more coming, too. As the song says, “we’ve only just begun.”

Keep an eye out for membership renewal forms, which should arrive soon.

## Miscellany

*As I write, we’re in the fifth week of NJ’s corona virus journey. I live alone and feel fortunate for the space and light and freedom from want that I enjoy. Still, as the days pass, my mood ricochets--one day, I want to know everything and am reading voraciously, even listening to lectures on epidemiology, the next day I can’t stand to look at any news. I’m happy to be at home, and then I find myself crazed with the need to get out of the house. Sometimes I am laughing out loud at myself--who knew that the delivery of food could be so exciting?--but soon enough, I find my eyes tearing up at the numbers, the stories, the unimaginable suffering and sacrifice and loss. Through it all, because I taught literature and English poetry for many years, I find myself comforted by the memory or lines and books I have read and loved. Eventually, I started keeping track. Here are some of my favorites.*

--Marylou Motto

“All’s changed, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born.”

W. B. Yeats, “Easter, 1916”

“One reason cats are happier than people is that they have no newspapers.”

Gwendolyn Brooks

“If you don’t know the exact moment when the lights will go out, you might as well read until they do.”

Clive James, *Latest Readings*

“Lord! How sad a sight it is to see the streets empty of people!”

Samuel Pepys, *Diary* (London, 1666 Bubonic Plague)

What people did know was that the disease was highly contagious and might be passed to the healthy by mere physical proximity to those already infected. For this reason, as the number of cases steadily mounted in the city—and communal fear with it—many children in our neighborhood found themselves prohibited by their parents from using the big public pool at Olympic Park in nearby Irvington, forbidden to go to the local “air-cooled” movie theaters, and forbidden to take the bus downtown or to travel Down Neck to see our minor league team, the Newark Bears, play baseball at Ruppert Stadium. . . . We were to wash all fruit and vegetables, and we were to keep our distance from anyone who looked sick or complained of any of polio’s telltale symptoms.

Philip Roth, *Nemesis* (Newark during the 40s)

“What hours, o what black hours we have spent / This night!”

Gerard Manley Hopkins, “I wake and feel the fell of dark”

“Sing, sorrow, sorrow, but good win out in the end.”

Choral refrain, Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, trans. Lattimore

“So we sailed on, with sorrow in our hearts,  
Glad to survive, but grieving for our friends.”

Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Emily Wilson

“And for all this, nature is never spent;  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things.”

Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur”

# New Jersey Stars

## Ruth B. Mandel



**Ruth Blumenstock** was born in Vienna in 1938. She was an infant when her parents fled Germany with her just before World War II. They were passengers on the ocean liner St. Louis on the journey dubbed “the Voyage of the Damned”: the Nazis allowed the ship to sail, expecting that the Jews would never be allowed to disembark. They were unfortunately right: Cuba, the U.S., and Canada all refused the ship, and passengers had to return to Germany where a quarter of the nearly 1000 passengers were to die in Nazi death camps.

Ruth’s parents, however, somehow made it to England, where they lived for nine years before they moved to the U.S. Still, they never forgot the sight of the Miami Beach lights as their ship had idled off the Florida coast: freedom was so near and yet so far. As Ruth later commented:

***“The clarity of hindsight tells us that at that moment, people could have been saved; action could have made a difference.”***

In many ways, Ruth’s parents spent the rest of their lives in the wake of that voyage, feeling themselves fortunate for their escape but knowing the world to be unfair and dangerous.

So Ruth grew up in a household that remembered. She studied English literature, first at Brooklyn College and then at the University of Connecticut, where she earned

a doctorate. She was teaching at Rutgers in 1971 when she read that the Eagleton Institute was starting a center on women and politics. Without any political experience, she volunteered to help and soon was organizing the center. She became a co-director and then served as **director** of what is now known as the **Center for American Women and Politics at the Eagleton Institute**, the premier research and educational institution for the study of women in politics. Committed to the idea of having women on the inside of democratic government, she wrote the first book on an important subject: ***Running: The New Woman Candidate***. Then she became director of the prestigious **Eagleton Institute** itself, staying for 24 years.

She also became an official with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

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***“I do not know for sure that we learn from the past. I have my doubts that recalling evil can make people good. But at least we have to try. As an act of faith, we have to try.”***

***--Ruth B. Mandel***

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At 23, she married Barrett John Mandel. Later, they divorced but remained good friends, and both Mandel and her second husband, Jeffrey Lucker, cared for her this year as she suffered from ovarian cancer. When the pandemic occurred, Ruth’s daughter, Maud Mandel, president of Williams College, Massachusetts, joined the family in their family home in Princeton. They were all with her when she died in April.

***“We get to do this,”*** Maud remembers her mother saying to her when they were voting: ***“We are empowered to make the world what we want it to be.”***

## Judy Persichilli



At his daily press conference during the health crisis, NJ Governor Phil Murphy sits socially distant from but also next to the Commissioner of New Jersey’s Department of Health, **Judy Persichilli**. He refers to her knowledge and management often. “The governor’s respect for and reliance on Judy Persichilli is--for this viewer--a joy to watch.

One of four siblings and a twin, Persichilli was born in New Brunswick and raised in Dunellen. She received her nursing diploma from the St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing; her B.S. in nursing from Rutgers University, 1976; and her M.A. in administration, summa cum laude, from Rider College, 1980.

After several years as a CEO, an Executive VP, and as President of state and regional health systems, and after a raft of honors including two honorary doctorates, Persichilli was appointed by Gov. Murphy, late in 2018, to direct University Hospital, Newark. There, she helped NJ’s only public hospital regain its footing after a series of critical management and fiscal problems.

In June 2019, Governor Murphy announced that Persichilli would join his cabinet and head up our Department of Health. Judy Persichilli now oversees NJ’s response to the 2020 coronavirus pandemic and daily reports the number of positive tests and deaths.

## From Protest to President

In 1975, 25,000 Icelandic women (yes, 25,000 *Icelandic* women) peacefully protested to demonstrate against being underpaid and underrepresented in government. That same day, called “Women’s Day Off,” 90% of the female population did not go to work,<sup>1</sup> cook, clean or take care of children.

Just five years later, in 1980, Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was elected President of Iceland. Well known for her educational and cultural activities, Finnbogadóttir was the first woman to be democratically elected head of state *anywhere*. She held that position for 16 years and repeatedly credited Women’s Day Off with her election. Still active, Finnbogadóttir turned 90 in April.

## Double Whammy

“As of 2019, 33 women led Fortune 500 companies--6.6% of the total. At Davos, women are sparse, and the World Economic Forum estimates that at current rates it would take 257 years to achieve gender parity in “economic participation.” There’s . . . a range of ways people unintentionally reward masculine traits (such as assertiveness) or networks, and “maternal wall bias”: a 2007 *American Journal of Sociology* study found that companies are significantly less likely to hire a woman who is a mother than a man or a childless woman. If they do, she’s likely to be offered \$11,000 less than a childless female with similar qualifications. Progress has been so slow that California . . . recently enacted a law *requiring* public companies in the state to place at least one woman on their boards.”  
----Caroline Fraser, “Warren in the Trap,” *NYRB*

## In Memoriam



**Beverly Hausker** died in June of 2019 at age 90. Bev was Chair of the Finance Committee from 1992 to 1995 and again in 2008-09. From 1996-99, while SCC was responsible for the Monday Meals on Wheels program, she served as Coordinator.

She was born in St. Paul, Minn., in 1928, and graduated from Hamline University in 1949. In 1951, she married Arthur J. Hausker, and they raised their children in the midwest until 1974, when she and her family moved to Summit, where they lived for 35 years.

Her children say that Bev was a lifelong activist in the causes of world peace, international brotherhood, civil rights, and women’s rights.

In 2009, the couple moved to Seabrook Village, Tinton Falls. They had been married for 63 years when Art died four years later.

Bev is survived by her children and their spouses: Eric and Nancy (Sanchez), Karl Hausker and Kathleen McGinty, and Karen (Hausker) and Paul Sherbine; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

**Hedy Tukey** recalls meals with Bev at Gourmet II years ago: “I remember especially during one of the dinners, Bev was talking about financial strategies to prepare for retirement. She was a very smart woman. What sad news.”

## In Memoriam

**Ann Joralemon**, a **Summit College Club 50-Year Life Member**, died at 97 years of age on April 18, 2020. At the time, she was living at Juniper Village in Chatham Township.

Born in 1923 in New York City, Ann graduated from Sarah Lawrence College in 1943 with a degree in Early Child Development.

In 1944, she married Peter Joralemon. After WWII, Peter and Ann moved to Cambridge, Mass., where Peter completed a PhD in geology. They then moved West, where they lived in mining towns with their three young children: Peter David, Barbara Gail and Donald. After some years in California, the two divorced, and Ann moved with her children to Summit, NJ, to be near her parents.

She worked for 30 years at Chubb Insurance in Short Hills. She discovered a passion for travelling and took trips all over the U.S. as well as to Guatemala, Peru, Taiwan, and Spain, among others.

As a Summit College Club member, Ann served on various committees and was the Club’s Historian from 2006-2012. She helped to organize the annual book sale. From 1998-2002, Ann served as the Summit College Club Foundation Director. Also, for six years Ann was in charge of the Telephone Tree when members were called with announcements about events.

Ann was a longtime member of Christ Church; she sang in its choir for 50 years.

She is survived by her children, a daughter-in-law, a son-in-law, a grandson, nieces, nephews, friends and colleagues.

Many thanks to **Ann Soper**, who provided some of the information for this column.