



Branch Banter

MAY 2023

MAY BRANCH MEETING

PROGRAM: Two of our Dual Enrollment students, Emma and Elisee, will share their experiences. Then, celebrate our Branch Awards recipients and join in the installation of our new officers. Please join us for this special occasion.

2022-2023 Dual Enrollment Students

The following students have been sponsored by the York Branch AAUW during the 2022-2023 academic year as dual enrollment students:

- Jewel May, Red Lion High School & Penn State York
- Elisee Okenge, Dover High School & York College
- Emma Patterson, Susquehannock High School & York College

We wish all of you the best of everything as you prepare to graduate from high school and begin your college career.

Lois Conaway & Carol Heintzelman, Program Co-Vice Presidents

MEMBERSHIP

RENEW your membership by June 15!

TECH QUERY FROM CAROL ANDERSON

If we were to establish a tech support group, would you be interested in participating? Bringing iPads or iPhones, we would meet with a professional for guidance. Let me know if you are interested and if you also would be willing, if it becomes necessary, to pay a fee.

Carol Anderson, Co-President

FROM THE PODIUM

TIME TO RENEW

Although it may seem we have leapt right into summer, let us celebrate the spirit of spring with its promise of renewal. It is:

- Time to renew our financial commitment to AAUW by renewing membership
- Time to renew our commitment to our mission
- Time to renew our support to activities, fundraising and programs
- Time to renew our positive responses to action

In this regard, the following remembrance is, I think, apt.

Hearing a cranky complaint - that we shall just have to return to argue this case again - from a member of a group which had just received an interim concession to its request, a new citizen of the USA replied, "That is democracy." The idea being, that in a democracy one does not always win the day nor win once and forever, but must always be ready to renew a commitment to The Good Fight.

Carol Anderson, Co-President

BOARD MEETING

The May 2 Board meeting will be conducted virtually using Zoom. Carol will email the agenda and lead the meeting, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Branch members are welcome to attend Board meetings.

NOTE: The June 6 combined Board meeting of old and new officers will be held at 10 a.m. at Carol's home.

SAD NEWS

We are sorry to report the passing of member Jeriline (Jeri) Wood on April 11, 2023. Jeri was born in Sylvatus, Virginia. She earned a BA from Penn State University and a Master's in Education from Millersville University. Jeri taught in the Dover Area School District for over 20 years. She began as a second-grade teacher, and later became a keyboarding instructor.

Jeri joined the York Branch in 2006. She served as Banter editor from 2008 until 2009. Jeri loved to read and published a children's book, *Kamra's Christmas Story*.

Although she was soft-spoken, Jeri had a keen sense of social justice. She was a long-time member of the York County Federation of Democratic Women. She was a past treasurer of the Dover Area Education Association and a member of York/Adams PSEA-Retired. Jeri was also a member of the YCPASR (York County PA School Retirees).

Betty Hooker, Archives Chair

BANTER DEADLINE

May 24 is the deadline for articles for the June *Banter*, the last issue until September. If you want any Branch summer activities listed, please send them by the May deadline.



OUTSTANDING WOMAN AWARD 2023 – Rita Meisenhelder

Rita has served our Branch in many capacities over the years. She has served as Program VP, Hostess Coordinator for Spring Market Faire, a book group facilitator, and a member of the Branch's 50th Anniversary Planning Committee. As Co-President from 2020-2022, she guided the Branch as it faced the uncertainties and challenges of COVID. She helped establish the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee to address the important issues of discrimination that are facing our community. This is now a standing committee that she co-chairs. Rita is known for her willingness to volunteer wherever our Branch has a need. Her leadership and her ability to think creatively have helped our Branch remain strong and well respected in our community.



MEMBERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE 2023 - Jean Quickel and Suzanne Robertson

Jean and Suzanne have done an excellent job in their efforts to increase AAUW York Branch's membership. They surveyed the membership to determine what times members preferred our Branch meetings to be and conducted and coordinated a campaign to call members to connect with them if they had not attended meetings on a regular basis. A significant accomplishment was the business card they developed with information about AAUW's mission and the York Branch's meeting. Their efforts have resulted in our new and current members feeling welcome in our Branch.

YORK BRANCH SPECIAL HONOREE 2023 – Linda Palmer

Linda has been a dependable coordinator, leader, and facilitator of the daytime Book Group. During the challenges of COVID, she helped to bring about some consistency at a time when everything was changing and uncertain, including when and where our Branch meetings would be held. She is welcoming to anyone who is interested in participating in the Book Group. Her leadership is greatly appreciated.

Lois Conaway, Awards Chair

PUBLIC POLICY

Here is a brief update of bills that have been introduced in Congress or that are expected by AAUW to be introduced in the coming months.

1. Family Act—Would create a national self-funding paid family and medical leave insurance program. Women disproportionately bear the economic burden of taking time off to care for children or elderly family members, or they are forced to delay securing care for themselves or others because they cannot afford to use unpaid leave. Expected to be introduced in late February.
2. Healthy Families Act—Allows workers in businesses with 15 or more employees to earn up to seven job-protected paid sick days. Expected to be introduced in March or April. AAUW joined the United States of Women (USOW) and more than 100 gender equity partners to deliver an open letter to the 118th Congress detailing five key priorities for gender justice. Given the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination that women and all people of marginalized genders face, in particular Black women and other women and gender expansive people of color, the 118th Congress has a responsibility and a duty to make gender equity and justice a top priority in its upcoming session. We deserve leaders who prioritize gender justice.
Our 5 demands to Congress are clear:
 - A. Protect health, reproductive freedom, and bodily autonomy.
 - B. Ensure economic security for women and families.
 - C. Advance policies to reduce gender-based violence.
 - D. Advance democracy, voting rights, and gender equality.
 - E. Advance justice for immigrants and their families.

Carol Heintzelman, Public Policy Chair

AD HOC COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND RELATIONSHIPS COMMITTEE

During three meetings, Martha Fleischer, Rita Meisenhelder, Nancy Spataro, Amber Stokholm, Barbara Woodmansee and Carol Anderson met to discuss ways to broaden an awareness of our Branch so that we might increase membership and promote our mission.

The following are suggestions for implementation in the coming year:

- Support current members as a first priority
- Schedule fewer meetings and vary venues (Board by Zoom except in June)
- Direct member contributions to scholarship funds as a possibility
- Undertake no new community programming
- Form partnerships and collaborate with:
 - Community organizations and events
 - Other Branches
 - Local Colleges
- Encourage members to:
 - Make program suggestions and alert Board to community events
 - Write letters to the editor with review by Communications Comm./Board
 - Send information and photos to Communications Committee to post
 - Develop new interest groups
 - Support fundraising
 - Pay dues
 - Bring friends to meetings

Carol Anderson, Co-President

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

This is Part 2 regarding what we can do to end racism in our community. The DEI Committee hopes that this information will help achieve the committee's goal of making all of us aware of how we can play a part in ending racism in our community. This article was written by the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

EVERYDAY WAYS TO FIGHT RACISM (PART 2)

Call out racist “jokes” or statements.

Let people know that racist comments are not okay. If you are not comfortable or do not feel safe being confrontational, try to break down their thought process and ask questions. For example, “That joke doesn’t make sense to me, could you explain it?” Or “You may be kidding, but this is what it means when you say that type of thing.” Do not be afraid to engage in conversations with loved ones, coworkers, and friends. Racist jokes or statements perpetuate and normalize biases and prejudices. Remember that not saying anything – or laughing along – implies that you agree.

Find out how your company or school works to expand opportunities for people of color.

Systemic racism means that there are barriers – including wealth disparities, criminal justice bias, and education and housing discrimination – that stack the deck against people of color in the workplace or at school. For example, the African American Policy Forum (AAPF) reported that in 2014, a 12-year-old girl faced criminal charges, in addition to expulsion from school, for writing “hi” on a locker room wall. Their campaign, #BlackGirlsMatter, addresses the issues of overpoliced and underprotected Black girls within the education system. It is important for companies and schools to address these issues and promote a culture of equity.

Be thoughtful with your finances.

Take a stand with your wallet. Know the practices of companies that you invest in and the charities that you donate to. Make an effort to shop at small, local businesses and give your money back to the people living in the community. Your state may have a directory of local, minority-owned businesses in your area.

Adopt an intersectional approach in all aspects of your life.

Remember that all forms of oppression are connected. You cannot fight against one form of injustice and not fight against others. As an example, many survivors of domestic violence also face racism and other forms of oppression.

The next DEI Committee meeting will be in the fall. New members are always welcome.

Rita Meisenhelder & Barbara Woodmansee, DE&I Co-Chairs

VOTE ON MAY 16TH BUT DO YOUR HOMEWORK FIRST!

Municipal Primary Election - May 16, 2023

Last Day to register – May 1

Last Day to request Mail-in and Absentee Ballots – May 9

Check this website for more information:

<http://www.vote.pa.gov//Pages/default.aspx>

In the February *Branch Banter*, Carol Little, Chair of the Education Issues Action Group, wrote about the importance of the upcoming municipal election. Carol wrote:

This year, 2023, is a municipal election year, and that means school board candidates will be on the ballot. In normal times, this is a low voter turnout situation, with little enthusiasm or controversy. This year, however, some extremist groups have organized with the intention of “packing” local school boards, with candidates who will attempt to implement their political agenda with specific policies that reflect their own point of view. (p.5)

When extremists achieve a majority on school boards and implement books bans and censorship, it can lead to expensive lawsuits, and money wasted on legal bills rather than smaller class sizes, services for students and training for teachers. Some of you may recall the “intelligent design” controversy in the Dover Area School District in 2005 that cost taxpayers approximately one million dollars to settle. Unfortunately, expensive legal battles have been waged in other Pennsylvania school districts as well.

What Can You Do?

- School Board elections are nonpartisan, so candidates often “cross file.” Their names will appear on both the Republican and Democratic ballots. The May election is the primary. The final election will be held in November.
- You can contact the County Board of Elections (717-9604) to request a full list of the school board candidates in each district.
- If you vote by mail-in ballot, or before you go to the polls, you can check out the school board candidates on Facebook or Google. You also can talk with trusted neighbors and friends and learn their views on the candidates.

Questions for School Board Candidates

- Why do you want to become a school board member?
- What do you view as the role of the school board?
- What are major issues facing the school district?
- What are your budget priorities?
- What is your position on school boards controlling the information that students can access in their school libraries?

School Board candidates should not be running to promote their religious beliefs or to promote a political agenda. Their goals should be to use tax dollars wisely and to ensure that schools provide all students with a quality education and provide opportunities for students to thrive after graduation.

Vote on May 16th but do your homework first!

Betty Hooker, Education Issues Action Group & Get Out the Vote

BOOK GROUP

3rd Wednesdays 1:00 p.m. via Zoom Contact Linda Palmer

May 17: *The Lincoln Highway* by Amor Towles

If you are interested in joining a discussion, you can request a list of discussion questions.

BRIDGE GROUP

The Bridge Group will meet at the home of Phyllis Sword on Wednesday, May 3, at 10:00 a.m. Please bring a sandwich for our noon lunch.

Nancy Rexrode will host the June 7 meeting.

For information about joining or subbing in the Bridge Group, please call Lois Kulp. We welcome new players at any time.

GAME GROUP

Our lunch and Game Group will be held Saturday, May 6, at 12 noon. Our host is Martha Fleischer and husband Tom. We are open to new participants. Please RSVP to Martha **by May 1**.

LUNCH A MONTH

The May Lunch-a-Month will be held at the Stone Grill on **May 18 at 1:00 p.m.** Please sign up by calling Barbara Bott **by May 16**. Hope to see you there!

SUNSHINE

If you know of an AAUW member who deserves a card due to illness, death in family, or thinking of you, please notify Linda Rupert.

Mission Statement

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

Vision Promise

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

Diversity Statement

AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.