



# Branch

# Banter

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JANUARY 2024

**THERE IS NO BRANCH MEETING FOR JANUARY**  
**We will get together again on February 13!**

## FROM THE PODIUM

At the moment, Christmas has not yet gone nor has it even come. But as much as we delight in celebrations, there is the urge to look ahead, to forge forth. And the first agenda item after Yule is the business of New Year Resolutions. They have the reputation of being an exercise in futility with precious few, if indeed any, of us managing to keep them much past the dropping of the apple, pickle, red or white rose, et al.

This being so, why not try something a bit easier? A day-to-day exercise. Close the evening with a review of the passing day. That which was good, aim to repeat, and that which was missing, aim to incorporate tomorrow. If we miss a day, all hope, therefore, is not lost!

Happy New Year!

*Carol Anderson, President*

## BOARD MEETING

The January 2 Board meeting will be conducted using Zoom at 7:00 p.m. Carol will email the agenda prior to the meeting, which will begin at 7:00 p.m. Branch members are welcome.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

**Please say YES!** The Nominating Committee is seeking a member to serve as President for one year and another member to serve as President for a two-year term. We also need one or two members to serve as Program Vice President(s) for a two-year term. Please contact Suzanne Robertson, Darla Stover, or Jane Long if you could be an officer for the York Branch AAUW. Thank you.

*Suzanne Robertson, Darla Stover & Jane Long, Nominating Committee*

## BRANCH AWARDS

York Branch is given the opportunity to present three awards annually through the sponsorship of our state organization, AAUW-PA. The honorees are recognized by AAUW-PA, and members receive a certificate recognizing their accomplishments.

The **Gateway to Equity Award** is given to individuals or organizations that have shown by action and philosophy that they advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, or research. This award is selected by the Branch Board members.

The **Member Making a Difference Award** is given to a member who has made a big difference in something important to the branch within the last year. This person need not be an officer or a committee chair.

### Outstanding Woman Award

- She has provided meritorious service to the branch and the community over multiple years.
- She may not be the current president.
- The state allows two nominees.

### Other Optional Awards

**York Branch Special Honoree** – may be given to someone who has been active for many years who deserves recognition but does not qualify for the other awards.

**AAUW-PA Special Honoree** – This award is given by the State Board to someone who has been active at both the State and Branch levels or has given extraordinary service to the local branch,

Check our *Yearbook* for past honorees. Please submit your nominations **in writing by January 15**, and **please give examples of the person's accomplishments in a brief statement**.

You may send an email or a note via mail to Lois Conaway. Thank you for your suggestions. A committee of past recipients will select the 2024 honorees. Please understand that the Branch is under no obligation to submit all of these awards, but we want to recognize those women who have served our Branch in a significant way.

*Lois Conaway, Awards Chair*

## HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

We shall be meeting in early January at a date and time to be set after the holidays.

Please call Carol Anderson or email her if interested in adding your voice to the discussion of what scholarships are to be given in the future and how decisions are to be made.

*Carol Anderson*

**\*\*\*\* BE A LUNCHEON SPONSOR \*\*\*\***

As we draw nearer to the date of our Spring for Scholarship Luncheon (April 28, 2024), the committee is hard at work arranging entertainment, designing publicity materials, soliciting corporate sponsorships, arranging ticket sales, and finalizing the many details involved in organizing a successful fundraiser. Our members have asked what they can do at this stage to help.

Help to support our luncheon by making a financial contribution to its success. The money raised through contributions from our members and our corporate sponsors will enable us to cover the costs involved in holding this event, with surplus from contributions and ticket sales applied to our scholarship program.

Be an ANGEL, SPONSOR, or FRIEND. In recognition of your contribution, your name will appear in the *Banter* and in the AAUW Spring for Scholarship program. Please complete the form below, indicating the amount of your contribution. Make checks payable to: York Branch AAUW. Then return the form and payment to Phyllis Sword **by February 29**.

\_\_\_\_\_ ANGEL (\$100 & up)

\_\_\_\_\_ PATRON (\$75)

\_\_\_\_\_ SPONSOR (\$50)

\_\_\_\_\_ FRIEND (\$25)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\*\*\* CORPORATE / BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS \*\*\***

Now that the holidays are past and a new year has begun, it is time to renew contacts with businesses that would benefit from advertising in our Spring For Scholarships Luncheon program booklet. As of now, we have had commitments from 3 companies, for a total of \$800.

If you deal with a local business you think might benefit from this opportunity, as well as support us, here is the information you can supply to them:

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**Spring For Scholarships Luncheon**, April 28, 2024, at the Country Club of York

Below are the opportunities to help us and to promote your business in our program booklet:

\_\_\_\_\_ Full page ad (5" w x 8" h) = \$200

\_\_\_\_\_ 1/2 page ad (5" w x 4" h) = \$150

\_\_\_\_\_ 1/4 page ad (5" w x 2" h) = \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ 1/8 page ad (2.5" w x 2" h) = \$50 (business card size)

If you would like to place an ad, please email or call Carol Little **by January 15** to reserve your ad space. She will supply you with the information you need to submit the ad, and will send you an invoice for your records.

## EDUCATION ISSUES ACTION GROUP

### The A B Cs of School Funding in Pennsylvania – It Is Complicated

On Wednesday, December 13, the Pennsylvania legislature passed School Code House Bill 301 which includes \$130 million in new funding for the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program for private and religious school vouchers. These funds, along with the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC), now total \$470 million a year. The programs allow businesses to direct their taxes to private and religious schools, thereby reducing their tax burden.

#### **What's wrong with Providing Tax-Payer Funds to Private and Religious Schools?**

**Private and religious schools discriminate** based on the LGBTQ status of families, pregnancy, religious beliefs, children's disabilities, children's academic standing/test scores and vague "right fit" criteria. See the *New Report: PA voucher schools use tax \$\$ to advance discrimination, December 6, 2023*, published by the Education Voters of Pennsylvania at: <https://edvoterspa.org>

**Due to discriminatory practices**, taxpayers' children and grandchildren may not be admitted to the religious and private schools that they are indirectly supporting through tax breaks to businesses.

#### **Private and religious schools are largely unaccountable to taxpayers.**

- There is no provision for the verification of family income levels.
- There is no provision for indicating where the students attended school the previous year; it is therefore impossible to determine whether vouchers are being issued to new students or to students who were already attending the private or religious school.

**The Commonwealth Court in February 2023 decreed that all students in Pennsylvania have 'a constitutional right to a comprehensive, contemporary and effective public education.'** EITC and OSTC programs take tax dollars away from public schools, thereby increasing the tax burden on all citizens through higher taxes and making it more difficult to fulfill the Commonwealth Court's order. EITC and OSTC make it more challenging to provide all Pennsylvania students with "a comprehensive, contemporary and effective public education.'

*Betty Hooker, EIA Group*

## BANTER DEADLINE

**January 24** is the deadline for articles for the February *Banter*. .

## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COMMITTEE**

In a June 2023 article entitled *DEI Programs in Universities are Being Cut Across the Country. What Does That Mean for the Country?*, it focuses on the number of states that are withdrawing DEI departments from public education campuses. More than 22 states are proposing withdrawing funding for these efforts. Large numbers of faculty and students favor DEI and are protesting the legislation opposing DEI.

According to the Inter-University Council of Ohio, data shows that “DEI efforts help create an academic community that generates a higher enrollment rate, matriculation rate, and eventual success rate. DEI is for students with disabilities, veterans with PTSD, minority students, and students who are New Americans who need extra help due to language or cultural barriers.”

Such measures of defunding DEI are perceived as threatening professors’ ability to present information in their classes. According to Yoleidy Rosaria-Hernandez, a recently fired chief diversity officer at New College of Florida: “the real impact is that it’s a signal of the larger regression of civil rights” (including reproductive rights). Student applicants may be wary of schools in states with DEI restrictions.

According to a *Forbes* magazine article dated July 2023, “DEI has become a political football, a critical battleground in the larger culture war roiling American society and politics.” Students are the ones suffering from such measures.

*Rita Meisenhelder & Barbara Woodmansee, DEI Co-Chairs*

## **BOOK GROUP**

The Book Group will meet on Wednesday, January 17, at 1:00 p.m. at Olive Garden to discuss *The Devil in Dover* by Lauri Lebo.

In case of inclement weather, we will meet via Zoom:

Please RSVP to Linda Palmer if you plan to attend.

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 Carol Anderson on Wednesday, January 3, at 10:00 a.m. Instead of a sandwich, you are welcome to bring New Year refreshments to share.

New players and subs are accepted anytime. For information, please contact Lois Kulp.

## **PUBLIC POLICY**

It has been more than a year since the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which instigated new legislative and legal attacks on critical health care. One of the most recent cases, of a Texas woman facing a terminal pregnancy that threatened her own life, has showcased how abortion bans – even with exceptions – do not work. After Kate Cox, mother of two, learned from her doctors that her fetus had a fatal condition, she sought an abortion to protect her life and future ability to have children. The Texas Supreme Court overruled the determination of her physicians and the lower court. Kate’s life could not wait while this political theater played out and she was forced to leave her home state to receive medical care to save her life.

Everyone has the right to make decisions about their own reproductive lives without government interference. National AAUW is now calling on Congress to pass the Woman’s Health Protection Act (WHPA).

Abortion access is vital to women’s ability to control their lives, bodies and futures. Congress must act to protect women and all people who might need this lifesaving care, because access to critical health care should not depend on where someone lives. The Women’s Health Protection Act (WHPA) would protect abortion care as a statutory right and prohibit restrictions including arbitrary deadlines like 6- or 20-week bans, biased counseling, and mandatory ultrasounds. These restrictions are medically unnecessary and rely on “exceptions” that, as Kate’s case shows, can be nearly impossible to get.

Let’s take action now and every day until our members of Congress support and pass the Women’s Health Protection Act. Without reproductive freedom, there is no equity.

(Source: Meghan Kissell, Senior Director, Policy & Member Advocacy, 12/18/23).

*Carol Heintzelman, Public Policy Chair*

## **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*

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

### *Vision*

Equity for all.

### *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.