



# Branch

# Banter

FEBRUARY 2024

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## CRITICAL RACE THEORY AND CONTEMPORARY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE

**WHEN:** Tuesday, February 13 7:00 p.m.  
Social time 6:30 PM Business meeting follows program

**WHERE:** York Alliance Church, 501 Rathton Road, York

**PROGRAM:** *Critical Race Theory and Contemporary Conversations about Race* will be presented by Dr. Laura West Steck, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology, York College of Pennsylvania. Dr. Steck is the Chair of the Applied Behavioral Sciences Department and Associate Professor / Behavioral Sciences. She received a B.A. in Sociology / Religious Studies and also her M.A. in Sociology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She holds a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies (2004) from University of Connecticut and received her Ph.D. from there in 2006.

*Lois Conaway & Carol Heintzelman, Program Co-Vice Presidents*

## FROM THE PODIUM

Searching for a relaxing streaming series, I came upon an engaging and witty French police procedural, *Astrid*. Astrid is a young autistic woman who is gripped by a need to solve puzzles. The simplest puzzle, the nine point four-line puzzle, is solved by the detective character when she gets the idea to "think outside the box."

Thinking outside the box became trite at the end of the last century through overuse. But it is one directive we might wisely now revisit. It would seem a good idea in these perilous and troubling days, both for the good of our own life and of the life of human society, that we very seriously consider moving outside boxes; the boxes we inhabit and the boxes we consign to others. For the most part, these boxes harbor insular thinking and belief. You will be able to list the all too often feelings with which they are filled – discontent rather than gratitude, pride rather than humility, fear rather than love, envy rather than modesty.

You clearly have got a President who thinks she missed her calling as a preacher. Please take this as an apology for a sad compulsion.

*Carol Anderson, President*

## BOARD MEETING

The February 6 Board meeting will be conducted virtually using Zoom. Carol will email the agenda prior to the meeting, which will begin at 7:00 p.m. Branch members are welcome.

## EDUCATION ISSUES ACTION GROUP

### GOOD NEWS FOR PENNSYLVANIA STUDENTS!

For the first time, legislators have acknowledged that the State has a **constitutional responsibility to provide adequate and equitable funding for public education to meet students' needs.**

The bipartisan Basic Education Funding Commission approved a detailed and comprehensive report with recommendations that, if implemented, would bring transformational change to Pennsylvania's school funding system and have a life-changing impact on public school students.

Co-chaired by Sen. Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-98, York) and Rep. Mike Sturla (D-96, Lancaster), the BEFC spent many months in meetings across the state, listening to countless hours of testimony from over 100 educators, parents and community leaders. They are to be congratulated and thanked for their efforts.

[Click HERE to find a copy of the report that was approved.](#) A summary of the report is on page 2. (There is also a Republican report that dissents from the majority, and is available on Phillips-Hill's website.)

The next step is for Governor Shapiro to introduce this plan into his 2024-25 budget proposal. After that, the General Assembly needs to adopt and fund the plan in the 2024-25 budget and commit to fully funding the recommendations over the next seven years.

**Please take one minute to text the governor at 717-788-8990 to thank him for seizing this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to provide real opportunity to Pennsylvania's public-school students — and for continuing to fight for them throughout this year's budget season.**

A short, personalized thank-you message of 1-2 sentences will make a big difference in keeping our momentum strong through his budget proposal and the June 30 deadline for next year's budget!

*Carol Little, EIA Group Chair*

## BANTER DEADLINE

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

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

February is Black History Month. It is the time when our country honors the contributions and sacrifices of African Americans who have helped shape our nation. It celebrates the rich cultural heritage, triumphs, and adversities that are part of our country's history.

This observance began when the Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson and the prominent minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH), an organization dedicated to researching and promoting achievements by Black Americans and other people of African descent. Over time, city mayors began issuing yearly proclamations recognizing "Negro History Week." The week's observance evolved into Black History Month, particularly on many college campuses.

In 1976, President Gerald Ford recognized Black History Month, calling upon the public to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Since 1976, every American president has designated February as Black History Month. February was chosen because it coincides with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Other countries also observe Black History Month, including Canada, Ireland, and the United Kingdom.

The DEI Committee recognizes the importance of such observances. The committee will continue its efforts to increase awareness of DEI issues and share them with our Branch. With that goal in mind, the committee recommended the bestselling book *Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett to February's Book Group and collaborated with the Program VPs to bring Dr. Laura Steck to our February Branch meeting to discuss "Critical Race Theory and Contemporary Conversations about Race."

The DEI Committee welcomes new members to join in these important conversations. The next committee meeting will be held on Monday, February 26, 10:30 a.m., via Zoom. Please contact Barbara or Rita if you have any questions.

### Special Information:

The Appell Center is observing Black History by showing the following films:

February 4, 3 PM - *Hidden Figures*  
February 9, 7 PM - *Queen and Slim*  
February 18, 3 PM - *Selma*  
February 23, 7 PM - *A Man Called Adam*

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

## AAUW PROPOSED BYLAWS CHANGE FOR MEMBERSHIP

"AAUW recommends approval of the following bylaw amendment to eliminate the degree requirement for membership in AAUW. This change will align our membership practices with our purpose of advancing equity for women and girls and enable us to include members with the diverse backgrounds and perspectives needed to achieve our purpose in today's world."

[2024 AAUW Proposed Bylaws Changes](#)

**Be informed and make your vote count. Voting open April 3 – May 15**

## **PUBLIC POLICY**

The following items reflect activities of AAUW at the national level:

1. December 13 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Equal Rights Amendment's (ERA) first introduction in the U.S. House of Representatives. As a founding partner of the ERA Coalition's National Strategy Task Force, AAUW marched alongside the ERA Coalition and partners in Washington, DC, to call on Congress to affirm the ERA and for President Biden to instruct the Archivist to publish the ERA as the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
2. Congress continued funding of federal programs through early 2024 – January 19 and February 2 – but the fiscal year 2024 appropriations process is still underway. AAUW continues to urge Congress to reject a year-long continuing resolution, which would result in catastrophic cuts to federal programs that serve the public and strengthen our economy, and to finish the appropriations process through a bipartisan approach.
3. January 28 marked the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act*.

*Carol Heintzelman, Public Policy Chair*

## **BOOK GROUP**

The Book Group will meet on Wednesday, February 21, at 1:00 p.m. at Olive Garden to discuss *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett.

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**

Nancy Rexrode is hosting the Bridge Group on February 7 at 10:00 a.m. Please bring a sandwich for the lunch break.

The Bridge Group invites Branch members to join the group at any time. Subs are welcome. For information, please contact Lois Kulp.

## **GAMES GROUP**

You are invited to Games Group at Barbara Woodmansee's home on Friday, February 9, at 12 noon. We enjoy a potluck lunch with brain stimulating games to follow. New participants are welcome. Call Barbara to RSVP.

### *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.