



# Branch

# Banter

NOVEMBER 2024

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## LIBRARY IN YOUR POCKET

**WHEN:** Tuesday, November 12 1:00 PM \* New time and place for November! \*  
Social time 12:30 PM Business meeting follows program

**WHERE:** Glatfelter Center, SpiriTrust Lutheran, The Village at Sprengle Drive  
1802 Folkemer Circle, York

**PROGRAM:** Our speaker, Jill Weston, currently Member Services Librarian at Martin Library, will teach us how to use the *Libby* platform which works on any tablet, phone or desktop computer with an internet connection. With *Libby*, we can access Martin Library's ebook and e-audio collection. We also will learn about some of Martin's other online resources, such as *Transparent Languages* and *My Heritage: Library Edition*. Join us as we become better acquainted with this technology!

*Suzanne Robertson & Darla Stover, Program Co-Vice Presidents*

## IMPORTANT NOTE RE: DECEMBER 10 BRANCH MEETING

Our festive Christmas event will be held on December 10 at the Glatfelter Center, starting with social time at 12:00 noon, followed by the meal at 12:30 PM.

Due to very recent changes in the SpiriTrust Lutheran's Food Service Department, the menu and cost will be forthcoming by email (or phone).

## 2024-2025 YEARBOOKS

Please contact Betty Hooker by email or phone if you have not received your 2024-2025 York Branch *Yearbook*. The *Yearbook* has a chartreuse cover.

Many thanks to the faithful members who delivered *Yearbooks*. They reduced our mailing costs and made personal connections with members who are unable to attend our monthly meetings.

## BANTER DEADLINE

**November 24** is the deadline for articles for the December *Banter*.

## **FROM THE PODIUM**

Women have lost a champion in the fight for equal pay. Lilly Ledbetter passed away on October 12. Lilly Ledbetter was the pioneer of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 to ensure all women receive fair pay for their work. When Lily became aware that she was being paid 40 percent less than her male counterparts, she filed a gender discrimination lawsuit. That began her journey to advocate for equal pay.

Alongside Lilly Ledbetter, AAUW and other organizations participated in marches, wrote letters, and sent emails to their Congressional leaders that motivated Congress to pass the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. This law allows people to fight ongoing discrimination regardless of when it began.

AAUW considers it an honor to have had worked alongside Lilly Ledbetter in her efforts to fight for pay equity. Two of our members, Betty Hooker and Carol Heintzelman, were fortunate to be with Lilly at an AAUW National Convention.

Lilly Ledbetter said, "Pay equity affects you for the rest of your life. Women are outliving their spouses by an average of 10 years. Many can't remain independent simply because they did not get their rightful retirement and pay. This is a hardship in this country. It's devastating to the American family, the community, the states and the nation. The gender pay gap is everybody's issue."

There is still work to be done. Advocating for the passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act is important because it protects workers from being fired if they talk about their pay at work and it bans employers asking about salary history.

What is Lilly Ledbetter's advice to the next generation? She said, "Young women, in the beginning of their careers, make sure they negotiate. Because if you start out making less than men, you can't easily catch up. Be sure to research salaries for your prospective employer and industry. Take AAUW's negotiating trainings."

In honor and in the memory of Lilly Ledbetter, AAUW will continue the fight for equal pay. It is a legacy we will leave for our daughters, granddaughters, and all future generations.

*Barbara Woodmansee, President*

## **BOARD MEETING**

The November 5 Board meeting will be conducted virtually using Zoom. Barbara will email the agenda prior to the meeting, which will begin at 7:00 PM. Branch members are welcome.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

REMINDER: The Higher Education Scholarship Committee will hold a meeting on Thursday, November 7, at 1:00 PM. It will be held at Rita Meisenhelder's home. I look forward to seeing you then.

*Rita Meisenhelder, HESC Chair*

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

The DEI Committee's goal is to share information that will help our members understand diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. There are two new resources that the Committee wants to share. Both resources address the transgender issue.

The First Presbyterian Church is presenting the documentary *From Pain to Purpose* on November 8 at 6:30 PM. The documentary is about Mary Almy, a First Presbyterian member, and how she transitioned from male to female. The film has been shown at the Appell Center and at other venues. The program is free and open to the public. It will be held in the Christine Thomas Hall at the First Presbyterian Church, 225 East Market St., York, across from Martin Library. For more information, please contact Sue Dunham at 717-495-1565.

The other resource regarding transgender issues is the documentary *Will and Harper*. The film, currently on Netflix, features Will Ferrell, who learns that his good friend has transitioned to a woman. It is a portrait of friendship and transition.

The DEI Committee welcomes suggestions and feedback from our members.

The next DEI Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, November 7, 2:30 PM at Rita's home. New members are always welcome.

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

## **GET OUT THE VOTE**

Lois Conaway, Barbara Woodmansee and I registered voters at Penn State York on Tuesday, October 15th. We received a warm welcome from Scott Simonds and Jeff Gerstein of the Student Affairs Office. They set us up outside of Rosie's Cafeteria, with computers set to <https://www.vote.pa.gov>, and we had a steady flow of students passing our table. Most of the students said they were already registered, but we did remind them to vote. We also gave registration information to students, and we registered one incredibly grateful student.

Additionally, I shared voter registration and voting information with the OLLI staff, and they included it in their newsletter in the weeks prior to the election.

Kudos to Lois and Barbara for helping with this project.

*Betty Hooker, Get Out the Vote 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.

## EDUCATION REFORM IN PENNSYLVANIA – A WORK IN PROGRESS

On July 11, 2024, the PA House and Senate passed the state budget and school code, and it was signed into law by Governor Shapiro.

### Legislation that is good for public schools

- The full legislature acknowledged that education funding must be increased to comply with constitutional requirements. As a first step, there was a \$494 million adequacy funding increase for education in this year's budget.
- Cyber charter school funding for special education was reformed to match the actual percentage of students with disabilities in a district rather than an artificial number specified in state law.
- No new school voucher program.
- Increased requirements for cyber school advertising transparency and accountability.
- A substantial funding increase for the neediest school districts.

### Room for Improvement

- **“Hold Harmless” Clause**

Decades ago, the Legislature passed a provision that specified that school districts would receive the same amount of funding even if their student population decreased. Shrinking school districts receive the same state funding year after year, even though they have fewer students. Districts that are growing in population, such as the school districts in South Central PA, receive less than they would if resources were divided fairly. “Hold Harmless” is unfair to taxpayers who must make up the difference through higher school taxes and to students who are getting short-changed by the Legislature.

- **Over-Funding of Cyber Charter Schools**

Cyber Charter Schools are online public schools. They are run by private companies or by intermediate units or school districts. The private companies charge the school districts the same-per-pupil rate as the districts pay for students enrolled in brick-and-mortar charter schools. Since the cost of in-person instruction far exceeds the cost of online instruction, the cyber charter schools are grossly overpaid.

- **Lack of Accountability and Transparency in EITC and OSTC Funding**

The current **Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC)** school voucher programs received \$55 million in additional funding in the 2024 Budget with no additional reporting requirements. Taxpayers are now providing \$525 million for tax credit school vouchers for private and religious schools that discriminate against students from certain backgrounds. Furthermore, the private and religious schools provide no information on which students benefit from the programs or on student outcomes.

*Betty Hooker, Education Issues*

## **PUBLIC POLICY**

**Family Care Act Update:** It has been more than 500 days since the Family Care Act (HB181) passed out of the House Labor & Industry Committee in June 2023. It has since been amended with bipartisan support in December 2023, while the Senate Labor & Industry Committee passed the Senate version of the Family Care Act (SB580) with strong bipartisan support (8-3) in June 2024.

Pennsylvania House of Representatives: Since June 6, 2023, HB181, the Family Care Act has been waiting for a full House vote. Members of the Family Care Coalition were in Harrisburg in July to urge legislators to pass paid leave legislation, which would help every worker in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Senate: The Pennsylvania Senate Labor & Industry Committee voted 8-3 on June 11, to advance the Family Care Act (Senate Bill 580) – an important step in making paid family, medical and safe leave a reality for Pennsylvanians. This marks the first time in the United States that a Republican controlled chamber ran and voted on a paid leave bill, a sign of bipartisan support for the Family Care Act and the vital role it plays in the lives of people of all parties across the Commonwealth.

Despite strong bipartisan and bicameral support, the Family Care Act (HB181/SB580) has yet to be brought to the floor for final votes in the Pennsylvania House and Senate. If the Family Care Act does not pass by the end of this year, it will have to start over again in 2025. With nearly 4 million Pennsylvania workers lacking access to paid leave, Pennsylvania's economy, small businesses, and working families are falling behind. The Family Care Act would provide Pennsylvanians the freedom not to have to choose between their financial stability and taking care of their families during a critical time of need.

*Carol Heintzelman, Public Policy Chair*

## **BOOK GROUP**

The Book Group will meet on Wednesday, November 20, at 1:00 PM at Olive Garden to discuss *The Second Life of Mirielle West* by Amanda Skenandore. Please RSVP to Linda Palmer if you plan to attend.

## **BRIDGE GROUP**

The Bridge Group will meet at the home of Nancy Rexrode on Wednesday, November 6, at 10:00 AM. Please bring a sandwich for the noon break.

The Bridge Group currently has 9 members, but we encourage you to be a substitute player at any time. Please contact Lois Kulp-Hickman for further information.

## **GAMES AND LUNCH GROUP**

The Games and Lunch Group will meet at Anne McFeely's home at 12 noon on Friday, November 15. Please RSVP to Anne. New friends welcome.

### *Mission*

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