



Branch Banter

JUNE 2025

FROM THE PODIUM

As my term as president of the AAUW York Branch ends, I want to express my deep appreciation to the Board and the entire membership for their support. It has been a distinct honor to serve as your president. Your support energized me as we faced challenges and celebrated our accomplishments.

Over the year, our Branch continued to strongly advocate to support education. We awarded two scholarships, one graduate and another undergraduate. We continued to enhance our community partnerships and we participated in AAUW public policy initiatives. AAUW recognized our Branch for its activism, for its efforts to share information about our Branch and its activities, and for how we increased our membership.

As I reflect on the York Branch's impact on our community, on women, and girls, I am proud to be part of an organization that will invest in our future generations by advocating for gender equity for women and girls. I know that I will persist in my advocacy just as I am sure our membership will.

Congratulations and best wishes to our new leadership team, ably led by Bonnie Bluett, our new president.

Thank you.

Barbara Woodmansee, President

JOINT BOARD MEETING – JUNE 3

In-coming, out-going and returning Board members will meet on June 3 at 10:00 AM at the Glatfelter Center. Bonnie will email the agenda and lead the meeting. Branch members are welcome to attend.

AAUW PA 2025 SUMMER RETREAT – REMINDER

The AAUW PA Summer Retreat will be held on Saturday, June 28, 10 AM–3 PM, at the Wyndham Garden, State College, PA. A Welcome Reception will be held on Friday, June 27, 6:30-8:00 PM. There is a block of rooms at the Wyndham Garden for those who wish to stay overnight. Consider carpooling if you are interested in attending.

For more information and to register, visit the state website: <https://aauw-pa.aauw.net>
If you have questions, you can contact a Board member.

HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

May has been a very busy month for our committee. We united with this year's scholarship winners and selected new scholarship winners for the fall 2025 semester.

It was a wonderful evening. Our Branch members came together for the end of the year dinner, an event for us to see one another and to recognize another year of supporting the mission of AAUW. A highlight of the evening, especially for our committee members, was to finally meet our scholarship winners for the fall semester 2024. Sully Pinos, the Graduate Scholarship winner, and Kori Thompson, our Undergraduate Scholarship winner, spoke about their academic year and the impact it has had on them. They were superb. They were eloquent, appreciative, and dynamic in describing their studies and their hopes in integrating their newly acquired knowledge in helping others in their careers, present or future. After their presentations, Sully invited Kori to join her at her place of business, the York County Economic Alliance, to explore possible opportunities for Kori's future. How wonderful is that?!

Our committee is delighted to announce that we have selected one young woman as the graduate scholarship winner and two young women for the undergraduate. We had four apply for the graduate scholarship and nine students apply for the two Doris Cohen Memorial undergraduate scholarships. The applicants were split between York College and Penn State York. We based the criteria on academics, financial need, and community service (either in the community or on campus). The group was very impressive. We chose the following:

Kali Barnes – Graduate Scholarship

She is studying Public Policy and Administration at York College.

Catherine Kurnik – Doris Cohen Memorial Scholarship

She is majoring in English and History at Penn State York.

Francesca Rodman – Doris Cohen Memorial Scholarship

She is majoring in Human Development and Family Studies/Psychology at Penn State York.

Thank you to Carol Eicher for her generous donation in memory of her mother, Doris Cohen. It is making a difference in students' lives.

Rita Meisenhelter, Higher Education Scholarship Committee Chair

BOOK GROUP

We will meet on Wednesday, August 20, to choose books to discuss in the upcoming year.

BANTER DEADLINE

August 26 is the deadline for articles for the **September Banter**.

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.

NOTABLE BRANCH MEMBER

AAUW Pennsylvania has created a way to honor special long-term members who have served in several leadership roles and have served their branches as well as possibly with the state. Pages titled *Branch Notable Members* appear on the State website:

<https://aauw-pa.aauw.net/branch-notable-members/>

Betty Hooker has been a member of AAUW since 1978. She is a graduate of University of Michigan, AB Elementary Education, and received a MEd from Millersville University in Reading and Language Arts.

Betty has served as the President, Secretary, Yearbook Editor, Awards Chair, and Archives Chair for AAUW York. She is currently on the Board as the Bylaws Chair. She was awarded Outstanding Woman three times.

She co-chaired an AAUW York public service project in the 1980's by publishing a book on the history of York County Women titled *Legacies: Remembrances of York County Women*. In 2012-2014, Betty served as Public Policy Co-Chair for AAUW Pennsylvania. She is a frequent attendee at many State as well as national AAUW conferences.

Betty Hooker received Member Making A Difference in 2020, for tirelessly chairing AAUW York's Spring Market Faire tour of kitchens scholarship fundraiser as well as chairing several committees. Betty was involved with the Spring Market Faire scholarship fundraiser since its beginning in 1981. She is always ready to lend a hand mentoring new officers, offering support and answering questions whenever needed.

In 2022, she published a Spring Market Faire Recipe Booklet when we could not hold a tour. This same year, she stepped in to help with Program as a Co-Chair as well as co-chairing our 50th Anniversary celebration.

Betty has been dedicated to our branch for many years as well as preserving our archives, chairing the collection of comfort products, coordinating the branch's Get Out the Vote initiative, publishing the Branch *Yearbook*, and updating branch bylaws. She is willing to take on a project wherever and whenever needed. She is an inspiration to all AAUW members.

Lois Conaway, Awards Chair

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The Fundraising Committee has decided to postpone our second *Spring for Scholarship Luncheon* until April, 2027. We have sufficient funds to support our scholarship program until then and the additional time will better enable us to host a successful, enjoyable event. Instead, we will hold two events we are sure will bring pleasure to all:

A Holiday Card Sale will feature the artwork of our members and friends. Are you an artist? If so, we invite you to submit your work to Carol Little. The artwork will be photographed and printed on cardstock for inclusion in a package of cards.

Dine at Isaac's Day will take place in March or April of 2026. Bring your family and friends or join a group of your fellow AAUW members for a delicious meal. Isaac's will donate a percentage of the cost to AAUW-York Branch.

Nancy Buckley, Fundraising Committee Chair

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

In early April, the federal administration required schools to abolish their equity programs or risk losing federal funding. A superintendent of schools responded in a letter to the administration to explain the negative impact such a policy would have on students.

The educator stated that the student who would be most affected would be 'low-income students, disabled students, and English learners.' The superintendent relayed that 'equity is not a threat. It's the antidote to decades of failure. Equity is what ensures all students have a fair shot. Equity is what makes the nonverbal kindergartner use an AAC (assistive) device. It's what gets the newcomer from the Ukraine the ESL support she needs without being left behind.'

Just imagine not being allowed to use your glasses while taking a written driver's test. No matter how hard you try, it is not possible to read the test. Now imagine a struggling student without any academic support while trying to learn. Another reason for us, AAUW, to support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Rita Meisenhelder & Barbara Woodmansee, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Co-Chairs

SUMMER BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS ON DISABILITIES

- *Don't Ask the Blind Guy for Directions* by John Samuel
- *The Quarry* by Iain Banks
- *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog* by Bruce D. Perry and Maia Szalavitz

PUBLIC POLICY

As Congress continues to drive forward sweeping cuts to student financial assistance in the federal budget, our voices are critical to support the millions of students whose futures are in jeopardy. The House Education & Workforce Committee's budget reconciliation bill would make harmful changes to Pell Grant eligibility – penalizing those who can least afford it. The proposal raises the threshold for 'full-time' status to 15 credits per term and eliminates Pell Grants entirely for students enrolled less than half-time. These changes would hit student parents hardest. Nearly 60% of student parents already work full time while pursuing their degrees, and childcare costs push their total expenses up to five times higher than their peers without children. Black and Latina mothers – who make up a significant share of Pell recipients – would face impossible choices. To keep their aid, they would need to add classes to already overloaded schedules or risk losing a quarter or more of their grants. For many, that means borrowing more or abandoning their education altogether. Write to your representative and tell Congress to support students in completing their degrees, not rip away that potential.

Carol Heintzelman, Public Policy Chair

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.