



Branch Banter

SEPTEMBER 2025

YOU CAN TELL YOU ARE A YORKER IF...

WHEN: Tuesday, September 9 7:00 PM
6:30 PM Welcome Back Dessert and Coffee Business meeting follows program

WHERE: York Alliance Church, 501 Rathton Road, York

PROGRAM: Lee Woodmansee had the opportunity to combine his loves for writing, regional history, and small business when he wrote, printed, marketed, and distributed his book *You Can Tell You're a Yorker If...*, followed by *...You're a Yorker!* and a book about the Wilkes-Barre area *...You're From the Valley!* They sold, in total, about 70,000 copies and provided Lee with the opportunity to host autograph parties, give speeches, and even make a few dollars while totally enjoying the entire experience. He will not only share his sometimes unusual sense of humor, he will describe why he thinks that only a few cities can become the subject of humorous books like his, why there are fewer and fewer possible areas that lend themselves to such humor, and how self-publishing books worked for him. Spouses and friends are welcome to join us.

Lois Kulp Hickman & Anne McFeely, Program Co-Vice Presidents

DISPOSABLE UNDERWEAR DRIVE AT THE SEPTEMBER BRANCH MEETING SEE YOU BEFORE THE MEETING IN THE PARKING LOT

As prices rise, hardworking families are struggling to buy food and pay their rent. Purchasing disposable diapers and underwear is an additional burden for many. Please help the less fortunate in our community by bringing a donation of adult disposable underwear or wipes to the September Branch meeting. Betty Hooker will be collecting donations in her car (a white Camry sedan) in the parking lot prior to the meeting. The donations will go to Representative Carol Hill-Evans for distribution to the needy.

Betty Hooker

2025-2026 BUDGET – VOTE AT MEETING

We will vote on the 2025-2026 budget (attachments) at the September meeting. For any questions, contact Carol..

Carol Little & Becky Shives, Co-Finance Officers

2025-2026 YEARBOOKS

The 2025-2026 Yearbooks will be distributed at the September meeting. The Yearbooks that are not picked up by the October meeting will be mailed.

I am especially thankful to Sue McMillan for her help with proofreading. Emails flew back and forth as we tried to get each page exactly right.

Betty Hooker, Yearbook Chair

FROM THE PODIUM

We are excited to welcome you to the start of our fall season with some great programs and activities for you to participate in to continue to implement our mission of gender equity and inclusion for women and girls throughout our community. Thank you to all of you who participated in our member survey in the spring, because we have some new initiatives we are starting this fall based on your suggestions and interests. One that stands out is restarting our Write-Read-Write program that you will hear more about from our Co-Chairs, Kay Roddy and Martha Fleischer.

Based on your feedback, we are continuing to alternate our meeting times and locations for the upcoming year. Our September and May meetings will be held at the York Alliance Church at 6:30 PM. Our October through April meetings will be held at 12:30 PM at the Glatfelter Center at SpiriTrust Lutheran. There will be some fluctuations in the 12:30 PM time when we have special events, such as the Book Sale in November and a Holiday Luncheon in December. Our Program VPs will provide more information in each *Banter*.

As your new President, I look forward to working with all of you. We had some new members join over the summer, so I am looking forward to meeting each of you. Earlier this year, one of the themes of the AAUW Pennsylvania statewide conference was that the future of AAUW and gender equity for women and girls relies not just on us doing more, but on doing it together, with intention and care. If you hear of a need for help within our Branch, please consider volunteering. We currently need help with Facebook and possibly some new groups that Martha will tell you about at our September Branch meeting. There also are many opportunities to participate in the various enjoyable social groups that our Branch offers. Thank you for your commitment to AAUW's vision of 'Equity for All.'

Bonnie Bluett, President

BOARD MEETING

The September 2 Board meeting will be conducted virtually using Zoom at 1:30 PM. Bonnie will email the agenda prior to the meeting. Branch members are welcome.

BANTER DEADLINE

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

MEMBERSHIP

Please Welcome! the following new members: Anne Gray, Sharee McFadden, and Tracey Brass Oberdorf. Their information is in the new *Yearbook*.

Martha Fleischer & Jenny Sears, Membership Co-Vice Presidents

WRITE-READ-WRITE RETURNS!

This popular project is returning after a short hiatus due to renewed interest. With the cooperation of Laura Gordon, a teacher at Yorkshire Elementary School, we will take our list of participating Branch members and coordinate it with her 'early reader' students. They write a letter about themselves to us - we read their letter and write a letter and purchase a book for our student - they read our letter and write a 'thank you' letter to us.

If you want to participate, the timeline starts with **sign-up sheets at our September 9 and October 14 Branch meetings**. After the students write their first letters, they will be distributed at the November 11 Branch meeting (or mailed to you). Your response letter and a gift-wrapped book will be collected at (or by) our December 9 Branch meeting.

If you cannot attend either of our first two Branch meetings and want to participate, please call or email one of us to add your name to the **sign-up list no later than October 14**. More details will be provided during the process.

Kay Roddy, Write-Read-Write
Martha Fleischer, Write-Read-Write

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

National AAUW Fellowship and Grant Applications opened August 1. Each year, AAUW provides millions in funding to support women pursuing academic, research, and professional opportunities that advance equity for women and girls. Applications close September 30! Encourage eligible students, scholars, and leaders to apply today. Visit the national site at www.aauw.org for more information.

AAUW FUND

The National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) unites college women from across the United States for leadership development and networking through workshops and hands-on activities. This past fiscal year, the York Branch provided two scholarships for local students to attend the conference in May, 2025. To help provide funds for 2026 scholarships, the York Branch will be participating in the Boscov's 'Friends Helping Friends' fundraiser. The \$5.00 discount shopping pass entitles the customer to save up to 25% off the lowest sale price on many items. The event will be held Wednesday, October 22, from 8 AM to 11 PM. This would be a great time to purchase some Christmas gifts for your family and friends. Your shopping pass may be purchased at the September 9 or October 14 Branch meeting. All \$5.00 will help support the York Branch NCCWSL scholarships. Donations to help support the scholarships will also be accepted.

Jane Long, AAUW Fund Chair

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

As we reflect upon the impact of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on women's lives, it is important to see how it has improved women's opportunities and quality of life. The League of Women Voters has highlighted some of those opportunities:

“Opening admission and increasing opportunities at universities and corporations nationwide;
Creating mentorship opportunities, leadership trainings, scholarships, investment programs, and more that grow women's success;
Encouraging everyone from medical researchers to film producers to pay attention to women's needs and perspectives;
Creating safer workplaces through anti-harassment programs and anti-discrimination policies;
Promoting pregnancy and parental leave and benefits;
In some cases, imposing quotas so schools and workplaces entrenched in patriarchy were forced to open their doors to qualified women.

In 1997, it was estimated that at least 6 million women held positions they wouldn't otherwise hold because of affirmative action. Notably, while opponents to DEI claim that Black women and other women of color benefit the most from DEI, most of the women who obtained these positions were white.”

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies affect all women. That is why AAUW will continue to consider it an essential part of its advocacy efforts.

Book Recommendation: *Good for a Girl: A Woman Running in a Man's World* by Lauren Fleshman

Rita Meisenhelder & Barbara Woodmansee, DEI Co-Chairs

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Each year, York Branch AAUW presents scholarships to several outstanding young women from York County to facilitate their studies at the undergraduate and graduate level. This year, we invite you to participate in the following activities in support of our scholarship program.

Book Sale – November 8 – at the Branch meeting – an opportunity to clear your shelves of the books that you have enjoyed reading and exchange them for books that your fellow members recommend. The modest price that we charge will benefit our scholarship program.

Women's History Month – March – in celebration of the contributions women have made in all fields of endeavor, we encourage our members to donate to the scholarship fund.

Dine at Isaac's – April (specific date to be announced) – invite your family, friends, and fellow members to dine with you at a local Isaac's. Fifteen percent of sales generated will be remitted by Isaac's to our scholarship program.

Join our Fundraising Committee in planning a gala event for the future. Our first meeting will take place Tuesday, September 16, 10:30 AM, at Nancy Buckley's home. Sign up at the September Branch meeting or contact Nancy.

Nancy Buckley, Fundraising Committee Chair

HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The past fiscal year has been a year of transition for the HESC. Recently and for a few years, we had been awarding scholarships to high school students to participate in the Dual Enrollment Programs at the three local colleges: Harrisburg Area Community College, Penn State University/York Campus, and York College of Pennsylvania. Nancy Spataro, who was the Chairperson of the committee at that time, recommended our Branch's discontinuation of it. Instead, she suggested we consider giving scholarships to high school seniors who would be entering college the following September. Last year, we awarded an Undergraduate Scholarship and a Graduate Scholarship. These applications were unsolicited and entered online. They both qualified for the scholarships awarded them.

Two of our committee members met with the chairperson of the Garden Club of York's scholarship committee to discuss their process for awarding high school seniors scholarships. As this meeting took place in January 2025, we knew it was too late in the year to begin such a process. Therefore, our committee eventually decided to offer undergraduate and graduate scholarships as in the past when there was a scholarship committee for each category.

At our January 16 meeting, Carol Eicher was invited to meet with us to discuss her interest in sponsoring a scholarship(s) in memory of her mother, Doris Cohen. Doris had been a long-time member of the York Branch of AAUW. Remembered for her intellect, artistry and curiosity, she enjoyed the arts and travel. She was a role model in her fields of education and business. Carol donated \$5,000 for this year's scholarship winners.

With the donation, we decided to offer two Doris Cohen Memorial Undergraduate Scholarships for \$2,500 each. Additionally, the York Branch sponsored a \$3,000 graduate scholarship. We had 13 applicants for the spring: 4 for a graduate scholarship and 9 for undergraduate scholarships. The Graduate Scholarship winner is Kali Barnes, who is studying Public Policy and Administration at York College. The undergraduate scholarships were awarded to two students from Penn State York: Catherine Kurnik, who is majoring in English and History, and Francesca Rodman, who is majoring in Human Development and Family Studies/Psychology.

Additionally, we sponsored two Penn State York students to the annual NCCWSL conference at the University of Maryland at the end of May. They are Alyssa Bortner and Tirzah Miller.

In May, a highlight of the end of year meeting, 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 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.

Rita Meisenhelder, Higher Education Scholarship Committee, 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.

PUBLIC POLICY

AAUW PA will be hosting several events for the Family Care Act in regard to paid leave in Harrisburg this fall. The first event is October 29, which is a Press Conference in the main Rotunda of the Capitol at 12 noon in the West Wing. The second event, which is the biggest one, on November 18 in the Main Rotunda, which is a Partners Campaign for Women's Healthcare. We will be partnering with Planned Parenthood and other related organizations. If any members wish to attend, they should contact Sandy Miller, Public Policy Chair for AAUW PA. The last event will be December 9 in the East Wing of the Capitol. AAUW PA is very active in lobbying our state legislators.

Carol Heintzelman, Public Policy Chair

BOOK GROUP

The Book Group will meet on Wednesday, September 17, at 11:45 AM, to discuss *Crow Mary* by Kathleen Grissom.

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 Thursday, September 4, at 10:00 AM at the home Jenny Sears. Please bring a sandwich.

All Branch members are invited to participate in the Bridge Group, either as a full time player or as a substitute. We enjoy playing a very friendly game as well as improving our skills. Our lunchtime sandwich break is a fun social time. Call Lois Kulp for information.

Lois Kulp Hickman.

LUNCH AND GAMES GROUP

Our next gathering will be held at Martha Fleischer's home on Friday, September 12, at 12 noon. All are welcome, including husbands or companions. There will be a Potluck at 12 followed by group games such as Pictionary, Personal Preferences, or a group card game of your choice. Please RSVP to Martha by September 6. See you there!

Anne McFeely

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Mission

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