



## From the Presidents' Pen

Spring is coming. Not soon enough for me.

March is Women's History Month. I remember when branch members focused on contributions by Pennsylvania women in school presentations and at the Sigal Museum when my third grade grandson sat in the first row. Now he is a senior at Virginia Tech and his cousin, my only granddaughter is at UCSD studying Environmental Systems. She is proud to be a "Woman in STEM" and is volunteering on the beach in San Diego protecting baby seals and sharing information about them.

Many of our scholarship applicants are studying STEAM courses and other exciting subjects pioneering their own history in the making. One of our recipients last year even volunteered for three of our Let's Read Math programs this past summer. She sent a video of her appreciation for the scholarship and the opportunity to work with us. Her video was a great addition to the recent fund-raising dinner, a great event hosted by Phyllis Finger. Many members donated generously to our scholarship funds. Becky Goldenberg facilitated. Perhaps you would like to be more involved with follow-up of a recipient. A win-win program!

Our Girls Recognition Night will take place on Thursday, May 2 at the Nurture Nature Center. This event celebrates 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls nominated by their teachers for their excellence in STEAM fields. We have a great panel of local women in STEAM who will be sharing their individual journeys, encouraging the girls and answering their questions. I hope you can attend this inspiring night.

The [National Women's History Alliance](#) has designated the 2024 theme to celebrate "Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion." This theme recognizes women who understand the need to eliminate bias and discrimination from individuals' lives and institutions." (taken from history. Com).

In closing a couple of quotes I find inspiring:

***"If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair."* - [Shirley Chisholm](#) (1924-2005), U.S. Congresswoman.**

***"One child, one teacher, one book, one pen can change the world."***  
**— [Malala Yousafzai](#) (1997- ), Pakistani female education activist, Nobel Peace Prize laureate.**

***"My mission in life is not merely to survive but to thrive and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style."*** – [Maya Angelou](#) (1928-2014), memoirist, poet, civil rights activist.

Fran



Thank you to Phyllis and Ellis Finger for hosting a lovely dinner to celebrate Fran Kennedy's birthday and to raise funds for our scholarships. So far this AAUW year, we have raised \$2,196.62 plus \$500 more has been pledged.



## Important Dates to Remember

### Women's History Month

March 8 - **International Women's Day**

March 10 - Daylight Savings Time begins

March 15 - Ides of March

### March 19 - International Aid Organizations

March 22 - International Goof Off Day

March 29 - Smoke and Mirrors Day

## Newsletter Information

Wouldn't you like to learn how to put a newsletter together or just use WORD for all the articles? It is a great learning opportunity and would help tremendously. If this is you, please let Toni Hoffman know.

If any member has information that she wishes to have published in the newsletter, please e-mail the information to **Toni Hoffman**. This would include births, deaths, marriages, happenings at cultural institutions. We also encourage submissions of photos of events and anything that you think may be of interest to other members. Please note, however, that **submissions must be in by the 15th** of the current month to be included in the following month's newsletter. Otherwise it will be in the newsletter after that.

### Newsletter Ads

Do you have a business or service that you would like to promote? The charge for including an ad is only \$5 for each issue. Ads should be no larger than business card size and must come from members. Payment for ads should be made to the finance officer and she will notify the newsletter editor that the ad is ready to be placed.

**AAUW PUBLIC POLICY CONVERSATIONS - MARCH 2024**

Can Doula deliver better maternal health care outcomes? That's the question many in Pennsylvania are asking. In 2023 the March of Dimes declared six of Pennsylvania's 67 counties "Maternal Health Deserts," lacking OB-GYNs, hospitals or facilities to care for pregnant people. The U.S. maternal mortality rates nearly doubled from 17.4 per 100,000 live births in 2018 to 32.9 per 100,000 live births in 2021, creating what officials call a national maternal health crisis. City & State Magazine reported in January that infant mortality—the death of an infant before their first birthday—saw a 3% increase in 2022 for the first time in 20 years.

Barbara Christianson, a certified Doula and Public Health Nurse Consultant at the Association of Women's Health, Obstetrics and Neonatal Nurses, noted that doula can help patients manage high stress caused by pregnancy complications or uncertainties about medical terminology and processes. This could lead to high blood pressure, putting patients at risk of preeclampsia, preterm births and even death. Doula are not authorized to administer medication or perform clinical procedures, but they can advise patients on breathing or muscle relaxing exercise which could help reduce pain and the accompanying stress to improve labor or delivery, according to Christianson.

With health care systems strapped for staff, doula offer supplemental care to the patient that doctors and nurses may not have the time for, and they play an important role in patient advocacy as well. In 2023 Delaware and New York required doula services to be covered by Medicaid. New York Governor Kathy Hochul said, "Our maternal and infant mortality rates are a disgrace. Expanding access to doula services is an effective, evidence-based strategy to support expectant parents and allow their babies to grow and thrive." At least 10 states and the District of Columbia cover doula under Medicaid, but only two—Louisiana and Rhode Island—require private insurance to do so. In June 2022 the Biden administration launched the White House Blueprint for Addressing Maternal Health, a whole-of-government program, aimed at reducing maternal mortality through enhanced maternal care, workforce training, expanded access to doula and midwives, and improved maternal health data monitoring, among other goals.

In Pennsylvania the state Department of Human Services is working with the nonprofit Pennsylvania Doula Commission to increase the number of licensed doula by offering subsidies for the commission's certification fee. New Jersey passed a bill in November 2023 requiring hospitals and birthing centers to allow doula to accompany mothers for childbirth. Pennsylvania really could be doing a lot more. Philadelphia Rep. Morgan Cephas has introduced **HB.1608 ADDRESSING MATERNAL MORTALITY: MEDICAID COVERAGE FOR DOULAS**. It's presently referred to the House Health Committee since last August. HB.1608 extends Medicaid coverage to doula services while also creating a Doula Advisory Board. The Board would be responsible for determining the approved accreditation organizations for doula, the competencies that should be required to ensure doula are properly equipped to serve mothers of Pennsylvania and setting standards based on best practices for doula professionals.

Representative Cephas urged support for HB.1608 to "provide a compassionate and life-saving system for pregnant women and mothers in the Commonwealth." Only recently under the Wolf administration was postpartum Medicaid coverage extended to new mothers and babies from 60 days to 12 months.

The 2024 National Women's History Month Theme

**"Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion"**

The National Women’s History Month’s theme for 2024 celebrates “Women Who Advocate for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.” The theme recognizes women throughout the country who understand that, for a positive future, we need to eliminate bias and discrimination entirely from our lives and institutions.

Women from every background have long realized that an uneven playing field will never bring equality or justice. Many feel the critical need to speak up and work harder for fairness in our institutions and social interactions.

During 2024, we recognize the example of women who are committed to embracing everyone and excluding no one in our common quest for freedom and opportunity. They know that people change with the help of families, teachers and friends, and that young people in particular need to learn the value of hearing from different voices with different points of view as they grow up.

Today, equity, diversity and inclusion are powerful driving forces that are having a wide-ranging impact on our country. As members of families, civic and community groups, businesses and legislative bodies, women are in the forefront of reevaluating the status quo. They are looking anew at what harmful social policies and behaviors exist and, often subtly, determine our future. In response, women in communities across the nation are helping to develop innovative programs and projects within corporations, the military, federal agencies and educational organizations to address these injustices.

AAUW, both national and statewide have been ardent advocates for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

**National Women's History Alliance**

**2024 AAUW PA Conference**

**Evolution of the Fight**

**Looking Back to Move Forward**

**April 5 - 7**

Join AAUW members from across PA and attend the conference at the Best Western Central Hotel and Conference Center in Harrisburg.

There is money in our budget to attend this AAUW-PA conference. I encourage you to attend. I have always found it to be helpful and inspirational. Networking is great! Two of the Learning Circles on Saturday jumped out at me. “Open membership, Discussion and Questions about removing the Education Requirement for AAUW Membership” and “How to Close the Sale: Strategies to Join and Keep Members”.

**See page 6 for details.**

Thinking of going but wish to car pool? I can give you other contacts in Bethlehem that may want to car pool or two of you may want to go.

Fran



**Contact Fran to order this delicious coffee.**

**AAUW-PA Conference Details**

# 2024 AAUW PA Conference



**FRIDAY April 5, SATURDAY April 6, & SUNDAY, April 7, 2024**

**Best Western Premier the Central Hotel & Conference Center  
800 East Park Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17111**

**LODGING: Best Western Premier the Central Hotel & Conference Center**

**A workshop not to be missed!**

*Hands-on Advocacy Activity, **Sandra Miller, AAUW PA Public Policy Chair***

Sandra Miller, Public Policy Chair, has been involved in the public policy world since her days in the Governor's office under Governor Thornberg. Her passion for policy and how we as citizens can affect our government has led to many opportunities in education policy over the past 20 years. Currently, Sandra is the Advocacy Coordinator for Education Voters of PA and has been working with the campaign, *PA Schools Work*, for many years. Newly retired after 16 years as a school director at Saucon Valley School District, she hopes her volunteer time with AAUW will be an asset to the organization and looking forward to working with all the branches and other statewide organizations in fulfilling the mission of AAUW – empowering women through advocacy. A member of Easton and Bethlehem branches, she is ready to support all efforts to engage our members in the coming year. Sandra lives in Saucon Valley with her husband, mother and sister, and her two sons as they complete their graduate work.

The room rate is \$133.15 INCLUSIVE for either a single or double room. That is \$119.95 plus 11% taxes. A credit card will be required to make your reservation. To guarantee room availability, you **must** make your room reservation no later than March 1st.

**Conference Options (except Students – Students see below):**

- \$110 Saturday only (includes all meals and programs for Saturday)
- \$160 Friday-Saturday (includes all meals and programs for Friday and Saturday)
- \$190 Full conference (includes all meals and program for Friday, Saturday and Sunday)

<b>Friday, April 5</b>	
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Conference Registration
4:00 p.m.	Hotel Check-In
4:30 – 5:45 p.m.	Social Hour (Hotel Lobby – Cash Bar)
	Dinner
	<b>Keynote: <i>Remarks from the Secretary</i>, Valerie A. Arkoosh, MD, MPH, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services</b>
6:00 – 8:30 p.m.	
8:30 – 9:30 p.m.	Social Hour (Hotel Lobby – Cash Bar)
<b>Saturday, April 6</b>	
7:30 – 10:00 a.m.	Conference Registration
7:45 – 8:45 a.m.	Breakfast Buffet
	<b><i>Welcome!</i> AAUW PA President Cindy Hall, Nominations Committee,</b>
9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	<b>AAUW National</b>

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	<b>Learning Circles: <i>Attend one, two, three or more</i></b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Hands-on Advocacy Activity</i>, Sandra Miller, AAUW PA Public Policy Chair</li> <li>• <i>What are the Greatest Needs Fund and the Legacy Circle – and, why should we care”</i> – an update on the need for donations to the Greatest Needs Fund and Joining the Legacy Circle, Sally Kalin, AAUW PA Funds Chair</li> <li>• <i>Updating Your Branch Bylaws with the Latest Revisions</i>, Deb Roney, AAUW PA Bylaws Chair; Advancement Committee, AAUW National</li> <li>• <i>Open Membership, Discussion and Questions about removing the Education Requirement for AAUW Membership</i>, Ajla Glavasevic Laussegger and Ann Pehle, AAUW PA Past President</li> <li>• <i>How to Close the Sale: Strategies to Join and Keep Members</i>, Karen Wellin, AAUW Membership VP</li> </ul>
10:00 – 11:15 a.m.	
	Lunch
	<b>Keynote: <i>Women in American Politics: From Exclusion to Protest, to Participants, to Policymakers,</i></b>
	<b>Kimberly S. Adams, PhD, Professor of Political Science at East Stroudsburg University; Board of Directors AAUW National and</b>
11:45 – 1:45 p.m.	<b>National Organization for Women (NOW)</b>
	<b><i>Generative AI: The Evolution of Machine Learning and Why It Matters,</i></b>
	<b>Ajla Glavasevic Laussegger, Deputy General Counsel &amp; Global Data Privacy Officer, Quaker Houghton; AAUW PA Diversity &amp; Inclusion</b>
2:00 – 3:00	<b>Chair; Governance Committee, AAUW National</b>
	<b><i>AAUW’s Advocacy in Action: Opportunities for Impact,</i> Meghan Kissell,</b>
3:15 – 4:15 p.m.	<b>Senior Director, Policy and Member Advocacy, AAUW National</b>
	<b><i>100 Years of Motivation:</i> Panel Discussion with Branch Presidents from</b>
4:30 – 5:45 p.m.	<b>Carlisle, Erie, Harrisburg, Johnstown, Reading, and State College</b>
	Dinner Buffet
	<b>Keynote: <i>The Power of Vulnerability,</i> Gisele Fetterman, Nonprofit Founder, Hugger, Dreamer</b>
6:30 – 9:30 p.m.	<b>AAUW PA Awards Presentation, Cindy Hall</b> Dessert Bar and Reception in Lobby (Cash Bar)

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**Sunday, April 7**

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8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Breakfast Buffet
	Your Choice: Meet with Your Branch Board Counterparts or Join Ajla Glavasevic Laussegger and Grace Hampton, AAUW State College Co-president, for a discussion titled <i>AAUW PA: NextGen—GenAI and the Future of Career Development</i>
9:00 – 10:00 a.m.	<i>of Career Development</i>
10:30 – 11:30 a.m.	Hotel Check-Out
11:00 a.m. – Noon	<b><i>Call to Action for AAUW PA Members, Sandra Miller</i></b>
12:15 p.m.	<b><i>Closing Thoughts, Cindy Hall</i></b>
12:30	Adjourn



## NCCWSL

**Dare to be...**  
May 30-June 1, 2024  
University of Maryland  
College Park

AAUW's annual conference, The National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL), brings together more than 800 young women from around the country for two and a half days of leadership training, networking and inspiration. This year's event will include sessions on career development, mentorship, financial literacy, racial-justice activism and more. Participants will have an opportunity to explore post-graduate programs, careers in a variety of disciplines and other opportunities for their future.

NCCWSL is a conference that brings together a diverse group of young leaders who are involved in various activities on their campuses. They are engaged in student government, academic organizations, social justice clubs, and advocate for political change. One in four attendees are pursuing STEM majors, demonstrating their commitment to breaking barriers in underrepresented fields. Participants also come from diverse disciplines such as business and social sciences. Most attendees are rising juniors or seniors, at a critical stage in their educational journey.

## ELDERHOOD One Read

Easton Branch members and guests met on February 10 at Palmer Library to discuss the book *Elderhood* by Louise Aronson.

Margaret Skaarup led the discussion which centered on what it means to grow old and how to live the best life possible as we age.

Refreshments provided by Someday Coffee and Phyllis Finger.



## Interest Groups

The Easton Branch has several interest groups created to stimulate discussions, encourage networking and support the community. If you have ideas for additional groups, let us know. Every group looks forward to new participants. Call if you are interested in joining a group.

### Book Discussion

**Chair:** Susan McNamara



March 18, 2:00 pm  
Hostess: Fran Kennedy  
**Fifty Words for Rain** by Asha  
Lemma

### International Relations

**Chair:** Fran Kennedy



March 26, 2:00 pm  
Hostess: Fran Kennedy  
Topic: NATO's Future - a continuation  
of the Great Decisions discussion.

### Hot Topics

**Chair:** Randi Blauth



March 6, 1:00 pm  
Location: Palmer Library  
Topic: **Book Ban Discussion**  
**Continued**

### Out To Lunch

**Chair:** Claire Degnan



All members welcome.  
Date: TBD  
Location: TBD

### Bridge

**Chair:** Rosemary Baker



Contact Rosemary for date and  
time. New members welcome.

### Tapas Dining

**Chair:** Phyllis Finger



Date: TBD  
Hostess TBD

### Mah Jongg

**Chair:** Becky Goldenberg



March 11 1:30 p.m.  
March 25 1:30 pm  
Hostesses: Susan, Toni

### Women & Science

**Chair:** Susan McNamara



Date: March 21, 1:30 pm  
Hostess: Magaret Skaarup  
Topic: **An Immense World** by Ed  
Yong, Ch.8-10

### Stitch and Be

**Chair:** Toni Hoffman



March 7, 2:30 p.m.  
Hostess: Susan McNamara



### Walking Group

**Chair:** Fran Kennedy  
Every Friday 9 am  
On hiatus

# American Association of University Women

AAUW National	800.326.2289	<a href="http://www.aauw.org">www.aauw.org</a>
Easton Branch		<a href="http://easton-pa.aauw.net">easton-pa.aauw.net</a>
Co-Presidents	Lisa Spitale, Fran Kennedy	<a href="http://easton-pa.aauw.net/contact/">easton-pa.aauw.net/contact/</a>
Membership Team	Carolyn Connors	<a href="http://easton-pa.aauw.net/membership/">easton-pa.aauw.net/membership/</a>
Easton Edition	Toni Hoffman	<a href="http://easton-pa.aauw.net/contact/">easton-pa.aauw.net/contact/</a>

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to members to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national orientation, disability, or class.

The AAUW Funds include the Educational Opportunities Funds (formerly a part of the AAUW Educational Foundation) which help us to advance equity for women and girls through programs such as American and International Fellowships and Community Action grants.

AAUW Funds also include the Legal Advocacy Fund which provides funding and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for sexual discrimination, the Leadership Programs Fund (formerly the AAUW Leadership and Training Institute), the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund, and the Public Policy Fund.

AAUW  
Easton (PA) Branch

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED