



Easton (PA) Branch

The Easton Edition

Easton, PA Branch Newsletter

CALENDAR

Newsletter Deadline

Thursday, August 15

Branch Meeting

TBD

Board Meeting

Monday, August 19, 7 pm

IN THIS ISSUE

Annual Membership Report	1
Presidents' Pen	2
Award Photo Gallery	3
Public Policy	5
GRN Highlights	6
Let's Read Math™	7
Your View	8
Book Group Choices	10
Interest Groups	11

2024

One benefit of summer is that we had more light to read by.

Jeannette Walls

AAUW EASTON ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP REPORT JUNE 18, 2024.

In the fiscal year 2023-2024 Easton branch had three new members join. The branch presently has fifty nine members. As has been said before, it is difficult to have open membership drives due to the educational degree requirement for membership in AAUW. The Membership Committee, consisted of Carolyn Connors, Nancy Berry, Rosemary Baker and Kathleen Morgan. Membership had tables at most branch events including Girls Recognition Night, and the Scholarship Event. Although we had interest, no one joined our branch through these events. These tables and events do provide opportunities to form relationships with the community and have AAUW Easton recognized. The National Community Hub continues to be a challenge.

Just a reminder that most of us have our AAUW Easton membership renewals due no later than June 30. Some members have a different renewal date since AAUW National has switched to membership a year from when you joined. You should have received a reminder from National. If you have a question about when your renewal date is, please contact Fran Kennedy. You can renew by going to your account online, creating an account online (go to our branch webpage and click JOIN under the Membership tab for instructions) or by sending a check to Becky Goldenberg by June 28th. Please make the check out to **AAUW Easton Branch and mail to Becky or AAUW Easton Branch, PO Box 1464, Easton PA 18042.**

From the Presidents' Pen

I hope everyone enjoyed the Spring and is ready for the sun-kissed days of Summer! Although many of us are ready for the relaxation, travel and less-scheduled days that Summer typically brings, our committees have been busy making sure things in our branch continue progressing forward. We have a program committee which has been busy planning interesting programs for the upcoming months. Our membership committee continues to work on both increasing our membership as well as maintaining our current level of membership. I know the mission of the AAUW is one which you are passionate about. I encourage you to channel this passion and become more involved. There are many opportunities for more members to become involved, such as Girls' Recognition Night, the program committee or the membership committee. Perhaps YOU are interested in one of these areas. Please let Lisa or Fran know if you have any questions or would like more information on any of our committees.

In June we celebrated Juneteenth, commemorating the end of slavery in the United States. I choose to close with the following quote, which I believe to be appropriate not only for Juneteenth, but for all the oppressed.

"We are not ready to fight because we love fighting. We are ready to fight because we are worth fighting for."

– Zoé Samudzi

Lisa Spitale



Fran and I wish you all a wonderful relaxing summer filled with fun, family and friends.

Join us in September for a new and exciting programmatic year.

Lisa and Fran

Scholarships and Branch Awards



Claudia Gonzales



Ella Choi



Lois Wildrick - 50 Year Member



Fran Kennedy - Outstanding Woman



Margaret Skaarup
Member Making A Difference



Debra Kindervator & Karol D'Huyvetters
Presidents Award

AAUW PUBLIC POLICY CONVERSATIONS – JUNE 2024

Why has faith and trust in the United States Supreme Court plummeted to all-time lows? A Quinnipiac University national poll found that only 36% of registered voters approve of the Supreme Court's handling of its job, while 56% disapprove. A majority of Republicans said they approve, while majorities of Democrats and Independents said they disapprove. 71% of voters say the Supreme Court justices "are too influenced by politics" including majorities of Democrats, Independents and Republicans.

On May 5, 2024 the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for public service journalism was awarded to ProPublica for its "ambitious reporting that pierced the thick wall of secrecy surrounding the Supreme Court to reveal how a small group of politically influential billionaires wooed justices with lavish gifts and travel." ProPublica's "Friends of the Court" series uncovered the biggest ethics scandal to hit the Supreme Court in the modern era. Last November the Court announced that it had unanimously adopted the first Ethics Code in its 234 year history. Unfortunately, the Code of Conduct relies on an honor system that has thus far proven a failure.

This term's Supreme Court docket holds momentous cases, several affecting the quality of women's lives and health since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022. The Court in June will rule on gun ownership rights demanded by convicted domestic abusers under the Second Amendment. While otherwise excellent coverage of the justices' ethics scandals frequently stipulates that their billionaire benefactors rarely have business before the Court, the truth is that "court whisperers" like Leonard Leo, Harlan Crow and Charles Koch have both motives for and means of influencing rulings in many of the cases the Court will soon decide, Jamison Foser and Will Royce wrote in the May 2024 *American Prospect*. The billionaires are connected with organizations that submit Amicus curiae briefs, known as Friend of the Court briefs that provide perspective on how the court should rule. Many of these briefs are filed by organizations closely connected to the very same people bestowing gifts upon the justices—the literal "friends of the court." [SupremeTransparency.org](https://www.supremetransparency.org) is a website that tracks efforts to influence the Supreme Court by power brokers and organizations with cozy ties to the justices.

More must be done to restore confidence in the United States Supreme Court. In late April the **JUDICIAL ETHICS ENFORCEMENT ACT** was introduced in the U.S. House by Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D/NM). It calls for an office of Inspector General to monitor and audit the Court. "An Inspector General will protect the Court from special interest groups looking to strip Americans of their rights in favor of their personal agendas," Rep. Stansbury said. Her bill would task the Chief Justice to appoint an IG, in consultation with House and Senate leaders, to at least a four-year term. The IG would be tasked with investigating alleged violations of the Supreme Court Code of Conduct. The IG also would conduct audits and investigations into potential waste, fraud and abuse. With subpoena power to compel witness testimony, IG reports to the Chief Justice and Congress would be made. Where necessary, an Inspector General would inform the U.S. attorney general of potential criminal violations of federal law. The **SUPREME COURT ETHICS, RECUSAL and TRANSPARENCY Act** was introduced by Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D/RI) and Richard Blumenthal (D/CT). "Like every other federal entity, the Judiciary needs an Inspector General to deter and investigate internal wrongdoing and restore public trust," Senator Blumenthal said in a statement. "After years of plummeting public confidence, the courts need a watchdog to do prompt, impartial investigations of alleged conflicts of interest, improper benefits or other potential wrongdoing. Any ethics rules or code of conduct requires public accountability—otherwise it's a dead letter," Senator Blumenthal stressed.

Lilly Gioia
Public Policy

Girls Recognition Night Highlights

Eleven girls, five panelists and one keynote speaker - what does this equal? - our third and now annual Girls Recognition Night honoring 7th grade girls who excel in the STEAM areas.

GRN was held at the Nurture Nature Center in Easton on May 2, 2024. Sixty people (branch members, parents, siblings and community members) gathered to recognize our honorees.

Honorees from Bangor Area Middle School were Molly Hayes, Science, Amy Juarez, Science, Alesha Urbanski, Math and Anabella Vosper, Math.

Honorees from Easton Area Middle School were Delaney Heimbach, Technology, Rumeek Kaur, Technology and Anvi Patel, Technology.

Honorees from Wilson Area Intermediate School were Hayleigh Grove, Technology, Angela Karakkai, Math, Emmery Monk, Technology and Hallie Sunderlin, Science.

Each girl received a small gift and a certificate from the branch as well as a certificate of achievement from Congresswoman Susan Wild, distributed by Selina Winchester.

The panelists this year were Oriana Fisher, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Lehigh University, Karen Ruggles, Assistant Professor of Computer Science, Laura Stedenfeld, Omnes Studio, Landscape Architect, Alisa Testa, Takeda Pharmaceuticals, Regulatory Affairs, and Natasha Woods, Assistant Professor of Biology, Moravian University. Dr. Wendy Hill, our keynote speaker, is a professor of neuroscience and Director of the Hanson Center for Inclusive STEM Education at Lafayette College.

Karol D'Huyvetters and Debra Kindervatter, co-chairs of Girls Recognition Night, wish to thank the Nurture Nature Center and the many volunteers who helped make the event a success.



Let's Read Math™

A big "Thank You" shout out to Bethlehem AAUW for their donation of Let's Read Math™ materials to our branch. Bethlehem gave our branch five lessons of LRM materials which included the story book, lesson plans, worksheets, and many manipulatives. Each lesson is well organized in a tub with a list of included materials on the outside of each tub. This is a wealth of resources for our branch. Many of the lessons include typed out scripts, markers, crayons, glue, scissors and many supporting manipulatives for the lessons.

All these materials will be put to beneficial use this summer. A team of volunteers which include members of our branch, community members and a scholarship recipient will use these materials to teach six lessons of Let's Read Math to elementary age students at Easton Public Library. The lessons to be taught include The Greedy Triangle, Bart's Amazing Charts, Wanda's Roses, Grandfather Tang's Box, King's Commissioner and How Big Is A Foot.

The lessons will be taught at Easton Public Library on Mondays at 1:00 from July 8 to August 12. At this time, we have 3-4 volunteers for each lesson. If you are interested in joining our team or just want to observe a lesson, please contact Karol D'Huyvetters.

We send our condolences to Nancy Butow on the death of her husband Bob on June 9, 2024.

[Click here](#) for a link to his obituary. Nancy is currently staying with her son in Malvern.

Seeking Dry Storage Space

Our Let's Read Math™ materials are stored in six large tubs at the home of Karol D'Huyvetters. She needs her spare room back as she is expecting company this summer. These LRM lessons are a valuable resource for our branch that allow us to continue to help children learn math concepts in new and fun ways. If you have unused space, please contact Karol and make arrangements to transfer the LRM materials.

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.

Your View: Keep your eye on challenges to libraries, books

I write as a member of AAUW, a nonpartisan, national organization. Lehigh Valley readers may know us for our book fairs, which support college scholarships for young women as well as adult women returning to college. I write today out of the experience of these annual, community events offering books donated by all people for all people on innumerable topics.

On behalf of the AAUW “Hot Topics” Study Group, I speak out about the opportunities for browsing open to anyone who walks in the door. I write out of the pleasures of conversations about books struck up among strangers. And, sadly, I write out of concern that, if left unexamined and largely ignored, recent challenges to libraries and schools in the Lehigh Valley over the matter of books will continue to increase and lead to more damaging attacks on these public institutions and, most critically, those whom they serve.

This is not to say that book banning gets no attention — it does! However, issues including cost of living, homelessness, student college loans and climate change are more likely to get on-going attention. With so much to worry about, it is all too easy to lose sight of problems that seem to have less effect on our daily lives.

Unfortunately, challenges over books in school and public libraries across our country and, close to home, in our local counties and cities also need our attention:

- 2021-2024: [Lower Saucon Township and Hellertown Area Library part ways](#). Lower Saucon residents have no home library.
- Fall 2023: Northampton County Moms for Liberty calls for [the removal of the book "Push" from Nazareth High School library](#).
- April 2024: Nazareth Area School District Board [votes to leave "Push" in the collection](#) and updates procedures, adding a board approval requirement for new books.
- Spring 2024: New members of the Northampton Area School Board propose an 81% budget cut for Northampton Area Public Library, with consequences that would include the loss of Pre-K readiness and reading programs for COVID-impacted students.
- 2021-2023: Legislators in the state Senate and House introduce bills that would affect libraries and book restrictions.

So you say, why the fuss? Consider the increase in national numbers. In the fall of 2021, 1,383 books were banned in schools across the county; by fall of 2023, the number rose to 4,349, including 657 books reported in Pennsylvania.

Book banning has exploded! Add the fact that these book challenges are less likely to be from the parent who asks only occasionally and in relation to their child than from organized groups that most often are part of campaigns to remove books that, in any way to any degree, depict or reference a minority race and/or gender.

Even a few challenges to library and school book collections or their budgets all too quickly provoke questions that begin to erode trust in the institutions, their mission, worth and those who serve in them.

Libraries and schools have well-established standards and procedures for both book selection and in response to requests for book removals. Adding a requirement for school board approval of new books gives apparent credibility to challengers' claims and invites more book banners to come to meetings to contest more books.

This is sure to take a toll on the confidence of the librarians trained and charged with selections. Teachers begin to second guess classroom texts. Sending out a call for emails to save a library budget undermines confidence in board members and their constituents. And when state legislators bring forward bills for restrictive interventions, anxiety increases.

Simply put, removing or reducing funding for libraries, banning books and legislating restrictive interventions are designed to keep minds boxed in, to limit understanding, to leave us confused or angry. This is unacceptable!

Libraries and schools are inclusive; they exist to provide spaces, professional staff and researched resources for learning, exploring, inventing and broadening perspectives. Books in their collections are meant to open minds, to foster curiosity, to deepen understanding, to encourage imagination and, yes, to entertain.

In doing so, books encourage us to take risks, to extend ourselves, to reach out to those who are not just like us; to affirm our aspirations and our best instincts.

Now, when libraries are being tested by book banning, funding cuts and legislative intrusion, we need to pay attention, and give them support and trust. We need to call on those aspirations and best instincts and speak out now!

Susan P. McNamara, of Bethlehem Township, is a dual member of the AAUW Easton and Bethlehem branches.

The Morning Call
May 17, 2024



Easton Branch Book Group

2024-2025 Easton AAUW Book Group Calendar of Meetings

Meeting Dates and Readings

Hostess and Discussion Leader

September 16, 2024 at 2:00pm
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
 by Mark Twain

Rosemary Baker

October 21, 2024 at 2:00pm
James by Percival Everett

Rosemary Baker

November 18, 2024 at 2:00pm
The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell
 by Robert Durgoni

Karol D'Huyvetters

December 16, 2024 at 2:00pm
Death Comes to the Archbishop
 by Willa Cather

Carol Inman

January 20, 2025 at 2:00pm (MLK Day)
The Women by Kristin Hannah

Nancy Berry

February 17, 2025 at 2:00pm (Presidents' Day)
Lethal Legacy by Linda Fairstein

Susan McNamara

March 17, 2025 at 2:00pm
Shadows on the Crimson Sun by
 Julia Lin

Janice Lupackino

April 21, 2025
Beloved by Toni Morrison

Fran Kennedy

May 19, 2025
 TBD

TBD

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



September 16, 2:00 pm
Hostess: Rosemary Baker
Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

International Relations

Chair: Fran Kennedy



September 24, 2:00 pm
Hostess: Phyllis Finger
Topic: The International Court of Justice

Bridge

Chair: Rosemary Baker



Contact Rosemary for date and time. New members welcome.

Out To Lunch

Chair: Claire Degnan



All members welcome.
Date: TBD
Location: TBD

Mah Jongg

Chair: TBD



July 8, 1:30 p.m.
July 22, 1:30 pm
Hostesses: Toni, Susan

Tapas Dining

Chair: Phyllis Finger



Date: June 23, 5:15 pm
Hostess: Carolyn Connors

Stitch and Be

Chair: Toni Hoffman



August 1, 2:30 p.m.
Hostess: Toni Hoffman

Science

Chair: Susan McNamara



Date: July 18, 1:30 pm
Host: John Cosgrove
Topic: **The Light Eaters** by Zoe Schlanger



Walking Group

Chair: Fran Kennedy
Every Friday 9 am

American Association of University Women

AAUW National	800.326.2289	www.aauw.org
Easton Branch		easton-pa.aauw.net
Co-Presidents	Lisa Spitale, Fran Kennedy	easton-pa.aauw.net/contact/
Membership Team	Carolyn Connors	easton-pa.aauw.net/membership/
Easton Edition	Toni Hoffman	easton-pa.aauw.net/contact/

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

PO Box 1464
Easton, PA
18044-1464

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED