



# The Easton Edition

Easton, PA Branch Newsletter

## CALENDAR

### Newsletter Deadline

Tuesday, April 15

### Branch Meeting

No branch meeting in April

### Board Meeting

Monday, April 7, 7 pm

### IN THIS ISSUE

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*2025*

Leadership is not necessarily about being the loudest in the room.

Jacinda Ardern

## Elections Are Coming

To find your polling place (polling places do change, even if you haven't moved)

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx>

To request a mail-in ballot or to vote early in person you may visit: Northampton County Office of Elections and Voter Registration

(610) 829-6260  
669 Washington St  
Easton, PA 18042

(Lower Level of County Courthouse/Government Center – across from Civil Division/Prothonotary office)

OR you may apply for a mail-in ballot online:

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication/#/OnlineMailInBegin>

To check your registration status:

<https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/voterregistrationstatus.aspx>

The county elections website is updated as petitions are made official, but it simply lists the candidates and their party affiliation. <https://www.norcopa.gov/election-voting>

The Morning Call is interviewing candidates and will publish a Voters Guide. There is a paywall, although the online subscription fee is low.

Lehigh Valley News is also posting interviews and has no paywall.

Lehigh Valley Live is covering contested races and did not ask for a subscription to view their election coverage.

## From the Presidents' Pen

As we embrace the arrival of spring, a season synonymous with renewal and growth, we reflect on our ongoing commitment to advancing gender equity within our community. Our collective efforts continue to drive meaningful change, and I am grateful for your unwavering dedication.

Our branch has been vibrant with activities that foster learning, connection and advocacy, including, but not limited to, the following:

- May 1<sup>st</sup> Girls Recognition Night at 6:30 pm at Nurture Nature Center
- May 21<sup>st</sup> Scholarship and Awards Ceremony at 7:00 pm at the First Presbyterian Church of Easton on Spring Garden Street

Our nominating committee worked hard to present a slate of officers. Phyllis Finger and Christina McFadden have agreed to act as Co-Presidents and Becky Goldenberg has agreed to serve as the Finance Officer. Thank you to the committee and our incoming officers.

In 2025, Equal Pay Day falls on March 25, marking how far into the year women must work to earn what men earned in the previous year, signifying the persistent gender wage gap. Unequal pay is a global issue with slow progress, emphasizing the importance of Equal Pay Day in advocating for change and combating workplace sexism.

As we move forward, let's continue to embody the spirit of collaboration and empowerment. Our collective actions, whether through attending events, participating in discussions, or engaging in advocacy, contribute to a more equitable future.

Warm regards,

Lisa Spitale

Co-President, AAUW Easton Branch

*"Men have to demand that their wives, daughters, mothers and sisters earn more—commensurate with their qualifications and not their gender. [Equality](#) will be achieved when men and women are granted equal pay and equal respect." -Beyoncé*

**AAUW PUBLIC POLICY CONVERSATIONS – APRIL 2025**

Schools and districts across the country rely on research from the American Institute for Research, (AIR) a nonprofit that conducts research in education and other areas. As Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) cost-cutting team force termination of the U.S. Department of Education, (DOE) they are cancelling numerous contracts on which Education Department staff members rely. The American Institute for Research has contracted with DOE for years, informing the entire education system at all levels about the condition of education and the distribution of students, teachers and resources in school districts across America. Responding to DOGE contract cancellations, DOE Spokesperson Dana Tong said, “This is an incredible waste of taxpayer dollars, which have been invested – per Congressional appropriations – in long-standing data collection and analysis efforts and, policy and program evaluations. The evaluation and data work that has been terminated is exactly the work that determines which programs are effective uses of federal dollars, and which are not.”

In a ProPublica February 2025 report, Jodi S. Cohen and Jennifer Smith Richards posed questions to DOE staff about the decision to decimate the agency’s research and statistics arms, the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). They were advised that the standardized test known as the nation’s report card, the national Assessment of Education Progress, would not be affected. Neither would the College Scorecard, which allows people to search for and compare information about colleges. IES is one of the country’s largest funders of education research and the slashing of contracts could mean a significant loss of public knowledge about schools. The Institute maintains a massive database of education statistics. It contracts with scientists and education companies to compile and make data public about schools each year, including information about school crime and safety, and high school science course completion. The total annual research data budget is about \$815 million or roughly 1% of the Education Department’s overall budget of \$82 billion this fiscal year. The \$900 million in contracts the department is canceling includes multiyear agreements. According to ProPublica, the vast trove of data represents much of what we know about the state of America’s roughly 130,000 schools. Without a national repository of data and statistics, it will be harder for parents and educators to track schools or compare the achievement of students across states.

The Trump administration has repeatedly expressed a desire to “return” responsibility for schools to the states, although state and local governments already control the largest share of funding for education. There is no national curriculum. States and districts decide what to teach and dictate their own policies. DOGE wrote in a post on “X” “Today, the Department of Education terminated 89 contracts worth \$881mm.” Washington Senator Patty Murray blasted the contract terminations at the Institute of Education Sciences. “An unelected billionaire is now bulldozing the research arm of the Department of Education - taking a wrecking ball to high-quality research and basic data we need to improve our public schools,” she said in a statement. “Cutting off these investments after the contract has already been inked is the definition of wasteful.”

Lawsuits filed by Public Citizen and others regarding the legality of dismantling the Department of Education continue. A temporary restraining order against what DOGE is attempting at the Department of Education was issued in mid-February. The elimination of the Education Department is a major goal of Project 2025 whose focus is eventually allocating public tax dollars to private, religiously-affiliated (primarily Christian) schools and home schools.

## **AAUW EASTON SLATE OF OFFICERS 2025-2027**

**Co-president: Phyllis Finger** grew up Florida and graduated from Florida Southern College and then attended Syracuse University where she earned her Masters. She taught at Lawrence High School in New Jersey and when her husband began work at Lafayette College, she began her over forty year career of teaching in the Easton Area School District. Phyllis has been active in our AAUW Easton branch for a long time, earning an Outstanding Woman of the Year award in 2005-6. Phyllis was also branch president from 2000-2003. She knows AAUW and has graciously accepted the nomination of co-president.

**Co-president: Christina McFadden** has lived in Easton PA for 39 years. Her husband, Michael, and she live in downtown Easton. They raised their two children, Paul and Kathleen in downtown Easton. Christina joined the Easton branch of AAUW in September 2023.

Prior to moving to Easton, she grew up in Edison NJ. and chose to stay in state for College. She attended Upsala College located in East Orange NJ. and majored in Economics.

After graduation, she started a 14 year career as a bank branch manager. During this time, her responsibilities were credit analysis, marketing, operations and human resources. Christina worked in both NJ and Lehigh Valley Banks as a branch manager.

Christina returned to work to start a second career in higher education after a short time at home raising children. She is in her 25th year in this field, working at Lafayette College for 14 years and currently employed at Northampton Community College for 10 years. Her job involves helping new and returning students seeking financial assistance navigate the federal aid process. Counseling students on application procedures, grants, student loans and billing are among a few of her primary duties.

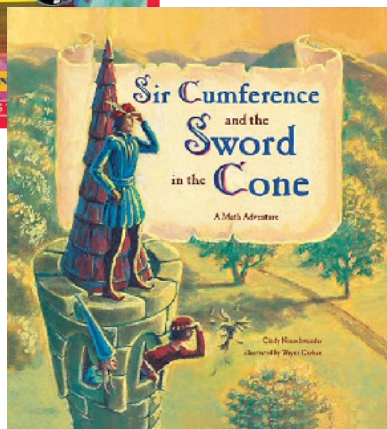
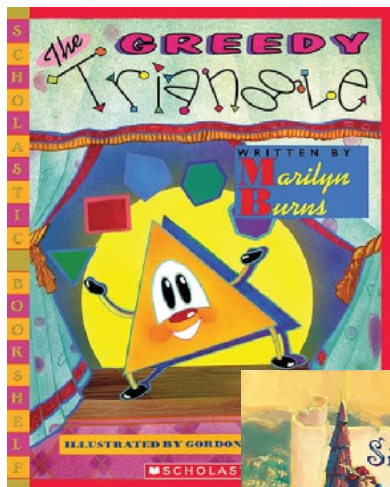
We extend our gratitude to Christina for agreeing to the nomination our branch as co- president.

**Treasurer: Becky Goldenberg** grew up in Easton and has lived here for most of her life. She spent four years at Boston University, a year in New York and a year in France. Becky was a local Weichert realtor for almost forty years. Among many community activities, she now serves as treasurer, board member, and volunteer at the Easton Area Neighborhood Center. Becky has been a long-time member of our branch and has agreed to serve another term as AAUW Easton treasurer.

### Volunteers Needed For Let's Read Math

Branch members had a great time facilitating Let's Read Math™ sessions last summer. We partnered with Easton Library to present Let's Read Math™ lessons and over 50 children participated. The Bethlehem AAUW gave us six complete lessons.

We are exploring partnering with local agencies that offer summer programs for children. We need volunteers to either teach or assist with teaching the lessons. Come learn how you can volunteer and engage elementary children in learning about math through literature. There will be a meeting at Karol D'Huyvetters' house, 2116 Gruver Ave., Easton on May 21, 2025 at 2:00 pm. If you have any questions, please call Karol at 610-751-5047.



### Message from Cindy Hall

I am resending the below email from Gloria, dated March 20. Please see AAUW's statement on the dismantling of the Department of Education. (The link below appears in the first paragraph of the email.) **It would be helpful if you would resend to your branch members to ensure they have seen AAUW's stance.**

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/news/media/press-releases/aauw-condemns-executive-order-to-dismantle-the-u-s-department-of-education/?emci=ed3be517-e704-f011-90cd-0022482a9fb7&emdi=a709f112-d605-f011-90cd-0022482a9fb7&ceid=934732>

Several branches have written letters to the editor and opinions for their community and regional newspapers on a number of recent developments impacting our mission.

**Here is the link for the opinion piece written by Kathy Seidl and Mary Ann Daniels, Co-Presidents AAUW Harrisburg.** (Unfortunately, you may only be able to see the header and first few lines if you are not a subscriber.)\_ The visibility for AAUW and awareness for our mission is important.

<https://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2025/03/the-real-victims-of-trumps-education-cuts-our-children-opinion.html>

**Cheryl Towers and Nancy Weinstein, Fox Chapel Co-Presidents, had this piece run in December on publishing the ERA.**

<https://triblive.com/opinion/cheryl-towers-and-nancy-weinstein-time-to-add-era-to-constitution/>

**If you have authored letters or opinions for your local or regional newspaper, would you please share with Sandra Miller and me. We may collect some of these for the state website.**

**Just a reminder that branch advocacy is a good way to recruit and retain members. Involvement in supporting our mission and values keeps us strong.**

## Closing the Pay Gap: The Importance of Equal Pay Day March 25, 2025

Every year, Equal Pay Day serves as a stark reminder of the persistent gender wage gap in the workforce. This symbolic day represents how far into the year women must work to earn what men made in the previous year. While progress has been made, the reality remains that women, particularly women of color, continue to earn less than their male counterparts for the same work.

The gender pay gap is not just a women's issue—it's an economic and social issue that affects families, businesses, and communities. When women are paid less, families have less income to cover essential expenses, invest in education, and save for the future. Additionally, pay inequity contributes to a cycle of financial insecurity that can last a lifetime, affecting retirement savings and long-term wealth accumulation.

To close the gap, we must advocate for policies that promote transparency, pay equity, and accountability in the workplace. Businesses should conduct regular pay audits, ensure fair hiring and promotion practices, and foster inclusive environments where employees of all genders are valued equally.

As we recognize Equal Pay Day this year on March 25th, let's commit to taking action—whether by supporting fair pay legislation, encouraging workplace policies that promote equality, or simply raising awareness about the issue. Achieving pay equity is not just about fairness; it's about creating a stronger, more equitable future for everyone.

## Gateway To Equity



On this International Women's Day I am proud to present the Gateway to Equity Award for 2024-2025 to the Nurture Nature Center. Each year since 2008 the AAUW Easton Branch has presented this award to individuals, groups, or organizations that have shown by action and philosophy that they advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philosophy or research. NNC embodies all of these through their involvement in community with science and art presentations and their work with internships for young women. They have hosted our Girls Recognition Night honoring 7th grade girls chosen by their teachers for their achievement and interest in STEAM courses. Panelists meet with the girls and a keynote speaker encourages parental support. Our 4th Girls Recognition Night will be here on May 1. Please join us for this always exciting and rewarding evening.

Award presented by Fran Kennedy.

## 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



April 21, 2:00 pm  
Hostess: Fran Kennedy  
**Beloved** by Toni Morrison

### International Relations

**Chair:** Fran Kennedy



April 22, 2:00 pm  
Hostess: TBD  
Topic: Women Leaders in Europe

### 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:** Randi Blauth



April 14, 1:30 p.m.  
April 28, 1:30 pm  
Hostesses: Toni, Susan

### Tapas Dining

**Chair:** Phyllis Finger



Date:  
Hostess:

### Stitch and Be

**Chair:** Toni Hoffman



April 3, 2:30 p.m.  
Hostess: Toni Hoffman

### Science

**Chair:** Susan McNamara



Date: May 22, 1:30 pm  
Hostess: Nancy Kinzli  
Topic: **The Song of the Cell** by Siddharta Mukherjee  
Part 3: Blood = p. 151-225



### Walking Group

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

## 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.

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