



Easton (PA) Branch

The Easton Edition

Easton, PA Branch Newsletter

CALENDAR

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2025

Science is organized knowledge.
Wisdom is organized life.

Will Durant

June, July and August

Congratulations to the five excellent young woman who received scholarships from our branch. Three of the recipients were able to attend the dessert and it was delightful conversing with these bright young women.



There are no branch programs taking place over the summer. That doesn't mean that your board is not busy. In fact, your officers are beginning to plan the programs for the next AAUW programmatic year.

Our branch is partnering with the Sizzle program to once again hold Let's Read Math™ workshops. It's always fun and rewarding to interact with the children who attend these workshops.

Check our website for updated information on what lies ahead.

From the Presidents' Pen

We wish everyone a fun and relaxing summer filled with all good things!

We're excited for the new AAUW year to begin in September and look forward to new officers, new and interesting programs and new ways for the branch to participate in the Easton community.

Happy summer everyone.

Fran and Lisa

AAUW Easton Branch Annual Scholarship and Award Ceremony

May 21, 2025 at First Presbyterian Church

Fran Kennedy, Co-President, called the meeting to order at 7:10pm. She welcomed everyone and introduced our three scholarship recipients that were present.

Karol announced that our branch will again be doing Let's Read Math. We will be working with the Sizzle program. Volunteers are needed. Contact Karol to volunteer.

Fran Kennedy presented our Scholarship awards to Karmella Imboden (Easton), Miara Jackson (Phillipsburg) and Julia Vargo (Pen Argyl). She also acknowledged our two recipients who could not attend - Ava De Febbo (Nazareth) and Brook Lyn Hermanski (Bangor).

Lisa Spitale presented the Member Making a Difference Award to Lily Gioia.

Lisa Spitale presented the Named Gift Honoree Awards to our members that we lost this year- Janet Heffner, Helen Pearson, Mildred McFadden Pitoni.

Fran Kenedy presented the President's Award to Toni Hoffman.

Congratulations to all our award recipients!

Margaret Skaarup representing the branch and the board thanked Fran and Lisa for their service the past two years and presented them with gift certificates. Fran and Lisa thanked all board members and event chairpersons.

The following board positions are needed for next year: Newsletter editor, Website and yearbook.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Rosemary Baker

AAUW PUBLIC POLICY CONVERSATIONS – JUNE 2025

“Pennsylvania is the wild west when it comes to governing our politics,” Larry Platt wrote in the 4/18/25 Philadelphia Citizen. “There are no limits on campaign fundraising. Members of our full-time legislature can hold outside jobs. Committee chairs can essentially be on the payroll of those they’re supposed to regulate. Despite being among the nation’s highest paid legislatures (\$110,000+ annual base pay), members can claim per Diems—flat rate payments with no paper trail when they travel outside their district. And worst of all, there is no ban on the gifts a member can accept; we’re one of only 10 states that allows its elected representatives to get for themselves all that they can.”

When Democratic Representative Jarod Solomon introduced H.B.744 banning gifts to members of the legislature for the 38th time in the last 25 years, he said, “This is the lucky 38. There is a chasm between what the legislature passes and what the people want. If this came to a vote on the floor, who would be against it? Anyone in Pennsylvania? Anyone in the universe? I want to find the only person who says we should be allowed to accept \$1 million vacation homes. Find me that one person.” The reality is that reform gift ban bills never GET to the floor for a vote, persistently suppressed over decades by House and Senate leadership of both parties.

Solomon says it’s entrenched power that oils the status quo. The bi-partisan bill’s Republican co-sponsor, Representative Jim Rigby, told the PA Capital Star (4/7/25), “This is the hard stuff, the egregious stuff, the headline making stuff. I’m talking about the vacation homes, the cars, the jewelry.” H.B. 744 “tries to do something very simple, it says we’re not going to tolerate it.” Solomon noted H.B.744 includes reasonable exceptions as the legislation has in the past. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle in Harrisburg have rejected claims that expensive gifts rarely influence policymakers’ decisions and that constituents should not be concerned. But for decades, the General Assembly has failed to pass legislation that would end what critics say amounts to legalized bribery.

MarchOnHarrisburg, a non-violent activist group advocating for Pennsylvania campaign reform, ending dark money campaign spending and other issues involving transparency and political accountability, continues to push for the gift ban. Rabbi Michael Pollock who leads gift ban advocates, told the Capital Star that leadership in both chambers are to blame because it’s difficult for them to admit fault in the institutions they oversee and in recognizing their own humanity. When it comes to reform, what voters want to know is which side are you on? “Are you working for me or are you working for someone else or something else?” “This may be over simplistic, but they like the gifts, including the governor. He’s very skilled at soliciting money in politics. He likes the Super Bowl and Sixers tickets.” “All of these things add up to a really deep culture of corruption. If we don’t do it, we just continue to be governed by smaller and smaller numbers of people with money and influence.”

Lilly Gioia/Advocacy

Dear Branch members,

As some, but not all, of you know, I have decided to move closer to my daughter in Virginia and will be leaving the Lehigh Valley in about two weeks.

I've known most of you for many years, we've participated in the Book Group and the Mah Jongg group, the Stitching group and International Relations. We've enjoyed tapas and walking and talking. We've advocated here in Easton and also in Harrisburg, always working toward the goal of pay equity and equality for all.

I've enjoyed my time with AAUW Easton Branch, I've grown as a person and learned how to advocate for change.

Now it's time for that change in my life. I'm excited and a bit anxious and I'm looking forward to my next chapter.

I hope that someone will take over the newsletter editor position - it's a good way to disseminate information and it's a great way to stay in touch with what's happening with the branch.

Toni Hoffman



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.

Most interest group do not meet over the summer.

Book Discussion

Chair: Susan McNamara



Date: TBD
Hostess: TBD
Book: TBD

International Relations

Chair: Fran Kennedy



DATE: TBD
Hostess: TBD
Topic: TBD

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



June 9, 1:30 p.m.
June 23, 1:30 pm
Hostesses: TBD

Tapas Dining

Chair: Phyllis Finger



Date: TBD
Hostess: TBD

Stitch and Be

Chair:



Date: TBD
Hostess: TBD

Science

Chair: Susan McNamara



Date: TBD
Hostess: TBD
Topic: **The Song of the Cell** by Siddharta Mukherjee
Part 4: (Knowledge) & 5 (Organs)



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	Phyllis Finger, Christina Mc Fadden	easton-pa.aauw.net/contact/
Membership	Jan Schwartz	easton-pa.aauw.net/membership/
Easton Edition		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
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