



THE KEYSTONER

Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



September and October seem to be the busiest of months, certainly for AAUW. The September 27-29 Atlantic States Regional Conference held in Richmond was, in a word, wonderful. Pennsylvania played a key role in the conference which was hosted by Virginia. The evaluations were particularly high, Speakers received excellent ratings, including Pennsylvania presenters Ajla Glavasevic Laussegger (National), Kate Elkins and Mary France (Carlisle), Paula McDaniel (Lansdale), Deb Roney (Huntingdon plus), and Ajla and Sandra Miller (Easton) who filled in for Debe Mack (Johnstown). Thank you all for representing Pennsylvania in high style!

Moving forward, we have been asked to host the 2026 Regional Conference in Pennsylvania. From our work in Richmond, we know this is a big job, but we are supported by the participating states. We are developing an organizational structure for the conference to avoid an overload on our Pennsylvania volunteers. Very soon, we will be determining the location of the conference and the timeframe. This will be done cooperatively with the other states. Accessibility will be key (Amtrak, airports, major highways).

We are anxious to have volunteers from across the state so consider this our (first) call for your support. This is your opportunity to meet dedicated members from many states and build bonds beyond our own branches. If you would like to participate, please email me so we know you will join in. Do not let an inability to travel deter you from helping. There will be many jobs, not all requiring travel or large blocks of your time.

This also is a good time to remind branch leaders to begin to plan to financially support members and students to attend in 2026. If your branch has issues with leadership succession, this is an excellent way to get others involved and learning more about AAUW.

Branch Presidents and administrators meet every other month to discuss issues. Since several branches do not have designated Public Policy Chairs, we hold the Public Policy meeting in the first half hour. All branches should have their President or an alternate in attendance. We rely on Presidents to carry news back to their members.

If your branch is in the process of developing or assessing a branch strategic plan, please be sure you align the work of your branch with AAUW’s mission, with a focus on gender equity, economic security, and education.



Pennsylvania AAUW regional conference attendees Sandra Miller and Cindy Hall pictured with Lane Stone, AAUW Virginia President and AAUW CEO Gloria Blackwell.

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

Support AAUW and the significant advocacy work done by National. Send donations to the Greatest Needs Fund so National has the flexibility to address pressing issues. Support AAUW PA in our quest to increase college student participation at our conferences and retreats, at the regional states conference, and NCCWSL for emerging student leaders as well as through mini grants.

You make a difference.

Cindy Hall (State College)
President, AAUW Pennsylvania

A MOTHER OF TWO GOES BACK TO SCHOOL

While being a full-time mother, Emily Lopez is attending Mount Aloysius College this fall to finish her degree in special education.

Lopez graduated from Mount Aloysius College in May of 2022 while pregnant with her first child. In the span of two years, Lopez married her husband, Abraham Lopez, and they have two children together, Abraham Theo and Cove.

Lopez received a bachelor's degree in "Interdisciplinary Studies," including early education and business. Yet, she did not have the qualifications to become a full-time special education teacher, so she decided to go back to school to receive those credentials.



"My biggest regret in life is not finishing my education," said Lopez. "I know the teaching environment is where I am supposed to be, and because of that, I feel comforted that one day I will be able to have my dream job."

Although Lopez is working toward her dreams, she explains major setbacks she has experienced while being away from her children. "From being a stay-at-home mother for two years to becoming a college student again has impacted my life greatly because I don't get to see my kids as often," said Lopez. "I miss precious moments like the crawling/walking stage with my daughter that I didn't miss with my son."

Despite facing challenges, Lopez continues to work toward her goal of becoming a special education teacher. "I came back with a fire in my ass because I want to achieve my dreams."

With less than a year left, Lopez wants to start her career in any school located in Cambria County, PA. "Through the good and the bad, I remind myself that I am doing this for my children, but I am also doing this for myself."

Colette Costlow
AAUW Pennsylvania Intern

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM VICE PRESIDENT



The Bigger Picture matters (Southern Hospitality, Systemic Racism)

Last month, I attended the AAUW Atlantic Regional Conference – Empowering for Equity in Virginia with several other members from across our state. Even though September is always a busy time at college, I was glad to have set aside time for this conference and made the five-hour drive south with Cindy Hall. Despite the destruction and havoc wreaked by Hurricane Helene, the conference had a strong turnout. It was also quite intense, with two full days of solid programming focused mainly on advocacy efforts related to the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), voting rights, education and immigration. I gained new insights and felt I benefited from understanding the “bigger picture.”

One key takeaway for me was that the quest for gender equality sought in the ERA was being undermined through subtle and underhanded methods: through “racial gerrymandering,” or the design of legislative district boundaries to weaken the participation of minority voters; and malicious tactics that stifled the ability of Black and Brown voters to effectively cast their vote. Proponents of the amendment that would bring equity and equality for women have faced significant barriers to the passage of the ERA for decades.

This point was highlighted in “The Struggle for the Right to Vote for All,” which outlined the difficulties faced in ratifying the ERA in Virginia. Kati Hornung, Executive Director of Vote Equality shared insights from her experience supporting voters of color facing suppression. She explained how gerrymandering, and voter suppression obstruct efforts toward gender equality and highlighted that dismantling racial gerrymandering was crucial for the ERA’s ratification.

A related presentation entitled “Voting and the ERA” showcased how grassroots organizers effectively leveraged insights from the ratification process. Andrea Miller, Executive Director of People Demanding Action, explained that non-profits have emerged to tackle obstacles, barriers and tactics associated with voter suppression. For instance, the Center for Common Ground, where she serves as a Founding Board Member, is a non-partisan voting rights organization led by Black women. Focusing on empowering voters of color in Virginia and other states facing voter suppression, the Center’s goal in 2024 is to reach 18 million voters. An army of 85,000 volunteers is currently engaged in sending 12.5 million postcards, 3.5 million text messages, and 12.5 million postcards. The organization has enlisted the support of the “Divine Nine”, the sororities and fraternities at HBCU campuses. At the regional conference, I also gained valuable insights into “menstrual equity” and now see why it’s a crucial policy issue and a significant area of advocacy that deeply resonates with college students. I’ll share more on this topic in the next issue of the *Keystoner*.

Lori Woods (Indiana Co)
Program VP, AAUW Pennsylvania

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES



Election Update: Election Day is November 5, 2024

Please get out to vote and encourage your friends and families to vote. Voters must complete their mail-in ballots by November 5 and have them received by your local election board by November 5 at 8 pm. For any voting related questions - check out [the PA.gov website page on voting!](#)



PA is an important state in this year's national election cycle and AAUW National has prepared PA-specific voter guides for our use in the Senate race and four House races.

Head-to-Head Voter Guides: AAUW Action Fund

[Head-to-Head-Candidates-for-PA-Senate-Election-2024.png \(4829×6250\) \(aauwaction.org\)](#)

National AAUW did voter guides on these four races: Incumbents listed first:

Wild/Mackenzie: [Head-to-Head-Candidates-for-PA-07-Congressional-District-2024.png \(4829×6250\) \(aauwaction.org\)](#)

Cartwright/Breshnahan: [Head-to-Head-Candidates-for-PA-08-Congressional-District-2024.png \(4829×6250\) \(aauwaction.org\)](#)

Perry/Stelson: [Head-to-Head-Candidates-for-PA-10-Congressional-District-2024.png \(4829×6250\) \(aauwaction.org\)](#)

Deluzio/Mercuri: [Head-to-Head-Candidates-for-PA-17-Congressional-District-2024.png \(4829×6250\) \(aauwaction.org\)](#)

ERA Update: The Public Policy Committee is developing a letter to send to our Congressional Delegation to encourage their support for the discharge petition for the ERA and its inclusion in the Constitution. Look out for it soon.

Title IX Update: The courts have not resolved the current injunctions that are in place in 26 states and in Mom's for Liberty schools from the Kansas Injunction. See the new listing [here](#). Please support your local school boards as they address these attacks.

PA Legislative News:

We are reaching the final voting days of this legislative cycle in PA.

The Family Care Act (Paid Leave) and the Pay Equity Bill are not scheduled for a vote in November with the General Assembly only scheduled for two days this month. This lack of action will require that these bills be re-introduced in the next session starting in January 2025. These bills will be a priority for our public policy work in the next PA Legislative Session.

Sandra Miller (Easton/Bethlehem)
Public Policy Chair, AAUW Pennsylvania

AAUW PA MEMBERSHIP – SHARING STORIES FROM ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE



I returned from the Atlantic Regional Conference filled with a new enthusiasm for the mission of AAUW. Meeting and interacting with so many like-minded women opened my eyes to the fact that branches all along the East Coast share the same challenges and success stories as our branches do in Pennsylvania. We're all looking to improve, especially in membership development. Here's a few tips, shared by many of the members whom I met.

It seems so simple, but I was reminded by some long-time members in North Carolina and Virginia that a good membership program starts with a goal. How many new members will we recruit this year? Setting that number keeps a branch focused on a goal and helps to measure progress. How many new members can be recruited from Shape the Future events? How many college students might join? Think reasonably but be open to a challenge.



Attendees from Pennsylvania

Everyone I talked with agreed that once a new member is recruited, it's so important to get that new member involved. As an officer from Greensboro, NC said "When you invite someone to the party, ask them to dance." I loved that phrase and asked to share it. That same sentiment was hammered home by Deb Roney in her program "Keeping Small Branches Afloat but not Adrift." Members can't be ignored. We need to get their input. What can that member contribute? Why did he/she join the branch and why do they stay?

Another common challenge is leadership development. Many branches agreed that approximately 50 percent of the members on a branch roster participate in branch activities and can be recruited for leadership roles. So, branches find themselves struggling to fill officer positions. Consider member strengths and what might be the best fit. Maybe two officers share a job; maybe a group acts as leader. Whatever the plan, creativity is the key.

I'll share some additional ideas from the conference in future *Keystoner* publications. For now, a "housekeeping" note:

Any student at a College/University that is a C/U member of AAUW can receive free national membership. When registering on the Community Hub, use the coupon code CUSStudentFY25. This code will deduct the \$18.81 that is normally applied for student membership.

Thank you for all you do for AAUW!

Karen Wellin (Valley Forge)
Membership Vice President, AAUW Pennsylvania

BRANCH BYLAWS

Are you reviewing your bylaws to include the mandated Articles and/or to make any other changes? Remember that all proposed bylaws amendments need to be reviewed by the AAUW PA bylaws chair before your branch votes on them.

If you have questions, need help, or want to submit your proposed amendments for review, please contact Deb Roney, aauwpabylaws@gmail.com, who is more than happy to assist.

Deb Roney (Huntingdon & Carlisle Branches)
Bylaws Chair, AAUW Pennsylvania

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

AAUW PA is seeking nominations for the following officers to fill 2025-2027 terms on the State Board.
DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 15.

Membership Vice-President: The membership vice president is specifically responsible for planning, coordinating, implementing, and reporting membership activities and shall perform such duties as the president and board shall direct ([Detailed position description](#)).

Secretary: The secretary shall record and keep minutes of all business, board, and special meetings and is the member designated to record and make available upon request the minutes of each meeting and board meeting. The secretary shall perform such other duties as the president and board shall direct ([Detailed position description](#)).

Finance Officer: The finance officer shall be responsible for collecting, distributing, and accounting for the funds of the Affiliate and for meeting specific deadlines. The finance officer shall serve as custodian of all funds and securities and as the designated contact for finance to AAUW ([Detailed position description](#)).

Meeting Obligations: The state board meets four times annually, usually in July, October, January, and April/May (in even-numbered years, just before the PA conference). January’s meeting is typically held on Zoom. Others are usually in person but may be virtual.

Board expenses related to the position and most expenses for attendance at in-person meetings are reimbursed by AAUW-PA.

To nominate someone other than yourself for one of these positions, complete the Candidate **Nomination** Form. Tell them why they would be good for the position. Be sure to get the candidate’s permission.

To nominate yourself or if you are a candidate nominated by someone else, complete the Candidate **Application** Form.

Both of these forms are posted online at <https://aauw-pa.aauw.net/nomination-and-election/>. If you want to see the **Call for Nominations PowerPoint** presentation and/or the related pdf version, they are linked at the bottom of the page of the same website.

Want to submit? Send the appropriate form to Deb Roney at aauwpanominations@gmail.com (e-mail preferred) or by mail at 1211 Allison St. NE, Washington, DC 20017.

Submission deadline: November 15, 2024

Questions? Need a form? Contact Deb Roney, co-chair, at aauwpanominations@gmail.com.

The members of the Nominating and Elections Committee are

Deb Roney (Huntingdon & Carlisle Branches), Co-chair, aauwpanominations@gmail.com
 Ann Pehle (Carlisle Branch), Co-chair, aauwpacu@gmail.com
 Eva Kaufmann (West Chester-Chester Branch), Eastern PA
 Mary Kratzer (Harrisburg and Huntingdon Branches), Central PA
 Kacie Kirkpatrick (Beaver Valley Branch), Western PA
 Sriya Vontela (State College Branch), Alternate, Central PA

COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY NEWS

For AAUW C/U Representatives, I sent emails from the address aauwcupa@gmail.com on September 16 and October 9 to the address provided to AAUW. Several “undeliverable” messages were returned. So, please check your SPAM/JUNK; work with school tech to accept emails from this address; change your email address in AAUW Community HUB, etc. If you don’t receive my emails, you won’t know the exciting things AAUW Pennsylvania has planned for the College/University AAUW partners in Pennsylvania.

For branch presidents and C/U representatives, these emails were forwarded to you. I asked branch Presidents to share the C/U contacts in their branches so that they could communicate with you directly.

BIG NEWS for November. The 2024-2025 AAUW Pennsylvania Student Impact Mini-Grants are open now until February 15, 2025. Go here for more information and links to the Overview and Application. These grants are available to any student organization on the campus of an AAUW College/University in Pennsylvania. The last day to submit an application is February 15, 2025. But don't wait until then, because grants are awarded first come, first serve until the budgeted funds run out.

Ann Pehle (she, her, hers)
AAUW Pennsylvania College/University Liaison

NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

AAUW Beaver Valley

2024 Kitchen Tour Fundraiser

On September 28th, the Beaver Valley Branch held our 23rd Annual Kitchen Tour and Tasting Event. Four area homes are engaged along with a local chef stationed in each home to showcase the kitchen and serve a “bite” to participating patrons. Attendance has grown throughout the years with this year’s patronage topping nearly 400 attendees. In addition to the kitchen tours and tastings, the event also features a “marketplace” where we raise monies from a raffle basket auction, bake sale, a gently-used accessories sale, and local small business vendors who rent space.



Over the last twenty-three years, the branch has been able to award 104 scholarships worth \$158,000 with funds raised through the kitchen tour. In comparison, 1987-2001 the branch awarded 16 scholarships worth \$8,000 using standard grassroots fundraising activities. During most years, the branch awards seven scholarships (high school seniors, women enrolling in higher education after a break, an outstanding woman student at the local community college, and a woman in her second year of law school).

This high-profile event has many other benefits including the opportunity to engage patrons and our business community about the mission of AAUW; and, recruit possible new members. Additionally, an onsite informational table gives focus to public policy topics regarding gender equity and voter registration requirements. A key success factor for this event is the nearly one-hundred percent branch member support with the planning, solicitation, public relations, set-up, guest services, and clean-up.



AAUW Fox Chapel Area

What's In a Name? LGBTQ+ and beyond, Tuesday, November 12th, 2024, at 10 am

On Tuesday, November 12th at 10:00 am at the Fox Chapel Presbyterian Church (corner of Fox Chapel and Field Club Roads) Ted Hoove, Educator/Trainer at the Persad Center will tackle each of the specific letters in the "alphabet soup" that's associated with the LGBTQ+ community. The history and usage of each term will provide us with the vocabulary needed to better understand gender diversity and how it's evolving.

At 52, the Persad Center is the nation's second-oldest behavioral health and wellness center working with the LGBTQ+ and HIV/AIDS community. The organization strives to de-stigmatize established cultural systems that exclude or discriminate against gender diversity. Homelessness, family rejection, and bullying are among the topics of discussion.

Ted Hoove has worked with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Family Health on youth suicide prevention, adolescent sexual health, and creating safe work and education environments for individuals identifying as LGBTQ+. He also consults with law enforcement agencies and the Civil Rights Division of the FBI on issues of discrimination, hate crimes, and human trafficking.

AAUW Indiana County

#Standingupfordemocracy in Indiana County

On October 23rd, AAUW members Jean Rickard, Peggy Bomboy, Kate Geiger and Cathy Schloemer rallied the County Board of Elections to expand voter rights in Indiana County by permitting voters to "cure" their mail-in ballot envelopes that contain disqualifying errors. Such a policy would authorize the elections department staff to notify voters of any technical errors on their mail ballot outer envelope and give them a chance to correct these errors in person at the Voter Registration office.

Advocates argue that this step is crucial for increasing voter enfranchisement and ensuring that every qualified vote is counted.



The Indiana Co AAUW leaders made a strong impression, and in a powerful moment, they all stood up as Jean spoke on behalf of the group. Several other women, also AAUW members, stood in solidarity. After much discussion and consideration, Board of Elections member and commissioner Sherene Hess made the motion to "notice and cure," which was seconded and passed 3-0. It was a moving experience. Kate remarked, "It felt like democracy in action." Cathy added, "It truly felt like we accomplished something today!"

AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh

Voter Registration Collaboration with LWV of Greater Pittsburgh and La Roche University

AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh Branch partnered with the League of Women Voters of Greater Pittsburgh to have a Get Out the Vote table at La Roche University's Fall Activities Fair on September 10th. The LWV supplied the materials which include voter registration ballots, a handy card with a QR code and website into to give students who wanted to do this later.



The focus was to register students, see if they needed a change of address, or to get a mail in ballot. Judy Clack, VP Voter Service, LWV of Greater Pittsburgh shared training documentation with AAUW member participants to refresh or train us. Judy was joined by Julie Kant and Judith Kaperstein from LWV.

Our branch was represented by Peggy Schmiedecke, Linda Joy, Debbie Rosenfelder and Sylvia Lynn. Both organizations are non-partisan and do not talk about political parties.

State Public Policy Chair, Sandra Miller reached out to Amy Widestrom, PA Executive Director of the League of Women Voters on ways that we can work together this fall. Amy Widestrom was very receptive and stated that she believed that we can support each other and work together. We were already doing this with Peggy's assistance since she has been a LWV of Greater Pittsburgh, Civic Education, College/University Team member for the last five years. Also, AAUW PA held a Voter Education Panel Sept. 17th on National Voter Registration Day. Peggy was on the panel and presented what we accomplished as a branch with the LWV on September 10th at La Roche. It was recorded and will be on AAUW PA Facebook in the near future.

Also, AAUW National offered some GOTV swag stickers and a sheet with head "#Its My Vote Because". Thanks to Julie Makuta, we had several students complete this sheet.

La Roche University Students - Encourage Voter Turnout



Make a plan, see what's on your ballot <https://www.vote411.org/> Share your plans! Tell your friends and family what you learned in the process of making your voting plan and encourage them to make their own. Then, cast your ballot and let your voice be heard. #ItsMyVote

WEBSITE SUBMISSIONS

Please send news for the AAUW PA website to the Administrative Director.

ADDRESS CHANGES

E-News Subscribers:

Send email address changes and additions to the President or the branch officer who manages your branch email list.

SUBMITTING INFORMATION TO THE KEYSTONER

We’re always looking for news from AAUW branches! The best submissions will be between 100-250 words and include a photo (well-focused and at high resolution, please!)

The next issue of the *Keystoner* will be published in January. Below are deadlines for the year.

Issue	Content Deadline	Anticipated Publishing Date
January 2025	Friday, December 20, 2024	Friday, January 3, 2025
March 2025	Friday, February 14, 2025	Monday, March 4, 2025
May 2025	Friday, April 12, 2025	Monday, May 1, 2025

Please send information to the Keystoner Editor and put “For the Keystoner” in the Subject line!

AAUW PA STATE BOARD

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For contact information please visit: <https://aauw-pa.aauw.net/about/board/>