



Inclined to AAUW



JOHNSTOWN BRANCH

March/April 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturdays, March 7 & 21 and April 11
Cinderella Project, YWCA 12-3 pm

Wednesday, March 18, 2026
Public Program: Women in the American Revolution
6:00-8:30 pm at Heritage Discovery Center

Saturday, March 21, 2026
Membership Business Meeting
1:00-3:00 pm at the Conemaugh East Hills Building, 1450 Scalp Avenue

Wednesday, April 8, 2026
Public Program: Issues in AI
6:00-8:00 pm at John Murtha Center, UPJ

AAUW IN ACTION **SOCIAL GROUP CONTACTS**

TUESDAY BOOK CLUB
2ND Tuesday afternoon of each month
Ann Furlong: akfurlong@verizon.net

BOOKS on THURSDAY
2ND Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm
Pat Grzybicki: patgrzybicki@gmail.com
Shellby Custer: shellbyc@aol.com

DINING CLUB
3RD Wednesday of each month at 5:45 pm
Mary Kay Milavec: mkmilavec@verizon.net
Kenna Raymond: kennaraymond@gmail.com

THIRSTY THURSDAY
as scheduled by Kenna Raymond:
kennaraymond@gmail.com

BOOK SALE REPORT

by Ann Furlong
akfurlong@verizon.net

The Spring book collection will be in the month of April. The boxes will be placed at the collection sites on April 10. Collection will continue until May 2. Please be ready to say "yes" if you are asked to help collect books at the sites or asked to help with sorting at the Galleria. Sorting will begin on April 16 and take place on Mondays and Thursdays from 1:00-3:00 until the job is finished.

Thank you in advance for your hard work and dedication to this project. It is the source of funding for our scholarships and helps with programming. You have responded to the call in the past and we know that this year will be another successful Book Sale year.



Johnstown Branch AAUW Website
<http://www.aauwjohnstown.org>



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Madeline Gyure
madelinegyure@gmail.com



Well, it has been, and continues to be, a cold and snowy winter! Your Board was able to meet on January 17th, but we had to cancel our membership meeting on February 7th as I did not want anyone to slip, fall or freeze! The meeting is rescheduled for March 21st at the Conemaugh East Hills Building.

The weather does not stop us from conducting business. Cindy Hall, State President, called a special zoom meeting of Branch presidents on January 28th to discuss some pressing matters. Specifically, there have been attacks on diversity and inclusion policies at some of the universities. This has resulted, in some cases, in pressure to eliminate the gender preference from some of the AAUW scholarship criteria or in the university not promoting it to their students. Rather than eliminate the female preference criteria, many of the Branches have chosen to do their own promotion and/or institute their own selection process, in order to keep with our mission of advancing equity for women. Penn Highlands previously advised us that they had to remove the gender preference criteria from their website; as yet we have heard nothing from UPJ. And we have so far had no concerns from the high schools, but we may have to face some of these issues in the future. The last Branch presidents and public policy meeting was held on February 17th.

On a national level, AAUW continues to lobby for/against policies that align or do not align with our mission. The "Lobby Corps" recently celebrated the fact that they have been helping shape policy for over 50 years. National did come out with a statement in opposition to the activities in Minneapolis.

The National AAUW Alumni Recognition Award was given to Yie Hsin Hung, one of Forbes 100 most powerful women.

I am pleased to report that in our Branch we continue to have more members stepping up to accept positions of leadership. While Deanna has to temporarily step back somewhat because of personal issues, Cindy Banda and Eileen Tweed have agreed to take a larger role in the Public Policy Committee.

Shellby Custer will now serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee, and Nina Girard and Andrea Santoro will serve as members.

Mary Kay Milavec and Kenna Raymond are now doing the scheduling for the Dining Club. Georgia Yeager is leading an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee, and, in addition to some of our usual leaders, I am pleased that three of our younger members, Nicole Kirsch, Kristie Murray, and Jen Phillippi, have agreed to serve on it. If you have any ideas as to the future direction of our local Branch, please contact any member of Georgia's committee.

One of our newest members, Marcia Podplesky, will be assisting Dorene Miller in archiving our history. So, we are preserving the past while planning for the future!

Continue to keep the dates of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference in mind: September 25-27th. Lori Woods, who will be speaking at our March 21st. meeting, will tell us what to expect from this event.

On September 9th as part of the semi quincentennial celebrations, and to reflect on our connection to the women's suffrage movement, we will be hosting an event presented by the Justice Bell Foundation. Mark your calendars. More information to follow.

Finally, we won first place in the Jolly Lobby Christmas tree contest! The Board voted to give the \$200.00 prize winnings to the public policy committee, as they had a very small budget, yet have many needs.

Hope to see you all on March 21st.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

by Kathy Howanek
khowanek@hotmail.com



Upcoming events which need immediate attention:

Cinderella Project try on days are March 7, 28 and April 11 from noon to 3:00 pm at the YWCA. Here is the link for anyone wishing to volunteer for this year's Cinderella Project Try-On Days! Please sign up at least 2 weeks prior to the date(s) you wish to volunteer if you need a volunteer t-shirt!

<https://forms.gle/peAodhQLK25h6jXv5>

Backpack Project will be held March 30, from 4-5:00 pm at the old Garfield School on Decker Ave. We need only 17 volunteers. If you want to assure a volunteer slot, please email Kathy Howanek and indicate if you are interested in dinner following the activity.

Sign-up sheets will be available at the March membership meeting for diaper wrapping for the **United Way Diaper Bank**. This event will be held on April 21 from 10:00 am -2:00 pm at the United Way Office 422 Main St. Suite 203.

The **One Book Project** will be held on May 18, 19, and 20 at Penn Highlands Community College. A link to register as a volunteer will be emailed to everyone in March and activities will be described at the March membership meeting.

GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN!

by Kathy Howanek
khowanek@hotmail.com



The final activity of our branch year is a trip to the Westmoreland County Museum of American Art.

On Wednesday, May 13 at 2:00 pm we have a scheduled docent-led tour of the exhibit, "Cecilia Beaux: Inventing the Modern Portrait." We then are free to tour the permanent collections and the gardens at our leisure. We are carpooling and ask that when you sign up, you indicate if you are willing to drive and are interested in lunch on the way to the museum.

For those of you who prefer a weekend, the staff of the museum advised us to plan to attend a free and open-to-the-public tour on a Saturday. We have chosen Saturday, May 16 for this and also plan to carpool.

Sign-up sheets will be available at the March membership meeting for both of these outings.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

by Heidi Staib
staibfamily@aol.com

Cindy Banda delivered the Write/Read/Write books to Ferndale Elementary and has thank you notes for our members.

Andrea Santoro and Lisa Matson delivered 60 books to the Conemaugh Memorial Maternity Ward to be given to new moms after completing their birth classes. Some books were donated and others were purchased by our Branch. Thank you to all our members for their generosity.

Scholarship letters were sent to the three schools up in the rotation: Richland, Conemaugh Valley, and Forest Hills. Conemaugh Valley has already chosen a recipient and she has already sent in her paperwork.

The 2025 recipients have successfully completed their first term and have received their scholarships.

Lisa obtained the name of a recipient from Conemaugh Valley for the Princeton Book Award.

Two sessions of the “No Book” Club were held in the month of February. Andrea Santoro hosted a group of 6 members on Tuesday evenings and Heidi Staib had a group of 8 on Wednesday mornings. The groups dug into the “History of the Constitution” via The Great Courses Series. The feedback was positive!



PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

by Deanna Haddle
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The Branch Public Policy Committee, in keeping with AAUW Public Policy Priorities, will hold at least two post-card writing meetings. Most likely the dates will be scheduled for the end of March or beginning of April, as the PA Primary Election is May 19, 2026. Watch your email for dates and time. Postcard reminders have been proven to be one of the most effective ways of Getting Out the Vote!

THINK SPRING!!!

MARCH 2026



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Cind Proj YWCA 12-3
8 Daylight Savings Time begins	9	10 2 nd Tues Book TBA @ 1:00 pm	11	12 Bks on Thurs 6:00 Harrigan's	13	14
15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18 Pub Pro @ Dis Cen 6-8:30	19	20 SPRING!	21 Mem Bus Mtg 1-3 Con East Hills
22	23	24	25 Dining Club 5:45 TBA	26	27	28 Cind Proj YWCA 12-3
29	30 Bkpk Proj @ Garfield 4-5 pm	31				

APRIL 2026



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1 Passover Begins	2	3	4
5 Happy Easter!	6	7	8 Pub Prog @UPJ 6-8 pm	9 Bks on Thurs 6:00 WW Bar & Grill	10	11 Cind Proj YWCA 12-3 Book Coll begins
12 Happy Orthodox Easter!	13	14 2 nd Tues Book @ KHowanek 1:00 pm	15 Dining Club 5:45 TBA	16 Bk Sort 1-3	17	18
19	20 Bk Sort 1-3	21 Diaper Pk @ Untd Way 10-2	22	23 Bk Sort 1-3	24	25
26	27 Bk Sort 1-3	28	29	30 Bk Sort 1-3		