



Inclined to AAUW



JOHNSTOWN BRANCH

July/August 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, August 3 and Tuesday, August 4, 2026

Book Sale Set-up
Johnstown Galleria

Wednesday, August 5 through Saturday, August 8, 2026

BOOK SALE
Johnstown Galleria

Wednesday, August 26
Business Meeting
6:30 pm in the Penn Highlands Library

AAUW IN ACTION SOCIAL GROUP CONTACTS

TUESDAY BOOK CLUB
2ND Tuesday afternoon of each month
Deanna Haddle: jdhatt1@gmail.com

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

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

GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN
as scheduled by Kathy Howanek:
khowanek@hotmail.com

ELECTION RESULTS 2026

President: Madeline Gyure

VP Program:

Co-chairs: Georgia Yeager and Shellby Custer

Secretary:

Co-officers - Kristie Murray (Board meetings);
Dr. Nina Girard (Membership meetings);
Robbin Hofman (Correspondence).

Term of office expires June 30, 2028

ADDITIONAL OFFICERS

VP Membership: Dr. Debe Mack

Treasurer: Claire Montoya

Term of office expires June 30, 2027

Thank you to those who are stepping up to lead us into the future! It is an important role that you take to honor the mission, vision and values of our organization.

Mission Statement: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

Vision Statement: Equity for all.

Values: Non-partisan. Fact-based. Principled. Inclusive and Intersectional.

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Madeline Gyure
madelinegyure@gmail.com



I hope you all are having a pleasant summer. The weather has mostly been agreeable (other than the crazy winds), so I imagine everyone has been able to complete a lot of your outside tasks. The summer months tend to be less busy for AAUW in that there are fewer scheduled Branch activities, at least until our annual book sale in August. However, between cruises, European tours, beach trips, and family reunions, some of our committees have been meeting and making plans for the coming year.

A survey was distributed to all members in May, with the intention of utilizing your input to plan meeting locations, educational programs, public policy events, community outreach and social activities. To a certain extent, the results were also to help with the development of a new strategic plan to cover the next five years. Of our members, 21 completed and returned their survey (about 30% of membership). Thank you to those who took the time to send these in. We will be using these results, as much as possible, to develop programs and activities to please the majority. A summary of the survey results is at the end of this newsletter.

I would like to focus the remainder of my message on explaining a new requirement that we have, and how it relates to the “Five-Star Program.” AAUW is transitioning the former “branch survey” into the “AAUW Branch & Affiliate Annual Report” to better reflect its role as an official, organization-wide reporting requirement. This change is driven in part due to new IRS compliance requirements, and it is essential to protect AAUW’s group tax-exempt status, strengthen accountability, and ensure that AAUW can continue operating effectively at both local and national levels. AAUW is a mission-based affiliate network, and we are most effective when we are aligned and working together toward that shared mission. The AAUW “Five Star-Program” is a “framework that helps branches align their work with AAUW’s mission and strategic priorities.” In addition to providing the IRS required documentation, the new Annual Report will also serve as a mechanism through which branches document and describe their work that may count towards the Five-Star criteria. There are specific criteria to meet in each of five categories: Advancement; Public Policy and Advocacy; Governance and Sustainability; Programming; and Communications and External Relations. With input from some of the committee chairs, and the assistance of our Finance Officer, Claire Montoya, I was able to complete the report by the June 30th deadline. Last year our Branch received Three-Star recognition. We will strive to maintain that status, and to make additional improvements.

I hope to see you all at the Book Sale and at the first scheduled Fall Business Meeting on August 26th at 6:30 pm in the Penn Highlands Library.



BOOK SALE 2026

by Pat Grzybicki
patgrzybicki@gmail.com



The book collection has (mostly) ended, the sorting and packing is (mostly) done and the work scheduling has begun.

If you have already signed up to work, thank-you! If you have not, slots still are available.

We will begin set-up on Monday, August 3 at 10:30 am and on Tuesday at 9:30 am and will work until mid-afternoon. On these days you may come and go as your schedule allows. On the Wednesday to Friday sale days, the shifts are 8:30-12:45, 12:30-4:30 and 4:15-8:15.

On Saturday, the last shift is packing and tear-down until we are done (around 6 pm). We have an after-party dinner scheduled at Nyko's on Saturday. Contact Madeline Gyure if you wish to sign-up for that.

I will be sending out an email with specific work openings after July 4th. If you wish to sign-up before then you may email me or call me at (814) 322-7400.

Also, please save medium size boxes and bring them with you when you come to work. These are needed for customers and for left-over books so that we may keep our "good" boxes.

Deanna Haddle will be sending out emails a day or two prior to your shifts as a reminder so you don't miss out on all the fun.

See you at the sale!

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

by Dr. Debe Mack
debemack@gmail.com



AAUW Johnstown currently has 67 members. As a reminder, membership renewals are rolling, so please watch your renewal date and keep your membership current. Dues may be paid online through AAUW, or you may mail a check to Debe Mack for processing.

The Shape the Future opportunity is ongoing. Any new, first-time member may join AAUW with heavily discounted dues for the first year. This is a wonderful way to introduce friends, colleagues, neighbors, and community members to AAUW Johnstown.

Membership information will continue to be shared at upcoming events. As you are out in the community this summer, please help promote our organization and invite others to learn more about who we are and what we do.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

by Heidi Staib
staibfam@aol.com

Representatives from the Education Committee presented our scholarship winners with certificates at their respective award ceremonies this spring. Scholarship checks will be awarded after a successful freshman year.

Georgia Yeager presented Conemaugh Valley's Kaydence McCalley with her certificate at the Imperial Room on May 21, 2026. Kaydence's activities include school newspaper editor, cheerleading captain, color guard captain, and student council, all while taking honors classes. She plans to attend Westminster College to major in early childhood and special education.



Bernice Adams attended Richland's Award Night to honor Sienna Mihaly with her certificate on May 15, 2026. Sienna was president of



Richland's National Honor Society, captain of the Varsity Tennis Team, and a participant in many community activities. She plans to attend Penn State main campus to major in pre-medicine and biology.

Becky Catelinet honored Maggie Martin at her Awards Night at Forest Hills High School on May 21, 2026. Maggie has been active in Forensics, Robotics Club and NHS, among other worthwhile pursuits. Maggie will attend Waynesburg University to study Forensic Investigation.



Laura Huchel presented Elora Scherer with the Princeton Book Award on May 7, 2026. Elora is a junior at Conemaugh



Valley High School. She received a copy of "We Are the Leaders We Have Been Looking For" by Eddie Glaude, Jr. Glaude, a Princeton graduate, signed the copy.

Andrea Santoro has been busy purchasing enough Books for Babies to supply new parents till the end of 2026. She will prepare and deliver them to Conemaugh's Maternity ward soon.

Thanks to these hardworking AAUW members!

FUN, FOOD, FELLOWSHIP (AND BUSINESS!)

by Madeline Gyure
madelinegyure@gmail.com

On May 18th we held our end-of-year business meeting in the form of a covered-dish picnic at Highland Park. We were very fortunate to have had lovely weather and the chance to sample lots of good cooking provided by our members. Everyone seemed to have a good time.

Special thanks to Carol Keppel and Heather Brice for their leadership in organizing and setting up this event.



As is our custom at the last meeting of the year, we awarded our three internal awards to some of our very deserving members.

The **Named Gift Award** was given to **Marianne Spampinato**.



This award is given to an individual who demonstrates exceptional, ongoing dedication to the organization, who shows dedication to advancement of the mission of gender equity, and contributes to the Funds on a regular basis. Marianne contributes to the Branch in many ways.

Andrea Santoro was awarded the **“Member Making a Difference” Award** for making a significant impact on Branch initiatives within this past year. Her active contributions to the five committees on which she serves were noted. She has consistently demonstrated willingness to step up and take on new responsibilities when the need arises.



Deanna Haddle was honored as the **Outstanding Woman**.

This is awarded to a Branch member who has demonstrated meritorious service to both the local Branch and the broader Community. The recipient is recognized for dedication to advancing the mission and making significant, sustained contributions to the Branch

and the community over multiple years. Deanna's contributions to AAUW Johnstown are too numerous to list!



Congratulations to the awardees!!!

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

by Georgia Yeager
gayeager@gmail.com

While our AAUW branch does not meet in the summer, there is a lot to get excited about in the coming fall! So, get out your calendars and mark **August 26** and **September 9** for the kick-off to a new year of meetings and programs.

The Justice Bell Story Comes to Johnstown

Our first public program promises to be an outstanding opportunity to celebrate America 250 and to learn more about women in history. On **Wednesday, September 9** at 6:30 pm, AAUW Johnstown Branch and Penn Highlands Community College will jointly host Amanda Owens of The Justice Bell Foundation who will present a 19-minute film along with discussion about the Justice Bell which made its historic journey across Pennsylvania in 1915. In that year, Pennsylvania suffragists wanted a way to make everyone aware of the state referendum on the 19th Amendment which was coming up on the November ballot. To that end, the women escorted a replica of the Liberty Bell across the state through small communities to make sure everyone knew the importance of the liberty women would gain through the vote.



In addition to the film and the Q and A to follow, Amanda Owens will sign copies of her book, *The Justice Bell: Tracing the Journey of a Forgotten Symbol* which is available from Amazon. In preparation for this event, those of you who love to read might consider reading this book ahead of time and getting your copy signed on Sept 9!

Because September is a busy month not only for meetings but also for the Atlantic States Regional Conference, we are breaking with tradition and holding our first meeting at the end of August. The first business meeting of the year will be **Wednesday, August 26** at 6:30 pm in the library at Penn Highlands Community College. Prior to our business meeting and in conjunction with the Outreach Committee, Lauren Lazzari from the United Way will present a 20-minute talk on their early childhood programs. There will be an opportunity for our members to sign up to assist the United Way by helping to put together kits for the children's programs. We had a lot of fun packaging diapers, so I'm sure we will have an equally good time helping with the early childhood programs!

Other programs for the year include a public policy program, women in the military, banned books, and women in history, as well as fun events for the holidays and our end of year meeting. Check out your 2026-27 AAUW Directory for all of the details! (Directories will be available in August or September.)

IN MEMORIAM

by Kathy Howanek
khowanek@hotmail.com

April is often referred to as “the cruelest month” but it was May of 2026 that was especially unkind to AAUW Johnstown as we lost two of our most senior members. Both were vital, active members who will be sorely missed.

Margaret Barron became a member of Johnstown AAUW in 1966 and was one of the stars of our 100th Anniversary Video. She joined at the invitation of a dear friend and credited AAUW with providing many other friends and opportunities. She had especially fond memories of the Literature Study Group which evolved into the Tuesday Book Club of which Margaret was a continual member. “It was always about education,” was her feeling about AAUW whether learning, herself, at branch programs or raising money to fund scholarships for girls via the annual branch book sale. Always an active member, Margaret served for years as the Educational Foundation Program chair, a responsibility that she took very seriously. Her legacy in the Johnstown branch is her daughter Sara who joined the branch in 1985 and is a lifetime member.





Another star of the 100th Anniversary Video was Leora Rager who joined the branch in 1969 not only because of the mission, but to meet people outside of her teaching experience. She credited AAUW with giving her many new friendships and opportunities to serve the community as a representative of the branch. She served in the relocation of those affected by the 1977 flood. Lee also joined the Literature Study Group and remained a member throughout her life. She served the branch as President but is most remembered as long time chair of the Book Sale Committee, shepherding the sale from place to place. Due to that commitment, our branch scholarships are awarded in her name. Lee also worked diligently on the Editorial Committee of the branch’s publication, *Women of Cambria County* published in 1988.

We are fortunate to have their stories on video at our branch website under the 100th Anniversary tab.

JEWELRY SALE NEWS

by Dr. Debe Mack
debemack@gmail.com

AAUW Johnstown will have a jewelry sale tent at Art Walk in the Park at Stackhouse Park on Saturday, August 30, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

We are not in need of additional help for this event, but we encourage members to spread the word and stop by. Your support and promotion help make these fundraisers successful.

We will be looking for helpers for Ethnic Fest, so please watch for more information and volunteer opportunities as that event gets closer.

The Tree and the Scarecrow – It's Never Too Early!

by Georgia Yeager
gayeager@gmail.com

Our Johnstown Branch of AAUW hopes to have a scarecrow entry for what was once Scarecrows in the Park. The scarecrows may be located at a different site this October, but we want our entry to be there. We also hope to have a tree in the AmeriServ Holly Jolly Lobby event downtown. This will be the second year for both projects. Planning for both began in June because time flies when summer gets busy, and often the fall is even busier! If you would like to be a part of either or both projects, contact Georgia Yeager by email or at 814-322-7154.

MEMBERS HAVING FUN ☺

End of book sorting celebration!



Westmoreland County Museum of Art



AAUW Johnstown Branch Membership Survey
Distribution: May, 2026
Completed Surveys Returned: 21 (30% of membership)

Please Note: Some respondents checked more than one answer; therefore, the total number of answers for any individual question may be larger than the total number of survey respondents.

Question 1: What is your main reason for belonging to AAUW?	
Social	12
Educational	10
Support for Public Policy Endeavors	8
Support for Scholarships	13
Community Outreach	8
Other	1 "All of the above"
Additional Comments	"Support of the book sale"

Question 2: In addition to supporting National and State AAUW priorities, on what else do you think the Branch should focus?	
Providing fun and/or entertaining events for the membership	15
Increasing Local Visibility	14
Establishing Partnerships with other local organizations with similar missions	11
Providing Educational Opportunities	9

Question 3: What type of presentations do you find valuable or wish that the Program Committee would pursue?	
Lectures	16
Panel Discussions	9
Debates	2
Films	9
Other	"Social gathering with educational component" "Current events" "Study groups such as Constitution" "Online webinars during winter" "Travel Topics" "Previous scholarship recipients" (2 respondents) "Local and regional history" (2 respondents) "(Meet with) regional and local political candidates" (2 respondents)

Question 4: Are there any specific topics that you would like to see presented at either the business meetings (short presentations) or public programs?

“Representatives—like a town hall”
 “Online financial safety and preventing fraud”
 “Wellness”
 “Holistic Health”
 “Women’s issues”
 “Civics education”
 “Master gardener”
 “Women’s contribution to history”
 “Nutrition”
 “Socialized medicine”
 “Fun craft; maybe at Holiday Party”

Question 5: We have been repeating our outreach projects for a couple of years (*Backpack Project, Diaper Bank, One Book, Cinderella Project*, food collection, etc.). Do you have other suggestions for outreach that complement the AAUW mission?

YWCA
 Women’s Help Center
 Victim Services
 Food Banks
 Tutoring
 Mentoring young people
 Cancer Walk (early June)

Question 6: What is your preference for receiving information from the Branch?

Email	19
Text	6
Phone	1
Newsletter	13
Facebook	2

Question 7: According to our bylaws, we need to have at least three Business Meetings and four Program Meetings annually. Is this too many, or too few?

Note: Business Meetings are generally September, February & May

Program Meetings are generally October, November, March & April

Too many	1
Too few	2
Just right	17

Additional Comment: “Add November and move February to March”

Question 8a: Do you attend Thirsty Thursdays?

Yes	6
No	14

Question 8b: Should we continue the Thirsty Thursday Program?

Yes	6
No	6
Additional Comments	“Incorporate into <i>Girls Just Wanna Have Fun</i> ” “Need information on Thirsty Thursday sent out” “Decrease frequency” “Meet at bar or coffee shop”

Question 9: In May, do you prefer a picnic or an indoor venue for the last Business Meeting?	
Outdoor Potluck Picnic	6
Indoor Potluck	10
Restaurant (dinner at your own expense)	9

Question 10: Often attendance is low at Business Meetings and Public Programs. What keeps you from attending AAUW meetings and/or programs?	
Location	1
Family Obligations	7
Travel	10
Building Access	0
Disinterest	1
Health	2
Other	Work Weather Conflicting Community Events Too long (3 respondents) – Limit committee reports

Question 11: Please provide any additional thoughts on any aspect of Branch activities that are not covered in the questions.	
• New service projects • New members assigned a member “buddy” to invite to activities • [Only] a small number of people working—need more member involvement • Craft group—if someone could lead • Used book sale too physically demanding • Recruit younger women—mentor younger women • Year-end Expense Report [distributed] to all members in the newsletter—showing what was spent in what categories • “Girl’s fun” activities on days when working people can attend—winery—shopping venue • [Hold a] November meeting • Circulate committee reports to members—discuss only topics as needed	



JULY 2026



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 Bks on Th @The Fifth 6:00 pm	10	11
12	13	14	15 Taste Budds @ Pine Ridge Inn 5:45 pm	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



AUGUST 2026



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
2	3 BOOK SALE SET-UP	4 BOOK SALE SET-UP	5 BOOK SALE 9 am-8 pm	6 BOOK SALE 9 am-8 pm	7 BOOK SALE 9 am-7 pm	8 BOOK SALE 9 am-4 pm Nyko's 6pm
9	10	11	12	13 Bks on Th @Capri WW 6:00 pm	14	15
16	17	18	19 Taste Budds @ Darlington Inn 5:45 p	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Business Mtg 6:30 pm@ Penn Highlands Lib	27	28	29
30 Art Walk Jewelry Sale 10 am to 4 pm @ Stackhouse Park	31					