

League of Women Voters to speak on democracy

This is an open meeting, bring a guest!

The Leadership Team from the League of Women Voters of Erie County will be presenting a most timely topic, "Democracy – A Work in Progress," at the October 14 branch meeting. The event begins at 7 p.m. at the Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State Street, Erie.



Presenters Lucy Krupicz,

Mary Coleman and Andy Blackburn have volunteered with the local League for a total of 38 years. Since 2020, they serve as a three-person leadership team. All are passionate to expand civic involvement and understanding of major policy issues among the citizens of Erie and beyond.

Along with local League members, they work toward expanding voter registration and educating the public on issues that affect them.

This is an open branch meeting, and the general public is welcome to attend. So please invite anyone whom you think might be interested in hearing what promises to be an informative and thought-provoking talk.

Established in 1919, the League of Women Voters of Erie County is one of the oldest Leagues in the country. The group's mission is to encourage informed and active participation in government, to work to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate and believes that through informed participation, people can become engaged in their communities and advocate for public policies they support.

The LWV of Erie County seeks to increase productive dialogue and electoral participation by hosting educational and voter registration events, public forums with candidates and legislators, and round table discussions.

National offers fellowships, grants

AAUW national has an update on one of the fellowship programs that supports women of color. This information is available on the National website using the link: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/news/media/press-releases/>

Pursuing academic work or leading community projects? See if there is an AAUW fellowship or grant that matches your academic or professional goals! To confirm your eligibility for a program, review the application instructions carefully on the AAUW website, or follow the links. Opportunities available include American Fellowships, Career Development Grants, Community Action Grants and Selected Professions Fellowships.

American Fellowships

support women scholars pursuing full-time study to complete dissertations, conduct postdoctoral research, or prepare research for publication over eight consecutive weeks. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. Candidates are evaluated on scholarly excellence, project quality and originality, and their commitment to advancing women

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President's Message

Hello AAUW Friends!

One mission of AAUW is to provide lifelong learning programs and our first one of the season was attended by almost half of our Branch members... This month's program is also open to the public, presented by LWV, about our democracy. I urge you to invite friends so they can see us in action!

Our other mission is to support women and girls in education, advocate for policies on their issues and help them with workplace skills. This is not done easily unless we have the financial fortitude to sponsor the necessary programs. Our financial strength comes from invested funds, but we also have an obligation to preserve and grow these funds over time because the needs keep rising. There are two ways each of us can contribute to the monetary health of our organization (at all levels.) One is to donate money at fundraisers such as Erie Gives Day or respond to requests for specific needs such as the Legal Advocacy Fund contributions. We all do this as best we can throughout the year.

The other way is by giving our time, i.e., volunteering. Volunteering is just as valuable as a monetary gift because there is much to be done, serving on committees, helping run events and organize community engagement. Without this work, AAUW would not exist at any level, branch, state or national.

So, this month, I would like us all to volunteer to serve, help make decisions, raise funds or recruit new members because we are not just a social club, we are a service organization putting women and girls in the center of our efforts. Without volunteerism, when the same few take on all the work that must be done, we will simply cease to be an effective organization.

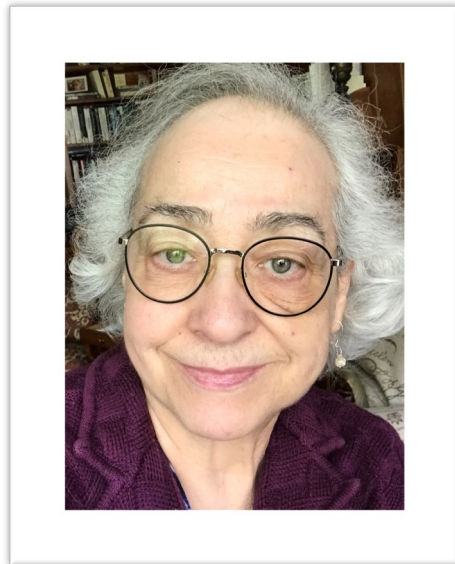
Right now, we have a fundraiser in progress through Boscov's Friends Helping Friends campaign. Please sign up for a two-hour period, any day of the week, anytime that is good for you and bring a fellow member along. Let me know so I can reserve that time for you. Or you can sign up for the already reserved 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. period every Friday and Saturday until the day of the sale, October 22. Email me so I can put you in the schedule. Shoppers are nice and generous. Some actually like to chat, so it is also fun!!

Or you can pick up the savings passes to sell to friends and family anywhere and anytime you see them. Again, email/text me so I can arrange for delivering the passes to you.

All of us must pick up a piece of the work that runs a volunteer organization. Shared goals bring us together and shared burden makes it possible to achieve those goals. Let's rise up to the challenge!

Stay well and enjoy the season...

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Fellowships

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and girls through community service, their professions, or research fields.

Career Development Grants supports the career progression of women by funding to women preparing to advance or change careers or re-enter the workforce.

Primary consideration is given to women pursuing their first advanced degree or credentials in education, health and medicine, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and social sciences.

Grants are available to support full-time or part-time coursework such as a second bachelor's or first master's degree, a certification program, or specialized training in these fields.

Community Action Grants provide funding to AAUW branches and AAUW state organizations as well as community-based nonprofits for programs that promote education and equity for women and girls.

Since 1972, AAUW has provided support to hundreds of communities across the United States.

Selected Professions Fellowships support women pursuing full-time study in designated fields with historically low female participation at accredited U.S. institutions. Applicants must be U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

Yearbook updates

Mary Yonkers has a new telephone number, 814-881-7548.

Karen Miller has a new email address.



Several Branch members joined with the League of Women Voters of Erie County at a voter registration drive at the recent Spanish Heritage Festival at Perry Square.



Members of Erie Branch helped welcome Harding Elementary School students back to school in September. The event is part of the United Way's Community Schools program.



Public Policy Highlights

Branch kicks off year with one-woman play

At the September meeting, Erie Branch members heard Lydia Axelrod (right) present "Fanny Kemble at the Slave Plantation," a one-woman play that examined the rights of women and the conditions faced by enslaved people in the 1880's.

Ms. Axelrod was introduced by friend and Erie Branch member Linda Lorah, (left).

The production, an edited version of "Shame on the Devil" was held at the Jefferson Educational Society and opened the branch's 2024-25 program year.

In lieu of her honorarium, Ms. Axelrod requested that the branch purchase four tickets to the upcoming Liz Cheney/Sr. Chittester event at the JES and make the tickets available to women in need.

Enthusiasm and excitement are building for the November election. It is vital that we all vote and that we encourage others to do the same to ensure that all voices are heard. I agree with Sandra Miller, AAUW Pennsylvania Public Policy Chair, who wrote in the September edition of the *Keystoner* "when women vote, we change the conversation."

I am sure that many AAUW Erie Branch members will volunteer in ways large and small during this election season. We may be helping with voter registration efforts, working phone banks, knocking on doors to distribute information or engaging in many other election related activities.

Recently, I attended a helpful webinar led by Meghan Kissel, AAUW National Senior Director of Policy. She discussed a number of issues that, as AAUW members, we all need to consider. AAUW is a non-partisan organization. Any activities conducted under the AAUW name or by individuals who identify themselves as AAUW members need to be nonpartisan.

For example, registering individuals to vote is non-partisan as long as information supporting particular candidates is not distributed or issues or information re: political parties or candidates is not discussed. Meghan suggested that signs are posted on registration tables stating that all voter registration information is available to individuals without regard to political party or preference. Activities such as working at phone banks or knocking on doors to distribute information re a particular candidate's position is, of course, partisan.

During the webinar, it was stressed that it is fine to identify oneself as an AAUW member by wearing AAUW T-shirts, hats or buttons as long as we are volunteering at a nonpartisan event (such as voter registration). However, if we are involved in activities in support of a particular candidate or a particular political party, it is important that we not identify ourselves as AAUW members in any way. Another issue discussed was that AAUW, as a nonpartisan organization, does not endorse candidates.

The complete AAUW National "Guidelines for Election Activities" follows.

By Loretta Seigley, Public Policy Chair

GUIDELINES FOR ELECTION ACTIVITIES

Election activities carried out in AAUW's name must be conducted within the guidelines set out in AAUW policies. Activities must also be allowable under regulations established by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and the Federal Election Commission. The full AAUW Board of Directors Policy Book is available online.

AAUW is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The AAUW Action Fund is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization. Any branch or state that has not filed to be separately incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization falls under AAUW's 501(c)(4) status. There are certain AAUW policies prohibiting 501(c)(3) organizations from undertaking some activities that are legally permissible for 501(c)(4) organizations. Note: Election activity guidelines for state and local races sometimes differ from those found in federal regulations. To determine state and local regulations for partisan and nonpartisan races, including school boards, check with your state elections division.

AAUW branches and state organizations may conduct election related activities, as long as:

- the activities do not expressly advocate the election or defeat of any clearly identified partisan candidate or political party
- the preparation for and conduct of the election-related activities are not coordinated with any candidate or political party.

AAUW BRANCHES AND STATE ORGANIZATIONS MAY DO THE FOLLOWING

Focus issue education messages and get-out-the-vote activities on the impact that the election results will have on AAUW priority issues. Those messages or activities must not expressly advocate the election or defeat of any candidate or party.

Encourage voters to support unspecified candidates who agree with AAUW's position on specific issues. For example, a branch or state can publish a "vote pro-choice" message. The message cannot appear, however, in a publication that gives candidates' views on reproductive rights.

Acting as private citizens, individual AAUW members may endorse candidates for partisan elective office, contribute money or anything of value to such candidate(s), and organize for supporting such candidate(s). Such endorsement, contribution, or organizing activity cannot use the name of AAUW.

Any AAUW member who is actively involved in a candidate's campaign should avoid participating in activities that may give the appearance of AAUW's endorsement of the candidate.

Identify particular groups in the community (e.g., women, people of color, people with disabilities) **to be part of coalition efforts** or to receive election materials. Decisions about which groups to work with should be based on factors such as the desire to build a broad-based coalition, not on whether an anticipated coalition member can affect the outcome of an election.

Any political action committee or organization that has endorsed a candidate cannot be asked to be a coalition member in an AAUW voter education or voter turnout campaign.

Determine and publicize the positions of candidates. In addition to voting records, the following may be used to gather and publicize information about the candidates' positions on issues: position papers issued by candidates, public statements made by candidates, candidate questionnaires, and candidate forums. Different guidelines apply to each activity.

All candidates running for the offices to be covered in the questionnaire must have the opportunity to participate. Language must not favor or disfavor a particular candidate, and **all responses received must be printed in their entirety** in any publication of questionnaire responses. The publication of responses should include the names of all

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GUIDELINES FOR ELECTION ACTIVITIES

candidates to whom the questionnaire was sent, but publication may proceed even if all candidates do not respond.

Candidate Forums

All major party candidates for the office must be invited, and an effort must be made to ensure their participation. If only one candidate can attend and the other candidates do not send representatives, AAUW branches with 501(c)(3) status may **not** proceed with a forum. AAUW branches with 501(c)(4) status may proceed in organizing regardless of how many candidates attend.

(For the full set of rules pertaining to candidate forums, see AAUW Policy 301 in the Board of Directors Policy Book) Any publication or oral statement of the candidates' responses to questions asked on a questionnaire or at a forum may include a statement of AAUW's position on the issues covered, as long as there is no call to remember AAUW's position when voting.

ONLY A 501(C)(4) MAY...

Publish voting records for the state's congressional delegation, state legislature, or other body. The voting record must include all incumbents within the district or geographic area to be covered. Its content (e.g., the votes to be included) and distribution must not be coordinated with candidates.

Publish voter guides that include the position of major party candidates on specific issues. The information in the voter guides must be available from public sources, such as prior votes cast by candidates, position papers, or public statements made by the candidate.

AAUW BRANCH AND STATE ORGANIZATIONS MAY NOT DO THE FOLLOWING:

They may **not endorse candidates** in any partisan election, including local, state, congressional, gubernatorial, or presidential elections.

They may **not target any voter registration efforts at members of a particular political party** or at individuals likely to vote for partisan candidates who support AAUW issues.

The public must be notified by signs and in any handouts that all voter registration information is available to individuals without regard to their political preference.

They may not distribute advocacy materials as part of voter registration. They may not distribute voter guides in conjunction with any event designed to highlight an incumbent's or a candidate's positions (e.g., a press conference regarding how a member of Congress voted on budget cuts affecting women and families). During such events, no mention should be made of the election.

They may not coordinate any election-related activities with one or more candidates, campaigns, or political party organizations.

They may not provide membership lists to be used in fundraising or other efforts as an in-kind gift to any partisan or nonpartisan campaign. This includes AAUW e-mail, phone, and mailing lists.

They may not use AAUW e-mail, phone, or mail network updates to expressly advocate on behalf of a candidate who is running for partisan political office. This includes advocating financial or any other in-kind support of a particular candidate.

To learn more about the AAUW Action Fund, please email policy@aauw.org or visit www.aauwaction.org.

Branch Study Groups

Book Discussion

Book Discussion will meet on Thursday, Oct. 3, from 1-3 p.m. at Springhill 317.

Food and Friends

Food and Friends will meet for a Wine Tasting Tour on Oct. 2. A few seats are still available so hurry and reserve your spot with Loretto Bellicini, 814-449-8839.

Global Friends

Global Friends will meet Monday, Oct. 28, 7 p.m. at Edie's home, 638 Vermont Ave. Program: TBD.

Speaking at Global Friends Monday, Sept. 30, 7 p.m. meeting, also at Edie's

home, 638 Vermont Ave., is Haieda Sharifi. The topic is "Leaving Afghanistan."

Gourmet

Gourmet will get together on Friday, Oct. 25, at 5 p.m. We will be meeting for a delicious Italian meal at MiScuzi's new location, 700 Millcreek Mall Blvd., next door to J.C. Penney.

Please reserve your place as soon as possible. Call Nickie Azicri at 814-835-3780 or 814-504-8258 or email to speedyzeek8@gmail.com

Politalk

Politalk will meet Oct. 17 at 2:30 p.m. at Asuman's home, 3838 State St.

October 2024

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Food/ Friends Wine Tour	3 Book Club 1-3 p.m. Springhill 317	4	5
7 Board mtg. 6:30 p.m. Zoom	8	9	10	11	12
14 Branch Mtg. 7 p.m. Jefferson Edu- cational Society	15	16	17 Politalk 2:30 p.m. at Asuman's	18	19
21	22	23	24	27 Gourmet 5 p.m. at MiScuzi	26
28 Global Friends 7 p.m. at Edie's	29	30	31		



Erie Branch ♦ Founded in 1902

P.O. Box 9264 Erie PA 16505

AAUW's Mission

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through education, philanthropy, and research. By joining AAUW you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance. In principle and in practice AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in the organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or class.

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