

# BRIDGES TO EQUITY

American Association of University Women (AAUW)  
Volume 68, no 6

Valley Forge Branch Newsletter  
March 2025



**MISSION STATEMENT: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, research and philanthropy.**

---

**VALLEY FORGE BRANCH AAUW  
BRANCH PROGRAM, MARCH 8, 2025  
EASTTOWN LIBRARY, BERWYN, 10:15 A.M.**

**Marilyn Toole on her novel The Flight of the Soiled Dove**

Marilyn, a former branch member, taught genealogy for 35 years in the Philadelphia area and served on the boards of the Genealogy Society of Philadelphia and the Main Line Genealogy Club. She has served as a speaker for over 40 local groups.

Marilyn published her first novel, The Flight of the Spoiled Dove, at the age of 88. Based on her research into her own family history, it is the story of a woman trafficked into an exclusive brothel in 1876 Chicago. Through perseverance and determination the heroine eventually achieves a good life. Marilyn will appear in period costume to tell us about her research and about writing the novel. Books will be available for purchase and signing. Proceeds from book sales will be donated to an organization that fights present day human trafficking.

Do join us to hear about this fascinating historical novel. Guests are always welcome.

.....



## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I attended a Zoom meeting for Public Policy Chairs and Presidents on Feb 5. Twenty-one chairs from around the state were on the call.

There is a current opinion that we now have a 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution!! The ERA Amendment. A coalition is reviewing options to take it to the Supreme Court.

Most of the call addressed the need to make our voices heard in Washington. Everyone agreed that a strong letter to your representatives is important. Some representatives seem to have no sense of urgency or outrage at what is occurring in Washington. My representative, Chrissy Houlahan, just sent out an email stating that since Jan 20<sup>th</sup> her office has averaged 5,700 calls/email a week instead of the usual 2000. The messages:

\*Stop Elon Musk from having access to our personal information.

\*Stop Elon Musk and President Trump from dismantling USAID.

\*Stop President Trump from freezing all federal funding.

AAUW conservative members nationally are asking AAUW national to temper responses. The AAUW PA group feels we need to be more forceful and quicker. We believe more needs to be done to protest the current administration.

There is a sentiment that if we of AAUW can't stand and make noise, what is our organization?

A letter was produced and signed by Public Policy Chairs and Presidents and sent to National. I emailed a copy of the letter and the responses from Gloria Blackwell and Meghan Kissell to all Valley Forge members.

Call your Senators: John Fetterman – 202-224-4254 and Dave McCormick – 202-224-6324.

Make your voice heard!

Susan Norris

\*\*\*\*\*

## PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS for 2025-27

President	Karen Wellin
Program Vice Presidents	Eleanor Erskine and Marsha Irvin
Recording Secretary	Anne Odenweller

\*\*\*\*\*

**NEXT BOARD MEETING:** Saturday, March 15 @ 10:15 a.m. via Zoom.

\*\*\*\*\*

## MEMBERSHIP

Debbie Snyder

As spring approaches, we begin to think of renewing our memberships and how we can hopefully grow in the coming year. In recent “membership matters” emails, I have received information about winners of the 5 Star Program, branches celebrating anniversaries, and calls for artists to design the new notecards. One thing I have not seen in recent weeks is the idea of opening our membership to all women, regardless of educational level. I would like to say that this is closed, but I think it will open up again (probably after membership numbers are reviewed later this year). On a good note, we have several new members this year, from our programs and from just talking to people. As a Webinar from last year noted, “Membership secures our future.” Please keep inviting friends and neighbors to our programs and continue to talk about our organization. As noted in my Public Policy write-up, we have many challenges to our policies and programs and a strong membership will help with this.

## PUBLIC POLICY

Debbie Snyder

As we have seen in recent weeks, many challenges are facing us with regard to healthcare, equity, and financial stability. Recently Susan Norris and I put our signatures on a letter to AAUW President (this letter represented AAUW PA), Gloria Blackwell, affirming the significance of Title IX and the need for the Department of Education and its programs (this letter was sent to branch members on February 23). As many of you know, I also sit on the board of The Junior League of Philadelphia and we recently expressed concerns about potential changes and reductions to DEIB programs in the area. Please, during this time, keep abreast of the challenges facing many non-profits and community groups so that we can be helpful in protecting valuable programs – many of which have taken quite a long time to put in place. Here are a few recent articles that detail such issues and how they are playing out in courts.

[Judge largely blocks Trump’s executive orders ending federal support for DEI programs | AP News](#)

[What to know about the key laws invoked in the scores of Trump legal challenges - CBS News](#)

\*\*\*\*\*



\*\*\*\*\*

**Remember to look at our branch website: [www.aauwvalleyforge.org](http://www.aauwvalleyforge.org)**

\*\*\*\*\*

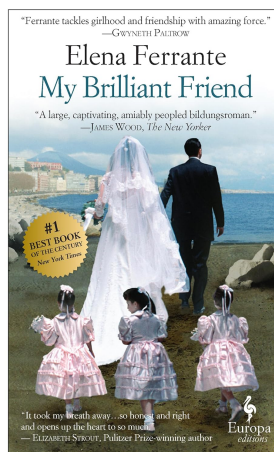
## INTEREST GROUPS

### AFTERNOON LITERATURE

Connie Kirker  
Susan Norris

We will meet on Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. at the home of Eleanor Erskine. Eleanor will lead the discussion of My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante. This novel is number one on the New York Times list of the best books published in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is the first in a quartet of books called the Neapolitan novels. It follows the complicated friendship between two girls who live in a poor, but vibrant, neighborhood outside Naples in the 1950's. The next three novels follow them into their 60's.

Ferrante provides a list of the neighborhood families at the beginning of the book; it is helpful to copy the list and refer to it to keep all the characters straight.



---

### CURRENT EVENTS

Susan Norris

We'll meet on Wednesday, March 19 @ 1:30 p.m. Charlotte Rowland will host. Bring an article that you think would interest the group. Please let Mary Carr know that you will be there. We welcome newcomers!



---

### LIVING THEATRE

Karen Wellin

Living Theater will meet on Monday, March 3, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. Elly Warren will serve as hostess for the meeting. We will read a one-act play, "The Lottery," from a story by Shirley Jackson. We will also pick one other play from our collection of one-act plays. Copies will be available. Please let Elly know that you'll attend. Please call Karen with any questions or comments. Welcome all newcomers!

Eleanor Erskine will host the meeting on Monday, March 17 @ 1:30 p.m. Please let her know that you will be there, and contact her for the articles to be discussed.



\*\*\*\*\*

**MARCH DATES TO REMEMBER**

3	Living Theatre	1:30 p.m.
8	Branch meeting	10:15 a.m.
13	Afternoon Lit.	1:30 p.m.
15	Board meeting via Zoom	10:15 a.m.
17	New Yorker	1:30 p.m.
19	Current Events	1:30 p.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

**UPCOMING BRANCH PROGRAMS 2025**

April 12: Noah Lewis as Ned Hector, a Black Revolutionary War soldier.

Sunday, May 4: Spring Luncheon and installation of officers @ Waynesborough Country Club.

\*\*\*\*\*

**NOMINATIONS FOR AWARDS**

Outstanding Woman	Susan Norris
Member Making a Difference	Jean Givey
Gateway to Equity	Fair Districts PA

**WE REIMBURSE YOUR RIDE!**

Remember, if you need to take Uber or Lyft or a cab to an AAUW Valley Forge meeting, we will reimburse your ride. Just forward your receipt to Jean Givey.  
We want to see you at our meetings!