

BRIDGES TO EQUITY

American Association of University Women (AAUW)
Volume 69, no 8

Valley Forge Branch Newsletter
May/June 2026



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

**YOU'RE INVITED
TO
VALLEY FORGE AAUW BRANCH'S
70TH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON**

Date: Sunday, May 3rd

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Place: Waynesborough Country Club, 440 Darby-Paoli Road, Paoli

Cost: Nothing, although donations are welcome

Program: The Way We Were: Seven Decades as a Vibrant AAUW Branch
Presented by Norma Winther

Please let Eleanor Erskine know that you plan to come, and if you have any food restrictions. Guests are welcome.



“Let’s Look Back 70 Years”

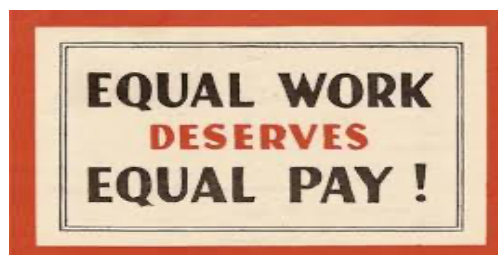
1956. I was only one year old. I guess I was one of those babies that I hear referred to whenever I hear about the founding of our AAUW Valley Forge branch.

“We were women who needed something to stimulate our minds while we were washing diapers and taking care of children”. These women got together to talk about the issues of the day. They explored “hot topics” for which national AAUW supplied study guides. They formed interest groups and enjoyed being together, feeling like they were with like-minded women who wanted to have that experience of life-long learning.

Along the way, they learned how important it was to work towards educating women and girls. Raising money for scholarships became a focus of their efforts. Fighting for equity in the workplace demanded attention; supporting the legal advocacy fund was deemed important. Throughout it all, this early group of women attracted more women, and the branch grew and grew.

I joined in the early 2000’s, also at a time when my child was off to school and I had a free morning to enjoy a Living Theater group. In some way I was just like those 1956 founders finding a group of women with whom I could share an intellectual interest. Women tend to look for the company of other women. I think of my own mother, who had a life-long career teaching in women-centric collegiate positions. To help another woman achieve her educational goals, to see another woman rise in her profession, and to have that woman be a strength to her family and community is the most fulfilling mission that can be done.

The ideals of AAUW have not significantly changed in the last seventy years. We still want to see women succeed and we still want to enjoy each other. Maybe technology has changed us a bit. We email, not talk on a party line. We evite, not send handwritten invitations. We advertise on social media, not through newspaper ads. But through it all, we are women who come together to laugh, to sometimes cry, to learn, and to work towards the success of all women.



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MEMBERSHIP

Debbie Talbot Snyder

It is that time of year to renew our membership dues. If you are one of our recent new members, i.e. if you have joined in the past few months, you will not be renewing at this time. Closer to your renewal month, you will receive notification.

We have also had some questions and confusion about whether our Life Members pay state dues (many of you have been paying this). According to our by-laws you do not have to pay the state dues, but can if you wish to do so. If you are not sure of your membership status such as Life Membership, please let me know.

Below are the details for renewing your membership. Remember that you can renew on the Community Hub or by following the below directions. Please note that the national dues have increased by \$2.00. If you do pay by check and have had any changes to address, phone, etc. please include this information with your check.

Annual Regular Membership Dues are \$106/year, divided as follows:

- **AAUW National** **\$76**
- **AAUW PA** **\$12**
- **VF branch** **\$18**

Please make check payable to: AAUW Valley Forge Branch

Send the check to:

Elly Warren

Inquiries to:

Deb Talbot Snyder

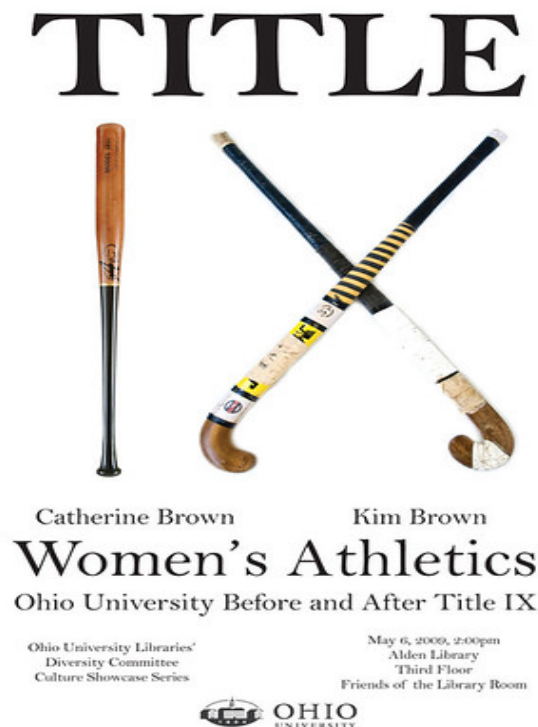
A final note pertaining to Membership is that as dues paying members, you are able to vote in our national and state elections. On April 13, you should have received an email to vote on national leadership. There are bios of the candidates in the email link so please take the time to vote. The email subject is AAUW Election 2026 and voting is open until May 12, 5pm.

For a recent assignment, I had my Junior students write about the idea of the American Dream in older literature such as *The Great Gatsby* and then compare how this concept may have changed over the past 100 years. Many students wrote about how we are all equal now and how barriers do not exist. Of course, I wrote on these assignments that there are still racial and gender inequalities throughout American society. Actually, this past week there was a webinar on the challenges facing Title IX (continuing after so many years) and as we know it is becoming harder to pay not only for higher education but also just basic living expenses.

It is amazing to think that so many of our “battles” are issues that we have been fighting for decades and that we see no solutions in the near future. I did recently view another webinar (from March) concerning pay equity so you may want to view this too.

[The Fight for Pay Equity: Turning the Not So Simple Truth into Real Action](#)

As always, as we are away for the summer or enjoying quieter days, please keep the work of AAUW in mind and continue to reach out to others. We have seen a growing interest in our organization so let's keep that up.



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INTEREST GROUPS

AFTERNOON LITERATURE

Connie Kirker
Susan Norris

We will meet on Wednesday, May 13, at 1:30 p.m. Anne Odenweller will host and will lead the discussion of The Frozen River by Ariel Lawson.

We will meet on June 10 @ 1:30 p.m. via Zoom to discuss our books for next year's reading. Also, we will discuss Lovely One by Katanji Brown Jackson, with Maria Brooks as our discussion leader.



CURRENT EVENTS

Susan Norris

We will meet on Wednesday, May 20 @ 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. Each of us will share an interesting and pertinent article with the group. Newcomers are welcome. Be assured that you don't have to be an expert on foreign policy, or, in fact, anything!



LIVING THEATRE

Karen Wellin

Living Theater will meet on Monday, May 18, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. at Elly Warren's. We'll read two one-act plays, "Here We Are" by Dorothy Parker and "A Marriage Proposal" by Anton Chekhov. Karen will have copies of these plays at the May 3 anniversary luncheon. Please RSVP/contact Elly so that she knows you're coming. Please call Karen with any questions or comments. Welcome all newcomers!



NEW YORKER GROUP

Eleanor Erskine

The New Yorker group will meet on Monday, May 11 at 1:30 p.m. at Erlis Wickersham's home. Contact Eleanor for articles to be discussed.

The group will meet again on July 13. Place to be decided.



MAY DATES TO REMEMBER

3	70 th anniversary celebration!	1:00 p.m.
11	New Yorker group	1:30 p.m.
13	Afternoon Lit.	1:30 p.m.
18	Living Theatre	1:30 p.m.
20	Current Events	1:30 p.m.

JUNE/JULY DATES TO REMEMBER

June	8	Board meeting	7:00 p.m. via Zoom
	10	Afternoon Lit.	1:30 p.m. via Zoom
July	13	New Yorker	1:30 p.m.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Monday evening, June 8 @ 7:00 p.m. via ZOOM



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!
