

BRIDGES TO EQUITY

American Association of University Women (AAUW)
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Valley Forge Branch Newsletter
October 2026



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

**AAUW VALLEY FORGE BRANCH MEETING
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10TH AT 10:15 A.M.
EASTTOWN LIBRARY, BERWYN**

“THE WAY WE WERE; 70 YEARS AS A VITAL AAUW BRANCH”

How did the Valley Forge Branch reflect the mission of AAUW?

Written by Norma Winther and Presented by Karen Wellin

Celebrating 70 years as a branch, this program was originally presented at our May 2026 luncheon. Norma Winther, our historian, spent many hours searching through our archival pictures, directories, and newsletters to show our history in an entertaining and informative way. We wish to present this again to those who missed this in May and to everyone who wishes to hear and enjoy this again.

Unfortunately, Norma will not be able to attend. Karen Wellin, Valley Forge branch President, will share Norma’s script and slides. Karen will also speak about the broader AAUW history, its mission, and the work our branch has done to support that mission.

We can be proud of what Valley Forge Branch has done and continues to do to advance equity for women and girls. Do come on October 10 to learn about our history. Guests are welcome.



**We Were Inspired at the Atlantic Regional Conference,
Lancaster, PA September 25 -27, 2026**

After a last-minute book wrapping party at the New Yorker meeting (thank you, Erlis), Sharon Gurak wrapping a box of books (thank you, Sharon), and the final trip to Bala Cynwyd library to pick up 10 more books (thank you, Autumn), I set off with 160 green wrapped books in my car, ready for the Regional Conference in Lancaster.

My job was simple and tiring. Hospitality involved lots of tasks that had to be done to make the conference as comfortable for our guests as possible. We distributed books on the dining tables, and we set up a silent auction. We had 23 donated items and raised over \$2,000.

About 180 AAUW members descended on the conference arriving by plane, train and car. They came from as far as California and as close as Lancaster County. Valley Forge branch was well represented by Eleanor Erskine, Sue Norris, Kim Edgar and me. Sharon Gurak delivered her program on whistle blowing that was well received.

But it wasn't all gift books and silent auctions. We had a full line up of inspiring and knowledgeable speakers and programs. Gloria Blackwell set the stage speaking to the challenges of our "Unfinished Revolution." We still must fight for equity for women and girls on so many fronts. Pay equity, family leave, women's health, and the assault on women's voting rights were all common themes. Our AAUW national collaboration with the League of Women Voters was highlighted. And we all were reminded that like drops of rain that become a stream, a river and an ocean, we are small but powerful forces in our communities. As we work together, we can cause meaningful change and fight the "Unfinished Revolution."

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Monday, October 19 @ 7:00 p.m. via Zoom



MEMBERSHIP

Debbie Talbot Snyder

AAUW recently held its annual membership meeting, which focused on the Five-Star program, student funding, as well as voting and educational issues. I was only able to attend for half an hour or so, but it is always good to hear what national is focused on and any potential upcoming changes. If you were unable to attend, here is the link to the webinar.....

AAUW Fall 2026 Member Gathering

At our September branch meeting, we had quite a few guests to hear our program from the Delaware County League of Women Votes. There were two guests who did express an interest in joining. While I need to follow-up with them, this does demonstrate that our branch meetings are a good way to introduce guests to our branch and AAUW.

PUBLIC POLICY

Debbie Talbot Snyder

Our September branch meeting was quite a success with many guests who wanted to learn more about voting in Pennsylvania and the need to be active in this process. With regard to upcoming elections, it is very important that if you vote by mail, you fill out the ballot and drop it into a designated drop box as soon as you receive it. As you know, there has been much recent news about potential changes to the mail ballot, so it is best to vote right away.

Also, at our September meeting, I made an announcement that the recent “Keystoner” newsletter had a great deal of public policy information. If you have not read through it yet, please do so to keep up with our public policy focus areas.

I have mentioned webinars in recent write-ups, and I want to share a set of links (received from a recent national Membership email) that also focus on our public policy interests.

AAUW is a proud partner of National Voter Education Week on October 5-9, No Kings: Vote Early on October 17, and Vote Early Day on October 24. Ready to get started? Refresh your knowledge on staying nonpartisan and use AAUW’s 2026 Civic Engagement Guide to spark conversation in your community on what’s at stake for gender equity.



INTEREST GROUPS

AFTERNOON LITERATURE

Connie Kirker
Susan Norris

Afternoon Lit will meet on Wednesday October 14th at 1:30 p.m. at EmJ's Cafe, [814 Lancaster Ave, Berwyn](#). We will all discuss Carnegie's Maid by Marie Benedict. Please let Susan know if you can make it.



CURRENT EVENTS

Susan Norris

We'll meet via ZOOM on Wednesday, October 28th @ 1:30 p.m. Bring an article that you think would interest the group. We welcome newcomers!



LIVING THEATRE

Karen Wellin

Living Theater – A Fun Way to Spend an Afternoon!

Living Theater will meet on Monday, October 19, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. at Elly Warren's. We will read the play, "Bus Stop" by William Inge. Copies of the play are available in libraries and Karen will have copies at the October 10 branch meeting. Please let Elly know you're planning to attend. Please call Karen with any questions or comments. Welcome all newcomers!



NEW YORKER GROUP

Eleanor Erskine

We'll meet on Monday, November 9th at 1:30 at Marilyn Toole's apartment at 1:30 p.m. Please let Marilyn know that you will be there.



OCTOBER DATES TO REMEMBER

10	Branch meeting	10:15 a.m.
14	Afternoon Lit.	1:30 p.m.
19	Living Theatre	1:30 p.m.
19	Board meeting	7:00 p.m. via ZOOM
28	Current Events	1:30 p.m. via ZOOM

NOVEMBER DATE TO REMEMBER

9	New Yorker	1:30 p.m.
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Greetings!

We would like to cordially invite you to join us for an open house at our Administrative Offices in East Norriton!

You are invited to a special open house at our administrative offices. This is a unique opportunity to step inside our space, meet the team who bring our mission to life, and learn more about the work happening at Laurel House every day. Light refreshments will be served.

Location: Laurel House Administrative Offices
[190 W. Germantown Pike, Suite 200](#)
[East Norriton, PA 19401](#)

Date: Monday, October 26, 2026

Time: 4:00 PM-7:00 PM

We look forward to seeing you!

RSVP to bsmith@laurel-house.org or [610-277-1860 ext. 102](tel:610-277-1860)

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!
