BRIDGES TO EQUITY

American Association of University Women (AAUW) Valley Forge Branch Newsletter
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MISSION STATEMENT: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, research and philanthropy.

AAUW VALLEY FORGE BRANCH MEETING
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14 AT 10:15 A.M.
EASTTOWN LIBRARY, BERWYN

CAN INTELLIGENCE BE TAUGHT?
PRESENTED BY SHANNON ALMQUIST

Shannon Almquist is a graduate of Indiana University with double majors in English and German. She has taught every age from 4th grade through adult, loving each grade for different reasons. (Locally she taught at Cheltenham High School). Later in her career she trained parents and teachers in cognitive rehabilitation, working around the world in places such as India, Denmark, Israel and Australia as well as in the U.S. Throughout this time she and her family lived in the various towns where her husband Roy was a pastor, and later the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in the Philadelphia area.

We tend to think of intelligence as something innate and genetic. Is it? Shannon will discuss how cognitive development happens in a child, and, surprise, it is not an automatic result of reaching a certain age. It is the outcome of intentional mediation of a child's experience by an invested adult (parent, grandparent, teacher, or mentor). She will discuss what she has done and discovered in this process. How did we learn to think? What is the difference between knowledge and reason? What is IQ and how does it determine someone's life? What is potential and can it be measured?

Do come and bring guests to this thought-provoking presentation.



FROM OUR PRESIDENT **Karen Wellin**

Our Valley Forge Branch and All Branches are the Keystones for our Members

When I drove to Chicago to visit my daughter, I stayed overnight in a hotel south of Toledo, Ohio. There I was in the breakfast area the next morning, getting my oatmeal, and I happened to be carrying a cloth AAUW bag. From across the room, I heard "I haven't seen that AAUW insignia in a long time." I turned around and a woman about my age was smiling at me. "I used to belong to AAUW and it's good to see that bag." So, I asked her where she had belonged as a member and suggested she could be a member again. Her reasoning was simple: she had been a member of the Itasca Illinois branch, but the branch closed, and she just dropped out. She knew she could be a national member, but it just wasn't the same without her old friends and activities in Itasca.

I tried to encourage her to find a different branch or join nationally. I could tell she wasn't buying my reasoning. For her and for many of our branch members, the key to AAUW is the social connection, the friend, the cooperative working on a mission-based project. These activities, done with women with whom we bond, encourage us to join and to stay members. One could see at our October branch meeting the joy and admiration expressed for so many members, past and present. "I remember her," "Yes, I knew her," "Oh, she was a dynamo and she started our …" were all comments frequently expressed.

Yes, we join AAUW because we believe in the mission of working towards equity for women and girls. We stay because our branches give us the social keystone on which to build our work. Let us continue to support our Valley Forge branch in any way we can.



MEMBERSHIP **Debbie Talbot Snyder**

At this time, we have 32 members and would like to increase this number. It is not just that we would like to have more members, it would be great if they would also like to get involved. At my church, we have started to utilize a program called "Invite, Welcome, Connect." If you Google this, you may find links to Episcopal Churches or to workshops. While this program is being used by churches, its tenets are applicable to organizations that are seeking growth. The first step is to invite and since we have a Holiday party coming up, this may be a nice, less formal way to introduce AAUW to friends. The welcome is just that: be open and not cliquey at meetings. The connect is to get involved and to establish relationships with others in the organization. Please keep these elements in mind at our meetings and events and how the "invite" may be something you try for an upcoming event.

PUBLIC POLICY **Debbie Talbot Snyder**

Do not forget to vote if you have not done so through mail ballots. Our voice is so important this year, so please take the time to do this.

The below information is from a recent AAUW state meeting. Please note that the dates and the links provide good information on important focus areas.

COME TO THE STATEWIDE CONFERENCE ON DECEMBER 5 IN HARRISBURG:

PA 250: Mapping Pennsylvania's Future
Representation, Voting Rights, Redistricting and Reform
Saturday, December 5th, 2026 | 9:00am–4:30pm
Crowne Plaza, Harrisburg

Fair Districts PA, the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, Common Cause PA, the Committee of Seventy, and other PA advocacy organizations will be gathering to celebrate Pennsylvania's first constitution and to consider important government reforms that enjoy broad public support but remain stalled in the halls of Harrisburg. We'll hear from national and state leaders, network with others from PA regions, and learn new skills for advocacy and civic engagement. Follow the link in the conference title above for information and registration. Those who register will also have access to a ride-share discussion board.

FIX HARRISBURG

Here's the website link: https://www.fixharrisburg.com/
There are some reports listed on the home page. The first sets out the problem. The 4th gives the most recent stats. The Problem page gives a series of Stories of Dysfunction. We'd welcome help identifying and writing other stories of dysfunction.
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INTEREST GROUPS

AFTERNOON LITERATURE Connie Kirker
Susan Norris

Afternoon Lit will meet on Wednesday, November 11 @ 1:30 p.m. We will discuss Wild Dark Shore by Charlotte McConaghy. Eleanor Erskine will host and will lead our discussion. Please let Eleanor know that you are coming.



CURRENT EVENTS Susan Norris

We'll meet via ZOOM on Wednesday, November 25 @ 1:30 p.m. Bring an interesting article to share. We welcome newcomers!



LIVING THEATRE Karen Wellin

Living Theater – A Fun Way to Spend an Afternoon!

Living Theater will meet on Monday, November 30, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. at Elly Warren's. We will finish reading the play, "Bus Stop" by William Inge. We will also read "Master Harold…and the boys" by Athol Fugard. Karen has ordered copies of the play and it is available in libraries. 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 p.m. at Marilyn Toole's apartment. Please let Marilyn know that you will be there. Contact Eleanor about articles to be discussed.



NOVEMBER DATES TO REMEMBER

9	New Yorker	1:30 p.m.
11	Afternoon Lit.	1:30 p.m.
14	Branch meeting	10:15 a.m.
25	Current Events	1:30 p.m. via ZOOM
30	Living Theatre	1:30 p.m.

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NEXT BOARD MEETING: Monday, January 11 @ 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

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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!

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