

THE READING BRANCH LINES

Volume 56 No. 04

March/April 2022

Reading, PA

**Reading Branch Annual Business Meeting
Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 1:00 PM
At Berks History Center
940 Centre Ave.
Reading, PA 19601
(610) 375-4375 or www.berkshistory.org**

Please join us for our branch annual business meeting at Berks History Center. The meeting will start at 1 PM. We will elect new officers and discuss and approve the budget. If anyone else would like to run for office, please contact Karen Parish before the meeting. If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to vote please fill out the ballot in the separate attachment to this newsletter email and return it to Judith Kraines by March 14, 2022 at the address listed on the ballot. Please let Virginia Schulze-Johnson know if you plan to attend. The program will be System Shakers and Barrier Breakers: Women in STEM presented by members of our branch.

Officer candidates are: Co Presidents: Karen Parish and Judith Kraines
Secretary: Ellie Hunt
Program VP: Virginia Schulze-Johnson
Communication VP: Eileen Ritz

AAUW Recognition of Women

- We do not have a recognition breakfast planned for this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Joan Cook is working on getting information out to schools to recognize the outstanding senior girls.
- The high school honorees photos will be in the Reading Eagle on Palm Sunday, April 10.

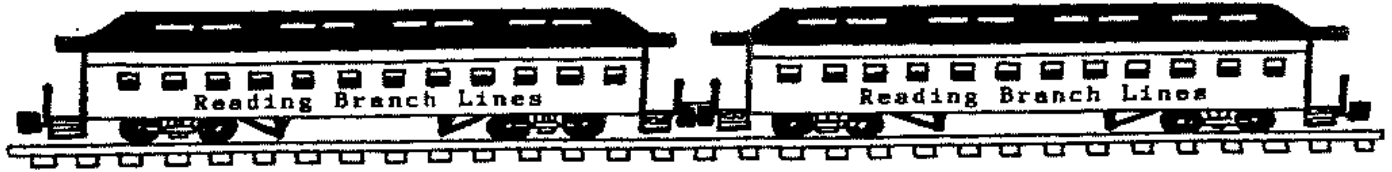
Graduate and Non-traditional Scholarships Available

The Reading Branch of the American Association of University Women will award scholarships in 2022-2023 to Berks County women who are pursuing full or part-time study. Candidates must be residents or natives of Berks County. Academic excellence is expected and financial need must be shown. Funds for these scholarships are raised through the Book Bonanza.

Applications are available on the AAUW Reading Branch website reading-pa.aauw.net. The deadline for application is May 26, 2022.

LUNAFEST

Carol Toomey is ready to plan this year's LUNAFEST fundraiser for our branch and is inviting any interested member to join our LUNAFEST committee. Initially it will be a Zoom meeting until we can sit outside or inside and enjoy the warmth of in-person faces. Call or email her with your interest.



Interest Groups

School funding is an issue that is currently in the news in Pennsylvania. There was a flyer sent out earlier about a virtual event to be held on March 16 about this issue. If any members are interested in forming a study group on the school funding issue please contact Karen Parish or contact Judith Kraines.

March

Culinary Diversity – No meeting planned due to the general meeting that day
Contact: Joanne Wrigley

Cultural Arts – No group activity planned
Information Contact: Ellie Hunt

Fine Arts – Wednesday, March 23 -11:30 AM
Lunch at A Tea Affair, 8 Stugis Lane, Lititz, PA 17543
(717)627-1776
Contact – Carol Toomey

Home Arts – Wednesday, March 2, 12:00 Noon
Lunch – Cloud 9 Café, 84 Commerce Drive,
Wyomissing 19610
Contact – Judy Druckenmiller

Literature – Monday, March 28
Plans to be determined at the Feb. Meeting
Contact: Virginia Schulze-Johnson

April

Culinary Diversity- Wednesday, April 20 – 6 PM
Dinner at Mom Chaffee's Cellarette
148 Tulpehocken Ave., W.Reading 19611
(610)374-5733
Contact – Joanne Wrigley

Cultural Arts –
No group activity planned
Information Contact: Ellie Hunt – 610-670-1808

Fine Arts – Plans to be announced at a later date
Contact: Victoria Troutman

Home Arts – April 6, 12:00 Noon

Condolences:

Sincere Condolences to the family and friends of Evelyn Marker. Evelyn was a long time, active member of our branch. She passed away on February 18, 2022. Her friends will miss her. A memorial service will be held on February 28, 2022 at 11 AM in Phoebe Berks Chapel.



It's Personal

By Judith Kraines, Public Policy Chair

I wish I could tell you facts about the spring election; but only one thing is clear: there will be one. Everything else is muddled. A lot depends on court decisions.

Redistricting: Pennsylvania has a strong history of gerrymandering: incumbents choose their voters instead of voters choosing their representatives. So our district maps have favored the party in power for years.

Pennsylvania is losing a Congressional seat as our population didn't grow as fast as other states. This map is – in theory – drawn by the Legislature and agreed to by the Governor. But, as expected, there was no agreement. The issue went to Commonwealth Court (where government issues are heard). It recommended a map, but the PA Supreme Court set hearings for Feb. 18th. That is late in the normal elections calendar. So the Supreme Court is considering shortening the time candidates have to circulate nomination petitions. (Normally they would have started Feb. 15.) If all goes according to the Court's plan, the election could still take place May 17.

District maps for the PA House and Senate are drawn by a committee of five: the Republican and Democratic leaders of the PA House and Senate and an appointee of the Supreme Court. These maps have been approved. But court challenges have occurred and could change the election calendar.

Mail-in Ballots: As I write this, we don't know if we will have mail-in ballots for the spring election. The Commonwealth Court ruled them illegal, but the issue has been appealed to the PA Supreme Court. Hearings are set for March 8.

If mail-in ballots are allowed, you must ask for one. Berks County Election Services is sending reminder notices to those who had them before, but the form's print was too small for my eyes. It's easier to apply on vote.pa.gov. If you have a physical disability or will be away from the County on election day, you may vote by absentee ballot. It, like the mail-in ballot, must be applied for. Vote.pa.gov has the information.

Before you vote, check out vote411.org for information on the candidates. This is a non-partisan Voters Guide of the League of Women Voters.

Violence Against Women Act: Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Joni Ernst (R-IA), Richard Durbin (D-IL), and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) have introduced the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2022. This important bill reflects a bipartisan consensus that the government needs to do more to prevent and to respond to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. The House of Representatives passed their version of the bill, but the Senate has not acted. This is a priority issue for AAUW. Sen. Casey is supportive. You are encouraged to contact Sen. Toomey to urge his support.

AAUW-PA Membership Contest

AAUW-PA has created a membership "Elevator Pitch" contest as a recruitment tool. They would like to know why members joined AAUW, and why you support AAUW. Entries should be 200 words or less. Members can enter as often as they like between March 10 and April 10. The top 3 pitches will be shared with all members and branches to use at gatherings to try to increase membership. There are prizes. The grand prize is a free registration to the AAUW-PA Convention in Harrisburg this June. For more information please see the separate attachments to the email that includes the Branch Lines.

100th Anniversary – Our branch is approaching its 100th anniversary year from July 2023 – June 2024. If you have any suggestions for celebrating this event or would like to participate in planning a celebration please contact Karen Parish.

AAUW READING BRANCH
1171 Schoffers Road

Birdsboro, PA 19508

Diversity Statement

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class. Membership is not by invitation.

Mission Statements

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

AAUW Educational Foundation provides funds to advance education, research, and self-development for women and to foster equity and positive societal change.

AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund provides funding and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for sex discrimination.

Branch Lines

Editor – Eileen Ritz **Web Site:** <http://reading-pa.aauw.net> **Email:** aauwreadingpa@gmail.com

Jewelry Sale

The sale of “vintage” jewelry (unwanted jewelry from members and friends) began 3 years ago to provide funds for our AAUW Branch Operating Budget. Our Book Bonanza funds are restricted to our scholarship awards programs. However to provide other activities, program costs, and services such as printing and mailing to our branch we need money for those services.

The vintage jewelry sale was started to raise some of that money. Eileen Ritz will be selling jewelry at flea markets again when it is safe to do that.. Contact Eileen for more information. Thank you to all those members who have donated to this fundraiser and those who helped before with the pricing and selling of the jewelry.

Redner’s Register Tapes

Ellie Hunt is still collecting cash register tapes from Redner’s Market. This is another fundraiser to support our branch projects. If you shop at Redner’s, please save **your** tapes and send or give them to Ellie. Please note the following requirements when handing in REDNER' s TAPES

They require the entire sales receipt. Bonus card must be used for the purchase.

They will only take receipts or tapes from 3 years back from the day I hand them in.

Next time I will be handing in tapes from 2020, 2021, 2022, and maybe 2023, depending on whether I receive more 2020 tapes.

I hope to hand in the next submission in 2022.

If you have any questions, call Ellie Hunt

Book Bonanza

The Book Bonanza committee is planning to meet possibly this week on making plans for a Book Bonanza sale. Eventually we expect to be in the county building in Mohnton, but renovations must be made and the space will not be ready this year. We will keep you posted when we have more information.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at 4 PM on ZOOM.