



Equity Now

JUNE 2025

Scholarship Awards & Officer Installation Spring Banquet Held in May

A delicious picnic meal was held in elegant surroundings at the historic home of Kristen Mulligan on South Main Street in Middletown on May 12. Special thanks go to Kristen for moving us indoors when rain kept us from enjoying her lovely garden.



Our scholarship award winner was Jocelyn Brenot, a senior at Stephen T. Badin High School in Hamilton who plans to attend Miami University in the fall to study Biology/PreMed. She was unable to attend the banquet in person due to a class commitment. Good luck to Jocelyn as she embarks on her college career!



*Jocelyn
Brenot*

Miami University

Biology PreMed

Calendar of Events

Rummage Sale Work Days
Tues./Thurs. from 9 am - noon
Most Weds. from 3 – 6 pm
► Towne Mall site

Be sure to sign up to work at the sale! The hours are:

June 20	9 am – 4 pm
June 21	9 am – 4 pm
June 27	9 am – 4 pm
June 28	9 am – 4 pm
June 29	12 pm – 4 pm

BeWISE Camp Tour

Tues., June 17 at 10 – 11:30 am
► Meet at John and Annie Glenn Museum in New Concord, OH.
Our scholarship winner Nahla Malone will be there!

Rumpke Recycling Tour

Wed., August 6 at 11:30 am
► 5535 Vine Street, Cincinnati, Ohio 45217 (St. Bernard)

Take a tour of Rumpke's Materials Recovery Facility, the 8th largest in the U.S.

Make reservations before July 9 by text messaging or calling Margie Homan at 513-518-3897. Adult guests welcome. (More directions attached to this newsletter.)

Annual Dues Reminder

The majority of our branch's memberships are renewable in June. National will still send three emails to each person as a reminder. Please look for these alerts and respond promptly.

Our combined national, state and local dues are now **\$95**. You may pay this in one of two ways: by credit card online OR by sending a check to AAUW for \$95 and mailing it to:

AAUW
P.O. Box 118
Middletown, OH 45042

AAUW Middletown Officers for 2025-26 Program Year

Elected officers and appointed committee chairs for our upcoming program year are listed below.

President: Margie Homan

President-Elect:
Amanda Adkins-Ricci

Secretary Co-Chairs: Becky Hamner and Marcia Miller

Finance Co-Chairs: Katie DeVilling and Jackie Webster

Membership Co-Chairs: Beth Miller and Eleanor Yeager Stewart

Communications Co-Chairs:
Jackie Lankfer and Carolyn Smith

Program Co-Chairs: Marti Kreps and Katie McNeil

Scholarship Co-Chairs: Debbie Worbis and Mel Worbis

Diversity: Emily Foote

State Liaison: Carolyn Smith

Book Sale Co-Chairs: Marcia Miller, Stacey Finnessy, Marianne Zsiska

Holiday Bazaar Co-Chairs: Carole Schul, Chris Buchert, Jackie Lankfer, Bonnie Thompson

Garage Sale Co-Chairs: Karen Berry, Chris Buchert, Jackie Webster

National Liaison: J.J. Gregory
(This is a newly created position to strengthen our ties to AAUW's national leadership.)

Newsletter & Joy Luck Book Club:
Sharon Williamson

PENS Writing Group: Becky Ward

Officers Installed at May Meeting



Left to right: Chris Buchert, Carolyn Smith, Becky Hamner, Jackie Webster and Eleanor Yeager Stewart assume posts for 2025-26 program year.



From left to right are incoming president Margie Homan, outgoing president Debbie Worbis, Marcia Miller and Virginia Palmer. Becky Ward (far right) leads the installation program.

Update From Pens Writing Group

At our April program our PENS group sent an open invitation to any of you who have a passion for writing. Two or three members expressed an interest and at the same time a hesitation about joining our group. Here is a “**low risk**” offer . . . come to a meeting and listen to our stories.

For your first visit we will only ask you to share your *writing background* and your *writing goals*. If you decide it is a good fit for you and you decide to come back, then at the next meeting we would invite you to share a piece of your writing. Remember . . . we encourage each other and we are not judgmental!

Our writers continue to meet the first and third Thursdays of the month, from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. in Room #123 at the Gardner Harvey Library on the Middletown Campus of Miami University. Our next meeting dates will be June 5 and June 19. Come share your story. Contact Becky if you have questions: beckward@gmail.com or 513-424-8409.

Eat, Explore, Connect!

Thanks to Emily Foote, AAUW is starting some study groups to help us connect through cuisine, grow through friendship, and experience the world together.

The first gathering is scheduled for August 21 at 6:30 pm. We'll meet the owner of Singha Thai, a restaurant in Kettering, and learn about her story immigrating from Thailand. If you love Thai food, this will be a delight! Location: Singha Thai, 4123 W. Town and County Rd., Kettering, OH 45429

Future dates are October 23 and February 19, 2026. Those will also be dining explorations in the Dayton area. More information will be shared closer to the events.



President-Elect Amanda Adkins-Ricci (left) and Katie McNeil (right).



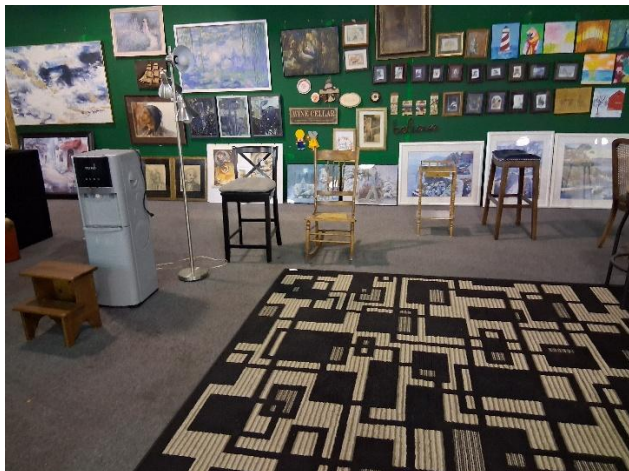
Mary Reams (left) and Mel Worbis (right).



(Left to right) Eleanor Yeager Stewart, Jackie Webster and Katie DeVilling

Rummage Sale Kicks Off Soon!

Thank you for your many donations for the garage sale. The last day for donations is June 7. Also thank you to all who have volunteered so far to prepare for the sale. Workdays are Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings from 9 am until noon and Wednesdays from 3 to 6 pm. Please stop by and help.



It is now time to sign up to work at the sale. The sale dates are June 20, 21, 27, 28 and 29. If you can, commit to work two or three times. Time slots are from 9 to 11 am, 11 am to 1 pm, 1 to 2:30 pm and 2:30 to 4 pm. On June 29 the times are 12 noon to 2 pm and 2 to 4 pm.



Pick a shift online using SignUp Genius. It's easy! You recently received an email with the link to SignUp Genius. If you have a question about signing up, please contact Chris Buchert at 513-292-0420 or tcbuch@yahoo.com.

Remember to tell your friends about the sale. You might use some pictures of the sale items. We have so many wonderful items, this sale should be our biggest ever!



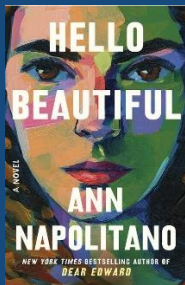
Remember our goal is to increase our scholarship fund to continue for the future. See more on page 7.

Joy Luck Book Club

Thurs., June 19 at 7 pm
Sharon Williamson's home

Hello Beautiful – Ann Napolitano

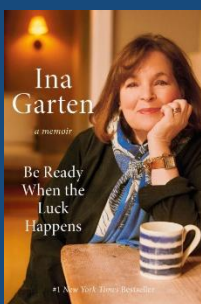
This novel is the story of what happens when sisters in an Italian Catholic family in Chicago fall in love with the same man, causing the family to split apart for 25 years. Readers enjoy its compelling characters, exploration of complex relationships, and relatable portrayal of everyday struggles.



Thurs., July 17 at 7:00 pm
Becky Hamner's home

Be Ready When the Luck Happens – Ina Garten

This is a memoir by the renowned author of 13 cookbooks and Food Network star of *The Barefoot Contessa*. This book chronicles her remarkable career, inspired by Julia Child and others.



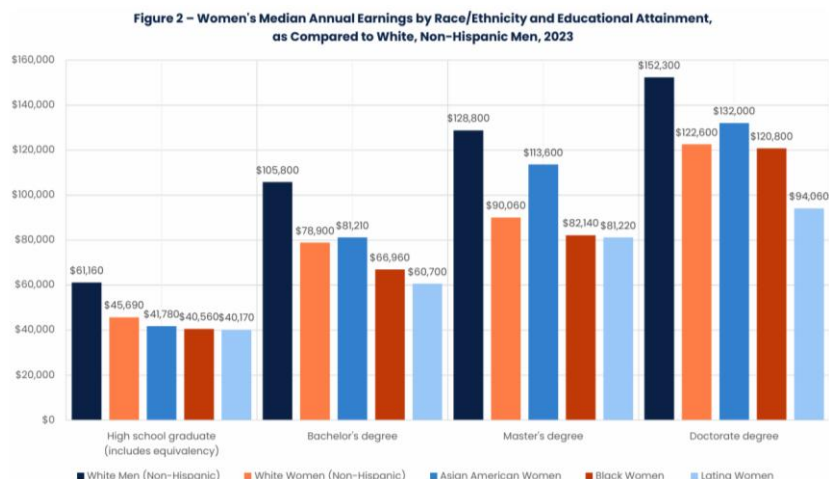
Letter from Our Leader

Branch President Margie Homan
(homan.margie@gmail.com)

On October 21, 1925, twelve college educated women of Middletown, Ohio formed our local chapter of AAUW. We really don't have any information about that day or the 12 women involved. Sharon Williamson is looking through what artifacts we have, and I hope we find the twelve women's names. I do wonder who they were, where they went to college, what they did in their lives, why it was important to them to be members, and who of our membership are descendants of our original twelve members.

So why is it important to me to be a member? Let's each of us ask ourselves that question. To me it's because even though we have come a long way since 1925, we as women are not paid the same as men, and it is even lower for Hispanic and Black women.

We all know what education can do to narrow the gap. I think we have a duty to younger women and girls to help them, whether it is by providing scholarships for higher education, tuition for BeWISE camp, or leading by example. It is important to me to know that AAUW women are smart, strong women who may not always agree, but know that together we can leave a legacy for women in Middletown for the next 100 years.



Source: AAUW calculations based on data from U.S. Census Bureau.⁹

For a clearer view of this map, search online for "AAUW The Not So Simple Truth." This brings up a new study that incorporates this and other graphs.

More From April's Featured PENS Writers

Last month we heard from one of the PENS writers featured at our April meeting, Paula Cohen. This month we hear from another PENS writer, Carolyn Smith.



I Am Moved By Carolyn Smith

I am moved by story. Lecture me all day long, and I probably will just look for ways to disagree. But story. It mesmerizes. I get lost in it and find the dozens of ways something might turn out and the social, psychological, cultural, spiritual, and political implications that might come to the surface. Today, if you ask me why I write, I will say I write to tell stories. Stories are powerful, whether they are fact or fiction. Through story, we enter into and understand another life. Story offers empathy.

I have always written with a sense of purpose: essays, book reviews, a study of a transitional living facility for the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, poetry published in a variety of magazines, and opinions published in newspapers. I felt powerful as I wrote and published these pieces. Samuel Taylor Coleridge said, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." Those words apply to all writers who challenge our thinking. Just think of the power of Bob Dylan's lyrics. They are powerful and they are story.

What I like about myself as a writer is that I can walk around with an idea in my head for a while and then sit down and let the writing flow. What I don't admire is that I am a sometime writer. I easily go days or weeks without writing. Our PENS group is so important to me. Motivated by our meetings, in spite of the challenges and "must do's" of daily life, I write. I have written stories for a memoir for my sons. I have finished and am revising a novel I started years ago. In some sense, today I can say that I write because of PENS.

This is the second of two poems PENS writer Richard Russeth shared at the April meeting.

Pears

Witness the humble pear,
a bit thick around the bottom,
and actually
quite quiet
for a fruit.

Oranges and lemons go clubbing
even on weeknights,
while the earnest pear
prefers to wait
for things to ripen.

Bananas always want to peel it off
and go to Ibiza on holiday,
but are terribly sentimental,
and turn to mush
at the slightest
romantic overture.

Pineapples laze by the pool
doing shots all day,
and could care less
what hotel it is or where;
nothing spoils their fun.

Mangos' feelings are easily bruised,
they sleep in darkened rooms
until noon, keep journals,
and drink alone.

Cherries are wild and extravagant,
and go to Vegas to lose themselves;
they'll have
whatever you're buying.

Peaches! Oh! Peaches!
All they want is to be glamorous
movie stars, but their fame
is so fleeting.

Grapes are arrogant bastards,
all thinking they will
one day be a famous,
expensive wine.

Pears, and apples
(as long as we're
on about it),
are trustworthy,
and sit on your counter
like first graders
anxiously awaiting recess.

But even apples can dream of pie,
pears usually never
get to be anything
but themselves.

Except for those pears
lucky enough to live in Paris,
where every pear dreams
of living on the Left Bank
and becoming a tart.

"Pears"

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In Memoriam
Pam Pearson



On Sunday, May 18, a dear friend and loyal member of AAUW Middletown passed away. Pam Pearson was an active volunteer in the Middletown community for the past 50 years, serving as a member of the Middletown Arts Center and New Hope Lutheran Church as well as AAUW. Pam brought beauty to the world in countless ways – through her beautiful paintings, sculptures and collages and her generous and loving spirit.

Named Gift Given to National AAUW Education Foundation

Annually, we make a “Named Gift” to National AAUW. This is a donation based on the number of members we have in the branch (71), and we select a member to honor with the gift. This year we gave \$2,500 and named past member Tina Newlin as the honoree. Tina passed away on March 23.

This gift comes directly out of our operating account.



Tina Newlin

Updates from State Spring Conference

State Liaison Carolyn Smith filed this report from the state spring conference:

Political consultant Erin Czerniak’s presentation from the spring conference on creating community through partnerships is available for all members on the AAUW Ohio website at <https://aauw-oh.aauw.net>.

Coffee & Convos is looking for ideas for next year’s Saturday morning monthly book club. Send your suggestions to Debbie Wooldridge.

Don’t forget to log in frequently to AAUW Ohio’s website where much of this information is available. AAUW Ohio has a very active Facebook account. Check that out, too!

Members need to mark their calendars for several important events:

- June 17: Members who wish to visit the BeWISE Camp for girls will meet at the John and Annie Glenn Museum in New Concord, OH. The camp tour will last from 10 until 11:30 with lunch afterwards at the museum. Check with AAUW President Janice McCloud if you are interested in attending.
- October 11: The AAUW Ohio Leadership Conference is scheduled for this date. Info about the state Starz Awards and ByLaws rewrites will be part of the program. A venue and details will come later.
- April 25, 2026: The Spring State Conference is scheduled for this date. Details later.
- September 25-27, 2026: The AAUW Atlantic Regional Conference will be held in Lancaster, PA. Ohio President Janice McCloud is looking into getting a bus for this conference if members are interested in attending a regional conference.

Good Progress Towards Funding Endowment

Annually, the Middletown branch of AAUW gives \$4,000 to the Middletown Community Foundation (MCF) to fund our renewable \$1,000 scholarship for high school seniors. MCF selects the recipient for us, as they interview students for a number of local scholarships. We fund \$4,000 in total because each recipient can renew her scholarship for 4 years.

The endowment fund that we are building at the Middletown Community Foundation is our branch project to ensure that our scholarships will continue in the future even if the branch became unable to fund them directly. We have been able to earn enough from our sales to make an annual contribution of \$10,000 to this fund for the past few years. Our current balance is around \$82,000. Finance Co-Chair Jackie Webster believes we are making good progress towards reaching a funding level sufficient to generate the \$4,000 needed to fund our scholarships annually. Depending on the economy and investment returns, we are well over half-way there!