



Equity Now

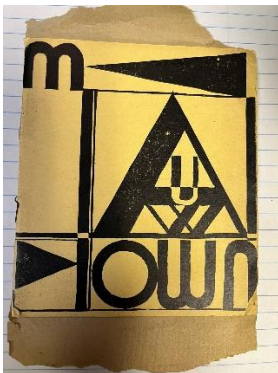
OCT. 2025

AAUW Middletown: Then and Now

Monday, October 6 at 7 pm

Middletown High School Community Room, 601 N. Breiel Blvd. and Zoom

We kick off our 100th anniversary year with an armchair journey through a century of AAUW Middletown branch history. Sharon Williamson will talk about the interests and accomplishments of the Middletown branch in context of what was happening in women's education and the world. Scrapbooks documenting decades of past AAUW activities will be on display. We'll also tell stories that members recalled from the writing prompts provided at our Speakeasy event.



Proud Past. Bold Future.
AAUW Middletown
Celebrating 100 Years

On the left is the earliest known program booklet from AAUW's Middletown branch, circa 1929. On the right is a graphic that designer Sam Ashworth created for our 100th anniversary year, inspired by this original program cover.

Celebrate Our Century at October Luncheon

Get your tickets now for our 100th Anniversary luncheon to be held October 25 at the Event Center of Middletown. **Tickets must be purchased by October 10.**



Our guest speaker will be **Dr. Anedra Million** (shown at left), an educator and mental health advocate who was crowned Mrs. Ohio America in 2024 and was named first runner-up in the Mrs. America 2024 competition.

A first-generation college student, Anedra is one of many local students AAUW has helped over the years with an academic scholarship. We are delighted to have her join us and share some of her personal and professional journey.

Wanted!

We are looking for 2 Secretary Co-chairs to replace officers who need to step down. Typically one person takes minutes at board meetings and another at regular branch meetings.

Calendar of Events

Branch Meeting: AAUW Middletown, Then & Now

Mon., Oct. 6 at 7:00

► Middletown High School Community Room, 601 N. Breiel Blvd.

Take an armchair journey through a century of AAUW Middletown branch history.

AAUW Ohio Fall Summit

Sat., Oct. 11 from 10 am to 3 pm

► All Saints Lutheran Church, Worthington, Ohio

Food / Friendship Study Group Lebanese Dinner

Thurs., Oct. 23 at 6:30 pm

► Cedarland Bakery & Restaurant, 4515 Linden Ave., Dayton (see last page)

Celebrate Our Century Luncheon

Sat., Oct. 25 at 12:00 pm

► Event Center of Middletown, 3907 Central Ave.

Honor this major milestone for our branch at this gala luncheon, featuring Dr. Anedra Million, trailblazing educator and Mrs. Ohio in 2024.

Branch Meeting: Past, Present and Future Look at Our City

Mon., Nov. 10 at 7:00 pm

► Middletown H.S. Community Room, 601 N. Breiel Blvd.

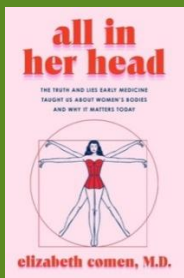
Our speaker will be Middletown City Manager Ashley Combs.

Joy Luck Book Club

Thurs., Oct. 16 at 7 pm
Becky Ward's home

***It's All in Her Head* – Elizabeth Comen, M.D.**

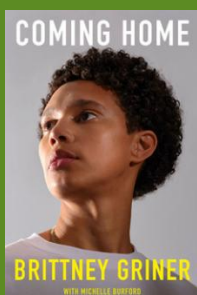
This book is subtitled "The Truth and Lies Early Medicine Taught Us About Women's Bodies and Why It Matters Today." Written by an oncologist at Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York, this entertaining and informative book is a collective narrative about women's bodies and a call to action for a new conversation about women's health.



Thurs., Nov. 20 at 7 pm
Marianne Zsiska's home

***Coming Home* – Brittney Griner**

This memoir of Olympic gold medalist and basketball icon Brittney Griner tells the tale of her arrest in Russia and detainment in a penal colony before being released in a prisoner swap orchestrated by a Russian arms dealer. It's a story of survival and a testament to the love of family and friends.



Letter from Our Leader

Branch President Margie Homan

We are getting near to the start of our celebration of AAUW Middletown Branch's 100 Year anniversary. As I write this, the Speakeasy event is right around the corner, and our 100 Year Anniversary Luncheon is a month away. I am excited about both, and I hope you are, too. A lot of planning has gone into both events. But it doesn't end here. We have a whole year of big and little events to keep the celebration going.

Why is this particular anniversary important? Think of the things you use in your life that haven't been around 100 years. Everything from jet airplanes to the Internet. We could make quite a list. The point is that reaching 100 years – whether it's a person or an organization – is a big deal. AAUW in Middletown survived WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and police actions. We weathered the Great Depression, the 1960s, and inflation. There have been 15 presidents during that time.

Women's lives have changed for the better since 1925. The Equal Rights Amendment passed but has yet to become the law of the land. Women still earn 81% of what men do in this country. Although this has recently dropped from 83%, we still have work to do.

I am very proud of this organization: how we raise funds for scholarships, donate time and money, and support education through our programs. We support women's rights, diversity, equity and inclusion. We lobby and speak up. As a group, we are caring friends to all our members. Without a doubt, this is the hardest working group I ever knew.

Yes, we have our opinions, but we agree to disagree. We are still open to new ways of doing things and other ideas to improve our strategies and methods. This is what smart women do. Let's celebrate for us and the women who came before us.

In Memoriam: Cleda Klingensmith

We are sad to share the news of the death of Cleda Klingensmith in Dayton on September 10. Cleda joined our branch in 2024. She was diagnosed with cancer in early August and given a few months to live. She entered hospice a month later and passed away shortly thereafter.

Cleda's good friend Eleanor Yeager Stewart said she was extremely active in promoting our branch sales online, sharing details and encouraging friends to attend, despite her health issues. Cleda had one son, Kenny. You may send a condolence note to him at 274 Lucerne Place, Memphis TN 381236.



AAUW Middletown Officers for 2025-26 Program Year

Elected officers and appointed committee chairs for this 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 Finnessey, Marianne Zsiska

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

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

New Team Carries on Book Sale Tradition

Kudos to the new book sale leadership team of Marcia Miller, Stacey Finnessey and Marianne Zsiska and 40 other volunteers for their efforts on this year's book sale. They put in an estimated 900 – 1,000 hours to earn \$7,378 in sales, which will generate about \$6,500 for scholarships and educational support.

"Thanks go to the many people who helped putting this together. Our members are amazing!" said Marianne Zsiska. "This was Marcia, Stacey and my first time. We learned a bunch and hopefully it will be as successful next year."

Now that our book sale has passed, it's time to turn our sights to the November Holiday Bazaar. Work begins Oct. 2 from 9 am to noon on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays up until the sale opens.

Holiday Bazaar Dates
November 7 and 8
November 14, 15 and 16

Donation Drop Off:
Oct. 7 - 25
Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays
9:30 – 11:30 am

If you haven't been to our sale site yet, go to the back of Towne Mall and look for AAUW signage. The entrance is behind Gabe's by Loading Dock Bay B.

Branch Earns Four Stars from AAUW National

Deputy Director of Advancement Tremayne Parquet recently notified our branch that AAUW Middletown branch earned four stars in national's Five Star Program

- ★ **Public Policy & Advocacy**
- ★ **Governance & Sustainability**
- ★ **Programming**
- ★ **Communications & External Relations**

Stars were earned for Public Policy & Advocacy, Governance & Sustainability, Programming, and Communications & External Relations for fiscal year 2025.

"This achievement reflects your branch's commitment to advancing gender equity and aligning your programs, advocacy, and sustainability efforts with AAUW's strategic priorities," he wrote. "We are so grateful for the time and energy you and your fellow leaders devote to this work. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition."

The AAUW Five Star Program is designed to help branches align with AAUW's strategic priorities and advance the organization's mission of achieving gender equity for women and girls.

Memorable Speakeasy Event Had Us Partying Like It Was 1925!

To celebrate our 100th anniversary in a lively way, the branch held a cocktail party with a speakeasy theme on September 25 at West Central Wine + Bar. Thanks to Amanda Adkins-Ricci and Amy Shreve for chairing and sponsoring this event.



Past presidents of the branch gather at the end of a fun evening. Left to right: Katie McNeil, Debbie Worbis, Mel Worbis, Anita Shew, Eleanor Yeager Stewart, Chris Buchert, Carolyn Smith, Virginia Palmer, Nita Driscoll. On floor: Henrietta Nye and Margie Homan.



Amy Shreve & Melissa Crabtree



Carolyn Smith and husband win the costume contest.



Nita Driscoll & Dora Bronston



Mary Reams with signature cocktail, the "Bee's Knees"



The Bee's Knees is a Prohibition-era cocktail made with gin, fresh lemon juice, and honey syrup, served shaken and chilled, often with a lemon twist garnish. Wine and non-alcoholic beverages, appetizers and desserts were also served at the event.

Forty-one members and guests attended the anniversary celebration, and many dressed up for the occasion. Sequins and spangles, feathers and fringe were the order of the evening.

Past friendships were renewed and new members recruited. Three women expressed interest in joining the branch. There were several requests to make this an annual event...maybe with karaoke!



Carolyn Dell Patrick, Marcia Miller, Amy Shreve, Melissa Crabtree were among the flappers in attendance, while Amanda Adkins-Ricci came as an old-fashioned bartender.



Sharon Williamson channels her inner Gloria Swanson.



Carolyn Smith enjoying the tasty appetizers on hand.

First Food and Friendship Study Group on Oct. 23

October will see the kickoff of our new Food & Friendship Study Groups, where members will learn about different cultures by visiting sites around our community. The first event will be held Thursday, Oct. 23, when the group share dinner at a local Lebanese restaurant where we will chat with the owner.

Food & Friendship Study Group:
Cedarland Bakery & Restaurant
4515 Linden Ave., Dayton

Meet at restaurant at 6:30 pm

RSVP to Katie McNeil at
kmcneil62853@gmail.com

PENS Challenges Us to "Write On!"

Our PENS writing group meets the first and third Thursday of each month from 1:00 to 2:30 pm in Room 123 of the Gardner Harvey Library on the Middletown Campus of Miami University. Our next meeting dates are October 2 and 16.

Please contact Becky Ward at beckward@gmail.com or 513-424-8409 if you have questions. Everyone has a story to tell. Come share your story with PENS.