

NO FEBRUARY BRANCH MEETING

In past years, due to weather concerns, we have not offered a February meeting.

**AAUW Recognizes Black History Month
2026 Marks A Century of National Commemorations Of Black History.**

AAUW is actively involved in celebrating Black History Month by highlighting the significant contributions of Black women throughout history. The organization recognizes the importance of these contributions and aims to educate the public about the achievements of Black women in various fields.

During Black History Month AAUW recognizes the Significant achievements of Black women throughout history. The organization emphasizes the importance of acknowledging these contributions. See article on page 6.

February Heart Month and Black History Month

February is designated as American Heart Month and Black History Month, with each month offering unique opportunities to raise awareness and promote health and education. American Heart Month focuses on heart health, with activities like National Wear Red Day and the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women Movement. Black History month on the other hand, honors contributions of African Americans to society and culture, with event and activities that celebrate their history and achievements.

The month serves as a platform to educate the public about heart disease and to recognize and celebrate the rich heritage of black Americans.

February at a Glance

QUICK REFERENCE CALENDAR

In February we take a break we do not have a board or branch meeting

Feb 07, 7:00 p.m.

La Roche Literary Society February Event

Speaker: Jennifer Birch will discuss her debut YA novel, "Woven from Clay,"

Feb 10, 9:30 a.m. Morning Book Group

The Immortal Irishman,

by Timothy Egan

Reviewer: Judy Sparlin

Hostess: Linda Joy

Feb 13, 1:00 p.m. Lunch Bunch

Olive Garden Italian Restaurant

40 McIntyre Square Drive, Pittsburgh, PA

15237

Feb 23, 1:00 p.m. Evening Book Group

The Glass Maker

by Tracy Chevalier

Facilitator: Cindy Stewart

Hostess: Joyce Ruzanic

Feb IPODS

TBD, Check emails for updates

Save The Date!

Feb 7th is the start of the Great Decisions series

May 30, 2026 For The Love of Books Fundraiser

Viewpoint Articles

We encourage all of our members to submit articles to the Viewpoints. If you have something to include in our newsletter the deadline is the **25th of each Month**. Please send to Debbie Rosenfelder in word format at rosenfelderd@verizon.net



If I do not have it by 5 P.M. on the 25th of the month it may not make the Viewpoints

WEB SITE



Don't Forget Me...

I'm always here!

I'm your Branch AAUW Website:

<https://aauwnorthhillsphg.org>

Stay informed!

Webmaster: Susan Banerjee

President's Message

What a wonderful way to bring in the Branch's New Year with a great turnout for our January Branch meeting! It was nice to get back together and the weather event cooperated.



The 26th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast took place on January 19th. Several of our members attended this event at La Roche University. Our branches' own Janice Peischl serves on the committee for this annual event.

In February we do not have a scheduled branch meeting. All of our social groups will be meeting. We kick off the month with the start of the Great Decisions series on February 7th. This series continues Saturdays through February and into March.

As we enter 2026, and as the nation begins the 250th anniversary commemoration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, check out articles in the viewpoints throughout the year about women that have made an impact. We will start by exploring significant achievements of Black women throughout history in February.

Something to ponder!

"You must never be fearful about what you are doing when it is right." --- Marie Curie

Is it worth it? Is it worth doing? Why do we continue to fight? How can all our progress be changed overnight? These are questions that keep me up at night. Although my opportunities are better than the generation before me, we still have a long way to go to ensure what's fair and right for future generations. We must persist so we do not go backwards.

May this month bring you gentle days, cozy moments, and a heart full of hope. Let love, kindness, and new opportunities bloom in your life just like the promise of spring ahead. Wishing you a joyful and beautiful February!"

Debbie



February Happenings

Lunch Bunch

Olive Garden Italian Restaurant 40 McIntyre Square Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237

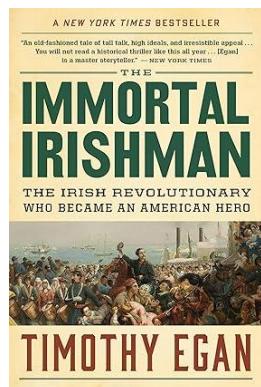
Olive Garden is an American casual dining restaurant chain specializing in Italian-American cuisine. They have a variety of tasty dishes, including classic pasta and filling entrees, so everyone can find something they like.

They have great Lunch specials!



Morning Book Group

The Immortal Irishman, by Timothy Egan

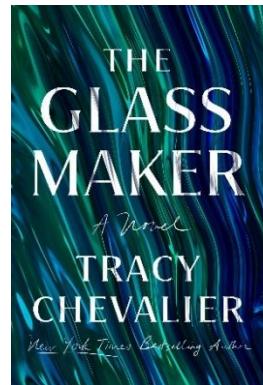


Illuminates the dawn of the great Irish American story, with all its twists and triumphs, through the life of one heroic man. *The Irish Revolutionary Who Became an American Hero* is a 2016 non-fiction book by American author Timothy Egan. The book details the life and times of Thomas Francis Meagher, from his rise as a public speaker during the Great Hunger, his time in Tasmania, his leadership of the Irish Brigade during the American Civil War, and his final adventure to Montana.

Evening Book Group

The Glass Maker by Tracy Chevalier

The Glassmaker (2024) is a historical novel that follows the life of a fictional glassmaker named Orsola Rosso and fuses traditional historical fiction with elements of magical realism, depicting the primary characters in different eras that range from 1486 to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chevalier also describes key events in the history of Venice and develops themes of creativity, gender, and memory.



**AAUW Membership for NHP
February 2026**

Our North Hills Pittsburgh branch of AAUW is looking forward to continuing to grow together throughout 2026, both in terms of our membership and in our ability to advocate for women because equity is still an issue for women and girls.

At this time, our branch is 65 members strong! We had five women join us following our "Shape the Future" program in November - the program featuring

Professor Lisa Tetrault from CMU leading a discussion about our concerns as women in 2025. We are thrilled to have Jenn Jones, JC Kasten, Maria Kitay, Kimberly Rhule, and Anne Smallstig join our North Hills Pittsburgh group and look forward to working together in the coming year. We are also happy to have 20 student members from our gracious host, La Roche University. We are thrilled to share the mission of AAUW with these young women and hope that by learning more about our organization, these students may apply for grant or scholarship opportunities as well as help carry the banner of AAUW into the future.

PLEASE invite a friend to join us for our March program at La Roche University!

Our program will begin at 6:00 pm in the Ryan Room, and features our own Peggy Schmiedecke as one of the co-presenters to discuss the objectives of CEDAW.

CEDAW stands for Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and Peggy is the Co-Vice Chair of Pittsburgh for CEDAW. A friend or neighbor will be welcome to join us for a cup of coffee, a few cookies, and most importantly a bit of conversation about the importance of being part of something bigger than ourselves in regard to supporting equity for women and girls. There will be no pressure to join; just the opportunity to enjoy a program and meet some of our wonderful, dedicated members. Inviting friends is the very best way for others to get to know us and understand the power of being part of our quest for equity.

Francie Cech and Jennifer Schwoebel
CO-VPs for Membership, NHP AAUW

What in the World??
Find out by attending Great Decisions 2026

- 1) ***U.S.-China Relations Trade Rivalry***, a discussion focused on both security motives as well as the tariff situation.
Dr. Mark Haas, Duquesne University -Saturday, February 7th, 2026.
- 2) ***America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy***, a discussion that will explore the implications of a potential return of Trump to the presidency and how it may reshape U.S. foreign policy.
Professor Ross Harrison, University of Pittsburgh -Saturday, February 14th, 2026.
- 3) ***Ruptured Alliances and the risk of Nuclear Proliferation***, a discussion focused on the consequences of weakened alliances & the implication for global security, specifically in regard to nuclear weapons.
Dr. Soren Fanning, Robert Morris University -Saturday, February 21st, 2026.
- 4) ***The Future of Human Rights and International Law***, A look at the future of global cooperation amidst shifting power dynamics and rising nationalism.
Speaker TBA - Saturday, February 28th, 2026.
- 5) ***U.S. Engagement of Africa***, a discussion focusing on Africa's growing geopolitical role, comparing U.S. and Chinese presence, and the tools of statecraft the U.S. might use to strengthen ties.
Dr. Innocent Badasu, University of Pittsburgh – Saturday, March 7th, 2026.
- 6) ***Ukraine and the Future of European Security***, a discussion on the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and its effects on European security.
Dr. Soren Fanning, Robert Morris University - Saturday, March 14th, 2026.

Our North Hills Pittsburgh branch of AAUW is proud to sponsor the largest discussion program on world affairs, a program put forth by the Foreign Policy Association.

Great Decisions 2026 books are available:

-Wright Library, La Roche University
- \$30.00, checks only. (Made out to AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh)

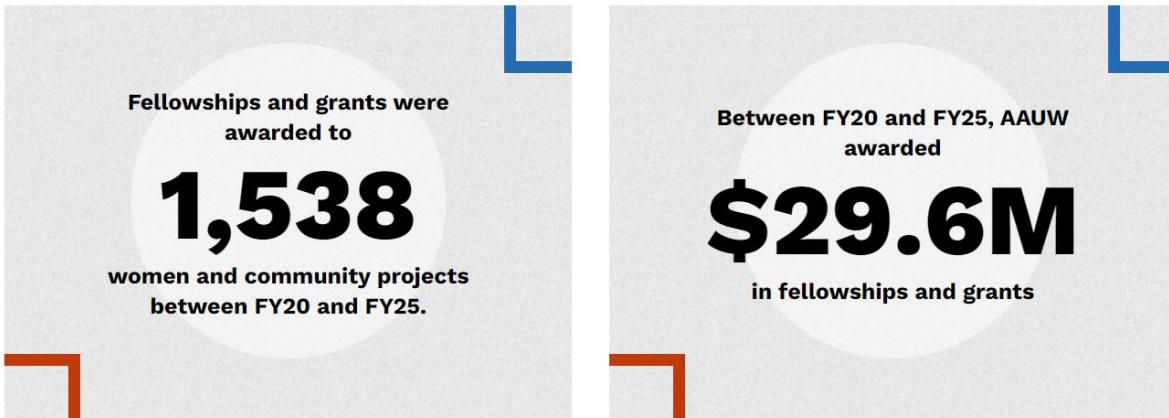
We hope you will be able to join us on Saturday mornings at La Roche University, Palumbo Science Center, Room 101 from 9:30 am to 11:00 am to learn more about some of the most critical issues facing America today!

Public Policy

National

Fellowships & Grants

Since 1888, AAUW has been one of the largest funders of women's graduate education, investing in women who go on to change the world.



Become a Two-Minute Activist

More than ever we need to speak up

We need to let our elected officials know how we feel!!! Members of AAUW's Action Network have received urgent e-mail notices and text messages when their advocacy is needed most. With our online Two-Minute Activist tool, it takes just minutes and an internet connection to make your voice heard on issues impacting women and girls! AAUW National provides all the tools you need to call or send messages to your members of Congress, contact your state legislators about pressing issues, and more.



Upcoming Events

- **Membership Recruitment Best Practices Webinar:** The recording will be live on AAUW National's website and YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XydvfPODZS8>
- **SAVE THE DATE:** Please attend the February 18th Member Gathering (virtual) – 4:30pm ET / 1:30pm PT. The link to register is here: <https://my.aauw.org/event-information?id=a0lQr000001k2xVIAQ>

State:

2026 AAUW ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE



The 2026 Atlantic Regional Conference “Unfinished Revolution: Together We Stand” will be held September 25 - 27, 2026 at the Lancaster Convention Center.

The hotel room block is open for the Lancaster Marriott at the Lancaster Convention Center- reserve early to secure your stay at and be at the center of the action!

A conference registration link will be available in January for the conference. The early bird registration fee will be \$249 per person to attend (this includes all meals starting Friday evening

through Sunday breakfast, but does not include dinner on Saturday evening.

AAUW PA DEIB BOOK SERIES

The 2025 book series have come to a close. AAUW PA wants to thank all of the individuals that joined the lively, deep, and wonderful conversations that took place throughout the year. Those Thursday evenings were a place we built community and understanding. For that, I am grateful. We are at a crucial moment in time when words such as diversity, inclusion, and belonging are charged – politicized, making it more critical to understand what such words describe, whom they protect, and why. This is all the more important as AAUW has continued to maintain its DEIB stance.



Local Public Policy:

Submitted by Peggy Schmiedecke

Pgh & Allegheny County 4 CEDAW - I attended CEDAW Rising Second National Convening and CEDAW Rising Follow Up Gathering in December 2025. The focus was on gender-based violence (GBV). Also, January is Human Trafficking month. Marcia Bandes, Chair Pgh 4 CEDAW, Sam Salopek, Communications Manager and I Co-Vice Chair have opened discussions with Jones Day Law Firm regarding a project they launched called Start Anew Project. This project offers one day clinics to empower survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual abuse. We are also scheduled to meet with the Victim Assistance Specialist at the U.S. Attorney's Office - Western District of PA.

The Gender Based Violence presentations at the CEDAW Rising convening also lead discussions that GBV and human trafficking increases during major sporting events (mve) and the fact that Pittsburgh is hosting the NFL Draft in April launched into building connections and exploring advocacy opportunities in our area. Marcia and I will be presenting - The Impact of CEDAW - Global to Local for NH Pgh and the Fox Chapel Branches in March. Stay tuned for more updates then.

Also, Pgh 4 CEDAW has schedule a table to participate at the 28th Annual Pittsburgh Racial Justice Summit, Saturday, February 21 9am-5pm at CCAC Allegheny Campus. The theme this year is: Building Community for Lasting Democracy and Racial Equity. Save the date. Registration: <https://28thprjs.eventbrite.com/>

Voter Registration for May 19, 2026 Primary Election - I am working with La Roche and have one date in February and two in April to have voter registration/civic education tabling in collaboration with LWV Greater Pgh.



What are Pennsylvanians voting on in 2026?

- Pennsylvania Governor
- Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor
- 17 US House Seats
- 25 Pennsylvania State Senate Seats
- All Pennsylvania State House Seats

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF PENNSYLVANIA

IMPORTANT DATES

PA 42ND STATE HOUSE DISTRICT SPECIAL ELECTION

MON 9 FEB	VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE Last day to register to vote or update your registration (such as for a new name or address). Register or update your registration at vote.pa.gov .
TUES 17 FEB	LAST DAY TO REQUEST A MAIL-IN BALLOT Request a mail-in ballot at vote.pa.gov .
TUES 24 FEB	ELECTION AND DEADLINE TO RETURN MAIL-IN BALLOTS Polls close at 8:00 pm — be in line to vote or return your ballot to the county elections office by 8:00 pm!

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF GREATER PITTSBURGH WWW.LWVPGH.COM

Local:**LWV of Greater Pittsburgh and MIT D-Lab - Women and Democracy Project***Submitted by Peggy Schmiedecke*

The Greater Pittsburgh League and MIT D-Lab's "Women and Democracy Project" united women's organizations from across Pittsburgh for a full day co-design session focused on problem solving, collaboration, and movement-building. Together, participants dug into pressing local challenges, imagined solutions and forged new partnerships to energize the next chapter of the women's movement. Additionally, the Women and Democracy Project leverages participatory design strategies and digital platforms to meet the complex and intersecting needs of the moment.

The event was cosponsored by the Chatham University Center for Women & Politics, LWVPA, and LWVPGH.

Peggy Schmiedecke, who is also a LWVPGH member was asked to invite AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh Branch Members to attend. She also invited AAUW Fox Chapel but they were not available. See back row third person Francie Cech, fifth person Judy Daw and not pictured Peggy Schmiedecke.



In November, the MIT D-Lab's Women and Democracy Project led a Codesign Workshop for Pittsburgh area women's organizations. The event was cosponsored by the Chatham University Center for Women & Politics, LWVPA, and LWVPGH. Participating organizations included local chapters of the Women & Girls Foundation, YWCA, AAUW, CEDAW, NCNW, the Links and LWVPGH.

26th Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast

Submitted by Peggy Schmiedecke and Janice Peischl

On January 19, 2026, our Branch marked its involvement as a founding and sponsoring organization for 26 years for the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast. As stated in our 50th Anniversary Book 1970-2020, published January 21, 1971. In 1999-2001 Branch President Pat Sand was a vital member of the first committee along with 4 other organizations. Over the years the planning committee grew to include 8, then 10 and up to 14 organizations. Currently there are 7 active sponsoring organizations; Variety the Children's Charity, North Hills Community Outreach, YWCA Greater Pittsburgh, American Association of University Women, Sisters of Divine Providence, La Roche University and North Hills Ebony Women.

Our AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh Branch has had many members on the planning committee. Following Pat Sands, Marge Backus was the representative, then Sina Murphy, Barbara Matthews, Linda Joy, Joanne Ahlstrom and Janice Peichel for the past 15 years. We had 20 members, spouses and their friends attend this year's amazing program; breakfast, keynote speaker, essay awards, poetry, songs, readings of Dr. King's quotes, insights shared by non-profits and optional service projects to do after the event.



Committee Members and Sponsoring Organization



Breakfast



Black Women in History

Countless Black women have made significant contributions to history, thought, society, innovation, science, government, civil rights, women's rights, and much more. For Black History month we celebrate the achievements of but a few:

From civil rights leaders to trailblazing scientists, here are 10 of the most influential Black women in American history whose impact continues to be felt today.

1. Harriet Tubman (1822-1913) – The Freedom Fighter for women's suffrage.

Legacy: Tubman's bravery and commitment to justice have cemented her as a symbol of resistance and resilience. Her life's work laid the foundation for later civil rights movements.

2. Madam C.J. Walker (1867-1919) – The First Black Female Millionaire

Legacy: Walker's entrepreneurial spirit continues to inspire Black women in business, proving that success can come from innovation and dedication to community upliftment.

3. Rosa Parks (1913-2005) – The Mother of the Civil Rights Movement

Legacy: Parks' courage in standing up to racial injustice helped dismantle segregation laws and remains a powerful example of peaceful protest.

4. Katherine Johnson (1918-2020) – The Hidden Figure of NASA

Legacy: Johnson's contributions to science and technology paved the way for more diversity in STEM fields, inspiring future generations of Black women scientists.

5. Maya Angelou (1928-2014) – The Voice of a Generation

Legacy: Angelou's writings continue to empower and educate people worldwide, offering a voice to those who have felt marginalized.

6. Shirley Chisholm (1924-2005) – The First Black Woman in Congress

Legacy: Chisholm broke barriers in politics, inspiring countless Black women to pursue leadership roles.

7. Oprah Winfrey (1954-Present) – The Media Mogul

Legacy: Winfrey's story of perseverance and success continues to inspire people across the globe, particularly women and people of color striving for greatness.

8. Michelle Obama (1964-Present) – The Trailblazing First Lady

Legacy: Obama's poise, intelligence, and commitment to service have made her a role model for young women everywhere.

9. Serena Williams (1981-Present) – The Greatest Athlete of All Time

Legacy: Williams' impact goes beyond athletics—she has been a fierce advocate for gender equality, maternal health, and Black business ownership.

10. Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett (1986-Present) – The Scientist Behind the COVID-19 Vaccine

Legacy: As a young Black scientist making groundbreaking contributions to medicine, Corbett's work is inspiring a new generation of women in STEM.



Conclusion: Honoring Black Women's Contributions

The achievements of these extraordinary Black women have shaped history, science, culture, and politics. Their legacies serve as reminders that progress is built on the courage, intellect, and resilience of those who dare to challenge the status quo.

Diversity

Diversity means variety and is all about what makes us unique.

What are some of the dimensions of diversity? They can be anything that has been historically used to differentiate groups, such as ethnicity, gender, religious beliefs or socio-economic status.

Some of these dimensions are more visible than others, and some are more salient in the United States than in other parts of the world, given our history of discrimination and exclusion. Dimensions of diversity can be broken down into two categories – primary dimensions, which can't be changed, and secondary dimensions, which we have some control over.

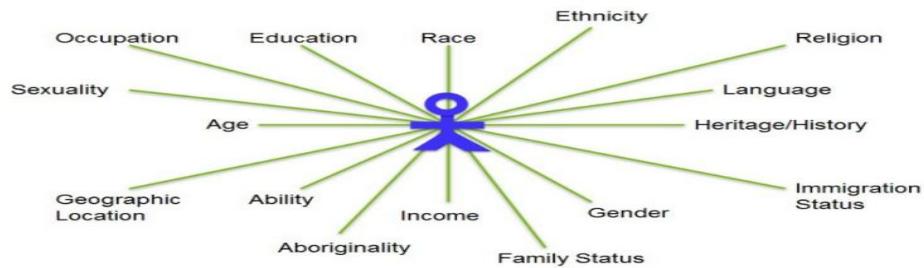


Photo credit: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women

Something interesting to think about from the AAUW Diversity Tool kit

Identity evolves over one's lifetime, but it always dictates how we see ourselves and how others see us. When you meet someone new or see someone for the first time, what do you notice? How does that shape your interactions?

Author Jane Elsea lists the [nine most important things](#) people in our society tend to notice in others, in order of importance:

Skin Color
Appearance
Movement

Gender
Facial expressions
Personal space

Age
Eye contact
Touch

How New United States Postal Service (USPS) Rules Put the Right to Vote at Risk

As we begin 2026, a new development threatens to further undermine voting by mail. A recent rule change at the U.S. Postal Service means that postmarks will no longer reflect the date a piece of mail was deposited at a local post office. Instead, postmarks will be applied at a regional processing facility.



Making matters worse, the USPS has scaled back evening mail pickups in vast parts of the country. Voters whose post offices are more than 50 miles from a regional processing facility will be hit hardest. Roughly 149 million Americans across 70% of U.S. ZIP codes will be affected.

To be clear, the USPS claims these changes reflect budgetary realities, not an effort to undermine voting. Regardless of the motivation, eligible voters will pay the price when their ballots are rejected.

Finance

January 2026 Financial Report – June Maier

(as of January 26, 2026)

CHECKING		SAVINGS		CERTIFICATE OF DEPOSIT	
Beg. Balance	\$6,583.03	Beg. Balance	\$3,914.90	Beg. Balance	\$5,792.94
Deposits	\$117.00	Transfer to CD	\$1,800.00	Deposit to CD	\$1,800.00
Expenses	\$221.00	Interest Earned	TBD	Interest Earned	TBD
End. Balance	\$6,479.03	End. Balance	\$2,114.90	End. Balance	\$7,592.94

CHECKING + SAVINGS + CD = \$16,186.87

- Checking Deposits – One Membership Renewal
- Checking Expenses – January branch meeting honorarium and tech support
- Previous memorial & individual donations were transferred from Savings to CD on the date CD matured; all \$1,800 transfer Restricted for Grant

Fun Events in February

Groundhog Day: February 2, 2026



Groundhog Day serves as a convenient and whimsical milestone to mark the end of the darkest three months of the year (November, December, and January in the Northern Hemisphere). We wait with bated (and ice-cold) breath to see whether or not winter will continue for another six weeks.

According to weather lore, if it's a clear or sunny day, the groundhog will see its shadow and return to its underground home. This means six more weeks of bad wintry weather.

The plump prognosticator will not see his shadow if it's a cloudy or snowy day. This means early spring weather is right around the corner.

Pennsylvania certainly has become a trendsetter. Just look at our beloved Punxsutawney Phil, the first groundhog to annually predict whether we'll have an early spring or six more weeks of winter. Since the inception of Groundhog Day in 1887, other cities have introduced their own versions of Phil. Nothing beats the original, though.

Presidents' Day, 2026 Monday February 16

In the United States, this holiday (third Monday in February) is popularly recognized as honoring George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. The day is sometimes understood as a celebration of the birthdays and lives of all U.S. presidents.



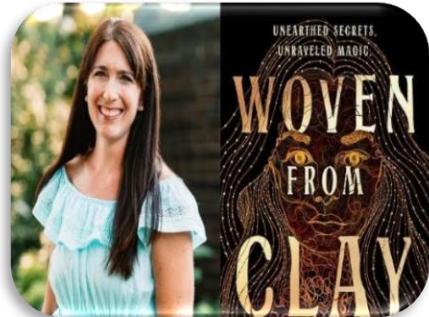
Mardi Gras 2026: Tuesday, February 17

Mardi Gras 2026 will be celebrated on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 and is also known as Fat Tuesday. Mardi Gras refers to events of the Carnival celebration, beginning on or after the Christian feasts of the Epiphany and culminating on the day before Ash Wednesday, which is known as Shrove Tuesday. Mardi Gras is French for "Fat Tuesday", reflecting the practice of the last night of eating rich, fatty foods before the ritual Lenten sacrifices and fasting of the Lenten season.



La Roche Literary Society February Event

February 6 2026 at 7 p.m.



The La Roche University Literary Society invites the community to this free event. The presentation will be hosted in the Ryan Room of the Zappala Campus Center at La Roche's campus in McCandless Township.

Jennifer Birch will discuss her debut YA novel, "Woven from Clay," a YA novel on February 6 at 7 p.m. at the La Roche Literary Society.

In this fresh and imaginative contemporary fantasy, a golem must master the magic that binds her together and finds an unexpected ally in the mysterious boy sent to ensure her demise.

In a blog interview, Michele Kirchanskaya wrote, [Jenny Birch](#) is a middle school teacher of English, French, and history, and serves as a youth theater director for students in grades 7-12. She lives in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, PA with her husband and three children. Jenny holds a BA in French and an MEd in Instruction & Learning and as an adoptee herself, she is a passionate advocate for children, particularly those in the foster care and adoption communities. When she's not in her classroom or on stage with her students, you can find her either dancing in the kitchen with her family or flexing her overactive imagination.

All presentations are free and open to the public. We hope you can attend.



January in Pictures

Lunch Bunch



3.9 MB

3.9 MB

3.9 MB



January Program





MISSION STATEMENT OF AAUW LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND

LAF provides funding and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for sex discrimination.

AAUW MEMBERSHIP

AAUW, founded in 1881, is open to all graduates who hold an associate's or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university.

AAUW DIVERSITY STATEMENT

In principle and 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, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

BRANCH CONTACT INFORMATION

President: Deborah Rosenfelder	412-916-9073 or rosenfelderd@verizon.net
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Branch Website: aauwnorthhillspgh.org

Branch Email: aauwfam@gmail.com

Facebook Page: AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh branch

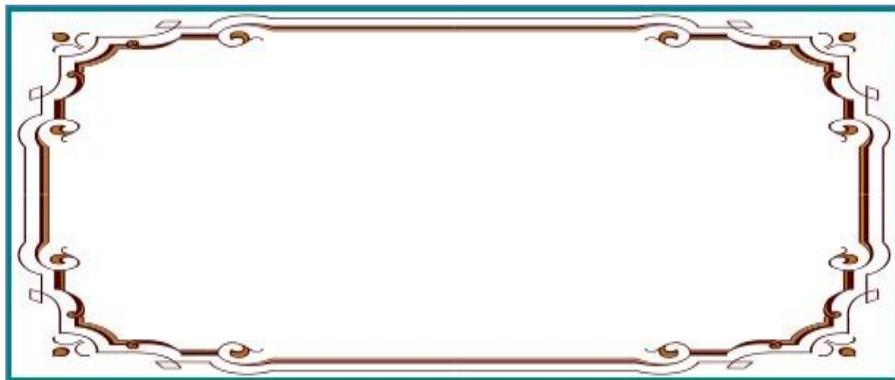
CONNECT2AAUW: 800-326-2289 or connect@aauw.org

National Website: www.aauw.org

State Website: www.aauw-pa.org

Viewpoints

AAUW North Hills Pittsburgh Branch
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Because Equity is still an issue