

ERIE PRESSIBLE April 2026

Electric Vehicles, Their Potential, and Their Impact on the Environment

Victoria and Richard Brogdon will speak on the differences between electric vehicles, hybrids, and more, as well as outlining the benefits and drawbacks of each. They will address the future of these types of cars as well as auto-drive cars. What will the future of transportation bring us?

Richard and Victoria met while employed at GE. Richard worked as a manufacturing engineer with an emphasis on programming; Victoria worked in Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) as a technical advisor because of her background in chemistry and teaching. Victoria also taught at Mercyhurst Prep. They both retired from GE in the early 2000s and began to work full time on their Brogdon Real Estate Business. They spend their time now riding around in their electric vehicles, an electric Chevrolet Silverado and a Tesla Model S.

Location: Jefferson Educational Society, 3207 State Street

Monday, April 13th at 7:00 PM



President's Message

Friends,

March's celebration of Women's History Month reminded me just how extraordinary the women of our AAUW Erie Branch truly are. Your leadership, your commitment to equity, and your unwavering belief in women's potential inspire me each and every day.

March's program strengthened that sense of shared purpose. Dr. Carolyn Baugh guided us through the complexities of gender issues in Islamic law with remarkable clarity, compassion, and insight. She shed light on the challenges Muslim women face in the interpretation of law—both within their own communities and across the world—while also celebrating the powerful work of Muslim feminist scholars and activists who are reshaping narratives and challenging long-held misconceptions. As a Muslim woman myself, it was profoundly meaningful to see so many people engage with this topic with such curiosity, openness, and respect.

One moment from the evening stood out in a very personal way. I was delighted to see Haieda Araee, one of our AAUW scholarship recipients, in the audience. Seeing her there as a student at Gannon—where the program was held—was incredibly moving. It was a vivid reminder that our scholarships are not just awards; they are life-changing opportunities that help women pursue their education and realize their aspirations.

Women's History Month also invites us to look beyond our own community and reflect on the realities women face around the world—a reflection that feels especially urgent this year. The United Nations continues to highlight persistent gender inequities, noting that women still earn only about 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. At the March UN Assembly, leaders raised concerns about gender-based violence, barriers to education, and the ongoing struggle for economic opportunity. These challenges are unfolding during a time of global uncertainty, including economic instability intensified by conflict in the Middle East. History reminds us that when economies falter, women often carry the heaviest burdens.



Sharmin Khundker

Our mission feels especially urgent right now. Every scholarship we award is a direct investment in a woman's future and her ability to move forward with confidence. With our branch's scholarship deadline coming up on Saturday, April 4th, 2026, we're reminded how important this support is and how many lives it can impact.

I hope to see you all at our branch meeting in April.

Sharmin

Public Policy Updates

The Heritage Foundation, a Washington DC-based conservative think tank, has released a follow-up to Project 2025 which outlines priorities for the Trump Administration including limited government, border security and tough immigration laws in addition to numerous other conservative measures. The outline for 2026 is titled "The Golden Age is a Choice". The foundation describes "Heritage 2.0" as a focus on four cornerstones: The American Family, The Dignity of Work, The Future of Free Enterprise, and National Security and American Heritage and Citizenship. Analysts and advocates on all sides are watching closely as the priority list signals an effort to further consolidate executive power, overhaul deferral agencies and redefine federal policy to reflect conservative and Christian Nationalist principles.

Described as Project 2026 by many observers, the plan proposes a focus on the total elimination of the US Department of Education. It includes a pledge to "reclaim higher education from the radical LEFT", a phrase that has become associated with efforts to eliminate protections for victims of sexual assault, Title IX enforcement, LGBTQ+ inclusion and academic freedom itself. Heritage 2.0 doubles down on shrinking federal agencies that regulate health, safety, and labor protections.

Reports indicate that Heritage wants to reduce government spending and regulation in ways that especially impact working families who struggle to make ends meet. Proposed cuts to Medicaid and childcare subsidies as well as reduced workplace enforcement of policies to reduce harassment, discrimination and injury will impact women in particular. These are protections that working women rely on every day.

Many women's groups are treating Project 2026 as a warning that must be met with full force. Katherine Spillar, the Executive Director and Executive Editor of Ms. Magazine state that "The coming year will test our resolve. But we have marched before. We have organized before. We have voted in record numbers before. And we will do it again."

Food and Friends at the Tardy Mardi Party



Some attendees: Charlie Roehrl, Jones, Christy Rieger, Karen Miller, Edie and Mehmet Cultu

Branch Study/Interest Groups

AAUW Book Club meets the **first Thursday** of every month at **1-2:30 PM** at **Springhill**, 2323 Edinboro Road, Room 316. Cindy Belczyk is the coordinator for the group (814-873-5401 or BelczykCA@gmail.com). **Next meeting is April 2nd.**

Upcoming book selections are:

- ***The Book Club for Troublesome Women*** by Marie Bostwick
- ***Miss Morgan's Book Brigade*** by Janet Skeslien

Food and Friends You are invited to a **Celebration of Friendship—A Spring Brunch!** Bring a friend (or meet one there). Enjoy delicious bites, lively conversation, and plenty of laughter. To be held at St Stephen's Episcopal Church Hall located at 1070 Dutch Rd. in Fairview. The cost is \$5 per person.

Saturday, April 18 at 10:30 AM. Please call Barb Hutzelman at 814-881-7339 by Friday, April 10 to make your reservation.

Games, Games, Games! Susan Roehrl is hosting the next Games meeting at her house, 626 Mohawk Drive on **Thursday, April 9 from 2-4 PM**. If you plan to come, please call Susan at 814-868-4537 to make your reservation.

Global Friends is an outreach program to immigrant women in our community. It is open to both AAUW members and immigrant women. The topic for the April 27 meeting is My Hajj Journey by Niken Carpenter. It will meet at our regular time of **7:00 PM** at Edie's home, **638 Vermont Ave**. Global Friends is chaired by Edie Cultu (814-397-2975, edie_cultu@yahoo.com).

Link to Niken's journal of the experience:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13TTnYBebp7lfNa51989cRfK2Hs37t79Z/view?usp=sharing>

Global Friends Book Club is a new group formed after our meeting at the Blasco Library. It is open to both AAUW members and immigrant women. *The Distance Between Us* by Reyna Grande will be discussed **Monday, April 20 at 6:30 PM** in **Room 219** at the **Blasco Library**. Global Friends is chaired by Edie Cultu (814-397-2975, edie_cultu@yahoo.com).

Gourmet Join us for dinner at **Smugglers' Wharf** located at 3 State St. near Dobbins Landing with the gourmet group on **Thursday, April 30 at 5:30 PM**. Please call Candy Brown (814-873-0486 or candybrown1@gmail.com) on or before April 23 to make your reservation.

Politalk is an unstructured discussion about domestic and international political events which leads to brainstorming about ways of coping with such events. Politalk meets the **3rd Thursday** of the month from **1-3 PM** and/or **6:30-8:30 PM** at chair Asuman Baskan's house 3838 State Street. Finger foods will be served. Please R.S.V.P. when you receive the reminder email earlier in the month (814-282-8277 or irrepressibleturk@gmail.com). Feel free to switch between afternoon and evening groups as they will meet on the same day.

Thoughts about RMDs

A Required Minimum Distribution or RMD, is the minimum amount of money the IRS mandates that you withdraw annually from any tax-deferred retirement accounts such as 401(k) accounts and Traditional IRAs beginning when you reach age 73.

The mandated withdrawal amount is taxable income. But, if the RMD is transferred directly to a qualified nonprofit organization it is NOT taxable. For example, if someone makes a direct transfer to the Erie Community Foundation on Erie Gives Day. Check with your financial advisor or the plan's administrator for details.

Note: This is not intended to be tax/legal/financial advice.



April 2026

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1	2 Book Club 1-2:30 pm Springhill	3 Good Friday	4
5 Happy Easter	6	7	8	9 Games 2-4 pm 626 Mohawk	10	11
12 Orthodox Easter	13 Branch Meeting 7 pm Jefferson Ed Society	14	15	16 Politalk 1-3 pm & 6:30-8:30 pm at Asuman's	17	18 Food & Friends 10:30 am Spring Brunch
19	20 Global Friends Book Club 6:30 pm Blasco Lib.	21	22	23	24 Arbor Day	25
26	27 Global Friends 7:00 pm Edie's home	28	29	30 Gourmet 5:30 pm Smuggler's Wharf		

Global Friends at the Blasco Library in February

Hello friends! I want to offer a big thank you to Cyndy Dunn for the excellent program and tour of the library. I think many of us were surprised at all the services our library has to offer. Now we know we can make Global Friends buttons and t-shirts at the library! I am pleased that so many of you turned out on a cold winter night and attended the program. I am also pleased that many of you want to participate in the Global Friends Book Club that Cyndy is organizing for us. She passed out books to those of us who want to participate last night. If you were not able to attend the meeting last night, but would like to participate in the book club and want the book, please let me know so we can arrange to get you a copy. The book is *The Distance Between Us* by Reyna Grande. Our Global Friends Book Club meeting will be on Monday evening April 20th at 6:30 at the library.

In the meantime, plan on our regular Global Friends meeting on the fourth Monday of March, the 23rd of March at 7:00 at my house. We will have the program on supporting the refugees in the Erie School system by Tisha Ryden. This is the program that we had to cancel last month because of the snow. I have also delivered the socks you have all donated to USCRI and they are very appreciative. Thank you for helping to keep the feet warm of the Erie refugee children.

— Edie Cultu —

March's Public Branch Meeting at Gannon University

The topic was on Women and Islamic Law.
There was a table for those interested in joining AAUW.



A peek into the future — Program Planned for September 14, 2026

Program Information — Pennsylvania Women and Their Fight for the Vote

Join us for a **19-minute documentary**, *Finding Justice: The Untold Story of Women's Fight for the Vote*, followed by a **Q&A with Amanda Owen, the filmmaker and executive director of the Justice Bell Foundation**. Signed copies of Owen's new book, *The Justice Bell: Tracing the Journey of a Forgotten Symbol*, will be available for purchase. Learn about it and read reviews at: <https://www.justicebell.org/justicebellbook>

Documentary Description

Part present-day detective story and part a historical account of the movement for voting rights, **Finding Justice: The Untold Story of Women's Fight for the Vote** tells the story of a band of intrepid women and their one-ton bronze bell that became a celebrated icon of the women's suffrage movement. Learn more here: <https://www.justicebell.org/documentary>

Link to film trailer: <https://vimeo.com/437255948>

Book Description

The Justice Bell: Tracing the Journey of a Forgotten Symbol by Amanda Owen, traces the history of the Justice Bell, a one-ton bronze bell used by Pennsylvania suffragists to symbolize women's exclusion from the vote. Drawing on new research, Ms. Owen recounts how the bell became a national sensation during a months-long tour before fading from public memory, and why it remains one of the most significant surviving artifacts of the suffrage era.

Learn more about the book and read reviews here: <https://www.justicebell.org/justicebellbook/justicebell-book-reviews>

Author Bio

Amanda Owen is a writer, independent historian, filmmaker, and the cofounder and executive director of the Justice Bell Foundation. She wrote and directed *Finding Justice: The Untold Story of Women's Fight for the Vote*, a documentary that premiered at the National Women's History Museum and aired on PBS stations. Her book, *The Justice Bell: Tracing the Journey of a Forgotten Symbol* was published in December 2025.





empowering women since 1881
Erie Branch—Founded in 1902

AAUW's Mission

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through education, philanthropy, and research. By joining AAUW you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance. In principle and in practice AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in the organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or class.

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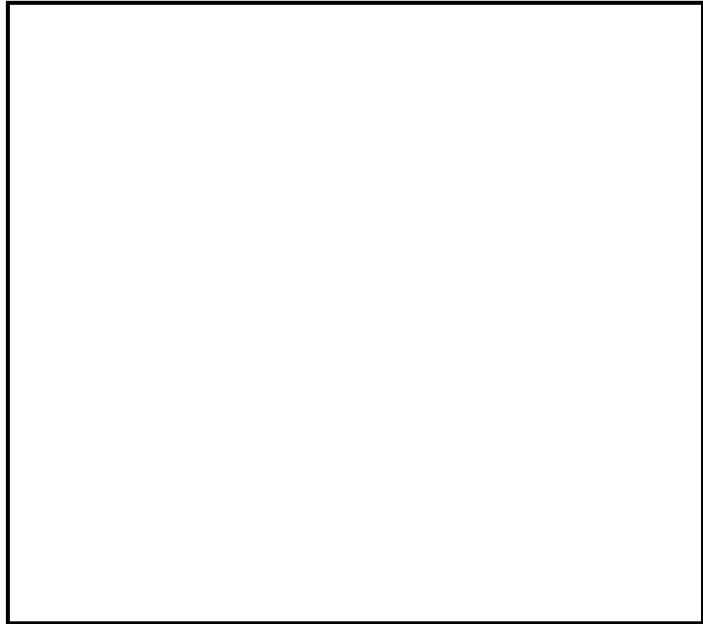
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Drive-Thru Book Drive
Saturday, April 25th - 10 am to 2 pm

Drop-off Location:
Flo Fabrizio Ice Arena
527 West 38th Street
Erie, PA 16509

Please use Zoo entrance



ONLY Used Books,
Audiobooks, CDs, DVD,
Puzzles, and Vinyl are
accepted.

- Please NO:
- Encyclopedias,
 - Readers' Digest
 - Condensed books
 - Textbooks,
 - Magazines
 - VHS or cassettes.



The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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