

ERIE PRESSIBLE

February 2026

The African American Experience in Erie

February is known as Black History month. Our branch is happy to host speakers from our community to provide their perspectives on the **African American experience in Erie**, past to present. Following their talks, there will be a tour of the **HICAAE** exhibits. Sarah Speir, Program Organizer.

The African American Experience in Erie

Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026

10 - 11:00am



The HICAAE
The Historical Institute of
Culture and the
African American Experience

Inform & transform through knowledge, engagement, & understanding of the African American Experience.

AAUW Program Speakers:

**Bishop Curtis Jones, Sr. and
Mr. Curtis Jones, Jr.**

Location:

315 East 9th Street, Erie, PA.

Located within the historic New
Life & Spirit Revival Center



President's Message

Friends,

I'd like to begin by wishing everyone a happy and healthy new year. I also want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the AAUW Erie Branch members for your generosity, your time, and your continued commitment to our mission of empowering women and girls.

Our Erie Branch continues to thrive through our mission-focused monthly programs and our diverse study groups. I encourage you to join any of these gatherings to learn more about their work—even if you're unable to participate regularly. At January's program, we heard from our speaker, Nadia Pribyschuk, who shared her powerful experience as a refugee. Our Global Friends meeting this month will also highlight the critical role of USCRI's work with the Erie School District.

Every Sunday, the First Presbyterian Church of the Covenant hosts a community meal for individuals and families in need. On January 18th, our Food and Friends group will contribute by organizing the Sunday Supper. They will be purchasing, preparing, and serving meals, with plans to support up to 150 people this year.

Our branch recently held an important Zoom session to discuss the dismantling of the Department of Education, along with several other policy changes that could significantly affect our core mission of advancing equity for women and girls. These issues are complex, far-reaching, and often difficult to navigate, which made this conversation especially valuable. We are deeply grateful to Loretta Seigley, Asuman Basakan, and Christy Rieger for sharing their time, expertise, and thoughtful analysis. They helped break down the potential implications of these policy shifts — particularly how they may influence public education, access to resources, and the broader landscape of gender equity.



Sharmin Khundker

This session served as a reminder of the importance of staying informed and engaged. As policies evolve, our branch will continue to monitor developments, provide educational opportunities, and encourage active participation in efforts that support our mission and protect the rights and opportunities of women and girls.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our mission. I am grateful for all you do, and I look forward to the meaningful work we will accomplish together in the year ahead.

Sharmin

Public Policy Updates

AAUW has joined the **Unite and Rise 8.5 Campaign** –This is an initiative designed by the League of Women voters to defend democracy. It grew out of a new focus of the League in 2025 titled Women Defend Democracy. It is defined as a focus centered on people power in an effort to move our country toward a stronger multi-racial democracy.

The campaign to defend democracy designed the Unite and Rise 8.5 initiative to engage at least 8.5 million people in civic education, community activism and voter turnout support. The number 8.5 million is the estimated number of voters it would take to bring about meaningful change through non-violent protest.

This initiative has its roots in the 2025 deportation of Kilmar Abrego Garcia. A US District Court Judge ruled that there was probable cause to find the Trump Administration in criminal contempt of court for violating an order to pause deportations.

According to League CEO Celina Stewart, this action constituted a Constitutional Crisis. The following statement was released by the League: "We the people must fight back. The League of Women Voters is launching a powerful new initiative: Unite and Rise 8.5. We will engage and mobilize 8.5 million voters and protect and preserve our democracy."

In the January Keystoner Sandra Miller, Pa. Public Chairperson states: "AAUW is proud to be a Power Partner with the League of Women Voters. AAUW will collaborate with local partners to host non-partisan events, share clear voter information and connect policy to real life while honoring each organization's non-partisan guidelines." Sandra also promises that she will have more information to share re: the Unite and Rise 8.5 initiative in the next Keystoner coming out in March.

Requesting Nominations for Awards

It's time for Erie Branch to begin considering members for this year's state awards. Please submit your award recommendations to the Nominating Committee Chair, Anne Marie Kumhera (annemarieku@gmail.com).

Final submissions for all awardees are due by February 15. To ensure the committee has sufficient time to meet and review all nominations, please submit your recommendations by the end of January.

State Award Categories are:

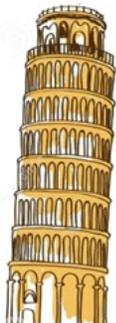
- Woman of the Year
- Member Making a Difference
- Gateway to Equity



Additional details about each award can be found at:

<https://aauw-pa.aauw.net/awards/state/>

Gourmet Group *at Roma's Restaurant in January*





Mardi Gras, Unbound by Dates

The Food and Friends group invites you to a Tardy Mardi Gras Party, because the spirit of Mardi Gras is too good to limit to one Tuesday! We'll celebrate on **Saturday, March 7th, 2–5 pm**, at Barb Hutzelman's, 3226 Rustic Lane.

 **What:** A belated celebration with food, drinks, music, and good cheer.

 **Why:** Because life got busy, but the beads still want to party and we're raising money for the next Sunday Supper!

 **Dress:** Mardi Gras flair encouraged but not required (**purple, green, gold**).

Expect authentic Mardi Gras food, something bubbly, plenty of conversation and laughter, and lots of beads and masks!

Come ready to celebrate, even if the calendar says we're late to the parade. Reservations to Barb (814) 881-7339, barbhutz@yahoo.com, by February 27th. Cost is \$20 per person paid at the door.

Legislative Forum

The League of Women Voters is sponsoring a Legislative Forum with our State Legislators on Thursday, February 12th, 2026 at 1:30 pm. The Legislative Forum will be held at The Sight Center of Northwest PA, 2545 W 26th St, Erie, PA 16506. The event is open to the public.



AAUW Nomination Committee

If you're interested in serving as a board member, please reach out to Ellen DiPlacido (eldip@aol.com). She will be chairing the nomination committee for the 2026–2027 board.

For more information about board roles, you can find position descriptions on our website, aauwerie.org, under "Get Involved" in the Job Position Description section.

Branch Study/Interest Groups

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** at chair Asuman Baskan's house 3838 State Street. (814-282-8277) (irrepressibleturk@gmail.com)

Upon demand, **a second Politalk group** will start meeting in the evenings on the third Thursday of each month, **6:30 - 8:30 pm**, at Asuman's house (3838 State St.) starting Thursday, March 19th. Finger foods will be served. Please rsvp when you receive the reminder email earlier in the month. (Feel free to switch between afternoon and evening groups as they will meet on the same day.)

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 **February 23** meeting will discuss **All Our Library Services** shared by **Cyndy Dunn**. It will meet at an earlier time **6:30 PM at the Blasco Library** instead of its usual location. Global Friends is chaired by Edie Cultu (814-397-2975, edie_cultu@yahoo.com).

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). **Feb. 5, *The Lost Bookshop* by Evie Woods**

Upcoming book selections include:

- ***The Love of my Life*** by Rosie Walsh
- ***James*** by Percival Everett
- ***The Book Club for Troublesome Women*** by Marie Bostwick
- ***Miss Morgan's Book Brigade*** by Janet Skeslien

Gourmet Join us at **Thai Taste Cuisine** located at 35 Peninsula Dr. for lunch with our gourmet group on **February 18th at noon**. Please R.S.V.P. to Candy Brown (814-873-0486 or candybrown1@gmail.com) on or before February 12.

Games, Games, Games! Susan Roehrl is hosting the next Games meeting at her house, 626 Mohawk Drive on **Friday, February 20 from 2-4 PM**. If you plan to come, please call Susan at 814-868-4537 to make your reservation.

January's Talk on Immigration at the Blasco Library



February 2026

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

1	2	3	4	5 Book Club 1-2:30 pm Springhill	6	7 African Amer. Exp. In Erie 10 am HICAAE
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day
15	16	17	18 Gourmet noon Thai Taste Cuisine	19 Politalk 1-3 pm & 6:30-8:30 pm Asuman's	20 Games 2-4 pm 626 Mohawk	21
22	23 Global Friends 6:30 pm Blasco Lib.	24	25	26	27	28



empowering women since 1881
Erie Branch—Founded in 1902

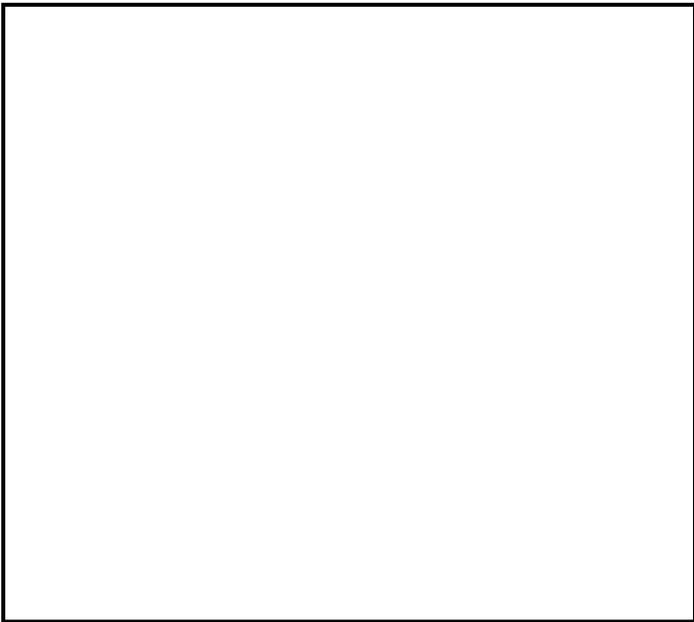
AAUW's Mission

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.

Published by: American Association of University Women — Erie Branch, Inc.
P.O. Box 9264, Erie, PA 16505
Branch email: eriebranchaauw@gmail.com
Editor email: eriepressible@gmail.com
Facebook: @AAUWEriePA
Web page: <http://www.aauwerie.org>

JEFFERSON EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY

Erie's Think Tank for Community Progress
Examine the Past. Study the Present. Explore the Future.
Visit us at www.JESerie.org. 3207 State Street, Erie, PA 16508



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.
Contact us at: lwverie@gmail.com

Great deals are waiting in the Admiral Room of the Blasco Library and the Bayfront Bookshelf
160 East Front Street,
Erie, PA 16507

Thursday, February 12 10 am - 6 pm
Friday, February 13 10 am - 4 pm
Saturday, February 14 9 am - 3 pm



Featuring: Fiction, Nonfiction,
Children's books, Puzzles,
Audiobooks and DVDs



DUSCKAS Funeral Home AND Cremation Services, Inc.

2607 Buffalo Road | 814.899.7656
Nancy E. Dusckas, Supervisor, Main Office

Dusckas Funeral and Cremation Services Harborcreek
5151 Buffalo Road | 814.315.0911
Aaron T. Bowers, Supervisor, Branch Office

www.dusckasfuneralhomes.com

Chris Spoto
image master

2827 West 26th St.
Erie, PA 16506

814.838.6255

814.838.6676

copyrightprintererie@gmail.com

copyrightprintererie.com



COPYRIGHT
PRINTING | GRAPHICS | SIGN SOLUTIONS