

# ERIE PRESSIBLE March 2024

## We will explore 'The Story of Us' in March

*The meeting will be held at Hagen History Center*

On Monday, March 11, 7 p.m., Erie Branch members will enjoy an overview of the Hagen History Center's newest exhibit, "The Story of Us."

When you walk through the center's 3,000-square-foot exhibit space at 356 W. 6<sup>th</sup> St., you're sure to see someone or something that is familiar. "The Story of Us," detailed in hundreds of photos, artifacts, interactives and 3-D displays, takes you from the beginnings of Erie County through current times.

Opening in July, 2022, this exhibition traces the roots of our ancestors: where they came from; how they arrived; how they made a living; where they settled; and how they founded churches, schools and social clubs.

It takes you from the earliest Native American residents to current times. The space also highlights companies and retail businesses, agriculture, manufacturing and much more that bring back memories.

Our guide will be center Project Manager Pam Parker, who joined Hagen History Center in January 2021 after a career as an award-winning reporter and editor with Gannett's *Erie Times-News* and GoErie. She also worked in freelance writing, marketing and publishing most of her life, logging careers as a vice president, account executive and media director for multiple ad agencies.

Parker has also been recognized as Women's Roundtable Woman of the Year, Public Relations Society Print Journalist of the Year and Employee of the Year, while working for *the Erie Times-News*.



*Pam Parker*

*The Story of Us," takes you from the beginnings of Erie County through current times.*

She is a proud Penn State University graduate and has served on numerous boards and committees for Athena Powerlink, Women's Roundtable, Erie Ad Club, PRSA and many others. Her ties to the History Center include serving as a board member and board secretary for six years.

On a personal level, she is a wife, mom/stepmom of six, GramPam to nine and a wicked-good tennis player.

An interesting aside is that her daughter was married in the archway of the Watson-Curtze Mansion's dining room and library.

## President's Message

As I wrote in a previous *Pressible* letter, I will represent AAUW Erie Branch on the "One Hundred Years of Motivation" Panel at the AAUW Pennsylvania Conference in April. The panel discussion will focus on how branches have managed to maintain their focus for 100 years or more. To prepare for the discussion, I have spent time at the Hagen History Center, reviewing the AAUW Erie Branch archives housed there.

It has been an amazing experience to read minutes of the College Women's Club (later to become AAUW) from 1902 and beyond. The stated purpose of the club at that time was to "help other women to attend college" and one of their first initiatives was to start a scholarship fund. The fund began with a \$5 donation from Adella B. Woods, a founding member of the club.

Minutes reflect the lives of women living through two World Wars and a Great Depression. In 1942, a Defense Chairperson was elected to coordinate defense activities on the home front. Money was collected at each meeting to support war relief.

Members were welcomed home after serving several years overseas for the Red Cross.

During hard times, the Scholarship Fund continued to assist young women graduating from local high schools to attend college. The money was initially awarded as loans to be repaid once the student graduated from college. Beginning in 1941, awards were made as scholarships rather than loans.

By 1950, the branch's focus shifted to local issues. A Community Affairs report read at one meeting was titled "Problems of Neglected Children in Erie County." A focus on public policy was also evident as members reported on proposed legislation meant to "permit married women to deal with real estate the same as men" and a uniform salary bill re: teacher salaries. Efforts to grow the Scholarship Fund continued. In 1956, a large Tea Party and Fashion Show (106 tables) was held. Later successful fundraising efforts included the Holly Trail in the late seventies. Area florists decorated homes for the holidays. This was very popular- I can remember standing outside the homes waiting for my turn to view the beautiful decor. Lunch and Literature was also a local favorite in more recent years. Attendees enjoyed a delicious luncheon while several authors discussed their books.

As I reviewed the archived materials, I could not help but imagine some future AAUW member reading through current minutes and reports. I believe they would find many similarities to earlier times given our attention to community issues, public policy and of course scholarship awards. Times have changed, but our focus on equity for women and girls remains the same.



*Loretta Seigley*

# Public Policy Highlights

## School Vouchers — Unfinished Business

Governor Josh Shapiro’s billion-dollar education spending plan makes no plans for school vouchers, but that doesn’t mean he’s washed his hands of the conversation entirely.

Aside from reconstituting the outdated formula for funding charter schools, the first term Democrat said lawmakers need to “stay at the table” and “keep having important conversations.”

“And look, one of those conversations will need to be about scholarships that let poor families in struggling school districts put their kids in the best position for them to succeed -- whether that’s paying for extra tutoring, books and computers, or yes, going to another school,” he said.

Shapiro mentioned the Senate Republican-backed \$100 million school voucher program he helped draft. If enacted, students attending schools in the bottom fifteen percent as measured by academic performance could get a state grant to cover tuition at a private school...

*He should focus proposed new investments of state dollars on ensuring adequate, equitable, and constitutional funding for public schools*

The Democrat-led House, however, refused to include vouchers in last year’s budget, believing it to be an unconstitutional diversion of taxpayer dollars to private schools. Shapiro sided with them, but recently said again he supports the idea and considers it to be “unfinished business.”

*This information was taken from The Center Square*



## The Education Voters

Private school vouchers are a very bad idea. As states around the nation adopt and expand these programs, we get a crystal clear understanding of the catastrophic impact that private school vouchers have on public schools AND the massive amount of tax dollars that these programs waste...

In his 2024-2025 proposed state budget, Governor Shapiro should commit to bringing accountability and transparency to Pennsylvania’s current \$400 million/year Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) school voucher programs AND he should focus proposed new investments of state dollars on **ensuring adequate, equitable, and constitutional funding for public schools, which educate all students who come through their doors.**

Again it is time to make our voices heard and counted. Contact our local legislators!

*Public Policy Chairperson---Ellen DiPlacido*



# Members enjoy February branch meeting

Erie Branch met at the Church of the Nativity, the Russian Old Rite Orthodox Church, at 247 East Front St. Parish Rector Archpriest Pimen Simon showcased the iconic church that has graced Erie's bayfront since 1919 and contains many historic icons.

After the tour, Jeremy Bloeser, Executive Director of Bayfront East Side Taskforce (BEST) described that organization's efforts towards maintaining and improving the rest of that area, one of Erie's oldest and most historic neighborhoods.

B.E.S.T. is a relatively new group which assists with owner-occupied home construction, home renovations, and blight removal.

It is also involved with neighborhood beautification including increasing community desirability and livability through new signage, gateway gardens, streetscaping, care for parks, and other community building events.

The group also partners with the East Bayfront Neighborhood Watch group, law enforcement, and provides summer employment opportunities.



*Photo by Deborah Tonkin*

Members take time to explore the Church of the Nativity's icons after the tour. At left is Jeremy Bloeser, executive director of the Bayfront East Side Taskforce (BEST) who updated us on that organization's efforts and accomplishments.





*Photo by Edie Cultu*

Global Friends study group enjoyed a presentation last month by Patty Stubber, who is working with the Afghan refugees at the International Institute. She brought two of the Afghan women refugees with her, one of whom was the recipient of one of our scholarships last year. Patty talked about the progress the refugees are making in adapting to their new home, what their current needs are, and the ways the agency is helping them to settle here.

## **Plan to Vote!**

AAUW National will put a bylaw change on open membership up for a vote in April 2024.

Open membership means that the education requirement would be removed from requirements for AAUW membership.

Watch your email for more information on this topic to be provided by National and by AAUW Pa.

Plan to vote on this important issue between April 3 and May 15.

## **Pay gap is persistent**

Despite progress, the gender pay gap is persistent.

Women working full-time, are still only making 84 cents for every dollar paid to men. And this number hides the further impact of the wage gap for women of color.

Around the country, there is a trend to ensure greater transparency about salary and compensation. These policies work.

The Salary Transparency Act (H.R. 1599) would advance pay equity for everyone by requiring all employers to share salary or wage ranges, protect employees from retaliation and establish civil penalties for violators.

## Registration is now open for April State Conference

Registration is now open for the AAUW-PA state conference. This year's theme, "Evolution of the Fight: Looking Back to Move Forward," will highlight AAUW's achievements within the broader context of the women's movement. The conference will be held at the Best Western Premier: The Central Hotel and Conference Center in Harrisburg on April 5 -7.

Keynote speakers include Dr. Valerie A. Arkoosh, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services; Dr. Kimberly S. Adams, Board of Directors for AAUW National and National Organization for Women (NOW); and Gisele Barreto Fetterman, Nonprofit Founder, Hugger, Dreamer.

Hotel reservations are due by Tuesday, March 5; conference reservations by March 15. In order to receive the AAUW room rate please call 717-561-1086 and use the room block name "American Association of University Women."

Members can register for all or part of the conference. Cost is \$190 for the full conference, which includes all meals and program for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Friday-Saturday meals and programs are \$160; Saturday only is \$110. To register please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2024-ConferenceRegistration>

You can pay by credit card or PayPal, using our PayPal link provided or by sending a check postmarked before March 15, 2024 made payable to AAUW PA and mailed to Ann Echols, 181 Winesap Dr, Port Matilda, PA 16870.

Registration fees will increase by 18 percent after March 15th and onsite registration will not be available.

For more information on the list of speakers and activities please visit <https://aauw-pa.aauw.net/>.

## Sick leave under consideration in Healthy Families Act

Nearly 1 in 4 private sector employees – and more than six in 10 of the lowest-income workers – don't have even a single paid sick day. That means getting the flu or having a sick child creates a precarious choice: go to work sick (or send their child to school sick) or stay home and risk not being able to pay for groceries or rent.

For the typical family without paid sick days, just 3.5 sick days without pay is equivalent to losing an entire month of groceries.

Having a national paid sick days standard would provide working women with more job stability and the economic security they need to take care of themselves and their family.

Look into the Healthy Families Act under consideration in Congress.

# Branch Study Groups

**Book Discussion**

The AAUW Book Group will be meeting on Thursday, March 7, at the Millcreek Branch of the Erie County Public Library at 1 p.m.

Beverly Gocal will be reviewing "The Book of Two Ways" by Jodi Picoult.  
New members are always welcome!

**Global Friends**

Global Friends will meet Monday, March 25, at 7 p.m. at Edie's home, 638 Vermont Ave. Program: TBD

**Gourmet**

We will be having delicious Italian food at Ricardo's Restaurant, 2112 E. Lake Road, Erie. Our group will meet on Friday, March 22, at 5 p.m., as Easter is the next week.

Please call Nickie Azicri at 814-835-3780 or email speedyzeek8@gmail.com

**Politalk**

Politalk will meet on March 21 at 2 p.m. at Asuman's home.

## March 2024

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2
4 <b>Board mtg.</b> 6:30 p.m. Zoom	5	6	7 <b>Book</b> 1 p.m. Millcreek Branch library	8	9
11 <b>Branch meeting</b> 7 p.m. Hagen History Center	12	13	14	15	16
18	19	20	21 <b>Politalk</b> 2 p.m. at Asuman's	22 <b>Gourmet</b> 5 p.m. At Ricardos	23
25 <b>Global Friends</b> 7 p.m. at Edie's	26	27	28	29	30



Erie Branch ♦ Founded in 1902

P.O. Box 9264 Erie PA 16505

### 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.**  
**Branch email: [eriebranchaauw@gmail.com](mailto:eriebranchaauw@gmail.com)**  
**Editor email: [eriepressible@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.JESerie.org). 3207 State Street, Erie, PA 16508



*Compliments of*  
**Dusckas**  
**Funeral Home, Inc.**

2607 Buffalo Road  
 899-7656  
 Nancy E. Dusckas, FD  
 Supervisor

536 West Tenth Street  
 452-2456  
 Gary J. Cumming, FD  
 Supervisor

[www.dusckasfuneralhome.com](http://www.dusckasfuneralhome.com)

Chris Spoto  
 image master

2827 West 26th St.  
 Erie, PA 16506

☎ 814.838.6255

☎ 814.838.6676

✉ [copyrightprinting@verizon.net](mailto:copyrightprinting@verizon.net)

[copyrightprintingerie.com](http://copyrightprintingerie.com)



**COPYRIGHT**  
 PRINTING | GRAPHICS | SIGN SOLUTIONS