

Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, Inc.
Board Meeting Minutes
Saturday, January 9, 2015
Home of Barbara Van Itallie, Poughkeepsie, NY

Members Present: Barbara Van Itallie, Diane Jablonski, Kris Puzza, Sherre Wesley, Maria DeWald, Cathy Kinn, Janna Whearty, Betty Harrel, Mary Anne Hogarty, Eileen Hayden, Pat De Leo, Linda Roberts, Betsy Kopstein Stuts, Kathy Friedman. Guests: Mary Lou Davis, Lula Allen.

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM by President Barbara Van Itallie, who welcomed everyone and thanked them for their contribution to the organization. The December minutes were approved as written.

Treasurer

Diane Jablonski reported that we have set up a Paypal account for the Branch and members can now use it to pay online for the Authors' Tea and contributions. We will try it out this year, and if we find it useful and worth the fees, we may use it for other online payments. Diane thanked Margaret Nijhuis for figuring out how to get it to work on our website.

Diane reported that we can put a quarter page ad in the State Convention Booklet for \$55. The deadline is February 26. Mary Lou Davis pointed out that Geeta Desai is running for Program Vice President, so we can support her with the ad, as we have for others running for office. Janna Whearty volunteered to write the ad.

Membership

Mary Ann Hogarty reported that, as of 2016, we have 360 members, including 27 new members. Barbara reported that Susie and Mary Ann have decided to update the renewal form with a box to check for "I do not plan to renew." This may save the membership committee from sending and phoning so many renewal reminders. Barbara suggested that we also have a place on the form to make an optional donation. It was also suggested that we have an optional place to give the reason for non-renewal.

Programs

Betsy Kopstein-Stuts announced that the monthly programs are all set for the year:

January—Common core

February—Human trafficking

March—Women in Iran Photos

April—Mental Health/Suicide

Also, in October, Sue McLane will be back with a new program. She presented the popular program about woman's fashion in Victorian times last October.

Betsy has looked into using the room at Boardman Road Library for our programs next year, except for the open house in September which needs more space. The cost is \$50 per meeting. The library has more parking and better lighting than the Unitarian fellowship and is more convenient for many. The only negative issue is that we must be packed up and out by 9:00 PM. The consensus was that we would like to use the library. We can deal with the time issue by starting fifteen minutes early, at 6:45, for some socialization, so that we can start the meeting promptly at 7:00 PM.

Community Initiatives

Maria DeWald reported that we are now down to eight initiatives. She is now trying to combine *Let's do Math* and *STEM*. She announced that International Initiatives is sponsoring a bus trip to the UN.

Girls Conference

Maria announced that the Girl's conference has been reinstated, with quite a few enthusiastic volunteers. The new co-chairs are Laura Scolaro and Diana Babington. The "Live Your Dreams" conference will be on November 5, 2016 at DCC. It will be similar to previous conferences, with a goal to promote girls' self-esteem. The liaison committee will be contacting middle schools for sixth and seventh grade girls, and Diana will work with social workers to identify girls who would benefit from the program. Betsy Kopstein-Stuts brought up the idea of providing scholarships for some of the girls. Transportation is also an issue to consider. Donations can be elicited for the scholarships.

Equal Pay Day

Pat DeLeo announced that April 12 is Equal Pay Day and she will have an article about it in next month's Newsletter. She would like to have an event to celebrate the day. One possibility would be a coffee klatch that day with local politicians, with members assigned to speak to them about various topics. The popular suggestion was for women to "strike" that night and meet somewhere for cocktails and conversation. Pat will look into venues and ways to publicize this event.

Marist Liberty Partnership

Kris Puzza met with the director of the Marist Liberty Partnership. They work with at-risk youth, male and female, from Poughkeepsie High, promoting the value of education, mentoring, running after school programs. They follow them through High School and 99% of their students graduate and go on to college. They would like help from our organization for a series of dates that they are planning.

1. April -- Speed mentoring for 40 students. This program is fully funded but they would like our help in getting mentors.
2. May 12 -- Stem activities and a stem career workshop for 9th and 10th graders. This program needs funding, including \$300 for bus transportation and \$234 for food.
3. June 30 -- A similar program for 25 rising 9th graders. Funding for this program includes \$300 for transportation and \$146 for food.
4. August 9 -- Workshops for 9th through 12th graders. This program is fully funded.

Since we have STEM money set aside that has not been spent, the consensus was that we can fully fund and co-sponsor one of the workshops, and then consider helping with another one.

Eileen Hayden made a motion that we will co-sponsor, with Marist Liberty Partnership, the May 12 STEM program contributing \$534 and volunteer personnel. The motion passed.

Leading to Reading

Betty Harrel attended the United Way Early Literacy Conference and found that the rack cards were very useful there, with many people showing interest in our organization and taking the cards.

Betty announced that she made use of the Kohl's "Associates in Action" volunteer program. Betty recruited four Kohl's associates to help with wrapping sessions, and Kohl's donated \$500 to *Leading to Reading*. *Leading to Reading* has also received other grants, including \$1500 from the Greenspan Trust, a \$500 New York State AAUW program grant, and \$5000 from the McCann Charitable Trust.

Interest Groups

Cathy Kinn reminded everyone that interest group leaders should be talking about upcoming Branch events with their groups each month.

Special Committees

Auction

Lula Allen thanked everyone for their support for the Writers' Tea and Auction. Our seventh Writers' Tea and Action will be at the Links at Union Vale on Sunday, May 15. The two authors are Lucinda Franks, a well-known Journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner, and Jeffrey T. Sammons, a history professor at NYU who writes about race and sports.

Lula listed the three things we all can do to help with the Auction: Come to the tea, help get items for the auction, and buy something at the auction. Last year more people stepped up to help and it made a big difference. Gloria Gibbs is collecting the items at her home. We are hoping to get some more donations of services, as these are popular at the auction.

New Business

Barbara reported that the program awards from the state are upcoming. We submitted Leading to Reading last year and it received an award. We will submit the program about Sexual Assault on Campus this year.

Maria DeWald brought up the suggestion that we could choose to schedule fewer general program meetings than the ten monthly meetings we have now. However, many people really like the monthly meetings, they are well attended, and the program vice presidents are willing. So the consensus was that we will continue having programs each month.

Barbara is considering Lisa Gharney, of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services, to be the speaker at our annual meeting. Several of the board members reported that she is a dynamic speaker and would be a very good choice.

Kriss Puzza reported that we can pay \$7.00 for a Facebook ad that would last a week and go out to all who like our page and to all their friends. We could publicized events in this way. It is an inexpensive way to reach many people, and she will speak to Mary Coiteux, our Facebook coordinator, about it.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50

Respectfully Submitted,

Katherine Friedman
Secretary