

WRITERS' TEA

NOTE: CHANGE OF DATE!

APRIL 6, 2014

AUTHOR NUMBER 2

Sarah Bracey White

Margaret White *462-8052*
mgwhitecs@aol.com



We are pleased to spotlight our second author Sarah Bracey White. Sarah says she is looking forward to sharing her book, *Primary Lessons: A Memoir*, with the guests at the AAUW 2013 Writers' Tea. She is a writer, teacher, arts consultant and motivational speaker. The author of a collection of poetry, *Feelings Brought to Surface*, her creative essays are included in the anthologies *Children of the Dream*; *Dreaming in Color*, *Living in Black and White*; *Aunties: 35 Writers Celebrate Their Other Mother*; and *Gardening On A Deeper Level*. Her essays have been published in many regional newspapers and on the internet. She now lives with her husband in Westchester County, NY.

From the Blog of CavanKerry Presss, Ltd

Primary Lessons: A Memoir by Sarah Bracey White

As an African-American child growing up in the segregated pre-Civil Rights South, Sarah Bracey White pushed against the social conventions that warned her not to rock the boat, even before she was old enough to fully understand her urge to defy the status quo. In her candid and poignant memoir, *Primary Lessons*, White recalls a childhood marked by equal measures of poverty and pride—formative years spent sorting through the "lessons" learned from a complicated relationship with her beloved, careworn mother and from a father's absence engendered by racial injustice and compromised manhood.

Although born in Sumter, South Carolina, Sarah spends much of her first five years in Philadelphia in the care of her bighearted Aunt Susie and her husband, Uncle Whitey. As her parent's fourth daughter, she has been sent north to ease her family's financial burden, freeing her mother to work as a schoolteacher. Young Sarah loves her life in Philadelphia, and is devastated when her mother comes to retrieve her and take her back to a "home" she has never known. There, she is shocked and confused to encounter strange signs that read "colored only" and to be told for the first time that black people must behave a certain way around white people and accept their lot as second class citizens.

Continued on page 5...

SLAVERY IN THE HUDSON VALLEY

January 9, 2014

7:00 pm

(Snow Date, January 16, 2014)

Unitarian Fellowship of
Poughkeepsie*
67 Randolph Avenue
Poughkeepsie, NY



As a lead up to Black History Month, please join us to hear Michael Lord, Associate Director of Education for Historic Hudson Valley, present a talk about the history of slavery in New York.

Did you know...

- That the first non-indigenous settler in Manhattan was a man of African descent?
- That the variety of African nationalities in colonial NY equaled or surpassed the number of European nationalities represented?
- That numerous plantations flourished on both banks of the Hudson River?
- That enslavement in NY lasted about 200 years, while freedom in NY has been around for only 185 years?
- That during the 18th century, one tenth of Westchester's population was enslaved. And in Manhattan, one person in five was enslaved?
- That liberty and independence for thousands of enslaved men, women, and children meant siding with the British during the American Revolution?

Questions: Susie Blecker (462-7074) or iblecker@aol.com
Mary Coiteux (226-8275) or mcoiteux@frontiernet.net

*Directions on page 3.

Continued on page 3 ...

JANUARY CALENDAR

Online Calendar at www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org

Contact: Kathy Friedman kfriedman33@gmail.com

- 4 Trekkers: 9:00 am**
Annual Planning Meeting
Hostess: Karen Haynes (297-5700)
Coordinator: Karen Haynes (297-5700)
- 6 Word Games: 2:00 pm**
Hostess: Barbara Van Itallie (462-3924)
Coordinator: Ellie Charwat (462-7061)
- 7 World Travelers: 7:00 pm**
Presentation: *Nepal and the Mystical Himalayas*
Hostess: Jeanette Cantwell (452-4188)
Coordinator: Jeanette Cantwell (452-4188)
AAUWtravelers@gmail.com
- 8 The Ediss Book Group: 7:00 pm**
Book: *The Buddha in the Attic*
by Julie Otsuka
Hostess: Gabriela Dranzny (471-5406)
Coordinator: Celia Serotsky (473-8426)
- 9 Board Meeting: 6:00 pm**
Unitarian Fellowship
Prior to the membership meeting.
- 9 General Membership Meeting: 7:00 pm**
All members are invited and encouraged to attend.
See details on page 1.
- 10 "The Branch" deadline for February.**
- 10 Daytime Literature: 10:00 am**
Book: *Homer & Langley*
by EL Doctorow
The Manor at Woodside, 168 Academy, Pok.
Coordinators: Pat Dogil (454-5441)
& Dina Gleeson (229-8458)
- 11 Bridge 3: 10:00 am**
Hostess: Carol Mastropietro (221-8862)
Coordinator: Donna Reichner dlr0804@verizon.net
- 14 Movie Night: Time TBD by show**
Movie: Group members will be notified the
Thursday before - sign up with Sue.
Discussion: *Eveready Diner*, Rt. 9, Hyde Park
Director: Susan Osterhoudt (889-4469)
Producer: Dina Gleeson
- 15 Gourmet: Out & About: 6:30 pm**
Farm to Table, Route 9, Wappingers Falls
Contact: Kay Saderholm (229-8545)
Ksaderholm@aol.com
- 15 Bridge I: 1:00 - 4:00 pm**
Hostess: Mary Ann Ryan (897-9679)
Coordinators: Linda Ronayne (897-9745) &
Mary Ann Ryan (897-9679)
- 17 Aventures en Soleil:**
Planning meeting 1:30-3:30 pm
Where: *contact coordinator*
Coordinator: Ruth Sheets (473-6202)
- 20 Manderley Literary Society: 7:30 pm**
Book: *The Art Forger* by B.A. Shapiro
Hostess: Jackie Klein (485-6530)
Coordinator: Ellie Burch (297-7828)
- 21 Cuisine: 6:30 pm**
Restaurant Dinner
Planner: Mary Lou Davis, (223-5544)
maryloudavis125@gmail.com
Coordinator: Barbara Van Itallie (462-3924)
- 22 Contemporary Literature: 7:30 pm**
Book: *Death Comes to Pemberley* by P.D. James
Hostess: *contact coordinator*
Coordinators: Ann Wade (229-5267) &
Linda Freisitzer (266-5427)
- 22 Mah Jongg: Noon - 4:00 pm**
Uno Chicago Grill - Lunch (\$15)
Contact Jackie Prusak: JRPrusak@aol.com (226-6049)
by January 20
Coordinator: Amy Schwed (462-2269)
- 23 Bridge II: 12:15-4:00 pm NOTE: New Location**
Lesson and Game, \$10.00
The Bridge Center - 24 Park Avenue
(Hellenic Community Center)
Coordinators: Cathy Kinn cathy@kinn.org &
Jackie Prusak (226-6049)
- 23 Pins & Needles: 7:00 pm**
Project: *Necklaces*
Hostess: Chris Eidel (485-7235)
Coordinators: Arlene Seligman (297-0006) &
Jane Toll (463-2712)
- 27 All those books...: 7:00 pm**
Book: *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*
by: Anne Bronte
Hostess: Ruth Kava (471-0480)
Coordinator: Carol Loizides (452-3208)
- 28 Women's Personal & Professional Development:**
Natural Health and Wellness
Presenter: Dr. Fella
5:30-7:30 pm, DCC,
Washington Hall Room 138
Coordinator: Jacqueline Goffe-McNish
mcnish@sunydutchess.edu
- Art on the Go: No meeting in January**
Coordinator: Mary Coiteux (226-8275)

LOOKING AHEAD

January 31, 2014 CTAUN Conference UN

February 13, 2014 Celebration of Life, page 7

April 6, 2014 Writers' Tea, page 1,6

April 25 - 27, 2014 AAUW-NYS Convention, page 6
"A World of Wellness"



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jacqueline Goffe-McNish *471-7220* mcnish@sunydutchess.edu

Strong Women Growing Stronger

During the first week of December, I attended a conference in Philadelphia. This was sponsored by the Middle States Council for Higher Education. This is the organization that accredits post secondary education institutions in over ten states as well as international colleges and universities. There were over two thousand attendees who were professors, directors, or presidents representing their colleges. This was a fantastic conference with outstanding workshop presenters and plenary speakers. I was struck by how organized everything was and how efficiently the conference was run. I was struck by another important detail; over fifty percent of attendees were women. The chairperson and vice chairperson were women. Two of the four plenary speakers were women. Most of the workshops were presented by women. It was great! This showed the relevance of the work of AAUW even at the Branch level. We are committed to empowering women and girls so that they can take their rightful position in society and do the things the women at the conference were doing with brilliance and elegance.

This year in our Branch women were *celebrated* at our Woman of the Year luncheon, they were *enlightened* at the Writers' Tea, they were *professionally developed* at the monthly meetings and initiative meetings, they were *educated about diversity* at the District meeting, they were *introduced to international realities* by the United Nation project, and they were *entertained and motivated* by the monthly interest group meetings.

Girls were *empowered* this year as we provided a place for them to discover their voice at the Girls' Conference. The STEM program, Let's Do Math, Leading to Reading, and the new Girls' Scout Initiative played important roles in *equipping girls to take their place in society*.

As we begin this new year, we can certainly compliment ourselves for the positive impact we have made on the lives of women and girls in this community. We also know the tremendous responsibility and opportunity we have to continue to advance the goals of the AAUW of advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research and as we continue to **Broaden our Borders**.

POUGHKEEPSIE AAUW ON FACEBOOK

Our thanks to **Christie Van Horne** for designing and launching the official Poughkeepsie AAUW Facebook page. It is beautiful and we appreciate her work in bringing us into the age of social media.

To view the page go to:

<https://www.facebook.com/AAUWPoughkeepsie2014>

You may view this page even if you are not on Facebook but to post you must be a Facebook member or you may send Christie information that you would like posted and she will do it for you. ChristieVanHorne@gmail.com

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SLAVERY IN THE HUDSON VALLEY

Michael Lord's presentation will examine the issues, events and individual choices surrounding enslavement in the Hudson Valley from the perspective of the enslaved. Using a select group of individuals, Lord's conversation traces the development of slavery in NY, everyday life for those enslaved in the Hudson River Valley, resistance to the institution, emancipation, and why this most-American of stories continues to be relevant.

Michael Lord is a graduate of Amherst College with degrees in History and Black Studies. He is currently Historic Hudson Valley's Associate Director of Education. Michael supervises and trains the educational staff at all of HHV's historic sites. He also writes, produces and directs museum theater presentations for Historic Hudson Valley and other institutions.

Directions: 67 South Randolph Ave. can be accessed from Hooker Ave. or take Route 9 to Sharon Dr (near Holiday Inn). At the end of Sharon turn left onto Beechwood then the first right onto Ferris Lane, next an immediate left to S. Randolph. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie is on the right.



Poughkeepsie AAUW, Inc.

BOARD NEWS AND NOTES

Betty Harrel *462-2141* bharrel128@gmail.com

From the November board meeting:

New branch initiatives include health care and a joint project with the Girl Scouts. A new interest group, Biking the Rail Trails, was approved.

Procedures were approved for donating to other organizations which further our AAUW mission, for equitable allotting money earned by the Writers' Tea, and for non-members attending events which are subsidized by AAUW funds.

Strategies for involving new members and membership retention were discussed. Plans for the New Member Reception were finalized.

Full minutes of Poughkeepsie AAUW board meetings and business meetings of the membership (twice each year) can be found on the website www.aauw-poughkeepsie.org under About Us/Leadership/Minutes.

Supporters of *The Branch*!!

Annual contributions from members help defray the expense of publishing *The Branch* and other communication expenses. All patrons and sponsors are listed in each monthly newsletter unless anonymity is requested.

Patrons (\$25 or more)

Catherine Albanese, Joan Cordani, Marguerite Cotter, Lillian DePasquale, Marion Effron, Joan Fay, Ruth Gau, Gloria Gibbs, Sandra Goldberg, Doris Kelly, Peggy Lombardi, Jean Miller, Jacqueline Prusak, Margaret Ruggeri (In Memoriam), Brenda Schaffer, Terry Schneider, Barbara Van Itallie

Sponsors (\$10 or more)

To add your name to the list, mail a check payable: "Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, Inc." to Margaret Nijhuis, 9 McAllister Drive, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569

LEADING TO READING INITIATIVE RECEIVES \$1500 GRANT

Betty Harrel *462-2141* bharrel128@gmail.com



The **Community Response Fund** of the Community Foundation of Dutchess County recently awarded a \$1500 grant to the AAUW *Leading to Reading Project!* The funds will be used to purchase specialized books not available through other sources, such as those for middle and high school students, bilingual books for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, and toddler board books. It will also be used to purchase materials for the family reading kits.

A reception for the organizations receiving grants was held in mid-December at the Mill Street Loft. The grants are for one year and will start in January, 2014.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Kay Saderholm *229-8545* ksaderholm@aol.com

What a pleasure to see so many new members at the **New Member Reception** held at 6:00 pm, immediately preceding our November 14th membership meeting. This was an opportunity for these new members to meet our board members, interest group coordinators, community outreach chairs, and other AAUW members who came early for the reception. Many thanks to Barbara Lemberger for coordinating the refreshments – the round submarine sandwiches were outstanding! Thanks also to the board members who provided the delicious desserts.

The program for the evening was outstanding. We met Dr David Crenshaw, director of the Children's Home in Poughkeepsie; learned about service dogs and met Ace, grandson of Rosie, the first service dog at the Children House. We were delighted to welcome State Sen. Terry Gibson, who is sponsoring the bill called *Rosie's Law* that will allow service dogs to be used in the courtroom as needed. We had a full house for this amazing program.

To our new and returning members – read about our many interest groups and sign up to attend a group in January. Each month, you will find a calendar listing the interest groups and their meeting information on page 2 of this newsletter.

More information on the interest groups, the community initiatives, membership meetings and annual events can be found on the website www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org. From the **Homepage** select **Programs** on the menu bar at the top, in the drop down list you will see **Interest Groups**, the **Community Initiatives**, **Membership Meetings** and **Annual Events**. By selecting any of these you will find the groups and their leaders' contact information. You will also find some of this information on the back cover of your membership directory.

For details on any of these activities call or email the leader(s) of the group that interest you.



Make a New Year's resolution to attend, each month, the AAUW membership meeting and to participate in one of our many activities – it will make 2014 a special year for you!!

Keep informed about AAUW activities – read our newsletter, *The Branch*; visit our website; and check your email daily!

PUBLIC POLICY

Doris Kelly mscw12@aol.com

Is the Equal Rights Amendment dead?

It is now ninety years since the first Equal Rights Amendment was introduced in Congress in 1923 and it *still has not passed*. Forty nine years later, in 1972, an amendment stating that “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State on account of sex” was proposed by Congress for ratification by the states. A deadline was included in the preamble to the resolution which allowed the amendment to expire in 1979 if it were not ratified by 38 states. As the deadline approached, the amendment had been approved by 35 states. There was an attempt by the opposition to bring the ratification process to a halt but in 1978 Congress voted to extend the deadline until June 30, 1982.

Today proponents of the Equal Rights Amendment believe that Congress has the authority to repeal the original time limit as well as the 1978 extension of that limit then restarting the clock at the current level of 35 states but without a time limit. This would leave only three additional state ratifications necessary at any time in the future for the proposed ERA to be adopted as an amendment to the Constitution.

Senators Benjamin Cardin of Maryland and Mark Kirk of Illinois have introduced a resolution to remove the deadline for the states' ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. The Cardin-Kirk resolution would remove the deadline set by Congress for ratification of the ERA. This would give the states another chance to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Congressman Rob Andrews of New Jersey is introducing a companion bill in the House of Representatives.

Why should we need an Equal Rights Amendment?

It would be fantastic if we could report that we now have a Women's Equality Act, **but we don't**. It would be great if we could tell you that women are now receiving equal pay, **but we can't**. I wish we didn't have to be concerned about states passing laws that will affect women negatively, **but we do**.

- New election laws in several states which prevent registered voters from voting if their last names have changed and their registration doesn't match their other ID mainly affects women who have gotten married or divorced. Ten states require poll workers to check the voter registration list for a match.
- The federal government's cut in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - food stamps - has its greatest effect on women with low paying jobs.
- Laws which put a pregnant woman's personhood in danger have passed in our House of Representatives.

It has become a constant battle to keep the basic rights which have been won by women in the past. Stay informed, write letters and e-mail to your elected representatives and always be sure to vote for those candidates who really do represent you.



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PRIMARY LESSONS: A MEMOIR

by Sarah Bracey White

Still too young to attend the public school, Sarah convinces her mother to enroll her in the Catholic school, where the nuns arrange a scholarship. Sarah's embrace of Catholicism rankles her mother, who finally transfers her to the public school—yet another disruption in the young girl's life. Life at home is tough, the family living hand to mouth, especially during the summer when her schoolteacher mother does not get paid. Sarah's father, once the principal of the local school, took the fall for his co-workers when the NAACP tried to challenge unequal pay for black teachers. His dismissal was a monumental blow to his self-esteem that deeply affected the trajectory of his life. He has been absent from the family, seeking manual labor, and Sarah does not lay eyes on him until she is ten—and then only for an afternoon.

As Sarah's mother struggles to support her five children on her own, she clings to her pride. But her acceptance of her fate infuriates Sarah, who believes her mother should seek some pleasure in life and not shrink from the nascent rumblings for civil rights that are beginning to sound in the South. Sarah comes into her own as she enters high school, discovering a talent for journalism. But life at home continues to be a challenge as her mother's health worsens. With her older sisters out of the house and her brother still young, Sarah becomes her mother's keeper. Deep tragedy will prove oddly liberating, however, opening up a world beyond Sumter for a young woman ready to take on the world.

ATTENTION ALL ARTISTS, CRAFTERS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE AUCTION/RAFFLE

Linda Roberts *227-5287* olsen241@aol.com



This is the 5th year of our Writers' Tea and Auction! Each year our auction makes more money than the previous year, largely due to the generosity of our members. This money has been put to good use to enable women to further their education through the AAUW

Foundation (one of the world's largest source of funding for graduate women) and to support so many of Poughkeepsie AAUW's wonderful community projects. This year we would, once again, like to top our previous year's total. Please think about how you can help this happen by donating artwork, handicrafts, anything else that we could use in this effort. We are also accepting donations for our raffle "basket" with a theme of "Travel and Leisure."

Please contact me (227-5287, olsen241@aol.com) or Gloria Gibbs (454-7262, gmaygibbs@aol.com) if you have any questions or if you want us to arrange to pick up your donations. Thank you so much for your continued support!

YOUR CHANCE TO ATTEND !!
AAUW New York State Convention
April 25-27, 2014
 Margaret Nijhuis *635-8612*
margaretnijhuis@gmail.com



If you have never attended an AAUW-NYS Convention this should be the year that you do.

The convention will be held in Ellenville, less than an hour's drive from Poughkeepsie. The location is **Honor's Haven Resort**. This was formerly The Fallsview but, of course, has been completely remodeled. The property is adjacent to the Nevele – still closed but there were rumors in 2012 that renovations would begin?

The price is the most affordable in several years. You may come for the entire weekend (2 nights and 6 meals) or just for the day (Saturday offering the most activities).

The new **president of AAUW National, Patricia Fae Ho**, will be with us the entire week-end and speak at some point each day. The complete schedule and prices for the week-end (or day) will be out later in January.

Poughkeepsie member, Mary Lou Davis, will be completing her term as president of AAUW of the State of New York, Inc. This will be our chance to say thank you to Mary Lou for an outstanding two years in office.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Cathy Kinn, Interest Groups Chair, *462-3196* cathy@kinn.org

Because we love trips, events and gatherings, may I suggest the following New Year's Resolutions:

- I will recognize that before I get a chance to sign up, the planner has already spent a great deal of time acquiring venue and arranging time, food, transportation and a myriad of details.
- Because I am grateful to her, I will mean it when I add my name to her list.
- I will understand that my signature does not mean “unless something better comes along” or “if I feel like it at the time”.
- I will know that if I cancel I am one of several who cause her to spend even more time (sometimes significantly more) than she already has.
- I am not proud of the fact that planners have to charge money upfront if they want members to take their signatures seriously.
- I will know that when planners have to call venues and restaurants to make changes and/or cancellations, it does not reflex will on the name of our AAUW branch.

That said, there is one member who attends many AAUW functions, and her name is gold. Once she signs up, the planner need never think about her again. She remembers the date and time, arrives early, and is a charming presence. She is **Lillian DePasquale** who just celebrated her 50th year in AAUW.

WANTED!! WANTED!! WANTED!!

Do you like a beverage and something to nibble on when you arrive at an AAUW Membership Meeting? If so, please volunteer (individually or with a friend) to serve as the **Hospitality Chair**. There are many people who will provide the “goodies” but the coordinator is needed!
Contact Jackie Goffe-McNish (471-722)



SAVE THE DATE



AAUW Writers' Tea

April 6, 2014

2:30 – 6:00 pm
at

The Links at Union Vale

Featuring:



Wes & Barbara Gottlock
Lost Amusement Parks of the Hudson Valley

Frances F. Dunwell
The Hudson: America's River



Sarah Bracey White
Primary Lessons: A Memoir

- * **A literary benefit for the AAUW Scholarships and Community Projects**
- * **Authors, Tea and Auction**
- * **More details to follow.**

Questions:

Lula Allen 823-7140 lulaallen@aol.com
 Linda Roberts 227-5287 olsen241@aol.com

LOCAL BUSINESS SUPPORTS

"LEADING TO READING!"

Betty Harrel *462-2141 * bharrel128@gmail.com

For the second year in a row, **McGrath and Company of Fishkill** has made a generous donation to our community initiative, *Leading to Reading*. The money will be used to purchase books and supplies for our family reading kits. It will allow us to continue to expand our role in supporting literacy efforts in the local community.

Their support is greatly appreciated!

AAUW GIRL SCOUT PROJECT

Peggy Kelland *297-0507* smkell45@aol.com

Poughkeepsie AAUW's series of monthly events for Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador Girl Scouts and all girls grades 6-12 continues with a **Cooking Event** at Zion Episcopal Church in Wappingers from 5:00-8:30 on **Friday, January 24**. Culinary Institute instructor Liz Briggs and some of her students will be teaching the girls how to prepare nutritious dishes from a variety of cultures using local ingredients where possible.

We will also be presenting an additional bi-weekly Senior Girl Scout Journey series for grades 9-10, "**Girlltopia**." The four Sunday afternoon sessions will identify an ideal world for women and girls, confront the issues women face around the world, discover how American women's lives and opportunities have changed over the past 150 years, and explore opportunities for the girls to participate in improving their community and world for all women and girls. The programs will be held at Zion Episcopal Church from 3:00-4:00 on **January 26, February 9, February 23, and March 9**. We are seeking presenters on these issues from AAUW and other speakers whom you may recommend.

"CELEBRATION OF LIFE FESTIVAL"

February 13, 2014

7:00 pm

*Unitarian Fellowship
of Poughkeepsie*

The evening will feature the Vanaver Caravan, based in the Hudson Valley, a world touring company of dancers and musicians that presents a variety of entertaining and informative programs that synthesize various ethnic and regional styles, ranging from Appalachian clogging to flamenco with a range of modern theatre techniques.

This will be followed by a brief presentation of the up-coming events by the International Initiatives Chair, Cecilia Dinio-Durkin, and a closing segment of poetry /storytelling championing the importance of education for women.



HUDSON VALLEY HOME MATTERS

"AGE IN PLACE" GRACEFULLY!

Linda Rashba *845-297-6923 or 845-797-0638*

Hudson Valley Home Matters (HVHM) is part of the national aging in place movement. We are a member driven organization for residents ages 50 and over and provide programs and services so members can lead vibrant, active and healthy lives while living in their own homes and neighborhoods.

For HVHM members, help with the needs and problems of daily life is a single phone call away. The most frequently requested service involves our dedicated volunteers, who run errands, drive members to luncheons, doctor appointments and shopping. When needed, drivers will assist the member to and from the front door and help carry groceries into the house. Volunteers help with vexing electronic and technology issues, including computer set up and programming thermostats, DVDs, phones and clocks.

Volunteers also help our members with routine paperwork, minor household chores and repairs, such as removal of screens and hanging storm windows and installing weather stripping around drafty windows. We help our members organize "stuff" and get rid of clutter. Should a member require the skills of a skilled tradesperson, we provide them with pre-screened names of contractors who often provide a discount to our members. Keeping seniors connected with their community through social events can prevent depression and isolation. We encourage our members to attend monthly luncheons, lectures, field trips and holiday events. The Hudson Valley Home Our Coordinator makes home visits to those members who cannot easily get out.

About 85% of our services are provided by volunteers. They find their work rewarding. Volunteers serve either on a regular or periodic basis, and have an initial orientation period. We welcome any new volunteers to join our group. Call us at 845-452-4846

Scholarships are available to help defray the cost of membership for those who qualify. We have recently started a "Trial Membership" for three months for folks unsure if they would benefit from our services. Almost 100% have decided to become full annual members at the end of this period. Having a mentor system in place for these new members has been beneficial and appreciated.

We are dedicated to provide seniors and their adult children peace of mind that comes with knowing that someone is there to help.

Note: This is not an AAUW project but Linda Rasba is a member of AAUW and very active in this organization. If you have any questions, please contact Linda (845-297-6923 or 845-797-0638)

THE INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT: A Win-Win Proposition For The US

From: <http://www.wg-usa.org/advocacyblog/>

A blog by Geeta Desai *297-7589* geetadesai@optonline.net

Regardless of the form that gender-based violence takes, it is a violation of human rights, a public health challenge, and a barrier to civic, social, political, and economic participation. It has been identified as an obstacle to sustainable development.

So, why is the United States Congress balking at supporting the International Violence Against Women Act (I-VAWA)?

Sponsored by Rep. Janice Schakowsky (D-IL9), the bill was re-introduced on November 21, 2013 and assigned to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. The bill would make ending violence against women globally, a US foreign policy priority. The bill requires the establishment of a five year strategy to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls around the world and authorizes funding to implement programs to address this violence. Provisions of the bill require that training, prevention, and response to violence against women and girls be included in US efforts in the areas of humanitarian relief, conflict, post-conflict and disaster relief programs.

I've read the bill in its entirety and it doesn't say anything that can be vaguely construed as revolutionary. In fact, it reiterates the existing United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally, adopted in April 2012 and which is an ongoing part of the work of the US Agency for International Development. With this strategy, this administration has shown itself to understand a simple truth: the prevention and appropriate response to gender-based violence must be a **cornerstone of diplomacy, development and defense**. Under the leadership of President Obama and Secretary Clinton, gender equality and the advancement of women and girls has been incorporated within these three pillars of U.S. foreign policy.

Unfortunately, as it stands, this bill has a 5% chance of getting past committee and a 1% chance of being enacted. To understand Congress' recalcitrance regarding this bill, is to understand why, over the past five years, US Congressmen and women has taken one ruinous stand after another without thought to what the American people might actually want from them. There has been a range of motivations (too tedious to mention, here) for their unproductive behaviors but underlying all of them has been a singular short-sightedness regarding this country's economy, security, society, morality and leadership.

Which is why I worry about the passage of the I-VAWA; although it has immediate benefits for victims of violence, its true beauty lies in longer-term benefits that have the potential to transform entire societies around the world which in turn would benefit the US.

Continued in the next column...

I'm afraid that our Congress, so focused on the immediate, will fail to consider that the International Violence Against Women bill, codified and made permanently an integral part of US foreign policy. It stands to, over the long-run, reduce the outflow of US humanitarian aid to developing countries, keep this country safe, reduce the need for American engagement in conflicts around the world, regain goodwill towards the American government and its people and create the transparency that is so woefully lacking in American interaction with the rest of the world. The International Violence Against Women Act may not be the solution to all of our problems but it's a substantial step in the right direction.

So, I'm asking you to write to your elected officials before the end of this year, to tell them that you care about the future of this country as much as you do about the present and that you see the I-VAWA as an investment in the future and that you want them to support this bill for all of the reasons cited above.

To contact your representative go to www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org select **Public Policy** on the top row (menu bar) then **Your Representatives**. Type in your zip code, select the representative you want to contact and you will find their complete contact information – email, phone and mail addresses.

*Writers' Tea - new date
April 6, 2014!*

Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, Inc. Officers 2013-2014

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AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

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

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