



*Celebrating Our
Legacy, Enhancing
Our Future*

THE BRANCH

Poughkeepsie Branch of the
American Association of University Women, Inc.
P.O. Box 1908, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601



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62nd year of publication

<http://www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org>

December 2017

MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY THIS YEAR!

Linda Beyer *462-0345* lmbchanel@aol.com



*Once again let's
share the spirit
of the holidays
with the
residents of
Grace Smith
House at our
December
meeting.*

Linda Beyer & Sue Doyle collect gifts in Dec '16

The children who are residing at Grace Smith House, a home for victims of domestic violence, are remembered and well-provided for with lovely gifts from various community groups at the holidays. **The mothers there, however, need also to feel that the community cares about them and remembers them at holiday time.** For the past three years AAUW has provided a host of wonderful gifts. They were most appreciated by the mothers. We are asking members attending the December membership meeting to bring along a donated gift for a mother at Grace Smith again this year. Please send a gift if you cannot attend. The gifts will be given at the residence by the staff. **Only gifts accepted, no checks and no cash.**

If you wish to donate a gift to the mothers, please follow the staff's guidelines:

1. **Gifts must be newly purchased and unwrapped.**
2. Gifts must be something usable by the mothers and something personal which is uplifting.
3. **Favorite gifts we have given in the past three years:**

- Pajamas
- Robes
- Slippers
- Fuzzy socks
- Lotions
- Bath items
- Perfume
- Pocketbooks
- Cosmetic sets

Please remember, all donations must be new and unwrapped – no checks and no cash. Just bring your gift to the meeting and we will be sure it gets transported to the mothers!



Happy Holidays

Thank you so much for sharing your holiday spirit! ■

“FIVE CENT COOKIES” — A Journey to Senegal

Presented by: Amy Thrasher

December 14, 2017
7:00 pm

Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship of Poughkeepsie
67 S Randolph Ave.,
Poughkeepsie**



“Sometimes Travel to New Places Leads to Great Transformation: Believe it or not, that was printed on the slip of paper inside my fortune cookie from a Chinese takeout dinner, just a few days before I left for my month in Senegal. I can't think of anything more timely or auspicious!” (Amy Thrasher)

Amy Thrasher, a member of Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, has returned from a month-long assignment in Dakar, Senegal with IBM's Corporate Service Corps (CSC) and she will share her experiences and photos of Senegal with us.*

Along with her professional expertise, Amy brought a discerning palate and acute cultural curiosity with her to Senegal. We can expect to sample a taste of the sweet side of Senegalese cuisine at our December 14th meeting!

*More on [page 4 Amy Thrasher](#).

****Directions:** Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Poughkeepsie at 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.

Questions:

Monique Jones, 849-1692, myj712@aol.com
Sandy Lash, 227-4650, sjlash@optonline.net ■

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Online Calendar at www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org

Contact: Kathy Friedman kfriedman33@gmail.com

- 1 **Art on the Go: 11:00 am**
Fluid Expressions: The Prints of Helen Frankenthaler
Francis Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar.
Meet at the kiosk at 11 am.
Coordinator: Mary Coiteux (226-8275)
- 2 **Aventures en Soleil: 4:00 pm**
Twilight Tour at Boscobel, Garrison, NY
Contact: Janna Whearty
Coordinator: Janna Whearty (546-9190)
- 4 **Word Games: 1:30 pm**
Hostess: Betsy Vivas (485-2379)
Coordinator: Susan Doyle (914/474-1232)
- 5 **World Travelers: 7:00 pm**
Holland
Hostess: Barbara Van Itallie (462-3924)
Presenter: Bonnie Auchincloss
Reservations: Jeanette Cantwell (452-4188)
AAUWtravelers@gmail.com
- 6 **Gourmet: Out & About: 6:30 pm**
County Fare, 2652 Main St., Wappingers Falls
Contacts: Mary Ann Boylan (462-2504)
Kay Saderholm (229-8545) Ksaderholm@aol.com
- 7 **Board Meeting: 7:00 pm**
By conference call, directions will be sent by email.
- 7 **Bridge I & II: 12:00-4:00 pm**
Combined Holiday Party
Red Lobster, Route 9, Poughkeepsie
Coordinators: Cathy Kinn cathy@kinn.org (Bridge II)
Linda Ronayne (897-9745) Linronay@optonline.net (Bridge I)
- 8 **Daytime Literature: 10:00 am**
Book: *School of Essential Ingredients*, Erica Bauermeister
The Manor at Woodside, 168 Academy, Pok.
Coordinator: Leona Miller (471-0777)
- 9 **Bridge III: 10:00 am**
Hostess: Joanne Dyson (297-1046)
Coordinator: Donna Reichner dlr0804@verizon.net
- 10 **"The Branch" deadline for January.**
- 11 **All those books...: 2:30 pm**
Book: *Barchester Towers* by Anthony Trollope
Hostess: Peggy Kelland smkell45@aol.com
Coordinator: Carol Loizides (452-3208)
- 11& 18 **Days for Girls: 3:00 – 6:30 pm**
Vassar Hospital Conference Room A
Chair: Sabashnee Govender Sabashnee@aol.com
- 12 **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)
sosterhoudt@yahoo.com
Producer: Diana Gleeson
- 13 **Mah Jongg & Canasta: Noon - 4:00 pm**
Uno Pizzeria & Grill – Lunch
Contact Blanche (462-3955) by Dec 11
Coordinator: Blanche Bergman (462-3955)

14 **General Membership Program: 7:00 pm**
All members are invited and encouraged to attend
– see details on [page 1](#).

14 & 15 **Gifts wrapping with "Leading to Reading," page 3**

15 **Poetry and Plays - Emily D to Tennessee: 1:45 pm**
Deep Study of Imagists
Hostess: Cathy Kinn (462-3196)
Coordinators: Jackie Sweeney (518/947-6682) &
Barbara Hugo BHugo2@gmail.com

18 **Manderley Literary Society: 7:00 pm**
Book: *A Piece of the World* by Christina Baker
Hostess: Patty Cerniglia (298-7655)
pattycerniglia@gmail.com
Coordinator: Shelly Friedman (462-4996)

19 **Cuisine: 6:30 pm**
Soup and Sandwiches
Hostess: Betsy Kopstein-Stuts (485-7044).
Coordinator: Barbara Lemberger
brlemberger@yahoo.com

Photography Club: 7:00 pm

Hostess: Contact Coordinator for date and place
Coordinator: Carol Demicco (845-204-9553)

NOT MEETING THIS MONTH:

Diversity: Out of One Many People:

Chair: Jacqueline Goffe-McNish
mcnish@sunydutchess.edu

Contemporary Literature:

Coordinators: Ann Wade (229-5267) &
Linda Freisitzer (266-5427)

Pins & Needles:

Coordinators: Pat Luczai (463-4662) &
Mary Ann Williams (868-7465)

The Ediss Book Group:

Coordinator: Celia Serotsky (473-8426)

Returning in April

Pedal Pushers

Coordinator: Sheila Zweifler sheilaz@optonline.net

Trekkers:

Coordinator: Tori Smith torismith.home@gmail.com

LOOKING AHEAD

Jan 11, 2018, 7 pm: Protecting Yourself and Your Family
from the Perils of Online Activity.

Investigator Thomas Roidl, [page 4](#).

Apr 15, 2018: Writers' Tea & Auction, The Links, page 5.

Apr 20-22, 2018 AAUW-NYS Convention, Cortland, page 8.



Opening activity for the Girls' Conference



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Maria DeWald *266-4960* mfdewald@yahoo.com

Passing the Torch. Every generation, every family, every town and city and state and country does that constantly and must do that carefully and well. Think of how many times you have done that personally, in small and large ways, whether passing the baking of the treasured family dessert to another family member, or passing a position to the next in line, or selling your home to the next to live there, or being part of a movement that must continue long past your time.

At our November Membership meeting, I **passed a torch** on behalf of AAUW Poughkeepsie to our three State Board members who in turn will bring it to Albany where it will then wend its way west via other branches until it reaches Buffalo. This particular torch's journey went like this so far: Islip Branch→Smithtown Branch→LI Interbranch→Nassau County Branch→North Shore Branch→Massapequa Branch→Westchester Branch→Poughkeepsie Branch→State Board Albany→continuing west until it has traveled across the state. This was done in commemoration of the **Relay Crusade in the summer of 1917, just before women in NYS won the right to vote on November 6th of that same year**, who rode by "automobile" (sometimes private, sometimes by "suffrage van") from Montauk Point, LI to Buffalo, NY holding open air meetings and carrying the "**Torch of Liberty**".

This was one of the many, many activities, marches, protests, relays, and speeches by many, many different groups, involving many, many different leaders, starting in 1848, when the woman's suffrage movement in the United States began in Seneca Falls, and lasting through 1917. In 1917 the women's right to vote was finally passed into NYS law, the first state east of the Mississippi to do so (Arkansas was the first west of the Mississippi). So, for almost seventy years, over multiple generations, over cultural, and economic lines, this truly grassroots movement was sustained and grown. Plus, if that movement had not continued even after NY's victory, perhaps the 19th Amendment would not have passed a few years later. In short, the Suffrage Movement was a great uprising of activism of women who demanded their right to vote.

But activism takes time. This world can swallow up so much of a women's time that it can be difficult to be involved. You cannot let that happen. AAUW cannot let that happen. We cannot let that happen. I believe that it will always take an uprising of women's grassroots activism to accomplish any great change. As life changes around us at a faster and faster pace, some will prosper and others won't. Let's make sure that when it comes to the rights of women and girls, whether they be in our own family, or neighborhood, or those we will never know, that we will be ready and willing to rise up in whatever capacity we are needed to ensure the **passing of the torch** to a better future.

I wish you all, from Thanksgiving Day through New Year's Day 2018, many moments where a smile will cross your face, a song will be in your step, someone you love will be close at hand, peace will be in your hearts and advocacy will be on your lips. ■ **Maria** **Picture Page 7...**

HELP MAKE A MOUNTAIN!

Betty Harrel *845-462-2141* bharrel28@gmail.com

It's time to build our AAUW mountain of brightly wrapped gifts. As part of our *Leading to Reading* community outreach, we'll be wrapping gifts for children living at Hudson River Lodging. Families may remain in this temporary shelter for up to two years while a parent completes high school, goes through counseling or is involved in job training. Approximately 100 children from infants through teens live in the facility sponsored by Hudson River Housing.



Plan to bring gift wrap, ribbon, scissors, tape, blank gift tags, and lots of enthusiasm.

We wrap gifts purchased from Holiday Helping Hand funds as well as a new book for each child donated by *Leading to Reading*.

Sessions will be held from 9:30-11:30 am at Hudson River Lodging, 389 Manchester Road, LaGrange (opposite Page Lumber on Route 55). The building is the former Edison Motor Inn.

To register for Thursday, December 14, please contact Ellie Burch (845-297-7828 or reburch@verizon.net).

To register for Friday, December 15, please contact Patty Cerniglia (845-298-7655 or pattycerniglia@gmail.com).

We hope to see you there! ■

HONORING OUR MEMBERS

Betty Harrel *845-462-2141* bharrel28@gmail.com

It's time to start thinking about those members who have done an outstanding job for AAUW. We have several ways we can honor them:

- **The Cornerstone Award:** for someone who epitomizes our branch and has helped to move us forward. Last year's recipient was long-time member Gloria Gibbs.
- **Emerging Leader:** a relatively new member who has stepped in and taken an early leadership role. Our hope is that she will continue to take on branch responsibilities.
- **Named Fellowships:** For every \$500 donated to AAUW funds, we may name one of our members as an honoree. Last year we had 6 named fellows.

We will be having a short-term committee to designate this year's awards. We will plan on one meeting and some email dialogues. If you'd like to take part, please contact Betty Harrel at bharrel28@gmail.com or 845-462-2141.

Any and all suggestions for those you'd like to honor are welcome. Please note the person's name and reasons you think she should be nominated.

Watch for results this coming spring! ■

AMY THRASHER

Sandy Lash, 227-4650, splash@optonline.net

IBM launched the Corporate Service Corps (CSC) in 2008 primarily as a vehicle for global leadership development. Competitively selected teams spend three intensive months learning about the communities and the problems they'll address. Then they spend four weeks on the ground partnering with government, business and civic leaders in emerging markets to address high-priority issues such as education, health and economic development.

Amy's specific CSC assignment in Senegal was working with a team of fellow IBMers and the government of Senegal on the development of a new multi-use Technology Park that could ultimately employ over 30,000 people and influence the well-being of over 100,000 people. ■



"Before starting our true work, we had a wonderful overview tour by our partner from Pyxera. **The highlight of the day was a visit to a Mosque where the community was celebrating its birthday.** The women were preparing a traditional meal and graciously allowed pictures to be taken. Meat was browning in oil in cast iron kettles over wood fires, they were mincing vegetables for the rice (no Robot Coupe required) and you could hear a 'POK-POK' sound everywhere as they ground the hot chilies (piment) and other seasonings for the dish in large mortars and pestles.

It was an interesting juxtaposition: preparing to support a Tech industry project against a backdrop of traditional cooking for a community celebration."

Amy Thrasher is a Procurement Professional and Global Operations Team Leader with IBM in Poughkeepsie. She has been with IBM for 20 years and previously held procurement roles with the Atlanta Olympics Committee and the US Department of Defense. She has a BS in Management from the University of Virginia's McIntire School of Commerce. ■



Joyous Kwanzaa!!

PROTECTING YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY FROM THE PERILS OF ONLINE ACTIVITY

Sandy Lash, 227-4650, splash@optonline.net

January 11, 2018, 7 pm

Unitarian Fellowship
67 S Randolph Ave.,
Poughkeepsie

Presenter: Investigator
Thomas Roidl



"The Internet has opened up a world of information and opportunity **for anyone** with a computer and a connection." Cybersecurity expert Investigator Thomas Roidl has over 19 years of experience in law enforcement. With expertise in the world of hacks, stolen identities, malware, sexual and financial predators and more, Investigator Roidl will bring us vital information about the perils of online activity and cover Internet Safety for children and adults. ■

"HATS OFF"

Mary Coiteux *226-8275* mcoiteux@frontiernet.net
An expression of admiration for someone's achievement or contribution and our acknowledgment for it.

Hats Off to **Diane Babington** and **Lori Scolaro** for the wonderful Live Your Dream (LYD) Girls' Conference at DCC on November 4.

Hats Off to **all the women of AAUW** that took part in the LYD conference – some throughout the year long planning and others as workshop presenters and assistants in many ways during the day long conference.

Hats Off to **Gail Sisti** and **Mary Lou Davis** for the beautiful, delicious and informative Woman of the Year luncheon on October 29. Also to **their committee and other AAUW members** that made the day so perfect.

Hats Off to **Monique Jones** and **Sandy Lash** for the membership programs both in October and November. They were both amazing. A reminder to all members to mark your calendar for the **second Thursday of Dec, Jan, Feb, Mar and May** to attend the other exciting events they have planned for us.

Hats Off to **Maria DeWald** and **Peggy Kelland** of the very interesting program for District IV on October 21. More details on **page 8** of this issue.

Hats Off to **Pat DeLeo**, **Ellie Charwat** and **Suzi Stroller** for their roles in a very successful Candidates Forum for DC Comptroller and 9th Judicial District Supreme Court Justice on October 10.

PUBLIC POLICY

Patricia DeLeo *883-5181* pattide2@optonline.net

Veterans and Pioneers

Sorry, ladies. **You are not intended to be in the audience, but instead, I hope you will be the featured speaker.** You have lived through the fight for birth control, the right to a post-secondary education, the right to healthcare, the right to choose, political representation, equal pay parity (still fighting), Title IX and the right to not be sexually harassed or assaulted. Your daughters and many women and girls only know a world with these rights. They don't know any other America. At least not in reality. **You need to educate them about life in the past to insure their future.**

They may have read or watched *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, a book about a dystopian society that severely limits human rights with women's rights more diminished and subjugated. Atwood



questions what would happen if the social, political, and religious trends of the 1980s, especially "casually held attitudes about women" were taken to a new century. They may have seen the "red robed-white bonneted handmaid's demonstrations" on Capitol steps and hallways. Fiction meets reality?

Our battles reignite. Title IX, designed to provide women with equal access to education, is under attack. Despite the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, a woman earns an average of 79 cents to every dollar a man is paid for the same work. Easy and affordable access to women's health services are being threatened as the federal government debates national health care and works with insurance companies to deregulate premiums and services. Medicare and Medicaid are targeted bullseyes for budgetary reductions and tax relief for the 1% while children, seniors and women lose access to healthcare and economic gains. Remember the failure of trickle-down economics?

Younger women's healthcare, specifically, is under national attack. **Planned Parenthood (PP)**, the largest provider of services to women, is being challenged and threatened with closure. **"Fake news" claims PP uses federal dollars to fund abortion services. This is not true.** Under Title X, PP is prohibited from using any federal money for abortions. Those services are funded by a person's individual insurance, personal funds or private donations. Abortions comprise 3% of PP Services while 96% of services provided by PP include birth control/contraception, long acting reversible contraception, breast exams, cervical cancer screenings, pregnancy testing, pregnancy option counseling, pre-natal care, treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, sex education, vasectomies and LGBT services. New health proposals threaten to allow employers to opt out of prescription coverage for birth control,

Continued in next column...

pregnancy and childbirth. Although US companies may offer child rearing benefits, the US doesn't have a law mandating paid maternity or paternity leave.

Thanks to our modern pioneers - Eleanor Roosevelt, Gloria Steinem, Margaret Sanger, Betty Friedan, Coretta Scott King, Helen Gurley Brown, Bell Hooks, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Charlotte Bunch and Rebecca Chalker among many others - American women are/were enjoying human and civil rights. Read their bios. These pioneers self-discovered and took ownership of their minds and bodies. Their results? Laws to guarantee equality in the workplace, education, government and healthcare.

Women in America are under attack. The veterans need to voice their stories and experiences for younger women: abstinence, rhythm and condoms for birth control; sports for boys, not girls; huge pay disparity for equal work if you could get hired. Also no insurance coverage for pregnancy, childbirth, birth control and gynecological procedures; no access to abortion; college admission denials based on gender; employment opportunities denied based on gender; no protection from sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape. Take out your copy of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, the book that informed and empowered women by providing the knowledge of how their bodies physically, emotionally and intellectually functioned. **Guide the younger generations in the fight to retain and expand the rights that were achieved.**

We don't want to see a generation of red caped handmaids. We need new pioneers. ■



AAUW WRITERS' TEA & BENEFIT AUCTION

Jocelynn Banfield *454-5551* jbanf50@aol.com

It's not too early to think about our annual Writer's Tea & Benefit Auction.

With the holidays upon us, a thought: give a gift of attendance to our annual Writer's Tea & Benefit Auction.

Plan to attend yourself and bring a friend or two or three. This wonderful, informative and charming event, **Sunday, April 15, 2018**, is open to the public.

There will be cards available at the December meeting that you could use to send as an announcement of your gift. ■

PERUSING OUR PAST

Eileen Hayden and Barbara Hesenheide

The AAUW logo contains the words “empowering women since 1881”. But what occurred to bring about formation of our organization? How did this group embody the mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research? Prior to this period in the late 19th century, educational and occupational opportunities for college educated women were limited. The belief that “a woman’s place is in the home” was widely held.

Reacting to a shared need to meet the challenges facing such women, fifteen graduates of eight colleges met in Boston in 1881 to form a corporation. Creation of the branch structure came in 1884 with the first branch starting up in Washington, DC, followed by branches in New York City and Philadelphia two years later. (Poughkeepsie branch formed in 1925)

In 1885, the first AAUW research paper was published. It was a study, with statistics, that provided the conclusion that, contrary to popular thought, women’s health was not adversely affected by college attendance. Child-bearing would survive.

In 1888, AAUW granted its first fellowship of \$350 to University of Michigan graduate, Ida Street to continue studies. A later grant went to Marie Curie for purchase of one gram of radium so that she could continue her research at the University of Chicago. During the World War II period, funds were made available to university women and scholars displaced by war. In each succeeding decade, AAUW has produced a variety of funds for specific educational purposes. Currently, the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund focuses on education for girls K-12. STEM programs flourish in many branches.

In 1906, AAUW, celebrating its 25th anniversary, began study of the issue of equal pay for women. Even after 106 years, this goal has yet to be realized but, without a doubt, it will eventually be a reality.

Currently, one of AAUW’s important initiatives, supported by local branches, is the Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) formed specifically to challenge sex discrimination against women in higher education. Across the nation, female students, faculty and administrators face issues of harassment, pay inequity, denial of tenure and inequality in women’s athletic programs. This is an ongoing issue in educational institutions.

From advocacy to educational issues to career and workplace concerns, AAUW continues its vision to help women and girls achieve their highest potential. ■



Happy Hanukkah!!

MEMBERSHIP COUNTS

Susie Blecker *462-7074* iblecker@aol.com

Sheila Zweifler *462-6478* sheilaz@optonline.net

At this time Susie and I want to welcome our newest AAUW members: **Alison Camp, Elizabeth Celaya, Anne Negrin and Penelope Taylor** who have joined our organization. We are thrilled to have you and hope you will get involved in the many activities and initiatives AAUW offers. I want to apologize to a new member for misspelling her name, **Cornelia Firth**.

This fall, our Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW has added 21 new members. That puts our total membership at 349. New people bring dynamic ideas and add an extra dimension to our organization. It is so exciting to see our branch growing and thriving. **By now you should have received the Poughkeepsie AAUW Directory 2017-2018.** It lists the names, addresses, phone numbers, and emails of all our members. Please check to make sure your contact information is correct. If there is a problem, email **Claudette Hennessy** at chennessy@hsysgrp.com. The Directory is a wonderful resource; it contains all of the information stated above and more. Keep it handy so you will always be able to contact members throughout the year. Susie and I want to thank **Claudette Hennessy** for producing this year’s directory. She did a fabulous job and we appreciate her hard work and dedication. In addition, we would like to thank **Bonnie Auchincloss** and **Pat Luczai** for the photos that are in the Directory.

We are looking forward to seeing all of you at the **Unitarian Fellowship Hall on December 14th for our monthly membership meeting.** The program is “Five Cent Cookies” A Journey to Senegal presented by AAUW member, Amy Thrasher, who will share her experiences of being in Senegal. Also, please **remember to bring your gift for the women at Grace Smith House** to the meeting.

Happy Holidays

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)

Anonymous, Mary Ann Boylan, Marge Barton, Sharon Clarke, Lillian DePasquale, Ruth Gau, Gloria Gibbs, Sandy Goldberg, Elizabeth Harrel, Shaileen Kopec, Margaret Nijhuis, Jacqueline Prusak, Mary Ann Ryan

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

POUGHKEEPSIE AAUW MEMBERS MEET WITH NEW AAUW NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Diane Jablonski *485-6228* dianejablonski@gmail.com

Members of the AAUW- New York State Board including **Diane Jablonski** and **Betty Harrel** recently met with the new AAUW CEO, **Kim Churches**, and the COO, **Mark Hopkins**. Kim was on a “listening” tour to understand the issues facing local AAUW branches and state organizations and to share her priorities for AAUW.



Kim Churches

First, it was heartening to hear that Kim is strongly committed to a transparent, open leadership style. She is also very well connected in the business community from her previous jobs and is more than willing to use those connections to benefit AAUW.

Second, her goal is a measurable and actionable strategic plan - in other words a plan where there are specific steps and goals and we assess our progress against those goals. She wants to focus where AAUW can really make a difference. One of her examples is STEM. While we do great work in STEM, she noted there are many organizations teaching girls to code. She asked, “What can AAUW do in the area of STEM that will really make a difference, and also provide unique value and differentiate us from other organizations?” She stated we must focus and not spread ourselves too thin, while recognizing that each state and branch must work within the needs and priorities of their community.

She started by asking us what we thought the current issues are facing women and girls today. Each of us had our own perspective. One comment was that women are “stuck at 25%” - whether it be in political office, in boardrooms, or in executive positions. Other input included debt for college loans, a hostile work environment, lack of pay equity, and difficulties in achieving a work-life balance.

We talked about some of the challenges we see in New York State: the diversity of our branches in size ranging from a few to hundreds of members, location in rural, urban and college settings; the challenge of the national dues increase; the financial challenges small branches face; attracting and retaining members of all ages especially younger, working women.

She encouraged us to seek creative, “outside the box” approaches, reinforcing collaboration with other community organizations staying focused on our mission and being able to make a difference where it really matters.

It was an invigorating meeting and we walked away from it excited and hopeful. We should all look forward to the strategic plan as it evolves under Kim’s leadership and help AAUW remain a vital, growing organization that will change the climate for women and girls in the 21st century.■

LEADING TO READING DONATIONS

Betty Harrel *845-462-2141* bharrel28@gmail.com

For the second year in a row, *Leading to Reading* was given **boxes of beautiful new books by the WCT (Wappingers Congress of Teachers.)** They received the books as part of a New York State grant from First Book and generously donated many of the pre-school books to us. Books for school-aged children are being distributed to each of the Wappingers Schools.



We also received a **generous check from the WCRT (Wappingers Congress of Retired Teachers)** to purchase new books. Their continued support is greatly appreciated! Last year's donation was used to purchase pre-school and baby books.

The community support we receive continues to make *Leading to Reading* an important branch outreach! ■

PASSING THE TORCH



Diane Jablonski, Mary Lou Davis, Maria DeWald, Betty Harrel

LIVE YOUR DREAM – A SUCCESS!!!



From beginning to end, fun and learning were evident everywhere!

MOVING FORWARD: INFLUENCING THE FUTURE, *District IV Meeting*

Peggy Kelland *264-9085* SMKell45@aol.com



Cathy Kinn, Lula Allen and Jeanette Cantwell enjoy coffee before the meeting begins.

On Saturday, October 21, about 40 AAUW members from across the Mid-Hudson Valley (Adirondack, Amsterdam-Gloversville-Johnstown, Schenectady, Westchester and Poughkeepsie Branches) met at the Underwear Factory in downtown Poughkeepsie. **Maria DeWald** welcomed all with grace and poetry. The meeting space was delightful and a great credit to Hudson River Housing. Please visit – there is a café open to the public M-F from 8 am to 4 pm.

The day began with opening remarks from **Elizabeth Celaya**, AAUW member and Community Relations Manager of Hudson River Housing, who renovated the Underwear Factory. It includes low income housing, art studios, an industrial kitchen, a cafe and a meeting place. She was followed by **Ruth Ellen Blodgett**, the CEO of Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley who spoke on the current status of women's access to affordable health care, the impact of defunding Planned Parenthood, and the slow erosion of access to free birth control. Then **Kathy Scheider** of NYSUT explained the implications of a proposed Constitutional Convention in New York, and pointed out that the New York State Constitution can and is amended at the general elections.

After a buffet lunch there was a bi-partisan panel of "Women in Politics" moderated by **Diane Jablonski**, former Dutchess County Comptroller. The panel also included **Sandy Goldberg**, former Dutchess County Legislator; **Barbara Gutzler**, former Dutchess County Legislator and Supervisor of the Town of Wappinger; **Elisa Sumner**, Chair of the Dutchess County Democratic Party; and **Peggy Kelland**, President of the Wappingers School Board. They each had a story of deciding to run and getting elected, the hurdles they had to overcome in the political world, the problems they see with young women not being involved and the need to VOTE!

Much thanks go to the organizing committee, especially **Gwen Higgins** and **Marcine Humphrey**, who were in charge of the food, and **Maria DeWald**, who arranged for the venue.

The discussions and questions throughout the day were many and interesting. It was a very inspiring day for everyone. ■

AAUW NEW YORK STATE CONVENTION



April 20 to 22, 2018

Held At Radisson Hotel in Corning, NY

One Year After the Women's March
Moving Onward: Empowering Women

AAUW & Non-AAUW Members Welcome

More information on speakers & workshops will be published by December 2017. For more information go to AAUW NYS website at www.aauw_nys.org ■



Merry Christmas!!

Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, Inc. Officers 2017-2018

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Association website: www.aauw.org

NY State website: www.aauw-nys.org

Poughkeepsie Branch website: www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org

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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