

## Membership Report-2015/2016

Susie Blecker

Membership numbers for 2015/2016 are up for our Poughkeepsie Branch of AAUW. After a successful open house in the fall, we welcomed 25 new members to our organization. All of the women who joined received personal phone calls from me welcoming them to AAUW and an invitation to attend our new member's reception in October. This dinner coincided with the first membership meeting of the year and was well attended.

Throughout the year we have continued to add new members every month and most of the women who have recently joined have become active in either our interest groups or initiatives. I believe the retention of these women in our organization is directly related to the follow up work I encouraged which was done by the group leaders, most of whom reached out to these women and encouraged them to become involved in the activities where they had expressed an interest at the open house.

Because membership is vital to the health of our organization and is a huge responsibility, our board recently voted to put it in the hands of co-chairmen, instead of just one person. This move hopefully will provide continuity for the future since new people will be brought on in staggered years. I have also devised a list of month by month responsibilities so each future membership chairman will know exactly when and what has to be done during the year.

Besides writing a monthly column for the Branch, we have also addressed the problem of people who choose not to renew their membership. Last year we spent hours contacting these people via the mail service, multiple emails, and phone calls. This year those not wishing to renew, are being encouraged to notify one of the AAUW officers in the spring of their intentions so they won't continue to be contacted multiple times in the spring and fall about renewing.

Finally, after a review of the fall open house was conducted, new methods were put in place to streamline new member sign up in the interest groups and initiatives. Also other procedures to simplify the fall meeting were voted on and passed.