

Annual Report - President

Looking back over the accomplishments of the Poughkeepsie Branch for the last year, it is hard to capture the scope, intensity, and hard work done by all of the committees, initiatives, and interest groups in 2018-19. Six members of the Poughkeepsie Branch participated in the NYS Summer Leadership Meeting in July at Cazenovia College when. This was an opportunity to network and share with AAUW members from all over New York State. Then in August, several of us attended the District Meeting in Glenn's Falls to celebrate Women's Equality Day. We marched with other organizations and AAUW women and enjoyed a lunch and program, a discussion with Commission Roberta Reardon, head of the NYS Department of Labor, and viewed an exhibit of women impressionists at the Hyde Collection.

As September rolled around, we had a very successful Open House with special thanks to our Membership Co-Chairs, Susi Blecker and Sheila Zweifler. We also co-sponsored with Women's Professional Network and Vassar College, a timely and informative workshop on: "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace; Compliance and Response".

The board kicked off an effort to update the Poughkeepsie Branch Strategic Plan to better align it with the updated National AAUW strategy; the updated plan was adopted by the board in April. Thanks to the team of Mary Lou Davis, Maria DeWald, Betty Harrel, Diane Jablonski, Monique Jones, Judy Linville, and Margaret Nijhuis.

In October, our Woman of the Year celebration recognized Dr. Patricia Edington for her leadership, vision, and direct support of AAUW. Enormous thanks to Gail Sisti and Margi Quart for their flexibility and organizational skills in making the event a real success.

This was quickly followed by our Annual Live Your Dream Girls Conference for eighty-four middle school girls, and their parents. College women from several local colleges were Big Sisters throughout the day which included 12 workshops and lunch with 27 Women Leaders from the mid-Hudson areas. I must note the incredible work done by Diana Babington and Lori Scolari in coordinating a fabulous day. And, of course, thanks to the many members who worked on planning the event and being there that day, as well as your financial contributions to the Diva program.

Our regular Thursday programs began in October with a New Member Reception. Credit goes to the Program Co-Chairs Sandy Lash and Monique Jones for a varied, informative, entertaining, and thought-provoking program series for the year covering everything from Chinese food in American culture, to services for women recovering from addiction, to an evening of song.

And all during the year our initiatives and interest groups were busy: Days for Girls, Math Buddies, Leading to Reading, the Mother's Project, Extending Girl's Horizons and Careers and Leadership.

The International Committee under the leadership of Marti Madory initiated the Global Friends Sharing meetings that provide an opportunity to recognize, celebrate and become aware of diversity within Dutchess County.

In February, working with the Women's Professional Network we advanced one of our public policy initiatives by having the Dutchess County Legislature declare April 2 as Equal Pay Day. In addition, we publicized the Work Smart online Initiative from National - encouraging members to try the workshop themselves and then publicize the workshop to their friends, families, and professional groups.

April was a busy month with the 10th Annual Writer's Tea and Auction. We had two great authors and the Vassar Night Owls to entertain us. We thank Lula Allen and Linda Roberts for successfully leading that effort

for 10 years, raising money to support our community service programs as well as everyone who worked on the tea.

At the end of April, Mary Lou Davis headed the AAUW NYS Convention in Otesaga NY. Poughkeepsie Branch had a great representation at the convention where Sabashnee Govender was recognized as an emerging leader.

In May, Jackie Goff-McNish and I were pleased to award scholarships to two Dutchess Community College graduates going on to 4-year schools - Imani Somers and Samarra Graiser.

We particularly recognize Lula Allen and Linda Roberts for the 10 years they chaired the Writers' Tea and Auction. Their hard work has made all our initiatives possible.

Finally, we recognize the incredible contributions made by Margaret Nijhuis in her 19 years as editor of the branch. She provides so much of the linkage, connection and communication that allowed our branch to grow and prosper over that time period.

This is only a sampling of what went on during the year and I apologize that I cannot mention everyone, every activity, and all your contributions. The individual annual reports provide much more detail on specific activities during the year to provide a comprehensive overview of our accomplishments during the year.

Diane Jablonski