

President's Report – 2019-20

Writing this report in May, it is difficult to remember back to the beginning of the program year when times were normal, and we were not dealing with a pandemic. Beginning in March, as COVID-19 began to affect all of our activities as well as life in the Hudson Valley, we have scrambled to continue both our community service initiatives, our programs, our interest groups, and to sustain the community of AAUW Poughkeepsie Branch. The shut-down for New York, the requirements for social distancing, and the health emergencies and deaths have affected each of us in various ways.

It is good to recall more normal times: a wonderful open house/reunion at Freedom Plains Presbyterian Church in September, The Woman of the Year honoring the Hon. Joan Posner, the Girls Conference in November co-sponsored with Dutchess Community College, the exceptional programs that spanned Domestic Violence, Gender Bias in healthcare, the issues of asylum, a collaboration with the Big Read, and recognizing the needs of international students in our community. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our programs for March, April, and May due to the coronavirus.

Our public policy team has kept us informed of issues, opportunities for action, and again had Dutchess County declare an Equal Pay Day.

Unfortunately, the state convention and elections for state officers was cancelled, replaced with an online election where Poughkeepsie will be able to have its full complement of delegates voting.

As part of our fund development efforts, we had decided to replace the Annual Writer's Tea with a new event in the Fall called a Novel Affair to fund our initiatives, and to move the Woman of the Year celebration to the Spring. Due to the uncertainties surrounding the future and our ability to gather, we decided to cancel A Novel Affair for 2020-21. We did put out a request to our members for donations to our initiatives and the response was amazing; to date, we have raised over \$5000 through this outreach. Thanks to all the members who contributed to this effort!

Poughkeepsie Branch members are resilient, and we moved many of our activities to Zoom. A monthly get-together on Zoom is popular, and some interest groups and initiatives have met over Zoom. In fact, a new interest group was formed to watch movies online and then gather to discuss them. I want to thank everyone who has looked to move ahead with new technology, those who continue to reach out to members to provide human contact, keeping the spirit of the Poughkeepsie Branch alive. Board meetings were held via conference call in February and via Zoom from March on. Plans for the annual meeting scheduled at the Grand Hotel had to be cancelled with a Zoom meeting to elect and install officers.

Our two AAUW Poughkeepsie Branch scholarships will be awarded to 2 Dutchess students continuing their education at a 4 year school.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your president for 2 years. It has also been an honor to serve with the entire leadership of AAUW – from the board members to the off-board members, to the interest group leaders, to the community service initiative members. You, along with the membership, are all awesome advocates for the AAUW mission and I applaud all that you have accomplished this year. We have again shown our resilience and will be stronger as we move into 2020-21. Thank you for everything.