

EMERGING LEADERS 2012



Adirondack - Ann Mathewson

Ann Mathewson, a native of Syracuse and graduate of Syracuse University, is the 2012 AAUW NYS Emerging Leader selection of the Adirondack Branch.

Ann officially joined the Adirondack Branch in June, 2011. Since 2009, while vacationing in our area, she had attended some meetings of the Adirondack Branch.

Ann was a member of the Yates County AAUW for several years. While there, she was Membership Chair for a few years and Co-President for one year. She currently serves as Co-President of the Adirondack Branch. Ann helped Regina Hillier in setting up a booth to promote AAUW at the Adirondack Balloon Festival last September. She assisted with the 5th Grade Annual Essay Contest last April, the Comedy Night Fundraiser and "Childhood for Sale" programs in October. She is helping with this year's 5th Grade Essay Contest, the STEM Project scheduled for September 29, 2012, and the Golf Tournament, May 19th, our major fundraiser for the year. She also serves on our Budget Committee. We are very fortunate to have Ann as a leader in our Branch!



Amsterdam-Gloversville-Johnstown - Ella Ryder

Ella Ryder is our assistant treasurer. She agreed to audit our books and now manages the Sister to Sister Summit account. She serves on the branch finance committee working to develop a budget and reformat the branch financial reporting system. Ella draws on her experiences to quietly make suggestions for new approaches. She attended the NYS Leadership Conference last summer. Ella has made many "visits" to the AAUW websites. She introduced her fellow employees to the AAUW website and provided them with AAUW brochures. She volunteers to represent AAUW in the community. "I'll go, if you need me to." We are thrilled with her quiet yet considerable contributions to our branch and dedication to AAUW during her less than 3 years as a member and see in her great potential as a future leader. We are proud to recognize Ella Ryder as the 2012 Emerging Leader of our Amsterdam-Gloversville-Johnstown branch.



Bath - Becca Kirch

Becca and her three sons, ages 12, 9, and 6, live in Bath; she is an accountant/bookkeeper/service provider for an agency called Arbor Development, which helps low-income families obtain housing, and income guidance (among other things). She received the "Mature Woman" Scholarship from our Branch two years ago and used the funds to help her complete her degree from Geneseo. She and her boys enjoy music and also actively participate in Civil War and other historical re-enactments. Becca is active in local theater; in fact her acting skills are very important in the production of "Momoirs"! She brings a high level of enthusiasm to the efforts of our Branch, and, lucky for us, she has agreed to be co-President of Bath Branch next term!



Buffalo - Michelle Norris

The Buffalo Branch is proud to honor Michelle Norris as our Emerging Leader at the 2012 NYS convention. Michelle has been a member since 2004 and has jumped right in to help in a wide variety of positions. In her short time as a member she has chaired one of the scholarship committees, co-held the position of membership retention vice president, acted as treasurer for our scholarship loan funds and is currently our very first chief financial officer, a position which was just created in the past year. In that position she has directed the audits of the various treasurer accounts, has dug into our insurance needs and brought us up to date on those, and will be taking on the budget process for the next year. She has been an invaluable resource for the branch and we are delighted to honor her in this way.



Cortland - Sara Earl

Sara Earl joined AAUW last April. In June she agreed to chair a committee to explore the possibility of creating an award program to honor strong fifth grade achievers in Cortland County who face unique challenges. Her November report-out to the Branch was very well managed and received. The Branch approved a pilot program for 2011-2012.

Sara is equally effective in committee settings. There she displays skills that complement her ability to make and manage large group presentations and discussions.

There are few limits to the leadership Sara is capable of providing. We are fortunate to have her in AAUW along with her mother.



Elmira-Corning - Janet Winfield

Janet Winfield is the 2012 Emerging Leader for the Elmira-Corning Branch. When approached to be Co-President last year she was reluctant but accepted the challenge. In July, she attended the Leadership Conference and came home enthused and ready to meet the challenges of the position. With the assistance of our dedicated members, she chaired a very successful fashion show. She attended the District II Fall Conference and volunteered to help at the NYS Convention in April. Her enthusiasm for the organization and dedication to the goals of AAUW has made her a wonderful person to work with. We look forward to her continuing leadership.



Fairport Area - Janice Meyer Volpe

Janice Meyer Volpe is the 2012 AAUW-NYS Emerging Leader selection of the Fairport Area Branch (FAB). Janice has been the leader of one of our special interest groups, the Lunch Bunch, for three years. Lunch Bunch meets monthly for a social outing with fun, good company and food. Janice sends the invitations to our membership electronically using EVITE software which ensures that our members all use new technology and have fun using it. Holding a Ph.D from Northwestern University, Janice was a member of the SUNY Geneseo faculty for eleven years (1973-84). She joined Xerox Corporation in 1986, after completing a MBA. She worked there for 15 years in various administrative and financial management functions.



Greater Rochester Area - Barbara E. Le Savoy

Barbara E. LeSavoy, Ph.D., Director of the Women and Gender Studies Program at SUNY Brockport, has an impressive list of leadership accomplishments. She has chaired the GRAB AAUW College University Partnership and Education and Equity committees; organized and lead the AAUW/Leadership Academy for Girls; established and developed the AAUW Internship Position; authored a historical map of AAUW for the *Encyclopedia of Women*; led the linking of area colleges to the AAUW/International Women's Day 100th Anniversary and Call for Change postcard signing campaign; chaired the *Women's Partnership Committee, Linkages Rochester NY Sister City Program* with Novgorod, Russia; and coordinated Brockport's annual *Take Back the Night March and Clothesline Project* supporting activism to stop violence against women. At our branch luncheon meeting on February 11, 2012, Barbara will present "Looking Back, Thinking Forward: An Overview of International Women's Day."



Islip - Lynn Perry

Lynn Perry joined Islip Area Branch in 2010. This year she assumed the position of International Affairs Director. Lynn, an RN, has an abiding interest in global affairs, especially health issues. Last June, she gave a moving branch program, about the effects of depleted uranium on women in war. This topic she also presented at a UNESCO forum. She participated in the Commission on the Status of Women and attended AAUW NYS UN Day and the CTAUN Conference.

Lynn is an officer of the LI Council for Prejudice Reduction and instrumental in organizing their annual conference at SUNY Stony Brook. She is a real asset to our branch.



Jamestown - Shirley Sanfilippo

Since 2009 Shirley has been actively involved in our branch leadership and activities. She assumed the role of Corresponding Secretary, then V.P. Legal Advocacy Fund, and currently she is serving as Treasurer. In addition, she served two years as Sweet Shoppe Chair for the "What's New" Fair, the annual two-day fundraiser for the scholarships we offer. She is always ready to help whenever called on. We appreciate her hard work and are looking forward to her continuing leadership. We are delighted to name her our Emerging Leader! Congratulations Shirley.

Jefferson County - Katherine FitzGerald

Katherine FitzGerald joined the Jefferson County AAUW in 2009 and immediately began contributing to the vibrancy of our local programming. In March 2010, she presented a program titled "A Global Perspective on the Oppression of Women: Stories of Strength and Suffering from Sierra Leone" which drew on her semester-long teaching experience in Africa. The following fall, she joined the AAUW delegation to Cuba. At about the same time Katie began working with a small group of Jefferson Community College students to form the JCC/AAUW Student Organization which has won a Campus Action Project (CAP) grant from AAUW to film a documentary chronicling sexual harassment in grades 7-12 based upon the research paper, Crossing the Line.



Kingston - Ruth Bean

Ruth Bean, our membership vice president and branch administrator, deserves our recognition and thanks for many things, but especially encouraging and welcoming new members. She connects personally with every new member, ensuring that each finds something they will enjoy and value in the branch. She steps up to handle many administrative tasks for the branch, like mailing paper newsletters to members without computers, despite a busy schedule caring for grandchildren for her physician-daughter. She models the warmth and excitement that we hope characterizes our branch. She is our terrific Emerging Leader!

North Shore - Barbara Aitken

Barbara Aitken is a graduate of Queensborough Community College where she studied for eleven years taking courses in "everything," and after working for eleven years and accumulating a hundred and fifteen credits (for a degree which requires only sixty-five), she was awarded an AA degree. She studied psychology, art, and music among other things. She has two daughters, one of them handicapped. Because of her handicapped daughter, she served on the Committee of the Handicapped of the local school district and when later asked if she would like to work for the Board of Education commented, "I'm here every day. I might as well." She then worked for the Board for twenty-five years. In addition, she worked with the handicapped in many ways such as leading Scout trips where she remembers pushing wheel chairs through the snow. Her daughter continues to require much attention as an adult. Barbara is an artist who gives her paintings away, an ardent horsewoman, and a mah jong player.

At her first AAUW meeting, Barbara volunteered to co-chair the music group where she has served faithfully procuring some outstanding musicians to perform for us and the seniors at a local senior citizen home. Some people are honored for doing many things. Barbara is nominated because she has done things extremely well despite facing personal challenges and winning many friends along the way.



Poughkeepsie - Cecilia Dinio-Durkin

Born in the Philippines, Cecilia Dinio-Durkin lives in Poughkeepsie, NY. She has worked at Random House, Scholastic, and MTV Networks, and has written and published nine educational books as well as many articles. Inspired by her stay in Botswana, she started Women's Work, a fair-trade store to help women artisans from developing countries. She has served on the Executive Board of the Fair Trade Federation, has visited Pakistan with USAID, been invited by the Guatemalan government to an expo for Central American crafters. She serves as International Chair for the Poughkeepsie AAUW, co-chairing its program My Sister's Keeper and is a leader in organizing the county's annual International Women's Day walk.



St Lawrence County - Michele Pinard

The St. Lawrence County Branch is pleased to nominate Michele Pinard as our Emerging Leader for 2012. Michele, who joined the branch in Dec. 2006, has been an active branch member who has contributed as a leader and as a member and through her professional work to AAUW. Michele currently serves as the combined EF-LAF Vice President to our Board, after serving as LAF VP for a term. Michele has taken our branch fund-raising to new levels since her election. She has become an innovative and master basket builder and is now enthusiastically taking on the challenge of Susan B. Anthony's purses!

Professionally, Michele works as Clinical Faculty in Curriculum & Instruction at SUNY Potsdam, where she oversees the preparation and placement of student teachers. She works diligently with them to ensure they understand the value of an equal and an excellent education. Her latest efforts to connect her students to AAUW includes working to set up a \$tart \$mart workshop and to provide motivation and help for her students to attend the March 3 "Bully Culture" District 7 Conference featuring AAUW's Holly Kearl. In addition, she is organizing a pre-event workshop session for her students with Holly on campus so they can hear directly from Holly about bullying and harassment and the toll it takes on students.

Michele is an outstanding ambassador for AAUW and a pleasure to work with as a colleague and a sister branch member.



Schenectady - Elise Russo

The Schenectady Branch of AAUW is pleased to recognize science educator Elise Russo, EdD, as our emerging leader. Elise's work with the International Center for Leadership in Education as Program Director brought her back to our region 3 years ago, and our branch has benefited. In her work experience, Elise exerts an important influence on international education, particularly in the Caribbean Region. As Educational Equity Chair, Elise has supported and encouraged collaborative efforts with other service groups in promoting educational equity. Girls, Inc. and Business and Professional Women are two organizations who collaborate with AAUW in our efforts to improve education for women and girls. STEM initiatives have been supported and encouraged in the articles Elise writes for our newsletter "VISIONS.". Elise's clear thinking and supportive reasoning have enriched discussions at our Board meetings. Our Branch looks forward to more and better educational equity initiatives with Elise as a key player in the future effectiveness of our AAUW NYS Schenectady Branch.



Skaneateles - Fran Rotunno Fish

Fran has held the position of Branch Treasurer for the last two years. She has gone above and beyond in that position, and in other areas. She publicized a program on Matilda Gage, so that we could meet the requirements of a grant to reimburse the speaker and then paid for four eighth grade girls to attend. Another of our programs featured a woman CEO of a local high tech medical devices firm. On her own, Fran called the high school and paid for interested girls to attend. This event was very well covered in the local press, which emphasized our efforts in STEM education and outreach to girls.

Fran is a nurse and upper-level nursing administrator, but her input has not been confined to those fields. She contributes strategic thinking and always offers assistance to whatever project or program we undertake.



Westchester - Adelaide DiGiorgi

Adelaide is currently on our branch Board, serving as Program Co-Vice President. She is also our Tech Consultant for Branch meetings. Adelaide has shown a commitment to serving the AAUW mission, is always available to step in to lead branch meetings, and contributes ideas and follows up on plans to produce excellent programs. As a past president of the League of Women Voters, she is well connected to women of leadership in our county. Adelaide is reliable and a responsible member of our branch.



Yates County - Judy Wiltberger

Our choice for the Emerging Leader Award for 2012 is Judy Wiltberger. Judy has been an enthusiastic member from the start and currently holds the office of Program Vice-President. She is also Public Policy chair person and is an active participant in our monthly book discussion group. Judy also has been a valued volunteer for our annual book sale and a hard worker for our annual turkey dinner, both of which are our major fundraisers for our Interrupted Studies Grant and our Educational Fund. She has hosted meetings at her winery on several occasions. Judy is a hard worker, an advocate for the mission of AAUW and an informed communicator of AAUW's public policy. It is with pride that we have selected Judy Wiltberger for this year's Emerging Leader Award.