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Subject: IWD Buffalo

Date: Tue, Mar 22, 2011 12:09 pm

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Equity for women was the theme of the March 8, 2011 International Women's centennial celebration hosted by the AAUW, Buffalo Branch. The 100 year struggles, particularly of working women, were highlighted in poetry, stories and an historical poster. Also celebrated were AAUW 130th anniversary, the 10th annual IWD branch program and the labor legislation which followed the tragic Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire.

Haiti's past, present and future were the centerpiece of the evening with presentations by a Haitian

of the country's art and artists, including the damage to the national gallery collection. A young Haitian woman reviewed Haiti's history, its current presidential election choices and the contributions of women to its two hundred and sixty year history. A third speaker described the Mothers Clubs of Haiti, a microloan program in rural Haiti which has been restarted in the past few years. Tied to these presentations was a remark by a Haitian man that without economic power, Haitians were children, a circumstance that women over the past one hundred years would understand.

As an AAUW branch we seek to be open for participation to any qualified person from anywhere on the globe; we are also keen to provide information to our membership and the community on international affairs and the status of women. Our first Muslim member attended the dinner and decided to join our branch.

Planning requires attention to the theme and possible presenters quite early. Actions taken include notification of all the cosponsors with an invitation about two months in advance of the date of the

program, an invitation in the branch newsletter as least a month in advance and a PR person contacting the media outlets. Then planning for the day: members participation, name tags, program details, etc.

The newspaper article through the Amherst Bee (to be sent separately) encouraged attendees and presented AAUW as a progressive organization with a long history of involvement in women's issues in the US and abroad. Lillis McLean

# Lifestyles

Wednesday, March 2, 2011

**BPO offers free nature-oriented concert**

The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra will play a free preview concert at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, at the Audubon Library, 350 John James Audubon Parkway. The preview concert is titled "Nature in Symphonic Music" and will feature music of Beethoven, Debussy and Holst. For more information, visit [www.bpo.org](http://www.bpo.org).



# International Women's Day 2011 Celebration to focus on Haiti

by **KATE MOCKLER**  
Reporter

A century ago, women in most countries could not vote. They didn't have the right to hold property. Women who worked often did so for low wages, in dangerous and oppressive conditions. Yet at the same time, women were often denied access to higher education and entry into professions.

International Women's Day started as an informal way to galvanize women. 1911 marked the first international celebration of the day. A few weeks later, the Triangle Shirtwaist factory in New York City caught on fire. More than 140 women lost their lives because the exits were blocked. The incident sparked calls for working condition reform and helped cement the status of International

and the Everywoman Opportunity Center.

Lillis McLean, the program coordinator for AAUW, sees parallels between the struggle for women's rights and the struggles of people in developing nations.

"I was watching a documentary, and one man said, 'Without economic power, we are children, we are not adults.' I felt, historically, women could resonate with that because there's been a long struggle for economic equity, and it continues," she explained.

The program will feature several speakers, a poet and a performance. Craig Centre, college professor and director of the El Museo Gallery at 91 Allen St. in Buffalo, will speak about Haitian art.

Anne Valerie Pacoulourte will also speak at the event.



**Kathy Mang-Haag**, left, and **Barbara Grove**, right, visit a maize-growing business started by Haitian women and funded by their micro-loan program. Mang-Haag will be a featured speaker on International Women's Day.

ways with a hopeful slant.

"Often, the questions that people ask me, I'm always a little bit taken aback by those questions, like 'Back in your country, do you have toilets?' and things of that nature. The [misconception] that I see that's recurring is there's no

Pacoulourte, she also sees a lot of hope for Haiti.

"The single thing that had the most impression on me was the fact that people live with such hope amidst such despair," she said. "It's so poor, and yet people have this faith and belief and hope that things will get better. When you talk to them and you're with them, they just want the opportunity, that's all."

Though International Women's Day might strike some as outdated, the event organizers are in agreement about its relevance for modern society.

"I think one of the things we have to recognize is our country has fought for women's rights and women's place in society for a long, long time. We've made some strides toward women's rights in our country. When you go to countries like Haiti or Tanzania, you see how far back they are in terms of equality," said Mang-Haag.

"The International Women's

Women's Day, celebrated annually on March 8. Since the 1970s, the United Nations has sponsored International Women's Day events.

2011 marks the centennial anniversary of International Women's Day, and the American Association of University Women Buffalo Branch will host a celebration focusing on issues facing Haiti. It will take place at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 8, at Samuel's Grande Manoir, 8750 Main St. between Harris Hill and Shimerville roads in Clarence. It has 23 co-sponsors, including the Zonta Club

Haiti when she was 17 and settled in Staten Island with her father's family. She has an associate degree in computer information systems and moved to Amherst with her husband, a chemical engineer. She is now working toward a degree in French education from Buffalo State College.

"I'm going to give a little bit of Haiti's history and what I think Haitian people's hopes are for Haiti," she explained. "As a people, we've been through a lot, some of it is our fault, some of it is things that were outside of our power. I think that we will find a way to get out of it, and it will happen."

Pacoulourte has spoken before to school groups about Haiti, al-

hope a rich culture. The people of Haiti are wonderful. A portion of the Haitian people themselves haven't been able to let the country go forward, but I believe we are on the right path."

"After the earthquake, people came to the realization that something has to happen. Haiti cannot go any further back; it has to go forward."

Kathy Mang-Haag is among those providing assistance to ensure that Haiti does go forward. She is a co-founder of the Mothers Clubs of Haiti, a micro-loan program. She will also speak at International Women's Day.

Mang-Haag and her friend Barbara Grove started the Mothers Clubs of Haiti and Tanzania in the early 1990s.

"We're two women who've cre-

look across the world, we have centuries to go before women have equal status," said McLean. "We have to focus and put light on the struggles that women are facing throughout the world. It will continue for a long time to come."

"It's important because, even to this day, even in the 21st century, women still have a lot of hurdles to overcome. It's still relevant to talk about women, it's still relevant to talk about all the things women have to overcome, it's still relevant to celebrate their accomplishments and hope for more accomplishments in the future," Pacoulourte said.

For reservations for the International Women's Day event, contact McLean at 873-7467 or lmclean366@yahoo.com.

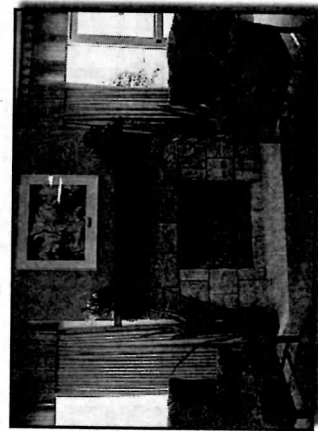
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Micro-loan uses the same by 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner Muhammad Yunus of the Grameen Bank. Women are organized in small groups that meet monthly. They receive loans of \$55 each, which they can pool. The money funds things like the purchase of a horse to carry bamboo to a market. After their third loan, they begin working with a bank and saving as a group. Mang-Haag says the program has a 97 percent payback rate.

"We don't really believe in a donor-beneficiary relationship. The women are strong, and once they're on their feet, they can do anything," said Mang-Haag. Like

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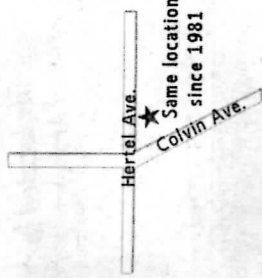
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The American Association of University Women Buffalo Branch  
presents its 10th Annual International Celebration

## 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day

**Tuesday, March 8, 2011**

5:30 p.m. social gathering

6:00 p.m. dinner

Samuel's Grande Manor  
8750 Main Street  
Williamsville, NY 14221

**Featuring speakers  
from Haiti: Its Past,  
Present and Future**



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### Registration Form

Cost: \$30 per person (Please make checks payable to AAUW/Buffalo Branch)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone #: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Dinner Choices:

Chicken Normando (basil wine and herbs): \_\_\_\_\_ Salmon: \_\_\_\_\_ Pasta with Vegetable: \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail this registration form and checks by March 1 to:**  
Lillis McLean, 366 Victoria Blvd., Kenmore, NY 14217  
716-873-7467