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Revving Up for Election 2000

Jane Smith, NYS Voter Education Director

607/868-3243 Blufview@ptd.net

When I was a little girl, in Wayland, a small upstate town, my dad was the chairperson for his political party. My sisters and I were included in his political activities from an early age. Our job was to hand out fliers for candidates, and canvas all the houses in the town. Later, my dad was elected councilman, a position he held for many years. During all this time my sisters and I watched and learned and participated. We saw my dad in political conversations with our neighbors. We went with my mother as she took older people to the polls on Election Day. We saw our grandmother's place of business turn into a polling place. One of the highlights of my life was the day my sister and I went to Bath, to register to vote.

We have continued our political activities as adults. Pulteney was a one-party town when I moved here. I helped my party to organize and elect a supervisor and councilmen. We now have a third of the voters here registered in our party. When I moved here 20 years ago, it was less than 50. My sister, of whom I am proud, was elected a city court judge in Rochester at the age of 32. She is in the last half of her second ten-year term now. My other two sisters vote regularly and are extremely concerned with issues affecting them and their families.

I knew that my children needed some role modeling in politics as I had had. I have run unsuccessfully several times for jobs in Pulteney. But, my children have seen me do this. They know that I have done this as insurance that there will always be a two party system in our town. They know that I strongly believe in a choice in every election.

I heard a local person say that she couldn't vote for me because she was registered to vote in a different political party! Ignorance in the voting process is appalling. As an educated, intelligent person, you can make a difference. You can encourage your branch to do voter registration, now, before the beginning of October. Contact your election board for the required forms and then go to farmer's markets, the schools, the county fairs, sporting events, outside grocery stores, or simply talk to your neighbors.

When registering new voters, remember my neighbor who thought she could only vote in the party she was registered. Talk to the newly registered voters, and ask them if they have any questions. Another important fact to remember is that even homeless people can vote. A description of where they live is sufficient for address, for example, "under the bridge." Make sure the voters know where they go to vote, and when. Your efforts could make a difference. Many of the races in New York this year are extremely important and could have far reaching effects.

Enlightening information came from a survey that the League of Women Voters did in 1996. "**Nonvoters** are less likely to grasp the impact of elections on issues that matter to them. **Nonvoters** are more likely to believe they lack information on which to base their voting decisions. **Nonvoters** are more likely to perceive the voting process as difficult and cumbersome. **Nonvoters** are less likely to be contacted by an organization encouraging them to vote." I am challenging you and your branches to do something to change this in your communities. Please feel free to contact me at any time for help in getting started, or in following through with a plan. You are all members of the Voter Education Committee.

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

AAUW's Future: Who Will Shape It?

Bobbe Fortunato, NYS AAUW President

631/665-4689 bobbef@juno.com

"It takes courage to be oneself, to be truthful and live beyond the psychology of one's 'day,' to make one's way on new terrain without sanctions and a lot of outside support, to rely on one's inner strength- Matthew Fox



So, who then will work to shape AAUW NY's Future? I have the courage to try, and I will work hard at all we must do. I will also look to the elected and appointed officers plus the branch members to help. In AAUW we are not alone! We have issues as well as the everyday concerns of each community that we live within. Joining our strengths, our hearts and our members it is time to start the shaping.

For two years our conventions have shown that New York has had and still has Strong Women Leaders who work to make their lives and the lives of Women and Girls better. We have been involved from the time of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the never-ending push for Women's Rights.

When you look at AAUW's history you will see that the work we started in the late 1800's is still the work that needs our attention. We have come a long way but the work to *Shape the Future* is still here for all of us. The issues of Education, Individual Rights, Government, Social Concerns and Global Interdependence are there for us just as they were for those who went before us. AAUW has been on the forefront in these battles for over 100 years. We have won some but the battles are still there for each of us to find something we can and should continue to champion.

The money we send to the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund helps teachers work with young people to develop a strong sense of continuing to learn. The Legal Advocacy Fund allows us to stand up and say, **"NO, you can't tread on Women's Rights."** We will not allow harassment of any form to put us out of the game. These are the causes that we continue to address as together with other AAUW members and our Coalition partners we work for AAUW's Future. Don't let a feeling of being alone frighten you and your members. If each of us joins hands across New York we strengthen each other and we can *Shape the Future*.

AAUW 2000-2001... A Renaissance

Ann Di Nicola, Director of Branch Council

315/735-4762

The Fall District Conferences will be based on the theme, **AAUW 2000-2001...Renaissance**. Discussions will center on *"Reshaping the Future," "Change through Opportunity and Learning"* and *"A Renaissance Opportunity."*

FALL 2000 DISTRICT CONFERENCES

DIST.	DATE	LOCATION, HOST BRANCH
1	Oct. 14	Dunkirk, Jamestown
2	Oct. 21	Bath, Bath
3	Oct. 14	Ogdensburg, St. Lawrence Co.
4	Oct. 28	Albany, Albany
5	Oct. 21	New York City, NYC
6	Oct. 21	Patchogue, L.I. Interbranch

Your local branch president will have more details and reservation forms for your District Conference in September. Do attend and learn how **you** can help AAUW NYS grow and prosper.



Legal Advocacy Fund News

Evelyn M. Currie, Director

518/399-3711 ecurrie@gateway.net

At its June 2000 meeting, the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund Board of Directors awarded \$48,000 to six ongoing cases and three newly adopted cases. One of the NYS LAF goals for 2000 is to increase our contributions to LAF in order to support this funding to help women who have faced discrimination on the college level. Our vision is that the cases that LAF supports will have significant impact on laws that effect women in higher education and eventually all women. This is putting the AAUW mission of creating societal change into action!

You can be a part of this important movement by becoming a member of one of our special donor categories:

- LAF Advocate (\$500-\$999)
- LAF Partner (\$250-\$299)
- LAF Amicus (\$100-\$249)
- LAF Circle (\$50-\$99)

Being a special donor not only helps your branch meet the requirements (\$5 per capita) for the LAF Star but also gives you the satisfaction of contributing to this very important cause. **Contributions should be sent to me (NOT to Washington) by December 15, 2000.** Remember, there are only 3 months left to reach our goal!

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

New York Joins Membership Campaign

Jannette Knapp, Membership Vice President

Information on the Association's *Shape the Future* membership campaign was mailed to all branches this summer. New members who join at one of your community action events receive \$10 or \$20 discounts, and the branch receives up to three free Association memberships for every two members recruited. Here are some of the details:

1. Plan a program that will appeal to women between 36 and 55, such as a *Sister-to-Sister Summit*, *Transitions Conference for Women*, or Voter Education event.
2. Have all guests sign your guest list.
3. Offer discounts to join on the spot: save \$10 off Association dues (a 25% discount)
4. Join with a friend and get 2 memberships for 1, a 50 % discount.
5. To qualify for discounts, the branch must send AAUW the guest list and referral forms with the dues.
6. The branch earns:
 - One free Association membership for every 2 new branch members recruited on the spot.
 - One free Association membership for ever 3 new members-at-large recruited on the spot or after branch activities.

For more information plus guest and referral forms contact the HELPLINE (800/326-AAUW) or the AAUW website (www.aauw.org) or e-mail: helpline@aauw.org

New York is joining this campaign with incentives of our own:

- ◆ No state dues for student affiliates
- ◆ No state dues for graduate students
- ◆ No state dues for new graduates given free memberships through the **Give a Grad a Gift** program
- ◆ Branches should consider waiving dues for students and new grads to show our support for education and help them find a network of educated women when they need it most.

Make every member part of the membership committee and every event a membership event. Create your own branch brochure so potential members can see what you do in your community. Encourage all members to carry brochures they can give to friends and co-workers. Become a 5-Star branch. Members of active branches have good answers to the question, "What does AAUW do?" Involve the members you have by asking them to help with branch activities. Once they're involved with a committee, they're yours. And send a delegation to your Fall District Conference to pick up your branch's *AAUW New York Membership Kit*.

eGRRLS!

(Empire Girls Really Learn Science!)

Kay Kraatz, NYS Past President

The American Association of University Women Educational Foundation has funded a \$10,000 Community Action Grant to promote science learning opportunities for girls throughout New York State. This is a 2-year project involving partnerships between AAUW NYS and the Science-Technology Museums of New York.

Through the eGRRLS! Project, science centers throughout the state will offer innovative new science learning opportunities for women and girls. Learning opportunities may include, for example, mother-daughter exhibit building, summer science camp for girls, career exploration days, and mentoring programs.

In the second year of funding, science learning opportunities for girls will be presented by science-technology museums in each of six districts throughout the state. These activities will be conducted with the support and involvement of the local eGRRLS! partnerships, which will consist of AAUW branches, science-technology museums, schools, and community groups.

If you're interested in becoming involved contact:

Margaret Conover
Sciencenterprise, P.O. Box 632
Wading River, NY 11792

or,

Kay Kraatz
AAUW NYS Past President
PO Box 458
Skaneateles, NY 13152
315/685-6256
kraatz@dreamscape.com

13. Publication Title		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below	
New York State FOCUS		Summer 1999	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date	
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	4500	4474	
(1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions (Based on Form 3541. (Include advertiser's proof and exchange copies)	4100	4105	
b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation	--	--	
(2) Paid In-County Subscriptions (Based on Form 3541 (Provide advertiser's proof and exchange copies)	--	--	
(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution	--	--	
(4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	--	--	
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (Sum of 15b, (1), (2), (3), and (4))	4100	4105	
d. Free Distribution by Mail (Carriers or other means)	40	40	
(1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541	--	--	
(2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541	--	--	
(3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS	--	--	
e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	12	0	
f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e)	52	40	
g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f)	4152	4145	
h. Copies not Distributed	348	329	
i. Total (Sum of 15g and h.)	4500	4474	
j. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15i, times 100)	91%	90%	
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership (PS Form 3526, October 1999) (Required for all publications except those published by the U.S. Government, or its agencies, or other securities of the publishing corporation. In item 11, if none, check the box.)		[] Publication not required	
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner		Date: 28 Sept 2000	
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6. In item 16, indicate the date of the issue in which this Statement of Ownership will be published.			
7. Item 17 must be signed.			
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PS Form 3526, October 1999 (Revised)			

International Relations

Peggy Coe, International Relations Director

315/788-8702 bpcoe@imcnet.net



It's all too easy for us to focus on our own cozy corner of New York State, but we do have an opportunity, and indeed a responsibility as educated women, to consider the plight of women and girls around the world. Fortunately we have an avenue through the International Federation of University Women and the United Nations to be informed and to effect change. The fact is that we are ALL members of the IFUW by virtue of our membership in AAUW and we have our own AAUW representative to the United Nations.

Welcome Our New United Nations Representative: Carolyn Donovan

A former president of the North Shore NY Branch and the Blacksburg Area Branch in Virginia, Carolyn was recently appointed AAUW's UN representative by Association president Sandy Barnard. She is the successor to Mary Purcell, who has held the position since the early 1990's, and who will continue as the IFUW's UN representative. Mary is recognized for her tireless dedication to women and girls worldwide through support of the United Nations and the founding of the Working Groups for Girls.

UN Report

In June, the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Beijing+5, was called to review member nations' progress since 1995 on the Platform for Action. This included an inspiring meeting sponsored by the Working Group for Girls entitled "Girls As Their Own Advocates." The morning session featured five young women from 12 to 22 who related their own experiences and philosophies regarding female genital mutilation (Egypt), armed conflict (Uganda), trafficking (Nepal), community participation (Guatemala) and reproductive health (Belarus). The personal stories of hardship and involvement were breathtaking and awakened a sense of urgency. They need to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

You may reach Carolyn Donovan by e-mail: acdonovan@earthlink.net, or by phone/fax: 516/944-5534.

Let's make a Difference...

Ann Bish, NYS Public Policy

716/741-3964 ashicks2@juno.com



The influence of money from special interest groups, the denigration of one candidate by another, and the omission or distortion of facts by the media are insidious ways of affecting attitudes of voters. Disgust for the process may, in fact, dissuade many women from going to the polls on Election Day.

AAUW members must work to counter this attitude. If we believe in our mission and if we are committed to meet the challenges of the 21st century, we must not only become informed voters ourselves but also work to inform others and urge them to vote. Too much is at stake.

What are some of the AAUW priority issues/legislation now in Congress that we support?

• Hate Crimes Legislation

AAUW supported the Smith/Kennedy amendment to the Hate Crimes Prevention (S622) because it would strengthen and expand current hate crime prevention laws to cover hate crimes caused by the use of fire, firearms, or explosive devices. It would also expand federal hate crime law to include acts of violence motivated by a victim's gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Representatives should be urged to vote for the Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HR 1082)

• Managed Care Reform

AAUW supports the House-passed Norwood/Dingell bill. AAUW believes that a real patients' bill of rights must include, as this bill does, coverage for the 161 million privately insured Americans, direct access for women to OB/GYN services, greater access to clinical trials, and legal recourse for patients who have been subject to managed care abuses.

• Social Security and Medicare

Instead of focusing on how to increase retirement savings opportunities for women and low-income families by improving the current Social Security program, Congress has been caught up in election year rhetoric about privatization. And Congress has not taken action to modernize and shore up the Medicare program beyond 2013.

The NYS bills that AAUW is endorsing and following appear on the website (www.northnet.org/nysaaauw). These bills, complete with sponsors' names, numbers, and action taken are listed for our reference and advocacy. This comprehensive lobby list has been developed and updated periodically by our vigilant website editor, Donna Seymour.

Branch Visibility: The Key to Success

Donna Seymour, Director of Communications

315/265-6985 onthego@northnet.org

Every organization struggles to retain members from year to year and attract new people who will bring the ideas and enthusiasm to the organization to ensure continued success. AAUW is no different, but we do have unique resources that make the task easier.

If we do a good job of communicating that mission statement in the communities our branches serve, our organization will thrive.

Our mission statement is clear. "The American Association of University Women promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change." If we do a good job of

communicating that mission statement in the communities our branches serve, our organization will thrive. Existing members will continue to belong and new people will be attracted to our community action projects, our cultural events, our 'fun'd raisers, and our educational programs.

If the mission statement is our compass, we can think of the 5-Star program as our roadmap. One of the easiest stars to earn, and the one that pays off the greatest bonus, is the Visibility Star. "The Visibility Star requires local visibility through media outreach for branch community action projects, public policy efforts, or work on social justice issues. Projected audiences must include nonmembers, and media outreach must extend beyond meeting notices. Media may include newspapers, television, radio, or other organization's "newsletters."

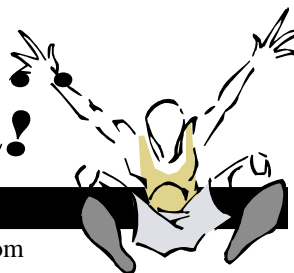
The people who create and distribute public relations material for each branch play a central role in establishing the visibility and the viability of the branch. But in order to create that material, the branch must be doing interesting, exciting and worthwhile things with a direct impact on the local community. This is where you'll need to look at the rest of your roadmap. The other stars in the 5-Star program are a blueprint for success. During the process of thinking and planning about how to earn stars, a branch becomes more active, more visible, and better able to attract new members and grow.

The 5-Star program is not just a reward to be received at convention. It is a tool for branch boards to create a meaningful action plan for branch success. In thinking about how to earn a star, your branch is working to achieve visibility and recognition from the community. Identify a need in your local community that AAUW is uniquely suited to provide, create a solution, and tell others of your success. When you make the news, you won't have any problem getting attention from your local media. And you'll find that there are lots of people in your community willing to join in the work.

Diversity . . . Jump In!

Jane Sheeran, Diversity Director

518/587-4895 sheeran176@aol.com



It's nice to be on the NYS Board again. Working with so many talented, energetic folks is a pleasure. Working for the AAUW mission is an honor. For branches that have been working on Diversity, keep up the good work! For individuals, Diversity programs/practices take passion and commitment toward "positive societal change". Jump in!

AAUW NYS Board of Directors sent a letter of concern to the Boy Scouts of America regarding the recent Supreme Court decision. I encourage branches to contact their local Boy Scout Councils with a similar letter of concern regarding discrimination based on sexual orientation.

The Association: revised the Diversity statement to add the word "class." (Revised statement is on page 8.) The talking points (offered by Association) are posted on our web site. Gradually revisit your branch publications to incorporate this addition.

Use the ¡Adelante! Book of the Month Club as your own outreach tool. Libraries, high schools and colleges are a natural. When you hand your contact the ¡Adelante! book give her/him your branch membership brochure too. Don't forget to mention the open online discussions along with the past two years book lists and discussion questions. (www.aauw.org.) If you don't have Internet access, a book club may be just the excuse you need to connect at your local library or school.



The **NYS FOCUS** (USPS-390-570) is published for the American Association of University Women. The subscription rate of \$2.15 is included in the NYS dues. Periodicals postage is paid at Washington, D.C., and additional offices.

Send all address changes to AAUW Records Office, 1111 16th St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Questions and articles should be addressed to the NYS FOCUS Editor, Mary J. King, 77 King George Rd., Poughkeepsie, NY 12603, 845/462-0567, e-mail: thekings@idsi.net

Winter Issue deadline: October 30, 2000

Spring Issue deadline: January 15, 2001

Educational Foundation

Helen Engel, Educational Foundation Vice President

315/343-9678 rengenl@oswego.edu

A heartfelt "thanks" for your donations to the Educational Foundation in 1999. Due to your effort New York State placed third in total contributions. In addition, we had 100% branch and 100% State Board member participation represented in our final total. New York was also a Legacy State. Congratulations! We will really have to work hard in the next several months to better our standing for 2000, but with your help, we can do it. Let's strive for an increase in giving and for 100% branch and member participation for 2000.



The Educational Foundation was established in 1958 to increase AAUW's philanthropic activities and to continue the AAUW tradition of promoting educational

The Foundation gives over \$3 million a year and has become the largest single source of nongovernmental funding exclusively for graduate women

equity for women and girls. From the first graduate fellowship of \$350 awarded in 1888, the American Fellowships program now awards more than \$1 million annually. The Foundation gives over \$3 million a year and has become the largest single source of nongovernmental funding exclusively for graduate women. In the grant year 2000-01, 268 women received awards.

Those of us who have heard a grant recipient speak or know a grant recipient, realize how much our help has meant and how they in turn are helping others. In addition, research projects funded through the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund have affected each of our communities in some way. The latest research initiative is *Tech-Savvy: Educating Girls in the New Computer Age*. I just finished reading about a summer science program for middle school girls in my area. AAUW sponsored research reports were mentioned as part of the impetus for this program. Many of you can point to similar things in your community. Spread the word about the grants and fellowships available through the Foundation. Maybe you or someone in your community would like to apply. Grant information is available on AAUW's website (www.aauw.org) under Fellowships and Grants.

Our giving is not a one way street; the money has helped to improve our lives and the lives of others. We need your help in increasing awareness about the Foundation and how it has impacted all of us. We need your fund raising efforts in branch money raising events and in soliciting contributions, and last but not least, your own donation. Together we can continue the AAUW tradition.

Initiative for Educational Equity

Ann B. Walker, Director

516/563-2678 walkerab@aol.com

The focus for 1999-2001 will continue to be the program portfolio, *Education & Equity Choices for a Changing World*. Branches are encouraged to select one or more project topics from the Association materials: *Tech Check*, *Woman-to-Woman*, *Signposts*, *Sister-to-Sister Summits*, and *Transitions*. Four Summits are "in the works."

- Nov. 16, Hofstra U., a follow-up summit for participants who are looking to be empowered to act in their home schools
- Dec. 1, SUNY Stony Brook, a leadership program
- March 2001, Hofstra U., a Mother-Daughter Summit
- March 21, 2001, planned by the Buffalo Branch

School Secrets, scenarios about sexual harassment, with a Workshop Leader's Guide, is available free of charge for distribution to coalition partners, educators, and community groups. Send me your requests.

Community Action/Women's Sports Programs

AAUW NYS and the Women's Sports Foundation are working in partnership to promote gender equity in sports. You may become involved in this venture by organizing a Community Action Program Committee in your area. Plan a special activity to celebrate National Women and Girls Sports Day in February.

In February 2000, the Jamestown Branch in coalition with six community organizations, sponsored a local celebration of National Girls and Women in Sports Day, a day-long event held at a local community college with 160 girls in grades 4 - 8 who participated with over 50 female athlete/presenters. Janet Forbes reports the sports day was successful and provided wonderful visibility for all sponsors. A handbook explaining how to organize a Community Action Program is available. Contact: Janet Forbes, (jlforbes@hotmail.com), the Women's Sports Foundation, (wosport@aol.com) or me.

WINNING
THE
RACE

The Education & Equity Committee and the Women's Sports Foundation are looking for volunteer branches or school districts that would like to model *Gender Equity in Sport Action Steps*. The Title IX checklist asks you to consider the quality and equality of sports experiences being offered in your community. This is an opportunity to bring recognition to your school for the positive steps that have been taken to implement Title IX and gender equity.

Branch Action Notes

Happy Anniversary

40th - Islip Area Branch

75th - Poughkeepsie Branch

100th - Southern NY Branch



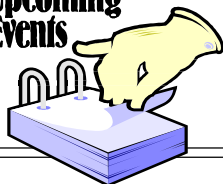
Libby Knapp (standing), Southern NY's Member of the Century, chats with Lois Schmeiske (seated), newest Honorary Life Member, at the branch's 100th Anniversary celebration

Shirley Harrison reports that the **North Shore Branch** has had several very successful summer outings, including a sail from Southport Seaport and a trip to the Queens Museum of Art.

The, **Mid Island Branch** held several summer socials to benefit LAF and EF, according to Faith Zimmerman. One event, an old fashioned English Tea, was hosted by Peg Cravens, LAF Chair.

The **Westchester Branch** will be co-sponsoring a program, "HMO's Medicare, Social Security and You" on Oct. 4, 2000, 5:30 p.m. at the Chappaqua Library. The program is open to the public. Contact Anne Mann, Public Policy Chair, annemmann@mindspring.com, for information.

Upcoming Events



Mark your Calendar!

Plan to attend the next AAUW
NYS Convention

April 27-29, 2001

Rochester Marriott Thruway Hotel

AAUW Needs You!

Donna Seymour, Nominating Committee Chair

315/265-6985 onthego@northnet.org

The important work of AAUW each year gets done because a group of committed members from across New York State steps forward to volunteer their time, talents, energy and enthusiasm to accomplish it. AAUW NYS is open to *everyone* who would like to be a part of this great enterprise. You don't have to *know* someone. You don't have to serve years in the trenches before you get a chance to work at the state level.

But you do have to let us know you are interested! The Nominating Committee is made up of members from across the state who are here to answer your questions about what working at the state level entails. There are always a variety of positions that are open at the district, committee and state level. Except for elected state office, prior experience is not a prerequisite.

Want to know more? Please feel free to contact anyone on the committee:

Chair	Donna Seymour	315/265-6985	onthego@northnet.org
Dist. 1	Sue Oliver	716/652-1230	gsoliver@worldnet.att.net
	Judy Weideman	716/655-3649	weideman@gateway.net
Dist. 2	Janet Ulinski	716/227-0632	wulinski@aol.com
	Joan Russen	607/739-9960	jcrussen@exotrope.net
Dist. 3	Sharon Martin	315/437-9318	
	Grace Saatman	607/272-3748	rrs2@cornell.edu
Dist. 4	Margaret J Nijhuis	914/635-8612	nijhuis@vh.net
	Elizabeth Harrel	914/462-2141	bharrel28@juno.com
Dist. 5	Christine Volkmar	212/734-1336	
	Mimi Korb	914/354-3839	mimikorb@aol.com
Dist. 6	Faith Zimmerman	516/496-3090	fmzim@aol.com
	Norma Pleff	516/627-5590	

Serving AAUW at the state level is fun, exciting, worthwhile and satisfying. I know because I stepped forward when state president Vicki Marshall made an open call for volunteers at the Lake Placid Convention a few years ago. It has been a wonderful experience. Take a chance! Join us to make a difference in New York State!

Important

Branch Presidents: NYS Bylaws Change Reminder

Important

Please remember to return your response form for the proposed NYS bylaws change to me as soon as possible. Branches were e-mailed the information and the return form in June for the change proposed at Convention 2000 regarding the restriction of participation of more than one member on the NYS Board from a branch. You may e-mail your response if you wish. If you missed the communication on this change, you can download it from the AAUW NYS website or contact me directly.

Loreen S. Gionnitti, NYS Secretary/Bylaws
75 Third St., Westfield, NY 14787
716-326-4270 loreen_ginnitti@wacs2.wnyric.org

The nominating committee begins work on the proposed slate of officers in early fall. This change would allow them more freedom to choose the best available candidate. We must have a positive??????????



New York State *FOCUS* (USPS-390-570)
Fall 2000

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Additional Entries
USPS-390-570

The American Association of University Women
promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong
education, and positive societal change.

The AAUW Educational Foundation provides funds
to advance education, research, and self-development
for women and to foster equity and positive societal change.

The AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund provides funding and
a support system for women seeking judicial redress
for sex discrimination.

In principle and practice **AAUW** values and seeks a diverse
membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation
in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed,
age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

Important! All mailing labels are prepared at AAUW headquarters. Attention postmaster: Dated Material. Please do not delay

NEW YORK STATE AAUW BOARD: JULY 1, 2000 - JUNE 30, 2001

President

Roberta (Bobbe) Fortunato
551 Potter Boulevard
Brightwaters, NY 11718-1615
631/665-4689
bobbef@juno.com

Treasurer

Mary Thompson
5 Orchard Lane
Waterford, NY 12188
516/237-2577
cayethom@aol.com

Voter Education Director

Jane Smith
Box 37
Pulteney, NY 14874
607/868-3243
blufview@ptd.net

Convention Director

Ann Hicks
5177 Willow Brook
Clarence, NY 14031
716/741-3964
ashicks2@juno.com

Program VP

Marjorie B. Smith
129 Sheldon Road
Freeville, NY 13068-9716
607/347-4965

Educational Equity Director

Ann B Walker
31 Alma Street
Sayville, NY 11782
516/563-2678
walkerab@aol.com

Communications Director

Donna Seymour
8 Cedar Street
Potsdam, NY 13676
315/265-6985
onthego@northnet.org

Administrative Director

Carmen Wyszomierski
14 Country Greens Drive
Holtsville, NY 11742
631/698-1532
wyszcarmen@dellnet.com

Membership VP

Jeanette Knapp
1143 Ellis Hollow Road
Ithaca, NY 14850
607/254-7115
jdk4@cornell.edu

Diversity Director

Jane Sheeran
176 Burke Road
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
518/587-4895
sheeran176@aol.com

Legal Advocacy Fund Director

Evelyn Currie
37 Forest Road, Box 16
Burnt Hills, NY 12027
518/399-3711
ecurrie@gateway.net

College/University Director

Cira Markuson
Hartwick College
Oneonta, NY 13820
607/431-4034
markusonc@hartwick.edu

Educational Foundation VP

Helen Engel
32 Brown Drive
Oswego, NY 13126
315/343-9678
rengel@oswego.edu

Public Policy Director

Ann Bish
5177 Willow Brook
Clarence, NY 14031
716/741-3964
ashicks2@juno.com

International Relations Director

Peggy Coe
314 Paddock Street
Watertown, NY 13601
315/788-8702
bpcoe@imcnet.net

Past President

Kay Kraatz
PO Box 458, East Lake Road
Skaneateles, NY 13152
315/685-6256
kraatz@dreamscape.com

Secretary/Bylaws

Loreen Ginnitti
75 Third Street
Westfield, NY 14787
716/326-4270
loreen_ginnitti@wacs2.wnyric.org

Branch Council Director

Ann DiNicola
4112 State Route 12
New Hartford, NY 13413
315/735-4762

Peace Project Director

Barbara Schwarz
23 Wyandanch Avenue
Babylon, NY 11702
631/587-8865
onespirit@worldnet.att.net

Leadership Portfolio Editor

Freddie Cheek
406 Maynard Drive
Amherst, NY 14226
716/835-6945
fscneck@adelpi.net