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## GOTV Critical for the Fall Elections

**Jann Mirchandani, Voter Education Director**  
718/671-1649 [mirchman@ix.netcom.com](mailto:mirchman@ix.netcom.com)

It may surprise many members to discover the AAUW NYS Voter Education Director (yours truly) isn't really a political "wonk." In all honesty, I hate politics. I don't enjoy reading about it. I find it tedious to follow. It's time consuming and takes me away from my young children and husband.

Mainly, though, it is because of my family that I do follow politics. And lately, it's been harder than ever: the war on terrorism, No Child Left Behind, Medicare reform, the PATRIOT Act...

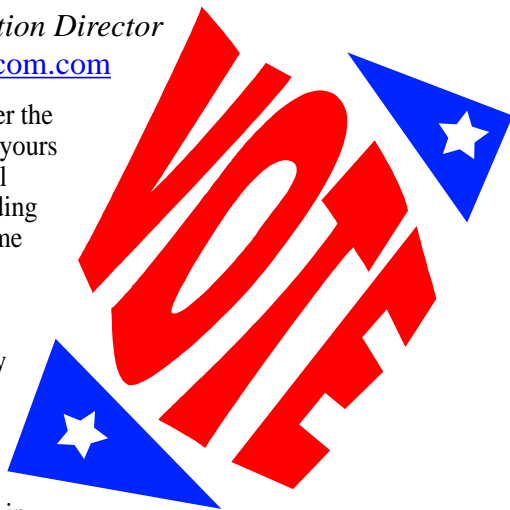
But I do it because I know what happens in Washington – and Albany and my own Town Hall – will reverberate for years to come. Poor legislation that gets passed may take years to reverse. A case challenging the constitutionality of the law must wend its way through the courts, with lawyers for both sides arguing and appealing decisions.

This year's election promises to be a real mud-slinger. It will likely be more partisan than anything we have seen in a long time. For those of you who are like me and just want to live your life, take care of your family and not be bothered with the mind-numbing accusations and politicking, you are not alone. But if we were all to sit back and let the political wonks take over, we will surely be in a sorry state. And we would, as the saying goes, have no one to blame but ourselves.

It's us everyday folks who ultimately decide the fate of our nation. Let us take up the gauntlet – and clipboards, and phones – and rise to the challenge. Let us not allow the politicians, corporate lobbyists and wealthy elite to determine our fate.

Work with your branch and other local organizations to start planning your legislative forum AND voter registration drive for the Fall. I think the branches throughout the state did a great job with our "Voter Education Campaign" last year. This year I hope to see even more of everything: more branches participating, more media coverage for our events, more legislators participating, more coalition building, more voter registration, more voter guides.

We all have families, jobs, and commitments – lives. **Get Out The Vote** needs to be one of our jobs and a real commitment – because of our families. This year's election is far too important to ignore while we "just live our lives."



**COME TO THE  
Convention!**



**Living  
the Mission**





# Reflections on "Living the Mission"

Evelyn M. "Evvie" Currie,  
AAUW-NYS President  
currie-em@nothnet.org 518/399-3711



What an exciting time it was! "Living the Mission" was the impetus to my traveling over 5000 miles to visit the NYS Branches last falls. I saw small branches and large branches providing mission-based programs. I participated in interesting District meetings. I met AAUW members who love this organization as much as I do. I renewed the AAUW acquaintances I had made around the state when I was the NYS LAF Director. The thrill of it was that these members are still working within their branches to further the AAUW mission.

Everywhere I went, we discussed membership ideas for retention and growth in the branches in New York State. Thanks to the work of many of the branches, AAUW NYS is down just five members from our membership total of December 31, 2002. We now have the excellent total membership of 3,351. This is the first time in several years that we have not had a substantial loss in membership. YOU DID IT! YOU have turned AAUW NYS around and it will only be onward and upward from here.

Many branches need to be congratulated for the specific mission-based projects they have initiated. While it is impossible to name all of them, I do want to mention a few which were outstanding. The **Buffalo Branch**, which is our largest branch with 242 members, produced Transitions Conference in 2002 and 2003. They were very successful, with many women of different ages being helped in their quest to acquire further education.

The **Ithaca Branch**, with 61 members, hosted their third Transitions Conference this past fall. They are having another Sister-2-Sister in the spring, as is the **Amsterdam-Gloversville-Johnstown Branch** of 78 members. The 66 members of the **St. Lawrence County Branch** worked with 51 other county organizations to produce the 4<sup>th</sup> Professional Clothing Fair; 426 people in need "shopped" for quality clothing contributed by the organizations. It helped students and the unemployed, among others, to retain their dignity. What wonderful things we can do with coalitions!

The **Elmira-Corning Branch** (71 members) invited the public to join them in honoring local Women Veterans who have served our country at a special meeting. The **Garden City Branch** (113 members) has adopted Mrs. V., a single mother, caring for two young boys, and year-round they contribute to helping her as she attempts to keep her head above water. The **Rockland County Branch** (48 members) turned their Holiday Pot Luck Party into a fund-raising event to be shared by EF and LAF. Members not only brought the food but also new gifts to be auctioned off after dinner. The **Skaneateles Branch** (40 members) attracted over 500 adults and children to their "Celebrating Women in the Arts" Show in November. These branches increased their membership too!

As I read the Branch newsletters sent to me, I realize how far we have come in the last two years. The branches that have invited me to speak to them will recognize this Helen Keller quote with which I close my remarks. "Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not obtained through self-gratification, but fidelity to a worthy purpose!" We have made fidelity to "Living the Mission" our worthy purpose!

Living   
the Mission

**AAUW-NYS • 2004**

*Convention*

ALBANY MARRIOTT

APRIL 23 - 25, 2004

**Convention information,  
Hotel & Convention  
Registration Forms available from**

*Carmen Wyzsomierski*

*at wyszcarmen@msn.com or*

*Telephone: 631/472-9377 or*

*www.northnet.org/nysaaaw/albany04.htm*

The hotel package includes two nights lodging, six meals, welcome reception and breaks. The cost per person is: \$400 single, \$276 double, \$234 triple.

# Legal Advocacy Fund Update

**Susan Sontup, LAF Vice President**  
tresswann@yahoo.com 516/679-6274

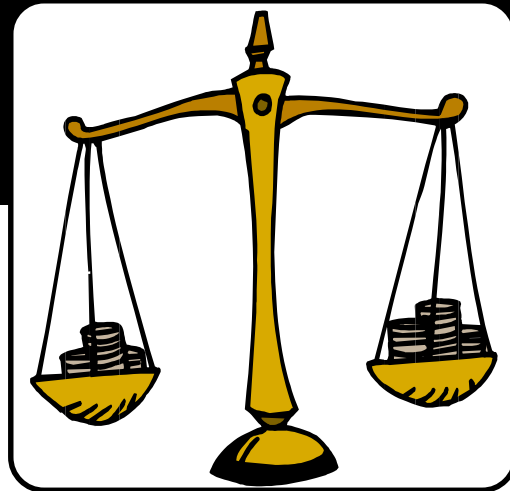
We exceeded our contributions for New York State's contributions to LAF for 2003. Many thanks to each and every one of you who made this possible!

At the end of the year, I heard from both branches and individuals who expressed their discomfort with giving money to the Legal Advocacy Fund as they believe that our responsibility at AAUW is to support education and not litigation.

Education is indeed what the Legal Advocacy Fund is about. Yes, the most visible portion of LAF is plaintiff support. Some of you have been able to hear LAF plaintiffs speak at conventions or district meetings. Yes, LAF supports them in their fight for equity at institutions of higher learning. Cases are not chosen randomly but have to meet strict criteria, one of which is to establish case law.

Plaintiff support in itself is a form of education for both the institution and society. Our AAUW mission statement is comprised of three parts: lifelong education, positive societal change and equity for all women and girls. Plaintiff support clearly exemplifies our mission. Education is not confined to classrooms. Positive societal change and equity are by products of successful suits.

However, LAF is not only about plaintiff support. Campus outreach programs are also an important part of LAF. Campus outreach is very much an educational effort. In



New York State, we have established the **Evvie Currie Giving Circle** to fund campus outreach programs in our own state. LAF contributions can be specifically earmarked for that cause. The Campus Outreach program also supports our mission of equity and positive societal change.

Another arm of LAF is the Progress in Equity award that provides a monetary award and recognition for an institution of higher learning that creates a program that improves the quality of life for women on campus. One of the criteria for this award is that it be able to be replicated elsewhere. This too is clearly part of our mission. As recently as last year, we have had a candidate for this award in New York State.

In conclusion, remember when you are thinking about how you support AAUW, remember that the Legal Advocacy Fund is an important part of the mission. For more detailed information on LAF programs, visit [www.aauw.org/laf](http://www.aauw.org/laf)

Come to convention to meet LAF litigant **Linda Brodsky** at the Legal Advocacy Luncheon.

## Come To The Convention

The New York State Board of American Association of University Women cordially invites you to come to the **Convention to be held in Albany at the Marriott on Wolf Road from April 23 to April 25, 2004.**

Leave home the white gloves, the flowered hats and the sequined dresses. Instead bring new energy and ideas to share, enthusiasm to meet new friends and an open mind to bring ideas back to your branches. We will not be serving high tea, but meals designed for the actively minded woman. We will not be playing croquet, but will have the annual Bina Roy Lap Swim at the hotel pool and the EF Walk held in a beautiful adjacent park.

As our two years of Living the Mission in AAUW draws to an end, come to hear the speakers, vote for new leaders, participate in the workshops you asked to be held, bid on LAF Baskets, and hug your friends that you haven't seen in too long.

On behalf of the Board I look forward to seeing you in Albany,  
*Jane Smith, AAUW-NYS Program VP*

# Nominating Team Report

Jann Mirchandani, *Nominating Team Chair*

The Nominating Team is proud to present the following members as qualified to stand for election to office in AAUW-NYS for 2004-2006.



*President*  
**Nancy Mion**

Nancy, a member of the Islip Area Branch, joined AAUW in 1975. She has held many positions within her branch, most recently as Legal Advocacy Fund Chair (1994-03) and President (1996-00). Nancy has also

served at the state level, most recently as the Convention Director (2001-04). In addition to her AAUW work, she has served her community through Suffolk County Coalition Against Domestic Violence Board of Directors 1984-2003, acting as President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Long Island Fund for Women and Girls, Gender Equity Committee 1999-2003, East Islip Public Library Arts Council 1998-2003. Nancy is proud of the fact that last year Islip's LAF contributions ranked 10th out of 1300 branches nationally. "Nancy cares about our mission and tries to live it. Her enthusiasm for all things AAUW is contagious," says Loreen Ginnitti, AAUW NYS Administrative Director.

*President*  
**Jane Pfeiffer Smith**

Jane joined the Bath Branch in 1976 and since then has held many offices in her branch – President, Program VP, EF chair and LAF chair. Jane joined the NY State Board in 1999 as a member of the Ed-Equity team. Other state positions she has held are Voter Education Director, Public Policy Director, and she is currently serving as Program Vice President. Outside of AAUW, Jane began her career as a teacher and currently runs her own catering business part of the year and works as a winter full-time employee at Stratton Mountain, VT as their Catering Manager. She is also a member of Rotary International and has served in many leadership positions in that organization, including President. Sandy Bernard, Past President AAUW and Past President AAUW NYS, writes, "Jane will be an excellent NYS President, leading us in an inclusive manner with grace, humor and style."



*Program Vice President*  
**Diane Haney**

Diane first joined AAUW in the early seventies in Colorado Springs and then in Evanston, IL where she served as a study group leader. After a lapse of several years, Diane rejoined in North Shore when she retired in 1995. Since then she

has worked as Assistant Chair to a branch study group, VP for Membership, Branch President and Branch Council Team member. She has also served as a volunteer with Planned Parenthood (Chicago), Cub Scouts and the Great Neck-Manhasset Parent-Child Home Program, and is currently an Ombudsman in a nursing home. Joy Billhardt says of Diane, "She is an excellent leader. Her dedication and loyalty to AAUW is outstanding. Her attention to detail plus her warm friendly manner are just some of her many assets."

*Education Foundation Vice President*  
**Phyllis Anderson**

Phyllis first joined AAUW in Costa Mesa/Irvine CA in 1972. She is a member of the Smithtown Branch and has served in various capacities, most recently as EF chair of her local branch. Currently she is serving as AAUW NYS Education Foundation Vice President and is seeking a second term. Phyllis also works with adults who want to pass the High School Equivalency exam. She participates in four book groups and supports the Girl Scouts, Habitat for Humanity, Bread for the World and Oxfam America. Stella Bruning writes, "The Smithtown branch unanimously endorses Phyllis Anderson for a second term as EF VP. She is the kind of person who is always ready to lend a helping hand in any capacity."





# Educational Foundation: A Century of Service

Phyllis Anderson, Educational Foundation VP 631/234-2451 EFVPforNYSAAUW@aol.com

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The Educational Foundation has awarded more than \$3.4 million for the 2003-2004 academic year. That is wonderful progress since the first grant of \$350 was made in 1888! This year nearly 200 extraordinary women are being helped to accomplish their personal and professional goals, 25 of them in New York. They will be performing research and holding positions of leadership. Their efforts will tackle the educational and social barriers facing women in the United States and around the globe and improve the quality of life for all people.

At the Convention in Albany, we will have an opportunity to hear from a Fellow whose research project addressed gender equity. Laurie Mandel is an art educator at Murphy Junior High School, Three Village Central School District, as well as at the Usdan Center for the Creative and Performing Arts. In addition to her role as art educator,



**Dr. Laurie Mandel**

Dr. Mandel is committed to understanding and improving the social climate of schooling and, in particular, adolescent peer interactions that she has been studying for the past 12 years. She is the project director of "The Relationships Project" at Murphy JHS, a gender-equity project funded by a community action grant from the AAUW Educational Foundation. She and four colleagues oversee a nine-month project with 60 girls and boys in 8th and 9th grades. It focuses on promoting healthier peer relationships by helping students develop skills to challenge

and redefine traditional gender roles. They are tackling issues of homophobia, language, and body image in their peer social interactions in junior high school.



The convention's Walk/Run for the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund is an excellent opportunity to raise the money to support such worthwhile projects and women educators like Dr. Mandel. Walk yourself or support an EF walker from your branch!

The Foundation has recently published the Directory of Fellowship, Grant, and Award Recipients. Each Branch received a copy, sent to the EF chair. If you have not ever perused a Directory, ask to borrow it. In every category of Award, the projects and recipients are briefly presented and the range of topics is astounding. At the end of the book is a full-page list of the volunteers who serve on Review Panels to evaluate proposals and select the recipients. There is also a list of major donors, an index to the sponsors (NYS has several named fellowships), and an index to the Recipients. It makes for interesting reading (you may recognize names) and encourages us to continue funding such worthwhile programs! There is an opportunity for you to become a Legacy Donor if you include the Foundation in your will. Contact Amy Falk at the Foundation for information on planned giving.

## International Affairs "To Do List"

**Joan Monk, International Affairs Director**  
914/245-7704 ftmaven@bestweb.net

- Begin intensive training for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bina Roy Lap Swim at the NYS Convention in Albany, April 23-25, 2004.
- Begin collecting sponsors for the swim in hope of winning the coveted "Golden Purse."
- Volunteer to be the International Affairs Chair for your branch.
- Begin planning a program/project with an international focus.
- Look for coalition partners in you community for this project.
- Take advantage of the "Early Bird Discount" available until May 2004 for the Triennial IFUW Conference in Perth, Australia.

### **FOCUS (USPS-390-570),**

a quarterly newsletter, is published for the New York State Division of the American Association of University Women by Printing, Inc., Cheektowaga, NY 14225-0701. The subscription rate of \$4.00 is included in the NYS dues. Periodicals postage is paid at Buffalo, NY, 14240.

Send all address changes to Buffalo Postmaster, Buffalo, NY, 14240, and AAUW Records Office, 1111 16<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Questions and articles should be addressed to the Communications Director, Donna Seymour, 8 Cedar Street, Potsdam, NY, 315/265-6985, e-mail onthego@northnet.org

Summer Issue Deadline: May 15, 2004  
Fall Issue Deadline: August 30, 2004

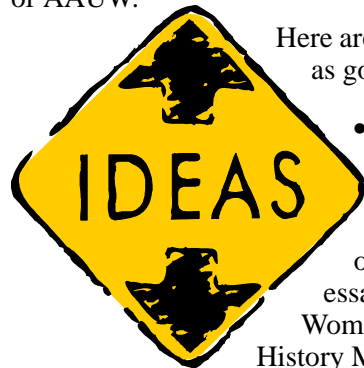
# Turn Your Branch Scholarship Award Into a Mission-based Program

Jane Smith, AAUW-NYS Program VP 607/868-3243 blufview@empacc.net

Local branches raise money for both the Educational Foundation and for the Legal Advocacy Fund. EF scholarships are given to candidates to change the educational landscape of America and the world. LAF helps to make workplace change at academic institutions. But we also support local branch scholarship programs. We take the mission of AAUW seriously at the local level to “promote equity for all women and girls, lifelong education and positive societal change.”



There are many ways to ensure your local branch scholarship is a mission-based program. The recipient of an AAUW scholarship should be attending a school or be enrolled in a program that supports the mission of AAUW.



Here are some suggestions to make the annual local scholarship award truly mission-based as well as good for branch visibility and membership recruitment!

- Have each applicant to write an essay based on the mission statement of AAUW, or a program aspect of AAUW (or, for example, an essay about the life of one of our 31 Women of Distinction for Women's History Month).
- Submit your scholarship to local newspapers, radio and/or television. This is news! Make sure you publicize the scholarship application process and the award! Get publicity for this program. Include a short history of the local branch and include an estimated dollar figure of how much money you have given to local students. Follow up articles about what some of the past winners are now doing. Make sure each article has complete contact information for membership.
- Make sure the application looks professional.
- Make an appointment at least a month in advance to discuss application and the award with the local guidance counselors for the schools involved.
- When conducting interviews use a neutral location that is easily accessible. A public library is a good location.
- Establish a public occasion for the scholarship presentation. Examples here include an AAUW banquet, graduation or school awards ceremony. Invite family members of the recipient to attend, as well as the principal of the winner's school, the guidance counselor, or a favorite teacher. If the recipient is a woman going back to school, invite her family and someone from the college.
- Invite the local press; make sure photographs are taken and include branch membership information in all copy, along with our AAUW mission statement.
- Ask the recipient to speak to the group about her goals and what she has done so far to achieve them. (Give her plenty of notice prior to the meeting so a short talk can be prepared!)
- Invite a guest speaker, perhaps a former scholarship winner who will talk about the difference your scholarship made in her life. This is a great way to motivate the new scholarship winners and increase donations!
- Take the opportunity to speak about EF and LAF; include the broad base of giving that AAUW has been noted for over the years.
- Include the gift of AAUW membership – pay the recipient's student dues and include her in branch membership and activities!

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*Good luck with your local scholarship. If you have any question, do not hesitate to contact me or any other board members. With advance preparation you can turn this annual event in your branch into a major community event and a very special occasion for all involved. You have the opportunity to gain attract potential members who see the branch involved in the community and making a difference in the lives of local people.*

# AAUW NYS Bylaw Change Recommended by the Board

to be voted on by the membership at the AAUW NYS Convention 2004

## Article IX Nominations and Elections

### Section 1. Nominating Committee

- a. there shall be a nominating committee elected by the following procedure:
  1. a member and an alternate to be elected at each District Caucus at the State Convention.



### Recommended change to the underlined sentence above:

1. a member and an alternate from each District to be elected by the delegates at the State Convention. Each District Chair shall forward 2 nominees, who have consented to be elected, to the President before the Convention convenes.

### Rationale:

For the last 4 years, the attendance at the State Convention District Caucuses has not been a true representation of the District membership. Many districts had only 8% of their membership present. Last year, 3 districts were not able to elect anyone to the Nominating Committee because the few members who were there were not eligible or refused to be elected. In the following weeks, the President had to recruit district members, who had not been at the Convention, to fill the Committee.

The Nominating Committee is too important a committee to be filled in this haphazard way! It decides the future of AAUW NYS when it selects its leadership for a 2-year period. The Committee needs to be made up of members who understand its importance and will commit to the work of the Committee. Too often in the past, some members felt coerced into taking the job just because they were able to be at the Convention District Caucus.

With this revised Bylaw, the District Chairs can solicit and nominate members who are interested in shaping the future of AAUW NYS, even though they cannot be at the Convention for some reason. The delegates at the State Convention Business meeting will elect the District Chairs' nominations for the Committee.

Re: Past Practice of Electing a District Chair at the Convention Caucus. According to the AAUW NYS Bylaws, the President appoints the District Council Director and the District Chairs on her committee. The District Caucus at the Convention is not needed to give the President suggestions since it is not a true representation of the District. In the past, a member at the Caucus sometimes felt coerced into being Chair, which information was not conveyed to the President. So the President appointed the person when someone else might have been more appropriate.

*Evelyn M. Currie, AAUW NYS President*

## AAUW-NYS • 2004 • Living the Mission II

# Convention

APRIL 23 - 25, 2004 AT THE ALBANY MARRIOTT

This 2004 Convention was developed to meet your needs. We'll elect the AAUW-NYS President, Program VP and Educational Foundation VP; enjoy the EF Gala; hear from a Legal Advocacy Fund litigant; be able to Network; attend the Public Policy Forum and Workshops on these topics: computers, leadership, membership, personal finances, Transitions conferences and the USA Patriot Act.

Cost per person for 2 nights and 6 meals: \$400 single, \$276 double, or \$214 triple. Car pool to centrally located Albany. Share a room with a member. You'll be glad you were part of this AAUW experience.

*Nancy Mion, AAUW-NYS Convention Director*

# Quick and Easy Action For Equity

**Janet L. Forbes, Initiative for Educational Equity Director**  
716/483-3525 jlforges@hotmail.com

*Here are a few quick and easy Action For Equity projects your Branch can accomplish and that can make a significant impact in your community.*

**New Moon Magazine:** *New Moon* is the magazine for every girl who wants her voice heard and her dreams taken seriously. It is 48 advertising-free pages edited by and for girls ages 8-14. *New Moon* contains fiction, poetry, artwork, letters, science experiments, cartoons, and pen pals. It also publishes award-winning articles about the lives of girls and women around the globe.



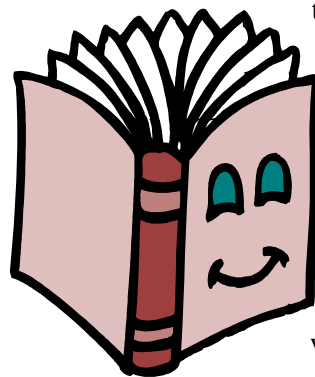
I challenge your Branch members to buy a gift subscription to *New Moon* for your school or public library, physician's office, after-school program, or a girl in your family, neighborhood, or religious community. Visit their website at [www.newmoon.org](http://www.newmoon.org) for more information and resources galore for girls ages 8-14 and those who care about them.

**National Women's History Project:** In 1980 the National Women's History Project (NWHF) was a group of women who noticed that no more than 3% of the content of school texts was devoted to women. Girls had few role models and boys presumed that women had never done anything important. Since that time the NWHF has grown from a local grassroots organizations to a nationally recognized institution that people around the country depend on for leadership, information, and educational resources. The NWHF mission is to recognize and celebrate the diverse and historic accomplishments of women by providing information and educational materials and programs.

I challenge your Branch members to become members of the

NWHF and support their work to promote the celebration and recognition of women throughout the year. The NWHF theme for 2004 is Women Inspiring Hope and Possibility. Visit their website at [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org) for more information about membership, catalog requests, informative quizzes, and resources related to celebrations of women throughout the year.

**Give the Gift of Women's History:** Donate a women's history book to your local library, after-school program, or senior center. The gift can be made in memory of a loved one, in honor of a special teacher or mentor, or simply a gift from your Branch. If you select a book from the NWHF catalog, they will customize a gift bookplate for the inside of the book and send the book and a



letter on your behalf to the organization of your choice. The bookplate includes the NWHF logo along with their motto, Our History Is Our Strength - Writing Women Back Into History. You can read more about this in the NWHF catalog. For more information visit their website at [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org).

These quick and easy Action For Equity projects are meaningful ways for each of us to continue Living the Mission in our homes, families, and communities. By joining with businesses and organizations that are doing the great work of supporting women and girls, we are **Living the Mission**, promoting equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change.

As our foremother, Alice Paul, said, "I never doubted that equal rights was the right direction. Most reforms, most problems are complicated. But to me there is nothing complicated about ordinary equality."

*Congratulations*  
to these Branches who Celebrate  
Milestone Anniversaries in 2004

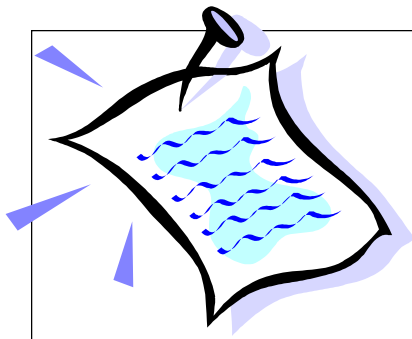
- 50 years:** Ontario County (1954)
- 55 Years:** Mid-Island (1949)
- 65 Years:** North Shore (1939)
- 115 Years:** Syracuse (1889)

## LAF Basket Silent Auction

Each branch can bring 3 baskets to convention. Branches receive credit for bids. Winners receive credit for donations. Shop, bid and support the Legal Advocacy Fund.







# Branch Title IX Action

The **Buffalo Branch** is planning a major conference on Title IX in October. Invited guest speakers for this conference include Deborah Slaner Larkin, former Executive Director of the Women's Sports Foundation and a member of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, and Marcia Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center and a long time advocate of Title IX.

The **Skaneateles Branch** heard AAUW-NYS Public Policy Director Betsy Forkas on the topic of "Title IX Revisited: More than Sports!" in January. As part of the state's education efforts about Title IX and other public policy issues, Betsy issues a monthly "Title IX on the 9s" report on the 9<sup>th</sup> of each month via e-mail. To sign up for these and other bulletins, contact Betsy at [bforkas@earthlink.net](mailto:bforkas@earthlink.net).

The **Ithaca Branch** and Ithaca College hosted a local National Girls and Women in Sports Day celebration for girls ages 8-12 in February. Girls rotated among four activity stations prior to an IC women's basketball game. The stations included an obstacle course, a basketball skills challenge, and a team-building activity, as well as halftime activities and an autograph session with the Ithaca basketball team at the game's conclusion.

**AAUW Jamestown** sponsored their 4<sup>th</sup> annual Get in the Game NGWSD event in early March at Jamestown Community College. The branch worked with others to plan events for 200 girls in 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade to encourage girls' involvement in sports. The girls rotated through several interactive skill stations to experience a variety of sports.

**AAUW-NYS Convention Keynoter Antonia Novello**, the NYS Health Commissioner, heads one of the leading health agencies in the country. She is responsible for a \$32 billion annual budget, the largest of any state agency, accounting for one third of the total state budget. Dr. Novello previously served as the US Surgeon General, the first woman and first Hispanic to hold this position. She has served as UNICEF Special Representative for Health and Nutrition. She holds thirty honorary doctoral degrees and is the recipient of over 40 awards and honors, including the Women's Hall of Fame.

## Media Savvy in an Election Year!

**Donna Seymour**, Director of Communications  
[onthego@northnet.org](mailto:onthego@northnet.org) 315/265-6985

It is easy to lose our sense of perspective about the news in an election year. We are bombarded by mixed and contradictory messages by the candidates, their political parties, special interest groups, and the news media commentators trying to "explain" everything to and for us. For example, during the Iowa Caucus, the combined total spent on political advertising equaled \$150 per voter!



Politicians know that negative advertising does two important things. First, it distorts the picture we have of the other candidate, and second, it turns off voters. It is much easier to guarantee results at the polls when the majority of eligible voters don't show up. The parties know what to expect from their base; it is the independent-minded voter willing to sift through the issues and really listen to the candidates that scares them.

Young adults, as group historically the least likely to vote, turned out in surprising numbers in Iowa. A poll by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that people increasingly turn to alternatives like the Internet for news about the presidential campaign, shifting away from traditional outlets like the nightly network news and newspapers. Young adults lead the shift, with one-fifth saying that they consider the Internet a top source of campaign news.

We all need to investigate the truth behind the advertising. This means spending time listening to more than just sound bites and watching 30-second ads. We need to explore those news outlets that allow us to hear the whole message, not a 10 second clip that illustrates what the commentator says the candidate said. Yes, this takes time and effort, but we can't trust our democracy to anything less. Too many of the news outlets in this nation are owned by a corporation whose bottom line is corporate profits. Info-tainment sells. Informed voters need more!

### Task Force for Tobacco-Free Women and Girls

NYS Smoker's Quitline:

1-866-NY-Quits

(1-866-679-8487)

or visit [www.nysmokefree.com](http://www.nysmokefree.com)



# Living the Mission



A one-day conference for 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls in New York City and Westchester County titled **Expanding Your Horizons in Science, Math & Technology** presented the opportunity for hands-on exploration of related careers. Held on March 13 at Barnard College, the EYH event was organized by the **New York City and Westchester Branches** of AAUW working with Barnard College and a host of local business sponsors.

In addition to students, interested adults were invited to discover how interesting and fun math and science can be and to learn about career opportunities for women in math, science and engineering. It was a chance to make personal contact with women working in traditionally male occupations and meet other young women interested in science and math.

The conference opened with remarks by Dr. Diane Herrick, a senior scientist at NexPress Solutions. The event featured a resource room with information about a wide range of math and science-related topics. Each girls went to two workshops that included:

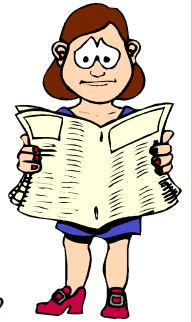
- Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend. Why are diamonds white, rubies red and sapphires blue?
- 2 Rub a Dub Dub. How Soap Works in the Tub
- What's Itching You? Asthma and allergies: Find out what these ailments are and how to test for them.
- Bringing Down The Walls! Design and build a catapult to rescue people being held as prisoners in a castle.
- Cry Me a River of DNA. Ever wonder what DNA really looks like?
- Smart Teenagers Finish Rich. Want to make your dreams a reality? Find out how!

The adults watched a screening of AAUW's video, *Tech Savvy Girls*, followed by their own "hands on" workshop. They participated in a town hall-type meeting led by three panelists, expert in the area of education, math and science. The day ended with a post-convention tour of Barnard College. For more information about the conference, you can visit their website ([www.aauw-eyhconference.com](http://www.aauw-eyhconference.com)) or contact Jann Mirchandani at 718/671-1649 or at [mirchman@ix.netcom.com](mailto:mirchman@ix.netcom.com). Any branch working with a local college can organize this kind of event.

## Living the Mission

### Membership News

**Diane Silvestro**, Membership VP  
[belvoir6@hotmail.com](mailto:belvoir6@hotmail.com)  
716/631-3349



Last year NYS lost 5% of our members; this year we only lost 5 members. How do I thank thee? Let me count the ways! Membership is everyone's business, is woven into all you do.

- Branch leaders set the tone for everyone, a dedicated board marches the branch in the right direction.
- Membership VP's lead efforts to recruit and retain members.
- Program VP's offer engaging meetings and events satisfying our mission.
- Members tell friends and colleagues how much they get from their AAUW membership.

AAUW is about building community among members: they feel welcome at branch events, feel connected to the organization, and feel their feedback is taken seriously. If your branch needs work, is losing members, then think about where you'll be in five years. Will AAUW still be a part of your life then? I hope so!

Your NYS Board is willing to work with any branch that asks in any area of the state. I'm so proud that you've stabilized our membership when so many organizations are hemorrhaging members. But there are branches in trouble out there that I want to help. Please let me.

### CONVENTION EF WALK/RUN

Sunday, April 25 at  
6:30 am or as time permits  
Tote Bags and Award  
for participants.

For details see your  
Convention packet or webpage:  
[www.northnet.org/nysaauw/albany04.htm](http://www.northnet.org/nysaauw/albany04.htm)



# Branch Programming that Lives the Mission

## Living the Mission

**Buffalo Branch** held an International Women's Day Dinner with speakers Ambassador Ellen Sauerbrey, US Representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, Mary Purcell, IFUW Representative to the United Nations, and Julia Hall, Counsel and Senior Researcher for Human Rights Watch, Europe/Central Asia.

The **Oswego Branch** invited high school coeds from Fulton to attend an OSU Women's Basketball game with them. In March, branch president Jenn Windsor's English 9 classes researched and presented information on the 2004 NYS Women of Distinction in conjunction with the "AAUW Reads" program.

The **Fairport Area Branch** had a successful an EF fundraiser in the fall involving tickets to Broadway production of the musical *Hairspray* in Rochester and a dinner.

The **Ontario County Branch** invited several groups - girls scouts, boy scouts, 4-H'ers, YMCA After-School "Kid-Lit" program, the general public and school art classes - in our area to participate in the "She Did It!" program for Women's History Month. The branch created a Starter Kit and identified 12 local outstanding women. The projects were on display at the Ontario County Arts Council in Canandaigua during March. The project targeted 3rd to 6th graders, but it was open to anyone.

**Islip Area Branch** programs included their popular Annual Cultural Celebration with the focus on Vietnam in January. February's program was a talk about African Americans on Long Island, and March saw local author (and AAUW member) Pat Hogeboom at their annual Author's Luncheon.

**Mohawk Valley Branch**, working in coalition with other local organizations including AARP, Alpha Delta Kappa, and Women of Rotary, raised money for local scholarships. They distributed "VOTE" posters before the November elections and did their usual stint as bell ringers for the Salvation Army Red Kettle.

The **Adirondack Branch** held a meeting on the campus of Adirondack Community College that was open to the public and attended by many non-members. They continue to hold their biennial FUN-Raising Auction

where members donate goods and services to raise money for branch activities.

The **Poughkeepsie Branch** went "Inside A Mosque" when the Imam gave members a tour of a local mosque. Members then met with some of the women of the mosque for fellowship. Aisha Kahn, whose children's book "What You Will See Inside a Mosque," spoke about her personal experiences as a convert to the Muslim faith after her marriage. The branch's EF fundraiser was a wine tasting party at a local business that raised about \$1000 for the Educational Foundation.

As part of its women-supporting-women efforts, the **Huntington Branch** members donated over \$400 to the Suffolk County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, which faced significant funding cuts.

The **Jefferson County Branch** took advantage of nearby Fort Drum to learn about the military's humanitarian missions and ways to build positive relationship in war-torn countries overseas. The branch celebrated Women's History month with guest Melanie Golding talking about Marietta Holley, a North Country author and early feminist.

The **Syracuse Branch** heard Francis Parks, a well known African American storyteller, speak about "African American Women Living the Mission: Tubman, Truth, Terrell, Bethane, Height."

The **Nassau Branch** enjoyed a visit from AAUW-NYS Legal Advocacy Fund VP Susan Sontup, who spoke about the important work of LAF. They also had programs about the needs of poor women at home and abroad during fall programs about Appalachia, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

The **Greater Rochester Area Branch** participated in the Open World Program of the Library of Congress in February. The branch planned and hosted activities for a "Rule of Law" delegation from Moscow and Tomsk Oblasts in Russia. The mostly women delegation consisted of a community leader advocate, a prosecuting attorney, a defense attorney and a judge. Events included visiting local courts, schools, and agencies, meeting judges, district attorneys, local leaders, and visiting points of interests.



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# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN NEW YORK STATE

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, disability, or class.

**Important!** All mailing labels are prepared at AAUW headquarters. Attention postmaster: Dated Material. Please do not delay. Send all address changes to AAUW Records Office, 1111 16<sup>th</sup> St., NW, Washington, D.C. 20036

## Issues at Breakfast: A Skaneateles Area Branch Tradition



**Joyce Jowaisas**, *President Skaneateles Area Branch*  
 315-685-3789 jowaisas@adelphia.net

Each May for the past seventeen years the **Skaneateles Area Branch** has hosted Issues at Breakfast. This mission-based event is our major fundraiser for the Education Foundation and is open to the community.

Members and guests gather at 9:30 AM for short networking and social hour, followed by a breakfast buffet. Before the guest speaker is introduced, there is a brief business meeting that includes the induction of new officers and, if an Outstanding Skaneateles Area Woman has been selected, she is honored at this time.

Our speakers' topics have been as varied as early spring weather in upstate New York, addressing issues related to women, girls, education, community or global concerns. Recent speakers have included educator Meg Brooks who spoke on the process of forming charter schools and updated the group on charter schools in New York. Chuck Doyle, General Curator of the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, discussed the political and financial challenges of animal

conservation. Tula Goenka, an assistant professor at Syracuse University S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication, offered insights into activism through films from a South Asian perspective.

The event offers us excellent opportunity for visibility in the community and has been a source of new members. We always have a membership table set up and make a special effort to welcome each guest. Finally, this event speaks beautifully to that "lifelong education" piece in our mission statement.



## 3rd Annual IFUW Bina Roy Swim at the 2004 AAUW-NYS Convention

Support the Bina Roy Swim with a suggested donation of \$1.00 per lap. Chart your own laps in the pool. All proceeds go to the IFUW Bina Roy Fund. Awards go to winner of the most laps and to the most dollars raised.

To register, contact Joan Monk at  
 914/245-7704 or ftmaven@bestweb.net.