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WOMEN NEW YORK STATE

### Come To Convention!

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### **Legislative Reform**

Jann Mirchandani, Voter Education Director 718/671-1649 jannmirch@verizon.net

The old saying goes, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." Well, it's broke! Albany is a mess and we can no longer afford to NOT fix it.

AAUW is in a unique position to work for change. We have many members that could meet with legislators. For members who live too far from Albany, letter and phone campaigns let them know we are paying attention and we will no longer wait for meaningful reform. After successful Voter Education and Public Policy campaigns, most branches have already found coalition partners with whom they could work. The Brennan Report http://www.brennancenter. org/programs/downloads/albanyreform\_final report.pdf is an excellent guide to the issues and what can be done. Use it as a resource for talking points when contacting your representatives.

And for those of you who like a challenge (as if changing Albany isn't challenge enough!), a great program built around this issue, or any other public policy priority, will work nicely for the Voter Education/Public Policy Award application.

New York State is a leader in so many respects. Our state legislature also should be a national leader – not a national laggard!

#### **Election Reform**

**Betsy Forkas**, *Public Policy Director* 518/377-6919 <u>bforkas@earthlink.net</u>

In the span of four years and two presidential elections, this nation has witnessed voting irregularities in at least two states. If we believe that voting is our inalienable right, then we ought to be able to believe that the process is also inalienable. We ought to be able to trust that our vote counts, and that our vote and the voting process is revered.

What can we do? Get involved. Be informed. Make a difference. Protect the rights that our foremothers secured for us. The League of Women Voters (LWV) is active in 57 counties and/or communities in New York. Work with them to study the issues and seek solutions. Or, create your own study with AAUW members and present your findings to your community.

Internet sites provide information as well as historical perspectives. Start with LWV sites: http://LWV.org or http://www.lwvny.org/. Search for 'election reform' and you will get 7.5 million results!

According to the *New York Times* in a recent report, "Our elections need to do more than produce a legitimate winner. They need to do it through a process that seems fair to all reasonable citizens."

Be a leader. Support and perfect that process.

## **Creating Leaders**

Nancy Mion, AAUW-NYS President 631/472-9377 myown220@aol.com



There are 3115 educated AAUW members in 43 branches in New York State. You are a part of this large number who believe in our Mission and know "Equity is Still an Issue". Your branch brings this AAUW message to your communities. To keep your branch alive and well, involved in "Sharing the Vision", use that special effort that took you through to a degree. You can give AAUW the gift of your ability. You know your branch needs leaders and you all have the potential to become those leaders. Leading is a skill that can be learned. It is not a talent with which you are born.

The AAUW NYS Board has developed a Strategic Plan. The goals we set were to assist the branches by: providing creative leadership training, developing programming with a membership link and marketing AAUW. The NYS Board also defined three Public Policy priorities: governmental reform, the future of women's rights, and women's lifelong

health care issues. Leadership and governmental reform are featured themes in this issue of the FOCUS.

Acknowledging that as a leader, you need training and support, the 23 members of the NYS Board are there to assist you. Your board counterpart will support you with information and answers to your questions and concerns. Coming to the NYS Convention will enable you to gain an even greater understanding of AAUW and its issues, meet counterparts and meet other leaders from around the state. We are developing plans to hold District Leadership Training Workshops this fall

The Summer Leadership Conference to be held at Delta Lake Conference Center near Rome. NY on July 15-17. 2005 will highlight Leadership Training. Pamela Collins, one of the five Association directors-at-large and a professional trainer, will be our Leader on Loan for the weekend. Pam will present two leadership training sessions totaling 3.5 hours. Participating in Strategic Planning for the NYS Convention will further enhance your skills. The NYS board will provide information and ideas about programming, membership, marketing AAUW, EF, LAF and the college/university tie-in. A Town Hall will be held to address your Association, NYS and branch concerns. Please let me know if there are other issues you would like discussed. In addition there will be time to network and socialize with those from other branches and the NYS board, and to enjoy a picnic, bonfire and s'mores. The subsidized cost is \$25. Two members from each branch are invited to attend and share this unique AAUW leadership experience.

### **LAST CHANCE!**

Betty Harrel & Margaret Nijhuis, Convention Directors 845/462-2141 <a href="mailto:bharrel28@msn.com">bharrel28@msn.com</a> • 845/635-8612 <a href="mailto:rnijhuis@hvc.rr.com">rnijhuis@hvc.rr.com</a>

**Register NOW for the** 

### 2005 AAUW NYS Convention!! "Sharing the Vision"

April 15-17, 2005 Turning Stone Resort, Verona, New York

In addition to an exciting convention, the Turning Stone Resort offers several golf courses, beautiful walks, a spa, a heated pool and a casino.

The convention and hotel deadlines are March 18th. Plan to join in the fun and the future! Forms are available at www.aauw-nys.org or from your branch president.

Get ready for a great convention! Join members from around the state.

Talk with Nancy Rustad, Association president. Learn about issues facing all of our communities. Share successful ideas and create new approaches. The convention is for EVERY member!

### Legal Advocacy Fund Update:



Equity Is Still An Issue.

LAF Evvie Currie Giving Circle

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

I hope to see all of you at the convention this year. It promises to be really great. As usual we are going to have baskets for LAF representing the branches. It's a great way to support LAF and your branch. LAF still needs your support.

In November, I was privileged to attend a four college forum sponsored by the St. Lawrence County Branch where we discussed the status of women on campus. The issues these women are facing are very similar to those faced in the corporate world. It was insightful, inspirational and invigorating. And, after listening for three hours, I was amazed that a gentleman from the audience still did not get it. All he took out of the entire exchange was that perhaps women should only have women faculty advisors. This is what we are facing and why it is so vital and important that we continue to support LAF not only with our dollars. We must also speak in our communities about our experiences, our daughters', mothers' and sisters' experiences. The Evvie Currie NYS Campus Outreach Giving Circle is open until March 30, 2005. Please consider making your donation early this year and earmarking it for this fund, the proceeds of which will be used in New York State.

### Leadership Is Action

Linda Suchocki, District Director 716/823-4154 suchocki207@cs.com

Former CEO of Westinghouse Broadcasting Corporation, Donald H. McGannon, once said, "Leadership is action, not position," and I strongly agree. In all your activities within the branch, you have an opportunity to take action. This year, I challenge all branch members to participate in planning, presenting, and supporting your Fall District Conference. Use this as an opportunity to strengthen ties with other branches, share ideas, and develop programs that reach out to new members and publicize the remarkable work of AAUW.

I invite you to contact your District Coordinators and NYS Board members within your district to begin planning your District Conference. The format, date and location of the Conference is up to you, but every branch should be working with the branches in your district to create an event that opens dialogue and provides a venue for sharing ideas and supporting our mission.

#### Membership News

Diane Silvestro,

AAUW-NYS Membership

Vice President 716/631-3349
belvoir6@hotmail.com

Communication between the NYS board, branches, and members is limited. The NYS Convention is a great opportunity for board members to interact with the people they represent. We are expected to lead the state in a way that reflects the wishes of our members. But, unless you make those wishes known, it becomes a serious challenge. I'm asking every convention attendee, no matter what her branch role, to come forward with concerns and suggestions, or just to meet the leaders who make decisions affecting them, to ask what they're doing. Getting involved runs the gamut from taking an elected position to offering ideas. If you aren't planning to attend the Convention, contact numbers are on the state website. Let us know how we're doing and what you want us to do.

Communication is also a way to let the public know about AAUW. Talk from the heart about what AAUW means to you. Continue to publicize our wonderful programs and events at work, at your health club, library, supermarket, or wherever you go, because that's where you'll find like-minded women. I hope all members will adopt the slogan, "REACH OUT!"

### In Memoriam

We are saddened by the recent passing of Frances Sontag, a former president for four years of Massapequa Branch. She began the Chordalairs and arranged all the music for that branch's spring and holiday events. Known on Long Island and in New York and other states for her music and chorus teaching, Frances received awards and recognition for her work with New York State School Music and National Music Education Associations. The Marian Choir of Seaford also benefited from her arrangements. She was well loved by all and will be greatly missed.

### **Nominations 2005**

Evelyn M. Currie, Nominating Team Chair 518/399-3711 emcurrie@earthlink.net

The Nominating Team is proud to present the following members as qualified to stand for election to office in AAUW-NYS for 2006-2008:



**Eileen Hartmann** *Membership Vice President* 

Eileen has a BA in English and Education and an MS.Ed. from Nazareth College, where she was Field Experience Coordinator in the Dept. of Education from 2000-2004. Her AAUW experience has been in both California and New York. She has been a member of the Fairport Area Branch for 29 years. But from 1995 until 1999, she also was a member of the Los Gatos Saratoga Branch while living in California. She has held elective offices in both branches. Eileen has been President of the Fairfield Area Branch twice: 1986-87 and 1998-2000. She is currently in her third year as College/University Director on the AAUW-NYS Board. She presented "Ideas for Action" workshops at the AAUW-NYS Convention 2002 on Long Island, and served as Credentials Chair for the AAUW-NYS Convention 2001 in Rochester. In September 2004, she organized a voter registration drive for the Fairport Area Branch in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Rochester. Nancy Shadd, Fairport Area Branch president, describes Eileen as a natural born leader. "She is dedicated, supportive, creative and a persistent promoter of AAUW." She will be a team player on the AAUW-NYS Board!



Cheryl Papa Legal Advocacy Fund Vice President

Cheryl earned a BS and MS in Elementary Education at SU-NYCortland. She retired in June after 32 years of teaching in several Binghamton area school districts. Her community volunteerism includes being a Lay Leader and President of the Vestal United Methodist Women and a Democratic Party Committee Woman. Cheryl has been a member of the Southern NY Branch for 30 years, serving as Hospitality Chair, Secretary, Membership Vice President, Scholarship Committee Chair and Co-President of the branch, and LAF Chair. In her four years as LAF Chair, the Southern NY Branch LAF contributions have quadrupled. She was named 2003 AAUW

Woman of Achievement and joined the honorees of all of the women's organizations in Broome County to be recognized at a prestigious annual event. According to Mitzi Manning, Secretary of the Southern NY Branch, "Cheryl's ability to put untiring effort and enthusiastic optimism into every job she undertakes makes her a joy to work with and a pleasure to be around!" Cheryl will bring to the Board a splendid work ethic and a wonderful sense of humor.



Loreen Ginnitti (Laurie) Secretary/Bylaws

Laurie earned a BS degree from SUNY Buffalo and an MS from SUNY Plattsburg. She was a Family and Consumer Science Teacher for 33 years and a middle states evaluator for six years. Laurie belonged to the Chautauqua/Westfield Branch for 30 years. She was the President or Co-President for 12 years and has also been the Branch Secretary, Program Chair and Membership Chair. Laurie now belongs to the Jamestown Branch and served as AAUW-NYS Secretary/Bylaws in 1999-2001. Leading workshops at Branch, District and State levels is her forte. She was the chair of the AAUW-NYS "Task Force for the Future" 2001-02 and was the Administrative Director 2002-04. Presently she is President of the YWCA Board in Westfield. Laurie has demonstrated her ability to work with diverse personalities and maintain a calmness which in turn calms others. She will be dependable and accurate in completing AAUW-NYS Secretarial tasks. Betty Harrel, AAUW-NYS past president, recommends Laurie: "Throughout her time in AAUW, Laurie has shown a love of AAUW, a commitment to its mission, and a willingness to help others."



Mary J. King Treasurer

Mary has a BA in Chemistry from the College of Wooster in Ohio. She retired from Spackenkill High School, Poughkeepsie, after 19 years as an Administrative Computer Aide. Mary has been a member of the Poughkeepsie Branch for 40 years, serving as Secretary, Treasurer, Bylaws Chair, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster. She was on the AAUW NYS

Convention Registration Committee 2000. After moving to Brant Lake, she became a dual member in the Adirondack Branch. Last year she consented to fill out the unexpired term of their Treasurer. On the state level, Mary was the Focus Editor from 2000-2003, leaving that position when she was elected AAUW- NYS Treasurer. She originated "Treasurer'\$ Tally", a quarterly newsletter available on line at aauw-nys.org. She also launched the Treasurers' egroup to help Branch Treasurers with their questions. She will continue to design and administer a budget that reflects the organization's program needs. Donna Seymour, Immediate Past Communications Director, describes Mary as a wonderful team player and role model for everyone on the state Board. Her friendly style and willingness to help others is contagious. She will bring a dedication and exemplary work ethic to the Board for two more years!

### NYS Nominating Team 2004-2006

The decision was made by the AAUW NYS Board to have the Nominating Team be a two-year commitment to coincide with the term of the elected President. Most of the members who were elected at the 2004 Convention have consented to remain for another year. Replacements needed will be appointed by the President. The next election of Nominating Team members will be in 2006 when the next President is elected.

### The Least Equal State

**Diane Haney,** NYS Vice President Program 516/248-0476 <u>haneydhd@yahoo.com</u>

How does it feel to live in the least equal state in the union? When it comes to educational funding, it feels exactly like living in New York. We are the least equal state in terms of the difference in amount of money per pupil spent in the richest 25 per cent of school districts compared to the poorest 25 percent. New York City is the most famous district thus underserved, but 517 other districts are also under funded, and more than forty are less well funded than New York City, according to the New York State School Boards Association and the Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

You are undoubtedly aware of the successful Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) lawsuit charging that the state school funding formulas as applied to New York City are unconstitutional. Although this lawsuit applies only to New York City, all parties are well aware that any solution must apply state-wide. A recent poll shows that citizens support increased school funding two to one.

Between March 12 and May 1, thirteen "community conversations" will be held around the state to discuss the issues of *Underfunded Schools*, *Discounted Dreams*. As we go to press. legislation is being written to make school funding fairer, and a second series of meetings to discuss this proposed law will be held.

Program includes all of the things we do to further the mission of AAUW. The support of public education has been an AAUW goal since the organization began. If you would like to know more e-mail or send mail to 13 Whitewood Drive, Roslyn, NY 11576. For information on meetings in your area contact www.nyssba.org (the school boards association), www.cfequity.org (CFE) or call Jessica Garcia of the CFE at 1-888-690-0212.

### Branch Action: Sharing the Vision In Programming

The Amsterdam-Gloversville-Johnstown Branch had been active in its community outreach program with Catholic Charities in Fulton and Montgomery counties by volunteering for after school programs in Gloversville, Fort Plain, Fonda, and Amsterdam. Members travel distances to offer their time and service.

The **Greater Rochester Area Branch** again hosted a Russian delegation under the auspices of the Liberty of

Congress's Open World Leadership Development Program. The focus of the eight person delegation this year was HIV/AIDS. The group also visited Strong Memorial Hospital, the teaching hospital of the University of Rochester, and various community health projects dealing with AIDS. The group stayed with local families and participated in cultural and community issues. AAUW members hosted and provided many meals for the delegation.

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### **Did You Know?**

Helen Engel and Marilynn Smiley, AAUW-NYS Historians 315/343-9678 & 315/342-4803 rengel@oswego.edu & smiley@oswego.edu

#### Did You Know? 1925

State President: Mrs. Frederick E. Bates, Ithaca (1920-26) New Branches: Poughkeepsie, Dunkirk, Westfield 18 Branches in New York State Division: New York City. Central New York (Syracuse), Albany, Buffalo, Eastern Steuben (Corning), Southern New York (Binghamton), Rochester, Elmira, Oswego, Ithaca, Adirondack (Glens Falls), Mohawk Valley, Jamestown, (divided into 3 branches in 1925) with the 2 new additions of Westfield and Dunkirk, Schenectady, Aurora (1921, disbanded 1926)

**1930** – 75 years ago State President: Mrs. William Pratt Graham, Syracuse (Central New York Branch) (1926-30) Mrs. Charles H. Snyder, Rochester (1930-32)

For the first time, the New York State Division had an executive board consisting of five officers (President, 1st, 2nd, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-president and Secretary-Treasurer) elected by the convention and six chairmen [sic] (Education, Fellowships, International Relations, Legislation, Membership,

and Publicity) appointed by the president. These had been authorized in the new constitution passed at the convention held in Rochester that year.

Members-at-large of the National Association, who lived in New York, were invited to become members of the State Division

New branch: Newburgh (College Club)

#### **Questions for You:**

- ☐ Who is responsible for maintaining all records of your branch (not just the minutes of your branch board and branch meetings)?
- ☐ Does your branch have a historian?
- ☐ When are you going to update your branch history or write one for the first time?

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

Questions and articles should be addressed to the Communications Director, Betty Preble, 6935 East Quaker Street, Orchard Park, NY, 14127, 716/662-0608, e-mail betty6935@adelphia.net.

> Summer Issue Deadline: May 1, 2005 Fall Issue Deadline: August 1, 2005

What you always do before you make a decision is consult. The best public policy is made when you are listening to people who are going to be impacted. Then, once policy is determined, you call on them to help you sell it.

-Elizabeth Dole in The Last Word: A Treasure of Women's Quotes by Carolyn Warner

### **Creative Leadership with a Cross Cultural Perspective**

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

As we focus on creative leadership, I would like to share with you the wisdom of Angeles Arrien, Ph.D. Angeles is a cultural anthropologist, author, educator and corporate consultant. She lectures and conducts workshops worldwide, showing the bridge between cultural anthropology, psychology and comparative religions. Her work reveals how indigenous wisdoms are relevant to our families, professional life and organizations, and our relationship to the Earth.

In her work, The Four Fold Way: Walking the Paths of the Warrior, Teacher, Healer and Visionary, creative leadership is the way of the Visionary. The principle that guides the Visionary is telling the truth without blame or judgment. When we express the inner visionary, we know and communicate our creative purpose and life dream, act from our authentic self, are truthful, and honor the four ways of seeing: intuition, perception, insight, and vision.

Trusting our inner wisdom allows us to be who we truly are and bring our gifts and talents forward into AAUW.

As we continue to work together, it is important to remember the way of the visionary. Being in touch with our inner visionary, moves us forward in powerful ways. Truth telling without blame or judgment is a powerful tool for leadership. Vision is a sign of leadership. What is your vision?

#### **Branch Action**

-continued from page 5

The **Poughkeepsie Branch** www.aauwpoughkeepsie. org, in coalition with two other local organizations, the Older Women's League and the League of Women Voters, distributed 20,000 mail-in voter registration forms to libraries, schools, daycare centers, senior centers, nursing homes, apartments, and town house complexes in order to encourage voter registration. "This election-year tradition gives members a chance to become involved in an important community outreach," notes Branch President Peggy Kelland. The Poughkeepsie Branch has been the lead group in Dutchess County for voter registration since 1996. This year the branch doubled the number of forms handed out in 2002.

Yates County Branch completed its award-winning local history project, "Through the Eyes of Women," which includes interviews with 30 women who have played vital roles in education, politics, and other areas of public service. The culminating event was a spring ceremony in Penn Yan where the women, including 100-year-old retired teacher Elsie "Peg" Pond, were honored. Project coordinator Barbara Alconero explained how AAUW, working with the Oliver House museum, used a \$5,000 James P. Gordon Trust of Rochester grant to purchase video equipment, lighting, a DVD recorder-player and software. AAUW members conducted the interviews that are available in both CD and DVD forms. These were placed in Yates County public and school libraries, and the Oliver House museum. It's hoped that students of all ages, including adult researchers, will find these resources valuable in understanding the contributions women have made to Yates County history.

### From the Communications Director

Betty Preble, 716/662-0608 betty6935@adelphia.net

When someone in AAUW mentions "communications", the usual thought is of newsletters, websites, newspaper articles, etc - and those are certainly necessary. However, most branch members look at those and think, "That's someone else's responsibility!" Let's try to remember that more personal communication is also necessary - and that's a job for each and every one of us! Do your friends know about AAUW - what it stands for and your degree of involvement? Do your relatives? Do you USE the AAUW canvas bag from a convention or conference so that others will see it? Have you worn your LAF or Eleanor Roosevelt pin to places where people might ask about it? Many of us are private people who choose to keep our feelings and political leanings to ourselves, but for each of us there's a reason we joined - and have continued our membership. Figure out the best way to use that as a "hook" to draw in others who feel the same way - use those bags and pins to trigger your "elevator talk". Even the shyest of us can answer questions and "share the vision" of what we're doing to make the world a better place!

### **Leadership = Influence**

Erna Cunningham, AAUW-NYS Diversity Director 631/585-0868 rcunning@suffolk.lib.ny.us

Leadership = synonymous with influence. A person who is a forerunner or guide, may it be a world class leader such as Marian Anderson, Frida Kahlo, Eleanor Roosevelt or a branch leader, influences others and exhibits this trait. Marian Anderson's regal demeanor despite rejection prompted the first civil rights rally at the Lincoln Memorial. Frida Kahlo's courage to depict her pain in vivid folkloric style was embraced by all people and Eleanor Roosevelt's work as a humanitarian and reformer set examples for others to follow.

In the same way branch members should set examples for other members to follow. Encourage others by giving them small pieces of a job to work at along with you. Be a mentor by keeping close contact. Share a room with a new person at the New York State Convention and at Delta Lake. Share a ride and send messages of thanks and praise to other members.



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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 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036

### The Seasons of the Educational Foundation

Phyllis Anderson, AAUW-NYS Educational Foundation Vice President 631/234-2451 <a href="mailto:EFVPforNYSAAUW@aol.com">EFVPforNYSAAUW@aol.com</a>

Winter is the time of dormancy and hibernating in nature, but for human members of AAUW it is a time for planning and action. When spring arrives, we are ready with a burst of energy and new ideas, especially for the Educational Foundation and fund raising. If your Branch is looking for new ways to achieve the goal of \$25 per capita, plan now to attend the NYS Convention in April. Take part in the Saturday workshop "chat room" where we will present success stories from Branches of different sizes. Return home with new enthusiasm and "how to" suggestions. Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, and we get our best ideas from each other. If you would like to share the success of your own Branch Fund Raiser, be prepared with handouts and let me know your plans.

Every member should feel responsible for helping young scholars continue their studies. On Saturday evening April 16 we will hear from EF Fellows in the fields of ornithology/evolution and in nutrition. Share our pride in their academic excellence. You can get a "jump start" on your Branch contributions by asking a few friends and family members to sponsor you in the EF Walk on Sunday morning. Collect their checks (made out to the Educational Foundation) before the Walk which benefits the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund for Women and Girls. The individual donors and your Branch get credit for their donations and you might receive an award for gathering the most money. Look in the Convention Registration Packet for the sign-up form. Starting your campaign in the spring makes it easier to avoid the rush and pressure at the end of the calendar year. As the seasons turn, we find ways to make good use of our energies and time.

2005
ASSOCIATION CONVENTION
June 24 - 27
Washington, DC

NYS 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

