

## WHAT'S DRIVING YOU TO AAUW?

by Eileen S. Hartmann, AAUW NYS president,  
Eshartmann5@gmail.com ~ 585.924.4876

We had a wonderful AAUW NYS convention at the Otesaga in Cooperstown in April. It was heartening to see so many dedicated members in the audience each time we gathered and I was thrilled to have the opportunity to spend some quality time with AAUW Executive Director **Linda Hallman**, National Women's Hall of Fame Director **Christine Moulton**, and the many other speakers and guests who came to enlighten us about topics of interest to women and families.

There are several NYS board members finishing up their terms. We are grateful to them for their outstanding contributions of time and expertise. They are: Public Policy Director **Nancy Mion**, Cultural Interests Director **Joan Monk**, and College/University Director **Diane Haney**. All been driving forces for projects that have benefitted NYS. Also, **Mary Lou Davis** will remain on the board, moving from convention director to secretary/bylaws officer. **Mimi Korb**, who has resigned that position after completing one year of her two-year term, has done an outstanding job in assisting our 42 branches with bylaws updates this year. Bravo to all for distinguished work!

At the convention it was exciting to be re-elected to the position of state president for a second two-year term and to know that there are incredible women team members on the state board who, together with active branch leaders, are so creative and involved in our AAUW mission-related goals. It is support from every member that makes the position one to embrace and keeps me on the pathway to achieving goals on behalf of AAUW NYS.

What does drive us to action within this organization? Consider these few options:

- The unfinished business of equity
- The opportunity for ongoing mental stimulation
- The chance to build on ideas that make lives better
- Community partnerships that make a difference through programs and projects
- The passion that takes ideas to fruition,
- Channels for communication
- Real-time face-to-face meetings with people who have common causes
- Access to electronic communications which allow us to voice opinions and concerns,
- Outreach to legislators
- Recognition for excellent work and financial incentives that move the mission forward,
- Friendships
- Projects that allow us to empower the next generation of women and their families

Add to this list your own reasons for involvement in our organization and soon you will see that the drive to break through barriers is strengthened by you as a member.

On behalf of the state officers and directors, I encourage you to bolster your involvement in the organization by attending the **Summer Leadership Conference** at Cazenovia College from July 9 - 11. AAUW New York State lends value to your life all year long and your state board members provide several opportunities to bring you together; this summer one is more casual than convention but it's equally powerful. Come to campus and let's grow the organization with the ideas we conceive. Your driving force is pivotal to the success of AAUW NYS!

### In This Issue:

NYS President: AAUW's Driving Force....	1
LAF Corner.....	2
College/University.....	2
Public Policy.....	3
Communications.....	3
Historians.....	4
Membership Matters.....	4
Diversity.....	4
Convention Highlights.....	5
Women of Distinction.....	5
21st Century Awards.....	6
Educational Fund.....	6
Future NYS Convention Dates & Places..	6
My Sister's Keeper.....	7
Convention Kudos.....	7
Visibility.....	7
Cultural Interests.....	8



## LAF CORNER — CONGRATULATIONS TO AAUW NEW YORK STATE BRANCHES!

by Mildred DeWitt, AAUW-NYS LAF vice president,  
aauwmanhattan@aol.com ~ 516.318.1313

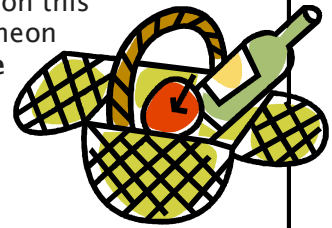
For the third year, New York State is second in the nation in donations to the Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF). The following branches placed in the Top Ten for contributions and/or per capita:

**Islip Area; Westchester County; Buffalo, Inc.; Schenectady; Smithtown Area; Fairport Area; Manhattan; Poughkeepsie, Inc.; St. Lawrence County; New York City, Inc.; Mid-Island; Southern New York; Yates County; Rockland County; Syracuse; Jamestown; Staten Island; North Shore, LI; Adirondack; Ithaca; and Oswego.**

Of special note is the **Islip Area Branch** which has consistently placed first for donations and per capita in New York State and ranked in the Top Ten nationwide for the third year. Thank you to **Deborah Benzinger** of the Islip Area Branch for her dedication to the Legal Advocacy Fund.

### Baskets

Twenty-five branches participated in the Basket Auction at the AAUW NYS Convention this year. There was also a beautiful basket, containing items from Kentucky, donated by luncheon speaker and LAF litigant **Claire Schuster**. A convention workshop speaker, **Deborah Borie** ("Too Sexy Too Soon"), also donated a basket, bringing our total number to 60. As usual, the basket room was a success and all donations, by branch and basket, are posted at [www.aauw-nys.org](http://www.aauw-nys.org) (click on LAF).



### LAF Pins

The new pin for 2010 is now available. If you donated \$100 or more at the convention and did not receive a pin, please let me know and I will send you one.

## BRANCHES OFFER SUPPORT FOR STUDENT CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

by Diane Haney, AAUW NYS college/university director, haneydhd@gmail.com ~ 516.248.0476

As I write this, we have 33 college/university members in New York State — a recent high. The recession is not hurting our recruiting.

Thanks go to **Lorrin Johnson** for her work with our newest member, the College of Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale, the Bronx.

There are about 300 schools in NYS, so while this is excellent; there is still room to improve. Please think about your local schools, check to see if they are members, and make plans to recruit them in the fall.



This year we established a state matching funds program to assist branches with providing support for students attending NCCWSL (National Conference for College Women Student Leaders). This has been a real learning experience.

We thank the **Buffalo, Dunkirk-Fredonia, Smithtown, Syracuse, and Westchester** branches for their support of the state program. With branch help, NYS assisted three students in attending NCCWSL this year.

Thank you, too, to those branches which support local students entirely. I know the **North Shore** and **Islip Area** branches do, but I would like to be sure I know about all of you who do. If your branch supported a student, would you please let me know?

The two best ways of finding candidates for our NCCWSL support have been AAUW members and upper-level administrators. A vice president for student affairs or dean of students, for example, simply forwards the information to the campus e-list. Remember, a wider net catches more fish, so if you are interested in finding your own student to support, you might want to try that.

This has been a very worthwhile project, and I would like to see it continue.

## YOU ARE THE FORCE THAT CAN MAKE AN AAUW ISSUE BECOME A REALITY

by Nancy Mion, AAUW NYS public policy director, myown220@aol.com ~ 631.472.9377

**YOU CAN** contact your legislators and let them know what you think about laws that reflect AAUW and NYS Public Policy principles. You have all the resources of AAUW at your fingertips to give you the information. Nationally, go to [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org), click on Act or call 800.326.2289; for NYS, go to [www.aauw-nys.org](http://www.aauw-nys.org) and click on Public Policy.

**YOU CAN** become involved in your branch's Voter Education efforts this significant election year. We will be electing: two U.S. Senators; Members of the House of Representatives; the NYS Governor, Lt. Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General; Members of the NYS Assembly and Senate; and local officials.

**YOU CAN** participate in candidate forums to inform yourself and others about candidates' thoughts on AAUW issues. To vote, citizens need to be registered. Carry registration forms with you and be part of branch registration activities.

**YOU CAN** encourage women to vote,

especially younger ones, for they espouse our issues. As we increase the number of women voting, politicians will be made more aware of women's interests. Also, women will hold elected officials more accountable for campaign promises.



**YOU CAN** help elect people who believe in our goals. It is more effective than trying to change the minds of those in office who have a different point of view. When women comprise 35% of a legislature, change occurs. Congress has 16%. The NYS Legislature has 22%. Our NYS counties have 17%. Support women candidates whenever possible.

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.** Your commitment to having informed women voters come to the polls in 2010 will help AAUW issues become realities.

It has been a rewarding experience being your NYS Public Policy Director for the past four years. Thank you for your encouragement and support. Your involvement in the political process has resulted in the passage of legislation that has advanced equity for women and girls.

## SMALL ACTS

by Donna Seymour, AAUW NYS director of communications, onthego@northnet.org ~ 315.265.6985

The great (if uncomfortable) historian Howard Zinn (1922-2010) once wrote, "Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world." To illustrate this point, I bring you three acts of accidental activism.

The first is New Hampshire's **Doris "Granny D" Haddock**, who died at age 100 in March. Born in 1910, she "retired" in 1972 and became more active in community affairs. Granny D walked 3,200 miles across the country at age 89 to draw attention to campaign finance reform. Inspiration for her cross-country trek came from the Tuesday Morning Academy, a group of women in Dublin, NH who met every Tuesday at 8 a.m. to do ballet exercises and discuss world affairs.

Covering about 10 miles a day, Granny D walked through more than 1,000 miles of desert, climbed the Appalachian Range in blizzard conditions and even skied 100 miles after snowfall made roadside walking impossible. She started in near-obscure, but soon was discovered by local and national media. The subtitle of her autobiography, written with Dennis Burke, was "You're Never Too Old to Raise a Little Hell." A lesson for us all.

My second story is a Facebook campaign to get 88-year old **Betty White** to host Saturday Night Live (SNL). Started on a lark by an unassuming young man who admires the actress and his friends, within a couple of months 500,000 people had signed on and Betty White was "drafted" to host SNL for the Mothers' Day 2010 weekend broadcast, one of the most-watched episodes in the show's recent history.

The power of social media is further illustrated by the actions of documentary filmmaker **Annabel Park**, who expressed her frustrations with the Astroturf Tea Parties that have taken over the political process since last summer with a good, old-fashioned rant: "Let's start a coffee party — a Red Bull party — anything but tea," she wrote. "Let's get together and drink cappuccino and have real political dialogue with substance and compassion."

In just a few weeks, fans of the Coffee Party on Facebook mushroomed from a few hundred to more than 100,000 — making Park the accidental leader of a virtual — and real — political movement. The first official Coffee Party meetings took place on March 13, National Coffee Day, where folks all across the country came together in their communities to discuss their concerns.

Who will the next accidental activists be, and what revolutionary media techniques will they use? It could be you!



## WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE: ADD HER STORY TO YOUR HISTORY

by Helen Engel, [rengel@oswego.edu](mailto:rengel@oswego.edu) ~ 315.343.9678  
and Marilyn Smiley, [marilyn.smiley@oswego.edu](mailto:marilyn.smiley@oswego.edu) ~  
315.343.4803, AAUW NYS historian consultants

Thanks to all the branches that exhibited their scrapbook pages at the state convention. Each one was unique, creative and helped to showcase the many different types of branch activities there are statewide.



We hope that all branches eventually catch the scrapbook habit – it's a wonderful way to showcase your branch's current activities and to preserve your branch history.

The Women Making a Difference project will continue through 2010. We are requesting additional 1-3 page biographies, as many as you can contribute. The biography could be an AAUW member or non-member from the past or in the present — someone who made or is making a difference in your area. Consider fields such as: government, politics, business, science, medicine, law, journalism/media, literature, religion, health, social services, education, art, music, theater, sports, leadership, and community service, among others.

It is important to preserve the accomplishments of these women, for otherwise their contributions might be forgotten. Since this is an ongoing project, send us your biographies as soon as they are written.

Discussions of important women to be included in this project can be incorporated into branch programs and/or committees, and also can be used as community outreach. It is a great way to increase branch visibility!

The participation of every member is needed to make this exciting project truly representative of the entire state. Questions? Check the NYS AAUW website's historians tab or contact one of us.

## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

by Bergie Lebovitch, AAUW NYS membership vice president,  
[bergie.lebovitch@gmail.com](mailto:bergie.lebovitch@gmail.com) ~  
845.298.4045

Summer is here and many have wonderful plans for vacations and time spent with families. Please don't put AAUW out of your minds, but rather spend some time thinking

about how you can assist your membership vice president(s) (MVP) in "growing your branch."

Fall will be fast upon us, which is a great time to have open houses, community teas, and/or new member luncheons....BUT this requires work from everyone in the branch. How many people do you know outside of AAUW, who might want to share in all of the exciting things you do with your fellow

members? Please provide all of their contact information to your MVP so handwritten invitations may be sent to them to join you at your branch's venue.

Utilizing the Shape the Future special pricing of \$24.50 for the national portion of the dues and informing potential members that this is a one-time special pricing if they join right then (not a few days later) for a year-long membership, will certainly be to their advantage.

Please make sure that there is a good cross-section of current members who are coordinators of your interest groups and chairs of your initiatives in attendance at your welcoming event. Perhaps a small introduction of these activities and an opportunity for new members to sign up for the various attractions would also be enticing.

If you are the member who "brought in" one or more new members, please make sure your treasurer inputs your name and membership numbers on the membership report, because YOU are a Member Get A Member and your name will appear on the National Hall of Fame!

Please stay in touch throughout the year with your "newbie", and make sure that you are sharing all of joys of your membership and branch activities. Help us to keep our "Bergie's Angels" club growing here in NYS.

I hope to see you all at Cazenovia College for the Leadership Conference, July 9-11.



Note: "The devil made me do it" — Bergie's Angels -- Sins of Omission [Please add these outstanding women to the list (which appeared in the spring issue of *FOCUS*) of those who've recruited five or more new members.]

**Sandra Maceyka** of Amsterdam/Gloversville/Johnstown — 5 new members

**Mildred DeWitt** of Manhattan/NYC, Inc. — 5 new members

**Nkechi Agwu** of New York City, Inc. — 20+ new members

**Jeanette Cantwell** of Poughkeepsie, Inc. — 5 new members

**Amy Schwed** of Poughkeepsie, Inc. — 22 new members

## ALL-ENCOMPASSING DIVERSITY

by Lillis C. McLean, AAUW NYS diversity director,  
[lillismclean@live.com](mailto:lillismclean@live.com) ~ 716.873.7467

We are considering ways to embrace diversity in all our branches. Diversity needs to permeate the organization and reach women on a personal level.

Would those of you who are branch diversity directors or are simply interested please contact me with your ideas and concerns? Remember that diversity encompasses not just race and ethnicity but also gender, age, disability and social class. A dialogue began at the convention among **Geeta Desai**, **Marilyn Tedeschi**, **Nancy Shadd** and myself. Feel free to join it with your insights.



## CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

by Peggy Kelland, NYS program vice president, program@aauw-nys.org ~ 845.297.0507

The 2010 convention of New York State AAUW at the Otesaga in Cooperstown was launched with a keynote address at the Friday night dinner by **Linda Hallman**, executive director of AAUW. She updated us on the latest study, "Why So Few?", on women in STEM careers (science, technology, engineering, and math); on plans to implement the one member, one vote national by-laws change; and on public policy initiatives to move forward from the Lily Ledbetter Act with pay fairness.

After Saturday morning's Awards Breakfast and the state business meeting, **Lois Haigner** updated us on the Equal Pay Coalition's efforts in New York State. Then **Christine Moulton**, executive director of the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, spoke to us about some of the outstanding women honored in the Hall.

At lunch we heard Legal Advocacy Fund plaintiff and former NYS convention speaker **Claire Schuster**. Although she was forbidden to discuss her case, she gave us a riveting description of her experiences nursing in the rural reaches of Kentucky.

In addition to workshops with Linda Hallman, attendees had the choice of hearing **Jennifer Ball** and her students from Clarkson University speak about their Value U program to help students intervene to help classmates and teammates avoid risky situations. **Deborah Borie** spoke of the media's hyper-sexualization of preschool children, while **Melinda Trimble** told of the Dignity for All Students Act to protect all students from discrimination and bullying. Inspiration was given by **Joan Monk**, who shared events, anecdotes, and stories about Eleanor Roosevelt, and by **Marilynn Smiley**, who related the story of the music of Holocaust refugees at Fort Ontario from 1943 to 1946.

Many of us enjoyed a belly-dancing session with returning instructor **Gail Sherman** before Saturday's Educational Foundation Dinner, where we welcomed **Marion Wrenn**. Wrenn described her research into U.S. efforts after World War II to encourage a free and democratic press in Germany, Austria, Italy, and Japan, and how this initiative influenced the media here in the United States. The evening was capped with a delightful concert featuring Chopin selections performed by pianist **Robert Auler**.

Sunday breakfast included sessions for branch officers and directors with their state counterparts, while other attendees joined the various speakers for informal discussion. The Branch Showcase presented college connections in the STEM-based Exploring Your Opportunities conference sponsored by the **New York City** and **Westchester** branches; an Eleanor Roosevelt program taken to the Inter-Club Council by the **Jamestown Branch**; the Sister to Sister girls' program conducted by the **Amsterdam/Gloversville/Johnstown Branch**; candidates' forums offered by the **Islip, Skaneateles, and Jamestown** branches; and an AAUW TV show produced by the **Kingston Branch**.

Author **Rhoda Lerman** came and read excerpts from her book about Eleanor Roosevelt, on which the film "Soul of Iron" with Jean Stapleton was based. **Kerry Connolly**, executive director of the Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York, updated us on new directions in Girl Scouting and suggested ways in which AAUW branches could partner with the Girl Scouts. The convention concluded with luncheon speaker **Gina Torry**, coordinator of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Her narration of the struggles and achievements of women worldwide was a call to further learning and action with our new state project, My Sister's Keeper.



## HONORING WOMEN OF DISTINCTION

by Maria Ellis, AAUW NYS district council director, mellis@citi-habitats.com ~ 973.216.4181

I was privileged to attend the Women of Distinction Awards Ceremony held June 3 in conjunction with the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders. The ceremony paid tribute to five women who have made extraordinary contributions in their professions or communities. They are all leaders in their fields, innovators of unique programs and services, and prime examples of lifelong commitment to promoting equity for women and girls.

The honorees were: (1) the late **Dorothy Irene Height**, a pillar in the civil rights and women's rights communities, whose life exemplified her passionate commitment for a just society and her vision of a better world; (2) **Christina Lagdameo**, who is

committed to the social, economic, and political empowerment of people of color, especially Asian Pacific Americans, women, and girls; (3) **Patti Solis Doyle**, a partner at Utrecht & Phillips, a Washington, DC, law firm that offers strategic counseling and representation before Congress and specializes in federal and state campaign finance and ethics laws; (4) **Marie Tillman**, founder and chair of the Pat Tillman Foundation (created in 2004) which invests in veterans and military families through advocacy and educational resources, and by building a new community of veteran scholars; and (5) **Nomfundo Walaza**, chief executive officer of the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre in Cape Town, South Africa.

Thanks to former AAUW President **Ruth Z. Sweetser** and our many generous AAUW members nationwide, we are able to properly honor these women for their leadership, vision and courage in promoting equity for women and girls.

## TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AWARDS 2010

by Peggy Kelland, NYS program vice president, program@aauw-nys.org ~ 845.297.0507

### — OVERALL PROGRAMMING AWARDS —

**Platinum: Amsterdam-Gloversville-Johnstown; Jamestown; Jefferson County; New York City; Poughkeepsie; Schenectady; Westchester**

**Gold: Adirondack; Bath; Garden City; Islip; Rockland**

**Silver: Buffalo**

**Bronze: Elmira/Corning**

### — INDIVIDUAL PROJECT/PROGRAM AWARDS —

**Community / 1<sup>st</sup>: Schenectady** - "Brightening the Future of Students in the Schenectady Community"; **2<sup>nd</sup>: Jamestown** - "What's New Fair"; **3<sup>rd</sup>: Dunkirk-Fredonia** - "AAUW Advocates"

**Diversity / 1<sup>st</sup>: Garden City** - "¡Hola! Garden City"; **2<sup>nd</sup> Rockland** - "Diversity Brunch"

**Education: / 1<sup>st</sup>: Amsterdam/Gloversville/Johnstown** - "Sister to Sister" Conference; **2<sup>nd</sup>: Poughkeepsie** - "Girls Conference"; **3<sup>rd</sup>: St. Lawrence** - "National Women and Girls in Sports Day Celebration"

**STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) / 1<sup>st</sup>: Westchester** - "Exploring Your Opportunities: The Sky's the Limit"; **2<sup>nd</sup>: Rockland** - "Family Math Night at the Circus"

**Health Issues / 1<sup>st</sup>: Schenectady** - "Accessing Affordable NYS Healthcare"; **2<sup>nd</sup> Rockland** - "HPV Vaccine: Mandated or Not?"; **3<sup>rd</sup> Elmira/Corning** - "You've Gotta Have Heart!"

**International / 1<sup>st</sup>: Buffalo** - "Status of Women in North America"; **2<sup>nd</sup>: Schenectady** - "Refugee Resettlement Program"; **3<sup>rd</sup>: Jefferson County** - "A Global Perspective on the Oppression of Women and Girls"

**Public Policy / 1<sup>st</sup>: Skaneateles** - "Meet the Candidates Forum"; **2<sup>nd</sup> Islip Area** - "Changing the World Together"; **3<sup>rd</sup> Garden City** - "Tour of Old Nassau County Courthouse"

**Women / 1<sup>st</sup>: Jefferson County** - "Too Sexy, Too Soon"; **2<sup>nd</sup>: Adirondack** - "Women's History Awards"; **3<sup>rd</sup>: St. Lawrence** - "Agent of Change" and "AAUW Research" Awards

## EDUCATIONAL FUND VISION

by Lisa Davis Clark, Ph.D., AAUW NYS educational fund vice president, lisaclark\_507@msn.com ~ 845.352.1668

After returning from a rewarding experience at the New York State AAUW Convention, it is reassuring to know that the support for the Educational

Fund (EF) continues to demonstrate the strong commitment of our members. EF contributions support the work of scholars such as 2009 Publication Grant Recipient, **Dr. Marion Wrenn**.

We applaud the dynamic members of eleven branches that achieved 2009 per capita contributions of \$25 or more to the Educational Fund: **Buffalo, Smithtown, Huntington, Albany, Islip, North Fork, Oswego, Rockland County, Westchester County, Mid-Island, and Yates County**.

Twenty-six branches distinguished themselves by contributing more than \$500 in total EF contributions for the 2009 calendar year: **Adirondack** (\$838), **Albany** (\$1,050), **Bath** (\$1,050), **Buffalo** (\$16,255), **Fairport Area** (\$745), **Huntington** (\$1,250), **Islip Area** (\$3,347), **Ithaca** (\$900), **Jamestown** (\$500), **Jefferson County** (\$1,500), **Kingston** (\$655), **Massapequa Area** (\$585), **Mid-Island** (\$929), **Mohawk Valley** (\$500), **Nassau County** (\$525), **New York City** (\$1,441), **North Shore** (\$6,630), **Oswego** (\$630), **Poughkeepsie** (\$2,025), **Rockland County** (\$3,018), **Schenectady** (\$1,624), **Smithtown Area** (\$1,695), **Southern New York** (\$850), **Syracuse** (\$520), **Yates County** (\$850) and **Westchester County** (\$5,481).

Congratulations also to the 2009 named gift honorees who are listed on the AAUW NYS website.

We are beaming with pride over the most recent accomplishment of the **Buffalo Branch**. During the 2009 calendar year, they were the top contributing branch in New York State, with EF contributions totaling \$16,255, representing a **per capita contribution of \$74.22**. As a result of such a strong and consistent commitment, the branch submitted an application for, and successfully established, the **Buffalo American Fellowship**. Women scholars will benefit from the extraordinary commitment of these visionary branch members.

As we conclude the first half of 2010, I encourage everyone to look towards planning activities which will reinforce our commitment to supporting the Educational Fund. Congratulations to the branches that have already initiated their 2010 contributions: **Staten Island, Poughkeepsie, Jamestown, Rockland County, Schenectady, and Adirondack**.

As the summer continues, please share your ideas for moving the mission forward by enhancing your branch's support of the Educational Fund.

## FUTURE AAUW NYS CONVENTIONS

**2011: Glen Cove Mansion ~ Long Island ~ April 15-17 (Plan to visit Sagamore Hill - Home of Theodore Roosevelt)**

**2012: Woodcliff Hotel & Spa ~ Rochester ~ April 20-22**

**2013: High Peaks Resort ~ Lake Placid ~ April 26-28**



## ARE YOU A KEEPER?

by Melissa Guardaro, AAUW-NYS international affairs director, mmg4@netzero.net ~ 845.268.0152

A new statewide project was announced at the New York State Convention entitled "My Sister's Keeper". This project hopes to foster a greater understanding of the plight of women worldwide and within our domestic borders. Organized by AAUW NYS board members **Melissa Guardaro** and **Joan Monk**, individuals, interest groups and branches are encouraged to develop programming, volunteering, advocacy and education outlets for women suffering under the issues of genocide, violence, lack of educational opportunities, poor maternal health care, diminished rights of women and the lack of gender equality.

The starting point for My Sister's Keeper is the book "Half the Sky" by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn. This book has been described as essential reading for every global citizen and has the transformative effect of Greg Mortenson's "Three Cups of Tea". "Half the Sky" details the lives of extraordinary women who have triumphed over crushing circumstances to embrace their potential and help other women in their communities.

This two-year program aims to turn women's concerns into venues for local and international action. A complete outline of the program, discussion guide, quotes and a flyer are available at <http://www.aauw-nys.org/msk.htm>. It is hoped that each New York State branch will combine the resources of diversity/cultural interests/international affairs/public policy and programming to implement programs that are both informative and transformative for those involved.

A special workshop in developing programs will be presented at the Summer Leadership Conference in Cazenovia, New York, in July. Please plan on attending to learn more about the My Sister's Keeper project and to share past and current branch and individual programs that not only promote equality for all women but also help women to help themselves, their community and our world.

"Women and girls aren't the problem," according to Kristof, "they are the solution."

# My Sister's Keeper

## CONVENTION KUDOS

by Mary Lou Davis, AAUW NYS 2010 convention chair, davehdavis@aol.com ~ 845.223.5544

Thank you to the 2010 Convention Committee and AAUW NYS board members who helped make the convention at Cooperstown's famous Otesaga a wonderful event.

I would especially like to thank: **Peggy Kelland, Eileen Hartmann, Betty Preble, Nancy Mion, Joan Monk, Mildred Dewitt, Melissa Guardaro, Lisa Clark, Betty Harrel, Margaret Nijhuis, Jann Mirchandani, Marcine Humphrey, Cathy O'Leary, Amy Schwed, Joan Rajchel, Marilynn Smiley, Lynn Schwabenthal, Erin Teichman, Phyllis Anderson, Geeta Desai, and Mary Coiteux.**

## VISIBILITY DOESN'T GET A VACATION

by Claire Regan, AAUW-NYS visibility director, regan@siadvance.com ~ 718.816.2845

If your branch is like mine on Staten Island, summertime means a break from the hectic programming schedule of the rest of the year.

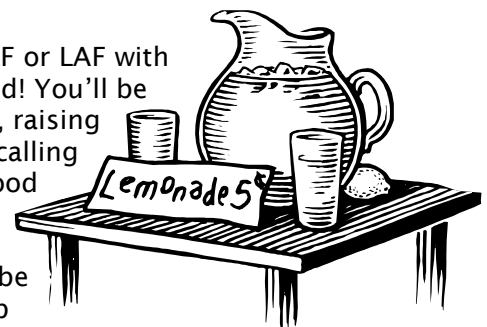
We see each other for a brainstorming session in June and a lovely pool party in July. But the branch pretty much goes on vacation for almost three months. It's a well-deserved break after a busy year of hosting candidates nights, LAF and EF fundraisers, and even a district conference.

But taking a break doesn't mean disappearing. Summer is time to come up with creative ways

to keep the branch -- and AAUW's mission -- alive and well in every community.

I hope these suggestions will inspire you to keep AAUW visible through the dog days of summer.

- Before leaving for vacation, look up the contact information for the AAUW branch at your destination. Reach out with an e-mail or phone call when you arrive in town. Better yet, set up a casual lunch date to swap programming ideas. Every branch appreciates outreach.
- Pack AAUW literature in your suitcase. At the hotel, ask the desk staff if you can leave a few brochures at the front desk. Include your business card or a sticky note with your e-mail address.
- At your vacation destination, visit the local library and ask to leave AAUW literature at the main desk.
- Work AAUW into the conversation every chance you get. The beach, the pool, a bookstore and the local coffee shop are great places to try this out.
- Raise money for EF or LAF with a...lemonade stand! You'll be quenching thirsts, raising awareness and recalling a pleasant childhood memory all at the same time. And it could turn out to be a perfect photo op for the local newspaper.





New York State  
**FOCUS**  
 Summer 2010  
 ISSN: 1056 3199  
 www.aauw.org  
 www.aauw-nys.org

PERIODICALS  
 POSTAGE PAID at  
 Pleasantville, NY  
 10570 and  
 additional offices  
 USPS-390-570

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.*

**AAUW VALUE PROMISE**

*By joining AAUW, we belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.*

**VISION STATEMENT**

*AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting The lives of women and girls.*

**DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

*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.*

*FOCUS* (USPS-390-570), a quarterly newsletter, is published for the American Association of University Women — New York State by Mount Kisco Printing, 175 Tompkins Avenue, Pleasantville, NY 10570-3144.

The subscription rate of \$4 is included in the New York State dues. Periodicals postage is paid at Pleasantville, NY, 10570, and additional offices.

Questions and articles should be addressed to the *FOCUS* Director, Jean Havens, 40 Kisco Park Drive, Mount Kisco, NY 10549. Telephone: 914.241.4518. Email: [FOCUS@aauw-nys.org](mailto:FOCUS@aauw-nys.org). Submissions are accepted at the discretion of the editor.

**Attention postmaster: Dated Material. Please do not delay.**

**POSTMASTER:** Send all address changes to AAUW Records Office, 1111 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

**THE SWEET SPOT — CULTURAL INTERESTS/ DIVERSITY/INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

by Joan Monk, AAUW NYS cultural interests director, [ftmaven@bestweb.net](mailto:ftmaven@bestweb.net) ~ 914.3776-8000



Can you list the five-fold focus areas of cultural interests? No, this is not a test, but more of a brainteaser! The answer is: the arts; The Big Read; women’s history; philanthropy and mentoring. It is time to “learn more/connect more/do more.” Through our new NYS project, My Sister’s Keeper, our goal is to take action and walk the talk. How sweet it is to promote equity for women and girls through projects that reflect the trifecta of cultural interests, diversity and international affairs!

Branch programs related to **the arts** have historically been very successful in connecting with the larger community. **The Big Read** is an idea whose time has come and can take many different shapes and forms (visit [www.nea.gov](http://www.nea.gov)). The **women’s history** website [www.roadsfromsenecafalls.org](http://www.roadsfromsenecafalls.org) contains links to 2,000 related sites. **Philanthropy** is a new theme for cultural interests, but not for AAUW. Be proud of this legacy and promote it in all you say and do. **Mentoring** is a powerful way to “move the mission forward” in support of women and girls. Celebrate National Mentor Month in January.

This five-fold cultural interests focus creates a platform on which your branch can build a signature project that fosters greater understanding of the plight of women, not only worldwide but also within our domestic borders. Based on Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl Wu Dunn’s work in their book “Half the Sky”, the core issues are: gendercide, violence, lack of educational opportunities, lack of maternal healthcare and support of the rights of women, and gender equality.

Many of our branches have embarked on terrific programs that help women around the world. Now we would like to combine efforts making AAUW NYS a beacon for women’s rights, education and equality. We have the opportunity of “turning oppression into opportunity for women worldwide.” Let’s do it! Visit the cultural interests area of the AAUW NYS website for more ideas, quotes and suggestions on how to become a keeper – My Sister’s Keeper!