

AAUWNYSFOCUS

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LEDBETTER INSPIRES NYC COUNCIL

By **EDWINA MARTIN**
AAUW-NYS SECRETARY

A AUW made an impact in the New York City Council in 2012.

On Oct. 17, Anne Hedgepeth from AAUW's public policy department testified at a New York City Council hearing on "Examining Sexual Assault and Harassment Procedures at Higher Education Institutions in New York City."

In particular, she discussed AAUW's report "Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School (2011)," and made recommendations on steps colleges and universities in New York State could take to address harassment on campus.

On Dec. 5, inspirational speaker Lilly Ledbetter was invited to share her story with members of the City Council.

Ms. Ledbetter spoke for nearly an hour and answered questions about her historic lawsuit against Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co. and her fight for fair wages for women.

While she ultimately lost her case in the United States Supreme Court — with the court ruling that she had filed her lawsuit past the deadline to bring charges — her story helped spur the movement for legislation to correct this ruling, leading to passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009. This was the first bill signed into law by President Barack Obama.



Councilmember Debi Rose (D-Staten Island), top photo, with Lilly Ledbetter, and with AAUW-NYS Secretary Edwina Martin, above, who is counsel to Ms Rose.

Ms. Ledbetter praised AAUW and its role in supporting her case and in advocating for passage of the act.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of

2009 amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 so that the 180-day statute of limitations for filing an equal-pay lawsuit regarding pay discrimination resets with each new paycheck affected by that discriminatory action.

This is important because it may take years for a woman to learn that she is not receiving equal pay for her work.

Ms. Ledbetter said it is imperative that we work for passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would update the Equal Pay Act by barring retaliation against workers who disclose their wages to co-workers and create stronger incentives for employers to follow the law.

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DIDI BARRETT



CHRISTINE CLARK

Their mission: Continuing in the

By DONNA SEYMOUR AND MARGARET NIJHUIS

The women and men who had worked tirelessly for 75 years to get women the right to vote thought it might take about five years or so for the women’s vote to have an impact following the 19th amendment’s passage in 1920.

Their vision was off by a few decades, but finally came to pass in 2012. Candidates, political parties and governments are recognizing they must “remember the ladies” if they are to succeed at the ballot box.

In 2012, 53 percent of the electorate were women; 19 percent were Millennials — voters 18-30 years old — and 42 percent of young voters were persons of color.

We have seen women elected to national office in unprecedented numbers. Fully 20 percent of the U.S. Senate will be women as the 113th Congress convenes this month.

And for the first time in history, the Democratic side of the House of Representatives reflects the diversity of America — women and persons of

color outnumber white males.

Here are a few of the many women who won election to a full term for the first time this November. This is only a sampling from the responses from the AAUW-NYS branch presidents; we thank all for their contributions.

DIDI BARRETT

Didi Barrett, previously elected to the New York State Assembly in a special election last March, has been elected to the new 106th Assembly District, including the towns of Milan, Pine Plains, North East, Stanford, Amenia, Clinton, Hyde Park, Pleasant Valley, and Poughkeepsie.

A resident of the Hudson Valley for 25 years, Barrett has been a community activist, writer, and leader of not-for-

profit organizations. “I’m really excited,” Barrett said after winning the 106th Assembly District election.

“It’s been an incredible six or seven months, and I look forward to continuing to work for the mid-Hudson Valley and be sure that our voice is always heard up in Albany.” Poughkeepsie AAUW is pleased to have Barrett as a member.

CHRISTINE CLARK

Christine Clark, New York State Supreme Court, 4th Judicial District (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, Saratoga, St. Lawrence, Warren and Washington Counties).

There were eight candidates running — the other seven were men.

A graduate of Columbia University and Albany Law School, she began her law practice in 1997. Her home is in Schenectady.

Previously Clark has served as Judge, Family Court, Schenectady County, and Judge, City Court, Schenectady County.

Judge Clark said: “The most important lesson I ever learned as a



TRACI DIMEZZA



GAIL DONOFRIO



MARIA ROSA

footsteps of their predecessors

judge was not taught to me in law school or heard in a court room. It came from my brother: "Try to be kind to everyone because everybody, no matter who they are, carries a burden."

TRACI DIMEZZA

Traci DiMezza made history by becoming the first woman to be elected City Court judge in Gloversville, N.Y.

The victory fulfilled a promise she had made to her 12-year-old daughter, Honor, a year ago.

When discussing the possibility of running for the office, with her family, her daughter said "Mom, don't run. Don't do it because you could lose". "It was then, that my mind was made up," DiMezza said. "I said to my daughter, 'Now I am going to run, to teach you that you shouldn't not try something, for fear of failure.'"

DiMezza is a member of the Amsterdam-Gloversville-Johnstown Branch of AAUW. She received a bachelor of arts degree in political science from Siena College, and obtained her juris doctorate from Quinnipiac University in Connecticut.

She has been practicing law for 17 years, in a variety of different fields.

GAIL DONOFRIO

Gail Donofrio Supreme Court, 7th Judicial District (Cayuga, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne and Yates Counties).

Judge Donofrio served as a judge in other courts for 14 years.

Donofrio is a graduate of SUNY Buffalo Law School, and St. John Fisher College.

Her background as an attorney in private practice, beginning in 1987, included civil litigation in state and federal courts in cases involving negligence, severe brain injury and medical malpractice.

She is currently a supervising judge of family courts in the seventh district and is an acting Supreme Court Justice.

Donofrio said she will bring something different to the job.

"As a judge I know how frightening it can be for anyone who's involved in a court case. And as a woman and a judge I believe I bring a unique perspective to the Supreme Court bench."

She and her husband, Roger DaGama, have three children. The family resides in Pittsford, N.Y.

MARIA ROSA

Maria Rosa, Supreme Court 9th Judicial District (Dutchess, Putnam, Westchester, Rockland and Orange Counties). The daughter of two New York City teachers and a graduate of Albany State University and Albany Law School, Rosa lives in Millbrook with her husband and twelve year old twin daughters. She began practicing law in a Poughkeepsie firm in 1987. For the past 18 years she has been Principal Court Attorney in the New York State Supreme Court. She will be serving in Dutchess County.

"Everyone who comes to court should feel they have been heard and that their case received fair and timely consideration," Rosa said. Maria is a new member of Poughkeepsie AAUW Inc.

Donna Seymour is AAUW-NYS public policy director and Margaret Nijhuis is AAUW-NYS administrative director.

Embracing differences, encouraging diversity

By **MARY LOU DAVIS**
AAUW-NYS PRESIDENT

Heide Parreño, a member of Greater Rochester Area Branch, has accepted the position of Chairman of an AAUW NYS Diversity Committee. Heide is



looking for volunteers to be on the NYS team.

Previously, Heide formed a team of “Women of Wisdom” for her branch to explore what diversity is and

how to make it a value that is imbedded in the structure of AAUW. If you are interested in joining our state team, please contact her at OroStar@aol.com or call 585-256-7372 or 585-414-6312.

The Ibis Consulting Group defines diversity as the collective mixture of differences, similarities and areas of uniqueness that each person brings to the group.

Diversity is not always visible, but it is always present. We are unique individuals. Aspects of our identities, which include ethnicity, gender, religion, social class, country or region of origin, age, physical abilities, family background, education, physical appearance, learning style, and other differences and experiences, influence who we are.

We need to appreciate the good things that cultural differences bring to us as individuals and as a society. When we travel we become aware of how others look, behave and think differently than we do.

On my recent trip to Myanmar (Burma), I was surprised at how happy the people were in spite of the fact that they were so poor. Sometimes we are not as aware of differences in our own communities and how others are treated because of their differences. Women have often been encouraged



At left, Thanaka, a yellow powder made from tree bark, has been used by Burmese women for over 2,000 years to treat acne, protect from sunburn and promote smooth skin.

Below, the manufacture of shapes and styles of decorated glazed and unglazed earthenware has not changed much since early times in Burma, now known as Myanmar.



PHOTOS BY MARY LOU DAVIS

into certain occupations that are considered more acceptable for them. Men are encouraged to feel and show some emotions and avoid others.

Lower expectations are set for some students because of their race or poverty levels. It can be uncomfortable and threatening to deal with differences so close to home. We need to work toward acknowledging and embracing those individual differences and

encouraging diversity and inclusion.

“Inclusion is engaging the uniqueness of the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, capabilities and ways of living of individuals and groups when joined in a common endeavor,” according to Ibis Consulting Group.

Please consider joining our AAUW NYS Diversity Committee.

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A public policy challenge for each branch



By **DONNA SEYMOUR**
AAUW-NYS PUBLIC POLICY DIRECTOR

The election season is over — and now it's time to focus on the work of inspiring our lawmakers to work in our best interests.

This will include educating ourselves and our members and the public about our issues, following closely the actions of our elected officials (local, state and federal), and advocating for positive action on AAUW priorities.

The 13 in '13 Public Policy Challenge: As a way to motivate and direct our efforts, I am announcing the 13 in '13 Public Policy Challenge! I challenge each branch to take 13 (or more) actions in 2013 that will create a ground swell of broadly-based grassroots action here in the Empire State.

There are suggestions for action on the state website and a score sheet. And there are plenty of ideas so you as individuals can take the Challenge, as well!

Learn more at: <http://www.aauw-nys.org/pp.htm>.

CQ StateTracker: We have a brand new tool in our arsenal thanks to AAUW.

The Public Policy Department is assisting us to configure CQ StateTracker so we can follow the legislative twists and turns in Albany. CQ StateTracker is a game-changer for AAUW-NYS's advocacy on AAUW priority issues.

Through its policy experts in Washington, D.C., AAUW already has the capability to track federal legislation down to this specific, instantaneous level, and CQ StateTracker will extend that capability to state legislation in our state.

AAUW-NYS Biennial Action Priorities: At the Lake Placid convention business meeting in April, we'll be voting on the updated Biennial Action Priorities for 2013-15. Biennial priorities for action are chosen according to the criteria of viability, critical need, strong member support, and potential for distinctive AAUW contribution.

Resolutions passed at convention focus on specific issues which are not already contained within our Action Priorities.

The purpose of a resolution is to focus attention on issues of importance to the mission and vision of AAUW. Want to know more?

Go to http://www.aauw-nys.org/pp_resolution.htm.

Taking a Local Stand: AAUW states and branches can take positions on state or local issues that are not current AAUW priorities at the federal level, providing those issues do not conflict with AAUW public policy priorities and principles.

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Treat your branch records like gold

By **HELEN ENGEL**
AAUW-NYS HISTORIAN

Do you know where your branch historical records are stored?

Maintaining these records for your branch is important, but just as important is having a satisfactory place to store them.

If they are not available to your branch members (to say nothing about others, who may sometime in the future want to learn more about your branch), they are not of much use.

For those of you who belong to a branch that has not found a place to keep these records so they are accessible to others, now is the time to find one.

For suggestions check the Preserving Historical Records on the history page of the AAUW-NYS website.

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Seeking qualified candidates to fill the state slate

By **DONNA SEYMOUR**
AAUW-NYS PUBLIC POLICY
DIRECTOR

At the 2014 spring convention, we will be electing three state officers for the following two years — President, Program VP and AAUW Development VP (a new position which combines the previous Legal Advocacy Fund and Educational Opportunity Fund VP jobs).

It is the job of the 2013 Nominating Committee to advertise those positions, educate members about the positions, and find candidates to stand for election.

Each District elects members at convention to serve on the Nominating Committee at convention. This is a critically important task as we consider the future needs of the state and search for leaders. We invite all members of AAUW-NYS to consider carefully these needs and suggest qualified people to fill the slate.

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Bucket filling makes everyone feel good

By **JOAN MONK**
AAUW-NYS DISTRICT COUNCIL DIRECTOR

Can you imagine a 32-page picture book teaching children of all ages the benefits of kindness through the metaphor of a bucket? Check out Carol McCloud's "Bucket Books" for students from preschool through middle school.

The series has taken off and become one of the most effective character development programs offered to all ages. That's bucket filling and AAUW members had their first introduction to this seemingly simple concept at Summer Leadership at Cazenovia. Some lucky branches went home with buckets of their very own.

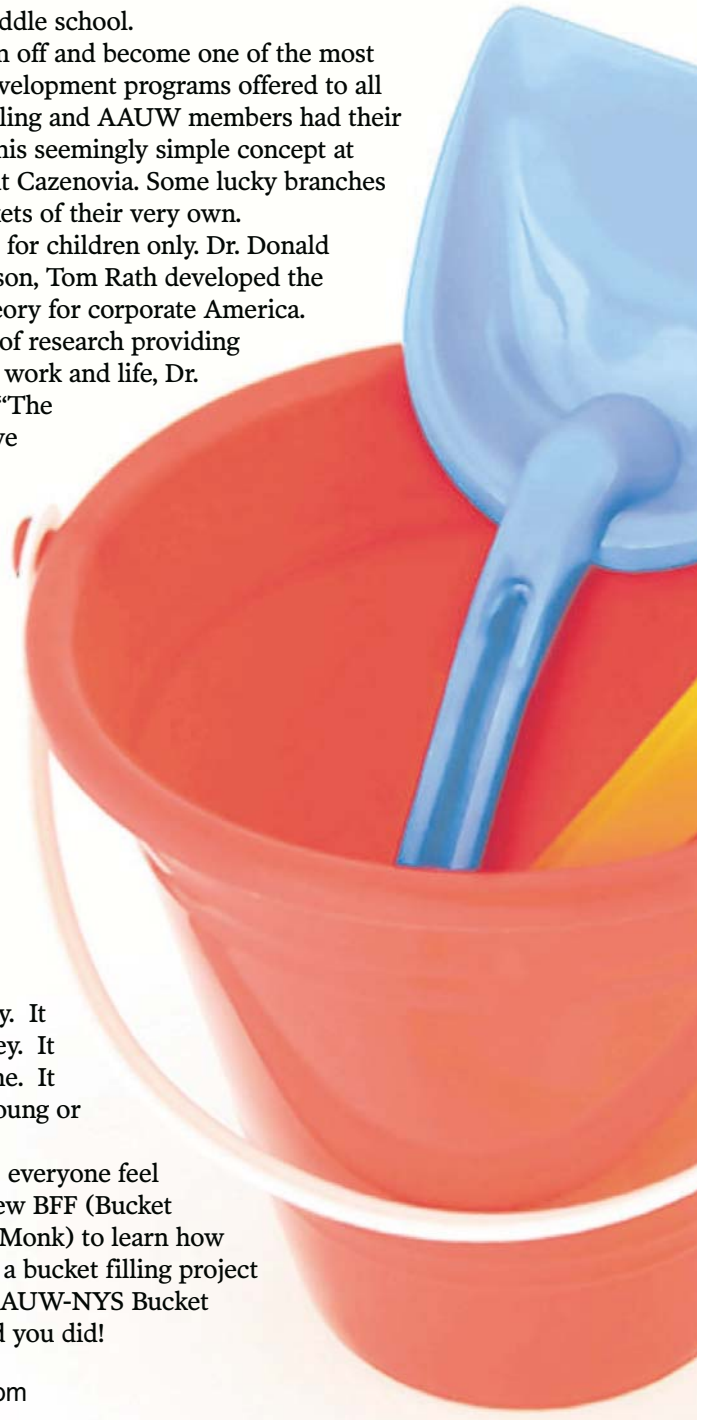
Bucket filling is not for children only. Dr. Donald Clifton and his grandson, Tom Rath developed the bucket and dipper theory for corporate America. Through his 50 years of research providing positive strategies for work and life, Dr. Clifton is considered "The Grandfather of Positive Psychology."

A bucket-filling branch is a great place to learn. A bucket-filling school is a place to grow and thrive. A bucket-filling family is a great place to grow up. A bucket-filling community is a great place to live. These are places where kindness, respect, fairness, responsibility, and generosity are seen.

Bucket filling is easy. It doesn't cost any money. It doesn't take much time. It doesn't matter how young or old you are.

Bucket filling makes everyone feel good. Contact your new BFF (Bucket Filling Fairy aka Joan Monk) to learn how your branch can start a bucket filling project and become part of AAUW-NYS Bucket Brigade. You'll be glad you did!

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2013 STATE
CONVENTION
APRIL 26-28
AT HIGH PEAKS
RESORT

DETAILS IN THE
NEXT ISSUE OF
FOCUS AND ON
WWW.AAUW-NYS.ORG

JOIN US IN BEAUTIFUL LAKE PLACID, N.Y.



Celebrate Teamwork



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.

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New law aims to curb exploitation of children

By ELISE RUSSO

AAUW-NYS INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS/
CULTURAL INTERESTS DIRECTOR

Commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially girls, continues to be an epidemic globally and right here in New York State.

New York is a major hub for international travelers, and the highway system offering straight shots north/south and east/west make trafficking relatively easy. In fact, in New York City alone, it is estimated that 2,200 children are sexually exploited annually.

The average age of those entering into this exploitation is between 12 and 14 years old. Statistics show that across the country 1.6 million children run away from home each year and the average time that elapses before they are approached by a trafficker or solicitor is only 48 hours. This leaves 100,000 to 300,000 children at risk every year.

There is some good news. New York State was the first to enact legislation, "Safe Harbor Laws," in September 2008.

This law ensured that commercially sexually exploited children were seen as victims, not criminals. The law's major objectives were to remove minor victims from the criminal justice system and, instead, provide them with special-

ized services to help deal with the unique trauma they suffer. Additionally, two other aspects of the law ensure that stiff penalties apply to the perpetrators and that law enforcement officers, state officials, and the general public receive continued training to aid in the prevention of this exploitation.

Rachel Lloyd, herself a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, fought tirelessly to have this legislation enacted. She is the founder of "GEMS" — Girls Educational and Mentoring Services in New York City.

Her memoir, "Girls Like Us — Fighting for a World Where Girls Are Not For Sale," is the story of her own exploitation and the founding of and continuing work accomplished by GEMS.

Visit the GEMS website at www.GEMS-girls.org for more information on how to become involved. You can begin your involvement by joining in the swim at the annual AAUW-NYS Convention in Lake Placid this April.

More information is to come on how to line up sponsors and get yourself ready to swim laps. Proceeds will benefit GEMS.

And why "GEMS"? "It's like their lives have been full of violence but really they're like precious stones," Lloyd said.

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