



# Upstate Update



## AMSTERDAM \* GLOVERSVILLE\* JOHNSTOWN BRANCH

- The American Association of University Women advances equity for woman and girls through advocacy, education and research.
- 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.

**2012 – 2013**

**December/January**

**Branch Officers:**

**Presidents**

*Liz Russo*

*Linda Hammond*

**Vice Presidents - Program**

*Anne Campos*

*Ginni Mazur*

**Vice President – Membership**

*Trish Isabella*

*Catherine Julius*

**Vice President – Edu Opp Fund**

*Anya Biel*

**Vice President – Legal Advocacy**

*Open*

**Recording Secretary**

*Bonnie Van Wie*

**Treasurer – Ella Ryder**

**Membership Treasurer**

*Michele Acquaro*

up. Upon inquiry, we discovered that they were at FMCC for the HOBY leadership conference for high school freshmen. Ella volunteered to help them carry some of their supplies and inquired about the group. As a result, we were invited to sit in on the event. Once the SAT Test Takers were settled in with the proctor, we visited the HOBY event to learn more about the Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership program. A while later as I returned to our AAUW display table to settle in and read a book until the SAT Test takers were finished, one of the HOBY conference leaders came out to ask me if I would stand in for their panel on Volunteerism since they had a last minute cancellation! I agreed and took advantage of the opportunity to give AAUW a plug and discussed our Sister to Sister Summits and Tech Savvy ventures as programs organized by volunteers to make a difference in the lives of girls. As a result, a fellow panel member expressed interest in joining AAUW, and a student attendee from Herkimer wanted to find out if there was

an AAUW branch in her area. When I again returned at our AAUW display table, parents waiting to pick up their students after the SAT test were checking out the display, asked about our organization and picked up membership brochures. We were glad that when the opportunity arose we were ready to spread the word about AAUW.

At our September meeting, Membership co-VP, Catherine Julius, passed out 3 membership brochures to each member attending. That way, as members, each of us can also be ready to take advantage of the opportunity to hand out an AAUW flier and promote our organization. (Just as the HOBY student group had taken advantage of the opportunity to educate us about their organization!)

As December approaches, we have many opportunities to fill our time with music and community outreach efforts. The AAUW Student Organization will start off the holiday season by ringing bells on December 1 at Price Chopper in Johnstown for the Salvation Army Red Ket-

**President’s Message**

One never knows when opportunity will knock! Let’s be ready to take advantage of the moment! Fortunately, at the SAT Practice Test recently we were ready. Having set up an AAUW table to welcome those who were going to take the test, Ella Ryder and I watched as many young people began appearing. At first we thought they were “walk -ins” to take the test who had not previously signed

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

tle Drive as part of their community outreach efforts. Next our Branch Lunch Bunch will be taking a trip to Amsterdam on December 3 to the Century Clubs Festival of Trees for lunch, entertainment and an opportunity to support the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Family Shelter. On December 8 we will hold our annual Holiday Brunch at Union Hall, be entertained by the 11-member a cappella singing group, Duly Noted, from RPI and have the opportunity to donate toward Hugs across America to provide stuffed bears to children in crisis.

Our winter meetings will focus on health and well being. In January we will be introduced to Chinese traditional medicine and QiGong, in February we will pamper ourselves at the local Day Spa, and in March we will learn about universal health care insurance and palliative health care. We hope you will all bundle up and come out to the meetings and take advantage of the opportunity to participate in the wonderful presentations that our program committee has lined up!

**Merry Christmas,  
Happy Hanukah!!!**

**--Liz Russo**

\*A reminder that this is the December/January issue of Upstate Update. There will not be a separate January issue. Fliers for both the December and January issue are included.

**REMINDER: BOARD MEETING MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 6 p.m. at the JPL!! ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME. WE APPRECIATE YOUR INPUT!**

**Branch Lunch Bunch will Attend Festival of Trees Luncheon on December 3**

Last year a group of us traveled to the Century Club's annual Festival of Trees in Amsterdam to enjoy the decorated trees, listen to music, enjoy lunch and shop. We will "Do Lunch" again this December. We have chosen Monday, December 3, since the most members signed up for that date. The musical entertainment will include a performance by the AHS Choir at 11:15 a.m. and the Liberty Bell Choir at 1 p.m. We would like to head for Amsterdam around 11 a.m. so that we can enjoy the decorations and entertainment before lunch. The Festival will be open from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Since we have 11 signed up so far, we can take advantage of the group discount of \$7 each for lunch and admission. Lunch includes a sandwich, soup, dessert, and beverage.

This is not just for AAUW members. We encourage you to bring a friend. "The more the merrier"! Please contact Liz Russo at 762-9702 by November 30 if you are interested in "Doing Lunch" on December 3. Car pooling can be arranged.

**Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser Tickets**

We hope to be able to distribute tickets in December for the Soroptimist/AAUW Pancake Breakfast. Although the event will not take place until February, some of our members requested the tickets early to use as stocking stuffers. Ticket money will not be due until sometime in January, however.

**November Meeting Follow-up**

We filled the Wine and Roses meeting room to capacity for our November meeting! It was good to see new members Jennifer Christopher, Luci Batty and Barb Solomon in attendance along the familiar faces of long time members who had been unable to attend earlier meetings this fall. We all enjoyed the delicious soups, turkey dinner, and yummy dessert, but especially the wonderful video Patsy Suydam produced of her travels to Morocco complete with script and Moroccan music in the background. We were impressed with the gorgeous landscapes and all the colorful tile artwork the country has to offer. Thank you Patsy for sharing your experiences in such a well produced format!

**Hugs Across America**

At the November meeting we took an early collection for HUGS Across America to send Bears to children in NY City who are victims of Hurricane Sandy. Helen James delivered the \$82 in donations we received from members to Manhattan on

November 17. Our collection will continue at our December meeting to provide Bears to local children in crisis.

The members of the FMCC AAUW Student Organization have expressed interest in stuffing Bears in March.

### **Fundraisers for NCCWSL**

Our branch held two fundraisers this fall to send a female student from Fulton-Montgomery Community College to the National Conference for College Student Women Leaders (NCCWSL). The Conference will take place in May in Maryland.

The Wine and Chocolate Basket Raffle and the Princeton SAT Practice Test have raised \$249 toward the \$400 needed.

### **Wine and Chocolate Raffle**

A thank you goes out to Linda Hammond for putting together the basket and to all those who bought tickets at the September and November meetings. The winner of the raffle was Patsy Suydam. We made \$119 for the NCCWSL scholarship.

### **Princeton Review Practice SAT**

Thirteen students took advantage of the opportunity to take the test and receive follow-up study guidance. We raised \$130 from the registration fees. Although we had hoped to have more students, we are pleased with having the opportunity to introduce more members of the community to AAUW. We would like to

thank Darcelle Winchell and Jane Kelley for all the help in arranging use of a room at FM, providing FM information packets for the students as well as cookies, water, and juice for those taking the test. Cory at Princeton Review has also been wonderful in scheduling proctors and details so that we just had to provide a venue and get the students there! In addition, it seems our branch is leading the way as we have had inquiries from other NYS branches who are interested in offering the SAT test in their area.

Note: The SAT follow-up session was moved from November 28 back to Tuesday, November 27.

### **Thanks for Stepping Up!**

At the November meeting, volunteers were requested to serve on the Nominating Committee. A thank you goes out to Darcelle Winchell and Nancy Reynolds for agreeing to serve.

### **LAF Chair Still Needed**

AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund support has been crucial to the success of many gender discrimination cases during its 31-year history. The case-support program provides financial and organizational backing for lawsuits that have the potential to set significant precedents for gender equity. Responsibilities of the branch Legal Advocacy Chair include organizing donations of baskets or purses for the LAF Fundraiser at the AAUW State Convention April, 2013 and

planning a fundraiser with EOF Chair, Anya Biel, for the fall of 2013-14 and sharing updates regarding efforts the AAUW National has done with these funds to assist those who have been discriminated against in their schools or workplace.

Here are some examples of what LAF is all about:

AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund supported Lilly Ledbetter in her claims of pay discrimination by Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company in Gadsden, Alabama. In January 2009, Congress passed and President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law.

Sexual assault in the military has been a frequent news story this year, in large part due to two similar class-action lawsuits against the military and the investigative documentary *The Invisible War*. AAUW supports all three lawsuits through our Legal Advocacy Fund.

**WILL YOU STEP UP,  
VOLUNTEER TO SERVE AS  
LAF CHAIR  
AND HELP RAISE  
AWARENESS AND FUNDS  
FOR THIS IMPORTANT  
WORK OF AAUW?**

### **Membership Booklets**

Membership Booklets were handed out to those in attendance at the November meeting. The rest will be distributed at the December meeting or mailed to you. Please thank Patsy Suydam for producing the booklet again this year.

### **January Meeting - Come and Participate!**

We are very fortunate to have members of our branch share their expertise as presenters at our meetings. In January, member Carol Cownie will provide us with a program on Chinese traditional medicine and QiGong. Carol is a registered nurse who received her bachelor's degree in Holistic Studies for Empire State College. She has been nationally certified by the American Holistic Nurses Association in Holistic Nursing for 10 years. She is a member of the National QiGong Association. She has studied with Shoshanna Katzman and Master Yang Yang. She will present the Five Treasures Practice as developed by the National QiGong Association's Healing Wave Program. Attendees should wear comfortable clothing and supportive shoes and plan to participate. Carol will also have a limited number of DVD's of the "Five Treasures Practice" available at a cost of \$10 for those who wish to continue the practice of QiGong.

Booklet Correction

**Anya Biel**

**Orel State University**

**SUNY Albany**

\*correct phone number, 368-2386

### **AAUW January meeting: QiGong and an overview of Chinese Medicine**

Carol Cownie RN BS

The presentation includes a brief overview of Chinese Medicine and how it differs from Western Medicine. We will learn the, "Five Treasures" qigong practice as developed by the National QiGong Association for its Healing Wave program. Wear comfortable clothing and supportive shoes. This practice may be done seated. Any questions or concerns contact Carol Cownie at 883-8099.

### ***The AAUW Student Organization Holds Its November Meeting, Plans Activities for 2012-2013***

The AAUW Student Organization held its monthly meeting on November 13, 2012. At the meeting, we greeted a new member, Heather Kowalczyk, who is one of the twenty-six (!) AAUW e-student affiliates we had signed up during our membership drive at the FMCC Club Fair in October 2012. The meeting was very productive, as we brainstormed for ideas of club activities for the remainder of the fall semester of 2012 and the spring semester of 2013.

In November, 2012, the AAUW Student Organization volunteers to assist with AAUW-sponsored SAT Practice Test for high school students scheduled to take place at FMCC on Saturday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, with a follow-up on Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>. Our Vice-President, Ellie DiScioscia, gave a campus tour to high school students after their test on Saturday.

In December, 2012, the AAUW Student Organization will ring bells for the Salvation Army at Price Chopper in Johnstown on Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, between 8:30 am and 12:30 pm. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Liz Russo at 762-9702.

In February, 2013, the organization will be sponsoring an event to make earrings to give to Domestic Violence Shelter Victims. The event will take place at FMCC and will be open to all members of the AGJ Branch of AAUW. The exact date of the event is to be announced in January.

In March, 2013, the AAUW Student Organization will stuff bears as part of Hugs Across America to give to children coming with their mothers into shelters. We are looking to team up with the FMCC's Residence Club to involve students living in residential halls on campus.

In addition to the above-mentioned events, during the course of the spring semester, the AAUW Student Organization wants to organize a "women's lunch hour" series. We plan to

invite local women guest speakers of diverse ethnic and educational background who are successful in various fields. Of particular interest are the fields in which FMCC offers degrees: business, computer science, criminal justice, education, engineering science, human services, nursing, radiologic technology, fine arts, theater, visual communications technology. If you know someone who could be a potential candidate for our lunch series, please contact Anya Biel at 368-2386 or [anna.biel@fmcc.suny.edu](mailto:anna.biel@fmcc.suny.edu).

The next AAUW Student Organization meeting will be held on December 4<sup>th</sup>, 12:30-1:15 pm, in C-119 at FMCC. –Anya Biel

**PUBLIC POLICY**

The election season is behind us and now the country and its leaders must turn their focus, once again, to the dire economic issues that continue. While these issues have had a negative effect on both males and females, it is imperative that the government take into consideration the added impact that job reduction and wage discrimination pose to women.

More women than before are working outside the home. A large majority of these women are the primary wage earners for their families – an even larger percentage are single mothers trying to keep their families living under one roof. As stated on the AAUW NYS Public Policy website “Women have either lost proportionately more jobs or

gained proportionately fewer jobs than men in *every industry* over the course of the last three years”.

The comment has been made that “*We must focus on creating jobs, training our workers for those jobs, and ensuring those jobs are good jobs – ones that pay equitably, and provide important protections for economic security.*”

While the pay equity issue is of major importance, the present trend of reduction of employment and loss of wages should be the primary focus of our government. I would urge all of you to write or email our legislators to stress the necessity for doing whatever is necessary to ensure adequate funding is made available to struggling businesses so that jobs are retained, economic security is ensured and families are impacted less severely.

*Helen Martin  
Public Policy*

**HATS OFF!**

Congratulations to AAUW Branch Member Traci DiMezza! Not only did Traci win the race for Gloversville City Judge, but she will be the first woman to hold that position!

**Curl Up With a Good Book - Branch Book Club lunch group**

The cool weather tends to bring us inside to curl up under a warm quilt with a good book. AAUW members, branches and

states have submitted the following titles for the 2012-13 Adelante Book Club that you might like to add to your winter reading. Titles were chosen to provide insight into the diversity of our population. Perhaps a Branch Book Club lunch group might like to form to read and discuss some books on the list. (Contact Liz Russo if you are interested.)

**ADELANTE BOOK LIST**

September, National Hispanic Heritage Month

***Make It Your Business: Dare to Climb the Ladder of Leadership* by Sylvia M. Montero**

Sylvia Montero tells the story of her journey from a plantation shack in Puerto Rico and the projects of the Lower East Side of Manhattan to a “beyond dreams” career at Pfizer Inc., the largest pharmaceutical company in the world. This is a memoir and business book filled with stories of successes and setbacks that translate into portable tools for how to succeed in corporate America.

October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month

***Lark and Termite* by Jayne Anne Phillips**

Lark and Termite is set during the 1950s in West Virginia and Korea. It is a story of the power of loss and love, the echoing ramifications of war, family secrets, dreams and ghosts, and the unseen, almost magical bonds that unite and sustain us. At its center are two children: Lark, on

the verge of adulthood, and her brother, Termite, a child unable to walk and talk but filled with radiance. Around them, their mother, Lola, a haunting but absent presence; their Aunt Nonie, a matronly, vibrant woman in her fifties, who raises them; and Termite's father, Corporal Robert Leavitt, who finds himself caught up in the chaotic early months of the Korean War.

November Native American Heritage Month

**Power by Linda Hogan**

Sixteen-year-old Omishita Eaton and her adoptive Aunt Ama are members of the fictional Taiga tribe of Florida, a dwindling group that is down to its last 30 members. After a devastating hurricane, Ama and the girl track a wounded deer into the swamps and use it as a stalking horse to hunt a panther, an animal sacred to the Taiga. Ama kills the cat, a scrawny, flea-bitten example of its species, and is charged with poaching and violations of the Endangered Species Act. The event tears the Taiga community apart. Most castigate her for slaying the sacred animal, but Omishita stands by her. Though Ama's motives are never made entirely clear, there are intimations that she undertook the taboo act in the hope of sparking regeneration not only of the Taiga culture but of all of creation.

December

***This Child will be Great: Memoir of a Remarkable Life by Africa's First Women President* by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**

In January 2006, after the Republic of Liberia had been racked by fourteen years of brutal civil conflict, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf—Africa's "Iron Lady"—was sworn in as president, an event that marked a tremendous turning point in the history of the West African nation. In this stirring memoir, Sirleaf shares the inside story of her rise to power, including her early childhood; her experiences with abuse, imprisonment, and exile; and her fight for democracy and social justice.

This compelling tale of survival reveals Sirleaf's determination to succeed in multiple worlds: from her studies in the United States to her work as an international bank executive to her election campaigning in some of Liberia's most desperate and war-torn villages and neighborhoods. It is also the story of an outspoken political and social reformer who, despite danger, fought the oppression of dictators and championed change. By sharing her story, Sirleaf encourages women everywhere to pursue leadership roles at the highest levels of power and gives us all hope that, with perseverance, we can change the world.

January

***Baghdad Burning: Girl Blog from Iraq* by Riverbend**

In August 2003, the world gained access to a remarkable new voice: a blog written by a 25-year old Iraqi woman living in Baghdad whose identity remained concealed for her own protection.

Calling herself Riverbend, she offered searing eyewitness accounts of the everyday realities on the ground punctuated by astute analysis on the politics behind these events. In a voice that is eloquent, angry, reflective and darkly comic, Riverbend recounts stories of life in an occupied city—of neighbors whose homes are raided by U.S. troops, whose relatives disappear into prisons, and whose children are kidnapped by money-hungry militias. At times, the tragic blends into the absurd as she tells of her family jumping out of bed to wash clothes and send e-mails in the middle of the night when the electricity is briefly restored or of their quest to bury an elderly aunt when the mosques are all overbooked for wakes and the cemeteries are all full. The only Iraqi blogger writing from a woman's perspective, she also describes a once-secular city where women are now afraid to leave their homes without head covering and a male escort.

# Calendar of Upcoming Events

## **November 26**

AAUW Board Meeting  
Johnstown Public Library, **6 pm**

## **November 27**

Branch Fundraiser  
Princeton SAT Practice Test Follow-up **6-8:30 pm**  
(Students and Parents)  
FMCC Classroom Building Room C-130

## **December 1**

AAUW Student Organization  
Ringing Bells for Salvation Army  
Johnstown Price Chopper  
**8:30 am-12:30 pm**

## **December 3**

Branch Lunch Bunch  
Festival of Trees  
Century Club, 130 Guy Park Ave., Amsterdam  
Group Luncheons (\$7 for groups of 10)  
Entertainment: AHS Chorus, Liberty Bell Choir  
**11am-2 pm**

## **December 4**

AAUW Student Organization  
Meeting  
FMCC Classroom Building Room C-119  
**12:30-1:15 pm**

## **December 8**

Holiday Brunch  
Union Hall Restaurant, Johnstown **10 am**  
Entertainment by Duly Noted A Cappella  
Donation to HUGS  
(to provide stuffed bears to children in crisis)

## **January 14**

Branch Potluck Supper Meeting  
Johnstown Senior Center **5:30 pm**  
An Introduction to Qi Gung and Traditional Medicine  
Presenter: Carol Cownie

## **February 12**

Branch Supper Meeting  
Ace Day Spa **5:30 pm**  
Rt. 30A, Johnstown  
Healthy You, Inside and Out

