

Announcing our new website!

Poughkeepsie-ny-aauw.net

See page 4 for details

Coming in April

**Votes for Women, Laws for Birds:
The Suffragists Who Saved America's Wildlife**

Presented by Michelle Nijhuis

April 8, 2021

7:00 pm

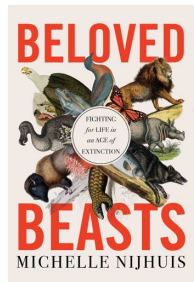
On Zoom

Michelle Nijhuis, author of the new book *Beloved Beasts: Fighting for Life in an Age of Extinction*, will discuss the key role of suffrage activists in the early conservation movement and how their accomplishments still benefit us today. She will also talk about her own experiences as a science journalist and first-time book author.



Rachel Carson

A project editor for *The Atlantic*, Michelle writes about science and the environment for *National Geographic*, *The New York Times Magazine* and other publications. After 15 years off the electrical grid in rural Colorado, she lives with her family in White Salmon, Washington. To learn more about her work, visit <https://michellenijhuis.com>



Join us for a look at local history....

A Long & Winding Road: The Local Path to Women's Suffrage on its 100th Anniversary

(Rescheduled from March 2020)

March 11, 2021 at 7pm on Zoom

Members will receive an email with the link to register. Non-members are welcome and may register at poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net

Speakers:

Bill Jeffway,
Executive Director,
Dutchess County
Historical Society

Melodye Moore, Head
of Collections, Trustee,
Dutchess County
Historical Society



Celebrate the Centennial of Women's Suffrage with a program highlighting Dutchess County's role in advancing the rights of women. We will commemorate this milestone of American democracy with a fascinating look at the individuals and events within Dutchess County that led to the adoption, in August 1920, of the US Constitutional Amendment granting women across the nation the right to vote.



Even before the first organized efforts at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, Dutchess County had a unique influence on the women's suffrage movement, in part due to its large Quaker community and the presence of Vassar College.

For more on our speakers, see page 5

Questions: Sandy Lash 845-227-4650 sjlash@optonline.net or
Marcine Humphrey 845-485-7697 marcine.humphrey@gmail.com

MARCH CALENDAR

Online Calendar at www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org
 Contact: Kathy Friedman kfriedman33@gmail.com

- 1 Word Games: 1:30 pm on Zoom**
 Coordinator: Sue Doyle (914-474-1232)
suedoyle1@aol.com
- 2 World Travelers: 7:00 pm**
Italy and Switzerland
 Presenter: Sharon Fleury
 Coordinator: Bonnie Auchincloss (635-5191) bauchincloss@gmail.com
- 4 Board Meeting: 7 pm on Zoom**
- 8 All those books...: 2:30 pm on Zoom**
The Blue Flower, by Penelope Fitzgerald
 Coordinator: Carol Loizides (452-3208)
e.loizides@verizon.net
- 9 Reely Together: 2:00 pm on Zoom**
 Discussion of streamed films.
 Film selection TBD
 Coordinator: Jackie Vierno (320-6967)
jmv129@optonline.net
- 11 Canasta: 1-4 pm**
Online Canasta
 Coordinator: Barbara Cohen barbco451@gmail.com
- 11 Monthly Program: 7pm on Zoom**
- 12 Daytime Literature: 10 am on Zoom**
Inside the O'Briens by Lisa Genova
 Coordinators: Kathy Friedman (485-8671) and Susan Fink (473-3168)
- 15 Manderley Literary Society: 7:00 pm on Zoom**
Button Man by Andrew Gross
 Coordinator: Shelly Friedman (462-4996)
rfriedman5@gmail.com
- 16 Cuisine: 7:00 pm on Zoom**
Choose a female chef and make one of her dishes
 Contact Coordinator: Jo Anne Abraskin
abraskinmomma@yahoo.com and Blanche Bergman)
blanchebergman@gmail.com
- 17 Bridge I: 1:00 - 4:00 pm**
Bridge on Bridgebase.com. Members must notify a coordinator each month of their intent to play.
 Coordinators must have each member's username for bridgebase.com in order to invite them to play.
 Coordinator: Linda Ronayne (897-9745)
linronay@gmail.com
- 18 BYOL Party on Zoom at 5:00pm**
- 19 Poetry & Play Readings: 1:45 pm on Zoom**
 Topic TBD
 Coordinators: Cathy Kinn cathy@kinn.org & Jackie Sweeney (518-947-6682)
- 23 Reely Together: 2:00 pm on Zoom**
 Discussion of streamed films.
 Film selection TBD
 Coordinator: Jackie Vierno (320-6967)
jmv129@optonline.net

- 24 Contemporary Literature: 7:30 pm on Zoom**
 TBD
 Coordinators: Ann Wade (229-5267) and Linda Freisitzer (266-5427)
 - 25 Bridge II: 1:00 pm on Zoom**
 Coordinator: Cathy Kinn cathy@kinn.org
 - 25 Pins & Needles: 7:00 pm on Zoom**
 Theme: TBD
 Coordinators: Pat Luczai pat.luczai@gmail.com and Mary Ann Williams maryannwms@optonline.net
- Trekkers: 10:00 am**
TBA

Coordinator: Tori Smith (345-0043)

Movie Night, Gourmet Out & About, Soleil, Art on the Go, and Mah Jongg are not meeting at this time of social distancing.
Pedal Pushers will resume in April.



Poughkeepsie Branch Officers 2020-2021

President	Monique Jones
Program Co-VPs	Sandy Lash Marcine Humphrey
Membership Co-VPs	Mary Scalise-Annis Sheila Zweifler
Development VP	Lula Allen
Communications VP	Barbara Durniak
Secretary	Margaret Nijhuis
Treasurer	Patricia Luczai
Membership Treasurer	Susan Doyle

President: president.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com
 Board members: board.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com
 Association: www.aauw.org NY State: www.aauw-nys.org
 Poughkeepsie Branch: <https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net>

MISSION: To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy.

VISION: Equity for all.

VALUES: Nonpartisan. Fact-based. Integrity. Inclusion and Intersectionality.

AAUW Poughkeepsie values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

The Branch is published ten times a year, September through June, by the Poughkeepsie Branch of the AAUW, Inc. Send articles to the editor: Cyd Averill, averill@optonline.net

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Monique Jones

Beginning April 7, 2021, members will have the opportunity to vote on National's proposed changes to its bylaws and the Public Policy Priorities as well as to select members for the National Board of Directors. While the comment period for the amendments ended on February 5th, all members are still encouraged to review the proposals in advance of election time.



The bylaws modification put forth for approval pertains to the elimination of the degree requirement for membership eligibility. With the changes to the Public Policy Priorities, National seeks to better define AAUW's commitment to addressing systemic racism; refine its commitment to equitable access to higher education for all; and underscore the importance of high-quality data collection.

Details on how members can cast their ballots, the rationale for the recommended changes, and the proposed language to incorporate into the Priorities can be found here:

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/member/governance-tools/national-election/>.

While perusing the election material, it is also worth exploring the wealth of information on the rest of National's public pages, including its [2020 Year in Review](https://www.aauw.org/about/years-in-review/2020-review/#Programs): (<https://www.aauw.org/about/years-in-review/2020-review/#Programs>). This report highlights the organization's accomplishments during what can only be described as an extraordinary year.

National remained active last year - educating, advocating, and researching - despite the pandemic. It offered 35 timely and informative [webinars](#), reaching more than 30,000 people. Subject matter, spanning an array of interests yet all supportive of the organization's mission, included *Understanding the Digital Divide in Pre-K — 12 Education*, *Women Scholars During COVID: Solutions for Gender Equity in Academia*, and *Justice Ginsburg's Legacy and the Future of the Court*.

It also prompted more than 62,000 letters to elected officials through the Two-Minute Activist, advocating for issues like comprehensive COVID-19 relief, the Voting Rights Advancement Act, and the Paycheck Fairness Act. Legislatively and in partnership with coalition members, AAUW also successfully advocated for passage of the [Pregnant Workers Fairness Act](https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/pregnant-workers-fairness-act/) <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/pregnant-workers-fairness-act/> by the U.S. House of Representatives. It is now working to garner support for passage of the Act in the Senate.

Additionally, National launched the Latina Policy Initiative to gain a better understanding of the economic and health impact of COVID-19 on Latinas.

So why the segue from voting on the proposed amendments to exploring National's website and touting its achievements? Well, with the coming election, it is a good time to reflect on the larger organization that we are a part of and the impactful work it does to effect change at the national level. By acquainting ourselves with what National has achieved and what it still looks to do, we may not only become more informed voters in April but also more invested members.

Finally, as we look at AAUW beyond our local branch, I would also like to remind members that AAUW-NYS is seeking individuals interested in leadership positions to serve on its Board. Open positions include: VP Membership, VP Public Policy, Treasurer, and Secretary. Job descriptions as well as the application can be found here: <https://aauw-nys.org/about-us/governance/>

MEMBERSHIP COUNTS

Mary Scalise-Annis 635-2109 nicevalley@aol.com
Sheila Zweifler 462-6478 sheilaz@optonline.net

Happy March, the harbinger of Spring! Hope all good things are before us. Vaccines are on their way so let's hope we can gather together before too long!

We have **good news** for our members! New York State AAUW has decided to waive their fees for new and continuing members for this year, and we are passing along the savings to you! Our local Poughkeepsie Chapter will not be raising dues, but National will be asking for a slight increase of \$3.00. So all told, this year's dues will be \$78.00, instead of \$91.00. Any new members who join now will be members from March until the following June 2022! So invite your friends to learn about our wonderful organization. (Here's the fine print: the following year, all regular payments will be due, with an additional \$5.00 increase for National). So put your \$13.00 gift to good use!

Our branch has a new website, so please find us online and bookmark us. <https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net> Speaking of our website, check out all the activities lined up for this month, including our monthly meeting: *A Long & Winding Road: the Local Path to Women's Suffrage on its 100th Anniversary, March 11, 2021 7:00 pm, on Zoom. Don't forget to pre-register!*

And of course, we hope you'll attend our monthly **BYOL** gathering on Zoom, on Thursday, March 18th at 5:00 pm.

Have fun during your Zoom Interest Group gatherings! Hope to see you all soon. Stay well.

NYS CONVENTION UPDATE

The 2021 annual meeting will be held in conjunction with a virtual summit June 11-12, 2021. Details will be shared as they are made available.

COMMUNICATIONS: A New Website

Barbara Durniak

New Poughkeepsie Branch Website: <https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net/>

Exciting news - our new website is now operational! We are using a WordPress-based program called Site Resources, available from AAUW National at **no charge** to branches and state organizations. Although the framework is standardized, local website editors have the ability to organize menus and pages according to branch needs. An added bonus is that AAUW National is hosting our site at **no charge**.

Throughout the summer and fall, Margaret Nijhuis, Claudette Hennessy, Diane Jablonski, Cyd Averill, Mary Coiteux, Joanne Scolaro and I held several planning sessions via Zoom. At the same time, Margaret and Joanne worked on streamlining and updating content on the existing website. And with the help of Barbara Hespenheide, branch historian, back files of certain documents (newsletters, annual reports, etc.) were moved to our cloud storage and an annual archiving schedule was developed.

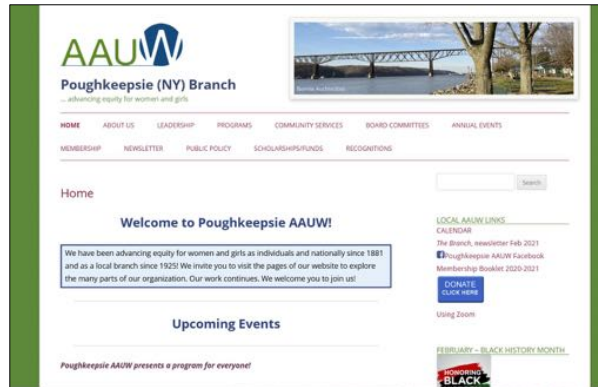
The branch signed the Site Resources service agreement in late November and we were given access on December 2nd. The planning, pruning, and updating done earlier enabled Margaret and Joanne (the designated "super-editors") to concentrate fully on mastering the Site Resources software. Although they both had extensive experience with the original website, there was still a learning curve, not to mention the extremely time-consuming task of copying, pasting and formatting 45 pages of content, including photos and graphics, into the new framework. As they progressed, the committee weighed in on all aspects of the site, including aesthetics such as font and background colors.

Astoundingly, Margaret and Joanne completed the transfer by mid-January, and the committee reconvened for a final review. After a few minor tweaks, the board was asked for input. At the February 4th meeting the board approved the official launch date - 2/12/2021.

Margaret is working to set up an automatic redirect from our old website to the new one, but until the technical details are worked out, she will put a large banner on the old site with a link to the new one.

A quick orientation to the new site: Expanding the number of main menus to 12 (the old site had 6) eliminated the need for multiple layers of submenus, thereby simplifying navigation. The right-hand column, which features links to branch, state and National information, is persistent, meaning the column is visible from any page on the website. Please note the revolving display of photos on the website's header. The Photography

committee supplied many striking images of our area's two iconic bridges and we are now able to showcase them on every page.



There are many people who contributed to the success of this venture. First, I would like to thank Dave and Mary King, who created, hosted, and maintained our website for many years, and also generously paid the

site's domain name fees annually. Margaret's technical expertise, willingness to push through obstacles, and attention to detail were invaluable every step of the way. Joanne was also instrumental in keeping the workflow on track and transferring content quickly. The other members of the committee provided ideas and feedback throughout the project. It was truly a pleasure to work with such a talented and committed team. Our contact at Site Resources answered our questions and resolved issues promptly and efficiently. We look forward to working with Site Resources as they continue to make improvements to the software and add new features. And finally, the website's content comes from our members, so thanks to all of you for keeping your pages current and relevant.

Our old website was dynamic, inviting, and informative, and we believe this new iteration fulfills those goals as well. Please check in often at our new site.

NOTE: Do not type "www" before "Poughkeepsie" in our URL, as that will give you a "link not found" message.

SHORTCUTS TO OUR WEBSITE: For iPad and iPhone Users

Margaret Nijhuis

Make it easy to find the new AAUW website by putting an icon for the website on your iPad or iPhone screen in 4 easy steps.

- 1) Go to the new site <https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net>
- 2) With the website open on the screen look up to the top right (iPad) or bottom (iPhone) and you will see the symbol at right. Tap on this "share button."
- 3) One of the options will be **Add to Home Screen** Tap on this selection.
- 4) Edit the name if you wish, tap "Add" and you will have the icon for the website on your screen.



The AAUW newsletter link is on every page of the website. Follow these same steps to put an icon for www.facebook.com/AAUWPoughkeepsie2014 or any other website you visit often.

PUBLIC POLICY

Celia Serotsky

In preparing to write this article I went to the National AAUW website to research policy issues and legislation the organization was supporting. The national dues increase that will be instituted in the near future makes some of us stop and reevaluate our desire to continue a financial commitment to an organization that may or may not be representing our views or using our dues wisely. So, I am committed in my role as Public Policy Chair to bring attention to the actions that the national organization is doing to further its mission to “advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.” And, my hope in doing so will allow you to continue your membership, knowing that concrete actions are being taken on behalf of women in the workplace and in education.

Recently I sent an eblast message encouraging you to email or call your Congressional Representative asking for support to consider and move forward the **Paycheck Fairness Act**. Briefly, this act was created to “update and strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 so that it **provides effective protection against sex-based pay discrimination in today’s workplace.**” (National AAUW website) This bill was introduced to the House by Representative Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut on January 28, 2021, and was referred to the Education and Labor Committee on the same day.

Here is part of the text of the letter that National AAUW sent:

Swiftly pass the Paycheck Fairness Act (PFA) to update and strengthen the Equal Pay Act of 1963 so that it provides effective protection against sex-based pay discrimination in today’s workplace. This bill takes several important steps, including prohibiting retaliation against workers who wish to discuss or disclose their wages and banning the use of salary history in determining future pay, so that prior pay discrimination does not follow workers from job to job.

PFA also closes loopholes that have weakened the law over time and equalizes remedies to ensure that women can receive the same robust compensation for sex-based pay discrimination currently available to those subjected to discrimination based on race and ethnicity. This bill also provides technical assistance to business, requires wage data collection, and supports salary negotiation training programs. PFA passed the House of Representatives with bipartisan support in the 116th Congress, so we urge expeditious passage again now.

I sent an email to my Congressional Representative and to Senators Gillibrand and Schumer, and I’m sure many of you



did as well. This issue is extremely important for women, especially, as I have written before, women are experiencing far more impact on their professional life as a result of the Covid pandemic. If you have not had a chance to write or call any of these people, I urge to do so. We do not want this bill to linger in committee, as so many bills do. Women in the workplace need to know that they are being paid fairly and equitably and that they have a right to obtain that information without retribution.

I will continue to keep you informed of policy issues that both the National and the State organizations are emphasizing and, on occasion, will send out an eblast for your immediate consideration. In the meantime you can sign up for “The Two Minute Activist” at this address:

<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/> This site will allow you to receive updates directly from National and offer you the opportunity to communicate directly with Congress.

MARCH PROGRAM NOTES: Speaker bios

Melodye Moore has been a long-serving leader at the Dutchess County Historical Society in many roles: as Chair of the Collections Committee, as Program Chair of major initiatives like the “Year of the Veteran,” and is very centrally involved in interpretation for public engagement. She authored numerous articles on local history, has been a lecturer, including at Marist College for Lifetime Studies. She served as Chief Administrative Officer and Site Manager for Mills Mansion Historic Site in Staatsburg.



Bill Jeffway was appointed Executive Director of the Dutchess County Historical Society (DCHS) in early 2017. Having retired from three decades of work in communications and marketing, primarily at the advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather, he turned his attention to his first love: local history. Given his background, he is helping DCHS “get the word out” about its enormous reserves of physical collections, research and writings that have been nurtured since DCHS’s 1914 inception.

Together, in addition to their managerial roles, **Bill and Melodye** develop the majority of program and exhibition content for DCHS and manage its outreach efforts to members, educators, and friends of history.

The Local Path to 1920 “Votes for Women” by **Bill Jeffway** will give you an overview of this journey to voter rights for women. You will find a link to the article at <https://dchsny.org/1920path/>

AAUW: A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Barbara Van Itallie, State Board Member

While we are all so pleased with the programs of the Poughkeepsie Branch, we are also members of National AAUW, with reach and influence beyond our own branch. Part of our annual dues goes to support this outstanding organization, which focuses on gender equity and economic security through education and advocacy. They offer many initiatives and programs in a number of areas, for example:

National is a source of **public policy programs and advocacy** for us. AAUW and coalition partners successfully advocated for the House passage of the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. They produced many voters' guides and lobbied Congress on the Paycheck Fairness Act. We receive emails from them on current issues and calls-for-action. And so much more; watch for columns from our Public Policy Chair, Celia Serotsky, for other National policy initiatives.

They sponsor **webinars on a wide range of timely topics**, particularly during this last pandemic year. For example, recent webinars were on topics the digital divide among students, and another on building a diverse and inclusive AAUW. Watch your email for invitations to these webinars, or go to the AAUW National website to view past ones.

AAUW supports **fellowships and grants** to women to advance their educational and professional opportunities. In the last year, 250 women received a total \$3.9 million to pursue educational and professional opportunities.

They conduct **research on current important issues** for women and publish the results. For example, their publication "The Simple Truth about the Gender Wage Gap" was updated in 2020. The report can be found on the National website. Another report dealt with women and student debt during Covid.

National offers **help to branches**. A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Toolkit can be found on their website, for branches to use to obtain actionable goals and strategies. For another example, our recent change to an updated website was due to a National AAUW program, which not only improved the site, but also saved our branch money.

They offer **training and programs** in salary negotiation and leadership, such as the Start Smart Program

Through its Legal Advocacy Fund, AAUW offers support to **fight sex-discrimination** in the workplace.

Be sure to check the AAUW National website, www.aauw.org, from time to time, to see all that National AAUW is doing for us and for all women.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Barbara Hespenheide, Historian

Our Poughkeepsie Branch of AAUW is really amazing! Our history is found in our newsletter. As historian, I have been given extra copies of these wonderful documents dating from September 1986. In addition, there is a one-volume history of each year since 2006 in condensed form. If you would like copies of any issues of the Branch, or would like to see/read our history, please let me know. I would like to share this treasure trove!

A NOTE OF THANKS

Muriel Horowitz, on behalf of
Reunite Migrant Families

REUNITE MIGRANT FAMILIES



Thank you!

Our Clean Sweep Drive was a huge success! Although we didn't count, we feel safe saying that over a thousand items were collected, worth well over \$2000, and the cash contributions were more than \$2500. The hygiene supplies have been given to the pastors of five local Hispanic churches for distribution. The cash donations will be used to buy more supplies, needed for medications and other emergency situations as identified by the pastors. They are very grateful for your generosity and thank you all for your support and kind wishes.

Thank you everyone! Those who shopped and donated, those who wrote a check, those who were drop off locations, those who spread the word, those who organized all the items, and those who wished us well, all contributed to this awesome drive that provided supplies and furthered the trust between our neighborhood communities by their show of caring.

EMPOWERING WOMEN

Watch our branch Facebook page this month for images from the Women's Empowerment Draft, a creation of student-led ArtForce5 to celebrate Women's History Month. Each day we will feature a different historic trailblazer or living legend. Stay tuned!



SUPPORTERS OF THE BRANCH

Many thanks to our newsletter Patrons (\$25 or more) and Sponsors (\$10 or more). Their annual contributions help defray the expense of publishing *The Branch* and other communication expenses. To add your name, make check payable to: "Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, Inc." and mail to Cyd Averill, editor.

Patrons: Mary Ann Boylan, Ruth Aldrich Gau, Sandra Goldberg, Shaileen Kopec, Marticia Madory, Margaret Nijhuis

Sponsors: Mary Ann Ryan