

AAUW Poughkeepsie Branch Communications Vice-President Annual Report 2021-2022

Members

Barbara Durniak: Communications VP
Cyd Averill: Newsletter Editor
Katherine Friedman: Assistant Newsletter Editor
Bonnie Auchincloss: Photography Chair/Coordinator
Margaret Nijhuis: Web Editor
Joanne Scolaro: Assistant Communications
Mary Coiteux & Sabashnee Govender: Facebook
Jackie Goffe-McNish: Public Relations Chair

Overview

With many Covid restrictions still in place this year, the Communications team was instrumental in keeping members informed of branch activities. The website, newsletter, and Facebook editors creatively used both print and visual effects to draw interest to their respective content. Using Zoom for various meetings enabled “snowbird” members to participate and made scheduling much easier.

As a result of last year’s review of the Working Rules, the Database Co-Managers now report to the Membership Co-Vice Presidents. This move was made because the database is so closely aligned to the operations of Membership.

Amazon Cloud Storage

The Amazon cloud storage is used to store photographs of branch activities, backfiles of documents such as annual reports and meeting minutes, and the newsletter. Bonnie Auchincloss is responsible for keeping branch photos organized and labeled for easy retrieval.

Email Announcements

Margaret Nijhuis and/or Joanne Scolaro send out email notifications and reminders for branch events such as meetings, programs, and items of interest. The addition of relevant graphics gives these emails added “eye appeal.” Margaret resolves email “bounce back” issues.

Facebook

Facebook postings have been coordinated with the Branch Webmaster and Newsletter Editor and make use of the graphics used by both coordinators. Postings include timely reminders of upcoming events, news and photos from the Interest Groups & the Initiatives as well as other items of interest for the membership. Postings are also used to promote interest in branch Activities and Goals to potential members. Information and graphics from State and National AAUW have been shared throughout the year. Zoom information about the monthly General Membership Meetings, and other gatherings were posted. Zoom photos were not posted due to privacy concerns. Respectfully submitted, Mary Coiteux

The Branch

Under Cyd’s expert editorship, the newsletter is published monthly from Sept. – June. All but 6 members are comfortable receiving the newsletter via email.

After many years of outstanding service in maintaining the online calendar and managing the mailing of newsletters to members who don’t use email, Kathy Friedman is stepping down as Assistant Newsletter editor, and a replacement is being sought.

Photography Committee

The Photography committee developed a Photo Release form for Minors and guidelines for its use and retention. The form and guidelines are now on the website.

Public Relations Chair

The Branch has received recent coverage in the local press and our Facebook page is drawing the attention of local community leaders. At the May meeting, the board voted to make this position an on-board position so that the chair can hear first-hand about branch activities and initiatives. Jackie Geoffe-McNish is stepping down, so this position needs to be filled.

Technical Support

Due to Covid, there has been no need for technical support in the traditional sense this year, apart from assistance with Zoom (see below). Bonnie Auchincloss continues to store the branch computer, mouse, LCD projector, screen, and an extension cord. This spring the speaker system, microphone, and microphone stand were used at the Woman of the Year event. Afterward, I transferred the equipment to Marcine Humphrey, with the expectation that it could be kept at the Presbyterian Church hall once we start renting it in the fall.

Website

The new Site Resources website has been running smoothly. Margaret continues to do most of the updating work, but Joanne, Cyd and I also contribute. The website will be updated as usual during the summer.

Last summer, Mary King and I were able to transfer the old website's domain name from the Kings account a new branch account. On 7/8/21 the Branch registered the old domain name with Namecheap, at a cost of \$44.88 for 3 years. This action will protect the old domain name from being co-opted by other organizations. In 2024 the Branch will need to decide whether to continue this arrangement or to assume the "risk" of having the domain name out on the open market. For more information on this topic see: <https://www.makeuseof.com/avoid-domain-expiration-security-concern/>

In the fall, the Membership Co-Vice Presidents decided to discontinue the printing of the Membership Booklet. The web editors and Membership Co-Vice Presidents met several times to make sure all content from the Booklet was represented on the website.

The web editors and Membership Co-Vice Presidents, along with the Database Co-Managers and Sue Doyle, met several times to develop a single editable membership form for both new and returning members. Margaret wrote up clear instructions outlining the various options for filling out and submitting the form to Sue Doyle. The instructions for how to pay via credit card/PayPal were also updated on the website. Initial reports seem to indicate the process is running smoothly.

This coming year, Membership is interested in working with Site Resources to develop a dynamic membership form – one that members can fill out and submit online as opposed to sending to Sue Doyle. Another goal for the website is to work with others in the branch to meet the criteria for the AAUW Five Star Recognition Program.

Zoom Manager

Zoom assistance, primarily for program and membership virtual events, continues to be a group effort, with major input from Betty Harrel and Margaret Nijhuis.

Other

The Privacy and Security committee did not have a chance to explore an encrypted password manager application for the storage of the Branch's many passwords, so this is a goal for the upcoming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Durniak
Communications Vice President