

Commission on the Status of Women: March 6-17

Diane Jablonski



The start of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is fast approaching! This year it's possible to attend either virtually or in person. The conference lasts two weeks with 20+ presentations each day.

Plan to attend when **Gloria Blackwell, AAUW CEO, will conduct a virtual presentation on March 15, from 2-4pm.** Poughkeepsie AAUW has tentatively planned a Zoom meeting on March 16th to discuss her presentation and share brief summaries of any other presentations that you attend or reactions to the conference in general. Watch your email or the branch website for more information.

WHOVA (free) is being used for registration, viewing the agenda, and viewing virtual presentations. Registration is open and you can register now by downloading the WHOVA app on your android or Apple device or going to https://whova.com/portal/webapp/ngocs1_202303/ on your computer. If you have trouble navigating the Portal or want more information on how to use the different features, this short tutorial is for you! Watch the 7-minute tutorial video here: <https://youtu.be/PuJmzi-jGIw>.

This is a great opportunity to get a global perspective on what different organizations are doing around the world to support women and girls in their careers and exploring Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. The presentations are from around the world in many time zones - you have your choice.

General information is available at <https://ngocsw.org/>

Please contact Diane Jablonski
board.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com

Join us IN PERSON for this inspiring program



**Arts, Access, and
Excellence**

Creation and Community in Poughkeepsie
with The Art Effect

Presented by:

Mary Ellen Iatropoulos, MA, MPS
Director of Programs, The Art Effect
<https://thearteffect.org/>

**March 9, 2023
7:00 PM**

Freedom Plains United Presbyterian Church*
1168 Route 55, Lagrangeville, NY 12540

How can the arts empower and uplift communities struggling with poverty? In this presentation, The Art Effect's Director of Programs, Mary Ellen Iatropoulos, discusses how arts-based workforce development programs can provide a pathway out of poverty, from helping youth obtain their first paying jobs in the arts, to increasing first-generation students' access to college, to developing a Youth Arts Empowerment Zone that helps to sustainably revitalize Main Street Poughkeepsie.

See page 4 to read about
Mary Ellen Iatropoulos

***Directions:**
<https://bit.ly/3T3D4jc>

Questions? Contact Marcine Humphrey or Maria DeWald at
program.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com



MARCH CALENDAR

Online Calendar: <https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net>

Calendar listing: Philippa Goodman,
communications.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com

To contact interest groups: interest.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com

- 1 Pins & Needles: 2:00 pm**
Accordion fold books
Host: Pat Luczai
Coordinators: Pat Luczai and Mary Ann Williams
- 2 Board Meeting: 7 pm on Zoom**
- 6 Word Games: 1:30 pm**
Coordinator: Sharon Fleury
- 7 World Travelers: 7-9 pm**
Presentation on Bhutan by Margaret Nijhuis.
At Ellie Charwat's house and on Zoom.
Coordinator: Bonnie Auchincloss
- 8 International Women's Day**
- 8 Gourmet: Out & About: 6:00 pm**
Milanese Italian Restaurant, 115 Main St, Poughkeepsie
Coordinator: Jo Anne Abraskin
- 9 Canasta: 1-4 pm**
Coordinator: Barbara Cohen
- 9 Monthly Program: 7:00 see page 1**
- 11 Days for Girls Poughkeepsie NY Team**
Work session: 1:30-4:30 pm
Zion Church Parish Hall, 12 Satterlee Place, Wappingers Falls, NY 12590
Coordinators: Judy Longacre and Sabashnee Govender
- 13 All those books...: 2:30 pm**
Dead Souls, by Nikolai Gogol
Host/Presenter: Peggy Kelland
Coordinator: Carol Loizides
- 14 Reely Together: 2:00 pm on Zoom**
Discussion of streamed films
Film selection: *TBD*
Coordinator: Jackie Vierno
- 15 Bridge I: 1:00 - 4:00 pm**
Coordinator: Susan Fink
- 18 Aventures en Soleil: 11 am - 12:30 pm, rain or shine**
Trip to Wolf Conservation Center, South Salem, NY
Learn about the mythology, biology and ecology of wolf families and discover why it's a special time for packs in North America. Tickets are \$15; purchase at the door, or contact Tori for tickets
Host: Tori Smith
Coordinator: Terry Jackrel
- 17 Poetry & Play Readings: 1:30 pm**
Theme *TBD*
Coordinator: Maria DeWald
- 20 Manderley Literary Society: 7:00 pm**
Book and reviewer to be decided
Coordinator: Shelly Friedman
- 21 Cuisine: details TBD**
Coordinators: Jo Anne Abraskin and Blanche Bergman
- 22 Mah Jongg: Noon - 4:00 pm**
Lunch from 12-1. Play from 1 to 3:30/4:00 pm
TGIFridays Restaurant in the Poughkeepsie Plaza
Contact: Blanche Bergman

- 23 Bridge II: 12:00-4:00 pm**
Red Lobster, Route 9, Poughkeepsie
Coordinator: Sandy Goldberg
- 24 Art on the Go: Details TBD**
Coordinator: Mary Coiteux
- 27 Movie Mavens: details TBD**
Coordinator: Linnea Mason
- 28 Contemporary Literature: 7:30 pm on Zoom**
Lessons in Chemistry, by Bonnie Garmus
Coordinators: Ann Wade and Linda Freisitzer

Trekkers TBD

Coordinator: Tori Smith



Poughkeepsie Branch Officers 2021-2022

President	Celia Serotsky
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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. Submit articles to Cyd Averill, editor.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Celia Serotsky president.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com

On February 9th I attended a webinar provided by PowHerNY on the topic of Governor Kathy Hochul's Executive Budget and how it affects three areas of importance to women: Child Care, Home Health Care, and Reproductive Health Care. There was a considerable amount of information provided that I will highlight below.

Home Health Care

Ilana Berger representing Hand in Hand NYS Association of Home Health Care Workers presented the following information.



- Our population is ageing rapidly and most choose to remain in their homes
- At the same time there is a crisis of not enough home health care workers in the work force or joining the work force to provide for these needs.
- Governor Hochul's current budget continues a practice held over from Governor Cuomo's budget that causes much of the funding provided in the budget to go to insurance companies and not to the agencies that need the money.
- Home health care is not a minimum wage job. It involves a tremendous amount of physical and emotional support.
- The following bill is in the Senate and is in the drafting process in the Assembly:
 - S.3189 Fair Pay for Home Care: would increase the salary to 150% of minimum wage bringing the hourly wage to \$22.50/hour and would address the issue of funding going to insurance companies rather than the agencies that provide the care.
- Currently, the Executive Budget keeps the hourly wage at \$18/hour.

Child Care

Blue Carreker, representing Empire State Campaign for Child Care, a coalition of several constituencies, provided the following.



- Blue emphasized the importance of quality child care. Currently child care workers receive very low wages creating the "Leaking Bucket" situation of losing quality care providers.
- The goal of this organization is to provide \$1 billion in the Executive Budget for a workforce compensation that would provide a \$12,500 supplement for every provider this year.
- In addition, the goal is to transition to true cost of care methodology by 2025.
- Unfortunately, Governor Hochul's budget provides \$389 million for child care compensation. The organization believes that this is not enough.
- Other goals are to help more New Yorkers access child care, break down unnecessary barriers to care, and to plug the holes in the leaking bucket.

- One of the other goals of this effort is to rectify the situation where families whose income increases slightly often lose benefits due to the provisions provided in the current process.

Here is the link to the organization that Blue Carreker represents: <https://bit.ly/3Z5t1Wu>

Reproductive Rights

Quadira, she/her, spoke on this issue representing the Freedom and Equity Fund. Georgana Hanson representing Planned Parenthood Empire State Acts spoke also.



- There is a lack of funding to support those who can't afford care and those who travel here for care
- The goal here is to create an Abortion Access Fund to provide the necessary support for those requesting help.
- In New York State 25% of women ages 19-64 have Medicaid support.
- The Executive Budget provides an increase to the reimbursement for reproductive health care services.

Home health care is an issue that many of us will face in the not too distant future, and for those of us who returned to work when our children were toddlers, child care was a very important issue. The rescinding of Roe v Wade by the Supreme Court has brought reproductive rights back into the forefront of women's rights. We will continue to keep informed on these issues.

MEMBERSHIP COUNTS

Mary Scalise-Annis and Bonnie Auchincloss:
membership.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com

Happy March 2023! **Spring** is just around the corner!

Save the Dates!

Monthly Program: ARTS, ACCESS AND EXCELLENCE, on March 9th at 7:00 in person! Come renew your friendships and meet new members!

Woman of the Year Luncheon: Come join us to honor **Jewel Ratzlaff** at Mill Creek Caterers on Sunday, April 23rd! See registration info in the enclosed form and on our website.

Take some time to peruse our National website, **AAUW.org**, to learn about our support for women and girls, including addressing the STEM gap, the Gender Pay gap, and Title IX. There is power in numbers! Tell your friends about our wonderful work and camaraderie in our very active Poughkeepsie branch too!

MARCH BIRTHDAYS: Jane Austin, Gail Barrack, Alice Bunnell, Veronica (Roni) Cavalla, Ellie Charwat, Beth DeFiglio, Cindy Emmer, Vivian Garber, Mia Henry, Sally A. Kimink, Judy Longacre, Charlotte Mann, Florence Mondanaro, Stephanie Pyrek, Erica Salzmman-Talbi, Maureen Tremblay, Ellen Zelig





Take My Hand (Dolen Perkins Valdez); **Memphis** (Tara Stringfellow); **Black Cake** (Charmaine Wilkerson); **The Hate U Give** (Angie Thomas); **In Every Mirror, She's Black** (Lola Åkerström); **The Vanishing Half** (Brit Bennett); **Hunger** (Roxane Gay).

AAUW supports academic freedom, civic education, protection from censorship, bias-free education, and responsible funding for all levels of education. Stay informed about censorship attempts via your local school board and city/town council meetings. The choice should remain yours. “There are worse crimes than burning books. One of them is not reading them.”

PROGRAM NOTES: March Speaker

Mary Ellen Iatropoulos, MA, MPS has more than fifteen years of experience as an educator, engaging and empowering students across a vast range of humanity, from prisoners to preschoolers, from homeless teens to blue-chip executives. Since 2007, she has been one of The Art Effect's lead teaching artists in radio, film, photography and zine-making, teaching classes for schools, libraries, and partner organizations across the Hudson Valley. In her current role as Director of Programs for The Art Effect, she oversees successful design, implementation, and evaluation of sequential visual, media, and curatorial arts curricula across the organization. She sits on the executive committee of the Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam Counties and the steering committee of Poughkeepsie City School District's Community Schools initiative. She is also an award-winning author focusing on popular culture whose edited volume *Joss Whedon and Race: Critical Essays* is available now from McFarland Publishers.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR COLLEGE WOMEN STUDENT LEADERS (NCCWSL)

Marcine Humphrey



Applications are now being accepted for the 2023 [National Conference for College Women Student Leaders](#) (NCCWSL) conference to be held May 31 to June 3, 2023 at the University of Maryland. The Poughkeepsie branch is offering a scholarship to a young woman attending college in the Poughkeepsie area. The scholarship, named for Irene Keyes, a past president of our branch, covers the registration fee as well as **all** scheduled meals and housing. A travel stipend will also be available.

NCCWSL, a well-known conference that attracts young women from all over the country, is a transformative experience for college women. The conference provides a platform to help college and university women develop leadership skills, Young women meet accomplished female leaders and choose from a variety of workshops designed to inform and inspire. In addition, the young women participate in community service activities and tour Washington DC. Applications are available on our website—deadline is **March 20, 2023**.

PUBLIC POLICY

Patricia DeLeo board.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com

Fahrenheit 225: Banned But Not Burned

Last month was Black History Month—a celebration of Black culture. But it is getting difficult to celebrate the literary achievements of Black writers as their works are increasingly disappearing from many school curriculums, school libraries and public libraries.

Opponents of Critical Race Theory have inflamed a rapid acceleration of national book censorship. Texas (801 books banned), Florida (566) and Pennsylvania (456) stand on the podium with the largest increase in censorship placing them ahead of 38 other states. What books are under scrutiny? 40% of banned books contain protagonists or prominent secondary characters of color; 21% directly address issues of race and racism; 22% contain sexual content of varying kinds, including descriptions of sexual experiences of teenagers, teen pregnancy, sexual assault/abuse, and abortion. 674 LGBTQ works cross reference the canon or stand alone for content. Works may include composite themes. A look at many banned lists confirms one similarity. It is clear that fiction and nonfiction works about Black culture and LGBTQ are disproportionately represented, especially those for young adult readers, making those books some of the most coveted and requested.

Toni Morrison's **The Bluest Eye** and **Beloved**, Alice Walker's **The Color Purple** and Maya Angelou's **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings** have long accompanied Harper Lee's **To Kill A Mockingbird** and Margaret Atwood's **The Handmaid's Tale** on the “Dirty Thirty.” The secret, and often silent, experiences that bind these women's narratives are self evident, but the cultural influences and behaviors that they lay bare oblige us to address the cultural differences that have inappropriately and ignorantly enshrined prejudice, racism, discrimination, hate and violence in American societies. Fortunately, these books appear on many bestseller and best book lists. They are American classics, and banned or not, they will be discovered by current and upcoming generations.

Hopefully, Black History Month inspired the exploration of books from the new wave of contemporary Black woman authors. They write cultural exposés in hopes of gaining cross-cultural respect and understanding. These works may not find their way into all schools and libraries but they are available in many, and of course, from book sellers.

Consider reading **Behold the Dreamers** (Imbolo Mbue); **Such A Fun Age** (Kily Reid); **Sing Unburied Sing** (Jesmyn Ward);

DAYS FOR GIRLS

Judy Longacre



The Days for Girls Initiative recently sent off a shipment of components for 25 kits to our distribution center in Pittsburgh. This amounted to 50 shields, 25 transport bags, 25 outer bags and 200 liners – all made by our DfGs Poughkeepsie Team. Also included were 50 washcloths, 50 panties, and 50 pieces of soap. The distribution center is currently working to provide 10,000 kits to Cuba in 2023 and our kits will go towards that effort.

Since the start of the pandemic, DfGs has been working through distribution centers stationed around the US. We send our kit components to them, they make up the kits, and then send them to locations with which they have cultivated contacts for distribution to individuals and who will deliver the needed menstrual education, vital to the DfGs effort.

In November we began participation in a new Days for Girls program, Period Poverty. The program focuses on period poverty at local levels and requires donating modified kits to local groups/organizations that have clients in need of menstrual supplies. We have distributed 70 modified kits, which contain both sustainable and disposable items. These were distributed to 4 different groups. We have 20 more kits that will be distributed in the coming month. Three team members will coordinate our Period Poverty efforts in Dutchess, Ulster, and Orange Counties. They will work with the groups to which we have already donated and be on the lookout for additional groups/organizations that can use the menstrual kits for the people they serve.

EXTENDING GIRLS HORIZONS

Peggy Kelland

Our program on January 6, "Special Agent", was cancelled due to an ice storm on December 16 which postponed a Christmas pageant at Zion Episcopal Church until the date we had planned. However, the Girl Scout Journey "A-Maze", did run on Saturday, February 4. Gwen Higgins and I welcomed 32 Girl Scouts in grades 6-8 and 7 adult leaders to an all-day exploration of social relationships: first impressions, stereotyping, friendship circles, cliques, bullying, etc. through large group games, small group discussions, and journaling.

Our next program is "New Cuisines" on Friday, March 10, from 4-8 at Zion Episcopal Church in Wappingers Falls across from Grinnell Library. We will be making a variety of historical, regional, and international recipes. All AAUW members are invited to help.



LOOKING AHEAD: April Program

The Family Partnership Center Approach

Our April 13 monthly program will be in-person at 7:00 PM at the Freedom Plains Presbyterian Church off Route 55.

Our presenters will be providing an overview of the work of **The Family Partnership Center**, located on North Hamilton Street in the City of Poughkeepsie, which is one of the many programs provided by Family Services Poughkeepsie. (<https://familyservicesny.org/>)

From one central location, the Center currently offers approximately 20 programs and services designed to meet the health, social, cultural, educational, training, and recreational needs of our community.



Since 2007, the Center Partners have focused on three primary community issues: **Health, Youth and Community**. They use their collective experience and expertise to incorporate the resources of the business community, local schools and colleges, civic and religious organizations, and not for profit and government agencies to focus on these priorities. It is estimated that The Center provides 45,000-70,000 individual services annually!

Our featured presenters will be: Dennis Woodbine, Founder and Executive Director of Finish Strong Wellness Center and current Family Service's Steward for The Partnership Center, who will provide an overview; and, two Partner representatives including Renee Fillette, representing Dutchess Outreach, and a representative from Sun River Health.

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, send a check, payable to: "**Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, Inc.**" to Cyd Averill, editor.

Patrons: Ruth Aldrich Gau, Sandy Goldberg, Shaileen Kopec, Margaret Nijhuis, Sheila Zweifler

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Please join the Poughkeepsie Branch of the
American Association of University Women, Inc. to:

Honor our Woman of the Year 2023

Jewel Ratzlaff Innovator and Activist

Sunday, April 23, 2023
12-3 pm

Mill Creek Caterers

17 NY-376

Hopewell Junction, NY 12533

Directions: <http://tiny.cc/ygy2vz>

To use Pay Pal/Credit card go to:

<https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net>

Event Chair: Mary Lou Davis

board.aauw.poughkeepsie@gmail.com



Cash Bar & Hot Luncheon

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Entrée Choice: _____

If you are making reservations for more than one person,
please list all additional **names and choices** on back.

Entrée Choices:

Sliced London Broil with Burgundy Sauce

Chicken Francese

Honey Garlic Glazed Salmon

Vegetarian option

Accompanied by Broccoli Cheddar soup and cake.

**If you have any dietary concerns, please let us know.

Price: \$55 (includes gratuity)/
\$57 if using PayPal or Credit Card.

Reservations and checks due: April 9, 2023

Make checks payable to:
"Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, Inc."

Mail to: **Maria DeWald, 127 Willow Brook Road
Clinton Corners, NY 12514**

Questions: Call Maria DeWald 845-266-4960 or
mfdewald@yahoo.com

**To make reservations using PayPal or Credit Card
go to <https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net>**

If you would like to make a contribution in Jewel
Ratzlaff's honor, please send it to Maria DeWald at the
address above. Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW is a
501(c)3 organization.

Jewel grew up in eastern Pennsylvania with five siblings and parents who lived simple lives of service and imbued their home with principles of Christian faith and a focus on others. After graduating from Goshen College, she taught High School math for four years, then studied Theatre at Michigan State University.

The next rung on her career ladder included volunteering and working in public radio for several years. In Dutchess County, she became involved in her children's schools, her church, and County Players. She read about the Love INC ministry, which intentionally networked local churches to better support people experiencing poverty in holistic and transformative ways. The approach was inspiring and there were real needs in the community. With support from the National Love INC office and a team of dedicated local individuals, the Mid-Hudson Love INC affiliate opened in Poughkeepsie in 2009. The engagement of many extraordinary volunteers kept the mission growing. Mid-Hudson Love INC now handles over 900 Calls for Help annually, with a volunteer corps of 160+ people from 33 local churches. Together, they offer life-skills classes, mentoring, and delivery of tangible resources such as personal care items and used furniture. Jewel has had the privilege of serving as board chair, furniture delivery coordinator, volunteer coordinator, event planner, teacher, and #1 cheerleader.

As the Public Information Officer for the Poughkeepsie Public Library District, Jewel spearheaded the community-wide Big Read project. In her efforts to engage as many as possible in enjoying literature together, she coordinated with high school and college educators, libraries, artists, musicians, chefs, cultural organizations, law enforcement members, authors, and anyone else who could enrich the multiple activities of the Big Read. She helped secure National Endowment for the Arts grants each year and coordinated all the publicity for each event taking place in a 4-6 week period every fall. She was also involved in general community outreach and promotional library materials.

She worked closely with the AAUW Leading to Reading project to publicize the importance of reading for all children. To recharge her batteries, she enjoys reading, board games, and directing her church choir.