

POUGHKEEPSIE AAUW, INC. HISTORY July, 2023 - JUNE, 2024

History of our branch as taken from the pages of our newsletter, "The Branch," Cyd Averill, Editor
2023-24 newsletters are available at <https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net>

Please find the President's Report at <https://poughkeepsie-ny.aauw.net/Leadership/Annual Reports>.

This document compiled by Margaret Nijhuis

POUGHKEEPSIE AAUW LEADERSHIP TEAM

June 30, 2023- June 30, 2024

Elected Positions

President	Celia Serotsky
Program Co-VP	Kay Saderholm & Gail Sisti
Membership VP	Bonnie Auchincloss
Development VP	Betty Harrel
Communications VP	Barbara Durniak
Secretary/Bylaws	Beth DeFiglio
Treasurer	Diane Jablonski
Membership Treasurer	Kathy Friedman

Appointed Positions

Community Initiative Liaison	Mary Ann Boylan
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Gwen Higgins
Historian	Marge Barton
Honor and Awards	Barbara Hesperheide
Interest Group Liaison	Linnea Masson
Newsletter Editor	Cyd Averill
Nominating Committee	Pat Luczai
Public Policy	Pat Deleo

Off Board Positions

Assistant Newsletter Ed.	Philippa Goodman
Assistant Secretary	Paula Greenspan
Communications Assist.	Joanne Scolaro
Database Manager	Claudette Hennessy & Darlene Yerdon
Facebook Manager	Mary Coiteux
Keys Fund/ NCCWSL	Marcine Humphrey
Photography Comm. Chair	Bonnie Auchincloss
Public Relations	Betty Harrel
State & National Liaison	Barbara Van Itallie
Technical Support	Bonnie Auchincloss
Web Site Editors	Margaret Nijhuis & Joanne Scolaro Cyd Averill & Barbara Durniak

Interest Groups 2023-2024

All those books...	Carol Loizides
Art on the Go	Mary Coiteux
Aventures en Soleil	Terry Jackrel
Bridge I	Susan Fink
Bridge II	Sandy Goldberg
Canasta	Barbara Cohen
Contemporary Literature	Linda Freisitzer
Craft 'n' Create	Pat Luczai & Mary Ann Williams
Cuisine Group	JoAnne Abraskin & Blanche Bergman

Gourmet: Out & About	JoAnne Abraskin & Mary Ann Boylan
Mah Jongg	Blanche Bergman & Susan Fink
Manderley Literary Society	Rochelle Friedman
Movie Mavens	Linnea Masson
Pedal Pushers	Pat Luczai
Poetry & Play Reading	Maria DeWald & Jackie Sweeney
Reely Together	Jackie Vierno
Trekkers	Tori Smith
Word Games	Sharon Fleury
World Travelers	Bonnie Auchincloss

Community Service Initiatives 2023-2024

Court Watch	Ann Pinna
Days for Girls	Sabashnee Govender & Judy Longacre
Extending Girls' Horizons	Peggy Kelland
Leading to Reading	Betty Harrel
Live Your Dream Girls' Conference	On Hold
Math Buddies	Barbara Van Itallie

EVENTS 2023-2024

A few events remained on Zoom and some will continue, such as board meetings, as it has proved more convenient. The January and February membership programs were on Zoom but others in person.



You're Invited to our OPEN HOUSE

Chair: **Bonnie Auchincloss and Linda Eagleton**
Sept 14, 2023

Welcome new members!

Share the story of our good works

Enjoy a brief slideshow

12 new members signed at this meeting and 9 additional members joined later.

Membership lists the birthdays for each month in the newsletter and encourages the attendance at the Monthly Programs and well as the Interest Groups

A few short bios of the new members are shared each month to introduce them to the branch.



CORNERSTONE AWARD 2023:

Patricia Luczai

Chair: **Margaret Nijhuis**, Honors & Awards
Pat joined Poughkeepsie AAUW in 2003. She very quickly took positions of leadership, serving as Vice President for Programming from 2006 to 2008, followed by

Vice President for Educational Foundation (now Development) from 2009 to 2011. Pat served as Treasurer from 2018 to 2022 and is currently the chair of the Nominating Committee. For many years, Pat has been coordinator of Pins and Needles and this year became coordinator for Pedal Pushers, as well. She also participates in Travelers, Trekkers and Aventures en Soleil groups, where she has planned many trips. She was active with the Writers' Tea – providing wonderful workshops to be auctioned. Pat is an outstanding photographer and is one of the photographers for AAUW. She is always happy to do tasks such as taking reservations, making suggestions for programs and planning activities for our branch.

NCCWSL: Scholarship Recipients

Marcine Humphrey, Chair, Irene Keyes Memorial Fund



Miyor Gerard is in the nursing program at Dutchess Community College, planning to graduate with a nursing degree in 2025. She writes:

"I am so grateful to AAUW Poughkeepsie for this amazing experience! The NCCWSL conference included three days of focused sessions, a trip to Washington D.C., an award ceremony, and a keynote speech from Minda Harts..."



Maggie Gravano is a student at Marist College majoring in Biochemistry. Maggie writes:

"Although I learned about the NCCWSL scholarship just one week before the deadline for submissions, I realized it was an opportunity I could not pass up. ...Stepping onto the University of Maryland campus was nothing short of intimidating, mostly due to its size but also the beauty of my surroundings. ..."



Poughkeepsie AAUW has a QR Code

Chair: **Barbara Durniak**

How to use our QR Code

Wine Tasting and Talk "The History of Women in Wine"

Chair: **Betty Harrel**
October 29, 2024
Fund Raiser



We learned about fascinating women at our History of Women in Wine AAUW Fundraiser. It was held at the Crown Heights Clubhouse. The program was presented by **Arnie Serotsky**, who has been collecting and studying wine for 45 years.

DAYS FOR GIRLS

Chairs: **Judy Longacre and Sabashnee Govender**

In late May, Days for Girls asked teams to focus on making the carry pouch, an



item in the kit which has taken the place of now outlawed plastic bags. In July we used our workshop time to make the bags and were able to send 51 to help meet the need.



Poughkeepsie team lauded

In the fall, Days for Girls in the U.S. recertified their teams in order to improve the quality of the menstrual kits being produced. DfGs developed tools and improved guidelines and instructions to help teams do a better job of producing useable kit components. Our samples were quickly judged and our team received the following comments from the national organization:

"We are assessing the photos submitted for recertification and, wow, everything is excellently sewn! Your team's attention to detail is wonderful to see and will ensure that kits sewn by your team are durable and functional for at least 3 years."

Celebrating a Milestone

Days for Girls International has reached **3 million girls and women** with menstrual health education and washable menstrual pad Kits!



Congratulations to Jackie Goffe-McNish on earning her doctorate. After retiring from DCC last year, she completed her Ed.D in Executive Leadership and Social Justice.

LEADING TO READING

Chair: **Betty Harrel**

We Have Moved!

After spending two years at the Roosevelt Fire House in Staatsburg, Leading to Reading has once again moved. Our new location is in the Education Building at the United Methodist Church of Hyde Park



Leading to Reading Thank You's

Lori Cassia-Decker, Executive Director of **Angels of Light**, wrote, "Your support, compassion and kindness has given families the most precious gift of all, quality time together." Joanne Temmel from **Love, INC.** said, "They (the children's books) will be enjoyed by many children in our Love, INC families." Carol Broadwell from **St. Vincent DePaul Food Pantry** stated, "Your support is a tremendous help in reaching so many families in need. The books are greatly appreciated by the kids." Jane Konitz from the **Rural and Migrant Ministry** wrote, "AAUW's reading books were so welcome. Thank you so much for your faithful support."

Hudson River Lodging Giftwrapping

This temporary shelter, run by Hudson River Lodging, is home to approximately 100 children. We wrap donated gifts and provide new books from Leading to Reading.

Barnes & Noble Book Drive Will Benefit LTR

Each year, our Barnes and Noble store features a holiday book drive. Shoppers are asked if they would like to purchase an extra book to donate to a local child. **This year Leading to Reading will receive all the books!**

Beautiful New Books!

Thanks to a Holiday Helping Hand grant, our Leading to Reading project was able to give new books to over 90 children residing at Hudson River Lodging. The grants, provided by the United Way of Dutchess-Orange Region and the Poughkeepsie Journal, help to brighten the holidays for local children

Leading to Reading Receives Grants

Once again, our Leading to Reading project has received a grant from the **Stewart's Shops** Holiday Match program and **AAUW-NYS** offers grants to branches for programs which support the AAUW mission, build community visibility, and serve as a membership tool. Our branch has received a grant for the Leading to Reading project for 2023-2024.

Meet Your Math Buddies

Chair: **Barbara Van Itallie**

Looking for a very worthwhile volunteer opportunity? Math Buddies **Kathy Martin**, **Kathy Smith** and **Barbara Van Itallie**, who serve in the City of Poughkeepsie Schools, tell you about it. Math Buddies work at the direction of the teacher, typically in grades 3 through 5, to improve basic math skills of struggling students.

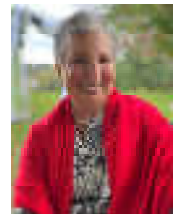
THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Chairs: **Gail Sisti and Kay Saderholm**
October 12, 2023

AAUW Poughkeepsie invited members and the public to join us as we heard from a panel of presenters from the Eleanor Roosevelt NHS in Hyde Park, NY. We welcomed: Franceska Macsali-Urbin, Supervising Ranger; Kevin Oldenburg, Lead Ranger and Dani Massaro, Park Guide. Together, they represented more than 75 years of experience at the site talking about Eleanor Roosevelt, her life and her accomplishments. They spoke on where the 75th anniversary of this Declaration finds us today and how it has affected human rights globally, particularly on today's climate for women both here in the USA and internationally.

Woman to Woman: from Poughkeepsie to Chermaitre, Haiti. *What can we create?*

November 9, 2023



Lila Meade, Co-founder and Executive Director of the Haiti Project at Vassar College. Lila and her husband started the Haiti Project in 2001. After they decided it was time to stop talking about making a difference and actually start doing it! As young parents, they started with the idea of feeding 125 children annually one meal a day in a remote Haitian village and they raised funds by selling Haitian art.



Sara Neequaye, is a Vassar College sophomore, and the Vice President of the Women's Initiative Student

COURT WATCH

Chair: **Ann Pinna**



For 13 years, Court Watch monitors have consistently gone into the Poughkeepsie Family Courtrooms to observe, take notes, and cite any areas of concern they

deem might have a negative impact on domestic violence victims, especially women and children, who are seeking justice from their abusers. So if you're looking to volunteer and help make a difference, consider becoming a monitor for Court Watch and help us look for ways to fight against gender bias, improve the court system, and seek justice, equity, and fairness for all.

EXTENDING GIRLS' HORIZONS

Chair **Peggy Kelland**

On November 3rd, AAUW members **Kathy Prisco** and **Amy Matts** taught "Woodwork" craft for girls in grades 6-8. Our December event was Samba dancing. **Ginnia Hargins**, Gwen Higgins' daughter, was the instructor. February was First Aid and March was back to a favorite New Cuisines.



2023 DCC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Your donations to the Poughkeepsie Branch Scholarship Fund make a positive impact on people in our community. Here are the notes of appreciation from this year's recipients:



Shernette Bourdier

I would sincerely like to thank the Poughkeepsie AAUW for giving me this scholarship opportunity. ... This scholarship will help me purchase books as I pursue my next chapter.

I came to the US from Jamaica about 18 years ago to seek better opportunities for my children and myself. Working as a Sergeant in the Department of Corrections, I have seen the justice system firsthand. Now I am changing my career path to Human Services in order to work with adolescents to prevent incarceration. I hope one day I will join AAUW and help someone else on their path. Thank you again for your support and help.



Athena Xenakis

I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for this AAUW Scholarship. It provides validation to continue and excel in my studies. I am thrilled to be graduating from Dutchess Community College's esteemed Nursing Program and becoming a Registered Nurse. ...My long-term goal is to acquire a master's degree to practice as a Nurse Practitioner.

I firmly believe in your organization's mission that education and advocacy is the key to gender equity, and I will carry that role into the healthcare field....



2023 Trudy Hankinson Briggs AAUW Scholarship

Thomas Paulet

I am incredibly grateful and honored to be the recipient of this scholarship. Your generous support is truly life-changing, as it not only alleviates my financial burden but also empowers me to focus on my educational pursuits and reach my fullest potential. This opportunity will undoubtedly pave the way for my academic and professional success, and I am committed to making the most of it. ...

Fabulous Food

December 14, 2023

Chairs: **Gail Sisti and Kay Saderholm**

December is a time of celebration and tasty tidbits for many of us. Members of our branch tempted us with descriptions of foods that reflect their cultural traditions: **Blanche Bergman, Gwen Higgins, Marcine Humphrey, Pat Luczai, Kay Saderholm, Gail Sisti, Maureen Trembly, and Barbara Van Itallie**

HAT'S OFF

Marti Madori, Sewing Workshop a Hit at Library!
Leah Feldman, CEO of Family Services, recently completed a grueling 50-mile run to raise awareness and funds for her organization and as a "testament to the courage of survivors."

NATIONAL NEWS – AAUW Fellowships

The American Association for University Women (AAUW) announced it has awarded a record **\$6.3 million to women scholars and community organizations** in 2022-23.

AAUW has a proud heritage of helping women pursue higher education, tracing back to a time when few women had that opportunity. It started after the U.S. Civil War. With a growing middle class and more women looking to go to university, AAUW founder Marion Talbot gave the call to support a fund for women's graduate education. The goal was "to enable gifted women to use their intellectual powers for the good of humanity."

The **American Fellowship** program began in 1888, a time when very few women went on to become professors, administrators, deans or college presidents. It is AAUW's

largest fellowship program and the oldest non-institutional source of graduate funding for women in the United States.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Chair: Jackie Vierno

Many reminders on each of the following:

March 8, 2024

International Women's Day is Theme: Inspire Inclusion

March 10-22, 2024

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women CSW68

Bill to Establish International Women's Day in NY Signed by Gov. Hochul, Nov 29, 2023



A View from the Clean Energy Future



January 11, 2024

Zoom

Registration is required

Chairs: Gail Sisti and Kay Saderholm

Imagine a world where our energy no longer comes from extracting and burning huge amounts of oil, gas, and coal, with the resultant pollution. What will a clean energy future look like for the average household? What can we do to be ready for this transition?

Our presenter, **Sean Dague**, gave us a view of that world, because it's already here. All the solutions we need for this transition exist, we just need to deploy them faster.

AAUW's story began in 1881

Celebrating Our Centennial

Marge Barton

In 2025, the Poughkeepsie Branch will celebrate 100 years!

The following information is from our archives:

- **May 20, 1925:** First meeting of interest in forming a branch of AAUW
- **Sept 29, 1925:** A meeting to adopt the constitution and by-laws
- The AAUW Poughkeepsie Branch was initially known as **Central Hudson Valley Branch of American Association of Women** (say that 10 times).
- In **1928**, our branch became the Poughkeepsie Branch of AAUW. Our annual membership dues were \$3.00.

- **Excerpted from the Branch newsletter,**
- **Nov. 1, 1953:**
At a time when most branches are bereft of leaves, it seems unfair for us to be flaunting ours. Rather than

have you think us facetious, we would like to explain our metaphor. It seems to us that our national organization is a strong vigorous tree. ...

Slavery, Antislavery and the Underground Railroad: A Dutchess County Primer

February 8, 2024 on Zoom

Registration is required



Chairs: Gail Sisti and Kay Saderholm

Presenter: Peter A. Bunten, Executive Director, Mid-Hudson Antislavery History Project

In his presentation, Peter Bunten examined the history of slavery and antislavery in Dutchess County, focusing on its key players and events. He placed this local history within the broader national context of slavery and antislavery.

Dr. Jessica Sims, AAUW Fellow (scholarship recipient) discusses her dissertation:



"Existential Captivation: On the (Im)Possibility of a Life Lived in Terror"

March 14, 2024

Chairs: Gail Sisti and Kay

Saderholm

This talk discusses the traditional concept of Stockholm Syndrome in the context of a type of domestic violence known as "coercive control." By framing this strange phenomenon in terms of a prevalent type of abuse, we will begin to comprehend the strong psychological attachment that victims have for their captors - an attachment that cannot be explained by the common assumption that victims refuse to leave due to fear.

Make Someone Feel Special This Mother's Day



Since 2015, Poughkeepsie AAUW has provided holiday gifts to the mothers at Grace Smith House, a home for survivors of domestic violence.

This year, we'd like to share the spirit of Mother's Day with the residents of Grace Smith House at our May meeting.



Why US Birth Outcomes Are So Bad: The Role of Race and Racism

Presenter: Dr. Richard David

Chairs: Gail Sisti and Kay Saderholm

April 11, 2024

The Freedom Plains United
Presbyterian Church

- The United States has the highest infant mortality rate in the developed world, despite spending more money per capita on health care than any other country.
- Our maternal mortality rate is not only high, but has actually risen in recent years.
- What explains this seeming paradox in health outcomes?

AAUW Donations

Development VP **Betty Harrel**

At the February board meeting, funds were approved to send to AAUW national. Including donations from individual branch members, a total of \$3,000 will be donated for 2023. The funds are sent annually to honor some of our branch members, who will be highlighted at the annual dinner in June. Our Branch raises money through our branch development programs, which also support local scholarships and our community initiatives. These include fund drives when dues are collected and our recent "History of Women and Wine" event.

Our Woman of the Year 2024

CARA MIA BACCHIOCHI

Founder of Hope on a Mission, Inc.



Mill Creek Caterers
Sunday, April 14, 2024
Chair: **Mary Lou Davis**

Cara Mia Bacchiochi, AAUW's 2024 Woman of the Year, founded Hope on a Mission

at a time when she was at her lowest

point in life. Every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evening, as well as Saturday mornings, volunteers bring hot food, beverages, personal hygiene items and seasonally appropriate clothing to Poughkeepsie's city streets. Last year, Hope on a Mission served nearly 8,000 meals and provided over 1,000 "blessing bags" with socks, underwear, shoes, and winter clothes.



Beatrix Farrand and the History of Bellefield

May 9, 2024

Chairs: Gail Sisti and Kay Saderholm

Freedom Plains United
Presbyterian Church

Presenter: **Karen Waltuch**



We learned about Beatrix Farrand (1872-1959), America's first woman landscape architect and her oldest surviving residential work in Hyde Park, NY.

Karen Waltuch is the Horticulturist at the Beatrix Farrand Garden which is located on the grounds of the FDR National Historic Site in Hyde Park, NY.

POUGHKEEPSIE BRANCH AAUW ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 13, 2025
Coppola's, Rt 9, Hyde Park



Chair: **Celia Serosky and committee**

Dinner, Business Meeting (budget, etc) Election and Installation of Officers, Awards and Entertainment

Each year we gather together to take care of important organizational business and to celebrate our members.

We had dinner and exciting entertainment presented by the Reader's Theatre, part of Dutchess County's County Players.

From AAUW.org: Not-So-Golden Years

Women encounter a pay gap at every stage of life, but nowhere is it more pronounced than during the retirement years. On all three components of the "three-legged stool" of retirement security — Social Security, pension and savings — women fall short. As a result, they have 70% of the income that men have during retirement.

PROGRAM PLANNING MEETING FOR 2024-2025

Chairs: Gail Sisti and Kay Saderholm

FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2024
10:00 AM on ZOOM

All members are welcome *and encouraged* to attend this meeting to share any ideas they have for our monthly programs in the coming year.

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Topics covered each month

Celia Serotsky, President

Sept – Goals for the Year

Oct – Many Parts of AAUW

Nov – Strategic Plan Revisions

Dec – AAUW Documents & Positions

Jan – Strategic Plan & Bylaws

Feb – Grace Smith House & General Board Work

Mar – AAUW Votes on membership Amendment

Apr – Calendar of events, a little on state and national AAUW

May – Attending the CSW presentations

Jun – A thank you and not of coming report

PUBLIC POLICY

Many topics of interest throughout the year.

Chair: Pat Deleo

Sept- Barbie World: Spoiler Alert!

Oct – Jingo, Lingo, and Bingo! Get Ready, Get Set...

Nov – Book Banning

Dec – Two Households, Both Alike in Dignity...

Jan – Deep Sea Fishing and Hooked a Red Herring

Feb – African American artists

Mar – A New ERA for NYS

Apr – Alabama Slammer – abortion and reproductive rights

May – History Should Not Repeat – women rights.

Jun – Crimes against women

AVENTURES EN SOLEIL:

JOIN OUR SPECIAL TOUR!

Chair: Terry Jackrel

Coordinator: Betty Harrel



All members were invited to join the April Soleil trip to see a special exhibit at the Wallace Center. It was held on Thursday, April 18th at 10:30 am. **“Black Americans, Civil Rights, and the Roosevelts: 1932-1962”** focuses on historical voices of many Black community leaders, armed service members, and ordinary citizens.

AAUW FUNDS HONOREES

Barbara Hesperheide, Honors and Awards Chair

2024 AAUW Honorees



Officers Nominated & Elected for 2024-2026



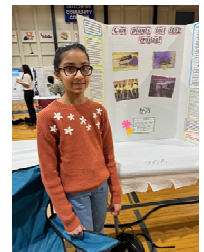
L to R **Pat Luczai, Communications VP; Celia Serosky, President; Cindy Emmer, Secretary and Diane Jablonski, Treasurer**
Chair: Pat Luczai

**POUGHKEEPSIE AAUW STEM AWARDS
Dutchess County Regional Science Fair**



Chair: **Barbara Hesperheide**
AAUW members Bonnie Auchincloss, Vicki Greenberg and Amy Matts attended the Dutchess County Regional Science Fair on Saturday April 6, 2024

The 7th grade award winner was Nidhi Pandya (right). Her well-designed experiment investigated whether radish seedlings could prevent soil erosion.



The 8th grade winner was Anya Shah (above). Her timely project investigated the stability of structures during earthquakes.

DEVELOPMENT

Betty Harrel



Join our major fund drive this year! Along with the dues renewal notice, members received a letter describing the many membership benefits along with our branch needs. Since our **local** dues haven't been raised in over 20 years, we've been frugal with your dollars and need your support to continue our vibrant programming!

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Jackie Vierno

Multicultural Events Summer 2024

... the first Sunday of August shall hence be known as **La Guelaguetza Day.**" –

NCCWSL NEWS

Marist Freshman Receives Irene Keyes Memorial Scholarship



Lily Hardwick, a first-year student at Marist College is the recipient of the **Irene Keyes Memorial Scholarship** to attend the **National Conference for Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL)**. Lily is majoring in Political Science with double minors in Environmental Policy and Global Studies while earning a paralegal certificate

THOSE WE WILL MISS...



Christina Mary Houghtaling, surrounded by her loving family and devoted caregiver Rosa Ramirez, passed away peacefully May 16, 2024. She had suffered from Parkinson's disease for many years. Christina was a lifetime member of AAUW and belonged to the Poughkeepsie Branch for more than 40 years.

Chris was a lifelong resident of the City of Poughkeepsie. She was a graduate of Poughkeepsie High School, Dutchess Community College and Vassar College, class of 1974 where she majored in art history. Chris had a successful career with IBM where she was held in high regard for her integrity, work ethic, and willingness to share her knowledge and skills. Chris was well known for her sense of humor and camaraderie.



Sally Edwards Taylor passed away on May 28, 2024. Sally was a graduate of Wellesley College and SUNY New Paltz. She was a long time member of AAUW and enjoyed the *All those books...* and *Cuisine* interest groups for many years. Betty Harrel wrote " She was very

involved with the Community Family Development Day Care Center - one of the founders and a board member for years. That's how *Leading to Reading* got involved with the Children's Book Week celebrations we had there."

Sally's daughter, Janet Gangemi wrote "...Sally passed away at home. She was comfortable and not in any pain, and as you may or may not know, she was more than ready. My sisters and I will be planning a Memorial Service for the fall. ..." (The membership will be advised of plans for this Memorial)

A FINAL WORD...

*Our branch has been enriched throughout the year by the articles written in our newsletter. Our thanks to **Celia Serotsky**, PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE; **Kay Saderholm and Gail Sisti**, program announcements; **Bonnie Auchincloss**, MEMBERSHIP MATTERS; and **Pat Deleo**, PUBLIC POLICY. A special thank you to "The Branch" editor **Cyd Averill!***