AAUW NEW YORK STATE CONVENTION 2018:
MOVING ONWARD, EMPOWERING WOMEN

By Stephanie Lemnios, AAUW State Program Vice President

The AAUW NYS Convention will be held April 20th to 21st at the Radisson Hotel in Corning New York. The 2018 Convention theme is “Moving Onward, Empowering Women” that will focus on women continuing to take action one year after the march. The speakers and workshops that have been selected, we hope will both inspire and provide tools for members as a “call to action”.

In addition to the interesting program, the location should prove to add an element of fun and discovery for attendees too. The hotel is very easy walking distant to the Corning shops and restaurants. Also, a Friday afternoon tour has been planned to the wonderful Corning Glass Museum along with the option to create a piece to bring home with you.

Before I provide more information about the program, I wanted to share with those of you who have never attended a convention, what you might experience at the AAUW NYS convention. AAUW members from many different branches around the state attend. Attendees tend to be very friendly and enjoy sharing a common perspective of women’s equality. It is a relaxed atmosphere with an opportunity to meet amazing women and learn about some really interesting programs that other branches are doing too. AAUW Westchester branch has several members who are on the AAUW NYS State board who attend along with some other AAUW Westchester members too. There tends to be a few people who carpool together to get to the convention.

So, the Convention program will kick-off on Friday night with the President's dinner that will include honoring our 2018 Emerging Leaders. At this dinner an AAUW National spokesperson will speak about AAUW National’s current vision. On Saturday there will be a panel discussion “Advocacy in the Current Landscape” that will provide a discussion on how the changing media landscape effects people’s impressions and how advocacy messaging needs to work in this environment. The panel will be moderated by Crystal Sarakas, a local NPR Radio Show Host and will include a diverse panel of AAUW Fellows and a Women’s March organizer.

There will be several workshops offered to appeal to different areas of interest: Women’s Health Care & Reproductive Rights, Women Getting a Seat At the Table, Where We Are a Year After The Women’s March, and Media Literacy.
We are very excited about our Saturday plenary speaker, Aasha Shaik. In her talk, “Vulnerability & Girls: The Keys to Moving the Movement Forward”, Aasha will share her journey and inspiration to promote girls’ rights around the world. She is currently a second-year undergraduate at Rutgers University, in the Honors College and Douglass Residential College. She is triple majoring in Political Science, Business Analytics & Information Technology, and Middle Eastern Studies. After her sophomore year of high school, she began working at the United Nations for gender equity, as a Girl Advocate of the UN NGO Working Group on Girls and for AAUW. Her passion for gender equity and social/political activism stems from a year she spent living in India, and the realities that she has been forced to confront since her time there, and since returning to the United States. As a Girl Advocate, she organized and moderated large-scale UN events, wrote and performed the theme song for the International Day of the Girl - Girls Speak Out, researched and wrote policy recommendations, and held meetings lobbying UN policy makers, including Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau.

I encourage you to take this opportunity to attend the convention and network with some amazing AAUW members from throughout New York State. Our goal is to provide you with an educational, inspiring and fun convention weekend.

Registration will open in January on the AAUW NYS website.

AAUW BOOK GROUP MEETINGS!

DAYTIME LITERATURE GROUP

The Daytime Literature Group will meet on Thursday, January 25 at 10 a.m. at the Ossining Library. The group will discuss The Little Red Chairs by Edna O’Brian. Contact Diana Kent for further information.

TUESDAY MORNING LIT GROUP

The Tuesday Morning Lit Group will meet on January 9 in the home of Marilee Scheuneman, in Yonkers. We’ll discuss the novel, Abide With Me, by Elizabeth Strout. Questions? contact Wilma Gitchel

EVENING LITERATURE GROUP

The Evening Literature Group will meet at Lexington Square Cafe in Mt. Kisco, at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, January 10. Jean Havens will lead the discussion of The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane by Lisa See. Please let Ellen Eschmann know if you plan to attend.
A PLAY READING AFTERNOON:
THE COCKTAIL PARTY

You are invited to join members of the AAUW Poetry Interest Group for a group reading of THE COCKTAIL PARTY by T.S. Eliot. We will meet at 1 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon January 9th in the Board Room of the Mt. Pleasant Library. The Library will supply copies of the play for us to use. So come for an afternoon of fun as we take turns reading the different parts. For further information please contact Doris Lowenfels dlowenfels@gmail.com.

ART INTEREST GROUP

On Thursday, January 11, the Art Interest group will visit the Jewish Museum to see the exhibits Modigliani Unmasked and Veiled Meanings: Fashioning Jewish Dress From the Collection of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. If you would like to join us, please email Shelli Pines.

CURRENT ISSUES GROUP

The Current Issues Interest Group will meet Friday morning January 5th at 10 a.m. in Selena Barron’s home. We will discuss Upcoming Supreme Court Cases and the Election Aftermath. For further information, contact Marie McKellar.

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES GROUP

This group will meet on Wednesday, January 24, from 10 a.m.– 12 noon at the Greenburgh Public Library.

POETRY INTEREST GROUP

The Poetry Interest Group will meet on Tuesday afternoon January 16th at 1:30 p.m. in the home of Janice Rabinowitz. For further information contact Mary Ellen LeClair.

STEM INTEREST GROUP

The next meeting of the STEM Interest Group will be on Wednesday, January 10 at 10:15 a.m. in the Greenburgh Public Library. Paul Beeken will present "Astronomy and Black Holes" For further information please contact Sandy Flank.
In November 2017 AAUW reached an important milestone, its 130th anniversary. In November 1881 a group of fifteen college graduates met together to form AAUW. As described in the AAUW Washington Update of December 1, 2017, two women Marion Talbot a graduate of Boston University and, Ellen Swallow Richards the first woman graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, brought together fifteen alumnae from eight colleges in a meeting in Boston, Massachusetts. They were all dealing with a lack of opportunity to enter and grow in their careers. In founding AAUW their goal was to work “together to help other women break through educational barriers and attend and graduate college as well as assist those who had already graduated.”

AAUW, a grassroots organization, announced it now has “170,000 members and supporters, more than 100 student orgs, and 800 college and university members”. “in 2017, AAUW members and supporters voiced their support or opposition to at least 325 state bills, submitted more than 10,000 comments to the U.S. Department of Education in support of strengthening and protecting Title IX, and sent over 270,000 messages to lawmakers.”

As we begin a new year we can be proud of our AAUW Westchester branch’s 2017 achievements in continuing the legacy left to us by these fifteen women. Our efforts to help women and girls break through educational and career barriers have expanded and now reach more age groups and larger numbers of participants.

Three years ago we began Wiz Girls - Building the Future. This year the enrollment of fourth and fifth grade girls expanded to 180 students. One half of the students came from underserved schools. Each girl had the opportunity to learn about technology and engineering through hands on workshops and a “Design and Make” team competition to build a table strong enough to hold a heavy textbook from newspapers, one cardboard piece eight inches by eight inches, a ruler and a roll of tape. Along the way they learned scientific principles, error and success and an expanded vocabulary. Twenty five high school students worked as workshop assistants, seventeen working scientists were workshop leaders, and almost 50 AAUW members volunteered. In planning and participating on the day. The girls went home inspired and excited, and some took home their tables to explain to their parents about load balance and why all the table legs needed to be the same height.!

Our Explore Your Opportunities - The Sky's The Limit (EYO) conference, sponsored by the AAUW Westchester branch, the Empire State Virtual Branch and Mount Saint Vincent College for seventh grade girls celebrated its fourteenth year in 2017. There were 241 student participants in 2017, including some school buses with students accompanied by teachers who volunteer their time so that their pupils can attend. There were 57 accompanying adults, 26 workshop leaders, 40 workshop assistants 18 mystery women, and 68 volunteers. This year’s keynote speaker was Michelle D. Land, J.D, BSc, whose expertise includes environmental law and policy, wildlife biology, interdisciplinary education, and campus sustainability. The goal of the conference is to introduce the students to careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Each girl participates in two workshops ranging from Egg-cellent Parachutes Don’t Let it Splat to Whatever Floats Your Boat. Guessing who the Mystery Women are gives the girls a chance to learn that young women scientists also play sports, have pets and enjoy their families. For many of the students this is their first time on a college campus and this beautiful campus, close to home, and welcoming, is very inspiring. Most of the students give high marks to the conference and many ask if they can come back next year. There is a simultaneous program for parents and adults which includes workshops on safety on the internet and Financial Aid for college. Over its fourteen year history EYO has served over 2,600 students and 700 accompanying adults. Each girl who attends Wiz Girls - Building the Future or Exploring Your Opportunities - The Sky’s the Limit receives a certificate of participation. We gave out 480 certificates this year.

Our branch gives out awards for excellence in math and in science to eighth grade girls. Every school may nominate up to three girls. Each year we award about 150 eighth grade certificates. For twelfth grade girls we award certificates and a copy of Strunk and White’s Elements of Style, one for Excellence in Writing and one for the Outstanding Student Award acknowledging seniors for service to their school, academic ability, and potential for future service to women in the solution of social and civic problems. For each grade the awards certificates and books are presented at honor assemblies at each school. Receiving an award at a public ceremony is a wonderful way for girls to achieve acclaim for outstanding academic excellence and service.

2017 was the sixth year for the Running and Winning all day workshop for eleventh and twelfth grade girls that our branch co-sponsors with the League of Women Voters of Westchester and the YWCA White Plains. Forty students, representing 21 schools, and sixteen elected women officials participated. The girls are given the opportunity to hear why each woman became interested in running for office, what steps go into running a campaign and what they do in their elected position. The girls then are given a campaign issue and formed formed into teams. They choose a candidate and help her write a campaign speech. They also choose a fundraiser and a plan for financing their campaign, and a publicity leader is chosen who creates a poster and logo for the candidate. Each team is then given time to present their candidate and their campaign. In a short preparation time, the girls do an amazing job. They have the opportunity to realize that they do have the possibility of running for office or participating in an election and they are introduced to public service as a career.

As part of our AAUW Westchester Pay Equity Outreach Group, Start Smart and Work Smart, are two workshops with the goal of giving young college women and women in the workforce the tools that they need to succeed in gaining equal opportunity in pay and career advancement. This year we reached 232 participants in workshops and 332 in workshops plus presentations. Venues included
As a member of AAUW Westchester you are a woman making a difference!

Richards would be amazed at the progress women have made and they would especially be grateful that their legacy is being carried on by groups like our AAUW Westchester branch.

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It’s hard to believe that we are working on our 15th annual conference for seventh-grade girls, “Explore Your Opportunities—The Sky’s the Limit!” This year the conference will be on April 14, 2018, again at the College of Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale.

A quick summary of the conference for those of you who haven’t heard about it before: our mission is to encourage seventh-grade girls to emphasize courses in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) by introducing them to role models of women who are working or studying in these areas. We provide two sessions of fun, exciting workshops conducted by women working in these fields, along with workshop assistants of students preparing for STEM careers, and Mystery Women for the students to interview. Our conference is popular; we’ve had no trouble filling all available seats. We target schools in places like Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Peekskill, among others, with the result that the schools send busloads of their students for this opportunity. We’ve had to impose limits on the number of students per school, and have, sadly, had to turn some away when we’ve reached our capacity.

We’re trying something new this year. Instead of having a Welcome and Keynote speaker, we’ll be sending the students straight to their first workshop after breakfast. The keynote will be after the second workshop session, with Lorrin Johnson moderating a panel of young women studying or working in STEM fields. We feel this will be more interesting to the students.

Another innovation: we weren’t able to get the big gym this year so we’re back in the cafeteria. In order to relieve the congestion we reached our capacity.

We hope that we will have more of our members participating in this rewarding day. It’s a chance to see students become very excited by the new things they are seeing and experiencing. Their possibilities. Our members have been very supportive of this important event.

Our members have provided support in another way: their financial contributions. We are so grateful—without you we couldn’t do this at all. Please consider making a donation, using the provided form.

Thank you so much.
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<td>Monday Bridge Group</td>
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<td>Branch Meeting</td>
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<td>Board Meeting</td>
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<td>Current Issues Discussion Group</td>
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<td>Play Reading Event</td>
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<td>Deadline for submitting for CHIPS</td>
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<td>Tuesday Morning Literature Group</td>
<td>Marilee Scheuneman’s Home</td>
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<td>STEM Interest Group</td>
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**JANUARY 2018**