

May 2021

# CHIPS

*The monthly newsletter of the Westchester Branch of the American Association of University Women, Westchester County, New York*



Westchester AAUW Has Been  
Empowering Women and  
Girls Since 1933



## **Zooming Through The Year** - by Ellen Leuner & Lorrin Johnson

Covid-19 hit how AAUW operates like an earthquake, with no in person anything. The loss of human connection revamped every way we operate: from Branch, Board, committee meetings, to community outreach like EYO, Running & Winning, Hour Children, middle school and high school excellence in science awards plus our many Interest groups.

The really bright news is we figured how to navigate our new reality, learned how to operate new technology and function rather efficiently. Hats off to those who stepped up and innovated. Zoom, though not perfect, lets us see, talk and connect.

Westchester AAUW has so many dedicated and resourceful members. Zoom has let us benefit from their efforts. We are very thankful for our uplifting art tours which have given us joy. We are also, very grateful for the many insightful virtual presentations covering Food Insecurity, Food Scrap Recycling, the Birth of the Modern Women's Movement, the importance of our libraries in providing much needed services during COVID, and our Female American Revolutionary Heroes.

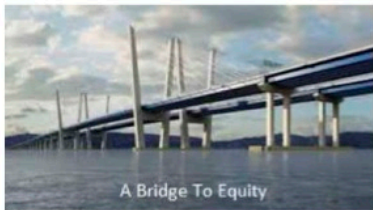
Our program "The Abuse to Prison Pipeline for Women" spurred on a new AAUW mission to supply books for the library at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. This library supports women in prison who are trying to expand their education and complete college courses. Not only did our members donate a good number of books, the Bedford Hills Project is currently expanding with our members helping inmates access research information for their courses. Look for more information to come regarding this project.

Our Feminist Walk Through Harlem highlighted many important women of color and their accomplishments. Their names and images have been added to murals and benches, while sculptures commemorate their service. Both streets and buildings have been dedicated to honor them. These women have made America more conscious of our collective self.

Again, innovation and leadership turned this wonderful Feminist Walk into a fundraiser for our annual Scholarship Fund. Normally, we are able to provide three scholarship to women graduating from Westchester Community College (WCC) who are pursuing a four-year college degree. But this year, YOU DID IT. Enough money was raised to provide four (4) \$1,000 scholarships for women.

**So, thank all of you for making this year something to be proud of.**

**MAY BRANCH**  
**MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY**  
**MAY 5**  
**5:30 P.M.**



## ADVOCACY NEWS, APRIL 12, 2021

-by Jane Pendergast



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

**VISION:** Equity for All

**VALUE STATEMENT:** By joining AAUW you belong to a community that breaks educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance. AAUW is nonpartisan, fact-based, and values integrity, inclusion and intersectionality.

### **2020-2021 BRANCH OFFICERS**

#### **Co-Presidents**

Lorin Johnson & Ellen Leuner

#### **Program Co-Vice Presidents**

Marie McKellar & Sue Perko

#### **Membership Co-Vice Presidents**

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Susan Appel & Elaine Weiss

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#### **State Web Site**

[www.aaup-nys.org](http://www.aaup-nys.org)

#### **National Web Site**

[www.aaup.org](http://www.aaup.org)

Facebook at AAUW Westchester NY

#### **The AAUW**

#### **Legal Advocacy Fund**

provides funding and a support system for individuals seeking judicial redress for sex discrimination.

#### **The AAUW Educational Opportunities Fund**

provides fellowships and grants to aspiring graduate women scholars in the US and around the globe.

It's hard to take your eyes off the national news these days. But last week, the New York State Legislature passed a 2021-2022 budget that surprised everyone. Our advocacy partners in POWHER New York and Westchester Women's Agenda (WWA) played a role in what one New York Times writer called "a relentless effort to reorient the state's priorities and values." As Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins noted, "...we have accomplished a great deal. I am proud of the strides we have made in funding our schools, helping businesses rebuild, and protecting New York's most vulnerable. Working and middle-class taxpayers will receive the relief they desperately need, while the wealthiest New Yorkers will help their neighbors. ... This budget makes New York better for all. In the remaining months of session, the Senate Majority will continue to deliver results that are reflective of our progressive values and priorities."

For AAUW members, certain aspects of the budget may shine especially brightly. Among these are a \$1.4 billion increase in Foundation Aid to fulfill the commitment for the Campaign for Fiscal Equity to fund underfunded schools, a \$105 million expansion of full-day prekindergarten funding, \$72 million to restore cuts to SUNY and CUNY, and a three-year freeze to prevent tuition increases at SUNY and CUNY. A \$2.4 billion infusion to the child care system will increase access and support providers; a \$2.1 billion fund to provide one-time unemployment benefits to workers who lost jobs but were ineligible for federal benefit, \$100 million for relocation expenses for victims of domestic violence, for diaper allowances for low-income families, and emergency food assistance for the elderly; and a \$100 million fund for shelter supplements to low to middle income families regardless of immigration status – will provide needed funds for deserving workers and families. In addition, \$1 billion goes to investment in small businesses, \$40 million goes to arts and cultural organizations, and a \$35 million tax credit for restaurants and expansion of a tax credit to \$100 million for theaters will revive these industries. Further, the budget delivers \$440 million in property tax relief for 1.3 million New Yorkers. It also includes \$2.4 billion in COVID-19 emergency rental assistance for those who are in arrears, \$600 million in homeowner assistance, \$200 million for NYCHA and \$125 million for other public housing, plus additional housing-related funding. There are also significant funds and rule changes to reduce healthcare costs for New Yorkers, as well as funds for the environment and natural resources, infrastructure and transportation, agriculture, community safety, and the election process - including for the Independent Redistricting Commission.

Wealthy New Yorkers will pay increased taxes for individual filers with incomes over \$1 million and joint filers over \$2 million, and corporations with income over \$5 million will also pay increased taxes. Finally, a large new revenue opportunity will open through the legalization of mobile sports wagering.

As Senator Stewart-Cousins notes, the legislature will continue to work on progressive programs. POWHER New York has spearheaded equal pay-related legislation that has made New York a leader in advancing equal pay for all women. This year, we are urging you to join in supporting a new salary disclosure bill (S. 5598/A6529) that requires NYS employers to disclose the salary or range of compensation and any benefits for all job opportunities. This new legislation will empower applicants with critical information, prevent wage discrimination, reduce negative negotiation outcomes, and address systemic gender-based wage disparities that originate during the hiring process. Please contact your State Senator or State Assemblyperson to urge them to vote for this important legislation.

Bridge Photo from NY  
State Thruway Authority



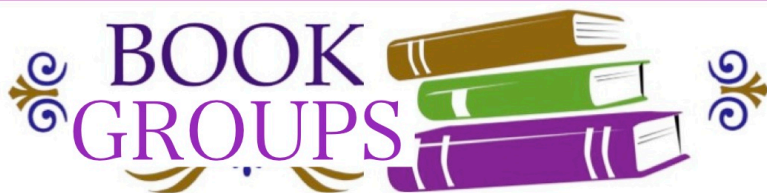
## WALKING TOUR MEETS LOCAL SCHOLARSHIP

- by Marilee Scheuneman

Art Interest Group leaders, Marlene Brenhouse and Shelli Pines, did it again. They provided us with a fascinating virtual tour led by Leigh Hallingby, this time celebrating remarkable women of Harlem. They took it another step forward, and came up with the idea that everyone who signed on to the tour could write a check for \$10 or more to be donated directly to our local scholarship fund. Thanks to the generosity of our branch members, and some friends of members, we raised \$3200. This year we will be awarding four scholarships of \$1000 each to female students at Westchester Community College who will go on to a four year college or university. Thank you!

## CURRENT ISSUES GROUP

The Current Issues Interest Group will have a Zoom meeting on Friday May 7 at 10 a.m. As usual, there will be 3 topics. For information or to suggest topics or speakers, please contact Selena Barron, Diona Koerner, or Marie McKellar



## TUESDAY MORNING LIT GROUP

The Tuesday Morning Lit Group will meet, via Zoom, on May 11 at 10 a.m. We'll discuss the biography, "A Woman of No Importance," by Sonia Purnell. Nancy Heymann will lead our conversation. Please contact Wilma Gitchel if you'd like to join us.

## EVENING LITERATURE GROUP

The Evening Literature Group will meet via Zoom at 5:30 p.m. on May 12. Ellen Eschmann will lead the discussion of Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Adichie. Contact Colleen Fay if you want to receive a Zoom invitation to this meeting.

The group plans to meet at 5 p.m. on June 15 at Sue Lambert's home to select the books for next year. It will be a potluck picnic outside, weather permitting.

## PROGRAM MEETING

A Program Meeting will be held the week of May 10 (on Zoom) to discuss our Branch programs and speakers for 2021-2022. All members are welcome to attend. Please send suggestions for topics or speakers to Sue Perko and Marie McKellar. If you want to attend the Zoom meeting and have preferences for days or times of the meeting, please let Sue and Marie know.

Thank you.

## JOIN AAUW WESTCHESTER BRANCH

Membership is open to anyone with an associate or equivalent, baccalaureate, or higher degree from an accredited college or university. To join, please complete this form and send a check payable to AAUW Westchester Branch to the address below. New Member Dues for 2020-21 are \$85, of which \$82 are tax deductible. When you join the Westchester Branch of AAUW, you also become a member of the AAUW New York State and National organizations. The Membership team can also provide you with more information about AAUW-Westchester's activities on our branch record form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City:State:Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

College/University, Degree, Graduation Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Send check and/or branch record form request to: Judith Walsh at 2 Fountain Lane, Scarsdale, NY 10583 or 734-748-9318 or email: [westchesteraauw@gmail.com](mailto:westchesteraauw@gmail.com)

## **AAUW MAY BRANCH MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 5 AT 5:30 P.M.**

Invitation to join Zoom meeting will be sent to all members via email. If you are not a member, please email [westchesteraauw@gmail.com](mailto:westchesteraauw@gmail.com) to receive the Zoom invitation.

### **PROGRAM**

#### **The Role of Women in the USA—100 years after the 19th Amendment Gave Women the Vote**

Now a century after its passage, has the promise of the 19th Amendment been fulfilled? The discussion will include the Equal Rights Amendment and why it has not yet been passed. We will examine the data, discuss the causes, and share what we realistically (perhaps hopefully) believe we will see in the years ahead.

### **SPEAKER**

#### **Evelyn Stock, Past President, LWV of Scarsdale, Westchester, and NYS**



50 years of community volunteering in Scarsdale and Westchester--former co-chair of Scarsdale Adult School, president of the Scarsdale Foundation, recipient of the Scarsdale Bowl. Former Scarsdale and Southern BOCES school board president. Currently on the Board of the Westchester Community College Foundation, Chair of the Scarsdale Board of Ethics, and 20 plus year member of the Fair Campaign Practices Committee.

Missed seeing our Speaker at the last AAUW Westchester Zoom Branch Meeting? Well now you can treat yourself and view it online via our website: <https://westchester-ny.aauw.net>

Go to "Home", located on the left side on the page. Click down to "Zooming" and you will see "Speaker Presentations". Clicking on that will take you to their talks.

### **AAUW COVID ANGEL**

**Are you a Senior who is having a hard time getting a COVID-19 vaccine appointment? Well , AAUW has their very own COVID Angel, Sally Suen. Contact Sally for help! Her contact information is in our AAUW Yearbook on page 38.**

**Have  
YOU Seen  
Our Web Site?**

**[westchester-ny.aauw.net](https://westchester-ny.aauw.net)**

Board minutes are posted on the Web Page.

# #metoo -by Selena Barron

AAUW is a strong advocate for equality for women, especially in the workplace. The recent allegations made against Andrew Cuomo have brought attention to the problems and complexity surrounding sexual harassment in the workplace. Activist Tarana Burke started the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment in the workplace 15 years ago but it didn't receive wide public attention until dozens of allegations against Harvey Weinstein, the Hollywood mogul, were made public and revealed just how widespread the problem is in the workplace. Last year one in six women stated they have experienced misconduct at work- down from one in five women the year before. The decrease in numbers could be the result of many women working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fatima Goss Graves, president and CEO of the National Women's Law Center says the #MeToo movement "interrupted our long-standing silencing of survivors, and created not only a cultural conversation but also shifts in institutions, in our laws, in the way that people understood that harassment and violence at work cannot be tolerated." Noreen Farrell, executive director of Equal Rights Advocates, a legal non profit, says "It's clear the #MeToo movement has made people more comfortable coming forward to report it, .... We're seeing more victims find strength in each other to take action and hold harassers accountable." However, a report by the National Women's Law Center found that more than 70% of those reporting sexual harassment at work were then retaliated against.

Action has been taken. For example after accusations of predatory behavior, careers ended for Matt Lauer, Charlie Rose, Kevin Spacey and Al Franken. Several states, including California and New York, passed legislation requiring companies to provide awareness and training for their employees. Since 2018 4,070 workers, most of them women, have sought assistance from the Time's Up Legal Defense Fund. The Fund is currently providing financial help to over 260 cases including 30 individual cases and two class action suits filed against McDonald's by employees stating they've been sexually harassed.

Noreen Farrell states employers can encourage workers to bring complaints by making reporting procedures clear, looking into every allegation and clearly saying what measures will be taken to hold harassers accountable. Bystanders should also be trained on how to respond if they see misconduct.

Andrew Cuomo is facing sexual harassment allegations from more than six women who worked for him or are still working for him. The allegations cited uncomfortable ogling, questioning their sex life, and making suggestive remarks. One woman has accused Cuomo of groping her breast while they were in the executive mansion.

Through advocacy brought about by #MeToo activists in 2017, New York State passed laws requiring employers to establish policies and educational programs to prevent sexual harassment. An article in the NY Times by Ginia Bellafonte states that whether his actions constituted sexual harassment under the laws he supported should not be a matter of viewpoint but of the law. The law states that "Harassment does not need to be repeated for you to file a claim." In a news conference Cuomo said "I now understand that I acted in a way that made people feel uncomfortable." "It was unintentional and I truly and deeply apologize for it." "I never touched anyone inappropriately." Political foes have used the harassment claims to bring politically charged accusations against Cuomo that have nothing to do with sexual harassment.

Federal agents are investigating the nursing home statistics problems and the NY State Assembly is looking at causes for impeachment. Cuomo has asked the public to wait to make up their minds until after the investigation findings are completed. The outcome is complicated by the positive achievements that Cuomo has accomplished for New York. During the worst of the pandemic his daily press sessions were calming and reported medical help coming to NY from other states, acquisition of ventilators and safety equipment and the opening of emergency hospital beds at the Javits Center, hospitals and even Westchester County Center. Through his leadership the Mario Cuomo Bridge was built and state budgets came in on time. Cuomo states his input is now needed for such projects as the new state budget which is soon due, the continuing of vaccinations, the opening of NY State and the work necessary to improve New York's financial status hurt by the pandemic.

Cuomo has stated he will not resign. As we wait for the outcome of the investigations, do we believe that Cuomo's achievements and future efforts for New York State outweigh the allegations?

**AAUW WESTCHESTER COUNTY, INC. BRANCH**  
**455 TARRYTOWN ROAD #1354**  
**WHITE PLAINS, NY 10607**



**MAY 2021**

5/5	Board Meeting	Zoom	4 p.m.
5/5	Branch Meeting	Zoom	5:30 p.m.
5/7	Current Issues Discussion Group	Zoom	10 a.m.
5/10	Deadline for submitting for CHIPS		
5/11	Tuesday Morning Literature Group	Zoom	10 a.m.
5/12	Evening Literature Group	Zoom	5:30 p.m.
5/18	Poetry Interest Group	Zoom	1:30 p.m.
5/18	Running and Winning Workshop	Webinar	7-9 p.m.