

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

JANUARY CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Abby Hirsch and Judith Walsh



We hope that everyone has a wonderful holiday season as we welcome the start of the new year. This is always a time to reflect on the past year and to think about goals and hopes for the future.

Our state AAUW is always busy with activities. We do have monthly public meetings and are compiling a list of top priorities in this area. Last month we talked about reproductive rights for women. We all know that in many states women are denied health care needs such as those around a miscarriage, an abortion, or even birth control.

This month we will be discussing book banning. The number of books being removed in both schools and libraries is on the rise throughout the country. We are not immune to this, living in New York State or Westchester County.

Last year there were more than 10,000 books under attack in schools; this represents an increase of about 200% over the previous year. A book familiar to many of us is Jodi Picoult's **Nineteen Minutes**, written in 2007. This book, dealing with bullying, violence, and the aftermath of a school shooting, is one of 4,231 titles banned in schools. Other popular titles banned include **Thirteen Reasons Why**, **Looking for Alaska**, and **The Perks of Being a Wallflower**. It is not surprising that the ten most challenged books deal with LGBTQ themes. In addition, 44 per cent of banned titles were about race, racism, and characters of color. Libraries are also under attack to remove books. This is particularly true of small libraries in small communities.

Many classics have been removed from libraries, including Toni Morrison's **The Bluest Eye**, Maya Angelou's **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings**, and Kurt Vonnegut's **Slaughterhouse 5**. The increase in these numbers started in 2021, after the rise of parental rights organizations. These groups aim to purge schools of books that they believe are not appropriate for children. They maintain that parents need to have greater control over what their children read. And yet, these groups are making decisions for other parents' children. States that have more than 100 titles removed from their schools include Connecticut, Colorado, Florida, Texas, Maryland, Wisconsin, and Virginia.

Most, if not all, of us believe in the importance of books and reading. Reading is a fundamental skill for all learning, and reading well will help students in all subjects. Young people should be able to see themselves and deserve to see themselves in books in schools and libraries. This includes children who are struggling over LGBTQ issues or are immigrants or children of color. Other children will also benefit from learning about people who are different from them.

(cont'd on page 4)



Women Empowering Women

Dr. Cheryl Brannan will discuss her work with Sister to Sister International, a non-profit organization that connects, advances and strengthens women, girls and families of African descent worldwide by linking them to available resources.

SPEAKER: Dr. Cheryl Brannan, Founder of Sister to Sister International

WHEN: Saturday, January 11, 2025 at 10:30am

WHERE: Greenburgh Public Library, 300 Tarrytown Rd, Elmsford and via Zoom.
Visit www.greenburghlibrary.libcal.com to register for the Zoom link.

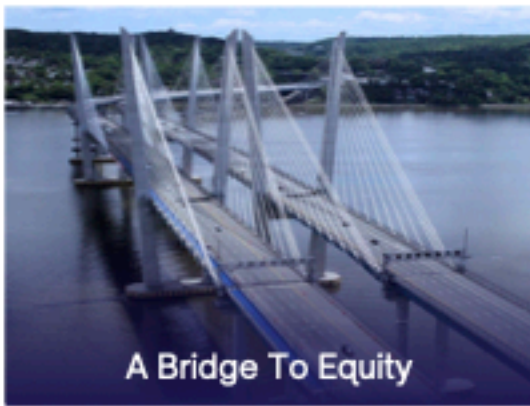


Dr. Brannan, founder of Sister to Sister International, is also President of the Brannan Solutions Group, a multi-faceted consulting firm specializing in the elimination of health disparities in communities of color; women's empowerment; education and strategic management programs and initiatives. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from SUNY at Cortland and a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership from Mercy College, where she has taught as an adjunct professor in Business. She received an Honorary Doctorate from Mercy University in recognition of her work, and Dr. Brannan serves on several boards that promote the educational and professional advancement of women of color.



The AAUW mission is to advance gender equality for women & girls through research, education and advocacy.

www.aauw.org ~ www.westchester-ny.aauw.net



A Bridge To Equity

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

VISION: Equity for ALL

OUR VALUES: Intersectional. Inclusive. Intergenerational. Empowering. We are nonpartisan but not values-neutral: We fight barriers and biases that impede gender equity. We train women to negotiate for pay and benefits and to pursue leadership roles. And we advocate for federal, state and local laws and policies to ensure equity and discrimination.

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westchester-ny.aauw.net

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aauw-nys.net

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aauw.org

Poetry Interest Group



Looking for a lovely way to spend an afternoon? Our poetry interest group may be just what you've been searching for. You need not be a poet or literary expert. At our zoom meetings, held on the third Tuesday from 1:30 to 3:30, we take turns reading the poems aloud and talking about them. Our discussions are lively, enlightening, and intellectually stimulating. At the end of each session we select the poet for next time. If you can join us on January 21, contact Mary Schenck for the zoom link.

ART INTEREST GROUP

The Art Interest Group will visit the Scandinavia House on January 9 to see the exhibit, "Nordic Utopia? African Americans in the 20th Century". If you would like to join us, please email Shelli Pines.



Did You Know ???

38% of physicians are women, up from 13% in 1980.

source: Pew Research Center,

Have you visited our website?

westchester-ny.aauw.net

Board minutes are posted on the web page

Visit our Facebook Page: AAUW Westchester NY

The Financial Times 25 Most Influential Women of the Year

by Selena Barron

Each year The Financial Times announces its list of The 25 Most Influential Women of the Year. Each woman's influence is introduced in writing by one of the world's current influential women Naomi Klein, an author, journalist, and associate professor of geography at the University of British Columbia, presented the award for this year's PEN Pinter Prize to Arundhate Roy and supported Roy's inclusion as one of the 25 Most Influential Women of 2024.

Roy received the 1997 Booker Prize for her winning debut "The God of Small Things". She has moved on to use her skills as a novelist to write about people and places in India experiencing maximum pain, maximum injustice, and maximum state injustice. Her topics included the Maoist insurgency, the aftermath of the Gujurat Massacre, nuclear test sites, and the movement to defend the Narmada Valley from drowning. She has described protest chants and gallows humor in guerilla warfare.

Roy was awarded the PEN Pinter Prize in April. In June she learned that she could face charges under India's draconian anti-terrorism laws. Naomi Klein states that threat to Roy is a reminder "that we cannot take any writer's freedom or safety for granted no matter how renowned. "So many struggles for justice and survival were better understood and more deeply felt because she chose to help us see them through her artist's eyes." Klein also praised Roy for helping us see our moment in history.

As one of The Financial Times 25 Most Influential Women of the Year, Arundhate Roy has pushed boundaries, made important discoveries, and challenged the status quo. She has certainly met all the criteria for inclusion in this year's list.

Presidents' Message (cont'd from page 1)

If this is a topic or issue of concern, there are things that we can all do. Visit your local library and ask if they have felt any pressure to remove or hide books. You can also attend school board meetings in your community. They are open to all. Find out if and why books are being removed and if topics represented in these books are not allowed to be taught. Make a statement in favor of allowing children to learn about different points of view and different topics.



NEW WEBSITES

AAUW National recently updated their website
and our chapter website too!

CLICK HERE

<https://aauw.org>

to visit the national site



CLICK HERE

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

to visit our site

Check out AAUW's New Look!

CURRENT ISSUES GROUP

The Current Issues Group offers our members stimulating discussions on noteworthy topics. We usually meet via zoom on the first Friday of each month but in January we will meet on the 10th at 10 a.m.. A week or so before each meeting, our presenters decide

on items for discussion. Topics will include Failing Recycling Programs in the U.S. All are welcome. Contact **Ellen Leuner** for the zoom link.



BRIDGE MEET UP GROUP



Bridge group meets each Monday at 1 p.m. on zoom. Contact Elaine Barbakoff for details and the zoom link.

LITERATURE GROUPS



TUESDAY MORNING LIT GROUP

The Tuesday Morning Lit Group will meet at 10 a.m. on January 14 via zoom. Carol McMillan will lead a discussion of David Michael's biography, "Eleanor".

Please contact Wilma Gitchel if you'd like to join us.

EVENING LITERATURE GROUP

The Evening Lit Group will meet at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 15 at the Lexington Square Cafe in Mt. Kisco. Abby Hirsch will lead the discussion of "Interpreter of Maladies" by Jhumpa Lahiri. Please contact Marsha Savino by phone, e-mail or text if you plan to attend. New members are welcome. **For more information, contact Sue Lambert at slamb47@aol.com.**

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. Dues for a new member are \$98 for the first year of membership, a \$10 reduction from regular membership dues, which are \$108/year. When you join the Westchester Branch of AAUW, you also become a member of the AAUW New York State and National organizations.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

College/University, Degree, Graduation

Year: _____

To join send a check to: Westchester AAUW, 455 Tarrytown Rd. #1354, White Plains, NY, 10607 or to get more information visit: westchester-ny.aauw.net

LADIES WHO LUNCH

The Ladies Who Lunch Group has a decades-long history of exploring the culinary delights of Westchester and nearby Fairfield (CT) counties.

The group meets at 12:30 p.m. on the third Friday of the month and members take turns selecting and contacting the restaurants involved. For more information contact Jean Havens.



There are time when one of our members is dealing with an illness, a loss or another personal crisis.

If you know a member who should receive our well wishes or support please send the information to our corresponding secretary, Susan Ferris Rights at susanferris123@gmail.com



**WE NEED
YOUR HELP**

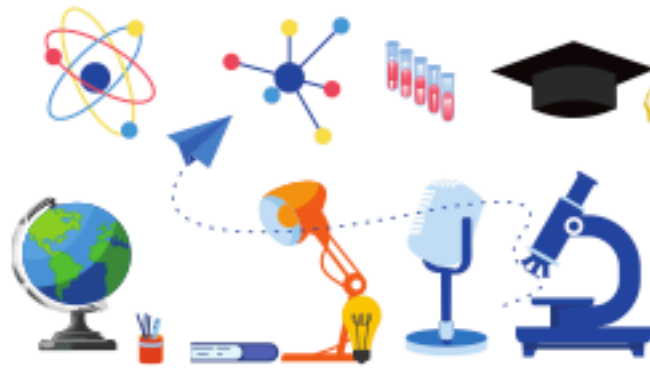


Are you someone with any accounting skills or knowledge? Do you have strong computer skills? Do you like to work with numbers? If so, we have a position for you. Our chapter is in need of a co-treasurer.

For details, please contact Abby Hirsch or Judy Walsh.

**Happy
New Year**





Important News About STEM

Over 20 years ago, Lorrin Johnson, Wilma Gitchell, and several other AAUW members saw the need to introduce young girls to STEM careers and to help them become excited about studying subjects in science and math. This was a time when few females were thinking about these subjects, few were enrolling in AP or honors classes in these areas, and few were pursuing these as majors in college. Something had to change, thought our early STEM leaders.

And changes did happen. An annual conference was held at Barnard College for girls in middle school. Experiential workshops were offered to 200 girls who descended on the college for a full day of learning and fun. The conference was a huge success, and many of these girls were introduced to a world they knew very little about. There is no doubt that many of the young girls who attended one of these conferences did get excited about science and engineering and pursued a career in one of these related areas.

Things have changed for many young women, which is very exciting. Now every student in middle school does take a STEM course, and the enrollment in many AP courses is overwhelmingly female. It is no longer unusual to see young women in engineering programs, medical school, or pursuing graduate work in a scientific field.

Our STEM conference under the leadership of Lorrin Johnson has moved to the University of Mt. St. Vincent. President Susan Burns has welcomed the conference, and she and her staff have helped us tremendously.

The enrollment for this conference has decreased in recent years for many different reasons. There no longer seems to be a vital need to offer this since they are learning about these fields in other ways. As a result, AAUW will no longer sponsor a STEM conference. Many thanks to Lorrin, Wilma, and all who made this possible. I am sure that many of us have wonderful memories of being part of these conferences. **Abby Hirsch**



January



JANUARY 2025 CALENDER

1/9	Art Interest Group	Scandinavia House
1/10 10 AM	Current Issues Group	via Zoom
1/11 10:30 AM	Branch Meeting	Greenburgh Library
1/14 10 AM	Tuesday Lit Group	via Zoom
1/15 5:30 PM	Evening Lit Group	Lexington Sq. Cafe Mt. Kisco
1/17 12:30 PM	Ladies Who Lunch	
1/20	Martin Luther King Day	
1/21 1:30 PM	Poetry Interest Group	via Zoom