



The Branch

Poughkeepsie Branch of the
American Association of University Women, Inc.
P.O. Box 1908, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601



BROADEN OUR BORDERS

Volume 26, Number 5

Our 57th year of publication

<http://www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org>

January 2013

JANUARY CALENDAR

Online Calendar at www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org

- 2 **The Ediss Book Group: 7:00 pm**
Book: *The Uncommon Reader*
by: Alan Bennett
Hostess: TBD
Coordinator: Celia Serotsky (473-8426)
- 3 **Board Meeting: 7:00 pm**
Hostess: Mary Lou Davis (223-5544)
Please let Mary Lou know if you are coming.
- 5 **Trekkers: 9:00 am**
Annual Planning Meeting
Hostess: Karen Haynes (297-5700)
Coordinator: Karen Haynes (297-5700)
- 7 **Word Games: 2:00 pm**
Hostess: Sheila Zweifler (462-6478)
Coordinator: Ellie Charwat (462-7061)
- 8 **World Travelers: 7:00 pm**
Presentation: *India* by Ellie Charwat
Coordinator: Jeanette Cantwell (452-4188)
AAUWtravelers@gmail.com
- 10 **“The Branch” deadline for February.**
- 10 **General Membership Meeting: ??**
All members are invited and encouraged to attend – see details in the next column.
- 11 **Daytime Literature: 10:00 am**
Book: *Einstein, His Life and Universe*
by Walter Isaacson
The Manor at Woodside, 168 Academy, Pok.
Coordinators: Diana Gleeson (229-8458)
& Tiz Hanson (229-9394)
- 12 **Bridge 3: 10:00 am**
Hostess: Joanne Dyson (287-1046)
Coordinator: Donna Reichner
dlr0804@verizon.net
- 14 **Movie Night: Time TBD by show**
Movie: Group members will be notified the Thursday before - be sure to sign up with Sue.
Discussion: *Eveready Diner*, Rt. 9, Hyde Park
Director: Susan Osterhoudt (889-4469)
Producer: Diana Gleeson

Calendar continued on page 2...

MISS REPRESENTATION

– a documentary film by Jennifer Seibel Newsom, premiered to rave reviews at the Sundance Film Festival in 2011!



**Thursday, January 10, 2013
7:00 pm**

**Dutchess Community College
Taconic Lecture Room
Taconic Hall**

Come and Join Us... for a film and discussion about the impact of images of women in the media on self-expression in our daily lives.

Film:

Several times a year, Victoria's Secret angels silently swoop down to remind us how far most of us are from the unreachable ideal “that men really want.” Other women are seen as dimensionless warriors or corporate titans, venal and vicious, fueling the prototype of what Rush Limbaugh dangerously calls a “Feminazi” in relation to Hillary Clinton and others he does not like.

Women have become invisible as whole human beings. But media-created images exert a powerful influence on both the conscious and unconscious level, and have become both a mirror and a mold of our future. *Miss Representation* explores this dynamic in a way that will stay with you long after the evening ends.

Discussion:

Mia Mask, Associate Professor of Film at Vassar College, will lead the discussion. She is the author of the acclaimed, *Divas on Screen: Black Women in American Film*, featured writer at the AAUW's 2011 Writer's Tea, and member of AAUW.



Mia Mask, PhD New York University, Associate Professor of Film at Vassar College, teaches African American cinema, documentary film history, seminars on special topics such as the horror film, and auteurs like Spike Lee. She also teaches feminist film theory, African national cinemas, and genre courses.

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Calendar Continued from page 1...

Online Calendar at www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org

- 14 Cuisine: 6:30 pm**
Restaurant Dinner, contact Barbara.
Coordinator: Barbara Van Itallie (462-3924)
- 16 Bridge I: 1:00 - 4:00 pm**
Hostess: Mary Ann Ryan (897-9679)
Coordinators: Linda Ronayne (897-9745) & Mary Ann Ryan (897-9679)
- 17 All those books...: 7:00 pm**
Book: *A Passage to India* by E. M. Forster
Hostess: Dina Gleeson (229-8458)
Coordinator: Carol Loizides (452-3208)
- 21 Manderley Literary Society: 7:30 pm**
Book: *The Great Bridge* by David McCullaugh
Hostess: Helen Buhler (473-0665)
Coordinator: Ellie Burch (297-7828)
- 22 Women's Personal & Professional Development:**
5:30-7:30 pm, DCC, Washington Hall, Rm 138
The Power of One by Wendy Maragh Taylor,
Details page 8 and website.
Coordinator: Jacqueline Goffe-McNish
mcnish@sunydutchess.edu
- 23 Contemporary Literature: 7:30 pm**
Book: *The Language of Flowers*
by Vanessa Diffenbaugh
Hostess: Betty Harrel (462-2141)
Coordinators: Ann Wade (229-5267) & Linda Freisitzer (266-5427)
- 23 Gourmet: Out & About: 6:30 pm**
Antonella's, 9 Mall Plaza, WF
Contact: Kay Saderholm (229-8545)
Ksaderholm@aol.com
- 23 Mah Jongg: 1:00 - 4:00 pm**
Hostess: Gerry DiPompei (635-2050)
Coordinators: Amy Schwed (462-2269) & Gerry DiPompei (635-2050)
- 24 Pins & Needles: 7:00 pm**
Project: *Making Wreaths with squares of fabric.*
Hostess: Arlene Seligman (297-0006)
Coordinators: Arlene Seligman (297-0006) & Jane Toll (463-2712)
- 24 Bridge II: noon - 3:30 pm**
Uno (on the arterial) - Lunch (\$15)
Coordinators: Cathy Kinn cathy@kinn.org & Janet White (462-6675)
- 25 Art on the Go: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm**
See *Soleil* information.
Coordinator: Mary Coiteux (226-8275)
- 25 Aventures en Soleil: New York City**
New York Historical Society: "Hudson River School" and "NYC in WWII"
Reservations: Checks for \$18 to Peggy Kelland, 13 Susan Lane, Pok, 12603 by January 8.
Coordinators: Peggy Lombardi (635-9091) & Ruth Sheets (473-6202)
- Tee Off:** *Play will continue in June, 2012.*
Coordinators: Terry Schneider (849-1122) & Carol Mastropietro (221-8862)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Jacqueline Goffe-McNish *471-7220* mcnish@sunydutchess.edu

In October, I attended a one day conference in Schenectady. This was a regional conference for the AAUW district four. It was a well planned day in which we were exposed to rich presentations and discussions about women in abusive situations. At the end of the day we gathered to complete a project which would give back to society. We made earrings. We had a great time putting wires together with beads and producing works of art. This was also a time to network with each other and discuss what was going on within the different branches. We donated most of the pieces to the local women's shelter. This was a great day. It had all the elements of a well-rounded and fulfilling occasion. I felt good at the end of the day. On the train on the way back to Poughkeepsie, I began to think of ways to keep that feeling for compassionate service alive throughout the next year and decided that this would be something to include in my New Year resolutions. So I began thinking about New Year resolutions.

What are New Year resolutions anyway? Why do we make them? Are they really necessary? Should they be "new?" Why do we break them after the first month? Why do we seem to choose ones that are unattainable? What can we do differently? How can we ensure successful completion of our plans for change? I have a few suggestions.

What about resolving to give rather than get? What about resolving to help others rather than help ourselves? What about building our skills for the sole purpose of facilitating changes in other people's lives? What about planning to produce happiness for others rather than secure happiness for ourselves? What about giving time, service, and love rather than things? What a wonderful opportunity to resolve to "**Broaden our Borders**" as we continue to Build our Branch.

LOOKING AHEAD

Feb 14 From Inertia to Vitality, A Woman's Journey to Mental Health

Mar 8 International Women's Day, see page 6.

Mar 14 The Global Woman's Crisis – an evening with Geeta Desai

Apr 7 Writers' Tea, The Links at Union Vale, see page 4 & 6

Apr 26-28 NYS AAUW Convention,

High Peaks Resort, Lake Placid, see page 8.

A BIG THANK YOU

Betty Harrel *462-2141* bharrel28@gmail.com

The Poughkeepsie AAUW board recently granted \$2,000 from the Writers' Tea funds to the *Leading to Reading* project. The money will be used to purchase books for children in numerous programs throughout Dutchess County. Our list of partner agencies is constantly growing and we always have requests for more books. This funding will allow us to purchase some hard cover books as well.

Thank you to the board and to all who sponsored and supported the tea!

Mark your calendar for this year's tea on April 7, 2013 to help AAUW continue to support projects such as this!

Supporters of *The Branch*!

Annual contributions from members help defray the expense of publishing *The Branch*. All patrons and sponsors are listed in each monthly newsletter unless anonymity is requested.

Patrons (\$25 or more)

Catherine Albanese Lula Allen Mary Bagley
Marge Barton Joan Cordani Marguerite Cotter
Lillian DePasquale Ruth Gau Gloria Gibbs
Sandra Goldberg Betty Harrel Doris Kelly Jean Miller
Cathy Pété Jacqueline Prusak Esther Reisman
Margaret Ruggeri (In Memoriam) Terry Schneider
Mary Louise Van Winkle

Sponsors (\$10 or more)

Brenda Schaffer

To add your name to the list, mail a check payable:
“**Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, Inc.**” to Margaret
Nijhuis, 9 McAllister Drive, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569

THE STORY OF EDISS

Cathy Kinn *462-3196* cathy@kinn.org

Our branch is graced with five book groups of enviable quality. Last fall, a few of us talked about the joys of book discussion in a small setting and decided to look into forming a new group. We are not a break-off of any group. Permission was asked of and received from the board with our promise to help in the formation of other pods. Celia Serotsky, our leader, placed an article in the newsletter and we had a fun, very small beginning. We started with four and it wasn't until June that we reached our agreed-upon limit of ten.

If you are interested in forming a like group, please contact: Cathy Lane, akitalane@optonline.net or Cyd Averill, averillc@optonline.net. **Your group could be daytime, night or any arrangement you desire.** Join the fun of small group book discussion!

MANOR AT WOODSIDE VOLUNTEERS

Betty Harrel *462-2141* bharrel28@gmail.com

An important part of the *Leading to Reading* program is the involvement of some residents at the Manor. They come on a regular basis to help us make the reading kits. They enjoy the opportunity to talk with our members while they're giving something back to their community. We were saddened to learn that one of our regular volunteers, Selda Awerman, recently passed away. At 96, she was energetic and always had a big smile for us. She will be missed by many of our members.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Amy Schwed *462-2269* amyschwed@optonline.net

Kay Saderholm *229-9679* ksaderholm@aol.com

What a wonderful evening was had by all at the *New Member Reception*. We had a great mix of new members and “seasoned” members. (You remember, we never call our members who have been around for a while, “OLD”!) I would like to thank all the special interest, community outreach chairs, interest group coordinators, and board members who were there, as well as each and every other member who joined us that evening. Our new hospitality co-chair, Barbara Lemberger, did a superb job on her “maiden voyage,” supplying us with lots of nibbles and drinks.

One of the new members, when asked what she would like to get from her membership in our branch, answered “the recipe for the peanut butter cookies we had tonight!” Mary Lou Davis shared her super easy, super delicious recipe and it is too good to not share with everyone. So, without any further ado, here's her recipe for “**Simply Scrumpy Peanut Butter Cookies**”: Mix 1 cup of peanut butter (your choice - with or without nuts), 1 cup of sugar and 1 egg together. Roll into small balls and place on a cookie sheet. Flatten with a fork and bake in a 350 degree oven for 10 -14 minutes. Mary Lou bakes them for 10 minutes, which produces a soft cookie. I tried them for 14 minutes, which gave me a crisp cookie. Either way - they're “simply scrumpy,” and ready to eat in a flash. Thanks for asking, Liz!

I'd like to share the reactions of many women attending the reception about highlights of the evening: “getting to meet new and almost new members,” “seeing the smiles on the new member faces was wonderful - they seemed so interested,” “met new friends that felt like old friends,” “learned more about opportunities to get involved,” “meeting old friends I haven't seen for a long time,” “I'm impressed by the friendliness and warmth shown by everybody,” “I enjoyed talking with new members,” “good conversations at our table,” “so much effort was put in making people feel welcomed,” “always love the games,” plus, a wonderful picture of a tree with branches spreading to lots of friendships and the roots being AAUW, and one just filled with smiles. But my favorite note said, “I met a former student and got a chance to see what a wonderful young woman she has become!” How fortunate for both of them, to reconnect.

I've challenged the new members to join at least one special interest group, participate in at least one community outreach or initiative group, and attend at least one monthly meeting/program. The key to making membership matter is to get involved! I hope everyone commits to becoming involved, because then they will truly enjoy their membership.

Happy holidays to each of you and a healthy, happy New Year.

ELEANOR ARONSTEIN

Eleanor is moving to live in the Schenectady area. We wish her the best but are sorry to see her go. We want to thank her for her years of work in AAUW. She brought to us *Word Games* and *Sunshine Cards* (those cards sent to our member in need of a happy thought) as well as the performance of the *Northern Dutchess Sympathy Orchestra*.

Our best wishes,
AAUW and Word Games Members

GIRLS' LEADERSHIP WORLDWIDE

GLW is an international leadership development program for girls currently in the 9th or 10th grade, held in Hyde Park with housing at Vassar College. During this nine-day program, girls from diverse cultures and backgrounds come together to engage in workshops and activities designed to fully awaken the leader within them, using the leadership model of Eleanor Roosevelt.

Dates for 2013

July 6-14, 2013
July 20-28, 2013

All information is available at
<http://www.eryk.org/html/glw.html>

CTAUN CONFERENCE:

“Advancing Social Justice: The Role of Educators”

AAUW encourages our members to attend CTAUN at the United Nations scheduled for:

Friday, January 18, 2013
9:30 to 4 in New York City
Registration Fee: \$65
Student Fee - ID required: \$40

The Committee on Teaching About the United Nations (CTAUN) will examine the social justice issues of Human Trafficking and Economic Inequality.

Distinguished speakers from the United Nations and International NGOs will provide insight and information helping to empower you with increased awareness.

I believe that education is the civil rights issue of our generation. And if you care about promoting opportunity and reducing inequality, the classroom is the place to start. Great teaching is about so much more than education; it is a daily fight for social justice. US Education Secretary Arne Duncan, October 9, 2009

To register and obtain additional information, visit
www.teachun.org

It was at this conference last year that Cecilia Dinio-Durkin presented the Poughkeepsie AAUW's *My Sister's Keeper Project*, for which she and Joan Monk had been given a “Best Practice” award by CTAUN.

SAVE THE DATE
2013 AAUW Writers' Tea
April 7, 2013
3:00 – 6:00 pm
The Links at Union Vale

Featuring:



Myra B. Young Armstead
Freedom's Garden



Wendy Maragh-Taylor
This Part of the Sky



Jacqueline Sweeney
Selected Poems

- * A literary benefit for the AAUW Scholarships and Community Projects
- * Authors, Tea and Auction
- * More details to follow.

Each author will be highlighted in coming newsletters, starting with **Wendy Maragh Taylor** in this issue on page 6.

Questions: Lula Allen 823-7140 lulaallen@aol.com
Linda Roberts 227-5287 olsen241@aol.com

MIA MASK *Continued from page 1...*

Mia Mask is the author of *Divas on Screen: Black Women in American Film*, published by University of Illinois Press. *Divas on Screen* was featured on the radio program "Tell Me More." Formerly an assistant editor and regular contributor at *Cineaste* magazine, she has written film reviews and covered festivals for a wide variety of newspapers and magazines.

In 2006, 2007 and 2008 she served at the Institute of International Education as a member of the National Screening Committee assembled to select Fulbright scholars. Her cultural commentary has been on National Public Radio. Her criticism was anthologized in *Best American Movie Writing, 1999*.

Directions to Taconic Hall at DCC: Park in main parking lot on Creek Rd. Cross the road and enter the building directly in front of you, Hudson Hall. Take the elevator up to campus level. Exit the building and walk left to Taconic Hall. Signs will point the way to the lecture room, which will be on the first floor.

MARIST PARTNERSHIPS LINK KIDS, SCIENCE

Kris Puzza *221-3488* kpuzza@aol.com

Mentor, tutor program allows students in middle school chance to experience college, instills interest in tech careers

Taken in part from Poughkeepsie Journal, Nov 8, 2012

Marist College's Liberty Partnerships Program is providing experiences in science and technology to middle-school students through a **partnership with the Poughkeepsie Branch of the American Association of University Women.**

The program provides students with academic enrichment, exposes them to college and instills an interest in careers in science and technology.

The association (AAUW) provided funding to offset the cost of the mentoring program.*

In the program, Marist students serve as mentors to eighth-grade students from Poughkeepsie Middle School. This fall, the program focus is on STEM – science, technology engineering, and math. The students are given hands-on activities that are aligned with the science curriculum as planned by Jennifer Tokos, program teacher, **and Kris Puzza, representative of the American Association of University Women.**

Between 25 and 35 students and 18 Marist students participate and meet weekly.

Activities include encryption, building snap circuits and take-apart-day (where students see what is inside computers, DVD players and other electronics).

Students also competed in an engineering challenge. The activity began with video clips from the film "Apollo 13" showing engineers devising a plan to save the astronauts using only supplies available on the damaged spacecraft. The students then worked in teams to design and build containers to protect an egg dropped from 6 feet, using random supplies with prices associated with each item. The team that built the least expensive "spacecraft" to protect their "astronaut" won the challenge, with each team member receiving a DVD of "Apollo 13".

Susan Repko, program director, believes the success of the program is based on the enthusiasm of the Marist mentors and the middle school students. .

"They certainly enjoy working together and give the program rave reviews each year," Repko said.



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"This program wouldn't be possible without the involvement of the Marist students. They teach their mentees the value of education."

The STEM program concluded on December 5th with a video montage of the program, and a presentation by Kris Puzza on the value of a STEM career. Students, parents, and mentors attended the presentation which included comparisons of various STEM career salaries and education requirements, along with encouragement to do well in school and take challenging science and math courses. Feedback from students and parents was overwhelmingly positive.

In the past 10 years, 90 percent of graduates of the program have enrolled in college, according to Liberty Partnership. As a drop-out prevention program in a district where high school graduation is less than 50%, this is a remarkable record.

*Another use of funds raised by the **Writers' Tea.**

CECILIA DINIO-DURKIN CHOSEN AS THE 2012 ATHENA AWARD RECIPIENT

With four out of the nine of this year's Athena nominees being AAUW members, the woman chosen to represent Dutchess County was in great company! On December 2, 2012, with the main banquet hall at the Grandview filled to near capacity, Cecilia Dinio-Durkin was stunned to have been chosen to attend the Athena Conference in Chicago.

"There must be some mistake, are you sure?" Cecilia said as she accepted the honor.

AAUW has played an integral part in furthering Cecilia's fair trade store called, *Women's Work*. According to her, she uses her contacts with women artisans from around the world to provide products for women here in the USA. Serving as International Chair and having co-chaired the My Sister's Keeper Initiative for the past three years, she has taken her knowledge of women's issues and empowerment and shared it with the Poughkeepsie and Staten Island AAUW branches as well as at AAUW-NYS Convention. After receiving the CTAUN (Committee on Teaching About the United Nations) award for Best Practice, Cecilia hopes that the Poughkeepsie Branch is ready to not only support events like International Women's Day on March 8 but celebrate the accomplishments of women all year long! And next year, Cecilia also hopes to bring the Athena community and AAUW together hopefully by having some of the past Athena nominees mentor the LYD (*Live Your Dream*) alums.

"Any one of this year's nominees would do an amazing job at the Athena Convention. As the woman chosen to go to convention, I hope to do Dutchess County proud and also represent AAUW by sharing with the Athena community all of the wonderful programs we do at the Poughkeepsie Branch."

**Welcome to the Poughkeepsie AAUW Board:
Hospitality Co-Chairs: Barbara Lemberger and
Fran Raucci**

WENDY MARAGH TAYLOR

Writers' Tea 2013

Elisha Johnson *635-8959*



The fourth annual Writers' Tea will take place on **April 7, 2013**. The fundraising event will be held at the Links at Union Vale.

Wendy Maragh Taylor is one of three authors who will be presenting at the Writer's Tea. She will be available to sign books during the reception and after the event. Wendy's book, *This Part of the Sky: Building in Liberia*, can be purchased at Women's Work, www.amazon.com, or www.barnesandnoble.com

Wendy Maragh Taylor was born in Jamaica and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She received her Bachelor's degree in Literature from Brown University, and then went on to earn her Master's degree in Clinical Social Work at New York University. She currently works as a licensed social worker and as an adjunct professor at Adelphi University.

Her other avocation is writing. In addition to documenting her musings about life in her blog (www.wendyslifeworks.wordpress.com), Wendy's writings have been published in such notable journals as the *International Journal of Literary Nonfiction* and *Aunt Chloe-A Journal of Artful Candor*.

Wendy has always sought to provide guidance and education to those who are in need. She has worked with various organizations and collegiate groups for many years in order to better the lives of others. Among the numerous awards she has received were a PASEsetter Award for her work with NYC children and families and a grant from the NY Foundation for the Arts and NYS Council of the Arts. She was also chosen as the AAUW New York State Emerging Leader of the Year.

Wendy's most recent humanitarian endeavor involved traveling with her husband to West Africa where they took part in the building of a school and church in Liberia. Using a journal of her activities, Wendy chronicles her experiences in the book, *This Part of the Sky: Building in Liberia*. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of her book will go towards funding the continuation of the Liberia Project.

The Liberia Project was a very meaningful and rewarding experience for Wendy. The memories and connections that Wendy and her husband made with the community of Zorzor will last for a lifetime. When asked about her favorite memory Wendy stated, "I smile when I think of a little boy who came running excitedly to the building site and called out, 'Garmai, I have something special for you,' as he handed me a basket of cucumbers."

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARCH 8, 2013

2013 Theme: THE GENDER AGENDA: GAINING MOMENTUM

Over time and distance, the equal rights of women have progressed. We celebrate the achievements of women while remaining vigilant and tenacious for further sustainable change. There is global momentum for championing women's equality.

Each year around the world, International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on March 8. Thousands of events occur not just on this day but throughout March to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women. Organizations, governments, charities, educational institutions, women's groups, corporations and the media celebrate the day. Many groups around the world choose different themes each year relevant to global and local gender issues.

"The Gender Agenda: Gaining Momentum" is the 2013 theme. More details are available at <http://www.internationalwomensday.com>. **Our 2012 theme was Connecting Girls, Inspiring Futures which supported the first International Day of the Girl celebrated on October 11, 2012.** Each year the United Nations declares an overall International Women's Day theme. Their 2012 theme was "Empower Rural Women – End Hunger and Poverty." Many organizations develop International Women's Day themes relevant to their local contexts. For example, the European Parliament's 2012 theme was "Equal pay for work of equal value".

Watch this newsletter and the website <http://www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org> for more details.

LEADING TO READING GRANT

Betty Harrel *462-2141* bharrel28@gmail.com

Our early literacy project, *Leading to Reading*, has always had a great deal of community support. AAUW funds have been provided from the Writers' Tea, an AAUW Action Grant, and individual member donations. The grants committee has been seeking outside funding and members have made presentations at several community groups. They are also in the process of applying for grants.

4Imprint.com, an online source for personalized materials, has again donated \$500 toward the purchase of SportPak string bags. These are used for book kits for older students, who often have no bag for carrying belongings to school. The bags have been given to students at the Rural and Migrant Ministry summer program and the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie. In addition, **TEG Federal Credit Union** has joined our list of community sponsors. Money donated will be used to purchase additional books.

With these new donations, *Leading to Reading* will be able to provide reading materials for more children from low income families throughout our community.



MARGARET P. RUGGERI

From *Poughkeepsie Journal* and Margaret Nijhuis

Margaret Gloria (Pascale) Ruggeri, passed away on November 22, 2012 at Albany Medical Center at the age of 90. She was born in New York City in 1922 and had been a long-time Spackenkill resident before moving to the Capital District in recent years. She moved to the Mid-Hudson Valley from New York in 1953.

Margaret was married to the late Mario P. Ruggeri, deceased in 1996, who taught at Marist College and in the Highland School system for over 30 years. Margaret Ruggeri was a retired substitute mathematics teacher and statistician. She was a graduate of Hunter College (A.B.) and attended SUNY New Paltz for her Master's degree and teaching certificate.

Margaret Ruggeri joined Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW in 1958. She was a strong supporter of our newsletter "The Branch" and contributed to many other of our special requests. She has lived in the Schenectady area for over 10 years but has remained a member of our branch and shown interest in all we do. She was a dear, dear person and I, personally, will miss hearing from her and receiving her support.

She is survived by her sons, Robert Ruggeri of Niskayuna, NY and Richard Ruggeri of Warwick, NY; and four grandchildren: Edward, Katherine, Renee, and Nicholas.

Condolences may be sent to:

Robert Ruggeri
1846 Union Street
Niskayuna NY 12309

"HATS OFF"

Mary Coiteux *226-8275* mcoiteux@frontiernet.net
An expression of admiration for someone's achievement or contribution and our acknowledgment for it.

Hats Off to Leah Feldman who has been named director of Domestic Violence Services of Dutchess County, a program of Family Services. Leah is active in "Court Watch" project of the "Stand Up to Domestic Violence" Community Outreach program of Poughkeepsie AAUW.

Hats Off to Marie Tarver who was honored by the Children's Home of Poughkeepsie for her dedication and philanthropic work at the fifth annual Margaret Garrison Race Awards.

Hats Off to Cecilia Dinio-Durkin, see page 5.

Continued in the next column...

Hats Off to Karleen Dorn, watercolorist, who was featured in *Portrait of the Artist, Enjoy!* of the *Poughkeepsie Journal*.

Karleen's work is on display at The Art & Zen Gallery at All Mine Jewelers through December. Her fabulous floral watercolors are a gift in these cold winter months.



Hats Off to AAUW's Court Watch Program

which has been recognized for their efforts by the Dutchess County Legislature and the DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence at their annual breakfast.



L to R:
Geeta Desai,
Joanne Scolaro,
Doris Kelly,
Leah Feldman,
Marcine Humphrey

PUBLIC POLICY

Doris Kelly mscw12@aol.com

This election year made it quite clear that not everyone believes in the right to vote for all American citizens.

New regulations requiring a government issued voter ID were passed in many states under the guise of protection against voter fraud. However, the number of fraudulent votes cast in any election appeared to be so minimal it wouldn't have any effect on an election. These new voter ID laws could have prevented hundreds of thousands of voters from being able to cast their ballot. In Pennsylvania, the law was postponed by the Commonwealth court because of the inability of the government to process the large numbers of applications in time for the November elections.

In Florida, there was an attempt to purge the voting rolls of "non-citizens." Florida's political leaders identified 180,000 potential non-citizens to be purged. According to the Miami Herald, Florida finally sent just 198 names to local election supervisors.

Then there were the lines. Voters had to wait for hours in long lines in some districts in Florida, Tennessee, New Mexico, Massachusetts, and other states. Yet, all this seemed to bring out the best in many citizens.

From the *Boston Herald*: "I'm hungry, starving, excited, everything at the same time," said Vladimir Thomas, 34, who had been in line for an hour. "But I don't care, people die for this right, especially Black folk, so I'm gonna vote no matter how long it takes me; I'm almost at the finish line so I'm going to keep running until I get my 'I voted' sticker."

From the *Miami Herald*: At the end of the line at the South Kendall Community Church, Andre Murias says he would wait as long as it took. The 18-year-old first time voter got in line at exactly 7 p.m. "We were surprised that it (the line) went around the neighborhood," Murias said of the long line. There were some who waited at least six hours to cast their vote in some districts.

I wonder if we would be willing to do the same.

AN INFORMED LIFE

Geeta's Blog

Geeta Desai *297-7589* geetadesai@optonline.net

I've used the term "women's empowerment" as long as I can remember: first in the 1970s when I bore my feminist leanings on my sleeve and then at the drop of a hat to express my idealized vision of American society. Until very recently, I was quite happy with my use of that term in everyday conversations with friends: I understood what they meant and they understood what I meant when I bandied it about. But everything, it seems, has changed since I've approached my very own version of the "fiscal cliff." I'm going to be sixty years old in December and feel the need to weigh my words.

So, I began to think about what "empowerment" really means and how it applies to women. I've concluded that women are born with power. Although power can be defined in many different ways, I see it as that brilliant blaze of intelligence, ability and knowing at the core of our beings that forges our respective identities. This identity, this "sense of self" is meant to guide us in our everyday interactions with the world but for a multitude of reasons we become disconnected from this source and stumble across the landscape of our lives, torn in many directions and living on someone else's terms. In order to (re) empower ourselves we must reclaim our intelligence, ability and knowing.

Once, I thought that I needed to be empowered by others, that power could be bestowed upon a person much like property or money or some other form of largesse. Now I understand that the power to question, to act on my convictions, to become a strong woman resides within me, *ad infinitum*.

Of course, understanding the concept and acting on it are two very different things. For many women, self-empowerment is taboo; to empower themselves is to risk everything they own including their lives. Here in America, women who dare to speak up are frequently victimized at work, at home, by friends and community. For me, self-empowerment meant that I would have to change the patterns of a lifetime. I was concerned that any changes that I might make would hurt the people I loved the most: my husband, children, parents and friends. But as I thought about this some more, I realized that reclaiming my power wasn't the zero-sum game I had imagined it to be. I had always thought of power as a finite commodity that could only be gained at someone else's expense. Since then, I have found that power can and must be shared.

Becoming empowered is a process that asks a lot of you but gives much in return. It requires you to become knowledgeable about yourself and the world, understand the roots of your disempowerment, gather skills and harness the wisdom of experience, increase your credibility through hard work and then to create gradual changes in your life based on good judgment.

AAUW-NYS CONVENTION

High Peaks Resort at Lake Placid,

April 26-28, 2013

Convention Director Karen Carr will share more information about the program and the business meeting as details develop.

The nominations for office for 2013-15 are:

Maria Ellis - Membership V.P., North Shore Long Island

Donna Seymour - Public Policy V.P., St. Lawrence

Edwina Martin - Secretary/By-Laws, Staten Island

Mildred DeWitt - Treasurer, Southern New York

You may read about all four of the candidates on the New York state website, www.aauw-nys.org Nominations are also accepted from the floor during the business meeting on Saturday morning.

Poughkeepsie's Mary Lou Davis, President of AAUW-NYS, will preside at this convention.

WOMEN'S PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL GROUP

The Power of You

Wendy Maragh Taylor *

Join in a thought-provoking discussion about how you can use your individual power and professional skills to change lives, and possibly transform your own in the process.

Participants will:

- Identify abilities/talents
- Learn how to determine the communities (local or abroad) on which to focus
- Develop a plan to be personally invested

*Bio, see page 6; meeting details-January 22, see page 2

Poughkeepsie Branch AAUW, Inc. Officers 2012-2013

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Association website: www.aauw.org

NY State website: www.aauw-nys.org

Poughkeepsie Branch website: www.aauwpoughkeepsie.org

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.

