



Mission Statement: *AAUW advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.*

Value Promise: By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

SEPTEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER AAUW Bridgeport Area Branch
www.aauwbridgeport.org

President's Message

We are at a turning point in the future of our branch and the direction we take all depends on you. Our focus this year is "Team AAUW Bridgeport". It takes a community to keep a branch alive and we have an opportunity to ensure that we remain as vibrant, relevant and alive as ever.

At the AAUW National Convention, I was inspired by women leaders from across the country. Most of all, I came away with a sense of the AAUW's credibility. When we speak, people in Washington listen. For example, we had a lobby day to visit our representatives. I applied for a meeting with Congressman Himes but hadn't heard anything. A call was made from our leadership and I had an appointment that day. Congressman Himes offered to work with AAUW and our college partner HCC to host an event on campus violence.

We have many opportunities for you to get involved in the work of our branch. Besides our book and Global Issues groups, members are reading to children at Wilbur Cross, or you could call or send a card to a member who is ill or has lost a loved one. Helping with coffee at our events/general meetings is a great way to meet other members and enjoy the program. If you are interested in communications, you could get involved in outreach with the wider community. This could take a small amount of time and in some cases not even involve leaving home.

I challenge you to get involved. You could open a new avenue in an area that interests you that I haven't mentioned. It's an opportunity to work with a team of interesting, like minded women who are aware of what is happening in the world and want to make a difference. Team work is the only way to change our world.

Carole Fanslow and I will be meeting with and calling members to get feedback as to how you envision the future of our branch and how to engage our members in ensuring that we remain relevant to ourselves and the community.

Judi Polizzotti

Co-President AAUW Bridgeport

Branch Programs, 2011-2012

SAVE THE DATE...PLAN TO ATTEND

September 13, 2011 Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
“Discovery”, at the Discovery Museum
See what’s new . . . have some fun!

October 11, 2011 Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Fairfield Public Library, Memorial Room
“Through the Immigrant’s Eye”
Angela Zurowski, Executive Director of the International Institute, and a representative of Congressman Jim Himes’ office will be present.

December 11, 2011, Sunday, 2:30-4:30
TBA

March 1, 2012, Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
‘50/50 by 2020’
Patricia Russo, president of the Women’s Campaign School at Yale will tell us about the exciting work of the School in directing women toward achieving the goal of equal representation on our elected governments.

April 28, 2012, Saturday, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.
Trumbull Library
TBA

May 10, 2012, Thursday, 7:00 p.m., Annual Fundraiser
Square One Theater, Stratford
“Love, Loss and What I Wore”. “The performance is an intimate collection of stories by Nora and Delia Ephron based on the best-selling book by Ilene Beckerman, as well as on the recollection of the Ephrons’ friends. Like the popular book, the play uses clothing and accessories and the memories they trigger to tell funny and often poignant stories that all women can relate to”. . . . “Funny, powerful, sweet and saucy! This is an evening that goes directly to the heart.” - Liz Smith, Syndicated Columnist

Gretchen Goethner
VP Program



Community Action Projects

Maybe this year?
Is the year you’ll decide to become a reader at Cross School in Bridgeport? Maybe you think about it this time every year, and then put it off? How about saying “yes” this year?
One hour. One child. One year. (two children, a half hour each, if you prefer).

Team up with another AAUW member and go together. Team up with a friend and split the year. Go as many weeks as you can. No absence slips required for weeks that you are unable to go! Gloria Manning, Jean Weicker, MaryAnn Matthews- all read at Cross School. Ask us about it. Contact MaryAnn Matthews @ 203-261-3212, <mammatthews@gmail.com> to say YES. Grades K-3. Mornings.

The school location is changed as the Cross building is under repair.

This year, the address is 161 Iranistan Avenue. It is one of the UB buildings and it faces the Bernhard Center and the soccer field. Plenty of safe parking. Air conditioning! The easiest way is to go straight down Park Avenue and take a right on University Avenue. It will be on the right.

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Scholarship

Scholarship recipients for the academic year 2011 – 2012 are:

Ines Cenatiempo completed her undergraduate studies at Sacred Heart University majoring in Spanish. Ines is currently a student at American University in Washington D.C. where she is pursuing a Master of Arts in Ethics, Peace, and Global Affairs. In addition to her academic studies, Ines is working in the Department of Justice – U.S. Attorney’s Office.

Elizabeth Crowley, a graduate of Fairfield Ludlowe High School, transferred from Northeastern University to UCONN where she is pursuing studies in biology and journalism! Her goal is to pursue a career that interlaces journalism and medicine. Her dream is to practice pediatrics and be published in the *New York Times*.

Kelsey McDonnell graduated from Shelton High School in 2010 with a class rank of 12th out of a class of 418 and 15 Advanced Placement credits jump-starting her university experience. With this academic success, Kelsey was accepted into the highly selective nursing major program at the University Park Campus of Pennsylvania State University. Out of 1500 applicants, only 80-100 are accepted each year. Kelsey aspires to graduate at the top of her class and become commissioned as a nurse in the United States Air Force.

Joyce Wall completed undergraduate work at Housatonic Community College and SCSU. Joyce has a BS in Chemistry. She also has an MA in Psychology, and an MS in Biology from SCSU. Joyce is currently enrolled in the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program at SCSU and has also been accepted into the Bridgeport Hospital School of Nursing for September. Wow!!

For the past 11 years Joyce has been an Adjunct Professor at Naugatuck Valley Community College, University of New Haven, Housatonic Community College Albertus Magnus College, Quinnipiac University and most recently at Fairfield University where she has taught a myriad of courses in chemistry, human biology, psychology, and currently at Fairfield University Human Anatomy and Physiology I and II.

Lorraine Conway
Scholarship Committee Chairperson

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Networking

We will kick off our season with the annual AAUW Picnic/Board Meeting at my home 58 Great Oak Farm Rd in Monroe at 6:00 pm on Thursday August 25th. This year we decided to include both the picnic and meeting together to give new members an opportunity to meet the board members and learn more about the organization.

We ask our networking group to let us know how you envision the direction of networking gatherings in the next year. In the past, we have met for dinner, visited a winery, and attended the Square One Playhouse. Many of our new members have become involved on the board or in a book group or Global Issues. If you have any thoughts we would like to hear from you.

Directions;

From either 95 or Merritt Parkway take Route 25 to Danbury

Take a right to Monroe at the first light intersection on route 111. At the fourth light (Walgreens is on the left) take a left onto Purdy Hill Road; continue to the first stop sign. Take a right onto Cutler's Farm Road. Travel past Wolfe Park, up the hill, to Great Oak Farm. Take a left into the entrance. Go to the stop sign, take a left, and the first right onto Old Colony Road. Take the second right, which is at the stop sign, onto Great Oak Farm Road. Proceed to number 58, and park in the circle.

Judi Polizzotti
Co-President AAUW Bridgeport

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Membership Directory, Updates as of August 2011

New member: _____

Elinor Whitaker 72 Tuckahoe Lane 203-384-8463
Fairfield, CT 96824 eewhitaker@snet.net

Address and phone corrections:

Laurel Anderson 203-913-2811

Evelyn Balamaci 55 Spicebush Lane
Milford, CT 06461

Barbara Buxton 8E9 Watermark 203-373-6527
3030 Park Ave
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Claire Fulcher 8111 E. Broadway 520-885-2485
Tucson, AZ 85710

Nathalie Taranto 115A Cedar Hill Road
Easton, CT 06612

Leisa Taylor 203-292-3679

Email updates:

Christine Bonosky cbonosky@gmail.com 203-261-1241

Cary Ericson cary24@sbcglobal.net

Gretchen Hamilton gretchenwhamilton@yahoo.com

Ellen Kuroghlian ekuroghlian@gmail.com

Please note correct spelling of name

Virginia Loch no Email

Marilyn Moore mtmoore62@aol.com

Linda Suhr lindasuhr64@charter.net

Joyce Sweeney joycesween@att.net

Nathalie Taranto nstaranto@att.net

Mary Ann Worthington mawshop@att.net

Sylvia Dahl
Membership Treasurer

Contemporary Global Issues

Are you interested in a better understanding of political and economic issues in countries around the globe? Join the Contemporary Global Issues group.

The Contemporary Global Issues Group meets the second Tuesday of most months at Bayview at 9:30 a.m. One of our members acts as a discussion leader at each meeting. Our background information on a topic comes from articles in *Great Decisions*, a briefing book published by the Foreign Policy Association.

On September 13th we will discuss nuclear proliferation or using sanctions to prevent countries from making nuclear weapons and making it increasingly possible for terrorists to acquire them. Facilitator will be Linda Suhr.

At our meeting on October 11th, Claire Shumofsky will lead a discussion on American national security since 9/11.

In November our topic will be Rebuilding Haiti with Bobbie Schlig as the discussion leader.

In the past year this group has discussed multilateralism, the Caucasus, the Horn of Africa and Germany's ascendancy. If you are interested in joining the group, contact Merrilyn Decker at <merrdeck@aol.com>.

Merrilyn Decker

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Morning Book Study Program

Book Selections for 2011 – 2012

| Book | Author | Date | Discussion Leader |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <u>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</u> | Rebecca Skloot | Sept. 27 | Chris Ehlers |
| <u>Cutting for Stone</u> | Abraham Verghese | Oct. 25 | Pat Mahoney |
| <u>Cleopatra</u> | Stacy Schiff | Nov. 29 | Joyce Sweeney |
| <u>20 under 40</u> | the editors of the New Yorker | Jan. 24 | Cary Ericson |
| <u>Major Pettigrew's Last Stand</u> | Helen Simonson | Feb. 28 | Jean Weicker |
| <u>The Tiger's Wife</u> | Tea Obrecht | March 27 | Merrilyn Decker |
| <u>Faithful Place</u> | Tana French | April 24 | Geraldine Dunbar |
| <i>Pre-selection meeting</i> | | <i>April 24</i> | <i>all interested</i> |
| <i>Final selection of books for 2012 - 2013</i> | | <i>May 22</i> | <i>all members</i> |

Morning book study meets the 4th Tuesday of most months from September through May, 9:30 a.m. at Watermark, 3030 Park Ave., Bridgeport, CT, 203-373-6195. Any Bridgeport Area Branch member is eligible to join a study group. Come to a meeting as a visitor, perhaps you'll like the experience and decide to join us. For further/more information, please contact:

Jean Weicker, (203-261-0691), <j.weicker@att.net>

Chairwoman, AAUW Morning Book Group +++++
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AAUW EVENING BOOK GROUP, 2011 – 2012

1ST Tuesday Evenings @ 7:30 P.M.

Note: The meetings are changed to the 1st Tues. in order to avoid conflict with General Meetings of AAUW held on Thurs. evenings. Please call the hostess if you're coming.

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| Sept. 6 | <u>Outliers</u> by Malcolm Gladwell <u>The Social Animal</u> by David Brooks at Chris Bonosky's, 68 Saxony Dr., Trumbull (203-261-1241) | Chris Bonosky, Reviewer Mary Misevich, Reviewer |
| Oct. 4 | <u>Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</u> by Rebecca Skloot at Mary Misevich's, 453 Surrey Lane, Fairfield (203-255-3804) | Phyllis Mankowitz, Reviewer |
| Nov. 3 | <u>The Paris Wife</u> by Paula McLain at Gloria's house, 200 Buena Vista Rd. Fairfield (203-372-8922) | Gloria Manning, Reviewer |
| Feb. 7 | <u>Luncheon of the Boating Party</u> by Susan Vreeland (about Renoir's painting) at Louise's house, 1491 Round Hill Rd., Fairfield (203-259-0625) | Louise MacCormack, Reviewer |
| March 6 | <u>Major Pettigrew's Last Stand</u> by Helen Simonson at Gretchen's house, 394 Penfield Rd., Fairfield (203-254-8481) | Gretchen Goethner, Reviewer |
| April 3 | <u>Small Island</u> by Andrea Levy (about Jamaica) at Claire's house, 747 Tahmore Dr., Ffld. (203-372-1700) | Claire Shumofsky, Reviewer |
| May 1 | <u>Caleb's Crossing</u> by Geraldine Brooks at Judy's house, 58 Great Farm Rd., Monroe (203-268-2014) | Judy Polizzotti, Reviewer |
| June 5 | Planning meeting for next year, location TBA | |

Other suggestions for summer reading:

- Stones for Schools by Greg Mortenson
- Cleopatra by Stacy Schiff
- Waiting for Snow in Havana by Carlos Eire
- The Greatest Journey by David McCulloch
- My Year with Tolstoy and the Purple Chair by Nina Sankovitch
- Wings by Karl Friedrich

Louise MacCormack
Evening Book Group Chairperson

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Bridgeport Branch Calendar, 2011 – 2012

August 25th - Branch Board Meeting and Networking Picnic – home of Judi Polizzotti, 6 p.m.

September 6th - Evening Book Group - home of Chris Bonosky, 7:30 p.m., *RSVP: 261-1241*

September 13th – Contemporary Global Issues, Bayview, 9:30 a.m.

September 13th – “Discovery” at the Discovery Museum, 7:00 p.m.

September 27th – Morning Book Group – Watermark, 9:30 a.m.

October 4th - Evening Book Group – home of Mary Misevich, 7:30 p.m.

October 5th and 6th Housatonic Community College and LWV –voter registration in the cafeteria

October 11th - Contemporary Global Issues, Bayview, 9:30 a.m.

October 11th – “Through the Immigrant’s Eye”, Fairfield Public Library, 7:00 p.m.

October 18th –Board Meeting – Bayview 9:30 a.m.

October 25th - Morning Book Group – Watermark, 9:30 a.m.

November 3rd - Evening Book Group – home of Gloria Manning, 7:30 p.m.

November 8th - Contemporary Global Issues, Bayview, 9:30 a.m.

November 29th - Morning Book Group – Watermark, 9:30 a.m.

December 6th – Board Meeting – Bayview 9:30 a.m.

December 11th – Program TBA, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.

January 24th - Morning Book Group – Watermark, 9:30 a.m.
 February 7th - Evening Book Group – home of Loiuise MacCormack, 7:30 p.m.
 February 21st –Board Meeting – Bayview 9:30 a.m.
 February 28th - Morning Book Group – Watermark, 9:30 a.m.
 March 1st – ‘50/50 by 2020’, 7:00 p.m.
 March 6th - Evening Book Group – home of Gretchen Goethner, 7:30 p.m.
 March 27th - Morning Book Group – Watermark, 9:30 a.m.
 April 3rd - Evening Book Group – home of Claire Shumofsky, 7:30 p.m.
 April 17th –Board Meeting - Bayview 9:30 a.m.
 April 24th - Morning Book Group – Watermark, 9:30 a.m.
 April 28th – Program TBA, Trumbull Public Library, 12:00 – 2:00 p.m.
 May 1st - Evening Book Group – home of Judi Polizzotti, 7:30 p.m.
 May 10th – Annual Fundraiser – Square One Theater, Stratford, 7:00 p.m.
 May 22th - Morning Book Group – Watermark, 9:30 a.m.
 June 5th - Evening Book Group – planning meeting, location TBA

Christine Bonosky
 Newsletter

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International:

Highlights from CEDAW (Convention Ending Discrimination against Women) Nepal

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is one of 188 countries that have ratified CEDAW (Convention Ending Discrimination against Women) often called an international bill of rights for women. In today’s meeting Nepal provided an update on measures they have taken to implement the articles of the convention.

Currently, Nepal is operating under an interim constitution. Revisions are being developed which guarantee fundamental rights for women and minorities.

Nepal is also in transition following a 10 year insurgency. A proposed truth and reconciliation commission bill is expected to protect human rights and improve transparency.

There are over 100 indigenous languages spoken in Nepal representing numerous ethnic groups. Many questions from the experts were centered on, equal rights for all ethnic minorities. Still underway is the development of language addressing nationality in their constitution.

Raising the awareness of women's civil rights is an important issue for both rural indigenous and migrant women. Currently, rural women continue local practices including child marriage, polygamy, son preferences, a dowry system, and witchcraft. Of the over 30,000 Nepalese that migrate to work in other countries, women migrants are particularly vulnerable to abuse.

The CEDAW Committee expert Ms. Dubravka Šimonović (Croatia) questioned whether women are able to pass inheritance to children. She also asked whether the rights of nationality are passed from the mother to her children as children of mixed marriages often become stateless.

In relation to trafficking in women, expert Ms. Murillo de la Vega (Spain) questioned the disappearance of 33,000 women. She asked if there were safe houses, commissioners, and judges to deal with this issue.

In response, Mr. Kedar Poudyal, Nepal Delegate, Joint Secretary, Minister of Law and Justice suggested that the women's disappearance could be a problem with the census in which family members may not be correctly reporting their location. Women or children could be anywhere at work, school, which may be described as absent in the census.

Ms Rasekh of Afghanistan asked if there was monitoring and tracking of women being trafficked, also what were the follow up procedures, who plays a leadership role and what actions plans were in place. Experts went on to question whether bars in Katmandu thought to be involved in trafficking are co-owned by police and government officials.

In response, the delegate from Nepal stated that his country is adhering to the Palermo Protocol to prevent human trafficking. He added Nepal has national laws against violence including domestic violence. There is also a national workshop on trafficking which began in 2010. They are working with NGOs to aid and educate the public. "There is no evidence of police or government official's involvement in trafficking".

In terms of ending discrimination in political and public life, there are 191 women out of 575 members or 32.8% in parliament. Committee expert, Meriem Belmihrab-Zerdani, from Algeria asked for the number of women ministers and suggested that today's delegation was primarily male.

Gender parity in primary education was reported as one of the significant achievements (84% attendance with 86% male and 82% female). The literacy rate is 79% with 85% and 73% female. In secondary education, the rate is 43% attendance with 46% male and 41% female. Reductions in the female secondary education rate are due to social norms and traditional values. Also access to private restrooms for menstruating teenage girls is an issue.

Nepal is a newly formed representative democracy still in the process of finalizing their constitution. Yet, trafficking and disappearances remain an issue. In a related article from Human Rights Watch “the Truth and Reconciliation draft bills currently fall short of international standards and contain serious flaws that would fatally compromise the credibility and effectiveness of the commissions once they are established”.

From today’s report it appears that although there is significant achievement in stipulating women’s rights in the constitution and with gender parity in primary education, questions remain unanswered and achieving women’s rights remains a work in progress.

Judith Polizzotti
Co-President AAUW Bridgeport

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Highlights from the AAUW National Convention 2011

Even though this was my first convention, I was struck by the desire of many of the “over a thousand women leaders from all over the country”, who wanted to meet a new attendee.

One of the quotes by AAUW leadership that most resonated with me was that “AAUW members are like minded men and women who listen and know what’s going on.” I believe that we not only listen but often react and change the direction of issues effecting women, which is why I support this organization.

In a briefing to prepare for lobby day, Jan Schakowsky D-IL spoke on Social Security and stated that “We can afford Social Security”. There is 2.6 trillion in reserves. In 2037, we will still be able to pay out 77 % of scheduled benefits. If we only “lift the cap on earnings” social security will be solvent. “There is no need to cut benefits, raise the age, cap spending, privatize, or change the cost of living adjustment.”

Speakers also included Rosa DeLauro D-CT, who added that “social security ties generations together. Also, ¾ of unmarried elderly women are on social security alone”. In terms of Medicaid, I was surprised to learn that “it covers 66% of nursing home care for seniors”.

On Capitol Hill Lobby Day, the CT delegation, Loretta James, President AAUW CT, Alice Reitz, President Elect AAUW CT, Linda Avgerinos, President Elect New Canaan, Melinda Rising AAUW CT College Partner Representative and I joined “AAUW’s Big Teal Machine” and met with congressional staffers representing Senator Blumenthal, Senator Lieberman and Congressman Jim Himes. We requested that the representatives consider reserving Social Security benefits, co-sponsoring both the National Women’s History Museum Act, and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act. Following the discussion, Congressman Himes joined us and offered to partner with Housatonic Community College to address women’s issues.

In the first one member one vote election, members elected AAUW President, Carolyn Garfein, AAUW Vice President, Patricia Ho, and AAUW Directors-at-Large, Kathy Anthon, Amy

Blackwell, Kathryn Braeman, Julia T. Brown, Sandra Camillo, Kathleen Cha, Charmen Goehring-Fox, Connie M. Hildebrand, Millie Hoffler-Foushee, David Kirkwood, Betsy McDowell, Dot McLane, and Peggy Ryan Williams.

Also attending the convention was “Lilly Leadbetter the namesake of the Lilly Leadbetter Fair Pay Act, which restored protections that allow workers to challenge wage discrimination”. She also participated in AAUW's Capitol Hill Lobby Day.

The most powerful speaker in my opinion was AAUW’s own Director of Public Policy and Government Relations, Lisa Matz. She exhibited her wit and knowledge of the issues in moderating the panel discussion with Obama Administration women powerhouses, Michelle Obama’s Chief of Staff Tina Tchen who is also the Executive Director Council on Women and Girls, Sara Manzano-Díaz, Director of the Women’s Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, Jocelyn Samuels Senior Counselor to the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Justice, Russlynn H. Ali Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education who spoke on their work promoting equity for women and girls.

In the morning’s special interest group session on International affairs, Gloria Blackwell VP AAUW Funds/International Affairs stated that “International fellowships for 2011-2012 will support international fellows who return to their home country and implement a project that supports women”.

Jane Roberts discussed the non-profit she founded “34 million friends”. She described how, when President Bush cut 34 million in funding for UNFPA, (United Nations Population Fund), she collected one dollar from people all over the country and raised over 4 million over 10 years. This will help fund maternal health services for women in all parts of the developing world. She is an amazing example of the power of one person to change the world.

AAUW- UN Representative, Carolyn Donovan stated that the UN-CSW’s (Commission on the Status of Women) topic for 2012 will be “Rural Women”. She added that language has been added to AAUW’s international public policy statement that addresses human trafficking.

Another topic was “Men and Women Allies” in which Joan Williams, Center for Work-life Law, discussed issues with men who want family leave. John Curtis, AAUP, added that only 28% of full time professors are women. Women’s issues are family issues and it’s important to include men in the discussion.

In the breakout sessions, we discussed “Why Women stay in Organizations”. A representative of mobilize.org suggested that to attract millennials (14 to 30 year olds), the branch might want

to have a cocktail and conversation meeting at local pubs. Perhaps a social meeting on a Tuesday night was a possibility. Using women owned businesses to support these groups was also suggested.

One of the critical issues for students is media images of women. And also use of social media in general.

At a luncheon with Cynthia D'Amour, Leadership Strategist and President of People Power Unlimited, she discussed lazy leaders. "We celebrate martyrs. We have a few doing all of the work that leaves none for anyone else. The only way to be valued is to be a martyr. We must celebrate people who can bring people with them. Be a lazy leader. People will support what they help create." As leaders women need to delegate and mentor the next generation of leaders.

She also suggested that we need to create a vision statement and say it at every meeting. And have a long range plan for 2012. We should also celebrate what we accomplished today at the end of every meeting and manage at least 2 minutes of every meeting. If you give people an incentive to become involved, it will improve membership. Why would they do it? If you knew the answer what would it be? What do you think? Make it visual.

By the conclusion on Sunday, I was left with a sense of the importance and relevance of AAUW in advocating for equity for women and girls. When we speak, people in power listen. Being in DC, you appreciate the significance of lobbying congress for the issues that affect women. The national board members were impressive and convincing. This experience confirmed my belief in the organization.

Judi Polizzotti

Co-President AAUW Bridgeport