

CHIPS

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

COUNCIL MESSAGE -by Adelaide DiGiorgi

Ever since I attended the one and only candidates debate on Long Island at Hofstra University before last November's Gubernatorial election, I worried about Andrew Cuomo's position on hydraulic fracturing. Most people remember that event because of the candidate that said "the rent is too damned high". I remember it because I was concerned about Cuomo's take on the matter of fracking. Now, despite repeated requests from residents, environmental groups and local officials to perform the legally mandated environmental review and adhere to rule-making processes related to the state's proposal for high-volume hydraulic fracturing in upstate New York, Gov. Andrew Cuomo's Department of Environmental Conservation has rejected that path.



The DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation) has issued proposed rules for regulating industrial gas drilling throughout the state's portion of the Marcellus Shale even before it has completed the legally required environmental review process on which future regulations are supposed to be based.

Under the proposal, comments on the highly technical rule-making draft are due on December. 12 - the same day as the deadline for public comments on the 1,500-page draft environmental impact study on high-volume hydraulic fracturing.

Combining the rule-making process and the environmental review process for fracking undercuts the spirit and intent of the state's landmark environmental review statute. Cuomo administration officials understand the impact of this expedited schedule, and they have chosen to proceed regardless of the consequences.

The premature release of the rule-making proposal also runs counter to the DEC's own previously expressed plans. In July of this year, DEC released a preliminary draft of the revised environmental review in which it stated that the department would revise regulations only after the environmental review process was complete. At that time it concluded that following the "completion of the Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement, the Department would be in a position to rationally determine what additional measures or procedures should become fixed principles that would supplement and improve the Department's existing regulatory framework." (continued on page 2)



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

Vision: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

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

In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

2011-2012

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News items are due by the 10th of the month for the following month's issue.

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www.aauw-westchester.org

STATE WEB SITE

www.aauw-nys.org

NATIONAL WEB SITE

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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.

(continued from page 1)

Turning to the proposal itself, the DEC's new rule-making proposal contains the same fundamental flaws as the draft environmental impact statement. It contains only partial safeguards for public drinking water supplies, inadequate protections for the disposal of fracking-related hazardous wastes, and no effective mechanisms to shield communities from the impacts of industrialized landscapes.

New York City Council Environmental Protection Chairman Jim Gennaro, a long-time champion of drinking water protection, released a statement in which he warned that the current process would "bring us one step closer, in my opinion as both an environmental public policymaker and a geologist, to the possible unprecedented contamination of New York City drinking water and other drinking water supplies around the state." That includes us here in Westchester County...."

The issue of fracking is the most significant environmental challenge facing New York state in recent memory. The environmental impact study reports that as many as 62,000 hydrofracking wells could be drilled in New York in the first 30 years following approval of fracking operations. Such a massive industrialization of the state's rural communities would be unprecedented and would likely be accompanied by significant adverse impacts to state water resources, declines in air quality and the transformation of rural landscapes.

In their efforts to fast-track the rule-making process for fracking, state officials have picked exactly the wrong issue on which to cut corners. On Friday October 7th, The Department of Environmental Conservation's Commissioner Joseph Martens said he was confident in his agency's approach to study the controversial gas process and its regulations will be the strongest in the nation.

To my mind, there is no safe hydrofracking at this time. Our air and our water supply will be in jeopardy. I attended a meeting State Senator Greg Ball held in Katonah in late August to which he invited people from Pennsylvania whose property and water have been ruined along with Fracking company executives to tell their side of the story. Not one Corporation spokesman came. To my mind, this is the most irresponsible and dangerous takeover of our environment and water we have ever seen.

UPDATE ON THE 2012 EYO CONFERENCE! **by Wilma Gitchel**

Our Ninth Annual Explore Your Opportunities--The Sky's the Limit! conference is shaping up to be the best ever. We are relieved to report that we have secured the funds we had in reserve with the New York City Branch. And the College of Mount Saint Vincent has agreed to be our Fiscal Sponsor this year. What this means is that we will be able to accept tax-deductible contributions for our event. (You will recall that the New York City Branch was our Fiscal Sponsor in the past, and its disbandment left us without this facility.) So we are once again on solid ground, financially, although we won't be getting the nearly \$1,500 that the NYC Branch and the Manhattan Branch together have been contributing in the past.



Planning for this year's crop of seventh-grade girls is well on its way.

We expect to have an even greater selection of workshops. We'll begin recruiting Mystery Women and volunteers in January. You can help: if you know a young woman working in one of the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) or Design fields who would like to meet 200+ young women on Saturday, March 17, 2012, please refer them to Roli Wendorf. If you would like to volunteer to help escort and direct the young women around the campus, please let Mary Kay Olson or Carol McMillan know.

If you would like to help defray expenses, please write a check payable to the College of Mount Saint Vincent, with "EYO" on the memo line and send it now to Carol McMillan. Future issues of CHIPS will provide a tear-off donation form for your convenience.

We have enjoyed tremendous, generous support from our Westchester Branch members and thank you all. Thank you, thank you.

CURRENT ISSUES DISCUSSION GROUP

The Current Issues Interest Group meets on the first Friday morning of each month. Our next meeting will be on December 2 at 10 a.m. in the home of Selena Barron. Our topic that morning will be the "The Financial Eurocrisis (Greece, Italy, etc.) and its implications for the U.S., China and the World." All are welcome.



For further information please contact Marie McKellar 914 591 4899 or mariemck@optonline.net.

TUESDAY MORNING LIT GROUP

The Tuesday Morning Lit Group will meet on December 13 at 10 a.m. at the home of Marilee Scheuneman. We'll discuss the novel, Little Bee, by Chris Cleave.

Please contact Wilma Gitchel if you are interested in joining this vibrant, thoughtful group.

DAYTIME LITERATURE GROUP

The Daytime Literature Group will hold its holiday lunch on Wednesday December 14 at 11:30 a.m. at the Kittle House in Chappaqua.



Contact Lillian Joffe for more information.

EVENING LITERATURE GROUP

The Evening Literature Group will meet at the Oishii Asian Fusion Restaurant in Mt. Kisco, at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, December 14. Monica Hochman will lead the discussion of White Heat by Brenda Wineapple.

Please let Ellen Eschmann know if you plan to attend.

THE PLAY READING GROUP



The Play Reading Group will meet on Tuesday, December 13 at 1 pm at the Mount Pleasant Public Library. We will be reading The Odd Couple (female version) by Neil Simon.

Please contact Joyce Koyner for more information. jkoyner@gmail.com

POETRY INTEREST GROUP

The third meeting of the Poetry Interest Group will be at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 21 in the home of Janice Rabinowitz. Mary Ellen LeClair will lead the group and all are welcome to attend.



When you come, please bring a sandwich for lunch. Dessert and coffee will be provided. In true holiday spirit the group may read "A Child's Christmas in Wales" by Dylan Thomas. Copies will be provided at the meeting, so just come and enjoy!

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Westchester Branch of AAUW

Phyllis Kirigin lives in Croton-on-Hudson. She has a MA in theatre from the University of Iowa and a MA in Education and supervision from CCNY. She has retired from teaching high school. She is involved in community theatre and she edits a food blog and has a column in a local newspaper. She has given poetry and performance workshops as a volunteer and local assisted living communities. Phyllis performed in Women's Stories at our September Branch Meeting.

Susan Alin lives in Hartsdale. She has an AA in Dental Hygiene from Farleigh Dickinson University and is a retired dental hygienist. She has volunteer experience in fund raising and party planning.

Dear Member of the Westchester Branch,

Our annual campaign for the AAUW Funds is now in progress. Our targets for 2011 (based on 200 members) are \$5000 to the Educational Opportunities Fund (EF) and \$1000 to the Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF). We would appreciate any contributions you can make for these worthy causes. If you have already contributed, we thank you very much. Your contributions are due by November 30, 2011.

Please note that there is a new fund structure this year. Please make your check out to AAUW Funds and specify in the memo line on the check to which funds, EF or LAF, you would like your contributions applied, and how much to each fund.

Send your checks ASAP to Linda Motelson, 375 Martling Ave., Tarrytown, NY 10591. Your support makes a big difference in the lives of others. All contributions are tax deductible. Please do contribute, even if it is a small amount.

Sincerely,

Linda

Linda Motelson
Chair AAUW Funds, Westchester Branch



Yes, I would like to contribute to the AAUW Funds in the amount of:

\$1000 \$500 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other _____

If you do not designate a specific fund in your memo line, your contribution will be applied to the AAUW Funds, # 9110

Name:

Address:

Phone: _____

Make checks payable to AAUW Funds

ANNUAL HOLIDAY LUNCHEON DECEMBER 4

On Sunday, December 4, at noon, we will meet at Casaletto Ristorante, in to celebrate the holiday season. There will be a delicious three-course meal including soup or salad, a choice of three entrees, an elegant dessert, and coffee, tea, and soda. There will be a cash bar.

Directions: The restaurant is located on 9A just half a block south of Route 119. Take the Saw Mill River Parkway to Exit 21, go east on 119 and it's the first turn south. This is just a few miles west of the Greenburgh Public Library. Casaletto Ristorante is handicap accessible. Ample parking is available at the restaurant and across the street in the post office parking lot.

The program will feature personal immigration stories by a few branch members. As our community service project for the holidays, we ask attendees to please bring unwrapped toys and gifts or a cash donation to the luncheon. Carol Almasi, who generously volunteers her time and efforts, will deliver the gifts to the Bedford Hills Prison for the children of mothers at Bedford Hills.

Our luncheon last year was sold out. Please send your reservation in as soon as possible.



HOLIDAY LUNCHEON RESERVATION

Sunday, December 4th at 12 noon

Casaletto Ristorante, 15 Saw Mill River Road (9A), Elmsford, NY 10523

914-592-5980

Luncheon Reservation: \$35/person *RSVP by November 28*



Please reserve _____ place(s) Name _____

Enclosed is a check in the amount of _____ payable to AAUW-Westchester

Mail to: Carol McMillan, 14B Lyon Street, Rye Brook, NY 10573

HOLIDAY TIME AT BEDFORD HILLS CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

AAUW is having its annual "Holiday gift collection for the children and grandchildren of women at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility: The gifts should be for children from infants to 18 years of age, and should not be wrapped. They will be collected at the holiday brunch. If anyone would prefer to make a donation, I will be glad to buy the gifts.

Thank you, and see you at the brunch.

Carol Almasi 15 The Terrace Katonah NY 10536

914 232 2378 office 914 299 9047 cell



GIRL SCOUT MEMORIES SOUGHT

Were you a Girl Scout? (any age level from Brownies through Seniors or as an adult volunteer) In preparation for her branch meeting presentation on the 100th Anniversary of Girl Scouting, scheduled for March 7, 2012, Jean Havens is collecting Girl Scout memories from our Branch members. If you have a great story or a treasured memory to share, please take a few minutes to email to Jean at jhavens@verizon.net. Remember, once a Girl Scout, always a Girl Scout!



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CURRENT ISSUES SURROUNDING RETIREMENT, SOCIAL SECURITY AND TAXES **-by Selena Barron**

The fall 2011 issue of Outlook, the AAUW national magazine, includes two articles discussing some of the following issues that women face when they consider retirement. "The Bureau of Labor Statistics states the fastest growing cohort in the paid workforce by rate of increase is women ages 65 and older." Please read the entire AAUW articles to learn more about women and retirement.



Reasons women give to postpone retirement include:

- Wanting to retain their employer's health insurance
- Changes in Social Security benefits which change eligibility requirements and offer substantially larger benefits to retirees if they wait until they are older to retire
- Women often earn less in the workplace and therefore their benefits from Social Security and pensions are lower
- Loss of investments and savings in retirement accounts and non-retirement accounts due to the recession
- Women are living longer and their benefits and income must last longer
- Some women put off retirement because they enjoy the stimulation and accomplishments they derive through their employment

What about women who have already retired? I don't know anyone who has voluntarily retired, in good health, who regrets the decision. However, they may very well be financially affected by lower income from low interest rates, increased inflation and losses in their retirement and non-retirement accounts due to the volatility of the stock market and the recession. Part time employment often can make a difference.

The Social Security web site provides the following information for 2012. The maximum earnings taxable for Social Security will be \$110,000. There is no limit for tax on earnings for the Medicare tax. There will be a 3.6% increase in Social Security benefits based on a cost-of-living adjustment. The full retirement age will be 66. A recipient under the full retirement age for the entire year is exempt from income taxes up to \$14,640. For the months before a recipient reaches full retirement age in a given year, \$38,880 is tax exempt. Beginning with the month the individual reaches full retirement age there is no income limit.

The Kiplinger Tax Letter, dated October 28, 2011 discusses the following tax ideas presented by GOP candidates that, if implemented, could have an impact on retirees. A short summary of their suggestions is presented below as part of our AAUW voter education initiative. As the campaign to be the Republican candidate heats up ideas may be changed or modified.

- Rick Perry suggests letting taxpayers choose between current law and a 20% flat tax. "The flat tax would have \$12,500 in exemptions for individuals and each dependent, plus write-offs for mortgage interest, state and local taxes, and donations to charity." Long term capital gains and dividends would be tax free. The flat tax option could be filed on a postcard and Social Security benefits would be 100% tax free.
- Herman Cain, in a more extreme suggestion, favors a flat 9% income tax on individuals, a 9% tax on corporations, and a national sales tax of 9%. Charitable contributions would be deductible. Filers with incomes below federal poverty levels would be exempt from income tax. Capital gains would be tax free.
- Mitt Romney suggests "fewer tax rate brackets for individuals, along with less credits and write-offs, similar to what Obama's reform commission proposed." Gains, dividends and interest for people with AGIs below \$200,000 would be exempt from taxes. He would retain the 15% top rate for gains and dividends for those people with higher than \$200,000 incomes.

FROM: AAUW PUBLIC POLICY AND GOVERNMENT RELATIONS SENT: NOVEMBER 07, 2011
SUBJECT: AAUW RELEASES MOST COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT SCHOOL IN A DECADE

Nearly Half of Students Experienced Sexual Harassment at School Last Year
AAUW Releases Most Comprehensive Research on Sexual Harassment at School in a Decade

WASHINGTON — The American Association of University Women (AAUW) today released *Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School*, the most comprehensive, nationally representative research conducted in the past 10 years on sexual harassment in middle and high schools.

Sexual harassment pervades the lives of students in grades 7–12. Nearly half of those surveyed reported that they had been harassed in the 2010–11 school year. Of that number, a majority (87 percent) said that being harassed had a negative effect on them. Among the responses, one-third said they did not want to go to school as a result of the harassment. Another third said they felt sick to their stomachs.

The prevalence of sexual harassment in middle and high school comes as a surprise to many, in part because it is rarely reported. Only about 9 percent of harassed students told a teacher, guidance counselor, or other adult at school about being sexually harassed.

“The AAUW report *Crossing the Line: Sexual Harassment at School* is a call to action to students, parents, teachers, and all of us who are concerned about the next generation,” said AAUW Executive Director Linda D. Hallman, CAE. “Many students feel sexual harassment is normal behavior, and often victims of sexual harassment in turn victimize other children. It’s a vicious cycle that exacts an enduring emotional toll on students.”

Included in the report are promising practices for how teachers, parents, and community groups in particular can help change the school climate.

“The good news is that the more we know about sexual harassment at school, the better we can combat it,” said AAUW Director of Research and co-author Catherine Hill. “This report is nationally representative and provides fresh insight into this problem.”

Creating, publicizing, and enforcing sexual harassment policies and adhering to the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 are other ways schools can bring attention to the issue and chip away at the problem.

“Our report clearly shows that, in many instances, we are failing to provide the safe environment necessary for our children to succeed,” said Lisa Maatz, AAUW director of public policy and government relations. “Children and their families are too often left to fend for themselves when kids are harassed. Congress needs to strengthen federal protection for all students, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, perceived gender identity, or religion.”


On Tuesday, November 15, AAUW will host an event at the National Press Club on the topic featuring Rosalind Wiseman, an AAUW fellowship recipient, youth expert, and author of *Queen Bees and Wannabes*, the book that inspired the film *Mean Girls*; Kedrick Griffin, senior director of programs at Men Can Stop Rape; and Ileana Jiménez, educator at the Little Red School House and Elisabeth Irwin High School in New York.

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. Since 1881, AAUW has been one of the nation’s leading voices promoting education and equity for women and girls. AAUW has a nationwide network of more than 100,000 members and donors, 1,000 branches, and 500 college/university institutional partners. Since AAUW’s founding 130 years ago, members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day — educational, social, economic, and political. AAUW’s commitment to educational equity is reflected in its public policy advocacy, community programs, leadership development, conventions and conferences, national partnerships, and international connections.

**c/o Barbara Sarver
34 Scenic Circle
Croton on Hudson, NY 10520**



DECEMBER 2011

12/1	Thursday Mah Jongg Group			10:30 a.m.
12/1	Thursday Bridge Group			
12/2	Current Issues Discussion Group		Selena Barron's Home	10 a.m.
12/2	EYO Planning			1:30 p.m.
12/4	Branch Brunch		Casaletto Restaurant, Elmsford	12 noon
12/5	Monday Bridge Group			12 p.m.
12/6	Tuesday Mah Jongg Group			10:30 a.m.
12/8	Thursday Mah Jongg Group			10:30 a.m.
12/8	Thursday Bridge Group			
12/10	Deadline for submitting for CHIPS			
12/12	Monday Bridge Group			12 p.m.
12/13	Tuesday Morning Literature Group		Marilee Scheuneman's Home	10 a.m.
12/13	Financial Interest Study Group		Inge Clark's Home	10 a.m.
12/13	Play Reading Group		Mt. Pleasant Lib.	1 p.m.
12/14	Tuesday Mah Jongg Group (Wed. Mtg.)			10:30 a.m.
12/14	Daytime Lit. Group Luncheon (Wed. Mtg.)		Kittle House in Chappaqua	11:30 a.m.
12/14	Evening Literature Group		Oishii Asian Fusion, Mt. Kisco	6 p.m.
12/15	Thursday Mah Jongg Group			10:30 a.m.
12/15	Thursday Bridge Group			
12/16	Pay Equity Outreach Group		Roli Wendorf's Home	2 p.m.
12/19	Monday Bridge Group			12 p.m.
12/20	Tuesday Mah Jongg Group			10:30 a.m.
12/21	Poetry Group		Jan Rabinowitz's Home	12:30 p.m.
12/22	Thursday Mah Jongg Group			10:30 a.m.
12/22	Thursday Bridge Group			
12/26	Monday Bridge Group			12 p.m.
12/27	Tuesday Mah Jongg Group			10:30 a.m.
12/29	Thursday Mah Jongg Group			10:30 a.m.
12/29	Thursday Bridge Group			

