

# March's General Meeting

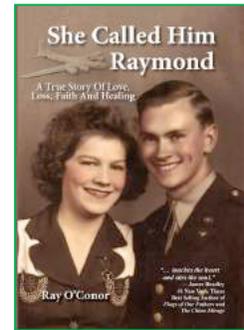
**Wednesday, March 15**  
2:30 p.m.

**McChesney Room**  
**Schenectady County Public Library**

## MEET & GREET

**Author: Ray O'Connor**  
will discuss his book:

***She Called Him Raymond***



**A WWII true story of love, loss, faith and healing.,**

Ray O'Connor abandoned his career to search for his namesake, a heroic B-17 pilot who died in WWII.

What he found "touches the heart and stirs the soul".

James Bradley, author *Flags of our Fathers*

*She Called Him Raymond* is a story of the struggles and romance of two ordinary people who led extraordinary lives during the most tumultuous period in history. Helen Gregg, the daughter of Irish immigrant parents, grew up in Hell's kitchen during the Great Depression and Clarence Raymond Stephenson grew up in Ironton, Ohio. They met in New York Central Park and their lives changed forever.

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

**"Despite all the challenges we face, I remain convinced that yes, the future is female." Hillary Clinton**

### Mark Your Calendar

**Wednesday, March 1, 6:45 p.m.**  
Board Meeting, Niskayuna Town Hall

**Wednesday, March 15, 2:30 p.m.**  
General Meeting  
Author Ray O'Connor

**Monday, March 20**  
First Day of Spring



### COMING UP

**Wednesday, April 5, 6:45 p.m.**  
Board Meeting, Niskayuna Town Hall

**Friday-Sunday, April 21-23**  
[AAUW NYS 2017 Convention](http://aaunyswp.aaunys.org/wp/index.php/state-events-2/nys-convention/)  
DoubleTree, Syracuse (see pg. 6)  
<http://aaunyswp.aaunys.org/wp/index.php/state-events-2/nys-convention/>



**Wednesday-Saturday, June 14-17**  
[AAUW National Convention](http://convention.aauw.org/)  
Washington D.C.  
<http://convention.aauw.org/>

## President's Message



As a retired high school and college History teacher, I follow the news closely. Education - and public education in particular - has a special place in my heart. This is for two reasons: first, I was the child of four immigrant grandparents, none of whom had more than a couple of years of schooling, if that. Both my grandmothers were illiterate; they could not read or write. Second, the opportunities afforded me because of mandatory free public education have allowed me to live a full and rich life, intellectually and aesthetically. I recall many dedicated teachers who contributed to my development - and I am grateful.

I consulted the AAUW website and this is what I found. What follows *in italics* is a direct quote, a copy and paste from the website.

### **Urge your senators today: OPPOSE Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education**

*The U.S. Senate has held its hearing for Betsy DeVos, President Donald Trump's nominee for Secretary of Education. AAUW weighed in with concerns over DeVos' lack of background as an educator and urged senators to ask questions regarding her positions during her hearing in order to better understand what type of Secretary of Education she would be.*

***We heard her answers loud and clear. If confirmed, Betsy DeVos would put the education of women and girls at risk. Send a message to your senators today – oppose Betsy DeVos' nomination for Secretary of Education!***

As I rewrite my message, Betsy DeVos has just been confirmed - a feat accomplished by the Vice President casting the deciding vote. The AAUW web site notes: .... *DeVos has been conspicuously silent on the importance of Title IX and other civil rights laws. In addition, she has been an outspoken advocate against public education. Her hearing clarified that those are indeed her positions, that they are not in line with AAUW's policy priorities, that they would put the equal education of women and girls at risk.*

*During her hearing, DeVos:*

- 1. Did not agree to uphold and enforce the U.S. Department of Education's Title IX guidance.*
- 2. Did not agree that all schools receiving federal funds should follow civil rights laws.*
- 3. Did not commit to supporting public education and to not privatize education.*
- 4. Failed to answer basic questions about her responsibilities as Secretary regarding school accountability. She also did not demonstrate an understanding of the Secretary's role to ensure schools support students with disabilities.*

**We are now tasked with maintaining vigilance to make sure that public education and civil rights are not compromised. Continue to make your voice heard. Tell your senators to stand up for public education and civil rights by opposing any actions which compromise them. Stay alert, stay tuned, and take action! ~ Eleanor Aronstein**

## **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

Since 1881 AAUW membership has been about empowering women to reach their potential through educational opportunities, parity in employment, health care and access to legislation, to name a few. The recent nationwide turnout at the women's marches throughout the United States and worldwide is a resounding example of the power many voices have to help make these causes be heard.

This is a wonderful opportunity to speak to potential members and encourage them to join AAUW. We would be pleased to speak to possible recruits for you regarding our association goals.

~ *Shellie van der Zee and Jackie Mendini*

**Welcome to New Member**

**Geri Mulligan**

**42 Lori Drive, Niskayuna, NY 12309  
(518) 785-7544, [gemu179@hotmail.com](mailto:gemu179@hotmail.com)**

## PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

This year public school choice will probably be instituted on the federal level with the nomination of Elizabeth De Vos as Secretary of Education. AAUW has been at the forefront on educational change, but it does not support the promotion of charter schools and private school voucher programs. The organization does not view these programs as a way to improve public education.



Charter schools are public operated schools that are exempt from many state regulations and these schools receive taxpayer's money. These funds are diverted away from the public schools. AAUW believes "the flexibility granted to charter schools must still come with clear responsibilities". Publicly funded schools should be accountable to the taxpayers for academic achievement, health and safety standards, and the civil rights of the students. Also, regulations for charter schools differ from state to state.

Private school voucher programs are another school choice issue. AAUW has strongly opposed this concept. In the past, the organization has stated that this nation must provide excellent education for all its citizens and not private school vouchers for a few. Private vouchers siphon off funds from the public schools giving the resources to private and religious schools that have a selection process for admittance. According to AAUW, "private and religious schools are not required to meet basic accountability provisions as open meetings and records law or to publicly release test scores, dropout rates and other basic information". Studies conducted in Milwaukee and Cleveland demonstrated that students using private vouchers do not perform better on standardized tests than those students in public schools. If funds are diverted from the public schools, these institutions will raise school taxes causing an anti public school attitude in some communities. Most taxpayers believe that their school taxes are already too high. Public school choice will cause major problems for the public school sector. Unfortunately, this may become a reality in 2017.

The success of any change requires crucial oversight and well thought out planning. The new Secretary of Education needs to bring both the public and private schools to the table in order to understand the intended and unintended ramifications of any changes to the nation's educational structure. ~Linda Rizzo

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### *The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap (Spring 2017)*

You've probably heard that men are paid more than women are paid over their lifetimes. But what does that mean? Are women paid less because they choose lower paying jobs? Is it because more women work part time than men do? Or is it because women have more caregiving responsibilities? And what, exactly does gender bias have to do with paychecks? The new edition of *The Simple Truth* addresses these issues.

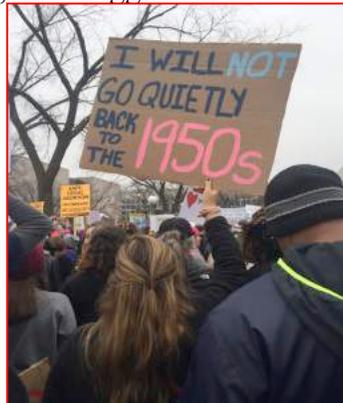
The Big Number: 80 Percent

Did you know that in 2015, women working full time in the US typically were paid just 80 percent of what men were paid? While the number has gone up one percentage point from 2014, the change isn't statistically significant. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the earnings ratio hasn't had significant annual change since 2007. The gap has narrowed since the 1970s, due largely to women's progress in education and workforce participation and to men's wages rising at a slower rate. Still the pay gap does not appear likely to go away on its own. At the rate of change between 1980 and 2015, women are expected to reach pay equity with men in 2059. Not only is their a national pay gap statistic, but the pay gap can also be calculated for each state. In 2015 the pay gap was smallest in New York, where women working full time, year-round were paid 89% of what men were paid. The largest gap was in Wyoming, where women were paid 64% of what men were paid. This is why our struggle continues.

## Why I Marched

By Bobbi Richardson

After the election, I was in a state of denial when I realized that once again women had lost. How could this happen? We were so close and ended up so far. I was desperate to do something and was delighted to hear of the organization of a women's march on Washington DC on the day after the inauguration. I immediately made a plane reservation to take part. My daughter Rachel, a DC resident, joined me. I marched for my daughter, granddaughter, daughters-in-law and numerous nieces. It was a wonderful experience to be among like-minded people. Yes, there were even men marching, wearing PINK HATS. I don't know if the March will ever make a difference but I know we were heard. I never realized when I signed up that it would be such a massive demonstration but I was so inspired by the effort many people put in to getting to Washington DC. I met a woman who had driven by herself from Nebraska. They were from all over the country. I have since discovered that two other Branch members made the journey to DC to march as well, Susie Leon and Geri Mulligan. Our Branch was well represented and as was our National Organization who was an active supporter of the March. It is appropriate that our National Convention will convene in Washington DC, June 14-17, so now we can take our voices directly to Capitol Hill. As we prepare for the changing political climate, our voices are needed now more than ever. By participating in Lobby Day at the convention, we too can hone our advocacy skills and apply them to meetings on Capitol Hill, at our statehouse, and in our communities. Hopefully someday we will be marching to see a woman take the oath of office. Unfortunately, until then, the struggle continues.



WE MADE  
OUR  
VOICES  
HEARD  
FOR  
GENDER  
EQUITY  
THROUGH  
CHARTS  
AND  
SIGNS



On **March 3, 1913**, a 26 year old named Inez Milholland slipped on her white kid boots, threw a cape around her shoulders and climbed onto a borrowed horse to help lead what was then the largest women's march in American history calling for the right to vote. Milholland was a suffragist, labor lawyer, WWI correspondent, and public speaker who greatly influenced the women's movement in America.

Women had fought for suffrage since at least 1848. But the 1913 march kicked off a series of political actions that swayed the public and male politicians, finally pushing them to pass the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution.

## Quote of the Month

**"There is no noise as powerful as the sound of the marching feet of a determined people."  
Martin Luther King**

## AAUW Funds

In 2016, the AAUW Schenectady Branch contributed a total of \$4,819.50 to AAUW Funds, placing the branch among the top donors in the State of New York. Using the collective power of the purse, members of the branch have demonstrated an acute understanding of the struggle that women still face in this modern world and their willingness to engage in the fight. The Schenectady Branch is committed to the cause financially and otherwise, and will continue to support women locally and throughout the world, and will not stop until equality for all is realized.

### 2016 Schenectady Branch Contributions

Charting The Course	\$ 1,000.00
Evvie Currie Giving Circle	\$ 940.00
AAUW Funds (General Fund)	\$ 775.00
EOF (Educational Opportunities Fund)	\$ 591.00
Leadership Fund	\$ 500.00
Public Policy Fund	\$ 425.00
LAF (Legal Advocacy Fund)	\$ 403.50
Other Funds	\$ 185.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,819.50</b>

The branch donations support a multitude of local and global activities including researches which have provided AAUW with much needed understanding about issues related to gender equity in education, the workplace and the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles. These groundbreaking researches and their findings enable the organization to better formulate action plans and develop effective programs in order to better confront and dismantle the obstacles that women and girls face in the fight for equal opportunity in education and the workplace.

The Schenectady branch has had a proactive role in programs such as Elect Her and NCSWSL. Branch members helped to fund the Elect Her program at SUNY Albany and as a result students requested sponsorship to attend the *National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCSWSL)*. *The students from SUNY Albany who attended the conference attested to the conference's transformative experience and how it prepared them to be the next generation of leaders.*

We encourage you to donate to the fund that is close and dear to your cause or the General Fund better known as AAUW Fund. Your generous donation advances AAUW's mission by sustaining programs and activities and helps incubate and disseminate programs that are at the core of our mission.

~ *Miriam Cajuste & Maxine Borom*, AAUW Funds VPs

**You are the "U" in AAUW !**

**March Forward With AAUW**

**Keep the Women's March momentum going by telling your elected officials  
that women's priorities should be national priorities.**

AAUW makes it easy for you to contact your representatives: Become a two-Minute Activist and make yourself heard on issues like fair pay, U.S. Supreme Court justice nomination and Title IX. Go to [AAUW.org](http://AAUW.org) to sign up.

## COME TO SYRACUSE



This year, the NYS AAUW Convention is being held in Syracuse (April 21-23). If you've never spent time in Syracuse, you've missed a gem of a city. As one of a string of mid-sized cities along the northwestern border, it offers varied cultural and culinary attractions. It boasts a lovely old theater which has been rehabilitated and now serves as a venue for touring shows. It boasts its own wonderful opera company with a first rate orchestra! It is home to the Erie Canal Museum and the Everson Museum of Art (designed by I.M. Pei) and the Onondaga Historical Society. On Sundays, the carillon of its magnificent cathedral is played for almost an hour at noon and there are park benches nearby so you can enjoy the music.

The Doubletree offers comfort and good location; you're almost in downtown Syracuse and you're very close to Syracuse University - with its lovely campus and walking areas.

Syracuse combines the sophistication of an arts-savvy city with the charm of a small upstate city. It's a great place for an AAUW Convention... and the opportunity to participate in both AAUW activities and enjoy the many attractions of this lovely city should be an inducement to attend.

~ *Eleanor Aronstein*, President, Schenectady Branch

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## ATTENTION BOOK LOVERS

Book Exchange I is looking for members to join us in our love of reading. There are no scheduled meetings, except for our yearly planning get together in June. That's when we agree on which book each member will contribute. Usually they are recent works. Then on September 1, we each drop off our book to our designated recipient and begin the passing chain. Our members live in Niskayuna, Scotia-Glenville and Coburg Village. My job is to remind them at the start of each month that it's time to "pass it on."

Call me (280-5623) or drop me an e-mail (margo32650) if you are interested and I'll send you our current reading list. Join us for a satisfying reading experience. ~ *Marguerite Pileggi*

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## MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD ON CAPITOL HILL WITH AAUW

For more than 40 years AAUW Action Fund Capital Hill Lobby Corps volunteers have volunteered tens of thousands of visits to congressional offices on behalf of AAUW members and supporters. Their hard work, dedication, and effective lobbying techniques have earned the respect of members of Congress and their staffs. These weekly in person advocacy efforts are a diverse program unique to AAUW - and now you have the opportunity to join in during AAUW's **2017 National Convention**.



**"It took me a long time to develop a voice,  
and now that I have it,  
I am not going to be silent."**

*Madeline Albright*  
First female Secretary of State

## ***Study and Interest Group Meetings***

**March 2017**

**If you're interested in attending a meeting, contact the leader.**

### **Book Chat**

Facilitator: Ellie Rowland (250-4302)

### **Book Exchange 1**

Leader: Marguerite Pileggi (280-5623)

No regular meetings

### **Book Exchange 2**

Leader: Ellie Rowland (250-4302)

No regular meetings

### **Gourmet**

Leaders: Pat Terry (372-8431)

Faith Weldon (393-0048)

Friday, March 10, 7:00 p.m.

**Theme: Irish**

Host: Pat Terry

1059 Garner Avenue, Sch'dy.

### **Diverse Topics**

Leaders: Barbara Aldi (372-4802)

Gerri Pinkerton (346-4560)

Monday March 20, 1:30pm

**Program: Story Teller,**

**Peggy Cimino**

Hostess: Suzanne Taylor

819 Huntington Drive, Niskayuna

Co-Hostess: Gail Karl

### **Modern Literature**

Leaders: Joan Bergin (399-1861)

Mary Delory (393-6811)

**Wednesday, March 15, 2:30**

**Branch General Meeting**

**Author Ray O'Connor**

McChesney Room, SCPL

### **MahJongg**

Leader: Dottie Potochnik (399-3854)

Monday March 13, 1:30

Hostess: Ellie Rowland

Location: 216 Lois Lane Niskayuna

Monday, March 27, 1:30 p.m.

Hostess: Shellie Vanderzee

5 Durham Court, Niskayuna

### **Quilting**

Leader: Marguerite Pileggi (280-5623)

Tuesday, March 28, 1:00 p.m.

**Program: Surprise**

Hostess: Pat Terry

Location: 1059 Garner Avenue, Sch'dy.

### **Science Topics**

Leader: Nancy Walden (280-8085)

**Monday, March 6, 7:30 pm.**

**Program: Stem Cell Research**

Kathie Armstrong

Hostess: Sue Wright

17 Wellington Way, Niskayuna

### **Varied Interests**

Leaders: Reba Mehan (374-7886)

Carol Reynolds (377-3856)

**Thursday, March 9, 12:30 pm.**

**Program: Cooking for One or Two**

Speaker: Diane Whitter

Hostess: Gail Puckette

28 Via Maria Drive, Scotia

### **Word Games**

Keep Mentally Fit

Leader: Eleanor Aronstein (265-2500)

Call Eleanor Aronstein for information



## VISIONS

**Schenectady Branch Newsletter AAUW**  
(published monthly except  
January, June, July, August)

The deadline for newsletter items is the  
1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month prior to publication.

**President:** Eleanor Aronstein  
**Co-Editors:** Bobbi Richardson and Robin Eddy  
**Circulation:** Carol Reynolds

Website: <http://schenectady-ny.aauw.net>

## AAUW's MISSION

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

## AAUW's 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.

## AAUW's PROMISE

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

## IN PRINCIPLE AND IN PRACTICE AAUW VALUES and seeks 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.

**AAUW**

**Schenectady Branch**  
**C/O Bobbi Richardson**  
**1417 Fox Hollow Road**  
**Niskayuna, NY 12309**

