



empowering women since 1881

Ithaca Insights

October 2019

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AAUW MISSION:

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

VISION:

Equity for all.

The AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund provides funding and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for sex discrimination.

The AAUW Educational Opportunities Fund provides funds to advance education, research and self-development for women and to foster equity and positive societal change.

The AAUW Fund allows AAUW to put resources where they are most needed.



FOCUSING ON DIVERSITY

With the advent of fall, we turn our thoughts to the district III conference on **Saturday, October 26th** in the **Robert R. Sprole Conference Room at Tompkins Cortland Community College, 170 North St., Dryden, NY**. A light continental breakfast starts at **8:30 a.m.** along with registration. Opening remarks commence at **9:15 a.m.** and we will hear from **Dr. Orinithia Montague**, the president of TC3.

"Diversity: It's More Than You Think" is our branch's theme this year and we have a great line-up of speakers planned. **Suzanne Young-Mercer**, the AAUW NYS Diversity/Cultural Director, and the President of the Rockland Branch will speak on "Intersectionality: As It Relates to Feminism and Diversity", and "Diversity and Inclusion: What it looks like for us?" **Devon Ritz**, the LGBTQ Patient Navigator and Outreach Educator at Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes will discuss "Gender and Identity 101". **Seth Thompson**, Chief Diversity Officer/Director of Diversity Education and Support Services, and **Sharon Clark**, Director of Human Resources at TC3, will address how the college is taking steps to recruit and retain diverse students, faculty and staff.

If you are interested, during the lunch hour you can tour the brand new TC3 Daycare facility with **Casey Goodwin**, Director of the FSA Child Care Center.

Your **\$20** registration fee will cover the continental breakfast and lunch. We must receive your reservation **NOT LATER THAN October 18th** to be included in this great experience. Park in either lot 4 or 5 and enter the athletic building on the left and take a right at the bridge/corridor. Look for signs to the Robert R. Sprole conference room which is on the second floor of the main building. Maps of the campus and the conference registration form are attached.

Looking ahead to the rest of 2019, please put **November 21st** in your planner and save the date for our next diversity theme program. Liddy Barger will speak about Diversity of Housing in Tompkins County at **7 pm at the Tompkins County Public Library**. She is the Coordinator of Housing Initiatives at the Human Services Coalition.

Also we will hold our annual Holiday Party in December at Madeleine Hemmings lovely home which she has graciously volunteered. We will collect canned goods and non-perishable food items for the Food Panty and dog and cat food for the SPCA. Look in the November edition of the newsletter for the exact date.

Kathy Earnest-Koons
Program V.P.



Dates to Remember

Monday, October 14: Book Group discusses *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry* 7 pm at Margaret Nichols' home

Friday, October 18: Registration Fee due for the District Conference

Saturday, October 26th: District III Conference at TC3 8:30 am

Thursday, November 21st: Liddy Barger speaks about Diversity of Housing in Tompkins County at TCPL 7 pm

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Equity and Inclusion in Ithaca's History

Thank you to Dr. Sean Eversley Bradwell for an inspiring beginning to our study of diversity this year. In September we met at the brand new History Center on the Ithaca Commons. Despite the last summer concert outside, we were captivated by his look back at how our community has treated diverse members, who have always lived here. Professor Eversley Bradwell is a member of the faculty of the School of Education at Ithaca College and a member of the Ithaca School Board.

There is much to regret in how, “with sword and flame,” the original inhabitants, the Haudenosaunee, were driven out of this region during the Revolutionary War. After the war, some of the new settlers from the East and South brought their slaves with them. He pointed out that New York outlawed slavery in 1799—but the law did not take effect until 1827. He asked, what kind of law is that? Peter Webb, who was owned by John Speed, of Speedsville, saved for seven years to buy his freedom.

Professor Eversley Bradwell pointed out that the detail of people's experiences is very important. Cornell University was founded on the idea that any person could study any subject. African Americans and women did study at Cornell, but their experiences were not the same as other students. Ithaca is proud that Alpha Phi Alpha, the first black fraternity, was founded at Cornell, but black students created it because they could not join the fraternities on campus. Helen Binker Young, an early Cornell architecture graduate, could not find work as an architect, or teaching architecture, so took an unpaid position teaching in the Department of Home Economics at Cornell. She eventually designed many homes in Cayuga Heights.

In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan held a big rally in Ithaca at the old fairgrounds, now the Wegman's parking lot. This frightening occurrence led African American women to organize in order to provide a safe place for their children. They created the Southside Community Center. Eleanor Roosevelt came to the dedication of the center that is still serving the community. Professor Eversley Bradwell said that often people are not fully included, but from bad circumstances, good can result.

Diversity: It's More Than You Think

Join us on Saturday, October 26, 2019, at Tompkins Cortland Community College to continue our examination of diversity. Bring friends and neighbors to our AAUW District Conference. The registration form and maps of TC3 are attached. Sign up before October 17. Questions? Call or email me.

—Jeanette Knapp, 272-3367 or jdk4@cornell.edu



Pat Sims and Muriel Everhart touring the History Center .



Dr. Eversley Bradwell answers questions at the History Center.

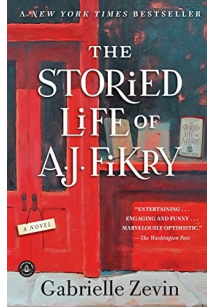


Norma Goldberg, Carolyn McPherson, Jeanette Knapp and Kathy Earnest-Koons taking action on the commons for Woman's Equal Pay Day.

AAUW BOOK GROUP NEWS

Reading: An Homage to a Bookstore

Irresistibly humorous, the book for the October AAUW book discussion is *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry* by Gabrielle Zevin. This sweetly tender, character-driven novel has it all: a curmudgeon bookseller, a stolen rare book mystery, and romance for good measure. Jeanette Knapp says it is one of the best books she read in the past year. She will be leading our discussion and suggests a bit of optional homework that could make the discussion even more fun. The author's device is to use titles of short stories as chapter titles. Read one of those stories.



Everyone is welcome to the book discussion on Monday, October 14. We will gather at 7:00 for coffee and conversation at Margaret Nichols' home and will begin to talk about the book at 7:30. Directions will be sent by email. Contact bhedlund@mindspring.com to be added to the group mailing list.

Reading Ahead: In November, we will discuss the autobiography *Becoming* by Michelle O'Bama.



Volunteer at the Book Sale: The Book Group will again help at the Friends of the Library book sale on Sunday, October 27 from 3:00 to 5:30 pm. Please let me know if you are interested in this good opportunity to let others know about our organization and its mission and goals. It is also a fine time to shop for books for yourself before or after the volunteer shift. The price will certainly be right on that last weekend of the sale – you can't beat 25 cents max on Sunday!

Betta Hedlund
Book Group Chair bhedlund@mindspring.com

2019 - 2020 Book Group Selections

Looking for a good read? Here are the books the Book Group is reading this year:

September: *Educated*

by Tara Westover

October: *The Storied Life of A. J. Fikry*

by Gabrielle Zevin

November: *Becoming*

by Michelle Obama

December: *Where the Crawdads Sing*

by Delia Owens

January: *Being Mortal*

by Atul Gawande

And the Winners Were.....

At the September meeting, the book group voted on the titles for programs in the spring. In order by authors' name, they are:

Fascism: A Warning by Madeleine Albright

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah

Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right by Arlie Russell Hochschild

The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote by Elaine Weiss

Dates, discussion leaders, and the hosts for the programs will be announced later.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please join me in welcoming our new branch members: Mary Berkelman, Mary-Carol Lindbloom, and Michelle Phillips.

Remember to add their contact information to you branch membership directory.



Mary Berkelman
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Norma Goldberg
Membership V.P.

“Put Some Respect on Her Name”

A Conversation with LAF Plaintiff

Dr. Zoe Spencer

As we honor Antonia Glasse and the other brave Cornell 11 Women who demanded pay equity from Cornell University over 42 years ago, which led to the formation of AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund, we recognize that many women are still facing pay inequities in their careers today.

The Legal Advocacy Fund continues to support Dr. Zoe Spencer, the professor in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Virginia State University who spoke to our branch last year during our centennial celebration. Her lawsuit against Virginia State University is based on unequal pay resulting from prior salary history being the “catchall exception” under the Equal Pay Act, if no bona fide job evaluation system exists for determining teaching salaries. The case is based on the university deciding not to renew the contracts for two male administrators and moving them into 9 month faculty teaching positions without evaluating their teaching credentials. The salaries that these former administrators were paid was 9/12ths of their prior administrator salaries (\$119,000 and \$105,000 per year), despite having no prior teaching credentials or advanced degrees. These salaries were \$35,000 to \$50,000 more per year than the salaries of many tenured women faculty with Ph. Ds. Four female faculty members, including Dr. Zoe Spencer challenged the provost’s decision and filed lawsuits against the inequity. The other three faculty women settled their lawsuits; however, they still experienced retaliation on campus from challenging the “good ole boy network”.

Dr. Spencer made the decision to continue her fight for gender pay inequity because of the actions that the university took against her. Over the years of her case, the justifications for their actions have changed and the courts have failed to fully consider the evidence as it has been presented. Ironically, many of the administrators and faculty have changed at the University, but Dr. Spencer remains a professor.

Last Fall, Dr. Spencer taught a certificate course on advocacy. Many of her students attended her October 31, 2018 oral argument. The attorney for the university repeatedly referred to the university administrators as doctorates in their professions, but they referred to Dr. Spencer as Ms. Spencer. In response, her students designed t-shirts with “Put Some Respect on Her Name – Dr. Zoe Spencer”.

Dr. Spencer lost her petition in the Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit last fall. Throughout the year, her legal team has continued to file motions with the appellate courts. Dr. Spencer is very realistic that university administration can not offer her a settlement because of the widespread financial ramifications of admitting that pay inequity based on gender existed.

On the positive side as a result of her case and others, in July, 2019, the Virginia governor signed into law a ban on public employers being able to obtain prior salary histories from applicants. Dr. Spencer has personally been to many AAUW Sponsored Events and frequently speaks about Intersectionality.

Financial support to the Legal Advocacy Fund is welcomed throughout the year, either through a branch donation or directly to AAUW LAF. Your personal support, reaching out to LAF plaintiffs, is greatly appreciated. Dr. Spencer ended her conversation with me by saying that AAUW members have provided invaluable personal support and motivation to her throughout her difficult fight for pay equity for all of her sisters.



Dr. Zoe Spencer speaking to branch members May 2018

Kim Edgar
Action Funds Chair

