



Bennington Branch News
American Association of University Women
Bennington, Vermont September 2019

A Busy Schedule Ahead for Bennington AAUW!
Our Fall Potluck Dinner, Our First Suffrage Centennial Event,
And Our Oldcastle Theatre Fundraiser



Monday, September 16, 2019 at 5:00 pm
The Old First Church Barn in Bennington
Bring 6-8 servings of a main dish, side dish, salad, or dessert to share.
Hostesses: Suzanne Kirkpatrick, Ruth Bornholt Olsson, and Carolyn Webb
Speaker: Eric Peterson, Producing Artistic Director of Oldcastle Theatre.

Suffrage Centennial Event

Wednesday, September 18, 2019
at 12:00 noon
The Meeting Room of the Martha Canfield Library in Arlington

To honor all the women (and men) who have participated in advancing women's rights, the Bennington Branch of AAUW will focus on programs and activities centered around

Women's Suffrage during the 100th year celebration of women obtaining the right to vote.

The first event of our Suffrage Celebration will be a moderated discussion of *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* by Elaine Weiss. In collaboration with the Book Group, we have arranged a special program with Kathy Wagenknecht moderating the discussion.

A few special guests will join us for this meeting: Alice Paul, Carrie Chapman Catt, and even an anti-suffragist. You are welcome to bring a guest, too. We hope to engage everyone in a lively discussion of the convergence of the Suffragist factions (the Suffs), the Anti-Suffragists (the Antis), the politicians, the clergy, the racists, and the reporters in Nashville, Tennessee during the summer of 1920. Members are encouraged to attend whether or not they have read the book.

In this Issue	
Fall Potluck	1
Suffrage Event	1
Fundraising Play	2-3
President's Column	4-5
AAUW Calendar	5
Scholarships	6-7

Theater Fundraiser for our Scholarship Fund

**Sunday, October 6, 2019 at 2:00 pm
Oldcastle Theatre in Bennington**

Play: Water, Water Everywhere... by Eric Peterson

See the lower half of page 3 for instructions on buying tickets. They need to be ordered by mail no later than September 19th. Or bring your check and order form to the potluck dinner and give them to Madeline Kennedy.

From Newspaper Page to Oldcastle Stage: Writing *Water, Water, Everywhere* . . .

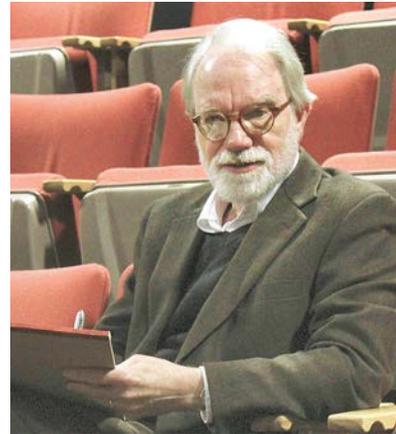
Our speaker for the Fall Potluck is Eric Peterson, Producing Artistic Director of Oldcastle Theatre. To spark our interest in the play, Eric will tell us about how and why he decided to write *Water, Water, Everywhere...*, a play set in the fictional town of Waloomsac, Vermont, where a local factory has been releasing perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) into the air, soil, and water.

First, Eric cautions that the play is fiction, not a documentary. However, there are many similarities between events in the play and actual events experienced by residents of Bennington and surrounding areas. As in the play, high levels of PFOA were found in the water, and local officials, business leaders, and the factory owner downplayed the health threat. And as in the play, there was a local tension between jobs and the environment.

The news cycle helped Peterson craft his play: Each morning, he read the news about the PFOA crisis in the *Bennington Banner* and *VT Digger*; each evening, he sat down to write. Asked how disparate chunks of news stories could lead to a coherent play, Eric explained: "Once I came up with the idea of a newsroom for the set, everything started to come together."

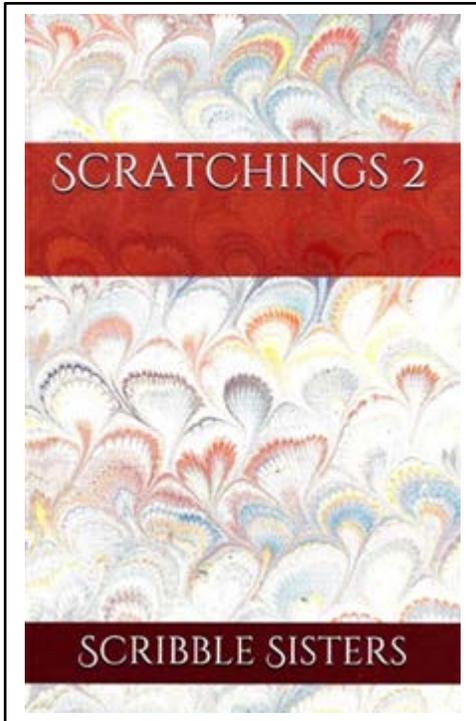
Although *Water, Water, Everywhere...* was written in response to a local situation,

what is especially frightening, according to Peterson, is that polluters "continue to operate all over the country because they provide jobs."



Almost 50 years ago, Peterson and some actor friends started an equity theater in Bennington. During that time, he has directed and produced hundreds of plays, including his own work: *Civil Union*; *Revolutionary Wizard: Ben Franklin*; *The Life and Times of Dorothy Parker*; and an adaptation of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*.

In addition to his work with Oldcastle, Peterson has taught at the high school and college level and has, with Tim Foley, taught a Theatre Arts Class at the Southwestern Vermont Career Development Center for 26 years. Peterson has served as president of the Vermont Arts Council and of the Bennington Downtown Alliance.



Announcement

After their wildly successful first book, *Scratchings*, which contributed over \$1000 to the local Scholarship Fund, our Scribble Sisters have done it again. *Scratchings 2* is bigger, bolder, and possibly even better than its predecessor. You can buy your copy of this sure-to-be best seller at the Fall Potluck for a mere \$10, of which \$6.50 goes to the Scholarship Fund. And if you missed out on their first publication, copies of *Scratchings* will also be available for you to purchase. Don't miss out on getting your own autographed copy!

To purchase tickets for the play, please clip and mail with your check (payable to AAUW) to:

Madeline Kennedy, 169 Fox Hill Road, Bennington, VT 05201

Deadline: September 19th, by mail.

Or bring your check and this form to the Potluck on October 16th.

Questions? Contact Madeline at 802-447-7996 or mmk.bfk@gmail.com

Name _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

I am enclosing a check for \$_____ for _____ tickets at \$39 each.

I cannot attend the play. I am enclosing \$_____ for the scholarship fund.

Madeline will distribute tickets in the Oldcastle Lobby from 1:30 to just before the opening curtain on the afternoon of the performance.

Branch President's Column

By Kathy Wagenknecht, Branch President

I haven't had the opportunity to work with many of you yet, so I thought I would spend a few words introducing myself to you. I grew up in Missouri and lived for 33 years in Arkansas. My degrees are in mathematics and English literature; my working career was in IT with large financial institutions world-wide. I taught composition and literature classes while I was in graduate school. And throughout my IT career, I was involved in communications between the technical staff and the user community, between management and employees, between developers and sales.

My encore career was managing the garden center and art gallery that my partner and I operated for 25 years. In that role, I developed a website for our business, published newsletters and blogs, and communicated with our customers about uses for the herbs we grew, descriptions of the antique roses and unusual perennials and we sold, and information about the artists we represented. And during this time, I took a writing workshop and began writing fiction.

With my background, you shouldn't be surprised that communications would be a focus of mine. In fact, you have received several emails this summer based on the MailChimp tool that we are planning to use for many Branch notices and announcements. You also have had a chance to give your input on a survey created using SurveyMonkey to help us understand what is important to you in the programs the Branch provides.

And now we are ready to introduce you to our website. Please visit it at this link:

<https://bennington-vt.aauw.net/>

The menu is in red under the header: the items are Home, What We Do, News, Branch Info, etc. Click on each of these and explore the information stored on the site. We will be adding more information as we go along, but you will find useful information on it today, including the last year's worth of Newsletters under the NEWS heading. And be sure to take a look at the Women's Suffrage Centennial page for an archive of information we have been gathering about upcoming programs and celebrations.

continued on next page

AAUW
Bennington (VT) Branch

HOME WHAT WE DO NEWS BRANCH INFO ARCHIVE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL AAUW VERMONT

Home

The Bennington (VT) Branch of the American Association of University Women was founded in 1926 and has been in continuous operation ever since. During all of these years, our focus has been on quality education and equity for women and girls in all walks of life. We also maintain a strong interest in our own life-long learning and sponsor public programs or lectures that examine a variety of topics. The Bennington Branch. holds two meetings each month on a variety of subjects with invited speakers:

- Branch Meetings in Bennington or North Bennington, are typically held at 7 pm during the

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL BLOG
Select Month ▼

JOIN
Join AAUW

Branch President's Column

continued from page 4

If you discover missing or incorrect information, please let us know. We want this website to be your warehouse of AAUW information.

I would like to hear from you if you have concerns, questions or suggestions. You can email me at: aauwbennvt@gmail.com or kathywag714@yahoo.com

Or you can call me at 501-352-9473.

Best regards to each of you,
Kathy Wagenknecht
Branch President

Newsletter Editor's note:

Please bookmark the new Bennington Website address: <https://bennington-vt.aauw.net/> on your laptop, iPad, or other digital device.

If you do a google search for Bennington AAUW, you will be directed to the old AAUW of Vermont website and not the new Bennington Branch site.

AAUW Calendar

Wednesday, September 11, 2019 at 1:30 pm
Scribble Sisters Meeting at the home of Althea Church. Information: Suzanne Kirkpatrick at suzykirkpa@gmail.com or 314-496-5628.

Monday, September 16, 2019 at 5:00 pm
Fall Pot Luck Dinner at Old First Church Barn. Speaker: Eric Peterson. See pages 1 and 2.

Wednesday, September 18, 2019 at 12 noon
Suffrage Centennial event at Martha Canfield Library in Arlington. Moderated Discussion of *The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote* by Elaine Weiss. Information: Page 1 of this newsletter and Kathy Wagenknecht. Please come whether or not you have read the book ahead of time.

AAUW Calendar Continued

Thursday, September 19, 2019

Last day to order tickets for our fundraising play by mail. Use order form on page 3.

Wednesday, September 25, 2019 at 1:30 pm

Scribble Sisters Meeting at the home of Margaret Howland. Information: Suzanne Kirkpatrick

Tuesday, October 1, 2019 at 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Branch Board Meeting at the home of Kathy Wagenknecht, Branch President. Save the date; additional information will be sent to board members.

Sunday, October 6, 2019 at 2:00 pm

Theater Fundraiser at Oldcastle Theatre. Tickets are \$39 (box office price). For the first time, Oldcastle is charging us \$20 per ticket (rather than \$25). As a result \$19 of every ticket goes to scholarship fund. See instructions on page 3 for buying tickets.

Monday, October 7, 2019 at 12:30 pm

First Monday Meeting. Additional information in October Newsletter.

Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at 7:00 pm

Public Branch Program at the Bennington Free Library. Cassandra Peltier, Executive Director, Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum, will present: "Voting: Around the World in 80 Years," a video presentation. She will also tell us about the "leading ladies" who led the drive for women's right to vote from 1840 – 1920.

Wednesday, October 16, 2019 at 1:30 pm

Book Group Meeting at Martha Canfield Library. *Dreamers of the Day* by Mary Doria Russell. Information: Mary Feidner

Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at 12:00 noon

Book Group Meeting at Martha Canfield Library in Arlington. *Women Rowing North* by Mary Pipher. Information: Mary Feidner.

Bennington AAUW Awards Three Scholarships

By Judy Murphy

With the award of three scholarships for the fall semester, AAUW's Scholarship Program has reached a total of \$45,464! This figure includes \$39,339 in scholarships and \$6,125 for textbooks since the program began in 2007. All funds for scholarships are raised by AAUW members through direct donations by the Silent Angels, fundraisers at Oldcastle Theatre, memorial gifts, and profits from the books published by the Scribble Sisters.

Funds for textbooks are collected by AAUW book group members in memory of the founder, Marge Carter. Her husband has generously matched the book group collection each year.

Thirty-nine different students have benefitted from 92 one-semester awards. This semester's awards have gone to three non-traditional women who have taken the big step to continue their education at Community College of Vermont.

In determining the scholarship awards, the committee considers the cost of childcare, transportation, and internet access for some of the students in addition to the cost of tuition and books.

Wendy Lyons

Wendy Lyons of Bennington, was awarded a fourth scholarship to help her to reach her goal of earning a Liberal Arts Degree. She will receive a \$700 scholarship, plus \$300 toward textbooks. Ms. Lyons, 52, had not planned on taking classes over the summer, but after losing her job unexpectedly, she changed her mind and became a full time student. Throughout Wendy's time at CCV, she has been a committed volunteer and leader through the Community of Student Representatives (CSR).

This summer Wendy is taking "Professional Field Experience," interning at the Kitchen Cupboard in Bennington. She will be attending a conference in Washington DC for the National Alliance to End Homelessness as the State Captain for Vermont. At that conference she will also be representing an organization out of Boston called "Together She Can." They give out toiletries to homeless people. This summer Wendy plans to open a "Together She Can" chapter at the Kitchen Cupboard. "If that is not enough," she says, "I will be attending the annual 'Capitol Hill Day' and be meeting with the Representative and Senators from Vermont."

All of these activities will further her dream of helping families grow in positive ways. In the fall she will use her AAUW scholarship to take three courses including American Judicial Process, Introduction to Ethics, and Interpersonal and Small Group Communication.

Ms. Lyons received high praise from Maggie Montovan, who served with her on the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Bennington. "She was always thoughtful in discussion, and timely in administrative matters. Her academic aspirations are admirable and her work ethic shines through."

Wendy has joined the Bennington Branch and we hope to see her at branch programs and events this year.

Cassandra Furciniti

Cassandra Furciniti, 29, of Bennington will receive her second scholarship, this time for \$700. She is studying Early Childhood Education at the Community College of Vermont. Her goal is to open her own home daycare center,

Continued on page 7

AAUW Scholarships

Continued from page 6

something that has been a dream since she was a young child. She has a daughter, 2 ½, and a son, 10 months old.

In an essay submitted for the award, Ms. Furciniti wrote about the first class she took at college. “I learned a lot about the career path I have chosen and many different ideas on how I can run my own child care center. I learned different techniques that I could use in my classrooms and that I will have to work with parents and how to communicate with them.”

Karen P. Burnell, M.Ed., taught a class Ms. Furciniti took, titled “Supporting Young Children with Diverse Abilities.” She wrote in a letter of recommendation, “Cassie's characteristics of commitment, diligence, dependability and interest in learning will serve her well as she progresses forward in meeting these goals.”

In addition to attending college and caring for her two children, Cassandra works full time as Assistant Staffing Coordinator at J. J. Young. Ms. Furciniti and her fiancé plan to marry on August 22, 2020 and were recently approved for a house through Habitat for Humanity.

In a letter Ms. Furciniti wrote, “I want to thank all of the Bennington Branch members for awarding me the AAUW scholarship. I would also like to thank Jennifer Kern for all the help she has given me in getting this scholarship.”

Desiree Walizer

Desiree Walizer, 27, of Cambridge, N.Y., will receive her fourth scholarship, this time for \$600. She is working toward an Associate Degree in Human Services with Certification in Substance Abuse.

Ms. Walizer is a residential counselor at Vermont School for Girls in Bennington (VPI-South). “Every day I go to work and talk to the kids about how important school is and help them with their school work. How can I continue to go to work and tell these kids to do something I myself just keep running from?” Ms. Walizer wrote in her scholarship essay. “Then I remember how much I have accomplished already and all the reasons to keep pushing forward.”

Ms. Walizer has been highly recommended by Lori Vadakin, MA, LADC, Director of Trauma Integrative Services for VPI-South. She wrote, “I continue to observe Desiree's compassion and professionalism as a dorm staff for VPI-South. I have witnessed her skills of cultivating safety, attunement, making students feel comfortable, modeling mutual respect and a gift of maintaining a positive attitude. I can attest that Desiree is highly motivated and it is a great pleasure to watch her grow as an individual.”

Leslie Rousseau, Assistant Professor, Academic Advisor, Transfer and Career Counselor at Columbia-Greene Community College in Hudson, N.Y., describes herself as one of Desiree's biggest fans. She tutored Desiree through the TRIO Upward Bound program when she was a senior in high school. “I learned that Desiree went through some very difficult times after she graduated from high school,” she wrote. “There is one thing I know for sure – she has come out a newer, stronger Desiree in the end.”

In a note of appreciation, Ms. Walizer wrote, “I want to start out by saying how thankful I am for this honor once again. I want to thank you for your continued support and for believing in me.”

The Scholarship Committee is chaired by Jennifer Kern, and includes Gudrun Hutchins and Judy Murphy. Beth Tegart joined the committee for this meeting due to the absence of Andrea Weisberg.