



Bennington Branch News—March 2020

Ain't I a Woman?

March 21 at 2:00 pm
Bennington Performing Arts Center—
Home of Oldcastle Theater



Kathryn Woods as Sojourner Truth

Born a slave in 1797 in New Paltz, New York, Isabella Baumfree walked away from slavery and in her travels evolved into Sojourner Truth: maid, laundress, evangelist, abolitionist, and suffragist.

This program, presented by Kathryn Woods, tells Sojourner Truth's story in her own words, speeches, and songs.

During her 29 years as a slave, she developed a close relationship with God which enabled her, in 1843, to rename herself Sojourner Truth and walk away from slavery. Sojourner took to the road to free her people.

She became a powerful speaker against slavery and for the rights of women. The last years of her life were spent petitioning the U.S. Government to turn over western lands.

The program joins Sojourner Truth at the end of her life. She recalls her early days

as a slave, details her relationship with God, and shares poignant stories of her days walking through this land. Ms. Woods uses Sojourner's own words and the spiritual music she may have sung to recreate this inspiring woman.

Kathryn Woods, a Massachusetts native, has acted on stage, screen, television, and radio and guides tours on the Freedom Trail in Boston.

We are partnering with the Bennington Performing Arts Center—Home of Oldcastle Theatre for this Vermont Humanities Council event.

"From the Parlor to the Polling Place: Stories and Songs from the Suffragists" with Linda Radtke

February 29 at 2:00 pm at Oldcastle Theatre.



Linda Radtke as a Suffragist

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First Monday: Linda Putney Speaks about Project Independence

This month's First Monday meeting features Linda Putney, Board President for Project Independence, speaking about her personal experience with Bennington Project Independence.

In 2007, when Linda's mother was in the mid-stage of Alzheimer's disease, she came to live with Linda and her husband. At the time, Linda was working part-time as billing agent for Bennington Project Independence Adult Day Service (BPI). She was well aware of the services that BPI provided for adults facing the challenges of aging and disabilities, as well as their impact on caregivers. Linda knew the caring and competent staff very well and wanted her mother to have the experience BPI could provide.

For two years, five days a week, Linda's mother attended BPI. The van picked her up each morning and brought her home in the late afternoon. She thoroughly enjoyed herself. The caring services of BPI gave Linda and her husband the time they needed for themselves. Linda said, "We wouldn't have been able to care for her if it hadn't been for BPI." Now, a decade later, Linda is giving back to BPI by taking on the role of President of the Board.

AAUW Calendar

Saturday, February 29, 2020 at 2:00 pm
Reenactment Performance at BPAC/Oldcastle. "From the Parlor to the Polling Place." Both the songs and stories in Linda Radtke's engaging presentation, accompanied by pianist Cameron Steinmetz, highlight Vermonters' efforts from 1840-1921, as they lobbied in churches, at "parlor meetings" at town halls, and at the State House for total enfranchisement.

Monday, March 2, 2020 at 12:30 pm
First Monday Meeting at the Federated Church of East Arlington on Ice Pond Road. Linda Putney will speak about Bennington Project Independence (see story above). Bring a

AAUW Calendar, Continued

brown bag lunch. Please let us know if you plan to attend. Contact either Jan Day or Nancy Schoerke:

Jan Day (mday2837@comcast.net)
(802) 442-9299

Nancy Schoerke (nts1016@comcast.net)
(802) 447-0829

Wednesday, March 11 at 1:00 pm
Scribble Sisters Meeting at the home of Judy Kniffen. Information: Suzanne Kirkpatrick at (cell) 314-496-5628 or suzykirkpa@gmail.com.

Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 12:00 noon
Book Group meeting at the Martha Canfield Library in Arlington. *The Sisters: The Lives of American Suffragettes* by Jean Baker. Information: Mary Feidner or Margaret Howland.

Saturday, March 21 2020 at 2:00 pm
Reenactment Performance at BPAC/Oldcastle. "A Woman Ain't I?" (Sojourner Truth). See p. 1.

Wednesday, March 25 at 1:00 pm
Scribble Sisters Meeting at the home of Nancy Schoerke. Information: Suzanne Kirkpatrick at (cell) 314-496-5628 or suzykirkpa@gmail.com.

Wednesday, April 18, 2020 at 12:00 noon
Book Group meeting at the Martha Canfield Library in Arlington. *Code Girls* by Lisa Mundy. Information: Mary Feidner or Margaret Howland.

Sunday, May 3, 2020 at 2:00 pm
Members are invited to carpool to Hubbard Hall in Cambridge, NY, for the matinee performance of The Susan B. Anthony Project. More information will be provided in the next newsletter. (See story on p. 3)

April 18, 2020 at 12 noon
Social Lunch at Bennington Country Club (see reservation form on p 4).

May, 2020
Screening of *Suppressed: The Fight to Vote*. Information will be included in the next newsletter

Saturday, June 13 at 12:00 noon
Picnic at Old First Barn

Legal Advocacy Fund and Public Policy Initiatives at AAUW

The National AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund works to challenge sex discrimination in higher education and the workplace by supporting key legal cases with a consortium of other organizations.

The supported cases recognize that sex discrimination today takes a variety of forms: unfair pay, pregnancy discrimination and limitations to accessing contraceptives, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and violations of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. LAF addresses these situations by informing people of their rights and using the legal system to seek justice and change.

Public Policy initiatives of AAUW are selected by the membership. Every two years, AAUW members vote to establish the federal action issues on which to guide the work of the national staff. Priorities for 2019 - 21 include supporting the “the civil and human rights of all immigrants, including a fair and just path to legal status” and promoting “the economic, social, and physical well-being of all persons.” Essential to that well-being are an economy that provides equitable employment opportunities; reduction of poverty; a living wage; quality, affordable dependent care; paid family and medical leave; safe, livable, and affordable housing; quality, affordable, and accessible health care for all, including reproductive health care. AAUW also pursues a lot of public policy work aimed toward new or revised legislation in Congress and in State Legislatures. Our success in passing equal pay legislation in 2018 with AAUW’s help is an example.

For a more complete explanation of AAUW’s Public Policy Program see <https://www.aauw.org/resource/principles-and-priorities/>

We hope you will consider a donation to AAUW’s Legal Action and Public Policy projects at our April 2020 Spring Luncheon. Donations are totally voluntary and tax-deductible. These donations are collected at the same time as the reservations for our social lunch or at the luncheon. (See reservation form on p. 4).



Theater Trip to Hubbard Hall

The Program Committee is planning a “pop-up” event—a trip to Hubbard Hall in Cambridge, NY, on **Sunday, May 3 at 2 pm** to see an original play about Susan B. Anthony. If you’re interested in learning more about Anthony, consider car pooling to the event with a few other members. In the next newsletter, we’ll have information about ticket prices and the possibility of getting together for dinner after the event.

Here’s some background: In 1894, Susan B. Anthony hosted a Woman’s Suffrage Convention at Hubbard Hall. When Hubbard Hall theater specialists learned about this connection, they decided to create a theatrical piece with music.

Funded by a grant from New York State, Hubbard Hall theater specialists worked with local students and adults, inviting them to write about issues of women’s rights and suffrage as well as local ties to this history. Their writing is integrated into the theater script, which focuses on Anthony, her convention at Hubbard Hall in 1894, her deep friendship with Mary Hubbard, and issues of women’s rights today.

AAUW's Long Road to Women's Suffrage

by Suzanne Gould

Editors' Note: After having watched movies, read books, and attended various presentations on suffrage in the past year, we thought you would be interested in the views of turn-of-the-century AAUW members on suffrage. The article below, which, appeared on the AAUW website in 2013, gives an insight into the mindset of early AAUW leaders and members. (<https://www.aauw.org/2013/08/23/road-to-womens-suffrage/>).

It may come as a surprise . . . that the road to women's suffrage was not an easily travelled one for AAUW, then called the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA). On the contrary, it was filled with lots of delays and roadblocks. It wasn't until 1914 that ACA leaders and members even began to discuss the issue. Only then did they support a watered-down resolution that simply called for branches to "study the issue."

Why, you might ask, would a group of such brave, trailblazing, educated women oppose women's suffrage? The answer is that most ACA members supported suffrage in principle but remained fearful of discussing it because it was considered outside the stated purpose of the association. If they became involved in this "external" issue, what else would follow? Would they then become stretched too thin and not be able to accomplish their original mission?

The fear of losing membership loomed large in this decision. Remember that in the 1910s, the pool of potential members, women with college degrees, was still rather small. So with limited womanpower at their disposal, early leaders wanted to conserve their membership and dedicate their focus on the original purpose: "for practical education work, for collection and publication of statistical and other information concerning education, and in general for the maintenance of high standards of education." This first generation of college-educated women still faced insurmountable barriers to their full participation in the educational

world; there was much work to be done without tackling the issue of suffrage.

Despite these fears, ACA members were also acutely aware of their responsibilities, as college educated women, to create a better society. The importance of their civic responsibility is a consistent message in records from the archives. But how could women carry this out without being able to vote?

In 1914, Mary Woolley, president of Mount Holyoke College and an ACA member . . . wrote:

"It is impossible to consider the question of civic responsibility," Woolley wrote, "without reference to the question of woman suffrage." (Woolley would later become AAUW president, in 1927.)

The following year, 1915, the association met in San Francisco. Now that the branches had studied the issue for a year, the organization deemed it safe to cast its ballots for or against the issue. The suffrage resolution passed by a vote of 247 to 19. It read as follows:

"Recognizing that, under our government, education in both its academic and social aspects is controlled by the electors, be it Resolved that we, as a body of college women dedicated to the promotion of education and desirous of furthering our ability for usefulness, favor suffrage for women."

Note: Many individual ACA members were suffragists, including Anna Kelton Wiley, a member of the Washington, D.C., branch who was jailed for picketing the White House and Maud Wood Park, who organized the College Equal Suffrage League to gather support from what critics called an apathetic younger generation.

You are invited to the . . .



AAUW Bennington Branch

Social Lunch

Mount Anthony Country Club
180 Country Club Road, Bennington, VT
Saturday, April 18, 2020 at 12:30 pm
Mingling and Cash Bar from 11:30 - 12:30



Menu

Vegetarian Soup

Quiche and Salad

Lemon Ice Box Cake

Coffee or Tea



Social Lunch Reservation and Payment Form

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

[] I enclose a check for \$25.00 for my lunch.

(Payable to AAUW, lunch in the memo space.)

[] I enclose a check for \$28.00 for lunch and room-rental donation.

(Payable to AAUW, lunch in the memo space.)

[] I enclose a LAF/Public Policy donation of _____.

(Separate check: Payable to AAUW, LAF in the memo space.)

Please mail check(s) to Norma McShane, 329 Elm St., Bennington, VT 05201