



BRANCHING OUT



May 2020

The coronavirus has affected us all and we hope you are well during these challenging times. Fortunately, Dr. Shah, with his daily Maine CDC updates (he even has a Facebook fan club), has been a source of compassion with measured and detailed information.

PENOBSCOT VALLEY BRANCH NEWS

PAST BRANCH MEETING: MARCH 7, 2020 Cathleen Bauschatz, Secretary's report of this well attended, dynamic meeting - Triad Andrea Mercado, Mary Cathcart, Susan Landry, Judi Coburn Harris:

“Supporting Diverse Women’s Life Experiences.”

(A good summary of the panel of speakers provided by Janet Givens is found in the AAUW Dawnbreaker, Spring, 2020, Vol. 66, No. 3; pp. 4-5)

Mary Cathcart opened the meeting with a reminder that Mar. 8 would be International Women’s Day. We also recognized attendee Carrie Davis, a scholarship winner this year from EMCC. Mary reminded us that our branch of AAUW began in 1865, with the University of Maine. Caroline Colvin was the first branch president. Andrea Mercado introduced the speakers:

I. Paige Mitchell began the program with “Dolls to Divas – Women and Self-Actualization.” Paige directs the Writing Center at UMaine, and is working on a Ph.D in Literacy, in the College of Education. She described the two terms in her title as metaphors for women’s self-image, and for her own voyage from “doll” to “diva,” as she now describes herself as a strong single parent. She sees that terms for women in power have been demonized – Madonna, Ruth Bader Ginsberg, etc. Paige’s research populations include UMaine women, and inmates at the Penobscot County Jail. She compares their cultural and institutional identity. As their skill levels increase, so does their self-reliance. She focuses on helping students in both groups to develop the self-confidence to speak up. She uses meditation as a tool in UMaine classes, but this does not work well for the incarcerated population. Both groups of women have the sense of “not being good enough,” and needing to develop their own voice.

II. The second speaker was Catalinha Oiedrahita, MD. She is from Colombia, and has spent two years in the US. She is a case manager for the Preble St. Anti-Trafficking services. She works with homeless people, the food pantry, and the teen resource center. Her main focus is to help victims and survivors of human trafficking. Many are immigrants or migrant workers. These women need support to leave the situation where they are being trafficked –they need housing, food, clothing, etc. Most of us would be surprised to learn how many women are being trafficked, in Maine, all throughout the state. She works with people who are hidden, afraid, ashamed. Some are in domestic servitude – a sort of slavery. Many don’t know how to live independently, shop, pay rent, etc. Most need mental health treatment, learn to grow up, look for a job, etc. Many questions reflected the fact that most of us have no idea that this is going on right in our communities. Often recruiters in the home country do the paperwork, but then change the terms once the person arrives in the U.S.

III. The third speaker was Cheryl Golek, who operates The Vicarage, in Harpswell. It is a residential facility for people with poverty as well as developmental difficulties, dementia, etc. Cheryl creates a personalized plan for each resident, and gets everyone out at least once a week, rejecting the “warehousing” that we sometimes see for people with extreme disabilities. Cheryl began by describing her own early experience of poverty, and how she was able to pull herself up from that world.

CANCELLED MEETINGS

As you know, the AAUW State Convention and our Penobscot Valley Annual Dinner Meeting, May 13, have been cancelled.

FUTURE MEETINGS

The leadership team is continuing until fall when we will meet to plan for next year. You will be notified of meeting dates and other information.

PIZZA AND POLITICS

Thurs., May 21, 5:30 pm Join us for a night of discussion and fun on Zoom. Details e-mailed later. The April Zoom Pizza and Politics was a success!

DUES Janice Osgood and Fran Haines

Regular membership dues of \$84 are payable now. Fifty year Honorary Life members pay no dues, and Life Members pay \$25 (state and local dues). **Grad student** members enrolled at the University of Maine (or another AAUW member school) pay no national, state, or local dues. We do need your expected graduation date. Please send your dues checks made out to Penobscot Valley AAUW to Fran Haines, 24 Page Place, Orono, ME 04473. Thank you.

FUNDRAISERS Fran Haines

Our scholarship fund so far totals \$1715 thanks to very generous contributions of members! As you know, the support of this fund is an important part of our mission. Thank you to those who have donated.

Also, don't forget to take your deposit bottles and cans to **Burby and Bates** in Orono. Let them know to deposit the refunds into the Penobscot Valley Branch account. So far, donations total \$119.58. Thank you.

MARYANNE HARTMAN AWARD CEREMONY

Postponed until the fall. Sharon Barker, a very active past member of our branch, will receive this well deserved award.

2020 MAINE ELECTION INFORMATION from League of Women Voters of Maine

Check out <https://www.vote411.org/maine> for voter information including dates of upcoming primaries and what's on the ballot in your town. Please vote!!

ADDITIONAL MEMBERS' COMMENTS:

Mary Cathcart writes:

-Silver Sneakers is offering live exercise classes through Zoom, which I am participating in. The instructors are good and I'm glad to have the regular reminders to exercise. Since several of our members have Silver Sneakers eligibility, I thought others might want to check it out.

-The Store/Ampersand is stocking many more fresh foods than before, including, veggies and fruits. They will deliver in Orono, or you can order by phone or email and pick up at curbside. You can get a list of each week's items by emailing thestoreampersand@gmail.com. We have been happy with their deliveries.

Susan Wishkosky expresses sentiments we all feel as she urges everyone to take good care and be well.