

# The Opinion Page

## Title IX Celebration

CANTON - "Title IX at 40 - In it for the Long Run" is the theme for the 26th Annual National Girls & Women In Sports Day (NGWSD) celebrated on Feb. 1

NGWSD is a special day for girls and women to celebrate their participation in sports and athletics. When Title IX was enacted in 1971, one in 27 girls in high school participated in athletics.

Now, one in three girls participates in athletics and all women and girls have greater opportunities in sports and athletics.

On Feb. 1, NGWSD will be celebrated in all 50 states with community-based events and activities honoring the achievements and encouraging participation of girls and women in sports.

The St. Lawrence County Branch has distributed posters and other information to all the public schools in Section 10, the four area colleges, and public libraries in St. Lawrence County.

One exciting and fun way to mark the day is to Take A Girl to a Game. You can check out local high school sports in your community or events at three of our four local colleges who have home women's games scheduled during the week.

At St. Lawrence University, the women's home basketball game against RIT on Feb. 4 will feature a halftime "Lose Your Shoes" 3-point shooting contest, and an autograph session after the game with a photo of the team surrounded by the informational quick facts about women in sports. There will also be light refreshments provided for the students in attendance.

Since 1989 the St. Lawrence County Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) has organized a countywide promotion of NGWSD to help girls and women celebrate their love of sports. AAUW invites schools and colleges to help commemorate National Girls & Women in Sports Day by encouraging all girls and young women to wear a T-shirt or jersey which identifies her participation in sports and athletics on Feb. 1.

From summer T-ball to youth soccer to figure skating

to ice hockey to basketball to softball to lacrosse or other sports, celebrate your participation and accomplishments of female athletes at all levels.

AAUW reminds us that Title IX, the 1972 law that prohibited sex discrimination in educational institutions that receive federal funding has made the difference in breaking through barriers for women and girls in education and athletics. The equity law will celebrate 40 years of positive societal change in June 2012.

The just released Women in Intercollegiate Sport report, says that the 9,274 women's intercollegiate teams and the average of 8.73 women's teams per school is the highest ever reported in the 35 years since the researches began looking at the statistics. In terms of coaching, there are 3,974 female head coaches of women's teams; 42.9% of women's teams are coached by females. And, 2 percent to 3 percent of men's teams are coached by females.

When the athletics director is a female, more female coaches are likely. At colleges in 2010, 20.3 percent of athletics directors were females. However, in 1972, the year Title IX was enacted, more than 90 percent of women's teams had a female coach.

There are 9.2 percent of athletics departments with no female anywhere in the administration; the best ratio is found in Division 3 schools where one third of athletics directors are females.

One area where significant equity improvement is needed is in sports information directors (SIDs). While 99.6 percent of colleges have an SID, only 9.8 percent of sports information directors are females. You can learn much more from the full report, available online at <http://acostacarpenter.org/AcostaCarpenter2012.pdf>.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day is nationally sponsored by several national organizations: Girls Inc, the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., the National Association for Girls and Women in Sports, the National Women's Law Center, the Women's Sports Foundation, and the YWCA of the USA.

The growth in girls' and women's sports has been phenomenal in recent years and studies show that girls who play sports have higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of depression. Girls who play sports have a more positive body image and experience higher states of psychological well being than girls who do not play sports, and high school girls who play sports are more likely to graduate from high school and have better grades.

Sports are where boys have traditionally learned about teamwork, goal setting, the pursuit of excellence in performance and other achievement-oriented behaviors -- critical skills that women and men need for success in the workplace.

Participation in sports and athletics is also important for the development of a healthy lifestyle. With no immediate intervention, one in three American children born in 2000 will contract Type II Diabetes and currently one in six girls today is obese or overweight. Girls who begin playing sports by age 10 are much more likely to make vigorous exercise a life-long habit with countless positive effects over her lifespan.

In addition to wearing a sports shirt on Feb. 1, if you have access to the Internet, visit the Women in Sports Timeline that was created and is maintained by the St. Lawrence County Branch. It contains hundreds of milestones in women's sports history stretching from ancient Greece right through the early days of 2012. The address is [www.northnet.org/stlawrenceaauw/timeline.htm](http://www.northnet.org/stlawrenceaauw/timeline.htm).

For more information about more ways you can celebrate NGWSD, contact branch member Donna Seymour (265-6985 or e-mail [onthego@northnet.org](mailto:onthego@northnet.org)).

For more information about AAUW in St. Lawrence County, contact President Becky Gerber at 268-9957, [gerber1@potsdam.edu](mailto:gerber1@potsdam.edu) or Public Policy Chair Kathleen Stein at 386-3812, [kstein1@twcny.rr.com](mailto:kstein1@twcny.rr.com), visit the branch website, <http://www.northnet.org/stlawrenceaauw/index.html>