



Mission Statement: AAUW advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research.

Vision Statement: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas

Value Statement: By joining AAUW, we belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

FEBRUARY 2010 NEWSLETTER AAUW Bridgeport Area Branch

www.aauwbridgeport.org

President's Message

Our theater party fundraiser was a great success thanks to Square One Theater, Carole Fanslow and the members and friends who contributed \$1340 to our scholarship fund. With our interest and dividends down last year, this fund raiser allowed us to continue with our same level of giving for local scholarships.

Lorraine Conway, our local scholarship chairperson, has just updated the materials for our Web site and for distribution to local bulletin boards. Laurel Anderson is producing a flyer and Louise Lisboa is helping with distribution of the flyers.

You may have noticed in the AAUW association annual report that the AAUW Educational Foundation awarded \$4 million in fellowships, grants and awards to more than 250 recipients. Each branch and individual donors make this possible. One Fellow got support from the fund named for our member, the Leonette Wishard International Fellowship, which now contains more than \$162,000. Thanks to all of you who continue to add to this fund.

With no general meeting until March you might like to attend a book group, a networking dinner, a meeting of Contemporary Global Issues, or contact Jean Weicker or Mary Ann Matthews about mentoring at Wilbur Cross School. (See articles and the calendar in this newsletter.)

I look forward to hearing Anita Gliniecki, President of Housatonic Community College, speak about the growth of Housatonic and its contributions to the Greater Bridgeport Area on March 18 at 7 p.m. at the Trumbull Library.

On April 24 our guest for our Saturday noon luncheon will be Marissa Moseley, assistant coach of the UConn women’s basketball team. This team is on its way to a perfect season and a national championship if they continue to work hard and no player gets injured. It will be exciting to get the inside story as the team recovers from “March Madness.”

I will see you at one of our groups, the general meetings and the annual meeting where we will award our local scholarships. Please put the dates on your calendar or post the whole calendar.

Happy New Year and Help Haiti,

Merrilyn

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Programs

Tuesday, March 18, 7 p.m., Trumbull Library

Anita Gliniecki, President of Housatonic Community College (and AAUW member), will speak about the growth of Housatonic and its contributions to the Greater Bridgeport Area. Enrollment at Housatonic, as well as community colleges in general, has increased in the past few years as the economic recession has constrained family budgets and increased competition for employment opportunities.

Saturday, April 24, noon, Trumbull Library

In a departure from our annual author luncheon, our speaker this year will be Marissa Moseley, assistant coach of the UConn women’s basketball team. This will be after “March Madness” and, hopefully, another national championship. Passage of the Title IX legislation and increased opportunities for women to participate in sports have been important issues for AAUW.

Membership

For the 2009-2010 year, we have confirmed a total of 82 members to the AAUW National. This is a significant membership reduction due to a number of factors. Primarily due to illness or moves, we have a number of members who have not renewed.

I would encourage all members to bring a new prospective member to a meeting or event. I applaud those members who have invited friends to book group and general meetings. All members are welcome to join Linda DeLeon and me on the membership team. Ideas for recruitment are also encouraged.

Judi Polizzotti
VP Membership

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Scholarship

Dear AAUW Members,

The following information gives the requirements for women of any age to apply for an AAUW scholarship. If you know any women who meet the requirements for eligibility, please encourage them to call or email me if they have further questions. The application is available at the AAUW website as listed below.

The Bridgeport Area Branch of AAUW (American Association of University Women) is pleased to announce that approximately \$5000 in scholarship funds will be awarded this year to local women who have not received prior scholarship aid from AAUW. Applicants must be a resident of any of the following towns for at least two years: Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Monroe, Newtown, Shelton, Stratford, and Trumbull. They must have completed at least 30 college credits by June 2010 and plan to continue their education for the school year 2010-11 in order to qualify. Applications may be downloaded from the AAUW website under the link for education: www.aauwbridgeport.org. For additional information or questions, please call Lorraine Conway, Scholarship Chairperson 203-268-5896 or e-mail: lortok@aol.com

Lorraine Conway
AAUW Scholarship Chairperson
239 Judd Road
Easton, CT 06612

Public Policy

AAUW celebrates some action network successes in 2009. To name a few:

- * Regained ground in a fight for pay equity with the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act**
- * Expanded protections for victims of hate crimes**
- * Successfully supported Sonia Sotomayor's confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court**
- * Supported the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act for higher education**
- * Championed Senate confirmation of Hilda Solis as Secretary of Labor in Pres. Obama's cabinet**

Now, looking forward to 2010, there is still plenty of work to accomplish. AAUW opposes a Senate commission that would seek to reduce the federal budget deficit by cutting Social Security and Medicare programs. President Obama is considering issuing an executive order creating this commission. It would have a disastrous and disproportionately negative impact on women. Social Security is one of the most successful anti-poverty programs, providing benefits to children, disabled workers, surviving spouses and retirees. Without the help of Social Security, more than two thirds of older and unmarried women would be living below the poverty line.

On Christmas Eve the Senate passed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. It covers most of AAUW's key priorities, including maternity care, preventive care, and end to gender rating. Earlier, the House passed a bill called the Affordable Health Care for America Act. Now Congress has the task of combining the two bills. Both of these bills contain versions that affect women's reproductive health.

AAUW still believes that girls and women are kept back from studying math, science and engineering.

Jean Weicker

Contemporary Global Issues

At our January 2010 meeting new Great Decisions briefing books were distributed and a schedule for the year was established.

January 12 Global Food Crisis - facilitator Merrilyn Decker

February 9 Enhancing Security through Peacebuilding – facilitator Judi Polizzotti

March 9 Special Envoys - facilitator Chris Ehlers

April 13 Europe’s “Far East”: the Uncertain Frontier - facilitator Jean Weicker

May 11 The U.S. and the Persian Gulf - facilitator Karl Wallischeck

June 8 Transnational Crime: Globalization’s Shadowy Stepchild - facilitator Linda Suhr

September 14 China Looks at the World: the World Looks at China - facilitator Merrilyn Decker

October 12 Halting Atrocities in Kenya – facilitator Claire Shumofsky

November 9

December 9

Dates are not adjusted for holidays and we may decide not to have a December meeting, all dates are the second Tuesday.

These topics have not yet been scheduled:

Global Financial Crisis

The Arctic Age from the 2009 briefing book

Great Decisions has a web site www.greatdecisions.org for up to date information and Phyllis Wing has found Great Decisions on PBS on Saturday at 9 a.m.

Merrilyn

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International

On Tuesday, December 8th, I gave a presentation to HCC students, sponsored by the HCC Women’s Center, to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I wanted to share excerpts from that presentation:

On Thursday December 10th, we celebrate the 61st anniversary of the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights). The UN General Assembly adopted the declaration on Dec 10 1948. All UN member countries were called upon to “publicize the text of the declaration and to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories.” UN

member states pledged to proclaim this declaration as the standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.

“Every society in the world will strive by teaching and educating these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal recognition and observance among people of the member states and people of territories under their jurisdiction. It is a vision of a desired state, and a source of inspiration. To protect human rights, people everywhere must have a universal knowledge and understanding of their rights. Therefore, the declaration was translated into 360 languages.”

At the time it was implemented, this was a “fundamental shift in the understanding of human rights. In a post-war world scarred by the Holocaust, divided by colonialism and wracked by inequality, a charter setting out the first global and solemn commitment to the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings, regardless of color, creed or origin, was a bold and daring undertaking”.

Today as we commemorate the declaration in the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon “it is our duty to ensure that these rights are a living reality -- that they are known, understood and enjoyed by everyone, everywhere. It is often those who most need their human rights protected, who also need to be informed that the Declaration exists -- and that it exists for them”.

When I read the declaration, it was interesting for me to compare it to our US Constitution and Bill of Rights. All of the rights described in our Constitution and Bill of Rights were included. However, these rights were expanded to include: a ban on slavery, right to marry, right to privacy, freedom of movement and residence, equal pay for equal work and a right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being of himself and of his family and a right to education. It also describes the citizen’s duties to the community.

It’s not a coincidence that the Commission on Human Rights that drafted the declaration was chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt. Women have always been at the forefront of the struggle for civil rights, for example, in the abolition of slavery, union organizing, and housing and consumer advocacy.

Today in the US, we continue to debate equal access to many of the rights that were declared for citizens of the world back in 1948. The struggle for civil rights in health care, equal pay, privacy, equal standard of living and religion continues and we must remain vigilant of our civil rights as they can be taken away.

**Judi Polizzotti
VP Membership**

Bridgeport Branch Calendar- 2009-2010

February 9th –Contemporary Global Issues-Bayview

February 16th –Branch Board Meeting-Bayview

February 23rd -Morning Book Group-Watermark

March 3rd -Finance Committee Meeting-home of Gloria Francesconi

March 9th –Contemporary Global Issues-Bayview

March 11th-Evening Book Group-home of Claire Shumofsky

March 18th -General Meeting-Anita Gliniecki, President of Housatonic Community College-Trumbull Library-7 pm

March 23rd -Morning Book Group-Watermark

April 8th -Evening Book Group-home of Gloria Manning

April 13th – Contemporary Global Issues-Bayview

April 20th –Branch Board Meeting-Bayview

April 24th -General Meeting-Speaker's Luncheon-Marissa Moseley, Assistant Coach, UCONN Women Huskies-Trumbull Library-12 noon

April 27th -Morning Book Group-Watermark

May 5th -Finance Committee Meeting-home of Gloria Francesconi

May 11th -Contemporary Global Issues-Bayview

May 13th -Evening Book Group-home of Gretchen Goethner

May 18th -Annual Meeting – 6 p.m.

May 25th -Morning Book Group-Watermark

June 10th -Evening Book Group-Dinner Meeting