



**BEDFORD-LEXINGTON AREA BRANCH
NOVEMBER 2011**

Breaking Through Barriers for Women and Girls

**NOVEMBER PROGRAM
"THE (ALMOST INVISIBLE) OLDER WOMAN IN
FEATURE FILMS"
BY (OUR OWN) ELIZABETH MARKSON
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 2
BEDFORD LIBRARY**

When do women become almost invisible, moving from winsome winner to withered woman? One easy answer: WHEN WE GO TO THE MOVIES. What are we learning about the older women from the movies? Or if you blink twice in the movie, do you miss seeing her? Why should we care? What messages have we all tacitly received? Is 'grandma' depicted as primarily baking cookies, or as incapacitated and in a wheelchair, or a partner in a law firm? What ageist and gender stereotypes are we clinging to? How have we dressed these women --their bodies and their minds?? What implications do media messages have, not only for our own lives but for younger people and their own ideas about gender and aging?

Liz, currently co-program VP of our branch, studied at Bryn Mawr College, University of Chicago, and received her Ph.D. in sociology from Yale University. She taught at SUNY-Albany, Wellesley College, Boston University, and as a visiting scholar in gerontology at the University of Auckland. She also maintains a practice in couples and individual therapy with a focus on life transitions.

Her current interests combine several long-term interests: gender, aging, family, and film, the aim of which is to examine persistence and change in culturally constructed cinematic versions of older women's lives. She is currently a resident scholar at the Women's Studies Re-

search Center, Brandeis University. Her research focuses on how ideological and sociodemographic changes affecting older women's lives have been reflected in feature films. During eight decades of American film, remarkable social changes have occurred. What messages has the celluloid American dream created of older women (60+)? To what extent do these cinematic images reflect persistent or time-bound ageist and gender stereotypes?

This is a program that is very pertinent to a huge portion of our area's residents. Come and learn! We look forward to seeing you.

Inside this issue:

November Program	1
Co-Presidents' Message	2
What's New in Public Policy?	3
Thanks for Supporting the LAF	4
Equal Pay in Federal Government	5
December Newsletter Deadline	6
Book Group	6

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Fall has arrived despite the warm 85 degree weather on Columbus Day Weekend. We hope that you all enjoyed the holiday! We also want to wish our Jewish friends a Happy and Healthy New Year!

Our branch program is now in full swing and we all enjoyed our October meeting with Jane Roberts. Her life adventures and efforts to combat women suffering throughout the world provided a fascinating meeting! She graciously "gifted" us with her book "34 Million Friends of the Women of the World." Jane is also included in the book "Half The Sky" by Nicholas Kristof!

Jane's program was a perfect lead into AAUW State Conference on October 29th at Endicott College in Beverly, MA, when Human Trafficking will be highlighted.

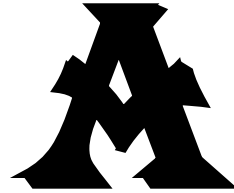
Liz Fragola, AAUW State President, graciously attended our branch meeting and personally invited us to sign up as soon as possible. There is much to learn and confront about this issue. We are looking forward to seeing you there!

At the November meeting, our own Liz Markson will provide her expertise and research on "The Nearly Invisible Older Woman" and the way media deals with this image. Please consider bringing a neighbor or friend to this interesting program. We hope to encourage new membership and need your help to reach our branch goal of 60 members.

Our 2011 Holiday Party and Education Fund Dinner planning has begun. A number of members have already signed up and if you are planning to bring a dish or pay \$20, please let us know by the November meeting or telephone Harriet Hathaway @ 781-862-2977.

See you soon,

Joan Zinderman and Alice Wadden



WHAT'S NEW IN PUBLIC POLICY?

Liz Blumenthal and Marilyn Flaherty, Public Policy Co-Chairs

What's new in Public Policy? The Promise of Social Security.

There are real concerns about using cuts to Social Security in order to solve American's financial issues. At AAUW we think that Social Security is a promise and a commitment that we as Americans make to invest in our future. This is particularly important for women who have had less income saved for retirement.

The new proposal, "Keeping Our Social Security Promise Act S.1558", closes the funding the funding gap by lifting the cap on payroll taxes. Right now 94% of Americans pay into Social Security based on their total salary, but the wealthiest 6% do not, because the cap for individual income stands at \$106,800. A billionaire and a millionaire pay the same amount into Social Security. The "Keeping the Social Security Promise Act" would gradually lift the cap by 2033, so that the wealthiest 6% of Americans will be on equal footing with the other 94%.

"Women across the industrialized world still live 5 to 10 years longer than men," according to Tom Perls, founder of the New England Centenarian Study at Boston University Read more:

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1827162,00.html#ixzz1ZuofOxkx>





THANKS FOR SUPPORTING THE LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND

A big thank you is due to the 13 members and one guest who contributed to the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) at the October branch meeting. As a result of their donations, the Bedford-Lexington Area Branch raised \$405 for LAF at our FAABM (Fundraiser-At-A-Branch-Meeting)! These funds will support LAF in continuing its critical work to combat campus and workplace sex discrimination.

The members who contributed in October were Karen Bragaw, Robin DeMott, Marjorie Flowers, Sue Giurleo, Harriet Hathaway, Ruth Ladd, Lois Pulliam, Merion Ritter, Helene Rosenthal, Midge Nealon-Seibert, Irene Shea, Dorothy Smith, and Terry VanDeCarr. A guest, Trudie Sadeghpour, also contributed. Sue Giurleo, Ruth Ladd, and Lois Pulliam tied in giving the largest gifts at the meeting. The \$405 raised at the meeting compares to last

November's amount of \$495.

Many branch members who have supported LAF in the past have not yet contributed. If you wish to help and haven't contributed this year, it is not too late. You may give me the check at the November or December meetings or send your check, made out to "AAUW Funds" with **Legal Advocacy Fund #3999** on the memo line to me, Midge Nealon Seibert at the address in the directory. Please send your check by December 20. Thanks to all who have supported the Legal Advocacy Fund!

Midge Nealon Seibert



EQUAL PAY IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?

Washington, DC - The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) issued a joint memorandum regarding equal pay in the federal government. According to a 2009 report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the gender wage gap for federal employees declined from 28 cents on the dollar in 1987 to 11 cents in 2007. Of that 11 cents gap, seven cents could not be explained by differences in education, years of service, or other non-discriminatory factors. The gap is much larger for women working in the private sector who are paid an average of 77 cents for every dollar paid to men with even lower numbers for African American women and Latinas. "Equal pay for equal work is the law, it's right, and its time has come. OPM and the EEOC are working together to ensure that federal equal pay laws are vigorously enforced in the federal workplace," said OPM Director John Berry. "Ensuring equal pay for equal work without regard to gender, or any other prohibited basis helps us recruit and retain the most talented workforce to serve the American people. While this wage gap is smaller in the federal government than in other sectors, much work remains to be done to ensure that the federal government is a model employer."

In 2010 President Obama established the National Equal Pay Task Force, bringing together OPM, EEOC, the Department of Labor and the Department of Justice. This Task Force recommended that OPM and the EEOC work together to "implement a strategy to improve the federal government's role as a model employer." On July 20, 2010, Vice President Biden released the Recommendations of the National Equal Pay Task Force, providing a road map for federal agencies working to increase compliance with federal compensation discrimination laws. The full text of the Equal Pay Task Force Recommendations may be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/women>. 8

"We cannot achieve our national commitment to equal employment opportunity until women are included as equal partners in every workplace, including the federal government," said EEOC Chair Jacqueline A. Berrien. "The federal government should be a model employer in every regard—including equal pay."

The Equal Pay Act requires the federal government pay men and woman equal pay for equal work. The jobs do not need to be identical, but they must be substantially equal. All forms of pay are covered by this law, including salary, overtime pay, bonuses and all benefits.

What is the Equal Pay Act?

The Equal Pay Act (EPA) is a federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in the payment of wages. Congress enacted the EPA, as an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act, to correct the conditions created by the pay inequities that existed based on sex — specifically to remedy the wage disparity faced by women.

In enacting the EPA, Congress made the following findings regarding sex-based wage differentials:

- (1) depresses wages and living standards for employees necessary for their health and efficiency;
- (2) prevents the maximum utilization of the available labor resources;
- (3) tends to cause labor disputes, thereby burdening, affecting, and obstructing commerce;
- (4) burdens commerce and the free flow of goods in commerce; and
- (5) construes and unfair method of competition.

Bedford-Lexington Area Branch
Ruth Ladd, Editor
15 Pine Knoll Road
Lexington, MA 02420-1206

AAUW's Value Promise

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

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: November 15, 2011

The book group will meet on Wednesday, November 16, at 1:00 pm at the home of Sue Giurleo. ***Mrs. Astor Regrets*** by Meryl Gordon will be the book we will be discussing. New participants are always welcome.

