



**BEDFORD-LEXINGTON AREA BRANCH
DECEMBER 2012**

Breaking Through Barriers for Women and Girls

**ANNUAL HOLIDAY DINNER AND
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION PROGRAM
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2012
6:00 PM
BEDFORD TOWN CENTER**

This annual event promises to be another outstanding gathering, so come one, come all, come with a friend and enjoy the companionship along with fancy holiday foods in the festive atmosphere and meet the young woman who is benefiting from our fundraisers in support of AAUW Educational Foundation.

DINNER: Please contact Mary Brzezinski at 781.862.5788 if you plan to attend but have not signed up yet. At that time, let her know what food donation you are bringing: a main dish to serve 8 or more, or an appetizer, salad, side dish or dessert (+\$5) or, if you prefer, make a \$20 donation in lieu of food. **Please, please** let her know as soon as possible, but not later than November 26.

PROGRAM: Our guest speaker and EF Fellow Brenda Ware is presently working on her Masters degree of Engineering in Transportation at MIT. Her undergraduate degree, also from MIT, is in Civil and Environmental Engineering, with a concentration in Economics. She also has a diploma from the Institute for the Management of Information Systems.

Brenda spent several summers as an intern in various places. The most recent internship was in Boston, working for the IBI Group, whose client is the MBTA. In Washington DC, she worked for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Let's hope that she helped these two Authorities find their way in their respective cities.

She was also an intern in Nakuru, Kenya, where she helped the neighboring communities by educating the residents on sustainable water use and designing an irrigation master plan. In New Delhi, she worked on developing effective ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as well as on improving the building plan approval process and laws. As a member of the D Lab Energy Team Project at MIT, she designed a

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CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Greetings! As we approach the end of 2012, we in the AAUW-MA Bedford-Lexington Area Branch still have more insights into how we can support the AAUW priorities in the new year. In the past two years we focused on Human Trafficking and "It's My Vote, I Will be Heard." Now, in line with current events, AAUW-MA Public Policy will be studying a variety of interesting and important issues. See page 5 for details.

The idea is for our organization to work together with others who are also advocating for women and girls. Looking forward to seeing everyone TUESDAY, December 4 for our celebration of the season and of our impressive Educational Foundation.

Joan Zinderman and Alice Wadden



LAF UPDATE

November was "LAF Support Month" but the weather didn't cooperate. In spite of that, \$305 was collected.

If you'd planned to turn in a check on November 7 but couldn't, please either mail it to the Legal Advocacy Chair, Midge Nealon-Seibert (address is in the Yearbook or contact the Newsletter Editor), or bring it to the December meeting. It should be made out to "AAUW Funds" with Fund #3999 on the memo line.

Thanks!

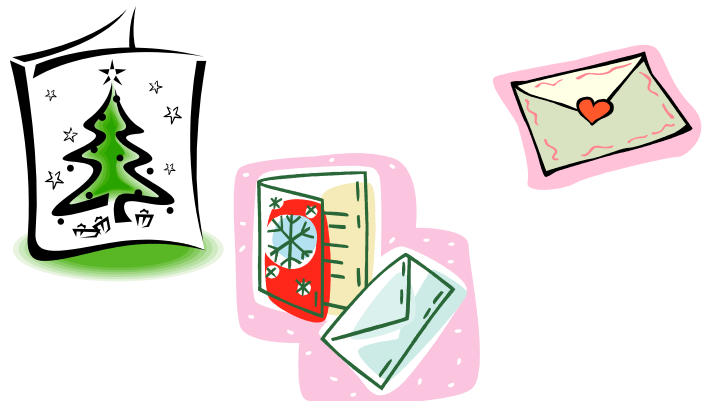


RE-USE OPPORTUNITY!

Wondering what to do with the unsolicited cards and calendars that come in the mail? Don't recycle (remember, reuse should come before recycle - bring them to the December dinner and we'll take them to the patients at the Bedford VA.

Thank you!

Pat Costello
781-862-6435



REPORT ON “POST-MORTEM ON 2012 ELECTION” PANEL DISCUSSION

Marion Kilson, Moderator

Despite wintry blasts, 14 intrepid branch members braved the weather to attend the November 7 Post-Mortem on 2012 Election program. The day before President Barack Obama won a second term and Elizabeth Warren became the first woman U.S. senator from Massachusetts. A panel of three keen observers of the American political process commented on the implications of different aspects of the election results.

Martin Kilson, Frank G. Thompson Professor of Government *Emeritus* of Harvard University, maintained that the 2012 elections had saved the United States from a political abyss. He argued that the United States has always been a problematic democracy but that strategic humanitarian activists' interventions have always moved our democracy forward and not our formal arrangements of Constitution, Court, and Congress.

Janet Vaillant, former Associate Director of Harvard's Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, made a cogent case for the importance of the Executive Branch in setting international policy. Noting the relations between defense spending and the availability of funds for domestic purposes, she endorsed President Obama's emphasis on "soft" diplomatic rather than "hard" militaristic policies at this time in our national history.

Finally, Lois Pulliam, our branch Public Policy co-chair, reminded members of the AAUW public policy resources including Congressional voting records and the informational 2012 Voter Guide for Massachusetts before reviewing significant public policy issues for women and their families that AAUW has addressed and will continue to address including reproductive rights and pay equity as well as women's workplace grievances through the Legal Advocacy Fund.

ANNUAL DINNER (cont. from p. 1)

special charcoal stove for a community in Nicaragua. There is more to Brenda Ware and her achievements, but you'll have to come to find out!

DONATING TO EF

RAFFLE: You may still bring items for the raffle table on the night of our fund raiser. You will find suggestions in October and November newsletters, and your own choices are also welcome. A number of lovely items have already come in. You will be able to buy 6 raffle tickets for \$5 or 1 for a dollar.

CONTRIBUTIONS: Make checks payable to **AAUW Funds** and on memo line write **#4336**. If you cannot attend, please mail your check to Lila Packer, 10 Nouvelle Way T821 Natick MA 01760.

Looking forward to seeing you on December 4 at 6 p.m. at the Bedford Town Center.

Lila Packer, Educational Foundation Chair

REPORT ON AAUW-MA OCTOBER 27 FALL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND POLITICS

Alice Wadden

It may seem like mere coincidence but for two years the AAUW-MA Fall Conference had lovely weather and was followed by unusual storms. The Halloween snow storm came after the 2011 conference at Endicott College in Beverly and then we had a very mild winter. Hurricane Sandy followed the 2012 Conference and brought rain, wind and flooding to Fall River.

About 70 members attended the absolutely wonderful and well balanced program at UMASS Dartmouth-Fall River Campus Advance Technology and Manufacturing Center. Dr. Divina Grossman, Chancellor of UMass-Dartmouth, welcomed us and mentioned the connection of the site with the history of Fall River. In the past, Fall River was famous for cotton textile mills but on January 12, 1987, the Kerr Mill Outlet Store was destroyed and the south coast and UMASS-Dartmouth started an evolution of economic development from "the ashes."

There was a panel which started with Gail Fortes, Executive Director of the YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts and a true leader. One project she encouraged was the historical volume "100 Women for 100 Years." Next, Melissa Cranford, fourth year medical student at Brown University (she has a BS in Human Biology), discussed her concern with the accessibility of mental health care and reproductive

freedom and rights for African-American women.

For the intermission, Melissa Cranford, due to her special interest in the people of India, the language Hindi—one of the official languages—and classical dance, performed a classical Indian dance in complete outfit and make-up which was absolutely fantastic.

The third speaker was Dr. Juli Parker who has been the Director of Center for Women, Gender & Sexuality and is also with the Women's Studies Program at UMASS Dartmouth. One of her awards is in connection with "Miss Representation" a media literacy movie. Dr. Parker received the UMASS President's Office Roy J. Zukerberg \$100,000 Leadership Prize (<http://vimeo.com/28066212>) and <http://www.missrepresentation.org/education/> to enable her to bring the ideas into the schools along the south coast.

Though we had few members from our branch, it was wonderful to meet someone from the Worcester branch who came to the Bedford-Lexington Area Branch tea last year at the Concord Library for those who had scholarships and international fellowships through EF. This recipient enthused over the entire event--the hospitality and the chance to network. It is wonderful to create excellent memories.

RACISM LIVES ON, AND YWCA WILL FIGHT IT

August 15, 2012 letter from Gail Fortes who spoke at the state conference described above.

Racism lives on, and YWCA will fight it.

When we read of incidents such as the case recently reported about racial hostility involving a 5-year-old girl in a Dartmouth elementary school, I am reminded of how much work we have to do as a community in accomplishing the YWCA's mission: eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

According to studies published in the Journal of Youth Adolescence, students and families who endure racism experience negative mental health, academic and social outcomes. Ethnic discrimination from adults and peers in educational settings is associated with increased negative perceptions of one's ethnic group (Gaylord-Harden & Cunningham, 2009). Youth who report experiencing prejudice are less likely to feel that opportunities are equal for anyone willing to work

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AAUW-MA's PUBLIC POLICY
Advocacy and action for current issues
affecting women and girls
 (from the AAUW-MA.org website)

In addition to **Tools for Action**, there is an opportunity to become part of the **Political Action Corps**. This is a state-sponsored initiative, with a focus on advocacy and public policy that supports women and girls. Members who take part will lobby policy makers via email, phone calls, and letter writing. If you are not already a part of the Action Corps, please contact the AAUW-MA State President, Barbara Burgo, at BJMonteiro@aol.com to learn what you can do to improve the lives of women and girls.

Action Priorities for 2011-2013 are:

- To support a strong system of public education that promotes gender fairness, equity, and diversity
- To achieve economic self-sufficiency for all women
- To guarantee equality, individual rights and social justice for a diverse society

Priorities encompass issues in education, Title IX enforcement, affirmative action, employment, career development and pay equity, dependent care, affordable housing, health care

access, and environmental protection.

Among other issues, at the state level, AAUW-MA has supported:

- Gender equitable programs for girls with the Girls' Coalition of Greater Boston and girls in technology programs with Girls Inc. of Lynn
- Increased state funding of public education, in alliance with the Campaign for Fair School Finance
- State funding for programs affecting women's health and employment in partnership with the MA Commission on the Status of Women
- Gender-neutral insurance policies with the League of Women Voters
- Access to emergency contraception (EC) comprehensive family planning services and reproductive choice, with the MA Coalition for Choice
- Opposition to the proposed constitutional amendment banning same sex marriage.

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hard (Flanagan, Syvertsen, Gill, Gallay, & Cumille, 2009).

The issue of racism can be challenging for anyone, especially for adults to address with a child. Through our racial justice education and outreach program, we have seen the direct impact of racism when a person makes a racially offensive remark or bullies another person because of his or her race. Children learn these behaviors, and they are not necessarily aware of the full impact these behaviors have and will have on the future of others, or how these behaviors and ideas influence their own future

and perspectives on society. It's important that we move beyond reactive intervention and are proactive in educating our children about racial, ethnic and cultural diversity and how to promote respect and confront discrimination.

It's a fact: Racism still exists. And for as long as it exists, we'll be helping our community understand, challenge and eliminate it.

Gail M. Fortes
 Executive Director
 YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts

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

AAUW's Value Promise

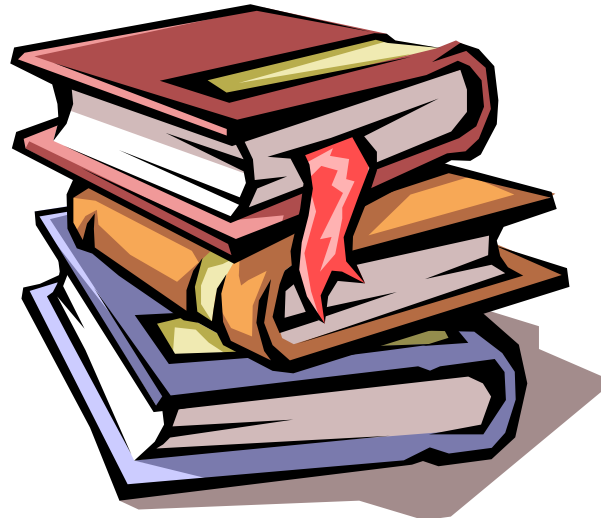
By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: December 15, 2012

BOOK GROUP

The branch Book Group will be meeting on Wednesday, December 19 at 1pm at the home of Sue Giurleo in Bedford, 781-275-6584. This is our potpourri meeting when we share something that we have read. It will be also our fourth annual Yankee Book Swap.

All are welcome.



AAUW