

AAUW NEWS OF NOTE

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Mission Statement: AAUW advances equity for all 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 impacting the lives of women and girls.

HINGHAM AREA BRANCH DECEMBER 2008

CALENDAR

December 4th, Thursday	Girls Game Night, 7 PM Home of Sharon Lemoff
December 4th, Thursday	Writers Group, 7 PM Home of Susan Mahan
December 14th, Sunday	Holiday Brunch, 12 Noon Mill Wharf, Scituate

HAVE A HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

January 6th, Tuesday	Girls Game Night, 7 PM Home of Sandy Carle
January 8	Writers Group, 7 PM Brewed Awakenings
January 13th, Tuesday	Branch Meeting, 6:30P M Book Discussion/Supper "The Glass Castle" by Jennette Walls Allerton House, Hingham
January 19th, Monday	Martin Luther King Breakfast RSVP: Nancy Moore 978-535-5426
January 27th, Tuesday	Board Meeting, 7 PM Home of Pat Laidler

HOLIDAY SOCIAL

The Holiday Brunch will be on Sunday, December 14th at noon at the Mill Wharf in Scituate. The cost is \$24 (pay with cash at the brunch). Please let us know if you are attending by November 30th.

Sandy Carle and Lynn Howard

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a great November **Branch** Meeting we had! Michele Norman from the Massachusetts Executive Department of Education spoke to us about Governor Patrick's "Readiness Project." She addressed the MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) and other important educational issues. It was a very informative and interesting evening. More information can be found at www.Mass.gov where the entire study can be read.

On the State level we met in Taunton to discuss the proposed new changes in the bylaws of AAUW which will be voted on at the convention in St. Louis in June. This reminds me to invite all of you to join us in St. Louis. It will be a fun and challenging few days. I hope you have let Lynn Howard or Sandy Carle know if you are joining us on Sunday, December 14th, for the Holiday Brunch. It is not too late - just call or e-mail one of them. This is always a great meeting to share a quiet and enjoyable meal when the holidays are so busy. Hope to see you all soon.

Sheila Doherty

Hollie shares a note from our November speaker, Michele Norman: "Thanks very much for the terrific conversation and for the AAUW pen. What fun! Please extend my thanks to the group -- they shared some very helpful perspectives. Best, Michele"

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We are happy to announce that two new members have joined our branch. Please add their names and other information to your directories.

Elizabeth James and **Mary Wagner**

PAMELA J LINCOLN RECOGNITION AWARD

At the January meeting, in addition to our Casual Supper and Book Discussion, we will be having a **Book Sale** to benefit the Pamela J Lincoln Recognition Award fund. This award is presented each April to an outstanding student. Any branch member may nominate a student. For an application contact Patricia McKay. Applications are due March 1.

Don't forget our book sale. January 13, 2009 meeting Bring a book and buy two.

GIRLS GAME NIGHT

A good time was had by all at the last game night. A new member joining us for the first time remarked, "I haven't had this much fun in ages." We invite any member to join us—for one night or for all. We unashamedly admit we play games that don't require much skill so that we can concentrate on conversation and eating. The group schedules the dates and place. We will meet next on December 4th at the home of Sharon Lemoff and on January 6th at the home of Sandy Carle. Call or email the hostess if you plan to attend. Contact information is in your "orange" directory.

ADVENTURES IN DINING

On November 20th the group enjoyed themselves at Hola's in Marshfield sampling a variety of tapas, such as crab tostada with avocado/pickled red onions/smoked paprika, and flatbreads, including a fabulous dessert - one with bananas, walnuts and sweet cream. We all agreed we liked everything we tried, and apparently we were not alone since the small place was packed on a Thursday evening. Save the date to join us on **January 22** as we may pay a return visit to Fujiyama Japanese Restaurant in Norwell (or discover a new ethnic place to try). Any suggestions? Send to holliebagley@gmail.com.

LAF UPDATE

The AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) works to combat sex discrimination in higher education and the workplace.

Important U.S. Supreme Court Case

AAUW signed an amicus curiae brief in support of Noreen Hulteen in AT&T v Hulteen. The case will be heard by the Supreme Court on December 10 and relates to pregnancy discrimination.

Visit the PDA section of the LAF Online Resource Library at

<http://www.aauw.org/advocacy/laf/lafnetwork/library/index.cfm>



Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA)

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of this important law, LAF has launched a new PDA section of its online resource library.

Visit the PDA section of the LAF Online Resource Library (link above)



Fair Pay Tool

AAUW's partner Job Search Intelligence recently launched a free fair pay compensation tool. Access nearly all job descriptions in every region of the US.

Find out your personalized salary target at <http://www.jobsearchintelligence.com/jobseekers/>

PUBLIC POLICY

Woman Rises to Rank of Four-Star General for First Time: On Friday, Ann Dunwoody became the first female four-star general in U.S. military history. At her promotion ceremony, which came after 33 years in the Army, Dunwoody said, "I've heard from moms and dads who see this promotion as a beacon of hope for their own daughters and after affirmation that anything is possible through hard work and commitment. And I've heard from women veterans of all wars, many who just wanted to say congratulations; some who just wanted to say thanks; and still other who just wanted to say they were so happy this day had finally come."

According to the Associated Press, women make up about 14 percent of the active-duty Army. While women are still excluded from units designed primarily to engage in direct combat, opportunities for women have expanded over the past several decades, and they are and are allowed to serve in a wide variety of assignments.

Gates Foundation Announce New Focus on Higher Education: The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced this week that it will shift its focus to college completion, specifically at the community college level. The Gates Foundation, currently one of the most generous philanthropic organizations in the world, has focused on education since its founding in 2000. According to Inside Higher Ed, the decision to work towards increased higher education enrollment and graduation marks an increased opportunity for those who want to attend college but cannot afford to, a large number of which are women. Melinda Gates was quoted as saying, “Most community colleges have open admission, low tuition rates, and with 1,200 of them around the country, most people live near one. Community colleges have untapped potential for getting students the credentials they need to earn a living wage.” The foundation has a four-pronged plan to address college completion: shifts in financial aid policy, changing student incentives to encourage graduation, building partnerships between schools and local employers, and improving remedial education to help students get ahead.

ESPN Joins in on Pay Equity: According to the Aspen Times, ESPN recently announced that the X Games, its popular action sports event, will be taking a step to recognize increased talent in women athletes. After many discussions and lobbying from women’s sports organizations, ESPN will offer equal purse prizes for both women and men athletes at the Winter X Games in Aspen and the X Games in Los Angeles. This shift reflects recent successes in women’s sports and the desire to equally reward women. Along with equal purses, ESPN agreed to work towards equality in broadcasting and coverage. These new changes will be featured in the upcoming Winter X Games in January.

Supreme Court Hears Case on Gun Rights for Former Domestic Batterers: The U.S. Supreme Court heard a case that could decide the fate of a firearm ban for past domestic-violence perpetrators, which has yet to be extended to all 50 states. According to Women’s eNews, the U.S. government is arguing that law banning guns for batterers should cover all 50 states, not just those that have explicit laws on the subject. Supporters of the government’s position warn that if the court rules against a country-wide ban, many batterers could have their gun rights restored as their names are moved off of nation-wide criminal lists. However, groups on the other side of the argument say that such a ruling would infringe on state and constitutional rights. A ruling is expected before the end of next June.

Women Give Obama the Win on Election Day: Election Day brought a record number of voters to the polls, and at the end of the day, Senator Barack Obama was elected the first African-American president of the United States. The Obama/Biden ticket received 364 electoral votes, compared to 163 won by Senator John McCain and Governor. Sarah Palin. President-Elect Obama has begun to put together his transition team and his White House staff, naming Representative Rahm Emanuel (D-IL) his new chief of staff.

The Democrats expanded their control of both chambers of Congress. In the House, Democrats improved their majority by at least 19 seats to hold 254 seats, with 174 held by Republicans and 7 seats still undecided. In the Senate, Democrats will hold at least 55 seats, as well as 2 Independents who caucus with the Democrats. The Republicans will maintain at least 40 seats, but races in four states are still in question: Alaska, Georgia, and Minnesota. Democrats picked up one governorship, with the final tally standing at 29 governors’ mansions for the Democrats, 21 for the Republicans. Once again, women made the difference in the outcome – Obama won 56 percent of the women’s vote, versus 49 percent of the men’s vote. Youth voters (ages 18-29) also had an enormous impact on this election, making up 18 percent of the total electorate -- even outpacing the powerful senior block (age 65+), who made up 16 percent of the voting public.

Women Candidates Make Gains in Congress and State Legislatures: Women as candidates largely did well, picking up seats in Congress and in state houses across the country. In one extreme but noteworthy example, women won a majority of the state senate seats in New Hampshire, making it the first legislative body to be dominated by women in the history of the United States. Seventeen women (13D, 4R) will serve in the U.S. Senate, besting the record of 16 set by the current Congress. This record includes the four women (3D, 1R) who won Senate elections this year, including two incumbents and two challengers. Kay Hagan (D-NC) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) both beat well known incumbents and will join Susan Collins (R-ME), who was re-elected in a rare bright spot for Republicans. Incumbent Elizabeth Dole (R-NC) lost her race to Hagan.

A total of at least 74 women (57D, 17R) will serve in the 111th Congress, setting a new all-time high. Ten new women (8D, 2R) will join the 64 incumbents (49D, 15R) who were re-elected, topping the previous record of 71 women set this Congress. The women newcomers include five challengers (4D, 1R) who defeated incumbents and five winners of open seats (4D, 1R). Two women candidates for House seats are in contests that are too close to call: Darcy Burner (D-WA), who is challenging an incumbent, and Mary Jo Kilroy (D-OH), who is seeking an open seat.

Beverly Perdue (D-NC) was the only new woman governor elected in 2008. Perdue joins Christine Gregoire (D-WA), who was re-elected in a rematch of her close race from four years ago, as the only woman to win gubernatorial races this year. With six women governors already safely in office, the total number of women governors in 2009 is eight (5D, 3R).

Victories Made in State Initiatives across the Country: Among other highlights from the 2008 election was the outcome of state ballot initiatives dotted throughout the country, many of which featured important AAUW issues. An overwhelming majority of Milwaukee voters supported an initiative to require paid sick days to all employees, making them the third city to do so. South Dakota voters helped to stop the undermining of *Roe v. Wade* by defeating Initiative 11, which would have banned nearly all abortions in the state. In another reproductive rights initiative, Colorado voters defeated an initiative that would have given legal rights to a 'person' from the moment of fertilization, threatening access to contraceptives, abortions, stem cell research, and in vitro fertilization. Additionally, California defeated Proposition 4, which would have prohibited abortions for a minor until 48 hours after parental notification. However, in Nebraska, voters passed Initiative 424. This ballot measure would ban affirmative action provisions in the state, notably in public contracting, public employment, and public education. A similar AAUW-opposed initiative was defeated in Colorado.

AAUW Signs On to Fight Pregnancy Discrimination Case: Coinciding with the anniversary of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, AAUW signed on to an amicus brief on a case involving Title VII and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act. The case of *AT&T v. Hulteen*, which is before the Supreme Court, will address whether AT&T violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by awarding women retirees smaller pensions because of leave taken during pregnancy before the PDA was passed in 1978. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act requires employers to treat pregnant women the same as other employees with similar abilities or physical limitations.

Need for Title IX Evident as Spending Gap Widens: A biennial gender equity report released Thursday by the National Collegiate Athletic Association showed that the proportion of spending on women's sports decreased over the last two years. According to Inside Higher Ed, the report found that colleges that play Division I sports allocated a smaller proportion of athletics spending to women's teams in 2005-06 than they did in 2003-04. While Division I programs spent an average of 37 percent of their expenditures on women's teams in 2003-04, they spent an average of only 34 percent on women's teams in 2005-06.

Funding For Abstinence-Only Education Is More Than Expected: The Government Accountability Office is questioning the way the Office of Health and Human Services has implemented the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Initiative, a \$150-million a year grant program. The report released by the GAO this past week shows that the HHS was unable to properly monitor the activities of the grant recipients before the money was released when the law took effect in February 2006. The report found that some of the programs focused primarily on abstinence-only education, despite the fact that it was deemed impermissible to do so. The GAO report also found that the HHS does not properly conduct site visits of grant recipients to check how grant money is being spent.

Senator Ted Stevens Convicted on Seven Felony Counts: Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AK) was convicted of lying on financial disclosure forms, the Washington Post reported. The senator was first indicted in July on accusations of hiding nearly \$250,000 worth of home renovations and other gifts from oil service company VECO Corp. and former CEO Bill Allen. Stevens was found guilty on all seven counts, with each count carrying a maximum sentence of 5 years each, though Stevens will likely serve much less time under federal sentencing guidelines.

The verdict came just 8 days before Election Day, in which Stevens is in a tight race with Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich (D). Stevens is the longest-serving Republican in the history of the Senate, and many political pundits have predicted that he could be re-elected due to his long-term popularity in Alaska. A convicted felon may be elected under Senate rules, but his colleagues have the right to expel him with 67 votes.

Gender Discrimination Suit Settled in Florida: The Florida Gulf Coast University settled two cases involving gender discrimination. The university paid out \$3.4 million to two female coaches and \$800,000 to a former female general counselor. The original suit was brought by two female coaches from the volleyball and golf teams, alleging retaliation and defamation after trying to shed light on the treatment of the women's athletic program. The former general counselor was terminated in 2007 after trying to resolve the claims by the women, prompting her to seek restitution. These cases seem to join a rash of other gender discrimination cases in university athletics, such as the case won by the former SDSU swim coach.

Students Carry More Debt than Just a Year Ago: The Project on Student Debt released its third annual report on average student debt at the public and private, national and local levels. On average, students carried 6 percent more debt at graduation in 2007 than in 2006, while the average starting salary for college graduates only increased by 3 percent during that time. Based on data reported by hundreds of four-year colleges across the country, the national average student loan debt for 2007 graduates was \$20,098.

Pharmacy Refuses to Fill Prescriptions Based on Beliefs: A new pharmacy in Chantilly, VA announced that it will not be selling contraceptives, even to women with a prescription, the Washington Post reported. Adding to the list of at least seven pharmacies across the country, the Divine Mercy Care Pharmacy cited religious reasons as the cause for why it will refuse to sell birth control pills, the morning after pill, and condoms to its customers. The Virginia store has incited action by some reproductive rights groups who fear that its opening could embolden other pharmacies to follow in its footsteps. Such groups have already called for a boycott and collected more than 1,000 signatures protesting the pharmacy.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Final FMLA Regulations to be Released: The U.S. Department of Labor announced today that they would release final regulations on the Family and Medical Leave Act on Monday, Nov. 17. The regulations, which were proposed in February of this year, seek to guide the implementation of FMLA for military families, a new and important benefit. But, they also have a number of clarifications that may make it more difficult for employees to use FMLA and that present concerns for medical privacy.

House Republicans Face Leadership Race: According to a report from this afternoon's CQ Today Online News, Representative Dan Lungren (R-CA) has launched a challenge against Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) for the House's top Republican post. Lungren has said that he does not believe Boehner should not be unopposed after the party's losses last week. Lungren's bid will also serve as a platform for the Republican Study Committee — the House Republican's conservative caucus — to pressure Boehner to adopt more of their positions. The race could also affect committee assignments. Since the election, the Republican Party has been divided, with conservatives arguing for a return to basic principles and moderates pushing for more independent positions. According to CQ Today, Boehner already leans towards the conservative side of the debate, and is the overwhelming favorite to win re-election on November 19.

Education Department Releases Regulations on No Child Left Behind: U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced final regulations intended to strengthen and clarify the No Child Left Behind Act, Inside Higher Ed reported. The regulations focus on improved accountability and transparency, uniform and disaggregated graduation rates and improved parental notification for Supplemental Education Services and public school choice. The secretary noted these new regulations build on what has been learned after six years of NCLB and will primarily focus on uniform graduation rates in all 50 states.

Education Department Releases Regulations on Higher Education Costs: The U.S. Department of Education published final regulations to carry out changes made to federal student loan programs by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act that became law last September. The bill, which represents the largest investment in higher education since the GI bill, increases scholarships and reduces loan costs for undergraduate students. According to Inside Higher Ed, while the rules address many issues, they focus heavily on carrying out the new income-based repayment program that was created by Congress to help students repay their loans.

from Cordy Galligan, Director of Corporate Relationships, AAUW

Exciting news! Beginning immediately, AAUW has a new partnership with Barnes & Noble's online sales site, **BN.com**. Customized for AAUW members, the www.bn.com/aauw website is our own AAUW bookstore. AAUW members automatically receive a 5 percent discount on purchases (10 percent periodically)—and that's on top of other available discounts that apply to the purchase. You will also find information on

- AAUW's ¡Adelante! book club reading list
- publications by AAUW members
- AAUW award-winning books

□ International Affairs Committee reading list

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