

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

FEBRUARY 2011

CALENDAR

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| February 2, Wednesday | Book Group 7:00 PM
"Half the Sky" by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn
Home of Kay Campbell |
| February 8, Tuesday | Branch Meeting 7:00 PM
Behind the Veil: Women in the Middle East
Speaker: Kay Campbell
Hingham Public Library |
| February 10, Thursday | Declutter Bugs 4:30 PM
Panera Bread, Derby Street Shoppes,
Hingham |
| February 10, Thursday | Adventures in Dining 6:30 PM
Bia Bistro, Cohasset
RSVP: Sondra Schmidt |
| February 17, Thursday | Writing Group 7:30 PM
Brewed Awakening, Hingham |
| February 24, Thursday | Girls Game Night 7:00 PM
Home of Chrisanne Gregoire |

BRANCH MEETING

An Unlikely Queen: the Life and Legacy of Saudi Arabia's Queen Effat is the subject of the Branch meeting on Tuesday, February 8, 2011, at 7:00 PM at the Hingham Public Library.

The life story of Effat al-Thunayan, the only woman in Saudi Arabia to ever have the title of Queen, has never been chronicled in a book, though it is a legend that is retold to every Saudi schoolgirl.

Born in Istanbul during World War I to an impoverished family, Effat met and married a prince who would become one of Saudi Arabia's most beloved kings. Effat was brilliant, beautiful, and courageous, but she's most well known for pioneering women's education in the 1950s and 60s, despite fierce resistance from religious conservatives. Her life demonstrates that difficult circumstances can build strong character. Her story also dissolves many stereotypes we have about women in the Muslim world.

Branch member Kay Hardy Campbell was an Arabic major in college. She lived in Saudi Arabia for more than seven years, and while there began writing about Saudi culture and society. She is a contributing writer to Saudi Aramco World Magazine, and has traveled back to the Kingdom several times on assignment.

Please feel free to invite any of your friends and colleagues who are interested in the issues of women in Islam and Saudi Arabia.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Welcome to New England. As I sit here writing this letter, it is snowing again. Hopefully you will be able to join us on February 8th at the Hingham Public Library to hear Kay Campbell, a member of our Branch, talk about Queen Effat of Saudi Arabia. I am sure it will be a great evening.

Speaking about a great meeting...I hope you did not miss our Supper and Book Discussion meeting in January. Lynne Griffin, author of Life Without Summer was a simply delightful speaker. She told us about the books she has written and also led our discussion. It was a wonderful evening. I also have to comment on our terrific cooks who brought the soups, salads, and deserts; they were great. Also a special thanks to Susan Mahan for organizing the event.

Again, circle February 8th on your calendar for our next meeting. See you then!

Sheila Doherty

PAMELA J. LINCOLN RECOGNITION AWARD

I am pleased to say that we raised \$64.00 towards the Lincoln Award at last month's supper/book discussion/bring and buy a book event

Be sure to let me know if you would like to nominate someone for this award. I will forward the application forms. Email me at beakelly42@yahoo.com (please note new address) or phone 781-925-3310. The deadline for submitting applications is March 1.

Beatrice Kelly

MEMBERSHIP

Please welcome and add to your membership list:

Nancy Yellin
550 Jerusalem Road, Cohasset MA
BU, BC M Ed. Special Education
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ADVENTURES IN DINING

The "Adventures in Dining" group will sample Bia Bistro in Cohasset on Thursday, February 10, 2011, at 6:30 PM. The Bia Bistro website can be viewed at www.biabistro.com/. Hope you can join us.

R.S.V.P to Sondra at beesnees@comcast.net or 781-383-8765

WRITING GROUP

The writing group will meet on Thursday 17th February at 7.30 at Brewed Awakening in Hingham.

PUBLIC POLICY

President Issues an Executive Order for Regulatory Review: In a Wall Street Journal op-ed. , President Barack Obama announced an executive order for a government-wide review of federal regulations. The president called on federal agencies to eliminate outdated and redundant regulations that "stifle job creation and make our economy less competitive." At the same time, the president also stressed the need for balance in this effort, recalling that a lack of government oversight "nearly led to the collapse of the financial markets and a full-scale depression."

Federal Funding for Community Colleges: the Department of Labor, in conjunction with the Department of Education, released guidelines for a grant program to provide \$2 billion over a four-year period to community colleges and institutions offering degrees of two years or less. The program, funded by the Student Aid Fiscal Responsibility Act,

marks a large increase in funding for two-year institutions, although it is far less than \$12 billion the failed American Graduation Initiative would have invested.

Military Commission Proposes Ending Ban on Women in Combat: the Military Leadership Diversity Commission proposed ending the ban on women in direct combat operations. To go into effect, the proposal requires approval from the Defense Department only; congressional approval is not necessary. While formal Pentagon policy currently bans women from participating in any ground combat operations, opponents of the ban point out that the lines between combat and non-combat situations have been blurred in recent years in Iraq and Afghanistan. The current policy also places artificial barriers to advancement for women because successful combat experience is the most direct route for career advancement and promotion in the military.

AAUW supports the mission of advancing equity throughout all levels of the workforce, including the U.S. military.

LGBT Hospital Visitation Rights Secured: new federal regulations went into effect ensuring hospital visitation rights for patients' partners or spouses. The new rules, proposed by President Obama in an April memorandum, give patients the ability to decide who can visit them and prohibit hospitals from denying visitors' entry based on gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, ethnicity, or disability.

President Announces New Economic Council: President Obama announced the creation of a new Council on Jobs and Competitiveness to replace the Economic Recovery Advisory Board. The council is charged with "finding new ways to encourage the private sector to hire and invest in American competitiveness," and will be chaired by Jeffrey R. Immelt, the chief executive officer of General Electric. This announcement can also be seen as an indicator that the focus of economic recovery is shifting from preventing financial crisis to increasing employment.

Responding to the Arizona Shooting: President Barack Obama spoke at a memorial event honoring the victims and survivors of the tragic shooting in Tucson that left 6 dead, several wounded, and Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ) in critical condition. While the long term political repercussions of the event have yet to be determined, the House released a revised floor schedule pushing back several controversial votes.

Please read President Obama's memorial speech in Tucson from the New York Times below:

http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/13/us/politics/13obama-text.html?_r=2&pagewanted=all

Census Data Details Pay Disparities between Women and Men: The Census Bureau recently released data from the American Community Survey (2005 to 2009) that details the pay disparities between men and women, and occupational gender segregation. Of 20 occupations where men's median annual salary is \$40,000 and more, men out-earned women in every single instance.

AAUW has long fought to end wage discrimination, and will continue to fight for paycheck fairness. Despite widespread backing from the American public, the strong leadership of AAUW, and the diligent efforts of our members and coalition partners – not to mention the support of 58 Senators – the Paycheck Fairness Act was defeated in November 2010 in a procedural vote. **Please do not hesitate to remind Senator Scott Brown that you did not appreciate his refusal to recognize women's right to equal pay by calling or writing to his office in Washington, D.C.**

World Economic Forum Recognizes Gender Imbalance among Business Leaders: In an attempt to address the disappointing gender balance at its annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, the **World Economic Forum** has introduced a gender quota. The quota requires companies in attendance to include at least one woman in every group of five senior executives. In a business climate where women account for less than 3 percent of chief executives at the world's 500 largest companies, the WEF's commitment to closing the gender gap in Davos sets a strong example for the global business community.

AAUW believes that access to high-wage, high-skill jobs should be a right for women and girls. It is in fields traditionally dominated by men that women workers can begin to close the persistent wage gap between women and men.

Decline in Abortion Rate Plateaus, Legislation Aims to Limit Title X Funds: According to a recent survey, after nearly two decades of decline, abortion rates nationwide have stagnated. The proportion of poor women seeking out

abortion services has increased over the past few years. While the survey did not collect data on reasons for the trend, some evidence suggests the economy may account for the leveling off.

In an attempt to limit women's access to abortion services, Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN) introduced a bill (H.R. 217) that, if passed, would restrict Title X grants from being awarded to any organization that provides abortion care with their own funds. Title X grants fund comprehensive family planning and preventative health services, but contain existing restrictions that forbid funding to go toward abortion services. The bill currently has 122 co-sponsors.

AAUW supports the right of every woman to safe, accessible, affordable, and comprehensive family planning and reproductive health services. This position stems from AAUW's 2009-2011 Public Policy Program, which advocates choice in the determination of one's reproductive life, increased access to health care, and family planning services including expansion of patients' rights.

State Department Changes Passport Applications to Reflect Diverse Family Structures: The State Department has introduced changes to passport applications for minors, giving applicants the option of listing "Parent 1 or Mother" and "Parent 2 or Father." According to State Department officials the announcement, "carries significant tangible and symbolic consequences for same-sex headed families." Though some have protested, the shift has been widely praised for recognizing the realities of modern family structures.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY UPDATES

House Votes to Repeal Health Care Reform: the House voted (245-189), predominantly along party lines, to completely repeal the historic health care reform legislation passed in the previous Congress. Republicans voted unanimously to repeal health care reform along with three Democrats: Dan Boren (D-OK), Mike McIntyre (D-NC), and Mike Ross (D-AK). Leaders on both sides of the aisle agree that the vote is a largely symbolic gesture as the both Democratic majority in the Senate and President Obama have affirmed their intent to block the House effort to repeal health care reform.

AAUW believes that everyone is entitled to health care that is high-quality, affordable, and easily accessible. Although the current health care reform is not perfect, many of the reforms included in the new laws will improve the collective health of the American people.

Changes on the Hill, at the White House: Senators Kent Conrad (D-ND) and Joseph Lieberman (I-CT) announced they would not seek reelection in 2012. Senator Conrad announced that after 24 years in the Senate he will not seek reelection. Senator Lieberman, the 2000 Democratic Vice Presidential nominee who later lost his party's 2006 nomination for Senate after aligning himself with the Bush administration, also announced his plans to retire.

Senator Bailey Hutchison Will Not Seek Reelection in 2012: Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX) recently announced that she does not intend to run for re-election in 2012. The three-term Republican was the first woman to represent Texas in the Senate, and her announcement comes amidst speculation over the consequences of her decision on the 2012 Senate race. Former Texas Secretary of State Roger Williams (R) has already filed paperwork to pursue the seat and Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst (R) is also expected to run. No Democrats have yet announced their interest in running for the seat.

Elect Her, AAUW's joint initiative with Running Start, acknowledges the necessity to build the pipeline of women running for office to diminish the long-standing political leadership gender gap. Learn more by reading the Elect Her FAQ.

State of the Union Scheduled for January 25: Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) officially invited President Obama to deliver the 2011 State of the Union address, scheduled for January 25. While the President's annual visit to Congress to deliver the State of the Union address has become a tradition, invitation by the Speaker is still required and serves as a reminder of the separation of powers.

Redistricting to Shuffle Congressional Representation: As a result of the recent census data released, a number of states are set to gain or lose congressional seats in the upcoming decennial congressional redistricting. Texas, Florida, Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina, Utah and Washington will all see additional representatives in the next Congress, while New York, Ohio, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania will lose seats. The changes will likely place many recently elected representatives' seats at risk, and a number of long-term incumbents against one another.

Amendment Tally for the 111th Congress: A small, but powerful, minority of conservative senators led the charge in the 111th Congress to procedurally block legislation. The small corps of senators often organized filibuster efforts in response to what they claimed was Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's (D-NV) unprecedented resistance to amendments. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) argues that Senator Reid blocked bill changes by filing the amendment tree a record 43 times. A McConnell spokesperson has indicated the push for amendments will continue in the 112th Congress.