

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 JANUARY 2009

CALENDAR

January 6th, Tuesday	Girls Game Night 7 PM Home of Sandy Carle
January 8th, Thursday	DeClutter Bugs 4:30 PM Panera Bread, Derby shops, Hingham
January 8th, Thursday	Writers Group 7:30 PM Brewed Awakenings, Hingham
January 13th, Tuesday	Branch Meeting 6:30 PM Book Discussion/Supper Allerton House, Hingham <i>The Glass Castle</i> by Jennette Walls
January 19th, Monday	Martin Luther King Breakfast RSVP Nancy Moore (978-353-5426)
January 22nd, Thursday	Adventures in Dining 6:30 PM Location to be announced
January 27th, Tuesday	Board Meeting 7:00 PM Home of Pat Laidler
February 3, Tuesday	Book Group 7:00 PM Home of Carol Sullivan-Hanley
February 10th, Tuesday	Branch Meeting 7:00 PM RA RA with Laura Hingham Public Library
February 19th, Thursday	Writers Group 7:30 PM Brewed Awakenings, Hingham

BRANCH MEETING

For our January branch meeting we will once again have a soup and salad dinner followed by a book discussion. It will be held on **Tuesday, January 13, 2009**, at the Allerton House in Hingham and begin at 6:30 p.m.

Come and share your culinary talents and your intellectual curiosity. Treat us to your favorite soup or salad and then be ready to discuss the book *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls. The book discussion will be lead by Deanne Noiseux. You will need to bring your own place setting (soup bowl, plate, and cutlery). In addition, please bring a book for the book sale.

Please let us know if you will be attending and if you'll be bringing soup, salad, or dessert. Call or email Sandy Carle at scarle12@aol.com or 781-340-6281 by January 9th. Hope to see you on January 13th!

Lynn Howard and Sandy Carle, Social Co-Chairs

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Happy New Year. I hope you all had a safe and happy holiday season. In December we met for brunch in Scituate and had a lovely time. Thanks to Patricia McKay we had our annual popper event. Lynn and Sandy surprised us with Scratch tickets... fun was had by all. Thank you to Lynn and Sandy for arranging the brunch.

Our January meeting will be our soup and salad/book discussion meeting. We are reading *The Glass Castle*, a unique and interesting book. I hope everyone will join us on Tuesday, January 13th. Please RSVP to Sandy Carle. See you then.

Congratulations to Elaine Cadigan on the birth on her grandson this past summer. Also, condolences are extended to Fran Schlesinger on the passing of her mother. Sheila Doherty

BOOK GROUP

At the February meeting, we'll be discussing *Saving Fish from Drowning* by Amy Tan. This humorous novel departs from Tan's usual theme of mothers and daughters and explores the fun and fanciful adventures of a group of San Francisco tourists in Myanmar over Christmas. Please join us on Tuesday, February 3, 2009, at 7 PM at the home of Carol Sullivan-Hanley. Pat Laidler

PAMELA J. LINCOLN RECOGNITION AWARD

At our next branch meeting on January 13, we will be holding a Book Sale to raise funds for the Pamela J Lincoln Recognition Award. . BRING A BOOK AND BUY TWO. Share your reading pleasure with others and help raise some funds for a worthy cause.

Each year the Pamela J Lincoln Recognition Award is given to a student with an outstanding record in academics, school activities and community service. Any branch member may sponsor a candidate for this award. The application form can be obtained from Patricia McKay. The deadline for the completed application is March 1.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Good news! If you have a friend who is interested in joining AAUW, now is the time to encourage her to come to a meeting. New members who join our branch at a regularly scheduled AAUW event between January 1 and March 15 can enter at a very reduced rate. The total fee for National, State and local dues will be \$26.50 if the new member joins between those dates. What a bargain! Bring a friend or two to a meeting.

We are sad to report the death of Fran Schlesinger's mother. Our condolences go out to Fran and her family. We send out congratulations to Elaine Cadogan on the birth of her handsome grandson, Benjamin Owen.

LAF REPORT



As you know, in May the Educational Foundation board directed Linda Hallman to issue a briefing about the LAF transition in order to generate discussion and to help define the new criteria for LAF case selection. While in the past we had some general guidance regarding LAF eligibility, there were actually no specific criteria, which made it difficult to have general clarity about what kinds of cases would be eligible for selection and what information was needed for decision making. Over the last several months, AAUW has received literally hundreds of comments, suggestions, and recommendations regarding the plans for the expanded LAF. These helpful comments have provided the basis for the revised LAF briefing, the LAF Case Support Criteria & Review Process, and the new forms AAUW will use in the case screening and decision-making process.

Previously, when LAF case support applications were posted on the AAUW website, large numbers of applications were received for cases that were entirely unsuitable for LAF support. It took a great deal of staff time to read and respond to such requests. With broad dissemination of the new recommendation process, it is anticipated that we will have a better way to prescreen cases. You are all encouraged to contact Holly Kearl at kearlh@aauw.org if you are aware of a case that should be considered by LAF, including cases currently supported by LAF, and she will send you the recommendation form. Following the recommendation process, litigants (and/or their lawyers) in cases that appear to merit consideration will be contacted and given a data collection form that will be used by the Educational Foundation Program Committee in their assessment of the case. The process will proceed as described in the LAF Case Support Criteria & Review Process document. You may access more information on the national website:

LAF Briefing (May 16, 2008) -

http://www.aauw.org/member_center/briefings/briefingLAF_051608.cfm

Revised LAF Briefing (December 4, 2008) -

http://www.aauw.org/member_center/briefings/LAF_120408.cfm

LAF Case Support Criteria & Review Process -

http://www.aauw.org/member_center/briefings/upload/NewLAFCaseSupport.doc

As always, the Educational Foundation board and the LAF staff welcome your comments and hope that you will continue to assist them as they work to identify and support strategic cases that advance our fight against gender-based discrimination.
Hollie Bagley, LAF Liaison

PUBLIC POLICY

Supreme Court Hears Pregnancy Discrimination Case: The US Supreme Court heard a case Wednesday involving Title VII and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act. The case of *AT&T v. Hulteen* addresses 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.

Celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 60th anniversary of one of the great international efforts to eradicate human injustices for good, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. UDHR is the foundation for all international human rights law and is committed to protecting “inherent human dignity, non-discrimination, equality, fairness and universality.” The Document was introduced in 1948 by President and Chair of the Commission on Human Rights, Eleanor Roosevelt, and continues to be an inspiration for all nations. The Declaration is continuously relevant, as people fight injustices on the national and international level everyday.

Where are the New Jobs for Women?: President-elect Barack Obama has promised to create 2.5 million new jobs through infrastructure projects in a new stimulus package. But many critics have spoken out, as Linda Hirshman did in an op-ed in the New York Times, wondering where the jobs for women are going to come from. Construction workers, who will see the biggest jump from infrastructure projects, are only nine percent women. Engineers will also see a rise in employment opportunities; however, women make up only 12 percent of this field. Hirshman suggests that Obama should push the stimulus towards human capital projects. Investing in schools, libraries, urban youth programs, and social services would create millions of new jobs for women, where they make up large portions of the demographics.

Unionization Increases Wages and Benefits of Women: The Center on Economic and Policy Research recently published a study on the effect unions have on the income and benefits of female union members. Unions and the Upward Mobility for Women Workers found that women who are members of unions make 11.2 percent more than those women who are not members of unions. Female union members are 19 percent more likely to have employer based health insurance benefits and a 26 percent more likely to have an employer based pension plan than women not in unions. This study also shows that women in low-wage occupations benefited from being in a union because union members earn 14 percent more than non-union members, and these workers also were 26 percent more likely than non-unionized members to have employer based health insurance. The study predicted that the majority of union members would be women by 2020.

Supreme Court Hears Case on Sexual Harassment: The US Supreme Court heard a case this Tuesday involving sexual harassment against a female kindergarten student in Massachusetts. *Fitzgerald v. Barnstable School Committee* started as a lawsuit brought by the parents of a five year old girl who had been inappropriately treated by a third-grade boy on her school bus. The school and local police investigated the story but could not find sufficient evidence to bring criminal charges. The parents sued under both Title IX and a Civil War-era law that was designed to enforce the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause, hoping for a favorable turnout by seeking protection under both provisions. The Fitzgeralds originally lost their case in the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals; a decision by the Supreme Court is expected by late spring.

Refusal to Hire Women Costs California Grower: A central California grower agreed to pay \$1.68 million to settle a federal lawsuit for refusing to hire women, according to the Central Valley Business Times. After the lawsuit was filed in 2006 by six female job applicants, an investigation by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission found the company had not hired any women between 1998 and 2002, despite having jobs available.

What Women Want: The YWCA USA, whose mission is to "eliminate racism and empower women," has released the findings of its new study, "What Women Want: A National Survey of Priorities and Concerns." The study, which surveyed women ages 18 to 70, found that Generation Y women (aged 18-29) are more concerned about racism and have higher expectations for the new administration. The survey also reported that more than 90 percent of all women say that Congress and the new administration should make solving the financial crisis a top priority, 80 percent of women worry about being able to retire with financial security, and 70 percent of women worry about having access to quality, affordable health care in the future.

College (Un) Affordability: The New York Times recently announced that the US Department of Education would buy up to \$6.5 billion in federally-backed student loans. This decision has been made to insure that student loans remain available amid a growing credit crisis. The Department of Education's announcement comes as the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education released its annual report, as reported by the New York Times, stating that the cost of college increased 439 percent from 1987 to 2007, while median family income rose only 147 percent during that same time. As a result of such increases the amount of student loans taken out has doubled in the past decade. Mr. Callan, president of the center, stated that the US has to focus on college affordability because the US is one of only a few countries where workers aged 25 to 34 are less educated than older workers. With increases in college tuition at institutions for next year, the ability to afford an education will become even more difficult for lower income students.

University Considers Cutting Enrollment Due to Budget Constraints: The L.A. Times recently reported that the California State University system could cut enrollment by 10,000 applicants due to the massive budget deficit being experienced by the California state government. CSU is apparently looking at imposing stricter application requirements and earlier deadlines as a means of cutting enrollment. Those that are most likely to be affected by this change are low- and middle-income students of color, who are more often unsure about financial aid and the application process. Other colleges, including the University of California, are also looking at limiting enrollment or cutting class offerings.

Welfare Reform Affect's Women's College Enrollment: A new study released by the National Bureau of Economic Research found that increased work requirements under the 1996 federal welfare reform law significantly lowered the rate of college attendance for single mothers. According to Inside Higher Ed, the study found that the rate of college attendance decreased by 20 to 25 percent for low income unmarried mothers age 24 to 49 with a high school diploma. While rules governing the law vary from state to state, all states significantly limit the amount of time spent in a classroom or training that can be counted toward the work requirement. With these increased restrictions and a heavier work schedule, researchers found that these women were less likely to enroll in college because they have to focus on providing for the immediate needs of themselves and their families.

Title IX May Face Criticism in Upcoming Months: As the economy continues its tumultuous path, a rash of athletic cuts in schools across the country may be on the horizon. NCAA's president, Myles Brand, said this week he fears that this could cause schools, athletes, and fans to blame Title IX for losing their favorite team. Brand stated that he is trying to pre-empt any blame put on Title IX by requesting schools cite the economy as the reason for any proposed cuts, saying "Any cuts at this point in sports are certainly going to be tied to financial pressures." Jim McCarthy of the College Sports Council, an advocacy group for men's sports, called this "utterly disgraceful", saying "He knows perfectly well Title IX is going to force schools to target men's sports first. He is asking schools to join him in a whitewash."

Wall Street Journal Announces "50 Women to Watch" List: The Wall Street Journal is currently featuring its "Women to Watch" series, highlighting women who are leading major corporations throughout the world. The article states that women hold only about 15 percent of corporate-officer positions in Fortune 500 companies, which is down 1 percent since 2005. While women have made great strides recently in the political realm, as both elected officials and cabinet members, the "glass ceiling" seems to remain as thick as ever on Wall Street. However, there are some bright spots for corporate women. The Wall Street Journal also pointed out that as more and more women become in charge of powerful board committees, we could see more women being appointed to key positions.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

AAUW Leads Efforts to Support Women Nominees for Presidential Appointments: President-elect Obama continued to form his cabinet this week, naming two additional nominees. Earlier he gave the nod to retired Army General Erik Shinseki for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs position, and he officially named former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) as his nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services. In addition, Daschle would also be director of a new White House Office of Health Reform where he will focus on expanding coverage and reining in costs. The Senate Judiciary Committee scheduled a hearing on the nomination of Eric Holder to be Attorney General for January 8, 2009.

Changes on the Hill: FBI agents arrested Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich (D) on federal corruption charges related in part to the selection of President-elect Obama's successor in the Senate. According to Politico, all 50 Democratic senators joined in signing a letter from Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid's (D-NV) office urging Blagojevich to resign and to refrain from using his current authority to appoint someone to fill that seat. The Illinois state legislature is set to meet on Monday to discuss removing the governor's authority to fill the seat, which will likely mean setting a special election for the coveted spot.

Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA): has chosen to step down from the Senate Judiciary Committee, as reported by CQ. Kennedy cited his desire to focus on major health care reform legislation, a passion the senator is well-known for. As Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, the senator will likely see a very full schedule in the upcoming session. Kennedy, who is battling brain cancer, referred to the possibility of sweeping health care reform in the next year as “the opportunity of a lifetime, and I intend to make the most of it.”

The US Senate race in Minnesota drags on. According to CQ, the state’s election canvassing board Friday recommended that each of the state’s 87 counties review absentee ballots initially rejected as invalid, and submit amended vote counts that include any ballots found to be wrongly rejected. However, the board has no authority to force the counties to do so. The Minneapolis Star Tribune shows Senator Norm Coleman (R) with a 192-vote lead, while the campaign of Al Franken (D) says its own internal count shows Franken in the lead by four votes.

Changes on the Hill: In a blow to Senate Democrats’ hope of reaching a filibuster-proof majority, Senator Saxby Chambliss (R) bested challenger Jim Martin (D) in the runoff election to keep his Senate seat. While Chambliss received a plurality of the vote on November 4, he fell just short of the 50 percent required by Georgia law to be declared the winner. In Minnesota, the recount continues in the Senate race between incumbent Norm Coleman (R) and challenger Al Franken (D).

Florida Republican Senator Mel Martinez announced that he will not be seeking reelection in 2010, citing his desire to spend more time with his family and friends. Rumors are already circulating of a potential run by former Florida governor Jeb Bush for the seat.

Cabinet Watch: President-elect Obama made key announcements regarding his nominees and appointees for his administration. Among his choices are Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) for Secretary of State; Governor Janet Napolitano (D-AZ) for Secretary of Homeland Security; Governor Bill Richardson (D-NM) for Secretary of Commerce; Eric Holder for Attorney General; Susan Rice for U.N. Ambassador; and Tim Geithner, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, for Treasury Secretary.

Unemployment Benefits Extended: Second Lame Duck Session a Possibility

President Bush signed into law an extension of unemployment compensation. The legislation (H.R. 6867) cleared the House (368-28) on October 3 and cleared the Senate (voice vote, following an 89-6 vote to move forward with the legislation). According to CQ, the passage of these extensions gives an extra seven weeks of unemployment insurance to those whose benefits have run out and an additional 13 weeks to those in states with unemployment rates higher than 6 percent. This comes as new data shows that unemployment levels are at their highest in 16 years.

Final FMLA Regulations Released: The U.S. Department of Labor released final regulations on the Family and Medical Leave Act. While the new regulations contain a few good provisions for military families, they make it harder for most workers to take FMLA leave, and they also present a concern for workers’ medical privacy. AAUW submitted comments during the rulemaking process, expressing concern with a number of provisions in the proposed regulations that were retained in the final rule.

Senators Stand Up Against HHS Regulations: Senators Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and Patty Murray (D-WA) introduced legislation to block implementation of regulations that would severely limit women's access to reproductive health and family planning services. The regulations, proposed by the Department of Health and Human Services, are expected to be finalized. In introducing the Protecting Patients and Health Care Act, Senator Clinton said, “This HHS rule will threaten patients’ rights, stand in the way of health care professionals, and restrict access to critical health care services for those who need them most.”