

# 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 2011

### CALENDAR

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|-----------------------|---|
| January 5, Wednesday  | Adventures in Dining 6:30 PM<br>Reggio's, Rt 53, Norwell<br>RSVP: Sondra Schmidt  |
| January 6, Thursday   | Girls Game Night 7:00 PM<br>Home of Chrisanne Gregoire  |
| January 11, Tuesday   | Casual Supper/Book Discussion 6:30 PM<br>"Life Without Summer"<br>Allerton House, Condito Rd., Hingham<br>RSVP: Susan Mahan |
| January 20, Thursday  | Writing Group 7:30 PM<br>Brewed Awakenings, Hingham   |
| January 25, Tuesday   | Board Meeting 7:00 PM<br>Finance Meeting 6:45 PM<br>Home of Ginny Giordano  |
| February 10, Thursday | DeClutter Bugs 4:30 PM<br>Panera's, Derby Street Shoppes, Hingham<br>All are welcome!                                       |

### Casual Winter Supper and Book Discussion

The annual soup & salad supper will take place on January 11, 2011 and will again be held at the Allerton House in Hingham, at 6:30 pm. A discussion of the book Life Without Summer by Lynne Griffin will follow. We need volunteers to bring breads, salads and desserts. Please RSVP your attendance and what food you can bring to Social Committee member Susan Mahan at [poetesssusan1@verizon.net](mailto:poetesssusan1@verizon.net) or 781-335-6912. Don't forget to bring your own place setting! I hope to see you!

Susan Mahan, Social Committee

**Directions to Allerton House:** Allerton House  
15 Condito Road  
Hingham, MA 02043

From Route 3 South:

Take Route 3 South to Exit 14 (Route 228). At the end of the ramp, turn left and follow Route 228 approximately 4 miles to a red blinking light. Continue straight through the light and follow Central Street through yellow blinking light in Hingham Square. Directly after the yellow blinking light, turn left onto North Street, and then right at the Lincoln Statue onto Lincoln Street. Follow Lincoln Street to intersection of Route 3A and bear right onto Downer Avenue. Take the first left onto Conditto Road. Allerton House at Harbor Park is directly behind Harbor House Rehabilitation and Nursing Center.

From Route 3 North:

Take Route 3 North to Exit 14 (Route 228). At the end of the ramp, turn right. Proceed on Route 228 as instructed above.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Happy New Year to all. I hope you had a nice holiday season. Our New Year's Resolution for the Hingham Area Branch should be to promote our mission statement of advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research. We could do this by attending the National Convention that is being held in Washington, DC this June. It will be a great opportunity for everyone to be heard "Up on the Hill". Please don't miss this chance to join us in this adventure.

Our next Branch Meeting will be the supper and book discussion on January 11th. There will be a book sale to benefit our local scholarship that evening. Please bring books to donate and plan on buying a few new ones to read this winter. As our membership year is half over, I am looking for someone to fill the President's position in the coming year. I have been your President for the past four years and our by-laws require that we elect a new person to the position. I also need someone to head the Nominating Committee which is vacant at this time. If you are interested in either position, please let me know. Again "Happy New Year"

Sheila Doherty

## **MEMBERSHIP**

January Special ! Bring a friend to the Soup and Salad meeting on January 11 and if they join it is only \$25.25 because of the special rate and the half year dues. This meeting is always interesting and of course yummy. We have some great soup connoisseurs. See you in 2011.

Deanne Noiseux, Membership

## **PUBLIC POLICY**

**Coast Guard Academy Hires First Woman Superintendent:** Rear Adm. Sandra Stosz has been named the first female superintendent of the Connecticut-based Coast Guard Academy, and is the first woman to lead any U.S. military service academy. Stosz, a 1982 graduate of the academy with 12 years of experience at sea, currently serves as the Coast Guard's director of reserve and leadership. Of note, the Coast Guard Academy was the first of the five U.S. service academies to accept women.

**President Signs Healthy Kids Act:** President Barack Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, championed by First Lady Michelle Obama. The bill to provide all children with healthy food in schools received bipartisan support from public officials, health experts, and business and labor leaders.

## **Palin Disses Michelle Obama over ‘dessert’**

<http://politicalticker.blogs.cnn.com/2010/12/20/palin-disses-michelle-obama/>

**Court Rules that Title IX Complaint Against UC Davis Officials May Proceed:** A federal judge ruled that four top officials at the University of California at Davis are not entitled to immunity in an ongoing Title IX lawsuit against the school. The suit, brought seven years ago by former women wrestlers, alleges that the four UC Davis officials were “deliberately indifferent” to the women’s constitutional right to nondiscrimination in athletics in a government-funded educational program. The judge dismissed the officials’ claim that equal opportunity in athletics is not clearly defined as a constitutional right, and the case will proceed with a jury deciding if the officials were indeed “deliberately indifferent.”

The case, *Mansourian, et al. v. Regents of the University of California, et al.*, is a longtime Legal Advocacy Fund supported case.

**Campus Sexual Assault Settlements Used as Guideposts:** According to the U.S. Department of Education, campus sexual assault settlements from Eastern Michigan University and Notre Dame College will be used to model how other colleges and universities can deal with allegations of sexual assault on campus. Earlier this month, the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights revealed its “voluntary resolution agreements” with EMU and Notre Dame in an effort to change the culture on college campuses that often perpetuates sexual assaults.

**Disparities in Women-Owned Business Growth, Revenues:** The latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2007 Survey of Business Owners show that the growth of women-owned businesses outpaced those owned by men. Companies owned solely by women made up more than 28 percent of all U.S. businesses and accounted for \$1.2 trillion in transactions. However, in the same time period, male-owned businesses generated significantly more revenue.

**House Fails to Pass Bill to End Child Marriage:** the House failed to pass the International Protecting Girls by Preventing Child Marriage Act (H.R. 2103) aimed at preventing or reducing the practice of child marriage internationally. Already passed by unanimous consent in the Senate, the bill was expected to be signed into law by the president in an effort to identify child marriage as a human rights violation, direct the administration to create an action plan to reduce child marriage, and integrate child marriage prevention into existing United States development efforts.

**Congress Approves Updated GI Bill:** Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), chair of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, unveiled a new report on a continuing investigation of federal investment in the for-profit education industry. The report affirms that the expansion of military benefits to for-profit schools has made service members “highly attractive prospects” to such institutions.

**IVAWA Voted Out of Committee:** The Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed bipartisan legislation (11-8) to establish a five-year strategy for identifying and reducing violence against women and girls worldwide. Among other things, the International Violence Against Women Act (S. 2982) will mandate coordination among government agencies (including the State Department and USAID) and provide a programmatic component to respond to violence against women in humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, and conflict settings.

**Workplace Discrimination Cases in the News:** the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear *Wal-Mart Stores v. Dukes*, the largest class-action discrimination suit in U.S. history. The plaintiffs, led by Betty Dukes, an employee at a California Wal-Mart, allege that the chain engaged in widespread pay and promotion discrimination against women employees nationwide. Wal-Mart, which petitioned the Supreme Court to hear the case, claims the plaintiffs - of whom there may be as many as 1.5 million - hold at least 170 different job classifications in 3,400 stores, and “cannot...have enough in common to make class-action treatment appropriate.” According to some, the case appears already to have forced Wal-Mart to change its pay and

promotion policies with respect to women; however, its' outcome will leave a significant mark on the future strength of pay equity laws and legal protections.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has received a record 100,000 charges of employment discrimination in 2010. The EEOC attributes the surge, in part, to expanded statutory authorities granted by the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the increased accessibility of the office, and the Obama administration's focus on educating workers about workplace discrimination.

**New Report on Affordable Care Act:** A new report on health care costs finds that the Affordable Care Act (H.R. 3590), passed by Congress earlier this year, will help drive down premiums and save money for Americans. The report found that in recent years, premiums for businesses, regardless of size, increased 41 percent and per-person deductibles rose 77 percent. Based on the research, under ACA, if premium growth slowed to one point below the national growth rate, families' coverage would drop an average of \$995 by 2015.

**Study Looks at Suicide Rates of Female Veterans:** A new study compared suicide rates of female veterans to female civilians and found that the veterans were significantly more likely to commit suicide, particularly among 18-24 year-olds. Annually, an estimated 20 percent of the 32,000 suicides committed in the U.S. are attributed to veterans. Beyond dealing with the effects of post-traumatic stress, female veterans often report struggling with issues of sexual assault and rape during their deployment. As more women are fighting on the frontlines in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is an increased effort to pay more attention to female veterans.

**Changing Population Statistics, Changing Attitudes:** the government released new statistics, based on birth, death and immigration records, estimating the U.S. population grew to somewhere between 306 and 313 million in the last ten years. While the estimates are separate from the official 2010 census, demographers say the range of numbers offers an idea of the official results that will be used to reapportion House seats.

**NYC Considering Regulation of Anti-Choice Crisis Pregnancy Centers :** A hearing was recently held in New York City to discuss a proposed law to regulate crisis pregnancy centers in the city. Among other things, the law would require CPCs to clearly display disclaimers explaining they do not provide abortions, contraception, or licensed medical professionals on staff. The centers, run predominantly by religious organizations, often intentionally place themselves in close proximity to comprehensive reproductive health facilities (in one case, on the same floor of the same building), and provide clients with only extreme anti-choice rhetoric. Much of the debate surrounding the proposed law focuses on issues of free speech, and whether or not the new requirements would be unfairly limit CPC proponents' rights.

**Women's Rights (to Proximity) Not Lost on Speaker-Elect::** Incoming House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) is planning to turn the Parliamentarian's office into a restroom for female members of Congress, who currently must walk across Statuary Hall to use the facilities. Only 72 women will serve in the House in the 112th Congress, the smallest number of female members in 30 years. Despite the high number of visible women candidates in the 2010 elections, the number of women in elected office has declined.

**Senate Judiciary Committee Moves on Nominations:** the Senate Judiciary Committee moved on six of the 38 pending judicial nominations. While this is certainly a step in the right direction, 110 vacancies on the federal courts remain nationwide. In a speech last week on the Senate floor, Senate Judiciary Committee chair Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) named the federal courts in jeopardy due to the delays of judicial nominees, noting that vacancies have risen more than 100 percent since 2009 due to partisan obstruction.

**Pay Discrimination Litigation Progresses:** in a 5-1 decision, the New Jersey Supreme Court decision granted a right to proceed to a pay discrimination case brought by three female Seton Hall University faculty members. The court agreed that every discriminatory paycheck counts as an act of discrimination. However, the women will be able to sue only for discrimination they experienced during the past two years, according to the New Jersey statute of limitations for such claims.

In another case, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission filed suit against the Port Authority of NY and NJ in September for age and sex discrimination, accusing the agency of paying female non-supervisory attorneys less than males for similar work and firing women because of their age. The Port Authority asserts the dismissals were part of overall reductions and has thus far refused pre-litigation settlement offers.

**Women Making Strides in Science Higher Education:** A new report finds that the slight increase in research doctorates awarded by U.S. universities may be attributed to women. As more women are entering STEM education programs, many professors are doing what they can to help them succeed. A recent experiment at the University of Colorado found that a simple values affirmation writing exercise drastically closed the gap between male and female performance in physics. The assignment was found to increase women's sense of self-worth and integrity and reduced women's stress regarding negative stereotypes of women in science.

**Debt Commission Report Released, AAUW Calls for Social Security Protection:** Members of the bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform met to debate the adoption of recommendations including deep cuts to Social Security. President Barack Obama released a statement thanking the members of the commission and recognizing the difficult choices that are ahead for the country. The bipartisan commission failed to reach consensus on the proposal to bring down the massive federal debt. However, there were more members in favor than expected, given that the vote fell short by only three votes.

**2009 Hate Crime Statistics Released:** the FBI released the latest statistics on hate crimes committed last year, including comparisons to earlier years. Reported hate crimes were at their lowest level in 15 years, and offenses based on race, national origin, religion, and sexual orientation have all declined since 2008. Of note, 2009 saw record participation by police agencies in the data collection process.

**Single-Sex Education Based on Stereotypes:** New research debunks the myth that girls and boys learn differently due to differences in their brains and should thus be educated in sex-separated classes. Dr. Cordelia Fine, author of the new book Delusions of Gender, calls this theory "neurosexism," and says there is very little evidence supporting the idea that male brains are more adept at logic and female brains at understanding people. AAUW believes single-sex education without proper attention to civil rights protections can reinforce problematic gender stereotypes, increase discrimination, and restrict the educational opportunities open to both girls and boys. Even where programs are established for both boys and girls separately, they have tended to be distinctly unequal, with fewer resources allocated for girls programs.