



**BEDFORD-LEXINGTON AREA BRANCH
NOVEMBER 2012**

Breaking Through Barriers for Women and Girls

**PANEL DISCUSSING:
“POST-MORTEM ON THE 2012 ELECTIONS”
BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY
7:00 PM, NOVEMBER 7, 2012**

The day after the 2012 presidential and state elections, the branch is sponsoring an exploration of the national, international, and local implications of election outcomes. Our conversation will be initiated by a panel of knowledgeable political commentators: Martin Kilson, Professor of Government *Emeritus* at Harvard University; Janet Vaillant, member of the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University; and Lois Pulliam, Bedford-Lexington Area Branch AAUW public policy co-chair. Professor Kilson, whose analyses of the 2008 presidential election appeared on *BlackCommentator.com* and in Charles Henry’s *The Obama Phenomenon: Towards a Multiracial Democracy*, will focus on the presidential election and what its outcome portends for the nation. Dr. Vaillant will comment on the connections between internal politics and foreign policy, emphasizing expected continuities and changes based on the election outcome. Ms. Pulliam will explore the potential impact of the national and state elections on AAUW’s key public policy issues, including pay equity and reproductive choice. After the panelists’ presentations, branch members and guests will have an opportunity to join the discussion.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

GLAD NEWS: We welcome new member Nancy Hannaford Greer of Belmont. She is a Harvard (Radcliffe) grad and is on the Board of Directors for the Salvation Army.

SAD NEWS: Member Shirley Donnelly of Lexington passed away on October 4 after a long illness. Services will be during the week of October 16.

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CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

The October 3rd meeting opened with a welcome by co-President, Alice Wadden, and then Ruth Ladd introduced the speaker, Megan Admudson, Executive Director of NARAL Pro Choice Massachusetts. Megan went into detail about the advocacy of Pro-Choice America. She mentioned a list of bills that are before the Massachusetts State House. Planned Parenthood is connected with NARAL ProChoice America but the focus is on the clinics for health information. She stressed the importance of these elections, especially in a Presidential Election year. In parts of the United States, the rights of women are being lost. So we must vote based on wise decisions after real thought.

NARAL has developed the *Pro-Choice Voter's Guide*. To get a copy, contact Megan Admudson at Megan@ProChoiceMass.org or get it on their website: ProChoiceMass.org

Megan urged AAUW members to write/call friends and relatives about the importance of women's health issues, including Pro-Choice. Apathy can lead to loss of rights!

Following the program, Treasurer, Robin DeMott, presented the 2012-2013 budget which was approved unanimously.

** Special mention of the wonderful new sound system we purchased in the spring. It is very portable and the microphone uses batteries so no wires to drag around.

Joan Zinderman and Alice Wadden

EARLY WARNING...er, REMINDER!

Holiday Pot Luck Dinner and Educational Foundation Program to be held on Tuesday, December 4 at 6 pm at the Bedford Town Center

The Volunteer Sign Up Sheet is almost full. I need a couple more names to add to the list. You can help to set up and decorate, accept dishes with donated food, collect money, and/or clean up.

The sign up sheet for food (appetizer, salad, or vegetable plus \$5 or main course for 8 or more) or money donations in lieu of food (\$20) will be circulated during the November meeting or you may call Mary Brzezinski and she will gladly sign you up.

Some fine items have been already donated for the raffle table, but we need more to fill the "Morning Coffee" and "Afternoon Tea" baskets that will be included in the raffle. Gift certificates, books such as those recommended by AAUW's iAdelante!, community book of the year, books by local authors (any branch members who are authors?), art or craft work, are some of the suggestions. For more ideas, please check the October Newsletter. I will gratefully collect these items at the November meeting.

I am excited to report that our speaker for the evening will be Brenda Ware, and International Fellow at MIT, whose field of study is Transportation Engineering. Her resume is most interesting and she listed many varying experiences in her field. More about her in the December Newsletter. My thanks to Karen Bragaw and Janet Khattab for helping find the speaker.

If you have questions or need more information please be in touch with Mary Brzezinski at 781.862.5788 or Lila Packer at 508.315.3165 or by email. We are in the Yearbook.

Lila Packer, EF Chair

GENDER BIAS BY SCIENCE FACULTY??

Article review by Ruth Ladd

Research by five Yale professors, and edited by a Princeton professor, shows that, yes, both male and female science professors are biased against female students! This is written up in a new article approved on August 21, 2012 by the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (<http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2012/09/14/1211286109>). The article is entitled, *Science faculty's subtle gender biases favor male students*.

The article reports that there are more women receiving science degrees than in the past but the percentage of female Ph.D.s and junior faculty is much lower than would be expected based on the number of graduates. Much research has been done looking at life choices, self-chosen or not, by women which probably does play a role in the numbers but there has been an assumption that there is no discrimination from biological and physical science faculty once a woman is in the university system. These authors decided to see if this assumption is accurate.

A double-blind study was conducted which gave resumes from male and female students for a laboratory manager position to 127 biology, chemistry, and physics faculty from public and private universities with a focus on research. The faculty thought this was a real situation where their decision and recommendations would influence hiring and benefits such as salary and that they would be providing any mentoring offered. The resumes were identical but half used John and half Jennifer. Faculty rated "John" as significantly more "hireable" and competent for the position. They also recommended higher salaries (average of just over \$30,000 for men and \$26,500 for women) and more mentoring to "John." The article's graph (Figure 1) showing these differences is quite dramatic. The gender of the faculty member did not affect the ratings and recommendations!

An effort was made to determine the key reason for the disparity and it appears that there is some bias against support for female students as opposed to bias for support of male students. The authors conclude that institutions need to address the bias, which appears to be unintentional, against female students to increase the participation of women in science.

AAUW'S 2012 PRESIDENTIAL VOTER GUIDE

Where does Governor Romney stand on closing the pay gap? Where does President Obama stand on college affordability? Where do the presidential candidates stand on a woman's right to access affordable contraception without asking her boss's permission? Are you sure you know their positions?

All these answers and more can be found on the AAUW Action Fund's [2012 Presidential Voter Guide](http://www.aauwaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/President.pdf). The Action Fund has thoroughly researched the candidates' records and public positions to assess where they stand on AAUW's priority issues. Check it out at: <http://www.aauwaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/President.pdf>

SUPPORT BRANCH LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND FUNDRAISER

on November 7, 2012

Midge Nealon Seibert, LAF Chair
Helene Rosenberger, LAF Co-Chair

On Wednesday, November 7, the Bedford-Lexington Area Branch will hold its annual Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) fundraising event. Please help us exceed last year's branch fundraiser amount by attending the Wednesday, November 7th meeting and making your gift.

Since 1981, LAF has disbursed nearly two million dollars to more than 100 plaintiffs to help offset their legal fees in sex discrimination cases. Prior to 2009, LAF only supported cases in academia, but now LAF supports select cases in any workplace. (Please see the side bar for articles on a LAF-supported case involving military sexual assault.)

While gifts of any size are welcome, I urge you to consider a gift of \$10 or more. We all easily spend \$10 on coffees from our favorite coffee spot or a trip to the movies. Please make a gift that you know will have lasting impact!

Please bring your checkbooks and make your check out to AAUW Funds with "Legal Advocacy Fund #3999" on the memo line.

If you wish to help and are unable to attend the November branch meeting,, please send your check made out as indicated above, to Midge Nealon Seibert, at the address in the directory.

Thanks to everyone who has supported the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund in the past. With the ongoing support of our branch, LAF can continue its critical work to combat campus and workplace sex discrimination.

LAF CASE

Klay et al v. Panetta et al.

Case Adopted 03/12

Background: Ariana Klay is one of eight plaintiffs suing the U.S. military for allegedly creating a culture in which sexual assault and rape are tolerated and in which people who report it face retaliation.

Klay says she was raped by a fellow officer and his friend while she was stationed at the U.S. Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C. Klay says that after she reported it, she was accused of inviting the attack by wearing makeup and her regulation-length skirt. One of the rapists was court-martialed but, as often happens in the cases of reported rapes, was convicted of a lesser crime: adultery and indecent language.

Klay and the other seven plaintiffs allege that U.S. military officials tolerate sexual predators in their ranks and antagonize service members who report rape, sexual assault, and harassment. The plaintiffs say that this culture of sexual assault violates their constitutional rights.

The case was filed on March 6, 2012, in the District of Columbia by lawyer Susan Burke. AAUW Executive Director Linda D. Hallman spoke at the National Press Club event and emphasized AAUW's deep concerns about an apparent pattern of sexual assault in the military and reminded the audience of a similar case that AAUW is also supporting, Cioca v. Rumsfeld, also filed by Susan Burke and centered on the issue of sexual assault in the military.

Burke and several of the plaintiffs from both cases, including the named plaintiff, Ariana Klay, are featured in *The Invisible War*, a documentary about sexual assault in the military. The documentary premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah in January 2012 and won the Audience Award.



IT'S MY VOTE, I WILL BE HEARD UPDATE

BEDFORD DAY

On September 15th, the Bedford-Lexington Branch helped the community celebrate at the annual Bedford Days. The fair features booths and displays from key civic groups and commercial ventures. Most of the town turned out to greet their neighbors, meet new business leaders, and talk lots of politics.

The AAUW booth featured the "Its My Vote, I Will Be Heard" publicity with our members encouraging citizens to register to vote. Most of the people who stopped to talk to us were already registered, but we did get a few new registrations. We also had an opportunity to talk about AAUW, our public policy positions, and the causes we support.

Branch members who participated in Bedford Day were: Lois Pulliam, Ruth Ladd, and Karen Bragaw. State President, Barbara Burgo stayed for most of the day to lend her support.

WATERTOWN'S FAIRE ON THE SQUARE

The second Bedford-Lexington Branch voter registration "It's My Vote: I Will Be Heard" with a focus on millennial women took place at the Watertown Faire on the Square on September 22. Because some of our members –including our State AAUW President, Barbara Burgo, were at Bedford Town Day, all the AAUW Get Out The Vote materials were passed on to us in Watertown. The group of AAUW members included Alice Wadden, Betty Cohn, and Janet Khattab with the able support of Becca Rutenberg, AAUW's It's My Vote Massachusetts organizer. The table was in a great place – next to a citizen environmental organization and across from

Elizabeth Warren's supporters. We were considered a political group though non-partisan - because we were doing voter registration. It was a tremendous success because we did voter registration under the guidance of Becca, so many people were at the fair, and it was a social occasion for us (a wonderful chance to chat!). Please go to the Fall 2012 Issue of the AAUW OUTLOOK for inspiration: "Before 1917, women in the United States had no female representatives in Congress. Today, women still hold only 16.8 percent of congressional seats, and the political gender gap remains a fact of life."



Alice Wadden with newly registered voter



Becca Rutenberg, Alice Wadden, Janet Khattab, and Betty Cohn with the AAUW materials

Bedford-Lexington Area Branch
Ruth Ladd, Editor
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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.

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: November 14, 2012

BOOK GROUP

The November gathering will be on November 28 at the home of Jeanne Stockdale. Janet Khattab will lead the discussion of *In the Time of Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez. For information on time, directions, etc., contact Catherine Boyd at cath-erefboyd@verizon.net or 978-371-2611.

