



# CONNECTIONS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN  
STORRS WILLIMANTIC BRANCH

Fall 2008

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Welcome to our new members, Andrea Rosenstein, Susan Meisler, Janis Fausey, Ekram Abou El-Hamd, Charlotte George, Stephanie Beron, Francine Hodovan and Sheila Siegel. We know they share our enthusiasm in supporting our quest to "Break down barriers for women."

AAUW constantly presents us with opportunities to participate in improving equality for women in the United States and abroad. The latest research piece to be released from AAUW in Washington, is called *Where the Girls Are/ Facts about Gender Equity in Education*. It is available as a free download at the [aauw.org](http://aauw.org) website. Please feel free to share the report with principals, superintendents and school boards. You can give a copy to your local library.

The new director of the Eastern Connecticut State University Women's Center is Raja Staggers-Hakim. We presented her with a \$50 Amazon gift certificate which we had received from AAUW for our new member recruitment success. Raja was able to use the gift certificate to purchase books and a video for the center library.

Many thanks to those who staffed our Third Thursday table: Leslie Gemme, Laura Tordenti, Karin Randolph, Sue Harkness and Loretta Wroebel. Joan Goba helped me staff our table at the Know Your Towns Fair a League of Women Voters event. Both venues provided us with wonderful visibility and contacts.

Andrea Rosenstein and Janis Fausey have agreed to join Chair Carol Williams on the Scholarship Committee. Susan Eastwood has agreed once again to chair the nominating committee for our spring election. Catherine Sampson has volunteered to recruit young women for Girl State. Thanks to all of them for agreeing to be on these committees.

I am looking forward to working with you this year as I begin my second term as branch President. Hope to see you at our monthly meetings.

Peace  
Lesley Kirschenbaum

# LOCAL BRANCH NEWS AND INVOLVEMENT



## Book Author Event



Good Afternoon Storrs Willimantic AAUW Members!

First off I want to thank all of the members who attended the 14th Annual Book Author Event on sat. October 4th in my home in East Killingly. Between members (22) and guests (16), plus Lynn Bloom, our guest book author, we had 37 women in attendance!

What a great time we all had! Our members are among the most generous of people! Several members brought a variety of delicious brunch type foods to share, and we certainly had plenty! No one left hungry! Sue Harkness got right to work at 10:30 selling tickets for drawings while the rest of the group chatted in a very informal and comfortable setting. We had 7 winners! Sue collected over \$100 dollars! A few members who could not make the day sent in donations anyway totaling \$115. For each \$10 sent in, I put their name in a bowl. At the end of the event, one name was drawn - Denise Bachand's - and she won an autographed copy of Lynn Bloom's book *The Seven Deadly Virtues*. Lynn's presentation was lively, interesting and educational. As she recounted some of her many experiences, heads were nodding in recognition - so many of us could relate! Lynn has such a talent of being able to capture and clearly represent those experiences in words!

All in all we collected \$965 for the Educational Foundation! Quite impressive amount coming from only 40 people! All of that money will be added to the Eleanor Jenkins Fellowship, which, prior to our book author event, required approximately \$9,500 to reach its goal of \$100,000.

Request:

Now my question to all of the members who were unable to come to the book author event this year is Would you please consider sending in a donation to the Educational Foundation? We would LOVE to be able to collect enough more to make our total collected from the book author event at least \$1000! We are not far from that goal! Should you decide to make a donation, it will be totally tax deductible IF you make the check out to

AAUW Educational Foundation

Please send all donations to me. Pamela Thompson, P. O. Box 156, East Killingly, CT 06243



The Storrs Willimantic AAUW wants to say get well soon to Ellen Marshall who had hip surgery on November 3. Get well cards can be sent to her home at 175 Old Willimantic Road, Columbia 06237. Her phone number is 228-0229.

## Congratulations to Joan Goba

for receiving the monthly, Wayne Norman Willimantic Radio host, Rays of Sunshine award. The award is given to individuals for their charitable contributions to the community. Joan is a Corporator of Communications bench at the chairs, with the Theater Guild, a Parents Network Connecticut Michael have all the Board of Directors of the Windham United Way, a life member of Windham Hospital Auxiliary and a life member of the UCONN Alumni Association. Way to go Joan!



# MEMBERSHIP ADDRESS CHANGES AND ADDITIONS

## CHANGES:

1. Charlene Fuller's corrected address is [weaverbee2be@netscape.net](mailto:weaverbee2be@netscape.net)
2. Ellen Marshall's email has changed TO [elmar12345@gmail.com](mailto:elmar12345@gmail.com)
3. Laura Tordenti's new email is [lauratordenti@aol.com](mailto:lauratordenti@aol.com) or [tordentilau@CCSU.edu](mailto:tordentilau@CCSU.edu)

## NEW MEMBERS:

The contact information for our new members Ekram Abou El-Hamd, Stephanie Beron, Janis Fausey, Charlotte George, Francine Hodovan, Susan Meisler, and Andrea Rosenstein can be found in your new blue membership booklet.

Shiela Siegel's contact information is 26 Ashford Lake Drive, Ashford CT 06278. Her telephone # is 429-9665 and Sheila's e-mail address is [srsiegel@att.net](mailto:srsiegel@att.net)



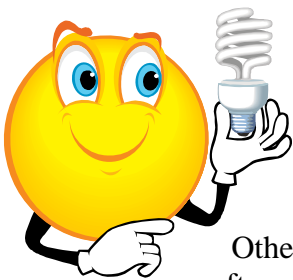
## Jean McCarthy Receives CT Democratic Women's Leadership Award

Our very own Jean McCarthy was among ten Connecticut women to receive the Democratic Women's Leadership Award for 2008. The awards were presented by Nikki O'Neill, former First Lady of CT, and Nancy DiNardo, State Democratic Chairwoman, on October 6 at a special breakfast held at the Hartford Hilton to honor the winners. The keynote speaker Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro spoke of her work to legislate equal pay for women and of her determination to move the Pay Equity Act through both Houses of Congress in the coming year. The event was attended by all the top Democratic office holders, and many candidates, not to mention a table of very enthusiastic fans of Jean's!

Jean's award was well-deserved. Jean has a long history of activism and contributions to the Town of Ashford and the 35<sup>th</sup> District Democrats. Jean served on the Ashford School Board of Education from 1981-1990 and held the position of Chair. She also served on the Region 19 Board of Education from 1987-1991. She has been a key member of the Ashford Democratic Town Committee and has served in numerous positions, including Committee Chair (Elections and Nominating), Vice Chair and DTC Chair, just stepping down in the spring of 2008. Jean has served on the Ashford Board of Zoning Appeals for many years and is also an active member of AAUW, LWV and her union, UCPEA.

Jean helped to build the Ashford Democratic Town Committee to one that is known for its involvement and leadership in the District. She has been involved in the activities of the 35<sup>th</sup> District Democrats in many ways, attending many events to represent Ashford and hosting the Winning Ways of the 35<sup>th</sup> Conference here for many years. Jean has also been very good at getting others involved in the democratic process, setting an example by her own involvement and inspiring and encouraging others to do the same.

We are proud of you Jean!  
Submitted by Susan Eastwood.



The local AAUW branch has been advocating new ways for its members to get together in informal gatherings to enjoy each others company. Currently some members have been enjoying Movie Night. The next movie night, as noted above, is November 20th at Ellen Marshall's house. Please let Lesley know if you plan to attend.

Other branches get together for a book discussion group. Is anyone interested in belonging to a craft group, a book discussion, theater or a travel group? Two people can start an interest group.

Have any ideas? Call Lesley at 423-9590 or email her at llesleyk[at sign]yahoo.com.

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## **Best of luck to Polly!**

***Polly Silva has started working at Waterbury Hospital in a brand new Organizational Development Consulting position. She says there are a lot of opportunities there to do some interesting work. She is also doing adjunct teaching at Charter Oak and U. of Hartford. Unfortunately her busy schedule will probably not allow her to make our meetings.***

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Storrs Willimantic AAUW member Marita McComiskey, Associate Director and Intern Coordinator Women's Studies Program at UCONN took a group of 25 student interns to Cape Town, South Africa. At our November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting she and 3 of her students gave us an inspiring account of their trip. We were all so very impressed with the young women and their life changing experiences in Cape Town. For more information on Marita's program go to Cape Town Pictures at <http://picasaweb.google.com/marita.mccomiskey> or to her blog <http://www.marita4peace.blogspot.com>. Marita can be reached at UCONN at [marita.mccomiskey@uconn.edu](mailto:marita.mccomiskey@uconn.edu).



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### **Dinner at the President's Dining Room**



***Please make your reservations early, before the deadline, which is the Thursday before the first Wednesday of the month. Unfortunately we can't guarantee late reservations until the evening of the meeting when we determine if someone, with a reservation, wasn't able to attend.***

***Payment by check is preferred or exact change. The cost of dinner has gone up to \$19. Checks should be made out to the AAUW Storrs/Willimantic Branch. Please remember that once we call in the reservations we are obligated for that number of dinners, therefore, if you make a reservation for dinner, you will be expected to pay for it unless you cancel before 9 on Sunday. Hope to see you there.***

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# LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND

Please consider sending a donation again this year to the Legal Advocacy Fund, which is a part of AAUW. As you may know, LAF supports legal action against sex discrimination in all workplaces. LAF is expanding to participate as amicus curiae (friends of the court) in cases affecting women's rights.

Donations may be sent to Karin Randolph, P.O. Box 438, Mansfield Center, 06250, or given to Lesley Kirschenbaum at the November AAUW meeting. Thank you. Karin Randolph.

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## Websites

Storrs-Willimantic web site is [www.aauwstorrswilli.homestead.com](http://www.aauwstorrswilli.homestead.com). Our minutes are now available on our website.

Our branch e-mail address is [aauwstorrswilli@gmail.com](mailto:aauwstorrswilli@gmail.com).

Our state website is [www.aauwct.com](http://www.aauwct.com)

AAUW National web site is <http://www.aauw.org>

If there is something you would like to see on our website, email [Denise Bachand](mailto:Denise.Bachand) at our branch website.

Here's an easy way for you to make your voice heard. Check out the **E-Alerts and 2 minute activist** which are easily accessed through [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org). You can arrange to have alerts sent to your e-mail address directly. E-Alert makes it easy to contact our government officials about current AAUW issues.

AAUW is interested in getting feedback about how many members participate in these opportunities. Please let Lesley know if you do participate.

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## DATES TO REMEMBER



**November 5:** WORKING FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA - Speaker: Dr. Marita McComiskey, Associate Director and Intern Coordinator Women's Studies Program, UCONN and her study abroad students.

November 20: MOVIE NIGHT. We will be meeting for movie night at Ellen Marshall's at 7pm to view the movie Whale Rider.

**December 3:** Program to be announced.

**January 7:** Executive board meeting at Karin Randolph's house.

**February 4:** WOMEN AND CRIME -Speaker: Lisa Maruzo-Bolduc, Chief of Police, Willimantic.

**March 4:** IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN - Speaker: Tom McNally, Chair Person of the No Freeze Zone Hospitality Center.

**April 1:** CELEBRATING AAUW EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION AND SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS.

**May 6:** REACHING OUR TO WOMEN ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES - Speaker: Kathleen Holgerson, Director of Women's Center at UCONN and Aatreyee Eitland, Coordinator of Women's Programming at ECSU.

**June 3:** POTLUCK AND PLANT AUCTION at Del Anne Carey's home in South Windham to benefit the AAUW Educational Foundation.

**June 26-28:** AAUW NATIONAL CONVENTION in St Louis, Missouri.

*Do you have an essay, poem or an account of something you have attended or learned about? Please send it to Jean McCarthy to be included in the next newsletter.*

# NATIONAL NEWS

## NATIONAL NEWS

AAUW American Association of University Women

Celebrate Action Network Successes in 2007!

Thank you for playing an integral role in AAUW's success in moving the mission forward this year. Your advocacy and that of tens of thousands of others in our nationwide network of e-activists has helped AAUW make an impact on public policy issues throughout 2007. The growing power and reach of Action Network can claim some impressive achievements. Just consider that over the past year, together, we have:

- \* Successfully advocated for the enactment of the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, the largest investment in higher education since the G.I. Bill. AAUW actively supported this new law and similar bills for addressing increasing college costs and burdensome student debt, increasing access to higher education in general and for women in particular.

- \* Ensured a pay increase for nearly 7 million women by successfully advocating for the enactment of the first minimum wage increase in nearly 10 years.

- \* Improved opportunities for women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields and addressed the shortage of highly qualified STEM teachers with the enactment of the America COMPETES Act. Action Network members supported STEM legislation throughout the year, ensuring earlier passage in the House of the 10,000 Teachers, 10 Million Minds Act.

- \* Supported successful passage of the Higher Education Act Reauthorization in the Senate and unanimous committee passage in the House (look for final passage next year). Action Network members helped ensure that the bills contain many priorities that AAUW has been working on for years, including the creation of the Patsy Mink Graduate Fellowship program and the expansion of SMART and Pell grant eligibility.

- \* Increased awareness of the wage gap between men and women through the promotion of AAUW's report, Behind the Pay Gap, and through programming based on AAUW's Pay Equity Resource Kit and forwarding Equal Pay Day e-cards across the country.

- \* Convinced the House to take the first critical step towards maintaining critical pay discrimination laws with the successful passage of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Action Network members continue to push for the Senate to take the next step by passing the Fair Pay Restoration Act, which will counter the Supreme Court's wrongheaded decision in the Ledbetter v. Goodyear case.

- \* Increased to 226 the number of House cosponsors of Paycheck Fairness Act, a bill that includes needed updates to the Equal Pay Act, and continued our work towards passage of this legislation.

\* Successfully passed hate crimes legislation in the House and an amendment in the Senate, and ensured that an improvement of hate crimes data collection on campuses was included in the House Higher Education Act reauthorization bill.

\* Preserved critical federal regulations on the Family Medical Leave Act. Action Network members submitted comments to the U.S. Department of Labor, ensuring continued federal support of the law in its current form. (OVER)

\* Strengthened our voice on Capitol Hill through a 20 percent increase in advocacy messages from Action Network members through AAUW's Two-Minute Activist. Another 20,000 letters were sent to the Hill on behalf of AAUW members from the Public Policy and Government Relations Department.

\* Put a face to our voice with approximately 1,800 visits to members of Congress by AAUW's Capitol Hill Lobby Corps.

\* Increased attendance and raised issues of importance to women at elected officials' town hall meetings across the nation throughout the year.

\* Prepared women voters to be ready to go to the polls in the upcoming primaries and caucuses.

\* Held members of Congress accountable for their votes using the AAUW Congressional Voting Record. Action Network members thanked their elected officials who voted with AAUW on priority issues and expressed their disappointment to those officials who did not support our position.

\* Increased awareness of public policy issues and advancements through a 50 percent increase in subscribers to Washington Update, AAUW's member's-only weekly e-bulletin for public policy leaders.

Also, hundreds of Action Network members responded to the challenge to write letters to the editors of their local papers to increase awareness on a variety of topics including:

- \* AAUW's priorities for the new Congress
- \* Celebrating Women's History Month
- \* Celebrating Equal Pay Day
- \* The Paycheck Fairness Act
- \* Celebrating Title IX's Anniversary
- \* Celebrating Women's Equality Day
- \* Publicizing the gender wage gap using AAUW's report, Behind the Pay Gap

You can see just a few of the published letters in AAUW's Newsroom.

AAUW urges you to resolve in the New Year to help others speak their mind, too! Help Action Network grow and be even more of a force in our nation's capital. Urge your friends and family to join AAUW and AAUW's Action Network today!

Take Action!

Encourage your friends to sign-up for the AAUW Action Network. Just visit the Tell A Friend page where you can enter their e-mail addresses to send them an invitation to join.



Special congratulations to the AAUW Educational Foundation on its 50th anniversary year and sincere thanks to all the AAUW members across the nation – a community whose generous contributions have enabled the Educational Foundation to continue breaking through barriers for women and girls for 50 years.

In honor of the Educational Foundation's 50th Anniversary, members and friends can help AAUW meet our goal of raising 500 gifts of \$50 in 50 days! Special thanks to all who have already made a gift to this special campaign. Contributions will be used where we have the greatest need and opportunity to educate women for a lifetime of success, research the barriers that harm women and protect the legal rights of those facing discrimination.

For more information about the Educational Foundation, please contact Storrs Willimantic AAUW member , Pamela Thompson at 860-774-5048 or email her at [pjthompson@mac.com](mailto:pjthompson@mac.com).



### **AAUW to Launch Major STEM Study with Funding from National Science Foundation**

WASHINGTON - AAUW has won a two-year, \$249,000 grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to launch a major study of the causes and dynamics behind the low participation of women and girls in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. This is AAUW's fourth grant from NSF. Set for a 2010

release, the study has the potential to garner public support for policies to even out the disparities in the higher-paying, male-dominated STEM fields, in which women are woefully underrepresented.

"Our report will sound the alarm," said AAUW Executive Director Linda D. Hallman, CAE. "As a nation, we can't afford to take baby steps toward achieving parity, especially when we're facing a shortage of professionals in the STEM fields. How can we stay competitive in the global economy when half of our population isn't fully engaged in those areas?"

While progress has been made in many STEM fields, women remain far behind in critical areas, including computer science. High school girls represent only 17 percent of computer science Advanced Placement (AP) test takers.<sup>1</sup> College-educated women earn only 27 percent of bachelor's degrees in mathematics and computer science.<sup>2</sup> AAUW's new research report aims to help turn back this trend and ensure that girls and women are fully represented in these critical STEM fields.

The research on innate gender differences, the effects of stereotypes and bias, mentoring, and differences in performance on standardized tests are among the topics to be covered in the new report. Looking at the most important studies from the past 15 years, the AAUW report will connect common themes across the disciplines, explore the reasons behind the persistent gender inequity, and highlight key findings from the existing STEM research. Written with the general reader in mind, the report will include personal stories to illustrate the problem.

AAUW has received three previous grants from the National Science Foundation on initiatives to remedy gender inequities in STEM fields. These grants include support for the National Girls Collaborative Project, which facilitates collaboration among organizations, institutions, and businesses committed to expanding the participation of girls and women in STEM; the research report *Under the Microscope: A Decade of Gender Equity Projects in the Sciences*; and the creation and distribution of the video *Tech Savvy: Educating Girls in the New Computer Age*.

AAUW Fall Newsletter  
Jean McCarthy, Publisher  
Lesley Kirschenbaum, Editor