

## ***New National AAUW Theme: Education as the Gateway to Women's Economic Security***

Girls and young women have made tremendous progress in education over the past 20 years -- much of it has been directly influenced by the research and advocacy work of our organization. Clearly gender equity issues remain in the K-12 arena and into the college level, such as the pervasive problem of harassment in the schools. There is also a continued need to support girls' early participation and advancement in science and technology. However, the reality is that girls are now faring as well as boys by most measures of educational achievement. This is a cause for celebration.

AAUW must refocus its efforts to ensure that the school-based achievements of recent decades translate into lasting, lifelong financial security for women and their families. As has become abundantly clear from recent research, women today are working more than ever yet remain crowded in undervalued, lower-paying occupations with fewer benefits for themselves and the children and elderly for whom they often care. Ensuring equity for women and girls -- from pre-K through retirement and at all points in between -- has become our greatest challenge.

The new programmatic theme will serve as the guide for new AAUW programs. It is intended to focus our work as the continued leader in equity and education for women and girls. For all of our accomplishments, equity is still very much an issue.

### ***Gains in Education***

- Girls and boys are nearly equally likely to take courses in mathematics and science in high school.
- Women are going to college in record numbers and now outnumber men on college campuses. Women were 56% of undergraduates and 58% of graduate students in 2000.

- Women have made dramatic gains in doctoral programs in medicine, dentistry, and law. The proportion of women in these programs increased from 9% in 1970 to 47% in 2000.
- By 2003, 51% of women of age 18 – 24 had entered or completed college compared with 41% of young men.

### ***Gaps in Earnings and Financial Security***

- In 2003 the median salary for a college educated woman in the United States was \$44,200 a year compared to \$61,800 for college educated male workers.
- Overall, the median earnings for women in 2003 was \$30,733 and the median earnings for men was \$40,683.
- Women remain segregated in traditionally female, mostly low paying jobs and underrepresented in high status, high paying occupations.
- Nonmarried women are more likely to be poor and rely more on Social Security income than men. About 44% of all nonmarried women 65 and older get 90% or more of their income from Social Security compared to 35% of men.

### ***What Do We Need to Accomplish?***

- Access to high-quality education (pre-K through higher education) for all girls and women.
- Access to high-quality professional training and development for women
- Opportunities to study and advance professionally in high-skill and high-wage fields, particularly science and technology
- Greater value for women-dominated fields, including education
- Fair wages, family friendly benefits, and nondiscriminatory workplaces for all women
- Progress for women and girls internationally and for different subgroups of women and girls in the United States on the above issues.

## ***President's Perspective***

*-- Dot Rand, State President*

### ***Thanks for the Dialogue!***

The visits to the branches seemed to energize everybody including me. In your evaluations we read words like “stimulating”, “thought provoking”, “it got us thinking about other women in the world” and “a lot to think about”. Many of you asked questions like: how do we identify the place to actively start working? How do we work on the ideas we discussed? “The issues raised were important and we need concrete projects we can develop”. Since it was our intention to get you thinking more about the mission and goals of AAUW, Andrea, Jennifer and I are pleased at how well we have succeeded. There are, or will be, resources available from the staff at the National Office and from the Association Boards to work on programs fostering the new theme Education as the Gateway to Economic Security. We think members of your branch may have better ideas on what appeals to you after you consider the items you came up with on the sheets we left with you.

We know your programs for 2005-2006 are already in place. By next April or May we hope working together you will have picked your issue and begun the planning process. That will guide the 2006-2007 program committee and you will know where to begin and which organizations might make good partners; doing something local. Let me make it clear that Jennifer, Andrea and I want to serve as resources for you after you have continued the discussion we started in your branch meetings.

We came back from The National Convention in Washington believing that since women are now going to college in greater numbers than men, it makes a lot of sense to focus on promoting equal pay, more opportunity for better jobs and advancement in the workforce for all women who realize that a high school education is not enough. We see great promise in the new theme.

The Association boards and staff want to serve as resources for you in the three initiatives they are developing. The first program, Building a Harassment-Free Campus, is ready for us to take up in conjunction with students at a nearby 2 or 4 year college. Campus Action Projects (CAP) require a member of your branch to serve on the team. According to the research

AAUW commissioned this summer, college students are conflicted as to the definition of harassment. One idea is to help students discuss honestly and seriously what constitutes harassment and what standards they want to set for themselves before they enter the workforce. (The research will be available to us in print in January 2006.)

The next initiative is set for release on Pay Equity Day in April 2006. The subject includes fair wages, family-friendly benefits and non-discriminatory workplaces for all women.

The last initiative is Financial Literacy for women and girls to use throughout their lives. This topic is especially appropriate if a branch decides to work with non-traditional students at your local Community College. Or you might decide to partner with the Girl Scouts and work with girls. There is no date for the release of financial literacy resources. I encourage you use the [aauw.org](http://aauw.org) website to keep current with the latest material on the new themes.

### ***Branch Recognition for Working on the Mission and Goals of AAUW***

For three years I have contemplated bringing up the subject of recognizing branches at our State Convention. The “21<sup>st</sup> Century Awards” are the newest title to the former “5 Star Awards” and many states and branches have been participating for years. Last year the Bennington Branch received funding from AAUW and started their Eureka Project, which continues this year. The Middlebury Branch supported Middlebury College in their highly successful Sister-to-Sister-Summit. Both should have at least received a round of applause at our convention. I decided the time was right to ask for a committee made up of one member from each branch to make recommendations about criteria for receiving an award.

It used to be that all applications for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Awards recognition were sent to National and staff chose the winners. The program staff is now smaller and they feel they are too busy to continue this assignment; State Boards are now responsible for their own branch awards. I expect the state board will receive these recommendations at their winter board meeting and by next year all branches will be encouraged to apply for an award for their efforts to work on the mission and goals of AAUW.

## ***From President-Elect Andrea Weisberg***

Dot Rand, Jennifer Kern and I have been traveling around the state of Vermont to meet with our membership and share ideas about the present and future plans for AAUW. We have been so graciously received wherever we have traveled and that is most heartwarming. We have given presentations in Brattleboro, Middlebury and Bennington and still have Burlington, Randolph and Central Vermont to go. It has been especially rewarding for me to meet our different branch members since I am presently "in-training" as the state President-Elect.

As I anticipate taking the reins from Dot's very capable hands, I have been reflecting on my association with AAUW over a period of some 20 odd years. During my career days, AAUW was the "best place" to network if one was looking to move up in the administrative ranks of different school districts on Long Island. I must admit, I didn't pay much attention to the role AAUW was playing in achieving equity for women and girls. When I retired and moved to Vermont, being new to the area, I scanned the local newspaper and found of all things a meeting of the Bennington Branch of AAUW. This time I wasn't looking to network, I was looking to meet new friends. Happily I attended AAUW meetings and met the brightest, most engaging women who soon became my new friends. Again, my primary focus was not the mission of AAUW.

Well, that was then and this is now and I'm in a new and different place in my life. As I started to get more active in Bennington and became the Educational Foundation Chair for the branch and ultimately for the state, it became increasingly more important to pay attention to what AAUW's role has been in fostering vast improvements in the lives of women and girls. I realized when I was at convention and bought my granddaughter an AAUW T-shirt that stated the next President of the United States could be a WOMAN and it could be YOU.....how much this organization of dedicated women has brought about change in our society.

I know we have many new and exciting areas on which to focus for the future. Clearly my thoughts are now with the AAUW mission, with building its membership, and working to insure that equity for women and girls both in the schools and in the workplace becomes an even greater reality.

I think my granddaughter might just have a shot at being the President of the United States and isn't that just something to work towards?

## ***Foundation Fellowship Recipient Chyi-lyi Liang***

-- Kathy Corrao EF Chair

Chyi-lyi Liang (who has adopted the name Kathleen) is an American Fellow at the University of Vermont. Kathleen is one of six women to receive a publication grant for 2005-2006 from the AAUW Educational Foundation. She is studying the demographics of female farmers in Vermont. Kathleen will investigate their expectations or organic practices, the challenges and risks of such practices, and the learning experiences associated with personal and family business issues.

Kathleen earned her M.S. and Ph.D. from the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University. She came to the University of Vermont in the Fall of 1998 and has focused her research on Agricultural and Entrepreneurship issues. In 2002 she became the lead faculty member in Agricultural and Entrepreneurship Education. This is a unique program for non-traditional, non-business majors. We are looking forward to having Chyi-lyi Liang speak to us at our annual convention in Bennington.

### ***AAUW State and Regional Calendar***

#### ***Saturday, January 28, 2006***

Vermont Leadership meeting in the Mitchell Greene Room of McCullough Student Center, Middlebury College.

#### ***Saturday, May 6, 2006***

Vermont AAUW Convention in Bennington. The Bennington Branch invites members from other counties to stay overnight and share a pot luck supper with them on ***Friday, May 5, 2006***.

#### ***Saturday, October 21, 2006***

The New England Regional Conference will be held at the School for International Training in Brattleboro. It has been quite a few years since Vermont hosted a regional conference; this is a great opportunity for Vermonters to attend it.

## ***Changing and Growing***

-- Jennifer Kern, State Membership Chair

We are 107,000 members, 1,300 branches and 550 Colleges and Universities strong and we can be larger and more powerful for women's and girls' issues.

### ***Recruit more members with our New National Bylaw!***

Women and men with an Associate Degree, Nursing Degree or a Business Degree from a qualified Institution are eligible to join. (Not just 2 years at a college, they must have a degree paper in hand.) Now we can check out these institutions, possibly focusing on the graduating class for this year.

***Pick one.*** Invite the students, professors, the dean of students and other key people to hear your speakers and attend events that you are having. Plan an event like a transitions conference and connect it to the Shape the Future Program and hold it on campus. Hold a forum on women's issues, equity issues, or education issues. Invite students or educators to be part of the forum – planning or speaking.

***Use the personal touch*** by having a meeting just for these groups and talk more about AAUW, what it stands for and how it helps women and girls in communities throughout the United States. If you are hearing... "I want to join and support AAUW's mission but I'm focused on establishing myself and/or family obligations"... Sell them on National AAUW's on-line opportunities to learn about and speak out on vital social, economic, and political issues. Tell them about Action Network and Mission in Action with the 2-minute activist, where they can contact Members of Congress to support AAUW causes. They can visit the newsroom for press releases, hot topics, and media alert distributions. Great reasons to join and support our mission! If they are moving out of town, offer to find the nearest branch to their new location and then offer to make the first contact

***Reach out to individuals*** who are eligible for membership under the new by-law. Give a membership gift to a family member or friend with an Associate or equivalent degree. Invite people you know with these degrees to a branch meeting or event. Offer to take them there. Give a Grad a gift .... Free to you and to them! Recruit student affiliate members...

Don't forget you can attract new members through the Shape the Future Program (2 members at ½ price and another member free if they sign up at a public event you are sponsoring). Remember that memberships drop to half price in January.

Having trouble being published in your local papers? ***Consult Branch Spotlight on Donna Seymour, Press Whiz.*** (AAUW site, click on newsroom, click on Branch Spotlight). She connects AAUW in the news, media alerts and press releases to the various activities her Branch is involved in. Your Branch speakers and their topics could easily have a newsroom connection. She answers lots of questions that may not apply to your... read on! You never know, ***one idea might work for you.*** Be sure to add your name to get on the news release distribution list on the bottom of the news page... it could be interesting news for you.

## ***Randolph Branch Member Recognized***

The Randolph Branch would like to recognize Sue Forcier's achievements. She joined our branch in 2001 as an affiliate member while working on her bachelor's degree at Vermont College (now Union Institute). She worked full time while completing this external degree program on weekends. After graduating in January 2004, she has continued to study Counseling Psychology at the Antioch New England Graduate Program. We enjoy having Sue as an active member. Recently we heard that she is featured in Peter Miller's new book about places in Vermont. Sue is featured in it at Ken's Barber Shop in Randolph; Sue was the first woman barber in Randolph. We think she has come a long way.

-- Kathy Corrao, Randolph Branch President

## ***Vermont Fellowship Endowment***

Many branch members are not aware that the 10 Vermont branches created an endowment fund in 1980 that is administered by the Educational Foundation. The principal is now approx. \$36,000 and the income funds Career Development Fellowships for women earning a second degree and Community Action Grants such as the Bennington's Eureka Project. Funding for both categories is very limited and branches are encouraged to designate their EF contributions to this endowment. (Fund #1310). We also know who receives the endowment income each year. In 2004-2005 the award went to Lauren J. Erickkson-Mamane to help her earn a Masters degree in Public Health after she spent five years in Niger as a Peace Corps health volunteer. After completing her degree she will return to implement programs to improve the health of women and girls. The 2005-2006 award went to Shirley S. Rinaldi to help her earn a Master of Divinity degree so that she can become a chaplain at a women's correctional institution.

## ***Memorable Meetings of Vermont Branches***

### ***Randolph Branch***

The Randolph Branch is proud to use the expertise of its members for some of our programs. Since we are a small group (at present), we plan programs around our members' interests. For instance, one of our programs was a simulated psychologist session based on *The Color Purple* and *A Woman's Way of Knowing*. Two of our members presented this and a very stimulating discussion followed.

One of our members visited a rural town in Ecuador and showed us her slides. We discussed them and questioned her about women's roles in this culture.

Members of our branch are working with the Central Vermont Branch to "woman" an AAUW table at the Leahy Economic Opportunity Conference on November 3rd at Vermont Technical College. We are also attending some of the workshops.

-- Kathy Corrao, Randolph Branch President

### ***Brattleboro Branch***

The Brattleboro Branch's first formal program of this season was a discussion on "Vermont Health Quandaries" held in the meeting room at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital on the afternoon of Tuesday, October 4th. The meeting was open to the public and we were glad to see 6 or 7 "outsiders" there along with members. The Hospital meeting rooms can be used at no charge by outside groups as long as the topic is health related and the schedule allows it. It helped that I am a BMH employee.

Leaders of the Session were Margaret Newton, M.D. and Richard Davis, R.N., Executive Director of Vermont Citizens Campaign for Health. Talk and questions went on long past our usual meeting time because of the intense interest in this subject. Not everyone was happy with some of the speakers' statements.

Both speakers brought out what member Nancy Chard, former state senator from Windham County, told us at our Branch annual meeting two years ago. That civility and a spirit of working together and compromise unfortunately seem to have disappeared from Vermont politics.

-- Marty Fenn, Brattleboro Branch President

### ***Central Vermont Branch***

Our October meeting featured a local herbalist, Amy Goodman. She is concentrating on samples and recipes that enhance our immune systems. We used the meeting to boost membership and put out an attractive poster in PDF format inviting the public. Members could print it from an email attachment and post it where they thought appropriate. We encouraged members to invite friends. We phoned, emailed or dropped a note to MALs and others who have expressed interest in AAUW in the last year or so. It went very well!

Our November 16<sup>th</sup> meeting is planned as sort of a "flash from the past." Those of us who have been members for years remember "memories" meetings and recall them fondly. We will come prepared to share a personal story with everyone; an item or artifact can be part of it. We are eager to foster camaraderie in the branch and feel this is a firm step toward that goal. We'll combine it with further discussion on our fundraising goals.

-- Vivienne Adair, Central Vermont Branch President

### ***Bennington Branch***

As I look back over the past two years, it is difficult to choose which were our stellar programs because they varied so. One of our best attended meetings was one at which David Larsen, then serving as Interim Commissioner of Education, spoke on "Educational Assessment – What does it imply?" He took a fairly dry but controversial topic and turned it into a fascinating discussion on children's achievement and how to measure learning in our public schools. This talk was followed by a very lively interchange between members and the speaker.

There were some marvelous programs where we were able to tap our own members. Writer and scholar Lea Newman told "How I Wrote My Memoir and How You Can Too" – and who hasn't contemplated leaving a memoir for their family if not for publication? Another member, Fronia Simpson, gave a brilliant slide show about "Knitting in Art" showing paintings up through the ages featuring women (including several Madonnas) knitting. It was most unusual and since Fronia is an accomplished knitter herself this was especially interesting. (continued on bottom of page 6)

## *Two Vermont Branches Focus on Middle School Girls*

### *Middlebury Sister-to-Sister*

Our Sister-to-Sister day – a get-together for college students from Middlebury College and area middle-school girls – was a huge success on February 19<sup>th</sup> and so we're doing it again on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Modeled after the Sister-to-Sister Summit developed by the American Association of University Women which has been implemented in many places throughout the US including the Burlington area, the Middlebury College project began to take shape in the Fall of 2004 when Gail Smith, College/University AAUW representative for Middlebury College, Dot Rand, Vermont state president of AAUW and Karin Hanta, Director of the Chellis House, a women's resource center at Middlebury College, had 4 women students commit to the project. The students spent the fall connecting with middle school girls from Middlebury, Bristol and Vergennes, developing a relationship with the girls and discovering issues of concern to these girls. Using this information, the college students spent their January Winter Term, led by Gail Smith, developing the February 19<sup>th</sup> event. The day included whole group activities to encourage interaction among the girls, a self-defense demonstration, and a-cappella singing by two college groups. The girls had workshops in both the morning and in the afternoon including creative writing, Latin and break dancing (...very popular !...), Indian cooking, and trust building. They participated in two discussion groups, which addressed topics such as bullying, media and women, physical exercise, sexuality and future plans. The day ended with a time for reflection, action planning, awarding Sister-to-Sister T-shirts to everyone, and a slideshow.

This year a team of 9 college women – we've doubled the size of our student team – is again working with Gail, Dot, Karin, and Liane Barrera to develop the November 19<sup>th</sup> summit. Middlebury branch members play a key supportive "sister role" by providing transportation for girls from the outlying areas, a light morning breakfast, and an afternoon snack as well as financial support. This project has been very exciting for the sisters of all ages! Or another way to sum it up is as one of the student team members, Caroline Theriault, put it: "Some of the girls who came had a tendency to fly under the radar, but on the day of the gathering they had over 70 individuals working solely to inform and entertain them. It was amazing to see the effect that one day of positive attention had on these girls."

-- Peg Galgano, Middlebury Branch President

### *Bennington Eureka Project*

The Eureka Project brochure says:

#### *Imagine Yourself as a*

- *Graphic Designer*
- *Engineer*
- *X-ray Technologist*
- *Video Technician*
- *Research Scientist* .... etc

During last year's field trips in the Bennington area the 8th grade participants of the Eureka Project met at least one woman in each of these categories. During the year end evaluation they ranked greater awareness of technical and scientific careers as one important aspects of the program; another important aspect was getting to know other girls who liked science, technology and math.

We did our best to make science fun so that the girls learned scientific concepts while doing activities they enjoyed. They built strong structures out of toothpicks and gum drops using engineering design principles. Chemical experiments featured lots of food color; paper helicopters were tested in a stairwell after most people had left the building. The girls made their own ice cream, polymerized Elmer's glue, neutralized lemon juice with Tums tablets, and built film canister rockets. They also solved lots of puzzles of all types.

This year we will work with our second group of 8th graders and a 9th grade group at the high school that includes some of the girls from last year. Some of the less technically inclined branch members will be assisting with photography and publicity, food and general logistics.

-- Gudrun Hutchins, Eureka Co-Director

#### *Bennington Branch Programs* continued

One of our most successful get-togethers is our annual holiday party in December where we share memories. One year the theme was "What was your most memorable holiday gift?" Another year it was "Tell us about your home town." This year will center on "What are your holiday traditions?" These shared moments help members to get to know one another on a more personal level than at our regular meetings.

-- Judy Murphy, Bennington Branch President

## *Our International Sisters*

-- Linda Hiebert Sekiguchi, Chair,  
AAUW International Affairs Committee

Did you know that as a member of AAUW, you are also a member of the International Federation of University Women? Our relationship to the international organization has been very much on the front burner over the past months, as budgetary constraints have called into question our ability to meet our dues to IFUW. Nevertheless, the delegates to the 2005 Convention in Washington endorsed our continued participation in and support of our international obligations.

IFUW represents 150,000 women graduates in 77 countries. It works largely through the triennial conference, which serves to set goals for the Federation, educate participants on women's issues, and provide opportunities for networking among members of the national federations and associations (NFAs) which make up IFUW. The next triennial conference is scheduled for 2007 in Manchester, England. Although the number of members on AAUW's voting delegation is limited, you need not be a voting member to attend, to present a paper to the interdisciplinary seminars, to conduct a workshop on a topic related to the theme of the conference, or to participate in the meetings and social activities. IFUW's current Action Programme is *Women: Agents of Change*.

IFUW is in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and works closely with UNESCO, Unicef, and UNIFEM to achieve its goals. Through its programs of advocacy, development of new national organizations, and support for women in developing countries, IFUW plays an important role in improving the lives of women throughout the world. A major focus of IFUW from its beginning in the aftermath of World War I has been on improved international understanding and world peace.

Since its birth, IFUW has relied heavily on the support of AAUW, both in terms of leadership and financially. We make up the lion's share of the 150,000 members, yet too many of our members are only dimly aware of the impact we have on the world through IFUW. If you would like to know more about what IFUW is doing, please go to its web site, [www.ifuw.org](http://www.ifuw.org).

Here is a little history of our association with other women graduates in the wider world:

IFUW was formed in the aftermath of World War I by Virginia Gildersleeve, Dean of Barnard College in New York, and Caroline Spurgeon, the first woman professor in an English University (Bedford College, London), who met while the latter was on a visit to the United States in 1918. In the summer of 1919, the British Federation invited their American colleagues and a group of university women forming in Canada to work together to create IFUW. A year later the first Conference was held at Bedford College in London -- Caroline Spurgeon's college. Representatives of 16 countries were present.

While the first IFUW Conference was held in 1920, it was the Third Conference in Oslo in 1924 when IFUW really "took off". The four Nordic countries came together to run the conference jointly. It was at this Conference that the Fellowships Fund was launched with a donation of money which had earlier been raised in Norway for a research fellowship for a woman, but had not been used due to the intervention of World War I. This was matched by other donations.

The IFUW badge with the lamp was also created for that Third Conference. The antique lamp represents the light of learning; it is surrounded by an interlinked chain symbolizing the bonds of friendship which the Federation exists to create and strengthen.

IFUW sponsors two voluntary funds: The Hegg Hoffett Fund provides relief assistance for women graduates displaced by war, other conflicts, and natural disasters. The Bina Roy Partners in Development Programme supports projects in developing and transitional countries.

A number of NFAs have formed regional groups to work more closely together: Europe, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, Central America, Africa, and South Asia. The European group focuses particularly on common interests within the European community. In the South Pacific group, Australia and New Zealand have been active in sponsoring new Associations in the South Pacific island nations, who have proved to be some of our most enthusiastic members.

Although AAUW is in arrears for 2005 dues, we remain a member without vote through 2007. This status includes the next IFUW Triennial Conference scheduled in 2007. The Association Board is committed to remaining a member of IFUW and communication lines with IFUW are open. IFUW is actively pursuing cost reductions and a new dues structure.

## ***State Leaders 2005-2006***

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