



Green Mountain AAUW

American Association of University Women of Vermont

Volume XXXXIII No. 1

November 2008

AAUW-VT Convention on April 25, 2009 “The Changing Face of Vermont”

The Brattleboro Branch will host the annual state meeting on Saturday, April 25, 2009 at the School for International Training. AAUW members from the five Vermont branches will meet for a day of learning, listening, sharing and socializing. Branch officers and committee members are working with the theme of “The Changing Face of Vermont”, with a look at immigration and how it affects so many aspects of Vermont: education, agriculture, the workforce, tourism, the law, social services, and health services. How do we deal with diversity? the clash of cultures? the plight of refugees and those seeking asylum? What about our own origins as immigrants?

Branch members have held their first planning meeting on November 6th and welcome input from anyone. The weekend will begin with an informal potluck supper for those who plan to spend the night. We are also hoping that Brattleboro members will offer home hospitality as a fundraiser for the Educational Foundation.

Below are two US Census statistic on immigration in Vermont to get you thinking about the topic:

- There were 21,410 immigrants in Vermont in 2007, a decrease from 24,182 in 2006.
- Approximately 30.7 percent of the total population increase in Vermont between 2000 and 2006 was directly attributable to immigration.

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend!

Vermont AAUW Calendar

Saturday, January 24, 2009 9:30 – 3:00 pm

Vermont state and branch leadership meeting at Middlebury College Library. More information will be emailed to leaders by Andrea Weisberg.

Saturday, April 25, 2009

AAUW of Vermont State Convention hosted by the Brattleboro Branch. Theme: “The Changing Face of Vermont”.

Two International Fellows Study in Vermont

As we mark the Educational Foundation’s 50th anniversary, we welcome two recipients of International Fellowships to Vermont. Both are students at the School for International Training in Brattleboro.

Ajabji Stella, from Cameroon, is working toward a Masters degree in Social Sciences. Her project is “Development of a Micro-Finance and Enterprise Development Model for Women’s Groups”. She will use the results of her research to set up a community-based, women-owned microfinance structure in rural communities of Cameroon

Htang Zung, from Myanmar, is seeking a master’s degree in Education Curriculum and Instruction. Her project is “Educational Conflict in Burma / Transforming the Society through Education”. She plans on joining the education mission at Myitkyina Kachin Baptist convention and working with the Kachin Independent group in developing curriculum. Her long-term goal is to establish a non-profit that focuses on curriculum improvement, teacher education and empowering women through education.

We wish both of these dedicated women well and hope to meet them on April 25th in Brattleboro.

President's Message: The Value Promise

Andrea Weisberg, State President

At our September Leaders' Meeting, there was discussion of AAUW's new Value Promise and its meaningfulness to our members. The Value Promise expresses the essence of AAUW, what we believe will bring equity to women and girls. Perhaps at the beginning of our meetings we should read this statement as a reminder of why we belong to an organization that is committed to Breaking Through Barriers.

The Promise:

"As a member of AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance"

The following is excerpted from Briefing #5 by AAUW Executive Director Linda Hallman:

The new Value Promise was unanimously supported as the unifying focus of AAUW by both the AAUW and the AAUW Educational Foundation Boards. This action followed two years of dialogue and market analysis to identify the program focus that embodies our legacy, personalizes our mission, and illuminates our future path.

Why a unifying focus?

It states who we are, what we have been, and what we will be in the future. It makes clear how the organization will advance equity for women and girls and in what pursuits we will apply our advocacy, education and research. Our unifying focus is more than a program theme. It captures both the spirit and the strategy of the Value Promise. A unifying focus identifies something that coalesces its membership. It brings us together, describing what we believe in and what we do. It says we do what we value. Our unifying focus mandates integration of our program components: public policy, Educational Foundation and Legal Advocacy awards, research, Campus Action Projects, etc. in the service of our goals.

How will we use it?

The unifying focus has flexibility, it is equally appropriate for application to women's educational, economic, legal, political and socio-cultural challenges. It suggests the confidence we have to break through those targeted barriers to achieve our

goals. We make decisions that identify barriers that we can attack and select tactics that capitalize on our strengths. It focuses us on our promise that by joining AAUW we are committed to taking personal action to help break through the barriers for women and girls.

AAUW is an organization 100,000 members strong. We have a history of credibility, achievement, and effectiveness. AAUW is a force to be reckoned with. Let's continue all we do to make sure we are breaking through barriers for women and girls.

Contact Andrea at aauwandrea@gmail.com

CHECK YES

Jennifer Kern, State Membership Chair

YES! I want to help provide a fair chance for all women and girls.

YES! I want to break through educational and economical barriers.

YES! I want a level playing field.

BUT! Without "my effort" AAUW, a powerful and influential nationwide organization cannot survive. That is a scary thought! For so long we have been breaking through on important issues for women and girls. We protect the legal rights of those facing discrimination, advocate for laws that give women a fair chance in many arenas and educate women for a lifetime of success.

AAUW's work is not done...equity is still an issue and many of the issues we have won are being chipped away. As you go about your day, take a moment and think about our mission. Have you met someone recently who would think these values important? Invite them to a meeting to learn more about AAUW and what your Branch is doing to promote it.

AAUW is only as strong and effective as its membership. The more we grow the more we can break through women's barriers.

Contact Jennifer at kerncopp@verizon.net

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research.

Regional Director's Message: A Place to Belong

Patricia Ho, New England Regional Director

Each of us belongs to many different groups – our families, neighborhoods, churches, social circles and other organizations, among them. These memberships help to define us and enhance our identities. Without these anchoring points, our lives would be less rich and purposeful.

Hopefully, our membership and participation in AAUW provides one such anchor in adding purposeful work to our lives. As engaged members, we support AAUW through our dues and contributions, through the input we offer, through our countless hours of involvement as branch member leaders. Most of all, we are part of a community of diverse individuals united in ensuring equity for all women.

If we see ourselves as members of this community, this AAUW organization, we expand our perspective of the work ahead and strengthen our collective power. As members of the whole AAUW community, we can enhance our participation in several ways.

We can stay connected, be informed of AAUW's work through www.aauw.org and publications such as *Outlook*. Read the briefings from Executive Director Linda Hallman, posted on the website, because they provide real updates on the organization's direction. These briefings address many of our questions and include such topics as *Breaking through Barriers -- AAUW's Unifying Focus*, *the Value of Branches*, *Member Showcase*, *Program in a Box*, *Pilot Program for Dues Processing and Collections*, *Branch Tax Status after Restructuring*. It is crucial that state and branch leaders forward these notices to members.

As branch members, we can tap the varied resources on the website as we plan programs to support our Value Promise of "breaking through barriers". Our branches need to reach out to other groups so that this becomes a collaborative, shared endeavor. The new programmatic focus will be highlighted at National Convention, June 26 – 28, 2009 in St. Louis.

Finally, your presence, if possible, at National Convention will ensure that you have a physical vote on the proposed bylaws that will impact membership, one member/one vote provisions, and the flexible structure of states and branches. All of these issues will shape AAUW for the future.

Program in a Box

Diane Telford, State Program Chair

"Program in a Box" is a new feature on the national AAUW website aimed at helping branches and state boards provide programs that support our mission of "Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research."

So what are "Programs in a Box"? They are resources that provide a starting point for branch and state program committees as they plan and evaluate their programs. Simply put, it is a set of documents that provide an outline or framework for planning programs or workshops around broad topic areas related to AAUW's mission.

All "Programs in a Box" provide answers to the questions:

- What is the program?
- How will this program benefit your branch or state or community?
- How can you implement this program?
- How can you evaluate this program?

The materials under each of the questions often offer links to greater details and all can be printed from your computer to be shared with the program committee. The programs are flexible and leave room for you to customize or focus to your needs. Some of them have the potential to be a theme for multiple programs over the course of a year or multiple years.

All of the "Programs in a Box" are intended to help increase AAUW visibility in the community, teach leadership skills to the planners, promote the mission, and help us keep our value promise of *"...belonging to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance."*

The first program in a box appeared in late July; as of late October the list has expanded to include nine different topics. Titles include: Plaintiff Travel Grant, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Educational Foundation 50th Anniversary, Woman to Woman Voter Turnout, Campus Action Projects, Grassroots Advocacy

continued on page 4

Program in a Box

continued from page 3

Leadership Training Workshop, Let's Read Math, Financially Fit For Life, Focus on Fellows and Grantees.

AAUW will be updating this list so bookmark this page and return to it whenever you need ideas for your program year.

www.aauw.org/member_center/programs/index.cfm

If you have other program ideas, that you would like a "Program in a Box" for, or that you have already used, the Association would like your suggestions. You can submit your thoughts to:

programinabox@aauw.org

I suggest you take a look at these resources and see how they inspire and help you as you plan your programs. As your program chair for Vermont, I would appreciate hearing about your experiences with them.

Contact Diane at gdebs17@comcast.net

New Information on the AAUW of Vermont Website

Gudrun Hutchins, Communications Chair

This year's programs for all five branches are listed on the AAUW of Vermont website. Take a look and one of the titles may inspire you to find out more. Go to www.aauwvt.org click "Vermont Branches" in the sidebar and then click the link to the Branch page in each of the boxes to see a listing of planned programs.

State Program Chair Diane Telford has compiled a list of mission based programs that have been previously held by Vermont branches with names of speakers and the name and email address of the person who coordinated the program. It is a great idea to replicate a program that has already worked well for another Vermont branch! Getting some pointers from the person who organized the previous program may also be really helpful. You can find a PDF version of Diane's booklet on the Vermont website at www.aauwvt.org/missionbased.html

Links to the various resources mentioned in this newsletter have been added to the news and new links page of the web site. So even if you lose this newsletter, you will still be able to find the information.

Contact Gudrun at vtgudrun@comcast.net

New Focus for Legal Advocacy Fund

Since its founding in the early 1980's, the AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund has provided funding for worthy individuals who have suffered from discrimination in their academic workplaces. Selected cases were based on applications that came to AAUW and we financially supported only those that arose in the academic context. Relatively few of these cases were precedent-setting for all women, although LAF's impact on college campuses around the country is clear.

Going forward, the generous LAF donations of our members will be available to help women in all workplaces, not just in academia. The intent is to focus on strategic litigation that has a strong potential for establishing precedent or making a significant contribution to advancing equity or reducing discriminatory workplace practices. Instead of responding to applications from individual plaintiffs for support, AAUW will choose cases that are likely to have maximum impact in the wider workplace. As part of the expansion of the focus of LAF, AAUW hosted a meeting in July of the leaders of key civil and women's rights organizations to gain their collaboration in this effort.

AAUW members have increasingly indicated a desire to support cases in the wider workplace. Members will now have that opportunity. The focus on strategic cases with precedent-setting potential will give our dollars additional impact in breaking through barriers for all women.

LAF plans to continue its campus outreach programs and will expand its online LAF Resource Library to include more topics on discrimination in the wider workplace.

Candidates for National Office

Ruth Sweetser and Barbara O'Connor will be stepping down as President of AAUW and the Educational Foundation, respectively, on June 30, 2009. Both have served AAUW for four years and have succeeded in moving along the Strategic Process and initiating change to make AAUW a more viable organization in the future. At the St. Louis convention from June 26 – 28, 2009, AAUW

continued on page 6

AAUW Receives Grant from National Science Foundation

AAUW has won a two-year \$249,000 grant from the National Science Foundation 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. 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.

The research on innate gender differences, the effects of stereotypes and bias, mentoring, and differences in performance on standardized test are 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 problems.

"The excellent work that has been done in this area too often does not reach the public because it is narrow in scope or too technical" said Catherine Hill, PhD, lead investigator on the report. "This project has attracted a stellar panel of experts from the scientific and research community because they recognize the need for a reader-friendly compilation of research."

30th Anniversary of Pregnancy Discrimination Act

About 75 percent of the 68 million women working in the United States will become pregnant at some point in their lives. Between 1996 and 1999, 81.5 percent of women who worked while pregnant with their first child, returned to work within a year of giving birth. Therefore, the protection of pregnant women or those trying to become pregnant is vitally important to a majority of working women in the United States. In 1978 Congress passed the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA) to ensure that women and men could take time off from work for pregnancy related problems without fearing adverse employment action. The legislation took effect on October 31 thirty years ago. To mark the occasion, AAUW has added a section on the PDA to its growing online LAF Resource Library for the wider workplace.

Under the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, employers with more than 15 employees are required to treat women who are affected by pregnancy or related conditions the same way they treat other employees with temporary disabilities. The PDA also prohibits discriminatory policies that limit or preclude women from performing specific jobs simply because they are pregnant or capable of becoming pregnant.

How well is it working?

There was a time in this country when pregnancy served as a green light for sex discrimination or termination. The PDA has helped to change the nation's mindset about childbearing and working moms, and it continues to provide significant civil rights protection for women.

However, while men can typically encounter a job boost from fatherhood, women often hit the "maternal wall," according to experts who study the issue. In recent years, women have become more vigilant about reporting alleged discrimination. In 2007, women filed 5,587 complaints of pregnancy discrimination with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).

Last year, the EEOC filed suit against Bloomberg, LP, the financial news service, in a class action that now includes 72 current and former employees who became pregnant while working at the company. The suit was originally started when three women brought allegations of pregnancy discrimination to the attention of the EEOC. The EEOC investigated the claims and found that women in the company "lost momentum" after becoming pregnant and were subsequently transferred, displaced, and/or demoted.

Following this investigation, the EEOC filed suit, alleging that Bloomberg engaged in a pattern of reducing women's pay after they announced their pregnancies or returned from maternity leave. Additionally, some women claimed that they were replaced by junior male counterparts and purposely excluded from management meetings.

A class action suit about pregnancy leave and pension calculations brought by women against AT&T has gone all the way to the Supreme Court which will hear oral arguments in December 2008.

Candidates for National Office

continued from page 4

members will elect a single national board as specified in the bylaws passed at the 2007 convention in Phoenix. The Association and the Educational Foundation will merge into a single organization to be named AAUW. One president and one vice president will be elected in St. Louis, and six additional board members will be elected as directors-at-large. An additional six directors-at-large will be appointed by the eight elected officers at their first meeting. Officers with specific responsibilities and required skills, such as finance vice president, will be chosen by the board from the pool of directors-at-large.

The National Nominating committee has completed its work and has published the following slate on the AAUW website. All positions are contested so there will be a lot of competition. The candidates are:

AAUW President: Sally Chamberlain (PA)
(1 position) Carolyn Garfein (GA)

Vice President: Gail Nordmoe (CT)
(1 position) Jennifer Wilken (IL)

Director-at-Large: Kathleen Cha (CA)
(6 positions) Jeanne Clarke (AZ)
Alicia Hetman (CA)
Connie Hildebrand (ND)
Anthony Hill (DC)
Patricia Ho (MA)
Jackie Littleton (TX)
Betsy McDowell (OR)
Ronni Nivala (WI)
Audrey Salgado (AL)
Linda Tozier (PA)

Detailed information about all candidates will be published in the spring Outlook. The new recommended bylaws will be posted on the website in January and will also be in the spring Outlook with the rationale for various provisions.

The new AAUW structure and bylaws will have very little effect on how we run our state and branch organization in Vermont. However, the new bylaws give us much more flexibility if we should chose to change our structure.

Green Mountain AAUW

American Association of University Women
Gudrun Hutchins, Editor
421 Barber Pond Road, Pownal VT 05261