



Representing all of Anne Arundel County, Maryland
annearundelcounty-md.aauw.net

March 2015 Newsletter

THE PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Gail Viamonte and Mary McGrath

Regardless of the snow, whipping winds, and cold temperatures, branch members continued their activities and accomplishments! By the way—even if you'd prefer to watch the winds blow from behind a comforting (sometimes sunny?) window and while cupping a hot beverage, this message suggests three brief but important “indoor” steps you can take to benefit women and communities.

The Nominating Committee has been hard at work assessing open positions, researching potential candidates, and seeking nominations. [Step 1:] Please consider self-nomination! Whatever your interests or special skills, there is a comfortable and productive role for you in our branch, a role in which you can benefit the mission of AAUW and share in the camaraderie and fun.

Several members met newly elected delegates and senators, community-based organizers, and a room full of passionate and engaging individuals at the February 12th Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) Annual Legislative Briefing, in Annapolis. In two well-organized and lively hours, we learned of proposed legislation on homebirth safety, domestic violence, family and medical leave, rape survivor protection, and the “Healthy Working Families Act,” as well as others.

At MLAW's briefing, one message that struck home for me, personally, was how much one phone-call or e-mail means to those trying to decide whether or not a given bill is “really important” to the public. It's

amazing the impact we can have, and our individual voices are sought and valued by those who are directly affected. [Here's Step 2:] Go to our branch website (see address at the top of this newsletter), click the Legislative Alert link on the right hand side, and see the names, brief description, and hearing dates of pending legislation. Attend a hearing, phone, and/or e-mail! AND/OR Sign up on the AAUW National Site to be a “Two Minute Activist” and use the on-line system to send an e-mail on any given piece of legislation. Want more? Contact Pat Strott-Wheatley: pbsw@comcast.net and take part in branch Public Policy activities.

Every year, the National organization of AAUW provides branches with necessary updates to the bylaws that determine how branches are run. Thanks to Roxann King, our branch bylaws have been spiffed up, brought into IRS compliance, and made generally more transparent and accurate. [Step 3:] Please see the newsletter article on our branch bylaws and review the changes for yourself. We all vote on the updated bylaws as a full membership body on March 9th and now is everyone's opportunity to review them. Shouldn't take more than twenty minutes—and you may get some good ideas about branch activities and workings.

See you on February 28th for the trip to the National Museum of Women in the Arts in D.C. Don't forget to RSVP to Cheryl Menke: camenke2@hotmail.com. I look forward to seeing everyone March 9th at our membership meeting, where there also will be an exciting program.

**For Your Review and Vote: Anne Arundel
Chapter Bylaws Revisions**
By Gail Viamonte

Every year, the AAUW national office provides required updates and “best practices” recommendations for branch governance and bylaws. Our newly edited bylaws are ready for a vote during our meeting on March 9th, thanks to the efforts of Roxann King. Keep on the lookout, as an advance copy of the bylaws will be sent to your e-mail and will be posted on the branch website.

The updated bylaws contain certain “must haves” that bring our branch into compliance with IRS and other rulings (for example, the secretary’s and treasurer’s responsibilities cannot be carried out by the same person). These “must haves” are automatically included throughout the 2015 update. The first page remains essentially unchanged.

-On pages 2 and 3, green font has been used to highlight points of clarification.

-On pages 4-7, cross-outs and red font describe our branch’s most recent processes regarding types, terms, and responsibilities of officers, boards, and committees.

Kindly take a few moments to help us ensure that this branch operates as you thought it did and as you wish it to operate! Take a look at the bylaws and let Mary McGrath: mary@bugeye.net or Gail Viamonte: gev24@earthlink.net know of any questions or concerns, preferably prior to March 9th!

Thanks to all.

On Public Policy
By Pat Strott-Wheatley

As usual, it has been a busy month as far as Public Policy is concerned. It always is when the Congress, Senate, and State Legislature are in session. In addition President Obama gave his State of the Union Address this past month, which always provides fodder for discussion and action. At our last AAUW Board Meeting, we had a fairly extensive discussion about how to get all of this information disseminated to you – our membership. It was clear that we need to have more than one person doing this in order to comment on everything! Roxann King helps greatly by being the

main person along with me and our Presidents to cover the activities and bills of the Maryland Legislature, through our Branch’s MLAW membership (Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women). Our Branch members of Lobby Corps are on federal hill every week addressing whatever issue National thinks needs to be brought to the attention of Congress and Senate Members. I just try to wrap it up for you, and from time to time ask for your help in certain ventures. You will note the amount of attention given to our Public Policy issues in the letters of the Co-Presidents and Roxann’s column on the MLAW legislative briefing that many of us attended on Feb. 12. It was inspiring to see a room full (about 300) of women truly invested in making a difference in the lives of women and children in Maryland!

Getting back to our board meeting, it was suggested that I just try to touch on the overall process (as being registered in the “2 Minute Activist” on the AAUW website etc.). I try to encourage us all to do three things EACH month to alert our representatives of our wishes. And further, that I highlight 4-5 main issues for the month. This month, my first issue is to bring to your attention that EQUAL PAY DAY is coming up on April 14. I know, that is a month away, but I like to plan ahead. National has asked that each Branch do “something special” to bring this attention to our lawmakers (again!) Women, from the bluest collar to the most educated still earn less than men doing the same work – an average of .78 cents to the \$1.00! Amazing! So what can we do? (Remember when I said we would need volunteers on this committee from time to time? Well this is one of those times!) Can we send our representatives a cake?...a bouquet of balloons?...some cookies and a note? Think, a few of you get back to me: pbsw@comcast.net, and LET’S DO IT!!!

Other national issues to support, and watch for in the paper and on AAUW website are: 2) Paid sick days for all workers; 3) More affordable ways for young graduates to pay back college loans; 4) More affordable ways to fund college .. period! 5) Education priorities (ESEA) to replace the No Child Left Behind law of the land, which has been ineffective.

All of these issues, and more, were mentioned by President Obama in The State of the Union Message, so let’s get behind him and help on some of these things. Pick YOUR favorites, and call,

email, and sign on to the “2 Minute Activist”! (If you don’t belong to it join up today!) Until next time, have a busy and active political month!

Women’s Legislative Briefing

By Roxann King

For 35 years this annual meeting for Maryland women has been held in Rockville, on January 21, sponsored this year by Kaiser Permanente, AARP (over 60% of its members are women and over 90% of its members vote in elections) and various women’s profession groups and sororities in Maryland, including AAUW. It is the only meeting of its kind in Maryland, or in any state. It is not the same as attending an MLAW briefing or reception, in which the bills that will or may be supported this year are described. The main difference is the break-out sessions, in which panels of activists engaged in dealing with legal problems in areas of concern to women and families describe the problems they have confronted and possible actions being taken.

I attended two break-out sessions: Immigration and Family Safety/Human Trafficking. The Immigration panel included several representatives from activist organizations were themselves immigrants; the legal aide to Nancy Navarro, legislator from Montgomery County; and the director of the ACLU Immigrant Protection Program. This panel discussed:

- The need to get out the minority vote in primaries: that is where the candidates are determined.
- The need to expand the Dream Act so that fewer children end up being placed in foster care upon being separated from their parents.
- The importance of issuing valid social security documents to immigrants, who most often pay into Social Security using false numbers, and never benefit from those contributions.

All of the members of the Family Safety/Human Trafficking panel were women lawyers, three of whom were members of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force. The panel discussed:

- SB 78 which would deny parental rights to perpetrators of rape, similar to how perpetrators of other violent family crimes

are denied, using clear and convincing evidence, not conviction, as the prerequisite.

- Design of a Safe Harbor program for children under 16 charged with prostitution and/or found to be victims of human trafficking. The child would be immune, but put in a diversionary program, modeled on best practices in such programs in 27 other states.
- The Affirmative Defense Bill, which would strike all prior prostitution convictions from the record of a victim of human trafficking. Currently victims have great difficulty entering the work force because of a criminal record.

The meeting was attended by around 300 supporters of women and family issues, including at least 30 federal, state or local legislators. The keynote speaker, Ann Lewis, worked as communications director for President Clinton, left to work in Hillary’s campaign, and worked before and during all of Barbara Mikulski’s campaigns. Her presentation included:

- “We want to change what Senators look like...”
- “The most effective way to reach people with a political message is to see it on the Facebook page of a friend.
- It is easier to elect women than it is to get legislation passed.

I will not miss next year’s event. I hope others will join me there.

LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND

By Sigrid Dorf

The Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) works to challenge sex discrimination in higher education and the workplace. Their resources range from community outreach programs to backing of major cases.

Sex discrimination today takes a variety of forms: unfair pay, pregnancy discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, and violations of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and can affect both women and men. LAF addresses these barriers by informing people of their rights and using the legal system to seek justice and change.

One of the cases that they supported which was recently settled is *Sun v. University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth*.

Plaintiff Lulu Sun, who received case support from LAF, was awarded significant damages, including \$200,000 for emotional distress. Sun, an English professor, alleged sex and race discrimination in the promotion process. In 2011 a hearing officer ruled that the university had unlawfully discriminated against Sun by denying her application in the promotion process. The hearing officer ordered the university to promote Sun to full professor with retroactive pay, pay Sun emotional distress damages, and conduct an eight-hour anti-discrimination training. The university appealed part of the decision but in May 2014 the full commission upheld the initial ruling in Sun's favor.

If you would like to receive the monthly email LAF Express, send an email to: laf@aauw.org to add your name to the mailing list.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

By Terry Saylor

A FEW WILLING WOMEN WANTED!!

The Branch Nominating Committee (Michele Hauf, Roxann King, Kay Monk, Pat Strott-Wheatley, and Terry Saylor) are looking for interested and enthusiastic members to fill the following four positions for the next 2 years: 2nd Vice President Membership, Secretary, Treasurer, and Nominating Committee (1). If you and a friend would like to co-lead, we welcome your interest. Please contact Terry Saylor at 410-757-2446 or saylerry2@gmail.com ASAP. (Please note new email address for Terry.)

Standing for co-1st Vice President-Programs is Mary-Lynne Neil. Rita Strom will be one of the 2 nominees to replace 2 members of the Nominating Committee

Transfer Scholarship

By Barbara Marder

All three of our transfer scholarship recipients for the current year achieved honor grades for the fall term and are fully registered for spring. They continue to be grateful for our assistance and demonstrate the high standards for which they were selected.

Applications for the 2015-2016 Transfer Scholarship are now available. The women selected to receive the scholarship(s) will be introduced at our May luncheon. Again the criteria for selection include transfer from Anne Arundel Community College with 3.0 or higher overall grade average, residence in Anne Arundel County, eligibility for junior standing at their receiving four-year institution, and potential for outstanding service in their chosen community or career. Please note current high school graduates or women having completed only one year of college work are not eligible for this scholarship.

Applications are available from the AACC Office of Financial Aid, directly from Barbara Marder, Transfer Scholarship Chair, or online on the branch website. Notice of this scholarship will be sent to the current faculty/ staff of AACC in mid-March, asking them to inform women they feel would be worthy candidates. Their assistance has been providing us with a challenging pool of worthy candidates the last few years. Completed applications are due by April 3.

The Transfer Scholarship Committee would welcome one or two new members this year. Our current committee membership has been unchanged for three years and a portion of the committee would like to move to other service activities after this session. If you are interested please contact Barbara or another committee member: Terry Saylor, Maggie Cullman, and Sam Hackman.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

By Alice Harrison

There are numerous resources for AAUW Anne Arundel County members to keep up with what is going on in our branch. We invite you to take advantage of these information sources. Have you checked out our web site as created by Roxann King? It's excellent and includes information that members will find illuminating. It's an excellent resource for checking on upcoming dates and subjects of meetings and get-togethers.

We also have a presence on Facebook and we need all members to "like" it. Please thank Cindy Neseth for giving the Book Sale a Facebook presence and Roxann for putting our AAUW branch in touch via social media.

As one of your Membership Co-Chair, please feel free to call me, Alice Harrison at 410-956-5140 or Markonette Richardson, (Co-Chair) at 240-605-4801. If we don't have an answer to your question, we will find it and get it to you. You can consider us as another resource in addition to our web site and our Facebook page.

And don't forget this newsletter. Published most months, it includes information about what your branch is currently involved with. Editor Dot Gibson, 410-266-8930, would love to hear your thoughts on her monthly efforts on our behalf.

FEBRUARY OUTING

Washington DC trip to the National Museum for Women in the Arts. (See following article for interesting history written by Carolin Head.)

Date: Saturday, February 28. Time 9:15am to about 3pm. Museum admission fee is \$8:00/person. Lunch reservations are for 1 pm at CoCo Sala, 929 F Street.

Carpool: We'll all meet at the Festival Shopping Center off Riva Rd, Annapolis, in front of Michaels, and carpool from there. We will need at least 3 drivers. Gas and parking fee will be shared by each car (gas \$6 and estimated parking \$15). We will leave Annapolis Festival Shopping Center at

9:15am, arriving at the Museum by 10:15 leaving us about 2.5 hours to enjoy the exhibits. Directions to the parking garage will be provided.

For reservations call or text Cheryl Menke at 443-221-3338 or email her at camenke2@hotmail.com.

Women's Museum/AAUW connection

The following is a note from our long time member Carolin Head regarding AAUW's role in establishing a women's museum in DC. Carolin writes:

This article is to inform members that AAUW was quite instrumental in the founding of this museum by Wilhemina Holliday, who had collected tons of forgotten art by women in her travels throughout the world--putting her wealth to good use indeed. When she approached AAUW for help in this venture, the national board sent two of us on the staff--Amy Swauger and I--to Wilhemina Holliday's house in Georgetown to see what she had. It was everywhere...stacked up on the floors, on the walls, on shelves, on tables, in bedrooms and even bathrooms. Amy and I were so stunned; we hardly knew what to say! A result of that visit was that Mrs. Holliday was invited to address our national AAUW convention the next year. The AAUW national board decided to donate \$5K to the museum and publicized it widely to help get it started...so that is why you will see AAUW listed on the display as you enter that beautiful building, which was formerly owned by the Masons, a Masonic temple (my Dad and both grandfathers were Masons).

Carolin Head

Morning Book Club

By Pat Eggleston

The morning book club meeting will be held at the home of Polly Wilson, 736 Trenton Ave. in Severna Park on Wednesday, March 4, 2015 at 10:30 a.m. We will discuss the book Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital by Sheri Fink. Call Polly to let her know you are coming. Her phone number is 410-544-5635.

Evening Book Club
By Sam Hackman

The book for our next meeting is: *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd.
Mary Ellen Gick will moderate and Stacey Hilder will host on Wednesday, March 18th at 7:30 PM.
Read the Amazon description below of our March book selection:
“This exquisitely written novel is a triumph of storytelling that looks with unswerving eyes at a devastating wound in American history, through women whose struggles for liberation, empowerment, and expression will leave no reader unmoved.”
Please feel free to join our group!
Contact samhackman@hotmail.com for further details.

GREAT DECISIONS
By Terry Sayler

Interested in current events here and worldwide? Want to discuss topics ranging from “Privacy in the Digital Age” to “Sectarianism in the Middle East”? Join the Great Decisions group which meets monthly at members’ homes to watch a video from the Foreign Policy Association on a topic, engage in discussion about the topic and feed your mind. The next meeting is on “Russia and the Near Abroad” on March 18 at 9:30AM. Please contact Terry Sayler at email: saylerterry2@gmail.com if you would like to join us.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 2/28 – Saturday – trip to National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. - led by Cheryl Menke – camenke2@hotmail.com – See details in the body of this newsletter.
3/4 – Wednesday – Morning Book Club – Polly Wilson, hostess – 410-544-5635 – 10:30 a.m.
3/9 – Monday – AAUW Regular Meeting at Woods Church in Severna Park – Topic: TBD – 7:30 p.m.
3/11 – Wednesday - AAUW Board Meeting – Pat Strott-Wheatley, hostess – pbsw@comcast.net – 7:30 p.m.
3/18 – Wednesday – Great Decisions – Current events discussion – contact Terry Sayler at: saylerterry2@gmail.com for more information – 9:30 a.m.
3/18 – Wednesday – Evening Book Club –Stacey Hilder, hostess – stacey861@verizon.net – 7:30 p.m.
4/13 – Monday – AAUW Regular Meeting at Woods Church in Severna Park – 7:30 p.m.
5/2 – Saturday – Annual Spring Luncheon – Chartwell Country Club – 11 a.m. Save the Date!