

AAUW NEWS OF NOTE

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Mission Statement: AAUW advances equity for all women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.
Vision Statement: AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls.

HINGHAM AREA BRANCH

SEPTEMBER 2011

CALENDAR

September 13, Tuesday	Branch Meeting, 6:30 PM Potluck Supper Donovan Farm Way, Norwell
September 20, Tuesday	Book Discussion Group, 7:00 PM book: <u>Room</u> by Emma Donohue home of Carol O'Sullivan Hanley
September 22, Thursday	Declutter Bugs, 4:30 PM Panera's, Derby Street Shoppes, Hingham
September 20, Tuesday	Adventures in Dining, 6:30 PM Port 305, Marina Bay
September 22, Thursday	Girls' Game Night. 7:00 PM home of Gail Saccone

POTLUCK SUPPER

The annual potluck supper is coming up on September 13. It will again be held at Donovan Farm Way in Norwell and will start at 6:30 pm. Please RSVP to me and let me know what dish you can bring so we can make sure we have enough in the categories of salad/side dish, main dish and dessert. We can also have wine if people want to sign up to bring it. Coffee, tea and bottled water will be provided. Don't forget to bring your own place setting! It might be a good idea to carpool if you can, since the parking lot at the Donovan Farm clubhouse is pretty small. Parking on the street is limited, and parking on the grass is not permitted.

We need people to help set up and clean up afterwards. If you can help with this, please let me know when you RSVP. You can contact me at 781-335-6912 or poetessusan1@verizon.net I hope to see you there!

Susan Mahan
Social Committee

Directions to Donovan Farms: Take Route 53 to 123E (Main Street). Follow Main Street for 1.8 miles, past Town Hall and Norwell Middle School until you reach Circuit Street. Take a right on Circuit and follow past Pleasant Street. Stay left at the fork in the road. Go up a little rise in the road, and there'll be a sign for Donovan Farms on the right. Once you're in the complex, the road is one-way and circular. Follow it around 180 degrees from where you enter the one way road, until you get to #17, a green clubhouse building on your left.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone –

I'm very excited to be taking over from Sheila as president of the branch,, and I'm looking forward to my new role at both the local and the state level. Working together with a great board, I'm confident we can keep our branch strong and growing.

Thanks to all who worked over the summer planning wonderful events and to those who worked getting us ready for the fall. We have some wonderful plans for a fundraiser in the works and we'll keep you posted on the group that is investigating the possibility of changing the name of our branch. Our upcoming programs look like they'll have something for everyone and the October state-wide meeting on Human Trafficking should prove very valuable in helping us fulfill our mission. Women and children enslaved by this terrible trade need our voices to speak for them now more than ever, and this meeting will give us a chance to learn more about what we can do. I'm looking forward to seeing you all at Potluck. Enjoy the remaining days of summer!

Pat Laidler

A NOTE FROM SHEILA

I want to thank you all for your help during my Presidency over the last four years. I was truly blest to have such an able and friendly board. I now turn the position of President over to a wonderful leader, Pat Laidler. She will be elected at Pot Luck. I know this year's board will support Pat as they did me. Thank you,

Sheila

DECLUTTER BUGS

The next Declutter Bugs meeting will be on Thursday, September 22, 2011 at 4:30 at Panera at The Derby Street Shoppes in Hingham. Anyone looking for fun and feedback on how to get rid of those mountains that seem to grow from nothing is welcome to join us.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Attention, every member coming to the Potluck on Sept 13! Bring an acquaintance to this fun meeting and get a chance to win a free membership to national next year! Also, if the new person joins that night, she can get half off of the dues - what a bargain. Will you all look for opportunities to tell others about the AAUW mission and goal to help women and encourage them to join us to further our goals? Remember, most people also want to eat and have fun, and Potluck is a great start. See you then.

Deanne Noiseux

Send contact information to me at 1-781-545-5247 or deebythesea2@gmail.com and I will give them info on our organization and meetings. Thanks, dnoiseux.

PUBLIC POLICY

Health Care Reform Loses Court Battle: The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit ruled 2-1 that a provision of the 2010 Affordable Care Act is unconstitutional. The court said in response to a lawsuit from 26 states, that *Congress exceeded its authority by requiring Americans to purchase health insurance, but allowed the rest of the law to remain in effect.* This overturns part of a ruling by a district judge in Florida that sought to void the health care law entirely. The law will likely come before the Supreme Court as early as next term. Although the court decision did not touch on the provisions in the law that provide for free or subsidized preventive care for women and girls, some are concerned the savings created by the law will disappear if the “individual mandate” is ruled unconstitutional.

College Grads’ Earnings Vary by Gender, Race, Field: People with bachelor’s degrees earn an average of 84 percent more across their lifetimes than those without them, according to a new report by Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce. At the same time, the report warned that gender and race are factors that can trump other predictors of earnings. At every degree level people of color earn less than whites and women earn less than men. For example, the report found that a man who does not complete college is likely to have about the same salary as a woman who graduates with a bachelor’s degree. Earnings also vary by field, with those in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields earning more than those in other fields – even those with higher degrees. The research showed that a person with a career in a STEM field who has not completed college will usually earn close to 30 percent more than a teacher with a master’s degree.

Debt Crisis Rooted in GOP Transformation?: The Washington Post has called the debt crisis a “natural outgrowth” of a transformation of the Republican party rather than a routine partisan clash. An article detailed the organizing efforts of the party’s “Young Guns,” such as House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA), who in recent years traveled the country recruiting candidates for office who were committed to shrinking government spending. The Post chronicled the shift of the debt ceiling vote from a routine measure to the Young Guns’ use of it as a leveraging tool to slash the budget. AAUW strongly supports public budgets that balance individual rights and responsibility to the community. During the debt ceiling negotiations, AAUW paid close attention to the status of our priorities — especially retirement security and education funding — and AAUW members kept the pressure on their legislators to protect important programs like Social Security, which was signed into law 76 years ago on August 14.

DOJ Files Suit Against For-Profit College Company: the Department of Justice and four states (California, Florida, Illinois, and Indiana) filed a fraud lawsuit against the Education Management Corporation, one of the country’s largest for-profit college companies, The suit charges that the college falsely certified that it complied with federal regulations against paying recruiters for enrolling students and therefore should not have been eligible for the \$11 billion in financial aid it received in the past nine years. The Education Management Corporation, which enrolls approximately 150,000 students among its schools and is 41 percent owned by Goldman Sachs, has denied wrongdoing. This is the first time the federal government has involved itself in a lawsuit in which whistle-blowers in a for-profit college company have reported that recruiters are receiving “incentive compensation” based on student enrollment.

Newsweek Draws Fire for Bachmann Cover: Women’s groups have blasted Newsweek for sexism following the magazine’s recent cover story on presidential candidate Michelle Bachmann. The cover contained a photo that many said makes Bachmann look crazy next to a headline reading “Queen of Rage.” Conservative and progressive women alike have come to Bachmann’s defense. This is not the first time Newsweek has faced accusations of sexism. Most notably, the magazine was criticized for its cover featuring Sarah Palin in 2008.

New York City Requires Comprehensive Sex Education: New York City’s public middle and high schools will be required to teach sex-education classes starting this school year. The classes will include lessons on how to use a

condom, the risk of pregnancy, and the appropriate age for sexual activity. Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration hopes this will improve the lives of black and Latino teenagers who are statistically more likely to have unplanned pregnancies and contract STDs. The mandate requires one semester of sex education in sixth or seventh grade and again in ninth or 10th grade. Parents will be able to opt their children out of lessons on birth control methods. Nationally, the Guttmacher Institute reports that between 2006 and 2008 one in four teenagers received abstinence-only education.

Illinois DREAM Act Becomes Law: Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn signed into law a bill that will provide college scholarships to students whose parents are documented or undocumented immigrants. The law creates a commission to raise private money for the scholarships. Following California and Maryland, Illinois is the third state with a Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act. However, Maryland's law has now been stalled by a petition drive and is expected to be on the 2012 ballot. The state DREAM Acts differ from the federal DREAM Act (H.R. 1842, S. 952), which failed to pass the Senate last year, in that a state cannot include a path to citizenship. The federal DREAM Act has been referred to Senate and House subcommittees this year.

Debt Deal Reached: Congress and the White House reached a last-minute agreement to avert default on the national debt. The legislation allows President Barack Obama to increase the debt limit by up to \$2.4 trillion, with up to \$400 billion of that available immediately. The agreement requires that nearly \$1 trillion in spending cuts be implemented over 10 years through caps on discretionary spending. This includes programs such as Head Start, K-12 education, family planning, job training, and services for the elderly. However, changes in graduate student loan financing mean that the maximum Pell Grant award level will remain intact for at least the next two years. The bill creates a special 12-member, bipartisan committee to identify up to \$1.5 trillion in deficit reduction through changes to entitlements, discretionary programs, and tax reform. The committee's proposal is subject to a straight up-or-down vote from Congress. If the package is not completed or not approved by Congress, then automatic across-the-board spending cuts of at least \$1.2 trillion would be enacted over the next decade. The automatic enforcement mechanism excludes cuts to Social Security, Medicare beneficiaries, and low-income programs; however, cuts to these programs can be recommended by the special committee. Women's groups have raised concern that reductions in all or some of these programs will be a part of the long-term deal.

Violence Surges Against LGBTQH Community: Violent crimes against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and HIV-affected (LGBTQH) community are on the rise. Hate crimes against LGBTQH people rose 13 percent from 2009 to 2010. *Last year marked the second-highest number of LGBTQH persons murdered since 1996.* An estimated half of all hate crime victims did not report the crimes to the police, and 61 percent of victims who reported the crimes experienced indifferent or abusive police attitudes. Among victims of violence, people of color and transgender people faced the worst violence with 70 percent of the 27 LGBTQH-motivated murders comprised of their demographic.

Affirmative Action May Be Headed to Supreme Court: Affirmative action may again come before the Supreme Court following recent lower-court decisions. In 2003, the Supreme Court ruled in *Grutter v. Bollinger* that race was an acceptable consideration in the admissions decisions of public universities within strict parameters. Recently, cases in both Texas and Michigan have emerged that are likely to spark Supreme Court attention. The Texas case upheld a race-conscious admissions policy at the University of Texas at Austin. The Michigan case overturned a constitutional amendment that prohibited affirmative action in public universities.

GOP Pushes School Vouchers in States: Republicans in at least 30 states have introduced school voucher bills this year – more than ever before – and 28 states have looked at giving tax breaks to those paying private school tuition bills. The vouchers would send poor or special needs children to private schools using taxpayer dollars. At least six states have passed voucher or tax credit bills this year. Prior to this year, these types of programs operated in 12 states and Washington, D.C.

AAUW believes a strong, free public education system is the foundation of a democratic society and has long opposed diverting public funds to private or religious elementary and secondary schools. The appropriate strategy

for improving our nation's schools is to direct resources toward improving public schools to provide an excellent education for all children.

Gender Wage Gap Smaller in STEM Careers: A new U.S. Commerce Department report found that women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers experience greater economic parity with men. The department's Economic and Statistics Administration report, titled *Women in STEM: A Gender Gap to Innovation*, said women with STEM jobs made 33 percent more than women with non-STEM jobs in 2009; however, only 24 percent of women in the United States hold STEM careers. Engineering, which remains the most male-dominated STEM career, offers the lowest wage disparity between genders.

Denver May Require Paid Sick Days: Mandatory paid sick days will be on the ballot in Denver this November. The initiative received almost twice the number of signatures needed to bring it to a vote. If passed, the measure would require employers in Denver to grant nine days of paid sick leave each year to full-time employees and a prorated amount of sick leave to part-time employees. Businesses with fewer than 10 full-time employees would be required to provide five days of sick leave. Polling shows that two-thirds of Denver voters support the measure. Opponents contend that the initiative may force businesses out of Denver and damage the city's economy.

Black Women Suffer More during Economic Recovery: Black women have disproportionately suffered job losses during the first two years of the economic recovery, according to the National Women's Law Center. Although women overall have lost jobs during this time, black women have recorded greater increases in unemployment than other groups, including black men. The unemployment rate for black females in 2010 was 12.8 percent compared to an unemployment rate of 7.2 percent for white women.