



BEDFORD-LEXINGTON AREA BRANCH
FEBRUARY 2010

Breaking Through Barriers for Women and Girls

**FEBRUARY PROGRAM: IS THAT YOUR CHILD?
MOTHERS TALK ABOUT
REARING BIRACIAL CHILDREN
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 11:30 AM
BEDFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Authors Marion Kilson and Florence Ladd will discuss their book with the above title.

“Is that your child?” is a question that countless mothers of biracial children in the US encounter, whether they are African Americans or European American, rearing children today or a generation ago, living in the city or the suburbs, are upper-middle class or middle-class. In the book the authors probed mothers’ responses to this query as well as their accounts of other challenges and rewards of parenting biracial children.

The authors started by sharing their own experiences. Marion Kilson, a European American, and Florence Ladd, an African American, became parents of biracial children in the 1960s and 70s, respectively. Curious about the commonalities and differences between their experiences and those of other such mothers, they interviewed many other women in the Greater Boston area. The responses were candid and showed that some issues transcended generations and others were specific to one generation.

This program will share the information gathered in the research for *IS THAT YOUR CHILD? MOTHERS TALK ABOUT REARING BIRACIAL CHILDREN*, a book that fills a gap in social science literature.

Co-author Florence Ladd is also a social critic and psychologist. She’s written a novel, *Sarah’s*

Psalm, which received the 1997 best fiction award from the American Library Association’s Black Caucus. She’s also written short stories and research articles. She is a graduate of Howard University (B.S) and the University of Rochester (Ph.D.). She’s held a number of positions as a teacher and administrator at colleges and universities. She lives in Cambridge, MA and Cote-d’Or in France.

Our branch member and co-author, Marion D. de B. Kilson, went to Radcliffe (B.A.), Stanford (M.A.), and Harvard (Ph.D.) with degrees in Anthropology and Social Anthropology. She also has been both a teacher and administrator in higher education. She’s widely published and has even spoken to Bedford-Lexington Area now and then!

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CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Sue Giurleo and Dot Hart Rand

January meeting

For those who missed the January daytime meeting, it was a real learning experience for all of us. We followed the careers of four women who now work for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at their headquarters in Concord. We had at least one student in the audience and I wish more had been there. A valuable suggestion to pass on to your children, grandchildren, and friends is that science majors need to possess a sense of curiosity and it really helps to have role models and/or mentors.

I was amazed that none of the four were conscious of having experienced discrimination due to their gender. But it seems the Corps is trying to increase the number of females in their professional workforce. They did agree they still find some men addressing a male at a field visit or meeting, even if the woman is the most knowledgeable person or the person leading the meeting.

I should add that I continue to get *Green Mountain AAUW* and I noticed that our former member, Diane Telford, State Program Chair in Vermont, mentioned Ruth's STEM program in her search for new program ideas for Vermont branches.

Two-Minute Activist ("TMA")

I hope you are using this way to communicate with our legislators. If you are not using this, it is not that difficult to thank them by e-mail for supporting AAUW's equity issues or to tell them of your disappointment. Recently I thanked Senator Kerry because he scored

100% on the issues that matter to our members: economic security, education and civil right for women and girls.

Our newly elected Senator should be hearing from us so that he knows what AAUW stands for and that his voting record is available to us. AAUW also keeps track of any legislation that our senators sponsor.

Directions to the TMA

Go to www.AAUW.org and then to the Member Center. Enter your ID number (found above your name on the label for *Outlook* or any snail mail). Click on "Take Action" and Two Minute Activist comes up. Scroll down and follow the directions.

There will be a first sentence of required text that explains who we are. Next there are several talking points and you can select one or two or write your own personal story (encouraged). The last paragraph also is mandatory. Then sign your name as required and submit. The email goes directly to your legislator.

If you like the talking points, it takes about 2 minutes to complete. If you have something of your own to compose, it may take a little longer.

Did you know that our branch celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2012? Please save memorabilia that you still have. In the meantime I hope some of you can produce a written history.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Catherine Boyd of Concord
Wendy Rudner of Lexington

AAUW RELEASES 1ST-YEAR REPORT ON OBAMA

WASHINGTON - AAUW today [1/14/10] announces the release of a comprehensive analysis of President Barack Obama's first year in office and the AAUW Action Fund scorecard of congressional votes. These materials demonstrate that real progress is being made on the issues that matter most to women and their families.

The Obama Administration's First Year: A Progress Report on AAUW Priority Issues, available at www.aauw.org, and the *Congressional Voting Record* for the first session of the 111th Congress, available at www.aauwaction.org, outline the AAUW priority issues that became law in 2009.

Last year, AAUW was instrumental in the passage of several pieces of legislation, including the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which provides funding for job training, a \$500 Pell grant increase, and an unemployment insurance increase.

"Overall, AAUW is pleased to report that Washington has heard the concerns of American women and taken the right steps toward addressing some of our nation's most serious problems with respect to economic security, work-life balance, education, and civil rights," said AAUW Executive Director Linda D. Hallman, CAE. "However, much work remains to be done as we push for sustainable change and equity for women and girls."

"Our assessments of both the administration and Congress will serve as valuable tools to help inform the political debate and will assist voters as they participate in 2010 primary elections," said Lisa Maatz, AAUW director of public policy and government relations. "As a nonpartisan organization with members in every Congressional district, our main goals with these publications are to highlight significant achievements of the past year and to hold our elected and appointed officials accountable."

The *Congressional Voting Record* and *The Obama Administration's First Year: A Progress Report on AAUW Priority Issues* include the following highlights:

- The *Congressional Voting Record* provides AAUW members and the public with critical information on how their members of Congress voted on issues affecting women and girls in 2009. New this year, AAUW also scores legislators on their co-sponsorship of key legislation. When a member co-sponsors a bill, it demonstrates initiative on and commitment to the issue and gives the bill momentum. Our 2009 successes include House passage of the Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act, Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, and more than 100 House co-sponsors of the Healthy Families Act, which would provide employees seven paid sick-leave days per year. Disappointments include the House Stupak vote, Senate efforts to advance school vouchers, and Senate failure to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.
- *The Obama Administration's First Year: A Progress Report on AAUW Priority Issues* delves into issues of pay equity, job security, reproductive rights, education, and work-life balance. It offers a close look at the administration's progress and identifies areas in which more work can be done. The administration's first-year successes include the launch of Educate to Innovate, a campaign to improve math and science education; the confirmation of Justice Sonia Sotomayor, the first Latina and third woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court; and the creation of the White House Council on Women and Girls, which keeps issues related to gender equity at the forefront of the executive branch. AAUW was disappointed with the Obama administration's lack of public support for the Paycheck Fairness Act and silence over the Stupak amendment to the health care reform bill, as well as their support for continued federal funding for private school vouchers. AAUW is further concerned with the administration's surprisingly slow pace on judicial and executive branch nominations; the Senate's advice and consent role notwithstanding, the administration must take a stronger stand with respect to filling these vital positions.

**Hear ye! Hear ye! The census is coming; the census is coming!
Be sure to participate and encourage others to do so as well.**

END GENDER RATING FOR ALL WOMEN

One of AAUW's key priorities in the health care reform debate is an end to the discriminatory practice of gender rating. While the Senate's health care reform bill makes some steps in this area, it falls disappointingly short of the ultimate goal.

Under the House bill, insurance companies are banned from charging men and women different premiums for individually-purchased health care plans, and are also banned from charging employers different premiums based on the gender make-up of their workforce. However, the Senate bill fails to provide this protection to businesses with more than 100 workers. As a result, women working for large employers with majority female workforces, like schools, child care providers,

health care facilities, and others will continue to face this discriminatory pricing. Similarly, their employers will continue to face significantly higher health care costs simply because they employ more women. As the two bills are merged into one, **contact your members of Congress now** to urge them to end this discriminatory practice for all women, regardless of the size of their workplace.

Women should not be subjected to discrimination under any circumstances, let alone based on such factors as the size of their employers or the gender of their coworkers. Gender rating can result in women's monthly premiums ranging from four percent to 48 percent higher than men's, even when under identical coverage. Not only could the Sen-

ate bill's arbitrary distinction encourage employers to hire more men than women to avoid higher premiums, it could also stifle job growth for businesses near the 100-person mark that employ a higher proportion of women.

In October, a group of 25 senators sent a letter urging their colleagues to end this discriminatory practice for all employers, regardless of size. Urge your members of Congress to do the same.

Take Action!

Write your members of Congress and urge them to ensure that the ban on gender rating is extended to all employers, regardless of their size, as the health care bills are combined.

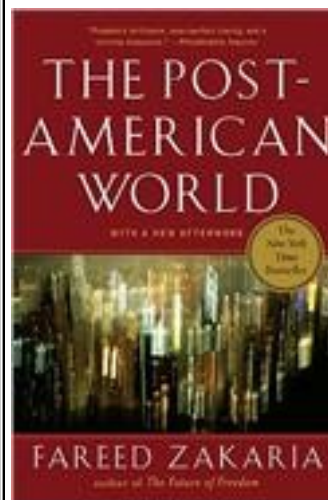
SUPPORT TO HAITI THROUGH AAUW

Many AAUW-MA members have inquired as to how to help Haitian earthquake victims. AAUW and AAUW-MA are partners with CARE (www.care.org). If you are looking for a safe and secure way to help, CARE would welcome your donations. You may reach their donation page at <http://bit.ly/4X63HY>

For the convenience of our members, Hollie Bagley has posted the links on our state website: www.aauw-ma.org.

BOOK GROUP

CHANGE OF DATE!



The Book Group will meet on Wednesday, February 24th at 1:00 PM at the home of Mary Brzezinski, 43 Robinson Road, Lexington. Irene Shea will lead the discussion on *The Post American World* by Fareed Zakaria.

For more information, call Joan Zinderman at 978-371-5647.

JUDGE RULES “JUSTIFIABLE HOMICIDE” DEFENSE POSSIBLE IN ROEDER TRIAL

On Tuesday, January 12, Kansas Judge Warren Wilbert ruled for a second time that attorneys for Scott Roeder, the man who confessed to the murder of Dr. George Tiller in May 2009, may argue a "justifiable homicide" defense under a plea of voluntary manslaughter. Under Kansas law, voluntary manslaughter is defined as "an unreasonable but honest belief that circumstances existed that justified deadly force."

On both sides of the abortion debate, many believe the final decision may influence others to

kill abortion providers because of the possibility of a lower sentence for voluntary manslaughter. According to the [Associated Press](#), Don Spitz, a supporter of Scott Roeder and website manager for the Army of God said that this decision "may increase the number of people who may be willing to take that risk." [Feminist Majority Foundation](#) Executive Vice President Katherine Spiller agreed saying, "Let there be no mistake, the rulings of Kansas Judge Warren Wilbert are being seen by extremists as a green light for

those who would murder abortion providers."

AAUW supports the right of every woman to safe, accessible, affordable, and comprehensive family planning and reproductive health services. This position stems from AAUW's [2009-2011 Public Policy Program](#), which advocates, "choice in the determination of one's reproductive life ... increased access to health care and family planning services including expansion of patients' rights."



UNSUNG HEROINES OF MASSACHUSETTS

The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is proud to host the 2010 Unsung Heroines of Massachusetts initiative which, through your nominations, will identify and honor 100 extraordinary women from across the Commonwealth.

Thousands of women from every community of the state perform unheralded acts on a daily basis that make our homes, neighborhoods, cities and towns better places to live. They are the Unsung Heroines who use their time, talent, spirit and enthusiasm to enrich the lives of others. They are mentors, volunteers and innovators. They are the glue that keeps a community together, they are the spark that gets things started and gets things done...they care about other people and it shows.

They don't make the news, they make the difference!

For additional information, contact Ellen Fahey at 617-626-6521 or mcsw@state.ma.us.

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AAUW's Value Promise

By joining AAUW, you belong to a community that breaks through educational and economic barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

MARCH NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: Friday, February 19

SPIKE IN WOMEN AMBASSADORS DUBBED “HILLARY EFFECT”

The Washington Post published an [article](#) on Monday (unsurprisingly, in the Arts and Style section) on "the Hillary effect," noting the 25 female ambassadors in Washington as the highest number of women in history representing their countries in the United States. While women remain a clear minority of the 182 total ambassadors in Washington, their numbers have quintupled since the late 1990s.

Many attribute the rise in women ambassadors to the US as a direct result of increases in high-ranking women, like Secretaries of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Condoleeza Rice and Madeline Albright, to US diplomat positions.

LEXINGTON HOUSING PARTNERSHIP REPORT

Unfortunately, the Lexington Housing Partnership did not win or place in one of the top three spots in Cambridge Savings Bank's 175th Anniversary Celebration affordable housing grants program. We did, however, come in fourth behind the Cambridge Housing Assistance Fund, National Center for Homelessness (Newton), and Caritas Communities Bedford Vets Quarters. The partnership, through its Foundation, will receive a grant of \$5000 for affordable housing initiatives.

A big thank you to those of you who voted for us last year. Although the Lexington Housing Partnership did not win one of the top awards, it appreciated support from all segments of the community.
—Florence Baturin

PUBLIC POLICY—POINTS FROM LOIS PULLIAM

Some bills you may want to write your Congressman about supporting are:

- Healthy Families Act, (HR2460/1152), the Pandemic Protection for Workers, Families, and Businesses Act (H.R.4092/S./2790), and
- Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act (H.R.626/S.354).

According to the AAUW Washington Update (which you can read yourself online), gender matters in hiring practices at institutions of higher learning. A study released by the Cornell Higher Education Research Institute concluded that, when it comes to hiring female faculty members, having a woman in the top job or the number two slot makes a difference. The study also found that having a critical mass of women also makes a difference in terms of the number of female faculty

hired. Also, the extent of the impact of women in these leadership positions is greater at smaller institutions. Another Cornell study shows that women have made slow but steady progress in their representation on college boards, jumping from 20 percent to 31 percent between 1981 and 2007.

Remember that--if you use a computer--you can get onto the AAUW TAKE ACTION PAGE of the website and sign up for ActionNetwork. You can also print up flyers about the subject in which you are interested!

Needless to add: watch Congressional Action on the proposed health insurance bills with the addition of a new Massachusetts senator in opposition.