



AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITY
WOMEN

2009–2010 Leadership

Co-Presidents

Mary Lynn Merkle 404/633-7183
Ruth Yurchuck 770/934-1536

Program Co-Vice Presidents

Diana Luykx 404/915-9595
Diana Witt 678/372-1530

Membership Vice President

Dot Ransom 770/448-0887

Recording Secretaries

Board Meetings
Angela Walton 404/617-4735
Branch Meetings
TBA

Treasurer

Alta Birdsong 770/394-2681

College/University Relations

Betty Slater 404/237-6806

Community Action

Tami Anderson 404/875-9503

Diversity Co-Chairs

Marie Bonheur-Gulotta 678/765-2645
Bea Meyer 404/634-0305

Historian

Sarah Rondeau 404/257-0304

Hospitality

Anne Habersetzer 770/394-0671
Frances Smith 404/231-0482

Public Policy

Angela Walton 404/617-4735

Public Relations

Betty Slater 404/237-6806

Scholarship Co-Chairs

May Ruth Bradberry 770/399-7628
Barbara Buchanan 770/998-2444

Web Information

Terry Eshenour 770/698-0852

Finance Committee Co-Chairs

Huiping Du 404/365-0372
Lynn Fountain 404/256-4768

Contemporary Literature

Kay Collins 404/266-2183

Travel, Day

Betty Arden 770/955-6381

Gourmet, Evening

Sally Byers 770/491-3781

Advisory Committee Chair

Kay Collins 404/266-2183

Publications Editor

Stephanie Babbitt 404/296-7571

ATLANTA BRANCH NEWS

Vol. 60, No. 2 ❖ October 2009

October Meeting: Women and the Law

Please join us for our next meeting on October 17, 2009, at 11:00 a.m..

Our speaker for October 17 will be Dianne O'Donnell, an attorney and gerontologist with Hurley Elder Care Law. She is an advocate for Georgia's elderly population and has worked with the Georgia Council on Aging and the Atlanta Coalition on Aging and Mental Health. She will speak to us on legal and social issues that face women as they age, including retirement, health benefits, and financial planning. We will also hear from one of our other Community Action Grant recipients, Angela's House of the Juvenile Justice Fund.

The speakers will begin at 11:00 a.m., with lunch and our business meeting to follow.

We are meeting at:

The Mint

3683 Clairmont Road

Menu: Egg drop soup (non-spicy)
Chicken and rice (non-spicy)
Mango ice cream
Tea or water

Cost: \$10.00

Reservation Deadline:

Monday, October 12

To make reservations, please e-mail Frances Smith at francesjsmith1921@yahoo.com or telephone Frances at 404/231-0482 ❖

League of Women Voters' Guide

by Betty Slater

With the elections being held on Tuesday, November 3, 2009, we need to decide for whom we will vote. The League of Women Voters has partnered with *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* to produce the 2009 Voter Guide. The website is <http://www.lwvga.org>. When you go to the website, click on the 2009 Voter Guide. You can enter your home address, and the site will list the candidates that will be running in your district. You are able to click on the names and compare the candidates' responses to a list of questions. This Voter Guide will assist each of us in making an educated decision.

Program Reflections

by Diana Witt

The Atlanta Branch Fall Kickoff meeting featured two speakers who focused on one of AAUW's most important projects, the STEM initiative. Our principal speaker was Joy Dike, who is currently completing her Ph.D. thesis for the University of Georgia about the history of science education for women in the U.S. She spoke of how post-Civil War educators became aware that the traditional Euro-centric curriculum, which emphasized Latin and Greek, was completely unsuitable for an increasingly industrial and technological society. She also noted that early science education, which centered around nature study, was considered "suitable" for girls, who clearly were not capable of absorbing the classics and maths!!

Our second speaker was Deborah Bowling of Georgia Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic. She brought us up to date on how technology has changed this indispensable service for sight-impaired students. It is now possible for volunteers to record at home and upload their work to the organization. However, technology has its limits. Ms. Bowling noted that although it is actually now possible to digitally record books, using a computer-generated voice, studies have shown that students seem to learn better and retain more of what they learn when humans are reading the material. Volunteers are still needed for this worthy cause. If you are interested, contact Deborah at dbowling@rfd.org

See you on October 17! ❖

50th Anniversary Bookfair = SUCCESS

Our Bookfair came to a close last Sunday evening after a very busy week of selling books. The final figures are surprisingly good, considering the bad economy, weather disasters, and the fact that we took fewer books to the mall this year. Overall, we will have more money to distribute to the three Branches because our internet sales have continued to escalate.

Another outstanding feature of the 2009 Bookfair was the superb publicity generated by our Publicity Chair, Alta Birdsong. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran an article with two pictures. Our 50th anniversary was the cover story of the *Senior News*. We were mentioned on WABE's noon discussion of Atlanta book events. We know that internet advertising on Facebook and book-sale websites drew large numbers of customers.

Preliminary figures as reported by Alta Birdsong are:

\$62,447.62	Bookfair receipts including sales taxes collected (this figure is \$283 under comparable figures for 2008) (Figure net of \$1500 start-up funds)
21,926.75	NET Online sales through mid-September—will include all sales online through October 31
729.00	Bookroom sales through August
1,455.00	Textbook sales through August

Thus far, there have been no returned checks from 2009 Bookfair, but there may yet be some. The Bookfair costs appear to remain within our allocation of \$27,600. The allocation to branches should



be greater than 2008 due primarily to an increase in online sales. The allocation will be distributed to branches based on total hours worked.

MANY THANKS to all those who worked at the Bookfair and many more thanks to those who also worked in the bookroom. Final reports on finances and the distribution of money to the branches based on hours worked will be published soon as well as more details about a celebration in November honoring those who worked so hard to make Bookfair a success. ❖

Racism: Real or Imagined

by Mary Lynn Merkle

We've heard about "racism" frequently in the last few weeks, coming from such esteemed men as Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton along with many other journalists and talk-show hosts and guests. As soon as one says it's apparent, another says it's just politically motivated.

I just received the latest issue of "Teaching Tolerance," an outstanding teaching tool produced by the Southern Poverty Law Center, and this particular issue addresses ways to teach diverse students. The gamut of diversity was covered; however, I would like to cite information presented on racism in several articles. Some of these quotes may be surprising to some or all of us, and they may provide opportunities for discussion among our members.

1. "The new documentary *Prom Night in Mississippi* tells the story of Charleston, MS, where high-school students ended the school year with their first racially integrated prom—in 2008."

2. "For decades, white students have enjoyed better academic outcomes than most students of color. A similar gap exists between middle-class students and students who live in poverty. These gaps are measured in test scores and dropout rates, but their impact goes far beyond education statistics, affecting who goes to college and who doesn't, who makes a living wage, who becomes the line worker and who becomes the manager. The "achievement gap," as it's known, is arguable the greatest barrier to true equality in America."
3. From a parent who was black commenting on a timeline that included Greeks, Romans, and Incas: "The children have eyes, and they can see. And I'd like them to see that our culture (African) was a strong, viable culture."
4. Racial "colorblindness" is defined as the idea that overlooking or ignoring racial and ethnic differences promotes racial harmony.

5. "Racial "colorblindness" leads the folks who enjoy racial privilege to close their eyes to the experiences of others."
6. "Roughly 80% of American teachers are white, while children of color make up more than 40% of the student body."
7. "Failure to see and acknowledge racial differences makes it difficult to recognize the unconscious biases everyone has."
8. "Food, folklore, and festivals are not the same as an analysis of race in America."
9. "Students identify the cafeteria as the place where divisions are most clearly drawn."

As I read these articles, it became clear that racism and all the other "-isms" need to be confronted in our classrooms. Otherwise we will continue to see and hear hate language in the media and in our neighborhoods. ❖

President's Column: Examining Our Branch

by Ruth Yurchuck

Adoption of the revised national AAUW bylaws was the most important outcome of the recent national convention, followed closely by the election of Georgia's own Carolyn Garfein as national AAUW President. With the new bylaws allowing more flexibility in branch structure, it is important for members to take a closer look at our own branch structure: What kind of branch are we? What kind of branch do we want to be? And how can we organize to make us be that branch we want to be? If we are happy with our current structure and activities, that is fine, but we need to examine our branch to be sure we are going in the right direction. If the membership decides we need a new structure, our bylaws must be amended to reflect this.

One way to look at our branch (or any branch) was suggested by Carlynnne McConnell, Co-Vice President of AAUW California, at the national convention. Stating that all branches are not created equal, she described two basic types of branches, social and mission-based. One type is not "better" than the other, but type reflects how a branch operates. Even though our national organization is moving toward more mission-based efforts, it is up to each branch to choose its path.

In social branches, members belong primarily for specific functions such as lunch, book groups, or interest groups. There is little community collaboration, and members are less diverse in age or race. In mission-based branches, members belong primarily for belief in the organization's mission, and friendship is the by-product. Programming is based on public policy, educational and legal advocacy, and scholarship. Members are more diverse in age and race.

Book Group

Our October meeting will be on Wednesday the 7th. The discussion will be about *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink. The location is the same: Frances Smith's, 1128 Club Trace, Atlanta, 404/231-0482 (Brookhaven area). Mary Hanson will do the review, and Dot Ransom will provide refreshments.

Everyone is welcome even if you haven't read the book! Contact Tami Anderson if you have questions: 404/875-3503. ❖

**Why are you a member of AAUW?
Why did you join AAUW?**

Carlynnne described a healthy branch as one that is welcoming and inclusive, and partners with other organizations. It mentors new members and encourages participation. A major goal should be active members, not just "younger" members. The more interesting we are as a branch, the greater the chance to increase our membership.

To gather some data about what kind of branch we are, I asked those present at our last Board meeting to answer two questions: 1) Why are you a member of AAUW? and 2) Why did you join AAUW? (These are really discussion questions but in the interest of time, members wrote their answers or e-mailed me after the meeting.) Here is a brief summary of responses to each question:

Why are you a member of AAUW?

- to participate in meaningful community-driven projects
- to participate in book club, monthly programs, and Bookfair, and to support women's education
- to keep myself alert and invigorated by reaching outside myself, further the cause of women, explore new dimensions, and be involved
- to connect with a community of women committed to AAUW mission and goals
- to interact with members and make friends
- to pursue lifelong learning

Why did you join AAUW?

- I wanted to meet other women who share values of advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research
- I wanted to be part of a respected organization with a measured approach when advocating for women's issues
- My mother was a member
- I was new to the community and wanted to associate with like-minded women
- I wanted to be involved in delivering services to needed communities
- I wanted to maintain intellectual stimulation
- A friend invited me
- An older woman I admired asked me to join
- I wanted to participate in the Book Group

These answers represent women who have been members for a range of two years to over 35 years. It appears ours is a social- *and* mission-based branch. Individual members also represent a mixture, and we celebrate each of them. This is a dialog that needs to continue as we assess our branch and consider our next steps.

Neither Mary Lynn nor I have any grand plan for making drastic changes at this time, but we want this branch to be healthy and successful. Examining who we are and who we want to be as a branch should assist us in increasing membership numbers and encourage greater activity on the part of the members we have. We welcome your input in making this happen. ❖

Travel Group

The AAUW Travel Group will meet at 9:45 a.m. at the Ansley Mall Kroger store on November 12. Car pools will take the group to the new Sandy Springs Heritage Museum to view the exhibit, "Sandy Springs: Land and People." The museum is located at 6075 Sandy Springs Circle. Lunch will follow. For information, call Betty Arden at 770/955-6381. ❖

Calendar

October

- 4 Board meeting
- 7 Book Group meets
- 8 Travel Group meets
- 17 Branch meeting
- 30 Newsletter deadline

November

- 3 Election Day
- 4 Book Group meets

- 10 Reception for Carolyn Garfein
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 12 Travel Group meets
- 14 Branch meeting
- 22 Board meeting

December

- 2 Book Group meets
- 10 Travel Group meets
- 13 Branch holiday celebration
Silent Auction to benefit RFS Project

AAUW of Georgia Plans and Dreams

Pat DeWitt, president of AAUW of Georgia, is seeking support to implement some of the goals set at the Warner Robins Summer Leadership meeting in July.

Branches are asked to address Public Policy Priorities. They are:

- STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) for girls
- pay equity
- healthcare for women.

Two specific projects were proposed at the meeting. The WAGE Project would train young women in salary negotiation. The other project is the selection of a workplace to receive The Family Friendly Workplace award.

An additional goal is to build up the Student Advisory Council. Betty Slater, from Atlanta branch, has done a terrific job as the State (and local branch) coordinator. However, many of the outstanding women students

on this council have graduated, and new members must be recruited. If you know of a college student or know an administrator or professor at a Georgia college who could recommend a student, contact Betty (bgslater@mindspring.com).

Websites are the key to communication. The State has an outstanding website (developed by Ann McKay) which can be used as a model for branches.

AAUW of Georgia is also looking for a corps of members to represent us within several groups/agencies of interest to us.

Are any of the above possibilities "speaking" to you? Opportunities for increased effectiveness in our mission of equity for women and girls abound. If interested, contact Mary Lynn Merkle (mlmerkle.aauw@gmail.com) or Pat DeWitt (patdewitt@shorter.edu). ❖

Contents

October Meeting: Women and the Law.....	1
Program Reflections.....	1
League of Women Voters' Guide	1
50th Anniversary Bookfair = SUCCESS	2
Racism: Real or Imagined.....	2
President's Column.....	3
Book Group	3
Travel Group	3
AAUW of Georgia Plans and Dreams.....	4

Board Meeting

The Atlanta Branch 2009–2010 leadership team will meet on Sunday, November 22, at 3:00 p.m., at the home of Frances Smith.

**Roses to all those who
worked many hours to
ensure a successful Bookfair.
Special accolades to Barbara
Buchanan and Alta Birdsong
for their efforts! Can you
believe that we were on
page 1 of the AJC Living
section? Way to go!!**

ATLANTA NEWS

Atlanta Branch AAUW
1651 Executive Park Lane
Atlanta, GA 30329