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ATLANTA BRANCH NEWS

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2009–2010 Leadership

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November Meeting: Diversity Issues

Please join us for our next meeting on November 14, 2009, at 11:00 a.m..

Our speaker for November will be Darby Christopher of Karuna Counseling. Her topic will be “Using Mindfulness to Build Bridges in Community.” Ms. Christopher received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Georgia in 1993, and she has worked as a therapist at Karuna Counseling in Decatur since February of 2008. Prior to Karuna, she worked in the foster care program at Families First, took some time off to be a stay-at-home mom, and completed a two-year Dream Group Leadership Training course at The Haden Institute. Her areas of interest include spirituality, Jungian psychology, and mindfulness, and she enjoys reading, tennis, and attending her dream group. The program will begin at 11:00 a.m., with lunch and our business meeting to follow.

We are meeting at:

Aldo’s Italian Restaurant

6690 Roswell Road, Sandy Springs

Lunch will be a buffet including Chicken Piccata as one of the choices. Drinks will include water and a choice of iced tea, a soft drink, or coffee. Wine is available for a fee. Dessert will be crème brûlée or brownies. Price: \$14.00.

[Deadline for reservations](#) is Monday, November 9.

RSVP to Frances Smith at francesjsmith1921@yahoo.com or 404/231-0482 if you plan to attend.

Aldo’s is on the corner of Roswell Road and Abernathy Drive. It is diagonally across Roswell Road from Mirage. Enter the parking lot from Abernathy Drive. Parking and the entrance are behind Aldo’s. Going north on Roswell, get in the left lane to make the left turn onto Abernathy. ❖

Branch Members Attend State AAUW Fall Board Meeting

by Ruth Yurchuck

Four Atlanta Branch members and one student affiliate attended the October 24 State Board meeting of AAUW of Georgia held at Wesleyan College in Macon. Betty Slater, the state College/University Relations Liaison, brought Jasmine Brandon, a student affiliate member from the Atlanta campus of the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) to the meeting. Marie Bonheur-Gulotta, Myra Carmon, and Ruth Yurchuck were other branch members in attendance. Seven other branches were represented as well.

Pat Dewitt, current AAUW of Georgia president, gave a progress report on state activities, followed by a presentation of current public-policy issues led by Marie Bonheur-Gulotta and Varie Rustin, state Public Policy co-chairs. Focus was primarily on the recent Shriver Report; copies were made available to participants. There was a lively discussion, and the suggestion of scheduling a legislative day for AAUW of Georgia issues or holding an issues forum were brought forth. Holly Boettger-Tong, a Wesleyan faculty member and director of the Center for Women in Science

and Technology, described several programs attracting high school students to these areas. Marie Bruner, editor of *The Cherokee Rose*, urged branches to send information about their activities to her for inclusion in the newsletter. This kind of information should also be sent to the AAUW of Georgia website.

Other business included discussion of starting a “branch without borders”, drawing from the members at large list; five women have already indicated interest in such a branch. Betty Slater will chair the Emerging Leader Award committee for 2010. Branches were reminded that all mandated bylaws changes should be submitted to Pat or to Evelyn Merk, state bylaws chairman. The question of what to do with material currently being stored was raised but no action was taken at this time. A committee consisting of Carlene Beck, Debbie Karvey, and Pat DeWitt will examine awards to state branches.

The program concluded with discussion of family-friendly workplace or women-friendly workplace and what it means. ❖

Making the Most of Our Diversity

by Marie Bonheur-Gulotta

The new co-president of the American Association of University Women (AAUW)'s Atlanta Branch, Mary Lynn Merkle, began her tenure by adding a committee on diversity to the Branch's organization this year. Our stated purpose appears in the revised Branch Handbook: "Making the Most of Our Diversity." Mary Lynn invited me to co-chair the committee along with Bea Meyer.

My agenda for our AAUW branch is to establish diversity as a strong foundation for future leaders. In the past several months I've been reading books and speaking to people in the communities and to colleagues regarding diversity. I've expanded my own knowledge and I've made an attempt to include many voices on the subject.

Diversity is including our differences, not excluding. One of the books that makes a strong argument for diversity is *Emotional Intelligence for Managing Results in a Diverse World* by Lee Gardenswartz, Jorge Cherbosque, and Anita Rowe. According to the authors, "...emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and deal with feelings, both your own and those of others, in a healthy and constructive way." Further: "Emotional intelligence is the ability to access and understand feelings and use their energy in productive ways." Beyond understanding, it involves specific actions in recognizing feelings, understanding them, articulating them, and then applying their power effectively. "Human beings function on both rational and emotional levels, and emotions are at the heart of energy, commitment, and motivation."

Society tells us that we must hide our feelings and keep a stiff-upper-lip attitude. According to the authors, emotional intelligence is to be able to articulate the feelings you are experiencing. When you can identify feelings and label your feelings, you are stronger and better prepared to deal with them. Feelings are part of the soul and consist of mind, will, and emotions. (*Managing Your Emotions*, Joyce Meyers, 1997.)

Emotional Intelligence demonstrates and opens a dialogue on ways to address stereotypes and prejudice regarding age, gender, race, physical ability, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. I hope during my active

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participation in this Diversity Committee with my co-chair and other committees we can offer ways to resolve some of these issues at a local level.

Emotional Intelligence touches at the heart of it all that is our emotional feelings. In the introduction John E. Jones said, "Awareness precedes choice." Jones also said that before you can make effective choices about how to respond and act, you need to understand yourself and your situations clearly and honestly. I found this to be a personal challenge to begin with approaching our feelings and then going deeper to understanding who we are.

Diversity was introduced at our first board meeting of the year as part of our agenda. I used a framed copy of Norman Rockwell's *The Golden Rule*, which is captioned "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." I found it a fitting illustration because the picture depicts people of varied national and ethnic origins, displaying their different faiths. Diversity should reflect what Norman Rockwell is showing us.

As a fine-art photographer I depended on my visual perception to share the concept of diversity. Rockwell did not exclude; rather, he included every nation and many religions. Isn't that what diversity is—embracing differences? Every nation had a face in this picture. I believe the visual is more effective than words.

The next book, *Diversity: Leaders Not Labels* by Stedman Graham gives us statistics and a global phenomenon. The census bureau predicts that women will continue to outnumber men throughout the first half of this century, from a numerical difference of 5.3 million in 2000 to 6.9 million in 2050.

Graham talks about accepting people of all backgrounds and being flexible and tolerant

of each other. He cites an anonymous individual who writes, "Stereotypes are devices for saving a biased person the trouble of learning." Graham adds that we must continue to evaluate ourselves. "Always remain positive, understand where a person is coming from and create an engagement." He makes a strong argument, "...once we've reflected on where we've been, and what they have endured to get where they are, we can move on. Identifying what controls and labels people have placed on us and what controls and labels we have internalized and placed on ourselves and remove ourselves from the trap of race-based thinking."

Graham wants us as a people to change by redefining ourselves on our own terms. By identifying and escaping from negative stereotypes and behavior patterns that we may not even have realized were present in us, we are breaking invisible chains that shackle us as we wind our way through this complex and competitive labyrinth of life. With an open mind and some self-reinforcement, we can discard negative labels to clear a pathway to successes and leadership, whether in the workplace, in the home, or in society.

Graham furthers states that the privileges once reserved only for affluent, non-ethnic individuals are now available to everyone. All you need to know is how to access them. "Difference" is not only acceptable, it is the norm. The minority is now becoming the majority. It's clear that in America the word "minority" will eventually be applicable to white men and women.

Diversity is a topic—and a reality—that's here to stay because of the many cultures that exist in the state of Georgia. I believe there is lot of work to be done. We as a people have what it takes to work with differences. We have what it takes to embrace physical differences in so many ways.

Marcel Proust states, "The real voyage of discovery consists not only in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." I invite all members of the AAUW Atlanta branch to join in an on-going dialogue or to share thoughts, comments, and concerns they have with diversity in our monthly newsletter. ❖

President's Column

Atlanta Branch: Mighty Like a Rose

by Mary Lynn Merkle

I've had a close-up view of roses for almost 50 years now. You see, my husband was until recently a consulting Rosarian (a person who has been certified to help others with their roses) and a judge for the American Rose Society. Through the years I've become pretty knowledgeable about roses. The bush upon which the beautiful but complicated flowers bloom is not the original root. No! The original root stock is sturdy, absolutely dependable. And on that root is grafted the producing bush. The bush produces many shoots which in turn have green leaves in groups of five or three ending with the bloom. The roses share similar characteristics but are not clones. Each is a gift to the eye and often the nose as well. There are hundreds and thousands of varied rose bushes, and more continue to be developed. Their places in our society are many—a bridal bouquet, a Kentucky Derby winner, a celebratory bouquet—but wherever they are found they are appreciated.

And Atlanta branch?? We come from strong, sturdy stock—having been established 105 years ago. Those years have brought many shoots. The shoots represent the enthusiasm of women who are seeking knowledge and understanding in order to change the world and who know that working together will make those changes happen more quickly. The leaves represent the ways in which are goals are met: new members, committee work, programming, book

discussions, many many bookfairs (50 to be exact), scholarships, awards, community presentations, fellowships—well, you get the idea. Of course, along the way there are a few thorns—the loss of members, some efforts that don't work the way we expected, for-profit book companies usurping our book drops. The ultimate goal (the rose at the top of the stem) is to become a woman who is a gift to the world she lives in. Through those experiences found in branch membership we learn, we grow, we share, we invite.

And then there are the rope hips! Those are the seed pods! Each rose has hips with seeds to continue that variety of rose. For Atlanta branch “hips” from many varieties have seemed to form one very diverse and experienced group of women—a group that has, indeed, changed the world, often one person at a time. Ask one of our scholarship winners or one of our selected Young Women Leaders, or any of the other hundreds who have been reached through the years. Each of us need to assume responsibility for continuing our branch. We must plant seeds of interest wherever we go, whoever we meet.

The floribunda rose bush is one that has sprays of color with its many roses. Atlanta branch is a plethora of thoughtful, intelligent, knowledgeable and caring women with great ideas. Just as a rose bush with many blooms provides more color and praise, by adding more women we will certainly impact changes that will help fulfill our mission—equity for women and girls. ❖

Lynn Fountain Receives Honor

by Betty Slater

On Friday evening, October 25, Alta and Ken Birdsong, Huiping Du, Angela Walton, Betty and Bob Slater, along with our Co-President Dr. Ruth Yurchuck, Lynn's husband, David, and her daughter, Hannah, all gathered in Georgia Tech's student center ballroom to surprise Dr. Lynn Fountain as she was named by the Women's Leadership Conference as a Woman of Distinction. The event was sponsored by Georgia Tech's Women's Resource Center.

Lynn had been selected from a list of twelve others. Betty Slater had submitted her name because of the conference's theme, “Unleash Your Potential: Impact the World!” Betty felt Lynn had done so much to encourage girls and women in science and math besides accomplishing so much for our branch and AAUW of Georgia. Little did she know that Lynn has received funding for 29 projects for Georgia Tech, has mentored two women for promotions at Georgia Tech, and holds several patents.

All of us who attended were so proud of Lynn and how she continues to inspire and nurture women in science. ❖

You Are Invited!

Circle Tuesday, November 10, on your calendar! Cobb branch is hosting a reception for our new national president, Carolyn Garfein. Many of us who have been connected to AAUW through the years know Carolyn and supported her candidacy, so for us it's a special opportunity to honor her.

The reception will take place at 6:30 p.m. on November 10 at the Mansour Center, 995 Roswell Street, Marietta. All branch members are encouraged to attend.



Bookfair Celebration



Our Bookfair celebration brunch will be on Saturday, November 21, from 10 a.m.–12 p.m., at Sylvia Goodyear's home. Everyone who worked at the Bookfair or in the Bookroom is invited to attend. Sylvia's address is 5380 Willow Point Parkway, Marietta, 30068.

RSVP to Sylvia at 770/594-9901 or email smgoodyear@mindspring.com.

From Marietta: take 120 east, turn right on Timber Ridge Road. Turn right on Huntingford Drive, turn left on Willow Point Parkway. House is on right just past the tennis courts. From Sandy Springs/Dunwoody: Go north on Roswell Road. Immediately after crossing the Chattahoochee, turn left on Azalea Drive, then left again on Willeo. Willeo becomes Lower Roswell Road when you cross into Cobb County. The subdivision is about a mile on the right. If you need directions from another location, <http://www.mapquest.com> is a good resource. ❖

Calendar

November

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

December

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

January

- 6 Book Group meets

Book Group

Our book group's holiday celebration will be Wednesday, December 2, at the home of Mary Hanson. It will be a pot-luck; please let Mary know what you will bring so she can fill in if needed. We'll start gathering at 6:00 p.m. Mary's address is 3875 W. Nancy Creek Court, Atlanta, 30319; phone is 404/847-9844. Her email is maryhan@bellsouth.net.

We will be discussing *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer. Our tradition of having a holiday book exchange will continue: bring a new or used book you, or someone you trust, have read but that has not been on our list. Wrap the book but don't label it.

The Wednesday, January 6 meeting will be at the home of Carol Fetters: 1271 Verdon Drive, Dunwoody, 30338; 770/399-5656. The discussion will be about *The Strangeness of Beauty* by Lydia Yuri Minatoya. We start gathering about 7:30 p.m. ❖

Travel Group

On December 10 at 9:30 a.m., the Travel Group will meet at the Ansley Mall Kroger parking lot to carpool to the High Museum of Art. The group can tour two new exhibits, "John Portman: Art and Architecture," and "Leonardo daVinci: Hand of Genius." Lunch will follow. RSVP to Betty Arden at 770/955-6381. ❖

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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.

ATLANTA NEWS

Atlanta Branch AAUW
1651 Executive Park Lane
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