



AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITY
WOMEN

2009–2010 Leadership

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ATLANTA BRANCH NEWS

Vol. 60, No. 9 ♦ May 2010

May Meeting: Arts Performance

Please join us for our next meeting on Saturday, May 15, at:

Ansley Golf Club

196 Montgomery Ferry Drive, N.E.

There will be a breakfast buffet at 9:00 a.m. The program, branch meeting, and installation of officers will follow. The program will feature a performance and presentation by Community Action Grant recipients Synchronicity Performance Group and Playmaking for Girls.

The buffet will include:

Fresh fruit bowl with yogurt dressing

Crisp bacon

Cheese grits

Biscuits

Honey butter and preserves

Scrambled eggs

Link sausage

Hashbrowns

Muffins and danish

Orange and cranberry juice, coffee, and tea

Price per person: \$21.00

To reserve your place, please e-mail Frances Smith at francesjsmith1921@yahoo.com or call her at 404/231-0482.

The reservation deadline is Monday, May 10.

Directions: From Piedmont and Peachtree, go south on Piedmont and pass under the expressway. Go past Cheshire Bridge Road. Look for Rock Springs Church on your right. Make an immediate right onto Montgomery Ferry Drive. Continue through the light (Monroe Drive) and cross the bridge. The clubhouse will be on the right. ♦

AAUW Retreat Information

by Ruth Yurchuck

Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 5, when our Branch will hold a special workshop/retreat from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. We will meet at a location convenient for most members—St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 435 Peachtree Street N.E., in Atlanta, about two blocks south of Emory Midtown Hospital (formerly Crawford W. Long).

There is ample parking in the lot directly adjacent to the church and the entrance is at the right rear of the parking lot. Our workshop will be held in the St. Luke Room, where you will find coffee and hot water for tea awaiting you as we get ready for discussing

plans for our future as a Branch. We will have a working lunch, which we will provide for you.

The planning committee is delighted that Audrey Salgado of the AAUW Leadership Corps will facilitate our discussion. The agenda is being developed at present.

This is your opportunity to help us create the Branch we want to be, one that will ensure our survival and a continuing positive influence in the Atlanta community. This workshop/retreat is not just an exercise in developing a new organizational chart by a few dedicated members. We need the input of every member in this journey to create a stronger, healthier Branch, and we simply cannot do this without your participation.

Make your attendance at this important event a priority—it won't be the same without you! ♦

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Looking Back at the AAUW of Georgia Convention

by Mary Lynn Merkle

2010 was a very good convention for Atlanta Branch. Our Branch was represented by *twelve* people: Huiping Du, Diana Witt, Kay Collins, Ruth Yurchuck, Phyllis Miller, Lynn Fountain, Betty Slater, May Ruth Bradberry, Mary Lynn Merkle, Marie Bonheur-Gulotta, and Mary and Darwin Womack.

Betty Slater—College and University Representative for us as well as the State—formed and facilitated a fine panel of college and university professors who shared much information about the status and role of women in higher education.

We received many certificates of excellence both for our efforts at building membership and for our contributions to the Educational Foundation funds.

A highlight of Friday's banquet was Huiping Du's receiving the 2009 Emerging Leader award. Flanked by her good friends Mary and Darwin Womack, she was lauded for her many efforts on behalf of AAUW and its mission.

Atlanta Branch's Lynn Fountain served as chair of the Bylaws Committee, an important responsibility since there were so many opportunities and necessities for change as a result of the 2009 national convention. May Ruth Bradberry continues into the second year of her term as AAUW of Georgia treasurer.

All in all, it was an energizing convention! And we thank members of the Cobb County Branch and the State Board for their help in making it so! ❖



Among the State Convention attendees from Atlanta Branch were: (back row) Betty Slater, Mary Lynn Merkle, Lynn Fountain, Ruth Yurchuck, Diana Witt, Phyllis Miller, Kay Collins; and (front row) Huiping Du, Mary Womack, and May Ruth Bradberry.

It was great to see our wonderful volunteers help with WABE's fundraising campaign. We all gathered on Monday afternoon, April 26, to answer telephones for those pledges. While there, we gave them information about our mission for AAUW, Bookfair, and pay equity. Let's hope the station shares our information with its listeners! Thanks to these volunteers for their time and talent: Myra Carmon, Susan Diffenderfer, Elizabeth Gordon, Bea Meyer, Betty Slater, and Mary and Darwin Womack.

Happy Mentor's Day

by Mary Lynn Merkle

When I was in 9th grade, my junior high was physically connected to an elementary school. One day I was called down to the principal's office. A second-grade teacher was on a district-wide committee that would take her out of the classroom one afternoon each month. I was asked if I would be willing to take that classroom over on those afternoons. In light of today's concerns that request seems unfathomable, but it was a different time. With the self-assuredness of a teenager, I agreed to do it. After all, I had baby-sitting experience. That principal picked me out from all the other students, and that gave me such confidence. Perhaps that was an important experience as I moved toward a career in education.

There have been many opportunities given to me throughout the years—student teacher supervision, in-service presentations, union leadership, etc. Each time I have felt inadequate to the requested task, but have tried because someone else believed I could.

In fact, just five years ago, a few short months after I joined Atlanta Branch, my good friend Bea Meyer asked me if I would take the position of program vice-president. I hesitated. I was so very new. But Bea (and, I assume, the rest of the nominating committee) was sure that I had more than adequate skills. So I agreed to do it, and was absolutely smitten with Atlanta Branch and all that it does. So, two years ago, when the search was on for a president-elect, Ruth Yurchuck approached me for this position. She said she would be right there beside me if I would agree to do it. (Little did she know that I would take her so literally and ask that she be my co-president.) Although we are only halfway through our two-year term, I continue to be amazed at our Branch. Our accomplishments are many; our fellowship and friendships build through our small groups and our projects; we learn from one another, and our commitment to the mission of AAUW is apparent every step of the way.

I tell you these stories about me because I feel sure that you have similar stories—times when you were asked, nudged, and even begged to take on some responsibility for which you felt ill-prepared. That mentor—the principal, Bea, Ruth, etc.—helped me grow and build skills. Each of our mentors, whoever and wherever she is, was a significant part of our becoming the women we are today.

With Mother's Day on the horizon, why not send a thank you and a Happy Mentor's Day note or email to one of them! ❖

Bullying Still Matters

by Mary Lynn Merkle

Almost ten years ago, AAUW published a research study on bullying called "Hostile Hallways." In this study a number of students were surveyed. Eight of every ten students reported personally experiencing sexual harassment. Two of those said they were afraid some or most of the time that someone would bother them or hurt them at school. Although most of the harassment was done to students by other students, 38 percent of those harassed reported it being done by teachers and other school employees. A similar survey done in 1993 reported an even higher incidence of harassment by school personnel. Could this be due to the fact that many schools adopted harassment policies and staff in-services in the intervening years, and that awareness is a strong deterrent?

AAUW, interested in more than surveys and numbers, followed in 2004 with "Harassment-Free Hallways: How to Stop Sexual Harassment in School," a guide for students, parents, and schools.

Why then, in the spring of 2009, did a young 5th grader in the DeKalb County Schools find it necessary to hang himself to stop the bullying he experienced at school? Word is that the family, having recently moved to the United States, went to a thrift store to buy clothing and supplies for school. Not knowing "the ropes" in America, the child selected a pink book bag. The teasing/name-calling was continuous. He told school people, and his parents called the school. And, finally, the teasing stopped—when the child ended it himself!

In the spring of 2010 a young high-schooler in Massachusetts, again a recent immigrant, was harassed unendingly by mostly girls. She was pretty and was sought after by boys. Immediately she was labeled as a "slut" and all sorts of other four- and five-letter words. Calls for some assistance from school personnel had no result. So Phoebe, too, took care of it herself. She went home from school one afternoon and hung herself.

Ten years ago AAUW knew our schools had a problem, and they addressed it. Their guidelines undoubtedly helped schools be safer places for our children.

Here in Atlanta, as a result of the young boy's suicide, a coalition was formed to work toward extinguishing child suicides due to bullying. The Georgia Safe Schools Coalition (GSSC) is represented by school counselors, teachers, GLBT community members, psychologists, social workers, and human rights organizations—all volunteers.

These professionals, working together, produced a manual of strategies for keeping our schools safer and distributed it to counselors in Metro Atlanta and throughout Georgia last fall. Their purpose is clear, and their mission is an important one.

Let there be no question! Bullying is still an issue! With the efforts of organizations like AAUW and GSSC, there's still a chance that children will find their schools to be "safe space." ♦

Huiping Du Named Emerging Leader

by Berry Slater

Huiping Du was named AAUW of Georgia Emerging Leader for 2010! Huiping was given this award at the state convention on Friday evening, April 23. She has helped the Atlanta Branch in so many ways. She has freely taken photographs of so many of our functions as well as serving as co-chair of the Finance committee, working with Bookfair, and serving as the co-chair for our Holiday Tea.

She has helped Georgia State University as President of the Chinese Student Union. She will be representing Georgia State University as she goes to China to recruit students to attend Georgia State University. She has used her photography skills to help others. The Atlanta Branch is so proud to support this Emerging Leader. ♦



Huiping Du (center) with Mary and Darwin Womack after receiving the Emerging Leader award

Notes From The April 24 General Meeting

by Mary Lynn Merkle

1. DUES ARE DUE!! They are still \$77 (\$46 of which is tax-deductible). At the State Convention we received a certificate for member retention. Let's do it again! Bring those dues to the May meeting, or mail to Dot Ransom.
2. Elections for open offices to serve from 2010–2012 were held. Connie Eshenour, Nominating Committee chair, reported that Dot Ransom was willing to continue her service to Atlanta Branch as membership vice-president and that Alta Birdsong is willing to continue as treasurer. Two members of the new Nominating Committee for 2010–2011 were named: Mary Hanson and Connie Eshenour. Two additional members were nominated from the floor: Betty Arden and Mary Womack. All were elected by acclamation!
3. Atlanta Branch was noted in the program of the Planned Parenthood Gala on April 15 as a "Voice for Choice." Hurray for Atlanta Branch and for Sarah Rondeau who made it all happen!
4. Diana Witt will represent Atlanta Branch at the first evening of the White House Project's "Vote Run Lead" program.
5. Lunch at The Mirage was delicious!! ♦

Bookfair Funds Send Students to Conference

by Betty Slater

Two students from area colleges will be representing their respective schools at the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders to be held on the University of Maryland campus, June 3–6. Thanks to the efforts of many Atlanta Branch members, we earned the funding that supports sending these students to a gathering of this caliber. Janet Sexton from Oglethorpe University is a sophomore mathematics major. Elizabeth Brandt from Emory University is majoring in Accounting, Finance, and African Studies. She will be Emory’s Student Government President in 2010! We look forward to them being a part of our branch! ❖

Thank-You Note from Whole Foods

Atlanta Branch received a thank-you note from Jayme Persons, Marketing Team Leader, at the Briarcliff/LaVista Whole Foods. Following are some excerpts from the note. “Thank you for your generous donation to the Whole Planet Foundation.... I look forward to working with you and continuing our successful partnership with AAUW.” Well done, Atlanta Branch!

ATLANTA NEWS

Atlanta Branch AAUW
1651 Executive Park Lane
Atlanta, GA 30329

Calendar

May

- 5 Book Group meets
- 9 Mothers’ Day
- 14 Travel Group meets
- 15 Branch meeting

June

- 5 Branch workshop/retreat
- 7 Newsletter deadline
- 14 Flag Day

Book Group

The Book Group will meet Wednesday, May 5, at the home of Carol Feters: 1271 Verdon Drive, Dunwoody, 30338; 770/399-5656. The discussion will be about *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle: A Novel* by David Wroblewski. We start gathering about 7:30 p.m. Remember to bring suggestions for next year’s reading list! ❖

Travel Group

The AAUW Travel Group will meet on Friday, May 14. Program details had not been finalized at press time. For information or to RSVP, call Betty Arden at 770/955-6381. ❖

Board Meeting

The Atlanta Branch 2009–2010 leadership team will schedule its first 2010–2011 meeting in August. ❖

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National Purpose Statement Amended

- The Purpose statement, Article III, of the AAUW Bylaws has been amended to read:
- “The purpose of AAUW is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.” The word “philanthropy” has been added.