



Alabama Daybreak

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AAUW of Alabama

Summer 2009



State Convention 2009

Our annual state convention, hosted by the Montgomery branch, was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel and Montgomery Conference Center, April 3-5. Its theme was “Breaking through Barriers in Alabama,” and indeed it

did. Convention sessions explored what we as citizens can do to change our state for the better, especially where AAUW issues are concerned. Pre-convention sessions Friday, April 3, included *Ready to Run™* training and “Launching a Creative Career,” both of which were a great success.

The keynote speaker was Lecia Imbery, AAUW public policy grassroots coordinator, speaking on “Achieving Pay Equity through Legislation and Government Action.” Speakers included State Senator Linda Coleman (health care); Barbara Bobrowski, executive director of the Women’s Leadership Institute at Auburn University (status of women in Alabama); and Cheryl Sabel (dropout rate in Alabama). State Representative Laura Hall (D) and State Treasurer Kay Ivey (R) spoke at lunch. Lecia and Thomasyne Smith, Association Director at Large for AAUW and past president of AAUW of Alabama, did a presentation on armchair activism—using the web to make a difference. (Please see Jo Ann’s article in this *Daybreak*, “Social Media, Networking, and You” for some other ideas about using the Internet to stay informed on issues.) The students’ track included business etiquette skills, financial planning, and professional development.

The star of the show was the banquet speaker, former Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts Evelyn Murphy, author of *Getting Even: Why Women Don’t Get Paid Like Men—and What to Do About It*, and president of The WAGE Project, founded to end discrimination against women in the workplace. Just before the state convention, AAUW announced a partnership with The WAGE Project to offer \$mart\$start classes, salary negotiation seminars for college students. Evelyn had us “standing in the aisles,” enthusiastically demanding fair pay. Twelve attendees accepted her challenge to get members trained as class facilitators, so \$mart\$start classes can be offered on Alabama campuses. We held \$mart\$start training May 30 in Birmingham, taught by Annie Houle, Evelyn’s partner in The WAGE Project.

Though the convention was not without its glitches, lessons learned, and low attendance, we received much positive feedback (“great,” “outstanding,” “a new perspective”). Thank you to the people who worked so hard to make it a success, especially Jo Ann Cummings, state president, and Janet Smith, Montgomery president. Janet really deserves applause for stepping up at the last minute to cover the career session. Jo Ann and I both appreciate all that she and Anna Blair and the students of Troy did to make such a small branch such a fine host.

I thank everyone—those who worked on the program and logistics and those who attended—for helping to make this convention the very special meeting of hearts and minds that it was.

We are planning on holding the next state convention in Montevallo. Please join us there in the spring of 2010!

Wanda Foster – Program Vice President



Public Policy Impact Grant Activities End with a Visit to the State Capitol

Our last twelve months have been filled with “busyness” to accomplish goals for our Public Policy Impact Grant (PPIG). More ambitious than many of the other states participating in the grant awarded by the national AAUW, AAUW of Alabama turned our efforts and energies toward three areas: Voter Turnout, Pay Equity, and Lobby Corps. The leaders for these activities were Wanda Foster (Huntsville), Patricia Mason (Birmingham), and Mary Jo Buff (Montevallo), respectively.

First, the Voter Turnout work began last summer and fall as we focused on federal and local elections:

- Municipal campaign forums were held in Decatur, Madison, Huntsville, and Montevallo by local branches, and Florence was the site of a forum featuring candidates for the 5th U.S. Congressional District race.
- The Montevallo branch set up voter registration tables at a Back-to-School Bash on campus, and the Montgomery branch co-sponsored a showing of the film, *Iron-Jawed Maidens*, with the Zonta Club and the Montgomery League of Women Voters Education Trust Fund.
- A pilot project Get Out the Vote (GOTV) effort was held by the Huntsville branch and focused on both telephone and door-to-door canvassing of “drop-out” voters in a designated precinct.

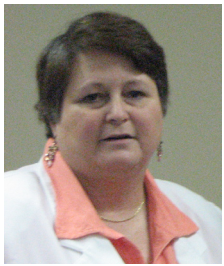
Our second effort centered on Pay Equity. Focusing on the need to educate others about the issue of equal pay for women, we held seminars, wrote editorials to local newspapers, and encouraged mayors of four Alabama cities to issue Proclamations regarding Equal Pay Day on April 28th. We offered a seminar on salary negotiation skills in Birmingham. At the AAUW of Alabama State Convention, our guest speaker was Evelyn Murphy, author of *Getting Even: Why Women Don’t Get Paid Like Men—and What to Do About It* a guide to help women understand their monetary worth and enable them to get paid more equitably. As a result of the inspiring talk by Ms. Murphy, AAUW of Alabama chose to partner with her organization, The WAGE Project. Annie Houle from The WAGE Project conducted a training session for all Alabama AAUW members wanting to train young women in salary negotiation skills. Twelve AAUW members plus three women

from the University of Tennessee Martin and three from the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa participated May 30 in Birmingham.

Our third effort was to establish an Alabama Lobby Corps, mirroring the national Lobby Corps. The team exceeded its membership goal by four, ending the grant year with 39 members. Members were outfitted with handsome binders and a CD to use in training more members. Melissa Oliver, a professional lobbyist with Alabama Arise, trained Lobby Corps members in January. Jo Ann Cummings presented all the women in our state legislature with copies of *Getting Even*, along with a letter urging them to support state legislation addressing pay equity. Lobby Corps grant activities culminated with seven members participating in Lobby Day at the State House in Montgomery on April 28th, Pay Equity Day. Lobby Corps members distributed information sheets regarding pay inequity in Alabama, in support of the Joint Resolutions to establish an Equal Pay Commission introduced by Representative Laura Hall and Senator Vivian Figures.

With all the hard work by the leaders of each prong of our grant, AAUW of Alabama and the Impact Grant team can boast that we reached, and in some areas, surpassed, our goals. Many thanks to all of you who gave your energy and talents tirelessly to make this grant a success!

Anna Blair, Public Policy Chair



President's Message

AAUW members from around the country are meeting in St. Louis at the national convention to decide the future of the AAUW organization. The changes to the bylaws that were proposed this year may represent a major shift in defining who we

are, what we do, and what we want to become.

For 128 years, members of AAUW have championed higher education and post-graduate education opportunities for women, advocated for women's rights and issues, and promoted pay and social equity for women. We have participated in many activities that promote leadership opportunities for women and social justice for all, and advocated for legislation that makes a better place for women and their families.

So the questions are: Will the changes proposed in these new bylaws actually transform who we are or impair what we do? Will they result in a new AAUW that is inferior, or will the restructured AAUW be transformed into a more modern, effective organization? Will eliminating the college degree membership requirement really alter who we are and our passion to follow our principles? With the streamlined organization, will the policy and fiscal responsibility be wielded by too few, with too little membership oversight? Will the restructuring opportunities offered for states and branches reduce costs and improve their efficiency, or will these options reduce their ability to meet local needs? Does one member—one vote provide greater access to members unable to attend the convention, or does it have the potential to eliminate the relevance of states with fewer members?

These are the topics that we must consider in St. Louis as we review and deliberate the proposed bylaws changes. The times are changing too, and maybe a streamlined, flexible organization is the only way for our national association to remain financially viable as we try to transition to the needs of our next generation

of women leaders, while serving our existing members. There are issues that worry many members; we have to incorporate their concerns into our final decisions.

Of course, the most divisive issue is the subject of opening membership up to anyone who supports our association mission and goals. Many established members are very proud of our distinguishing requirement to have a college degree of some kind, and many actually completed their degree because they aspired to become eligible for AAUW membership. They worry that if we don't require a degree, we are no different from any other organization that anyone can join, that we are sacrificing our principles, and, consequently, we are going to lose members. Those on the other side of the debate argue that we violate our own principle of inclusiveness and diversity when we turn away those who are enthusiastic about our mission, but unqualified to join in. Many express their regret and embarrassment that they must discourage potential members, and they feel that possible younger recruits are "put off" by such an exclusive requirement.

I want to thank those of you who took the time to advise us of your opinions about the proposed bylaws; we will consider and weigh those comments as we hear and participate in the convention debate. I hope that whatever decisions are made, members of AAUW of Alabama will accept any changes and continue to support the mission and goals of our association to advance equity and education for women and girls through education, advocacy, and research. May we always remain a united force with a promising future.

Jo Ann Cummings, AAUW of Alabama President,
joannc1972@charter.net

Financial Literacy & Junior Achievement Update

Last year at the state convention, AAUW kicked off its collaboration with Junior Achievement to start a program for our members and others to volunteer in local schools and teach Alabama's students lessons on financial literacy and community involvement. Junior Achievement, which is the world's largest non-profit for economic education, is dedicated to bringing entrepreneurship, workforce readiness, and financial literacy into the classroom. It promotes the development of more financially aware individuals by promoting joint financial development between males and females. This is a crucial key in the overall solution to break the cycles of poverty and ignorance and create a healthier and more educated workforce especially in Alabama. Our pilot for this program was initiated by the Birmingham branch.

This collaboration has allowed several of our Birmingham members to give back to their community in an incredibly heartfelt way. This spring, members from the Birmingham branch spent time at Inverness Elementary School in the 3rd grade classrooms teaching the students the importance of "Our City." The local volunteers were Audrey Salgado, Judy Deegan, Jimmie Anderson, Cathy McDonald, and Bobbie Piper.

As the new school year approaches, we will begin to train new volunteers and get back into the classroom. Although this program has initially been launched in Birmingham, the goal is to expand to other branches in Alabama. Junior Achievement has offices all over the state and is willing to train volunteers regardless of their location.

If you are interested in making this a service project for your club, or having someone come speak to your club about this collaboration, please contact Jeris Burns at jerburns@gmail.com.

Jeris Burns

Ready to Run™ Wrap-up

The two-year Community Action Grant that **Ready to Run™** received from the Educational Foundation in 2007 is coming to an end June 30, 2009, as team members wrap up their final report. It's been a huge success. AAUW of Alabama owes a tremendous debt to Elizabeth Hendrix and Mildred Lanier, co-directors; Audrey Salgado, past president; and the Public Policy and Program Theme team who wrote the grant proposal. Trainers and team members include Juliet Arrington, Cindy Bell, Veronica Bryant, Jean Gerber, Brendette Brown Green, Susan Sheppard, Tiffany Todd, Anna Blair, and Alison Stigers.

Theirs are huge shoes to fill, as I have reason to know. Jo Ann Cummings, state president, has appointed Susan Sheppard and me as co-directors of the project for 2009-10. Like Elizabeth, Mildred, and Audrey before us, we were trained at the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP) in the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University. (AAUW of Alabama's **Ready to Run™** is in partnership with CAWP; only five other states have such partnerships.) Susan and I are both enormously proud to be a part of **R2R**.

Training has been held in Auburn, Birmingham, Decatur, Gadsden, Huntsville, and Pell City. Pre-convention workshops were held before the 2008 and 2009 state conventions in the Shoals at the University of North Alabama and in Montgomery at Troy University. In 2 years, July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2009, 148 women have enrolled in **Ready to Run™**.

It's icing on the cake that AAUW of Alabama has been asked to participate in Taste of Success at the AAUW national convention in St. Louis, one of 19 states or branches chosen. We received this honor on the basis of our signature project, **Ready to Run™**. Taste of Success is an event that applauds states or branches for projects, events, or activities that have been successful in helping to break through barriers so that all women have a fair chance. We were chosen, in part, on how **Ready to Run™** helped affect membership recruitment and retention, enhance effectiveness of the state AAUW, promote leadership, and strengthen advocacy efforts. We will be given a table to display our materials during the Welcome Reception and Meet the Candidates events the evening of Friday, June 26. By sharing our efforts, we hope to promote **Ready to Run™** programs in other state and branch AAUWs.

Susan and I will be meeting in July with team members to set the course for future **Ready to Run™** projects. We both hope that the very able team members and trainers from the first phase of **R2R** will continue on under our leadership. Kimberly Jones (Montgomery), Mindy Boggs (Birmingham), and Carrie Robbins (Montevallo) are among the dynamic new members coming on board. Future **R2R** programs will likely be held in Montgomery and Mobile, and there are several other sites under negotiation. We plan to continue using the facilities at the Robert Trent Jones clubhouses throughout the state. If you're interested in joining this great effort—whether that's by being a member of the team, being a trainer, or being trained, please contact Susan or me. Her email is susantexas@yahoo.com and mine is wlfoster002@yahoo.com.

Getting women into public office is a powerful part of AAUW of Alabama's strategy to promote AAUW issues and to change the dynamics of "business as usual" in our state. According to statistics

provided by CAWP, in 2009 Alabama ranks 48th in the nation for women serving in the state legislature (12.1 percent). We have no women in the U.S. Congress. There are 4 women in the state Senate (out of 35 seats) and 13 women in the state House of Representatives (out of 105 seats). Yet when Susan and I trained at Rutgers, we were told that New Jersey was around 48th when CAWP started their **Ready to Run™** program there and now ranks 11th among state legislatures in regard to the number of women serving. Electing women to public office is an uphill battle, but it's a battle we can win by increments if we refuse to give up.

**Wanda Foster, Program Vice President
and Ready to Run™ Co-Director 2009-10**

AAUW Website: www.aauw.org

**AAUW of Alabama Website:
www.aauw-alabama.org**

Summer Leadership Training & Board Meeting

On Saturday, August 1st, AAUW of Alabama will hold our Summer Leadership Training Workshop at the Hoover Public Library. Pat Johnson, past president of the Huntsville Branch and LTI Leadership Literacy Chair will be our trainer. Ms. Johnson will provide training for state and branch leaders on Developing Effective Programs for Your Branch and Learning Better Marketing Techniques. Wanda Foster, Programs Vice President, will be working with Ms. Johnson on the program. Prior to the Leadership Training, the AAUW of Alabama will hold the summer Board of Directors meeting.

The meetings will be at the Hoover Public Library at 200 Municipal Drive, in Hoover (205-444-7800). The Board of Directors meeting is from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Lunch will be at the Golden Corral Steak House, 3117 Lorna Rd. Birmingham (205-822-1314). The Summer Leadership Training Workshop will be from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

All members and branch officers, especially new ones, are encouraged to attend the training workshop, because you will learn valuable skills that will be an asset to yourself and your branch. If you will be attending, please fill out this form.

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City, Zip _____

Branch _____

Office (if any) _____

Email _____

I will be attending _____ Board of Directors meeting

_____ Summer Leadership Training

Mail to: JoAnn Cummings, 2505 Ashmor PL SE, Decatur AL 35603.
You can also email the information to joannc1972@charter.net.

ACCR Mock Constitutional Convention

The Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform (ACCR) Foundation sponsored a Mock Constitutional Convention during two weekends in the spring. A representative from most of the 105 House Districts plus some alternates met to develop a new constitution to replace the 1901 “Thick Book” Constitution that the citizens of Alabama are currently governed by.

The delegates split into nine groups to cover all the aspects of a constitution. Constitutions developed but not passed in 1973 and 1983, as well as the current constitution, became guidelines as delegates developed the new document.

AAUW members Mark Berte and Audrey Salgado were very involved from the ACCR Foundation in developing the guidelines and agenda used by the group and in the logistics for the facilities. They helped ensure that things ran smoothly during the two weekends.

AAUW members Cindy Bell, Mindy Boggs, Cindi Branham, Joan Hudiburg, Ellie Lienau, and Janet Smith participated in the committees during at least one of the sessions. Joan wrote that “the most exciting thing was the opportunity to deliberate in the real House of Representatives Chamber [in Montgomery].” Mindy said that “it was a great opportunity to work with the people on my committee.” Ellie was “very excited to be part of the deliberative process and to see that the final product is much better than the current constitution with over 800 amendments.” She got to meet some wonderful people from all over the state.

During the last session, feedback was given to each of the committees as to enhancements to the sections. The committees “met” by email and conference call to make changes. Mark emailed the results from the work of the committees and the delegates voted whether to accept them or not. All did pass.

So now there is a draft mock constitution available for the public to make comments. Please encourage people in Alabama to go to <http://www.politicalparlor.net/wp/2009/06/10/comment-on-draft-constitution/> to read the document and provide feedback. This phase of the mock constitutional process will close on July 7th. Then, if needed, the committees will “meet” again and make adjustments to their portions of the draft mock constitution.

In addition, those who participated are encouraged to spread the word about the document and about the process. To help facilitate that, two publicity workshops were offered to delegates and others. Nineteen people attended the one in Huntsville, including AAUW members Mindy Boggs, Wanda Foster, Joan Hudiburg, Ellie Lienau, Bob Robertson, Donna Sather, and Audrey Salgado. The presenter was very knowledgeable about how to pitch publicity to various types of media. This was excellent for anyone interested in publicity, but also practical for those who are involved with ACCR issues and the draft mock constitution. We learned that a good sound bite could be “Alabama has the largest city council (legislature) in the United States.” Leevones Dubose and Donna Slater became the representatives of their district after the mock convention, but they will be spreading the word like the rest of the delegates.

We look forward to the unveiling of this document on August 27th in Huntsville. We hope many AAUW members can join us. See another article with more details about it.

Ellie Lienau,

Alabama Arise Liaison and Mock Convention delegate

ACCR Bailey Thomson Luncheon

We are very excited to be gearing up for the third annual Bailey Thomson Annual Luncheon. This year’s event will take place 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, in Huntsville’s Von Braun Center – South Hall Ballroom (700 Monroe Street). The keynote speaker will be Alabama author, Rick Bragg.

The luncheon will recognize and celebrate those individuals, businesses, and organizations that strive for a modern constitution for Alabama. Past winners of these awards include Dr. Wayne Flynt, Dr. Thomas Corts, the Greater Birmingham Ministries, AAUW of Alabama (in 2008), and many others. We have received many great nominations for the 2009 awards and will announce the winners very soon.

Please make plans to join us for this year’s luncheon, which promises to be an uplifting and entertaining event. If you are unable to attend, consider making a donation to provide a scholarship to those otherwise unable to attend.

The price per ticket is \$50.00, and any contribution you make in addition to that or scholarships provided are 100 percent tax-deductible. The ACCR Foundation provides a secure page on our web site for you to purchase tickets or make a donation: www.constitutionalreform.org.

In addition to individual tickets, we offer table sponsorships at several levels. If you would like to join a special table for AAUW, please contact Ellie Lienau (elienau@yahoo.com)--the cost is \$62.50. For more information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Elizabeth Dotts (Elizabeth@constitutionALreform.org), who chairs the Awards Luncheon Steering Committee.

**Mark Berte, ACCR Foundation Liaison
and Alabama Constitution Convention Coalition Liaison**

Volunteer for State Positions and Activities

AAUW of Alabama is busier than ever, and there are many ways that you can get involved.

Ready to Run™ Wanda Foster (wlfoster002@yahoo.com)
& Susan Sheppard (susantexas@yahoo.com)

STEM Coalition Jo Ann Cummings (joannc1972@charter.net)

WAGE Project Jo Ann Cummings

Lobby Corps Mary Jo Buff (buf2teach@aol.com)

Pay Equity Patricia Mason (patriciamason1@netzero.net)

We also are looking for leaders to fill these Board of Director positions: Newsletter Distribution (from Huntsville area), College/University Relations, Historian, Resolutions Chair, Student Advisory Council Director. If you are interested in working in any of these positions, please contact JoAnn Cummings (joannc1972@charter.net).

Congratulations!

We would like to offer our congratulations to Past President Audrey Salgado. She has been appointed as the Interim Executive Director for the Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform Foundation. We know that she will do an excellent job fulfilling those responsibilities, as she did for our state as past president.

AAUW Alabama STEM Coalition

Several members have volunteered to work with me on the Alabama STEM Coalition project, but I am still preparing an agenda of activities. My efforts have focused on collecting lots of information online regarding STEM education. In addition, I regularly attend meetings for the Tennessee Valley Workforce Coalition to keep track of various science and technology training events that already exist in North Alabama. It looks like we need to find ways to get more girls to enroll in these programs and events.

I have joined with Cyndy Morgan from the SciQuest Museum in Huntsville to begin planning an “Expanding Your Horizons” conference for the coming year. These conferences nurture girls’ interest in science and math courses to encourage them to consider careers in STEM fields. If you are interested in volunteering for this project, contact me at joannc1972@charter.net.

Jo Ann Cummings

A Message from the Southeast Central Regional Director

The National Convention is fast approaching and probably will result in the end of the Southeast Central Region. I have served as the SEC Regional Director for the past four years and have been honored to represent Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and my home state of Louisiana. I want to thank everyone for welcoming me to your State Conventions and Leadership Conferences. In the past four years, I have renewed friendships made as a state president and made many new ones; these friendships will continue even when the region itself no longer exists.

I have applied to become part of the Leadership Corps, although there is not a clear definition of the scope of the position at yet. A transitional period will be required, and I want everyone to know that I will do whatever I can to make that transition smooth. Although there has been some opposition to the dissolution of the regions, the transfer to the Leadership Corps could be a beneficial move, allowing greater grassroots attention to states and branches. I look forward to the challenges of the new AAUW.

Eileen deHaro, Southeast Central Regional Director

Montgomery Branch Kickoff

The Montgomery branch of AAUW of Alabama held organizational meetings on May 12 and June 3 to work on revitalizing the chapter. Eleven women attended one or both of these meetings and are interested in participating in branch activities. Janet Smith is currently serving as our president, and we have filled several other chapter positions. We decided that our chapter will focus (at least initially) on education. Our top priority is to establish a satellite group at Alabama State University (ASU) in Montgomery; ultimately, we hope to start additional student affiliates at other local colleges and universities. We believe these satellite groups will help us recruit new members, reach out to young women who share AAUW's philosophy, and create mentorship opportunities. In addition, we discussed The WAGE (Women Are Getting Even) Project, and three members of our group attended the WAGE training last month in Birmingham. We hope to implement the WAGE program at ASU as part of our work with students there.

Sonia Scherr, Montgomery Branch

Social Media, Networking and You

A year ago, I never would have thought that I would get “into” the social media “thing” on the Internet. Now I am finding that it is very informative and a unique way to keep in touch with family, friends, and other people who share concerns about the issues that I care about. In a nutshell, Social Media can be described as online websites, technologies, and practices that people use in order to share their opinions, preferences, experiences, and likes and dislikes with anyone who cares to listen.

I was invited to join Facebook by several other AAUW members who participate. I find it a great way to interact with AAUW members from Alabama and across the nation. However, I primarily use it to touch base with local friends and with family members in California. Not only can I see what they are doing now, but there is a “chat” feature that allows me to text messages to friends who are online at the same time. My son seldom calls me from California, but I touch base with him often via Facebook. (For a discussion about AAUW on Facebook, see <http://tinyurl.com/aauwfb101>.)

What I am having great fun with is Twitter. Some people use it to chat (in 140 characters or less) about lunch or shopping. I “follow” many people who are concerned about social justice, health care, and family or women’s issues. I got involved with Twitter right before Equal Pay Day, and I was able to participate in a lot of give-and-take discussions about pay equity issues. Since then, more people are beginning to follow me as I share information that I have found in “tweets” that I receive. I have several national AAUW contacts on Twitter, but I’d sure like to interact more with members from Alabama. (My Twitter name is [@jasmine1972](https://twitter.com/jasmine1972).)

Social media websites offer a unique way to share information on your favorite concerns. If you find something of interest on the Internet, like a particular website, quote, picture, blog, comment, anything, it can be shared with your friends, who may then decide to share it with their friends, and so on it goes. This is a great way for branches to reach out to students and younger women to keep them informed and get them involved with local activities.

Of course, the Internet is always evolving, and some new medium is always coming along. As a matter of fact, national AAUW has just established an existence in “Second Life.” Oh, I don’t even want to go there...

Jo Ann Cummings (joannc1972@charter.net)

New Educational Foundation Vice President

Jo Ann Cummings, AAUW of Alabama president, is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Pamela Arrington to the position of Educational Foundation Vice President. Dr. Arrington will complete the term vacated by Melinda Bicknell, who resigned for personal reasons.

Dr. Arrington, a member of the Montgomery branch, currently works as the Director of Instruction, Planning and Special Services for the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. With her experience, she should provide the leadership we need to move forward with our efforts to develop effective EF and LAF programs at the state and branch levels. You may contact her at Pamela.Arrington@ache.alabama.gov.

State and National Legislation

Our AAUW of Alabama Lobby Corps members participated in Equal Pay Day/Lobby Day activities in Montgomery at the State House on Tuesday, April 28. We were recognized in the gallery and observed Representative Laura Hall introduce Joint House Resolution 797 to establish an Equal Pay Commission for Alabama. Later, Senator Vivian Figures introduced Joint Senate Resolution 123 to do the same. Neither resolution made it out of committee before the end of session. By next year, let's rally more support throughout the state to at least get this matter out of committee and to the floor for a vote.

Statistics on the Alabama high school dropout rate indicate it is a serious problem that affects the future of Alabama's children, as well as the economic health of our state and its future workforce. Undereducated students suffer the effects of an inferior education throughout their lives and are more liable to suffer unemployment, low-paying jobs, and incarceration. Senate Bill 334, increasing the mandatory age for school attendance from 16 to 17, was introduced by Senator Arthur Orr and passed. Ideally, this legislation will keep more children in school longer in the future, so that they have a better chance.

The Healthy Families Act (H.R.2460) was re-introduced in the U.S. Congress by Representative Rosa DeLauro on May 18. It would provide full-time employees with seven paid sick days a year to be used for their own medical needs or to tend to the medical needs of a family member. One hundred million workers have no paid sick leave days to take care of family members or themselves when illness occurs. Since this burden tends to fall upon women, it is one more issue that threatens our job security and advancement. Please provide your support through the AAUW Two Minute Activist (<http://tr.im/o3Mj>) or by contacting your congressman directly.

The Pathways Advancing Career Training Act (H.R.5774), introduced by U.S. Representative Linda Sanchez, would provide financial assistance to states for training programs that prepare women for employment in high-wage, high-skill fields where they are often underrepresented. Even if women do not aspire to college degrees in science or technology fields, there are still plenty of trade skills and technical careers fields where women who get this training can prosper with the higher wages paid in these jobs.

Please contact our senators to support the Paycheck Fairness Act (S.182), which provides more clarity and enforcement capability to the original Equal Pay Act of 1963. Whether or not they agree, we still need to let them know that we think this bill is important.

You can call their offices for personal contact, and ask for the Labor Legislative Aide:

- Senator Jeff Sessions: D.C. (202) 224-4124; Birmingham (334) 244-7017
- Senator Richard Shelby: D.C. (202) 224-5744; Tuscaloosa (205) 759-5047

Your Voice is Important! Let it be heard regarding the issues that are important to you!

Teaching Salary Negotiation Skills to Women

One cause of wage disparities between men and women is the reluctance of women to negotiate for higher salaries or benefits when applying for a job or pursuing a promotion. Learning salary negotiation skills is one way to avoid this problem. On May 30 in Birmingham, 18 women attended facilitator training sponsored by AAUW of Alabama for \$mart\$art classes offered by The WAGE Project.

\$mart\$art workshops teach junior and senior college women how to benchmark the salary of the job they want when they graduate and basic salary negotiation skills. Women from Huntsville, Decatur, Florence, Birmingham, Montgomery, Tuscaloosa, and Martin, Tennessee, attended this training, which instructed them how to offer \$mart\$art workshops at their local universities.

The WAGE Project is working with AAUW nationwide to try to bring 500 workshops to college campuses this summer and fall. AAUW of Alabama would like to see 6-8 workshops offered in our state this year, but we need your help. If you are an AAUW member who would like to help us offer a workshop in your community, please contact JoAnn Cummings at joannc1972@charter.net, or 256-584-6567. For additional information on this subject, visit <http://www.wageproject.org/>.

Membership Pilot Program

AAUW of Alabama is enrolled to participate in the new voluntary Membership Pilot Program (MPP). The program offers online options to effectively process membership dues. All Alabama branches have the option to participate in the program. To participate, the branch president must opt in to the MPP by accessing the Member Services Database (MSD) and selecting the State/Branch Opt-in screen and submitting the branch banking account information. The branch banking details should be obtained from the branch finance officer; it will include such information as bank name, account holder, routing number, account number, branch dues, and federal tax ID number, if applicable. The process for opting in is clearly spelled out once the branch president accesses the MSD site.

After the branch is enrolled, members can go online and renew annual membership dues. The MPP process enables AAUW to transfer funds from AAUW to the respective state and branch accounts. Another benefit to opting into the MPP program is that branches could possibly gain "unexpected" new members or members at large could possibly join their local branch when they renew at the national level.

To sign up your branch for the MPP, the president needs to access AAUW at www.aauw.org. Please feel free to contact me at (205) 527-6190 or veronica.bryant@wgint.com if you have any questions.

Veronica Bryant, Finance Director

North Alabama Students Attend National Conference for College Women Student Leaders

The Huntsville branch of AAUW annually sponsors local students to attend the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL). This year the branch sponsored six leaders from The University of Alabama in Huntsville (UAHuntsville) and two leaders from Alabama A&M University (AAMU) to attend the conference at the University of Maryland, College Park, June 4-6.

NCCWSL 2009 embraced the theme “Leadership for Today and Tomorrow” and included more than 50 workshops and presentations on topics such as advocacy, leadership skill-building, financial management, and health and wellness. The conference also offered community service projects, networking opportunities, and keynote speakers in the fields of international human rights.

UAHuntsville student Sara Martin particularly enjoyed the presentation by keynote speaker Kirk W. Johnson. She said, “He was fantastic! He handled issues of religion, racism, and sexism gracefully, and he was so humble. For once, listening to someone successful and young didn’t make me feel panicked about my life. He made me feel uplifted and capable. I felt like, wow! You can take a passion that you really have and make a difference in the world.”

AAMU student Laquita Humphreys described what she liked best about the conference: “We got the chance to meet ladies from the other universities and the chance to network and find out about each other’s various professions and schools.” She left the conference with a strong sense of “how to be a strong leader on campus, how to put together meetings and conferences, how to be the driving force in an organization and to go forward if we need something established on campus.”

Sara Jo Taylor of UAHuntsville said her favorite workshop was “Wommon Words: The Semantics of Being Female,” which explored embedded messages about gender communicated by leaders. Additionally, Sara Jo said that recipients of the NCCWSL Women of Distinction Awards were “truly amazing and inspiring.” The awards paid tribute to women leaders who have made extraordinary contributions in their professions or in their communities.

Veronica Ferreira of UAHuntsville also enjoyed the awards and especially appreciated the opportunity to meet the women leaders afterward. She said, “My favorite thing was meeting Tammy Duckworth. She is a Major in the National Guard who refused to retire after she lost both of her legs. She’s the first female to be in charge of a combat unit. Now she is an Obama appointee who works with Intergovernmental Affairs for the Department of Veterans Affairs. She’s awesome! I thanked her for taking care of veterans, because my husband is a veteran, and she told me to thank my husband.”

The students also made a point to attend workshops where they learned about ideas, information, and resources they may bring back to their campuses. The students are interested in pursuing an AAUW Campus Action Project grant that promotes service and activism projects in schools and the community.

Kriti Mishra, a Business Administration major from Birmingham Southern College, was sponsored by AAUW of Alabama to attend NCCWSL. She felt empowered by the experiences shared by the various speakers during the three-day event. Each female had her own story and challenged the audience to assess its values, actions, beliefs, and morals, then go empower themselves with the skills they need to succeed.

The student leaders from UAHuntsville were Melissa Cavins, Psychology major, Theatre Cognate minor, senior; Veronica Ferreira, History/Sociology major, Women’s Studies minor, senior; Sara Martin, Psychology major, Sociology minor, senior; Sara Jo Taylor, Chemical Engineering major, junior; Brenda Taylor-Moody, Psychology major, Studio Art minor, junior; and Wyndi Turner, Sociology major, Women’s Studies minor, junior. The student leaders from AAMU were Ashley Holland, Nursing major, junior, and Laquita Humphrey, Accounting major, junior. The student leaders also serve on the AAUW’s state Student Advisory Council.

Additional funding for the NCCWSL trip was made possible by local AAUW member contributions, student fundraising, AAMU, and the UAHuntsville Women’s Studies Program.



UAHuntsville students (left to right): Wyndi Turner, Brenda Taylor-Moody, Melissa Cavins, Sara Jo Taylor, Veronica Ferreira, Sara Martin

Alabama Arise - Grocery Tax Bill Done For This Year

It’s hard to admit defeat, especially when we come so close, in an unprecedented fourth attempt to get a floor debate on the measure. After the redoubled effort at the end of the legislative session, we watched the House vote 59-41 to bring the grocery tax bill up for debate, but we didn’t get the 60 votes needed. Now this bill is dead for another year.

This time we gained the vote of Representative Richard Laird, the only Democrat who had been voting against the bill, and we gained our first two Republican votes of the year: Representatives Spencer Collier of Mobile County and Ron Johnson of Sylacauga. Three supporters were absent: Fite, Mitchell, and Salaam.

The 41 Republican opponents seemed more interested in protecting a lopsided tax deduction for the highest-paid 5 percent of Alabama citizens than in giving grocery tax relief to 100 percent. According to a recent poll, two-thirds of voters favor lowering the grocery tax and capping the lopsided state deduction for federal income tax.

Hundreds of constituents did their homework and made their calls. The House switch board hummed and three legislators changed their vote. Now it’s time to evaluate and strategize. How can you help prepare for next year? Please join Alabama Arise and help frame the arguments and gather supporters to win this campaign for a fairer tax system. For more information go to www.alarise.org.

AAUW Calendar of Events

June 26-28, 2009	National Convention, Renaissance Grand Hotel, St. Louis, MO
July 1, 2009	Branch Dues Report Deadline
August 1, 2009	Educational Foundation Fellowships, Grants and Awards Applications Available
August 1, 2009	Executive Committee Meeting, Hoover
August 1, 2009	Board of Directors Meeting, Leadership Training Workshop Hoover Public Library, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
August 27, 2009	Alabama Citizens for Constitutional Reform, Bailey Thompson Awards Luncheon, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Von Braun Center (South Hall Ballroom) Huntsville
August 26, 2009	Women's Equality Day: Passage of the 19th amendment in 1920, which gave women the right to vote
September 1, 2009	<i>Daybreak</i> Fall Issue (October, November, December) Deadline
September 15, 2009	<i>Daybreak</i> Fall Issue Published



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AAUW MISSION STATEMENT

AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education and research.