



November/December 2010 Newsletter

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

**WILLMAR BRANCH MEETINGS**

*Bethel Lutheran Church*

**Monday, November 15, 2010**

: **6:45 pm – Coffee and Treats**  
**7:00 pm – Program**

Willmar Branch AAUW will be meeting on **Monday, November 15 at 7:00 pm at Bethel Lutheran Church** for a program by Cathy Keuseman. Cathy is the new Willmar Economic Development Commission's (EDC) Agribusiness and Renewable Energy Specialist. As a former business owner and consultant, she has experience in the biotechnology and nanotechnology fields. Following a move from Arizona to rural New London with her family, Cathy attended Ridgewater College in pursuit of a degree in marketing and business development. It was during that time that her interest in the field of renewable resources were supported by several research projects she was involved with. Please join us for an interesting evening as we explore the field of agribusiness and renewable energy with Cathy! **Come early for coffee and treats at 6:45 pm.**

**Monday, December 20:**

**7:00 pm – Holiday Party**

"It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas!" and on **Monday, December 20**, Willmar Branch AAUW will be celebrating the holidays! Join us for our annual holiday party with the Girls Group Home at **Bethel Lutheran Church** at **7:00 pm**. In addition to fun games, good food, and great company, we will be entertained by a Tribute to Eleanor Roosevelt by our very own Carol Esbjornson. Plan to bring some tasty treats to share and we will see you there!

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**FROM THE CO-PRESIDENT...**

A belated thank you goes to all of you for your fine support at the September meeting and the silent auction on behalf of AAUW's Legal Advocacy Fund-- especially to Vicki for arranging the visit to Mr. B's, to Kathy for organizing the donations and sharing news from the LAF, to those of you who brought and bought items, to Marion for helping with the high tea, and to the volunteer "clean-up" crew. It's wonderful to have raised almost \$400 for LAF from our branch. I'm proud of you!

I look forward to our November meeting and our speaker who exemplifies what females in the career areas of math, science, and technology can accomplish. She will be an excellent role model for our girls from the group home. Of course, this topic fits right in with the national effort to emphasize STEM education.

I recently finished the book, *We Are All Welcome Here* by Elizabeth Berg, a true story written

as a novel and taking place during the Civil Rights era in Tupolo, Mississippi (and yes, Elvis Presley makes a cameo appearance at the end of the book). The mother is pregnant, is diagnosed with polio, and becomes paralyzed from the neck down shortly before giving birth to a daughter in an iron lung. When her husband divorces her, she decides to raise her daughter herself with the help of a black woman who becomes a surrogate mother to the daughter. I share this story because it fits in well with our book discussion (*The Help*) slated for February. Without giving too much away, I will say that the book has a happy ending! I look forward to seeing you at the November meeting!

– Jeanette Carlson, Co-President

### ***Holiday Gifts and Treats for Girls***

As has been our custom for a number of years, we plan to have the girls from the Prairie Lakes Youth Program Girls Group Home provide us with wish lists. These lists will be distributed at the November meeting. Typically, two or three members share a girl. The gifts are brought to the December meeting and given to the girls. If you cannot attend the November meeting but wish to help out with a gift purchase, please e-mail me at [drosenbrook@tds.net](mailto:drosenbrook@tds.net) or call 599-4118.

Also, remember that each member is asked to bring 1/2-1 dozen treats for the December 21 holiday party to share that evening. Any remaining goodies will be sent along with the girls for them and the staff to enjoy during the holidays. Thanks!

Dee Rosenbrook

### ***Prizes Needed for Holiday Celebration***

We will play Bingo for a short time at the December 20 party. Please bring prizes or donate \$ for me to buy prizes: [drosenbrook@tds.net](mailto:drosenbrook@tds.net) or 599-4118.

### ***Follow-up to October Meeting***

Mollie Bredeck, Willmar AAUW member and speaker at the October branch meeting mentioned that Laura Westley, the keynote speaker at the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders last June, was one of the authors of *Secrets of Powerful Women*. (Mollie and all attendees were given a copy).

I noticed in the Spring/Summer issue of the AAUW publication Outlook that Lisa M. Maatz, AAUW Director of Public Policy and Government Relations, is a co-author as well. Her article was titled "Confessions of a Twitter Convert".

–  
Sharon Jones

### ***WILLMAR AAUW BRANCH MEETING***

**October 18, 2010, 6:45 p.m.**

Vicki Melbye College Rep, welcomed everyone to the 533<sup>rd</sup> meeting of Willmar Branch AAUW at Ridgewater College. Vicki provided refreshments and gave the girls from the Prairie Lakes Youth Program Halloween treats at the end of the meeting.

**Mollie Bredeck's Power Point presentation** was infused with her enthusiasm for her experiences at the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders that she attended at the University of Maryland June 3-5. The days were filled with Newseum Exhibits, the life stories of the five women honored as Women of Distinction, and the four sessions she attended. Laura Westley, keynote speaker, is one of the authors of *Secrets of Powerful Women*, a book that was given to all delegates. Mollie posed a question for us to consider that had been asked of her at the conference, "Are you an equalist or a feminist?" In the second portion of the program, **Jennifer Gibson** explained the many responsibilities that are part of her job as Student Success Coordinator at Ridgewater College. She is responsible for the Student Success Program, Access to Success Learning Community, Summer Academy--a one credit course-- and the MentorNet program. All of them are offered to under-represented groups.

The business meeting was called to order by Co-President Jennifer Gibson. A motion was made by Dee Rosenbrook, seconded by Vicki Melbye, and carried to accept the secretary's minutes as printed. **Treasurer Lou Thoma** reported a checking balance of \$1111.66, which included a \$398.86 deposit for Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF), and \$1272.61 in savings. A motion was made by Vicki Melbye, seconded by Marion Nordin and carried to accept the treasurer's reports subject to financial review.

**Membership:** Dee Rosenbrook said our membership total is 43. A welcome was extended to guests, Jen Stelter, Ridgewater College student, and the girls from the Prairie Lakes Youth Program.

November program: Cathy Keuseman will speak on Agri-Business/Renewable Energy.

**Board Reports:** Kathy Vruwink thanked everyone for donating and purchasing the Silent Auction items for

the LAF fund raiser. Historian Marion Nordin said Joan Kuhn was quoted on the front of the Willmar Levy Referendum brochure. Vicki Melbye continues to invite prospective members to meetings. Dee Rosenbrook explained that the online newsletter had been sent twice when some members said they hadn't received it. Julia Janssen will forward public policy e-mails to members that have expressed an interest in receiving them.

Other: Jeanette Carlson and Jennifer Gibson attended the Nobel Conference at Gustavus Adolphus in October. Members have assisted the League of Women Voters at the four Voter Forums held at the Municipal Utilities Conference Room. The consensus was to continue decorating a tree for the Kandiyohi County Historical Society Festive Forest. The girls brought thank you cards for the High Tea served at the September meeting. The girls' Christmas wish lists are needed for the November meeting. Vicki Melbye delivered an entertaining account of her whirlwind three-day Los Angeles trip. She was the Grand Prize Sweepstakes winner for the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration for "Days of Our Lives."

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Jones, Secretary

## ***MARK YOUR CALENDAR***

**Winona Branch** will host the MN AAUW convention **April 29-May 1, 2011**. They offer a visit to a Marine Art Museum and a bike path for walking besides all the excellent speakers/workshops typical at the state convention. Attending a convention really gets one into the spirit of AAUW!

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**National AAUW Convention: June 16-19, 2011 in Washington, DC.**

**Go to [aauw.org](http://aauw.org) for more information. Best prices are offered by registering in December.**

## ***Public policy***

**Public Policy Chair Julia Janssen brings the following to our attention:**

### **Paycheck Fairness Act**

In less than three weeks, the Senate will vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act. Your senators will either pass

an historic piece of fair pay legislation or they will fail to act to close the wage gap and protect the victims of gender-based pay discrimination.

You have a chance to influence your senators' decisions and to ensure their votes represent you accurately, but time is short. We are asking you to write a letter to the editor to the major newspapers in your state in advance of this vote, urging your senators to vote for and support the Paycheck Fairness Act. Several key senators are still on the fence, and although [calls](#) and [emails](#) are important, you can increase your impact prior to the vote by using some of the language and information we provide to write a short letter.

AAUW has led the coalition fighting to pass the Paycheck Fairness Act, and your contributions have brought us within sight of victory. Now, it is time to redouble our efforts for the next three weeks and pass this critical fair pay legislation.

Take Action! The [Paycheck Fairness Act](#) (S. 182) sits poised on the cusp of action in the Senate. This critical bill will provide greater safeguards against pay discrimination, which would be a fitting way to recognize the value of *every* American worker *every day*.

...why is this Act so important...read below...

1. [Citigroup Used Recession to Fire Women](#) Citigroup has been [accused](#) in a lawsuit of using company-wide layoffs to oust scores of women and protect the jobs of less-qualified men. This is being called "recessionary discrimination." The lawsuit alleges that Citigroup allowed supervisors and managers to select employees to be terminated based on their own personal preferences and biases.

AAUW is [committed](#) to supporting fairness in compensation, equitable access and advancement in employment, and vigorous enforcement of employment antidiscrimination statutes. Our [Legal Advocacy Fund](#) provides support to workplace sex discrimination [cases](#) that have the potential to make a difference for all women.

2. [Gender Pay Gap Leads to Retirement Shortfall](#) Based on numbers released last week in the GAO [report](#) on the pay gap in management positions, the negative effects of the pay gap continue into retirement. An [article](#) for SmartMoney.com shows that differences in pay now can lead to hundreds of thousands of dollars' difference in retirement savings.

This shortfall can be attributed to the fact that women earn less income to save, receive lower Social Security payments, and work fewer years despite living longer than men. The average [difference](#) in the retirement income between women and men is \$8000, two thirds of which is due to occupational segregation and the pay gap.

### 3. Equality in Math Skills, Inequality in the Job Market:

A recent [analysis](#) by the University of Wisconsin-Madison found that the difference in math skills between women and men was so small it was negligible. The study also found that although men and women have equal skills in math, teachers and parents continue to guide girls away from math-heavy sciences and engineering classes.

Additionally, a new [report](#) in Business Week reveals the significant lack of women in technology and addresses methods of reversing the trend. Women make up a mere one percent of CEOs in high-tech startups, and make up only 19 percent of those studying computer science (down from 37 percent in 1985). The report's authors point out that small businesses are more successful when they are more diverse and give tips to increase the number of women in these ventures.

In a recent AAUW research [report](#), it was found that negative stereotypes about girls' abilities in math can measurably lower girls' test performance and lower girls' aspirations for science and engineering careers. For information and resources on how to combat gender stereotyping, visit [www.aauw.org/whysofew](http://www.aauw.org/whysofew).

4. Girl Scouts Tackle Images of Women in the Media: Girl Scouts of the USA has launched a new public service announcement called "[Watch What You Watch](#)," encouraging girls to seek out media with positive portrayals of women and girls. The group, in collaboration with the National Association of Broadcasters and the Creative Coalition, is working to raise [awareness](#) among youth and generate positive images of women across the industry. Researchers have found that girls who watch more television are less likely to [believe](#) they will be successful in the future, and boys who watch frequently are more likely to have sexist views of girls.

And, now for the good news...

### **STEM Education, AAUW in the National Spotlight**

This week, President Barack Obama [hosted](#) the White House Science Fair celebrating the winners in a broad range of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) competitions. The president spoke to an audience of students, science educators and business leaders on the importance of STEM education in moving the United States forward. Tangentially, the Department of Education [announced](#) three five-year grants totaling \$27 million awarded to projects focused on innovative technology to help young students with reading and math skills.

AAUW will host experiments and hands-on [activities](#) at the USA Science & Engineering Festival [expo](#) as part of AAUW's ongoing efforts to engage girls in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The free event will feature more than 1,500 activities and 75 stage shows on the National Mall, with more than 500 leading science and engineering organizations participating. AAUW will offer activities for children, stories of inspiring female scientists, and information about AAUW programs that encourage girls to explore the fascinating fields of science and math.

### **Supreme Court Opens Term with Three Women**

This month marks an historic [new term](#) for the Supreme Court where, for the first time, there are three women justices on the bench at the same time. Studies have shown that there is no real difference between the way female and male justices decide cases in 12 of 13 areas of law; the only exception is cases involving sex-based employment discrimination. In the case of Lilly Ledbetter, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg read her [dissent](#) from the bench and called on Congress to change the law, which it subsequently did thanks to urging from AAUW.

AAUW [monitors](#) the judicial nominations process because so many of our fundamental rights and liberties have been established and are protected by the federal courts. AAUW believes the federal judiciary, and through it the country as a whole, is best served by the nomination and confirmation of moderate judges.

### **And, Finally, An item of importance to all of us: Protect Social Security**

In February, President Obama created the [National Commission on Fiscal and Financial Reform](#) to put America "[on the path towards fiscal reform and financial responsibility](#)." However, AAUW's worried that members of the Commission view cuts to Social Security as a potential way to cut the deficit.

Social Security, which just turned 75 recently, is one of our country's most successful anti-poverty programs, providing benefits to children, disabled workers, surviving spouses, and retirees. Without Social Security benefits, more than half of older women would fall into poverty. In addition, more than two-thirds of unmarried women would be living below the poverty line without the help of Social Security, which also supports more children than Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), also known as welfare.

Social Security legally can't borrow money to pay benefits and therefore does not contribute to the federal deficit, and cutting benefits will not reduce the deficit. While fiscal discipline is needed, we must tell the Commission that it should not come at the cost of hurting Social Security beneficiaries. The Social Security program currently has a surplus of over \$2.5 trillion and is expected to be able to pay full benefits for another quarter of a century, giving Congress ample time to make adjustments to future benefits through the normal legislative process.

The members of the Commission, both Republican and Democrat, will make recommendations to Congress for balancing the budget and for related fiscal issues by December 1. These recommendations could fast-track cuts to Social Security, including reducing monthly benefits, privatizing accounts, and raising the retirement age – a benefit cut that places the greatest hardship on older Americans.

In these tough economic times, cutting social programs like Social Security could be devastating to women and families across our nation. Now more than ever, these linchpin safety-net programs need to be protected and expanded, not cut.

*We encourage submissions from members for this newsletter. Send ideas or articles to: Becky Romosz ([ellen\\_romosz@ymail.com](mailto:ellen_romosz@ymail.com)) and/or Dee Rosenbrook ([drosenbrook@tds.net](mailto:drosenbrook@tds.net))*

See the difference: Impacting Girls' and Women's Lives: and the world! AAUW advocates equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

## ***Refreshment hosts***

November: Julia Janssen/Sharon Jones  
December: All Members  
January: Carla Buzzeo/Raeanna Gislason  
February: Kathy Vruwink and ?  
March: Potluck Dinner  
April: Louise Thoma/Bernice Grabber-Tintes  
May: Annual Dinner Meeting

## ***Maya Lin***

***“If you don't remember history accurately, how can you learn?”***

On November 11--Veterans Day—we will remember those who have served our country. Maybe some of you have been to Washington, D.C. to see the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. It was dedicated in 1982. The black, granite wall displays the names of all 57,692 Americans killed or missing in the Vietnam War. The Memorial was designed by Maya Lin, an architecture student at Yale University. She was 21 years old when she won the Memorial design competition. At first the simple design was considered very controversial. Some veterans' groups insisted that a more traditional, realistic group-statue of service members be erected nearby. However, “The Wall,” as it came to be called, has become one of the most revered veterans' monuments in the world, attracting more visitors per year than any other public work of art in the United States.

Maya Lin continues a distinguished career as an architect/sculptor. She designed the *Civil Rights Memorial* at the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, and the *Women's Table* for Yale University. In 1994, she designed a major installation, *Groundswell*, for the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio.

Recently she commented on her dual commitment to architecture and sculpture: “Sculpture to me is like poetry and architecture is like prose.” She continues to work in both mediums with equal success.

(Thanks to Carla Buzzeo for sharing the publication *Wise Women's Words on Learning* from which this selection was taken.)

***AAUW 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***

