



AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION OF
UNIVERSITY
WOMEN

Northfield Concern

Newsletter of the Northfield, MN AAUW Branch

March, 2008



**AAUW
Welcomes New
Executive
Director Linda
Hallman**

AAUW is pleased to welcome Linda D. Hallman as its new executive director. Hallman joins AAUW with a long history of executive-level association and foundation experience in the Washington, D.C., area. Most recently, she served as vice president of policy and government strategy, external and member relations, with the National Alliance for Health Information Technology in Washington, D.C. "Over the past year, AAUW has taken bold steps in new directions, and I am honored to be joining this powerful and dynamic organization," said Hallman.

February Meeting

On February 9th, we heard a presentation by Sarah Swan McDonald, history teacher at Northfield High School and Anne Larson, kindergarten teacher at Greenvale Park Elementary School. The

women were participants in a several years project on immigration funded by a Teaching American History Grant. Unlike much funding earmarked for public school improvement, this grant was aimed specifically at professional development. The women explained how the focus on immigration issues, the study of primary sources and the field trip to New York City have impacted what they do in their classrooms.

Calling all readers to our March meeting...

At our March 8th meeting (9:30) at The Bittersweet Eatery in the Archer House, we will have our third annual book talk. Members are encouraged to share brief summaries and impressions of books they've read this year. This has been a popular meeting. Members come away with a list of good books to read, based on the recommendations of other members.

Bring a book to share and money for your own treats to this meeting.

Book Groups



Consider joining in some lively discussions each month.

Morning group: meets the fourth Monday of each month at 10:00 a.m. If you want more information or have ideas for a good book, contact Suzanne Sornson at 664-9611.

Evening Literature Group:

This group usually meets the third Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Mon., March 17, 7:30 p.m. The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion.

Bernice Schendel's home, 1304 Presidential Drive.

Mon., April 21, 7:30 p.m. at What's Bred in the Bone by Robertson Davies
Audrey Ebert's, 618 5th St. E
No May meeting

June - Sat. brunch in Webster
(date to be determined)

Snow Flower and the Secret Fan by Lisa See

(Contact: Carol James at 645-6074
or randcjames@charter.net)



Seneca Falls: The story of the women who changed the world

A historian looks at the early women's rights movement and the reformers America has forgotten.
By Marjorie Kehe

"Cautious, careful people always casting about to preserve their reputation and social standing never can bring about reform," observed women's rights activist Susan B. Anthony.

Anthony knew whereof she spoke. She and her peers – the first generation of female activists – had doors slammed in their faces. They were shouted down when they rose to speak. Newspapers mocked them and clergymen called them instruments of the devil.

Even the majority of women took little interest in their efforts. And almost none of them lived long enough to see their cause prevail.

If you're looking for an upbeat, go-girlfriend view of history, **Seneca Falls and the Origins of the Women's Rights Movements** is not your book. The story that Sally McMillen tells is poignant, more a tale of self-sacrifice and delayed gratification than of triumph. But it's also a story of courage and conviction, about a small group of people who did, finally, change the world.

It was 1848, at a women's rights meeting in Seneca Falls, N.Y., that Elizabeth Cady Stanton rose to declare that "all men and women are created equal." And yet it was not until 1917 that the United States Constitution was amended to extend to women the right to vote.

Stanton and her peers spent their lives struggling toward that goal and the hard work they did altered everything about the American way of life. What is remarkable today, however, is how little we remember about these women.

That's a gap that McMillen, professor and chair of the history department at Davidson College in Davidson, N.C., hopes to help close with her solid examination of the Seneca Falls convention and the five decades that followed. She chooses four of the historic heroes of the women's movement – Stanton, Anthony, Lucretia Mott, and Lucy Stone – as her focal point.

The four women could not have been more different. Stanton, the well-to-do daughter of a judge, married and had seven children. Anthony, a born reformer, lived her life alone and saw marriage and family as a form of bondage.

Mott, a Quaker, was born on Nantucket, where the long absences of seafaring men encouraged the independence of women. Stone was a prodigy, a hardworking farm girl who, through sheer determination, became one of the nation's first female college graduates.

What these women had in common was an inability to accept the norms of their time. They lived in a world where women ceased to exist in the eyes of the law on the day that they married. "Physically they are persons; politically they are not," stated one California judge in 1871.

Where McMillen's book excels is in setting the lives and work of these women in context. She marches through the decades following Seneca Falls, evoking the 19th century in all of its turmoil and sometimes infuriating incomprehension. She shows how the Civil War and the furor over slavery slowed the advance of women's rights, even as she demonstrates how the industrial revolution accelerated the cause.

She paints a fascinating picture of the reactionary nature of American churches at the time. ("The worst enemy [women] have is in the pulpit," said Anthony, who also told a minister preaching female

submission that if his mother were alive she "should lay you across her knee and give you a good spanking.")

And most of all, she reminds us – because it's hard for contemporary readers to grasp – how utterly powerless women were. They could be robbed, beaten, and raped by their husbands and would have no legal recourse. Yet most unquestioningly accepted that state and even considered it a form of "protection."

"So circumscribed have been her limits that she does not realize the misery of her condition," lamented Mott of her fellow women.

Despite their gumption, the lives of McMillen's reformers were not entirely heroic. Their internal quarrels and jealousy hurt their cause. Stanton's and Anthony's substantial egos sometimes clashed, particularly when the more appealing Stanton outshone the severe Anthony on speaking tours.

Stone, who once swore never to marry, ultimately found herself weighted down by a spouse who was neither a good provider nor a loyal husband. Also, Stone – who is largely overlooked today – became increasingly isolated from her colleagues by disagreements over approach. In her later years she found solace in housekeeping and jam-making.

For all the women it was a disappointment that full legal rights remained so elusive. They had to comfort themselves with the idea that another generation would savor their victory.

"We are sowing winter wheat, which other hands than ours will reap and enjoy," said Stanton toward the end of her life. The rest of us can never be grateful enough.

From the Christian Science Monitor
February 05, 2008 edition

AAUW Fights Pay Inequity

Carol James attended this and shares this report:

Lisa Maatz, AAUW Director of Public Policy and Government Relations, visited Minnesota in January and spoke to the Red Wing Branch, along with Red Wing community members and representatives of other branches.

Her message was related to the recently published AAUW research, "Beyond the Pay Gap," which came out of the overall topic, "Education as the Gateway to Women's Economic Security." She started with a few familiar statistics that don't seem to move. Nationwide women earn an average of 77% of what men earn. MN is at that average, placing us 15th among the states. Women college graduates earn 80% more than women high school graduates, putting them just ahead of men with high school diplomas. One year out of college, women are earning 5% less than their male classmates, ten years out, it is 12% less. This is unexplained.

Maatz posed the question, "Haven't we done it right?" We've taken all the advice, women have better grades in all majors including the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), have entered nontraditional fields. Ten years out of college women are more likely to have graduate degrees. This is a lot bigger than just the choices women make. The AAUW study and economists agree; discrimination creeps in at this point. 90% of women in numerous surveys rank equal pay as the highest voting priority, higher than homeland security. She reminded the audience that pay inequity isn't just a women's issue. It also affects spouses and families.

There are currently three bills working their way through Congress to address the pay gap. AAUW is currently working hard on the Fair Pay Restoration Act, also known as the Lily Ledbetter bill. You may recall that the U.S. Supreme Court in May

overturned an appellate court decision upholding her pay discrimination suit against Goodyear. The Supreme Court decided 5-4 that the 180 day time clock to file started the day she got her first discriminatory paycheck, even though she didn't find out about it until much later, reversing the 40 year interpretation that the clock starts anew with each paycheck. This ruling prompted an extremely unusual oral dissent from the bench by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Since this decision, thousands of cases have been dropped.

The Ledbetter bill is a narrow fix, putting the former interpretation into law. The more extensive Paycheck Fairness Act is, as Maatz said, "caught up in presidential politics" and she doesn't expect much action on this one until after the November elections. AAUW supports this bill as well.

The House passed the Ledbetter bill in July, and the Senate held hearings in January. Senator Klobuchar has signed on to the bill, and Senator Coleman was undecided when Maatz was speaking to us. She urged us to contact his office by e-mail or phone, expressing our opinions. He was listening to constituents and had been contacted by a number of women's groups. A letter sent by classic mail should go only to his MN office, not to Washington, due to the delays in checking for dangerous substances.

She reminded her listeners that AAUW advocacy works. "We're good at speaking our minds and bringing others with us." She said that in Washington it is well known that AAUW members "are educated, are registered voters, and are opinion leaders." We are respected as reasonable and "dangerous because we are patient and persistent."

This year's program:

"Breaking Barriers: Women As Agents of Change"

September 15 , 9:30 a.m.

Branch Discussion: How I have Been An Agent of Change
Address: NAG

Note: See detailed article in newsletter

October 13, 9:30 a.m.

Title IX Thirty Five Years of Reform;
Pat Lamb, Ellie Hanson, & Tami Metcalf
Address: Carleton Alumni House

November 10, 9:30 a.m.

India: Landscape of Change; Eleanor Zelliot
Address: Village on the Cannon

December 10, 7:00 p.m.

Holiday social. Collection for EF to be taken. Bring ½ dozen cookies

January 12 (luncheon)

Laura Baker: Founder Profile and State of Special Education Today
Address: Laura Baker School

February 9, 9:30 a.m.

Immigration: Impact on America;
Anne Larson, Paula Seeberg and Sarah Swan
Address: First UCC Church

March 8, 9:30 a.m.

Book Share: Past, Present & Future Women of Change
Address: Bittersweet Eatery

April 19

Tri-Branch luncheon
Address: Owatonna Arts Center

May 12, 9:30 a.m.

Pot-luck: Skit of Historic Northfield Women of Change
Address: St. Peter's Church

Officers

President Greta Anderson
 President Elect
 Vice Presidents, Membership
 Jackie Thorsen
 Nancy Lehman
 Vice Presidents, Program
 Gina Washburn
 Barb Rippley
 Greta Anderson
 Jo Kleber
 Secretary Carol James
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Non-elected board members

Newsletter Anne Larson
 Sarah Currier
 Carleton Rep Hudlin Wagner
 St. Olaf Rep Lois Stratmoen

Public Radio concerns

Watch for efforts to prevent the



cutting of government funding for Public Radio Broadcasting. Huge cuts have been proposed (again) so there will be campaigns starting to prevent that.

Old Magazines...

Have you been wondering what do you do with your magazines when you are done with them? To the left of the Clothes Closet door, at the other end of the building from the Senior Center, there is a rack where people can pick up free books and magazines. It is a better way to recycle than to just put them with the recycled paper.



Northfield AAUW Branch
 28 Fareway Drive
 Northfield, MN 55057

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