

Nutmeg News

CT AAUW
Bi-annual newsletter

November, 2005

A Message from Carol Virostek, Acting President CT AAUW

For the last four months, much of my AAUW work has focused on the silent auction, to be held in conjunction with the WIT/EF fundraiser reception on November 9. I want to thank everyone for the great support of this event, which promises to be our most successful "Power of Women" reception yet. As of today (November 8), 130 people have registered for the event, 30 of whom are CT AAUW members – the most ever. We will receive all of the money AAUW members have contributed, and with the \$50 minimum donation, that means that our EF receipts begin at \$1500. But even those who cannot attend have contributed significantly. EF will also receive 80% of the profits from the silent auction, for which members collected or donated over 65 items. I much appreciate the work of Judi Polizzotti, Sue Scannell, and Melissa Morriss-Olson, who spearheaded the solicitation efforts, all those who brought in donations, and everyone who helped in cataloguing the items following the October 22 state board meeting. By the time of the next edition of the Nutmeg Newsletter, we will know exactly how much we collected for EF from this event, and I'll share that information with you. Audrey Scotti will make sure that EF also knows the names of everyone who contributed.

In the meantime, just know how much I have appreciated the support of the members and the state board during this time of transition. We accomplished a great deal at the fall board meeting. We all wish Carol Buch well and look forward to her return and renewed involvement in CT AAUW. In the interim, I will do my best to keep our initiatives moving forward. The work of our priority issues committees will result in a new strategic action plan that is focused and workable. I look forward to hearing the reports from the committees at the winter board meeting on January 28, 2006. If you have any suggestions as to where this meeting should be held or about how we can improve communication between the state board and the branches, or on any other matter, please feel free to contact me at CRVirostek@aol.com or 860-828-5416.



'Feminine Relationship to Power'

By Nina Simons, *UTNE Magazine*

"The relationship to power that I aspire to is "power through" and "power with," not "power over" that relies on brute strength and dominance. You have to practice humility; you have to remember that the power is not yours. A more feminine definition of power is embodied in the idea of relationships. The more we are connected to each other, to our communities, and to the natural world, the more that power is available to us."

Upcoming Dates

11/16/05

Planning Meeting
Carol Virostek's
home



1/28/06

Winter Board
Meeting—site to
be announced



2/16/06

PCSW "Making
Women Visible"
CT Capitol



4/29/06

CT AAUW
Annual
Convention
Details
forthcoming
Site shared by
Shoreline and
Orange/Milford
Branches





CT AAUW FALL BOARD MEETING

October 22, 2005

A Summary – by Carol Virostek, Acting CT AAUW President

Overview: A great deal of work was accomplished at the CT AAUW Fall Board Meeting, held on October 22, 2005, at Charter Oak State College. The business meeting ran from around 9:15 a.m. to 10:30, after which people broke up into interest groups to undertake some of the most important work of the day. *Three groups, facilitated by Pamela Thompson, Mary Ann Kistner, and Paula Jean Yukna, conducted discussions on three of the four priority issues identified at the Summer Board Retreat. (The focus initiatives of each committee are included later in this summary.) At the same time, the auction committee, chaired by Judi Polizzotti, worked diligently to catalogue the many donations for the Charter Oak/AAUW fundraiser to be held on November 9. The day ended with a brief executive committee meeting, which adjourned around 12:45.

In Memoriam – Lorraine Olson. Chaired by Program VP/Acting President Carol Virostek, the business meeting began with a tribute to Lorraine Olson, who died earlier in the month. As noted by Paula Jean Yukna, Lorraine was not only the president of the Naugatuck branch and a faithful attendee at state and national conventions, she also served her community in countless ways. Without question, all of the people whose lives she touched will miss her greatly. In her memory, the Board voted to donate \$500 to LAF, in appreciation of her extensive work on behalf of AAUW and her particular interest in the work of LAF.

Funding Requests. Other funding issues submitted in writing prior to the meeting were discussed. At the request of Carol Buch, the board agreed to continue its annual donation of \$100 to support the Southern Connecticut State College Annual Women's Studies Conference. Marcelline Barron asked that the board consider continuing to fund the Girls in Technology Camp, a request that will be acted on at the winter board meeting in January.

WIT/EF Fundraiser – November 9, 2005. One hundred percent of donations from AAUW members and guests, along with 80% of the silent auction receipts, will go to EF.

Members are urged to support this event. It is not too late. You can pay at the door.

Communication Issues: Improved communication was one of the objectives established at the summer retreat. **Directories** were distributed by Carol Blauvelt and will be mailed to those not present at the meeting. **E-mail** will be the primary means of communication among and between board members. Those without email access will find a "buddy" willing to download and share information with them.

Reports and Announcements:

- **Secretary's Report:** To streamline approval of minutes, the secretary will send draft minutes to two readers for review. Revised minutes will be considered "accepted" and distributed to the membership in a timely fashion.
- **Treasurer's Report:** When completed, this report will also be e-mailed to members prior to the next board meeting.

- **Membership Report:** The co-membership VPs are planning a meeting of branch membership VPs. They need to hear from all branches to determine a convenient date and place for this meeting.
- **Public Policy:** Joyce Kathan shared information on public policy initiatives and on the new national theme, "Education as the Gateway to Women's Economic Security," which will feature prominently in future CTAAUW programming.
- **EF:** Connecticut contributed \$20,000 last year. Branches should check contribution reports for accuracy and report back to Audrey Scotti.
- **LAF:** Although LAF has merged with EF, donations can be earmarked for LAF. Pins are available from Laurel Anderson for a \$100 contribution.
- **Nutmeg News:** Branches should forward news items, as well as published articles of branch activities, to Pamela Thompson. They will be posted on the website in Nutmeg News.
- **Coalition for Choice:** Audrey Scotti encouraged members to pay close attention to Supreme Court nominees, to follow the hearings, and to urge representatives to vote based on adherence to highest standards.

Appointments: Two new **nominating committee members** were appointed. Judi Polizzotti of Bridgeport and Mary Ann Kistner of Lower Connecticut Valley volunteered to work on that committee chaired by Candy Buebendorf. We also need to appoint a state **public relations chair**. Anyone interested in assuming this important post should contact Carol Virostek.

Future Meeting Dates/Sites. It was suggested that we consider holding the **Winter Board Meeting – January 28, 2006**, and perhaps other events, at community college sites, in light of the changes in AAUW's membership eligibility. Rosemary Woolwich, Candy Buebendorf, and Pamela Thompson all agreed to investigate sites in their parts of the state. The **April 29, 2006 Annual Convention** will be co-hosted by Orange/Milford and Shoreline branches at a site yet to be determined. The convention will be discussed in greater detail at the executive committee meeting to be held on **November 19, 2005**, from 10:00 a.m. until 12 noon at Carol Virostek's home.

***Priority Issues Committees:** After the adjournment of the business meeting, three committees met for two hours to discuss and develop action plans on their particular topics. Outcomes of the Summer Retreat made readily apparent the need for revitalization of CT AAUW. Recognizing that the very future of our organization is at stake, participants worked diligently to address critical issues we are facing and come up with creative solutions to long-standing problems. What follows is a list of committee members and their objectives. They will prepare and present full reports of their action plans at the Winter Board Meeting. Committee work is ongoing. **Anyone interested in joining a committee should contact the chair.** Everyone is welcome.

- **Committee #1: Who are we? Where do we want to go? *Questions of Identity, Image, and Goals.***

Chair: Mary Ann Kistner. **Members:** Carol Blauvelt, Candy Buebendorf, Carol Carlough, Johanna Malinowski, and Polly Silva.

Objective: To provide CT branches with a unified programming theme based on the national theme for the next biennium, “Education as the Gateway for Women’s Economic Security.”

Goal: Develop a list of programs/projects that support this theme. Gather information about perceptions of identity, image and goals.

- **Committee #2: How should we conduct business? *Questions of structure, organization, operation, and communication in view of time, membership, and other issues.***

Chair: Paula Jean Yukna. Members: Carrie Gallagher, Joyce Kathan, and Audrey Scotti.

Operative Question: How can leadership at the branch level facilitate state communication? How can communication be more effective?

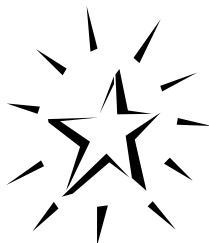
Goal: Determine what methods state AAUW can employ to assist branches in passing on information to each member.

- **Committee #3: How can we make AAUW more welcoming to all, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, age, class, health, or sexual orientation? *Questions of diversity and inclusivity.***

Co-chairs: Pamela Thompson and Chantal DeArmitt Members: Barbara Arafah, Ann Carroll, and Cora Pelletier.

Preliminary Focus: Establishing a clear definition of “diversity”

Goals: To increase membership; to insure that ALL are welcomed and feel welcome at AAUW meetings and functions; and, when interpreting the mission, to be inclusive, relevant, and holistic.



News from New London Branch—Ann Carroll

On Wednesday, October 19th, 2005, the “Girls and Technology” Expo was held at the Coast Guard Academy in New London. Seventh grade girls (140!) and their teachers from surrounding towns were invited. This event was funded by Dominion Nuclear. NL Branch AAUW member Sara Aiken-Hjort was responsible for obtaining these funds. Girls attended two workshops while their teachers attended sessions to obtain CEU’s. The workshops ranged from handling marine animals to making polymers. At lunch, girls were able to interview the cadets. In addition to Dominion, sponsors were the Academy, the Girls’ and Women’s Legal Fund, the Women’s Technology Network and our NL AAUW Branch. AAUW members are a critical part of this event, participating as guides for the students and with the registration process.



Who is AAUW?

How do you answer that question? The issue was raised at the 2005 Annual Connecticut Convention and again at the State Board's summer retreat. Who are we? Have we lost our identity? What are our core goals?

Our committee, one of four established at the Summer Board meeting, has started looking into questions of identity, image, and goals, addressing the questions: *Who are we? Where do we want to go?* At our preliminary meeting we agreed that it might be helpful to develop some resources that branches might use to assist them with their programming. We talked about creating a state-wide theme connected to AAUW's primary mission – education – to guide the branch programs for the upcoming year. Moreover, we considered basing the statewide theme on the national theme for the next biennium, "Education as the Gateway for Women's Economic Security." (<http://www.aauw.org/newvision/index.cfm>). The theme would serve as a guide for branches to use as they plan their meetings.

Most members agree that they value the work and the friendships and contacts of AAUW. Many expressed concern that AAUW is branching out in too many directions, and the branch presidents in this group felt that there was no sense of direction provided either by the state or the national organization. A preliminary review of the Connecticut Chapter's meeting schedules for the year shows there are many excellent programs planned, but little commonality between the branches.

One way this committee might help is by gathering a list of outstanding programs that support the National theme and then making this program list available to all branches. We also suggested using the state meeting in April as a time to talk about successful outreach programs that various branches have developed that will serve as a resource for branches wanting to develop similar programs.

Over the next few weeks we will be contacting the Program V.P or President of each of the state branches to discuss our ideas -- and more importantly – *to hear your ideas*. We welcome input from *all* AAUW members. Please feel to share your input with Mary Ann Kistner, chair of the committee (mkistner@adelphia.net) or contact any member of the committee to discuss this further.

Committee members include: Mary Ann Kistner, Chair, and Carol Blauvelt, Candy Buebendorf, Carol Carrough, Winifred Leary, Johanna Malinowski, and Polly Silva

Reported by Polly Silva