



CONNECTIONS

STORRS WILLIMANTIC BRANCH

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Winter 2011

As your new CO-Presidents, we want to wish all of you a happy new year. We look forward to some exciting programs thanks to our program committee headed by Leslie Gemme. We welcome your ideas about how to best accomplish our mission of advancing equity for women and girls. We will continue to work on the programs that have been successful in the past but would also like to try some fresh ideas to make us an even more formidable organization.

A new idea, which the executive board had, was to have a holiday social rather than a December meeting. We wanted everyone to get a chance to get to meet one another in a more relaxed social setting. It turned out to be a wonderfully successful event. A special thanks to our hostess, Lesley Kirschenbaum, who lent us her home for the event. At our December Holiday Social gathering, our members graciously contributed over \$1,000 worth of food to the Covenant Soup Kitchen. This was acknowledged by the organization with a very grateful "Thank You". In our recovering economy it is incumbent upon us to continue to support those who are in need. It was stated that our donation will touch many lives.

Our Holiday Social gathering also collected \$310 for the Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF). Many thanks to Karen Randolph; she coordinated the many donations from our members for the leisure basket. Joan Goba was the lucky person who got to take the basket home. Congratulations Joan!

We are in the process of re-constructing our website to make it more informative and easy to get information. Thanks to Denise Bachand and the many members who are contributing to the effort. We hope to have a comprehensive and updated list of members, a history of our organization and much more. Any suggestions are appreciated.

In the coming year, your co-presidents have as a goal to increase our membership so as to forward our mission of Breaking Barriers for all women.

In order to accomplish this we need to ask ourselves some important questions:

- Do we foster our members sense of belonging to and ownership in the AAUW
- Does our chapter appeal to members of different races, ethnicities, sexual orientation
- Do we have a positive public image
- Does the general community know about and recognize us as a viable and important organization
- Are we viewed as an integral part of our community
- Are we doing an adequate job in projecting our Mission to the general public

We are looking for your feedback to these questions. We will appreciate any and all comments.

Please remember the best way to recruit new members is to invite them to a meeting or event. Please feel free to bring friends, colleagues, or relatives to one of our meetings. They may join for half of the national dues between January 1 and March 15. (Their membership will expire June 30, 2011.).

On a sad note, we want to acknowledge the passing of one of our dearest, brightest and passionate members, Mary Rogers Beckert. Mary had inspired all of us in so many ways. She will be sadly missed.

Jean McCarthy
Catherine Sampson



Mary Rogers Beckert, a long time member of our branch, died on December 2, 2010.

A tribute to Mary from Tim Swanson:

In the history of Eastern Connecticut State University there have been faculty members who stand out in the memories of those who knew and taught with them, faculty who played a major role in the development of the University as it exists today, faculty who were held in high regard for both the quality of their service to the University and for who they were as colleagues. Mary Rogers Beckert, who passed away last week at the age of ninety three, was such a person.

Mary Rogers Beckert laid the foundation for both the Department of Physical Sciences and the Department of Environmental Earth Sciences at Eastern. When I came to Willimantic State College in the fall of 1966 to teach physics, all science lab courses were taught in three rooms on the second floor of Shafer Hall. One room was used to teach biology, a second was dedicated to science education under the direction of Robert Wickware, who would become Dean of the College, and after whom the Wickware Planetarium is named, and in the third room, Mary's room, all the other sciences were taught. It was a time before departments existed here. When departments were formed, she became the first Chairperson of the Department of Earth and Physical Sciences. With the major emphasis on teacher education at the College at that time, all students were required to take two semesters of biology in their freshman year and a yearlong course in the physical and earth sciences as sophomores. The sophomore course was Mary's course. In it she taught astronomy, meteorology, geology, chemistry and physics. The year before I came, Max Ferguson was hired to teach additional courses in chemistry, and in my first year, a geologist and I were hired to teach in our respective specialties. Mary continued to teach the required sophomore course.

In the spring of 1967 we moved to the then new, now the old science building, Goddard Hall. It was the second building on the North Campus and was referred to somewhat enviously by a member of the English Faculty as "that temple of science with its priests and priestesses." Mary was instrumental in the design and the equipping of the second floor of the building, in which she included a faculty lounge with men's and women's showers for those wanting such facilities after geology and biology field trips. She managed to obtain the maximum amount of equipment for her part of the new building with the funds available by ordering many of the pieces of physics equipment as kits to be assembled. I spent a good part of that semester soldering and assembling those kits. Mary would check in occasionally and see how I was doing.

In the early 1970's money became available to build the Science Annex, now known as the Planetarium. In addition to being involved in the design of that facility, Mary became the first Planetarium Director. In that role she expanded the Planetarium's use to the way it functions today, used not only in the teaching of astronomy but also as a facility that presents programs to the public and surrounding school system classes. Back then, she did both the teaching and the presenting.

Mary was highly respected by both faculty and students alike, for her competence as a teacher, for her willingness to go the extra mile for the benefit of her students, and for who she was as a person. She was someone who would downplay her own achievements and accomplishments in favor of those of her colleagues. Yet, if something needed to be said or done, she could be forceful when she thought she needed to be. She would knock on the office door of anyone in the administration, including the President, if she decided that person needed to hear something she thought important. When I asked her if I could change some of the items on her equipment order list for Goddard Hall in order to obtain equipment I needed in general physics, she of course agreed, but said I should give my changes to the then Business Manager. He was a crusty, older gentleman, who with secretarial help, conducted the financial matters of the College as essentially a one person show. When I mentioned Mary's name in relation to the list, I heard him say to himself "that damned woman." That alone, is a tribute to who Mary was. She had obviously knocked on his door a number of times in relation to Goddard Hall.

Mary was also a mentor to younger faculty members such as myself. Fresh out of graduate school, I benefited greatly from her advice and experience as an educator. Her suggestions as to how I might improve my teaching were always presented in a constructive and considerate way. The number of faculty and staff at Eastern who knew Mary has diminished over the years since her retirement in 1989. If there have been legendary members of the faculty at this University, then Mary Rogers Beckert is surely one of them. However, the highest accolade I can give her is that she was first and foremost a teacher, a teacher who cared about her students and colleagues and gave them the best she had.

Tim Swanson
Chairperson
Department of Physical Sciences

From Facebook:

Mary Rogers Beckert passed away this morning. She was a remarkable woman who had a tremendous influence on me for the past 28 years. She taught me the value of education and the value of being a woman. She introduced me, my daughters, and so many others to the AAUW as she was passionately involved with the organization – she truly cared about the status of us all. Her vision for the future of woman will not be forgotten. She will be missed by so many. I am her granddaughter and take much pride in what she has accomplished during her life time. I love you Mary.

Angela O'Neill [AAUW](#)

LOCAL BRANCH NEWS AND INVOLVEMENT



On Tuesday, Dec 7, AAUW (American Association of University Women) Storrs/Willimantic delivered a pickup truck load of non-perishable food items valued over \$1,000 to the Covenant Soup kitchen pantry.

Items were gathered at the AAUW December Party. Co-Presidents Jean McCarthy and Cathy Sampson organized the food collection. Lesley Kirschenbaum helped with the delivery.

A letter to editor published 1/2/10 - Willimantic Chronicle

Editor:

I was pleased and elated to read recently in *the Chronicle* that Susan Herbst will be the new president of the University of Connecticut. Imagine my thrill and excitement to see a female president at my former college.

I was shattered and displeased as I continued to read the salary offered to her was \$50,000 less than the starting salary offered to the past president, Michael Hogan in 2007. When I speak of teaching the \$tart \$mart workshop to college women (helping women learn negotiating salary skills and benchmarking starting salaries), many comment there is no need for that. Women and men are paid equally. What planet and what universe are they living on?

What further proof do we need? This is not to fault Herbst who has a rich and outstanding resume but to call to attention to how our society continues to degrade and disregard half the population. We need to stand up and tell the emperor that this is unacceptable. We demand equality or we shall return to the streets. What happened to the changes of the 1970s when the women's movement fought so hard to point out the unfairness of our treatment of men and women?

I am appalled at this blatant display of discrimination.

"Hold on," many would say. Don't you know we have a financial crisis in our state? Of course I do. I read the paper. I listen to the news. And I know inequality when it appears. Do you?

Loretta Wrobel - Ashford





Lee Terry has served as a trustee of the former Community Foundation of the Tri-County area since 2006 and was instrumental in effecting the merger with Southeastern CT.

She is an energetic force behind the success of the Windham Women & Girls Fund, magnetizing many women in the northeastern corner of the state to organize around improving women's lives. She is a serial graduate of UCONN, with a B.A. and M.A. in English Literature and a Juris Doctorate from the Law School. For nine years she worked for the CT Education Association, negotiating on behalf of teachers. After admission to the Connecticut Bar, Lee had a private law practice in Putnam and Storrs and served on the State Board of Labor Relations. She has also served on the boards of United Services, and Region 19's Board of Education. She has successfully campaigned for Denise Merrill, our new Secretary of the State. Lee and her husband, Tom, are founders of and performers in a Renaissance singing group. Their band is called "The Seldom Heard". Lee has always been devoted to Eastern Connecticut.



Our chapter decided to assist the American Legion Women's Auxiliary in recruiting and sponsoring girls to attend Girls State which has been held at ECSU for some years. The one week long program teaches the girls about how government works, has CT State officials speak to the girls about their jobs and encourages the girls to take on leadership roles. Pamela Thompson applied to the Women and Girls fund at the Community Foundation for a grant beginning in 2005. We received \$1,750 over 4 years from the Foundation to send girls to Girls State. Pamela Thompson, Lesley Kirschenbaum, Janis Fausey, Cathy Sampson and Antoinette Webster have worked to recruit local high school girls who are between their junior and senior years. Each year we contributed between \$250 and \$500 from our treasury. Our chapter continues to recruit and sponsor girls although in recent years the Community Foundation has used its grants to fund other projects.



2010 Report – Educational Foundation Donation submitted by Pamela Thompson

Thanks to the generosity of the Storrs Willimantic branch members during 2010 our branch collected and donated \$1,927 to the AAUW Educational Foundation. This amount is above the suggested goal amount for a branch to donate, which is \$25/member. (If we had 65 members x \$25 = \$1,625.) Eight individuals contributed \$100 or more, either following the tradition of the Second Century Club* or in memory of Mary Rogers Beckert. ** The plant auction netted a record \$272 this past year! And although the book author event was cancelled, \$120 was still given. Several miscellaneous donations made up the remaining amount. Nearly 35 members in all made a contribution in 2010, most of these being tax-deductible, while others were cash.

*The Second Century originated in 1988 and continues to this date as a way for members to celebrate the 2nd century of the Foundation.

** The total amount donated in Mary's name for 2010 was \$700. An additional \$140 has been given for the 2011 year.



AAUW Educational Foundation Morphs!

In response to changing needs, the AAUW Educational Foundation is now part of the AAUW Educational Opportunities Fund. AAUW has a long and distinguished history of advancing educational and professional opportunities for women in the United States and around the globe. One of the world's largest sources of funding for graduate women, AAUW provided more than \$3 million in funding for more than 200 fellowships and grants to outstanding women and nonprofit organizations in the 2009-10 academic year. Due to the longstanding, generous contributions of AAUW members, a broader community of women continues to gain access to educational and economic opportunities — breaking through barriers so that all women have a fair chance.

Fellowship and grant recipients perform research in a wide range of disciplines and work to improve their schools and communities. Their intellect, dedication, imagination, and effort promise to forge new paths in scholarship, improve the quality of life for all, and tackle the educational and social barriers facing women in the United States and around the globe.

The Educational Opportunities Fund supports educational and lifelong learning opportunities that give women a chance for a lifetime of success. Some of the programs it supports includes:

Fellowships and Grants: There are hundreds of endowed funds, each for a specific fellowship, career development grant, community action grant, or selected professions award. Branches can continue to support their favorite funds.

The Fellows Alumnae Initiative, which inspires women by providing access to the network of past and current AAUW fellows and grantees.

The Undergraduate Scholarship Clearinghouse, which educates women by allowing students to find and apply for much-needed scholarships from AAUW branches across the country.

Fully tax-deductible donations to these expanded educational opportunities can be made at any time during the year. From now on, checks now need to be made out to **AAUW Educational Opportunities Fund**. In order for our branch to receive recognition for its members' donations, please send your checks to me, Pamela Thompson, P.O. Box 156, East Killingly, CT 06243. I will complete the necessary paperwork and forward them on to National.

REMEMBER: AAUW Educational Opportunities Fund now replaces AAUW Educational Foundation!

Pamela J. Thompson

LEGAL ADVOCACY FUND

Thank you to all of the members who contributed to our AAUW-Legal Advocacy Fund this year. Our branch's contributions for 2010 amount to \$410. This exceeds the \$5 per member contribution requested by AAUW.

The basket raffle seems to be working. Thank you, too, to all who brought items for the basket...our best basket so far.

These contributions from our branch members help to provide the resources to protect the rights of women facing discrimination, and advocate for laws and policies that are fair to women.

Once again, thank you for continued support of this mission.

Karin Randolph
LAF Liaison

Case Support

In late March, the U.S. Supreme Court will review lower-court decisions that allowed female Wal-Mart employees to pursue employment discrimination claims as a class action. If approved, [**Dukes v. Wal-Mart Stores Inc.**](#) will become the largest civil rights class action in U.S. history, including as many as 1.5 million women who will be seeking billions of dollars in back pay. [**Lawyers representing**](#) the plaintiffs have applied for case-support funding and have asked AAUW to sign an amicus brief, a request that reflects the influence these lawyers feel we may have with the court. The AAUW board is currently considering the requests. AAUW is watching this case closely, since the ruling will have important implications in the future ability of discrimination victims to claim redress as a class in federal court.

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Please consider making a [tax-deductible donation to LAF**](#) to help balance the scales of justice for women.**

Interested in more information? What is [LAF?**](#)**

What is happening now? [LAF EXPRESS NEWSLETTERS**](#)**

Want to know what is happening with past cases? [LAF UPDATE**](#)**

Please consider sending a donation again this year to the Legal Advocacy Fund, which is a part of AAUW. As you may know, LAF supports legal action against sex discrimination in all workplaces. LAF is expanding to participate as amicus curiae (friends of the court) in cases affecting women's rights.

Donations may be sent to LAF, % Karin Randolph, P.O. Box 438, Mansfield Center, 06250. Thank you. Karin.

Did you know?



Dinner is at the President's Dining Room ECSU

Please make your reservations early, before the deadline, which is the Thursday before the first Wednesday of the month.

*The cost of dinner is \$19 which includes **appetizers, entrée, dessert, tax and gratuity.***

Payment by check is preferred. Checks should be made out to the AAUW Storrs/Willimantic Branch. Please remember that once we call in the reservations we are obligated for that number of dinners, therefore, if you make a reservation for dinner, you will be expected to pay for it unless you cancel before 9 on Sunday. Hope to see you there.



Did you ever wonder why we pass the basket around at our dinner meetings?

Well the reason is to collect funds to support our annual Sue Harkness Book Award. A check in the amount of \$200 is given to a deserving student from UCONN, Eastern or QVCC. We supplement these fund with dollars made from our annual plant sale which takes place at our annual pot luck picnic.

Do you have something you would like to share? Please send it to [newsletter](#) and we will include in the next issue.

Websites

Francine (Frankie) Hodovan is our web diva. Minutes are posted on the website.

AAUW Storrs Willimantic [website](http://sites.google.com/site/aauwstorrswilli/Home/about-us): <http://sites.google.com/site/aauwstorrswilli/Home/about-us>.

Minutes are now available on our website.

Our branch e-mail address is aauwstorrswilli@gmail.com.

Our state website is www.aauwct.org

AAUW National web site is www.aauw.org

If there is something you would like to see on our website, email Francine Hodovan at our branch website.



DATES TO REMEMBER



- Mar 2:** Monthly dinner with [Lt. Col. Christine Harvey](#), recently retired from the US Army. She will speak about her experiences as a woman in a non-traditional role.
- Apr 6:** Monthly dinner with Margaret Chatey – Westford Hill [Distillers](#)
- Apr 11:** Next board meeting at Denise Bachand's house. Everyone is welcome. Contact Jean or Denise: 546-2062 or [dsgrnhs2009\[at\]sign@gmail.com](mailto:dsgrnhs2009[at]sign@gmail.com) for more info
- Apr 12:** Pay equity day (<http://ctpcsw.com/newsletter/>)
- May 4:** Monthly dinner with Rachell Arteaga (Harvard) our Educational Foundation Recipient of the Career Development Grant Award
- Jun 1:** Potluck and Plant Auction at Del Anne Carey's home in South Windham to benefit the AAUW Educational Foundation.
- Jun 2-4:** National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL)
- Jun 16-19:** 2011 AAUW NATIONAL CONVENTION in Washington, DC. Breaking through Barriers, advocating for change.
- Dec 7:** 2nd annual AAUW Holiday Social

NATIONAL NEWS

SAVE the DATE

[2011 AAUW NATIONAL CONVENTION](#)

Breaking through Barriers — Advocating for Change

Renaissance Hotel • Washington, D.C. • June 16–19, 2011

<http://convention.aauw.org/index.aspx>

The AAUW Voices Project.

Members of the Voices Project will be provided with training and resources aimed at targeting their writing skills for op-eds, letters to the editor, and other media outreach. The goal is to have AAUW voices published throughout the nation to educate the public, spark discussion, and influence the debate. AAUW members interested in gaining this valuable set of skills, seeing their name in print, and advancing the cause of equity for women and girls can apply to join the AAUW Voices Project by completing the short application found here: [AAUW Voices Project Application](#). Send your application by email to [Samuel Lehman](#), AAUW grassroots advocacy coordinator, or fax to (202) 466-7637 (Attn: Samuel Lehman). You must be an AAUW member to join.

Those accepted into the Voices Project will attend four online and telephone training sessions in February and March. Members will be responsible, with AAUW's assistance, for producing an op-ed on pay equity for Equal Pay Day (April 12, 2011). In the long term, the members of the AAUW Voices Project will work with AAUW staff to produce (at least) monthly media pieces on AAUW priorities.

Please submit your application no later than Monday, February 14 at noon. If you are selected, training sessions will begin immediately with the goal of publishing your first op-ed, on our first topic of pay equity, on or around Equal Pay Day.

"What's going on nationally? Some interesting reading!"

December 9–17, 2010

Spotlights Shine on AAUW Fellows

[20/20](#) and [What Would You Do?](#) (Friday, December 17)

Jane Chen, CEO and co-founder of [Embrace](#), was [interviewed on 20/20](#) for her role in creating inexpensive incubators that help underweight babies keep warm in developing countries. Chen, who received a Selected Professions Fellowship from AAUW, is continuing her work to decrease infant mortality rates. Rosalind Wiseman, another AAUW fellowship and grant recipient and author of [Queen Bees and Wannabes](#), appeared on [the December 17 episode of What Would You Do?](#) This show included a segment about bullying, an area in which Wiseman provided expertise.

AAUW Executive Director Honors a Founding Mother of Science

[More Magazine](#) (Thursday, December 16)

AAUW Executive Director Linda Hallman contributed a story to More.com honoring Margaret Mead's birthday. Hallman highlighted some of Mead's many accomplishments as well as her AAUW Achievement Award. "Mead is still an inspiration for women to break through barriers and achieve their goals," Hallman said. "And AAUW supports women in their endeavors to do so, particularly in fields in which we are sorely underrepresented."

AAUW Research Expert Talks about Campus Sexual Harassment Policies

[Inside Higher Ed](#) (Friday, December 10)

AAUW Director of Research Catherine Hill was quoted extensively in an *Inside Higher Ed* article about recent cases of sexual harassment on college campuses. Pulling from her work on the 2006 research report, [Drawing the Line: Sexual Harassment on Campus](#), Hill discussed the development of college sexual harassment policies and the lack of knowledge some individuals have about their rights. Hill said colleges need to make "those tools more easily accessible for students."

AAUW's Holly Kearn Featured in *Guardian* Column on Sexism

[The Guardian](#) (Saturday, December 11)

AAUW LAF Program Manager Holly Kearn's new book, *Stop Street Harassment*, was mentioned in an excellent *Guardian* column on street harassment. Cath Elliott's piece on "sisters who stand up to sexism" profiled some amazing

women who are working to stop harassment. The piece came right after Kearl's appearance at AAUW's Cocktails and Convos, a monthly D.C. happy hour focused on women's issues.

AAUW Happy Hour Series Starts Online Conversation on and among Young Women

Fem 2.0 (Wednesday, December 15)

AAUW's new happy hour series inspired a blog post on Fem 2.0. Cocktails and Convos, a monthly D.C. happy hour devoted to women's issues, was featured in the post, which focused on why young women shy away from becoming members of organizations. Blog entries and other discussions like this are exactly the kinds of conversations AAUW hopes to engender by hosting these events.

AAUW Director of Public Policy Blogs about the Senate and Pay Equity

Common Blog (Thursday, December 16)

Lisa Maatz, AAUW director of public policy, wrote a guest blog post recounting the Senate's vote to stop the Paycheck Fairness Act from moving forward. Maatz said: "While AAUW remains deeply troubled by the Senate vote, and thus the failure of the PFA in the 111th Congress, we remain confident that we'll eventually win this fight. ... [O]ur organization and the broad coalition we continue to lead is stronger and more determined for the effort."

Why So Few? Statistic Cited in Article on Girls and STEM

The Pittsburgh Tribune Review (Tuesday, December 14)

A local Pittsburgh newspaper cited an AAUW statistic from the 2010 research report *Why So Few?* in an article on a Carnegie Science Center program that aims to develop girls as math and science leaders. The article notes that only 15 percent of female college freshmen plan to major in STEM fields.

Please remember AAUW in your end-of-year philanthropy by making a **tax-deductible gift**.

AAUW Action Fund Releases *Congressional Voting Record* and Voter Guides *Scorecard Shows Important Progress for AAUW Priority Issues*

WASHINGTON – The American Association of University Women Action Fund released today a scorecard of **congressional votes** and **voter guides** on the issues that matter most to women and their families in the 2010 elections.

Denise Bachand, Publisher
Jean McCarthy, Editor