

October
2009

Presidents' Message

It's been over a decade since Matthew Shepard was viciously attacked and left for dead. I remember the collective shock and horror at the loss of a young man, college student, by all accounts sweet, and openly gay. I also remember, as a nation wrestled with the questions "how could this happen?" and "why?," others saying "hey, it almost happened to me, too" and "what do you think we live with everyday?" And so it happened that this 21-year-old man, who had been physically attacked because of his sexuality more than once in his short life, became the representative of a chorus of experiences across the nation.

It took awhile, but a federal legislative response to Shepard's death has finally passed both chambers of Congress. The Matthew Shepard Hate Crime Prevention Act strengthens current law that allows federal prosecution for crimes motivated by race, religion, or ethnicity. The Shepard Act widens the definition of bias-motivated crimes to include gender, sexual orientation, and disability. This classification has repercussions at the penalty stage of trials, as well.

It shouldn't be too much of a surprise that AAUW has been actively involved in paving the way for this legislative success. Our policy agenda has been actively promoting hate crime prevention, as well as disability education for years. The

work we do on bullying and sexual harassment, while not necessarily hate crimes themselves, is intended to prevent any such escalation.

So why was I taken aback that I learned of the passage of the Matthew Shepard Act not from the New York Times web site or my favorite blogs, but from an AAUW press release? They had the scoop, for at least a half an hour – because *they were there*. They have been collaborating for years with over 100 organizations to effect this legislative change.

To me, it's one of the great things about being member of this organization on the national level: *we are there* on so many important issues.

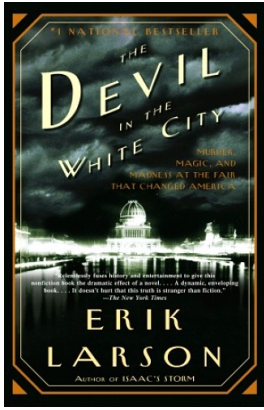
That and having an acronym that no one can pronounce: "Awwwww?"

-Kate Hinnant, kate.hinnant@gmail.com

Thursday, November 12, 2009 - 7pm
Healthcare issues with Kristin Dexter
RCU Corporate Bldg – Eau Claire Room

Saturday, December 5, 2009 – 11am
Holiday luncheon/LAF silent auction
Sweetwaters

Saturday, January 23, 2010 – 11am
Soup and Cinema meeting
LE Phillips Library



Book group

will meet Tuesday November 3 at 7:30 at Claran Ramsdell's. Please contact her to let her know if you are coming. If the hostess doesn't hear from you, she will assume that

you are not going to be at the group that evening.

Our book for November is *Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson. Marge Quaid will give the background for us.

December's meeting is Tuesday Dec.1 at Ginny Wright's. Our book that evening will be *The Girls Who Went Away* by Ann Fessler. This is a book from last year's AAUW Adelante Reading list. The reviewer will be Claran Ramsdell.

Some other selections are: January -- *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison; February -- *Garlic and Sapphires* by Ruth Reichl; March -- poetry month; April -- *Peony in Love* by Lisa See (from the current Adelante list) and June -- *The Lace Reader* by Brunonia Barry. We will decide on May's classic selection at our November meeting.

Greetings, Team AAUW!

Our new membership books are now available. If you did not pick yours up at the book sale or have had yours delivered, I will bring yours to our November 12th meeting on health care.

Please welcome our newest members:

Janet Bethke
Kate Bowman
Sandy Flores
Beth Hellwig
Diane Iverson
Karen Konz
Cate Thompson

And scholarship winners:

Amber Boyce-Fisk
Terri Ertz
Kathleen Kaczmarowski
Traci Newville
Rebekah Streit
Theresa Strong

Think membership and bring someone to our next meeting. It is sure to be great!

-Margot Bouchard
Membership Co-Chair

AAUW Eau Claire Board:

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Kate Hinnant

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Dawn Bosold

Program

Pam Hicks & Barbara Radke

Membership

Margot Bouchard & Linda Spaeth

Public Policy

Mary Hayden & Sarah Harder

Educational & Legal Foundation (EF/LAF)

Kim Wellnitz

Branch Historian

Cleo Powers

Upcoming programs:

The **Thursday, November 12** meeting will be held at the RCU Corporate Office at **7pm** and will feature **Representative Kristin Dexter**. The main focus of the meeting will be **healthcare issues**, specifically on women and health.

On **Saturday, December 5**, we will be having our holiday **luncheon and LAF Silent Auction** at Sweetwaters Restaurant starting at **11am**. Our silent auctions are always a great way to prepare for Christmas while contributing to a worthwhile cause. See below for some auction item ideas.

Another date for your calendar – **Saturday, January 23 (11am)**, when we will have our annual Soup and Cinema Meeting at the L.E. Phillips Memorial Library. Watch for more.

Must-reads:

The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything:

<http://awomansnation.com/index.php>

Women are working more and harder, where's the support? Fascinating essays, both in and accompanying the report.

AAUW's Policy Recommendations for *A Woman's Nation*:

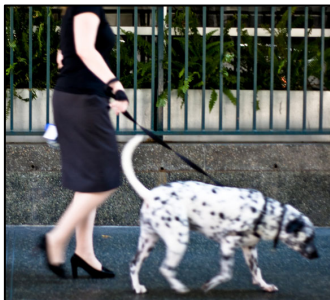
http://aauw.org/advocacy/issue_advocacy/womansnation.cfm

Carol Greider AAUW member & Nobel Prize Winner



Dr. Greider will be honored this December in Sweden for her work on an enzyme crucial to cancer and anemia research.

This year, five women have been awarded the Nobel Prize – more than any other year before.



And the Highest Bidder is (insert your name here)!

It's time to get creative for the LAF Silent Auction. Think about your talents. OK, so it's easier to think about the talents of others. What kind of service could you or a friend offer at the auction? Ideas to consider: a weekend at a cottage, a picnic, a boat ride, garden help, babysitting, bake or cook for a special occasion, clean something, eldercare, hold a kid's birthday party, find someone you do business with and ask them to donate a service, teach a lesson on quilting, drawing, knitting, computers, digital cameras, etc., go hiking or snowshoeing, offer to attend exercise classes with a buddy, or give rides to the doctor or for a fun shopping trip. There!

One of these ideas must have struck a cord, so when I send out a request for the December 5 auction items and services, you will be ready. I can hardly wait to start the bidding...

Mary Hayden haydenm@prodigy.net
832-0445



Health Care Reform

Why Should Women Care?

There is no shortage of information available in the newspapers, online, or in media sources about what should or should not be done to “fix” the health care system in this county. I hope you have educated yourself on the issues, the proposals, and the facts. The facts include some important data on how the lack of equitable health care affects women. AAUW's 2009-

2011 Public Policy Program advocates: "increased access to quality affordable health care." Check out the AAUW position and supporting documentation on health care at:

http://www.aauw.org/advocacy/issue_advocacy/actionpages/healthcare.cfm



Some of the information on the AAUW Webpage was surprising to me. I knew women made less money than men, and that they often worked in jobs that did not include health coverage, but I was outraged to find that women can be asked to pay more for health coverage than men, and are more often denied coverage for preexisting conditions. In an October 8 front page article in the *Leader Telegram*, my cousin was interviewed on the difficulty that many farm families face in getting health insurance. She stated that in her search for affordable health care for her family, the fact that she had breasts and a uterus priced many policies out of their range. An additional factor made the problem even more difficult: a spot on a mammogram marred her medical history, even though the final outcome of the test was OK. Companies are hesitant to sell her, and many women, insurance at any price.

Keep an eye on what happens, as health care legislation is shaped and passed into law. See if the bills include these priorities from the AAUW webpage:

- **End the practice of "gender rating":** Gender rating is the process by which insurance companies charge men and women different premiums for individually-purchased health care plans.
- **Require coverage of women's reproductive health services:** AAUW's 2009-2011 Public Policy Program advocates, "choice in the determination of one's reproductive life...increased access to health care and family planning services including expansion of patients' rights."⁷ AAUW has long believed that politicians should not insert themselves into the decision-making process when it comes to reproductive health care, which is a basic element of women's health care overall. As a result, AAUW firmly believes that health care reform legislation should require coverage of women's reproductive health services.
- **Ensure access to and coverage of preventive services and care:** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the two leading causes of death for women in America are heart disease and cancer⁸ – afflictions that can often be prevented if women have access to preventive care services such as screenings, immunizations, and educational material.

I hope to report in 2010 on a better health insurance situation for women and their families.

Mary Hayden

haydenm@prodigy.net

Mary and Sarah Harder are branch public policy co-chairs.

THANK YOU THANK YOU

It was another successful book sale this year. At 3pm Friday afternoon, when the sale opened, there were 131 people lined up at the Expo Center, itching to get their hands on our books. It was 131 if you count the baby, which Mary Hayden did.

According to early reports from our treasurer, Donna Weidman, we made over \$12,000: "Our total 2009 Book Sale monies for the three days was \$12,034.70, a record set exceeding last year's total income by \$690.49. I still need to subtract all the expenses, which were about \$2,400 last year. Great job, everyone!!!" It's exciting to think of all the good we can do with these earnings.

We will have more extensive reporting on the sale, with photos, next issue. But this is a good opportunity to thank our **two hard-working co-chairs, Connie Russell & Barb Ries**. Ever-present in her role as Book Sale Guru, **Kim Wellnitz** was instrumental in supporting both the chairs and the volunteers. **JJ Henrickson** again showed her mastery over all things sortable. Behind the scenes, **Rita Houser, Becky Mauch**, and **Jeanne Claridge** worked publicity. **Dawn Bosold** and **Pam Hicks** coordinated the book barrel volunteers, and **Roma Hoff** and Kim coordinated the sale volunteers. **Karen Pope's** children's area was enjoyed quite a bit by at least two kids I know...

I know I am forgetting many people – I'll let Connie & Barb correct me next issue. But in addition to the individuals listed above, a big thanks to all our members who committed time to collect, sort, and sell books. The Book Sale Committee could not have done it alone.

Cheers!

Kate Hinnant, Branch President

AAUW – Eau Claire supports Ms. Adventure Girls again!

Branch member Deb Pattee, a faculty member in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at UW – Eau Claire, heads up this program which supports "under resourced" girls in several local elementary schools. Each girl is partnered with a college student who checks in with her weekly. Discussions focus on issues critical to these girls, including dealing with peer pressure, nutrition and exercise, and bullying.

As a branch, we budgeted \$300 last spring to support the Ms. Adventure Girls program. At a future branch meeting, we will discuss the possibility of adding to this amount.

AAUW VISION STATEMENT - *AAUW will be a powerful advocate and visible leader in equity and education through research, philanthropy, and measurable change in critical areas impacting the lives of women and girls..*

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

FOLIAGE - *Newsletter of the American Association of University Women - Eau Claire Branch*
Send or call items of interest to Kate Hinnant, kate.binnant@gmail.com, 831-0182, 220 Roosevelt Ave, Eau Claire, WI 54701



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