



# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

JANUARY 2015

AAUW-CHAPEL HILL

## From the President: Bea Keller

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The start of every new year is an opportunity for optimism no matter how challenging the current situation. While hope seems elusive especially given current events, our nation honors a man this month who, despite enormous challenges, persevered. Dr. Martin Luther King would have celebrated his 86<sup>th</sup> birthday January 15, and would have no doubt remained an activist throughout his life for as long as he was able. We too, must remain activists to protect our democracy no matter how difficult our task.

Democracy is a process; it sometimes involves taking a step forward and sometimes unfortunately, a step back. For the average citizen, there have been some setbacks. I would cite the partial repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act, in particular the Financial Services Modernization Act (Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act) of 1999 as a major player in the "Great Recession". In spite of the rosy job reports, there are many people who are struggling to earn a living wage today. National unemployment among African-Americans is about 11.3%, Hispanics 7.4% and Whites, 5.2%. (Economic Policy Institute, Nov. 2014) And there are other people who are not counted in these statistics. The Dodd-Frank Act mitigated the effects of the GLB Act, but Wall Street has managed to chip away

at some of its provisions in the recently passed budget. There will be an Act II (pun intended) on the part of Wall Street, rest assured. Free Trade Agreements, supported by large corporations and favoring stockholders, send jobs overseas, and have not resulted in a plethora of "better paying" jobs for Americans as promised. It has resulted in cheaper goods in stores, and more service jobs. The new Congress will probably vote on the Trans-Pacific Trade Agreement, a secretive agreement which will likely involve loss of American jobs, higher drug prices, and expose US shoppers to unsafe food products.

The US Supreme Court has played a role in eroding the power of the American voter. It struck down section 4 of the Voter Rights Act. Ruth Bader Ginsberg, in her dissent said, "Efforts to reduce the impact of minority votes, in contrast to direct attempts to block access to the ballot, are aptly described as 'second-generation barriers' to minority voting. Second-generation barriers come in various forms. One of the blockages is racial gerrymandering, the redrawing of legislative districts in an 'effort to segregate the races for purposes of voting.' Whatever the device employed, this Court has long recognized that vote dilution, when adopted with a discriminatory purpose,

cuts down the right to vote as certainly as denial of access to the ballot." Prior to striking down key parts of the Voter Rights Act, the Supreme Court upheld *Citizens United*, which allows anonymous backers to donate unlimited amounts of money to elect their chosen candidate. According to the dissenting opinion, the *Citizens United* decision "threatens to undermine the integrity of elected institutions across the Nation. The path it has taken to reach its outcome will...do damage to this institution." Congress has failed to address campaign reform—in truth, both parties are compromised by corporate money.

We must remain vigilant and informed. We are all assailed by information today, but it is difficult to get at the facts and to have time to analyze them. We do not want, as Martin Luther King, Jr. said, that, "... the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people."

I wish all our members good health and joy for 2015, and I hope to see you at our January 20 meeting at 2 p.m. at Carol Woods!

## Tuesday, January 20 – “Called to the Clergy: Opportunities and Challenges”

Rev. Susannah Smith, Rabbi Jen Feldman, Emma Akpan, DD.

On Tuesday, January 20 from 2- 4 at the Carolina Room, Carol Woods, AAUW will present a program entitled Called to the Clergy: Opportunities and Challenges. It will feature three Triangle area clergywomen, Rev. Susannah Smith, Rabbi Jen Feldman and Emma Akpan, DD, Duke University Divinity School. Susannah is a semi-retired

Episcopal priest who subs at nearby churches and does spiritual direction. Jen is the rabbi at Chapel Hill Kehillah, and Emma is helping to build a progressive coalition at Raleigh's Blueprint NC.

Their discussion, moderated by Lisa Price, will focus on a brief history of her denomination's attitudes towards women in leadership roles,

what led each woman to pursue this career, challenges and opportunities, and the difference it has made in her denomination.

We hope you will join us, and please don't hesitate to bring friends interested in the subject

--Lisa Price

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Tuesday, January 20,  
2:00 - 4:00 PM.  
Carolina Room, Carol Woods  
Called to the Clergy: Opportunities and Challenges.”

Speakers: Revs.  
Emma Akpan,  
Susannah Smith and  
Rabbi Jan Feldman

February 21, 10:00 AM, Carolina Room Carol Woods  
AAUW Fellows: Ms. Tanisha Folks, NCCU and Ms. Libby MacFarlane, Duke  
"Changing Environments Affecting Women's Well-Being and Livelihood: Perspectives from Nepal and North Carolina".

## Minutes: December 13, 2014 Plenary Meeting

President Bea Keller welcomed members to the annual Schwenning Scholarship Meeting. She said that while it was not unique among chapters to fundraise for their own scholarship, it was uncommon. She mentioned the Education Development Fund and in particular, its global as well as domestic sphere, adding that this year, in the Triangle alone, we have 11 recipients. She thanked Sandy Passero, Sandy Smalley, and Donna Hammerly for the refreshments. Lisa Price introduced our speakers, Madhu Sharma, Shayela Suvarna, and Ratna Swarminathan, and moderated the panel.

Madhu Sharma, trained as an engineer, had a long career spanning industry and higher education. She is currently part-time chaplain at Duke University. Shayela Suvarna came to the US for her studies, and stayed for research opportunities ultimately doing medical research. Ratna Swarminathan was trained as a journalist,

worked for *The Times of India*, the largest English newspaper of the world, and has continued her journalistic work in Europe and the US.

While the Hindu religion regards women as equal to men, the advent of Muslim rule changed the status of women in India. Women took to the veil, child marriage increased, and widow remarriage was scorned. The position of women has improved through legislation and the reform movement. Women by law are considered equal to men, but not culturally. Women are still marginalized and there is poor implementation of legislation. While the female literacy ratio is 65.5% to the male 80%, more women than men go to college. India has the lowest gender ratio in the world (940 females to 1000 males); male children are preferred. Less than 30% of women are in the workforce; most are in the unorganized sector. Only 2%

of rape cases lead to conviction. Social Media is expanding coverage of women's issues. India has produced notable women: Kiran Bedi, Dir. Gen. of the Indian Police Service, Pratibha Patil, India's first woman president, and Kalpana Chawla, NASA astronaut. There are also many Indian women excelling in the financial and technology fields.

After the presentation, Program Chair Donna Wilson announced that our next meeting would take place on a Tuesday afternoon, at 2 p.m. in the Carolina Room at CW, and would feature a panel of 3 clergywomen, Emma Akpan, Jan Feldman, and Susannah Smith who will discuss, *Called to the Clergy: Opportunities and Challenges*.

Membership vice-president Genoveva Aguirre welcomed our guests Carol Bodine, Kathy Harris, Joan East and Bobbie Lubker (former member). She also announced two

# Member of the Month - Elaine Herndon

Elaine Herndon was born and raised in Durham, NC. She graduated from Durham High School and Duke University. She married and moved to the Boston, Massachusetts area where she taught elementary school and where her three daughters were born. She moved back to Durham in 1969, she earned a master's degree from UNC Chapel Hill in the Teaching of Reading and continued her career in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools as a Reading Resource teacher.



hands-on activities such as making Birthing Kits, School Kits, "Days for Girls" kits, and clothing for Haitian children, as well as advocacy for the poor and hungry through Bread for the World, Heifer International, FINCA, Women for Women and other international organizations. AAUW's advocacy for women and girls is what drew Elaine to this organization.

Elaine is retired from teaching but leads a busy life of volunteer work, mostly through Epworth United Methodist Church. She is the outgoing president of United Methodist Women whose purpose is to advocate for women, children and youth here at home and throughout the world. As incoming chair of Social Action for that group, Elaine will continue to encourage

In her spare time, she and her husband enjoy spending time with their 6 children and 8 grandchildren, who all live out of state, including 2 who live in Canada, and 2 who live in Manila, Philippines. They also like traveling, hiking, biking, and dancing.

Interesting trivia: In 1957 Elaine Herndon represented North Carolina in the Miss America Pageant in

Atlantic City. She won her swimsuit division and was in the Top Ten finalists.

Other activities: Elaine is a regular volunteer at Urban Ministries of Durham and the Interfaith Hospitality Network of Durham.

Elaine and her husband Bob have traveled to all 50 states, mostly camping and hiking as well as to many European countries, Central America, South America and Southeast Asia. A favorite trip was with her daughter Kimberley and her family to Malaysian Borneo for snorkeling and diving, a jungle cruise (complete with leeches!), the Turtle Islands, and the caves of Mulu National Park. Memorable sights: Proboscis monkeys (only place in the world they are found), green sea turtle her eggs, purple herons, and the biggest flower in the world, the Rafflesia.

— Karen Piplani

## Minutes: December 13 (continued)

new members: Mary Monroe Kolek, who has had an illustrious career in education and retired as superintendent from the New Canaan School District in New Canaan, CT. and Lindsey Smith, who earned her undergraduate BA Biology at UNC-CH, before completing her MA in Anthropology at Hunter College, CUNY Graduate Center. She is currently a lecturing fellow at Duke.

Treasurer Karen Piplani presented the history of the Schwenning

Scholarship, and collected checks from the members.

Dona Koeberl reiterated that the Good Morning Book Club was meeting at her house on Dec. 18, 10 a.m. and was reading **Unlikely Allies**. Mary Paterson said that Penelope Easten, who has written a book about the diet of indigenous Alaskan people, would be at the next meeting. Mary is hosting the meeting. Ms. Easten, 91, will be discussing, "Learning to Like the Mukluk diet of Alaska," and would

bring some samples.

Bea Keller told members to reserve Wed., Apr. 1, 2-4 p.m. (at Extraordinary Ventures) as our tea date. Haven Kimmel will be our speaker with Sally Green interviewing her. She also announced that Sandy Passero, our recording secretary, will be leaving us permanently. The board is looking for a replacement and hopes that a member will volunteer to replace her.

Respectfully submitted by Bea Keller

**Welcome New Members**  
**Mary Monroe Kolek, She has a BS in spec. education, MA in Ed Psych-Counseling, PhD in Education Leadership and recently retired as superintendent from the New Canaan School District in New Canaan, CT.**

**Lindsey Smith. Undergraduate BA Biology UNC Chapel Hill, graduate: MA Anthropology, Hunter College, CUNY graduate Center. Occupation, lecturing fellow at Duke.**

**Genoveva Aguirre**

### Good Morning Book Club

The January Good Morning Book Club will meet January 8 in the home of Mary Paterson, 750 Weaver Dairy Road, #156, phone 919-918-3447. Penelope Easton, former member of AAUW, will discuss her recent book, *Learning to Like Mukpok*

Remember if you have questions about our next meeting or need to check on the book club's selection, please check our web page: <http://chapelhill-nc.aauw.net>. If you want to check our archive of past newsletters in our "members only" section, remember the password is the word "dogwood" in lower case letters.

## Minutes: November 15, 2014 Plenary Meeting

President Bea Keller welcomed members, thanked the members who had brought refreshments, and mentioned that a sign-up clipboard for hospitality was circulating. Program chair Donna Wilson introduced the speaker, Dr. Bill Rohe.

Dr. Rohe spoke of the inception of the Research Triangle largely through the efforts of Romeo Guest, George Simpson, and Elizabeth Aycocock. With the knowledge that North Carolina's textile and furniture industries were drying up, Romeo Guest came up with the idea of the Research Triangle. At the time, the universities in the area were exporting their talent. Guest foresaw a time when industries in the area could draw upon this wealth of knowledge and expertise. Guest convinced former textile mill owner Karl Robins to invest 1 million dollars and buy up land in the RTP. Few people bought stock in the company Guest formed so a Vice-

President at Duke suggested making a non-profit research institute which attracted considerable money and interest. NIEHS and IBM were the first two enterprises to build in the RTP.

The model for the RTP is an antiquated one; the minimum lot size was 8 acres, and companies could build on only 15% of any lot. There were deep setbacks on all sides. Dr. Rohe mentioned that today, people want to live near their work, and to be able to walk or bike to businesses and their homes. Plans for new buildings or repurposing old buildings will reflect this philosophy of integrated land uses and flexible building design.

RTP has provided the area with an identity and there has been economic spillover to the surrounding area. The plans for the future include building high density villages, thereby creating little towns, to increase office space from 26 million to 84 million square feet, and expectations are that

current levels of 39,000 employees will grow to 150 thousand employees.

After the presentation, Dr. Rohe sold copies of his book, *RTP: Then and Now*. Program Chair Donna Wilson announced that our next meeting, *A Conversation on Women of India* would take place Dec. 13 and feature Madhu Sharma, Shayela Suvarna, Ratna Swaminathan with Lisa Price as the moderator. Membership vice-president Genoveva Aguirre introduced a guest, her mother Emilia Brieba, and announced that we had a new member, Mary Monroe Kolek. It was announced that the Good Morning Book Club would meet at Dona Koberl's house on Dec. 18 for a discussion of *Unlikely Allies*. A member asked who would be the speaker at our annual tea. Bea Keller said that AAUW-CH was awaiting an answer from Haven Kimmel. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Bea Keller

## Treasurer's Report - December 17, 2014

### Current Account Balances:

Checking account: \$1876.61

Money Market Savings Account: \$1504.08

CD: \$6,436.52

### Carrie Heath Schwenning Scholarship Status

We now have **\$985.00** toward our goal of **\$1500.00** thanks

to the generosity of 17 of our members. We are hoping that those who were not at the December meeting (or who those who lacked their checkbooks then) will help us reach our goal.

Remember, the check must be made out to **UNC- Chapel Hill**, because they administer the scholarship. The note "

**Fund #6725"** must be in the memo part of the check. Please send your check to me: Karen Piplani, 1502 Halifax Rd., Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

Thanks to all of you who so generously gave, and remember that every bit helps!

—Karen Piplani, Treasurer