

# AAUW-Orange, Durham, Chatham Branch

## From the President: Bea Keller

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What? Russia has hacked into U.S. computers? Should we be shocked? The alleged Russian interference in our election using Julian Assange as their mouthpiece made me wonder about past foreign interference in our elections—specifically Russian.

In 1960, the Soviets favored John F. Kennedy over Richard Nixon. Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev had met at the American National Exhibition at Sokolniki Park in 1959. A discussion ensued in the model kitchen (“The Kitchen Debate”), and antipathy for Nixon reigned in Khrushchev’s heart. Nixon’s tendencies were deemed hawkish and militaristic by the Soviets--a danger to their interests. After U-2 pilot Gary Powers’ plane was shot down over Soviet airspace, he was imprisoned and not returned until 1962. Khrushchev, the Soviet leader at the time, said in his memoirs, “We kept Nixon from being able to claim that he could deal with the Russians; our ploy made a difference of at least half a million votes,

which gave Kennedy the edge he needed.” By 1968, the Soviet view of Nixon had softened but the Soviets believed that Hubert Humphrey would be more likely to bring an end to the Vietnam War. The Soviet ambassador to the US, Anatoly Dobrynin, said in his memoirs that Moscow sent him to offer monetary help to the Humphrey campaign, but Hubert Humphrey understood Dobrynin’s nuanced offer, and refused it diplomatically. (Michael Cohen, “Russia’s Stake in the US Election Is Steeped in Cold War History,” [www.vocative.com](http://www.vocative.com). 8/4/2016)

We all remember when Carter was running for reelection (and battling historic levels of inflation as well as the hostage situation in Iran) that the Iranians did not free the hostages until Reagan was inaugurated as president. In truth, the historical perspective shows that Carter lost because of our national economy, and not because of the hostage situation. While the Iranians wanted to hurt Carter’s chances at reelection, the Russians were concerned that Reagan, depicting

himself as a hawk, was a menace to Russian interests. They “set up two propaganda agencies to spread unfavorable stories about Reagan.” One of the agencies only found “‘alleged evidence’ of his ‘weak intellectual capabilities,’ while simultaneously distributing slanderous pieces in Denmark, France and India.” (Craig Shirley, Andrew Shirley, *conservativereview.com/commentary/Aug. 3, 2016*) “As Christopher Andrew recounts in the ‘The Sword and the Shield,’ ‘influence operations’—which spread disinformation—were staples of Soviet intelligence activities.” The KGB also attempted to intensify U.S. racial tensions by fabricating “racist pamphlets, attributing them to the Jewish Defense League and mailed them to militant African American organizations.” (“*Why would Russia interfere in the U.S. election? Because it sometimes works*”, Paul Musgrave, *Washington Post/07/26/2016*) Apparently, Russian interference with U.S. elections is not new. What is unusual is



### Mark Your Calendar

December 3: Dr.

Tanya Shields

“Rose Hall’s Reverberations: Annie

Palmer and Plantation

Sexual Economies”

Durham Public Library,

300 N. Roxboro St.,

Durham, NC 27701

10:30 AM (Social

Time), 11:00 AM

—Donna Wilson, Vice

President, Programs

## November 19 Meeting: Dr. Keith Harris—*Chocolate Production and Consumption: Entrepreneurial and Health Issues Related to Women*

Chapel Hill Public Library, Room A, 10:30 a.m.

Dr. Keith Harris, from North Carolina State University’s Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Sciences Department, has an intense love for chocolate. He is the Alumni Distinguished Professor and Undergraduate Coordinator at NCSU. Understanding how food processing affects the health properties of food is his primary research interest. Specifically, his research examines the “aspirin-like” or anti-inflammatory effects of plant foods, as well as their effects on blood sugar

regulation and satiety. During his travel to Oaxaca, Mexico, and the Mayordomo Chocolate Factory, Mayordomo employees allowed

Dr. Harris to taste every step of chocolate production, and he observed their minimalist

processing method using only a few ingredients like sugar, cinnamon and roasted cocoa nibs. We are excited to have Dr. Harris speak November 19 at 11:00 a.m. about *Chocolate*



*Production and Consumption: Entrepreneurial and Health Issues Related to Women*—a

subject that will appeal to all of us. Our social hour and coffee begins at 10:30—there will be a chocolate theme!

—Vickie Healey

## Presidents Message (continued from page 1)

for a U.S. presidential candidate to encourage a foreign power to interfere instead of decrying their attempt to sway the vote. And for all the hawks that worry about a female candidate’s ability to be firm enough with our adversaries, the Russians have already decided whom they most fear. Just as they hatched the slogan “Reagan Means War” to broadcast throughout the Soviet Bloc and Europe, they are up to

their same old tricks but using new technology. “That the Soviets cracked the Democratic Nation Committee’s computers is in keeping with the behavior and paranoid attitude of the Russian people. Governments may change, but the behavior remains the same.” (Craig Shirley, Andrew Shirley)

Our November program turns our thoughts to chocolate—*Chocolate Production and Consumption: Entrepreneurial and*

*Health Issues Related to Women* presented by Keith Harris. Our next meeting is on Nov. 19, in room A at the Chapel Hill Public Library. We will begin our social time at 10:30 and the program at 11:00. I hope all of you can come—our refreshments’ theme will be chocolatey too! We will all need the healing attributes of chocolate.

## Member of the Month: Laurie Tepper

As a person who putters about in her garden, analogies involving horticulture form easily (with apologies to all non-gardeners). Laurie Tepper reminds me of the plant that never disappoints, and reveals a loveliness and tenacity no matter the season. Imbued with a keen intelligence and a quiet strength, her integrity and principles govern every aspect of her life.

Laurie grew up in Kansas City and attended college at Washington University in St. Louis as did her older brother. She majored in history, and, "(I) continue being a student of history, believing that studying history is an important way to understand the present." Her father was a powerful and influential presence during her childhood. A child immigrant from Russia, he worked his way through undergraduate and medical school. "(He) became a very old-fashioned general practitioner with a practice of mostly poor patients." A tireless worker, he tended patients at all hours in their own homes as well as in his office, hospitals and delivery rooms. He expected the same compassion and generosity of spirit from his chil-

dren. "Once a year," Laurie adds, "I gathered clothes and toys and went with him to give to one of his poorest patients." Her father also insisted that she help as a candy-striper in a poor, run-down hospital. Nothing resembling a toy gun was allowed in their house. "He had been shot by a sniper while serving as a general surgeon in World War II and forevermore hated guns."

Laurie left the Midwest to attend Law School at Suffolk University. She earned her law degree but realized that her heart was not into pursuing a career in law. She worked for a number of years as an attorney in government – the city of Cambridge, MA, and Social Security in Arlington, VA, and then went into legal publishing upon moving back to Boston. When her husband's career required a move to Chapel Hill, she decided to get an MS in Library Science at UNC. Combined with her law degree, perhaps she could get a job in a law library. Alas, there were no librarian jobs available at the time. Not long after, her husband Joel, a radiation oncologist at UNC-CH, was diagnosed with stomach cancer at that time. Laurie cared for him full-time

before returning to work for a nonprofit serving the Jewish community.

Laurie's ease with a wide variety of people was certainly enhanced from life in a house frequented by her father's patients, "I knew his patients because they came to our house to bring, in lieu of payment, produce from their gardens, casseroles, cookies, and small gifts at Christmas. I grew up playing with their children while their fathers painted or made repairs in our house." Her proudest accomplishments are her children and grandchildren with whom she is very involved. Laurie and Joel have two daughters; one is a psychiatrist at a neighborhood clinic in Somerville, MA. "She has two sons, one of whom is adopted. As a result I am greatly appreciative of all women who make the difficult choice to give up a child for adoption. My younger daughter is in her last year of the bachelors nursing program at UNC. She is the single mother of four sons and a very busy woman, and I am her helper and backup."

— Bea Keller



Laurie Tepper

### **Good Morning Book Club**

*November 3 Good Morning Book Club will meet in the home of Kay Irish, 673 Spindlewood, Fearington, 919-542-7566. We will be discussing David McCullough's biography of Harry Truman.*

—Dona Koerberl

### Treasurer's Report

10/27/2016

**Checking:** \$1,199.68

**Savings** \$1,504.37

**C.D.** \$5,562.04

The profit from our Tea with Stephanie Elizando Greist, \$707.55, has been donated to the AAUW Ann Chipley Fund, #4051.

Submitted by Karen Piplani, Treasurer



## December 3: Dr. Tanya Shields

### Rose Hall's Reverberations: Annie Palmer and Plantation Sexual Economies

We are very fortunate to have Dr. Tanya Shields, associate professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Women's and Gender Studies at UNC,



Chapel Hill, speak to us on Annie Palmer, a plantation owner in Jamaica, and plantation sexual economies. Dr. Shields is currently at work on her second

monograph, "Gendered Labor: Race, Place and Power on Female-Owned Plantations." Dr. Shields teaches classes on Caribbean women, the arts of activism, growing up girl globally, and the continuing influence of plantation economics and politics. Dr. Shields is also dramaturge for the Houston-based Process Theater's "Plantation Remix" project. Her class, "Rahtid Rebel

Women: An Introduction to the Caribbean," was listed as number 7 on Elle Magazine's "63 College Classes that Give Us Hope for the Next Generation." Dr. Shields earned her Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Maryland at College Park. Social time will begin at 10:30 a.m., and the program will start at 11:00 a.m.

— Bea Keller

## Carrie Heath Schwenning Scholarship

At our December meeting every year, we ask our members to donate to the Carrie Heath Schwenning Scholarship Fund. In 2011, members voted to increase the amount to \$1500 to help cover the rising cost of tuition.

The Chapel Hill branch began this scholarship in 1928 to help a female graduate student at UNC-Chapel Hill; at that time it was a loan of only \$100 a year. Money raised now

will be for our scholarship for the 2014-15 school year.

To make a tax-deductible donation, make the check payable to "**UNC-Chapel Hill**" and put the note "**scholarship # 6725**" in the memo field on your check. Give or **mail your check to Karen Piplani, 1502 Halifax Rd., Chapel Hill, NC, 27514-2728.**

We are very proud of this scholarship, and our chapter has continued the tradition of giving it to a female graduate

student at UNC. Our current recipient is Taylor Pasley, a graduate student at UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy. Our scholarship is administered by the Financial Aid Office of UNC-CH.

-Bea Keller

## Outreach Efforts of Our Branch

UNC-CH Student Malia Suhren, and Coordinator for Peer Mentoring and Engagement Erica Wallace contacted our branch to ask if one of us would be willing to help with their application for a Campus Action Project (CAP) grant. Gloria D. Thomas, PhD, is the Contracting/Financial contact. The proposal, called "I Am Worthy" seeks to provide psychological support and encouragement for all women of color at UNC-CH through monthly activities. The need was identified through a preliminary meeting—more than 600 female students at-

tended. Bea Keller agreed to be their liaison. We wish them success in this worthy project.

Duke University's FEMMES Connect program presented a screening of *Big Dream*, a documentary made in part by Microsoft that followed seven international young women that were trying to encourage, teach and innovate in the STEM fields. Pam Stephens, our STEM coordinator, and Bea Keller attended the showing in hopes of using the film in an outreach program for Chatham County. While the film had good features (diverse, international--and a

wonderful scene between a brother and sister wherein the brother affirmed that boys/men are better when the reality of his sister's academic prowess was indisputable), the film needed serious editing. We are continuing our search for a better documentary.

Member Laurie Tepper is contacting various NC branches to get ideas for recruitment, fundraising, projects, and more exposure. Other branches have been very welcoming, and Laurie is compiling a list of possibilities.

— Bea Keller



## Plenary Meeting, October 15, 2016

President Bea Keller called the meeting to order at 10:50, thanking Ruth and her band of volunteers for providing seasonal refreshments. She went on to note that, as had been advertised in our newsletter, this meeting was an important one in terms of the health and robustness of our local branch and as such the entire session would be devoted to a "Future Planning" process. An agenda, prepared by session moderators, Bea Keller, Donna Wil-

son and Michele Hoyman, detailed the steps in the proposed planning process and the 15 members in attendance were invited to participate, first in small groups and then as part of a consensus-building, full group discussion.

Program Chair, Donna Wilson, representing the Board, opened the program by providing audience members with a rationale for why the Board chose to engage members in this process at this

time. Two overarching issues that threaten the viability of the ODC branch are:

**Dwindling Membership-** Over the past few years membership has declined 50% going from approximately 100 to 45.

**Dwindling Participation-** Meeting attendance is often low (12-20) which is especially disconcerting when the Program Committee has consistently secured expert,

### Website News

*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.*

## AAUW Plenary Meeting (continued)

engaging and often prestigious speakers who give up their time to prepare and present outstanding presentations for us.

Active participation on committees and work groups is low resulting in the President and Board members having to cover a range of tasks in order to ensure we meet our goals of providing engaging sessions, informative newsletters, a successful Tea and sufficient scholarship contributions.

Members took a moment to recognize the “herculean” efforts of President Bea Keller, who has gone well above and beyond to ensure events, commitments and communications have been up to high standards.

Donna then posed the overarching question of the day: *How, as a membership, can we problem solve so as to ensure the ongoing, active, widespread involvement required in order to sustain and continually improve our affiliate?*

She segued into an informative and motivational video, produced by the national organization (insert link) that summarized the rich history, significant accomplishments, current array of services, programs grants and scholarships and future goals of the organization.

With local and national information provided as context,

Bea then used a PowerPoint presentation to facilitate our examination of the AAUW ODC Mission and Goals.

Using the following questions as prompts: What are we doing now; What do we need to think about [as we move forward]; and Where are we going (community outreach, advocacy, education, etc) she invited members to process responses collegially.

Members worked in small groups to discuss and build upon the presentation and to identify priority areas and possible action steps.

Facilitated by Michele Hoyman, each group presented a summary of their focus areas and examples of targeted actions related to priorities. A synthesis is provided below:

Priority issues and possible action steps:

Over the next 1-2 years the ODC AAUW will focus on:

Expanding membership numbers, increasing diversity and increasing active involvement of members

Expanding outreach efforts and increasing awareness by the community of the benefits available through AAUW [especially with regard to the

programs, seminars, support groups, on line resources and scholarships and grants designed to meet the unique needs of women as students, employees, colleagues, advocates/mentors, friends and leaders.)

through such actions as:

Identifying and making contact with specific individuals who can act as liaisons with local universities, community/ technical colleges, and professional, cultural and faith-based organizations.

Using marketing ideas to prepare information trifolds and announcements that address the benefits of joining AAUW (include the social and networking value that many have found rewarding, especially when moving to new community or transitioning to new phase of life- parenting, return to the classroom or retiring.)

Using traditional and social media, regularly present our “message” about the local organization and its mission based activities, events and services to those organizations where potential new members may be found (ex. Newcomers, Campus Women’s Organizations.) Use broadcast and on line



## AAUW Plenary Meeting (continued)

media including UNC Public Radio, Twitter, Facebook to highlight how AAUW mission, goals and services are particularly apropos at this time.

Using such outreach strategies as “tap on the shoulder” and subsidized memberships increase membership, especially with an eye to increasing diversity. Toward this end other ideas such as varying the topics and time, place, frequency of meetings and book groups were also mentioned.

Involving more members in the organization through participation on committees, service on the Board and via contributions to the monthly newsletter and as presenters. This has the secondary benefit of supporting leaders and encouraging more to serve in leadership roles over time.

Building upon and expanding partnerships with local non-partisan organizations that share our mission in order to connect and expand the power of our “workforce” and thus our ability to take on projects.

Considering an annual “focus” that is consistent with mission, aligned with member interests/strengths and resources and which presents opportunities to connect with

the broader community (ex. STEM, Empowerment: Ensuring Equity, Respect and Safety in the Family, Classroom, Workplace and Courtroom.)

As time was running short and much had been accomplished, it was determined that the Board would review the results of the meeting and use these to develop set of recommendations for the members to consider as part of annual goal setting and program planning. In cases where suggestions or questions need to be reviewed by state or national AAUW officials the Board will investigate and make appropriate recommendations so as to be consistent with national AAUW mission, policies and by laws.

Bea concluded the meeting by reviewing business items:

Member Vickie Healy enthusiastically invited members (and guests) to attend the November 19 meeting at the Chapel Hill Library, 10:30 AM. NCSU Professor, Dr. Harris will address the topic of chocolate and how it relates to women’s health and entrepreneurial endeavors. (The theme will be reflected in refreshments as well!) The December 3 meeting will be at the Durham Public

Library. Dr. Tanya Shields is presenting her research on Women Plantation Owners in the Caribbean and U.S. South.

Bea has served as a liaison with UNC and assisted a student group in writing an AAUW grant proposal designed to fund a year-long support program for women of color- *I am Worthy*. The need for such a program became obvious last year when 600 women attended an event focused on promoting dialog and providing moral support as they confront and cope with issues relevant to their lives and goals.

Book Club will convene this month at Kay Irish’s home and will be discussing David McCullough’s biography of Harry Truman.

Pam Stevens and Bea are previewing a film on STEM to determine if it is something we may want to sponsor as an event for our communities.

Donna thanked those present for their active participation and commitment to the organization, remarking how heartening it was to see recurring themes and discussion points, indi-



cations we are “all on the same page”.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Monroe Kolek, recording secretary

