

## From the President: Bea Keller

Hoping to influence others to take action on behalf of women in NC, our September speaker, Bernetta Thigpen, shared many facts and figures. Her message: it is hard for many to earn a living wage today—even first year public school teachers. The Orange, Wake, Durham, and Chatham region is the wealthiest in the state—yet according to statistics compiled by the state, these 4 counties have nearly 23,000 families with children living below the poverty level. However, we can

work to implement policies that help working parents: flexible working practices, adherence to federal anti-discrimination statutes, access to training in high-growth, well-paid careers, financial support for career counseling and child care to name a few. We must make our voices heard, and support policies that improve the lives of women

and their families.

On August 26, the local chapter of the League of Women Voters celebrated the ratification (93 years ago) of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment which gave women the right to vote. Individuals in a packed house asked many questions about the provisions of HB589, the new NC voter law. Former state senator Ellie Kinnaird was present in the audi-



ence, asking questions and referring to her copy of the bill. There were so many changes and additions made at the last minute that she did not have the latest, official copy of the new law! It was clear to all present that no one, including the NC Board of Elections, had a thorough knowledge of the new bill on August

26. Ellie Kinnaird has said that she will focus on helping college students get the 4 items necessary to register to vote in their college towns. But other age groups may not have the required ID—especially if they don't drive. NC Women United has expressed concern that 64 percent of women are without the necessary voter ID. It is very important that we educate ourselves and others about the changes in the new voter law, and consider volunteering our time to help those who do not have what it takes to vote. "Voting is the one time when all citizens have an equal say in how we shall be governed," Jo Nicolas of LWVNC reminds the public.

I hope to see all of you Oct. 19—this time our focus will be international! Dr. Erica Field will speak on micro-lending and how it enables women and their families to thrive.

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### Treasurer's Report

As of 9/26/2013 our checking account has a balance of \$1,923.64, and our Money Market Account has a balance of \$1,503.91. Our Certificate of deposit totals \$6,608.35.

— Karen Piplani, Treasurer

## October 19 Speaker: Micro-Lending to Female Entrepreneurs in India

Erica Field, a native Chapel Hillian, and Associate Professor of Economics and Global Health at Duke University specializing in the fields of Development Economics, Health Economics and Economic Demography, will speak to us on micro-lending, the sometimes controversial innovation in economic development that is used across the developing world to lift women out of poverty. The Grameen Bank spearheaded this widely used concept to promote the use of very small loans (as small as \$25.00) to help women get their products, often produced at home, to market. These loans are repaid with interest and the collateral is often a lending circle of other borrowers rather than physical capital.

Professor Field is a Faculty Research Fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research, a research affili-

ate of the Bureau for Research in Economic Analysis of Development, and a member of the Jameel Poverty Action Lab at MIT. She received her Ph.D. from Princeton University in 2003 and her B.A. from Vassar College. Prior to joining the economics faculty at Duke, Professor Field was an Associate Professor of Economics at Harvard University.

Professor Field's work examines the microeconomics of household poverty and health in developing countries, with an emphasis on the study of gender and development. She has written papers on several topics in development in many different parts of the world, including microfinance contract design and social networks in India. Her work has been published in several leading peer-reviewed journals. As a member of the

Jameel Poverty Action Lab at MIT, she has spent much of her career pioneering the use of field experiments to evaluate development policy and understand individual behavior. She is currently engaged in several large-scale randomized program evaluations including an expansion of rural microfinance in India.

—Nan Nixon

**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.**

—Bea Keller

## Good Morning Book Club

Please visit any Good Morning Book Club discussion which interests you. You might just decide to participate regularly!

At 10 on the morning of Thursday, October 3, Good Morning Book Club will discuss the book *The Invisible Wall* by

Harry Bernstein in the home of Kay Irish. Phone Kay at 919-542-7566 for directions.

The November 7 discussion of the book, *March* by Geraldine Brooks will be in the home of Annette Jurgelski, 3211 Oak Knob Court, Hillsborough, NC 27514,

919-644-0280. I loved the characters in the book *Little Women* and wanted to know what might happen next. *March* focuses on the life of the father from the book *Little Women* as Brooks imagines his life experiences.

—Dona Koeberl

## Please Welcome our New Members

**Donna Wilson** completed her undergraduate work at Ohio State University, majoring in Spanish and French, and acquired her graduate degree there as well in Spanish and 2nd Language Acquisition. She earned her doctorate from the University of Massachusetts in Higher Education Policy and

Leadership. She is semi-retired from college teaching and administration. Welcome Donna!!

**Brenda Rogers** earned her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in English. She completed the graduate and doctorate programs

at NC State University in Adult and Community College Education and Psychology, respectively. She is currently retired in education administration and institutional research and planning. Welcome Brenda!!

—Genoveva Aguirre

## Member of the Month - Karen Piplani

Our new treasurer, Karen Piplani, is a Midwesterner. Karen spent most of her childhood in small towns in South Dakota, Idaho, and Iowa, before returning to Iowa City—the city of her birth. Her father was often the only physician in these small towns, and free time was non-existent for him.



He eventually returned to school to specialize in dermatology and became a professor at the University of Iowa; thus began Karen's love of small university towns.

As a young woman, Karen was interested in science, but at the time there were not many career choices. Her father referred to the few women physicians in his time as “hen medics” and he did not want his daughter to be one. Karen became a nurse and worked for many years in private practice. As the only nurse in a practice, it was a busy and varied work, a nice combination of contact with people, problem solving, and technical skill. As in most small offices, it was difficult to

get time off, and this eventually led to Karen taking a break in her career. There were other jobs waiting at home.

While at the University of Iowa, Karen met her husband Ratan Piplani. When Ray was eleven, his family had been forced to flee their home and livelihood in the Indus

Valley. The Hindu section of their town was burned to the ground by Islamist fanatics, and the family was fortunate to reach India intact. Ray found his way to the University of Iowa to study engineering, urged by his brother who was already a student there. With Ray, Karen has traveled to India twice to visit his family who finally settled in the New Delhi area.

When Karen and Ray settled in Chapel Hill, Karen saw an opportunity to get a BS degree with a concentration in

applied math. Karen was looking for a job related to her new degree when a pharmaceutical development company hired her to answer patients' calls concerning a new injectable insulin pen. For Karen, a teacher at heart, it was familiar territory.

Karen is, without question, a life-long learner. “If you have that kind of a mindset, you'll never be bored,” she says. For many years, she played cello in the Chapel Hill orchestra and is thinking to take it up again. At her mother's side, she learned the wonder of books, and her house is filled with books. She quilts, gardens, and goes on local birding treks. A warm and caring person, she is always at the ready to lend a capable hand.

—Bea Keller

**Bridge Club: will meet at 1 p.m. , October 10, at the home of Marion Effron, 750 Weaver Dairy Rd, #3201, Carol Woods.**

## Notes from the AAUW National Convention 2013 in New Orleans

Last spring, many of us heard and have continued to hear that there is sexual assault in the military and that the military has not been doing their duty in dealing with this problem. Well, that point was dramatically demonstrated in the documentary shown at the AAUW Convention in New Orleans on June 10. It is called “The Invisible War”. It is a powerful, Oscar-nominated film that exposes the epidemic of sexual assault in our military and why more is not being done to report and stop it. After we

watched the movie, we listened to Andrea Neutzling, an AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund-supported plaintiff and U.S. Army veteran who filed a joint lawsuit against the Department of Defense in 2011 for its failure to prosecute offenders. Two things became clear to me: (1) Both men and women are being sexually assaulted; it is primarily because women are reporting the sexual assaults, that men have now come forward to report it as well. (2) Often, even if the person assaulted reports the

assaults, he or she is reporting it to her next in command who may well have been her attacker. To say that the movie is powerful is an understatement. I found it difficult to sleep that night, but I am proud that AAUW 's Legal Advocacy Fund (LAF) is helping. Our branch does give a small amount each year to LAF.

—Kay White

# Norma Taylor Mitchell Receives Alice Lee Award

At the annual meeting of the Alabama-West Florida United Methodist Annual Conference meeting in June, 2013 at Christ United Methodist Church in Mobile, Alabama, Norma Taylor Mitchell received the annual Alice Lee Award given by the Conference Commission on the Status and Role of Women. With this Award, the Commission recognized her work since the 1970s on behalf of equality for women in the church, academia, and the larger community. The work recognized by this award began in 1972, when Norma was elected to the United Methodist General Commission on Archives and History. In 1980, a committee chaired by Norma produced the first United Methodist Women's History Conference called

"Women in New Worlds" which resulted in two volumes of published papers. Alice Lee, for whom the award was named when it was established in 1992, is an attorney and United Methodist laywoman in Monroeville, Alabama. She is 101 years old, and at age 100, was celebrated as the oldest practicing lawyer in Alabama. She is the also the elder sister of Harper Lee, Pulitzer-Prize-winning author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Norma and her husband Joe lived and worked in the boundaries of the Alabama-West Florida Conference for thirty-one years before they retired and moved to Durham in March, 2001. Having been away from the Conference for twelve

years, Norma was greatly surprised that Methodists there could even remember her name, much less choose her for this award! Congratulations, Norma! We are not at all surprised that they remembered you and honored your work.

**Elect Her and STEM Program at NCCU**  
**Chimi Boyd-Keyes, Director of the Women's Center at NCCU, announced that both Elect Her, an AAUW workshop encouraging collegiate women to run for office, as well as an AAUW STEM program for elementary school girls will be taking place this spring. She welcomes support from our members and will be back in touch with details.** — Bea Keller

## Minutes for Branch Meeting, September 21

President Bea Keller called the meeting to order at 10:00.

Donna Hammersley introduced Bernetta Thigpen, Regional Director of the North Carolina Council for Women. The Council was created in 1963 as a state agency. Its funds have been canceled and will be good for only one more year. Its mandate is to administer North Carolina Grant funds to alleviate domestic and sexual violence and to aid displaced homemakers.

Ms. Thigpen discussed women's wages, one-third less than men for comparable work, women's education, statistically better than men, and women's concerns

which are to remedy the wage gap, to facilitate access to higher education and to encourage women to run for higher office.

Bea opened the business meeting by



introducing guests and a new member, Brenda Rogers. The next meeting will be October 19. The speaker will be Erica Fields, Professor of

Economics at Duke University. Bea also announced that member Norma Mitchell had received an award

from the Conference Committee on the Status of Women for her work as the first Chair of the Committee in Southern Alabama and Northern Florida and the organizer of the first national conference on the history of women among other accomplishments.

Members of the League of Women Voters were guests at the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 AM.

Mary Paterson  
Secretary

