

*Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research*

Fall 2015

Vol. 64 No. 1

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In principle and practice, AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

If you have questions, comments, or need to request a particular form to be sent by regular mail, please contact us

866-525-2155 phone/fax  
or  
[www.aauwnc.org](http://www.aauwnc.org)

**Highlights of the 2015 National Convention**

Comments from AAUW NC Co-President Jean D’Addario



AAUW board chair Patricia Fae Ho (center) holds a dual membership in the Tar Heel virtual branch. Following a busy day, she invited other Tar Heel branch members to join her for a chat in her suite. Joining the conversation were (L to R) Cherrie Wheaton, Denny McGuire, Mary Fran Schickendantz and Nancy Shoemaker.

There were 11 members from AAUW NC representing Asheville, Charlotte, Hendersonville, Greensboro, Raleigh-Wake County, Tar Heel, and Wilmington branches who attended the National Convention in San Diego on June 18-21.

The AAUW National Convention was a unique experience for all 1,010 attendees. There were outstanding speakers, presenters, and panelists. Workshops and Daily Dialogues provided so many opportunities for attendees to learn, share, and come away with new ideas and resources to bring home to every branch. For those of you who have attended an AAUW Convention, you know that you will come home energized and eager to continue our mission of empowering women. Since equality is still on the distant horizon, a new \$1 million campaign, *Charting the Course*, will raise unrestricted funds for AAUW’s community programs across the country.

Our members (12% voting) approved all Public Policy statements and AAUW Bylaws changes except the one proposed amendment that would have eliminated the degree requirement. Several outstanding women spoke at convention:

- “I’m 84 and will continue to be a force in the art world, where women are underrepresented,” said **Faith Ringgold**, the 2015 Alumnae Recognition Award winner, during her acceptance speech.
- “It’s so much harder to change the culture in a place that is already successful,” said Achievement Award winner **Maria Claw**. She left Princeton University to become president of Harvey Mudd College which now boasts computer science classes with an enrollment of 38 % women, compared with the national average of 18%.

*(continued on page 2)*

## Co-Presidents' Message

### AAUW 2015 San Diego Convention: A Unique Experience



AAUW NC Co-Presidents

Jean D'Addario

Sandra McLaurin

Sandra McLaurin and I are privileged to be following in Mary Peterson's footsteps as AAUW NC Co-Presidents. We are grateful for her service and continued support! Since this is our first Co-Presidents' message, we greet you and look forward to working with you.

Your state board met in Greensboro July 23 to make plans for the coming months. We hope you are giving thought to what we can do to help you in your branches. Please be sure to **update your branch officer lists on the Member Services Database** at [www.aauw.org](http://www.aauw.org).

Sandra and I thought that this 2015 fall issue of the Tar Heel News should lead off with highlights from the convention.

We will have many more opportunities following convention to focus on all aspects of AAUW programs which were renewed, "relaunched," or planned for the future, including the new research project on *Women in Leadership*, focus on *ONE AAUW. ONE MISSION. ONE FUND*, and the launching of *Charting The Course*. We look forward to sharing many exciting updates with you.

*Jean and Sandra*

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### Increase Teacher Pay Without the Taxpayer

#### Bill of Rights (TABOR)

"I was talking to the superintendent of a small school system last fall, and she mournfully told me about losing her best high school math teacher to South Carolina, where he would earn \$10,000 more per year for doing the same job. We all know of schools that will open this month without a qualified teacher in each classroom because those schools cannot find enough qualified teachers to hire."

*(continued on page 8)*

## Highlights of Convention (cont.)

- University of Georgia Professor **Juanita Johnson-Bailey**, the Eleanor Roosevelt Award winner, encouraged attendees to challenge the status quo, and to take on the task of envisioning and creating a better future. She believes that gender oppression is the worst form of oppression around the world.
- **Catherine Lhamon**, Assistant Secretary for Civil rights, U.S. Department of Education, credited AAUW for the Office of Civil Rights' release of a list of Title IX officers and contacts -- soon to be available on the OCR website.
- **Noorjahan Akbar**, a 2012 NCCWSL Woman of Distinction, is Co-founder of Young Women for Change, an organization that fights for gender equality for women living in Afghanistan. Currently studying at American University in Washington, D.C., she hopes to return to Afghanistan to continue making progress for women.

## AAUW NC Considers Convention Qs

The AAUW 2015 national election offered members the opportunity to vote on five proposed amendments to the AAUW bylaws, changes to public policy priorities, and the election of the national AAUW board of directors. According to the AAUW website, "the 2015 election was a great success, with 12% of our members voting – more than double the 5% quorum required by AAUW national bylaws."

In a nutshell, of 75,685 eligible voters, 9537 members voted (12.6%). These voters included 8442 branch members and 1095 national members.

### NC PARTICIPATION IN 2015 AAUW ELECTION

Number of NC eligible branch voters	872
Number of NC eligible at-large voters	497
Total Number of NC eligible voters	1369

Number of branch voters	174
Number of at-large voters	16
Total Number of all NC votes cast	190

% of NC eligible votes cast	13.88%
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**Editor's Note:** Perhaps it is time to begin a public "conversation" in the Tar Heel News among AAUW NC members. Email a short, signed note to [editor@aauwnc.org](mailto:editor@aauwnc.org). Why did/didn't you vote? Do you consider 12% a "great success?"

## Brevard Branch Names Woman Who Makes a Difference: Christi Whitworth

*Note: Last year the Brevard AAUW Branch revised its criteria for selecting its annual Woman Who Makes a Difference (WWMD) award winner. In keeping with the branch's intent to reflect the AAUW mission in all its programming, the criteria now include: relevance to the AAUW mission; impact on lives of a target population; scope and duration of the project/activity, and plans for sustainability/expansion of project/activity. Nominees are assigned points for each criterion by each member of the WWMD committee, based on a letter of recommendation and further "research" by WWMD committee members.*

At their May luncheon this year, the Brevard Branch honored Christi Whitworth, Education Director at the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI), as its Woman Who Makes A Difference. For the last eight years, Whitworth has led multiple projects at PARI, focusing on the education of girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Whitworth is a past co-president of the Tar Heel Branch and currently serves on its board of directors. The Brevard branch awarded one of its Shaping the Future gifts to Whitworth who now holds a dual membership in AAUW NC.

The National Girls Collaborative Project (NCGP), funded by the National Science Foundation, named PARI as the host institution for the North Carolina Girls STEM Collaborative and Whitworth as the collaborative lead. The North Carolina Girls STEM Collaborative, in affiliation with the National Girls Collaborative Project, connects programs and resources across the State of North Carolina. Christi and other PARI staff members disseminate best practices for engaging girls in STEM and assist with teacher professional development opportunities in STEM throughout North Carolina.

PARI, under Whitworth's direction, co-hosts SciGirls, a program for girls ages 9-14, in partnership with the Transylvania County 4-H. PARI and the 4-H host programs each month that coordinate with televised SciGirls episodes. SciGirls is a national effort sponsored by Twin Cities Public Television to change the way girls think about STEM. Christi is currently training to become a SciGirls trainer for the PBS television program component. SciGirls is in its fourth year and is self sustaining. Hundreds of middle school girls from western North Carolina have participated.

Whitworth has encouraged more girls to join the PARI broad-based STEM programs, including the STARLab planetarium, Smiley radio telescope, SCOPE online citizen-science program, Duke TIP (Talent Identification Program), Space Science Lab and Homeschool programs.

She has worked to develop programs targeted specifically to girls in these areas. Under Whitworth's leadership, PARI hosted a weeklong 3D Planets workshop for girls between the ages of 9 and 13, funded by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund. The girls learned about lunar and planetary altimeter data, 3D design and 3D printing, then designed new tools for people with visual impairments for educators in North Carolina science museums. The 3DPlanets program is in its second of three years, with plans to reapply for another three-year funding cycle.

These projects, including outreach efforts in home schooling, distance learning and citizen science programming, are giving young girls a "leg up" on scientific process and discovery. Strong connections between the girls and future careers are built through this effort to encourage, mentor and promote organizations that serve girls in STEM fields. Over the years, Whitworth has observed during her interaction with girls in all the PARI programs, that the activities are life-changing and result in an immediate impact on the self-confidence and interest in pursuing more scientific subjects in their school work and science projects.

In accepting the award which includes a \$1000 gift in Whitworth's name to the AAUW Eleanor Roosevelt Fund, she asked Brevard branch members "...to keep up your 'hard work' so I can keep doing what I love."



Whitworth has encouraged more girls to join the PARI broad-based STEM programs.

## Branch News and Project Updates

### RALEIGH-WAKE COUNTY

Four of our branch members – President Treka Spraggins, Denny McGuire, Nancy Shoemaker, and Terry Wall –attended the **NC Women Matter Conference** (aka Bennett IV) which was held on Saturday, July 25 at Bennett College in Greensboro. In addition to learning valuable lessons about collaboration on public policy issues with women from across the state, we were mindful of opportunities to build our branch!

Through conversations at the literature table, where we displayed our favorite AAUW publications, we connected with women representing MomsRising, NC Women United, and Blueprint NC. We hope that all will be able to join us at our September 15 meeting and will consider joining AAUW of Raleigh-Wake County.

We are proud of our branch's success at attracting a diverse membership. Last year there were among our members one woman from Africa and one from Iran, as well as a Hispanic woman and three African American women – one of whom we elected as our branch President. In the year ahead, we hope to enrich the membership even further.

For information about the AAUW's Raleigh-Wake County Branch, contact the VP for Membership, Terry Wall at [terry.c.wall@gmail.com](mailto:terry.c.wall@gmail.com) or 919-832-3055. In addition, please see our website: [rwc-nc.aauw.net](http://rwc-nc.aauw.net)

### CHAPEL HILL

On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Voting Rights Law, Chapel Hill will welcome guest Irving Joyner, J.D.. He will speak on Civil Rights: Then and Now at the Chapel Hill Public Library. A graduate of Rutgers University School of Law, Joyner is a frequent commentator for local, state, and national media in the areas of law, politics, civil rights and racial justice.

In October the branch has invited a group of educators and scientists to discuss Engaging Girls in STEM fields: Perspectives from Educators and Scientists.

The November program will feature a panel discussion on Domestic and Gun Violence Against Women.

The branch's annual Schwenning Scholarship Program will be held in early December 2015.

### GREENSBORO



Triad TechSavvy participants and parents begin registering for the STEM&M conference on Saturday, March 28, in Greensboro.

AAUW Greensboro's successful STEM conference for middle school girls was offered again on March 28, 2015 – with a twist this year. The theme of this year's conference was expanded to **STEM&M** (Science, Math, Engineering, Technology **and** Medicine) and included hands-on workshops in the health-related sciences.

AAUW Greensboro, in collaboration with UNCG, has been selected to be one of fifteen sites across the United States to be patterned after TechSavvy – Powered by AAUW. This year NC A&T State University, the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering, and Guilford College joined in the collaboration. Dr. Lakshmi Iyer, a member of AAUW Greensboro and a faculty member at UNCG, planned and organized the event.

### ASHEVILLE

In this centennial year, the Asheville Branch awarded \$39,000 in scholarships to 19 women through donations to the GEM (Gaining Educational Momentum) fund. Membership has reached 167, and the celebration continues with a potluck on September 20th at the Ramble.

### SANDHILLS/SOUTHERN PINES

The speaker for our first branch meeting this fall will be Linda Parsons, CEO and President of Moore County Chamber of Commerce.

We are experimenting with a new time and place for our meetings to attract younger members. We have three new members since last May, one a student at Sandhills Community College.

In June we presented seven young women who are rising ninth graders with Sally Ride Awards. Each young woman received a framed certificate and \$50 for their accomplishments in math and science.

## AAUW NC Members at San Diego Convention in June



The NC delegation to convention included (back) Denny McGuire (Raleigh-Wake County, Tar Heel), David Kirkwood (primary in Tar Heel), Mary Fran Schickendantz (Greensboro, Tar Heel), Ellen Garbarino (Hendersonville, Tar Heel), Cherrie Wheaton (Greensboro), Nancy Shoemaker (Tar Heel, Raleigh-Wake County), Diane Schneider (Charlotte, Tar Heel), Sandy Bernard (Asheville, Tar Heel); front: Millie Hoffler Foushee (Greensboro, Tar Heel), Jean D'Addario (Wilmington, Tar Heel), (and right) Everlena Diggs (Greensboro).



Diane Schneider (Charlotte, Tar Heel) casts her vote on one of five proposed bylaws amendments.



Everlena Diggs



(from L) Waiting to go to dinner are Denny McGuire, Mary Fran Schickedantz, Cherrie Wheaton, Millie Hoffler Foushee and Ellen Garbarino.



Over 1000 attendees packed the plenary sessions. Cherrie Wheaton commented, "The energy and camaraderie of the participants were fantastic. We learned so much."



A wonderful view from the San Diego convention center for all attendees...



AAUW President Patricia Fae Ho and AAUW Public Policy adviser Lisa Maatz emphasized the importance of mission-based programming at the branch level.

### If You DO Social Media

- Like us and "follow" us on Facebook
- Follow us on Twitter -- or put us in a list that you check occasionally
- AND
- Share our content with your friends and followers!
- AND
- Let us know if you want to help post as AAUW NC!

<http://facebook.com/aauwnc>  
<http://twitter.com/aauwnc>



2017 AAUW National Convention  
 June 14-17, 2017  
 Washington, D.C.

## AAUW NC Hosts First Webinar in April

Under the leadership of past president Mary Peterson, and with the assistance of our web master, Nancy Shoemaker, AAUW NC offered its first webinar in late April. The program featured John Dornan, founder and longtime director of the NC Public School Forum. The Forum is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to shape a world-class public education system in NC that encourages all children to reach their full potential, and that drives a vibrant economy in our state.

Over the course of his 25 years of leadership, Dornan has led different delegations of educators, business executives, community and nonprofit leaders, and legislators to study ten educational systems in the world, ranging from Great Britain to Denmark to Japan and India. Their research findings are shared with policy makers in NC.

Dornan's comments focused on how the "best and the rest" of the world are educating their children, and how NC now educates its children. Some of the Forum delegations' key findings are listed at right.

### Women's Advocacy Day - April 21



AAUW table at the NC Legislature for the 2015 Women's Advocacy Day in Raleigh

The NC Women United Women's Advocacy Day is a biennial event when AAUW NC and coalition partners from around the state meet at the NC General Assembly to share information and position papers on public policy issues apt to come before the legislature, and meet with our legislators to let them know our views.

With guidance from AAUW NC web manager, Nancy Shoemaker, we presented a "virtual booth" this year with Quick Fact information, public policy priorities, legislators' voting records, research reports, information on AAUW Fellowships and Grants and other advocacy material. The booth drew attention especially from younger women attending Advocacy Day.

#### OTHER WORLD COUNTRIES

- Nearly universal value attached to providing early education (3-5 years)
- Longer school year (207 days)
- Entry into either an academic or certified technical program by high school age
- Testing done for student diagnosis, improvement/placement
- Decisions regarding education, programs, curriculum, placement, best practices, policy, etc. are left to educators

#### NORTH CAROLINA

- Primary focus on at-risk children
- School year (180 days)
- Vocational education not viewed as "valid"
- Testing done for public "score keeping"
- Decisions regarding education policy, programs, curriculum, placement, best practices, etc. are made by politicians

### Lobbying in Washington for ESEA - April 23

Denny McGuire was one of four AAUW representatives who joined a large coalition formed by the Leadership Conference to lobby for reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in Washington. ESEA, signed by President Johnson fifty years ago, is now referred to as the "Every Child Achieves Act"

Three women from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools joined McGuire as the NC "team" that met with Senator Tillis' Education Advisor and then with Senator Burr's Deputy Legislative Director. North Carolina receives more than \$500 million in federal funding under this law so its continuation is very important to the state. McGuire reported that "both the Senate staffers were very familiar with the bill and of its importance. While we did not get a firm commitment for a vote, we were heard."



Denny McGuire (second from right) gathered with three AAUW state presidents from Mississippi, Maine and Ohio as part of a national effort to lobby for continued support of ESEA.

## Remembering How to Live Life Well



**Leslie Woodzelle Syron**  
February 8, 1921 - June 3, 2015

Dr. Leslie Woodzelle Syron, 94, died on June 3, 2015. A former AAUW North Carolina President from 1957-1959, she was a member of the Raleigh-Wake County branch.

Dr. Syron received her education at Mary Baldwin College where she earned her B.A. degree. She then attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she earned both her masters degree and a doctorate in sociology.

After a brief teaching stint at UNC-Greensboro, Dr. Syron spent almost her entire career at Meredith College where she taught in the Sociology Department. Her career spanned from the summer of 1943 until her full retirement in 1991! For many years she was Head of the Sociology Department and later was head of sociology and social work after she helped Meredith College achieve accreditation by The Council of Social Work Education. At the time Meredith was the only private school in North Carolina with this distinction.

Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Syron was involved in many professional, community and church activities. Included were the American Association of University Women, the International Federation of University Women, the North Carolina and Southern Sociological Associations, and the State Council for Social Legislation.

A life-long Presbyterian, she was a founding member of St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Raleigh over fifty years ago.

In recognition of these contributions, Mary Baldwin College presented her with the Emily Smith Medallion, an alumnae award that recognizes outstanding service to the community, college, and church. In 1970 she was honored as the Wake County Woman of the Year. In 1990 she was honored by the YWCA by induction into the Academy of Women with an award in the field of education.

Sandra Close, member of the AAUW Raleigh/Wake County branch, took an anthropology course from Dr. Syron, as a 40-something freshman at Meredith College. She shared this fond memory:

*“As the oldest student in the class, I read and studied and tried to answer every question she asked! One day she called me into her office after class and reprimanded me, which really hurt my feelings – she could do that. She said ‘You need to be quiet – the other students are waiting for you to answer so they won't have to!’ What a shock to me, who did not know a thing about college! She became my advisor, and we remained friends for the rest of her life.”*

A memorial service was held in Raleigh. Patricia Fae Ho, national AAUW board chair, sent the following note to Nancy Shoemaker when she learned of Dr. Syron's death.

*“Thank you for sending the notice of Leslie Syron's passing. I extend sincere condolences on the loss of a most notable leader who touched so many lives in different areas of her dedicated service. Celebrating Leslie's accomplishments and impact provides a wonderful role model for AAUW members and the communities she influenced.”*

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### On the Death of Charles R. (Pete) Peterson

Members, officers and friends of AAUW North Carolina extend their deep sympathy to former AAUW NC President, Mary Peterson, whose husband, Pete, passed away unexpectedly on August 7 when they were traveling in Chicago. Cards and notes can be addressed to

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New Bern, NC 28560



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### Teacher Pay Without TABOR (continued)

"Almost all of us in North Carolina deeply believe that our public schools should prepare each child for a meaningful and productive life. We know that to accomplish this, schools must have good teachers in each classroom and enough up-to-date textbooks and technology. I was surprised to read that talk of TABOR, the so called "tax-payer bill of rights," has resurfaced in the legislature.

This proposed amendment to the NC Constitution would both cap North Carolina's income tax at 5%, helping those with higher incomes, and cost the state \$1.5 billion a year in revenue. It would also limit increases in state spending, based on inflation and population growth, limiting North Carolina, effectively, to the amount we are spending now, with no room for improving public schools even in prosperous times.

NC has never been at the top of the pack on teacher pay, but in the 1990's we decided to raise teacher pay by \$1 billion over four years, bringing it to the national average. Student achievement soared! Now pay levels have gotten worse, much worse.

We're stuck, however, if we adopt a constitutional amendment that reduces our income and caps our spending essentially at the current level. Why would we want to prohibit our legislature from having and using available revenues to invest in teachers, textbooks and technology? Why would we want to tie our own hands?"

*Excerpted from an essay in the Charlotte Observer, by Leslie Winner, Executive Director of the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and a former state senator from Charlotte.*