



## *Cherokee Rose Newsletter*

*November 2015*

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### **FALL BEGINNINGS**

Fall finds Georgia AAUW Branches busy with exciting programs, events and activities. Several branches have already held annual fundraising book sales to provide scholarships and donations to AAUW funds.

AAUW of Georgia's Fall Board Meeting was held at Mountain View Inn at Callaway Gardens on August 22nd. The board approved participation in the Atlanta Maker Faire in October, which promises to provide visibility for our organization.



The state convention will be held the weekend of April 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> hosted by the Houston-Peach Branch in Warner Robins. We will have a dynamic guest speaker, Dr. Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Director of the Institute for Women's Studies at UGA. She is the recipient of the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund Award and was a keynote speaker at the San Diego National Convention. Details and registration information will be provided in the next issue of the Cherokee Rose. Plan to attend; it should be a great convention!

As AAUW moves forward into the holidays and beyond, mission based programs as well as social gatherings will become focal points for many branches.

## ATLANTA MAKER FAIRE 2015

The weather was damp, but our spirits were not! Rained out of the Atlanta Maker Faire on Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, we made our appearance on Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup> instead, and were well received by 200 or so faire-goers interested in finding out about this organization that has been “Empowering Women Since 1881.”

Most who stopped at our exhibit – under the only bright pink tent on the field! – paused long enough for a meaningful dialog on the importance of STEM education for girls, and the difficulties inherent in an engineering career for women today. Several conversations with female engineers validated recent AAUW research findings that 40% of women leave the field within ten years because of the hostile work environment. One woman complained of the lack of a “voice” because male colleagues discounted her professional opinion; another told of being assigned repeatedly to trivial tasks that were not part of her career preparation because her male supervisor felt that “women are good at detailed work.”

We also made some STEM connections with other exhibitors, including Pali Proto 3-D Printing, one of three firms mentioned in a recent AJC article on 3-D printing. We’ll keep you updated as we pursue their offer of 3-D printing camps for girls.

In all, Debbie Karvey, Yetta McMillan, Kay Collins, Mike Sakmar (Yes! He is an AAUW member, and an invaluable helper at the Faire!) and Diane Sakmar felt that it was a worthwhile experience. Several families expressed their appreciation for AAUW, saying, “Thank you for the work you are doing!” Debbie’s closing assessment, with which we all concur, was “a good day, a good experience, and good for AAUW.”





## **AROUND GEORGIA:**

News from some of the Georgia branches to highlight activities, community involvement and AAUW mission-based programs. Branches will also have an opportunity to share updates and accomplishments at state convention.

### **ATLANTA BRANCH**

The 56<sup>th</sup> Annual AAUW Atlanta Bookfair took place the last week in September with participation of Atlanta, Cobb and North Fulton Branches. At a new venue, North Point Mall in Alpharetta, the Bookfair was welcomed by a new community of merchants and customers. It was a successful sale earning money for local scholarships and community projects as well as AAUW funds. Volunteers worked hard all year long and during the sale. As a way of paying it forward, AAUW Bookfair provided all the remaining unsold books to Our Neighbor in Gainesville (a local non-profit) for their October fundraising book sale. Our Neighbor provides support and residential services for severely disabled adults – many of whom enjoying working with the books and the book sale.



### **CARTERSVILLE-BARTOW BRANCH**

The Cartersville-Bartow branch continues the STEM program in partnership with the Tellus Science Museum. The branch held its annual book sale in September to generate funds for scholarship recipients.

## **COBB BRANCH**

The Cobb Branch got off to a busy year in September. At our first general meeting, Simoine Kenya, who Cobb sponsored to attend NCCWSL last spring, was our guest speaker. Simoine described her experience at the conference and how it helped her in her leadership role as President of our AAUW affiliate at Kennesaw State University, where she is also on KSU's Board of Student Activities. At a KSU fair for campus organizations held mid-month, Simoine encouraged 54 women students to sign up for KSU AAUW! They have become very active on campus in collaborating with other organizations for several charitable events. They also have an interest in the international status of women. In late October a program is planned with women in India as a topic.

Prominent on the September calendar was the collaboration of Cobb, Atlanta, and North Fulton branches in holding the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual AAUW Bookfair held September 21-27 at North Point Mall in Alpharetta. The Bookfair is a major fundraiser for all three branches. Each branch is allotted its share of funds raised, based on the percentage of volunteer hours that each branch donates, not only at the fair, but all year long. Used books are collected from drop-boxes throughout the year, taken to a storage room for cleaning and sorting by genre, priced, and stored until Bookfair time. A sizable percentage of books are also sold online. Cobb member, Karen Peters, is an online pro at this. You can find her and Debbie Karvey every Saturday at the bookroom with other volunteers "working the books". Debbie took on the huge task of chair of the Bookfair. We are all grateful for her hard (often physically demanding) work, time and energy it took to make the fair a success. Last I heard, she was taking a well-deserved vacation somewhere in Florida. The Cobb branch will use its allocation from the fair for scholarships, selected from applications from women at Cobb County's Chattahoochee Tech, Life College, and KSU.

Our October general meeting was a speaker who gave a riveting description of an alternative school for middle and high schools students at risk: "at risk", meaning risk of incarceration, physical endangerment to others, gang-related violence, and resistance to authority at every level. Girls are no exception. The speaker, who is a teacher in this environment, where security measures are tight, described how many of the students demonstrate an inability to care or want to be a productive member of society. Changing the mindset is a teacher's main challenge—that, and watching your back. Students are sent to an alternative such as this when a "normal" public school can no longer cope with the student's behavior or long-term truancy despite numerous efforts. The good news among all this is that students can return to a normal public school if their behavior and attitude change to an acceptable level. Keeping them at this level long-term is not easy. What can we do as AAUW members who support quality public education? That is a conundrum to be considered.

Cobb has recently become a proud sponsor of the Cobb Library Foundation, thanks to the initiative of Nancy Coakley. The Foundation, in collaboration with corporations and non-profits, is devoted to interactive STEM-related activity programs for youth and the library as a central place of learning and communication that serves the interests of Cobb residents.

Plans are underway for Cobb's first 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Essay Contest (inspired by Houston-Peach's project) and the Scholarship Committee's yearly selection of those women who will be awarded scholarships in the spring. Other upcoming program topics include a letter-writing campaign as an advocacy project, a domestic violence dialogue, a special program honoring female veterans in Women's History Month, and a "Program in a Box", an AAUW resource with a ready-made program on a topical subject that is available to all branches.

## **COLUMBUS BRANCH**

The branch continues to stay involved in the community and Erma Banks recently attended Community Leadership Academy (CLA) training on the Family Care Act in Columbus presented by Charmaine Davis, Georgia Director of 9to5. It was a very energized and interactive group that finished the day writing letters to legislators. AAUW is a coalition member of the Georgia Job and Family Collaborative, which falls under the direction of 9to5.org ... focused on passing the Family Care Act in Georgia – hopefully during the 2016 legislative session.



Pictured:  
Erma Banks – front row  
Charmaine Davis – back row on right

## HOUSTON-PEACH BRANCH

Our fall book sale went well; we made lots of money to enable us to continue with our old and new projects. **Reading is Fundamental** has been with us for a long time and is going strong into this school year. The first distribution of STEM prizes to the students in our new **STEM Store** project has taken place. The information for our **scholarship awarded to a non-traditional female student** in her junior or senior year at Middle Georgia State University or Fort Valley State University has hit the digital and print media, and our **Writing for a Change** has a fall gathering planned. **VINES, Volunteers In Nearby Educational Settings**, are ever present when and where needed. Our essay contest is being tweaked and will be presented for the spring semester to schools in Houston and Peach Counties. Our prize for the best essay on *career plans and how to reach them* will be an iPad!! We have a few new members and hard-working former members, so life is good in middle Georgia in the Houston-Peach Branch of AAUW!!



Pictured:  
Margaret Matthews, Jeanine Freyer, Marlene Humphry

## MACON BRANCH

The branch continues to host an annual book event as a major fundraiser for contributions to AAUW and the community.

## MILLEDGEVILLE BRANCH

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, AAUW members attended a Start Smart Workshop at Middle Georgia University. The branch also inaugurated an online member recruitment week in October. Under the leadership of Frani Geiger, the branch is working to build membership and visibility in the community...

## **NORTH FULTON BRANCH**

The branch started off a new year with focus on Atlanta metro Bookfair and lots of volunteer hours. The successful fundraiser enabled the branch to make a donation to a local organization.



HomeStretch/Housing Initiative of North Fulton was recently presented with a check for \$2,500 from the American Association of University Woman (AAUW) North Fulton Branch as a Challenge for Georgia Gives Day. Funding will provide Life Skills Education and Family Contingency Funding to help working homeless families.

AAUW's mission is to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research. Pictured above is Rose Burton, HomeStretch Executive Director (left to right), Louise Conti, AAUW Program Chair, Laura Kirk, AAUW Grants Committee, Anna Marie Hoffman, President of AAUW N. Fulton Branch, and Joan O'Connell, HomeStretch Development Director.

Funding from AAUW will provide a facilitator for a Life Skills Education class plus Family Contingency Funding to cover emergency car repairs, transportation, medical and dental costs. The fund permits working homeless families continue to make progress with budgeting, debt pay-down and saving without interruption for unexpected expenses. Implementing financial literacy skills with the support a caseworker, mentors and Life Skills Education, in addition to housing, helps working homeless families create self-sufficiency and long-term sustainable change in the HomeStretch program.

## **ROME BRANCH**

The membership in Rome continues to promote membership and community involvement in Floyd County. The group is active in voter registration and other AAUW mission-based efforts.

## **VALDOSTA BRANCH**

Under the leadership of incoming president, Beatriz Otter, the Valdosta Branch hosted a Political Forum event on September 24<sup>th</sup> at Valdosta State University. The event was well attended, providing citizens the opportunity to present issues of concern to their legislators.

## Recent AAUW of Georgia Public Policy Advocacy Opportunities:

### **AAUW Leaders Fly to Washington to Lobby for Civil Rights Protections in Education Bill (excerpt from AAUW Washington Update)**

Four AAUW leaders flew to Washington, D.C. this week to lobby for strong civil rights protections in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. AAUW has been working with a coalition of civil rights organizations to argue for these strong protections in the bill. The ESEA reauthorization bill has been sent to a House and Senate conference committee, and we've heard that a vote on the final bill may come up as soon as the week after Thanksgiving. AAUW of Wisconsin State Public Policy Chair Mary Modder met with staff representing Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) as well as Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) and Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI). Georgia State Public Policy Chair Deborah Karvey met with staff representing Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Sen. David Perdue (R-GA). AAUW of Ohio President Christine Siebeneck met with staff representing Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH). AAUW of Durango (CO) Communications Chair Katherine Burgess met with staff representing Rep. Scott Tipton (R-CO), Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO), and Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO).



Pictured from left to right: Marry Modder, Deborah Karvey, Christine Siebeneck, Katherine Burgess, Erin Prangley (AAUW Associate Director of Government Relations), and Elizabeth Holden (AAUW Grassroots Advocacy Manager.)

Debbie Karvey has also been invited by Georgia 9to5 Director, Charmaine Davis, to attend a conference on Family Values in the Work Place in NYC December 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. This will provide an opportunity to network and acquire a national perspective on the efforts by many organizations to support family-friendly legislative initiatives locally and nationally.



## **AAUW of Georgia Public Policy Updates**

AAUW of Georgia will continue to support passage of the Family Care Act in Georgia. Working with Georgia Job and Family Collaborative under the direction of 9to5, AAUW will work with branches and other organizations in preparation for the 2016 legislative year. The collaborative and 9to5 will host training sessions for local residents in Athens, Gainesville and North Fulton in the coming months. We will provide as much advance notice as possible when FCA training sessions will be in your area.

Other initiatives that arise in Georgia related to equity, voter rights, education, health care and family values will be tracked and supported as legislative bills are presented during the 2016 session.

AAUW will plan to co-host a lobby day at the capital sometime in February. Look for the details when the date and location are set.