



Pay Equity demands **more** than just **Lip Service...**

**Mark your calendars for Feb. 8,
and invite your friends!!**

U.S. Rep. Suzan DelBene is slated to be part of a panel discussing Pay Equity, as part of our monthly meeting.

Also on the panel will be **Tonna Kutner**, Seattle AAUW expert on Pay Equity, and **Professor Shurla Thibou**, Western Washington University Women's Studies Program.

We are asking attendees to bring written questions and their personal stories about inequity in pay to the meeting. Your stories will be compiled and sent to our U.S. Reps. DelBene and Rick Larsen.

The Paycheck Fairness Act now being discussed in Washington D.C. would provide an update to the Equal Pay Act of 1963, bringing the law's principles and practices in line with the nation's other civil rights laws. The Paycheck Fairness Act helps to create incentives for employers to follow the law, empowers women to negotiate for equal pay, and



AAUW tour of museum exhibit draws large turnout

Over 30 members and guests attended our January Branch meeting at the Lightcatcher Museum. Members were eager to see the final product of Curator Babara Matilsky, who spoke to us 18 months ago about her plans and vision for the exhibit.



Jude Williams

Docent Jude Williams led the tour, drawing attention to subtleties one might miss, although the thrust of the show -- the unmistakable pattern of climate change as evinced in old and new works of art -- was unsettlingly clear. Original oils-on-canvas by Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Hart Benton, *(cont. on page 2)*

strengthens federal outreach and enforcement efforts.

The meeting will be at our usual time and place, the Bellingham YWCA, 1026 N. Forest St., at 10 a.m. The board will provide coffee and cookies.

Also on the agenda for the day is selecting someone for the nominating committee, and getting prepared for March elections. ☺


Masterpieces old and new tell the story of *Vanishing Ice*

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among others, were a treat to see, as were modern pieces such as Alexis Rockman's oil-on-wood, "Adelies" (2008), which shows dozens of Adélie Penguins gathered on top of a shrinking segment of ice shelf.

Michael Upchurch, writing a review of the exhibit for *The Seattle Times*, said, "the biggest impression you come away with is of an important exhibit that needs national exposure."

Just as Dr. Matilsky had told us of her plan, original artworks were complemented with topnotch reproductions, since the cost of borrowing a large amount of artwork, shipping and insuring it, would have been prohibitively expensive for our small museum.

Short videos and prints in old books round out the displays. If you haven't seen the exhibit, or want to go again, it will be shown through March 16. 



AAUW members Ruth Norman, left, and Lori Smiley, wait for the tour to begin.

Interest Groups

Adelante! Book Club

Meets at Arlis's Restaurant, 1525 Cornwall Ave. in Bellingham. Next meeting will be Feb. 27. Book is *The Lives of Lesbian Elders*, by D. Merilee Clunis, et. al. Newcomers are welcome. Contact: Gwen Parker 360-933-4314.

Dames Who Dine

Contact: Lori Smiley 360-739-1379 for time and place.

PM Book Club

The Evening Book Group meets at 6:45 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month downstairs in the Colophon Cafe in Fairhaven. The February 7 book is *Hoboes: Bindlestiffs, Fruit Tramps, and the Harvesting of the West*, by Mark Wyman. We welcome all comers - please join us. Contact: Barb Craig, 360-927-2526

Simplicity Circle

Mary LeDonne will host the next meeting at her home Feb. 17, at 7:00 pm. The address is 1760 Waterside Lane Bellingham 98229

We're "wreathed" in smiles

The latest info from Treasurer Sue McDonald is that Bellingham Branch cleared \$1713 from our holiday wreath sale. Way to go, salespeople!!



Elections are coming up --**Can you take an active role??**

Time truly seems to fly by. It is already time to be thinking about **Branch elections**, which are held at the March general meeting. This year, we need to elect a **Treasurer** and a **Membership co-chairperson**.

(Membership is one area where having two people share the job seems to work very well.)

We also need some stronger standing committees, and are DESPERATE for someone to take over the job of organizing refreshments for meetings.

Personally, I have found being on the Executive Board to be a lot of fun, as well as fulfilling

Don't be shy about nominating yourself, or about just calling for more information.

Current co-membership chair Helene Berg-Kolin has drawn up the following **short job description**, to help you understand the work involved:

The two Co-VPs of Membership are members of the Branch's Executive Board and attend its monthly meetings on the 4th Tuesday at 4 p.m. at the YWCA. They are responsible for maintaining the Branch, state, and national membership rosters, working with the Treasurer to process in new members, and handling the annual spring renewal campaign.

Membership materials are brought to the monthly general meetings for prospective members along with the member nametags. Welcome emails are sent to new members which include the most recent edition of the monthly Branch newsletter. Requests for membership information are also processed by email or telephone. Lists of committee members & birthdays are compiled from the member data sheets.

Membership VPs also organize periodic events such as the Fall restaurant lunch or coffees for new members. Skills needed include attention to detail and sufficient availability to maintain contact for ongoing requests for membership information. Email required. ☞

March meeting set on a Friday

In a rare change of days, the March meeting will be held not on a Saturday, but on Friday, March 14th.

This is being done to match the open hours of the place we will be touring:

The Washington State Archives, NW Regional Branch, corner of 25th Ave & Bill McDonald Pkwy.

Parking: Carpooling necessary. Parking lot 33G, across 25th St. from the Archives, is small. Parking permits will be obtained, but probably not enough for all unless we carpool.

Time: 10 a.m. until noon

Refreshments: Coffee and hot water for tea will be available and may be consumed only in the conference room before the tour.

If a small lunch after the meeting is desired, something in the Fairhaven or Sehome areas will be arranged.

Welcome aboard, new members!

We are pleased to welcome two new members to Bellingham Branch:
Robin Kagan and Lynn Bellinger.

Member profile.....

Upcoming Pay Equity program is brainchild of Catherine Chambers

by Gwen Parker

When I asked Catherine Chambers what her ideal job would be, she paused for just a second, and then said, "I think I have it now."

She went on to say that she is content with where she is, her job, and her other activities, which center on her passion for women's issues and poverty.

Catherine works through Lydia Place, one of the local women's shelter organizations, to find housing for people who need it, and then help them maintain their housing. She explains that her clients range from whole families to single adults, and sometimes she also makes youth referrals. Much of the work is done under the umbrella of the Opportunity Council, with funds coming federal, state and local sources.

She is a member of the Community Development Advisory Board, and is active in state and local Democratic Women's groups.

Getting started with pay equity

Catherine says that spearheading the effort to hold a local panel discussion on paycheck equity for women brings to fruition something that started back in the 1980's. It was at that time that she was involved with the issue of "comparable worth," and Washington State was sued by its employees to correct gender-based inequities. A settlement was reached in which the state agreed to pay over \$480 million to 34,000 state employees.

However, the issue seemed to die on the vine after that settlement, and today in Washington State the typical woman makes only 76 percent of what a typical man makes. Nationwide, the women's-to-men's earnings ratio is at a slightly more equitable level of 80.9 percent. (*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*)

Catherine is eager to put the spotlight back on the pay issue, in hopes that local support will help our legislators win approval for the Paycheck Fairness Act, which is currently before Congress. She hopes that attendees at the AAUW Panel Discussion on Pay Equity will bring written accounts of their own battles for fair pay, as well as questions for the panel members, who include U.S. Rep. Suzan DelBene; Tonna Kutner, Seattle AAUW expert on Pay Equity, and Professor Shurla Thibou, Western Washington University Women's Studies Program.

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Member profile - Catherine Chambers

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But, more about Catherine herself: She was raised in Dearborn, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit, and her father worked for Cadillac for many years. Her mother also worked in the auto industry for a time, as a draftsman, and later worked as a school cook, back in the time when schools still had their own cooks! Catherine has two younger sisters, one in Michigan and one in Chicago.


College work

Catherine attended community college in Michigan, and later got a degree from Whatcom Community College, where she studied early childhood education. She then attended Western Washington University for a degree in visual communications, and later returned to Fairhaven College to earn a degree in community development.

She has three children and one grandchild. Her oldest daughter is trained as an ESL teacher. She and Catherine's son live in Bellingham, while her other daughter is studying at Portland Community College.

As well as being part of AAUW and Whatcom County Democrats, Catherine works for International Women's Day, the annual Martin Luther King poverty action march, and the free community breakfast.

A recent addition to her activities is doing a presentation on Eleanor Roosevelt. Catherine does not claim to be an actress, and does not try to duplicate Roosevelt's accent or looks, but she did sew herself a 1940's-style dress, and tries to speak as Roosevelt did. Her next presentation is to the Clark County Museum, in Vancouver, WA.


She also knits, enjoys music and theater, and hosts a Chinese foreign exchange student. 

Elect Her event set Feb. 8 at Western

The second Saturday in February is shaping up to be a busy one. First, Rep. DelBene is joining us for a panel discussion at the YWCA.

Also, the Elect Her program offered by the national AAUW will be held the same day at the Viking Union on the WWU campus. Carol Simmer, our Academic and Scholarship Committee co-chair will bring greetings from our Branch to the students.

According to the Associated Students Women's Center, the Elect Her events held the last few years inspired a significant increase in female elected officials on campus this year. Many of the elected women on the AS Board attended Elect Her last year.

The Elect Her initiative acknowledges the necessity to build the pipeline of women running for office in order to diminish the long-standing political leadership gender gap. This initiative consists of a full continuum of programming to empower females from high school onward to view themselves as political candidates. 

February Birthdays

- 15 Jo Pullen
- 16 Diane Monsen
- 21 Teizeen Mohamedali
- 23 Sharlene Joshua



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You are Welcome

Bellingham AAUW offers scholarships and supports numerous programs which help women and girls gain equity in all areas of life.

Anyone possessing a four - year bachelor's degree or a two - year associate's degree is welcome to become a member.

We enjoy a wide variety of programs and events, as well as each other's company.

Please join us!