



President's Message

Joanne Hill
AAUW NC

State of the State

WELL I DON'T know about all of you, but I am still basking in the afterglow of that stellar state convention! Mary Peterson and her program committee, our most gracious Asheville hosts, the speakers, the attendees, the art – it was truly an inspirational event.

I am very pleased at the business we conducted – the body voted to be a signatory on the first anniversary of the March for Women's Lives that ran in the Raleigh paper, and to forward a resolution regarding a paper ballot audit trail. Discussion of these items was balanced and varying viewpoints were discussed. See articles elsewhere in the paper.

This Convention also marks the approaching "midpoint" in my term as your president. I am grateful to all of you who have "buckled up" and "stepped up to the plate" to create our successes. Our ReConnection and strategic planning efforts are moving our organization forward. Our newly approved by-laws changes make us stronger yet more flexible. The participation in the 100 Club, the idea of the state working on a focused project to lend our collective voice, outstanding programming ideas – we have accomplished much and I am very proud of all you do every day.

As most of you already know – "there ain't no laurels" – especially in a forward-moving organization committed to "Purpose, Power and Progress!" This is my invitation and my request that you put the Association Convention in Washington on your "must do" list for 2005. For those of you who have never been, it is the best opportunity to get a sense of what we are about at the national level and beyond. For "seasoned veterans" it is a great opportunity to renew old friendships, rejuvenate, reconnect. For everyone, there are phenomenal workshops, lobbying opportunities, banquets honoring amazing women – and our North Carolina delegation needs your voice and your vote! If you are planning to attend, please contact me about being a delegate. Make sure your branch is

represented, and then let me know if you would be interested in serving as a state delegate.

Our state summer board meeting is July 30, in Raleigh. We will share news from convention and continue our strategic and annual planning for 2005-2006. Hope to see you there!

Please have a safe and enjoyable summer. I look forward to seeing you in the upcoming months!

Ann Terry Finishes Term

Ann S. Terry
SAR Director

THIS WILL BE my final message to you as your South Atlantic Regional Director, and I look back at our two years with much pleasure and pride.

I have been so proud to represent you at the Association and to share in the successes that your state and branches have enjoyed since 2003. We have struggled with some difficult issues, shrinking membership, and members reluctant to serve as leaders. Yet somehow, we have still managed to move onward with AAUW's mission and to make our communities and states better places.

I thank each of you who welcomed me to your meetings and conferences. I shall treasure the friendships I have made throughout the region and always share in your pride for the work you do. I hope that you will continue to be enthusiastic about AAUW and its role and work. There is still so much to be done and it will take all of us working together to fulfill our mission.

Hate computers? Avoiding the Internet?

Ask your branch to start a T-Buddy system! T-Buddy stands for tech-savvy AAUW members who are willing to be buddies with others who just don't want to mess with computers. They will download forms or information from the AAUW and AAUW NC web sites for you, and help you participate in on-line surveys. T-Buddy communications should be kept confidential. Recruit and publish the names and phone numbers of volunteer T-Buddies in your branch newsletter and encourage those who are not tech-savvy to get connected.

Scholarship Help

<http://www.scholarshiphelp.org/>

If the scholarship process is confusing to you, this site can help you understand what to do and help you to avoid scholarship scams.

Judicial Elections Forum Held in Winston-Salem



Ellen Morris
Winston-Salem Branch

RHODA BILLINGS, FORMER chief justice of the NC Supreme Court and professor, Wake Forest University School of Law; Judge Wanda Bryant, NC Court of Appeals; and Chris Heagarty, executive director of NC Center for Voter Education, discussed key issues on selection of judges in North Carolina at the forum held at the Hawthorne Inn and Conference Center in Winston-Salem in March. The forum was organized by Julia Archer, LAF Chair for the Winston-Salem Branch, and Beth Messersmith of Democracy NC.

Judge Bryant discussed the structure of the NC Court System into the Trial Courts (District Courts and Superior Court), and the Appellate Division (Court of Appeals and Supreme Court). North Carolina's challenge is to find appropriate adjustments to the judicial elections systems to assure a fair and informed selection of qualified judges. She was positive about her campaign under the new law applied in 2004, allowing a candidate to obtain campaign funding from the state rather than to depend on PAC monies and other single contributions of over \$1,000.

Chris Heagarty described the NC Judicial Reform Act that provides public financing of appellate-level judicial elections. Its purpose is to ensure judicial independence and to help "meet speech with more speech" rather than basing elections on fund-raising prowess of candidates. Campaign funding from the state is

From left: Julia Archer, Chris Heagarty, Rhoda Billings, and Wanda Bryant participated in a judicial forum co-sponsored by Winston-Salem Branch and Democracy NC.

available for candidates who limit their campaign spending to smaller contributions from a large number of individuals (rather than PAC or large donations). Sixteen candidates qualified for campaign funding in 2004. However, the Act is new and voters are not familiar with it. The funding source is from individual taxpayers checking "yes" to the \$3 contribution toward judicial campaigning. Taxpayers need more education on this election funding method.

Professor Billings explored the issue, "Should North Carolina elect judges or have a system more like the federally-appointed system?" At the federal level, the legislative branch passes laws, the administrative branch carries out the law, and the courts interpret and apply laws. Currently, 30 states have non-elected judges, 13 states have non-partisan judges (including North Carolina), and eight states have partisan judges. According to the study conducted by the NC Bar Association, North Carolina could have a better system with gubernatorial appointments and reappointment by the legislature. The Bar Association also advocates lengthening of judicial terms for and identification of some group to evaluate candidates. Senate Bill 857 calls for a constitutional amendment for the governor to appoint judges to the appellate court for four years. Senate Bill 855 calls for the governor to appoint lay people and attorneys to determine retention. An amendment to the North Carolina constitution is required for a change in the judicial system.

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AAUW NC: When & Where!

June 24-27, 2005

AAUW Convention, Washington, DC

July 30, 2005, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

AAUW NC Summer Board Meeting
Raleigh. See page three.

October 29, 2005

AAUW NC Fall Board Meeting
Chapel Hill. Details to come.

March 31-April 2, 2006 (corrected from
print version of Tar Heel News)

AAUW NC Convention
Sheraton Grand New Bern.

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