



Jeri Graham, Temple of Israel, and Phyllis Vogel (right) at the thank you lunch for "Eyes to the Future" volunteers. They partnered on the project. Geri was Temple's chair.

Eyes to the Future Promotes Vision

Wilmington Branch made a presentation at convention about their successful program, "Eyes to the Future," which has been in operation since 1997. Last year 6,000 children had vision screenings in school through the efforts of trained volunteers from AAUW and Temple of Israel. To start a certification program in your area, contact "Prevent Blindness North Carolina," 800.543.7839 or 919.755.5044 or 4011 West Chase Blvd., Suite 225, Raleigh NC 27607. The certification coordinator is Janie Lewis. For specific information on how to proceed with a program at your branch, contact Phyllis Vogel, phylstan@bellsouth.net or 910.270.2597.

Workshop Notes

Mary Stephens, AAUW NC federal public policy chair, moderated a workshop at convention on **Social Security**. Panelists were William Haas, Martha Sachs and Kathleen Balogh. AAUW's position paper on Social Security can be found on-line at http://www.aauw.org/issue_advocacy/actionpages/positionpapers/women_socialsec.cfm.

Queen Thompson, AAUW NC diversity chair, moderated a workshop, **"Equity is still an issue—from the cradle to the grave."** Panelists were Cindy McIntee, Cathie St. John-Ritzen, Marsha Shortell, and Terry Collins.

Cindy spoke about "No Child Left Behind," which originated as ESEA – the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. It is revised and reauthorized periodically and was renamed in 2002. She stressed the importance of people being informed on all aspects of the program.

Cathie, Marsha, and Terry spoke on different aspects affecting elders – identify theft, victim services, and domestic abuse.

Lola Jackson, AAUW NC college/university representative, teamed with Liz Bridges and Carolyn Taylor to talk about building partnerships with academic institutions and communities.

Nancy Shoemaker, AAUW NC technology chair and webmaster, presented "Nancy's Magic Show," to help members communicate better.

Gailya Paliga, president of Raleigh NOW, spoke about the 2004 Women's march for Choice.

Statesville RIF: 30,000+ Books Given to 10,000+ Kids



Enthusiastic "students" look through books distributed to K-2 children in Iredell-Statesville Schools by Statesville Branch, as Virginia Palmer demonstrates the presentation used for 26 years. Below: Pat Abell with Clifford, the Big Red Dog, aka Virginia Owen.

RIF stands for "Reading is Fundamental." The oldest non-profit children's literacy program in the United States, Statesville Branch has sponsored the RIF program since 1979, distributing more than 30,000 books to over 10,000 students. The federal RIF grant funds approximately 75% of the cost of the books, and the branch supplements the cost of books and supplies through fund-raisers such as barbecue dinners and enlisting the support of local businesses and school PTOs.

Each year, a different school is selected on the basis of economic need and the percentage of high-risk students enrolled. All students in grades K-2 choose three books each year. The program includes visits from Clifford, the Big Red Dog. Branch members and parents read and talk to classes. Gift books for classroom use, posters, bookmarks, stickers, worksheets, and a letter to parents are utilized, as well. For information, contact Virginia Palmer, 704.872.7133 or see <http://www.rif.org> or call 1.877.743.7323.



Verifiable Voting Technology Resolution

Presented by Brevard Branch

Whereas in the 2004 November election a North Carolina county lost 4,500 votes in the electronic equipment...

Whereas North Carolina had a lengthy and costly recount for two Council of state offices due to uncertainties about electronic voting equipment and inability to achieve data...

Whereas in Florida, Ohio, Nebraska, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wyoming serious voting malfunctioning and miscounting were attributed to electronic voting machine problems...

Whereas the AAUW Public Policy Program advocates, "vigorous protection and full access to civil and constitutional rights"...

And *whereas* certainty that our votes are correctly recorded is central to those rights...

Therefore be it resolved that the North Carolina American Association of University Women support and promote legislation regarding verifiable voting systems which incorporates the following:

- Every electronic voting system generates a verifiable paper ballot
- Source codes for software in electronic systems are required to be available to examination by officials of state, county, and political parties
- A code of ethics is established to govern relations with voting system vendors
- Audits of machine tabulations against paper ballots are required.

Therefore be it further resolved that in keeping with these principles, the North Carolina American Association of University Women support and promote the proposed legislation "Public Confidence in Elections"

now before the North Carolina General Assembly (H238 and S223), urging legislators to take positive action during this session to enact these bills without amendments into law.

AAUW NC voted to endorse this resolution.

Dissenting Opinion

Only a few voted against the Resolution during the business session at Convention. However, there are valid reasons for not supporting it and not writing your legislators to support the legislation.

The apparent problems in NC seem to be caused by "a people problem" – one in which the election officials did not keep their software current. Adding a paper trail adds many time-consuming layers to keeping election officials on track. The money would be better spent seeing that election officials are better trained in the technology to begin with. The paper trail machine also would not offer people with vision disabilities an option for voting. There are ways to "verify" ballots on voting machines that are not being used for which we could advocate.

I have worked successfully with touch screen machines (Guilford County has used them for 17 years) that did not use paper trails. Guilford County has also gone to great lengths to educate their poll workers. The National League of Women Voters Organization took a neutral position on paper trail legislation. I have heard directly the presentation of those advocating for the change and presenting the legislation. My mind was not changed because of their findings. I urge you to get involved with the board of elections in your county by helping to operate the polls on Election Day. We need educated people in charge. –Mary Fran Schickedantz

Asking question, "What in the World," leads to dignity, preservation of heritage



Lena Epps Brooker
Native American Educator and Activist

Pat Abell
Statesville Branch

Lena Epps Brooker chose the title "What in the World," as in "What in the world were you thinking?" and "What in the world am I doing?" when she shared stories about her childhood in rural Robeson County. Her father and mother were Native Americans and she faced segregation three ways. She went to Meredith College at age 16, and majored in education. When ready for student teaching, the head of the department told her she would be assigned to Robeson County. She told him her parents would be greatly disappointed if she returned to Robeson County and she knew he could find her a place in another county in North Carolina. She went to Cary in Wake County and had a good experience.

Lena married a European American and they have two daughters. One daughter was very angry when she was told that she could not be a Native American with a 27606 zip code (Raleigh). Lena was even more incensed and soon her daughter was classified as Native American.

Lena discussed her pride in being Native American and her desire to help her people, an idea instilled in her by her father and her background. He had told her when she chose to leave Robeson County, that she was helping her people when she claimed her heritage wherever she was.

The explanation "What in the World" was used by Lena with each new challenge. She went to work with an organization that helped Native Americans who faced discrimination in their jobs. Lena is proud of her heritage and had been shaped to be the fighter she is by the discrimination she had suffered. "I am a perfectly ordinary woman who has been blessed with an extraordinary life. I have enjoyed every opportunity to work on behalf of my people and believe that equality for all should be a concern of all." Yet, there was a time she hesitated in going to an event where she thought she might be uncomfortable. Her daughter reminded her of what Lena had taught her, repeating to her Lena's own words to hold her head high and "Someone had to be first."