

## CONVENTION INVITATION

**JoAnn:** I've heard people say that "nothing of value exists east of Raleigh"

**Mary:** Well we know that's not true. We have four AAUW branches east of Raleigh. Maybe we'd better invite our AAUW friends to come and see for themselves.

**JoAnn:** Let's invite AAUWNC to come to New Bern for the 2006 convention. Looks like trips to Wilmington and Jacksonville weren't convincing enough. You know they say "the third time is the charm".

**Mary:** Right on. The New Bern Sheraton is expecting AAUWNC to be there March 31 to April 2....no fooling. Did you know you can come to the Sheraton by car, plane or boat...they have a marina at the hotel?

**JoAnn:** Also you can walk from the Sheraton through the downtown area with lots of good restaurants and little shops. Also there's a walking or running path that goes to Union Point Park...that's where the Neuse and Trent Rivers meet...you've heard the term "Twin Rivers". I hear there's an AAUW branch there by that name.

**Mary:** You know New Bern and AAUW have a lot in common. They both have a past, present and a bright future.

**JoAnn:** They both believe that education is important. The New Bern Academy was the first school in North Carolina to be established by law; the legislative assembly incorporated it in 1766. Fire destroyed the original building. The present building was constructed between 1806 and 1809, and served as a school until 1971, making it one of the oldest continuously used school buildings in America.

**Mary:** In the pre-Civil War period New Bern had an integrated community. In 1860, free blacks composed nearly 13% of New Bern's population – by far the greatest number of free blacks of any town in North Carolina. Thousands of slaves who freed themselves early in the Civil War poured into New Bern, drawn by the town's distinguished free black community. Free black craftsmen built many of New Bern's handsome houses and public buildings.

**JoAnn:** I hear they are making strides in gender equity. Down East used to just recognize "the good ole boys". Now they have an AAUW branch, a League of Women Voters, the Coastal Women's Shelter, and female doctors, lawyers, architects, and judges. Do you know when they built the big bridge they even had a woman crew boss? I think AAUWNC should visit New Bern.

**Mary:** So in true Southern style we say

**JoAnn and Mary** Y'all come...

**Mary:** Write March 31 – April 2 on your 2006 calendar (**JoAnn holds up a calendar**)

**We hand out the brochures.**