

ALICIA HETMAN TO HEADLINE AAUW STATE CONVENTION

Alicia Hetman, AAUW national board member from California will be the keynote speaker and conduct a town hall meeting at the AAUW Colorado State Convention hosted by the Boulder Branch April 29 – 30. Our theme **Our AAUW Vision: Women = STEM = The Future** will open with a reception at the History Museum on the University of Colorado campus on Friday evening, April 29. The following day's convention events will all take place at NCAR just west of downtown. All details of the convention schedule and the registration forms are in this issue, on our website coaauw.org, and on the Boulder Branch website.

Workshops related to the STEM theme will be presented by Margaret Eisenhart, PhD from CU and Jordan Haine, member of the Boulder Branch. The noon luncheon features Wind River mysteries author, Margaret Coel, who will speak and sign books which may be purchased at the event. Branch and state awards will also be given following the luncheon.

The afternoon program highlights three young women who have received grants from the Boulder Branch to do graduate work in STEM related fields, followed by the state business meeting and town hall.

Culminating an event-filled weekend is the evening dinner and a dynamic presentation by Patty Limerick, CU professor and founder and chair of the Center for the American West.



Alicia Hetman

Join us to enjoy the breathtaking view from NCAR, socialize with friends and learn new ideas and strategies from our dynamic

Margaret Eisenhart is University Distinguished Professor and Charles Professor of Education in the School of Education at the University of Colorado, Boulder. She specializes in educational anthropology, ethnographic research methods, and women in science, engineering and technology. She is the author or co-author of over 100 research articles and 3 books—*Educated in romance: Women, achievement and college culture* (with D. Holland, 1990, University of Chicago); *Designing classroom research* (with H. Borko, 1993, Allyn & Bacon); and *Women's science: Learning and succeeding from the margins* (with E. Finkel, 1998, University of Chicago). She co-edited *Schooling the symbolic animal: Social and cultural dimensions of education* (with B. Levinson, 2000, Rowman and Littlefield). She was the 2001 recipient of the Elizabeth Gee Lectureship Award for outstanding contributions to research, teaching, and service for women and the 2003-04 recipient of the University of Colorado's Distinguished Research Lectureship, the highest faculty award given at the University of Colorado.



Alicia Hetman has been an active member of AAUW since 1975. She says her primary goal is to create a world where equity IS NOT still an issue. An experienced public speaker, Ms. Hetman has given Title IX Testimony before the CA Commission on the Status of Women and was part of the press conference for the release of AAUW's landmark study, "Hostile Hallways." She was the keynote speaker for the launching of California assembly member Jackie Speier's Fellowship for Excellence in Education of Girls. She was the facilitator for AAUW California-sponsored Child Care Task Force Networking meetings. Her experience in workshop planning and presentation includes a workshop presentation on Gender Equity at the California Federation of Business and Professional Women Conference; the California Title IV Desegregation Conference; the IFUW Conference; and the National Coalition for Sex Equity Conference. She is an AAUW Director-at-Large for the 2009-2011 term.

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OUR AAUW VISION WOMEN + STEM = THE FUTURE

AAUW COLORADO STATE CONVENTION APRIL 29-30, 2011

FRIDAY, APRIL 29

3:00 or 4:00: State Executive Committee Meeting

6:00: Reception and Social Time-University of Colorado Museum of Natural History

SATURDAY, APRIL 30:

NATIONAL CENTER FOR ATMOSPHERIC RESEARCH

8:30: State Board of Directors Meeting - Auditorium

9:00: Opening Ceremony

Welcome: Jane Brautigam-City Manager of Boulder

Keynote: Alicia Hetman-AAUW National Board Member

10:00: Workshops (Repeated at 10:50 a.m.) Break between workshops at 10:40

“Why So Few?”

Margaret Eisenhart, Ph.D.-CU Professor and Contributor to “Why So Few?”

Technology- Social Networking and Membership Enhancement for AAUW:

Jordan Haine

Branch Programs Spotlited:

Boulder Branch “Expanding Your Horizons”

Douglas County Branch

Colorado Springs Branch “Why So Few” adaptation

11:50 Book Sales and Signing by Margaret Coel--

Award winning Colorado author of the *Wind River Reservation* mysteries

12:15 Lunch

12:45-1:30 Author, Margaret Coel

1:30-2:00 Awards

2:15-3:15 STEM Women in Action- Boulder Branch Graduate Grant Recipients:

Pippa Cosper, Lorine Giangola, and Sarah Trexler

3:15-4:00: State Business Meeting

4:00-5:00: Town Hall: Alicia Hetman-AAUW National Board Member

5:30 Reception

6:00 Dinner and Entertainment

Speaker, Patty Limerick, Ph.D.-CU Professor-Founder and Chair of the Center of The American West

REGISTRATION FOR COLORADO AAUW CONVENTION 2011

April 29-30, 2011 in Boulder
NCAR
1850 Table Mesa Dr, Boulder 80305

Hotel Information: Reservations must be arranged *individually* with:
Best Western Boulder Inn, 770 28th St, Boulder 80303 (on the Frontage Road)
Room Choices: 1 King \$89, 2 Queens \$99, Upgraded King \$109 *plus taxes*
Reservations: Call (303) 449-3800 or <http://boulderinn.com>, ask for the AAUW Group Rate
Rooms & rates will be held until March 28—act quickly as CU graduation is the following weekend

Registration for Colorado AAUW Convention 2011
April 29-30, 2011

Name _____
Address _____
City, Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Branch _____

AAUW office (if any) Branch _____ State _____

Is this your first Colorado AAUW state convention? _____
Guest _____

Please note any special accommodations, dietary restrictions, or assistance needed:

Registration Fee (Before April 22, 2011) \$45 _____
Registration Fee (After April 22, 2011) \$50 _____

Friday: "Night at the Museum", Natural History Museum, CU Campus \$30 _____
Reception for Alicia Hetman with Heavy Hors d'oeuvres and Wine

Saturday Lunch, Awards Presentation, Speaker: Western Author Margaret Coel \$20 _____

Please check one:

- Smoked Turkey Sandwich
 Ham & Brie Sandwich
 Vegetarian Sandwich

Includes Salad, Dessert Bars/Cookies, Cold Beverage

Saturday Dinner-Speaker: Patty Limerick. Director, Center of the American West \$35 _____
Tuscan Buffet Including Appetizers, Salad, 3 Entrée Choices, Vegetable,
Rustic Bread w/ Dip and Dessert

Tickets For Glass of Wine or Beer at \$3 each \$ _____

Please enter number of tickets and total

(NCAR does not provide a cash bar—drink tickets will also be available at the event)

TOTAL _____

Make checks payable to *Colorado AAUW* and mail by April 22, 2011 to:
Convention Registrar: Mary Hassler, 4230 Corriente Pl, Boulder, CO 80301-1629
(303) 448-9669 maryh2@ix.netcom.com
NO REFUNDS AFTER APRIL 26, 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE : **SPRING IS IN THE AIR.....AND BOY! ARE WE BUSY....**

There is so much to do and get involved with!! I don't know how we are all going to get our Spring housecleaning done...See the recap elsewhere of the fantastic and informative **Public Policy Day** – thanks again to Barbara McDaniel and Amy Blackwell and the entire Public Policy committee for organizing such a successful event. Check out the pictures on our Yahoo groups site.



We continue to be approached to support and advocate on the behalf of coalitions in Colorado. Currently we are members of the following coalitions: Colorado Coordinating Council of Women's Organizations, Women's Lobby of Colorado, Women's Collaborative for Colorado, Coloradans for Fair Pay, Job Protection and Civil Rights Enforcement Act coalition, Voices for Strong Families, Paid Sick Days Colorado and PFPC (Protect Families Protect Choice). Our Public Policy committee does an excellent job of representing us on these groups, but if anyone else is interested in attending these meetings on behalf of AAUW- CO, please advise me. We specifically are looking for help with the Coordinating Council of Colorado which meets on the second Saturday of the month downtown at Trinity Methodist Church.

Our state was again a co-sponsor for the Women's Legislative Breakfast held on February 15, and it was well attended by our members. Author of *Just Like Us* and First Lady of Colorado, Helen Thorpe, gave the keynote address. She updated us on the lives of the subjects in her book and teased us with an excerpt of an upcoming sequel. There was an excellent legislative panel attended by the Honorable Ellen Roberts, Betty Boyd, Nancy Spence, and Angela Giron.

Don't miss the **14th Annual Equal Pay Day Rally** which will be held on April 12. More information follows in this newsletter and on the website. If your local branch also sponsors or attends events in your community, I would love to hear about it.

Please join me for the **85th Annual AAUW State Convention on April 29- 30th in Boulder** at the **National Center for Atmospheric Research**. The theme for the weekend is "Women +Stem = The Future." I look forward to seeing you there. As a result of last year's bylaws change eliminating the delegate voting system, all members attending the convention will be allowed to vote during the business meeting.

Don't forget to also register for the **2011 AAUW National Conference** which will be **June 16-19 in Washington DC**, with the theme of ***Breaking through Barriers - Advocating for Change***. If you will not be at State convention, please send me an email that you will be going to DC, as we have state gatherings during the convention. If you will not be attending convention, do not forget to participate in history as this year, for the first time ever, **ALL** AAUW members will have the opportunity to vote on the candidates, the public policy platform and the Bylaws changes. While State convention will be an excellent time for members to discuss the issues, I encourage each branch to set aside some time this Spring to discuss and review this ballot with members. Details of the voting process are in the latest **Outlook**.

Colorado AAUW will again award a scholarship to a female middle student who submits an outstanding project at the State Science Fair held on April 9 in Ft. Collins. Thank you to this year's judge and coordinator, Karen Alfino.

Thanks to all you help take the mission to the streets! See you out there...

Brenda

Brenda.wolfe@metso.com

Colorado Members at Large:

Please enjoy our latest edition of the *Colorado AAUW Bulletin*. We invite you to attend the Spring Convention and the National Conference this year. We have many active branches that you may join. For more information about AAUW Colorado and our local branches, please visit our website **www.coauw.org**

The 14th Annual Equal Pay Day Events in Coalition with 9-5:

Equal Pay Day is April 12, symbolizing the amount of time a woman has to work into the year to earn the same amount a man would have made the year before. Women in Colorado still make 80 cents for every dollar a man earns. This year, there will be two events on Equal Pay Day - a daytime rally on the West Steps of the Capitol as well as an evening reception.



The daytime rally will be held on the west steps of the capitol. An Equal Pay Day Resolution will be introduced and passed through the State Legislature. The rally will celebrate the passage of the Resolution, and we will hear from State Legislators, Pay Equity Commissioners, business owners and those with personal stories. Our goal is to have over 100 people attend the rally and hope to get media coverage from newspaper, radio and TV.



Got social media?
AAUW Colorado does!



Harness our Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and blog power to publicize your branch's AAUW-mission-related programs and events. You might even get some new members through social media outreach! Quick links to AAUW Colorado social media presences are on coaauw.org. Got an event to post --or pictures from a past event that you want to share with the world? Contact Amy Blackwell at ae_blackwell@yahoo.com or cell 303-710-2031. Got a fire in your belly for social media outreach to advance equity for women and girls? Amy really, really wants to mentor new admins for AAUW Colorado presences.



Spotlight on Public Policy

Amy Blackwell, AAUW Colorado Public Policy Co-Director

2011 Public Policy Day a Great Success!

Many thanks to the 100+ members who attended this year in Greenwood Village! You heard Colorado state budget chief Henry Sobanet and Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute Director Carol Hedges talk about the fiscal challenges that Coloradans are facing – and some ideas for responsible reform so that we can fund education, health & human services, and other vital budgetary sectors that directly impact equity for women and girls in our state. FYI: You'll find Carol Hedges' Powerpoint presentation on the aauw-Colorado Yahoo group (free group subscription info later in this article).

You also heard certified speaking professional Meryl Runion talk about effective communication strategies between Millennials (or Gen Y) and preceding generations. What does that have to do with public policy, some have asked? Remember that Millennials comprise the largest sector of the US electorate. They need to hear about issues affecting equity for women and girls – *from you!* FYI: Meryl Runion is willing to do free webinars on "Restoring Sanity to Our Political Conversations" for AAUW branches and groups. Interested? Please contact her at merylrunion@speakstrong.com or 719-684-2633.

You received an update on the workings of the Colorado Pay Equity Commission (the creation of which AAUW Colorado advocated for last year) from 9to5 National Association of Working Women Director Linda Meric – a member of said commission and a staunch AAUW Colorado ally in the numerous coalitions of which 9to5 Colorado and AAUW Colorado share membership. FYI: We awarded Linda a certificate of appreciation that day for being a Super Duper Barrier Breaker for her outstanding work in advancing equity for women and girls.

And you heard the AAUW Colorado Volunteer Lobby Corps present information about our organization's stances on 2011 state bills of interest. Remember that the lobbyists told you to stay tuned -- because Public Policy Day took place so early in the legislative session and things could change? Guess what? Things have changed!

AAUW Colorado Stances on 2011 State Bills as of 3/5/2011

It is still relatively early in the state legislative session. Other bills may be introduced that need AAUW Colorado review, and amendments to current bills may arise that change intent or impact. For the latest bill developments and contact information for your state senators and representatives, please visit the Colorado General Assembly website at <http://www.leg.state.co.us/>. You can also find a bill status summary (updated weekly) in the AAUW Colorado Facebook page's Notes section and receive periodic updates by email as part of your free subscription to the aauw-Colorado Yahoo group (subscription info later in this article). FYI: Our stances resonate with the AAUW 2009-2011 Public Policy Program, which you can find at the following website.

http://www.aauw.org/act/issue_advocacy/principles_priorities.cfm

ACTIVE SUPPORT (i.e., lobbying for)

SB11-072 (Job Protection and Civil Rights Enforcement Act)
SB11-172 (Civil Unions)
SB11-177 (Sunset Teen Pregnancy & Dropout Program)

ACTIVE OPPOSITION (i.e., lobbying against)

HB11-1048 (Income Tax Credits For Nonpublic Ed)

SUPPORT

HB11-1080 (Address Confidentiality Program)
HB11-1254 (Bullying In Schools)
SB11-126 (Unsubsidized In-state Tuition)

WATCHING

SB11-001 (Knowledge-based Economy Fund)
SB11-052 (Goals for Higher Ed System)
SB11-063 (Health Care In Local Govt Master Plans)

Save the Date for Equal Pay Day!

... which is Tuesday, April 12th. AAUW Colorado is a member of the Coloradans for Fair Pay Coalition that is planning a noontime rally at the state capitol and an evening reception at the Funky Buddha Lounge, 776 Lincoln Street, in Denver. Full details, once available, will be distributed by email through the aauw-Colorado Yahoo group (free subscription info later in this article).

AAUW Colorado encourages branches and individuals members to raise awareness of the gender-based pay gap among their community members via their own local Equal Pay Day events. Consider conducting an “Advocating & Negotiating for Fair Pay” seminar at your public library using AAUW Colorado’s curriculum (like AAUW Douglas County will do at the cosponsoring Philip S. Miller Library in Castle Rock on April 19th). Consider an Equal Pay Day press conference on the steps of your town or city hall. Organize an “Unhappy Hour” or “Cocktails and Convos” event at a local bar to share a drink and a thoughtful conversation about the impact of the pay gap on women and their families in the short and long terms. Show the DVD of “Made in Dagenham” (an engaging film about the events leading to passage of Great Britain’s Equal Pay Act of 1970, available on DVD in late March) at a house party or a public venue – and use it as a launch pad for a discussion about pay inequity in the US. Interested in doing something? Amy Blackwell can provide you with more information at ae_blackwell@yahoo.com or cell 303-710-2031.

Help AAUW to conduct research on the advancement of STEM education for women at community colleges!

Know of a community college that is doing work to advance women’s educational opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and/or mathematics (like the Community College of Aurora and its annual Math Day for Girls)? Share that college’s contact info with the AAUW Research Department via Catherine Hill at hillc@aauw.org or through Connect AAUW at 800-326-AAUW or connect@aauw.org. Advancement of STEM educational and career opportunities for women and girls is a top AAUW public policy priority, so please help us in this important research endeavor. And reach out to your local community college! Most Millennials are beginning their college careers at such institutions because of lower tuition costs amid the economic downturn. Potential members? You bet! Students pursuing associate degrees are eligible to be AAUW student affiliates. Faculty members and degreed staffers are eligible for membership, too. Hint hint.

Get in the loop. Join the aauw-Colorado Yahoo group!

This is AAUW Colorado’s only way of distributing time-sensitive information like state public policy action alerts and updates, event info that can’t wait for the next state bulletin, etc. It’s also the group through which we distribute the electronic version of the state bulletin. It’s free to join, is members only, and has encountered ZERO security or privacy breaches since launch over two years ago. Ready to join? Here’s how!

Step 1: Get a Yahoo ID (if you don’t already have one). Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/>. Follow all the instructions to fill out a profile and make the choices that you want to apply to your ID on any Yahoo! Features. When you are done, you will get an email with a code or a link to verify your sign up. After you click on the email link, you will be able to use your ID to sign into any Yahoo! group.

Step 2: Join the AAUW Colorado Group. Use your browser to go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/aauw-Colorado/>. (You may or may not be already signed in. It doesn’t matter because you are not a member yet. You are here to sign up.) Click on the blue JOIN THIS GROUP button to start and be a member. Or... Send an email to be a member to aauw-Colorado-subscribe@yahogroups.com. An email is sent to the moderator, and you will get an email when your membership has been approved.

Step 3: Inside the AAUW Colorado Group Use your browser to go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/aauw-Colorado/>. You may need to sign in with your Yahoo ID and password. Just click the Sign In button next to the Yahoo! Groups logo. At this site, use the menu links on the left to post a message, add your name to the phone book under databases, and see a calendar of events that all Colorado Branch members need to know. Questions: Contact the group moderator by sending email to dparcheta@earthlink.net.

Got a fire in your belly for public policy affecting equity for women and girls?

Contact Amy Blackwell about volunteer opportunities with AAUW Colorado’s public policy committee at ae_blackwell@yahoo.com or cell 303-710-2031.

membership matters

by Cheryl Hansen and Stephanie Fong

State Membership Co-Chairs

Along with all of the advocacy, research, philanthropy, education, and social events that we enjoy by being part of AAUW, we also have the best opportunity to build AAUW membership. One way to recruit new members is to have an “Elevator Speech” ready. An “Elevator Speech” is good for brief introductions when networking or meeting someone for the first time. It answers the question “what do you do?”

Below please find a description of how to write an elevator speech. To help you fill in the spaces we have provided some talking points about AAUW. Finally, we have also provided the campaigns for this year to help you process all of those new memberships.

The “I Support by” Model:

I support #1 _____ in their desire to #2 _____ by means of #3 _____.

#1 who: Types of People, target audience

#2 what: They want to accomplish, their needs, desires and goals.

#3 how: You help them get what they want.

Talking points from the AAUW website

- **AAUW’s Mission.** AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.
- **A voice in government.** AAUW’s 100,000-member voice is key to lobbying, briefing policy-makers, and spearheading coalitions on critical women’s and civil rights issues.
- **A powerful network.** Whether in spirit, online, or in person, you belong to a community of people who value education and equal rights and who believe in taking action.
- **Timely and relevant information at your fingertips.** AAUW’s award winning magazine, *AAUW Outlook*, and the *Mission & Action e-bulletin* highlight issues and individuals influencing education and equity for women and girls. The *Action Network* alerts you to congressional actions on issues that can change your life. State and branch groups publish newsletters about local activities and interests. The AAUW website has information on equity and education issues; opportunities for online advocacy; links to Congress; information about Educational Foundation fellowships, grants and awards; and summaries of plaintiffs and their cases supported by LAF.
- **National and regional activities.** At conferences like the AAUW National Convention, expand your personal and professional network. Learn skills to strengthen your leadership role at work, at school, or in your community. Chart the course for advancing equity for women and girls in the United States and around the world. Discover innovative strategies to promote equity and social justice.
- **Opportunities for activism.** Participate in programs like AAUW’s Sister-to-Sister Summits for teens and Sisters in Action follow-up activities, Woman-to-Woman Community dialogs on Social Justice, Transitions Conferences for women considering a return to school or addressing career and lifestyle changes, Voter Education Campaigns, and other state and local programs.
- **Professional and educational support.** AAUW educational and professional development programs help you develop your professional and personal skills and hone your leadership skills. Take advantage of AAUW’s Leadership Library and volunteer to serve on national boards, committees and panels.
- **Access to fellowships, grants, and awards.** Discover the more than \$4 million that the Educational Foundation provides annually in fellowships, grants, and awards for outstanding women around the globe. Encourage family members, friend, or local scholars to apply.
- **Updates on groundbreaking research.** Take pride in being part of an organization that studies issues that matter to women and girls today for generations to come.
- **Increased buying power.** Take advantage of exclusive member discounts for AAUW books and merchandise; magazine subscriptions; quality health insurance plans; flowers, cakes and gifts; auto insurance education loans; and books.

2010-2011 Membership Campaigns

- **130th Anniversary Membership Campaign** – This campaign starts November 1, 2010 and will close on November 30, 2011. What better way is there to celebrate AAUW’s upcoming 130th anniversary year than to grow your branch with a special membership recruitment campaign! For more than 128 years, AAUW members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day – educational, social, economic, and political. Share your enthusiasm for the mission and work of AAUW by recruiting new members, and you and your branch will be eligible for special recognitions.
- **Member-Get-a-Member** – To participate simply invite prospective members to join AAUW. When you send in the membership

(continued on page 9)

enrollment form, be sure to include the recruiter's membership number with the application or remittance form. A new member is officially credited to the recruiting member when the AAUW Membership Department receives the new membership and dues.

Shape the Future - The Shape the Future Membership Campaign is a program used to help branches recruit new members by offering reduced membership rates for new or lapsed members to join on the spot during AAUW-sponsored activities. Branches build their member base and earn up to three free memberships annually to use any way they wish.

Give-a-Grad a Gift - AAUW members can give a recent grad — a friend, daughter, son, granddaughter, grandson, niece, or nephew — a free AAUW membership within two years of graduation. At no cost to you or them!

50 Year Honorary Life Membership – Available for those who have been members for 50 years or more. (We threw this in because we were able to do this for one of our members and it just felt great.)

AAUW Colorado - 2011 Proposed Bylaws Amendments April 30, 2011 - State Business Meeting, Boulder, CO

Rationale for Change from Education Funds to AAUW Funds and combining director for Education Funds and Legal Advocacy Fund to director for AAUW Funds.

At the national AAUW convention in June 2009, delegates voted major changes to AAUW's bylaws. One change was the combining of the Association and Foundation into one entity, AAUW. AAUW Colorado's Board of Directors voted to amend Colorado's bylaws and change the term Educational Foundation to Education Funds in September 2009. The position of Legal Advocacy Fund director was retained in Colorado's bylaws.

AAUW has now structured AAUW Programs under the title of AAUW FUNDS. These programs include the Legal Advocacy Fund, the Educational Opportunities Fund, the Eleanor Roosevelt Fund, the Public Policy Fund, and the Leadership Programs Fund.

The Colorado Bylaws Committee recommends the following: Changing Education Funds to AAUW Funds and combining the positions of director for Education Funds and director of Legal Advocacy Funds into one position, director of AAUW Funds.

The recommendation has proposed deletions ~~struck out~~ and proposed additions in CAPITAL LETTERS.

Lois Florkey, State Bylaws Director, loiszach@aol.com, 303-978-9192

ARTICLE VII. OFFICERS

Section 1. Functions to be fulfilled. There shall be officers to fulfill the functions of administration, program, membership, public policy, finance, ~~Education Funds~~ AAUW FUNDS, and communications.

Section 2. Elected Officers. The elected officers of the state shall be president, president-elect, program development vice president, membership vice president, secretary, treasurer, director for Public Policy Program, director for ~~Education Funds~~, and director for ~~Legal Advocacy Fund~~ AAUW FUNDS. All elected officers shall be chosen with due regard for geographic representation when feasible. Co-officers may be elected.

ARTICLE IX. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 2. Elections.

d. Rotation of Officers. In odd numbered years the president-elect, the program development vice president, the secretary, AND the treasurer; and the director for ~~Legal Advocacy Fund~~ shall be elected. In even-numbered years the membership vice president, and the director for ~~Education Funds~~ AAUW FUNDS shall be elected. Each year one co-public policy director



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Find out the latest news about Colorado AAUW
at <http://www.coaauw.org>

- Important Events in 2011**
- April 12 Equal Pay Day**
- April 29-30 Colorado State Convention
Boulder, Colorado**
- June 16-19 AAUW National Conference
Washington, DC**
- September 17-18 Fall Conference**

ADVANCING EQUITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH ADVOCACY, EDUCATION, PHILANTHROPY, AND RESEARCH

Tax Talk: Who Knew It Could Be So Interesting?

by Anita Bemis

“You women are tough,” was the appraisal of speaker Henry Sobanet, as he faced questions from the 100-plus women who attended the annual AAUW Public Policy Day on February 5. “I was expecting a quiet little Saturday morning talk...yeah, this will be easy...,” Sobanet went on to laughter from the audience. The discussion was all about the Colorado state budget, presented by Sobanet, newly appointed director of the Office of State Planning and Budget, and Carol Hedges, director of the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute.

The hardy women who braved the cold and (yes, more) snow on a Saturday morning came away with a new appreciation of the difficulties involved in managing the sprawling budget and deciding on the massive cuts which will have to be made. Sobanet said he often hears this question: “Why can’t you just run the state like a business?” “Well, businesses don’t have the problem of a constitution which provides for simultaneously limiting tax revenues and increasing spending”, he explains. He also hears, “Does the state have revenue problems or spending problems? The answer is “yes.”

Hedges, who is a recognized expert on the TABOR amendment, focused on “Rethinking Revenue in Colorado.” She maintains that TABOR is not our problem right now: “It is a constitutional theory that is very difficult to have a conversation about.” She would welcome the chance to “go to ballot and ask Coloradoans whether we want a tax increase. Where we are now is like doing heart surgery with one hand.” She would like to see issues of “fairness” being considered, and believes that when voting on tax hikes, the public focuses more on the problems at hand and makes intelligent decisions. “Remember that we only have to reach 51% of the voters,” she reminded us when asked about the difficulties of voter-approved tax increase measures.

In the afternoon, Meryl Runion, certified speaking professional and author of *How to Restore Sanity to Our Political Conversations*, enlightened us on the difficulties of cross-generational conversations about the issues. There is “Old School Thinking,” “New School Thinking,” and “Between Worlds.” When making your point, remember that people remember *stories*, and that *how* you tell your stories makes all the difference. Young people want to be mentored, but not in the top-down old school style. They still respect authority, but it needs to be earned. For a funny little video that makes a very good point, check out Runion’s blog: www.speakstrong.com/blog On February 2, she posted a short video on “escalator failure,” that says a lot about the message she tries to get across.

State Public Policy co-chairs Barb McDaniel and Amy Blackwell put together the day’s events and received overwhelmingly positive feedback.