

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I write this, our thoughts are with our members who have been affected by Hurricane Charley. They are facing such difficulties and our hearts go out to them when we see the devastation in so many areas of our state.

Those of you who were at our 75th Anniversary Convention, or read my message on our website, will know that I have adopted a mantra for the next two years - *that we will keep showing up*. Despite hurricanes and other difficulties, we will keep showing up. We will keep showing up and advocating for women and girls. In this very important election year, we can all show up by voting.

Recently, I received some excerpts from Iron-Jawed Angels, the HBO movie about Alice Paul and the suffragists. That movie dramatized the horrors that our foremothers went through for the right to vote. Their actions must not have been in vain: we must show up and vote in November. I think and hope this paragraph is "preaching to the choir". AAUW members surely register and vote every time. But if you have been careless about it, I urge you to register and vote for those who support our priorities.

In this issue, you will find information from the Nominating Committee about the State Board positions that will be filled at our next convention in April. We need candidates for President-Elect, Director for Program, Director for Finance, Director for Public Policy and Director for Legal Advocacy, as well as for four Director at Large positions. All of these officers are essential to the operation of AAUW at the state level. I urge you to consider applying for, or recommending someone, for these positions. Branch Presidents will be helping us recruit. But maybe you or someone you know would be an excellent candidate for one of these positions, and we would never know, if you don't step forward. This is another way to keep showing up.

In May and June at their board meetings, the Association and Foundation Boards have had to make many difficult decisions. The Foundation Board voted to increase the amount needed to complete an American or International Fellowship from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and specified the funds must be raised in 15 years as opposed to the current 20. Similarly, Research and Projects endowments were increased from \$35,000 to \$75,000, and must be raised in ten years. These changes do not affect any endowments currently in process.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Teacher Fellowship awards have not been self-sufficient and were being financed by borrowing from reserves. The number of applicants has not been at all what was originally envisioned. Therefore, the Board voted to put that program on hold for a year, to assess it and see how it might be modified to become a more viable program.

The LAF Board proposed a partial merger with the Educational Foundation and at the Board meeting the Foundation voted to pursue this partial merger. A committee, chaired by Barbara O'Connor, is preparing an operational agreement outlining the steps and processes required of both corporations.

At the Association, significant budget shortfalls made it necessary to suspend the Leader on Loan program and drop our IFUW membership for a year. These shortfalls were caused by declining branch and MAL membership and less non-dues revenue than anticipated. The shortfalls happened despite drastic cuts in staff and operating budgets. The Association is launching a "One in a Million" campaign directed first to Honorary and Paid Life members to raise a million dollars to support the Association. The Board had 100% participation in this campaign and at the Leadership Conference, State Presidents and EF Directors contributed enough to bring the fund to \$10,000. I'm wearing my "Equity is Still an Issue" pin proudly; it's another way of showing up.

There is more information about all these decisions and the One in a Million campaign on our website, www.florida-aauw.org, and on the Association website, www.aauw.org.

The State Board voted in the spring to fund a lobbyist in Tallahassee again. We have contracted with Vicky Wooldridge to promote our priorities in Tallahassee and around the state. You will have a chance to meet

and work with her if you come to Lobby Days in Tallahassee, March 12/15, 2005. That is another way to show up.

Finally, plan to show up at our state convention April 15/17, 2005, at the Renaissance Orlando Airport Hotel, and the Association Convention at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D. C., June 24/27, 2005. Put these dates on your calendar. When we work together, women and girls benefit.