



# PINELINES



*The Monthly Newsletter of the AAUW - Medford Area Branch*

[www.aauwmedfordnj.com](http://www.aauwmedfordnj.com)

## AAUW's Mission

*Advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research*

## President's Message

Thanks to Margaret Riccardelli for a fascinating portrayal of her adventures in Cuba at our February meeting. June Ramondetta happened to notice that the Garden Statement's winter edition has the perfect footnote to Margaret's "**Assignment: Havana.**" Four members from NJ joined the AAUW delegation to Cuba last November, as outlined in the article, "**Our Women in Havana- a brief overview,**" by Ms. Adrienne Lesser. Read the article at the NJ website ([www.aauwnj.org](http://www.aauwnj.org)). Click on to the **Current Garden Statement** on the left-hand navigation area. The article starts on page 10.

Remember to make your reservation for our book & author brunch scheduled for April 30.

Check out an interesting article online. Helping to promote science & math to females, AAUW grant recipient [LeAnn Erickson](#) is screening her documentary [Top Secret Rosies: The Female Computers of WWII](#) across the U.S. The film was recently featured on [CNN](#) and uncovers the contributions of women scientists during the war effort. The short video online has snippets of interviews with some of these "Rosies."

Please see what's going on in our neighboring branches below and on our website.

I hope to see everyone at Cranberry Hall on the 8<sup>th</sup> and don't forget to bone up on Persephone first. Check out **Programs** below for a preview.

Mary Ann Brookes

## Mark Your Calendar

**Tuesday, March 8, 7:30**

**"Maiden, Mother, Mysteries: The Myth of Persephone in Girls' Literature, Nutcracker (1816) through Twilight (2005)."**

Speaker Dr. Holly Blackford  
Cranberry Hall, Medford

**Tuesday, March 15, 7:30 pm**

Lit Group – **Picking Cotton: Our Memoir of Injustice and Redemption**, by Jennifer Thompson-Cannino, Ronald Cotton, and Erin Torneo  
Home of Tricia Reace

**Saturday, April 30, 11:30 am**

Medford Branch Book & Author Brunch  
**Lights Out In Paradise** by Paul Salvo  
Medford Leas, Medford

## Occasions

*If you know of a member who is celebrating an event or needs words of encouragement, or a word of thanks, please let Mary Ann or Tricia know so we can send a note or card.*

Also, we'd like to include everyone on our birthday list, so please drop a note to either of us.

### Birthday greetings

Best wishes go out to Lois Kling & June Ramondetta for March birthdays!



**Hope your special day is wonderful!**

Tricia Reace

## Programs

On March 8, Dr. Holly Blackford from the Rutgers Speakers' Bureau will present "**Maiden, Mother, Mysteries: The Myth of Persephone in Girls' Literature, *Nutcracker* (1816) through *Twilight* (2005).**" This program focuses on an ancient myth that conveys the agony and ecstasy of female development. Members may want to review the Greek myth of Persephone and Demeter before attending this meeting. One version can be found at

<http://www.essortment.com/demeter-persephone-37462.html>

Below is Dr. Blackford's program description:

This lecture focuses on an ancient myth that conveys the agony and ecstasy of female development. The Greek myth of Persephone and Demeter is the story of two nature goddesses, Maiden and Mother, separated when Hades, the lord of the underworld, abducts Persephone, whom he desires as his consort and queen. The descent of her daughter into the world of the dead sends Demeter into mourning and wrathful anger, and all of the earth dies with her loss. Only the restoration of mother and daughter will heal the rift and rejuvenate spring.

The myth is essentially the story of harmonic female relations disrupted by the patriarchal exchange of the daughter, for Zeus (Persephone's father) agreed to give Hades the goddess without Demeter's consent. The Hymn focuses on the grief of the mother as her daughter sexually develops and leaves her mother's world of flowers and innocence. Yet the myth is not just about loss; it is also the story of hope and rejuvenation for humankind. In the end, mortals receive Demeter's agricultural blessings and gifts, assuring good harvest and fertility. Although Persephone cannot fully return because she has eaten the pomegranate, the seeds of which commit her to the underworld, a compromise between mother and consort enables the seasonal cycling of Persephone between the two. Her return to earth initiates the annual rites of spring.

Ancient retellings of the myth emphasized and praised Demeter, bringer of seasons, but during

the late Victorian and early modern period, interest in Persephone surged. The story of Persephone and the excavation of a Greek underworld in Western culture built the foundation for girls' fantasy literature. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, writers influenced by romantic and Victorian accounts of Persephone would depict the complexities of female ambivalence about development by focusing on girls who descend into underworlds as consorts to Hades figures. Influential literary accounts of girls' journeys by E.T.A. Hoffmann (*Nutcracker* and *Mouse King*), Emily Brontë (*Wuthering Heights*), Louisa May Alcott (*Little Women*), and J. M. Barrie (*Peter Pan*) would shape the destiny of twentieth-century descents into the underworld for a broad spectrum of girls' writers. Writers as diverse as Frances Hodgson Burnett (*The Secret Garden*), E. B. White (*Charlotte's Web*), J. K. Rowling (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*), and Stephenie Meyer (*Twilight*) would continue the legacy of Persephone's story, some of them intertextually crediting Brontë and some less consciously equating female development with an underworld consort. Writers like Neil Gaiman would even radically alter Persephone's journey, renaming the Hades figure of Coraline "the other mother" and therefore asking us to reconsider less visible aspects of the myth that were nevertheless always there.

This lecture will consider manifestations of the myth in classic and contemporary girls' literature. How does this tradition accord with the myth in women's literature? What ancient fertility rituals are embedded in fantasy stories in which female protagonists descend and return to earth?

*Lynne and Dian*

## Fundraising & Scholarship

Don't forget to get your reservations in for our Book and Author Brunch on April 30 at Medford Leas. See the flyer attached.

Please also encourage qualified candidates to submit the 2011 Scholarship Application posted on our website.

*~ Mary Strickler*

## Lit Group

Our selection for March is a true story called **Picking Cotton: Our Memoir of Injustice and Redemption**, by Jennifer Thompson-Cannino, Ronald Cotton, and Erin Torneo. While Jennifer Thompson is sleeping in her apartment, someone breaks in and attacks her at knifepoint. She is able to escape and later identifies Ronald Cotton in a lineup as her assailant. Despite his insistence that he is innocent, Cotton is convicted of the crime. After eleven years, a DNA test reveals that he is indeed innocent. Eventually, they meet face to face and forge a friendship that changes both of their lives and enables them to collaborate in the writing of their story. The book highlights the fallibility of eye witness accounts and demonstrates the healing power of forgiveness.

We will be meeting at Tricia Reace's home in Marlton at 7:30PM on March 15<sup>th</sup>. RSVP Tricia at 856-985-9031. Please join us.

*Bea Chawla and Rose Mary Bland*

## Public Policy

**LAF Supports Plaintiffs in Wal-Mart Lawsuit**  
Last month the [AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund](#) committed to assisting the plaintiffs in the [Dukes v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.](#) lawsuit, potentially the largest workplace discrimination class-action lawsuit in U.S. history. LAF is signing an amicus brief in the case and providing financial assistance for six of the lead plaintiffs to travel to Washington, D.C., to attend oral arguments at the U.S. Supreme Court. The court will decide whether the plaintiffs can pursue the case as a class action. If the court affirms the class certification, the lower courts will hear the plaintiffs' discrimination claim. AAUW urges local members to support the plaintiffs by attending the oral arguments on March 29, 2011.

*Lynne Poag*

## Other Branches' Events

### Salem March 19: **Women's History Month Queen's Tea**

Saturday, March 19 at the Friends' Meetinghouse Annex in Woodstown at 11:30-about 2:00pm. We have tables of four available, or will seat individuals with new friends. Cost is \$25.00/person. The program will be "**An Under the Skirts Tour of Civil War Dressing**" by two local people who are very knowledgeable about the topic. A male member of their group makes the clothing for the presentation. For info, email [jhjack@verizon.net](mailto:jhjack@verizon.net).

### Somerset Hills **Author's Luncheon**

Saturday March 12, 11:30 – 2:00, at the Somerset Hills Hotel, Warren, NJ. Marc Mappen is the co-editor of the award-winning Encyclopedia of New Jersey and author of four other books, including *There's More to New Jersey Than the Sopranos*.

## 2010/11 Executive Board

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Mary Ann Brookes



American Association of University Women



AAUW Medford Area Branch presents:

**2011 Book & Author Brunch**  
***Lights Out in Paradise* by Paul Salvo**

**\*\* All ticket proceeds go to college scholarships \*\***

*Lights Out in Paradise* is a coming-of-age novel that is a blend of autobiography and fiction following a young boy moving from Sicily to Bushwick, one of Brooklyn's working-class neighborhoods. The author delivers insightful views into the cultural and ethnic influences and changes experienced by two friends through the 1950's and 60's.

**When:** Saturday, April 30, 2011, 11:30 AM

**Where:** Medford Leas, Route 70, Medford, New Jersey

**Tickets:** \$30 per person (\$15 tax deductible)



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**\*\*\*\*\* RSVP \*\*\*\*\***

***Yes, I will attend the brunch and meet Paul Salvo.***

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of attendees:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (\$30 per person)

*Please make checks payable to: AAUW Medford Area Branch*

**Send with RSVP & check to:** June Ramondetta, 119 Bracken Rd. Medford, NJ 08055

**AAUW-Medford Area Branch  
Membership Roster  
March 2011**



*The **American Association of University Women** promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change. In principle and practice AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership.*

*The **AAUW Educational Foundation** provides funds to advance education, research and self-development for women and to foster equity and positive societal change.*

*The **AAUW Legal Advocacy Fund** provides funding and a support system for women seeking judicial redress for sex discrimination.*



 AAUW

The logo for the American Association of University Women (AAUW), consisting of a stylized inverted triangle made of horizontal lines of varying lengths, followed by the letters "AAUW" in a serif font.

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