

President's Message

Come to Sarasota April 21 – 23, 2006, for the Florida AAUW state convention. Sarasota is an exciting destination with theatre, museums, wonderful beaches and great shopping. Come early and/or stay a few extra days. The Hyatt Sarasota will give you convention rates either before or after convention. So make it a little vacation and enjoy our convention at the same time. Our theme for convention will be, "Education as the Gateway"

Dr. Sarah Pappas, President of Manatee Community College, will be our keynote speaker on Friday evening. Dr. Pappas is in her ninth year as President and her experience includes 37 years of holding progressively more responsible positions in Education at three different community colleges and the University of Central Florida.

Ann Gustafson, Chair of the AAUW Membership Committee, will be joining us for convention. And, we are bringing back Lisa Maatz, Director for Public Policy and Government Relations, again this year. We will also have an LAF plaintiff at our LAF luncheon and we plan to have an EF Fellow speak at a breakfast on Sunday morning. We have some terrific workshops lined up – some new, some old with new slants and all designed to help you and inspire you.

We will elect some new state officers and install them. We will award the second annual Florida's Finest awards and we will honor branches that meet important AAUW goals. And we will have some fun.

Convention is for all AAUW members, not just for branch officers. It is a wonderful opportunity to exchange ideas with other branch members, renew your commitment to our mission and energize yourself for the next year. The Southwest Interbranch is planning this convention and they will welcome you to our part of the state. Remember, I keep talking about our mantra, "we will keep showing up". This will be my last convention as your president, so please show up. We will have a wonderful time – I guarantee it.

The other place we need to show up is in Tallahassee March 13/15 for Lobby Days with the Florida Women's Consortium. We have a more powerful voice when we have a larger group in Tallahassee. Please join us as we lobby once more for the Equal Rights Amendment and other concerns of interest to women in Florida.

Carol Newnam