



AAUW Hilltopics April 2013

BURMA/MYANMAR: Nexus of a Modern Silk Road or Battleground in a New “GREAT GAME”?

Thursday, April 4, 7:30 p.m.
Bethlehem Lutheran Church

What? Rudyard Kipling wrote, “[t]his is Burma, and it will be quite unlike any land you know about.” It has been true for centuries and is true today.

Its topography is both forbidding and generous. The origins of its many ethnic groups are complex and confusing. Its religions (primarily Buddhism) coexist with “nats” and animism. Myanmar’s pagodas are mindboggling in number, beautiful when well-kept and fascinating when in ruins. The name “Burma” evokes images of graceful women in flowing skirts, tropical climate, shaved monks and nuns in colorful robes, exotic-sounding Mandalay, teakwood, jade and other gems, the British Raj. On the other hand, in the West the name “Myanmar” brings thoughts of military juntas, human rights abuses, poverty, slaughter and mismanagement. Everyone knows of “the lady,” Aung San Suu Kyi. A few recall U Thant, a former United Nations Secretary General. For decades, however, this nation has been one of the most isolated and opaque in the world. Now it is opening up – to industry, trade, financial services, tourism and much more.

Why should we be interested in Burma/Myanmar? In addition to offering a fascinating place to visit, its geographic position is especially important in the 21st century. This talk will touch on past and recent history, resources, trade, lack of political integration due to the circle of ethnic minorities, and Myanmar’s membership in the ten-member Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) – important to the “new Asia.” It will also address the interest of emerging great powers, India and China, in Myanmar’s highly strategic geographic placement.

Maps and many photographs on Myanmar, including a computer slide show, will be available. The program will open with a brief description by Helena Whyte of AAUW’s Great Decisions discussion group, which this year includes Myanmar and Southeast Asia as one of its topics.

By Whom? Dorothy Shaner, a member of AAUW resident here for 11 years. Dorothy claims no “expertise” on Burma, but she offers background. She earned a Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) and taught part time at Randolph Macon Women’s College, Pitt, Washington and Jefferson College and full time at Chatham College. Dorothy taught international relations, international organizations, American foreign policy, and American politics. In 1985 Dr. Shaner accepted a fellowship and then a new career in Washington, DC, at the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (State Department) and later at the Department of Energy. That career took her to meetings at the National Security Council at the White House and to multilateral forums at the United Nations General Assembly, the 1987 Conference on Security Cooperation (CSCE) Review Conference in Vienna, the 1990 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference in Geneva, NATO Disarmament Experts meetings in Brussels and bilateral meetings in Moscow, Canberra and Beijing. Posted to Geneva for four years, Dorothy was the DOE Member of the U.S Delegation to the UN’s sole negotiating forum for disarmament, the 60-nation Conference on Disarmament, which negotiated the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The Treaty was opened for signature, September 1996 at the United Nations.

State News:

The meeting dates for the annual convention are April 20-21 in Carlsbad.

AAUW-NM is looking for a volunteer to become its new Public Policy Chair. Dixie Trebbe has reached term limits in this position and needs someone to take her place in tracking legislative issues. She is willing to mentor her replacement but needs to "pass the torch." Contact Mary Sandford of the Nominations Committee for more information. (m_sandford47@hotmail.com)

Branch News:

Our featured May event is **Spring Tea**, Friday, May 10th, 4 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church's Gathering Place. We recall that Virginia Woolf requires *A Room of One's Own*. Do other authors agree? Come to our spring tea and enjoy a program assembled by our own members: Marilyn Thayer, Angela Coop, Margo Batha and Betsy Comly.

Come to Santa Fe on Saturday, May 18, for a special treat at the Institute of American Indian Art campus. This five-branch joint meeting will feature the dynamic **Mary Carter, Executive Director of the Women's Intercultural Center** in Anthony, New Mexico, as speaker. The center has been educating and empowering women by providing them the tools and resources to thrive, and Mary Carter will share its story with us. It is guaranteed that you will be inspired and energized. We'll meet on the campus of the Institute of American Indian Art at 10:00 a.m. IAIA's cafeteria will prepare a tasty lunch for us. We have a short tour of the facilities after our meeting. Details will be provided in the May newsletter.

Our member **Rosmarie Frederickson** has been selected to be a 2013 Los Alamos Living Treasure. Come to the ceremony on April 21st to offer your congratulations!

Book group:

The April book is *State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett. Denise George, 411 Cheryl Ave. will host and review on Monday, April 1st at 7:30 p.m.; let her know if you will come (denisegeorge@icloud.com

or 672-9688). Helena Whyte, 100 El Morro will host the meeting on Tuesday, April 2nd at 1:00 p.m.; let her know if you will come (mozden08@aol.com or 672-9153). Marilyn Thayer reviews on Tuesday.

Non-fiction Book Group:

The May book is *On Thin Ice, the Changing World of the Polar Bear* by Richard Ellis. Helena Whyte will be reviewing, and Harriet Dodder, 149 El Gancho, will host the meeting on May 20th at 7:30 p.m. Let Harriet know if you are coming (hardod@earthlink.net, 662-7473)

Great Decisions

Carroll Thomas leads the morning Great Decisions group. Carroll's contact information is 672-1937, ctgb@earthlink.net. Meetings are held at Mesa Public library on the second and fourth Monday of each month, at 10:00 a.m.

The remaining schedule for the morning group is:

Topic	Date	Leader
1 Euro	Apr 15	Marilyn D.
7 China in Africa	Apr 29	Carroll
5 Humanitarian Intervention	May 13	Group

Helena Whyte leads the evening Great Decisions group. Helena's contact information is 672-9153, mozden08@aol.com. The schedule is:

Date	Topic	Hostess	Leader
Thurs. Apr 4	Myanmar /Burma	AAUW - Bethlehem Lutheran Church	Dorothy Shaner
Wed. Apr 24	NATO	Judy Prono 670 Totavi	Judy Prono
Thurs. May 2	China in Africa	Natalie Markin 505 Oppenheimer	Natalie Markin
Thurs. May 23	Iran	Beverly Cooper 521 Ridgecrest	Beverly Cooper
Thurs. June 6	Threat Assess.	Local Restaurant	Group

Title IX Supporting Girls Sports

Helena Whyte leads this group; there is one remaining event:

April 20, 2013, Saturday, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Los Alamos High School Softball Double Header at Minor A Softball Field--Overlook Park in White Rock. No admission fee. Contact Helena if you wish to attend (672-9153, mozden08@aol.com).

Out 'n About

Alahna Weller is organizing an Out 'n About visit to the Forked Lightning Ranch, home of Greer Garson, in the Pecos National Monument Ruins for Sunday, June 23rd. She has reserved a nine-passenger van for a 2 p.m. tour of the Ranch (the only way one can visit the ranch). The tour lasts 1 ½ hours. The plan is to have lunch in Pecos before the tour. This would leave time for a brief visit to the ruins after the tour -- the park closes at 5:00 and the visitor center at 4:30.

There is a \$2 tour fee and a \$3 entrance fee.

As the number of seats on the van is limited, the park will open the remaining seats to the public at the beginning of June. Please let Alahna (672-9539) know if you are interested in attending; you may cancel until June 1.

Car pools will be arranged.

National News:

AAUW is now a strategic partner with the Clinton Global Initiative, whose goal is to create and implement solutions to the world's most pressing

challenges; being a sponsor of CGI University will expand AAUW's campus leadership programs.

Take the AAUW Annual Member Survey online; it only takes a few minutes.

<http://www.aauw.org/resource/2012-aauw-every-member-survey/>

Progress toward MORE Women in Science

Brittany Wenger, 17, won the Google Science Fair grand prize with her "Global Neural Network Cloud Service for Breast Cancer". Designed to non-invasively diagnose malignant cancerous tumors, it successfully detected over 99% of malignant breast tumors in a test set. She received \$50,000, a trip to the Galapagos Islands, and mentoring and internship opportunities for winning the competition. Asked why so few girls go into computer science she answered, "I think sometimes there's a stereotype around computer science, that it's just video game development, and more boys are hard-core game developers than girls. But you have to realize it's our Web sites, our Google tools, it's our Facebook and I think that you could reach girls more if you could appeal to what they're using computer science for... I know it used to be that girls weren't encouraged, but I've never felt like I couldn't go into science, like I was being discriminated against because I was a girl."

(sources: Wikipedia, Scientific American)



Biography of the Month Laura Towne (1825-1901)

Influenced by the sermons of the Unitarian minister William Furness on the abominations of slavery, Laura Towne was one of the first Northern women to go south to work with freed slaves. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1825, Towne later lived in Philadelphia, where she moved in socially progressive circles and was educated as a homeopathic physician from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

Shots were fired at Fort Sumter in 1861, and the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina fell to the Union army. Faced with defeat, the entire white population fled, leaving their homes, belongings, and ten thousand slaves; the government declared the former slaves to be contraband of war. The Port Royal Experiment

was set up to prove that former slaves could be educated, become landowners, serve in the military and build self-sufficient communities and thereby provide a model path to be followed in other parts of the South. The teachers who went south sought not only to teach the freedmen how to read and write, but hoped to help them develop socially and morally. They saw themselves as missionaries who would "bring the light of God's truth" to people they assumed were in need of such enlightenment.

Laura Towne arrived on the Sea Islands in April 1862. She exemplified this dual role, teacher and missionary, though with few lofty affectations. She was pragmatic, down-to-earth and strong-minded. She readily entered into the life of Saint Helena Island, where she began her work attending to the medical needs of the freedmen. However, in June 1862, she and Ellen Murray, her life-long friend and fellow teacher and Quaker, opened the first school for freed slaves. The school had nine adult students and operated out of the back room of a plantation house. This school was to become the Penn School, named in honor of William Penn and the Pennsylvania Freedmen's Society that funded the school's first years. Later her family, other Unitarians, and abolitionists of many faiths supported the school that Towne and Murray would operate for the next forty years.

Eventually, Towne gave up practicing medicine in order to devote all her attentions to the business of teaching and running Penn. Unlike most of the schools for freedmen, the Penn School offered a rigorous curriculum, modeled on that of schools in New England. Towne became a bridge between the government and people of the islands, often as an advocate for their needs and wages. She opposed speculators' attempts to buy lands for back taxes, eventually making it possible for people to own the land they had worked on all their lives. Laura Towne spent forty years running the school and grew to love her life on the Sea Islands. She and Ellen Murray eventually adopted several African American children and raised them as their own. Upon her death in 1901, Towne left the Penn School to the Hampton Institute, at which time it began operating as the Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School, and in 1948 it became Penn Community Services Center. Rosalyn Browne a former director of history and culture at the Center said, "In 1862, before freedom came, Towne taught my ancestors how to free their minds long before the United States Congress freed their persons."

(sources: UU World and PBS.org)

Report of the Nereson Memorial Committee:

The Nereson Memorial Committee recommends that the Los Alamos Branch of AAUW commit to raise funds in Jean Nereson's memory to be donated to the Los Alamos Public Schools' five elementary schools to be used for the purchase of library books, at least half of which are in the fields of social studies, world cultures, geography, and history. All books will contain a bookplate in honor of Jean and her more than 50 years teaching elementary school. The Nereson Family has agreed to match funds raised by the Branch. Fundraising will be limited to the 2013 calendar year

While AAUW will sponsor this project, the LAPS Foundation will administer it.

Branch Calendar

Apr	1,2	Book Group
Apr	4	General Meeting
Apr	15	Great Decisions
Apr	20	Title IX
Apr	20	Evening Great Decisions
Apr	24	Great Decisions
Apr	29	Council meeting at Ginny White's

Coordinating Council for 2012-13

Mona Wecksung	Co-Treasurer/Membership	662-7084	wecksung2005@msn.com
Judy Prono	Co-facilitator/AAUW Funds	662-2691	djprono@msn.com
Natalie Markin	Co-facilitator/Co-treasurer	662-9399	natalie@lanb.com natgmark@aol.com
Nina Thayer	Program/Public Policy	662-6835	gnthayer@cybermesa.com
Dorothy Donnelly-Shaner	International Affairs/ Publicity	672-2224	fivesigma@comcast.net
Maryjane Giesler	University Representative	662-5574	mgiesler@unm.edu
Ginny White	Secretary	500-8009, 695-2072	ginny@atomicski.org
Non-council positions			
Jane Sherwood	Hospitality	662-3194	jane.sherwood@att.net
Denise George	Newsletter	672-9688	georgeje@acm.org
Marilyn Minshall	Historian	672-3499	mjminshall@q.com
Helena Whyte	Nominating Chair	672-9153	mozden08@aol.com