

Lamorinda AAUW Branch Celebrates and Renews

By Sophie Braccini



AAUW May luncheon at the Orinda Country Club Photo Sophie Braccini

As the Lamorinda branch of the American Association of University Women got together to celebrate Maryann Zivic, the Distinguished Woman of the Year, members were reminded of the important role their association has played in the life of many

young women around the world, and here in Lamorinda, thanks to the tireless efforts of volunteers and the generous donations of members.

Marie Bonilla was re-elected President of the branch. An engineer by training, the

young woman likes to present figure-based facts. A series of mysterious figures were listed on the back of the agenda. $128 + 52$ to represent the 128 years AAUW has been advancing equity for women and girls, and 52 years for the Lamorinda branch. $201 + 21 = 3\%$, is the increase in branch membership this year. 1885 to 2008, the years the organization has sponsored 100 research programs.

Bonilla reminded the audience that the first research the association conducted was intended to demonstrate that education doesn't hurt women's health. "We have come a long way since then," said Bonilla, "but plenty is still to be done." The association acts all over the world and this year granted 257 young women \$4,000,000 for their education.

Closer to home, 795 Lamorinda middle schools girls have participated in the Sister to Sister program, while 280 high school students were trained to mentor them.

The second part of the luncheon held in the Orinda Country Club was a very emotional celebration of Maryann Zivic. Most of her 6 children, some of her grand-children and great grand-children were present. Zivic has had a life long involvement with volunteer groups, noticeably with AAUW and Saint Perpetua Church in Lafayette. As friends and family succeeded each other to recount their life with Zivic, she emerged as an extraordinarily strong, brilliant and fun woman, whose faith and sense of service to the community have guided her all her life.