

The American Association of University Women (AAUW), a well-known national organization dedicated to advancing equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research, recently honored the work of two New Mexico artists (who are also AAUW members) by voting their images into the six-artist winner's circle in the national AAUW 2009 Annual Note Card Design Contest. Designs by Michelle Stump, from Los Alamos, and Katherine Barit, from Las Cruces together with 198 other contest entries were voted on by thousands of AAUW members from across the country during the weeks of November 10 through December 15, 2008.

All six winning entries are displayed online at <http://www.aauw.org/contests/index.cfm> and will be published as note cards and sent to over 100,000 AAUW members, who respond with monetary donations, which have historically resulted in significant funding for the association. Barit and Stump donated their art work to the AAUW and will each receive 100 note cards of their designs in acknowledgement of their contribution.

AAUW membership consists of individual and college/university members. If you hold an associate's or equivalent, bachelor's, or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university, you can join AAUW as an individual (member-at-large) or as a member of one of AAUW's 1,000 branches. Branch members also belong to the national organization. If you are an undergraduate in a two-or four-year regionally accredited educational institution, you can join as a student affiliate of a branch or a student-affiliate-at-large. Qualified institutions are educational institutions that offer recognized associate, baccalaureate, or higher degrees and that have full regional accreditation (including two-year or community colleges) or appropriate professional association approval. AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There are no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class. One among the many notable AAUW members is Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea*. His story of building schools in isolated Muslim villages of Pakistan and Afghanistan with an emphasis on educating both girls and boys in an effort to thwart the growth of terrorism speaks to the deepest AAUW beliefs

Both Stump and Barit consider being members of the AAUW to be very rewarding. "Being able to make a contribution to the AAUW allows me to give back to an organization that has helped me over the course of many years," said Stump, who joined in 2006. "I was delighted that "Skyward Dreaming" was one of the six winning designs and am very glad that I am part of the Los Alamos branch of the AAUW." "I think it must be the mystery and beautiful colors in "Skyward Dreaming" that captured our members' votes," said AAUW New Mexico co-president, Nina Thayer, when asked why Stump's entry was among the winners. Stump has also donated her work to Saint Dimitri Orthodox Church, the Kiwanis Club of Los Alamos, and the Los Alamos Family Strengths Network.

"To Life!" is a wonderful example of Barit's warm, expressive painting style. She said, "I can't live my life without being creative." She has donated pieces to the Las Cruces Veteran's Center, the Democratic Party of Dona Ana County and to the Jewish Temple Beth El. She said, "Winning the contest made me feel good. It fed my spirit." Barit joined last August and added, "There's always something going on." In addition to networking activities, her branch has visited the equestrian department at NMSU, toured a publishing house and an iris farm, and saw a demonstration from a local sculptor.