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## Film Delves into Question: Are Women Misrepresented in Media Today?

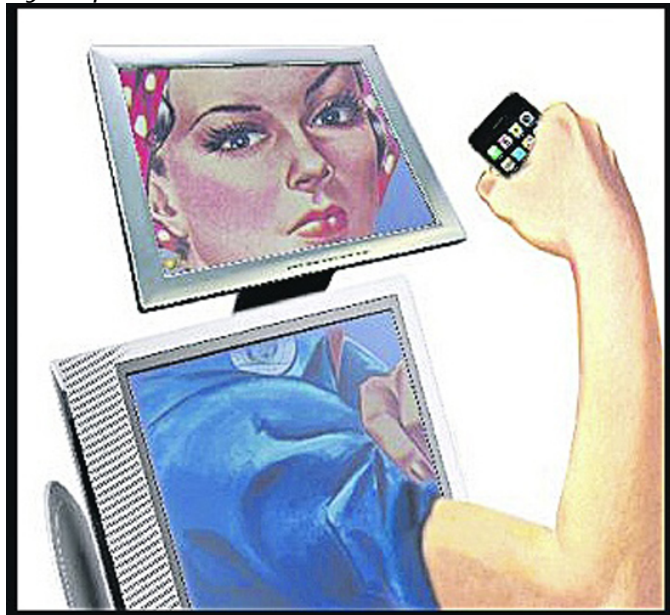
By *Sophie Braccini*

Image provided

Diane Bell-Rettger is a soft spoken woman, but as President of the American Association of University Women - Orinda Moraga Lafayette branch (AAUW/OML), she vehemently defends what she believes in. One of these beliefs is that women are misrepresented in the media, which is the premise of the documentary *Miss Representation* by Jennifer Siebel Newsom that AAUW/OML will show at 7 p.m. October 25 at the Rheem Theatre in Moraga. The film - which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2011 and was featured on the Oprah Winfrey Network - explores how the media's misrepresentations of women have led to their under-representation in positions of power and influence.

"When Nancy Pelosi was the Speaker of the House of Representatives from 2007 to 2011 she was not once on the cover of a major magazine," says Bell-Rettger. "John Boehner on the other hand (the incumbent), made covers six times in his first four months as Speaker."

According to the film, the collective message sent by the media is that a woman's value and power are tied to her youth, beauty, and sexuality, and not to her capacity as a leader. "The movie includes stories from teenage girls and interviews with politicians, journalists, entertainers, activists and academics," says Bell-Rettger. "The facts and statistics

presented are so overwhelming. Women leaders have no public voice or face; they are silenced and cannot be role models for the younger generation."

The movie changed Bell-Rettger's perspective and drove her to act. The local branch of AAUW got on board and persuaded the Rheem Theatre to rent them the main theater for the presentation. Bell-Rettger reached out to Lamorinda parents and invited them to come with their children. "The film is interesting for all ages and sexes," she adds.

Tickets are \$10 with proceeds funding AAUW/OML's annual scholarship that sends middle school girls to a math and science camp at Stanford. For reservations, visit [www.aauwoml.org](http://www.aauwoml.org).

Reach the reporter at: [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

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