



Reston-Herndon Area (VA) Branch

The AAUW Mission Statement: AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, and research.

President's Pen Janine Greenwood

"Freedom is not a state; it is an act. It is not some enchanted garden perched high on a distant plateau where we can finally sit down and rest. Freedom is the continuous action we all must take, and each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society."
Congressman John Lewis

Several of us participated in a very interesting, inspiring and worthwhile AAUW-VA Summer Leadership Meeting. The virtual meeting was held over three days with over 100 participants from Branches around the Commonwealth. I had the special pleasure of speaking about our branch's success earning all Five Stars in the AAUW Five Star Program. Nothing I like better than to brag about our wonderful and dedicated members! Elsewhere in this newsletter you will find a report on the Public Policy portion of the meeting from Judi Pollozitti and Mary Zane, and a report of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs from Lynne Chernin, a member of our new Branch Diversity, Equity and Inclusion group that also includes Carol Bradley and Stephanie Abbott.

Although our branch usually takes a break in August, we decided to continue our programs and regular groups this year. Some programs are shared with other branches. Please see the calendar for a schedule of great events.

We always want to hear from our members and encourage you to share your suggestions, comments and even your applause! Please watch your inbox for our latest member survey which you will receive in a few weeks. We want to hear from you.

The most important thing you can do this fall is VOTE. If the witness requirement for mail voting continues, please make a date with another Branch member to meet in an outdoor location and safely witness each other's ballots. The AAUW website will have Voter Guides assessing candidates' positions on critical issues – watch for them. Critical dates to remember are:

- September 19 to October 31 – Absentee In-Person Voting
- October 13 – Deadline to Update Registration or Register
- October 23 – Last Date to Apply for a Mail Ballot
- November 3 – Election Day

For details: <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/>

Thank you all for your continued participation and support.
Janine

MEMBERS

Membership News - Ilene Banker, Membership Vice President

We are delighted to welcome the following new members to our branch:

Cypriana Mccray, President of the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)
Florida A&M University, Masters of International Business

Barbara Hampton Barclay, Brooklyn College MS Music Education, Columbia Teachers College,
Gifted Studies.

Patricia Reblitz: Fordham, MSW, Biology,

We have a 74% percent renewal rate as 7/30/2020

Our membership data can be found below:

Total Members (6/30/2020):	20	Non renewed as of 7/30/20
Total Members (6/30/2021):	71	Renewed as of 7/30/20
Total Members (Life Members):	5	
Total Members Listed:	96	

Members recruiting members: If you let Janine know that you have a friend whom you would like to invite to a Zoom meeting, and that friend participates and is then interested in formally joining our R-H branch, I can offer a discounted rate of \$59.50 as dues for the new membership year. SUCH A DEAL!

We often have requests to keep members apprised of serious illnesses/deaths in the family within our branch community. Your help is needed with this issue. Please provide the names, contact information (especially important if the individual not at home) and any additional information she permits when you become aware of those who need our support due to personal circumstances. Please provide all information to our secretary, Alyse Goldman, at alysegoldman818 @ gmail.com. The branch members will be notified as soon as possible. Please support those individuals who are in need with cards, meals, etc.



As you all know, all of our activities are now on Zoom. Since our Newsletter is published on the unsecured portion of our website, we will be attaching a separate attachment to the newsletter email with all the Zoom meeting ID numbers and passwords that you will need to access these activities.



**From Our Book Group Facilitators
Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld**

Our next book group will be over the internet via Zoom. Please see the attached page for the Zoom link for our meeting on August 26 at 2 pm.

Upcoming books:

August: ***Northanger Abbey*** by Jane Austen

September: ***Moment of Lift*** by Melinda Gates

October: ***Free Food for Millionaires*** by Min Jin Lee

December: ***A Well-Behaved Woman*** by Therese Ann Fowl



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

August 6 Noon Our speaker will be Brian Cannon, OneVirginia202.

Since our Branch was interested in hearing Mr. Cannon speak on the work of his organization on the issue of gerrymandering and the Alexandria branch had already secured his speaking to them, we are joining with them at their meeting. The information to join in on this zoom meeting will be on the Zoom attachment. Hope many of you can attend this very important meeting.



Public Policy Postcard Project

Thank You Thank You ...for the rapid and enthusiastic response from eleven of our branch members who participated in a request to write postcards to 550 voters in our local region. The request came from the non-partisan Fairfax Local Action Group for OneVirginia2021. Our “ask” in purple ink and stars was to encourage those voters to vote “YES” on the Nov ballot for the “Redistricting Commission Amendment”. The Bill addresses the many inequities in our voting district lines. This amendment will give VA a transparent, bipartisan, citizen-led commission for fair voting maps. A letter of appreciation was received acknowledging our branches’ participation as they reached their 3,000 postcard goal.

For further information please contact:

OneVirginia2021.org/the-solution (Note our August Speaker is from this organization)

And a big thank you to the writers :Roberta Sherman, Judi Polizzotti, Janine Greenwood, Brenda Maas, Cyndi Shanahan, Mary Lou DeDemeo, Ellen Grimley, Nadine James, Judy Skirbunt, Melissa Williams and Mary Zane.



Public Policy and Lobby Corps - Mary Zane and Judi Polizzotti Co-Chairs

On Sunday July 26, Director of Public Policy and Legal Advocacy, Kate Nelson presented recent changes, current status, and future plans.

- Economic Security - passage of Equal Pay Act which passed the US House Of Representatives in 2019 but is stalled in the Senate.
- Education - AAUW has enjoined in a lawsuit against the Title IX new rules promoted by Secretary Of Education, Betsy DeVos, that allows victims to be cross-examined, includes additional barriers and is being implemented in this time of a pandemic.
- ERA - passed in 38 states, we will continue to work towards ratification.
- Others - Reduce student loan debt, improve child care, and retirement security.

We are striving to not be the same but have a new normal to serve all. To achieve the goals stated below, we must build coalitions with groups with different perspectives on issues.

- We support the Voting Rights Advancement Act which has an emphasis on grassroots organization and eliminating restrictions on people of color and women.
- Voter education is an important vehicle for change with Voting User Guides and Voter Issue Guides in key races available on action alerts. Mail-in voting education and changes in voting procedures are also important parts of this election.

Madison Roberts, UVA Graduate with a Masters in Public Policy, presented her capstone project on legislation to reduce gender based wage gap in Virginia. She analyzed state gender pay equity legislation and compared options to achieve pay equity. Her recommendation is that the salary history ban legislation is most effective in this effort. It was also mentioned that Virginia state agencies are now not asking for salary history on job applications.

Our Virginia State Public Policy Co-Chairs are Denise Murden and Susan Burke who will provide the VA activities for the upcoming year. They suggested communicating through email and social media to provide the VA priorities to our members and coalition partners. Possibly to also include virtual town halls to address the community.

AAUW VA website contains the VA Public Policy Priorities and also links to portions of the presentation for more details.

Below is a new Fairfax County Police Reform website. It describes efforts in reform and statistics on the current situation and ways for residents to comment and support.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/police-updates>

Great Decisions - Judi Polizzotti, Co-Chair

Due to our pandemic, August 19th will be a Zoom meeting. You will need a computer with a mic and camera to view the video and hear the audio. The topic will be China and Latin America. It is the sixth topic in the Foreign Policy Briefing Book which is available through the website fpa.org or on your nook or kindle. Check the attachment for the Zoom link information. I hope to see you then. Stay well.

INFO

To Our Sister Branches in Northern Virginia:

If you are a Nationals fan and/or also support women's and girls' education, McLean Branch is offering a unique opportunity, including the possibility of owning a baseball signed by Max Scherzer. Due to the impact of the Covid 19 virus McLean Area Branch has had to cancel its 2020 Used Book Sale. As you are probably aware, this huge book sale is our annual charitable fundraiser and raises many thousands of dollars for AAUW Funds and our three local scholarships for women returning to college. We know that many of our sister AAUW members come to our book sale because we've seen you there! We know all our branches fundraise, and the loss of fundraising events and opportunities this year is disheartening for all our branches.

We now have an alternative fundraiser that we believe will be enticing to your members and all those Nationals fans. Nats pitcher Max Scherzer has given us three baseballs, personally signed with his name and "2019 World Series Champs." (Erica Scherzer is an AAUW member.) For every \$20 contributed, there is an opportunity to have one of the baseballs. And a person may donate multiples of \$20 to enhance the opportunity. You may have neighbors and family members who would also like to join in, both for the baseball and also to support women's education.

We'd love your help. If you would like to contribute to this, contributions can be sent to McLean Branch AAUW, P.O. Box 1002, McLean, VA 22101. Be sure to include your full name, address, and phone number so we can contact you if you are lucky. Or you can contribute by credit card through this link on GoFundMe: <https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/aauw-mclean-areas-home-run-fundraiser-for-women-and-education>. The owners of a baseball will be selected randomly, and all contributions will receive a thank you receipt. Contributions can be made through August 31, 2020.

Our branch members personally contributed in May and June, encouraged to think of what they would have spent on the May luncheon and the value of all the hours they would have spent working on the book sale. We know we won't come close, but we still want to do as much as we can for those women returning to college because we know that money is crucial to them. And we also want to support as we can our national organization's philanthropy, AAUW Funds. Thank you



Thought provoking and encouraging to take action, today's AAUW leadership meeting focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. I am sitting here thinking what I can do, and what we as the Reason/Herndon branch can do to make a difference.

Dr. Janice Underwood reviewed what she and Governor Northam are working on to increase equity in the state. She emphasized the unique nature of her role – reporting directly to the Governor.

After Dr. Underwood's talk was stopped because of technical problems, her special assistant, Alaysia Hackett, spoke. She discussed several important events and concerns:

--Governor Northam announced a grant opportunity for small business and non-profits that were not helped by the CARES act. Many of these businesses are minority or women owned. The grants will help these businesses survive during the Covid-19 pandemic.

--In March the Health Equity Working group (Virginia was the first state to do this) looked at the disparate impact of Covid on communities of color—including Hispanic groups and undocumented people who have no insurance. The working group is planning so they can respond appropriately to whatever happens in the Commonwealth and that all Virginians have access to appropriate healthcare.

--Alaysia encouraged all of us to key into the website where we can receive updates of all decisions regarding diversity and inclusion on the state level. The website is governor@virginia.gov/diversity.

The next speakers were Angela HatteryPh.D and Earl SmithPh.D who wrote "Policing Black Bodies: How Black Lives are Surveilled and How to Work for Change."

They began the talk with some history and the decision at the US's formation enslaved people were to be considered property and therefore deprived of rights. They also discussed Thomas Jefferson's reneging on his much publicized decision to free his slaves, which he did not do. That Blacks in this country are surveilled in many situations, which causes the heightened numbers in the criminal justice system.

When asked what AAUW could do—what we could focus on— the authors encouraged us to read their book, "Policing Black Bodies" and "Life on the Color Line" by Dr. Gregory Williams: The true story of a white boy who discovered he was black. They also said we could focus on influencing lawmakers about the following concerns:

Food Stamps

Raise the limit and make the rules sensible on Food Stamps. Dr. Hattery—under \$5 for a single person. Their reaction was that living on that amount is impossible. DrHattery suggested we ask our members to try to live the present \$5 for food for a single person

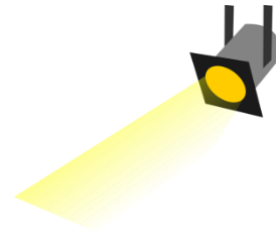
Decriminalization of Using Drugs when Pregnant.

White women addicted to opiod use are sent to rehab. Black woman addicted to crack are sent to prison. The authors discussed the outrageous way black women have pregnant women addicted to alcohol or drugs should be given treatment—not incarceration.

Anti-Shackling Law—Women prisoners are sometimes shackled in labor and delivery. The reason is the fear they are flight risks—during labor and delivery. Shackling is cruel and not at all necessary.



When sending emails to a large group of members, please list the emails for recipients in the “bcc” line. When responding to a group email, please make sure to reply only to the sender and **not** “reply all” unless the sender indicates differently. This would be greatly appreciated.



SPOTLIGHT ON Gail Osberg - Branch Record Holder



Gail Osberg holds at least two branch records – for the most years as a member of AAUW and the most different AAUW positions held.

“I joined the Westchester County, NY branch right out of college in 1959. I had learned about AAUW from the dean of students at SUNY Geneseo who said it was an important organization to get involved in.”

But soon she took a break from AAUW due to a series of major events: graduate school, a new job as a librarian at the CIA which meant moving to northern Virginia, marriage, and the birth of a son. When the family moved to Reston, she joined our branch in 1972, which had been founded just three years earlier.

“Almost immediately, I was asked by the president if I would take on the branch newsletter, which I did, and I served as president from 1973-75.”

In 1978, Gail was elected corresponding secretary of the VA AAUW State Board and in the early 1980s, she was appointed the Board’s technology chair.

“The national AAUW officers realized the importance of computers and held a week-end meeting in San Francisco of the 50 state technology chairs. We spent two full days learning about computers and how to pass on the information to branch members in our state.”

Also in the 1980s, for several years Gail was the Reston branch representative to the AAUW Education Watchdog Committee, which closely watched the Fairfax County school system.

“We met monthly, and we testified at the budget hearings of both the school system and the county.”

And Gail attended many national AAUW conventions, then held every other year in a different city. A highlight was the one in Boston in 1981, celebrating AAUW’s 100th anniversary.

“It was attended by hundreds of members and the keynote speaker was Senator Edward Kennedy.”

Gail had a lot more in her life than AAUW. Her husband, Tom, worked for the federal government and they had two sons. She was a stay-at-home mom for 9-1/2 years, then in 1978 became a librarian in Fairfax County libraries, first at Pohick Regional Library in Burke, then at Reston Regional, and finally as manager of the Patrick Henry Library in Vienna. The last position included supervising the remodeling of a building and moving into it, a huge job.

After retiring in 1998, Gail became even more active in AAUW. In 2000 she was elected to the State Board again, this time as the Northern District Representative, which meant planning an annual meeting for all members in the district’s 12 branches, and meeting quarterly with branch presidents from Fairfax, Arlington and Prince William counties. And she served on the planning committees for two state conventions, including the one at the Dulles Hyatt in 2016.

Gail’s husband died in 2001. In 2017 she moved to an assisted living residence in Falls Church, near one of her sons, and she can no longer attend our branch events. But she remains a member and said she “continues to support AAUW as much as possible.”

Why is she such a strong supporter of our organization?

“One reason is that it helped me advance professionally, as I could deal with the general public because I had learned to work with different people in AAUW. And I am still very interested in AAUW’s goals. Even though I have sons and no daughters, I know how terribly important equality is for women.” Written by Marilyn Silvey

Board of Directors 2018-19

President	Janine Greenwood	janinegrnwd@hotmail.com
Vice President	Vacant	
VP Finances	Ruth Ruttenberg	kennruth@comcast.net
VP Membership	Ilene Banker	ilene.banker@gmail.com
VP Program	Carol Flicker	carolflicker@verizon.net
	Roberta Sherman	shermanrs1@aol.com
Secretary	Alyse Goldman	alysegoldman818@gmail.com
Adopt-a-Spot	Fran Lovaas	franlovaas@comcast.net
Cultural Arts	Roberta Sherman	shermanrs1@aol.com
	Carol Flicker	carolflicker@gmail.com
Book Group	Carla Heymsfeld	heycarla@comcast.net
	Alyse Goldman	alysegoldman@icloud.com
Great Decisions	Judi Polizzotti	judipoli86@gmail.com
	Judy Skirbunt	judy.skirbunt@gmail.com
Newsletter	Roberta Sherman	shermanrs1@aol.com
NVCC Liaison	Janine Greenwood	janinegrnwd@hotmail.com
Public Policy	Judi Polizzotti	judipoli86@gmail.com
	Mary Zane	mpz_06@verizon.net
Ashby Ponds	Marilyn Silvey	marilynsilvey@comcast.com
Website	Dianne Mero	dmeroaaauw@yahoo.com

Northern District Co-Representatives: Kate MacLeod and Sara Anderson

State Board Liaison to Reston-Herndon Branch: Susan Burk Burksu@aol.com

AAUW Diversity Statement: *In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.*

Vision: *Equity for all.*

Values: *Nonpartisan, Fact-based, Integrity, Inclusion and Intersectionality*

Branch Website: <http://restonherndon-va.aauw.net> VA3035

AAUW VA Website: <http://aauw-va.aauw.net>

AAUW Website: www.AAUW.org

Branch Facebook Page: *Reston-Herndon Branch of AAUW*