



Reston-Herndon Area (VA) Branch

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

President's Pen



One of my biggest celebrations this holiday season is the election of our first woman vice president – not only a woman, but a woman who reflects the wonderful diversity of our nation. Hurrah!

The second thing I'm celebrating is our members. We had a great Friendsgiving celebration and a wonderful talk by member, Dr. Jean Anne Linney, on Maintaining Mental Health in the Time of COVID. Here's a few of Dr. Linney's suggestions for maintaining calm now:

- Increase sources of pleasure
- Decrease sources of distress
- Increase sense of mastery, control, purpose
- Adjust expectations
- Reflect and Revisit Gratitude

Not only did we have a wonderful event but you generously stepped up to the plate and contributed \$940 to our scholarship fund since we were unable to have our usual raffle. And to top that Branch members have contributed almost \$4000 to AAUW funds! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Don't miss the rest of this newsletter particularly some great December programs including a chat with the staff of Virginia Senator Tim Kaine and a virtual visit to the National Women's History Museum.

Wishing you and your family a happy holiday season
Janine

MEMBERS

Membership News - Ilene Banker, Membership Vice President

We would like to welcome new members Susan Rosenthal and Shyamali Hauth to our active branch. The addition of these two new members brings our total to 84 members.

I encourage you to invite your friends to join at this time. If they attend any one of our Zoom presentations, I can offer them a reduced membership fee of \$59.50, rather than \$89.00. Any questions, please have your friends or family contact me, ilene.Banker@gmail.com.

Our branch has recently advertised for new members in several local community blogs in the hope of reaching a more diverse membership. Next Door reaches 40 communities and we hope to attract new members by inviting them to any Zoom meeting to see what we are all about. Therefore, you may be seeing faces you do not know during our sessions. We hope we will be able to expand our membership by these community outreach sites.

ALL MEMBERS, PLEASE READ AND CONSIDER

As you all know, our Board of Directors is entirely composed of volunteers who have stepped up in the service of our branch to help facilitate day to day operations, communications, programs including Diversity and Inclusion, partnership with National Council of Negro Woman (NCNW) and outreach to our communities.

In May, several positions will become open since those members have served two consecutive terms or others Board members may want to step down. President, Vice President, Membership Vice President, Program Vice President and Secretary are several positions that will be opened for next year.

If you would like to volunteer for any position or assist on a team with others either in a co-role or on a team, please let one of the Board members know or contact me directly, ilene.Banker@gmail.com. for more information. You can also look at our AAUW Reston-Herndon website for job descriptions.

Members Supporting Members

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](mailto:alysegoldman818@gmail.com). The branch members will be notified as soon as possible. Please support those individuals who are in need with cards, meals, visits, etc.



Email: 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.



Several Virginia AAUW members have received emails said to be from either Suzanne Rothwell or Leslie Tourigny, Co-Presidents of AAUW of Virginia. The subject line is "AAUW of Virginia" and is sent from the email address "." The emails ask for donations to purchase gift cards for "Veterans at Hospice and Palliative care units for preventive items from Corona Disease (COVID 19)." Some emails include a specific dollar amount. These emails are bogus so do not respond.



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

Upcoming books:

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

Jan: My Own Words, Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Feb: The Hate U Give, Angie Thomas

March: Hell and Other Destinations, Madeleine Albright

April: Island of Sea Women, by Lisa See

May: The Dutch House, Ann Patchett

June: Is This Anything? Jerry Seinfeld

July: I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelu

August: Instructions for a Heat Wave, Maggie O'Farrell

Sept: Eleanor, David Michealis

Oct: Book of Lost Friends, Lisa Wingate

Dec: This Chair Rocks, Ashton Applewhite



Diversity and Inclusion

Kamala Harris was elected the first woman to be Vice President. I'm sure we all know her background as a daughter of a Black Jamaican dad and an Indian American mom. Her diverse background is an inspiration for young girls of all backgrounds. In her victory speech on Saturday night she said: "Dream with ambition, lead with conviction and see yourselves in a way that others may not, simply because they've never seen it before. But know that we will applaud you every step of the way."

Spotlight On:
Cindy Shanahan
By Marilyn Silvey



Many women join AAUW when they are young and remain members for years, while others become active – then drop out – and return to be even more active. Former branch president Cyndi Shanahan, who current holds a newly-created position on the AAUW Virginia State Board, is one of them.

Originally from the Cleveland area, Cyndi graduated from Jacksonville State University and the University of Alabama where she majored in Home Economics , went to work, got married, and had two children. In 1991, the family moved to Reston, and her busy life continued as she worked fulltime at Freddie Mac and cared for 10-year-old Erin and three-year-old Daniel. Erin attended Armstrong Elementary School, the site of one of our branch's annual GEMS – Girls Excelling in Math and Science – events. Aimed at 5th and 6th grade girls, GEMS offered a Saturday morning of hands-on classes led by area women with math and science careers, with an astronaut or other high-profile woman as opening keynote speaker. Cyndi says it led her to AAUW.

“Erin participated in that program, which got me involved in the branch. The work that we did though our STEM programming in Reston elementary schools was wonderful, and impactful for the girls. I felt I was able to help by providing some speakers from Freddie Mac and by helping at the events.”

And Cyndi was glad to become a branch member.

“I joined AAUW to be with like-minded women and to have an interest of my own outside of work. I also wanted to be a role model for my daughter in supporting women.”

Those goals worked - daughter Erin, now married with two children, has also been a member of our branch. But that's getting ahead of the story.

Cyndi was active for a few years and became branch treasurer, but her life changed when her children became active in band and travel sports and her husband was traveling extensively with his work. And by then Cyndi was vice president of strategy and planning at Freddie Mac.

“I no longer had time to participate actively in AAUW and ultimately dropped out. But a few years later I rejoined, and in 2012 Maureen Dwyer and I were elected co-presidents and served for three years. We worked hard to involve our members in planning and engagement, and we also worked with the new branch in Ashburn, which ended up folding during our last year in office.”

The annual scholarship that our branch continues at Northern Virginia Community College also began then, replacing scholarships given senior girls at South Lakes and Herndon High Schools.

A year later, Cyndi became the Membership Chair for AAUW-Virginia.

“During this time, I worked closely with the Membership Vice Presidents of each branch in the state to encourage them to focus on diversity and inclusion. A membership toolkit was developed and resource on the AAUW-VA website. I was thrilled that the membership in many branches, including the Reston-Herndon branch, not only remained constant but increased!”

As Cyndi's term was coming to an end, a new challenge was presented. Diversity and Inclusion became a key topic at the state level, and the state conference in 2019 was focused solely on this topic. The state board decided to create a new position – now the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion chair – and appointed Cyndi to be the first holder of it. During the past year, she asked each of the 23 branches in Virginia to identify a member as Diversity and Inclusion contact, and she has led conference calls with all of them to ensure collaboration across the state.

“More than three quarters of the branches in Virginia are actively participating in the program and the work they are doing is amazing. And I am proud that our Reston-Herndon branch is leading the way. We are one of 17 states that have a diversity chair on the state board. This summer, in coordination with AAUW-National, we held the first ever conference call with state chairs across the country to share ideas and information, and we will be checking in later this year to see how things are progressing.”

Cyndi's five years on the Virginia state board have made her impressed with the focus on the mission, vision and priorities of AAUW and more professional each year, including after “Covid took over the world” this spring.

“Our state leaders have done a wonderful job of pivoting the organization to Zoom presentations and spending sufficient time to effectively manage Zoom meetings. The Board continues to be dedicated to meeting the mission and vision of AAUW, meeting our state goals and engaging our members. Our organization values the empowerment of women and girls and does so in a well thought out and effective way. That is why I remain a solid AAUW member.”

One last thing – daughter Erin, who was our branch membership chair a few years ago, got very busy after having two children and dropped out. Let's hope she will follow her mother's example, and later rejoin AAUW and blaze new trails for future members.

Great Decisions - Judi Polizzotti, Co-Chair



As we are waiting for the Briefing Books to arrive and it is not on Kindle or Nook as of yet, and January 20th is Inauguration Day, we are delaying the start of Great Decisions meetings until February 17th. It will also be a Zoom meeting. The zoom link, ID and password will be included in the zoom links that will be sent only to branch members which is included in the email with the newsletter . You will need a computer with a mic and camera to view the video and hear the audio. The topic will be "Global Supply Chains". It is the first topic for 2021 in the Foreign Policy Briefing Book which will be available through the website fpa.org or on your Nook or Kindle. I hope to see you then. Stay well.

You can pre-order the Briefing Book on Foreign Policy Association website now. The topics are Global Supply Chains, Persian Gulf Security, Brexit and the EU, The Arctic, The two Koreas, Role of the WHO, End of Globalization?

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

We were pleased to see the passage of the Virginia Redistricting Amendment in the National election endorsed by VA State AAUW.

The following letter was sent from the President and the Public Policy Co-Chairs to the Fairfax County Board of Elections Chairman, Secretary and Vice Chairman to thank them for their service in the last election.

Fairfax County Board of Elections

Dear Chairman Hunt:

On behalf of the Reston-Herndon Area Branch of AAUW, we write to express our appreciation for your staff's extraordinary efforts during this election season to help more Fairfax County voters than ever to exercise their right to vote in a safe and secure manner. We recognize that legislative changes to our long-standing voting process, increased media and public scrutiny, and the restrictions of our health crisis posed unique challenges during this election, yet thanks to your team and volunteer citizens they trained, Virginia rose from being the 49th most difficult state to vote in 2016 to 12th in 2020.

AAUW, a non-partisan organization that advances equity for women and girls, considers the right to vote as *foundational* to our other goals, and our members across the Nation work to support and expand voter access. This year, Getting Out the Vote (GOTV) was a top AAUW priority. Here in Virginia, we worked to make sure our branches around the State were aware of and informed about deadlines, process and voting changes, including those adopted during the Special Session, and encouraged our members to share the information with their families and neighbors.

We would like to particularly thank Katherine Hanley for speaking to our group prior to the election about voting procedures and the county's efforts to provide a safe and secure voting environment.

The challenges of conducting a high-profile election in the midst of a pandemic were great, but you and electoral officials and volunteers throughout the County rose to the challenge and delivered a historic turnout with a fair and transparent process that ensured that every citizen had their voice heard. Please pass on our deep and sincere appreciation to all involved.

AAUW Matching Gift Opportunity

Thank you for standing up for equity during this tumultuous and difficult year. If you're feeling weary about the divisive election, relentless pandemic and struggling economy, you're not alone. AAUW is right there with you. But we must keep fighting for the one thing that can get our nation past this



Thursday, December 11 - 2:00 pm - Congressional Update - Meet Anna Przebinda and others of Sen. Tim Kaine's Staff and hear what's ahead for the 117th Congress. Zoom link is attached to the email with this newsletter.

Wednesday, December 16 at 3:00 pm - National Women's History Museum Program on the impact of the radical Lesbians on the feminist movement. For Zoom line email janinegrnwd@hotmail.com Attendance is limited. Below is a summary of the topic to be discussed:

The Second Wave of Feminism: The Lavender Menace

In 1949, French feminist author Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex*, a foundational book that set the tone for the next surge of 20th-century women's activism. Betty Friedan followed this effort in 1963 with the publication of her seminal work, *The Feminine Mystique*, a work that is often associated with helping to ignite the second feminist wave in the United States. Using these two texts as a foundation, this program explores the Lesbian Feminist Movement and provides an overview of the Radicalesbians, an organization of feminist lesbians that formed in the wake of the National Organization of Women's (NOW) exclusion of lesbian participation at the Second Congress to Unite Women. The Lavender Menace protest at the 1970 NOW Conference had myriad effects on the feminist movement, which can still be felt today.



Sunday, December 13, 2020 from 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

*Please RSVP below for the link to our virtual Holiday Party!
Family and friends are also welcome!*

There will be games, prizes, and lots of fun discussions!

RSVP by Friday, Dec. 11.2020 to info@NCNWrestondulles.org

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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*