



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

### President's Pen



### Stars in Our Eyes

Our branch didn't just survive 2020, we thrived. We received Five Stars in the AAUW Five Star Program. We are one of only sixteen AAUW branches in the country to have achieved this honor. In addition, AAUW of Virginia is the first state chapter to receive the state Five Star Award. **We'll celebrate these achievements with a special Zoom meeting just for our branch with AAUW President Kim Churches on Tuesday, January 19 at 2:30 PM.** Link and details of this program will follow.

The stars are just an acknowledgement of the great things we have accomplished this year. Programs ranged from an in-person tour of the Library of Congress Suffrage Exhibit (It seems so long ago and in another universe!) to a virtual tour with the National Women's History Museum. Other programs looked at diversity in local education, food insecurity, the upcoming Congress, VA efforts to reduce gerrymandering and new voting procedures. We got tips on how to promote our mental health. Great Decisions connected us to the world and our Book Group kept our minds active. Branch members supported GOTV. And we had fun and kept connected with all our AAUW friends in our branch and statewide. Our website and newsletter make us the model for other branches. Thanks to all who made these initiatives possible and all who participated.

To keep all this going, **your branch needs you!** Our officers have worked very hard to make all this happen and now it's your turn to take us to the next level. Have a chat with your AAUW branch best buddy and think of the role the two of you could fill as "co-something." For our fiscal year beginning July 2021, we need just about everything from branch president on down. So now it's your turn to step up and help lead the branch that means so much to us all. Email or call me any time to talk about how you can contribute.

Finally, our thoughts and condolences go out to members who have lost friends or family members, have had medical issues, or have faced other challenges in this unprecedented year. We're all standing together and stronger because of our community. Here's to better times in 2021.

Happy New Year  
Janine

# MEMBERS

## Membership News - Ilene Banker, Membership Vice President

Our membership has reached 85 members with the addition of Joan Denchfield. Welcome Joan and we hope to meet you on our next Zoom event.

Did you know that our Branch is advertising in NextDoor.com and the Reston Patch to encourage new members to join us. As always, if you know anyone who would like to be part of our Branch, please let me know and I will send them all the necessary information they might need.

To encourage our growing partnership with the National Council of Negro Women, please consider joining their organization to additionally support women and families in our communities. AAUW has invited NCHW members to join us as well.

“Our local chapter of NCNW was founded in September 1973 by 11 women from the Reston, Herndon, Sterling and Vienna areas, with a goal of service to the community. Our mission is to lead, develop and advocate for women of African descent as they support families and communities.”

Total cost of the discounted membership dues is \$65.00 and is tax deductible. For more information please contact [ilene.Banker@gmail.com](mailto:ilene.Banker@gmail.com) or go on their website <http://www.ncnwrestondulles.org/>

## 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.



**Note:** All zoom links to our meetings and activities will be attached to the newsletter email.



### From Our Book Group Facilitators

**Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld**

Our Zoom meetings continue at 2PM on the fourth Wednesday of the month. The next meeting is on January 27 and the February meeting on February 24

Upcoming books:

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

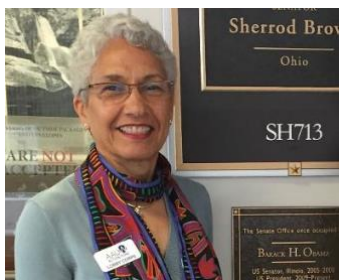


### Diversity and Inclusion

The League of Women Voters is dedicated to promoting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, as is AAUW. In November, the League held a forum on "One Fairfax." One Fairfax is a policy adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Fairfax County Public Schools to work toward racial and social equity in Fairfax County. The forum is available to watch on the League's YouTube channel.

[http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=0017rgnZGOJLkEcljLKJsiM9dHSCstG25BlgqIAzplhSlzqniGTsp76opePvfVKIXeYoa8Qv48cBzzZW4w4lfJ0vEe1AGtJfkzc5HdrawQ32djq4HzfV-Ze9pgJOmW7d2PhXvxuVkeKkM7gzhlLJDlszg==&c=NiwDNwmHWPDP0pISGN4EwdV7ZBWtluw2r5Dx2xRJ2z1-7oI\\_n5Xzhg==&ch=4uZdOiuW00re4V4\\_OW9\\_pAlgnFOXtZN0qp2K9Ur7HnqMBxDcZney-g==](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=0017rgnZGOJLkEcljLKJsiM9dHSCstG25BlgqIAzplhSlzqniGTsp76opePvfVKIXeYoa8Qv48cBzzZW4w4lfJ0vEe1AGtJfkzc5HdrawQ32djq4HzfV-Ze9pgJOmW7d2PhXvxuVkeKkM7gzhlLJDlszg==&c=NiwDNwmHWPDP0pISGN4EwdV7ZBWtluw2r5Dx2xRJ2z1-7oI_n5Xzhg==&ch=4uZdOiuW00re4V4_OW9_pAlgnFOXtZN0qp2K9Ur7HnqMBxDcZney-g==)

Spotlight On:  
Stephanie Abbott  
By Marilyn Silvey



Before Stephanie Abbott joined our branch in 1990, I had learned some things about her. That's because her mother, Lee Young, was our membership chair at the time. She told me that Stephanie had earned degrees in Spanish from two US colleges and studied for a year at the University of Madrid, and that she had had three distinctly different professions.

But other things I only recently learned from Stephanie, including that she is the great, great, great granddaughter of Aaron Burr (yes, THAT Arron Burr!) whose son was a barber and a member of the underground railroad in Philadelphia, where Stephanie grew up.

"Genealogical research was part of our family's life before it became so popular," Stephanie said.

Stephanie moved to Reston in 1979 with her husband Ed, whom she had met during their senior year at Bates College in Maine, and their two sons. They had lived in Honolulu and in New York state, where Stephanie taught high school Spanish for four years. Here, Stephanie was a bank manager with First Virginia Bank for five years, then in the insurance business for 21 years, as first a New York Life agent, then an independent broker.

Stephanie said it's obvious why she joined AAUW – "I was recruited by my mother, how could I not join!" -- and she at once felt a common bond with our members.

"At that time, most of us had school age children. We were at the forefront of pushing for more girls in STEM fields with our annual GEMS (Girls Excelling in Math and Science) conferences. We watched each other's kids go through middle school, high school, college and some weddings. Our branch started a mentoring program at Forest Edge Elementary School, and I helped as a substitute for several years."

Other branch activities in those years included an investment club, which after a few years had to disassociate from AAUW due to National AAUW's concerns about liability, and a gourmet group that shared a fixed menu and met, with husbands, in members' homes.

In 2008, our branch hosted seven young Russian business people and government managers for about 10 days the week before the first Obama election. The program was financed by an agency of the Library of Congress. The Russians stayed in branch members' homes and had a busy schedule of meetings with supporters of both parties, capped by attending an outdoor rally at which Barack Obama spoke the night before the election. Stephanie and her husband hosted two of the visitors.

"I am still friends on Facebook with one, Alexey, who we spent a few hours with in St. Petersburg a few years later while Ed and I were on a Baltic cruise."

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Stephanie was branch membership chair, treasurer, and from 2009-11 the co-president for one year each with Carol Hurlburt first followed by Judy Helmich.

After the election of Donald Trump, Stephanie joined the AAUW Lobby Corps, which for many years was the only weekly lobby program of a national women's organization. More recently it became a monthly program, and it is not active now due to the pandemic.

"It was a great experience. We met on Capitol Hill and got packets of talking points prepared by AAUW staff at our national headquarters about issues that AAUW wanted to get enacted into laws, supporting our core mission of improving the educational and working conditions for women. We also lobbied for better child care, medical care, and paid family leave. We met with varied levels of success. Hopefully we can return to our efforts next year."

As Stephanie looks to the future, she also hopes to follow her mother's example in recruiting an AAUW family member -- her granddaughter Soukeyna, who graduated from Mount Holyoke this year. The Abbotts' son Michael and family have lived in Senegal for the past 18 years and Soukeyna is there now, but she is applying for jobs in the United States and hopes to work here. When she returns, Stephanie is ready to tell her that membership in one of the oldest and largest American women's organizations is a family tradition.

### Great Decisions - Judi Polizzotti, Co-Chair



**We are delaying the start of Great Decisions meetings until February 17th. This 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](http://fpa.org) or on your Nook or Kindle.

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? I hope to see you then. Stay well.

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

Join Delegate Ken Plum and Senator Janet Howell for a virtual Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, January 5, 7:00 to 8:30 pm. In these difficult times, it's important to stay informed of the issues and status and how it impacts our daily lives. To register for the Town Hall go to <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwldOCupjMtEtSggzZ2Uc3HWmi1J-kq1DIm>



**January 5, 2021 6:45 pm** The Vienna Branch has invited us to their program on "Climate Change in the Commonwealth of Virginia". Professor Jim Kinter of George Mason University will be the speaker. According to Professor Kinter, "Knowing where, when, and by how much climate will change in the Commonwealth, and what the impacts of those changes will be on citizens' lives, livelihoods and property, are critically important aspects of planning and preparing for changes that are decades in the making."

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89251583009?pwd=NytwUk1LNThVWUVHNkw5WIB2V2d4UT09>

Meeting ID: 892 5158 3009

Passcode: 043279

**January 9, 2021, 10 a.m.** Our Branch will be joining with The Northern District of AAUW of Virginia for a Zoom program. This will be a panel discussion with representatives from local districts. The topic is "Local Governments' Efforts on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." The goal of the program is to help our members in Northern Virginia to better understand what our local governments are doing related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Currently there are two confirmed panelists: Karla Bruce, Chief Equity Officer of Fairfax County; and Samia Byrd, Chief Race and Equity Officer for Arlington County. Organizers have also asked someone from Alexandria City to participate.

**January 13 3:00 pm** Our Streaming group will be discussing *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* which you can view on Netflix. It is a 2020 film based on the play by August

Wilson. Ma Rainey was an influential blues singer. The dramatization is set in a recording studio in 1927. It explores themes of artistic control, commercial exploitation and systematic and sometime violent racism.

**January 19 2:30** The following letter was received by Janine Greenwood our President from Kim Church, National CEO of AAUW:

"Congratulations on your branch achieving all five stars in the Five Star Recognition Program. Your branch has been steadfast in our mission to continue advancing opportunities for women and girls, and we would like to personally thank you for the tremendous work you've done to cross the Five Star finish line.

It takes all of us working together – something we've been doing since 17 bold women formed AAUW in the late 1800s -- to affect the change that we want to see in the world. **That's why we'd like to cordially invite all members of the AAUW Reston-Herndon Area (VA) Branch to join Kim for a leadership briefing via Zoom.**"

The link for this meeting will be sent to you as the date nears.

**January 20 11:45** - Join us as we celebrate American Democracy in action as we view the inauguration of our new President of the United States. The ceremony starts at noon and Janine will stream it from her computer beginning at 11:45 AM. Bring your lunch and join us to chat and celebrate this special event.

## Great free January programs from National Women's History Museum <https://www.womenshistory.org>

**January 17 - 1-2 pm - NWHM Presents! Sundays@Home: "Standing Up for Change" Virtual Exhibit Walk-Through**

Join the National Women's History Museum for a guest curator-led virtual walkthrough of the Museum's popular online exhibit, *Standing Up for Change: African American Women and the Civil Rights Movement*, with Emma Rothberg, NWHM Predoctoral Fellow in Gender Studies, as part of NWHM's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration and salute to the women who formed the backbone of the Civil Rights Movement throughout the entire month of January.

**January 24 - 3-4 pm - NWHM Presents! Sundays@Home: Remembering Lula and the Selma Teachers' March**

Join the National Women's History Museum and Diana Veiga in conversation with sisters Joyce Parrish O'Neal and Phyllis Parrish Alston as they reflect on the bravery of their mother Lula "Too Sweet" Parrish and the 100 teachers who demonstrated in the Teachers' March on January 22nd 1965 in Selma, Alabama.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**February 26 at 4:00 pm** - Dr Sherri Burr, Professor of Law at the University of New Mexico will be our speaker. Dr. Burr has an impressive background. She is the Dickason Chair in Law and Regents Professor Emerita at the University of New Mexico School of Law, received her education at Mount Holyoke College, Princeton University and the Yale Law School. The author of 26 other books, Burr lectures on her research related to Free Blacks and created the art exhibition "400 Years of Freedom, Restriction and Survival." For more information about her you can go to:

<https://lawschool.unm.edu/faculty/burr/index.html>

Her talk will focus on the challenges of being a woman in pre civil war Virginia. In addition, she has written a Pulitzer Prize nominated book Complicated Lives Free Blacks in Virginia 1619-1865. She indicated that the discussion would be more engaging if we read her book in advance. To that end, Janine has purchased two copies of the book. It is only 141 pages so we are assuming a quick read. If you are interested in reading the book before the meeting, you can order the book on Amazon or can contact Janine or Roberta to be placed on a list and as people finish reading the book, it will be passed along to the next individual on the list. Once those of you who want to read the book have finished it and the discussion is over, we will donate one copy to the South Lakes High School Library and one to the Reston Regional Library. This should be a wonderful talk.



Ilene Banker has used the following site for technical help. It is free and designed to help seniors with technical issues:

[getsetup.io](https://getsetup.io)





The Codebreaker: American Experience

When: Monday, January at 9 pm on WETA PBS and WETA Metro + streams on the PBS Video App

Carol Issacs brought this program to our attention as one that may be of interest to our group. Not only is it of interest, but you can visit the Marshall Museum at 340 VMI Parade, Lexington, VA 540-463-7103 to see Friedman's collection and archives. Here is the information about the program:

" The American Experience film "The Codebreaker" tells the fascinating story of former Washington, DC resident Elizebeth Smith Friedman, a groundbreaking cryptanalyst whose painstaking work decoding thousands of messages for the US government would send infamous gangsters to prison and bring down a massive, near-invisible Nazi spy ring during World War II. A suburban wife and mother, she led a secret double life that along with her remarkable service to the nation would only come to light decades after her death when classified government files were unsealed. Together with her husband, the legendary cryptologist William Friedman, Elizebeth helped develop the codebreaking methods that led to the creation of the powerful new science of cryptology and laid the foundation for modern codebreaking today. The one hour film is based on the book The Woman Who Smashed Codes: A True Story of Love, Spies and the Unlikely Heroine Who Outwitted America's Enemies by Jason Fagone.