



PRESIDENTS' PEN

President's Message

Cyndi and I would like to wish you all a happy and safe holiday season. We are facing challenges in our battle with COVID variants but with our vaccines and booster, we will prevail. Our in person gathering with coffee and bagels has helped us stay connected in this difficult time. New members who joined our group taught us more about their role in working with Supervisor Alcorn and the issues they face in Fairfax County. **Please join us for these informal get-together on January 11 at Silver Diner in Reston or January 12 at Silver Diner in Loudoun to discuss ways we can keep engaged and forward our organization's important mission of building equity for women and girls. Details and RSVP information within the newsletter and links page.**

Be sure to join our state-wide zoom meeting on January 22 at 10 a.m. to learn more about Creating Inclusive Spaces.

AAUW National continues to inspire members with action alerts on Build Back Better and reproductive justice. Webinars describe our efforts toward creating inclusive spaces and pay equity.

Our state team focus is on the economic security issues of paid leave and pay equity. The State Conference is scheduled for Saturday March 26th in person in Harrisonburg and virtually on Saturday April 30th. Virginia has many challenges in this changing political environment that the Public Policy team will address. Members in all branches have been asked to stay in touch with their local delegates on important AAUW issues for the upcoming 2022 legislative session through virtual meetings and emails.

Our branch is one of four which achieved 5 stars in 2021 and is striving to continue this milestone in 2022. As far as 5 star Branch, we are beginning succession planning for next year. If you would like to be involved, please contact Cyndi.

There will be a branch board meeting on January 18th at 3:00 pm. Details on the Links Page. All are welcome.

Judi Polizzotti and Cyndi Shanahan



WEBSITE RESTON-HERNDON BRANCH

Our branch has a lively and active website, <https://restonherndon-va.aauw.net>, loaded with a treasure trove of branch related information, including member email addresses and contact information in the "Members Only" section. Entry code for the "Members Only" section is on the links page.

You can learn about National and State priorities as well as keeping up with local branch activities. New members, especially, may want to browse the various tabs, articles, and photos posted and keep up to date on calendar events and upcoming programs. Every attempt is made to update the branch website every two weeks – so stay tuned!!

Membership

MEMBERSHIP NEWS: Ilene Banker, Membership VP

We welcome our newest Reston-Herndon AAUW member, Judy Ratliff, B.A. University of Maryland to our awesome branch.

Wishing all of our 78 active members a very Happy and Healthy Holiday Season and New Year ahead.



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 is 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.



GREAT DECISIONS - Judi Polizzotti, Co-Chair

There is no program scheduled for December. January 19 at 7:00 on Zoom we will discuss the End of Globalization. The 2022 briefing book and resources are available on the fpa.org website and on Kindle and Nook. All are welcome. See you then.

Let's Do Coffee



Omicron is hovering over us like a dark cloud. Our battle with COVID 19 continues in 2022, but, we have our vaccines and our boosters and wear our masks. In an effort to maintain our relationships despite the threat, we are scheduling two coffees:

Tuesday January 11 at 9:30 am Silver Diner Reston

Please RSVP Judi Polizzotti

Wednesday, Jan. 12 at 9:30 am Silver Diner on Loudoun County Parkway, Ashburn.

RSVP by Jan. 10 to Marilyn Silvey

We believe that the cohesiveness of the organization is as important as the mission and continue to work together to advance equity for women and girls in VA and beyond.

Hope you can join us in discussing ideas in support of this critical work and to enjoy each others' company at either or both of these coffees.

PUBLIC POLICY- Judy Polizzotti and Mary Zane Co-Chairs



The CEDAW working group for Fairfax County has finalized and forwarded the resolution to the Fairfax County Supervisors for their review and comments. We will have a branch program to present the resolution hosted by Jill Fallows LWV and me, Judy Polizzotti, once it is approved .

Correspondence was sent to State Senators, Jennifer Boysko and Janet Howell, thanking them for their support of women's economic security, pay equity and advocating for education. We also requested that they continue that support with "surplus" budget funds as opposed to tax breaks.

AAUW National Public Policy held a meeting to discuss the future of Lobby Corps and status of Public Policy priorities. While Lobby Corps is suspended in person office visits until Congress resumes, there are plans to hire a staff member for Public Policy. In the meantime, I encourage all members to sign up for Action Alerts on the [AAUW.org](https://www.aauw.org) website.



State Lobby Day Update – We will be Virtual Again

After considering public health warnings about the new Covid variant, AAUW Virginia has decided to forgo an in-person State Lobby Day in 2022 and canceled our plans to host an in person reception for Virginia's women legislators.

Branches are asked to support by virtual lobbying through emails and phone calls to your elected representatives. AAUW Virginia will provide resources in the form of fact sheets, talking points, and other materials Branches can use to engage your delegates and senators. Virginia's General Assembly session begins on January 12 and ends on March 12. In lieu of the reception for women legislators, AAUW Virginia is working to host a Zoom session with Virginia women legislators from both political parties on January 25 at 6:30 p.m. Thanks for your active support of our lobbying efforts and your patience as we work to adjust to an unpredictable environment



BOOK GROUP

Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld

Book group meets the fourth Wednesday of the month. Our next meeting is Wednesday, January 27 at 2.

January: *Beautiful Ruins*, by Jess Walter

February: *The Night Watchman*, by Louise Erdrich

March: *Bossypants*, by Tina Fey

April: *Nomadland*, by Jessica Bruder

May: *Anxious People*, by Frederick Bachman

June: *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*, by Isabel Wilkerson

July: *Mrs. Dalloway*, by Virginia Woolf

August: *I Feel Bad About My Neck*, by Nora Ephraim

September: *Vanishing Half*, by Brit Bennet

October: *Hamnet*, by Maggie O'Farrell

December: *No Ordinary Time*, by Doris Kerns Goodwin

PROGRAMS Janine Greenwood - Program VP

In December we had an inspiring program with Renee Gorman, Founder and President of She Believes in Me. Her stories of these girls touched our hearts and personally brought me to tears. See the article within the newsletter for more details about this important organization and information on how to volunteer to support their work.

Instead of a branch January program, we are encouraging members to participate in the AAUW Virginia program "**Creating Inclusive Spaces**," a diversity, equity and inclusion Zoom Program on Saturday, January 22 at 10:00 am – 11:30 am. The program will feature:

- Krysta Jones has committed her life to public service, developing leaders, and changing lives. In 2021 she helped organize the Leadership Center for Excellence racial equity listening sessions and
- Dr. Somya Dwivedi-Burks has thrived in the intersection of learning, facilitation and, designing inclusive experiences. As a principal consultant of Somya Trains LLC, Somya has helped teams to move beyond the perspective of "training for awareness" and provided results for building inclusion through cultural intelligence plus
- Jonathan C. Zur is President & CEO of the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities an organization that works with schools, businesses, and communities to achieve success through inclusion.

Book Group and **Great Decisions** will resume this month. **Streaming Group** is looking for anyone interested in leading a discussion of their favorite film. Please contact Janine at the email on the links page and she will set up a Zoom. The group found that the first or second Tuesday of the month usually works best.

The February Branch program will feature Helen Cole, Hunter Mill Representative to the Fairfax County Commission on Women, an important force for gender equity in our community. Please watch your email for more information.



Note: All zoom links to our BRANCH meetings and activities will be attached to the newsletter email and you will receive an email with links at the beginning of each week when we have a Branch program or meeting.

AAUW-VA 2022 State Conference

You are invited to attend the AAUW-VA 2022 State Conference, which will be held in two parts on March 26th and April 30th. Nadine James, AAUW-VA VP for Program, and Sylvia Rogers, Conference Committee Chair, have been arranging a memorable conference chock full of engaging, mission-related speakers and topics; opportunities to ask questions of the speakers; time to socialize; and even some opportunities to win door prizes. This year's theme is "**Going the Distance for Women and Girls.**"

Conference Overview

Part 1 of the State Conference is being held in person on Saturday, March 26th, 2022, at the Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center in Harrisonburg, VA from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m

Part 2 of the State Conference, the AAUW-VA Annual Business Meeting, is being held virtually via Zoom on Saturday, April 30th - the starting time TBD. We encourage all AAUW-VA members to mark their calendars and plan to participate in both events.

Registration Fees

AAUW of Virginia Members	\$25.00 (\$30 March 5-11)
Students	\$30.00*
Other Non-AAUW of Virginia Attendees	\$35.00

The Program Book

As we have done for the past two years, we will produce a digital program book with information provided by branches and state board members, along with paid advertisements. The finished product allows branches to see what their counterpart branches around the state are doing and creates a historical compendium of impressive information for the Archives

She Believes In Me

On Tuesday, December 7, Renee Gorman the President of She Believes in Me (SBIM) spoke to our group. This group help girls in grades 3 to High School whose parents who are focused on day-to-day survival, and often lack time to teach their children essential life skills. SBIM provides these children with nutritious food, teach them how to handle conflict, manage emotions, overcome setbacks, and build meaningful relationships, which changes their future. They are committed to meeting the physical and emotional needs of our community's most vulnerable children in the Reston, Herndon and Centerville area.

SBIM is primarily a volunteer-run, dedicated group of volunteers who truly care and believe that together we have the power to change lives.

SBIM was founded in 2018 by Renee Gorman, a school counselor, and a group of teachers and social workers in Herndon, Virginia. These professionals recognized an urgent and growing need to provide support to young girls in the community, many of whom were suffering as a result of poverty and trauma. Through the years, they have realized there is a deeper need to help the whole family unit of these girls within the community

The following programs they have are:

- The liaison program that identifies some of the most vulnerable families and helps them make a positive, systemic change. These families are assigned a trusted liaison who will use SBIM resources to provide food, hygiene products, cleaning supplies and emotional support to children.
- Monthly Food Distributions - In partnership with Food For Others, SBIM hosts a monthly food distribution to families in need. Over 4,000 lbs of food are distributed to approximately 160-200 families. Food is distributed on the second Friday of each month at Floris United Methodist Church from 1-3pm. In partnership with Floris United Methodist Church, BRAWS, Cornerstones, Food For Others and generous donations, we are able to operate a small food pantry at our Worldgate location to serve the most vulnerable in our community. The Worldgate location also supports children emotionally by providing mentoring and comfort items that provide support to improve their mental health.
- School Partnerships - Our goal is to reach even more children and their families by providing tools and resources to establish partnerships where needs exist.

If you could like to volunteer, go to their website to learn of opportunities.

shebelievesinme.org



DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

Martin Luther King Celebrations at the Reston Community Center - Hunters Woods

This year's 37th Annual Reston Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration is an inspiring three-day event that includes special performances by the Reston Community Orchestra, Baratunde Thurston and a Keynote Speech by Heather McGhee followed by a community luncheon.

Saturday, January 15 Reston Community Orchestra *Annual Musical Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: Words and Music as Diverse as the World of Which He Dreamed* 4:00 p.m. Free Combining the traditions of African American culture and Western classical music, the concert pays tribute to Dr. King's vision of a society free of prejudice and racial divisions, and his belief in the power of music to help create positive change. Featured performers will include students from Al Faith Academy and song stylist Beverly Cosham, Bryan Jackson, and New World Order Horns presenting music by a variety of composers honoring Dr. King's legacy. Free tickets will be available through the CenterStage Box Office two weeks prior to the performance.

Sunday, January 16 Baratunde Thurston *Writer, Comedian, Activist* 2:00 p.m. • \$15 Reston/\$20 Non-Reston Baratunde Thurston holds space for hard and complex conversations with his blend of humor, wisdom and compassion. He is an Emmy-nominated TV host who has worked for *The Onion*, produced for *The Daily Show*, advised the Obama White House and written *The New York Times* bestseller *How To Be Black*. As the executive producer and host of *How to Citizen with Baratunde*, which Apple named one of its favorite podcasts of 2020, Baratunde also received the Social Impact Award at the 2021 iHeartRadio Podcast Awards. Baratunde is unique in his ability to integrate and synthesize themes of race, culture, politics and technology to explain where our nation is and where we can take it. It is recommended that children under 16 be accompanied by an adult.

Monday, January 17 Reston Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration *Keynote Address and Community Lunch: Heather McGhee* 11:00 a.m. • \$5 Reston/\$20 Non-Reston A renowned expert on the American economy, Heather McGhee is one of the most brilliant and influential thinkers exploring inequality today. Both her viral TED talk and her instant *New York Times* bestseller *The Sum of Us* reveal the devastating true cost of racism – not just for people of color, but for everyone. Deeply stirring, intelligent and compassionate, McGhee's talks offer us an actionable roadmap during one of the most critical – and most troubled – periods in history.

Other Programs at Reston Community Center Hunters Woods:

Saturday, February 5 8:00 p.m. "Reading of American Moor with Keith Hamilton Cobb" - a poetic exploration of the experience and perspective of Black men in America through the metaphor of Shakespeare's character Othello.

Wednesday, February 9 8:00 p.m. Ibram X Kendi - author of How to be an Antiracist

Co-Administrators	Judi Polizzotti Cyndi Shanahan
Vice President	Vacant
VP Finances	Ruth Ruttenberg
VP Membership	Ilene Banker
VP Program	Janine Greenwood
Secretary	Alyse Goldman
AAUW Funds	Stephanie Abbott
Adopt-a-Spot	Fran Lovaas
Cultural Arts	Roberta Sherman Carol Flicker
Book Group	Carla Heymsfeld Alyse Goldman
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Stephanie Abbott Carol Ann Bradley Lynne Chernin
Great Decisions	Judi Polizzotti Judy Skirbunt
Newsletter	Roberta Sherman
NOVA Liaison	Jean Ann Linney
Public Policy	Judi Polizzotti Mary Zane
Ashby Ponds	Marilyn Silvey
Website	Dianne Mero
Zoom and Weekly Updates	Janine Greenwood

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*