



PRESIDENTS' PEN

Judi Polizzotti and Cyndi Shanahan, Co-Administrators

As we are closing in on the end of this challenging year, we want to express our thanks to each of you for maintaining the vibrant branch that Reston-Herndon continues to be. While we have had challenges maintaining our very important connections together, we hope you feel that you are indeed a vital part of the branch!

Thanks to each of you who responded to the survey about our branch and where you would like to see us focus on in the future. We are so pleased that you are very interested in meeting in a safe way together so that we can extend our deep connections. Results of the survey are found within the Newsletter.

We want to thank our fantastic board that has provided the leadership providing great programming, engaging with new members, and implementing new activities. Please continue to read the newsletter so you stay updated on all the great things that we are doing!

As we have over the past couple of years, we are again pursuing the Five Star recognition for our branch. We have submitted the appropriate documentation and look forward to learning that we are indeed going to be granted this honor again.

We want to engage with each of you for 2022-23. Please continue to think about what volunteer role interests you! You could volunteer to join a Program Planning Committee or coordinate Friendsgiving, which is one of our most attended events. You could take on creating the newsletter for a month or two or become a part of the Membership Committee. Just think about those things that you really enjoy doing, and how much time you think you could commit to helping run our wonderful organization. We will be happy to work with you to find just the right opportunity. Working together we will make Reston-Herndon AAUW stronger and more fun!

We hope that each of you will join in our annual business meeting that will be held at Cafe Montemarte. During this meeting we vote in our slate of officers, celebrate those who have served our board so effectively this year and talk more about the survey results and our plans for 2022-23. Most importantly though, we will be able to connect with one another and have a lovely lunch together.

The **next AAUW Coffee and Bagels** will be held on Tuesday **May 10** at 9:30 at Silver Diner in Reston and Tuesday, **May 3** at 9:30 at the Ashburn Silver Diner on Loudoun County Parkway. RSVP to Marilyn Silvey for Loudoun and Judi Polizzotti for Reston. We've enjoyed having members share their stories of travel and family gatherings. We hope you can join us to meet new members and reconnect with old friends.

SAVE THE DATE: Branch Annual meeting lunch at Noon on Wednesday, June 8.

PROGRAMS

Janine Greenwood, VP Programs

I hope you enjoyed our excellent program on CEDAW and the progress being made towards implementing this important initiative in Fairfax County. Kudos to Judi Polizzotti for her hard work on this initiative!

I know many of you attended the AAUW of Virginia Annual Meeting and were inspired both by our awardee Ilene Filler-Corn as well as the reports of our hard-working state officers. Among the new officer nominees are three members of our branch: Nadine James for re-election as Program VP, Dianne Mero as Program VP, and Janine Greenwood as Co-VP for Public Policy. Watch for an email from AAUW-VA on May 6 with details on how to cast your vote. It is critical to have a quorum so please vote on officers, bylaws updates and public policy priorities.

And speaking of Annual Meetings, I'm excited to announce our **Branch Annual Meeting at Café Montmartre at Lake Anne on Wednesday, June 8 at Noon**. You will be receiving an invitation this week with our three menu choices and the per-member cost for the luncheon will be \$30. Please reply promptly to the invitation with your lunch selection and follow instructions where to send payment. **At the meeting, we will be collecting donations for the NOVA Food Pantry to support students facing food insecurity**. Save the date and watch for details.

You spoke and we listened. The Public Policy issue that most concerned you in our survey was voting rights. We are working to set up a program with the League of Women Voters in May. Stay tuned for details. We have other exciting programs in the pipeline including a very special late summer tea and an exploration of Unconscious Bias.

Sign up for the Program Planning Committee either at the Annual Meeting or email Janine.



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.



RESTON-HERNDON BRANCH WEBSITE – Dianne Mero

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!!



BOOK GROUP Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld

Book group meets the fourth Wednesday of the month. Our next meeting is Wednesday, May 25 on Zoom at 2.

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



GREAT DECISIONS - Judi Polizzotti, Co-Chair

In April we discussed Russia and the US. It was certainly relevant in light of the invasion of Ukraine. On **May 18, we will discuss Myanmar and ASEAN.** You will find this topic in the Foreign Policy 2022 briefing book available through the website <https://fpa.org> or on your nook or kindle. We have agreed to follow the topics in the order of the Reston Library so that we can attend their virtual program prior to ours.

Membership

MEMBERSHIP NEWS: Ilene Banker, Membership VP

Sign up for the Membership Committee either at the Annual Meeting or email Ilene.

Fun Fact: During 2021-2022 we had 7 new members join our branch. As a result, we were awarded three free National memberships!

New Membership Database. In a few weeks I will be letting you all know when to renew your membership for next year. For now, please **ONLY reset** your password **but do not renew.** The system is still not ready.

- **To change your password,** (we all have to do this) you will need to Log in on the AAUW Website.

- To access your account, click the "Log In" at the top right corner of the website <https://www.aauw.org> or visit my.aauw.org.
- To reset your password click the "Forgot Password" link. Once you create a password and log in, you can update your profile by clicking "Edit Profile" in the menu on the left side of the screen.

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. The branch members will be notified as soon as possible. Please support those individuals who are in need with cards, meals, visits, etc.

AAUW FUNDS

Stephanie Abbott

Due to the generosity of our members our branch is well on its way to completing the advancement requirement for the Five Star Recognition Program. The program is a way to recognize the steps that branches are taking at our local level to reinforce the AAUW mission. As of April 20, our members have donated \$3088 to the Greatest Needs Fund. Our goal was to raise \$30 per member which works out to \$2340. AAUW, as many non-profit membership organizations, depends on members to make a financial commitment to help the organization achieve its goals. The AAUW mission includes the fight for fair pay and economic opportunity for women. Thanks to all of our members who have donated to this effort.

PUBLIC POLICY-

Judy Polizzotti and Mary Zane Co-Chairs.

Our Public Policy Priority for 2022 is GOTV (Get Out the Vote). We expect in the next month to ask members to write postcards to targeted prospective voters in VA. We will also help the LWV in Voter Registration.



We want to thank the AAUW VA Public Policy VPs Denise Murden and Susan Burk for all of their efforts in the last legislative session to promote the AAUW Public Policy Priorities. Following is the only bill among AAUW priorities that was passed and signed by the Governor. It's a modest step in the right direction. The good news is that many efforts to roll back legislation previously advanced were not successful.

SB 15 (Favola) & HB 1156 (Byron) - Private family leave insurance. Establishes family leave insurance as a class of insurance. The bill defines "family leave insurance" as an insurance policy issued to an employer related to a benefit program provided to an employee to pay for the employee's income loss due to (i) the birth of a child or adoption of a child by the employee; (ii) placement of a child with the employee for foster care; (iii) care of a family member of the employee who has a serious health condition; or (iv) circumstances arising out of the fact that the employee's family member who is a service member is on active duty or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty. Under the bill, family leave insurance may be written as an amendment or rider to a group disability income policy, included in a group disability income policy, or written as a separate group insurance policy purchased by an employer. The bill prohibits delivery or issue for delivery of a family leave insurance policy unless a copy of the form and the rate manual showing rates, rules, and classification of risks have been filed with the State Corporation Commission. The bill prohibits an individual certificate and enrollment form from being used in connection with a group family leave insurance policy unless the form for the certificate and enrollment form have been filed with the Commission. The bill provides that "life and annuities insurance agent" means an agent licensed in the Commonwealth to sell, solicit, or negotiate, among other types of insurance, family leave insurance on behalf of insurers licensed in the Commonwealth.

IT'S STILL NOT A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD: A QUICK LOOK AT THE AAUW-VA CONFERENCE Marilyn Silvey

There were 92 members from 22 of the 24 AAUW branches in Virginia who met in Harrisonburg on March 26. Our seven jam-packed hours included a welcome by the president of James Madison University, keynote by a University of Virginia School of Law professor who was Ketanji Brown Jackson's law school roommate, five additional hour-long sessions with outside speakers on a variety of subjects, and wonderful in-person communication among participants. Six of us from our branch attended: Janine Greenwood, Nadine James, Dianne Mero (all on the incoming AAUW State Board), Cyndi Shanahan (outgoing State Board), Joyce Senger and Marilyn Silvey.

Following are a few notes on comments by some of the speakers:

JMU President Dr. Jonathan Alger – JMU now has 60% women students. Of the total US population, 38% of women and 36% of the men are college graduates.



Pictured: Nadine James, Marilyn Silvey, Cyndi Shanahan, Janine Greenwood, Joyce Senger, Dianne Mero

Session One -- Kimberly Jenkins Robinson, professor at the University of Virginia Law School and Harvard Law School roommate of Ms. Jackson, spoke on “Progress and Enduring Inequities for Women in Higher Education.” She noted that Title 9 is one of the greatest civil rights documents of all times, but there are still some gaps. Enrollment in grad schools is now women 60% and men 40% but there is a disparity in fields. In grad schools, 72% of engineering degrees are now earned by men, 68% of math degrees by men, while 30% of the fastest-growing job areas in the next decade require STEM backgrounds. We need to work with K-12 teachers to use Mae Jamison instead of Neil Armstrong as an example of an astronaut, and to help girls find internships. As for her friendship with Ms. Jackson, “She was brilliant but humble, always extraordinary, and I am confident she will make a lasting impact on the court.”

Session Two --Dr. Elisabeth Gumnior, associate professor at James Madison University and board member at the Gemeinschaft Home, and Michelle Roberts of the staff of the Gemeinschaft Home, located just outside Harrisonburg which offers re-entry and diversion programs for formerly incarcerated individuals. They provided an important quote from Angela Davis – “Prisons disappear people, especially women.”

Session Three – Carla Kimbrough, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Virginia Community College System (VCCS) and Dr. Brent Lewis, Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at JMU spoke on their work in the Virginia higher education system. VCCS has 23 colleges on 40 campuses, 218,000 credit students and 150 non-credit – 6/10 are women, 40% of students are people of color – schools primarily provide workforce development especially for childcare and nursing fields – try to focus on equity of resources, not equality, which continues the same patterns of inequality. JMU has 22,000 students of whom 4,000-5,000 are Black

Session Four – “Models of AAUW and C/U Partnerships” with Dr. Rosemary Green, Emerita Librarian, Shenandoah University; Dr. Sally Sledge, Associate Professor of Management at Norfolk State University; and Raven Knight, student. They described how AAUW can help on campuses - hold workshops on job interviewing, salary negotiation, health practices – connect with student life groups including online – help with career days - offer mentorships and a version of Take Your Daughters to Work days - offer free food (e.g. bagels) and “lots of coffee”

– ask students what they need -- LGBTQ students do not feel welcome in many places - text messages are best in communicating with students

Session Five—Featured Dale MacAllister, of the Harrisonburg Historical Society, who showed slides and told the story of early African American education in the Shenandoah Valley and the example of Lucy F. Simms, a Black teacher

Session Six – “The Changing Nature of Virginia Politics” featured Dr. Stephen Farnsworth, professor at the University of Mary Washington and oft-quoted analyst of US politics
The last two years, from 2018-2020, have been the most liberal two years in VA history – 2021 saw a drop in voter numbers – Democratic candidates have always lost the white vote in VA – in 2021 only 10% of votes were cast by voters under 30 – the most important issues in 2021 were economy/jobs followed by education – perhaps the Nov 2022 election will be under newly-redistricted congressional districts but it is complicated by the failure to deliver the census results on time – the present political party opposition and antagonism will not improve because of the candidates who are choosing to run and get chosen – only the narcissistic and truly immune to abuse will run for office – if Biden wants votes he could cancel the student loan debt indefinitely but a permanent solution would need Congress to do it – there is a big drop in the number of students becoming teachers—how can a state be economically competitive without a first-rate educational system – Trump is planning to run again and if the election were held now he would win

The day ended at nearly 5 pm with 10-minute district meetings. Attendees at the gathering of the Northern District, which our branch is part of, quickly agreed that the number one issue for us should be how to develop closer relations with the colleges and universities in our communities, both to assist students and to make them aware of AAUW so that they might want to join after graduation. Leslie Tourigne and Sandy will be the new Northern District Representatives.



SURVEY RESULTS

Janine Greenwood

Many, many thanks to the 41 members who participated in our recent survey. That's an incredible response rate and tribute to our engaged members. Here is what you told us:

In-Person Meetings: 76% of you said you would be ready for in-person meetings this fall. Meeting details will be one of the first items for our new Board to consider at their first meeting after election.

Annual Meeting: 78% of you said you would probably attend an in-person Annual Meeting in June. See the details of this meeting in the Program section.

Meeting Scheduling (select top two): In order of preference, weekday afternoons (75%), Weeknights (40%), weekend afternoons (30%) and weekend mornings (22%).

Activity Participation: Book group (22 members/58%); streaming group (20/53%); author talks (20/53%); AAUW webinars (19/50%); coffee meetings (14/36%); virtual cultural tours (11/30%).

Programs to have more of in order of preference: public policy, social justice, author talks, in-person tours, health and wellness speakers, and virtual tours.

Willingness to Support Our Branch: The most interest was serving on a program or membership committee.

Do You Get Enough Information: 97% said yes and one member felt too much.

Top Public Policy Priorities: voting rights by a wide margin followed by -- supporting public education, reproductive rights, pay equity, diversity, equity and inclusion, affordable higher education, redistricting, women's health, sexual violence and human trafficking, STEM education, ERA ratification.

Barriers to Attracting Younger Members: In order -- daytime programs, childcare, perception that issues for women resolved, our program topics, and a focus on broader equity issues.

What Would Attract Younger Members: In order -- evening or weekend meetings, different program topics, young speakers, younger women meet ups and walk/talk events.

All this information will be incredibly valuable as we move into next year.



Education Committee Update

Roberta Sherman

Our Education Committee has been hard at work with encouraging Juniors at South Lakes and Herndon High Schools to enter our essay contest regarding inclusion. We are happy to announce that Cora Kwitowski from Herndon and Martha Afoakwa from South Lakes are our two winners. We will be sending the checks to the schools beginning of May. Since award ceremonies are for Seniors and our meeting date does not work for the students in school, we thought sending the checks to the schools would be best. We have asked the counselors to send us pictures of the students with their checks. Hopefully we will be able to post the photos in our next newsletter. A special thanks to Judy Skirbunt who took the lead in encouraging the counselors to get students to enter. Also thanks to our readers: Stephanie Abbott, Joyce Senger and Judy Skirbunt.

From our Loudoun County NOVA Scholarship Winner:

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Reston-Herndon chapter of the American Association of University Women for this incredible opportunity.

My name is Marinella, I was born and raised in the Philippines, my passion is working with people, and nothing brings me more joy than making a difference in people's lives and their families.

I am currently taking my Associate's Degree in Nursing at Northern Virginia Community College and looking forward to graduating this coming May. My current goals right now are to pass this semester, graduate, and take my board exam to get my license to practice. And after that, I plan to continue my education to obtain my Bachelor's Degree in Nursing.

I look forward to being able to give back to the community once I begin my career in Nursing. Once again, I thank you for your confidence and willingness to help me achieve my goals.

*Sincerely,
Marinella Cruz*



Diversity Equity Inclusion

Stephanie Abbot

Also, the DEI team is working on a program about Unconscious Bias to be presented in the Fall. Any members interested in helping with this program can contact one of us.

Board of Directors 2020-21

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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*