



Reston-Herndon Area (VA) Branch

PRESIDENTS' PEN Judy Helmich and Cyndi

Shanahan, Co-Administrators
President's Pen

The Winter Solstice has given us time to reflect on the beginning of our year together and turning our attention to the lighter season that is coming.

What a Great Year We Started

Reston-Herndon has been busy and focused on returning to a normal program year and engaging our members in a variety of ways. Our branch meetings have focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Public Policy and through our cultural events and special activities we are centering on in-person activities to increase our connectedness. Highlights include:

- Visiting the Reston Museum for a tour and viewing the museum's exhibit **Determined: The 400-Year Struggle for Black Equality**
- Exploring hybrid meetings with a program on **Notable women in the history of Herndon**.
- Learning about **Unconscious Bias** with an interactive zoom session.
- Hearing from Del. Ken Plum on "**The State of the Commonwealth of Virginia**".
- Venturing to **Meadowlark Gardens** together.
- Visiting **Dodona Manor**, the estate of George C. Marshall.
- Holding our annual Friendsgiving gathering to support our educational efforts through our basket fundraiser.
- Our active **Book Group** and **Great Decisions Groups**

We are looking forward to even more activity in the winter and spring!

We have great plans for January including a joint meeting with the Vienna branch to hear from State Senators Boysko and Petersen. Then we head down to Lobby Day in Richmond on January 19. If you would like to spend the day there, Cyndi is driving down and would love to have company in her car!

Mark your calendars for March 18 to head down to Williamsburg for our Spring Meeting. It should be a lot of fun, and Williamsburg at this time of year is lovely to see. Plan on making a weekend of the event!

Check out the rest of this newsletter for other cultural events, book group activities and Great Decisions discussion that you can attend for wonderful conversation and to connect with our fellow members.

Calling All Members

Also in January, your board will be meeting to discuss our leadership for 2023-24. A core value of ours is that we plan ahead to ensure that our branch remains vital and interesting for all. Think about what role you may want to play in the leadership of our branch! We have made each role small enough to be manageable and connected to others so that we get to know each other well and support each other in the leadership of the branch. You can find a listing of the leadership roles [here](#). Please contact either of us to tell us what role you would like to fulfill!

Looking forward to seeing you soon,
Cyndi and Judy



PROGRAMS - Janine Greenwood, VP Programs

The Virginia General Assembly session convenes on January 11. Legislative proposals before the GA involve many of our AAUW-Virginia public policy priorities. These will be the focus of several events and programs.

Wednesday, January 4 at 7PM: **Virginia Senators Boysko and Peterson on the Upcoming General Assembly Session.** A joint program with the Vienna branch on Zoom.

To register for the Zoom program, please go to: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/9965758>

Thursday, January 19 at 9AM **AAUW-Virginia Lobby Day.** Members will gather in the Pocahontas Building in Richmond to lobby for AAUW of Virginia Public Policy Priorities. This is your chance to Make our Voices Heard in Richmond and Connect with our Lawmakers.

Let VA Public Policy know if you are coming: aauwvpublicpolicy@gmail.com

Group Hotel Rooms available at the Hampton Inn Downtown

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/deeplink/?ctyhocn=RICEMHX&groupCode=CHHAAU&arrivaldate=2023-01-18&departuredate=2023-01-19&cid=OM,WW,HILTONLINK,EN,DirectLink&fromId=HILTONLINKDIRECT>

Limited in home rooms may be available through members of the Richmond Branch.

Contact aauwvpublicpolicy@gmail.com

If you are interested in carpooling contact Cyndi Shanahan.

Due to pandemic venue challenges, there will be no reception with Women Legislators

Saturday, January 21 at 10:30 AM Janine Greenwood and Denise Murden, Co- VPs for Public Policy for AAUW of Virginia will provide an update on how **AAUW Public Policy Priorities are faring in the Virginia General Assembly.** They will review what members learned from lawmakers at our January 19 Lobby Day and discuss the status

of legislation important to our members at this midpoint in the legislative session. See Zoom page for link.



Cultural Events

Thursday January 26 Dip Your Fingers into the New Year

Join us as we regroup and recharge with a New Year's Afternoon Tea. We will meet at the home of Roberta Sherman 2950 Timber Wood Way from 2-4 pm We request that you RSVP by January 19 to Roberta at shermans1@aol.com to let us know if you are coming and what you plan to bring. We would like finger food i.e. little sandwiches, small desserts or anything else you might want to bring that will feed 4-6.

Sunday, February 19 NextStop Production of *Forty Six Play For America's First Ladies* A roller coaster ride through American Her-story

Forty-six mini plays, in under two hours, that cleverly and concisely introduce each of the women who served alongside the highest office in the land. This fast paced comedy offers a unique perspective on American history. These ladies will make you laugh, cry and illuminate the pressures inherited with ceremonial and often under-appreciated role. The cost per ticket is \$45, but if we get ten people, we will get a 20% discount.

RSVP to Roberta Sherman to let me know if you could like to attend by Jan 10 and I will tell you the cost of the tickets and when the money is due.



WEBSITE RESTON-HERNDON BRANCH - Dianne Mero

Our branch website, updated bimonthly at a minimum, can be found at <https://restonherndon-va.aauw.net> or by searching 'Reston-Herndon AAUW' in your web browser. In addition to timely posting of branch activities, events, and mission-related information, you can learn about local, state and national AAUW priorities and how to become involved at each level. Additionally, there are various articles and photos posted and an up-to-date calendar of events and upcoming programs. The website has a "Members Only" section, requiring an entry code [VA3035], housing member contact information, individual email addresses of members and officers and other branch information. Give it a look! Suggestions for improvement are welcome.

**BOOK GROUP Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld**

Book group meets the fourth Wednesday of the month on Zoom. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, January 25 at 2.

Jan: Rough Draft, by Katy Tur

Feb: Horse, by Geraldine Brooks

March: Susan, Linda, Nina and Cokie, by Lisa Napoli

April: Lessons from the Edge, by Marie Yovanovitch

May: Killers of a Certain Age, by Deanne Raybourne

June: Gender Queer, A Memoir, by Maia Kobabe

July: Personal Librarian, by Marie Benedict

August: Rose Code, by Kate Quinn

Sept: Shy...Memoirs of Mary Rodgers, by Mary Rodgers Guettel

Oct: Left on Tenth, by Della Ephron

Dec: Diamond Eye, by Kate Quinn

**GREAT DECISIONS - Judi Polizzotti, Co-Chair**

Following the holiday break, Great Decisions will resume on January 18 at 7:00 pm with the last topic in the 2022 briefing book, "Biden Foreign Policy in the Age of Strategic Competition." This meeting will be on zoom. An invite will be sent out to the entire membership as everyone is welcomed. Reston Library Great Decisions is January 18th 2-4pm in person at the library. The topic is "Energy Geopolitics" from the Foreign Policy Association 2023 briefing book. We will begin the 2023 Foreign Policy Association Briefing Book in February. You can order the book on the [fpa.org](https://www.fpa.org) website, use the handout from the Reston Public Library or access it from a Kindle or a Nook. Library meetings are held on the third Friday of the month. Go to the Reston Regional Library website for dates and topics.

Membership

MEMBERSHIP NEWS- Judi Polizzotti, VP Membership

Membership stands at 69 members as of January 1st. That excludes the 15 members who didn't rejoin last year and the new members as of January.

I hope to have a program in the new year to acknowledge the 12 new members who have joined in the last 2 years. More specifics will follow.

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.



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.



Diversity Equity Inclusion

In January the Reston Community Center will be offering opportunities to observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The keynote speaker will be Heather McGee, New York Times bestselling author of **The Sum of Us** on **January 16 at 11:00 a.m.** Other activities include a concert by Mark G. Meadows at the CenterStage January 15 at 2:00 p.m. Further descriptions and details are on restoncommunitycenter.com where you can purchase tickets and find other community activities to honor Dr. King.

The DEI team welcomes ideas for other programs and activities. Our branch is a very welcoming group. We want the community to know us.



PUBLIC POLICY- Judy Schretter and Lynne Chernin Co-Chairs

Public Policy

AAUW Virginia's Lobby Day is January 19 in Richmond. It is really quite a lot of fun, both to meet our officials and to connect with our other Virginia AAUW members.

If you wish to go down to Richmond on January 18, spend the night and lobby with us on January 19, then Judy Schretter is heading down and will drive you to Richmond and back again. Contact Judy if you would like to go with her.

If you wish to rise early on January 19 and go to Richmond for the day, then Cyndi Shanahan will be driving down just for the day, and would welcome you to ride with her.

Should the weather be inclement, either Judy or Cyndi (depending on which day you wish to go to Richmond) will tell you know whether we will be driving to Richmond or not.

Education Committee Update



The Branch will once again sponsor an essay contest to Juniors at South Lakes and Herndon High. The contest's essay will be on their past and present efforts to promote inclusion and their hopes for the future. Judy Skirbunt will once again be our liaison with the school personnel who will inform the students of the contest. The winners will be announced in April.

Spotlight on Roberta Sherman
By Marilyn Silvey



Roberta Sherman met AAUW when she was assistant principal of Reston's Forest Edge Elementary School, a position she held for eight years.

"I had a phone call from a member, Eloise Plavcan, asking if AAUW members could start a mentoring program for at-risk girls at our school, meeting one-on-one once a week after school. She kept calling, and had worked out all the details, and once we finally met of course I said yes. The program began in 2002 and lasted for several years and was absolutely wonderful."

The mentoring program was especially needed at Forest Edge, Roberta says, as it is called a "bi-polar" school, located in a neighborhood of both million dollar houses and Section 8 housing, in accord with Robert E. Simon's goal of people with different economic backgrounds living side by side.

As she supported the program, Roberta learned more about AAUW, and she liked what she learned.

"I said that once I retired, I would join, and I did, in 2009. And I joined with both feet, I was not a quiet member!"

Roberta soon became co-membership chair, and later vice president, first when Cyndi Shanahan and Maureen Dwyer were co-presidents, and then when Gail Parsons was president. After that she was co-program chair with Carol Flicker and now, since 20??, she has been newsletter editor.

As for her background, Roberta was born and grew up in Brooklyn, NY, and met her husband, Sy (Seymour), when she was 16. They married when she had finished two years at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn and they moved first to Red Bank, NJ and then, when Sy joined IBM in 1974, to Reston.

Roberta returned to school at George Mason University and earned a BA in 1981 and, in 1986, a Masters of Education, while she was teaching at Great Falls Elementary School. She and Sy have two children and four grandchildren.

These days Roberta is involved in more than AAUW. She is active in the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, plays mah jongg and Mexican Train regularly, and travels a lot and has been to every continent except Antarctica. She reads stories to five Head Start, classes a month. And she volunteers at the Travelers Aid desk at Dulles Airport.

"I go once a week for four hours and love helping people who are so grateful."

What keeps Roberta active in AAUW is first of all, her own family.

"I have a daughter and three granddaughters for whom women's rights are so important.

But she is worried about the future of the organization.

"I am concerned that we don't have more young members, our branch is half the size we used to be. Our mission is so important, women's rights seem to be going backwards and we are still so needed, I hope things can be turned around."

2022-2023 Leadership

Co-Administrators	Cyndi Shanahan & Judy Helmich
VP Finance	Ruth Ruttenberg
VP Membership	Judi Polizzotti
VP Program	Janine Greenwood
Secretary	Alyse Goldman
AAUW Funds	Stephanie Abbott
Adopt-a-Spot	Fran Lovaas
Cultural Arts	Carol Flicker, Joyce Senger, Roberta Sherman
Book Group	Alyse Goldman & Carla Heymsfeld
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Stephanie Abbott, Lynn Chernin Carol Ann Bradley, Ilene Banker
Great Decisions	Judi Polizzotti & Judy Skirbunt
Newsletter	Roberta Sherman
NOVA Liasion	Jean Ann Linney
Public Policy	Lynne Chernin & Judy Schretter
Website	Dianne Mero
Zoom and 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*
