



PRESIDENTS' PEN Judy Helmich and Cyndi Shanahan, Co-Administrators

Spring is such a wonderful time of renewal and restarting. We have wonderful programs for this spring that are beginning to emerge, just as our gardens are emerging from a long but mild winter. Many of our programs this spring will be in person as we begin to come to terms with this long season of Covid.

Williamsburg Conference and Our Honorees

We start March with a wonderful AAUW VA conference in Williamsburg. We hope you will join us on March 18. The agenda for this meeting looks wonderful. Check out all the information on the [AAUW-VA website](#) and in this newsletter.

At the conference, we will be celebrating our longest tenured members as well as our newest members. The membership article discusses this in detail. We will also be celebrating our on-going relationship with Anh Le the owner of Cafe Montemartre. Find the article about her journey in this newsletter.

Spring Activities

We will also be exploring women's health, ERA, and diversity issues via a play, and many other topics. Check out the rest of the newsletter for all the important topics, dates and times. We encourage you to bring a friend along to any of our events. We are very interested in sharing AAUW and AAUW's values with the community.

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

Leadership 2023-24

There are still plenty of possibilities for you to serve on the leadership team for 2023-24, so please contact us if you are interested! 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.

Looking forward to seeing you soon.
Cyndi and Judy



PROGRAMS - Janine Greenwood, VP Programs

Celebrate Women's History Month - Finding Our Voice – The Vote

A panel will explore American women's journey to the right to vote, the struggles for suffrage after 1920 and the continued importance of the vote to women's voices today. During our discussions, we will celebrate the women who told and tell our stories. This program is sponsored by Fairfax County Public Library and the League of Women Voters. **Virtual Event. Wednesday, March 8 at 7 p.m.** [Register](#).

Join Reston-Herndon AAUW via Zoom on **March 16 at 5:30 PM** as we learn from Marga Fripp, Healing Arts Practitioner and Certified QiGong Teacher, for an hour of **Mindful Movement with QiGong: Nourish Soul, Mind and Body**, in conversation and practice. QiGong is a moving meditation and energy healing practice similar to Tai Chi that transforms stress into vitality and improves the quality of life through breath, flow and intention. Practicing QiGong even a few minutes a day can release muscle tension and pain, clear emotional blockages, increase your energy, and align mind, body and spirit. Since this meeting will be via zoom, you don't have to worry about how you do during the session. The link will be available in our weekly updates soon! Be sure to ask others you know to join us! The more the merrier.

Join Fairfax county librarians Chris Barbuschak and Suzanne S. LaPierre to discuss their new book **Desegregation in Northern Virginia Libraries**. Many believe that Fairfax libraries were open to everyone since their founding in 1939, but the authors' research found a hodgepodge of local rules that effectively barred Black users, not only in Fairfax but also in Loudoun and other counties. It took citizen protests and threats to cut public funds before the libraries were desegregated in the late 1950's and 1960's. Join us on Zoom on **April 12 at 4PM** to hear this important story. You can buy the book here: https://www.amazon.com/Desegregation-Northern-Virginia-Libraries-American-ebook/dp/B0BSXRY6HR/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=

Members can find the Zoom link on the Links page.

SAVE THE DATE June 8 at noon for our Annual Meeting at Café' Montmartre.



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.



Cultural Arts - Carol Flicker, Joyce Senger and Roberta Sherman Co-Chairs

We had two wonderful activities in February. Twelve members enjoyed tea and conversation on a lovely February afternoon. We all learned a bit more about each other. At the end of the month, fifteen of us attended the wonderful production of "46 Stories of 46 Plays for American's First Ladies." As one member said to me as we were leaving, "We could not have chosen a better play for AAUW."

In April, we propose attending yet another play at NextStop - "The Cake." This play deals with bakers who refuse to bake a cake for a gay couple. We would like to attend the performance on Sunday, April 2 at the matinee at 2:00 pm. Tickets are 20% off for a total of \$36. The theater is in the Herndon Industrial Park. If you are interested, please contact Roberta Sherman by Friday, March 17.



BOOK GROUP Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld

Book group meets the fourth Wednesday of the month on Zoom. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, March 22 at 2.

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

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. 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

On Wednesday February 15th, the group discussed "Energy Security." It was the first topic in the 2023 Foreign Policy briefing book available through the website <https://fpa.org> or on your nook or kindle. This topic resonates with our members as we consider the weaponization of energy infrastructure in Ukraine by Russia.

Members also attend the Reston Regional Library Great Decisions program on the third Friday of the month (March 17). This will be listed in the library calendar.

On March 15, we will discuss "War Crimes." This will be a virtual meeting on Zoom. The link is in the evite sent to all branch members.

All are welcome. Please join us.



MEMBERSHIP NEWS- Judi Polizzotti, VP Membership

Currently we have 72 members. New members are always welcome. We hope to have an in person membership event in the near future. Members are encouraged to bring friends to our cultural events and suggest they visit our website for more information about us.

The following members are being nominated as honorees as our early members who have been with the branch since the 1970s and hold our branch history.

Judith Berkey
Suzanne Cook
Judi Orloff
Gail Osberg
Glenna Paukstis
Marion Stillson

And also our newest members who joined in the last 12 months and will be the future of the branch:

Joanne Jessen
Samantha Polon
Alicia Russman
Patty Hagan
Janet Silverberg
Linda Bailey

Certificates will be given out at the Virginia AAUW Conference in Williamsburg on March 18th.



**PUBLIC POLICY- Co-Chairs Lynn Chernin and Judy Schretter
LOBBYING THE
VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY WITH AAUW**

On January 19, 2023, I joined AAUW members from across the Commonwealth at the Virginia General Assembly in Richmond. Leaving Northern Virginia before sunrise to get to Richmond in time for our 9am gathering did not appeal to me, so I drove down the day before and stayed at a hotel just a few blocks from the Capitol with several other AAUW members. This gave us an opportunity to meet and socialize over dinner before our day at the Capitol.

Approximately 35 AAUW members met at the location where the members of the House of Delegates and the Senate have their offices. Several other organizations were also visiting at the same time which made the halls busy at times as we competed with each other for time with the members and their staffs.

By way of background, I had previously worked for an organization where I had the opportunity to visit Congress and State Legislatures, but that was 30 years ago. Because my skills were a little rusty, I asked to be paired with an experienced AAUW member. We were assigned one State Senator and two House Delegates to visit. While none of the members were available to speak with in person, their legislative aides welcomed us into their offices to hear what AAUW had to say. The ability to present issues of interest to AAUW came right back to me, and our conversations went smoothly.

Following these meetings, we went to the Capitol where AAUW was among the groups to be presented as visiting that day in the Senate and House chambers. In the House, we received a warm reception, especially from the women delegates, when Delegate Briana Sewell (Prince William) introduced us. Prior to the start of the session, Del. Sewell invited us to the floor for a photo op with several of the women Delegates. Delegate Ken Plum (Reston) visited with us in the House gallery beforehand.

We reconvened over lunch to compare notes on our visits before we headed home. Thanks to the hard work of our State Public Policy co-Chairs, Janine Greenwood and Denise Murden, our visit was a success.

Consider joining AAUW next year to visit the Virginia General Assembly. And also consider joining Lobby Corps when AAUW resumes visiting Congress. These activities are excellent ways to promote the issues of interest to AAUW.

Judy Schretter
Public Policy Co-Chair

NOTE FROM AAUW-VA PUBLIC POLICY

The General Assembly session concluded on February 25 without agreement on the state budget. The House and Senate joint budget conference committee will have to continue its work. This short session of the Virginia legislature saw deep partisan divides. With the Republicans in control of the House of Delegates and the Democrats in control of the Senate, the votes continued a trend of lawmakers of both parties opposing each other's controversial legislation and killing them in committee hearings. Disposing of the most controversial bills, including abortion and school vouchers without a floor vote of the entire chamber enabled politicians to avoid going on the record in a way that could haunt them in the 2023 election. One bright spot was passage of the "Silence No More Act" would prohibit non-disclosure and non-disparagement provisions in employment contracts or settlement agreements if the contracts were to bar discussion of conduct at a past workplace, at work events, and between employees and employers.

AAUW marks, but does not celebrate, several Equal Pay Days over the year. March 14 of this year marks the date to which women overall must work to equal the pay men received in the prior year.



Diversity Equity Inclusion

April is Global Diversity Month

Registration is open for the April AAUW webinar and May workshop via the following links. You must register in advance to join.

Thursday, April 6, 2023

Celebrating Diversity Month

Registration

link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AwboUK_gQXuTYhJ_67v2Rg

Please join the national Inclusion & Equity Committee's virtual webinar on Thursday, April 6, from 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm ET. The webinar is designed to aid local branches and states as they prepare to celebrate Diversity Month in April and the World Day for Cultural Diversity on May 21. The webinar is designed to be interactive, with ample opportunities for participants to make suggestions and ask questions. Please join us on April 6!

Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Workshop: Diversity and Intersectionality

Registration

link: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_FYzrX3CIR0KbFMZiY5cxTg

The national Inclusion and Equity Committee invites all AAUW members to participate in a virtual workshop on Wednesday, May 10, from 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm ET in preparation for World Day for Cultural Diversity (observed on Sunday, May 21). This workshop provides a hands on learning opportunity for AAUW members to explore aspects of diversity and intersectionality. Please join us on May 10!

Nikole Hannah-Jones and the 1619 Project

Fairfax County Library sponsored a Black History Month interview with Ms. Hannah-Jones and Karla Bruce, the county's Chief Equity Officer.

Ms. Hannah-Jones was a journalist with the New York Times and is now a tenured faculty member at Howard University. Born in Waterloo, Iowa, in 1976, she took an elective class on Black history when she was 15 years old. That's when she discovered how much Black people contributed to this country, and that made her question why Blacks weren't included in our history textbooks, movies, statues, etc. Her teacher gave her other books to read including *Before the Mayflower*, which included the story of the first Africans who were brought to Virginia aboard the White Lion in 1619. Ms. Hannah-Jones wondered why we all learned about the Mayflower, but no one had heard about the White Lion.

As 2019 approached, Ms. Hannah-Jones wanted to make sure the 400th anniversary of the beginning of slavery in the American colonies wasn't overlooked and that people understood its historical significance. The people who write history, predominantly white males until fairly recently, ignored the history of other groups of people. Ms. Hannah-Jones is on a mission to make sure the other histories are known and not erased.

Although Black people have been in this country since 1619, her generation is the first one to be born with full rights and citizenship. Let that sink in. When you do, it partially explains why racism is still such a huge problem in this country even though the Civil War ended in 1865.

Ms. Hannah-Jones said that speaking here in Virginia was very important since Virginia was the architect of race laws. Thomas Jefferson was one of the writers of the Declaration of Independence and James Monroe was pivotal in writing the Constitution. These two men, plus George Washington and James Madison were among the first 5 presidents; they were all from Virginia and all of them were slave owners.

Virginia also had the first Black governor, Douglass Wilder in 1985. Ms. Hannah-Jones sees Virginia at a crossroads with the opportunity to be progressive, or revert back to its earlier days of massive resistance.

Our country had a brief recognition of the continuing acceptance of racism when a white police officer knelt on a Black man's neck for over 9 minutes until he died. Even knowing he was being filmed, the white officer never stopped. Our structural racism allows such things to happen. Fortunately, in that instance, the officers were all convicted.

The structural racism goes back to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. The Declaration talks about taking more land from the indigenous people. King George III was against that because the Indian wars were too costly. The Declaration also talks about King George III stoking revolution among enslaved people to rise against the colonists. While the colonists wanted to be free, they didn't want enslaved people to be free; they were to work the land taken from the indigenous people. Slavery may have been a reason for the Revolutionary War. In order to get the southern states to stay within the Union, the 3/5 Compromise was made in the Constitution. This allowed the three of every five slaves were counted when determining a state's population for legislative representation and taxation.

Ms. Hannah-Jones said that the racist systems were actually economic systems for maximum exploitation. And Jim Crow was racial apartheid. Therefore, legislating the end of racism as we did in the 1960's didn't change the economic exploitation of slavery and racial apartheid.

Justice and reparations are still needed. HR 40 was introduced in the last Congress. It would have established a Congressional Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans. Ms. Hannah-Jones suggested we contact our Members of Congress to reintroduce the bill in this session.

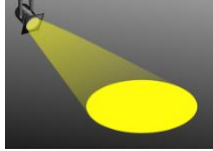
The 1619 Project has many detractors who say she's trying to rewrite history. She believes the basis of the backlash is fear that we've built this country on a house of cards. Ms. Hannah-Jones says she's just writing a more complete history from a different perspective. The facts are all there; it's a matter of which facts people choose to write about.

Ms. Hannah-Jones believes she needs to fight for a country she doubts she will see. She's motivated by family history to make a change. She's also motivated by rage, not always by hope.

When asked what the single, most important point was, Ms. Hannah-Jones stated that the past is shaping our society whether we acknowledge it or not. We can either confront it and try to make things right, or we can ignore it and keep repeating the same patterns over and over again. It's a collective acknowledgement of the past and then a determination not to be willfully blind but to address the harms collectively as a society.

The complete interview may be watched on Fairfax County Library's You Tube channel until March 6. Here's the link for the 1 hour program:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFg2xebjuS4&t=147s>



Spotlight on Judi Polizzotti



If we looked for the officer who had served the longest in the same branch position, or who is involved in the most local organizations, Judi Polizzotti would be a leading contender.

Judi is branch co-chair, with Judy Skirbunt, of the Great Decisions monthly discussion program that is currently held on Zoom. The group discusses topics from the Foreign Policy Institute, Great Decisions booklets. These briefings are offered to groups across the country which organize and lead the actual discussions. Judi formerly chaired the programs for the AAUW branch in Bridgeport, CT, when she was a member there, and she has led ours since 2013. Why does she enjoy it?

"They keep my mind going. I like foreign policy discussion groups and often attend the Great Decisions programs at the Reston library, which are held a month ahead of ours with excellent speakers. A goal is to get our branch participants to vote to meet in person again, the pandemic has been devastating and we need to reconnect."

She is also branch VP for Membership, where she seeks new members, and encourages them to join one of the oldest organizations in the United States that has worked for women's rights since 1881.

Born in Boston, Judi grew up in Salem, MA, and immediately after high school graduation married and had two children. Four years later, she began a 28-year career in telecommunications. Following graduation with a BA in history from Fairfield University, when she was 50, she continued her education with an MS, also in history, from Southern Connecticut University. In the following years, she was a substitute teacher in both Connecticut and Florida, where she spent winters, and then an adjunct professor at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

In 2012, Judy moved to Reston to be near her son and stepson, and she joined our branch. Having first joined AAUW in 2000, she was a dual member in Connecticut and Florida, president of the Bridgeport branch, and a member of the Connecticut AAUW state board. She has long been a supporter of AAUW goals.

"I like being with like-minded people who do things, I agree with and support women's rights."

Currently, Judi is also an active member of four other area organizations: PEO, the Hunter Mill Democratic Committee, the Unitarian Universalist church of Reston (which she represents on the Cornerstones board), and the Stratford condominium association where she serves as Secretary. In her spare time, she takes OLLI courses and enjoys hiking, travel, swimming, photography and reading.



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.



AAUW of VIRGINIA 2023 CONFERENCE

Please join us for of the 2023
AAUW-VA State Conference
PART 1

Saturday, March 18, 2023 ~ 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

REGISTER NOW!

Open the conference brochure link below for all the information you need.

[AAUW-VA 2023 CONFERENCE BROCHURE](#)

The 2023 in-person AAUW-VA Conference Part 1 will be held on March 18 at the Holiday Inn & Suites Williamsburg ~ Historic Gateway in Williamsburg, VA. Included in the sessions will be the Keynote Address, a discussion regarding the under-representation of girls in the STEM fields, a public policy presentation on the future of K-12 education in Virginia and our own past state president, Caroline Pickens, sharing the work AAUW has done to promote the education and protect the rights of women and girls. Conference Part 2 is the 2023 AAUW-VA Annual Business Meeting to be held VIRTUALLY on March 25. See the brochure for more details on how to join this important free event.

*Detailed information about how to register, the speakers and lodging is in the **Conference 2023 Brochure.***

You can also find this information at the [AAUW-VA Website.](#)

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
Great Decisions	Carol Ann Bradley, Ilene Banker
Newsletter	Judi Polizzotti & Judy Skirbunt
NOVA Liasion	Roberta Sherman
Public Policy	Jean Ann Linney
Website	Lynne Chernin & Judy Schretter
Zoom and Updates	Dianne Mero
	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*