

# AAUW of Virginia Reston Herndon Branch

September/October 2023



**President's Pen** Last month I told you that we were going to have a planning meeting in September. A small group of your leadership team met in late August, and we reviewed all the input you provided via our spring survey. As a result of that review, we determined that you have already provided your input, so we are adjusting our plans.

One of the key themes of your survey input is that you are active learners, and you value learning. Additionally, we are all interested in empowerment of women and girls. To that end, our theme for activities this year is support of learning and education. I hope that we embed this theme into everything that we do, and that we can proudly state that the Reston-Herndon Area branch is known for support of education that focuses on empowerment of women and girls.

We still have a plan to hear more from you. We are going to leverage the meetings and activities that you are already attending. We have lots of activities planned for September and felt that one more activity focused solely on planning may not be necessary. So, you can expect the leads of the September activities to ask you for a few minutes to brainstorm how the group you are engaged with can help support our focus area in 2023 and beyond. There are so many great minds in our branch, and together we can find impactful ways to educate and influence our community on the important subject of educational support of empowerment of women and girls. Already the ideas are flowing. For instance, Stephanie Abbott suggested that we advertise the [Stem Ed for Girls program](#) on our website and Facebook page. We have already taken that further into our local high schools through the South Lakes and Herndon High School science departments. We can do more with this program by contacting the private schools in our area. We are just beginning to explore the other opportunities we have and will keep you posted about how you can get involved and support these efforts.

In late August and September, we are super active. I hope you are finding an activity that you are interested in. Our public policy team is hosting two postcard writing parties, our book group and Great Decisions group will be meeting and the Cultural Arts team has a great activity planned for you! We have a social meet and greet planned for

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September 21 – be sure to check this out, and bring a friend along with you to introduce them to the Reston-Herndon AAUW. We will meet at my home to greet each other and support the very important South Lakes Food Pantry with our food and toiletries donations. In addition, our Education Committee plans to meet soon to create a plan for 2023-24.

We look forward to our year ahead and thank you each for the support you provide to the board and the branch.

Cyndi Shanahan



### **MEMBERSHIP NEWS- Judi Polizzotti, VP Membership**

Fifty Three members have renewed their membership for 2023-2024.

Please come to a Meet and Greet on September 8th at 5:30 at Reston Town Square Park on Market Street and connect with potential members. At 5:30 there will be a Jazz Concert with Darden Purcell and a Sip and Stroll. Attendees can purchase drinks from local restaurants (Teds Bulletin, Capital Burger, Jinya, Maker's Union, North Italia) and sip them while listening to the concert.

Following the concert there will be an Improv performance "Upright Citizens Brigade". Please join us and bring friends and family. It will be a fun evening and we will provide snacks. Parking is free after 5:00 pm.

### **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 President Cyndi Shanahan. 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**

The meeting will be Wednesday September 27th at 7:00 pm where the topic will be "Global Famine" Look for an evite as the date nears.

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## **BOOK GROUP Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld**

Book group meets the fourth Wednesday of the month on Zoom. Our next meeting will be Wednesday, September 27.

Sept: Shy...Memoirs of Mary Rodgers, by Mary Rodgers Guettel and Rose Code by Kate Quinn

Oct: Left on Tenth, by Della Ephron

Dec: Diamond Eye, by Kate Quinn



**WEBSITE RESTON-HERNDON BRANCH - Dianne Mero**

### **Looking for something in particular about our branch?**

Our branch website can be found at <https://restonherndon-va.aauw.net> (or by searching 'Reston-Herndon AAUW' in your web browser). This site is a great "back-up" to this newsletter (edited by Roberta Sherman) and the weekly branch highlights (thanks to Janine Greenwood) which are both sent to all branch members. You can make sure your email address is up to date in the National database by reviewing your AAUW Hub "Snapshot" page information or check with Membership VP, Judi Polizzotti, and you will also receive all AAUW of Virginia member notices. In addition to timely posting of branch activities, events, and mission-related information, on the website 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 a current calendar of events and programs in case you have misplaced or wish to double-check information about branch events. The website also has a restricted "*Members Only*" section, requiring an entry code [VA3035], with member contact information including individual email addresses of members and officers and other branch information. Give it a look and while you're there, verify your contact information and let Judi know if there are any errors. Thanks, Dianne

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Spotlight on:



Patty Hagan: New Branch DEI chair

By now we all should know that DEI stands for "Diversity, Equality and Inclusion," a goal of AAUW and many other organizations in the country. Our branch can boast of having a member who is the AAUW state DEI chair, Cyndi Shanahan.

Now we can further brag that we have a new branch DEI chair with a long career focused on equal opportunity and diversity: Patty Hagan.

Before she started her own business, Lighthouse Coaching LLC, Patty worked for the federal government for 36 years, retiring in 2008 as the first Diversity Manager for the U.S. Geological Survey. In that position and others, she influenced changes in hiring, promotion and development practices affecting the composition of the workforce -- mostly through training managers on the legal requirements and advantages of having a diversified staff. She was also active in Federally Employed Women at the local, regional and national levels, working to help all women in the federal government succeed. For a while, she was an AAUW member at large, but never got involved.

"I had a plaque in my office that said, 'Only those who dream the absurd can achieve the impossible.' It showed a flying seagull carrying an elephant in its beak! That concept guided my federal career and continues to guide my coaching."

Patty continued her passion for healing racism by helping start the Social Justice Team at her Unity Church in Oakton. It was there that she met our branch member, Carol Bradley, who invited Patty to meet with her and Stephanie Abbott to discuss speaking at an AAUW branch meeting. In 2022, Patty spoke informally at a summer luncheon at Cafe Montmartre. In the fall, she presented an online class on "Unconscious Bias." Carol and Stephanie gifted her with an AAUW membership.

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A native Virginian who grew up in Arlington and Springfield, Patty earned a BA in history at George Mason University and an MA in public administration at George Washington University. Throughout Covid, she took classes online and conducted two racial healing training courses for her church online.

"It was easier not to travel but I missed the in-person contact."

Patty sees her branch position as trying to bring more awareness of DEI and expand AAUW's DEI goals to include age diversity.

"We've got to find a way to reach out to new younger potential members; we need diversity in age, physical abilities and all components of DEI. I know that many groups are having this problem since younger people tend not to join groups. We must find solutions or we will not survive."

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### **School Supplies Drive:**

Our Friends at NCNW will once again collect school supplies for local schools in Reston and Sterling. They will be at the Reston Multicultural Festival on 9/23 in Reston Town Center. Please save the date and gather those school supplies. The students will appreciate it.



As a reminder, members who send AAUW group emails please list the email addresses to those receiving them in the bcc line and not in the cc line. This should be done to protect the privacy of members who do not want their email address broadcast widely

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**PUBLIC POLICY- Shyamali Hauth, Chair**

## Supporting Voting in the Upcoming Election

Members, the Virginia election this November will be a critical test of our Public Policy priorities. All 140 seats in the legislature are up for grabs.

**Voter Guides** -- AAUW of Virginia is doing Voter Guides for the Virginia Senate races. With redistricting and legislative retirements, many voters will not have enough information about the positions candidates have taken on our key Public Policy Priorities. If you would like to help in this research, please contact Janine Greenwood.

**Get The Vote Out Post Cards** – Branch members have been great in the past about writing postcards to encourage voting. If you would like to do this at home, you will be supplied with cards, stamps and labels. All you need to do is let your imagination and artistic flair run wild. Contact Shyamali Hauth at [shyamalihaut@gmail.com](mailto:shyamalihaut@gmail.com) or Janine Greenwood [janinegrnwd@hotmail.com](mailto:janinegrnwd@hotmail.com) to sign up and we will get the supplies to you.

## What is Lobby Corp?

Since its formation in 1972, AAUW Action Fund Lobby Corps volunteers have made tens of thousands of in-person visits to congressional offices on behalf of AAUW members and supporters in their respected congressional district, placing a name and a face to our mission of advancing equity for women and girls. Lobby Corps volunteers are trained in how to effectively advocate AAUW's priority issues with members of Congress and their staff. Volunteers receive briefings on each issue topic before going on visits, and new Lobby Corps volunteers are paired with experienced members. Capitol Hill Lobby Days are typically held once a month when Congress is in session.

AAUW members and college students in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area are welcome to join Lobby Corps. No experience or expertise is necessary—only a commitment to promoting AAUW's nonpartisan public policy priorities. If you're interested to learn more, please join one of our open interest Zoom calls to ask questions and hear from experienced Lobby Corps members. Register here:

- **September 14, 9:30am:** [bit.ly/459QcJj](https://bit.ly/459QcJj)
- **September 21, 7:00pm:** [bit.ly/45w3TSt](https://bit.ly/45w3TSt)

If you have any further questions, please reach out Kalina Majercak, AAUW Policy Associate ([majercakk@aauw.org](mailto:majercakk@aauw.org))

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## **DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION – Patty Hagan**

I think by now we all know that diversity encompasses many human aspects, not just race and gender. It includes ethnicity, religion, age, color, abilities, sexual orientation, socio-economic background, and much more. But what does “equity” involve, and how do we make sure that everyone is included?

First, let’s take a look at the difference between “equality” and “equity.” I’ve seen a great meme which depicts this perfectly. It shows 3 people of various heights trying to watch a baseball game over a fence, but none of them are tall enough to see over it. The next scene shows the same people standing on boxes of equal heights. That allows the tallest person to see fine. One of the people is standing on his tip toes and can just barely peer over the fence, but not comfortably. The shortest person is still looking at the fence. The box sizes are equal but the effect isn’t. The last picture shows everyone easily watching the game over the fence. Why? Because they now have different size boxes that work for their heights. That’s “equity”; it allows everyone to have the same access regardless of their differences. One size doesn’t necessarily fit all. Equity also ensures that historical disparities are rectified.

For most of us women, we understand “inclusion.” In our workplaces, we often weren’t included in meetings at all. And if we were, we were frequently the only woman there. We could make a suggestion that no one paid attention to. Moments later though, a man could make the same suggestion, even using our words, and everyone immediately agreed that it’s a wonderful idea! We were at the meeting but our voices weren’t “included” in the discussions.

AAUW works to ensure that DEI is part of our nation’s educational system which is a microcosm of society. Numerous studies show that diverse teams outperform homogenous ones both in the workplace and academia. And as members of AAUW, it’s important that we get and stay involved with what happens in education at all levels. Girls won’t be interested in STEM careers if they’re discouraged from learning math and science in elementary, middle and high school.

Making our voices heard at school board meetings is one way to help ensure that all children are provided quality education and feel safe in school, even if we don’t have children in school. Virginia students are now facing challenges on how LGBTQIA students will be treated. Silence is compliance, so let’s speak up in public, online, and in editorials! Let our elected officials know how we feel!

September 15 to October 15 is Hispanic Heritage Month. It spans 2 months to include the dates on which many Central and South American countries gained independence from their colonizers. Heritage months honor the contributions made by people from those groups which typically aren’t in our history books. Many of us are familiar with Cesar Chavez and his work for the National Farmworkers Association. How many of us heard of Dolores Huerta who was an activist and civil rights leader? She was the co-founder of the National Farmworkers Association with Chavez, but we don’t often hear

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her name. If you want to find out more about Hispanic women, here's a link you can use: <https://parade.com/1085057/lolamendez/influential-latina-women-history-hispanic-heritage-month>.

October 12 is now celebrated as Indigenous People's Day in most states. [Columbus just happened to land on what's now the Bahamas in his search for India.] Most of us learned about Pocahontas and Sacagawea because of their involvement with men, not for their own actions. We didn't study the many other indigenous women who worked hard for a land which was taken from them. Here's a link to some of them (sorry about the ads): <https://allthatsinteresting.com/native-american-women>

President Biden will sign proclamations for Hispanic Heritage Month and Indigenous People's Day closer to those events. Just google to find it. They're always interesting and informative.

If you would like to get involved in our DEI program, please contact Patty Hagan at [pattyhagan13@gmail.com](mailto:pattyhagan13@gmail.com) or 703-304-3080.

### Cultural Arts – Carol Flicker and Roberta Sherman



Join Us for a Walk Through History

The first Cultural Arts activity this year will be a tour at the Ellanor Lawrence Park in Chantilly. The tour is called Women of Walney, We would love to have you all join us.

What: Women of Walney tour

Where: Ellanor Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly Virginia

When: Wednesday, September 13, the tour starts at 11 am but let's meet at the Historic Farmhouse Visitor's Center at 10:45

Price: \$8.00 in county \$10 out of county (we need a minimum of 10 people) You can bring your check made out to Carol Flicker the day of the outing or mail it to:

Carol Flicker  
1150 Fairway Drive  
Apt. 407  
Reston, VA 20190

RSVP to Carol Flicker at [carolflicker@gmail.com](mailto:carolflicker@gmail.com)

After the tour, we plan to go to Piero's Restaurant in the Franklin Farm Shopping Center for lunch. When making your reservation with Carol, please let her know if you are planning on joining us for lunch so she can make a reservation.

Hope to see many of you there!



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## Programs – Judy Helmich

**September 21** - The September program meeting is Thursday, September 21 from 2 - 4 p.m. at the home of Cyndi Shanahan, 11903 Fawn Ridge Ln, Reston, VA 20194. This meeting will be an opportunity to renew our friendships and meet new acquaintances along with supporting South Lakes students by providing them with the food they need to be successful. Light refreshments will be provided. Be sure to bring some food and/or toiletries for the South Lakes High School Food Pantry.

The South Lakes food pantry was started in 2017 to help close the hunger gap for the 30% of the students who are on the free and reduced lunch program. It is currently serving over 150 families.

Items in great need are:

- Toiletries (shampoo, conditioner, soap, maxi pads, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant)
- Canned goods (peanut butter, jelly, beans, tomatoes/sauce, applesauce, chili, veggies, tuna/canned meat)
- Box/Dry goods (crackers, cereal, pasta, rice, lentils, boxed milk)
- Cooking oil
- Laundry detergent, dish soap

**September 23** – Fall Northern District Meeting 10:30 am-1:00pm Charles E. Beatley Jr. Central Library 5005 Duke Street, Alexandria – Focus is on public policy and advocacy. Meghan Kissell, AAUW Senior Director, Policy & Member Advocacy; and Janine Greenwood, AAUW-VA Co-VP for Public Policy. (One of our members!) will be the featured speakers. As always, there will be time for branches to share important information, and once again, we will be collecting donations for Generation Hope and Women Giving Back.

**October** Public Policy Meeting with Ken Plum and perhaps Janet Howell

**November 18** Friendsgiving Luncheon at Mon Ami Gabi 11:30-2:00

Speaker: Dixiane Hallaj, author and publisher

**December** No program meeting

**January 30-31** Women Legislators' reception in Richmond on the 30<sup>th</sup> from 5-8pm

AAUW Lobby Day in Richmond on the 31<sup>st</sup> from 9am to 3pm

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<b>February 28</b>	AAUW Lobby Day (Virtual) TBD
<b>March</b>	DEI Workshop; led by Stephanie Abbott and Patty Hagan
<b>April 12-13</b>	2024 AAUW State Conference in Lynchburg
<b>June</b>	End of program year luncheon and meeting

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### 2023-2024 Leadership

Administrator	Cyndi Shanahan
VP Finance	Ruth Ruttenberg
VP Membership	Judi Polizzotti
VP Program	Judy Helmich
Secretary	Vacant
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	Patty Hagan
Great Decisions	Judi Polizzotti & Judy Skirbunt
Newsletter	Roberta Sherman
NOVA Liasion	Jean Ann Linney
Public Policy	Shyamali Hauth
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](http://www.AAUW.org)

**Branch Facebook Page:** *Reston-Herndon Branch of AAUW*