

# AAUW of Virginia Reston Herndon Branch

November/December 2023



## President's Pen

This is absolutely my favorite time of year! I hope you are enjoying it too. I love the colors, the smells, the wonderful weather, the happy laughter of children at Halloween, and Reston-Herndon AAUW's Friendsgiving!

I missed Friendsgiving last year because I had covid. I sure hope that doesn't happen again this year, because it is a great time to socialize with all of you at a wonderful restaurant (Mon Ami Gabi). I hope to see many of you there. See the invitation within the newsletter for more details.

In early October we had a lovely dinner with significant others at True Food in the Reston Town Center. The members who attended really enjoyed themselves, and would like to do something similar again. I have my thinking cap on to see how we can make a similar social activity happen soon.

Our public policy teams at both the state and branch level have been busy. Our get out the vote activities have been going on, and our education of the issues from our immediate past state legislators was a great program. The state policy team co-lead by our impressive and dedicated Janine Greenwood hosted a program to educate us more about the abortion issue in Virginia. Please be sure you get out and vote if you haven't already!

State Lobby day is coming up in January. I know several of us plan to attend, so look for car-pooling options. Plan on going the day ahead to enjoy the cocktail party for the women legislators.

Our Education Committee plans to meet early in the new year to create a plan for spring 2024. Think about the ways you think Reston-Herndon AAUW can positively impact our community through activities that support our mission within our schools.

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

Cyndi Shanahan

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## Membership

### MEMBERSHIP NEWS- Judi Polizzotti, VP Membership

There are currently 63 members of the branch. We hope that some of the seven members who have not renewed prior to September 30th will do so. We continue to hold in person or hybrid meetings to allow all members to attend. The social gathering at True Foods was a great success and hope to do more in the future.

If you would like to join me in working on developing membership ideas, you can email me at [judithpolizzotti@gmail.com](mailto:judithpolizzotti@gmail.com)

### 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

Our next meeting is Wednesday November 15th at 7:00 pm. It will be a hybrid meeting in person at 11776 Stratford House Place unit 501 or on Zoom. I will forward the link the week of the meeting to all that have joined on the evite.

The topic is "Iran at a Crossroads". Some of us attended the Reston Library discussion of the topic which was very informative. See you then.

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

We are on the last book for this calendar year. The group will meet on December 6 on Zoom. Our regular meetings will be on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

Dec: Diamond Eye, by Kate Quinn

Voting is still open for next year's book choices.

Voting Instructions:

-Please vote by Saturday, November 11, 2023.

-Send your choices to Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld:  
alysegoldman818@gmail.com; [heycarla@comcast.net](mailto:heycarla@comcast.net)

-Choose 5 Fiction, and 6 Non-Fiction, (include at least 1 biography/memoir).

**Fiction:** Choose 5

1. Verity, by Colleen Hoover: 333pgs
2. The Thursday Murder Club: A Novel (Book 1), by Richard Osman: 363 pgs
3. Heaven and Earth Grocery Store, By James McBride: 400 pgs
4. The Bird Hotel, by Joyce Maynard: 457 pgs
5. Harry's Trees, by Jon Cohen: 464 pgs
6. The Plot, by Jean Hanff Korelitz: 336 pgs
7. Demon Copperhead, by Barbara Kingsolver: 560 pgs
8. The Women of Chateau Lafayette, by Stephanie Dray: 567 pgs
9. Lessons in Chemistry, by Bonnie Garmus: 386 pgs
10. Siracusa, by Delia Ephron: 304 pgs
11. The Lost Manuscript, by Cathy Bonidan: 241 pgs
12. Mrs. 'Arris Goes to Paris, by Paul Gallico, 157 pgs
13. Hang the Moon, by Jeannette Walls: 364 pgs

**Non-Fiction/Biography:** Choose 6

- 14 The Secret History of Home Economics, by Danielle Dreilinger: 368 pgs
15. Build the Life You Want, by Oprah Winfrey & Arthur C. Brooks: 272 pgs
16. White Lies, by A. J. Baime, 400 pg
- 17 The Premonition, by Michael Lewis, 320 pg
- 18 The Death of the Public Schools, by Cara Fitzpatrick: 384 pgs
19. Six Amendments, by Justice John Paul Stevens, 192 pgs
20. White Too Long, by Robert P. Jones, 336 pg
21. Inheritance, by Dani Shapiro: 274 pgs (Biography)
22. In the Form of a Question, by Amy Schneider: 272 pgs (Biography)
23. Enough, by Cassidy Hutchinson, 379

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## **PUBLIC POLICY- Shyamali Hauth, Chair**

- Public Policy wants to alert branches to the situations in Grayson County and Bristol, VA, both in Southwest Virginia. After working with the Wytheville Branch and the Southwest District Rep to better understand the community's involvement and impact on women there, we have decided to support advocates in these communities who are facing efforts from outside Virginia to restrict access to abortion and establish "test cases." We held a special Zoom presentation on the subject on October 26 and provided additional details of how our members can support community advocates at this meeting. In addition, Denise Murden plans to speak on behalf of AAUW-VA at the Grayson County Board of Supervisors public hearing on an abortion ordinance on December 14.
- Voter Guides for the 37 contested Virginia Senate Races were completed, shared with individual candidates, and posted on the AAUW-VA website prior to the start of early voting. AAUW National recognized Virginia for this effort.
- After a summer break, AAUW National restarted its monthly State Public Policy Chair (SPPC) Zoom meetings. We have been introduced to and given access to a new legislative tracking system, BillTrack50, which we will use in the upcoming General Assembly session. AAUW National Lobby Corps has also resumed with many Virginia members, including Janine. Lobby Corps training for both existing and new members will be held on November 2 in the AAUW offices.
- AAUW National sent out two GOTV emails to all AAUW-VA members. The first encouraged registration and the second encouraged voting. National is using Virginia as a 'beta test' of new ways they can support state public policy activities.
- AAUW-VA will again participate in the League of Women Voters Pre-session event on December 6 to highlight the AAUW-VA Public Policy agenda.
- More than 3,000 postcards were distributed to our branches for the Reclaim Our Vote campaign, and we know that some Branches were supplying their own cards to write. Reston-Herndon members did 300 cards. Special recognition to John Lovas who wrote 100!!!!
- Preparations for our Lobby Days is underway. We have secured a room at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Richmond for our Women Legislator's reception on January 30 at 5 p.m. We will be working with GRAAUW Branch members on this event. A block of 18 rooms have been reserved at the Hampton Inn, Richmond at a group rate of \$149 each. This is the same hotel as last year. In person lobbying will be on January 31 and we are working on details for virtual lobbying on February 28. Issues for lobbying will depend on what is introduced by the newly elected members of the legislature after the election but will reflect our policy priorities.

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**AAUW Reston-Herndon Invites You to Celebrate with Us**

**Saturday, November 18, 2022, at Noon**

**Mon Ami Gabi**

**Reston Town Center**

**No Program – Just a Chance to Get Together**

Three Course Lunch with Choice of Entrée:

*Oeufs En Cocotte with house salad and garlic bread*

(baked eggs, creamed spinach, tomatoes, parmesan cheese)

*Steak Frites*

*Salmon Salad with Baby Kale and Spinach*

(avacado, blueberries, walnuts, lemon vinigrette)

\$50 per Person

RSVP with Entrée Choice to Cyndi Shanahan at [cyndi9817@gmail.com](mailto:cyndi9817@gmail.com)

by November 13

Check Payable to Reston-Herndon AAUW to:

Ruth Ruttenberg at 1767 Wainwright Drive, Reston, VA 20190

**BRING A GUEST**

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Please note: We will not have the basket raffle this year. Donations may be made to the branch's education fund, (payable to Reston-Herndon AAUW)

or

AAUW Nationals' Greatest Needs Fund (payable to AAUW)



**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



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 wide!

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## Diversity Equity Inclusion Patty Hagan, Chair

November has been celebrated as American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month since 2001. It is a time to recognize and honor the many contributions of the original inhabitants of what are now the 49 states. (People of Hawaiian heritage are honored in May during Asian American and Pacific Islander Month.) Despite our government's many attempts to obliterate the native tribes

(<https://library.law.howard.edu/civilrightshistory/indigenous/termination>) from the 1800's into the 1900's, many of them managed to survive. Currently, there are 574 tribes with Federal recognition. That provides them some limited sovereign immunity and powers of self-government. There are 7 Federally recognized tribes in Virginia: Chichahominy Indian Tribe, the Chichahominy Indian Tribe – Eastern Division, Monacan Indian Nation, Nansemond Indian Nation, Pamunkey Indian Tribe, Rappahannock Indian Tribe, and the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe. There are numerous tribes that do not have Federal recognition. During WWII, the U.S. Marines hired 29 Navajo men who became known as the Code Talkers (<https://www.cia.gov/stories/story/navajo-code-talkers-and-the-unbreakable-code>). Their unwritten language was used to communicate in the Pacific theater and was never broken. Many horrific stories have only recently become widely known including the 'kidnapping' of indigenous children and putting them in boarding schools where they were stripped of any connection to their families and tribes, and where many of them died. And the book, and now movie, *Killers of the Flower Moon*, tells the story of murders of members of the Osage tribe in Oklahoma after oil was discovered on their land in the 1920's.

During the October national AAUW meeting on DEIB, there was discussion of what various branches are doing. These include:

- Reviewing a book that members have read in the newsletter;
- LGBTQIA issues including pronouns;
- Women with disabilities;
- Providing menstrual products and through the Period Project and Days for Girls International;
- Reaching out to communities where AAUW is unknown; and
- Walk and Talk which involves visits to museums and discussions of the exhibits.

The month of December includes major holidays for people of many faith traditions including Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Zoroastrian. Americans of African heritage also celebrate Kwanzaa during December and Wiccans celebrate Yule. This explains why many of us prefer to wish people 'Happy Holidays' during December. Most people are celebrating something.

Diversity is about respect for everyone!



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Your DEIB Committee is planning a program during March 2024, Women's History Month. We're meeting at 2:30 on November 6 at LaMadeleine in Reston to discuss ideas. Anyone who would like to join us is welcome. And if you have ideas about what you'd like to learn about, but can't attend, please send them to me at [pattyhagan13@gmail.com](mailto:pattyhagan13@gmail.com).



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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 Intersectional*

**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*