

AAUW of Virginia Reston Herndon Branch

January/February 2024



President's Pen

The holiday season is just about over now. I hope yours was full of fun, family and friends.

While this is the darkest time of the year, it helps us remember that there is so much to look forward to. It is a great time to pause and take stock of how things are going in our lives and the life of Reston-Herndon AAUW. I hope that you are finding that our organization meets your needs and expectations. We have so many activities and opportunities to learn, grow and have interesting interactions with other like-minded people. If there is anything you would like to discuss about our branch, or AAUW Virginia, please give me a call or send me an email.

We are heading into an active public policy period, particularly at the state level. There is so much opportunity to participate and be a part of what is happening at the state, local and national level. I hope you are considering going to Lobby Day this year and are thinking about going down the day before so that you can attend the event sponsored by Virginia AAUW for women legislators. I am personally still trying to decide exactly when to head to Richmond!

We have some really interesting programs coming up this winter, so be sure to check out the meetings in our program section of the newsletter. In addition, we are having our regular on-going meetings for Book Group and Great Decisions. Additionally, we are meeting this month to discuss our Education Committee goals for the year. Once we have decided on them, we hope you will be excited enough and available to help us make them come to life.

Finally, please consider joining our leadership team for the 2024-25 year. The year starts on July 1, and we must have our slate of officers in place during the spring so that it can be communicated to the branch. We are in need of officers in many of our key roles. Please call me at 703-945-9817 to tell me what role you are interested in for our next year!

We look forward to 2024 and thank you for the support you provide to the board and the branch. Cyndi Shanahan

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Membership

MEMBERSHIP NEWS- Judi Polizzotti, VP Membership

As of December 22, we have 61 members. We hope in the New Year we will be able to have all meetings hybrid or in person to enable us to reconnect with friends and colleagues we haven't seen in a while. Also, we would like to have more social activities in combination with meetings to facilitate connections with new members. Most importantly, we open all programs to friends and family to join us in our work on women's equity, economic security, education equity and reproductive rights.

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, Judy Skirbunt, Co-Chair



On Wednesday, January 17th, we will discuss "Climate Change, Environmental Degradation, and Migration". It is the 8th and last topic for 2023. You can order the 2024 Foreign Policy Briefing Book on fpa.org. We will begin those topics in February. It is available on your kindle as well. It will be a hybrid meeting in person at 11776 Stratford House Place unit 501, Reston and on Zoom. The link will be sent in the evite and in an email reminder. See you then.



PUBLIC POLICY- Shyamali Hauth, Chair

AAUW of Virginia was part of a coalition that defeated a proposed ordinance in Grayson County Virginia that would have made the county a "sanctuary for the unborn." The ordinance would have denied women in the county access to abortion care. The drive for the ordinance was driven by outside conservative groups and was seen by these groups as a test case. The ordinance mirrored much of the legislation in Texas.

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Denise Murden, Co-VP of AAUW of Virginia, testified at the hearing where the ordinance was defeated. Lane Stone, President, and Sarita McCoy Gregory, Administrator, filed a letter with the Board of Supervisors of Grayson County opposing the ordinance.

To continue our advocacy in Virginia, our **annual Virginia Lobby Day in Richmond will be on January 31**. Whether you are coming to Richmond or not, please fill out the poll through the following link. You will help us not only know if you are coming to Lobby Day and how many packets to prepare, but which legislators represent you. To access the poll, click or cut and paste the following link: [AAUW-VA 2024 Lobby Day Events](#) In addition to the actual day of lobbying, a women legislators' reception will be held on January 30 at 5 p.m.

If you are interested in carpooling to Richmond, let Janine Greenwood know and she will facilitate getting groups together. A block of rooms at the Hampton Inn in Richmond for the night of January 30 has been reserved. You can make reservations here: <https://group.hamptoninn.com/xfvxmr>

Whether you can attend or not, the information you give us via the poll will help us shape our plans for **Virtual Lobby Day on February 28**. More details on that to come. Virginia Public Policy Zoom meeting on January 4 at 6 p.m., which we be recorded, will provide you with detailed information on which bills we will be advocating and supporting and how to do that.

Public Policy hopes you will join AAUW-VA in our legislative efforts to advance equity for women and girls.



Members Stephanie Abbott and Mary Zane at ERA march.

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AAUW Staff and Members at the March



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.



BOOK GROUP Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld

Book group meets the fourth Wednesday of every month except November. Check the weekly announcements online to see either the zoom link or where the group will meet.

Jan: Six Amendments, by Justice John Paul Stevens
Feb: Thursday Murder Club, by Richard Osman
March: Enough, by Cassidy Hutchinson
April: The Death of the Public Schools, by Cara Fitzpatrick
May: Lessons in Chemistry, by Bonnie Garmus
June: The Premonition, by Michael Lewis
July: In the Form of a Question, by Amy Schneider
August: Siracusa, by Delia Ephron
September: Heaven and Earth Grocery Store, by James McBride
October: History of Home Economics, by Danielle Dreilinger
December: The Lost Manuscript, by Cathy Bonidan

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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

Diversity Equity Inclusion Patty Hagan, Chair

Carol Bradley attended the November National DEI meeting on Zoom. Among other issues, there was a suggestion about a book and website on LGBTQ+ issues. The book is [The Savvy Ally: A Guide for Becoming Skilled LGBTQ+](#) by Jeannie Gainsburg. Her website is www.savvyallyaction.com and includes information on workshops.

With the November recording, Suzanne Y-M. who moderates those meetings, included a wonderful quote from Monifah Carter: "We cannot **force** someone to hear a message they are not ready to receive, but we must never underestimate the **power** of planting a seed."

Stephanie Abbott attended the December National DEI meeting on Zoom. The topic was whether AAUW should drop the college/AA degree requirement for membership. It will be coming up for a vote next year as part of the national meeting. It has come up at least twice before and failed. The diehard members feel it should remain because that's how we were founded. There's lots behind that, but many members, so far not enough voting ones, feel we need to branch out.

Many thanks to Carol and Stephanie for participating in those meetings since I wasn't available.

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In January, we honor Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, incredible civil rights work by celebrating his birthday, which was January 15, 1929. Four days after his assassination on April 4, 1968, there was a push to make his birthday a federal holiday. Thanks for the combined work of Coretta Scott King, musician Stevie Wonder, and the Congressional Black Caucus, that was finally achieved on November 2, 1983, when President Reagan signed the holiday into law. It was first observed 3 years later.

Several states, including Virginia, originally refused to honor it as a separate holiday and combined it with the birthday of Confederate General Robert E. Lee whose birthday was January 19. All states finally recognized the federal holiday in 2000. Alabama and Mississippi, though, still combine the 3rd Monday in January as Martin Luther King and Robert E. Lee Day.

To honor Dr. King's life of service, the late Congressman John Lewis (D-GA) and the late Senator Harris Wofford (D-PA), proposed legislation to make the King Holiday a day of service, a "day on, not a day off." President Clinton signed the King Holiday and Service Act into law on August 23, 1994. (<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/stories/15-year-battle-martin-luther-king-jr-day>)

February is recognized as Black History Month, a time to recognize and honor the achievements and accomplishments of Black Americans, most of whom aren't in our history books. The theme for this year is "African Americans and the Arts." It will focus on the experiences of African, Caribbean and Black Americans.

Carter G. Woodson, Ph.D. developed the idea of Negro History Week in 1926. He selected February as the month to coincide with the birthdays of President Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. Dr. Woodson stated: "*Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.*" While not immediately supported, the holiday gained support especially during the 1960's Civil Rights movement. It was changed to Black History Month 50 years later. (<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/initiatives/black-history-month-2024>)

To celebrate Women's History Month in March, the DEI committee will sponsor a speaker from George Mason University's Center for Women and Gender Studies. The speaker was ill in December and facing final exams. They asked that we wait until January to contact them. As soon as we have details arranged, we will provide additional information.

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February Program

Jeremy Nusbaum from Reset180 became aware of the problem of Human Trafficking in Northern Virginia after having previously worked to combat human trafficking in Thailand. He will discuss with us what the problem is, and how Reset180 works through awareness, education, prayer and prevention efforts. They work to prevent and disrupt human trafficking and restore the survivor through trauma-informed wrap-around case management. Jeremy will tell us what we can do to combat this terrible problem. Our meeting will be held on **February 1 at 4 P.M. via zoom**. We hope you will join us to learn and then take action.

The Education Committee will hold its first meeting of the new year to consider how we should support our local elementary, middle and high schools. The meeting is open to all members. Please bring your suggestions and ideas.

When: Tuesday, January 16

Time: 11:00 am

Where: Home of Roberta Sherman, 21630 Hawksbill High Circle, Apt 406, Sterling
There is on street parking as well as three visitor spots in the front of the building.

Hope to see many of you. Please let Roberta know if you plan on attending – 571-375-7717 or shermanrs1@aol.com

The **next Northern District Meeting will be on Saturday, March 9, 2024, from 10:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.** We are finalizing the details and will be sending further information next month. In the meantime, please **Save The Date**.

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



After careful consideration, the Cultural Arts committee decided an indoor, close-by trip would be best during the month of January. To that end, we are going to the Udvar Hazy Air and Space Museum in Chantilly VA. We went there a number of years ago and had a wonderful tour of Women in Aviation. Not sure what the topic will be this time, but know it will be most informative.

When: Thursday, January 25

When: 11-12:30

Where: Udvar Hazy Air and Space Museum

Fee: \$15 for parking which is for all car occupants

RSVP: Roberta at shermans1@aol.com

For your information the following is Museum policies:

Mask Policy: As of March 11, 2022, the Museum no longer requires that visitors wear a face covering during their visit.

Inclement Weather Policy: In the case of inclement weather, we will do our best to reschedule your reservation at a later date

Docent Policy: For all guided tours, one docent will be assigned for every 20 people in the tour group.

Parking Policy: There is a parking fee of \$15.00 per vehicle

Food Policy for Groups: . Food and drink (other than bottled water) cannot be consumed outside of designated eating areas.

Security Screening: All bags/backpacks will be checked by Security.

Carol Flicker will be investigating nearby restaurants for us to go to after the tour for lunch.

As you know, we were planning a trip to Hillwood in DC. After considering weather conditions, we decided to postpone this trip to the spring when weather will not be an issue and the garden should be in bloom. Once we have a firm date, we will advertise it

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in our various communications. Thank you to all who offered to drive. We will be in contact once we have a firm date.

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 Liaison	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

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