

AAUW of Virginia Reston Herndon Branch

July/Aug 2024



President's Pen

Last week saw several significant Supreme Court decisions; the first Presidential candidate debate and other election news. All of this reinforced my belief that the future of our AAUW public policy agenda and the future of our democracy are riding on the outcome of the election in November. I was feeling depressed about all this as I sat at the Network NOVA Women's Summit on Saturday. Then one of the speakers shared some wisdom from her grandmother about how to defeat a feeling of hopelessness:

Do what you can

With what you have

Where you are

I believe the original quote was from Theodore Roosevelt, but it's good advice.

So, what can we do? In the Public Policy section of this newsletter, you will see important information on two initiatives. The first is our annual Get Out The Vote postcard initiative. This will be starting later in July. If you did not sign up at the Annual meeting and want to participate, please let me or Shyamali know.

The second initiative is to reach out to local school officials on Title IX. I know that all our members, particularly our educator members, know how important it is for all students to have schools free of discrimination or harassment. Please do the simple but very important outreach we suggest in the Public Policy section.

I am also counting on you to let me know what programs or activities you would like our branch to do in the upcoming year. What speakers and topics engage you? How can we serve our community? How can we support each other and have fun? Please share your inspiration!

Janine

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Public Policy

Shyamali Hauth, Chair

A few months ago, the Biden administration released important new Title IX regulations which were to go into effect August 1. The intent of these regulations was to roll back modifications to the rules that had been made during the prior Presidential administration. Several states, including Virginia, joined lawsuits to block the new regulations. At that time, AAUW of Virginia posted the statement which is attached as "Title IX Update AAUW-VA". It was posted on the Public Policy (PP) page of the AAUW-VA website.

We are asking you to [share this letter](#) with your Superintendent of schools in July, urging them to swiftly implement policies consistent with the new Title IX rules. The link takes you to a letter from the National Women's Law Center from a coalition including AAUW.

Suggested message you can copy and paste into your email and add your personal thoughts:

Students across races, places, and genders prove every day that they can do great things, especially when there are strong Title IX protections in place, which is why the Biden Administration's updates to the Title IX rules are essential to ensure every student can thrive at school. Reston-Herndon AAUW supports these updates and opposes the efforts to stop new Title IX rules from going into effect. We would like to [share this letter](#) from AAUW and our coalition partners.

Title IX's promise, when it was enacted over 50 years ago, was to broadly guarantee all students equal educational opportunities free from sex discrimination. But in the years since its passage, opponents have stopped at nothing to weaken these crucial civil rights protections -- including undoing critical protections against sexual harassment and against the rights of LGBTQI+ students, particularly transgender, nonbinary, and intersex students. The Biden Administration's Title IX rule helps hold the line against these attacks.

We urge you to swiftly implement policies consistent with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972's federal regulations, as updated on April 29, 2024.

Thank you.

For Fairfax county residents: Dr. Michelle Reid superintendent@fcps.edu

For Loudoun County Residents: You can paste your message to Dr. Aaron Spence here: <https://www.lcps.org/Page/248677>

We will be writing Reclaim Our Vote postcards again this year. Our chapter got a shout out from Center for Common Ground! (see below) These are critical for elections and achieving our policy goals.

"Just a brief note to **Thank You** all for your support of the [Center For Common Ground](#) and our [Reclaim Our Vote](#) Campaigns, and to check-in with you before the start of activities for the General Election. Our goal this year is to reach **15 Million BIPOC** voters across VA, NC, SC,

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FL, AL, GA, and TX. The women of AAUW have been a tremendous supporter, especially the *Falls Church, Hampton, Reston, Richmond, Smith Mountain, Virginia Beach, and Wytheville* Chapters. We hope that we can count on you again this year, and that you'll help us reach our goal by encouraging other AAUW Chapters in Virginia and elsewhere to join in the fun!

We are waiting to receive the postcards and addresses. We will hold postcard writing parties in July and August. You will also be able to request cards to do on your own. We ask writers to hold their postcards for mailing closer to the start of Early Voting which begins on Sept. 20 in Virginia. This will give writers about 3 months to write postcards which is key to our goal of writing 12 million postcards!

We're hoping volunteers use their lazy, hazy summer days to write and store their postcards for the Fall.

Membership

Don't Forget to Renew Your AAUW Membership

Many of us have recently received our request to renew our annual membership. AAUW National is renewing on a rolling calendar year from your initial renewal date or if you were a member when the new software was implemented a few years ago from June 30.

You may find that when you renew your membership through AAUW.org that you need to reestablish your password. Don't let that be a barrier to your renewal process! There has however been no change in the annual dues for any level of our organization. Annual dues to be a member of Reston-Herndon branch of AAUW remains \$102. The breakdown of this is \$72 for National and \$15 each for our state organization and our branch.

If you have issues renewing or you would like to renew via check. Please send your check payable to Reston-Herndon AAUW to Ruth Ruttenberg at 1767 Wainwright Drive, Reston, Virginia 20190



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Patty Hagan, Chair

At recent national DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) meetings, we learned that within AAUW, there's been some discussion about what DEI is and isn't, and if it was something that AAUW should be working on. The national, regional and chapter DEI officers unanimously agreed that yes, it is important to AAUW now and in the future. DEI is about so much more than race and gender. It's about all aspects of what makes us human which are even more than what's included in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. That Act ruled that discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability and sex was illegal. And, by the way, in case you didn't know, sex was added at the last minute with the assumption that most Members of Congress would never vote for the bill if it included protecting women! Fortunately, that Congress did "Remember the ladies" unlike John Adams in 1776. DEI covers everyone because we're all diverse in some way(s). And that diversity adds to our nation's strength and abilities.

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Growing up, most of us were probably taught that America was the great melting pot. Everyone could achieve the American dream since we all became one. Well, that may have worked if your ancestors were from Western Europe. If they weren't though, it wasn't, and still isn't. always true. The late Justice Thurgood Marshall said that "The dream of America as the great melting pot has not been realized for the Negro; because of his skin color, he never even made it into the pot."

The concept of "diversity" to me is better than a "melting pot." While fondue is lovely, you can't see or taste the individual ingredients. I like to think of diversity as a big salad which may have different types of lettuce, plus some peppers, zucchini, tomatoes, carrots, nuts, onions and other veggies and fruit. Each item is distinguishable and retains its own taste. Blended together, the tastes are enhanced by each other. To me, that's what DEI is. We're better together than we are on our own. It's synergy!

As we read in the papers and hear on the news today, some states, i.e., Florida and Texas, have banned DEI from schools at all levels. The AAUW DEI officers from those states have stated they have to be extremely careful what they say and write now, and fortunately they're still talking and writing as much as possible!

If people truly understood that DEI includes everyone, I don't think there would be such an adverse reaction to it. People are afraid of change, especially people with power. DEI expands the opportunity for elected office and other power levels, to more people with different backgrounds.

So why do we still have special emphasis months and days? Most of the special emphasis months began about 60 years ago during the civil rights era. It was a way to bring attention to the accomplishment of groups of people who usually weren't included in our history books. They continue since we can all learn something about people who are from different backgrounds, cultures, religions, etc. than we are.

During July and August, we acknowledge three equal pay days. These recognize the pay disparity between women and white men. July 9 is Black Women's Equal Pay Day. August 7 is Mom's Equal Pay Day, and August 28 is Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Women's Equal Pay Day.

August 9 is the International Day of the World's Indigenous People. That day commemorates when the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations was held. This year's theme is "Protecting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Voluntary Isolation and Initial Contact." There are approximately 200 groups of indigenous people who currently live in voluntary isolation. Many of them are in South America, specifically Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. Other groups are found in India, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. Through their isolation, these people are able to preserve their cultures, languages, religions and remain strictly dependent on their environment. Changes to their natural habitat can adversely impact individuals, the group, and the environment on which they depend.

Some of us may not be aware that August 21 is National Senior Citizens Day. This commemorates the contributions older people made and continue to make in our society. And it's a time for younger generations to share in the wisdom and knowledge of the older generation. Most indigenous peoples honor their elders and seek them out for their wisdom and guidance. Sadly, that typically doesn't happen in western cultures. Unfortunately, ageism continues to impact people who are still in the workplace as well as those who are retired.

Hopefully, all of us in AAUW know about Women's Equality Day. This concept was introduced by Congresswoman Bella Abzug (D – NY) in 1971. That year, Congress declared that August

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26 be recognized to celebrate the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 which finally gave women the right to vote. The amendment was first introduced in 1878. It took 42 years before it became law. The final vote was cast by a 24-year-old Tennessee representative who alleged received a note from his mother urging him to vote yes. And while the language of the amendment proclaimed that "...the right to vote shall not be denied or abridge on account of sex" women of color, immigrant and poor women were often denied their right to vote. (<https://www.history.com/news/19th-amendment-voter-suppression>)

Despite not having the right to vote, there was nothing to prevent women from running for office. "Her Hat Was in The Ring" is a database compiled by Dr. Chmielewski, Dr. Norgren, and Dr. Gwinn-Becker. It shows that 3,586 women ran in 4,927 campaigns before they got the right to vote. At 1964 Republican Convention, Margaret Chase Smith (R – ME) was the 1st woman to be nominated at a major party's convention. And in 1972, Shirley Chisholm (D – NY) became the first African American woman to seek the presidential nomination. If you want to learn more about Congresswoman Chisholm's run for office, and backroom politics at the national level, there's an excellent movie on Netflix called "Shirley."



AAUW Funds - Stephanie Abbott Chair

The focus of AAUW is "Economic Security, Education and Advocacy." This is important work, especially now as we see many of the gains of the past being reversed or threatened. Title IX is being challenged. Programs that help women get ahead financially are being challenged. There is much we can do as members. We can give of our time and/or give money.

At our annual luncheon we raised \$355 in our 50/50 raffle. The winner of the raffle donated her half of the raffle proceeds right back to AAUW funds. Thank you Shyamali! Another way to donate is to use IRA Required Minimum Distributions to make a donation. Usually using that vehicle can satisfy the required distribution but you don't have to pay income taxes on the amount that you donate to AAUW Funds. This is called a "Qualified Charitable Donation (or Distribution)". Ask your financial advisor if you are eligible for that type of transaction. I have used it myself!



BOOK GROUP Alyse Goldman and Carla Heymsfeld

Book Group meets monthly at Reston Used Book Store Lake Anne at 2PM and we usually gather for lunch before at 12:30. Join us!

July 24: In the Form of a Question, by Amy Schneider

August 28: Siracusa, by Delia Ephron

September 25: Heaven and Earth Grocery Store, by James McBride

October 23: History of Home Economics, by Danielle Dreilinger

December 18: 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. 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 Janine know if there are any errors. Thanks, Dianne



Reston-Herndon AAUW Supports South Lakes Students

Where will you find some of the Reston-Herndon AAUW members from 1:30 – 3:30 on the third Thursday of the month during the school year?

Several members of Reston-Herndon AAUW have been supporting South Lakes by distributing free clothing provided by Women Giving Back to the high school students. The relationship with Women Giving Back, a nonprofit in Sterling, Virginia that provides clothing to women and children at no cost to them, has been in place since December, 2023. Generally, the third Thursday of each month at the same time as the students are provided the opportunity to get free food for their families, they are also encouraged to select free clothing. Reston-Herndon AAUW members are on-site to set up the clothing displays, help the students select clothing, and re-box any left over items. The clothing has been selected by Women Giving Back volunteers to be fashionable for high school students. On average there are 250 – 300 items taken each month. The students are generous with the clothing they select in that they often indicate that the clothes are for another family.

We'd love to have you join the team supporting this effort. We expect the next clothing give-away to be held on Thursday, September 19. Please send an email to Janine Greenwood

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(janinegrnwd@hotmail.com) or Cyndi Shanahan (cyndi9817@gmail.com) if you would like to be included in September or a future month.



Join Us! for the AAUW Atlantic Regional Conference

Connecting Voices from the Everglades to the Northern Border Conference

Spotlight! Presenter: Ajla Glavasevic Laussegger

Topic: Generative AI: The Evolution of Machine Learning and Why It Matters

When: September 27th-29th 2024

Where: Virginia Crossings Hotel & Conference Center 1000 Virginia Center Pkwy, Glen Allen, VA 23059

Hotel Amenities: The Tavern Bar & Grill, The Glen Restaurant Fitness Center, Free Wifi, Room Service, Free parking

Nearby Attractions: Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, James River Cellars Winery, Richmond National Battlefield Park, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Children's Museum of Richmond Crossings Golf Course

Register at the link below: <https://aauwatlanticregionalconference.com/>

AI models are generating inaccurate information, exacerbating racist and gender stereotypes against women, but more specifically, women of color. AI models repeat or mirror real-world stereotypes and disparities, but also work to amplify and reinforce them. Ajla Glavasevic Laussegger serves as Deputy General Counsel & Global Data Privacy Officer of a global chemical manufacturing company in Conshohocken, PA, Quaker Houghton, where she leads the Data Privacy organization, advises on business matters, drafts and reviews contracts, and provides legal support and leadership in litigation, regulatory matters, corporate restructuring, labor and employment matters, corporate compliance, crisis management, corporate governance, artificial intelligence, investigations, mergers and acquisitions, environmental matters, and day-to-day business needs of the organization. Ajla serves on the board of AAUW PA as the Diversity Officer, and previously served as the Secretary

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Membership Happenings

At our annual meeting at Café Montemarte, we enjoyed a wonderful lunch, visited with friends old and new and celebrated Marion Stillson's 50 years of being a member of AAUW.



Education Committee

Roberta Sherman Chair

This year's education project was to give books of famous women in our local schools. Forest Edge, Lake Anne, Hunters Woods, Clearview and Herndon Elementary were given a number of books that were suggested by the librarian at Forest Edge. Herndon Middle and South Lakes High School were given titles for their libraries as well. Below are some pictures of the librarians and a few notes received.

"A very belated thank you for the books you donated to our library. They are exactly what we want to make available to our students. We so appreciate your generosity and interest in our library." Thank you again, Linda Frantz and Emily Morton

Dear Roberta, "Thank you so much for the book donation from UAW of Reston. "

Sincerely, Debbie Scott, Herndon Middle

Dear Reston-Herndon AAUW, "Thank you so much for the new biographies. The titles and reading levels are perfect for our students' interests and levels. I truly appreciate you thinking of us for this donation. I'm excited to get them processed and into the students' hands. Thank you again for your generosity." Happy Reading, Terri Orvis, Librarian, Dogwood Elementary School

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2024-25 Reston Herndon Area AAUW Board of Director

Administrator	Janine Greenwood
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Newsletter	Roberta Sherman
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*

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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