



## AAUW FALLS CHURCH NEWS Falls Church Area (VA) Branch

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### PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! We have survived and thrived, and as we look 2023 in the eye, we see that there is much to do. We all want to continue to get back to “normal,” to have fun together and effectively to push our policy agenda nationally, state-wide and locally. We can and we will if we plan together and advocate with purpose and sustained focus.

January 8 at 2:00 p.m. is your first chance to do so. Come and enjoy seeing your friends at our January 8, 2023 meeting, and meet your Virginia House of Delegates legislator, Delegate Marcus Simon. Come a few minutes early to hear holiday stories and bask in the glow of seeing and sharing with old and new friends. Find out Del. Simon’s views on legislative priorities and possibilities. Communicate YOUR priorities! The meeting will be held in person at the Falls Church Community Center.



January 19, at Virginia Lobby Day in Richmond, VA, is your second chance to do so. Marilyn Falksen, our Public Policy chair, includes information about the day in our Save the Date article later in this newsletter.

We are only as strong as our membership. If we want to make a difference and have an impact on policies that are important to us, we cannot let up on building our branch. Please help by inviting a friend to come to the January 8 or another upcoming program or an AAUW movie or book group. Consider asking a friend to join AAUW. Explain to your friends the many aspects of AAUW and the positive contributions of AAUW to the community, the state, and the nation.

Our state and national websites provide many examples of the value of AAUW. For example, recently, there have been many challenges to the curriculum taught in public schools, including Virginia public schools. AAUW of VIRGINIA has joined a coalition of non-partisan Virginia organizations and community leaders calling for the Virginia Board of Education to pass a curriculum proposal that was developed with state-wide community input. See the letter of the coalition calling for the VA Board of Education to pass the **August 2022 version of the proposed History and Social Science Standards of Learning and Curriculum**. [\*\*READ THE LETTER\*\*](#). AAUW supports truthful and balanced curriculum, which is the foundation of a quality public education.

Members can also let their policy positions and concerns be known through a valuable AAUW tool, the Two Minute Activist. Make a pledge to yourself and the FC AAUW branch to sign up and use this convenient way to make your policy views known to your legislators. By informing your legislators of your opinion regarding important legislation affecting women and girls, you can positively effect change. Currently, for example, AAUW urges all members to notify federal legislators to **Pass the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act**, which

would require employers to make reasonable accommodations to protect the health of pregnant workers. In AAUW's view, "This critical legislation passed the House of Representatives more than a year ago, but it continues to stall in the Senate. Tell our leaders that pregnant workers cannot wait another day." [Take Action Now](#).

AAUW also sponsors many scholarships. AAUW's scholarships enhance the lives of the recipients and all who benefit more indirectly from AAUW's funding of higher education for diverse candidates. For example, see Gloria Blackwell's conversation with an AAUW Scholarship Alumna (2016-2017 Scholarship Award), Keisha N. Blaine (available on AAUW's website). Blaine is now an award-winning historian and *New York Times* best-selling author of *Until I Am Free: Fannie Lou Hamer's Enduring Message to America*. All of us who read Blaine's book are educated about an important, but lesser known, American civil rights intellectual.

Looking back, thank you, Susan Conklin, for a wonderful holiday party. We enjoyed the meal, conversation and camaraderie. Great choice! Thanks also to Mollie Jewell for collecting contributions at the lunch. In total, the FC AAUW branch members made a charitable contribution to The Center for Common Ground of Virginia, a registered non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization of \$225. Our contributions to this group, so important to encourage voter participation, are numerous – 18,390 postcards and counting! Thanks again, Mollie, for spearheading our engagement with this group.

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday, January 8!

Co-Presidents

Aida Loomis and Sharon K. Zackula

**BRANCH MEETING**  
**VA STATE DELEGATE, MARCUS SIMON**  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 8, 2:00 PM, FALLS CHURCH COMMUNITY CENTER**



**First Meeting of 2023**

We welcome the New Year with our first branch meeting of 2023 on **SUNDAY, January 8**, at The Falls Church Community Center at 2:00 p.m. We will meet with our elected representative to the Virginia House of Delegates, Delegate Marcus Simon. Del. Simon represents the 53<sup>rd</sup> House District, which includes the entire City of Falls Church and parts of Fairfax County.

Del. Simon is a lifelong resident of Fairfax County, where he resides with his wife Rachel, and two children, Emily and Zach. Early in his public service career, Del. Simon served as an officer in the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, earning the rank of Army Captain, serving as a prosecutor and also as a part-time Special Assistant United States Attorney. He is a co-founder of the law firm of Leggett, Simon, Freemyers & Lyon and EKKO Title, a real estate settlement, title, and escrow company.

First elected in 2013, Del. Simon currently serves on the following four House Committees: Courts of Justice; Finance; Public Safety; and Communications, Technology & Innovation. Del. Simon is proud of his work to expand voting rights, to protect our communities with commonsense gun violence prevention initiatives, to address the student loan debt crisis, and to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

**Mark your calendars! 2:00 p.m. on [SUNDAY, January 8](#)**, to meet Del. Simon, discuss the 2023 legislative session, and urge passage of legislation that we AAUW members believe is fundamental to women and family's  
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economic wellbeing, women's health and reproductive care, and a more fair, equitable, diverse, and inclusive Virginia.

## SAVE THE DATE



### Virginia Lobby Day, Thursday, January 19, 2023

**From Janine Greenwood & Denise M. Murden, Co-VPs for Public Policy, AAUW of Virginia:** The Virginia General Assembly session opens for its short 45-day session on January 11, giving us many opportunities to advocate for legislative, Policy, and budget priorities that advance equity for women and girls in the Commonwealth. It is the strength of our united voices that gets the job done, so **we need every member helping in the ways they can.**

We will kick off with a **Pre-Session Public Policy Zoom meeting on January 5 at 5 p.m.** At this statewide gathering you will *learn how to advocate both in-person and virtually.* We will introduce you to tools and resources that will be available to our members throughout the session, highlight issues to watch for, and provide updates on our in-person Lobby Day plans for January 19 as well as how you can participate virtually. *This is one meeting you will not want to miss.*

Topic: AAUW-VA Pre-Session Public Policy Zoom Meeting

Time: January 5, 2023, 5:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88121083620?pwd=Y1ptK0JEVDk5Tk3bGIJbGJoaXU3dz09>

Unfortunately, we were forced to cancel our Women Legislators Reception for the evening of January 18 due to lack of a venue, but we will be meeting in person in Richmond for AAUW-VA Lobby Day on Thursday, January 19. We are in the process of planning a gathering in place of the reception, on Wednesday evening for those members who will be arriving that day as well as those who would like to join via Zoom.

For those who will be arriving in Richmond on Thursday, January 19, we will plan on gathering at 8:30 am at a location yet to be determined near or in the Virginia State Capitol building.

It would help us to know what our members' plans are for how they plan to advocate this year and who and how many will attend in person. Members are asked to complete our brief questionnaire regarding your plans  
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for lobbying and advocacy. Please also use this form for comments, questions, and suggestions you may have concerning lobbying and advocacy during the 2023 session. It can be found here: <https://forms.gle/ZRyxTxLE8QYXi3Cv6>. There are just six easy questions, so please take a few minutes to complete the survey. If you are uncertain who your State Senator and Delegate are, go to <https://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov> and fill in your address to find their names and contact information.

**AAUW-FC Public Policy Chair Marilyn Falksen** adds that Aida Loomis, Sharon Zackula, and Becky Gaul from the Falls Church Branch plan to attend on the 19th. They will be meeting with Delegates in groups of 2-3, using discussion points on AAUW issues provided by AAUW-VA Public policy. If anyone is interested in joining them, please let Marilyn know by emailing her at [fcaauwpublicpolicy@gmail.com](mailto:fcaauwpublicpolicy@gmail.com) by **Wednesday, January 4**, so that we are able to work out the logistics of getting everyone who wants to participate to Richmond.

The 2023 Legislative Session is an important one, and your support and advocacy for AAUW-VA Policies and legislation will be critical. Here are the legislative priorities for 2023:

- Protect access to abortion and women's right to make personal reproductive decisions with their medical care providers
- Eliminate systemic racism and sexism through changes to Virginia law and regulations
- Make childcare affordable and readily available for all families
- Protect full access to voting
- Ensure full public-school funding and protect teachers from harassment and liability claims

## PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES

### VA Abortion Rights

Among the legislative priorities for AAUW in 2023 is to **protect access to abortion and women's right to make personal reproductive decisions with their medical care providers.**

Considering this, and with the upcoming Lobby Day approaching, we include this information from a December 19 Axios Richmond online article.



Virginia Governor Youngkin's proposed budget, which was unveiled on December 15, 2022, includes \$50,000 to pay to incarcerate people who violate a 15-week abortion ban the Governor is [pursuing](#). Governor Youngkin favors a state ban on abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy and called on legislators to enact new restrictions on the procedure shortly after the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. The Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* on June 24 2022, in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. "The Supreme Court's decision, I agree with — that this is a decision for states to make by elected officials, by the citizens of Virginia," Governor Youngkin said on *Face the Nation* on July 10, 2022. The inclusion in the proposed budget of \$50,000 to incarcerate people

who violate a 15-week abortion ban is viewed as the opening salvo in the fight over abortion rights in the coming legislative session, which begins Jan. 11, 2023.

Legislators blasted Governor Youngkin for not mentioning or otherwise noting the proposed appropriation when he formally [presented his budget](#). The allocation is required under procedural rules in the General Assembly, which require a minimum of \$50,000 in new corrections funding for any new laws that could increase the state's prison population. Governor Youngkin's press secretary, Macaulay Porter, defended the inclusion of the \$50,000 in the proposed budget stating that Governor Youngkin "will not sign a bill which imprisons women, that's pure political posturing." He also stated, "There is a technical requirement to include any legislation that may expand a felony in the budget, even before it passes."

Your voice is critical in protecting a person's right to make personal reproductive decisions with their medical care provider.

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### Two-Minute Activist

Become a two-minute activist and let your voice be heard on issues important to you and AAUW! It's easy. Just go to <http://www.aauw.org/what-we-do/public-policy/two-minute-activist/> and click on the "sign up" button. This will bring you to a form to complete with your name, address, and email. Once you've signed up, you will receive email notices when your advocacy is most needed. AAUW will provide you with the tools you need to share your views with your Senators and Representative in Congress, your state legislators and other government officials. You will receive a prepared letter which you are able to modify to personalize if you wish. Then, with a push of a button, it's on its way. If time is of the essence, you may receive a request to make telephone calls and will be provided with talking points. With your help, the Action Network can continue to boost AAUW's influence on Capitol Hill and in statehouses across the nation

## SHARE YOUR CAREER EXPERTISE: HELP BUILD THE FUTURE

The **Meridian HS Career Chat Program** will be back in person in February and school leaders are excited to welcome professionals from many careers to chat with their students about career possibilities after high school.

Regan Davis, Community Outreach Coordinator for Falls Church City Schools, is leading the program, which offers students the opportunity to meet real people and learn about different career choices. The next session is **Monday, February 6, 9:30-11:30 am.**



Please consider attending, and if possible, share this information about the Meridian HS Career Chats with your friends. They need lots of presenters this year!

Please complete this [form](#) if you are interested, or reach out to Regan at [davisr@fccps.org](mailto:davisr@fccps.org)

## MOVIE AND BOOK GROUPS



### Let's Go to the Movies

#### Wednesday Movie Outings (when a good movie is playing) Club

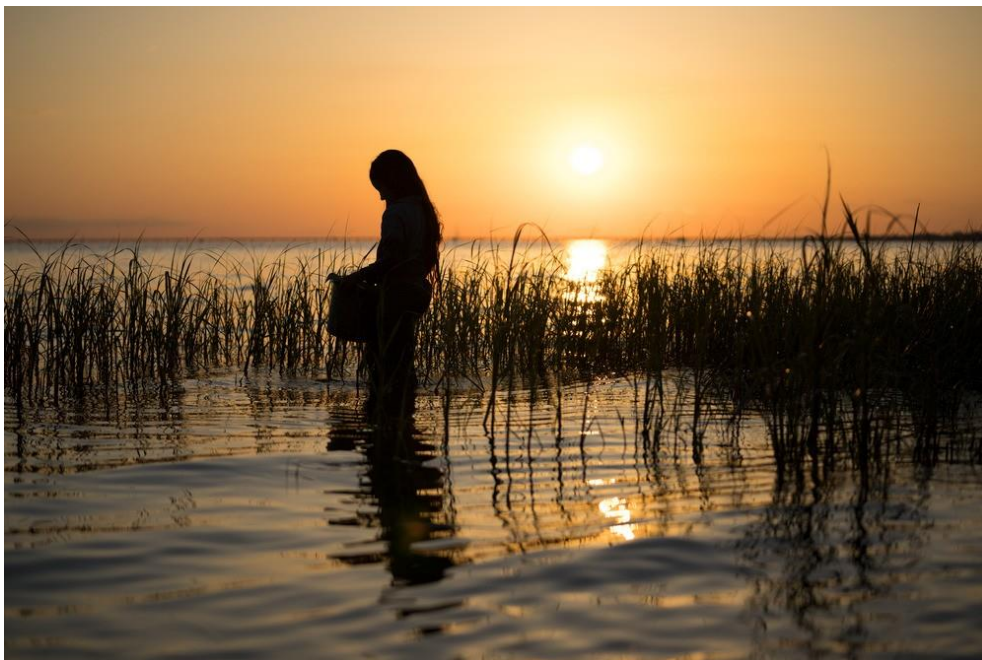
Join in the fun of a *sometimes-weekly movie theater outing* with AAUW friends. Among those we have been to see lately include: **Devotion**, **Ticket to Paradise**, **Banshees of Inisherin**, and **The Woman King**. Outings are on Wednesdays for the first showing, and emails about the movie choices go out a week in advance. To get on the list for movie emails contact Clare O'Sheel at [cosheelatgmail.com](mailto:cosheelatgmail.com). We're looking forward to **Living, Women Talking, A Man Called Otto**, and lots more!

#### Virtual Movie Club

#### Fourth Wednesday of the month, 7:00 pm on Zoom

For more than 24 months and even more films, the Virtual Film Group continues to connect through film, especially those highlighting women. All films are streaming on Netflix.

#### Wednesday January 25th at 7:00 PM, *Where the Crawdads Sing*



Best-selling novels often become films and *Where the Crawdads Sing* is no exception. Like the book, the film tells the story of Kya, an abandoned girl who raised herself to adulthood in the dangerous marshlands of North Carolina. Known in town as the "Marsh Girl", an isolated yet resilient Kya is drawn to two young men from town. Kya opens herself to a new and startling world; but when one of them is found dead, she is immediately



cast by the community as the main suspect. As the case unfolds, the verdict as to what happened becomes increasingly unclear, threatening to reveal the many secrets that lay within the marsh. I am sure that the discussion will not only be on the quality of the film but also on how closely it followed the book.

Watch **Where the Crawdad Sings** on Netflix Streaming. Join the group on zoom, Wednesday, January 25 at 7:00 PM. Please call or text Aida at 703 966 8050 if you are interested in joining any of our film discussion evenings. All are welcome!

Upcoming movies include:  
February 22, **The Good Nurse**  
March 22, **The Wonder**

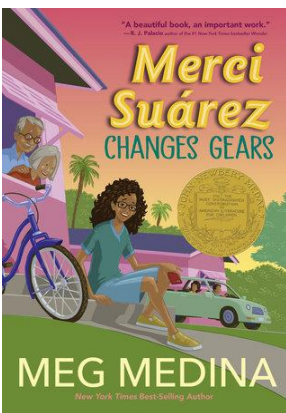
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## Let's Read!



**Book Club,**  
**Third Tuesday of the month, 7:30 pm on Zoom**

We asked for and received lots of great book recommendations at the end of 2022; here are the prize-winning books that received the most votes for January, February and March:  
***Merci Suarez Changes Gears*, *Deer Season* and *The Years*.** All meetings are via Zoom on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM. Everyone in the chapter is welcome to come; a Zoom invitation will be sent the day before the meeting.



**January 17<sup>th</sup>: *Merci Suarez Changes Gears* by Meg Medina  
Newberry Medal 2019**

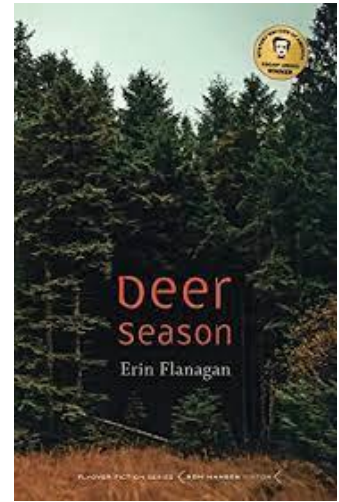
Thoughtful, strong-willed sixth-grader Merci Suarez navigates difficult changes with friends, family, and everyone in between in a resonant new novel from Meg Medina.

Merci Suarez knew that sixth grade would be different, but she had no idea just how different. For starters, Merci has never been like the other kids at her private school in Florida, because she and her older brother, Roli, are scholarship students. They don't have a big house or a fancy boat, and they must do extra community service to make up for their free tuition. So when bossy Edna Santos sets her sights on the new boy who happens to be Merci's school-assigned Sunshine Buddy, Merci becomes the target of

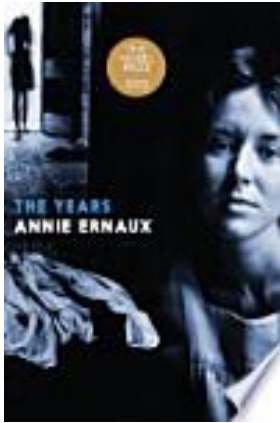
Edna's jealousy. Things aren't going well at home, either: Merci's grandfather and most trusted ally, Lolo, has been acting strangely lately — forgetting important things, falling from his bike, and getting angry over nothing. No one in her family will tell Merci what's going on, so she's left to her own worries, while also feeling all on her own at school. In a coming-of-age tale full of humor and wisdom, award-winning author Meg Medina gets to the heart of the confusion and constant change that defines middle school — and the steadfast connection that defines family.

**February 21<sup>st</sup>: *Deer Season* by [Erin Flanagan](#)  
2022 Edgar Award for Best First Novel**

It's the opening weekend of deer season in Gunthrum, Nebraska, in 1985, and Alma Costagan's intellectually disabled farmhand, Hal Bullard, has gone hunting with some of the locals, leaving her in a huff. That same weekend, a teenage girl goes missing, and Hal returns with a flimsy story about the blood in his truck and a dent near the headlight. When the situation escalates from that of a missing girl to something more sinister, Alma and her husband are forced to confront what Hal might be capable of, as rumors fly and townspeople see Hal's violent past in a new light.



A drama about the complicated relationships connecting the residents of a small-town farming community, *Deer Season* explores troubling questions about how far people will go to safeguard the ones they love and what it means to be a family.



**March 21<sup>st</sup>: *The Years* by [Annie Ernaux](#), [Alison L. Strayer \(Translator\)](#)  
2022 Nobel Prize for Literature**

Considered by many to be the iconic French memoirist's defining work and a breakout bestseller when published in France in 2008.

*The Years* is a personal narrative of the period 1941 to 2006 told through the lens of memory, impressions past and present—even projections into the future—photos, books, songs, radio, television and decades of advertising, headlines, contrasted with intimate conflicts and writing notes from six decades of diaries.

**FUNDRAISING TASK FORCE UPDATE**

The Fundraising Task Force has been formed and has met. Check the box! Ideas have been generated. Check the box! Fundraising has started. Check the box! Are we done? Nowhere close to being done. The Fundraising Task Force has met three times starting in the Fall. In one of those meetings, members had the opportunity to share ideas. The team will continue to meet and if any member wants to join us as a member or with an idea please let us know. I plan on showing up at around 1:00 PM prior to our January 8 program if you want to help or have a suggestion for fundraising.

Some of the ideas so far include Silent/Online Auction, Speaker Event, Casino Night, Film/Theater Fundraiser, Pop Up Book Sale, Direct Solicitation, and Food Prep/Restaurant collaboration. We are researching and networking to see what ideas work best for our members and organization. Is there someone you know that may want to work with us? Is there someone who you think we should talk to? Are you willing to make an introduction?

In addition to brainstorming there are fundraiser opportunities that just land in our lap. In November we were asked to participate in The Village Preservation & Improvement Society's (VPIS) Falls Church Holiday Tree Fest. In a New York City minute we said YES! In a couple of weeks we had a tree, with decorations and our branch story. Members participated and joined in the celebration as our tree was voted # 1 in Most Representative of the Organization! It is always a **WIN!** when we as an organization can celebrate and share our [AAUW Falls Church pg. 8](#)





story with the community (and raise \$166). I am sure we will do this again. With a great team and member support we hope to create a fundraising strategy that is rooted in our mission of gender equity through education, research and advocacy.

## CALENDAR

**January 5, 5:00 pm:** AAUW-VA Pre-Session Public Policy Zoom Meeting

**January 8, 2:00 pm:** Branch meeting **in person** with speaker VA Delegate Marcus Simon. Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls Street, Falls Church VA

**January 17, 7:30 pm:** Book Club on Zoom

**January 19, 8:30 am:** Virginia Lobby Day

**January 23, 7:30 pm:** FCAAUW Board meeting on Zoom (anyone wishing to attend contact Sharon Zackula at [sharon.zackula@gmail.com](mailto:sharon.zackula@gmail.com))

**January 25, 7:00 pm:** Virtual Movie Club on Zoom

## A FUN ENDING TO 2022 WITH THE ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY



*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 based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.*