

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

February 2, 2024

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

Winston Churchill



Dear Members,

Happy February! The days are getting longer.

A very big round of applause for Susan Conklin. Thank you, Susan, for the fantastic meeting in January, when **Suzanne S. LaPierre, co-author, *Desegregation in Northern Virginia Libraries*, (2023)**, spoke to us about the recent history of the desegregation of Northern Virginia’s public libraries. Susan has also planned a very interesting program for **Sunday afternoon, February 11, 2024, 2:00 p.m., at the Falls Church Community Center**. Come a few minutes early to see old and new friends. Then listen to our panel of three women entrepreneurs – Mala Persaud, Anna Gallman and Tiffany T. Laing -- that Susan has arranged. (More details inside!)

As we look at 2024, we want to remain a dynamic organization, to engage, to persuade, to have fun and to be purposeful. But, action is required, even when the weather is bleary and the days are short. “We will fail when we fail to try,” Rosa Parks said. We can make a difference if we plan and act together, advocating with sustained focus for issues and legislative changes we believe are necessary to achieve AAUW’s goals for women and families. **AAUW Lobby Corps**, a program led by the AAUW national office, is soliciting more of us to participate in lobbying the U.S. Congress on important issues, such as pay equity, paid leave, education funding, Title IX, voting rights, criminal justice reform and others. **Lobby Corps training will occur (online via Zoom), Feb 8, 2024. Sign in either to the 9:30 a.m. or the 5:30 p.m. session** and see if this is an area where you can engage and persuade, have fun and be purposeful.

AAUW Falls Church and other Virginia branches also lobby our state legislators for positive change. Several members have just returned from Richmond, VA after meeting with VA state Delegates and Senators on January 30 (a reception for women legislators), and January 31, 2024, at their offices at the Capitol. We addressed issues and legislative proposals regarding childcare, maternal health, minimum wage, paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, public meeting access, public school funding, reproductive rights, salary history ban, and workplace equity. Continue the effort – follow and engage with the AAUW VA Public Policy chairs during the rest of this year, tracking issues and legislation and contacting your legislators.

FC AAUW Nominating Committee and March Meeting. We have three thoughtful members working together to create a slate of officers for next year. Anne Baxter, Marion Jarrett and Dianne Bodeen are the Nominating Committee, and are identifying candidates for three offices that will be voted upon at the **FC AAUW branch's annual business meeting on Monday evening, March 11, 2024, at 7:30 p.m., at the Falls Church Community Center. We will elect a President (or co-Presidents), a Vice President-Programs (or co-VPs) and Secretary.** If you are asked by the Nominating Committee to be nominated to serve as one of these officers, please take a moment to consider how much your contribution would mean to the branch as an officer. And, say yes, if you can.

Do more than belong: participate.

Do more than care: help.

Do more than believe: practice.

Do more than be fair: be kind.

Do more than forgive: forget.

Do more than dream: work. ---- William Arthur Ward

We look forward to seeing you on February 11, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. at the Falls Church Community Center. Thank you to our newsletter publishers, Pam Martinov and Clare O'Sheel!

Co-Presidents Aida Loomis and Sharon K. Zackula

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 Feb. 11 meeting 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.

BRANCH MEETING

Women Owned Businesses

Our February Program focuses on Women Owned Businesses. We have three dynamic women entrepreneurs: Mala Persaud, Anna Gallman and Tiffany T. Laing. Make sure you put 11 February on your calendar. The program starts at 2:00 pm at the Falls Church Community Center.



Mala Persaud is a former journalist turned communication consultant and sustainability entrepreneur. Transitioning from a career in network journalism, Mala then applied her skills and global perspective to help a range of global health, development and sustainability to shape their communications strategies. In 2019, Mala took a step into entrepreneurship by founding Trace: The Zero Waste Store in Vienna, VA. At Trace, Mala has created a destination for eco-conscious consumers, with more than 150 package-free foods, soaps, detergents and personal care items.

Anna Gallman is an entrepreneur with 34+ years of running successful international business endeavors: exports/imports of secondary steel, plastic and raw materials; international distribution of natural products and state of the art technologies; liaison for medical tourism in Mexico for alternative and regenerative medicine. Her current focus in financial services on a B2B program to facilitate Project Blue's expertise in Institutional and government specialized benefits and grants for medium size companies in USA.



Tiffney Laing is the founder at the award winning Bevy & Dave and an author and podcast host. A visionary and solutions-driven entrepreneur on a mission to foster a positive self-identity in African (Black) children. Tiffney is also an author, professional speaker and podcast host. Tiffney has been recognized industry peers and featured in local, national and international media to include Good Morning America.

This is just the tip of what these speakers have to offer. Do not miss this event.

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES

Virginia General Assembly



The Virginia General Assembly convened on Wednesday, January 10, and elected the first Black Speaker of the House of Delegates in Virginia's history, Delegate Don Scott. Several key bills supported by AAUW have already been introduced. Bills pertaining to **reproductive rights and maternal health**: a Constitutional Amendment on reproductive freedom, protection from searches of menstrual data, prohibition of extradition to other states for violation of their laws pertaining to reproductive health care, a right to contraception, implicit bias training requirements; **economic security/workplace equity**: paid family and medical leave, paid sick days, minimum wage increase, childcare review, salary history ban; **education**: Title IX/sexual harassment training, studies on teacher compensation and retention; **LGBTQ**: Constitutional Amendment for right to marry, right to gender affirming care.

AAUW-VA Lobby Day was held on January 31. (As of the date of this article was written (January 28), five Falls Church Branch members were planning to attend. Look for more information about this event in the March newsletter.) There will also be a Virtual Lobby Day on February 28. Watch you email box for updates and ways in which you can participate. Also, please help the AAUW-VA Co-Vice Presidents for Public Policy prepare for the Virtual Lobby Day on February 28 by completing a poll to let them know who your representatives are using this link: <https://forms.gle/arjPBxGfebcrTLiT9>

Lobby Corps



Are you interested in making your voice heard in Congress? Joining Lobby Corps is a great way to do that. For over 50 years, Lobby Corps members have been advocating for legislation that advances equity for women and girls, and you can become part of that dynamic group! Lobby Corps is only a two- hour commitment on the third Thursday of each month Congress is in session. Attend an upcoming virtual training via Zoom for new and returning Lobby Corps members scheduled for **February 8** at **9:30am** and **5:00pm** to learn more. Just click on the time that works best for you and fill out the registration form. You will receive a confirmation email with the link to use on the February 8. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kalina Majercak, AAUW Policy Associate at majercakk@aauw.org.

AAUW Webinar on Education Culture Wars

On Wednesday, **February 7, at 7 p.m.** the AAUW National Public Policy Committee is presenting a webinar titled **[School Boards: The Battleground for the Education Culture Wars](#)**. Across the country, school boards and candidates for school boards have taken up controversial policies that have led to banning books from school libraries; the censorship of curriculum in school classrooms due to individuals finding content “objectionable”; and policies leading to the prevention of safe school climates for students of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Join the webinar on February 7 to learn how one AAUW state board is fighting back and what you can do locally. Click on the underlined title above to register; you will receive a confirmation with the link to use on February 7.

POSTCARDS FOR ROV

Get out the vote postcard writing will resume in 2024!

Falls Church AAUW has been writing **non-partisan** postcards to minority voters in conjunction with Reclaim our Vote (ROV) and support of AAUW’s policy of “vigorous enforcement of and full access to civil and constitutional rights, including affirmative action and expanding voting rights.”

Our postcards via ROV comprise a nonpartisan **voter outreach campaign to fight voter suppression** in states that have been severely impacted, empowering underrepresented voters to fully participate in elections. Our postcards invite citizens to re-register and vote in important federal and statewide elections.

In 2023, we helped ROV reach 99% of the 287,000 Virginia voters identified as belonging to underrepresented groups. The efforts paid off: voters sided with candidates that supported protections for voting rights, women’s health, and the environment. **Falls Church branch wrote 2,198 postcards for the VA fall election (primary and general elections), bringing our grand total to 20,588 since 2020.** And here we go again...



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What's in store for

2024

No doubt you are well aware that in 2024 we'll be facing a Presidential election, Congressional elections, and a host of state and local races. The 2024 elections are arguably even more important than 2020's, in terms of what's at stake. As always, turn-out will be the key to preserving our democracy. So refill your pens and limber up your fingers.

These are the campaigns that we'll be writing post cards (that have been identified so far):

GEORGIA: Primary postcard campaign launches on February 23.

- **U.S. Congressional District 13**
- **Mailing window: May 1-6**
- 10-14 days of early voting
- Primary on May 21, 2024

VIRGINIA: Primary postcard campaigns launch on March 1.

- **U.S. Congressional Districts 7 and 10**
- **Mailing window: May 7-21**
- Early voting: May 3-June 15
- Primary on June 18

More campaigns will be announced as races develop.

VOTING ON OPEN AAUW MEMBERSHIP

Preparing to Vote on Open AAUW Membership

The National AAUW Board of Directors supports a proposed change to open AAUW's membership (i.e. remove the degree requirement) and is encouraging Branches to respectfully consider this issue before member voting begins in April.

To help our Branch members prepare for this important vote, we're planning a discussion during our March Business meeting.

The proposed bylaws changes, background, and FAQs are available at [Open Membership Toolkit – AAUW : Empowering Women Since 1881](#). We'll refer to this resource during our March meeting discussion.

Actual member voting will take place online between April 3 and May 15. Each member will receive email from vote@simplyvoting.com with their unique ID and Password to vote.

INTRODUCING BONNIE KRAJESKI

I enjoyed talking to Bonnie, whose life story was not too unlike mine, as a wife of a Foreign Service officer. That meant a lot of traveling and living in a lot of interesting places over 30 years: Kathmandu, Madras, Warsaw, Tunis, Cairo, Dubai, Yemen and Bahrain—twice in the role of Ambassador’s wife (never easy as I observed it).



Bonnie’s home town is Boston, and she did her undergraduate degree at UMA Amherst. She since then has earned two MED’s in Virginia, one for Special Ed. While working for USAID in Yemen, she became involved with education for women. Her teaching in Virginia has found her with her special love, interestingly enough, as a certified math coach.

You would think she had traveled enough, but she hasn’t had her fill yet, as she and her husband travel whenever possible—most recently in Sicily, which included a cooking course. Bonnie enjoys biking, quilting, and books!

Now back in our area in retirement, she is keen to get involved, do volunteer work, and generally to feel at home. She and her husband have three children, one of whom, as a lawyer, has written the gun policy for the Massachusetts’s House. Another is a writer in NYC, and a son lives in Montreal.

Dianne Bodeen

MOVIE AND BOOK GROUPS

FEBRUARY

Falls Church AAUW Book Group

We’ll be reading your favorite short stories for our February 15 Book Group meeting. You can choose an author from any era, country, etc. It may be a current author such as, O. Henry, Hemingway, Faulkner, John Updike, Katherine Mansfield, Jumpa Lahiri etc. Tell the group if you’d recommend the short story and why. Do you like this format better than a novel, poetry etc.

Falls Church AAUW Movie Group



When you think of the 1963 March on Washington, what names come to mind? Martin Luther King? John Lewis? Well of course. How about Bayard Rustin? Perhaps that is a less familiar name. The virtual film group will be watching and discussing the movie, *Rustin*. It tells the story of Bayard Rustin, a charismatic, gay, civil rights activist. In two months, Rustin, with 200 volunteers, summoned over 200,000 marchers. Despite internal and external resistance, no internet, no social media, no cell phones, Rustin organized an event that is considered one of the high points of the civil right movement. Remember MLK’s “I Have A Dream” speech?

Watch *Rustin* on Netflix streaming. Join the group on zoom on Wednesday February 28th 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 Attractions: *All Quiet on the Western Front* (2022 Netflix)

MARCH

The Book Group will meet with the Movie Group on Wednesday, March 27. We'll read *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque, a German veteran of World War I. War breaks out in Germany in 1914. Paul Bäumer and his classmates quickly enlist in the army to serve their fatherland. No sooner are they drafted than the first images from the battlefield show them the reality of war.

The 2022 film adaption (also done in 1930 and 1979) was done by German filmmakers.

CALENDAR

- **February 7, 7pm:** Webinar on School Boards
- **February 8, 9:30am and 5pm:** Virtual training for Lobby Corps
- **February 11, 2:00 pm:** Branch Meeting (in person) with speakers Mala Persaud, Anna Gallman and Tiffany T. Laing, Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls Street, Falls Church, VA.
- **February 15, 7:30 pm:** Book Club (Zoom)
- **February 26, 7:30 pm:** Board Meeting (Zoom)
- **February 28, TBA:** Virtual Lobby Day
- **February 28, 7:00 pm:** Virtual Movie Group (Zoom)
- **March 11, 7:30pm:** Branch Meeting (in person) Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls Street, Falls Church, VA.
- **March 25, 7:30 pm:** Board Meeting (Zoom)
- **March 27, TBD :** Joint meeting of Book Club and Movie Group (Zoom)
- **May 1-6:** Mailing Window for Georgia postcards
- **May 7-21:** Mailing Window for Virginia postcards



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.