



Falls Church Area (VA) Branch

AAUW FALLS CHURCH FLASH

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PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

In the evening of November 6th as I was holding Brad's hand as he was dying, our daughter called her father from a noisy airport. While choking back tears, she told Brad how much she loved him and what a privilege it was to be his daughter. Since then the word privilege has had me wrapped around an emotional axle. What does it mean to be privileged and why do I feel so privileged to be part of AAUW FC?



Through our programs, It was a privilege to learn and be transported to Spain's El Camino and then to a time (in my lifetime) when libraries were segregated in my backyard. How lucky were we to be inspired by women entrepreneurs and the passions that drive them? Or about organizations like the W20 which helps ensure that gender issues are mainstreamed into G20 discussions and translated to policies that support gender equality and economic empowerment. Thank you Susan for taking the helm.

How can you not feel privileged to see 18 young women receive our branch scholarships or know that you have helped hundreds of high school students visit colleges or provided materials for learning English. It was a blessing to work with volunteers as young as 16 to as old as 91. Thank you all who made our fundraising efforts a success with a special shout out to our fundraising leaders Sarah, Clare, Mary Ellen, Bunny and Mollie. The honor to award scholarships and grants will continue. And thank you Mary, Pam and Marilyn for the work on making the tough choices.

From the US Capitol to the Virginia State Capitol, from the power of the internet to the power of a postcard our branch advocated for gender equity. Through Lobby Corps, members learn and speak about issues reflecting AAUW values. Whether driving to Richmond to meet with state legislators or contacting them via email or phone, members from across the Commonwealth work to support legislation aligned with our mission. And if that is not enough, our postcard writing campaign targeting battleground states and races, is second to none. Thank you to Becky, Marilyn and Mollie for giving us different ways to engage and advocate for issues that are important to our branch.

We are privileged to have served on this board with so many talented, intelligent and generous women. We are lucky that six members have stepped up to serve as Co-Presidents, Co-VPs of Programming and Co-Secretaries. Linda and Dianne will remain as Treasurer and VP of Membership. They are both dedicated, creative and experienced leaders. Next year we will ask that you consider serving on the board. Why wait? Ask how you can help now. There is always something to do. We said yes. The result was growth. Thank you Mollie for your ever presence and service to this branch. And thank you Sharon for your patience and mentorship. And, from Sharon, thank you, Aida, for your hard work, vision, creativity and courage.

This past year was not what I had envisioned but through it all you were there. Thank you to the branch for the cards, flowers, food, emails, texts, calls, support and above all your presence. I grew up knowing I had brothers. Little did I know that I had so many sisters too. And that is why I feel so privileged.

Aida Loomis and Sharon Zackula

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Not only do you get to eat some great food, you get to help plan the next year's events. Don't forget 11 June at 6 pm in the Falls Church Community Center. Bunny and Mary Ellen will pick your brain and we will have a great time. I will be on vacation 2 to 7 June, so let me know if you are coming and what you will bring. Main entrees are needed whether it will be fried chicken (even KFC), casseroles, or one of your specialties. Looking forward to seeing you. Susan Conklin

Bring Your Program Ideas to the June 11th Meeting

We are beginning to schedule programs for our branch meetings for 2024-25. Our branch meetings will be held the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 with the exception of our December holiday party. We need your input about topics and speakers as well as visits to local sites of interest. Below are a few ideas that we hope will get your creative juices flowing and stimulate some interesting ideas.

Diana P. Parsell, *Eliza Skidmore, The Early AAUW Member Behind Washington's Cherry Blossoms*. Member of McLean AAUW.

Meghan Kissell, Senior Director of Policy and Membership Advocacy at AAUW. Impact of November election on AAUW priorities.

VHC Health, Center for Women's Health, Women's Health Issues.

Lindsay Lauren, GMU Women and Gender Studies Program. Spoke at Reston/Herndon on transgender issues.

Andrew Painter, *Rise of a Region* presentation at GMU. Local FC zoning attorney. History of the region from early days to current development.

Come ready to offer your ideas at the Potluck Picnic, Tuesday, June 11, 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

Bunny Jarrett and Mary Ellen Gannon
Co-Vice Presidents for Programs



MAY MEETING- MEET THE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS!

We met in person on Monday, May 13, at the FC Community Center to honor our scholarship recipients for 2024. Scholarship Chairperson, Mary Youman sent her best wishes from France as Marilyn Falksen and Pam Martinov carried on without her. The committee's process involved reading applications, transcripts, recommendations and personal statements. Each young woman was invited to the front of the room to be recognized with a framed certificate and an AAUW mug. Hearty congratulations, photos and applause followed.

The scholarship recipients were: Laina Amaya, Fahmida, Anisha, Nayla Bonilla-Mendez, Piper Cannon, Angie Esmail, Rashelle Guzman, Sherlin Hernandez Rivera, Dola Hossain, Jenna Kassem, Alhour Khalaf, Khadijatut Kubra, Yoselin Martinez-Guzman, Jennifer Morales Gonon, Danya Osman, Avery Pike, Namrah Shahzadi, Alexandra Valladares and Karen Veizaga Lobo.



Front row from left: Jennifer Morales Gonon and Karen Veizaga Lobo

Back row from Left: Marilyn Falksen, Alexandra Valladares, Nayla Bonilla-Mendez, Yoselin Martinez-Guzman, Danya Osman, Avery Pike, Laina Amaya, Sherlin Hernandez Rivera, Piper Cannon, Rashelle Guzman, Namrah Shahzadi, Pam Martinov

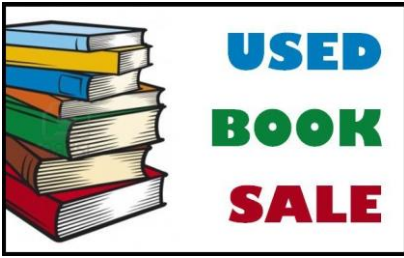


Marilyn, Sharon and Aida after the presentations. Pam reading comments about this year's scholarship winners.





BOOK SALE



We pulled another rabbit out of a hat with this year's AAUW-Falls Church Used Book Sale after a last-minute donation of storage and sorting space by Beyer Auto. Thanks to the space, we were able to meet our goal of collecting around 5,000 pristine books in nine weeks to sell at the combined AAUW/VPIS Book, Jewelry and Accessories Sale and Treasure Attic. With 2/3 the inventory we had last year, and the contributions from the jewelry sale, together we grossed more than \$17K. Stay tuned for final numbers....

Sarah, Aida and Clare would like to thank all of you who supported the effort. Whether you came out on rainy Saturdays (almost every Saturday was wet!) to sort books, participated in set-up or take-down, manned the cashiers' or membership table or walked the aisles, you made the sale a success. Special thanks goes to our high school Saturday volunteers, Ariella, Sara and Josephine and the Justice High School students who helped with Thursday set up and Saturday clean up. Perhaps we met a future scholarship winner.

The Used Book Sale is a fundraiser for sure, but it is also a signature event for our branch, one that our community identifies with AAUW and looks forward to each year. We heard over and over again from shoppers that they look forward to the sale each spring, and as they checked out their pile of treasures their smiles were as meaningful as those of the 18 young women, who a week later received scholarships from the branch.

JEWELRY AND ACCESSORIES SALEDONATIONS

The Jewelry and Accessories Sale, held in conjunction with the AAUW Book Sale and the VPIS Attic Treasurers Sale on May 3 and 4, was a great success. We don't know the amount we raised from the sale because the Jewelry Sale and the Book Sale earnings were commingled throughout the sale. However, we do know we sold a lot of jewelry, scarves and purses! Since we don't plan to hold another sale, we have donated the leftover items to four local charities. We gave some items to VPIS at the end of the sale since they will hold their sale again next year. Dianne Bodeen took two boxes of donations to Goodwill.



Bunny took a large bin full of items to Women Giving Back, a volunteer organization in Sterling that helps women and children in crisis by distributing clothing at no cost. We especially support the shopping days they hold for women who have been trafficked and their families. Mary Ellen donated a large bin of items to the Clock Tower Thrift Store – Northern Virginia Family Services to support their efforts in providing resources to woman and men entering the workforce. We particularly support their "Training Futures" program. Both of these organizations are well aligned with AAUW's mission of supporting women's access to resources.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who donated, sorted, and sold the jewelry, scarves and purses - and to those of you who bought items for yourself!

Bunny Jarrett and Mary Ellen Gannon, Jewelry and Accessories Co-Chairs

FUNDRAISER AT LEBANESE TAVERNA



On May 5, FC AAUW members and their families and friends gathered at the Lebanese Taverna on Washington Blvd. to celebrate the successful book and jewelry/ accessories sale. A good time was had by all, while enjoying wonderful Middle Eastern cooking. FC AAUW will receive a donation of 20% of the sales earmarked AAUW from either VA location or even gift cards for our scholarship fund.

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES

Virginia's Budget Passed

After weeks of negotiations, the Governor and General Assembly negotiators finally agreed on a two-year spending plan for Virginia, thus averting a government shutdown and the resulting damage to Virginia's AAA bond rating. The measure was passed by the General Assembly on May 13 with only minimal opposition and immediately signed by the Governor. Lawmakers were able to use about \$545 million in higher-than-expected state revenue to fund their priorities without having to expand the State's sales tax to digital downloads to pay for them, which had been a major obstacle in the negotiations.

The new budget includes increased funding for K-12 schools and higher education to the tune of \$2 billion as well as increased funding for mental health services. Specific items of interest to AAUW-VA included in the plan are additional money given to school systems with a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students, funding for English language learners, and a 3% increase in the state's portion of teacher and support staff compensation over the next two years.

Although the final agreement is to be celebrated, there is still work to be done to ensure that Virginia schools are adequately funded and the gap between teacher pay and the national average is closed. Because the majority of funds for schools comes from local taxes, many teachers will not see a full 3% increase unless the locality where they teach has sufficient funds. The Governor vetoed a bill that would



have allowed localities to hold a referendum on whether to adopt a small sales tax that could be used for schools. Additionally, although education priorities are funded for the upcoming fiscal year, the long-term fiscal stability of funding for education is in question because the revenue for some of these priorities was funded by a temporary budget surplus. What happens when there is no surplus?

Action on AAUW-VA's Priority Legislation

In last month's *Flash*, I summarized the fate of AAUW-VA's priority legislation. As mentioned in that article, the amendments made by the Governor to several of these bills were not accepted by the General Assembly, so we were waiting to see if he signed them without his amendments or vetoed them. Here are the final results: The Governor signed the bills which expanded the STEM Education Advisory Board's duties, established a Community School Office in the Department of Education, and

developed Title IX and sexual harassment training modules for 9th and 10th graders. He vetoed the bills which enshrined in Virginia law the right to obtain contraception, required insurance companies to cover contraceptive drugs and devices, and required unconscious bias and cultural competency training for medical professionals.

Invitation to AAUW Lobby Corps Virtual Training

Want to make your voice heard in Congress? Join AAUW Lobby Corps!

For more than fifty years, Lobby Corps has put a face to AAUW's mission of advancing equity for women and girls, and you're invited to join this dynamic group of committed women! Lobby Corps gives you the tools and resources to amplify your voice and your impact. And, you get to do it with other gender equity advocates in your community. A short video about Lobby Corps can be seen at this link [Lobby Corps video](#).



You are invited to attend a virtual training session on **June 4 at 5:00pm ET**. [Register on Zoom](#) by clicking the underlined words. Just delete the sample name and email and fill in your information before pressing the "Register" button.

Lobby Corps members have made tens of thousands of in-person visits to congressional offices on issues including Title IX, pay equity, reproductive rights, and the Equal Rights Amendment. Lobby Corps is only a two-hour commitment once a month and generally meets on Capitol Hill on the third Thursday of each month when Congress is in session. Volunteers receive in-depth information about the issues and are paired with experienced Lobby Corps members for office visits.

Lobby Corps is AAUW in action!

If you have any questions, please reach out to policy@aauw.org. or Lobby Corps Coordinator, Becky Gaul at beckygaul@verizon.net.

Voter Registration Training

Now that the Virginia legislative session has concluded, AAUW-VA is looking to the critical upcoming November elections. Registering voters is a key part of the effort to encourage more people to vote in these election, and branches are encouraged to work with their local League of Women Voters (LWV) to register voters for the November elections.



On **July 13, 2024, from 2 – 3pm (Online)** the LWV is sponsoring training for those interested in participating in nonpartisan voter registration drives. The training will be conducted by officials of the Virginia Board of Elections and will satisfy the State requirements for those registering voters. Anyone wishing to participate in voter registration must first attend a training session.

To receive a Zoom link for the online training on July 13, 2024, sign up here: [Voter Registration Training](#). The deadline to sign up is July 7.

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MOVIE AND BOOK GROUPS



I (Susan) have informed everyone that the movies are less than great. Well, I lied. May 24's Washington Post had 26 most buzzed about summer movies. The news gets better. When reviewing what is playing at the theaters, I saw the morning movies are back. This has not happened since the pandemic except for Cinema Arts. Currently at Angelica is *Babes* with Ilana Glazer and Michelle Suteau. Pregnant from a one-night stand, Eden leans on her best friend and mother of two, Dawn to guide her through gestation and beyond. It is a comedy and

lots of laughs. New this week is *Hit Man* with Adria Arjona and Glen Powell. He's got sex appeal and comic timing. They play out a complicated romance where Powell stars a professor and pretend killer-for-hire named Gary. Gary Johnson, a contentedly nerdy psychology professor at the University of New Orleans who moonlights as a technical advisor for police sting operations. Without giving away the story, things do go wrong and get funny. It got four stars. If you can wait two weeks, it streams on NETFLIX on 7 June.

As the new movies hit the theater and get good reviews this summer, I will send notices where they are playing. *Young Woman and the Sea* stars Daisy Ridley who plays American competitive swimmer Gertrude "Trudy" Ederle, who in 1926 at the age 20 braved the freezing waters to swim from France to England. She was the first woman to swim the English Channel. The movie is scheduled for a 31 May start date. There are more movies to come. My next step is to get a group together for a July movie. Send me an email: sconklin00@aol.com or sconklin00@gmail.com or call 703 869 7131 to get info or let me know your druthers.

The virtual film group will be taking a pause for the summer. We will resume meeting in September. In the meantime, is there a film that you have watched that the film group should consider? Please pass it along! Is there a streaming service that you have discovered that has additional choices? Let us know!



The Book Club will reconvene in Sept.

We're Stronger Together!



CALENDAR

- **June 4, 5:00pm:** Virtual training for Lobby Corps
- **June 11, 6:00 pm:** Branch Meeting (in person)- Planning Picnic, Falls Church Community Center, 223 Little Falls Street, Falls Church, VA.
- **June 24, 7:30 pm:** Board Meeting (Zoom)
- **July 13, 2-3pm,** Virtual Voter Registration Training (Register by July 7)



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.