

AAUW FALLS CHURCH FLASH

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PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

I hope you enjoyed our Holiday Party as much as we did! It was a wonderful start to the New Year. We want to thank our gracious hosts, Sharon Zackula and Jeff Rogers, for sharing their lovely home with all of us and also to Bunny and Mary Ellen for their organizing of the event. Thanks also to all of you who made donations to Homestretch!



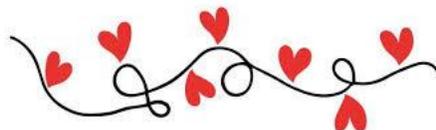
We hope you will join us on Zoom on **February 9, 2:30**, for our Branch Meeting, *Introduction to AI: What Can AI Do for You?* as we learn about the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The Zoom link will be sent several days before the meeting.

Please let us know if:

- ◇ You might also want to attend some/all of the State Conference **March 27-28**. There is some branch funding available for the registration fee.
- ◇ You might be interested in joining the Scholarship Committee to select those who receive our scholarship.

Your enthusiasm and commitment help make our branch vibrant.

Anne Baxter and Mary Youman
Co-Presidents
AAUW Falls Church Area Branch



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 one of our programs, 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 BUSINESS MEETING
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2:30 PM ON ZOOM**

INTRODUCTION TO AI: WHAT CAN AI DO FOR YOU?



Our February 9 branch meeting will feature a Zoom Presentation by Josh Jarrett, the Senior Vice President & General Manager, AI Growth at Wiley, a global publishing firm. Previously, Josh co-founded two companies in the education-to-employment space and was a founder of the higher education program at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Josh is a graduate of George Mason (Meridian) High School and Dartmouth College, and he holds a graduate degree in business from Harvard Business School. He is the son of Bunny and Marshall Jarrett.

A Zoom link will be sent to members several days before the Feb.9 meeting.

Bunny and Mary Ellen
Program Co-VPs



SAVE THE DATE



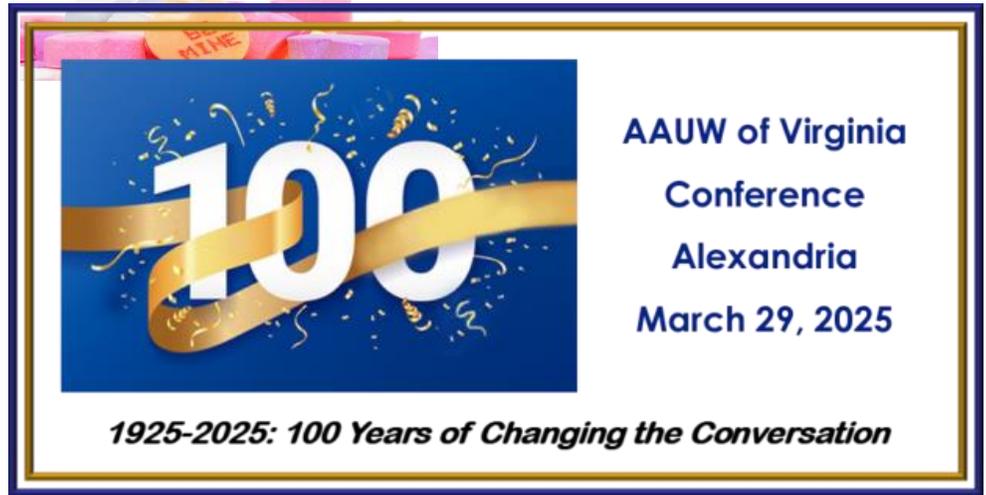
**You're Invited: AAUW Member Gathering
Wednesday, February 5, 4 p.m. ET**

On Wednesday, February 5, at 4 pm, we'll come together to recognize our achievements, share important updates, and celebrate the strength of our community. As we navigate this new administration and the challenges that lie ahead of us, it is critical that we leverage our collective advocacy to defend our mission.

[You can sign up right here.](#) Hope you can join us!

Don't let time run out to register for the AAUW-VA **March 29 Conference** "1925-2025: 100 Years of Changing the Conversation" before the prices go up. Registration received by Feb 25, 2025, is \$100 and after that date, registration is \$125.

To register and see the listing of all activities on Friday and Saturday go to [Conference | AAUW of Virginia](#).



We are also taking orders on Conference Mugs and Centennial Stemless Wine Glasses. They make great presents for you or other branch members or speaker gifts for the next year. They must be preordered and [can be purchased as part of the conference registration process](#).

We have not scheduled an April branch meeting and encourage you to attend this historic State Conference. Many of us are carpooling for the Saturday events where most of the action will be. If you would like to find a carpool or are willing to drive one, contact Clare O'Sheel at cosheel45@gmail.com. Please put Carpool in the subject line.

PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES

Lobby Day

AAUW-VA held its annual Lobby Day on Thursday, January 16, 2025, in Richmond. Twenty-six AAUW members from across Virginia attended and visited the offices of 46 Delegates and Senators to share AAUW-VA's public policy priorities – Constitutional Amendments to ensure reproductive autonomy and voting rights, maternal health care for all women, paid sick leave, paid family and medical leave, and full public-school funding. Many of the visits were with the legislators themselves, although some were with their aides. AAUW-VA members and issues were well received during most visits. After meeting with the legislators, AAUW-VA members went to the House or Senate Gallery where they were recognized with a brief statement about AAUW-VA and its mission and acknowledgement of 2025 being the 100th anniversary of its founding.



The prior evening, individuals who arrived early for Lobby Day met for dinner and a presentation by Fund Our Schools (FOS) on issues relating to funding for public education. AAUW-VA is a member of FOS, a statewide coalition of parents, students, teachers, and organizations who believe that every child in every zip code across the Commonwealth of Virginia should have access to a high-quality public education. **Becky Gaul and Marilyn Falksen** represented the Falls Church Branch at these events and found the experience interesting and worthwhile.



Status of Legislation

As of January 29, this is the status of some of the bills of interest to AAUW-VA members.

HJ1 Amendment to Virginia Constitution – fundamental right to reproductive freedom; passed by the House of Delegates, reported out of Senate Committee, awaiting action by full Senate

HJ2 Amendment to Virginia Constitution – right to vote restored automatically to convicted felons upon release from prison, passed by the House of Delegates, reported out of Senate Committee; awaiting action by full Senate.

HJ9 Amendment to Virginia Constitution – repeals amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage. (This amendment was invalidated by the Supreme Ct. in 2015.); passed the House of Delegates, reported out of Senate Committee, awaiting action by full Senate.

HB1921 – paid sick leave; reported by House Commerce and Labor Committee and Appropriations Committee; consideration by full House of Delegates is the next step.

HB1649/1675 -- directs Board of Medicine to require unconscious bias and cultural competency training as part of the continuing education requirements for renewal of license; passed by House of Delegates; Senate action is the next step.

HB1954 –similar to SB997 implements recommendations of 2023 State research study to ensure Virginia K-12 schools are adequately and equitably funded; reported from House Appropriations Committee; next step, action by full House.

HB2531 – requires Virginia Employment Commission to establish a paid family and medical leave insurance program; reported out of the House Commerce and Labor Committee and referred to House Appropriations, in the Subcommittee.

SB977 – similar to HB1954 regarding adequate and equitable funding for Virginia K-12 schools; reported from Senate Education and Health Committee; referred to Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee.

Lobby Corps

Lobby Corps is back in action and will typically meet every other Thursday. For more information about joining this dynamic group of women, contact Becky Gaul at beckygaul@verizon.net. The Lobby Corps schedule for 2025 is included in this newsletter.

RECLAIM OUR VOTE POSTCARDS

What's Happening with Post carding?



We haven't had any post carding opportunities **yet** this year. But I'm sure we will - for Virginia primaries and general elections. Meanwhile, the Center for Common Ground/ROV postcards is urging action at the state and local level, where Marilyn Falksen is ably steering our branch.

Update: As I am writing this article, I just received an email that **post carding will start soon!** With leaders in Congress and the White House threatening our freedoms, it is more important than ever to elect judges and justices who will protect our rights. Which is why ROV is going north for the **Wisconsin Supreme Court Race** to mobilize black voters and get-out-the-vote in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin post carding campaign starts this weekend, so now is the time to sign up. Contact Mollie Jewell, MollieJewell2@gmail.com, with your order: the number of postcards, if you need stamps and where you want to pick up (Mollie Jewell or Mary Youman). But don't worry, I'll send you an email with more information so you can easily order your postcards (RSVP by Wed. Feb. 5).

For more background, I recommend this short (1:32) clip from The View about the impactful work of the Center for Common Ground (aka get-out-the-vote post carding) and celebrating Andrea Miller, Founding Board Member of the Center for Common Ground. The link is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Uatj428Krk>

NOMINATING COMMITTEE NEWS

The nominating committee, headed by Dianne Bodeen, with the helpful input of others, is pleased to announce the following proposed candidates for the 2025 election:

Manuela Costescu is the candidate for the position of VP for membership.

Fatema Dadgar is the candidate the position of treasurer.

The election will take place at our Annual Business Meeting on May 16 at 2:30. It will be held at the Mary Styles Riley Library in Falls Church.

You will find a profile of Fatema in a past issue of the FLASH and while many of you know Manuela, a profile of her will appear in a future issue.



Let's Go to the Movies

We enjoyed a relaxing Inaugural Day (imagine!) out this past month with lunch at Ted's Bulletin followed by "A Complete Unknown", the Bob Dylan biopic, which is nominated for a number of Academy Awards. If you love good movies and the opportunity to share tasty food with friends, join us in February for another fun outing.

Speaking of the Awards, The Academy Award Nominations are out, and I'm wondering how many of the Best Picture nominations you've seen....

Anora

Emilia Perez

The Brutalist

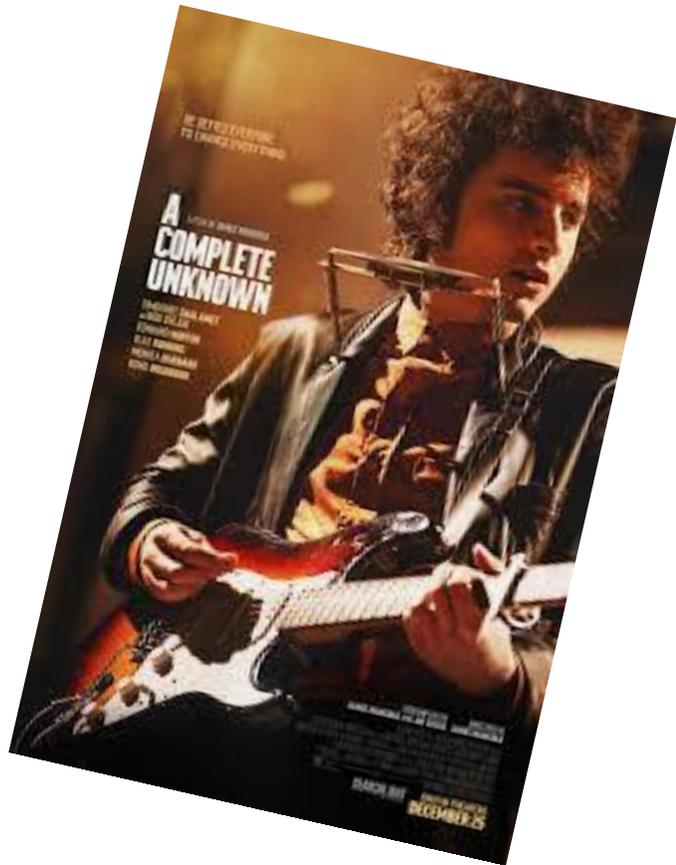
I'm Still Here

A Complete Unknown

Nickel Boys

Conclave

Dune: Part Two



I have only seen two. A real setback for me, but we moved and that upset the apple cart. I hope to do better in the coming months. However, "Captain America" and "Avengers Dooms Day" are on the horizon. Disney is releasing a new Snow White and that looks promising. I am asking you to keep your eyes open for new releases that look good and to let me know your suggestions and thoughts. As always, I can be reached at 703-869-7131.

Susan Conklin



Virtual Movie and Book Club February 26, 2025, Wednesday 7:00 PM via ZOOM



March is the month we celebrate St Patrick and all things Irish. With our March 16th branch business meeting and the Northern District leading AAUW VA convention on March 28 celebrating the organization's 100 year, we decided why not start the Irish celebration a little earlier. Together the virtual film and book group will have an Irish theme **with two book selections by Claire Keegan which have been made into films.**



Claire Keegan is an Irish writer known for her short stories and novellas. The book group will be reading and discussing *Foster* and *Small Things Like These*. Both stories take place in Ireland during the 1980's. *Foster* was adapted for film as *An Cailín Ciúin* (*The Quiet Girl*; 2022), and was nominated in 2023 for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film. It is mostly in the [Irish language](#), although it also contains parts in [English](#). *The Quiet Girl* can be watched on Kanopy. The film adaptation of *Small Things Like These* stars Academy Award winner Cillian Murphy, Emily Watson and Eileen Walsh. It can be watched on streaming services such as Amazon, Apple TV, Microsoft, Xfinity and YouTube.

So come with your cup of tea or your pint and join the joint group via Zoom on Wednesday February 26 at 7:00 PM. Please call or text Aida at 703 966 8050 if you are interested in joining our book/film discussion evening. All are welcome!



FEBRUARY CALENDAR

February 5, 4:00 pm, Zoom, AAUW Member Gathering

February 9, 2:30 pm, Zoom, Branch meeting, Introduction to AI: What Can AI Do for You?

February 26, 7:00 pm, Zoom, Virtual Movie and Book Club



HOMESTRETCH DONATIONS



Our Donation Drive for Homestretch was a huge success. We donated 100 Pairs of Kids Underwear plus items from the Homestretch Amazon Wish List. In addition, \$1000.00 was donated by individual members of our Falls Church Area Branch. A big thank you to all who donated and to all who celebrated the new year with us at the Holiday Party January 5th. We appreciate Sharon Zackula and Jeff Rogers hosting us at their lovely home for the party.

Mary Ellen and Bunny
Program Co-VPs

THANK YOU NOTE FROM HOMESTRETCH

Dear AAUW Friends,

Thank you for your generous donations from your holiday party! Our clients will really appreciate the personal and household items. Reducing their expenses helps them reduce debt, provide essential items for their family, and lets them know that their community is rooting for their success! Your generous financial donations will be used to provide holistic services designed to break the cycle of poverty. We're so grateful for your support!

The Homestretch Team



AAUW-FC 75TH Anniversary Ad

As the state branch of AAUW celebrates 100 years in 2025, we are celebrating our 75th year as the Falls Church branch. Here is the ad we have placed in the State Conference brochure and on our web and Facebook pages...



Falls Church Area (VA) Branch

Celebrating
75 Years of
Partnership
with our
Community

Education

Raised
\$200,000 for
more than 200
scholarships



Advocacy

Lobby Corps
*

28,038 Reclaim
Our Vote
postcards

Partnerships

Graham Road
Elementary
School
*

Homestretch
*

VPIS



Falls Church Area (VA) Branch

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.

