

SMITH MOUNTAIN
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN
Fall 2023 Newsletter



**A message from our
President Betsy DeWeese**



Greetings Fellow Members,

We belong to a strong national organization that has been empowering women and girls for 142 years. AAUW National's Mission is "To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy." Our Smith Mountain Branch's Purpose is "To promote equity, education and development of opportunities for women and girls in our local counties that enable them to realize their full potential."

Our branch membership of 80 is hard at work accomplishing great things to achieve our purpose. Many activities serve the women and girls of our local counties. But we also have internal branch activities that promote our own development and education. The strong dynamic that I continue to see is that we accomplish great things while developing lasting friendships, laughing (a lot!!) and sometimes crying together. I am humbled to be working with such a wonderful group of strong, intelligent, talented women as I learn your stories of professional achievement and success, as well as your stories of personal loss and tragedy.

I want to welcome our newest members! I encourage all of us to find a place to "plug in" and get involved. Read on to find out what's planned for the coming year, and let us know where you would like to contribute your talents. I hope to see you at our **September 23rd Branch Meeting**. And be sure to mark your calendar for our **Fall Fundraiser on November 15th!**

All the Best,
Betsy



UPCOMING EVENTS

Don't miss out. Add these dates to your calendar!

2023 Dates through December:

Saturday, September 16—Walk to End Poverty, Smith Mountain Lake Park

Monday, September 18—Board Meeting, AM

Monday, September 18—Fundraiser Team Meeting, PM

Wednesday, September 20 — International Study Group

Saturday, September 23—Branch Meeting and Lunch, Kaleidoscope, Hardy

Saturday, October 14—Southwest District Meeting, Roanoke (See page 3 for Details.)

Wednesday, October 18—Classics Book Group (Banned Books)

Wednesday, November 15—Annual Fundraiser, 4-H Center

November 15 Rescheduled—International Study Group (Special Date TBD September 20)

2024 Save the Date Reminders from AAUW Virginia:

Friday - Saturday, April 12 - 13, AAUW Virginia Conference in Lynchburg, hosted by the Southwest District

Saturday, May 4 — AAUW Virginia Annual Business Meeting (Virtual)

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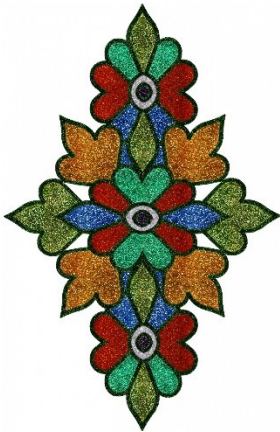
AAUW Southwest District Meeting

Saturday, October 14, 2023

10:00 AM – Noon

Hollins Public Library

6624 Peters Creek Rd. Roanoke, 24019



Pidge and her Maasai friend, Mbyani.

Join your Southwest VA AAUW sisters for an informative and enjoyable program to meet an extraordinary woman,

Pidge Morgan.

Pidge has been working with an NGO in Tanzania for over 20 years, starting a home for young girls and promoting vocational training.

[Registration required by October 7th, 2023.](#)

Box Lunch choices: Ham/Cheese sandwich w/chips & cookie or Green Salad w/bread & cookie. Drinks included. \$15 p/p

**Send checks to: Anita Aymer (276-620-4547)
775 Country Club Drive, Wytheville, VA 24382**

Out and About with SMAAUW— Road Trips

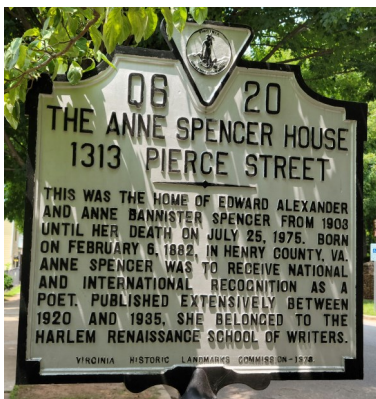
Artsy Afternoon in Goodview

On July 11, nine members gathered at the Fables & Feathers Winery and Brewery in Goodview. Fables & Feathers is a family farm winery with amazing views. We relaxed, shared conversation and lots of laughs, and tried our hands at painting a Smith Mountain Lake scene, created especially for our group by Genny, one of the owners and the winery artist! What can we say...we met our objective: to have FUN! Those attending were Diana Barrett, Sherry Brown, Deb Carlstedt, Betsy DeWeese, Shannon Hannigan, Susan McSlarrow, Janet Potter, Mary Roddy, and Laura Southall. Thank you, Laura, for helping coordinate this event!



Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum, Lynchburg

Our second Summer Road Trip was to Lynchburg on August 2. Twelve ladies enjoyed lunch and comradery at the Depot Grille and then met at the Anne Spencer House and Garden Museum on 1313 Pierce Street. Only two blocks long, this is the smallest of Lynchburg's seven historic districts. It is the only local historic district that is more notable because of the people who lived there rather than because of the architecture of the buildings. Our docent was none other than the amazing Shaun Spencer Hester, granddaughter of Anne Spencer, a celebrated poet of the Harlem Renaissance. (See the August 2023 issue of [Southern Living Magazine](#).) It was unanimous...if you've never had the opportunity to visit this site and hear this story, put it at the top of your "to do list!"



*Continued on the
next page.*

Out and About with SMAAUW, cont.

Anne Spencer House, cont.

Those sharing this very special, back-in-time experience were Betsy DeWeese, Karen Ann Campbell, Sharon Cooper, Kris Hill, Ann Johnson, Kathy Lietz, Sally McSlarrow (visiting guest), Susan McSlarrow, Janet Potter, Kathleen Riordan, Kay Shauberger, and Laura Southall. Thanks, Sharon, for your help coordinating this event!

Finally, please stay tuned for another adventurous event as the ladies of SMAAUW take to our brooms to visit the Olde Salem Brewing Company and surrounds in Salem, VA on October 30 or 31st. Get the connection? Stay “broomed” for details. Shannon Hannigan will be assisting on this flight.

Susan McSlarrow, Road Trip Coordinator



BRANCH BRAGS

An enterprising shutterbug caught sight of two SMAAUW ladies—our Road Trip Coordinator Susan McSlarrow and her sidekick Janet Potter, past president and current Fundraiser Décor Diva, on their way to meet fellow Road Trippers for lunch.

Embracing the continuing educational opportunities that come with SMAAUW membership, here they are solving the mystery of the Pay to Park machine at the Depot Grill restaurant in Lynchburg. Stay tuned for our October Classics meeting in Roanoke, when the intrepid duo will take on the QR Code phone parking app!



In the meantime, remember to share with your Newsletter editors when you hear about a special accomplishment of a fellow branch member. We enjoy presenting the Branch Brags, highlighting our amazing ladies!

MEMBERSHIP

From our VP of Membership Laura Southall:

We have gained 4 new members and lost 2 members due to moves, bringing us now to 80 members. Three out of the four new members attended the May Branch meeting, receiving a 50% discount off the National portion of the dues, so members bringing guests to our branch meetings continues to be a successful way to increase our membership! For any members that joined and did not receive your name badge, I have it! Bring an \$8.00 check payable to SMAAUW or cash to any of our events or meetings to get your badge. See you at the Fashion Show Fundraiser – you can get it then!

New Member Profiles

Cathy Bleier

I grew up in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. I graduated from Clarkson College of Technology (now Clarkson University) with a bachelor's degree in Math and Computer Science. My first job out of college was with the Taylor Instrument Company in Rochester, New York as a software development engineer. I designed and wrote microprocessor-based software for process control instrumentation. I also met my future husband at Taylor. When our company was bought by Combustion Engineering, headquartered in Connecticut, his job was transferred so I found a new job in Connecticut at Hamilton Standard. At Hamilton I designed, coded, and tested real-time embedded software for electronic engine controls on jet airliners. In 2005 we purchased a vacation home on Smith Mountain Lake at the Cottages at Contentment Island. In 2007 we moved to the lake full time while continuing to work for our employers in Connecticut. We both realized we were “living the dream”, working from home in a beautiful location. After six years of working from home, I retired early so I could enjoy my passion for traveling throughout the world. I volunteer with AARP Tax-Aide to prepare income taxes for residents in Franklin County. I enjoy sailing, kayaking, golfing, pickleball, and gardening. I look forward to participating in the Smith Mountain chapter of AAUW and the International Studies Group.

Donna Roberts

I was born in Buffalo, NY and grew up in the small town of Newfane, NY. I attended Millard Fillmore Hospital School of Nursing in Buffalo, NY. I graduated with a three-year diploma RN degree in 1968. I worked in several different areas of nursing during my 55 years as a nurse. Hyperbaric Chamber in Buffalo, doing senility studies for the University of Buffalo, Med Surg and Dialysis, both acute and chronic. My Husband, Pete worked for Eli Lilly, which accounts for several moves. Our last move took us to North Carolina where I worked in Employee Health at High Point Hospital. While living there I took a position with USAir as a flight Attendant. By then Pete and I had 3 sons and



MEMBERSHIP, cont.

Donna Roberts, cont.

after a family meeting decided that this would give our family an opportunity to travel using my employee benefits. I attended UNC at Greensboro to obtain my BSN. Juggling family, hospital, USAir and going to school was difficult, but my family and especially my husband helped me make it work. It was hard for me to give up anything...I loved being a mom, being a nurse, flying and loved going to school to obtain my degree. I completed my BSN in 2000. I retired from USAir after 9/11 and worked at Carilion in presurgical testing. It was a wonderful way to finish my career. I retired a few years ago and still miss it. I live in Penhook and enjoy my family and especially my 6 grandchildren.

Diane Connor

I grew up in upstate New York in Sherrill until I moved to Oxford at age 16 where I attended both high school and BOCES (a tech school) where I earned my license in cosmetology. I went to Alfred State, graduating with an AAS in Business. I worked for a couple of years before returning to school at the State University of New York (SUNY) Binghamton where I earned my BS in Business with a concentration in Human Resources. I worked in HR/Employee Benefits for 24 years with The Hertz Corporation at the world headquarters in Park Ridge, NJ. Before leaving Hertz, (and with a lot of support from my husband) I returned to school for a career change, becoming a Registered Nurse through SUNY Rockland, where I earned my AAS in Nursing in 2012. While working as a nurse on the brain injury unit of a specialty rehabilitation hospital, I earned my BSN online through SUNY Delhi. My husband and I lived and raised our daughter and son in Blauvelt, NY until retiring to SML/Moneta in October 2022. I enjoy being outdoors whether it is long walks, hiking, gardening, kayaking, and now more swimming and boating. I also enjoy reading, cooking, travel as well as growing my faith and participating in church activities. I look forward to being an active member of SMAAUW and getting to know this group of smart, talented, and fun women.

Did You Know? News from President Betsy

We have a new Member-at-Large on our Board of Directors

Sandy Furick is the new Member-at-Large on our Board of Directors. She will reach out periodically to our home bound members to check in, say “hello” and find out how they are doing. If you know of someone who needs a friendly call, please let Sandy know (swfurick@gmail.com). Sandy is also someone that any of you can reach out to with questions and feedback for her to share with the Board of Directors anonymously. Thanks for taking on this important role Sandy!

PROGRAM

From our Co-VP's of Program Susan McSlarrow and Shannon Hannigan:

Save the Date! Details are being finalized for our business meeting on September 23 at Kaleidoscope (formerly Oyler's Chapel) on Hardy Road. This is the same place we met in April for our meeting and the annual Salad & Dessert luncheon and Book and Puzzle Sale.

Our speaker will be SML resident, Rear Admiral (Retired) Terri Clark. She will tell us about her exciting military career in the United States Navy and provide specific information about her last assignment in the Public Health arena. She will be wearing her uniform, so why don't we all surprise her by wearing something red, white, and blue and thank her for her service?

The meeting will begin promptly at 10:30 a.m., followed by a unique Finger Food Lunch. The email invitation went out Friday, September 1st. If you missed it, see below.

Additionally, at this meeting, our Community Outreach Committee members will be collecting items for the women's and children's shelter in Bedford and the family shelter in Rocky Mount. Items needed include personal care items, such as shampoo, body wash, deodorants, toothbrushes and toothpaste, razors, and lotions.

We hope to have a large turnout on Saturday, September 23, as we kick off activities for the 2024 membership year and get ready for the big fundraising event in November.

Branch Meeting RSVP and Lunch Information from the Email September 1:

We will be experimenting with a simple luncheon, a spin-off of an idea offered by one of our members, Sandy Furick. We think it sounds like a lot of fun, so here goes!

- One member to bring at least 40 paper plates and napkins.
- One member to bring two gallons of ice tea--one sweet, one unsweetened.
- Two members each to bring a relish/veggie tray.
- Two members each bring two dozen homemade cookies.
- One member to bring 40 bottles of water.
- One member to bring two large bags of chips.
- Five members to each bring three "sandwiches." These can be 12 croissants or rolls; bread, hoagies, or tortillas cut into fourths; or be creative--just so there are 12 servings on the plates each of you bring. Please keep in mind that some of our members have food allergies, so specify to Shannon what type of sandwich you intend to bring--chicken salad, tuna salad, ham & cheese, etc.--and then provide a card to be displayed next to your plate that lists the main ingredients. Same goes for the cookies. Any questions? Ask Shannon.

If you prefer not to bring one of the above items, the cost is \$10 to defray the meeting expenses.

Please RSVP to Shannon by September 16, if you plan to attend or if you cannot attend. Her email address is Shannigan2@hotmail.com. Let her know what you will be bringing or if you will help to defray the meeting expenses instead. Remember guests are always welcome!

Fundraising Committee - Mary Roddy, Chairperson

Announcing the 2023 Fundraiser **FALL FASHION "FRIENDSY"!** **BE SIMPLY THE BEST!**

Join us for our annual fundraising event to be held on **Wednesday, November 15th** from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm at the W.E. Skelton 4-H Educational Conference Center at Smith Mountain Lake. Our mission is to raise the most scholarship and science camp funding in our history, build our organizational friendships and be simply the best contributors to our community.

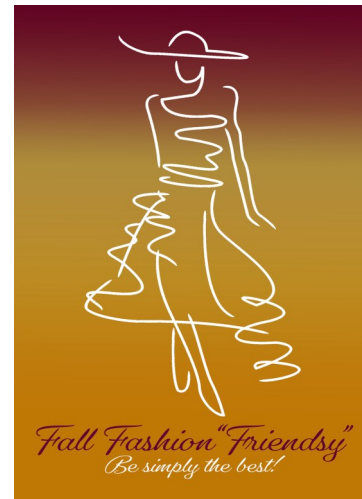
We've planned for a fun, festive and fashionable afternoon with expanded table seating for 248 guests, **door prizes**, a streamlined layout for navigating from check-in to **Silent Auction** to **Wine Bar with cheese & cracker nibbles**, to buffet style luncheon and enhanced fashion show visibility plus expedited checkout. And, of course, the ever-popular **50/50 Raffle!**

What's new this year, you ask?

This year's Fall Fashion "Friendsy"! Be Simply the best! show is coming to you from the Star City of Roanoke. **The Bird Cage** and sister store **Weekend by tbc**, located in The Forum shopping center, are wonderful finds in the area offering what only a small boutique can – unique apparel and accessories that will set you apart while offering extraordinary personal service. They carry over 15 specialty brands, distinguished by timeless styles with a savvy edge, quality fabrics at an affordable price. The Bird Cage has been voted platinum Best Local Women's Clothing Store, in The Roanoker Magazine for 2022 & 2023.



[HTTPS://SKELTON4HCENTER.ORG/](https://skelton4hcenter.org/)



Fundraising Committee, cont.

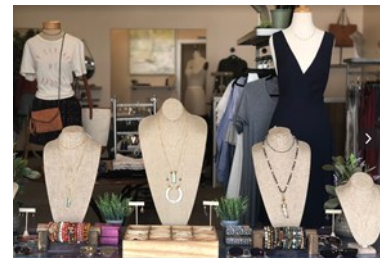
We're debuting a unique new offering: custom, SMAAUW member hand painted wine glasses for \$10 each while they last! These one of a kind decorated glasses include the first white or red wine serving of your choice. Red and white wine will be available, as usual, at the Wine Bar for \$5 per glass.



The buffet style menu will include fresh tossed salad, sliced chicken breast, assorted dressings, pasta with marinara sauce and two dessert choices: chocolate brownies and lemon bars. Available non-alcoholic beverages are water, coffee, sweet and unsweetened tea, and lemonade.



We've been able to maintain our ticket price at \$40 per person. The registration process will be emailed to all members mid-September so watch your email inbox for that communication. Consider filling a "friendly" table of 8, sharing a partial table or bringing the whole neighborhood and filling several tables. The show fashions will range from jeans to travel wear, business casual attire and dressier outfits for special occasions, all matched with outstanding accessories. We're also including styling tips so there's literally something of interest for everyone!



As a SMAAUW member please plan to attend, invite potential new members, sell tickets, contribute to the Silent Auction and Door Prize items, volunteer for an operational role and enjoy being "Simply the best"! Detailed communications will be emailed to you in the upcoming weeks. Let's make this "friendly" fundraiser a HUGE success!



Scholarship Committee - Marsha Protinsky, Chairperson

The Scholarship Committee has spent some of the summer basking in the afterglow of our branch having awarded three \$4,500 scholarships this past May. These are the largest in monetary value ever awarded as well as the most in number at three. It was a wonderfully rewarding and note-worthy year for our branch.

The Committee met for the first time this new fiscal year on September 6th. We will continue our annual process of editing documents related to the application process. Consideration will be given to questions we might ask applicants concerning how they learned of our scholarships. The committee also plans to explore questions and comments from past recipients that might serve to enhance our efforts in the future.

One member of the Scholarship Committee and the longest serving, Carole Massart, has moved to Northern Virginia to be near her daughter and family. We will miss her wisdom and her ongoing support of the entire scholarship process. The committee wishes Carole much happiness in her new home.

Here's to a spectacular fundraiser in November. The Scholarship Committee eagerly awaits the outcome in order to kick into high gear on behalf of scholarship applicants and recipients!



Photo Memories with Carole Massart

Keep in touch, dear lady!



2015: Silent Auction (with Pat Armentrout)



2014: Classics Silliness (with Margee Kauffman)



2022: Rocking her Classroom Sign at the Science Museum

Community Outreach Committee - Ann Tavino, Chairperson

Our Branch is participating as a team in the Walk to End Poverty. This fun and worthwhile event, held at one of Virginia's most beautiful state parks, will be held on September 16th. You can register through noon on Thursday, September 14, or at the event at 9AM. Register online at smlwalktoendpoverty.com. Our team is called American Assn. of University Women - Smith Mountain Branch. Both the 5K and 10K walk and run start at 10AM. Plan to stay for lunch, music, and an awards presentation. Our team will carry the SMAAUW banner. If you are unable to attend, please consider making a donation through the same link, select Team Fundraiser and find American Assn. of University Women - Smith Mountain Branch. Linda Strup is our Team Captain. Please contact her at linda.strup@gmail.com for further details.

Our Committee will be collecting donations for the Family Crisis Centers in Bedford and Franklin counties at our Branch meeting September 23. The Centers are currently in need of personal care items, such as shampoo, conditioner, body wash, toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors and body lotions. Boxes will be located near the sign-in table. Please contact Deb Carlstedt at debcarlstedt@gmail.com or Marsha Melkonian at marshamelk@hotmail.com if you have any questions about items to donate. Thank you in advance for your generous gifts.

The Community Outreach Committee will be donating classroom posters to all science, math and technology teachers at each middle school and high school in Bedford and Franklin counties. The posters depict girls and women participating in career-related tasks and activities in these subjects. We want to encourage students to expand their knowledge and pursue their interest in all STEM academic areas. Our SMAAUW logo and Branch information will be included on the back of each poster.

Thanks to the generosity of AAUW Virginia's mini-grant program, we are able to provide high school senior girls in our local area the opportunity to apply for the College Application Scholarship. This award will help offset the fee that must be paid when a student submits their initial college or university application. We feel honored to be able to assist girls in the first step of their post-high school education.



INTEREST GROUPS

Classics Book Group - Maria Meleis, Chair—mariam.sml17@gmail.com

Fifteen members of the Classics Book Group met on August 16th at the Moneta Library. Continuing the theme of Banned and Challenged books, we discussed books that have been challenged in school and public libraries. In addition to classics like Tom Sawyer, Harry Potter and Judy Blume books, members spoke about controversial subjects like LGBTQ and racial topics in Young Adult literature. One member discussed picture books that have been challenged on the basis of seemingly trivial objections. Our takeaway for the discussions is to be aware of what is happening in our schools and public libraries and to raise objections on the efforts to suppress freedom to read controversial books across the board for all children.

The last meeting of the year will be on October 18th with the topic of books banned for overt sexuality. We will have our meeting at the Roanoke bookstore *Books No More* and will continue our discussions during lunch at Billy's on Market St. It is sure to be a memorable meeting for the Classics Book Group.

New members are always welcome. Meetings are on the 3rd Wednesdays of alternate months at 1:30 pm. If interested, contact Maria more information or to be put on the list for meeting reminders

International Studies Group - Pat Bratcher, Chair—pbratch2@gmail.com

If you love to travel or if you are an arm chair voyager consider joining this wild, wonderful, adventurous group. The group selects a country to study and shares the culture, music, dance, women's issues, education, history and politics, etc. while sampling the countries' unique foods and drinks. Through our quest, we learn that the world is a small sphere with many exotic and unique cultures.

Our next International Study meeting will be Wednesday, September 20 at 1:30. Cindy Connie will present the program, Estonia's Government, Politics, Economics and Trade. If you are interested in checking out this creative and fun group, please contact Pat Bratcher. You will be able to participate in the selection of our next country destination.



PUBLIC POLICY

From Janet Byrne, Public Policy Liaison

Current volunteer member activity: Reclaim Our Vote (ROV) get out the vote postcard writing campaign. Mailing postcards September 8-October 25, 2023.

Our branch has eight volunteers writing and mailing out 330 postcards to encourage identified infrequent voters in designated Virginia voting districts. These messages identify priority topics for voters to link up with legislators campaigning in their specific districts. The postcard messages show topics important for women and families. Candidates are not endorsed since all get out the vote activity is nonpartisan and is policy promoting.

This Virginia General election year features all delegate and state senator positions up for election. **Early Voting** begins 9/22/2023; **Election Day** is 11/07/2023.

On another topic, I would like to share a note sent to AAUW staff from the Archivist about **AAUW's rich history of working for pay equity for women**. To celebrate Women's Equality Day in August, Jessica Miller wanted to highlight the early days of AAUW's work on pay equity. Jessica's historical account, with links to documents in the AAUW Archives, follows:

In collaboration with the Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, AAUW released its first [report](#) on women's salary in 1896, *Compensation in Certain Occupations of Women Who Have Received College or Other Special Training*. AAUW collected employment and salary information from members for analysis by the Bureau.

Many women described their experience in the survey, explaining how they experienced or witnessed pay inequity like the following:

"Men oftener than women have to support others. In spite of this, I cannot see why a man should be paid \$200 more than I am paid to do the same work when he does it no better."

"When I was doing office work, I received \$6 a week and kept the books and was a typewriter too. If a man had been employed for this work, his pay would have been \$15 a week and he would not have been required to perform the general office work. He would have been a professional bookkeeper, however, which I was not."

"Women are fearful of asserting their inherent rights, standing as they now do, on the verge of freedom. The time, however, is not far off when women will have a voice in making just laws for themselves and others, and this will no doubt have an effect in securing equal remuneration for equal services to both sexes."

Continued on the next page.

PUBLIC POLICY, Continued

In 1913, according to a [report](#) by the DC Branch of AAUW, women’s salaries in federal jobs were approximately 77.5 percent of men’s. Men, on average, were paid \$1,079 annually, and women were paid \$837 for similar work in similar positions, which did not indicate the difference in salary between white women and women of color.

Every post-war Congress had an equal pay act introduced, and AAUW supported each one. Equal pay had become a wartime and post-war issue due to the influx of women workers into jobs previously held by men. In 1945, AAUW endorsed and supported the first federal equal pay legislation, S. 1178, HR 5221, The Women’s Equal Pay Bill.

Yet, ten years later, in 1955, AAUW was still advocating and supporting each equal pay bill introduced to Congress while women made an average of 65 cents to every dollar a man earned.

The Equal Pay Act, signed by [JFK](#) in the company of AAUW [members](#), wouldn’t come until 1963.

Of course, AAUW has learned a lot about and [continues](#) to advocate for pay equity to this day. The archives are full of great information and records relating to our pay equity work, if you’re interested in learning more, feel free to stop by!

Jessica Miller, AAUW Archivist

And the fight continues at the federal level with our work on the [Paycheck Fairness Act](#).

COMMUNICATIONS

Our **Sunshine / Celebration** Chair is **Lauren Hafner**. If you know a SMAAUW member who needs our congratulations, encouragement or sympathy, you can contact Lauren at lhafner54@gmail.com and Lauren will send a card or a note.

Sharon Cooper, our **Facebook** Chair, encourages you to visit the page titled “Smith Mountain American Association of University Women—SMAAUW” Click “like” on the posts there to have more delivered to your news feed. Share our posts and send Sharon anything you think others would like to see there. (sbcoopsml2@gmail.com)

Visit our Web Page—smithmountain-va.aauw.net—for information about the branch. Visit the Members Only page for the current roster, newsletters and the like!