



Springfield–Annandale Branch

U P D A T E S

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Issue 9

President's Message

Ann Sauberman, Co-President

Celebrating 100 Years of Changing the Conversation!

On March 29, Virginia AAUW members gathered in Alexandria, VA to celebrate 100 years of fighting for the rights of women and girls by changing the conversation. After a welcome by both AAUW-VA President, Lane Stone and Alexandria Mayor, Alyis Gaskins, the Keynote Address was given by Representative Jennifer McClellan (VA-04). As we collectively remembered the many steps in our advancement as women, Representative Gaskins stressed that yes, we have made many positive changes for the lives of women. More women have graduated from college, enjoyed successful careers, and have been elected to political offices. There has been more women scientists, medical doctors, researchers, military officers, and major league sport participants. But then she stressed that although we should be proud of how women's lives have improved, we must acknowledge that there is now a backlash to women's rights. Representative McClellan listed many steps and political actions that have contributed to our great strides for women advancement, but now we must be alert to the fact that we must organize and fight again as we begin "Another Century of Changing the Conversation."



Many of us remember learning in our history classes, key events in the rise of women rights such as, the Seneca Falls Convention; Abigail Adams ("Remember the Ladies"); the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Nineteenth Amendments; the first women in Congress; the fight for the ERA, and the list goes on.

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AAUW National Website: <https://www.aauw.org/>
AAUW-VA Website: <https://aauw-va.aauw.net/>

Springfield-Annandale Website: <https://sprann-va.aauw.net/>
Like us on Facebook. Search Springfield-Annandale AAUW

AAUW Mission Statement

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy. Vision: Equity for all. Values: Non-partisan. Fact based.

AAUW Diversity Statement

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 on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

President's Message *continued from page 1*

Some of us fought to have Virginia ratify the ERA and fight for Title IX (1972). We can't just be proud of the many accomplishments because now there is a political movement to push women and other groups backward. DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) has been AAUW's major goal and many branches have planned both programs and community projects to further this goal. Now in just a few short months after the 2024 presidential election, there is a movement to halt or diminish the effects of DEI. Even government offices which have been created to increase the positive effects of DEI have been dismantled. Many employees have been fired. In addition, women rights in education have been threatened. The goal of some of these politicians is to totally abolish the Federal Department of Education. Their argument is that 90 percent of running the schools is assigned to the states. This is true, but the United States still needs federal regulations and financial support to help economically disadvantaged and the disabled. There needs to be a level playing field. The ability to gain an education must not depend on your zip code. Without a Federal Department of Education, cuts in Pell Grants and other scholarships, Head Start, Medicaid and many programs are in danger. But the one stressed by Representative Jennifer McClellan is Title IX. There are so many laws under Title IX that ensure equal money spent on women's sports and encouragement for women's teams on the high school and collegiate level. It protects women from sexual abuse and other impediments to their equal rights. AAUW and other advocacy groups cannot just let these guarantees for equality fade away.



Representative Jennifer McClellan

The many speakers and panels in the AAUW Virginia 100th Anniversary meeting presented many interesting suggestions on how we can continue changing the conversation. We cannot backdown. We cannot give in. "The Second American Revolution" is up to all of us. We will have to march or advocate. We are not, however, starting over. In this new century of the Virginia AAUW, we have more power and more strength. But we can't fight alone. Our organization needs to join coalitions. We need to fight against the propaganda, the lies, and the laws aimed to take away our political power. The National government wants to require new documents to prove US citizenship in order to vote. This will make it harder for some to exercise their constitutional right to vote. We must advocate for change. Let our local, state, and national elected officials know how we stand. If the Federal government resists, then we need to fight on the local and state levels. Our Branch and others need to plan community outreach. The Virginia AAUW offers annual grants for community projects.

Three Branches presented their current grant outreach project. Anita Booth and Sue Christie (McClean), discussed how they created the Graham Elementary School Sensory Garden. Two others, Tony Williams Brown (Hampton) presented "A Day in the Life of STEM Women" and Linda Walters (Smith Mountain) discussed their project "Can I join Your Club." Our Branch needs to create a grant project that might spread the AAUW message to our local community. This will take time and effort but it is important.

Before I close, I want to thank all the individuals who worked so hard to make this anniversary convention enlightening and motivational. We cannot rest on the work of our mothers or grandmothers or even our past

efforts. We need to encourage new members to join and fight with us and our coalition partners to resist the backlash and continue forward to protect DEI and the laws that guaranteed our freedom and our rights.



AAUW McLean presentation on Graham Elementary School Sensory Garden



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award Meeting

Judy Baldwin, Chair, Student Inclusion Award Committee

Five high school Juniors were honored on April 24 for their efforts to promote inclusiveness in their schools and to combat bullying.

Two Lake Braddock Secondary School students were awarded the \$500 prizes because the Branch's Student Inclusion Award Committee could not decide between their equally outstanding applications, and, as no applications had been submitted from Thomas Jefferson High School, that prize was available.



Samantha Gutierrez Granados, Manas Puri, Charlotte Petrick,
Julia Albertani, Brooklynn Aguilar

Samantha Gutierrez Granados from John Lewis High School sees Artificial Intelligence as the path to inclusiveness now and in the future. She gave a brief explanation of what AI is and isn't.

Manas Puri volunteered with the Department of Education's Civil Rights office and is President of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) at Lake Braddock. He works to make FBLA be welcoming and inclusive.

Charlotte Petrick from West Springfield High School and Julia Albertani from Annandale High School are concerned with creating acceptance for students with disabilities through sports and other activities. Charlotte introduced her brother Ben who is her inspiration.

Brooklyn Aguilar, also from Lake Braddock, has created a series of lessons for elementary school students on diversity, equity, and inclusion. She is president of the Hispanic Students Association.

All five students are involved in many other activities including sports, student government, National Honor Society, Boy Scouts, and academic competitions. They were a delight to meet over cookies and punch after the ceremony.

My heartfelt thanks go to Student Inclusion Award Committee Members Helen Cassidy, Mussaret Sheikh, Ann Sauberman, and Irene McGhee.

Increase in 2025-2026 Membership Dues

Deborah Dodd, Debbie Gilligan, Co-Vice Presidents for Membership

When it is time to renew your membership for 2025-2026, you will notice changes to membership dues. Most memberships are current through June 30.

In January 2025, the AAUW National Board proposed changes to national dues. At that time, they were considering a \$5 per year increase in dues from 2025-2029. They requested feedback from members. After receiving comments from more than 750 members who felt that the increases were excessive,

in March 2025, Shannon Wolfe, AAUW Managing Director and Chief of Staff, announced that “the AAUW Board approved a modest dues adjustment — \$2 per year over the next two years.” She said, “This reflects an adjustment to the original proposal to lessen the burden of a dues increase on members while keeping pace with inflation.”

New national dues for the coming 2025-2026 year will be \$74 and \$76 starting April 1, 2026. The dues increase was effective on April 1, 2025. The VA State dues remain \$15 per year; the Springfield-Annandale Branch dues remain \$12 per year.

The renewal form for the 2025-2026 year, with instructions on renewing online or by mail, will be included in the June issue of *UPDATES*. The total dues will be \$101.

If you have any questions, contact Deborah Dodd or Debbie Gilligan.

Public Policy

Susan Burk, Public Policy Chair

Too often we hear members complain that they have no idea what National does for them, other than to ask for money. And National does often ask for money. Yet the small but mighty staff at National is busy advancing our Public Policy priorities. Today we face a less than permissive environment, still they persist!

Janine Greenwood, President of the Reston-Herndon Branch of AAUW-VA recently posted the following information in her newsletter to her Branch. Janine serves on AAUW National’s Public Policy Committee. The following is a list of recent actions taken by AAUW’s National staff courtesy of Janine Greenwood.

AAUW National

In case you wonder what AAUW National does, the Public Policy team has had a very busy March. All letters endorsed can be found on the AAUW website [here](#). Following are the letters and bills endorsed in the month of March.

Coalition Letters AAUW Joined:

- [Letter to Congress Leadership on Protecting and Preserving Public Access to Federal Data \(2/11/25\)](#)
- [Letter to Senate HELP Committee Leadership Opposing Linda McMahon’s Nomination as U.S. Secretary of Education \(2/18/25\)](#)
- [Letter to Senators Opposing Confirmation of Linda McMahon as the U.S. Secretary of Education \(2/19/25\)](#)
- [Letter to House & Senate Committee Leaders on Protecting Students from \\$2.7 billion Pell Grant Budget Shortfall \(2/26/25\)](#)
- [Urging Congress to Protect and Secure Postsecondary Data, Research, and Student Data Privacy \(3/10/25\)](#)
- [Letter to the Senate Opposing the Nomination of Harmeet Dhillon to be Assistant Attorney General for Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division \(3/11/25\)](#)

Bills Endorsed:

- Caring for All Families Act ([H.R.1002/S.437](#)) (endorsed on 2/3/25)
- John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act ([H.R.14](#)) (endorsed on 3/4/25)
- Salary Transparency Act ([H.R.2007](#)) (endorsed on 3/12/25)
- Equal Pay Day Resolution ([H.Con.Res.21](#)) (endorsed on 3/17/25)
- Proxy Voting for New Parents Resolution ([H.Res.23](#)) (endorsed on 3/18/25)
- Establish the Ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment ([H.J.Res.80/S.J.Res.38](#)) (endorsed on 3/24/25)
- Paycheck Fairness Act (bill yet to be published) (endorsed on 3/25/25)

Thank you, Janine

Get Out the Vote (GOTV)

This year, Virginia will be electing a new Governor, LT governor, Attorney General, and every member of the General Assembly. It is not hyperbole to say that all eyes will be on Virginia this fall which is being widely characterized as a bellwether election.

Once again, we will be writing postcards for Reclaim Our Vote, a program that seeks to reach out to infrequent or underrepresented, mostly minority voters, i.e., those who are less likely to vote in non-presidential elections. Last year, Springfield-Annandale wrote 500 postcards but we could have written more. Our demand from potential writers, has usually exceeded our supply of cards. I will be contacting you soon to find out how many postcards you plan to write this year so we have enough when we get started. Think about hosting a postcard writing party, too. This is a great opportunity to get together with Branch friends while we GOTV.

Mark Your Calendars for Upcoming Virginia Elections

Democratic and Republican Primary Elections

Early In-person voting is Friday, May 2 through Wednesday, June 14.

Primary Election Day is June 17.

General Election

Early In-Person voting is Tuesday, September 9 through Saturday, November 1.

Election Day is Tuesday, November 4.



And make sure you are registered to vote!

<https://www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/view-your-info/>

Two Minute Activist

Finally, are you signed up for Two Minute Activist? AAUW and women across the country and around the world need your voice. <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>.

Spring Fling – May 9

Ann Sauberman, Coordinator

The Springfield Golf and Country Club, 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield, is the place to be on **May 9**, 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Our featured speaker is Juliana Valencia. Ms. Valencia is an Emmy-Award-winning reporter in two languages for News 4 and Telemundo 44. She is part of the News 4 Today team and a regular fill-in anchor.



Juliana Valencia

Since Valencia joined News 4 in 2019, she has reported on many historic moments such as the January 6 insurrection, Supreme Court rulings, and the funeral proceedings of Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sandra Day O'Connor. Working early mornings, Valencia was one of the first journalists on the scene of the Key Bridge accident in Baltimore and provided coverage for the entire week. Read more about Ms. Valencia here: <https://www.nbcwashington.com/author/juliana-valencia/>

A Big Thank You to Beth Boivin, our new Branch member, and NBC4 Anchor, Jummy Olabanji for their assistance in securing Ms. Valencia.

The Silent Auction committee, chaired by Debbie Gilligan, is working hard to plan a wonderful event. It is important to remember that the Spring Fling is our Branch's main fund raiser. We need to support the many essential National AAUW programs which supports equity for women and girls.

Silent Auction Committee

Debbie Gilligan, Coordinator

We have lots of gift cards to stores and restaurants. Also, we have nine gift baskets to auction off along with good costume jewelry, designer scarves, and handbags. We also will have a 50/50 Raffle. It should be a great time for people to get together, have a delicious lunch, listen to an interesting speaker, and shop - all for a good cause!

Election for Springfield-Annandale Branch Board Members

Deborah Dodd, Debbie Gilligan, Co-Vice Presidents for Membership

The election for Branch Board Members for 2025-2027 continues. Your vote must be recorded by May 25 to be recorded. You will be voting for two Co-Presidents, two Co-Vice Presidents for Programs, and one Treasurer. They will serve a two-year term beginning on July 1, 2025.

Vote Now!

Co-President Cathie Boivin has emailed the ballot to all Branch members. If you have not already voted, then look for the email and vote. It only takes a minute.

Programs Report

Irene McGhee, Amy Crolus, Co-Vice Presidents for Programs

Branch Picnic – Sunday, **June 1**, Occoquan Regional Park, 9751 Ox Road, Lorton, Pavilion 4.

We are aiming for **June 4**, 7 :00 P.M., to hold a planning meeting at Pohick Regional Library, Burke, for members to provide input for suggested programs for 2025-2026.

Evening Book Group

The Evening Book Group next meets via Zoom, Thursday, **May 1**, 7:00 P.M., to discuss *Famous Father Girl: A Memoir of Growing Up Bernstein*, by Jamie Bernstein. Susan Burk will review.

Submit your two selections for the 2025-2026 reading year to Cathleen Boivin by the **May 1** meeting. A Potluck Dinner at Mussaret Sheikh's home is planned for **June 5** to agree on the final reading list.

Contact Debbie Gilligan for more information.

Morning Book Group

The Morning Book Group meets on Thursday, **May 15**, 10:00 A.M., for a review of *The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store*, by Jamie McBride. Wendy Cleland-Hamnett will host and Helen Cassidy will review. This is a schedule change. Mark your Directory with this update.

Book selections for the 2025-2026 reading year will take place on **June 12** at a luncheon at Deborah Dodd's home.

Contact Wendy Cleland-Hamnett or Deborah Dodd for more information.

Movies at Midweek

Bev Wise and Helen Cassidy, Movie Mavens

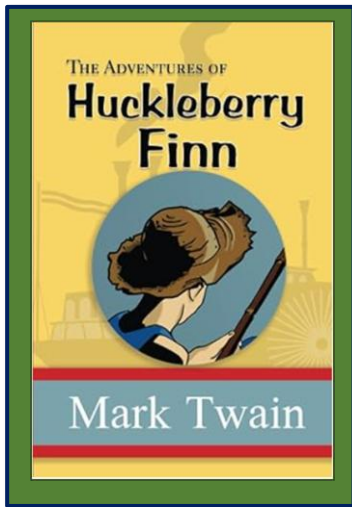
Movies at Midweek now meets on the second Wednesday of the month.

The next meeting of Movies at Midweek is **May 14**. Watch your email on the Friday preceding for the movie selection.

BRANCH CALENDAR

May 1, 7:00 P.M.	Evening Book Group – Zoom	page 8
May 9, 11:00 A.M.	Spring Fling	page 7
May 14	Movies at Midweek	page 8
May 15, 10:00 A.M.	Morning Book Group – Live	page 8
May 25	Board Members Voting Ends	page 7
May 27	<i>UPDATES</i> articles due	
June 1	Picnic at Occoquan Regional Park	page 7
June 4	Programs Planning Meeting	page 7
June 5	Evening Book Group – Pot Luck Dinner	page 8
June 12	Morning Book Group – Pot Luck Lunch	page 8

Famous Endings



“I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can't stand it.

I been there before.”

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain

Articles for June UPDATES due May 27