

70 Years

# AAUW

Springfield-Annandale (VA) Branch

December 2025

## UPDATES

Volume 67, Issue 4

### ★ *From the President...*

Cathie Boivin, Co-President

As I write this, we are now looking at Halloween in the rear view mirror and the most American of holidays is looming. When I lived in England some years ago, the celebration of plenty and gratitude for a successful harvest occurred in October - without a feast featuring the all American turkey and pumpkin pie. Still, the sentiment was much the same, giving thanks for a plentiful harvest and sharing the bounty with friends and neighbors. Our year now ends with festivals of light during the dark of early winter. Two major religious faiths celebrate significant holidays in December, both with practices based in prayers for peace and hope for the future.



Hope is what keeps us going. I've always believed in the intrinsic goodness of the American people. During the recent government shutdown, we saw the American public react to the situation as frustrating and worry inducing as it was. Many communities and charities worked tirelessly to help those in need and ensure that no child went hungry.

No matter which political party you champion, we can all agree that our nation has been undergoing some very trying times. What keeps me going is my trust in the promises assured by our constitution and my belief in the power and will of the people. As most of you know, I used to teach World History. In our curriculum, we taught the basis of the ideas that eventually led to the formation of a country with a government by the people and for the people. From Magna Carta to the end of a belief in the Divine Right of Kings, the English Bill of Rights, civil wars and revolutions, world wars fought over nationalism, imperialism, and ideological differences, the beginning of voting rights for people of all genders and races, to an increasingly diverse electorate, we are experiencing the power of the people.

Some of you have begun watching "The American Revolution" by the superb documentary producer, Ken Burns. This was a massive undertaking with historical research spanning almost ten years. The series traces the beginning of our country which was the culmination of Enlightenment thought and a unique experiment in governance. Our successful rejection of control by another country has been adopted by many other nations who now have democracies and a representative government instead of monarchies.

**AAUW National Website:** <https://www.aauw.org/>

**AAUW-VA Website:** <https://aauw-va.aauw.net/>

**Springfield-Annandale Branch Website:** <https://sprann-va.aauw.net/>

#### **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.*

## From the President...

Continued from page 1

Our governing document, the Constitution, has continued to evolve over the almost 250 years of the United States of America. It contains the first ten amendments called the Bill of Rights which clearly specify our inherent rights as citizens. It is the framework by which we are governed and upholds the rule of law for all Americans regardless of race, religion, or gender.

We are now well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and entering another era of great change. For the very first time in the long history of the Commonwealth of Virginia, we have elected both a female governor and a female Muslim lieutenant governor. Ten seats in the Virginia house formerly held by men will now be occupied by women.

Groups such as AAUW and the League of Women Voters worked hard to pen hand written postcards to encourage citizens to vote for their candidates of choice which they did in record numbers. This is how our system of government is supposed to work. Our legislators serve by the will of the people and for the good of the people. Women are representing the American people in increasing numbers after being elected to positions of influence in both federal and state assemblies.

So as we approach this holiday season, we all hold hope for a prosperous and fair government and a peaceful future as we move into 2026.

## 2000-2025 History Documentation - Seeking Information

Judy Titterton, Acting Historian

I am seeking electronic (preferred) or paper copies of **Membership Directories** for Membership Years 2000 to 2004, and 2008-2009.

If you have any Newsletters, Approved Budgets, or Board Meeting Minutes, as listed in previous newsletters, then please contact me.

## Inclusion Committee Updates

Irene McGhee and Ann Sauberman, Co-Coordiators

The Inclusion Committee met again via Zoom November 12 at 7 p.m. to continue the work of preparing to launch the enhanced 2026 Student Inclusion Award selection and recognition process.

Committee members reviewed drafted criteria and planned the timeline for the communication, application window, and selection process for the awards.

The next meeting of the Inclusion Committee is **Wednesday, January 7 at 7 p.m.** via Zoom.

## Program 2025-26: Women Breaking Boundaries

Amy Crolius and Beth Boivin, Co-Vice Presidents of Program



On Wednesday, October 29, we had a wonderful second hybrid program for this year, with guest speaker **Kate McDonald**, Partner at McDermott, Will and Schulte.

Kate's presentation, "**One Big Beautiful Bill: How Does it Impact Women?**," analyzed the major policy changes of the OBBBA, a law passed in July 2025 addressing taxes, health care, social programs, as well as defense, border security and immigration enforcement. The presentation detailed significant negative impacts on women's health coverage and social safety nets.

*Photo courtesy of Ainsley Gottrich: Amy Crolius on left, Kate McDonald on right.*

## Program Updates

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### December 6: Holiday Luncheon at PJ Skidoos



Nearly 40 branch members and guests are signed up for our holiday luncheon at PJ Skidoos! It's shaping up to be a festive, joy-filled afternoon packed with good cheer, great conversation, and the chance to connect and celebrate together. We're also thrilled to turn this event into a moment of giving by collecting food and personal care items for ECHO in Springfield.



And here's an exciting milestone—70% of attendees paid electronically this year, making our registration process smoother, faster, and more secure than ever!

### January 21 at 7 p.m. via Zoom

**Lauren Charles** is a fire effects monitor with the National Park Service, where she collects long-term ecological data to understand how fire shapes plant communities and fuel conditions. Her work spans fuel reduction projects, ecological monitoring, prescribed fire operations, and wildfire suppression.

Before joining the National Park Service, Lauren served as a forestry technician with the Department of Forestry, responding to wildfires in the Shenandoah Valley and assisting private landowners and loggers in implementing best land management practices. She holds a BS in Biology from James Madison University.



### February 25 at 7 p.m. via Zoom



**Lauren Elliff** is a recent graduate of the University of Virginia, holding a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering with a minor in German. While at UVA, she was a member of Alpha Omega Epsilon, a professional and social sorority for women in engineering and science.

Since July 2025, she has worked as a mechanical engineer for Framatome, Inc. in Lynchburg, Virginia. Her current position is as a Mechanical Product Development Engineer in the Fuel division, focusing on the design and manufacture of commercial nuclear fuel. Before joining Framatome full-time, she spent the previous summer interning on the same team and continued her internship part-time throughout her final year of college.

### Spring Fling Update - Volunteers Needed!!

We have a few months until our 2026 Spring Fling brunch, scheduled for **Saturday, March 21**, at the Springfield Golf and Country Club. Our featured speaker will be **Olivia Campbell**, New York Times bestselling author of *Women in White Coats: How the First Women Doctors Changed the World of Medicine* and *Sisters in Science: How Four Women Physicists Escaped Nazi Germany and Made Scientific History*.

Beth Boivin will be serving as the silent auction chair, and we are **actively seeking volunteers** to join the silent auction committee. An initial meeting will be held in early January to walk through the timeline, item collection, pricing, and event-day responsibilities. As a committee member you may help in as small or large a way as you'd like - we appreciate any time you can give to support this important fundraising effort!

We will also need volunteers for the overall event - for check-in, raffle support, and other event logistics. If you're interested in helping make this event a success, please contact Beth Boivin at [elboivin@gmail.com](mailto:elboivin@gmail.com)!



## Program Updates

Continued from page 3

### Remaining Program Dates for 2025-26:

January 21, 7 p.m. (Zoom) - Program  
February 25, 7 p.m. (Zoom) - Program  
March 21, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. - Spring Fling  
April 22, 7 p.m. (Hybrid) - Program  
May 30, 12 p.m. - Picnic



## AAUW - Northern District Updates

The Northern District meeting was held on November 1 at 12:00 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library. Guest speaker Shirley Marshall, author of *A Radical Suffragist in Washington, D.C.*, shared fascinating insights into the National Woman's Party by drawing on the letters of suffragist Elizabeth Kalb. Our branch was proudly represented. Also, nearly half of all attendees at the meeting were from our membership. Way to go!

## AAUW-Virginia Updates

### 2026 AAUW Virginia State Conference April 18, 2026

The Northwest District is hosting the next AAUW-VA State Conference—the first conference of our second century. They have secured the venue so please Save This Date—**Saturday, April 18, 2026**, at the Drury Plaza Hotel Richmond in Glen Allen, VA 23060. There will also be pre-conference activities on Friday, April 17, 2026. Further information will be distributed as it is available on the [AAUW Virginia webpage](#).



## Membership Updates

Deborah Dodd and Debbie Gilligan, Co-Vice Presidents of Membership

Our branch is at **62 members** now, with the addition of a new member this month. We are excited to grow our branch and share in this important work together!

### Let's Meet Our Newest Member!



**Judy Russell's** career spanned libraries, publishing, and government. She most recently served for 18 years as the Dean of University Libraries at the University of Florida, stepping down this year and planning to retire from UF in July 2026. Prior to her work in academia, she was the Superintendent of Documents at the U.S. Government Printing Office (now the Government Publishing Office). She relocated to Fairfax in August to be closer to two of her three children, and all three of her grandchildren.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Dunbarton College of the Holy Cross and a Master of Science in Library Science from The Catholic University of America.

## Membership Updates

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### Remembering Judy Baldwin

The Springfield-Annandale Branch of AAUW mourns the passing of Judy Baldwin, a dedicated leader, historian, and cherished friend whose commitment to our mission spanned decades. Judy contributed significantly to our branch's written history, serving as a key contributor to A History of the Springfield-Annandale Branch, AAUW of Virginia, 1955–2005. Her leadership touched nearly every corner of our work: she served multiple terms as Branch President (2008–2009, 2017–2018, 2019–2020), as Membership Vice President, Diversity Chair, Secretary, Historian, Webmaster, Bylaws Chair, and a guiding force in the 5-Star Program. Recognized as an AAUW Funds Honoree in 2014, Judy's steady presence, historical knowledge, and passion for equity enriched our branch and inspired all who worked alongside her.



Judy's life reflected the same commitment to service, learning, and community that she brought to AAUW. Born in Bonne Terre, Missouri, on April 1, 1939, she embraced her April Fool's Day birthday with joy and humor. A gifted journalist from an early age, she served as managing editor of her high school paper before earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Missouri School of Journalism. Her life's journey included Navy travels with her husband Rick, raising four children, and a long career with the Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital, where she founded and later co-directed Camp Firefly, impacting generations of young people. A devoted volunteer, sorority alumna, Girl Scout leader, and docent at the Sully Historic Site, Judy gave endlessly of her time and talents. She leaves behind a legacy of service, leadership, laughter, and deep compassion. Her AAUW family will miss her dearly.



### Public Policy Updates

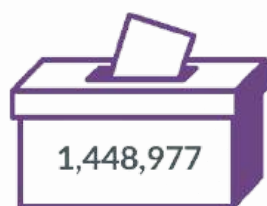
Susan Burk, Public Policy Chair

#### Getting Out the Vote -- Your Vote is Your Voice!

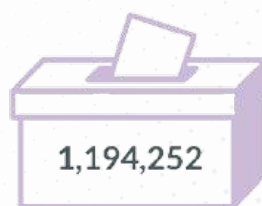
There are many ways to Get Out the Vote, and postcard writing has proven to be an activity that our branch has embraced with energy and enthusiasm. Thanks again to all branch members who helped write the 825 postcards we contributed to the Reclaim Our Vote campaign. This year, ROV targeted 90,000 Black voters in Virginia. **Your efforts did make a difference!**

The following is the report from Andrea Miller, leader of Center for Common Ground which sponsors ROV: **Virginia just witnessed its second-highest voter turnout ever in a gubernatorial election.** This election shattered early voting records for a Virginia gubernatorial race. Thanks to your dedication, we mobilized Black voters across the Commonwealth.

#### Early Ballots Cast



2025  
(As of 11/3/25)



2021  
(Final total through  
11/2/21)

## Public Policy Updates

Continued from page 5

### AAUW's Position on the Decision to Dismantle the Department of Education:

The Trump administration has taken another major step toward dismantling the U.S. Department of Education. Following deep staff cuts, the Department's November 18 announcement of six new "partnerships" shifts the day-to-day work of core K-12 and higher education programs to agencies focused on labor, health, public lands, and foreign policy. This undermines the Department's ability to enforce civil rights laws and ensure equal educational opportunity." [Read AAUW's statement here.](#)

**Paid Family and Medical Leave** has been a long-time AAUW-VA public policy priority. Our members have lobbied legislators on the Hill and in Richmond to expand the current policy (the Family Act) that provides for unpaid leave for family/personal reasons. Many people cannot afford to take extended leave to care for a sick child or family member which is the rationale behind PFML. The recent November election has brightened prospects that legislation on PFML will be passed (for the third time) in the upcoming VA General Assembly session, but this time will be signed by the Governor. In addition to AAUW-VA's regular lobbying, our State President Lane Stone recently signed on to a letter sponsored by the organization Voices for Virginia's Children encouraging the VA General Assembly and the incoming Spanberger gubernatorial administration to pass and sign legislation in the 2026 GA session to establish a statewide PFML program. I will provide points on this issue to branch members to use in written communications with your state delegate and senator.

### SAVE THE DATE:

2026 AAUW-VA State Lobby Day will be held on February 5 in Richmond. For those planning to travel to Richmond the day before, we have an AAUW rate at a [Hampton Inn in Richmond](#). More information on plans for Lobby Day will be provided as soon as it is available.



## Other Branch Activities

### Movies at Midweek

All branch members are invited to Cinema Arts theatre the **third Wednesday of the month** to see a film, followed by lunch at nearby First Watch. This month the movie date is December 17. Details of the selected film are sent via email to all branch members by the Friday of the previous week.

### Book Groups

All members are invited to join the branch book groups! The **evening book group meets via Zoom at 7 p.m. the first Thursday of the month** and the **morning book group meets in-person at 10 a.m. the second Thursday of the month**. Full selections and schedules for the year can be found in the Membership Directory.

#### Evening Book Group

The Evening Book Group will meet on **Thursday, December 4** to discuss *The Lion Women of Tehran* by Marjan Kamali. Mussaret Sheikh will be the reviewer.

#### Morning Book Group

The Morning Book Group will meet on **Thursday, December 11** to discuss *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Wendy Cleland-Hamnett will be the hostess and Betty Sheehan and Deborah Dodd will be the reviewers.

### White House Ornament Sale

Thank you to everyone who sold ornaments this year! The branch sold 125 ornaments, spreading holiday cheer and raising funds for the branch.

## ✦ **Branch Calendar: December 2025**

December 4, 7 p.m.	Evening Book Group - Zoom
December 6, 11:30 a.m.	Holiday Luncheon (Registration Previously Required)
December 11, 10 a.m.	Morning Book Group
December 16, 1 p.m.	Board Meeting - Zoom
December 17	Movies at Midweek
December 24	UPDATES Articles Due for January Issue



H A P P Y   H O L I D A Y S

**UPDATES Articles for January  
due December 24**

