



February and March 2021



President's Letter

Hope this finds all healthy and well with you and yours. It certainly has been an interesting and action packed few months hasn't it?! A lot is happening legislatively in DC and in Richmond that affects all of us and I hope many of you have been able to tune into the League of Women Voter's weekly roundtables on Wed. Mornings at 8:30. As always they have been VERY informative. And as always things happen every minute in our part-time General Assembly and even more so in our a short sessions!! Even with the incredible limitation on proposed bills this year - 7 for each Delegate and 12 for each Senator - there is still lots happening every day. You can tune in online to Legislative Services - lis@virginia.gov and watch what is taking place in real time. Crossover Day is rapidly upon us - 2/5 and you can make calls or send emails to your delegate and senator every day. There are bills on ensuring maintaining easy absentee ballots and keeping ballot drop boxes, ensuring voting rights for all (20% of Virginians of color CANNOT vote) , sick leave for working parents, increased broadband coverage and removing the cash bail option as well as a proposed constitutional amendment!!

We have a lot happening with GRAAUW and AAUW Virginia this spring and hope you

have put those dates on your calendar already. Specifically the virtual Virginia State meeting in March - more details soon. Your Co-VP's of Programs, Kathy Kelley and Lisa Scott have been busy lining up great monthly programs and as always Book Club is active.

We need volunteers for the Nominating Committee and I will be making contact with you next week to secure those volunteers - **please consider running for an office/chair** - many hands make light work !! We also need a couple of volunteers to review and suggest edits to the bylaws and policies - a tedious but necessary job. We would hope to vote on these at our Annual Business Meeting in March. Please contact myself or Carol Stephens if you are interested in helping.

The vaccine is finally here but in limited quantities so far. Best advice is to sign up on the Dept. of Health website for your city/county and/or check in with your Primary Care Physician to get on the waiting list. Please contact myself or one of your other board members if you have concerns or challenges that we can help you with during these challenging times. **SPECIAL NOTE** - we are hoping to secure an outdoor space in a restaurant so we can all come together and enjoy our end of the year banquet - stay tuned. In the meantime stay safe and healthy. As always, Laura

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Programs

February 9th at 7:00 pm - Muriel Miller Branch speaker - Environmental Justice in Cumberland, VA

Our next branch meeting will be February 9th at 7:00 PM virtually. . Non members are welcome.

Muriel Miller Branch, a **former member of AAUW Bon Air Branch** will be the speaker. She attended the segregated, two-room Pine Grove Elementary School in Cumberland, VA which is on Preservation Virginia's annual list of the state's most endangered historic sights. She went on to graduate high school and has several college degrees.

Muriel has won numerous awards and is a former media specialist, author and is now a minister. Muriel has been active in the social/racial justice movement since she was 17. She also is interested in environmental justice and her topic at the meeting will combine the two. She is President of the AMMD Pine Grove Project. Her group is trying to protect their history and culture and the environmental integrity of their rural community.

She will talk about her struggles growing up African American in VA and the work she is doing with the AMMD Pine Grove Project.

This program promises to be fascinating and educational so be sure to invite your friends.

Watch your emails or GRAAUW Facebook for a Zoom or Eventbrite link.

Jane Newell Enters AAUW Art Contest - VOTE! Each year AAUW holds an art contest to select the six images that will grace the covers of the notecards mailed to members each Spring. You, as an AAUW member, can vote for your favorites starting February 10th through March 3rd on the AAUW website. Jane will have entries.

Increasing Representation of Women and Minorities in STEM Professions

Last month we heard Kendra Brinkley, Ph.D., Engineering Instructor, School of Mathematics, Science and Engineering, at J Sargent Reynolds Community College share with us her personal experience being a young black STEM student and her desire to encourage many more young girls to become involved in STEM fields. Dr. Brinkley is currently involved in the program *Girls for Change STEM Immersion Lab*. The program goals are to increase student awareness of STEM careers and engage minority female students through mentorship, scholarship, and industrial collaboration. GRAAUW has been looking to partner/ collaborate with others to do just that. We are hopeful that once COVID 19 is no longer a factor, that we can do just that. If you are interested in helping to make that happen, please let Laura or Carol know.

Northwest District Meeting

Laura, Jane, Connie, Musua, and Carol attended the virtual Northwest District meeting on Sat. Jan. 30th. We saw the results of our many long years of effort to promote the education and political leadership of women in action! Delegate Sally Hudson from Charlottesville spoke to us about Criminal Justice reform and the General Assembly. She beat the incumbent in her primary election. She will be sending us a list of bills that have survived Crossover after Feb. 5th that we can then lobby for, that will hopefully bring more "Just Mercy" to our system! She spoke about the importance of coordinating the efforts of the prison system, community colleges, non-profits, and local government to afford parolees with job skills and employment to facilitate their transition back into society and to reduce recidivism.

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Book Group

Continuing a 45-year tradition, our Book Groups meet on the third Thursday of each month. **All GRAAUW members and their guests are welcome.** Join us any time our book interests you OR come every month. For more information, please contact DeAnn Lineberry: deann.lineberry@yahoo.com or call 804-233-5352.

During the pandemic, we have been meeting via Zoom, thanks to Nora Narum who sets up our gatherings. Though it's not the same as meeting in person, we enjoy our virtual get togethers and discussions. Many thanks to Nora who makes it possible!! Be sure to let DeAnn know if you want the Zoom link.

February 18 - 2:00 pm Zoom

BOOK: *Princess Noire: The Tumultuous Reign of Nina Simone*, by Nadine Cohodas.

A complete account of the triumphs and difficulties of the brilliant and high-tempered Jazz singer, Nina Simone. Her distinctive voice and music occupy a singular place in the canon of American song. If you wish to hear some of her music and watch an excellent documentary about the black female singers and actresses during the 20th century, watch ***How It Feels to Be Free*** shown on PBS and available on Amazon.

March 18 - 2:00 pm Zoom

BOOK: *Louisa Catherine: The Other Mrs. Adams*, by Margery M. Heffron.

Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams, wife and political partner of John Quincy Adams, became one of the most widely known women in America when her husband assumed office as sixth president in 1825. Shrewd, intellectual, and articulate, she was close to the center of American power

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over many decades, and extensive archives reveal her as an unparalleled observer of the politics, personalities, and issues of her day.

Lunch Bunch

We normally meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 1:30 in restaurants around RVA to allow some informal socializing. However due to Covid 19 we have not been meeting. Watch future newsletters for notice about when we'll meet again. For information about the group, contact DeAnn Lineberry at [<mailto:deann.lineberry@yahoo.com>](mailto:deann.lineberry@yahoo.com) deann.lineberry@yahoo.com.

GRAAUW Dues Change

The GRAAUW board voted to reduce the branch dues by three dollars to offset the increase in national dues starting July 1, 2021. Our membership will vote on this change at the annual meeting Mar. 16th.

Birthday Corner

We would like to recognize the folks who will be celebrating their birthdays in February and March. Please let them know you are thinking of them on their special day!

Marian Seigla 2/09

Carol Stephens 2/23

Diane Reale - 3/05

Elizabeth Smith - 3/19

Trish Wallace 3/31



AAUW Funds Report

Carol Stephens is happy to report that GRAAUW and its members have been recognized by the state for contributing more in 2020 than in 2019! Together we have contributed \$3,449. This means we qualify to have 6 named honorees who will be listed in the program for the State Conference. If you have any nominations for members or non-members that we should honor, please notify Laura Wimmer. The Board will be making a determination at its meeting on Feb. 3rd.

March 13 - 15th AAUW of VA State Conference

Due to Covid 19 we will again have to have our conference virtually via Zoom. However, this does allow us to get excellent presenters from many parts of the state and allows more folks to participate. Please set the following dates and times aside so you can join us for **Women Make the Difference!** Saturday March 13 10:00 am- 12:30 pm and from 3:00 - 5:30 pm. Sunday March 14 & Monday March 15 at 3:00 - 5:30 pm. Watch for more details in the February *Vision*, which should come out mid February.

AAUW'S LONG HISTORY OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Did you know that AAUW has been actively working for equity and equal rights for **100 years**? This isn't something we have been doing for just the past 5 or 10 years. After all, AAUW was founded for the express purpose of fighting for women's equal access to education, especially higher education. Take a look at some actions from our amazing past:

- 1965 lobbied for passage of the Civil Rights Act
- 1969 created the Coretta Scott King Fund to support opportunities for black women to study African-American history and culture.
- 1969 began lobbying for a woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court (that only took 12 years—AAUW is persistent)
- 1972 instrumental in the passage of Title IX, co-authored by Patsy Mink of Hawaii, an AAUW member
- 1987 admitted men to membership (first proposed in 1979)
- 1983 after 7 years of lobbying and support, the Family & Medical Leave passed
- 1988 appointed a Diversity Chair to the national Board with a committee of diverse members.
- 1989 adopted AAUW's Diversity Statement: "AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability." All national, state, and branch publications must include this statement. (Later wording added gender identity, geographical location, and socioeconomic status and changed "creed" to "religious beliefs.")

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