

“Some people go to priests; others to poetry; I to my friends.” Virginia Woolf



***AAUW ALEXANDRIA BRANCH
2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT***

***This report is dedicated to Ginger Chamberlain,
AAUW-Alexandria Co-president 2013-2017.***



To rephrase Shakespeare, and we know Ginger would approve, “We shall not look upon her like again.”

From Co-Presidents, Lane Stone and Gail Kalin

Do you find yourself calling 2019-2020 “the year time forgot” because of COVID-19? We are disappointed that we can’t be together, at least physically, for our annual meeting in a restaurant (remember those?) and that we missed our biggest fundraiser of the year, the Little Theater of Alexandria performance we sponsor to support education and training for women students. And our branch worked hard on Alexandria’s 19th Amendment Anniversary year of celebration, just to see one event after another cancelled. But wait! After reading the board members’ reports it’s obvious that the year cannot be seen as just these few months. **AAUW-Alexandria got more done than many organizations do in years without a global pandemic.**

We started the year with our September Meet and Greet. That’s when we first talked about a new fundraiser, Autumn Leaves, headed by Susan Cash. Our October program was a panel of Alexandria elected women leaders: Councilwoman Del Pepper, Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, and Councilwoman Amy Jackson. We were off and running! Some of our activities were just for fun, like our movie & dinner nights, when we saw movies like Harriett and Jojo Rabbit. And some were heartbreaking, like the presentation our Program Chairs Dr. Elizabeth Hendrix and Diane Schrier gave on Human Trafficking. Some of our achievements were new, like in January when we began our Diversity Book Group. Some highlights were from old fights, like on March 10, when we were recognized by the City with an Equal Pay Day proclamation. Some of our successes were in coalitions, like in February when Virginia ratified ERA. And sometimes we had to figure it out for ourselves, like when Margaret Zebrowski and Jan Jaynes scrambled to find a way to supply Christ House clients with a “contactless” meal. Whether we were discussing [Great Decisions](#), or worrying about our most vulnerable citizens (like our support for Volunteer Alexandria as they fed school children when there was no school) we can feel good about our year!

July 2020 marks our 75th anniversary and we celebrate each one of you.

Stay well,
Lane Stone and Gail Kalin
Co-Presidents

CAMPUS OUTREACH

Danielle Beach and Lane Stone

In summer of 2019, Northern Virginia Community College had 12 students and 2 chaperones attend [NCCWSL](#). We support two students to attend but because of the backing from our chapter, they were able to go to their Student Life representative and to the Vice President of Student Success to get the others paid for. The Braden Center for Women, Gender and Social Equality director said, “This would not happen without the support of you all.” Lane Stone continues to serve on the Center’s External Advisory Council. AAUW-Alexandria is a community partner. The 2020 NCCWSL has been postponed. This was a difficult decision to make since the conference can be transformative to these women students.



CHRIST HOUSE DINNERS

Jan Jaynes and Margaret Zebrowski

The Christ House suppers were held on July 31, 2019, October 30, 2019, January 29, 2020 and April 29, 2020. Until the April date we served pizza, salad, fruit and dessert. The pizza cost \$200 per evening and was delivered by Marino's Pizza on Route One in Arlington. A number of members generously donated the salads, fruit and dessert and also helped serve the evening meal.

To protect volunteers and clients from COVID-19, we gave out bag meals for a contact-less April dinner. They looked very tasty and included a sub (3 kinds), chips, tangelo and a chocolate chip cookie. All the staff at The Italian Place worked hard to accommodate our needs. One photo is Jan’s husband, Joe, delivering the water with us. The other masked duo is Jan on the left and Margaret on the right.



COMMUNICATIONS

Eugenia Burkes, Editor

NEWSLETTER

Again, as last year, I want to thank everyone who worked valiantly to meet the deadlines I set. I also appreciate the response I received from individuals to submit items concerning how they are coping during these strange times and the congratulatory items under Kvell's & Kudos.

WEB SITE

There is a lot of information contained on this site. I encourage all members to explore the site and refer potential members to it. Many on the Board have worked with me to make the pages on the site that are relevant to their areas of responsibility as current as possible.

FACEBOOK

I want to thank those willing to join me in servicing as administrators of this page. I appreciate the help and the increase in timely postings.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Our newsletters and web site: <https://alexandria-va.aauw.net>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AAUW-Alexandria-Branch-Alexandria-VA> Thank you for letting me serve in this capacity for the last two years.

Eugenia Burkes, Editor aauwnewsltr.ed@gmail.com

FRANCOPHILE GROUP

Susan Cash

In the summer of 2019, we held our annual Bastille Day dinner at the Hermitage Bistro in Occoquan. We also marked the 75th anniversary of D-Day (June) and the liberation of Paris (August). Our program on D-Day included a discussion of both the Normandy province and the military operation leading up to and following June 6, 1944. Our program on the liberation of Paris included discussion of the city and the events leading up to August 24, 1944. In November we marked Armistice Day and Veterans' Day, had a brief presentation on Halloween in France and read Art Buchwald's iconic Thanksgiving column ("Le jour de merci donnant). Attendees also talked about other French-related books and articles they had recently read. In February we attended a showing of a film on the Normandy invasion at the National Museum of American History and visited an exhibit on Julia Child's kitchen.

GOURMET OUT

Susan Cash

In July we teamed up with the Francophile Group for the annual Bastille Day dinner at the Hermitage Bistro in Occoquan. In September we enjoyed Japanese food at the Ariake Japanese restaurant on Little River Turnpike (Annandale/Fairfax area). In February we had a Mexican dinner at Los Toltecos restaurant on Duke Street in Alexandria.

GREAT DECISIONS

Lynn O'Connell

Thanks to enthusiastic and active members, we had a highly informative year. Below are our monthly events. We did miss March 2020 due to COVID-19, but we pivoted to online Zoom meetings as of April 2020.

September 12, 2019: The Middle East: Regional Disorder, *Larry Korb, Senior Research Fellow with the Center for American Progress*

October 10: Cyber Conflict and Geopolitics, *Lynn O'Connell*

November 14: The United States and Mexico: Partnership Tested, *Eugenia Burkes with Guest Speaker Angeles Villarreal, Specialist in International Trade & Finance, Congressional Research Service*

December 12: The Rise of Populism in Europe, *Sylvia Linke*

April 9, 2020: India and Pakistan, *Ruth Bennett with Guest Speaker Vinson Palathingal, Executive Director of the IndoAmerican Center*

May 14: U.S. Relations with the Northern Triangle, *Larry Korb, Senior Research Fellow with the Center for American Progress*

June 11: Red Sea Security, *Sylvia Linke with Guest Speaker former Ambassador Richard Kauzlarich, Distinguished Visiting Professor at GMU and interim Director of the Peace Operations Program*

In September 2019, we had an outing to the Phillips Collection to see the exhibit, *The Warmth of Other Suns: Stories of Global Displacement*.

MEMBERSHIP

Sylvia Linke and Susan Werner, Co-Vice Presidents for Membership

As usual, a few members were not able to renew their memberships, but the Branch welcomed several new members. These new members brought fresh ideas and energy to the Branch: Tresi Griffin, Lalitha and Mahadevan (Dev) Mani, Barbara Ross, and Kam Sumrall. We have to thank Gail Kalin and Lane Stone for their help in recruiting new members. Some of our new members joined because of their interest in the Branch's Human Trafficking initiative.

In May, AAUW Virginia recognized the Alexandria branch's efforts in recruitment and retention with a Certificate of Appreciation and a \$25 gift card for Office Depot. AAUW State's recognition is based upon the total growth in membership from February 2019 to February 2020. Near the end of the 2019-2020 membership year (i.e. as of May 04, 2020), the total membership of the Alexandria Virginia branch was 65, five (5) of whom are Life Members of AAUW.

Sylvia continued to coordinate the Friendly Foursome groups where long-time members get together with new members for a small, cozy cup of coffee or meal and share information about the Alexandria Branch of AAUW. The VPs for Membership will continue to reach out to potential new members who share AAUW's goals of supporting women's efforts to improve their education and seek equality.

MYSTERY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Susan Werner

The Mystery Book Discussion Group has been meeting for over 21 years. During that time, the group has reviewed a wide range of "mystery" fiction: cozies, thrillers, historical mysteries, and crime fiction. We have traveled from medieval Britain (*The Heretic's Apprentice* by Ellis Peters) to 1950s Britain (*London Rain* by Nicola Upson) to more modern Britain (*Good Bait* by John Harvey). We have been to Italy with Andrea Camilarie (*The Age of Doubt*), Scandinavia with Ragnar Jonasson (*Snowblind*), and India with Sujata Massey (*The Widows of Malabar Hill*). Our December holiday mystery brought us to turn of the century New York with Rhys Bowen's *The Ghost of Christmas Past*. We had our first Zoom meeting in April to discuss Alaskan mystery *Bad Blood* by Dana Stabenow. While the Mystery Group has mostly met at the homes of members with an occasional restaurant meeting, due to the coronavirus, we are grateful that Zoom allows us to meet on-line. Our members have provided great suggestions for authors, but new recommendations and new members are always welcome.

ON THE GO WITH AAUW
Ruth Bennett, Producer

Shows produced from July 2019 – March 2020
Alexandria Cable TV Project

312) Darlene Kaplan, Lingnan Style Oriental Brush Painting Artist

Darlene Kaplan talks about her journey to becoming a Lingnan style artist. Along the way she explains what Lingnan style and Oriental Brush Painting is and how it differs from western art. We also view some of her paintings

Host: Jennifer Disano

Producer – Ruth Bennett

7/17/2019

313) Fall for the Book 2019

Kara Oakleaf, Director of Fall for the Book, and Suzy Rigdon-Williams, Manager of Fall for the Book return to tell us about the authors and books being featured at Fall for the Book 2019.

Host: Jennifer Disano

Producer – Ruth Bennett

8/12/2019

314) Just Neighbors

Just Neighbors is a nonprofit that provides legal services to immigrants. Erin McKenney, Executive Director of Just neighbors, describes the work Just Neighbors does in our community.

Host: Jennifer Disano

Producer – Ruth Bennett

10/19/2019

315) Literacy Council of Northern Virginia

Learn about the mission of the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV), the English language training they offer, and how you can volunteer at LCNV.

Host: Jennifer Disano

Producer – Ruth Bennett

11/20/2019

316) OLLI

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University offers intellectual and cultural experiences to Northern Virginia residents in their retirement years.

Host: Danielle Beach

Producer – Ruth Bennett

2/20/2020

317) Compassion and Choices

Compassion & Choices is the national organization that advocates for improving care and expanding choice at the end of life, including medical aid-in-dying. Jud Richland, Virginia State Coordinator for Compassion and Choices discusses their work.

Host: Jennifer Disano

Producer – Ruth Bennett

3/11/2020

PROGRAMS

Virginia Kress and Lynn O’Connell, Program Co-Vice Presidents

September 22, 2019, we had our meet and greet at Danielle's home in Cameron Station.

October 20th we hosted a panel discussion with Councilwoman Del Pepper, Councilwoman Amy Jackson and Vice Mayor Elizabeth Bennett.

December 8th was our holiday lunch at Belle Haven Country Club.

January 26, 2020, Elizabeth Hendrix and Diane Schrier presented a panel discussion on Human Trafficking.

February 23rd, Eugenia Burkes and Cathy Cassleman moderated a program on Death With Dignity.

On March 28th we were scheduled to take a tour of The Belmont Paul Women's Equality National Monument, which had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PUBLIC POLICY

Dr. M. Elizabeth Hendrix and Ms. Diane Schrier, Co-chairs, Public Policy

Lighting a Fire: Better Legislation and More Advocacy

Your Public Policy Co-Chairs, Diane and Elizabeth, worked hard all year. They kept a flame burning and **ignited the *public policy passion*** for others as well. They expanded the Human Trafficking Intervention Team from four members to ten members. Moreover, they recruited numerous AAUW branches throughout Virginia to support the AAUW Angel App and Angel Alerts. In the summer, they spoke at the AAUW of Virginia Summer Leadership Conference. In the fall they spoke at the AAUW of Virginia Northern District Meeting to garner support for the AAUW Angel App and Angel Alerts. They increased the branch team members during this time as well. Diane, Elizabeth, and the team submitted a grant proposal for the national AAUW Community Action grant in the fall for the AAUW Angel App and online human trafficking awareness conference too. Furthermore, they wrote newsletter articles for the branch and state newsletters.

In the fall and in January 2020, Diane lobbied in Richmond, Virginia for the group and kept the branch updated on pertinent legislation. Diane and Elizabeth presented a two-hour human trafficking awareness session during Human Trafficking Awareness Month in January 2020 along with Dr. Gail Kalin. Ms. Lalitha Mani and Dr. Dev Mani, AAUW of Alexandria Human Trafficking Intervention Team Members, also lead a lobbying table at the successful event, which was well attended. Diane spoke at the AAUW of Springfield branch in February about the branch's human trafficking intervention efforts and human trafficking educational awareness too. Ms. Sylvia Linke, AAUW of Alexandria Board Member, tracked the human trafficking legislation that Elizabeth discussed at the January event throughout the Virginia legislative session and kept the branch updated on the bills' progress. Sylvia wrote two newsletter articles about the legislation for branch members as well. In March, the branch discovered they earned a star for their public policy work from the national AAUW group.

In April 2020, Diane received the news that they were selected as an alternate for the competitive AAUW Community Action Grant. Then, Elizabeth recruited two, local app developers and coders, Dr. Ray Dos Santos and Ms. Sudha Sunder, to create the app with in-kind donations, so the AAUW Angel App could still be developed. They met in April and developed the initial prototype. She and Diane created a new budget and timeline for the AAUW Angel App for 2020-2021 as well. They plan to fundraise for the needed funds, which are minimal now. Please continue to support their efforts. *"We are all in this together!"* **Light a fire for others! You will make a difference by supporting the new AAUW Angel App and lobbying your elected officials for better policies.**

TREASURER REPORT

Anne Simpson

We have approximately \$21,500 in the bank, similar to last year at this time.

We are in the black for branch expenses by approximately \$600, a little more than last year.

Most people told us to keep the money for their LTA tickets, so we ended up with a net of approximately \$1,800 that we will be giving to the National Educational Fund.

We collected approximately \$1,800 for Autumn Leaves as well. \$1,110 went to the National Greatest Needs fund, and the rest we are keeping for a local project, Human Trafficking.

Christ House has been pretty stable in the past. Income from spa cards and donations has come close to outgo for pizza. However, now we need to provide a sandwich meal from a restaurant, which costs a lot more, \$500. We can keep this up for a year and a half or so.

WOMEN BUILDING CROSS-CULTURAL FRIENDSHIPS, WBCCF

Bonnie Hershberg

On January 13, 2020, "Women Building Cross-Cultural Friendships (WBCCF)" celebrated the arrival of our Diversity Book Group, which grew out of the three successful public events sponsored by AAUW Alexandria during 2019. Drawing from Branch members, attendees from one or more of these earlier gatherings, as well as others who heard about the initiative, 13

participants attended the first meeting. We have been fortunate to partner with Ellen Coolidge Burke Library, which has helped us publicize the new group and provided a meeting space on the first Monday of the month until the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to meet virtually on “Zoom,” starting in April.

The goals of the Diversity Book Group spring also from those of our multi-phase initiative, WBCCF. We have sought to learn about others whose backgrounds and cultures—whether US or foreign born—are different from our own through carefully curated reading and by building friendships within the group. Ultimately, through this knowledge and personal relationships we hope to help amplify the voices of all women in our community.

The group worked enthusiastically together at the first meeting to develop a list of 12 books that highlight the group’s interests in themes related to diversity and inclusion. Most are written by women of color and include several different genres. Each month a member of our group has volunteered to facilitate the discussion with as little or much structure as she chooses. While we all wish that the group included more racial, religious, ethnic, and age diversity, we have tried to explore the differences that already exists within the group. We are hoping that when the Library advertises each month’s selection, additional women will participate. We have over 30 members who want to remain on our email address list and have been averaging about 10 at each meeting, whether in person or virtually.

Looking back to our previous two public events, one in September and one in December 2019, 23 women came in the fall to a lovely outdoor venue to celebrate a variety of different cultures through their cuisines. We were treated to an array of delicious and interesting food, reflecting many foreign and American regional cultures and traditions. After introducing ourselves, each participant described the food she brought and, most important, its meaning for her.

We then engaged as small groups to discuss how we could further interest women in our area from different cultural backgrounds to come together to build new friendships. The groups were also asked to discuss what we could do to get to know one another better during our next gathering. A variety of ideas were tabled, which led to our third event in December.

At that gathering at Beatley Central Library, 26 women joined us to continue building friendships across cultures. It was a diverse group that readily shared their experiences of winter celebrations, our theme, including from Ethiopia, Nigeria, Japan, and Puerto Rico. Twelve of the participants were new to the group but, through the good will of past participants, reported that they felt most welcome. One person joined our Branch that evening and several expressed interest by taking home membership forms.

We’re especially grateful to several participants, who shared their heartfelt stories of their recollections of our first two events. After these introductions, everyone joined in a lively game of “Diversity Bingo,” an ice-breaker suggested by another AAUW Branch. After small groups discussed the meaning of their winter celebrations—be they personal, traditional, familial, ethnic, religious or none at all, we continued the conversation about what’s next.

Out of these conversations and previous ones, the idea for a Diversity Book Group emerged. We recognized that we would need a smaller group of women getting to know each other over a period of time before we could create a meaningful project together that would help us amplify the voices of all women in our diverse city. As we reflect on the evolution of “Strangers No More—Women Building Cross-Cultural Friendships,” we have been inspired by what we have learned not only about other cultures but also about each other in the process. The good news is that it is just the beginning!



“Think where man’s glory most begins and ends, and say my glory was I had such friends.” W.B. YEATS

