



EMPOWERING WOMEN SINCE 1881

THE ALEXANDRIA SCHOONER

September 2020

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Save these dates:

9/10, 7p, Great Decisions,
(Zoom) Lynn O'Connell
9/13, 2p, Branch Meet &
Greet (Zoom), Virginia Kress
& Patty Steelman
9/15, Francophile Book
discussion (Zoom), Susan
Cash
9/20, 7p, WBCCF: Diversity
Book Group, (Zoom) Bonnie
Hershberg,
9/22, 7p: Mystery book
group, Susan Werner

Dear AAUW Friends,

It was good to see so many smiling faces on our Lunch & Learn virtual meetings this summer. On July 22, 2020 we were briefed by Dr. Cynthia Pascal, Interim Associate Vice President & Interim Title IX coordinator, Northern VA Community College, on upcoming changes to Title IX. We had 17 total attendees, 13 were from our branch. On August 6, Brian Cannon from OneVirginia/Fair Maps VA, spoke on redistricting reform. This will be the first amendment listed on your November ballot. Out of a total of 39 attendees, ten were from our branch. On August 12, [Jacqueline Tucker](#), Race and Social Equity Officer for the City of Alexandria, spoke. Of the 22 attendees, eight were from our branch. She spoke about the importance of being actively antiracist.

We also kept our "date nights" going. We viewed three programs on our own and then discussed them on Zoom: *Just Mercy*, *The Vote* and *Radioactive*. Of course, we'd much rather see you, but we can wait until it's safe.

We're looking for a Cultural Chair and a Bylaws Chair. If you can help out, or want to know more, please email or telephone us. (gaillaneaauwalex@gmail.com, 703.307.2431).

See you at the Meet and Greet. Details in this newsletter!

Stay well!

Lane and Gail

In Memoriam

The board wishes to express our sympathy to the Mt. Vernon Branch at the death of past co-president, Shirley Richey. Many of us got to know her as we worked together on the LTA fundraiser. She passed away on July 28, following complications from heart surgery. She had moved to Ashby Ponds a few years ago. She was kind and warm and we will miss her smile.



**AAUW Alexandria Branch
SEPTEMBER MEET AND GREET
We can't meet in person this year
So join us for our Meet & Greet ZOOM Call
*Sunday, September 13, 2020 At 2 PM***

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81251153244?pwd=d28xT2liSkZmSC9VaU1CVzVFVUg5UT09>

Meeting ID: 812 5115 3244

Passcode: 949622

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Questions: vmvkress@gmail.com

PUBLIC POLICY

DIANE SCHRIER & SYLVIA LINKE

Virginia AAUW Statement on voting:

AAUW's 2020 Gender Policy Agenda describes expanding and protecting the right to vote as a *foundational right*. This year we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of Women's Suffrage. **And we know that when women vote, they change the conversation.**

In Virginia this year, the General Assembly passed several pieces of legislation that expanded Virginia voters' access to the ballot, including providing for no-excuse absentee voting by mail or in person, elimination of the requirement for a picture ID at the polls, and implementing automatic voter registration for individuals accessing service at a DMV office or website. It already is clear that voters are choosing to vote absentee in very large numbers due to concerns about the Covid virus so these changes are very timely. At the same time, the challenges facing the U.S. Postal Service are raising serious concerns about the reliability of voting by mail. The best advice for those who want to vote absentee by mail is to apply for your absentee ballot NOW! Ballots will be mailed out in mid-September. Complete your ballot as soon as you can and mail it back. OR, you can drop off your completed ballot at your local registrar.

You will need to check with your own locality for information about drop-off points for absentee ballots, if you choose not to mail it back, and satellite sites for in-person absentee voting.

By clicking the following link, <https://aauw-va.aauw.net/files/2020/08/2020-election-important-dates-002.pdf>, you'll be able to access the key dates information on the AAUW of Virginia website, along with live links to the Virginia Department of Elections website.

Additional Information on Voting:

Virginia election laws have been simplified this year and voting is more accessible to everyone. Election day, November 3, is a state holiday. Polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. Any qualified voter may now vote in person or by an absentee ballot up to 45 days before the election. Make sure that you bring a form of id showing your name and address. Registration or change of address must be completed by October 13th. Go to <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov> to register. It is very important to ask for your ballot as soon as possible. Ballots are supposed to begin to be mailed out starting on September 18. They may take as long as 2 weeks to arrive. The last two Saturdays before the election must have early voting availability. As long as the ballot is postmarked showing that it was mailed by Election Day, it has until noon on the third day after Election Day to arrive at the General Registrar's office. Absentee ballots must be requested by 5:00 p.m. on October 23rd. October 31st is the last day to vote Absentee in Person. Emergency ballots, due to illness, hospitalization, family death, or travel can be requested in person or by a designated representative up until 2:00 pm on the day before Election Day.

However, due to reorganization of the Post Office, it is highly recommended that all ballots be mailed at least 14 days ahead of time. If you know whom you are voting for, then mail it in immediately. If the ballot arrives too late for that, bring the ballot to the specified absentee vote in person sites.

After you have submitted your ballot, contact the Supervisor of Elections to make sure your ballot is accepted. Wait at least 3 days before doing so. Go to: vote.elections.va.gov and apply to vote absentee by mail. Fill out the form and then click on voting history and find ballot. If it is not accepted or located, then you must arrange to vote again. If you have questions, call Fairfax County Office of Elections at 703-222-0776 (TTY 711) or the Alexandria Office of Registration and Elections at 703-746-4050.

VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Virginia Legislature met in a special session to discuss changes to the budget due to the economic impact of the coronavirus. The budget experienced a \$237 million revenue shortfall in June due to the pandemic and expect a \$2 billion shortfall over the next 2 years. The suggestions are \$88 million for eviction prevention and affordable housing, \$85 million for increased broadband coverage to rural areas, freezing of all raises for teachers and state workers, not investing more in behavioral health and not decreasing college tuition. There will be no spending cuts or workers laid off. Criminal justice reform and releasing prisoners because of Covid is also on the agenda.

Please read! We would like your input at the Meet & Greet, when we discuss our response.

NATIONAL STATEMENT ABOUT DUES

The AAUW Board of Directors will consider and vote on a change in Individual Member dues at their upcoming Board meeting on October 16, 2020. Any increase would take effect on July 1, 2021. The Board will consider two different options:

A. An increase to take effect on July 1, 2021, of an amount between \$3 and \$10.

B. An increase to take effect on the 1st of July of each of the next three fiscal years of between \$3 and \$10 each year.

The selection of option A or B and the exact amount of the increase for the option chosen will be determined by the board at its October meeting. Any change to Individual Member dues will impact paid Life Membership as well, since AAUW's bylaws require paid Life Membership to equal 20 years of annual dues. The Board is not considering a change to College/University Member dues at this time.

Membership dues cover between 15% and 20% of AAUW's annual budget. While AAUW's expenses increase annually, in recent years dues have not increased with enough regularity to keep pace with expenses. Increasing Individual Member dues will help AAUW cover more expenses, including important functions like the Connect team, critical technology and infrastructure such as the website and Member Services Database, and other member support. Please send any comments regarding this dues increase to connect@aauw.org no later than Friday, September 25, 2020. All comments will be reviewed by AAUW staff and the Board of Directors prior to the Board's vote. Thank you. Julia Brown, AAUW Board Chair.

Important Dates for the November 3, 2020 Election



Ongoing (See deadline below)	Register to vote
Ongoing	Check and, if necessary, update registration information
Ongoing (see deadline below)	Apply to vote absentee by mail
September 18	Requested absentee ballots begin to be mailed from registrar
September 18	Early in-person voting begins
ASAP (see deadlines below)	Mail or hand deliver completed absentee ballot to registrar
October 13, 5 p.m.	Deadline to register to vote or update registration (in person or receipt by mail)
October 13, 11:59 p.m.	Deadline to register to vote or update registration (online)
October 23, 5 p.m.	Deadline to apply to vote absentee by mail
October 31, 5 p.m.	Deadline for early in-person voting at your local registrar
November 3	Deadline for postmark on absentee ballot submitted by mail
November 3, 6 a.m. - 7 p.m.	Election Day Voting at assigned polling places
November 3, 7 p.m.	Deadline for receipt of absentee ballot delivered in person
November 6, 12 p.m.	Deadline for receipt of absentee ballot mailed to registrar

IMPORTANT BRANCH NOTES

Christ House

We will host a Christ House Supper on Wednesday, September 30th. We are still in delivery mode with either the bag suppers or pizza, etc. and bottled water. We welcome donations to cover the cost of the food and delivery. Donations can be sent to Anne Simpson, Treasurer, with notation that the donation is for the Christ House initiative. There are also still spa gift cards available. The money from the sale of the gift cards supports the Christ House initiative.



Autumn Leaves Fundraiser 2020

Susan Cash

The Alexandria Branch of AAUW was founded May 12, 1945, making 2020 our 75th anniversary year. The Branch board has decided that the 75th Anniversary will be the theme for this year's Autumn Leaves fundraising drive. We would like to suggest making donations in that spirit: \$7.50, \$15 (\$7.50 for the first 75 years/\$7.50 for the next 75 years), \$75 and so on. Of course, feel free to contribute any amount of your liking. In May, the Branch board voted that 100% of 2020 Autumn Leaves receipts will be reserved for the Alexandria Branch for the 2020-2021 year. (Therefore, these contributions will not be tax deductible.) Please send your checks, made payable to Alexandria Branch AAUW (with Autumn Leaves on the memo line) to Susan Cash, 8402 West Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308. Everyone who makes a donation received by December 4, 2020 will be eligible for entry into a drawing.

Membership Reminder

Margaret Batko and Monique Miles

Friendly Reminder: Thank you for everyone who has renewed their membership for July 2020 - June 2021. If you haven't yet renewed, we hope that you will renew. Each and every one of you is a valuable member of the Branch. Please contact Monique Miles or Margaret Werts Batko for information on renewal.



SPITFIRE CLUB SEEKS “CREATIVITY” DONATIONS by Sylvia Linke

Would you like to do something to help Spitfire Club prepare for its fall session, but you do not have time lead a class? Here is something quick and easy that you can do - donate supplies for its upcoming “creativity unit” which is scheduled for this fall. The Spitfire Club is seeking an odd assortment of:

- rubber bands
- paper clips
- toilet paper rolls and paper towel rolls
- broken toys – especially wheel-like things
- school glue – no glue sticks
- rulers
- coffee cans and similarly shaped cans
- ribbon
- tempera paint and/or watercolor paint
- paint brushes
- paper plates
- scrap fabric
- string, yarn, and wire
- duct tape and painter’s tape
- sidewalk or school chalk
- sequins, glitter, and other shiny things

You can minimize effort by donating things that are laying around the house.

Spitfire Club is going to equip its girls with a creator’s box. No two boxes will be the same, so an odd assortment of “found” things is ideal.

Spitfire Club is also seeking artist or creatives who might want to advise on projects and instruction.

Spitfires “creativity” unit will launch on September 28, so Spitfire Club personnel would like to have donations reach them by mid-September.

If you would like to donate something or advise on projects you may contact Sylvia Linke at SFLaauw@gmail.com or by phone at 571.329.5953 to make arrangements for delivering your donation or advising on a project.

Virginia's Redistricting Commission Amendment Fact Sheet

Uncovering the facts about government policies has always been difficult. In this day and age, the ease and pace with which information can be produced, shared and manipulated can make it especially difficult to discern what's real. Opponents of Virginia's Redistricting Commission Amendment often spread misleading information, whether intentionally or on accident, obscuring the purpose and impact of [this historic redistricting reform](#). Here's a quick fact sheet on Virginia's Redistricting Commission Amendment on the ballot this November.

FACT: Both parties are responsible for Virginia's gerrymandered maps.

It's no secret that Republican gerrymandering has been an enormous problem across the country for the past decade, and that Virginia's final district lines benefited the GOP disproportionately. But it is also true that both parties are guilty of protecting their own incumbencies in 2011.

In fact, Democrats supported gerrymandered maps throughout every step of the 2011 process -- from [passing the first versions 86-8 in the House and 22-18 in the Senate](#), to [giving overwhelming bipartisan support in both legislative chambers to the final maps](#) after Governor Bob McDonnell's initial veto. This bipartisan support includes the districts that were ultimately ruled to be illegally gerrymandered on the basis of race.

FACTS: This is a bipartisan amendment that doesn't favor either political party.

This is a **bipartisan amendment** [patroned by legislators across the aisle](#) seeking a compromise with enough support to meaningfully reform redistricting in 2021. Accordingly, the amendment secured strong bipartisan support in both 2019 and 2020. The final version of the amendment closely resembles [the bill originally introduced](#) by Democratic Senators George Barker and Dick Saslaw, and was informed by their combined 62 years of experience in Virginia politics (during which many egregious gerrymanders have been achieved by both parties). The attempts to mislead voters into thinking this is a "Republican" or "Democrat" sleight of hand are hallmarks of an extremely polarized political landscape perpetuated by gerrymandering. This is not a "left" versus "right" issue, this is about right versus wrong. The reason why so many people, regardless of party, support the amendment is because **a Vote Yes is a vote for people, not parties or politicians.**

FACT: This amendment is very popular among Virginia voters and politicians.

Two recent surveys by Christopher Newport University's Wason Center for Public Policy showed that [78% of Virginia voters supported the formation of a redistricting commission](#), with [70% specifically supporting the amendment proposal being considered by the 2020 legislature](#). In the General Assembly the bill passed with bipartisan support two consecutive years.

FACT: The constitution is the only way to bind the legislature to give up their map drawing power.

The constitution grants the General Assembly ultimate map-drawing power, so anything short of an amendment (which takes two years to pass) is simply the status quo. Legislators have [proposed legislation](#) to remedy gerrymandering but **any commission created through statutory legislation alone can only advise the General Assembly. We tried an advisory commission in 2011 and it did not work.** A citizen-led redistricting commission is the way. If Virginia's Redistricting Amendment passed this November it would be the first time citizens would hold the map-drawing power.

FACT: There is no demonstrated support and no time to pass a completely independent commission within today's General Assembly in 2021.

In 2020, no independent redistricting commission proposals made it out of committee - even ones that would've not started until 2031. While pushing for a new amendment to create a fully independent commission in time for 2031 redistricting is a laudable goal that we share, the current lack of support for an independent commission is why it is the only option to change the status quo. Other proposed alternatives, including those by [Price](#) and [Levine](#), have failed in committee. Instead of voting no and rolling the dice with an advisory commission, this November, Virginians can Vote Yes for an amendment that's been [endorsed by redistricting experts and advocates across the country](#).

FACT: The amendment offers historic constitutional protections for communities of color.

Virginia's Redistricting Commission Amendment adds new [civil rights protections](#) into the state constitution. In addition to the inclusion of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, the amendment clearly dictates that, "Districts shall provide, where practicable, opportunities for racial and ethnic communities to elect candidates of their choice." These additions will be the first time the Virginia Constitution has explicit protections for communities of color, which is why Senate Pro Tempore Louise Lucas, Senate Democratic Caucus Chair Mamie Locke, Senator Jennifer McClellan and Senator Lionell Spruill of the **Senate Legislative Black Caucus all fought for this reform.** [Justin Levitt of Obama's U.S Department's Civil Rights Division](#) agrees that the structural protections that incentivise diversity coupled with the inclusion of the Voting Rights Act safeguard communities of color.

FACTS: If the commission cannot agree, the Supreme Court of Virginia serves as the redistricting backstop.

The Supreme Court of Virginia serves as the redistricting backstop if the commission cannot agree because the alternative is returning power to the General Assembly, which is no different than the gerrymandering status quo. State Supreme Courts are a standard fallback in redistricting reforms because they are the natural adjudicator of such disputes as the states' highest court. Other states are already using their state supreme as a backstop. Additionally, many of the loudest proponents of the idea that SCOVA is a partisan body copatroned other amendments that would have used SCOVA as a backstop.

FACTS: The Supreme Court of Virginia is a trustworthy body that doesn't favor Republicans.

Claims that having the Supreme Court of Virginia as a redistricting backstop will benefit Republicans (due to the court's conservative leaning justices) are unsubstantiated, ignoring the court's historical lack of partisanship, as well as the [national history of courts drawing fair maps](#). Additionally, all currently sitting justices were appointed unanimously in both houses, save one. If Democratic legislators truly thought they were the partisan hacks they now make them out to be, why would they have voted in favor of appointing them?

SCOVA has repeatedly proven to be a nonpartisan body through their rulings, including [denying a lawsuit](#) made by Republic lawmakers challenging the governor's "stay at home" order, [upholding](#) Governor Northam's emergency no-weapons ban at a gun-rights rally in Richmond, extending an eviction moratorium for all of Virginia at [Governor Northam's request](#). [Greg Lucyk](#), former Chief Staff Attorney of SCOVA, also points out that these justices have risen to the top of their field through years of experience and through trusted, fair rulings. If the Justice feels that they may not be able to be impartial, they are required by their oath to [recuse themselves from the case](#).

FACT: The Supreme Court of Virginia is bound by existing legislation regarding the drawing of districts.

The constitutional amendment explicitly states that, "every electoral district shall be drawn in accordance with the requirements of federal and state laws that address racial and ethnic fairness," meaning SCOVA is required to draw districts in accordance with anti-racial gerrymandering provisions in the amendment as well as criteria legislation ([SB717/HB1255](#)). [Article VI of Virginia's Constitution](#) gives the General Assembly wide latitude to regulate the court, specifically in Sections One, Four, Five, and Eight. Justices must follow the [Code of Virginia](#), even if the General Assembly changes it. Additionally, the justices do not have the technical expertise to draw the maps themselves. Instead, they would hire a "Special Master" with significant relevant experience who would similarly be beholden to the law. Any state court observer will tell you that the main bias our Supreme Court of Virginia has is institutional bias towards [deference to the legislature](#).

In summary, the proposed constitutional amendment is a bipartisan measure that represents the maximum amount of reform achievable in time for this decade's redistricting. Have more questions? Feel free to reach out to daela.tipton@fairmapsva.org



TUTORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR THIS FALL WITH THE ALEXANDRIA TUTORING CONSORTIUM

Sylvia Linke

The Alexandria Tutoring Consortium (ATC)) is currently recruiting volunteers to tutor basic reading skills to kindergarten and first grade public school students who are struggling in reading. ATC's goal is to ensure that all its students are able to read at or above grade level by the end of first grade.

Alexandria Tutoring Consortium's flagship program, Book Buddies, is a structured, peer reviewed tutoring program developed at the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. Tutors receive training in the Book Buddies program before they start tutoring and receive periodic refresher training throughout the school year. ATC staff provide tutors with detailed lesson plans plus books and materials that are tailored to the individual student's reading level. Alexandria Tutoring Consortium also offers a Kindergarten Reading Readiness Program, designed to help children who start school without sufficient pre-literacy skills. Volunteers work one on one with kindergarteners to teach the alphabet by using pictures and sounds associated with letters and by tracing letters and playing word games.

In both programs, Reading Readiness and Book Buddies, ATC commits to tutoring each child for two sessions each week. Each session lasts 30-45 minutes, depending on the school, with the goal of tutoring each child a minimum of 20 hours by the end of the school year. Most volunteers tutor twice a week, but some tutor once a week, partnering with a colleague who tutors the second session.

In recruiting tutors and raising funds, the Alexandria Tutoring Consortium partners with the Alexandria City Public Schools, Alexandria's faith community, local businesses and community organizations. AAUW Alexandria is one of the community organizations which supports the Alexandria Tutoring Consortium. AAUW Alexandria is currently a source of volunteer tutors but may support ATC in other ways in the future.

If you are interested in tutoring, you may complete the ATC registration form at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1v8UYyP9xHyp6eMdChZb3mJxWjjk3taBZ_S4CW9c62cg/vie wform?edit_requested=true. Prospective tutors must also complete an ACPS Volunteer Application, which initiates a background check. The ACPS Volunteer Application may be found at <https://www.acps.k12.va.us/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&ModuleInstanceID=5414&ViewID=ed695a1c-ef13-4546-b4eb-4fefcdd4f389&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=6389&PageID=2455&Comments=true>.

ATC is currently recruiting volunteers for the 2020-2021 school year. Once volunteers are trained and assigned to a school, they begin tutoring in late October and conclude tutoring in late May. ATC's tutors keep step with the school calendar on holidays, vacations, and school closings (such as for snow days).

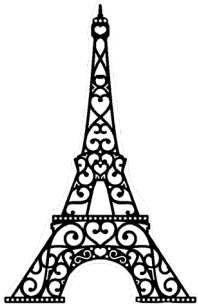
If you are interested in tutoring please let Sylvia Linke know. You may contact her via phone at (571) 329-5953 or via e-mail at SFLaauw@gmail.com. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask her for information.

BRANCH ACTIVITIES



MYSTERY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP **Susan Werner**

The Mystery Book Discussion Group will meet at 7 PM on September 22nd, 2020. The mystery will be Broken Places by Tracy Clark. The members of the Group decide on a month-by-month basis whether we will meet in person or via Zoom so the decision as to September will be made at the Aug 25th Zoom meeting. While not all members are able to use Zoom, this seems to work fairly well during this COVID-19 crisis. Safe is better. If you are not a regular member of the Group and want an email reminder, contact Susan Werner at susan.werner1@verizon.net. If you have questions about the Mystery Group, contact Susan. Mystery novel suggestions are always welcome. Looking forward to someday meeting again in person.



FRANCOPHILE GROUP DISCUSSION of *The Plague* by Albert Camus **Susan Cash**

Tuesday, Sept. 15, 2020 at 7:45 p.m. on Zoom.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought renewed attention to the famous novel *The Plague* (*La Peste*) by French-Algerian author Albert Camus. Published shortly after World War II, this book

can be read on many levels. A number of recent articles have discussed its relevance to today. Here is a link one of them: https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/in-camus-the-plague-lessons-about-fear-quarantine-and-the-human-spirit/2020/04/02/8bd6b914-72cb-11ea-85cb-8670579b863d_story.html

Please join us on the Alexandria Branch's Zoom account for a timely and interesting discussion. POC: Susan Cash, scash5558@gmail.com to get the log in information.



GREAT DECISIONS FALL 2020

Lynn O'Connell

Our Great Decisions group will continue meeting on the second Thursday of each month to discuss the monthly topic. Below is the schedule:

September 10: Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking - Diane Schrier & Danielle Beach
October 8: Climate Change and the Global Order – with guests Margaret Byess and Paula Clements with The Climate Reality Project
November 12: The Philippines and the U.S. – Lynn O'Connell
December 10: Artificial Intelligence and Data – Sylvia Linke

We welcome newcomers - AAUW or not, men also welcome. Please let Lynn O'Connell know if you would like to be added to the distribution list - lynnoconnellva@gmail.com.

For the 2021 year, we will know the nine topics in September, and Lynn will begin taking 2021 book orders then.



DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB

Bonnie Hershberg

Since the killing of George Floyd by police early this summer and the groundswell of support for racial justice, the Diversity Book Group has become increasingly popular and diverse. Having moved the meeting to Zoom in April, thanks to the continuing sponsorship of the Alexandria Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, we are able to successfully host a group of 20 women. We continue also to maintain a mailing list of over two dozen women. The group now has a wide age range represented—from those in their 20's to those in their 70's. Participants include several women of color and, although all attendees are US born, they represent a variety of cultures. The group is also diverse in terms of the different lifestyles represented, including stay-at-home mothers, retirees,

mothers raising teens and working outside the home, single career women, and a graduate student. At our August meeting, we also had two infants—future readers no doubt.

The books the group selected in January have been well received, although the diversity in our differing reactions has also been welcome. In June, we read a debut novel by Etaf Rum, [A Woman Is No Man](#), which was based in part on the author's own story. We gained some insight into the life of one immigrant Palestinian family, focused on three generations of women as they sought to navigate life in a new country and culture, dramatically different from the ones they left behind.

In July we read [Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity](#) by award winning journalist, Katherine Boo. Because of the author's commitment to study a subculture intensely over several years, many readers remarked on her ability to transport the reader to the scene of this impoverished community. We also had a lively discussion about literary "cultural appropriation," which has been much in the news over the last year or so.

The novel for August, [Kindred](#) by Octavia E. Butler, was especially popular. Written in 1979 by an award winning African American woman, Ms. Butler is a unique contributor to the fantasy/time travel genre that borders on science fiction. While several participants noted that they would never have selected this book because this genre would not have interested them, they found it riveting—to their surprise—despite the disturbing content. [Kindred](#) is the story of a young African American woman who, in 1976, time travels to an ante-bellum plantation in Maryland. There she develops a number of important relationships that carry her into her future. The narrative of enslaved people on the plantation is rich in detail and character development. I, for one, haven't been able to stop thinking about this small jewel since I read it.

For September, we look forward to discussing [The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane](#) by Lisa See. This will be the first book focusing on Chinese culture that we've read together this year.

This will round out our summer meetings, which have provided "womanship," learning, and some vicarious travel. If you'd like to participate, please email Bonnie Hershberg at hersh3b@gmail.com. Everyone who has expressed an interest will receive an email notice about 7-10 days before the event. We will then accept participants on a first-come-first served basis. We are still hoping to build a committed group that is with us for the long haul. Our goals remain to build friendships across cultures, to expose ourselves to a wide variety of experiences through reading, and at some time in the future to work together to help amplify the voices of all women in our community.

KUDOS AND KVELLS

New Grandchild:



Diane Schrier's granddaughter was born on Feb. 24th. Abigail and her mother are doing well and at home.

Athletic Endeavors:

Lane Stone and Margaret Werts Batko participated in the virtual Ramblin' Rose Sprint Triathlon (swim 250 meters, bike 9 miles, run 2 miles). Margaret came in 32nd in a time of 1:25 and Lane came in 40th in a time of 1:32, of 56 finishers.

INVITATIONS

Invitation to Become a Social Host

Patty Steelman

The Social Host program for 24 international students on State Department scholarships has a new schedule for this year. Instead of arriving in July, their arrival has been postponed until January 2021. Their NOVA fall semester classes will be via virtual programming. The host/student pairs will be announced in the late fall allowing for pre-arrival communication.

It has been a pleasure for me and my husband to introduce international students to American family life, traditions, and culture. (Hopefully there will be parades again in our future.) There are foods they have heard of, or read about, but never tasted--peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cheesecake, Popeye's fried chicken. It's fun to see their reactions to new experiences. Please make room in your life for a new young friend--the commitment is for getting together once a month--probably January through May.

To apply to become a social host, please contact one of the program coordinators: Sarah Yirenkyi, syirenkyi@nvcc.edu

2020-2021 Branch Officers:

Co-presidents: Lane Stone (info@LaneStoneBooks.com) & Dr. Gail Kalin (gailkalin@yahoo.com)

Co-VP's Membership: Margaret Batko (margaretwb@verizon.net) & Monique Miles (moniquemiles08@gmail.com)

Co-VP's Program: Virginia Kress (vmvkress@gmail.com) & Patty Steelman (pattysteelman@gmail.com)

Co-Chairs, Public Policy: Diane Schrier (diane.schrier@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Anne Simpson (aseyedoc@gmail.com)

Secretary: Susan Werner (susan.werner1@verizon.net)

AAUW Funds: Susan Cash (scash5002@email.vccs.edu)

Special Interest Group Leaders:

Campus Outreach: Lane Stone (info@LaneStoneBooks.com) & Danielle Beach (danielleaauw@gmail.com)

Christ House Dinners: Margaret Zebrowski (Mmzebrow@aol.com) & Jan Jaynes (janjjoek@verizon.net)

Diversity Book Group: Bonnie Hershberg (hersh3b@gmail.com)

Great Decisions: Lynn O'Connell (lynnnoconnellva@gmail.com)

Mystery Book Group: Susan Werner (susan.werner1@verizon.net)

AAUW Board of Directors and Committee Chairs 2020-2021 7/10/20

Co-Presidents

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