

# THE ALEXANDRIA SCHOONER

## DECEMBER 2020

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### Save these dates:

**12/5**, Branch Holiday Party (Zoom), 2 p, Virginia Kress  
**12/14**, 7p, WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, (Zoom) Bonnie Hershberg,  
**12/10**, 7p, Great Decisions, (Zoom) Lynn O'Connell  
hersh3b@gmail.com.  
**12/22**, 7p: Mystery book group, Susan Werner,  
susan.werner1@verizon.net

*Dear Friends,*

*Our first bit of news for you is that AAUW-VA was the first state branch to earn four stars! So proud! Here's what AAUW national said, "At the state level, AAUW-VA is leading the pack! Huge kudos to them on hitting the 4-star mark! We look forward to seeing them cross the Five-Star finish line."*

*And more news. A few months ago we told you that National had requested input on a dues increase. At its October 16, 2020, meeting, the AAUW Board of Directors voted to increase Individual Member dues for the next three years. The dues will rise by \$3 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, \$5 for FY 2023 and \$5 for FY 2024, making the total dues amount for those years \$62, \$67 and \$72, respectively.*

*Now a request. Please put on your thinking caps. At our Annual meeting (May or June) we will ask for your input on a strategic plan for the future of our branch. All ideas, opinions, inspiration will be welcome.*

*You all mean a lot to us and we hope you stayed safe on Thanksgiving!*

*Stay well!  
Lane and Gail*

## Sad News

Carol Dabbs of the Arlington branch learned that Denise Decker died quite suddenly in November of metastatic cancer. Denise had many AAUW friends with warm memories of her. Many of you will know her as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion point of contact for Arlington branch.

As many of you know, she was a remarkable woman who did not let her blindness stop her living a full life of great outreach. She was a champion for women and persons with disabilities and will be sorely missed. You can go to our [AAUW VA home page](#) and click on the link to her recent PBS interview.

Many of you also remember her guide dog, Wonder, who died a few months ago. Due to the pandemic Denise was not able to receive another guide dog.

Please keep Denise's family in your thoughts and prayers.

Cyndi Shanahan  
AAUW VA DE&I Chair

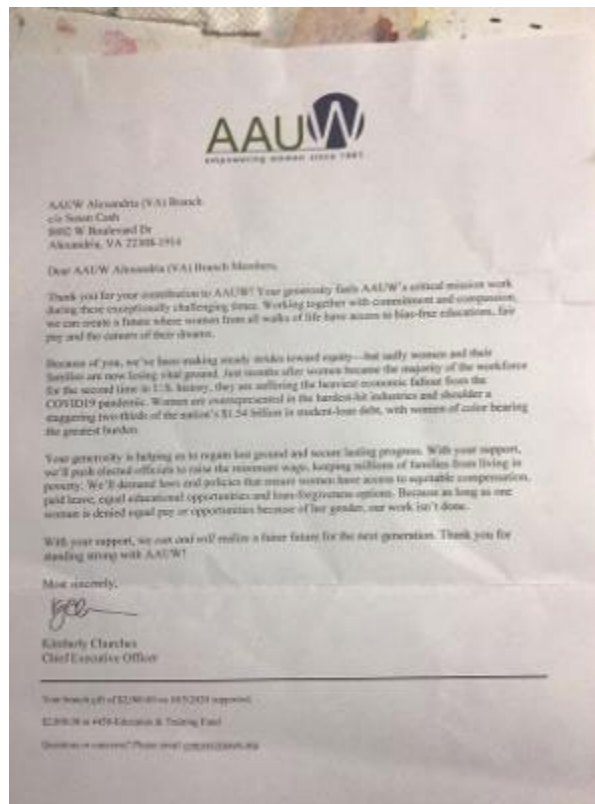
## A Message from the Newsletter Editor

As we move to the end of 2020, a traumatic year in so many ways, may we look forward to an improved 2021. To that end I share one of my favorite holiday cards from a saner year:



## Messages from National

### Thank You from National for Our \$2,000 Contribution to the Education & Training Fund



### Too Many Emails To Deal With from National?

National provides a solution. For your reference, clicking the unsubscribe link in the footer any type of email from AAUW National (newsletter, program, fundraising, etc) will unsubscribe you from **all emails** through our system due to anti-spam laws. For your protection, our system won't allow us to contact you again until you change your email preferences. Members can change email preferences themselves via this online form: <https://aauw.us/emailoptions>

## Message from AAUW-VA

### Now is the Time to Give

Many, many of us make personal donations to AAUW Funds, but this year it is even more important. With branches having to cancel their traditional fundraisers, AAUW is more dependent than ever on individual contributions. This year, for example, contributions from Virginia branches and members are \$39,583.04 through October 31, which is a long way from the 2019 total of \$86,455.81.

Consider all the programs and activities that are supported by our contributions that affect women and girls: NCCWSL (Nat'l Conference for College Women Student Leaders), WorkSmart/StartSmart (salary and benefits awareness and training for women entering or in the workforce), economic security actions aimed at women's lifelong security, involvement and collaboration with like-minded organizations, Title IX support, action directed at girls' and women's equal educational opportunities—the list goes on and on. Our contributions enable all of that to happen.

So please contribute generously this year—and be sure to indicate your branch so it gets credit. Checks should be made out to AAUW Funds (and preferably to AAUW Greatest Needs Fund). To meet the December 31 receipt deadline, it's best to mail it by Dec. 17. Or use your credit card by going to [aauw.org](http://aauw.org) any time up to December 31. Your contribution is 100% tax deductible—and just think how it is helping women and girls.

Thanks so much,  
Caroline Pickens, State AAUW Funds Chair



**AAUW Alexandria Branch**  
**Virtual Holiday Party**

**ZOOM MEETING**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87982569435?pwd=aytZbktobFdrNldjbkFWelROTE0zZz09>

**Saturday, December 5, 2020**  
**2 PM TO 4 PM**

**VIRTUAL COOKIE SWAP**  
**HOLIDAY TRADITIONS**

**Join us with your favorite Holiday treat and Family Tradition**

**Additional:**

**Virtual Holiday Trivia**

**Donations for Alexandria Domestic Violence Program –**

**Please send gift cards from Walmart, Target, CVS,**

**Walgreens or Visa Cards in the amount of \$25; and**

**Donations for Friends of Guest House – Please send gift cards from Walmart only or Visa Cards in the amount of \$25.**

**[Contact Mary Ann Bier at [marybier@comcast.net](mailto:marybier@comcast.net) for more details]**

**RSVP to :**

**Virginia Kress @ [vmvkress@gmail.com](mailto:vmvkress@gmail.com)**

**Send Gift Cards to:**

**Mary Ann Bier**

**413 E. Custis Ave.**

**Alexandria, VA 22301**

**No later than December 3, 2020**

## POLICY UPDATE

### Furthering Racial and Social Justice in Alexandria by Bonnie Hershberg

As a resident of Alexandria, I attended one of three meetings held in November to solicit input to the “All Alexandria: Community Race and Social Equity Resolution.” The meeting was hosted by the city’s new (as of February 2020) and first Racial and Social Equity Officer, Jacqueline Tucker. Some of you may have had the opportunity during the summer to attend a Branch “Lunch and Learn” in which we heard from Ms. Tucker about racially-centered but also other disparities in Alexandria and plans to reduce and eventually eliminate them. The Office of Racial and Social Equity is preparing a resolution that will go before the City Council early next year. After an acknowledgment of the native peoples who lived in the area prior to our forebears, Ms. Tucker showed many of the same charts highlighting disparities in our community. Please check out the Office’s website for a complete rundown.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/Equity>

Before getting to the business of the meeting, Ms. Tucker went over the difference between equality and equity; the former being “everyone gets something” and the latter, “everyone gets what they need.” She used the shoe analogy to highlight that point, noting that getting any pair of shoes didn’t really solve the problem for everyone. She also made clear that while there are many groups who suffer from the disparities and are included, the Office is taking a race-centered intersectional approach.

The 33 participants at the Zoom meeting—like the 100 others who had already attended previous meetings—were a mix of interested citizens and representatives of non-profits, city offices and commissions, and Alexandria public school staff. We were shown several examples of current Resolutions passed by three other cities—Arlington, Va.; Austin, Texas; and Seattle, Washington. The plenary then discussed what they felt was important from them that we might want to incorporate in our own resolution.

What got the group’s attention seemed to run along a continuum from spiritual, with an impassioned and eloquent plea that we focus on the “oneness of humanity” to the practical, with a strong statement of the need to have measurable goals that relate to impacts, not just actions. There was also considerable support not only for collaborating across jurisdictional lines with contiguous communities but also intra-institutionally within our own City. We were then organized into smaller groups with a facilitator and asked what we thought the Alexandria resolution needed to include specifically. The five in my group were all women and the first to respond was a long-time advocate for passage of the ERA. She noted that while she agreed with the race-centered focus of the resolution, she lobbied to be explicit in identifying other groups for whom social justice was still beyond reach. She added that women, and particularly women of color, are among the poorest of the poor. I supported this view, having introduced myself as a member of several local non-profits (although not representing any), including AAUW Alexandria. Unfortunately, there was insufficient time for everyone to speak at length, but the group was generally supportive of highlighting the existence of other groups, including those who are undocumented residents.

Back in the plenary, participants offered their nominations for values that should underlie the resolution. Among these were justice, healing, accountability, shared humanity, reconciliation, equality vs. equity, truth, striving not just surviving, oneness of humanity, and embracing difference.

The Office will now begin the challenging work of drafting a resolution, which they plan to share at least with the meetings’ participants, likely through their website. If you have an interest in following their process, I suggest checking their website for updates. I was glad to be a part of this important process and look forward to more action following the words!

Bonnie Hershberg

## IMPORTANT BRANCH NOTES

### Membership Reminder

Friendly Reminder: Membership runs from July through June. We know that everyone is under a lot of stress this year and renewing your membership for July 2020 -June 2021 may not be a high priority. Most members have renewed. We thank for everyone who has renewed their membership. A few have indicated they do not intend to renew. But if you haven't yet renewed and this is just one of many items that have fallen off the radar during this highly stressful time, we hope that you will renew. Each and every one of you is a valuable member of the Branch. Please contact Margaret Werts Batko for information on renewal.

### AUTUMN LEAVES 2020

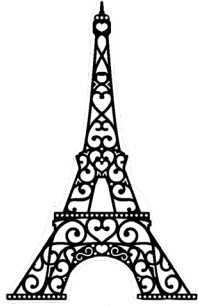
The Alexandria Branch sends its heartfelt appreciation to all who have supported the Autumn Leaves fundraising campaign for our 75th anniversary. As a reminder, if you plan to make a donation and would like to be entered into the drawing that will be held at our virtual holiday event on Saturday, December 5, please mail your check (in any amount of your choice) to Susan Cash, 8402 West Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308 in time for it to be received by Friday, December 4. We will continue to accept donations after the virtual holiday event.

### Christ House

The next Christ House supper is on Wednesday, December 30. We will again purchase the bag suppers from The Italian Place as we did for the April and July suppers. They include a sub, chips, fruit, and a cookie. We provide and deliver personal bottles of water. We welcome donations to cover the increased cost. Checks can be sent to Anne Simpson, Treasurer, with notation that the contribution is for the Christ House soup kitchen. There are also still spa gift cards available for purchase. The money from the sale of the gift cards also helps us provide meals for those who are most in need in our community, especially during these difficult times.







## FRANCOPHILE GROUP DISCUSSION

Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place via the Alexandria Branch's Zoom account on Saturday, January 30, at 3 p.m. with a discussion of the novel The Little French Bistro by Nina George. I think you will enjoy this story set in Brittany. Unless otherwise noted, all of our meetings are in English. POC: Susan Cash, [scash5558@gmail.com](mailto:scash5558@gmail.com). Please RSVP to Susan to receive the Zoom link.



## GREAT DECISIONS FALL 2020 and BEYOND

Our final meeting of 2020 will be: Artificial Intelligence & Data, *arranged by Sylvia Linke*

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/gdtv48/382325102?autoplay=1>

Thurs, Dec 10, 7 pm, via Zoom

In 2021, we will continue to meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7 pm. We'll continue on Zoom at least through the first half of 2021. Below are dates and topics:

Thurs, Feb 11 – Global Supply Chains & National Security

Thurs, Mar 11 – Persian Gulf Security Issues

Thurs, Apr 8 – Brexit & the European Union

Thurs, May 13 – Struggles Over the Melting Arctic

Thurs, Jun 10 – China's Role in Africa

Thurs, Sep 9 – The Korean Peninsula, to be arranged by **Diane Schrier**

Thurs, Oct 14 – Roles of International Organizations in a Global Pandemic

Thurs, Nov 11 – The End of Globalization?

We welcome new participants in 2021. Contact Lynn O'Connell, [lynnocConnellva@gmail.com](mailto:lynnocConnellva@gmail.com) or 703/867-4942, for more information. For those who purchased advance books/DVDs, I will connect with each of you in January to deliver. If you did not yet purchase materials, here is the link: [https://www.fpa.org/great\\_decisions/?act=gd\\_materials](https://www.fpa.org/great_decisions/?act=gd_materials). In December/January, electronic materials will be available (Kindle, Nook, and Vimeo), and those will be less expensive than the hard copy book and DVD.





## DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB

The Diversity Book Group meetings in October and November focused on very different books in terms of genre, cultural focus, and subject matter. In October, we read a collection of short stories, Sabrina and Corina, focused on Hispanic/Native/Filipino women, and their struggles in contemporary Colorado. A debut collection by Kali Fajardo-Anstine, the collection was praised by critics who found it “masterful” and a “force to be reckoned with.” Our group was divided in their reactions to the book; some cited it as overwhelmingly sad and others as inspirational.

In November, we took up Lost in America: A Journey with My Father by Sherwin B. Nuland, who through his memoir, paints a portrait of his “misplaced” immigrant Jewish father and the family dynamics that put an indelible mark on his own history. Nuland, who achieved considerable acclaim first as a Yale-educated neurosurgeon and ultimately as a writer and motivational speaker before his death in 2014, tells a story of trauma, loss, love, and the values that both held the family together and also tossed it asunder. Most group members struggled with this “hard-to-read” tale, although Nuland’s perseverance and determination to break free from his upbringing also inspired some. We had a thoughtful conversation about what it means to be “assimilated” in this country and how much of one’s identity one has to surrender to be successful, even today. Like much of what we’ve read this year, while the themes are quite particular to the cultures described, they also have a universality that most of us find relevant to our own lives.

Our increasingly diverse group that is slowly expanding to include different racial and ethnic backgrounds welcomed a member in November who immigrated 40 years ago from Russia, now Ukraine. A resident of Pittsburgh, she found our group on the internet when she was searching for a group that would offer her the opportunity to read and discuss books by authors whose voices are not always heard and whose stories are not always familiar to White women. One of the virtues of the lives we are living today via Zoom is that we can attract women from outside Alexandria and even outside our state, including a member from Austin.

Every month, in an effort to get to know each other better, we’re taking up a different question at the beginning of our sessions. This month’s question was, “Who is one of your heroines or heroes—sung, unsung, famous, infamous or otherwise described—and why?” Among those mentioned, our member cited authors, including poet Mary Oliver and Robert Frost for their particular saliency right now; Stacy Abrams, for getting out the vote in Georgia and who we can all admire despite our political differences; and Eleanor Roosevelt for her work on the Declaration of Human Rights. Our partner, Librarian Caroline Pak, noted that her heroines include strong women like the ones she encountered as a young immigrant girl from South Korea, including Joe from Little Women and Anna of Green Gables. Closer to home, one of our Book Group members was identified as a heroine for her work as an Alexandria election official, dedicating three days of her vacation time to the effort despite working full time.

On 14 December we will be discussing Resilience: Two Sisters and a Story of Mental Illness by Jessie Close and Pete Earley. Please email Bonnie Hershberg at [bhersh3@gmail.com](mailto:bhersh3@gmail.com) if you have an interest in joining our Group.



Our branch is the only one to have a blog and we are lucky to have a membership full of interesting and committed people suited to filling the blog with personal statements. It's also a great way to learn more about individuals in our branch.

This blog is everyone's opportunity to express themselves about any topic that inspires them. These topics could include lessons learned during quarantine, other volunteer endeavors you are passionate about, events in your life that had a life-changing impact, etc. The list could be very long. There are two restrictions: must be non-partisan and no attacks on any individual. There is no length requirement but one to two pages with PHOTOS! is recommended.

Currently these are the topics in our blog and they can be found on the right-hand side of our web site's home page under the links to our newsletters:

### **SOUND OFF UPDATE**

The following posts have been added to our blog:

American Family in Pakistan by Patty Steelman

Her Story - AAUW and Rachel Carson by Caroline Pinkens

Self Care from the Alexandria Library Web Site

You will find the links to these essays on our branch's web [site](#) on the right-hand side of the home page under Sound Off.

Please use this opportunity to "Sound Off" about something you are passionate about and please let those who have submitted posts know your thoughts/reactions to their writings.

## KUDOS AND KVELLS

Danielle Beach has been recognized as one of the best lawyers in DC in an article in the current Washingtonian.



**Beach-Oswald Associates, PC**  
**IMMIGRATION LAW**

Danielle Beach-Oswald has over 28 years of immigration law experience. Her firm focuses on employment immigration law, asylum, waivers, consular processing, family-based petitions and naturalization. She successfully advocates for clients from over 80 countries around the world who seek freedom from torture in their country, or are victims of domestic violence and trafficking. She has excelled in getting waivers of inadmissibility granted and has a high grant level for asylum and removability hearings.

**AREAS OF PRACTICE**  
Employment-based Immigration; Humanitarian-based immigration and Removal; Appellate Work; Family Immigration in U. S. and Abroad

**DESIGNATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, and AWARDS**  
Best Lawyers, 2011-2020; *Super Lawyers*, 2011-2020; AV® Preeminent; 50 Top Women Lawyers in the DC area

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202.331.3074  
[immigrationlawdc.com](http://immigrationlawdc.com)

WASHINGTONIAN ★ DECEMBER 2020

Kudos to Lane Stone for her contract for a new mystery series, The Big Picture Trilogy. The first book, *THE COLLECTOR*, will launch May 2022. “Art and religion expert, Emma Kelly’s life looks like a masterpiece, but is designed around a very big secret.”



## EVENTS OF INTEREST DURING THE PANDEMIC

### Reston-Herndon AAUW Early Alert on December Special Programs

For Zoom Link email [janinegrnwd@hotmail.com](mailto:janinegrnwd@hotmail.com). Attendance limited.



**Thursday, December 10, 2020 at 2PM, Congressional Update:** Meet Anna Przebinda and others of Sen. Tim Kaine's Staff and hear what's ahead for the 117th Congress.

**Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm, The Second Wave of Feminism: The "Lavender Menace"** Join us for a program from the National Women's History Museum on the impact of the radical Lesbians on the feminist movement.



## 2020-2021 Branch Officers:

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

Co-VP's Membership: Margaret Batko ([margaretwb@verizon.net](mailto:margaretwb@verizon.net))

Co-VP's Program: Virginia Kress ([vmvkress@gmail.com](mailto:vmvkress@gmail.com))

Co-Chairs, Public Policy: Sylvia Linke ([SFLaauw@gmail.com](mailto:SFLaauw@gmail.com)) & Diane Schrier ([diane.schrier@gmail.com](mailto:diane.schrier@gmail.com))

Treasurer: Anne Simpson ([aseyedoc@gmail.com](mailto:aseyedoc@gmail.com))

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

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

Special Interest Group Leaders:

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

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

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

Great Decisions: Lynn O'Connell ([lynnoconnellva@gmail.com](mailto:lynnoconnellva@gmail.com))

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