



EMPOWERING WOMEN SINCE 1881

## THE ALEXANDRIA SCHOONER

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### Save these dates:

**3/8**, 7p, WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, (Zoom) Bonnie Hershberg,  
**3/11**, 7p, Great Decisions, (Zoom), Lynn O'Connell  
**3/13-15**, AAUW of Virginia Conference (Zoom)  
**3/23**, 7p: Mystery book group, Susan Werner, [susan.werner1@verizon.net](mailto:susan.werner1@verizon.net)  
**3/31**, Christ House Dinner

March 2021

Dear Friends,

We miss being together but every month we get closer. For now, we'll continue to meet virtually. You may be a little Zoom'd out, like us, but these virtual meetings been a sanity-saver. We've been able to keep in touch with one another and we remain a strong branch.

The pandemic has magnified the inequality AAUW has fought since our founding. Thankfully, we can take action from our homes. The easiest way is to sign up to be a [Two Minute Activist](#).

AAUW National public [priorities](#) for 2021 include: [Paycheck Fairness Act](#), [FAMILY](#) (Family and Medical Insurance Leave Act), [Raise Wage Act](#)

If you haven't signed up to be a Two Minute Activist, we hope you will now.

Warm regards,

Lane and Gail



### **A Newsletter Sound Off by the Newsletter Editor (and Membership Vice-President)**

March is Women's History month. This was always a big deal where I worked. We had special programs to celebrate. It was an opportunity to learn about people and events of which we were unaware. This year, while we continue to hunker down in our homes and seek ways to enlighten and amuse ourselves, I want to suggest that now is a good time to commit to celebrate women and our history. Find a biography of a woman you know little or nothing about. Perhaps find a movie or documentary about a woman. Maybe one of the local libraries is having a program on women's history or a book club meeting discussing a book you haven't read and should. Encourage your library to expand its women's history collection. Will you commit to one activity this month? If you do, send me a message about what you did. The April newsletter could identify all the many commitments to women's history members of the Branch made. And maybe you can write something more in-depth about it for the Branch blog.

Margaret Batko, Newsletter Editor and Vice President, Membership





Please join us virtually for the annual AAUW of Virginia State Conference, which also includes our 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Meeting. In addition to conducting important business of our organization, over the course of three days, you'll hear from and be able to question an exciting variety of speakers on the AAUW mission-related topics described below.

On **Saturday, March 13**, there will be morning and afternoon sessions, while on **Sunday, March 14, and Monday, March 15**, there will only be afternoon programs.

**The conference and business meeting are free, but please register in advance** for each day you want to “attend” by using the registration links below. You will be sent Zoom links for each day. **Even though there will be two sessions on March 13<sup>th</sup>, there will only be one Zoom link for that day.**

**[SCHEDULE, LINKS, AND DETAILS HERE](#)**

REGISTER FOR DAY 1:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_TveFAYLQROO\\_WQuBgfzSgQ](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TveFAYLQROO_WQuBgfzSgQ)

REGISTER FOR DAY 2: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_nreRC7-HQ--eVNndZzz58w](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_nreRC7-HQ--eVNndZzz58w)

REGISTER FOR DAY 3: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_69wqwPnSQDy67ks-yacJfg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_69wqwPnSQDy67ks-yacJfg)



## Upcoming Webinar

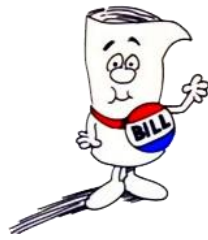
**In Conversation with Dr. Shanna Benjamin:**

***“Half in Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Nellie Y. McKay”***

**Thursday, March 4<sup>th</sup> 5:00 PM ET**

**Description:** Join us for an informative and engaging conversation with AAUW fellowships alumna Shanna Benjamin, Ph.D, Educator and Scholar, to discuss her upcoming book, *Half in Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Nellie Y. McKay*, which will be published in April. Dr. Benjamin is a biographer and scholar who studies the literature, lives, and archives of Black women. She has published scholarly works on African American literature and Black women's intellectual history in *African American Review*, *MELUS*, *a/b: Auto/Biography*, *Studies in American Fiction*, and *PMLA*.

**Register Now**



## **POLICY UPDATE**

February has been a very busy month for Americans. The Coronavirus seems to begin to be getting under control, with adequate doses ordered, including the new J&J vaccine. It looks like most Americans will be vaccinated by July, if they wish. However, the South African variation remains a major question mark.

The inauguration went off with a problem, although many of us might have been delayed on our travels by the closing off of DC. However, March 4 is a potential problem, caused by the concept that March 4 was the original inauguration date and thus it is the only one that matters. Please warn people to stay away from DC for a few days before that. Hopefully it fizzles out.

Hearings have been occurring about the disaster of January 6th. The information has shown that this was a controlled plot and many arrests have been made. Hearings about the police reaction are taking place now.

Schools are reopening. While the CDC has said teachers are okay, what hasn't received as much attention is the other part of the sentence. Schools need to be modified with proper air ventilation and other safety measures. HR 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, will allow teachers and other essential workers to get social security. Some states do not allow it at this time. HR 1, For the People Act, will enhance voting rights, limit gerrymandering, create new ethics rules for federal officeholders and reduce the influence of money in politics. HR 400 will support civic education. The issue of standardized testing for this year is still a problem. The DOE said each state can delay it but it must go through. Will Becerra continue that DeVos idea for this year remains to be seen after he passes approval.

Our legislators have been busy. The Marriage Equality Amendment has passed the House and Senate. It must be reaffirmed next year and voted on by the voters.

HB 1931, Virtual Meetings, has been sent to the Governor. HB 2295, Safe Elections, has been sent to the Governor. HB 2295 is still in the works. The former bans guns at voting sites and the latter bans guns in the Capitol and Capitol Square.

Virginia became the first Southern State to abolish the death penalty.

Other bills in the pipeline are HB 2147, incorporating the Office of Civil Rights into the Office of Attorney General. The bill to legalize marijuana is on the Governor's desk. The Voting Rights Acts will stop voter suppression.

In the Budget, there is paid sick leave for essential workers, pay raises for teachers and state employees, and workers' compensation for healthcare workers. Alcohol sales have been expanded to midnight.

HB 2113, The Virginia Clean Slate Act, has now passed the General Assembly and is headed to the Governor's desk for his signature. The Act provides for the automatic sealing of certain misdemeanor convictions and will also allow individuals to petition the court for sealing of other misdemeanor convictions and certain felony convictions after a period of time has passed with no further convictions. This legislation is an important continuation of the work to remove barriers and address systemic inequities in our criminal justice system. Countless hours of work have been poured into this legislation.

There are many candidates running for office this upcoming year. It should be interesting.

Diane Schrier

## **IMPORTANT BRANCH NOTES**

### **Membership**

**The FY22 dues collection year will open March 16<sup>th</sup>. National dues have increased to \$62, of which \$59 will be tax deductible. We look forward to you renewing your membership.**



## **AUTUMN LEAVES 2020**

Thanks to all of you who have contributed to Autumn Leaves for the Alexandria Branch's 75th Anniversary. As of January 31, we had raised \$1,746.50. We will continue to accept donations for our 75th anniversary drive through May 31, 2021. Our goal is to increase our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary total to \$2,000.00 by May 31.

May 2021 marks the end of our 75th anniversary year. To help celebrate that special occasion, we will hold another drawing for prizes at our annual meeting (to be held in May). All who have donated since June 1, 2020 up until two days before the annual meeting will be eligible.



Once again, 100% of the donations received for our 75th anniversary Autumn Leaves drive (through May 31) will be retained by the Alexandria Branch to support our projects.

**Our 2021 Autumn Leaves drive will open on June 1.**

Donations to Autumn Leaves should be sent to Susan Cash, 8402 West Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308.

## BRANCH ACTIVITIES



### MYSTERY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

We are marching to spring – so welcome to the selection for our March 2021 Mystery Book Discussion Group. This month's mystery is Sworn to Silence by Linda Castillo. We will meet via Zoom on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 7 PM. If you have mystery suggestions, or questions, please contact Susan Werner at [susan.werner1@verizon.net](mailto:susan.werner1@verizon.net). Happy reading.



### FRANCOPHILE GROUP DISCUSSION

At our next get together (Saturday, April 24 at 3 p.m.), we will continue our exploration of Brittany with a discussion of the book I'll Never Be French No Matter What I Do: Living in a Small Village in Brittany by Mark Greenside. Discussion is in English. For more information, please contact Susan Cash, [scash5558@gmail.com](mailto:scash5558@gmail.com), 703/587-4790. Please RSVP to Susan to receive the Zoom link.

## Christ House

The next Christ House supper is on Wednesday, March 31, 2021. We will again purchase the bag suppers from The Italian Place as we did for the April, July, and December 2020 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.



A message from Sr. Aniliza P. Juan, SNDS, Christ House Volunteer Coordinator:



## GREAT DECISIONS 2021

### Great Decisions Schedule

Thurs, Mar 11 – Persian Gulf Security Issues, to be facilitated by **Peter Kent**

Thurs, Apr 8 – Brexit & the European Union, to be facilitated by **Margaret Batko**

Thurs, May 13 – Struggles Over the Melting Arctic, to be facilitated by **Gail Kalin**

Thurs, Jun 10 – China's Role in Africa, to be facilitated by **Peter Kent** with **Lynn O'Connell**

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

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

Thurs, Nov 11 – The End of Globalization? facilitated by **Sylvia Linke**



If you are not on our email list, please let Lynn O'Connell ([lynnococonnellva@gmail.com](mailto:lynnococonnellva@gmail.com)) know, and she will add you. These events are open to non-AAUW members as well, and they are virtual via Zoom.



## DIVERSITY BOOK CLUB

### A Deep Look at a Little Known Culture—by Bonnie Hershberg

The Diversity Book Group's discussion in February of journalist and essayist Anne Fadiman's 1998 book, The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, was popular with members, drawing 17 enthusiastic participants. We discussed in detail many of the themes the author addresses in her prize winning, non-fiction telling of a particular 'collision' of cultures. The story focuses on the Lee family, Hmong emigres who, after a challenging journey of some five years following the end of the Vietnam War, ultimately settled in the central valley of California in 1980. While many of us are all too familiar with the casualties of that war, few are aware of the significant sacrifices of our "secret" allies, drawn from the Hmong people in the mountains of Laos. The story centers on the Lee's daughter, Lia, who is born and diagnosed in the US with epilepsy as an infant. Not only is the book an in-depth exploration of two extraordinarily different cultures—the American "bio-medical system," specifically in the 1980s, and the little-known Hmong belief system—but also an intimate portrayal of a large cast of characters involved in Lia's care. Book group participants shared stories of their own experiences with non-Western medicine, their ideas on what it means to be a "good doctor" and a "good parent," and their views on the trade-offs involved in providing non-US born residents the American medical "standard of care," especially when insurmountable barriers would try to preclude delivering that care. We also had a lively discussion about the negative criticism Ms. Fadiman encountered from some Hmong readers, who questioned her legitimacy in speaking for them. If you would like to join us for our virtual discussion on March 8, please RSVP [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com) by March 1. In order to ensure that all voices are heard, we limit attendance to the first 20 who contact me. The book we'll be discussing is This Is How It Always Is by Laurie Frankel.



One good thing to come out of the pandemic is people finding time to submit a blog post. I hope these new postings will inspire others. All posts can be found on the right-hand side of the home page under our newsletters. Here's what's been posted since November.

American Family in Pakistan

Her Story - AAUW and Rachel Carson

Self Care, Alexandria Library Post

Violet Protest

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. I’m sure they would love to hear from you.

Eugenia Burkes

### Invitations from Other Branches and Items of Interest

*The Arlington Branch NAACP Education Committee and National Coalition of 100 Black Women Northern VA Chapter Committee presents:* This award-winning documentary takes a deep dive into the lives of Black girls and the practices and policies that disrupt one of the most important factors in girls’ lives, their education. **Mar 8, 2021 07:00 PM**

Official Trailer: <https://youtu.be/nWPayvrHkEM>

FREE

Register Online <https://tinyurl.com/pushoutnaacp>



**ALEXANDRIA CELEBRATES WOMEN**

2021 Celebrate Women Awards Nominations Open Awards will Honor Women on the Front Lines of Pandemic

Alexandria, VA -- We have been inspired for centuries by women who stepped up and led the way in Alexandria. This past year, many women have worked and volunteered an exceptional number of hours on the front lines – delivering mail and packages, ensuring our food supply, teaching our children, caring for our health and safety, and many other efforts helping the Alexandria community battle COVID-19.

Do you know someone whose dedicated efforts have impacted Alexandria in a positive way? Whose efforts provide inspiration and who deserves to be recognized for her outstanding contributions to our community during the pandemic?

To honor women who have gone above and beyond during this crisis, Alexandria Celebrates Women is proud to host the first Celebrate Women Awards Monday March 29. This Women's History Month awards ceremony will replace the Alexandria Commission for Women's annual Salute to Women.

The Celebrate Women Awards will be a FREE online event – highlighting five women through biographical videos.

Event: 2021 Celebrate Women Awards (FREE online event)

Date: Monday March 29, 2021

Time: 7 p.m. ET

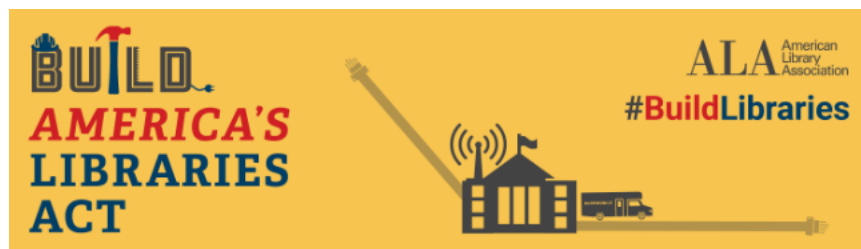
Help us to honor extraordinary women who are helping us all through extraordinary times.

To nominate your favorite woman on the front lines, please visit Alexandria Celebrates Women. Nominations close at midnight March 15, 2021.

Alexandria Celebrates Women (ACW) recognizes the accomplishments and contributions of Alexandria, Virginia's women of the past, present and future. The volunteer 501(c)(3) charitable non-profit organization acknowledges the distinguished history of Alexandria's heroines while celebrating the empowerment of Alexandria's modern woman. <https://alexandriacelebrateswomen.com/>

Contact: Pat Miller [pmiller1806@comcast.net](mailto:pmiller1806@comcast.net)

## REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FOR OUR LIBRARIES



We are forwarding this request from the American Library Association because we agree that every community in America deserves a great library. Library facilities are an essential part of our nation's civic infrastructure. There's a "Take Action Now" link in the letter below from the ALA.

On January 28, 2021, the Build America's Libraries Act (**S. 127**) was introduced by Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) and cosponsors. This legislation would provide **\$5 billion** in funding to repair, modernize, and construct library facilities in underserved and marginalized communities. **The Build America's Libraries Act would provide historic funding to improve our nation's libraries. Please ask your Senators to invest in our library infrastructure.**

### [Take Action Now](#)

Federal funding for library buildings has not been provided in more than 20 years. But as the nation works with this new Congress to recover from a historic pandemic and reckon with the legacy of racial injustice, now is the time to think big. The Build America's Libraries Act would prioritize funding to communities with high poverty rates, as part of a strategy to begin to reverse decades of underinvestment in communities of color.

[Ask your Senators](#) to co-sponsor the Build America's Libraries Act.

Thank you for your hard work for America's libraries,  
ALA Public Policy and Advocacy Team

## **[Literacy Council of Northern Virginia - lcnv.org](http://lcnv.org)**



### **[Literacy is a Survival Skill](#)**

A Taste of Literacy: LCNV's virtual event  
Thursday, March 25, 2021

The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia's mission is to teach adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and understanding English so they can access employment and educational opportunities and participate in the community at large.

Attend "A Taste of Literacy" --LCNV's free virtual event on [Thursday, March 25, 2021](#) to learn more about the work they do in our communities and how you can participate in furthering their mission. Last year, over 1,800 people joined in online to hear more about LCNV's mission. Visit <https://lcnv.org/tol2021/> for more information.

All of us faced challenges this year, and English language learners were among those most affected, struggling to find work or working in low wage jobs with risk of exposure to the virus. Last year, LCNV was able to pivot their classes online for over 600 learners and provide over \$30,000 in scholarships and free classes, offering a pathway out of poverty even during a pandemic. One of their students recently commented that, “you light our path of darkness.”

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This article was adapted from an email I received from Ruba Marshood Afzal, LCNV’s Director of Partnerships and Community Engagement. She was a guest on the Branch’s On the Go with AAUW public access cable TV show. – Ruth Bennett

### **2020-2021 CALENDAR – ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE (CHECK BACK OFTEN)**

3/8/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Virtual, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)  
3/11/21, 7p: Great Decisions – Persian Gulf Security Issues  
3/13-15/21, AAUW-VA conference, Virtual, 3/13: 10-12:30 & 3-5:30; 3/14 & 15: 3-5:30  
3/23/21, 7p: Mystery book group, Contact: Susan Werner, [susan.werner1@verizon.net](mailto:susan.werner1@verizon.net).  
4/1/21, 6:45p: Board Mtg.  
4/8/21 7p: Great Decisions – Brexit & the European Union  
4/12/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Virtual Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)  
4/27/21, 7p: Mystery book group, Contact: Susan Werner, [susan.werner1@verizon.net](mailto:susan.werner1@verizon.net).  
5/6/21, 6:45p: Board Mtg  
5/10/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Virtual. Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)  
5/13/21, 7p: Great Decisions – Struggles Over the Melting Arctic  
5/25/21, 7p: Mystery book group, Contact: Susan Werner, [susan.werner1@verizon.net](mailto:susan.werner1@verizon.net).  
6/10/21, 7p: Great Decisions – China’s Role in Africa  
6/14/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Burke Library, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)  
6/22/21, 7p: Mystery book group, Contact: Susan Werner, [susan.werner1@verizon.net](mailto:susan.werner1@verizon.net).  
7/12/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Burke Library, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)  
7/31/21, Summer Leadership Mtg, Sweet Briar, VA.  
8/9/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Burke Library, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)  
9/13/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Burke Library, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)  
10/11/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Burke Library, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)  
11/8/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Burke Library, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)

12/13/21, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Burke Library, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, [hersh3b@gmail.com](mailto:hersh3b@gmail.com)

## 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))