



Alexandria (VA) Branch
THE SCHOONER - February 2022

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SAVE THESE DATES:

2/3/22, 7p, Board Meeting
2/13/22, 2p Program meeting
- Author's panel
2/14/22, 7p, Diversity Book
Group
2/22/22, 7p, Mystery book
group
2/27/22, 7p, Great Decisions

Dear Friends,

As we finish this cold January, I hope we all have stayed safe and healthy. Good news this month is that Monique Miles, our co-Chair of D, E&I has been named Deputy Attorney General for Government Operations and Transactions for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Other good news this month is that Lane Stone, our ex-co-President, is a candidate for State President. Both will be outstanding in their roles.

Unfortunately, our fund-raising play, *Bright Star*, at the Little Theater of Alexandria had to be cancelled due to Covid. This happened at the last minute and Susan Werner and Lynn O'Connell did an excellent job notifying people. They and Arlene Shapiro had worked very hard to make this opportunity happen.

On January 12, there was a [zoom meeting](#) with the new CEO of AAUW, Gloria Blackwell. She has been a member for several years and was our U.N. representative. There will be voting this year on procedures, but there will not be a vote on degree requirement for membership. Financial equity for women will continue to be our cornerstone, as time has proven that respect and equality is not given without financial parity. We must keep fighting for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

Part one of our state convention will be held March 26th in person in Harrisonburg at the Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center. The cost has been reduced to \$25 until March 4th for registration. Hotel reservations must also be made by March 4th. Use the Group ID 3217285 and AAUW. The hotel's number is 540-564-0200. The business meeting part will be April 30th on zoom.

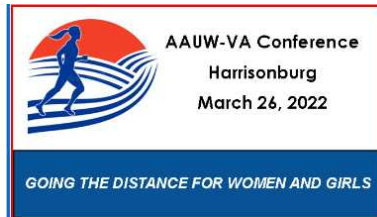
Diane Schrier and Sylvia Linke
AAUW-Alexandria, Co-Presidents

Please join us for Part 1 of the 2022 AAUW of Virginia State Conference!

Saturday, March 26, 2022, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

[AAUW-VA 2022 Conference Brochure](#)

This is an **in-person event** at the Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center on the James Madison University campus in Harrisonburg. You will hear from and be able to question informed and inspiring speakers on AAUW mission-related topics that support the theme of



The conclusion of the program will provide an opportunity for the four state Districts to convene and elect representatives to the State Board for 2022-2024. All information about the speakers and how to register is in the [Conference 2022 Brochure](#). Lodging information is within the brochure as well. You can also find this information at the [AAUW-VA Website](#).

If you want to register immediately, [CLICK HERE](#).

The AAUW-VA State Board is pleased to announce that because operating budget costs were lower between March 2020 and now, due to the pandemic, we are returning some of the unspent funds to members in the form of a lower conference registration fee, which includes morning beverages and lunch.

The registration deadline is March 11.

AAUW-VA Members	\$25.00 until March 4 (\$30 March 5 - 11)
Students	\$30.00*
Other Non-AAUW-VA Attendees	\$35.00

*Branches may consider sponsoring students from college/university partners.

We look forward to seeing you there!

BRANCH NOTES

PROGRAM

Author's Forum

Our next zoom program meeting will be on Feb. 13th at 2:00. The authors are: Solveig Eggerz, Catherine Hughes, D. A. Spruzen and Lane Stone, writing as Cordy Abbott. All write different types of books, which will make this a fascinating and informative discussion.



Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82568708121>

Meeting ID: 825 6870 8121

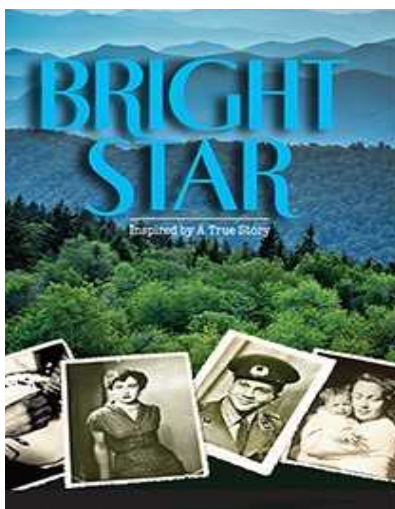
One tap mobile. +13017158592,,82568708121# US (Washington DC)

The Theater Was Dark For

“BRIGHT STAR”

The Branch’s Fund Raiser, the play “Bright Star” at the Little Theater of Alexandria, was canceled because of COVID. Due to the generosity of our Branch members and friends, we still raised (to date) \$1650.00.

Lynn O’Connell, because she is a Branch member, was tapped to check all of us coming into the theater for our vaccination cards. The performance was cancelled twenty-four hours before our event! Lynn let Susan Werner know and she was able to notify ticket holders immediately. We didn’t want anybody showing up to a locked down theater with just a notice on the door.



PUBLIC POLICY

Virginia Kress
Public Policy Chair

Susan Burk and Denise Murden, AAUW-VA Co-VPs for Public Policy, sent this to get us ready for the 2022 Virginia General Assembly session. A fact sheet follows, with additional information.

AAUW-VA has identified a number of **legislative priorities for 2022**. We will be preparing actionable fact sheets/issue papers on these topics for distribution to our members to support our lobbying efforts.

1. **Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML).** Sen. Jennifer Boysko again has introduced a bill (**SB 1**) to establish a **PFML program** in Virginia. The bill has been referred to the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee. AAUW-VA remains allied with the Campaign for a Family Friendly Economy on this issue. (NOTE: The Commission to Examine Racial and Economic Inequity in Virginia Law, established by outgoing Governor Northam, has now issued a 65-page report that, among other things, urged lawmakers to create a PFML program.) In a related development, Sen. Barbara Favola has introduced a bill to establish paid family leave as a class of insurance (SB 15). This also has been referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor.
2. **Paid Sick Days.** AAUW-VA is continuing to work with the Coalition of Virginians for Paid Sick Leave. Update: While no bills have been tabled yet, we understand from our January 7 call with the Coalition that several bills are being developed in both the Senate and the House. The Coalition plans to support all of them.
3. **Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.** Susan reported on her call with the State Policy Director at the National Women's Law Center concerning legislation introduced on this subject in 2021. The NWLC has concerns with the liability provisions of HB 2155 introduced by Del. Watts last year; the bill failed to pass the Senate. We will be consulting with our Co-Presidents on how to proceed.
4. **Holding the Line on Voter Access.** We have identified 12 bills introduced so far that primarily address voter identification and absentee voting (including eliminating no excuse absentee voting). Sen. Mamie Locke has introduced a constitutional amendment (SB 21) to address the voting rights of "returning citizens." Passage of this bill for a second time is required to permit it to move to the voters, who must approve any Amendment to the Virginia Constitution.
5. **Public Education/Vouchers.** We expect these to be on the table as part of the budget discussion in view of the campaign statements made by the incoming Executive team. AAUW has positions to guide our lobbying efforts, including this statement on vouchers: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/position-vouchers/>. Diane Schrier and Marsha Melkonian volunteered to research charter school issues in Virginia to help keep us informed on this issue as it develops.
6. **Childcare.** This is another issue of interest to members, and we will be on the lookout for opportunities to promote our views.

Opportunities to Lobby and Engage. Our lobbying on behalf of AAUW-VA will be virtual again this year. In addition to issues papers, we will provide information on how best to engage your legislators. AAUW has a toolkit for meeting and communicating with your legislators: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/advocacy-toolkit/meeting-elected-officials/>. Denise has developed and will circulate an online contact form

(<https://forms.gle/TD28SPqHNo3JZGLZA>) that members can use to report on their contacts. Please use it throughout the session. In addition, there will be many other opportunities to get informed about issues through the work of other, like-minded organizations.

1. **VA Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICPP) *Day for All People*** After we held this meeting, VICPP canceled their in-person events and will hold virtual only sessions January 17-21.). There is a \$20 charge for those able to pay. You can get a full schedule of events and register at this link: <https://virginiainterfaithcenter.ourpowerbase.net/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=170>
2. **LWVVA – Weekly Legislative Round Tables (LRT)** will be both in-person and virtual this year; League Day, January 26, also will be a hybrid event. To sign up and see the topics for each LRT: <https://lwwvawlrt22.eventbrite.com>
3. **National Political Women’s Caucus of VA (NPWC-VA) Advocacy Day** on January 11, 2022 @11am (Zoom). Legislators from both sides of the aisle will each provide ten-minute discussions of a bill related to women and equality. They are encouraged to provide an overview, key talking points, and requested actions from NPWC-VA members and invited guests. Registration is required. The following provides a registration link, more details about the session, and a list of other sessions available for on-demand viewing: <https://nwpc-va.org/upcoming>.
4. **AAUW-VA Zoom Meeting with VA Legislators.** In lieu of our annual reception for Virginia’s women legislators, we have invited selected legislators (two each from the House and Senate, both Democrat and Republican), and the new Lt Governor to participate in a Zoom discussion with our members.

Fair, Non-partisan redistricting. Thanks to the efforts of two Special Masters, and with the approval of the VA Supreme Court, Virginia’s state and national legislative districts have been redrawn and renumbered. You can find your district and other information explaining the changes at this link: <https://www.vpap.org/redistricting/>.





AAUW of Virginia 2022 Legislative Priority Fact Sheet for Members

What: Insurance; Paid Family Leave

Why it is important:

Unlike most developed countries worldwide, the U.S. does not guarantee extended paid time off (weeks, not days) for illness, family care, or parental leave. The situation has become more acute for people in the “sandwich” generation, i.e., caring for aging parents and for children. Without these policies, balancing the responsibilities of work and family can be difficult for employees, negatively impacting productivity, making recovery from major illnesses or injuries difficult, and in some cases, inhibiting the healthy development of children. The COVID pandemic has shown how difficult it can be for women, in particular, especially women of color, to balance work and protect their families. Virginians of color are less likely to have access to paid leave, and the Commission to Examine Racial and Economic Inequality, created by former Governor Northam, included a call for paid family and medical leave for workers among its policy recommendations. The 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) made it possible for some, but not all, employees to take time away from work, up to 12 weeks without pay, to deal with serious personal or family illness or to care for a new child, with protection for their position. Many workers cannot afford to take unpaid leave, however, without endangering their economic security. As women already face a real pay gap, many are forced to return to work before they are ready. **AAUW-VA strongly supports paid family and medical leave and is advocating for the establishment of a public program in Virginia (SB 1). Prospects for approval of such a program are slim, at this point.**

Status of legislation:

Senator Barbara Favola has introduced SB 15 to establish paid family leave as a class of (private) insurance. The bill defines “paid family leave insurance” as an insurance policy issued to an employer related to a benefit program provided to an employee to pay for the employee’s income loss due to several circumstances, including the birth or adoption of a child and care of a family member who has a serious health condition. **Delegate Kathy Byron has introduced a similar bill, HB 1156.** Byron’s bill is intended to be compatible with Favola’s bill increasing the chance of passage after crossover. Favola’s staff explained that current VA policy does not currently permit the sale of family leave insurance by a private insurer. Both Favola’s and Byron’s bills aim to redress this. According to Favola’s office, the Bureau of Insurance studied this issue and advocates for the change; Favola’s bill matches the recommendations of that study. No businesses are currently opposing the bill. Although there have been concerns that this bill could take some of the steam away from efforts to establish a public program, we understand that in other states where this has been done, private insurance plans have helped “change the culture” and gotten businesses on board.

Other Patrons of SB 1: Boysko (chief co-patron), Dunnivant, and Del. Kaye Kory. SB 1 has been referred to the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee. Members of the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee: Saslaw (chair), Norment, Newman, Obenshain, Lucas, Spruill, Edwards, Deeds, Barker, Marsden, Ebbin, Lewis, Surovell, Mason, and Bell)

No patrons, at present, for Byron’s bill, HB 1156. It has been referred to Subcommittee #2 of the House Committee on Commerce and Energy. Subcommittee #2 Members: Webert (chair); Ware; Ransone; Adams, L.R.; McNamara; Ward; Bagby; Sullivan; Gooditis; and Byron

Members of the Senate C&L Committee and Subcommittee #2 of the House C&E Committee are a priority for outreach. Please indicate if you are a constituent. Draft letter or script for telephone call:

As your constituent, I am (sending this letter/email/calling you) on behalf of myself and the more than 1,000 members of the American Association of University Women in 24 branches in the Commonwealth of Virginia, to urge your support for (SB 1) (HB 1156) that will establish paid family leave as a class of insurance.

Cont.

AAUW of Virginia is committed to achieving equity for women and girls and creating a secure economic future for all Virginians. At some point, most workers will need time away from work to deal with a serious personal or family illness or to care for a new child. The situation becomes more acute for those individuals in the “sandwich” generation, i.e., caring for aging parents and for children. And the COVID pandemic has only worsened the situation, especially for working women. Many workers, especially women who are already disadvantaged by the gender pay gap, cannot afford to lose pay while caring for a new baby, an aging parent or family members with COVID when they are forced to return to work prematurely. AAUW-VA strongly supports measures to make Paid Family Leave insurance available to employers and employees in Virginia. It is the right and necessary thing to do for Virginia’s workers and their families. And it will go a long way to help businesses recruit and retain the workers they need.

Can we count on you to support legislation to this end during this legislative session?

Additional key points for phone call or legislative staff discussion:

- Paid family and medical leave insurance will make it possible for women to stay home with newborns and young children, and decrease infant and post-neonatal mortality rates.
- It allows ill or injured adults time to recover from sickness and gives family members time to care for sick relatives, including older family members with health problems.
- This, in turn, helps those individuals recover from illness and avoid complications, reducing hospital readmissions and health costs.
- Racial health and economic disparities are compounded by the lack of access to paid family and medical leave. Women of color suffer most from the continuation of these disparities and challenges.
- Workers’ access to paid family and medical leave will strengthen economic security for Virginia’s families, especially its families of color

MEMBERSHIP

Margaret Batko
Membership VP

As February opens, there has been no change in membership. As the chart below shows, there are 58 members, one a life member who has not actually renewed her Branch membership but continues to show in national records.

Member Count Summary:

Active Member: **58**

National Life Member: **8** Paid: **50** Yet To Renew: **0**

State Paid: **57** Yet To Renew: **1**

Branch Dual Member: **0** Paid: **57** Yet To Renew: **1**

As reported last month, there has been a large membership fluctuation, with many losses and some new members. We have contacted former members in multiple fashion to encourage them to renew, but we have not been as successful as we would have liked. As we look forward to the next few years, it feels like we will be refighting old issues, relitigating old cases. Education has become one of the latest trigger items, including censorship of books and restrictions on what can be taught in schools. As Membership Vice-President I am concerned that membership loss will negatively impact our efforts on issues related to women's rights and progress. I would encourage each member to invite a new person to join.



AUTUMN LEAVES

Susan Cash
AAUW Funds Chair

The Alexandria Branch extends its heartfelt thanks to those who have donated to the Autumn Leaves 2021 fundraising drive. Through December, \$2,200 has been raised.

In our Autumn Leaves 2021 drive, the funds raised will be divided equally between the Alexandria Branch and AAUW National's Greatest Needs Fund. Fifty percent of each donation is tax-deductible. The portion retained by the Alexandria Branch will be used for the Branch's support of the Christ House meals program. Our drawing for prizes was held at the holiday luncheon on December 5.

We will continue to accept donations throughout the program year. To contribute to Autumn Leaves 2021, please mail a check (in the amount of your choice), payable to AAUW-Alexandria, with Autumn Leaves on the memo line, to Susan Cash, 8402 West Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308.

BRANCH ACTIVITIES



MYSTERY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Susan Werner

The Mystery Book Discussion Group will meet on February 22, 2022, at 7PM. Our February mystery is The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman. We will continue to meet via Zoom due to COVID and cold weather. All Branch members are welcome. If you have questions about the Mystery Book Discussion Group or suggestions for future mysteries, please contact Susan Werner: susan.werner1@verizon.net.



FRANCOPHILE GROUP

Susan Cash

Our next meeting is planned for Saturday, March 12 at 3 p.m, via Zoom. Our topic will be the book *A Man in France* by Philip Ogley. We will also share impressions of exhibitions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (*Monet in Boston*) and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (*Man Ray: The Paris Years*).

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83697404950?pwd=eWExZDVsaWlwYkthTWZHNHljeFQvZz09>

Meeting ID: 836 9740 4950, Passcode: 439933

One tap mobile: +13017158592,,83697404950#,,, *439933# US

Please join us. For more information I can be reached at 703/587-4790, scash5558@gmail.com.



GREAT DECISIONS 2022

Lynn O'Connell

OUR FIRST IN-PERSON MEETING IN FOREVER!

Sunday, Feb 27, 7 pm – US Foreign Policy Challenges

Speaker: John Allen (<https://www.brookings.edu/experts/john-r-allen/>), President of the Brookings Institution. Previously, he was a Marine General with commands in Afghanistan and Iraq, and then served as President Obama's Special Envoy to the Coalition Against ISIS.

Location: Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria, VA 22308

Email Lynn at lynnocConnellva@gmail.com with questions.

Anyone Else Interested in a Book?

Below is a list of those who have pre-ordered a book. Please let Lynn (lynnocConnellva@gmail.com) know, and she can add you to an order that Aldersgate's Great Decision group is preparing to submit for additional books.

Lane Stone
Diane Schrier
Margaret Batko
Sylvia Linke
Lynn O'Connell
Susan Werner
Ruth Bennett
Patty Steelman

Peter Kent
Gail Kalin
Ross Paul (via Gail)
Danielle Beach
Priscilla Wiener



DIVERSITY BOOK GROUP

Bonnie Hershberg

A Well-Received “American” Novel

An American Marriage is at once a compelling love story and a well-crafted commentary on the times in which we live. Burdened by the history of racial discrimination, the three main characters circle around the present and future while struggling with forces out of their control. Over a dozen members of the Diversity Book Group participated in a discussion of Tayari Jones’ fourth novel, everyone liked the book. Lane Stone, who served as our volunteer facilitator this month, started the meeting by asking each participant if the book made them cry or swear. Many responded that the novel evoked a variety of emotions, including among them deep-felt sadness and anger. All also agreed that the main characters were well drawn and that they evolved and grew in different ways over time. Many of the discussants said they were drawn to one or another at various times in the narrative, as the narrator changed with each chapter sharing his or her particular point of view. An American Marriage (2018) is the most recent work of a deservedly celebrated author; her others are also novels—Silver Sparrow (2011), The Untelling (2005), and Leaving Atlanta (2002).

The Diversity Book Group will meet virtually on Monday, February 14, from 7-8:30 pm to discuss The Distance Between Us by Reyna Grande. All are welcome. If you’d like to join us, please email me at hersh3b@gmail.com.

KVELLS AND KUDOS

CONGRATULATIONS TO MONIQUE MILES. We're sorry to see her move to Richmond but so happy that she will be Virginia's new Deputy Attorney General of the Government Operations & Transactions Division role. She will oversee 9 secretariats, including more than 150 agencies, departments, authorities, boards, and commissions: Agriculture & Forestry, Administration, Commerce & Trade, Finance, Labor, Natural and Historic Resources, Transportation, Veterans & Defense Affairs, and Independent Agencies.



Our membership VP and resident artist, MARGARET BATKO, created this jewel of a hat –



An invitation from the Southwest District -

**Southwest District Meeting
Saturday, February 12th, 2022
2:30 – 4:00 PM**



Join your Southwest sisters and others for an informative and enjoyable program to meet our
AAUW–VA President Nominee for 2022-2024

Lane Stone

This will be a Zoom event so no need to travel.

Lane is an active and contributing member of her Alexandria Branch, serving as past Co-President and current newsletter editor. Also she was a former College/University Chair for AAUW VA.

She is a prolific writer and published author of several mystery novels.

Check out her website for a preview:

www.LaneStoneBooks.com

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86213742771?pwd=VEJQWXZhakdGKzNrZEnd0NqK2hFQT09>

Meeting ID: 862 1374 2771

Passcode: 260091

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,86213742771#

Mt. Vernon AAUW Presents

Saturday, February 12, 10:30 am

Via Zoom

[Click Here to Register](#)



Lisa Gruenberg

Author of

My City of Dreams

A Holocaust tale, but a so very much the modern-day story of the relationship between a daughter and her father, about how trauma travels down through the generations, and how we find meaning in our lives.

Born in Ottawa, Canada and raised in Syracuse, NY, Lisa is a physician, medical educator, and writer. She began writing in 2004, when her father, a Viennese Holocaust survivor, began having nightmares and flashbacks about his past and about his sister, Mia, who disappeared into Germany in 1941 when she was just fifteen years old. In 2005, Lisa traveled to Vienna, Austria and Germany to trace the fates of Mia, her extended family, friends and neighbors. She wove their stories together, linking them with photographs, archival documents, family letters, diaries, her father's writing, his genealogy research, and the joyful tales he told her long ago.

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BOOK

My City of Dreams can be purchased in hardcover on Amazon and is available on Kindle and Audible. It will be available in the Fairfax County Library by mid February.

FROM AAUW-NATIONAL

Did you know that, as an AAUW member, you have the right to comment on any proposed changes to our organization's bylaws before they are put up for a member vote? As we prepare for AAUW's national election in the spring, now is the time to share your thoughts! **The comment period is open, and we invite members to weigh in through February 2, 2022, at 5 p.m. ET.**

The changes recommended by the AAUW Board of Directors and AAUW Governance Committee this year would streamline two important organizational functions: nominations for the board and timing for those eligible to vote in AAUW elections.

To learn more about the proposed changes and submit your feedback, please visit the [election page on the AAUW website](#).

We encourage your participation and look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Best regards,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia T. Brown". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Julia T. Brown, Esq.
Board Chair



FROM AAUW – VA

AAUW-Virginia's DE&I zoom meeting was held on Saturday, Jan. 22. One important statement made was that you should look at people with different opinions with wonder and find out why they feel that way. This is more effective than dismissing their ideas. Here's a link: <https://youtu.be/lHYFDV2XYRc>.

2022 CALENDAR – ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

(CHECK BACK OFTEN)

2/3/22, 7:00p, Board Meeting
2/13/22, 2-4 Program meeting - Author's panel
2/14/22, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Burke Library, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, hersh3b@gmail.com
2/22/22, 7:00, Mystery book group, Contact: Susan Werner, susan.werner1@verizon.net.
2/27/22, 7:00p, Great Decisions –In-person, Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Rd., Alexandria, Contact Lynn O'Connell at lynnococonnellva@gmail.com
3/3/22, 7:00p, Board Meeting
3/10/22, 7:00p, Great Decisions –Contact Lynn O'Connell at lynnococonnellva@gmail.com
3/14/22, 7p: WBCCF: Diversity Book Group, Location: Burke Library, Contact: Bonnie Hershberg, hersh3b@gmail.com
3/20/22 2-4 pm Program meeting - African-American Women's History
3/22/22, 7:00p, Mystery book group, Contact: Susan Werner, susan.werner1@verizon.net.
3/26/22, AAUW-VA Conference, part 1, Harrisonburg, In person
3/30/22, Christ House Dinner. Contact: Margaret Zebrowski, (Mmzebrow@aol.com) & Jan Jaynes (janjjoek@verizon.net)

2021-2022 Branch Officers

Co-presidents: Sylvia Linke (SFLaauw@gmail.com) & Diane Schrier (diane.schrier@gmail.com)

VP Membership: Margaret Batko (margaretwb@verizon.net)

VP Program: Committee

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

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

Diversity and Inclusion Reps: Dr. Gail Kalin (gailkalin@yahoo.com)

Public Policy Chair: Virginia Kress (vmvkress@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Anne Simpson (aseyedoc@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Lane Stone (info@LaneStoneBooks.com)

Special Interest Group Leaders:

Campus Outreach: 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 (lynnococonnellva@gmail.com)

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