



# FOCUS

August 2019

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## August and September Gatherings

Do you have the following dates on your calendar: August 22 and September 19 at 5:00? These start of the year/welcome dinners at my house will be a way for us to gather and ideally bring in new potential members.

This month on the 22nd, Dottie Joslin and Kitty Lou Smith will present on topics that interest them after we share a simple meal. We will then have a business meeting, including presentation of the proposed branch budget. People are encouraged to stay for the business meeting.

A buffet will be provided so people don't have to cook or bring food, but if anyone wants to bring home-cooked food to either meeting, let me know.

Please RSVP to me at 703-830-1998 or via e-mail at [dianneblais@aol.com](mailto:dianneblais@aol.com). Also, since no one has yet offered to present in September, please consider giving a short (2–10 minute) presentation.

In AAUW solidarity,

Dianne Blais  
5211 Gunpowder Road  
Fairfax

**Book and Author Brunch is coming!**  
**Saturday, November 2, 2019, 11 AM - 3PM**  
**Springfield Golf & Country Club • 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield**  
**\$45 per person (includes luncheon and silent auction)**

What could be better than good friends, good conversation, good books, a beautiful setting all shared over a delicious lunch?

Four delightful authors will share their experiences writing their books then will happily mix and mingle and sign their works.

Don't miss this highlight of our year, which includes the always popular Silent Auction.

And of course, you will be "doing good" at the same time because as always proceeds go to fund our scholarships to women returning to school to fulfill their dream of a college degree.

I am looking for volunteers for any and all of the pieces that it takes to put this event together.

Please think about what you would like to help with. It will really take all of us working together to pull this together.

Here are some possibilities: silent auction, both collecting items and putting together the baskets; possible local authors to invite; hosting and introducing authors; publicity; reservations; table decorations.

Contact your friends and all the book lovers you know and invite them. Put together a table of booky-types who are happy to contribute to women's education. Get the details from the flyer included in this email and make your reservation now!

Paulette Miller

### **Silent Auction**

Dear Loyal Fairfax City Branch AAUW Members,

Where would we be without the Book & Author Luncheon? So many people enjoy this meal and afternoon of book talk that we couldn't think about not going forward with it. Thanks to Dianne Blais for taking the lead and volunteering as President so we can continue as the Fairfax City Branch, and proceed with our fundraiser.

Can we still put on a big project such as the Book & Author Luncheon and make a go of it? Yes, of course, especially with Paulette at the helm. She stepped up and didn't blink about taking on the task even though she is doing a thousand other volunteer jobs.

Last year's Silent Auction was quite successful. We were able to donate over \$3,000 to a George Mason University student just from proceeds from the Silent Auction. As the Silent Auction Chair, I have started collecting things (actually begging for items), but I know that people will either be receptive or just say no thanks. The items that really seem to be of interest to bidders are restaurant gift cards, spa certificates, overnight stays, theater tickets, various gift cards, wine, and theme baskets. If you can just request one gift card from a business you frequent, that would be extremely helpful. More is better. Would you be willing to donate a themed basket? Or another appealing item that you haven't used in a while?

I need a committee to help me, and I would like to count on those of you who have helped in the past as well as anyone else who is interested. There isn't a lot of work, and we are finished by 2:30 p.m. on November 2. Call or send me a text (571-214-5056), email ([spalomaki@dspalomaki.com](mailto:spalomaki@dspalomaki.com)) or leave a voice message (703-455-9262.) I would like to think I am a super woman and can do this project by myself, but it just isn't possible. So go out to that new or favorite restaurant, spa, inn, hairdresser, etc. and ask for a donation.

Many thanks for your efforts for the branch,

Sonja Palomaki

### Gerrymandering, the Courts, and What it all Means in the States

In late June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on gerrymandering cases from North Carolina and Maryland that could impact upcoming elections nationwide. In *Rucho v. Common Cause*, the Court ruled that federal courts cannot hear cases regarding partisan gerrymandering, a practice in which the party that controls the state legislature draws voting maps to help elect its candidates. This decision effectively leaves it up to legislators—many of whom created the problem of partisan gerrymandering in the first place—to address the issue. The week prior, the Court issued a narrow ruling in *Virginia House of Delegates v. Bethune-Hill* that will likely leave in place Virginia's newly established electoral map. The case considered a narrow question: whether members of Virginia's House of Delegates could challenge a lower court's ruling on an electoral map. But the effect is that a map drawn by a court-appointed expert in response to racial gerrymandering and used in Virginia's primary elections is likely to be used for the general election in November.

While these cases affect the presidential and congressional elections in 2020 and beyond, they also impact the power of state legislatures. This includes the policies state legislatures advance and their once-a-decade power to draw district boundaries after the census. At both the state and federal level, AAUW has long advocated expanding voting rights and ensuring equitable political participation and representation.

#### AAUW Diversity Statement

In principle and in practice, AAUW values and seeks an inclusive membership, workforce, leadership team, and board of directors. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, race, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status.

### Interest Groups

#### Afternoon Literature

We'll meet at 1 p.m. on **September 18** at Jean Arnold's home, 14611 Algretus Drive, Centreville. Our book is *The Ramblers*, by Aidan Donnelley Rowley. Be prepared for 400 pages! Please let Jean know by Sunday, September 15 if you plan to attend (703-830-8189 or [arnoldjh52@aol.com](mailto:arnoldjh52@aol.com)).

#### Musical Notes

We usually meet on the last Thursday of the month, depending on member's availability. In other words, we are very flexible. We meet at 1:00 and watch a video of an opera, sometimes the entire work, other times only half. Our videos are from the top opera houses in the world, so the quality is always excellent. All members are welcome as are guests. Since we start with a dessert, the hostess would like to know if you can make it. All meetings are held at the home of Olga Burns, 10623 Timberidge Rd., Fairfax Station. Our first meeting will be on **September 26**.

Olga Burns  
703-239-2876  
[rubato12@aol.com](mailto:rubato12@aol.com)

## Night Owls

Night Owls will meet on Tuesday, **September 10** at the home of Sonja Palomaki to discuss *Barren Ground* by Ellen Glasgow, led by Olga Burns. Please let Sonja know if you will be attending at 703-455-9262 or [spalomaki@dspalomaki.com](mailto:spalomaki@dspalomaki.com). Sonja's address is 7014 Ebbtide Lane, Burke.

For planning purposes, below is a list of the books we will be reading through July 2020:

October 8 – *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee

November 12 – *Where the Crawdads Sing*, by Delia Owens (spotlighted author presenter at Fall for the Book)

December 10 – *There, There*, by Tommy Orange

January 14 – *Educated*, by Tara Westover

February (Sat. TBA), *The Japanese Lover*, by Isabelle Allende

March 10 - *A Week in Winter* by Maeve Binchy

April 14 – *Little Fires Everywhere* by Celeste Ng

May 12 - *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman

June 9– Planning Meeting

July 14 - *The Leavers* by Lisa Ko

New members are always welcome! Please contact Paulette Miller for more information. (703 250-0876; [psmiller10847@verizon.net](mailto:psmiller10847@verizon.net) )

## Salon

Discussing events, sharing ideas and opinions, listening to other's concerns sounds like a great way to spend a couple of hours once a month. Let's gather at Giardino Italian Restaurant in the Kings Park Shopping Center with items that could spark discussion gleaned from the papers, magazines, online, wherever. Or if you've come across something that has surprised you and you'd like to share it with others, bring that up. If life has been too busy of late and you don't have anything to mention just come and join in the conversation. We'll meet on Wednesday, **September 4** at noon and see how that time and day work out for people. Feel free to give me a call at 703-239-2876 if you have any questions.

Olga Burns  
[rubato12@aol.com](mailto:rubato12@aol.com)

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It's not too late to renew your membership! Call  
Dottie Joslin for the details (703-591-9035).

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**August 26: Women's Equality Day!**

This date in 2019 marks the 100th Anniversary  
of the ratification of the 19th Amendment  
to the U.S. Constitution, giving women the  
right to vote.

*Celebration Time!*

**Branch Website:** <http://fairfaxcity-va.aauw.net/>

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**Interest Group Chairs:**

Afternoon Literature: Jean Arnold  
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