

AAUW of Virginia Conference

CELEBRATING VISIONARY WOMEN 1920–2020

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Alexandria - Old Town, 625 First Street, Alexandria

April 17–19, 2020

Mark your calendars for the 2020 AAUW of Virginia State Conference at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Alexandria-Old Town, April 17-19, where we will begin our celebration of 100 years of women's suffrage in the United States. In this historic year, the conference will give us an opportunity to reflect on and celebrate what the courageous women of a century ago accomplished for women. However, we will not forget that it took nearly half a century after the Constitution was amended before women of color could cast their ballots. Our celebration will also recognize the 55th anniversary of the groundbreaking Voting Rights Act of 1965, which prohibited racial discrimination in voting. The conference is a setting for meeting like-minded AAUW members from around the state, hearing their stories, and learning what their branches are doing and how they are doing it. Hopefully, the cherry blossoms will be in bloom!

Details on conference registration and contact information for the hotel are available in the Winter/Spring *Vision*. Go to https://aauw-va.aauw.net/files/2020/02/Vision_Winter-Spring-2020-FINALFINALpub-compressed.pdf. Early-bird registration (\$95) ends on March 20.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: "Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote," **Janice E. Ruth**, Curator, Library of Congress and chief of the Library of Congress Manuscript Division. Ms. Ruth previously held positions as the assistant chief, manuscript specialist in American women's history, writer-editor, reference librarian, and processing technician and curated the library's exhibition, "Shall Not Be Denied: Women Fight for the Vote." She is one of the authors of *American Women: A Library of Congress Guide for the Study of Women's History and Culture in the United States* (2001), and *Women Who Dare: Women of the Suffrage Movement* (2006).

SATURDAY LUNCHEON SPEAKER: **Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.**, Superintendent of the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), will join us for Saturday lunch to talk about the real-world laboratory of a public-school system. Tasked with a mission to ensure that "every student succeeds," the ACPS serves over 15,000 students who come from more than 114 countries and speak 119 languages.

AAUW of Virginia 2020 Women of Achievement will be honored:

State Senator Janet Howell exemplifies the word "achievement." As a volunteer, she first became a community leader: PTA president, Reston Community Association president, chair of the State Board of Social Services. In 1992 her leadership abilities and expertise led her to the Virginia Senate. In her eighth term and second in seniority in the Senate, she is now the first woman to chair the Finance and

Appropriations Committee, one of the most powerful positions in the Senate. She also serves on the Education and Health, Privileges and Elections, and the Rules standing committees.

By 2019, **Ana Humphrey** was a National Merit Scholar, high school senior, and valedictorian at T.C. Williams High School, in Alexandria. Her scientific research on exoplanets earned her the first place \$250,000 prize in what is now the Regeneron Science Talent Search, surpassing more than 2,000 other student competitors. Her research on planets outside our solar system (exoplanets) won Best of Category in Physics and Astronomy at the 2018 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair. She currently attends Harvard College and plans to joint concentrate in astrophysics and physics and continue studying exoplanets.

In addition, **workshops** and **panel discussions** are part of the program. See the *Winter/Spring Vision* for details.

AAUW-VA Guest Room Rate is \$129 plus tax. This rate is also available 2 days before and after the conference. The last day to reserve a room at the conference rate is March 17. The *Vision* has a link to the Holiday Inn website and a phone number for reservations.



Status of the Equal Rights Amendment

On January 27, 2020, Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the ERA, satisfying the requirement that three-quarters of the states ratify an amendment to the U.S. Constitution before it is incorporated into that document. Yet the status of the ERA remains uncertain.

One issue is that the 1982 deadline for ratification originally adopted when the ERA passed Congress has long passed. A precedent for having no deadline for ratification was set when the 27th Amendment, which had no stated deadline, was ratified 203 years after it was passed by Congress in 1789. This amendment referred to salary increases for Congress members taking effect only after the beginning of the next Congress.

Hoping to solidify their case, the House of Representatives passed a bill in February that voided any deadline for ratification of the ERA. A companion bill in the U.S. Senate must pass before the end of the current Congress for it to become law. The President cannot veto this bill, according to Article V of the Constitution.

A second issue is whether a state can withdraw its ratification of an amendment. Since they ratified the ERA and before the 1982 original deadline, Idaho, Kentucky, Nebraska, Tennessee, and South Dakota withdrew their approval of the ERA. No such state vote has ever been recognized as valid, although it has been attempted several times. For example, during ratification of the 14th Amendment, granting citizenship and equal rights to African Americans and formerly enslaved persons, New Jersey and Ohio attempted to rescind their vote, but this request was ignored. Similar events marked the ratification of the 15th and 19th amendments. Again, the precedent has been clear: once three-quarters of the states have ratified an amendment it is automatically incorporated into the Constitution.

It is unclear what will happen in the Senate regarding the ratification deadline, so the final outcome regarding the ERA remains murky. It is clear, however, that since it was originally passed in Congress, public support for the amendment has grown to more than one half of voters throughout the country.

Full text of the ERA:

Section 1: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2: The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3: This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

Source: ERA, Frequently Asked Questions, <https://www.equalrightsamendment.org/faq>. © 2018 Alice Paul Institute.

AAUW of Virginia Elections

Voting for the election of state officers, bylaws amendments, and public policy priorities will begin April 26. It is very important that you cast your online vote by the deadline of May 16th because we need a quorum of seven percent of the membership for the election. If we don't have a quorum, the new state officers cannot take office on July 1, 2020. Please take the time to vote as a responsible AAUW of Virginia member.

The schedule for 2020 is as follows:

- **February 10–March 22:** Verify that your email address is accurate in the AAUW Member Services Database (MSD).
- **April 26:** Online voting opens.
- **May 16:** Online voting closes at 11:45 p.m.

The Nominating Committee has chosen a slate of officers for 2020–2022.

- Co-Presidents—Leslie Tourigny and Suzanne Rothwell
- Co-Vice Presidents for Public Policy—Susan Burk and Denise Murden
- Vice President for Communications—Patsy Quick
- Vice President for Program—Nadine James



Public Policy Priorities

Equality, Individual Rights, and Social Justice

- Support additional actions, as required, so that the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) becomes the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution
- Support access to civil and constitutional rights, including affirmative action and voting rights
- Support measures to insure fair, nonpartisan redistricting, and transparency in government
- Support self-determination of women's health decisions, including reproductive rights
- Assure freedom from violence and fear of violence, including bullying, hate crimes, sexual harassment, and human trafficking
- Advocate for diversity and inclusion as mission-based values

Economic Security

- Support adoption of measures to close the gender pay gap and promote fairness in compensation and benefits
- Support equitable access and advancement in employment and leadership opportunities for women
- Advocate for quality, affordable health care and family planning services; dependent care; and paid family, medical, and sick leave

- Support a livable minimum wage standard

Education

- Enforce Title IX and all other civil rights laws pertaining to education
- Provide adequate and equitable funding for quality public education for all students
- Oppose use of public funds for nonpublic elementary and secondary schools and to charter schools that do not adhere to the civil rights and accountability standards required of other public schools
- Promote and protect programs that meet the educational needs of girls and women at all levels, including STEM fields
- Increase support for and access to affordable higher education for women and disadvantaged populations

For information about the **by-laws amendments**, see the Winter/Spring edition of *The Vision* at https://aauw-va.aauw.net/files/2020/02/Vision_Winter-Spring-2020-FINALFINALpub-compressed.pdf.

If you're a registered Democrat, don't forget to vote in the Presidential Primary election on March 3! Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. If you're a registered Republican, the date and hours are the same, but the contest is quite different!

Welcome to Padmini Chilappagari

I was born and brought up in India. I have a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Computer Science and worked for five years as a Software Developer and Senior Software Developer in India. I then moved to the U.S. in 2015 to pursue higher education. I have a master's degree in Information Systems from George Mason University, and I graduated in May 2017 with an "Outstanding Academic Achievement" honors award. On a personal front, I married Srinivas Chepuri in 2017.

I learned about AAUW when I was applying for jobs after I got my master's degree. I was lucky to get a chance to work in AAUW, Washington, D.C., as a Senior Website Associate, responsible for handling 500 branch sites from August 2017 to November 2017. During my term as the Site Resources manager, I had a chance to meet with many members of AAUW and led an information session for all the AAUW directors on how to create and manage their Tech Trek websites. Because of visa sponsorship issues, I had to resign in November 2017. My husband and I moved to Chantilly, and I work as a Software Developer for the client, NIH-Maryland. Though I worked at national headquarters for only four months, it had a great impact on me. The STEM workforce drive, Tech Trek camps, and the mission to reduce the gender pay gap have influenced me to become an AAUW member and contribute to the society.



Book and Author Luncheon is coming!

Saturday, November 14, 2020, 11 AM - 2PM
Springfield Golf & Country Club • 8301 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield
\$45 per person (includes luncheon and silent auction)

Save the date for our biggest event of the year! We have four delightful authors lined up to share their experiences, mix and mingle, and sign copies of their books.

What could be better than good friends, good conversation, good books, a beautiful setting all shared over a delicious lunch? And of course, you will be “doing good” at the same time because as always **proceeds go to fund our scholarships for women returning to school** to fulfill their dream of a college degree.

An enthusiastic organizing committee has already met to begin the planning. But we are always looking for **volunteers** for any and all of the pieces necessary to make this event happen smoothly.

Please think about what you would like to help with. Pulling this event together is a huge job, and we really need help from everyone to carry it off. Here are some possibilities: silent auction, both collecting items and putting together the baskets; hosting and introducing authors; publicity; reservations; table decorations.

Paulette Miller and Anita Light, Co-Chairs

Glass Recycling

Where can you drop off your clean, dry glass containers for recycling? You probably know about the purple glass-only drop-off containers (“purple cans”) at the I-66 transfer station (the County’s preferred drop-off location) and the Government Center. Now a purple container is parked along Judicial Drive across from the Fairfax City Post Office. Look for it in the parking lot of the Burkholder Center, the former location of the FCPS School Board office. Drop in your glass and hear it smash! For more information about this successful recycling program, go to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/news/regional-approach-glass-recycling-leads-creation-purple-can-club>

“Save Me Twice”

Member Elfriede Dustin, one of our featured authors at last fall’s Book & Author Luncheon, is pleased that Fairfax County Public Library system has approved her book, “Save Me Twice,” for addition to its collection. Look for it in the catalog a few months down the road. You can read it for free if you borrow it from the library!

Run, Dianne, Run!

Our Co-President, Dianne Blais, would like to be on the November ballot as the Green Party candidate for Virginia’s 11th district. To do this she needs to get 1,000 valid signatures of registered voters in the 11th district. To be on the safe side, 1,500 signatures is recommended. The 11th runs from Reston, south through Vienna and Fairfax to Quantico. There are 160 precincts in the 11th, and the ideal would be to have two people cover each precinct during the March 3 presidential primary. Although anyone can download the petition form and use any legal-size clipboard, Dianne can supply the petitions, business cards (which gives her website DianneforCongress.com), and clipboards. Only U.S. citizens can get signatures, and each page must be notarized. If anyone is willing to help Dianne get signatures (due

June 9) on March 3 or any other day, she would greatly appreciate it. Call or email Dianne if you would like to volunteer at 703-830-1998 or dianneblais@aol.com.

Interest Groups

Afternoon Lit

March: We will not meet.

Wednesday, **April 15**, at 1 p.m.

Home of Prativa Prasad, 9030 Scott Street, Springfield

balramprasad@gmail.com

703-866-4038



The group will discuss *The Mature Mind: The Positive Power of the Aging Brain* by Gene D. Cohen. Please let Prativa know if you plan to come by Sunday, April 12.

Looking ahead, the selection for May 20 is *Boundaries of the Wind*, a memoir by Urmilla Khanna. Urmilla was one of the authors who spoke at the 2016 Book & Author Luncheon.

Musical Notes

Dates and programs are yet to be determined. If you would like to attend, call Olga Burns around the middle of the month to see if the information is available (rubato12@aol.com or 703-239-2786).

Night Owls

Night Owls will meet on Tuesday, **March 10**, at the home of Joyce Grimes, 8550 Fisher Woods Drive, Lorton, to discuss ***A Week in Winter***, by Maeve Binchey, led by Paulette Miller. A light supper will be served at 6:30 p.m., followed by our discussion.

Please let Joyce know if you will be attending (joyce_grimes@cox.net or 703-550-8722).

In April we will meet on Tuesday, **April 14**, at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Ida Portland, 10810 Glen Mist Lane, Fairfax. A light supper will be served followed by our discussion of ***Little Fires Everywhere*** by Celeste Ng, led by Barbara Klementz.

Please let Ida know if you will be attending (idaport@verizon.net or 703-352-0125).

For planning purposes:

May 12: *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, by Gale Honeyman

June 9: Planning Meeting

July 14: *The Leavers*, by Lisa Ko

New members are always welcome! Please contact Paulette Miller for more information.

(psmiller10847@verizon.net or 703-250-0876)

Salon

We'll meet on **March 4** and **April 1** at noon at Villa Bella, 6050 Burke Commons Road, Burke. Bring a print article that raises an issue of current interest or controversy for group discussion. Please let Olga Burns know if you're planning to come so she can reserve a table that fits everyone (rubato12@aol.com or 703-239-2786).

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

Officers:

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Interest Group Chairs:

Afternoon Literature: Jean Arnold
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Night Owls: Paulette Miller
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Musical Notes: Olga Burns
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Salon: Olga Burns
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