



THE SCHOONER – February 2024

INSIDE:

Co-presidents' letter	1
Branch Notes	2
Branch Activities	9
Calendar	16
Contacts	16

SAVE THESE DATES:

2/1 7p Board Meeting
2/8 7p Great Decisions
2/12 7p Diversity Book
Group
2/25 2p Program Meeting
2/27 7p Mystery book
group
2/28 Lobby Day (Virtual)
2/29 6:30p Gourmet Out

Dear Friends,

Our year has started off with very cold and warm intermingling. Climate change is so much fun. Our branch has started off its year very actively. However, it's important for the health of our organization that everyone be involved. Join an activity; start an activity – we'll support you. Take a board position. We are active women who are involved in every aspect of life and we need to support each other.

Our meeting with the Superintendent of Schools was amazing. She is knowledgeable and very enthusiastic. Our Human Trafficking group met and came up with new ideas. Diversity and Mystery book clubs also had an active January, as did French and Opera. We are also working on an exciting Stem Project for Middle School girls with National. Please volunteer to help. Lobby Day is Jan. 31. For those who can't participate there will be a virtual lobby day on Feb. 25th. Education is definitely involved this year, as are bills for justice reform, taxes, extending the repairs of the Alexandria waterfront, etc.

Diane Schrier & Sylvia Linke, co-presidents

BRANCH NOTES

Leslie Tourigny
VP for Programs

January's Program Featured the Alexandria City Public Schools Superintendent,
Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt



Education has been a primary focus of AAUW since the organization's founding back in 1881, and here it is 2024, and it's still a primary focus. Some of the issues are exactly the same more than 100 years later--and there are a whole host of new issues that could never be imagined back then.

On January 21, 2024, our Zoom program provided *An Update on Public Education in the City of Alexandria*, and we could not have had a more qualified speaker than the esteemed Superintendent of the Alexandria City Public Schools, Dr. Melanie Kay-Wyatt.

Dr. Kay-Wyatt is a native of Virginia whose background spans a wide spectrum of experiences and roles in the teaching and learning field throughout the Commonwealth. Dr. Kay-Wyatt joined the Alexandria City Public Schools in 2021 as Executive Director for Human Resources and then became the Chief of Human Resources the following year. In 2023, she became the interim Superintendent, followed by her appointment as permanent Superintendent on July 1, 2023. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Mary Washington College, a master's in science in education from Old Dominion University, a Master of Education in Educational Leadership from the University of Mary Washington, and a doctorate from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Dr. Kay-Wyatt's presentation was comprehensive, touching upon many of the responsibilities and challenges faced by public school systems as they strive to provide a safe learning experience for their students and a top-notch working environment for their teachers and staff. Following her presentation, she answered questions from our members on a wide range of topics.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM MEETING

Sunday, February 25, 2024, 2:00 p.m. (Virtual)
State Senator Adam Ebbin

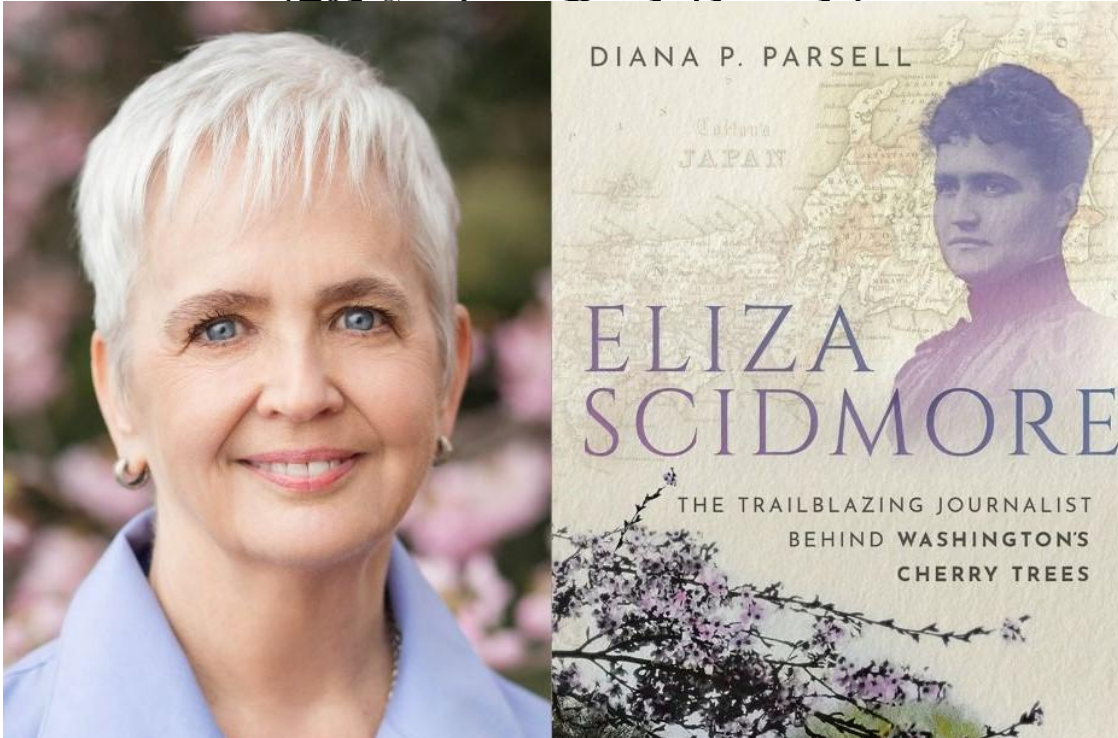
*A Status Report from VA Senator Adam Ebbin on the 2024 General Assembly
Session*



Please join us on Zoom on Sunday, February 25, 2024, 2:00 p.m.- 3:15 p.m., to hear from Senator Ebbin (39th District--All of Alexandria, part of Fairfax County), who will also answer our questions.

Join the Zoom Meeting
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83833322291>
Dial In +1 301 715-8592 US (Washington, DC)
Meeting ID: 838 3332 2291

Northern District Meeting
Saturday, March 9, 2024
10:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library



Diana Parsell, author and member of the AAUW McLean Area Branch, will introduce us to *Eliza Scidmore, the Early AAUW Member Behind Washington's Cherry Blossoms*.

As Diana's book reveals, Scidmore was an extraordinary journalist and travel writer who got her start as a newspaper correspondent in Gilded Age Washington in the 1870s. She wrote authoritative books on Alaska, Japan, Java, China and India; was an activist in the burgeoning U.S. conservation movement, in association with major figures like John Muir; and was the most influential female at the early National Geographic, as the first woman elected to the board (in 1892) and to publish photographs in the magazine. In 1920, Scidmore became an AAUW member. Copies of the book will be available for sale.

A business meeting will follow.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING 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, or socioeconomic status.

Your Generosity is Abundant

Thanks to all of you who contributed gift cards and the many toys and books to the Domestic Violence Program at our Holiday Luncheon on December 10. The gift cards totaled \$940, the largest amount we have ever collected. The director of the DVP, Debbie Evans, said in her acknowledgment letter, "Your donations will be used to assist families and individuals who been affected by domestic and sexual violence. We appreciate your kindness and generosity... We could not run this program without amazing individuals like yourselves."

*Sincerely,
Mary Ann Bier*

PLEASE NOTE: Voting on AAUW National bylaws changes will begin in April. This is a good time for you to be sure you are receiving emails from National. If you have unsubscribed in the past, please consider re-subscribing so you will receive an electronic ballot.

PRESERVING HERSTORY

Arlene Shapiro
Historian

We received a thank you note from the Alexandria Library for the donation of some of our historical records to their Local History/ Special Collections. This is located at the Barrett Branch. We're happy to partner with the library in preserving our herstory for future researchers and historians.



Local History / Special Collections
717 Queen Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
p: 703.746.1706 | f: 703.746.1720

15 September 2023

Arlene Shapiro
6216 Driftwood Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22310

Dear Arlene,

On behalf of Alexandria Library, Local History & Special Collections, thank you very much for your recent donation of records of the Alexandria chapter of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Your generous gift will be a welcome addition to our collections and serve as a valuable historical resource.

For tax purposes, we wanted to confirm in writing that *no goods or services were given in exchange for this donation.*

We will keep in touch and will be sure to let you know when any published guides or digitized materials become publicly available. And please let us know if, in the future, you have any additional materials that you would like to contribute towards our efforts to document local Alexandria and Virginia history and genealogy.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Crowe".

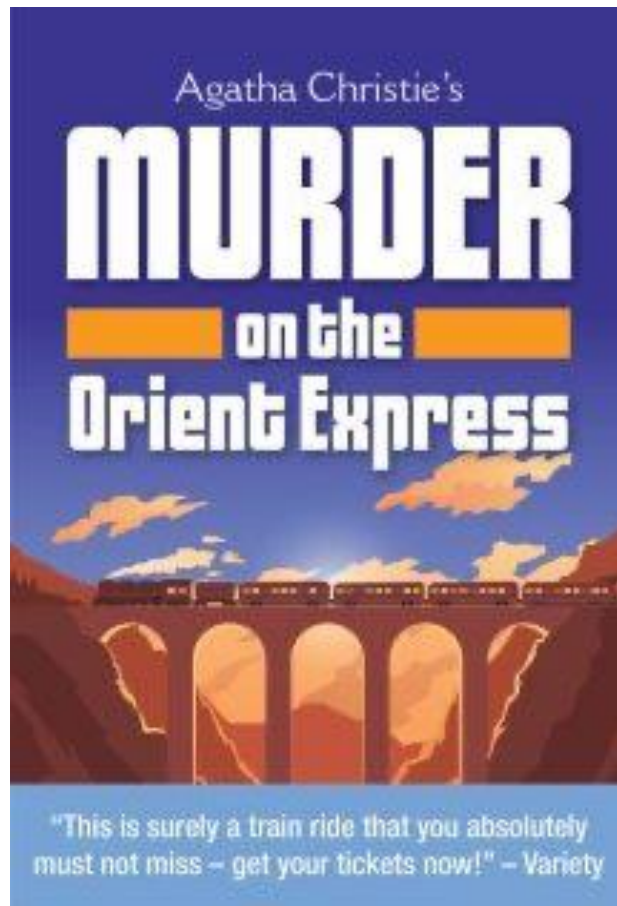
Katherine Crowe
Special Collections Librarian
kcrowe@alexlibraryva.org
703-746-6447

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia L. Walker".

Patricia L. Walker
Local History/Special Collections Branch Manager
pwalker@alexlibraryva.org
703-746-1719

LITTLE THEATER OF ALEXANDRIA FUNDRAISER

MARCH 22, 2024



The play is the classic Agatha Christie's, *Murder on the Orient Express*. This year Alexandria will provide savories for the pre-show reception and Mt Vernon will provide sweets. This is always a popular way to visit and enjoy an evening out. You are welcome to provide an appetizer or a non-alcoholic beverage (Mt Vernon provides the wine). We will need some volunteers to help with our part of the setup as well as with the clean-up at the end of the show.

- Contact Mary Ann Bier, marybier@comcast.net, 703-203-2942, if you would like to donate a food item or are able to volunteer at the reception.
- Contact Susan Werner, susan.werner1@verizon.net, 703-270-5378, to purchase and reserve tickets.
- Tickets are \$40 each – please consider buying two tickets to help us pay for our share of the 'house'. If you cannot attend, a donation is always welcome. \$16 is tax deductible. Proceeds support AAUW educational funds.
- The theater is located at 600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Parking is on the street, or in some closed businesses' parking lots. Please read the signs!
- The reception starts at 7:00 pm and the play starts at 8:00 pm.

CHRIST HOUSE SOUP KITCHEN

Wednesday, January 31.

We are still preparing 75 boxed and then bagged meals that are distributed outside in front of CH by the staff. In addition to adults, there are sometimes children who accompany a family member for a meal. We are still in need of some food contributions. Please contact Margaret and Jan if you can help.

The Alexandria branch started its connection with the soup kitchen in 1986 with the guidance of long-time member and former president, Ellen Pickering and then president, Jan Jaynes. The branch was looking for a service project to benefit the Alexandria community. It has been a successful endeavor for a very long time and has always been well-supported by our membership. We welcome new members to participate with contributing food or helping to prepare and serve or monetary donations to help purchase the pizzas.

Margaret Zebrowski - mmzebrow@aol.com

Jan A. Jaynes - janjjoek@verizon.net



AUTUMN LEAVES

Susan Cash
AAUW Funds Chair

Thanks to all of you who have contributed to Autumn Leaves 2023 and congratulations to our drawing winners! We will continue to accept donations. The funds raised are divided equally between the AAUW Alexandria Branch and an AAUW National Fund. ***Fifty percent of your donation is tax-deductible.***

If you would like to contribute, please mail a check, ***payable to AAUW-Alexandria***, with Autumn Leaves on the memo line, to Susan Cash, 8402 West Boulevard Drive, Alexandria, VA 22308.

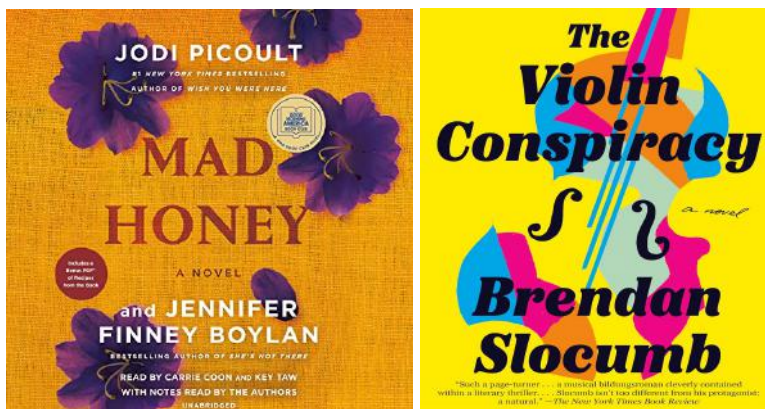
BRANCH ACTIVITIES



DIVERSITY BOOK GROUP

Bonnie Hershberg

The Diversity Book Group opened the new year and celebrated our three-year anniversary with a lively discussion of Jodi Picoult's and Jennifer Finney Boylan's novel, *Mad Honey*. The book appealed to most of the participants on several levels—it's a page-turning mystery and courtroom drama that explores many of the themes that our group has dedicated itself to explore. It wrestles with such questions as, what does it mean to be a woman in America today? It also delves into how much of our past should we take with us into our present and what do we owe in terms of disclosure to others, especially to our loved ones, about that past, if anything. Ms. Picoult's traditional plot twists and turns are artfully complemented by the insights and sensitivities that characterize Dr. Boylan's writing. The latter's highly detailed dream before the pandemic inspired their decision to write this book together. While they admired each other's work, they didn't know each other. They met on Twitter and the result—a gripping and seamless novel written during the isolation of the pandemic. Our Monday February 12, 2024 meeting on Zoom will focus on *The Violin Conspiracy* by Brendon Slocumb, published in 2023. If you have an interest in joining our group, please email Bonnie Hershberg at hersh3b@gmail.com.





FRANCOPHILE GROUP

Susan Cash

Stay tuned to the newsletter for future events.

For more information, please contact Susan Cash, scash5558@gmail.com or 703/587-4790.



GOURMET OUT

Susan Cash

Our next outing is planned to take place at Marib Traditional Yemeni Cuisine, 6931 Hechinger Drive, Springfield. It has been rescheduled for Thursday, February 29 (Leap Day) at 6:30 p.m. Point of contact is Susan Cash, scash5558@gmail.com, 703/587-4790. Stay tuned to the newsletter for future events.



MYSTERY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

Susan Werner

The February 2024 meeting of the Mystery Book Discussion Group will take place on February 27, 7 PM via Zoom. Our mystery is Nonna Maria and the Case of the Missing Bride by Lorenzo Carcaterra. Mystery lovers, please join us during this winter weather as we discuss a mystery set in sunny Italy. If you have questions about the Mystery Book Discussion Group, or suggestions for a mystery for the Group to read, please contact Susan Werner at -- susan.werner1@verizon.net. Happy Reading.



Looking for Branch Members to Serve as Application Readers for the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria

Over the years, members of our branch have volunteered for an important “one and done” assignment to serve as application readers for the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria (SFA). This year’s “reading weekend” will be March 1-3, and we are hoping to get a robust response from branch members. It will involve just several hours of your time over that weekend in front of your computer reading and rating scholarship applications. You don’t even have to change out of your pajamas! The information below should answer all of your questions, and if you then want

to participate, email Leslie Tourigny at ltourigny@gmail.com no later than February 10, 2024. She will submit your names to the Scholarship Fund, and your further contacts will be between you and the Scholarship Fund.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria?: “The Scholarship Fund of Alexandria is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing free post-secondary education advising to Alexandria City Public School families. The mission of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria... is to encourage and assist the students of Alexandria City Public Schools by providing them with the necessary resources to pursue a college, vocational or career program of postsecondary education.

“In 1986, when it all began, the SFA awarded just over \$7k in scholarships to eight students. Last year alone, we awarded \$1.2 million to support 400+ Alexandria City High School graduates to over 60 different institutions. Ninety-five cents of every dollar raised goes directly to support scholarships. The Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, has awarded over 18 million dollars in scholarships and sent more than 5,000 Alexandria students with financial need to college since 1986.”

What is Reading Weekend and how can you help? All students at the Alexandria City High School can apply for a scholarship through the SFA. There is one application portal for the 200+ scholarships that get awarded. All applications need to be read by 3 community members. That's where you come in!

Do I need to go somewhere to read applications? No! It's all virtual through a portal.

How long will it take? Typically, 2-3 hours

When is reading weekend? March 1-3, 2024

How will I know what to do? There is a [short tutorial](#) on how to use the portal, what to look for in applications, and a rubric for how to award points for each of the parts of the application.

Why should I participate? You get a peek into these amazing students' lives, what they have overcome, and what they hope to achieve by attending college. YOU can make a difference!

Am I the only person reading the application? NO! Each application is read by three community members, so you are not the last word on if a student will be awarded a scholarship or not.

Note: Parents of students attending Alexandria City High School cannot be readers.

Thank you!

GREAT DECISIONS – 2024

February 8, 7p, Virtual

Lynn O’Connell

Larry Korb will discuss NATO’s Future. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has come under increased scrutiny, not because NATO troops are involved in the conflict, but because of its role in relations between Russia and its neighbors. Will expanding membership in NATO protect countries, or will it further provoke Russia?

On March 14, Howard Soroos, will discuss Mideast Realignment.

2024 Topics

Topic 1: Mideast realignment

The United States and Middle East are at a crossroads. In spite of a reduced presence in the Middle East, the U.S. still has significant national interests there and the area is a key arena for global power politics. Can the U.S. continue to defend its interests in the Middle East and globally with a lower level of military and political involvement, or should it recommit to a leading role in the region?

Topic 2: Climate technology & competition

Will the United States and China, with other powerful countries following suit, approach current and future climate initiatives with an increased commitment to trade protectionism and nationalism, by various measures including trade restrictions? Or could a growing spirit of international accord develop to confront the “common enemy” of climate change?

Topic 3: Science across borders

Scientific advances benefit from collaboration between researchers, but what happens when material, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) is controversial and important to a nation’s national security? Is there a middle ground between sharing information and denying access? How can we regulate cooperation?

Topic 4: U.S.-China trade rivalry

China’s economic rise and its current policies of increasing the role of the state in the economy have led some U.S. policymakers to seek to deny China access to U.S. technology and investment. This is seen as a necessary corrective to decades of predatory Chinese economic policies. Is this a wise strategy, and how effective can it be?

Topic 5: NATO’s future Larry Korb

Topic 6: Understanding Indonesia

Despite its large size, Indonesia remains virtually invisible to most Americans. But as one of the world's largest democracies, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, and as an economic driver of ASEAN, why does it fly below the radar? What are current issues in U.S.-Indonesian relations, and what role can the country play in Asia?

Topic 7: High Seas Treaty

Areas of the seas beyond national jurisdiction comprise the high seas, which are facing a degradation of ecosystems due to climate change and the increase in human activities, such as shipping, overfishing, pollution, and deep-sea mining. The recently negotiated High Seas Treaty, also known as the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction treaty, will attempt to address these issues. How difficult will it be to convince nations to participate?

Topic 8: Pandemic preparation

Looking back at the covid-19 pandemic, there are many lessons to take away in terms of domestic and international policies. Although this pandemic seems to have waned, how can we apply these lessons to future pandemics? Will countries cooperate, and will a consensus emerge on how to manage global health challenges?

For the Zoom link contact Lynn at lynnoconnellva@gmail.com.





A request from. AAUW-VA VP for Communications, Dianne Mero: When you receive THE VISION later this month, please open that email and the link. This will help our email service, MailerLite, work the way it's supposed to, and you'll keep receiving emails from us.

From Janine Greenwood and Denise Murden, Co-VPs for Public Policy: Look for registration information for our virtual lobbying on February 28, and join us.

AAUW – National

Webinar: January 31, 7:00 pm ET

As advocates for progress and change, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) is proud to present two pivotal webinars aimed at fostering inclusion and addressing critical challenges in today's educational landscape.

Join us for enriching discussions that not only illuminate the path to greater equity but also empower you to become a catalyst for change in your community.

Register:

[Inclusion in Practice: How AAUW's Policies and Practices Promote Inclusion](#)

Please join us **Wednesday, January 31 at 7:00 pm ET** for the AAUW National Inclusion & Equity Committee webinar on inclusion policies and practices.

The webinar is designed to aid local branches and states as they explore various national policies and bylaws of AAUW national, featuring the resources available in [AAUW's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(DEI\) Toolkit](#). The webinar provides an informative look at several national policies and practices, including the soon-to-be-announced member civility policy.

2023- 2024 CALENDAR – ALL EVENTS SUBJECT TO CHANGE
(CHECK <https://alexandria-va.aauw.net> OFTEN)

2/1/24 7p Virtual, AAUW-Alexandria Board Meeting
2/8/24, 7p Great Decisions
2/12/24 7p Diversity Book Group Bonnie Hershburg, hersh3b@gmail.com
2/25/24 2p Program Meeting
2/27/24 7p Mystery book group, Susan Werner, susan.werner1@verizon.net
2/28/24 AAUW-VA Lobby Day (Virtual)
2/29/24 6:30p (Leap Day) Gourmet Out

2023-2024 BRANCH OFFICERS

Co-presidents: Sylvia Linke (SFLaauw@gmail.com) & Diane Schrier (diane.schrier@gmail.com)
VP Membership: Arlene Schuchner (arlene.schuchner@verizon.net)
VP Program: Leslie Tourigny, (ltourigny@gmail.com)
Secretary: Dr. Gail Kalin, (gailkalin@yahoo.com)
AAUW Funds: Susan Cash (scash5558@gmail.com)
Diversity and Inclusion: Dr. Gail Kalin (gailkalin@yahoo.com)
Public Policy: 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 (janjioek@verizon.net)
Diversity Book Group: Bonnie Hershberg (hersh3b@gmail.com)
Francophile Group: Susan Cash, scash5558@gmail.com
Gourmet Out Group: Susan Cash, scash5558@gmail.com
Great Decisions: Lynn O'Connell (lynnoconnellva@gmail.com)
Mystery Book Group: Susan Werner (susan.werner1@verizon.net)