



THE SCHOONER - March 2025

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SAVE THESE DATES	
3/6, 7:00 p	Board Meeting
3/8, 10:30 a	Program Meeting
TBD	Francophile Group
TBD	Gourmet Group
3/25, 7:00 p	Mystery Book Group
3/29	VA Conference
6/18, 7 p	The Play That Goes Wrong

Letter from the Co-Presidents

“May You Live in Interesting Times”. This is actually an English, not Chinese, curse. We certainly do. There is a serious attack on the role of women. Whether it is in conferences that praise a woman’s only place is in her home with her children, the firings of women, the “bro” culture or the continuing difficulty that women have in breaking some glass ceilings, issues abound. AAUW wants full equity for Women. We stand for the need of women to be educated and to have financial and emotional security. We desire to protect women whether in the job, the home or in the classroom. It is essential that we stand together in these interesting times. It is true - there is strength in numbers.

On the weekend of March 28th, we are in charge of the Hospitality Suite at the State Conference being held in Alexandria. We need 2 volunteers for each 2 hour time slot the suite will be open. Please contact me (Diane.Schrier@gmail.com) to volunteer to fill a slot. The easy duties include greeting guests and make sure that the snacks, which will be there, are accessible.

Diane Schrier & Sylvia Linke, Co-Presidents

PUBLIC POLICY

Public Policy is on a roller coaster this year as both State and National issues are in flux. One very positive Virginia vote is the passing of the Paid Sick Leave bill. Also, the three constitutions amendments, marriage equality, restoring the right to vote for felons, and the right to female reproductive health, have passed and will be voted on next year. In addition to the many bills on maternal health, education also started out as a major focus of this year's General Assembly. The new accountability standards have some inadvisable repercussions on teachers, public education and students. Several bills were introduced into the General Assembly to slow down the speed of the integration into the curriculum. Bills were introduced to increase funding by revising the funding formula to include all staff personnel and subsidize schools based on the number of students. Bills to improve IDEA in Virginia were also incorporated into the budget. The budget was increased by over \$250 million over what the governor proposed to improve education. We now await what the Governor signs.

One very obvious issue is that what happens in Virginia is affected by what is happening in the National government. The strong tax base in Northern Virginia, which is the least dependent on Federal funding, helps fund many services including education in the more rural areas of Virginia, which also depends the most on Federal funding. However, as the tax base will be impaired by the recent firings, there will definitely be a ripple effect. Nothing happens in a vacuum.

The final version of the AAUW Public Policy Principles and Priorities will be going to the Board. It will then be voted on by the members. Higher education which is under direct attack is a major focus. Colleges and universities are losing grants in research and other forms which help fund them. If the Dept. of Education is dissolved, Pell Grants will be assigned to a different agency under different rules. USAid has had the majority of its employees fired and many of its previously authorized monies have still not been dispersed. Many other governmental agencies have also lost thousands. Congress must approve a budget or continuing resolution by March 14th. There are many differences between the House and Senate version. Under the guise of anti-immigration, the SAVE Act (HR 22) effectively removes the vote from all married women who have taken their husband's name. To reregister, they will need a passport or birth certificate to prove their citizenship. For many, who have been voting for years and decades, this may be very difficult, especially if they are unaware of this requirement. Eighty-three representatives have signed the 2025 version of this bill, which passed the House in 2024. There have been executive orders against DEI. However, executive orders cannot overrule a Congressional law. There has also been a Dear Colleague letter against DEI, to which the NAACP has responded. Again, these cannot overrule Congressional laws.

Congress is considering the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, a bill that would create unnecessary barriers to voter registration by requiring citizenship documents—even though voters already affirm or verify their citizenship when registering.

The SAVE Act is unnecessary and harmful. It would make it harder for eligible voters—especially citizens of color—to register and cast their ballots. Compared to white citizens, citizens of color are three times more likely to lack access to required documents like passports or birth certificates. We should be making voting more accessible, not adding more obstacles.

Tell your members of Congress to oppose the SAVE Act and protect the freedom to vote!

Take action now: <https://www.lwv.org/take-action/tell-your-members-congress-oppose-save-act>

Submitted by Diane Schrier

Program Notes

The March branch program will feature a special guest speaker - a historian from the Museum of the US Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Ms. Allison Schwartz. . She will tell us about the "Hello Girls" of World War I. The "Hello Girls" were a unit of the US Army's Signal Corps who were experienced switchboard operators. They maintained communications in England and France during the war. They were noted for the speed and reliability with which they operated the switchboards, as well as their skill as translators.

March 08 is International Women's Day. This program was selected to highlight the noted achievements of women. Please join other members of the branch on a Zoom call at 11:00 a.m. Diane will distribute the link. It was provided by the Museum of the US Army.

If you would like to read ahead about the "Hello Girls", you may read an article from the US Archives about these exceptional women.

<https://unwritten-record.blogs.archives.gov/2021/03/30/hello-girls-women-telephone-operators-during-wwi/>

Sylvia Linke Co-President

MEMBER PROFILE

Marilyn Zayas



How long have you been a member of AAUW and what was it that made you want to join? I don't remember when I joined AAUW in Puerto Rico, but I would say it was the late 90s or early 2000s. A friend took me to a Meet and Greet. I was living and working full time but interested in meeting new people and looking for a good bridge game. When I met some of the members, they explained the mission of AAUW, and I was hooked. I served as membership chairperson for a few years and worked on the NCCWSL committee, interviewing wonderful young women who wanted to make a difference.

Briefly describe your education and career. I attended SUNY Albany when it was a state college for teachers. I majored in Latin and minored in Spanish. My first teaching job was at a private girls school teaching Latin, Ancient History, and Geography. Then I had 2 children, got my MA, and was recruited by a suburban Albany NY high school that was in desperate need for a Latin teacher. Within 2 years the board decided to phase out Latin. I then went to get an additional MA in English. I continued in that school for 30 years. After 7 years (1976), I applied for a sabbatical and took my 2 girls (ages 11 and 9) to England to be with me while I studied British history and literature at the University of Nottingham. That year changed my life!!!

Before moving to Alexandria, you were living in Puerto Rico. Please discuss why you moved there and what was your experience. In 1974 I went with a group of teachers to PR for a February vacation. (I was recently divorced). I returned in 77 and then in 79, each time for a week's vacation. When I met the man who would become my husband years later, we traveled to PR and then, in 1986, I bought a condo on the beach 30 miles from SJ.



By 1989 I had decided that I wanted to know what it was like to live in PR. I applied for a leave of absence from the school in the Albany area, found a job in PR (by luck, at a prestigious private school which educated the kids of the "rich and famous" of San Juan), and spent 2 years figuring it out. Because I was close to retirement age, I returned to Albany for 5 years, finished in 1997, and returned to PR permanently. I became part of the SJ community, as well as part of the snowbird community at the beach. I loved it. My husband

died in 2014; Maria hit in 2017; I was in my 70s. Time to return to the US. Reluctantly.

When you are in Alexandria, what keeps you busy? When I moved here, I wanted to continue working with kids, as I had all my life. Finally I found a job at a tutoring center in McLean and I have been with them for 7 years now. I worked 3--4 nights a week until this year, when driving at night and weather challenges have forced me to work from home, mostly as a support person.

I love theater (Kennedy Center, ShakespeareTheater Company, Signature Theater, and American Shakespeare Center in Staunton) and I travel: This year I will explore Ireland, visit friends in England, and then look forward to a river cruise on the Danube. My goal with travel is to understand more cultures, not just look at old buildings. I will do this for as long as I am able. By the way, I have taken each of my granddaughters on a trip, something for which they will always remember their grandmother. (Paris -the artist. Milan-the fashionista. Rome-the Latin student. Costa Rica- the warm weather and beach kid.)

I belong to two book clubs, one here and one in Puerto Rico. I have rejoined the Great Decisions group. I have a wonderful family: a daughter in Arlington with 2 lovely girls (one goes off to college in the fall) and a daughter in Asheville, whose girls are on their own working and living in Brooklyn. I'll be seeing them in May; we just got tickets for Broadway!

Editor's Note: This is the first member profile. I hope this helps everyone in getting to know our members — all have interesting stories to tell! If I ask you to let me profile you, **PLEASE** say yes. If you have someone you think I should ask, I'd also like to know that. Contact me: eugeniaburkes@mac.com.

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,

BRANCH ACTIVITIES



Diversity Book Group

After discussing the 2024 Pulitzer Prize Winner for non-fiction, *A Day in the Life of Abed Salaam: Anatomy of a Jerusalem Tragedy* by Nathan Thrall in February, the Diversity Book Group will turn its attention to a poignant love story of historical fiction, ***The Island of Missing Trees*** by Elik Shack. It covers a variety of love relationships between a man and a woman, between a man and a man, between a citizen and his/her country/national identity, between a parent and a child, and between a people and nature. It takes place in Cyprus at a time of great strife between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. If you are interested in joining our group, please email Bonnie Hershberg at hersh3b@gmail.com.

Francophile Group



In late May or early June, we plan to have a Zoom talk on a World War II theme, marking Victory in Europe (VE) Day, plus a book (on any topic) to be selected by our members. To RSVP, please contact Susan at 703/587-4790 or scash5558@gmail.com.

Gourmet Group



Our next event is expected to be a beginning of spring late afternoon/ early evening get together on March 19 or March 20. I am suggesting one of the following restaurants: Laporta's, 1600 Duke Street, or Chay Vegetarian Restaurant, Barcroft Plaza (Falls Church), but I am open to other ideas. If you are interested, please contact Susan Cash, scash5558@gmail.com, 703/587-4790, and we will work out the final details.

Great Decisions



Our next AAUW Great Decisions meeting will be Thursday, March 13, at 7 pm, via Zoom. Our topic is "The Future of NATO and European Security," and Larry Korb will be our very special guest presenter for the evening.

European security is more uncertain than it has been for decades. Putin's Russia has launched a war with Ukraine on its doorstep, and America's uncertain role as leader of NATO and security provider has been called into question with the failure of Congress to pass supplemental military support for Ukraine. What are Europe's options, and how might developments on both sides of Western Europe – in Ukraine and across the Atlantic – impact its choices? What are America's stakes in NATO and Europe's strategic dilemmas?

We welcome anyone interested to join us. Below is the Zoom link. Please reach out to Lynn O'Connell at lynnocConnellva@gmail.org or 703/867-4942 with any questions.

Time: Mar 13, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://vccs.zoom.us/j/88666484841?pwd=F1RTkJeIS2PxOmTtdUIIol4IlnUCUv.1>

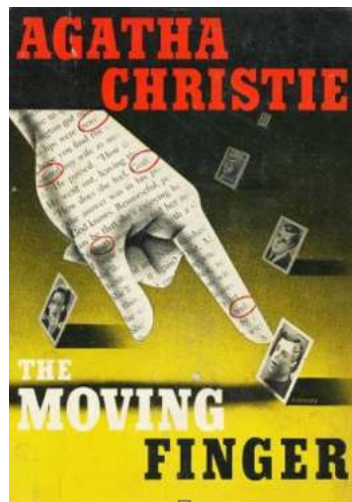
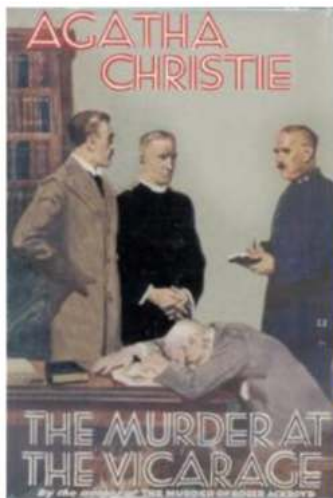
Meeting ID: 886 6648 4841

Passcode: 575907



Mystery Book Discussion Group

If you are an **Agatha Christie** fan, you are in for a treat. This month the Mystery Book Discussion Group will address two Miss Marple books: **Murder at the Vicarage** and **The Moving Finger**. This is in preparation for next month when we will read contemporary takes on Miss Marple. Hopefully, you can read at least one of these books, perhaps both. Our meeting will take place on **March 25, 2025, at 7 PM via Zoom**. My thanks to our Zoom providers.



If you have questions about the Mystery Book Discussion Group or suggestions for mysteries the group should read, contact Susan Werner: susan.werner1@verizon.net.
HAPPY READING !!

AAUW ALEXANDRIA BRANCH FUNDRAISER
At THE LITTLE THEATRE OF ALEXANDRIA
COMING JUNE 18, 2025

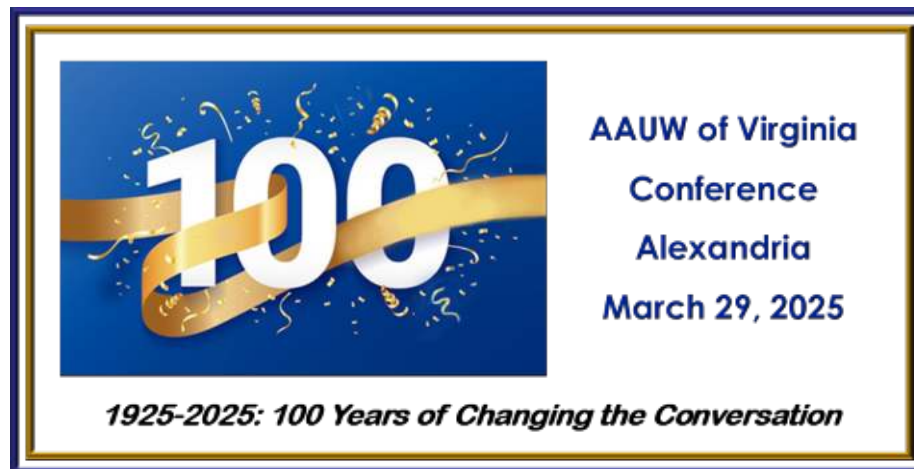


What would happen if Sherlock Holmes and Monty Python had an illegitimate Broadway baby? You'd get New York and London's award-winning comedy! This classic murder mystery is full of mishaps, mayhem and madcap mania! Welcome to the opening night of The Murder at Haversham Manor, where things are quickly going from bad to utterly disastrous: it's sure to bring the house down.

Estimated run time: 2 hours with an intermission. Age appropriateness: 8 and up.

Looking forward to seeing you at LTA again!
Mary Ann Bier

When: Wednesday, June 18, 2025
Time: 7:00 pm – Reception; Alexandria Branch is responsible for sweets
8:00 pm – Performance
Where: Little Theatre of Alexandria
600 Wolfe Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Tickets: \$40 (\$31.68 is tax deductible)
Tickets will be available at the end of March



The deadline for registering ended with good news — **it's sold out!** If you missed the deadline but wanted to attend, notify Susan Burk, burksu@aol.com, to be added to the wait-list.

Even though there are 11 branches in AAUW-VA Northern District who are hosting the conference, our Alexandria Branch wants to roll out the red carpet to our AAUW-VA sisters from all corners of the Commonwealth because, after all, Alexandria is our city. Our branch will be in charge of the Hospitality Suite for conference attendees, and branch co-presidents, **Diane Schrier and Sylvia Linke, will be looking for volunteers to help stock and staff the Hospitality Suite.** The Hospitality Suite will not be open at times that will conflict with conference events so you will be able to help out with the Hospitality Suite without missing any of the conference. Also, the branch will be assembling a basket to be raffled off at the conference, along with baskets from other branches. You'll be hearing more about items needed for our branch basket.

Celebrating 100 years in Virginia

Dear Members,

Thanks to all who have donated to the State Conference 100 for 100 Project but we **NEED MORE!**

Every branch will be donating 100 items selected by each branch to an organization of their choosing. Alexandria branch has selected reusable menstrual or incontinence pads that saves money when women are in financial distress, are inexpensive to buy, are environmentally friendly and that every young woman can use. We will donate them to Guest House and the Domestic Violence Shelter. They are inexpensive and can be ordered from Amazon. Please order a set and have it delivered to:

Diane Schrier
307 Yoakum Pkwy, Apt. 1004
Alexandria, VA 23004.

Some examples are:

Bamboo Charcoal Cloth Menstrual Pads/Sanitary Pads/Mama Panty Liners 7 pieces for \$7.95
Reusable Menstrual Pads Charcoal/Heavy Incontinence Pads 5 pieces for \$12.59
Soft Adjustable Snaps Reusable Menstrual Pads 9 pieces for \$15.99

Alexandria Branch's Raffle Basket

We've changed the theme of the Alexandria Branch raffle basket to **Persist.**

“Resist. Persist. Insist.”—Stacey Abrams

So far these items are in our **Persist** basket:

- Self care things to soothe and strengthen
- Food and drink from Alexandria companies
- Crunch Love Company headband to “help you conquer the world”
- Socks like Big Foot Bertha's, mother of Emperor Charlemagne, 800 AD
- Essential oils made by the women of Thistle Farms, formerly on Nashville's streets
- To inspire you, *Public in Name Only*, about the Alexandria library sit-in of 1939



And **Persist**, “a party game from the female perspective...for women who choose to lock arms and *persist*.”

Have something exciting, funny, or meaningful to add to our **Persist** basket, I’d love to hear from you—

Solveig, solegg24@gmail.com

COMMUNITY INTERESTS



Have you ever wondered what famous women have said about their country? Come and listen to snippets of speeches set to music from Abigail Adams to Michelle Obama in "Washington Women", the title piece of the March concert for Alexandria Choral Society. The program includes several choral numbers, all written by women, and features the Sing Off Winners, Rock Ridge High School Chamber Choir. Our branch has an ad in the program. The concert is Saturday, March 8th, at 7:00, at the George Washington Masonic Memorial.

This will probably be a sold out event. Tickets may be purchased on the website, AlexandriaChoralSociety.org. Suggested price is \$30, but you can pay whatever you want.

Submitted by Anne Simpson, Treasurer and a member of the Alexandria Choral Society

Show Appreciation For Our Federal Workers

In these stressful times, think of something you can do to express your appreciation for our federal workers. A friend of mine took a thank you note and a bouquet of flowers to the local Social Security office on Edsall. I thought that was a very kind act. It would be nice if others followed her example. There certainly is no shortage of federal offices in our area.

Submitted by Eugenia Burkes, Editor

2024 - 2025 BRANCH OFFICERS

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

VP Membership: Dr. Felicia Goss (FMGoss@icloud.com)

VP Program: Dr. Gail Kalin, (gailkalin@yahoo.com)

Secretary: Lane Stone (LaneStoneAAUWVA@gmail.com)

AAUW Funds: Susan Cash (scash5558@gmail.com)

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

Public Policy: Diane Schrier (diane.schrier@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Anne Simpson (aseyedoc@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: Eugenia Burkes (eugeniaburkes@mac.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)

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)