



THE SCHOONER - April 2025

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The cherry blossoms are flowering and were at peak bloom for the AAUW Virginia 100th Anniversary State Conference. Life moves on and even the worst of times come to an end and the best of times will eventually return. During times of conflict, it is important for us to come together. We gather strength in fighting for common causes and joining with others for the issues that we hold important.

SAVE THESE DATES	
4/3, 7:00 p	Board Meeting
4/4, 10:30 a	Program Meeting
TBD	Francophile Group
TBD	Gourmet Group
4/22, 7:00 p	Mystery Book Group
4/30	Christ House
6/18, 7 p	The Play That Goes Wrong

Our group stays strong and vital for so many of us participate in so many things. It is important however, that we make time for the branch also. Community is very important and branches stay strong when people participate in what ways they can.

Our 80th Anniversary celebration will take place on Saturday, May 17th, at 2:00 at Elaine's restaurant. The price will be \$25 per person. This is also our annual business meeting. Please plan to attend.

Diane Schrier & Sylvia Linke, Co-Presidents

PUBLIC POLICY

Since AAUW's founding in 1881, education has been of primary importance in our mission. Therefore we decry the weakening of the Department of Education. While an executive order cannot destroy a Congressionally authorized department, it can severely hurt its capacity to function. Public education has been one of the comprehensive areas that has created the modern United States by giving all young people a chance to learn and contribute to American society. Student loans have been moved to the Small Business Administration which has received significant force reductions of 2,700 positions out of 6,500 personnel. There are new restrictions on student loan forgiveness. The Civil Rights Dept. has been severely decimated and its remains may go to the Dept. of Justice. Pell Grants may go to the Treasury and graduate scholarships may go away. Title IX may go to Health and Human Services and the rules have returned to the 2020 DeVos rules which said that sexual harassment must be severe and pervasive, a very high bar. It is anticipated that there will be soaring class sizes, the elimination of job training programs, higher education out of reach for many, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) services limited.

Social Security Medicaid and Medicare are three important indicators of women's financial security. In the recent Continuing Resolution, there was an over \$880 billion cut, almost all of it will come from Medicaid. Medicaid funds senior housing, including long term care, rural hospitals and 40% of all children's health. There is a push to privatize Medicare. Social Security has had major operational changes. Starting March 31st, the customer service phone line will be discontinued. New applicants and anyone making changes to their direct deposit will have to either do it online or go to a Social Security Administration office. Unfortunately, dozens Social Security offices are scheduled to be closed even with the tighter identity-proofing measurements. If the SAVE Act is passed, married women who have changed their name with have to have a passport, Real ID (driver's license with a star), or notarized birth certificate and marriage document.

Including postal workers, there are approximately 193,000 Federal workers in Virginia and 3.0 million in the United States that will have coverage under the unemployment insurance act. However, that is deceptive. Federally filed claims have reporting delays of several weeks or months because a claim is not classified as a federal claim until federal wages are confirmed. As many were fired with the claim that their work was unsatisfactory, they may not be eligible for unemployment. In total there are approximately 300,000 Virginians who work at Federal jobs or 10% of Virginia's workforce. It could create a 40% cut of GDP for the Commonwealth. If there is a 75% reduction in the workforce as stated, the unemployment rate will increase in the DC Metro area to 9.6%. In Alexandria, there are 9,021 full-time and part-time federal civilian employees or 11.2% of the workforce. There will be impacts on the Metro, Medicaid, SNAP, Federal Real Estate, population growth and immigration. Additionally, it is expected that 40% of restaurants and other hospitality units in this area will close. There is about only a 30%

match of jobs available at this time. The majority of those 160,000 listed jobs on the Virginia website are those that require advanced degrees or entry level sales clerks.

Three Virginia bills that AAUW supported, the increase of the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, removing salary history, and paid sick leave, were vetoed. Several bills supporting IDEA in education were passed, as were the bills forbidding restraints on juveniles in court without a hearing and a pilot program for remote care for maternity patients passed. A few of the bills (SB 1002, HB 2165) controlling the use of campaign funds passed, for the first time. Ranked choice voting adjustment (SB 1009) failed.

Submitted by Diane Schrier

Program Notes

EDUCATION AND ART

TWO GREAT LEGENDS COME TOGETHER TO TALK ABOUT THEIR AMAZING CAREERS

Rossie Kelly - in the Kennedy Administration working on starting the Peace Corps.

In the Johnson Administration working on starting Head Start

Pat Addiss - Tony Award Broadway Producer, Actress & Star. 2023 Woman Purpose Award Winner.

The event will be at Ellen Coolidge Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Blvd. on April 5, 2025 at 10:30 am.

Your Board in Action

During the Board meeting on March 6th, the minutes of the February meeting were approved. The following is a summary.

The meeting was held on February 6th at 7 pm via Zoom. Those present were:

Sylvia Linke	Diane Schrier	Mary Ann Bier	Eugenia Burkes	Lane Stone
Solveig Eggerz,	Felicia Goss	Gail Kalin	Ann Simpson	

Treasurer's Report by Anne Simpson showed an available balance of \$17,763.06.

She also gave the details of the Alexandria Chorus performance on March 8th. The Mt. Vernon and Alexandria branches will have a table at the event.

Membership Report by Felicia Goss' report showed one new member.

Public Policy by Diane Schrier described the new action form available from the National office and our Branch will request one for support in VA for paid sick leave.

NCCWSL Report by Susan Cash indicated our support will switch from NCCWSL to the State Conference.

MEMBER PROFILE

SUSAN WERNER



My response to Eugenia's request to be the April profile was "Oh, Dear. What to say?" My major obsessions are books, cats, Fred Astaire movies, and maybe Jane Austen. I will focus on books.

I grew up in Rapid City, South Dakota. I got my love of reading from my mother. She belonged to the Book of the Month Club and enrolled me in a children's book club. I still have a copy of Tom Sawyer from that book club. I reread the Laura Ingalls Wilder books (Little House on the Prairie is only one) and was bored, so mother handed me a copy of Gone With the Wind. I was about 12. Mother and I shared a love of mysteries – we both loved Stanley Gardner (Perry Mason), for example. And I started on my love of Jane Austen. My first copy of Pride and Prejudice has fallen apart. New insights every time I read it.

I majored in English and History in college. What does an English major do – join the Army of course! Well, maybe not everyone. I hauled my books (and cats) with me from Massachusetts to Texas to Berlin, Germany – I was there when the Berlin Wall came down.

My first experience with AAUW was when a friend in Rapid City invited me to a meeting to discuss a book. I joined AAUW when stationed in San Antonio, TX, and became part of the branch book group. In 1992, when I transferred from Berlin to Ft Belvoir, VA, I joined the Alexandria Branch AAUW. Fellow Alexandria member Sandy Seppela and I formed the Mystery Book Discussion Group after attending a Smithsonian program called "Sleuthing Spinsters and Dangerous Dames." Our book group has now been going on for over 20 years.

Why mysteries? Mysteries can go from "no thought required escapism" to a discussion of issues wrapped in the format of a mystery – see Charles Todd or Jacqueline Winspear for the impact of world wars on people and society. I would encourage folks to read – fiction, non-fiction: biographies, mysteries, thrillers, romance, history, social commentary, satire. travel – the choice is endless. I still like to have a book in my hand, but tablets, audio books and other media work – whatever makes you happy. Not everybody can like the same book, but it is such fun to discuss maybe disagree, and gain insight with a book group. Everyone is invited to join our AAUW Mystery Book Group!

Susan's beloved Wade, her companion for 14 years.



BRANCH ACTIVITIES

Community Service

Our next soup kitchen supper is **Wednesday, April 30**. We are still serving pizza, veggies, fruit, dessert and bottled water. As the dining room is still closed, our members package 75 individual meals and put in plastic bags to be distributed at the dining room door.

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We need the following total donations:

4 bags of baby carrots 5 cartons of cherry tomatoes 5 bags of clementines
5 desserts of 24-36 cookies or brownies
3 server/boxer volunteers.

If you can contribute any portion of listed food, please indicate how much and e-mail Jan at : janjjoek@verizon.net. Also, indicate if you plan to help prepare the meals.

All food should be delivered to Christ House before 4 pm.

Jan Jaynes and Margaret Zebrowski

Francophile Group



Our next meeting, projected for Saturday, May 31 or Saturday, June 7 at 3 p.m., will include a Zoom talk on a World War II theme, marking Victory in Europe (VE) Day, plus a book to be selected by our members. To RSVP, please contact Susan at 703/587-4790 or scash5558@gmail.com. In July, we also plan to have our annual Bastille Day dinner at L'Hermitage Bistro in Occoquan. The tentative date is Thursday, July 17. This will also be the summer's Gourmet Out event.

Gourmet Group

The next event will be a joint gathering with the Francophile Group to celebrate Bastille Day. The tentative date is Thursday, July 17 at L'Hermitage Bistro in Occoquan. .



Mystery Book Discussion Group



In April, we will continue our exploration of the Miss Marple character. In March, we discussed the original -- Agatha Christie's Miss Marple in two books: Murder at the Vicarage and The Moving Finger. Now, we will look at a contemporary take on **Miss Marple: Marple: Twelve Stories** featuring stories from Naomi Alderman, Leigh Bardugo, Alyssa Cole, Lucy Foley, Elly Griffiths, Natalie Haynes, Jean Kwok, Val McDermid, Karen M.

McManus, Dreda Say Mitchell, Kate Mosse and Ruth

Ware. Are these stories true to the Miss Marple as Agatha Christie created her?? The meeting date is April 22, 2025 at 7 PM. We will meet via Zoom. If you have questions about the Mystery Book Discussion Group, please contact Susan Werner:

susan.werner1@verizon.net. Also, suggestions about future books are welcome.

Please join us.

27 May	Pay Dirt	Sara Paretsky	7:00 PM	Zoom
24 June	The Spy Coast	Tess Gerritsen	7:00 PM	Zoom
22 July	Shutter	Ramona Emerson	7:00	Fratelli

The following is the schedule through July 2025:

Great Decisions



Many thanks to Larry Korb for leading our lively and insightful discussion on the future of NATO as our March topic. Our next Great Decisions session will be on May 8, 7 pm, via Zoom. Diane Schrier will be facilitating our discussion on "US-China Relations."

Washington's relations with Beijing have reached an ominous low ebb. Both American political parties have identified China as the country's preeminent geopolitical challenger and, in the eyes of many, a systemic threat. What is driving this deterioration of Sino-American relations, and what are America's strategic options in the face of Chinese power and ambition?

Zoom Link:

Time: May 8, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://vccs.zoom.us/j/83498539185?pwd=Jxu8yxOcpFhSfGdPQiO1xNteDajpGr.1>

Meeting ID: 834 9853 9185

Passcode: 888077

Below is our schedule for the rest of the year. Guests are always welcome. Please contact Lynn O'Connell at lynnoconnellva@gmail.com with any questions.

Thurs, May 8 - U.S.-China Relations (facilitated by Diane Schrier)

Thurs, June 12 - American Policy in the Middle East (facilitated by Hoard Soroos)

Thurs, Sept 11

Thurs, Oct 9

Thurs, Nov 13 - India: Between China, the West and the Global South (facilitated by Danielle Beach)

Thurs, Dec 11

Lynn

703/867-4942

"Life is about the adventures you take and the memories you make. So travel often and live life with open eyes and an open heart."

KUDOS

Kudos to **Anne Simpson** for participating in the wonderful Alexandria Choral Society's presentation Washington Women with the participation of the Rock Ridge Chamber Choir. She also ensured that AAUW Alexandria was a sponsor.

Kudos to every member of the Alexandria Branch who made the State Conference a HUGE success: **Lane Stone** for her leadership as Co-President of AAUW VA and her brilliant call for all of us to pace ourselves to work ALL DAY LONG for the causes for which we care for so much; **Leslie Tourigny** for being a co-chair of the State Conference; **Diane Schrier** for organizing the Hospitality Suite; and **Solvieg Eggerz** for coordinating the Friday afternoon tours. Also to all the members who helped by volunteering in various ways. {Editor's Note: Apologies to those not named.}

Diane Schrier represented our Branch when the Alexandria City Council honored various women's organizations in Alexandria as part of Women's History Month.



Diane is pictured on the far left of the image.

Kudos to **Margaret Zebrowski** and **Jan Jaynes** for their dedication to the Christ House service project. They have been the organizing force behind this important work for more than twelve years. AAUW Alexandria is grateful for their service.

SAVE THE DATE!

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) Available after April 3rd



AAUW Condemns Executive Order to Dismantle the U.S. Department of Education

March 20, 2025

Action Jeopardizes Students' Futures; Congress Should Not Allow Further Cuts and Take Immediate Action to Protect Students

Washington, D.C. — The American Association of University Women (AAUW) unequivocally condemns President Trump's executive order "Improving Education Outcomes by Empowering Parents, States, and Communities" dismantling the U.S. Department of Education.

"This reckless and shortsighted action threatens to gut vital protections that ensure equal access to higher education and will have devastating consequences for students — especially women, students of color, and those from low-income backgrounds — who rely on federal oversight for their right to an equitable education," said Gloria L. Blackwell, CEO of AAUW. "Eliminating the Department of Education would decimate federal civil rights enforcement, slash protections against gender-based discrimination, and roll back decades of progress toward making higher education accessible and affordable. This decision is not about streamlining government; it is about stripping students of their rights and futures."

Consequences of this action may include:

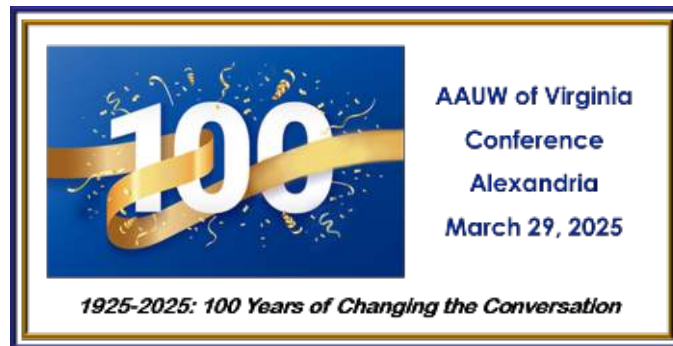
- Low-income students may lose vital federal financial aid that makes it possible to earn their degrees;
- Survivors of sexual harassment and assault on campus may see more Title IX cases dismissed and drastically weakened pathways to justice;
- Students with disabilities could be left without critical safeguards to protect and enforce their rights in schools.
- LGBTQ+ students who experience harassment and discrimination could face unsafe environments without their schools being held accountable;
- Student loan borrowers may be more vulnerable to abuse by predatory for-profit colleges and noncompliant servicers while facing unaffordable repayments;

AAUW urges Congress to speak out against this move and protect the Department from any further cuts that could hinder enforcement of federal civil rights laws protecting students and preserving access to higher education. The cost of inaction is too high, and the futures of millions of students — especially those from marginalized communities — hang in the balance.

In response to these coordinated and continuing attacks on education in America, AAUW is launching [The Defend Higher Education Fund](#) to enable AAUW to elevate the critical higher education issues impacting women, mobilize advocates across the country, provide strategic resources to students, staff and faculty on campus, and fuel investments in the infrastructure and technology necessary to move our mission forward.



Celebrating 100 years in Virginia



The following are just a few photos taken during the event.



Alexandria's Town Crier, Mayor Alyia Gaskin
Ben Fiore-Walker welcomed all
read a proclamation

OYE! OYE!



Leslie Tourigny got things started.



Here are two of the speakers being thanked by Lane Stone



US Representative Jennifer McClellan



VA Delegate Elizabeth Bennet-Parker

Happy Anniversary AAUW VA!



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)