



THE SCHOONER - August 2025

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A Letter from a Co-President

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer, despite the heat. As one of your two new presidents, (the other one is Felicia Goss), I am looking forward to another great year. We will have a Meet and Greet at Danielle's house in September so that members can reconnect and think about becoming more involved. Have you thought about joining the Francophile Interest Group? (No, you do not need to speak French.) How about the Diversity Book Group or the Mystery Book Group? You can come as often or as little as your schedule permits. And remember, this is an excellent opportunity to bring friends that might be interested in joining AAUW.

Several people are working hard to get the monthly programs set up, starting in October. We will cover such topics as the state of our schools, women in the Supreme Court, health issues, and wellness issues. Our Little Theatre of Alexandria fundraiser play, "School of Rock", is in February next year. Hopefully we won't have any snow! See you in September.

Anne Simpson, Co-President

SAVE THESE DATES

8/7, 7:00 p	Board Meeting
8/11, 7:00 p	Diversity Book Group
8/26, 6:30 p	Mystery Book Group
9/8, 7:00 p	Diversity Book Group
9/11, 7:00 p	Great Decisions
9/14, 2:00 p	Meet & Greet
9/27, 3:00 p	Francophile Group

PUBLIC POLICY REPORT

Advocacy works. The President just announced that he would release \$5.5 Billion in grants for schools, after an extended review delay. The money is used for after-school, summer, English as a Second Language, adult education and other causes. This release prevents schools from eliminating academic services and helps allow parents to work, while their children learn. It is still evaluating an additional \$5 Billion in grants to ensure that their goals are acceptable to the President.

The Big Beautiful Bill passed. It cuts nearly \$1 trillion from Medicaid over the next 10 years. This ensures that many rural and urban hospitals will close and areas that are already in need of more medical aid will instead get less. Nursing homes, which also depend on Medicaid, will suffer and many will close. There will also be work requirements, although realistically not too many Alzheimer's victims sitting in hospitals will be able to get a job. Taxes will increase for the majority of Americans and SNAP programs are cut, as are Meals on Wheels, with states being required to fill in the gaps.

Student debt loan repayment is being restructured and student loan forgiveness for occupations in public service will be limited. As the majority of these jobs are held by women, that part of the \$1.5 trillion student debt will increase. There are new limiting requirements for getting student loans and graduate student loans and grants will be seriously hurt.

For 3 years, the Social Security deduction will increase from \$4000 to \$6000 for individuals over 65. No taxes on tips and overtime will be in effect only until 2028. Clean energy incentives are reduced, but the National Debt will increase by approximately \$3 Trillion. More money is appropriated for military spending.

Governor Youngkin has appointed more members to college boards. Schools and universities are removing all DEI programs and actions to avoid heavy penalties. There will be a special session of the General Assembly in September to analyze how to handle the large loss of state income due to federal firings.

There are ongoing discussions in Alexandria over redistricting and integrating DASH and the ACPS bus system for the high school system. More money has been appropriated to help those who have lost their positions.

Diane Schrier, VP - Public Policy

ALEXANDRIA BRANCH NEWS

Looking Ahead To Our First Meeting

It is the middle of summer and most of you are relaxing, going on vacation, or staying out of the heat. However, the board is working on plans for the next year, including the Meet and Greet event at Danielle Beach's house in September, 5621 Glenwood Drive, Alexandria. Say hi to your friends and listen to the plans for the up-coming year. The date is Sunday, September 14th at 2:00. As usual, it will be a potluck. See you there!

Anne Simpson, Co-President

It's Time To Pay Dues!

I wanted to remind those who have been in AAUW awhile that it is past time to **pay dues**. They are now \$105, and you can pay them online or pay by check made out to AAUW Alexandria. **Send the check to Sylvia Linke, 203 Yoakum Parkway, #1509, Alexandria, VA 22304.** You have two more months to take care of them before you are no longer a member.

Anne Simpson
Former Treasurer and current Co-President

Autumn Leaves

Our 2025 drive will open on July 1, 2025. The funds raised will be divided equally between the AAUW Alexandria Branch (Food for the Homeless Project) and an AAUW National Fund. Fifty percent of your donation is tax-deductible. All who make a donation received by the Thursday before the holiday luncheon will be eligible for the drawing held at the luncheon. In addition, the first five people to donate can select a gift of their choice, as well as participate in the drawing, if they desire. This year we have a goal of receiving 20 donations. When that goal is reached, Susan Cash will add a bonus donation to the donation she will make on July 1.

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

Susan Cash, Chair - Autumn Leaves

Member Profile

Please welcome our new member, Dorathea Peters. She provided the following information.



I am Dorathea Peters, the descendant of German and Irish and Canadian immigrants. If I achieved anything in my career or my discussions in life, it came from the speech therapists in the Arlington County Public Schools who corrected my speech defect. I graduated from New York University with honors, majoring in Politics and minoring in Economics and Philosophy. My Juris Doctorate came from William and Mary, where I made the National Moot Court Team. I have retired from practicing law, after forty years. During those years I was appointed to the Alexandria Juvenile Court Committee, the Alexandria Family Law Drug Court, the Parent Child Partnership Chair, and the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Commission, Chair.

Through the years I also was President of the Alexandria Soccer Association, Chair of the Northern District of the American Civil Liberties Union, a member of the Legislative Committee of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, and Deputy Chair of the Alexandria Industrial Development Authority and Director on the Board of the Northern Virginia Democratic Business Council. I am honored to have received the 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Alexandria Commission for Women.

I believe strongly in the Constitution of the United States of America. My active participation and leadership achieved the Grassroots Award from the Alexandria Democratic Committee in 2008 and again in 2018.

I am the mother of a good man, a widow of a good man, and still striving to be a good woman and a brave, intelligent citizen.

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.

Diversity Book Group



The Group continued to meet over the summer and was favorably impressed by Our Missing Hearts by Celeste Ng, which we discussed in June. It is a novel set in the future (but not too distant, maybe) that focuses on the themes of sacrifice, parenthood, unrequited love, friendship, and highly relevant today—confronting authoritarianism.

In July we had the opportunity, thanks to our volunteer member facilitator and Va. AAUW President Lane Stone, to discuss “banned” books. The topic related well to The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie, whose young adult novel we read for our July discussion. It has episodically been banned in some quarters. Our Alexandria Public Librarian sponsor, Caroline Pak, provided a brief history of what has unfolded generally in this regard in our local system. She also described the process by which books are challenged, the role of the Library Board, and ultimately how the Library’s Director adjudicates the challenge. We also had an opportunity to wrestle with the topic of separating “the art from the artist” because while the book has been highly acclaimed in some quarters and was generally valued by our group, Mr. Alexie has been accused of being a sexual predator.

In August our discussion will center on A Pigeon and A Boy by Israeli author Meir Shalev. Coming up in September is Anita Monte Laughs Last by Xochitl Gonzalez. Our group is a lively, enthusiastic and diverse one—if you’d like to join, please email Bonnie Hershberg at hersh3b@gmail.com. We meet the second Monday of each month on Zoom from 7-8:30 pm. All are welcome.

Bonnie Hershberg, Group Coordinator

Francophile Group

For our next meeting, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, September 27 at 3 p.m. via Zoom, we plan a presentation on the Marquis de Lafayette to mark the 200th anniversary of the conclusion of his Farewell Tour of the United States. It will include information on his visits to Alexandria, Loudoun County, and Baltimore. The following meeting, tentatively scheduled for November 15, will feature a book to be chosen by our members. For more information, contact Susan Cash, scash5558@gmail.com, 703/587-4790.



Great Decisions



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

Thurs, Sept 11 - AI & American National Security (facilitated by Lynn O'Connell)

Thurs, Oct 9, - Evolution of US Leadership in the Global Economy: Dilemmas & Choices (facilitated by Larry Korb - thank you, Lane Stone!)

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

Thurs, Dec 13 - International Climate Cooperation in an Era of Geopolitical Turmoil - **seeking facilitator**

Zoom Link:

AI & American National Security (facilitated by Lynn O'Connell)

Time: Sep 11, 2025 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84470339855?pwd=sYAiTBGdGDqazwygMfhVsHLDbVAODT.1>

Meeting ID: 844 7033 9855

Passcode: 655348

Gourmet Group



Our next event is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 23. It may be either a day or evening event. Some restaurant suggestions: Helena's Mexican Restaurant, 5735 Telegraph Road; Burton's Restaurant, 6452 Old Beulah Street (Hilltop Village Center), Taco Ssam, 4347 John Marr Drive (near Little River Turnpike), and LaPorta's, 1600 Duke Street. Those interested should contact Susan Cash, scash5558@gmail.com, 703/587-4790.

Mystery Book Discussion Group

Mystery Lovers – we all love libraries. Join us on August 26, 2025 for the cozy, library based mystery: *Books Can Be Deceiving* by Jenn McKinlay. This month, we will be at the restaurant – Aldo's Italian Kitchen, 2850 Eisenhower Ave, Suite 1, Alexandria, VA 22314. Because we are meeting in a restaurant, we will meet at 6:30 PM instead of 7 PM. Since reservations need to be made, please contact Susan Werner by August 21st to let her know if you plan to attend. For reservations, suggestions, and other questions about the Mystery Book Discussion Group, contact Susan Werner: susan.werner1@verizon.net. All fellow mystery lovers welcome. Happy reading.



NEWS FROM THE NORTHERN DISTRICT

The Northern District meeting is **November 1, 12:00pm- 2:30AM** at the Pohick Regional Library, [6450 Sydenstricker Rd](#), Burke. Shirley Marshall will be talking about her book, *A Radical Suffragist in Washington D.C.* The book features letters from Elizabeth Kalb Green who worked and lived at the National Woman's Party Headquarters from 1918 to 1921. Her book will be available for purchase. After Shirley's talk, we will have a short break followed by a business meeting



We Hold True

AAUW, we hold true,
Each and every one of us – she and you.
We fight for equality, over a century strong;
Through words and actions, we right the wrong.

From grassroots to the national stage,
We ban together, no matter our age.
For women and girls, we've risked our necks –
Never are we the lesser sex.

Opportunities from coast to coast,
Are offered as we play host
To the land of lobbying and campaigning
For which we're never waning.

We are a voice for the oppressed,
As they deserve nothing but the best,
Like equal pay and Title IX.
They should never have to walk the line.

We heed the call with pride in our breast,
And though weary, we never rest.
For America, we give our due
To AAUW, we hold true.

Tess Evans AAUW–VA VP for Communications

ATLANTIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE UPDATE

The Atlantic Regional Conference will take place, **Sept. 25-27, 2026** in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Hotel registration will probably open in Oct. The date for conference registration isn't set yet. Lancaster, Pennsylvania is a destination spot. Speakers and extra activities are still being developed.



Press Release From AAUW National

July 15, 2025

WASHINGTON, D. C. — The American Association of University Women (AAUW), the leading organization for gender equity in higher education, responded to the U.S. Supreme Court granting a request from the Trump Administration to proceed with a reduction-in-force affecting nearly 1,400 employees.

The following is a statement from Gloria L. Blackwell, AAUW’s Chief Executive Officer:

“Secretary McMahon’s claim that these layoffs ‘will not directly’ harm students and families is flatly false. These mass layoffs, the wholesale dismissal of thousands of civil rights complaints, the withholding of billions in federal funding, and the chaos imposed on borrowers are not mere administrative errors—they are deliberate tactics that threaten educational equity, student safety, and financial security.”

We are already witnessing direct impacts on students:

- **Civil rights enforcement crippled:** The Office for Civil Rights dismissed 3,424 complaints between March 11 and June 27, shutting the door on investigations into discrimination across race, disability, sex, and national origin.
- **Borrowers in chaos:** Uncertainty over which agency will manage federal loan portfolios, coupled with servicers pausing the tracking of loan-forgiveness payments, has left millions of students unable to verify their progress toward relief
- **Critical programs cut off:** The Department has withheld nearly \$6.8 billion in formula funding—jeopardizing English learner services, after-school programs, and special education supports that students rely on to succeed.

All of these actions are a betrayal to our students, and AAUW will continue to fight to restore and defend their rights.

COMMUNITY EVENTS INVOLVING OUR MEMBERS

Alexandria 250th Celebration

One of our Coalition partners in Alexandria is the Alexandria VA 250 Committee. Diane Schrier is serving on the Committee as this Branch's representative. Next year, with a few activities this fall, there will be numerous activities taking place to celebrate the founding of Alexandria. One date to save will be the Tall Ships. Sails on the Potomac, which will take place from June 12th - 14th. The Jazz Festival will also be on June 13th. VisitAlexandria.com/150 will contain information on all activities.

Editor's Request: Any member who is a member of another local non-partisan organization or city commission is encouraged to submit brief articles for **Community Events** promoting events and ways members of AAUW can support our fellow members in their other activities.

Please submit suggestions for future **Member Profiles**. This is a group of very talented and interesting women and this is a great way to better know fellow members. Just because someone has been a member for a long time, does not mean they cannot be profiled. Not all of our members may know that person's story.

Last request — Please submit items for our **Kvells & Kudos** column. This is a great way to express our pride (kvells) and praise (kudos) for the individual's accomplishments.

I always welcome comments and suggestions. This is your newsletter and I will always strive to make it worth your time to read.

Eugenia Burkes, Editor
eugeniaburkes@mac.com

BRANCH OFFICERS

2025 - 2026

Co-presidents: Anne Simpson (aseyedoc@gmail.com) & Dr. Felicia Goss (FMGoss@icloud.com)

VP Membership: Eugenia Burkes (eugeniaburkes@mac.com)

Co-VPS Program: Dr. Gail Kalin, (gailkalin@yahoo.com) & Vashti Robinson (robinsonvashti@gmail.com)

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

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

Treasurer: Sylvia Linke (SFLaauw@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 (lynnnoconnellva@gmail.com)

Mystery Book Group: Susan Werner (susan.werner1@verizon.net)