



THE SCHOONER, September 2025

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SAVE THESE DATES

9/4, 7:00 p	Board Meeting
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
9/30, 7 p	Mystery Book Group
10/18, 3 p	Spooky Mad Science
11/1, 12 p	Dist. Meeting
2/6, 7 p	Ann. Fund Raiser

A Letter from the Co-Presidents

It hardly seems possible that summer has come to an end, but now is time to start planning for fall and get involved! Danielle Beach Oswald will be hosting us this year for our Meet and Greet event. The date is Sunday, September 14th at 2:00 and her address is 5621 Glenwood Drive, Alexandria. Food will be potluck and she would like to know what you plan to bring as well as who you plan to bring. Her email is danielleAAUW@gmail.com. We are trying a new idea this year. We want to encourage everyone to bring a friend, so anyone who brings someone will get a \$10 gift card for themselves and one for their friend. We would love to see new faces. We will not have a formal program per se, but we will have a brief introduction to the various interest groups in our branch. They are always looking for new members. In addition, we are asking for donations of food for the Alexandria Domestic Violence Shelter.

Looking ahead to October, we will have a program on the school district and specifically on the school to prison pipeline that unfortunately still exists. November will be a talk on women in the Supreme Court and December will be our annual holiday lunch at the Bellevue Country Club.

The branch has other ways to get involved. Diane Schrier has hundreds of postcards to fill out and send

urging people to vote in the November election. Do as many or as few as you want, everything is supplied, stamps included. Her email is diane.schrier@gmail.com. You could also represent AAUW at the Spooky Mad Science Expo, a STEM event for children put on by the Chrysalis corporation, October 18, 3 – 7pm, at the Patrick Henry Recreation Center. Email me if you are interested, aseyedoc@gmail.com. Whatever you plan, we at least are looking forward to seeing you at Danielle's.

Co-Presidents Anne Simpson & Jyothi Sunkari

PUBLIC POLICY REPORT

Hope is a very fragile thing but it is the one thing that in this very interesting time we must cling to. Advocacy with standing up for what we believe in is part of that hope. We stand together to fight for the issues that matter so much to us: education, voting, health, fair pay and equal rights for all people. In my travels throughout the Country this summer, women came up to me and said that my words, espousing what AAUW stands for, gives them hope. We live in a silo of aware, educated women supporting each other, but throughout the Country, many of our sisters are in despair, wondering what other rights they are going to lose and how they are going to face their children and grandchildren who will live with fewer rights. We must reach out to others. We must continue to speak out. We must not be afraid.

Washington D.C. continues to be occupied, but the crime rate has barely budged. Chicago may have National Guard installed in it. Our restaurants are hurting, and many small businesses are feeling intense pressure as people stay home and cut back on their shopping. The producer price index, which measures inflation before it hits consumers, rose .9% in July and wholesale prices rose 3.3%. Wholesale food prices rose 1.4% from June with a 38.9% increase in vegetable prices. The Big Beautiful Bill is already having an effect as some rural hospitals are beginning to close. ICE arrests have surged in Northern Virginia.

Our nearby universities are under attack. George Mason University has been targeted for DEI, and the University of Virginia president has been forced out. Many universities, like Columbia, Duke, etc. have given millions of dollars to the Dept. of Education for policies that involve diversity, equity and inclusion. \$785 million of health research funding has been cut due to that reason. Young scientists have been especially hurt, and overseas universities are eagerly offering them spots. Many international students have had their visas terminated and have instead registered at overseas schools. This has also hurt the funding of our schools.

Our Alexandria school system has bravely stood up to the anti-trans hysteria, but is now facing a financial burden of being forced to request reimbursement for educational expenses. Four other northern school districts are also being manhandled this way, misusing the wording of Title IX, which was designed to help protect students. Issues of busing and redistricting while modernizing schools in Alexandria are also under discussion.

The last Virginia General Assembly removed the cap on funding for staff positions. However, as much educational revenue in Virginia comes from the Northern Virginia tax base, it is expected that next year's revenue stream will be tighter and hurt educational advances.

The upcoming election will determine whether the 3 Constitutional Amendments, passed by the General Assembly last year, will pass this year and become law. They are based on the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, the right for non-violent felons, after completing their sentence to vote and the removal of the clause in the Constitution that says marriage can only be between a man and a woman. The election will also determine issues like paid sick leave, maternal health, wage history, and education standards. Everyone needs to vote as the issues in this Virginia election are very important and the eyes of the Nation will be watching.

Diane Schrier, VP - Public Policy

ALEXANDRIA BRANCH NEWS

Member Profile Meet Your New Co-President



I am Jyothi Sunkari, born and grew up in India, moved to USA in 2006. I have Bachelor's degree in computer science, Master's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication completed in Andhra University, India and Master's degree in Information technology systems and management from IGlobal University in Alexandria, Virginia.

I have worked in multi-national companies in India for business process outsourcing for British Telecom and HSBC. In USA, I worked in various Information Technology roles as a technical recruiter, cloud administrator and am currently working as IT Analyst.

My interest in Television and Filmmaking has led to producing show "The Art of Dance" in Fairfax public access. Also volunteering as technical director, video editor and audio technician for several shows at Channel 10 where "On the go with AAUW" was one of the shows. It introduced me to AAUW organization and its impactful work for women & young girls.

In filmmaking, have produced & directed short film "OCD" and worked as camera operator for feature film "Arrange to settle" which screened at film festivals. I worked on environmental

documentary filmmaking with American University which featured “Safe Haven: The Delmarva Fox Squirrel and Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge”.

I volunteered with ‘Asha for Women’ with fundraising, a non-profit working to help domestic violence victims from southeast asian immigrant communities in DC metro area.

Currently, being member of ‘Women in Cybersecurity’ organization have applied & received a full scholarship to attend national conference in Dallas which was held in April 2025. My focus is to bring women closer to technology fields and opportunity to collaborate. To encourage women & young girls to pursue roles in STEM fields with either jump start their career or helping with getting a foot in the door.

Becoming widow in mid-thirties, facing challenges in USA as minority immigrant women, needed to jumpstart my career and learn to navigate life with confidence and strength. It was only possible because of sisterhood and network of women I built around myself in all these years. I hope & strive to paying forward, share lessons learnt and support fellow women.

Autumn Leaves

Our 2025 drive opened 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 (in any amount). When that goal is reached, Susan Cash will add a bonus donation to the donation. So far we are 45 percent on our way toward this goal.***

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.

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.



MEET & GREET with POTLUCK Lunch

Date: September 14, 2025

Time: 2:00 PM

Venue:

Danielle Beach Oswald

5621 Glenwood Dr.

Alexandria, VA 22310

*Please RSVP by **September 13th, 2025** & email to danielleAAUW@gmail.com*

Tell us your choice of dish to bring for the Potluck:

Appetizer, Main Dish or Dessert.

[Alexandria Domestic Violence](#)

We are doing a food drive for Alexandria Domestic Violence Safehouse.

Items needed: pasta, pasta sauce, canned vegetables, canned fruit, canned soup, macaroni & cheese, breakfast bars, cereal, oil, sugar, and flour

Come hear about our various activities (Francophile, Dining Out, Mystery Book Club, Christ House, Diversity Book Group & Great Decisions).



**Bring a guest:
Each gets \$10 gift card!!!**



ALEXANDRIA BRANCH

Diversity Book Group

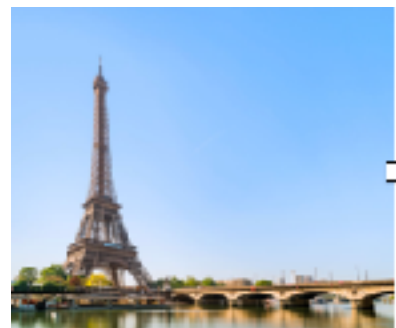


After a lively conversation in August of A Pigeon and A Boy, the Diversity Book Group will turn its attention to a completely different culture. Moving from a celebrated work by an acclaimed Israeli author, Meir Shalev, on September 8 we will discuss Anita de Montes Laughs Last by Xochitl Gonzalez, who is of Puerto Rican and Mexican American descent. Her novel is focused on American culture but filtered through the perspective of a Cubana and a Latina, born a generation apart. Our selections for October 20 take us into yet another cultural milieu. For the first time, the group is experimenting with the opportunity to choose one of two books: one a graphic novel by a South Korean author, Keum Suk Gendry-Kim, Grass, and a memoir of sorts by Korean American author, Grace M. Cho, Tastes Like War: A Memoir. Both are about historical trauma and how its roots impact the lives of generations to come. New members are welcome to join our group. If you would like more information please email Bonnie Hershberg at hersh3b@gmail.com. We usually meet on the second Monday of each month on Zoom from 7:00 - 8:30 pm except in October, when we will meet on the third because of the celebration of Indigenous People's Day.

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.



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, Pasara Thai Restaurant, 5926 Kingstowne Towne Center, Suite 180. Those interested should contact Susan Cash, scash5558@gmail.com, 703/587-4790.

Great Decisions



The *Great Decisions* program, organized by the Foreign Policy Association (FPA), is a nationwide initiative aimed at engaging Americans in discussions about key foreign policy issues. It serves as a platform to raise awareness and deepen understanding of global issues that directly impact U.S. foreign policy, security, and international relations.

Our AAUW-Alexandria Branch Great Decisions group began meeting in 2018. Originally, we met in person, and now we meet via Zoom to accommodate participants and guest speakers from all over our area. Typically, we meet eight times annually – on the second Thursday of the month from 7:00 – 8:00 pm. We cover one topic each month, based on the Great Decisions book which can be purchased [at this link](#).

Our group welcomes new AAUW members as well as guests who are not AAUW members. Please reach out to Lynn O'Connell at lynnocConnellva@gmail.com with any questions.

Upcoming Meetings

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)

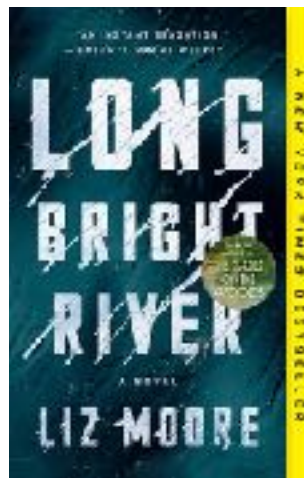
Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 844 7033 9855

Passcode: 655348

Mystery Book Discussion Group



Mystery Fans,

Please join the Mystery Book Discussion Group to discuss the September mystery novel. Because Rosh Hashanah starts on our regular meeting date, we will meet one week later on **September 30**, 2025, 7 PM, once again meeting via Zoom. Our mystery will be **Long Bright River** by **Liz Moore**. New members to this group are always welcome. If you have mystery book suggestions, need a copy of the book schedule, or have questions about the Mystery Book Discussion Group, please contact Susan Werner - - susan.werner1@verizon.net.

Remember this new date – this month only.

Happy Reading.

Kudos

AAUW Alexandria has shone this year with 480 postcards being sent out to encourage people to vote. A special thank you to all who have donated time to this:

Arlene Schuchner
Virginia Kress
Margaret Batko
Sylvia Linke

Diana Warmann
Vashti Robinson
Margaret Zembrowski
Mary Ann Bier

Bonnie Hershberg
Anne Simpson
Marilyn Zayas
Susan Werner

YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS!

**Bring a Friend
2025-2026
Membership Drive**

It's time to spread the word that AAUW's voice is being raised to fight for women's rights in these challenging times. The message is needed to go out to those frustrated and searching for a way to get involved. The Alexandria Branch also provides a **supportive community and interest groups** that provide:

- * **friendship and serious conversations** (Great Decisions, Francophile Group);
- * **book discussions** (Diversity Book Group, Murder Mystery Book Group);
- * **visits to terrific restaurants** by the Gourmet Group..

The current membership count for our Branch is 58. We need new members because it's really true — **there is strength in numbers**. If everyone will do their part to invite their friends and neighbors, we can grow our Branch and increase our message so that it's heard in all the important places - City Hall, Virginia Capitol, and our national Capitol. **Men and non-residents of the City of Alexandria may join.**

Most of our events are open to visitors. Be sure to consult with the coordinator of the interest groups to confirm guests are welcomed.

**Accept the challenge
Bring a Friend**

SAVE THIS DATE--Friday, February 6, 2026, 7:00 P.M.

That's When the AAUW Alexandria Branch and the
AAUW Mt. Vernon Branch Join Together, Once Again,
for Our Annual Fundraiser At
The Little Theatre of Alexandria.
Following a reception, you'll be able to settle in and enjoy



Here's what the Little Theatre has to say about the show:

“*School of Rock* is a rocking, high-energy musical that will have ‘fists of all ages and sizes...pumping’ (*Vanity Fair*)! Watch a wannabe rocker turn a class of misfits into a band of rockstars. With a score that’ll make you groove, this show is a blast.”

Stay tuned for further information, especially how you can purchase tickets.

Leslie Tourigny

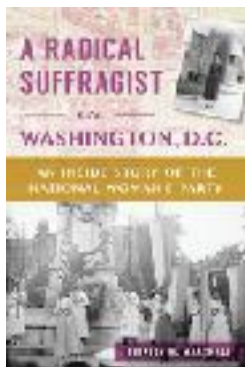
CO-Sponsors:



Pohick Regional Library

AAUW-VA Northern District Meeting
November 1, 2025, 12:00 p.m.

Pohick Regional Library
6450 Sydenstricker Rd, Burke, VA



Business meeting will follow talk.

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.

**COMMUNITY EVENTS
INVOLVING OUR MEMBERS or AAUW**

Virginia Women's Conference

Sponsored by US Senator Mark Warner

NOVEMBER 15, 2025, 8a-3p

**The Johnson Center, George Mason University,
4400 University Dr, Fairfax, VA 22030**

Click [here](#) for information on registration.

AAUW will once again have a table at the Virginia Women's Conference. Email AAUW-VA Public Policy VP, Diane Schrier, if you can help out, Diane.schrier@gmail.com.



Spooky Mad Science Expo

Member Sohreh Khoshnamak is organizing this event. Bring you kids and grandkids to this fun event!

We are getting ready for the 10th annual

Spooky Mad Science Expo, Northern Virginia's premier family STEAM event, on October 18, 2025 (rain date: Oct. 25), from 3–7 PM in Alexandria, VA.

This vibrant STEAM celebration is expected to draw over 2,500 attendees, families, educators, and youth leaders, for an afternoon of hands-on science, art, and imagination. We'll have 100+ interactive stations, including robotics, live demos, a planetarium, and a costume parade.

Here is the Spooky Mad Science Expo Vendor registration link:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScwCKJfBTLfx4iSOjiDLexCgf0QW8BIL9urencmIL3ZgYugwg/viewform)

[1FAIpQLScwCKJfBTLfx4iSOjiDLexCgf0QW8BIL9urencmIL3ZgYugwg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScwCKJfBTLfx4iSOjiDLexCgf0QW8BIL9urencmIL3ZgYugwg/viewform)

Warm regards,
Zohreh

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.



BRANCH OFFICERS

2025 - 2026

Co-presidents: Anne Simpson (aseyedoc@gmail.com) & Vashti Robinson (robinsonvashti@gmail.com)

VP for Programs: 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: Sylvia Linke (SFLaauw@gmail.com)

VP Membership: Eugenia Burkes (eugeniaburkes@mac.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)