

Mt. Vernon Voices

AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls
through research, education, and advocacy.

Volume 65 Issue 6 February 2022

Mt. Vernon Branch



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As I was searching for inspiration about what to write for this February newsletter, I googled for quotes about the month. I never realized how negative some people think about this the shortest month of the year! For example:

- "February is the shortest month, so if you're having a miserable month, try to schedule it for February."
—Lemony Snickett
- "February—the month of love..?! No wonder the shortest one in the calendar." — Dinesh Kumar Biran
- "February is just plain malicious. It knows your defenses are down."
—Katherine Paterson
- "The only bubble in the flat champagne of February is Valentine's Day." —Tom Robbins



But among the many negatives I found this sweet thought:

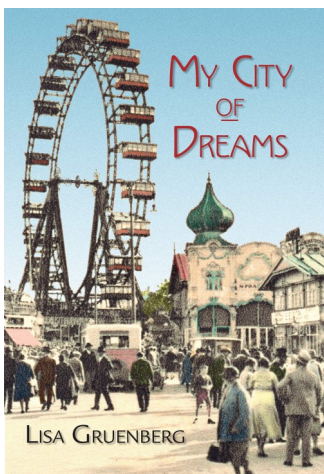
- "The February sunshine steeps your boughs and tints the buds and swells the leaves within."
—William Cullen Bryant

That thought alone should be enough to keep us going during February!

On **February 12**, I look forward to our Zoom program featuring **Lisa Gruenberg**. She will talk about the personal journey she made while writing the book, *My City of Dreams*, a story about relatives lost during the Holocaust. Lisa is a friend of our member **Joanna Crane**. I know that by now you have heard about ways you can obtain the book. If not give Joanna a call. She may have a copy to lend.

(Continued on page 2)

BRANCH PROGRAM



In collaboration with Sherwood Regional Library

AAUW Mt. Vernon Branch Presents

Author Talk with Lisa Gruenberg

Saturday, February 12, 10:30 a.m.

Join us for a virtual reading and discussion of Lisa's memoir, *My City of Dreams*, a Holocaust tale, but also very much the modern-day story of the relationship between a daughter and her father, about how trauma travels down through the generations, and how we find meaning in our lives.

The event is free and open to the public.
Registration is required. A Zoom link will be sent to registrants.

*** To register click [here](#). ***



February is Black History Month. Black History Month began as 'Negro History Week,' a label applied by historian **Carter G. Woodson** in 1926. In February 1969, the leaders of the Black United Students at Kent State University first proposed expanding Black History Week into Black History Month. The following year, the university celebrated Black History Month for the very first time.

February is the birth month of two figures who loom large in the black past: **U.S. President Abraham Lincoln** (born February 12), who issued the Emancipation Proclamation, and African American abolitionist, author, and orator **Frederick Douglass** (born February 14).

February held other events of historical value, too, such as the birth of civil rights leader **W.E.B. DuBois** (February 23, 1868) and the passing of the 15th Amendment, which gave African Americans the right to vote (February 3, 1870). Black History Month isn't a strictly American event. Countries around the world spend the month commemorating the contributions and achievements of black citizens who have made enduring and pioneering contributions to their

countries. (<https://holidappy.com/quotes/Quotes-About-February-and-What-Makes-It-Unique>)

As a branch, we celebrate Black History in our activities all year long!

- We have a Diversity Outreach Group that is delving into the issue of racism at full throttle.
- Our book group has focused on Black authors to broaden perspectives about Black history, Black lives, and issues surrounding racism and social justice.
- Our branch programs have also focused on those same issues.
- And, our National and State organizations have provided opportunities along these lines with programming and webinars, as well.

We have made Black history part of everything we do. That is because Black history is American history.

So during the month of February I hope you will find delight in reading a love story to celebrate Valentine's Day or seek out something new to learn about Black history. Maybe you want to just gaze out the window and think about those buds and leaves that are invisibly swelling. However you do it, I hope you find a multitude of enjoyable moments during this short month of February!

Patsy Quick

BRANCH LEADERSHIP 2021 – 2022

Elected Officers

President:	Patsy Quick
Program Vice President:	Solveig Eggerz
Membership Vice President:	Mary Wall
Treasurer:	Anne Simpson
Secretary:	Paula Lettice

Appointed Chairs

Bylaws:	vacant
AAUW Funds:	Elaine Kolish
Public Policy:	Mary Ellen Mehler

Newsletter/Website:	Bianca Daugherty
Newsletter/Directory Distribution:	Mary Ellen Mehler
Nominating Committee Chair:	Lois Passman
Hospitality:	Cathy Krebs

Interest Groups

Book Group:	Liz Promen
Diversity Outreach Group:	Janet Hedrick
Dining Out:	Paula Lettice, Cathy Conron, Bianca Daugherty
Game Night:	Cynthia Jacobus
ImpromptEvent:	Joanne Clark

Contact Email: AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com

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.

BOOK GROUP



**Book Group will meet via Zoom on
Monday, February 21, 7:30 p.m.
*** Zoom link will be sent via email. *****

BOOK: **The Dutch House**
By Ann Patchett

REVIEWER: Solveig Eggerz

NEXT BOOK: **Klara and the Sun**
By Kazuo Ishiguro

Contact **Liz Promen** if you are interested in joining the group or would like more information. (epromen2@gmail.com)

GAME NIGHT



**Join us for Game Night
Friday, February 25
from 7:30 p.m. until approximately 11 p.m.
Home of Shannon Dubicki**



Spouses and significant others are welcome to join in!

We are guided by the CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/variant.html>. All current Game Night members are fully vaccinated.

**Contact your AAUW Game chair Cynthia Jacobus cynthiacobus@cox.net
if you would like to join the group.**



The **Diversity Outreach Group** will meet on

Wednesday, February 9 at 7 p.m.

If you have ideas or want to participate at any time, you are welcome.
Just let **Janet Hedrick** know of your interest. (jhedrick815@gmail.com)

BRANCH PROGRAM - MEET THE AUTHOR



Dr. Lisa Gruenberg

Born in Ottawa, Canada and raised in Syracuse, NY, **Lisa** is a physician, medical educator, and writer. She began writing in 2004, when her father, a Viennese Holocaust survivor, began having nightmares and flashbacks about his past and about his sister, Mia, who disappeared into Germany in 1941 when she was just fifteen years old. In 2005, **Lisa** traveled to Vienna, Austria and Germany to trace the fates of Mia, her extended family, friends and neighbors. She wove their stories together, linking them with photographs, archival documents, family letters, diaries, her father's writing, his genealogy research, and the joyful tales he told her long ago.

BE A BRANCH LEADER

A LEADERSHIP and FUN OPPORTUNITY!!

It's Mount Vernon Branch Board of Directors **Nomination** Time
for the July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024 Term!

The following positions will be open for election to the board
at the annual meeting March 19, 2022.



Co-Vice Presidents for Membership:
Susan Farmer and Mary Wall

Treasurer:
Anne Simpson

Current officers are available to “mentor and help.”

**** Nominations may also be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee. ****

Please email: **Lois M. Passman** LMPassman@hotmail.com

or call Lois: 703-781-7626 (after 1 p.m.)

to take advantage of this amazing opportunity.

**Good news! Solveig Eggerz agreed to serve the second year of her term as Program VP.
Thank you Solveig!**

LTA FUNDRAISER UPDATE

Success of Canceled Fundraiser



Late on Thursday, January 13, the night before the planned performance of the musical, *Bright Star*, at the Little Theater of Alexandria, the event was canceled. The show's producer tested positive for COVID that day and most of the cast and crew were quarantined for 5 days.

Leading up to the event, several branch members had decided not to attend because of the increasing numbers of people who were being diagnosed with COVID. However, they contributed what they had paid for tickets to the effort.

And those branch members who bought tickets and planned to attend were also generous and directed the money they paid for tickets to the branch as well. We sold 52 tickets to branch members and received contributions from several members. **The total raised was \$2,465!**

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the fundraiser's success! Whether it was the cost of your tickets or a contribution, your support is appreciated!

You made the event that turned out not to happen into a success despite the cancellation of the performance.

The money raised will be given to AAUW for the Greatest Needs Fund.

Janet Hedrick

AAUW-VA PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

AAUW-VA has identified a number of **legislative priorities for 2022**. We will be preparing actionable fact sheets/issue papers on these topics for distribution to our members to support our lobbying efforts.

1. **Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML).** **Sen. Jennifer Boysko** again has introduced a bill (**SB 1**) to **establish a PFML program** in Virginia. The bill has been referred to the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee. AAUW-VA remains allied with the Campaign for a Family Friendly Economy on this issue. (NOTE: The Commission to Examine Racial and Economic Inequity in Virginia Law, established by outgoing Governor Northam, has now issued a 65-page report that, among other things, urged lawmakers to create a PFML program.) In a related development, **Sen. Barbara Favola** has introduced a bill to establish paid family leave as a class of insurance (SB 15). This also has been referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor.
2. **Paid Sick Days.** AAUW-VA is continuing to work with the Coalition of Virginians for Paid Sick Leave. Update: While no bills have been tabled yet, we understand from our January 7 call with the Coalition that several bills are being developed in both the Senate and the House. The Coalition plans to support all of them.
3. **Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.** **Susan Burk** reported on her call with the State Policy Director at the National Women's Law Center concerning legislation introduced on this subject in 2021. The NWLC has concerns with the liability provisions of **HB 2155** introduced by **Del. Watts** last year; the bill failed to pass the Senate. We will be consulting with our Co-Presidents on how to proceed.
4. **Holding the Line on Voter Access.** We have identified 12 bills introduced so far that primarily address voter identification and absentee voting (including eliminating no excuse absentee voting). **Sen. Mamie Locke** has introduced a constitutional amendment (**SB 21**) to address the voting rights of "returning citizens." Passage of this bill for a second time is required to permit it to move to the voters, who must approve any Amendment to the Virginia Constitution.
5. **Public Education/Vouchers.** We expect these to be on the table as part of the budget discussion in view of the campaign statements made by the incoming Executive team. AAUW has positions to guide our lobbying efforts, including this statement on vouchers: <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/position-vouchers/>. **Diane Schrier and Marsha Melkonian** volunteered to research charter school issues in Virginia to help keep us informed on this issue as it develops.

Opportunities to Lobby and Engage.

Our lobbying on behalf of **AAUW-VA** will be virtual again this year. In addition to issues papers, we will provide information on how best to engage your legislators.

In addition, there are other opportunities to get informed about issues through the work of other, like-minded organizations such as...

LWVVA – Weekly Legislative Round Tables (LRT) will be both in-person and virtual this year; League Day, **January 26**, also will be a hybrid event. To sign up and see the topics for each LRT: <https://lwvvawlrt22.eventbrite.com>

Fair, Non-partisan redistricting. Thanks to the efforts of two Special Masters, and with the approval of the VA Supreme Court, Virginia's state and national legislative districts have been redrawn and renumbered. You can find your district and other information explaining the changes at this link: <https://www.vpap.org/redistricting/>.

*Susan Burk and Denise Murden
Co-VPs for Public Policy
AAUW-VA*

AAUW NATIONAL NEWS



Now that Congress is back in session, we are working hard to advance AAUW's key policies. Similarly, many state legislatures have returned this week. This is a critical time to reach out to both federal and state lawmakers. Whether you connect virtually or in person, meeting with legislators is a great way to develop a relationship and influence the positions they take on issues important to you. AAUW has a number of resources to support your advocacy in 2022:

The [Where We Stand quick-facts pages](#) on key public policy issues are undergoing updates. Check back over the course of the month for new information you can use in meetings and to guide your activism!

Engage — *Share the important work we're doing*

Marking the first anniversary of the January 6 insurrection, AAUW joined more than 40 gender equity organizations and leaders in a [statement](#) pledging to fight for our democracy. In the face of bigotry, disinformation and anti-democratic violence, urge your members of Congress to support the [Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) and the [Freedom to Vote Act](#) today!

In December, members of the policy team hosted the first in a series of webinars, "[Exploring Tough Policy Issues Through An AAUW Lens: Political and Non Partisan](#)." Watch the recording to learn about highlights of our proud non-partisan, yet very political, history.

On December 22, President Biden [announced](#) an extension of the federal student-loan freeze through May 1, 2022. AAUW has [advocated](#) for student-loan relief before and during the pandemic, and we won't stop until the government delivers.

As we begin the 2022 midterm election year, the Center for American Women in Politics shared an [assessment](#) of 2021 state elections and how some data may foreshadow gender trends.

Stay engaged this year with our [Two-Minute Activist tool!](#) You can also check out our [letters, comments, testimony and legal briefs](#) to learn more about AAUW's positions and advocacy efforts.



NATIONAL ELECTION 2022—COMMENT PERIOD OPEN

It's your AAUW, and your voice counts. It's time to comment on and propose changes to the AAUW bylaws.

This spring AAUW members will be asked to **vote on proposed changes recommended by the AAUW Board of Directors and AAUW Governance Committee that would streamline two important organizational functions: nominations for the board and timing for those eligible to vote in AAUW elections.** In accordance with AAUW's bylaws, every AAUW member has the right to comment on proposed changes to the bylaws before they are put to the membership for a vote.

Comments can be submitted until February 2, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. ET

- [2022 AAUW Bylaws Proposed Changes: Nominations](#)
- [2022 AAUW Bylaws Proposed Changes: Eligibility](#)

[VIEW / COMMENT](#)

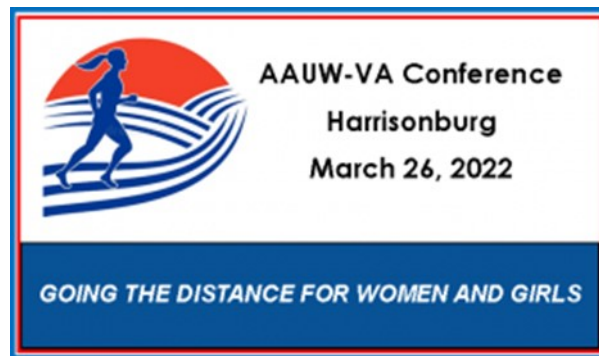
[VIEW / COMMENT](#)

2022 AAUW OF VIRGINIA STATE CONFERENCE

**Please join us for Part 1 of the
2022 AAUW of Virginia State Conference!
Saturday, March 26, 2022, 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

This is an **in-person event** at the Hotel Madison and Shenandoah Valley Conference Center on the James Madison University campus in Harrisonburg.

You will hear from and be able to question informed and inspiring speakers on AAUW mission-related topics that support the theme of



The conclusion of the program will provide an opportunity for the four state Districts to convene and elect representatives to the State Board for 2022-2024.

All information about the speakers and how to register is in the [Conference 2022 Brochure](#). Lodging information is within the brochure as well. You can also find this information at the [AAUW-VA Website](#).

If you want to register immediately, [CLICK HERE](#).

The AAUW-VA State Board is pleased to announce that because operating budget costs were lower between March 2020 and now, due to the pandemic, we are returning some of the unspent funds to members in the form of a lower conference registration fee, which includes morning beverages and lunch.


The registration deadline is March 11.

AAUW-VA Members	\$25.00 until March 4 (\$30 March 5 - 11)
Students	\$30.00*
Other Non-AAUW-VA Attendees	\$35.00

*Branches may consider sponsoring the attendance of students from college/university partners with whom they interface.

We look forward to seeing you there!

2021 - 2022 MT. VERNON BRANCH PROGRAM YEAR

Meeting Date and Place	Focus/Activity
Saturday, February 12, 2022, 10:30 a.m. Location ZOOM	Book and Author My City of Dreams , journey into uncovering the lives of her relatives long-lost to the Holocaust. Lisa Gruenberg
Saturday, March 19, 2022, 9:30 a.m. 10:45 a.m. Laugh Yoga Location ZOOM	Annual Business Meeting followed by Laugh Yoga 
Saturday, April 23, 2022, 10:30 a.m. Sherwood Regional Library or ZOOM	School-to-Prison Pipeline Panel Discussion 
Thursday, May 19, 2022, Time TBD Location TBD	Annual Potluck
June, 2022, Date and Time TBD Location TBD	Annual Planning Session

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

AAUW of VA State Conference
Annual Business Meeting

March 26, 2022, Harrisonburg (Part 1)
April 30, 2022 via ZOOM (Part 2)



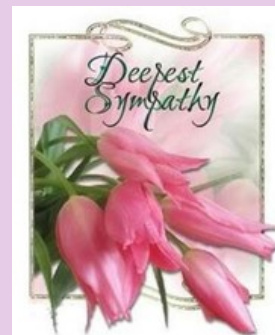
THANK YOU to **Janet Hedrick** and **Cheryl Spohnholtz** for heading up our LTA Fundraiser. After a lot of work, the fundraiser was canceled. Many thanks especially to **Janet** who scrambled in the days before the event to get the last-minute list of attendees that the Theatre asked for.

MANY THANKS to our wonderful, generous members who donated the cost of their tickets and/or made other donations.

All of these efforts made for a very successful fundraiser! Thank you!

Sending caring thoughts to Mary Ellen Mehler on the passing of her husband, Paul Mehler, who was a great friend to Mt. Vernon AAUW.

A donation in his memory has been made to United Community.



AAUW ART CONTEST

AAUW's 13th annual [art contest](#) is under way. Submissions will be accepted through Monday, January 31. Our own **Janet Hedrick** has submitted 2 photographs.



BURSTING IN AIR



WINTER LIGHTS

Voting will be open from February 2 to February 16. The six winning entries will be featured in a collection of notecards mailed to AAUW members in the spring!

* Photos by Janet Hedrick



FEBRUARY 2022

- **1 Board Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Contact Patsy Quick
703/360-8678
- **9 Diversity Outreach Group
7 p.m.**
Contact Janet Hedrick
571/213-2670
- **12 Branch Program 10 a.m.**
Contact Patsy Quick
703/360-8678
- **21 Book Group, 7:30 p.m.**
Contact Liz Promen
703/780-7342
- **25 Game Night, 7:30 p.m.**
Contact Shannon Dubicki
703/780-7973

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Board Meeting	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Diversity Outreach Group	10	11	12 Branch Program
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Book Group	22	23	24	25 Game Night	26
27	28					



Check out our website <https://mtvernon-va.aauw.net/>

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