

Mt. Vernon Voices

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

Volume 67 Issue 1 September 2023

Mt. Vernon Branch



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Can it really be the beginning of September already? When we last met as a group at our potluck dinner at **Paula Lettice's** home, you sent me off with thoughts of relaxation for which I was grateful. Summer for AAUW members is a "break" from programs and regular group meetings and events. For some, it's a time maybe for traveling or doing something different from your usual routine. For others

of us it is a time to carry on carrying on, with the only change being the hot weather. Either way, I hope you enjoyed an AAUW break and are looking forward to the coming program year.

There were a several photo ops for Mt. Vernon AAUW members during the summer. On June 3, 6 members arrived at **Patsy Quick's** home to write postcards to encourage primary voting in areas of Virginia where sometimes voting is slim. (page 10) Of course our planning meeting on June 9 was extremely productive as you will see on page 11. And, on August 5, some of us met up with Alexandria's **Gayle Converse** on the Mt. Vernon Trail

as she embarked on a 133-mile walk to Richmond to celebrate and honor women's history, health, and achievements (page 5).

September is always a very busy time of year and that is especially true for AAUW. Our programs begin (see the program chart on page 11), our groups resume their meetings (see book, game night, diversity group announcements on pages 3 and 4), and ImpromptuEvents and action items abound (pages 9 and 10). I hope you will join in to at least one of these activities during the month of September! It will be great to gather again with familiar faces and maybe a few new ones.

Golda Meir said, "Make the most of yourself by fanning the tiny, inner sparks of possibility into flames of achievement." Join us to write postcards this fall to again encourage voting. It is a simple task that proves its worth (see page 4). Join us at a program, book group or other group activity, and join us at the District meeting on September 23 along with other Northern District branches. Bring a guest, enthusiasm, and willingness to move AAUW advocacy for women and girls forward.

See you soon!

Patsy

BRANCH PROGRAM—KICKOFF

We are excited to start our program year with a presentation by our newest member

Dr. Melissa Joy Thiel, MD

SELF-EMPOWERMENT—HOLDING YOUR FIELD AND SPACE

Saturday, September 16, 10:30 a.m.
at Sherwood Regional Library



Don't Miss!

Come to our kick-off meeting, you do not want to miss this program!

Information on page 2!

KICKOFF—SEPTEMBER 16

Harnessing the Discoveries of Quantum Physicists to Empower Women

SELF-EMPOWERMENT - HOLDING YOUR FIELD AND SPACE

Saturday, September 16, 10:30 a.m. at Sherwood Regional Library

Our newest member, **Melissa Joy Thiel**, MD, will explain and demonstrate some of the ways in which women can harness their own deep energy source by tapping into the energy that pervades the universe. Melissa worked as an obstetrician/gynecologist for many decades in Alexandria.

The latest findings by quantum physicists on energy flow in the universe and our own interconnectedness matter for our daily lives and how we wield our own power to make the world a better place.

Here's how Melissa puts it:

"Most often we view ourselves as primarily physical beings. Rarely are we educated and trained to identify,

optimize and use our 'energy body' for maximum benefit. Let's share this opportunity to begin to understand and experience some fun, amazing, and powerful aspects of our energetic body and presence."

A helpful source for understanding how energy flow and connectedness relates to us is the book ***The Field: The Quest for the Secret Force of the Universe*** by Lynne McTaggart. Based in quantum physics theory, the book offers findings of scientists such as Albert Einstein, Max Planck, Hal Puthoff, and Niels Bohr, to explain the inexplicable—how there's no such thing as empty space, how energy flows through the universe, and why it matters for our technological world as well as for our personal lives.

Some Questions to Raise at the Meeting:

- How do the findings of quantum physicists relate to how women can live their most vibrant lives?
- How can our tapping into the universal flow of energy help us empower other women?

BRANCH LEADERSHIP 2023 – 2024

Elected Officers

President:	Patsy Quick
Program Vice President:	Solveig Eggerz
Membership Co-Vice Presidents:	Susan Farmer Mary Wall
Treasurer:	Anne Simpson
Secretary:	Joanna Crane

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:	vacant

Interest Groups

Book Group:	Liz Promen
Diversity Outreach Group:	vacant
Dining Out:	Paula Lettice Cathy Conron Bianca Daugherty
Game Night:	Bianca Daugherty Paula Lettice
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

The book group will meet on Monday, September 18 at 5:30 p.m. to pick out books for the coming year.

Hostess: Patsy Quick
Co-hostess: Solveig Eggerz

Details to follow.



Interested in joining? - Contact Liz Promen epromen2@gmail.com

GAME NIGHT

Thanks to everyone who participated in this past program year's Game Night which resumes in September and runs through next June. It's typically the fourth Friday evening of the month, but is adjustable based on holidays and other potential conflicts. We enjoy some social time with food and drink, then "get to gaming."

If you aren't currently on the email list of those participating and would like to be added, please let Paula or Bianca know. AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com

We are ready to get started.
Join us for a fun evening with various games

Friday, September 22, 2023, 7:30 p.m.

Home of Bianca Daugherty

Spouses and significant others are welcome to join in!



WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBER!



We are pleased to welcome **Melissa Joy Thiel** to our branch.

Melissa was raised in Livingston, NJ.

She holds an AB in Biology and Economics from Lafayette College, Easton, PA, and is a George F. Baker Scholar of Harvard business school. Melissa received her medical degree from Cornell University Medical College-NYC and completed her OB-GYN residency at Walter Reed AMC.

Melissa served as Clinic Chief and Mobilization Trauma Surgeon at the US Army Medicine 97th General Hospital in Frankfurt, Germany. She developed the Army "Safe Kit" for sexual assaults and MIS (miscarriage, infant death, stillborn) protocols for Army hospitals. Melissa was on the teaching faculty at Fort Belvoir's OB-GYN/ family practice residency program.

After serving in the military Melissa opened her private medical practice specializing in women's health and wellness/gynecology.

Melissa's interests are nutrition and wellness, organic gardening, Medical Qigong, which she studied with a Chinese master for 10 years, acupuncture, herbal medicine and spiritual healing.

DIVERSITY GROUP CONTINUES: NEW NAME, NEW FOCUS

Four members of the DEI group (**Patsy Quick, Ebba Jo Spettel, Anne Simpson and Elaine Kolish**) met by zoom on June 15, 2023 to decide the future of the group since our Chair, **Janet Hedrick**, is not able to continue. We decided that we wished to continue the group but meet less frequently and have a less structured format. We also renamed the group the **Diversity Study Group**. We hope this format will be appealing and workable to even more members of the branch.



1. **Schedule**: To meet quarterly (roughly), on the second Wednesday of the month from 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. The dates are **September 13, 2023, January 10, 2024, April 10, 2024 and July 10, 2024**. Please mark your calendars now to save those dates.
2. **Agendas**: With the exception of the September meeting, to have an open agenda to allow for information sharing and an attendee driven discussion of relevant articles, books, current news events and other events such as lectures, performances and the like.
3. **September 13, 2023 (7:30) Agenda**:
 - We will finish the book the group has been working on, the **1619 Project**, by reading the last three chapters (16-18). Each chapter is independent of the others and each has a different author. You do not need to have read the prior chapters to learn from chapters 16-18 and participate in the discussion.
 - Discuss holding a future meeting or just lunch at Della J's, a to support this local, Black-owned business. It is located on Richmond Highway at Mount Vernon Plaza and serves delicious food.
4. **Zoom links**: Patsy will send shortly before each meeting.

We look forward to seeing lots of members on Sept. 13.



Reclaim Our Vote Postcard Campaign

Join us at 10:00 am, September 30

at Mary Ellen Mehler's home 2002 Old Stage Rd.

to write postcards encouraging voters in low-vote areas to vote in the fall election.

RSVP to the email that is coming.

This is an [important election](#) for [voting rights](#), [reproductive freedom](#), and [education](#). And it could be a bellwether for 2024. On the ballot will be:

- All 40 seats of the Virginia State Senate;
- All 100 seats of the Virginia House of Delegates;
- Many local offices, including some school boards.

Studies indicate that in the areas where postcards and phone calls about voting have been received voting numbers increased. Our efforts are worthwhile!

So far, our branch is on track to donate about \$4,000 to the **Greatest Needs Fund**. The **Greatest Needs Fund** supports AAUW's groundbreaking research and effective advocacy work to pass fair-pay laws and other key equity legislation. Our branch is donating about \$2,400 (proceeds from the Little Theater event). Individuals have donated a bit more than \$1,000. The individual donations mostly are from members who are making monthly recurring donations, for which we are very grateful.



I will be stepping up my efforts to collect at branch events this fall. But, please remember you can always donate online by clicking the big red **DONATE** button at AAUW's website, <https://www.aauw.org>. If you already have an account it is super easy. You log in with your email address and password. If you don't yet have an account, it just takes a few steps to create one.

Please consider supporting this very worthwhile fund.



“Women Going the Extra Mile” – August 2023 Mt. Vernon AAUW Members Participate!

Our nation's centuries-old journey for women's equality continued from Alexandria, Virginia this August as Alexandria Celebrates Women (ACW) leads the way.

ACW Vice President **Gayle Converse** led “Women Going the Extra Mile” – a 133-mile trek from Alexandria to Richmond to raise awareness for many of the issues women face.

“We are walking for women's equality – in health care, at the ballot box and everywhere else. We honor women and girls of today and throughout history who have broken tradition, social norms, glass ceilings and *gone the extra mile,*” explains Converse.

Walkers followed the East Coast Greenway [East Coast Greenway - Home](#) from **Alexandria City to Mount Vernon**, next proceeding to Occoquan Regional Park – home to the [Turning Point Suffragist Memorial](#).

The journey ended on August 26, 2023 (Women's Equality Day) at the [Virginia Women's Monument](#) on Capital Square in Richmond.

Seven Mt. Vernon AAUW members, **Bianca Daugherty, Elaine Kolish, Paula Lettice, Mary Ellen Mehler, Ofelia Perotti, Patsy Quick, and Anu Soi**, met **Gayle Converse** as she approached the grounds of Mt. Vernon from the Mt. Vernon Trail. Anu and Ofelia walked about a mile to meet Gayle on the trail. They came up to the trailhead arm in arm with her. We all walked the rest of the way to the Mt. Vernon Circle where two women from the DAR joined us. We distributed bottles of water with AAUW labels and encouraged Gayle as she continued on her journey to Richmond. The Greater Richmond branch greeted her there. ***Many thanks to our members who came out on August 5 for this unique event.***

**** Photos on next page ****

WOMEN GOING THE EXTRA MILE



Mt. Vernon branch members greet Gayle Converse at her first stop in Mt. Vernon on August 5.

Two DAR members also joined to meet Gayle.



Gayle Converse arrives at the Turning Point Memorial. Mt. Vernon branch member Lois Passmann (front row left) and Alexandria branch Co-President Diane Schrier (with AAUW board) attended the event.





Northern District Meeting

Saturday, September 23, 2023

10:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library

5005 Duke Street, Alexandria

Our focus is on AAUW's Public Policy and Advocacy Agenda:

Get Informed and Be Engaged.

Meet and hear our speakers:



Meghan Kissell,
AAUW Senior Director,
Policy & Member Advocacy



Janine Greenwood,
AAUW-VA Co-VP for Public Policy

Questions?? Contact: ltourigny@gmail.com

**Back by
Popular Demand!**

We will be collecting **diapers** and **baby wipes** for:

GENERATION HOPE (<https://www.generationhope.org>)

WOMEN GIVING BACK (<https://womengivingback.org>)

- All items must be new, unopened, and in original packaging.
- Women Giving Back requests diapers in sizes 4 and 6.



Directions to the Beatley Central Library at 5005 Duke Street:

If you are heading East on Duke Street, you'll need to make a **left turn at the traffic light on North Pickett Street**, which is the street before you reach the library. There is a CVS on the corner. **After you turn and pass the two driveways for the CVS, turn right at the next driveway, where there is a small sign for the library.** You'll be in the library parking lot.

If you are heading West on Duke Street to reach the Beatley Central Library at 5005 Duke Street, **you will be able to make a right turn into the library parking lot directly from Duke Street after you pass the library building on your right.**

MEMORIAL BENEFIT CONCERT—SEPTEMBER 9

You are invited to the concert below in honor of member DeJuana Jones's beloved Phil Bolin.

MEMORIAL BENEFIT CONCERT

In Loving Memory of Phil Bolin

The family of Phil Bolin would like to invite you to a Memorial Benefit Concert.



Mezzo-soprano Caroline Nielson will sing a selection of art songs, Broadway hits, opera arias, spirituals and more.

Join for an enchanting performance featuring mezzo-soprano, **Caroline Nielson**, and pianist, **Edward Rothmel**.

Nielson will sing a selection of art songs, Broadway hits, opera arias, spirituals and more honoring the **memory of Phil Bolin** on **Saturday, September 9, 2023, at 2 PM**.

The concert will be held at **Aldersgate United Methodist Church**.

1301 Collingwood Rd, Alexandria, VA 22308

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students.

Ticket purchases are non-refundable and support **United Community**, an Alexandria-based human services nonprofit.

BUY TICKETS

<https://www.unitedcommunity.org/concert/>



AAUW members faced violence to fight for civil rights in 1964 Freedom Summer in Mississippi!

They were called “communists” by segregation supporters.

A new play *Wednesdays in Mississippi* dramatizes the little known activism of an inter-racial alliance of women who fought for civil rights in the South in 1964. Enraged at the exclusion of women from the 1963 March on Washington, **Dorothy Height**, director of The National Council of Negro Women, invited Northern women to join Mississippi women to struggle for voting rights, to support the Freedom Schools, and to aid the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

The “Wednesdays in Mississippi” coalition, which included the AAUW and the League of Women Voters, formed the only women’s civil rights project led by a national organization.

Written by **Nicole Burton**, *Wednesdays in Mississippi* is produced by Pipeline Playwrights. Burton adapted the play for the stage from **Debbie Z. Harwell’s** award-winning book by the same title. The November 11 performance will include post-show discussions.

Who are the Pipeline Playwrights?

Pipeline Playwrights strives to break through the glass ceiling women face in the American theater when they try to get their plays produced. The group of five mid-career women playwrights aims to close the theatre gender gap one play, one reading, one production at a time.

Pipeline Playwrights is based in Fairfax County, Virginia, and the digital world.

In 2018, Pipeline Playwrights launched “Our Time, Our Stories,” a multi-year project to produce five new full-length plays. After the pandemic hit, Pipeline quickly pivoted to Zoom and presented dozens of online readings and events, including a full production of the first play in the “Our Time, Our Stories” series, Ann Timmons’ *A Very Present Presence*. In 2022, Pipeline began producing live plays again (*Heartland* by Patricia Connelly and *Unprotected* by Jean Koppen) but is committed to continuing to serve audience members unable to attend live theater because of disability, caregiving responsibilities, or economics.

Tickets on sale now! In-person performances:



Performances:

- Fri, Nov 10 • 7:30 p.m.
- Sat, Nov 11 • 3:00 p.m.
- Thu, Nov 16 • 7:30 p.m.
- Fri, Nov 17 • 7:30 p.m.
- Sat, Nov 18 • 3:00 p.m.
- Sun, Nov 19 • 3:00 p.m.

Box Office:

<https://www.joesmovement.org/listofevents>

Info: pipelineplaywrights.org

Venue: Joe’s Movement Emporium
3309 Bunker Hill Road
Mt. Rainier, MD 20712
Tel: 301-699-1819

If you'd like to join us to see the play, please contact Solveig or Patsy.

AAUW MISSION AND ACTION



Affirm the Equal Rights Amendment!

It has been 100 years since the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was first introduced in Congress.

While the advancement of women's equality has continued incrementally through patchwork legislation and court decisions, we have seen in the past year how women's equality under law can be changed or even revoked at the whim of legislators and judges.

In July 2023, a new joint resolution **ERA Now (H.J. Res. 82)** was introduced in Congress to affirm the ERA and direct the Archivist of the United States to certify and publish the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Women in the United States have waited long enough for the ERA to be fully codified. We cannot wait for equality any longer. To contact your members of Congress and urge them to affirm the Equal Rights Amendment [click here](#) or go to <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>

AAUW LOBBY CORPS IS BACK!

On July 27, the AAUW Lobby Corps was back on Capitol Hill for the first time in-person since 2019! Kudos to **Meghan Kissell** and the policy team for preparing our dedicated local AAUW members to continue to advocate for our policy priorities.



Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) Postcard Writing June 3, 2023

Mt. Vernon AAUW has participated in the GOTV writing of postcards for several years. The purpose is to send hand-written postcards to targeted populations encouraging voter turnout. Does it work? Is it effective? Yes! The data was analyzed in 2022 and showed there was a measurable lift in voter turnout in districts where postcards were sent. (Ask Patsy to show you the study.) To that end, seven of our branch members gathered at Patsy Quick's home on June 3 and wrote 80 postcards to mail to a district in Tidewater Virginia. They

had fun decorating the cards with stars and various colors of pens to make the cards friendly and eye-catching, and then added postage stamps that matched the locale.

Many thanks go to **Bianca Daugherty, Kathi Hanrahan, Mary Ellen Mehler, Ofelia Perotti, Louise Priest, Liz Promen, and Patsy Quick** for their time and efforts. It was a fun morning and every little bit we can do helps the cause.

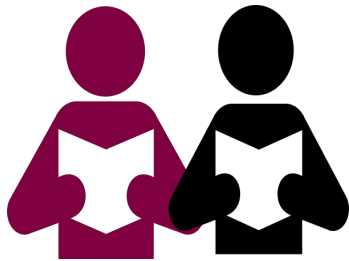
2023 - 2024 MT. VERNON BRANCH PROGRAM YEAR

Meeting Date and Place	Focus/Activity
Saturday, September 16, 2023, 10:30 a.m. Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	Holding Your Field And Space Women's Empowerment Presentation by Melissa Thiel
Saturday, October 14, 2023, 10:30 p.m.—noon Place TBD	Seniors Staying Strong (Seniors building body strength and flexibility) Patricia Lindemann and Jenny (personal trainer)
Saturday, November 18, 2023, Time TBD Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	Travels to Antarctica Antarctica from various points of views of the travelers
Saturday, December 2023, Date and Time TBD Place TBD	Holiday Event
January 2024 TBD (3 rd Thurs or 3 rd Sat.) Sherwood Regional Zoom	Seniors in Transition (Housing issues, financial issues, legal issues)
February 2024 TBD (3 rd Thurs or 3 rd Sat.) Zoom	Struggles Toward Integration and Defeating Massive Resistance in Virginia: libraries, lunch counters, schools
Saturday, March 9, 2024, 10:00 a.m. Zoom	Annual Business Meeting
Friday, March 22, 2024 7 p.m. Reception / 8 p.m. Performance Little Theatre of Alexandria 600 Wolfe St, Alexandria, VA 22314	LTA Annual Fundraiser Murder on the Orient Express
April 2024 TBD (3 rd Thurs or 3 rd Sat.) Sherwood Regional Zoom?	Underfunding Public Education Panel Discussion with Laura Goren , Director of Research and Education Policy at The Commonwealth Institute (TCI) for Fiscal Analysis
Thursday, May 16 or 23, 2024 Location, Date and Time TBD	Annual Potluck
Saturday, June 8 or 15, 2024 Location, Date and Time TBD	Annual Planning Session

Other Important Dates to Remember:

September 23, 2023
April 13, 2024

Northern District Meeting
AAUW of Virginia 2024 State Conference, Lynchburg,



Power Partnership: AAUW & Ms.

As part of a special partnership, AAUW is pleased to offer new and renewing AAUW members a free, one-year membership to the legendary **Ms. Magazine** which includes four print issues.

[Sign up](#) to get yours today!



September 2023

- **5 Board Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Zoom
Contact Patsy Quick
703/360-8676
- **13 Diversity Study Group**
7:30 p.m.
Contact Patsy Quick
- **16 Kickoff Branch Program**
10:30 a.m.
Contact Solveig Eggerz
703/203-0769
- **18 Book Group, 3:30 p.m.**
Contact Liz Promen
703/780-7342
- **22 Game Night, 7:30 p.m.**
Contact Bianca Daugherty
703/360-7239
- **30 Reclaim Our Vote**
Postcard Campaign 10 a.m.
Contact Mary Ellen Mehler
703/780-8494

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5 Board Meeting	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13 Diversity Study Group	14	15	16 Kickoff Branch Program
17	18 Book Group	19	20	21	22 Game Night	23 Northern District Meeting
24	25	26	27	28	29	30 Postcard Campaign



Check out our website <https://mtvernon-va.aauw.net/>
Follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/mtvernonvaaauw/>

