

Mt. Vernon Voices

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

Volume 67 Issue 4 December 2023

Mt. Vernon Branch



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Wow! We are in full-on holiday mode! Houses are lit, credit card charges have escalated, wrapping paper is everywhere, and baking is in progress. Enjoy every moment of this holiday season! Life turns on a dime and the future is not guaranteed,

as several of our friends know. The bright and joyful holidays keep us busy and our branch turns to festive events: **Our holiday luncheon is December 9** and if you haven't sent in your reservation, please send it to **Paula Lettice** now! Don't forget to bring a gift card or two for UC if it is in your budget. The book group will be festive with a book exchange. Our own **Anne Simpson** will sing with the Alexandria Choral Society on December 9, 7 P.M., at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Tickets can be purchased at AlexandriaChoralSociety.org. Let's make this an ImpromptEvent! See page 2.

During this holiday season, please remember our friends who are not able to be out and about. Send a card, make a phone call, or visit **Joanne Malkin** at

E lance (400 N Washington St, #212, Alexandria, VA 22314) and **Lois Passman** who had surgery recently (703/776-0515; 9100 Belvoir Woods Pkwy, #314, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-2714).

We are also thinking of our friends **Cathy Krebs** and **Janet Hedrick** who lost loved ones recently. Talk about life turning on a dime... This holiday season will be very different and difficult for them.

Two of our members will be moving away this month. **Shannon Dubicki** is moving to West Virginia to be close to her daughter. **Mary Wall** is moving to California to be near her daughter. Her email remains the same. Shannon's new email and both new addresses will be in our directory which will come to you soon if it hasn't already. We will miss both Shannon and Mary as they have been valued members and wonderful friends.

So, the holidays bring different feelings and activities depending on your situation. But, I pray that 2024 will bring joy, good health, and adventure to each and every one of you. You deserve it!

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah!

Patsy

AAUW Mount Vernon Branch Celebrates the Holidays

Holiday Luncheon and Wine Raffle Saturday, December 9, 2023, 11:30 a.m.

You will also have a chance to win a collection of 6 red wines rated 90+ or a collection of 6 white wines rated 90+ with our holiday raffle. Tickets are \$20 each or \$50 for 3.

All proceeds will go to AAUW Funds. WINNER WILL BE DRAWN AT THE LUNCHEON. You do not have to be present to win the raffle.

Questions or if you have not responded to the invitation that was sent out via email earlier, please contact **Paula Lettice** immediately at pglettice@gmail.com

IMPROMPTEVENT FOR A HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE!



Our member **Anne Simpson** sings in the Alexandria Choral Society. Their next concert is December 9, at 7 P.M. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 S. Pitt Street in Old Town Alexandria.

Let **Patsy** know when you have a ticket and we can form a carpool.

Get your ticket here: <https://www.alexandriachoralsociety.org/winter-cathedrals>

December 9, 2023 | 7:00pm—St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Join us for a joyful celebration of the season in historic St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Old Town Alexandria featuring international carols, new favorites, and a chance to sing along with the spectacular sound of the Alexandria Choral Society. Get your tickets early for our most popular concert of the year!

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.

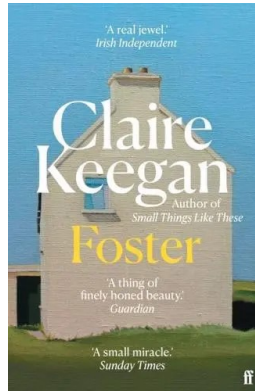
BOOK GROUP

Monday, December 18, 2023, 7 p.m.

Please inform the hostess whether or not you plan to attend.

HOSTESS: Joanne Clark
6607 10th Street, A-2.

CO-HOST: Solveig Eggerz



BOOK: Foster
Claire Keegan

REVIEWER: Solveig Eggerz

NEXT BOOK: Symphony of Secrets
Brendan Slocumb

BRING A USED BOOK FOR SECRET SANTA

GAME NIGHT

NO GAME NIGHT IN DECEMBER

We meet on the fourth Friday of every month gathering at 7:15 p.m. and beginning playing at 7:30 p.m.



26 January 2024	Barbara
23 February 2024	Hosted / Co-host needed
22 March 204	Anne
26 April 2024	26-Apr-24
24 May 2024	Patsy
28 June 2024	Kathi

Contact Paula Lettice or Bianca Daugherty if you would like to join the group.

AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com



SEASON OF GIVING

We have chosen **United Community** as our service giving agency this year – purchasing gift cards for UC's clients.

If you would like to help needy children this holiday season, please consider buying one or more \$30 gift cards from Target or Walmart and donating to **United Community** at our holiday luncheon or you can drop off the card(s) at **Elaine's** house (920 Emerald Drive). Thank you in advance for your generosity!

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

Around 30 branch members and guests attended the November 18 branch meeting 'Icy Adventures.' Five adventurous branch members—Bianca Daugherty, Susan Farmer, Liz Promen, Patsy Quick and Cheryl Spohnholtz—traveled independently to Antarctica and were excited to share their experiences of their adventure.

Bianca shared information on travel season, travel routes, expedition companies as well as excursions, on board activities, and, of course, showed some amazing photos of scenery and wildlife.



A brief history report plus information on the Antarctic Treaty and Citizen Science onboard the vessels rounded off the program.

Terra Australis Incognita/The Unknown Southern Land/Antarctica—Liz Promen

The ancient Greeks and Romans were first to believe there was some unknown land at the bottom of the planet but the road to discovering it did not begin until **Magellan** found the strait linking the Atlantic and Pacific oceans on his quest to reach the Spice Islands in 1520. In 1526, using this Strait of Magellan, **Francisco de Hoces** was blown out of it and landed in the waters at lands end, later named the **Drake Passage**, where the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans meet between the end of South America and the top of Antarctica. In 1773, the British Admiralty ordered **Captain James Cook** to look for that Southern Continent which had intrigued geographers and navigators and heading south he was first to cross the Antarctic Circle but was stopped by ice before reaching land.

Through the next century whalers and sealers headed south to take advantage of the rich marine life in the Southern Ocean. A Russian sealer was first to see the Antarctic continent in 1820, and an American whaler was first to walk on it in 1851. By 1904 a

commercial whale processing center was established on South Georgia, where 275,000 whales were processed between 1904-1965 contributing to the near extinction of Humpback whales by the sixties. By the 20th century attention turned to the interior. **Roald Amundsen was first to reach the south pole and** planted the Norwegian flag at the South Pole on December 14, 1911.

In 1914, **Sir Ernest Shackleton** set out to be the first to walk across Antarctica. His almost unbelievable story of human endurance includes being stranded on an ice flow for nine months, his ship crushed by the ice, traveling 100 miles in life boats to forsaken Elephant island and then leading a party of six to South Georgia in a life boat, one of the greatest boat journeys ever. After a 22 mile trek over the mountains he reached help, but it took four months later a successful rescue of the men left behind. All survived!

A few highlights of women in Antarctica include the first woman, a Norwegian whaler's wife, to step on the continent in 1937 and the first American woman to over-winter as a working member of her husband's expedition in 1946. The U.S. Navy dropped its ban on transporting women to Antarctica in 1969 which brought a female Ohio State scientific team to the continent and they became the first women to visit the South Pole. In 1979 a female engineer was the first to overwinter at the South Pole and to do research independent of a man. In 1993 four women reached the South Pole with skies and sleds, the first to get there on their own power. In 2001, two women were the first women to cross the continent on their own.

The handful of men and women mentioned here are only a few of hundreds of intrepid adventurers who have worked, explored and done research in this harsh yet beautiful now known part of our world.



Liz and her husband at Shackleton's grave

The Antarctic Treaty—Patsy Quick



As early as the 1500s, territorial claims for Antarctic lands have been made. Countries made claims as land was discovered by their explorers, sealers, and whalers. By the late 1950s seven sovereign states had made eight territorial claims to land in

Antarctica south of the 60° S parallel. These territorial positions had been asserted, but not agreed, creating a tension that threatened future scientific cooperation.

By this time also, permanent research stations were being established. At the same time, planning was underway for the International Geophysical Year (IGY) in 1957-58. This was the first substantial multinational research program in Antarctica. It was recognized as being pivotal to the scientific understanding of Antarctica. The twelve nations active in Antarctica agreed that their political and legal differences should not interfere with this research program.

The huge success of the IGY led these nations to agree that peaceful scientific cooperation in the Antarctic should continue indefinitely. Negotiation of such an agreement began resulting in the Antarctic Treaty.

Twelve countries represented by the Governments of Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Chile, the French Republic, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the Union of South Africa, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America signed the Antarctic Treaty on December 1, 1959 in Washington, D.C. It entered into force in 1961 and to date, it has been signed by 56 countries.

There are 14 articles within the treaty. (<https://www.ats.aq/e/antarctictreaty.html>)

This portion of the preamble sums up its provisions:

“It is in the interest of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue to be used forever for peaceful purposes and shall not become the scene or object of international discord.”

There have been additions to the Treaty. The most recent, **the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty**, was signed by in Madrid on October 4, 1991 and entered into force in 1998.

There are 70 permanent research stations on Antarctica operated by researchers and scientists who represent 29 countries from across the globe. The US has 3 research stations.

They are managed by the National Science Foundation. This website has more information:

<https://www.usap.gov/theantarctictreaty/>



The Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station (U.S) in November 2009.

Citizen Science in Antarctica—Susan Farmer

A unique aspect of eco cruises in Antarctic is participating in citizen science. Antarctica has a profound effect on the Earth’s climate and ocean systems, but research in this remote location costs a lot. Because



Susan's husband collecting phytoplankton

of this, it is often difficult for scientists to get the funding they need. The constant stream of cruises to Antarctica provides the perfect opportunity for scientists from all over the world to collect data they would otherwise be unable to get. One of the two full-time scientists on our ship researches phytoplankton. By collecting this plant-like plankton along the Antarctic Peninsula, passengers on

our ship went out in Zodiac boats to help scientists add to 90 years of data. This data creates a seasonal picture of phytoplankton abundance, composition, and distribution, as well as shows how phytoplankton are influenced by the increasing meltwater inflow from glaciers. In addition to being the base of the Antarctic food chain and providing the earth with half of its oxygen, phytoplankton are important producers of Dimethyl sulfide (DMS), an anti-greenhouse gas. Participating in citizen science adds to the joy and wonder of visiting this amazing place.

AAUW-VA PUBLIC POLICY

Save the Dates!

- **January 4, 2024:** Pre-General Assembly AAUW-VA Public Policy Zoom Meeting
- **January 30, 2024, 5 p.m.:** Women Legislator's reception (Richmond)
- **January 31, 2024:** AAUW-VA Lobby Day (Richmond)
- **February 28, 2024:** AAUW-VA Lobby Day (Virtual)



We are **seeking volunteers to serve on the Women Legislators' Reception planning committee**. We have a venue, but need assistance with planning for refreshments, a program, and other details. Please send an email to aauwvpublicpolicy@gmail.com if you can help.

Virtual lobby day plans are still in development, but we heard some great ideas from our members. We will supply contact information, scripts, and background information for our members to contact their representatives by phone, email or Zoom meeting during Virtual Lobby Day.

Freedom Summer, 1964: Volunteers Lived Under the Shadow of Murders of Civil Rights Activists

by Solveig Eggerz

Anne Simpson and I attended an unforgettable performance of Nicole Burton's civil rights play, *Wednesdays in Mississippi*, November 11 in Mt Rainier, MD. The play celebrated the role of an interracial group of women who fought for voting rights, the integration of schools, and assisted Fannie Lou Hamer's Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party during that violent summer in Mississippi, 1964, known as Freedom Summer.

Adapted from the book by Debbie Z. Harwell, directed by Rikki Howie Lacewell, and produced by Pipeline Playwrights, the play celebrates the impact on civil rights of the collaboration and life-long friendship of Dorothy Height, then director of The National Council of Negro Women, and Polly Spiegel Cowan of *Spiegels*, the nationally known furniture mail order catalogue. It also demonstrates the powerful courage of the many women who answered their call to support the civil rights struggle in Mississippi.



From left: Anne Simpson, Nicole Burton, Solveig Eggerz

A special treat was the TalkBack session after the play featuring two of the original women, Susie Goodwillie and Linda Davis, who went to Mississippi as college students. The women described for the audience a time when volunteers were threatened and sometimes murdered. Both recalled working under the shadow of the recent murders of civil rights workers, James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman, in June 1964.

Another participant in the TalkBack was Holly Cowan, daughter of Polly Cowan, who quoted Dr. Height as having said about her close friend, "Polly was the only white woman who fully understood what it felt like to be a black woman."

To learn more about Dorothy Height and Polly Cowan, see the links below.

<https://jwa.org/were/member/cowan-polly>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorothy_Height

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 Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	Seniors Staying Strong (Seniors building body strength and flexibility) Jenny Grover (personal trainer)
Saturday, November 18, 2023, 10:30 a.m. Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	Travels to Antarctica Antarctica from various points of views of the travelers
Saturday, December 9, 2023, 11:30 a.m. Cedar Knoll 9030 Lucia Lane, Alexandria, VA 22308	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:

April 13, 2024

AAUW of Virginia 2024 State Conference,
Lynchburg, VA

Members are reminded they can **find up-to-date public policy information** on our [AAUW-VA Public Policy Google drive](#). Information will be updated as we head into the 2024 General Assembly session. More information can be found on our [AAUW-VA Public Policy webpage](#). If you have suggestions or questions to improve these resources, please be sure to let us know.



December 2023

- **5 Board Meeting, 7 p.m.**
Zoom
Contact Patsy Quick 703/360-8676
- **9 Holiday Luncheon, 11:30 a.m.**
Contact Paula Lettice
703/780-3463
- **18 Book Group, 7 p.m.**
Contact Liz Promen
703/780-7342

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5 Board Meeting	6	7	8	9 Holiday Luncheon
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 Book Group	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						



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