

# Mt. Vernon Voices

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

Volume 67 Issue 9

May 2024

Mt. Vernon Branch



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### *Courage, Connection, and Commitment*

I attended another wonderful state Conference on April 13 in Lynchburg. **Lane Stone**, President (from Alexandria Branch) opened the gathering by reminding us of the 2024 Conference theme: **Courage. Connection. Commitment.** She set the interactive tone of the conference by asking questions for which audience members responded with personal anecdotes. She encouraged us to talk about women of accomplishment any time we can and to "say her name." She had us name dozens of accomplished women from every field of endeavor we could think of.

The Keynote speaker, **Dr. Alison Morrison-Shetlar** was a highlight. She, too, gave an interactive talk. She elaborated on three ways to lead: from the front, from the side, and from behind, and described why each is important. She gave examples of her own leadership from each direction and had the audience share as well. All of the discussion was quite useful and inspiring!

The 10-Minute Tool Kit portion of the conference focused on a variety of information "bits" from a video on "Micro-aggressions" to a talk on "Cybersecurity for Branches." These were tailored after the well-known TED Talks and were a hit with the attendees.



If you have never attended a state conference, I hope that you will plan to do so at some time in the future. It's in the branch budget to help you with the registration and other expenses. At these conferences I've met many wonderful and like-minded women from around the state whom I now call friends. It is always a pleasure to gather with them, catch up from the last time, and encourage each other as we move along toward a tension-filled autumn.

Courage, Connection, and Commitment is what I always carry with me when I leave an AAUW-VA Conference.

*Patsy*



Lane Stone with Dr. Morrison-Shetlar.

Thursday

May 16

6:30 p.m.

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Annual

Branch

Potluck

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Home of  
Paula Lettice

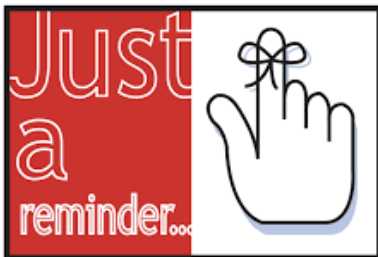
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# SAVE THE DATE! ANNUAL BRANCH POTLUCK

Enjoy good food and good company!  
Our annual Potluck Dinner is on Thursday, May 16  
beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Look for an invitation from our host Paula coming soon ...  
to an email box near you!

Bring your favorite dish!



It is spring, time to start thinking about renewing your membership. Do it while you are thinking about it! You can pay dues with your credit card on the AAUW website, [AAUW.org](http://AAUW.org), or send a check to me payable to the branch. The dues for this year are the same as last year, \$100. (includes \$72 - National; \$15 - State; \$13 for Mt Vernon). National dues (\$72) are now fully tax deductible.

Anne Simpson  
Treasurer

## 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:** All Members

**Contact Email:** [AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com](mailto: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.

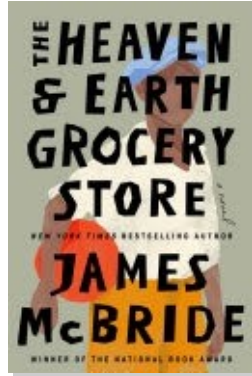
## BOOK GROUP

Monday, May 20, 2024 - 7 p.m.

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

**HOSTESS:** Joanne Malkin  
Elance  
400 N Washington Street

**CO-HOST:** Liz Promen



**BOOK:** The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store  
James McBride

**REVIEWER:** Ebba Jo Spettel

**NEXT BOOK:** Banned Books

Each person will read a banned book and tell a little about it and why it was banned

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

## GAME NIGHT

Join us for a fun evening with various games.

Friday, May 24, 2024, 7:30 p.m.

Home of Joanna Crane

Spouses and significant others are welcome to join in!



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

[AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com](mailto:AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com)

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION



Branch members **Ebba Jo Spettel, Cathy Krebs, Lois Passman and Liz Promen** visited **Joanne Malkin** to celebrate her birthday with a delicious lunch and Bavarian cream cake. Joanne was delighted with the party and appreciates all the cards and support she has had from her AAUW friends.

## AAUW FUNDS: A NEW CHAIR IS NEEDED



As the incoming co-president of the branch, **Elaine Kolish** needs someone to take on her job of soliciting funds for AAUW Funds and nominating “named honorees” for every \$500 the branch donates. According to Elaine it’s an easy job. You ask the branch members to donate at in person events and through the newsletter. The chair also periodically keeps the branch apprised of how much has been donated to date. The bulk of the money raised through our Little Theatre fundraiser is donated to the Greatest Need Fund and represents our single largest donation. Please contact Elaine if you would like to learn more. Elaine at 571/282-1263.

## APRIL BRANCH PROGRAM RECAP

### Show Me Your Budget, and I’ll Know Your Values

These words capture the essence of a presentation by **Briana Jones**, a policy associate with The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis (TCI), on the current underfunding of Virginia’s public schools.

The discrepancy between the General Assembly’s passed budget and the Governor’s proposed expenditures on schools is \$1.2 billion. Speaking to AAUW members on April 11, she explained the dire consequences for school districts across the state, ranging from “crumbling” schools to severely understaffed school systems, most notably among students who most need services.



“A high capacity/low effort state,” Virginia is “one of the top ten states in terms of household income” but among the lowest funders of education. Progress has occurred, however. Today TCI gives Virginia a “D” score in three key areas. That is up from a previous “F” score.

- Virginia provides less funding to the schools than the national average.
- Teachers in Virginia are paid 67 cents for each dollar paid to peers in other professions.

Many of TCI’s priorities dovetail with those of AAUW, especially the goal of equal education for all students.

Ms. Jones stressed the importance of “keeping public funds in public schools,” rather than supporting K-12 vouchers. Vouchers increase segregation and discrimination, consequences that hark back to Virginia’s struggle to desegregate its schools.

A key legislative priority for TCI is “Creating a safe and restorative environment for every student,” which includes “implementing holistic practices to address student behavior, reducing interactions with criminal legal system, and keeping students in the classroom.”

She urged AAUW members to “stay engaged with your lawmaker throughout the year.” Above all, “Let legislators know that education funding is a priority for you.”

*Solveig Eggerz*  
*Program Vice President*



*(Information provided by Denise Murden and Janine Greenwood, AAUW-VA Co-VP for Public Policy)*

When the Virginia General Assembly reconvened for the day on April 17, the 2/3 vote necessary to override the Governor's vetoes on a number of bills of particular interest to our AAUW members was lacking. However, these two bills of interest were passed and signed:



- HB633 which combats labor trafficking
- HB 994 which ends child marriage which was often a path to sex trafficking

Budget negotiators aim to submit a new budget in a special legislative session on May 13, returning two days later to vote on it. Many AAUW educational priorities are dependent on the budget. Our state AAUW Public Policy co-chairs will be reporting as legislative activities take place.

## DID YOU KNOW....



As Vice-Chair of the Fairfax County Tree Commission, our newly elected Co-VP **Elaine Kolish** periodically writes short articles on tree subject for Plant NOVA Natives.

### Humans and Trees Share a Common Enemy: Stress!

By Elaine Kolish

**W**e all know that chronic stress affects our health and well-being, causing us to go into “fight or flight” mode. That, in turn, can lead to a variety of health effects ranging from depression to high blood pressure, which itself can increase our risk for stroke or heart attack. Ongoing stress also affects the health of trees. But unlike us, they have limited options for reducing their stress. They can use internally produced chemicals and scents to deter predators and warn other trees of threats, as well as help stressed neighbors by sharing water and nutrients through an underground fungal network. But they can't pick up and move to avoid stressful conditions. We need to step in and alleviate tree stressors to the extent we can, particularly those caused by human activity. The good news is that caring for trees and spending time in nature can reduce our own stress. A win-win.

To read the complete article, click on the link. <https://www.plantnovatrees.org/post/humans-and-trees-share-a-common-enemy-stress>

# AAUW ELECTION TIME

You will be voting twice this spring in AAUW elections, once for AAUW national and once for AAUW of Virginia.



## AAUW National Elections 2024

It's time to vote on the AAUW Board of Directors and changes to the bylaws.

AAUW members are asked to vote on an amendment to the national bylaws recommended by the AAUW Board of Directors and AAUW Governance Committee that would **open membership to any individual who supports AAUW's important mission of advancing equity for women and girls.**

**Your voice and vote counts! Ballots have gone out via email on April 3. Just follow the link in your email to go straight to your ballot.**

Voting closes at 12:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15, 2024.

Meet the AAUW board candidates and review the proposed bylaw changes [here](#).

**One Member/One Vote  
Online Voting for AAUW of Virginia opens on May 7!**



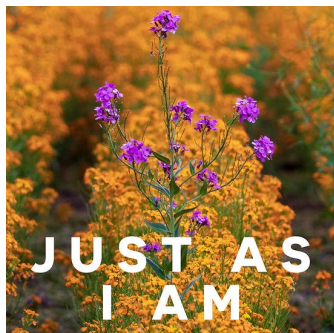
**Watch for email with voting instructions and the link to the electronic ballot.**

You will be voting for state officer positions and for AAUW-VA 2024-2026 Public Policy Priorities.

**Online voting closes on May 26 at 11:45 p.m.**

Open your [Voter Guide](#) to meet the board candidates and review the proposed 2024-2026 Public Policy Priorities

## Alexandria Choral Society



ACS is singing again! Celebrate Mother's Day a day early and come to our last concert of the season, "Just As I Am", celebrating love, healing, and personal growth. The concert is at 7 p.m. on Saturday, May 11, at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 7750 Cameron Mills Road, Alexandria. The concert will feature singers from Alexandria City High School, winners of our Sing-Off grant. Look for treasurer, **Anne Simpson**, in the alto section.

Tickets are available by going to the website:

<https://www.alexandriachoralsociety.org/just-as-i-am>

# 2023 - 2024 MT. VERNON BRANCH PROGRAM YEAR

Meeting Date and Place	Focus/Activity
<b>Saturday, September 16, 2023, 10:30 a.m.</b> <b>Sherwood Regional Library</b> 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	<b>Holding Your Field And Space</b> Women's Empowerment Presentation by <b>Melissa Thiel</b>
<b>Saturday, October 14, 2023, 10:30 p.m.—noon</b> <b>Sherwood Regional Library</b> 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	<b>Seniors Staying Strong (Seniors building body strength and flexibility)</b> <b>Jenny Grover (personal trainer)</b>
<b>Saturday, November 18, 2023, 10:30 a.m.</b> <b>Sherwood Regional Library</b> 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	<b>Travels to Antarctica</b> Antarctica from various points of views of the travelers
<b>Saturday, December 9, 2023, 11:30 a.m.</b> <b>Cedar Knoll</b> 9030 Lucia Lane, Alexandria, VA 22308	<b>Holiday Event</b>
<b>Thursday, January 11, 2024. 1:30 p.m.</b> <b>Sherwood Regional Library</b> 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	<b>Senior Living Community Options</b> <b>Speaker: Arvette M Reid</b>
<b>Thursday, February 29, 2024, 1:30 p.m.</b> <b>Sherwood Regional Library</b> 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	<b>Separate but NOT Equal</b> Struggles Toward Integration and Defeating Massive Resistance in Virginia <b>Speakers: Brenda Mitchell-Powell and Wilma Jones</b>
<b>Friday, March 22, 2024</b> <b>7 p.m. Reception / 8 p.m. Performance</b> <b>Little Theatre of Alexandria</b> 600 Wolfe St, Alexandria, VA 22314	<b>LTA Annual Fundraiser</b> <b>Murder on the Orient Express</b>
<b>Saturday, March 23, 2024, 10:00 a.m.</b> <b>Zoom</b>	<b>Annual Business Meeting</b>
<b>Thursday, April 11, 2024, 7:30 p.m.</b> <b>Sherwood Regional Zoom</b>	<b>Underfunding Public Education</b> <b>Speaker: Briana Jones</b> , policy associate at The Commonwealth Institute in Richmond
<b>Thursday, May 16, 2024</b> <b>Home of Paula Lettice, 6:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Annual Potluck</b>
<b>Saturday, June 1, 2024, 10:30 a.m.</b> <b>Sherwood Regional Library</b> 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	<b>Annual Planning Session</b>



What do states from Florida to New York have in common? We're all getting together for AAUW's Atlantic Regional Conference! **SAVE THE DATE: September 27-29, 2024 in Richmond, Virginia!** Stay tuned for more details



## Have you registered for the AAUW-VA 2024 Annual Business Meeting?

It will be held via Zoom webinar on  
**May 4, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.**

**You must register in advance for the webinar and to receive the login information.**

Register [HERE](#)

You will hear about the accomplishments of your AAUW-VA Board members as well as the state proposed Public Policy Priorities to be voted on in May. This event also will allow you the opportunity to meet this year's candidates for elected positions.

The Business Meeting Program Book is available on the AAUW-VA website.  
<https://aauw-va.aauw.net/annual-business-meeting/>



# May 2024

- **7 Board Meeting, 7 p.m.**  
Contact Patsy Quick  
703/360-8678
- **16 Branch Potluck, 6:30 p.m.**  
Contact Paula Lettice  
703/780-3463
- **20 Book Group, 7 p.m.**  
Contact Liz Promen  
703/780-7342
- **24 Game Night, 7:30 p.m.**  
Contact Joanna Crane  
703/718-8892



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



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

