

Mt. Vernon Voices

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

Volume 68 Issue 4 December 2024

Mt. Vernon Branch



CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



December is a month of caring and giving. I appreciate all of the caring and giving that our branch members do for the AAUW mission and for each other. I want to share part of a poem that seems to say much about the kind of caring that means a lot to

most of us. (I am sorry, I do not know the author. This was posted on Facebook.)

*Continue to do the good work.
Continue to build bridges not walls.
Continue to lead with compassion.
Continue the demanding work
of liberation for all.
Continue to dismantle broken systems,
large and small.*

*Continue to set the best example
for the children.
Continue to be a vessel of nourishing joy.*

*Continue right where you are.
Right where you live into your days.
Do so in the name of
The Creator who expects
nothing less from each of us.*

Hope to see you at any of our gatherings in December. I am wishing each of you the happiest of holidays however you celebrate! May you find peace and joy.

Patsy

Join in for some holiday cheer!

Enjoy delicious food and delightful company as we celebrate the season with a festive 3-course-luncheon at

Cedar Knoll

Sunday, December 8, 2024 / 11:30am—2 pm

9030 Lucia Ln, Alexandria, VA 22308 (GW Parkway)



Also, get your tickets for our annual wine raffle for a chance to win either a collection of 6 red or 6 white wines. **All proceeds will go to AAUW Funds.**

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

Looking forward to celebrating with you.

HOLIDAY COLLECTION FOR UNITED COMMUNITY

To mark **AAUW of Virginia's 100th anniversary**, every branch has been asked to donate 100 items or 100 dollars to a local non-profit or to AAUW's funds. We have chosen **United Community** and its home-bound clients as our recipient

Personal toiletries, such as shampoo, soap, dental care products, and adult diapers are needed items and always in short supply.

We are asking members to bring one or more full size bottles and tubes of toiletries or adult diapers to our Holiday Luncheon on December 8.



We hope to collect at least 100 items that we will then donate on behalf of the branch. We thank you for your generosity in advance.



BRANCH LEADERSHIP 2024 – 2025

Elected Officers

Co-Presidents: Patsy Quick
Elaine Kolish

Program Vice President: Solveig Eggerz

Membership Vice President: Susan Farmer

Treasurer: Anne Simpson

Secretary: Joanna Crane

Appointed Chairs

Bylaws: vacant

AAUW Funds: Cathy Krebs

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

Dining Out: Cathy Conron
Paula Lettice

Game Night: Bianca Daugherty
Paula Lettice

ImpromptEvent: All Members

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.

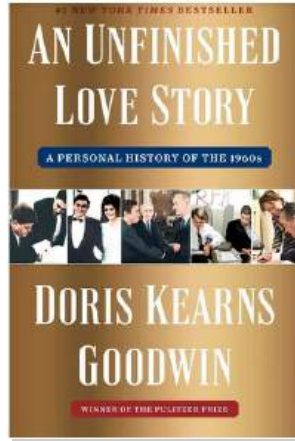
BOOK GROUP

Monday, December 16, 2024 - 7 p.m.

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

HOSTESS: Patsy Quick
5508 Old Mill Rd
Alexandria

CO-HOST: Joanna Crane



BOOK: An Unfinished Love Story
by Doris Kearns Goodwin

REVIEWER: Solveig Eggerz

NEXT BOOK: James
by Percival Everett

**NO GAME NIGHT IN DECEMBER.
GAME NIGHT WILL BE BACK JANUARY 24, 2025**

**Hosts are still needed for March 21, April 18, and May 23!
If you are able to host please let Paula or Bianca know.
AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com**



IMPROMPTUEVENT - HOLIDAY DREAMS



Come and join the festivities of the season! **Alexandria Choral Society** is partnering with the **Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic Orchestra** to present "**Holiday Dreams**," an eclectic mix of holiday music at the George Washington Masonic Memorial on **Sunday, December 8** at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$35 and can be purchased on the ACS website, alexandriachoralsociety.org. Look for **Anne Simpson**, our treasurer, in the alto section of the chorus.



If you want to attend the performance and form a carpool (possibly leaving from Cedar Knoll after our holiday luncheon) let Elaine and Patsy know.

RECAP OF OUR NOVEMBER BRANCH PROGRAM

“In the silence I discovered these unexpected musicians.”

by Solveig Eggerz

For music educator, **Annie Ray**, everything changed on a Covid lockdown day in 2020 when she heard the unexpected sound of kids talking and laughing in the otherwise silent halls of Annandale High School. She discovered the source of these happy sounds was a group of CAT-B special ed students who had returned to school because their needs couldn't be met online.

“The world had gone quiet, but in the silence I discovered these unexpected musicians,” she recently told an audience of AAUW Mt. Vernon and Alexandria branch members at Sherwood Regional Library.

The “unexpected musicians” Annie encountered had severe intellectual and developmental disabilities and, therefore, were not in her general music class. Yet it was they who transformed her approach toward teaching and toward music itself. To discover what their curriculum looked like and how she could apply music to their needs, she consulted all the professionals in the school who worked with the CAT-B students. Welcoming her interest, they responded with “Learn from us.” After that, they were a team.

“My team taught me everything I know,” Annie said, but so did her disabled students. For them she created the **Crescendo Orchestra**, a curriculum of its own. Using an approach similar to the Suzuki method of music education, Annie formed a relationship between student, teacher, and parent. Out of this concept emerged the **Parents Orchestra** to help caregivers understand the musical challenges their student faces. The 215 members of the Parents Orchestra meet twice a month and are obligated to learn how to play their child's instrument.

Annie's teaching is driven by the goal of “meeting kids where they are.” This does not mean lowering standards but rather leaving behind the traditional standards of success in favor of the idea that success may “look different for each kid.” Redefining success may mean “simply doing something you've never done before.”

Among her students is wheelchair-bound, non-verbal **Dean** who “redefined what success meant to me” as he learned to pluck along with his peers on a violin, modified for him, so that it has only one string. Another is **Kevin**, who when she handed him a cello

and a bow, “began bowing back and forth, his eyes filled with tears. There was a connection.” She is always learning something new. “These unexpected musicians teach me more than I can ever teach them,” she said.

As she reevaluated concepts of success and failure, she discovered the “**in-between part, the part that brings joy. The Musicking.**” When her very diverse students play together, “they are connecting.” She noted, however, that “there's nothing wrong with pushing students toward excellence but not at the cost of feeling the joy of the music.”



Annie Ray sharing photos of her Grammy experience....
Yes, she also met Taylor Swift!

Parents often comment that their student has “come out of his shell.” They also tell her that since joining the orchestra their child performs better in other aspects of the curriculum

This is how Annie puts it: “Let me find where you are. Let me pull you along and let you become more than you ever thought you would be.” This means “being willing to make a loud, wrong sound and being willing to laugh at it.” Because music is “inherently human,” you don't have to be able to speak to make music.

Continued on page 5

RECAP OF OUR NOVEMBER BRANCH PROGRAM

(Continued from page 4)

In addition to being Orchestra Director and Performing Arts Department Chair at Annandale High School, Annie is also a performing harpist. This year she won a **Music Educator Grammy** and was also named **Fairfax County Public Schools Outstanding Secondary School teacher**. Actress **Meryl Streep** attended the Grammy Awards and made a point of talking to Annie. "A music educator had a huge impact on her life," she said. "Thanks to a music educator, I am where I am today."

Sadly, music programs are often the first thing to go when it comes to budget cuts. Not only should music education be retained, Annie counters, but it should become a core subject for every student.

"I'm an open book," Annie said and invited AAUW members to connect with her on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#) and on her **Motherhood and Music Education** website. To stay in the loop on advocacy happenings, she suggested the **Fairfax Arts Coalition for Education** and support this new National Association for Music Education call-to-action:

Congress has passed a continuing resolution (CR) that extends current government funding levels until December 20th. While the CR staves off a government shutdown, it also provides advocates with additional time to reach out to their members of Congress and share their support for music education!

The house appropriations committee approved its FY25 proposal for Labor-HHS-Education funding, which not only slashes Title I funding by 25%, but also proposes the complete elimination of Title II funding. In addition to slashing funding for two of the Department of Education's (ED) most vital programs, the current proposal would eliminate the only Department of Education program focused on supporting the arts, the Assistance for Arts Education (AAE) program. To rationalize the elimination of AAE the appropriation committee's report stated "funding provided by the Department should be focused on core education such as reading, writing, and math." This rationalization ignores the well-rounded focus of ESSA, as well as the benefits the arts provide across subject areas.

To encourage continued (and expanded) funding of the performing arts, she suggested contacting members of the Board of Supervisors at Fairfax County Public Schools.

FCPS Board Contact Information:

- Braddock District, Megan McLaughlin, 571-423-1088, Megan.McLaughlin@fcps.edu
- Dranesville District, Jane K. Strauss, 703-246-4780, jane.strauss@fcps.edu
- Hunter Mill District, Pat Hynes, 571-423-1082, Pat.Hynes@fcps.edu
- Lee District, Tamara Derenak Kaufax, 571-423-1081, tdkaufax@fcps.edu
- Mason District, Sandy Evans, 571-423-1083, ssevans@fcps.edu
- Mt. Vernon District, Daniel G. Storck, 571-423-1086, Daniel.Storck@fcps.edu
- Providence District, Patty Reed, 571-423-1084, Patty.Reed@fcps.edu
- Springfield District, Elizabeth Schultz, 571-423-1080, Elizabeth.Schultz@fcps.edu
- Sully District, Kathy L. Smith, 571-423-1085, kathy.l.smith@fcps.edu
- At-Large Member, Ryan McElveen, Ryan.McElveen@fcps.edu,
- At-Large Member, Ilryong Moon, 703-246-4788, ilryong.moon@fcps.edu
- At-Large Member, Ted Velkoff, Ted.Velkoff@fcps.edu



From left: Diane Schrier, Co-President AAUW Alexandria, Annie Ray, and Solveig Eggerz, Program VP AAUW Mt. Vernon

'TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING - AAUW FUNDS

When AAUW was founded to promote gender equity in 1881, women could not vote unless they lived in the Territories of Wyoming or Utah. Since the 19th Amendment gave suffrage to women in 1920, we have advanced a long way but there is still more work to be done to level the playing field. AAUW publishes research, provides education programs, and advocates for the benefit of women and girls. This requires financial support.



'Tis the season for giving. We can be proud that some members of AAUW Mount Vernon Branch have already contributed the praise-worthy sum of \$2,274 dollars! However, this amount represents only eleven members. If you have not already made a gift this year, now is your opportunity. You know it is for a cause you believe in. It does not need to be a large amount, just enough to show that you care, and it is tax deductible.

At our December holiday celebration, there will be a box labeled **AAUW FUNDS**. Place your check into this box and it will get to AAUW by way of our Treasurer, **Anne Simpson**. Please make out your check to AAUW Greatest Needs Fund (9110) and include your AAUW membership number, as well as your signature.

In the alternative, you can give online at <https://aauw.org>. Have your AAUW membership ID number ready and press the red DONATE button.

Donations to the Greatest Needs Fund by December 31 are matched dollar-for-dollar.

*Cathy Krebs
AAUW Funds Chair*

Celebrating the New AAUW Fredericksburg Branch

Janet Hedrick founded the AAUW Fredericksburg branch and invited guests to a celebration of the new branch on November 16. Janet is a member of the Mt. Vernon Branch who recently moved to Fredericksburg.

Susan Burk Springfield-Annandale, Patsy Quick, Leslie Tourigny and Lane Stone (AAUW-VA President) both from Alexandria (photo on the right) attended the event.



Janet Hedrick (center in blue) with branch members and guests.





I
M
P
R
O
M
P
T

E
V
E
N
T

Joanna Crane and her daughter in law, along with **Patsy Quick** and **Elaine Kolish** attended the concert at Schlesinger Hall on November 10. **Anne and Richard Simpson** were part of the chorus singing with the NOVA Symphony Orchestra performing Beethoven Symphony No 9. It was a great venue and a wonderful, beautiful performance in front of a packed house.

A POST ELECTION
CONVERSATION WITH
REPRESENTATIVE

Update: Maddy White, District Director,
Office of Congressman Gerald E. Connolly, will be the speaker.

of Virginia

Monday, December 2 at 5 p.m. on Zoom



SPONSORED BY:

- ◆ Alexandria Branch
- ◆ Arlington Branch
- ◆ Falls Church Branch
- ◆ McLean Branch
- ◆ Mt. Vernon Branch
- ◆ Reston-Herndon Branch
- ◆ Vienna Branch

ADVANCE REGISTRATION HERE:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IbHEq8JMTUmEPCp1MxPquQ

HAPPY EATING – THE YUMMY SECRET OF PLANT BASED FOOD

AAUW member, **Susan Farmer**, hosted a lunch to introduce a lifestyle that emphasizes whole-food, plant-based foods (WFPB) and moderately includes meats, seafood, and milk products.

Turned off by vegetarian and vegan? This is a gentler approach to happy eating.

Susan, a Master Naturalist and retired science teacher, demonstrated the joy of a diet that focuses on plants, including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, seeds, and nuts, and that excludes refined foods, added sugars, white flour, and processed oil. Shifting your focus to minimally processed foods and eating from the list above is not only heart-healthy, but this food lifestyle may reduce risks of cancer, diabetes, and cognitive decline.

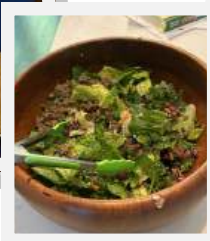
The unspoken question at the lunch was—Does it taste good?

Susan put us to work cutting, stirring, cooking, and baking. After an intense hour, we each had a beautiful plate of colorful, nutritious food.

YES! Every dish was delicious!

To learn more about plant-based cooking download [Dr. Michael Greger's app, "Daily Dozen."](#) I couldn't resist ordering Greger's cookbook with the catchy title, *The How Not to Die Cookbook*. Another Susan-recommended resource is the book *Good Energy* by [Dr. Casey Means](#). Or consult the website of EWG (Environmental Working Group) for the latest information on healthy choices.

Solveig Eggerz
Program VP



Curried Cauliflower, Grape & Lentil Salad

CAULIFLOWER: 1 head cauliflower (divided into florets), 1 ½ tsp water, 1 ½ tbsp curry powder, 1/4 tsp sea salt

GREEN CURRY TAHINI DRESSING: 4 ½ tbsp green curry paste (or store-bought, though fresh is best) 2 tbsp tahini, 2 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tbsp maple syrup, 1 pinch each salt and black pepper, water to thin

SALAD: 5-6 cups mixed greens, kale, spinach (or other green of choice), 1 cup cooked lentils (rinsed and drained), 1 cup red or green grapes (halved), Fresh cilantro (*optional*)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (204 C). Line a baking sheet (or more as needed) with parchment paper. Add cauliflower to a mixing bowl and toss with coconut oil (or water), curry powder,

and sea salt. Transfer to the baking sheet and roast cauliflower for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown and tender. Prepare the dressing by adding green curry paste, tahini, lemon juice, maple syrup, salt, and pepper to a mixing bowl and whisking to combine. If needed, thin with water until pourable. Taste and adjust flavor as needed, adding more green curry paste for a stronger curry flavor, tahini for greater thickness, lemon juice for acidity, or maple syrup for sweetness.

Assemble salad by adding lettuce to a serving platter or bowl. Top with lentils, grapes, and cooked cauliflower, and serve with dressing. Optional: garnish with fresh cilantro.

Best served fresh. Store leftovers in an airtight container for 3-4 days. Store dressing separately for up to 1 week.

2024 - 2025 MT. VERNON BRANCH PROGRAM YEAR

Meeting Date and Place	Focus/Activity
Thursday, September 12, 2024, 1:30 PM Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	Fundamentals of Estate Planning (estate planning, wills, trusts, beneficiaries) Speaker: Gretchyn G. Meinken, Esq.
Tuesday, October 15, 2024, 1:30 PM Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	Election 2024 Speaker: Liz White of Upvote VA and Chris DeRosa & Janice Morris , of the League of Women Voters of Arlington/Alexandria "Ranked Choice Voting" team. (Discussion of Rank Choice voting.)
Saturday, November 2, 2024, 10:30 AM Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	Speaker: Annie Ray , Grammy Award Winning Orchestra Teacher
Sunday, December 8, 2024, 11:30 AM Cedar Knoll, 9030 Lucia Ln, Alexandria, VA 22308	Holiday Event
Saturday, January 11, 2025, 10:30 AM Sherwood Regional Library (Zoom if bad weather)	AI Unleashed: The Future and Its Risks Speaker: Jennifer Swann , Director of Information Security at Bloomberg
Thursday, February 20, 2025, 1:30 PM Sherwood Regional Library (Zoom if bad weather)	Unconscious Bias and Microaggressions Speakers: Meg Tuccillo and Patty Hagen
March or April Location, Date and Time TBD	Annual Business Meeting
March 28-29, 2025 Sheraton Suites of Old Town Alexandria	AAUW-VA Conference
April 17, 2025, 1:30 PM Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	Eliza Scidmore: The Trailblazing Journalist Behind Washington's Cherry Trees Author Diana Parsell will speak about her book and research.
May Location, Date and Time TBD	Annual Potluck
June Location, Date and Time TBD	Annual Planning Session
Wednesday, June 18, 2025 7 PM Reception / 8 PM Performance Little Theatre of Alexandria 600 Wolfe St, Alexandria, VA 22314	LTA Annual Fundraiser The Play That Goes Wrong



Saturday, January 11, 2025, 10:30 AM
Sherwood Regional Library (Zoom if bad weather)

AI Unleashed: The Future and Its Risks

Speaker: Jennifer Swann,
Director of Information Security at Bloomberg

Happy Holidays



December 2024

- **8 Holiday Luncheon**
11:30 A.M.
Contact Paula Lettice
- **8 ImpromptEvent, 3 P.M.**
Choral Concert
Contact Patsy Quick/
Elaine Kolish
- **10 Board Meeting, 7:30 P.M.**
Contact Patsy Quick/
Elaine Kolish
- **16 Book Group, 7 P.M.**
Contact Liz Promen



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 Holiday Lunch	9	10 Board Meeting	11	12	13	14
15	16 Book Group	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	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/>

