

Mt. Vernon Voices

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

Volume 68 Issue 7 March 2025

Mt. Vernon Branch



CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Dear members:

Many of us are appalled by the disrespectful treatment and likely illegal wholesale firing of federal employees across the government. You also may have family members who are affected, as we do. In addition to hurting hardworking employees, this will disrupt programs that are critical to so many, such as Veterans, minorities, and women.

AAUW has long supported DEI programs, which have now been obliterated throughout government, and has backed other programs, such as Title IX, which is administered by the Department of Education.

As noted in [AAUW's 2024 annual report](#),

AAUW advocated for stronger Title IX rules to protect survivors of sexual assault and harassment, clarify protections for pregnant and parenting students, and include LGBTQ+ students. While updated rules were issued by the U.S. Department of Education they were later vacated by a federal court in January 2025. AAUW will continue to fight for Title IX enforcement.

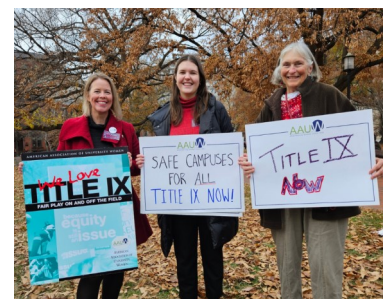
This year AAUW CEO, **Gloria Blackwell**, issued a statement regarding the President's nominee to the Department of Education.

AAUW calls on the Senate to reject McMahon's nomination and demand a leader who will uphold the mission of the Department of Education: to expand opportunity, protect civil rights, and invest in students' success. Anything less would be a betrayal of our nation's commitment to educational equity and opportunity for all.

On February 19, the Senate HELP committee sent **Ms. McMahon's** nomination to the full Senate and undoubtedly in short order she will be confirmed. Despite having a hand-picked person to run DoEd, the President still intends to try to shut down the Department of Education (and other agencies providing important services to our citizens), which would end all the programs AAUW supports.

If these actions perturb or anger you, instead of despairing, please speak up!!! Share your thoughts and stories you may have about the impact of furloughs, reductions in force and firings with your elected representatives. It is easy to do. Just put their name in your web browser and choose their official site. Phone numbers and an option to send written messages are provided. Our officials need this information to mount a defense and to spread the word across the nation (beyond Washington Post and NYT readers) about the impact the President's actions are having on issues AAUW supports.

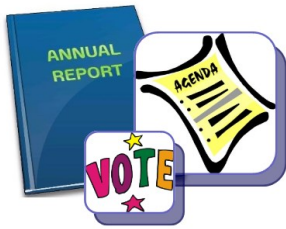
And, if you have not yet done so, please sign up for AAUW's action alerts and two-minute activist program at <https://secure.everyaction.com/t79k4XW2qE6zElzj0xllKA2>.



Warm regards,

Elaine and Patsy

Join us for our
Annual Business Meeting
March 15, at 10:00 a.m.
via Zoom
Zoom link will be sent via email.



At this meeting we will

- **vote on officers for 2025-2027 (President, Program Vice President, and Secretary),**
- **vote to approve the 2025-2026 budget, and**
- **hear reports from our branch leaders.**

We will discuss program ideas and other topics pertaining to the operation of our AAUW branch.

It is important that we have a quorum in order for the election and budget vote to be official. **As a valued member of Mt. Vernon AAUW, please join us for this important meeting where your vote is needed.** Look for emails which will proclaim the officer nominations!

BRANCH LEADERSHIP 2024 – 2025

Elected Officers

Co-Presidents:	Patsy Quick Elaine Kolish	Directory Distribution:	Mary Ellen Mehler
Program Vice President:	Solveig Eggerz	Nominating Committee Chair:	Lois Passman
Membership Vice President:	Susan Farmer	Hospitality:	vacant
Treasurer:	Anne Simpson		
Secretary:	Joanna Crane		

Appointed Chairs

Bylaws:	vacant	Interest Groups	
AAUW Funds:	Cathy Krebs	Book Group:	Liz Promen
Public Policy:	Mary Ellen Mehler	Dining Out:	Cathy Conron Paula Lettice
Newsletter/Website:	Bianca Daugherty	Game Night:	Bianca Daugherty Paula Lettice
Newsletter/		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.



The nominating committee composed of Patsy Quick, Elaine Kolish and Cathy Conron, is pleased to nominate the individuals below for the listed positions.

On March 15, 10:00 a.m. at the virtual Annual Business Meeting (ABM) branch members will vote on the nominations. Nominations from the floor are welcome.

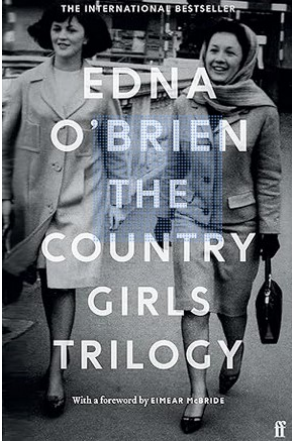
The zoom link for the ABM will be provided by email closer to the date.

- **SECRETARY:** [Cathy Conron](#) and [Sandy Doyle](#) as Co-Secretaries
- **VICE PRESIDENT FOR PROGRAM:** [Beverly Dyer](#) and [Kathi Hanrahan](#) as Co-Vice Presidents for Program for one year, to revisit the position at the end of program year 2025-2026.
- **PRESIDENT:** [Elaine Kolish](#) and [Patsy Quick](#) as Co-Presidents for 2025-2026

We thank these members for agreeing to be nominated to become part of the leadership team for the Mt. Vernon Branch of AAUW!



BOOK GROUP



**Book Group will meet via Zoom on
Monday, March 17, 2025 - 7:00 p.m.
*** Zoom link will be sent via email. *****

BOOK: Country Girls
by Edna O'Brien

REVIEWER: Solveig Eggerz

NEXT BOOK: Sipsworth
by Simon Van Booy

Contact Liz Promen if you are interested in joining the group.

GAME NIGHT

Join us for a fun evening with various games.

Friday, March 21, 2025, 7:30 p.m.

Home of Paula Lettice, Co-Host Cathy Conron

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**



**Our Game Night Calendar
has been filled:**

Anne Simpson	April 25
Cynthia Jacobus	May 23
Joanna Crane	June 27

IMPROMPTU EVENT



Have you ever wondered what famous women have said about their country? Come and listen to snippets of speeches set to music from Abigail Adams to Michelle Obama in **"Washington Women"**, the title piece of the March concert for Alexandria Choral Society. The program includes several choral numbers, all written by women, and features the Sing Off Winners, Rock Ridge High School Chamber Choir. **Our branch has an ad in the program.**

**The concert is Saturday, March 8, at 7 p.m.,
at the George Washington Masonic Memorial.
For tickets click [here](#).**

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT – RECAP FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Microaggressions and DEI—The Impact on Our Lives

Two experts on microaggression and DEI, **Patty Hagen** and **Meg Tuccillo**, raised attendees' awareness of how we are all impacted by these practices and ideas.

Patty Hagen, who spent 36 years in the Federal Government promoting equal opportunity and championing inclusion, noted that diversity is not just about how we look. It's about everything we are. Equity involves making all people feel part of the One, and inclusion ensures that all people are heard and seen.

A minority, Patty said, is made up of "people who have little power, especially in a system that discriminates." When we "minoritize" a group of people, they feel unseen and unheard. And racism occurs by "assigning inferiority to a group of people depending on the package they come in." Although discrimination was declared illegal in 1964, "it happens every day in this country."

It may express itself unconsciously, as a microaggression, "the everyday verbal, non-verbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership." (Cited under the Raven Approach.)

An example is Patty's experience with an African-American friend. The two women were walking down the hall at work when Patty said, "I don't see color." Her friend stopped short and stared at Patty. "Then you don't see me," she said. It marked the beginning of Patty's understanding of microaggression.

Another example is complimenting a black person for being "so articulate" with a look of wonder on your face.

Meg Tuccillo, who served as an Assistant Superintendent in Arlington's Public Schools for 17 years where she also coordinated Title IX, described the discrimination African Americans experience as something whites often don't know about, such as her friend's inability to return an item to a jewelry store. She as a white person tried to return the same item and got all her money back, no questions asked.



Meg (left) and Patty



To combat microaggressions—which sometimes feel macro—Meg suggested using the five-part **Raven** Approach:

- Redirect**—intervene
- Ask**—probing questions for clarity
- Values**—clarify, "You know in AAUW, we..."
- Emphasize**—your own thoughts and feelings
- Next**—steps, decide what to do next time

Meg described her experience of being in a shop with a basket full of items, getting ready to pay when she heard the shop owner use the N-word. She set down her basket and intervened. "I think I heard you say..." she asked, which led to a short exchange. The shopkeeper's confused answer led to Meg's saying, "You ruined it. I can't shop here," as she left her basket of items and walked out. Another customer followed her out.

The program concluded with a lively discussion. Both speakers are active members of AAUW.

*Solveig Eggerz
Program Vice President*

ANNUAL TRADITION



Mount Vernon District Supervisor **Dan Storck**, pictured above with **Patsy, Mary Ellen, Joanne, Cathy and Bianca**, stopped by at our table. He is familiar with AAUW and recognizes the important work that AAUW does.

Elaine (photo on the right) is the Tree Commissioner for Mount Vernon. This is her second year at the table for the Fairfax County Tree Commission, providing community education and promoting tree conservation.

Our branch participated in the **38th Mount Vernon District Town Meeting** on February 8. It has become an annual tradition for us to take part in the town meetings. It is a great way for our branch to connect with the community, share information about our branch, and promote AAUW values.



Anne Simpson, a dual member of Mt. Vernon and Alexandria AAUW branches has accepted the appointment as **AAUW-VA Historian**, effective immediately.

Congratulations, Anne!



The AAUW of Virginia 2025 Conference and 100th Anniversary Celebration is being held on March 29, 2025, with pre-conference activities on March 28.

The Conference is sold out! I hope some of you registered before this happened! Our branch is providing Welcome Bags for the event. A BIG thank you goes to the members who have donated items and/or will be helping to put the bags together.



THE MOUNT VERNON AAUW BRANCH NAMED HONOREES FOR MARCH 2025



by Cathy Krebs and Elaine Kolish

In keeping with the strategy we adopted last year of recognizing our speakers with Named Honoree recognition, this year we are honoring the eight wonderful speakers we have had. In addition, we are acknowledging branch members who went over and beyond, such as organizing the 100 for 100—for the 100th anniversary of Virginia AAUW and the members who graciously pitched in to create and assemble the “swag” bags for the Virginia AAUW’s 100th anniversary conference in March. The honorees are identified below.

\$500. **Gretchyn G. Meinken, Esq.** In appreciation for her useful presentation to the AAUW Mount Vernon Branch on the need for estate planning, using wills, trusts, and identified beneficiaries, etc., so we may neatly exit this world and leave legacies for the future.

\$1500. **Liz White** of Upvote VA, and **Chris DeRosa & Janice Morris** of the League of Women Voters of Arlington/Alexandria, who enlightened the AAUW Mount Vernon Branch regarding ranked choice voting and illustrated how ranked vote tabulation works using Lego bricks. We thank you.

\$500. **Annie Ray** of Annandale High School, 2024 recipient of Grammy Music Educator Award and 2023 FCPS Outstanding Secondary Teacher of the Year, inspired the AAUW Mount Vernon Branch with her advocacy of universal access to quality music education. She includes students with developmental disabilities in the Crescendo Orchestra and each year teaches about 200 parents, or caregivers, their child’s instrument so all are involved. High involvement leads to a low drop out rate. In addition she is a harpist and a wife and mother of two. Many thanks for being an amazing role model.

\$500. **Jennifer Swann.** Director of Information Security at Bloomberg Industry Group. In recognition of her educational presentation to the AAUW Mount Vernon Branch in which she defined “Artificial Intelligence” as “machines simulating human intelligence,” which assist in diagnostics and decision making in areas of health, education, finance, entertainment, identify theft, et al. She cautioned that our data needs protection and “AI” is so new it presents regulatory challenges.

\$1,000. **Patty Hagan**, retired former (and first) Diversity Manager at the U.S. Geological Survey, and **Meg Tuccillo**, retired as Arlington Public Schools administrator and is involved with PathForward Homeless Center, The Dream Project, Arlington workforce development committees, Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth, and Families, and has served as President of the Arlington Branch of the AAUW, and is currently Co-VP for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging for the Virginia State Board of AAUW. In appreciation for their presentation, “Unconscious Bias and Microaggressions.” to the AAUW Mt. Vernon Branch which taught us that “Microaggressions” are commonplace verbal and behavioral indignities, intended or not, which can result in communicating hostile, derogatory, or negative slights. The solutions are to remain positive, with an “attitude of gratitude “ and to surround yourself with positive people.

\$1,000. **Joanna Crane**, Secretary, and **Anne Simpson**, Treasurer, of Mount Vernon AAUW Branch. In recognition of and appreciation for their many supporting activities, especially their work on collecting and sorting the toiletries brought to the Branch Holiday Event, and delivering them to United Community. To mark AAUW’s 100th anniversary, every branch was asked to donate 100 items or 100 dollars to a non-profit or to AAUW’s funds. Together our Branch donated 232 items!

\$2,500. In recognition of the **Mount Vernon AAUW team** that donated luxury gift bags, treats and useful items for the gift bags and contributed their time and talents to make items for the bags and to assemble them. These bags are the branch’s contribution to the conference to celebrate Virginia AAUW’s 100th Anniversary. The team consisted of **Patsy Quick, Elaine Kolish, Sandra (Sandy) Doyle, Anne Simpson, Cathy Conron, Bianca Daugherty, Solveig Eggerz, Mary Stauss, Susan Farmer, Mary Ellen Mehler, Bev Dyer, Joanna Crane and Joanne Clark.**



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
Saturday, March 15, 2025, 10:00 AM Via Zoom	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



March 25 is Equal Pay Day 2025

Each year, this symbolic day is used to raise awareness around and combat the impact of pay inequities. Equal Pay Day 2025 is on March 25 and marks the current state of the gender pay gap for women: 83% for full-time, year-round workers and 75% for all workers (including part-time and seasonal).

<https://www.aauw.org/resources/article/equal-pay-day-calendar/>



March 2025

- **11 Board Meeting, 7:30 P.M.**
Contact Patsy Quick/
Elaine Kolish
- **15 Annual Business Meeting,
10:00 A.M.
Via Zoom**
Contact Patsy Quick or
Elaine Kolish
- **17 Book Group, 7 P.M.**
Contact Liz Promen
- **21 Game Night, 7:30 P.M.**
Contact Paula Lettice and
Cathy Conron

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



9 March 2025



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

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