



Springfield-Annandale (VA) Branch

January 2026

UPDATES

Volume 67, Issue 5

From the President...

Ann Sauberman, Co-President

As the holiday season of 2025 comes to an end, I hope all of you were able to celebrate and enjoy with your friends and family. The end of a year and the beginning of a new one is also the time to look back in history and realize that many individuals have made a big difference both in our country and in the world. As I researched the many women in history, who have broken the glass ceiling through science, politics or stepping up and holding positions that were mostly assigned to men, I decided to concentrate on only those who were born in January. It is impossible to mention all those courageous and motivated women, but I just selected a few who are not as well known, but have made a big contribution.



In science, Alice Catherine Evans, born on January 29, 1881, discovered the cause of undulant fever in 1917, which helped establish milk pasteurization laws. She saved countless lives and became the first woman President of the Society of American Bacteriologists and was an inspiration for women in science. Another woman scientist, Gertrude Ellon was born in January 1918. She became a biochemist, and pharmacologist who shared the Nobel prize in physiology or medicine in 1988. Ms. Evans was the first woman in the National Inventor's Hall of Fame and revolutionized the development of drugs for leukemia, malaria and AZT (AIDS).

In global politics, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf made history when she was sworn in as president of Liberia in 2006, becoming the first woman elected as head of state of an African nation. In the United States, Margaret Chase Smith broke barriers decades earlier when she launched a campaign for president in 1964. She was the first woman to seek a presidential nomination from a major political party and the first woman to serve in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Since then, other women have followed her path. Hillary Clinton became the first woman nominated for president by a major party in 2016, and Kamala Harris made history as the first woman vice president while also running for president. Although none have yet been elected president of the United States, each campaign has moved the nation closer to that historic milestone. These women of history have encouraged generations to continue to find careers that were typically reserved for men.

AAUW National Website: <https://www.aauw.org/>

AAUW-VA Website: <https://aauw-va.aauw.net/>

Springfield-Annandale Branch Website: <https://sprann-va.aauw.net/>

AAUW Mission Statement

*To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education and advocacy.
Vision: Equity for all. Values: Non-partisan. Fact based.*

AAUW Diversity Statement

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 socio-economic status.

From the President...

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As I was writing this President's message, the terrorist attack occurred on Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia on December 14, 2025. Fifteen people, including a 10-year-old girl and an 87-year-old survivor of the Holocaust, were killed while they were celebrating the first night of Hanukkah. I am sure this was a shock to all of us as we learned about the many who were also seriously injured by an anti-Semitic father and son. I decided to include this horrific incident because of the hero, Ahmed Al Akmed, a bystander, who jumped across the grass and wrestled the father, grabbed the gun, and pointed it at the attacker. Akmed, an Australian Muslim, risked his life to save others who were targeted because of their religion. He was an individual who acted quickly against hate and discrimination. His actions are proof of the importance of the AAUW mission to support anti-hate and DEI.

I wish each of you a very happy and healthy New Year. I look forward to seeing you all at meetings, discussing important topics and advocating for the missions of AAUW together.

2000-2025 History Documentation - Seeking Information

Judy Titterton, Acting Historian

If you have any historical Newsletters, Approved Budgets, Board Meeting Minutes, or Membership Directories as listed in previous newsletters, please contact me.

Inclusion Committee Updates

Irene McGhee and Ann Sauberman, Co-Coordinators

The next meeting of the Inclusion Committee is **Wednesday, January 7 at 7 p.m.** via Zoom, to finalize the timeline and materials for the 2026 Inclusion Awards.

Program Updates

Amy Crolius and Beth Boivin, Co-Vice Presidents of Program

On **Saturday, December 6**, nearly 40 branch members and guests gathered at PJ Skidoos for our annual Holiday Luncheon. Attendees enjoyed a lovely meal featuring salad, delicious entrées, and an indulgent chocolate mousse dessert. Adding to the festive spirit, member Beth Boivin and guest Kathleen Jacoby delighted attendees with holiday flute duets. The luncheon also served as a charitable giving opportunity for our branch, and we are proud to share that **200 pounds of food and personal hygiene items** were donated to [ECHO](#) in Springfield.

The luncheon was a wonderful opportunity to connect and celebrate the season together while making a meaningful difference for members of our community in need.



Program 2025-26: *Women Breaking Boundaries*

January 21 at 7 p.m. via Zoom

Lauren Charles is a fire effects monitor with the National Park Service, where she collects long-term ecological data to understand how fire shapes plant communities and fuel conditions. Her work spans fuel reduction projects, ecological monitoring, prescribed fire operations, and wildfire suppression.

Before joining the National Park Service, Lauren served as a forestry technician with the Department of Forestry, responding to wildfires in the Shenandoah Valley and assisting private landowners and loggers in implementing best land management practices. She holds a BS in Biology from James Madison University.



February 25 at 7 p.m. via Zoom



Lauren Elliff is a recent graduate of the University of Virginia, holding a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering with a minor in German. While at UVA, she was a member of Alpha Omega Epsilon, a professional and social sorority for women in engineering and science.

Since July 2025, she has worked as a mechanical engineer for Framatome, Inc. in Lynchburg, Virginia. Her current position is as a Mechanical Product Development Engineer in the Fuel division, focusing on the design and manufacture of commercial nuclear fuel. Before joining Framatome full-time, she spent the previous summer interning on the same team and continued her internship part-time throughout her final year of college.

Spring Fling Update - Volunteers Needed!

Hopefully, your calendars are marked for the annual **Spring Fling** on **Saturday, March 21**, at the Springfield Golf and Country Club with featured speaker **Olivia Campbell**, New York Times bestselling author of *Women in White Coats: How the First Women Doctors Changed the World of Medicine* and *Sisters in Science: How Four Women Physicists Escaped Nazi Germany and Made Scientific History*.

Beth Boivin will be serving as the silent auction chair, and we are still **actively seeking volunteers** to join the silent auction committee and for the overall event - check-in, raffle support, and other event logistics.

If you're interested in volunteering to assist with the silent auction or for any other role in the event (we'll take any support you can give, whether a small or large amount!), **please contact Beth Boivin as soon as possible at elboivin@gmail.com.**



Program Updates

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Remaining Program Dates for 2025-26:

January 21, 7 p.m. (Zoom) - Program
February 25, 7 p.m. (Zoom) - Program
March 21, 9:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. - Spring Fling
April 22, 7 p.m. (Hybrid) - Program
May 30, 12 p.m. - Picnic



AAUW-Virginia Updates

Virginia Women's Municipal Leadership Institute Zoom Program January 22

Join AAUW-VA members from around the Commonwealth on this **Zoom program Thursday, January 22, at 7 p.m.** to hear from **Bonnie Svrcek, Executive Director of the Virginia Women's Municipal Leadership Institute.** The Institute is a professional education program developed by Virginia Women Leading Government and academic partners to provide connections, content, tools, and opportunities for women aspiring to become local government leaders. See more in the flyer at the end of the UPDATES.

2026 AAUW Virginia State Conference April 18, 2026

The Northwest District is hosting the next AAUW-VA State Conference—the first conference of our second century. They have secured the venue so please Save This Date—**Saturday, April 18, 2026**, at the Drury Plaza Hotel Richmond in Glen Allen, VA 23060. There will also be pre-conference activities on Friday, April 17, 2026. Further information will be distributed as it is available on the [AAUW Virginia webpage](#).



Marcy Leverenz - State Named Honoree Award Recipient

Branch member **Marcy Leverenz** has been selected as a **2026 Named Honoree by AAUW of Virginia**, an honor that recognizes exceptional, long-term contributions in advancing AAUW's mission and priorities across the Commonwealth. This prestigious recognition celebrates Marcy's many years of dedicated service and leadership with AAUW's Lobby Corps, where her commitment has helped ensure that Virginia members remain a strong and visible force in national advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill.

This recognition reflects not only Marcy's personal achievements, but also the collective strength of Virginia's advocacy community and its continued commitment to equity for women and girls. Marcy will be formally recognized at the AAUW of Virginia State Conference in Richmond on April 18. Congratulations to Marcy on this well-deserved honor, and thank you for the lasting impact of your service and leadership.

Membership Updates

Deborah Dodd and Debbie Gilligan, Co-Vice Presidents of Membership

The Springfield-Annandale Branch is the vibrant organization that it is because of its active membership. What a pleasure it was to see so many members in attendance at the festive Holiday Luncheon in December.

❖ Public Policy Updates

Susan Burk, Public Policy Chair

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! The Virginia General Assembly will begin its 2026 Regular Session at 12 noon on Wednesday, January 14, 2026. It is scheduled to finish (or adjourn sine die) on Saturday, March 14, 2026. There will be old faces and new faces, but all of them will benefit from learning about AAUW and where it is putting its energy.

2026 AAUW-VA State Lobby Day February 5 in Richmond

For those planning to travel to Richmond the day before, we have an AAUW rate at a [Hampton Inn in Richmond](#). More information on plans for Lobby Day will be provided as soon as it is available. But prospects for significant progress on Paid Family and Medical Leave, Paid Sick Days, affordable child care, and support for public education look brighter than they have in several years. Please consider joining us as we meet with delegates, senators and staff to explain our priorities and why they should support actions to turn proposals into policies.

LWVVA Women's Legislative Roundtable

The League of Women Voters of Virginia will again host its weekly, virtual Women's Legislative Roundtable (WLRT) every Wednesday (except February 11 which is the LWVVA's in-person Lobby Day (In Richmond) from January 14–March 11, 2026. The WLRTs are scheduled for 8:30 - 9:30 A.M. and cover a variety of topics and included invited speakers. Register for any WLRT [here](#).

❖ Other Branch Activities

Movies at Midweek

All branch members are invited to Cinema Arts theatre the **third Wednesday of the month** to see a film, followed by lunch at nearby First Watch. This month the movie date is January 21. Details of the selected film are sent via email to all branch members by the Friday of the previous week.

Book Groups

All members are invited to join the branch book groups! The **evening book group meets via Zoom at 7 p.m. the first Thursday of the month** and the **morning book group meets in-person at 10 a.m. the second Thursday of the month**. Full selections and schedules for the year can be found in the Membership Directory.

Evening Book Group

The Evening Book Group will meet on **Thursday, January 8** to discuss *All That She Carried* by Tiya Miles. Jane Censer will be the reviewer.

Morning Book Group

The Morning Book Group will meet on **Thursday, January 8**, to discuss *The Benevolent Society of Ill-Mannered Ladies* by Alison Goodman. Ginny Wells will be the reviewer and Carol Grace will host at the Kings Park Library, located at 9000 Burke Lake Road in Burke, VA.

❖ Other Opportunities

School of Rock Fundraiser

Join the Alexandria and Mt. Vernon AAUW Branches on **Friday, February 6, 2026**, at the Little Theatre of Alexandria for an evening of fun and fundraising. Enjoy a reception at 7:00 p.m. followed by the high-energy musical School of Rock musical at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$45, with proceeds supporting AAUW's mission to empower women and girls. If you'd like to go as a group from Springfield-Annandale, contact Helen Cassidy.

Branch Calendar: January 2026

January 7, 7 p.m.	<u>Inclusion Committee Meeting - Zoom</u>
January 8, 10 a.m.	<u>Morning Book Group</u>
January 8, 7 p.m.	<u>Evening Book Group - Zoom</u>
January 20, 7 p.m.	Board Meeting - Zoom
January 21	<u>Movies at Midweek</u>
January 21, 7 p.m.	<u>Women Breaking Boundaries - Zoom Program</u>
January 22, 7 p.m.	<u>Virginia Women's Municipal Leadership Institute - Zoom Program</u>
January 24	UPDATES Articles Due for February Issue

**UPDATES Articles for February
due January 24**



AAUW-VA All District Program

January 22, 2026

7:00 P.M. via Zoom



“As of December 2024, the percentage of women serving as town, city, county managers, or administrators in Virginia was less than 17%, which puts the state in the bottom five.” (Virginia Town & City, Mar/Apr 2025)



Join AAUW-VA members from around the Commonwealth to hear from Bonnie Svrcek, Executive Director of the Virginia Women’s Municipal Leadership Institute.

The Institute is a professional education program developed by Virginia Women Leading Government and academic partners to provide connections, content, tools, and opportunities for women aspiring to become local government leaders.

Ms. Svrcek served as the Deputy City Manager, and then City Manager for the City of Lynchburg for a combined term of more than twenty years. She also worked for the Town of Blacksburg, Fairfax County, and the City of Los Angeles’ Washington, DC office. Hear her describe her own professional journey – the one that led to the establishment of the Institute; and hear her share how the institute is performing in its mission to educate and empower women to pursue advancement in municipal leadership.



Topic: Virginia Women’s Municipal Leadership Institute
Time: Jan 22, 2026 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84656305779?pwd=Ccb3fbCSUbBa1V4YNrhCtejiqqlb33.1>
Meeting ID: 846 5630 5779
Passcode: 002341

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One tap mobile
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+16469313860,,84656305779#,,,*002341# US



Alexandria Branch



Mt Vernon Branch

Alexandria and Mt. Vernon AAUW Branches

Invite You to Attend a Fundraising Event at the

LITTLE THEATRE OF ALEXANDRIA

600 Wolfe Street, Alexandria

Friday, FEBRUARY 6, 2026 7PM RECEPTION 8PM PERFORMANCE



Tickets: \$45

School of Rock is a rocking, high-energy musical that will have “fists of all ages and sizes...pumping” (Vanity Fair)! Watch a wannabe rocker turn a class of misfits into a band of rockstars. With a score that’ll make you groove, this show is a blast!

Please join us in supporting AAUW's goals to
empower women and girls. Tickets

Patsy Quick (Mt. Vernon): pnquick@cox.net or

Susan Werner (Alexandria): susan.werner1@verizon.net