



WORDS TO THE WISE²

WOMEN IN SEARCH OF EDUCATION AND EQUITY

Volume 29, Issue 7

April, 2025



Winchester (VA) Branch

MISSION

To advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and

Winchester, Virginia, Branch

<http://winchester-va.aauw.net/>

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AAUW Winchester Branch Annual Business Meeting

Speaker: Rosemary Green

Saturday, April 12, 2025

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Handley Library

Benham Room

100 West Piccadilly Street

Winchester, Virginia

Please note this meeting begins at

1:00 p.m.!!!

Sustaining a Small Library in

Nicaragua is the April 12 program. Rosemary Green will speak about her work with the HJH Libraries for All Foundation, which supports a small public library in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua. Last year, the Winchester AAUW Branch also collaborated with the Foundation to bring hundreds of children's books in Spanish to the Winchester area Little Libraries, Leyendo Juntos (a reading program for Latino children and families), and Virginia Avenue Charlotte DeHart Elementary School.



This is the annual business meeting of our branch where we will approve the budget (which can be found on page 7 of the February newsletter and page 5 of the Yearbook), and elect officers for the next 2 years (See page 3). We will also discuss ways to remember our members who have recently died.

May Meeting Field Trip and Picnic Clermont Farm

Saturday, May 10, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Clermont Farm

151 Clermont Lane

Berryville, Virginia

Join us in May for a field trip and picnic to learn about historic Clermont Farm in Berryville. There will be a nominal fee for attending the private tour by Robert Steig (\$10). Pack a picnic for after the tour. More information about the farm and carpooling will be found in the May Newsletter. We will meet to leave Winchester at 9:15 a.m. to arrive in Berryville for the tour at 10 a.m.

Information below is from the Website: clermontfarm.org

Elizabeth Rust Williams, a farmer, preservationist, lawyer and judge in Clarke County (1945-2004), wanted this 360-acre agricultural landscape (which her family had owned for 185 years) and its historic buildings preserved permanently and given to the people of Virginia as a place to connect with their history and land.

Board Meeting

Wednesday April 23, 2025

Zoom 6 p.m.

All members are invited to attend.

(Contact Marsha Gochenour for Zoom details.)

President's Message

Pat Kadel

"If you're going through hell,
keep going."

Winston Churchill

I have had that quotation from Winston Churchill taped to the shelf above my desk for two months, hoping it will give me some strength to cope with recent events in our nation and the world. I even started a President's Message based on it.

It hasn't helped much and I was struggling to cope and to write a message.

Then I attended the VA AAUW Conference this weekend.

This was my third state conference, one in person and one via Zoom--thanks to COVID-19. While I definitely enjoyed and was inspired by both of the earlier conferences, I felt real encouragement and hope everywhere I turned for the first time since November 5, 2024. One speaker after another reminded us of our strength and abilities and the challenges we are facing. I learned from the formal presentations as well as in conversations with other attendees. Some information was and some wasn't new, but there was a certain vitality present that I have never experienced. Everything was inspirational.

Tess Thome has written a great summary of what was presented, and it would be almost impossible to fit more details in one newsletter. There were two

things that I personally will not forget for some time, and I want to share.

Early in the weekend, I heard someone say that we should never change our beliefs or mission, but we should "be careful with our words." There will always be certain "trigger words" that accomplish nothing, alienating people and even inciting violence. People already have been arrested or deported for exercising free speech. The list grows daily. While I personally will NOT abandon my beliefs and ideals, I will encounter situations where I can't be silent, so I have resolved to "be careful with MY words."

I also heard words that I thought were especially simple yet brilliant. They may be specific to AAUW, but they are universally true. After she had shared her poetic tribute to AAUW of Virginia, I thanked author Zeina Azzam and asked if I could use them here. She thanked ME and said of course.

*For 100 years, we have struggled and aspired, untiring, to amplify the W in our logo—
the oversized letter that stands for Women and their rights.
Women's Well-being.
Women's Work and Worth.
Women's Words of Wisdom
for our imperfect World.*

We, the Women.©2025
by Zeina Azzam

I realized how applicable that is today and that all of us, AAUW members or not, must continue

to, "amplify the W in our logo", that stands for so much more than just Women.

Please read her poem (on page 6) that was meant as a tribute but will be my inspiration. We may need to "be careful with our words," but we must "amplify the W."

Pat Kadel

Winchester Branch President



*Taking a break at the Conference
Seated: Mary Anne Graham, Theresa Merkel.
Standing: Becki Bronson, Tess Thome, Pat Kadel.*



Our 100 (300) Spanish Language Children's Books Donated to Winchester Little Libraries was recognized as our contribution to the One Hundred Needed Items campaign.

Treasurer's Report

Marsha Gochenour

As of March 26, 2025:

\$296.09 Checking
14.65 Woman of the Year
0.00 AAUW Funds
682.74 NCCWSL
0.00 Dr. Amy @ SU
805.00 Orndoff @ SU
3,682.27 Froehlich Memorial
Scholarship (local)
4,200.67 CD, 1-year
2,211.92 General Savings
\$11,893.34 Total
Mar Receipts: \$50.00 newsletter
ads; \$100.00 WOY expenses;
\$50.00 Orndoff; \$150.00
Froehlich

Jan-Mar Disbursements: \$25.00
Scholars Latino Initiative;
\$120.35 WOY plaque

Nominating Committee Report

Marsha Gochenour

We will hold an election
for the following positions at the
April 12 meeting:

President:

Tess Thome

Vice President for Program:

Rebecca Bronson

Additionally, **Rebecca Ebert**
will be *Program Assistant*, and
we are currently in need of a
Recording Secretary beginning in
July. Please consider filling this
position as a means of becoming
more involved with our branch.
Contact Pat Kadel if you are
willing to help in this way.

CLEO

(Classy Ladies Eating Out)

Marsha Gochenour

Monday, 6:00 p.m.

April 28, 2025

I J Canns American Grille
3111 Valley Avenue (Creekside)
Winchester, Virginia



Call Marsha (533-8069) if
you plan to attend so she will
have a head count.

Evening Book Group

Marsha Gochenour

Monday

April 21, 2025

6:00 p.m. Zoom



The Women

Author: Kristin Hannah

Discussion led by Julie Sayre

Women can be heroes. When twenty-year-old nursing student Frances "Frankie" McGrath hears these words, it is a revelation. Raised in the sun-drenched, idyllic world of Southern California and sheltered by her conservative parents, she has always prided herself on doing the right thing. But in 1965, the world is changing, and she suddenly dares to imagine a different future for herself. When her brother ships out to serve in Vietnam, she joins the Army Nurse Corps and follows his path.

The Women is the story of one woman gone to war, but it shines a light on all women who put themselves in harm's way and whose sacrifice and commitment to their country has too often been forgotten. A novel about deep friendships and bold patriotism, The Women is a richly drawn story with a memorable heroine whose idealism and courage under fire will come to define an era.

DEIB

Becki Bronson

Drawn from the meeting minutes of the national DEI officers meeting, held via Zoom on March 11 and provided by Shannon Wolf, AAUW Managing Director and Chief of Staff regarding the use of the words Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): "*AAUW supports free speech and believes in the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Branches do not have to eliminate use of these words, and we have no plans to stop our work for equity at the national level, nor to ask branches to do so. AAUW was founded on the belief of equity in higher education. We will continue to defend and promote our values.*"

While several branches were participating in postcard protests, AAUW leadership wanted to remind folks that AAUW remains nonpartisan, and to avoid personal attacks on politicians or government officials or valuing one political party over another, adding that we should focus on policies and their impact. If members have questions, they are welcome to reach out to the AAUW Advocacy Team (advocacy@aauw.org).

The 2-Minute Activist (<https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist/>) was offered as a reliable vehicle for targeted action on policy priorities.

Additionally, AAUW national is responding with a series of advocacy workshops to be held in

April, *Defending Equity: Strengthening Our Collective Impact Series*. The goal of the series is to help members cut through the confusion and learn more about actionable ways we can affect change in the current environment. Registration is available at aauw.org.

Woman of the Year 2025

Our Woman of the Year program for 2025 was a great success! A huge thank you is extended to all who helped to make it so. The food provided by members was delicious and plentiful. The flowers arranged by **Rosemary Green** were beautiful and full of the essence of the spring season. The time and effort exerted by **Theresa Merkel, Tess Thome and Pat Kadel** was extraordinary and contributed to a perfect program. **Kimberli Grove Ball** was a worthy recipient and has sent a letter of appreciation:

To the members of the Winchester Branch, AAUW:

Thank you so much for the honor of being your 2025 Woman of the Year. This past Friday was a wonderful evening; I am still feeling the exhilaration of being recognized for my cumulative endeavors in serving the community. It was so special that family and friends, as well as those who have served along with me in various ways, could be present.

I appreciate all the details that went into the recognition: the very nice press release, the beautiful plaque, the lovely

flowers, and the wonderful reception. Many people commented about the great food. Theresa's introduction was very special, and a bit overwhelming. I appreciated having photos taken with the prior honorees who were present that evening. It's humbling to be in this sorority of service with these other accomplished women.

I'm attaching a photo of me with my family taken that evening: my parents, husband, son, daughter-in-law, grandsons, and niece. In addition, several aunts and cousins were present.



Kimberli Grove Ball (center) surrounded by her family.

Saturday morning, I asked my son what the boys (my grandsons) had to say about the event. He said they were proud to see their "nanna" recognized in this way, but Landon was confused (or just being his typically sarcastic ten-year-old self) about the timing: "I mean, it's March. Isn't it a little early for Woman of the Year? There are still nine more months." 😊

Thank you again for the honor and for all of your efforts.

Kimberli Ball



Theresa Merkel presents the Woman of the Year 2025 plaque to Kimberli Grove Ball.

AAUW Funds Named Gift Honoree – Patricia Kadel

Pat Kadel was genuinely surprised to learn that she had been chosen as the AAUW Funds Named Gift Honoree of the Winchester Branch of AAUW at the 2025 Woman of the Year program. She was recognized for her hard work and dedication to our branch for the past four years as our president.



Theresa Merkel, left acknowledges Pat Kadel as the Named Gift Honoree for the Winchester, VA Branch of AAUW (Flowers by Rosemary Green)

AAUW of Virginia 100th Anniversary Conference
March 28-29 2025
1925-2025: 100 Years of Changing the Conversation

Members attending from Winchester (seen at right): **Tess Thome, Pat Kadel, Mary Anne Graham, Theresa Merkel, Dahlia Ashford, and Becki Bronson.**

Lane Stone, the State President presented opening remarks and closing remarks with a theme of, “Don’t back down, don’t back off, don’t look back!”

Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan, from the Virginia 4th District, gave the Keynote speech, which took us through the history of women and African American rights in what became the U.S. from the beginning. She had the main point that progress was met with three main things, violence, voter suppression and propaganda.

There were several mini-grant presentations. One about setting up a Sensory Garden in a Title 1 Elementary School in the Falls Church Area. Another was similar to a program our branch has done in the past, “A Day in the Life of STEM Women”.

There was a wonderful panel on “Changing the Conversation” for Title IX. Please look at the details from the conference materials to dig deeper but the main idea was on the erosion of the civil rights protection from Title IX. They all encouraged us to educate ourselves on Title IX and to do what we can in our own communities to stand up and voice our concerns in any way we can.

There were two presentations related to public libraries. One was about the history of the public libraries in Alexandria, focusing on the 1939 sit-in. The second was about book challenges and the threat of censorship.

These are a few examples of the many presentations at the conference. As a first-time attendee, I was encouraged by the energy and enthusiasm at the AAUW State Conference. I am encouraged that we will make it another 100 years and beyond. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the members that attended to ask for more details. We all enjoyed it and would love to share.

Our fearless leader, **Pat Kadel**, won one of the raffle baskets. It is totally Karma since she did the most to put our basket together 😊 Yeah Pat! Thanks again to all those who contributed to our “Thelma and Louise Gift Basket” there were a lot of tickets in the bag!



Pat, Tess, Becki, and Theresa among the cherry blossoms



Another big THANK YOU to **Mary Anne** who represented our branch at the Board Meeting earlier in the day on Friday so she had to miss the Cherry Blossoms.

Submitted by Tess Thome



Pat with our Thelma and Louise Gift Basket

Lessons from the Moon

On the celebration of AAUW of Virginia's centennial year, March 2025

From Alexandria to Wytheville
we are 24 branches of the AAUW tree
planted in Virginia a century ago.
The state chapter came alive in 1925
under a waxing crescent moon,
the lunar phase that tells of intentionality and growth,
clarity and change.

For 100 years we have struggled and aspired,
untiring, to amplify the W in our logo—
the oversized letter that stands for
Women and their rights.
Women's Well-being.
Women's Work and Worth.
Women's Words of Wisdom
for our imperfect World.
We, the Women.

We are changing the conversation,
redirecting the thinking,
illuminating the territory,
advancing what's fair.

We believe in the melding of science
and hard work and intuition, research and caring,
the art of knowing and the skill of doing.
Like the moon's nurturing light,
Women embrace the world to change it,
to birth goodness, new beauty, new life
with the power of a strong and persistent
Women-led movement.

We, the Women of Virginia's AAUW
continue to fight for teachers' rights
and for funding free public schools.
We advocate for the civil liberties of Women and girls of color.
We champion access to STEM programs.
We promote women's reproductive rights.
We ensure equity and inclusivity in the workplace.
We uphold the noble principles of Title IX:
no sex-based discrimination in education.
We affirm that the ERA must become
the 28th Amendment of the US Constitution.

We are changing the conversation,
redirecting the thinking,
illuminating the territory,
advancing what's fair.

We applaud all—
the conversation trail-blazers and cutting-edgers,
the conversation sowers and spreaders,
the conversation modelers and engagers,
the conversation leaders and motivators,
the conversation changers.
We recognize all—in AAUW and in the community—
proudly, lift up their work.

How lovely and meaningful
that tonight we have a new moon
modeling new beginnings,
reminding that our work for a new century is before us.
We cannot see the shadowed moon
but we feel its promise.
As the coming crescent thickens each night
we grow with it and welcome its glow and gleam.
The moon will become more and more luminous
like our shared hopes,
our bright, essential mission.

© Zeina Azzam, March 2025
City of Alexandria Poet Laureate

This was written by the poet laureate of Alexandria specifically to celebrate the 100th anniversary of AAUW of VA. The poet laureate was [ZEINA AZZAM](#)

CALENDAR

April 12	Annual Business Meeting, Handley Library, Benham Room, 1 p.m.
April 20	Deadline for May issue of <i>Words to the WISE</i> ²
April 21	Book Group, <i>The Women</i> , Zoom, 6 p.m.
April 23	Board Meeting via Zoom, 6 p.m.
April 28	CLEO, I J Canns, 3111 Valley Avenue, 6 p.m.

Received on 3132025 from Lane Stone

Re: **Department of Education**

AAUW opposes the dismantling of the Department of Education, in no uncertain terms and let Congressman Scott know. Please let your [senators and representative know how you feel](#).



The Honorable “Bobby” Scott
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

District Office
2600 Washington Ave, Suite 1010
Newport News, VA 23607

Dear Congressman Scott,

On behalf of the over 1000 members of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Virginia, including your constituents in our Hampton and Newport News branches, I write to you today in your capacity as Ranking Member of the Education and Workforce Committee to ask you to oppose the recent actions of the administration to destroy the Department of Education.

This year, AAUW of Virginia is celebrating its 100th year of advocating for equitable access to public education. The recent actions of the Administration endanger this century of progress, and we fear will send us back to the days of separate but equal — which was anything but.

The President knows he cannot unilaterally dismantle the U.S. Department of Education through executive order; however, this reckless action is part of a deeply troubling agenda to dismantle public education through cuts and chaos. Since most of the DOE’s budget is spent through the Office of Federal Student Aid, by slashing funding, stripping oversight, and creating disorder, this administration is deliberately undermining America’s future leaders’ ability to access and complete higher education. The consequences will be devastating for low-income students, first-generation college-goers, and communities historically marginalized in education.

AAUW calls on Congress to reject this cynical attack on the U.S. Department of Education and to uphold its essential mission: ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has access to a high-quality education. We will not stand idly by as public education is placed on the chopping block. We expect Congress to protect the future of education in America.

The members of AAUW of Virginia know we can count on you to do everything in your power to ensure an education system that respects and nurtures all students. We are happy to meet with you and your staff at any time to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Lane Stone,
President
AAUW of Virginia

More Photos from 2025 Woman of the Year



*Women of The Year Past and Present
From Left to Right: Libba Pendleton, Shelly Lee, Tricia Stiles, Rebecca Ebert,
Kimberli Ball, and Theresa Merkel*



*Named Honoree Pat Kadel, center, with her
daughter Ryan and husband Paul*



Pat Kadel, Kimberli Ball, and Theresa Merkel



*Kimberli Ball with a Tower of
Balloons to Mark the
Celebration*

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