



WORDS TO THE WISE²

WOMEN IN SEARCH OF EDUCATION AND EQUITY

Volume 29, Issue 8

May, 2025



Winchester (VA) Branch

MISSION

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

Winchester, Virginia, Branch

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

PRESIDENT

PAT KADEL (717-314-4470)

(patriciakadel52@gmail.com)

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS - PROGRAM

TESS THOME (757-870-8176)

(thometess@gmail.com)

THERESA MERKEL (540-664-1266)

(theresa.merkel@comcast.net)

VICE PRESIDENT - MEMBERSHIP

LAURIE GAULKE (908-591-7595)

(laurie.mg96@gmail.com)

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE CHAIR

JANE PARRISH (540-667-8580)

(jmparp@comcast.net)

RECORDING SECRETARY

JULIE SAYRE (843-271-4771)

(jbsayre@mft@gmail.com)

FINANCE / AAUW FUNDS

MARSHA GOCHENOUR (540-533-8069)

(mgochen@yahoo.com)

EDUCATION / LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS

ROSEMARY GREEN (540-539-2674)

(rglibrarian50@gmail.com)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DE&I)

REBECCA BRONSON (540-931-1467)

(rbronson123@gmail.com)

WORDS TO THE WISE² EDITOR

MARTHA PRUSCH (540-729-1135)

(bmecs@comcast.net)

FACEBOOK MANAGER

PAT KADEL (717-314-4470)

(patriciakadel52@gmail.com)

May Meeting Field Trip and Picnic Clermont Farm

Saturday, May 10, 2025

10:00 a.m. \$10.00

**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 yourself a picnic lunch for after the tour. We will meet in the parking lot of Solenberger's (near the mural wall) to carpool. We will leave Winchester at 9:15 a.m. to arrive in Berryville for the tour at 10 a.m. Contact Theresa Merkel (540-664-1266) if you need a ride.



Board Meeting

Wednesday May 21, 2025

Zoom 6 p.m.

All members are invited to attend.
(Contact Marsha Gochenour for Zoom details.)

The information below is from the Website:

<http://www.clermontfarm.org>

ABOUT HISTORIC CLERMONT FARM, CLARKE COUNTY, VA

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.

At her death in 2004, she gave it to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), and her other assets to The Clermont Foundation which she created to help support and manage the site in partnership with DHR. No state funds are appropriated for Clermont's preservation or operating costs. The value of her \$15 million in gifts includes the significant historical equity created over 110 years by possibly 200 enslaved African Americans. Some Clermont land became, in 1870, the largest freed-peoples' community in Clarke County, Josephine City, named for Josephine Williams, a woman formerly enslaved at Clermont. That community, now

part of Berryville, is also home to the Josephine School Community Museum and African American Cultural Center, the only African American museum in the Northern Shenandoah Valley.

Clermont, managed and funded by The Clermont Foundation, is now a state-owned research and training site in agriculture, history, and historic preservation, whose land and buildings are teaching tools. A five-year study of the historic buildings has been completed, as well as research on the history of the site in topic areas including agriculture, architecture, African American life, women's roles, military history, legal and medical history, and Clermont's role as a public history site (see nine commissioned papers from Virginia historians on these topics in the ARCHIVES section.)

Clermont, personally surveyed by an 18-year old George Washington on Oct. 19, 1750, from Lord Fairfax's 5.2 million acre Northern Neck Proprietary, and owned by just four families from then until 2004 (Vance, Wadlington, Snickers, McCormick/Williams), encapsulates the history of the Great Valley and of early national development, including the extension of slavery. The first three families to own Clermont were active in the founding of the nation, from the French and Indian War through the Revolution and its aftermath.

The land was shaped by Native Americans over at least 10,000 years for game production

and harvest, and after contact was inhabited by a community of European and enslaved African Americans who built on it and tilled it. The farm's timber-frame buildings represent a span of construction of over 200 years, from the initial house in 1755-6 to a major addition in 1970.

Clermont is still a working farm. In the 18th and 19th centuries, it was a champion wheat growing farm supplying international markets. It currently raises Angus beef cattle and Katahdin (hair) sheep, plus supporting research and training. Three families live at Clermont. The Foundation has partnerships with the Clarke County Public Schools and Farm Bureau to provide a training site for Clarke agriculture students, and with Virginia Tech, JMU, and others for student training/faculty research purposes, and with Virginia Extension for working farmers.

The buildings at the farm are undergoing a long-term process of stabilization. Given Clermont's purpose, the treatment mode chosen under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards is **"Preservation"** (preserving all layers, all periods), as opposed to **"Restoration"** (to a specific point in time), **"Reconstruction"** (from little or nothing), or **"Rehabilitation"** (for modern adaptive re-use). The buildings are basically empty, all dendrochronology dated, and their fabric has been opened for

research and to assist the teaching of students in several historic disciplines (see Historic Structure Report in ARCHIVES section). The site is on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

In a devastating fire in 2018, the working 1917 timber-framed barn and 1849 corn crib were lost, along with one of the largest wooden archaeological artifacts excavated on land in Virginia, the forebay and turbine box of a "tub mill" (horizontal water wheel) from Woolf's Mill in Fauquier County, VA, a grist mill like those used to grind Clermont wheat. While there was never a mill at Clermont, the tub mill was a reminder of the fact that Clermont has always existed in and is inseparable from a much larger labor, production, transportation and market context related to regional, national and international conditions.

Elections

An election for the following positions was held and approved at the April 12 meeting:

President:

Tess Thome

Vice President for Programs:

Rebecca Bronson

Programs Assistant:

Rebecca Ebert

Congratulations to all those elected!

Treasurer's Report

Marsha Gochenour

As of April 23, 2025:

\$271.09	Checking
14.65	Woman of the Year
0.00	AAUW Funds
282.74	NCCWSL
0.00	Dr. Amy @ SU
805.00	Orndoff @ SU
3,682.27	Froehlich Memorial Scholarship (local)
4,200.67	CD, 1-year
<u>2,211.92</u>	General Savings
\$11,468.34	Total

No Receipts

April Disbursements: \$25.00 HJH Libraries for All (April speaker bequest); \$400.00 memorial donations.

Branch Dues Renewal

Marsha Gochenour

As treasurer, I will send a separate mailing with the dues renewal form and a return envelope. Please pay your dues promptly so that our branch report can be submitted on time. Total dues are \$97.00. The breakdown is as follows: National \$74, VA State \$15, Branch \$8.

Please consider including donations to some or all of the following:

(1) AAUW Funds – donations to National AAUW used for governance, research, advocacy, fellowships, and leadership training.

(2) Mary Miller Froehlich Memorial Scholarship – for Laurel Ridge Community College

transfer students to Shenandoah University. Local fundraiser is the Winchester Little Theatre play tickets.

(3) Dr. Amy Lee Parker Endowed Scholarship – for a Shenandoah University student enrolled in Dr. of Education in Administrative Leadership or Professional Studies Certificate Program in Administration. Funded by the Estate of Dr. Amy Lee Parker, former branch member. Donations to the corpus earn interest and may increase the dollar amount of the annual scholarship.

(4) Betty and Edwin Orndoff Scholarship – for a Shenandoah University student in the Performing Arts

(5) Woman of the Year Reception – event expenses include plaque, printing, flowers, room rental.

The AAUW website has updated instructions for online payment of dues. An email was sent by National in late April. You will be directed on how to pay with a credit or debit card. Donations to AAUW Funds may be included with this payment. (Sorry – donations to our local scholarships cannot be made online with a credit/debit card.)

CLEO

(Classy Ladies Eating Out)

Marsha Gochenour

Monday
June 2, 2025
6:00 p.m.



La Braza Breakfast Crush
170 Rivendell court, Sunnyside
Breakfast, lunch, dinner, Peruvian chicken

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

Evening Book Group

Marsha Gochenour

The book group will meet during the summer months at the homes of members with a potluck meal. This will be a good opportunity to eat delicious food and discuss our book selections. Come join us!



Monday
May 19, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Potluck at home of Martha Prusch

Be Ready When the Luck Happens: A Memoir

Author: Ina Garten

A chance to bake something yummy from one of the Barefoot Contessa's cookbooks!

Here, for the first time, Ina Garten presents an intimate, entertaining, and inspiring account of her remarkable journey. Ina's gift is to make everything look easy, yet all her accomplishments have been the

result of hard work, audacious choices, and exquisite attention to detail. In her unmistakable voice (no one tells a story like Ina), she brings her past and her process to life in a high-spirited and no-holds-barred memoir that chronicles decades of personal challenges, adventures (and misadventures) and unexpected career twists, all delivered with her signature combination of playfulness and purpose.

From a difficult childhood to meeting the love of her life, Jeffrey, and marrying him while still in college, from a boring bureaucratic job in Washington, D.C., to answering an ad for a specialty food store in the Hamptons, from the owner of one Barefoot Contessa shop to author of bestselling cookbooks and celebrated television host, Ina has blazed her own trail and, in the meantime, taught millions of people how to cook and entertain. Now, she invites them to come closer to experience her story in vivid detail and to share the important life lessons she learned along the way: do what you love because if you love it you'll be really good at it, swing for the fences, and always Be Ready When the Luck Happens.

Monday
June 16, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Potluck at home of Pat Kadel

Tom Lake
Author: Ann Patchett

In the spring of 2020, Lara's three daughters return to the family's orchard in Northern Michigan. While picking cherries, they beg their mother to tell them the story of Peter Duke, a famous actor with whom she shared both a stage and a romance years before at a theater company called Tom Lake. As Lara

recalls the past, her daughters examine their own lives and relationship with their mother and are forced to reconsider the world and everything they thought they knew. Tom Lake is a meditation on youthful love, married love, and the lives parents have led before their children were born. Both hopeful and elegiac, it explores what it means to be happy even when the world is falling apart.

Monday
July 21, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Potluck at home of Sherry Lloyd

Eight Hundred Grapes A Novel
Author: Laura Dave

There are secrets you share, and secrets you hide? Growing up on her family's Sonoma vineyard, Georgia Ford learned some important secrets. The secret number of grapes it takes to make a bottle of wine: eight hundred. The secret ingredient in her mother's lasagna: chocolate. The secret behind ending a fight: hold hands. But just a week before her wedding, thirty-year-old Georgia discovers her beloved fiancé has been keeping a secret so explosive, it will change their lives forever. Georgia does what she's always done: she returns to the family vineyard, expecting the comfort of her long-married parents, and her brothers, and everything familiar. But it turns out her fiancé is not the only one who's been keeping secrets?

Monday
August 18, 2025
6:00 p.m.
Potluck at home of Theresa Merkel

Table for Two Fictions
Author: Amor Towles

Millions of Amor Towles fans are in for a treat as he shares some of his shorter fiction: six stories based in New York City and a novella set in Golden Age Hollywood. The New York stories, most of which take place around the year 2000, consider the fateful consequences that can spring from brief encounters and the delicate mechanics of compromise that operate at the heart of modern marriages. In Towles's novel *Rules of Civility*, the indomitable Evelyn Ross leaves New York City in September 1938 with the intention of returning home to Indiana. But as her train pulls into Chicago, where her parents are waiting, she instead extends her ticket to Los Angeles. Told from seven points of view, "Eve in Hollywood" describes how Eve crafts a new future for herself—and others—in a noirish tale that takes us through the movie sets, bungalows, and dive bars of Los Angeles.

Membership
Laurie Gaulke

When you've been around family, friends, neighbors...have you ever shared a story (like we all do), starting with or incorporating something similar: "My AAUW ladies night out was fun..." OR "I'm really enjoying reading this great/awesome/inspiring book *** in my AAUW book club..."? You've just opened the door to curiosity.

And then, the inevitable questions: What is AAUW? What

do they do? Do you, like me, struggle to share concisely, clearly and lightly, without that 'selling' feeling, instead of simply 'telling'? I know I have.

Here's the thing. AAUW is not in most women's minds at any one moment. They may have seen or heard of it, but it's just a bunch of letters to many, especially to younger women. We don't want to share too much, but just enough. But how? How do we answer them?

Would an easy tool help you? Currently, our local AAUW has a brochure that is updated every season so that you can print it off at home. I'm happy to email it to you, if needed. But, perhaps you feel that it's not casual enough.

What if there was a small 'chat card' you could pop into your handbag, with just enough information and contact info to whet their appetite...would that be helpful? I always have some sort of chat card with me for my business, which I find extremely casual and informative.

Summer is a relaxed time of year, and you'll be catching up with friends, new acquaintances and family members. Conversations are easy, so why not share some of our local branch's fun events/activities you've attended? Who knows...the person you're chatting with might be curious to learn more!

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Becki Bronson

We're touching on scholarships this month as the landscape around scholarships for women is changing. To that purpose, AAUW national presented the webinar *Funding Futures: Understanding Changes to Sex and Gender Based Scholarship Programs*.

Title IX reinterpretations by the current administration has led to threats to many of the scholarship opportunities offered by AAUW branches. Presenter Shannon Wolfe, AAUW National Managing Director and Chief of Staff, outlined recommendations for branches to remain within new legal guidance proffered by the Department of Education Office of Civil Rights. She noted that there is a division in how scholarships are administered, either by the institution or by branches or states. Thanks to changes in guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, scholarships administered by colleges or universities now have stricter guidance that they must adhere to, while scholarships administered at the state or branch level aren't as restricted.

She encouraged us to work with our local colleges to determine if changes in language are needed to keep institutionally based offerings within the new guidelines. Adapting mission-based criteria that focuses on how an applicant has or will work for equity is one strategy. Other

strategies include targeting scholarships toward a particular educational focus (gender studies if the college still offers it) or life circumstance (older, returning students, for example). She offered that branches may want to consider alternative ways to support women on campus, through offering grants for childcare, funding a mentoring program, or academic support.

During the Q&A, attendees asked about the viability of the National College Women Student Leaders (NCWSL) conference. Ms. Wolfe noted that since the conference pays market rate to use facilities and does not use them for free, the conference remains viable. Earlier in the presentation she noted that offering free space to single-sex focused groups now violates Office of Civil Rights guidance.

Sustaining a Small Library in Nicaragua

At our Annual Branch Business Meeting on April 12 Dr. Rosemary Green gave an excellent, enthusiastic presentation: "Sustaining a Small Library in Nicaragua," a years'-long endeavor founded by Jane Mirandette in 2001, as part of the [Hester J. Hodgdon Libraries for All Foundation](#). Based in San Juan del Sur, Rosemary and colleagues developed three goals that shaped their mission: providing print and digital resources; developing programs to strengthen local schools; and instruction in educational and

trade skills for the local population. The changes the library has engendered continue to benefit students, parents and local educational professionals. Further, collaborating with another nonprofit organization, Engineering Brightness, the Foundation and Library staff have encouraged organizing resources and teamwork to create solar lanterns distributed in the local area for those with no electricity. They have created opportunities for continued growth, from developing children's reading and crafts programs, to providing technical training for educators. This has been life-changing for San Juan del Sur and the people who have benefitted from the projects, resources and training, made possible by the expertise, energy and enthusiasm of the Libraries for All team.



Children selecting their books from the bookmobile.



Rosemary introducing digital library resources to a local teacher.

More from Virginia State Convention

Theresa Merkel

Kristin Moyer, a dear AAUW friend of mine, won the Winchester Basket at the convention. I have been corresponding with her over something personal, but she did ask to whom she should send a thank you note. I told her Pat, as president. However, Kristin made these comments in a follow-up email. *I loved it. Thank you, committee, for the theme and Pat for the packaging and decorating.* This will be a hard act to follow for next year. It has to be excellent as we are one of the host branches.

Theresa

"I wrote a thank you note to Pat this morning, and this afternoon starting unwrapping the basket and seeing all the great things in it. What a fantastic basket! And whoever assembled it has an amazing artistic eye. I am very impressed! Please pass that along to Pat. I know I will enjoy the contents, too...but right now I just am blown away by the creation of this basket!"

Kristin

I have attended AAUW conventions off and on since 1973. The convention has always been opened with a color guard. At the last minute for the convention last weekend, the color guard was revoked by the military. I guess because of AAUW's DEI advocacy. A very important facet of the convention that I did not want to get overlooked.

Theresa



CALENDAR

May 10	Field Trip and Picnic, Clermont Farm, 10:00 a.m., \$10.00
May 19	Book Group, <i>Be Ready When the Luck Happens</i> , 6 p.m., potluck, home of Martha Prusch
May 21	Board Meeting via Zoom, 6 p.m.
June 2	CLEO, La Braza Breakfast Crush, Sunnyside, 6 p.m.
August 20	Deadline for September issue of <i>Words to the WISE²</i>

AAUW Winchester Branch Annual Branch Business Meeting

April 12th, 2025

1:00 – 3:00 PM at the Handley Library Benham Room

- President Pat Kadel opened the meeting with a welcome and introduced our speaker and branch member, Dr. Rosemary Green, who spoke from 1:00 to 2:00 PM. Please refer to the program review elsewhere in this newsletter of an enlightening and inspiring presentation: *Sustaining a Small Library in Nicaragua*
- President Pat Kadel called the annual branch meeting to order at 2:14 p.m. following Rosemary Green's presentation. Members present were Pat Kadel, Theresa Merkel, Marsha Gochenour, Martha Prusch, Laurie Gaulke, Becki Bronson, Rosemary Green, Julie Sayre, Dahlia Ashford, Rebecca Ebert, Sherry Lloyd, Jane Parrish, Patricia Rice, and Mary Ruos.
- Most of the agenda is covered in detail elsewhere in this newsletter. Please refer to information on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) updates; details of the Treasurer's report; Book Group and CLEO; and events related to our Woman of the Year event.
- **Business items included:**
 - **NCCWSL funds:** The branch discussed and voted on reassigning the funds. As we are not sponsoring an attendee to NCCWSL this year, the Board sought a vote to approve using a portion of the funds toward memorial contributions to honor four members who have passed away this year: Ann Poling; Diane Brenneman; Mary Lou Zickefoose; and Joan Johnson. The branch unanimously voted to approve spending \$100 on each of four memorial contributions, to include \$400.00 of the designated NCCWSL funds.
 - **Adoption of 2024-2025 Budget:** Marsha Gochenour distributed the budget, and members discussed, and unanimously approved it.
 - **Membership:** Laurie Gaulke advised members that the Winchester Visitor Center will have only one event this year, rather than two. Laurie also requested help with contacting potential new members in an ongoing recruiting effort. Branch members were pleased to meet Laurie Friedman, new to our branch, an AAUW member from PA.
 - **Programs:** Theresa Merkel reminded branch members of our planned May 10, 2025, Field Trip to Clermont Farm. We will have a private tour with Robert Steig, followed by a bring-your-own picnic lunch. The admission fee is \$10, and we will be organizing carpools.
 - **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** AAUW National and Virginia - continued support of DEI programs was discussed. Rebecca Bronson reported attending three recent national webinars, which reiterated that AAUW is not abandoning commitments to the precepts of DEI. We discussed ways to remain engaged on DEI through outreach.
 - **Scholarships:** Rosemary Green addressed future NCCWSL support; she will revisit this after she assesses outcomes from this year's conference. Rosemary and members also discussed existing scholarships; we also addressed a possible change in how to fund the scholarships, as currently one is endowed and two are contributory. Theresa recommended forming a committee to address the possibility of one scholarship fund: Pat appointed Theresa Merkel, Rosemary Green, and Martha Prusch.
 - **CLEO and Book Group:** Marsha reviewed the upcoming schedule: Book Group will next meet April 21st on Zoom at 6 PM to discuss *The Women*; and CLEO will meet April 28th at IJ Canns at 6 PM.
- **Other Business and Announcements:**
 - Rosemary further addressed DEI and recent political gatherings. We discussed remaining within AAUW guidelines on non-partisanship while also finding ways to be visible as an organization.
 - Pat commented favorably on the Virginia AAUW Conference 2025; and noted the challenge in our district creating a successful conference in 2026 with significantly fewer members. She encouraged people to help and to attend. The 2026 Conference will be held in Richmond, exact location TBD, April 17-18.

- **Elections and Appointments:**
 - Pat opened the election process by noting that she has included a count of four email votes, (Amy Fielder, Maryanne Graham, Suzan Herskowitz and Tess Thome) and one by proxy (Cee Ann Davis). Pat presented the slate: President – Tess Thome; Vice President for Programs – Becki Bronson; Program Assistant – Rebecca Ebert. The slate was approved as presented and each candidate was unanimously elected.
 - Pat also noted that the Recording Secretary position will be open after this spring; there were no volunteers at this meeting.
- **Adjournment:** Pat adjourned the meeting at 3:12 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Sayre
Recording Secretary

AAUW State Elections 2025

May 1 – May 20

Virginia State AAUW Voting Information

THE VOTING PROCESS FOR THE ELECTION OF STATE OFFICERS AND THE BYLAWS AMENDMENT WILL BEGIN MAY 1.

It is very important that you cast your online vote by the deadline of May 20, 2025, because we need a quorum of seven (7) percent of the membership for the election.

Please take the time to vote as a responsible AAUW of Virginia member.

VOTING WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE ONLINE TO ALL AAUW OF VIRGINIA MEMBERS WITH EMAIL

Check your email on May 1 from AAUW of Virginia

To vote, visit:

<https://secure.electionbuddy.com/VXZR-2DDT-PZHS-TMLS/>

Questions concerning the election can be directed to Sandy Lawrence (sandyaaaw@juno.com).

AAUW National Elections 2025

April 14 – May 13

Members will receive electronic ballot reminders with their unique voting credentials from our third-party voting service vote@simplyvoting.com. Members without email addresses were mailed paper ballots. Eligible voters are those who were members as of March 14, 2025. Voting closes on May 13, 5pm ET. For voting help, email connect@aauw.org with name and email.

Members should have received an email from **AAUW Election 2025** on April 14 and April 28 around noon each of those days with information about voting in the AAUW National Elections. These emails contain your individual Elector ID and Password needed to cast your vote. If you have not yet voted, please check your past emails for necessary information.

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www.suzanherskowitz.com

2400 Valley Avenue
Suite 16
Winchester, VA 22601