

Mt. Vernon Voices

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

Volume 69 Issue 5 January 2026

Mt. Vernon Branch



CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



Dear AAUW Sisters,

In a time where things seem bleak politically and dark with horrible and relentless gun violence, we hope our branch is a pinpoint of light and hope. We have had an autumn filled with great programming, educating us and providing us an opportunity to make or strengthen connections with each other and the community. Most recently, we enjoyed a beautiful holiday luncheon where we enjoyed each others company and had many interesting conversations.

Throughout the fall, we also strengthened our relationships with the community by participating in local non-profit drives for towels, food, money and toiletries. See page 5 for a description of the extraordinary response to our request for toiletries for United Community's home bound clients. We also are grateful for all the donations to AAUW's Greatest Needs fund, as detailed on page 4.

We hope 2026 brings positive changes to the political environment and that unlawful executive orders, such as the one to dismantle the Department of Education, are overturned by the courts. But even if this proves to be wishful thinking, we can continue to be a voice for women and girls to have equal opportunities, and a branch where we can continue to learn and laugh.

Happy New Year to all!

Elaine and Patsy

Co-Presidents

BRANCH PROGRAM

Start the New Year with us and join us for our January branch program.

January 15 , 2026 - 2 P.M. - Sherwood Regional Library

**The U.S. Foreign Service:
One Woman's Experience Over 25 Years as a Foreign Service Officer
Our speaker is Stephanie Kinney.**

Ms. Kinney will discuss her Foreign Service career and the evolution, over time, of the status of Foreign Service female officers and of Foreign Service spouses. **Read her bio on page 5.**



The meeting is free and open to the public.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

On December 7, branch members and guests gathered for their annual Branch Holiday Luncheon at Cedar Knoll



BRANCH LEADERSHIP 2025 – 2026

Elected Officers

Co-Presidents:	Elaine Kolish Patsy Quick	Newsletter/ Directory Distribution:	Mary Ellen Mehler
Program Co-Vice Presidents:	Beverly Dyer Kathi Hanrahan	Nominating Committee Chair:	vacant
		Hospitality:	vacant

Membership Vice President:	Susan Farmer
Treasurer:	Anne Simpson
Co-Secretaries:	Cathy Conron Sandy Doyle

Appointed Chairs

Bylaws:	vacant
AAUW Funds:	Joanna Crane
Public Policy:	Ofelia Perotti
Newsletter/Website:	Bianca Daugherty

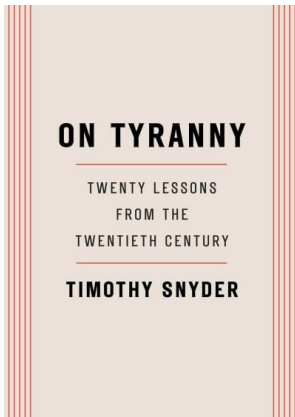
Interest Groups

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



**Book Group will meet via Zoom on
Monday, January 19, 2026 - 7:00 p.m.
*** Zoom link will be sent via email. *****

BOOK: On Tyranny
by Timothy Snyder

REVIEWER: Solveig Eggerz

NEXT BOOK: Mighty Red
by Louise Erdrich

Contact Liz Promen if you are interested in joining the group

GAME NIGHT

**Join us for an evening of fun, friendly competition,
and good company!**

Friday, January 23, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Home of Paula Lettice

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**

DINING OUT



**LET'S DINE OUT.
WINTER RESTAURANT WEEK IS BACK!**

January 31 to February 9, 2026

Participating restaurants are offering special multi-course prix fixe dinner menus at \$35, \$45 or \$55 per person, plus gratuity and tax, and any extras you order. Here is a list of participating restaurants:

<https://visitallexandria.com/restaurants/restaurant-week/>

**Plans are in the works. Please stay tuned—more information will follow by email
from Paula and Cathy.**

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS



Mt. Vernon AAUW announces a CALL FOR NOMINATIONS for officers on the branch Board of Directors. This year the positions of **Membership Vice President** and **Treasurer** will be elected. The current leaders in these positions have served 2 to 3 full terms. If you are interested in learning more, please contact **Patsy or Elaine**.

**Nominating Committee members will be making phone calls,
so get a head start and express your interest NOW!
We need you and appreciate you!**

AAUW FUNDS

Mount Vernon Members are Great Givers!

Dear Mount Vernon Branch,

Thanks to the generosity of many Mount Vernon Branch Members, **we have donated \$2,650** to AAUW Funds from January through November, 2025. This is an impressive amount, and as Funds Chair this year, I appreciate your largesse! Whether you have donated this year or not, please consider giving even a small donation to AAUW Funds in your end-of-year donations. Donations received by December 31 are eligible for a dollar-for-dollar match, up to \$90,000.

Treasurer **Anne Simpson** also reports that due to our successful 2024 LTA and Wine Raffle Fundraising, **our Branch has been able to donate \$2,900 to AAUW**. Well done, All!



*With Gratitude,
Joanna Crane, AAUW Funds Chair*

AAUW-VA LOBBY DAY



AAUW VA Lobby Day in Richmond is

February 5, 2026.

More information [HERE](#).

Please let Elaine or Patsy know if you would like to attend.

MEET OUR PROGRAM SPEAKER



Stephanie Kinney served as a Foreign Service Officer for more than 25 years, entering the Senior Foreign Service in 1998. Her diplomatic career included bilateral tours of duty in Europe and Latin America and multilateral diplomacy under the auspices of the United Nations, serving as one of the three chief U.S. negotiators for the original Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well a negotiator in several other treaty processes such as the Montreal Protocol and the U.S. lead in establishing the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. Before retirement in 2004, she served as a Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism Policy and Programs and the first Project Coordinator for what will now be known as the National Museum of American Diplomacy. In addition to several Superior Honor Awards, Ms. Kinney received the Department of State's Lifetime Achievement Award. She was given AFSA's Harriman

Award for Creative Dissent for her vision and leadership role in the creation of the Department of State Family Liaison Office (FLO). She holds an MA in Strategic Resource Management from the National Defense University (NDU), a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a BA in both Spanish Literature and American History from Vassar College, as well as a diploma in Hispanic Studies from the University of Madrid.

Mount Vernon Members are Generous!



From Left to Right:

Joanna Crane, MV Branch, Cecelia Fix, Senior Director of Development and Communications, Mayleen Watson, Fundraising Operations Manager, Anne Simpson, MV Branch

The members of AAUW of Mount Vernon donated over 335 full-sized toiletries and numerous travel-sized items to **United Community (UC)**. This will provide much-needed personal supplies to UC's Homebound Clients. In total, the fair market value of the donation exceeded \$1,100.

As a Branch, we are happy we can respond to a tangible need in our Mount Vernon Community, and make a real difference in people's lives.

Joanna Crane, AAUW Funds Chair

AAUW-VA ALL DISTRICT PROGRAM



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=Ccb3fbCSUbBa1V4YNrhCtejiqdlb33.1>
Meeting ID: 846 5630 5779
Passcode: 002341
—
One tap mobile
+13126266799,,84656305779#,,,,*002341# US (Chicago)
+16469313860,,84656305779#,,,,*002341# US



To join the meeting click on this link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84656305779?pwd=Ccb3fbCSUbBa1V4YNrhCtejiqdlb33>

ROCKING AND ROLLING LTA FUNDRAISER

SCHOOL OF ROCK

Friday, February 6, 2026 - 7 p.m. Reception / 8 p.m. Performance

Little Theatre of Alexandria

600 Wolfe St, Alexandria, VA 22314



School of Rock is a rocking, high-energy musical that will have “fists of all ages and sizes...pumping” (Vanity Fair)!

Tickets for branch members have been distributed by hand or mail. The cost is **\$45 per ticket**, which includes a pre-show reception with food and drinks—what a bargain!

Please mail your check, made payable to **AAUW Mt. Vernon**, to **Bianca Daugherty, 4406 Aragon Place, Alexandria, VA 22309**.

If you are unable to attend the performance or sell your tickets, please consider making a donation to our branch. Tickets also make wonderful gifts for family members, friends, or neighbors.

All funds raised will support our branch's contribution to the AAUW Funds, helping to advance advocacy for women and girls.

For more information or to request extra tickets, please contact Bianca Daugherty AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com

The Northwest Branches (Greater Richmond, Winchester, and Fredericksburg Area) cordially invite you to the **101st AAUW-VA Conference**, at the **Drury Plaza Hotel Richmond, 11049 West Broad Street, Glen Allen, VA 23060**.

Join us for afternoon tours and evening entertainment on **Friday, April 17, 2026**. Then on **April 18**, we'll spend the day together with:

- **Interesting speakers,**
- **Informative panels,**
- **Catered lunch,**
- **Irresistible raffle baskets to support AAUW Greatest Needs Fund**

You can make reservations at the **Drury Plaza Hotel** by visiting the following link:

https://www.druryhotels.com/bookandstay/newreservation/?group_no=10150185

OR CALL 1-800-325-0720 and reference your group number, 10150185, to make your reservation.



ON THE FRONT LINES:
Defending Education
and Equity for Women
and Girls

AAUW-VA Conference 2026, Glen Allen, April 18

(The default dates may show as April 16 – April 20; just adjust the dates for your preference.)

To get the group rate, **be sure to reserve your room by Sunday, March 15, 2026**. Reservations made after this date will be subject to prevailing rates and availability.

Any questions? Email **Mary Anne Graham**, maryannegrahamatcomcast.net. We look forward to seeing you there!

2025 - 2026 MT. VERNON BRANCH PROGRAM YEAR

Meeting Date and Place	Focus/Activity
Thursday, September 25, 2025, 1:00 PM Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306	Let's Get Physical Health and fitness workshop Speaker: Patricia Linderman
Thursday, October 16, 2025, 2:00 PM Sherwood Regional Library 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306 (2nd floor)	Round Table of Mt. Vernon Community Non-Profits: Ron Fitzsimmons, (Alice's Kids); Leah Fraley, (United Community); Genee Hayes, (Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services, Inc.)
Thursday, November 20, 2025, 1:00 PM Sherwood Regional Library	Women in the Media, a Profile of Change Speaker & Panel: Deborah Todd (formerly with Voice of America), Sue Ann Staake-Wayne, and Carol Pearson
Sunday, December 7, 2025, 11:30 AM Cedar Knoll 9030 Lucia Lane, Alexandria, VA 22308	Holiday Event
Thursday, January 15, 2026, 2:00 PM Sherwood Regional Library	The U.S. Foreign Service: One Woman's Experience Over 25 Years as a Foreign Service Officer Speaker: Stephanie Kinney
Friday, February 6, 2026 7 PM Reception / 8 PM Performance Little Theatre of Alexandria 600 Wolfe St, Alexandria, VA 22314	LTA Annual Fundraiser School of Rock
Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 10:30 AM Sherwood Regional Library	History of the Enslaved at Mt. Vernon Speaker: Rev. Sherrie Quander
March 2026 Place, date and time TBD	Annual Business Meeting
April 2026, Place, date and time TBD	Importance of tree canopy in Fairfax County, especially in underserved areas. (related to climate change)
May 2026 Place, date and time TBD	Annual Potluck
June 2026 Place, date and time TBD	Annual Planning Session

Other Important Dates to Remember:

February 5, 2026	AAUW-VA Lobby Day, Richmond, VA
April 18, 2026	AAUW-VA Conference, Glen Allen, VA
September 25-27, 2026	AAUW Atlantic Regional Conference, Lancaster, PA



Do you have any comments or suggestions for the newsletter?
Please send them to Bianca Daugherty at AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com
We would love to hear from you!



January 2026

- **13 Board Meeting, 7 P.M.**
Contact Elaine Kolish/
Patsy Quick
- **15 Branch Program, 2 P.M.**
Contact Joanne Clark
- **19 Book Group, 7 P.M.**
Contact Liz Promen
- **23 Game Night, 7:30 P.M.**
Contact Paula Lettice



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

