

Mt. Vernon Voices

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

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AAUW
Mt. Vernon (VA) Branch



CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



Designed by Freepik

On this snowy and cold day at the end of January, I am warmed by the story of a 78-year-old immigrant in Florida who makes pies. **Max Mendoza** came to America as a trained engineer from Venezuela, who started out trying to be a veterinarian. The vet school he attended was unreliable; it closed frequently because of guerrilla violence. So, he gave that up and went to another school, trained as an engineer, and had his own business. Until Chavez came to power and took it. He pivoted to farm management until the government took that, too. Finally, as Venezuela spiraled downward, his daughter persuaded him to come to America, where she lives. Once here, no one would hire him. So with the help of his daughter, he began making pies. That business is now flourishing. His message is, **"If you have to start again, start again... It's never too late to start."**

<https://www.pressreader.com/usa/the-washington-post-sunday-598/20260125/281526527468332>

To me, this story epitomizes the popular Nike slogan: **Just Do It.** Action matters even for the smallest things in life. The characteristics of optimism, persistence, and determination will help you get started, but in the end, **just do it.** Read that book you have been meaning to start. Exercise to stay strong. Send that check to AAUW or some other worthy organization that is fighting for our democracy. Call your Senator or Representative to raise @\$#% about what you see happening in our country. Donate to Rising Hope or other community non-profits helping those who are at risk. Call and check on your neighbor. Smile and hold the door for someone at the grocery store. Let another car cut in front of you. It is the small things done by us as individuals that can make a difference in our community and to ourselves, personally. It's never too late to start. **Just do it.**

Elaine and Patsy
Co-Presidents

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

See page 2

BRANCH PROGRAM

The Quander Family Through
History From Slavery to Leadership
Speaker Rev. Sherrie Quander

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

10:30 a.m.

Sherwood Regional Library

See page 3

LTA FUNDRAISER

The Little Theatre Fundraiser is just around the corner!



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

A few tickets are still available.

Please contact **Bianca Daugherty** for tickets at \$45 each
AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com

Branch members who wish to **donate wine** for the reception on February 6 may drop off their donation at the home of **Mary Ellen Mehler, 2002 Old Stage Road**. Call Mary Ellen at 703/780-8494 if you need to have her pick up wine from you. Rosé or red wine donations are especially appreciated! Thank you for your support!



BRANCH LEADERSHIP 2025 – 2026

Elected Officers

Co-Presidents: Elaine Kolish
Patsy Quick

Program Co-Vice Presidents: Beverly Dyer
Kathi Hanrahan

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

Newsletter/Directory Distribution: Mary Ellen Mehler

Nominating Committee: Elaine Kolish/
Mary Ellen Mehler

Hospitality: **vacant**

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.



Mt Vernon Branch AAUW



Sherwood Regional Library

FEBRUARY 17, 2026 10:30 A.M. Sherwood Regional Library

The Quander Family Through History - From Slavery to Leadership



Rev. Sherrie Quander will tell the story of her historic family's journey from slavery until the modern era. The Quander family is one of our region's most historic families. Rev. Quander has researched and can recount the family's origins as slaves at Mount Vernon, to emancipation, the Jim Crow years, the Civil Rights Era, and on to modern times. Rev. Quander will weave in her own journey from a childhood in Alexandria through her career in Hollywood.

Born in Washington, DC, **Sherrie Quander** grew up in Alexandria, Virginia and enjoys the distinction of being a member of the oldest African American family on record in the United States. After receiving her diploma from Groveton (aka West Potomac) High School in Alexandria, Sherrie moved to Wilmington, Ohio to attend Wilmington College. Upon receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in both Psychology and Theatre Arts she worked as a family social worker for Clinton County Children's Services in Chillicothe, Ohio before moving to San Francisco in 1977.

In 1979, Sherrie found herself one step closer to her dream of a career in show business as she moved to Los Angeles. In 1981, Norman Lear's production company, Embassy Television, offered her a position and she remained there until 1988. During her years with Norman Lear, Sherrie worked as an Associate Producer on *ONE DAY AT A TIME*, in addition to other various television pilots. In addition to production work, Sherrie spent 5 years as a Director of Human Resources, providing recruitment, employee relations, and training to the production employees for as many as eight television series.

In 1988 Sherrie left corporate human resources to pursue a full-time acting career. From 1988 to 2001 she

appeared in numerous commercials, student Master's thesis films as well as sitcoms. To keep cash flow coming in, she worked as a human resource consultant for a literary agency, a television station and, The Walt Disney Company.

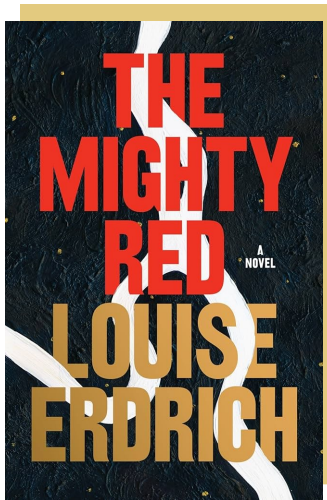
In 1998, as a member of the Granada Hills Center of Spiritual Living, in Granada Hills, California, Sherrie began her ministerial study with Centers for Spiritual Living. She received her ministerial credential in 2002, her Practitioner's license in 2003, and was ordained in 2009. In 2008 Sherrie accepted a Letter of Call from Center for Spiritual Living, Mobile, Alabama, as an assistant minister and moved into the role of Senior Minister in 2010 where she remained until 2015.

Sherrie returned to Alexandria in 2015 to become primary care giver to her mother and upon her passing, Sherrie was introduced to Unity of Fairfax church which has become her church home. She is currently the First Chair of the Board of Trustees, a prayer Chaplain, a member of the choir, a platform assistant, and upon occasion a substitute speaker at Sunday morning services.

In her spare time Sherrie loves teaching, acting, singing, crafting, good food, and has an extraordinary love for animals. She continues to reside in Alexandria, VA.

The meeting is free and open to the public. For more information: AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com

BOOK GROUP



Book Group will meet via Zoom on
Monday, February 16, 2026 - 7:00 p.m.
*** Zoom link will be sent via email. ***

BOOK: Mighty Red
by Louise Erdrich

REVIEWER: Mary Wall

NEXT BOOKS: Lost Bookshop by Evie Woods and
Perestroika in Paris by Jane Smiley

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, February 27, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Home of Patsy Quick

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



From left: Patsy, Bianca, Cathy, Kathi, Paula

Five branch members braved the cold and ventured out to DC for restaurant week on January 24. **Cathy and Paula** selected **Dauphine's**, stepping a little outside the box to expand our palates and enjoy New Orleans inspired dishes.

Our next quarterly dining out will be in May. Share your restaurant ideas with Cathy and Paula.

Interested to join the group, let them know.

AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com

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 would be interested in serving or if you would like more information about a position please let us know.

As you know, it takes many hands to keep a branch running successfully so please consider stepping up for a position.

We need you and appreciate you!

*Elaine Kolish/Mary Ellen Mehler
Nominating Committee*

HELPING THOSE IN NEED

As part of our ongoing mission to model kindness and compassion and to rise above the divisive rhetoric that surrounds us, we raise for your consideration supporting **Rising Hope** in some way. RH is “**a Community of Faith helping individuals rise above homelessness and poverty along the Route 1 Corridor.**” Every year, RH runs a hypothermia shelter for unhoused people. It runs from December 1 to April 1 and recruits individuals and organizations to help provide supervision (along with RH staff) for its overnight guests. RH also runs clothing and food missions. It says its “**goal is to provide consistent, dignified care for every guest who walks through our doors. A key part of that care is making sure our guests have access to clothing that meets their everyday needs.**” Its website has a list of and links to clothing that is needed. Right now, it is particularly interested in men’s shoes, sizes 8-12, backpacks and sleeping bags. The food mission provides a community-based lunch Monday-Friday and a food pantry that provide nutritious and culturally appropriate food for 300 people weekly.



To learn more and to find out donation hours, visit <https://www.risinghopeumc.org>.

*Elaine Kolish
Co-President*

FULL HOUSE AT JANUARY PROGRAM MEETING



Patsy Quick, Stephanie Kinney, and Joanne Clark who organized January's branch program.

On January 15, an audience of more than 30 members of the AAUW Mt. Vernon branch and community members gathered for our monthly meeting at Sherwood Regional Library. Our speaker was **Stephanie Kinney**, a 25-year veteran of the U.S. Foreign Service. Her presentation focused on the role of women in the Foreign Service across decades, and her significant role in improving and elevating the role of Foreign Service spouses. She regaled us with interesting and often amusing anecdotes of things she experienced personally as well as stories of notable women ambassadors. It was a lively, engaging, and very interesting discussion, followed by a good number of questions from the audience.

Joanne Clark

AAUW-VA LOBBY DAY

Are you ready to make your voice heard for equity?
Join **AAUW of Virginia's Lobby Day in Richmond on February 4-5, 2026.**



Citizen lobbying is one of the most powerful ways to influence policy change. We're heading to the State Capitol to advocate for women, families, and all Virginians — on education equity, paid family and medical leave, abortion and contraception rights, raising the minimum wage, and more.

- [Click here](#) to RSVP now.
- [Book your lodging](#) at the Hampton Inn & Suites Richmond – Downtown.

Just bring your voice — we'll provide the resources to help you make an impact.
Please reach out to Diane Schrier, diane.schrier@gmail.com with any questions.

We hope to see you there!

Diane Schrier, VP for Public Policy, AAUW-VA

AAUW-VA CONFERENCE 2026

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/?groupno=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!

AAUW's WINTER MEMBER GATHERING



AAUW's Winter Member Gathering **Wednesday, February 18, 4:30 p.m. ET**

Please join us for AAUW's Winter Member Gathering. At this special virtual event, we will:

- Recognize outstanding supporters and branches,
- Update you on the impact of our Strategic Plan's 3 key priorities, and
- Provide you with the information you need to answer our 5 Calls to Action!

Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate our achievements and learn about our shared impact!

[Register here.](#)

Calling All AAUW Artists!

We are thrilled to announce the opening of the **2026 AAUW Annual Art Contest!** This is your opportunity to showcase your artistic talents and have your work featured in our annual notecard collection, distributed to members nationwide. Sign-up is easy and only requires your email address or AAUW member ID!

Entries are open now through January 30, 2026 on the [AAUW Art Contest page.](#)

IMPROMT EVENT - MARCH 22



Alexandria and Mt Vernon Branches



Sherwood Regional Library

MARK YOUR
CALENDAR



Let's Get Physical! (Again)

Join us for Patricia Linderman's new workshop!

Becoming Your Strongest You and (Maybe) Adding Seven Good Years to Your Life

Sunday, March 22, 2:15 p.m.

Sherwood Regional Library

2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, 22306

Join Functional Aging Specialist Patricia Linderman to explore how we can adopt healthy habits with more self-kindness and even fun and joy, and how we can think more positively about aging and our aging bodies - a mindset that has been shown to increase our healthy lifespan by an average of seven years!

SKILLS WE WILL BUILD TOGETHER INCLUDE

- falling more safely,
- adding beneficial physical movements to everyday life,
- feeding our good gut bacteria (illustrated with puppets!),
- reducing stress through laughter,
- being more kind to ourselves and our bodies, and
- perhaps most importantly, recognizing and questioning (with curiosity and compassion) the internalized ageism nearly all of us are burdened with, which has been shown actually to shorten our healthy lifespan!



Patricia Linderman

After turning her own health around at age 52 with sustainable lifestyle changes, [Patricia Linderman](#) got so excited at the results that she left her work as an editor and language teacher to become a physical movement leader and health coach for other women at midlife and well beyond. She now coaches clients locally and all over the country via Zoom, and leads a variety of classes and workshops online and at Providence Rec Center in Falls Church. She's also certified as a Functional Aging Specialist and Pilates Pelvic Floor Exercise Teacher. Find out more about her work at www.fierceafter45.com and follow her blog at <https://fierceafter45.substack.com/>

The meeting is free and open to the public. For more information: AAUW.MtVernon@gmail.com

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
Saturday, March 21, 2026, 10:00 AM Via Zoom	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

April 18, 2026

September 25-27, 2026

AAUW-VA Lobby Day, Richmond, VA

AAUW-VA Conference, Glen Allen, VA

AAUW Atlantic Regional Conference, Lancaster, PA

39th Annual Mount Vernon District Town Meeting

When: Saturday, February 7, 2026
Where: Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Rd.
Times: Exhibit Hall is open from 8:30-10 a.m.
 Program 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Click [here](#) to see the Town Meeting Flyer.

Our AAUW Mt. Vernon branch will have a table for distributing literature and chatting with neighbors in the community. Stop by for a visit.



February 2026

- **6 LTA Fundraiser**
7 P.M. Reception
8 P.M. Curtain
 Contact Elaine Kolish/
 Patsy Quick
- **10 Board Meeting, 7 P.M.**
 Contact Elaine Kolish/
 Patsy Quick
- **16 Book Group, 7 P.M.**
 Contact Liz Promen
- **17 Branch Program,**
10:30 A.M.
 Contact Joanna Crane
- **27 Game Night, 7:30 P.M.**
 Contact Patsy Quick

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



Check out our website <https://mtvernon-va.aauw.net/>
 Follow us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/mtvernonva.aauw/>

