

The American Association of University Women

The TORCH

November, 2023

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*AAUW. Vol. 62, No. 3
Peggy Drennan Cihi, Editor.*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greeting Members,

Welcome to November! For many of our members who are snowbirds this is the month you return to Florida and to AAUW. For the stalwarts who remain here year-round, this is the time of the year when you notice an increase in traffic. On behalf of the snowbirds, I apologize for that, but hope that the return of friends will outweigh the negatives.

On a more serious note, as we reconvene as a group, we are looking at a full calendar of events. This topic for this month's luncheon "Mental Health Literacy" with its focus on the schools is important for all of us to become knowledgeable about. As a country, we face an increase in violence in the schools, much of it perpetrated by children and teens. The research on this violence points to the need to have school personnel trained to spot children suffering with mental and emotional disorders. Sadly, training educators in social and emotional learning and mental health literacy has become somewhat politicized. This lecture will better inform all of us about how this training is filling an important need.

Hopefully, you are noticing the introduction of some new ways to make your luncheon reservations, donate money, and renew your membership. In order to streamline operations, we have established online forms that provide any easy way to do all three. With the invaluable assistance of Astoria Aviles, this process is up and running. Please check out our website <https://fmlc-fl.aauw.net> for more information. If anyone needs assistance filling out the forms or has questions, contact me at cecilebrennan@gmail.com.

In closing, let's remember to be ready to vote. During future elections, please make sure to fill out that ballot, and when doing so keep in mind the needs of students and the goals of AAUW to ensure a level-playing field for women in the classroom, the athletic field, the workplace and the C-Suite.

Cecile Brennan
Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc.

LUNCHEON SPEAKER

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18,
2023**

DIANE KRATT, ED.D.,

**CLINICAL EXPERIENCES & PARTNERSHIPS,
COORDINATOR**



MENTAL HEALTH IN THE CLASSROOM

Diane Kratt has been part of FGCU's College of Education faculty since 2008. Prior to that, she was a K-12 educator for twenty years. She enjoys working with student teachers, supervisors, and classroom teachers to develop effective educators for the future. Some of her favorite topics include child development, gifted education, classroom management, study abroad, and school mental health. Currently, Diane is a member of American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), National Association of Professional Development Schools (NAPDS), and Mental Health Education Integration Consortium (MHEDIC). She holds an Ed.D degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Florida Gulf Coast University.

Dr. Kratt's research focuses primarily on school mental health. She is especially interested in the teacher's role regarding the mental health of the students and self. Since she joined the faculty, her goal has been to better prepare our pre-service teachers for today's classrooms regarding mental health. She started off by creating an annual community Children's Mental Health Conference that went on for ten years. Since then, she has brought the education and training directly to our students at various points throughout their programs.

In her own words, Diane summarizes: "...mental health has been a barrier to learning for a long time. Teachers are in a pivotal position regarding children/youth mental health, especially in identifying and making appropriate connections. Teacher preparation programs, however, typically have not offered mental health content as part of their curriculum. For over 10 years now, Florida Gulf Coast University's College of Education has been responsive to this need and worked to improve the mental health literacy of its teacher candidates. In this upcoming presentation I will share what that ten year journey has looked like and talk about where we might go from here."





Join us for
Our Luncheon and Program
The Landings Yacht, Golf & Tennis
Club, 5200 South Landings Drive

OUR MEETING DATE:
Saturday, November 18, 2023
Gathering: 11:30 A.M.
Location: The Helm Club



Rolls, Coffee, Tea

**Choice 1: OVEN ROASTED SLICED
TURKEY**, whipped potatoes, stuffing, chef
vegetable & side cranberry sauce.

**Choice 2: CHICKEN BLT SALAD W/
CUCUMBER RANCH DRESSING-** baby
romaine, heirloom tomatoes, applewood
smoked bacon, w/ house made croutons,
grilled chicken

Choice 3: VEGAN MEAL. Chef's choice

Dessert: Chef's Choice or Fruit Cup

*Beverages are available. Wait staff will accept
charge cards for beverages.*

Reservations are required.

***Please indicate choice of menu. Cost
for the luncheon is \$30.00.***

**For luncheon reservations,
Payment Is Expected
to insure your reservation.**

Contact Carolyn Nance with your
choice of menu by e-mail, phone or
when you send in your check for
\$30.00.

Carolyn Nance's contact is:
cnance5240@gmail.com
or at

(239) 785-9993
11674 Lady Anne Circle
Cape Coral, FL 33991

Please title your e-mail
AAUW Reservations
and contact Carolyn Nance for
reservations no later than
Monday, November 13
Cancellations must be made no later
than **Tuesday, November 14.**

You can also pay with PayPal.



is available on our Branch
website: **<https://fmlc-fl.aauw.net>**

**(Meetings begin the third Saturday in
September and end in May.)**



is available on our Branch website.

What is it?

PayPal is a payment platform with a website and a phone app that enables payments between parties through online money transfers.

Why does the Fort Myers/ Lee County Branch, Inc. have an account?

The Branch can manage payment for Donations, Membership, Luncheon and Events.

Will I have to set up a PayPal account?

No. You have options to pay by credit card, use your own PayPal account, or by check.

How will it work?

We have PayPal set up on our web page: <https://fmfc-fl.aauw.net>

AAUW



We have two book clubs. Each welcomes new members.

Cover Girls Book Club

The Cover Girls Book Club will meet on November 8th from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. at a member's home. (Meetings are usually the second Wednesday of the month). Zoom is also available. Members will discuss the ***Remarkably Bright Creatures*** by Shelby Van Pelt. New members are welcome and are encouraged to contact Carol Fuechsel for more information about the meeting location and joining the club . Please email Carol Fuechsel:

cbfuechsel@gmail.com

Page Turner Book Club

The meetings of the Page Turners Book Club are on the 4th Thursday of each month at 12:45 PM at the Lakes Park Library. If you are interested in participating in this book group, contact Lois Benedetto:

benedetl@georgetown.edu

2023-2024 MEETING DATES and Torch Production Schedule

SEND ARTICLES TO peggycihi@comcast.net

Meeting Date	Deadline for Articles	Mail Torch Date
September 16, 2023	August 24, 2023	September 6, 2023
October 21, 2023	September 27, 2023	October 11, 2022
November 18, 2023	October 24, 2023	November 8, 2023
*Bingo Dinner		
Thursday, Dec. 14	November 14, 2023	November 23, 2023
*January 13, 2024	December 18, 2023	January 6, 2024
February 17, 2024	January 24, 2024	February 7, 2024
March 16, 2024	February 20, 2024	March 6, 2024
April 20, 2024	March 27, 2024	April 10, 2024
May 18, 2024	April 24, 2024	May 8, 2024
<i>*unusual date</i>		

Woman of Interest

Golda Meir was an Israeli politician who served as the fourth prime minister of Israel from 1969 to 1974. She was Israel's first and only female head of government, the first female head of government in the Middle East, and the fourth elected female head of government or state in the world.

Born in Kiev in the Russian Empire (now Ukraine) to Jewish parents, Meir immigrated as a child with her family to the United States in 1906. She graduated from the Milwaukee, WI Normal School and found work as a teacher. While in Milwaukee, she embraced the Labor Zionist movement.

In 1921, she and her husband emigrated to Palestine, an area set up by the League of Nations, later becoming the kibbutz's representative.

Meir held several key roles in the Jewish Agency during and after World War II. She was a signatory of the Israeli Declaration of Independence in 1948. Meir was elected to the Knesset in 1949. In 1969, Meir assumed the role of prime minister. Early in her tenure, she made multiple diplomatic visits with western leaders to promote her vision of peace in the region.



A controversial figure in Israel, Meir has been lionized as a founder of the state and described as the "Iron Lady" of Israeli politics.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golda_Meir

YOUR HOLIDAY GIFT BASKET COULD BE GOING TO THE. . .



BINGO GALA

At the Helm Club at The Landings

**Admission of \$75 includes:
Bingo Cards & Cash Prizes**

**This is our annual fundraiser for
SCHOLARSHIPS.**

**We will have a fantastic buffet dinner and
10 Bingo Games with cash prizes!
The activities will begin at 5:00 p.m.
(Doors open at 4:30 p.m. to peruse the fabulous
silent auction prizes and make bids.)**



MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR OUR THURSDAY DEC. 14.

**Payment of \$75 per person
is expected to insure your reservation.**
***Payment is made in advance by mail with
a check made out to AAUW.***

***To make your payment,
contact Carolyn Nance by e-mail, phone,
or when you send in your check.***

***Carolyn's contact is:
cnance5240@gmail.com
or at (239) 785-9993***

***Send your check to
Carolyn Nance
11674 Lady Anne Circle
Cape Coral, FL 33991***

**Our Silent Auction items will consist of a
variety of baskets on which to bid. Each
will be worth more than \$100. Themes
for the baskets are such categories as
pictured below.**



Not the actual baskets that will be offered



Money doesn't grow on trees, *except* when it is used to support scholarships. The Money Tree will be sprouting....

\$100!

...that you can win along with a real tree.

We want our scholarship money to

GROW...

and **GROW...**
and

GROW....

For a chance to contribute to the scholarship funds and win this money tree at the December 14 **CHRISTMAS GALA**, purchase raffle tickets at the November luncheon or the evening of the **Gala**.

Tickets are available for a minimum of \$5.00 for five tickets.

**WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD to raising funds for our SCHOLARSHIPS
MARK YOUR CALENDAR**



**Thursday, December 14, 2023
Buffet Dinner and Bingo Games
Bingo Cards, Daubers and
Cash Prizes
Admission cost: \$75.00**

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- ☐ Gather your friends, neighbors and relatives to make up a table to attend the Bingo Gala
- ☐ Volunteer to help set up the room on Bingo night.
- ☐ Put together a raffle basket. Contact [Peggy Cihi, 239-980-4794, peggycihi@comcast.net](mailto:peggycihi@comcast.net) if you have questions and to let us know if you choose to do this.
- ☐ We are collecting themed baskets worth a minimum of \$100 for the raffle.

Samples of themes:

Chocolate	Gardening	Board games	Tennis
Wine	Correspondence	Candles	Hurricane Prep
Dining gift cards	Handbags	Holiday	Taste of Italy
Jewelry	Dog Lovers	Travel	First Aid
Art supplies	Holiday Cookies	Bath	Pamper the Chef
Card players	Mysteries & Puzzles	Beach	"As seen on TV."
Yoga	Flower Arranging	Crafts	Greeting Cards
Golf	Cat Lovers		

Cut out and use the form below to accompany your basket. Give your basket a title and list the contents and the final value. Send a copy of the form below to Peggy Cihi, 4605 S. Landings Drive, Fort Myers, 33919 or email it to peggycihi@comcast.net.



Your name:		
Contact Information:		



Kristen Ziman



**WE HAVE SOME EXCITING SPEAKERS COMING UP
IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.**

In January , we will welcome our WOMEN OF INTEREST interpreter Sheryl Faye, who will present her interpretation of Queen Elizabeth II. This program is described on the next page.

In February we will hear from a former Chief of Police, Kristin Ziman. Chief Ziman's extensive police background in Aurora, Illinois and years on the force have made her a perfect candidate to author a book on policing. Entitled ***Reimagining Blue: Thoughts on Life, Leadership and A New Way Forward in Policing***, it is a passionate and personal look into a misunderstood profession from the vantage point of the first female to break the brass ceiling and become a chief of police in her own hometown. Now retired, the Naples native has waived her considerable speaker's fee in the hopes that some of our members will order her book, bring it to her February 17 luncheon presentation, and engage with her in a discussion. It would also be great for a book club selection.

You can order your copy from this link:

<https://amplifypublishinggroup.com/product/bookstore/timely-politics-and-current-affairs/reimagining-blue-thoughts-on-life-leadership-and-a-new-way-forward-in-policing/>

Luncheon Event January 13, 2024

Queen Elizabeth II, Portrayed by Sheryl Faye
BRAND NEW! Queen Elizabeth II - "Her Majesty"



Queen Elizabeth II was a true icon, inspiring people around the world with her strength, courage, resilience, and dedication to a life of service. Her reign of 70 years and 214 days was the longest of any British monarch and the longest verified reign of any female head of state in history.

MENU

Luncheon Buffet

Tomato basil soup & chicken noodle soup

Build your own salad bar w/ assorted toppings, plus egg salad & chicken salad

Mini croissants

Cookie & brownie platter

Coffee

\$40 inclusive for members

\$50 for non-members

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED

Payment is made in advance by mail with a check made out to AAUW.

To make your RESERVATION and PAYMENT,

contact Carolyn Nance by e-mail, phone,

or when you send in your check.

Carolyn Nance's contact is:

cnance5240@gmail.com

or at (239) 785-9993

Send your check to

Carolyn Nance

11674 Lady Anne Circle

Cape Coral, FL 33991

Guided Nature Adventures 2023-2024

Fall in love with Southwest Florida all over again! Explore the surrounding nature that your winter home has to offer. Join AAUW's Master Naturalist, Cathy Tucker, Nature Photographer, Jemetta Hunt, along with guest experts from Southwest Florida. On the fourth Wednesday of the month, be prepared to have an exclusive experience, that is Florida.

Please contact:

Cathy Tucker 239- 634-7414 or
Jemetta Hunt 239-249-6545

to reserve your spot or to answer any questions you may have. Below is a list of adventures we have planned for this year. Most are free, but some fees may be incurred. Lunch will be after each adventure at a unique location.

October 25, 2023	Coastal Discoveries – Mud Flats and Sea Grass- Englewood, Florida
December 27, 2023	The Past and Future of Lee County- Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve
January 24, 2024	Expanding Your Horizons- Charlotte Educational Center
February 28, 2024	Future of Sea Cows -Manatee Park
March 27, 2024	The Original Snowbirds- Location TBA
April 24, 2024	Ten Thousand Islands- Everglades National Park
May 22, 2024	Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary or Guided Kayak Tour

The **October 25 Adventure** begins with exploring Florida's coast to discover life beneath the tides. You will see how the seagrasses play an important role in protecting our coastlands and our marine life. In this first stop, you will be wading out to sea grass beds to collect and observe the life that depends on these grasses. We will be joined by Kate Rose who is the

Charlotte County's Sea Grant Agent. Equipment will be provided, but please wear clothes that can get wet along with water shoes to protect your feet. Sunscreen and a hat are recommended along with water and a snack. This excursion is open to spouses and friends, but space is limited.

Call now to reserve your spot.



Mail-In Ballots DID YOU KNOW?

All mail-in ballot requests expired at the end of 2022. This has nothing to do with your voter registration. If you were registered to vote in FL/Lee County prior to 12/31/22, you are still registered to vote. However, you must reapply for mail-in ballots.

This is easy to do at <https://www.lee.vote> (If you do not live in Lee County, go to the appropriate website.) Scroll down the home page to find the link to accomplish this. If your address has changed, you must correct that with the election's office. Mail-in ballots cannot be forwarded.

The new requests will expire at the end of 2024.



AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County

<https://fmlc-fl.aauw.net>

Our local e-mail address:

aauwleecounty@gmail.com

Our National Organization

<https://www.aauw.org>

Facebook, linked from the website and the direct link:

<https://www.facebook.com/AAUW-Fort-Myers-Lee-County-Branch-107794550957375>

Your Vote is Your Voice



Contact the LEE COUNTY Supervisor of Elections

239-LEE-VOTE (533-8683) www.lee.vote

Register to Vote Update your Voter Registration

Update your Vote-by-Mail Request

All Vote-by-Mail requests expired at the end of 2022



Returning Citizens. Information and help for persons with felonies and completed sentences to regain their right to vote.

League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVFL):

Call: 407-710-5496 email: CanIVote@LWVFL.org

web: <https://lwvfl.org/returning-citizens/>



Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRRC)

help to pay fines and fees if criteria are met

Call FRRRC at 1-877-MYVOTE-0 www.FLORIDARRC.com



LWV Lee County www.lwvlee.org

email: lwvlee@lwvlee.org

phone: 239-278-1032



The League of Women Voters of Lee County, Inc. (LWVLee) is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

*The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose candidates and/or political parties.
LWVLee is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice.*

9/23

GREAT DECISIONS

Great Decisions is America's largest discussion program on world affairs. The program model involves reading the Great Decisions *Briefing Book*, watching the documentary film series and meeting in a discussion group to discuss the most critical global issues facing America today. Great Decisions meets virtually on the first Friday of every month (usually with a couple of alterations due to holidays) from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. There are eight topics each year; our branch meets February through June and September through November. Participants purchase a booklet published by the Foreign Policy Association (FPA) to prepare for the discussions and watch a "Master Class" video on the topic. FPA suggests additional readings for each topic, but that reading is at the discretion of the individual participant. Group members take turns facilitating the discussions. Costs for the booklet and shipping/handling have not yet been announced. However, in previous years the cost of the booklet has been \$35. Go to fpa.org for more information about Great Decisions. Suzan Harden is our local Great Decisions coordinator (skh062653@gmail.com).

Below is a summary from the first Discussion Group for this fall.

AAUW Great Decisions Discussion Group

October 6, 2023

"Iran at a Crossroads" Discussion leader Mary Lou Chamberlain

"Iran at the Crossroads" from the 2023 Edition of the book Great Decisions Foreign Policy Association, which was written by Lawrence G. Potter, contained so much information. Mr. Potter teaches at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. Mr. Potter also was deputy director of Gulf 2000, a major research and documentation project on the Persian states based there, from 1994 to 2016 to name a few of his accomplishments.

Mr. Potter begins his article by talking about the uprising in Iran because of the arrest and killing of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who was charged with "bad hijab" on September 15, 2022. This brought about protests in some 100 cities. The slogan of the revolt was "Woman, Life, Freedom." This level of defiance and anger had not been seen before. Iran did kill 300 people and over 14,000 people had been arrested. The Iranian government pardoned 22,000 Iranians.

Iran talks about the United States as their enemy. Iran also blames many of their problems on the United States, although this is unfounded.

Our discussion group felt it was important for the United States to try to reconcile with Iran. Foremost is to try to deal with the nuclear treaty that President Trump pulled out of with Iran. The Obama Administration led by John F. Kerry, Secretary of State, focused on Iran and achieved their single foreign policy victory. The partners in the treaty included Britain, France, Germany, Russian, and China and was signed July 2015. The Trump administration repeatedly said that they wanted to negotiate a "better deal" with Iran but failed to do so.

So far attempts by the U.S. to isolate and punish Iran have hurt the Iranian people but not led to policy changes by the Iranian government. We believe it's time to alter its policy.

We noted that the population of Iran is young. Sixty percent are below the age of 30. The average age of marriage for males is 27.8 years, while for females it is 23.1. The population surged from 36 million in 1978 to 88.6 million by mid-2022. We also noted that there are not many Americans who are experts in Iranian culture and history. People who had experience have retired.

Mary Lou Chamberlain



CELEBRATING GEMS

Scholarship Co-Chairs: Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf

In October, we highlighted one of our STEM scholarships. (*STEM is an acronym for science, technology, engineering, and math. These four fields share an emphasis on innovation, problem-solving, and critical thinking.*) GEMS (Girls in Engineering, Math, and Science) is a hands-on science education program for regional middle school girls. One of its unique features is that, while it is led by professionals and undergraduates serve as facilitators and role-models in a girls-only environment.

On Saturday, September 30, ninety-three students from the area middle schools converged on the FGCU campus for the first GEMS (Girls in Engineering, Math & Science) Program of this academic year. The students were split into two groups and had a chance to explore two areas of study. One group explored ways to protect a water balloon from a drop from a balcony. The students had a variety of materials to choose from to complete their projects.

Later, the groups switched rooms and did the other's projects. What a great day for this group of Middle School students! The next GEMS program will be held on Dec 2nd at the Whitaker Center on the FGCU campus. It was wonderful to be able to meet in person!!

Later, they took the projects to a balcony and did the drop. It was great that the students worked together to make a project that was fun and informative. Meanwhile, the second group of students looked at microbes that are found in our foods. This was a hands-on experience that

showed how Microbiology is important to food safety, production, processing, preservation, and storage. to auction for the event. Guidelines and ideas appear on page 8 in the Torch. Another way to help is to reserve a table and invite your friends to join you. Remember that this is an "all are welcome" event, so grab all your friends, family, mates, etc. Your president Cecile and your scholarship chairperson, Cheryl will again be the Bingo callers, and we need your smiling faces out there! This is our major fundraiser, and without your generous support we will have to go back to begging for funds again....If you aren't sure about participating, remember those wonderful young women you met at our spring luncheon who were so moving in their appreciation. We really do change lives, and not everyone can say that!

We have some photos celebrating the day. See the one below; others are on the next page.



As we said at our AAUW October luncheon meeting, we will be able to offer all our scholarships with a minimum of asking for your help for funds. Instead, we are going to ask you to help us raise sufficient funds at our annual fund-raising Bingo Gala. How can you help? Please either get together with a partner(s) or go solo and create a basket for the silent auction as described on page 8. Reserve a place or an entire table for the Bingo Gala. See p.6.



AAUW Star Bright Scholarship

The AAUW Star Bright Memorial Scholarship was established in 2005 by Book Club 3. It provides branch members with the opportunity to make donations honoring friends and commemorating special events. As funds accrue, a \$1,000 scholarship is awarded to a female student attending the second semester at Fort Myers or Cape Coral Technical College.

AAUW Lee County High School Scholarship: Established in 2011 in memory of Jane Wagner, a three-term branch president. It awards one \$1,000 scholarship per year to a graduating female student with financial need chosen by the school counselor. The award is paid to the college of the recipient's choice.

AAUW STEM Awards: Established in 2001 to encourage middle and high school girls in STEM fields. It awards two \$300 prizes based on those projects submitted to the Thomas Alva Edison & Kiwanis Regional Science and Engineering Fair: The AAUW Thomas Edison and Kiwanis Regional Science & Engineering Fair Award goes to a top female entrant; The AAUW Thomas Edison and Kiwanis Regional Science & Engineering Fair Emerging Research Scholar Award goes to a female entrant whose skills are laudable, but still developing.

Marie Glasgow and AAUW STEM Award Fund: Established in 2019 in honor of Marie Glasgow, president of AAUW Fort Myers/Lee Co Branch for two years. It is awarded each year with the goal of improving educational opportunities by rewarding young Middle School girl(s) who are winners at the Junior Division of Edison-Kiwanis Science Fair or Thomas Edison Festival of Light Regional Inventors Fair

Girls in Engineering, Math and Science (GEMS): This hands-on program is dedicated to science education for regional middle school girls by enthusiastic professionals and undergraduates as facilitators and role models in a girls-only environment.

AAUW FGCU Endowed Scholarship: Established in 2000, with member and matching funds from the state, it awards one scholarship to a female student who resides in the five-county (Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Glades, Hendry) area with financial need pursuing an undergraduate degree at FGCU. Priority is given to the current awardee.

AAUW Sue Gottcent Memorial Endowed Scholarship: Established in 2006 with a bequest from the estate of member Sue Gottcent who was an avid supporter of AAUW's mission. It awards one \$2,000 scholarship to a Lee County female student aged 25 or older with demonstrated financial need who attends an institute of higher education that is part of the Florida State University system. Priority is given to the current awardee.

AAUW FSW State College Endowed Scholarship: Established in 2000, with member and matching funds from the state, it awards one \$1,000 scholarship to a female Lee County student with financial need attending the Fort Myers Campus of FSW. Priority is given to the current awardee.



SAVE THE DATE FOR GEMS!

SAT. SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

SAT. DECEMBER 2, 2023

SAT. FEBRUARY 24, 2024

SAT. APRIL 20, 2024

**GIRLS IN ENGINEERING,
MATH, & SCIENCE**

A HALF-DAY EVENT FOR ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS, REGARDLESS OF GENDER, TO ENGAGE IN HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES RELATED TO ENGINEERING, MATH, & SCIENCE.

DOES THE PROGRAM COST ANYTHING?

This program is FREE to all participants. Group registration is required.

DO PARENTS/GUARDIANS NEED TO BE THERE?

No. All activities are supervised by university personnel.

WHERE IS IT HELD?

FGCU's campus in Fort Myers.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN THE DAY OF THE PROGRAM?

Participants will engage in hands-on STEM activities with FGCU professors and students in actual university classroom laboratories.


WHAT TO WEAR?

Comfortable clothes that you would wear to school with close-toed shoes.

DETAILS REGARDING UPCOMING EVENTS TO FOLLOW

For more information:

<https://www.fgcu.edu/cas/centers/whitaker/k-12#girlsgems>

 @FGCUGEMS | Email: GEMS@FGCU.EDU

YOUR SCHOOL IS NEITHER ENDORSING NOR SPONSORING THIS EVENT NOR ENDORSING THE VIEWS OF FGCU.

PUBLIC POLICY

AAUW FORT MYERS/LEE COUNTY

Submitted by Suzan Harden

skh062653@gmail.com

November Public Policy Update

Florida Public Policy Chairs met virtually Tuesday, October 24. A highlight of the meeting was for the PPC's to share what is happening in their branches. Here are some highlights:

St. Augustine is working with the League of Women Voters to write post cards to felons who will likely be eligible to vote in 2024 elections to encourage them to register and vote. They are also making presentations to community groups regarding human trafficking, an area of particular concern to that branch.

The Sarasota branch is preparing for a meeting with their state representative where they will outline the branch's education priorities.

The Weston branch is working to circulate the petitions gathering signatures to get issues regarding Clean Water and Women's Reproductive Rights on the ballot in 2024.

All the chairs are working to identify proposed bills that may be relevant to AAUW FL's Public Policy initiatives.

Upcoming FL AAUW Public Policy Issue Virtual Forums

Thursday, November 2 – 6 p.m.

Gender Studies and DEI Initiatives at Colleges, presented by Dr. Elizabeth Brown, Past President of the United Faculty of Florida, University of North Florida

Thursday, November 16 – 6 p.m.

Florida 2024 Legislative Preview, presented by Dr. Pat DeWitt, AAUW Co-Public Policy Director, and Public Policy Committee Members

The registration link for both the above events can be found in this edition of the Torch. There is no cost and guests are invited to register and attend.

AAUW FL Lobby Days

Lobby Days will be held Monday, January 15 – Wednesday, January 17, 2024, in Tallahassee. On Monday evening, AAUW attendees will meet to discuss last-minute lobbying details, schedules, and talking points. On Tuesday and Wednesday, AAUW members will be meeting with legislators. Members can leave as needed on Wednesday to drive home. Suzan Harden will be representing our branch and would love to have company! Please contact her for information.

PUBLIC POLICY

AAUW FORT MYERS/LEE COUNTY

Submitted by Suzan Harden

skh062653@gmail.com

November Public Policy Update, *continued*.

Petition to Place Reproductive Freedom Initiative on 2024 FL Ballot

AAUW FL supports the efforts of Floridians Protecting Freedom (<https://floridiansprotectingfreedom.com/>) to put an amendment on the 2024 ballot that, if passed, will guarantee Florida women the right to make their own decisions about their health care with the support and assistance of their friends, families, and doctors. Here is the text of the amendment: https://floridiansprotectingfreedom.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Fulltext_2307_EN.pdf

Volunteers are out and about Lee County talking with voters and collecting signatures. For this measure you must be registered to vote in Florida. You can sign the petition only once. Also, once you have signed, your signature of support is public record. Here is a link to the petition:

[RptInitVolunteerFormV1 \(floridiansprotectingfreedom.com\)](#) Information regarding the return of the petition is in the Floridians Protecting Freedom website.

VOTING IN 2024

Under Florida law, all mail-in ballot requests were canceled at the end of 2022. This does not affect your voter registration. If you have not already done so, Florida officials encourage you to renew your mail-in ballot request as soon as possible. If your permanent address is in Lee County, go to www.lee.vote to request a new mail-in ballot or to verify that your request is active. The link is on the home page. If your permanent address is out of county/state, check your local guidelines to be sure your mail-in ballot request is still valid. Your new FL ballot request will be effective until the end of December, 2024.

Mail-in ballots cannot be forwarded. If you are in a temporary residence because of Hurricane Ian, contact the Lee County Elections Office to ensure your eligibility to vote in 2024.

For more information about AAUW Florida's advocacy initiatives, go to <https://aauw-fl.aauw.net/advocacy-2/>

Suzan Harden, Fort Myers/Lee County Branch Public Policy chair.



The AAUW Florida Public Policy Issue Forums

Wouldn't you like more in-depth information on the important issues facing Florida from a nonpartisan but equity-focused viewpoint? Would you like to be able to ask your own questions of experts regarding these issues? Then be sure to attend as many AAUW Florida Issue Forums this year as you can. All sessions will start at 6:00 PM and last for an hour. The series is open to AAUW members and guests.

TITLE	DATE	SPEAKERS	RSVP
Reproductive Rights	Sept. 14, 2023	Moné Holder, Florida Rising	Click here to register for this session
Title IX and Dress Codes in Schools	Oct. 5, 2023	Nancy Tray, Change the Dress Code Movement, St Johns County	Click here to register for this session
Gender Studies and DEI Initiatives at Colleges	Nov. 2 2023	Dr. Elizabeth Brown, Past President of the United Faculty of Florida, University of North Florida	Click here to register for this session
Florida 2024 Legislative Preview	Nov.16, 2023	Dr. Pat DeWitt, AAUW Co-Public Policy Director and Public Policy Committee Members	Click here to register for this session
Public Education and Book Bans	Jan. 11, 2024	Dr. Marvin Dunn, Professor Emeritus at Florida International University and Miami Center for Racial Justice	Click here to register for this session
Gender Pay Gap and Economic Security	March 7, 2024	Dr. Mary Gatta, AAUW FL Co- Public Policy Director and Director of Research and Public Policy, National Association of Colleges and Employers	Click here to register for this session
Voting Rights	April 18, 2024	Debbie Chandler, Co-President, League of Women's Voters. Florida	Click here to register for this session

You will need to RSVP for each session individually. Once you RSVP you will receive a Zoom link for the session. If you have any questions, contact Mary Gatta, Co-Public Policy Director, AAUW Florida at gatta.mary@gmail.com

Please note: You will need to go to the AAUW FLORIDA website to register for these sessions.
<https://aauw-fl.aauw.net>

INTEREST GROUPS/COORDINATORS

BOOK GROUPS

Carol Fuechsel, Coordinator

cbfuechsel@gmail.com

Book Club Meets

Cover Girls 2nd Wednesday, 1 PM

Page Turners 4th Thursday, 12:30 PM

(The book clubs accept new members. If interested, please contact Carol Fuechsel.)

BRIDGE

Patricia Crowe, Coordinator

pwc@world.std.com

HAND & FOOT

Carolyn Nance, Coordinator

Meets –1st Monday each month

cnance5240@gmail.com

MAHJONG

Carolyn Nance, Coordinator

Meets –3rd Thursday each month

cnance5240@gmail.com

GREAT DECISIONS

Suzan Harden, Coordinator

Meets 1st Friday each month.

skh062653@gmail.com

GUIDED NATURE EXCURSIONS

Jemetta Hunt, Coordinator

jemetta@aol.com

Cathy Tucker, Master Naturalist

cptucker@embarqmail.com

TOOLS FOR ADVOCACY

Suzan Harden Coordinator

Skh062653@gmail.com

New Interest Groups Are Welcome

Contact: Jametta Hunt

jemetta@aol.com

AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc. 2023-2024 Officers

Elected – Executive Board

President – Cecile Brennan

*Past Presidents – Bonnie Ryan
and Janet George*

Vice President, Elect –

Nancy Schoenstein

Vice President of Programs –

Jill Jennings

Vice President Membership –

Jemetta Hunt

Secretary –Patricia Crowe

Treasurer – Mary Kellner

Appointed Officers – Board Members

Public Policy – Suzan Harden

Co-Chairs of Scholarship –

Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf

Communications/Website/Facebook –

Astoria Aviles and Perry Doubt

Ways and Means – Peggy Drennan Cih

Standing Committees

Torch Editor – Peggy Drennan Cih

Records Retention – Executive Board

Science Fair - Cathy Tucker

Diversity Officer - Lisa Crotty

Strategic Planning—

Kathleen Haibach and Tamara Pigott

Ancillary Positions

Reservations – Carolyn Nance assisted by

Lynn Felice

Sunshine – Mary Jane McDowell

Greeters – Board Members

Torch Proofreaders: Jill Jennings

and Carolyn Nance

Torch Circulation –

Jemetta Hunt (US Mail)

Kathy Jones (E-mail)



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(See list under: <https://fmlc-fl.aauw.net> under tab Philanthropy; Scholarships,

Awards

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**Please make checks payable to AAUW Fort Myers / Lee County, Inc. and mail to:
AAUW – ATTN: Treasurer, PO Box 2115, Fort Myers, FL 33901- 2115**

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