

The American Association of University Women

The **TORCH**

February, 2024

Vol. 58, No. 6

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Peggy Drennan Cihl, Editor.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

February

Election time is here! If you are alive and on any media platforms you know that the entire country is gearing up for a major election. Here at AAUW we are facing our regular election season of looking for candidates who want to serve our branch. I know that you are busy, or that you don't feel fully "qualified" for a position. Let me respond to your concerns:

You are needed!

If you are a newer member who feels underqualified, let me assure you that you will be mentored and supported. If you have been around awhile, now is the time to get more involved. The future of our branch depends on people stepping forward.

This election season we have three positions open: ***President Elect****, ***Treasurer*** and ***Vice-President for Membership***. These positions are described on the following pages.

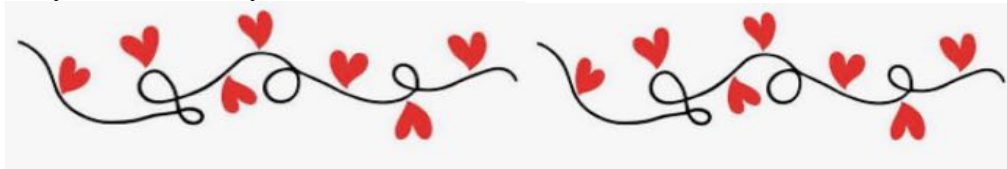
If you have questions or would further information about each position, contact me at cecilebrennan@gmail.com. If you would like to be nominated for the position, please email Nancy Schoenstein, the Chair of the nominating committee, at nschoenstein@gmail.com. You must inform Nancy of your interest by March 1.

Please consider stepping up and helping our branch to maintain the events and programs we currently offer, and to develop new initiatives to support the women of Lee County.

* At the last meeting of the nominating committee, members felt that the title *Vice President Elect*, which was the previous title, did not make sense. It has been changed to reflect the fact that this person is the *President elect*.

Cecile Brennan

Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc.



AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc

President Elect* The office of *President Elect* is the first year of a three-year term of office. The elected officer serves as *President Elect* the first year and as President the second year. In the third year, the officer serves as an Ex-Officio member of the Board.

*At the last meeting of the nominating committee, members felt that the title *Vice President Elect*, which was the previous title, did not make sense. It has been changed to reflect the fact that this person is the *President elect*.

Primary Function:

- The President Elect is charged with learning about all operations of the branch in preparation for serving as president.
- The President Elect serves as the parliamentarian – assuring that proper motions and votes are taken and recorded at all branch meetings.

Responsibilities:

- Assists president/executive board to maintain operations consistent with the branch bylaws.
- Attends and participates in all executive, board and general meetings.
- Provides input to the preparation of the meeting agenda.
- Supports the president and board by actively participating in all decision-making issues concerning the branch.
- Serves on finance committee for the preparation of the next fiscal year budget.
- Provides direction to nominating committee (job descriptions, qualifications needed)
- Serves on membership and ways and means committees.
- Attends to physical arrangements/needs for the monthly membership meetings.

Skills:

- Knowledge of Word, Excel
- Knowledge of broadcast emailing
- Oral and written communication
- Team building, consensus building
- Public relations
- Ability to meet deadlines imposed by outside agencies and within the organization

President (This position is filled currently)

Elected Officer – Executive Board Member – Ex-Officio Member of Committees

Overview: The scope of responsibilities includes but is not limited to leading the board and membership in the work of achieving the mission and vision of the branch.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure members, elected and appointed, and committees understand their responsibilities and can fulfill those expectations:
- Provide orientation to new position holders
- Offer opportunities for developing desired/needed skills
- Monitor performance and intervene/assist as appropriate
- Help recruit new members and develop succession plans for all officer and appointed positions.
- Provide structure for the accomplishment of the work of the board and branch.
- Preside over meetings balancing thorough discussion with efficiency in moving through agenda:
- Ensure that topics on the agenda are given complete consideration
- Ensure that everyone has opportunity to be heard and consensus is reached

- Develop and implement management tools (multi-year strategic plan, annual action plan, budget)
- Serve as link to the community to create positive working relationships and promote the branch.
- Keep currently informed of legal, regulatory and sector developments relating to the branch activities/programs.
- Submit annual report of branch activities/programs.
- Perform the duties prescribed by branch bylaws, rules of policies and procedures adopted by the board of directors and such duties as requested by AAUW, national and state level.
- Work with board officers, appointed position holders and committee chairs to bring to successful completion all branch activities and realize set goals.
- Work with general branch membership to assure that all voices are heard and represented.

Skills:

- Oral and written communication
- Technology and management
- Team building, consensus building, coalition building
- Public relations and fundraising
- Ability to meet deadlines imposed by outside agencies and within the organization

Treasurer

Elected Officer – Executive Board Member

Term: Two years

Overview: The scope of responsibilities includes, but is not limited to management of branch finances, board's review of and action related to the board's financial responsibilities and serving as designated signing officer on behalf of branch.

Responsibilities:

- Manage finances of the organization:
- Responsible for the recording and reconciliation of all financial activity.
- Prepare timely financial reports and email to board officers one week prior to meeting at which the reports are to be accepted.
- Meet with finance committee, composed of the current Treasurer, the Treasurer-elect and scholarship chairman to prepare the proposed annual budget draft for board approval.
- Manage the board's review of and action related to the board's financial responsibilities
- Ensure development and board review of financial policies and procedures needed to maintain the financial integrity and sustainability of the organization.
- Administer tax and corporate filings:
- File Form 990
- Obtain permits and licenses
- Register with charitable solicitation agencies Florida (if needed)
- Ensure appropriate confirmation of contributions made by all donors.
- Keep currently informed of legal, regulatory and sector developments relating to the board's financial responsibilities.
- Submit annual report of treasurer activities.
- Perform the duties prescribed by branch bylaws, rules of policies and procedures adopted by the board of directors and such duties as requested by the president or board.
- Work with vice president of membership and assistant treasurer to ensure AAUW membership count and paid dues reconcile.
- Work with the members of the board to develop long-term financial strategies.

Skills:

- Knowledge of accounting for non-profit, financial controls and GAAP or willingness to learn
- Oral and written communication skills
- Technology skills to utilize accounting and office software
- Ability to meet deadlines imposed by outside agencies and within the organization

Vice President Membership

Elected Officer – Executive Board Member

Term: Two years

Overview: The scope of responsibilities includes but is not limited to development and implementation of plans to increase and retain membership.

Responsibilities:

- Select and chair the branch membership committee.
- Maintain file of branch membership forms.
- Welcome all new members and guests at monthly meetings.
- Contact all new members to share information about the branch and to elicit areas of interests and strengths that could support the AAUW mission and branch goals.
- Share information with past president.
- Develop and provide an orientation program for new members.
- Conduct member renewal drive
- Create new/renewing membership forms.
- Follow-up on non-renewals.
- Provide membership data to the directory editor
- Provide directory updates throughout the year
- Oversee reservations and branch name tag responsibilities.
- Attend board meetings.
- Work with reservations host to ensure accurate name tags for guests and to produce list of guests/member hosts for each meeting.
- Work with communications officer to determine best approaches to seeking new members.
- Work with finance officer to ensure accurate payment of AAUW national, Florida and branch dues.
- Work with publicity, torch and website chairs to promote membership growth,
- Submit annual report of membership activities.
- Perform the duties prescribed by branch bylaws, and such duties as requested by the president or board.

Skills:

- Knowledge of Word, Excel, and email blasts.
- Knowledge of broadcast emailing
- Oral and written communication skills

If you would like to be nominated for the position, please email Nancy Schoenstein, the Chair of the nominating committee, at nschoenstein@gmail.com. You must inform Nancy of your interest by March 1.

Kristen Ziman, Nationally Known Expert on School Shootings



The speaker for our February 17 program will be Kristen Ziman, a nationally known expert on mass school shootings. Ziman, Chief Executive Officer of Kristen Ziman Consulting in Naples, Florida, where she now lives, is the retired Chief of Police of Aurora, Illinois. Most recently she was called by the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate one of the worst campus attacks in U.S. history, the mass school shooting at Uvalde, TX.

"The end in mind is to investigate the entire incident and determine if lessons can be learned to apply to bettering law enforcement response in future events," she said. It pains me to say that there will be future events, but we've come to the realization that we live in a world where it's not a matter of if, but when, the next mass shooting will occur."

Chief Ziman's extensive police background 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 the first chief of police in her own hometown.

Since Chief Ziman is waiving her considerable speaker's fee, she hopes that our members will order copies of her new book, which she be referring to in her presentation. It would be great if our members order one in advance and bring it to the Feb.17 meeting. You may order it from a link on her website www.kristenziman.com/reimagining-blue) where you may be able to download a section for free, or from your preferred website or bookseller.



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

OUR MEETING DATE:
Saturday, February 17, 2024
Gathering: 11:30 A.M.
Location: The Helm Club



Rolls, Coffee, Tea

*Choice 1: ITALIAN CHICKEN CUTLETS
W/ FRESH LEMON MIST, Basmati rice,
chef's vegetable.*

*Choice 2: GREEK SALAD W/ GRILLED
SHRIMP, tomatoes, cucumbers, red onion,
olives, and lemon with herb dressing.*

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, made
out to AAUW, 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, February 12
Cancellations must be made no later
than ***Tuesday, February 13.***

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.)**

Woman of Interest

1972: The First Two Female Special Agents in the FBI Were A Marine and a Nun

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had a firm rule: only men could be special agents in the FBI. But that rule changed shortly after his death in May 1972, paving the way for the first female modern Special Agents. The two women, Joanne Pierce Misko and Susan Roley Malone, joined their 43 male counterparts at the FBI's Special Agent training course in Quantico, VA, in July 1972.

Joanne Pierce Misko had been a nun in New York for 10 years before getting her start as a researcher with the FBI in 1970.

Susan Roley Malone had already broken stereotypes as a U.S. Marine when the FBI began accepting special agent applications from women. They worked hard and wanted to be just like any other agent. "We wanted to be agents first. We just happened to be women."



The 2023-2024 Thomas Alva Edison Science and Engineering Fair will be held this year on February 17, 2024 at Alico Arena on the campus of FGCU.

This is the first in-person fair since 2020. As always, we are looking for members to help with the judging. If you want to be part of the fun, please contact Cheryl Tromley 239-530-9147, Devera Graf 440-554-7786 or Cathy Tucker 239-656-6912, and we will be able to walk you through the judging process. Contact information can be found in the AAUW directory.



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?

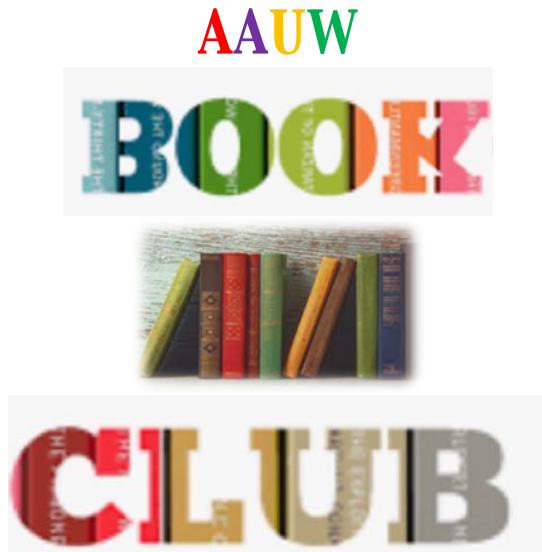
We have PayPal set up on our web page: <https://fmlc-fl.aauw.net>

Photo Gallery from our
January Luncheon
Event:
Sheryl Faye Portrays
Queen Elizabeth II



Our Guests:





We have two book clubs. Each welcomes new members.

Cover Girls' Book Club

Cover Girls book club meets in member's homes. Zoom will be available for those who are out of town or unable to otherwise attend. The selection for February will be ***Demon Copperfield*** by Barbara Kingsolver, and the meeting will be in the home of Pat Tillis in Cape Coral on February 14 at 1:00 pm. The meeting time is generally the second Wednesday of each month from 1 pm to 3 pm. If interested in joining or have questions, contact Carol Fuechsel at cbfuechsel@gmail.com.

Page Turners' Book Club

The Page Turners Book Club is now meeting every two months at Lake Parks Library from 1:30-3:30. The next meeting will be March 28 and the book to be discussed is ***Heaven and Earth Grocery Store***, by James McBride. If you are interested in joining the club, please contact Lois Benedetto at: benedetl@georgetown.edu

WHY JOIN A BOOK CLUB?

Are you in a book club? Are you thinking of joining one or even starting one up? Well, here's some good news – book clubs are good for you and here's why:

SOCIAL CONNECTION

Book clubs offer an affordable way to connect with others. Socialization helps sharpen your memory and cognitive skills, which leads to an increase in your sense of happiness and well-being.

IT FORCES YOU TO READ

And I mean that in a good way. In today's busy world, it can be hard to find time for ourselves. Being in a book club forces you to put everything aside and just read and relax.

BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS

Book clubs read a wide variety of books so if you're stuck in a reading rut or don't know what to read next, look no further, a book club can open you up to a whole new world of books.

HEAR NEW PERSPECTIVES

You can enjoy healthy, respectful debates about a variety of issues in a book club. Hearing other readers' perspectives on social issues and everyday topics might change your own opinions - or theirs.

SHARE YOUR LOVE OF BOOKS

You get to talk about books! Whether you're gushing over a book or ranting about it, your fellow book clubbers will be all ears.

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.

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

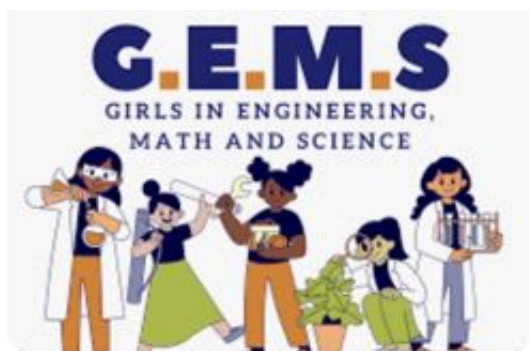


"Manatee Park is a seasonal location for viewing non-captive Florida manatees in Lee County. Manatees visit the park in search of warm water during the cooler days in winter when the temperature in the Gulf of Mexico is below 68° F. The warm water in the Manatee Park canal comes from the Florida Power and Light power plant and is created as a byproduct of cooling off their equipment.

Mid-December – March: Manatees are more likely to be seen at Manatee Park when the temperature in the Gulf of Mexico drops below 68° F

April-November: Manatees are most likely to be seen in coastal habitats in the Gulf of Mexico."

MAKE YOUR RESERVATION!



**Scholarship Co-Chairs:
Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf**

CELEBRATING ANOTHER GEMS

GEMS (Girls in Engineering, Math, and Science) is one of our STEM scholarships and is a hands-on science education program for regional middle school girls. It is held at the Whitaker Center on the FGCU campus. One of its unique features is that, while it is led by professionals, undergraduates serve as facilitators and role-models in a girls-only environment.

The second GEMS program of the academic year was held on Saturday, December 2, 2023. The students were split into two groups and had a chance to explore two areas of study.



One group explored spectroscopy, which is the process of documenting and studying light interactions. First students used a dispersion prism and a penlight to consider how light is reflected. Next the students went outside and collected leaves. Inside, they used microscopes to enhance the characteristics of the leaves to find the differences in dry and healthy leaves using light interactions.

Meanwhile, the second group of students participated in a civil engineering activity. First, they learned how important concrete is in our lives today. Next, the students were presented with a

variety of materials and given the challenge of making concrete. Small groups competed to see which one could concoct a mixture that would turn into concrete. The students chose materials, measured, weighed, and mixed until they had the perfect combination. The concoctions were poured into plastic cups to dry. The students were very involved in this activity, learning a scientific concept in a fun way.



Later the groups switched rooms and did the other projects. What a great day for this group of middle school students!

Our Lee County AAUW President, Cecile Brennan, also attended the program and said:



“As a former high school teacher, I was heartened to see so many young people gathered on a Saturday morning to listen to college faculty. They did more than just listen. Looking through a prism led to looking through a spectroscope and analyzing the way light diffused. Throughout the lecture and the experimentation students took notes, collaborated with one another, and offered their reflections back to the undergraduate assistants and faculty members. Seeing these young people in action reaffirmed my view that the future is indeed bright. Heartfelt thanks need to go to the enthusiastic instructors and organizers of this event.”

Scholarships

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.

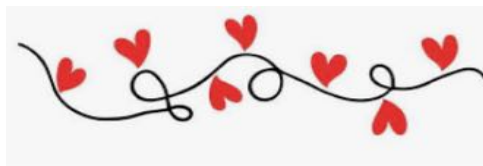
AAUW FGCU Endowed Scholarship Established in 2000, with member and matching funds from the state, it awards one scholarship to a female student who resides in the five-county (Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Glades, Hendry) area with financial need pursuing an undergraduate degree at FGCU. Priority is given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





You are invited to the
NEW MEMBERS' GET TOGETHER
 at the Landings home of Kathleen Haibach,
 5034 HARBORTOWN LANE,
 Thursday February 29th
 at 5:00.
 BYOB.

Come for good food and good
 company. Meet other members, board
 members and explore committee
 opportunities.
 We look forward to hearing about what you
 want to achieve with your membership.

RSVP:
 Kathleen Haibach before February 22 via
 text/email or phone. 585-233-7974
kathhaibach@gmail.com

A warm welcome to
 our **NEW MEMBERS** for 2023-2024:

Heather Skaza Acosta
 Cathy Allen
 Astoria Aviles
 Charlotte Barkley
 Jill Berle
 Christina Dixon
 Margot Flinn
 Carol Marston-Foucher
 Jodi Harrison
 Janet Ion
 Jeanette Ion
 Julie Iverson
 Lois McDougall
 Elaine Petrie
 Nedy Staerber
 Carol Watson

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>		

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>



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.



The next Great Decisions special interest group will meet Friday, March 1, at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. The topic of discussion will be ***Climate Technology and Competition***. As summarized in the FPA website: Will the United States and China, with other powerful countries following suit, approach current and future climate initiatives with an increased commitment to trade protectionism and nationalism, by various measures including trade restrictions? Or could a growing spirit of international accord develop to confront the “common enemy” of climate change?

Great Decisions meets virtually the first Friday of every month (with a couple 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.

Great Decisions is America's largest discussion program on world affairs. Our branch is still welcoming discussion participants for 2024. If you are interested in more information, contact Suzan Harden, Great Decisions coordinator (skh062653@gmail.com).

PUBLIC POLICY

AAUW FORT MYERS/LEE COUNTY

Submitted by Suzan Harden

skh062653@gmail.com

The 2024 session of Florida’s General Assembly began January 9 and runs for 60 days. During that time hundreds of bills will be debated, with some of them becoming Florida law. Advocacy is a major part of AAUW’s mission. The AAUW FL Public Policy Committee and board members review the bills that have been proposed and identifies those closely related to the AAUW mission. The following chart summarizes bills AAUW FL has identified for action during this session. Both the House and the Senate must file a version of each bill for discussion to take place. Most bills now are just in the committee phase of the process. This may or may not be a complete list. The AAUW FL PPC and board members will continue to monitor bills throughout the session.

(Continued on the next page.)

PUBLIC POLICY

To see complete information about any bill, go to www.myfloridahouse.gov or www.flsenate.gov. You do not have to create an account to see this information for reference. You do need to create an account to set up tracking for any bill for which you would like action alerts. AAUW FL members have created position papers for these bills. You can go to the Advocacy section of the AAUW FL website or contact Suzan Harden, Public Policy Chair, for more information.

Bills AAUW Florida Supports			
Bill Numbers/Topics	Sponsors	Summary	Current Activity
SCR 142/HCR 647 Equal Rights for Men and Women	Sen. Lori Berman (D); Rep. Dotie Joseph (D), with co-sponsors Joe Casello (D), Anna Eskamani (D), Rita Harris (D)	Ratifies proposed amendment to the U.S. Constitution relating to equal rights for men and women.	Senate referred to: Judiciary Ethics and Elections Rules House referred to: Civil Justice Subcommittee Constitutional Rights, Rule of Law & Government Operations Subcommittee Judiciary Committee 1 st Reading in both chambers on 1/9.
SB 1414/HB 1355 Freedom to Learn Act	Sen. Tracie Davis (D) w/ Sen. Shevrin Jones (D) co-sponsoring Rep. Michele Rayner (D)	Would repeal or amend many provisions of recently-enacted bills affecting the instruction and management of education (both K-12 and higher ed), primarily regarding DEI initiatives and the removal of curriculum and books.	Senate referred to: Education Pre-K – 12 Judiciary Rules House referred to: Education Quality Subcommittee Appropriations Subcommittee Education & Employment Committee 1 st Reading in both chambers 1/9 and 1/10.

PUBLIC POLICY

Bills AAUW Florida Supports Continued			
SB 100/HB 237 Pregnant Women in Custody	Sen. Shevrin Jones (D) Rep. Dianne Hart (D)	If a woman in custody and not released within 72 hrs. requests a pregnancy test that yields a positive result, she would be allowed to request a postponement, though not a reprieve, of incarceration to allow for a safe, healthy pregnancy and delivery.	Senate referred to: Criminal Justice Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice Fiscal Policy House referred to: Criminal Justice Subcommittee Justice Appropriations Subcommittee Judiciary Committee 1 st Reading in both chambers 1/9.
SB 128 /HB 127 Paid Parental Leave for State Career Service Employees	Sen. Ashley Gantt (D) Rep. Lori Berman (D)	Changes unpaid leave to paid leave for over 80,000 employees of the State of Florida (avg. pay, \$56,500/yr)	Senate referred to: Governmental Oversight & Accountability Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government Appropriations House referred to: Constitutional Rights, Rule of Law & Government Operations Subcommittee Appropriations Committee State Affairs Committee 1 st Reading in both chambers on 1/9.
SB256/HB 343 Pregnancy Support and Wellness Services	Sen. Lauren Book (D) Rep. Kelly Skidmore (D)	Would improve the integrity of the state-supported, childbirth-only Pregnancy Support Centers by requiring that information presented by medically correct and requiring Dep't. of Health inspections and annual audit reports.	Senate referred to: Health Policy Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services Fiscal Policy House referred to: Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee Health & Human Services Committee 1 st Reading in both chambers on 1/9.

PUBLIC POLICY

Bills AAUW FL Opposes			
SB 1596 Employment of Minors HB 49	Sen. Danny Burgess (R)	Reverses nearly a century of labor protections for 16- and 17-year old FL students (although restrictions for hazardous work would still be in place); allows students to make employment decisions as adults w/o parent permission; would encourage students to prioritize low-wage work over their education.	House referred to: Regulatory Reform & Economic Development Subcommittee (Favorable w/Committee Substitute) Local Administration, Federal Affairs & Special Districts Subcommittee (Favorable w/Committee Substitute) Commerce Committee (Favorable) Senate referred to: Commerce and Tourism Regulated Industries Rules 1 st Reading in both Chambers 1/9 and 1/10 2 nd Reading in House 1/24
Employment and Curfew of Minors	Rep. Linda Chaney (R)		

Your Vote is Your Voice

 [RegisterToVoteFlorida.gov](https://www.RegisterToVoteFlorida.gov)



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



FLORIDA

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>



AAUW

American Association of University Women

Fort Myers / Lee County (FL) Branch Inc.

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