

The American Association of University Women

The **TORCH**

April, 2024

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AAUW. Vol. 62, No. 8

Peggy Drennan Cihl, Editor.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR APRIL

Welcome to spring! Here in Florida spring isn't quite as dramatic as in other parts of the country, especially those places finally seeing sunshine and the melting of snow. Nevertheless, it signals for us a change in our AAUW schedule, and the loss of some members who fly away back to summer homes. Let me take a moment to wish everyone a safe trip. We will miss you.

As promised, I want to continue highlighting some of the other committees that offer us opportunities to get involved. Let me first discuss *Ways & Means*. Under the capable hands of Peggy Cihl, *Ways & Means* has been responsible for organizing and overseeing our fundraisers. Over the past couple of years, we have moved from having a fashion show to having a fun evening of dinner, a silent auction, and bingo. This activity produced funds needed to support our scholarships (More about scholarships is coming up!). *Ways & Means* needs new leadership as Peggy takes a well-deserved break from chairing. I am confident we have in our midst individuals with experience fundraising and event planning, please reach out to Nancy Schoenstein (nschoenstein@gmail.com) with your interest. We can use new ideas about how to proceed and new energy about how to accomplish our goals. I know that as women we often find it hard to nominate ourselves. Don't let that get in your way, step forward—any assistance you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

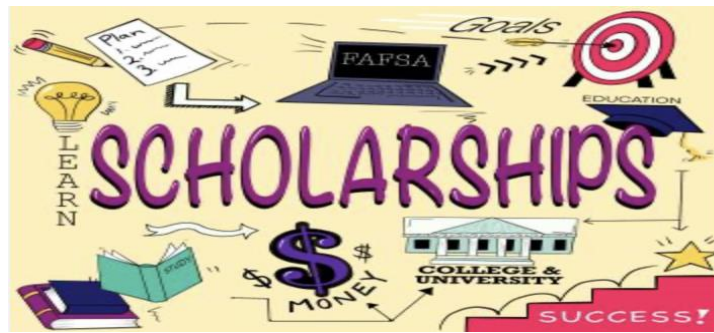
One of the committees most central to our mission is the *Scholarship* committee. Under the capable hands of Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf, the *Scholarship* committee has worked diligently to fund and administer our scholarships and Science Fair awards. This year, they are offering members the opportunity to commit to partially or fully funding one of the scholarships or science fair recipients. If electing to fund a scholarship at its current amount, the funder would have the right to name the scholarship. This is a great way to honor a family member or friend. In addition, if we could support scholarship funding through sponsorship, it would ease the efforts in *Ways and Means* and of our budgeting process. We could focus on other important aspects of our mission as well as fundraising. If you have an interest in fully or partially sponsoring a scholarship, please contact Cheryl Tromley (cltromley@gmail.com).

Enjoy Florida's spring and, if traveling, have a safe trip.

Cecile Brennan

Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc.

Our April Program



This month our Meeting, Program and Luncheon will focus on the Young Women that have been selected during the 2023-24 year to receive the AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch Scholarships and Awards. They have all been invited to join us at the April Luncheon. We will be able to meet and greet these young women as they embark on their educational journey. This will be a great opportunity to see our Scholarship fundraising efforts in action.

To make reservations follow instructions on p.3 of the TORCH

Woman of Interest

Lady Anne Radcliffe Mowlson

Lady Mowlson bequeathed the *FIRST UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP*

In May 1643, Lady Mowlson of London, Ann Radcliffe, was the first to contribute a financial aid scholarship to Harvard, which included the terms: "the maintenance of some poor scholar which shall be admitted into...Harvard's Colledge." [sic]

Her scholarship—the *Lady Mowlson 1643 Fund*—has benefited countless students over the past 375 years and inspired others to create additional scholarships. She is remembered today in the name of Radcliffe College.

In 1600 she was married to Thomas Mowlson, an alderman and member of the Grocers' Company who served as Lord Mayor of London in 1634. They owned and operated an inn in London. They had two children, but both died young. Thomas Mowlson died in 1638, leaving the customary half of his estate to his widow Anne. Anne had a head for business and managed her own business for the next twenty-three years. In addition to the inn, she loaned money and invested in import ventures. She was also active in the Puritan cause, contributing toward hiring a Puritan lecturer in her parish and giving generously to other charities. In 1643 she donated some of her money to found the first endowed scholarship at Harvard. When in 1894 the women's annex to the university was chartered as a full college, it was given the name of Harvard's first female benefactor.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_\(Radcliffe\)_Mowlson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anne_(Radcliffe)_Mowlson)



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

OUR MEETING DATE:
Saturday, April 20, 2024
Gathering: 11:30 A.M.
Location: The Helm Club



Rolls, Coffee, Tea

*Choice 1: CHICKEN PARMESAN, with
Risotto, Chef Vegetable*

*Choice 2: GRILLED SHRIMP CEASAR
SALAD*

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.*

Luncheon reservations are required.

Please title your contact information:
AAUW Reservations

1. **Please indicate choice of menu**
by contacting Carolyn Nance:

cnance5240@gmail.com

or at
(239) 785-9993

or at
**11674 Lady Anne Circle
Cape Coral, FL 33991**

2. **Pre-Payment Is Expected**

***Cost for the luncheon is
\$30.00.***

to insure your reservation.

Your check, made out to AAUW,
can be sent to Carolyn, along with
your menu choice.

You can also pay with PayPal.



is available on our Branch
website: <https://fmfc-fl.aauw.net>
(See page 6 for more information.)

**Reservations can be made no later
than
Monday, April 15
Cancellations must be made no later
than Tuesday, April 16**

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

celebrating our **SCHOLARS**

Scholarship Co-Chairs: Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf

This month we want to introduce you to one of our 2024/2025 High School Scholars. Kayla Harrison is a senior at Island Coast High School in Cape Coral. This Fall she will be attending FGCU to study nursing. Devera and I were so happy to have the opportunity to surprise her with the news of her scholarship. I think the school counselors were even more excited about giving her this award than we were.



Cheryl Tromley, Kayla Harrison, Devera Graf
(left to right)

They told us that as soon as we contacted them, they knew instantly who deserved it the most – Kayla. They were effusive in their praise of her potential, eagerness to succeed, and ability to overcome hardships. When we met her, we could understand their enthusiasm. What a lovely, warm young lady she is. You can imagine being that age and being called to the office (Oh no! am I in trouble?) and walking in

to find the counseling staff and two ladies waving pom-poms and cheering. I know I would have been totally overwhelmed. While Kayla was initially surprised, once she understood what it was all about, she was excited and disbelieving at the same time. She could not stop thanking us and was eager to have her picture taken and enthusiastic about attending our luncheon. All the counselors said they would love to accompany her if her mom wasn't available. There was a lot of hugging and not a dry eye in the room. Thank you all so much for your generous support which makes moments like this possible.

Kayla is pictured below with the school counselors who guide her educational progress.



Scholarships we provide. . .

AAUW Star Bright Scholarship

Established in 2005, by Book Club 3, to provide branch members with the opportunity to make donations honoring friends and commemorating special events awards two \$1,000 scholarships to female students attending their second semesters at Cape Coral Technical College and Fort Myers Technical College.

AAUW Lee County High School Scholarship

Established in 2011 in memory of Jane Wagner, a three-term branch president. It awards two \$1,500 scholarships per year to graduating female students 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 high school girls in STEM fields, it awards two entrants in the Thomas Alva Edison and Kiwanis Regional Science and Engineering Fair. Recipients must present a unique, quality topic, and conduct their own research. Judging is done by members of the Scholarship Committee. The first award, the *AAUW Thomas Edison and Kiwanis Regional Science & Engineering Fair Award*, provides a \$300 prize to a third or fourth place female entrant in the Thomas Alva Edison & Kiwanis Regional Science and Engineering Fair. The second award, the *AAUW Thomas Edison and Kiwanis Regional Science & Engineering Fair Emerging Research Scholar Award*, provides a \$300 prize to a female entrant for a project that shows promise with the purpose of encouraging her participation in future years.

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 terms. 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. In even numbered years the award will go to a Lee County Middle School (grades 6-8) girl participating in the Junior Division of the Edison-

Kiwanis Regional Science Fair. The winner should demonstrate meritorious effort but is not a major winner (i.e., third or fourth place.) The project must be STEM related and show proof of own research. In odd numbered years the award will go to a Lee County Middle School (grades 6-8) girl participating in the Thomas Edison Festival of Light Regional Inventors Fair. The winner should show meritorious effort but is not a major winner (i.e., third or fourth place.). The projects could benefit Mankind or the Environment. Judging for both awards is done by the Special Award Staff. The Award Judges may suggest different selection criteria but must seek approval of donor prior to award disbursement.

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, it awards one (approximately) \$2,000 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, it awards one (approximately) \$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.

**Board Member
Position Open:
*Ways and Means***

This is the position where the fun begins!

Ways and Means is a rewarding position where you and your team plan a gala to raise money for our scholarships. There is a committee already in place. There is a collection of documents to help you with guidance and planning. If you are interested in this position or joining the committee or being a co-chair, please contact:

*President Elect –
Nancy Schoenstein
nschoenstein@gmail.com*

Ways and Means Board Member Needed!



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>



ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!

Calling all members to come to our new **Branch Discussion Group** that will be held Monday April 15 at 5:30 at Kath Haibach's home in the Landings at 5034 Harbortown Lane. BYOB and \$10 to cover food. RSVP before April 13 to Kathleen Haibach via text, or phone 585-233-7974 or email at Kathhaibach@gmail.com.

The group is meant to be an opportunity to get to know each other better

and share our goals for our Branch in an informal setting. The April gathering will include the results of our Branch Survey.

How do these results influence our Branch Mission?

This group evolved out of our New Members Gathering held in February. It was a great success in sharing ideas and feedback on our Branch. It was decided we should meet once a month and open it to all members to continue the open dialogue among members.

Pictured below are participants in last month's Branch Discussion Group.
Will you join us?



We will be voting on the following positions at our April meeting.

AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc

President Elect

Elected Officer – Executive Board Member

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.

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.

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.

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.

Skills:

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

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!

**IT IS TIME TO RENEW YOUR ANNUAL
AAUW BRANCH MEMBERSHIP!
for 2024-2025**

AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc.

DO YOU KNOW:

- **YOUR AAUW PERSONAL ID #.....?**
- **DATE YOU JOINED AAUW**
- **DATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES**

**IF YOU DO NOT, CONTACT: Jemetta Hunt, VP Membership, 203-245-6545,
jemetta@aol.com**

As an AAUW member whose branch participates in the Membership Payment Program (MPP), you will be paying all your dues – branch (15), STATE (12), national (72) all together. Total Due is \$99.00

YOU CAN RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

1. **AAUW NATIONAL website, <https://aauw.org>**
2. **OUR AAUW BRANCH website , <https://aauw-fl.aauw.net>**
3. **BY CHECK, \$99.00, made out to...
AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County, Branch, Inc.
and mail to
AAUW
PO Box # 2115
Fort Myers, FL 33902-2115**
4. **BRING YOUR CHECK and membership form to
the April meeting.**

Recent Youth Migration to Florida – A Follow-Up Submitted by Suzan Harden

(In preparation for our March luncheon presentation by Dr. Maria Barbero on Recent Youth Migration to Florida, Suzan Harden, Public Policy Chair, brought an article to share with the Board. Highlights of the article are presented here.)

Amid a child labor crisis, U.S. state governments are loosening regulations

This was originally aired on NPR on May 4, 2023. Hannah Dreier, a *New York Times* investigative journalist, has researched the issue of unaccompanied minors coming to the United States. She estimates that approximately 250,000 children have come to the U.S. without their parents in the last two years. Most of them wind up working full-time jobs. She has interviewed more than 100 migrant children across 20 states, including Florida.

In addition, *Washington Post* business reporter Jacob Bogage says a Florida-based conservative think tank called the Foundation for Government Accountability and its lobbying group, the Opportunity Solutions Project, are leading nationwide efforts to relax child labor laws across the country. (Note: AAUW FL opposed HB 49 and SB 1596, written to relax minor labor laws, which were passed this session and go into effect July 1. Due to intense advocacy efforts by organizations across Florida, the bills were dramatically altered by the time they were passed to maintain some protections for minor workers. Florida is one of 24 states that passed rollbacks to minor labor laws enacted almost 100 years ago.) Here are some of their findings:

- A 12-year-old girl in Alabama was working overnight stamping auto parts
- A 12-year-old boy in Florida started work roofing houses the day after he arrived
- A 13-year-old boy in Michigan was working 12-hour shifts at an egg farm, six days a week. He wanted to go to school, but he didn't realize how expensive things are in the U.S.
- 15-year-old Carolina came to the U.S. from Guatemala. An aunt she had never met took her in but told her she would have to work. She got a job packaging Cheerios. She went to 9th grade during the day, then worked 8-hour shifts until midnight. At the time of Dreier's interview with

Carolina, she was skipping school more and more frequently and feeling sick.

Dreier met with children making Flamin' Hot Cheetos every night, and they told her their lungs burned from breathing in the spicy dust.

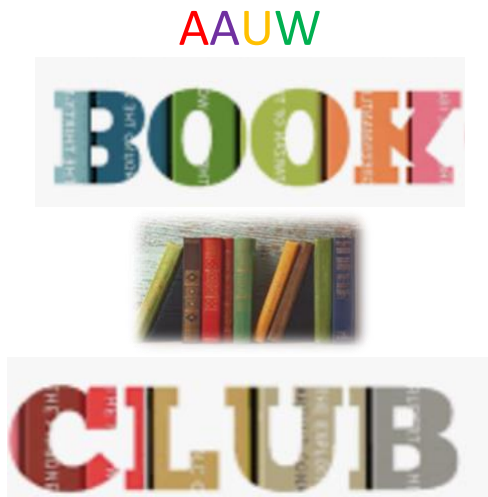
Some of the worst violators of minor labor laws are meat-processing plants, where there are many allegations of children doing work considered dangerous for adults.

The problem stems from the stresses in the labor market. There aren't enough workers. Brands (Cheetos, Cheerios, Ford, many others) contract with manufacturers to produce their products. Manufacturers have a very difficult time hiring for these grueling jobs, so they contract with staffing agencies. Staffing agencies bring in children to do the work. The primary company does not ask questions if the product is produced for sale. Until an investigation reveals the problem, the brand name has no idea children are being used in this way. Consumers are aware only if the investigation makes the news.

Some of the new laws complicate the investigation process. A federal child labor investigator starts the investigation by going to the state unemployment office and asking for the work permits for all the minors working in that state. States that have eliminated the requirement for work permits erase that paper trail. In addition, until a little over a year ago, the Department of Health and Human Services Hotline was not required to follow up with calls from unaccompanied minors reporting safety and health concerns.

Violations of child labor laws are rarely a criminal offense. They are civil issues with nominal fines. Companies make back the fine in minutes or less, depending on the company and the product, and the practices continue.

AAUW-FL continues to monitor these issues.



We have two book clubs. Each welcomes new members.

Cover Girls' Book Club

Cover Girls is meeting in members' homes. Zoom will be available for those who are out of town or unable to otherwise attend. The meeting time is the second Wednesday of each month from 1 pm to 3 pm.

The selection for April 10 is *Dinner with Ruth* by Nina Totenberg. The meeting will be held at Judy Sims's house. Contact Carol Fuechsel at cbfuechsel@gmail.com for more information.

Page Turners' Book Club

It meets monthly the 4th Thursday of each month at 1:00 p.m. at the Lakes Library. The next meeting is April 25 at 1 p.m. We are discussing *Reimagining Blue* by Kirsten Ziman, former police chief of Aurora Illinois, and one of our recent luncheon speakers. We welcome new members. If interested, contact Lois Benedetto, benedettol@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.



Nature's Bliss: A Journey to Happiness with Maria Felipe

(Join our own Jametta Hunt and Cathy Tucker on this adventure.)

**Monday, April 22, 2024
9:00am - 12:00pm Naples, Florida**

Embark on a joyful exploration of happiness at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary with renowned speaker and author of Live Your Happy, Maria Felipe. Join us for an enchanting event filled with wisdom, connection, and uplifting energy in celebration of Earth Day!

Event Highlights

Happiness Satsang

Maria will guide you through the powerful 4 Steps to Happiness. This interactive workshop will delve into practical insights and timeless wisdom, providing you with a roadmap to embrace joy and fulfillment in every aspect of your life. Maria will also touch on the profound healing effects, both physically and mentally, that time spent in nature offers. Learn how reconnecting with the natural world can bring tranquility, joy, and improve your overall well-being.

Gratitude Walk along Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary's Boardwalk

Immerse yourself in the serene beauty of Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary's boardwalk during a guided gratitude walk with Maria Felipe. Experience the healing effects of nature as you stroll through an ancient cypress forest discovering joy in every movement and fostering a deeper connection with nature.

Participate in discussions, ask questions, and develop an understanding of these life-changing principles.

Guided Meditation: Nature's Healing Embrace

During this unique and healing curated meditation, discover the powerful connection between mind, body, and spirit as Maria gently brings you closer to the natural world.

Q&A Session

Engage with Maria in a thoughtful Q&A session. Pose your questions, share your insights, and deepen your understanding of the profound connection between happiness and nature.

The Happy Dance

Conclude the event with Maria's signature "happy dance." It's a celebration of joy and an expression of the happiness that radiates from within. No dance experience required – just come ready to let go and dance with the rhythm of nature.

Meet and Greet Book Signing with Maria

Participants will have the opportunity to purchase Maria's book, "Live Your Happy," and get their copy personally signed by Maria. This is a chance to make your book a cherished keepsake, as Maria imparts her positive energy and heartfelt messages, creating a unique and personalized touch to your copy.

Reserve your spot now and spend this Earth Day finding inspiration and happiness as we reconnect with nature!

Nature's Bliss: A Journey to Happiness
Follow this link to:

[Purchase Tickets](#)

<https://corkscrew.audubon.org/events/natures-bliss-journey-happiness-maria-felipe>

Location Details

Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary
375 Sanctuary Road West, Naples, 34120, FL

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

*unusual date



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>



Great Decisions

Thank you to Colleen Wheeler, who led our March Great Decisions discussion on Global Trade and Green Energy. Certainly, the topic of clean energy geopolitics is a controversial one, and Colleen had done her research! We had a lively debate. Thank you to everyone who participated.

The following meeting of the Great Decisions discussion group was Friday, April 5, at 12:30 p.m. via Zoom. The discussion topic was “Risky Science Across Borders.” Our discussion leader was Cheryl Tromley. Information used during the discussion was from the Foreign Policy Association website (www.fpa.org): “Scientific advances benefit from collaboration between researchers, but what happens when material, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), is controversial and important to a nation’s national security? Is there a middle ground between sharing information and denying access? How can we regulate cooperation?”

If you would like more information about Great Decisions, contact Suzan Harden.

skh062653@gmail.com

PUBLIC POLICY

AAUW FORT MYERS/LEE COUNTY

Submitted by Suzan Harden

skh062653@gmail.com

The 2024 FL Legislative Session concluded on March 8. The bills that passed are being forwarded to the Governor’s office for his signature. Most will go into effect July 1 of this year. Some have alternate effective dates depending on the nature of the bill. For more information about any bill, go to www.myfloridahouse.gov or www.flsenate.gov. As this is an election year and the legislature needs time early in the year to organize leadership, committees, etc., the 2025 legislative session will begin in March and end in May. Stay tuned!

Within the last month or so the Lee County elections office mailed color brochures with names, photos, districts, and contact information for all the elected officials who serve us. This is a very informative brochure. Hope you saved yours! If you don’t know for sure what district you are in to know who represents you, go to www.lee.vote and enter your name and address to get that information.

If you are interested in working on our branch’s Public Policy Committee, please indicate so on your membership application/renewal. All help is appreciated!

(Continued on the next page.)

PUBLIC POLICY

Upcoming Elections

Tuesday, May 21 – Special Elections for the Captiva Erosion Prevention District and for the City of Sanibel. Go to www.jee.vote for information.

Tuesday, August 20 – Primary Election
Deadline to Register – July 22
Deadline to Request that Ballot be Mailed – August 8

Tuesday, November 5 – General Election
Deadline to Register – October 7
Deadline to Request that Ballot be Mailed – October 24

If you have updated your request that your ballot be mailed since Dec. 31, 2022, your request is valid until the end of this year. You do not need to do it again.

AAUW Florida Public Policy Issue Forums

The final Public Policy Issue Forum will be held Thursday, April 18 at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

The topic is Voting Rights, presented by Debbie Chandler, Co-President, League of Women Voters, Florida. To register for this free seminar, go to the AAUW FL website, <https://aauw-fl.aauw.net>. On the right you'll see "What's Next"; beneath it you see Public Policy Issue Forums. Click there. It's a little confusing because a new page does not pop up. After you click, scroll down to see the entire list of Public Policy Forum presentations offered this year. Click to make your reservation. If you register from your phone, click on Advocacy and Voter Education from the home page. Scroll down to find "What's Next" and the Issue Forums.

The Policy Forums were very successful this year, and the Public Policy Committee is planning to offer a series next year. If you have suggestions for a topic, please let Suzan Harden know.

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.

PUBLIC POLICY

FINAL REPORT FOR FLORIDA 2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bills AAUW Florida Supported

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.	Last Event: March 8 – Died in Civil Justice Subcommittee
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.	Last Event: March 8 – Died in Education Quality Subcommittee
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.	Last Event: March 8 – Died in Criminal Justice Subcommittee
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)	Last Event: March 8 – Died in Constitutional Rights, Rule of Law, and Government Operations Subcommittee
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.	Last Event: March 8 – Died in Healthcare Regulation Subcommittee

PUBLIC POLICY

Bills AAUW FL Opposed

SB 1596 Employment of Minors HB 49 Employment and Curfew of Minors	Sen. Danny Burgess (R) Rep. Linda Chaney (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.	Last Event: March 8 – After passage by Senate, ordered enrolled. Due to relentless advocacy by numerous Florida agencies that serve kids, this bill had been modified greatly by the time it passed. It still allows kids to work too many hours per week; 8 or more hours on Sundays or holidays when school is scheduled for the next day; too many hours without a break; and downplays the importance of an education. However, they did remove the requirement that local governments could not pass ordinances regarding curfew of minors where local officials deem such restrictions appropriate to ensure student workers’ safety..
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CS/SB 1044/HB 931 – School Chaplains

This bill was passed by the House on 2/22 and by the Senate on 3/7. It was then ordered enrolled. This bill allows public schools to install volunteer chaplains to provide student-support services, including counseling and other mental-health assistance. These chaplains would not have to have any education, training, or credentials of any kind. They can basically just identify themselves as “chaplains.” The ACLU has asked Governor DeSantis to veto the bill citing concerns of violation of the First Amendment provisions regarding church and state.

INTEREST GROUPS/COORDINATORS

BOOK GROUPS

Carol Fuechsel, Coordinator

cbfuechsel@gmail.com

Book Club Meets
Cover Girls 2nd Wednesday, 1 PM
Page Turners 4th Thursday, 12:45 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

MAHJONGG

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: Jemetta 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*

President Elect –

Nancy Schoenstein

*Vice President of Programs –
Jill Jennings*

*Vice President of Membership –
Jemetta Hunt, Kathleen Haibach*

Secretary –Patricia Crowe

Treasurer – Mary Kellner

Appointed Officers – Board Members

Public Policy – Suzan Harden

Co-Chairs of Scholarship –

Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf

Communications (Torch/Website/Facebook)

*Peggy Drennan Cihl, Astoria Aviles and
Perry Doubt*

Ways and Means –Peggy Drennan-Cihl

Standing Committees

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)



American Association of University Women

Fort Myers / Lee County (FL) Branch Inc.

PO Box 2115
Fort Myers, FL 33902-2115

Donate Today to help the Fort Myers Branch Advance Equity for Women

Use my Gift for: ___ **Operating Expenses** ___ **Unrestricted** ___ **Scholarships*** ___

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State & Zip _____

Phone: (Mobile) _____ (Home) _____

Email: _____

Donation Amount ___ **\$25** ___ **\$50** ___ **\$100** or **Other Amount \$** _____

Is the gift in honor or memory of someone? If so please complete the following:

In Memory of _____

In Honor of _____

Contact information for person honored or family of person remembered:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Note: Should you want to specify a specific Branch scholarship or award please name below: (See list under: <https://fmlc-fl.aauw.net> under tab Philanthropy; Scholarships, Awards

Scholarship/ Award: _____

**Please make checks payable to AAUW Fort Myers / Lee County, Inc. and mail to:
AAUW – ATTN: Treasurer, PO Box 2115, Fort Myers, FL 33902**

AAUW Fort Myers/Lee Co FL is a 501 (c) 3 not for profit organization and gifts may be tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law.

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE OR www.800helpfla.com. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.” CH39730



**Membership and Interest Form
AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County
Branch, Inc.
July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025**

Last Name: _____ **First Name:** _____

Florida Address (Is this a new or edited prior address in Florida? Circle: Y or N)

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Dates usually in Lee County: Full Time or Seasonal, from: _____ to: _____

Out of Season Address (Is this a new or edited out of season address? Circle: Y or N)

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Contact Information--Will be included in the directory and used to send branch communications such as the Torch.

Email: _____

Phone-Home: _____ Phone-Cell: _____

Birthdate: Month/Day: _____ / _____

Education—As you would prefer to be included in the directory. Education: Degree(s)/Year/College/University(s):

Degree _____ Year _____ Colege/University _____

Degree _____ Year _____ College/University _____

Level of Membership

- \$63.00 New Member (Reduced cost for first year membership! Welcome!)
- \$99.00 Renewing Branch Member
- \$27.00 Dual Member—Primary membership with another branch Primary branch: _____
- \$27.00 Paid Life Member
- \$0.00 Honorary Life Member

Payment: Mail the Membership Form with your check, payable to **AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch Inc.**
AAUW Fort Myers/Lee Co Branch, Inc.
P.O. Box 2115
Fort Myers, FL 33902-2115

All questions regarding membership may be sent by email to Jemetta Hunt, Membership VP, jemetta@aol.com

My interests would be in the following Committees and Interest Groups

Check	Committees	Check	Interest Groups
	Membership/Directory		Book Group
	Public Policy		Bridge
	Scholarships		Hand and Foot
	Communications		Mahjongg
	Ways and Means/Fundraising		Nature Walks
	Torch Newsletter Production Editing		Tools for Advocacy
	Strategic Planning		Great Decisions
			Field Trips
			Other:



AAUW FORT MYERS/LEE CO. BRANCH
Jemetta Hunt, Torch Distributor
7361 Twin Eagle Lane
Fort Myers, FL 33902
AAUW Website: <https://fmlc-fl.aauw.net/>



AAUW Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100070887894617>

