



OCTOBER IS OUR FIRST MEETING!

Happy October everyone and welcome back to those arriving for the season.

We are excited to begin our programming year with Mindi Simon from Lee County Library System as our speaker. Please RSVP if you will be able to join us on October 18 at Lexington Country Club. We will be using the same format as last year – ordering from the club favorites menu. Chef Leon will be updating the menus in November for the fall season.

We have a great lineup of programs this year including our December theatre outing. After listening to your feedback, we have moved our fundraising gala away from the December holidays, and it

will now be February 4. We have also booked Sheryl Faye for a return engagement – this time as Abigail Adams celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

If you are interested in becoming more involved the branch, please reach out. We have a variety of positions available and need more volunteers to keep these events going.

I look forward to seeing you on October 18 and would love to talk with you about getting involved.

See you soon,

Lisa

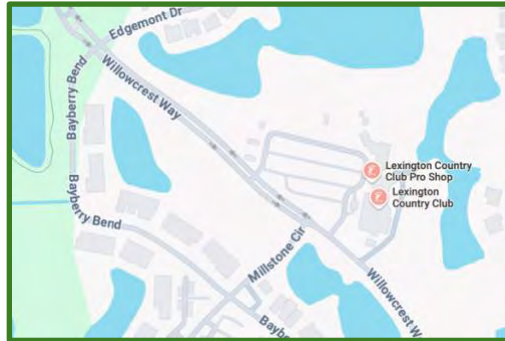
Lisa Crotty, Branch
President

**Join us for our October Luncheon and Program
at the Lexington Country Club in the Main Dining Room**



**16257 Willowcrest Way
Fort Myers, FL**

**(Near the Intersection of Bass Road & Summerlin;
follow the entrance road to the turn-in for the Country Club to the left.)**



Our Meeting Date:

Saturday, October 18, 2025

Gathering: 11:30 AM

**We will order from the “Club Favorites” menu rather than ordering in advance.
We ask that you make a reservation to allow us to have the proper size area
assigned and for Lexington to allot the proper staffing.
For your reservation, please email:**

aauwleecounty@gmail.com no later than Tuesday, October 14.



**AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County
P.O. Box 2115**

Fort Myers, FL 33902-2115

<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>

October's Speaker is
Mindi Simon
from the Lee County Library System

Mindi Simon, Director of the Lee County Library System has been with Lee County for 32



years. She has worked in a variety of capacities within the Library System including reference librarian, trainer, systems administrator, and technology manager before becoming director in 2017.

Mindi received her bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Florida, her master's degree in library science from the University of South Florida, and her Certified Public Manager certificate from Florida State University. She is proud to serve the residents, visitors, and staff of Lee County.

**"Lee County
Library System --
More Than Just
Books."**



October Woman of Interest

First Lady: Edith Wilson

Edith Wilson (October 15, 1872 – December 28, 1961) was as the second wife of President Woodrow Wilson. She married the widower Wilson in December 1915, during his first term as president. Edith Wilson played an influential role in President Wilson's administration following the severe stroke he suffered in October 1919. For the remainder of her husband's presidency, she managed the office of the president, a role she later described as a "stewardship", and determined which communications and matters of state were important enough to bring to the attention of the bedridden president.



ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS



Our October and November meetings are the only meetings we will have before our Dec. 9 fundraiser. We would like to have you be able to pick up your tickets at one of these meetings!

The ticket order form and information about the event and ordering tickets can be found on pages 12 and 13.

(Tickets can still be ordered by mail after November 8.)



AAUW BRANCH MEMBERSHIP 2025-2026

National AAUW will be sending out reminders for your membership renewal. Do not ignore them. Your membership renewal date is one year from the date you joined.

Renewal by Credit Card:

- Go to the AAUW National Website: <http://aauw.org>
- You will need your AAUW ID#
- If you do not know your ID# , contact: Jemetta Hunt, VP Membership.
- Members' contact information is in your Branch Directory.
- If this is your first time connecting on the AAUW Community Website, you will need to
- create a new password by clicking the "Forgot Password". Once you log-in, click "My Profile", located in the menu on the left side of the screen. You can update your profile at any time.
- The annual dues for 2025-2026 are \$101. (National 74, State, 12, Branch15)
- Make sure you click the Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc,
- If the total is more than \$101., you may have clicked on more than one branch. Delete and start over.

Paying by Check:

- **Complete the AAUW Membership Form on the next page.**
- Write a check for \$101.00, payable to AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, inc.
- Mail check and form to our AAUW Branch PO Box. (address on form)
- If you are a dual member and your primary branch is out-of-state, you will owe \$27.00 (State of FL \$12, Branch \$15.)



Our AAUW Board has approved an exciting new opportunity for our members to support our scholarships. Beginning in 2024/2025 fiscal year, anyone will be able to sponsor and name a scholarship “*in honor of*” someone.

For example, Cheryl Tromley intends to fund the Fort Myers Technical College Star Bright Scholarship and name it “The Violet Roberts FMTC Star Bright Scholarship” in honor of her grandmother. You can do this as an individual or partner with others.

This offer would apply to the following scholarships:

- AAUW Star Bright Scholarship (Cape Coral Technical College): \$1,000 per year.
- AAUW Lee County High School Scholarships: 2 @ \$1,500 per year.
- AAUW Thomas Edison and Kiwanis Regional Science & Engineering Fair Award: \$300 per year.
- AAUW Thomas Edison and Kiwanis Regional Science & Engineering Fair Emerging Research Scholar Award: \$300 per year.

This opportunity does not change any of our normal donation processes. All opportunities for donating will remain the same, and this is just an ***additional way*** to contribute to our scholarships and an ***additional way*** to honor someone. The normal channels will still be available.

In addition, if anyone wants to donate “*in honor of...*” but does not want to commit to a sponsorship, as has always been the case, they may elect to target that donation to a specific scholarship or the scholarship fund. If the latter, the Scholarship Committee and/or Chairs will allocate it where the need is greatest.

If anyone is interested in exploring this opportunity, please contact Cheryl Tromley, Scholarship Committee Co-Chair at 203-530-9147 or email cltromley@gmail.com.



Our Scholarships

AAUW Star Bright Scholarships: Established in 2005, by Book Club 3, to provide branch members with the opportunity to make donations honoring friends and commemorating special events, this scholarship awards two \$2,000 scholarships to female students attending their second semesters at Cape Coral Technical College and Fort Myers Technical College. The latter is a sponsored scholarship, the “AAUW Violet Roberts Star Bright Scholarship.”

AAUW Lee County High School Scholarship: Established in 2011 in memory of Jane Wagner, a three-term branch president. It awards two \$2,000 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 & 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 \$500 prize to a promising female entrant. The second award, the ***AAUW Thomas Edison and Kiwanis Regional Science & Engineering Fair Emerging Research Scholar Award***, provides a \$500 prize to a female entrant for a project that shows promise with the goal of encouraging her participation in future years. Established in 2025 to encourage middle school girls in STEM fields, this scholarship awards \$200 to three entrants (one each in grades six, seven, and eight) in the Junior Division of the *Thomas Edison Festival of Light Regional Inventors Fair*.

Marie Glasgow and AAUW Friends 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 girl (grades 6-8) participating in the Junior Division of the Edison-Kiwanis **Regional Science Fair**. The winner should demonstrate meritorious effort

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.

CELEBRATING *GEMS*

Scholarship Co-Chairs: Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf

Many of you are familiar with GEMS (Girls in Engineering, Math, and Science), one of our STEM scholarships. It was developed as a hands-on science education program for regional middle school girls and 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. Unfortunately, due to anti-DEI initiatives, the program has had to be renamed ***Growing*** in Engineering, Math, and Science as it must be open to both genders. This is a problem across the nation for all single-gender scholarships that are administered by Universities and other organizations that receive any federal funding. It is a particular challenge for an organization like the AAUW. Our Board continues to explore strategies for managing this issue within the spirit of our mission of empowering women and girls through our scholarships.

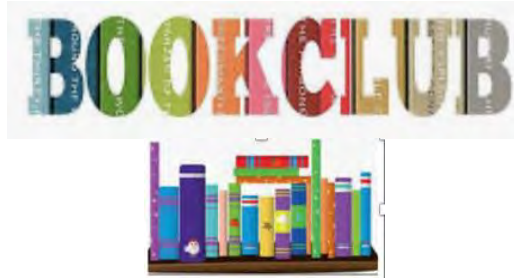
The first GEMS program of this academic year was held on Saturday, September 27. The students were split into two groups, had the opportunity to explore two areas of study, and go home with two "hands-on" projects. Two instructors led the process in adjoining rooms. After the first session finished, the students switched rooms and worked on the other topic.

The first topic was learning about pH. In this session, participants tested several solutions with known pH values. These solutions are called "buffers." They then looked at different household liquids to see at what pH turmeric will turn red. Later, the students were able to create pictures using the pH colors they created.

The second session explored the textures of different kinds of soils, specifically sand, silt and clay. The students discussed why pH

matters in our lives. They discovered that the texture of a soil impacts water drainage, root growth, nutrient growing, and soil erosion. Through this discussion, they developed a deeper understanding of the importance of soil as the foundation for all land life through supporting our buildings, growing our foods, etc. The participants then collected soil samples outside, added water to them in a petri dishes, and determined if they were sand, silt, or clay. Later, the students had a chance to paint a picture using paints made from the different soils. What a great day for this group of Middle School students, learning scientific concepts in a fun way! Thank you for helping to make this possible!!!!

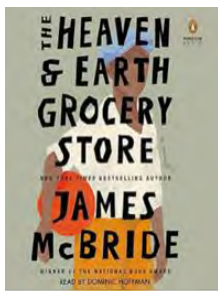




***We have two book clubs.
Each welcomes new members***

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 usually the second Wednesday of each month from 1 pm to 3 pm. Contact Carol Fuechsel at cbfuechsel@gmail.com for more information.



The selection for October will be the ***Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*** by James McBride to be held at the home of Pat Tillis. In November, the group will be reading ***The River is Waiting*** by Wally Lamb. The group will meet at the home of Ginny Parsons.



Page Turners' Book Club

We welcome new members. We anticipate a meeting later in the year. If interested, contact Lois Benedetto, benedetl@georgetown.edu

News from AAUW Florida

Fall Virtual/Online Book Club

Members keep engaged all year long with our statewide AAUW Florida Online Book Club! It's open to all and a great way to connect, reflect, and recharge through shared reading. Contact Doris at dorispnoble20016@yahoo.com to get involved.



Membership Form
AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc.
July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026

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--Included in the directory and used to send branch communications such as the Torch.

Email: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Birthdate: Month/Day: _____ / _____

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

Degree _____ Year _____ College/University _____

Degree _____ Year _____ College/University _____

Level of Membership

\$65.00 ☐ New Member (Reduced cost for first year membership! Welcome!)

\$101.00 ☐ Renewing Branch Member (National \$74, State \$12, Branch \$15)

\$27.00 ☐ Dual Member—Primary membership through another branch

Primary branch: _____

\$27.00 ☐ Paid Life Member

\$0.00 ☐ Honorary Life Member (50+ Years of Membership)

Payment

Mail this 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

Send any questions regarding membership Jemetta Hunt, Membership VP, jemetta@aol.com

Get Involved! I'm interested in learning about 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: _____

**Theater Event for Tuesday,
December 9.**

Entertain your family and visiting friends.



AAUW HOLIDAY EVENT

**DECEMBER 9 AT 3:15 PM
13211 M^CGREGOR BLVD**



Presents a MATINEE PERFORMANCE **EXCLUSIVELY** for AAUW members and guests. You can reserve seating by sending in your request for seats right now.

We are limited to 110 seats, so reserve early. The tickets will be available starting in October; you will be on the top of the list, and you can pick them up at the October Meeting

Reservations are by mail, email or at our meeting.

Payment needs to be made to hold your reservation.

aauwleecounty@gmail.com

Make the subject of your e-mail *Players Circle*.

If reserving by mail, include the information on the form below.

Payment: Tickets \$55.00 Make your check payable to

AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch Inc.

(Or pay by credit card or PayPal online on our web site.) Mail your check and the form below to:

AAUW Fort Myers/Lee Co Branch, Inc.

P.O. Box 2115

Fort Myers, FL 33902-2115



Number of tickets @ \$55.00	Total owed.
Handicap accommodation needed?	
Name	
Local Address	
Phone Number(s)	
Email	

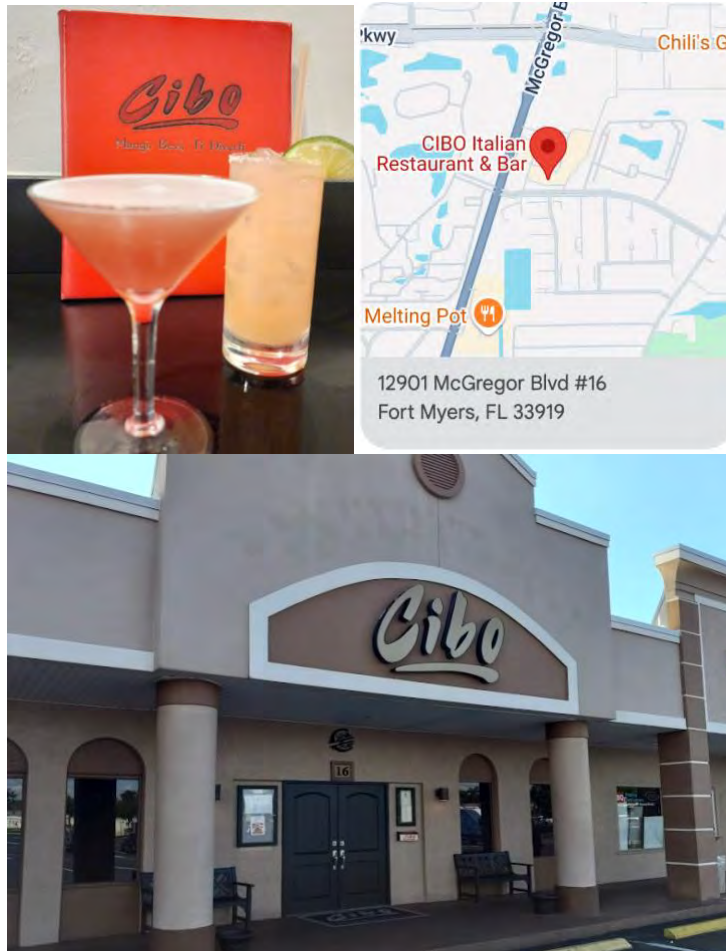
Further details about the Dec. 9 Holiday Event:

The show lasts for 90 minutes, just in time to head to a neighborhood restaurant for dinner.

Our suggestion: CIBO Italian Restaurant & Bar, [\(239\) 454-3700](tel:2394543700), (see photo below)

To make a reservation, please call 239-454-3700. Be sure to include the DATE, TIME, NAME, and NUMBER of SEATS you'd like to reserve

Cibo's is a modern, upscale Italian restaurant offering delicious plates, diverse wines & happy hour specials. The food itself is a delightful representation of classic Italian cooking. Everything tastes fresh and uses quality ingredients.



Other restaurants nearby:

Cristof's

The Melting Pot

Prawnbroker Restaurant and Fish

Market Deep Lagoon Seafood and Oyster

House Lazy Flamingo

Bellini's Fort Myers



SAVE THE DATE!

JANUARY 10, 2026

SHERYL FAYE WILL HELP US CELEBRATE THE 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTITUTION WITH HER PORTRAYAL OF ABIGAIL ADAMS.

Woman of Interest

Abigail Adams was the wife and closest advisor of John Adams, the second president of the United States. Hailed for admonition that the “*remember the ladies*” in Adams was not only an women's rights, but she and advisor to her nation's second president. She opposed slavery and supported women's education.



ABIGAIL ADAMS

States, and the mother of sixth president of the her now-famous Founding Fathers their new laws, Abigail early advocate for was also a vital confidant husband John Adams, the

2025-2026 MEETING DATES and TORCH PRODUCTION SCHEDULE

SEND ARTICLES TO peggycihi@comcast.net

Meeting Date (September Zoom Meeting Cancelled)	Deadline for Articles	Mail Torch Date
October 18, 2025 *November 8, 2025	September 3, 2025 September 25, 2025 October 13, 2025	September 11, 2025 October 8, 2025 October 20, 2025
*Theater Musical December 9	November 19, 2025	November 29 2025
*January 10, 2026 *February 4, 2026 March 21, 2026 April 18, 2026 May 16, 2026	November 30, 2026 January 14, 2026 February 28, 2026 March 25, 2026 April 22, 2026	January 1, 2026 January 25, 2026 March 11, 2026 April 8, 2026 May 6, 2026

**Unusual Day and/or Date.*

OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

2 Beverly Aviles

22 Margot Flinn

3 Peggy Drennan Cihi

23 Madelyn Ranno

3 Janet Schwenn

24 Pamela Simon

14 Jane Lukowitz

31 Raymonde Howell

17 Lisa Crotty

INTEREST GROUPS/COORDINATORS

Interest Groups meet monthly for social activities.
For details on joining, see contact information for
the coordinator of each group.

Bridge Group

Coordinator: Lois McDougall
lois.mcdougall@yahoo.com

Cover Girls Book Club

Carol Fueschsel cbfuechsel@gmail.com

Page Turners Book Club

Lois Benedetto

benedetl@georgetown.edu

Guided Nature Excursions

Coordinator: Jemetta Hunt
jemetta@aol.com

Great Decisions

For information, see

[Foreign Policy Association website](#)

Coordinator: Open

Hand & Foot

Coordinator: Carolyn Nance
cnance5240@gmail.com

(Instruction is available for new players
interested in Hand and Foot and Mahjong.
Contact Carolyn Nance for details.)

Mahjong

Coordinator: Carolyn Nance
cnance5204@gmail.com

To create a new group,
reach out to Jemetta Hunt

jemetta@aol.com

AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County Branch, Inc. 2024-2025 Officers

Elected – Executive Board

President – Lisa Crotty

Past President – Bonnie Ryan

President Elect –

Open

Vice President of Programs –

Tamara Pigott

Vice President of Membership –

Jemetta Hunt

Secretary – Patricia Crowe

Treasurer – Mary Kellner

Appointed Officers – Board Members

Public Policy – Open

Co-Chairs of Scholarship —

Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf

Communications (Torch/Website/Facebook)

Peggy Drennan Cihl, Astoria Aviles

Ways and Means – Astoria Aviles

Standing Committees

Records Retention – Executive Board

Science Fair - Cathy Tucker

Strategic Planning—

Kathleen Haibach and Tamara Pigott

Ancillary Positions

Reservations – Janet George and

Bonnie Ryan

Sunshine – Margot Flinn

Greeters – Board Members

Torch Proofreaders – Lisa Crotty,

Carolyn Nance

Torch Circulation –

Jemetta Hunt (US Mail)

Lisa Crotty (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 33901- 2115**

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