



DECEMBER

Dear Members,

It's hard to believe we are already at the end of another year. I hope to see many of you at the Player's Circle holiday play on December 9. We are starting 2026 strong with a return performance by Sheryl Faye on January 10 and our annual fundraising gala in support of our scholarships on February 4. Both events are at Lexington – details are available in the Torch and on our website.

If you are moved to make any end of year donations, details on how to support our scholarships are available in the Torch. We are a 501(c)(3) organization and provide tax letters for donations.

I want to take a moment to say a special thank you to the board and volunteers who put so much time and effort into the branch and events. In particular, I want to thank Peggy Cihl for creating the December theater event, guiding the planning, all while editing the Torch and corralling her husband into

playing the piano for us. Be sure to give her a special thank you.

I wish you and yours a lovely holiday season. I hope you will join us at one of our upcoming events and bring a friend. If you would like to be more involved in the branch please reach out to me at lisajcrotty@gmail.com to learn more.

Thank you for your membership and continued support of our branch.

Happy
Holidays,
Lisa

Lisa Crotty
Branch
President



ATTENTION

OUR DECEMBER MEETING IS OUR THEATER FUNDRAISER ON DEC. 9.

DETAILS ON PAGE 4

IF INTERESTED, CONTACT PEGGY CIHI FOR TICKET INFORMATION.

peggycihi@comcast.net

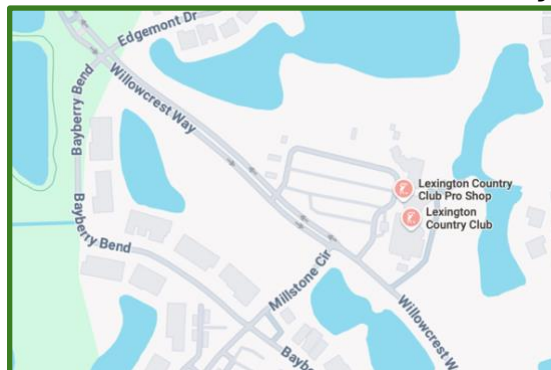
Join us in January for our next luncheon. Details are below and the following page.

**Join us for our January Luncheon and A VERY SPECIAL 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, January 10, 2025, Gathering: 11:30 AM

We will enjoy a buffet prepared by the outstanding chefs at Lexington.

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.

**See reservation AND PROGRAM info for this special event on
page 3**

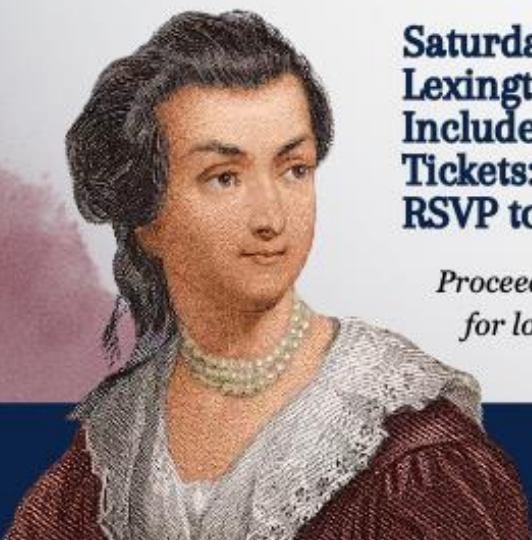
**Celebrate the
250th Anniversary
of the Declaration of
Independence**

with Sheryl Faye's portrayal of

Abigail Adams

Abigail Adams was the wife and closest advisor of John Adams, the second president of the United States, and the mother of John Quincy Adams, the sixth president of the United States.

Hailed for her now-famous admonition that the Founding Fathers "remember the ladies" in their new laws, Abigail Adams was an early advocate for women's rights, including rights to property and education.



**Saturday, January 10, 2026
Lexington County Club - 11:30 AM
Includes buffet lunch
Tickets: \$45
RSVP to aauwleecounty@gmail.com**

*Proceeds support scholarships
for local women and girls.*



AAUW Fort Myers - Lee County Branch
Learn more at fmlc-fl.aauw.net/

Our Dec. 9 fundraiser is nearly sold out. A few tickets are left.

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

Entertain your family and visiting friends.



AAUW HOLIDAY EVENT

DECEMBER 9 AT 3:15 PM

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

All seats are excellent, because it is “theater in the round.”

Reservations are by mail or email.

Payment needs to be in advance.

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

Include the information on the form below.

Payment: Tickets \$55.00

Pay by PayPal online on our web site. Mail 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:



Happy Holidays

The doors of the Circle Theater Open at 3:15 for a treat of Christmas cookies with other guests, beer and wine and snacks for purchase and Bob Cihl performing on the piano for your enjoyment .



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



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



Fort Myers/Lee Co. Branch, Inc.

How to Donate to the American Association of University Women

Fort Myers Lee County Branch Inc.

Visit our website - <https://fmlc-fl.aauw.net/>

Click on **DONATE** in the upper right-hand corner.

Use the online arrow to designate how your gift will support our programs.

You can use this donation procedure for

- Players Circle Theatre Tickets
- Membership Dues
- Scholarship Funds General Donation
- Bingo Fundraiser

Donate with PayPal or with Debit or Credit Card

The illustration below is what you will see when going online.

or go directly to our PayPal link –

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=HV5UFNRAWBGZJ

or use the QR code





BINGO FUNDRAISER

Supporting Scholarships for Women!

SAVE THE DATE

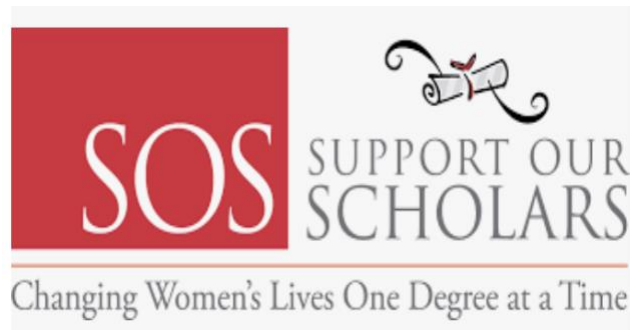
Wednesday, February 4th

Lexington Country Club

**BUFFET DINNER | BINGO GAMES |
SILENT AUCTION & MORE!**



This event begins at 5 PM



Gratitude for our Members' Generosity

Scholarship Co-Chairs: Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf

You may remember from our February 2025 column that your donations and support of our fundraisers, enabled us to increase our support for a number of our established scholarships and fund some exciting additions to our STEM awards. This is something we have always dreamed of being able to do. On behalf of the young women whose aspirations and dreams you are supporting, we cannot thank you enough. In addition, because of your continued support, we will be able to continue this for the coming year.

There seems to be some continuing confusion about how our funds are structured and we want to make sure everyone is comfortable with how we are handling your contributions.

We have two sorts of funds: Unrestricted and Restricted. When you donate, you check a box to indicate how you want that donation to be used. Unrestricted monies can be used to support any of the needs of AAUW Fort Myers/Lee Country Branch. Restricted monies can only be used for supporting our scholarships. The VAST majority of our money is Restricted.

Within the Restricted category we also have two sorts of funds: Endowed scholarships are designed to be permanent and, when completely funded, self-sustaining. Funds are invested in a diversified portfolio, and scholarships are awarded based on the performance of those investments. These funds are, as is the norm, managed by a University or Community organization and we contribute to them annually. We have three endowed scholarships, 1) AAUW FGCU Endowed Scholarship, 2) FSW Endowed Scholarships, and 3) AAUW Sue Gottcent Memorial Endowed Scholarship. The remainder of our scholarships, including all STEM awards are funded by your donations and our fund-raising efforts.

We would also like to remind you about our Scholarship Sponsorship program which we introduced in 2024. If you are particularly interested in any of our scholarships, you now have the opportunity to directly sponsor one and name it in honor of someone/something. For example, Cheryl Tromley funds the Fort Myers Technical College Star Bright Scholarship and named it "The Violet Roberts FMTC Star Bright Scholarship" in honor of her grandmother. You needn't do this on your own. It could be a book club, a group of friends, etc. Opportunities range from \$300 to \$2,000. The specifics of this program appear later in the TORCH. Or, if you prefer, just get in touch with me at cltromley@gmail.com.

We would also like to remind you about our Scholarship Sponsorship program which we introduced in 2024. For all the details see the article that follows.



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): two at \$2000 per year.
- AAUW Lee County High School Scholarships: two @ \$2000 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.



AAUW

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



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.

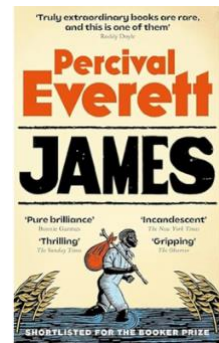
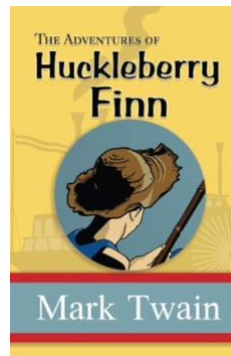
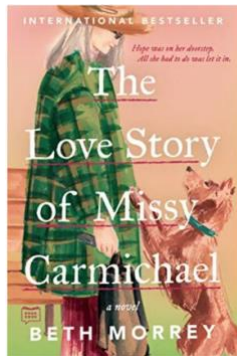
AAUW FSW State College Endowed Scholarship: Established in 2000, it awards one (approximately) \$1,000 scholarship to a female Lee County student with financial need attending the Fort Myers Campus of FSW. Priority is given to the current awardee.

BOOK CLUB

We have two book clubs. Each welcomes new members

The Cover Girls Book Club

Our club meets on the second Wednesday of the month from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the homes of members. Book discussions are generally scheduled from September through May. New members are welcome and should contact Carol Fuechsel at cbfuechsel@gmail.com for further information. The group will not have a book discussion in December but will meet to have a holiday luncheon.



The January selection is
The Love Story of Missy Carmichael by Betty Morrey.

The February selection will be two books:
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain and
James by Percival Everett.

Page Turners' Book Club

We welcome new members. We anticipate a meeting next year.

If interested, contact Lois Benedetto, benedetl@georgetown.edu

WOMAN OF INTEREST



NANCY REAGAN

First Lady Nancy Reagan oversaw eight White House Christmas celebrations with distinct themes, including "Old Fashion Christmas," "Enchanting Creatures," and "Mother Goose". A significant element of her decorations was the collaboration with the people from the drug treatment program Second Genesis, who helped create ornaments like foil paper cones, metallic snowflakes, and even "Mother Goose" nursery rhyme scenes. She also worked with groups like the Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum and the Brandywine Museum.

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	December 20 January 14, 2026 February 28, 2026 March 25, 2026 April 22, 2026	December 27, 2025 January 25, 2026 March 11, 2026 April 8, 2026 May 6, 2026

**Unusual Day and/or Date.*



**Suzanna Guiliano
Janice Spada
Lila Sullivan**



**1 Carolyn Nance
2 Nancy Schoenstein
3 Lynda Leonard-Boyce
12 Lois Benedetto**

**15. Nancy Karchunas
23. Cathy Allen
30. Heather Skaza-Acosta
31. Perry Doubt**

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

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 Cihj, Astoria Aviles

Ways and Means – Astoria Aviles

Standing Committees

Records Retention – Executive Board

Science Fair - Cathy Tucker

Strategic Planning—

Tamara Pigott

Ancillary Positions

Reservations – Janet George and

Bonnie Ryan

Sunshine – Margot Flinn

Greeters – Board Members

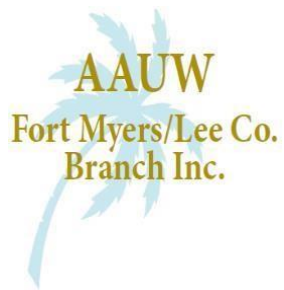
Torch Proofreaders – Lisa Crotty,

Carolyn Nance

Torch Circulation –

Jemetta Hunt (US Mail)

Lisa Crotty (E-mail)



AAUW FORT MYERS/LEE CO. BRANCH
Attn: Jemetta Hunt, Torch Distributor
PO Box 2115
Fort Myers, FL 33902-2115

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