

The American Association of University Women

The **TORCH**

January, 2026

AAUW. Vol. 64, No. 5

Peggy Drennan Cihl, Editor

JANUARY

Hello everyone,

Welcome to our 2026!

Last January, we surveyed our members' interests. Key learnings included a desire for programs which would include local women speaking about their activities; a strong demand for Sheryl Faye to return after we missed booking her last year; and moving the Bingo fundraiser away from the holidays.

We have taken all that feedback into account, and we are pleased that Sheryl Faye is our presenter for January, kicking us off strong with her interpretation of Abigail Adams, as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

On February 4, we will host our Bingo Fundraiser at Lexington with some great prizes for the silent and live auction including amazing hotel packages.


In March, our annual meeting will feature Calli Johnson duPont from Bailey's General Store and the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation as our speaker. At our annual meeting, we will also be electing our officers. If you are interested in serving, please reach out as we have several positions available.

Details for booking your tickets for Sheryl Faye and the Bingo Gala are in this issue of the Torch. We look forward to seeing you there!

Happy
Holidays,
Lisa

Lisa Crotty
Branch
President







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/

Sheryl Faye is returning on January 10 as Abigail Adams to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Sheryl was featured on [Gulf Coast News](#) during her last visit. Tickets are **\$45 payable in advance** and include the performance and buffet lunch.

Make your reservation and pay now –

Link to <https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/ULJ6ZX54843BG>

Please email aauwleecounty@gmail.com and let us know you are coming.

Mail check payable to **AAUW Fort Myers** and mail to PO Box 2115, Fort Myers FL 33902.

All checks must be received by January 5.

Join us for our January Luncheon **VERY SPECIAL** Program,
INTERPRETER SHERYL FAYE, presenting **ABIGAIL ADAMS**,
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 ahead 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 make your payment to allow us to have the
proper size area assigned and for Lexington to allot the proper staffing.



Our Dec. 9
fundraiser at
Players Circle
Theater was nearly
sold out. We were
able to place over
\$1700 into our
Scholarship Fund
for distribution in
the spring.

Thank you, members, for your contributions and for
helping to make this fundraising event such a success!



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

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.

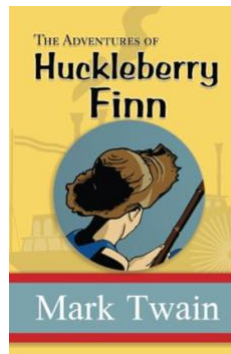
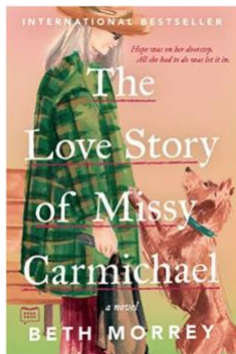
AAUW FSW State College Endowed Scholarship: Established in 2000, it awards one (approximately) \$1,000 scholarship to a female Lee County student with financial need attending the Fort Myers Campus of FSW. Priority is given to the current awardee.

BOOK CLUB

Our book club 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 January selection is
The Love Story of Missy Carmichael by Beth Morrey.

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

WOMAN OF INTEREST

Lucy Ware Hayes (August 28, 1831 – June 25, 1889) was the wife of President Rutherford B Hayes and was the 19th First Lady and served from 1877 to 1881. Opposed to alcohol, she never served it in the White House. She was the **first** First Lady to have a college degree. An advocate for racial equality, both before and after the American Civil War, she invited the first African-American professional musician to appear at the White House.

Historians have christened her "Lemonade Lucy" due to her staunch support of the temperance movement. However, contrary to popular belief, she was never referred to by that nickname while living. It was her husband who banned alcohol from the White House.

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

LUCY HAYES





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.



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

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.*



AAUW Fort Myers/Lee County
P.O. Box 2115
Fort Myers, FL 33902-2115
<https://fmfc-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>



4 **Bridget Hampton**
12 **Nancy Fojo**
16 **Pat Tillis**

20 **Cheryl Tomley**
25 **Coleen Wheeler**

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
cnance5240@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—

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

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



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

