

*The American Association of University Women*

*The* **TORCH**

*September, 2025*

*Vol. 58, No. 1*

*AAUW. Vol. 64, No. 1  
Peggy Drennan Chi, Editor.*

## SEPTEMBER BEGINS A NEW AAUW SEASON!

Hello Members,

We have a great slate of events coming up in the fall, so please be sure to renew your membership promptly by using the info in the Torch or the email you received from National. If you have any changes to your personal information that needs to be included in the directory, please send that to me or Jametta Hunt ASAP, as we are working on that now.

In our programs for this new season, we have some very special events. We'll be going to Player's Circle Theater for a private show in December (make your reservations – it's filling up fast!), and we'll will be hosting Interpreter Sheryl Faye as Abigail Adams in January.

Even as our monthly meetings paused for the summer, many of our small groups continue through September. Details about small group activities are in your directory and the Torch.

We will resume our meetings October with Mindi Simon from Lee County Libraries. In the meantime, we have some upcoming events from Florida and National AAUW listed on page 7.

Thanks for being a member and supporting AAUW,  
Lisa Crotty, President

## Photos from our May PICNIC



We came and shared lunch and some of the books we have been reading lately. We also shared some videos

we recommend.

Astoria Aviles

Carolyn Nance

Nancy Paterson

Pam Simon

Cheryl Tromley

Vanessa Gilyard

Serene Aviles

Peggy Cihi

Pat Crowe

Judi Dixon

Carol Fuechsel

Devera Graf

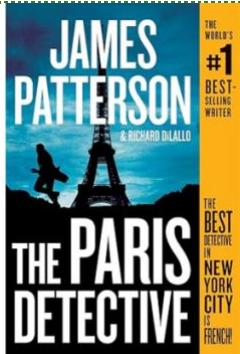
Bridget Hampson

Suzan Harden

Jemetta Hunt



## Book Recommendations From Our Picnic Participants

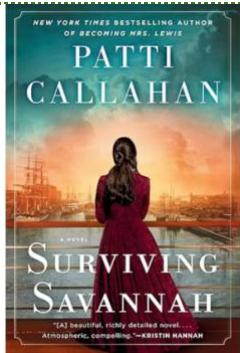


### A Paris detective uses his skills in three thrilling cases.

**French Kiss:** Very handsome and charming French detective Luc Moncrief joined the NYPD for a fresh start—but someone wants to make his first big case his last. Welcome to New York.

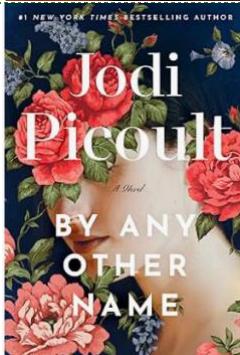
**The Christmas Mystery:** In the heart of the holiday season, priceless paintings have vanished from a Park Avenue murder scene. Now, dashing French detective Luc Moncrief must become a quick study in the art of the steal—before a coldblooded killer paints the town red. Merry Christmas, Detective.

**French Twist:** Gorgeous women are dropping dead at upscale department stores in New York City. Detective Luc Moncrief and Detective Katherine Burke are close to solving the mystery but looks can be deceiving . . . .



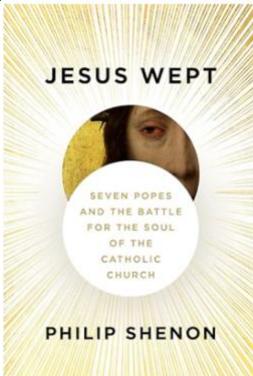
**It was called "The *Titanic* of the South."** The luxury steamship sank in 1838 with Savannah's elite on board; through time, their fates were forgotten—until the wreck was found, and now their story is finally being told in this breathtaking novel by Patti Callahan.

When Savannah history professor Everly Winthrop is asked to guest-curate a new museum collection focusing on artifacts recovered from the steamship *Pulaski*, she's shocked. The ship sank after a boiler explosion in 1838, and the wreckage was just discovered, 180 years later. Everly can't resist the opportunity to try to solve some of the mysteries and myths surrounding the devastating night of its sinking.



Young playwright Melina Green has just written a new work inspired by the life of her Elizabethan ancestor Emilia Bassano. But seeing it performed is unlikely, in a theater world where the playing field isn't level for women. As Melina wonders if she dares risk failure again, her best friend takes the decision out of her hands and submits the play to a festival under a male pseudonym.

In 1581, young Emilia Bassano is a ward of English aristocrats. Her lessons on languages, history, and writing have endowed her with a sharp wit and a gift for storytelling, but like most women of her day, she is allowed no voice of her own. Forced to become a mistress to the Lord Chamberlain, who oversees all theatre productions in England, Emilia sees firsthand how the words of playwrights can move an audience.



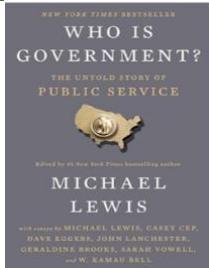
### Jesus Wept:

### Seven Popes and the Battle for the Soul of the Catholic Church

In *Jesus Wept*, Philip Shenon takes us inside the Holy See to reveal its intricacies, hypocrisies, and hidden maneuverings, bringing all the momentous disputes and issues vividly to life.

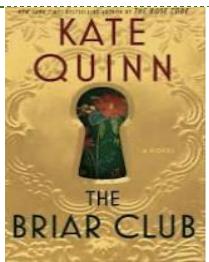
In his rich portrayals of the popes from John to Francis, Shenon draws on research across four continents, including hundreds of interviews and the exhaustive archival material. He also brings to light other key figures in the Church, such as Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, the incredibly powerful, conservative, and staunchly anticommunist director of the Holy Office under Pius XII, who lived proudly by the *motto semper idem*—“always the same.” This is a consummate, vibrant history of the modern Church.

## More Reading Recommendations



**Who works for the government and why does their work matter? An urgent and absorbing civics lesson from an all-star team of writers and storytellers.**

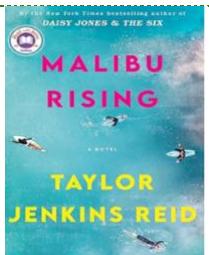
The government is a vast, complex system that Americans pay for, rebel against, rely upon, dismiss, and celebrate. It's also our shared resource for addressing the biggest problems of society. And it's made up of people, mostly unrecognized and uncelebrated, doing work that can be deeply consequential and beneficial to everyone. Whether they're digitizing archives, chasing down cybercriminals, or discovering new planets, these public servants are committed to their work.



Washington, DC, 1950. Everyone keeps to themselves at Briarwood House, a down-at-the-heels all-female boardinghouse in the heart of the nation's capital where secrets hide behind white picket fences. But when the lovely, mysterious widow Grace March moves into the attic room, she draws her oddball collection of neighbors into unlikely friendship. Grace's weekly attic-room dinner parties and window-brewed sun tea become a healing balm on all their lives, but she hides a terrible secret of her own. When a shocking act of violence tears the house apart, the Briar Club women must decide once and for all: who is the true enemy in their midst?

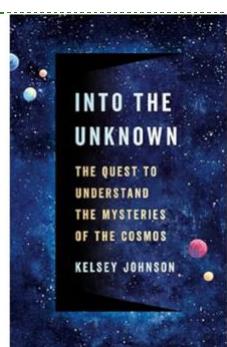


"The Island of Missing Trees" by [Elif Shafak](#) explores the intertwined stories of two generations, a love story, and a fig tree, all set against the backdrop of Cyprus's historical turmoil and its lasting effects. The novel follows Kostas and Defne, a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot, whose love story unfolds in a taverna under the watchful eye of a fig tree. Decades later, their daughter Ada, living in London, grapples with her family's past and the secrets surrounding her mother's death. The fig tree, brought to London from Cyprus, serves as a silent witness and a symbolic link to the island's history.



Four famous siblings throw an epic party to celebrate the end of the summer. But over the course of twenty-four hours, the family drama that ensues will change their lives forever.

Malibu: August 1983. It's the day of Nina Riva's annual end-of-summer party, and anticipation is at a fever pitch. Everyone wants to be around the famous Rivas: Nina, the talented surfer and supermodel; brothers Jay and Hud, one a championship surfer, the other a renowned photographer; and their adored baby sister, Kit. Together the siblings are a source of fascination in Malibu and the world over—



*Into the Unknown*, astrophysicist Kelsey Johnson takes us to the edge of scientific understanding about the universe: What caused the Big Bang? What happens inside black holes? Are there other dimensions? She doesn't just celebrate what we know but rather what we don't and asks what it means if we never find that knowledge. Exploring the convergence of science, philosophy, and theology, Johnson argues we must reckon with possibilities awaiting—including those that may be beyond human comprehension. The very places where we run smack into total ignorance are the places where the most important questions—about the philosophy of knowledge, the nature of our cosmos, and even the existence of God.

## Recommended Videos



### The Way

Martin Sheen plays Tom, an American doctor who comes to St. Jean Pied de Port, France to collect the remains of his adult son, killed in the Pyrenees in a storm while walking The Camino de Santiago, also known as The Way of Saint James. Driven by his profound sadness and desire to understand his son better, Tom decides to embark on the historical pilgrimage, leaving his "California bubble life" behind. Armed with his son's backpack and guidebook, Tom navigates the 800 km pilgrimage from the French Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela in NW Spain,

*Available on Amazon Prime and Apple TV*

### The Way Home.

The three Landry women finally get answers to questions about the past, present and future. But a shocking discovery will propel them to search for more. The Landry women pick up the pieces of their past, each wishing they could read Colton's mind.

*Watch it on Peacock, Roku, and Amazon Prime Video*

“I do believe  
something very magical  
can happen when you  
read a good book.”

-J.K. Rowling



Will **YOU** be caught reading?



## **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: <https://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.)

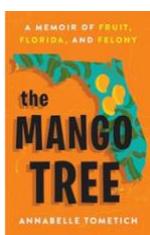


***We have two book clubs.  
Each welcomes new members***

### **Cover Girls Book Club**

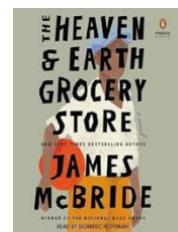
Our book club will resume meetings in September.

We meet every month on the second Wednesday from 1 pm to 3 pm at the homes of members. New members are welcome. If you are interested in becoming a member or have any questions, please contact Carol Fuechsel at [cbfuechsel@gmail.com](mailto:cbfuechsel@gmail.com).



The selection for September is ***The Mango Tree*** by Annabelle Tometich.

In October, members will read the ***Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*** by James McBride.



### **Page Turners' Book Club**

We welcome new members. We anticipate a meeting later in the year.

If interested, contact Lois Benedetto, [benedetl@georgetown.edu](mailto:benedetl@georgetown.edu)

### **News from AAUW Florida**

Florida Issues forum is holding a discussion on 9 September on Book Bans. Register here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/nkDfkFFNSZC1q1awFSj33g>

### **Fall Virtual/Online Book Club**

Keep members 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 [dorisnoble20016@yahoo.com](mailto:dorisnoble20016@yahoo.com) to get involved.

### **News from National**

AAUW Fall Gathering on September 18 at 5 pm. Register here: [Register here and join us for AAUW's Fall Member Gathering!](#)



**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](mailto: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



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](mailto:aauwleecounty@gmail.com)

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

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

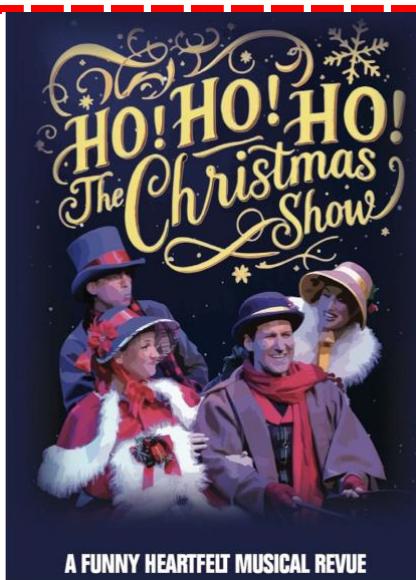
Payment: **Tickets \$55.00** Make your check payable to

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)

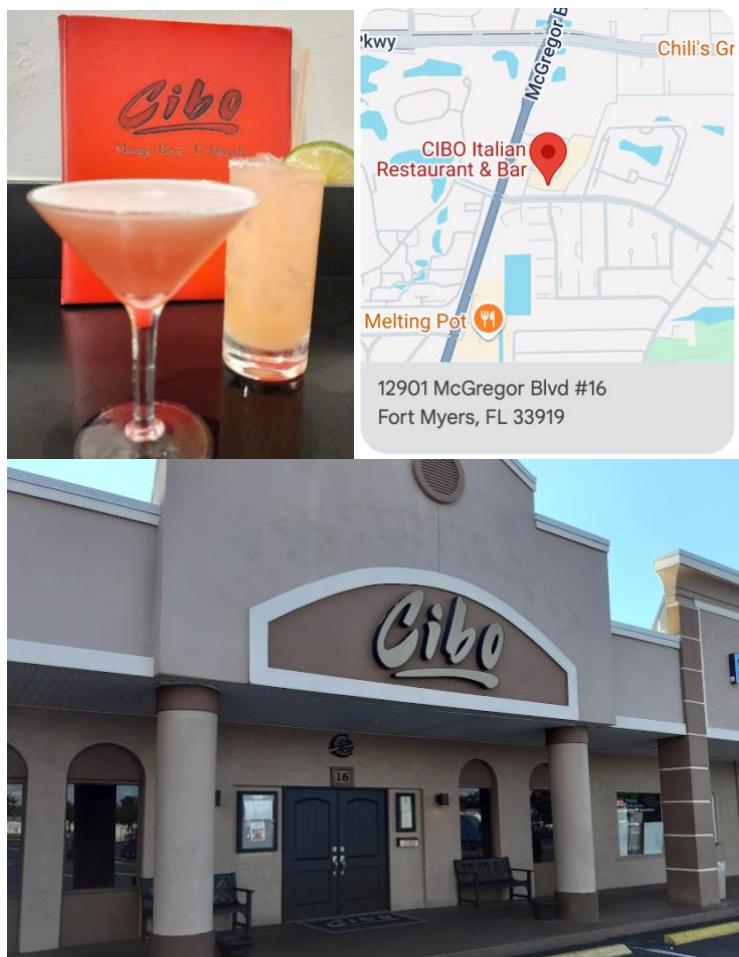
Email

**Further details about the Christmas Show:  
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, (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, polished Italian cucina offering classic 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 early advocate for women's rights, but she and advisor to her husband John Adams, the 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](mailto:peggycihi@comcast.net)

Meeting Date (September Zoom Meeting Cancelled) October 18, 2025 *November 8, 2025	Deadline for Articles September 3, 2025 September 25, 2025 October 13, 2025	Mail Torch Date 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.

<b>SUMMER BIRTHDAYS</b>		
JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Kath Haibach Judith Clare Judith Dixon Carol Fuechsel Phyllis Wayco Suzan Harden	Carol Marston-Foucher Sandra Sansone Brennan Devera Graf	Cathy Tucker Carol Watson Marilyn Myli Jill Jennings Jean Breininger Jan Ion Jemetta Hunt Mary Schoenheider
<b>SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS</b>		
Cecile Brennan Naomi Bloom	Nancy Paterson Judith Sims	Astoria Aviles Susie Draper

## **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](mailto:lois.mcdougall@yahoo.com)

### **Cover Girls Book Club**

**Carol Fueschsel** [cbfuechsel@gmail.com](mailto:cbfuechsel@gmail.com)

### **Page Turners Book Club**

**Lois Benedetto**

[benedetl@georgetown.edu](mailto:benedetl@georgetown.edu)

### **Guided Nature Excursions**

**Coordinator:** Jemetta Hunt  
[jemetta@aol.com](mailto:jemetta@aol.com)

### **Great Decisions**

**For information, see**

[\*\*Foreign Policy Association website\*\*](#)

**Coordinator:** Suzan Harden  
[Skh062653@gmail.com](mailto:Skh062653@gmail.com)

### **Hand & Foot**

**Coordinator:** Carolyn Nance  
[cnance5240@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:cnance5204@gmail.com)

### **Tools for Advocacy**

[\*\*Sign up for Two Minute Activist\*\*](#)

**Coordinator:** Suzan Harden  
[Skh062653@gmail.com](mailto:Skh062653@gmail.com)

**To create a new group, reach out to Jemetta Hunt**

[jemetta@aol.com](mailto: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** – Suzan Harden

**Co-Chairs of Scholarship** –

**Cheryl Tromley and Devera Graf**

**Communications (Torch/Website/Facebook)**

**Peggy Drennan Cihi, Astoria Aviles**

**Ways and Means** – Astoria Aviles

#### **Standing Committees**

**Records Retention** – Executive Board

**Science Fair** - Cathy Tucker

**Diversity Officer** - Open

**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)**



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](http://www.800helpfla.com). REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE." CH39730



**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>

