



American Association of University Women  
 Lake/Sumter Branch, Inc.  
*Learn – Connect – Support*

**December 2023**

## Presidents' Message



December is a time of giving. We give gifts to family and friends. We open our hearts and checkbooks to many worthwhile charities and organizations, such as: Marine Toys for Tots, Salvation Army, Girl Scout pajama and book drive, Operation Shoebox, food pantries, Samaritan's Purse, Sozo Kids...and Lake/Sumter AAUW. Our mailboxes are overflowing with greetings and solicitations. But don't forget us as we're now a 501(c)(3) tax exempt charity.

This is a time to celebrate as we end another calendar year (and can this new century be nearly one quarter over already?) and gear up for holiday events. We hope you will join us at our December 9 Holiday Luncheon and our January 11 benefit concert.

Our January 27 General Meeting will feature students from Tech Trek. What a joy it is to meet these young women and hear their stories! And February is not too far away with our drawing for Gold in Art's fabulous gold necklace. We hope you will support this fundraiser by buying lots of tickets. Several of our members have won jewelry in previous years. The money raised will support our Tech Trek students and our scholarship fund.

We wish you a blessed holiday season and good health and happiness in the new year. And thank you again for all you do to make our branch a success.

Helen Gozdanovic and Barbara Fisler  
 Co-Presidents

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## 501(c)(3) and You: Donations from your IRA

Each month we will discuss an aspect of our 501(c)(3) status and the impact that it has on YOU the member.

We are all busy women who are involved in more than AAUW. Does one of your other organizations make contributions to local charities? This is an opportunity for us to tap new sources to support our mission!



Let the committee know a contact person and we will take it from there. We have already received a generous contribution from a group based on their knowledge of our 501(c)(3) status and our mission of helping young women. Is your group another possible donor?

Beth Hicks  
501(c)(3) Implementation Co Chair

*Bring your stash of our tri-fold brochures to any General Meeting, and we will give you updated ones with stickers announcing our 501(c)(3) status and new meeting dates!*

## LEARN

### Meetings and Programs

#### *December Holiday Party*

Do not forget to make your reservation by December 1 for our annual holiday luncheon, which will be on Saturday, December 9 from 12:00 – 3:00 p.m. at Continental Country Club's Paulie's Oaks on 44. Details are available on our branch website ([www.lakesumteraauw.org](http://www.lakesumteraauw.org)) or on the flyer at the end of this newsletter.

## January Meeting

Saturday January 27, 2024  
Alamanda Recreation Center  
Doors open at 9:30 a.m.

Our January program will be the popular Tech Trek presentation where the young women we sponsored last summer share their projects. Bring a friend and you will be inspired and excited by the future. See you at Alamanda Recreation Center on Saturday, January 27. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and conversation; the program starts at 10:00 a.m.

Cynthia Snavelly and Kathy Howe  
Program Co-Chairs

## Public Policy

Welcome to new Public Policy Co-Chairs Susan Gold and Elizabeth White!

AAUW-FL has launched a series of Public Policy Forums.

The Zoom series offers in-depth information on the important issues facing Florida from a nonpartisan but equity-focused viewpoint. Participants will be able to ask their own questions of experts regarding these issues. All sessions start at 6:00 p.m. and last for an hour. The series is free and open to AAUW members and guests.

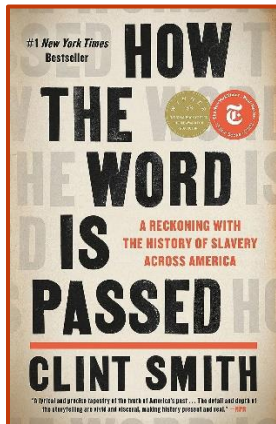
The series started in September and the four topics presented thus far include Reproductive Rights, Title IX and Dress Codes in Schools, Gender Studies and DEI Initiatives at Colleges, and Florida 2024 Legislative Preview. Here's the schedule for the remainder of the series.

<b>Public Education and Book Bans</b>	Jan. 11, 2024	Dr. Marvin Dunn, Professor Emeritus at Florida International University and Miami Center for Racial Justice	<a href="#">Click here to register for this session</a>
<b>Gender Pay Gap and Economic Security</b>	Mar. 7, 2024	Dr. Mary Gatta, AAUW FL Co- Public Policy Director and Director of Research and Public Policy, National Association of Colleges and Employers	<a href="#">Click here to register for this session</a>
<b>Voting Rights</b>	Apr. 18, 2024	Debbie Chandler, Co-President, League of Women's Voters. Florida	<a href="#">Click here to register for this session</a>

You will need to register for each session individually. Once you register, you will receive a Zoom link for the session. Contact Mary Gatta, Co-Public Policy Director, AAUW Florida at [gatta.mary@gmail.com](mailto:gatta.mary@gmail.com) with questions.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

### *Banned Books Reading Group*



The next meeting of the Banned Books Reading Group will be February 11 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. We will be reading *How the Word is Passed* by Clint Smith. This book focuses on sites where slavery is remembered...and misremembered as Smith reports and reflects on visits to plantations, prisons, cemeteries, and other locations that figured heavily in the slave trade in this country. It has been challenged by parents and community members attempting to keep it out of high school classrooms. It is included in a list of five must-read banned books by Black authors (<https://www.outspokenagency.com/blog/2022/2/14/five-must-read-banned-books-by-black-authors>) and appears frequently on lists of banned books. Contact Jacquie Latzer to register by February 1; she will give you the location and directions, if needed. There will be light refreshments, but please BYOB.

### *DEI Movie Night*

Sixteen people viewed *Driving While Black* at the first DEI Movie Night on November 12. All participants found the movie to be excellent and provocative, and it triggered lively discussion during the dinner.

Our next DEI Movie Night will be March 10; we will be viewing *The Chinese Exclusion Act*. Watch for more details in the February newsletter.

### *Our Mantra*

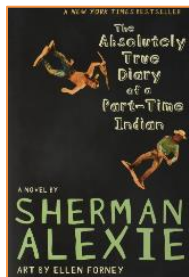
How have you or will you use your influence and connections to enhance racial harmony?

## Great Reads from DEI

For your reading pleasure in this double issue newsletter, the DEI Committee recommends two books: one a relatively light-hearted novel and the other a serious non-fiction book. Happy reading!

### ***The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*** by Sherman Alexie

*National Book Award Winner, 2007; Boston Globe-Horn Book Award winner*



Bestselling author Sherman Alexie tells the story of Junior, a budding cartoonist growing up on the Spokane Indian Reservation. Determined to take his future into his own hands, Junior leaves his troubled school on the rez to attend an all-white farm town high school where the only other Indian is the school mascot.

Heartbreaking, funny, beautifully written, and coupled with poignant black-and-white drawings by Ellen Forney, this novel is based on the author's own experiences. It chronicles the contemporary adolescence of one Native American boy as he attempts to break away from the life he was destined to live.

### ***Superior: The Return of Race Science*** by Angela Saini

*Best Science Books of 2019--Smithsonian Magazine, Library Journal, & NPR's Science Friday*  
*"An exceptional work by one of the world's best science writers" (New York Times)*

After the horrors of the Nazi regime in World War II, the mainstream scientific world turned its back on eugenics and the study of racial difference. But a worldwide network of intellectual racists and segregationists quietly funded research, providing the kind of shoddy studies that were ultimately cited in the 1994 book *The Bell Curve*, which purported to show differences in intelligence among races.

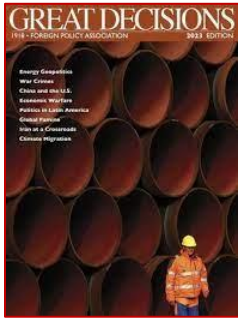


In this deeply researched examination of the re-emergence of scientific research into racial differences, Angela Saini shows us how, again and again, even mainstream scientists cling to the idea that race is biologically real. The hope of finding simple genetic differences between “races” – to explain differing rates of disease, to explain poverty or test scores, or to justify cultural assumptions – stubbornly persists.

At a time when racial nationalisms are a resurgent threat throughout the world, this is a much-needed review of the insidious and destructive nature of race science—and a powerful reminder that, biologically, we are all far more alike than different.

Book summaries courtesy of Amazon.com

## Great Decisions



We are planning to hold the *Great Decisions* discussion group again this year. This is an activity prepared every year by the Foreign Policy Association in New York, a non-partisan association which analyzes issues from geo-political and historical perspectives. We use their prepared text and read one chapter per week. During our meetings, we discuss the reading and watch a video lecture on the topic which expands on the readings. Members of the group in past years have found the experience very worthwhile and often a real stretch from how we have thought of the issues in the past.

Based on the survey at the end of our 2023 session, this year we will have two groups on different days. Our schedule will be 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. on either Monday or Tuesday (your choice) for eight weeks. Our meetings will begin with everyone meeting on Tuesday, January 23, then the group will split, and we will continue with the Monday or Tuesday schedule until March 11 and 12.

The location will be the same as last year: The Sumter Country Villages Annex Conference Room at 8033 East CR 466 near the corner of Morse Blvd.

Topics for this year will be:

- Mideast Realignment
- Climate Technology and Competition
- Science Across Borders
- U.S. – China trade Rivalry
- NATO's Future
- Understanding Indonesia
- High Seas Treaty
- Pandemic Preparedness

We had a very active group last year and we would like to have even more participants this year. Please encourage your friends and significant others both in and out of the AAUW group to join us. Please let me know if you can help me by facilitating one of the sessions.

Please email me at: [kurusu99@hotmail.com](mailto:kurusu99@hotmail.com) with your name, contact information, and your choice of Monday or Tuesday. I will let you know how to purchase your own book; it is doable!!!

See you there.

Christine Loken-Kim  
Great Decisions Coordinator

## ***Book Club***

The book club will celebrate the holidays with a luncheon at the Chop House in Lake Sumter Landing on Wednesday, December 13 at 11:30 a.m. (Note that this is not the usual monthly meeting date.) Those interested in attending should contact Kate Manion to reserve a seat.

Below is the schedule of books for the remainder of the 2023-24 program year, including discussion dates and leaders. Visit the Learning Programs page of our website and scroll down to Book Club for a link to the descriptions of each book.

<b>2023 – 2024 Book Club Selections</b>			
<b><i>Date</i></b>	<b><i>Book</i></b>	<b><i>Author</i></b>	<b><i>Discussion Leader</i></b>
12/13/23	<i>Holiday Luncheon</i>		
1/17/24	<i>Magnolia Palace</i>	Fiona Davis	Anne Wilkins
2/21/24	<i>The Warmth of Other Suns</i>	Isabel Wilkerson	Katie Haviland
3/20/24	<i>Pandora's Clock</i>	John J. Nance	Cathy Cirocco
4/17/24	<i>Babylon's Ark: The Incredible Wartime Rescue of the Baghdad Zoom</i>	Lawrence Anthony	Kate Manion
5/15/24	<i>Lessons in Chemistry</i>	Bonnie Garmus	Marge McQueston
6/19/24	<i>The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek</i>	Kim Michele Richardson	Anne Sobocinski
7/17/24	<i>Ordinary Grace</i>	William Krueger	Helen Gozdanovic
8/21/24	<i>The Girl Who Wrote in Silk</i>	Kelli Estes	Judy Reinhardt

## ***Day Trips***

On Saturday, November 11, nine branch members enjoyed a day trip to Clermont in Lake County. The group, pictured (below left) in front of the WWII Museum in the Historic Village, had a guided tour of the Village with Jim Briggs, President of the Historic Preservation Society, and Dieter Grube, the Society's Treasurer. Jim and Dieter are behind the group, with Jim on the left. The group also visited the Miniature White



House President's Hall of Fame where they paused for a photo op at a table set for world leaders (right). Check out the full story and more pictures on our website.



Our Day Trips Committee is hard at work, planning more trips this year. So, stay tuned and be sure to sign up for whatever comes next. It's a great way to learn new things and get to know some of your AAUW sisters, too!

## CONNECT

### Membership

#### *Membership Update*

As of November 16, our membership total is 99. We welcome three new members. Their contact information is on our website ([www.lakesumteraaauw.org](http://www.lakesumteraaauw.org)) in the directory.

➤ **Laura Kammer**

Originally from NY/NJ Laura graduated from Pace University with a BBA in accounting and earned her master's degree at Adelphi University. She and her husband were snowbirds until this year when they became full time residents in the Village of Fernandina.

➤ **Barbara "Bobbie" Peters**

Bobbie taught school for 37 years as a media specialist and English/Reading teacher in grades K-11. She has lived in Florida for 47 years and now lives in the Village of St. James.



➤ **Sandy Plano**

Originally from New Washington, Ohio, Sandy moved to New Castle, PA, with her husband Ron. In 2009, they moved to the Village of St. Charles. In addition to AAUW, Sandy is a Prime-Time Twirler and loves to swim, play pickleball, and golf.

Leslie Flanders and Terri Slotterback  
Membership Co-Chairs

*We've Got a Secret...*

...and it is Lake/Sumter AAUW, the best-kept secret in The Villages! Now, it is time to spread the news of AAUW to others. They want to know about us. So, plan a coffee or a wine-and-cheese party, invite every eligible woman you know, and tell them about AAUW, who we are, and what we do. We'll reimburse you for up to \$50 of receipted expenses. Yes, we'll pay you to have a party. Get an AAUW friend to host it with you.

Call Leslie Flanders if you want to help increase our membership. Only 10 of these opportunities are available, so call now!

*Online Membership Directory*

Our directory is updated regularly as we welcome new and renewing members to our branch. Please check your entry in the directory, located in the Members' Pages of our website ([www.lakesumteraauw.org](http://www.lakesumteraauw.org)), to make sure your information is correct and complete. If you need the password for the Members' Pages, email Linda Carpenter to request it.

Here is the information needed for all member entries in the directory:

Name  
Street address  
City, State zip code  
Village (if applicable)  
Phone  
Email  
Partner/Spouse/Significant Other (if applicable)  
Village (if applicable)  
School(s) and Degree(s)

Members can also send a photo to go with their entry. The photo should be a headshot in .jpeg format; it can be sent as an email attachment. Email Linda with any changes to your entry.

## *Downloading the Directory and Saving to your Desktop*

Now that you have the password, you can access the Members' Pages of our website (<https://www.lakesumteraauw.org>) and download the current directory. If you are an Apple user, follow the instructions Leslie handed out at the September General Meeting for saving the directory to your computer's desktop. If you are not an Apple user, a similar set of instructions is also available for you. Both sets of instructions are posted in the Members' Pages.

## **Social Interest Groups**

### *Mah Jongg*

The Mah Jongg Group will play on the following dates:

- December 13 - home of Lois Venus
- January 10 - home of Kathy Howe
- January 24 - home of Carolee Litwinka
- February 14 - home of Lois Venus
- February 28 - home of Kathy Howe

All games begin at 1:00 p.m. Interested players should contact the hostess and let her know that they will attend.

### *Singles Group*

Single members are invited to a game afternoon on Sunday December 3 from 2:00 – 4:45 p.m. at Fish Hawk Recreation Center in Buttonwood. We will have Samba, Mexican Train, or Rummikub games. You will get to meet some of my Boxwood Villas neighbor ladies that play this day. Please let Karen Pickelsimer know if you can come. We had lots of fun the last time we did this together. Bring your own drinks and we will have the usual water jug and cups. Liz and I look forward to seeing you on December 3.

## **SUPPORT**

### **Fundraising**

Lake/Sumter AAUW Branch brings

**Claudia Schmidt**

to The Villages in January

Claudia Schmidt has been perfecting her craft of performing for almost four decades. It is a quirky and wonderful hodge-podge (her word!) of music, poetry, story, laughter, drama, and



celebrating the moment. Work in clubs, theaters, festivals, TV, radio has added depth and dimension, and since she has always included her original work along with very personal versions of the work of others, what you get is a unique look at the world from someone who says what she sees with clarity, humor, and wonder. The San Francisco Bay Guardian said, "Schmidt's shows are a lot like falling in love. You never know what's going to happen next, chances are it's going to be wonderful, every moment is burned into your memory, and you know you'll never be the same again." More succinctly, Garrison Keillor said, "When Claudia sings a song, it stays sung."

Tickets (150 of them) will be available for sale from Leslie Flanders for \$25 each. The concert will take place on January 11 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Tri-County Unitarian Universalist Church. The church is located at 7380 SE 135<sup>th</sup> Street, about halfway between US 301 and US 27/441. You will be able to purchase tickets at the Holiday Luncheon.

### *Support the 2024 Adopt-A-Precinct Program*



We have a wonderful opportunity in 2024 to earn \$7,500 for our Tech Trek and scholarship programs. Contact Jennifer Thompson for more information. She is still recruiting interested members!

The Sumter County Elections Office will pay our local AAUW branch \$2,500 per election to provide volunteers to staff the precinct at Seabreeze Recreation Center in The Villages. In addition to our members, spouses, friends, and neighbors of AAUW members are welcome to work for our Branch at the precinct as well. All volunteers need to be Sumter County residents and willing to work some, if not all the dates below:

- March 19, 2024: Presidential Preference Primary
- August 20, 2024: Primary Election
- November 5, 2024: General Election

## **Tech Trek**



Tech Trek 2024 is beginning to gear up. Science and math teachers at area middle schools have been contacted by the State Tech Trek administrators who are requesting teachers submit names of girls they would recommend attending summer camp next year.

Meanwhile Lake/Sumter AAUW is preparing to honor the 2023 campers at the January General Meeting on January 27. Please mark your calendars and invite neighbors and friends. Last year I was telling one of my neighbors about the program and he gave me a check on the spot. This year he will be attending the January 2024 meeting to get a firsthand view of how he helped a camper. We will also be asking last summer's campers to talk to their younger peers about the camp and invite them to the January meeting.

You may recall the twins from last January who were invited and were subsequently selected to attend the 2023 camp. One of them wrote in her thank you note about camp that “This was the best week of my life.” We also hope to have one of the 2022 campers attend to share what she has been doing after camp. These are amazing girls.

## Scholarship

Here is an update about past winner, Amanda Cyr.



Amanda Cyr is now in her Senior year at Beacon college and has a B+ average. In her free time, she has her own pet sitting business. She will graduate in May 2024, with a major in Anthrozoology and a concentration in business. Amanda has been promised a job at Animal Care Wellness Center in Leesburg after graduation and plans to become accredited as a Vet Tech.

### *Jewelry Drawing*

In support of our scholarships, Gold in Art Jewelers has again gifted us with a beautiful piece of jewelry for our fundraiser. The necklace (pictured at right) has a retail value of \$3,800. Gretchen Lewis, our Scholarship Committee Co-Chair said, “I continue to be amazed at and grateful for their generosity.”



You can bring your checkbook to the holiday luncheon or January meeting to take your chance on winning this beautiful necklace.

The proceeds from our drawing enable us to award scholarships to very worthy women to help them finance their college educations.

And if you stop by Gold in Art, be sure to thank Richie Kluesener for his generous donation to our Branch.



**American Association of University Women  
Lake/Sumter (FL) Branch**

***Learn – Connect – Support***

The Holiday Season is upon us. Your staff is taking some time off and this is a combined edition for December and January. We wish you all a joyous holiday season and a happy and healthy new year.

Editor: Beth Hicks  
[aauwsnews@gmail.com](mailto:aauwsnews@gmail.com)

AAUW Websites

Local: <https://lakesumteraauw.org>  
State: <https://aauw-fl.aauw.net>  
National: <https://www.aauw.org>

**LAKE/SUMTER AAUW  
HOLIDAY LUNCHEON**

**Saturday, December 9**  
**CONTINENTAL COUNTRY CLUB - PAULIE'S OAKS ON 44**  
**75 CONTINENTAL BLVD., WILDWOOD, FL 34785**  
**12:00 – 3:00 P.M.**  
**COST \$33.00**  
TAX & GRATUITIES INCLUDED

**HEART SMART SALAD**

Apples, pears, strawberries, nuts on mixed greens raspberry vinaigrette w/feta cheese

**PEP'S JERSEY CHEESE STEAK**

Hand-sliced ribeye, sauteed onions & peppers w/ White American cheese on torpedo roll

**TRIO SALAD**

One scoop of our homemade chicken, tuna & egg salad. Served on a bed of greens

**CHICKEN PICCATA**

Chicken breast sauteed w/ lemon & capers in white wine sauce - over sauteed spinach

**RIGATONI WITH VODKA SAUCE**

Rigatoni, prosciutto and peas in a vodka cream and Marinara sauce

**BEVERAGES**

Non-alcoholic beverages included. Alcoholic beverages available at cast bar

**DESSERT**

Cheesecake or Tiramisu

Contact Kathy Howe @ [kamphowe@aol.com](mailto:kamphowe@aol.com) or call 631-219-4289  
Reservations must be made & paid **before December 1, 2023**