

LAKE/SUMTER NEWSLETTER

September 2020



Lake/Sumter branch of AAUW is committed to a diverse community that stimulates a culture of learning and understanding and enhances a member's experience. We aspire to create an inclusive and equitable branch that represents, supports, and celebrates diversity of all kinds.

President's Message

Your co-Presidents are sending positive vibes to you all, hoping that you are able to find creative ways to interact with family, friends and other AAUW members during this continuing pandemic. As we plan for our opening meeting on Saturday, September 19, we are confident that you will appreciate the work your Program Committee has put into creating an interesting, engaging virtual presentation for you. These are challenging times, forcing us all to look for new ways to be together.



The formation of our Tech Team under Carolee Litwinka's leadership, has provided the opportunity to engage in small group practice sessions on the how-tos of Zoom, the communication tool we are using to meet virtually. The members of the Board and Committee Chairs met using Zoom in July. While we are not physically together, Zoom enabled us to gather and brainstorm ways to continue to accomplish our AAUW goals of supporting girls' education and young women's scholarship programs, and to bring awareness to dealing with current issues.

We extend a huge thanks to Diane Jacobson, and her support team for providing us with a user-friendly Lake Sumter AAUW website, with the on-line Member Handbook and a member photo gallery. Our gratitude also to Jacquie Latzer and Linda Carpenter for the discussions on racism, hosted by the Diversity Committee, and to Marianne Bender-Powers and Ann Marie Lombardi for the programming events planned for our general monthly meetings.

It is our hope that you will join us for our first virtual AAUW General Meeting in September. If you have been hesitant to try out Zoom, we encourage you to take advantage of the offer from the members of the Tech Team to walk you through the process, step by step.

We look forward to "seeing" you in September

Katie Haviland and Anne Wilkins,
Co-Presidents 2020-21

Programs

Using Technology

Since our AAUW branch meetings will be virtual using Zoom during this pandemic, our Tech Team is taking a few steps to help members get familiar with Zoom before the September 19 General Meeting.

The team offered small group Zoom sessions to practice joining and participating in a Zoom meeting in August. If you haven't had the opportunity to join one of the sessions and are interested in learning how to use Zoom, please send an email to Carolee Litwinka (mctwinka@yahoo.com) and someone on the Tech team will assist you.

General Meetings

September 19

On Saturday, September 19, 2020, we will hold our General Meeting on the Zoom platform for the first time ever! Never did we envision having a meeting where we all saw each other on technology devices rather than in person. However, life in the Covid-19 pandemic has demanded that we learn new skills and adapt to changes that are often reminiscent of a science fiction movie. So, connect to your computer, your tablet, or your cell phone and join us for the opening of the meeting at 10:00 a.m. As September 19 draws closer, you will receive an email invitation to the meeting, with all the information you will need to connect to it.

Our meeting will include general business; updates about how our branch of AAUW plans to thrive during the pandemic; a celebratory review of our past year; and a well-deserved recognition of our outgoing and incoming officers. Don't miss it!

October 17

Election Day looms ahead in November. Are you familiar with the Florida Constitutional Amendments that will appear on the ballot? You will be very knowledgeable after you have heard the speaker from the *League of Women Voters* give her presentation to us at our second Zoom meeting. Many of you will remember the outstanding presentation our own Beth Hicks, representing the LWV, gave us the last time amendments were on the ballot. The information you will hear on October 17 is too important to miss. We look forward to sharing this experience with you.

Marianne Bender-Powers and Anne Marie Lombard
Co-Program Directors

Racism Discussion Series

Session 1: Racism 101

The Diversity Committee launched its online Racism Discussion Series on July 22. Twenty-five people participated in the discussion, which was based on the website Racism 101 (<https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/racism-101.html>). The session began with a viewing of a brief video: *The Look* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJav36Nbn58>) and discussion focused on participants' observation of instances of individual, institutional, and systemic or structural racism.

Session 2: White Privilege

Session 2 was held on August 26 and focused on White privilege; 34 people participated. For this session, participants viewed a brief video demonstrating White privilege (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3QmO5djgY&t=6s>), and they read *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (<https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf>); Dr. Peggy McIntosh, the article's author, joined the discussion. Dr. McIntosh shared how she came to see White privilege, and she led a wrap-up discussion of how we can use our unearned privilege to weaken systemic privilege. Video of this session will be available until September 18. All participants received a link to the video; if you were not able to participate but would like to view the video, send an email to divcomaauw@gmail.com to request the link.

Session 3: Antiracism

The third session in the Diversity Committee's Racism Discussion Series will be at 10:30 a.m. on September 23 via Zoom. The topic will be antiracism, and discussion will be based on the work of Ibram X. Kendi, author of *How to Be an Antiracist* (see page 7 of this newsletter). In preparation, participants will be asked to view a 12-minute video of Dr. Kendi being interviewed about antiracism and read a brief article he wrote for the September 2020 issue of *The Atlantic*; participants can also opt to read a longer article from the same magazine. Links to these resources will be sent along with the Zoom invitation.

If you would like to join the discussion, send an email to divcomaauw@gmail.com and provide your name, email address, and phone number. Feel free to share the registration information with friends as the series is free and open to the public. If you have registered for a previous session, you will not have to register again; you will automatically receive a Zoom invitation.

All sessions will be recorded so if you can't make it to the live discussion you can watch the video after the fact.

Membership

Our branch currently has 106 paid members. Two are student affiliates and a third is our student finishing her degree.

The AAUW National Board of Directors will consider and vote on a change in Individual Member dues at their upcoming Board meeting on October 16, 2020. Any increase would take effect on July 1, 2021. The Board will consider two different options:

- An increase to take effect on July 1, 2021, of an amount between \$3 and \$10.
- An increase to take effect on the 1st of July of each of the next three fiscal years of between \$3 and \$10 each year.

The selection of either option, and the exact amount of the increase for the option chosen, will be determined by the board at its October meeting. Any change to Individual Member dues will impact paid Life Membership as well, since AAUW's bylaws require paid Life Membership to equal 20 years of annual dues. The Board is not considering a change to College/University Member dues at this time.

Membership dues cover between 15% and 20% of AAUW's annual budget. While AAUW's expenses increase annually, in recent years dues have not increased with enough regularity to keep pace with expenses. Increasing Individual Member dues will help AAUW cover more expenses, including important functions like the Connect team, critical technology and infrastructure such as the website and Member Services Database, and other member support.

Karen Pickelsimer
Membership Co-Chair

Membership Booklets

Normally August is the time to print and distribute our 2020-2021 membership booklet; this year we have to be creative to get the job done. If you have not received your membership booklet via email or are having trouble reading it, let Diane Jacobson (chasanddi@embarqmail.com) know and she'll work with you to ensure you have a copy of the booklet. If you would like to add your picture to your membership information (or make a change), send the head shot photo to Diane and she'll update the records

Public Policy

Goals for Lake/Sumter Branch

Now that September is here and our political conventions are over, it's time to start the big push to *get out the vote*. If you see "GOTV" anywhere, that's what it stands for, and this year we really *must* get out the vote.

There are some real problems with voting this year, not the least of which is the COVID-19 virus that keeps on moving among us. For our own protection, we should seriously consider voting methods other than going to the polls on election day and waiting in long lines to cast our votes. There are early voting days and absentee or mail-in ballots as well. More information can be found on <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections>.

We should also keep in mind that spring means Lobby Days, the days when we go to Tallahassee and tell our state legislators what issues are important to us. This year our Lobby Days will be March 17 and 18, 2021. AAUW will be looking at the following issues:

- Voting access
- Pay equity
- Paid sick and family leave
- College affordability
- Campus sexual harassment and violence
- Women's health care and reproductive rights

Yes, there is a lot to do this year in Public Policy. We should get plenty of rest, eat wisely, wear masks, take good care of ourselves, prepare for an active year, and above all, VOTE!

Scholarship

Scholarship Committee Members reviewed 10 applications for financial support for the next two years and a meeting was held via Zoom to select two applicants who have earned strong grades, have completed community service, and are in need of financial support for courses leading to their baccalaureate degrees.

Paige Sanders is enrolled at Beacon College in Leesburg. Paige is 28 years old and has chosen Business Hospitality as a major with event planning her goal. She is involved in student government at Beacon and is active in community children's programs and activities. Paige has also worked as a pre-K teacher in a child-care setting. She will be receiving the award for this year only as she anticipates graduating next May.

Jordan Threlfall is 18 years old and will study engineering at UCF in the fall. Jordan has a 4.0 average. While working part time at Culver's she also served as the position of Student Government President at Lake Sumter State College. Jordan has received

numerous awards for her excellence in academics and has also volunteered at local hospitals.

Past Winner Update

Carolyn received this note from a previous winner and we need to share with the membership! We should be proud of all she has accomplished!

Dear Mrs. Johnson,

I hope you are doing well and staying safe during these uncertain times. I want to reach out and update you on my life since it is been awhile since last email, I sent you. I am graduating this Saturday from UCF with my bachelor's degree in health sciences and GPA of 3.75.

I am forever thankful to AAUW for supporting me throughout my journey at UCF and helping me out to graduate with no debts! This semester I did my thesis defense and I passed it. My thesis was on cardiovascular outcomes in nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke. It will be published in the UCF library website. Additionally, I retook my MCAT exam last week and I officially applied to medical schools for entering class of Fall 2021!

Also, I want to share with you this article that my school wrote about my journey and accomplishments: <https://www.ucf.edu/news/graduating-senior-escaped-a-civil-war-in-syria-to-become-a-scholar-at-ucf/>

Thank you for everything you and AAUW offered me! I will be forever grateful and I hope one day I can give back as a future physician!

Sincerely,

Suzanne Chaar

Burnett Honors Scholar

LEAD Academy Scholar

Health Sciences, Pre-Clinical Track, Class of 2020

College of Health Professions and Sciences

University of Central Florida

schaar@knights.ucf.edu

Scholarship Jewelry Donation

Gold in Art Jewelers has once again donated a piece of jewelry for us to use for raising funds for scholarships for women in our area. This year it is a 14-karat yellow gold mother of pearl pendant along with a gold chain. The retail price for the pendant is \$1,800.

Gold in Art Jewelers is located on Clay Avenue South in Lady Lake, visible from Rt 466. Traveling toward Rt 441 it is on the right a short distance beyond Recreation Plantation RV Resort. Be sure to visit the store and let the manager know how appreciative we are for these annual donations.

Activities

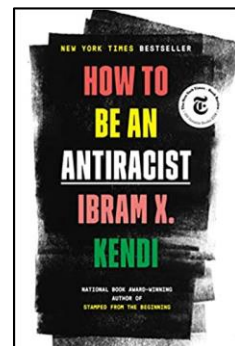
Our in-person activities are on hiatus. Check with the coordinators for when they will resume.

Great Read from the Diversity Committee

Beginning this year, the Diversity Committee will be offering suggestions of books about racism and social justice that committee members have read and recommend. This continuing column replaces the Heritage Month articles that the committee has published for the last two years. This month's recommendation is ***How to be an Antiracist*** by Ibram X. Kendi. The following description comes from Penguin/Random House, the book's publisher.

Antiracism is a transformative concept that reorients and reenergizes the conversation about racism—and, even more fundamentally, points us toward liberating new ways of thinking about ourselves and each other.

At its core, racism is a powerful system that creates false hierarchies of human value; its warped logic extends beyond race, from the way we regard people of different ethnicities or skin colors to the way we treat people of different sexes, gender identities, and body types. Racism intersects with class and culture and geography and even changes the way we see and value ourselves.



*In **How to Be an Antiracist**, Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of antiracist ideas—from the most basic concepts to visionary possibilities—that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly, understand their poisonous consequences, and work to oppose them in our systems and in ourselves.*

Kendi weaves an electrifying combination of ethics, history, law, and science with his own personal story of awakening to antiracism. This is an essential work for anyone who wants to go beyond the awareness of racism to the next step: contributing to the formation of a just and equitable society.

“Dr. Kendi will change the way you think about racism. Not easy, but a must read.”



Linda Carpenter

Diversity Book Club

The Diversity Book Club met on August 19 to select books for the 2020-21 program year. Club members suggested an overabundance of interesting books, so we provide here the club's selections and our "overflow list" as well. Happy reading!

Selections for 2020-21

Date	Title	Author	Facilitator
Sept. 16	A Good Neighborhood	Therese Ann Fowler	Peg Tabor
Oct. 21	The Library Book	Susan Orlean	Katie Haviland
Nov. 18	Giver of Stars	JoJo Moyes	Barb Blatchford
Dec. 16	<i>Holiday Luncheon</i>		
Jan. 20	The Nickle Boys	Colson Whitehead	Mary Place
Feb. 17	This Tender Land	William Kent Krueger	Diane Jacobson
Mar. 17	Born a Crime	Trevor Noah	Ginny Rivera
Apr. 21	See No Stranger	Valerie Kaur	Judy Reinhardt
May 19	Caleb's Crossing	Geraldine Brooks	Myra Mervine
June 16	Simon the Fiddler	Paulette Jiles	Blanche Boyne
July 21	American Dirt *	Jeanine Cummins	Blanche Boyne
Aug. 18	<i>Selection of 2021-22 Books</i>		

* Oprah's Book Club

Overflow List

Title	Author
American Marriage *	Tayari Jones
American Spy	Lauren Wilkinson
Bad Blood	John Carreyrou
Bluebird, Bluebird	Attica Locke
Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents *	Isabel Wilkerson
Clara and Mr. Tiffany	Susan Vreeland

Dutch House	Ann Patchett
Girl with the Louding Voice	Abi Dare
Just Mercy	Brian Stevenson
Mexican Gothic	Silvia Moreno-Garcia
Oil and Marble: A Novel of Leonardo and Michelangelo	Stephanie Storey
Only Woman in the Room	Marie Benedict (author of Carnegie's Maid)
Redhead by the Side of the Road	Anne Tyler
Remember Me Like This	Brett Anthony Johnston
Settle for more	Megyn Kelly
The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian	Sherman Alexie
The Last Train to London	Meg Waite Clayton
Unmasked: The Rise and Fall of the 1920s Ku Klux Klan	Ann Patton
Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race	Debby Irving
White Fragility	Robin Diangelo

* Oprah's Book Club

EDITOR'S MUSINGS



We are starting a new AAUW season that looks like the end of the last season. We hunker down in our homes and feel isolated. Don't forget to reach out to someone who might need a call! The deadline for the October edition is September 20.

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AAUW Websites

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