

LAKE/SUMTER NEWSLETTER

May 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

It is said that March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb, but "the lion" refuses to leave! Our AAUW branch had many exciting activities planned for spring. Unfortunately, because of COVID-19, we can't meet in person and all of our communication has been by email. We asked you to vote electronically for a new slate of officers for 2020-2021 and it was a great success. Thanks again to the nominating committee for their hard work and to all the candidates who so graciously have stepped forward to lead our Lake Sumter Branch



Linda Ferens and Carolee Litwinka

AAUW Officers for 2020-2021

Thanks to all of you who took the time to turn in your vote by email. It was the first time (and hopefully the last) we elected officers electronically. Seventy-seven of our members voted and the vote was unanimous for the nominated slate.

We present our 2020-21 Board:

Co-Presidents: Anne Wilkins, Katie Haviland
Co-Presidents-Elect—Gay Birchard and Anne Sobocinski
Co-Secretaries: Sharron Albrecht, Nancy Hartshorn
Co-Membership: Susan Gold, Karen Pickelsimer
Co-Finance: Margie Hunt, Terri Slotterback
Co-Program: Marianne Bender-Powers , Vacant position

Your Board in Action

Finance from Peg Tabor

Because we were not able to find a victim, er, willing volunteer, to be co-director of finance, I have been doing the job solo until recently. Two financially knowledgeable ladies stepped up to the plate to be co-directors of finance beginning 7/1/20: Terri Slotterback and Margie Hunt. Terri agreed to begin her duties immediately, thus filling the empty slot working with me for the balance of the term. Unfortunately, the coronavirus has hampered our ability to allow Terri to learn too much about the job as yet. Terri's term runs from now until 6/30/21 and Margie's will run 7/1/20 thru 6/30/22.

We are in the midst of the dues renewal effort, and we thank you for your patience as we all learn about this procedure together. With National's assistance, we have resolved some issues, and address others as they arise. But you, our members, are doing a phenomenal job – your willingness to try new methods, as well as your prompt attention to this matter, have made the job easier.

You can renew online via the link National emailed to members. But **please do NOT go directly to the AAUW National website to renew**; that will renew only National's portion of the dues.

If you prefer not to complete the renewal using the link sent to you in an email, you are welcome to renew using the familiar method of mailing a check to me. My address is on the invoice you received, and in the membership directory. Please make the check out for \$90 to AAUW LAKE SUMTER. If you have any updated contact information, please either include it in a note with your check, or you can make the changes on the AAUW National website yourself.

Thanks for renewing! Once the virus passes, we will have some super meetings and events ready for you!

Stay well and hope to see you soon.

Public Policy from Judy Bonn

This was an unusual year in that I held no real office on the Board. But I helped out with some committees. Diane Reichert was chair of the Public Policy and Bylaws Committees. Since she had quite a few health issues this year, the folks on her committees pitched in and helped out as best we could. I'm looking forward to chairing our Public Policy Committee this coming year.

The Bylaws committee successfully re-wrote the part of the sections pertaining to the succession and election of officers. I think we finally got it straight before COVID-19 hit.

When I was our branch chair of Public Policy in the past, I was blessed to have a state PP chair, Pat DeWitt, who constantly sent information, opinions, articles, and advice to the members of her committee and to the branch PP chairs. We worked very well together. This past year was all about getting used to a change in officers both at the state level, and at the branch level. We should be all set to take on the difficult year of Public Policy that lies ahead, what with a Presidential election and a coronavirus to boot! I predict we'll do fine. This coming year is very important and we're on it!

Thank You from Diane Jacobson

Dear Fellow Lake/Sumter members,

I was delighted to receive an award in the mail the other day. Our Lake/Sumter Branch nominated me for contributions to the Local, State, and National AAUW. This award was to be given at the 2020 AAUW Florida Convention but, because the convention couldn't take place, mailing it was the alternative.

Thank you for your confidence in making this nomination, I appreciate your confidence.

Take care and stay safe as we continue to do our part and stay-at-home. Looking forward to continuing our AAUW work, and especially looking forward to the day when we are once again safe to work and socialize in person.

Heritage Month: May is Older Americans Month



Every May, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads our nation's observance of Older Americans Month. The 2020 theme is "Make Your Mark."

ACL selected this theme to encourage and celebrate countless contributions that older adults make to our communities. Their time, experience, and talents benefit family, peers, and neighbors every day. Through their individual efforts and through the work of many clubs, organizations, and churches, older Americans are making their marks.

As older Americans, we have lived through many experiences and have many stories to tell. Stories build community and connect us even when we can't be physically together. Recalling adventures with childhood friends, a family weekend at the beach, a teacher who helped guide your life, or how you learned you would become a grandparent—all of those stories connect you with your past and the people who have mattered along the way. They help people you love get to know you better and feel closer to you. Looking back at how we got through other tough times can help us manage this challenging

time. Sharing what we love about our friends and family members helps them feel stronger and more connected. Stories can be told over the phone, on the computer, or over the backyard fence. They can be told in letters, in pictures, and with headlines and photographs collected from newspapers.

We can make a mark on people's lives with the stories we share.

Think about the stories that make up your life. Which ones would you like to share? Here are some questions that might get you thinking:

- What would you like to tell your 22-year-old self?
- What do you think your 22-year-old-self would want to tell you?
- What are the best and worst pieces of advice you've received?
- What's your hidden talent?
- What are you most proud of?
- Looking back, is there something you wish you had done that you did not?
- What do you most admire about your best friend?
- What do you wish the world knew about you?
- Was there a time when an older adult helped you feel strong in a tough time?
- What does it mean to be a caregiver? What did you learn from the experience?

For more ideas, see the Great Questions List from Story Corps at <https://archive.storycorps.org/great-questions-list/>.

Scholarship

The Scholarship Committee is gearing up to review the 2020 applications for our scholarships. We are very pleased that the Board recently approved an increase to \$2000 for each recipient for each year. We are also excited that we will also be looking for applications from Beacon College. Because everything is more difficult this year, we have moved the deadline for applications to May 1. We have already received five applications. At this time, it is difficult to predict when we will be able to complete the process.

As you know Suzanne Char and Deanna Geisel will complete their two years as scholarship winners this June and Josie Goodman and Hannah Harrington will begin year two. Both Josie and Hannah are hoping to complete their BSN degrees by next year and both are currently working as RNs. We have our fingers crossed for them and that the dreaded virus will not interfere with their plans nor their health.

Mount Dora Community Trust Grant Comes Through Again

Our Branch of AAUW was, once again, a recipient of a grant from the Mount Dora Community Trust. Originally designated for two girls from Mount Dora to attend Tech Trek, since we had no Tech Trek applicants from Mount Dora, the Grant Committee was kind enough to agree to make a switch and approve the grant for our second year scholarship recipient – Josie Goodman, a nursing student who lives in Mount Dora,. Many thanks to the Mount Dora Community Trust and to former AAUW member, Rosella Valentine who introduced us to this potential funding source.

We wanted to share the correspondence regarding this endowment. **We make a difference!!!!**

Our message to Josie

Josie,

Hope you are faring well in what must be a stressful time for you. I do have some good news for you. We have received a grant from Mt Dora bank. which we got permission to grant for your 2020-21 scholarship. It is in the amount of \$2200 so you will get an extra \$700 for your school expenses. The award was to go to Tech Trek campers but we had no applicants from Mt Dora so we asked for their okay to give it to you as a Mt Dora scholarship applicant and they agreed. Sometimes things work out well! I was not the negotiator but when I get the details, I will get them to you so you can drop in the bank and say thank you.

Josie's Response

Dear Carolyn,

I had been sitting at my work desk crying, afraid of what we are facing during this difficult time. And after I got myself together, I listened to the voicemail informing me that I had received this gift. The first gift I received was already such a blessing, but to again be blessed a second time left me speechless. I have the opportunity to give back to the community through my nursing care and take care of other women who need help finding resources, shelter from abuse, or even something as simple as clean clothes. This scholarship has supported me, and I am so grateful. The ladies of AAUW have provided me with more support than my parents were able to provide. This is life and it is full of both happiness and hardships. I will not disappoint you and the women of AAUW. I will be giving back. My love of caring, healing, and helping others will continue. Please tell the other ladies how much this means to me. I still have A's and I am signing up for summer classes. Also, please tell the other ladies to please stay safe.

All my love with care,

Josie Goodman

TechTrek 2020 Update

We are pleased to announce that 7 of our 7th Grade Middle School applicants have been selected to attend the AAUW TechTrek camps scheduled for June 2020.

Our committee has worked diligently since November 2019 to contact Lake and Sumter Middle Schools, disseminate information about the TechTrek program, encourage STEM teachers to nominate candidates, and monitor the application process which requires support and agreement from parents of the candidates. No small feat considering we were required to follow a timeline established by the State office to complete all paperwork by the end of 2019.

2020 ushered in the most enjoyable aspect of this committee's activities. We arranged to meet and interview each of the 12 candidates at their respective schools. Eustis Middle School, South Sumter Middle School, Wildwood Middle High School, and The Villages Charter Middle School were the 4 schools whose students chose to participate this year. I salute our committee members for their dedication and perseverance in addressing the diversity found in each school contacted. Without that dedication we would have no program to celebrate!

Camp Director Sue Sloane just sent the following information to our chapter.

We have decided to cancel Tech Trek Camp for 2020. We do hope to invite these girls to camp in 2021 along with the new crop of Tech Trek Campers. We have notified all the girls that were selected for camp of our plans. We plan to send Nomination Certificates to all girls who were nominated, and I will email the teachers who participated this year about our plans.

Meetings and Programs

We have no news to report since our May meeting is in doubt. All the programs planned for March, April, and May will be rescheduled for September and following months.

We will celebrate the passing of the 19th amendment before 2020 is through. We do not want to pass up this opportunity to celebrate the heroic suffragists and for all of their sacrifices to give women voting rights.

We miss seeing everyone and hope to be able to gather in the near future.

Your Programs co-Chairs
Dorothy Dobbs and Marianne Bender Powers

What Are You Up To?



Dorothy Dobbs works a jig saw puzzle.



Linda Ferens plays shuffleboard with newly purchased equipment.



Liz Schweers quilts.

Membership

Dear Members,

Before we report on membership matters, we want to reach out to all of you virtually and give each of you a hug...from a distance! These are difficult times and we hope you are all handling this social distancing with a minimum of stress and a maximum of laughter.

Now down to business.

Membership renewals for the 2020-2021 year are now open! As of the writing of this report, 49 of our members have renewed their memberships on-line using the MPP (Membership Payment Portal). We have 98 of you who have not as yet renewed. Our National office is encouraging all members to renew their memberships using this on-line process. It should be easy! You should have received a direct link in your email. Just click on the link provided and follow the directions. The email is from memberinfo@aauw.org. If you don't find this email, check your spam folder. As Peg Tabor mentioned on page 2, please do not try to renew directly on the AAUW National site. If you have had any difficulty with renewing your membership, please email Peg at taborpeg@gmail.com. If you want to renew by check, Peg's mailing address is: 3391 Empire Avenue, The Villages, FL 32163. Please make out the check to AAUW Lake Sumter. Again, DO NOT renew by going directly to the AAUW National website. If you want to renew using a credit card, your only option is to use the link sent to you.

We also have had two new memberships this month and one member re-join. The new members are:

Sarah Reagan
1755 Townsend Terrace
The Villages, FL 32162
(703) 725-9646
sareagan@aol.com
Rhodes College, BA
Tulane Univ., MA, German
George Mason Univ., MA, Psychology
Virginia Commonwealth Univ., Ph.D. Clinical Psychology

Mary Kay Fritts (Richard)
646 Turkey Lane
The Villages, FL 32163
(352) 461-0206
mkfritts@bellsouth.net
Vanderbilt Univ. BSN Nursing/German
Fl. International Univ. MSN, Nursing

The returning member is:

Sharon Edwins
1144 Ardsley Place
The Villages, FL 32163
(352) 446-2084
design361@yahoo.com
California State University, CA BA, Phy ED
Nova Southeastern Univ. MS. Admin ED

We are looking forward to seeing all of you when the social distancing lifts, hopefully in the fall, but whenever it becomes safe. In the meantime, please reach out if you need assistance. Stay Safe!

Your Membership co-Chairs,
Liz Schweers and Susan Gold

Fundraising

2019 – 2020 Lake/Sumter AAUW fundraising efforts are key to helping women and girls to reach pay equity. We do this by funding scholarships for women and camperships for girls at AAUW Florida's STEM-focused residential camps. Every other year we promote a "big" fundraiser. This year's big event was Music of the Night. Our other fundraising events include Great Decisions, Christmas Lunch, Linda Schnoll's sale, Women United Grant, Equalitea with the League of Women Voters, the

International Food Tasting and Dance Performance, donation from Gold in Art, Mt. Dora Trust, Belk's charity sale, Tea & Spice Exchange donation, 50/50 tickets sold at regular meetings, and contributions. We are pleased to report that we raised a total of \$31,577 this year.

We also planned to host a luncheon at the Spice & Tea Exchange and a Farewell to the Old Card Mah Jongg Party but had to cancel both events due to the coronavirus crisis. We are grateful to the generosity of those who donated their reservation money as we face this uncertain time.

In the spirit of creativity and flexibility, we look forward to scheduling events for 2020 - 2021 that not only make money for the branch but bring connection as we negotiate these trying times. Contact Diane Jacobson chasanddi@embarqmail.com with ideas and/or if you'd like to help with an event.

Activities

Finger Food and Fun



hosts provided soft drinks and paper products during the evening. BYOB to everyone's choice!

Finger Food and Fun had two socials prior to the virus: The first one was a Fall Harvest 2019 event at the home of Judith Anderson. The second event was at the home of Ellen Gagnon in February 2020!

At both events we had approximately 35 persons present including members and their spouses. Everyone enjoyed the casual company in lovely homes. Many kinds of appetizers were presented along with a variety of desserts. Both

L-R: Diane Jacobson, Nancy Shaw, and hostess Judith Anderson attended one of the Finger Food and Fun events this year. was up

Dine Around was scheduled at Lopez during the holiday season but due to limited response, it was cancelled. The next Dine Around was overtaken by the virus.

I will be doing a future get-acquainted meeting at my home in the fall to set up hostess schedules. Please consider becoming involved in one of these events if you enjoy an evening of dining out or an evening in a private home. Look for photos of these events in future AAUW news.

Your Finger Food and Fun Chairperson
Judith Anderson

Mah Jongg

Mah Jongg has been hit by stay-at-home orders like all activities. Prior to shutdown players met two times a month on Mondays and had anywhere from 4 to 8 players. Lessons will be announced in the fall if you would like to learn and join the group.

Bridge

Monday Bridge is canceled due to coronavirus. We usually play in a host's home from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Members take turns hosting two or three tables. Contact chair Cindy Anderson (cmc37738@yahoo.com) if you would like to play.

Diversity Book Club

Our March book club meeting was cancelled because of the coronavirus and the need to shelter in place. However, the book club met via Zoom on April 15 to try out the online meeting technology and see how we liked having a virtual discussion. Prior to March, we held old fashioned, in-person meetings with the attendance varying monthly from six or seven members up to 15 or 16.

Kate Manion hosted the September through November meetings and the December holiday luncheon at Miz Kathi's Cotillion in Wildwood. Peg Tabor hosted the January and February meetings while Kate was out of town.

At our April 15 meeting we discussed *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair via Zoom. Six members took part in this online meeting.

We learned that the low attendance was largely because members felt uncomfortable using Zoom, which has been criticized for poor security. We subsequently tried Jitsi, a platform similar to, but more secure than Zoom. On April 22, we introduced Jitsi to the club members, but the trial showed us that Jitsi would not meet our needs.

After widespread concerns about Zoom, the developers of that software have made necessary corrections and using it is now more secure. So . . .

We are now pleased to announce that we are moving forward with our next two book club discussions with the use of Zoom. At 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 29, we will be meeting online to discuss *America for Beginners* by Leah Franqui. And on Wednesday, May 20, we will again be meeting online to discuss *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison.

Whether we are meeting online or in person in June, July, and August will depend on the course of the coronavirus. At any rate, readings for those months are listed below. In August it will once again be time to select the books for the upcoming year of 2020-

21 and all members are urged to be thinking ahead about the books they would like to recommend for next year

Diversity Book Club 2019-20 Reading List			
Date	Title	Author	Discussion Leader(s)
May 20	<i>The Bluest Eye</i>	Toni Morrison	Ginny Rivera
June 17	<i>The Island of the Sea Women</i>	Lisa See	Sue Nelson
July 15	<i>Our Souls at Night</i>	Kent Haruf	Carmel Leese

Speakers' Bureau

Our branch Speakers' Bureau is ready to roll. . .as soon as the all-clear sounds on the coronavirus and we all feel comfortable being out in groups again. Here's where things stand:

- We have template email messages ready for arranging speaking engagements and a database ready to enter information about those engagements.
- We have PowerPoint slides, and associated "scripts," for three presentations: Voluntary Prekindergarten, gender pay gap, and an overview of AAUW and our branch.
- We have a group of members who have volunteered to be speakers for the Bureau.

Our initial plan was to be up and running by August, but that was PC (pre-coronavirus), so we'll see. In the meantime, if you would like to work with the Speakers' Bureau as a speaker and/or on the steering committee, contact Jeannie Hamilton or Linda Carpenter.

EDITOR'S MUSINGS



This is the last issue this Season. As we hunker down in our homes and feel isolated, don't forget to reach out to someone who might need a call! The newsletter will be back in September. . .remember the deadline is August 20. By then perhaps we will be able to write about real and not virtual activities!

Editor: Beth Hicks
aauwsnews@gmail.com

AAUW Websites

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