

LAKE/SUMTER NEWSLETTER

May 2021



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.

Presidents' Message



Congratulations to all of us, the members of the Lake Sumter AAUW! By hard work, imaginative thinking, new learning, and perseverance we have had a successful year despite the obstacles presented by COVID. Many of us were able to meet through Zoom which required much research, preparation, and new learning by many of us. But we conducted business and held Board meetings to discuss business and projects. General Meetings included an array of interesting and informative programs and social time before the meetings allowing members to “catch up.” ZOOM also provided a platform for Book Club and the Diversity Committee meetings. The Newsletter kept everyone informed. Thank you to so many members who facilitated the implementation of technology and continue to guide us as we move forward.

We are happy to announce that, as a result of generous donations made to AAUW, we have been informed that we may name nine members to receive Branch Named Gift Awards. The following members from our branch have been selected for this award.

- *Judy Bonn*, our By-laws and Branch Policy Chairperson, has worked extensively to ensure that our by-laws and policies are in keeping with the AAUW requirements. She has guided by-laws through the approval process with the State. As a long-time member, Judy has also been a great source of information regarding past happenings and events and generously steps forward to volunteer her time.
- *Linda Carpenter*, as co-Chair of the Diversity Committee, has engaged members and others in furthering an awareness of diversity. Under her guidance the committee has instituted a series of discussions on a number of topics related to the status of diversity in our country. Linda has also initiated the Speakers' Bureau which brings information about our branch to different organizations who are interested in learning more about us.

- *Beth Hicks*, our newsletter editor, has done a wonderful job in creating a newsletter that keeps members aware of events and information regarding AAUW and especially our branch. She is creative and innovative in producing a “reader friendly” newsletter which is not only informative but serves to advance branch goals.
- *Diane Jacobson*, currently our Fund-Raising Director, developed the “STEAM” project which served as a fundraiser. Professionals in various disciplines delivered talks via Zoom. Diane also developed the *On-Line Members Handbook* to give all of us easy access to information and important aspects of Lake Sumter AAUW as well as contact information on all members.
- *Jacquie Latzer*, our Communications Director, has been especially successful in establishing contacts with local newspapers thereby ensuring that the public is aware of our AAUW branch and what we do. Jacquie serves as co-chair of the Diversity Committee. She also assisted with the implementation of Zoom in our branch.
- *Carolee Litwinka*, along with Ann Marie Lombardi, researched extensively the use of ZOOM for our organization, studied its use, and communicated that information to the Board, to enable the Board to make good decisions for our branch regarding the selection and implementation of Zoom. Carolee has taken on the role of Tech Committee Chairperson as she guides and implements the use of Zoom in our branch. She also ensures that all members are informed about meetings, as well as other matters, in her role as E-Mail Distributor.
- *Ann Marie Lombardi*, our Program Director, has provided the branch with exceptional programs on a variety of topics and worked with presenters to ensure their effectiveness when delivering via Zoom. Ann Marie also partnered with Carolee Litwinka to research, distill and communicate information to the Board regarding the purchase of Zoom for our branch.
- *Diane Reichert*, our Director of Public Policy, has exercised her expertise regarding policy to ensure that our branch establishes policies in keeping with the AAUW philosophy and provides guidance in implementing appropriate policies as needed.
- *Peg Tabor* has been a primary facilitator in the utilization of Zoom. From developing a “how to” information sheet to being available for questions and working to increase members’ comfort level, to handling the mechanics of Zoom at Board and General Meetings, Peg has been invaluable to ensuring that meetings run smoothly and to increasing members’ comfort level with Zoom.

All these awardees will be receiving certificates in the mail.

As we conclude this year, we thank all of you who have helped make this year a success and wish you a happy, healthy summer! As the summer moves toward fall, we remind you to look for information in your e-mail regarding programs and activities for Lake Sumter AAUW Branch in 2021-2022.

Wishing all a healthy, happy summer,
Anne and Katie

State Leadership Conference

Our Lake Sumter AAUW branch was well represented at the Florida Leadership Conference in mid-April. Linda Carpenter and Jacquie Latzer were featured presenters for the Saturday morning session when they shared their strategy for developing a diversity plan for our branch. Ann Marie Lombardi created the PowerPoint presentation that was used for a 5-minute video describing how our branch came together, shared programs, raised scholarship funds, and grew in members during the past year of social distancing. There were 10 other branches who also shared their activities and successes during the “What’s Happening Around the State” 55-minute video.

At the general meeting on Sunday, we were reminded of the issues that are before the legislature and the important role we can play, not only on Lobby Days by contacting our representatives, but also during the year when bills relating to AAUW mission objectives of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion are up for vote. Judy Bonn, our branch Public Policy Chair, has been an active participant in Lobby Days and encourages members to be a voice using the research provided by National and State AAUW when formulating their decisions.

Janet Petro, conference keynote speaker and Deputy Director at NASA Kennedy Space Center, encouraged women to pursue their dreams and aspirations. In response to the question of equitable pay for women, Ms. Petro stated that one of her goals in her current position is to provide opportunities to all employees to apply for positions that lead to a step up on the ladder to a higher pay scale. The number of women under her authority has increased dramatically in all areas.

One Voice, One Vote presentation encouraged all members to let their voice be heard and to vote on the Open Membership proposal.

Membership

Voice Your Vote for AAUW's Future

Please vote in the AAUW National Election. This year, National is asking members to weigh in on four board candidates and amendments to our Public Policy Priorities and

bylaws, including a proposal to eliminate AAUW's longstanding membership degree requirement.

National hopes you'll consider voting to remove this prerequisite to membership, which leadership believes is unnecessary. While AAUW will never stop championing women's education, the AAUW National Board believes that, to achieve equity for all, we mustn't exclude anyone who wants to join our fight.

You can review the candidate bios and other information on the [National Election](#) page of our website. You should have received an email with instructions to vote. If you haven't, please check your spam filter or visit <https://aauw.us/emailoptions> to update your email preferences. You can also get your member ID and PIN for voting by contacting connect@aauw.org.

Voting closes at 5:00 p.m. on May 17, 2021.

Meetings

May 15 General Meeting Preview



The May program will be our year-end General Meeting. Please be sure to join us as we reflect on how we came together to overcome unprecedented challenges and the many, many ways we reached our objectives and achieved success.

During the General Meeting we will celebrate the outgoing Board of Directors and Executive Committee and install our new officers and welcome our new 2021-2022 Executive Committee.

You will also hear from several branch leaders, who have worked so diligently during this difficult year, to learn more about successful initiatives and the go-forward plans. Together, we will begin to outline expectations on the actions we need to take to set the pace for next year...a year that will, hopefully, bring us back to face-to-face gatherings. See you on Zoom May 15!

SAVE THE DATE!

Annual EqualiTea

August 26, 2021

Rohan Recreation Center



April 24 General Meeting Follow Up

Lake and Sumter Counties Teachers of the Year: Students' Needs



Our April 24 General Meeting program featured Lake County Teacher of the Year Shannon Clark (pictured at right) and Sumter County Teacher of the Year Brittany Brown (pictured below left). Whether you attended or reviewed the Zoom recording, you heard moderator Dr. Susan Gold

ask them to share student or classroom needs.



Shannon talked about her fourth-grade students needs for water bottles. The fountains have been shut off due to Covid and students often went all day without anything to drink. She told us that while they wear uniforms, there's a great need for shoes. And classroom supplies as well as backpacks (any color/size) are always appreciated.



Brittany told us she, too, always has a need for supplies of any kind, but her big, number one request is new books...any books for any reading level...to help fill her third and fourth grade library shelves. Many students do not own a book and rely on the classroom library. As a reading teacher, having an array of books is vital.

Want to help? Between now and our September 18 meeting at the Allamanda Recreation Center, you can contact Ann Marie Lombardi or Susan Gold to arrange for a house drop off or if you need a pick-up at your house. If you're not in town, you can order from Amazon, Walmart, etc. and ship to Ann Marie or Susan directly (let one of them know arrival date).

After September 18, Susan will personally deliver the donations to both teachers. So, please let Ann Marie or Susan know how you'd like to help. And thank you for your support of these two amazing teachers who are so dedicated to communities we serve.

Racism Discussion Series

May – Session #10: The May 2021 session of the Racism Discussion Series will be held on the 26th from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Zoom. This session will be an Open Forum, offering participants an opportunity to review preparatory materials from our first nine topics and make comments, ask questions, and engage in discussion about race, racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Announcements for the session along with the link to register and the list of preparatory materials used in the first nine sessions will be out in early May. If you have already registered for at least one session, you will receive an announcement automatically via email. If you would like to join the discussion but have not registered before, send an email to divcomaauw@gmail.com to request the registration link. Once you register, Zoom will send you a link to join the meeting.

This series is free and open to the public. So, feel free to share announcements, registration materials, and video links with friends and family around the country. And if you've found the preparatory materials helpful, feel free to share them as well to broaden the conversation. If you would like to receive a copy of the materials list, you can request it in an email to divcomaauw@gmail.com. And to be more inclusive, we have recently added closed captioning to the discussions for participants whose hearing is challenged.

Discussion Videos. Videos from previous discussions are now on YouTube. Search on YouTube for "Race Discussion Series," which is the name of our channel. When the results come up, you can identify our recordings by their titles, for example, "Discussion 1 – Racism 101."

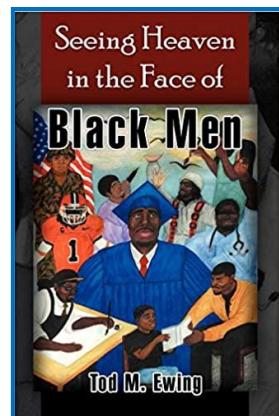
We have posted eight of the first nine videos to our channel (Discussions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9); the video for our second discussion, which focused on White Privilege, is on YouTube and can be accessed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIpfoottfps>. Titles of the other recordings currently on our channel are "Discussion 3 – Antiracism," "Discussion 4 – Implicit Bias," "Discussion 5 – Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome," "Discussion 6 – Microaggressions," "Discussion 7 – Implications and Impacts of Confederate Monuments," "Discussion 8 – Systemic Racism: Housing," and "Systemic Racism: Voting Rights."

Future Sessions: The Racism Discussion Series will alter its schedule for the summer to account for travel and vacation plans. We will meet on Wednesday, July 28 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for one summer discussion. The topic will be Purpose-Driven Communities with a focus on the Lift Orlando project. The discussion will be on Zoom and registration links will be out in early July. And beginning in September, the Series will resume monthly discussions on Zoom.

Great Reads from the Diversity Committee

This month's Great Read is *Seeing Heaven in the Face of Black Men* by Tod M. Ewing. The following is drawn from the book's preface.

“What is it about? It’s about why so few Whites and so few Blacks expect to see heaven (beauty, strength, dignity, spirituality) in the face of Black men. It’s about what I see, think I see, and feel about race as it crops up and pops up on a daily basis. It’s about my inner struggles, inner dialogues, and daily experiences trying to make sense of it all and understand it. It’s about my hard-gained understanding—derived from my life experience and from facilitating diversity workshops for the last twenty-plus years, many of them focused on race—that the only way toward racial unity and justice in this country, or any country, is to recognize the essentially spiritual nature of the problem/disease of racism and to apply spiritual, yet practical, solutions.”



In *Seeing Heaven in the Face of Black Men*, Mr. Ewing offers us a deep look at the day-to-day realities, the vigilance it takes, when one is Black in America. Written in a conversational style Mr. Ewing gets real, a bit like *Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man* (written 11 years later than this book) – but on steroids.

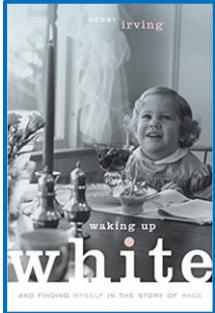
He shares the emotional pain and anger associated with race, and by sharing it honestly and calling on his “higher self,” sets an example of how rather than denying it, creates a space for healing and motivation for change.

The book “calls for a profound and dramatic transformation of consciousness on the part of both...” blacks and whites. In asking us to see heaven in the face of black men, he encourages us to release the stereotypical image many of us have acquired and replace it with, as he defines heaven, as dignity, honor, strength, and beauty. We are asked to rise to our better selves in recognizing these qualities and in recognizing the interconnectedness of all humanity. This transformation will have a profound impact on our world.

Reviewed by *Jacquie Latzer, Diversity Committee Co-Chair*

And for your summer reading pleasure... .

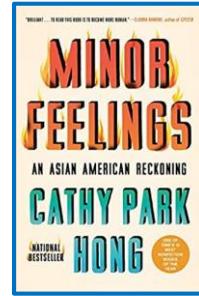
With our branch newsletter going on hiatus for the summer, and with an abundance of great reads, the Diversity Committee offers these books to continue your exploration of race and racism. The information about each book comes from the committee member who read and recommended it. And all books are in the Sumter County Library.



Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race is an easy, eye-opening read as author, Debby White, reveals how her White, privileged, upper socio-economic life has contributed to systemic racism. In a brutally honest, courageous account, she shares her observations and explorations into race as she unravels the complexities of how merely being White reinforces racial inequities that continue to thrive in our society today.

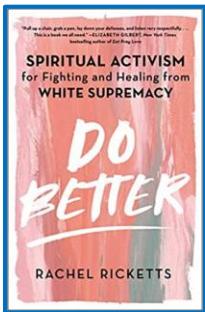
Reviewed by Jeannie Hamilton, Diversity Committee Member

Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning by Cathy Park Hong is a collection of essays – half memoir and half antiracist manifesto on her Asian American racial experiences. Brutally accurate, sobering picture of race relations in America. “Minor feelings” are a racialized range of emotions described as negative, dysphoric, built from the sediment of everyday racial experiences of being slighted with racial undertones. It is an irritant of having one’s perception of reality constantly questioned, dismissed, and it never totally dissipates.



An empowering, illuminating, and inspiring read.

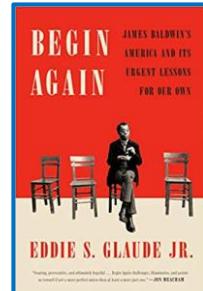
Reviewed by Espi Walmsley, Diversity Committee Member



In her unique Black voice, Rachel Ricketts has written *Do Better: Spiritual Activism for Fighting and Healing from White Supremacy*, a manual “directed primarily to, though not for, white women.” Each chapter ends with a spiritual exercise to nourish your soul and/or actionable suggestions to promote racial understanding and unity. “It starts here. It starts now. It starts with *you*.” Some adult language.

Reviewed by Diane Starr, Diversity Committee Member

James Baldwin was one of the major thinkers, writers, and critics of the civil rights era of the last century. *In Begin Again: James Baldwin's America and Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own*, Professor Eddie S. Glaude, Jr., revisits Baldwin's ideas, particularly America's failure to confront the lies it tells itself about race, and reexamines them in the light of current times. As Glaude describes it, the book is a mix of history, biography, and literary criticism. It is well and clearly written but it's not a beach book and requires thoughtful reading.



Reviewed by Linda Carpenter, Diversity Committee Co-Chair

Tech Trek

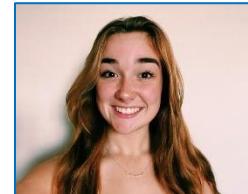
Our branch will be sending four girls to the Tech Trek Virtual Camp July 19-23, 2021. Two of the girls are from the 2020 candidates who were not able to attend camp last year due to COVID. They are Aspyn Sarah Winter from South Sumter Middle School and Caroline Cannon from The Villages Charter Middle School. The other girls from last year chose not to attend. The 2021 girls are both from South Sumter Middle School: Jaylee Elizabeth Lewis and Maisie Vega. The camp will run from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for the week. It will include Virtual Field Trips, STEM workshops, panels of women in the STEM field for presentations and discussions, and video projects. We hope to be able to invite these campers to a general meeting in the future to share their experiences.

Scholarship News

With the assistance of key leaders in both Lake Sumter State College and Beacon College applications for our AAUW branch scholarships were distributed to eligible women across the campuses over the last few months. We received 11 applications by the April 15 deadline; members of the scholarship committee reviewed them and selected six for interviews. The winners will be identified at the May 15 General Meeting. Committee members reviewing the applications and selecting the winners are Susan Gold, Diane Jacobson, Gretchen Lewis, Kathy Mason, and Marge McQueston.

We have received updates from two recent recipients.

A year 2000 recipient, *Jordan Threlfall*, is a student at the University of Central FL currently majoring in Computer Engineering with the hope of developing technology to create new, immersive experiences in the theme park industry. Most of her classes were online during the past two semesters and she finished the year with a 4.0 GPA. She also joined the Themed Entertainment Association and the Society of Women Engineers where she became the Outreach Officer.



A year 2021 recipient, *Josie Goodman*, graduated from Lake Sumter State College with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree and will be continuing her education in graduate school specializing in Women and Children's health. She is a single mom with two children and is currently employed at Waterman hospital in Tavares. This past year she received a special award for excellence in nursing care.

Office Depot / Office Max Purchasing Card

Several years ago, AAUW National stopped making hard copies of brochures and other printed materials available to the branches. Instead, they offered materials on their website and granted permission to branches to download and print them as needed. To offset branch printing costs, National arranged for members to receive discount purchasing cards for use at Office Depot and Office Max stores. At the time, the discount on copying was up to 80%.



Initially, members received the cards in ground mail. Although members have not received cards in recent years, the program is still in operation. Now, members can print their own cards at <http://officediscounts.org/aauw.html> and save up to 75%. In addition to printing your own in-store card, there are also links and codes for using the card for online purchases.

Please note...this discount is available to you for any personal printing needs that you have, not just AAUW material!

Activities

Special Events for 2021-22

It is exciting to finally be able to plan for next year's special events. We are looking forward to being able to once again get together for a Spice & Tea Exchange luncheon, eight weeks of Great Decisions discussions, a Farewell to the old Mah Jongg Card party, and more fun events that we can arrange. Let Diane Jacobson know of any ideas and how you would like to help with special events. All ideas are welcome so send an email to Diane (diandchas@gmail.com) with your thoughts.

Bridge is Back!

Monday bridge is resuming with Barbara Fisler (352-446-0039) and Carol Zoellner (352-753-4711) facilitating.

Thursday Bridge is resuming with Karen Pickelsimer (352-775-9683) facilitating.

Please call to sign up and for additional details.

Singles Group - Upcoming Events

Beach Trip to New Smyrna Beach

Date: Thursday, May 13 (Rain date: Sunday, May 14)
Cost: \$20/car.
Meet: 9:15 a.m. at Colony Recreation Center (pool end).
Bring: towel, chair, sunscreen, finger food/drink to share.
Return: by 5:15 p.m.
Contacts: Gay Birchard (231-742-6230) or Ginger Ryan (518-421-4454).

Winter Park Playhouse: *Crazy for Gershwin*

Date: Saturday, August 14, 2:00 p.m. matinee
Cost: \$36/ticket – **tickets are nonrefundable**
Send check to Nancy Hartshorn NLT May 14,
2173 Elton Place, TV 32162.
Meet: 12:00 p.m. at Colony Recreation Center parking lot
Return: by 8:00 p.m.
We will carpool so will need drivers (one car for every 4 women).
Contacts: Nancy Hartshorn (614-578-4322) or Barbara Fieldman (352-350-2950, 321-663-1858).

Get-Togethers This Summer?

It has been quite a year and many of us have missed our being together for our usual activities, one being our Summer Breakfasts. And, hopefully by now, we have all received our covid-19 vaccine shot. So maybe we might try easing into getting together again over the summer.

We might start by meeting outside, since not everyone is comfortable yet with eating inside. We could bring our own drinks, or not, with the focus on being together.

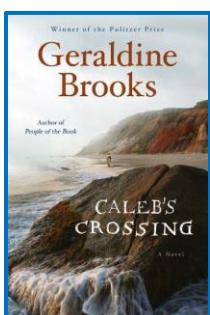
Realizing summer is hot even early in the morning, while we start meeting outside we can investigate where we might meet/eat inside.

But first, we would like to know if you are interested in attending. Let us know the following:

- I plan to attend no matter where it is held, either inside or outside
- I plan only to attend if it is outside
- I plan only to attend if it is inside
- No, I do not plan to attend

Please respond to Blanche Boyne at bboyne54@gmail.com and Jacquie Latzer at jacquie.latzer@gmail.com. It would help if you respond by May 10.

Diversity Book Club



The Diversity Book Club will meet via Zoom at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, May 19 to discuss *Caleb's Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks. Jeannie Hamilton will facilitate the discussion.

In June we will be reading *Simon the Fiddler* by Paulette Jiles and meeting via Zoom to discuss the book on Wednesday, June 16 at 10:30 a.m. Blanche Boyne will lead the discussion.

Our July read is *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins. We will be meeting via Zoom to discuss this book on Wednesday, July 21 at 10:30 a.m. Blanche Boyne will lead our discussion.

Finally, we will meet at 10:30 am on Wednesday, August 18 to select our books for the 2021-22 year. Anyone who plans to participate in the book club next year is welcome to attend this August Zoom meeting. To receive an invitation, advise Kate Manion via email at kmanion52@gmail.com and your name will be added to the distribution.

Book Club Selections for 2020-2021

	Title	Author	Facilitator
May 19	<i>Caleb's Crossing</i>	Geraldine Brooks	Jeannie Hamilton
June 16	<i>Simon the Fiddler</i>	Paulette Jiles	Blanche Boyne
July 21	<i>American Dirt</i>	Jeanine Cummins	Blanche Boyne
Aug. 18	<i>Selection of 2021-22 Books</i>		



Have a Great Summer! Here's to vacations and family visits. See you in the Fall

Editor: Beth Hicks
aauwlsnews@gmail.com

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- National: <https://www.aauw.org>
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