American Association of University Women
Lake / Sumter (FL) Branch, Inc.
A Tax-exempt 501(c)(3) Organization

Learn – Connect – Support

November 2026 Newsletter

A Message from your 2026-2027 Co-presidents



November is a month about friends and giving thanks. It is a great time to reach out to your friends to let them share in the friendship that comes from being a member of Lake and Sumter branch of AAUW.

Since it is also about giving thanks, our November meeting will highlight our scholarship recipients. We will hear from women who are truly thankful for the assistance that our branch scholarship has afforded them. It is gratifying to be associated with this branch because of the support that it gives to local women in the form of scholarships to assist in their college education.

The 2026 midterm elections marked significant milestones for women's political representation nationwide. In response to the results, AAUW Chief Executive Officer, Gloria L Blackwell, issued the following statement:

"Voters across the country made their voices heard in these midterms.

. A record number of women from both parties are projected to serve as governors.

. Four states elected women governors for the first time.

. The first Black woman and the first Native American woman ever elected governor of a U.S. state.

. The first Native American woman to the U.S. Senate and three Black women are set to serve there together for the first time."

As a result of the Lake and Sumter scholarship assistance it is hoped that more local young women can see themselves in positions of responsibility in government, education, and business.

Be sure to sign up for our holiday lunch in December and then to start the year our January meeting will highlight local girls (7th graders going into 8th grade). These girls attended Tech Trek camp in the summer of 2026. This is just the start of a great year. Looking forward to sharing it with you and our new members.

Elizabeth White and Sue Laluk, Co-presidents Lake and Sumter branch of AAUW

Editor's Note from Leslie Flanders

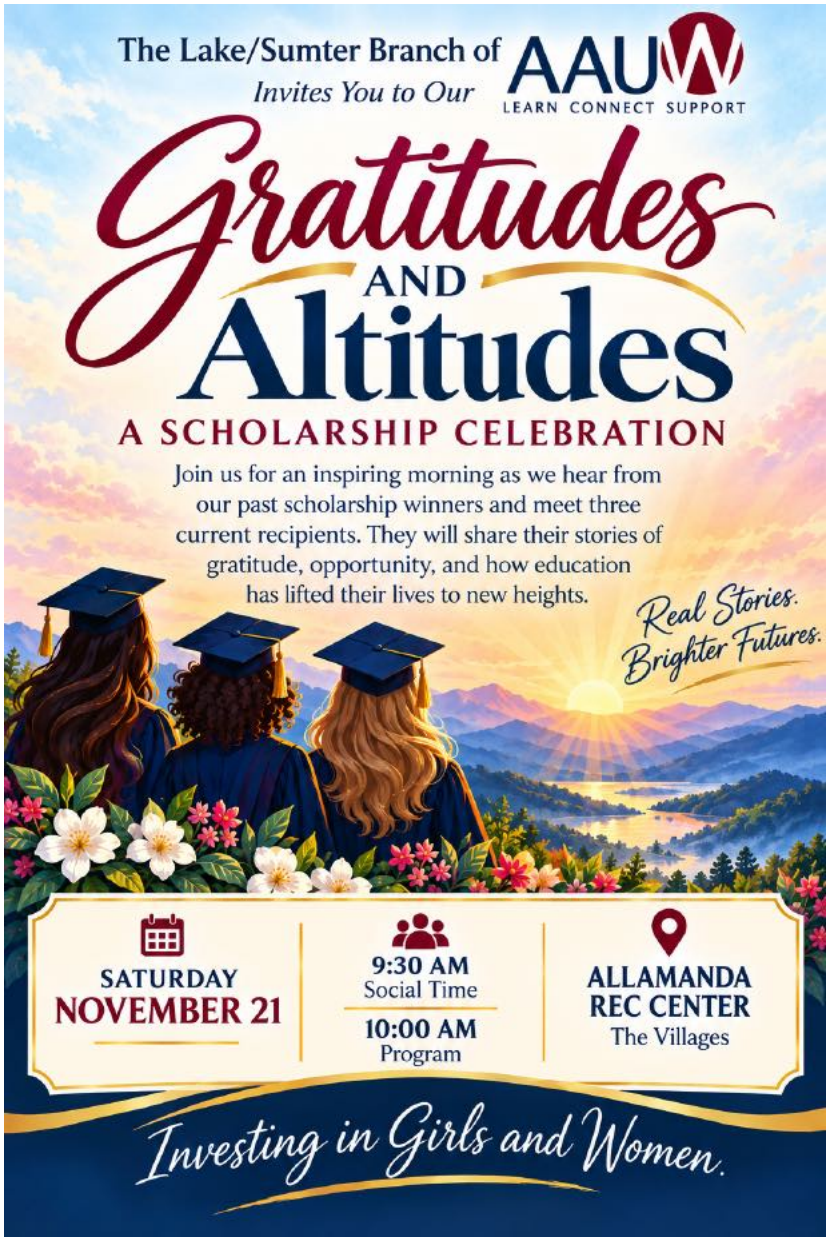
This newsletter contains lots of information about upcoming events for the next 3 months so please read through it and plan to attend the exciting events in store (literally) for you! That is how you will get to know us and we know that knowing us is what will make you want to remain a member. If you have any questions, please text me at (859)321-7171.

SAVE THE DATES - Later in this newsletter for your future planning!

LEARN

Upcoming General Monthly Meetings

Saturday NOVEMBER 21st



Let's ALL make our many guests feel very welcome!

OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Saturday, DECEMBER 5th

NOTE: Checks and Cash will be accepted for payment at our October and November meetings. And, you will choose your entree then.



GREAT DECISIONS 2027 - Topics are now In!

We are planning to hold this 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 a geo-political and historical perspective. We use their prepared text and read one chapter per week on the topic of the 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.

This year we will be having two groups: **one on Mondays and one on Tuesdays for 8 weeks**. Our meetings will begin on Tuesday, January 19. The meetings will end on March 9 (8 weeks). The time is 9:00- 10:30.

Our meeting place will be T**he Sumter Country Villages Annex Conference Room** at 8033 East CR 466 near the corner of Morse Blvd.

Great Decisions 2027 Topics

Edited by G. John Ikenberry.

American Foreign Policy and the Future of Multilateralism Auther: G. John Ikenberry
American Options in the Middle East Author: Phil Gordon
The Future of Germany in Europe and the Atlantic World Author: Liana Fix
U.S.-China: The Case for Engagement Author: Zongyuan Zoe Liu
Brazil and the Global South: Confronting a New America Author: Matias Spektor
AI and American Choices Author: Michael Horowitz
Energy Security: Challenges for American Foreign Policy Author: Samantha Gross
Organized Crime in the Americas Authors: Jorge Castaneda and Lisa Sanchez

Since the original deadline for ordering books as a group, please contact Christine at (617) 281-3815 if you are still wanting to participate.

Christine Lokem-Kim, Discussion Leader

Your AAUW Book Club

An Invitation to All Readers

Our November 18th discussion of The Briar Club by Kate Quinn will be facilitated by Sue Egloff.
A haunting and powerful story of female friendships and secrets in a Washington, DC, boardinghouse. Capturing the paranoia of the McCarthy era and evoking the changing roles for women in postwar America
For December 9th, (Please note this is the second Wednesday)
in lieu of a book discussion, we will enjoy a
Holiday luncheon at 11:30
Orange Blossom Country Club Restaurant
1542 Water Tower Circle, Lady Lake, FL 32159
There is no set meal; you may order directly from the menu.
Friends and guests are welcome.

Please make your reservation for the Holiday Luncheon at the November 19th book discussion or by email **katiehaviland1@gmail.com before December 1, 2026.**

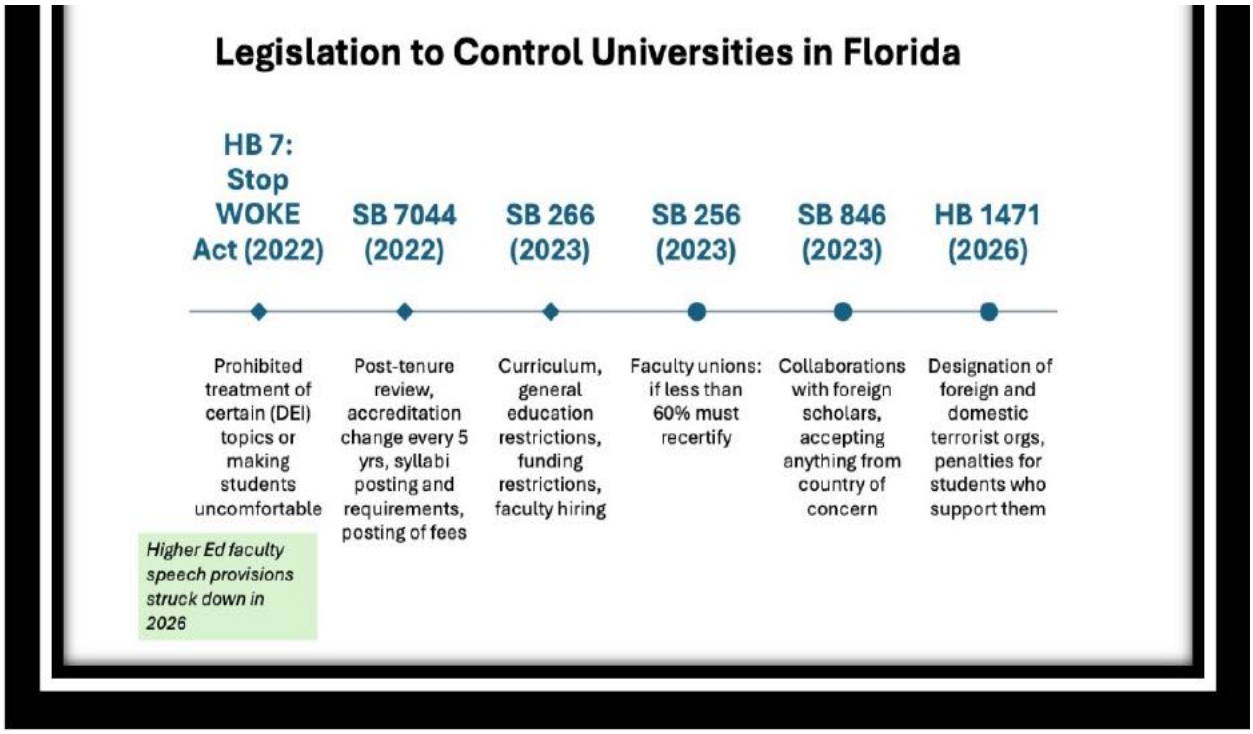
AAUW Book selections for 2026 - 2027			
Title Author	**Facilitator**	**Month & Date**	**Summary**
The Briar Club by Kate Quinn	**Sue Egloff**	**November 18**	A haunting and powerful story of female friendships and secrets in a Washington, DC, boardinghouse. Capturing the paranoia of the McCarthy era and evoking the changing roles for women in postwar America
Holiday Luncheon Reservations with Katie Haviland	**SAVE the DATE**	**December 9 11:30**	**Orange Blossom Country Club Restaurant** **1542 Water Tower Circle Lady Lake FL 32159** Make reservation with: katiehaviland1@gmail.com before December 1, 2026
The River We Remember by William Kent Krueger	**Kris Tygrett**	**January 20**	A shocking murder in a small Minnesota town exposes deep racial tensions and dark secrets, forcing a war-scarred sheriff to confront his own demons.
The Book Club for Troublesome Women by Marie Bostwick	**Leslie Flanders**	**February 17**	A humorous, thought provoking, and nostalgic romp through one pivotal and tumultuous American year--as well as an ode to self-discovery, persistence, and the power of sisterhood. Margaret never really *meant* to start a book club . . . or a feminist revolution.
Theo of Golden by Allen Levi	**Sally Wickman**	**March 17**	A story of giving and receiving, of seeing and being seen, *Theo of Golden* is a beautifully crafted novel about the power of creative generosity, the importance of wonder to a purposeful life, and the invisible threads of kindness that bind us to one
Team of Rivals by Doris Kearns Goodwin	**Sue Banner**	**April 21**	One of the most influential books of the past fifty years, *Team of Rivals* is Pulitzer Prize–winning author and esteemed presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin's modern classic about the political genius of Abraham Lincoln, his unlikely presidency, and his cabinet of former political foes.
Crow Mary by Kathleen Grissom	**Beth Hicks**	**May 19**	The life story of Goes First, Crow Mary, a real-life Indigenous woman of the Crow (Apsáalooke) nation who lived in 19th-century North America. Through her story, Grissom focuses on the Colonial Trauma and Indigenous Survival , and Cultural Conflict and Cross-Cultural Understanding
The Correspondent by Virginia Evans	**Dee Sherman**	**June 16**	Exploration of the life of septuagenarian Sybil Van Antwerp as she cultivates her longstanding letter-writing habit to address the loves, regrets, successes, and failings of her life.
Remember by Lisa Genova	**Katie Haviland**	**September 15**	A fascinating exploration of the intricacies of how we remember, why we forget, and what we can do to protect our memories by a Harvard-trained neuroscientist

Katie Haviland and Kate Manion, Co-chairs

Public Policy Update

By Lisa French

A forum was held on October 22 to discuss Higher Education Governance in Florida. Beginning in 2022, the Florida Legislature passed substantial legislation to influence and restrict institutions of higher learning. The chart below lists the names of the relevant laws.
There is significant concern among AAUW Public Policy representatives and the teaching professionals of Florida Universities. The details of individual laws are found online. The concern is the trend to increasing restriction and control.



A Special Event is Coming!

On the evening of **Friday, March 5th,** the Lake Sumter branch of AAUW is sponsoring the premier of a very special film entitled

"The Power We Hold"

at the Sumter Landing Epic Theater

Click the link below and scroll down to the movie trailer to check it out. Also check out the Iron Butterfly Media podcast for some fascinating stories about female spies.

Mark your calendar for the evening showing along with Q&A moderated by **our own Lisa French**. Details later.

IRON BUTTERFLY MEDIA

https://www.thepowerweholdfilm.com/

CONNECT

AAUW Happy Hour at Evans Prairie CC

Every 3rd Monday at 4 pm



Yes, that's what it says! A chance for us to gather and get to know each other in a relaxed venue with no time limit. PLEASE wear your AAUW name badge!!

This month on Monday, NOVEMBER 16TH at 4pm

RSVP via text or email to Elizabeth White by **November 15th** so she can reserve tables for us. (201) 749-0845 elizabethwhite2000@yahoo.com

Mark your calendars now for this monthly get-together on the 3rd Monday of each month! Cheers! It is for members to get better acquainted. Also, if you know someone who might be interested in joining our AAUW branch bring her along. This is not a couples event or a formal organized event. There is no agenda, just a casual, relaxed get-together once a month to share a drink, a soda, a snack or meal with other educated women.

Wednesday "Morning Mingle" at Panera

Every Wednesday morning around 9:30, **we invite you** to find us at Panera in Lake Sumter Landing to get acquainted, talk about any topic that arises, and just relax with friends who enjoy being with friends! You'll be glad you came! If you have an AAUW name badge, please wear it! AND, bring a friend who might be interested in learning about AAUW.



Mahjong

Contact **Barbara Fieldman** if you are interested in playing Mahjong on Wednesday afternoons. bfieldman@gmail.com

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Our NEW Website

Alice Watts has created an entire new version of our website! Please go there and realize that it has all the information you will ever need about our branch! And, in the Members Only section you can use our secret password to find out all sorts of things you may not have known about our branch and how we function. We are so grateful for her time and expertise she is contributing without even being a member of our branch!

http://lakesumteraauw.org

DAY TRIPS

(By the time you read this, you have probably enjoyed or missed out on the following. Watch for photos next month.)

Join AAUW members for a bus ride, private buffet lunch, and flamenco show in the historic Columbia Restaurant in Ybor City on November 13. The cost is $96. Say you are with AAUW when you call 352-776-2500. Make your reservation today with Workman.
https://workmantravel.com/the-villages-day-trips

Angela Vickers, Day Trip Coordinator

SUPPORT


AAUW
Lake/Sumter Branch
An Enchanting Evening of
Wine, Art & Music
Awaits!
Thursday, January 7th
6:30 pm to 9:00 pm
1575 Golden Ridge Drive
Join us for a delightful evening featuring
the captivating live music of
Claudia Schmidt
playing guitar and dulcimer,
a special silent charity auction showcasing
original artwork created by our talented
AAUW members, and the pleasure of
sharing wine, art, and friendship—
all while supporting a wonderful cause!
Only 40 Reservations
Are Available!
Reserve your place today
by texting Leslie at 859-321-7171
and making your $40 donation.
Come for the music, discover a piece of art to treasure, and leave with wonderful
memories—knowing you've helped make a difference!

Tech Trek for Girls

Preparations for 2027 Tech Trek Summer Camps have begun. The two week-long residential camps will be held in June at Stetson University in Deland and Florida Atlantic University in Jupiter. A total of 96 girls from throughout Florida will have the opportunity to participate in numerous STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) workshops.

Schools in Lake and Sumter counties have received the nominations materials for the 2027 Tech Trek Summer Camps. 7th grade math or science teachers must submit their nominations by mid-December. A maximum of five girls per school can be nominated. Each nominee must submit an application to AAUW Florida by January 31, 2027. All AAUW branches will then interview each of the girls and provide feedback to AAUW Florida. Final selections will be made by the end of March.

In prior years, approximately 200 girls throughout Florida are nominated by various branches and about 60% of the nominees submit applications. During the past two summers, 10% of the girls who have attended the Tech Trek Summer Camps have been from Lake and Sumter counties. Due to donations by branch members and other organizations, our branch was able to fund 10 girls at the 2026 Tech Trek Summer Camps who reside in Lake and Sumter counties.

The cost per girl for the 2027 Tech Trek Summer Camps is $1500. Each branch is expected to fully fund each girl who is selected from their counties. The Lake/ Sumter branch relies on donations from individuals, other organizations and clubs, and fundraising. Your personal donations and participation in branch fundraising events are important!

Attendees of the 2026 Summer Camps will be presenting at our branch's **January 23, 2027 General Meeting** which will be held at **Allamanda Recreation Center**. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending this meeting so you can learn about the girls' experiences.

Susan Hanson-Otis, Tech Trek Chair

Scholarships for Women



Each member of the scholarship committee is mentoring one of our scholarship winners. We will begin highlighting each of our students each month. Here is a list of our current scholarship winners, the college or university they are attending, their major, **and the committee member mentoring each student.**

The following 5 students are in their last year of undergraduate study and are receiving our second year of funding.

1. Christina Duncan - Lake Sumter State College (LSSC) - Strategic Leadership - ***Carolee Litwinka***
2. Aponi Zerniak - LSCC - Organizational Management - ***Anne Wilkins***
3. Tiffany Esmalla - LSCC - Nursing - ***Sherry Whallon***
4. Bryleigh Back - University of Florida - Health Education and Behavior - ***Dotty Sasmor***
5. Lindsay Phanord - University of Florida - Nursing - ***Susan Gold***

The Following 2 students are in their junior year of college or university and receiving their first year of funding from us.

6. Alanna Alvarez - LSSC - Nursing - ***Arlene Stein***
7. Tessa Kizito - Beacon College - Business Management/Hospitality - ***Susan Castle***

Our November branch meeting on Saturday, November 21st will feature several of our current and past scholarship winners speaking about how our scholarships have affected their lives.

Susan Gold, Scholarship Chair

The RED MAILBOX!

Because Florida law does not allow us to continue our 50/50 fund raising activity, we will have our **RED MAILBOX** at every general meeting with the hope that you will make small donations that will add up! **$$$$$$$$**

We are a 501(c)(3) charitable organization!

WHAT that means for you and anyone who donates directly to our branch:

As we near the end of the year, the notices arrive asking for end of year donations. **Please keep our Scholarship and Tech Trek funds in mind.** You can make a difference for girls and women who are our neighbors.

If you have investments, and are 71 1/2 or older, you are required to spend what's called an RMD sometime during each year. You can donate this or a portion of it directly to our branch in order to support our projects by contacting the person or company who handles your investments. You might even put us on your holiday gift list!

Or, you can contact our Finance Director, Barbara Fieldman (bfieldman@gmail.com) for more information. Or go to our website (lakesumteraauw.org) and click on Contact Us or Donate.

COMMUNICATION

Newsletter - This newsletter now comes out mid-month between the board and general meetings to keep you informed on the latest happenings so that you can stay involved.

Web Site - Please continue to check the website on a regular basis. Alice is doing a wonderful job of keeping it current. It should be your "go to" if you have any questions about our many activities. If you need the password for the members only part, please click on CONTACT US on the website and we will get it to you.

E-mail Blasts - Carolee Litwinka does an outstanding job of sending you emails to keep you informed when there is a need to know that can't wait until the newsletter. She sends what we call Email Blasts. Please add her name to your contacts to ensure you get our timely news and are ready to open and read it.

Beth Hicks, Communications Director

FUTURE FUND RAISERS

SAVE THIS DATE AND BE THERE!!!

DINNER AT Culvers' Restaurant

Wednesday, December 9th

Between 5 pm and 8 pm

Plan to stop in and bring your friends to the Culver's Restaurant on 466A for dinner and an ice cream treat!

Culvers
5327 Sundance Trl
Wildwood, FL 34785

AAUW will receive a donation of a percent of every penny anyone spends between 5 AND 8 PM! Please spread the word to all of your neighbors and friends. No need to sign anything, just eat and pay your bill!

Check out their menu in advance here:
https://www.culvers.com/menu?oloId=179962

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WEAR It and Spread AAUW Awareness!!!



Stop in at **Custom Apparel** at 3451 Wedgewood Lane, The Villages, and order a shirt or jacket, etc. with our logo on it to spread awareness of our branch of AAUW. They have all kinds of clothing just waiting for our logo!

Thanks for reading this newsletter! And, thanks to all of the contributors and especially our proofreader, **Barbara Combs**! **I so appreciate your getting your articles to me by the day after the 2nd Tuesday of each month.**

Leslie Flanders, Newsletter Editor

AAUW Websites

Local:	LakeSumterAAUW.org
State:	aauw-fl.aauw.net
National:	aauw.org