



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

October 2025

President's Message



It was great to see everyone's faces as we return to another great year for our branch of AAUW!!

Don't forget to check out our website and you will find everything you need to know about our branch of AAUW.

See page 15 for our **NEW** Lake Sumter Branch embroidered logo clothing opportunity.

<http://lakesumterAAUW.org>

We will be printing an addendum for your 24-25 Membership Directories to add to the directory you purchased last season so that you will have info on our many newer members. You can still purchase the directory for \$5 at our general meetings and then add the addendum to it.

So many exciting things happening in our branch this year! Opportunities to learn, connect socially, and to support our Tech Trek and College scholarships.

Let's make this our best year ever!!

Betty Rohan, President
Gay Birchard, Assistant to the President

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We Need YOU!!!
“Dine to Donate”

Do you and your friends enjoy dining together?

Here’s an easy way for all of you to help AAUW send a local girl to Tech Trek camp or help a local woman finish her college degree.

- 1)** Invite 3 or more of your non-AAUW friends to lunch and/or dinner and reserve a table at Arnold Palmer Legends on Tuesday, October 14th!
- 2)** When the server brings the bills, each of you write AAUW on the top of it! It’s that simple!

(Coupons, ad promotions, etc. cannot be used with the 20% bill donation. Gift cards may be used.)

It’s that easy to help us raise funds this year for our branch in support of Tech Trek and Scholarships. AND, there will be 4 more dates throughout this membership year at different country clubs **all owned by the Suleiman Family** who are graciously contributing 20% of your food bill to our branch.

On your way out of the restaurant look for our AAUW **red lock box** on the hostess station. If the hostess sees you drop \$5 or more into the box, she will reward you with a discount voucher for \$10 to use on your next visit.

See our complete flyer on the next page and share it with all of your friends and neighbors by copying and pasting it into a text or email! We want them ALL to attend, with or without you! Thanks in advance for your commitment to this!



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

Suleiman Family
RESTAURANTS
Catering & Events

Dine to Donate Fundraiser

- Dine 11:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., write AAUW on your bill before you pay and Suleiman Family donates 20% of your food bill.
- Drop \$5 or more in red donation box, receive \$10 food voucher to be used on your next visit.
- Coupons, ad promotions, etc. can't be used with 20% food bill donation..

October 14



November 18



January 27



Legacy Restaurant
at the
Nancy Lopez
Country Club

March 10



April 21



Proceeds support Tech Trek STEM Camp for local girls and Scholarships for women completing bachelor's degrees.

CHECK US OUT!

<https://www.lakesumteraaauw.org/>



Learn - Connect - Support

LEARN

Meetings and Programs

Laura McLaughlin and Kathy Howe, Program Co-chairs

October General Meeting

Saturday, October 25, 2025

LOCATION: THE PALACE IN LEESBURG!!

414 WEST MAIN ST.

LEESBURG, FL 34748

Doors open at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and conversation.

Program starts at 10:00 a.m



Our October meeting features a unique opportunity to hear from several Beacon College students, followed by a time for questions and answers.

Founded in 1989 by a group of visionary parents of students with learning disabilities, Beacon College is devoted exclusively to serving the needs of the neurodiverse. US News & World Report ranks Beacon #1 in the nation in this special category.

We will get a glimpse into the current lives of each student and discover a bit about their journeys thus far. It promises to be an insightful time.

Should you wish to **carpool** to Beacon College please meet at the Eisenhower Rec Center **by 8:50 am and we will leave at 9 am sharp.**

Three members have agreed to drive and there may be others.

Gay Birchard

Betty Rohan

Leslie Flanders

Simply enter the parking lot and locate the group on the left as you enter.

Volunteers Needed

for October 25th General Meeting at Beacon College



Enjoy baking pumpkin bread? Want to purchase a delicious apple pastry, cider donuts, or make tasty cheese and fruit plate?

Please email or text Ann Marie and volunteer to bring food items for our October meeting. A special thank you to members who have already signed up at our September meeting.

Happy Fall!

Ann Marie Lombardi am.lombardi1956@gmail.com 352-638-0550.

Our 501(c)(3) and You

As the calendar year draws to a close, our mailboxes will fill up with appeals from many different causes. We all have our favorites. As you get ready for your year end donations, please remember your AAUW 501c3 fund. You give and local young women will benefit from your generosity. Tech Trek and scholarships prosper thanks to all. Remember, no gift is too small.



Many thanks for your past donations!

Beth Hicks
501c3 Committee

Public Policy: Principles and Priorities

AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity for women and girls through research, education, and advocacy. As AAUW members nationwide we are asked to focus advocacy efforts on principles established by AAUW national. Last May focuses and priorities for 2025–2027 were delineated. They intentionally are described as bold and grounded.



The first paragraph reads:

AAUW opposes all forms of discrimination on the basis of age, disability, race, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, geographical location, national origin, religious beliefs, pregnancy or parental status, or socioeconomic status, and supports constitutional protection for the civil rights of all individuals.

Monthly zoom meetings are held with national AAUW that provide updated information and suggestions relevant to our principles. This section of the newsletter shares with members what's going on and maybe what we can do to further what we stand for.

I'm Lisa French and I agreed to attend the meetings and pass along the essence of messages received. We are all bombarded with information and it is difficult to winnow out and decipher it all. I will try to pair the principles with content of the meetings and local concerns. This is new territory for me so we will see how it goes.

Lisa French, Public Policy Chair



Embracing Community (formerly known as DEI)

This change preserves our intent to provide stimulating learning opportunities for our members around diversity, equity, and inclusion while also using somewhat more neutral terms to describe our focus. The new name also reflects the trajectory of our work over the last five years, from direct learning about racism and its impacts to learning how to address our differences in positive and productive ways.

This year's programming will feature three avenues for members to pursue learning around Embracing Community.

➤ **Opportunities Clearinghouse**

This program, new this year, will provide listings of upcoming online and in-person learning events that members can pursue independently. Opportunities will be published in the newsletter each month.

This month, we introduce **Braver Angels** (<https://braverangels.org/>), an organization whose mission is “bringing Americans together to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen our democratic mission.” While Braver Angels’ focus is largely on political differences, the skills the group teaches apply much more broadly.

Their programming includes numerous formats. Their **short, free eCourses** “provide an effective and ‘safe’ way to interact with people in difficult situations.” Offered online, each course takes about 40 minutes to work through.

eCourse: Depolarizing Within (<https://braverangels.org/register-for-an-ecourse/?ecourse=DW>)

This course helps you become more aware of your own inner polarizer, learn to be critical without stereotyping or showing contempt, and build skills to respond constructively when conversations turn toward ridicule or dismissiveness.

Braver Angels also offers **free podcasts**. Public Health On Call, Episode 906 addresses **Here to Understand: How Braver Angels is Orchestrating Tough Public Health Conversations** is described this way:

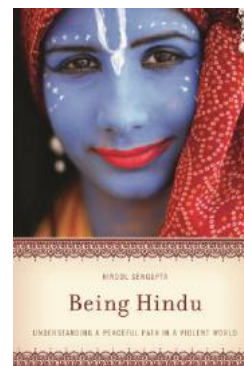
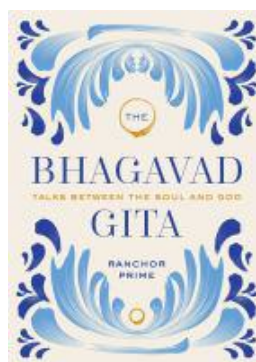
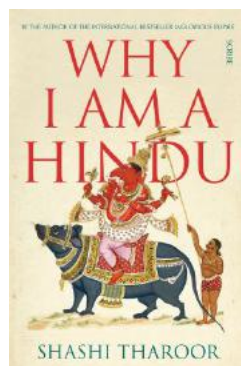
In 2016, the nonprofit Braver Angels was founded to bring together diverse groups of people to try and figure out why productive communication has become so difficult. During the pandemic, the conversations got even harder. In this episode: Braver Angels is bringing together questioners and supporters of public health to hear each other out with a goal of humanizing, understanding, and remembering that “everyone is worth listening to.”

Listen to this episode here: <https://tinyurl.com/5edmy7v3>

GREAT READS

from the Embracing Community Committee

HINDU AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH – October is a month of Hindu American heritage appreciation and awareness. This month includes traditional holidays like Diwali, the festival of lights, and Navaratri, a nine-day festival celebrating the Hindu deity Durga. It is also the birth month of Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu spiritual leader. Learn more about the world's oldest living religion by reading about unique Hindu symbols, philosophies and customs.



Why I am a Hindu (2018) by Shashi Tharoor

Shashi Tharoor, India's leading public intellectual, lays out Hinduism's origins and its key philosophical concepts, major texts and everyday Hindu beliefs and practices, from worship to pilgrimage to caste. He is unsparing in his criticism of extremism and unequivocal in his belief that what makes India a distinctive nation with a unique culture will be imperiled if Hindu fundamentalists seize the high ground.

The Bhagavad Gita: Talks Between the Soul and God (2021) by Ranchor Prime

At its heart, the classic *Bhagavad Gita* deals with the mysteries of life: the nature of the Self, the Universe/Higher Power, and the World. Spoken on a battlefield, it is a conversation between the soul and an Avatar, a Divine Being. Prime's version is distinguished by his nonsectarian approach, making the Gita relevant to those of all religions or none and emphasizing the link between spirituality and self-development. Translated into English from the original Sanskrit, this edition is one of the most accessible versions for the general public.

Being Hindu: Understanding a Peaceful Path in a Violent World (2018)

by Hindol Sengupta

Being Hindu is a practitioner's guide that takes the reader on a journey to very simply understand what the Hindu message is, where it stands in the clash of civilizations between Islam and Christianity, and why the Hindu way could yet be the path for plurality and progress in the twenty-first century.

**OCTOBER is also ITALIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH and
FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH**

**Jacquie Latzer & Linda Carpenter
Embracing Community Co-Chairs**

Book Club: An Invitation to All Readers

YOU are ALL invited to join the AAUW Book Discussion Group

OUR FIRST BOOK DISCUSSION:

Date: Wednesday, October 15 at 10:30 am

Location: Sheriff's annex corner of 466 and Morse Blvd

Book: **A Street Cat Named Bob (and How He Saved My Life)** by James Bowen
James is a street musician struggling to make ends meet. Bob is a stray cat looking for somewhere warm to sleep. When James and Bob meet, they forge a never-to-be-forgotten friendship.

October discussion leader: Carolyn Pasquale.

NOVEMBER BOOK DISCUSSION:

Date: Wednesday, November 19 at 10:30 am

Location: Sheriff's annex corner of 466 and Morse Blvd

Book: **The Light Pirate** by Lily Brooks-Dalton

Set in a near-future Florida submerged by climate change, *The Light Pirate* is a harrowing, beautifully written tale of adaptation, survival, and transformation. It's rich with magical realism, unforgettable characters, and themes that feel both timely and timeless.

November discussion leader: Sue Laluc

by Katie Haviland for Kate Manion, AAUW Book Discussion Group Facilitator

Day Trips

Our Travel Committee plans two trips every year



Our fall trip was announced this past June and July with notice that reservation spaces were going fast. Our outing is on Workman Transportation bus and is now **SOLD OUT** for the October 13 **All About Elephants** guided tour of the Two Tails Ranch. We leave together at Lake Sumter Landing and should return around 4:30 PM. Angela Vickers will send out reminder information to those with reservations closer to the October departure.

The Travel Committee is always looking for suggestions of nearby places of interest for our fall and spring outings. Sometimes we carpool and sometimes we use a transportation company. Carpooling allows for easier visiting and is less expensive as each passenger chips in a \$5 contribution to the driver. Why not join our committee or offer your trip suggestions for another good outing?

Angela Vickers, Carolyn Pasquale, Terri Slotterback, Kate Manion

Great Decisions 2026

Topics Now In!

Great Decisions discussion group is an activity prepared every year by the Foreign Policy Association in New York, a non-partisan association which analyzes issues from a geopolitical 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 have two groups **both on Tuesdays for 8 weeks from Tuesday, January 20th-March 10th. . You can choose between the group meeting from 9:30am – 11:00am or the group meeting 1:00-2:30.**

Our meeting place will be **The Sumter County Sheriff's Annex Conference Room** at 8033 East CR 466 near the corner of Morse Blvd.

Great Decisions 2026 Topics

America and the World: Trump 2.0 Foreign Policy
Trump Tariffs and the Future of the World Economy
U.S.-China Relations
Ruptured Alliances and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation
Ukraine and the Future of European Security
Multilateral Institutions in a Changing World Order
U.S. Engagement in Africa
The Future of Human Rights and International Law

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.

In order for me to plan for the course and order the books, I need to know who is planning to participate, which day you would like, and a check (made out to me, Christine Loken-Kim) by **Oct. 25, 2025. The cost for the book will be \$40. An extra participation charge of \$20** will be charged for non-AAUW members who would like to join us.

Please email me at: kurisu99@hotmail.com with your name, contact information, and your choice of 9:30 or 1:00 Tuesdays, along with your check, payable to Christine Loken-Kim, or give it to me at the AAUW general meetings. Christine Loken-Kim, 894 Barrymoore Loop, The Villages, FL 32162.

If you cannot make the Oct. 25 deadline, you may still participate by ordering your book online from the Foreign Policy Association. Since this activity is also a fund-raiser, I would like people to try to decide before Oct. 25 so I can order at the bulk rate.

Hope to have you join us!

Christine Lokem-Kim, Facilitator

CONNECT

Membership

Over 100 members!

Now, our challenge is to keep it there and above. There are 17 of our 101 members whose dues are in “grace” meaning they are about 3 months late. Please help us by paying Barbara Fieldman by check \$105 made out to Lake/Sumter AAUW and mail it to her at 810 Maybank Loop, The Villages, 32162.



Mary Anderson and Bobbie Peters, Membership Co-chairs

Webmaster and Website

We are so fortunate to have member Vicki Bealman as our new webmaster. She is in the process of making some website changes that we think you will find very pleasing and informative. Vicki comes to us with a real understanding of technology and how it can help us with our daily lives. <http://lakesumterAAUW.org>



ChatGPT: A Helpful Tool for Lifelong Learning and Everyday Life

Artificial intelligence is making headlines everywhere, and one of the most widely used tools is ChatGPT, an online program that can answer questions, explain concepts, and even help draft letters or recipes. While some may think it's only for students or tech professionals, we are discovering creative ways to use ChatGPT to make life easier, more engaging, and more fun.

For example, ChatGPT can:

- Answer everyday questions: Need a quick explanation of a medical term, a refresher on history, or tips for fixing a computer issue? ChatGPT provides clear, accessible answers.
- Support hobbies and interests: From genealogy research to gardening advice, ChatGPT can spark new ideas or provide background information.
- Encourage lifelong learning: If you love to learn, use ChatGPT to explore new topics, practice foreign languages, or dive into book recommendations.

- Assist with daily tasks: It can help draft emails, create shopping lists, or even suggest healthy meal plans.

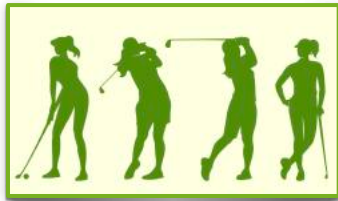
Like any tool, it's best used with care: fact-checking is important since AI can occasionally make mistakes. Still, with curiosity and a little practice, ChatGPT can be a valuable companion for lifelong learners of all ages.

For AAUW members, who have always championed education and access to knowledge, ChatGPT offers a modern way to stay informed, engaged, and connected.

Dr. Vicki Bealman, Lake Sumter Branch Webmaster

Social Interest Groups

“Nine and Dine” Golf



If you are interested in playing fun and friendly executive golf with a new **AAUW Friday morning golf group**. You should probably have played a little golf already sometime in your life. Please text or call Leslie at 859-321-7171 to be included on the Nine and Dine Golf Contact List. We will begin sometime in October. Oh, and it's all about the “Dine”!

Mahjong



Please contact Barbara Fieldman (Bfieldman@gmail.com, 321-663-1858) if you are interested in playing AAUW Mahjong.

AND

If you have an idea for a social interest group you would like to start, please contact Betty Rohan, our president. We are always happy to add more social opportunities for our members.

^S
SUPPORT

Tech Trek



Tech Trek Summer Camps provide a unique way for girls who are entering 8th grade to explore topics related to STEM careers. This past summer our Lake Sumter branch made it possible for the eight girls shown on the left to attend the 5-day Tech Trek Summer Camp at Florida Atlantic University. An additional five girls attended the camp at Stetson University. Each camp had daily core classes and workshops which were similar but not identical.



Favorite classes were **Neuroscience, Marine Biology, Forensic Science, and Environmental Science**. During the week-long camps, the girls also had the opportunity to meet professional women and form friendships.

At the **January 24, 2026 General Meeting**, some of the girls will be sharing their experiences from the 2025 Tech Trek Summer Camps. Plan on attending this meeting so you can meet the girls and their families and hear their presentations. Your support of the Tech Trek program is deeply appreciated by the girls and their families.

Scholarships



Thanks to your fundraising and the generosity of so many, we have been able to award scholarships to 8 new students this year. Additionally, we continue to support our 4 winners from last year. All monies have been distributed to the colleges and universities and all of the students are enrolled for the fall semester. On the next page is one of our winners reporting back.

Susan Gold and Gretchen Lewis, Scholarship Co-chairs

“Scholarship Awardee Spotlight”



I am grateful for the opportunity to introduce myself and share a bit about my academic and professional experiences.

I am currently a senior at Beacon College, majoring in psychology with a minor in education and a concentration in health and leisure. Alongside my studies, I serve as the president of Future Florida Educators of America (Beacon College chapter). I also work as a student worker in two roles: an office assistant at Beacon College and a teaching assistant for the course *The Family*.

This past year, I presented my research at the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (RMPA) Conference in Colorado. My poster, *Analysis of Exercise and Mental Health*, explored the relationship between physical activity and mental health among college students with learning disabilities. The findings highlighted that most participants experienced improved well-being after engaging in exercise, often reporting greater confidence and readiness to face the day.

Over the summer, I completed an internship at The Reindeer Grove in Talkeetna, Alaska. In this role, I educated tourists about reindeer and developed an educational slideshow that highlighted facts about reindeer and provided visitor guidelines for safe behavior in the reindeer pen. In addition, I conducted research on the connection between animals and mental well-being and created a flyer summarizing this research for visitors. Survey responses showed that interacting with the reindeer significantly enhanced participants' moods, with the majority rating their experience as highly positive.

Looking ahead, I am preparing to present at the National Organization of Human Services Conference this November. My upcoming presentation, *Attitudes Towards Exercise and Mental Health*, expands on my prior work with a larger study of 64 participants. This research revealed key trends:

- Students who exercised less often reported lower overall satisfaction.
- Those who felt their needs were unmet expressed lower levels of happiness.
- Lower engagement in exercise was linked to weaker feelings of social connection.
- Students using fitness facilities demonstrated stronger time-management skills.
- Regular gym use was positively associated with overall happiness among Beacon College students.
- Multiple significant differences emerged throughout the study, supporting the broader relationship between physical activity and well-being.

Overall, the data suggests a positive correlation between exercise and mental health in neurodiverse college students.

Thank you so much for this opportunity. I am truly excited to read the article and to continue this connection.

Warm regards, Tevia McNeil



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NEWS!!!

Wear It and Spread AAUW Awareness!!!



Stop into **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 proofreaders! I so appreciate you getting your articles to me **by the 20th of each month.**

Leslie Flanders, Newsletter Editor

AAUW Websites

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