

LAKE/SUMTER NEWSLETTER

April 2022



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



Greetings to our Lake/Sumter members.

Spring is bursting out all around us with new growth and color. As we move toward the end of our program year in May and fiscal year on June 30, we have the opportunity to

reflect on where we have been and what lies ahead for our branch. The vitality is determined by each of us being involved in a variety of ways, sharing individual talents and experiences.

At our March General Meeting, branch member Tweet Coleman not only gave us her history as a woman in the field of aviation, but donated copies of her book, *Take Your Life Off Autopilot: Live with Purpose, Passion, and Power*, as a fundraiser. With that title in mind, let's look to our future.

The slate of officers for the Board of our Lake/Sumter branch of AAUW was announced at the March General Meeting. As in every community there are shifts in individual lives. So today we find that our slate of proposed officers has a few openings. Your consideration to fill those positions and participate in newly revived committees is essential.

The positions of Financial Director (Treasurer) and Programs Director are open to you. Please contact Anne Sobocinski, Chair, Linda Ferens or Sharron

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Albrecht, members of the Nominating Committee, with your offer to fill either of these openings. Our branch cannot operate without having these two positions filled. Contact Char Griffin (Finance) and Ann Marie Lombardi (Programs) for details of the positions.

With Covid restrictions behind us, several committees are being reactivated. As our branch co-Presidents-elect remind us in this month's *The Future of Our Branch* (page 2), we need members' time and talents for short- and long-term working groups. There are several mission-oriented as well as branch operations opportunities. See page 4 in this newsletter for a description of committees that need you.

The General Meeting on Saturday April 23 will be over Zoom and not in person. We encourage you to participate in this important meeting that will focus on a Look to the Future for our branch of AAUW. The agenda includes:

- Your election of Board officers to our AAUW Lake/Sumter Branch
- Overview of the branch Strategic Plan and what it means for you as a member.

We look forward to seeing you via Zoom at this important branch General Meeting on April 23...and then **in person** for our end of year brunch on May 21 at the Allamanda Recreation Center. Details below.

Let us be grateful for the reawakening of the earth, and may it inspire us to action as we reconnect and greet each other at our branch meetings and interest groups.

Katie and Gay

The Future of Our Branch

We agree with Katie and Gay's suggestion that the time is right for us to reflect on where our branch has been and where we're going. This is a particularly timely task as we emerge from two years of pandemic and look forward to our branch's future.



Thanks to our branch leadership, we've been in a pretty good place for the past two years, despite Covid. They've helped us find ways to stay in touch...with each other and with the branch...and still provide support to women and girls. Now, as we come out of Covid-imposed semi-dormancy, we have the opportunity for renewal.

So, looking to the future of the branch, Anne and I have been thinking about what members want from the branch, and how the branch might fulfill those expectations.

We have a good idea of what our members want from AAUW. A survey conducted during the strategic planning process told us that most respondents are most interested in learning programs or special interest groups and least interested in Tech Trek and scholarships. About two-thirds join and renew for friendships vs mission-driven

activities, and they primarily support fundraising by buying tickets and making donations vs soliciting funds or chairing a fundraising committee or event.

As members of the Lake/Sumter branch, Anne and I have had those expectations of the branch. But now that we have gone from membership to leadership, our perspective has changed. We quickly saw that branch leadership also has expectations of the members: that they will engage actively in all branch activities, not just the fun ones, and contribute to the business end of our organization.

There are lots of ways to contribute, but Ann Marie Lombardi offered the trio of Time, Talents, and Treasures—the Three Ts. **Time** is self-explanatory, **Talents** are your special skills, and **Treasures** are your donated funds.

We are grateful that our members are willing to share their treasures with the branch. Your generosity has enabled us to provide support for the scholarship program and other projects. We certainly need your continued financial support to help carry out branch initiatives. But the branch also needs your time and talents, not right away as officers, chairs, and other leaders, but as committee members for short- and longer-term tasks that will help us address our mission-driven goals.

Anne and I participated in an instructive and productive strategic planning process, and we are ready to move forward with a new vision and a plan that will meet it. The Strategic Planning Committee members took what we learned from the survey to create our vision and goals; both focus on the membership and how the branch can best meet your needs and expectations. You'll hear about the plan at our April Annual General Meeting. However, without sufficient woman-power the branch will be challenged to move forward in a meaningful way.

So, please consider how you will contribute your Three Ts.

Linda Carpenter & Anne Sobocinski
Co-Presidents-Elect

Opportunities to Offer Your Time & Talents



If you read this newsletter from the beginning, then you know we hope that members will heed our call to contribute their time and talents as well as their treasures to the workings of the branch. Without members' active participation, we will not be able to carry out our mission and support girls and women in their educational journeys.

To help you choose where to contribute your time and talents, here is a list of our committees along with descriptions of the tasks assigned to each one. Please keep in

mind that these are *committee* tasks and are not expected to be carried out by one person.

Standing Committees

Communications Committee is chaired by the Director of Communications, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by a majority of Board members. The committee is charged with contributing to PR plan development and implementation as well as photographing branch events and ensuring that internal and external communications present a unified image of our branch. The Communications Director position is currently open. Basic committee members include newsletter editor, email distributor, social media chair; additional members are needed.



Fundraising Committee is chaired by the Director of Fundraising, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by a majority of Board members. The committee is charged to initiate, plan, and execute events to garner support for our campership and scholarship programs; work collaboratively with Programs Committee to plan and implement fundraisers. Diane Jacobson currently holds the Director of Fundraising position, but it will be vacant as of July 1; additional committee members are needed

Public Policy Committee is chaired by the Director of Public Policy, who is appointed by the President and confirmed by a majority of Board members. The charge to the committee is to keep members informed of National and State public policy issues and actions and to encourage participation in advocacy events. Judy Bonn currently holds the Director of Public Policy position, but it will be vacant as of July 1; additional committee members are needed.

Operations Committees

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Committee helps plan and implement activities and events focused on DEI issues. This committee is currently on hiatus; it needs committee members who will select a chair.

Hospitality Committee greets attendees at General Meetings; plans/provides refreshments, as needed. This committee is being resurrected as we return to live meetings. It's labor non-intensive and is a great way for members who are new to volunteering in branch activities to get involved.

Membership Committee greets attendees at meetings, supports new members, arranges New Member Coffee, assists with recruitment events. Co-chairs have been doing all membership tasks, which are essential to our branch; they need members to join a committee to help them. Karen Pickelshimer and Joanie Schmidt currently co-chair this committee. Lots of jobs to do; lots of committee members needed.

Nominating Committee develops the slate of officers for branch elections. This is a short-term committee that requires three (3) members and one (1) alternate, including a former branch president, a member of the board of directors, and a member of the branch. Their work is short-term and done primarily in the winter for a spring announcement of the slate.

Programs Committee plans presentations for General Meetings, assists in making meeting arrangements and facilitating meeting plan, works collaboratively with Fundraising Committee to plan fundraisers. Another busy committee in need of lots of help.

Scholarship Committee notifies local colleges, reviews applications, follows up mentoring with recipients. This committee is currently chaired by Kathy Mason. Contact her to learn if she needs more members of the committee.

Social Media Committee maintains branch website and Facebook page, considers other options as needed. This is a new committee; it needs people who are familiar with various social media platforms and can provide guidance for the branch.

Tech Trek Committee contacts schools, interviews candidates, follows up mentoring with recipients. Liz Schweers and Laura McLaughlin currently co-chair this committee, but they will need help with candidate interviews and final recommendations.

The best way to feel a part of the branch is to participate actively and collaboratively in branch operations. We hope you all will heed the call and volunteer.

Linda Carpenter, Co-President-Elect
Joanie Schmidt, Co-Membership Director

Programs

April 23rd Annual Meeting



Please plan to attend our Annual Meeting, which will be held **on Zoom**. You will receive an email to RSVP, followed by the Zoom link. Join starting at 9:15 a.m. for socializing. Meeting begins promptly at 9:30 a.m.

Highlights of our agenda include:

- Preview of our newly-developed Strategic Plan
- Branch Elections to the Board of Directors
- Introduction of our new Scholarship Winners
- An overview of the many opportunities to stay an active and engaged member

May 21st Year-End Celebration Breakfast Meeting

Ready for conversation and breakfast? Then please join us at Allamanda Recreation Center for our May 21st meeting! Doors open at 9:15 a.m. for a 9:30 a.m. start.

Our program will feature installation of incoming officers and other branch business, as well as a fun, Mystery Bag silent auction! The cost is \$5 for 10 tickets.

When you receive an email to RSVP, please let us know if you want to order a catered bagel and fruit cup box breakfast, along with coffee, tea, and juices for \$8.00. You can pay with cash or check at the meeting.



P.S. This will be our final meeting as Co-Chairs and we truly could not have gotten through the many challenges without your support and patience. Thank you!

Ann Marie Lombardi and Diane Jacobson, Co-Program Directors

Scholarship News



Over the next several months we will be sharing letters from our current scholarship recipients. It will help you understand how much of a difference we are making in these young women's lives. This month's thoughts come from Nikita Goodson

"While scholarships give students the needed funds to pay for educational expenses, they often end up being about more than money. Receiving the AAUW scholarship changed my life. The amount of stress and pressure it has relieved is indescribable. This scholarship opportunity has given me the chance to enjoy my time and concentrate on my studies at Lake Sumter State College, rather than trying to balance a work life and a school and motherhood. "I hope one day I can also give back and change someone's life like the AAUW donors/ members have changed mine."

Kathy Mason, Scholarship Committee Chair and past Co-President

Membership

The National AAUW organization shares a February 1 Count Report annually which shows branch membership counts as of January 31, with both a 3-year and a 1-year rate of change.

According to the most recent report, the Lake/Sumter branch is currently the third largest Florida branch with 118 members. Venice is currently the largest branch with 184 members and Orlando, the second largest, with 130 members. Surely, we can boost our membership to take over that second spot in next year's count, but we can only do that with your help! So, bring a friend to a meeting, share their name and contact information and we will be in touch with them about how we can utilize their time, talents, and treasures! We can encourage new people to be involved immediately by joining a committee as well as a learning group or joining in the fun and fellowship of a Special Interest Group.

In the February 1 Count, we were tied for third with St. Augustine and Venice with 12 new members in 2021-2022. Sarasota garnered the most new members with 14, and Naples came in second, with 13. Surely, we can raise our numbers to take over that #1 spot this year! We are working toward a Membership Recruitment Drive next spring but anytime is a good time to add a new member; perhaps a neighbor, someone you met in a book club, or an old friend who you think might benefit from this amazing group of educated women.

We lost several members during the height of the Covid pandemic, many who were not comfortable with the Zoom meetings, in addition to deaths of some long time, very much missed, members. Even so, in comparison with other groups, our negative growth rate was still lower than many in the state.

Although the numbers do not tell the whole story, it is still a good indication of who we are, what we work for and the people we serve. We hope you will continue to work toward growing the number of people in our organization to benefit from our programs, our learning opportunities, as well as aiding in giving back to the community; and in particular, the women we serve through the Tech Trek program and local women's educational scholarships.

We do continue to grow, but slowly, and certainly not in step with the vast growth of the Lake and Sumter County communities. Nevertheless, we had two new members join recently. Please welcome them to our branch and add them to your membership booklet.

Judith Passerini
jpasserini@embarqmail.com

Doreen L. Heizmann
Dheizman6277@gmail.com

Karen Pickelsimer and Joanie Schmidt
Co-Directors for Membership

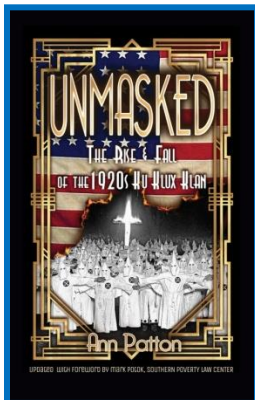
International Women's Day Celebration



What a wonderful celebration of women! The AAUW was a big part of the March 8 International Women's Day Celebration at Lake Sumter Landing. AAUW Member Dorothy Dobbs was the chair of the "Standing on their Shoulders, From Voice to Vote" event. We were all truly inspired by talks and music. The event concluded with a stroll around the square with all groups proudly displaying their banner.

Great Read from the DEI Committee

Those who attended the "Uproot Prejudice: Conversations for Change" presentation on March 5 at the Wildwood Community Center heard Ann Patton tell the intriguing story of David Curtis Stephenson, who built the Ku Klux Klan into a political powerhouse in Indiana during the 1920s. Ann's non-fiction book *Unmasked* covers all the details of this gripping tale, which offers important lessons relevant to present-day America. The book includes a foreword by Mark Potok of the Southern Poverty Law Center, the country's leading anti-Klan organization. The book is available to order from [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com), and Ann's website www.AnnPatton.net.



Unmasked: The Rise & Fall of the 1920s Ku Klux Klan
by Ann Patton

The 1920s KKK was not your grandpa's 1800s Klan, which was created after the Civil War to hold on to power by terrorizing Black former slaves by any means possible. The second KKK was re-created as a money-making fraternity and cynically sold through the then-new science of public relations. The result: a secret fraternity that captured the fancy of mainstream America. If you wanted to belong and progress in your town, you had better join the Klan. The high point came in 1925, when a throng of 60,000

Klan members marched through Washington, D.C. Membership was estimated at some 3 million across the USA, strongest in the basin stretching from Texas through Ohio.

The self-taught editor of small Oklahoma newspapers, David C. Stephenson became a mesmerizing orator and was assigned to "klux" Indiana. He cleverly absorbed the Protestant church, law enforcement, womenfolk, and ultimately, even the Republican party of Indiana into his Klan. Things were going great, for both the Klan and Stephenson. What could go wrong? Plenty.

Ann Patton tells the story in unflinching prose, as public horror at a sensational rape and murder finally stirs a nation in the grips of the Klan phenomenon. The reputation of the Klan was tarnished. Slowly, a majority of Americans began to reject Klan-style violence, bigotry, torture, lynching, and intimidation.

Activities

Day Trips: Boat Cruise Slated for April 28

The day trip committee (Carolyn Pasquale, Angela Vickers, and Kate Manion) is up and running again, and is planning a spring boat cruise in Mt. Dora on Thursday, April 28. The group will depart The Villages from Colony Cottage (near the pool) at 9:30 a.m. for a 2-hour cruise that begins at 11:00 a.m. Lunch at a nearby restaurant of choice will follow. The total cost of the outing will be \$37 plus the cost of lunch (\$32 for the cruise, payable at the boat dock, \$5 for the driver). The boat can accommodate up to 22 people.



Members interested in participating in this outing should contact Kate Manion by email at (kmanion52@gmail.com) as soon as possible in order to secure a seat. Members willing to drive should also let Kate know.

Due to COVID, it's been a while since the committee has been able to plan an outing and we look forward to a good turnout for this relaxing and fun-filled event.

Mah Jongg Group Forming



The Lake/Sumter AAUW branch is forming a friendly afternoon mah jongg group to play on alternate weeks each month at the homes of member-players. Beginners as well as experienced players are welcome.

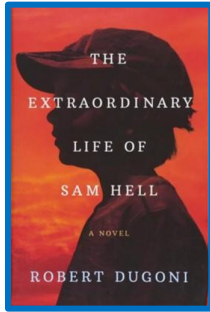
Members interested in joining this mah jongg group should contact Kate Manion via email (kmanion52@gmail.com) by April 28 and let her know they are interested, what their level of expertise is, and what afternoon(s) of the week they are available to play.

Dine Around

Dine Around will be held either the last week in April or second week in May. Please email (jcdukeirl@aol.com) your preference so I can set it up with the restaurant. The first two choices of dining with either be the Legacy or Waterfront Hotel.

Judith Anderson, Dine Around Coordinator

Book Club



On April 20, the Book Club will be discussing *The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell* by Robert Dugoni. Peg Tabor will lead the discussion. The club will meet via Zoom at 10:30 a.m. Invitations will be sent to group members via email.

May's read is *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro. Blanche Boyne will lead the discussion on May 18.

All members are welcome. To be added to the email distribution list, contact Kate Manion (kmanion52@gmail.com).

The book selections for the remainder of the year are listed below.

Kate Manion, Book Club Coordinator

	Book	Author	Discussion Leader
Apr. 20	<i>The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell</i>	Robert Dugoni	Peg Tabor
May 18	<i>Klara and the Sun</i>	Kazuo Ishiro	Blanche Boyne
June 15	<i>The Personal Librarian</i>	Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray	Mary Place
July 20	<i>The End of the Ocean</i>	Maja Lunde	Christine Loken-Kim
Aug 17	SELECTION OF BOOKS FOR 2022-23		

Singles Group

The Lake/Sumter AAUW Singles Group gals have been busy in March. We supported the Wildwood Elementary School PTO Bingo fundraiser event on March 25. Not only did we get a good chili dinner but we also nearly won the 55" TV! Nancy Hartshorn and one other attendee bingoed; unfortunately, on the runoff Nancy lost. It was nice to see the community support with a great turnout at the event.



Then, on March 28 several of us enjoyed The Village Pops Chorus presentation of the “Together Wherever We Go” concert at North Lake Presbyterian Church. Of course, we also enjoyed a delicious dinner at Carrabba’s afterward.

We are always looking for events to attend or places to go together so if you have any good ideas, please contact Dorothy Dobbs or Liz Schweers

Liz Schweers
Singles Group Member and past Co-President



Thank you for your support of this newsletter. Check out the many activities that are restarting and see if any interest you! Usual deadline of April 20 for the May edition.

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AAUW Websites

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