

# BRANCH BEACON



*AAUW was formed in 1881 by seventeen women from eight colleges.*

*The Lake Wales Branch was founded May 16, 1953.*

*The purpose of this branch shall be to unite graduates of different educational institutions in order to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research.*



**HOLIDAY PARTY DECEMBER 6**  
**WATER'S EDGE - 10 W. GROVE AVE., LAKE WALES - 5 PM**

**Buffet Dinner**

Details to be announced

**We hope to see you there!**

**Please reserve with Linda Brown by November 25**  
**Tel. 231-420-0991 or Email [Lindabrown306@hotmail.com](mailto:Lindabrown306@hotmail.com)**



**Susan la Francois to speak on**  
**WOMEN AND GIRLS IN STEM TODAY**

**Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics**

Our speaker at the November branch meeting will be Susan la Francois, professor of Data Sciences and Chemistry at Florida Polytechnic University and industry professional. Ms. la Francois is familiar with the AAUW Tech Trek project and was the recipient of a Community Grant from the Orlando AAUW branch. She is excited about speaking at our meeting and has offered to help us with any on-going STEM project that we might initiate.

This would be an ideal meeting to bring guests who are interested in finding out more about AAUW.

*Charlene Bennett, Co-Chair, Programs*

**NOVEMBER 16 - 9:30 AM - Water's Edge - 10 W. Grove Ave., Lake Wales**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Off to an Enthusiastic Start!

Dear Members,

Informative and knowledgeable speakers at our first meetings this year bode well for attaining our goals of increasing membership and attendance at branch meetings.

At our kick-off meeting in September, Attorneys Tonya Stewart and Blair Allen gave us insights on women in leadership positions and evoked animated discussion. In October, Nikki Sealey engaged the audience by relating her long-term experience in teaching civics in Polk County. Our November speaker Professor Susan la Francois promises to share her experience with women and girls in STEM education and professions.

Attendance has been only about 50% of our membership, but we hope for improvement with the end of hurricane season and the return of members from the North.

Remember, our Holiday dinner on December 6<sup>th</sup>, and there is no branch meeting in December.

I look forward to seeing you on November 16<sup>th</sup>.

Best Regards,

*Georgianna Pentinen*



*Above:* Attorneys Tonya Stewart and Blair Allen are introduced by Pauline Phillips at our first branch meeting of the year in September. Tonya is a member of our branch, and Blair has just joined.

*Below:* In October, Nikki Sealey spoke about her experience teaching civics in Polk County schools.



### \*\*\*\*\* NEW MEMBER – ATTORNEY BLAIR ALLEN \*\*\*\*\*

We extend a warm welcome to Blair Allen, the newest member of our Branch. An Attorney and first female Public Defender of the 10th Judicial Court, Ms. Allen spoke at the September Branch Meeting. We are delighted that Ms. Allen has become a member of the AAUW Lake Wales Branch.

Moving our meetings to Saturday affords the opportunity for women currently in the workplace to join us. Our meetings are open to the public with a reservation so, with the help of members inviting friends, we will be able to expand our membership and advance the worthy goals of the AAUW.

*Juanita Zwaryczuk, VP, Membership*

Call or email me for more information regarding membership.

Tel. 631-317-0159 or email [namastejfz@gmail.com](mailto:namastejfz@gmail.com)

## Spotlight on Branch Secretaries by Kristin Vanpraet, Public Policy Officer

A diverse and active membership is imperative to our branch's success. Naturally, the more active members we have, the greater our advocacy can be and our impact on our community more significant.

This second article in a series about the officers of our branch and their responsibilities features the Recording Secretary, Sharon Allen and the Communications Secretary, Margaret Swanson.



**Sharon Becker Allen** became a member of the AAUW in the 1970s in Poughkeepsie, NY, and joined the Lake Wales Branch in 1998. She is serving her second two-year term as Recording Secretary and enjoys participating as a member of the board.

Sharon served as branch President from 2000 to 2002.

“The duties of the Recording Secretary,” Sharon says, “are to ensure that the proceedings of the board meetings are accurately documented. The most important thing is to show up! For me, the challenge is to get all the information written down accurately during the meeting. It was suggested that I begin recording the proceedings as well as a written record, and this has been very helpful. I also have found that the sooner I complete the minutes after the meeting the better.”

*The Lake Wales branch by-laws state that the position of Recording Secretary shall record and keep minutes of all business and special meetings of the Affiliate, the board, and the executive committee; shall have available a copy of the Affiliate bylaws and a list of officers, chairs, and members; and shall perform such other duties as the president and board shall direct.*

**Margaret Swanson** has been a member of our branch since 2014 when she retired as Planning Director for the City of Lake Wales.

This is her third term as Communications Secretary. She has also served as newsletter editor and publicity secretary, and she prepared the Yearbook for a couple of years.

She served as Co-President with Charlene Bennett 2016-2018.

Margaret says she's been interested in communications since working in publicity at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston just after college. She works closely with the branch president and other officers in sending out emails to keep members posted on branch news. She also edits the newsletter. Social media, website and photography are ably handled by Kristin Vanpraet.

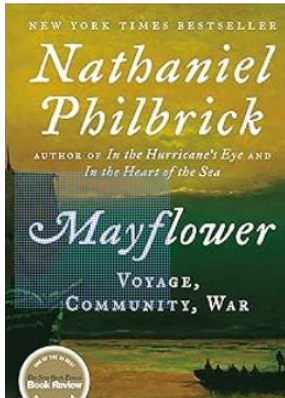
*The Lake Wales branch by-laws state that the position of Communications Secretary: shall be responsible for all internal and external communications of the Affiliate and shall perform such other duties as the president and board shall direct.*



### Educational Achievement Awards – Application Forms Available in January

Established in 1986, this program provides scholarships to mature students seeking a degree beyond the high school level. Since its inception the Award has been presented to more than 55 women and 2 men. Two awards of \$1,000 each were presented in 2024 to appreciative students.

*Pauline Phillips, Chair*



## BOOK STUDY GROUP

Hurricane Milton drowned our plans for our October book study group meeting. Discussion of the *Mayflower* by Nathaniel Philbrick has been postponed until November 13.

A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in History and one of the *New York Times Book Review's* Top Ten Books of the Year, the book recounts the 55-year epic story of the Plymouth Colony from its precarious beginnings to the conflict known as King Philip's War which nearly wiped out the colony as well as the native populations in Southern New England.

The book group meets on the second Wednesday of each month at the Blue Palmetto Café at Bok Tower Gardens at 10:00 AM. All who are interested are welcome to attend. *Carol Gillespie, Chair*

## DINING GROUP

*Linda Brown, Chair*

**The dining group meets monthly for a meal at a local restaurant.**

Please contact me if you would like to join in this fun group.

Tel. (231) 420-0991 Email: [lindabrown306@hotmail.com](mailto:lindabrown306@hotmail.com)

**In October, the group had lunch at Kualao Lao Thai Restaurant in Lake Wales. Eleven members and one guest attended and enjoyed both the cuisine and conversation.**

**NEXT: Lunch at LUCILLE'S AMERICAN CAFÉ - 1 PM Friday, November 22**

205 3<sup>rd</sup> Street SW, Winter Haven

## WE NEED YOUR PHOTOS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWSLETTER, AND SCRAPBOOK

Please send photos from AAUW events to Betty Martin, our historian.

Email to [Bettymartin8888@gmail.com](mailto:Bettymartin8888@gmail.com)

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Lake Wales FL Affiliate, Inc., P.O. Box 1264, Lake Wales, FL 33859-1264

### Branch Officers 2024-2025:

**President:** Georgianna Pentinen **Immediate Past President:** Juanita Zwaryczuk

**Co-Vice Presidents Programs:** Charlene Bennett & Pauline Phillips **Vice President Membership:** Juanita Zwaryczuk

**Communications Secretary:** Margaret Swanson

**Recording Secretary:** Sharon Becker Allen

**Co-Treasurers:** Jennifer Nanek & Nancy Gossard

**Bylaws and Parliamentarian:** Dianne Schmoyer

**Historian:** Betty Martin

**Public Policy:** Kristin Vanpraet

**Newsletter Editor:** Margaret Swanson [magjs@yahoo.com](mailto:magjs@yahoo.com)