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Branching Out is published monthly by the Bradenton Branch of the [American Association of University Women](#), P. O. Box 14009, Bradenton, FL 34280-4099.

May President's Message

Greetings, Bradenton Branch members. Our first ever Zoom year is coming to a close and we are looking forward to being together in the fall. (Fingers crossed and arms vaccinated!)

During our April Zoom meeting, members who participated in any of the AAUW FL Virtual Leadership Conference sessions shared their impressions and insights with members who were unable to be involved. Our exchanges were lively, thought provoking, and interesting. Keynote

speaker **Janet Petro, Deputy Director of the NASA Kennedy Space Center** addressed how she is facing the leadership challenges brought on by the pandemic as well as how her past experiences (such as her West Point education) prepared her to deal with them. We also explored the content of the two Saturday sessions. During the **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** session the **Lake Sumter branch** shared how they used **AAUW National's DEI Toolkit** as a resource for a series of programs including "How to Start Difficult Conversations." They encouraged community participation. Members in our discussion agreed that we should review the Toolkit. (<https://aauw-fl.aauw.net/advocacy-2/>)

We also found that the content of the "**Economic Security**" session piqued our interest. **Sarasota Certified Financial Planner, Laura Mattia**, a featured presenter, addressed the changing financial literacy needs women face at various stages of life. Bradenton members suggested forming an interest group in this area. Lastly, we discussed some projects and activities presented by 11 branches throughout the state. I have shared the videos from each of the branches on our branch Facebook page so you can watch what has happened during 20-21.

The board is finalizing plans for our May meeting. Information will be sent separately. The board is meeting this week to plan for the coming year, including focus, programming, leadership team and member involvement. Will you share your ideas or talent? Email me (mshanerhill@gmail.com) or call/text me with your input or questions (941-704-5381). You can be part of a team rather than "the director for" whatever. We're interested in support our mission with your help.



The Feed - CBS News.

Sometimes the journey is slow and difficult, but if you can see where you want to go, you make progress. Be the turtle not the fence.

(Maybe I've been away from people too long?!)

Marcia Hill

SAVE THE DATE

Membership Renewal (see below)

May 5 - 1:00 Board Meeting (Non-officers are welcome to attend! Use the regular zoom link. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6030763851>)

May 6 - 1:00 Book Group Lunch (see below for details)

May 17 - 5:00 Deadline to Vote! [National Election 2021 Information](#)

May 18 - 6:45pm Wrap-up of 2020-2021, and plans for next year. Bring your ideas!
[Note: Women of Achievement 2021 has been postponed until 2022.]

Membership Renewal - Past Time!

Each member got a personalized email last week with an individualized link. Renewing is as simple as clicking on that link, checking your data to be sure it is accurate, then submitting payment. If anyone prefers to pay by check, you can send it to Mickie - the address is in the email - with any changes to your address, etc. since last year, and I'll do the renewal for you. If you didn't get the email, please to check your spam/junk. Anyone who wants a repeat message, can email Mickie (mickiemc@gmail.com) to have the email resent to you. If you are comfortable with email, please help those who are not, or have them contact me by mail with their checks. That will be helpful.

MAY 18 MEETING

No guest speaker this month. Instead, we will wrap up this most unusual year, as well as make plans for 2021-2022!

For example, are there Special Interest groups you'd like to see formed?

What else would you like us to consider for next year?

You might even consider becoming a part of our branch leadership team.

You can even share an office with one or two other people.

Bring your best ideas!



Virtual Tech Trek Camp Needs Volunteers!!! July 19-23

AAUW Florida Tech Trek is a STEM camp for rising 8th and 9th grade girls from across the state of Florida. The virtual camp will be held **July 19-23, 2021**. Tech Trek empowers girls to explore STEM fields in which women are underrepresented, pursue an education in STEM and ultimately enter the STEM workforce.

Campers will have a choice of core classes in Engineering/Architecture, Neuroscience, Computer Science, Robotics and Marine Biology; participate in a variety of workshops and field trips; share video projects with other campers; and interact with professional women in STEM fields.

Volunteer from home

Volunteering will be quite easy, as you can do so from your own home, with your PC, laptop or iPad. **Volunteers** are needed to provide tech support in the core courses, workshops and breakout groups. The afternoon will have various workshops that explore STEM. This involves guiding students through virtual exercises and answering their questions. You must be able to use ZOOM and be comfortable with computer use.

Daughters, granddaughters invited to volunteer

You may not feel comfortable volunteering yourself, but we are looking for your college-age daughters and granddaughters to work as counselors who would support core courses and provide tech support in workshops or panel discussions. We are looking for **high school girls** to volunteer for tech support at our sessions. They can live **anywhere**. They just need internet access and a computer, laptop or tablet. **College-age girls** who would like to work that week can earn \$300.

Get more information

Any help your members could provide would be greatly appreciated. The girls involved in our camp are extremely bright and benefit from interacting with STEM role models.

More information about us can be found on our website: <https://techtrek-fl.aauw.net/>

If you are interested in helping, contact one of the following:

- **Counselors** kadeshiazsc@yahoo.com
- **Volunteers** Kathy@topoftranquility.com
- **Questions** techtrekfl16@gmail.com

Proposed Change for AAUW Membership

Below is a post from March on the AAUW Florida Advocacy Blog by of Pat DeWitt, AAUW Florida President. I think she gives some insight into the proposal to eliminate the degree requirement for membership in AAUW. Each of us will make our decision on the matter and submit our own vote. Pat shares a process she went through in examining the issue.

Marcia Hill

Starting April 7, 2021, AAUW members will vote on a proposed bylaw change providing that membership shall be open to anyone who supports our mission. I wish to share with you my journey regarding this controversial topic.

The last time AAUW open membership was proposed, I voted against it (a blog post on this appeared Feb. 27, 2018). This was because 1) a friend who was a member of the national Lobby Corps told me that she felt strongly that being “highly educated women” gave them more credibility in the halls of Congress, and 2) with the increasing number of women in the United States to hold at least a two-year college degree, it did not seem necessary to expand the pool of those eligible to join AAUW.

During one of the recent national discussions of the proposed change in membership requirements, I asked if there was any truth to what my friend in the Lobby Corps had told me. The panelist said no: what legislators care most about is whether you are eligible to vote for them. This was a “duh” moment for me. My years of experience in advocating for AAUW legislative priorities persuade me that the panelist was right. Perhaps it gave my friend more self-confidence to

hold a degree, but a woman's self-confidence comes from the sum of her qualities, not from just one. AAUW's research and legislative advisory capability should give us confidence in approaching legislators.

As for the pool of potential AAUW members, it is indeed large enough as it is. I have repeatedly emphasized that the battle for college degrees for women has been won. But the question is whether it is diverse enough. The research recently commissioned by AAUW of Florida showed that fewer women of color hold degrees than white women: while 41% of white women hold at least an Associate degree, and therefore are qualified for AAUW membership under current requirements, only 23% of Black women and 28% of Hispanic women would qualify. In addition, we learned that 66% of black women and 57% of Hispanic women live below the level of economic security for their family type.

So, shouldn't we encourage these women to get a college degree? According to the Florida State College in Jacksonville (FSCJ) website, "Twelve credits, which is considered a "full-time" load for a semester, cost \$1,259 for Florida resident students. Figure in your book costs at about \$80 per credit hour, and you are looking at a total bill of about \$2,219 for a full-time semester." Of course, there's financial aid. I used FSCJ's net price calculator to estimate cost for a 35-year-old single mother with two children, earning less than \$30,000 per year. She received \$3,101 in financial aid. The cost was \$15,203 including \$10,396 for room and board. So, if we subtract the room and board, we get \$4,807. That is still too much for this woman!

If we want to help all women and girls with diversity, equity, inclusion, and economic security, we need not hold ourselves above the ones who need help. We might gain valuable insights from the people who are experiencing economic challenges and inequity. Moreover, we might be seen as working together rather than swooping down from above to be "saviors". Our national Strategic Plan 2.0 calls for an increased emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion. While education remains an area of emphasis, that area is focused on equity, access, and freedom from sex discrimination at every educational level.

We have been told by national board members that it is becoming more difficult to secure corporate grants when we are seen as exclusionary. Those grants have enabled us to maintain and expand Start Smart, Work Smart, NCCWSL, our research publications, and our lobby and policy advisory activity. We have been told that member dues cover only 15% of an already reduced budget and dramatically reduced staff. We need those grants if we are to retain and strengthen our position as a national force for equity for women and girls.

DON'T FORGET TO VOTE BY MAY 17! MORE INFORMATION AT [NATIONAL ELECTION PAGE.](#)

Update from the League of Women Voters of Manatee County

Were you one of the 225 people who participated in the **League of Women Voters Implicit Bias** training last month? If you had to miss the session led by **Dr. Lorie Fridell**, you can still experience the session filled with research, compelling examples, and a path for how to

understand and address our own biases. **Dr. Fridell** is a Professor in the Department of Criminology at the University of South Florida and a nationally recognized expert on biased policing.

To join or rewatch the training, the LWV is making available a full recording at: <https://lwvmanatee.org/videos/>

Recommended Books:

- *The Hidden Brain: How Our Unconscious Minds Elect Presidents, Control Markets, Wage Wars, and Save Our Lives* (Shankar Vedantam)
- *Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives* (Howard Ross)
- *Biased: Uncovering the hidden prejudice that shapes what we see, think and do* (Jennifer Eberhardt PhD)

We thank **Helen Andersen**, Co-Chair of the Social Issues Committee of the LWV of Manatee County for sharing this opportunity with our branch.

Special Interest Groups

Most special interest groups are not yet meeting regularly.

May Birthdays

Fay Murphy MI



The AAUW Book Club will meet on May 6th at 1:00 o'clock at Riviera Dunes Restaurant in Palmetto. Our book for May is *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead. Come and join us for a delicious lunch and a lively discussion. Call Carolyn Reynolds (941-720-6575) to make a reservation.



ZOOM Meetings

We will continue to meet via ZOOM through the end of 20-21. To join the meeting, click on this link between 6:45 and 7:00 on February 16:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6030763851>

If you are unfamiliar with using ZOOM, there is an excellent tutorial at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOUwumKCW7M>.

Test your microphone and speaker when prompted. Make sure your camera video is enabled.

Please call or text Meg Newsome (941-704-2707) or Judy Griffin (941-323-4639) for individual assistance.

Bradenton Branch Leadership

Website: <http://bradenton-fl.aauw.net>

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/AAUW-Bradenton-Branch-103388217778483>

Branch Leadership 2020-2021

President - Marcia Hill: mshanerhill@gmail.com

Past President - Judy Griffin: jdthgriffin@gmail.com

Director of Finance (acting) – Mickie McElroy: mickiemc@gmail.com

Secretary – Fay Murphy: faymurph@aol.com

Director for Programs – Judy Griffin: jdthgriffin@gmail.com

Director for Communications – Meg Newsome: meggnewsome@outlook.com

Director for Public Policy – Mary Schmidt:

mcsrealtor@aol.com

Scholarship Foundation President – Elaine Graham: ebebeg@aol.com

Scholarship Information: aauwbbbscholarship@gmail.com

Bylaws Chair/ Parliamentarian – Ruth Qualich:

qualir@yahoo.com

Bridge Group: Lois Blevins at lwblevins@msn.com

Book Club: Carolyn Reynolds: 941-720-6575

Just for Girls: deenisnice@gmail.com

AAUW promotes equity for women, education and self-development over the life span, and positive societal change. AAUW values and seeks a diverse membership. Founded in 1881, membership is open to all graduates who hold an Associate or equivalent or higher degree.



Important to Know

National AAUW

<http://www.aauw.org/>

Florida AAUW

<http://aauwfl.aauw.net/>



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