



September 2023

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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.

*Best Viewed on Full Screen.*

## September President's Post

### Building Bridges

Dear Members,

Could there be a more important time to gather, unite and advocate for women's rights, issues and opportunities? Whether our obstacles occur in our county, state, or nation, it is time to meet, organize and share responsibilities to address these challenges. Therefore, we hope to see you at our first meeting on September 19th. An informal discussion will take place at 5:30 regarding PraderU. After dinner, our 2023-24 Scholarship recipients will be interviewed and share their experiences. Evites will be delivered by Meg two weeks prior to the meeting. Please invite interested friends and colleagues to join us!

Hope to see you there!

**Barb Coolahan**  
**President**

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## Next Meeting

**Tuesday, September 19**

**5:30 PM**

**Anna Maria Oyster Bar, Landside**

6906 14th Street West

Bradenton, FL 34207

### **PROGRAM:**

We will hear from our Scholarship Recipients, always a highlight of the year! More information about our recipients can be found below.

Be sure to **RSVP** when you receive the Evite.

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## CALENDAR 2023-2024

<b>Dates:</b>	<b>Time:</b>	<b>Topics:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
Sept. 19, 2023	5:30 PM	Scholarship Recipients	AMOB (Landside)
Oct. 17, 2023	5:30 PM	Tech Trek Recipients	AMOB *
Nov. 14, 2023	11:30 AM	Debi Osborne/Land Conservation Foundation	AMOB
Dec. 19, 2023	11:30 AM	Book Exchange/Holiday Celebration (Manatee Community Foundation)	MCF *
Jan. 16, 2024	11:30 AM	Guardian Ad Litem/Toni Jefferies	AMOB
Feb. 20, 2024	11:30 AM	Christi Haley/Pace Center for Girls	AMOB
March 16, 2024	11:30 AM	Cyn McCullough Women's Issues in the Workplace 50th and 75th Anniversary Celebration	Palm Aire Country Club *
April 16 2024	5:30 PM	LWV Deb Mazzaferro /Floridians for National Popular Vote	AMOB
May 21, 2024	5:30 PM	Installation/plan for 2024-25	AMOB

\* Joint Meetings with Manatee Branch

## SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

Congratulations to the AAUW Bradenton Branch Scholarship Foundation Fund Recipients for 2023-2024! We will be hearing from several of them at our September meeting.

**Would you like to support one of these women with a birthday dinner and other encouragement this year?**

Choose one and let **Sandra** know, or let Sandra select one for you.

**Michelle Nunes-Banos**

[m.nunez@gmail.com](mailto:m.nunez@gmail.com)

Birthday: 4/9

State College of Florida

Dental Hygiene

Anticipated Graduation: May 2024

**Mallory Tyler**

[mallorytyler@ufl.edu](mailto:mallorytyler@ufl.edu)

Birthday: 12/28

University of Florida

Data Science

Anticipated Graduation: May 2026

**Nama Shkukani**

[nshkukani@hotmail.com](mailto:nshkukani@hotmail.com)

Birthday: 12/22

State College of Florida

Computer Programming and Analysis

Anticipated Graduation: August 2024

**Karlee Hudson**

[Karlee.prodigaldaughters@gmail.com](mailto:Karlee.prodigaldaughters@gmail.com)

Birthday: 5/19

Southeastern University

Psychology

Anticipated Graduation: August 2024

**Evgenia Gatke**

[Egatke12@gmail.com](mailto:Egatke12@gmail.com)

Birthday: 5/6

State College of Florida

Nursing

Anticipated Graduation: May 2024

*Submitted by **Sandra Stone, President Scholarship Foundation Fund***

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**2023 Tech Trek Update from Our State Representative - Sue Sloan**

Forty-three girls attended the Stetson Camp and 39 girls participated in the FAU Jupiter camp. Each camp consisted of a week of exploration and learning in various STEM fields. Plus a great dinner with professional women from the area at the Professional Women's Night. This is always a favorite among the girls. We received 185 nominations from 55 different schools across the state from 89 different teachers across 17 branches. One hundred and two girls completed the application process including those all important personal interviews with you at the branches. All girls who applied were accepted, but some for various reasons chose not to attend. Now that we are back in person we are hoping for more nominations for the 2024 camp and, of course, more applications.

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## **AAUW - Bradenton Branch Strategic Plan 2023-2024**

### **Mission**

**AAUW advances equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy, and research.**

### **Value Promise**

AAUW promotes programs and research to break through educational and economic barriers so that all women and girls have a fair chance.

### **Vision Statement**

AAUW empowers all women and girls to reach their highest potential.

### **Diversity Statement**

AAUW seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or class.

### **Goals and Strategies**

**Goal 1 – Membership – Increase and sustain a diverse membership in the Bradenton Branch of AAUW.**

\*Increase media exposure of all Branch projects and activities.

\* Develop a marketing plan that includes outreach to other girls' and women's organizations, communities, schools, colleges and universities, sororities, etc.

**Goal 2 – Public Policy – Engage and support the Bradenton Branch in strengthening the AAUW efforts and initiatives.**

\*Increase participation in the 2 Minute Advocate.

\*Support Equal Pay Initiatives.

\*Collaborate with the League of Women's Voters on voter registration.

**Goal 3 – Branch Initiatives – Promote and increase engagement in the Bradenton Branch activities and initiatives.**

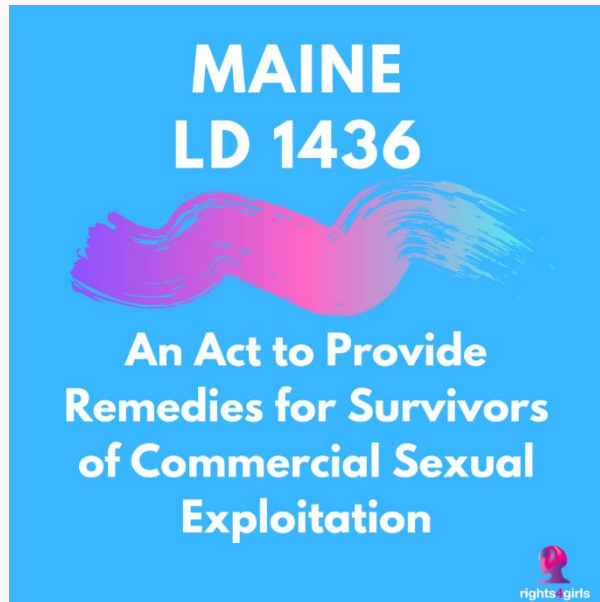
\*Sponsor Tech Trek STEM Camp for girls entering 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

\* Provide scholarships for deserving students.

\*Engage and support all Branch activities and initiatives

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**MAINE MAKES HISTORY: FIRST U.S. STATE TO LISTEN TO SEX TRADE SURVIVORS AND PASS EQUALITY MODEL**



**The law requires an understanding that purchasing sexual acts is not a harmless pastime for lonely men or a way to feed uncontrollable sexual urges, but rather is a practice of gender-based violence.**

<https://womensenews.org/2023/07/maine-makes-history-first-u-s-state-to-listen-to-sex-trade-survivors-and-pass-equality-model/>

Fifteen-year-old Tricia Grant was chatting with a girlfriend during dinner in a popular restaurant in Auburn, Maine. In her young life, Tricia had experienced hardships no child should suffer: sexual violence, housing insecurity, exposure to drugs and domestic abuse. She was also the mother of a one-year-old boy. Above all, Tricia confided in her friend, she feared losing her baby.



*Tricia Grant*

Two men eavesdropping on the conversation approached the girls and offered them a way to earn money. Excited by this potential lifeline, the girls showed up at the given address the following evening. That night, the men raped Tricia and her friend, put a pager in Tricia's hands, and immediately began selling the girls to sex buyers in Maine and throughout New England. Her friend is still missing.

"The pager would go off and I knew it meant that I would be brought either to a strip club, a hotel room, a truck stop, or a house party. Never once was I asked how old I was, or if I needed help," said Grant, now

44 years old, and the executive director of the survivor-led organization Just Love Worldwide. “I didn’t know there was a name for what was done to me or that it wasn’t my fault, so I never told anybody.”

Maine State Representative of South Portland Lois Galgay Reckitt understands all too well these intractable patterns of male violence against women, abuse of power, stigma, and shame. A long-time feminist advocate, Galgay Reckitt co-founded the Maine Women’s Lobby in the 1970s and lobbied for the passage of Maine’s first civil rights law for the LGBTQ community.



*Lois Galgay Reckitt and Governor Janet Mills*

Bearing witness to Tricia’s story and in collaboration with dozens of other survivors in Maine, Rep. Galgay Reckitt spearheaded a multi-year, bi-partisan campaign to educate her colleagues about the impact of prostitution and how its pieces fit with the puzzles of intimate partner abuse, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. The exchange of money for these cruelties, they advocated, did not add up to consent.

Legalizing or decriminalizing the sex trade, as some were proposing as a solution, would only expand the market of sexual exploitation under the economic laws of supply, demand, and revenues for the sex trade.

Pimps and traffickers rely on a vibrant demand of sex buyers to fill their coffers and – similar to pigs’ exceptional sense of smell in unearthing rare truffles – they can instantly sniff out a person’s vulnerabilities and exploit them. When the state legalizes or decriminalizes the sex trade, third-party profiteers and traffickers multiply auction blocks, in the style of brothels, illicit “massage parlors” and other commercial sex establishments, to deliver their prey.



Maine had to find a better solution. Thanks to the advocacy of survivors like Grant and allies like Rep. Galgay Reckitt – they did.

On June 26, 2023, Governor Janet Mills signed An Act to Reduce Commercial Sexual Exploitation, eliminating the crime of engaging in prostitution and maintaining penalties for patronizing. The law ends the arrests and incarceration solely of people bought and sold in prostitution while still holding their sex buyers and other perpetrators accountable for the grievous harm they cause.

Two weeks later, An Act to Provide Remedies for Survivors of Commercial Sexual Exploitation followed suit. A services component to the law, the law mandates the state to offer comprehensive services survivors need to help them rebuild their lives. It also seals records of prostitution convictions so survivors can forge their future without fear of discrimination in housing or employment, for example.

With these Acts, Maine became the first state in the nation to adopt a legal framework known as the Equality Model, also called the Nordic or Abolitionist Model. Enacted in eight countries around the world, including Sweden, France, Canada and Israel, the law recognizes the system of prostitution as a barrier to equality.

The Patriarchs sculpted the system of prostitution from their bedrock to exert dominance over women and feminized bodies in worlds that valued neither. Conquerors exported it across continents and seas to secure the desecration of Indigenous and African women that still permeates today. It cannot exist without sex buyers.

Survivors of prostitution report that sex buyers are often more brutal than pimps. The patronizers' sense of entitlement coupled with the power of their money hand them a license to humiliate, maim, torture, leave for dead, or worse.

Farmer and habitual sex buyer Robert Pickton, known as The Butcher, murdered 49 prostituted women. Another sex buyer, "Green River Killer" Gary Leon Ridgway, a commercial truck painter, killed 48 women. And now in New York, investigations are underway linking architect and chronic sex buyer Rex Heuermann to the Gilgo Beach murders of sex trafficked and prostituted women. Among them was Maine native Megan Waterman, pimped by her boyfriend and sold to Heuermann who allegedly dumped her body on the north side of Ocean Parkway.

In each of these and other serial killer cases linked to prostitution, the blueprints are similar: next-door neighbors consumed with hatred for women and who rely on law enforcement's stubborn indifference to both holding patronizers accountable and to the suffering of the prostituted. The Gilgo Beach tragedy shows that if New York were committed to apprehending sex buyers, lives could have been saved.

The Equality Model calls on us to change our deep-seated cultural beliefs that prostitution is either inevitable, or “work,” or punishment for the forsaken children who should have known better. Implementation is not easy; it requires both financial investments and political will.

But it can be done. Since enacting its law in 2016, France has increased prosecutions against pimps and traffickers by 54%, and fined close to 10,000 sex buyers using those revenues to fund comprehensive, trauma-informed services to hundreds of people in the sex trade, mostly women of color.

The law requires an understanding that purchasing sexual acts is not a harmless pastime for lonely men or a way to feed uncontrollable sexual urges, but rather is a practice of gender-based violence, often laced with racism, and always with misogyny and dehumanization.

Rep. Galgay Reckitt knows these truths in her bones from her pioneering days fighting domestic abuse and sexual violence. The call to action is the same: don’t look away, don’t make excuses, don’t ask whether anyone chose it.

Instead, ask who is suffering and why, who is causing the harm, and who is profiting from the multi-billion-dollar sex trade with impunity.

“We have a lot of work ahead of us,” said Grant. “But I’m so proud that Maine is the first state to listen to survivors and to understand that we too are deserving of justice and a life free from violence. Not just us, but the generations to come.”

*Author: Taina Bien-Aimé is Executive Director, Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW)*

*Forwarded by **Vickie Waters***

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## **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

### **Officers and Directors for Bradenton Branch**

**2023-2024**

**President/Administrator**

**Barbara Coolahan**

**President-Elect/Director for Membership**

**Mary Schmidt**

**Treasurer/Director for Finance**  
**Linda Lewis**

**Secretary/Director for Diversity**  
**Judith Griffin**

**Director for Programs**  
**Marianne Harrison**

**Director for Public Policy**  
**Marcia Hill**

**Director for Communications/Webmaster**  
**Margaret (Meg) Newsome**

**President Scholarship Foundation/College University Relations**  
**Sandra Stone**

**Treasurer Scholarship Foundation/AAUW Funds**  
**Linda Guilfoyle**

**Tech Trek Chair/STEM**  
**Linda Guilfoyle**

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

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

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### **Committee Members**

#### **Tech Trek**

Linda Guilfoyle, Marianne Harrison, Patty Benson (Manatee Branch), Marlene Yarnelli (Manatee Branch)

### **Scholarship**

Linda Guilfoyle, Sandra Stone, Sue Hauck, Marcia Hill, Doreen Colkert

### **Communications**

FaceBook ( Marcia Hill), AAUW site (Barb Coolahan), Evites and Newsletter (Meg Newsome)

## **AAUW Public Policy Update**

### **The AAUW Florida Public Policy Issue Forums**

Would you like more in-depth information on the important issues facing Florida from a nonpartisan but equity-focused viewpoint? Would you like to be able to ask experts your own questions about these issues? You can do without leaving home—or if you're not at home!

Plan to participate in as many **AAUW Florida Issue Forums** this year as you can. All sessions will start at 6:00 PM and last for an hour. The series is open to AAUW members and guests. Participation is free but does require registration. For the complete schedule and links to register go to <https://aauw-fl.aauw.net/public-policy-issue-forums/>

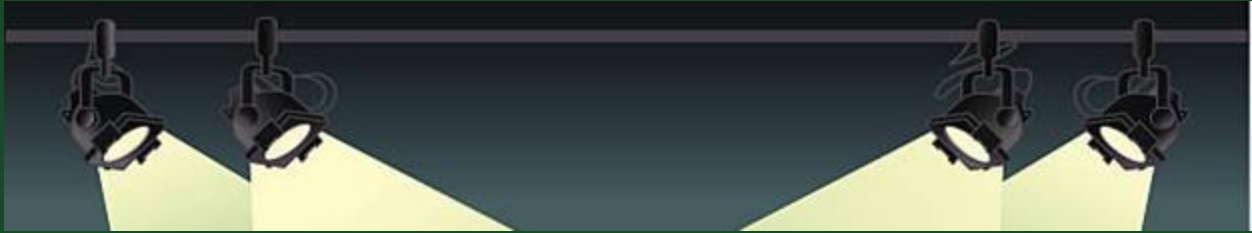
The goal of these Zoom sessions is to focus on key policy areas in our state tied to our mission and provide an opportunity to learn more about them.

**Reproductive Rights** is the topic of the next forum which is **September 14** at 6pm. Mone Holder of Florida Rising is the featured speaker. Florida Rising is a progressive, grassroots, community-based organization engaged in and committed to building power throughout communities in Florida.

On October 5 the focus is **Title IX and Dress Codes in Schools**. Nancy Tray, Change the Dress Code Movement, St Johns County is the guest speaker. Again, the time is 6pm for one hour. Registration is open to members and guests.

This information with the registration button is posted to our [Facebook page](#) (AAUW-Bradenton Branch).

*Submitted by **Marcia Hill, Director of Public Policy***



## Shining a Member Spotlight on.... Mary

Each issue of our newsletter will feature one of our members in the "Spotlight." Our new **President-Elect, Mary C. Schmidt** shines in September's spotlight.

Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Mary moved to northern Kentucky before moving to Sarasota. After her children graduated from high school, Mary moved to Bradenton. "My favorite spot is where I live now," says Mary, "enjoying the fruits of my labor!"

After graduating from Our Lady of Cincinnati College (now merged with Xavier University) she earned a master's degree in elementary education from Northern Kentucky University. Prior to moving to Florida, Mary taught elementary school for 15 years. Briefly, she owned a small retail store specializing in school supplies for teachers. Mary obtained her real estate license in 1995, and, she says, "I have been helping clients obtain their goals in home ownership ever since. I still enjoy the challenge of the real estate world. They say that the only constant in the business is change."

Mary has been a member of AAUW since around 2000 with a break in between due to her work schedule. In addition to AAUW, Mary's community involvement includes membership in the Bradenton Rotary Club. Since 2002 she has served in a variety of positions from board of directors to the first woman club president. The Bradenton Rotary Club's motto is "service above self". Mary strives to live up to it.

It's not all work and no play for Mary. Mary tells us, "My main interest is my family with son, Ben, who lives in Cleveland, Ohio and has three lovely daughters. My daughter, Heather, lives in Los Angeles, California and has one lovely daughter." While Mary's interest in real estate continues, she also enjoys walking, yoga, cycling, Zumba, and other fitness activities, spending time with friends, and, of course, a good book.

Born on December 8, she is a Sagittarius making her a dynamic blend of passion, curiosity, intensity, and adaptability.

You will enjoy getting to know Mary through AAUW—I know I have!

*Submitted by Marcia Hill*



### **Remembering a Former Member**

Former long-time AAUW Bradenton Branch member Jacqueline Margaret Kelsey, passed away in June. Jackie, 91, was born in Lincoln, England and emigrated to the US in 1957. Along with her husband Alan, Jackie raised four children and worked as the head nurse of Labor and Delivery at Kenmore Mercy Hospital for many years. She earned a Master's in Nursing and her Nurse Practitioner's License at SUNY at Buffalo. In 1990, Jackie and Alan moved to Bradenton, where she worked for Manatee County. Jackie was a member of Kenmore United Methodist Church and an active member of First UMC in Bradenton.

Jackie was an active member of our branch for many years. On a personal note, I can say that I have had many delightful conversations with Jackie at branch meetings and working on branch projects together. Just thinking about her makes me smile. If you interacted with Jackie no doubt you feel the same.

Jackie, in addition to her extended family, loved travelling, knitting, and being with her friends at Freedom Village. While contributions may be made at [tidewellhospice.org](http://tidewellhospice.org), I have chosen to donate to our Bradenton Branch Scholarship Foundation (P.O. Box 14099, Bradenton, FL 34280) in her memory.

Our branch has afforded me the opportunity to collaborate with amazing women I would otherwise not have known, so I try to appreciate their friendship with my donations. Perhaps you will consider remembering special women in your life this way as well.

*Submitted by Marcia Hill, Director of Public Policy*

*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/>

# About AAUW

We are tenacious and trailblazing — advocating for women and girls since 1881 and into the future!



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**Our mailing address is:**

[meggnewsome@outlook.com](mailto:meggnewsome@outlook.com)

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