

**Orlando *** Winter Park
BRANCHLINE**

**SPEAKER
MR. MARK COOPER**

**“Unknown Heroines
of the Civil Rights Movement”**

February is African-American History month when we recall some of the darkest times in American history and celebrate the resistance and persistence of African-Americans, their achievements and the promises of greater equity and equality. Last year, we had a presentation and co-sponsored a riveting production of the Fannie Lou Hamer Story.

Our presenter this month, Mr. Mark Cooper, will focus on other little-known or unsung heroines of the civil rights movement.

(Continued on Page 3)

Saturday, February 14, 2026

9:30-11:30

**First Congregational Church of Winter Park
225 S. Interlachen Ave., Winter Park**

COST: \$20

HOW TO PAY

1. Cash or check at the door or
2. Zelle or
3. Send check to the following:

AAUW

P.O. Box 884

Winter Park, FL 32790

(allow 5 days delivery time)

Make check payable to

AAUW-Orlando/Winter Park

RSVP BY WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11

USE THE RESERVATION EMAIL BELOW:

AAUWreserve@gmail.com

**You are responsible for payment in full
if you do not keep your reservation.**

From the President



Dear Branch Members:

Happy February! The month of February sports more than 100 holidays ranging from the well known: Valentines Day (14) and Presidents Day (16) to some not so well known: National Brown

Dog Day (2) and Car Keys and Small Change Day (28)

There are also many quotes, among them: *"February is the bridge that connects the promises of the past year with the hopes of the year ahead."* (David LaMotte) and **"February is for doers"** (Marc Parent).

Our very important task this month is selecting nominees to fill the following positions on our Board of Directors:

PRESIDENT (1)

CO-VICE PRESIDENTS/MEMBERSHIP (2)

CO-VICE PRESIDENT/FINANCE (1)

RECORDING SECRETARY (1)

Please contact a member of our Nominating Committee. If you would like to volunteer for a position, or if you would like to recommend someone for a position, please contact:

Maria Bonnet (marpazbonnet@gmail.com)

Ann Burnham (annmbunham@gmail.com)

Susan Turo (tomsuet@aol.com) or, adjunct member Diana Secor (dianasecorAAUW@gmail.com)

(Continued next page)

OFFICERS

President: Diana Secor
dianasecoraaauw@gmail.com

Co-VP Membership: Irene Pruzan
irene-pruzan@juno.com and

Ann Burnham
annmburnham@gmail.com

VP Programs: Dr. Leslie S. Lieberman
lsieberman@gmail.com

VP Finance: Pat Curenton
lilcreativdragon@gmail.com

Finance Assistant: Susan Turo
tomsuet@aol.com

Secretary: Linda Fessel
Lfessel@Comcast.net

Director: Scholarships: Karen Buchan
kgb@unknownegg.org

Director: Development
Myra Gaziano
gazianomyra@yahoo.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Missy Baker
bakerworks@gmail.com

Branchline Editor
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Judy McDonald
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Literary Luncheon Chair
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kgb@unknownegg.org

STEM coordinator

TBA

Tech Trek

TBA

Website

Linda Fessel
Lfessel@Comcast.net

Maria Bonnet
marpazbonnet@gmail.com

Contact Judy McDonald if you hear of any member who is ill, having surgery, experienced a loss, etc.
murran@bellsouth.net

Continued From Page 1

As a young person growing up in the south, Mr. Cooper recognized the pervasiveness of racial disparities and decided to learn about its historical basis and to share this information in an annual Martin Luther King Day presentation for the University Club and for other organizations. He received a Bachelors degree in government from Indiana University, and a law degree from the University of Georgia. Although his practice of over 40 years was primarily complex business litigation, he would occasionally be involved in civil rights litigation for the ACLU. He is well known in central Florida and the past president of the University Club of Winter Park. It is a heartfelt presentation for Valentine's Day.

Submitted by Leslie Sue Lieberman, Ph.D.



Jennifer Elliott was our guest speaker in January. Her talk about the UCF Arboretum provided the impetus for organizing a tour to explore the gardens. More about that later.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH



If you haven't gotten lost recently, you can thank Gladys Mae West.

She was born in rural Virginia in 1930, grew up working on a tobacco farm, and died earlier this month a celebrated

mathematician whose work made possible the GPS technology most of us use each and every day. Hers was a distinctively American life, in more ways than one. Seeking an escape from the agricultural labor she'd already gotten to know all too well, she won a scholarship to Virginia State College by becoming her high school class valedictorian. After earning her bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics, she taught for a time and then applied for a job at the naval base up in Dahlgren. She first distinguished herself there by verifying the accuracy of bombing tables with a hand calculator and, from there, moved on up to the computer programming team.

Stories like hers have drawn much greater public interest since the success of [Hidden Figures](#), the Hollywood adaptation about the black female mathematicians at NASA during the Space Race. When that movie came out in 2016, even West's own children didn't know the importance of the once-classified work she'd done. Only in 2018, when she provided that information on a biographical form she filled out for an event hosted by her college sorority, did it become public. She thus spent the last years of her long life as a celebrity, sought out by academics and journalists eager to understand the contributions of another no-longer-hidden figure. But to their questions about her own GPS use, she reportedly answered that she preferred a good old-fashioned paper map.

From the President

(Continued from Page 2)

THIS IS VERY TIME SENSITIVE as the Nominations are scheduled to be presented at the April Meeting and new officers sworn in at the May Meeting.

As you all know we are going full-speed ahead for our MAJOR fundraiser for our Scholarship Fund--our 24th AAUW SPRING LITERARY LUNCHEON, on March 21, at the Altamonte Hilton with speaker Eliza Knight – who is a *USA Today* journalist and international bestselling American author known for her historical fiction and romance fiction novel series taking place in 15th to 19th century Europe. We look forward to a “full house” attendance at this important—and Fun-- event!

Diana Secor, President
AAUW Orlando Winter Park Branch

From the Literary Luncheon Chair



On March 21, our Branch will host and celebrate the 24th Annual Spring Literary Luncheon at the Hilton Hotel, Altamonte Springs. This wonderful tradition is one we can be proud of since it enables us to provide local scholarships to women from the event's proceeds. Over the last two decades, through your sup-

port, our Branch has been able to provide numerous scholarships to women. Since 2016, in a ten-year period, we have provided over 40 scholarships to women and girls. That is commendable!

Recently, AAUW released U.S. Census data stating the gender pay gap for women working full time earned just 81 cents for every dollar paid to men. For women of color, the disparity is even more alarming. We must refuse a future where women are left behind.

Please make every effort to attend and support our Branch's wonderful signature event. It is our organization's only fundraiser. All proceeds go to a worthy cause and enables AAUW to continue its mission to advance equity for women through education.

A snapshot of the 24th Annual Spring Literary Luncheon's festivities includes:

Eliza Knight, an award-winning, *USA Today* and International bestselling author, will speak on her latest book, *The Confessions of a Grammar Queen* as well as *The Queen's Faithful Companion*. She will also be available to sign her books.

The Confessions of a Grammar Queen, along with several other books will be available for signage and purchase.

The Hilton Hotel welcomes our guests with a beautiful facility that has ample parking, easy access, and the capacity to seat over 200 guests. Hope the house will be filled with members and guests to this annual event.

A delicious Spring-influenced sit-down luncheon will be served at 11:45 am. Wine and cocktails will be available from the cash bar. Either your credit card or cash will be welcomed.

A fabulous silent auction is planned with baskets, gift cards, and other exciting items. The format of the auction has changed. Raffle tickets will be sold for most of the auction items. You can purchase 3 tickets for \$10 or 8 tickets for \$20.

Besides the lovely baskets and individual silent auction objects, there will be two items for actual bid: (1) An over-the-top five-course gourmet dinner prepared by the Dining-In Group, delivered to your home and served by your own private butler; and (2) A two-night relaxing stay at the Hilton Hotel, Altamonte Springs, with breakfast included.

Our traditional 50/50 raffle is also planned.

The doors at the Hilton Hotel will open at 10:30 a.m. That will allow you time to socialize, browse the auction items, enjoy a cocktail or glass of wine, and purchase one of Eliza Knight's books and get it signed.

Submitted by Myra Gaziano

Silent auction items, gift cards and baskets are needed for our 24th Annual Literary Luncheon to be a success. AAUW members and interest groups, please consider donating items or soliciting businesses you frequent for gift cards. Businesses such as stores, restaurants, beauty and nail salons and others may consider donating to AAUW and its educational mission for women. You may even consider regifting something desirable that others would like to bid on. Small items such as a bottle of wine or a box of wonderful chocolates can be combined with other items.

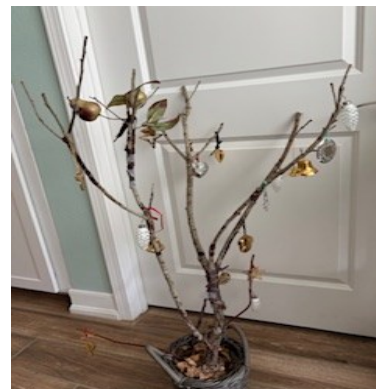
Please bring your items or baskets to the AAUW General Meeting on Feb. 14. An alternate drop-off time and place will be announced. Your contributions are needed and greatly appreciated. On the donated items, please put the name of the donor and include the list of item(s) donated. Questions may be directed to Leslie Lieberman at Lsieberman@gmail.com

You can find the flyer, reservation form and seating form after the calendar. Print them out as needed to make your reservation.

From Our Members



If you look up “Charlie Brown Christmas tree” on Amazon, you’ll find many examples like this one. Rosemary has her own version at Christmastime. She searches for a dead branch, trims it, then attaches objects that have meaning to her. It’s a lovely tradition. All we can say is: “Eat your heart out, Lucy!”



This bulletin board is for you to announce non-AAUW events that you would like to publicize and/or promote.

Adrienne’s Global Dining:

Contact Adrienne Katz Katz for information on this group.

321-695-4445

katzaid@yahoo.com

Central Florida International Black Women’s Congress, Inc.

32nd Red Dress Health Conference

"Empowerment for Healthy Aging & Thriving Communities"

When: Saturday, March 7, 2026, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Expert Presenters, Breakfast & Lunch, Venders,

Health Screening, Door Prizes

Where: Hilton Hotel, Altamonte Springs, 350 S. Northlake Blvd.

Registration \$75 until 2/15/26, then \$80

Register \$ pay by Zeffy or at the door or by check to CFIBWC

4300 W. Lake Mary Blvd., STE.#1010. Lake Mary, FL 32746

Contact: Cfibwc2020@gmail.com or Regenia Miller 689-254-5206

(Submitted by Leslie Sue Lieberman, Ph.D., Cfibwc Board Member)

Interest Groups

Booklovers: In this month of Valentine's Day, let's share some love with our Booklover group leaders: Judy Alper, Joyce Folsom, Maggie Kinst, Missy Baker, Diana Secor, Lynne Wiley and Lynda Hinckley. They coordinate, communicate, gather and encourage. They make Booklovers possible. Warm hugs to all.

This month many Booklovers groups will read and discuss *Lady Tan's Circle of Women* by Lisa See. This historical novel celebrates women's strengths and the strength of friendships. How appropriate for AAUW Booklovers.

Booklovers is open to all AAUW members. If you'd like a chance to attend a Booklovers discussion and wish more information, please contact me, Missy Baker, Booklovers Coordinator, bakerworks@gmail.com.

Booklovers Lite: Booklovers Lite meets monthly on the last Wednesday at 1 p.m. The reading list is independent from those of the other book groups. The book selected for February 25 is *Dear Edward* by Ann Napolitano. The books are usually page-turners, and the discussion is always lively. If interested in being part of this fun group, contact chair Karen Deo: Karen.deo@gmail.com

Dining In: Dining-In normally meets at noon on the first Friday of the month. Contact Jane Rosen for more information: 321-295-7689 or mjcrossen@hotmail.com

Exploring Central Florida (ECF): ECF will tour the Casselberry Arts Center, Art House, Sculpture House and Sculpture Garden on Wednesday, February 11, at 2 p.m. with lunch before the tour. Check your email for more details. Contact Linda at LFessel@Comcast.net to get on the contact list.

Foreign Affairs: Foreign Affairs Interest Group will meet on Sunday, February 22, at 2 p.m. Contact Mary Himes for more information. mwaltzhimes@gmail.com

Lunching Out:

We will meet on Friday, February 20, at 11:30—check your emails for more details. If you would like to join this group, contact me to get on the Lunching Out list. LFessel@comcast.net

MahJongg: meets on Thursdays at Club 24 in Winter Park from 1-4 p.m. Want to learn the game? We will teach you. For more information, contact Karen Deo: Karen.deo@gmail.com

From the Editor

The Branchline, E-Blasts, our Website, and our general meetings are the tools at our disposal for communicating with our members.

At this time, I am conducting a poll to determine how our members access the various forms of communication.

Please reply to the Email (Yes, this time I'm asking you to reply!) and give me your answers to the following questions. Your answers will determine how we will communicate with you going forward.

- (1) I prefer getting information just from E-blasts.
- (2) I access the Branchline from the link sent on an e-mail.
- (3) I access the Branchline from the Website.
- (4) I like e-blasts and access the Branchline via a link.

- (5) I use the website to find members' addresses, phone numbers, etc.
- (6) I prefer having a written directory.
- (7) I use both website and written directory to locate members' information.
- (8) I am not able to attend general meetings.
- (9) I attend general meetings occasionally.
- (10) I attend general meetings nearly always.
- (11) I only read communications from my interest group leaders.

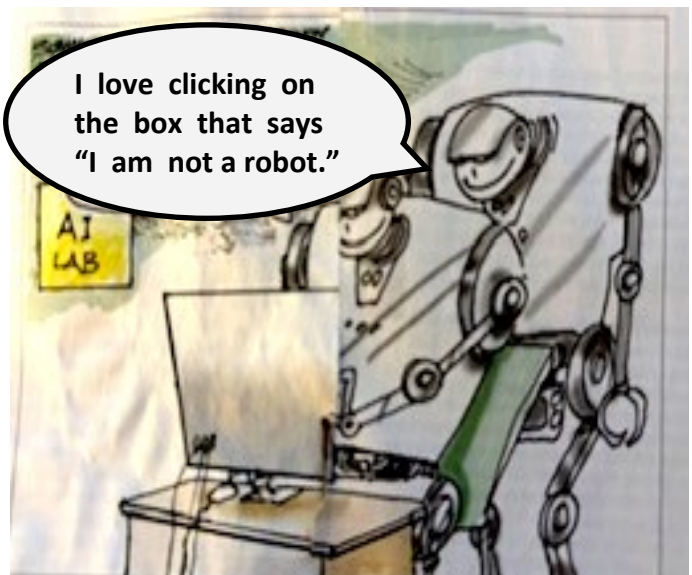
You can reply by just writing the numbers of all that apply to you. You can also send me a written comment. I hope to tally the results and have them for the March Branchline. Thanks for your cooperation. (ed.)

FEBRUARY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 Groundhog Day	3 <u>1:30 p.m.</u> B-Lovers I	4 <u>9:30 a.m.</u> B-Lovers IX <u>10 a.m.</u> B-Lovers VIII <u>1 p.m.</u> B-Lovers II <u>1 p.m.</u> B-Lovers VII	5 <u>1-4</u> Mahjongg	6	7
8	9	10 <u>2 p.m.</u> B-Lovers VI	11 <u>12-3 p.m.</u> ECF	12 <u>1-4</u> Mahjongg Lincoln's B'day	13	14 <u>9:30-11:30</u> General Meeting Valentine's Day
15	16 Presidents' Day	17 <u>1:30</u> B-Lovers V	18	19 <u>1-4</u> Mahjongg	20 <u>11:30</u> Lunching Out	21
22 <u>2 p.m.</u> Foreign Affairs Washington's B'day	23	24	25 <u>10:30</u> BOD mtg. <u>1 p.m.</u> B-Lovers Lite	26 <u>1-4</u> Mahjongg	27	28

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Lynne Wiley	Feb. 15
Lynda Hinckley	Feb. 17
Eileen Garrison	Feb. 18
Sherry Kragler	Feb. 27



THE 24th ANNUAL SPRING LITERARY LUNCHEON

Saturday, March 21, 2026

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hilton Hotel (350 South Northlake Blvd., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701)

Cost: \$65

GUEST SPEAKER

Eliza Knight,



Eliza Knight is an award-winning, *USA Today* and International bestselling author. Her books have been translated into multiple languages and, most recently, her title *A Day of Fire* has been optioned for television. She is also the creator of the popular historical blog, *History Undressed*,

and hosts the *History, Books and Wine* Podcast. Eliza is an avid history buff, and her love of history began as a young girl when she traipsed the halls of Versailles. Her books take you through riveting historical journeys that cross landscapes around the world. In 2025, she will publish her first contemporary women's fiction novel under the pseudonym, Michelle Brandon.

Knight lives in the sunshine state with her husband, three daughters, a dog, a crab and a turtle.

At the 24th Annual Spring Literary Luncheon, Eliza Knight will speak on her latest novel, *Confessions of a Grammar Queen* as well as *The Queen's Faithful Companion*.



Eliza Knight's *Confessions of a Grammar Queen* is a quirky and heartwarming story of breaking glass ceilings. In the 1960s, there are no female publishing CEOs in New York City. Bernadette Swift, the book's spirited heroine, brings to life the struggles of

women in the 60's who live in a *Mad Men*-esque, male-dominated workplace and must fight decades of sexism. You will enjoy the author's incredible research and perfect prose.

The Queen's Faithful Companion is an endearing and vivid novel told from unique multi-narrative viewpoints of a young Queen Elizabeth; Hannah Penwyck, the fictionalized Keeper of the Queen's dogs; and Susan, the Queen's Corgi, whose love and loyalty were boundless. Truly a heartwarming historical read with lots of humor, historical facts of a beloved Queen and her pet.



Please note a few changes:

The Literary Luncheon will be held on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at the Hilton Hotel, Altamonte Springs. In the Calendar of Events for 2025-2026, the date for the luncheon was posted as March 14, 2026. Please make the change.

For your convenience, a copy of the Literary Luncheon Registration Form is included in this issue of the Branch-line.

The Literary Luncheon Reservation Form has a few changes. This year open seating will be available as well as our usual reserved seating. **All reservations** must be paid in advance for the luncheon and be received by March 9, 2026.

RESERVATIONS

All guests wishing to sit together must list their names on the same Reservation Form.

Payment for all guests listed on the Reservation Form must be submitted with the Form. Payment can be made by individual checks or one check for the whole group on the form.

It is imperative that payment for all who wish to sit together be received by March 9. Table reservations will not be made until all information and checks are received.

Payment is to be made to: AAUW Orlando/Winter Park
Mailed to: AAUW, PO Box 884, Winter Park, FL 32790.

24th Annual Spring Literary Luncheon



Saturday, March 21, 2026

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Hilton Hotel

350 South Northlake Blvd., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701

Cost: \$65

Speaker: Eliza Knight

Eliza Knight is an award-winning, *USA Today* and International bestselling author. Her books have been translated into multiple languages and, most recently, her title *A Day of Fire* has been optioned for television. She is also the creator of the popular historical blog, *History Undressed*, and hosts the *History, Books and Wine* Podcast. Eliza is an avid history buff, and her love of history began as a young girl when she traipsed the halls of Versailles. Her books take you through riveting historical journeys that cross landscapes around the world.

In 2025, she will publish her first contemporary women's fiction novel under the pseudonym, Michelle Brandon.

Knight lives in the sunshine state with her husband, three daughters, a dog, a crab and a turtle.

At the 24th Annual Spring Literary Luncheon, Eliza Knight will speak on her latest novel, *Confessions of a Grammar Queen* as well as *The Queen's Faithful Companion*.

Reservation Form

Name (Clearly print first and last name) _____

Telephone _____ **E-mail** _____

Please Reserve: _____ **seats @ \$65** **Total: \$** _____ **Number of Vegetarian Entrees:** _____

All reservations, including payment, MUST be received by March 9, 2026.

Please mail this form and checks payable to AAUW Orlando-Winter Park to:

AAUW P.O. Box 884 Winter Park, FL 32790
(Allow five days for mail to reach the P.O. Box)

Use the next page to list everyone you would like seated at your table.

Questions? Contact Pat Curenton at lilcreatedragon@gmail.com or 407 719-1179 (text preferred)
Or Diana Secor at dianasecoraaauw@gmail.com

I am unable to attend but would like to donate \$ _____ to AAUW

As a 501(c)(3), your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law (check with your financial advisor).

By supporting AAUW, you provide educational opportunities and legal advocacy for women and girls.

www.orlando-fl.aauw.net

AAUW Orlando/Winter Park

24th Annual Spring Literary Luncheon

Please **Clearly PRINT** the names of all individuals you wish to be seated at your table.
Sorry, sometimes we cannot accommodate all requests, but we do our best!

RESERVATIONS

All guests wishing to sit together must list their names on the Reservation Form. Payment for all guests listed on the Reservation Form must be submitted with the Form. Payment can be made by individual checks or one check for those who wish to sit together (8 maximum). **It is imperative that all reservations, whether single open seating or requested seating be received by March 9 and include payment. Table reservations will not be made until all information and checks are received.**

Payment is to be made to: AAUW Orlando/Winter Park

Mailed to: AAUW, PO Box 884, Winter Park, FL 32790.

(Allow five days for mail to reach the P.O. Box)

Reservations and checks must be received by March 9, 2026.

NAMES and PHONE NUMBERS of persons (8 maximum) requesting to sit at the same table:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8
