

VOLUME L No. 4

JANUARY 2025

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN, VENICE, FLORIDA BRANCH

P.O. Box 515, VENICE, FL 34284

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## *Celebrating Our Successes and Looking Ahead to 2025!*

Dear Venice Branch AAUW Members,

As we close out an incredible 2024, we want to thank all of you for your participation and contributions. Looking ahead to 2025, we are thrilled about the fantastic opportunities and planned events to further our DIVA goals: Diversity, Inclusion, Visibility, Awareness/Accountability.

To kick start your year, put these dates on your calendar:

- January 15, Wednesday - Scholarship Awardees Reception - Hotel Venezia
- January 31, Friday - Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit Organization Fair
- February 6, Thursday - Homeowners - The Weihs, Chris, a renowned chef, and Karen, a noted artist, will be our speakers
- February February 14, Friday - Home Tour *“In Love with Venice”*
- March 13, Thursday - Journalist Carrie Seidman, a contributing writer to the *Sarasota Herald Tribune*, will be our speaker
- April 9, Wednesday - *Wine Tasting Gala*
- April 10, Thursday - Program TBD
- May 8, Thursday - Program TBD

A most exciting time lies ahead with preparations for the 50th anniversary of Venice AAUW and the Centennial of the City of Venice. Stay tuned for the activities leading up to this most celebratory time in our branch and city’s history.

As your Co-Presidents with our Board, we are poised in 2025 for even more significant achievements, deeper connections, and continued growth. Please be assured that we welcome your continued contributions of talents, visions, and energetic creativity. You make all goals possible!

Here’s to a dynamic and exciting 2025!

*Jan and Bev*

**WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF VENICE AAUW THIS YEAR,  
AND HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THEM?**

The Strategic Plan Committee will meet on Zoom, Monday, January 13, at 10am. If you are interested in learning more about our exciting and challenging goals for this year, please feel free to join the discussion. Just contact Joyce Mikulski, and she will be happy to include you.

## Our January 9 Branch Meeting

### Learn about an innovative program for middle school youth: creating a virtual world

Our January 9<sup>th</sup> VAAUW branch meeting will feature Dr. Cheryl Ellerbrock, Professor of Middle Grades and General Secondary Education and Campus Dean of the College of Education at the University of South Florida's Sarasota-Manatee campus. At the 10:00 meeting our guest speaker will discuss the launch of an innovative program in spring of 2025 for middle school youth called "World of Wonder." The program is intended to design, test and continuously develop and improve a prototype virtual world being built to support youth inquiry. All parties involved will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and more traditional methods while learning about the process of creating a virtual world.

The meeting will take place at the Venice United Church of Christ located at 620 Shamrock Blvd. A business meeting will follow our guest speaker. For those interested, a lunch reservation will be taken at the beginning of the meeting for lunch at the nearby Shamrock Café following the morning events. We hope many members will join together for this informative meeting.



## Scholarship Reception

January 15, 2025

The Scholarship Reception will be held on **Wednesday, January 15, 2025** from **4 to 6 pm** at **Hotel Venezia**. A glass of wine or beer and a selection of hors d'oeuvres will be provided for a cost of \$20 for AAUW Members and scholarship recipients will be our guests. The last sign-up will be at our January 9<sup>th</sup> AAUW Meeting. Our recipients will share their stories and tell how our scholarship helped them along their educational journeys. Please come and support these young women. It means a lot to them.



## HOME TOUR

This is no time to have the “*Post-Holiday Blues.*” Our signature Home Tour “*In Love with Venice*” is literally on our doorstep! For VAAUW members, it’s one of the most wonderful times of the year as we all come together, being of good cheer, with hearts all a-glowing, to raise scholarship funds for this year.

Quickie update:

- A third of our printed tickets have been distributed to our membership
- Tickets are available to the public right now by going to our website
- Our 4 vendors will have tickets for sale in January
- Tickets will be available at our January meeting for you to pick up and sell
- If you have not signed up to volunteer as a hostess or ticket taker, come onboard and sign up as a sub...you may be needed
- Contact Home Tour Chair Patti Warner with any questions

**A SUCCESSFUL 18<sup>th</sup> Home Tour is very well on its way!! Thanks!**

## POLO SHIRTS

Many thanks to all who have ordered shirts. The order has been submitted and may take up to six weeks to fulfill during this busy time of year. As soon as the shirts are ready, Joyce will notify members. Any additional orders will be taken in February.



## Public Policy word of the Day:

**kak·i·sto·cra·cy** /kakə'stäkrəsē/ - government by the least suitable or competent citizens of a state.

*Did you know?*

**2023 -2024** 2,944 vouchers were distributed in Sarasota county

**2024-2025** 4,688 vouchers were distributed.

***The district will lose about \$46.8 million in per student funding due to the increase in private school and homeschool voucher usage.***

On Monday, December 9, 2024 Debbie Blackwell visited with Florida House of Representative James V. Buchanan. They discussed the AAUW position on vouchers and the money being siphoned away from public education. He was not aware that homeschoolers in Florida can get a 55" flat screen tv with their \$8,000 voucher in Sarasota County. Debbie suggested he download a copy of the catalogue and urged him to hold the Step up For Schools Corporation accountable for the voucher money they are managing. Debbie told Representative Buchanan that she hoped to make it to Tallahassee and he said he would welcome her visit to his office.

## MEMBERSHIP

***important information about our directory***

Your Venice Branch AAUW directory is available online under the Members Only Section of our web page. You will find two versions. One is a printable format and is updated on a monthly basis. The other is in the scroll format. It is not printable. Yet, it is updated as soon as we receive the changes. We recognize that this is new and different. We are available to help you. Should you have any questions, please contact Marge Collin.

## INTRODUCING OUR NEW MEMBERS



**Joan Kosta**

Joan has had a career as a program developer in speech, hearing, and languages in academic and medical settings. She holds degrees in Theater (Bachelor's) and in Speech-Language Pathology (Masters and Doctorate) and has also acted in and directed theater. Joan worked in the US as well as Japan and Malaysia and served as a Fulbright Scholar in Malaysia.

Her background and training also enabled her to develop media products to stimulate language development in children and care programs for the elderly. She has considerable public speaking experience in both the US and abroad.

Joan moved to Venice from New York almost six years ago. Although the move was sudden, the outcome has been most positive. Joan found interests that matched her talent and she is part of a theater group, a "Great Decisions" discussion group and three book clubs. She participates in political activities, and she volunteers and supports community events.

She has wanted to join our AAUW group for some time and we are very glad that she did so now.

## Denise Malone



Denise is recently retired after working globally in international regulatory and government affairs for pharmaceutical and food companies. She raised her family in the Midwest, calling Michigan, Ohio and Illinois home. Now Denise and her husband have found a new home in Venice. She likes the heat and he likes the tennis.

Her desire for personal growth and new learning opportunities has brought her to our Venice AAUW Branch. We are pleased to welcome her.

## Kathy Doucette



Kathy

graduated from the University of Wisconsin with degrees in Mathematics and Economics and obtained her advanced degree from Boston College. She fell in love with the Boston area, met her husband there and they currently split their time between Florida and Salisbury, Massachusetts.

Her career spanned over 20 years in systems engineering and technical sales management. She and her husband both took early retirements and turned to the world of internet startups where she learned new technical skills and worked as a freelance website developer for the next ten years.

Kathy and John are both retired and are gradually extending their snowbird time in Venice each year.

They enjoy the golf, sunsets, and the historical sites up and down the coast. Their four children and seven grandchildren all live in the Massachusetts area and they will continue to call them back up north, at least for now.

Kathy is a strong advocate for women's rights and education. She wants to advocate for those rights and for educational opportunities for all women. We are delighted that she has chosen AAUW as a way to do so.



## December's Holiday Luncheon

On Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 52 members gathered to celebrate the Holiday season at the Venezia restaurant which was decorated for the holiday season. Members, many in holiday garb, enjoyed conversations before and during the meal. Holiday treats made by the organization's board members were on the tables. Following the meal, the women enjoyed entertainment from the Silver Foxes which included tap dancers, a readers' theater group which shared holiday jokes, a rendition of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," and 2 female vocalists. Following the Foxes, Frank Sinatra impersonator Nick Fiasco sang seasonal and classic Sinatra songs.

Many members brought used clothing to donate to the Sarasota Women's Resource Center. Tickets to sell for the House Tour on February 14<sup>th</sup> were distributed and will also be available at the Branch meeting January 9<sup>th</sup>.



## Study/Interest Groups

### Lunch Bunch



In November Lunch Bunch met at Pop's Sunset Grill in Nokomis. In January they will gather at Bodrum in Venice. Check the calendar for details.

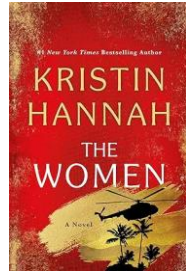
### Exploring with you Camera



Grab your cameras or cell phones and join the Camera Club, Tuesday, January 14th as we explore Burns Court and Pineapple Streets in Sarasota. Lunch will follow.

We will meet at The British Open Pub, 367 Jacaranda Blvd, Venice at 9:30 am, carpooling available. Please contact Lynda Friedman if you plan to join us this month.

## Book Group



Attention Kristin Hannah fans: The January book selection of the VAAUW SIG Book Group is *The Women* by Kristin Hannah. Mary Fritz will lead the discussion on January 13 at the Jacaranda Library. Discussion begins at 1:25pm, but come any time after 1:00 to share what you've been reading.

## Coastal Cruising

The December 17 pontoon trip was out of the Stump Pass Marina in Englewood where we saw the Milton Pass created by Hurricane Milton, pictured below behind Wendy Seeley. The January pontoon trip will be out of Marina Jack's in Sarasota at 2 pm. Carpooling available.



## Evening Out

The new date for Evening out is Wednesday, January 22 at 6pm at Leones's in Venice at 1266 Jacaranda Blvd. (corner of Jacaranda Blvd and Center Road in Venice Pines Shopping Center).

Call or email Melanie Odom by Monday Jan 20.

## Cook's Corner



The Cook's Corner group celebrated the holidays with their traditional salad buffet and cookie exchange (cookies pictured above) at the home of Judy Weber. Nancy Brex will host January's gathering on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. The theme will be "Mom's Best Recipe." Newcomers are welcome!

## Mix and Mingle

There will be no January Mix and Mingle. The Mix and Mingle group suggests members consider attending the reception for scholarship winners instead.

**AAUW VENICE BRANCH ACTIVITIES – JANUARY 2025 CALENDAR**

<b>DAY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>EVENT</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>	<b>LOCATION/ NOTES</b>
<b>Fri</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11:30</b>	<b>Euchre</b>	<b>Charlene Turczyn</b>	<b>Paradise Grill, Nokomis</b>
<b>Fri</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12:15</b>	<b>Bridge for Fun</b>	<b>Bernadette McEnemy</b>	<b>Venezia Restaurant</b>
<b>Mon</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1:30</b>	<b>Book Group</b>	<b>Lynda Weston Hilda Dillman</b>	<b>Jacaranda Library <i>The Women</i></b>
<b>Mon</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>Mix and Mingle</b>		<b>No meeting this month</b>
<b>Tues</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9:30</b>	<b>Exploring With Your Camera</b>	<b>Val Dwek and Linda Friedman</b>	<b>Meet at The British Pub, 367 Jacaranda Blvd.</b>
<b>Tues</b>	<b>14</b>		<b>Movie Mavens</b>		<b>TBD</b>
<b>Wed</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12:00</b>	<b>Cook's Corner</b>	<b>Joan Kieran</b>	<b>Nancy Brex will host. Theme: Mom's favorite recipe RSVP to Joan</b>
<b>Wed</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>Deadline for February Venice Views</b> Send Word formatted articles and/or jpg formatted photos by email to <a href="mailto:aauwveniceviews@gmail.com">aauwveniceviews@gmail.com</a>		
<b>Thurs</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>French Conversation</b>	<b>Jane Metcalf</b>	<b>Contact Jane for location</b>
<b>Thurs</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11:30</b>	<b>Mahjongg</b>	<b>Barbara Swartz</b>	<b>Moulin Blanc</b>
<b>Fri</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11:30</b>	<b>Euchre</b>	<b>Charlene Turczyn</b>	<b>Paradise Grill, Nokomis</b>
<b>Wed</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6:00</b>	<b>Evening Out</b>	<b>Melanie Odom</b>	<b>Leone's in Venice 1266 Jacaranda Blvd.</b>
<b>Wed</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11:30</b>	<b>Lunch Bunch</b>	<b>Anita Kunkle Lydia Russo</b>	<b>Bodrum in Venice, 225 Miami Ave.</b>
<b>Fri</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12:15</b>	<b>Bridge for Fun</b>	<b>Bernadette McEnemy</b>	<b>Venezia Restaurant</b>
<b>Mon</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>1:30</b>	<b>Banned Books</b>	<b>Lynda Weston</b>	<b>Jacaranda Library</b>
<b>Tues</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2:00</b>	<b>Coastal Cruising</b>	<b>Paula Dulski</b>	<b>Marina Jack's in Sarasota</b>



Venice Views Editor for January: Nancy Brex

E-copy Circulation: Susan Donovan

VENICE VIEWS: All submissions to our monthly Venice Views need to be sent by the **15th of the previous month** to [aauwveniceviews@gmail.com](mailto:aauwveniceviews@gmail.com)

**Text in Word Formatted / File Pictures in JPG Format Only!**

**Deadline for the February issue of Venice Views is 1/15/2025**

### **MAKING VENICE VIEWS BETTER FOR YOU!**

The Venice Views Editorial team continually tries to make our newsletter more informative and easier to read. In order to do so we came up with the following requests:

Everything that is emailed for inclusion in a monthly newsletter **MUST BE SENT ONLY** to: [aauwveniceviews@gmail.com](mailto:aauwveniceviews@gmail.com). Venice Views has its very own email address.

(1) We ask that each member who submits a notice to please keep the article down to a reasonable size, write the article in the third person. We thank you for your information. Please note your copy may be edited.

(2) Because the newsletter is posted on the internet, personal contact information is **not** to be included. Personal info is located in our Annual Directory. Contact Membership Director Marge Collin for a copy.

(3) We LOVE your photos! **BUT** please do **not** send them **twice**. [Often photos are sent to the SIG chair and by the individual straight to the Venice Views.]

(3) Not everybody knows everybody! **Please** label your photos, as much as possible, with the event and the names of the people in the photos.

(4) All photos are to be sent in **JPG format ONLY**.