

The UN Women/USNC Gulf Coast Book Club meets every second Monday at the Sarasota North County Library from 2:30–4:00. For further information, please contact Leita Kaldi Davis, [lkaldi@hotmail.com](mailto:lkaldi@hotmail.com).

The UN Women Book Club met on Monday, June 10, 2013 to discuss Sonia Pressman Fuentes' memoir, Eat First – You Don't Know What They'll Give you: The Adventures of an Immigrant Family and Their Feminist Daughter. We were honored by the author's presence, and delighted by the many stories she wrote about her Jewish family, such as “How I Got My Mink Stole,” and “Weinberg's Glasses.” We were awed by Sonia's breadth of knowledge and experience as a lawyer and a feminist. Sonia was the first woman attorney in the General Counsel's Office at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and a founder of the National Organization for Women (Not “of.” We appreciate that correction.) She devotes a substantial chapter, “Sex Maniac,” to her work in various positions in government and corporate institutions where she advocated for evolved labor laws and women's rights. She has received many awards for promoting women's causes, and continues to be dynamically involved with several national and global organizations such as the Commission on the Status of Women which is holding its National Conference in Sarasota in 2014. Many of the women who were drawn to this meeting shared their own experiences of the impact of feminism on their lives, and we had a dynamic discussion about the evolution of female equality in our generation, inspired by our author. Sonia has a unique writing and speaking style: while she appears to be self-deprecating and humorous, her deeds are amazingly laudatory. She tells incredible stories about her incredible life. I can't resist sharing her favorite quote from an anonymous African American woman:

We ain't what we oughta be,  
We ain't what we wanna be,  
We ain't what we gonna be,  
But, *thank God*, we ain't what we was.

Future readings include:

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| July      | Vaddey Ratner, " <u>In the Shadow of the Banyan</u> " (Cambodia)  |
| August    | Kaldi, Leita, <u>In the Valley of Atibon</u> , (Haiti) (available the library, from Leita or from amazon.com.   |
| September | Poniatowska, Elena, <u>Here's to you, Jesusa!</u> , the "true" life story of Jesús a Palancares de Aguilar, a poverty-stricken but amazingly independent woman, born in Oaxaca, whose life spans the events of 20th-century Mexico. |
| October   | <u>Three Strong Women</u> , by Marie Ndiaye (Senegal/France)  |
| November  | <u>Aboard the Democracy Train: A Journey through Pakistan's Last Decade of Democracy</u> , by Nafisa Hoodbhoy.  |
| December  | <u>The Almond Tree</u> , by Michelle Cohen Corasanti (Israel/Palestine)   |
| January   | <u>However Long the Night: Molly Melching's Journey to Help Millions of African Women and Girls Triumph</u> (Senegal/Africa)  |

February Peony, by Pearl S. Buck