



September Branch Meeting Members ONLY Social

Thursday, September 10, 2020 9:30 AM

Veterans Field Pavilion, Sardis Road

(Just north of the library by the Murrysville Public Works)



For our first AAUW Branch meeting of the year, Branch members ONLY will gather in the open air for a business and social meeting. We will have updates from Board members, then everyone will have time to reconnect, to talk together, and get to know each other better. It is very important that we continue to practice social distancing and wear masks, even when we are outside.

The pavilion has picnic tables, although you may be more comfortable by bringing your own chair or cushion. No food or beverages will be provided, but you are welcome to bring whatever you would like for your own consumption.

Bring your ideas for what you would like our Branch to be during this time of COVID-19, including future programs and tours, and consider whether you would be comfortable meeting in an indoor setting, either in the Library or a larger meeting room.

The Board knows that some of our members, due to health concerns, will not be comfortable attending our September Members Only Social meeting. Please know we will be thinking of those who cannot attend, and that we hope to see everyone soon! The most important consideration is the health and safety of all our members.

In the event of severe weather (heavy rain, hail, sleet, thunderstorm or snow) the meeting will be cancelled. Please join us! It's been too long since we have been together!

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Board Members

The Murrysville Area AAUW Branch board members for the 2020-2021 year are:

Elected Officers

President	Janet Sutton
Vice President, Programs	Diane Conway
Vice President, Membership	Laura Livingston
Secretary	Diane Kaufmann
Finance Officer	Carol Gezon

Appointed Officers

Newsletter Editor	Donna Beard
Directory Editor	Diane Kaufmann
Book Sale Chair	Annie S. Rivers
Public Policy & Information	Susan Greenberg
Website Coordinator	Nina Damato
Immediate Past President	Susan Petrie
Great Decisions	Barb Glozik



Janet Sutton



Laura Livingston



Diane Conway



Carol Gezon



Diane Kaufmann

President's Letter

Welcome to the new, unusual year of AAUW programming. This is not what we had planned. Instead, since March we have reacted to the advice of medical experts by cancelling scheduled meetings and tours, in the best interest for the health of all our members. At a Special Board meeting held July 9 in the pavilion at St. Alban's Church, after serious consideration the Board decided to cancel all AAUW speakers through January 2021, the Book Sale, and meetings of the Special interest Groups. This is disappointing, but necessary.

Annie Rivers organized the Phone Tree to facilitate updates of the latest AAUW information, exchange ideas, and inquire about how our members are coping with our new reality of life in the midst of a pandemic. We hope you have enjoyed the phone calls. Thanks, Annie!

The Branch Directory was updated thanks to Diane Kaufmann and will be emailed to all members. Download it to your smart phone, computer, or print your own copy. In addition to addresses and phone numbers of our members, it includes a list of current officers, programs and tours. Thanks, Diane!

The Board also discussed how to incorporate more social time into our Branch meetings. When we can again meet inside to hear a speaker, the business meeting will be from 9:30-9:45 AM, followed by social time from 9:45-10:00 AM, with the speaker starting at 10:00 AM. This will also allow those guests who do not want to sit through our business meeting to arrive in time for the speaker.

We urge all members to follow CDC guidelines as the experts continue to monitor the pandemic and gain understanding of transmission and treatment of the virus.

Janet Sutton

The Phone Tree

A phone tree in this day and age!
Is the world coming to an end?!?

I was reminiscing with Donna Beard about when Marj Morian would often volunteer to be in charge of our AAUW Phone Tree—remember? The Phone Tree, divided by neighborhoods, was printed at the back of the paper copy directory with captains responsible for activating the calling in case of snow days or to prompt members to RSVP for a brunch or luncheon. We used phone trees quite a bit in the days before personal computers and smart phones. Today it's definitely a retreat to the past.



When our newly elected President Janet Sutton called for a special Board meeting in early July (held outside in a pavilion), she pointed out that due to the pandemic our normal branch meetings and activities would not be happening until at least February 2021.

We discussed all the events that would have to be canceled or rescheduled. The Murrysville Community Library had closed in mid-March and was unavailable for our meetings until further notice. The Book Sale had to be canceled. The Focus would continue its normal schedule. There was much news to share with our members.

As our discussion continued, the Board realized how much we enjoyed seeing each other and speaking face to face (or I should say mask to mask). What if we had a social September branch meeting out of doors in a pavilion? But we needed to find out how our members felt about this.

So the idea of a phone tree came up! A phone call was more personal than email, we could see how members were coping during the pandemic, and if there was any interest in meeting in an outdoor pavilion. Since the book sale which I had volunteered to chair this year was canceled, I volunteered to organize the phone tree.

I hope all our members have had a chance to speak with one of the phone tree volunteers. Up to sixty percent of our membership reported they would be interested in an outdoor social meeting this September. They agreed masks were necessary and food was not. Some members did not feel they would be comfortable in a gathering at this time. That is quite understandable. Hopefully after September we can find ways to keep in contact without compromising anyone. In these unprecedented times, we have to come together in the safest way possible.

The phone tree calls prompted some delightful conversations. Each person had her own experience to share but many shared similar circumstances—isolation; worry and cancellations of planned events; either family members coming back home to stay during the shutdown or the opposite where families can't be together with children and grandchildren during the shutdown. Some have been adventurous and met with others, and some have stayed completely away from others. A few shared knowing persons who have tested positive or contracted Covid19 and recovered, but for the most part most of us have not personally known anyone who has been impacted by the virus. Everyone is looking forward to things “getting back to normal”.

I want to give a heartfelt thank you to all the callers – Susan Petrie, Susan Greenberg, Diane Kaufmann, Donna Beard, Carol Gezon, Diane Conway, Laura Livingston, Annie Rivers and Sally Haleen (a Past President), as well as to the membership as a whole for sharing ideas and experiences in these difficult times. Thanks to you, we talked and shared and planned for the future.

Annie S. Rivers
Phone Tree Coordinator



Right to Vote Centennial

One hundred years ago on August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, enfranchising all American women and declaring for the first time that they, like men, deserve the rights and responsibilities of citizenship: the right to vote. Since then, much has been accomplished towards the equality of women in many areas.

How important it is to use our privilege to vote.

Vote by Mail

The new Pennsylvania mail-in voting option allows voters to vote by mail without needing a reason, and COVID-19 is reason enough to stay away from the polls. To request a mail-in ballot, go to www.votesPA.com. Apply early and vote early to avoid the last minute rush!

Deadlines for the November 3 election are:

October 27, 5PM: Applications must be received by the county election office.

November 3, 8PM: Voted ballots must be received by county election office.

Susan Greenberg
Public Policy Chair



Public Policy

The following is a statement from AAUW CEO Kimberly Churches, June 1, 2020:

AAUW joins the country in mourning the losses of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and countless other people of color who have been unjustly killed across our nation. Our country needs healing. But healing will only come with justice. As an organization we condemn racism.

Systemic racism is firmly rooted in the U.S. and today's injustices mirror our shameful history – from police brutality to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color. There can be no justice or equality when Black and Brown communities are seen as less deserving of basic human and civil rights.

On behalf of our 170,000 members and supporters, we commit to fighting for justice, long-term and lasting change, and we stand in solidarity against racism. We also acknowledge that as an organization we have our own work to do.

And, as a member of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, we will work to advance the policies and systemic changes identified in the New Era of Public Safety: A Guide to Fair, Safe, and Effective Community Policing and Vision for Justice platform.

Book Sale

Book Sale Retrospective Part I

We are Book Sale people.

Murrysville AAUW was chartered in the fall of 1971. In January, we partnered with the Monroeville AAUW branch to participate in The Book Fair at the Monroeville Mall Community Bazaar. Karen Weiss was chair.

Two years later Marge Hanes picked up the cause as chair.

Until now, we have had an annual Book Sale in some form except for 2012. There will be no sale this year.

Many thanks go to Lorie Mottorn, for writing an amazing article outlining the history of the Book Sale from 1972 to 2011. It was my main reference for all things Book Sale.

Erika Treu saved every Focus from May 1971 through 2003 with every Book Sale reference highlighted. Bless you Erika. Judy Johnson, Marge Hanes and Betty Hollingsworth contributed additional information and fond memories. Thank you all.

We have always been Book Sale people.

Carol Gezon

In November 2009, Marge wrote this article for the Focus, reflecting on where we started.

Book Sale 1974 & 1975

What an amazing difference 35 years has made in the AAUW Book Sale. Shortly after I joined AAUW, in 1973, I was asked to chair the Book Sale that was scheduled to take place in January of 1974. I know that there had been one the previous January, but I don't know whether it had been the first. That 1973 sale had produced \$300 for the Education Foundation.

Space for the sale was a 10' x 10' area at the Monroeville Mall during their January "Sidewalk Sale." Starting in September, we

collected books using a barrel at the library as one collection point, or people would simply bring them to me. I stored them at my house, sorting them as they came in. I remember that Betty Soergel came over one day to check what children's books we had, and I think she found some Little House books.

The 1973 sale had simply used 3 tables to hold the books. Peggy Bowman, chair of Education Foundation, and I decided we could showcase more books if we used bookshelves, so we had our husbands construct enough for that 10' x 10' space. Our assigned space was an area on the upper level of the Mall, in the middle, opposite the escalators. On a Thursday night, we moved the bookshelves in, and then loaded up our station wagons to move boxes of books. The sale took place all day Friday and Saturday, and I took additional boxes to replenish the supply, during the days of the sale. When the sale ended, Peggy and I were delighted to discover that we'd made \$500 for the Education Foundation.

I again chaired the sale in 1975 but this time we were assigned a space on the lower level, at the far end. It was far less convenient for moving in supplies, and it was also a very cold, snowy weekend. We still made about \$500 on the sale, but it hadn't been nearly as much fun as the previous sale had been. Some of the volunteers hadn't been able to make their assigned times because of the weather, and I remember struggling to transport carts of books over the ice coated parking lot.

That was my final year to chair the sale, and I vaguely remember the sale moving to the community room in front of the old library the following year. The Mall had given us a good start, but we were ready for bigger and better sales. Just look where that has taken us!

Marge Hanes

Puzzle Pastime

I love jigsaw puzzles! I know many of you do, too, as evidenced by your enthusiasm when we sold puzzles at last Fall's book sale.

During this pandemic, puzzles have become a wildly popular escape. As a result, stock and selection are quite low, and prices have increased.

Here is where I've found puzzles. Perhaps you've found others.

- exchange puzzles with friends or family!
- Half Price Books, Target, Barnes and Noble, Home Goods
- thrift shops like Goodwill
- Mystery Lovers Bookshop
- BEST DEAL: Delmont Library. Puzzles are free!

Brands found online or in stores:

Ravensburger, Buffalo, White Mountain, Lang, Spilsbury, Bits and Pieces.



I like to first sort for edge pieces, then by color. Eventually, I might arrange by shape, particularly when there are many pieces of the same color. Shallow lids from cardboard boxes are good for sorting because the puzzle pieces don't slide. And I can stack my "trays" on my bookshelf, out of reach of inquisitive grandchildren or kitties.

Puzzles are good medicine. Enjoy!

Susan Petrie



The Library is..... Open!

The following came from Susan Long, Branch Member, and Board President of the Murrysville Community Library:

We're pleased to tell you that the Murrysville Community Library opened in August for browsing by appointment. Please see MCL's website for the latest information, and call 724-327-1102 to schedule your appointment. Curbside pickup may also be arranged.

While the library building cannot host meetings or programming at this time, know that we miss our AAUW friends.

Are you looking for a way to help make our community stronger? The library is now scheduling volunteers to assist with services (with all safety and social-distancing protocols). Find more information on MCL's website, or email our volunteer coordinator at Janeene.Foster@wlnonline.org.

Reading for Pleasure

I hope you are all safe and well. I understand there is a possibility of our having a virtual meeting using a site the library has. If we do this we would discuss *America's First Daughter* by Stephanie Day and Laura Kamole. We could do it informally as we have done in the past for the summer reading meetings. Please let me know, by email, if you are interested in trying a virtual meeting. My email address is bethiams@comcast.net.



Bethia Schulz

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