



October Branch Meeting Members ONLY Social

Thursday, October 8, 2020 9:30 AM
Veterans Field Pavilion, Sardis Road

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

Our October Branch meeting will again be for members only, again held in the pavilion of Veteran's field, behind the soccer field on Sardis Road. The business meeting will include updates from Board members, time for discussion of AAUW issues, and time for anything our members would like to address. A speaker is not scheduled. Plan to stay and chat all morning and enjoy the company of friends.

Please wear a mask and practice social distancing. Bring a cushion to sit on the picnic benches, or bring your own chair. No food or beverages will be served. Plans for future meetings this year remain in flux. Our most important consideration is the health and safety of all our members.

There will be a sharing opportunity at this social. A puzzle, book and magazine exchange will be available for all members to participate in. For details, see the article on the next page. This will offer a good opportunity to discuss and gather some leisure-time indoor activities for the coming cooler weather.

In the event of severe weather, like a thunderstorm, the meeting will be cancelled. Otherwise dress for the weather outdoors, even if there is a nip in the air or rain. We hope to see you there!

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President's Letter

Very pleasant weather made our first outdoor Branch meeting in the pavilion of Veteran's field a success, judged by the many favorable comments. Everyone was mindful of social distancing and wore masks to reduce the chance of spreading the virus. We did not have a speaker, but we did have time to reconnect with friends. If programming can resume in February, we have reserved the Murrysville Community Center since it is a larger room than the one we usually use in the Library allowing more social distancing.

The Branch Directory is still under revision as I write this; it will be emailed shortly.

Discussing what to include in the FOCUS, members were supportive of the inclusion of member profiles and suggestions of how to keep busy in the time of COVID-19, including recommendations or photos of favorite trails or other activities. We will not include any controversial topics! All members are welcome to send items for the FOCUS to Donna Beard at djbeard2@gmail.com.

A recent article by Chuck Greenberg in the Penn-Franklin News acknowledged the partnership between AAUW Murrysville Branch and the Murrysville Community Library. The Library is now open by appointment, and for curbside book delivery by appointment. For information about volunteering at the Library, email Janeen.Foster@wlnonline.org.

Our Special Interest Groups meetings are suspended, as we all wait for a time when we can gather safely again.

Enjoy the fall weather and stay safe!

Janet Sutton, President



Book and Puzzle Swap

Annie shares: "Whether it's a 1,100 piece '4D Cityscape Time Puzzles' or a 300 piece 'How to Live with an Idiot' fun puzzles, I have enjoyed spending time these days doing these and many other puzzles.

Quite a few I do with my husband Dick and then I often ship them to my daughter Sharon in Portland or take to my grandkids here in Pittsburgh. It's a great way to fill my days, or evenings in front of the TV, and to feel productive somehow with my 'accomplishment'."



At the September AAUW Social Branch Meeting, several of us discussed sharing with each other our puzzles....and books and magazines! Perhaps needlepoint workers, quilters, etc., would like to share patterns, too.

We thought our October Social Branch Meeting (outdoors) would be a good place and means for swapping items.

Here's how it works:

- If you want your items back, be sure to put your name on them.
- You are responsible for keeping track of who borrows your items.
- Any items you don't want back, place them on the "free" table.

Note: we are *not collecting books*, so please take home your unclaimed items.

Susan will be happy to collect any leftover unwanted puzzles and donate them to the Delmont Library, which offers puzzles for free.

Contributed by Annie Rivers and Susan Petrie



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.

Remember to make sure you follow all the instructions and sign in the indicated locations. Mail-in ballots will be rejected if not properly completed!

Susan Greenberg
Public Policy Chair



Book Sale News

As most of you heard either through the phone tree calls or at our Branch Meeting in September, we are not having our Used Book Sale fundraiser this year. The Library is not available and most (if not all) of us are not available or willing to do the fundraiser with Covid-19 concerns. The library is taking any used books that are dropped off to Half Price Books.

Members who have books that would have gone into the book sale have several options.

- Sharing among members books we have enjoyed this past year at the Branch Meeting in October at the Veteran's Pavilion.
- Save the books to donate, hopefully, at a Used Book Sale fundraiser in November 2021. Yes, 2021!!!!
- Take your books yourself to Half Price Books and donate that money to our Branch for inclusion in a donation to the Murrysville Community Library.

Other suggestions are always welcome. Call, text, or email me.

Annie S. Rivers
Used Book Sale Chair
anniesrivers@yahoo.com
cell phone 412-354-1411

Library Changes

Murrysville Community Library announced new hours effective September 28:

Monday and Wednesday	10 AM - 7 PM
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday	10 AM - 5 PM
Saturday	10 AM - 4 PM

Appointments to enter the Library are no longer required, but visitors must wear a mask and are limited to an hour.

Curbside pickup will continue.

Returns must be placed in the dropbox outside the library.

Book Sale

The Community Book Sale - Part II

We are Book Sale people. After several successful years at the mall, the time had come to make the sale local. In November 1977, the Community Building on Carson Avenue was rented for \$50 and Jane Grundy organized our first AAUW Book Sale in Murrysville. It made \$327.06. We were off and running.

Six years later the Community Building was to be under construction in the fall to accommodate an expanded library so the book sale was moved to Laird Hall. Our branch contributed \$2500 to the Library Building Fund when construction actually started in the spring. With our new location and continued refinements to the sale, the profits grew to as much as \$4000 a year by 1998. AAUW now had the opportunity to distribute more money to our local area as well as to our national scholarship program. By 2011 when we held our last sale in Laird Hall, we had contributed over \$87,000 within our community, to libraries, social service organizations, recreation and school programs.

In the 80's, our branch had as many as 270 members. By 1990 there were 129 members, by 1996 we were down to 95, by 2011 about 50. As the sale grew in size, it was difficult to have enough workers to collect and sort the books, a task that was almost year round.

Storage was also a problem. Member's homes, space in schools and a storage locker were all used at various times until March 1989, when Dr. Graham donated his basement for storage and sorting. It made all the difference; a central location with a good deal of space. We filled it!

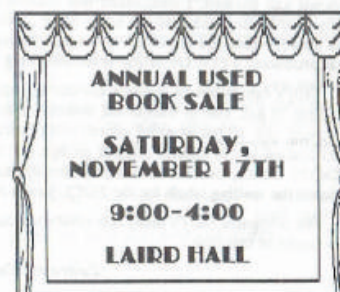
As different chairmen took over, different ideas were used to improve sales. Someone discovered how important it was to use uniform boxes for book storage. Seeking out Carlo

Rossi boxes became a passion. For several years the sale had been a one day event. Imagine all that work for one day of sales. In 1994, the sale expanded to two days and it eventually became three. 1995 was the year we started selling by the inch. In 2007 a Secondhand Prose Shelf was established at the library and later at a local tea shop. We tried consignment sales, sales to special-interest clubs and online sales. There was a bake sale alongside the books one year. But always, our profit leader was the books, the sheer volume of them, meticulously organized. In 2011 there were more than 20,000 books and we made almost \$12,000.

It should be noted that the era of having such a large sale at Laird Hall was also the era of having four amazing women take over for multiple years as chair. Pat Westine and Donna Carson both chaired for four years. In 2000, Betty Hollingsworth stepped in for Donna, serving for seven years until Erika Treu took over to finish our 34 year run.

It could not last. With an aging membership we could not have a sale of that size in 2012. But you know it wasn't the end. We did go on.

We have always been Book Sale people.



Old Book Sale Flyer

Member Profile Betty Hollingsworth

Elizabeth A. Hollingsworth (Betty) is a long-term AAUW member. She is filled with positive energy for our Branch and made me laugh when she made some non-repeatable threats she would kiddingly carry out if we disbanded. I had the opportunity to spend some time with her and here is what I found out:



Tell me about your life:

Betty was born in Philadelphia. Her family moved regularly, and at the time, she did not appreciate the opportunity to live in so many places. In hindsight she realized how good it was to meet so many people.

Betty was a good student and loved the French language. She wanted to go to a college where she could major in French and also spend a year abroad. She applied to only one college, the University of Michigan, was accepted and spent her Junior year in Aix-en-Provence, France, immersed in the language and culture and traveling throughout Europe.

Immediately after college graduation, she married Stephen, her high school sweetheart. Betty taught for one year before entering graduate school at Purdue, teaching French as a teaching assistant. She never got to finish her studies because her husband was drafted, joined the Navy, and they moved to Mare Island, California near San Francisco.

Betty has two children. Her daughter Susan is a professor at Edgewood College in Madison, Wisconsin, and her son David lives and works in New York City. Both graduated from Franklin Regional.

Betty and her family moved to Murrysville in 1973 when her husband was offered a position with Westinghouse. They were transferred to Taiwan from 1980 – 1981, a wonderful experience for the whole family, and to Aiken, SC, from 1990 – 1996, then returned to Murrysville.

How did you get involved with AAUW?

Betty joined AAUW in 1974. Later our AAUW Branch had between 200 and 300 members and many special interest groups in which she participated. She joined the Aiken, SC, Branch when she lived there but missed the Murrysville Branch of AAUW. Betty said, "AAUW is special to me because of friends it has allowed me to meet over the years. When I joined, my kids were 4 and 1. I joined to prevent atrophy of the brain and to get out of the house! I have enjoyed the social aspect ever since. Also it has broadened my horizons with program topics I otherwise wouldn't have explored."

Betty has been very involved in our local Branch, serving for decades on the Board in many different positions. When book sale time came around, Betty was a mainstay in the book culling and during the sale, even serving as book sale chair for seven years. The branch honored her in 2001 as Outstanding Woman.

How do you spend your time and what do you like to do?

Betty is interested in many things. She and her husband loved to travel, especially European river barge cruises. She is also a voracious reader. I asked her if she had a favorite book or author but she said there are too many. One book she just read and recommended was *On Pluto: Inside the Mind of Alzheimer's* by Greg O'Brien. She also likes to go on local tours and play bridge. Murrysville will always be her home even if she downsizes, and she will stay in Murrysville where she has many friends and activities.

In conclusion, I was fortunate to get to know Betty and share why we are lucky to have Betty as an active member of our Murrysville AAUW.

Laura Livingston

Cabin Fever?

If you need to get out of the house, try biking or taking a walk to enjoy the fall! We are blessed in our area to have many options to appreciate the outdoors. All of the different seasons bring their own unique aspects to enjoy, but for many fall is a favorite.



The [Westmoreland Heritage Trail](#) provides a relatively flat, wide, clear trail for walking, jogging or biking. The packed limestone surface is easier on your legs and back than a hard sidewalk or road, and there are no vehicles on the trail. While the trail can get very busy in the evenings and on weekends, during the weekdays there is less usage. Those of us that do spend time on the trail are pleasantly surprised by how many people we see that we know and have a quick, socially distant chat. With many convenient parking and access locations, one can have a variety of walks seeing different sections. While on the trail, check out the AAUW plaques on mileposts 17¾ and 13½.



The Duff Park Bikeway has two gentle elevation changes, but it is a wide, shaded walking trail along Turtle Creek. If walking the Bikeway, check out the AAUW benches near mileposts ¼ and ¾. These benches very recently had the lettering repainted by a friend of AAUW. For those wanting more of a workout, try the hiking trails through Duff Park.



Pleasant Valley Park trails are used for hiking and mountain biking, but have very light usage, especially during the weekdays. The trails are more gentle than Duff Park and provide views of meadows and wooded areas.

It is a favorite park of many birders because the variety of environments attracts many different species of birds.

Murrysville Community Park offers a long asphalt trail around the fields in the park as well as the crushed stone, half mile long trail around the wetlands. While the park may get busy when the children have organized activities, the park is primarily enjoyed by the walkers during the weekday mornings and early afternoons. It's a convenient place to walk with a threat of rain, having numerous shelters available throughout the park.

There are many other parks and reserves in Murrysville with trails, and of course, neighborhood walks are a great way to see some of the neighbors. Getting out and breathing fresh air makes your whole day seem better, and the friendly "hi's" from the other walkers make it even more rewarding.



*walk and be happy,
walk and be healthy.*
Charles Dickens



The FOCUS is published monthly, except in July and August, by the Murrysville Area Branch of the American Association of University Women. President: Janet Sutton, Editor: Donna Beard, Email: MurrysvilleAAUW@gmail.com. The American Association of University Women, founded in 1881, is open to all graduates who hold an associate degree or equivalent, or baccalaureate or higher degree from a college or university or academically accredited institution. In principle and practice AAUW values and 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. Membership is not by invitation. AAUW advances equity for all women and girls through advocacy, education and research. The Murrysville Area AAUW has an affiliate membership available to anyone who does not hold an associate or baccalaureate degree.