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**ALL BRANCH ACTIVITIES ARE CANCELLED
until further notice**

April is National Poetry Month

The Britannica defines poetry as “literature that evokes a concentrated imaginative awareness of experience or an emotional response through language...” In its simplest expression, April showers bring May flowers!

Spring

by Edna St. Vincent Millay

To what purpose, April, do you return again?
Beauty is not enough.
You can no longer quiet me with the redness
Of little leaves opening stickily.
I know what I know.
The sun is hot on my neck as I observe
The spikes of crocus.
The smell of the earth is good.
It is apparent that there is no death.
But what does that signify?
Not only under ground are the brains of men
Eaten by maggots.
Life in itself
Is nothing,
An empty cup, a flight of uncarpeted stairs.
It is not enough that yearly, down this hill,
April
Comes like an idiot, babbling and strewing flowers.



Board Meeting
Thursday, April 1
9:30 AM
Online Meeting

Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem “Spring”, published in 1921 and now in the public domain, portrays her quick wit and her penchant for deviating from the norm. Instead of romanticizing the season of spring, Millay portrays it as an “idiot, babbling” and shows readers a new perspective on the clichéd aspects of the season, rejecting the typical romantic depictions of the often-idealized season. For more insight into the poet: www.millay.org

President's Letter

Not meeting in person presents some challenges in conducting Branch business, such as the election of Branch officers. Had we had a Branch meeting, the slate of officers would have been announced in March. Instead the slate was introduced by email. The election of officers will again be by email in April. If the weather cooperates, officers will be installed at an outdoor meeting for members only on May 13.

Recently it has come to our attention that while our name is known in the community, our group's purpose and activities are not well understood. Here is our new mission statement:

The Murrysville Area Branch of AAUW is a dynamic social and service organization providing charitable giving, engaging in community service, and providing social and educational opportunities for its members. This mission is accomplished through regular monthly meetings with innovative programs, tours and special events, enhancing life-long learning in a welcoming environment.

The Murrysville Community Library continues to adjust hours and access to the public based on COVID guidelines. Check the website or call for the latest information. If indoor meetings can resume in September, Vice-President for Programs, Diane Conway, has already arranged for an exciting list of speakers for 2021-2022!

Until we can meet in person again, stay positive, test negative!

Janet Sutton



It's Time to Pay Our Dues

(Write that check now)

2021 - 2022



We may not meet in person again this Spring, therefore we ask that you please mail your dues check to Carol Gezon before June 1, 2021. Our national organization

requests that all member information and dues payments be in their hands before July 1.

Our total dues payment will not increase this year. It will continue to be \$85 for members and \$25 for affiliates. That breaks down to \$62 for AAUW National dues, \$10 for the State Affiliation and \$13 for our branch operating budget.

This year \$59 of our National dues are tax deductible since AAUW is a 501(c)3 organization.

Please mail your checks, made out to AAUW, before June 1, 2021 to Carol Gezon.

Carol Gezon
3309 Hermar Court
Murrysville, PA. 15668

Please include any changes in address, phone number, or email for updating the directory.

Laura Livingston
Membership
livingla@comcast.net
724-331-5773

Carol Gezon
Finance
cwgezon@windstream.net
724-989-9595

AAUW National and State News

Increase in National Dues

At its October 2020 meeting, the National AAUW Board of Directors voted to increase individual member dues over the next three years. The dues will rise by \$3 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, \$5 for FY 2023 and \$5 for FY 2024, making the total national dues amount for those years \$62, \$67 and \$72, respectively. All but \$3 of your annual National dues remains tax deductible.

The Murrysville Branch Board has decided to reduce our local dues for members to \$13 for FY 2022 so your annual total dues will remain at the current \$85.

Carol Gezon
Finance

AAUW National Proposed Bylaws Change

AAUW National will soon send members an email regarding a proposed bylaws change for AAUW membership. You will be asked to vote on removing the education requirement currently in place for membership in AAUW. Voting will be by email between April 7 and May 17, 2021.

Join Dot McLane, AAUW Past President and former AAUW national board member, in a Town Hall to learn about this change, and the reasons it is being proposed. At this event, attendees will be able to break out into smaller groups to have more intimate conversation with other members. This event is open to all AAUW members in the state of Pennsylvania. The event will run from 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM on Tuesday, March 30th, 2021. Advance registration is required. Click [here](#) to register.

"Economic Security" Proposals

In the March 2021 highlights from AAUW-PA, there were announcements of several proposed bills to increase economic security. HB 819, sponsored by Representatives Brian Sims and Tina Davis, deals with pay equity. There are 22 co-sponsors at this time. A sample letter was included as well as a table listing the pay discrepancy between men and women in the PA workforce.

As of September 2020, in our PA-14 Congressional district the mean earnings for men was \$55,998, for women, \$41,047, with an earnings ratio of 73.3%, ranking our district 18th, last in the state. The recommendation for AAUW members is to contact our local representative to encourage him to sign on as a co-sponsor of the bill. The information for Bob Brooks (R-54) is:

Hon. Bob Brooks,
3091 Carson Avenue
Murrysville, PA, 15668
724-387-1281

For the sample letter, salary table, and other information on proposed and pending legislation, go to

<https://aauw-pa.aauw.net/policy/>

For contact information for PA officeholders, go to

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us>

Susan Greenberg
Public Policy chair



Branch Officers Slate

Branch Officers Nominees for 2021-2023:

Vice-President, Programs: Diane Conway.

Vice-President, Membership: Laura Livingston

Finance Officer: Carol Gezon

Members will be sent a ballot in April. The Board President and Secretary continue to serve through May 2022.

Great Decisions



Like our meetings, Great Decisions is on hold until the fall. The books are in and cost \$32. If you want to take part in this year's group, please let me know either via an email or a phone call. You can pay for the book by cash or check, made out to AAUW

Murrysville, and give me

your payment when you pick up the book or mail it to Carol Gezon.

Barb Glozik
zafodsgirl@gmail.com
724-733-3577



Primary Election

Our Branch has held a Candidates Night prior to municipal elections over many years. The format for this year's Candidates Night will be modified because of COVID-19. The procedure is in development, and will be announced after prospective candidates have filed their nominating petitions.

This year, the Municipal Primary Election of 2021 will take place on Tuesday, May 18. Important dates to be aware of include:

- Monday, May 3: The last day to register or change registration to vote
- Tuesday, May 11: The last day to request an absentee or mail-in ballot

If desired, one can quickly change their voter registration online to reflect a change of party or residence at the election website:

votesPa.com

This website also provides the capability of requesting a mail-in ballot.

Susan Greenberg

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.

Talented Members Jewelry by Susan Greenberg

Here are some photos from the craft I've been practicing for many years. They are all sterling silver with a variety of gemstones (lapis, synthetic rubies, ametrine, jade).



Furry Friends



Here's a photo of our 6½ year old rescue cat (who joined us 5 years ago), Suki Greenberg. Our first cat, 52 years ago, was a calico, and because she was so beautiful, we wanted one again. She's a sweet, independent, but very loving member of the family.

Susan Greenberg



Aurora the Queen (17)
A Calico



Sadie (12) and Mitzi (13)

Susan Petrie's Pets



Mindy (12)
A Basenji/Sheltie

Mrs. T.'s Cheesecake

Crust:

2 c. graham cracker crumbs
1/4 c. sugar
1/2 c. melted butter

Mix and press in to 9 inch pie plate.
(purchased crust acceptable)

Filling:

13 oz. cream cheese
2 eggs
1/2 tsp. vanilla

1/2 c. sugar

Combine thoroughly and beat 10 minutes at high speed of electric mixer.

Pour in pie shell and bake at 350° F for 30-35 minutes. Make topping while it bakes:

Topping:

1 c. sour cream
1/4 c. sugar
1/2 tsp. vanilla

Remove pie after initial baking but leave oven on. Spread topping on pie and bake an additional 7 minutes more.

Spinach Salad

Years ago a friend gave me this recipe. It was so yummy, I sent it to friends and family at Christmas. Some said...???, I don't remember asking for this. But when something is this good, you want to share it.

1 small onion, chopped
2 Tbsp. grated parmesan
2 Tbsp. sugar
1/2 c. mayonnaise
1/2 tsp. thyme
2 Tbsp. oil
1/2 tsp. salad herbs
1 Tbsp. vinegar
1/2 tsp. garlic powder

Mix all dressing ingredients. Use with one 10 oz. bag fresh spinach, large stems removed. Garnish with sliced fresh mushrooms and crisp crumbled bacon.

After these many years of cooking, these 3 are the *crème de la crème*.

While I was in France my junior year, my roommate, Barb, lived in a small dorm for upperclass women where the cook was famously fine. At the end of the year, Barb asked for her cheesecake recipe, and Mrs. T. had to calculate how to make just one instead of enough for a dorm full of women. I have made it ever since and have never had a better cheesecake.

Betty Hollingsworth

Chicken Parisien

The French would be outraged at this recipe title containing cream of mushroom soup, but that is what it was called when I found it as a new bride. I've made it ever since. It is easy and elegant.

Preheat oven to 350° F.

1 can cream of mushroom soup
4 oz. can sliced mushrooms with liquid
1 c. sour cream
1/2 c. dry sherry

In a large measuring cup, mix sauce ingredients together until lumps in soup are incorporated.

Place 4 to 6 skinless chicken breast halves in a baking dish.

Pour sauce over and sprinkle with paprika.

Bake 1 to 1 1/4 hours.

Can be made with boneless breasts or chicken breast tenders--decrease cooking time accordingly.

I always serve with rice to absorb the yummy sauce.