



December Branch Meeting

The Joy of Reading

Arden Hamer, PhD

Thursday, December 9, 2021 9:30 AM
TechNook in the Murrysville Community Library
4130 Sardis Road
Murrysville, PA

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The AAUW Murrysville Area Branch is known for many years of book sales, having book discussion groups for members, supporting our local libraries, and most recently donating books to encourage elementary school students to read at home. Our December speaker, AAUW member Arden Hamer, has a love of books, reading, and the library.

Arden has been a daughter, wife, mother, friend, elementary school teacher, unsuccessful fiber artist, quilting and needlepoint teacher, Diet Workshop facilitator, author, blogger, and a professor at Indiana University of PA in the Developmental Studies Department. She earned her doctorate from Pitt in 1996 with a concentration in adult literacy and college reading. The one constant has been a love of reading. She currently leads several book discussion groups, including two at the Murrysville Library where she has volunteered for 19 years. Discussion giuides used in the book discussion groups are available online at:

<http://www.ReadtoEnrich.blogspot.com>

Everyone attending is required to wear a mask.

Snow Policy

If Franklin Regional Schools are cancelled,
AAUW meetings are cancelled.

If Franklin Regional Schools are delayed,
AAUW meetings will be held as scheduled.



President's Letter

I know everyone enjoyed hearing Dr. Lisa Haney's love for all things Egypt and the exciting new plans for the *Egypt on the Nile* exhibit at Carnegie Museum of Natural History. At some time in the future, we will plan for a behind the scenes tour of the exhibit with Lisa.



The speaker who was listed in your directory cancelled due to a sudden issue at work just a day before the November Focus was scheduled to be sent, resulting in a long delay in sending the newsletter out to you. Diane Conway, Program Vice-President, made a number of unsuccessful calls and emails trying to find a substitute speaker until she called AAUW member Rose-Marie Muzika, who recommended Dr. Lisa Saladino Haney, an assistant curator at the museum. Program coordinator Susan Petrie made further arrangements with the new speaker, and Susan Greenberg rewrote the publicity. Murrysville Library allowed us to reserve the TechNook and provided A/V expertise. Thanks are due to all who made the necessary last minute changes for the November meeting.

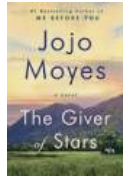
After our traditional book sale was cancelled, Annie Rivers, Book Sale chair, boldly went where AAUW has not gone before. She invented the Book Drop Off, a fundraising event for the Murrysville Library. Learn more about it in the article on page 3. To Annie and her team of volunteers, thank you for supporting this new event!

Best wishes to all for a wonderful holiday season,

Janet Sutton

Reading for Pleasure

Reading for Pleasure will not meet in November but will have a combined November/December meeting on December 2 at 1:00 PM at the library. Note the new date and time. I will be reviewing *The Giver of Stars* by Jojo Moyes. Copies are available at the library front desk.

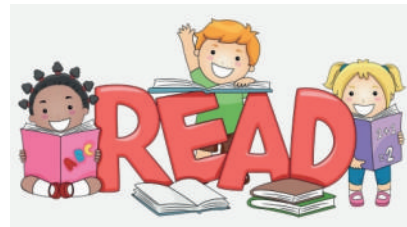


We still need to choose a book for March. I have a list of possibilities we discussed previously. New ideas are always welcome. Hope to see you on December 2 at 1:00. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

Bethia Schulz

Support Reading in Local Homes

While most of us think of Murrysville as an affluent suburb there are actually pockets of real need. Counselors at the Franklin Regional Primary School would welcome our donations of new or gently used books for children in kindergarten through second grade. There are children in the school who do not have reading materials at home. Counselors know of specific needs and can carefully place our donations in the hands of the neediest students. If you would like to support reading in the homes of these children, please bring your donations to the Branch meeting on December 9th.



Drop-Off Book Event Report

The November 13th Drop-Off Books Event can happily be called a success. While the numbers are not in yet, we are pleased to report that thirteen carloads were packed with donations of books, CD's, DVD's, records, games, and a few puzzles. Over the next several weeks, members delivered these donations to Half Price Books (HPB). All proceeds will be given to our partner, the Murrysville Community Library. We look forward to announcing the number of boxes of books collected and the amount raised at our December Branch meeting.

As you know, the Board decided to cancel our annual Used Book Sale for the second year in a row due to the pandemic. The idea of utilizing Half Price Books as a source of income for raising money for the Library was discussed and the idea of an outdoor "drop-off books event" began to form. The date of Saturday, November 13, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, was chosen. Twelve members quickly volunteered to help with the project, followed by an additional four. Some members had already donated money from taking books to HPB on their own.

Susan Greenberg and I met with Library Director Amy Riegner who agreed to let us set up in the event in the Library's parking lot. The Library provided a tent, table and two chairs, and four "Drop Off Parking Space" signs. In addition, the Library produced a "Book Donation Drop-Off" banner with the AAUW logo to hang on the tent. The Library with Susan Greenberg planned the publicity campaign with flyers, bookmarks, and online publicity. Susan submitted newspaper articles to the Penn Franklin and the Murrysville Star. We were all set.

Of course, the beautiful weather of early November did a complete turnaround on our designated day. My husband Dick, Chuck Greenberg, Donna and Charlie Beard, and I struggled to set up the tent with pellets of windy snow and sleet falling around us. Susan Long's husband Russ arrived soon after with some real

life-savers—side panel wind-breaks for the tent, weights for the tent poles, and a much appreciated propane heater for the tent to keep us warm.

As donors showed up, we loaded cars belonging to Diane Kaufmann, Patti Vargo, Rick Petrie, Cynthia Adams, and Donna and Charlie Beard with books. Fortunately, the Library provided empty boxes which were useful when some donors arrived with loose items, or with bins and bags that they wanted back. The first hour was quite busy and I was worried that we would not have any enough trunk space. The number of donors slowed down around the lunch hour. Some delicious pumpkin chocolate chip brownies were brought by Susan Greenberg. Diane Kaufmann and Patti Vargo took off for Half Price Books as soon as their cars were full. Donna and Charlie took a carload home, unloaded it, and then returned to the event. Helpers returned home as soon as their cars were full with plans to spread out their visits to HPB.

Joyce Vernon, Diane Conway, Susan Long, Betty Hollingsworth, Laura Livingston, and Bjoerg Granger arrived for the afternoon shift. One donor arrived with twenty-eight boxes! Thankfully, Susan Long was knowledgeable about providing him with a receipt requested for tax purposes. Bethia Schulz came towards the end to offer her car trunk but we had pretty much filled up the last of the donations.

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HPB was so busy on the day of our event, that Bjoerg Granger waited 45 minutes for her donation money and Diane Conway was asked if she could return on another day.

Carol Gezon had recruited her friend Liz Dillon to open her empty extra garage for any overflow, but in the end we did not need to take up Liz's generous offer.

At 2:00 PM, Chuck Greenberg and Russ Long returned to help dismantle the tent and all clean-up was done by 2:20 PM.

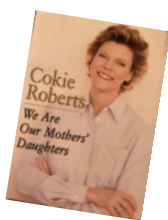
Many donors asked when a used book sale would happen again and some asked if another "drop-off" would be done in the spring. Everyone seemed happy to participate and support the Library.

Thank you to all our members who volunteered their help. You were great! Special thanks to all the husbands. You were invaluable!

If you couldn't participate in our Drop-Off Books event, consider taking your books and other items to Half Price Books and donating the money for us to give to the Library.

Thank you.

Annie S. Rivers
Book Sale Chair



Volunteers Requested

Murrysville Community Library Director Amy Riegner is setting up the annual library "Jingles and Gingerbread" celebration on Monday, December 6. She has put out a call for some volunteers to:

- 1) bake a few dozen cookies to donate, or
- 2) volunteer some time to help set up and clean up at the end.

Setup will be at 4 PM, and cleanup will be around 8:30-9 PM. The event runs from 5 PM to 8 PM. I'll be there along with members of both the Library Board and Library Foundation Board, but they could use a few more helping hands.

Call the library at 724-327-1102 if you are willing to help.

Susan Greenberg

Book and Puzzle Exchange

Members are invited to share their books and puzzles with other members at our Branch meeting on December 9. With no book sale this year, here is an opportunity to acquire "new" books - for free!

Please mark your items with your name and phone number if you would like the items returned to you.

If you bring a puzzle to loan or give away, please put puzzle pieces in a baggie and tape the box shut.

The books and puzzles will be on display both before and after the meeting, in the Community Meeting room on the left as you enter the Library.

If no one borrows or takes the books and puzzles you bring in, please take them home with you. You may wish to donate them to Half Price Books and give the proceeds to the Library!

International Foods

October, 1974 saw carloads of couples converging on Murry Woods for OCTOBERFEST in the backyard of Nancy & Gene Herron. Our good friends, Peggy & Bo Bowman (now living in Greenwood SC) had convinced us to join International Foods and this was our first experience. What a marvelous time we had. Various wursts were offered, as well as chicken, sauerkraut, potatoes, and of course, dark & light beers flowed freely. Everyone had been instructed to bring his/her own mug. Drinking songs were heard throughout the evening. It was a fun introduction to seven years of great eating and the opportunity to meet husbands of the women who were becoming good friends.



These dinners were some of the most popular activities of the youthful AAUW, and my files show that at one time there were 24 dinners (of 4 couples each) taking place on either the third or fourth Saturday of the month. Many of us had recently moved to Murrysville and were eager to meet others. We had members from a variety of different countries and cultures who were willing to plan menus for us with recipes and instructions.

Italian, French, Korean, Indian, Egyptian, Brazilian and Chinese were some of the flavors we encountered, as well as a sampling of American tastes from a Williamsburg feast in celebration of the Bicentennial in 1976 to a Strictly American compilation of favorite recipes from committee members from across the country.

When I called Betty Hollingsworth to ask about her memories, she said International Foods was the reason she joined AAUW. The Penn Franklin had an article with picture of a planning session for a dinner and she recognized a neighbor in the picture. She called her to ask about AAUW and the rest is history!

Our lives have all changed, and many of those couples have relocated, but the friendships remain. So do those recipes – a treasure trove of fond memories.

Marge Hanes

Great Decisions

The 2021 Great Decisions sessions ended on November 19. Participation was light due to Covid-19, but we learned a lot about how nations and international organizations interact to shape the world we live in day to day.

The books and DVDs for 2022 have been ordered. Next year's topics are:

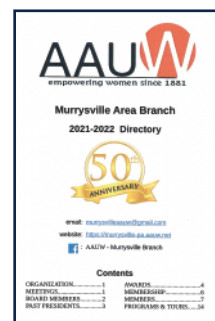
Changing Demographics,
Outer Space,
Climate Change,
Russia,
Myanmar and ASEAN,
The Quad Alliance,
Industrial Policy,
Drug Policy in Latin America, and
Biden's Agenda.

The exact start date has not been set, but will be either February 18 or 25, 2022. Final details and information on buying a book will be in next month's Focus.

Barb Glozik

Directory Update

Due to several unexpected changes to the Programs and Tours Schedule for the year, and some confusion over email addresses, we hope to update the Directory by the end of the year. Please check your current copy and contact Diane Kaufmann with any changes to your address and phone number as soon as possible. We want the Directory to be an accurate record of Branch members and activities.



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Vegan Chocolate Cupcakes

(modified from Teresa Sklenicka, aplantifulpath.com)
(makes 12) (or an 8" or 9" pan for brownies, or two pans of mini-muffins)

Ingredients

1¾ cups whole wheat pastry flour
½ cup organic cane sugar or Sucanat
½ cup cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
⅔ cup pumpkin puree
1 cup water
1 tablespoon ground flaxseed
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1½ teaspoon vanilla
½ cup chocolate chips or chopped nuts (opt.)

Instructions for cupcakes:

Preheat your oven to 350° F. Line a 12 cup cupcake pan with parchment cupcake liners; or you can use a silicone cupcake pan.

Sift together into a medium bowl the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.

Whisk together the pumpkin puree, water, flaxseed, vinegar, and vanilla. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and whisk together just until combined. Don't over-mix the batter.

Transfer the batter into a 12 cup cupcake pan. (The easiest way to transfer the batter to the cupcake pan is with a cookie scoop.)

Bake the cupcakes for 15 to 20 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the middle of one comes out clean.

For brownies:

Bake in an 8" or 9" square pan or other shape; start checking doneness at 23 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

For mini-muffins:

Bake for about 12 minutes.

Note: They freeze well; place in freezer bag; defrost at room temperature.

Date Balls

A recipe from my mother that has been enjoyed for many years.

Melt: 1 stick margarine or butter

Stir in: 1 cup sugar (scant)

1 egg, beaten

1 cup chopped nuts (walnuts or pecans or almonds)

1 cup chopped dates (whole dates freshly chopped work better than using packaged chopped dates.)

Cook over medium-low heat until it thickens, about 12 min. You want the egg protein to thicken, but over cooking makes the cookies harder.

Remove from heat.

Mix in: 1 tsp vanilla

2 cups Rice Krispies

Place coconut (~4 oz.) in a bowl.

While warm and sticky, shape cookies into a 5/8" ball, then roll in coconut. Cool.


Note, greasing hands help keep the balls from sticking to your hand.

Yield: 4 dozen ¾" balls

Donna Beard



December 2021

2	Thurs.	9:30 AM	Board Meeting - MCL Meeting Room† Board members please let Janet know if unable to attend.
2	Thurs.	1:00 PM	Reading for Pleasure - MCL Meeting Room†
9	Thurs.	9:30 AM	Branch Meeting - Murrysville Community Library Technook
13	Mon.		Deadline to email Focus articles to Donna Beard
25	Sat.		

† The Murrysville Community Library (MCL) Meeting Room is located at the entrance to the Murrysville Community Library, 4130 Sardis Road.



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