



January Branch Meeting

Comparisons: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and the Covid-19 Pandemic

Thomas Soltis, PhD – Emeritus, WCCC

Thursday, January 12, 2022

Member Social 9:30 AM Program Starts 10:00 AM

Murrysville Community Library TechNook

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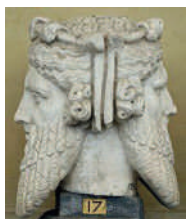
Dr. Thomas Soltis, author of *An Unwelcome Visit from the Spanish Lady: The 1918 Influenza Pandemic in Western Pennsylvania*, and professor of Sociology and Anthropology at Westmoreland County Community College until his retirement in December of 2022, will return to the TechNook of the Murrysville Community Library to share his extensive knowledge of both the Spanish Flu epidemic in 1918 and the Covid-19 pandemic, comparing and contrasting the two contagions.

Speaking to our Branch in January 2022, Dr. Soltis detailed how the 1918 influenza pandemic affected the entire world, killing millions of people. He focused on the impact of the 1918 pandemic in Western PA. Last January, people in our nation and the entire world were dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. During his presentation then, Dr. Soltis used the word “haunting” to describe the similarities between the arrival, response, and reaction to these two pandemics. This reference caught the attention of the audience and led to the decision to invite Dr. Soltis to return to discuss these “haunting” comparisons.

On January 12, 2023, we will welcome Dr. Soltis back to AAUW. He notes that his presentation will focus on the similarities between the two pandemics, looking at the controversy surrounding the arrival of the ‘Spanish Lady’ in 1918 in our area, how local officials and how residents took different approaches in their response to the arrival of the disease. The presentation will also look at the responses of business owners to restrictive actions taken by officials and will compare the approaches of local school boards as they dealt with the problems created by both pandemics. Dr. Soltis hopes to challenge those in attendance to draw similarities between the response to the pandemic in 1918 and our response to Covid-19. As in his previous remarks, Dr. Soltis will share stories of local families, noting how the pandemics influenced their lives.

Please join us for this most timely presentation at the Murrysville Community Library at 10:00 AM as we look at how lessons learned from the 1918 pandemic were – or were not – applied to the world’s response to Covid-19.

January! New Year's Resolutions and Reflections



Janus was the two-faced Roman god of new beginnings, transitions, and dualities, for whom this month was named. January is a time for looking back and looking ahead. As we look

back, we find our Branch growing (four new members!), serving the Murrysville Community Library (\$6,000 in donated profits from two Used Book Sales), and educating our community with a year of exciting programming. Looking ahead, we hope to continue these successful endeavors and to define more ways to serve.

To that end, we invite all members to attend a special Board meeting on January 5th, at 9:45 AM, in the MCL meeting room, to discuss program development for 2023-2024. Please join the Board for a forward-looking discussion of Branch programs.

Is it coincidence that our speaker for January, Dr. Tom Soltis, also plans to speak of dualities, comparing and contrasting the Spanish Flu of 1918 with the Covid-19 pandemic? Come to look back, to reflect on the present state of endemic Covid, and to look ahead to the next pandemic with Dr. Soltis.

Reading for Pleasure this January continues the theme of bifurcations, as the group gathers to read *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel, a novel describing societal collapse brought on by a pandemic that broke the world and left life unrecognizable. This dystopic, post-apocalypse story of life before, during, and after a pandemic is a most fitting "January tale". Why not join the group for an in-depth discussion led by Carol Gezon at Brushes and Beans in Murrysville?

Please put these dates on your new 2023 calendar as we begin a year of wonderful possibilities together.

Diane Kaufmann



Alice Miller Named Gift Honoree 2022

The Branch recognized AAUW Life Member Alice Miller as the Named Gift Honoree for 2022 on December 8th. Alice, accompanied by her daughter, Ellen, graciously thanked Branch members for this honor and accepted a bouquet of red roses.

Alice, active in AAUW over 50 years, has been dauntless in political activism in the community, an enthusiastic bridge player, and an inspiration to club members who find her leadership style and of sense of humor irrepensible. These years of active service have left a special imprint on our Branch! We are delighted to donate \$400 to AAUW Funds in Alice's honor!



Report on Used Book Sale Profits and Check Presentation

In our December FOCUS, I thanked all the members and their spouses who worked so diligently to make our November Used Book Sale a success. At our December Branch Meeting, we as the Murrysville Area AAUW presented a check of \$6000.00 to the Murrysville Community Library. This reflected the combination of the profits from our two in-person Used Book Sales which took place in 2022 which raised almost \$7100. The table below summarizes the sales.

Sixty-one percent of our membership worked on the November Used Book Sale. I thank you all and hope everyone can pitch-in in 2023.

Looking ahead, the next Used Book Sale will be in April of 2023. The book and puzzle donation collecting will be throughout the month of April and the set up day will be Wednesday, April 26, with the sale running the next three days – Thursday, April 27, Friday, April 28, and Saturday, April 29.

How can you help?

- Donate books
 - Cull and sort
 - Help set up
 - Volunteer on the sale days
 - Help take down
 - Transport boxes to Half Price Books
 - Place yard signs out
 - Promote the sale with friends and neighbors
- Please help in any way you can. It's all for a good cause.

Annie Rivers
Book Sale Chair



Comparison of Sales, May and November 2022

Description	May 2022	Nov 2022	Total
Book Sales	\$2898	\$3364	\$6262
Puzzles Sold	47	140	187
Puzzle Revenue	\$215	\$722	\$937
Half Price Books	\$423	\$448	\$871
Total	\$3330	\$3770	\$7100

November 2022 Daily Sales

Description	Books	Puzzles	Total
Thursday (Sunny)	\$1337	\$447	\$1784
Friday (Rainy)	\$726	\$136	\$862
Saturday (Mixed, short day)	\$572	\$105	\$677



Thanks to the generosity of our Branch members and to like-new books culled from Used Book Sale donations, AAUW has given “three bags full” of wonderful children’s books to the Franklin Reginal Primary and Intermediate Schools. Hoping to encourage reading in the home, counselors will distribute these books to needy students who do not have books of their own to read and cherish. Research has shown a clearly defined correlation between the number of books in a child’s home and success in school. We are grateful for all of the carefully and lovingly selected books that members donated to this very special appeal.

Reading for Pleasure

Our Branch book group, Reading for Pleasure, will meet at Brushes and Beans, a coffee shop near the Shop ‘N Save in Murrysville, on Thursday, January 26th at 10:00 AM to discuss *Station Eleven*, Emily St. John Mandel’s dystopic, post-apocalypse book about life and self-discovery. Carol Gezon will lead the discussion.



Members may plan on ordering their own coffee and pastries on location at **Brushes and Beans**. Please bring \$3.00 in cash to help defray the cost of renting the meeting room.

We wish Bethia Shulz, Reading for Pleasure coordinator, relief from pain and a rapid recovery from debilitating back issues. Thanks to Carol Gezon for organizing January’s meeting.

Cookie Social Thank You!

Special thanks to bakers Carol Gezon and Susan Petrie who baked and served the scrumptious cookies for the reception following our December 8th Branch meeting. Everyone enjoyed this very pleasant time of fun and fellowship!



January 2023

1	Sun.		
5	Thurs.	9:45 AM	Board Meeting - MCL Meeting Room† Board members please let Diane know if unable to attend.
12	Thurs.	9:30 AM	Branch Member Social - MCL TechNook† Members are encouraged to arrive early to socialize.
		10:00 AM	Branch Program with Business Meeting to follow - MCL TechNook
16	Mon.		Deadline to email Focus articles to Donna Beard
			
26	Thurs.	10:00 AM	Reading for Pleasure at Brushes and Beans in the Shop 'n Save plaza.


† The Murrysville Community Library (MCL) Meeting Room is located at the entrance to the Murrysville Community Library, 4130 Sardis Road. The TechNook is located in the main library room just before the main stacks.

Snow Policy

If FR Schools are closed, AAUW meetings are canceled.

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



 Like us at
AAUW-Murrysville Branch

The FOCUS is published monthly, except in July and August, by the Murrysville Area Branch of the American Association of University Women. President: Diane Kaufmann, 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.