



March Branch Meeting

Meet Young George Washington

Matt Gault

Director of Education at Fort Ligonier

Thursday, March 9, 2023

Meeting Starts 10:00 AM Member Social 11:30 AM

Murrysville Community Library TechNook

4100 Sardis Road, Murrysville, PA

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Snow Policy

If FR Schools are closed,
AAUW meetings are
canceled.

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

The Murrysville Area AAUW is proud to present historical interpreter Matt Gault as the "Young George Washington". Gault, Ft. Ligonier's Director of Education, will speak, impersonating the young Washington, dressed in period costume. After speaking as Washington, Gault will change clothes and return in his own persona for a brief discussion on this time period and to answer questions.

George Washington found his life "in the most jeopardy it had ever been in before or since" on November 12th during a friendly fire incident outside of Fort Ligonier in 1758. This moment and other events throughout the war would shape the man we know as the first president.

Matt Gault was named Fort Ligonier's Director of Education in May 2020 after serving as the Assistant Director of Education for more than six years. Matt's career began at Fort Ligonier as a college intern while enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Upon graduation, he was selected to join Fort Ligonier's Education Department.

During his time at the Fort, Matt has received several prestigious recognitions including the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau 2017 Tourism Employee of the Year Award and the PA Museums Association Carol Wickkiser Award presented to an outstanding young museum professional. Matt leads the development and production of Fort Ligonier's educational initiatives including the new, exciting virtual field trips and educational programs that have reached students as far away as Hawaii, California, and Utah, and visitors from across the globe. Matt is also known for this riveting portrayal of a young George Washington.

Matt will go to great lengths to increase awareness about French and Indian War history. In August 2021, clad in a breechcloth, Matt was the only historical interpreter to complete a 30-mile hike from Fort Ligonier to Bushy Run to commemorate Bushy Run's anniversary.

President's Letter

What Makes a Good Life?

What makes life fulfilling and meaningful? The world's longest scientific study of human happiness, "The Harvard Study of Adult Development", begun in 1938, spanning 8 decades with 2,000 participants, provides an answer to this question. RELATIONSHIPS!

Whether families, friends, romantic partners, co-workers, Bridge club members, Bible study participants, sports teammates, or volunteer organization participants, the study shows that the stronger our relationships, the more likely we are to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

The Good Life, by Robert Waldinger and Marc Schulz, published in January 2023, blends the results of this on-going eighty-year study with stories of the lives of study participants.



The book helps to demonstrate the truth of ancient teachings, acknowledging that "a good life is built on good relationships". This, of course, brings AAUW to mind.

The success of our new cookie social time following each Branch meeting suggests that we, too, know the importance of relationships. Joining friends to discuss books at a Reading for Pleasure meeting, helping with the Used Book Sale, playing Bridge, and coming to hear and question fascinating speakers at our Branch meetings are all ways to strengthen personal friendships and to live a more fulfilling life.

As a national organization AAUW also recognizes the powerful force participation can have in our lives. Cynthia Hall, President of AAUW PA, writing about the benefits of volunteerism in an article in the adjacent column, notes that what we do to help others also enables us to live healthier lives filled with meaning, connection and purpose.

The Board invites all members to be involved in the life of our Branch! Help with the Used Book Sale, stay for our monthly cookie social, learn to play Bridge, share your favorite book or reach out to a member at a time of sickness or loss. AAUW membership provides many opportunities to live the "good life"!

Diane Kaufmann

Volunteer to Help Your Community

Many of us want to live a life of purpose – contributing to bettering the world as well as doing something that we deem meaningful.



Research by the Stanford Center on Longevity found that 90% of us say we would like to volunteer, but only 25% do. Volunteers report better physical health as well as increased social interactions, better relationship quality, and decreased loneliness. So why do so few volunteer? Stanford research found three commonly cited barriers.

Time constraints and inflexible volunteer schedules. Interestingly, retirees volunteer at lower rates than people between the ages of 35-44 who are employed and may have young children. Volunteering at a younger age tends to result in volunteerism throughout our lives. Most nonprofit organizations are happy to find roles that suit our needs. Some may prefer to volunteer from home, working online, while others prefer an active social environment.

Lack of information coupled with uninteresting volunteer roles. Interviewing volunteers at organizations to find a good match is a good place to start. Many organizations list volunteer needs on their websites.

No one asked me. This may be the case, but it doesn't keep us from contacting an organization's membership or volunteer coordinators. Many organizations are eager to match volunteers' interests and experiences with their needs.

Volunteering brings us closer together with those in our community. It helps us to better understand others and how to work together to achieve common goals.

Cynthia Hall
President of AAUW PA





We're Lucky to Have New Members!



Barbara Breitenstein



Greetings! It is a pleasure to be back as a member of AAUW. I joined in 1983 while pregnant with my first child but then never had the time to be active. With a growing family, graduate school, and demanding positions in human services and corporate healthcare companies, AAUW became a distant memory. After our third daughter graduated from Franklin-Regional we moved away for a while and started to travel extensively in the US and abroad. We returned to Murrysville though, in 2019 once the grandchildren arrived. During this whole time, I never lost my interest in AAUW and the mission. I enjoy the AAUW programs, community outreach initiatives and special interest groups. I also fully support the AAUW vision to advance gender equality for women and girls. My husband and I have three daughters, a Social Worker turned Delta Flight Attendant, a Special Education Teacher and a Financial Assistant for Baird Corporation. We also have two little granddaughters who are keeping us very busy. I would like to help the Murrysville Branch grow and use my outreach and marketing skills to make that happen

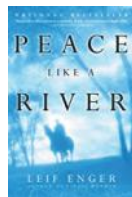
Lisa Roudabush



A graduate of Carnegie Mellon University in Metallurgy & Material Science, I recently retired after a 32 year career at U. S. Steel, where I held various positions, including General Manager of Research, Plant Manager of Clairton Coke Works, General Manager of the Mon Valley Works Operations and Managing Director of North American Quality Assurance and Customer Service. I was a member of the United Way Women's Leadership Committee & the International Women's Forum, served on the Board of the Carnegie Science Center & Carnegie Mellon CIT Dean's Advisory Council, and was President of the Ciloets, a U. S. Steel Women's Organization. My husband and I have lived in Murrysville twice, recently for the past 23 years. We have two children and one grandchild. I enjoy traveling, trying to play golf, rating golf courses for the West Penn Golf Association, drinking wine and eating chocolate (and thus exercising)!

Reading for Pleasure

Our March meeting is on Thursday the 23rd at Brushes and Beans at 10:00 AM. Remember to bring three dollars for the cost of the room. Beverages and snacks are available for purchase. Betty Hollingsworth will lead us in a discussion of Leif Enger's book *Peace Like a River*. Hope to see you there.



Bethia Schulz

Cullers/Sorters Needed for Book Donations

Used books and puzzles will be accepted at the library beginning April 1, and we need your help to keep it organized. Members are needed for the 6 days per week that the library is open to sort the books into fiction, non-fiction, mystery, Half Price Book candidates and trash. If you have done this before, you know it is an easy job. If you are new to the task, training is available. Contact Betty Hollingsworth to reserve your preferred day of the week.

Betty



Book Sale

at Murrysville Community Library
April 27-29, 2023

It's always good to know that we as the Murrysville AAUW are in demand. Back in November, 2022, as people were leaving our Used Book Sale with their bags of books and puzzles, they were already asking when our next Used Book Sale would be. A quick conference with Library Director Amy Riegner culminated with the decision to hold the first of two Used Book Sales in 2023 on the last week of April, 2023. Collecting, culling and sorting will be done throughout the month of April. The Set-up Day will be Wednesday, April 26, 2023. The UBS will take place on Thursday, April 27; Friday, April 28; and Saturday, April 29. And a quick take-down will follow at the end of the Sale on Saturday, April 29.

So here we go again! It would be great to have 100% AAUW participation! How can you help?



There are lots of ways:

- donating books and puzzles to the cause; to volunteering to sort and cull throughout the month of April;
- volunteering to take boxes of culled books to Half Price Books during April (the Library staff will load the boxes in your car and someone at HPB will unload the boxes);
- helping set-up on Wednesday, April 26;
- volunteering to work on the days of the UBS (Thursday, Friday, or Saturday);
- helping with the take-down;
- and finally taking the last of the books to HPB.

Sign-up sheets will be at the AAUW March Branch Meeting. Betty Hollingsworth is the Volunteer Coordinator and if you can't sign up at the Branch Meeting, please contact her to volunteer in some capacity.

Some things stay the same and some things will change. Once again we will accept books in good shape as well as complete puzzles. The library staff requested that certain types of books not be offered on the UBS tables. Thus during the culling period, encyclopedias, manuals, textbooks, health and medical books, religious books, comics, magazines, games, electronics, DVDs and CDs will be boxed up to be taken to HPB. Of course, damaged books and musty and moldy books will be culled and thrown away. The remaining books will be sorted into NON-FICTION, FICTION, and CHILDREN'S.

Adult books will be sold at \$10 a grocery bag (single hardcover books for \$2.00 and single paperback books for \$1.00) and Children's books will be sold at \$2.00 a plastic bag (single books for \$0.25). In order to try to get as many books sold as possible before we close the UBS, we will be offering coupons on Thursday and Friday to everyone who buys a \$10 bag of books so that they can come back on Saturday for a 50% discount on their book purchase after 12:00 noon.

We will be collecting puzzles to sell. Susan Petrie (cell phone 412-965-9671; email petriesusan@comcast.net) is the Puzzle Coordinator. If you have any questions about puzzle donations, please contact her. Susan will price and organize the puzzles. On Saturday after noon, she will reprice the boxes of puzzles that are left at a discount.

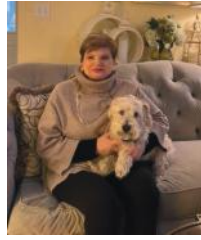
Mark your calendar! Sign up on Thursday, March 9, 2023! Donate and volunteer through the month of April. Set up on Wednesday, April 26. Work the UBS and buy books and puzzles Thursday, April 27, through Saturday, April 29. Clean up and take away books on Saturday, April 29, 2023. Let's have a great USED BOOK SALE!

Annie S. Rivers
UBS Chair

Branch Member News

Nina Damato Publishes a Children's Book Featuring Her Blind Kittens

The Covid shut-down gave Nina Damato the opportunity to fulfill a lifelong dream of writing a children's book. According to Nina, all teachers have books in their heads, but often do not find the time to write them. Nina, however, had both the topic and the time to write. One day during the pandemic, she looked down in her lap, and there were the two purr-fect subjects, the two blind kittens she had felt compelled to adopt. The book began as a simple love story but evolved and now provides teachers and parents a tool to introduce the heavy subject of blindness and by extension other physical disabilities.



After the loss of her beautiful cat Big Mini, Nina adopted two blind kittens from the Kiski Valley Cat and Kitten Rescue. She only planned to adopt one kitten but when she saw the tiny, blind brothers in a cage together, they both came home with her. Pet lovers know how this goes!

In Nina's words, the mega joy was adopting the kittens and seeing how they thrived. Writing the story was more of a challenge as she is not a writer by education. The love of her pets and wanting to share their story got her through that. Finding an illustrator and waiting for the illustrations was exciting but nerve wracking. Now that the book is almost finished (two more illustrations to go), it is time to move onto marketing. This is a whole new world for Nina and it is complicated by the use of technology. For example, Instagram is the perfect place to market the book, *The Extraordinarily Kittens*, because the target audience is parents of elementary school children and Instagram is where parents gather.

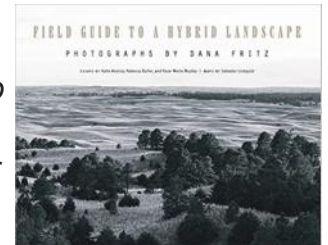


Nina grew up in a small steel town, Leechburg, in southwestern PA. After graduation from IUP she taught third grade at Kiski Area School District. While life events took her to Washington, D.C. where she worked for the federal government, she never forgot those third graders, who often struggled to read. Upon retirement she moved back to Western Pennsylvania to be closer to her family. She and her pets currently reside in the Murrysville area.

Fifty percent of any proceeds from book sales will go to Bocelli and Louis Braille's animal shelter. Nina hopes for a late February book release. You can help the shelter and Nina by following and sharing their posts on Instagram. Search for extraordinarilyordinarykittens - just think EOKs – and buy a copy of the book!

Rose-Marie Muzika Contributes Essays

Rose-Marie Muzika has contributed essays to a new book, *Field Guide to a Hybrid Landscape*, by author and photographer Dana Fritz. The book, listed as the #1 New



Release in the Forest and Rainforests category on Amazon, traces the evolution of the Bessey Ranger District and the Nursery of the Nebraska National Forest and Grasslands. Fritz's contemporary photographs of this unique ecosystem, with provocative environmental essays, maps and historical photographs from the U.S. Forest Service archives, illuminate the complex environmental and natural history of the site, especially as it relates to built environments, land use, and climate change.

Updates on December Speaker

Rita Wilson has finished the palette knife oil painting she was demonstrating at the December Branch Meeting. Any questions are welcomed.



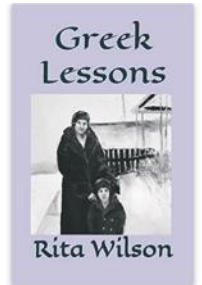
If any of you who purchased her book, *Greek Lessons*, have enjoyed it, please let Rita know. And a quick review on Goodreads is always appreciated!

Rita is almost finished with the book she told us she was busy writing. We will keep you abreast of that.

Diane Conway
VP Programming

Review of *Greek Lessons*

Brave and determined women immigrants are predominantly featured in Rita Wilson's *Greek Lessons*, right down to the present generation. We are all immigrants, aren't we?



Along the way, her story necessarily introduces us to the indispensable males in their family tree – characters, yes; but hard-working characters.

I personally enjoyed the stories of Oakland, the Pittsburgh neighborhood of my family.

The effort of this chronicle of travel to the 'old country' is an incentive to any reader to get up and go. You, too, have cousins left behind who can open large unknowns from your own past that are a part of you now.

This work of love shows that the journey is well worth it.

When finished, the work reveals the existing product, of an American, the author, Rita Wilson.

Charles Conway

Members with Dr. Nash at February Branch Meeting






March 2023

2	Thurs.	9:45 AM	Board Meeting - MCL Meeting Room† Board members please let Diane know if unable to attend.
9	Thurs.	10:00 AM	Branch Meeting - Member Social - MCL TechNook†
		11:30 AM	Social Time after the day's presentation - MCL Meeting Room†
13	Mon.		Deadline to send Focus articles to Donna Beard
23	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.



 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.