



April Branch Meeting

The Roeblings of Saxonburg: The Brooklyn Bridge and Smithfield Street Bridge

Rennick Steele

Thursday, April 13, 2023

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

Murrysville Community Library TechNook

4100 Sardis Road, Murrysville, PA

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John A. Roebling, a university trained engineer, immigrated from Prussia to Western Pennsylvania with his brother in 1831, where together they founded Saxonburg, PA, and took up farming. In 1841, Roebling began manufacturing wire rope, an innovation he employed in the design and construction of many suspension bridges in the United States and Canada, including the Brooklyn Bridge.

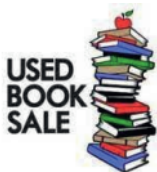


Rennick Steele (Ren) will tell us the fascinating story of the Roeblings of Saxonburg at our April meeting. Steele is a veteran actor, director, and playwright of New York and Los Angeles, who later returned home to his ancestral farm in Western Pennsylvania. He has written fifteen historical dramas, five comedies, a musical and a tragedy. A bibliography of his plays can be found on page 3. He also formerly taught in the Armstrong and Freeport School Districts.

In 2019, Steele received the prestigious Arthur St. Clair Award from the Westmoreland Historical Society for his historical dramas depicting life on the Pennsylvania frontier before, during and after the American Revolution.

Together with his wife Marushka, the Steeles founded the Freeport Theatre Festival (FTF) in 1989 as a means to serve local communities with plays chosen to lift spirits and entertain, as well as to provide an outlet for area youth to get involved in a different kind of team effort. The FTF will celebrate its 35th season in 2023. Visit the website www.freeporttheatrefestival.org or find it on FaceBook.

As a complement to this presentation, a "pop-up tour" of the Saxonburg Museum is scheduled. For details, see the article on page 3.



April 27-29, 2023
Murrysville Community
Library

President's Letter Building Bridges

Bridges have been very much on my mind these past few days. Of course, I am anticipating the presentation about the Roeblings and the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge by author Rennick Steele at our Branch meeting on April 13th. Diane Conway also piqued my interest in this topic by suggesting, in her introductory remarks at last week's Branch meeting, that it was actually Emma Warren Roebling who brought the Brooklyn Bridge to completion. She is credited with overseeing one of the most epic engineering feats in history, overcoming immense personal and structural challenges as the Brooklyn Bridge was constructed over a period of fourteen years.



Emma Roebling was an engineer at a time when women were not supposed to be! During bridge construction, when her husband fell ill and could no longer leave their home, Emma stepped in, kept the books, carried messages for her husband, and monitored construction of the bridge. She was the first person to cross the bridge when it opened. Should we have honored Emma during National Women's Month in March, I wondered?

Yet it is not only Emma Roebling who has occupied my thoughts. Our AAUW Branch constructs bridges all the time – not of steel and twisted cables – but those of an intellectual and academic nature. Last month's speaker, Matt Gault, from Fort Ligonier, engaged not only our members, but brought local historians, Bushy Run reenactors, and the historically curious to our meeting. Impersonating the young George Washington, Gault bridged both time and distance to bring Washington to life. I wish that all of our members could have crossed this bridge to the past with us!

Another bridge to our community is the always popular Used Book Sale in support of the Murrysville Community Library (April 27-29). The Board is hoping for 100% participation from our members. Call Betty Hollingsworth to volunteer. There are jobs for everyone! Please plan to

devote at least an hour or two to working with friends to serve the reading public – and to build a strong bridge between our AAUW Branch and local booklovers. I hope to see everyone at the Book Sale!

Diane Kaufmann

2023-2025 Slate of Officers

Thanks to the Board Nominating Committee for bringing this excellent slate of officers to the membership for your vote. Officers will be elected by an in-person show of hands at the April Branch meeting.

Our nominees are:



Finance Officer: Carol Gezon
Co-Vice Presidents for Programming: Janet Sutton
Andrea Cole
Vice President for Membership: Sally Haleen



Book Sale Volunteers Needed

It will take everyone's help to make the Used Book Sale a success. Please contact Betty Hollingsworth with your preferred job(s).

Culling books in April

Sale Set Up, Wed. April 26, 3:00

Unpack books and alphabetize by author

Book Sale morning shift, 9:30 to 1:00

Book Sale afternoon shift 1:00 to 5:00

Thurs. Apr. 27, Fri. Apr. 28, Sat. Apr. 29

Afternoon shift on Saturday includes sale take down

Sale take down only, Sat. Apr. 29, 3:00

Pack remaining books for Half Price Books

Take boxes to Half Price Books

Bibliography of Plays

by Rennick Steele

Historical Dramas

Washington in the Ohio Country
The Seizing of the Point
Braddock
Battle of Kittanning
Battle of Bushy Run
Beloved Woman – Beloved People
Spirit of the Revolution
Massy Harbison
Follow the Northern Star
Cauldron of Steel
The Spirit of St. Mary's
Johnny Appleseed
The Forbes Road
The Grimsby Lads
The Nativity – A Christmas Delight with Father
Edward Volz

Comedies

Baboon
Tusks and Tails
Bertha and Bailey's Circus with Chloe Marin
Explorers' Club Restaurant
A Mostly Fowl Murder

Musicals

Rivertown Firemen's Jubilee with Drew Fennell

Tragedy

Noche

Reading for Pleasure

We will not be meeting in April due to the Book Sale. Here are a few things to think about in preparation for our May meeting. First, we have traditionally held a luncheon at our May meeting in addition to choosing the books we would like to read for next year. We would like to continue doing the luncheon if we have a house which has the space and a suitable location. Second, where do we want to meet next year. And most importantly, the books! Please come with suggestions and a few words about the book you are suggesting. Thank you.

Bethia Schulz

P.S. Don't forget to sign up to work the book sale in some capacity.

Saxonburg Museum Tour

Thursday, April 20

Tour starts at 10:30 AM

Meet at the Saxonburg Museum

147 N. Rebecca Street, Saxonburg, PA

The Saxonburg Museum honors the John A. Roebling family displaying pictures and documents describing Roebling's engineering career



and his method of manufacturing twisted wire rope cable, which he patented in 1842. Due to this innovative work, Saxonburg is considered "the birthplace of the wire rope industry in



America." Adjacent to the Museum is the workshop building where Roebling did his design and engineering work.

Although the Saxonburg Museum does not charge for tours, attendees are encouraged to make a generous donation.

Lunch at the Hotel Saxonburg at 12 noon.

220 W Main St, Saxonburg, PA 16056

View the menu at www.hotelsaxonburg.com

RSVP to Janet Sutton by April 17.

We need **YOU** to help with the
Used Book Sale!

April 26-29

Won't you help us reach our goal of
100% participation?

Call Betty Hollingsworth
to Volunteer

Book Sale

at Murrysville Community Library

Thurs. April 27 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Fri. April 28 9:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Sat. April 29 9:30 AM - 3:00 PM

YOU KNOW THE DRILL– Collecting, culling and sorting will be done throughout the month of April. The set-up will be at 3:00 PM on Wed., April 26, 2023. **Please also let me know if you are planning to come for set up!** (Last sale the library staff decided to set up two hours earlier than planned and I had to call everyone to let them know the change in schedule.)

It would be great to have 100% AAUW Branch participation! How can you help? There are lots of ways:

- Donating books and puzzles to the cause
- Volunteering to sort and cull throughout the month of April
- Volunteering to take boxes of culled books to Half Price Books (HPB) 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
- Volunteering to work on the days of the Used Book Sale (UBS)
- Helping with the take-down on Saturday
- Taking the last of the books to HPB

To volunteer, please contact Betty Hollingsworth.

Working for the book sale is rewarding and enjoyable.

And there are tasks that can be done even if one has some physical limitations.

Some things will stay the same and some things



will change. Once again we will accept books in good shape as well as complete puzzles. The Library requested that certain types of books not be offered on the UBS tables. So 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 (with a MYSTERY subcategory), 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, Friday and Saturday morning to everyone who buys a \$10 bag of books so that they can come back on Saturday afternoon for a discount on more bags of books.**

We are collecting puzzles to sell. Susan Petrie 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.



So put it on your calendar. Donate and volunteer thru the month of April. Set up on Wednesday. Work the UBS and buy books and puzzles. Clean up and take away books on Saturday. Let's have a great USED BOOK SALE!

Annie S. Rivers
UBS Chair

2023-2024 Dues Are Due (Write that check now)



AAUW National requests dues be paid before the beginning of the new fiscal year. The time is now to send your check. It would be marvelous to have all checks **by June 1**, in order to process them in a timely fashion.

Our total payment will not increase this year although AAUW has made a \$5 increase in National dues. The total will continue to be \$85 for members and \$25 for affiliates. That breaks down to \$72 for AAUW National dues, \$10 for the State Affiliation and \$3 for our Branch operating budget.

\$69 of our National dues is tax deductible because AAUW is a 501(c)3.

Please mail your \$85 check, made out to AAUW, to me, or give it to me at a branch meeting.

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

Carol Gezon



Please say
YES
and help with the
Used Book Sale
Call Betty Hollensworth to
Volunteer

March Branch Meeting A Bridge to the Past

Matt Gault, historical interpreter from Ft. Ligonier, enlightened an audience of history buffs, Bushy reenactors, and our Branch members, with a dramatization of events in the life of the young George Washington.



Lively questions from the audience brought everyone to a deeper understanding of the crucial role that events in Western Pennsylvania played in the early history of our nation.



After the presentation, members gathered in the library meeting room to chat with friends.

Thanks to Carol Gezon, Susan Petrie, Sally Haleen and Betty Hollingsworth for providing the refreshments!

Please call Carol Gezon if you would be willing to provide cookies, sweet bread, or chocolates for a future social hour!

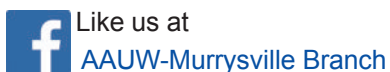




April 2023

6	Thurs.	9:45 AM	Board Meeting – MCL Meeting Room† Board members please let Diane know if unable to attend.
9	Sun.		
13	Thurs.	10:00 AM	Branch Meeting – MCL TechNook†
		11:30 AM	Social Time after the day's presentation – MCL Meeting Room†
17	Mon.		Deadline to send Focus articles to Donna Beard
			RSVP Deadline for Saxonburg Museum Tour to Janet Sutton
20	Thurs.	10:30 AM	Saxonburg Museum Tour –147 N. Rebecca Street, Saxonburg
26	Wed.	3:00 PM	Book Sale setup – Murrysville Community Library
27	Thurs.	9:30 AM	
28	Fri.	5:00 PM	
29	Sat.	9:30 AM to 3:00 PM	
		3:00 PM	Book Sale take down

† 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.



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