



## December Branch Meeting Post Soviet Russia and Vladimir Putin

Charles Hier, PhD

Thursday, December 14 10:00 AM

Murrysville Community Library Technook  
4130 Sardis Road  
Murrysville, PA

### Contents

Branch Meeting	p. 1
President's Letter	p. 2
Thanks to Library	p. 2
Reading for Pleasure	p. 2
New Member	p. 3
Book Sale	pp. 3-5
Calendar	p. 6



Murrysville Area AAUW (American Association of University Women), in partnership with the Murrysville Community Library, is pleased to have guest speaker Dr. Charles Hier. Dr. Hier will cover some elements of Putin's early life: his family was from Leningrad and suffered much from the Nazi invasion in WWII. He was rebellious in elementary school and got into a lot of fights, but he discovered sports and academics as a young teenager, developed discipline and began studying in school. He went to law school, joined the KGB and was sent to East Germany, returning to the Soviet Union shortly before its collapse to work for the reform-minded new mayor of Leningrad. Putin became his chief-of-staff and, after this mayor lost a later mayorial election, Putin moved to Moscow to work in Yeltsin's presidential administration. He worked his way up in Moscow and was chosen to be Prime Minister in late 1999. He was appointed to the presidency of Russia when Yeltsin resigned on New Year's Eve 1999. We will talk about some of his actions as president and finish by discussing the Russia-Ukraine war.

Dr. Hier received a BA in philosophy at Rice University and an MA in philosophy from NYU. Transitioning to history, he earned an MA at Boston College and a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh. He has taught history at several universities in the Pittsburgh area, most recently at Duquesne, and has taught at the Osher Institute at CMU in both history and philosophy/psychology.

The public is welcome to attend. There is no registration required.

### Snow Policy

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



## President's Letter



**Salaam (Arabic)**  
**Shalom (Hebrew)**  
**Paz (Spanish)**  
**Pace (Italian)**  
**Paix (French)**  
**Peace (English)**

In the diverse languages of the World, we can see that peace is a universal aspiration. The desire for peace transcends borders and cultures. It is a shared hope that conflicts will be reconciled through understanding and love. Yet this December finds the world far from peace, with wars raging in Ukraine and Israel, our society sadly divided on political and social issues, and public discourse roiling with protests and demonstrations. There is no peace on earth.

While I was initially concerned that a program on Putin at a time of year when we turn our thoughts to "peace on Earth, goodwill to men", would seem incongruous, it is now my hope that our December program on Vladimir Putin and post Soviet Russia will bring each of us a clearer understanding of the forces that drive the world to war, of how one man could devote his life to the struggle for power, while oppressing the people he proports to serve.

Former KGB intelligence officer, and alternatively prime minister and president of Russian since 1999, Vladimir Putin led his nation in a conflict against Chechen separatists, oversaw a military conflict with Georgia, annexed Crimea, supported a war in eastern Ukraine through several military incursions, and launched a violent invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022. The International Criminal Court issued a warrant for his arrest for war crimes in March of this year.

Please plan on joining us for Dr. Charles Hier's lecture on Putin on December 14<sup>th</sup> for a closer look at a leader who is clearly not a man of peace.

I wish a gentle personal tranquility for each of you this holiday season.

Peace,  
Diane Kaufmann

## Reading for Pleasure *Remarkably Bright Creatures*

Because of the November Used Book Sale and the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season, we will be meeting on Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 PM in the afternoon for our Reading For Pleasure book review. Our meeting will be held at Sally Haleen's home. Please note that the afternoon time and first Thursday date is unusual for us. Please let Sally know you will be attending.



Annie Rivers will be reviewing the debut novel *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt. The cover of the book itself catches the eye. Come and discuss.

## Thanks to the Library Staff



AAUW wishes to thank the staff of the Murrysville Community Library for their help during the autumn Used Book Sale! Library Director Amy Riegner and her entire staff helped in every way imaginable, from moving boxes of sorted books to the storage area, to lifting boxes on set-up day, to helping categorize books, and then on the last day working tirelessly to move boxes of unsold books to members' cars for transportation to HPB. We appreciate the staff's youthful energy, strength, good humor and gracious help with any request we made.

## Bravo for a Job Well Done!



Once again, the AAUW Used Book Sale has brought thousands of books to the community, a chance for fun and socialization (“The Best

Party of the Year” in the words of Carol Gezon), and an infusion of funds to be donated to the Murrysville Community Library.

While the success of the sale is the result of many people working together, I would like to thank Jane Kerr for the herculean effort she devoted to the sale in her role as Book Sale Chair! Jane worked for months to organize volunteers and a huge volume of books, all while teaching, tutoring, and taking care of grandchildren. With awe and gratitude, I salute Jane for a job very, very well done!

Kudos are also in order for Susan Petrie who organized the puzzle sale. Susan collected puzzles for months, sorted them, checked prices online, and then displayed them beautifully. Is there little wonder that this part of our sale grows in popularity every year?

Thanks also to Susan Greenberg for the excellent publicity! Week after week Susan submitted a photo and a short article to highlight the sale to the local papers. Nina Damato also helped to market the sale on local message boards and websites. Thanks to both of these tech savvy members!

Annie Rivers, former Book Sale Chair, was on hand during this entire sale to help Jane, to answer questions, to solve problems, and to be a gracious ambassador for AAUW to the community. We are so grateful for your unfailing service, Annie!

It is impossible to adequately thank everyone who helped sort and cull books, set up the books for display, serve as greeters and cashiers, clean-up on the last day, and transport books to Half Price Books. Thanks to everyone who helped!

Diane Kaufmann  
President

## We're Thankful for Our New Members

Every organization benefits from an influx of new members who bring new ideas and unique ways of



looking at things. This fall our Branch has had the pleasure of welcoming two new members. We ask you to introduce yourself to them and make them feel welcomed and appreciated! They have been asked to write a short article about themselves. Debbie Ulusoy's article follows. Anne Brendel will be featured in a later issue.

### Debbie Ulusoy

Greetings

I am a native of the immediate area and with my husband of 40 years live both in Murrysville and Istanbul, Turkey. I say this because my husband is Turkish having been born in Turkey.



We are retired empty nesters. There is no set pattern to our comings and goings these days. This may seem a little bit crazy but for us it works.

I love traveling, nature and animals, especially horses. As a child I wanted to be a horse not a person. My favorite color is green so PA is an ideal background to enjoy this color.

I am very excited to be a member of the AAUW group especially meeting all the members and being involved in the many activities offered. Recently, my first involvement was with the November Book Sale. A great experience!! However please forgive me if I get a member's name wrong these next few weeks (a senior moment).

Be Well

## **Fall Used Book and Puzzle Sale a Success!**

A big hurrah and many thanks to all who helped make the November 9-11, 2023 Used Book Sale such a success. Our AAUW members, including Susan Greenberg and Nina Damato, and the Murrysville Library did such a good job spreading the word about the sale in newspapers, with flyers, on digital sites and by word of mouth that the public generously donated over 275 boxes of books and over 200 puzzles to the sale. AAUW volunteer cullers and sorters worked diligently every day that the library was open throughout the month of October to sort over 200 boxes of books into four categories and then pack up about 75 boxes of books for other volunteers to take to Half Price Books before the sale even began. Susan Petrie collected over 200 puzzles donated by the public and processed each and every one. She even set up a special discounted table at the sale to sell those puzzles missing a piece, or in Susan's words "missing one, but still fun!"

The Library Director Amy Riegner and her library staff, volunteers and pages moved these heavy boxes of culled and classified books for the sale into designated locations for temporary storage in the library. Then on Set Up Day, they moved the heavy library tables following a plan that Amy developed that allowed for an easy flow of buyers on sale days. Once the tables were arranged, Amy and her team carried all the boxes of books to the appropriate locations. AAUW volunteers then arrived to help unpack and organize the books. AAUW volunteers continued to refine the organization of the books during the 3 days of the sale for an even better shopping experience.

Once the UBS began, the public again stepped up to support the cause by shopping the sale. On the first day of the sale, 41 shoppers were waiting for the doors to open. Luckily, it was a pleasant morning since the waiting crowd stretched into the parking lot! We nearly sold out of Children's Books that day. Very lucky for us, a generous shopper noticed our very meager offerings in the Children's Books and rushed home to bring back two large boxes of

wonderful children's books that her family had outgrown. We sold nearly all of these books on Friday. We had a steady, but much slower, stream of shoppers on Friday, so I decided to start the 50% off sale at the opening of the sale on Saturday. We had an even smaller, but still steady stream of customers right to the official close of the sale at 3:00 PM!

At the end of the UBS, more AAUW volunteers arrived to repack the leftover books and load these boxes into volunteers' vehicles for transport to Half Price Books to sell, adding to the amount we raised for this sale. Amy and her staff restored the library area back to normal. With so many helping hands, take down and restoration of the library took just one hour. By the end of the sale, 25 AAUW members volunteered to help with one of the many important jobs necessary for a successful sale. Together, the Murrysville Community Library and the Murrysville AAUW sold 155 boxes of books and 147 puzzles at the 2023 Fall Used Book Sale and raised over \$4800. This huge job was made lighter by the work of the many dedicated volunteers. My sincerest thanks to each and every one of you.

Please mark your calendar for our next sale on April 25, 26 & 27, 2024. We will begin collecting books and puzzles on April 1. Please work your magic again and spread the word about the Spring Used Book Sale!

Jane S. Kerr  
Used Book Sale Chair





# Book Sale Photos



December 2023			
1	Fri.	Noon	<b>Duplicate Bridge</b> – at the home of Diane Conway.
7	Thurs.	9:45 AM	<b>Board Meeting</b> – in the MCL Meeting Room† Board members please let Diane know if unable to attend.
		1:00 PM	<b>Reading for Pleasure</b> at the home of Sally Haleen. Please let Sally know you will be attending.
8	Fri.		<b>Happy Hanukkah</b>
14	Thurs.	10:00 AM	<b>Branch Meeting</b> – In the MCL Technook†.
18	Mon.		<b>Deadline</b> to email Focus articles to Donna Beard.
25	Mon.		<b>Merry Christmas</b>

† 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.



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.