



May Branch Meeting

Banned Books: Facts, Opinions, and Legislation

Fran Bogos, BS, M.Ed

May 9, 2024 10:00 AM

Murrysville Community Library TechNook
4130 Sardis Road, Murrysville, PA

“There is more than one way to burn a book. And the world is full of people with lit matches.” Ray Bradbury

Book banning has been part of history for centuries, but recently a well-publicized crusade to ban books has been sweeping the nation, and librarians have found themselves in the center of a culture war. Parents, armed with the Parents Bill of Rights Act, have mounted a campaign to remove books from libraries that they feel justify censorship, while librarians and teachers stand firm regarding intellectual freedom and the freedom to read. An inevitable impasse will find its way to a federal court for a ruling, and on the sidelines, watching the fray, are the students.



Fran Bogos began her 38-year teaching career at the same elementary school she had attended as a child. With a Masters degree as a Reading specialist, she was hired at McKeesport Junior High School, then at North Allegheny School District. Fran taught remedial reading, speech, and debate classes and created a Communications Skills course. One of her favorite courses to teach was Honors Argument which enabled students to earn credits at universities. As coach of the Speech and Debate Team, Fran proudly watched her students demonstrate the skills they learned, and excel at both the state and national tournaments.

This program is presented in conjunction with the Murrysville Community Library and the public is welcome. Please join us!



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President's Letter

Some may remember Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem *Locksley Hall* in which the poet asserts that "In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love". However, for our Branch I would beg to differ. In the spring mature women turn their thoughts to BOOKS!

Thanks to the organizational genius of Jane Kerr and her team of Used Book Sale enthusiasts, this year's sale was a huge success, attracting avid readers both young and old. As we await the final total, I would like to thank everyone who sorted and culled books, posted notices on their social media accounts, donated books and puzzles, who helped to set-up, who placed signs in their yards, worked to help community members find the books they wanted, schlepped books to Half Price Books, and finally stayed to the bitter end to clean up! The library staff supported us in every imaginable way! To them we offer a huge THANK YOU!



Branch members will continue to focus on BOOKS through May when we gather to hear Fran Bogos' thoughts on book banning, a topic which generates passionate discussion. Books have been banned for racial issues, blasphemous dialogue, sexual situations, violence, witchcraft and magic, political bias – just to name a few reasons. On the next page, please see the list of great titles, many of them classics, which have been outlawed in America and then come to explore the history of book banning and its role, if any, in a society which values free expression, tolerance, and democracy.

Returning to Alfred, Lord Tennyson, who also observed in *Locksley Hall* that "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers", we can hope that after the banned books discussion we will have a deeper wisdom to guide our understanding.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the May Branch meeting.

Diane Kaufmann

Carnegie Library Tour



Visit the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh in Oakland on Thursday, May 16, at 1:30 PM. Our guided tour will include a visit to the rare book

department and information about the history and architecture of the building, new initiatives, and plans for the library of tomorrow. Participants must make their own arrangements to get to the library, and are advised that the tour will require walking and standing for about 2 hours. Use of the elevator was requested. Our group will meet at the entrance to the library at 1:15 PM. The tour is for AAUW members and their guests only. To register, please email Janet Sutton at before May 13. The time change for the tour was initiated by the Library.

Janet Sutton

In Memoriam



Sue McPherson, 87, passed away quietly on April 12th after a long battle with breast cancer. Sue was an avid reader and bridge player. We will miss her friendship and beautiful smile.

Please Pay Dues In May

AAUW annual dues should be paid in May for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

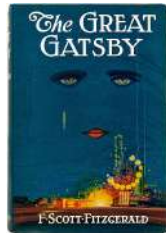
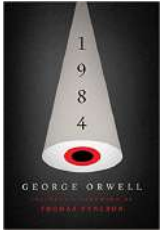


If you are planning to rejoin, please send me a check for \$85, made out to AAUW, or hand it to me at the book sale or May branch meeting.

Thank you for taking care of this promptly.

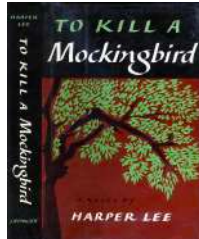
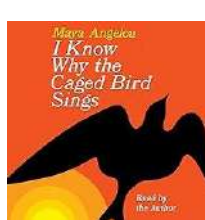
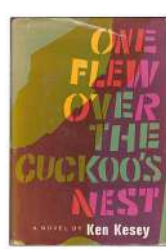
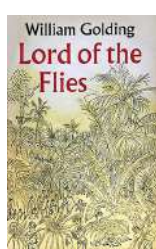
Carol Gezon, Finance Chair

Please plan to join us on May 9th as Fran Bogos explores the history of book banning.



The Top 10 Banned Books in America of All Time

1. *1984* by George Orwell
2. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
3. *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
4. *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
5. *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
6. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
7. *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
8. *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
9. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey
10. *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee



Books Banned Throughout History

Beloved

The Bluest Eye

Bridge To Terabithia

Catcher in the Rye

The Chocolate War

The Color Purple

A Day No Pigs Would Die

Fahrenheit 451

Flowers for Algernon

The Giver

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings

Julie of the Wolves

Lord of the Flies

Native Son

Ordinary People

The Perks of Being a Wallflower

Slaughterhouse-Five

Snow Falling on Cedars

The Things They Carried

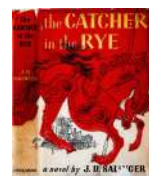
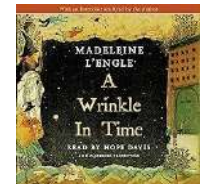
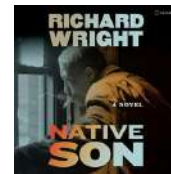
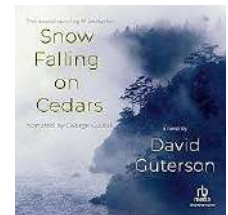
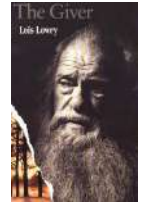
To Kill A Mockingbird

The Upstairs Room

We all Fall Down

The Witches

A Wrinkle in Time



The Westmoreland Land Trust Wins Award



**Betsy Aiken, Executive Director,
Westmoreland Land Trust**

Murrysville Area AAUW is delighted to recognize the Westmoreland Land Trust as the winner of this year's Community Service Award. Betsy Aiken, local Branch member and Executive Director of the Westmoreland Trust (WLT) will accept the award at the May 9th Branch meeting.

The Westmoreland Land Trust (WLT) was established in 2008 to conserve land of special value in Westmoreland County. WLT works to strategically conserve natural areas, recognizing the importance of natural areas for ecological sustainability, and also for our health and happiness. WLT's vision for Westmoreland County is a future in which open space and recreational land abounds, water resources are protected, wildlife flourishes, and Westmoreland County is known to families, businesses, and visitors for its high quality of life.

Since its formation WLT has enlarged County parks and municipal parks, and established free-standing nature preserves. In Murrysville WLT conserved the Skena Reserve on North Hills Road, and completed an ambitious project that conserved land to connect the eastern and western ends of Duff Park, enlarge Duff Park by near 75 acres, and create a 22-acre greenway link between Duff and Pleasant Valley Parks. WLT has also supported land acquisition for extension of the popular Westmoreland Heritage Trail. WLT is currently working to develop a scenic 96-acre property near Greensburg as the Carl A. Schwarz Nature and Art Park, which will feature significant works of outdoor sculpture.



WLT is also at the outset of developing a master plan for the 248-acre St. Xavier Nature Preserve along Route 30 near Latrobe. This property was the site of the Sisters of Mercy St. Xavier Academy and Convent until they were destroyed by a fire in 1972. During 2024 WLT will also make use of grant funding to complete improvements to visitor amenities within a 17-acre wildflower meadow at Westmoreland County's Twin Lakes Park. More information about WLT and each of these projects may be found online at Westmoreland-landtrust.org. Please email westmorelandlandtrust@gmail.com with questions about our work, or if you might like to become involved as a volunteer or supporter.



*Thank
you*

I was overcome by the kindness shown to me following my stroke. My deepest thanks to the many members who sent me lovely get-well cards and supportive messages, brought flowers and provided delicious meals. The cheerful flowers with a balloon from the Branch brightened my hospital stay so much.

I'm happy to report that my reading and spelling abilities have improved greatly since my stroke.

Looking forward to seeing you all and resuming my AAUW activities,

Susan Petrie

Reading for Pleasure

Can you believe it's May, 2024, already? Once again Donna Beard has invited us to her home for our annual RFP luncheon. The date is Friday, May 17 at 10:00. Carol Gezon has spoken to the people who are bringing salads, etc. All Branch members are invited to participate. We will be choosing our discussion selections for next year. Carol will be sending out a list of books for members to select the ones we will be voting on in May. Please come to the luncheon and enjoy. To assist in our preparations, please RSVP to me if you plan to come.

Things seem to get really busy in the spring. I haven't been able to read as much as I'd like but I have been listening to audiobooks as I drive from errand to errand. Since listening and driving makes me choose light "reading", I've been listening to food travelogues by Matt Goulding (in Spain and Italy), silly mysteries, ridiculous fantasies, etc. One series by Jamie Edmundson tells the adventures of Og-Grim-Dog, a three headed Ogre (yes, it was ridiculous but humorous enough to lighten my time on the road). Another series by Tirza Price was a silly mystery rip-off on Jane Austen which you can tell by the titles: *Pride and Premeditation*; *Sense and Second-Degree Murder*; and *Manslaughter Park*. Since the heroines were all in their late teens or early twenties, I believe the books are categorized as YA and take quite a few liberties with the Austen cast of characters. I can't remember why I picked *Venmo* by Cherie Dimaline, a Metis or Indigenous writer out of Canada. I must admit I kind of pushed myself to finish it but that was more because of happenings in my personal life than the writing. Dimaline won all kinds of awards for her first book, *The Marrow Thieves*, a YA dystopian novel touching on indigenous genocide. It sounds fascinating, but I'm not up for dystopia right now—future reading.....

Well, I hope everyone comes to our RFP group luncheon ready to socialize and to discuss. RFP is a great way to keep in touch.

Annie S. Rivers, RFP Chair

"Carl divided readers into hares, tortoises, and fish. He himself was a fish, allowing a book to carry him in its current, as its pace moved between fast and leisurely. Hares were speed readers, hurtling through a book and promptly forgetting what they had read just a few pages earlier, forever needing to flip the pages back to check. Tortoises flipped back too, because they read so slowly that months passed before they finished a book. Every evening they would read a single page, then fall asleep. Sometimes, they would read the same page again the next night, because they weren't sure how far they'd got. Each of these animals could, at a moment's notice, transform into a curious lapwing, leaping to the back of the book to see the ending first, before reading the rest. To Carl's way of thinking, that was like going to a restaurant and eating dessert first. Of course it was sweet and delicious, but the anticipation fueled by the preceding savory courses was lost."

From *The Door-to-Door Bookstore* by Carsten Henn, copyright 2020. Originally published in German as *Der Buchspazierer*

Great Decisions



If you have missed our Great Discussions meetings, the Monroeville Public Library is offering them via Zoom on the second Tuesdays of the month from 7:00-8:30 PM.

The readings from the Foreign Policy Association will be used to learn about each topic for the discussion.

Topics for this year include:

- Mideast Realignment
- Climate Technology
- Science Across Borders
- US-China Trade Rivalry
- NATO's Future
- Understanding Indonesia
- High Seas Treaty
- Pandemic Preparedness

To sign up, or for more information, contact Cory Little at littlec2@einetwork.net or 412-372-0500 ext. 122

May 2024			
2	Thurs.	9:45 AM	Board Meeting — in the Murrysville Library Meeting Room†. Board members please let Diane know if unable to attend.
6	Mon.	1:00 PM	Duplicate Bridge at the home of Sally Haleen.
9	Thurs.	10:00 AM	Branch Meeting — TechNook† in the Murrysville Community Library
12	Sun.		
13	Mon.		Deadline to email Focus articles to Donna Beard.
19	Thurs.	1:30 PM	Tour of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Oakland. To register, please email Janet Sutton before May 13.
17	Fri.	10:00 AM	Reading for Pleasure - at the home of Donna Beard, 3669 Blue Sage Court. Please RSVP to Annie Rivers if you plan to attend.
27	Mon.		 <i>Memorial Day</i>

† 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.