

February Branch Meeting

Chernobyl: Aftermath of the World's Greatest Nuclear Disaster

Michael Haritan, Photographer

February 13, 2025 10:00 AM

Murrysville Community Library
4130 Sardis Road, Murrysville

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Michael Haritan, author of the best selling book *Chernobyl: Aftermath of the World's Greatest Nuclear Disaster*, brings a thought provoking introspective view of the isolation and abandonment following the 1986 nuclear disaster in Ukraine.

Mr. Haritan, in 2016 and 2018, documented the Chernobyl disaster, including its causes, coverup and consequences of the release of radioactive material that still affects the health of millions of people and the environment. His book is a memoir, and a human interest story with documentary photographs.

A Pittsburgh based photographer, with a Certified and Craftsman Rating with the Professional Photographers of America, he has received numerous national and international awards, including a first place award in 1987 for his photo of a downtown Pittsburgh construction project displayed at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Haritan holds a Master of Music in Folk Arts degree from Duquesne University, and an Associate of Science Degree in Homeland Security. Throughout his forty year career, he has taught photography and produced photo documentaries of architecture, folk music and dance in the United States and Europe.

Join us to learn about this significant event in Chernobyl, Ukraine, that continues to be an environmental threat.



Like us at

[AAUW-Murrysville Branch](#)

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 Valentine's Day? Not yet!



National Puzzle Day is January 29th

Jigsaw puzzles and snowy days seem made for each other! I hope that you have marked your calendar with the dates of our Puzzle and Cookbook Sale, January 29th through February 1st, and are planning to shop and visit with friends during the event! Please say a special thank you to Jane Kerr, Susan Petrie, and the entire library staff for their hard work in making this sale possible.

Not only are puzzles a wonderful winter activity, solving them is also good for our brains! Completing a challenging puzzle not only provides a sense of mastery and accomplishment, it also stimulates the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter in the brain associated with feelings of pleasure. Thus, we feel good when finally placing the last piece of a thousand-piece puzzle.

London cartographer, John Spilsbury, is credited with creating the first jigsaw puzzle in 1767 when he mounted a map on a rectangular wooden plank and used a marquetry saw to cut around the countries to use as an aid in teaching children geography. Since then, the popularity of puzzles has spread to adults for purely recreational fun.

AAUW membership and puzzles provide many of the same benefits. Consider these sentiments I recently read on greeting cards for puzzle aficionados:

You ARE MY missing pieces

One piece AT A TIME

Thanks FOR KEEPING ME together



we just fit

As AAUW members we depend on each other to keep working together as an organization, to share our commitment to lifelong learning with the community one "piece" or program at a time, and to cherish the realization that "we just fit" together even though we share many diverse opinions. With these sentiments in mind, "let's get together soon" at the Puzzle and Cookbook Sale.

Love you to pieces!

Diane Kaufmann,
President, Murrysville AAUW

Used Puzzle and Cookbook Sale

Murrysville Community Library

Wednesday, January 29, 9:30 - 5:00

Thursday, January 30, 9:30 - 5:00

Friday, January 31, 9:30 - 5:00

Saturday, February 1, 9:30 - 3:00

Please stop by to shop and invite your friends to do the same.

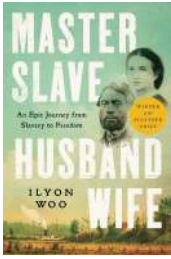
Hope to see you at the Library!



Jane Kerr



Reading for Pleasure



Master Slave Husband Wife: An Epic Journey From Slavery To Freedom by Ilyon Woo is another delve into history which I knew nothing about. In my schools in Mississippi and Louisiana we did study the history of the Civil War (referred

to as the War Between the States or the War For State Rights in Dixie) and the many events that led up to this historical schism but I don't remember any references to the famous fugitive couple who had to flee twice to avoid re-enslavement. Come to the Murrysville Community Library Meeting Room on Thursday, February 27th, to discuss this fascinating story. The meeting will be at 10:00 AM. The discussion will be led by Andrea Cole.

At this meeting, I would like to have everyone's opinion on the possibility of adding one more book for discussion before our organizational luncheon in May. Because the Used Book Sale is scheduled for May 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, with set-up on April 30th, the fourth Thursday of the month (April 24th) is open. The novel *James* by Percival Everett has gotten a lot of attention and is the winner of the National Book Award for Fiction in 2024. I believe several of our members have read this book and it was mentioned at our previous May luncheon. Also Percival Everett will be speaking on March 24th, at the Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures' Ten Evenings Speaker series. Another possibility is the book by another Ten Evenings Speaker series' author Cat Bohannon (March 3rd). After listening to her narrate her own book, I brought it up at last May's luncheon and now I am so excited in anticipation of hearing her speak. Her book is called *Eve: How the Female Body Drove 200 Million Years Of Human Evolution*. Believe it or not, her book is "engaging and entertaining". To quote one reviewer: "I was surprised at how such a big, potentially dull topic—two hundred million years of evolution?! for someone who barely

passed most of her science courses?!—could be such a fun, digestible read." Please think about this possible added meeting. In March we will be discussing the novel *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks at the home of Debbi Ulusoy.

See you at the Library, February 27th, at 10:00 AM, to discuss *Master Slave Husband Wife* by Ilyon Woo.

Annie S. Rivers
RFP Co-Chair

Judy Johnson Receives Named Gift Honoree Award



Branch President Diane Kaufmann presented Judy Johnson with the 2024 National AAUW Named Gift Honoree Award. Judy, a member of the Branch for over fifty years, has



served in a variety of capacities over that time, including branch president in 1976-1978, named "Outstanding Woman" in 1981, and "Community Service Honoree" in 2004.

In her reflections on her years in AAUW, she noted: "AAUW was the springboard that propelled many members into careers as they made connections and learned how to make positive changes in the world."

She served as Director School-Community Relations for the Franklin Regional School District, but still allowed time to be involved with AAUW on such projects as the as the pamphlet, *Pathways to the Past*, a guide to local landmarks in the Murrysville area. She also coordinated the library community, *Books for the Homebound*, which led to working on the Adult School committee.

The Branch expressed gratitude for the many years of dedicated service that Judy has provided to the chapter, and to the community at large.

Paraphrased from a recent Penn-Franklin article.

February 2025			
1/29	Weds.	9:30-5:00	Puzzle & Cookbook Sale – Murrysville Community Library
1/30	Thurs.	9:30-5:00	
1/31	Fri.	9:30-5:00	
1	Sat.	9:30-3:00	
6	Thurs.	9:45 AM	Board Meeting - Murrysville Community Library Meeting Room†. Board members please let Diane know if unable to attend
13	Thurs.	10:00 AM	Branch Meeting - Murrysville Community Library TechNook†
14	Fri.		
17	Mon.		Deadline to email Focus articles to Donna Beard.
			
		9:30 AM	Duplicate Bridge - at the home of Donna Beard.
27	Thurs	10:00 AM	Reading for Pleasure – Murrysville Community Library Meeting Room†.

† 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.