



## May Branch Meeting Trailblazing Women of Western Pennsylvania

**Judith Sutton**

**Heinz History Center Volunteer Ambassador**

**May 8, 2025 10:00 AM**

**Murrysville Community Library TechNook**

**4130 Sardis Road, Murrysville**



Nellie Bly

Western Pennsylvania's history is full of women who broke down barriers and made lasting impacts on both our region and the world. Heinz History Center Volunteer Ambassador Judith Sutton will speak about influential women in Western Pennsylvania who were "firsts" in their field and made significant impacts in their careers.

Among the remarkable women Judith will discuss:

- "Nellie Bly", a pioneer newspaper investigative journalist and intrepid world traveler, known for her 72 day race around the world.
- Bertha Lamme, first female engineer hired by Westinghouse – possibly impressed by her Ohio State thesis titled "An Analysis of Tests of a Westinghouse Railway Generator".
- Helen Richey of McKeesport, the first female pilot of a commercial airline in the United States when she was hired in 1934 by Central Airlines of Greensburg, later part of United Airlines.

Judith Sutton worked as a Children's Librarian for over thirty years. She graduated from Duquesne University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and received her Master of Library Science degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Since her retirement, she has become a Docent and an Ambassador for the Heinz History Center and the Historical Society of Mt. Lebanon. She has logged over 1000 volunteer hours for the Heinz History Center and greatly enjoys sharing her love of history.

Please plan to attend this program to learn about and be inspired by many more remarkable women from our region.

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## President's Letter

As the days of our Spring Used Book and Puzzle Sale draw near, I am reminded of how central the Murrysville Community Library is to the mission of our local Branch. Even the Library's own goal, "to inspire ideas, enrich lives, and foster lifelong opportunities for learning, literacy, and enjoyment" meshes seamlessly with our mission of promoting lifelong learning!

Recognizing the importance of this collaboration, the April 10<sup>th</sup> joint meeting of the Library Board of Trustees and The Library Foundation, featured a presentation by Library Director, Kat Neidig, recognizing our Branch "for invaluable services and contributions to the Murrysville Community Library and the whole community". Twelve Branch members were on hand to accept the recognition. The certificate will be on display to the May Branch meeting.



Ms. Neidig then presented plans for Library updates made possible by a \$350,000 competitive grant through the American Rescue Plan. Renovations and planned updates include greater access to broadband access (even in the parking lot), three new "quiet rooms", a new circulation desk, new

carpeting, and an exciting teen center outside of the Director's office.

AAUW is proud to support these exciting plans through the proceeds of our semi-annual book and puzzle sales. Last year we were able to donate \$10,000 to the library! Please mark your calendar and plan to help with the spring sale May 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>. Come to shop. Bring a friend. Help to organize books for a few minutes, or simply smile and welcome community members to this special event.

Most importantly please don't forget to thank Jane Kerr, Susan Petrie and their team of wonderful volunteers for their herculean efforts in organizing the sale! We can never thank them enough!

I look forward to seeing everyone at the Spring Used Book and Puzzle Sale!

Sincerely,

Diane Kaufmann  
President, Murrysville Area AAUW



## Dues Are Due 2025 – 2026



AAUW annual dues should be paid in May for the Fiscal Year 2025 – 2026. If you are planning to rejoin, please send me a check for \$85, made out to AAUW, or hand it to Sally Haleen at the book sale or May branch meeting.

Thank you for taking care of this promptly.

Carol Gezon, Finance Chair



Trillium in Duff Park



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AAUW-Murrysville Branch



## AAUW/Murrysville Library 2025 Spring Used Book and Puzzle Sale

**Thursday, May 1 from 9:30 AM – 5:30 PM**

\$15 a standard size reusable shopping bag  
(Bring your own or buy one from us for \$1)

**Friday, May 2 from 9:30 AM – 5:00 PM**

\$10 a standard size reusable shopping bag  
(Bring your own or buy one from us for \$1)

**Saturday, May 3 from 9:30 AM – 3:00 PM**

\$5 a standard size reusable shopping bag  
(Bring your own or buy one from us for \$1)

**Puzzles and Special Books are priced individually and are not part of the bag sale price.**

**Cash or check only.**

Thank you to all who help with the sale. Even if you did not “officially” sign up to help, please stop by to shop or even help for a little while. I hope to see you there!

Jane Kerr  
UBS Chair







## **Diane Eldridge Chosen as AAUW 2025 Named Gift Honoree**

Each year our Branch donates funds to AAUW to help finance the advancement of women. This donation is made in honor of a member who has provided leadership and inspiration for our Branch.

This year we were delighted to designate Diane Eldridge as our Named Gift Honoree. Diane joined the Murrysville Area AAUW in 1977 and has been an active member for 48 years. From 1982-1984 Diane served as Branch President for an organization of over 300 members! In 1986 the Branch honored her as the Outstanding Woman of the year. In 1988, Diane was in charge of the Branch directory and also edited *The Focus*, our Branch newsletter. Her leadership in AAUW Book Sales is legendary, experience which has been passed on to Book Sale chairs through the decades, and continues to this day. We thank her for her generous sharing of her time and talents to make each Used Book Sale a success!

Graduating from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, with both a BS and MS in the Sciences, she later received the MLS in Library Science degree from the University of Pittsburgh. She worked for many years in the Westinghouse Research Library. Diane and her husband have two sons, who also have pursued careers in the sciences.

Our members enjoy Diane's lively participation in Reading for Pleasure, noting that she is a deep thinker, opinionated "in a good way", always direct, thoughtful and kind.

An avid reader with a keen intellect, Diane is very interested in local, national, and global issues. As a past leader of Great Decisions discussions, she was always willing to host, to lead discussions, and to moderate heated debates.

Diane embodies the definition of a "lifelong learner" – a true AAUW trait!

When asked to share a tribute to Diane, one Branch member replied, "She is my hero!" While attending a conference with Diane in Washington, D.C., another friend remembers thinking, "When I grow up, I want to be just like Diane!". Members love her terrific sense of humor, even while facing health issues and other challenges.

Diane, we are all in awe of your loyalty, your excellent leadership and the inspiration you have brought to our Branch. May we all be like YOU when we grow up!



And One More Thing – To everyone who enjoys the dark chocolate candies offered at each Cookie Social, please know that it was Diane Eldridge, chocolate-lover extraordinaire, who proclaimed, "There must be chocolate!" The next time you find yourself enjoying a sweet during a post-program reception, please thank Diane!



## Reading for Pleasure

Reading for Pleasure will meet this month at the home of Donna Beard on Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup> (note this is the fifth Thursday of the month) at 10:00 AM. It is our luncheon meeting in which we choose our reading choices for the 2025 – 2026 AAUW year. Carol Gezon will canvas all of us in order to winnow the reading list down for our voting. Closer to the meeting we will figure out who can bring what to share for our luncheon. Please let Carol know if you have any more books to recommend. Remember that even if we don't choose a book for discussion, we still list summer reading recommendations in the June Focus.

March and April must have been busier months than I expected because as I look over my "Books Read" list on my smart phone I see I only read three books and listened to three audio books. My three books were all mysteries. *A Grim Reaper's Guide to Catching a Killer: A S.C.Y.T.H.E. Mystery* by Maxie Dara seems to follow the trend of a ghost helping the protagonist. This is the first in a series, I believe, because of the ending leaving a reason for continuation. Deanna Raybourn's *Killswell with Others* is the second in a series which started with *Killers of a Certain Age*. The premise is four professional female assassins who after forty years retire but have to return to their profession to take care of old business: "older women often feel invisible, but sometimes that's their secret weapon". Both books are fun reads. And then my third book was the third in the S.J. Bennett's series which has Queen Elizabeth II as the investigator thru proxy. I enjoyed *Murder Most Royal: Her Majesty the Queen Investigates*. The descriptions of Christmas at Sandringham were part of the charm of the book.




The three listening experiences were quite different. I listened to *James* by Percival Everett, which I really recommend as a listening experience as one of the themes of

the story is how James speaks in different speech patterns depending upon who hears him. I then had the pleasure of hearing the author's lecture at the Pittsburgh Arts and Lectures Ten Evenings series. The next audio book I listened to was the nonfiction audio book by the Countess of Carnarvon: *The Earl and the Pharaoh*. The author narrated this story of George "Porchy" Herbert, 5<sup>th</sup>, Earl of Carnarvon: his life, his financial backing of Howard Carter's Egyptian excavations, the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, and his death. The third audio book was the seventh of a series by Mick Herron: *Slough House* which continues the saga of *Slow Horses*. *Slough House* is the decrepit office where "the washed-up MI 5 spies go to while away what's left of their failed careers". My sister recommended the TV series, *Slow Horses*, which stars Gary Oldman and Kristen Scott Thomas. I watched the first year's six episodes and got hooked on the characters. I didn't realize that I had jumped from the first book *Slow Horses* which introduces this ensemble of failed spies to the seventh in the series. I feel I now need to fill in the intervening books.

I hope you have had some enjoyable reading experiences and that you will share them with us. Plan to join us at Donna Beard's home on May 29<sup>th</sup> at 10:00. Carol and I will be communicating more information on this luncheon later in the month. Let's all support the Used Book Sale on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> and help with set-up on April 30<sup>th</sup> and take-down on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Saturday afternoon. See you in May.

Annie S. Rivers  
Co-Chair RFP



May 2025			
1	Thur.	9:30 AM to 5:00 PM	
2	Fri.	9:30 AM to 5:00 PM	
3	Sat.	9:30 AM to 3:00 PM	
8	Thurs.	10:00 AM	<b>Branch Meeting</b> – Murrysville Community Library TechNook†
11	Sun.		
12	Mon.		<b>Deadline</b> to email Focus articles to Donna Beard
19	Mon.	9:30 AM	<b>Duplicate Bridge</b> – at the home of Diane Conway
26	Mon.		 <i>Memorial Day</i>
29	Thurs.	10:00 AM	<b>Reading for Pleasure Luncheon</b> – at the home of Donna Beard

† 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](mailto: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.