



**Brian Butko with
Lincoln Highway Marker**



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September Branch Meeting Greetings from the Lincoln Highway

Brian Butko

Senator John Heinz History Center

September 11, 2025 10:00 AM

Murrysville Community Library TechNook

4130 Sardis Road, Murrysville

"Greetings from the Lincoln Highway" takes a fun look back at America's first cross-county road, before paved streets or even gas stations. In Pennsylvania, much of Route 30 now follows the old highway and still offers travelers some fun and wacky experiences. Construction of the Lincoln Highway between 1913 and 1928 spurred westward expansion and economic growth. In Pennsylvania, Route 30 covers about 324 miles and continues to be a vital, well used east-west corridor in our area.

Brian Butko has been researching and writing books on popular history since the 1980s, and has been named Pittsburgh City Paper "Best Local Writer" three times! You can watch his interview with Rick Sebak in the video, "A Ride Along the Lincoln Highway" in 2009. In addition to writing several books on the Lincoln Highway, his other book topics include Isaly's Dairy, the Ship Hotel, Kennywood Park, diners and roadside attractions. For a complete list of his books and works in progress, visit www.BrianButko.com.

Currently Butko is Director of Publications, Senator John Heinz History Center in association with the Smithsonian Institution, editor of Western Pennsylvania History Magazine and designer of the Society for Commercial Archaeology Journal.

Please join us!



Like us at

[AAUW-Murrysville Branch](https://www.facebook.com/AAUW-Murrysville-Branch)

President's Letter



Building A Great Year for Our Branch

The hottest events of the summer may not have been the days when the temperature soared above ninety degrees, but rather the Lego and Puzzle Sale Days which AAUW sponsored at the Murrysville Community Library in August! A long line of eager Lego fans formed before the doors opened on the first day of the sale. These eager customers purchased the entire stock, leaving only puzzles for sale on the second day. Thanks to Jane Kerr, Susan Petrie, and their team of enthusiastic volunteers for their hard work which netted more than \$2,500 for the library.

Lego may well be an appropriate metaphor for our local branch this year. Lego is a toy for building, creativity, and the magic of making brilliant things from many small colored pieces – all of which are qualities also attributable to our Branch.

This will be a year of building! Our Branch will be working with the library all year as building improvements and upgrades, financed by a grant, are implemented; creating not only a more user-friendly interface with the library but also building a stronger collaboration between AAUW and the community. Lego enthusiasts are known for their creativity. This year, while working with the library staff to navigate changes necessitated by the building progress, we will need to be creative in finding alternative places to meet and possibly to host the autumn book sale. Flexibility and creativity will be key to weathering the shifting availability of library spaces.

Everyone recognizes Lego, those tiny colored cubes of plastic which when combined can make the most fantastic creations. This year many members, working tirelessly over the summer, have planned fascinating programs, pop up tours, reading lists, and cookie receptions to make our Branch a “creation” which serves everyone. While the efforts of our new Finance Officer, Susan Long, and our Co Vice-Presidents for Membership, Susan Petrie and Debbi Ulusoy, may seem like small steps, they, like those tiny Lego pieces, go together to form a firm foundation for our Branch.

All of these pieces begin to come together in September. Please mark your calendar and plan to come to our first Branch meeting of the year on Thursday, September 11th, to hear Brian Butko bring us “Greetings from the Lincoln Highway”.



I look forward to building a great year with you!

Best regards,
Diane Kaufmann



Children's Books Requested

The Rewind Recycle Reuse Workshop in Export needs children's books for their “free library”. If you have books to donate, you may drop them off at the store or call Susan Greenberg who is coordinating the collection.

Used Puzzle and LEGO Sale

The summer Used Puzzle and LEGO Sale on August 4 and 5 at the Murrysville Library was a success! We had about 50 interested shoppers lined up before the library opened.

Under Susan Petrie's wise leadership, the Puzzle Team stored unsold puzzles from our Spring Used Book & Puzzle Sale and then prepared additional recently donated puzzles for the summer sale. At the start of the 2-day sale, eager shoppers were offered a pleasing selection of 364 puzzles. By the end of the second day, there were just 23 puzzles left on the sales tables. The puzzles brought in over \$800!

With great help from Lisa Roudabush and my grandchildren, shoppers were offered a varied selection of over 100 used LEGO kits that were reasonably priced and an opportunity to scoop from bins of sorted LEGO bricks, pieces and figures for a bag sale. On August 4, the sale began at 9:30am and by 10:00am, all the kits were sold. By 1:00pm, nearly all of the bins were empty. We announced on various social media sites that due to the great support of our sale, the LEGO section was sold out! The LEGO sales brought in over \$1900 for a grand total of \$2761.25 for the 2-day sale.

To the generous people who donated items for sale, to those who spread the word about the sale, to the dedicated shoppers who frequently "rounded up" at the Cashier Table, to the library staff who promoted the sale and prepared the sale areas, and to all of you who helped before and at the sale — I send my biggest THANK YOU for your support of this sale to benefit the Murrysville Library.

Sincerely,
Jane Kerr
Used Book & Puzzle Sale Chair





Pop-Up Tour

Lincoln Highway Experience Museum
3435 State Route 30E, Latrobe
Thursday, October 16, 11 AM

As a supplement to our September program, plan to meet at 11 AM at the Lincoln Highway Experience Museum for an audio tour.

Leaves should be in full autumn color during our 45-50 minute drive. The cost of the tour is approximately \$10 - \$12 which you will pay at the Museum. Check out the website: www.lhhc.org. Afterwards, enjoy lunch at DeNunzio's Italian Chophouse at Arnold Palmer Airport, 148 Aviation Lane, Latrobe.

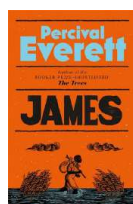
Please email Janet to make a reservation, indicating if you plan to attend the museum tour, and/or lunch. Guests are welcome for this event.

Deadline for reservations is our AAUW Branch Meeting on October 9.



If you would like to volunteer to help a child at the Franklin Regional Primary School, across the road from the Murrysville Community Library, there is still time to get your clearances and sign up for this wonderful opportunity to help a child! The FR Human Resources staff has offered to assist. Questions? Please call Diane Kaufmann.

Reading for Pleasure 2025-2026 Selections



James by Percival Everett (*Huck Finn* by Mark Twain as a companion book)—September 25, 2025 (Discussion led by Annie S. Rivers at the home of Susan Petrie)

Becoming Madam Secretary by Stephanie Dray—October 23, 2025 (Discussion led by Janet Sutton at the home of Carol Gezon)



Gray Mountain by John Grisham—December 4, 2025 (Discussion led by Betty Hollingsworth at the home of Sally Haleen, 1:00 PM)

The Women by Kristin Hannah—January 22, 2026 (Discussion led by Debbi Ulusoy either at the Murrysville Community Library or at the home of Bjoerg Granger)



The Frozen River by Ariel Lawhon—February 26, 2026 (Discussion led by Andrea Cole at the MCL or at the home of Debbi Ulusoy)

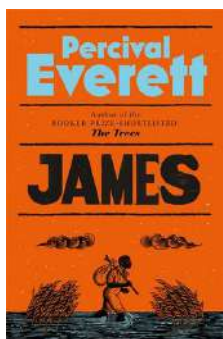
Dinosaurs at the Dinner Party by Edward Dolnick—March 26, 2026 (Discussion led by Carol Gezon at the home of Susan Petrie)

Memorial Days: A Memoir by Geraldine Brooks—April, 2026 (3rd, 4th, or 5th



Thursday to be determined) (Discussion led by Diane Eldridge at the home of Judy Johnson)

Reading for Pleasure



I hope everyone had a good summer and found plenty of books to read and enjoy. I want to point out that last June's "Reading for Pleasure 2025-2026 Selections" are listed in this Focus as well. First on the list is our September choice: *James* by Percival Everett. We will meet on the

fourth Thursday of the month, September 25th, at the home of Susan Petrie and I will be leading the discussion. The meeting will begin at 10:00. Please let Susan know if you plan to be at her home

Let me give you all a heads-up that because of the renovations at the Murrysburg Community Library, we will be meeting at members' homes all this year. Because of our choices of books to discuss this year, there also may be a shortage of available library books to check out and you may want to look into the Carnegie Library resources as well as the Westmoreland Library Network.

My summer was rather hectic so I feel I was listening mostly to "cotton candy for the mind" books interspersed with escapist mysteries. Most were enjoyable nevertheless. Back in May and early June, I did finish all the Mick Herron *Slow Horses* series that are so far on audio. The TV series has not quite caught up but I enjoyed watching what has been done so far— Gary Oldman and Kristen Scott Thomas are really great portraying two of the main characters.

After reading an article in *USA Today* about the travails of the actor, Alexander Skarsgard, prepping for his lead role in AppleTV's new series *Murderbot*, I decided I needed to read the science fiction books by Martha Wells that the television series are based on. I listened to them as audiobooks and chuckled as I listened. The series describes itself as follows: "Security android struggles with emotions and free will while balancing dangerous missions and its desire for isolation; evading detection of its self-hacking as it finds its place." The narrator, Kevin R. Free, is wonderful vocalizing his disgust with the "stupidity" of humans. I then

watched the first few episodes on AppleTV and enjoyed Skarsgard's portrayal. I can't wait to watch the end of this year's dramatizations. Another series that I have listened to this summer in which the voice of the narrator has added to the pleasure of the book is *The Amelia Peabody Novels of Suspense*. Many years ago I read quite a few of Elizabeth Peters' Amelia Peabody's Egyptology mysteries. At our Used Book Sale I recommended one to Lisa Roudabush. Remembering my pleasure reading the series, I decided to do as I had done with Terry Pratchett's DiscWorld books and returned to the series again but this time listening to the audio versions. And I must say I am so glad that I did! Barbara Rosenblat, the narrator of the Peters' series, is wonderful. She personifies the Victorian superciliousness of Amelia Peabody to a T! Fun! While visiting northern Michigan I went to a village fair where an author was hawking his books in one of the tents. Michael Carrier was quite a character himself as he peddled his books to me. *Murder on Sugar Island* was his second in his Jack Handler series and he recommended that I start with that as it was set in Michigan and that if I liked it to come back for more of the series. He told me a wild story about the first in the series so I have ordered that one but so far it is on one of my stacks to be read. Just by the titles you can tell my other readings were definitely summer reading fare: *Murder Takes a Vacation* by Laura Lippman; *Beach Reads and Deadly Deeds* by Allison Brennan; *The Retirement Plan* by Sue Hincenberg; *The World's Greatest Detective and Her Just Okay Assistant* by Liza Tully; *A Proposal to Die For* by Molly Harper; *A Case of Mice and Murder: The Trials of Gabriel Ward* by Sally Smith; and one of my favorite author's latest paranormal romance mysteries *It Takes a Psychic* by Jayne Castle (aka Jayne Ann Krentz). This is the 17th in the *Ghost Hunter* series and as always features a mischievous "dustbunny". Thus I escaped my cares thru some rather demanding times. I hope you found pleasure in your reading as well.

RFP Co-Chair, Annie S. Rivers

September 2025			
1	Mon.		
4	Thur.	9:45 AM	Board Meeting – Murrysville Community Library Meeting Room†
11	Thurs.	10:00 AM	Branch Meeting – Murrysville Community Library TechNook†
15	Mon.		Deadline to email Focus articles to Donna Beard.
22	Mon.	9:30 AM	Duplicate Bridge – at the home of Carol Gezon. Please let her know if you plan to be at her home.
25	Thurs.	10:00 AM	Reading for Pleasure – at the home of Susan Petrie. Please let her know if you plan to be at her home.

† 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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