



Equity For All

Dec. 2024

Calendar of Events

Turning the Holidays Upside Down: Author/Artist Beth Gully
Monday, Dec. 9 at 7:00 pm

► Middletown High Community Room, 601 N. Breiel Blvd.

Author and Ambigram artist Beth Gully will talk about her writing and her work with graphics and publishing. She will have copies of her books available to purchase.

Artificial Intelligence: Benefits & Problems
Monday, Jan. 13 at 7:00 p.m.

► Middletown High Community Room, 601 N. Breiel Blvd.

John Burke and Jessie Long from the Miami-Middletown campus of Miami University will discuss some of the benefits and challenges of using AI.

Women Helping Women: Healthy Relationships
Monday, Feb. 10 at 7:00 pm

► Middletown High Community Room, 601 N. Breiel Blvd.

Kathy Stockman, prevention educator, will talk about maintaining healthy relationships in the workplace.

Meet Elizabeth Slamka, Middletown's 1st Latina Mayor
Monday, March 10 at 7:00 pm

► Middletown High Community Room, 601 N. Breiel Blvd.

Middletown's mayor, Elizabeth Slamka, will discuss the challenges of her job and plans for the city.

Program Note: Members will be sent a Zoom invite through email. Non-members who wish to participate should contact Mel Worbis at worbismm@gmail.com for a link.

Turning the Holidays Upside Down

Monday, December 9 at 7 pm

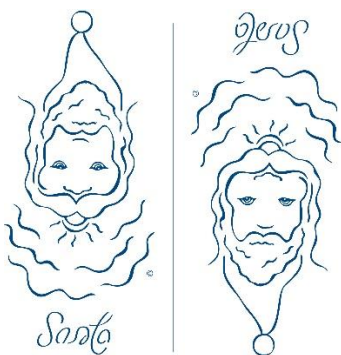
Middletown High School Community Room (and Zoom)
601 North Breiel Blvd., Middletown

Our December meeting will feature Beth Gully, a professionally-recognized ambigram designer and author of *The Other Side of Christmas*.

What is an ambigram? An image that can be read both right-side-up and upside-down. Beth's first ambigram happened by accident in 1992 and led her to discover a purpose for her life through this medium. Since then, Beth has gone on to publish several picture books that creatively blend sacred and secular messages and stories for children.



Designer/Author Beth Gully



Example Ambigram by Beth

Great Results from Holiday Bazaar

Thanks to everyone for making our Holiday Bazaar fundraiser a success. The sale grossed \$7,750 this year. Congratulations to our committee of Jackie Lankfer, Carole Schul and Chris Buchert.

"It's heartwarming to know we can continue adding money to our Community Foundation Fund so we can award scholarships for many years," said Chris Buchert.

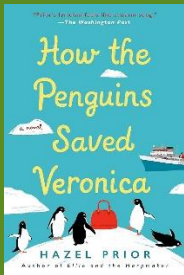
Marshall High School students worked quickly to pack up items and take down tables for storage. (See photo on last page.) All the extra items from the sale have been sent to One Way Farm.

Joy Luck Book Club

Thurs., Dec. 19 at 7 pm
Chris Buchert's home

How the Penguins Saved Veronica – Hazel Prior

A heart-warming story about a wealthy grandmother who is looking for the right cause to which she can leave her fortune. She travels to Antarctica after viewing a documentary on penguins and reconnects there with her estranged grandson.



Thurs., Jan. 16 at 7 pm
Virginia Palmer's home

Yellowface – R.F. Kuang

A brilliant, funny satire about a white woman who achieves literary success by stealing a manuscript from her recently deceased Asian friend and passing it off as her own. This novel takes us behind the scenes of big-time publishing and showcases the impact of social media on the authors we read.



Thurs., Feb. 20 at 7 pm
We Live for the We: The Political Power of Black Motherhood – Dani McClain

Journalist Dani McClain Shares Insights on Black Motherhood at November Meeting

A large group turned out for our November branch meeting featuring Dani McClain, author of *We Live for the We: The Political Power of Black Motherhood*. Speaking about reproductive justice as well as being a first time mom, she shared that, "Motherhood is deeply political."



Dani McClain reports on race, parenting, reproductive health and crisis issues. Her writing has appeared in *The New York Times*, *TIME*, *The Atlantic*, *Ebony*, *Harper's BAZAAR* and a host of other media.



McClain signed copies of her book which will be discussed at the Middletown branch's book club in February and State AAUW's Saturday morning "Coffee and Convos" online discussion on March 15.





Letter from Our Leader

Branch President Debbie Worbis

dworbis@gmail.com

As the month of November comes to an end, I am filled with gratitude. We began the month with the program from Dani McClain, sharing her book *We Live for the We*, talking about her research and her own experiences as a black mother. Then we completed another very successful two-weekend AAUW holiday bazaar. In Ms. McClain's words to us and as shown by this bazaar that so many members worked to make happen, we recognize the importance of finding and becoming part of a community and the strength that a group of individuals working together can yield.

For December we will celebrate the holiday season with another author who uses her artistic talents to create ambigrams. Come to the meeting at the Middletown High School Community Room on Monday, December 9 to learn more about ambigrams and perhaps buy a few of her books for holiday gifts.

Then we will greet a new year learning more about artificial intelligence, as AI takes on an ever bigger role in modern life. We will meet at the high school again in January, but also will continue to make the meetings available online through the cold winter months.

Here's wishing you all a fulfilling holiday season, and remember it is up to us to keep this community strong into our 100th year!

PENS AAUW's Writers Group

Merry Holiday Wishes from PENS

PENS writers' group meets at Gardner Harvey Library on the Middletown Campus of Miami University (MUM). We meet from 1:00-2:30 p.m. in conference room #123. Our December date will be **Dec. 19 only**. The following month we will meet on **Jan. 9 and 23**. If we have inclement winter weather on any of these dates, we will try to meet on Zoom. Call or email Becky Ward if you have questions: beckward@gmail.com or 513-424-8409.

Our calendars are filled with holiday events. If you are stuck for a writing idea, describe a favorite holiday memory from your childhood or begin a gratitude journal with entries to share at a Christmas family gathering. Think about starting a new tradition . . . writing a journal of your holiday time with family and friends. Everyone has a story to tell. Come share your story with PENS.



Turn to the next page to hear from one of the PENS writers, Marianne Demay.

Help Celebrate Our 100th Anniversary

In October 2025 our AAUW chapter will turn 100 years old! What a testament to the educated women of Middletown and the area. We are looking for volunteers to help envision ways to commemorate this special occasion.

You don't need to be part of the committee to participate, though. Some tasks can be done from your own home and will be short-lived.

If you have ideas, would like to be on the committee or want to help with selected tasks, please email Margie Homan at homan.margie@gmail.com. If you have questions, you may call her at 513-518-3897.

Help us celebrate the past and keep fighting for women. After 100 years, there is still a lot of work to do!

“Why I Write” by Marianne Demay

I was fortunate to be referred to PENS by Dr. Elizabeth Patterson after I moved to Ohio Living Mount Pleasant from Michigan.

I am German, born in Eastern Germany just as WW II started, and lived through hard times during and after that. I always loved to write and in my younger years I had poems and short stories published in a couple of German monthly papers.

I moved to England as an au pair girl and met my American husband in a London Club and followed him to Michigan where we started a family. I didn't start writing until the late 1980's when one of our sons had trouble coping with teenage challenges, and I then decided to write down the story of my German family to show him that it is possible to conquer hardships . . . in our case, homelessness, refugee camps, poverty, humiliation, and TB after the war. I had never talked much about that part of my life. I shared a few copies with family and friends and was always told, “Oh, you should write a book!”

I believe it was in 2012 that I joined the Oscoda Writers Group in Michigan where we met once a week to share our writings. A lot of my stories deal with my childhood memories. After moving to Monroe I feel very blessed to have found PENS and can continue sharing my writing.

Thanks to Marshall Students for Bazaar Help



Thanks to students from Middletown's Marshall High School and other branch volunteers for their help packing up remaining items from the Holiday Bazaar.

AAUW Middletown Branch 2024-25 Officers and Committee Chairs

President: Debbie Worbis

President-Elect: Marjorie Homan

Secretary Co-Chairs:
Becky Hamner and Marcia Miller

Communications Co-Chairs:
Virginia Palmer and Judy Florence

Finance Co-Chairs:
Jackie Webster and Katie DeVilling

Membership Co-Chairs:
Eleanor Yeager Stewart and Marti Kreps

Program Co-Chairs:
Mary Millard and Mel Worbis

Scholarship Co-Chairs:
Cari Hillman
Maria Langendorf

Public Policy: Connie Griffis

State Liaison: Carolyn Smith

AAUW Funds: Erin Eldridge

Diversity: Amanda Adkins-Ricci

**Newsletter Editor/ Joy Luck Book
Group:** Sharon Williamson

PENS (Writing Group): Becky Ward

Holiday Bazaar:
Jackie Lankfer
Carole Schul
Chris Buchert (consulting)

Book Sale:
Libby Abele
Sharon Dowden
Tina Newlin