



Amherst League of Women Voters

Bulletin

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LWVA Board

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253-0633

CALENDAR

Monday, July 20, 3:00 p.m. Book Discussion Group, John Steinbeck, “Of Mice and Men” @ Amherst Room, Jones Library.

Thursday, July 30, all day. Medicare 50th Birthday celebrations @ Northampton at 1:30 p.m. and from Springfield to Greenfield throughout the day. More on p. 4.

Wednesday, August 12, 10:30 a.m. LWVA Board Meeting @ 169 Shutesbury Road, Leverett. Contact Kathy Campbell.

Membership Mid-Year Report

Following the membership renewal process at the end of 2014 the Amherst League had 171 members for 2015, a loss of 27 members (14%) from last year. Since then we have gained 10 new members for a total of 181. Most new members are recommended to us by current members. If you know of a friend or neighbor who might be interested in League membership, you should do two things: refer them to the League website (www.lwvamherst.org); and send their name and address information to Jane McGowan, the incoming Membership chair (janefrances22@aol.com) or Dick Kofler (kofler@physics.umass.edu). We will send a personal invitation along with several of the latest LWVA publications and a membership form.

The League of Women Voters of Amherst extends condolences to long-time members Kay Moran and Georgana Foster and their families.

FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

As citizens, we have two major responsibilities. One is to vote, the other is jury duty. The major purpose of the League is "to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government" according to our Bylaws. Women achieved the vote in 1920. We are still struggling in this country to make voting a reality for minorities and members of disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups. Some groups, some states, and the Supreme Court have been whittling away voting rights. The recent step in Massachusetts to allow electronic voter registration for those with a signature at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles is a step in a positive direction.

Regarding jury duty, women in Massachusetts were not granted the right to serve on juries until 1950. I was called for jury duty a month ago, and although I could have been excused because of age, I showed up. I have never served on a jury although I have been called numerous times. The case this time was the allegation that a stepfather had sexually abused his three stepchildren over a period of years. I was ultimately excused because I was acquainted slightly with the prosecutor. We were both members of an Amherst club. I subsequently learned that the accused was found guilty.

Another act of citizen responsibility is serving in elective office. For women and minorities this is often an act of courage. Senator Diane Feinstein was the first woman to become chair of the powerful Senate Intelligence Committee. In 2009 under her leadership the committee began the investigation of interrogation techniques used by the CIA, which is supposed to report to the committee. A recent article describes the many obstacles that the CIA and the White House put in the way of the committee carrying out its function. It took courage and persistence by Feinstein and the committee to expose the use of torture. The committee's report, much redacted, now sits in the White House and Senate archives.

Are women capable of participating in a man's world? A Nobel laureate at University College London stated last month that female scientists should be segregated from male colleagues because women cry when criticized and are a romantic distraction in the laboratory. This recalls an American woman of courage in the 1960's, Congresswoman Patsy Mink of Hawaii. Patsy Mink was the first woman of color and the first Asian-American woman to be elected to Congress. She was a champion of women's rights and served from 1965 to 1977 and again from 1990 until her death in 2002. During that time a prominent physician in the Democratic Party's Committee on National Priorities asserted that women's "raging hormones associated with their lunar periods" made women unsuitable for executive positions in government, business, and crises like the Bay of Pigs. He further asserted he would not feel safe in an airplane piloted by a woman. Patsy Mike is reported to have responded, "And what's your excuse?"

Rachel Hare Mustin

A sign-up sheet was included in the June Bulletin and is also available on line at <http://www.lwvamherst.org/sites/default/files/SignUpSheet.pdf>. If you haven't filled one out yet, we urge you to do so and return it to any board member.

League members currently holding elected public office in Amherst

May 2015

Name	Office(s)
TracyLee Boutilier	Housing Authority & Town Meeting
Alisa Brewer	Select Board
Judy Brooks	Housing Authority
Mari Castaneda	Town Meeting
Matthew Charity	Town Meeting
Albert Chevan	Town Meeting
Janet Chevan	Town Meeting
Barbara Ford	Town Meeting
Gretchen Fox	Town Meeting
John Fox	Town Meeting
Hilda Greenbaum	Town Meeting
Carol Johnson	Town Meeting
Connie Kruger	Select Board & Housing Authority
Mary Jane Laus	Town Meeting
Joan Ross Logan	Town Meeting
Leo Maley	Town Meeting
Eleanor Manire-Gatti	Town Meeting
Kay Moran	Finance Committee & Town Meeting
Sandra Mullin	Town Meeting
Nancy Pagano	Town Meeting
Melissa Perot	Town Meeting
Janice Ratner	Town Meeting
Peggy Roberts	Redevelopment Authority & Town Meeting
Marcy Sala	Town Meeting
Ruth Smith	Town Meeting
Alice Swift	Town Meeting
Joan Temkin	Town Meeting
Adrienne Terrizzi	Town Meeting
Russell Vernon-Jones	Town Meeting
Gerry Weiss	Town Meeting

Correction: The book *Under Western Eyes* by Joseph Conrad is the LWVA book discussion group's selection for June 2016, not June 2015 as suggested by the ordering of the list in the June Bulletin.

Health Care Committee Plans Celebration and Speak Out

This summer, the Health Care Committee is working on a program for July 30th to celebrate the 50th birthday of Medicare, and a program, in early October, to raise awareness of the high cost of health care in Massachusetts. Below is a brief description of both programs. We invite League members to join us in developing these programs. (Please get in contact with Jackie Wolf – or any other member of the Health Care Committee – if you can help.)

1. Come join in the Celebration for Medicare's 50th Birthday

On July 30, demonstrations all across the country will herald the 50th birthday of Medicare. Medicare is one of the most highly regarded social programs in the United States. It provides health insurance for the vast majority of people over 65 and those with disabilities. Without Medicare, many people over 65 would forgo getting medical treatment due to the cost of health care, and many people would be forced into bankruptcy because of medical bills.

The League supports the drive to PROTECT, IMPROVE and EXPAND [PIE] Medicare for all. The western Massachusetts Medicare's 50th Birthday Party Organizing Committee invites you to join the celebration on Thursday, July 30th. There will be events in five western Massachusetts cities (see times and locations, below) with music, statements by elected officials and testimonies by Medicare enrollees. PLEASE JOIN US - bring family and friends - AND HELP MAKE THIS A TRULY HAPPY BIRTHDAY PARTY.

The route is as follows:

Springfield	9:00 – 10:00	City Hall Steps, 36 Court Street
Holyoke	11:00 – noon	City Hall at High and Dwight Streets
Northampton	1:30 – 2:30	City Hall, 20 Main Street
Greenfield	3:30 – 4:30	Town Common at Main and Federal Streets
Pittsfield	noon - 1:00	Federal Building, 78 Center Street

For more information, contact Jackie Wolf (lwvahealthcae@yahoo.com)

2. Speak Out for health care justice

The Health Care Committee is in the beginning stages of planning a program titled “Speak Out for health care justice.” Two Speak Outs organized by the Massachusetts chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program and Mass-Care: The Massachusetts Campaign for Single Payer Health Care took place at Harvard Medical School (Boston) and at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (Worcester) this past spring. Following this model, we are developing plans for a Speak Out in the fall at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. If you have a personal story regarding the high cost of health care – or know of a family member/friend – who would like to Speak Out at this event, please let us know.

Jackie Wolf

Book Sale Report 2015

Everyone wants to know HOW MUCH DID WE MAKE?

First, I would like to put the book Sale in context. It is our major fundraiser. We have done it for over 65 years. It is the LWVA's signature event in the community. The Book Sale has grown into a major event using a lot of our volunteer power and energy. Each year we seem to measure the success of the Book Sale by HOW MUCH DID WE MAKE?

Before I tell you, I want to say a little something about our League's overall financial situation.

First, did you know that each member costs our League approximately \$50 dollars (some a little more and some a little less) in the form of per member assessments to support the State and National LWV? Our dues are now \$35 for most members, so you can immediately see that we must make up that difference - just to break even. Plus, we have to raise more money to meet the other expenses in running our League.

We have relied on the Book Sale to do this. There has been more and more pressure to raise more and more money so that we can make up the difference, operate a healthy League and also have money in escrow for unforeseen events.

The Board formed a Financial Task Force last year. It has a two-year mission to look at our League's various ways of bringing in income. We focused on the Book Sale this year, and our goals were to simplify it, streamline it, make it more manageable and have it be something we all enjoy doing. We wanted to get away from feeling it was burdensome, overwhelming and/or often exhausting.

So, we made some changes that simplified and streamlined it. We had some glitches along the way (not too many—we call those “learning experiences”!) A survey completed by everyone who had helped in any way was sent out after the Book Sale and now is compiled. It shows we reached our goals.

So how much did we make? The amount is not quite the final but it is very close. There are still books to be sold at auction, which may bring in more income. Our gross income was \$17,587. Last year, our gross was \$20,490. However this year, we spent less and saved quite a bit of money. We analyzed our expenses and did a thorough search for the cheaper vendors. That saved us about \$2500. Our net profit last year was \$12,807 and this year it was \$12,535 (and we have not received all the income yet). So this year will bring in a net profit of almost exactly the same as last year.

However, we did not have as many book dealers on Friday. We took fewer books to the tent. Nonetheless we still had an enormous number of books left over (in the neighborhood of 6-7000 books) at the end of the sale, and we sold them to Discover Books at 4 cents a pound.

We are continuing to work on the Book Sale. In fact, the Book Sale committee this year has already met and reviewed all of these things: lessons learned and suggestions for changes. It is a work in progress...always.

(continued next page)

But OVERALL we need to diversify our sources on income. We need dues, we need a well-planned Finance Drive, we need member support, and perhaps we need a couple of other small, fun, easy to do fundraisers (there are ideas galore). We should not put all our eggs in one basket. This makes the Book Sale a huge strain, difficult to execute and difficult to get people to take on leadership roles. We need to be flexible, nimble, try some new things, be willing to change what doesn't work and try some things that might.

So much depends on where we do Pricing and Sorting. This year was great, but last year was the pits. The weather during the Book Sale can have a huge impact. If it rains or it is cold or very hot, it really has an impact on how many people turn out. Unfortunately, these are things we can't control.

Last, let me stress that one of the best things about the Book Sale is that it is part of the glue that holds us together. So many of our members work in some way on the Book Sale. Many thanks to the core group who worked long hours: my thanks to co-chairs Kay Fite and Leslie Nyman (and the FABULOUS shadow co-chair Jerry Brubaker). Thanks to everyone who took some job, large or small and worked to make the Book Sale a success! It was really GREAT fun this year!

Cynthia Brubaker, 2015 Book Sale Co-chair

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The League does not shut down completely in summer! Here are a few activities we know about as we go to press. Watch for your e-Bulletins throughout the summer for updates and sign up now to join the team or committee of interest to you! (See note on p. 2.)

A study on Aging in the Amherst Area was approved at the annual meeting of our League. In the US, the percent of the population age 65 and older has grown from 4.1 percent in 1900 to 13 percent of the total population in 2011. The rate of increase is expected to rise as baby boomers enter this age group. Our study will focus on seniors living in the Amherst area. The League's public policy positions include meeting basic human needs such as providing essential support services. During the study, we will see how the Town of Amherst is meeting the needs of seniors and perhaps make suggestions for improvements. A number of members have expressed interest in participating in this study. Diana Stein asks that they, as well as others who would care to join in this study, confirm their interest by email to dstein@mtholyoke.edu or at 253-9572. The initial meeting of the study group will take place in August.

The Voter Service Team will meet at a time and place to be determined. If you have not already signed up and are interested, please contact Judy Brooks.

The Communications Team will meet in July or August. If you are interested in any aspect of League communications, from public relations to member alerts to writing op-eds to preparing content for our bulletins and web site, please get in touch with Trish Farrington.

Fundraising and Membership will also be gearing up soon. The Energy and Environment Committee will be studying hydrofracking and pipeline issues and may be ready to hold a consensus meeting in the fall. Join us!

LWVA Members Attend Greenfield DPU Hearing on Proposed Pipeline

At least a dozen LWVA members attended a lengthy, four-hour-plus hearing sponsored by the Department of Public Utilities at the Greenfield Middle School on June 11, 2015. Following a request by Senate President Stanley Rosenberg, the hearing was scheduled to allow citizens in Western Massachusetts the opportunity to publically comment on the petition by Berkshire Gas for approval of a long-term supply agreement with Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co., the developer of the proposed Northeast Energy Direct pipeline (NED). The proposed 430-mile pipeline route would traverse Berkshire, Franklin and Hampshire counties, including 8 towns in Franklin County and Plainfield in Hampshire County. NED would bring natural gas from Pennsylvania to increase the supply of natural gas in New England.

The 650-seat auditorium was packed, and opponents of the Berkshire Gas application and the proposed NED pipeline overwhelmingly dominated this highly charged hearing. About 100 speakers, including many elected officials, expressed their strong opposition, raising major questions about the need for the pipeline, the negative environmental impact, health risks, and various engineering concerns. Many comments focused on the observation that most of the gas would be exported. Two speakers spoke emotionally about their houses being essentially “condemned” by their proximity to proposed compressors. A substantial number of negative comments were directed to Berkshire Gas for its recent moratorium on new customers “until such time as new interstate pipeline capacity is built.”



Alice Swift read the statement that is reproduced on the following page.

As Stan Rosenberg observed at our Legislative Reception the following day (photo at left), only the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has the authority to decide whether or not the pipeline can be built. A decision is expected within the next 15 months. Neither the state DPU nor local authorities and commissions can effectively reject the pipeline or alter its route.

Kay Fite

LWVA Statement at June 11 Hearing

THE AMHERST LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OPPOSES CONSTRUCTION OF THE KINDER MORGAN / TENNESSEE GAS (TGP) PIPELINE

Construction of the proposed TGP pipeline would cut an environmentally destructive path across productive farmland, forests, and conservation land in western Massachusetts. It would also lock in dependence on fracked natural gas for many decades.

The large diameter and high capacity of the proposed pipeline far exceed even the highest projected future demand for natural gas in Massachusetts. The pipeline would link the Marcellus shale gas fields in Pennsylvania with the Maritimes and Northeast Pipeline to Canada. These facts indicate that the main purpose of the proposed pipeline is for exporting Marcellus shale gas, not for serving Massachusetts needs.

Thus, any tax or tariff imposed on Massachusetts ratepayers would be subsidizing a private, for-profit enterprise, with only minor benefit to Massachusetts residents. Natural gas is used mainly for electricity generation and residential heating. For electricity, only peak demand on certain days of the year is projected to be above current capacity.

The League believes that energy conservation and renewable energy are the first priority: green buildings, energy efficient appliances, wind generation, flattening peak energy demand, etc. and that more can be done to reduce reliance on fossil fuel sources.

Before undertaking any new natural gas pipeline construction project, objective analysis of Massachusetts future energy needs must be carried out, taking into account trends in energy conservation and growth of renewable energy sources.

Moreover, an independent analysis of existing gas pipeline infrastructure must be conducted, including the capacity of the Northampton Lateral and Berkshire Gas local feed lines.

In summary, the benefit of the proposed TGP pipeline to Massachusetts residents is small, the environmental and economic price high.



LWVA Members at the DPU Hearing

Photo by Rene Theberge

Service & Action Civics for Youth: Current Local League Efforts to Support Civic Education for Youth

What is Action Civics? We all know about the usual civics class: learning about the U.S. and state constitutions, Congress and state legislature, how a bill becomes a law, three branches of government, etc. Action civics adds a little something extra: ACTION.

From the National Action Civics Collaborative comes this definition: “Action civics is designed to create: an engaged citizenry capable of effective participation in the [civic] process, in their communities and in the larger society.” Action civics combines traditional civic education, guided experiential civic education, and youth leadership development.

At one of the workshops at the LWVMA Convention in May, Terry Yoffie, LWV Newton and Karen Mazza, LWV Cape Cod Area Service shared their experiences building partnerships with the community to support civic education grants to schools and offer action civics and service opportunities in our schools. Handouts included information about the Cape Cod Foundation.

Cited in the workshop was the 2010 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in Civics and History showed that just 25% of students had a proficient understanding of civics and American history. This year was worse: only 18% of the students are proficient in history, and less than a quarter are proficient in civics. State law requires the teaching of American history and civics in all public elementary and high schools. This is “for the purpose of promoting civic service and a greater knowledge thereof, and of fitting the pupils, morally and intellectually, for the duties of citizenship.” [M.G.L. Chap. 71, Sec. 2]

Action civics encompasses support for current classroom civics classes; help for students to identify the issue that they are interested in; students doing research into their issue of interest; outside activities such as working at the polls or in the local election office on election day, interviewing local organizations and community leaders, attending meetings of the school board, board of aldermen or city council; learning about legislation about their issue currently being discussed; interview legislators at all levels.

Grants are available to develop an action civics program. Examples for grant applications include: field trip money, entrance fees for students, consultant fees for leadership development for students, fees for a special program for students, a professional development experience for teachers that will help them offer action civics curriculum.

Elizabeth Davis

Legislative Reception 2015



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