

## Centennial Committee Report for 2020-2021

The Centennial Committee began its work in the fall of 2019, holding its first event in October 2019. The Committee had a number of programs planned for the late winter and spring of 2020, but the arrival of the pandemic caused these plans to be postponed until we could again meet together indoors. Instead, we encouraged members to attend virtual events commemorating women's suffrage, such as those held by the State League and by the Forbes Library in Northampton.

With the arrival of summer, though, came events important in the history of women's suffrage which needed to be celebrated, and weather in which members could come together—masked and at a correct social distance—outside. On June 25 Massachusetts celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the State's ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. In commemoration, the Committee sponsored a walk from Kendrick Park to the Common, ending in front of Town Hall, where we gathered to hear the Assistant Town Clerk talk to us about the legislature's expansion of voting options to make it possible for people to vote despite the pandemic. Most of the walkers, who carried signs identifying the League, wore white as the suffragists of a hundred years ago had done. We had media excellent coverage of this event, as we did of our next event.

On August 18<sup>th</sup>, the Committee sponsored a car parade for voting, to celebrate Tennessee's vote to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup>, which ensured that the bill would be enacted. Cars decorated with placards, banners and streamers, drove through several of Amherst's neighborhoods to the sound of car horns and Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever," bringing voter registration forms and giving out cards listing the important dates of the upcoming election. And finally, on Women's Equality Day, August 26<sup>th</sup>, at the League's request, the Town bell rang out at noon to celebrate the day on which the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment officially became law.

The important events of a century ago had been celebrated by the Amherst League. But we were reminded that the suffrage anniversary Black women celebrate is August 6, with the signing of the Voting Rights Act of August 6, 1965, "An Act to enforce the fifteenth amendment of the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes." Professor Traci Parker's talk at Opening Meeting made this clear. Her message was confirmed and made visible by the Committee's last Women's Suffrage event, a program on Black Women's Struggle for Civil Rights. Members watched the film "Standing on My Sisters' Shoulders" and then on November 12 heard Amherst member Andrea Battle talk about her own experiences in the struggle for civil rights.

The Commemoration of the Centennial events wrapped up in December, with LWVMA's Gala celebrating the centennial of the State League. The task of the Centennial Commemoration Committee was completed, and the Committee disbanded.

Members: Bonnie Isman, Barbara Pearson, Ruth Smith, Adrienne Terrizzi, Kathy Vorwerk, Jessica Ryan, secretary and Susan Millinger convener.

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