



Amherst League of Women Voters

A Voice for Citizens, a Force for Change
e-bulletin

July 2025

Dear Members and Friends,

It was good to see so many familiar faces and new faces at our Annual Membership meeting. We started with a fun getting-to-know-you activity and ended with voting on our local programs and a new slate of Steering Committee members. Thank you to Jessica Ryan (Voter Service) and David Shanabrook (Treasurer) for serving the LWVA. We hope they don't have too much trouble finding things to do with their new free time.

And thank you to the new Steering Committee! We have a full year ahead of us and I am looking forward to working with the newly elected members. See the list of new Steering Committee members at the bottom of this email. Due to our non-partisan policies, we had to make a few changes and assign people to different roles.

Many thanks to the Amherst League members who served as delegates at the LWVMA State Convention, as shown in photo below from left to right: Rani Parker, Andrea Battle, Marcie Sclove, Rebecca Fricke, Susan Millinger, and Milan Clark. Susan and Marcie (also Jeff Gold, who was not at the convention) served on the State Reparations Study Committee. As delegates we participated in the vote to approve our new state position on reparations. See page 66 of the document [LWVMA Where We Stand](#) for the reparations position.

This E-Bulletin is mostly a review of the committee work accomplished over the past year, but amid those reports you will see photos of activities we participated in over this past month. We also have a few announcements and calls for volunteers. So grab a cold beverage and take some time to scroll through our news. Please reach out to the committee contact if the work sounds interesting.

Rebecca Fricke
Spokesperson
[Click here to email Rebecca.](#)



Save the Date

Opening Meeting

Thursday, September 11, 2025
6:30-8:00 PM

Potluck Finger Food and
Interesting Conversation

Members please consider bringing friends and acquaintances who want to learn more about what the LWVA does.

The Amherst Woman's Club - 35 Triangle St. Amherst



Financial Task Force Forming

Interested in the LWVA Financial Policies and Procedures?

Following the recommendation from the Budget Committee, the LWVA Steering Committee is forming a Task Force to review our policies for reserves and for making donations and the civic grant process. If you are

interested in joining this Task Force, please contact [Kathy Campbell](#) in the next couple of weeks. You must be a member to join the Task Force.


Book Sale

**Amherst League of Women Voters**
Giant Book Sale
Sale will be held in the Fort River Elementary School Gym
70 South East Street

First day of sale Friday July 25th open 10AM till 6PM
Saturday and Sunday July 26-27th and August 2-3rd 10AM-4PM
Monday August 4th—Left Over Day—Everything must go! 9AM-1PM

A gymnasium full of gently used books of all kinds at very low prices.
Also rare books, coffee table and children's books, DVDs and CDs!

For more information contact lwwa@lwwamherst.org or go to lwwamherst.org

DONATE YOUR BOOKS!
Bring them to the Fort River School Gym
July 5 -July 15
9 AM-2 PM
70 South East St
5 Box Limit per drop off


Volunteering at the book sale is fun, and you get to build your library at the same time. [Click here](#) to sign up using the online volunteer form or just come when you have time and the energy.

Susan Millinger

Chair, Book Sale 2025

[Click here to contact Susan](#) to learn anything related to the Book Sale.

Voter Service Annual Report 2024-2025

2024/25 was a big year for voters. We had many volunteers helping to get people registered and ready to vote. We participated in an accessibility survey of voting locations for the Disability Law Center, and we tabled at Collective Power for Reproduction at Hampshire College, the Gender Resource Fair at Amherst College, the Democracy Fair in Northampton, the Jones Library Naturalization Ceremony, the Democracy event at UMass, the Amherst block party, and many more. We had a panel on the League and voting at Amherst College where we mailed out hundreds of postcards to voters. We were invited to speak on a WMUA radio talk show. We even sent volunteers down to the West Springfield Mosque to educate and inform voters! As we headed into 2025, with democracy down but not out, we rose to the challenge and chartered a bus, taking nearly 60 people to Boston for the Hands Off rally.

Our work is not done, and we need every hand on deck. As I step aside and leave this committee into the capable hands of Dana Carnegie, I want to take a moment to thank every person who offered to lend a hand as I learned how to stand up voter forums, issue voters' guides, hang banners, and speak to voters at as many opportunities as we could. I wish I was leaving you all with democracy in a better state, but when we work together, we push that arc

toward progress. Every little bit matters.

Thank you all, it has been a pleasure!
Jessica Ryan, outgoing Voter Service Chair

Racial Justice Annual Report 2024-2025

Racial Justice Committee Goals

The Amherst LWV, with its mission to promote policy positions and advocacy on significant local issues, established a Racial Justice Task Force in June 2020; it is now a permanent League Committee. The broad goals of the Racial Justice Committee (RJC) are to increase the League's informed and active participation with Amherst Town government and the community at large, in order to advance racial justice, equity, and well-being, and to collaborate with individuals, groups, and organizations to achieve a just and equitable community.

Judy Brooks Conversation Series

Approximately each month, the RJC hosts a virtual conversation with a local leader or organization, to increase understanding of local social and racial justice issues among League members and the public. The series is named for League member Judy Harris Brooks, educator and civic leader, who was actively involved in finding solutions to complex issues in her community. Recordings of past programs can be viewed at lwvamherst.org.

CRESS: Community Responders for Equity, Safety & Service

RJC has supported the revitalization of CRESS; we have advocated for an Assistant Director, so that CRESS can cover expanded hours, as originally intended.

David Ruggles Center, Florence

RJC members visited the David Ruggles Center in October, to learn about pre-Civil War anti-slavery history and the utopian community in Florence. David Ruggles (1810-1849) was an active Black abolitionist. He established the country's first Black-owned bookstore in New York City, was a conductor on the Underground Railroad, and served as mentor to both Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. We arranged a second visit and walking tour June 21, 2025, for all members of the Amherst LWV.

Other Activities

- RJC members participated in the LWVA reparations study and consensus meeting.
- RJC members held occasional discussions with DEI and CRESS Directors to keep communication open and support their activities.
- We co-sponsored Race Amity Day, June 8, 2025.
- We supported two members to attend the June 12, 2025, conference, *Equity in the 413*.

Future Plans

- In the next year, we will continue the Judy Brooks Conversation series, to highlight racial justice activities and local organizations.
- We plan to prepare a report evaluating the progress Amherst has made in implementing the recommendations from the Community Safety Working Group report.

- We would also like to reach out to members from neighboring Leagues, to broaden our perspective on regional matters that impact area residents.

Respectfully Submitted,
Martha Hanner and Milan Clark, RJC Co-Chairs

RJC JUDY BROOKS CONVERSATION SERIES

www.lwvamherst.org

October 3, 2024: ARHS Sene-Gambian Scholars. Craig Hrones, one of the twelve ARHS students who were members of the 2024 cohort of Sene-Gambian Scholars, the fifth group in the program's history, described their visit. They stayed with host families in Gunjur, The Gambia, and Dakar, Senegal, and experienced the history and culture of these two neighboring countries, forming strong bonds of friendship.

Feb. 26, 2025: "DEI Deconstructed." Pamela Nolan Young, DEI Director, and Philip Avila, Assistant DEI Director addressed what "DEI" really means and how Amherst is implementing and supporting DEI.

April 2, 2025: "ARPS School Committee Challenges and Successes." Jennifer Shiao, Chair and Deb Leonard, Secretary, Amherst School Committee were featured.

April 17, 2025: "Market with Purpose." The presentation focused on how the Amherst Mobile Market fills a gap in access to fresh produce for Amherst residents, while also building community and supporting the local economy. The session featured Rossana Salazar, Rani Parker, and board members.

May 22, 2025: "A Better Chance." Showcasing the Amherst ABC program for academically talented high school students from educationally underserved school districts, Tem Blessed and Nancita Alejandro, Co-Directors, and scholar residents spoke about the program.

[Click here to contact Martha to volunteer.](#)



League Members who toured Florence with a Ruggles Center docent in June shown above and below.



Amherst Pride Parade



Amherst Pride - 2025 Amherst Pride Parade & Celebration, June 22nd

The LWVA joined many other local organizations on Sunday, June 22nd, to parade through Amherst in celebration of our town's first Pride Parade. Not even the extraordinary heat could diminish the festive, party-like feeling as we walked from ARHS to the Commons. There was a band, the Expandable Brass Band, and people waving signs of support all along the route. On the Common there was a resource and craft fair and speakers through the afternoon. Many thanks to Leslie Nyman for organizing our group.



Connecticut River 2024-2025 Report

From its beginning in 2022, the Connecticut River Committee has been focused on the relicensing of five hydroelectric facilities in the Connecticut River. Two of those facilities are in Massachusetts: the dam at Turners Falls and the Northfield Mountain pumped storage facility. In April 2024, LWVA submitted a statement to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), a statement based on our existing regional League Connecticut River position, was adopted in 1965/1966 yet still amazingly relevant to many of today's issues.

The next focus was on the work of the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) which needed to respond to the relicensing request by FirstLight under federal Section 401 water quality provisions. LWVA submitted a statement, again based on our existing position, to DEP in February 2025. DEP approved FirstLight's application, with conditions, in March 2025. That decision has been appealed by Connecticut River Conservancy. Stay tuned for a future decision in that case.

In the course of dealing with the relicensing projects, it became increasingly clear to the committee that while the 60-year-old position was still relevant to many of today's issues, there were two major gaps. First, because climate change was not much of an issue in the 1960s, the adopted position did not deal with it. Second, the pumped storage facility did not exist in the 1960s (it was constructed in the 1970's). The League committee has been working this year on updating the existing position and making it more relevant to today's and future issues. We aim to have consensus meetings in the fall. Please stay tuned.

[Contact Elizabeth Davis](#) for more information.



Health Care Committee Annual Report 2024-2025

The LWVA Health Care Committee continued its work to fulfill the LWWUS health care position, educating and advocating for a publicly financed health care system--to improve health outcomes, reduce costs, and re-introduce democratic governance in health care with coordinated resource allocation and public oversight.

However, as clarified in an impactful report from the research arm of Physicians for a National Health Program ([PNHP](#)), "[Our Payments, Their Profits](#)," the corporate Fortune 500 medical industry is deeply entrenched, siphons off as much as a third of our health resources to investors, and effectively thwarts reform efforts. (See also, the [Privatization of Everything](#) by Cohen and Mikaelian.) The results of the 2024 November election dealt an even larger blow to the movement to de-privatize health care. The new administration lost no time adopting [Heritage Foundation Project 2025](#) policies that prioritize handing our health care taxes over to investment firms (like United Health, Aetna, Cigna, etc.)

At that point, our local committee pivoted away from the prior year's focus to take health decision-making out of private profit-first hands. The committee also voted to tackle more local issues, so we could feel the effects of our efforts more directly. One strategy has been to ally with actions of allied groups such as the local Poor People's Campaign (PPC), the MA ACLU, who are both national League partners, Mobilize.US, and Mass-Care, a coalition of which LWWMA is a member, to achieve a state-based Single-Payer/Medicare for All system in Massachusetts. We've responded to [LWV Action Alerts for protests](#), emphasizing health justice with our signs. With PPC, we served on the host committee for the national co-chair's book tour to Boston and Pittsfield for *You Only Get What You Are Organized to Take*. With Mass-Care, we participated in a "friend-raising" fund-raiser in November and a HC Beacon Hill Lobby Day in April, and we submitted testimony with them in favor of the MA M4A bills for a hearing of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing in mid-June.

At our January meeting, a new member on the committee asked why we had no programs with some of the college students with which the town is well-endowed. So, we launched a project to activate students for health care education and advocacy--in two steps. First, we set out to learn the health care concerns of students across a range of different majors, through a series of informal focus groups (involving pizza, which turned out to be crucial) in order

to find messages that will resonate with people ages 18 to 26. In the process, we hope to move to step two: to recruit people in that age range to help us with social media campaigns to educate and activate their peers.

We made contacts with a couple of public health professors and the UMass Public Health Outreach Office (and their students) to get access to UMass and Amherst College ideas and resources. We began tabling in the UMass Blue Wall food court to recruit participants. Instead of remaining installed at our table, we visited tables with groups of students and asked if they would be willing to speak with us about health care. We held the first focus group in May and can't wait to regroup and do some more. Our main takeaway so far is that the students are much more open to talking about the topic than we anticipated, and come to the table with some strong (and also some mistaken) ideas. With respect to creating content for student-focused social media, we're still at square one -- our student participants reported that they use social media for social connection, but don't have experience with it as a tool for advocacy.

Looking ahead to 2025-26, we are poised to return to the campaign for de-privatizing health care, with a new set of tools. In their June 2025 state convention, LWV New York adopted LWV Vermont's updated Privatization Position with a state-to-state concurrence. Thus, New York, like Vermont, can now use League resources to fight against privatization in health care at the local and state (but not federal) level. If we can get more states to adopt concurrences or resolutions in support of Vermont's (or New York's) new privatization update, we hope to strengthen the case for LWVUS at its 2026 national convention to concur with Vermont. Then, the position will be available to all states--for advocacy at federal as well as state and local levels.

Help Wanted: an ongoing project is the tweaking and updating of our LWV SinglePayer/ Medicare for All [Toolkit](#). We are always looking for conceptual and artistic help (inquire within), but just writing to tell us what's wrong or what's missing would be welcome. We are currently developing an idea from a neighbor for "Single Payer 101"--a brief introduction to the Toolkit. (Click on the picture to go to [the first page](#), or find the link to the "detour" on the front page of the [Toolkit](#)-- and then send us your feedback.)

Barbara Pearson, chair

[Please email Barbara](#) for more information.



LWVA Civic Grant Report 2024-2025

Grants were made as follows:

\$1500 for the purchase of Pocketalk Voice Translators for the Amherst Mobile Market. From the organization: "The LWV contribution also promotes a more equitable environment, allowing more people to actively engage and participate in our initiatives. It is a true honor to have the backing of an organization so committed to democracy and community empowerment."

\$500 to the Amherst Basketball Club (Amherst Regional High School) which is dedicated to encouraging and empowering students, particularly girls, to get involved in sports and extracurricular activities. The program was especially focused on motivating girls to join more sports, fostering a sense of confidence, teamwork, and leadership.

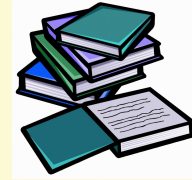
\$2500 to Kenine Dieuveuil (Hampshire College). The grant covered the costs associated with her research and public seminar on the history of efforts to mobilize the Black vote and the role deep canvassing can play in increasing voter turnout. She produced a community toolkit that includes step-by-step guides, sample scripts, and adaptable strategies to help grassroots organizations train volunteers and effectively engage voters. The resource is intended to empower community leaders to replicate these methods and sustain voter engagement beyond a single election cycle. Kenine posted a reflection on LinkedIn - [click here](#).

\$500 for Milan Clark to use to cover his time in planning a League focused Amherst Media show.

Book Group

The LWV Book Group meets the second Wednesday of the month, unless otherwise indicated, at 2:00 PM at Applewood, 1

Spencer Drive, Amherst. The building is handicapped accessible. Everyone is welcome.



The schedule:

- July 9: *Personal Librarian Belle DaCosta Green*, Victoria Murray
- September 10: *Hild*, Nicola Griffith
- October 8: *Why Nothing Works - Who Killed Progress and How to Bring it Back*, Marc Dunkelman
- November 12: *Stuck, How the Privileged and Propertied Broke the Engine of American Opportunity*, Yoni Appelbaum

Please call ahead to verify the time and date. We may have to cancel for weather or emergency appointments. Email [Phyllis Lehrer](mailto:Phyllis.Lehrer@lww-amherst.org) or call 253-5179.

FORWARD THIS MESSAGE!

This monthly message is for anyone interested in the League, not just members. If you know someone who might be interested, forward this message and invite them to subscribe themselves, using the link below.

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Rebecca Fricke, Co-Spokesperson & E-Bulletin
Susan Lowery, Membership
Caroline Murray, Voter Service
Katie Naughton, Treasurer
Lucia Spiro, At-Large
Maika Shinagawa Thanner, At-Large

[Click here to contact the Steering Committee.](#)

e-BULLETIN STAFF

The Editor of the LWVAmherst e-Bulletin, Rebecca Fricke can be contacted [here](#). Link checker is Kay Fite and Proofreader is Rebecca Curzon.

LWV Amherst



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