



## Amherst League of Women Voters

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

April 2024

### CALENDAR

**Wednesday, April 3rd, 7:00 PM**- Judy Brooks Conversation - Panel Discussion: "Black Women Leaders for Amherst's Racial Justice." For more information, see below.

**Wednesday, April 10th, 6:45 PM**- LWVA Steering Committee meeting. [Email to receive location and agenda.](#)

**Sunday, April 14th, 2:00 - 3:30 PM** -LWVA Town Charter Review. Discussion about Town Manager (Article 3), Incorporation Powers (Article 1), and Elections (Article 7). Zoom link [here](#).

**Sunday, June 2nd, 2:00 - 4:00 PM**- LWVA Member Consensus on Town Charter Amendments to lobby for. Location TBD.

**Thursday, June 13th, 6:30-8:30 PM**- LWVA Annual Meeting. Munson Library, South Amherst. More details coming soon.

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Dear Members and Friends,

We have a couple of important Zoom events coming up. We hope you get out your comfortable clothes, make some tea, and join us.

We are so grateful to Dr. Barbara Love, Jacqueline Wallace, and Mary Custard for joining our Judy Brooks panel discussion in early April. And speaking of being grateful, we want to thank Marcie Sclove for her service and dedication in leading the Racial Justice Committee. We wish her all the best as she and her husband settle down for a year in California.

Mid-month, the Town Charter Review committee will present its second program. If you missed the first one, the presentation slides are uploaded on our website, and the recording will soon be on YouTube. Looking ahead, the Charter Review Committee will hold a members-only meeting in June to see if membership can come to consensus about specific changes to lobby for when the Town begins the review process. Stay tuned for more information about that meeting. And, note that the Town is looking for volunteers to join the Town Charter Review.

Thanks to everyone who helped out during the last election. Good data was collected. We hope that more of our members will be willing to step up and take on more volunteer work for the upcoming election.

I want to give a shout out to Barbara Pearson for keeping us in the know about LWV Health Care initiatives. She is doing mighty work on behalf of us all. Please let her know if you want to join the fight for health care for all.

Finally, our book sale committee is getting prepped for another sale, and they are looking for help. If you are like me, your LWVA bookshelf is starting to have more space and the boxes in the basement are filling up!

Rebecca Fricke

Spokesperson - [Email](#) with any questions or comments.

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## Amherst Home Rule Charter Review

The LWVA Charter Review Task Force is continuing its review of the Amherst Home Rule Charter in relation to League good government principles. The Task Force will be hosting a series of public Zoom discussions on questions related to potential Charter amendments. Save the dates and spread the word.

### **Dates (including Zoom links):**

#### **Sunday, April 14th, 2:00 - 3:30 PM**([Zoom link](#))

Town Manager (Article 3)  
Incorporation Powers (Article 1)  
Elections (Article 7)

#### **Sunday, May 5, 2:00 - 3:30 PM**([Zoom link](#))

Public Participation (Article 8)  
Transition Procedures (Article 10)

#### **Sunday, June 2, 2:00 - 4:00 PM - Member Consensus Meeting.**

Location to be announced. For members only.

The public is cordially invited to participate or just listen in to the two public discussions. The first part of each discussion will be the presentation of potential amendments to the Charter, how they may relate to good government principles, and how five years of experience has demonstrated whether an amendment is or is not needed. We will then open to public comments.

## The LWVA'S "Good Government" Principles

1. **Widespread and inclusive** participation
2. **Diversity** in the community reflected in government
3. **Openness** and full disclosure
4. **Checks and balances** of power among the executive, legislative and administrative branches of government and the electorate
5. **Honesty and non-corruptibility** in all decision-making
6. **Efficiency**, based on professional management and timely decision making
7. **Accountability** for political and fiscal decisions

## Voters Service News

We are off to a strong start with Voter Service this 2024 season. For starters, some of our members contributed to the Associated Press turnout reports. As the thank-you letter received by Adrienne Terrizzi said, "We received 46 turnout reports throughout the day from Massachusetts LWV volunteers – the most from any state so far! The numbers you provided will help us improve our data modeling and turnout projections."

Even more, several of our members contributed data on seven polling sites in the Amherst area for a project focused on surveying disability access to polling places, in partnership with [Rev Up MA](#) and the [Disability Law Center](#). We busted out our tape measures and reported on door widths, slopes, and door handle types. We documented heights of posted information; we tested equipment and checked all aspects of access to voting. Many thanks to Sue Lowery, Tracy Zafian, Ruth Urell, Kathy Campbell, and Susan Millinger for their work in collecting this important data. Having an accessible voting site ensures all voters have the same opportunity to participate in our civic right and duty to vote. We were pleased to participate in the project.

Stay tuned for upcoming opportunities to get involved in Voter Service as we move through this vital year for our democracy.

Jessica Ryan, Chair of Voter Service -[Email](#)

# KEY ELECTION ISSUES

AT LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL LEVELS

## LOCAL



Local education



Book bans and education curricula



Candidates' disengagement from voter concerns



Anti-voter efforts

## STATE AND FEDERAL



Reproductive rights



Climate change



Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) facing resistance



War spending oversight and accountability



Immigration policy reform



LGBTQIA+ equality



Gun control restricting assault weapons



Affordable health care

## Racial Justice Committee News

Greetings from the Racial Justice Committee (RJC) for April 2024

The Judy Brooks Series program for April 3rd will feature Dr. Barbara Love, Jacqueline Wallace, and Mary Custard, strong and talented leaders who are inspiring and so important in our community. Zoom in to learn more about their work. Please register for this interesting event at [www.lwvamherst.org](http://www.lwvamherst.org).

The RJC's big news is that I have resigned as chair of this wonderful committee and Martha Hanner and Milan Clark will take over as co-chairs. As sad as I am to say goodbye to RJC, it feels necessary. My husband and I are relocating to Santa Barbara for a year to be near our daughter and her family. I leave the committee in excellent hands, with co-chairs Martha and Milan as well as the nine other members who give so much to this important League committee.

I will continue to participate in the state-wide Reparations Study Group and hope to share news of our progress as time goes by.

Wishing you all a peaceful spring.

~~Marcie Sclove, Outgoing Chair, Racial Justice Committee (RJC) - [email](#)



**JUDY BROOKS SERIES**

**PANEL DISCUSSION - BLACK WOMEN LEADERS FOR AMHERST'S RACIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY**

**WEDNESDAY  
3 APRIL 2024  
7.00 PM**

**ONLINE**

[LWVAMHERST.ORG](http://LWVAMHERST.ORG) FOR ZOOM LINK

**DR. BARBARA LOVE - PARTNER AT EVOLUTION, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION, UMASS- AMHERST**



**MARY CUSTARD - DEAN OF STUDENTS AND STUDENT ADVISOR AMHERST REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**



**JACQUELINE WALLACE- CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER AND THERAPIST, DIRECTOR OF THE AMHERST AREA GOSPEL CHOIR**



**JUDY HARRIS BROOKS (1944-2018) WILL BE LONG REMEMBERED AS AN EDUCATOR AND CIVIC LEADER WHO WAS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN FINDING SOLUTIONS TO COMPLEX ISSUES IN HER COMMUNITY.**

**Health Care**

On April 3, the Health Care Committee will attend another health care hearing on Beacon Hill, this time a "field hearing" chaired by U.S. Senator Ed Markey. He will be introducing a Senate companion bill to the "State-based Universal Health Care Act" already in the House ([HR 6270](#)). These bills would establish a "super-waiver" that strengthens the basis on which state-based Medicare for All bills receive federal funds and makes them better able to withstand challenges in the courts. The hearing is highlighting the value of public Single Payer programs as a protection against the abuses of unregulated private investment in health care. He will feature the threatened



default of Steward Health Care hospitals in Eastern Massachusetts that is putting patients, health care workers, and whole communities at risk. (We're a little extra excited about this because we were on the committee that recruited Markey--acting as individuals, of course, since LWV contact with federal officials requires a Federal Action Request Form, from *Impact on Issues!*)

People wishing to attend the hearing in person are required to [register through Eventbrite](#). The hearing will also be live-streamed at 11 am on the 3rd, at [help.senate.gov](#). ("HELP" is Senator Sanders' Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee in which Markey is a subcommittee chair.)

Anyone interested in attending, please contact Barbara Pearson - [Email](#)

## Connecticut River News

### Connecticut River Relicensing of Dams

Five facilities on the Connecticut River are currently undergoing relicensing, a (so far) twelve-year process that will affect operations of the four dams and a pumped storage facility for the next 40-50 years. Two of these facilities are in Massachusetts: Turner's Falls Dam in Montague (owned by First Light), and the Northfield Mountain pumped storage facility in Northfield (owned by Great River Hydro). Three dams are on the Vermont/New Hampshire border: Wilder, Vernon and Bellows Falls.

On February 22nd, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a notifier saying the final applications for these five Connecticut River facilities have been accepted and are ready for environmental analysis. The final date for public comments to FERC is April 22nd. The Amherst League's Connecticut River Committee met earlier this month to discuss the topics of our statement and League positions we will be basing our statement on. We plan to have our statement ready for submission the first week of April. Our statement will address issues in the two Massachusetts facilities.

The FERC announcement also activated studies and comments from the state Department of Environmental Protection as required by the Clean Water Act, Section 401. Their process will probably take up to one year.

For further information or to submit public comments on these relicensing applications, go to the website for Connecticut River Conservancy ([ctriver.org](#)) or contact Elizabeth Davis by [email for more information](#).



## 2023-2024 Civic Action Grants

Our grant is being put to good use! Here is a quick update from Tim Austin (Fort River 5th Grade Teacher): *We have started the Civic Literacy and Organizing Project, and kicked things off with Tem Blessed as well! He came in early March and did an introduction with each 5th grade class. And he started last Friday with his small group (it is 12 students, 4 from each class). Mostly so far, he focused on community building, but there are already several students throwing around ideas for music they want to write!*

**The LWV Amherst is still accepting applications for 2023-2024 Civic Action Grants.** Up to \$2,500 is awarded for projects that are directly related to the League's priority programs. Read [here](#) for how to apply. Contact [Rebecca Fricke](#) for more information or questions.

## LWVA Book Sale

### Time Marches On...to the Book Sale!!!

We've got daylight saving time, the first day of spring, crocuses.

**Time** to think ahead to our annual Book Sale!

Friday, July 26th - 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Saturday, July 27th - 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Sunday, July 28th - 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Saturday, August 3rd - 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Sunday, August 4th - 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

*Leftover Day:* Monday, August 5th - 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**Time** to start collecting the inventory we need to pull off our only fund-raising event of the year and the one the community eagerly awaits.

SO... round up the books you once read and put aside, and the ones you decided not to finish. Check your bookshelves and bedside table. Unearth the ones your kids and grandkids have outgrown; pass on the boxes your neighbors left when they moved, and declutter the closets. But remember! Nothing moldy or tattered; no textbooks, magazines, or self-help books.

And, be ready to drop off the books at Fort River School, from July 5th to 15th. Meanwhile, settle down to read a few more books.

**Time** also to think about volunteering, to help cull, sort, and organize the donations, from July 5th to 22nd at Fort River School. This is a huge endeavor, one that needs a slew of people to do the job. But it is also the most fun: talking to other volunteers, seeing old friends and making new ones, laughing, getting exercise, having snacks, and learning all kinds of new things.

If you need/want more information before the next e-bulletin, check out the League website ([lwvamherst.org](http://lwvamherst.org)) or [email](#) Susan Millinger, Book Sale Chair par excellence.

[CLICK HERE FOR EVEN MORE DETAILS!](#)

## LWVA Book Group Schedule

The LWV Book Group will meet the second Wednesday of the month at 1:30 PM at Applewood, 1 Spencer Drive, Amherst. The building is handicapped accessible.

Here are the schedule and books:

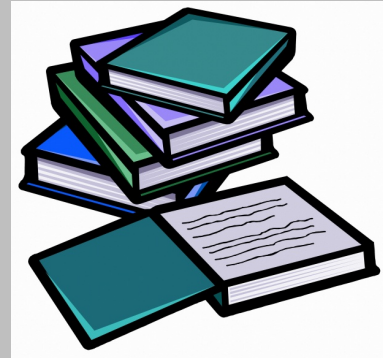
April: *Middlesex*, Jeffrey Eugenides, 544 pages

May: *Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*, James McBride, 400 pages

June: *Prequel*, Rachel Maddow, 416 pages

July: *Master Slave Husband Wife*, Ilyon Woo, 416 pages

For information, call Phyllis Lehrer 413-253-5179 or [email her](#).



### 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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LWV Amherst





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