



## Amherst League of Women Voters

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

### February 2024

#### CALENDAR

**Sunday, January 28th, 2:00 PM** - Program Planning. Applewood Meeting Room, 1 Spencer Drive, Amherst. See details below.

**Wednesday, February 7th, 7:00 PM**- LWVA Steering Committee meeting. [Email to receive location and agenda.](#)

**Saturday, February 10th, 12:00 PM** - Birthday Luncheon at Ginger Garden. Special Guest: Senator Jo Comerford.

**Wednesday, February 21st, 7:00 PM**- Judy Brooks Conversation - Panel with members of the Black Business Association of Amherst Area. For more information, see below. To register for the Zoom, please visit [our website.](#)

---

Dear Members and Friends,

Thank you to everyone who renewed their membership! For those of you who did not, it is not too late. [Visit our website for the renewal link.](#)

It might seem quiet these days, but behind the scenes our activities are ramping up. We have a Program Planning meeting which, for those of you who don't know, is a time for members to decide what the focus should be at all three levels of the LWV organization -- national, state, and local. Please see the agenda below.

I hope to see many of you on February 10th at Ginger Garden for our birthday luncheon, to hear Sen. Comerford's update and to enjoy good food and friendship. You must RSVP by January 28th. If you have not sent in your check but you want to go, email me! [Visit our website for all the details.](#)

I am so excited about the latest LWVA Civic Grant, awarded to teacher Tim Austin for his Civics Project at Fort River. More on the grant below.

And lastly, it is nominating time. The Nominating Committee is looking for people who want to learn more about what it means to become more active in the league. Please [email](#) Cynthia Brubaker for more information.

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

# Racial Justice Committee News



**JUDY BROOKS SERIES**

**PANEL DISCUSSION WITH MEMBERS OF THE  
BLACK BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF AMHERST AREA**

**WEDNESDAY  
21 FEBRUARY 2024  
7.00 PM**

**ONLINE**

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

**MONICA CAGE OWNER OF  
CROWNED BY CAGE**



**BABATUNDE AJAO FOUNDER  
OF TRUE GIVEN**



**ALYSIA BRYANT OWNER OF  
CAREFREE CAKERY**



**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.**

Greetings from the Racial Justice Committee (RJC)

Our Judy Brooks Conversation on January 18, with Debora Ferreira and Allegra Clark, Co-Chairs of the Community Safety and Social Justice Committee (CSSJC), was very informative. They reviewed the Community Safety Working Group (CSWG) reports and discussed how CSSJC is working towards implementing the CSWG recommendations. The recordings of this and all our Judy Brooks series can be accessed at [www.lwvamherst.org](http://www.lwvamherst.org)

The next Judy Brooks program on Wednesday, February 21st, at 7:00 PM will be a conversation with members of the Black Business Association of Amherst Area. Please attend to learn more about our local Black-owned businesses! Register at [lwvamherst.org](http://lwvamherst.org) for the Zoom link.

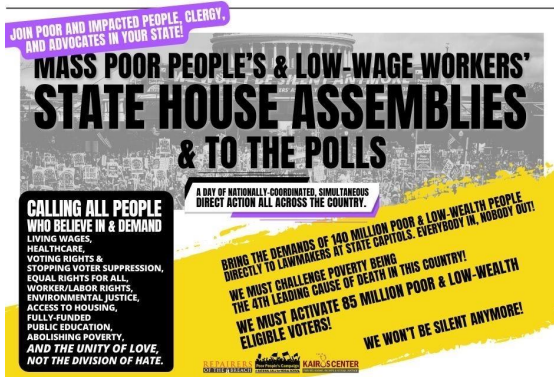
The MLK Day community reading of Dr. King's Nobel Prize speech, "The Quest for Peace and Justice," was well-attended and felt like a true community event. His speech is just as relevant today as it was in 1964. May we each resolve to do our small bit towards peace and justice in the year ahead, without becoming overwhelmed by the scale of the world's problems.

Martha Hanner, for the Racial Justice Committee  
[Email Martha](#) for more information.

## Health Care

**SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2024 AT NOON**

**SAVE THE DATE**



The Poor People's Campaign (PPC) will have simultaneous kick-off rallies for **"40 weeks of action"** at State Houses around the country -- including in Boston.

But, why is this Health Care Committee report about the Poor People's Campaign? Because PPC's "national call for moral revival" addresses eliminating poverty "from the bottom up" -- on many, many fronts. That includes health care -- "We demand a universal, single-payer national health care system for everyone...." It also includes the issues of voting, voting rights, housing, racial justice, economic justice, a living wage, the environment, education, an end to militarism, and more -- an issue for every member of the LWW.

So, save the date: Saturday, March 2nd, at 12:00 PM on the State House steps.

LWWUS supports the PPC, and encourages state and local Leagues to do so as well. I got involved with the MA PPC mostly to do voter registration and pledges, both of which they focus on. I also look for opportunities for MA PPC to use its leverage to push for health care reform.

I'm now a member of MA PPC's coordinating committee -- and I need help. Each of us on the committee is responsible for bringing at least 20 people to the rally on March 2, so we can raise at least 1,000 voices as they **take back the mic**.

Can you come to Boston and carry a sign? Can you be a driver (your own car or a van rented by PPC)? Help with logistics? If you can't go to Boston, can

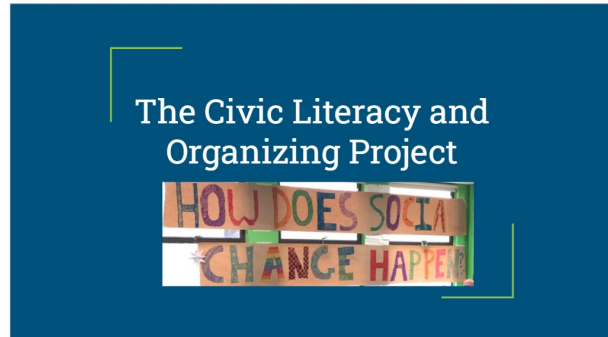
you help by distributing flyers closer to home (for example at Survival Centers or teen groups), creating PSAs, leveraging your social media networks, or donating? Please help to build the 140 million poor and low-wage workers into a powerful voting bloc.

Feel free to copy the above graphic and QR code, made for your Facebook!

Barbara Pearson  
[Email](#) for more information!

## 2023-2024 Civic Action Grants

The LWVA Civic Action Grant Committee and the Steering Committee are excited to announce that the LWVA has granted Amherst Regional Public Schools (ARPS) teacher Tim Austin a grant of \$2000 for The Civic Literacy and Organizing Project, to partner with a hip-hop musician, teacher, activist and author, Tem Blessed.



From the grant application:

"The Civic Literacy and Organizing Project is an existing program with history at Fort River School, as well as connections to schools around the district and state. Centered around the question "How Does Social Change Happen?", the project provides students an opportunity to initiate, develop and run a campaign originating from the change they want to see in the world.

"This program would exist as part of the larger Civic Literacy and Organizing Project, with a goal of providing opportunities for students to create and incorporate original music into the organizing work that they are doing with their class. There is a rich history of music playing an important role in social change movements, both here in the U.S. and abroad. Tem's knowledge of this history, as well as his many years of experience working for social change through his own music, make him the perfect person to help students learn how to communicate their message in powerful ways.

"The work of the overall project aligns closely with the LWVA's Local Program, especially the principles of encouraging widespread and inclusive participation; building the diversity that is reflected in the government; as well as teaching students about the checks and balances among the different parts of government and the role that citizens can play when they work together. The skills that students learn through their participation in the Civic Literacy and Organizing Project - collaboration, communication, coalition building, recruitment, working with the media, and many more - allow them to see the ways in which they can not only participate in social change, but drive social change, even at a young age."

**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.

## Program Planning Agenda

Our Program Planning meeting will take place on **Sunday, January 28th**, at 2:00 PM, in the Appplewood Meeting Room, 1 Spencer Drive, Amherst.

Program Planning is one of the most important meetings in our calendar year. It is a time when members can weigh in on the local and national priorities and talk to each other about issues and actions we can take. More information about individual items will be provided at the meeting.

Our draft agenda includes the following:

### **Local action items for discussion:**

- Affordable housing
- Reparations Study
- Town Charter Review
- CT River
- Ideas from members

### **Survey for National on priorities:**

The purpose of the survey is for local and state Leagues to recommend the programmatic focus for all levels of the League for the upcoming biennium. The survey also provides an opportunity for Leagues to identify other program items for the Board of Directors to consider.

The first question we need to answer is this:

Do we support National's proposed program focus, continuing the Campaign for Making Democracy Work® (which includes Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Redistricting, Money in Politics, and Electoral College)?

The second question is this: Do we have another program proposal for National?

Two have been suggested:

- **Program Planning suggestion from LWVUS Climate Interest Group asks that we say YES!**

Environmental statement proposed by Climate Interest Group. The sentence in red is proposed by Nancy Polan (Northampton). *Climate change threatens our democracy. Climate change is fueling extreme weather — heat, wildfires, flooding, drought causing food shortages, creating refugees, threatening the biosphere, and impacting our economy, health, and national security. **LWV must push harder for immediate reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to preserve civilization. LWV must push harder to protect and preserve forests, farms, and wetlands as part of the global strategy to maximize natural solutions to carbon sequestration and storage; to promote worldwide biodiversity and the rights of nature to exist; to maintain a water cycle***

*that contributes to a healthy climate; and to optimize human health.*

- **Health Care for All asks that we say YES!**

Proposed wording: We support putting “Concurrence at LWWUS Convention: Update the US Privatization position by adding the Vermont position” on the agenda for discussion and voting. Concurring with this LWWVT language at Convention will update the LWWUS position without requiring any outlay of resources by either local Leagues or LWWUS. It will support our DEI efforts by allowing Leagues to support reforms to our health care and other systems that will benefit racially, economically, geographically, and other underserved populations. Affordable access and public control over health care services is a concern for a majority of Americans.

## LWVA Book Sale

The Book Sale Committee will be meeting soon!

A poll will be sent out soon to determine the best time for the committee to meet. The poll will be sent to those who attended the meeting assessing the 2023 Book Sale. If you are new to Book Sale planning and would like to attend this meeting, perhaps to explore what’s involved, please contact [millinge@roanoke.edu](mailto:millinge@roanoke.edu).

For “old hands,” please be thinking about what role(s) you’d like to play and what changes you’d like to see us make.

## CT River

Connecticut River Source to Sea Cleanup

The Connecticut River Conservancy held its annual (27th year) Source to Sea Cleanup on September 23. The results have just been published. The cleanup involved 1,251 volunteers, 132 sponsoring groups, 34.2 tons (68,400 lbs.) of trash; 161 miles were cleaned up. The trash collected included 9,241 beverage containers, 1371 lbs. of scrap metal, 148 tires, and 1,657 NIPS. Further trash totals include: 3,690 plastic bottles, 2,294 aluminum cans, 1,600 glass bottles, 123 electronic devices, 105 automotive items, 598 clothing/footwear, 202 pharmaceuticals, 349 construction materials, 8 mattresses, 216 toys, 2,866 cigarette butts. The Connecticut River and its aquatic residents will be a lot happier with the removal of all these foreign objects! [Connecticut River Cleanup Chronicle, January 2024]

Elizabeth Davis

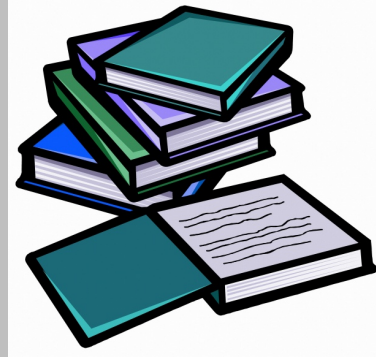
[Email Elizabeth](mailto:Elizabeth@ctriver.org) to get involved in monitoring the CT River

## 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:  
February - *How the Word is Passed*, Clint Smith  
March - *American Character: A History of the Epic Struggle Between Individual Liberty and the Common Good*, Colin Woodard

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



## Fact Checking Election Information

From LWV Andover/North:

The LWV Andover/North is pleased to share with you the link to our recent presentation on tools to use to fact-check election news and advertising.

Mary Robb, a social studies teacher at Andover High School, has been teaching a media literacy class for over 20 years. She distilled her semester curriculum into an hour. Members of your League can learn practical tips for how to fact-check news and images, how to spot your bias and that of reporters, how to spot misinformation and disinformation, and, in general, how to be more informed as we make our own decisions and head to the polls.

This nonpartisan event was hosted by Andover's Memorial Hall Library and filmed by Andover TV. It is great for adults as well as teens. With four elections coming up this year, please watch and share. It is relevant for anyone voting in Massachusetts and across the country!

[Fact Checking 2024 Election News Link](#)

### 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.

[SUBSCRIBE TO e-BULLETIN!](#)

#### STEERING COMMITTEE

Andrea Battle, At-Large  
Rebecca Fricke, Spokesperson & E-Bulletin  
Marla Jamate, Social Media  
Susan Lowery, Membership  
Jessica Ryan, Voter Engagement  
David Shanabrook, Treasurer  
[Click here for email links.](#)

#### 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



---

League of Women Voters Amherst | P.O. Box 2372, Amherst, MA 01004

[Unsubscribe admin@lwwamherst.org](mailto:admin@lwwamherst.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by [bulletin@lwwamherst.org](mailto:bulletin@lwwamherst.org) powered by



Try email marketing for free today!

---