

**LWV - AA
PRESIDENTS'
LUNCHEON**

CELEBRATING OUR 50TH!



MENU

- Hors d'oeuvres and drinks
- Chicken with wild rice
- Spinach salad with cranberries and pecans OR Caesar salad
- Bread
- Birthday cake
- Coffee/tea

PROGRAM

- Welcome by Marge Kennedy
- Reflection by Marilyn Peterson
- Celebration Ode by Marge Kennedy
- Recognition of Presidents

OCTOBER 17, 2009

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS - ACTON AREA PRESIDENTS

Nancy Duggan	2009-2011
Marge Kennedy	2008-2010
Marilyn Peterson	2007-2009
Jo-Ann Berry	2006-2008
Suzanne Shanahan	2005-2007
Paullina Knibbe	2003-2006
Betsy Comstock	2003-2005
Kathy Borofsky	2001-2003
Ruth Kohls	2001-2003
Ann Chang	1999-2001
Jo-Ann Berry	1996-1999
Jean Foley	1994-1996
Pam Collins	1993-1994
Loretta Roscoe	1992-1993
Andi Miller	1990-1992
Bea Perkins	1990-1992
Micki Williams*	1988-1990
Bea Perkins	1986-1988
Nancy Tavernier	1984-1986
Carolyn Gray	1982-1984
Sandy Masson	1981-1082
Pam Resor	1979-1981
Pat White	1977-1979
Kay Marcus	1975-1977
Anne Ridley	1973-1975
Phyllis Walsh	1971-1973
Ann Evans	1969-1971
Joan Gates	1969
Julie Stevens	1967-1969
Bev Tuttle	1967
Edith Stowell	1964-1967
Bea Perkins	1963-1964
Elinor Miller*	1963
Sally Hinkley*	1961-1963
Peg Moody Kinzie*	1959-1961



*deceased

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

EDITH STOWELL - 1964-1967

I thought and thought about what I might write for the record-- something positive? something inspiring? I kept coming up with the same embarrassing memory; let's call it my confession. During my short presidency, a gentleman, well known and long active in town affairs, died. I saw the obit and decided that the LWV should be represented at his funeral. On the appointed day I found myself in the midst of a church full of totally unfamiliar faces; where were all the town officials I expected to see? Slowly I came to the realization that I was either in the wrong church or at the wrong time or possibly both. I slumped down in my seat, trying to be invisible, but soon heard that we had all been invited to pay our respects at the open casket. I walked down the mile-long center aisle quaking in my boots and reluctantly looked down at a face I'd never seen before in my life, offered my apologies to him and left by the nearest door.

JULIE STEVENS - 1967-1969

That was such a long time ago: 1967-69. Our League was not yet ten years old. Beatrice Perkins, Edith Stowell, and Joanne Albright were among my mentors. I enjoyed being president with such a supportive board; they all became my friends for life. We were engaged in flood plain zoning, having studied the issue and coming to consensus before the annual town meeting in March. The question was: should I speak for the League in support of the article to have flood plain zoning in Acton? The gym was packed, and it became apparent that I should speak, but timing was critical. If I remember correctly, the article passed, but not unanimously. The best part of my presidency was my trip to the national league's convention in Chicago. This was my first airplane trip for which the League paid all of my expenses.

Ginny Moulton and Jean Harris took turns staying with my five children after school until my husband Joe could come home from his Raytheon office. The Convention was superb; I was so proud to be a league member! This year is my 50th year as a leaguer, having joined in Concord in 1958.

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

ANN EVANS - 1969-1971

The late '60's and early '70's were tumultuous times in our nation , and they were reflected in the League. I attended the 1970 national convention in Washington, D.C. and was recognized as the youngest delegate there (age 29). It was a week after the Kent State shootings, and there was a sense of growing desperation among those of us opposed to the Vietnam War. About a third of the delegates attended a peace vigil on the steps of the Capital, while back at the convention other delegates introduced motions to censure us. Lucy Benson, national president from Massachusetts, managed to keep order.

Back home in Acton our League was thriving. New members were coming and new issues were being studied and turned into action items. Some of these were controversial and engendered great discussions at the four units throughout town that we ran for information and consensus on each item. These included: recognition of Communist China, lowering the voting age to 18, access to birth control and abortion services, and, on the local level, support for the pilot school.

As a second generation leaguer - my mother gave me my membership for my 21st birthday - I have loved the league, learned so much and made wonderful, life-long friends.

PHYLLIS WALSH - 1971-1973

1971-73 was a time of change for our local league with the ascendancy of women's issues. Our board took the bold step of changing the way we identified members in the membership booklet. We would now be listed by our first and last names vs. the prefix Mrs. with our husband's first and last names. For example, I would be listed as Phyllis Walsh vs. Mrs. William P. Walsh. Looking back it seems comical that this was a major board issue requiring a board vote. To put this in context, the first stand-alone issue of *Ms. Magazine* appeared in January 1972 so we were right in step with the time.

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

A potentially volatile issue for our league was the study of the MA birth control and abortion laws. This was pre Roe v. Wade. We were fortunate to have the leadership of Lynne Salisbury, an Acton board member and later BC&A state chair, who proposed the study at the MA 1971 State Convention before the gavel came down on proposed new state studies. We were able to come to consensus for change on this challenging issue after comprehensive study and respectful member discussions at unit meetings.

Educational alternatives and curriculum coordination dominated local action. The league supported the “pilot” school which was a divisive issue within the town. The McCarthy-Towne Elementary School and school choice within Acton were the results of our lobbying efforts in cooperation with other supportive groups.

The backdrop for all League activities at the time was the turmoil created by the Vietnam War.

KAY MARCUS - 1975-1977

The years my family lived in Acton were, perhaps, the best years of my life; the League of Women Voters was the corner post for me. I will be forever grateful to Phyllis Walsh for urging me to join the Acton League and to all of you who were already involved for inviting me to learn and participate. I will never forget Ann Evans who was then president with a leadership that amazed me. Thank you, thank you all.

After years of stagnation the promise of “Housing for the Elderly” continued to be unfulfilled in 1975. Our League had the opportunity, through a chance meeting with a member of the Acton Board of Appeals, to re-open the subject. We were offered the opportunity to peruse their files for the historical facts. This happened late one night after a Board of Appeals regular meeting with half a dozen of our League members. There were some revelations; the original site in West Acton had not been refused by the State of Massachusetts for this building; the secondary, and most advertised, site across the street from Idyl-

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

wilde Farms, had been refused because it was wetlands. For some reason the original site was lost in the morass of politics.

This information led our League to hold an “Open Forum on Housing for the Elderly” with representatives from the State level as well as local committee folks. This meeting energized some of Acton’s citizens who then ran for public office and in a relatively short time plans were under way to build the housing on the original location.

PAM RESOR - 1979-1981

During the term from 1977 to 1978, much of our attention and effort was centered on the fact the State Department of Environmental Quality (DEQE) found high levels of volatile organics in two of our town wells. This was the beginning of the now three decades of the cleanup process and efforts to hold W.R. Grace accountable. The Acton League in its usual careful and proper procedure, held a forum to inform the residents of the Town and to raise awareness on the issue.

CAROLYN GRAY - 1982-1984

I was the 16th president from 1982-84 and presided over a vibrant league whose membership increased by 10% my first year, 14% the second (we won an award at State Convention). Nevertheless, we struggled with the question of how best to attract and keep women and men whose advocacy options were much broader than they had been 25 years before. We were a pretty active board so these are only the highlights of a very busy two years. In 1983 we held the 11th International Fair which was a great success although I think it may have been the last one as it took so many volunteer hours to pull off. That year both units worked for the passage of the Mass Bottle Bill and sponsored a Bicycle Safety Week in all the schools. We celebrated the 25th silver anniversary of the Acton League in 1984, and Stow observed its 5th year as Acton's partner with a number of activities which celebrated our past as well as inspired our future. We produced a 5th edition of Acton’s Know Your Town, and held a town social for town officials and employees. A major action focus was a citizen education program on the proper disposal of household hazardous waste. We raised \$2800 for the first Hazardous Waste Collection day in May, produced a

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

pamphlet, a library display and educational materials for Grades 4-6, and lobbied to secure funds for its continuation at Town Meeting. We also participated for the first time in the Student Intern program at the High School involving 4 students in voter service, our educational study, our haz waste project and a "Voice for Choice" rally. We spoke in support of many issues at Town meeting and sent 3 representatives to National Convention in Detroit.

I'm looking forward to seeing everybody.

NANCY TAVERNIER - 1984-1986

When I was elected president in June 1984, I remember being so terrified to speak in public that I asked my good friend Sally Gordinier to sit behind me when I addressed the League members just in case I passed out cold! In my final Annual Report for June 1986, I wrote "Being President is probably the single most important activity of personal development that I will ever experience." In between those two events, it's safe to say "I came a long way."

One of my early contributions to the League was my organizational skills, starting with something as simple as the board meeting set-up. One of the board members offered her home for every board meeting and we set it up with long tables to create a corporate board room atmosphere. It kept us on track and on time. We gave up keeping the handwritten financial records in a huge ledger and fearlessly computerized them. However, we still produced the Bulletin on stencils and a mimeograph machine. We learned how to produce Cable TV shows and became certified local access users for various public service events including our own candidate forums.

In my second year, I teamed up with Local Action Vice President Anne Lary and others to help educate and advocate on the issue of badly needed sewers in South Acton, collectively putting in hundreds of hours. Our victory at Town Meeting gained us a lot of visibility and respect for tackling such a tough controversial issue. This was also the year the League was successful in convincing the school committee to put seat

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

belts on the local school buses as a result of the local study led by Micki Williams.

After two years of personal growth and development, it was natural that the next step for me would be elective office. Within six months of retiring as President, I ran for the Acton Board of Selectmen and served the town for 12 years. I credit the League for the skills and leadership training that I received. Many other League members have served the town and the state government as well using League leadership training as a springboard to public service.

BEA PERKINS - 1986-1988

Since it was my 9th year of full-time work, I needed a good deal of help from the Board which now met in the evening. We bought a used copier for our Bulletin production which was originally placed in Nicollette Wellington's house. Our local study issues were a traffic management plan and understanding the Master Plan. There were 2 National issues studied also. At our opening Pot Luck dinner in September, our speaker was Susan Shaer, President of the LWVM. Otherwise, the usual business of the League was conducted.

In 1987, we had 7 members who participated in the Phonothon and received \$315 for our efforts. We also made \$650 at AB Jamboree selling souvenirs. At a Special Town Meeting in Nov., we supported an Article for \$15,000 to study the feasibility of NARA. This was an auspicious time and vote. This year LWVUS lost the Presidential Debates on TV. We complained but the League didn't have the money to compete w/the TV channels. We had a Juried Crafts Fair in front of Blanchard Auditorium, along with food, and fun activities for the kids. It was a lot of work but was well attended. Our Pot Luck dinner meeting had several speakers on "Acton's Traffic Growth--How can we manage it?" We also had a state study concerning the length of the legislative session.

In 1988, I started to work part time. I remember contacting Nashoba RHS, Maynard HS, and ABRHS to ask the Social Studies teacher to chose a student (we had 2 from ABRHS) to attend Harvard Model Congress in March for 4 days at the League's expense. I was a driver & chaperone for 2 days. Perhaps these Junior students may have spoken to us at Annual Meeting as we wanted to know their

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

thoughts about this new program. According to a Beacon article, all four enjoyed this experience and the League still supports this educational activity.

In 1990-92, as Co-President with Andi Miller, I was the public speaker for the League, attended Exec. committee and Board meetings which were planned by Andi. She dealt with the detail and daily job for which a president is responsible. We were partners in these years. It's interesting to note that our League studied Health Care. I'm not sure if we came to consensus but maybe Andi knows this fact. (What "goes around, comes around" as I'm Chair of the Health Care update for our Palm Beach County LWV!)

ANDI MILLER - 1990-1992

1990 was the first year that our local League adopted a team approach to handling the presidency—a successful system that continues to the present.

These were the days when we supplemented our traditional, perennial fundraising efforts with pre-Town Meeting spaghetti suppers, Town Meeting coffee and cookie sales, and the preparation of the old punch card voting machines before Acton Town elections. Then, as now, our League was also energetically involved with program and action at the local, state and national levels. In 1990/91, we sponsored six candidates' forums, held monthly membership meetings that focused on topics from ballot questions to the United Nations, sponsored students at the Harvard Model Congress, assisted at Household Hazardous Waste Day, co-sponsored a meeting with the AAUW on gender differences and women's self esteem, registered voters, and treated ourselves to a pot-luck Sunday brunch for members and their guests. We began a local study of the Acton Public Nursing Service. We also collected data for the LWV Education Fund recycling survey, toured recycling facilities and lobbied for the recycling initiative petition. At the three Town Meetings that Acton held in 1990-91, our League spoke in support of the Affordable Housing Incentives and Overlay District, the Local Historic District, and the School Regionalization articles. We also opposed a citizen's petition for Representative Town Meeting.

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

The 1991-92 years were equally busy. An Opening Meeting panel focusing on the financing and delivery of health care—the then current LWVUS study—was followed by information meetings and regional panel discussions; these culminated in morning and evening local consensus meetings to complete phase I of the study. We also participated in the State Fiscal Policy Study. Sally Wood reported on the status of Family Life and AIDS education in Acton Schools in preparation for reviewing our Family Life Education positions. We continued to promote recycling by financing a brochure that was distributed throughout Acton and sponsoring a panel discussion on the status of recycling bills in MA. Member Peggy Mikkola participated in Acton's Recycling Task Force and kept us informed. Our Stow coordinator, Kathy Borofsky, presided over local action there and organized Stow Candidates' Night. Maynard membership grew from one to nineteen and our Maynard contingent began work on a Know Your Town publication. We ended the year with 105 members from Acton, Stow, Maynard, and Boxborough.

PAM COLLINS - 1993-1994

Loretta and I had a dynamic League year! With the help of an engaged group of League members, we initiated a series of educational public forums on the town financing in Acton. We enacted a survey of school age child care programs. We updated the Acton KYT as well as mentoring the Maynard members as they did their first KYT. We participated in many state activities to include Lobby Day, State Council and the School Choice Study. One of our most exciting initiatives was to sponsor a regional League meeting with our US Congressman Marty Meehan. It was well attended and held at the Westford Regency. We presented Congressman Meehan with the results of the National League Health Care Study in which the LWV was asking for affordable care for all citizens. Interesting that we are still talking about health care in 2009!

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

JO-ANN BERRY - 1996-1999

The years 1996-1999 were focused on reinvigorating and generating wider interest in the LWV. We started by reorganization of board with planning, etc. in 96-97, implementation in 97-98 for two years, then consensus and needed changes in bylaws. The current steering committee system is what has evolved since then, but with the same structure. In those years we tried to make sure our scope for programs included the towns other than Acton. I think over that time, many of us came to realize that without a critical mass of members from the other towns, it would not happen.

In 1997-1998 we reviewed all the local positions from what were the Acton, Acton-Stow, Stow and Littleton Leagues and revised them into a coherent set of positions for the Acton Area LWV. Betsy Comstock led this herculean effort. The resulting document is still in use.

One of the events that we co-sponsored in 1996-1997 was a forum at ABRHS: "Respecting Sexual Diversity in our Schools" with the AB Human Rights Council and ABRHS Safe Schools Team. My most vivid memory of the evening was Charlotte Sagoff's story of her efforts in the 1920's or '30's to "save" a homosexual co-worker.

ANN CHANG - 1996-1999

What I remember about being president of LWV-AA is money. When I took over, there was a controversy about where the dues went. It soon became clear that we were "pre-spending" and did not have a definitive fiscal year. I made the Bulletin self-supporting through the Finance Drive. Our League had the best Bulletin around: it was the year Suzanne Shanahan became editor.

We worked with the Acton Town Moderator to get an outline of regulations for slide presentations and attendance of presenters at a pre-Town Meeting meeting. Relations between the League and the Selectmen were strained, and getting back to a calm working relationship was time consuming

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

At State Council I noted that what our League was doing was as good as the Scharfman Prize winners. The following year, Jo-Ann Berry entered her Mock Town Meeting project and of course, we won!

Every month I received a huge envelope of varied colored papers from the State League. Each project/study/event had its own color. The number and colors reminded me of the Cherry Sheets from the State budgets. I spent a lot of time reaching out to members in our area towns, with Stow being the most successful.

PAULINA KNIBBE - 2003-2006

Betsy Comstock and Paullina Knibbe served as co-chairs of the LWV Steering Committee. In 2003, the LWV – AA re-organized itself to better suit the needs of its members. The LWV adopted a steering committee structure where each member of the steering committee had a clear area of responsibility. Much of the ongoing work of the League was organized and run by one of the standing committees. During that time, participation in league activities soared: 73 of the 109 members participated in League activities in one way or another. In addition to the traditional activities of candidates' nights and observer reports, the League organized two public forums: one on the Patriot Act, and one on the use of Integrated Pest Management to reduce use of pesticides. The League also held three 'Conversations' on topics of current interest: the Patriot Act, Globalization, and Same Sex Marriage. At the end of the year, Betsy and Paullina attended the national LWV convention in Washington D.C.

In 2004, participation in League events remained high (110 members, 82 participants). The League continued to modify its organizational structure to suit the needs of the members by breaking the Program and Action committee into 4 policy teams: Education, Environment, Government and Social Policy. The LWV held 5 Candidates Nights in 3 towns, produced 2 very popular public forums: (Peeling the Onion: Understanding State Education Funding and Water, Water, Everywhere: Let's Keep It Safe to Drink), participated in the MA State Study on Voter Systems, read and discussed the 9/11 Commission Report, and worked with the

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

Acton Public Schools to institute a curriculum unit on town government that includes a simulated Town Meeting in each of the Acton grade schools. In addition, we began a very popular monthly gathering called 'First Tuesdays' where league members meet at a local coffee shop for coffee and conversation.

Paullina Knibbe and Suzanne Shanahan served as co-chairs. The League had 107 members (15 new members) and 81 participated in at least one LWV event. The organization structure continued to evolve with the creation of town specific units. The chairs of those units are also members of the steering committee. The League organized 5 candidates' nights in 3 towns and held a public forum on trash disposal issues in Boxborough. The LWV investigated tools for managing municipal growth and created a 'know your town' presentation which was offered as a free class through Community Education.

SUZANNE SHANAHAN - 2005-2007

In 2005 - 2006, I was co-chair with Paullina Knibbe. The Acton Know Your Town was reworked into a Power Point presentation, allowing LWV-AA to present it to different organizations and make changes as the Town changes. There were Conversations on Smart Growth and Domestic Violence, as well as a forum on trash disposal alternatives.

In 2006 - 2007, I was co-chair with Jo-Ann Berry. In the Fall, LWV-AA sponsored a forum on the Open Meeting Law. After a decision to combine polling locations into one location in Acton, we monitored the November election and presented a report to the Board of Selectmen on the results. We moved to an electronic Bulletin. After receiving a generous donation, LWV-AA started what is now the Jen Haan Memorial Speaker Series.

JO-ANN BERRY - 2006-2007

In the years 2006-08, a real highlight was our Election Day 2006 voting observation when the Board of Selectmen decided to put all voting pre-

WHAT I REMEMBER

HIGHLIGHTS OF MY TERM AS PRESIDENT

cincts at the junior high school. We were ready to gather the facts on the experience for voters inside and outside. While the voting experience itself was fine, traffic and parking were problematic. The information we gathered that day, with many League members participating, help the Selectmen reverse their decision. That was League work at its best.

MARILYN PETERSON - 2007-2009

In reviewing my two years as co-chair, two things stand out:

- ◇ The expanding role the League plays in representing the needs of the voters. In response to the dissatisfaction of attendees at Annual Meeting in 2008, the League undertook a review of best practices in surrounding towns, conducted a survey of ways to improve Town Meeting at the October Special Town Meeting, and made recommendations for changes, many of which were implemented with positive results at Annual Town Meeting in 2009. The project remains ongoing.
- ◇ The number of League members serving on elected and appointed Town boards. It's impressive to see so many of our members serving the community with the investment of time and energy and yet still remain active members of the League.



Board of Directors National League of Women Voters
Chicago Convention, February 1920

Top row: left to right: Miss Katherine Ludington, Hartford, Conn. Director 1st region; Mrs. Richard Edwards, Peru, Indiana, treasurer; Miss Della Dorth, Nashville, Tenn., director 3rd region; Mrs. George Gellhorn, St. Louis, MO. Vice chairman and director 6th region; Mrs. James Paige, Minneapolis, Minn., director 5th region; Mrs. Solon Jacobs, Birmingham, Ala., secretary. Lower row: left to right: Mrs. Maud Wood Park, Boston, President 1920-24; Mrs. Grace Wilbur Trout, Chicago, chairman hostess committee; Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, New York, honorary chairman.



THE ACTION LEAGUE CELEBRATES

We've been around for Fifty Years,
Acknowledge now with robust cheers
The many worthy things we've done,
Including having lots of fun!

Today we recognize with thanks,
You who've served within our ranks.
Your leadership both strong and vocal
On issues national and local.

Educating voters yearly,
Hammering out positions clearly,
Reaching consensus after study,
Frequenting Town Meetings, at the ready!

Membership is kept aware
Of ways the League can dare and care
By advocating rights, not wrongs;
Yet never, ever partisan!

Such doggerel isn't meant to be
The full or thorough history
Amassed in other documents,
This celebrates Past Presidents!

MAK, October 2009

THE ACTION LEAGUE CELEBRATES



Presidents from 1960 - 1970

Bea Perkins, Julie Stevens, and Ann Evans



Presidents from 1970 - 1980

Phyllis Walsh, Ann Ridley, Kay Marcus, Ann Evans, and Pam Resor

THE ACTON LEAGUE CELEBRATES



Presidents from 1980 - 1990

Bea Perkins, Sandy Masson, Carolyn Gray, and Nancy Tavernier



Presidents from 1990 - 2000

Bea Perkins, Pam Collins, Andi Miller, Jo-Ann Berry, and Loretta Roscoe

THE ACTON LEAGUE CELEBRATES



Presidents from 2000 - 2009

Ann Chang, Suzanne Shanahan, Marilyn Peterson, Marge Kennedy, Jo-Ann Berry, Ruth Kohls, Betsy Comstock, and Paulina Knibbe



Nancy Tavernier and Bea Perkins

THE ACTON LEAGUE CELEBRATES



Kay Marcus and Phyllis Walsh



Paulina Knibbe, Betsy Comstock, and Jo-Ann Berry

THE ACTON LEAGUE CELEBRATES



Ruth Kohls and Pam Collins



Nancy Tavernier and Jean Schoch

THE ACTON LEAGUE CELEBRATES



Betsy Comstock



Phyllis Walsh



Ruth Kohls



Marilyn Peterson

THE ACTION LEAGUE CELEBRATES



Kay Marcus and Pam Reson



Marge Kennedy

THE ACTON LEAGUE CELEBRATES



Mary Ann Ashton



Jean Schoch



Connie Huber and Loretta Roscoe

THE ACTION LEAGUE CELEBRATES



Bea Perkins