



Lower Connecticut Valley Newsletter

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February 2016

CALENDAR

Feb 1	Mon	6:45	PM	Great Decisions
Feb 3	Wed	1 to 3	PM	Afternoon Book Group
Feb 4	Thu	7	PM	Evening Bridge
Feb 9	Tue	1	PM	Mah Jongg
Feb 10	Wed	6:45	PM	General Meeting
Feb 16	Tue	6:45	PM	Great Decisions
Feb 18	Thu			Cultural Trip
Feb 23	Tue	6:45	PM	Evening Book Group

GENERAL MEETING

Date: Wednesday February 10
Place: Acton Library Old Saybrook
Time: **6:45** PM

Our speaker will be Melissa Josefiak who has served as the Director of Essex Historical Society since 2014. She holds an MA in Public History from Central Connecticut State University and a BA in English and History from Washington College, Maryland. Her topic will be:

“An Architectural Tour of Essex Village”

In 2015, Essex Historical Society revived its popular walking tours after a six year hiatus. EHS Director Melissa Josefiak will lead a virtual “walking” tour of Essex Village as seen through its architecture. Enjoy an easy stroll down the seaport’s 18th century streets learning about the major industries, structures and personalities that shaped the area. The tour captures the rich maritime past of early “Potapaug,” its working waterfront and ship-building prominence in the early 19th century as well as its development as a beautiful visitor destination of today.

! BOOK AUTHORS' LUNCHEON !

APRIL 2, 11:30-3, at Saybrook Point Inn

Ann Nyberg, our long-serving channel 8 news anchor has written *Slices of Life*, a memoir. Her current work is a book about Katherine Hepburn; Ann is a trustee of the Kate, Katherine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center.

Lisa Reisman, a "recovered lawyer," New Haven Register journalist and survivor of a life-threatening brain tumor, has written her memoir, *10 Months, 10 Years, 2 Hours*. Revealing her challenging recovery to be a triathlete.

Two outstanding women, our tempting and fun silent and auction items, while enjoying a wonderful lunch at the Saybrook Point Inn. Don't miss it! Tickets are still only \$50 and registrations need to be in by March 24th. You will receive registration forms by our email blast soon and also will be available on our web site and at our monthly meetings.

As always, the branch is selling ads for our program book as well as collecting auction items. There will be information on how you can help with either of these at the February meeting and forms on the web and blast or you can call Sara K. or Mary M.

Plan to come!! Invite friends! This will be a wonderful event and our main fundraiser to support scholarships and grants.

AFTERNOON BOOK GROUP

The next meeting of the Afternoon Book Club will be on Wednesday, February 3rd from 1-3pm at the Acton Library in Old Saybrook. The book for discussion is *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr. All are welcome no need to RSVP.

EVENING BOOK GROUP

Thanks to Dot B. for hosting and leading our very interesting January discussion of "The Light Between Oceans".

The evening book group will discuss "Circling the Sun" by Paula McLain on Tuesday, February 23 at 6:45 pm in the Acton Library. Please email or call Mary Jane P. if you plan to attend.

EVENING BRIDGE

Evening bridge will be held February 4 at Carolyn Cohen's home. Please let me know if you would like to come. Marcia N.

MAH JONGG

Mah Jongg is being moved to Tuesdays to see if we can accommodate more players. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 9th at 1:00 pm at the home of Sharon H. Please let her know if you are able to attend. Also, if you are interested in learning to play Mah Jongg, please feel free to attend and watch. We are always looking for interested players.

GREAT DECISIONS

The first Great Decisions meeting will be Monday, February 1st, and we will discuss 'Middle East Alliances'. Our second meeting will be Tuesday, February 16th, discussing 'The Rise of ISIS'.

We will be meeting at an earlier time, 6:45pm, since the Acton Library in Old Saybrook, where we meet for all 8 sessions, would like us to leave when the library closes at 8:30pm.

Please send any questions to Donna.

GOURMET GROUP

Our brunch was held on January 31st. Our next evening event will be in March, date to be announced. If you are interested in joining the Gourmet group, please let Sharon H. know.

CULTURAL TRIPS

February 18th -- Thursday

**The Harriet Beecher Stowe House and
The Mark Twain House**

Our February Trip needs **3 more people** to hold the tours & price. We plan to leave The Park & Ride area at Exit 65 in Westbrook at 9:00 a.m. We have carpools.

We drive to the Mark Twain House in Hartford and our first guided tour is **The Harriet Beecher Stowe House** on the same property. This tour will be followed by a short break and visit to the Twain Museum Shop.

The second tour is a one hour guided tour of **The Mark Twain House**.

Cost, if we have 10 people: Stowe House -Senior - \$12; under 65, \$14. Twain House - Seniors and Adults - \$12.

Lunch: The Pond House Restaurant at Elizabeth Park.

Please contact Pat L.

if you haven't reserved a spot, by **February 10, 2016** if you wish to go on this trip.

March 10th – Thursday

**One Hour Tour of the State Capitol and
Legislative Office Building**

Join us for the **11:15 am tour** on March 10th - sponsored by the League of Women Voters.

There is no charge. After the tour, we will have the opportunity to visit the Museum of CT History (walking distance from the Legislative Office Building) and have lunch either in the cafeteria on the premises...or stop at a restaurant on the way home. And we will plan to carpool.

Tour groups are limited in number. I have reserved **10 places** for this particular time slot. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested in going. Should be an interesting day!

Thank you,
Dot

AFTERNOON BRIDGE

Please email Bonnie for date and location.

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Our current educational grant recipients, Amanda, Megan, and Alexis, submitted their grades for the fall semester and have now received the second half of their award which is \$1000 each. Their grades are stellar and they are taking a full course load in the spring semester. The students are deeply appreciative of our financial assistance, as expressed in their thank you notes.

Briana, an educational grant recipient in 2014-2015, expects to earn a BS in Art Education from Southern Connecticut State University in May and has applied to graduate school at Lesley University in Cambridge, MA where she anticipates earning an MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling with Specialization in Art Therapy. Upon request, we have written her a recommendation for which she is grateful. She thanks all of us for our support and invites us to check out her new website showcasing her artwork <http://brianaparedes.wix.com/finearts>.

The Scholarship Committee met in January to begin preparing for the next cycle of educational grants, covering academic year 2016-2017. The committee is also planning to sponsor one or two students to the National Conference for College Women Student Leaders (NCCWSL) in 2016. This year's conference will be held on June 2-4 at the University of Maryland, as in the past.

The Scholarship Committee welcomes your suggestions and invites you to contact any one of us: Nancy F., Suzanne T., Carolyn C., Barbara H., Mary M., Rose P..

Rose P.
Chair

BRANCH WEBSITE

lowerctvalley-ct.aauw.net

During this past month, our website had 221 visitors, of these, 90% were new.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy February- Valentine's Day, President's Day, eagle watches and maybe some snow! We have lots on our calendar, so do come out and join us.

February is also the month that we appoint our nominating committee so they have the time to fill the slate for next year. Mary Mazur, Olga Saubermann and Carolyn Cohen have agreed to be the committee, and their names will be up for confirmation at the meeting. If anyone else wishes to volunteer, please let me know.

We are a vibrant and busy branch, but many of the branches and clubs that have disappeared in recent years have also been active, but with no one willing to assume leadership roles they have died. Please consider a post for the coming year. Many hands make light work, so if you think you travel too often, or are nervous about the amount of time it takes, think about sharing the post with a colleague. Most roles do not take too much time, and they are well defined.

On March 23, please put the date on your calendar now, we will be hosting a talk with the Essex Library entitled **Reach Out to Connect: Empower Afghan Women and Girls**.

The speaker, Hally Siddons, is the past president of the Canadian Federation of University Women, Ottawa, and instrumental in developing a project to support education and a school for women in Afghanistan. She is coming to us after attending the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York, where she has also presented. She will also be presenting at the Graduate Women International conference in Capetown in August. Please encourage friends to also come and meet Hally. I will send out her bio and a flyer separately.

Now a little experiment. Who reads the newsletter all the way to the end? Email me and say I did it! if you got this far, hopefully my inbox will overflow with 99 replies!

Dawn

Hally Siddons,
A Brief Biography



Hally started her career as a musician. A strong proponent of music education in the schools, she developed music programmes in Canada, England and the United States, consistently producing award winning concert bands and orchestras. Although retired she retains her passion for the arts and is presently working on a local board to establish a municipal concert hall in Ottawa.

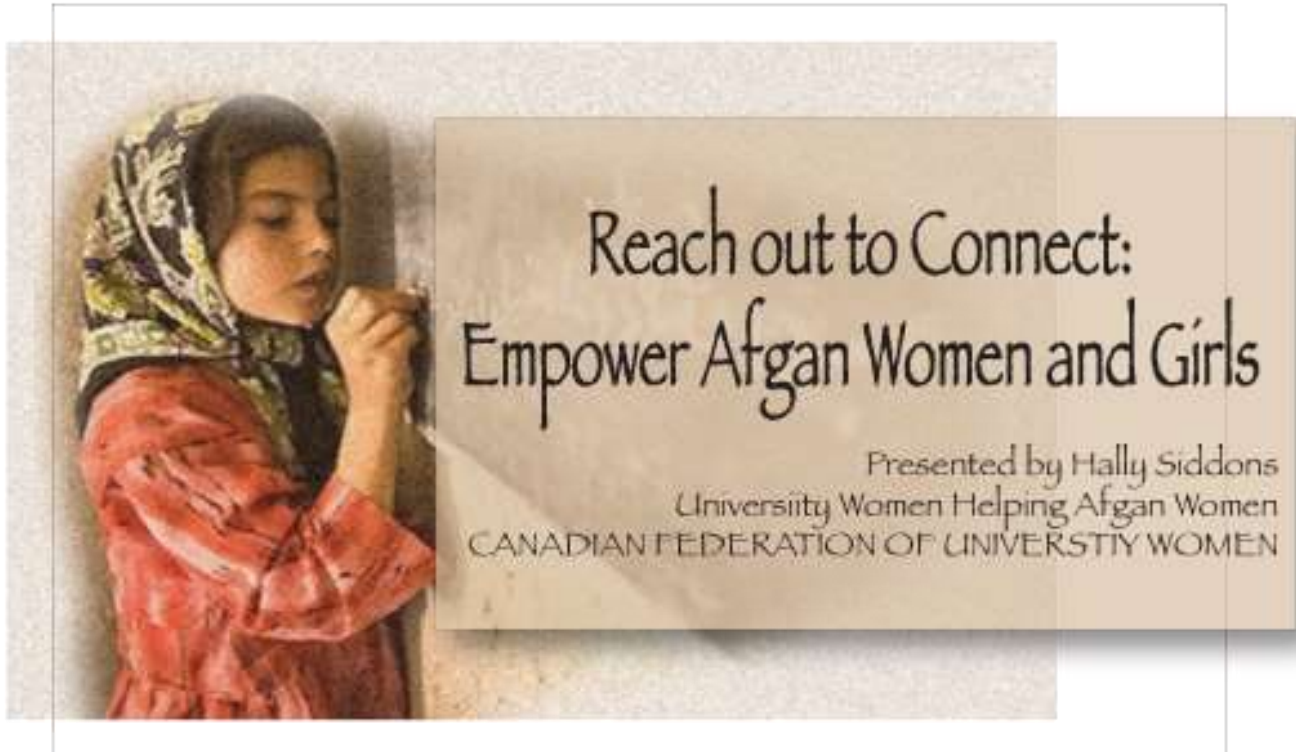
Retirement brought time to study international issues, always an interest. In 2010 after meeting Dr. Sima Samar, Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and learning more of the plight of Afghan women, Hally decided there were things she and others could do to help. She initiated and continues to lead an active study and project group in her Canadian Federation of University Women-Ottawa Club and has identified further interested members nationally. Continuing to learn themselves, the members raise awareness in their community, nationally and internationally, advocate for Afghan women and girls, and support them as they can including raising funds for scholarships at the Gawharshad Institute of Higher

Education in Kabul, founded by Dr. Samar. They believe education, and especially education for women, is the significant key to Afghanistan's future.

A past president of the 500 member CFUW Ottawa club, Hally has added Afghan women to the agenda at AGMs from Newfoundland to British Columbia, at the Women Graduates-USA AGM in Utah, presented a seminar paper and led a workshop at the International Federation of University Women Triennial Conference in Istanbul, worked to help develop an Afghan affiliate within this highly respected organization (now Graduate Women International, GWI) and led a Parallel Session at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

Dr. Samar reminds us the job in Afghanistan is not done. While remarkable progress has been made within, there is an ongoing need for knowledgeable voices to speak for Afghan women and girls outside the country. Hally is most grateful for the work of the international community to date but urges it to stay the course as Afghans, and especially Afghan women, continue to strive with infinite courage and determination to help themselves and their families.

January 2016



It can roll off your tongue so easily – bringing peace and stability to the fragile country of Afghanistan just won't happen, but there are contingents of Afghan women who with incredible courage and determination can and are making a difference in this war weary country. This growing cohort are desperate for an education, to have a salaried job, to have influence in their family, to have a say in government and at peace tables, and to hold up at least some of the Afghan sky.

Hally Siddons will tell us how members of the Canadian Federation of University Women have worked to understand the plight of these women, to advocate for them, and to provide support in Afghanistan and in Ottawa. An Afghan proverb says “drop by drop a river is made.” And this is how Afghan women and girls will gain their human rights and take an equal place in civil society.

Date March 23, 2016

Time: 7:00

Place: Essex Library

Please RSVP 860-767-1560

Sponsored by AAUW and the Essex Library
