Dear Members and Friends of WWHP —

It’s that time of year again. As March approaches, our memberships in WWHP will be ending. Time to renew! For our friends, consider becoming members and supporting the work of WWHP. Since WWHP is an all-volunteer organization, membership support is a major source of our income. For that reason, the Steering Committee has found it necessary to raise the fee schedule to keep up with the times and the needs of WWHP, but — we have kept the increase modest. There are two ways to renew/join. Either fill in the form at the back of this newsletter and send it in with your check or renew/join online at www.wwhp.org/support-wwhp. (And consider upping your membership category. I certainly am.)

Since 1994, WWHP has been a driving force in the cultural and educational life of Central Massachusetts. We are proud of our many efforts:

- The Oral History Project, which collects women’s stories, the more than 300 recordings and transcripts of which have the honor to be archived in the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America of Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University;
- The Lending Library, a collection of books available for loan to WWHP members;
- The one-woman play, Yours for Humanity—Abby (co-authored by Carolyn Howe, Ph.D. and Karen Board Moran, M.Ed. and performed by the remarkable Lynne McKenney Lydick);
- Events, such as the annual Women in Print (celebrating local women writers), the annual women’s history-themed bus trip, Abby’s Birthday Party, and many other events, including, of course, the 2000 production of Angels and Infidels by Louisa Burns-Bisogno, a dramatization of the 1850 first National Woman’s Rights Convention in Worcester;
- Mechanics Hall Women’s Portraits—WWHP started the movement to have portraits of distinguished women of Central Massachusetts take their proper place in the collection of portraits in the Great Hall.

Your membership in WWHP will provide you a role in the future accomplishments of the organization. For instance, we are in the process of planning a commemoration in 2020 of the centennial celebration of the passage of the 19th Amendment which enabled women (or as some will point out “white women”) to vote.

Recent events have, in the view of some, challenged the status of women in our society. So, be part of this historic moment and part of the future. Run to the computer and go to www.wwhp.org/support-wwhp to renew/join by Paypal or credit card. Or, if you wish, use the membership form at the end of this newsletter. Thank you!

We remember our past ... to better shape our future.

See you at the future!

Yours,

Ann Marie Shea, Ph.D.
President
WWHP is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable and educational organization incorporated in 1995 with a vision “to celebrate and document women’s contributions to the history, social fabric, and culture of Worcester and beyond.” Its mission is to

- Raise awareness of the rich history of women in the Worcester area;
- Create national recognition of Worcester’s role in the history of the women’s rights movement;
- Advance the ideals put forth in the 1850 convention that there should be “equality before the law, without distinction of sex or color,” or ethnicity.
An annual event is the observance of the anniversary of the birth of Worcester’s Abby Kelley Foster on January 15, 1811. This year it was observed on Sunday, January 15, from 1-3pm, at the YWCA. It was truly celebratory honoring Abby Kelley Foster and being the kick-off of planning for 2020, the 100th anniversary of the passing of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote.

President Ann Marie Shea welcomed all and spoke about the history and legacy of Abby Kelley Foster. Lynne McKenney Lydick, who portrays Abby in Yours for Humanity—Abby, spoke about the right to vote.

Sharing in this day were representatives from the YWCA, Abby’s House, Worcester Historical Museum, Women in Action, and Girl Scouts along with members and friends of Worcester Women’s History Project. Signup sheets were filled with volunteer hands and hearts to help create the 100th anniversary celebration of the passing of the 19th Amendment for 2020. Future meetings will be on Tuesday, February 21, from 5-7pm, and Wednesday, March 15, from 5-7pm, both at Worcester Public Library’s Saxe Room. One wonders what the attendees at Worcester’s 1850 first National Woman’s Rights Convention would think of all that has happened.

After hearing Abby’s message that all people have a civic responsibility and a duty to be engaged and involved in the world around them, Lori Haddad, GED teacher at the Community Corrections Center in Fitchburg MA, invited Abby to speak to her students on February 6, 2017. (See Ms. Haddad’s comment in next column.)

How Abby Kelley Turned Seneca Falls on Its Ear Five Years Before the Seneca Falls Woman’s Rights Convention

by Judith Wellman, Professor Emerita, State University of New York at Oswego, at the Women’s Rights National Historical Park in celebration of the M’Clintock House Grand Opening. (The M’Clintock House was the site of the writing of the Declaration of Sentiments.)

“Thanks to Abby Kelley, people in central and western New York had a clear chance, five years before the woman’s rights convention, to think about just how far women’s rights ought to go. Mobilization of abolitionist networks would bring dozens of supporters to the Seneca Falls women’s rights convention in July 1848. As early as 1843, however, the stage for the Seneca Falls convention had been set, the supporting cast picked, and the first tentative rehearsals had begun.”

See http://www.wwhp.org/Resources/akfoster.html for the entire presentation.

ABBY AT THE CORRECTIONS CENTER:
Performance of Yours for Humanity—Abby on February 6, 2017

Lori Haddad, the GED teacher at the Community Corrections Center in Fitchburg, wrote:

“On Monday, February 6, I was pleased to host and present Lynne McKenney Lydick in her portrayal of the great Worcester abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster to our students at Fitchburg Community Corrections Center. In a word, WOW. And for so many reasons: I had known Lynne for many years as a wonderful theatre talent, and had been aware that she performed a one-woman show about Mrs. Foster, but had not had the experience of seeing it until now, and oh--what an experience! The history of Abby that comes to life with drama, humor and passion through Lynne’s performance is nothing short of stellar.

“Twenty-five adult students of various ages and backgrounds sat in rapt attention during the nearly 40-minute characterization, most of whom had never seen live theatre before. To follow up, Lynne offered Q & A time from the audience and she was met with many insightful and intelligent questions about Abby. Lynne’s background knowledge surely impressed us all.

“Yours for Humanity—Abby brings so many important revelations to light: awareness of struggle and service in a specific historical context, along with learning of Worcester’s history and a wonderful woman’s devotion to causes to benefit all of humanity.”

Ms. Haddad said, “One student opened up during our class after the play. He expressed a reverence for the work of people like Abby Kelley Foster, then shared about having experienced racism firsthand while shopping in a store, and then waiting outside the place for friends. He described being watched in the store, and while standing outside seeing a woman hold her pocketbook closer, and even gathering up a child. This gentleman dropped his gaze in a sad realization that racism still exists in these subtle but hurtful forms.”
ELIZABETH CADY STANTON AND THE DECLARATION OF RIGHTS AND SENTIMENTS

by Margaret Watson

In 1848 Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott organized the Seneca Falls Convention in New York for the purpose of discussing social, civil, and religious conditions, and the rights of women. It was the first convention held for such discussion. From this meeting emerged a declaration establishing the goals of the women’s movement to gain equal rights as citizens of the United States and as human beings.

The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments as written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton at that time was closely modeled on the framework of the Declaration of Independence which was ratified on July 4, 1776, proclaiming the independence of the thirteen American colonies from Great Britain. Thomas Jefferson is usually given credit as the main author of this document although John Adams and Benjamin Franklin added their observations, and the Continental Congress made additional changes before its ratification.

The Stanton and the Jefferson Declarations are both organized through the use of a tight, logical argument structure called a categorical syllogism, consisting of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion that validly follows both.

Jefferson’s major premise, as given in the first two paragraphs of the Declaration of Independence, states that the purpose of government is to protect men’s natural rights and that government is established through the consent of the governed. Natural rights are here defined as “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Since all men are equal, it is argued, they all have these natural rights and so are wholly deserving of government protection. If a government fails to protect, it should be altered, or abolished and replaced.

Stanton’s major premise is also stated in the first two paragraphs of the Declaration of Sentiments, and the wording itself is very similar, if not identical in many respects to that of the earlier document, but there are two important differences here. First, the assertion that “all men and women are created equal” replaces the expression “all men are created equal” of the original. Second, the intention of the Stanton document is not to “alter or abolish” a tyrannical government, but rather “to refuse allegiance” to it. The aim is not to seek independence from the government but to insist upon equal status so that women may enjoy their natural rights.

The minor premise in the Declaration of Independence specifically charges the government of Great Britain, the king in particular, as having violated the natural rights of the citizens in the colonies. A long list of twenty-six violations follows, identifying the abuses that had occurred under the British rule. Many of these deal with enactment of unjust laws, failure to initiate needed laws, and measures used to circumvent existing laws. In this way, Jefferson uses empirical evidence to prove the case that Great Britain had failed to protect the natural rights of its citizens in their American colonies which were denied representation in the British parliament creating the laws governing them.

Following Jefferson’s example, Stanton lists sixteen abusive laws and practices that violated women’s natural rights in the United States. Especially, she emphasizes that these laws are enacted without the consent of the governed since women were denied the franchise. Because of this denial, women were oppressed without recourse. If married, they were “civily dead.” If they were divorced, the children’s guardianship was given to their fathers. Economically, women were disadvantaged since men monopolized the employment fields and denied women access to the education required for the practices of medicine, law, and the ministry. Moreover, Stanton continued, the moral codes for men and women differ, and therefore women are judged differently from men. Finally, Stanton indicated (in modern terminology) that women are damaged psychologically since they are treated as second-class citizens and therefore have feelings of low self-worth.

The conclusion to the Declaration of Independence is given in the final paragraph: the United States are, and ought to be, free from the British Crown and have the right to form their own government. Stanton’s conclusion is also brief but logically derived: that women be given “immediate admission to the rights and privileges which belong to them as United States citizens.” The Declaration of Independence proved to be an excellent resource for Stanton’s declaration because its principles should apply to both men and women, all being citizens, and because of the veneration given to this document in the country’s history.

The Declaration of Independence was signed by fifty-six men who pledged their “lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor” to defend the historic declaration and its principles. The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments was signed by sixty-eight women and thirty-two men, one hundred in all, who pledged themselves to use every endeavor to fight for equal rights for women. (Continued on p7.)
14th Annual

Women in Print 2017

Join us for an evening with 3 local authors!

Remembering: A Holocaust Survivor Shares Her Life
by Thea Aschkenase

Bait and Switch (A Jessica Minton Mystery Book 1)
by Sharon Healy-Yang

“Remembering: A Holocaust Survivor Shares Her Life” by Thea Aschkenase

“This is the heartfelt account of Thea Aschkenase, who survived the death camps and went on to make loving contributions to her family, her community and her new country. Thea chronicles her happy childhood days in Munich, her teenage years in Italy hiding from the Nazis, her internment at Auschwitz, her voyage to find a home in Israel and her coming to the USA to raise her family, eventually becoming a proud US citizen.” *

Thea Aschkenase is a 2007 graduate of Worcester State University having earned a degree in Urban Studies.

Bait and Switch (A Jessica Minton Mystery Book 1)
by Sharon Healy-Yang

“I’m a huge fan of films and books created during the 1930s-50s, with their blend of sharp wit, humor, and dark suspense. That passion inspired me to write Bait and Switch, a mystery/romance set in 1943. My novel features a sharp, witty, imaginative female lead who’s ripe for a little romance, even if it is mixed in with espionage, deception, and murder.” *

Sharon Healy-Yang, Ph.D. is a Professor of English at Worcester State University.

Sharing Voices: Getting from There to Here
by Stacy Amaral

“The people represented in Sharing Voices are men and women, very young to very old, black, white, Latino and Asian – all with varying degrees of education, careers and interests. Amaral said the book could be a great tool to teach people not only about their past, but others’ pasts and experiences. Perhaps, through a bit of understanding, the stories could even bring people closer together.” *

March 29
Wednesday
5:30-7:30 p.m.

Worcester Public Library
Saxe Room
3 Salem Square
Worcester, MA 01608

www.wwhp.org

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

* Descriptions of authors are from websites.
December Event a Great Success
by Maureen Ryan Doyle

An energetic and enthusiastic audience gathered on December 7 for the presentation, *Women Unheard…No Longer! Hearing the Voices of Deaf Women in the Community*. The talk, which was given by Judy Freedman Fask at the Worcester Public Library, was part of the Worcester Women’s Oral History Project’s annual event. Ms. Betty Fiipokowski was the interpreter for the lecture. Those in attendance represented a diverse mix of individuals, including members of the Deaf community, colleagues and former students of Ms. Freedman Fask, members of the greater Worcester community as well as members of the Worcester Women’s History Project.

In her address Ms. Freedman Fask focused on the complex process to record and present the lives of Deaf women in their own words and in their own language of American Sign Language. She stressed the importance of recording authentic stories of Deaf women so that they can be shared with others, and included as part of the fabric of our community. A lively question and answer session took place at the conclusion of the formal presentation.

Judy Freedman Fask is a recognized leader in the field of community and civic engagement, especially through Community Based Learning programming. She has been honored with numerous awards for her roles in the community as leader, advocate, and ally. She earned a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Springfield College and a Master’s Degree in Education of the Deaf from Smith College. Ms. Freedman Fask is a member of the Worcester Women’s Oral History Project’s subcommittee and a former member of the Steering Committee of WWHP.

Judy Freedman Fask and Dr. Lisa Kramer co-authored a book that was published in January, 2017. It is entitled *Creative Collaborations through Inclusive Theatre and Community Based Learning: Students in Transition*.

Seeking Stories of Women in the Military
by Maureen Ryan Doyle

WWOHHP Co-Chairpersons, Maureen Ryan Doyle and Charlene L. Martin, co-authors of *Voices of Worcester Women* and *In Her Shoes*, are interested in obtaining the oral histories of women who currently serve or who have served in the military. In addition, they are also seeking the stories of women whose spouses were deployed while they remained on the homefront.

While WWOHP has collected over 300 oral histories from women in Central Massachusetts, few of those stories are from women who served their country. Have you served in the military or do you know a woman who has? Would you be willing to share your story? Please consider participating in this project. The interview would take about one hour and would be arranged at your convenience.

If you have any questions, please contact either Ms. Martin, chmartin@townisp.com, or Ms. Ryan Doyle, Mryandoyle@aol.com.

JUNE BUS TRIP to Boston’s Gardner Museum, Christian Science Church and Tea at Boston Public Library.

Speakers’ Bureau Progress Report
by Margaret Watson & Barbara Mercier

The Speakers’ Bureau has enjoyed some success over the past two years (2015-2016). Most of our engagements have come by invitation from women’s groups and senior centers. The flyer now is out of date, and a new flyer needs to be generated for the years 2017-2018.

The process for streamlining communication among the speakers, host groups, and the Worcester Women’s History Project Office is currently being examined by Maureen Daley, who will make recommendation to the Steering Committee for clarity and refinement.

Upcoming 2017 Performances of Yours for Humanity—Abby


**March 7** – Becker College, Worcester

**March 8** – Greendale People’s Church, Worcester

**March 21** at 7pm for the Auburn Historical Society at the Lorraine Gleick Nordgren Senior Center. Free & Open to the Public

**April 3** – Women’s Club Angell Brook Community, W. Boylston

**October 22** – Ulster Historical Society, NY
O Tempora! O Mores!
Personal Reflections on the Challenges of Our Unique Age
by Ann Marie Shea

In the past few months we have been bombarded with reports of marches, demonstrations, and even lawsuits, as the world reels in response to a whirlwind of activity from the new administration in Washington. Many executive orders, cabinet appointments, and press releases trouble those of us who are committed, in the words of the WWHP mission statement, to equality before the law, without distinction of sex or color or ethnicity. What would Abby do?

Surely when we see violations of the principles enunciated in the 1850 first National Woman’s Rights Convention, we are obliged to bear witness, at the very least. Furthermore, our goals include “the pursuit of equality and justice,” and “the discovery of connections between past and present, for the benefit of the future.” When some citizens are treated more equally than others (to paraphrase George Orwell), whether that inequality is based on gender, country of origin, race, religion or income disparity, we march and we speak out in fulfillment of our stated goals, not out of political bitterness.

Our local heroine, abolitionist Abby Kelley Foster and her husband, Stephen Foster, actually broke the law in sheltering refugees from slavery and risked the punishment of the law. Those of us disappointed by defeat of the first female presidential candidate merely risk being called “poor losers.” But we cannot pretend we don’t see the injustices creeping into our public life. Many of us took to the streets on January 21, 2017, raising our voices in protest against recent violations of basic American values. We are angry and vigilant not because a woman lost the election. Rather, we are responding to outrageous measures that threaten the very mission and goals of this nation generally and this organization specifically. And that’s not “political”; it’s responsible citizenship.

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Another goal of WWHP is “the development of strong relationships with women’s groups, historical organizations, and the community.” As a new member of the League of Women Voters, I have found reaffirmation in assisting at recent naturalization ceremonies at Mechanics Hall. There newly-minted citizens are surrounded by portraits of Abby Kelley Foster, Dorothea Dix, Clara Barton, and Lucy Stone (portraits commissioned by WWHP a few years ago). Those women endured a lot of opposition and bullying as they liberated, healed, and inspired in their day. May their bravery and commitment to equality support us in these challenging times.

See you in the future. Let’s do what we can to make it a good one.
Abby's Birthday event at the YWCA on January 15th raised $80.00 to start a fund for celebration of the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, August 26, 1920. Volunteers and ideas are needed over the coming months as WWHP collaborates with other organizations to mark this momentous occasion. It was seventy-two years after the 1848 Declaration of Sentiments in Seneca Falls and seventy years after the first National Woman's Rights Convention held right here in Worcester in 1850 that women were finally granted the right to vote!

Pam Bobay, Chair of the WWHP Events Committee, has already identified volunteers to set up a Facebook page, do promotional writing, and possibly organize an art show. It's been suggested to hold a logo/project-naming contest in the public schools to promote and raise awareness of the significance of 2020 in the women's movement. WWHP has begun collaborations with Worcester League of Women Voters, Abby's House, Central MA YWCA, Women in Action, Worcester Historical Museum and Worcester Cultural Coalition. The City of Worcester has granted permission for Advisory Committee on the Status of Women, Office on Disabilities, Office on Human Rights, and Election Commission to participate. WWHP will have a work/study intern to assist with the project, but will need many volunteers to implement plans over the next three years.

Your participation, suggestions and ideas are welcome. Please contact the WWHP office wwhp.office@gmail.com to volunteer or to donate to the fund for 2020. The following national sites provide some ideas:

National Collaborative for Women's History Sites:  

National Woman Suffrage Centennial  
http://2020projectwomen.org/about/

Facebook:19th Amendment Centennial Celebrations  
https://www.facebook.com/19thcentennialcelebrations/

All those who are interested are welcome to attend a 2020 meeting on Wednesday, March 15, from 5-7pm, at the Worcester Public Library’s Saxe Room.

Info: wwhp.office@gmail.com
CALENDAR - March is National Women’s History Month  (Answer to HISTORY QUIZ on p2)

WWHP event:
March 21, Tuesday, 7pm, Yours for Humanity-Abby for the Auburn Historical Society at the Lorraine Gleick Nordgren Senior Center. Free & Open to the Public
March 29, Wednesday, 5:30pm, 14th Annual WOMEN IN PRINT, at Worcester Public Library —See page 5.

OTHERS:
March 7, Tuesday, 5-7pm, International Women’s Day, at YWCA of Central MA, Salem Square, Worcester. The Paintbrushes 4 Justice: Sisters in the Street Mural will be featured. This mobile mural was created by participants in the YWCA’s Young Women’s Leadership Program. Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey will provide a keynote address.
March 15, Wednesday, 5:30pm, Project 2020 at Worcester Public Library. All welcome to create and hear plans for the centennial celebration of the passing of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote.
March 25, Saturday, 2-3pm, at Shrewsbury Public Library. Clara Barton, a one-woman show by actress Lynne McKinney Lydick. Sponsored by Shrewsbury Public Library and Arts on the Green—Shrewsbury.


April 13, Thursday, 7:30am—4:15pm - 8th Annual Worcester Women’s Leadership Conference, 8:30am-4:15pm, DCU Center. The Worcester Women’s Leadership Conference inspires women to achieve their full potential by offering a mix of inspirational keynotes, workshops on leadership and professional development, and networking. 508.753.2924

To renew or join WWHP, you may use PayPal or credit card online with the form at http://www.wwhp.org/support-wwhp, or use this form.

Support Level
☐ Abby Kelleyite $500  ☐ Reformer $100-$499  ☐ Activist $60  ☐ Supporter $45
☐ Family membership $60  ☐ Student $25

Enclosed is my check for $_______________ payable to WWHP.

Mail to  Worcester Women’s History Project
30 Elm Street, Worcester, MA 01609.

My employer will match my gift. Company ________________________________

Please make my donation in memory of ________________________________

NAME ________________________________

ADDRESS ________________________________

CITY __________________ STATE ____ ZIP __________

EMAIL __________________ PHONE ________

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