

For Your Calendar

Monday April 13 ZQV Meeting—Ludlow Country Club *

Anne Gobi, Director of Rural Affairs will be the presenter. **Jess Petrie-Cummings** of Farmer at the Door will be an Entrepreneur guest.

Saturday, May 2 District-wide Spring Retreat Hampden Inn, Wells, Maine All members and guests are invited.

www.zontadistrict1.org/springretreat/

May 11 ZQV Meeting—Ludlow Country Club *

June 8 PotLuck Dinner Gathering - final meet before summer break - details TBA

July 11-14 Zonta International Convention in Vancouver British Columbia, Canada www.zontaconvention.com Registration is open for INPERSON and VIRTUAL attendance. Check it out!

September 12 Golf Tournament fundraiser

* RSVP required Dinner is \$30 - 35. Please see a board member if help needed.

Club Members and Friends:

On March 9th we celebrated our annual Women Who Make a Difference awards. The remarks from the awardees reminded us that sisterhood is powerful, community is everything, and even the smallest encouraging gestures can have a positive impact. The money we donated in their honor to organizations they chose support education, fight domestic and sexual violence, and the arts, all of which protect and enrich the lives of women and girls in Western and Central MA. I remain proud of this organization and what it can do.

Our next meeting in April will feature Anne Gobi, first director of Rural Affairs in Massachusetts who will speak to us about the challenges facing women and girls in rural areas in our state. We will also have entrepreneur Jess Petrie-Cummings from Farmer at the Door who will be selling items produced by growers in Central Massachusetts.

Our May calendar raffle is coming up. This is an important fundraiser for us so that we can support those in our area that hold up the values of our mission. Please buy a calendar for yourself and maybe for your friends and family. Each day is an opportunity to win some great prizes.

Also, keep our May meeting in mind if you or someone you know is considering joining Zonta. Our own Dr. Mary Ann Rubis will be talking about the work of Zonta International and this is always a great opportunity to learn more about what we do locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.



Cynthia Melcher, President

Board Meeting Highlights

Nominations for 2026-2028 Board and Nomination Committee. The Board is proud to announce a slate of officers for the next biennium. If voted at the April meeting, they will take the leadership helm starting June 1st. See Page 2

May Calendar Raffle Fundraiser – We have collected over 31 gifts valued at \$25 + and are offering an opportunity to members, families and friends to join in on the fun! Ticket sales end April 30.

District 1 Spring Retreat May 2nd We are excited that Cherie's husband Charlie will be one of the presenters!

ZI Convention Voting 2026 Historically, voting for candidates has taken place during International Conventions. Last year, however, the International Board recommended that elections be conducted online prior to Convention to allow for advanced training so the incoming Board is fully prepared to begin its work at the start of the new biennium. **Elections are occurring online in April.** The remainder of voting, such as for bylaws changes and biennial goals, will occur in-person at the Vancouver Convention. **Official Slate of Candidates for 2026-2028**

Cynd Melcher

Advocacy Alert

Controlling and abusive litigation happens in Massachusetts. All too often, even after a victim has left the person causing them harm, abusive former partners use the legal system to maintain power and control over the victim by continuously taking them to court. This leaves survivors physically unsafe and economically and emotionally drained. Please read the fact sheet. Learn more about how controlling litigation can be stopped now. www.ZontaQV.org/advocacy.



Controlling and abusive litigation happens in Massachusetts. All too often, even after a victim has left the person causing them harm, abusive former partners use the legal system to maintain power and control over the victim by continuously taking them to court. This leaves survivors physically unsafe and economically and emotionally drained.

What is controlling or abusive litigation?

Controlling and abusive litigation is when someone uses the court system to exert power and control over a victim. Tactics of controlling and abusive litigation include taking the survivor to court often and repeatedly, even when the survivor has already won the case and the court has ruled in their favor.

Through controlling and abusive litigation, the person causing harm seeks to control, harass, intimidate, coerce, and impoverish the survivor.

H.1594/S.1205 will help judges stop controlling and abusive litigation

- ✓ Courts have options to recognize and respond to controlling and abusive litigation
- ✓ Survivors can request an Order Restraining Controlling and Abusive Litigation*
- ✓ Survivors can request financial compensation for costs of being repeatedly dragged into court, such as (but not limited to) court, transportation and other expenses.

Zonta Quaboag Valley Leadership Nominees for 2026 - 2028

The Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley is proud to announce the several members - new and seasoned - who have stepped up to lead us in the next biennium. **Formal voting will take place at the April 13th meeting.** If you have additional nominee recommendations, contact President Cyd for instructions.

Candidates for Board of Directors

The Board of Directors sets the strategic direction and governance of the club, ensuring alignment with Zonta International's mission. The elected officers meet regularly to guide the club's activities.

President: **Karen Keough-Huff**

Vice President: **Connie Mahoney**

Treasurer: **Susan Seaver**

Secretary: **Cherie Braun**

Directors

Debra Wood:

Elizabeth Reeves

Patricia Hallberg

Cynthia Melcher, Past President

Candidates for Nomination Committee

The Zonta Club Nominating Committee is an independent body of three, elected by members, responsible for identifying, recruiting, and vetting candidates for club board positions. They prepare the slate of officers and directors for the next biennium, inform nominees of their duties, and secure consent to serve, ensuring leadership continuity.

Mary Ann Rubis

Patricia Pupek

Mary Knight

Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley
District I, Area II,
Charter 1317 of Zonta
International
Club Officers 2025—2026

President: Cynthia Melcher
 Vice President: Karen Keough-Huff
 Treasurer: Joanne Turner-Chiacchia
 Pam Albertson
 Secretary: Mary Knight
 Directors: Patricia Pupek
 Andreea Rotaru

Website: www.zontaqv.org

Committee Chairs/ Members 2025—2026

Finance/Audit: Pam Albertson,
 Membership: Mary Knight, Cherie Braun
 Visibility: Mary Knight, Andreea Rotaru
 Advocacy—Zonta Says No, Climate Action: Karen Keough-Huff
 Service—Hands-on projects, Grants: Mary Ann Rubis, Liz Reeves
 Scholarships: Patricia Pupek
 Poinsettia Fundraiser: Liz Reeves,
 Golf Fundraiser: Karen Keough-Huff, Debra Wood,
 Spring Fundraiser: TBD
 Nominating: Joanne Turner-Chiacchia, Patricia Pupek

ZONTA BOG NEWSLETTER

Info @ zontaqv.org Zonta of Quaboag Valley ~ PO Box 1034, Belchertown, MA 01007

March 9, 2026 Women Making a Difference - Ludlow CC

In honor of International Women's Day (IWD) 2026, the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley honored four community leaders at its Women Making a Difference Award dinner on March 9th at the Ludlow Country Club. Each was presented with a certificate, a yellow rose and \$500 to gift an organization of their choice that is uplifting women and or girls. The honorees and their nonprofit pick:

Samantha Hamilton—A Queens Narrative

Jacqueline Velez—The Care Center

Marianne Winters—Women of Color Network

Darlene Elias—Holyoke Arts League

Visit www.ZontaQV.org to read the bios of these deserving women.

We also recognized 2025 Honoree **Elizabeth Wills-O'Gilvie**, who was unable to attend last year's event, and inducted our newest member, **Deborah Alm**.





[] \$40 Registration (meeting room rental, lunch, coffee/tea, water). Registration is a 2 for 1 price for members who bring a non-Zontian guest. Payment can be made ONLINE or, if you would rather pay by check, send check payable to Zonta International District 1 by mail to c/o Janice Severance, Treasurer, 14 South Spring St., Concord, NH 03301

[] Need a place to stay overnight? This is a busy time in Wells, but we have some options. Contact info@ZontaDistrict1.org if you need help.

[Check out the details on the Retreat website](#)

Spring In-Person Retreat 2026

[Retreat Registration link](#)

Please join us on May 2nd at the Hampton Inn in Wells Maine from 9am to 3:30pm for a day of team building, membership building, lively discussions and important information to take back to your clubs!

Morning with Charlie Brown: Think – Play - Grow: Building Stronger, Smarter Zonta Teams
Play enhances learning. We learn the most when we are having fun. This facilitated team-building session will rely on a series of thought-provoking activities to challenge each individual participant, to increase awareness of the interaction and collaboration of the participants in the group, and increase the synergy and unity of the group as a whole.

Afternoon: Focus on life transitions and what Zonta can offer at every stage

We often talk about membership, but how are we really meeting the needs of our current members? This afternoon we will make a dive deep into what Zontians are looking for from their club at different stages of their professional lives. We will look at how we are best harnessing our advocacy talents and energies aligning with our mission. All of this leads to excitement, sharing with colleagues, and brings in new members.

It will be important for every club to be represented at the retreat – clubs might want to consider helping to offset the cost for two or more members.

Please register, submit payment, today.

Women in Rural Massachusetts: Opportunities and Challenges

Western MA ~ On April 13th at the Ludlow Country Club Zonta will celebrate Earth Day with a look at gender equity in rural MA and an online, local, farm to door delivery service connecting Quaboag Valley to the freshest farm products, bakeries & specialty food shops.



Anne Gobi became Massachusetts's first Director of Rural Affairs in January of 2023. Beginning her political life in the town of Spencer in 1998, she was first elected to the state House in an October 2001 special election. While a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, Gobi worked on multiple committees; including the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. She served as co-chair of the Committee on Agriculture. In 2014, Gobi was elected to the state Senate. In the Senate, Gobi served as the Senate Co-chair of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture and Joint Committee on Higher Education. She will be speaking to us on Women in Rural Massachusetts, opportunities and challenges.



Also joining us is **Farmer At The Door** entrepreneur **Jessica Petrie-Cummings** of Petrie Family Farm, Brimfield MA. Her online, local, farm to door delivery service connects Quaboag Valley to the freshest farm products, bakeries & specialty food shops. Jess will share her story and have items for sale before and after the program.

The public is invited to join us on April 13th.

RSVP by April 7, 2026 at info@ZontaQV.org.

5:30 Reception, 6:00 Dinner followed by the Program.

Pay at the door for the buffet (\$30) or [pay online](#) (\$35).

Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley

Empowering women through service and advocacy

Calendar Fundraiser \$25 Donation

May 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Total value of gifts in this fundraiser total \$ 1,460 Sale of chances ends on 4/30 at 10pm.			Thank you for your support!		1 \$55 Penzey's Spices and REI Gift Cards	2 2 \$25 Walmart Gift Cards
3 2 \$25 Dunkin Gift Cards	4 \$25 Center Square Grill Card	5 \$25 16 Acres Garden Center	6 \$50 Big Y Gift Card	7 \$30 Tractor Supply Gift Card	8 \$25 Center Square Gift Card	9 \$55 Sur La Table and Penzy's Gift Cards
10 Mother's Day Gifts*	11 \$50 Monsoon Roastery Card	12 \$60 Penzy's & Thirsty Mind Gift Cards	13 \$50 Big Y Gift Card	14 \$30 Barnes & Noble Gift Card	15 \$25 Randall's Gift Card	16 \$50 Talbot's Gift Card
17 \$50 Delaney Grill Gift Card	18 \$25 Walmart Gift Card	19 \$25 Mario Café Gift Card	20 \$50 Big Y Gift Card	21 \$30 Ace Hardware Gift Card	22 \$25 Home Depot Gift Card	23 \$50 Talbot's Gift Card
24 2 \$25 LL Bean Gift Cards	25 \$30 Starbuck's Gift Card	26 \$30 Panera Gift Card	27 \$50 Big Y Gift Card	28 \$30 Barnes & Noble Gift Card	29 \$40 Dick's Gift Card	30 \$50 Grapevine Grill Gift Card
31 2 \$25 Big Y Gift Cards	Special thanks to sponsors and all members of the Quaboag Valley club. Your generosity is critical to our success in empowering women and girls.			* Mother's Day gifts valued at \$250 + Includes Spring plant, Lottery Cards. \$100 Fort/Student Prince, Penzy's sampler, Corsella Butcheria takeout dinner		

Drawings will be on each day of the month in May. Winning names will be re-entered into the remaining drawings. Proceeds from the sale of this fundraiser will be used to support the work of Zonta, locally and globally.

Please fill out information below and return it with your \$25 donation to a Zonta member **or mail with check** to Zonta of Quaboag Valley, P.O. 1034 Belchertown MA 01007 **or register and pay online at** <https://zontaqv.square.site/>

Rules: Starting May 1st, an announcement of the winner for that day will be posted by 6pm on www.facebook.com/ZontaQuaboagValley and at www.ZontaQV.org/calendar.

The winner will be notified by phone or email to arrange delivery. The winner's name will go back into the pot for the next day's drawing.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Phone # _____ Email: _____

Seller: _____