

For Your Calendar

Monday, March 9

Women Making a Difference event and induction of Debra Alm @ Ludlow Country Club 5:30 Social 6:00 Dinner *

March 9-19

Join Zonta at Commission on the Status of Women

You can attend many of the workshops virtually, for free. Hear from others around the world working on issues we care about.

April 13 ZQV Meeting—
Ludlow Country Club *

Saturday, May 2

District-wide Spring Retreat Hampden Inn, Wells, Maine Hotel rooms available for Friday and Saturday.

May 11 ZQV Meeting—

Ludlow Country Club *
June 8 ZQV Meeting—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!

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

Club Members and Friends:

This year's Period Project was a terrific success. On February 21st 600 menstrual kits were assembled by some amazing volunteers at the Venture Way Collaborative. It's a great feeling to know that we were able to make this bit of difference for women and girls experiencing period poverty in our region.

March 9 we will be celebrating our 2026 Women Who Make a Difference. This promises to be a wonderful event showcasing some of the people in our community who provide invaluable support to women and girls. Please RSVP by March 2nd if you would like to attend.

The application deadline for our Young Women In Leadership Award is March 15. A local recipient will receive a \$2000 award from the Quaboag Valley Club. The top District 1 recipient will then be eligible for an International award of \$5,000. If you know someone with demonstrated leadership skills and a commitment to public service, please encourage them to apply.

We are also looking forward to our April meeting when we will hear from Massachusetts Director on Rural Affairs Anne Gobi, and we will host entrepreneur Jess Petrie-Cummings from Farmer at the Door who will have some products for sale.



Cynthia Melcher, President

Board Meeting Highlights

Scholarship - See Page 6.

Last call on applications for the Zonta Young Women in Leadership Scholarship.

March Women Making A Difference - See Page 5. Please share - we want to get as many guests as possible registered by March 2nd.

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 - We need to collect 31 gifts valued at \$25 + by March 25 -in time to get calendar ready for April newsletter. Every \$25 sale will be pure profit, so it is up to members to get the word out and sell, sell, sell in April.




You may have heard about the SAVE Act during the State of the Union.

If passed, the legislation would fundamentally change federal election procedures. To start, every voter would be required to update their registration IN PERSON to show proof of citizenship (e.g., a passport or birth certificate - and legal name change document if name doesn't match). **And a lot more changes that negatively impact large groups, especially women and minorities.**

Get the facts, plan to act. MORE INFO at www.ZontaQV.org/advocacy.

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

February 22, 2026 Period Project Assembly and Meeting



600 feminine hygiene kits were assembled for women and girls in need by some amazing volunteers at the Venture Way Collaborative on Saturday February 21st. Special thanks to VWC, Jazzercise Amherst Fitness, Girls Inc. of the Valley, Palmer Public Library, Soul Shine Consignment Boutique, Making Waves Belchertown, The Polished Room, Blush Med Spa, Chamelions Salon, Wilbraham Tanning, Wilbraham Monson Academy and the Skin Studio Wilbraham for their support in collecting product donations. We also received heart-warming messages and \$445 cash to purchase needed products thanks to the publicity we got from local publications.

Amherst Survival Center was the only non-profit who showed up to get the kits, so they left with hundreds of kits and a trunk-load of additional feminine products. Some of our members and volunteers will deliver the rest of the kits to the Care Center, Gray's House, local food banks, police departments, etc.

Additional pictures from the event are posted at www.ZontaQV.org/period.

Business Meeting February 21, 2026 11:30am at the Venture Way Collaborative in Hadley,

Present: Mary Knight, Debbie Wood, Karen Keough-Huff, Mary Ann Rubis, Pattie Hallberg, Chris Keough-Huff, Kris Goold, Trish Pupek, Connie Mahoney

Absent: Cyd Melcher, Liz Reeves, Joanne Turner-Chiacchia, Marge Cavanaugh, Deb Alm, Andreea Rotaru, Colleen Moynihan, Cherie Braun, Crystal Rondeau, Sue Seaver, Pam Albertson,

Guests: Several guests joined us to help with the Period Project assembly, and many stayed for the meeting and luncheon. Included were: **Dana Carnegie (Girl Souts), Gina Rotas (Northampton Club), Lucy Amato (Gina), Sarah Volkman (Liz), Gianna Allentuck and Anne Milette (Connie), Caro Lambert from our prime donor Jazzercise of Amherst.** Help is needed in identifying the others whose names were not captured.

Vice President Karen called the meeting to order.

Minutes and Treasurers Report will be sent out for an email vote

March Women Making A Difference on March 9th will be a great opportunity to invite guests! The honorees are: **Jacqueline Velez, Samantha Hamilton, Marianne Winters, and Darlene Elias.**

Their bios and photos are at www.ZontaQV.org.

Details: March 9 at the Ludlow Country Club. RSVP by March 2, 2025 at info@ZontaQV.org.

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

Pay at the door for the buffet (\$30 for table of 8; \$35 individual) or [pay online](http://www.zontaqv.org). **www.zontaqv.org**

Continued

Deadline for May Calendar Raffle gifts. We need 31 gifts in time to get calendar ready for the April newsletter. So far, we have gift cards for Center Square Grill, Sixteen Acres Garden Center, Big Y Gift Cards for every Wednesday, Fort/Student Prince, Talbots, Walmart, and Barnes & Noble. We need something special for Mother's Day and at least 15 more gifts \$25 +. Send Mary Knight a description of the item and value by March 20th please. Then in April, we sell chances for the May drawings Every \$25 sale will be pure profit, so it is up to members to get the word out and sell, sell, sell. Start making a list.

April 13 meeting at the Ludlow CC – Anne Gobi, Director of Rural Affairs (Anne.Gobi3@mass.gov), will be the presenter. Jess Petrie-Cummings of Farmer at the Door (Jess@farmeratthedoors.com) will be Entrepreneur guest.

May 11 Meeting at Ludlow CC – We typically focus on International Service Projects and the upcoming International Convention in May. The Board will reach out to Foundation Ambassador Mary Ann Rubis for suggestions on this program. We will also hand out Service Awards at this meeting. Mary will reach out to see if the Service Committee needs any promotion support. And, we will swear in the new board at this meeting – the last formal one until September.

Zonta Young Women in Leadership Scholarship – Trish, Connie, Liz and Mary personally contacted every high school in the area to formally update our database for this scholarship. The forms and details at ZontaQV.org/scholarships were shared with each contact, along with the 3/15 submission. The committee will select the best candidate, and the club will present her with \$2000. The winner may be eligible for an additional \$5000 from Zonta International, if chosen to be advanced by Zonta District 1.

Following the formal meeting, members and guests shared information of interest, including:

·Girl Scout Cookie time – Dana shared that selling cookies is a lot more than earning money to fund their Girl Scouting goals. Through “learning by earning,” Girl Scouting aims to empower girls through the development of five essential skills: goal setting, money management, people skills, decision making, and business ethics. Even if you don't want to buy cookies, please listen to their pitch. Give them encouragement and maybe a small donation.

·Union Capital – Connie shared this great resource and can be contacted for more information. Using a Union Capital Rewards App, social meetings and leadership trainings, the movement called "Union Capital" aims to transform social capital into opportunity by incentivizing community engagement.

·“Thank You for Inspiring”, founded by Gianna, is a global movement of inspiration and appreciation in celebration of good humans, good hearts, and good moments. Check out the website: www.thankyouforinspiring.org. She can answer any questions.

·Jazzercise of Amherst – Caro proudly shared that this great exercise program would welcome all of us to come try out a session. They have supported the Period Project for several years and this year contributed a record number of products!

·Karen invited us to a reading she has on March 27 from 7:00 to 8:30 at the Holyoke media. It will be the Writing Sisters performing a program called Hear Us Roar- A celebration of women in writing.

Respectfully submitted by Mary Knight, Secretary

Women Making A Difference

On March 9th at the Ludlow Country Club we celebrate International Women's Day. The public is invited to join us in honoring four women who are making a difference in our communities.

RSVP by March 2, 2026 at info@ZontaQV.org.

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

Pay at the door for the buffet (\$30 for table of 8; \$35 individual) or [pay online](#).

Each year in March, the global community celebrates International Women's Day (IWD), recognizing women for their achievements regardless of national, ethnic, linguistic, economic or political divisions. The Zonta International community also celebrates Zonta Rose Day, a time to reflect and give tribute to the women who have empowered us.

In this spirit, the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley proudly announces its Women Making a Difference Award dinner on March 9th at the Ludlow Country Club. The theme of this year's International Women's celebration "Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls." calls for inclusive legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, and addressing structural barriers to justice and opportunity for women and girls. Our honorees for 2026 are champions for this theme.



Samantha Hamilton

As Director of Coalition Building and Community Engagement at the Public Health Institute of Western Mass and co-founder of A Queen's Narrative, she leverages over 22 years of experience to advance health equity, address environmental and social disparities, and



Jacqueline Velez

With over sixteen years of experience, this Lead Organizer for Holyoke's Neighbor to Neighbor and Community Project Coordinator for Live Well Springfield drives campaigns for criminal justice reform, climate action, and housing justice.



Marianne Winters

With a career dedicated to ending domestic violence and sexual assault, she has held executive leadership roles at Jane Doe, Inc. and the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts prior to her nearly 15-year tenure as Executive Director of Safe Passage.



Darlene Elias

A social worker, writer, and activist with over 33 years of advocacy in child welfare, and community organizing; a cofounder of the Writing Sisters collective; and a board member of Alianza and the Strawdog Writers Guild.

2026

ZONTA YOUNG WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP



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Recognizing young women for their commitment to volunteerism, volunteer leadership achievements and dedication to empowering women worldwide



Applications for Leadership Award due by March 15th

Western MA ~ Applications for the 2026 Young Women in Leadership Award are available from the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley. A local recipient will receive a \$2000 award, funded by the Zonta Club of the Quaboag Valley and will be entered for the District YW award. The District recipient will be eligible for a \$5,000 award from Zonta International.

Applicants must be between the ages of 16 and 19 on April 1st studying at a secondary school, college or university in a Zonta District.

According to Zonta Club Scholarship Chair Patricia Pupek, the goal of the Leadership Award is to encourage young women to participate in leadership positions by recognizing a young woman's commitment to the volunteer sector, evidence of volunteer leadership achievements and dedication to building a better world for women in girls. "Applicants are asked to reflect on their voluntary commitment to their school and to their community and the problems limiting the empowerment of women in their own country and worldwide. The Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award looks to the young women of today to be the leaders of tomorrow." notes Pupek.

Applications can be obtained from high school guidance counselors or on its website: ZontaQV.org/scholarships and must be submitted electronically with supporting documentation no later than March 15th.

Questions can be directed to info@zontaqv.org.