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Amherst's politically active women speak tonight at Hampshire College

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AMHERST - The celebration of Amherst's 250th anniversary continues with a panel discussion tonight among prominent women residents of what brought them to the area and why they became politically active.

The discussion, titled "Amherst Women on the Move: Then and Now, 1959-2000," will be held from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at in the East Lecture Hall of Franklin Patterson Hall at Hampshire College.The women will also share how their involvement has changed, how they have changed and how Amherst has changed.

State Rep. Ellen Story, D-Amherst, will moderate the discussion, which includes Lucy Wilson Benson, former national president of the League of Women Voters; Robin Dizard, former professor of English at Keene State College; Lorna M. Peterson, executive director of Five Colleges Inc., who helped organize the event; and Karen Lederer, academic advisor for the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Women's Studies program.

"I am very excited to do this," said Lederer, who has lived in Amherst since 1977 and worked at UMass since 1986.

"We represent some of the different generations of local activists. We were involved in the history of Amherst at different points in time, and I look forward to contrasting this."

The panelists also will invite the audience to tell their stories. Admission is free.

Other related events

· Saturday, 8 p.m. - "The Beauty Stone," at Amherst Regional High School. Call 256-0678 for information.

· Sunday, 2 p.m. - "Slavery in Colonial Amherst," a lecture at Hope Community Church. Free admission.

· March 19, 6 to 7:30 p.m. - the David Peck Todd Birthday Celebration, 67 Amity St. Reservations required. Call 256-0678 for details.

· March 27, 7:30 p.m. - "Exploring the Battlefields of World War I, Amherst Women Who Were There" Amherst Woman's Club, Triangle Street.

For more information, visit **www.amherst250.org**.

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