

# In League...

MIT  
WOMEN'S  
LEAGUE

A quarterly newsletter

April – June 2011

## Celebrating women in public service on the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day



**Kendra Johnson, PSC Fellow in Ecuador. Funding from the MIT Women's League supports women helping communities around the globe.**

What do youth development in the Yukon River region of Alaska, collaborative design of common spaces for domestic violence survivors in Boston and computer training to fight human trafficking in Cambodia's capitol of Phnom Penh have in common? These student projects, along with many more, have all been generously funded by one of the Institute's treasures: the MIT Women's League.

Since 1913, the League has pursued its goal to "humanize a technical institute" by encouraging students to engage in serving their communities near and far. Although the organization already had a rich history of local outreach—such as spearheading volunteer opportunities like conversational English classes—their collaboration with the Public Service Center (PSC) since 1999 has enabled them to support MIT women engaging with women's issues around the world.

"MIT students are full of purpose and the local and global programs selected by the PSC are impressive," says Ellen Stordy, a member of the Women's League executive board. The League has supported eight women students addressing women's issues through the Rebecca M. Vest Fellowship, established in 2005. More recently, they have also launched the Elizabeth W. Johnson Fellowship for students, both women and men, working on environmental issues. Both Public Service Fellowship programs are named in honor of former first ladies of MIT.

Some students viewed their service experiences as a confirmation of academic direction. Graduate student Alyssa Bryson traveled to Colombia last summer to support a consortium of women providing advocacy for those affected by the country's armed conflict. "Hearing their personal stories ... was incredible.

They face their challenges with such strength and perseverance that I was truly left in awe," she shared in response to working alongside the Colombian women. "The experience solidified my lifelong goal to create sustainable change for marginalized communities, and for this I am extremely grateful."

The Rebecca M. Vest Fellowship has also been pivotal in shaping the paths of women early on in their time at MIT. During her freshman year, alumna Kendra Johnson '09 was funded by the PSC to develop and implement a potable water system in Ecuador's Amazonian communities. The Women's League supported Kendra for a return trip to Ecuador, during which she helped villagers become more self-sufficient in meeting their water needs. Johnson, currently studying medicine in California, now runs Sacha Yaku, a non-profit that supports the community of Santa Ana to help not just themselves but also neighboring villages with their community water systems. Visit its website at [www.sachayaku.org](http://www.sachayaku.org).

These stories and more are only a snapshot of the broad impact the Women's League has had on the MIT community and its global activities. The staff and board provide a wide range of ways to get involved, as portrayed by board member Suzanne Collins: "If you're looking for fun or more serious opportunities, brief encounters or monthly meetings, you can find it all with the MIT Women's League."

To find out more about the Public Service Center visit [web.mit.edu/mitpsc](http://web.mit.edu/mitpsc).

Emily Lo  
*Public Service Center graduate assistant*



## Meet Our Scholars...

The MIT Furniture Exchange is a wonderful campus resource for newcomers, students from four local universities, as well as MIT employees and affiliates. Customers discover reasonably priced household goods donated from the wider community. These sales provide the monies to support scholarships for three undergraduate women at MIT.

We would like to introduce:

- **Danielle F. Piskorz**, class of 2011, a Physics major from New York, enjoys the MIT Figure Skating Club. She participated in the 2009–10 Cambridge-MIT Exchange and has an interest in teaching.
- **Jennifer Hope**, class of 2012, a Chemistry major from Mississippi, finds time for painting and crafts. She plans to take pre-med courses and possibly go to medical school.
- **Andrea Park**, class of 2013, a Materials Science and Engineering major from California, plays varsity soccer at MIT. Her plans are to either pursue medical research or to practice medicine.

## Armenian Library and Museum Tour

**65 Main Street • Watertown**  
**Monday, April 4 • 11:00 am**

Curator and librarian Gary Lind-Cinanian will guide us through our special tour of the Armenian Library and Museum of America located in Watertown Square. His vast knowledge and keen interest make him an expert “tour leader.”

The Armenian Library and Museum of America (ALMA) was founded in 1971. Since then it has become a major repository for all forms of Armenian material culture. Created to locate, collect, preserve, and present the culture, history, art, and contributions of the Armenian people during the past 3,000 years, the Museum has amassed an expansive treasure trove. Rugs, textiles, ceramics, calendars, sheet music, and oral histories are but some of the objects that can be found in its collection.

Armenians have always had a spirit that carried them through disasters while reaching cultural heights, exemplified by: the creation of the Armenian alphabet, the dawn of the Golden Age of literature in the 5th century, the role of the Armenians in the Byzantine empire and during the Crusades, and the literary reawakening in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Discover the amazing story of these people by joining us on this tour. In addition to its regular collection, we will visit a special exhibit of Caucasian Rugs, as well as an exhibit of ancient maps entitled “Where in the World is Armenia.”

The tour will begin at 11:00 am. The cost is \$5 for adults and \$2 for students. If you drive, a public lot is available behind the museum. If you prefer to come by public transportation, the #71 bus from Harvard Square stops in Watertown Square. To learn more, visit [www.almainc.org](http://www.almainc.org). For those who wish to continue conversations prompted by the museum and library visit, we'll go for lunch next door at Not Your Average Joe's afterward.

To reserve your place on the tour, call 617.253.3656 or email [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu).



## Connections

**April 14 • May 12**

Each month during the academic year, the Women's League hosts Connections in the Emma Rogers Room (10-340) from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm. These informal monthly open houses with coffee, tea and sweets began in 2001 and continue to provide ways for the League to meet and welcome women new to

MIT and to the League as well as stay in touch with its members.

We hope you can join us and encourage you to bring a newcomer, a colleague, or a friend along with you. Come when you can and stay for as long as you wish. We look forward to seeing you!





**MIT  
+150**  
*INVENTIONAL  
WISDOM*

## MIT150 — Women's League

The celebration has begun and the Women's League will be participating in several events this spring. Among them are:

### Wednesday, April 13 150th Event for MIT Employees sponsored by Human Resources

This event will highlight the opportunities and services MIT offers for employee engagement—ways to grow and thrive at MIT. The venue is the Stata Student Street (Bldg. 32) and is a drop-in event between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm. This is similar to a newcomer or orientation fair and our table staffed by League volunteers will present the many facets of the MIT Women's League programs, service opportunities and social events. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet employees and acquaint them with our work throughout the Institute.

If you would like to be involved in either or both of these events, please call the League office at 617.253.3656 or email [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu) to learn more.

To stay informed about and the calendar of activities and events planned, visit the website: [mit150.mit.edu](http://mit150.mit.edu).

### Saturday, April 30 Under the Dome: Come Explore MIT

This is a Saturday campus-wide Open House and the first time in 30 years that such an event has been held! This is a rare chance for the public to explore intriguing aspects of MIT not usually encountered. The Women's League will provide support as greeters at Gray House from 11:00 am–4:00 pm. Our members will answer questions and provide information regarding the history of Gray House as we welcome visitors to the residence of MIT's presidents.

## League Interest Groups and Classes

### LEARNING MORE

#### Book Discussion

Barbara Donnelly  
781.646.4617  
Judith Lippard  
[jacs@mit.edu](mailto:jacs@mit.edu)

#### Chorale

Elizabeth Goldberg  
617.324.1487  
[eparr@mit.edu](mailto:eparr@mit.edu)  
[web.mit.edu/womensleague/womenschorale](http://web.mit.edu/womensleague/womenschorale)

#### Looking Together

Ann Allen  
617.527.7292  
[annallen@rle.mit.edu](mailto:annallen@rle.mit.edu)

### INTERNATIONAL

#### Japanese Tea Ceremony

Kyoko Wada  
[chado@mit.edu](mailto:chado@mit.edu)  
[web.mit.edu/chado/www/index.html](http://web.mit.edu/chado/www/index.html)

#### Middle Eastern Dance

Loni Butera  
617.491.5657  
[loni@mit.edu](mailto:loni@mit.edu)

### WORKING WITH YOUR HANDS

#### Informal Needlework

Beth Harling  
781.749.4055  
[oharling@mit.edu](mailto:oharling@mit.edu)  
Nancy Sweeney  
781.646.3107  
[n-j-sweeney@verizon.net](mailto:n-j-sweeney@verizon.net)

#### MIT Gardeners' Group

League Office  
617.253.3656  
[wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu)  
[web.mit.edu/womensleague/gardeners](http://web.mit.edu/womensleague/gardeners)

#### Tech Community Crafters

Brenda Blais  
[bmblais@mit.edu](mailto:bmblais@mit.edu)

### NEW FRIENDS AND CONTACTS

#### CitySide Dining

League Office  
[wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu)

#### MIT Japanese Wives Group

Kimie Shirasaki  
781.721.2517  
[mitjwg@yahoo.com](mailto:mitjwg@yahoo.com)

Groups meet weekly, bi-monthly or monthly. Contact the above women to learn more about their groups.



## Visit and Tour • Adams National Historical Park • Quincy

**Saturday, May 14 • 11:00 am**

Please join us for our visit and tour of the Adams National Historical Park in Quincy, MA where we will learn much about this outstanding family whose contributions to the early years of the United States of America are legendary. There is much to be seen and appreciated here. John Adams (1735–1826) was our 2nd President (1797–1801). John's wife Abigail Adams, a woman ahead of her time, was quietly influential during both her husband's and her son's presidential terms of office.

John's son, John Quincy Adams, whose political successes were far more significant and appreciated when he no longer was president, was our 6th President of the United States (1825–1829). His wife Louisa Catherine Adams, like her mother-in-law before her, was also relegated to the political wings where she continued to support the work of her husband.

Tours depart the Visitor Center on a trolley that will bring you to the Presidential Birthplaces where you will be dropped off for a guided tour with a Park Ranger. After this half hour tour the trolley will then bring you to the Old House where you will have an hour long guided tour with a Park Ranger. The trolley will then pick you back up and return you to the Visitor Center.

Tours are approximately two hours and include the Presidential Birthplaces, the Old House at Peacefield, the Stone Library and return to the Visitors Center. **The cost is \$5.00 for adults.** All National Park Passes are honored. Please be aware that the only restrooms for the park are located at the Visitor Center. Large bags and backpacks are not permitted inside of the homes.

Following our visit to the Park, if you can linger a little longer in the area, we will plan to have a light lunch together nearby!

**We will meet at the Adams National Historical Park at 11:00 am:**  
1250 Hancock Street  
Quincy, Massachusetts.

For those of you not familiar with Quincy, **a group will meet at 10:00 am at the Kendall T station**, downstairs on the inbound platform ready to travel together on the Red Line to Quincy. If you prefer to drive yourself, you can meet us at the Visitors Center in Quincy at 11:00 am. Our participation is **limited to 15 adults.**

For this very special outing, please contact the League office at 617.253.3656 or [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu) to reserve your place, first come!



## Spring Concert

**Sunday, May 15 • 3 pm**

The Women's Chorale will perform Michael Haydn's "St. Leopold Mass" with chamber orchestra, as well as music by Eric Whitacre, a Chinese love song, and in a Western premier, a lovely Russian piece for women's voices. Under the direction of Kevin Galiè, and accompanied by Susanne Swalley, the Chorale will be singing two lively pieces, definitely not in our usual vein, as a surprise for our audience. In addition, the orchestra will perform a Vivaldi double horn concerto.

This spring concert will be performed at the Dante Alighieri Society at 41 Hampshire Street in Cambridge. It is free and open to the public; donations will be appreciated.

For concert parking suggestions, and to learn more about the group and how to join, visit: [web.mit.edu/womensleague/womenschorale](http://web.mit.edu/womensleague/womenschorale).



## Notable

**4/27**  
Book Discussion:  
*The Summer of the  
Great-grandmother*  
by Madeleine L'Engle

**5/25**  
Book Discussion:  
*The Help*  
by Kathryn Stockett





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## Annual Meeting

**Friday, May 20 • 12:00 Noon ~ Emma Rogers Room, 10-340**

You are invited to join us at 12:00 noon in the Emma Rogers Room, 10-340, for our business meeting at which a summary of the League's activities and business of the past academic year is given. Also, new and returning Board Officers for the slate will be introduced and presented for election.

This year we are most fortunate to welcome Nora Murphy, Archivist for Reference, Outreach, and Instruction at the MIT Libraries. Nora can help find information about almost anything at MIT—from MIT's earliest days to the present. With the upcoming 100th anniversary celebration of the Women's League, Nora will give an overview of the League's history, dating back to the 1800s when MIT was a little known school and William Barton Rogers, among others, were not quite certain how to incorporate women into their programs. Such a daunting task way back then!

In the fall, the Women's League Honor Circle visited the MIT Libraries' Maihau-gan Gallery exhibit "Tell Her to Go To It: Women's Experiences at MIT." Much to the delight of the group, Nora, as curator of the exhibit, was an added bonus to their visit with her wealth of knowledge of the exhibit content. Not surprisingly, she received rave reviews from all who attended.

The MIT Libraries opened new exhibit space in 14N in 2008 through the support of generous donors. Their exhibits have been well received. All who visit and leave with a true sense of history.

Nora earned her undergraduate degree at Boston College (History) and pursued a Masters Degree (History and Archival Methods) at the University of MA, Boston, MA. She has been at MIT since 2000, previously working in various state, federal, religious, and private archives in the Boston area.

With a passion for her work, Nora describes in earnest her sense of appreciation in working with original documentation of history. She has always worked in the Boston area, and with its rich history dating back to the 1600s, which lends itself to appreciation of her profession as an Archivist.

Don't miss the opportunity to meet Nora Murphy and share in the stories and history of the League's beginnings. Enjoy the company of women with various affiliations to the MIT community and enjoy a delicious lunch. To reserve your place at the luncheon meeting, please call the League office at 617.253.3656 or email [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu).



## Slate of Officers Vote at Annual Meeting May 20

The Nominating Committee is pleased to announce the following slate of elective officers for the Women's League Board for 2011–2013:

### For two (2) years:

**Kim Watson**, Chair  
**Mary Harmer**, Vice Chair for Programs  
**Ellen Stordy**, Vice Chair for Social Activities

Continuing their unexpired terms for one (1) more year are Deborah Liverman, *Vice Chair for Service Projects*; Diana Strange, *Treasurer*; and Suzanne Collins, *Nominating Chair*.

Additional nominations for the above positions may be made by endorsement in writing by twenty-five (25) active members and filed with the Women's League office ten (10) days before the Annual Meeting on Friday, May 20, 2011.

New names may be added to the appointed Board and a complete list of all Board members will appear in the Annual Report at the May 20th Annual Meeting. For further information, please call Women's League Staff Associate Sis de Bordenave at the League office at 617.253.3656.

— Suzanne Collins, *Chair*



## Spring Craft Fair

**May 19 and 20 • 9 am to 5 pm**

Looking for a gift? The Technology Community Crafters 2011 Spring Craft Fair in Lobby 10 is the ideal place to find the perfect Mother's Day, birthday, hostess, graduation or any other type of gift. During this two-day sale, crafters will be selling beautiful handmade items: from soaps to handmade wooden puzzles to jewelry in a wide range of styles as well as pottery and hand-knit children's items and more. Don't hesitate to stop by and browse.

If you are a crafter and would like to display your work at the fair, email craft fair coordinator Brenda Blais at [bmblais@mit.edu](mailto:bmblais@mit.edu). She will be happy to send you an electronic application and provide you with the particulars.



Photo: Naoko Kikuchi

## And The Winner Is...

Accomplished quilter Naoko Kikuchi little suspected that while visiting MIT she would be named the winner of the 2011 Annual Hummus Taste Off, part of the **MIT Hummus Experience** held during IAP!

When Naoko first heard of the "Make Your Own Hummus" event, she thought of miso as one of her original ingredients. Explaining that in Japan, miso is eaten not only as soup but also as a paste or dip, Naoko thought "why not add miso to the neutral taste of original hummus." She chose to use red miso because it has a distinct flavor and is very tasty and then added honey, ginger, garlic, scallions and a hint of chili to her original mixture.

Because MIT Hillel, the event sponsor, specified that all ingredients be kosher, it purchased the ingredients for the aspiring hummus chefs. Not only did she come to know about kosher foods from her MIT Hummus Experience, Naoko also learned about a culture different from her own.

Students, faculty and staff passing through Lobby 10 stopped by the Bush Room to taste and cast their votes for the best home-made hummus at MIT's annual "made from scratch" taste-off. Voters, who were invited to be "dazzled by the variations in flavor and texture," chose Naoko's hummus!

To honor her accomplishment, local hummus maker Cedar's made a limited MIT 2011 Special Edition of her "Samurai Miso Hommus." Because they liked it—who knows—perhaps they'll consider manufacturing it!

Watching people's reaction to tasting her hummus, Naoko came to understand the excitement alternating with the nerve-wracking anxiety that chefs feel when their creations are tasted for the first time. She was pleased that so many people loved her miso hummus and grateful that they voted for hers. Naoko went on to say "I appreciate the openness of the MIT community that allowed me, the wife of a postdoc, to take part in this event. MIT is a great place to experience different cultures."

## Email Update

If you have become an email user and would like to receive our notes and reminders or if your email address has changed, please advise the League office at [wleague@mit.edu](mailto:wleague@mit.edu).



## Still Time to Donate

### Find New Homes For Clean, Gently Used —

#### • Winter Clothes

Coats, Jackets, Hats, Gloves, Mittens, Scarves, (like new) snow boots (Especially women's sizes: Small [Petite, XS, S] and medium)

#### • Interview Clothes

Women's Suits, Blouses & Dresses (Especially sizes: Petite, XS, S, 0-8)

Men's Suits, White or Blue Dress Shirts & Neckties (Especially Small sizes: Slacks: 30-32" waist, 28-29" length; Suits: 38-40" regular, Shirts: 14-15 1/2" neck, 32-35" sleeve)

#### • Formal Wear

Dresses, Gowns, Tuxedos, Accessories

For over fifteen years, the Clothing Service Program of the MIT Women's League has held an annual September event to supply **free** clothing to our international undergraduate students whose budgets are constantly stretched.

- Donations are welcome all year.
- Your donation is tax deductible and we supply a receipt for income tax purposes.
- Clothing items may be brought to the Women's League Office.

Please contact Sis de Bordenave before you bring your donation: 617.253.3656 or <esdeb@mit.edu>.

## Transition House Update

Transition House is a shelter for women and children victims of domestic violence located here in Cambridge. Last year at this time we reported that it was experiencing an increased number of calls since the economic downturn. We noted that while there isn't a real correlation between socioeconomic status and violence, economic strife makes people feel more stressed because fewer resources are available to help them. We've learned from Transition House this year that things have not changed. Things are just as tough, if not more so.

Our affiliation and support of Transition House is important. Since our partnership began, MIT family and friends have been a continuous means of resources. Each month community members bring either the requested items or something else they would like to give.

These are the requests for the following months:

**April:** Lightweight blankets and Charlie Cards with added value

**May:** Flip flops (women and children sizes) and Charlie Cards with added value

**Always needed:** Gift cards to Market Basket and CVS



While we have not specified items for the summer months, items will be needed and monetary donations are always welcome.

During the summer, if your workload is lighter or you have a little more leisure time, Transition House can always use volunteers in various areas. Foreign language interpreters in Spanish, Chinese and Arabic are needed to provide document translation services and babysitting is always needed. To learn more about the organization, visit its website at [www.transitionhouse.org/](http://www.transitionhouse.org/).

## Looking Ahead

**September 13, 2011**

English Conversation Classes Registration

**September 15, 2011**

First Day of English Classes

Check the League calendar on its website at [web.mit.edu/womensleague/](http://web.mit.edu/womensleague/) to learn about programs scheduled during the summer months.

## General Information

The MIT Women's League newsletter is published four times during the academic year. The deadline for the September/October issue is August 1. All items should be sent to the Women's League office.

Please call the League office for a hard copy of the newsletter and for answers to questions you may have. The office can also arrange for your membership.

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