



Remembering Mary Snyder

Former treasurer of TPF, Mary Snyder, died on June 28, 2016, just two months short of her 95th birthday. When Mary was born, in August 1921, the doctor who delivered her told her parents that she was frail and he didn't expect her to live long!

For 60 years she was a resident of Amherst MA, with her husband, Dana. Their Amherst home is a 1760s historic structure which they tenderly restored and conserved, and their sixty-acre farm was among the first to be under state agricultural preservation, not ever to pass into any use except agricultural. During their many years in Amherst they were friends and mentors often to younger farmers in the community.

Mary earned her degree in business administration in seven years of night school in Pittsburgh. She was a secretary at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh and then in the English Department at Amherst College for a long time. Besides raising four marvelous children, and holding a job, Mary was a life-long and steadfast volunteer in many spheres. As a Master Gardener she was a volunteer at the UMass gardens and greenhouses. She was an informed environmentalist and worked with the town's Conservation Commission. She was a leader in establishing the Amherst Farmers Market. She also taught English as a second language and adult literacy classes.

Many of us in the Amherst community knew Mary as a keen follower of international, national, and local politics, and as a stalwart participant in peace and justice movements. She regularly donated time and money to liberal causes, and often came out to a rally to confront war and injustice. On the local level, she was an elected member of Amherst Representative Town Meeting. She was a co-founder of the Amherst chapter of Women In Black, an international group that protests war and violence, and promotes human rights and justice. Year after year, Mary joined with other women every Friday near the Town Common as witness against violence, oppression, conflict, and injustice.

Mary and Dana were among the first members of Thomas Paine Friends in the Amherst area. They supported and attended all TPF local events, brought in new members, and made many generous money contributions. A member of the Humanist Society, Mary said that she was greatly in tune with *The Age of Reason*.

Memorably, Mary and Dana were superb dancers. They often attended the dance assemblies on Friday and Saturday nights, where they could twirl to their hearts' content in swing, country, and--their favorite--contra dancing.

For the Amherst community it is difficult to accept the absence now of our loyal and dear friends and neighbors. We still expect to come across Mary at the library, at the Snyder farm, or, surely, at the next peace demonstration. --from Martha Spiegelman