
[test] Meet two amazing activists

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Organizers Letter

Dear Sarah,

Generations of Activist Women

As we head into the final days of the 2024 campaign, we know you and your groups have done so much - and we are immensely grateful. We're all digging deep and pushing forward in these final days, and take inspiration from the tireless fellow activists among us.

Earlier this month, I met two remarkable women who certainly fit that description: Victoria Levi and Berl Hartman. Victoria and Berl, friends in college, reconnected decades later through Swing Blue Alliance. Well-educated in organization, energized by their lifelong commitments to engagement, they each became deeply involved in our volunteer work.

Meet Victoria Levi



Photo courtesy Susan Labandibar

Victoria, a retired psychiatrist, spoke of her earliest family influences. Her work in the 1960s struggles for racial equality on “Bloody Sunday” in Selma, Alabama, and voter registration in Mississippi began a lifetime commitment to activism. **Say Something...Do Something**, a message from World War II, became the imperative that she has lived by.

My Zoom call found her at home, but she has been canvassing in North Carolina and West Philadelphia, registering young people through reaching out on street corners.

“Listen,” she told me, “be patient and allow yourself to be genuinely interested in the other person.” Her own social connections have broadened through this commitment. A host family of Evangelicals have become friends!

Door to door, person to person, each volunteer is part of what Victoria believes is “being in community.” As we ended our call, Victoria told me that “life is enriched by doing things that you believe in.”

Do something >

Meet Berl Hartman



Photo courtesy Susan Labandibar

As an adolescent, Berl Hartman recalled being drawn to the national campaigns of candidates committed to doing “the right thing.” Without TV at home, engagement came in candidate headquarters and hearing speeches live (sometimes on the street). During those years, as her anger at injustice developed, her internal mandate became **“if I am enraged, do something.”**

Berl's activism developed when she was living in a small town in California. In her quiet community, the local news reported that a valued piece of park land near the Bay was in

planning for development. Stepping into the conversation, Berl soon found herself researching the hidden story of how one councilmember's greed was behind the real estate initiative.

Through her involvement, the story became the focus of community action, and while the developer volunteered to donate to the city and the case went to court, it was years before justice was served. For her efforts, Berl was awarded the key to the city.

Some years later, living in Massachusetts and employed as a software executive, she worked with Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2) to promote legislation for clean energy. Again, she was determined to do something.

Working with the Northeast Clean Energy Council, she worked on Beacon Hill to pass the Massachusetts Global Warming Solutions Act. Once it passed, Governor Patrick appointed her as a member of the citizens committee to provide oversight of its implementation.

As the political climate changed, Berl met Susan Labandibar and quickly became a valued Swing Blue volunteer. Working in campaigns in NH and Maine, Berl met Jason Berlin and Field Team 6. Her focus turned to voter registration, and with a measured approach honed over the years, she has most recently organized voter registration projects on college campuses throughout Pennsylvania.

As we ended our conversation, Berl told me she was getting ready to canvas in Bucks County, PA, the following week.

Do something >

Inspiration for the Days Ahead

You, our valued hosts, are part of these generations of dedicated activists. You all have stories of how you came to this work and specific experiences that formed your commitments. Share them with one another as you continue your commitment to saving our democracy this year. We value you, and value your contributions to our work.

If you and your groups are looking for ways to stay involved in the coming days, we encourage you to check out the Swing Blue Alliance calendar. Every effort helps!

Do something >

Thank you – let's lean in together, once again, and give it everything in this final push!

Janet Nelson and the Swing Blue Alliance mailing team

Do not stand idly by - Elie Wiesel

Action is the antidote to despair - Joan Baez

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