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CITY & TOWN

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Liverights' legacy: A forum for talk on socialist causes

By Joseph Saumarez Smith
Special to The Eagle

STEPHENTOWN, N.Y. — "A revolutionary never retires," says Betty Liveright, who with her husband, Herman, is handing over control of the Berkshire Forum, which they founded and have led for 17 years.

Now the Liverights plan to do the writing that they couldn't find time for during the years they built the forum into an internationally recognized organization for the promotion of socialist causes and leftist views.

There are some who have suggested that the Berkshire Forum cannot survive without the Liverights. The couple said they are both flattered and bothered by that assumption.

Not profitable

They freely admit that the forum has never made money and that they have often used funds from an inheritance trust to support it. They say they can no longer afford to use their own money.

But they believe that if it is possible for the forum to survive, the new executive director, Sybil Wong, will make it survive.

Wong has been appointed executive director by the board of directors. She recently arrived in Stephentown from New York City, having worked there as a freelance journalist with particular interests in socialist and feminist issues.

In an interview, the Liverights said recent events in Eastern Europe have not changed their belief in the effectiveness of socialism, but it has worried them that socialism often has been poorly administered.

Corruption, illusion

"There is no proof that socialism cannot work," said Herman Liveright, "but the terrible corruption and the illusion that capitalism always brings the goodies"

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Leslie Noyes / Berkshire Eagle Staff

Betty and Herman Liveright at the Berkshire Forum, which they founded 17 years ago.