

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD  
WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
MID-HUDSON REGION

COMMENTATOR

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April 05

# Commentator for April, 2005

The League of Women Voters of Mid-Hudson Region

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## Mission Statement:

*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*

## CALENDAR

<b>April</b>		
	<b>19</b>	7:00-9:00 PM General Meeting - Women's Health Care Study-Trinity Lutheran Church, corner of Spring and Hone Streets, Kingston. Speakers: Dr. Laura Decker and Dean Palen Public Health Director, UC Health Department. They will speak on Women's Health Care in Ulster County.
<b>May</b>		
	<b>3</b>	7:15-9:15 PM Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's
	<b>5</b>	10:15-12 noon Program Committee meeting at Gloria Plasker's
	<b>14</b>	8:00-3:00 PM Women's Health Fair-Tech City, Bldg. 5 North Lake Katrine, New York
	<b>20-22</b>	Friday-Sunday LWVNYS Convention, 2005 The Desmond, Albany, New York
<b>June</b>		
	<b>7</b>	7:15-9:15 PM Board Meeting at Jean McGarry's, Ruby, NY
	<b>21</b>	6:00-9:00 PM Annual Meeting Unitarian Church, Sawkill Road Lake Katrine, New York Supper at 6. Meeting at 7.
<b>July</b>		
	<b>12</b>	7:15-9:15 PM Board Meeting at Gloria Plasker's

## **The Prez Sez...**

Hi Folks! Well, spring has sprung, hopefully. The housing forum was informative and Len made the morning very entertaining. Many thanks for the great moderating, Len. Housing is such a basic need and so many people are without it. I want to thank the program committee for doing such a wonderful job in putting this forum together. I was impressed with the number of people that made it through the snowy morning.

Convention is coming! Convention is coming! The State Convention is a great opportunity to get energized and learn from other leagues.

*Chris Henning*

*"A hundred years after we are gone and forgotten, those who never heard of us will be living with the results of our actions." – Oliver Wendell Holmes, U.S. Supreme Court*

## **Membership Notes:**

Recently, two of our long time members were honored by the Ulster Performing Arts Center at its 15<sup>th</sup> annual Benefactors Dinner. Mary Johnston and Dr. Melva Wade for their long time support and contributions to UPAC. Congratulations.

The League's very own thespian, Elizabeth Askue appeared in the D'n A. production of Agatha Christie's "10 Little Indians" and received stellar reviews. Congratulations.

Evelyn Ness and her husband, the Reverend Leroy Ness, are in Pennsylvania for the next several months. While they plan to return to Kingston regularly, their address in Pennsylvania is 2971 Lutheran Road, Gilbertsville, PA 19525.

Laura Walls, a new member, is also a member of the New Paltz Board of Education. Welcome to the League.

We recently received word that Fran Dedrick, a member for many years, has moved permanently to Maryland. Her new address is: Fran Dedrick, 1611 Carpenters Point Rd., Perryville, MD, 21903.

### **In Memoriam**

**Victor P. Steibel  
4-1-18 to 3-1-05**

**Our condolences to his wife, Renee**

## **Housing Forum a Success**

Saturday, March 12 started with snow. The weather did not however deter the League from moving ahead with the Housing Forum as planned at 10 AM.

The panelists were Chester Straub, Jr., president of the UCDC and chairman of the UC Housing Consortium, Dennis Doyle, Director of the UC Planning Board, Mayor James Sottile of the city of Kingston, Fred Wadnola, T/Ulster Supervisor, representing the UC Town Supervisors Assoc., UCDSS Commissioner Glenn Decker, and Tom Perna, a private developer from AVR Realty. Len Cane acted as moderator.

The panelists presented a variety of perspectives. Nevertheless there was general agreement that there is a housing crisis, that the problem is of long standing, that housing needs and costs have risen, but wages have not kept pace.

While a variety of housing initiatives have been introduced throughout the county, they are in various stages from proposal to completion. It is not easy to move these proposals to completion whether due to the Seqra Law (State Environmental Quality Review Act), zoning requirements, costs, or the attitudes of the public.

There is a need for the various levels of government to work together, to show the will and the leadership, locally and regionally, to bring about improvement in the situation.

It was suggested that it might be best to change the word affordable to entry level to further improve the situation. All entry level employees: police, CSEA, firemen, teachers, members of the service industry need housing that is affordable as well as the homeless.

The stumbling block to a "healthy housing mix" in Ulster County is home rule with respects

to the Safety Net Program of assistance (SNA). This program of assistance is provided for under the NYS Constitutional provision to help the needy.

Ulster County is, however, the only county in NYS that does not have this program paid for 50% state and 50% county. While the state share continues to be 50%, the local costs are borne by the City of Kingston and those towns which have SNA recipients residing in their political subdivisions.

In addition to single people and couples determined eligible for assistance under SNA, those DSS recipients who have exhausted their benefits under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) after the 5 year limit has been reached may now be eligible for assistance under SNA. In 2003 there were 300 individuals receiving assistance under SNA; in 2005, there are now 700 individuals.

This process needs to be changed so that the entire county bears a fair share of the cost, which is now considerable. In 2004 it was \$1,056,000, over \$900,000 was paid by the City of Kingston.

It was suggested that until the fiscal responsibility for the costs of SNA is shared through out the county rather than being borne by the above mentioned entities, the problem of achieving a "healthy housing mix" will continue to be difficult.

Following the presentations, there was a Q & A session.

The League is indebted to Dennis Doyle, Chester Straub, Jr. and Tom Perna for the handouts dealing with related housing statistics, the Housing Consortium, and the development project on the Hudson River.

Approximately 60 people attended the forum.

## **Nominating Committee Presents Slate For 2005-06**

The following slate of nominees will be presented to the membership to vote upon at the annual meeting in June:

First Vice-President: Cindy Bell  
Second Vice-President: Gloria Plasker  
Third Vice-President: Elizabeth Askue  
Commentator: Jill Gormley  
Publications Director: Emilie Hauser-  
Off Board  
Nominating Committee: Emily Johnson

Two more nominees are needed. Anyone interested please call Shirley Kobran at 382-6989.

Two additional members will be appointed from the Board of Directors by the Board of Directors immediately following the annual meeting. The nominating committee elects its own chairman immediately following the elections.

The other members of the Board of Directors who will continue through 2006 (completing the first year of a two-year term are: Christine Henning, President; Jean McGarry, Treasurer; Lee Ridgway, Secretary; Jacki Moriarty, PR Director; or completing the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a 2<sup>nd</sup> two year term are: Shirley Kobran, Membership; Karen Goertzel, Voter Service; Lee Cane, Finance).

Members of the Nominating Committee were: Shirley Kobran, Elizabeth Askue, Jacki Moriarty, Dorothy Schuler, and Emilee Hauser.

## **Program**

Each year at the annual meeting, the membership is required to vote on what will constitute the League's program for the coming year.

As per the By-Laws, the program for the League shall consist of action to protect the right to vote of every citizen and those local governmental issues chosen for concrete study and action.

In order to do that the voting members of the League need to submit recommendations to the Board (send to the President), so that the Board may consider such two months prior to the annual meeting and formulate a proposed program for the coming year.

This proposed program is then sent to all members 4 weeks prior to the annual meeting.

At the annual meeting a majority of voting members present and voting must vote in favor of the proposed program that the Board of Directors has presented.

As yet no recommendations for the 2005-06 year have been received for consideration by the Board.

Those recommendations that voting members submit which the Board of Directors does not recommend may be considered at the annual meeting provided that:

1. (the members) at the annual meeting shall order consideration by a majority vote; and
2. (the members) at the annual meeting shall adopt the item by a two-thirds vote.

Remember: Please send your recommendations to Christine Henning, President LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region, UPO Box 3564, Kingston, New York 12402

Such recommendations as are received now will have to be discussed at the May Board Meeting, which is May 3, 2005.

## **Women's Health Care Study Sponsors April 19<sup>th</sup> Program**

The Women's Health Care study group will sponsor a program on April 19<sup>th</sup> at 7PM at the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is located on the corner of Spring and Hone Streets in downtown Kingston.

The speakers will be: Dr. Laura Decker and Dean Palen, Public Health Director, UC Health Department. They will speak on Women's Health Care in Ulster County.

Following the talk there will be a Q & A session. Do try to come. This looks to be a very interesting program.

Direction to the church: Proceed down Broadway(stay in the right lane). Some landmarks you will pass will be Kingston High School on your right, Yousman Towers on your right. There is a slight curve bearing to the right after the Towers which will bring you to a stop light. Stay in the right lane. As you proceed through the light, you will be on McEntee Street and Kingston Catholic School will be on your left. Continue for one block to Wurts Street where you will turn left. There are 2 large parking lots, one on each side of the street. Continue down Wurts Street for 2 blocks to Spring Street. Turn right on to Spring Street. The church is one block down on the left, corner of Hone and Spring Street.

### **The Impact of Drugs on Ulster County Youth:**

Since last June, the study group dealing with this topic has been meeting. Chaired by Tom Kadgen, the group has as members Emily Johnson, Jacki Moriarty and Frank Cassetta, Elizabeth Askue, Linda Roberts, and Cindy Bell.

One of the references that the group has used in its work is the PRISMS Reports for 1994, 1996 and 1998. Published by the Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), Ulster County was rated as the worst county in NYS with respects to the consequences its youth have experienced as a result of drug use. In 2000, Ulster County was ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> worst in the state, being tied with Monroe County.

In order to develop a better understanding of the situation, the group has met with:

Marshall Beckman, Director of UC Mental Health, who provided a list of what he thinks he needs to reduce these drug related consequences for UC youth;

Representatives of OASAS, who advised the group that it no longer ranked the counties as it had been doing in order to avoid providing the press such inflammatory information. Further in their "learned" opinion, UC youth did not seem to represent anything out of the ordinary; and

Assemblyman Kevin Cahill, who agreed to send a letter to OASAS requesting that that Agency provide him with an official analysis of the material, and indicate what, if anything, can be done about it.

Two hypothesis have been suggested at this point in the study:

-that UC is being penalized because of its ability to detect, report, and police drug related incidents; and

-that UC youth are in fact experiencing major problems getting through this period in their lives without being affected by drugs.

The study group is waiting to review PRISM Report 2005 (based on data from 2002) before moving ahead.

## Finance Report:

The Finance Drive for 2005 was completed on March 31. We did well this year.

Members contributed \$1170.00

Friends contributed \$ 500.00

Total gross \$ 1670.00

Expenses were \$ 203.15

Total dollars available to the League for its work comes to \$ 1466.85.

The League extends its thanks to all its members, friends and supporters in the community. It does make a difference.

## LWVNYS Convention 2005

### Second Call

In the March issue of the Commentator, that everyone received, detailed information was provided about the convention, all the great events that will take place, and the terrific people who will speak when it convenes on May 20. Please refer to the one page insert in the March issue for this information.

This gathering is well worth the time to attend.

As the April 1 registration deadline for registration has passed, we called the state office and were told as follows:

Anyone who registers prior to April 28 will receive the special room rate of \$158.51 per night for a single or double room. Room reservations at The Desmond: 1-518-869-8100.

Volunteers are still needed. Please call Barbara Thomas at 1-518-885-9769 if you are interested in helping out; or send an e-mail: [barbnob@capital.net](mailto:barbnob@capital.net)

## Women's History Month

OOPHS!!!! We missed recognizing March as Women's History Month, but were reminded when we saw the display at Barnes and Noble, the National Booksellers.

In addition, the Freeman had a pull out section, Woman's View where we found a section dealing with First Women. We hope you will find the following interesting:

1872-Victoria Claflin Woodhull: becomes first woman presidential candidate when nominated by the National Radical Reformers.

1887-Susanna Medora Salter: becomes first woman elected mayor of an American town in Argonia, Kansas.

1916-Jeannette Rankin of Montana becomes first woman elected to the US House of Representatives.

1922-Rebecca Felton of Georgia appointed to the US Senate to fill a temporary vacancy. First woman Senator, serves only 2 days.

1925-Nellie Tayloe Ross: first woman to serve as governor of a state in Wyoming. In fall, 1924 elected to succeed her deceased husband, William Bradford Ross. (Miriam Amanda "Ma" Ferguson was inaugurated governor of Texas a few days later.)

1932- Hattie Wyatt Caraway of Arkansas: first woman elected to US Senate.

1933-Francis Perkins: Appointed Secretary of Labor by FDR. First woman member of presidential cabinet

1960-Oveta Culp Hobby: First woman to serve as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare. She was also the first director of the WAAC-Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and the first woman to receive the US Army Distinguished Service Medal.

Editor's note: we will try to have more in the future.

## **Legislative Agenda 2005**

### **Smart Growth/Containing Sprawl**

League members have long been active in their communities when it comes to issues of land use and resource conservation. Starting in 1958, national and state league positions have stressed the importance of water protection, access to transportation, regional and metropolitan planning to prevent haphazard urban growth, and support of a statewide intergovernmental system for land resource management. This year's state legislative agenda calls for "...a proactive role for the state in conserving natural resources and containing sprawl..." Specifically, the League position supports legislation that will:

- Promote regional land use planning
- Enhance urban neighborhoods
- Protect agricultural land, open space, watersheds and other sensitive areas

If you are not familiar with the term smart growth and wonder what constitutes "sprawl", there is an excellent report recently published by the nonprofit organization Riverkeeper, Inc. which provides some insight. The goal of Riverkeeper is to protect the Hudson River watershed and specifically the drinking water of New York City. In their report titled "Pave It ...Or Save It? Volume I: the Environmental and Social Impacts of Sprawl", they define sprawl as "low-density, land consumptive, centerless, auto-oriented development, typically located on the outer suburban fringes." You may ask why sprawl is bad. According to Riverkeeper, "...(s)prawl increases traffic, air pollution, noise pollution, and infrastructure costs. At the same time, sprawl degrades water

quality, reduces biodiversity, reduces open space, and deteriorates existing hamlets and village centers. Sprawl also raises taxes by increasing the costs of roads, housing, schools, utilities, and transportation. Sprawl lowers the quality of life by decimating agricultural lands and natural areas; concentrating poverty and accelerating socio-economic decline in cities, towns, and older suburbs..."

To combat the effects of sprawl, many planners, community leaders and environmentalists, along with the LWVNY, are promoting the concepts of smart growth. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, as cited in the Riverkeeper report, smart growth means "... better planning, concentrating development where schools, roads, and sewer lines are already in place, and reinvesting in older communities instead of abandoning them. It places homes near major transit stations or within walking distance of shops, restaurants, and offices. Smart growth communities not only help preserve natural open spaces, but also are more livable and attractive than their sprawling counterparts."

The State League joined the Smart Growth Working Group in January 2001. It is an informal coalition of 30 organizations that was established at the first Smart Growth Conference in 1999 to promote smart growth concepts in New York State and to lobby the State Legislature on smart growth issues. To date, New York State has not passed any bills addressing this issue.

If you want to learn more:  
Riverkeeper.org - download their report  
LWVNY.org - "Impact on Issues 2003-2005"  
[A Field Guide to Sprawl](#), by Deloris Hayden



**Membership News**

Need a ride? If you want to attend a League meeting and need a ride please call Shirley Kobran at 382-6989 to arrange.

**LWV of Mid-Hudson Region Membership Application or Renewal to 6/30/06**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Member (\$50)\_\_\_ Family Membership (\$65)\_\_\_ Extra contribution \$\_\_\_

\_\_\_Please call about local LWV meetings or \_\_\_Please do not call.

Mail with check to:

Treasurer, LWV of Mid-Hudson Region, P.O. Box 3564, Kingston, NY 12402

**If you know someone who might like to know more about the League of Women Voters, please provide name and address below and send this slip to:**

**Shirley Kobran, 53 Schuler Lane, Lake Katrine, NY 12449**

**We will send information out as quickly as possible.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_