



Mid-Hudson Region *Commentator* December/January '06-'07

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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.

The LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region covers the Mid-Ulster County area and the Dutchess County area. We belong to the LWV of New York State and the LWV of the US.

CALENDAR

JANUARY

5 7:15 to 9:15 Board meeting at Gloria Plasker's

FEBRUARY

2 7:15 to 9:15 Board meeting at Gloria Plasker's

Non-Partisan Statement

The League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region is a nonpartisan organization which does not support or oppose candidates for public office but does encourage its members as individuals to participate actively in the political process. The League acts on those issues the membership chooses for study and action.

Board members will use discretion in any political activity and determine in advance from the local and/or state board that such activity will not compromise the nonpartisan political policy of the League of Women Voters.

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LWVNYS has a new address:
62 Grand Street
Albany, NY 12207

PO Box 3564, Kingston NY 12402
Telephone (845) 340-2003

Website: <http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org> E-mail: info@midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org

Prez Sez...

Greetings,

It was a squeaker but through the efforts of many of our League members, Ulster County residents have given the nod to a new form of government. Thanks especially to League member Renee Sachs who devoted the past two years to serving on the Charter committee. While those of us who supported the Charter are certainly breathing a sigh of relief and feeling of accomplishment, we must realize that there is still much work to be done. Implementation and oversight of our new government will present more challenges. Our League must be prepared to meet these demands.

But for now, as the holiday season is upon us, it is time for all of us to take a breather and relax and enjoy our families and friends. What better way to catch up on member news than to join us at our annual holiday gathering at the Moriarty's on Sunday December 17th for great food, conversation and fellowship in a beautiful setting. Happy Holidays to all of you.

Jean

Holiday Gathering

This is a reminder to you all to be present at the annual holiday gathering at John and Jacki Moriarty's. The Moriarty's have changed their front stoop and put up a railing so the house is much more accessible and as welcoming as ever. Even in a snowstorm, and we had one one year, the gathering is warm and friendly, the food is wonderful and

the company of League members is stimulating. Come one come all!



Place: 167 Apple Hill Road,
Hurley

Date: December 17

Time: 2-4 PM

Directions: Lucas Avenue to
Rolling Meadows sign, turn
right into Rolling Meadows. First
right onto Griffin Road (almost
immediate). Right on Ridgewood
Road to Apple Hill. Left on Apple
Hill to circle, house is slightly
left at top of hill.

Women as Leaders

On November 18th, the Honorable Nancy Cozean, Mayor of the City of Poughkeepsie, and Laura F. Walls, Research Director of Pattern for Progress, presented their approach to leadership in the community.

Nancy Cozean, with a background in Broadcasting Journalism and Public Relations, indicated that women have a different agenda from men, perhaps less technical, with a goal toward doing something for the community and a need to make a difference. Her local campaign in Poughkeepsie was "door to door" listening to what was most important to the citizens: truly a grassroots campaign.

Urban renewal had ripped out the historic waterfront on the Hudson River and had leveled the city in many other places. Businesses had left the city and there had been an increase in crime. What she heard from the community was their desire to improve the quality of life in the city. All of this resulted in proposals for a positive program, "Let's Rebuild Our Community"..

The campaign was successful and since assuming the office of Mayor, Nancy has been able to get the waterfront going, with mixed use now, and plans for the next aspect which will be the historical aspect. The many parks are being made more enjoyable; the crime rate has decreased; affordable housing has been increased with the renovation of the Luckey Platt building and other uptown buildings. Artists are now moving into the community, using some of the unused factories. The

many colleges surrounding Poughkeepsie are also important parts of the community.

With only 3-4% of American cities having a woman mayor, Poughkeepsie is doing well with a true visionary, who is sharing the vision of the community and making a difference.

Laura Walls, a former supervisor of the Town of New Paltz, current member of the New Paltz Board of Education, and now Research Director for Pattern for Progress, likened leadership traits to those needed in raising children, "setting high expectations for our children and also for our colleagues". Laura enjoys problem solving; when a need is seen, it is a motivation to action, an opportunity where an action makes a difference. The action must include justice.

Laura indicated that women need to strengthen themselves as they strength others. It is important to empower others to establish their goals. "We should grab the opportunity and seize it while watching what others do well and then emulate it"

Some obstacles to public service which Laura discussed might be Fear and Old Guard decision-making. There may be fear of speaking in public, fear of being wrong, fear of not being believed.

She felt that persistence and practice and not breaking down would be a help in overcoming this problem. Old guard decision making is different for women since women want to hear all parts and sides of a situation and then make a good decision. Women care what other people are thinking.

Leadership may involve power, but leadership is most important to access and to consensus building

Both Nancy Cozean and Laura Walls gave us a good insight into the thinking and actions of two outstanding women leaders in our community.

-- Emily Johnson

Charter Triumph

After working on two unsuccessful attempts to bring a charter to Ulster County in 1973 and 1989, the LWV is pleased that the charter of 2006 has succeeded. The County Charter Commission had a very open process for the past two years, with many well publicized meetings. Our own League member, Renee Sachs, represented us on the charter commission. The League studied this new charter after it was presented to the public and agreed to support it. With support from a coalition of many other community groups, the charter prevailed both in Kingston and in the rest of Ulster County. Our League did play a pivotal role in attaining that elusive goal to victory. The Charter Committee and the other League members who participated can all take pride in recognizing that we were an indispensable cog in the campaign to bring it to the people.

Now we must exercise oversight on the proper implementation of the charter and continue to educate the public on its potential to provide good government for Ulster County.

-- Renee Sachs

Voter Service and the Charter

Making my Voter Service report about this year's efforts means talking about promoting the Ulster County Charter as the two became one activity.

As part of the Charter Committee, I wanted to acknowledge the impressive efforts of the individuals of this team:

Renee Sachs—for her leadership, gracious hosting of many meetings, garage storage, limitless patience and her intimate knowledge of the Charter document, which helped us understand the considerations that led the Charter Committee to arrive at many of its choices. Renee's incredible sense of humor through all the ups, downs, and uncertainty kept us going with a wink and a smile.

Tom Kadgen—for his enthusiasm and unselfish dedication to creating a government worthy of Ulster County. Tom posted lawn signs (a lot of them), handed out brochures (a lot of them too), and spent hours at the Board of Elections observing the counting of the absentee ballots and doing whatever else came his way. He does the work of ten people with energy to spare.

Lee Cane—for taking on the entire distribution of 5,000 tri-fold Charter info brochures and Voter Guides throughout the county. I am most grateful for her assistance.

Jim McGarry—for taking care of our legal issues and web assistance as well as his

thoughtful insight into the charter document during our study.

Emily Johnson—for her good humor, common sense, enthusiasm and willingness to do whatever it took to get the job done.

Jacki Moriarty—for being the most supportive sounding board ever. She's always the voice of reason I wish I had.

Sally Colclough and the Saugerties LWV for their partnership and friendship.

Lastly, but by no means least, Gerald Benjamin, Stuart Fraser, and the Committee for Good Government for their assistance in bringing our concepts to reality.

I have been honored and humbled by the opportunity this League has provided for me to work with and learn from these wonderful people.

Now that it's official, the road to implementing the Ulster County Charter will require continued efforts to educate the public on the future form of county government and we'll be there to serve as guides through the process.

Have some time on your hands to help? Join us!

-- Cindy Bell
Voter Service Director

Good Search

Use GoodSearch.com and raise funds for LWVEF!

Earn money to support the LWVEF every time you search the web! Just log onto

www.goodsearch.com, designate the League of Women Voters Education Fund - LWV (Washington, DC) as your charity of choice, and start using GoodSearch as your primary search engine. Each time you search, a donation will automatically go to the LWVEF. GoodSearch is powered by Yahoo!, so you'll get the same high quality search results you're used to.

GoodSearch is a new search engine that donates 50% of its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to designated charities. A penny per search only adds up if all League members and friends use GoodSearch with LWVEF as their designated charity. GoodSearch recommends that participating nonprofits have a supporter base of 1,000 or more and estimates that such charities will receive \$7,300 at the end of the year if their supporters search just twice a day. The more people who use the site, the more money we'll earn. Please visit www.goodsearch.com today, designate the League of Women Voters Education Fund - LWV (Washington, DC) and start searching the Web!

Happy Holidays!

Global Warming

Global warming is a very serious threat to our environment, our health and our economy. The most recent scientific studies prove that global warming is here now and is already causing environmental changes that

will have significant economic and social impacts.

The good news is that if we act now, and act decisively, we can stop the worst effects of global warming. We can reduce global warming pollution by using existing technologies to make power plants and factories more efficient, make cars go farther on a gallon of gasoline, and shift to cleaner technologies, like wind and solar power, hybrids, cleanly-produced bio-fuels. Cities, states and individuals are already adopting many of these solutions, which also reduce our dependence on oil, reduce air pollution, and protect pristine places from oil drilling and mining. State and local initiatives are proving that answers exist.

To reinforce and expand on those efforts, we need federal action triggering solutions on a national scale. U.S. businesses can and should lead the world in developing new energy technologies, but most aren't going to without the guidance of mandatory limits.

A federal limit on global warming pollution that meets the following principles is the responsible way to ensure that we protect our environment for ourselves, our children, and future generations.

1. Guarantee global warming pollution reductions, with enforceable deadlines.

Scientists say we must begin to significantly reduce our emissions in the next 10 years and cut them by 60-80% by 2050 if we are to avert the worst consequences of global warming. Coal-fired power plants are the largest single source of such

emissions. Cars, trucks and SUVs are second. Global warming pollution from these sources is rising.

2. Promote clean and efficient sources of energy.

We can start using a number of low and zero pollution options immediately. The cleanest, fastest, and safest way to move away from dangerous sources of energy is to use energy more efficiently in our homes and vehicles. Energy efficiency reduces pollution and saves consumers money. Renewable energies like wind, solar and cleanly-produced bio-fuels reduce pollution, reduce reliance on oil and create new economic opportunities for farmers and small business.

3. Immediate action is required. If we wait, it will be too late.

We must begin to significantly reduce our emissions within 10 years if we are to limit global warming to 3.6° Fahrenheit and avoid the most dangerous impacts of global warming. The window of opportunity is closing, and the time for action is now.

In 2005 the U.S. Senate recognized that global warming is real and that the time had come for strong federal policy. As the impacts of global warming become more pervasive, it is clear that we cannot afford more delay. Our health and environment demand it.

Voting Machines Update

What kind of voting machine will we be using in our counties next year? This is the last year we can legally use the old lever machines, and Boards of Election are trying to make choices for new machines.

According to Election Data Services, 69 million voters used optical scan ballots in 2006 (40.8 percent of voters in 48.2 percent of counties in the US). Slightly fewer voters, 66.6 million used Direct Recording Equipment (DRE).

For New York State, the revised plan for certification and procurement of voting machines was made public 9/22. It called for testing from October to early December. Actual certification will occur around December 19, and counties will be notified which machines are available for them to select from. Counties will then have two weeks to make their decision, and orders are due from the counties by December 31, 2006. If the election commissioners are unable to agree, a decision will be made by the NYS Board of Elections.

The NYSBOE is doing timing studies in several places to establish the number of voters that can be served in an election by each voting system submitted for NYS certification. This will determine how many new voting machines must be purchased to replace each lever machine, establishing the number of voting machines that each New York county must purchase.

There are include three optical scan machines and two DREs submitted for certification. Three more DREs and four more optical scan machines may be added to the test for certification.

The New York Times has written editorials on the risks and costs of the DRE machines. Experts also say that DREs are more delicate and need more careful storage and handling than optical scan machines and that

they are vulnerable to hacking and vote-changing. The LWVNYS has backed optical scan machines because they have backup documentation for recounts.

Death Penalty Update

The death penalty is now on hold because one aspect of the law was struck down by the Court of Appeals in 2004. The Senate and the Governor have been trying to pass new legislation to correct that flaw and two bills were passed by the Senate. LWVNYS has distributed a memo in opposition to these bills and has urged League members to contact their legislators.

Ideas for Gifts

If your friends and family are already League members, consider sharing a League product with them as a stocking stuffer this holiday season. Leagues around the country create wonderful items like note cards, buttons, pins, tote bags, t-shirts, etc. Please check the LWVUS Web site, (Member Section, [Products Center](#)) to find a great gift.

Transportation Needed?

Some of our members find it difficult to get to our meetings because they need transportation or just want company at the meeting. This is particularly true in winter when the weather is treacherous. If you would like to ride with someone to a meeting, call Shirley Kobran at 382-6989.

If you are willing to pick someone up for a meeting, call Shirley and she will put you on a chauffeuring list.

Rides are also available to committee meetings. No one should have to stay home for lack of transportation.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I find it very disturbing that so many people in Ulster County claimed that they did not know about the Ulster County Charter or had not had time to make a decision about it. Even people I thought were well-informed in general were ignorant about the charter. Why? The Charter Commission tried to publicize it, and held hearings throughout the county. Did the local media fail to make the information public? Was the issue just not exciting enough to hold people's interest? What more can we as a League do to bring important issues to public attention? I feel we need to be much more proactive in advocating issues we think are important.

– Lee Ridgway

Membership News

After the public meeting held about the Ulster County Charter, Jacki Moriarty fell and damaged her rotator cuff. She wore a sling and could not drive for a bit, but amazingly she continued all her hard work on committees from home. She is now recuperating well, is driving herself and doing physical therapy, and appears undaunted. She is so involved in League activities and so supportive of others in the League that we are very glad that she is doing well.

Jacki tells us that one of the speakers at the meeting, Bill West, was very kind and considerate about helping her after she fell. Many thanks to him!

Another member, Renee Sachs, fell and damaged her knee very painfully. She waited until after Election Day to have arthroscopic surgery on the knee cartilage at Northern Dutchess Hospital. Election results buoyed her spirits and she is recovering well, is having physical therapy, and can see daily improvement.

Thanks to Gloria Plasker for driving Renee and to all who filled her freezer!

Let these accidents remind us all to tread carefully and be cautious in dark wet places particularly.

**A safe and Happy New
Year to you all!**

I/we wish to become members of the LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region through May 31, 2007

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (eve) _____

(day) _____

Email: _____

I/We enclose: Individual Membership (\$50) _____

Household Membership (\$65) _____

Additional gift to the LWV Education Fund (*tax deductible*):

(Send a separate check which **MUST** be payable to NYSLWV Ed Fund) \$ _____

If this is a Household Membership, please include the name and email address of additional member(s) _____

Check here if you prefer NOT to be contacted about local LWV meetings ____

Will read *Commentator* on website ____ or Please mail *Commentator* ____

**(Update the above form and return it to us with your check at
PO Box 3564, Kingston, New York 12402)**

If you know someone who might like to know more about the League of Women Voters, please send this slip with his/her name and address to: Shirley Kobran, 53 Schuler Lane, Lake Katrine, NY 12449.

We will send out information as soon as possible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Your name: _____

Do you have any comments about the League or our programs? Shirley would like to hear them too.

Be sure to visit our Advertiser's Page at
<http://lwnvy-bulletins.org/Capital Region/Mid-Hudson-2006-10-ads.pdf>