



Mid-Hudson Region Commentator

May 2006

P.O. Box 3564

Kingston, NY 12402

(845) 340-2003

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

Chris Henning, President
Shirley Kobran, Membership
Emily Johnson, Newsletter

(845)339-0509
(845)382-6989
(845)338-3554

CALENDAR

MAY

18 1:30 to 3:00 Book repair at Elizabeth's
23 7:00 to 9:00 Consensus meeting for
state study on financing
education, City Hall

JUN.

3 "Run for Women" Albany
7 7:15 to 9:15 **Date change** Board
meeting, Gloria Plasker's
10-13 National LWV convention,
Minneapolis
20 Annual meeting potluck
5:30 to 6:00 Appetizer hour
6:00 to 9:00 Dinner and business
meeting, Unitarian
Universalist Church

AUG.

26-27 9:00 to 3:00 Yard sale at Askue's

SEPT.

9 7:00 to 9:00 Charter Concurrence
meeting, Kingston City
Hall.

In this issue:

Page	Contents:
1	Calendar
2	Prez sez Yard Sale Local Studies Students Inside Albany
3	Annual meeting Finance report Election slate
4-5	Education Consensus
5-6	Lanzetta Profile
7	In Praise of Advertisers Website Update Charter Update
8	Lanzetta continued Membership news
9	Membership Forms

The Prez Sez..

Hello and Happy Spring! I hope you are planning to attend our Annual Meeting, which is a potluck supper, and please bring a friend! That's on June 20th.

Before that, there's a consensus meeting on Financing Education on May 23, 2006. I sat in on a planning meeting for the consensus presentation and I can tell you the information is definitely eye-opening.

Chris

Yard Sale Assistance

For many years the annual yard sale has been our chief fund-raising activity. Anyone who has worked on it knows that it is a tremendous job to do organizing, pricing, set up, sales and take-down. Shirley Kobran has volunteered to be the consultant, but there is a great need for assistants in all areas. In particular, we need people to recruit and schedule workers, to do the calls to members for monetary contributions, to oversee the pricing (including making sure supplies are on hand), and to put up signs to the sale on the day itself.

We expect all members to look over their things and contribute goods to the yard sale as well as to participate in the preparation and the weekend.

If you are interested in helping the League by working on the yard sale, please contact Shirley Kobran at 382-6989. Pricing in advance is 2 hours any Wednesday in June, July and August. Shifts at the sale are 2 hours either Saturday or Sunday. It's a great thing to do for the League and fun as well!

Proposed Local Studies

At the annual meeting, the membership decides what local issues it wishes to concentrate on in the coming year. This year the Board proposes two studies, one the continuation of a State study, and one a local study leading to concurrence.

'*An evaluation of the proposed Ulster County Charter* shall be undertaken for the purpose of reaching concurrence with a view to possible action.' There are plans to put the County Charter proposal on the ballot in the fall, so the League will be looking to take a position on the issue and then presenting the information to the public.

Financing Education Part II is a study of potential sources for Financing K-12 Education in New York State with a look at the appropriateness of gambling proceeds as a means of funding, and determination of whether we should take a position on charter schools. (consensus in November 2006).

Financing Education is a State study and as such does not need to be recommended at the local level, but support must be garnered to move the local study forward.

Students Inside Albany

This year we sent a Kingston High School student, Josh Soechting, to the annual state Students Inside Albany weekend. We have invited Josh to attend the annual meeting and we hope you will be able to meet him there. The Students Inside Albany program has proved very educational and interesting to the students we have sent.

Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting will take place on Tuesday, June 20th at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Sawkill Road in Kingston. To make it a little more fun, there will be a social appetizer and drinks period from 5:30 to 6:00. Anyone who chooses to bring appetizers or drinks should bring them no later than 5:15.

From 6:00 to 7:00 will be dinner, always a feast. People bringing salads, entrees or desserts are asked to bring them by 5:30 so that set up- can be complete by 6:00. Calls will be made to find out who is coming and what you are bringing. There's always plenty of food, so bring a friend and don't worry if you can't manage a dish.

From 7:00 to 9:00 is the business meeting, which includes approval of the budget, elections for officers and board members, review and approval of studies for the coming year, installation of the new president, and signups for tasks or committees you are interested in.

Be there, see a lot of old friends and meet new ones...your League needs you as much as you need it.

Finances

The year 2006 was a good year for the Finance Drive. A total of \$1810 was received from 35 members and 14 friends. After expenses, this meant \$1227.51 for any League use, and \$470 is available through the State Education Fund.

We thank everyone who contributed for their generosity. Such support does make a difference.

The reason for the distinction in contributions between the LWVNYS Education Fund and the LWV Mid-Hudson is that checks made to the LWVNYS

Education Fund are tax-deductible and the funds are available to our league for educational purposes but not for advocacy. Checks to the local league can be used for any purpose. Since much of what this chapter does is educational, we can make good use of either kind of contribution.

Lee Cane

Election Slate

This year, the following positions are to be voted on, and the people nominated to fill these positions are as follows:

President to 2008:	Jean McGarry
Secretary to 2008	Lee Ridgway
Treasurer to 2008	Dare Thompson
Finance to 2008	Margaret Sellers
Voter Service to 2008	Cindy Bell
1 st V.P. to 2007	Jacki Moriarty*
2 nd V.P. to 2007	Elizabeth Askue
3rd V.P. to 2007	Gloria Plasker
Commentator to 2007	Emily Johnson
Membership to 2007	Shirley Kobran**
Public Relations to 2007	Esther Stickley
* 1-yr. to complete Cindy Bell's term	
** Started in 2003	

Other nominations can be brought forward at the annual meeting with the permission of the nominee. Voting will take place at the annual meeting and new officers will be installed.

**Members: Don't forget the Con-
currence meeting May 23!!.**

Financing Education Consensus

Financing education is a question of great concern and importance. The LWV *New York State Voter* for April 2006 has a lot of information and summaries of various aspects of the issue, which LWV has been studying for some time, and will continue to study next year.

The questions that have been developed for this consensus are listed in the *Voter*, and there is much more explanatory material there and on the state website. The questions themselves, however, are listed below, to give members a second place to find them and think about them before the consensus meeting on May 23rd.

The questions are divided into three categories: general principles to provide all New York students with an adequate education, local taxes and targeted tax relief, and ways of raising money to provide all children with an adequate education.

Questions in category one are:

- * Should the taxes collected be progressive (making the tax burden heavier on those most able to pay) or proportional taxing all at the same percentage of income?
 - * Should similar groups of taxpayers be treated similarly to minimize special group exemptions?
 - * Should the sources of money be stable (capable of producing a steady and predictable source of income)?
 - * Should the system of raising money be simple and transparent?
 - * Should the taxes embrace the concept of transportability?
 - * Should the ways of providing money be designed to minimize adverse economic development?
- * Should the state earmark a substantial reserve fund to guarantee the revenue stream for schools in economic downturns?
 - * In the category of local taxes and tax relief, the consensus questions are the following.
 - * Should property tax relief be provided to all renters and homeowners regardless of their ability to pay?
 - * Should property tax relief be provided to all homeowners (not renters) without regard to ability to pay?
 - * Should property tax relief be based on need with people of lower income getting the most relief?
 - * Should property tax relief be based on overall local tax burden with relief provided when taxes exceed some portion of income?
 - * Should local tax relief reflect the disparity of housing costs in different parts of the state?
 - * Should taxpayers with real estate valued over a certain amount be ineligible to receive local tax relief?
 - * If limits are placed on a local tax relief program, should they be automatically adjusted to reflect changes in cost of real estate or growth of income over time?
 - * Should the definition of income used be federal income or NYS income? NYS income excludes public pensions and most social security?

- * The final area of consideration is how to raise money to provide all children with an adequate education.
- * Do you favor implementing efficiencies and educational best practices as a means of providing NYS's children with an adequate education?
- * Do you favor any or all of the following measures as a means of funding an adequate education?
 - a. Expand the definition of income for NYS personal income tax purposes to conform to federal treatment of Social Security and pension benefits?
 - b. Expand the sales tax to include certain exempted goods?
 - c. Expand the sales tax to include certain exempted services?
 - d. Expand the sales tax to include internet and distance sales?
 - e. Increase horizontal equity in business taxation?
- * Do you favor re-enactment of the stock transfer tax at a lower rate?
- * If other measures are insufficient, do you favor any or all of the following measures to make up the shortfall:
 - a. Increase the personal income tax?
 - b. Increase the statewide sales tax?
 - c. Create a statewide property tax?

Many leagues throughout the state have held or will hold consensus meetings on this important issue. You can get more information and explanation through the state league website www.lwvny.org.

Our local consensus meeting on May 23 will also go through the questions and explain the background and the implications. Although our original involvement was with the Campaign for fiscal Equity, which has been trying to get funding for the New York City schools to make it possible for them to provide an adequate education, it is clear

that there is a need for equity throughout the state, and that the question of adequate education must be addressed at least at a statewide level.

The consensus meeting will take place at Kingston City Hall at 7 PM on May 23. It will be in conference room 1, which is beside the elevator on the second floor of the building. Although non-members may come as observers, only members can vote on the consensus questions. Be there to add your insights to our collective wisdom.

Meet the Lanzettas

Talk about "dynamic duos," our League is fortunate to have as a family membership Cindy and Al Lanzetta. We offer belated congratulations to Al on his November 2005 election as Town Supervisor of Marlborough and to Cindy who was appointed Deputy Supervisor.

Cynthia was born in Wisconsin, the oldest of five children. She completed high school there and in 1974 moved to the Mid-Hudson Valley which she had visited a number of times previously. She held a series of jobs in food service; she met Al in 1983; they have been married 23 years. They have a blended family of five children of whom the youngest is 19 and off to college. The oldest is 34. None of the children are living at home.

About 19 or 20 years ago, Cindy became interested in recycling and met Shirley Kobran who sparked her involvement in solid waste management and the League of Women Voters. Under Shirley, she blossomed into a community activist. When the children became older, Cindy became an historic interpreter at Locust Grove, the home of Samuel F. B. Morse in Poughkeepsie. She became involved in

science-based children's programs and still maintains that interest.

As part of her activism, she helped initiate a grassroots organization, New Partisan Citizens for Intelligent Planning about 5 or 6 years ago as a response to the dismantling of a state-sponsored local citizen's group, the Greenway Committee, which had conceived and passed an area master plan.

Since Al holds a full-time job at the Thomas Watson IBM Research Center in Yorktown Heights, Cindy, as his deputy supervisor, handles the day-to-day operations of Marlborough until his return at 4 or 5 PM.

While she finds the world of the environment, good planning and smart growth stimulating, Cindy grew really expansive in talking about her new role as grandmother to brand new baby Evelyn in Poughkeepsie. She freely admits to their craziness as grandparents where she and Al fight over who gets to hold the baby and her threats to set a time or him.

She also sends her love to all her League friends in the Kingston area from whom the Lanzettas' time constraints have caused an absence.

Al Lanzetta was born in the Manhattan, New York, neighborhood of Harlem. His father owned a wine tavern in the Harlem area. When Al was 8 or 9 years old, his father bought an Episcopal boys and girls summer camp in Marlborough. The main house became the family summer and weekend home. Al had two half-sisters growing up. In the early 50's when New York City exercised its right of eminent domain over the Lanzetta home and business, they moved to the "country" full-time. At that time, Marlborough was a summer resort. Unfortunately, after they

had lived there for little more than a year Al's father suffered a massive heart attack and died. They lived in a rural area and Al's mother did not drive. They augmented their meager income by picking grapes, apples, berries and any other local seasonal fruit from the surrounding farms. The migrant workers' children became his friends and playmates. He said he never felt poor because his mother always produced good nutritious meals

Al attended the Marlborough school system and graduated from their high school in 1964. He took a job for about a year, then attended a trade school, the Delahanty Institute in NYC where he learned mechanical and electrical drafting and design. During that time he lived with his sister and her family.

After completing the courses, he returned to Marlborough where he worked for drafting subcontractors to IBM in LaGrange. After 3 or 4 years, IBM suffered reverses and he returned to Marlborough and entered the local labor union. After a few years he became a draftsman and eventually a designer. Al (cont. p.8)

In Praise of Advertisers

You may notice that we have a number of new advertisers. It is time to thank the new and continuing advertisers for their support of our *Commentator*. Printing and mailing the newsletter is not inexpensive, and the revenue from the advertisers helps us to be able to afford to do it.

Our advertisers not only deserve our thanks but our support. When you go to one of the advertised businesses, please mention that you are a League member and thank them for their advertising. We want them to be assured that their support of us is reciprocated by our patronage.

Look over the ads and see who you patronize now and who you might choose to patronize in the future. Toys, produce, restaurants, accountants, jewelry, all kinds of goods and services are represented. Use them and thank them, and meanwhile the *Commentator* editor thanks them all.

Web Site Update

Members who have Internet access can make good use of it to get information from and about the LWV and its doings. We post the newsletter on the website each month, and when we can provide more information about a topic in the newsletter, we do that on the website. If members can get their newsletters from the website rather than through the mail, it saves us printing and postage costs and provides a vehicle for expanded information such as updates on local and state studies. Let us know if you would like the *Commentator* online or if you have information you would like posted on the

website, or if you have suggestions for things that should be put on the website.

Please be assured that anyone who does not have Internet access—or doesn't want to use it—can still get all LWV information in print. Our goal is to get the most information to the most people in the most convenient way for them.

Charter Update

The Ulster County charter has now advanced from preliminary to final draft status and has been submitted by the Charter Commission to the Ulster County Legislature which can amend it or otherwise change it before it is submitted to the voters on the November 2006 ballot.

A major change by the Commission for the final draft reflects the Legislators' preference for a 2 year term (not 4) with the entire body standing for election at the same time (not staggered).

A key feature remains eliminating the current elective office of Treasurer and replacing it with an elected Comptroller responsible for auditing. A Department of Finance Would be accountable to the County Executive.

Other items: an Ethics Board which can investigate ethical concerns on its own, a Compensation Review Board to meet periodically, mandated periodic charter review, and an Inter-Municipal Collaboration Council to foster communication and cooperation among public entities. Boards will be expected to include both political parties and the public.

Lanzetta (cont.)
then took a job with a farm in Hopewell Junction. His design work became more specialized as he encompassed CAD, and he found himself working through his company with IBM in Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, and Kingston for 20 years. He was offered a job directly with IBM in 1988 and became an engineer scientist at the Scientific Research Center at Yorktown. He attended DCCC for courses in Mathematics and has attained the Eighth Level Plateau based on his inventions and papers. He also holds 24 or 25 US patents.

Al says Cindy "opened his life to the world and the environment." A year after their marriage they made a commitment to Christianity. They attend Christ Episcopal Church in Marlborough.

Al became interested in politics about the time Cindy was co-founding the Citizens for Intelligent Planning. He became interested in public access TV and started filming town meetings. The Town board was not happy with this and started hassling him but local people started watching and were dismayed at what they saw. Politics started to change. Al was offered the chair-manship of the local Democratic Party of which Cindy was secretary.

Eventually he accepted and then ran for town supervisor. He credits his board election not only to the local Democrats but many Republicans who felt the need for change. The town board now consists of two Democrats and 3 Republicans.

Between his two-hour commute each day and his duties as Supervisor and doting grandfather, we both agreed Al doesn't need much sleep.

Renee Sachs

Membership News

Shirley Kobran is receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award from the United Jewish Federation at its meeting on June 6 at 7:00 PM at Temple Ahavath Israel in Kingston. Those who know Shirley know it is richly deserved, and we all congratulate her! Because of this award, the LWV board meeting is being moved to June 7.

League members volunteered to help at the Women's Health Expo on May 6th, and had a signup sheet for people who would like more information about the League. Amazingly, we had 115 people sign the sheet, thanks to Shirley's persuasive manner and the good things the League has done and is doing. We all need to promote the LWV whenever and wherever we can.

Membership Forms

Membership Application

Join now for membership to 6/07.

Fill out the following fields and mail with the appropriate size check to the LWV Treasurer,
PO Box 3564, Kingston, NY 12402.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-Mail: _____

New ____ **or Renewal** ____

Family membership: \$65. ____

Individual member: \$50. ____

Phone about meetings __yes__ no

Send e-mail notices __yes__ no

Extra contribution: \$ ____

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution, please make out a separate check payable to the LWWNYS Education fund. Our chapter can use this money for educational programs.

The Commentator is available on our website. Do you need a copy mailed to you? __yes__ no

If you know someone who might like to know more about the League of Women Voters, please give us his or her name and address and send this slip to:

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

We will send out information as soon as possible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Your name: _____

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

ABOUT THE LEAGUE

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

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.

LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region

We cover 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.

Board of Directors

President	Christine Henning	338-0509
1st Vice-President	Cindy Bell	
2nd Vice-President and Program Chair	Gloria Plasker	338-8079
3rd Vice-President and Observer Corps	Elizabeth Askue	338-1667
Secretary	Lee Ridgway	339-4927
Treasurer	Jean McGarry	336-6622
Commentator Editor	Emily Johnson	338-3554
Finance Director	Lee Cane	338-0706
Membership	Shirley Kobran	382-6989
Public Relations	Jacki Moriarty	331-3418
Publications	Emilie Hauser	(off Board)
Voters Service	Jill Hudler	(off Board)
Web master	Jim McGarry	(off-board)
Dutchess Unit Coordinator	Ellie Charwat	