



Mid-Hudson Region *Commentator* September, 2007

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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		
SEPTEMBER		
18	6 to 8:30 pm	Kickoff Salad supper at Unitarian Universalist church Vote today -- Primary Day!
OCTOBER		
2	7:15 to 9:15	Board meeting at Jacki's
10		Deadline for October Commentator
13		Cindy to appear on Jodi McTeague show
18	12:30 to 3:30	Card party at Kingston Area Library
27	11:00 to 12:30	Open Meeting with DA candidates at City Hall
NOVEMBER		
7	7:15 to 9:15	Board meeting at Jacki's Election Day – Go Vote
17	9:30 to noon	Brunch and “Women as Leaders” meeting at Ulster Savings Bank
DECEMBER		
4	7:15 to 9:15	Board Meeting at Gloria's
9	2:00 to 4:00	Holiday gathering at Jacki'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 ... that such activity will not compromise the nonpartisan political policy of the LWV.

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Prez Sez...

Greetings,

It's that time of year again. Elections and politics abound. Sometimes the messages are not always that clear. To help you keep it all straight is the League of Women Voters. Debates are planned, moderating is being scheduled and questionnaires are being prepared to send out to local candidates. Candidate responses will be posted on our League web site to give our local voters an opportunity to personally meet the candidates without leaving their home. It is a busy time for the League but it is a most rewarding time for us. This is what we do best- getting information out so that more individuals will become more active in the political process.

And so I end with what has become my mantra. Many hands make light work. If you have been on the sidelines and wish to become a more active member, this is the time to jump in lightly. We need timers for moderating, observers for public meetings and individuals who could periodically give some time to help out with committee work. It's an exciting time for us. Be part of the action.

Jean

Kickoff Salad Supper

The salad supper at the Unitarian Universalist Church on September 18th gave us a time to kick off this year's programs and priorities. Because this newsletter is coming out so late, it cannot announce what will happen at the supper. Next month we will tell you what did happen. I hope that members

did in fact bring friends and that there was a good sharing of food and ideas. There is so much work that the League should do locally, and we need to have the people and the enthusiasm to do it.

Yard Sale

Last year, we said we wouldn't have another yard sale because it took too many resources. This year Emilie Hauser had a yard sale, and we were invited to participate and help, which we did. The sale has so far brought in \$934.62 which Emilie is giving to the League, and she tells us there may be more as she is continuing the yard sale (without us).

Many, many thanks to Emilie for her generosity and her hard work to hold this sale. Thanks also to the League members who helped with the sale.

Fund Raising Party

October 18th, 12:30 to 3:30, there will be a card and game party at the Kingston Area Library to raise funds for the League. Admission is \$12.00 if you register in advance or \$15.00 if you pay at the door. Cards (even poker) and Scrabble will be available, and members may bring other games they would like to play. There will be finger-food desserts to eat before or during play.

Register by calling the League telephone, 340-2003.

Local Studies

The local study on the future of the Golden Hill facility has been meeting on a regular basis and has plans to interview appropriate officials. For meeting times and places call Jacki Moriarty.

The study on Vote-by-Mail has been waiting for decisions to be made at the state level and will meet again when it can be usefully active.

The study on local regulations and permit requirements and the effects on local economic development is being organized. If you are interested in joining, call Margaret Sellers.

Pay Equity News

Pay equity is an issue in which the League has a long-standing position. The New York State Pay Equity Coalition has invited Gloria Steinem to Albany to bring attention and support to the issue of pay equity and to push for passage of the NYS Fair Pay Act. Ms. Steinem will spend the day in Albany on April 2, 2008. There will be a town hall meeting open to the public (time and location to be announced) as well as meetings with legislators, a press event, and a fundraiser. For more information, contact Barbara Smith: bsm3835992@aol.com, (518)436-1279

Or

Lois Haignere, haigner@nycap.rr.com, (518) 464-0991.

You may want to put the date on your calendar now to make sure you keep it open. If there is interest, we might organize a carpool to attend.

Judiciary in New York

The Fund for Modern Courts will host an event with the Hyde Park Library on Wednesday September 19 from 12:30–2:30. Lunch will be served.

The event includes a discussion on the role of Justice Courts in New York State and a training session for members of the community who wish to be part of a local court monitoring program in Dutchess County. The court monitoring program trains local residents in court procedures and requests that they attend local court sessions and comment on, for example, court facilities, audibility of the proceedings, security, and civil and criminal cases. Monitoring offers local residents an opportunity to gain knowledge of the courts; most importantly, their observations are critical to improve the courts and ensure public confidence in the court system.

The Fund for Modern Courts is a non partisan, not for profit organization. Part of its mission is to ensure an independent and highly qualified judiciary and a court system that provides equal access to justice for all New Yorkers.

For more information, call Kim Robinson at 212-541-6741 ext. 111 or e-mail at Robinson@moderncourts.org

Or

Cheri Gifford at 845-471-1480 or PGiffordjr@aol.com.

The date for the luncheon and training has passed, but you might want to find out more about the Fund for Modern Courts, as the League is also interested in justice.

Men of the League: Tom Kadgen

Tom Kadgen was born into an Irish working class family in the South Bronx. He attended the local public schools and after graduation from Samuel Gompers High School he enlisted in the US Army. In Tom's inimitable way, he chucklingly related that he knew he had made a big mistake after the first twenty-four hours. However, he completed a three-year tour of duty in communications "laying wire through woods" as he puts it. He was in the service during exciting times, 1961-4, which was the era of the Berlin Crisis and the tearing down of the wall. After his discharge, he immediately became an employee of the New York Telephone Company. Tom became an office technician which meant he fixed telephone equipment inside an office or home. He retired after twenty-eight tooth-gritting years.

Shortly before his retirement he started earning a bachelor's degree from SUNY Empire State. He completed his B.S. in human services with the expectation of becoming a psychotherapist. He attended a psychoanalytic institute in NYC for about six years, but somehow never went into private practice.

During the time he lived in NYC he met his wife, Georgette, who is a native of Budapest, Hungary/ Tom added with pride "She is a master wood carver. They have been married for twenty-one years.

The Kadgens found a cottage in Shokan which lured them to Ulster County. Once they became residents Tom was hired as a member of the county's Community Corrections Program as a case manager. He was able to incorporate

his psychoanalytic training in helping with his clients. Tom did this work, which essentially was an alternatives to incarceration program for ten years.

After retiring again, he discovered a real interest in the work of the League of Women Voters, which he found adopted relevant studies which were pursued in an objective manner and in which the League had no stake in the outcome except to improve the system. So Tom Kadgen became a member of the League in the fall of 1999 and was attracted to the Balancing Justice study and program led by Jacki Moriarty.

About this time he began to attend meetings of the Ulster County Legislature and its Efficiency and Reform Committee. Tom not only listened, but with the legislators' permission, he began recording their sessions. His recordings proved invaluable to the committee itself in case of disputes over precisely what had been said by whom. They grew to respect the gentleman from the League of Women Voters who usually appeared in a gray suit, always with a shirt and tie, who comported himself so well and gave equal deference to both parties.

Tom became interested in the proposed Ulster County Charter and after the League took a position in support of it, Tom served on the League's Charter Support Committee. During the campaign Tom was invaluable, devoting countless hours of his time and energy to monitor distribution and placement of materials.

From June 2004 to February 2007 he attended meetings of the County Jail Oversight Committee. When the Special

Committee for the Jail Investigation was established, Tom volunteered to serve as a member of the League and the committee welcomed him. His major contribution was spending 30-40 hours a week with special investigator John Mavretich reading through "tens of thousands of documents."

When the committee submits its report on or within a few days of September 17, Tom feels that they will have proved that dedicated individuals can make a difference. We are very proud of him.

Observer Corps

We have a group of people who attend legislative full and committee meetings on a regular basis. We have found it very interesting and useful. We are only there as observers, but our reports in the *Commentator* have given us all insights.

Currently, we have people attending Ways and Means, Charter Transition, Human Development, Health, Vote by Mail, Efficiency and Reform, the full legislature meetings, Mental Health Community Services, and others.

People are also attending Common Council and School Board meetings. We need more people to volunteer for several reasons: we are not covering all the committees we should have an interest in, it is helpful to have more than one person attend meetings to compare impressions, and it gives backup if someone is unable to attend their meeting. It also adds visibility and credibility to the League.

If you wish to be part of the corps, call Margaret Sellers at 339-3180. You can always find the legislative schedule on the county website.

Current Issues Across Committees

Many committees have been wondering about the implications of the County Executive position on their jurisdiction and functioning. Planning for future years and entering into long-term contracts have been difficult because it has not yet been spelled out exactly what authority and responsibility they will have under the new charter. The charter transition committee is working on a new administrative code, and when that is complete the future should be much clearer.

The other issue being faced by all committees is finances. Keeping budgets down and services at acceptable levels is on the mind of every legislator and legislative committee.

As observers of all the committees' deliberations perhaps we can see more common ground among legislators.

Charter Transition Committee

The committee met on August 28, and will meet again September 25. Robert Parete was unable to attend; all other members were present.

Considerable work has been done on arranging the charter to make it more readable and a table of contents has been added. Codification is proceeding, with the legislative section being done first. The Ethics Law has been reviewed by the county deputy attorney, Ms. Havranek and has come back to the committee with her comments. The Administrative Code is being worked on and it is expected that it will be posted on the website when it is completed. Copies of the draft were

distributed, along with the Sullivan County Administrative Code as an example.

The organization chart will be addressed at a meeting September 10. Marianne Collins will facilitate the discussion. Topics to be discussed include determining how the organizational chart should be drawn, whether there will be deputy department heads, which departments will report to whom, what departments should be consolidated, and other matters of concern.

Current department heads were asked some time ago to send their reactions and comments to the charter to the transition committee. To date, sixteen departments have responded and the coordinated responses were distributed.

Another inquiry and request will be made to the state concerning the \$25,000 in expenses incurred by the charter transition committee. That money could not be put in the 2007 budget as the filing was done too late, but the committee agreed that the chairman should file a duplicate request to go into the 2008 budget.

The committee discussed whether a transition plan should be made and made available prior to the 2008 election so that those running for office under the new charter could be aware of the implications of the new charter that they would have to deal with. No agreement was reached as to whether there should be a transition plan or what it should look like if written; the committee agreed that listening to the Chataqua County Executive on this matter would be in order. This will take place at the next regular committee meeting.

Ms. Collins advised the committee that she had reviewed how the Ulster County Community College budget was developed. It is approved by the Board of Trustees, presented to the Legislature for approval, and automatically put in the annual budget. The County Executive would therefore not have a formal role in developing the budget, but it was suggested that he or she might have an informal role.

Blue Ribbon Health Care Panel

The panel met on August 13, and met as the subcommittee dealing with the potential future appearance of the county nursing home. The meeting determined topics for which they needed to gather records and reports to inform their deliberations.

Human Development Committee

This committee met August 14, and lasted from 6:15 to 8:50. The next meeting was scheduled as the budget hearing on August 22.

The resolution dealing with the county takeover of the Safety Net Program was discussed, and Mike Hein explained that it would be phased in over a seven year period. The resolution was approved by the committee (not unanimously) and the opinion was expressed that there were enough votes in the full legislature to approve it.

Commissioner Rodriguez request for hiring additional Child Protective Services workers was reviewed. The committee directed that Commissioner Rodriguez should meet with and talk to the joint caucus meeting and explain the financial impact, the need for the additional staff and the requirement to meet state directions to lower the number of cases each worker must handle.

The Youth Bureau director noted that its board is nearing completion of its Strategic Report regarding goals which all funded programs must meet; the Boys/Girls Clubfunded programs by county will do a survey for work dealing with the prevention of gangs.

Commissioner Rodriguez will discuss the Medicaid local share point and the usage of the sales tax at the joint caucus meeting. A representative from the NYS Association of Counties will be invited to speak regarding this matter at the caucus as well.

The discussion of how Family was to be paid for providing supervised visitations at the direction of the Family Court was

raised again. There are two points that needed to be addressed: how to provide the \$20,000 for payment to Family in 2007 as a short term problem, and long term, where does the financing for this service belong in the future? These questions will be discussed at the budget hearing on August 22nd.

The ACCESS program was discussed. Commissioner Rodriguez had received the report on the program from the state. The state report on the program had been received and he was not sure that the county could meet the recommendations in the report. He was asked to deliver it to President Katt at UCCC nad legislators S. Zimet and H. Rodriques. Commissioner Rodriguez indicated that the recommendations were that there be more certificate programs targeted to jobs and the job market and that there should be more case management. He will meet with college personnel on August 22nd.

As the last item of business, chairman Peter Kraft distributed the LWV brochure to the committee and acknowledged the work the League has been doing. He noted that a member of the LWV Observer Corps attended the committee meetings, and he spoke of Tom Kadgen's dedicated work with criminal justice and with the Jail Oversight Committee.

Membership News

Congratulations to **Emily Johnson** who was honored by CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates of Ulster County) for her valuable service to children as a school nurse teacher, a CASA volunteer since 1998, and a mother and grandmother active with Girl Scouts, YMCA, Ulster County Youth Board, the Kingston Library, the Kingston School Board, and BOCES. CASA works for abused and neglected children, working to ensure that these children get the services they need and that each child finds a safe and permanent home.

Lee Cane's husband, Len Cane, has just had heart bypass surgery and is reported to be doing well. Len has supported the League and has served as moderator for many events. We wish him a swift recovery, and send best wishes to Lee while she is looking after his recuperation.

Jacki Moriarty will be on vacation for the first two weeks of October, and the board members are doing phone-answering in her place. Jacki has been wearing many hats in the League, and we hope she gets to rest on her vacation!

Vivi Hlavsa has had knee replacement surgery, which does not seem to have slowed her down for long.

Lee Ridgway is having knee surgery. The September *Commentator* is out late because of her preparing for surgery, and for this she apologizes. The October *Commentator* will be out in as timely a manner as possible. Any material that you wish to have printed should be e-mailed to lwlee@cs.com or mailed to 19 Johnston Avenue, Kingston, NY 12401.

Help Wanted

Somebody needs to write up the September meeting and the discussion that was held. Please volunteer! Let Emily Johnson know if you can help.

We still need people for the Observer Corps. Margaret Sellers is the contact.

The *Commentator* needs a committee on a permanent basis and there is a range of help needed:

- ?? Mailing the issues—pasting them (instead of stapling), stamping, addressing, and delivering them to the county office building and the Kingston City Hall.
- ?? Writing or finding interesting material to improve editorial content.
- ?? Being responsible for getting material from one or more particular people (that's nagging once a month).
- ?? Reporting on meetings and events.
- ?? Gathering Observer Corps reports.
- ?? Acquiring membership news.

Being a League member is more fun if you are active and work with others!

I/we wish to join the LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region through May 31, 2008

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: Betty Chin, 69 The Hills Port Ewen, NY 12466
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>