



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

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Commentator

August/September 2017

2017	Special Notes	
August		
22	1:45-3:30 PM	Book Club Meeting Club at Enzo's Pizzeria, Boices Lane, Lake Katrine. We will be discussing <i>Thank You for Being Late</i> by Thomas L. Friedman.
22	6:00 PM	Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Rd, Hurley, NY 12443.
September		
5	5:30 PM	Materials Management (Solid Waste) Study Committee at the Main Course Restaurant, 175 Main Street, New Paltz, NY 12561. For more information, contact Kathy OConnor at (845) 757-2247 or occonnor.kraye@gmail.com .
15	11:00 AM	Naturalization Ceremony, Ulster County Court House, 285 Wall St., Kingston.
26		National Voter Registration Day
26	1:45-3:30 PM	Book Club Meeting Club at Enzo's Pizzeria, Boices Lane, Lake Katrine. We will be discussing <i>Crisis of the Republic</i> by Hannah Arendt.
26	6:00 PM	Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Rd, Hurley, NY 12443.
October		
3	5:30 PM	Materials Management (Solid Waste) Study Committee at the Main Course Restaurant, 175 Main Street, New Paltz, NY 12561. For more information, contact Kathy OConnor at (845) 757-2247 or occonnor.kraye@gmail.com .
7	11 AM - 3 PM	Feeding the Hudson Valley at Walkway over the Hudson. LWVMHR Materials Management Committee will be volunteering to help stop food waste. For more information, contact Kathy OConnor at (845) 757-2247 or occonnor.kraye@gmail.com .

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Prez Sez

Last Prez Sez,

To all of you who have relied on the commentator to keep you up to date on the local activities of the League of Women Voters, we apologize for discontinuing this service. However, we will be continuing our website presence, expanding our presence on Facebook, and keeping you informed via regular emails. And of course we will still call you to let you know about upcoming events.

As the world becomes faster and communication more instantaneous, we are trying to be in step and provide news as it happens.

If you have not joined facebook, it is relatively easy and painless. You may use your membership just to follow the League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region. While you are there, you could also reach out to the State League and the National League. It is a great communication tool, and we try to post photos of League members appearing at demonstrations, important local political events, and information about the 100th anniversary of women gaining the right to vote.

Thank you for your commitment to a more informed voter public over the many years and many changes.

Jolanda Jansen

Membership News**Book Club**

The next three dates for the book club are:, and September 26th.

On July 25th we repeated Noam Chomsky, *Who Rules the World*.. On August 22nd, we discussed *Thank You for Being Late* by Thomas L. Friedman and on September 26th we'll discuss *Crisis of the Republic* by Hannah Arendt.

Daisy Tyler

VOTER SERVICE

Moderating Guidelines: *Guidelines for moderating and sponsorship of candidates' events by the League are on our website at <http://lwvmidhudson.org/Moderating.html> or from the [Home](#) page and the [Elections](#) page.*

National Voter Registration Day is September 26. Our league is registered as a participant and we are in the process of confirming voter registration tables at area colleges. Please look for a future e-mail for details on volunteering on this day. It is our hope to expand our voter registration efforts throughout the year. Beyond registering voters, this is an opportunity to serve the public, answering many questions related to voting. Feeling like you may not be up to the task? Not to worry. As a volunteer, you will be provided extensive voter information and FAQ's to prepare you for any questions that may arise. As in past years, we have again partnered with the New York Alliance for Donation to inform registrants that they have the opportunity to register as an organ donor when they register to vote. One donor can save the lives of 8 people through organ donation. Our league also receives a small stipend for participating in this program.

As I write this, after many years of chairing voter service, I am prepared to hand over the torch to allow me to focus on other league endeavors such as program, action and membership. Voter service is key to our league and I look forward to still being involved in this committee by participating in voter registration drives and moderating. Hope to see some of you!

Jean

**Electoral Reform
Committee**

Electoral Reform Committee held its second meeting July 18th. Kate Hymes was able to report on her conversation with Ulster County Board of Elections Commissioner Thomas Turco. He expressed satisfaction with current voter registration efforts and outreach but said there was confusion with some residents on the county borders who may have postal addresses outside the county. He also cited duplicate registration among students and said the DMV was not a reliable source of registrations. Kate noted that there is only a small staff at the Board of Elections. She continues to try to talk with

Commissioner Victor Work, though as of time of writing, he has retired and Ashley Dittos will be taking over his responsibilities.

The committee agreed to develop a press release to be distributed to press and to local political activist groups as well as through social media and flyers, publicizing and emphasizing the deadlines for voter registration for the 2017 election and for eligibility to vote in party primaries in 2018. Members expressed interested in volunteering to help League voter registration efforts on Voter Registration Day - September 26th. Next meeting will be in early September, date to be announced.

Gai Galitzine

STUDY AND ADVOCACY

Action

At Citizen Action's march on August 12th were Jacki Moriarity, Susan Holland, Nora Scherer, Merrill Sunderland and her dad, Adrienne Schorr and two of her friends, Vic Melville, as well as myself and friend. The signs that Nora S. so artfully crafted were well received by all, as was our enthusiasm for participating in the event. Susan's friend Pam (a member of Citizen Action) also deftly displayed one of our signs. An hour of speakers and poetry recitation preceded the march through midtown Kingston.

I felt good about all but one of the chants we shouted to the community as we marched about town. Think it was constructive for us to add our presence and our voice to this group (Citizen Action) that does so much for the community. Mission accomplished

(submitted by *Kathy O'Connor* 845-757-2247)



Nora Scherer in Red, Jacki Moriarty and on the other side of Jacki, Susan Holland



Adrienne Schorr and Kathy Oconnor

LWVMHR Materials Management Committee

This may be the last you'll hear of the "Materials Management" Committee. We're working on changing our name. We've been approved by the LWVMHV Board to expand the scope of our environmental considerations, and are polling our Committee members to come up with a new name that readily explains our interest not only in the reduction, reuse and recycling of materials, but also concerns with regard to climate change, energy conservation, air pollution, and soil and water protection.

We've vowed to become more interested in local activism groups, not only to support their objectives, but perhaps to find kindred spirits to join our efforts with regard to the environment. And so we shall.

We're going to march with Citizen Action of the Hudson Valley on August 12, to support their voice for a more just budget from the current administration. (See note* below.) And we're going to attend their meeting on August 23rd to hear what Democratic candidates throwing their hats in the ring for the 19th Congressional District might have to say about their goals for the environment and other issues. At that event, we're going to help any attendees with information on registering to vote.

Other groups that we're interested in partnering with are The Earth Guardians, the Coalition Against the Pilgrim Pipeline, the Mid-Hudson Citizens' Climate Lobby, the AAUW, Scenic Hudson, Riverkeeper, Clearwater, and many others. There's only so much we can do, but we'll do our best, and invite your participation with us.

We'll continue to meet on the first Tuesday of the month, at the Main Course Restaurant in New Paltz. Please join us at 5:30 p.m. if you can.

(submitted by *Kathy O'Connor* 845-757-2247)

ULSTER COUNTY OBSERVER CORP

Laws and Rules, Governmental Services Committee

June 19, 2017

Present:: all Committee Members as well as the following legislators; Ken Ronk, MannaJo Greene, Jennifer Schwartz-Berky and two county attorneys.

There were 6 resolutions discussed.

Highlights were as follows:

Resolution #411 Setting a Public Hearing on a Local Law Amending the Ulster County Charter to Amend the Powers and Duties of the Ulster County Human Rights Commission to be held on June 20, 2017.

Resolution #412 Setting a Public Hearing on a Local Law Establishing a Comprehensive Ulster County Human Rights Law to be held on June 20, 2017.

Resolution #11 Requesting the NYS Legislature Introduce Home Rule Legislation to Establish That the Jurisdiction of the Ulster County Commission on Human Rights , In Relation to Matters within the County , Be Concurrent with the Jurisdiction of the NYS Commission on Human Rights.

The sponsor of the preceding three items requested that they all be voted on at the same time and the discussion centered around the fact that there are parts of one that mentioned 'police powers' and some were not convinced that Ulster County has the authority to enact the law. Others felt that if punitive powers were given to 'well meaning volunteers' or non-elected personnel, that there may be trouble. Legislative counsel stated that if all three were passed before NYS allows #11, the point may be moot. It was felt that the Legislature might have to wait for NYS to reply to issues rather than having a local law in place for immediate action. Eventually, the sponsor permitted the committee to pass all three separately.

Resolution #448 Setting a Public Hearing Prohibiting Discrimination on the basis of Gender Identity at Places of Public Accommodation, Resort or Amusement.

This item passed with a comment that the committee is specifically looking for expertise in the area of civil rights that might assist in the process.

Resolution #281 Setting a Public Hearing on the Ulster County comprehensive Campaign Finance Reform and Accountability Law.

It was felt that more time to review was needed before setting a public hearing and that the Director of Purchasing should be present to discuss it so the resolution was postponed. It was also noted that comments were requested by local Good Government Groups with no response. [I did say we have looked at the law, but had not communicated our thoughts and that I would follow up with our local LWV.]

Resolution #283 Approving Home Rule Request Authorizing the Ulster County Sheriff to serve as an

**Laws and Rules,
Governmental Services
Committee**

Additional Firearms Licensing Officer.

A Home Rule Request has been sent to NYS lawmakers so that this issue can be enacted and a letter has been sent asking for action on this. There is support by the Sheriff and judges, who are overloaded with requests for firearms licenses. There is a question of timeliness for this process. The Sheriff already signs amendments to current licensees for additional firearms. The resolution was postponed pending response by state legislators.

Cindy Bell

August 14, 2017

Present: all Committee Members as well as the following legislators; Ken Ronk, MannaJo Greene, Jennifer Schwartz-Berky and Majority Counsel.

Additionally, LWV member Jennifer Clark, as well as two representatives of UCAT and 4 representatives of CSEA were present.

Resolution #281 Setting a Public Hearing on the Ulster County comprehensive Campaign Finance Reform and Accountability Law.

Discussion included the fact that this law doesn't prevent active contractors from contributing to campaigns except in election years ("pay to play for three years"). The CSEA attorney pointed out that they object based on the fact that as an organization, they are quite limited in their ability to support their chosen candidate, even though they represent the interests of thousands. Some legislators are concerned that \$2,000 (\$1000 plus matching grant from the county) won't be enough, though there is evidence that very few candidates spend more than that. Another noted that if the county's resources are lean, this money may not be available. The idea was floated that this law may need a subcommittee to further study it. There is a meeting scheduled to discuss it outside the committee meeting.

Comment was made by one legislator that it didn't seem as if the LWV representatives who publicly endorsed the County Executive's proposed law had, in fact, read it.

Resolution #320 Adopting Proposed Local Law Amending the Ulster County Charter to Amend the Powers and Duties of the Ulster County Human Rights Commission.

Resolution #321 Adopting Proposed Local Law Establishing a Comprehensive Ulster County Human Rights Law.

Both resolutions 320 & 321 were discussed and voted on together. It was noted that there was a good public hearing on the matter and that it was felt that these laws were not ready, noting that there is no executive director (leadership), that the penalties are too high, that there is a possibility that ill-equipped volunteers would be appointed to the committee and other issues. The measures were defeated in committee. A three member subcommittee was created to further work on the laws. The resolutions were postponed.

Resolution #322 Adopting Proposed Local Law Prohibiting Discrimination on the basis of Gender Identity at Places of Public Accommodation, Resort or Amusement

This issue generated a lively discussion regarding the possible formation of a "super protected class", as the penalties for this population are more severe than other types of discrimination and there may be more problems with enforcement as well as the time of enactment and other issues regarding current laws already on the books to protect all people discriminated against. A compromise was offered leaving the penalty section out and noting that unresolved issues would be referred to NYS while still spotlighting the problem and showing support for transgender individuals. It was felt that this would take any real effectiveness from the local law and it would seem to become a memorializing resolution, which is no longer permitted. The compromise was rejected and motion to postpone failed. The resolution failed.

Resolution #323 Adopting Proposed Local Law Repealing the Wireless Communications Surcharge.

This resolution did not generate much discussion outside of the fact that NYS was giving the counties back the same surcharge amount that they were collecting. There is a new state surcharge on wireless services that surpasses and supplants the county surcharge. The effect will be net zero to consumers. The resolution passed unanimously.

Resolution #340 Adopting the Principles of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations as the Policy of Ulster County.

This law codifies the governor's position. One legislator spoke of his support of this rather than individually writing laws against discrimination and spoke of respect, dignity and protection of all. It was pointed out that this policy only covers employment and that NYS does not make county policy. An

amendment was proposed in the wording of the document to reflect Ulster County and the amendment was passed.

Late Resolution #342 Appointing-- Commissioner of Elections

Note was made that the new Commissioner has not attended any meetings of the Legislature nor of this committee and has already made some changes that may not be positive ones, but the resolution passed. It was also noted that election night reporting has become very slow since results now have to be picked up from the Sheriff before being posted (rather than the call-in results of the past, which were posted immediately).

Late Resolutions #343 & 344 regarding County Bus Transportation. (Wording not available)

There is a 1.5 million dollar grant being applied for that can be used for capital projects only. It could be used for the following; to purchase a 36' bus; wifi for the buses and improvements to the facility parking lot. The county's responsibility is 10% or \$150,000. The resolutions passed unanimously after discussion of the value of Ulster County's rural transportation services.

Personal note:

I observed two legislators texting one another during this meeting with very little effort to disguise their activity. It is an interesting way to communicate without being understood, but may be a bit off-putting to the excluded members, although they had the good manners not to mention it. This is something that may have to be addressed in the future, since those comments cannot be noted in the minutes, even though they were certainly part of the meeting conversation.

This may be my final written report, but I intend to continue attending meetings and following this committee's activities. I can tell you that I won't miss writing this, but will take notes and report worthwhile commentary to the LWV board and any other interested parties. Company is welcome—it's always a pleasure to see fellow League members.

Cindy Bell

And so the sun sets on the last edition of our Commentator

