



# Commentator

## DECEMBER 2014

*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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WE WELCOME THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT ALL EVENTS!		
2014		
December		
4	Thurs. 3 PM	<b>Resource Development Committee</b> , home of Shirley Kobran, 53 Schuler Lane, Lake Katrine. 845-382-6989 for directions.
4	Thurs., 6 PM	<b>LWV MHR BOARD Meeting</b> , home of Shirley Kobran (see above). <b>Note early start time.</b> Light supper included.
5	10:45 AM	<b>Naturalization Ceremony</b> , at the Ulster County Courthouse, 285 Wall St, Kingston, NY 12401. Contact Jean McGarry, 336-6622 / <a href="mailto:jfmcg@hvc.rr.com">jfmcg@hvc.rr.com</a> for more information and to volunteer. (Or just show up!).
5	Fri., 10:30 AM	<b>TERM LIMITS</b> study group, home of Nan Fogel, 141 Fulton Ave., Apt 311, Poughkeepsie (near Vassar), <a href="mailto:nancyfogel@yahoo.com">nancyfogel@yahoo.com</a> or 845-337-3027 for directions.
6	Sat., 10 - noon	<b>CONSENSUS</b> meeting on <b>BALLOT ACCESS</b> , Kingston City Hall, 420 Broadway, Kingston. Parking in rear.
9	Tues., 5:30 PM	<b>Materials Management (Solid Waste)</b> study group, Gateway Diner, 3579 Rt 9W, Highland (just north of Mid-Hudson Bridge, across from Burger King)
15	<b>Mon. 8:30 – 9 AM</b>	<b>Listen</b> to LWV members on Kingston Community Radio on WGHQ, AM 920. Go to <a href="http://www.mykcr.org">www.mykcr.org</a> to listen to it on your computer. Call 845-331-1004 to ask a question or make a comment.  We are guests every 3rd Monday of the month from 8:30 – 9 pm. State Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk is usually on during the half hour
16	Tues. 2 PM	<b>Book Discussion on Joseph Stiglitz's <u>The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future</u></b> . Enzo's Ristorante & Pizza, 207 Boices Lane at Enterprise Ave., Kingston. Call Enzo's at 845-383-3696 for directions. For more about the book see <a href="https://www0.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty/jstiglitz/">https://www0.gsb.columbia.edu/faculty/jstiglitz/</a>
17	Wed., 10:30 AM	<b>Shared Services</b> study group, home of Ellie Charwat, 7 Creek Bend Rd., Poughkeepsie. 845-462-7061 or <a href="mailto:echarwat@yahoo.com">echarwat@yahoo.com</a> for directions.
2015		
January		
6	Tues., 7:15 PM	<b>LWV MHR BOARD Meeting</b> , home of Shirley Kobran, 53 Schuler Lane, Lake Katrine. 845-382-6989 for directions.
11	Sun., 2 PM	<b>CONSENSUS</b> meeting on <b>TERM LIMITS</b> study. In Poughkeepsie at site TBD.

**PREZ SEZ...**

According to the African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," and according to a recent book by Susan Pinker, *The Village Effect*, face-to-face contact is crucial for learning, happiness, resilience and longevity.

Many of the League's activities provide us with opportunities to create our own village. In this disconnected world with relatives in other states and other countries, finding a way to create our own village has become a necessity.

The trip to the UN on November 13<sup>th</sup> organized by the LWVNYS staff, Sally Robinson, the LWVNYS president, and Rosalee Keech, the UN Observer for LWVUS, was an awesome opportunity for face to face time. Dare had time with people she already knows, planning and organizing, while Jolanda met for the first time Kate Jablonski, the LWVNYS staff member in charge of fundraising, and had a wonderful conversation, and we all bonded over the quality of the program, the tour, lunch and presentation on the world wide situation regarding climate change and water.

A few of us even bonded with members of the Women's Bar Association of the State of NY and exchanged business cards and planned to meet again at a Moroccan restaurant.

It's possible that the ability to create our own Village Effect is one of the reasons why so many of us League members reach a ripe old age, fully engaged and stimulated by our relationships with each other and our exciting involvement in the world at every level.

*Jolanda*

**MEMBERSHIP  
NEWS**

Monthly Board meeting minutes and more can be found at:  
<http://lwvmidhudson.org/Committees.html>

**PROGRAMS****LWV Day  
at the UN****A REWARDING DAY AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

Our League sent SEVEN people to the UN on November 13th: Co-Presidents Jolanda Jansen and Dare Thompson, Vic Melville and Margaret Sellers, Anne Needham, Merrill Sunderland, and Xiao Dong Zheng Smith.. We all got on the LWVNYS bus from Albany at the New Paltz exit, which allowed us to get to know some other upstate LWV members en route.

Besides a tour and lunch in the lovely Delegates' Dining Room, we heard from two speakers - one on climate change and the other on water issues.

You can read and see pictures and videos about what we saw and heard it in the most recent LWVNYS VOTER at

<http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs102/1102704766323/archive/1119218817305.html#LETTER.BLOCK42>

The climate change speaker focused on what happened inside the UN during the September 23rd summit that inspired up to 400,000 people to take to the streets of NYC. Particularly inspiring were the words of a young woman from the Marshall Islands. Do play that short video for sure! It outshines the ones of Leo DiCaprio and President Obama.

## VOTER SERVICE

### Moderating Guidelines

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

### Naturalization Ceremony

**December 5<sup>th</sup>** - mark your calendar to be part of this very rewarding event. Contact Jean McGarry, 336-6622 / [jfmcg@hvc.rr.com](mailto:jfmcg@hvc.rr.com) for more information and to volunteer. (Or just show up!).

### Fight The Record-Breaking Spending On Campaigns

Are you outraged by the growing flood of secret money polluting our elections and the Supreme Court's Citizens United decision that enabled it? An amendment to the Constitution, if even do-able, is a long way off, but RIGHT NOW you can make a difference by sharing your views with the FEC.

Use this link to go to the appropriate spot on the LWVUS website for guidance. As always, your letter will be noticed more if you use your own words, but the sample letter will give you ideas. And while you may want to vent, remember that being polite as well as forceful is usually most effective.

[http://participate.lwv.org/c/10065/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action\\_KEY=10471](http://participate.lwv.org/c/10065/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=10471)

## STUDY AND ADVOCACY

### Help Reach Consensus On 2! State Issues

We have TWO consensus meetings coming up, both on good government issues being studied by leagues throughout New York. One is on Ballot Access on December 6 and the other is on Term Limits on January 11. Both apply to New York only, not the U.S. We NEED your input!

**NOTE:** *You cannot participate in a consensus unless you share in the discussion at the consensus meeting. We reach our league's answers collectively and then submit them to LWVNY, which combines our answers with those from other leagues. Only then do we arrive at our state position. Non-members are welcome to join our discussion but may not participate in answering the consensus questions.*

#### **BALLOT ACCESS Consensus Meeting**

Saturday, December 6  
Kingston City Hall, 420 Broadway. 10 AM - Noon

The questions on which we'll be trying to reach consensus are shown below. Our study committee will do its best to explain these somewhat difficult questions to you, but you can also learn about them ahead at

<http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/ballot-access.html>

#### **BALLOT ACCESS CONSENSUS QUESTIONS**

1. Which do you prefer?
  - a. Opening New York State primaries to nonaffiliated voters  
OR
  - b. Continued use of the current closed primary system in New York State
2. Do you support the adoption of ranked-choice voting in New York State? [Yes] [No]
  - 2a. If yes, which do you support the adoption of?
    - (a) Instant Runoff Voting  
OR
    - (b) Top Two Vote Getter (TTVG)/Open Primary system
  - 2b. If you support Instant Runoff Voting, in which elections do you support its use?
    - (a) For Statewide Offices
      - (i) Primary Election
      - (ii) General Election
      - (iii) Both

(b) For State Legislative Offices

- (i) Primary Election
- (ii) General Election
- (iii) Both

3. Do you believe that Wilson-Pakula should be repealed? [Yes] [No]

4. Should New York State retain fusion voting? [Yes] [No]

4a. If yes, should NY State retain its system of fusion voting (see pg. 16-17 of study guide)

(a) Only with Wilson-Pakula  
OR

(b) Only without Wilson-Pakula  
OR

(c) Whether or not Wilson-Pakula is repealed

#### INTERESTED IN THE TERM LIMITS STUDY?

See the Commentator calendar for details about the December 5 study group meeting (ALL welcome!) and save Sunday afternoon, January 11, for the consensus meeting. Study materials are at <http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies/term-limits.html>.

The next Commentator will provide the specific Poughkeepsie location for the meeting and will include the consensus questions.

#### Book Discussions

Following up a really good discussion of Barbara Ehrenreich's Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America, a group of us decided to explore how we ended up with an economy that is punishing especially severely people earning minimum wage and why that will ultimately hurt even the wealthy. We considered three very appealing options including Robert Reich's Beyond Outrage and Hedrick Smith's Who Stole the American Dream, and we settled on Joseph Stiglitz's The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Economy Endangers Our Future. It's available in all forms including audiobook and for the Kindle.

Stiglitz is an economist, a professor at Columbia University, a Nobel Prize winner, and in 2011 he was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time magazine. He is now serving as President of the International Economic Association.

Our discussion of The Price of Inequality will take place on Tuesday, December 16, 2 pm, at Enzo's Ristorante & Pizza, 207 Boices Lane, Kingston (at Enterprise Drive, near Tech City). Call Enzo's at 845-383-3696 for directions.

We'd love to have you join us, whether you've read the book or not. This is information we all need!

#### ULSTER COUNTY OBSERVER CORP

Audio recordings, addenda and minutes of Legislative Committee meetings can be found at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/legislature/committeesinfo/index.html>

#### Become A Member Of Our Observer Corps

Get to know your local government in a personal way! Strengthen local democracy by adding "sunlight" to the legislative process and publishing what you observe in our Commentator! You may observe your town or city board meetings you prefer. *We will guide you, so you do not need to be an expert to get started.* Call Margaret Sellers at 339-3180 with your questions.

#### Energy and Environment Committee

**Nov. 10, 2014, 6:00 – 8:38 PM**

**Committee Members:** Tracey A. Bartels, Chairman, Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr., Deputy Chairman, Manna Jo Greene, Richard A. Parete, Mary Wawro

Meeting called to order by Chairman Bartels, and approval of minutes of Oct. 21, 2014, meeting.

**Resolutions for Nov. 18, 2014, Legislature Regular Meeting:**

[These LWV observer notes are abbreviated to focus on **Resolution No. 394**, and please note the

League of Women Voters is named in the resolution.]

Here are edited (by this LWV observer) excerpts of the amended resolution:

**Resolution No. 394 November 18, 2014 Establishing The Ulster County Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission**

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature hereby establishes the Ulster County Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission shall consist of up to twelve (12) members, [...]; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the membership of the Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission shall include (1) the Chair of the Legislature or Legislative member designee; (2) the Chair of Ulster County Legislature's Ways and Means Committee or Ways and Means Committee member designee; (3) the Chair of Ulster County Legislature's Energy and Environment Committee or Energy and Environment Committee member designee; (4) the President of the Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors and Village Mayors or Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors and Village Mayors member designee; (5) the Mayor from the City of Kingston or designee; (6) the Chair of the Resource Recovery UCRRA Board of Directors or UCRRA Board of Directors member designee; (7) the Chair of the Climate Smart Committee or Climate Smart Committee member designee; and the following members to be recommended to the full Legislature for appointment by the Energy and Environment Committee: (8) a Representative from the Solid Waste Disposal Industry an UCRAA Licensed Hauler; (9) a Representative from the Reuse and Recycling Community; (10) a Representative from the League of Women Voters or an Environmental Group Representative; (11 & 12) two at large Representatives of the General Public; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that a request will be made for a Representative from the Executive's Office to serve in an ex-officio manner in order to provide support as needed, to encourage an open dialogue and to provide continuity; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that all tentative appointments to the Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission shall be made within thirty (30) days from the passage of this resolution and subsequently will require approval by the full Legislature; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Commission shall first meet within thirty (30) days of its membership appointment approval by the full Legislature; and, be it further

RESOLVED, Commission members, once appointed, shall serve for the duration of the Commission assignment; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission shall comprehensively review the technologies, grant funding and host benefits available to newly established solid waste disposal facilities; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that in furtherance of its objective, the Solid Waste Disposal Improvement Commission is authorized to seek information from and/or visit solid waste disposal, recycling and composting facilities as well as any other federal, state, or local agency or group it deems prudent; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that the first meeting of the Solid Waste Disposal Improvement Commission shall be called by the Representative of the Energy and Environment Committee and at that meeting the permanent Chairman of the Committee shall be elected; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that within one (1) year of its initial meeting, the Solid Waste Disposal Improvement Commission shall provide a written report of its findings and recommendations, including its activities to date, to the Ulster County Legislature and the County Executive; and, be it further

RESOLVED, a Legislative staff person shall be assigned to the Solid Waste Disposal Improvement Commission for the purpose of providing support and recording services as requested by the Commission; and, be it further

RESOLVED, to ensure a comprehensive review and evaluation process, all levels of available municipal data, tools, resources, assets and opportunities will be made available for the Commission and the public to have direct input into the Commission's ultimate recommendations for consideration by the full Legislative body, and moves its adoption.

Passed Committee As Amended: Energy and Environment on November 10, 2014.

Adopted by full Legislature on Nov. 18, 2014.

Vic Melville, LWV Observer, 11/21/14

**UC Legislative  
Public Health  
and Social  
Services  
Committee**

The Committee was convened by Legislator Chairman Lopez at 6PM on November 3, 2014 and adjourned at 6:58. The next meeting is scheduled for December 1, 2014.

Present: Lopez, Provenzano, Allen, Belfiglio, Litts

Others: Ken Crannell, UC Deputy County Executive, Erica Guerin, Legislative counsel; Ellen Reinhard, Director of TFAC; David Scarpino, President and CEO Health Alliance; Dr. Frank Erlich, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Marc Tack, Director of Infectious Disease; Dr. Carol Smith, UC Commissioner of Health.

Following the call to order, the minutes of the October 6, 2014 meeting were approved.

The next report was presented by representative of the health profession in UC as it pertained to the preparation by UC medical personnel to deal with ebola.

Dr. Erlich noted that when the situation began, 6% of US hospitals were found to be ready for dealing with the disease; even though that all have varying degrees of infectious disease to deal with. At this time US hospitals are apparently better prepared and more are ready to deal with this problem as it may occur.

Locally the hospitals, the medical community and those groups which would be involved have learned how to deal with ebola. He indicated that locally it is as prepared as any to handle suspected or actual ebola cases if such occur.

Dr. Marc Tack advised the committee that daily updates are received from the CDC and state level sources (acting Commissioner of Health for NYS). Specific procedures that local medical and related groups must follow have been received. He specifically acknowledged the work that the UC Commissioner of Health, Dr. Carol Smith has performed in directing the preparation of and informing the local stakeholders to deal with the potential or actual ebola case(s).

All three of the above doctors noted above emphasized the various steps that have been taken to deal with any possible situation in which there is a possible ebola situation.

Additionally, a representative of one of the first responders reviewed the process that would followed if an individual appeared with possible symptoms that might suggest that the person might have ebola from calling 911 to the various steps that must be followed to keep potential patient(s) isolated, to keep those caring for such patient(s) appropriately dressed and following the procedures indicated.

Dr. Tack noted that 9 of 10 people in the US who have had ebola have survived equals a 90% survival rate. More people die from the flue. He emphasized that people should be sure to get their flu shots.

Dr. Scarpino then briefly reviewed the progress that Health Alliance had made in moving ahead with its projected merger plan. He made a specific point of noting that locally the hospitals, private practices, county health department have a positive on-going relationship. They talk to each other, share information; and communicate with the police and other first responders. Further, he noted that Westchester Medical, St. Peters, and Health Quest are the three with which they have talked with, and might be joining. The NYS DOH would have to approve; and further so would the Federal Trade Commission. The NYS DOH could help in negotiating the support of the FTC.

The next item on the agenda dealt with work being performed by the Tobacco Free Action Coalition as presented by its director, Ellen Reinhard.

Initially she used a video to explain the group's position on having a tobacco free environment.

While the tobacco free groups have been able to impact tobacco sales for many years, tobacco groups have still spent over a billion dollars annually to market the use of tobacco.

The targeted group is young people, and the stores nearest schools are those which are the primary objective of this target by those selling tobacco products.

To counter this various cities/states have made the effort to prevent such exposure to young people.

The committee had thirty-three resolutions to address. Four of the resolutions: #367 and #443 were passed following updating the title in #367 with reference to tobacco free school zone; and #443 to include prohibition of the use of electronic cigarettes. Resolutions #396 dealing with certifying the county take over Safety Net costs was passed; and #428 dealing with the company which coordinates the bus usage in the county was passed.

**UC Board of Health**

The remaining 29 resolutions dealt with Mental Health contracts and the needs of those who are clients/work/services provided by of that department. Initially the committee voted to handle these 29 resolutions and the contracts in block form and then passed them accordingly.

Lee Cane Observer Corp

The November 10, 2014 meeting of the Board was convened by President, Dr. Tack at 6:30 and adjourned at 7:10.

Present: Tack, Woodley, Hilderbrandt, Cardinale, Graham; Absent: Delma, Kelly

Others: Dr. Carol Smith, Commissioner of Health and Mental Health Shelley Mertens, Director of Environmental Health Services, Katrina Kouhout, Secretary to Commissioner and Board Secretary

The first order of business referenced the minutes for September and October. The vote will be taken at the next meeting, once they are e-mailed to the members.

Under New Business the Board received a report from Dr. Tack and Dr. Smith regarding the status of preparedness in UC to deal with Ebola should such occur. Dr. Tack and Dr. Smith have worked very intently and hard to ensure that all the stakeholders are prepared and receive such updating material, training, information as it is received from the NYSDOH.

So far, per Dr. Smith, there has been no Ebola or anything related to it in Ulster County.

Dr. Smith receives regular up-dates from the State Commissioner.

She noted that Article 28 covers the licensing of the clinics, have the prevention orders and procedures in place that the clinics must follow.

The Health Alliance has been covered to receive all materials that have been required to date.

It was noted that the state came to UC to review the procedures that were in place and went to Margaretville, one of the 3 facilities in the group to evaluate the process, procedures that have been put in place as directed by NYSDOH.

Dr. Tack then added points of how much work and detail is involved in the preparation for hospital to meet all requirements; complimented Dr. Smith on the work she has done to ensure the process. He said UC is as ready as can be at this point. Dr. Smith noted that Mobile Life is the only ambulance group prepared to be used to transport any potential Ebola case.

Dr. Tack noted that the training received to deal with this matter can viewed as ground work for whatever the next event might be.

There was discussion about the topic with particular emphasis on how those involved are being trained, what their concerns are with respects to families and possibly being exposed, if there were cases; as well as how hospitals with limited resources and facilities and staff might react to trying to be prepared to meet such emergencies. Fear is a definite factor.

The medical examiner's report was the last item on the agenda. There was a question regarding an almost double number of suicides from 2013 to 2014. Dr. Heller suggested that by far most of the reasons for suicides increase apparently tended to be related to stress, financial situations, family related situations.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp