



Commentator

FEBRUARY 2011

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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CALENDAR		
2011		
JANUARY		
31	2:00 pm	Informal discussion on maintaining high standards in our schools with fewer resources – at Margaret Sellers’s, 80 Ringtop Rd., Kingston
FEBRUARY		
1	7:15-9:15 pm	Board Meeting at Gloria Plasker’s, 106 Park St, Hurley
8	1:00 pm	Observer Corps meeting at Margaret Sellers’s, 80 Ringtop Rd., Kingston
10	2:00 pm	Resource Development Committee at Margaret Sellers’s, 80 Ringtop Rd., Kingston
15	3:30 pm	Shared Services Study Committee at Jacki Moriarty’s, 167 Apple Hill Road, Hurley
26	10 - noon	Membership meeting on preserving education quality while cutting budgets – location TBA
MARCH		
1	5:00 pm	Enjoy Dutch treat dinner at Rosendale Café! Call the Café to join LWV reservation: 658-9048
1	7:00 pm	Film “Gerrymandering” at Rosendale Theatre, free admission
8	1:00 pm	Observer Corps meeting at Margaret Sellers’s, 80 Ringtop Rd., Kingston
8	7:15-9:15 pm	Board Meeting at Gloria Plasker’s, 106 Park St, Hurley
23	8:00 am-12:30 pm	“Justice and our Justice Courts” at SUNY New Paltz Student Union. (SUNY’s CRREO, LWV Mid-Hudson, Ulster County Bar Assn. sponsors) Speakers include Sydney Cresswell of the Rockefeller College, UC DA Holley Carnright, UC Legal Defender Andy Kossover, UC Sheriff Paul VanBlarcum, UC Town Justices Jim Baker, Tim Cox (head of UC Magistrates Association), Kevin Hunt, Wayne Lonstein

Check our Calendar on-line at
<http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/calendar.html>
 for updated information

Commentator archives, State and National League newsletters are at <http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/Newsletters.html>

MEMBERS: Need a ride? Want to car-pool?
 Contact Jean McGarry, 336-6622 or jfmcg@hvc.rr.com
 Interested in one of our committees? Just show up at a meeting. Our members are always welcome.

Prez Sez...

In spite of the snow, things are lively in our region and there are some important opportunities for us "goo-goo" types (good government people) to make a difference.

Above all, please take note of this opportunity to make a difference in the once-every-decade redistricting process. Albany is dysfunctional, Ulster Co. is reducing its legislature and has its first-ever reapportionment commission, and Dutchess - well, that's a tough call, but it's not looking good. Each situation is different but the bottom line is the same: citizen involvement (calls, emails, appearances at public meetings, etc.) REALLY make a difference. See a separate article on all this.

I know, you're busy. Kids. Elderly parents. Your job. Other volunteer commitments. But if you "don't have time," whom are you expecting to step forward in your place? This is as fundamental to democracy as it gets.

Beyond this, Ulster County residents please be aware that six legislators will soon be visiting a neighborhood near you to explain the options for addressing the problem of the rising deficits at the Golden Hill Health Care Center (our county nursing home). The League recommends selling the facility, but come hear what they say and weigh in with YOUR opinion. An article elsewhere in this Commentator gives dates and times of the hearings. This is just one piece of the how-can-we-pay-for-county-services puzzle, but a big one.

On both sides of the Hudson, the Resource Recovery Agencies are facing increased public scrutiny. Dealing with waste in environmentally responsible ways is a great concern to the League, so we're watching what both county legislatures are doing. We're worried and could use many more ears and eyes. Let us know if you're watching too. Collectively we can do more.

And while all these are priorities demanding action, many League members are also quietly fulfilling another basic League job. They sit in on public board meetings, take notes, report back to the Commentator editor, and generally make sure the elected officials know they're being watched. This is way more important than it may sound. Personally I sit in on Town of Marlborough meetings and I don't even report back, but I like to think I put them on notice. The scary thing is how few other people are there.

If we don't make it clear that the public interest should be paramount, why are we surprised when self-interest prevails?

Thanks for caring!

Dare

VOTER SERVICE**MAKE SURE YOUR VOTE COUNTS! Redistricting is happening NOW!**

The census numbers will be announced soon, so we are having a once-in-a-decade good government "moment," the redrawing of election district lines throughout the U.S. In our two counties there is good news and bad news and at the state level, well, there is a better-than-usual opportunity to be heard.

Ulster County:

There is a first-ever non-partisan commission doing the job of redrawing the lines, thanks to our new county charter. All citizens were encouraged to apply. Once the list had been reviewed to remove "public officials" and other "ineligibles," the Democrats and Republicans each got to appoint two people from the list. Those four people chose three more, and our president, Dare Thompson, is one of those three. She doesn't officially represent the League, but you can be sure she is using invaluable League resources to help the group do its job as fairly and inclusively as possible.

The commission will be holding ten public hearings throughout the county as it does its work and there will be a place on the Ulster County government website where you can follow what it's doing. Because the Charter also requires that the Legislature be reduced in size from 33 to 23 members, this may get particularly controversial. The commission aims to be transparent, so if you live in Ulster, please take advantage of these opportunities to get involved.

Dutchess County:

The executive and legislative branches are still wrestling with how to do their redistricting and at the moment, it looks as if the public will be the loser. It's imperative that citizens contact their legislators and County Executive Steinhaus RIGHT AWAY and insist that this process be non-partisan. We don't need to tell League members how fundamental this process is to the healthy functioning of government in their county but please spread the word. We get the government we insist upon. And time is running out.

New York State

We care just as much about this too and while there is a little more time at the state level than at the county level, time is still very limited, so contact your elected Assembly and Senate reps now. To get your blood boiling, on Tuesday, March 1, at 7 pm at the Rosendale Theatre we'll be showing the Woodstock Film Festival hit, "GERRYMANDERING," which aims to expose "the most effective form of manipulating elections short of outright fraud."

To encourage as many as possible to attend, we offer it with no admission charge. We'll have information on hand about what to do here in New York to prevent gerrymandering. You can bet it won't be easy, but all eyes are now on Albany (declared the most dysfunctional state government in the U.S. by the Brennan Center) so maybe THIS is the decade we can win. We must no longer accept the status quo.

We are also gathering beforehand (5 pm) at the Rosendale Cafe for socializing and strategizing. Please join us! See the calendar for details.

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ulster County Shared Services Study

DOCUMENTS ONLINE: <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/municipal.html>.

- [Ulster Intergovernmental Summary Report](#)
- [Economic Study](#)
- [Judicial Study](#)
- [Highway Study](#)
- [Action Plan](#)

Additional links of interest include

- The Draft Report can be found on the County Website at www.co.ulster.ny.us/municipalities/FINAL%20DRAFT%20Highway%20DOC%20with%20charts%20and%20maps.pdf
- Frank Cassetta's concise summary is at our website at lwvmidhudson.org/files/Highway_Service_Cooperation_-_Summary.pdf
- the Shared Services Program within the NYS Department of State Division of Local Government Services <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/sharedservices/index.html>

Best Practices page of the NYS Association of Counties.
www.nysac.org/County_Corner.php/

**LWV GHCC
Study Group 2****Ulster County Legislature Announces Public Informational Meetings
Regarding Golden Hill Health Care Center's Future**

League members are strongly encouraged to attend the meetings that were announced by Ulster County Legislator and Chairman of the Health and Human Services Committee, Walter Frey, Jr., (R). A panel of (6) Legislators will reach out to the community during the month of February allowing the public to express comment on the future of Golden Hill Health Care Center. League representation at all meetings is recommended. We will have flyers to distribute.

This panel was created by Ulster County Legislature Chairman, Frederick J. Wadnola. The panel will be instrumental in moving the county forward on the issues of Golden Hill's future. This is another step after the release of the Golden Hill Task Force findings back on November 30, 2010. Panel members include Legislators Roy E. Hochberg (D), District No. 3, Alan Lomita (D), District No. 7, Mary Beth Maio (R), District No. 11, Jeanette Provenzano (D), District No. 6, Walter Frey Jr. (R), District No. 4, and Ulster County Legislative Chairman Frederick J. Wadnola (R), District No. 5.

Meeting Locations, Dates and Time:

- Ellenville High School Auditorium, Wednesday, February 9th, 6:00 – 8:00 PM;
- Onteora High School Auditorium, Thursday, February 10th, 6:00 – 8:00 PM;
- Woodstock Recreation Center, Thursday, February 17th, 7:00 – 9:00 PM;
- New Paltz BOCES, Tuesday, February 22nd, 6:00 – 8:00 PM;
- Marlborough Town Hall, Thursday, February 24th, 6:00 – 8:00 PM; and
- Saugerties Frank D. Greco Memorial Senior Center, Monday, February 28th, 6:00 – 8:00 PM.

**LWVMHR Consensus Report presented to the Ulster County
Legislature.**

- **Summary:** http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_Consensus_Summary.pdf
- **Statement:** http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_Consensus_Statement.pdf
- **Pros & Cons:** http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_Study-Pros_and_Cons_10-19-10.pdf

Below are the 2010 and 2008 materials and resources used by the League in formulating its consensus. We recommend you study them.

Local News Coverage of interest

The Daily Freeman 10/21/10

<http://www.dailyfreeman.com/articles/2010/10/21/news/doc4cbfc5e8c81e5966393510.txt?viewmode=fullstory>

The Times Herald-Record 10/20/10

<http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101020/NEWS/10200343>

NOTE: Because of the vast amount of material under consideration, reports and resources on this topic are now only available online at

http://lwvmidhudson.org/Action_Study.html. We'll include a brief statement of the materials available and any links you'll need to access them. For printed copy, please contact one of the league officers noted above.

LWVMHR STUDY GROUP:

1. Golden Hill Health Care Center: A LWVMHR Study
at http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_-_A_LWVMHR_Study.pdf
2. LWVMHR Study Group meeting on July 16, 2010
at http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_-_Study_Group_7-26-10.pdf
3. Interviews about GHHC Marshall Beckman, Deputy County Executive of Ulster County
at http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_LWVMHR_Study_-_Beckman_Interview.pdf

ULSTER COUNTY TASK FORCE:

1. Observer Corp: Golden Hill Task Force Committee Meetings 6/1/10-8/3/10
at http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/GHHC_Task_Force_Meetings-6-1-10_to_8-3-10.pdf
2. Long Term Care Financial Considerations: Golden Hill Health Care Center; David Bonk, CMA, CISA
at
http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/Golden_Hill_Financial_Considerations_2010.pdf

Further items will be posted online at http://lwvmidhudson.org/Action_Study.html as they are available.

Additional links of interest:

NYS Department of Health - Nursing Homes in New York State at <http://www.nyhealth.gov/facilities/nursing/>
Resolution No. 115 at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/resolutions/115-10.pdf> adopted on April 20, 2010 creating the Golden Hill Task Force.
Information on the May 25th summit on county-run nursing homes hosted by Ulster County reported in the Daily Freeman May 13th issue at <http://www.freemanonline.com/articles/2010/05/13/news/doc4beb815d9e160368704114.txt>

ULSTER COUNTY OBSERVER CORP

**Ulster County
Legislature
Meeting**

The Legislature met on January 4th for some 20 minutes disposing of ministerial matters. With former Chairman Gerentine acting as Temporary Chair, Fred Wadnola, was unanimously reelected as Chairman.

The approved resolutions included authorization of tax and revenue anticipation bonds, standard contract renewals and amendments,

Items of note: The legislature approved resolutions relating to the repaving of South Putt Corners Road in New Paltz (80% of which is reimbursed by federal money.)

Also approved was a sale of nine properties (2 in Hurley and 7 in Ulster) acquired by the County in 2010 as part of *The Greater Catskill Flood Remediation Program*. Required by state law, the use of the properties will be restricted to, dedicated to, and maintained in perpetuity for use that is compatible with open space, recreation, flood mitigation and/or wetlands preservation management. A further condition of the program requires the premises to be demolished and cleared. See

<http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/resolutions/11-11.pdf> and
<http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us/Programs/FloodRemediation/>.

Finally, to no one's delight, the county will request the state to extend the 1% additional sales tax (imposed in 2002) for an additional 2 years.

Jim McGarry

**Legislative
Programs,
Education and
Community
Services**

Date: January 11, 2011
6:05 p.m.

Start Time: 5:37 p.m.

Finish Time:

Mr. Wayne Harris, Chairman, called the meeting to order and the minutes of the December 7, 2010, meeting were approved.

Mr. Harris introduced Mr. Benjamin Krevolin and Ms. Eve Madalengoitia of the Dutchess Arts Council discussed the current round of grants: grant writing seminars in March, submission deadline of May 3 and the projects start in July. They seek larger grants and collaborations, both profit and non-profit.

Mr. Mark Komdat, Dean of Administration, Ulster County Community College (SUNY Ulster) presented an update on UCCC emphasizing: the challenge for increased spring enrollment, the health care program and employment picture where full time enrollment is most affected.

Ms. Marianne Collins, Dean of Advancement and Continuing Education, UCCC, introduced Ms. Kathleen Keyser to present and discuss the RISE program (as requested at the last committee meeting). RISE is the Reaching Independence thru Supported Education program that supersedes the PACE program. The program addresses both essential and advanced skills that lead to a certificate or a degree. The program now reports to Ann Marrott, VP and Dean of Enrollment Management.

Ms. Lydia Reidy, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CEE), reviewed the Healthy Kids and RAP (Relatives as Parents) programs and discussed multi-county shared services and functions (such as contract management).

Proposed resolutions regarding an agreement with the UC Community Action Committee, an appropriation for the cooperative extension association, authorizing an agreement with the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), authorizing an agreement with the Dutchess Arts Council, authorizing an agreement with Family of Woodstock for a supervised visitation program, and authorizing an agreement for maintenance of facilities for the Ulster Performing Arts Center were adopted.

Mr. Harris announced the formation of a Meals on Wheels subcommittee, chaired by Legislator Catherine Terrizzi, with legislative members Mr. Carl Belfiglio and Mr. Michael Madsen.

The new reporting organizations to this committee did not report at this meeting.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 1/27/11

**Ulster County
Legislature:
Governmental
Services,
Environmental &
Administrative
Committee**

Ulster County Legislature: Environmental Subcommittee

Date: January 4, 2011

Start Time: 5:25 p.m.

Finish Time: 5:35

p.m.

Legislator Kevin Roberts, chair, called the meeting to order.

This was a short meeting prior to the legislative organization meeting.

A proposed resolution amending the 2011 Ulster County budget to appropriate 2010-2011 funding from New York State Board of Elections for voter registration and poll worker training (\$131, 618.33 moved but no net cost to the county) was adopted.

A proposed resolution supporting reinstatement of Belleayre jobs with some discussion of how Belleayre is funded and how they use their resources was adopted.

Date: January 24, 2011 Start Time: 6:30 p.m. Finish Time: 7:57 p.m.

Held at the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency, 999 Flatbush Road, Kingston, NY

Kevin Roberts, chair, called the meeting to order and the December 20, 2010 and January 4, 2011 meeting minutes were approved.

A proposed resolution creating a special joint committee to study viable solutions and improve the oversight of the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency by the Ulster County legislature was amended (to be due within 120 days) and passed after considerable discussion.

Mr. Leon Smith, new Chairman of the UCRRA board, and presented the current status of the board activities and issues of the board including a discussion of county comptroller's first and second reports, legal action by the former UCRRA executive director, financial issues (the year-end report will show an operating shortfall), about \$25M debt (re debt service costs), some operational and compliance issues. Mr. Tim Rose, Acting Executive Director, joined the discussion on the financial and operational activities and issues.

The committee discussed the composition of the special joint committee to include a representation of the stakeholders and the focus of the special committee on policy and operations.

There is an apparent large concern of the Ulster County Executive, the Ulster County Legislature and this committee, and the UCRRA board and management about how to effectively handle the current situation and plan for the future of the agency.

A proposed resolution amending the rules of order of the Ulster County legislature to establish a procedure for any and all resolutions regarding labor agreements was discussed, then held by Legislator Kenneth Ronk until next month's committee meeting.

A proposed resolution for home rule legislation regarding appointments to the UCRRA was not adopted.

A proposed resolution regarding standing committees for the year 2011 was not adopted.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 1/27/11

Board of Health

The meeting convened at 7 PM, 1-10-11 by Chairman, Dr. Tom Stellato and adjourned at 7:50.

Members present: Drs. Stellato, Tack, Godfrey, & Delmar (arrived later), Authenrieth. Other attendees: Dr. Hasbrouck, Mrs. Veytia, Kevin DuMond, Dr. Heller (Medical Examiner) and Katrina Kouhout, secretary to Dr. Hasbrouck.

Following the approval of the December minutes, Dr. Hasbrouck provided highlights to the Director's Report that had been distributed:

The 2nd annual Healthy Ulster Summit will be held; Dr. Hasbrouck will co-chair My Life check, an awareness computer program that people can log on to (mylifecheck.org); recognized the work done by the staff in completing the field offices which was the 2010 goal; the Sanitary Code, Articles 1-6 have been completed through a joint review/revision process with the County Attorney's office. Drs. Hasbrouck and Stellato are in the process of reviewing the material. Dr. Hasbrouck noted that once the code is completed (possibly by the end of January) Mr. Dumond will give a presentation highlighting the

developments.

Dr. Heller, the Medical Examiner, noted that December was a routine month for his office: 21 calls, 3 autopsies, and one site visit; the routines are proceeding smoothly. There is an upcoming meeting to be held with the legislative committee on Law Enforcement. He believes that the latter wishes to standardize the procedures that law enforcement personnel use when involved in cases; as well as how the medical examiner proceeds, i.e. what information is gathered.

Mrs. Veytia reported on patient services, noting that representatives of the UCDOH met with Columbia University personnel and other regional DOH members in December. A grant from the Centers of Disease Control has been obtained with the goal of providing training to improve public health preparedness.

Mr. DuMond provided an extensive report on the procedure that his division will engage in with respects to enforcing the rules. He explained in detail how matters would handled from the initial inspection by the Sanitarian inspectors through the various hearing, what is done by the business/camp, etc. to comply, to formal hearings and fining/closing. Additionally, he reminded the Board that Lou Klein has been hired as the hearing officer for the formal hearings. During discussion it was noted that public health and safety was paramount; that the final results of the process would involve negotiations of some type.

Mr. DuMond explained that he wanted everyone to understand that they are slowly changing the culture regarding how the UCDOH is viewed now by comparison to some two years ago, i.e., no longer a paper tiger. Further, once the format has been established he expects that it will not take months/years to resolve any problems, which had apparently been the case prior to the changes that have been made in the last two years.

Dr. Stellato noted the positive comments regarding the UCDOH that had been made in letters received from the NYS DOH. More specifically, such referred to "substantial compliance" by the Environmental Health Programs with NYS DOH expectations. Additionally, the residential engineering program was lauded.

At his suggestion, such information will be forwarded to the County Executive and County Legislature.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Jan. 27.2011

Mike Hein, Ulster Co. Executive, presented certificates of appreciation tonight to some of the volunteer members of the 28 Board and Committees that serve Ulster County government. Included were LWV Board members Cindy Lanzetta and Margaret Sellers. In presenting Margaret's certificate, Mr. Hein also mentioned the good work that the LWV has done in getting out the news from the County and thanked the League.

Many opportunities to serve on these Boards and Committees exist. If you are interested, please contact Mike Hein.

A GOOD-BYE TO MESCAL HORNBECK: A LEGEND HAS PASSED

Long-time League member and Woodstock resident, Mescal Hornbeck, would have celebrated her 100th birthday on June 17th, and her death earlier this month deprived us all of that special opportunity to salute her. However, she received plenty of recognition in her lifetime and accolades from many quarters upon her passing.

As the January 19th Daily Freeman reports, she "is credited with being instrumental in establishing Ulster County's first Meals on Wheels program in Woodstock and the county's Office of the Aging, as well as with helping to save from demolition the building that now serves as the Woodstock Community Center and assisting with the relocation effort of the Town Court to Tinker Street."

The Freeman also reported on her Woodstock Times column, "Mescal's Message," which she only recently gave up, and "her roles in organizing senior citizens' groups."

It reports that she served on the Woodstock Town Board for four years in the '80s and that in 2007 she received the Alf Evers Volunteer of the Year Award.

Town Supervisor Jeff Moran is quoted as calling her "sharp as a tack" and "politically astute."

Amy Godes, who organized a "Mescal Appreciation Concert" in 2001, called her a "doer and a shaper," crediting her with spearheading the community's Senior Recreation Committee.

Toni Weidenbacher, one of the organizers for Woodstock's annual All Day Christmas Parties, said that "when it came to senior citizens' activities in town, 'she was basically the head of the whole shebang.'"

Mescal's five decades as a nurse shaped her views on health care and she never quite forgave us (or the country) for not insisting on a single payer system, but that didn't stop her from supporting the health care reforms that have come to pass.

We chuckled to see her described as "cantankerous" by one of her most loyal fans. We too knew what it was like to see her displeased!

But like all who knew her, we deeply appreciated her big heart and her devotion to serving her community in words and deeds.

We extend our sincere condolences to her daughter, three sons, and all their offspring. We will let you know about a spring memorial service when the date is set.

I/we wish to become members of the LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region through May 31, 2011

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (day) _____ (eve) _____

Email: _____

I/We enclose: Individual Membership (\$50) _____ Household Membership (\$75) _____

Additional gift to the LWV Education Fund (*tax deductible*;) for our use
(Please send a separate check which **MUST** be payable to NYSLWV Ed Fund) \$ _____

If you are upgrading to a Household Membership, please
include the name and email address of new members _____

Will receive *Commentator* _____ online &/or will read it on website or _____ Please mail *Commentator*

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

League of Women Voters
Mid-Hudson Region
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