



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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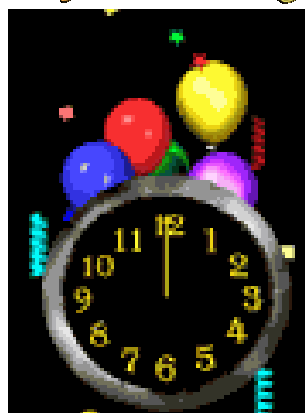
JANUARY 2012

CALENDAR		
2012		
JANUARY		
3	Tues. 7:15 pm	LWV MHR Board Meeting, home of Esther Stickley, 147 Griffin Drive, Hurley, 845-331-2919.
7	Sat. 2 – 4:30	Post-Holiday Party, home of Margaret Sellers, 80 Ringtop Road, Kingston, 845-339-3180. <i>Proceed south on Pearl St. to the very end (at the top of a hill). Go left on Ringtop. #80 is on the right, across from Overlook Dr.</i>
10	Tues. 10:30 am	Observer Corps meeting. Location TBA. Call the LWV phone, 845-340-1003, to confirm.
10	Tues. 2 pm	Resource Development meeting, home of Margaret Sellers, 80 Ringtop Road, Kingston, 845-339-3180.
FEBRUARY		
7	Tues. 7:15 pm	LWV MHR Board Meeting, location TBA
		WATCH for details about meetings in Ulster County with members of the new 23-member Legislature.

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

MEMBERS: Need a ride? Want to car-pool?
 Contact: Dare Thompson darethompson@gmail.com
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Happy New Year



Prez Sez...

2011 was quite a ride for those of us who follow our local government, and now we look ahead to a 2012 with major changes to county government in both Dutchess and Ulster Counties.

Most of the Ulster changes are mentioned in an article elsewhere in this Commentator about the County's Charter five years after it began to be implemented.

Three changes not noted in that article are: 1) although Republicans continue to control the legislature, with **12 Republicans and 11 Democrats**, we can expect many votes to be close; 2) 14 "old" legislators retired, 19 of the "new" legislators are returnees, and three "new" legislators (Lopez, Wawro, Wishnick) are serving for the first time and one (Bartels) is returning; 3) it appears that the Legislature will be electing **a woman as its chair** for the first time ever. We wish them all good luck, good sense, and - as much as possible - good cheer!

Watch for notifications of open meetings with this new group of 23!

Mike Hein ran unopposed for Ulster's County Executive but in **Dutchess County**, long-time executive William Steinhaus chose not to run and the voters elected Marc Molinaro as his successor. Molinaro is energetic and youthful and brings a great deal of experience – starting with his election as Tivoli's mayor at age 18 and continuing with his service as a county legislator and a state Assemblyman. We wish him good luck as well and will be following his endeavors with great interest.

Dutchess's legislative districts were unchanged this past fall, but we will watch this year as the legislature oversees the drawing of **new district lines** in time for the 2013 elections. If you want email alerts about redistricting meetings, please let me know at darethompson@gmail.com.

*BUT before jumping back into the political fray, we pause for **our post-holiday party** at the home of Margaret Sellers and Vic Melville on Saturday, **January 7**. (Details elsewhere.) Please join us and bring a significant other and/or some prospective members and other community allies. We love celebrating with new people!*

Dare

PROGRAM NEWS**The ULSTER COUNTY CHARTER – FIVE YEARS “IN”**

Kudos to Dr. Gerald Benjamin and the Center for Research, Regional Education, and Outreach (CRREO) at SUNY New Paltz for an excellent conference this December on the Ulster County charter, which has now been in effect for five years. Our League, a long-time advocate for the charter, lent its name to the effort, but CREEO did the work.

The consensus by the end of the day seemed to be that the charter is working quite well and didn't need a lot of tweaking, although a Charter Revision Commission is now in place (as required by the charter) to make any revisions needed. (LWV members Tom Kadgen, Cynthia Lowe, and Jim McGarry are among the commissioners.)

There also seemed to be general agreement that the Legislature is still adjusting to its new role as a policy-making (not administrative) body and has not yet learned to use the powers it has. Now that the census has occurred and the body has just been reduced from 33 to 23 members, with lines drawn by a charter-created bi-partisan Reapportionment Commission, everyone will be watching the 2012-13 Legislature with particular interest.

(Our president, Dare Thompson, and new LWV member Cynthia Lowe, were two of the seven members of the Reapportionment Commission.)

So the key reforms created by the charter are now all in place: a county executive, a comptroller, a fair redistricting process, with the revision commission busy at work. Dr. Benjamin, the League, and all those who helped bring the charter into being clearly have much to be proud of. Bravo to Ulster County!

Dare

ADVOCACY & STUDY COMMITTEE REPORTS**Ulster & Dutchess Counties Solid Waste**

The energetic study committee looking into solid waste management in Dutchess and Ulster Counties will be resuming its work in the new year. Most meetings are on Tuesdays at 5:30 at the Gateway Diner in Highland (on 9W near the Mid-Hudson Bridge) and new members are always welcome. This topic will be "hot" on both sides of the Hudson this year, so you may just want to come listen in at the Diner or join us when we attend meetings at the respective Resource Recovery Agencies or Legislatures. Check with committee chair Cindy Lanzetta (packback56@yahoo.com or 845-236-7288) to find out when (and where) we'll be gathering next.

The committee has been producing and gathering a great deal of material. You can find a list of some

Ulster County Shared Services Study

of the materials at http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/Action_Study.html#Trash. **Recently added materials include materials from our recent conference addressing "How Will Dutchess And Ulster Counties Deal With Waste In Future Decades?"**

During the month of December, members of the Shared Services Committee traveled to the Town of Denning and the Town of Rochester to meet with town officials with regards to the town justice courts. Early in December, Lee Cane traveled to the Town of Denning and interviewed the Town Supervisor William Bruning and the Town Justice Clerk Linda Bruning. While Justice Foellender had planned to be present, due to case work in his law office and the lack of cases to hear at the town court, he was not present. Efforts are being made to see if answers to the questions can be obtained in writing. This was an interesting trip for more than one reason. The town court is located in the town hall, which is a former school house that has been remodeled. The result is a lovely, modern building with some rather unique arrangements that make the town court very nice.

In mid-December members of the committee, Cane, Ridgway and Thompson went to the Town of Rochester twice in order to interview the justice clerks on one day and the town supervisor, Carl Chipman the following day. Justice Babcock had indicated he would respond to the questions, but as yet we have not received his response.

Given that this is holiday time we will pick up the work after the first of the year.

Lee Cane, Chairman, Shared Services Committee

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 Golden Hill Health Care Center Study Group 2

October 19, 2010 the League Consensus Report to the Ulster County Legislature and various reference materials can be found at: http://www.lwvnet.org/lwv/ny/midhudson/Action_Study.html#s03

For continuing coverage on this critical issue see our Observer Corp notes below

UC OBSERVER CORP

Reports from members of our Observer Corps follow. Key people in our area really depend on these reports so we thank all our observers for their good work and encourage others to join the Corps! There's a meeting at 10:30 AM on January 10 (location TBA) but if you can't make that, please let Margaret Sellers or Vic Melville at 339-3180 know of your interest or contact us at info@lwvmidhudson.org. We'd love your help and we'll train you.

Ulster County Legislature Meeting

On **November 29, 2011** Chairman of the County Legislature Fred Wadnola called the **Public Hearing** session to order at 7:10 and adjourned the meeting at 8:06. There were 25 legislators present, 8 were absent.

There were two topics that were on the agenda to receive a public hearing:

- introductory local law no. 3 of 2011, Domestic Animal Abusers Registry'
- the sale and/or transfer of the Golden Hill Health Care Center (GH) to a local development center (LDC).

Each speaker was given three minutes to present his/her comments.

For the first public hearing four people signed up to speak in favor of establishing a domestic animal

abusers registry. Only three actually spoke in favor of establishing such a registry and one of the three also thanked various people for supporting such. The fourth person, who actually spoke first, felt that instead of passing this type of law the county legislature should instead consider delaying taking up this proposed law and devote its attention to the abuse of children. The speaker who thanked people for support pointed out that while he agreed with this speaker's sentiments, no one had in fact submitted such a proposal to be considered.

For the second public hearing 16 individuals were signed up to speak.

The majority of the speakers spoke in favor of not supporting the LDC, but rather keeping GH under the auspices of the county.

Additional comments that were made:

- that the speaker, as UC Building Inspector had inspected the structure of GH from roof to basement 3 times prior to 1997 and there was nothing structurally wrong at that time;
- that there are 17 legislators in favor of the LDC concept, what about the employees taking the responsibility of operating GH;
- should the proposed LDC go forward, those opposed should develop a blog on which the names of those who supported the concept can be shown when the results of such a sale are negative, which he said they would be. Also the principle of recall of elected officials should be included in the charter revision project;
- the speaker noted that given the new article suggesting how small the amount of taxes per property the owner would have to pay with an increase in taxes, she was prepared to pay such for this year and next;
- there were six speakers who engaged in giving a comment line by line and those in the audience who echoed the speaker line by line. All supported keeping GH under county ownership and management, but suggested in the spoke lines the negative aspects of not doing so.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

The **Special Session** of the UC Legislature was convened on 12-5-2011 at 7:55 PM by UC Legislature Chairman Wadnola and adjourned at 10:15 PM.

The meeting was late in starting as the Republican Caucus went longer due to hearing Mr. Kenneth Bond speak and a Q & A with him on the subject of the Local Development Corporation.

There were 32 legislators present, one absent (Mr. Hayes).

The public comment period lasted until 8:25 with comments made by 9 individuals. The majority of the comments were not in favor of the LDC.

Following the public comment period, the Legislature dealt with resolutions and the county budget.

There was a lengthy period of comment direct at the amendment to the resolution to create a Local Development Corporation (LDC) to handle the sale of Golden Hill. The amendment, offered by Legislator Maloney, would have removed the LDC process from the County Executive's hands and given it to the County Legislature. The comments on the amendment were almost evenly divided, ending in the vote of 17 opposed and 14 in favor, thus defeating the amendment.

The resolution was then addressed. Following more comments, the vote was 17 in favor, 14 against, and 1 abstention, thus passing the resolution in favor of the LDC process as proposed.

Apparently proposed By-Laws for the LDC had been distributed to county legislators on Friday, December 2. The general reaction to that had upset many of the legislators (no time to review, digest, develop input, etc.)

The remaining resolutions were then passed.

The Legislature then turned to the Budget which, following presentation of six amendments, the Legislature voted to adopt the budget with some of the amendments, but not the one to reduce the number of deputies that the county executive has from 3-1, 19-13; and the UC Capitol Program 2012-2017 resolution was passed 32-0.

It was announced that the county legislature would have its organizational meeting on Tuesday, January 3, 2012 at 6 PM.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

Golden Hill Legislature & Committee Meetings

See our Observer Corp Legislature notes above for updates.

For those with an abiding interest in LDCs, the following links may be useful:

Municipal Use Of Local Development Corporations And Other Private Entities: Division Of Local Government And School Accountability Background, Issues and Recommendations

www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/pubs/research/ldcreport.pdf

Procedures For Forming And Changing Not-For-Profit Corporations In New York State

www.ag.ny.gov/bureaus/charities2/pdfs/how_to_incorporate.pdf

Economic Development and Tourism Committee

Date: December 5, 2011 Start Time: 5:47 p.m. Finish Time: 5:58 p.m.
 James F. Maloney, Chairman, called the meeting to order, followed by roll call and approval of the minutes of the November 7, 2011, meeting.
 Dennis Doyle, Director Planning, announced the application for agriculture flood relief funds is underway.
 Mr. Maloney asked Bob DiBella, Director of Public Transportation, about a UCAT loop. Mr. DiBella provided no comment.
 All of the proposed resolutions were adopted.
 The legislators complimented Mr. Maloney for a good job as chairman of the committee this year.
 Document prepared by Vic Melville, 12/21/11

Health and Human Services

The Committee was convened by Legislator Walter Frey at 5:13 PM on 12/5/11 and adjourned at 6:05.
 Present: Frey, Rob Parete, Loughran, Harris, Ronk, Maio.

The same agenda used at the previous meeting on December 1, 2011, which was not an official meeting, due to a lack of a quorum, but handled as an informational meeting, was used on December 5. DCE Marshall Beckman and Sean Griffin of Harris Beech were also present.

During the interim the committee was advised by Rob Parete that he had forwarded a group of 10 questions to Chairman Wadnola, County Attorney Havranek and DCE Beckman. Each of the questions raised were reviewed. Some of the comments were:

- property at Golden Hill has not yet been appraised; Mr. Griffin stated he thinks more than \$8 million can be acquired;
- the RFP process referenced in 2010 gave Legislature some idea of what the estimated value was;
- the LDC will eventually obtain an appraisal, which is required under the new accountability act;
- apparently the county can utilize the responses made to the RFP in 2010, or not, or use its own;
- the apparent point to the above comments: the LDC would not want the competitors to know the value of the property before it was actually needed;
- the \$1.3 million listed as cost for bonding is an estimate;
- the actual transfer of ownership to a buyer can take as long as 2024 months per DCE Beckman, which had been noted per Deputy Commissioner Mark Kissinger of the NYS Department of Health; could be more, could be less;
- all the revenues that Golden Hill receives will be used to pay down the bond costs, if such allowed;
- the number of beds that are involved, 280, can not be reduced or divided as such, nor can a portion be sold off; they can be decommissioned;
- once buyer obtained, and sale finalized, the provision to have a residential health care facility as noted in charter will be eliminated. Apparently this is considered to be an occurrence 23 years down the road....need to secure buyer approval by NYSDOH;
- county executive has no plans to develop another facility; expects a local law will be passed which will eliminate this part of the charter;
- as to procurement and competitive bidding, the LDC must establish a policy with regards to both as well as an appraisal policy; once buyer selected by LDC appraisal figures will be available to the legislature;
- Legislator Harris had though there would be two public hearings; he apologized for there not being a second one;

There were some observations regarding what might be the future of Golden Hill once the property sold: new owner could turn the facility into an assisted living facility, but Mr. Griffin said the state would "hammer" the county for doing that with so many beds; should the new owner want to make changes it would be required to go through the process as laid out by NYSDOH; adding services like rehab work does bring in more revenue.

There were 4 resolutions all of which were passed:

- confirming appointment of member to the UC Community Services Board's PW/DD Subcommittee;
- authorizing the required steps for the Golden Hill Health Care Center Transfer and Related Financial procedures;
- two resolutions dealing with DSS: authorizing Chairman of UC Legislature to enter into a memorandum of understanding with NYS Office of Children and Family Services for Day Care Registration and Inspection Program Funding;
- amended 2011 UC Budget to provide for Foster Care Holiday Expenses Allocation.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

**The Ulster
County Board
of Health**

There was no quorum at the December 12, 2011 meeting of the UC Board of Health. However, the time, about an hour, was spent dealing with reports on the various sections of the department. Members of the Board who were present: Dr. Tack, Dr. Stellato and Ms. Authenrieth.

Initially, Mr. Martello updated those present about the Healthy Ulster County Network website (www.HealthyUlsterCounty.net). The web site is up and running, but it is, as he said "a work in progress". The intent in establishing the website was so people could go to one place to find information dealing with such products, services and events related to healthy living.

Restaurants will be able to post health menus items so long as the items meet "UCDOH nutritional guidelines." The intent is to provide a way to engage the private sector in this endeavor.

The project and the newsletter are led by Cornell Cooperative Extension of UC and funded by the NYS DOH. The overall goal is to make UC the healthiest county in NYS.

Dr. Hasbrouck provided some updates to work presently being done by the local DOH:

- the newsletter that the department has been publishing monthly will be published quarterly starting in 2012;
- the next issue will reference the UCDOH and the UC Mental Health;
- when presenting the budget for UCDOH and UCMH in November, he noted that DOH did not experience anything negative; on the other hand UCMH's Chemical Dependency Unit will be privatized. However, rather than there being 8 layoffs at Mental Health, there will only be 3;
- the DOH will move to the MH building at Golden Hill in March, 2012;
- the NYSDOH has responded to UC's plan regarding the move; in January, 2012 the local DOH will respond, and
- the Board of Health will hold its meetings at the Mental Health building at Golden Hill.

The Medical Examiner's report: November was a busy time. There were no site visits; 5 autopsies; 2 suicides, 9 calls for the month. These figures were for Dr. Heller.

Under Patient Services a brief synopsis of the UC Public Health Emergency preparedness plan was provided by Mrs. Troy. She has been working with Art Snyder, the Director of Emergency Communications/Emergency Management on this plan. It is a plan which has been worked on, added to as needed. She noted that she feels the DOH has "tremendous" relations with their county partners; meet with them about 10 times a year.

The DOH does respond to assist with special needs populations such as the group which was located at Bellayre during the recent flooding situation.

During the ensuing discussion Dr. Tack raised the question: Who would be in charge when there is an outbreak of a public health incident: For a public health situation, Dr. Hasbrouck would be; in the case of a natural disaster, Art Snyder advise the County Executive Michael Hein, then as the events/needs are identified DOH would respond.

Dr. Tack pointed out it was important to have communication and coordination between the various groups which are involved. Further, he suggested that the group go through an actual drill to determine how they would respond as well as the other agencies which would be involved; the group needed to plan ahead. Dr. Hasbrouck supported this point. If an incident did occur, the department would be judged afterwards as to how it handled matters.

A second item under Patient Services was handled by Mrs. Veytia. This item referenced the Long term Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA) status. The policy/procedures covering this program were compiled and sent to the NYSDOH in 2010 for review and eventual approval. As of November 18, the NYSDOH has indicated that the local DOH is in compliance with Article 36 and 28 of the public health law. An application to become such an agency was submitted in April, 2010. This was done in order to change the classification that the department had in order to be able to go into people's homes.

The department can not surrender its license for the HHC Authority (which is being sold to Will Care) until it has the LHCSA in place.

The final report dealt with environmental health: a review of the status of environmental enforcement hearings; and how this division handles reviewing food programs at the various risks levels. The division conducts about 1000 inspections of food facilities: high, medium, low risk, what violations are given for, etc.

An e-mail will be sent to board members re voting on the sanitation coded.
Lee Cane, Observer Corp

**MEMBERSHIP
NEWS**

I asked Anne Needham to send me some info on herself to share with the board and this is her delightful and interesting response. Enjoy! (And our apologies for not publishing this sooner as intended.) You might also check out the very impressive NYTimes obituary on her husband at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/10/arts/music/10roberts.html> Anne, I'm so sorry we didn't have the privilege of knowing John too, but we are delighted to have you in our League and on our board! Thanks for all you're doing.

Dave

From Anne:

I'm 72, a widow with 3 children and 2 stepchildren all entering middle age. Poor them! Poor me! The five grandchildren make up for it though...

Born in Brooklyn, NY. Catholic schools for 13 years and then attended Brooklyn college. Worked as a secretary; then copy editor and reporter on a local newspaper; spent several years in public relations. I became an addictions counselor in 1980. Worked at Roosevelt Hospital, Smithers Center in NYC. After moving to Tivoli in 1984, worked at Ellenville Hospital, then Rhinebeck Lodge (mostly publicity and community outreach). Then to Dutchess County Mental Hygiene where I spent 22 years before retiring. My last ten years at DCDMH were spent in Rhinebeck at the day program for people with psychiatric issues.

My late husband, ethnomusicologist John Storm Roberts, founded and ran Original Music, a company which licensed and sold international music. I partnered with him in this venture and helped with the operation.

Right now, I'm working on my computer skills -- attending the Senior Computer Center for classes and labs. Also attending LLI at Bard College. Trying to get gardening skills up to okay; learning to sell on Ebay & Amazon (still have a couple of John's books left which I'd like to get out there, along with a scattering of Original Music stock)

I've known about and respected the League for years. After I retired my sister, Maggie, suggested I look into joining. She is past president of the Carbondale chapter.

As to my interests: Nothing much out of the box. Like classical music and 60/70's folk; off Broadway theatre (and on, too -- but rarely can afford); costume dramas of all sorts; documentaries and old MGM musicals. Read a fair amount -- novels light and heavy, history and whatever tweeks my fancy; just got a kindle which is neat; like the Economist, New Yorker, Kingston Freeman, weekend NY Times. I'm on Facebook but find it a bit of a bore...

I exercise and try to eat right (ho hum...) Do really love Zumba though!

Anne

INTERESTED IN LWV BOARD SERVICE?

The Nominating Committee will start meeting soon to put together a slate of candidates for the 2012-13 year.

Being a board member is a great way to learn more about what's really going on in local politics and to serve the League's mission -- and it's usually even fun.

If you can't serve, don't hesitate to recommend someone. We are especially eager to get some board members from Dutchess.

For further information, contact any board member or any of the Nominating Committee members (Cindy Bell at 336-5763, Lee Cane at 338-0706, Kathy Germain at 338-4432, Jean McGarry at 336-6622, and Renee Sachs at 331-0552). You can also email info@lwvmidhudson.org or call our LWV number, 340-2003.