



Commentator

JULY-AUGUST 2015

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!	
2015		
Aug 6	Thurs. 4:00 PM	LWV MHR Board Meeting , home of Margaret Sellers, 80 Ringtop Road, Kingston, NY.
Aug 18	Tues. 1:45 PM	LWV MHR Book Club , Discussing <i>The Soul of the Citizen</i> by Paul Loeb, at Enzo's Pizzeria in Kingston, NY.
Aug 26		Vote 411 data non-primary contestants
Sept 3	Thurs. 4:00 PM	LWV MHR Board Meeting , home of Jackie Moriarty
Sept 10		Primary Election and Vote 411 data primary winners
Sept 22		National Voter Registration Day - Contact Jean McGarry at jfmcg@hvc.rr.com or call her at 336-6622. See Voter Service report below for more information.
Nov 3		Election Day

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PREZ SEZ...

July 4th whizzed by in drizzling rain, fireworks and no overt domestic terrorist activity. I am still celebrating the most recent Supreme Court decisions. The Affordable Care Act has received another endorsement, allowing the federal government to fund subsidies for people whose states have not provided their own exchanges. Justice Roberts broadly interpreted the statutory language and made it very difficult for future decisions to undo the law. Growing up in the Netherlands and New Zealand, both of which had Universal Health Care during those years, imagine my surprise when I arrived in the United States to discover the health insurance situation here. At age 18 I had my first surgery. I walked into Princess Margaret Hospital in New Zealand, was taken care of and walked out without seeing an invoice. At age 23, I was taken by ambulance to St. Clare's Hospital in Manhattan, and on my way in was asked what insurance I had. "Insurance? What is that?" Would they take me back out into the street and let me die? Fortunately not. I was treated well. I don't remember what happened to the bill. It took another 5 years before I had my first health insurance.

The endorsement of gay marriage has come much sooner than I could possibly have expected. I don't know if my neighbors, a gay couple of 20 plus years relationship, plan to get married, but I feel like doing a weird little jig every time I see them. Of course they live in New York, and could have done so for a number of years already, but now their marriage would be recognized all over the country.

A little more obscure is the disparate impact decision. However, this was a topic I researched extensively while in Law School in 2011, because of a major housing law suit in Westchester County. In 2009 a federal judge found that Westchester County had failed to increase fair housing choice by not challenging barriers caused by restrictive zoning. Many areas of the United States have become more segregated over the last 40 years, caused not only by white flight, but also the difficulty of building affordable housing anywhere that it is needed.

I raise a toast to all of you who have worked towards these changes over many years. May we take a moment and celebrate.

Jolanda Jansen

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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

Condolences to Harriet Straus on the death of her husband, David Straus, who was an active supporter of the league, attending numerous events throughout the many years of Harriet's membership. We will miss seeing him at league events.

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.

What We're Doing**Naturalization Ceremony:**

Thanks to Shirley Kobran, Kim McEvoy, Doug Thompson and Daisy Tyler who welcomed 51 new citizens and distributed voter registration information on June 12.

National Voter Registration Day: Tuesday, September 22. Many volunteers are needed. We will target college students this year and would like to expand our drive beyond SUNY Ulster and SUNY Dutchess.

Moderating:

Interested in being a timekeeper or moderator? Personal training and shadowing will be available.

Volunteering:

Voter service requires many volunteers for short term commitments. If you only have a limited time to give to the league but would like to get involved, contact Jean McGarry at jfmcg@hvc.rr.com or call her at 336-6622.

STUDY AND ADVOCACY**Materials Management Committee**

Dear friends of the three R's,

We are making a change in the Chairmanship of the Mid-Hudson League of Women Voters Materials Management Committee. Kathy Oconnor will be our new Chairman. In the future, you can send information you think would be of interest to our Committee to the following email address:

oconnor.kraye@gmail.com

We look forward to continuing to work together to raise consciousness about the right stewardship of the earth's resources.

Sincerely, Cindy Lanzetta

2015 Book Discussion Selections

We continue to meet on Tuesdays at 1:45 at Enzo's Pizza, 207 Boices Lane, Kingston. An updated schedule follows below. We may make further adjustments, but we're committed to these books if you want to read ahead. But you don't have to have read the book to sit in!

Please confirm dates and times at 845-340-2004 or www.lwvmidhudson.org.

UPCOMING WORKS**August 18: Soul of a Citizen, Paul Loeb, 1999**

A book of inspiration and integrity, *Soul of a Citizen* is an antidote to the twin scourges of modern life--powerlessness and cynicism. Loeb tells moving stories of ordinary Americans who have found unexpected fulfillment in social involvement.

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

Karen L. Binder Library, 6th Floor, County Office Building, June 8, 2015, 6:37 – 7:40 PM

Committee Members:

Peter Loughran, Chairman, Kenneth J. Ronk, Jr., Deputy Chairman, Richard A. Parete, Hector Rodriguez, Mary Wawro

Other legislators: Manna Jo Greene and Tracey Bartels.

Meeting called to order by Kenneth Ronk, Deputy Chairman (Chairman Peter Loughran joined the meeting at 7:13 PM).

Minutes from the May 7, 2015 meeting were approved.

Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency Report: Tim Rose, Executive Director, reported that proposed contracts were recently sent to the towns, requesting them to sign-on in 30 days. The contracts are for 5 years. A copy of the contract language is to be sent to the committee.

There was discussion about the need for towns to sign on and concerns about the possible consequences (e.g. higher rates) if some don't. The UCRRA board will address the contacts and a proposed budget in their July UCRRA meeting in anticipation of a budget meeting in August.

Tim Rose mentioned that resumes for a new UCRRA Recycling Coordinator are coming in.

Resolutions for June 16, 2015:

1. **Motion: Resolution No. 109** - Setting A Public Hearing On Proposed Local Law No. 3 of 2015 (A Local Law Establishing A Sustainable Green Fleet Policy) To Be Held On Wednesday, July 15, 2015 At 6:00 PM

2. **Motion: Resolution No. 132** - Adopting The Ulster County Green Fleet Policy

Resolutions No. 109 and No. 132 were discussed together. Revisions to the policy were considered and proposed revisions were approved, pending a review by Executive and Legislative Counsels. Resolution No. 132 was withdrawn by its sponsor.

3. **Motion: Resolution No. 239** – Establishing Capital Project No. 456 – Ulster County Law Enforcement Center Lighting – Department Of The Environment

Amanda LaValle, Coordinator, Department of Environment led the discussion of a capital project to convert the center to LED lighting by Lime Energy. Lime Energy is the exclusive commercial energy efficiency contractor for Central Hudson Gas & Electric. The LED lighting is expected to improve lighting quality, reduce energy costs (a 13 month payback period) and reduce the carbon footprint. The resolution was approved.

Old Business:

1. **Climate Smart Committee – Update:** Legislator Greene recommended for consideration the town Woodstock initiative on smart meter and possible public meeting. She mentioned many street lighting proposals and the sharing of information of the Siemens' energy audit and plan. Amanda LaValle discussed that tracking and reporting is in place.

2. **Solid Waste Disposal Improvement Commission – Update:** Legislator Hector Rodriquez discussed a trip to Delaware County facility that was informative. Other trips including to Taylor Recycling are planned.

Vic Melville, LWV Observer, 6-19-15

UC Legislative Public Health and Social Services

The Committee was convened by Deputy Chairman Jeanette Provenzano at 6:33 on July 6, 2015 and adjourned at 7:35.

Present: Proenzano, Belfiglio, Allen, Litts

Absent: Lopez (excused)

Others: Erica Guerin, Legislative Counsel

Following the call to order the first order of business was the approval of the minutes of the June, 2015 meeting.

Next of the agenda was an overview report on the Northeast Center for Traumatic Brain Injury. Initially, following the introduction of the personnel from the Center, Annmarie Belfiglio, the Occupational Therapy Coordinator spoke about the difficulty that some of the Center's patients were experiencing.

Apparently, those patients who were getting ready to be discharged and become part of a program administered by Medicaid were having difficulty when shopping in stores along the 9W corridor in the T/Ulster. The difficulty was in attempting to cross 9W as there were no designated cross walks. At the Center's request Legislator Fabiano had met with staff at the Center to learn about the problem and at the Center's request to try to resolve the problem.

It was suggested by committee members that as this was a town issue, the latter would need to contact State Department of Transportation. Further, Legislator Allen noted that Saugerties has had a similar problem which it has handled and suggested that the T/Ulster might want to consider

contacting the T/Saugerties.

The remainder of the time allocated to the report on the Center provided the following information:

- Ms. Belfiglio felt that the Center was the very best of health care facilities in Ulster County;
- it is the largest facility of its type in the United States;
- the facility serves a diverse population in addition to the principle pint of handling brain injury, the Center has a 40 bed ventilator program; and cases which are handled by the medical complex unit which is similar to a skilled nursing facility;
- as well as a neuro-rehab unit which involves having patients assigned to a single room initially so that the Center can evaluate the prospective patient's injury and determine how the patient will inter act with others and staff and the Center itself;
- recently the Center representatives met with VA groups to arrange how to deal with those veterans needing the services of the Center; and
- that it has a highly regarded rehab system and program.

Ms. Belfiglio was also there to invite the committee members, and also the Legislature to come and visit the facility to see what it is like.

The Center has patients from outside UC. Many have nothing and no benefits. These are aeas in addition to the medical problems that the patient may have that the Center tries to address and put the person in a better situation.

Mr. Rinn, the Center Administrator, pointed out that in addition to the areas mentioned, the Center focuses on the cognitive aspects of the person's treatment; the Center has appropriate staff to handle such matters.

Over the years there has been an increase in the number of beds, originally 40 in the 1990s when the Center was established to 180 at this time.

Another problem that the Center has seen develop is the increase in the use of heroin among those who come to the facility.

Deputy-Chairman Provenzano thanked all the Center representatives for coming and for presenting the overview. She indicated that she would speak with Chairman Lopez regarding scheduling a visit to the Center.

There was no report from T/Supervisor Hansut.

The 6 resolutions were then taken up. The resolutions #259, #267, #268, #269, and #287 dealt with the following subjects:

- extend by 60 days the reporting to the UC Legislature the findings and recommendations of the UC Coalition against Narcotics;
- authorizing the UC Legislative Chairman to execute an agreement with SUNY-Albany School of Social Welfare to continue the Masters in Social Work internship program;
- amend the 2015 county budget to accept funds from NYS Office of Children and Family Services to fund a collaboration of behavioral health and child protective services- Department of Social Services;
- authorizing Chairman of UC Legislature to execute an amendment with the NYC Department of Environmental Protection to continue delegation of administration of Section 18-38 of the Watershed Regulations–Department of Health;
- approve the execution of a contact in excess of \$50,000 entered into by the County-Natalie Mesa-Department of Social Services.

All the resolutions were passed.

Old Business: Concern was raised about the need to address the proposed support of state act to require specific number of nurses per numbers of patients. Apparently contact will be made with Chairman Lopez to address this topic at a later date.

New Business: The committee discussed the article appearing in the Daily Freeman within the

last week. Apparently the article referenced a quote alleged to have been made at a Family Council meeting at Golden Hill regarding short staffing and a question of quality care of patients residing there. There appeared to be a difference of opinion about what had been actually said as well as the question on care.

A suggestion was made that the committee might want to visit any of the related groups in UC that are related to the Public Health and Social Services concerns.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

**UC Association of
Town Supervisors and
Mayors**

The June 16, 2015 meeting of the UC Association of Town Supervisors and Mayors was convened at 8:36 by President, T/Rochester Supervisor Carl Chipman and adjourned at 9:23. Present: T/Denning, Hardenburgh, Hurley, Marletown, Plattekill, Rochester, Rosendale, Shandaken, Ulster, and Wawarsing.

No representatives of the Office of County Executive or the UC Legislature were present.

There was no representative from the UC Resource Recovery Agency in attendance. However, in the brief discussion that followed it was noted that the new contract was not yet available. Apparently the UCRRA had voted to send this contract to its lawyers to review. It was suggested that possibly next week association members may see the new contract.

During discussion it was pointed out that apparently some 20 years ago each town had be allocated dollars (suggested figure was \$40,000) to improve their transfer stations; that if any dollars not used (suggestion by some that they had not used all the allocation) that the dollars not used might still be available with possible interest; that the towns contact the UCRRA to determine what they might still be entitled to.

Health: The group passed a motion to invite the representative of Niagara County, Daniel Inger, to talk to it. The subject would be the health consortium that that county had. The T/Supervisors also agreed to cover Mr. Inger's expenses (lodging, meals, and travel).

The group then discussed the various ways that the towns were and had been engaged in over time for shared services, i.e., lighting, roads, personnel, etc. The indication suggested that costs have been reduced and services still provided.

Treasurer's Report: \$6,443.23 approved

Minutes of the May meeting: approved

Lee Cane, Observer Corp