



Commentator

OCTOBER 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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2014		CALENDAR
WE WELCOME THE GENERAL PUBLIC AT ALL EVENTS! NO CHARGE!		
OCTOBER		
1	Wed 7:00 pm	A forum on sustainability with Congressional candidates Chris Gibson (R, incumbent) and Sean Eldridge (D), Lecture Center Room 100, SUNY New Paltz. Sponsored by the Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach (CRREO) , in collaboration with the New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (NYLCVEF)
6	Mon. 7:00pm	Congressional Candidate Debate between Sean Eldridge (D) and Chris Gibson (R) at Miller School, Lake Katrine. Sponsored by the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce with the LWV serving as timekeeper.
7	Tues. 7:15 pm	LWV MHR Board Meeting , home of Shirley Kobran, 53 Schuler Lane, Lake Katrine, 845-382-6989. Time, date and location tentative; please confirm at 340-2003.
8	Wed. 12:30 pm	Meeting on the LWNYS study on Ballot Access , home of Margaret Sellers, 80 Ringtop Road, Kingston, 845-339-3180, mcsellers@aol.com . New participants welcome!
8	Thu. 3:00 pm	Resource Development Committee meeting , home of Shirley Kobran, 53 Schuler Lane, Lake Katrine, 845-382-6989. Time, date and location tentative; please confirm at 340-2003.
14	Tues. 2:30 pm	Book Discussion on Marcia Coyle's THE ROBERTS COURT: The Struggle for the Constitution . Kingston Public Library, 55 Franklin Street. All welcome, whether you've read the book or not.
14	Tues 5:30 pm	Solid Waste Study Committee , Gateway Diner, Rt 9W just north of Mid-Hudson Bridge, Highland. For more info and to confirm, contact Cindy Lanzetta, 845-236-7288, packback56@yahoo.com
22	Wed 7:00 pm	Debate on the state ballot amendment on REDISTRICTING , Deyo House, Historic Huguenot St, New Paltz. Learn why it's got the good government experts arguing among themselves, including our debaters Dr. Gerald Benjamin of SUNY New Paltz's CRREO (who's against it) and Dick Dadey of Citizens Union (for it). Mark your calendars for this lively debate!
NOVEMBER		
13	Thurs.	LWV Day at the UN , featuring a tour, lunch in the Delegates Dining Room, and briefings by UN experts, all for discounted price of \$110 for our members. This year's topic: " Water for Life " the UN International Decade for Action, 2005-15. For \$45 round-trip, join the LWVNYS bus at the New Paltz Thruway exit. Register and get other details at www.lwvny.org or call 845-340-2003.
15	Sat. 10:00am	UN trip follow-up discussion at the Gateway Diner on Rt. 9W in Highland, just north of the Mid-Hudson Bridge (and across from Burger King). It's an overwhelming issue, but thank goodness the UN exists to help address it!

PREZ SEZ...

It's my turn again. Oh my gosh, things are getting exciting. I'm asking candidates for the New York State Senate and the New York State Assembly to enter their information into Vote 411. It's an online database, and when it goes public you will be able to enter your address and find out what your candidates' positions are on such issues as Campaign Finance, Election Reform, Energy Policy, and Redistricting. Of course they haven't all filled in their profiles yet, and we are on the phone tracking down the candidates and helping them get their answers into the database.

This week I was the League's timekeeper at a debate between Cecilia Tkaczyk and George Amadore at the Ulster County Chamber of Commerce breakfast. The questions from the audience required them to address fracking, women's reproductive rights, the SAFE Act as well as how they are going to help businesses, reduce regulations, and reduce taxes.

If you want to be at the front line listening breathlessly to every word while watching a stopwatch and holding up time cards, please call Dare Thompson at 845-340-2003 or myself at 845-505-0324. We can always use more timekeepers.

As a reward for voting, encouraging your friends and family to vote, and suffering through all the negative campaign ads, join us on November 13 as we go by bus from New Paltz to the United Nations. We will have our own private tour, lunch in the Delegates Dining Room and receive briefings on this year's topic "Water for Life" as part of the UN International Decade for Action, 2005-2015. I'm going and I really hope that you can join me. You can register on line at www.lwvny.org.

Jolanda Jansen

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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

PROGRAMS**Good Government Gurus Clash re Redistricting Amendment**

On **November 4** we are all going to have to vote YES or NO on a state constitutional amendment to "reform" the redistricting process in New York. Good government groups are getting heated in their disagreement. Some say the amendment is worse than nothing. Others (e.g. Citizens Union and our state League) say it's better than nothing.

We are very fortunate to hear two extremely well-informed men argue it out for our enlightenment on **Wednesday, October 22, 7 pm at Deyo Hall on Huguenot Street in New Paltz.** (Park on the gravel lot or on the pavement next to Deyo Hall.)

Gerald Benjamin (taking the CON position) is SUNY New Paltz's Associate Vice President for Regional Engagement and the director of its Center for Research, Regional Education, and Outreach (CRREO). He has also served as the chair of the Ulster County Legislature and chaired the commission that created a new county charter that included an independent reapportionment commission.

Dick Dadey (taking the PRO) is the Executive Director of Citizens Union of New York City, a 100+ year old civic organization that is a frequent ally of ours in fighting for better government but, unlike LWV, endorses candidates.

The two men are good friends and Dr. Benjamin reported awhile back that he "had lunch with Dick last week. He is relentless and formidable, and a wonderful person. It is going to be great."

We agree! What a privilege for us to hear them. Do join us.

LWV Day at the UN

NOVEMBER 13, a Thursday, is **LWV Day at the UN**, featuring a tour, lunch in the Delegates Dining Room, and briefings by UN experts. The topic this year is "**Water for Life**," the UN International Decade for Action, 2005-15. The LWVNYS bus will stop for us at New Paltz.

**SPACE IS LIMITED, SO RESERVE EARLY
REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS October 24, 2014**

To download a **registration form**, consult September's Commentator at http://lwvmidhudson.org/files/Commentator_Sep_14.pdf or go to http://www.lwvny.org/LLresources/SBR_StateNews/2014/August/UN-Registration-Form.pdf

For **more information**, go to <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/background.shtml> and in the latest LWVNYS VOTER emailed to you on August 22nd.

In her Prez Sez, co-president Jolanda Jansen talked about **UN Day on Thursday, November 13th**, and we all encourage you to take this trip with us and hear more about the international issues related to WATER, "the new oil" in world politics.

If you'd like to attend only part of the day, there is information on the registration form about what the tour, lunch, and briefings each costs separately. You may sign up for only the parts you want. Call the state office or us at 845-340-2003 if you need help or have questions.

Plus - new this year! - the LWVNYS bus will stop at the New Paltz exit just for us and Saugerties.

If you can't go but want to hear all about it, join us for a de-briefing discussion on **Saturday, November 15, at 10 AM at the Gateway Diner on Rt. 9W in Highland**, just north of the Mid-Hudson Bridge (and across from Burger King). It's an overwhelming issue, but thank goodness the UN exists to help address it!

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

On September 5, once again, our league welcomed new citizens and handed out voter registration forms and *First Vote*. These new American citizens are a joy to give voter information to since they chose to become American citizens. In many cases, they are particularly eager to vote since it is the first time they will be able to exercise this right. Volunteering for the Naturalization Ceremony is fun and does not require much time but it is probably the most worthwhile activity a league member can do. The next ceremony should be the end of November or early December. Look for details on volunteering in the next issue of the Commentator.

National Voter Registration Day September 23

On Tuesday, September 23rd, thousands of volunteers, organizations, and celebrities across the country joined in a one-day effort to register citizens to vote. According to Jeanette Senecal of the LWVUS, close to 75% of Americans who are registered to vote make it to the polls in major election years. Unfortunately, nearly 1 in 4 Americans are not registered to vote. More specifically, according to the U.S. Census, 6 million Americans did not vote in 2008 because they did not know how to register or they missed the state's voter registration deadline.

Business was brisk at SUNY Ulster as students registered knowing they could vote this November. It is our hope to expand voter registration to more area colleges, not only on National Voter Registration Day but to provide registration opportunities year-round. Of

course, to be able to do this, more volunteers are required.

Thanks to Cindy Bell, Cindy Lanzetta, Jean McGarry, Karen Miller, Jacki Morarity, and Lee Ridgway who worked registration tables at the Kingston Area Library and SUNY Ulster. With your efforts, there are 51 more Americans registered who will have the opportunity to have their voice heard on November 4th.

STUDY AND ADVOCACY

Study Group on Ballot Access and Term Limits

Ballot Access: How Do Our Elected Officials Get On The Ballot?

Getting elected to public office in New York State is not a simple process. We can compare our process to that found in other states and decide if we want to lobby for change. The questions that we are faced with in this statewide study include a look at our current closed primary system, discussing opening NYS primaries to nonaffiliated voters, ie, people not registered to a political party. We will also consider ranked choice voting, instant runoff voting, Top Two Vote Getter in an Open primary system, as well as whether or not "Wilson-Pakula" should be repealed and retaining the NYS system of fusion voting.

If all this confuses you, you're not alone. Join us as we figure out what this is all about and how the system might be changed for the better. We welcome your participation at a meeting on Wed. October 8 at 12:30-2:30 PM at the home of Margaret Sellers and Vic Melville at 80 Ringtop Road, Kingston, NY (off of Pearl St.) Bring a bag lunch if you are real hungry. Tea will be available. Call (845) 339-3180 for more information.

Term Limits:

If you check out the study materials for the Ballot Access study on the state League website at <http://www.lwvny.org/programs-studies.html>, you'll see that there are also materials there for the state League's TERM LIMITS study.

We plan to participate in this study too. And while we must reach consensus on both state studies by January, since the term limits study should be less complex, we are waiting until later in October to start holding meetings.

The League has a position against term limits for Congressional candidates but we are free to decide what we want to do about state candidates, and Nan Fogel and other members will be meeting in Dutchess Co. to get this study underway.

If you are interested in participating, contact Nan at nancyfogel@yahoo.com or call the League at 845-340-2003. We need other good minds on this topic (including non-members!) that just gets "hotter" with every new example of governmental fraud and ineptitude. Are term limits the answer?

Fixing Our Broken Government: A Book Discussion

How concerned are you about what the Supreme Court is doing? If you're reading this Commentator, the answer is probably "A LOT!" Then you'll want to read or at least hear about Marcia Coyle's recent book called **The Roberts Court: The Struggle for the Constitution**.

We'll be meeting on **October 14th at 2:30 at the Kingston Library** at 55 Franklin St., and we welcome you to the discussion whether you've read the book or not.

Author Marcia Coyle is the chief Washington correspondent for *The National Law Journal* and she has covered the Court for twenty-five years as a lawyer and journalist. If you've seen any of her many appearances on the *PBS News Hour*, you know how wonderfully clear her explanations of the twists and turns at the Supreme Court are. As the late Joan Rivers would say, "Let's talk!"

Materials Management Committee (Solid Waste)

September has been a busy month for Materials Management, especially for Ulster County. Towns are struggling with increased costs associated with their local transfer stations. The County is hesitant to help and the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA) is debating what options they have in their responsibility to the Towns and the collection of material.

Meanwhile, New Paltz is unveiling its Zero Waste Action Plan, Gardiner has hired an enthusiastic Recycling Coordinator, and gas stations in Ulster County have been brought aboard the recycling train.

Dutchess County now has a Recycling Educator, who will focus on school participation and other public educational activities.

Our Committee is going full steam ahead in its efforts to contact other local Leagues and make them aware of the importance of supporting legislation for Paint Stewardship. We'll keep you posted on their response.

We will have our next meeting on October 14, 2014 at the Gateway Diner, Rt. 9W, in Highland. We meet at 5:30pm for a bite to eat and interesting conversation. Join us!

Cindy Lanzetta, Chair, Materials Management Committee

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! While county meetings are our priority, you may observe your town or city board meetings if 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.

Ulster Resource Recovery Agency (UCRRA) Business Meeting

September 22, 2014; Meeting began at 5pm at UCRRA

Board Members present- Leon Smith, Charles Landi, David Gordon; Absent – Catherine Nilsen, Dominic Tagliaferro; All Agency staff present

During the public comment period I complimented the Agency on its updated website: www.ucrra.org and suggested that meeting dates and agendas be posted in a timely manner. The Rochester Town Supervisor and President of the Ulster County Association of Supervisors & Mayors, Carl Chipman, presented a resolution from the Association. The request is that, in lieu of additional fees to the towns and cities for containers and pull charges, the tipping fee be raised by \$2 for all users of the Agency's facilities.

Chairman Leon Smith reported on the meeting with the UC Environmental Committee. July 1, 2015 is the end of the towns' contract extension. Options discussed at the meeting included the County taking over transportation of town material. Apparently the County Executive has told Charlie Landi that he is not in favor of that. The County does not want to increase the net service fee. Charlie Landi expressed that he was "leaning in the direction to get out of the business" of transporting the towns' materials. The towns account for approximately 8% of the materials UCRRA handles. They do provide UCRRA with quality separated recyclables.

David Gordon reminded the Board that they are in the business of "providing a public service."

Charles Landi brought up the fact that minutes of the UC Environmental Committee meetings should be circulated to the UCRRA Board. It was agreed that the Clerk for the Committee would be asked to do so.

General Reports were made by staff members. All information is available on the website, www.ucrra.org

A public hearing has been set for the Agency's Proposed 2015 Budget. It will be Tuesday, October 14, 2014, 5pm at the Agency.

The next regular Business Meeting will be October 27, 2014, 5pm, when the final budget should be approved.

Cindy Lanzetta, Chair, LWV-MHR Materials Management Committee

Energy and Environment Committee

Sept. 15, 2014, 6:32 – 9:22 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, approval minutes of Aug. 6, 2014 (as amended) and July 8, 2014 meeting.

Resolutions for Sept. 23, 2014:

Resolution No. 314: Pertains to setting a policy for county owned vehicles to utilize alternative fuel sources. No action, following discussion of communications between Michael Hein, County Executive and the legislature leadership, and Chairman Bartels call for a special meeting.

Resolution No. 328: Pertains to authorizing the filing of an application for state grant-in-aid regarding municipal water reduction and/or reduction – Department of the Environment. Amanda LaValle, Coordinator, Department of the Environment, discussed the application. Approved.

Resolution No. 344 and Resolution No. 345 pertaining to setting a public hearing on proposed local law regarding regulating polystyrene was postponed following a discussion with Legislator Jeanette Provenzano (not a member of the committee) about differences of the resolutions.

Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency: Leon Smith, Board Chair and Charlie Landi, Board Member. Mr. Smith said that he and some board members had met with Carl Chapman, President, UC Association of Town Supervisors, about the towns contracts and that 10-year contracts would not be acceptable to the towns, but 5-year contracts would be better. Mr. Smith mentioned the budget would raise the tipping fees to offset town charges. Mr. Chapman said open-ended town contracts of 10 years would be no good and cause an auditing problem.

The committee and Mr. Smith, Mr. Landi and Mr. Chapman continued to discuss topics that have often been previously addressed, including: landfills, funding options, flow control of recyclables, single-stream, dual-stream, educational trips to regional landfills.

Mr. Smith said he intended to propose to the UCRRA board that the county does the towns hauling and provides the boxes and roll offs. Several members of the committee had concerns about this as that would put the county back into the resource recovery business.

Chairman Bartels calls for a new committee to address the future of resource recovery in Ulster County.

Pilgrim Pipeline Update: An issues paper was distributed.

Old Business:

1. Energy Improvement Corporation (EIC): Update and correspondence
2. Climate Smart Committee – Update
3. Watershed Hydro-Vac Truck - Update
4. Emerald Ash Borer - Update

LWV Observer Corp, Vic Melville, 9-26-14

**UC Association of
Town Supervisors
and Mayors**

The September 16, 2014 meeting of the UC Association of T/Supervisors and Majors was convened at 8:40 by T/Supervisor, Carl Chipman and adjourned at 9:51.

Mr. Chipman noted that while the County Executive, Michael Hein, was not present, Jay Mahler, representing John Parete, Chairman of the UC Legislature was. Initially, she noted that Mr. Parete apologized for the county not approving the take-over of election costs from the towns, but that he would try again next year.

The group engaged in some general comments regarding the county assuming the remainder of the costs related to the Safety Net program. One of the comments made was that not all of the towns had high costs. Other comments were related to items that the towns could deal with like repairs, infrastructure, salaries, benefits, etc. particularly as this is budget preparation time for 2015.

The supervisors then discussed the topic of trash costs and the on-going discussion with the RRA (Resource Recovery Agency). Based on the comments, it seems apparent that the towns continue to have concerns about the costs that the towns are being expected to pay to the RRA for trash pick-up and related items. Some of the comments:

- county needs to look at what would work long term in dealing with solid waste;

- Mr. Chipman asked Legislator Greene to comment on the happenings at the Energy and Environment committee. Apparently the committee had indicated developing a collaborative committee with representatives of each group involved in this matter, including the T/Supervisors to develop an appropriate process to deal with this situation;

- it appears that if the RRA does not obtain a sufficient number of signed contracts from the towns then apparently the RRA would no longer be handling the town pick up; it appears that the group believes that the RRA wishes to end that contract;

- the group needs to investigate what the costs would be to use private handlers only as well as what type of funds could be gained from the sale of various types of waste, and what types of grants might be available to help defray expenses involved in these matters.

The group passed a motion that a letter recommending RRA raise the tipping fee by \$2 a ton to cover costs for recycling, rentals, etc. Mr. Chipman indicated he would bring such to the RRA meeting on Monday, September 22.

With regards to election costs: Since the county will not take over such, then the towns feel they should have something to say about the costs that are involved. Jay Mahler, representing Mr. Parete explained there are state laws which need to be adhered to as to the process which of course involves paying for such; and the local Board of Elections would also be involved. She provided various specifics re equipment, the pens used to mark ballots, how many inspectors were needed per district, etc. It appeared that many of the details/points that she provided the group were not generally known to the members or were those which they were unaware of. Nevertheless, given the types of rules, regulations and laws involved, the group's reaction was that such costs should be considered the responsibility of the county, not the towns.

There was a brief commentary about the rail trail....many people come and use such, and those are people who do in fact spend money in Ulster County.

The August meeting minutes were approved. There is \$6,794.65 in the treasury.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp