



Commentator

September 2016

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!		
2016	Check our online calendar (http://lwvmidhudson.org/calendar.html) for updates.	
September		
8	4:00-6:00 PM	Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Rd, Hurley, NY 12443.
13		NY State and Local Primaries (See <i>Voter Service</i> article)
13	5:30 PM	Materials Management Study Committee at the Main Course Restaurant (175 Main Street, New Paltz, NY 12561). For more information, contact Kathy OConnor at (845) 757-2247 or occonnor.kraye@gmail.com.
19	8:30-9:00 AM	Kingston Community Radio, WGHQ 920 AM LWV On Air. Go to http://www.mykcr.org to listen on your computer. Jean McGarry and Jacki Moriarty will discuss voter registration. Call 845-331-9255 to ask a question or make a comment.
20	1:45-3:30 PM	Book Club Meeting Club at Enzo's Pizzeria, Boices Lane, Lake Katrine – <i>Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging</i> For more information, contact Jacki Moriarty at 331-3418 or jackim@hvc.rr.com.
20	6:30 PM	Voter Registration Training Home of Jean McGarry, 180 South Rd, Ruby
23	12:00 PM	Naturalization Ceremony, Ulster County Court House, 285 Wall St., Kingston. Volunteers should arrive at 10:45.
27		National Voter Registration Day (see <i>Voter Service</i> article)

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MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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

We note with sadness the passing of another "charter member" of our league, Gloria Plasker and express our deepest condolences to her family, friends and all those who reaped the benefits of her deep commitment to public service, especially to the League of Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region for over 50 years.

VOTER SERVICE

Moderating Guidelines

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

What Voter Service has done and What We're Doing

Congressional debates Attempts were made to set up debates in Kingston for the Teachout/Faso race and the Amedore/Niccoli campaign. Unfortunately, we were not successful in scheduling either debate.

We understand that the League of Conservation Voters will sponsor a debate at SUNY New Paltz in October (date to be set). Ulster County residents are encouraged to attend. According to Dare Thompson, this organization will publicly support a candidate after the debate based on the performance and positions of these Congressional hopefuls. More information about the LCV and scheduling information can be found at <http://www.lcv.org/> or our online calendar at <http://lwvmidhudson.org/calendar.html>

Scheduled below are other Congressional debates as printed in the Kingston Daily Freeman
The candidates for New York's 19th Congressional District seat between Republican John Faso and Democrat Zephyr Teachout will meet in a series of debates.

September 15, 1 to 2 p.m. at The Linda, WAMC's Performing Arts Center, at 339 Central Ave. in Albany. Hosted by Sunday Freeman columnist Alan Chartock, the debate is free and open to the public. For reservations, go to bit.ly/2bE0kSN. It will be broadcast live over WAMC's 29 radio frequencies and at wamc.org.

October 13, 8 to 9pm on WMHT-TV. The debate, moderated by Matt Ryan, also will be streamed at wmht.org and timesunion.com.

October 24 at 7 and 10 p.m. on Time Warner Cable News. It will be moderated by Liz Benjamin. The 19th District includes all of Ulster, Greene and Columbia counties and most of Dutchess County.

State Senate Debate The Amedore/Niccoli debate will not be held since the Amedore campaign feels Ulster County will be covered by the Chamber of Commerce breakfast Meet the Candidates on September 29. Voter Service disagrees with the reasoning that this event fulfills the need of Ulster County residents to be informed about these candidates. Below is an email sent to the Niccoli campaign explaining why we now have to rescind our invitation:

I just got off the phone with Doug Breckell, Amedore's campaign manager. Sadly none of your dates are available. He also told me that they consider the Chamber of Commerce Meet the Candidates event sufficient for Ulster County. Personally, as Voter Service chair I have a bit of a problem with this being the only opportunity in our area to hear the candidates' positions. It is a paid event and it caters to a business community. He also told me it is billed as a League event with the Chamber. This is news to me. While two of our members are helping out as time keeper and with collecting cards for questions, that is our only involvement. We are not moderating and we are not a co-sponsor so it is not imperative that our league guidelines for this event be followed.

While any organization certainly has the prerogative to host a debate and campaigns are free to accept or reject invitations at will, it would be preferable if a debate was held that would be more inviting of citizens in other segments of the population such as parents who need to get children off to school, senior citizens, and the working public who do not have the freedom to clock in at work at a later hour. Yes, this event may be open to the public but in reality, it serves a small sliver of our community.

Voter Registration Volunteers are still needed to conduct **drives on September 26th and 27th** at four area colleges for National Voter Registration Day. Attending **Voter Service Training on September 20, 6:30 pm** at the home of Jean McGarry will prepare you for any questions you may encounter. It will also allow voter registration materials to be easily distributed. Please volunteer.

State and Local Primaries If you are confused about what primaries are being held in Ulster County on September 13, please contact Jean McGarry for a list. For Dutchess County, contact your Board of Elections at 486-2473.

Constitutional Convention- This past April our league had its first presentation on the Road to the Constitutional Convention. New Yorkers will have the opportunity to vote on whether to have a constitutional convention in November, 2017. To continue to provide information to the public on the pros and cons of having the New York State Constitution revisited and possibly amended, we will attempt to offer forums that will focus on specific areas of concern regarding any changes in the constitution. Presently in the works is a forum on education to be scheduled in November. By then we will happily have the presidential campaign behind us and will welcome other topics for discussion and debate. Stay tuned and if you wish to help out with these forums or have ideas for other topics and speakers, please contact Jean McGarry.

Ulster Family Court - A controversial issue is whether to move the Family Court to the Business Resource Center outside the county seat or to find another location in the City of Kingston. The State has mandated that the current facility is inadequate and therefore, it must be relocated.

The LWVMHR has no position on this issue since we have not studied the pros and cons of moving from or staying in Kingston nor have we had access to any financial information or documentation that may serve as an argument for preferring one location over another. What was perplexing to the league was the action of four county legislators who voted against having the referendum appear on the ballot in the November election. This referendum is required since county residents must approve Family Court being moved out of the county seat.

Three of our members called three of the four members to find the reasoning behind the decision. In all instances, the main objection was the wording of the referendum that appeared to promote the benefits of moving Family Court to the Town of Ulster. The League of Women Voters agrees that any wording in a public referendum should be neutrally stated. The time for promoting the advantages for a particular position should be prior to the vote.

Jean McGarry

Voter Guides

Two thousand LWNYS *Voter Guides Part 2* have been ordered for distribution in Ulster and Dutchess Counties. Three hundred will be at no charge due to our participation in the *Organ Donation Drive*.

Does One Vote Matter?

After the November 2000 presidential election, most people would agree that every vote counts. One vote can be powerful enough to change the course of history, as the following statements attest.

- In 1645, one vote gave Oliver Cromwell control over England.
- In 1649, one vote caused King Charles of England to be executed.
- In 1776, one vote gave America the English language instead of German. Thomas Jefferson and then, John Quincy Adams, were elected by one-vote margins in the Electoral College.
- In 1839, Marcus Morton was elected governor of Massachusetts by one vote.
- In 1845, one vote brought Texas into the Union. A single vote also admitted California, Oregon and Washington to statehood.
- In 1868, President Andrew Johnson's impeachment was defeated by a single vote.
- In 1876, with the presidential election thrown into the House, Rutherford B. Hayes won by a single vote. It was cast by an Indiana congressman who himself had been elected by a one-vote margin. That same year, one vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic.
- In 1923, Adolph Hitler became leader of the Nazi Party by a one-vote margin.

- John F. Kennedy's margin of victory over Richard Nixon was less than one vote per precinct.
- One vote per precinct passed women's suffrage in California in 1911.
- Loretta Sanchez was elected to Congress from California by less than four votes per precinct in 1996.

From the League of Women Voters of New York State Incentive Program Tools , pg 66

(No longer available in print. Thanks to Shirley Kobran for saving a copy)

STUDY AND ADVOCACY

Book Club

Our book club meets at Enzo's Restaurant, 207 Boices Lane on the third Tuesday of the month from 1:45 to 3:30. The next meeting will be September 20th.

We aim to read and discuss a mix of social commentary, recent politics and history. We also share opinions on news stories as well as our own recently read books. Oh, and if we have not read the month's selected book, we just wade in anyway!

Come join us. September and October will be a good time to explore the platforms of the Democratic, Republican, Green and Libertarian parties.

In July we read *Strange Justice: The Selling of Clarence Thomas* by Jane Mayer (author of *Dark Money*, the June selection) and Jill Abramson (former executive editor of the *New York Times*). This 1994 National Book Award finalist showed – according to our group – a valiant attempt to be fair to both a flawed confirmation process and the unappealing Thomas.

Our August selection was *Some Luck* by Jane Smiley.

Yes, we read fiction too! This work, a multi-generational tale, showed both the insecurity and isolation of one lowan farm family. It fit with an earlier agriculture study done by the League.

Coming Up September 20th: *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* by Sebastian Junger, a book which uses the experience of American veterans as an argument for intense social and community ties. It will be interesting to see if League members agree that strong tribal loyalty (like those of soldiers under siege) will be healing or divisive. Vic Melville is lead.

October:

The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics by Daniel James Brown will be our October selection. While Jesse Owens' epic win was infuriating Hitler and inspiring Americans, there was another remarkable story: the gold medal won by nine working class children of the depression. A reviewer called it "a fine-grained portrait of the Depression era, with its economic and climatic horrors set against youthful dreams." Lead is Shirley Kobran.

Anne Needham
anne.e.needham@gmail.com

Materials Management Committee

First, we're reveling in the success of TRASH FEST ULSTER. Thank you, Margot Becker, for all the hard and productive work you put into this month-long event.

Second, our Committee team, consisting of Kathie Beinkafner and Jolanda Jansen, continue to expend hours upon hours contributing the report being worked upon by

the Ulster County Solid Waste Management Improvement Commission. Kudos also to Manna Jo Green and Laura Petit for their outstanding contribution to this Commission.

We're anticipating that the Commission's report will be finalized by the end of October.

Our Committee meeting was sparsely attended in July, so we decided to take something of a summer break through August. While not actually meeting, the issues continue on our minds, and we all stay vigilant for opportunities to reduce our waste stream, improve our recycling and composting, and reuse materials as much as possible. Looking forward to picking up speed in the Fall.

(submitted by Kathy OConnor)

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>

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

The committee was convened on August 1, 2016 at 6 PM by Chairman Legislator Lopez and adjourned at 7:30. The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 7, 2016 at 6 PM as the first Monday, September 5, is Labor Day.

Present: Lopez, Belfiglio, Heppner, Allen Absent: Roberts

Others: Legislator Herbert Litts III, Nettie Tomshaw, Secretary to the Committee,
Evelyn Whitebay, Dyslexia update

The first order of business following the call to order was the approval of the minutes of the July 12, 2016 meeting. Approved.

The committee then addressed the two resolutions on the agenda:

Resolution #131: Dealt with setting the date and time to hold a public hearing on proposed local law no. 3 of 2016: local law protecting children from exposure to toxic chemicals- to be held Tuesday, September 13, 2016 at 6 PM.

No action was taken by the committee as Chairman Lopez indicated that further information was needed from Legislator Tracy Bartels. The resolution will be brought up at the September committee meeting unless otherwise determined.

Resolution #366: This resolution referred to a state mandated program. Dealt with approving a contract (more than \$50,000) to be entered into by the county dealing with youth advocate programs: advocacy services to youth receiving services through the county's Coordinated Children's Services (DSS) who are at high risk of residential placement. The contract covers period 10-1-16 to 9-30-17; professional services have been negotiated; cost listed at \$86,000 (state covers 65%, county covers 35% of the cost).

During discussion question was raised that given the size of the DSS staff and its training and type of positions that were held, why couldn't the local DSS staff handle whatever was needed in its Coordinated Children's Services program.

Contact will be made with the County Executive's office to determine the answer to this and other questions and concerns that the committee members had. Deputy County Executive Crannell will be asked to attend the next meeting to answer these questions and concerns.

As the resolution dealt with a state mandated program the committee did pass the resolution.

Once the two resolutions had been addressed Chairman Lopez introduced Evelyn Whitebay who presented an update on how Dyslexia was being handled.

Ms. Whitebay provided an extensive and detailed update to her previous reporting on dyslexia given in October, 2015.

She initially expressed her appreciation and thanks to the committee and county for its help, support and opportunity to present this update.

Ms. Whitebay noted that the Highland Elementary School provides a program for those enrolled students who have this particular problem.

As noted her presentation was extensive. Among those comments made were:

-the dyslexia group will continue the efforts to promote awareness at all levels regarding dyslexia;

-will educate the NYS Legislature and support the legislation and higher education to provide such training to enable those with dyslexia in the public schools to learn to read and gain such skills as will enable them to participate successfully in society;

-2/3 of children who cannot read due to having dyslexia at the level they should end up having problems,

going to jail, etc.

-asked that October, 2016 be once again be designated as Dyslexia Awareness Month (it was so designated in October 2015) by the UC Legislature;

-she noted that she has met with staff members of both NYS Senators: Gillibrand and Schumer and NYS Congressman Gibson to discuss this topic; apparently all were supportive;

-local support at the Plattekill Library which was begun in fall, 2015 was noted and that a meeting with the Highland Library is upcoming; and

-that Legislator Litts has been a supporter of the programs to advance the work done on behalf of those with dyslexia.

During discussion following Ms. Whitebay's up-date, it was suggested that a request for a resolution be made supporting dyslexia awareness be sent to the New York State Association of Counties (NYSAC). If that group passed the resolution, then it would be sent to all counties in NY State.

Additionally, it was noted that screening children for dyslexia as they enter school was a better way to proceed than placing them in remedial reading programs to start with. This procedure could also save dollars and time and serve the children better, ie. placing them in a program that would address their dyslexia to start with.

The committee indicated it would write a support letter to the SUNY Chancellor, Chairman of the Board of Regents, Commissioner of NYS Department of Education and local school districts.

Further Chairman Ronk would be asked about designating October, 2016 again as Dyslexia Awareness Month.

Under New Business the committee addressed the following:

-Vending Machine Food Policy: In discussion it was noted that in May, 2011 a resolution was passed that required healthy options be offered in the items that were found in the vending machines in county buildings.

A letter was received from John Parete, Chairman of the Government Efficiency and Review Committee that apparently suggested that the policy noted above may need to be reviewed; that it may not be quite up-to-date with respects to providing those who use such vending machines with the healthy options desired.

There was no final determination from the committee.

-Tobacco Retail License Statistics: A memo was received from Commissioner of Health and Mental Health Dr. Smith date July, 2016: referenced applications for licensing of "qualified establishments whether they are located within 1000 feet of a school or not." The law covering the above was Local Law #6 of 2015 effective January 1, 2016. "As of January 1, 2017 the issuance of any new Tobacco Retail Licenses to establishments located within 1000 feet of a school will cease."

The UC Department of Health has the responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of Local Law # 6 of 2015 under the policy and procedure established by this law. The UC DH is also responsible for issuing the licenses.

As of July 20, 2016 memo: there were 196 applications for licenses received, 196 licenses issued. No applicants for licenses were denied. There were 22 licenses issued to establishments within 1000 feet of a school. There have been no disputes from any of those establishments, no waivers have been issued, no fines levied.

There was no old business brought before the committee.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp