

Commentator for July/August, 2005

The League of Women Voters of Mid-Hudson Region

P.O. Box 3564

Kingston, NY 12402

(845) 340-2003

lwwmidhudson@yahoo.com

<http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org>

Chris Henning, President (845)339-0509
Shirley Kobran, Membership (845)382-6989
Emily Johnson, Newsletter (845) 338-3554

Mission Statement:

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.

CALENDAR

JULY		
6,13,20,27	9:30 to 11:30	Yard sale pricing at Elizabeth's
21	9:30 to 11:30	Program Committee meeting a Gloria Plasker's
AUGUST		
2	7:15 to 9:15	Board Meeting at Jacki Moriarty's
3,10,17,24	9:30 to 11:30	Yard sale pricing at Elizabeth's
27-28	9:00 to 3:00	Yard sale at Elizabeth Askue's
SEPTEMBER		
13	7:15 to 9:15	Board Meeting at Jean McGarry's
20	7:00 to 9:00	Save date for general meeting, place topic not set
OCTOBER		
1	All day	Bus Trip to Natural History Museum
4	7:15 to 9:15	Board meeting at Jacki Moriarty's

The Prez Sez...

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer months. I know that a lot of work is going into pricing for the upcoming yard sale at Elizabeth Askue's. Have you done your spring/summer cleaning? We are in need of items!!!! We had a very successful planning meeting in July. We have some great ideas for the upcoming year including bus trips and various meeting places. If you have not checked out our website, you should. There is a wealth of information available at your fingertips. It is updated regularly and it includes meeting dates, times and even directions! I can't wait to see you at the yard sale in August. Stay cool!

Chris

Minutes of the Annual Meeting June 21, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 7PM by the president, Christine Henning. There was a quorum present. Karen Goertzel introduced Kate Wilsey, the student who won our local contest for "Students Inside Albany." Kate spoke of her experience on her weekend in Albany, which included shadowing her assemblyman, Kevin Cahill and her senator, John Bonacic.

Christine announced that the minutes of the last annual meeting had been approved by the Board of Directors and asked that the same procedure for approving this year's minutes should be followed. Lee Cane moved and Shirley Kobran seconded the motion that the Board of Directors review and approve the minutes of this meeting. The motion was accepted unanimously.

Jean McGarry, treasurer, presented the treasurer's report (in the annual report) and it was reviewed by the members present.

Lee Cane, the Finance Director, moved that the proposed budget for 2005-2006 (in the annual report) be adopted. Cindy Bell seconded the motion. The item for the Audit was left blank because we do not anticipate an audit expense this year. The budget was approved unanimously.

Shirley Kobran presented the slate proposed by the Nominating Committee. Lee Cane moved that the Secretary cast one ballot for the slate and Shirley Kobran seconded the motion. The slate was approved as follows:

1st Vice-president: 2005-7 Cindy Bell
2nd Vice-President: 2005-7 Gloria Plasker
3rd Vice-President: 2005-7 Elizabeth Askue
Commentator: 2005-7 Emily Johnson
Publications (off-board) Emilie Hauser
Nominating Comm.2005-6 Emily Johnson
Openings on the Nominating Committee will be filled by the president with the concurrence of the board.

Renee Sachs spoke about the work of the current charter commission, which is expected to recommend a charter, four year terms for legislators, and an elected county executive.

Gloria Plasker introduced reports on the program. We had 2 programs on housing, one on the Patriot Act, and one on health care, as well as one on elections. Leaders of the local studies spoke about each study and its status.

The Substance Abuse Study is at an impasse locally. Figures for substance abuse in Ulster County are high, but officials blame that on good policing rather than worse behavior in Ulster County. A full-time

substance abuse prevention coordinator will be funded by OASAS. Jacki Moriarty spoke on Balancing Justice. They have written a resolution to go to the Ulster County Legislature. It has been accepted by the Reform Committee and after "tweaking" will be sent to the legislature. The Accountable Schools study, described by Linda Roberts, has proposed that a committee be formed from local organizations to look at the reports from the schools and get explanations of the statistics and proposed actions for improvement. They are considering how this group can be formed. The two-year Women's Health Study was presented by Emily Johnson. The county legislature has appointed a committee on women's health care which supersedes our study. It may create a guide to women's health care, as we suggested and will continue to lobby for.

Jean McGarry announced the annual yard sale on August 27th and 28th and asked members for donations and help with pricing and with the sale. Sign-up sheets were circulated.

Shirley Kobran introduced the new and prospective members present at the meeting and thanked the members of the membership committee for their hard work this year. Shirley also described the book rescue project and invited people to sign up for it.

Karen Goertzel described the mission and the work of Voter Services in the community. Members were encouraged to sign up for work on voter services which is at the core of our mission.

Chris Henning spoke briefly about the new state study on funding education and invited interested people to seek out more information on the state website.

Jim McGarry, webmaster for our new local league website, showed samples of the website panels and spoke about its present and future content. He also asked for

suggestions for what to put on the website. Lee Cane noted that the Publications director can order League publications for members upon request.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee Ridgway, sec'y

The Web and I (and You)

The new *Commentator* manager, Emily Johnson and interested people met to consider the innovations to communication that we are making. We were all excited to hear more about our new web site from our webmaster, Jim McGarry. This will enable us to make current League information available in another medium. The *Commentator* appears on the website as well as in printed form.

This will be a year of transition for our *Commentator* as we look at other ways to produce the "hard copy" to make it more readable on its own and in conjunction with the greater amount of information that we can make available on the web for those who wish to access it. Our URL is <http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org>.

It's worth looking at our website now, as it already has a lot of information on it, such as our bylaws, the recent issues of the *Commentator*, and other items of interest such as links to other websites like the state LWV website, and you'll be pleased at how attractive and easy to use it is.

But there will always be hard copy for those who need it.

-- Emily Johnson

YARD SALE -- BRING! By August 22

Things you once loved but don't need any more...

Things you've run out of space for...

Things your kids will thank you for not keeping...

Things that keep you from finding other things...

The yard sale needs all kinds of things to sell.

Your cast-off is someone else's treasure. Give it a chance for a good home.

Bring things to Elizabeth Askue's house. Call for directions if you need them: Jean 336-6622 or Shirley 382-6989 or Elizabeth 338-1667.

If something is too big to carry, call Jean and she will arrange for transport.

The yard sale is as good as your contributions make it.

Make it the best one ever!

Yard Sale – Buy August 27-28

What have we got? Almost everything!

Baby furniture and children's toys

Furniture

Kitchen stuff including small appliances

Ornamental things: vases, candlesticks, pictures, mirrors

A 25th anniversary music box!

Cookbooks and murder mysteries (and other books)

Tapes, videos, records and CDs

Mystery items (only a few we don't know what they are)

Jewelry

You'll find something you want there!

The Legislative Observer

This year's legislative election is of more importance to the citizenry of Ulster County than usual, as the 2006 legislative agenda will contain a number of far-reaching issues that will have lasting effects. They include:

The Charter Commission

The Charter commission recommends that Ulster County would be best served by electing an executive to oversee county government. To do this requires a public referendum; however, the legislature must approve its being passed on to the voters to decide.

Budget Woes

On paper Ulster County is in dire fiscal straits. We are supposed to have some 20 odd million dollars in reserve for those times when our payouts go out faster than our revenues come in. At present we are some \$19 million short of this reserve.

- o What will they do about this deficit?
- o Will they decide on short term borrow-ing and try to ride it out for better times?
- o Will they opt to initiate new taxes? Increase existing ones? Raise fees? What taxes? What fees?
- o Cut costs? Cut services? What costs? What services?

Weighty decisions, as the interest rate for our long term loans is hinged to our bond rating, which in turn is hinged to budgetary matters such as this.

Casino Gambling

What will they decide about casino gambling? Will they let the localities decide the issue or override local objections? It's a huge amount of money in the offering.

Criminal Justice Center

What will they decide to do about the over-runs in construction costs? Will they sue the parties at fault? Or opt to give it up as a lost cause and pay it out?

The County Infirmary

What will they decide about the Infirmary? Build a new one? Renovate the old one? Transfer ownership to the private sector? And if they decide to rebuild or renovate, what will they do to insure that the construction costs do not go the way of the jail?

--Thomas P Kadgen

Local Government Observers

There is an effort underway to recruit people who are willing to attend some of the local meetings such as school boards, common councils, town meetings and other meetings that seem of concern to local citizens (who, we know, are not likely to attend such meetings in large numbers).

Several of our members do attend such government meetings, and we are hoping to find more who are willing to go on a rotating basis so that the *Commentator* can report not only items of immediate interest but general trends and activities.

If you already attend one kind of meeting and are willing to report on it, or if you are interested in attending such, or if you want to know more about what is entailed, call Elizabeth Askue, who is trying to gather names and set up rotas. Her number is 338-1667.

Yes, she is the Elizabeth Askue at whose home the yard sale will be held August 27th and 28th. But busy as she is, she will be happy to hear from you.

You will be hearing more about this in future issues, but this will alert you to some possibilities for your participation. As Tom points out, there are weighty issues in our counties.

Impact of drugs on Ulster County Youth

In its PRISMS reports (Prevention Risk Indicator Services Monitoring System) for 1994, 1996, and 1998 Ulster County was found to have the highest rate of youth undergoing consequences from drug use in NYS.

In 2000 we had the 4th highest, tied with Monroe County. It is not clear whether this is due to our rate improving or other count-ies getting worse.

Our study group met with OASAS (The Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse Services), but left with many of our questions unanswered.

There seem to be far too many intangibles in the data for OASAS to form an opinion on why our county shows up so bad. In fact, the data is so unclear that they were unable to determine if the youth of our county were actually engaging in more consequential behavior than the rest of the state or if our county was better at policing, detecting, and reporting this behavior.

Subsequently we asked Assemblyman Cahill for his help. He agreed and formally requested an in depth analysis of these indices from OASAS.

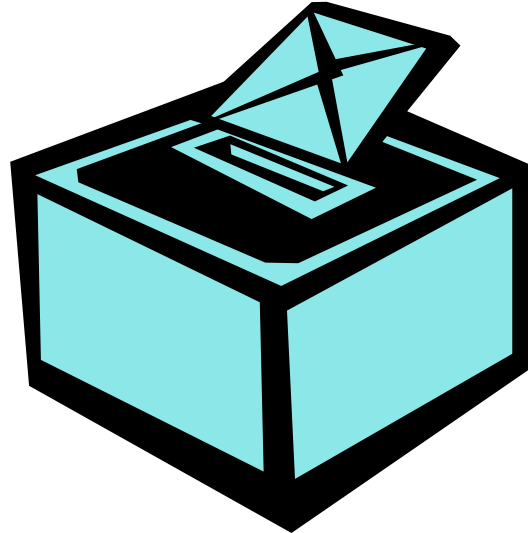
Unfortunately OASAS' response to him was similar to the one they gave us. However, they did agree to meet with his staff and all interested parties after this years PRISM report is published (July or August). We hope the 2002 report will shed some more light on this.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr.Cahill and his staff, especially Jay Dailey, for their efforts in this endeavor.

--Thomas P Kadgen

Action: Support Optical Scan Voting Machines in New York

According to the LWV of New York State, optical scan voting machines are the best choice for New Yorkers, and we should be advocating for their adoption.



In the next few weeks, state and local officials will begin the process of selecting a voting system to replace our 100-year old lever voting machines in order to comply with the Help America Vote Act. HAVA requires voting machines to be accessible for persons with disabilities and to be capable of providing "second-chance" voting (confirmation of the voter's choice).

Take action now!!

Send a letter to the Editor of your local newspapers to support Optical Scan voting machines.

Planned Natural History Museum Trip October 1

Bus trip to NYC to the Museum of Natural History in Manhattan, sponsored by LWV. A great opportunity for a multi-generational trip to explore the museum or just go to the city for the day. Prices tentatively set at \$49 for adults, \$39 for children. Includes entry to the museum and the planetarium. There is a lunchroom at the museum or you can bring a bag lunch. To sign up or find out more, call Lee Ridgway, 339-4927, or send your registration and a check to her at 19 Johnston Avenue, Kingston, NY. Time for leaving and return not established, probably leaving about 8:30, returning about 6:00.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Number of Adults: _____ Number of children: _____

LWV of Mid-Hudson Region Membership Application or Renewal to 6/30/06

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Member (\$50)___ Family Membership (\$65)___ Extra contribution \$___

___ Please call about local LWV meetings or ___ Please do not call.

Mail with check to:

Treasurer, LWV of Mid-Hudson Region, P.O. Box 3564, Kingston, NY 12402

If you know someone who might like to know more about the League of Women Voters, please provide name and address below and send this slip to:

Shirley Kobran, 53 Schuler Lane, Lake Katrine, NY 12449

We will send information out as quickly as possible.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____ e-mail _____

Your name _____