

# Commentator for June, 2005

The League of Women Voters of Mid-Hudson Region

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## 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*

JUNE		
7	7:15 to 9:15	Board meeting at Jean McGarry's
8,15,22,29	9:30 to 12:00	Yard sale pricing at Elizabeth Askue's
21	5:30 to 9:00	Annual meeting at Woodstock Reformed Church NOTE MEETING PLACE CHANGE
JULY		
6	7:15-9:15 PM	Board Meeting at Jean McGarry's—old and new board members should attend for turnover
9	10:00 to 3:00	Planning session for 2005-2006 year at Jacki Moriarty's. Bring bag lunch.
6,13,20,27	9:30 to 11:30	Yard sale pricing at Elizabeth'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

### **The Prez Sez..**

Well, summer has hit and it as hit full force. I hope you are able to attend the annual meeting. That is where we elect new officers, present and vote on the budget, talk about studies and eat great food! We will also have an opportunity to honor the students who participated in Students Inside Albany.

The LWNYS convention was fantastic. You can read about it in the annual report.

Please remember we are having the annual yard sale so it is time to clean all basements and attics. Elizabeth Askue has once again offered her home to us. Thank you so much Elizabeth. It is hard to believe another year has passed.

*Chris Henning*

### **Gift Membership for a Graduate**

*Is someone special you know graduating from high school or college? Give the new graduate a gift that helps defend our democracy and can introduce him or her to a new network of respected people engaged in their community – a membership in the League of Women Voters!*

*(See page 8 for a membership form)*

The following is an excerpt from a letter sent to the members of the U.S. House of Representatives from LWNYS President Kay Maxwell regarding H.R. 1526, the SAFE Act (Security and Freedom Ensured Act of 2005):

“...League members are concerned about the impact of the USA Patriot Act passed by Congress in October 2001. We believe that the SAFE Act would address some of the most problematic provisions of the USA Patriot Act. It would limit so-called “sneak and peek” searches, which allow secret warrants, to specific instances where there is a risk of flight or danger to life or physical safety.

In addition, the SAFE Act would limit law enforcement requests for business records by requiring evidence that the records relate to a foreign power or an agent of a foreign power, and are not merely part of a “fishing expedition.” In sum, we believe that the SAFE Act would provide reasonable checks on some of the most extreme sections of the USA Patriot Act.

These are challenging times for all Americans. We recognize that there are real and serious terrorist threats. The League believes that the SAFE Act would preserve authority for law enforcement officials to combat terrorism. At the same time, it would protect innocent Americans from unrestricted government surveillance. The League of Women Voters urges you to cosponsor and support H.R. 1526. “



## Ulster County Charter Commission

In the fall of 2004 the Ulster County Legislature appointed an eleven member charter commission chaired by Dr. Gerald Benjamin, Dean of Arts and Sciences at SUNY New Paltz and a recognized authority in the field of local government. I serve on the Commission as a representative of the League of Women Voters.

This is the third Commission appointed by the Legislature. In 1979 the recommendations of the first Commission were rejected by the public. In 1989 the recommendations of the second Commission never reached the public for a vote, since the Legislature itself vetoed them.

The current Commission is still garnering information and has already recommended the adoption of a charter itself but is still considering its form.

Further recommendations will be forthcoming as we sift thru the enormous amount of information we continue to amass.

-Renee Sachs

## Yard Sale

On your mark, get set, let's go. The Yard Sale date has been established: August 27 and August 28, 2005.

Our chairperson this year is Jean McGarry; and once again the sale will be held at Elizabeth Askue's in Hurley.

Collection of saleable merchandise has begun. The pricing team began its work on Wednesday, June 8 at 9:30 AM and will meet every Wednesday morning thereafter until the sale.

We need volunteers for **pricing** as well as for the actual sale itself. So if you have some time any Wednesday morning.....it doesn't have to be every week....please come to help prepare for our annual summer fund raiser.

Please call Jean McGarry at 336-6622 or Elizabeth Askue at 338-1667 for directions.

This is not just work....we have a great time together.

So come, join us in the action.

-Shirley Kobran  
Membership Director

### **Proposed Local Study**

There were no proposals for local studies submitted in time for a decision at the annual meeting. It is possible, however, to propose a local study at another time, according to our bylaws. The proposal must be sent to the membership at least two weeks before the general meeting at which it will be discussed, and approval must be made at a subsequent general meeting.

The planned building projects in Hurley and in Kingston, the lack of affordable housing, and, in Kingston, the proposed \$2000 assessment on some new apartments to fund open space and recreation, have caused a lot of controversy and confusion about whether these projects should be approved, and whether they would help the communities or detract from them in the long run.

We do not want to see our area stagnate, nor do we want it to become unaffordable for the people who are living here now. The study will **assess the impact on the housing market and the stock of affordable housing of proposed building plans in Ulster and Dutchess Counties.**

This proposal will be discussed at a general meeting in September and will probably be voted on in October. If you would be interested in such a study, you can sign up at the annual meeting as an interested member.

If any other members have suggestions for local studies, and did not bring them up to the board, there is still the opportunity to start a study at some other time. The best way to do it is to send a proposal to the board for their review. It will then be written up in the *Commentator* and scheduled for discussion at a general meeting.

### **Esther Stickley, New Member**

Talking to Esther Stickley you know you are talking to a minister's wife, that is her inner warmth and concern for others are apparent. In an about face, she was making the interviewer comfortable.

Esther, as so many of us, is not a native Kingstonian but hails from northeast Iowa farm country outside of Parkersburg. Her family raised livestock, grew grain, and provided hay for the animals. Esther, the youngest of five children, performed many farm chore, among which she gathered eggs. She drove a tractor before she drove a car.

A one-room schoolhouse provided her elementary education. During her junior high school years, her family moved to the village and she completed her studies at the local high school. For the next two years she worked for an office in town and then decided to go to college. She graduated from college in Waterloo with an associate's degree in business administration. Esther was then employed by the school system in Cedar Falls.

At the age of 22, Esther married Charles Stickley, a young man who sought his future as a funeral director. After completing some preliminary study, Esther's husband then elected for a career as a minister. He attended Central College in Pella, Iowa (from whence the windows come) with some help from his wife and then went on to the seminary at Holland, Michigan. Esther again found employment at Hope College. Their first daughter was born at this time.

After ordination, the Reverend Mr. Stickley accepted a parish at Muskegon, Michigan, where the family lived for ten years. By this time the Stickleys had three daughters.



In 1973, the family moved to Hurley, and Reverend Stickley became the pastor of the Hurley Reformed Church. Esther continued to work part-time while the children were in school. In 1983, she became a mortgage loan officer at two local banks until she was outsourced in 2000.

The Stickleys are proud of their three daughters who are now adults and have become a teacher, a nurse, and a social worker.

Elizabeth Askue originally invited Esther to come to some League meetings in 1973, but it was a difficult time for Esther. Last year, however, she decided she wanted to do something for her self and she turned to the League. As she put it so eloquently, "Having the education and the knowledge that the League provides through examining a variety of opinions and information, contributes toward making a good citizen. We have a bigger responsibility than just complaining."

Esther's husband encourages her to do as she wants and he's happy she's taken an interest in the League. And so are we!

--Renee Sachs

### **Apologies to Kevin Cahill**

Our student inside Albany actually shadowed Kevin Cahill, our Assemblyman, rather than Maurice Hinchey. Our apologies go to Kevin for our misstatement. Thanks to his staff for catching it! We are sure that Kate Wilsey learned a lot from Kevin!

Kate also had the opportunity to meet and talk with John Bonacic, our Senator, and to learn about the Senate as well as the Assembly.

Kate will speak about her experience at the annual meeting.

### **Annual Meeting Potluck**

The annual meeting will be held on June 21 at the Woodstock Reformed Church at 5:30, with dinner starting promptly at 6:00. By now, you will have received a call to find out whether you are coming and whether you are bringing a dish for the dinner. You are welcome with or without a dish, as league members always bring abundant food. 5:30 is the gathering time, with drinks and appetizers and socializing time. Dinner is at 6:00, and the business part of the meeting starts at 7:00.

Business of the meeting includes voting on new board members, establishing a nominating committee, approving the budget, and making plans for next year. This will include signing up for the various studies and committees the league has, including the very necessary nuts-and-bolts committees such as the telephone tree, the yard sale work, and the newsletter mailing. Fun and companionship are byproducts of the work, and everyone is encouraged to participate.

There will also be a demonstration of our new website, and we will hear from the student who went to Students Inside Albany from our league.

The Woodstock Reformed Church is on the Green in Woodstock and there is parking behind the church. We meet in the hall in the basement. There are facilities for reheating dishes if needed, and refrigeration for dishes that need to be kept cold until served.

Our annual meeting is also a traditional time for people to renew their memberships if they haven't mailed them in, so don't forget your checkbook if you want to pay your dues.

## **Publications**

An integral part of the League's mission is to educate our fellow citizens and toward that end, this was an excellent year for publications. Both League and non-League publications were featured in schools and in the community, most notably at the Women's Health Fair this spring.

I must acknowledge the assistance of PR Director Jack Moriarty and Membership Director Shirley Kobran in the acquisition and dissemination of these materials.

I reorganized and up dated our stock as well as highlighted various items in the Commentator, working to better serve our members by pointing up some of the League's excellent resources.

In moving on, I trust that I have continued the tradition of evolving and improving our publications library. I feel fortunate to be a part of this board, where teamwork and care combine to make my involvement a joy.

-Cindy Bell

## **Book Rescue Committee**

### **HELP! HELP!**

We need more hands for our books. Over 10,000 books have been cleaned, repaired and delivered since this committee was started.

We have many more books waiting for our gentle touch and there are people waiting to deliver more when we have space.

This very satisfying effort takes place at Elizabeth Askue's home. We meet once a month from 1:30 to 3:30. Please call Elizabeth

at 338-1667 for directions to her home and the date we are scheduled to meet next.

This is another way to be active in the League. It is not a study, but a worthwhile local activity that benefits children throughout the Mid-Hudson region.

So join us and help make some more children happy.

-Shirley Kobran

## **Advertisers**

We would like to welcome two new advertisers to our roster of supporters:  
Dr. Gene DeStefano and Gallo's of Woodstock.

Dr. DeStefano is a dentist with a practice in Kingston.

Gallo's of Woodstock, owned by Patrick Gallo, offers fruits and vegetables and an extensive array of perennials.

In future issues of the Commentator we will provide more information about these new advertisers.

We would also like to take the opportunity to thank all of our advertisers old and new for their continued support.



## **Legislative Agenda 2005**

### **Additional League Positions**

In addition to the main goals selected by the league members for this year's legislative agenda, several other important issues garnered strong support. These are listed as follows:

**Alternatives to Incarceration** - We support the use of more innovative, constructive and less restrictive sanctions. This includes drug law reform and repeal of the second felony offender law.

**Court Restructuring** - We support a user-friendly, simplified two-tier court structure that would result in statewide efficiency and consistency.

**Health Care** - We support reforms for more cost-effective and accessible physical and mental health care and more prescription drug availability.

### **Independent Public Defense**

**Commission** - We support legislation to establish an independent statewide public defense commission to enforce standards on selection, training, workload and performance of lawyers and eligibility of clients. The proposed legislation also establishes a non-partisan nominating committee process

for commission seats chaired by The League of Women Voters.

**Judicial Selection** - We support merit selection of judges. We believe that the present system of partisan judicial election should be abandoned. Judges, unlike members of the executive and legislative branches of government, are not expected to represent political parties or to be responsive to political pressures.

**Reproductive Rights** - A woman's constitutional right of privacy in making reproductive choices must be protected.

**Salary Equity Reform** - Secret salaries in the private sector keep employees from knowing if they are equally paid and can often mean job termination for seeking this information. We support legislation to enable private sector employees to obtain and reveal this information without reprisal. In the public sector, we support legislation requiring the use of gender-neutral job evaluation systems to end underpayment of job titles where women and minorities predominate

For more information visit [lwvny.org](http://lwvny.org).

## **Membership**

Our membership has grown this year by more than eleven percent, largely due to the efforts of our wonderful membership committee. You will have an opportunity to meet some of our new members, as well as many of our long-term members, at our annual meeting on June 21. Elsewhere in this bulletin, you will find the biography of one of those new members, Esther Stickley. We will continue in later issues to tell you about more new members and about the work of our membership committee.

### **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** \_\_\_\_\_