



# Commentator

## March 2010

*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.

President: Jean McGarry  
[jfmcg@hvc.rr.com](mailto:jfmcg@hvc.rr.com)  
 845-336-6622  
 Newsletter: Jim McGarry  
[lwvmhr@hvc.rr.com](mailto:lwvmhr@hvc.rr.com)  
 845-336-0304  
 Membership: Betty Chin  
[Blc2003@hotmail.com](mailto:Blc2003@hotmail.com)  
 845-331-2572

CALENDAR		
2010		
<b>MARCH</b>		
26	8:30 am	League members Jim McGarry and Cindy Bell are guests on WGHQ's "Feel Good Friday" program
<b>APRIL</b>		
5	10:30am	Observer Corp Meeting at Deisings, 111 North Front St, Kingston
6	5pm	Finance Committee Meeting at Savonna's Restaurant, 11 Broadway, Kingston
6	7:15pm	Board meeting at Jacki Moriarty's, 167 Apple Hill Dr., Hurley
10	9am	League members Jacki and John Moriarty are guests on WKNY with Jodi McTague
25	1-4pm	LWVMHR Golden Anniversary celebration at Wiltwyck Golf Club
<b>MAY</b>		
18		School Board Elections and Budget Vote
20	6-8pm	Annual Meeting, Town of Esopus Library, 128 Canal St, Port Ewen

Check our Calendar on-line at  
<http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/calendar.html>  
 for updated information

Commentator archives, State and National League newsletters are at <http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/Newsletters.html>

**MEMBERS:** Need a ride? Want to car-pool?  
 Contact Jean McGarry, 336-6622 or [jfmcg@hvc.rr.com](mailto:jfmcg@hvc.rr.com)

Interested in one of our committees? Just show up at a meeting.  
 Our members are always welcome.



**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**  
 This year our league celebrates 50 years of service to the Mid-Hudson Region. We'll gather for a sumptuous luncheon and wonderful fellowship on April 25<sup>th</sup> at Wiltwyck Golf Club. There will be speeches and congratulations all around as well as a popular and inspirational guest speaker.



**Prez Sez...***Greetings,*

Allow me to reflect on one week in the life of the League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region. On March 13th the League joined with several area organizations, government agencies, and private businesses to present its second forum on energy alternatives. On March 15th, about 15 individuals gathered to learn about or to hone their skills on the fine art of moderating and timekeeping. On Saturday, March 20, our league sponsored an informational panel on Shared Municipal Services. How appropriate that during this very busy week the Ulster County Legislature presented the Pride of Ulster County award to our league and proclaimed March 21- 27 as League of Women Voters week.

As I stood in front of the Legislature, joined by many other league members, I was profoundly proud of our organization. As Legislator Mary Sheeley read the proclamation, it was a glowing reminder of all we have accomplished in our 50 years of serving the community. Addressing the Legislature, Minority Leader Jeanette Provanzano recognized the League's efforts in monitoring the first year of the Charter form of government, ending her remarks with a resounding, "We welcome their scrutiny!"

What a week and what a testament to what the league is all about - information, education, and participation. March 21-27 is League of Women Voters week. No doubt, it will be another week of flurried activity for our members but do take a few minutes to "crow." We are the pride of the Mid-Hudson Region.

*Jean***Census 2010**

**10 Questions / 10 Minutes**  
**Now, Mail It Back!**

To learn about the census process and see what questions they're asking, go to [2010.census.gov/2010census/index.php](http://2010.census.gov/2010census/index.php)

**PROGRAM NEWS**

Do you regret not being able to attend our moderator/timekeeper training on March 15? It's never too late to learn. Contact Jean McGarry [jfmcg@hvc.rr.com](mailto:jfmcg@hvc.rr.com) or Cindy Bell [cbell@aol.com](mailto:cbell@aol.com). Providing a non-partisan forum for candidates to be heard and citizens to learn is the most important service the league provides.

**DID YOU KNOW...** The LWVUS has a "wall" on Facebook! Keep up with the critical (and some lighthearted) news of the day at [facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters](http://facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters)

**ADVOCACY**

**Helping Municipalities  
Reduce Energy  
Usage, Emissions, and  
Costs**

On March 13<sup>th</sup> the League joined with several area organizations, government agencies and private businesses to present its second forum on energy alternatives. For an agenda of the event as well as speaker biographies and downloadable program presentations and materials, go to the Hudson Valley Smart Growth Alliance website at <http://www.sustainhv.org/hvsga>. You'll also find links to media coverage and a broad range of materials relating to sustainable development.

Ironically, the power went out in a big way on the original date of our Energy Options workshop, and our major sponsor, Central Hudson, was just a little (!) distracted by other demands, but the event was finally held on March 13th with all the sponsors, speakers and vendors in place. We lost 100 or so of those who registered for the original date but picked up 100 or so new folks, so we still had almost 300 in attendance. They represented a remarkable mix of municipal officials, environmentalists, and interested citizens and were rewarded with a terrific program.

We salute our partners. The Center for Research, Regional Education and Outreach (CRREO) at SUNY New Paltz provided the site and helped make everything run smoothly, and our other collaborators – Hudson River Sloop CLEARWATER, Hudson Valley Regional Council, Hudson Valley Smart Growth Alliance, Sustainable Hudson Valley, NYSDEC Hudson River Research Reserve Estuary Training Program - pulled together an ideal collection of speakers. Mid-Hudson Energy Smart Communities/NYSERDA was also a valued resource and sponsor.

This event grew out of our October 20th Climate Change program that drew about 95 people. Our follow-up was intended to address the top need identified by our October attendees - How can my town and I find resources to help reduce energy usage and emissions?

If you attended the event and did not fill out an evaluation, please let us know how what you thought of the event: [www.surveymonkey.com/s/D5SZRRT](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/D5SZRRT)

You also might like to go to CRREO's Facebook page to see some pictures: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/New-Paltz-NY/CRREO/99755053299>

We will continue to address this important topic. Watch for details on our website and in future Commentators.

## Shared Services Study

The Shared Services Study committee hosted a panel to discuss the first stage of the study, relating to shared highway services, on March 20<sup>th</sup> at City Hall in Kingston. Marianne Collins, Dean of Advancement and Continuing Education as well as Director of the Ulster Community College Foundation, served as moderator. Panel participants included:

Michael P. Hein – County Executive, Ulster County.

John Valk Jr. – Supervisor, Town of Shawangunk & President, Association of Town Supervisors, Ulster County.

Gael Appler – Superintendent of Highways, Town of Marlborough & President, Town Highway Superintendents, Ulster County

Jerry Fairbairn – Supervisor, Town of Hardenburgh

Approximately 75 people attended the event with a variety of League members, representatives of public works departments, county and town government officials, and members of the general public.

The program began with statements from each panelist followed by a question and answer period. It was readily apparent that a comprehensive agreement to share some level of highway services is a long way from implementation. Noticeably absent was concrete information of anticipated cost savings, government jobs reduction and productivity improvement, equipment and material efficiencies, and quality of service enhancement.

Implicit in the speakers' statements was that the ongoing discussion included these as program goals but those with reservations, most notably Superintendent Appler, saw the current proposals as simply a cost shifting measure saving County dollars without adequate compensation to the towns. More temperate in his comments, Mr. Valk saw potential for merit and noted a variety of ways in which towns and the county share services effectively but that the array of services and the differences within and among the towns might hamper expansion of this practice. Supervisor Fairbairn discussed the mutually beneficial agreements Hardenburgh has had with the County to more economically service the Beaverkill Valley area of the town & county. (He pointed out you *can* get there from here... you just have to go out of the county to do it!) He cautioned the panel members and audience that no town should make a decision to participate based on Hardenburgh's experience. In many respects his town is rather unique in Ulster County. Mr. Hein, clearly a proponent of fully examining the matter, repeated a theme more than once that an impending budget

gap – whether from a continued slow economy or diminishing state and federal assistance – mandated looking into whatever cost savings measures might be available. He pointed out that a decision to participate should be made only after a town determines that to do so is in its interests. Prompted by a question from the audience, Mr. Hein made it clear the matter under consideration is not a consolidation of government but simply an organized and more comprehensive system of sharing various government services in an economically sensible way. Pointing out his accomplishments in jobs reduction in County employment while retaining most employees affected by his efforts, his remarks suggested he is sensitive to the economic and personal injury employee layoffs have in the community. Notwithstanding these assurances, a certain degree of mistrust permeated some of the questions and other speakers reported a general wariness of the county's intentions in their constituencies.

As with so many issues facing local government, it just isn't as simple as it may seem. Revulsion at talk of "shared" or "consolidated" government coupled with a deeply held notion of "home rule" assure that this discussion will be a contentious one. Vested interests will certainly raise their voices. No doubt good-government and taxpayer interest will as well.

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The League is developing a bibliography to be put on the website along with selected materials developed by our Study Group. It is our hope that league members as well as other interested parties will be able to follow our progress. And we would urge all readers to attend local meetings whenever this topic is raised. In the meantime, the [Shared Highway Services Master Study Draft Report](#) and other useful information about Ulster County's proposals is at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/municipalities/sharedhighway2010.html>

Also, board member Frank Cassetta has prepared a summary of the report. Read it at [midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/files/Highway\\_Service\\_Cooperation\\_-\\_Summary.pdf](http://midhudson.ny.lwvnet.org/files/Highway_Service_Cooperation_-_Summary.pdf)

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Additional resources can be found on the Ulster County Municipal Resources page at <http://www.co.ulster.ny.us/municipal.html>.

Links of interest include

- the Shared Services Program within the NYS Department of State Division of Local Government Services  
<http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/sharedservices/index.html>
- the Best Practices page of the NYS Association of Counties.  
[http://www.nysac.org/County\\_Corner.php](http://www.nysac.org/County_Corner.php)
- <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/sharedservices/index.html>

## Ulster County Legislature Meeting

You may wish to read Chairman Wadnola's [Chairman's Message](#) delivered on March 2, 2010. It can be found at: [ulstercountyny.gov/legislature.html](http://ulstercountyny.gov/legislature.html)

The Legislature meeting of March 16<sup>th</sup> gave a glimpse at some of the best features that open government has to offer. So well attended was this session that the hallway was teeming with the overflow. Needless to say, some mediocre features could be seen too.

After being called to order, the Legislature rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance led by several members of four Girl Scout troops in Ulster County. Each of the young ladies had earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award, the highest honor a Junior Girl Scout can earn, which requires her to learn the leadership and planning skills necessary to follow through on a project that makes a positive impact on her community. Witness the development of our future leaders! In recognition of their accomplishments, each on March 14 received a Pride of Ulster County award.

After some housekeeping task, Chairman Wadnola called upon Minority Leader (and League Member) Jeannette Provenzano to present a Pride of Ulster County Award and a certificate designating ..... as LWV week to President Jean McGarry and members Lee Cane, Tom Kadgen, Shirley Kobran, Jim McGarry, Vic Melville, Renée Sachs Margaret Sellers, Esther Stickley, Dare Thompson, and Cindy Bell.

At the close of the Presentations portion, the Majority and Minority Leaders gave their Addresses to the legislature. Speaking for the majority party, Mr. Paul Hansut spoke to the initiatives taken since his party returned to the majority including working transparently with the minority to consolidate and reorganize legislative committees and their responsibilities, reach agreements with the County Executive to make Deputy Executives and Department Heads be made available to the legislature and its committees, and make additional efforts to provide public access to government meetings. His report included support for and an understanding of the Legislature's proper role as the policy-setting and legislation-enacting branch under the Charter. Observing that the economic problems of Ulster County may be the worst since the Great Depression, he called upon the legislature to set aside political agendas and be guided by the needs and concerns of our residents. He admonished his caucus to focus on problem solving, exercise discipline, and listen to and accept the ideas of the minority party members. He closed by calling upon the Legislature to forget the political standard "Them against Us" and focus on US (the Legislature) *for THEM* (the people.)

In many ways, Minority Leader Provenzano echoed Mr. Hansut's calls for unity and focus on county needs over politics as usual. She looked forward to a cooperative relationship and pointed to a number of legislative actions in the preceding two years as evidence of her party's willingness and ability to work with the other side of the aisle in the full light of public scrutiny. She noted that some 75% of the legislation brought to a vote passed unanimously, items referred back to committee often returning and being passed, settlement of the jail expense litigation, implementing a fleet manager program, effectively examining and renegotiating a very substantial hospitalization bill for a jail inmate, and 14 local laws adopted covering a variety of areas including requirements for non-toxic lawn treatments, criminal background checks for new County hires and whistle-blower protection legislation. She also noted that the County Executive did not veto a single piece of legislation sent to him for approval. Among the efforts to assure transparency she spoke of local funding of the webcasts of legislature meetings after the originating grant had expired

Looking to the future, Ms. Provenzano foresees issues relating to tax burdens, jobs, reuse of the Golden Hill jail facility, and thoroughly examining mandated county programs. Again noting the good works of the League of Women Voters she encouraged Chairman Wadnola to embrace its valuable services.

Following these remarks, the Public Comment portion began and ran for about an hour with most speakers addressing the proposed Resolution 82 relating to supporting the construction of Belleayre Resort, a project under consideration for some 11 years.

When the resolution was raised about one-third of the legislators rose to speak on the resolution. The issues typically raised were similar to those raised by the speakers. Jobs and economic conditions was the most often cited matter by those favoring the resolution... including a detailed and forceful statement by legislator Peter Loughran who took the legislators through a tortuous path of businesses lost, driven away or prevented from coming to the area (and the jobs they represented) over the past decades. A theme typical of those opposed related to the accuracy and/or completeness of the studies and reports that have been made available. Some were in favor *because* it gave moral support to the project while others were opposed *because* it only can give moral support to the project. Ultimately the resolution passed with minimal opposition.

Despite the late hour, the legislature adopted the "Consent Agenda" and quickly moved on to the remainder of the agenda.

Items of particular interest adopted included establishing a Capital Project and funding it with \$140,000 for preliminary design & environmental review of a rail connector link from Kingston to Hurley, passing a resolution opposing a state tax on carbonated beverages, and approval of contracts for leasing space for County Sheriff substations.

On the matter of Sheriff substations, Legislator Donaldson (and others) spoke on the issue of cost and police services enjoyed by localities at county expense. Readers will recall County Executive Hein raised the issue in his State of The County Address.

[ED. NOTE: Generally, the agenda of meetings of the legislature include items that

## Economic Development and Tourism

express support for one cause or piece of legislation or another pending in a different governmental level. This meeting was no exception. Comments of various legislators at this and other meetings suggest a belief that much good can often be made with (what some call) "feel good" legislation. Tonight, Legislators Richard Parete and Alan Lomita expressed their frustration (with some measure of annoyance) at the amount of time and energy expended on matters that would have virtually no effect beyond "feel good." (Others have done as much at other meetings.) Legislator Parete pointed out often these matters are well beyond the task to which the Legislature had been assigned by the voters of Ulster County and he would readily support a rule prohibiting such resolutions.]

Jean and Jim McGarry

Date: March 1, 2010 Start Time: 4:50 p.m. Finish Time: About 6:50 p.m.

Mr. James F. Maloney, Chairman, called the meeting to order with roll call and introductions by the attendees.

Mr. Arthur Smith, Budget Director, addressed the committee regarding a fuel depot project. (A \$175,000 capital project for a 15,000 gallon tank for diesel fuel at UCAT.) A request of redirection of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, abbreviated ARRA, funds is being considered as the DEC Region 3 may require a containment system. Several thousand dollars of county have been spent on project work. A redesign estimated cost is \$10-15,000 and the project is already late. There was considerable and sometimes contentious discussion about the history and status of the project, who is accountable for the design decisions and several proposals of what to do at this time. Deputy Chairman Rodriguez and Legislator Loughran were initial proponents of the project and advocated that it goes to completion. Legislator Donaldson proposed abandoning the project and to move on to using the ARRA funds otherwise, which led to more discussion about resolving issues. A further discussion about when the project was known to have objections revealed the planning department knew two weeks ago, but Elliott Auerbach, Comptroller, contributed the comment that 90 days ago there was a known objection by UCAT. He comment raised considerable concern in the committee that was left unresolved.

Draft Resolutions #0304 & #0322 regarding a rail trail connector link was passed.

Draft Resolutions #0313 & #0317 regarding appoints to the county planning board were passed.

Chairman Maloney wants to see the ulstercountyalive tag line on busses.

Lance Matteson, President, Ulster County Development Corporation (UCDC), provided the monthly update: the June 30, 2010 for Empire Zone expiration is in question; the UCDC and UC contract for this year; Legislator Donaldson and Deputy Chairman Rodriguez noted the lack of mention of Ulster County support in the most recent UCDC Newsletter – Mr. Matteson acknowledged the point was taken; Mr. Matteson said there is a lot of UCDC activity (related to businesses and jobs) in which he has major involvement.

Draft Resolution #0311 regarding pension plans was discussed. It was rephrased as a Memorializing Resolution and passed.

Draft Resolution #0312 regarding the construction of Belleayre Resort was discussed and passed with some protection language. Legislator Donaldson did not favor a resolution at this time.

As a follow up from the previous month's meeting, the committee received a support document from Hudson Valley Center for Innovation and seven21 Media. There was some discussion about funding strategies of those organizations.

Mr. Dennis Doyle, Director of UC Planning, presented an update on state park funding issues, transportation including the intermodal study (Feb. 27 report), and the coming US Census.

Chairman Maloney addressed the committee about gas drilling in NY and the public hearing to be held Mar. 9. There was a presentation and concern by Ruth Parkins regarding a gas line thru Ulster County. The CatskillMountainKeepers web site was mentioned as a source of information and for their position.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 3/17/10

## Legislative Programs,

Date: March 15, 2010 Start Time: 6:03 p.m. Finish Time: 7:09 p.m.

## Education and Community Services

Mr. Kevin Roberts, Chairman, called the meeting to order followed by the approval of the minutes from the Feb. 8, 2010 meeting.

Resolutions regarding appointments to the Ulster County Resource Recovery were discussed - some resolutions were passed and one with no action. Some of the candidates were present for discussions of their interests and qualifications. There was some mix up and confusion on procedure.

A proposed late resolution regarding the Greater Catskills Flood Remediation Program by Ulster County was discussed at some length concerning health, legal, financial and responsibility issues. It was eventually passed and is to be referred to the health committee.

Ms. Amanda LaValle, Coordinator, Department of the Environment, addressed the committee regarding a resolution about setting a public hearing (Apr. 13, 2010), on Proposed Type III Actions SEQRA. The resolution passed.

Ms. LaValle discussed a Block Grant (re American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) for an energy audit of Ulster County facilities. Also there is a meeting on Thur. Mar. 18 to kick off an effort on performance contracting.

Robert Sudlow, Deputy County Executive discussed with the committee various efforts and issues regarding buildings and space needs by the county.

A Late Draft Resolution opposing the NYS Governor's proposal to add a tax on carbonated beverages lead to considerable discussion of the pros and cons of a resolution, and of the underlying issues related to health and state funding. Using this tax to help fund the NYS general fund is a concern. The proposed resolution passed.

Chairman Roberts announced that on Tues. Mar. 16, 2010, an Environmental Subcommittee will be enacted.

Document prepared by Vic Melville, 3/17/10

## Budget and Finance

The Legislative Budget and Finance Committee was convened at 5 PM, 3-9-10, by Chairman Gerentine and adjourned at 5:51. Members present except for Legislator Lomita. Other attendees: Chairman Wadnola, Comptroller Auerbach, Clerk of the Legislature Binder, Art Smith, County Budget Officer, Legislators Ronk and Madsen, Planning Director Doyle.

The first part of the meeting was devoted to considering the 22 resolutions on the docket. The resolutions dealt with various topics: lease agreements for satellite offices and substations; continuation of the immunization plan through the DOH; and to payout funds previously authorized in the 2010 budget to such agencies as Cornell Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Family of Woodstock, etc.

There was no discussion on these resolutions.

Number 56 dealing with project to upgrade and/or replace UC's technology infrastructure (printer requirements, laptop computer replacements, server and storage upgrades, etc.) to be financed with county serial bonds, estimated cost of \$474,698 was pulled to allow for the Government Services, Environmental and Administrative Committee to review. To be addressed probably at the April meeting. Members were all agreeable to having the resolution pulled.

Shared services was the topic for discussion for the second half of the meeting. Chairman Gerentine said his concern was that there appeared to be conflicting information being expressed, based on his conversations with three highway superintendents in his area. He was concerned that there was a need for accurate information so that people could make decisions. Mention was made that the League of Women Voters was presenting a panel on shared services on March 20 in Kingston at the City Hall.

Apparently the figures regarding the cost per mile that are being referred to vary....anywhere from \$4500 to \$10,000. Art Smith noted he was not aware of any figure on the cost having been released.

There also were a variety of observations, views and opinions among the legislators who were present as to what this subject means and the responsibility of the committee or the legislature at this time:

-the matter is between the towns and the county executive; do not see that legislature or this committee is involved at this time. Legislators Fabiano and Hochberg represent the county legislature (Gregorius/Provenzano);

- the towns she has talked to are developing their own cost determination which, fi near the county's, they have a deal; if not, then no deal (Sheeley);
- not all towns are alike; T/Rochester is different than T/Marlboro (Bernardo);
- if towns are going to do county roads, don't they have to meet certain standards (Gregorius);
- legislature and committee should wait until negotiations completed and such information provided to legislature; then this committee could respond (Frey);
- without contract, there are many areas involved that could be the basis for questions (Hayes: asked by Chairman to comment);

Legislator Fabiano was asked to comment (Legislator Provenzano had noted he sits on special committee with highway superintendents; T/Supervisors, representative of County Executive). He said this was not shared services but contract services. The county will hire the towns. He presented as a definition for shared services that town A agrees to perform specific tasks for town B one week and then town B does the same type of thing for town A the next week. Economic times putting a strain on the project. To do the highways cost can run as high as \$10,000 for plowing, salting, sanding. Towns which start (shared services with county) do so for one year as a pilot, then can do 3 years, and eventually 5 years.

He said very directly that the special committee meeting on March 23 would indicate which towns would be involved, which would not.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

## Health and Human Services

The Health and Human Services Legislative Committee was convened by Chairman Walter Frey at 6:35 on 3-4-10 and adjourned at 8:25. Members present. Legislator Fabiano absent. Other attendees: DCE Beckman, DSS Commissioner Rodriguez and members of the DSS management staff.

Following approval of the minutes as amended of the previous month's meeting, Chairman Frey called on DCE Beckman. Mr. Beckman introduced DSS Commissioner Rodriguez who made a power point presentation on the Department of Social Services. He noted the trends that have occurred in how DSS conducts business in order to carry out its mission.

The principal emphasis of need more recently, given the economic situation of the last two years, has been Food Stamps (now called Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-SNAP), heat (HEAP) and Medicaid. Each of these areas has seen substantial increases in applications, particularly from working people; as well as increased case loads for staff in all work areas of DSS.

An additional point concerned the law regarding eligibility for Temporary Assistance. This is a federal regulation, which applies nationwide. A family who has received Family Assistance loses eligibility for such after 5 years. In NYS under Article 17 of the NYS Constitution, the state is required to provide for citizens who are in need. Thus, in NYS, such a family would then need to be considered for assistance under Safety Net Assistance (SNA). This is an assistance program covered by state and county monies in NYS. However, the SNA program in Ulster County is covered by the state and towns and City of Kingston funds (the only county in NYS that handles this program in this manner).

Other changes that have occurred are that there are no more face-to face interviews required at DSS to apply for Food Stamps; and come April 1, 2010 there will be no more FTF interviews required in applying for Medicaid. Both are to be handled electronically. The ability to do the electronic applications are being made available in various sites throughout UC and staff will be available to go to the sites if needed.

It was pointed out that these changes had been made without any additional dollars being spent to support staff.

Commissioner Rodriguez noted there are 331 employees and nine divisions that comprise DSS.

Financially, the revenues that support DSS are federal, state and local dollars, IGTs (Intergovernmental Transfers) for a present budget of \$109 million dollars. However, it was noted that the actual local dollars spent are considerably less given the reimbursements that the county receives (total DSS revenues \$64,155,291 with a net county cost of \$45,722,701-source: Adopted Budget for 2010)

In order to reduce waste and fraud over all and obtain monies for child support, DSS has units designed to handle such matters: Special Investigations and Child Support. It was noted that the latter unit handles cases for both clients who receive public assistance and non-public assistance clients as well.

Sue Warman then presented a report on the developments that have taken place in Medicaid, which is now referred to as Public Health Insurance Programs.

Given the size of the DSS the committee was advised that at future committee meetings there would be presentations made about the other areas of the agency.

Approximately 45 minutes was devoted to these two segments.

Chairman Frey announced to the committee his intention to appoint two committees in response to Chairman Wadnola's requests in his statement to the Legislature: a review of Golden Hill Health Care Center and a review of federal and state mandates as such pertain to DSS.

For the review of Golden Hill he will chair the committee and ask Legislator Mary Sheeley to co-chair (question re this appointment raised by Legislator Parete since Mrs. Sheeley is not presently a member of this committee; Chairman Frey responded that Robert's Rules allows this); and as members Cynthia Wadnola and Louis Kirschner. Additionally he will ask the majority and minority party leaders to each recommend three possible members. The committee will look at all aspects as well as to whether to invest in the center (repair), possible coalition, or whether to privatize.

The second committee is to have Legislator Harris as chairman, possibly Legislator Petit and Karen Spinozzi as members as well as requesting the majority and minority chairs to submit three names each.

Legislator Parete commented on the previous study done by the Blue Ribbon Commission, which had been made up of professional members of the community; and how extensive the study had been (Note: it met for about one year). A further point that he made was isn't it the County Executive's job under the administrative code to refer this type of matter to the Legislature. The Chairman's comment was the expectation is to refer to the County Executive and then expect him to refer back to the Legislature. The County Executive apparently is to be used as a reference. Legislator Petit indicated that outside professionals should be included and that a time line needed to be established re the study and then acting on such.

Legislator Stoeckeler observed that financial matters needed to be addressed and a CPA should be on the committee, as well as that CSEA should be involved. Both he and Mr. Harris commented on the question of policy, the former referencing Philip Terpening who, when a legislator, had always stated it was the county's responsibility to provide for the elderly. They both spoke to the need to determine policy and then what the committee would recommend as well as what the cost would be. He offered the following as options to be considered: repair the Center, build a new one, privatize, a coalition, or the county keeps 100 beds, and sells the others.

Last on the agenda were 5 resolutions, all of which passed.

Mr. Beckman noted that the county is in the process of getting the ionization process for GHHCC. The Health Summit held March 2 was attended by over 100 representatives of community groups; feedback has been positive. The Mental Health technology renovation started a week ago is proceeding well.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

## Board of Health

At the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee meeting 2-4-10 and the Board of Health meeting on 2-8-10, Dr. Hasbrouck, Public Health Director presented the UC Department of Health Reorganization Proposal.

The proposed reorganization is a means to stream line the UCDOH and to accomplish County Executive Hein's goal to make UC the healthiest county in NYS as expressed in the DOH mission.

He noted that as part of the work involved each division of the local DOH had made presentations of what it does to the DOH divisions, which was well received by everyone.

Dr. Hasbrouck's presentation covered Core Public Health Services as well as "Prevention Agenda": promotion and support of healthy lifestyles; prevention and control of chronic diseases; prevention & control of injuries; and reduction & elimination of health disparities.

**Public Works and Capital Projects**

In order to accomplish the work of the DOH, Dr. Hasbrouck explained the approach that the DOH would take, i.e. build on successes; strengthen alliance with the Office for the Aging; increase grant funding, other revenues, etc.

Another aspect of the re-organizational proposal was the organizational restructuring.

Among the priorities mentioned by Dr. Hasbrouck to achieve this: clean lines of authority, accountability, reporting and compliance; promotion; high quality customer service (takes cultural change); use the website, etc.

Dr. Hasbrouck provided an organizational chart for 2010:

Public Health Director at the top with the Administration and Fiscal sections as part of the office of the Director. There is also a Deputy PH Director who meets state requirements and acts when Dr. Hasbrouck is not there. Responsible to the PH Director are the following sections: Patient Services, Environmental Health Services, Health Education Unit and Office of the Medical Examiner.

Some of the details that are involved: Form supports function: pool support services, fill select vacancies, contract services, leadership and technology training.

To enable the DOH to pursue this re-organization he noted that the process is fiscally neutral; it is to do everything with the dollars it presently has; the DOH is not getting any more dollars. The DOH will work with furthering partnerships, with other UC departments, and share resources.

At a future date it is anticipated that the power point presentation will be available on the county website.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

The Legislative Public Works and Capital Projects Committee was convened at 7:03 on 3-1-10 by Chairman Dean Fabiano and adjourned at 8:13. All members present. Other attendees: DCE Sudlow, Sue Ronga and David Boles from the Dept. of Public Works and several members of the county highway department.

Chairman Fabiano changed the order of business on the agenda to handle the new business first. The topic deal with was the concern raised by the group of county highway department employees who came to the meeting. Their concern was a perceived lack of communication from the management in their area of work

They believe that the change in who was going to be doing the plowing in certain areas, i.e. parking lots when highway and building and grounds personnel were out recently doing the plowing had not been clearly communicated to staff.

Apparently there was a lack of communication on whatever change was being developed; as well as who on the staff should be doing the communicating.

There was general comment made by DCE Sudlow, Legislator Fabiano, Sue Ronga and Legislator Provenzano about the importance of communicating to get the situation ironed out. Chairman Fabiano said he would look into who is suppose to be doing the communicating to the highway employees and advise them quickly.

At that point Mr. McGarril spoke to the subject of shared services. He state he had attended the breakfast sponsored by Pattern for Progress a few days prior to this meeting. He said that what he had heard was not accurate, claiming that people would in fact be out of jobs, that developing a grid system to handle the roads was the procedure to follow.

DCE Sudlow's response was that no privatization is being considered.

Legislator Feliciano commented that there are savings to taxpayers, towns and county with shared services if done correctly. He also suggested that if someone has a way to save money then the person should share with the management; he was sure that the latter would consider such a suggestion.

The six resolutions dealt with lease agreements, rail trail concerns, sheriff's substations, and support for the posted speed limit at Belleayre Mt. Ski Center. All passed, with the one dealing with a lease for a local DOH satellite office in Saugerties being passed contingent on the Health and Human Services Committee passing it as well.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp

**The Ulster County  
Association of Town  
Supervisors**

The Association of Town Supervisors was convened at 8:30 on 3-16-10 by John Valk, President of the Association and adjourned at 9:55.

The first order of business was an update from County Executive Michael Hein. He reviewed the process the county has engaged in by having personnel from his office visiting the towns to discuss the process of developing shared services as such applies to highways. Noted the cooperation his office and staff have received from town supervisors, highway superintendents and other personnel. He noted that the last meeting of the group that has been meeting for several weeks, would be March 16 at 10:30; that contract aspects and how-to steps of becoming involved would be brought up. He complimented county and town personnel for the above and beyond work done county wide during the recent storms. Mr. Hein expressed his hope to obtain reimbursement funds as a result of the disaster declaration.

The questions from the supervisors posed to Mr. Hein: the first checks for participating towns are scheduled to be cut in October. Approval of contracts would need town board approval and inter-municipal agreements approved by the UC Legislature first. Participating towns would need to do an amendment to town budgets due to additional revenue.

The next item involved a detailed report from Joan Lawrence-Bauer and Guy Kempe representing RUPCO. Mrs. Bauer noted it is her job to make the housing picture in UC clear so others can understand what is going on; Guy's to find solutions. The main area of her comments dealt with housing: affordable, workforce, senior, high end; that municipalities need to provide all types; that carrying on a dialogue about such as it applies to each area; how zoning, taxes, etc. impact housing development as well as efforts to bring about economic development. Considerable information was distributed.

Dorothy Martin of the UC Real Property Service commented on various items affecting tax assessments.

There was a brief exchange of comments dealing with the shared service meeting to be held at 10:30.

Lee Cane, Observer Corp



### **March is Women's History Month**

*With thanks to Lee Cane, we present her extensive list of women's achievements*

March has been designated as Women's History Month. It was not always so. The history of women was not part of the general K-12 school curriculum or in general public awareness. In 1978 the Educational Task Force of Sonoma County, California Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week". This initial effort eventually resulted in the US Congress expanding the national celebration of the week of March 8 in 1981 to the entire month of March in 1987. Since then the National Women's History Month Resolution has been approved with bi-partisan support in both the House and the Senate.

With the advent of the United Nations, the campaign to promote and protect the equal rights of women drew intense and widespread support. The Charter of the United Nations, signed in San Francisco in 1945, was the first international agreement to promote gender equity as a fundamental right.

The following are the names of women who have achieved distinction and have not been assigned a place on past lists.

- 1947 Edith "Jackie" Ronne-first woman to set foot on Anarctica
- 1958 Ella Fitzgerald-first black woman to win a Grammy Award
- 1963 Katharine Graham-upon assuming control of the Washington Post became first woman to head a Fortune 500 Company
- 1963 Lucille Ball-first woman to own a film studio; bought out ex-husband, Desi Arnaz to become first woman to run a studio
- 1965 Patricia Harris-first black woman to serve as US Ambassador (Luxembourg)
- 1969 Diane Crump-first woman to ride in a horse race (at Hialeah)-February 7 Barbara Jo Rubin-first woman to win a horse race (Charlestown), first woman to ride in NYS (Aqueduct)-March 14
- 1975 Helen Bosalis (D) first woman elected mayor of Lincoln, Nebraska; 1981-first woman president of the US Conference of Mayors (she is now deceased) Dr. Claudia Thomas-first black woman to become an orthopedic surgeon in the United States, graduating from John Hopkins School of Medicine.
- 1977 Patricia Harris-first black woman cabinet member: Secretary Department of Housing and Urban Development under President Jimmy Carter
- 1983 Barbara Streisand-first woman to receive the Golden Globe award for Best Director (Yentl)
- 1986 Oprah Winfrey-first black woman television host-The Oprah Winfrey Show

- 1989 Jeanne Robertson, professional speaker-first woman to receive The Cavett Award (National Speakers Association honor); 1998-only woman professional speaker to receive the Golden Gavel Award
- 1991 Melvina Lathan-first black woman licensed as a Professional Boxing Judge in NYS; first black woman to be confirmed as a NYS Athletic Commissioner in 2007; and first woman and first African-American woman to hold the title of Chairperson of the NYS Athletic Commission to which she was appointed July 25, 2008
- 1994 Whoopi Goldberg-first woman and first African-American to host the Oscar Awards solo; and then acted as host on three additional occasions
- 1998 Carol Jean Nigil-first native American woman to be elected a state district judge in the United States; first Pueblo Indian woman admitted to the bar
- 2000 Julia Roberts-first woman actress to earn same top dollar as men have earned: \$20 million dollars per film; paycheck for the film Erin Brockovich

2009 This year saw many firsts:

Dalia Grybauskaitė-first woman elected president of Lithuania  
Alysa Stanton-first African-American woman rabbi to lead a predominately white Temple

Deborah Scheer-first woman to become county judge in Ulster County

Elizabeth Blackburn and Carol Greider-first women to share in a Nobel Prize (medicine)

Irina Bokova-first woman to head UNESCO

Meryl Tisch-first woman to be elected as chancellor of the NYS Board of Regents

Sylvie Kauffmann-first woman appointed executive director of LeMonde considered France's newspaper of record

Jennifer Figge of Aspen, Colorado-first woman on record to swim across the Atlantic Ocean: from Cape Verde Islands to Trinidad

2010

Kathryn Bigelow-first woman to win the Oscar award for Best Director for the film The Hurt Locker March 7

Katie Spatz-the youngest person to row an entire ocean alone, and the first American to row a boat without help from mainland to mainland.

Her journey Started January 3, 2010 from Dakar, Senegal on the west coast of Africa and ended in Georgetown, Guyana, South America on March 14, 2010.....having traveled 2, 817 miles.



(Sources: internet biographies, Forbes lists, National Women's History Project, New York Times and other newspapers)

I/we wish to become members of the LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region through May 31, 2011

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (day) \_\_\_\_\_ (eve) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I/We enclose: Individual Membership (\$50) \_\_\_\_\_ Household Membership (\$75) \_\_\_\_\_

Additional gift to the LWV Education Fund (*tax deductible:*) for our use  
(Please send a separate check which MUST be payable to NYSLWV Ed Fund) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you are upgrading to a Household Membership, please  
include the name and email address of new members \_\_\_\_\_

Will receive *Commentator* \_\_\_\_\_ online &/or will read it on website or \_\_\_\_\_ Please mail *Commentator*

**(Complete the above form and return it to us with your check at  
PO Box 3564, Kingston, New York 12402)**

League of Women Voters  
Mid-Hudson Region  
PO Box 3564  
Kingston, NY, 12402

March 2010  
*Commentator*