



Commentator, v.I, i.4

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 Mid-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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COMMENTATOR OCTOBER, 2008

CALENDAR		
OCTOBER		
15	7:00-9:00 7:00-9:00	Candidates meeting, Highland High School Congressional candidates Hinchey and Phillips debate in Saugerties
20	7:00-9:00	Candidates meeting, BOCES New Paltz
21	6:00-8:00	Congressional Candidates Forum at Bardavon in Poughkeepsie
25	10:00-12:00	Candidates meeting, Kingston City Hall
28	7:00-9:00	Hinchey and Phillips debate at George Washington School, Kingston
NOV.		
4	ALL DAY	Election Day - VOTE!
5	7:15-9:15	Board Meeting at Gloria's
15	10:00-12:00	Brunch and Discussion of "Where Do We Go From Here" place TBA
DEC.		
2	7:15-9:15 10:00-5:00	Board Meeting at Gloria's UN Briefings in NYC
14	2:00-4:00	Holiday Celebration at Jacki's
2009	*****	*****
JANUARY		
6	7:15-9:15	Board meeting at Gloria's
17	10:00-12:00	Ecological Program (under development)
FEB.		
3	7:15-9:15	Board meeting
MARCH		
4	7:15-9:15	Board meeting
14	TBA	Open members' meeting

Check our website starting October 15 for responses to questions posed to our county Executive and Comptroller candidates.

**Ulster County
Administrative Code
Public Hearing 10/7.
Statement by Renee
Sachs**

In 2006 the Ulster County Legislature propelled this county into the 21st century by overwhelmingly adopting a County Charter with a vision for the future. As you know the charter is roughly equivalent to a constitution but it needs to be fleshed out by an Administrative Code which contains the details that clarify the particulars of procedures and operations. It also repeals any local laws that are in conflict with the Charter while preserving those that are not. Finally, and this is no small feat, it harmonizes the language of the Charter with existing laws.

Under the dedicated leadership of Gary Bischoff the Charter Transition Team of the Legislature, consisting of Legislators Jon Decker, Wayne Harris and Philip Terpening as well as former Charter Commissioners Dr. Gerald Benjamin, Marianne Collins and Louis Klein, Esquire, labored to make many decisions, collected data, sought funding and provided three information sessions for the Legislature and public. These aimed to acquaint them with the details of the Code.

Enough credit cannot be given to the legal team led by Beatrice Havranek, Esquire, First Assistant County Attorney, for the massive research that went into the actual writing of the Administrative Code. She was assisted by the Hon. Jon Decker, Deputy County Administrator Meg Dellay, volunteer Louis Klein Esquire, Clerk of the Legislature Kathleen Mihm, Deputy County Treasure Adele Reiter Esquire, Deputy County Administrator Arthur Smith and Paralegal Eric Stock.

The League was represented at every session of the Charter Transition Team by at least one member. Once again we appear before you to ask you to ratify the Administrative Code so that the Ulster County Charter can be fully implemented on January 1, 2009 with assurance that it can be operational.

On another note and off the record, with all due respect to Governor Sarah Palin of Alaska, many years before hockey moms became "pit bulls with lipstick" the League of Women Voters was referred to in Albany, N.Y. as "bulldogs in high heels".

The candidates for the 19th, 20th, and 22nd Congressional Districts (districts represented now by John Hall, Kirsten Gillibrand, and Maurice Hinchey) will be appearing at the Bardavon in Poughkeepsie at 6 pm on Tuesday, October 21 in a free event sponsored by the POK Journal and the Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce.

All three incumbents and their opponents (Kieran Michael Lalor, George Phillips, and Sandy Treadwell respectively) have agreed to be there.

The event is free but people are asked to reserve places. Call Dare Thompson at 845 236-3074 and she will call your name in if you want to go.

**Congressional
Candidates Debate
10/21 at Bardavon**

Certificate from New York State Assembly



We also received a copy of a Senate resolution commending the YWCA and its honorees. It was too large to be scanned on my machine, but will be available in the scrap book and perhaps on our website.

**State of New York
Legislative
Resolution from the
NYS Senate**

Calling all Leaguers:

I am the historian for our League. As such, I need all the newspaper clippings I can get to put into our scrapbooks. In recent years there has been a great drop in the articles sent to me from papers other than the Daily Freeman which I read.

Please help me—send any articles that may appear in your newspapers to Shirley Kobran, 53 Schuler Lane, Lake Katrine New York, 12449.

With gratitude for your assistance...Shirley Kobran

**Reminder from our
Historian**

**Human
Development
Committee**

The Human Development Committee chaired by Don Gregorius met on 9/22/08. All members were present.

The agenda for the meeting dealt with the Commissioner's Report, which was primarily fiscal, and Ulster Winter Watch.

The DSS account expenditures reports for 2008 was reviewed and comparisons made with 2007. This process was followed with regards to the Safety Net Program and the Youth Bureau. In addition the minutes for July and August of the Youth Bureau were distributed.

One concern that was discussed dealt with how physically handicapped children in the pre-school program are selected and the related costs. The Commissioner advised the committee that he has asked that Mike Hein, the County Administrator, join him in meeting with the school superintendents to develop voluntary controls in how they handle the process of selection and thus the related costs. Mr. Gregorius suggested that perhaps there was a possibility of developing a small group to provide oversight/accountability. Further discussion resulted in the committee deciding to wait until the above mentioned meeting with the school superintendents has taken place and a report of it has been made to the committee.

The remainder of the hour and 24 minutes meeting dealt with the Winter Watch program.

This program, developed within the last two months by the county, is primarily to help those people who qualify to have fuel, food, shelter, transportation during the coming winter season.

The Commissioner reviewed a list of organizations which have indicated support for this project, i.e. Council of Churches, Cornell Cooperative, Chamber of Commerce of Ulster County, Family of Woodstock, Association of Town Supervisors, ASPCA, etc.

Brochures on HEAP, the County Winter Watch Program and Powerful Opportunity Program (POP), the program sponsored by Central Hudson, were made available. Chairman Gregorius mentioned that there would be a meeting of the Winter Watch group in Woodstock on Saturday 9/25 at the Woodstock Library.

During the Open Forum portion of the session the primary concern that was voiced by committee members appeared to be the increase in the case load in the Medicaid division, i.e. from 250-450 to 800 per examiner. Commissioner's response: can't add staff due to lack of physical space.

Lee Cane, Observer Corps

Health Services Committee

The Health Services Committee was convened at 6:30 PM, 9/18/08 by Chairman Rob Parete. All members were present. In addition, there were a substantial number of County employees from the Golden Hill Health Care Center present, as well as several legislators.

The meeting, which lasted about one hour and 37 minutes was divided into two parts:

1. regular committee work: submission of proposed 2009 budgets for UC Mental Health, Golden Hill Health Care Center and the Public Health Department, resolution work and a verbal synopsis of the law dealing with banning smoking on county owned/rented property and the amendment to change the ban to within 50 feet of any entrance.

2. the power point presentation dealing with the report/recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Long Term Care (BRCLTC) on its study of the Golden Hill Health Care Center (GHHCC).

Steve Kelley, chairman of the BRCLTC, made the power point presentation:

* The Commission was charged with examining Long Term Care health services in UC focusing on possible alternatives to maintaining the GHHCC; the number of available nursing home beds in UC and how accessible to the residents of UC, while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

* Based on information from the census bureau, the Administrator of the Center, and its own analysis the commission determined:

* The present number of beds in UC (940)...omitting Northeast Center for Special Care due to the type of population (it serves-head trauma); and the projections of need for the future-1,102. That said, Kelley noted the Berger Commission has placed a moratorium on increasing the number of nursing home beds.

* He noted that the existing nursing homes in UC are located along the Hudson River and that the population density is in the south western area (Marbletown, Olive, Rochester, Shawangunk, Wawarsing). Only 7% of the Center's present residents are from that area; 11 % from outside UC; the closest nursing home to Ellenville in the T/Wawarsing is 30 miles no matter which direction one travels in.

* GHHCC is well maintained, clean well run and Sheree Cross is a fine administrator. The Center may have been state of the art when built in the 1970s, but the ones constructed in 2008 are quite different. Nevertheless, he noted that the care of the residents was excellent.

* Condition of the Center's physical plant based on the 2004 Engineering/Architectural study indicates a variety of problems, i.e. pipes, non ADA compliant, doesn't meet present NYS Code requirements in many areas.

* In recent years the county has had to subsidize the expenses incurred as the dollars from Medicaid reimbursements have not been sufficient to cover the costs of the Center.

* The costs for renovation, for building new county facilities and construction of new facilities not sponsored by the county were noted. Kelley pointed out that cost overruns would not be the county's responsibility if construction was under a non-county sponsor.

Recommendations:

* Replace GHHCC with 2 new nursing homes, geographically located so that areas presently underserved would be served: one in southern UC; leave the 2nd one in Kingston.

* Sponsorship should be non-county for both.

* GHHCC should continue to be operated until the 2 new nursing homes are completed. He noted that moving residents to another facility or outside the county is too disruptive for them and their families.

Benefits:

* County would no longer need to subsidize the county nursing home operation.

* Removes risk to the county for funding cost overruns or unapproved expenses related to renovations or replacement construction.

* Provides new, modern state of the art facilities that comply with current regulations and are consistent with modern delivery of nursing home care.

During the Q & A session which followed the presentation several observations were made and questions asked:

- committee did a fine job
- all members of legislature should receive a copy of the report
- need place for poor and middle class to receive care
- need an updated analysis of the Center and its problems
- what happens to the 414 employees
- the matter should stay on the legislature's radar; given problems associated with construction of the new jail no one wanted to touch previous studies, probably take 7-8 years to deal with; make sure staff buys into the project
- privatization did not have support of some legislators at the meeting
- thought story in Freeman had been a disservice to the community overall
- changing sponsors does not necessarily mean a loss of jobs
- morale at GHHCC among residents is high
- suggestion to appoint another sub committee to review what has occurred since the other studies done or have the present one go back and re-examine the work
- care at the Center is second to none

Lee Cane, Observer Corps

PREZ SEZ

Greetings,

Today was one of those days that I decided to attack a pile of League of Women Voters "things to read at a later date." With a little more than 3 weeks left until Election Day, I must confess I cringed when I came to a League publication, "Election Checklist." While the presidential election has taken front and center stage, one of the most important elections in the history of Ulster County takes place this November 4th. Did we serve the community as well as we possibly could in this election season?

Here is the checklist:

Number one- Does your league provide voters' guides? Locally, residents were served well by the distribution of an attractive tri-fold that gave information about the three branches of government under the new Charter. Additionally, we are again distributing thousands of Facts for Voters that will provide the community with essential information concerning the State and Federal elections.

Number two- Has your league had candidate or issue forums debates? A quick tally adds up to fourteen informational events with the league serving as a sponsor, a moderator or an advisor.

Number three - Has your league provided visibility or membership opportunities around your Election Day activities? Our new membership brochure is now a staple at all registration drives, moderating events and forums.

How did we do this election season? Give yourself an "A" Mid- Hudson Region. Well done. And for our curtain call, we'll be sure our family, friends, neighbors, and sometimes even strangers get to the polls.

Jean

**LWV Day at the UN
12/2/2008**

December 2nd, 2008, will be the annual UN day for the League. This year's topic will be "Briefings on the effect of global warming on women and children around the world." For a registration form, go to the State Board Report for September 2008, on the LWVNY.ORG website under Membership.

The timetable is as follows:

10-11 or 4:30 to 5:00	Optional tour of the UN (\$12.)
11:30-12:30	Optional Luncheon Buffet (\$40.)
1:00-3:30	Briefings Program (\$55. for League members, \$65. for non-members)

For the tour, the luncheon, and the briefings package, \$100. to members.

If there is sufficient interest, we can set up a carpool to NYC. Please call Jean McGarry if you would like to go. Registration starts at 9:00 AM, ends at 1:00 PM.

If you need more information or a printed registration form, call the League of Women Voters of New York State at (518) 465-4162 or ask a board member to print one out.

I/we wish to become members of the LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region through May 31, 2009

Name:

Currently Member(s)?:

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

Check here if you prefer NOT to be contacted about local LWV meetings

Will receive *Commentator* online____ or will read it on website____ or Please mail *Commentator* ____

**(Update 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
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