



**Commentator, v.I, i.3**

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Commentator v.1,i.3  
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# COMMENTATOR SEPTEMBER, 2008

*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.

CALENDAR		
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>		
<b>17</b>	<b>6:00-8:30</b>	<b>Potluck supper at Esopus Library, Port Ewen</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>6:00-9:00</b>	<b>YWCA Dinner honoring LWV as "Organization of the Year"</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>7:00 - 9:00</b>	<b>Informational meeting on Charter Transition in Saugerties</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>7:00-9:00</b>	<b>Information at SUNY Ulster</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>7:15-9:00</b>	<b>Finance Committee at Margaret Sellers</b>
<b>OCTOBER</b>		
<b>2</b>	<b>7:00-9:00</b>	<b>Informational meeting on charter transition at Kingston City Hall</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>7:15-9:15</b>	<b>Board meeting at Jacki's</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>6:45</b>	<b>Legislative hearing on administrative code</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>7:00-9:00</b>	<b>Candidates meeting, Saugerties Senior Center</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>7:00-9:00</b>	<b>Candidates meeting, Highland High School</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>7:00-9:00</b>	<b>Candidates meeting, BOCES New Paltz</b>
<b>23</b>	<b>10:00-noon</b>	<b>Candidates meeting, Kingston City Hall</b>

**Charter Transition  
Team 8/26/08**

The final version of the Administrative Code has been forwarded to General Code, should be reviewed early in September and returned to the county by the end of September. A few changes to the code have been initiated

The appointment of a county legislator to a paid office or paid position of employment with Ulster County within one year after service as a legislator, with the exception of the office of Commissioner of the Board of Elections was reviewed and a motion to delete it was passed.

A motion was passed calling for the inclusion of the functions of a budgetary analyst in legislative staffing Margaret Sellers of the LWV had suggested this at a previous meeting.

There will be a public hearing on the administrative code on October 8<sup>th</sup> if the Laws and Rules Committee passes a resolution at its September meeting. Once the public hearing is held, the county legislature has to vote on the administrative code.

**LWV Charter Transition  
Support Committee**

Our group has been busy, busy, busy this summer planning informational and candidate events in preparation for the new form of county government on the horizon. While the presidential race has overshadowed our political conversation, our group has been attending meetings, writing copy, scheduling speakers, organizing and anticipating voters' questions as they peruse the ballot before casting their vote. The Administrative Code has been formulated and is up for discussion and a vote before the county legislature. The Code will help guide the new executive, comptroller and legislature understand their places, rights and responsibilities within the new governmental format. Intense work has been done by the county's legal staff and the Charter Transition Committee to join the old style functions with the new. While the Charter and Administrative Code don't make for light reading, they do define duties and responsibilities in a flexible way that will enable the various branches of government to work together more effectively for the good of the citizens of Ulster County. Every effort has been made to keep the changes both budget- and personnel-neutral in order to make the changes easier on the county's taxpayers. The county's budgeting staff and leadership have done a great job toward that end.

We now have an attractive tri-fold brochure outlining basic information about the three branches of government and containing a calendar of events\* for those who wish more information. This process has brought us together with others around the county in a cooperative effort to provide adequate information for members of the public to make an informed decision on Election Day.

Please join us for one or more events to assist or just to listen. Bring a friend, promote the events through your email contacts or bring a question to the candidates. The tri-fold brochure is available on our website and those of you

who receive a hard copy of the Commentator will find one in this issue. For more information, or to help, please contact Renee Sachs at [reneesachs@verizon.net](mailto:reneesachs@verizon.net) or Cindy Bell at [CBell1000@aol.com](mailto:CBell1000@aol.com).

*\*Please note that there was a schedule change that occurred after the printing of the brochures. The Informational Forum on 10/7/08 at Bennett Elementary School in Boiceville has been cancelled due to a change in the date of the general legislative meeting.*

We invite our membership and friends to attend the 10/7 meeting of the County Legislature when the Administrative Code will be discussed. We plan to offer our support of the document during the public comment portion of the meeting. Please check the county website for details or contact the committee for more information.

**Planned informational meetings are:**

9/23 at 7 PM at the Saugerties Senior Center

9/24 at 7 PM at SUNY Ulster (UCCC)

10/2 at 7 PM at Kingston City Hall

Topics to be covered include an outline of the charter and the administrative code and the process by which it came to be, the legal changes, and the legislative changes from both the Democratic and Republican points of view.

**Planned Candidates Forums are:**

10/14 at 7 PM at the Saugerties Senior Center

10/15 at 7 PM at the Highland High School

10/20 at 7 PM at the BOCES Offices in New Paltz

10/23 at 10 AM at Kingston City Hall.

All officially registered candidates will be invited to participate. The meetings will be moderated by the LWV.

**Health Committee  
9/10/08**

Rob Parete chaired and all members were present except Legislator Stoeckeler. There were personnel from Golden Hill, UC Mental Health, UC Health Department, and UCCC.

The proposal to take away the power of the town clerks to give out marriage licenses, death certificates, etc. will be handled at the next committee meeting.

The remainder of the meeting dealt with the smoking ban on county property. Two items were considered: a law prohibiting smoking on any county owned property, to go into effect in November; and a resolution by Legislator Ronk to amend the law to no smoking within 50 feet of any county owned property.

Legislators Roberti, Terpening and Parete differed on the resolution with Parete opposing any smoking on county-owned property. Legislator Terpening pointed out the topic had been discussed at length at caucus meetings and suggested that the resolution could ban smoking anywhere on county owned property except at UCCC and UCMH. A public hearing will be held on October 1 at 6:40.

**Human Development  
Committee 8/25/08**

Following an executive session, Chairman Gregorius convened the regular meeting. Several resolutions involved amending the 2008 budget to transfer funds to DSS to cover some mandated services, and were passed.

The commissioner reported that the Family Assistance case load has declined as families have been dropped after 5 years of assistance. The cost for physically handicapped children has increased. The Safety Net program costs have also increased.

The 2009 DSS budget is up about 4% because of salary and contractual increases. The commissioner is preparing a comparison of 2007, 2008, and 2009 budgets. Figures are available on the county website.

The rest of the meeting dealt with other financial details.

**Ways and Means:  
9/3/08**

The Ways and Means Committee was convened 9-3-08 by Chairman Alan Lomita All members were present, though some arrived after meeting convened. Additionally, staff personnel and personnel from the various departments were present to provide explanations regarding the resolutions.

The agenda dealt with a large number of resolutions and dates for public hearings on certain subjects of resolutions. dealt with. Some of the items involved the following:

Capital project established to purchase and install a 25,000 gallon bulk diesel fuel storage facility to enable county to purchase fuel at the lowest possible costs for public transportation in UC; and the completion of the UC Transit Building 2<sup>nd</sup> floor which will be utilized for the purpose of training and meetings.

Reclassification of positions to comply with NYS Correction Commissions staffing analysis.

Transfer of funds from the Family Assistance line and State and Federal Aid to fund mandated Safety Net Services for recipients, which will be charged back to the towns and the City of Kingston in the 2009 budget.

Salary adjustments for UC Department Heads, Managerial staff, Legislative Employees and Board of Elections Employees as managers not represented by a collective bargaining agreement for 2008 and 2009 The salaries are for personnel who are "transferring," i.e. will still be in holding these positions after January 1, 2009. A public hearing will be held October 1 to effect this..

A public hearing to deal with the proposed partial exemptions for senior land owners with limited income, as well as those with disabilities and who are veterans.

A public hearing on October 7, for the proposed administrative code for UC, contingent on Laws and Rules Committee approving such.

Discussed a public hearing date on the local law prohibiting smoking 50 feet from all building entrances upon real property owned or leased by UC. Committee decided to hold off until 9-10-08 to learn what the caucus had to say about this.

**Ways and Means:  
9/10/08**

All members were present except Legislator Zimet. Members of the County Administrator's staff attended.

The tentative schedule for budget review for the 2009 budget was presented and members were asked to review the schedule and get back to Chairman Lomita with questions and comments. Proposed dates are November 6, 13, 17 and 18.

Resolution #299 sought approval for the Chairman of the legislature to execute an agreement with the Catskill Watershed Corporation Stormwater Retrofit Grant for the Glenford-Wittenburgh Road Stormwater Project. Resolution passed with no financial impact.

Resolution #301 passed, authorizing the County Chairman to apply to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to update the local Farmland Protection Plan. The \$10,000 require county match is to be charged to the 2009 budget.

Resolution #302 passed, appropriating additional funds for salt and chloride for UC highways for 2008. This required amending the 2008 budget. The materials had unexpectedly heavy usage in the winter of 2007-2008 and might not be adequate for November and December of 2008.. The county is receiving payment from the school district for the quarry work project so there will be little financial impact.

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

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2008 , will be the annual UN day for the League. This year's topic will be "The effect of global warming on women and children around the world." The day will include a tour of the UN and lunch in the Delegates' dining room. Details will be available at the end of the month and will appear in next month's *Commentator*.

If there is enough interest, we may set up carpooling or hire a bus for the trip. Please let a board member know if you are interested in attending.

In the past, these meetings have been informative and stimulating, and it will be a nice change from all the work that went into supporting the election. Save the date and seriously consider attending.

**Bella Abzug's Hats**

We've come a long way although we still have frustrations as women and are sometimes still treated as second-class citizens.

When she became active in politics, Bella Abzug was always assumed to be somebody's secretary or clerk, and complained to a friend that she was tired of it. Her friend advised her always to wear a big hat, because that way she would not be mistaken for somebody's menial. She tried it and it worked, and her big hats became her trademark.

We can never be complacent however. Even if we don't have to wear big hats any more, we do have to insist upon respect and equal treatment and not be considered as "just a woman." Act like someone who can carry off a big hat.

Lee Ridgway

## Election Facts

### **General Election: Tuesday, November 4, 2008.**

Polls are open from 6 AM to 9 PM in all NYS counties. You should have received a postcard confirming your polling place.

### Important Deadlines

**October 10**— Last day to register to vote by mail.  
Last day to register to vote in person.

**October 28**— Last day to postmark an application for an absentee ballot.

**November 3** Last day to apply in person for an absentee ballot.

## Ballot Proposal

There will be a proposed amendment to Article 5, section 6, of the NYS constitution in relation to additional civil service credit for members of the armed forces of the United States.

The proposed amendment would eliminate the requirement that veterans who were disabled in the actual performance of duty in any war be receiving disability payments from the United States Veterans Administration order to qualify for additional points on a civil service examination for appointment or promotion. Under the proposed amendment, the disability must only be certified to exist by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The proposed amendment would also update the reference to the "United States Veterans Administration" to instead refer to the "United States Department of Veterans Affairs" to reflect current federal government structure. Shall the proposed amendment be approved?

Applicants for many jobs in state and local governments are required to take a civil service examination and are appointed or promoted based on their scores on the exam. Veteran disabled in the performance of their duty in any war receive extra points on their scores, giving them preferential status on the list of those who qualify. Currently they only receive points if they are receiving payments from the federal government. This proposal allows them to qualify for points if the United States Department of Veterans Affairs certifies that the veteran's disability exists at the time that the veteran applies for appointment or promotion.

Providing this preferential treatment is a recognition of veterans' sacrifice and service to our country and also makes military service more attractive. Such preferential treatment has been given since the Civil War and the proposed change simply makes it easier for disabled veterans to qualify.

The League has not identified any arguments against this proposal.

Part 2 of the state Voters' Guide will discuss this proposal. Since the propositions are often difficult to read (small print), it is well to read and understand them in advance.

## Prez Sez

Greetings,

Sometimes we need to reflect on what the League of Women Voters is all about. "Program" is the foundation of our organization and three words sum up the basis of program in the League: study, action, and education. "Study" is the process of creating or updating our public policy positions. "Action" is promoting an adopted position. Education is the challenging task of informing our members and the community about topics of interest.

The Mid-Hudson League is all about study, action, and education. The League studied the proposed charter form of government. We adopted the position that a charter form of government was paramount in Ulster County. And we have continued this promotion through the tireless effort of our Charter Transition Support Committee. Inserted in the Facts for Voters this Fall will be a tri-fold that will explain the basics of the Charter. Numerous informational forums as well as candidates' events have been planned for September and October. The dates are posted in this newsletter, on our website and will be in the tri-fold. Encourage your friends, neighbors, and relatives to attend. And make a note for yourself!

Program - we do it well. Take advantage.

Jean

## New Voting Machines

This year will be the first year voters in New York will be using the Ballot Marking Devices (BMDs). League members have an opportunity to lead the way in testing out the machines and the accompanying election procedures developed for their use in "real time." Learn to use the BMDs so you will be able to explain their operation to voters. Consider using one yourself in your polling place on General Election Day. No voter can be denied the right to use the machine. You do not have to provide any reason or documentation. And you will gain firsthand experience - and the election workers will also!

Ballots marked by the BMDs are supposed to be counted at the end of the day in the polling place according to Regulations approved by the NYS Board of Elections 9/2/08. They are posted on [www.elections.state.ny.us.gov](http://www.elections.state.ny.us.gov). Observing the election night closing would give us the opportunity to learn how this part of the process is working around the state. However, NYS Election Law only allows Poll Watchers (a certificate issued by a candidate or party) to remain in the polling place after you have voted unless you are there "officially." If you want to observe the poll closing, you would need to obtain that certificate, or if your League participates in election night poll reporting, you would be able to observe. However, you can ask the inspector to demo the machine and ask how the ballots are counted.

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## Member News Provenzano

Defending titlists Chris Ferraro and Jeanette Provenzano shared the spotlight with remarkable performances in club championship finals Sunday at Twaalfskill Golf Club.

Provenzano, 75, broke her own record as oldest club champion in county history with a 1-up triumph on the 19th hole against Lynn Formica.

In the women's 18-hole final match, Provenzano fell into a 2-down hole after 11 holes. She pulled even with Formica on No. 15 and led 1-up going to the 18th tee.

Details can be found in the full article by Don Treat, in the Kingston Freeman of 8/25/08.

Congratulations, Jeanette!

## Thanks to members for Distributing League Materials

Lee Cane, Distribution Chair, sends thanks and a gold star to each of the members who assisted with the distribution of the League tri-fold brochure:

Cindy Bell, Maureen Bowers Lee Cane, Cathy Germain, Susan Hirsch, Emily Johnson, Tom Kadgen, Nancy Kennedy, Cindy Lanzetta, Irene McInnis, Renee Sachs, and Esther Stickley.

## League Board

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

9

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  
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Kingston, NY, 12402

September 2008  
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