



Mid-Hudson Region *Commentator* for June 2007

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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 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		
JUNE		
	5	7:15 to 9:15 Board meeting at Esther Stickley's
	26	10:00 to 12:00 Education Study meeting at Emily Johnson's
JULY		
	10	7:15 to 9:15 Board meeting at Jacki Moriarty's

Non-Partisan Statement

The League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region is a nonpartisan organization which 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.

Board members will use discretion in any political activity and determine in advance from the local and/or state board that such activity will not compromise the nonpartisan political policy of the League of Women Voters.

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Prez Sez...

Greetings,

Relief, rejuvenated and rarin' to go.

This is how I can best describe my feelings as the month of May winds down. It was during this month that I had the privilege of experiencing two "firsts" with the league. I presided over my first annual meeting and I attended my first state convention.

Admittedly, I was concerned about chairing the annual meeting. During this past year, the board agreed to rewrite our bylaws and totally change our fund-raising efforts. Change is sometimes difficult and I was not certain how this new direction would be received. It was with relief that the new bylaws were passed and that our fundraising suggestions were accepted.

Shortly after the annual meeting, I traveled to White Plains with Jacki Moriarty and Betty Chin to attend the state convention. If I had doubts about where the LWVMHR was headed before this convention, those feelings were squelched by the time we were headed home. Yes, we outreach to our community. Yes, we have a visible presence in the community. Yes, we collaborate with other organizations and leagues. Yes, we have an active observer corps. Yes, we speak with one voice and articulate these views to the public and elected officials. Yes, we are on line. And YES, our charter brochure won first place in the state for publications.

So, it is with much relief, rejuvenation and excitement that I begin this new league year. If I had to pick a mantra for our league, it would be, "Keep the momentum going!" A big welcome to new board members Betty Chin, Tom Kadgen,

Susan Hirsch and Renee Sachs. Thank you for saying, "Yes."

--Jean

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting took place on May 15th as planned, and we had a good turnout for it. As a result, some attenders may not have received copies of the annual report, and of course, those who did not attend did not receive them. The annual report will be posted on the website, but if you want a copy, please call Lee Ridgway at 339-4927 or email her at lvlee@cs.com.

The treasurer reported that that the League ended the year in the black, despite earlier fears that there might be a deficit.

As Jean said, the bylaws were passed with minor changes and a copy of the final bylaws is included in this issue of the *Commentator*.

The budget was passed and the dues for families were raised from \$65 to \$75 dollars.

Members who did not attend the annual meeting and have not yet paid their dues are reminded that they should send their dues in now.

The local studies were passed and the election slate was also passed.

Thanks to all who contributed to the great meal and to the program.

Observer Corps Reports

Charter Transition Support Committee:

Lee Cane, Tom Kadgen, and Cindy Bell attended meetings. The committee will meet with Glenn Noonan, Legislative Minority Leader, to discuss his concerns

regarding the Charter transition. Since the Charter Transition Committee seems bogged down, we feel it might be useful to have several members of this committee attend meetings.

Charter Transition Committee:

This committee met April 24, 2007. The new deputy clerk Meg Delay was introduced and it was noted that she does research for a group in Albany and will work part-time as deputy starting in three weeks. She will assist in researching various issues pertaining to the Administrative Code. A budget was created to present to the Legislature for their approval including fees to General Code Publishers and a part-time paralegal. NYS has an unfunded \$25,000 grant to assist in transition and Albany officials will be contacted regarding the possibility of funding the grant. Other counties organization charts will be reviewed with a view to creating one for Ulster County. The procedure for writing a code will follow article by article of the current charter. Input that has been solicited from county department heads will be taken into account when writing the Code.

At the meeting with Glenn Noonan, he stated that he was part of the group that approved writing the Charter several years ago and that he supports the Charter concept but he has some concerns regarding its implementation. Transition timelines are of great concern as the Charter will go into effect in just 18 months. He made note of a number of specific areas that contained inconsistencies or concepts that he felt were not well thought out. Discussion included the crucial importance of competence for the

first Administrative Code and administration forming Ulster County's government for the foreseeable future and beyond and also voiced concerns that communications across party lines have faltered and hopes that this is not a permanent trend. Fiscal responsibility for the process must also be tracked for a successful transition with consideration of the tax burden on Ulster County's taxpayers.

Vote by Mail:

The committee met April 25 and May 2 and continues to work on a Power Point presentation to outline the procedures, processes, and benefits of a *Vote by Mail* system. Simplicity and clarity are the goals.

Moderating: School Board Elections

The League has had a large number of requests for moderating services and has managed to honor almost all, though it is noteworthy that the pool of moderators and timekeepers is now insufficient. There is some interest in holding a Moderator/Timekeeper Training in the near future. Please contact Cindy Bell if interested. CBell1000@aol.com or 336-57563.

Local Education Study Begins a New

Phase

Exploring the achievement gap between students of different demographic groups in our local schools will be the focus of a continuing discussion by the Education Study Group. Our starting point will be an examination of relevant data in the school report cards, which are produced by the NYS Education Department to inform the people of New York State about the recent performance of public schools.

A constructive conversation will follow in which participants will develop a deeper understanding of the challenges involved in confronting this issue, and the consequences of failing to address it. Author James Baldwin expressed this point succinctly when he wrote, "These are all our children. We will all profit by, or pay for, whatever they become."

New participants are welcome! We will be meeting at Emily Johnson's home at 10 am on the following dates:

Tuesday, May 29th

Tuesday, June 26th

Call Linda Roberts at 338-1058 for more information.

If you are interested in working on any committee or any project, please get in touch with the appropriate director or any director to find out who is appropriate.

Board of Directors

Here's the new slate of officers and directors for the year 2007-2008

President

Jean McGarry 336-6622

1st Vice-President

Jacki Moriarty 331-3418

2nd Vice-President

Tom Kadgen 657-8763

3rd Vice-President

Renee Sachs 331-0552

Secretary

Susan Hirsch 339-4927

Treasurer

Dare Thompson 236-3074

Commentator Editor

Lee Ridgway 339-4927

Finance Director

Margaret Sellers 339-3180

Membership

Betty Chin 331-2572

Public Relations

Esther Stickley 331-2919

Publications

Emilie Hauser 338-4820

Voters Service

Cindy Bell 336-5763

Web master

Jim McGarry (off-board)

Dutchess Unit Coordinator

Ellie Charwat 462-7061

I/we wish to become members of the LWV of the Mid-Hudson Region through May 31, 2007

Name: _____ Currently Member(s)?:

Address: _____

Telephone: (day) _____ (eve) _____

Email: _____

I/We enclose: Individual Membership (\$50) Household Membership (\$65)
Additional gift to the LWV Education Fund (*tax deductible*):
(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 read *Commentator* 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)

If you know someone who might like to know more about the League of Women Voters, please give us his or her name and address and send this slip to:

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

We will send out information as soon as possible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Your name: _____

Do you have any comments about the League or our programs? Shirley would like to hear them too.