**SAUGERTIES DEMOCRATIC COMMITTEE MEETING**

**23 MAY 2017**

**Roll Call:** Members: Connie Bailey, Luz Mooney, Rick Cousin, Mike Harkavy, Pamela Ross, Bill Barr, Lanny Walter, Marcus Arthur, Finley Schaef, Nancy Schaef, Mary Anne Wrolsen, Judy Lechner, Timothy Scott, Chris Allen, Kathy Gordon, Claudia Lawrance

Nonmembers: Mike MacIssac, Judge Anthony McGinty, Bob Gelback, Holley Weeks, Julian Schreiben, Kevin Bryant, Patrick Morgan, Nejla Liias, John Tyrrell

**Approval of 25 April 2017 Minutes:** Added Barry Kerr to nonmember attending. Moved by Bill Barr, seconded by Mike Harkavy. Approved as amended.

**Supreme Court Candidates:**

**Julian Schreiben**. He learned the importance of judges from Trump administrations. He said he would be proud to have chance to succeed Judge Peters. Voters need to decide first, will candidate make a good judge, and second can they win. He grew up on Sawkill Road near Woodstock. His mother runs ballet school and brings Nutcracker to UPAC. His father was an artist and WWII vet, but his mother was the bread-winner. Julian worked his way through college graduating from Yale and Yale Law School. He was a General Counsel at CIA. He went into private practice in 2008 on Wall St. Kingston and has had a variety of legal practice. He has practiced on Supreme Court on daily basis. He said he is annoyed by judges treating court as a club house with lawyers. Cases are serious and deserve speedy resolution. He said the Republicans are running a well-organized and well-funded campaign from Albany. We need a campaign that can compete. In previous campaign, he fought hard and raised a lot of money.

**Anthony McGinty.** Passed out paper summarizing his accomplishments. Talked to us as a Democrat beginning with presidential defeat, but is gratified by public enthusiasm of grass roots Democrats. Dems are being told to get involved in politics, to run for office. He said that is our “farm system” and he is the product of that system. He will go door to door and meet the voters. As a family court judge, he has learned how to really listen to the public as a judge and let them know that they are understood which helps the public accept the judgements. For the past 12 years, he has been regularly assigned Supreme Court cases. Is a full time acting Supreme Court justice since 2011. Has been supervising judge for all Family Courts in county. In terms of resolving cases, have the best statistics.

**Kevin Bryant.** Believes this year will be an interesting election year with increased Democratic involvement, but not comfortable counting on that. Republican challenger has been campaigning for 3 months. Believes he has the best chance to excite the public and pull away from conservative candidates. In charge of all legal cases coming to Ulster County government which familiarizes him with the type of cases going to Supreme Court. Also in charge of cases involving Housing Authority. Has been Asst. Public Defender. Has been a public servant since 1998. Public has had a chance to see how he works in an intimate way. In addition, has his own practice dealing with employment, negligence and civil rights cases. Has been served on Character and Fitness Committee, Independent Judicial Election Qualification Committee, Attorney Grievance Committee for 3 years. Motivated to treat people as he would like to be treated. Used justifiable pessimism from guidance counselor to motivate him and learned that everyone deserves justice. Feels he is uniquely qualified to excite the base, largely because of the circumstances he has had growing up and the breadth of that experience.

**Questions for Candidates:** Kathy Taylor asked Julian what is motivating him to run. He answered that he thought about running for Congress. Wants to serve this community. Knows that he got where he is through the help of others. Feels he has to give back to the community. Asked Judge McGinty what is the most important judgement he has made in Family Court. Answered that he has proceeded over 25,000 cases and can’t pick just one. The type of cases does stand out, ones that are very important. Feels he connects people with needed services and dealt with them fairly. To Kevin Bryant, which position most significantly affects his values? Said he doesn’t see himself changing. What’s important is honesty, sincerity and appreciation of the importance to people before him of the case he is hearing or trying. As a judge, he would keep this in mind.

Lanny Walter asked candidates to address their chances of winning and financial viability. Julian served as county chair from 2008-2012. Was very data driven and became aware of the cost to win election. Sullivan County: $200,000. Justin Corker used $80,000 of his own. Raised $1.4 million in 2012. Has networks. Feels this race will cost at least $250,000. Need money for radio, TV, newspaper ads. Going to meetings in other counties and has a network of volunteers.

Anthony McGinty said his budget is $150,000, half of which is his own money and he thinks that’s enough. Has won every race he’s been in.

Kevin Bryant has the backing of multiple law firms but said he’d prefer not using that. Has met with Chairs in Albany and Rensselaer County and is encouraged by response. Feels that being a candidate of color will be an advantage. Has had a meeting of Albany NAACP.

Chris Allen asked candidates to briefly describe most important issues facing criminal justice system. Julian Schrieben responded that the Supreme Court Judge will not deal with a lot of criminal cases. As a criminal lawyer, he feels the most important problem is a lack of resources which may result in defendants pleading to something they didn’t do as part of a negotiation. Sentencing is often too harsh. Anthony McGinty responded that the biggest issues are statewide. Raising the age criminal responsibility was a great thing to do.
As a result, many criminal cases will end up in family court system. Need to focus on rehabilitation and treatment rather than conviction. Kevin Bryant answered that the problem starts at the top with prisons being big business. Not enough being invested in socio-economic ramifications of our judicial system. Recidivism is high because of no resources spent on rehabilitation and job training. Need to focus on getting people convicted back into society and giving them something hopeful.

County Executive Committee will hear from these three on Thursday and will probably vote upon which candidate to support. Unspoken rule that Ulster County will get to replace the retiring judge this year. Judicial Action Conference will decide which candidate is appointed.

Chair opened up floor to discussion. Chris Allen moved to do a secret ballot vote. Mary Anne Wrolsen seconded it. Discussion: Mike Harkavy said he knows all three and they are all great candidates.

Mike MacIsaac: Running for County Legislator in District 1. Gary Bischoff has volunteered to be campaign manager.

Born in Saugerties. Family active in community. Served in USMC for four years. Met his wife to be, Deb, at Boston University. He has worked for IBM in Kingston and Poughkeepsie for 27 years. Now he is a self-employed main frame programmer. He has three children, two in college and a freshman in high school. He served three and half years on school board after which he dropped out of politics for a while. He still volunteers in schools. He holds that the first words in Declaration of Independence need to be strictly maintained and promises to judge each issue solely on its merit rather than politics. That said, he will not blind-side the party with his vote. Issues: Padded trees on ski slopes. Better broadband access for area. He said the banning of Memorializing Resolutions was wrong. He said he understands running for the Legislature is a large undertaking and is willing to allocate some of his funds. Mary Anne Wrolsen pointed out that Mary Wawro voted against the ACA and that it may help him in his campaign. Lanny Walter said he worked very hard in his school board campaignand moved that the SDC endorse Mike MacIssac; seconded by Mary Anne Wrolsen and unanimously approved.

**Chris Allen:** Incumbent for Second District. Ran against a difficult candidate to defeat, but formulated his own strategy and won big. He didn’t realize how hard it is to work with other legislators. He said it has been a challenge and looks forward to more. He has the respect of colleagues and Hein, perfect attendance record. Mary Anne Wrolsen moved to endorse him. Seconded by Mike Harkavy and passed.

**New Members:**

Bob Gelback: Lifelong Democrat and very active in politics. Jewish G for Peace. Recently had a Muslim Imam speak at a Jewish Temple. Happy to be part of community and meeting.

Barbara Boyce: Lives on Van Camp Road. Worked in school system. Active in Congressional campaign. Husband is Bruce Ackerman.

Nejla Liias: Had a house in Saugerties for four years and moved from Brooklyn. Works on women’s rights and health. Lobby in Ulster County. Excited about 2017 election.

Chair moved to accept three candidates; seconded by Finley Schaef and approved.

Chair mentioned that there are 9 Democrats running for 6 openings in county legislators.

Town Board Candidates: John Schoonmaker said he wants to run for town board. He was invited but could not attend. Fred Costello may run for chair. Paul Adreasson is waiting for Fred to decide whether he will run for chair.

**Caucus:** Chair recommended holding Caucus on July 25. Mike suggested June to avoid conflict with vacations and to help candidates get on road sooner. Chris Allen agreed that identifying candidates before July 4 would be an advantage. Chair was convinced to hold it in June so June 27 was selected.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Bill Barr moved to accept it, seconded by Mike Harkavy and approved.

**Fourth of July Parade:** Connie Bailey will chair. Pam Ross volunteered.

Kathy Taylor suggested having a booth at the Saugerties Auto Show.

**Undocumented Aliens:** The Chair and Margo McGilvrey attended a workshop sponsored by a subcommittee of Indivisible Saugerties. The Chair said he would support Saugerties being a sanctuary city and suggested in everything we do to try to reach out to the Hispanic community.

**Registration of Democrats in Saugerties Schools:** Vic Work, Board of Elections, mentioned that Saugerties is behind other towns in registering High School students to vote. Connie Bailey wondered if it was because a teacher forgot to send in the registration applications. Nancy Schaef said Vic Work mentioned that it had to do with the personal involvement of the principal. The Chair expressed his hope that someone will come forward to take responsibility for improving it.

**Transgender Nondiscrimination Law**: Republican leadership of UC Legislature tried to make the motion out of order but was unsuccessful. Chris Allen said it was inappropriate for the UCL Chair to lead this; that it should have come from the Republican leadership in the legislature. Also noted that the minority chair has not done a good enough job. It was thought there would be a public hearing but it was killed. Nejla Liias suggested we should knock on doors and make phone calls. She announced a meeting of Ulster County Leaders of Indivisible groups on June 11 and suggested it as a subject for that meeting.

**Resolution on NY Healthcare Act:** Nancy Schaef read it read the resolution. The Chair moved to approve it. Mike Harkavy seconded. Discussion: Chair amended last paragraph. Approved as amended.

**Motion to Adjourn:** Moved by Mike Harkavy; seconded by Rick Cousin.