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| **New Administration: A Weight Is Lifted** |
| **January 6, 2021: We Learned Democracy is Fragile**  What an understatement in our January 2021 newsletter that the joint session of Congress to certify the election of Joe Biden “is expected to be a contentious process in what is largely a ceremonial event…” How shocking to see the Confederate flag flying in the United States Capitol! And yet there it flew. A violent mob stormed the Capitol and our representatives were minutes away from being harmed—maybe even killed—had it not been for the heroic action of Capital Police officer [Eugene Goodman](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/goodman-capitol-police-video/2021/01/13/08ab3eb6-546b-11eb-a931-5b162d0d033d_story.html). While we don’t want to give the insurrectionists anymore air than they have received, we would be remiss to not acknowledge that our democracy was a hair’s breadth away from profound damage caused by a group that included white nationalists and neo-Nazis. Let’s never again take our form of government for granted but instead continue to work hard to elect people who will defend the Constitution against all enemies—foreign and domestic.  **January 20, 2021: Hit the Ground Running**  The Biden-Harris administration was sworn in and normalcy returned to the White House. As of this writing, President Joe Biden has signed [42 executive orders](https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/29/politics/biden-executive-orders-climate-health-care-coronavirus-immigration/index.html), many overturning the damage of the previous administration’s executive orders. While Biden’s focus is on ending COVID-19 and reviving the economy, his executive orders also spotlighted climate change, immigration, racial, gender and sexual orientation equity, health care, ending private prisons, and stopping the border wall. Meanwhile, Vice President Kamala Harris is a leading voice in passing the American Rescue Plan (ARP), which proposes $400 billion to stop the spread of the coronavirus and increase vaccine distribution, $1 trillion for direct financial support for families, and $440 billion emergency funds for cash-poor small businesses and communities. Not surprisingly, the Republicans are screaming about the deficit after enabling the former administration to increase the national debt by nearly $7.8 trillion through massive tax cuts for the rich. Stay tuned.  **2021 Local Elections: Candidate Petitioning Begins in March**  Candidates who want to be on the primary ballot must receive petition signatures. Because of COVID, signature requirements will be reduced. Pending the governor’s approval, 300 signatures are needed for countywide positions (Comptroller and County Clerk) and 150 or 1.5% of registered Democrats, whichever is fewer, are needed for county legislatures (in Saugerties, Districts 1, 2, 3). Petitioning will be done safely; no canvasser will arrive unexpectedly. Calling ahead is recommended.  Saugerties Democrats will also choose candidates for Town Supervisor, two Town Board seats, Highway Superintendent, Town Clerk and Tax Collector. By March, the endorsed Democratic candidates for county positions will be determined. The primary is on June 20, with early voting starting on June 12. Early voting sites have yet to be identified. |

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| **Important Information and Upcoming Dates** |
| **January SDC Meeting**  The Saugerties Democratic Committee met on Tuesday, January 26 via Zoom.\* Kevin R. Bryant and David Gandin, who are running for Supreme Court Justices in the 3rd Judicial District, spoke about the State Supreme Court and what they would bring to the court as justices. County Comptroller March Gallagher gave an update on her office and talked about the upcoming election in which she hopes to be elected to a full four-year term.  Additionally, the SDC filled three committee member slots—Robert Gelbach, Nicole Roskos, Nancy Schaef—and nine associate member positions—Elizabeth Buono, Michelle Grossbohlin, Kenneth Klienberg, Deidre Miller, Lauren Rüberg, Finley Schaef, Justine Tomkiell, Deena Turner, and Andrew Zink. Congratulations to all.  \*For a copy of last meeting’s full minutes, please email Bill Barr at [saugertiesdemocraticcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:saugertiesdemocraticcommittee@gmail.com) or check <saugertiesdemocrats.org>.  Also please email Bill Barr at [saugertiesdemocraticcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:saugertiesdemocraticcommittee@gmail.com) for the upcoming virtual meeting link. All are welcome. |
| **Local News** |
| **Black History Month** will kick off on Saturday, February 6, from 1:00 to 2:30 PM with an online performance by the [Center for Creative Education](https://cce4me.org/) with poetry, singing and more. Various educational events and performances will occur throughout the month. For more information, see the [Black History Month of Kingston](http://www.blackhistorymonthkingston.org/) calendar.  Celebrate **Chinese New Year** (Year of the Ox) with an online cooking class by Dr. Willa Zhen of the Culinary Institute of America on Saturday, February 14, from 3:00 to 4:00 PM. Learn to make fa gao, which literally means “prosperity cake” or “fortune cake” and is a favorite dish for the Lunar New Year. Register [here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fa-gao-kitchen-class-with-professor-willa-zhen-and-think-chinatown-tickets-137497371339?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch).  Join **Ulster County Sheriff Juan Figueroa’s** **Town Hall** on Sunday, February 7, at 5:00 PM. The sheriff will be answering questions about COVID, systemic racism, budgetary shortfalls, civil unrest and public safety. Register and submit questions [here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScThTnSYIQfn-bgw1dehXIVY-aIlc12QVN41OSb9HWuiVg_Cw/viewform).  **Neighbor-to-Neighbor** (N2N), a grassroots, community-building initiative where neighbors nurture relationships and help energize voters, is meeting virtually throughout the pandemic. To learn more about N2N, contact Kevin Freeman at [kfree2@gmail.com](mailto:kfree2@gmail.com)  The **Saugerties Police Reform and Reinvention Committee’s** last town hall is Wednesday, February 17, at 6:30 PM. Registration info will be emailed soon. |