Saugerties Democratic Committee Newsletter

June 2023

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| **Politics and Elections Because That’s What We Do** |
| *The stakes are too high for government to be a spectator sport.* ~[Barbara Jordan](https://www.womenofthehall.org/inductee/barbara-jordan/)**Get Off the Sidelines: Saugerties Primaries**Barbara Jordan spoke the above words regarding the importance of voting. The stakes are huge—civil rights, voting accessibility, taxes, affordable housing, living wages, sustainable development, the environment, social justice, and more. Yet so many let others choose the elected officials who make laws that affect their lives. In the last Saugerties primary election for Town Board in 2021, just 1,902 registered Democrats voted out of the 5,005 Democrats eligible to vote—a mere 38% of Saugerties Democrats had the final say about our candidates. Registered Saugerties Democrats can choose two candidates for our Democratic lines for Town Board in the June 27 primary. Incumbents, [Mike Ivino](https://townsaugerties.digitaltowpath.org:10234/content/Offices/View/18%3Afield%3Dofficials%3B/content/Officials/View/52) and [Leeanne Thornton](https://townsaugerties.digitaltowpath.org:10234/content/Offices/View/18%3Afield%3Dofficials%3B/content/Officials/View/19), are being challenged by Paul Andreassen, a former town board member who [resigned from the Board](https://www.dailyfreeman.com/2020/09/10/saugerties-town-board-member-paul-andreassen-quits/?share=nuaaauwya0n00rao02le) in September 2020 with a year remaining in his term. The Saugerties Democratic Committee has endorsed Mike and Leeanne for the two Town Board seats, citing their commitment to the environment, gun safety and other issues important to Democrats. Please don’t cede your voice to others. Vote during Early Voting from June 17 through June 25 at any of the County’s four [early voting sites](https://elections.ulstercountyny.gov/early-voting/), or vote at [your usual polling site](https://vic.ntsdata.com/home/ulster) on June 27, Primary Day. Registered Working Families Party voters have a primary for Town Justice. [Aimee Richter](https://aimee4justice.com), an experienced attorney who is endorsed by both the Working Families Party and the Saugerties Democratic Committee, is being challenged by Stan O’Dell. While this is not a Democratic primary, SDC urges Working Families Party voters to go to the polls. **Legislative Update**With toxic trains speeding through the countryside, Senator Michelle Hinchey was proactive and sponsored a bill that requires comprehensive safety inspections of trains before they set off on state railways. Her bill has passed the NY Senate and is heading to the NY Assembly, where it is expected to be approved. In the aftermath of the [East Palestine, Ohio train derailment](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/east-palestine-residents-live-in-limbo-months-after-fiery-train-derailment), which spewed chemicals and deadly fumes into the atmosphere, people have become increasingly uneasy about living near railroads. Our State Senator responded before a local disaster occurred rather than simply hope for the best.  In the NYS budget, Hinchey fought for volunteer fire departments and EMS providers with $25 million for a first-ever Volunteer Fire Services Capital Fund to upgrade equipment and firehouses and respond to the demands of fire safety. The budget also includes $1 million for EMS recruitment and retention and the establishment of mental health and wellness programs. Ulster County will directly benefit from the infusion of money for first responders.  **Molinaro Watch**Continuing to align himself with corporations and billionaires rather than average Americans, Marc Molinaro voted to repeal the student-loan forgiveness policy, where the Biden administration would have forgiven up to $20,000 for low-income recipients of Pell Grants and up to $10,000 for low- and middle-income individuals with other federal government student loans. Additionally, Molinaro voted to nullify an Environmental Protection Agency rule that placed stricter emission standards on buses and heavy-duty trucks. And despite his initial demand that Representative George Santos resign, Molinaro voted against allowing Congress to vote on expulsion of the [disgraced congressman](https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/pr/congressman-george-santos-charged-fraud-money-laundering-theft-public-funds-and-false). Molinaro also voted the wrong way on two separate gun bills—both allowing federal law enforcement officers to purchase for their civilian use handguns and AR 15-style assault weapons that have been retired from federal agencies’ arsenals. Mendacious Molinaro calls himself a moderate while voting like Marjorie Taylor Greene.  **Countering the Culture Wars**Without a platform that resonates with most Americans, Republicans instead continue to pass laws ending abortion rights, banning books, stripping school curriculums of accurate history and criminalizing drag shows.  To counter GOP efforts to pass laws about drag shows, the Ulster County Legislature will consider a bill that adds gender expression as a protected class under the county’s Human Rights Law, recognizing the First Amendment Right of freedom of speech and artistic expression. Aaron Levine (Legislative District 1), one of the co-sponsors of the bill, said that, if it is approved, the county would become a symbol for the nation. Currently the Human Rights Law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, ethnicity, creed, age, national origin, alienage or citizenship status, familial status, gender, gender identity, group identity, marital status, sexual orientation or disability. A public hearing will take place on Tuesday, June 13, at 7:00 PM on the 6th floor of the county building during the regular legislative session. A “Drag is Not a Crime” rally will be held outside the county building at 6:30 that same evening. |

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| **Monthly Meeting News** |
| **May Saugerties Democratic Committee Meeting\***The SDC met on Wednesday, May 24, at the Senior Center. Highlights of the meeting included a discussion on the upcoming primary and getting out the vote for our endorsed candidates, Mike Ivino and Leeanne Thornton, through canvassing, phonebanks and meet-and-greets. There was also a brief discussion about urging Working Families Party voters to get to the polls in support of the WFP-endorsed candidate, Aimee Richter. Additionally, Leeanne Thornton gave an update on town news and Aaron Levine spoke about legislative business. Planning for summer, including the July 4 parade, was also on the agenda. \*For a copy of the full minutes, please email saugertiesdemocraticcommittee@gmail.com or check [saugertiesdemocrats.org](https://saugertiesdemocrats.org/). Meeting schedule for 2023: June 20 (moving from Primary date of June 27), July 25, August 22, Sept 26, Oct 24, Nov 28. Meetings at Senior Center. All welcome. |
| **News & Newsworthy** |
| **Give Us Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Masses Yearning to Be Free**After the horrors of the Holocaust, the international community committed to never again turn their backs on people in need of protection. The United States was among the countries that had turned away European Jewish refugees, sending them back to their deaths. The 1948 [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights), with Eleanor Roosevelt as a chief architect, enshrined the right to asylum. The U.S. passed its own asylum law, the [Refugee Act of 1980](https://immigrationhistory.org/item/refugee-act-of-1980/), for people fleeing persecution based on “race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”  Today, the vast majority of people at our southern border are fleeing gang violence, political persecution, and state-sponsored torture and persecution. As Father Frank Alagna of Holy Cross Episcopal Church in Kingston stated, “You don’t get up one morning and say, I’m gonna leave the country I was born and raised in, where everything was familiar to me, and move somewhere else where I don’t know the language, where I don’t know anything, just for the hell of it.” Yet, elected officials—primarily Republicans, including Marc Molinaro—are trying to score political points by slamming the door on asylum-seekers. The number of border crossings was expected to soar after the end of [Title 42](https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/what-title-42-and-what-does-it-have-do-asylum?gclid=Cj0KCQjw4NujBhC5ARIsAF4Iv6d8lA-thKiWkjSe0DyXPY7mYYyLntCQeqG_4a3HJUhYqCWpGZLXh2saAregEALw_wcB) on May 11, yet there has actually been a 50% drop of migrant encounters at the border.  With the arrival of 65,000 asylum-seekers to New York City within the last four months, Mayor Eric Adams has looked to the rest of the state to help the refugees. Yet [30 NY counties have balked](https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2023/05/which-counties-are-closing-their-doors-asylum-seekers/386314/) and are fighting to keep the newcomers out. To put the numbers in perspective, Poland, with a population of 37.75 million, has graciously accepted 12 million Ukrainian refugees, while the U.S., with a population of 331.9 million, had 2.76 million migrant border crossings in 2022.  There are no easy answers. The National Immigrant Justice Center recommends five ways to address the border in compliance with the Refugee Act of 1980: 1) develop and support robust communication between federal, state, local governments and civil society; 2) fully fund and support civil society including social and legal providers; 3) create noncustodial, humanitarian reception centers at the border; 4) overhaul the federal immigration budget, moving funds away from detention and enforcement toward asylum processing and humanitarian needs; 5) abide by its obligation to ensure asylum access to those arriving at the US borders and ports.  On a positive note, a bipartisan collaboration between Representatives Maria Elvira Salazar (R-Fla) and Veronica Escobar (D-Tex) is pushing for a comprehensive immigration bill, [The Dignity Act](https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/4022295-an-immigration-reform-bill-focused-on-dignity-has-bipartisan-support/). During this time of extreme polarization can what seems at first glance to be a humane solution to the immigration crisis be possible? **Debt Ceiling**On Wednesday night, the House passed a budget bill that suspends the debt ceiling through January 2025, meaning there is no debt limit until then. The bill passed with 149 Republicans and 165 Democrats voting yes. Speaker Kevin McCarthy needed Democrats to pass the bill he negotiated. According to Politico, “The latest rebellion [by Republicans] was spurred by a Congressional Budget Office report released Tuesday night that estimates spending on the food aid program that Republicans attempted to cut during the debt ceiling negotiations would actually increase under the agreement reached by Speaker Kevin McCarthy and President Joe Biden.” In the next few days, the exact details of the bill will become known. |

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| **June Community Happenings**  |
| **June 2:** Sunset Concert; Bruce T. Carroll & The Rough & Rumble; [Tina Chorvas Park](https://villagesaugerties.digitaltowpath.org:10064/content/Parks/View/2); 6:30 PM**June 3:** Saugerties Lighthouse monthly cleanup; 168 Lighthouse Dr., 9:00-11:00 AM**June 3:** Saugerties Library [Street Fair](https://villagesaugerties.digitaltowpath.org:10064/content/Calendars/View/1/2023/6%3B/content/CalendarEntries/View/6821); Green Space on Division Ave.; 10:00 AM-3:00 PM**June 3, 10,17, 24:** [Saugerties Farmers Market](https://saugertiesfarmersmarket.com/); 115 Main St.; 10:00 AM-2:00 PM**June 4:** Boy Scout Troop 8 Car & Bike Show; Sawkill Fire House; 896 Sawkill Rd., 10:00 AM **June 4:** Pride Family Picnic; Opus 40, 356 George Sickle Rd.; [sliding scale](https://opus40.org/event/pride-family-picnic/); 12:00-4:00 PM**June 5:** Village Board meeting; 43 Partition St.; pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org; 5:30 PM**June 7:** Saugerties Public Library Board of Trustees meeting; 91 Washington Ave.; all welcome; 6:00-7:00 PM**June 10:** Saugerties Lions Club Annual Golf Tournament (SHS scholarship); Rip Van Winkle Golf Course, Palenville; Information and sign-up: Bob Mayone; 845-514-7822**June 13:** Saugerties Board of Education meeting; Saugerties Sr. HS School Media Ctr; 6:30 PM**June 13:** American Legion BBQ; 30 John St.; Reserve by June 9; Reserve or donate for veteran or senior? Email, phone or text to kpendergast@hvc.rr.com, 845-246-9783, 845-706-9083**June 14:** Town Board Meeting (in-person & [Webex](https://townsaugerties.digitaltowpath.org:10234/content/Generic/View/294)); Saugerties Senior Center; contact lstanley@saugerties.ny.gov; pre-board at 6:30 PM; board meeting at 7:00 PM**June 14:** Village Planning Board Meeting; Fire Dept., 43 Partition St., 6:30 PM**June 15:** [Climate Smart Task Force](http://www.climatesmartsaugerties.org/) meeting @ 5:00 PM & Conservation Advisory Committee @ 6:00 PM; Town Hall Conference Room; contact: mhodonnell316@gmail.com**June 17-25:** Early voting for Saugerties Democratic and Working Families Party primaries. Note the times and sites [here.](https://elections.ulstercountyny.gov/early-voting/) Our closest early voting site—Woodstock Community Center**June 18:** Breeding Birds & Butterflies; [Esopus Bend Nature Preserve](https://www.esopuscreekconservancy.org/); preregistration required; meeting location at time of registration; bring binoculars; schorvas@gmail.com; 8:00 AM**June 18:** VFW Father’s Day Breakfast; 30 John St.; contact kpendergast@hvc.rr.com; 8:00 AM-11:30 AM**June 19:** Juneteenth Holiday; Town Offices closed**June 19:** Village Board meeting; 43 Partition St.; pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org; 5:30 PM**June 20:** Town Planning Board Meeting; Saugerties Senior Ctr; [agenda posted](https://townsaugerties.digitaltowpath.org:10234/content/Generic/View/144) prior to meeting; for info, contact: bbertorelli@saugertiesny.gov; 7:30 PM**June 22:** ShoutOut Saugerties; Speculative Fiction; CMM Distillery, 31 Market St.; 6:00-8:00 PM**June 23:** Community Action Saugerties Farm Stand; free food distribution; Saugerties Senior Center parking lot, 207 Market St.; 10:00 AM-1:00 PM**June 26:** Historic Preservation Commission Meeting; Senior Center; contact: Jeremy Russell at jeremy@thingsrelevant.com; 7:00 PM**June 27:** Village Zoning Board Meeting; 43 Partition St.; 7:00 PM**June 27:** Democratic Primary Day Saugerties Town Board—vote for two candidates—(Mike Ivino & Leeanne Thornton are the SDC-endorsed candidates); Working Families Party Town Justice—(Aimee Richter is the WFP-endorsed and SDC-endorsed candidate); find your polling place [here](https://vic.ntsdata.com/home/ulster).**June 28:** Saugerties Chamber of Commerce Mixer; The Partition, 124 Partition; 6:30-8:00 PM**June 28:** Village Historic Review Board meeting; Village Hall, 43 Partition St.; 7:00 PM**June 29:** Hudson Valley Mobile Canteen for Vets/Military; 30 John St.; 11:00 AM-1:00 PM**R.Y.A.N. House** [Support Group Meeting Schedule](https://www.raisingawarenessrun.com/r-y-a-n-house-schedule/) at 19 Barclay Street, Saugerties (ongoing)*Check Saugerties Democratic Committee* [*website*](https://saugertiesdemocrats.org/) *for calendar updates.* |