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| **Politics and Elections Because That’s What We Do** |
| **Happy New Year**Here’s to a peaceful and just 2024. Whatever drives you—climate change, income inequality, social justice, reproductive rights, gun safety, health care, immigration, human rights, peace—let’s recommit to building a better world. **It’s Time To Get Back to Saving Our Republic**Hard to believe that we would be quoting Liz Cheney, but her clarion warning that Trump must never be near the White House again should be everyone’s mantra. When asked about the need to rebuild the Republican Party, Cheney said, "In my view that has to wait until after the 2024 election because our focus has got to be on defeating Donald Trump." And that rings true for us Democrats—whether liberal, progressive, socialist, moderate, or conservative—we must come together and work to elect the Democratic presidential candidate and bring home a Democratic majority in the Senate and Congress. After that, we can get back to creating the Democratic Party more to our liking.**Even-Year Voting Comes to Local Elections**Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation to have elections for county executive, county legislature, and town board moved to even-numbered years. The transition to this change will begin with the 2025, where terms for those offices will be shortened. Democrats and good-government groups tout this change as a way to save taxpayer money and boost turnout. Local elections are generally decided by fewer than a third of registered voters. Elections for mayor, district attorney, city council, judge, local school board and fire districts were omitted from the legislation because of the state constitution. These elections may eventually be moved to even years if passed as a constitutional amendment. **It's the Economy**Historian [Heather Cox Richardson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heather_Cox_Richardson) recently noted that the economic numbers under President Joe Biden are solid—gross domestic product grew by an annual rate of 4.9% in the third quarter of 2023 (whereas under Trump it was just 2.5% before it plummeted during the pandemic), inflation is coming down and unemployment is historically low. Biden is returning to the “demand side” of economics (how the U.S. government operated from 1933 to 1981), which believes that government should ensure that middle- and working-class people have money to afford the goods and services that they need. Since Ronald Reagan, Republicans have been married to “supply side” or “trickle-down” economics, the theory that cutting corporate and billionaires’ taxes and reducing government regulation leads to job growth. The debate rages on—demand vs supply side economics. Cox Richardson notes that when President Bill Clinton left office, the U.S. had a $10 billion surplus and the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projected that revenue would keep up with the costs of domestic programs despite the aging population and rising health care costs. But the massive George W. Bush tax cuts upended that prediction, with the surplus turning to a $1.4 trillion deficit (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, *Economic Downturn and Legacy of Bush Policies Continue to Drive Large Deficits*, Feb, 23, 2013). Donald Trump’s tax cuts further exacerbated the deficit, costing $1.7 trillion by the end of 2023 and benefitting the wealthy and corporations. Read Cox Richardson’s [explanation](https://open.substack.com/pub/heathercoxrichardson/p/december-22-2023?r=4uv5r&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=email) of demand and supply economics and tax policy of both parties and you be the judge.**Look Who Are the Job Creators** |

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| **Monthly Meeting News** |
| **December Saugerties Democratic Committee Meeting\***The SDC had a special meeting and holiday celebration on Tuesday, December 19, at the home of our chair, Nejla Liias. We began with committee business, including hearing from Dan Torres, the deputy chief of staff for Congressman Pat Ryan, and Ashley Torres, Democratic Election Commissioner of the Ulster County Board of Elections. Dan spoke about the upcoming petition process for delegates and President Biden. Ashley explained the vital role of election inspectors and encouraged people to take on this civic duty. Later, committee members and guests participated in a guided brainstorming session. Committee members responded to two questions: 1) What are you most proud of during the last two years related to the Saugerties Democratic Committee and your work as a member? 2) What is the biggest challenge we face as the SDC to be a solid committee?Everyone was asked the following: 1) What are the top three values we should exhibit as a Democratic Committee? 2) What is the biggest challenge we face as Democrats for 2024? 3) What would you want to gain by contributing to the SDC in 2024? 4) What talents or actions do you commit to taking in 2024? \*For a copy of the full minutes, please email saugertiesdemocraticcommittee@gmail.com or check [saugertiesdemocrats.org](https://saugertiesdemocrats.org/). Meeting schedule for 2024: Jan 23, Feb 27, Mar 26, Apr 23, May 28, Jun 25, Jul 23, Aug 27, Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 26. Meetings at Senior Center. All welcome. |
| **News & Newsworthy** |
| **Saugerties Has a New Police Chief**Robert Nuzzo was appointed as the new Saugerties Police chief at the December 13 Town Board meeting. Nuzzo, who will officially begin on January 1 at a salary of $135,000, is a retired New York State Trooper. He served in that capacity from May 1987 through December 2019, where he attained the rank of lieutenant colonel as the Assistant Deputy Superintendent for State Police Planning and Research Section. Additionally, Nuzzo spent about two years providing security for Health Alliance in Kingston. He is currently the acting chair of the Ulster County Board of Ethics. We look forward to hearing from the new chief in the coming months. Perhaps he will set up a town hall.**Child Care Incentives for Businesses**Governor Kathy Hochul recently unveiled a plan to offer tax credits and capital funding for businesses to address the statewide child care gap. According to the advocacy group Empire State Campaign for Child Care, more than 28,000 families in New York do not have adequate child care. Upstate New York, in particular, is considered a “child care desert.” The plan includes a $50 million tax credit for employers to build child care centers or hire a third-party provider of services. Additionally, New York will make $50 million available for child care centers that are shovel ready. Hochul further stated that she hopes to boost salaries for child care workers who generally make minimum wage. **Biden Pardons Marijuana Users**On December 22, President Joe Biden issued federal pardons to every U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident who has used marijuana, including those who have never been charged. The pardon does not include people jailed for selling or driving under the influence of pot. Criminal records for marijuana use and possession are barriers to obtaining housing, employment and educational opportunities. This pardon will remove these obstacles to a good life. Additionally, Biden commuted the sentence of 11 people who Biden said "are serving disproportionately long sentences for non-violent drug offenses" and would have received lesser sentences if charged today. “Too many lives have been upended because of our failed approach to marijuana,” said Biden. “It’s time that we right these wrongs.”**Molinaro Watch**Marc Molinaro voted to authorize an impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden despite the fact that Republicans have not produced one shred of evidence of misconduct by Biden. The 118th Congress is one of the most unproductive in modern history. With a government shutdown looming, Molinaro joined all his Republican colleagues in wasting time and money on a political stunt.  |

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| **January Community Happenings**  |
| **Jan 1:** New Year’s Day; village, town, county, state, federal offices closed**Jan 1:** Last day of Kwanza**Jan 1:** New Years Day Spoken Word Extravaganza; 120 performers including poets, writers, musicians and dancers; Newberry Artisan Market, 236 Main St.; 1:00—8:00 PM **Jan 3, 17:** 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**Jan 6, 7:** [Rock Academy](https://rockacademy.com/woodstock/); Elvis Costello v Joe Jackson; The Local, 16 John St.; 7:00 PM**Jan 7** (in New Paltz): Manny Nneji public swearing-in; SUNY New Paltz Lecture Center, Alabama 74, New Paltz; tickets [here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/swearing-in-ceremony-of-ulster-county-district-attorney-emmanuel-c-nneji-tickets-782516276247?aff=oddtdtcreator); 11:00 PM—1:00 PM**Jan 8:** Town Zoning Board of Appeals meeting; Saugerties Senior Center; agenda [here](https://townsaugerties.digitaltowpath.org:10234/content/Generic/View/49%3Afield%3Ddocuments%3B/content/Documents/File/2903.pdf); contact bbertorelli@saugertiesny.gov; 7:00 PM**Jan 8:** [*The Elephant 6 Recording Company*](https://ticketing.useast.veezi.com/purchase/7448?siteToken=na3v1gjrn7yss5nkcfsbzazwqg) with special guests; Orpheum Theater, 198 Main St.; 7:00 PM**Jan 8, 22:** Housing Smart Communities Task Force; on Zoom during winter; general info: housingsmartsaugerties@gmail.com; for Zoom link, email dianebc22@gmail.com;7:00 PM**Jan 9:** Saugerties Central School Board; Riccardi Elementary School; meet the board at 6:00 PM; meeting at 6:30 PM**Jan 10:** Village Planning Board meeting; Hooks Meeting Rm, Firehouse, 43 Partition St; info at pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org; 5:30 PM**Jan 10, 17, 24, 31:** Saugerties Sings, a new non-denominational community chorus; Trinity Episcopal Church, 32 Church St. (& Rte. 9W); fiddlestitchtoday@gmail.com; 7:00 PM**Jan 11:** Saugerties Library Board of Trustees meeting; open to the public; 91 Washington Ave.; 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM**Jan 13:** Friends of Historic Saugerties meeting; Saugerties Library; 11:00 AM—1:00 PM**Jan 13** (in Rosendale): Ulster Corps’ 15th Annual [Dr. Martin Luther King Day Celebration of Service](https://www.ulstercorps.org/events/mlk-day-2024/); register by Jan 10 for this free event at register@ulstercorps.org or call/text 845-481-0331; Rosendale Recreation Center, 1055 NY-32, Rosendale; 12:00—2:00 PM**Jan 15:** Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Birthday; schools, government offices closed**Jan 15:** *Have You Got It Yet? The Story of Syn Barrett and Pink Floyd*; Orpheum; 7:00 PM**Jan 16:** 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**Jan 18:** [Climate Smart Task Force](http://www.climatesmartsaugerties.org/) meeting @ 5:00 PM & Conservation Advisory Committee @ 6:00 PM; via Zoom; contact: mhodonnell316@gmail.com**Jan 21:** Saugerties Pro Musica; Frission (with piano) Quintet; Saugerties United Methodist Church, 67 Washington Ave.; 3:00 PM **Jan 21:** [Lonnie Holley and Friends](https://dice.fm/event/2yayo-lonnie-holley-friends-21st-jan-the-local-saugerties-tickets?pid=90f36522&_branch_match_id=1247907788453744159&_branch_referrer=H4sIAAAAAAAAA8soKSkottLXz8nMy9ZLyUxO1UvL1Y8ySDRNSkkyMDMwTbUvyEyxtTRIMzYzNTICAIdAjrwuAAAA); The Local, 16 John St.; 6:00 PM**Jan 22:** Historic Preservation Commission meeting; Saugerties Senior Center; contact jeremy@thingsrelevant.com; 7:00 PM**Jan 23:** Saugerties Democratic Committee meeting; Saugerties Senior Center; 7:00 PM**Jan 23, 24, 25, 26**: Regents exams; Saugerties Senior High School**Jan 25:** Comprehensive Planning Committee; Town Hall, 4 High St.; 6:30 PM**Jan 27:** [AARP Smart Driver Course](https://local.aarp.org/driver-safety/aarp-smart-driver-saugerties-ny-c25642.html); pay by check--$25 for AARP members & $30 for non-members; Saugerties Library; 9:30 AM—3:30 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.* |