Saugerties Democratic Committee Newsletter

 February 2024

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| **Politics and Elections Because That’s What We Do** |
| **The Four Freedoms**  In his 1941 State of the Union address, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt expressed the urgency of entering the fight against fascism and Hitler. In what was called his Four Freedoms speech, he outlined what was at stake--freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.    Once again Americans are in the fight for their lives and for American democracy. This is not hyperbole. Trump has already shown that he is ready to annihilate our freedoms. A tiny sampling of his attacks on our freedoms thus far:    In May, 2020, Trump threatened to “sic the most vicious dogs” on protestors outside the White House gates. This was one day after he tweeted the 1967 phrase of the notoriously racist and violent Miami police commissioner Walter Headley, “when the looting starts, the shooting starts.” In 2020, Trump had people in his administration who could stop him from his most vicious and unconstitutional behavior. That will not be the case if there is a second Trump term.    In January 2017, in one of his first executive orders, Trump banned Muslims from entering the United States. While mistakenly seen as a man of faith who protects religious freedom, Trump promotes and privileges just one religious group—white evangelical Christians. His rhetoric has ramped up anti-Semitic and Islamophobic hate crimes. And in January 2019, the Trump administration granted a waiver to [Miracle Hill](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/miracle-hill-south-carolina-foster-care_n_5c49d498e4b0287e5b88b91d), allowing the foster care agency to receive government funds despite its “Christian-only” placement policy. The discriminatory policy applies to parents who are Jewish, Muslim, Catholic, Unitarian, atheist, agnostic or “some other non-Protestant denomination.”    Trump’s policies were directed to increase wealth among the uber rich ($1.9 trillion tax bill that favored corporations and the wealthy) and decrease social safety nets (attempting to end the Affordable Care Act and cutting food stamps and housing benefits for low-income people, seniors, disabled, veterans and families with children) for everyone else.    Trump and Republicans should make us all fear for Mother Earth with their promises to drill, baby, drill; fear for our children with their addiction to assault weapons and the NRA; fear for our reproductive rights as they are longing to expand abortion restrictions with a national ban; fear for our American democracy as Trump brags that he’ll be a dictator (only on day one?) and will seek retribution against his enemies.    This election day we have a binary choice—a vote either for decency and democracy or for divisiveness and demagoguery. Let’s not sit this one out or throw away our vote because we are not totally in sync with the Democratic candidates. Our freedoms hang in the balance.    **Chaos and Cruelty**  Ending the MAGA mania that is holding Congress and our country hostage depends on a Democratic Congress, Senate and President. For the brief moment that the Democrats had these three branches, the government was working for the American people. As a result of Democratic policies, the United States has had the strongest economic recovery after the pandemic of any industrial country. In addition to higher wages and lower unemployment, the 2021 expanded Child Tax Credit slashed child poverty in half. Prescription drug prices were lowered for seniors and people with disabilities. Manufacturing is flourishing and money has been made available to finally repair and improve our dilapidated infrastructure. Then in 2022, the Republicans took over the House. And unfortunately, Republicans gave the MAGA squad the keys to the car, resulting in the most dysfunctional and least productive Congress in decades (*See chart below of bills enacted from 1989 101st to the 2023 118th Congress*).    The governing principles of the MAGA wing of the Republican Party are chaos and cruelty. After 15 ballots Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) was elected speaker of the House and lasted exactly 269 days—the shortest speakership in 140 years. He became the first speaker ever to be removed from his speakership by Congress. And although Mike Johnson (R-La.) was elected speaker on the first vote, he was his party’s fourth choice. Following their leader Trump and his enablers in Congress, the chaos and cruelty have seeped into states led by MAGA Republicans.    **Immigration**  More asylum seekers and immigrants are attempting to cross the border. There are many reasons for this surge—the economic and political collapse of Venezuela, repression in Nicaragua, war, famine and poverty combined with the U.S.’s booming economy. Regardless of the reason, immigration has become a political football.    The Biden administration is supporting a bipartisan immigration bill; the MAGA cabal has made it clear that they will not support any legislation that will address the southern border because their leader wants to use immigration as a scare tactic in the 2024 election. When news came that negotiators were close to an immigration deal, MAGA Republicans rejected it without knowing what’s in it because Trump “doesn’t want Biden to have a victory.”    In Texas, authorities allowed a woman and her two children to drown in the Rio Grande River. As [reported in the *Houston Chronicle*](http://tinyurl.com/558ut2n2), a Texas trooper wrote to his supervisor that officers were told “to push small children and nursing babies back into the Rio Grande, and have been told not to give water to asylum seekers even in extreme heat.” And despite the Supreme Court siding with the Biden administration’s position that Texas must remove its razor wire and floating barriers from the river, [Governor Gregg Abbott is refusing to comply](https://wapo.st/3u4FQx4). Twenty-five MAGA Republican governors issued a statement in support of Abbot’s defying the Supreme Court.    While Trump loyalists do everything possible to create an election issue, vulnerable women and children continue to die. |

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| **Monthly Meeting News** |
| **January Saugerties Democratic Committee Meeting\***  The Saugerties Democratic Committee meeting was moved to Zoom on Tuesday, January 23, because of the National Weather Service’s winter weather advisory. The meeting included a short presentation by Ulster County Democratic Committee (UCDC) chair, Kelleigh McKenzie about what’s on the horizon in the 2024 county elections. SDC also heard from candidates who are seeking UCDC endorsements—Keri Savona running for reelection for Ulster County Family Court judge, incumbent Sarahana Shrestha running for reelection for NYS Assembly District 103, and challenger Gabriella Madden running for NYS Assembly District 103.    Since the current two-year term of the Saugerties Democratic Committee members will be coming to a close in the summer, there was a brief discussion about the slate that SDC will put forward for the next term. Finalizing the slate was put off until a special SDC meeting on Tuesday, January 30. At the January 30 meeting, the committee voted on a slate that will be presented to the UCDC.    \*For a copy of the full minutes, please email [saugertiesdemocraticcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:saugertiesdemocraticcommittee@gmail.com) or check [saugertiesdemocrats.org](https://saugertiesdemocrats.org/). Meeting schedule for 2024: 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** |
| **In Memoriam**  On January 10, the Saugerties community lost a shining star when 21-year-old Starllie Swonyoung was struck and killed in a hit-and-run accident on Route 9W. The Saugerties Democratic Committee mourns with her family and friends. Beginning in high school, Starllie was a fearless campaigner for our Democratic candidates, knocking on doors and rallying young people to get to the polls. Multitalented and extremely principled, Starllie was wise beyond her years and taught us to work hard for our ideals. Our deepest condolences to all who loved her.    **Senator Hinchey Rallies for Schoolchildren**  New York State Senator Michelle Hinchey continues to look out for her constituents—actually, for all New Yorkers. Joined on Monday, January 29, by the Healthy Schools Meals for All NY Kids Coalition, Hinchey called for the state to fully fund a healthy school meals program that would provide free breakfast and lunch for every student in the state. Recognizing the stigma of applying for a needs-based program and the importance of proper nutrition for learning, Hinchey is pushing to expand upon her 2023 bill that serves 347,000 students in 1,200 schools to reach an additional 321,000 students in 650 more schools. Hinchey is building on previous legislative victories to continue to move the state forward.    **Special Election for Congressional District NY-3**  When George Santos (R-NY) was booted from Congress on December 1, 2023, Democrats got a chance to gain back a seat. The special election to fill this vacancy will take place on Tuesday, February 13. Absentee balloting is already underway. Democrat [Tom Suozzi](https://suozziforcongress2024.com/) is running against Mazi Melesa Pilip, a registered Democrat running on the Republican line as she has in her two previous elections. Pilip is against reproductive rights and has said that she will support Trump if he is the Republican presidential nominee. While this district covers Nassau County and parts of Queens, winning the seat is crucial. If you want to help get out the vote for Tom Suozzi, sign up for virtual phone banks [here](https://www.mobilize.us/suozziforcongress/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email). |

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| **February Community Happenings** |
| **Feb 1, 3, 4, 10, 24:** The Local; 16 John St.; various music, arts and culture performances; see [calendar](https://www.thelocalsaugerties.com/calendar)  **Feb 5, 20:** Village Board meeting; Hooks Meeting Rm, Firehouse, 43 Partition  St; info at [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 5:30 PM—7:30 PM  **Feb 5:** Town Zoning Board of Appeals meeting; Saugerties Senior Center, 207 Market St.; agenda [here](https://townsaugerties.digitaltowpath.net/agenda/zba-agenda-page); contact [bbertorelli@saugertiesny.gov](mailto:bbertorelli@saugertiesny.gov); 7:00 PM  **Feb 5, 19:** Platica Biweekly; Spanish/English Chat (alternating between English and Spanish so everyone gets to practice listening and speaking in their new language); Zicatela’s Bar & Restaurant, 395 Rt 212; 6:00 PM—8:00 PM  **Feb 7, 14, 21, 28:** Saugerties Sings, a non-denominational community chorus; Trinity Episcopal Church, 32 Church St. (& Rte. 9W); [fiddlestitchtoday@gmail.com](mailto:fiddlestitchtoday@gmail.com); 7:00 PM  **Feb 8:** Saugerties Library Board of Trustees meeting; open to the public; 91 Washington Ave.; 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM  **Feb 10:** “The Joy of the Digital Image: A Potpourri of Maps;” Friends of Historic Saugerties meeting; Saugerties Library; 11:00 AM--1:00 PM  **Feb 11:** Saugerties Pro Musica; [Josefina Urraca Piano Trio;](https://www.josefinaurraca.com/) Saugerties United Methodist Church, 67 Washington Ave.; 3:00 PM  **Feb 12, 16:** Housing Smart Communities Task Force; on Zoom during winter; general info: [housingsmartsaugerties@gmail.com](mailto:housingsmartsaugerties@gmail.com); for Zoom link, email [dianebc22@gmail.com](mailto:dianebc@gmail.com);7:00 PM  **Feb 13:** Saugerties Central School Board; Senior High School Media Center; 6:30 PM  **Feb 14:** Town Board Meeting (in-person & [Webex](https://townsaugerties.digitaltowpath.org:10234/content/Generic/View/294)); Saugerties Senior Center; contact [lstanley@saugerties.ny.gov](mailto:lstanley@saugerties.ny.gov); pre-board at 6:30 PM; board meeting at 7:00 PM  **Feb 14:** Village Planning Board meeting; Hooks Meeting Rm, Firehouse, 43 Partition  St; info at [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 6:30 PM—7:30 PM  **Feb 14:** Bob Marley: One Love with pre-screening live musical tribute; Orpheum Theater, 198 Main Street; info [here](https://www.upstatefilms.org/bob-marley-one-love-w-pre-screening-live-musical-tribute); 6:30 PM  **Feb 15:** [Climate Smart Task Force](http://www.climatesmartsaugerties.org/) meeting @ 5:00 PM & Conservation Advisory Committee @ 6:00 PM; via Zoom; contact: [mhodonnell316@gmail.com](mailto:mhodonnell316@gmail.com)  **Feb 16, 19:** Saugerties Schools closed for Presidents Day weekend  **Feb 17, 24:** [Mighty Blighty Family Film Series](https://www.upstatefilms.org/mighty-blighty-family-film-series?fbclid=IwAR0pvoNt022pkctNAn6WdLbNVpA9CxmurVmU8PLXVv86jqzIGlaLVNl98Bg); ages 8+ (or your discretion) free screening (Feb 17) [tickets](https://ticketing.useast.veezi.com/purchase/7401?siteToken=na3v1gjrn7yss5nkcfsbzazwqg) and (Feb 24) [tickets](https://ticketing.useast.veezi.com/purchase/7642?siteToken=na3v1gjrn7yss5nkcfsbzazwqg); Orpheum Theater; 198 Main St.; 1:00 PM  **Feb 19:** Presidents Day; Town, Village, Library, County, State, Federal offices closed  **Feb 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](mailto:bbertorelli@saugertiesny.gov); 7:30 PM—8:30 PM  **Feb 22:** Comprehensive Planning Committee; Town Hall, 4 High St.; 6:30 PM  **Feb 23:** Saugerties Arts Commission meeting; Town Hall, Building Dept Conference Room, 4 High St.; info at [arts@saugertiesarts.org](mailto:arts@saugertiesarts.org); 9:30 AM-10:30 AM  **Feb 23, 24, 25:** Snow Moon Festival; activities, food, games to celebrate February’s full moon; parade on Sunday, lineup at 4:00 PM and kickoff at 6:00 PM; for more info contact Sue Sachar at [suesachar@gmail.com](mailto:suesachar@gmail.com)  **Feb 23, 24:** Our Town: The Photos of Dick Smith, 1923-1987; 32 Partition Street; Opening Feb 23 from 5:00 PM—7:00 PM; on display Feb 24 from 12:00 PM—4:00 PM  **Feb 24:** Saugerties Snow Moon Festival 5K Run/Walk’ benefitting the Saugerties Food Pantry; $30 entry fee; sign up [here](https://runsignup.com/Race/Register/?raceId=140724&eventId=811148&fbclid=IwAR1TOb4foI3NvQ0U-bZdGozFGh_BCAxTdSbsn60xleW3DlXhiH-Y51cZQiE); 10:00 AM—12:00 PM  **Feb 24:** Books Alive-Celebrating of Black Writing; ShoutOut Saugerties (event in Kingston); Kingston YMCA, 507 Broadway; 1:00 PM—2:00 PM  **Feb 26:** Historic Preservation Commission meeting;  Saugerties Senior Center; contact [jeremy@thingsrelevant.com](mailto:jeremy@thingsrelevant.com); 7:00 PM-8:00 PM  **Feb 27:** Village Zoning Board; Village Hall, 43 Partition St.; info at [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 7:00 PM-8:00 PM  **Feb 27:** Saugerties Democratic Committee monthly meeting; Saugerties Senior Center; 7:00 PM  **Feb 28:** Saugerties Chamber of Commerce Mixer; TBD; 6:30 PM—7:30PM  **Feb 28:** Village Historic Review Board; Village Hall; 7:00 PM--8:00 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.* |