 Saugerties Democratic Committee Newsletter

August 2023

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| **Politics and Elections Because That’s What We Do** |
| *When people show you who they are, believe them.* ~Maya Angelou    **They’ve Told Us**  Donald Trump and his allies have announced that if he wins the White House in 2024, he plans to consolidate power, undermine the political independence of all agencies including the Justice Department, and put far greater authority into the hands of any Republican that wins the presidency. In essence, Trump will change the course of history by increasing the president’s authority over every part of the federal government that currently operates independently from the White House. He has said he will refuse to spend money appropriated by Congress for programs he doesn’t like. This would allow future presidents to [rule like a dictator rather than govern like an elected official](https://wapo.st/3Kc3FI9). He is telling us what he will do. Believe him.    The first call to action is to go to the polls this fall and elect *every* Democrat on the ballot, beginning with local positions. Not only will this help build our voting muscles, it will also protect our town and county from officials who will support the dictatorial steps of their national Republican Party. Until the Republican Party steps away from the precipice of dictatorship, voters must send a strong message that we support democracy and our freedoms and we will not be fooled by their claims of being “nonpartisan” or “moderate.” While the national GOP seems far away from Saugerties, it is evident that the local Republican Party supports the [extremism unleashed by Trump that is barreling out of control](https://www.salon.com/2023/07/27/donald-unleashed-a-against-the-us-government--and-now-he-cant-control-it/). Go to the polls and elect Democrats up and down the ballot—the future of democracy is at stake.    **It’s Always the Cover-Up**  Faced with a litany of indictments and a dead-to-rights case of illegal possession of classified documents, Trump in his infinite wisdom did the only thing to make his situation worse—he [conspired to try to destroy evidence](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/07/27/feds-add-new-charges-against-trump-in-classified-documents-case-00108667). Think [Watergate burglary](https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/educational-resources/watergate/watergate-cover) and the [Enron collapse](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2002/jan/15/enron.usnews) to understand how coverups can be worse than the crime. Always the grifter, Trump has leapt into full-blown criminal and treasonous behavior. As his support plummets overall after his June indictment, Trump remains a [favorite of the Republicans](https://www.npr.org/2023/06/16/1182521901/after-indictment-majority-want-trump-to-drop-out-but-hes-getting-stronger-with-g)—with more than 8 out of 10 Republicans backing his candidacy. Will that change as indictments continue to mount? Don’t bet the farm on it.    **Molinaro Watch**  Despite Republican candidates claiming to be moderate or independent, they are aligned with a party that is upending our freedoms and spreading division and hate. It’s impossible to be moderate or nonpartisan and run as a Republican in the age of Trump and MAGA. Don’t be fooled by Marc Molinaro’s words, watch his actions.  Building on his misogynistic and right-wing record, Molinaro voted to defund the reproductive care policy of the Department of Defense (DOD). The DOD policy would provide three weeks’ administrative leave and travel expenses to servicewomen in anti-choice states who wish to go to a state that offers abortion services. Additionally, Molinaro voted against gender care for military personnel, voted to prohibit military schools from teaching U.S. racial history, and voted to end funding to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the military.    Molinaro also voted to stop the DOD from funding initiatives that address climate change or recognize climate change as a threat to national security. This atrocious attack on climate change mitigation took place as the U.S. broke more than 2,000 temperature records this past month and July is set to be the hottest month on Earth since scientists have kept record.    Molinaro ran as a moderate. But now we know him. When people show you who they are, believe them.    **Eyes on Ohio**  Republicans are up to their tricks again. This time in Ohio. Trying to prevent voters from passing an amendment that would codify abortion rights in the state constitution, Republican lawmakers scheduled a special election on August 8 to make it harder to amend the state’s constitution. If passed, instead of requiring a simple majority to amend the constitution, it would require 60% approval, overturning a 100+ year law. Additionally, Republicans abruptly reversed a law they just enacted in January that eliminated special elections in August, a month that historically has record low turnout. They are counting on Ohioans to be asleep on the watch, which would allow an anti-democratic law to pass. All of Ohio’s ex-governors—Republican and Democrat—and five bipartisan attorney generals joined a coalition of faith leaders, labor, and voting and civil rights groups in opposing this measure. This election will reverberate throughout the country if it passes, energizing more Republican malfeasance to upend the will of the people. |

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| **Monthly Meeting News** |
| **July Saugerties Democratic Committee Meeting\***  The SDC met on Tuesday, July 25, at the Senior Center. [Sarahana Shrestha](https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Sarahana-Shrestha) gave an update on legislative victories, setbacks and what to expect in the next legislative season. Following her presentation, she took questions from the audience. Additionally, Evan Holland-Shepler, campaign manager for [Manny Nneji](https://mannyforda.com/), rallied the group to sign up for Saugerties canvasses and phonebanks to help Manny and the rest of our slate across the finish line. Also, the coordinated campaign leads outlined the voter outreach plan going forward.    \*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 2023: Aug. **29** (note change to last Tuesday of the month), Sept. 26, Oct. 24, Nov. 28. Meetings at Senior Center. All welcome. |
| **News & Newsworthy** |
| **Armed Security Guards**  At 4:00 PM on May 26—the Friday of Memorial Day weekend—texts arrived on the phones of parents, students, teachers and school staff from the Saugerties Central School District. The text included a survey about whether the district should employ armed guards.    According to Superintendent Dan Erceg, the district received “331 unique responses to the survey” of which 81.6% supported an armed guard in the schools. The headlines blared: “Saugerties overwhelmingly supports armed guards in elementary and secondary schools.”    Some parents and community members are saying, “Not so fast.” They are questioning whether a text sent out on Memorial Day weekend that garnered only 331 responses adequately represents the school population as well as the community of taxpayers. Some are asking if this is a done deal. Others are asking for the research regarding the effectiveness of armed guards. Many are just saying, “Can I weigh in too?” We don’t have answers nor are we taking a position, other than we would have liked to have seen fuller community participation. If you didn’t get the survey and want to fill it out, as of this writing, here is the [link](https://forms.gle/AUzzMWK69fdW4yqk7). Full participation is always best and we hope the superintendent agrees.    **Saugerties Police Under the Microscope**  The NYS Attorney General Law Enforcement Misconduct Investigative Office issued a blistering report about allegations of harassment and sexual assault by Saugerties Police Officer Dion Johnson and has recommended his termination. Soon after the report became public, the Town Board implemented a temporary hiring and promotion freeze at its July 12 meeting. Five days later, the Board unanimously voted to place Saugerties Police Chief Joseph Sinagra on administrative leave pending an investigation. The NYS Association of Chiefs of Police, of which Sinagra was just elected president on July 17, is demanding to learn what’s behind the suspension. Like the rest of the town, we await the final determination of an ongoing and sensitive investigation. |

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| **August Community Happenings** |
| **Aug 1:** Saugerties Board of Education special meeting; Sr. HS School Media Ctr; 6:30 PM  **Aug 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6:** Ulster County Fair; UC Fairgrounds; 249 Libertyville Rd., New Paltz; Check hours [here](https://ulstercountyfair.com/)  **Aug 2,9, 16, 23, 30:** [Arm of the Sea](https://www.armofthesea.org/the-tidewater-center) Waterfront Wednesdays; 6:00-8:30 PM  **Aug 4:** Sunset Concert; Pine Cats & Right Hand Son; Tina Chorvas Park; 6:30 PM  **Aug 5:** Saugerties Lighthouse monthly cleanup; 168 Lighthouse Dr., 9:00-11:00 AM  **Aug 5:** First Annual Disability Awareness Parade; Note: Kingston—starting at People’s Place heading down Broadway and ending at Guido’s Little Italy Restaurant; 10:00 AM  **Aug 5, 12 19, 26:** [Saugerties Farmers Market](https://saugertiesfarmersmarket.com/); 115 Main St.; 10:00 AM-2:00 PM  **Aug 7:** Village Board meeting; 43 Partition St.; [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 5:30 PM  **Aug 7:** Town Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) meeting; Saugerties Senior Center; 7:00 PM  **Aug 8:** [Community Canvass](https://www.mobilize.us/mannyforda/event/573157/) for Manny Nneji; Saugerties Senior Center; two sessions: 4:00 PM & 5:30 PM  **Aug 9:** Village Planning Board Meeting; Fire Dept., 43 Partition St., 6:30 PM  **Aug 10:** Saugerties Library Board of Trustees meeting; 91 Washington Ave; 6:00-7:00 PM  **Aug 12:** Linemen Institute Summer Graduation Competition; “fun & exciting,” speed climb, obstacle course and more; 1700 Sawkill Rd; 8:00-11:OO AM  **Aug 12**: Caribbean Festival; Cantine Field; 11:00 AM-7:00 PM; parade @ 2:00 PM  **Aug 12, 13:** [Saugerties Artist Tour](https://saugertiesarttour.org/) Open Studio; for map contact: [bbravo@hvc.rr.com](mailto:bbravo@hvc.rr.com)  **Aug 14, 28:** Housing Smart Task Force meeting; Senior Center; info: [saughstf23@gmail.com](mailto:saughstf23@gmail.com); 5:30-7:00 PM  **Aug 15:** [Community Phonebank](https://www.mobilize.us/mannyforda/event/573160/) for Manny; Cantine’s Island, Ann St;  two sessions: 4:00 PM & 5:30 PM  **Aug 15:** Saugerties Board of Education meeting; Sr. HS School Media Ctr; 6:30 PM  **Aug 15:** 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  **Aug 16:** 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  **Aug 17:** [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](mailto:mhodonnell316@gmail.com)  **Aug 19-20:** Hope Rocks 24 Hour [Softball Marathon](https://hoperocksevents.ticketspice.com/hope-rocks-24-hour-softball-marathon?fbclid=IwAR2DnZOH31QX6Mpjs3qvcdMHmFVH-Phq1qe6E4ErD8dtW7mrjynqdsLbFSo); Cantine Sports Complex  **Aug 20:** Saugerties Community Band Concert; Kiersted House; 3:00 PM  **Aug 21:** Village Board meeting; 43 Partition St.; [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 5:30 PM  **Aug 22:** Village Zoning Board Meeting; 43 Partition St.; 7:00 PM  **Aug 23:** Village Historic Review Board meeting; Village Hall, 43 Partition St.; 7:00 PM  **Aug 25:** Community Action Saugerties Farm Stand; free food distribution; Saugerties Senior Center parking lot, 207 Market St.; 10:00 AM-1:00 PM  **Aug 26:** [Saugerties Vintage Baseball](http://www.saugertiesvbbc.org/); Lorenz Field, Cantine Memorial Complex; 11:00 AM  **Aug 27:** Meet and Greet with Manny Nneji; info: [bobgelbach@gmail.com](mailto:bobgelbach@gmail.com); 4:00-6:00 PM  **Aug 30:** [Community Canvass](https://www.mobilize.us/mannyforda/event/573162/) for Manny; Senior Center; two sessions: 4:00 PM & 5:30 PM  **Aug 30:** Saugerties Chamber of Commerce Mixer; Find location [here](https://discoversaugerties.com/events-calendar/); 6:30-8:00 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.* |