Saugerties Democratic Committee Newsletter

December 2023

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| **Politics and Elections Because That’s What We Do** |
| **Election Results**  The unofficial results are in. Official results with the breakdown of votes by towns and election districts are expected to be released on Monday, December 4.    On the county level, Jen Metzger, running unopposed, won a full term as County Executive with 33,105 votes. Manny Nneji squeaked out a victory, becoming the District Attorney-elect with 24,213 votes to his opponent’s 23,843 votes.    Legislative District 1 incumbent Aaron Levine and Legislative District 2 incumbent Joe Maloney, both running unopposed, garnered 1,656 votes and 1,346 votes, respectively. Running in deep red Legislative District 3, Keith Gurgui came up short with 867 votes to his opponent’s 1,183 votes. Republican Jason Kovacs will replace Dean Fabiano, who didn’t seek reelection. Keith has much to be proud of as he received 42% of the total vote, up from the 2021 Democratic candidate’s 32%. We hope to see Keith on the ballot in future elections. Voters from both parties expressed their appreciation of Keith’s insightful and measured approach. The 32-year-old has a bright future.    Two proposals to change the County Charter—1) establishing a new process to fill an early vacancy for County Executive and 2) a measure to improve financial transparency—passed.    In the Saugerties town races, Fred Costello, running unopposed for Town Supervisor, earned 3,962 votes with Leeanne Thornton and Mike Ivino reelected to the town board with 3,236 votes and 3028 votes, respectively. Aimee Richter came up a bit short in a three-way race for Town Justice. Stan O’Dell, having been appointed by the town board in 2022, will serve a full four-year term as Town Justice. Filling out the town races is Diane Friedmann who ran unopposed for Receiver of Taxes on the Republican and Conservative lines. The Saugerties-specific proposition to make receiver of taxes an appointed rather than elected position failed, with 3,440 no votes to 1600 yes votes.    The State Supreme Court race saw Democrats Sherri Brooks-Morton, Daniel Lynch and Richard Rivera win with 28,025 votes, 27,667 votes and 26,415 votes, respectively. The two propositions to amend the State Constitution—1) allowing city school districts to be treated the same as all other school districts around debt limitations and 2) counties, cities, towns, and villages to exempt sewer facility construction from their debt limit--passed.    We congratulate all our Democratic candidates for running positive and issue-based campaigns. For those who came up short, we hope they will remain in the political process.    For the rest of us, take a breather. Enjoy the holidays. And get ready for 2024 when our democracy will be on the ballot. |

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| **Monthly Meeting News** |
| **November Saugerties Democratic Committee Meeting\***  The SDC met on Tuesday, November 28, at the Senior Center. The meeting was primarily devoted to discussing and evaluating the 2023 election season. Most Saugerties Democrats received a door knock, phone call or postcard from a committee member or other volunteer. Additionally, various people gave updates on important school district, village, town, county and state issues.    \*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: Dec 19 (changed date). Meetings at Senior Center. All welcome. |
| **News & Newsworthy** |
| **With Democrats Things Get Better**  Right before the election, Sheriff Juan Figueroa [rallied voters](https://youtube.com/shorts/UPuB2nOekWY?si=g7SD2N6hOWq2ZFww) with a reminder of what Democrats have accomplished for the American people—Medicare, Social Security, Medicaid, civil rights legislation, protection of voting rights, Roe v Wade and more.    Sheriff Figueroa has accomplishments of his own to crow about. Under his leadership, the Ulster County Sheriff’s Office has obtained more than $3 million in grants to implement such things as implicit bias training, de-escalation training, community-policing initiatives and the nationally acclaimed ORACLE program. This rapid response team has a licensed social worker and peer advocates who work with law enforcement to offer drug users appropriate rehabilitation services rather than put them in jail. ORACLE also provides drug prevention education, NARCAN® training to prevent fatal overdoses, drug takeback drop-offs and community education.    The Sheriff’s Office participates with the NY State Attorney General’s Office on gun buybacks to prevent crime. Additionally, the Sheriff’s Office has successfully taken down drug and gun trafficking rings, demonstrating that Democrats are not soft on crime but rather smart on crime.    In November, Sheriff Figueroa announced a new $400,000 grant to create a program similar to ORACLE that deals with mental health emergencies. Support and Advocacy Through Frontline Engagement (SAFE) will consist of a social worker, mental health peer advocates and a sheriff’s deputy trained in critical incident response. Finding that 28% of Ulster County’s overdoses were intentional and mental health crises were fueling calls to the police, the Sheriff’s Office saw a need for trained personnel to connect people with mental health issues to treatment. Like ORACLE, which has been duplicated throughout the country, SAFE will be a model for compassionate and effective policing.  On December 1, Sheriff Figueroa unveils a new rehabilitation program in the County Jail, where incarcerated individuals will learn trades and skills to help keep them on the straight and narrow after they have completed their sentences. Inmate Growth Naturally & Intentionally Through Education (I.G.N.I.T.E.) is expected to help reduce recidivism, a win-win situation for the formerly incarcerated, the taxpayer and the community. Stay tuned for details.    **Cheat Sheet for the Holidays**  We all have experienced it. We’re sitting at the holiday dinner table and our Trump-loving relative wants to convert us. If you find yourself trapped with a MAGA Republican who will not respect your request to “let’s have a peaceful holiday and not talk politics,” here is a small sample of what President Biden has accomplished:  1.      In Biden’s first year in office, employers added 6.6 million jobs, an all-time record for a president’s initial 12-month period.  2.      Unemployment is currently 3.9%, down from 6.3% when he took office, and unemployment among Blacks and Latinos is at an all-time low.  3.      The economy grew 5.2% last quarter while the inflation rate continued to fall, down to 3%, with hourly wage rates rising more than the inflation rate.  4.      Drug prices are going down, with Medicare negotiating prices on an initial list of 10 drugs. (Note: Biden’s plan to negotiate drug prices for all Americans was rejected by the Republican Congress.)  5.      Lowered health insurance costs for 13 million people by an average of $800 per year; now more people than ever have health insurance.  6.      Biden signed into law a $1.2 trillion infrastructure package, delivering needed funds to rebuild our bridges, roads, rail tracks, airports, water and energy systems, and bring the Internet to broadband deserts.  7.      Shrunk the deficit by $1.7 trillion—the largest deficit reduction in U.S. history.  8.      Returned the U.S. to the international stage by rejoining the Paris Agreement on climate change and the World Health Organization, and by leading an international coalition to assist Ukraine after the Russian invasion.  9.      Erased $127 million in student debt for 3.5 million borrowers.  10.  Investment in U.S. manufacturing is exploding, with electronics, computers and clean energy leading the way. Our economy is the envy of the world.    The cheat sheet will not include the strides in expanding LGBTQ, women, civil and voting rights because your crazy Uncle Louie doesn’t realize that human rights is not a pie in which one person gets fewer rights if another gets equal rights. But for more left-leaning folks unhappy with our president, Biden signed an executive order to protect access to reproductive rights, reversed Trump’s policy by ensuring that Title IX does not discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity, signed into law federal protection for same-sex and interracial marriage, appointed the first Black woman and public defender to the Supreme Court, and signed an executive order enabling federal workers to collectively bargain. This is just a glimpse of what Biden has done in office. Perhaps agism and cynicism have blinded us to how much better off we are today than when Joe Biden took office.    **Breaking News: Ulster County DA’s Office Is Vindicated in the Synder Case**  On November 30, the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, Third Judicial Department unanimously ruled that Ulster County Court Judge Bryan Rounds incorrectly dismissed the case against Raymond Synder, who was standing trial for the murder of Romero K. Underwood. The higher court found that Rounds cannot enforce his order of dismissal and that a new trial could take place on three counts of the original indictment. Stay tuned as this case becomes clearer.    **Molinaro Watch**  Once again, Marc Molinaro (R-19) demonstrated that he is not a moderate Republican. On November 15, Molinaro voted to defund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s scientific research on the cause of gun violence. Molinaro also is campaigning with House Speaker and election denier Mike Johnson, including co-hosting a fundraiser with representatives Anthon Esposito (R-4), Mike Lawler (R-17) and Brandon Williams (R-22). Will Molinaro back off his lockstep votes with MAGA Republicans in 2024 to try to try to pull the wool over our eyes once again? We won’t be fooled if he does.    **End of the Year**  The Saugerties Democratic Committee wishes everyone a safe, peaceful and happy holiday season. See you next year. |

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| **December Community Happenings** |
| **Dec 1, 2, 8, 9, 17, 21:** The Local (various events); calendar [here](https://www.thelocalsaugerties.com/calendar)  **Dec 2, 3:** Christmas Fair and Bake Sale; Saugerties Reformed Church, 173 Main St.; Sat-9:00 AM to 3:00 PM; Sun-Noon to 3:00 PM  **Dec 3:** VFW Christmas Breakfast Buffet; 30 John St.; eat-in, take-out; ages 12 & up--$12; 7-11--$10; 6 & under—free; 8:00-11:30 AM  **Dec 3:** [This Business of Fighting: A Human Face on World War II](https://www.shoutoutsaugerties.org/all-events/2023/12/3/this-business-of-fighting-a-human-face-on-world-war-ii-the-wwii-letters-of-lt-anton-pritchard-performed-by-his-son-arnold-pritchard); ShoutOut Saugerties & the American Legion; Saugerties American Legion Hall, 30 Partition St.; 1:00-2:00 PM  **Dec 3:** Saugerties Holiday Village; family fun throughout the village; 12:00-5:00 PM  **Dec 3:** Parade of Lights; Saugerties Fire Dept.; line up at Post Ave (near Washington Ave.) at 4:30; step-off at 5:00 PM  **Dec 4:** Town Zoning Board of Appeals meeting; Saugerties Senior Center; agenda [here](https://townsaugerties.digitaltowpath.org:10234/content/Generic/View/49:field=documents;/content/Documents/File/2903.pdf); contact [bbertorelli@saugertiesny.gov](mailto:bbertorelli@saugertiesny.gov); 7:00 PM  **Dec 4; 18:** Village Board meeting; 43 Partition  St; info at [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 5:30 PM  **Dec 5:** Saugerties Central School Board; Cahill Elementary School; meet the board at 6:00 PM; meeting at 6:30 PM  **Dec 5:** The Future of the Lower Esopus Creek; (note: Ulster County Restorative Justice Center, 773 Broadway, Kingston or on Zoom); register [here](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lower-esopus-creek-stream-management-plan-winter-2023-workshop-tickets-753470018107?aff=oddtdtcreator); 6:00-8:00 PM  **Dec 5:** Home: Honoring the Darkness; a ritual sound gathering with Ben Brown & Elana Bell; The Forest Haven; $45, tickets [here](https://www.meetup.com/theforesthaven/events/296902423/); 7:00 PM  **Dec 6, 13, 20:** Saugerties Sings, a new non-denominational community chorus; Trinity Episcopal Church, 32 Church St. (& Rte. 9W); [fiddlestitchtoday@gmail.com](mailto:fiddlestitchtoday@gmail.com); 7:00 PM  **Dec 6:** Forward!: Vernon Benjamin at Standing Rock book release; Upstate Films, ShoutOut & Inquiring Minds Bookstore celebrate the publication of *Crossing Divides: My Journey to Standing Rock* by the late Vernon Benjamin; Orpheum Theater; tickets [here](https://ticketing.useast.veezi.com/purchase/7220?siteToken=na3v1gjrn7yss5nkcfsbzazwqg); 7:00 PM  **Dec 7-15:** Hannukah  **Dec 9:** A Brief History of the “Up and Down” (Ulster and Delaware); [Friends of Historic Saugerties](https://fhssaugerties.wixsite.com/home); Saugerties Public Library Community Room; 11:00 AM-1:00 PM  **Dec 9:** A Chorus of Angels Art Opening; Jane Street Art Center; 11 Jane St.; 4:00-7:00 PM  **Dec 10:** Holiday Concert; Reformed Church of Saugerties, 173 Main St.; 2:30 PM--Brass Prelude, 3:00PM--Saugerties Community Band  **Dec 11:** Housing Smart Task Force meeting; Saugerties Senior Center; info at [saughstf23@gmail.com](mailto:saughstf23@gmail.com); 5:30-7:00 PM  **Dec 13:** 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  **Dec 13:** Village Planning Board Meeting; Fire Dept., 43 Partition St., 6:30 PM  **Dec 14:** Saugerties Library Board of Trustees meeting; open to the public; 91 Washington Ave.; 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM  **Dec 16:** Miracle on Market Street Craft Fair; Saugerties Senior Center; vendors, food, photos with Santa; 10:00 AM-5:00 PM  **Dec 16:** Saugerties Ugly Sweater Party; put on your favorite ugly sweater, make reservations at one of your favorite Saugerties restaurants; 5:00 PM-10:00 PM  **Dec 18:** Historic Preservation Commission meeting; Saugerties Senior Center; contact [jeremy@thingsrelevant.com](mailto:jeremy@thingsrelevant.com); 7:00 PM  **Dec 19:** Saugerties Democratic Committee meeting and holiday celebration  **Dec 19:** 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  **Dec 20:** Saugerties Chamber of Commerce Mixer; Catskill Mountain Moonshine, 31 Market St.; RSVP at [grenache@aol.com](mailto:grenache@aol.com); 6:30 PM  **Dec 21:** [Climate Smart Task Force](http://www.climatesmartsaugerties.org/) meeting @ 5:00 PM & Conservation Advisory Committee @ 6:00 PM; Zoom only; for link, contact: [mhodonnell316@gmail.com](mailto:mhodonnell316@gmail.com)  **Dec 25:** Christmas Day; Town, Village, County, State, Federal offices closed  **Dec 26-Jan 1:** Kwanzaa  **Dec 26:** Village Zoning Board meeting; Village Hall, 43 Partition St.; 7:00 PM  **Dec 27:** Village Historic Review Board meeting; Village Hall, 43 Partition St.; 7:00 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.* |