Saugerties Democratic Committee Newsletter

March 2024

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| **Politics and Elections Because That’s What We Do** |
| **Ulster County Dems Endorse**  The Ulster County Democratic Committee met on Wednesday, February 21 via Zoom, for its endorsement convention. Public offices that will be on the ballot in November include president, vice president, US senator, US congressional representative, NYS senator, NYS assemblymember, and Ulster County Family Court justice. Our endorsed candidates are Joe Biden/Kamala Harris for US President/Vice President, Kirsten Gillibrand for US Senator, Pat Ryan for US House of Representatives member, Michelle Hinchey for NYS Senator, Sarahana Shrestha for NYS Assemblymember, and Keri Savona for Ulster County Family Court Judge.    In addition, Ashley Torres was nominated to continue to serve as our Democratic Board of Elections Commissioner. The UCDC also endorsed the New York State Equal Rights Amendment.    Among the candidates, there was only one contested race—for NYS Assembly District 103. Gabriella (“Gabi”) Madden challenged incumbent Shrestha for the UCDC endorsement. In a weighted vote (the number of votes per committee member is determined by Democratic votes in each election district in the 2022 governor’s race), Shrestha received 19,624 votes to Madden’s 8,185 votes. Madden has vowed to stay in the race through the June primary.    Soon Saugerties Democratic Committee members and Democratic candidates will be knocking on doors of registered Democrats to collect signatures on their petitions for ballot access.    **Oh Those Pesky Congressional Maps**  After Democrats successfully sued in the NYS Court of Appeals to throw out the 2022 NY Congressional district map, voters looked again to the Independent Redistricting Commission to draft a new map for 2024. Those efforts produced a map that seemingly protected incumbents.    Democratic lawmakers rejected the commission’s map and instead took to the drawing board to draft a new version. The latest map, which was released to the public this past Tuesday, was approved by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Kathy Hochul on Wednesday. Saugerties will move to CD18, where incumbent Congressman Pat Ryan is running for reelection. The new map splits Ulster County between CDs 18 and 19 (*see chart*).    **NY18:**     ALL OF ESOPUS TOWN     ALL OF KINGSTON CITY     ALL OF KINGSTON TOWN     ALL OF LLOYD TOWN     ALL OF MARLBOROUGH TOWN     ALL OF NEW PALTZ TOWN     ALL OF PLATTEKILL TOWN     ALL OF **SAUGERTIES TOWN**     ALL OF ULSTER TOWN     ALL OF WOODSTOCK TOWN     PART Of GARDINER TOWN    **CD 19:**     ALL OF DENNING TOWN     ALL OF HARDENBURGH TOWN     ALL OF HURLEY TOWN     ALL OF MARBLETOWN TOWN     ALL OF OLIVE TOWN     ALL OF ROCHESTER TOWN     ALL OF ROSENDALE TOWN     ALL OF SHANDAKEN TOWN     ALL OF SHAWANGUNK TOWN     ALL OF WAWARSING TOWN     PART OF GARDINER TOWN    Redistricting experts claim that the proposed map is close to being a “model of neutrality.” Whether the map leans blue, leans red or is neutral, Democrats need to show up in droves this November and become defenders of democracy.    **Build Your Voter Muscle**  [Early voting](https://elections.ulstercountyny.gov/early-voting/) for the presidential primary will take place from Saturday, March 23, through Saturday, March 30. The Saugerties Senior Center is one of four early voting sites in Ulster County. Voters can go to any early voting site in the county to cast their ballot, but must go to their designated polling site on the actual primary date—April 2. While it seems like a forgone conclusion who the Democratic presidential nominee will be, please be a voter in every primary and election. This will be the first of several opportunities to vote between now and November with a school board election May 21, the federal and state primary June 25, and, of course, the main event November 5. As you build your voter muscle, remember saving democracy is a marathon, not a sprint. |

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| **Monthly Meeting News** |
| **February Saugerties Democratic Committee Meeting\***  The Saugerties Democratic Committee met in person on Tuesday, February 27. The upcoming petitioning, which will begin the first week of March, was discussed--including the responsibility of committee members to carry petitions for endorsed candidates.    This year petitioners will collect signatures for candidates including Pat Ryan for Congress, Michelle Hinchey for NYS Senate, Sarahana Shrestha for NYS Assembly, and Keri Savona for Ulster County Family Court. Additionally, SDC candidates to represent Dems in the town’s 15 election districts (EDs) for the 2024-2026 term (which begins in July) will be petitioning for ballot access. Each ED is allocated two seats on the committee.    The SDC slate for the upcoming term includes Gilda Riccardi and Molly Mackaman (ED 1), Kathy Gordon and Andrew Zink (ED 2), Teresa Giordano and Bill Barr (ED 3), Liz Buono and Sakinah Irizarry (ED 4), Christine Dinsmore and Marcus “Skip” Arthur (ED 5), Katie Cokinos and Nejla Liias (ED 6), Barbara Boyce and Louise Bloomfield (ED 7), Ken Germano and Bob Gelbach (ED 8), Steve Charney and Nancy Schaef (ED 9), Anna Markowitz and Brigid Walsh (ED 10), Nina Schmidbaur and Ken Kleinberg (ED 11), Kevin Freeman and Deena Turner (ED 12), Rick Cousin and Margo McGilvrey (ED 13), Aimee Richter and Andrew Cowan (ED 14), and Aaron Levine and Lanny Walter (ED 15). Voters can only sign one petition for each office. If valid petitions are filed by more than two candidates in any ED, the outcome will be decided in the primary election.    \*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: Mar 25 (note this is a change to Monday), Apr 23, May 28, Jun 25, Jul 23, Aug 27, Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 26. Meetings at Senior Center. All welcome. |
| **News & Newsworthy** |
| **You Earned It, You Keep It Act**  Representative Angie Craig (D-MN) has introduced the “You Earned It, You Keep It Act” (H.R. 7804), which would end federal taxes on Social Security benefits starting in 2025. The bill also proposes to keep Social Security solvent for generations to come by having the payroll tax, which funds Social Security and is presently capped when income reaches $168,600, kick in again once earnings top $250,000. A Social Security Administration analysis of the bill finds that this change would allow the agency to continue making full payments through 2054. The question is, will the Republican-controlled Congress allow this bill to come up for a vote? Stay tuned but don’t hold your breath.    **The Long History of Russian Disinformation**  The KGB, the main Russian intelligence agency, has a special department with more than 15,000 people working to plant false stories to destabilize western democracies, particularly the U.S. democracy. This dates back to the former Soviet Union.    There was a time when both U.S. political parties fought back against this disinformation. In fact, not so long ago (2022), a GOP-led Senate panel released its report on the extensive contacts between the 2016 Trump campaign and Russian intelligence. But those days of putting country over party are gone.    Instead, Republicans in Congress embrace Trump’s alliance with Putin and use Russian disinformation to tarnish Democrats in an attempt to win elections. Case in point, despite the arrest of [Alexander Smirnov for working with Russian intelligence agencies](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/judge-sets-april-trial-date-ex-fbi-informant-charged-false-intel-biden-rcna140864) to provide false information about President Biden, the Republican impeachment inquiry continues.    As disinformation becomes more prevalent, astute voters need to put on their critical-thinking caps as they listen to politicians and their “news outlet” enablers. An educated citizen is the best defense against lies and chaos. We could all do well by following a journalistic axiom: Check everything out. If your mother says she loves you, check it out. |

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|        **March Community Happenings** |
|        **March 1:** Books as Art Opening; 25 local artists and Saugerties High School students have turned outdated encyclopedias into art; Saugerties Library, 91 Washington Ave;, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.     **March 2, 8, 12, 15, 16, 19, 30:** The Local; 16 John St.; various music, arts and culture performances; see [calendar](https://www.thelocalsaugerties.com/calendar)         **March 4, 18:** Village Board meeting; Hooks Meeting Rm, Firehouse, 43 Partition  St; info at [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.         **March 5:** Arts in Saugerties; Saugerties Arts Commission invites artists and creator to meet and share their work; 9W Diner, 3 Simmons Plaza; 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.         **March 6, 13, 20, 27:** Saugerties Sings, a non-denominational community chorus; Trinity Episcopal Church, 32 Church St. (& Rte. 9W); [fiddlestitchtoday@gmail.com](mailto:fiddlestitchtoday@gmail.com); 7:00 p.m.         **March 6, 20:** 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  6:30 p.m.; board meeting 7:00 p.m.         **March 9: “**A Buried River: The Catskill Aqueduct to NYC,” [Friends of Historic Saugerties](https://fhssaugerties.wixsite.com/home) meeting; Saugerties Library; info: [friendsofhistoricsaugerties@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofhistoricsaugerties@gmail.com); 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.         **March 9:** 90’s Cosmic Skate Fundraiser for Small World Playground Rebuild; Kiwanis Ice Arena, 6 Small World Ave.; minimum donation $10;  7:45 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.         **March 10:** Penny Social;Saugerties Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary; Saugerties Fire House, 43 Partition St.; 12:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.         **March 10:** Saugerties Pro Musica; [Aya Piano Trio](https://ayapianotrio.com/); Saugerties United Methodist Church, 67 Washington Ave.; 3:00 p.m.         **March 11, 25:** 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 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.         **March 12:** Saugerties Central School District Board of Education meeting; Senior High School media center; regular meeting & budget workshop; 6:30 p.m.         **March 13:** Town Ethics Committee; Town Hall, 4 High St., building dept conference room; 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.         **March 13:** Village Planning Board meeting; Hooks Meeting Rm, Firehouse, 43 Partition  St; info at [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.         **March 14:** Saugerties Library Board of Trustees meeting; open to the public; 91 Washington Ave.; 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.         **March 14:** Inquiring Minds Bookstore presents [Writers Read: Beverly Donofrio](https://www.inquiringbooks.com/page/Events), New Memoir; CMM Distillery, 31 Market St.;  6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.         **March 16:** [NYS annual burn ban](https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/air-quality/open-burning) begins through May 14         **March 17:** Signs of Spring Nature Walk with the Esopus Creek Conservancy and John Burroughs Natural History Society; a guided nature walk; pre-registration required: [ecc.saugerties@gmail.com](mailto:ecc.saugerties@gmail.com); 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.         **March 18:** Historic Preservation Commission meeting;  Saugerties Senior Center; contact [jeremy@thingsrelevant.com](mailto:jeremy@thingsrelevant.com); 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.         **March 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 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.         **March 20:** Fundraiser: Help Send [Saugerties Sirens U15 Travel Team](https://www.ayso595.org/?fbclid=IwAR0k5yFi-VUVLW4r4Yj3bop36VrhIMp7seWQFeQmSAmbQJA5e9uT401uC2Q) to Barcelona; family meal for four; Main Street Restaurant; pre-order only $40; place orders [here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeXrVv9hYithsoq77749VXOsF_UT1Wcu1vWL-0-vVAUsHcyUw/viewform); pick up between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.         **March 21:** [Climate Smart Task Force](http://www.climatesmartsaugerties.org/) meeting & Conservation Advisory Committee; via Zoom; contact: [mhodonnell316@gmail.com](mailto:mhodonnell316@gmail.com);5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.         **March 23:** Last day for mail-in and in-person registration to vote in Presidential Primary         **March 23:** Fundraiser: Help Al Bruno’s fight against cancer; Elks Lodge, Rte. 32; endless buffet, cash bar, entertainment, raffles; $25 donation; for tickets call Sawyer Motors at 845-246-3412; 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.         **March 25 through March 29:** Spring holiday; Saugerties Central School District closed         **March 25:** Saugerties Democratic Committee monthly meeting, location to be announced; 7:00 p.m.         **March 26:** Village Zoning Board; Village Hall, 43 Partition St.; info at [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.         **March 27:** Saugerties Chamber of Commerce Mixer; The Dancing Tulip; 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.         **March 27:** Village Historic Review Board; Village Hall; 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.         **March 29:** Saugerties Arts Commission meeting; Town Hall, Building Dept Conference Room, 4 High St.; info at [arts@saugertiesarts.org](mailto:arts@saugertiesarts.org); 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.         **March 29:** Good Friday; Town Offices are closed         **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.* |