Saugerties Democratic Committee Newsletter

May 2024

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| **Politics and Elections Because That’s What We Do** |
| **Next Up: Saugerties School Board and Budget Vote**  Now that the presidential primary has come and gone, we turn our attention to the Saugerties school board and budget vote, which will be held on Tuesday, May 21, from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Please vote for a world-class education for Saugerties’ children.    The Saugerties Democratic Committee would like to thank former SDC member Sakinah Irizzary for stepping up and running for the school board. Sakinah resigned from SDC when she threw her hat into the ring because she is committed to leaving politics out of education and instead focusing on what’s best for all the students and community. We agree. Learn more about the school board and budget election, including absentee ballots, [here](https://www.saugerties.k12.ny.us/faq-resources/election-information).    **June Democratic Primary**  Saugerties voters will have primaries in June, with challengers running against Ulster County Democratic Committee (UCDC)-endorsed candidates. All registered Saugerties Democratic voters are eligible to vote in the NYS Assembly District 103 primary, where the UCDC-endorsed candidate is incumbent [Sarahana Shrestha](https://sarahanaforassembly.com/).    Saugerties registered Democrats in Election Districts 7, 12, and 13 will be eligible to vote in the Saugerties Democratic Committee primaries. The UCDC-endorsed candidates are Louise Bloomfield and Barbara Boyce (ED 7), Kevin Freeman and Deena Rae Turner (ED 12), and Frederick (Rick) Cousin and Margo McGilvrey (ED13). The UCDC-endorsed candidates are active members of the Democratic town and county committees, including members of the SDC executive committee and fundraising, program, campaign support, and publicity committees. They are some of the hardest workers for democracy. Of the four challengers, three have run against Democratic candidates in recent general elections, throwing two races to Republicans. As the June primary gets closer, you will be hearing more from our candidates.    We urge voters to go to the polls and cast their ballots for the candidates who have been endorsed by the UCDC, the umbrella committee that governs all the local Ulster County Democratic town committees.    **Another Union Endorsement for Biden**  The North America’s Building Trades Unions (NABTU) endorsed President Joe Biden on April 24, one of their earliest endorsements ever. NABTU president Sean McGarvey heaped praise on President Biden for saving workers’ pensions and creating good paying jobs, and [excoriated Donald Trump](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3G5Yx-0BKM) for focusing on the rich and leaving working-class people behind. The NABTU, which represents U.S. construction workers, joined nearly all major unions including the AFL-CIO and the Auto Workers Union in endorsing President Biden, the most pro-union president ever. |

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| **Monthly Meeting News** |
| **April Saugerties Democratic Committee Meeting\***  The Saugerties Democratic Committee met on Tuesday, April 23, at the Saugerties Senior Center. The meeting featured an update by town supervisor Fred Costello and town board member Mike Ivino, including a discussion on the various development projects and the status of the proposed Town Board resolution supporting a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.    Additionally, John Schoonmaker of the Reelect Sarahana Shrestha Campaign outlined the coordinated canvassing strategy in Saugerties for both Shrestha and the Ulster County Democratic Committee-endorsed SDC candidates who are being primaried (*see June Democratic Primary*). The next Saugerties canvasses will take place on Thursday, May 2, Sunday, May 5, Thursday, May 9, Monday, May 13, and Thursday, May 16. Volunteers can sign up [here](https://sarahanaforassembly.com/volunteer/).    The remainder of the meeting included information on the village, school district, and the county and a status report from the two ad hoc committees—SDC Bylaws and Scribers (postcard writers).    \*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: May 28, Jun 18 (third week because of scheduled primary), Jul 23, Aug 27, Sept 24, Oct 22, Nov 26. Meetings generally are at Senior Center. All welcome. |
| **News & Newsworthy** |
| **Eyes on the Prize: The Supreme Court**  The [Trump Supreme Court that dismantled](https://luciantruscott.substack.com/p/this-supreme-court-has-broken-my?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email) Roe v Wade, which took away a woman’s right to choose and has made other disturbing rulings, heard oral arguments in the case of Trump v. United States on April 25. The Supreme Court was asked to decide whether Trump or any president can be criminally prosecuted for actions while in office.    In February, the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit unanimously ruled that a former president could be prosecuted for official acts that allegedly defied the rule of law. Many legal scholars were shocked that SCOTUS would even agree to hear the appeal and believed that Trump would lose in the Supreme Court. Yet, the six conservative judges (three appointed by Trump) seemed to indicate with their questions that presidents have immunity from prosecution in some cases despite egregious behavior.    The more liberal justices—Sonia Sotomayer, Elana Kagan, and Ketanji Brown Jackson—were more skeptical of a president being above the law. Referencing a president unbound by the law, Brown Jackson said that the thought of a president entering office knowing there could be no consequences for criminal actions made her wonder “what the disincentive is from turning the Oval Office into a seat of criminal activity in this country.” For a clear and concise summary of the day in court, read Heather Cox Richardson’s [April 25 “Letters from an American.”](https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/p/april-25-2024)    As we go to the polls in November, we need to keep our eyes on the prize—the Supreme Court. As writer and activist Rebecca Solnit said in 2016, “An election is not a valentine, but a chess move.” If only we followed that mantra back then. Let’s remember that in 2024.    **Biden-Harris Administration and Gun Safety**  The White House announced the largest expansion of gun background checks since the 1993 [Brady Bill](https://www.bradyunited.org/resources/issues/brady-background-checks). In June 2022, the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act](https://www.everytown.org/what-is-the-bipartisan-safer-communities-act/) passed. In August 2023, Biden signed an Executive Order directing the Department of Justice to clarify the Act to get as close as possible to universal background checks without the need for additional legislation. This May, the new rule goes into effect. It will close the gun show and online market loopholes. Anyone selling a gun for a profit will be required to be a licensed dealer who must do a background check. This law will help keep guns out of the hands of domestic violence perpetrators and felons.    **New York Attorney General Warns Facebook About AI Disinformation**  Following up on last month’s SDC newsletter’s caution about the dangers of Artificial Intelligence (AI) content, the latest known incident of AI disinformation involves the Meta AI chatbot disseminating made-up allegations of sexual harassment against state lawmakers. Attorney General Letitia James is not having it, as she said in a letter to Facebook parent company Meta. James’ office had tested the Meta chatbot and found that it had false stories with bogus sources. James demanded answers, adding, “We are deeply concerned about the creation and dissemination of such misinformation, which is likely to harm the reputation of New York State officials and mislead New York residents.” She gave Meta until May 10 to respond to five specific requests. While it is great that our attorney general is on top of the situation, it is a stark reminder that we all must be diligent as we read or listen to “news.” |

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| **May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29:** Saugerties Pickleball Club; outdoors at Cantine Pickleball Courts, weather permitting; all levels welcome; 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  **May 1, 15:** 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.  **May 1, 8, 15:** 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.  **May 2:** [Saugerties Artist Studio Preview Gallery Opening](https://opus40.org/event/saugerties-art-studio-tour-preview-exhibit/); Opus 40, 356 George Sickle Rd.; 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.  **May 2, 5, 7, 10, 12, 18, 25:** The Local, 16 John St.; various music, arts and culture performances; see [calendar](https://www.thelocalsaugerties.com/calendar)  **May 4:** Saugerties Animal Shelter Benefit: Blue Jeans Ball; Fortune Valley Manor, 248 Old Stage Rd.; Get tickets [here](https://saugertiesanimalshelter.networkforgood.com/events/67399-saugerties-animal-shelter-s-3rd-annual-blue-jeans-ball-at-fortune-valley-manor?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR2OCAbVI_DuRmn6gdIV4otP4G2fg5DL_Qty3m3g4EhWoQAVYl3C_AykqDA_aem_AWfdYgAxzzHMOShdNFXNMq4pRp62RNyDMpMwM24HQS4yO-XFURCDczpQIQEGhG9y0yXgBO3Hxqd89ZGcJZumlHne); 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  **May 6, 20:** 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.  **May 6:** Town Zoning Board of Appeals meeting; Saugerties Senior Center, 207 Market St.; agenda [here](https://saugerties.ny.us/agenda/zba-agenda-page); contact [bbertorelli@saugertiesny.gov](mailto:bbertorelli@saugertiesny.gov); 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  **May 7:** Arts in Saugerties monthly meeting; Saugerties Arts Commission; 9W Diner, Simmons Plaza; 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  **May 8:** Village Planning Board; 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.  **May 9:** Saugerties Public Library Board of Trustees meeting; open to the public; 91 Washington Ave.; 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.  **May 11:** The Hudson River Schools of Art and Their Ice Age Origins; [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.  **May 13:** Housing Smart Communities Task Force; on Zoom; 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.  **May 14:** Saugerties Transportation AdvisoryCommittee; Town Hall Buildings Department conference room, 4 High St.; for [information](https://saugerties.ny.us/boards/stac); 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  **May 14:** Saugerties Central Schools Board of Education Special Meeting (public hearing on budget vote); Saugerties High School media center; 6:30 p.m.  **May 15:** American Legion Roast Pork Loin Dinner; eat-in/take-out: reserve by May 10 at 845-706-8083 or [kpendergast@hvc.rr.com](mailto:kpendergast@hvc.rr.com); 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.  **May 16:** [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.  **May 16:** ShoutOut Saugerties; Writers Read: Shorts, Short Shorts, and Briefs with Jana Martin; CMM Distillery, 31 Market St.; 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.  **May 17**: Boys & Girls Club Fundraiser; Diamond Mills; 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  **May 18:** Spring Wildflower Walk; [Esopus Creek Conservancy](https://www.esopuscreekconservancy.org/); pre-registration required by emailing [searunner64@gmail.com](mailto:searunner64@gmail.com); 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  **May 20:** Pam Ross Memorial Bench Dedication; Esopus Bend Nature Preserve, Shady Lane; 5:30 p.m.  **May 20:** Historic Preservation Commission meeting; Saugerties Senior Center; agenda [here](https://saugerties.ny.us/agenda/hpc-agenda); contact [jeremy@thingsrelevant.com](mailto:jeremy@thingsrelevant.com); 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  **May 21:** 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.  **May 21:** Saugerties School Board and Budget Elections; voting information [here](https://www.saugerties.k12.ny.us/faq-resources/election-information); 6:00a.m. to 9:00 p.m.  **May 21:** Saugerties Central School District closed for Superintendent’s Conference  **May 22:** Village Historic Review Board; Village Hall; 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  **May 24:** Ulster County Community Action Farm Stand (once-a-month delivery of free healthy food); 10:00 a.m. (car lineup begins at 9:30 a.m.)  **May 24, 27:** Saugerties Central School District closed for Memorial Day weekend  **May 25:** Saugerties Farmers Market (opening for the season); ribbon-cutting, music, chef demo, kids art corner; 115 Main Street (Cahill School parking lot); 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  **May 27:** Memorial Day; federal, state, county, town offices closed  **May 27** (until Sept 3)**:** Groovin’ Around Saugerties: Hippie Buses Display; artists painted fiberglass hippie buses displayed throughout the town and village  **May 28**: Special Saugerties School Board of Education meeting; opening & tallying affidavit ballots, accepting vote results; Saugerties Senior High School media center; 6:30 p.m.  **May 28:** Village Zoning Board meeting; Village Hall, 43 Partition St.; info at [pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org](mailto:pmelville@villageofsaugerties.org); 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  **May 28:** Saugerties Democratic Committee monthly meeting; Centerville Firehouse, 859 Saugerties-Woodstock Rd; 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  **May 29:** Saugerties Chamber of Commerce Mixer; The Partition, 124 Partition St.; 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  **May 31:** 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.  **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.* |