

# League of Women Voters<sup>®</sup> of Falmouth Bulletin

## April 2023

### Steering Committee Report

Welcome to the April LWVF Bulletin. Signs of spring are everywhere: daffodils and crocuses are proudly displaying their pastel colors, peepers are loudly announcing their presence, and yesterday I saw an osprey flying away from our local cranberry bog with its herring catch.

We at the League are taking a twist on the classic "April showers bring May flowers" by hosting two key public events this April. We believe these events will inform the Falmouth community in preparation for the May town and League elections and beyond. 2023 is the year that April educational events bring May (and beyond) informed voters!

The League event on Thursday, April 20, is a first in many ways. It's the inaugural Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) community meeting for our League. Our DEIB Committee was formed just last fall and has been actively engaged in defining our role within the League and Falmouth.

Did you know that the 2022 voter turnout rate for the general election in the state of Massachusetts was only 51.4%? And that the 2022 turnout rate for primaries was just 21.75%? On Thursday, April 20, we are partnering with the Waquoit Congregational Church (WCC), Racial Justice Falmouth (RJF), Ellen Hewett, and Richard Johnson to bring the renowned Dr. B. Chad Starks to Falmouth High School for a discussion on "Inclusion and the Democratic Process." Why don't more people vote? Is an election with only one-half or one-quarter of the community voting representative? Please join us to learn more about these questions and other issues. This event will be held in Falmouth High School Cafeteria B at 6 p.m.

### **Table of Contents**

Steering Committee Report	1
Candidates Night	2
Legislative Committee Report	3
Civics Committee Report	5
Observer Corps	6
Partners in Democracy	6
Town Meeting Warrant 18	7
Upcoming Events	9-12
Legislative and Press Directory	12
Board of Directors	13
Meeting and Event Calendar	13

Dr. Starks is nationally recognized as a social justice advocate and has worked with various organizations, non-profits, and businesses to increase racial equity and promote social justice, from the Lynchburg Police Department to the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the NASA Space Grant Consortium. We are honored to have him speak with us!

The DEIB Committee hosted a workshop titled "My Future, My Vote: Student Involvement in the Political Process" at the March 25 Social Justice conference at Falmouth Academy. We also staffed an information table during lunch where we answered questions about voting and Eileen Mattingly handed out copies of a documentary film about Malala Yousafzai to many of the educators who attended.

The Committee is looking forward to more community outreach and involvement. Let us know if you have suggestions or want to find out more about the DEIB Committee.

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### Voter Service



Candidates Night has been set for Wednesday, April 26, at 7 p.m. in the Hermann Room of the Main Falmouth Public Library.

The Voter Service Committee has been meeting via Zoom and in person. We have formulated questions for all offices on the ballot and have spent our April 5 meeting deciding on matters of format, timing, publicity, and specific assignments for that evening. The program will be jam-packed with contending candidates but we hope to have time for questions submitted via email to <u>falmouth-lwv@gmail.com</u> and from in-person attendees.

We are very pleased that we will be co-presenting the program with FCTV 13 and that Mindy Todd will moderate the program. Lynne Rozsa will continue to act as the sole conduit between FCTV and the League on all matters relating to Candidates Night. If you'd like to help out by greeting guests, distributing programs, showing candidates to their seats, or any other tasks that may pop up at the last minute, please let me know.

Please let your friends and neighbors know about Candidates Night. The doors open to the public at 6:20 p.m. The program will be broadcast live and rebroadcast several times before Election Day — but it's more fun to attend in person.

Election Day is Tuesday, May 16. Please go to the Town Clerk's web page for information on how to vote early.

> — **Sylvia Szulkin** Voter Service Chair

### Steering Committee Report, cont.

As Sylvia Szulkin reported last month, the Voter Service Committee has been hard at work preparing for the April 26 Candidates Night. Falmouth has several contested races in the May election and this event is honestly the best way for the candidates to answer your questions. Whether you attend in person, stream it on FCTV, or read about it in *The Falmouth Enterprise*, it's an effective way to get the information you need to make an informed vote.

Candidates Night is Wednesday, April 26, 7 p.m., in the Hermann Room in the main Falmouth Library.

And that brings us to May. Key dates, including dates to exercise your right to vote include:

Friday, May 5 — last day to RSVP for the LWVF Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 6 — last day to register to vote for the May 16 election

Tuesday, May 16 — Annual Falmouth Town Election

Saturday, May 20 — the Falmouth League of Women Voters Annual Meeting

These April and May events are very important, but our League is busy with other activities as well. Please read the committee chair reports to see what other great work is happening in our League. Thank you!

> - Meghan Hanawalt Vice President, LWVF

### Legislative Committee Report



Dr. Sandra Faiman-Silva, Common Start Coalition; Liz Belcher, Information Client Services Manager, Housing Assistance Corporation; Senator Susan Moran; Representative David Vieira; Representative Dylan Fernandes

On March 16, the Legislative Committee presented a public program entitled "Focus on Young Families" in the Hermann Room of the Falmouth Public Library. This program, which lasted about an hour and forty-five minutes, was broadcast live on FCTV and also appears on FCTV's rebroadcast schedule. It featured our three legislators, Senator Susan Moran, Representative David Vieira, and Representative Dylan Fernandes, with two guest speakers, Dr. Sandra Faiman-Silva of the Common Start Coalition, and Liz Belcher, the Information Client Services Manager of the Housing Assistance Corporation (HAC). The program was in two parts, one emphasizing Common Start and the other focusing on affordable housing. Each part featured a speaker, a discussion by the legislators, and a question and answer session.

As Dr. Faiman-Silva explained with the help of a slide presentation, the main focus of Common Start is to support childcare and early childhood education through improvements in funding and accessibility. Direct financial assistance will be available to families, depending on income, with the income threshold rising over approximately a five-year period so that more families become eligible over time. The program also includes operational funding to childcare providers. The aim is to stabilize the income of the providers, lead to better pay for employees, and encourage professional development. It is especially important to provide operational funding based on slots rather than attendance because the provider's overhead does not change if a child is out sick on a particular day. All three of our legislators support the Common Start program, and the audience was left with the impression there is a high likelihood the program will pass in this session in some form.

Representative Vieira started off the discussion by the legislators, taking us to a basement meeting room in the State House where he sat as a freshman legislator when the promotion of early childhood education was being discussed. Years later, both he and Senator Moran served on a committee that released a report largely supporting the Common Start program. Representative Vieira suggested that our public school buildings could accommodate childcare facilities inasmuch as they were intended to be

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### Legislative Committee Report, cont.

Judy Ziss, Chair of the Legislative Committee, introduces the speakers.



available for a much larger student body than we now have.

When Representative Fernandes spoke, he stressed the high cost of childcare, saying that parents cannot afford both childcare and the mortgage on a house. He also noted that on the Outer Cape and the Islands, there have been no open slots for childcare, even if parents could afford to pay for the service. In his view, we have to recognize that childcare and early childhood education are expensive and funding is the key.

Senator Moran talked about her own experiences, saying she relied heavily on family members, juggling help with her children when they were young. In her law practice she represented a childcare provider and came to understand the difficulties providers experienced. As she noted, parents — generally mothers — are faced with whether to stay home or give up a career they love.

During the question and answer session, funding was again discussed. Representative Fernandes said ARPA money could help and mentioned the "millionaire's tax," which is to be spent for education and transportation. Representative Vieira disagreed, saying he feared that the "millionaire's tax" funds would not supplement other educational funding but, instead, would replace them. Senator Moran disagreed, saying the additional funds would be new money, not a substitute for funds that would have been spent anyway. She also emphasized that investments in education pay for themselves through a more educated workforce, fewer dropouts, and less crime. As this segment ended, Representative Fernandes pointed to New Jersey, where its highest court has held that early education is a right under the state constitution. He pointed to the beneficial impact of this ruling on education in New Jersey, noted that the Massachusetts constitution has similar language, and expressed his hope that the Massachusetts legislature would act on its own.

We then turned to the second part of our program, with Liz Belcher of HAC noting the financial links between childcare and affordable housing. As she told us, this is the worst housing crisis she has seen in more than 20 years working in the field. She handles intake at HAC, where she sees housing as an emergency situation involving triage. Houses are being sold when tenants cannot afford rent or when the owner is enticed to sell in a highly priced market. She emphasized that affordable housing has to be subsidized. Again, linking childcare and affordable housing, she reported that many of her clients seeking affordable housing work themselves as childcare providers.

Senator Moran led off the legislative panel by reporting on an omnibus bill, currently numbered SD 1668, which she introduced in the Massachusetts Senate. She explained that she convened a group of various stakeholders and asked what legislation they recommended to attack the affordable housing crisis. For example, builders said they would be aided if the funds they paid to house workers would be subsidized. Under the bill, similar help would be available to employers of seasonal workers. Taking environmental issues into account, the bill would also

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### Legislative Committee Report, cont.

steer new housing to lots serviced by septic systems. This is just a small sampling of the various issues Senator Moran's bill would address.

Representative Vieira followed and gave a shout out to Liz Belcher, explaining that when he is faced with a constituent housing problem, he has very often called on her to solve it. He supported the idea of coordinating new housing with the environmental need for sewers. He also praised a developer who wants to build about 150 rental units, a quarter of which would be affordable, and he looked forward to a potential flexible-use development of what is now Falmouth Plaza.

Representative Fernandes, the final legislative speaker, outlined three factors: environmental issues such as wastewater and natural resources, zoning changes to eliminate the need for a supermajority vote on zoning provisions, and capital which can come at several levels of government. He believes a real estate transfer tax of 2% of sales proceeds over \$1,000,000 would be the best local source of funding for affordable housing, and he is among the legislators seeking passage of a bill to permit such a tax.

During the Q and A, the subject of expensive houses being used solely for rental came up. However, those non-resident owners were distinguished from resident owners who can afford to live in Falmouth only by renting out their houses in the summer. Representative Fernandes, a new homeowner himself, explained that he would have to rely on such a rental in order to afford his mortgage. One audience member noted that these housing issues impact middleincome residents, explaining that his family has been unable to buy a home and leaves Falmouth each summer when their rental housing becomes unavailable. Falmouth Planning Board Chair Charlotte Harris, who was in the audience, reported that the Board is well aware of these problems and is trying to address them.

The Legislative Committee was pleased to present this program and thanks all the participants. During the program itself, Committee Chair Judy Ziss presided, aided by Committee members Mary Tamucci and Kerry Walton.

> — Judith Ziss Legislative Committee Chair

## **Civics Committee**

Efforts are continuing to assist Falmouth High School sophomores in connection with their civics projects. Civics Committee member Eileen Mattingly represented the Falmouth League at the Civics Service Career Day for eighth graders at the Mashpee Middle-High School; a photograph of her in teaching mode appeared on the front page of the March 10 *Mashpee Enterprise*. Eileen, Chinna Mapp, and Meghan Hanawalt also took part in the Falmouth Academy Justice Conference on March 25.

If you would like to know more about the Civics Committee, become a member, or volunteer to observe student presentations, please contact Mary Fran Buckley, <u>maryfran55@earthlink.net</u>. We hope you will be rooting for our young people as they work to become active and informed citizens.

> — Judith Ziss for the Civics Committee

### **Observer Corps**

The following Observers will be available to present their reports in person at our meeting on June 15: Richard Johnson (Zoning Board of Appeals); Marcia Easterling (Library Board of Trustees); and Stephanie Miele (Board of Health). Lynn Rozsa (Affordable Housing Committee Observer) and Carol Chittenden (EDIC Observer) will submit written reports. The presentation leading up to the reports will include a recognition of the wonderful work of our past Observers: Meghan Palanza (School Committee) and Suzanne Thomas (Solid Waste Advisory Board).

All current Observers are seasoned veterans who are willing to mentor and share information with anyone interested in joining the Corps. Once an Observer, always an Observer. The opportunity to make a difference is REAL! Former Observers have become members of Town Boards and Committees, brought our local League up to date on items of concern to the League and the Town, informed concerned parties of the importance of the Open Meeting law, and influenced the course of action. The rugged Observers became adept at interpreting the movements of the Committee members within the confines of the Zoom Square.

I would like to present the latest organizational chart and the Excel spreadsheet that Richard has worked on. It will give the membership an idea of the possible Boards and Committees which could use an Observer.

Current and past Observers and Steering Committee members have been invited to an Observer Corps meeting on Friday, April 14, 9:30 a.m. at my home. Because the June meeting will be after the Annual Meeting, both former and current members of the Board of Directors will be attending.

Observer Corps Chair is a fantastic position! From the first year I chaired until now, there has been a deep sense of commitment to community and genuine interest on the part of all the Observers I have had the privilege of leading. Our Falmouth League Observers have done great work for our town.

> — *Denise Morreale* Chair, Observer Corps

### **Partners in Democracy**

Stephanie Miele and I attended the Zoom meeting of Partners in Democracy with several members of LWVCC and LWVPlymouth. We talked about barriers to voting (big interest in voting by mail), voter registration (big interest in election day registration), barriers to running for election, voter apathy, difficulty in getting unbiased information on candidates and issues, and the influence of super PAC money.

The information discussion was largely about news deserts and consolidation of media outlets into a few corporations who control messaging. Several Leagues have started weekly zoom calls with anyone about local issues and on-line sites for local issue information. Candidate forums are obviously our strength in the League and we in Falmouth are fortunate to only have to deal with one town: LWVCC runs several forums each voting cycle and still can't cover the geographic area completely.

Percent voter registration is highest among Whites, lower in the Asian population and lower still among the Black population. We talked about reaching more unregistered voters in these groups; the LWVF was lauded for our outreach to the Cape Verdean Club. We also talked about stimulating registration by circulating information on prominent issues (e.g., ballot initiatives, women's health access, Holtec dumping) rather than voting in general.

Partners in Democracy is advocating for a change in election structure to something like the Boston mayoral race: a preliminary ballot open to all comers free of party designation, with a final ballot of the top five determined by ranked choice voting. They call this the Top5 system. This system is certainly less tied to parties at the early stages, and perhaps even at the final vote when there might be multiple Democratic or Republican candidates on the ballot. The obvious challenge is getting the House and Senate to approve changes in the way power is distributed.

There will be a follow-up Zoom session in May if any of you are interested. For more info see <u>https://</u>partnersindemocracy.us/2023-action-plan/.

-Richard Johnson

## Natural Resources: Town Meeting Article 18

The League of Women Voters of Falmouth supports the spirit of Petitioners Article 18 at Spring Town Meeting, the Plastic Reduction Article and its stated goal of reducing the amount of single-use plastic by food service establishments and residents in Falmouth. Too little of this material is recycled and a significant portion of it cannot be recycled. Singleuse plastic contributes significantly to landfills and roadside refuse and is an environmental hazard.

We find the Article to be in need of revision or amendment, however, so that it might best serve the stated goal. Non-plastic straws, utensils and containers exist for many of the prepared foods subject to the article, but not for hot/wet foods or those with longer shelf lives. Foods prepared off-site for sale in plastic containers are exempt from the proposed by-law. We encourage the petitioner to revise and re-submit the Article in a clearer and more comprehensive form.

#### -Richard Johnson

Chair, Natural Resources

Article 18 as written in the Warrant is as follows:

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Town's General Bylaw by inserting a new bylaw entitled, Plastic Reduction, as follows, and to authorize the Town Clerk to assign appropriate numbering therefor:

CHAPTER \_\_\_\_: PLASTIC REDUCTION This bylaw is enacted pursuant to the general police power in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the Town.

Effective Date This Bylaw shall take effect on September 1, 2024

Purpose and Intent

Plastic food containers and single-use utensils form a significant portion of the solid waste stream going into landfills. Local landfills are running out of room; our future solid waste may have to be transported hundreds of miles to a landfill at considerable cost. Plastic food containers are not recyclable, nor are they biodegradable. Once buried in our landfills, they will persist for centuries. If incinerated the toxins in plastic are linked to cancer and threaten our air quality. Appropriate alternative and sustainable products are readily available from the vendors used by local food establishments; cooperative bulk buying arrangements are possible. Thus, elimination of plastic food containers and utensils is in the best interest of the health and welfare of Town inhabitants.

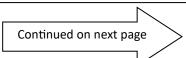
### Definitions

"Disposable Food Service Container" means singleuse disposable products for serving or transporting prepared, ready-to-consume food. This includes plates, bowls, trays, hinged or lidded containers, and utensils.

"Food Establishment" means an operation that stores, prepares, packages, serves, vends, or otherwise provides food for human consumption, as further defined in 105 CMR 590.002. Any establishment requiring a permit to operate in accordance with the State Food Code, 105 CMR 590.000, et. seq., shall be considered a Food Establishment for purposes of this Bylaw.

"Plastic" is defined as any type of plastic resin, which may contain recycled material, and may be sold as recyclable, biodegradable, or compostable. The material is commonly categorized in terms of #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7; plastic as referenced includes all categories.

"Prepared Food" means any food or beverage prepared for consumption on the Food Establishment's premises, using any cooking or food preparation technique. This does not include any raw uncooked meat, fish or eggs unless provided for consumption without further food preparation.



### Natural Resources: Town Meeting Article 18, cont.

"Town Facility" means any building, structure, land, or park owned or operated by the Town of Fal- mouth, its agents and departments. "Town Facility Users" means all persons, societies, associations, organizations, or special event promo- tors who require a permission to use a Town Facility. Town Facility Users also includes concession con- tracts with the Town, Town-managed concessions, Town-sponsored events, and food services provided at the Town's expense.	First Offense: Written warning 2nd Offense: \$150 fine 3rd Offense and Subsequent Offenses: \$300 fine Any such fines collected shall be payable to the Town of Falmouth. Each day the violation continues constitutes a separate violation. After detection of an initial violation, the designated inspection au- thority will be required to verify subsequent compli- ance until compliance with this bylaw is established. All businesses will be routinely inspected until the
Prohibition	Town Administrator deems the inspection to be no longer required.
<ul> <li>A. Except as provided herein, Food Establishments are prohibited from dispensing Prepared Food to customers in Disposable Food Service containers and utensils made from Plastic.</li> <li>B. Town Facility Users are prohibited from dispensing Prepared Food to customers in Disposable Food Service containers made from Plastic and providing utensils made from Plastic.</li> <li>Administration and Enforcement</li> <li>This Bylaw is enforced by the Town Administrator, or any committee appointed by them. Any Food Establishment or Town Facility User which violates any provision of this Bylaw shall be subject to the following penalties:</li> </ul>	On petition of Philip Alexander Gessen. RECOMMENDATION (Select Board): That the Town vote to recommend Article 18 as printed. EXPLANATION: This petition article would create a bylaw to prohibit the use of disposable food con- tainers and plastic utensils by food establishments. The proposed bylaw contains a provision for civil ticketing that is not consistent with existing bylaws or with M.G.L. c. 40 § 21D. While there are unan- swered questions about how this bylaw will be en- forced, the Select Board supports the intent of this bylaw to move toward reduced use of disposable plastic.



Annual

Meeting

### **Upcoming Events**

# THE

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS\* OF FALMOUTH

PRESENTS Inclusion and the Democratic Process Thursday, April 20

**DR. B. CHAD STARKS** 

**6:00 P.M. FALMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL** JOIN US IN CAFETERIA B



Co-Sponsored by: Racial Justice Falmouth Waquoit Congregational Church Ellen Hewett Richard Johnson Anonymous Donors

### Upcoming Events, cont.

# **Candidates Night**

# **Contested Races May 2023**

Wednesday, April 26 at 7 p.m. Hermann Room, Falmouth Public Library Live on FCTV Channel 13 (Doors open at 6:20 p.m.)

> The public is invited to submit questions in advance to: falmouthlwv@gmail.com This program can be viewed on FCTV—Public Channel 13 or online at www.fctv.org





### Upcoming Events, cont.

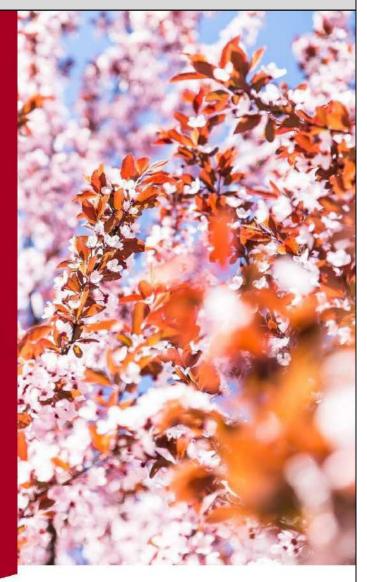


### TOGETHER IS BETTER

# IN-PERSON\* ANNUAL MEETING

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FALMOUTH

SATURDAY, MAY 20TH 9:30 – 11:30 AM Coonamessett Inn 311 Gifford Street, Falmouth \*Masks Optional



### Door Prizes • \$22 per person

Full Breakfast, Meeting and Presentation by Kim Fish, Housing Coordinator, Town of Falmouth:

FALMOUTH HOUSING CHALLENGES -CHALLENGES, STAKEHOLDERS, AND SOLUTIONS

Gain a firsthand perspective, through an engaging Q&A discussion between Kim and our other guests. You will come away with a resource sheet on ways (donation, time, groups) to help. Housing is a timely topic that directly relates to the ongoing sustainability of our community.

### RSVP by May 5th

Make checks payable to the League of Women Voters of Falmouth or "LWVF" and mail to:

> Maro Titus PO Box 183 West Falmouth, MA 02574 <u>marotitus@msn.com</u> 917-991-8013

Please RSVP by the deadline, as an accurate headcount is required.

### Upcoming Events, cont.

# Jane Scarborough Course: The Nature of Justice



How do you define "justice"? While this question has pre-occupied philosophers and theologians for centuries, each of us has our own empirical sense of what is "fair." But that question is not only about how individuals should treat each other, but also about what the law

should be, and about how society should be organized.

This 8-week class will explore the meaning of "justice" in various situational context and consider the thinking of leading philosophers in the field—Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, John Locke and John Rawls, among others. Part of the aim of this course, however, is to invite members of the class to reflect critically on their own moral and political assumptions, not only as against those of these leading theorists, but also in light of the current debate as to what constitutes a "just" society.

Date: Friday, April 21, 2023

Time: 10:30am - 12:00 p.m.



Natural Brush Clearing and Poison Ivy Control

Meghan Hanawalt, Goatherd info@getmygoatscapecod.com 774-521-8745 www.GetMyGoatsCapeCod.com

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## Make your voice heard today!

# <u>Contact Information</u> for Your Legislators

Senator Susan Moran 617-722-1330 <u>Susan.Moran@masenate.gov</u>

Representative David Vieira 617-722-2230 and press 5 David.Vieira@mahouse.gov

Representative Dylan Fernandes 617-722-2013 and press 3 Dylan.Fernandes@mahouse.gov

Congressman Bill Keating 508-771-6868

Info.keating@mail.house.gov

# Letters to the Editor

### The Falmouth Enterprise

Letters can be mailed to 50 Depot Avenue, Falmouth, MA 02540 or e-mailed directly to the editor at saito@capenews.net.

### The Cape Cod Times

Email to <u>letters@capecodonline.com</u> or mail to Letters, Cape Cod Times, 319 Main St., Hyannis, MA 02601.

### The Boston Globe

Send an e-mail to <u>letter@globe.com</u> or mail to Letters to the Editor, The Boston Globe, PO Box 55819, Boston, MA 02205.

### LWVF Board of Directors 2022-2023

#### **Board Members**

First Vice-President and	Janet Lauer
Steering Committee Chair	
Second Vice-President	Meghan Hanawalt
Secretary	Karen Dacey
Treasurer	Karen Epstein
Legislative	Judith Ziss
Natural Resources	Richard Johnson
Voter Service	Sylvia Szulkin
Spokesperson	Sylvia Szulkin
Publicity/Bulletin	Mary Fran Buckley,
Co-Editors	Eileen Mattingly
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion,	
and Belonging	Chinna Mapp
Membership	Misty Niemeyer
Observer Corps	Denise Morreale
FCTV Liaison	Lynne Rozsa
Annual Meeting Chair	Maro Titus

### **Off-Board Specialists**

Historian Facebook Webmaster Kathy Mortenson Penny Duby Joan Boyer

### Contact us:

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Email: FalmouthLWV@gmail.com

Website: www.lwvf.org

Facebook: <u>https://www.facebook.com/</u> LWVofFalmouthMA/

Submissions for the May issue of the LWVF Bulletin are due on May 3, 2023. Please send copy, photos, and other material to <u>both</u> of these addresses:

maryfran55@earthlink.net eileenmattingly@yahoo.com

### **Meeting and Event Calendar**

April 20, 6 p.m.	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging program, Falmouth High School Cafeteria
April 25, 7 p.m.	Board meeting on Zoom
April 26, 7 p.m.	Candidates Night, Hermann Room at the Falmouth Library
May 5	Deadline for your RSVP for the annual meeting
May 20, 9:30	Annual Meeting, Coonamessett
a.m.–11:30 a.m.	Inn
May 22, 7 p.m.	Board meeting on Zoom

### LWVF Friends 2022–2023

Barbara Douglass Maria Moniz Freddy Valois Robert and Barbara Schneider

# Join the League of Women Voters:

### **Democracy in Action!**

You do not have to be a resident of Falmouth to join. Membership dues are \$50 for an individual membership and \$25 for an additional household member.

If you wish to join the League, send your check made out to the address below. Include your name, mailing address, and phone number.

If you prefer, go to our website at <u>www.lwvf.org</u>. Click on "Join" to join or renew and pay online.

