



League of Women Voters[®] of Falmouth Bulletin

January 2023

Steering Committee Report

A new year is a wonderful opportunity for us to reflect on how far we have come as an organization. In the past year, we have continued our tradition of hosting amazing programs, most notably our Candidates Nights, which are important tools for informing local voters. We have officially established two new committees: DEIB—Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, and Civics, both of which build on the efforts the League has been working toward.

It is also a time to decide what we want for our organization for the new year and for our League's future. There are opportunities to work with the schools as they develop their civics curriculum. During a year leading up to a major election, we have the opportunity to have an impact on pivotal legislation and local government. We have an opportunity to create and share effective programs and make further progress on DEIB initiatives.

Growing and engaging our membership is the key to strengthening our impact and ensuring our League's future and longevity. We have the opportunity during the next year to actively recruit new members, an area where we have had success. We must continue to encourage member engagement in League activities and create new opportunities for member engagement.

If you are interested in getting involved in committees, please check out the committees on our website and in the League directory. Reach out to Committee Chairs directly or contact me as the Membership Chair (mistyniemeyer13@gmail.com cell: 912-996-3985) and I will put you in touch with the committee that best fits your interests. Reach

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out if you have additional suggestions for any membership recruitment or engagement ideas!

Here's to a great 2023 for our League!

— **Misty Niemeyer**

Words of Empowerment For a New Year

The temptation may be great to think or say, "Glad to see THIS year end," particularly in our current environment. I would urge you to avoid doing so. In the words of the poet and pacifist Edith Lovejoy Pierce (1904-1983):

"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day."

My best wishes to each of you for a healthy, blissful and incredibly powerful 2023!

—**Maro Titus**

Member News

Volunteer Opportunity



Yes, you! Sitting there in your chair reading this Bulletin and thinking about what you still have to do today. We need you to THINK AHEAD instead, to the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Falmouth. This meeting, the most important of the year, is scheduled to happen in May.

But it won't happen without you. It takes a village, remember: to choose a date, arrange a venue, plan refreshments, arrange for speakers, work up a schedule of events, send invitations, and more. If there are many of us working on this, no one will have too heavy a load of responsibility. So will you help?

What is the first step? Get in touch with annual meeting chair Maro Titus at marotitus@msn.com. Or call her at 917-991-8013 to volunteer. You'll be making a real contribution—to our League and to our town.

There's plenty of time before the meeting to get everything done. But the time to start planning is now! So please, pick up the phone or sit down to your keyboard and get in touch with Maro.

Voter Service Meeting

The kickoff meeting of the 2023 Voter Service Committee will take place on Wednesday, January 18, at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. The Zoom address and agenda will be announced to the entire membership during the preceding week. We look forward to seeing you.

— **Sylvia Szulkin**
Voter Service Chair

State Program Planning

Every two years local Leagues have an opportunity to propose areas of focus for LWVMA Program and Action for the biennium (fiscal years 2024, 2025) through state program planning. I encourage everyone to participate at our meeting in the Town Hall meeting room on January 19 at 7 p.m. We will discuss and make recommendations to the state League in preparation for the LWVMA convention in June. I will be moderating the program and am looking for a volunteer to tabulate results to send to LWVMA.

I look forward to hearing from you.

— **Janet Lauer**
Steering Committee Chair



In Memoriam
Stephen S.
Fassett

Help the League and Gain a New Skill

The League of Women Voters of Falmouth presents a number of interesting and informative programs each year to educate our local population. We introduce and explore issues of concern to the voting citizenry, and we keep our community up-to-date on the important work of our local, regional, and national governance.

Many – but not all - of these programs are filmed by FCTV, our community's nonprofit media center.



In order to expand our reach into the community, the League is looking for interested members to take the 3-class camera and production training given by FCTV. Having trained League members would enable us to film and then disseminate more of our programs without having to rely on the schedule of FCTV volunteers. We are assured that the training does not require a technical background, and indeed, trained volunteers often continue their production education!

If you are interested, please contact Lynne Rozsa, League liaison with FCTV: lynrozsa@gmail.com

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Workshop

In keeping with the dedication of the League of Women Voters to educating voters, the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee is partnering with a purpose. In collaboration with the Legislative and Voter Service committees, we will offer a workshop for students at Falmouth Academy on March 25th. Stay tuned for more.

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Legislative Committee Report

The Legislative Committee met via Zoom on December 12 to discuss an agenda for the first two years (2023-24) of the new state legislative term and to discuss a public program for the Legislative Committee to present on March 16.

Past experience indicates that little, if any, legislation will be enacted by our March 16, 2023 meeting. Indeed, we probably would be lucky to see good legislative progress by March 2024. However, there is one possible exception: Common Start and related early childhood programs.

Common Start is the effort to improve daycare and early childhood education, with attention to both funding for programs and assistance to families to defray the cost. I attended a statewide Common Start session on ZOOM and was delighted to find I was among approximately 100 attendees. If I have it right, **funding** for a Common-Start-like program was approved by the state Senate but got sidetracked in the House at the end of the session. I believe there will be an early effort in the next session to push a new and improved bill that will establish the parameters of the Common Start program along with an effort to get funding passed in both houses. Somehow, funding was considered first, thereby putting the cart before the horse. In any event, when bills are introduced, we will be lobbying in support.

These plans for Common Start gave us the incentive to plan a March public program around childhood and education issues. In addition to Common Start, we have civics education in the Falmouth Schools, possible discussion about reducing the voting age, and possible issues about changing school starting time for teenagers. Our guests for the proposed panel would include, but not be limited to, our three legislators: Susan Moran, David Vieira, and Dylan Fernandes.

As the legislative session moves along, we also hope to branch out in our advocacy work. Workforce housing and gun control issues are among the issues we have highlighted. Although the driver's license bill is now law, it is possible that other immigration-related bills will be introduced that the Massachu-

setts League supports and, if so, we may work for their passage as well.

AND PLEASE: Our member Kerry Walton is now Chair of the **Falmouth Affordable Housing Committee**, which I believe has lost two members. If you are interested in serving on this very important committee, please contact Kerry. Also, although our League **Legislative Committee** functions quite well as a small group, we would very much like to grow. We welcome new ideas and additional helpers. If you are interested, please get in touch with me – Judy Ziss – to explore joining us.

—Judy Ziss

Civics Committee Report

The Civics Committee was formed to be a resource for the schools in implementing the state law that requires all students to do two civics projects: one in eighth grade and a second at some point in high school. We understand that the Falmouth High School sophomores will begin work on their civics projects in February, return to them sporadically through the school year, and complete them in May or June. Students will present project reports in their classrooms at the end of the school year. We are invited to send one or two League members as an audience for individual classroom presentations. If you would like to be on a list to attend, please contact Civics Committee member Mary Fran Buckley (maryfran55@earthlink.net), and we will be in touch with you as the presentations are scheduled.

The Social Studies Department will provide the students with an Advocacy Guide we have prepared, relying heavily on the template prepared by the Needham League. We also want to make sure that

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Natural Resources Panel

Speakers (left to right): Amy Lowell, Eric Turkington, Scott McGann, Andrew Gottlieb, and Brian Baumgaertel



The Natural Resources Committee hosted a panel discussion on the Future of Wastewater Management in Falmouth on November 17 at the Falmouth Public Library. Panelists included Amy Lowell (Falmouth Wastewater Superintendent), Eric Turkington (Falmouth Water Quality Management Committee Chair), Scott McGann (Falmouth Health Agent), Andrew Gottlieb (Executive Director of the Association to Preserve Cape Cod), and Brian Baumgaertel (Director of the Massachusetts Alternative Septic System Test Center). The discussion was filmed and broadcast live by FCTV and may still be viewed at <https://youtube/-RyHmdRUz3w>.

The discussion was timely in that the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has charged all Cape Cod towns to clean up the water in coastal ponds and estuaries, and is preparing to change Title 5 septic laws to force this clean up.

Eric Turkington began with a historic perspective of Falmouth's efforts to improve water quality, including inlet widening to improve tidal flow, aquaculture, permeable reactive barriers, stormwater management, and a strict prohibition on fertilizer use in proximity to coastal ponds and estuaries. We have

14 watersheds in town, more than any other town in the state. Eleven percent of the town is sewered, with the Little Pond sewer representing the latest expansion. Water quality in Little Pond is being monitored to measure the effect of the conversion from septic systems to sewers.

Amy Lowell described the town's plan to expand the sewer treatment plant and extend sewerage to the area around Great Pond. The first phase of this is in design, and construction is expected to be completed in a few years, with the second phase to follow. This includes a sewer main connecting the Great Pond area to the West Falmouth treatment plant and expanding the sand discharge beds at the plant. Alternative wastewater discharge locations are being evaluated on two town-owned East Falmouth parcels, as is a potential ocean outfall. Future planning will include Waquoit Bay, in collaboration with the town of Mashpee.

Much of the discussion related to proposed changes to Title 5 by DEP. Currently DEP is considering requiring all septic systems be upgraded to Innova-

Continued on next page

Natural Resources Panel, cont.

tive/Alternative (I/A) systems within five years (+/- 15,000 systems in Falmouth), or allowing the town to propose watershed permits detailing specific methods of improving water quality over a period of 20 years.

Scott McGann described the design and function of conventional septic systems that are good at controlling bacteria and viruses but poor at removing nitrogen. Innovative/Alternative septic systems are better at removing nitrogen, at least to drinking water standards, but few are effective to much more stringent watershed standards. He emphasized that forcing the installation of 15,000 I/A systems within five years was impractical and would not be effective in meeting the watershed improvement goal.

Brian Baumgaertel described three very promising I/A systems, two of which are proprietary and based largely in septic tank improvements, and the third non-proprietary “layer Cake” septic field system developed by George Heufelder. These do require monitoring and quarterly maintenance. He suggested that groups of parcels combine to contract for monitoring and maintenance services, using remote sensing for greater efficiency. There are many I/A proprietary systems being developed, but only a few have enough installation track records to be easily approved at this time.

Andrew Gottlieb described recent developments at the state level that make the next five years ideal for towns to invest in wastewater treatment infrastructure. These include a large pool of money available to towns on Cape Cod for wastewater infrastructure at 0% interest, and a program tapping overnight accommodation tax funds to forgive 25% of that loan money. The I/A system mandate is largely intended to apply political pressure from homeowners to towns so that they choose the watershed permit option. Barnstable County has developed favorable loan terms for residential sewer/septic upgrades as well.

Discussion among the panelists was lively and there were many questions from the audience. Details of



the Alternative Septic Test Center can be found at <https://www.masstc.org/the-test-center/about>. Details of the Great Pond Sewer expansion can be found at <https://www.falmouthma.gov/1350/Great-Pond-Targeted-Watershed-Management>. For more on proposed Title 5 changes see https://www.capenews.net/regional_news/massdep-extends-comment-period-for-proposed-title-5-changes/article_e147c8f9-ea72-5743-aff0-708016c317fa.html.

— **Richard Johnson**

Civics Committee Report, cont.

members of the public, including officials and organizations, know about these student projects. We plan to write an article for *The Falmouth Enterprise* and to take other steps to ensure that, when a student seeks community input, the person who is contacted understands the need for a response. In this connection, we are looking into ways to tap into our League membership to facilitate such contacts when they would be helpful to the students. As the school year progresses, we will do our best to keep all of you informed.

— **Judy Ziss,**
for the Civics Committee

Emerging from History's Footnotes: Frances Perkins

If you are receiving Social Security payments, appreciate the 40-hour workweek, agree that child labor practices should be banned, Frances Perkins is the person to recognize and thank. Although her name is not attached to New Deal accomplishments, her fingerprints are all over the legislation. Her biographer Kirstin Downey details Perkins' role in *The Woman Behind the New Deal: Frances Perkins, FDR's Secretary of Labor and His Moral Conscience*.

In 1933, when Frances Perkins met with president-elect Franklin Roosevelt to discuss a position in his administration, she had in hand the accomplishments she had in mind as the new Secretary of Labor: a 40-hour workweek, a minimum wage, banning child labor, direct federal aid for unemployment relief, Social Security, a revitalized public employment service, and health insurance. By the end of her 12 years as Labor Secretary, Perkins' only regret was that she could not bring about a national health insurance.

Downey notes that "The scope of her list was breathtaking. She was proposing a fundamental and radical restructuring of American society, with enactment of historic social welfare and labor laws. To succeed, she would have to overcome opposition from the courts, business, labor unions, conservatives." Frances Perkins told FDR, "Nothing like this has ever been done in the United States before. You know that, don't you?" Roosevelt listened to her and acknowledged that she was, indeed, the perfect candidate for a position in his Cabinet — a historic move in naming the first female Cabinet member, and in the Labor Department, of all places! In 12 years as Labor Secretary, she almost completed all of her goals.

Frances Perkins grew up in Worcester, Massachusetts. Her father encouraged her to pursue higher education; Frances graduated from Mount Holyoke in 1902 and received a master's degree in political science from Columbia University in 1910. While living in Chicago after graduating from Mount Holyoke, Frances met Jane Addams and lived in Addams' settlement house, Hull House.

In 1911, while visiting friends who lived on Washington Square in New York City, Frances witnessed the devastating Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire. As she watched women plunge to their deaths, the fire became a turning point for Frances. More than ever determined to make changes to workplace conditions, she realized that she would need "allies and politicians who actually had the power to make things happen."

Frances Perkins met and worked with Al Smith (future New York governor and presidential candidate), was introduced to Teddy Roosevelt, and eventually worked with Franklin Roosevelt when he was governor of New York. After working with her for a number of years, FDR recognized Frances' intelligence and commitment to causes he supported. His nomination of Frances Perkins as Labor Secretary was evidence of his confidence in her.

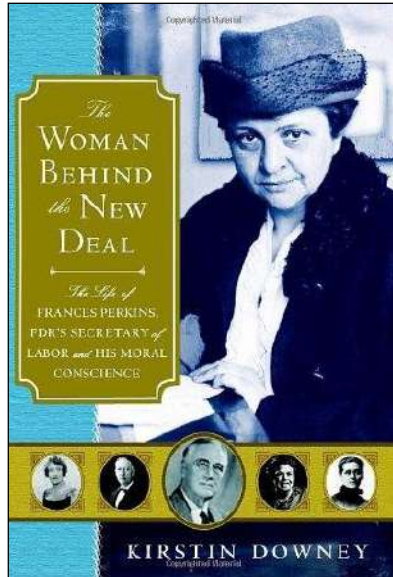


Although she had FDR's full support behind her, Frances Perkins suffered abuse at the hands of detractors. She was, of course, accused of being a lesbian and a socialist. Her husband, Paul Caldwell Wilson, suffered from mental illness and was confined, for much of his life, to a sanatorium. Frances was accused of causing his mental illness because she was a strong and successful woman. FDR's Cabinet was wary of having Frances present during meetings; they believed they "couldn't be themselves" with a woman in the room.

Continued on next page

Frances Perkins, cont.

Frances fought against all of these roadblocks, continued to press for her goals, and relished the relationship she had with President Roosevelt. She stayed behind the scenes, yet had an incredible influence on New Deal policies. Kirstin Downey notes at the end of her biography:



The secret of Frances' success was that she had done what she did selflessly, without hope of personal gain or public recognition, for those who would come afterward. It was perpetuation of the Hull House tradition of the old teaching the young how to advocate for the yet-unborn.

It is a great historic irony that Frances is now virtually unknown. Factory and office occupancy codes, fire escapes and other fire-prevention mechanisms are her legacy. About 44 million people collect Social Security checks each month; millions receive unemployment and worker's compensation or the minimum wage; others get to go home after an eight-hour day because of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Very few know the name of the woman responsible for their benefits. (P. 397)

And when she stepped down from office, she told Felix Frankfurter: "I came to work for God, FDR, and the millions of forgotten, plain, common working men. The last conversation ... I had with FDR was of such a nature that I could say with the Psalmist, 'My cup runneth over and surely goodness and mercy shall follow me.'" (P. 398)

—Mary Fran Buckley

Make your voice heard today!

Contact Information for Your Legislators

Senator Susan Moran
617-722-1330
Susan.Moran@masenate.gov

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

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Letters to the Editor

The Falmouth Enterprise

Letters may 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 letters@capecodonline.com or mail to Letters, Cape Cod Times, 319 Main St., Hyannis, MA 02601.

The Boston Globe

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

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Member Event Calendar

January 18, 4:30 p.m.	Voter Service meeting on Zoom
January 19, 7 p.m.	State Planning meeting, at the Town Hall meeting room
January 24, 7 p.m.	Board meeting on Zoom
February 16, 7 p.m.	Local planning meeting; location TBD
February 21, 7 p.m.	Board meeting on Zoom

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 www.lwvf.org. Click on "Join" to join or renew and pay online.



LWVF Friends 2022-2023

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Maria Moniz
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Submissions for the February issue of the LWVF Bulletin are due on February 1, 2023. Please send copy, photos, and other material to both of these addresses:

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