



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

November 2023

## ***Steering Committee Report***

Congressman Thomas “Tip” O’Neill, from Cambridge Massachusetts, famously declared while serving as Speaker of the House of Representatives: “All politics is local.” His constituents turned out to vote for him over decades because he understood and responded to the bread and butter issues that had the greatest impact on their daily lives.

As our League gears up for the 2024 elections, one of our biggest challenges will be to motivate potential voters to register to vote and actually cast a ballot in the May 2024 local elections. The Voter Service Committee will be working on ways to encourage voters to exercise their democratic rights in elections that directly affect their pocketbooks and the tenor of community life. A live Candidates Night will be organized by the Voter Service Committee in concert with Falmouth Public Television, and re-broadcast on FCTV several times before Election Day.

But the Voter Service Committee is not the only group in our League that will work on improving voter turnout. League committees studying local transportation, civics education, natural resources, and



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diversity, equity and inclusion, will provide information on the importance of local elections in each of these areas of concern.

Local election turnout is not just a numbers game. The number and quality of candidates can be affected by interest in local elections. And let's not forget that candidates in local elections sometimes morph into successful candidates on the state-wide and national levels.

So what you do to encourage your friends and neighbors to vote in May could affect many years of civic, economic, and political life.

— **Sylvia Szulkin**  
**LWVF Spokesperson**

## ***Legislative Committee Report***

The Legislative Committee's most recent focus has been in response to messages from the Massachusetts League of Women Voters (LWVM) regarding events on Beacon Hill. We again urged support of Common Start and pushed for passage of the all-encompassing firearms bill that has now passed the House. Currently, prompted by the press report of a recent hearing, we are in the process of commenting on a bill addressing the use of facial recognition technology. If, at some point, bills of special interest to us are not making news, we will send emails reminding our legislators of our support for other pieces of legislation that we believe are important.

Each year the Legislative Committee organizes a public program, usually in March. We are scheduling the 2024 program for Thursday, March 21. We have asked our three legislators, Senator Susan Moran, Representative David Vieira, and Representative Dylan Fernandes, to put the date on their calendars and have reserved the Hermann Room at the library. We have not yet decided whether we will emphasize specific issues or whether we will invite additional speakers.

We also have a piece of good news. New League member Helen Bresnahan, who was featured in last month's Bulletin, has just joined the Legislative Committee. Our previously tiny committee has now grown to a membership of eight! These are exciting times for us.

—***Judy Ziss***  
***Chair***  
***Legislative Committee***

## ***Civics Committee Report***

In late October, Bob Haskell and I had a cordial and informative meeting with Mike Feeney at Falmouth High School. As in the past, the Civics Project will be part of the US history curriculum for sophomores; this year three teachers, rather than four, will be teaching the course. This year, like last year, the Civics Project will be scheduled to begin in February to coincide with the lead-up to Town Meeting. One benefit of the linkage to Town Meeting is that students who select issues on the Town Meeting warrant are able to see their issue resolved.

We discussed the best way to make ourselves available when students have trouble communicating with community members to obtain information or advocate. We will consider alternatives as the school year progresses. We also told Mr. Feeney that we might want to email community leaders before the projects begin to make sure that they know about the mandatory Civics Project and to solicit their cooperation if they are approached. He liked this idea, and I promised to clear any communication with him before it was sent. Regarding our attendance at presentations, he said that when students knew we would be attending it seemed to energize them.

We agreed to meeting again in December.

—***Judy Ziss***  
***Chair***  
***Civics Committee***



**WE INVITE YOU TO A FILM SCREENING**  
**Thursday, NOVEMBER 9 from 6 - 9 pm**

# ***JUST MERCY***

**“... takes us inside America’s broken criminal justice system and compels us to confront inequality and injustice”**

**Discussion to follow**

**LOCATION:**  
**HERMANN ROOM**  
**FALMOUTH LIBRARY**  
**300 MAIN STREET**

Use the entrance on  
Katherine Lee Bates Road



**Questions? Contact us at:**

[cdmapp@gmail.com](mailto:cdmapp@gmail.com)

## ***Voter Service Committee Report***

The Voter Service Committee has set the date for Candidates Night, 2024. It will be hosted at the Falmouth Public Library in the Hermann Room on Wednesday evening, April 24, 2024. The Committee is also in the planning stages of sponsoring a community event for a public reading of the Constitution. We are interested in purchasing multiple pocket sized booklets of the U.S. Constitution.



In an effort to create interest in the upcoming presidential election, the Committee is considering sponsoring a student poster display focusing on the message about the importance of voting and that voting is exercising our voice for who will represent us. The posters to be completed by students from area schools will have a QR code leading to [Vote411.org](https://www.vote411.org).

At an upcoming meeting, the Committee will hear a talk about voting machines. League member Larry Moore will address questions and concerns about how voting machines function, how ballots are developed and processed, and how audits are conducted.

— ***Felicia Bordick***  
***Chair, Voter Service***

## ***In Memoriam: Joanne Voorhis***

Joanne had been a co-founder of the LWVF — and indeed a leader in the town — as long as I had known her. She was on the Finance Committee before Megan Jones got the Town Moderator to



have me “elected” to that important town board. I think Joanne was the first woman ever to serve on the Finance Committee.

For years we relied on Joanne's skill as a moderator to run our Candidates Nights and to keep both candidates and audience members courteous and relevant. She was our Parliamentarian at Annual Meetings, keeping us all on track. In 2002 she gave the Board an excellent lesson in Parliamentary Procedure and Roberts Rules of Order.

As for Joanne's work as our Treasurer, my main memory is admiration for the clarity of her reports. I especially appreciated her ability to explain the numbers and to summarize them for the rest of us when I had to become familiar with various town budgets for the Finance Committee and do the same thing for Town Meeting members.

Joanne had the best qualities of a leader: she could see a good path forward, she could bring others along with her, and she could develop the next generation of leaders to take on the tasks that keep an organization strong and healthy through the years.

— ***Judy Stetson***



## Natural Resources Committee Report

On October 12, Brian Baumgaertel and Bryan Horsley of the Massachusetts Alternative Septic System Test Center gave a presentation on Adding Tools to the (wastewater treatment) Toolbox. The LWVF Natural Resources Committee invited both men; the event was held in the Hermann Foundation Room of the Falmouth Public Library. The public presentation was well attended and well received.

Bryan Horsley began by reviewing the poor water quality of many Cape Cod ponds and estuaries, caused largely by excess Nitrogen (N) and Phosphorus (P) leaching out of septic systems close to these water bodies. These excess nutrients cause algae blooms and deplete oxygen in the water, causing fish and bird death. We are accustomed to thinking of roads, power lines, sewers, and telecommunication systems as infrastructure; however,

septic systems can also be thought of as distributed infrastructure, and need to be managed better than we do at present.

Brian Baumgaertel continued by describing standard septic system function, which typically releases 65% of N and 75% of P in residential wastewater into the ground water. Innovative/Alternative (I/A) septic systems are capable of reducing that N discharge to 10% or lower. These I/A systems can be tank-based or soil absorption system based. He reviewed the three best performing technologies and three others that are nearly as good. Some of these I/A systems are nearing MASS DEP approval for general use; currently, all require regular testing to monitor their efficacy, at the homeowner's expense. Phosphorus removal is also being studied at the Center but is less well documented.

Mr. Horsley continued by describing ecological sanitation technologies: composting toilets and urine diversion systems. These remove most N and P from the wastewater stream and greatly reduce ground water pollution but have regulatory and social stigma hurdles to be met. Pee-cycling removes the lion's share of N and P from wastewater and captures these valuable resources



*Bryan Horsley introduced the audience to the concept of "eco-toilets" that produce compost for ecological sanitation.*

Continued on next page

## ***Natural Resources Committee Report, cont.***

for re-use as fertilizer after collection and pasteurization. Eco-toilets collect feces and process them on-site to a safe and useful compost. Several current brands and examples were shown, and a Cotuit example can be viewed in a video at <https://undercurrent-productions.com/portfolio/how-composting-toilets-could-save-cape-cod/>.

Mr. Baumgaertel then spoke of ways to manage Distributed Wastewater Treatment Infrastructure, by creating Responsible Management Entities (RME) that monitor, test, and maintain many on-site residential systems in neighborhoods or in cluster developments. Barnstable County has begun a 5-year study to develop RMEs and has created AquiFund,

a loan program to help homeowners upgrade their septic systems with 0-4% loans when participating in a community-based watershed permit. This will become very important as towns develop and file watershed permits with MASS DEP; the loans will also be available for connection to extended sewer lines.

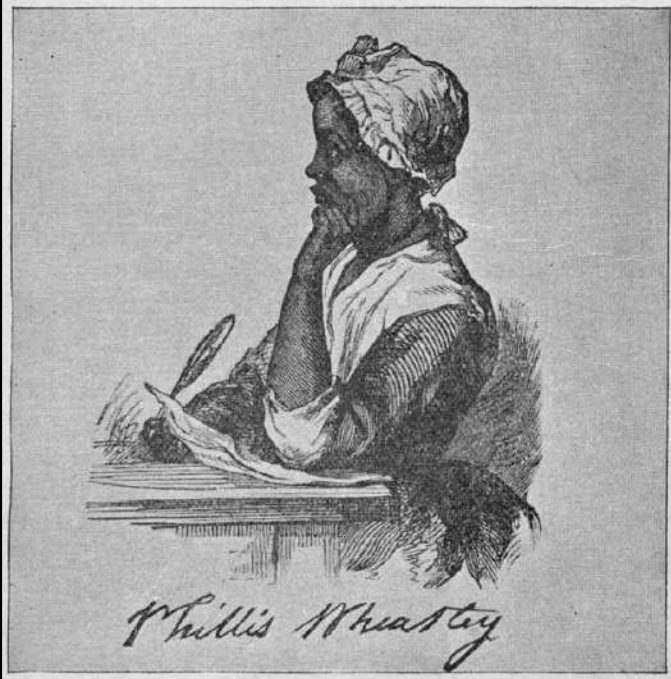
There were many questions from the audience. Hilde Maingay and Earle Barnhardt of the Green Center in Falmouth shared some of their research and experience. FCTV filmed the presentation and expects to broadcast it in the coming weeks.

**—Richard Johnson  
Natural Resources  
Committee**



*Brian Baumgaertel explains the science behind the proposed septic system upgrades and answered many questions from the audience.*

## ***Poet Phillis Wheatley on Stage***



*Friday, November 3  
to Sunday, December 3, 2023*

Revolutionary Spaces, which runs the Old South Meeting House and the Old State House in Boston, will be premiering a new play at the Old South Meeting House called "*Phillis in Boston*." It will tell part of the life story of 18th century Black poet Phillis Wheatley. Kidnapped at age seven from West Africa, she was enslaved and taken to Boston, where she was purchased by the Wheatley family. They soon realized her abilities and gave her an education. The play is written by Ade Solanke, an award-winning Black British playwright.

The Old South Meeting House, where the play will be performed, was actually the place where Wheatley and other revolutionaries were members of the congregation.

You can read more information and purchase tickets on their website at <https://revolutionaryspaces.org/explore/upcoming-programs/phillis-in-boston/>.

## ***Olivia White Recognized for Her Contributions***



LWVF member Olivia White has been recognized recently by the Cape Cod Women's Association for her many activities on behalf of our community. She was named one of the "6 over 60," women "of a certain age who persevere through life's challenges" to give back to the place where they live.

In addition to the League, Olivia has worked with many other civic groups, including the Falmouth Newcomers Club, the Cape Cod Council of Churches, and the Falmouth Historical Society.

The award is given to women who have overcome great adversity, supported Cape Cod and the Islands through their leadership and community service as volunteers, or tried to improve life for those living and working here. Congratulations, Olivia, and thank you for all you have done!





**Stephanie Miele**  
Certified Piano Technician

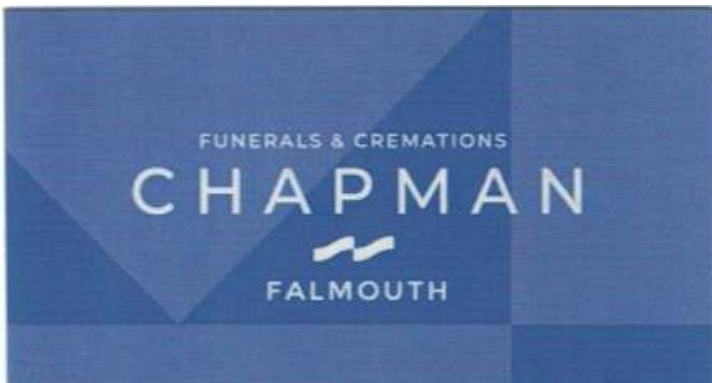
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***Make your voice heard today!***

## **Contact Information** **for Your Legislators**

**(Be sure to include your name and phone number when writing.)**

Senator Susan Moran

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Representative David Vieira

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Representative Dylan Fernandes

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[Dylan.Fernandes@mahouse.gov](mailto:Dylan.Fernandes@mahouse.gov)

Congressman Bill Keating

508-771-6868

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## **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](mailto:saito@capenews.net).

### ***The Cape Cod Times***

Email to [letters@capecodonline.com](mailto: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](mailto:letter@globe.com) or mail to Letters to the Editor, The Boston Globe, PO Box 55819, Boston, MA 02205.



## LWVF Board of Directors 2023-2024

### Board Members

First Vice-President	Janet Lauer*
Second Vice-President	Meghan Hanawalt*
Secretary	Richard Johnson*
Treasurer	Joan Boyer
Legislative	Judith Ziss
Natural Resources	Richard Johnson, Kathy Mortenson, Denise Morreale, John Carroll, Sally Palmer
Voter Service	Felicia Bordick and Chinna Mapp*
Spokesperson	Sylvia Szulkin*
Publicity/Bulletin Co-Editors	Mary Fran Buckley, Eileen Mattingly
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging	Chinna Mapp
Membership	Misty Niemeyer
Observer Corps	Meghan Palanza
At-Large	Lynne Rozsa
At-Large	Karen Epstein
Annual Meeting	<b>Position Open</b>

### Off-Board Specialists

Historian	Kathy Mortenson
Social Media	Penny Duby
Email Communication	Kathy Mortenson
Webmaster	Gayle Simundza

### Nominating Committee

Chair:	Stephanie Miele
Off Board:	Kathy Mortenson, Olivia White
Board members:	Karen Epstein, Misty Niemeyer

\*Member of Steering Committee

## Meeting and Event Calendar

**November 9,**  
**6 p.m.** Film screening and discussion of *Just Mercy*, Hermann Room, Falmouth Main Library

**November 28,**  
**7 p.m.** Board meeting on Zoom

**No meetings in December**

### Contact us:

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Website: [www.lwvf.org](http://www.lwvf.org)

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

## Join the League of Women Voters: Democracy in Action!

You do not have to be a resident of Falmouth to join. Membership dues are \$55 for an individual membership and \$25 for an additional household member. A discounted rate is available for students. 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](http://www.lwvf.org). Click on "Join" to join or renew and pay online.



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

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eileenmattingly@yahoo.com