



League of Women Voters[®] of Falmouth Bulletin

December 2024

Steering Committee Report

As I write this report, sunset is at 4:12 p.m.; we are creeping slowly to the “shortest day” — in reality, all days are 24 hours and December 21 is the day with the fewest hours of daylight. It is tempting to “curse the darkness” this time of year!

On the other hand, these darker days can be an opportunity for self-reflection, a time to look back over the past year and anticipate the new year on the horizon. The wide variety of holiday observations this month celebrate peace and hope; it’s no coincidence they arrive during the darker days of the year!

Lighting candles are traditional during Hanukkah and at Christmas. The website oneforisrael.org notes that “The light of Hanukkah shines bright in the darkness... The light of Hanukkah overcame the darkness. Evil was pushed back...” The celebration of Diwali in India (which was actually this past November) is known as “the festival of lights.” Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture, based on African harvest festival traditions. Seven candles that are lighted in a *kinara* symbolize the seven principles of Kwanzaa.

Another way to embrace the December darkness is to adopt the Swedish custom of *fika*. Defined briefly, *fika* translates as “coffee

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break.” As practiced in Sweden, however, it is a far broader concept. *Fika* is a break in the daily or weekly work day, when workers close their laptops, turn from their computers and telephones, or put down their tools to join their fellow workers for coffee, tea, and, most importantly, a sweet pastry. Conversation is definitely encouraged, as long as it has nothing to do with work. In this way, fellow workers relax with each other. No need to take a break from work! Invite a few friends to celebrate and enjoy the warmth of this Swedish fellowship custom.

As we anticipate the new year, I invite our members to consider our role in the League of Women Voters, as presented on their

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Natural Resources Program on Food Waste Composting

The Natural Resources Committee hosted a program on food waste composting November 21 at the Gus Canty Center. Mary Ryther, Recycling and Solid Waste Coordinator for Falmouth Department of Public Works (DPW) and Carmela Mayeski, Learning Partnership Specialist at Falmouth Public Schools, addressed this topic.

Forty percent of the food produced in the US is wasted. Methane gas from rotting food is a huge contributor to greenhouse gasses, greater than gasses produced by global aviation. Food waste accounted for 24% of solid waste in 2018 (much more if compostable paper products are added). Falmouth is committed to reducing solid waste by 30% by 2030; food waste composting is a big part of meeting that goal.

Many Falmouth residents bring food waste to composting collection sites at Teaticket and Thomas Landers Road, and many more compost at home. Ms. Mayeski noted that all Falmouth public schools compost food waste from kitchens and cafeterias. This program has removed 26 tons of waste from the solid waste stream over the last school year. Some

restaurants on the Cape have begun food waste composting.

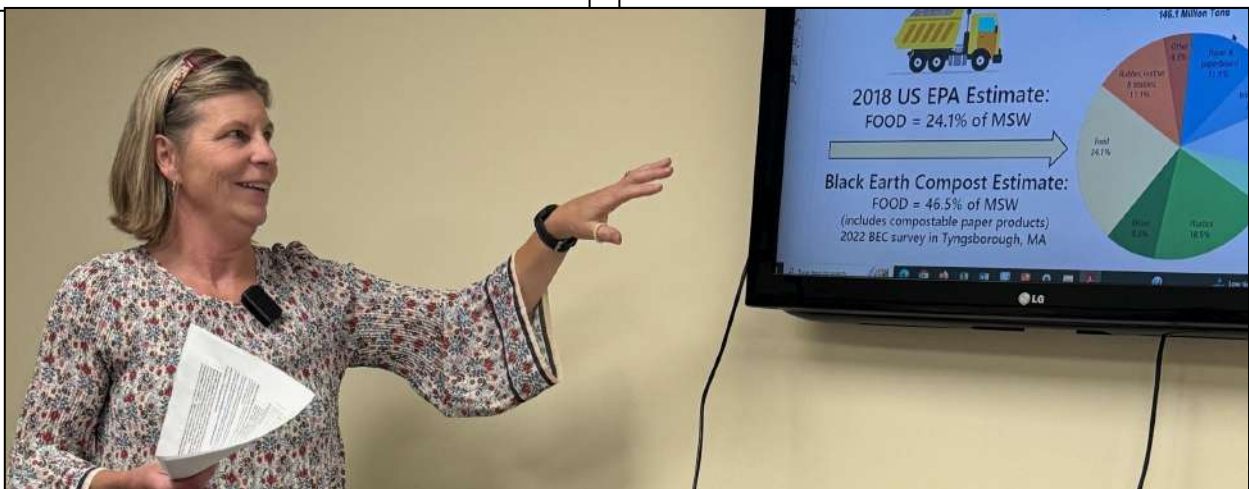
Food waste is currently collected by Black Earth Compost for processing off-Cape. We hope to have a composting facility on the Cape in the next few years, which would reduce trucking costs. (There is an article in *The Enterprise*, November 29, page 5, by Alan Robinson of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee, regarding composting on the Upper Cape.)



Carmela Mayeski of Falmouth Public Schools

FCTV sent a cameraman to record the presentation; the link to the program is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DldWKQpcqa8>. Thanks, Lynne Rozsa, for arranging that. Thirteen people attended the presentation.

—Richard Johnson
Natural Resources Committee



Mary Ryther from the DPW explains Falmouth's goal of reducing solid waste by composting.

January All-Members Meeting

to Focus on LWVMA Reparations Survey

Our Falmouth chapter annual member meeting in January will be to discuss and perhaps reach some consensus on the various aspects of questions related to reparations. It will be from 2:00 to 3:30 on Thursday, January 23, in the Hermann room of the main Falmouth library.

Background of the Consensus Study on Reparations

At the 2023 League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) Convention, the LWV Amherst proposed a study of reparations to determine whether the LWVMA should adopt, by consensus, a position on reparations. Delegates voted by a wide margin to form a study committee. A study committee was convened and included LWVF member Meghan Hanawalt as well as three LWVCapeCod Area members - Jeanne Morrison, Mary Ott and Debra Dagwan. The committee, which continues today, produced a detailed document including the background of American chattel slavery and its legacy. The committee also developed key questions and asked local Leagues to convene consensus study committees to answer these questions.

Questions to be Answered as part of the Consensus Study

1. Should the LWVMA support educational campaigns to raise awareness of the harms caused by systemic racism in the US?

2. How should we define the group of people who should receive reparations?
3. What sort of reparations should be offered?
4. What governmental or institutional bodies should be responsible for programs offering reparations.
5. Should LWVMA take a position in support of reparations?

Activities/Deliverables

Meeting of interested LWVF members to discuss, organize, and plan LWVF January Open Meeting to raise awareness of issues and to answer the five League questions.

Introduce members' discussion at the LWVF February board meeting to vote on any consensus arrived at member meeting.

Complete LWVF consensus report and submit it to LWVMA by 3/7/2025.

Background readings

Here are links from LWVMA, which contain information about the LWVMA reparations study and one of the key documents to read as an introduction:

<https://lwmma.org/lwmma-reparations-study/>

"[The Case for Reparations](#)" by Ta-Nehisi Coates published by *The Atlantic*.

—Don Gibbons
Chair, DEIB Committee

Civics Subcommittee Report

On November 6, 2024, Bob Haskell (virtually) and I (in person) met with Social Studies Chair Mike Feeney at Falmouth High School. Among other things, we learned that our three members of the Massachusetts legislature (current Representative and newly-elected State Senator Dylan Fernandes, long-time Representative David Vieira, and newly-elected Representative Thomas Moakley) are Falmouth High School graduates!

When we met with Mike, we also were updated regarding the MCAS exam. Although eighth graders must take the MCAS, passing the MCAS is no longer a requirement. This change removes some of the pressure regarding MCAS. However, an MCAS score could have an impact on assignments in high school, such as participation in honors classes.

During the current school year, we will continue to have the opportunity to sit in on classes, in groups of one or two, when the sophomores present their civics projects in the spring. We plan to next meet with Mike just before the holiday break (December 20) because that is generally a slow day for him.

— *Judy Ziss*
for the Civics Committee

Legislative Committee Report

We have reserved the Hermann Room at the main branch of the Falmouth library for the Legislative Committee's annual public meeting, which is scheduled for Thursday, March 20, under the LWVF's 2024-25 calendar. I have sent a save-the-date note inviting our legislators to participate, promising more details in the future as we plan the meeting itself. Stay tuned.

Regarding legislation, I am happy to report that candidates can now deduct childcare expenses as campaign expenses when they run for office in Massachusetts. That was one of the proposals we supported and it is now law.

— *Judy Ziss*
Chair, Legislative Committee

Save the Dates for 2025

Members' Meeting on Reparations

Thursday, January 23, 2:00-3:30 p.m.

Hermann Room

Falmouth Main Public Library

State Planning Meeting

Thursday, February 20

Time and place TBD

Legislative Committee Public Meeting with Legislators

Thursday, March 20, 7 p.m.

Hermann Room

Falmouth Main Public Library

Voter Service: Food for Thought

I'd like to thank and acknowledge Felicia Bordick for the work she's done as Chair of the Voter Service Committee. It's been (and continues to be) a pleasure to serve with her and the other wonderful committee members.

We met for lunch at the Upper Cape Tech Regional High School and discussed ideas for increasing our League's membership. UCT's Culinary Arts students apply their learning in real-world scenarios as they run a restaurant and serve members of the community.

As we look forward to the new year, let's think about community outreach efforts that engage first-time voters. Let us with great care serve as examples for others to follow as we partner with schools to encourage participation and engagement in the civic process. Let's challenge eligible students to register and pre-register to vote before leaving high

school. We can explore the role that the League could take to assist schools in reaching a 100% registered status.

Can we plan a program or write a grant that creates a spark? When I was a high school student, our teachers would offer pizza parties and ice cream socials as incentives. When they wanted our perspective on things, they'd offer an essay competition with a certificate, trophy, and, in some cases, a small monetary award for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. Might we offer an essay competition on "The Importance of Registering and Exercising the Right to Vote in All Elections"? Some food for thought as we move forward together.

***—Chinna Mapp
Chair, Voter Service***

Steering Committee Report, cont.

website: "The League of Women Voters is a **nonpartisan, grassroots** organization working to **protect and expand voting rights** and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. We empower voters and defend democracy through **advocacy, education, and litigation**, at the local, state, and national levels." This stated purpose dovetails beautifully with Chinna Mapp's suggestions in "Food for Thought," in her Voter Service report.

Never underestimate the impact one person can have or the difference one person can make. As Buddha tells us: "Thousands of can-

dles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared."



Embrace and enjoy the lights, hopes, and fellowship of this season. Happy New Year to all!

***—Mary Fran Buckley
Co-Chair, Communications***




Stephanie Miele
 Certified Piano Technician


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 342A Gifford Street
 Falmouth, MA 02540

508-540-5164
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2024 Friends of the LWVF

Maria Moniz
 Robert and Barbara Schneider

New URL for Our LWVF Website

Our new website address for the League of Women Voters of Falmouth is now:

<https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/falmouth>

Please change your bookmarks.

Make your voice heard today!

Contact Information
for Your Legislators

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

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

Representative David Vieira
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Representative Dylan Fernandes
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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 paradise@capenews.net.

General contact email:
newsroom@capenews.net.

The Cape Cod Times

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

LWVF Board of Directors 2024-25

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|--|---|
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| Email Communication | Kathy Mortenson |
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| FCTV | Lynne Rozsa |

Nominating Committee

| | |
|-------|-----------------|
| Chair | Stephanie Miele |
|-------|-----------------|

*Member of Steering Committee

**Shared Chairmanship by Richard Johnson*, Kathy Mortenson, Denise Morreale, John Carroll, Sally Palmer. Richard Johnson is Board Representative.

Meeting and Event Calendar

No Board meeting in December

January 23, 2 p.m. — **Reparations Study**
3:30 p.m., Hermann
Room, Falmouth Library

January 28, 7 p.m. **Board meeting (Zoom)**

February 20, time/place **State planning meeting**
TBD

February 25, 7 p.m. **Board meeting (Zoom)**

Contact us:

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Website: <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/falmouth>

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 \$65 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 League of Women voters to the address in the "Contact us" box above. Include your name, mailing address, and phone number. You may also join online through our website at <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/falmouth>. Just click on "Join" and pay online.



There will be no issue of the Bulletin in January. Submissions for the February issue of the LWVF Bulletin are due by February 5, 2025. Please send copy, photos, and other material to both of these addresses:

maryfran55@earthlink.net
eileenmattingly@yahoo.com