



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

June 2026

## Steering Committee Report

Barnstable County Sheriff Donna Buckley was the guest speaker at the LWVF annual meeting May 16. Sheriff Buckley described the many services her organization offers to



towns on the Cape, such as: supporting local police forces with the Criminal Investigations Unit, coordinating 911 calls, providing radio services for public safety offices on the Cape, and supporting at-risk and other youth

through summer camp programs. The Sheriff can authorize multiplication services to assist local police forces, at their request, for large events or emergencies.

Regarding the Barnstable County Correctional Facility, the Sheriff emphasized her focus on “it’s not the crime, it’s the time,” providing in-house counseling for addiction and mental health issues as well as skills training to make the transition back into the community more successful for inmates. These training programs can provide direct aid to the public, as in the culinary arts trainees’ bread production for those in need during the partial government shutdown in late 2025. Sheriff Buckley described the Frederick Douglass Project for Social Justice, providing struc-

## Table of Contents

Steering Committee Report .....	1
Observer Corps Meeting .....	2
LWVF Annual Meeting .....	2
Reading for the 250th .....	3
<i>Falmouth in Focus</i> .....	4
Thoughts from a Founding Mother.....	5
Legislative and Press Directory .....	6
Board of Directors .....	7
Meeting and Event Calendar .....	7

tured discussions between inmates and volunteers from the community to increase understanding of Social Justice. Sheriff Buckley also described the Bridge Center, which provides continuing counseling and other support services for released prisoners.

According to Sheriff Buckley, democracy is not self-sustaining — it depends upon many institutions and the people who speak up, question, vote, run for office, and attend rallies to keep those institutions true to their mission. Normalization of erosion of democratic values, marginalization of various groups, and the outsize role of wealth in politics are constant dangers. She noted that we need to get people to stop voting against their own interests. She ended by quoting Sir

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## Member News

### Steering Committee Report, cont.

Winston Churchill: “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others that have been tried from time to time.”

The League of Women Voters is actively committed to speaking up, asking questions, and encouraging voting. We appreciate the work all of our members do to strengthen democracy.

— **Richard Johnson**  
Steering Committee

### Observer Corps Reports

#### Coming June 17

Please join League members in the Civil Defense room at Town Hall on June 17 at 6:30 p.m. for the annual reading of the Observer Reports. This is your chance to learn more about the local governance that affects all our lives. There will be reports on the following topics:

- Board of Health
- Zoning Board of Appeals
- EDIC (Economic Development and Industrial Corporation)
- Library Board of Trustees
- Conservation Commission
- Energy Commission

PLUS there will be dessert!

— **Meghan Palanza**  
Observer Corps Chair

### LWVF Annual Meeting

The Annual Brunch and Meeting was held in the Meigs room of the Swope building in Woods Hole, Saturday, May 9, with 46 members and guests attending. Guest speaker Sheriff Donna Buckley gave a moving and powerful speech, and received a standing ovation when she finished. LWVMA co-president Courtney Henderson attended and responded to questions.

The Civic Leadership Award was presented to Michael Palmer, former Town Clerk, in recognition of his more than two decades of dedicated service to the Town of Falmouth. Felicia Bordick was awarded the League Leader Award for her tireless work as Voter Service Chair.



Judy Fenwick presented the complete and revised edition of *Falmouth in Focus*. The Study Committee also met with Dan Gesson and is exploring the “Transfer Tax” currently before the state legislature for further study.

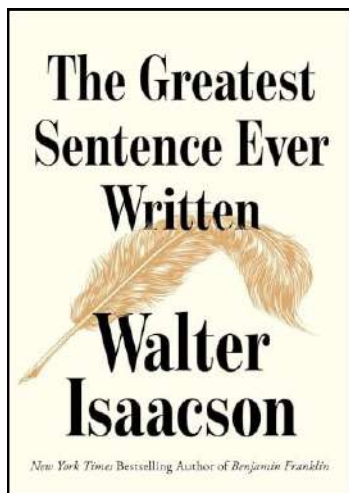
Many thanks to committee members Lisa Halvorson and Paige Garrison, whose support and hard work made the event run so smoothly, and to Marinna Martini, whose technical skills allowed attendees to enjoy a video presentation of past League events.

Thank you as well to everyone who attended and helped make the brunch and annual meeting such a robust and engaging event.

— **Sheila Scott Gordon**  
Second Vice-President, LWVF

## Reading for the 250th

In the national enthusiasm for the 250th anniversary of American independence, new nonfiction books have been streaming off the presses. One of the most unusual and interesting is *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*



by Walter Isaacson, the biographer whose work ranges from Benjamin Franklin to Elon Musk.

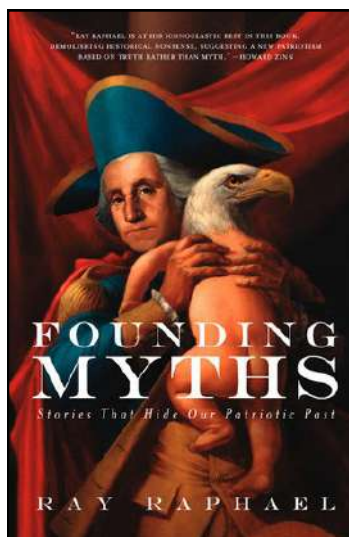
In this very short book, Isaacson dissects the first sentence of the second paragraph of the

Declaration of Independence word by word:

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."*

The reader learns the sources of Jefferson's elegant prose, including the social contract theory of John Locke and Emile Rousseau, and the work of Scottish philosopher David Hume, a friend of Benjamin Franklin. There

were edits to the original draft from Franklin, Adams, and other members of the Continental Congress. A primary resource for Jefferson was the Virginia Declaration of Rights, written by George Mason just a month before. The end result is a realization that the ideas Jefferson wrote so clearly were very much prevalent in the thought of the Enlightenment and the leading men of the times who had been educated in that philosophy. Our Declaration of Independence was unique, however, in its desire to cast off the monarchy and establish a new government that reflected the wishes of most Americans at that time.

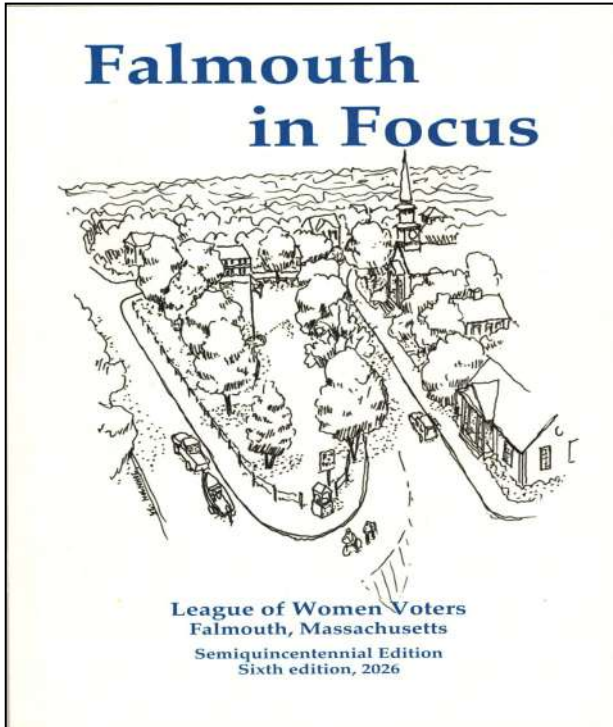


*Founding Myths* by Ray Raphael, makes a good companion book to Isaacson. His concern is not so much with the Enlightenment theories of the elites but rather with the actions and social movements of everyday Americans.

In this book, he examines thirteen well-known stories about the American Revolution and tells the reader the facts behind the legends. For example, Paul Revere is celebrated for his lone ride to warn the colonists at Lexington and Concord that the British were coming to seize their weapons. The im-

Continued on Page 5

## Falmouth in Focus



The cover illustration was designed and drawn by Richard Johnson, a board member of the LWVF and a landscape architect.

In 1954, the precursor of *Falmouth in Focus* ("Falmouth Fore and Aft") was published by the League of Women Voters of Falmouth. The first edition of *Falmouth in Focus* followed in 1968; the Bicentennial edition (the second) in 1976; the third edition in 1992; the fourth edition in 2004; and the fifth edition in 2010. Now in 2026, at the time of our Nation's Semiquincentennial, we are proud to present this sixth edition.

We dedicate this edition of *Falmouth in Focus* to the signers of the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the framers of the Constitution (1787).

As the acknowledgments note, the sixth edition was written, edited, and produced for the LWVF by Judy Fenwick, Richard Johnson,

and Kathy Mortenson, standing on the shoulders of editors of the five earlier editions.

*Falmouth in Focus* is particularly useful for those new to Falmouth. Current residents can use this edition as a reference guide to the operation of the town. Sections include: Falmouth Past and Present (from 1686 to 2026); Falmouth and the Commonwealth, County Government, and the Courts; the Town Government; Finances, to include the budget process; Land Use, the history, planning, and zoning; Recreation, focusing on open space, parks, and beaches; Safety (police and fire and rescue departments); Health and Human Services; Education, to include the school committee, the schools, and the Upper Cape Regional Technical School; Science, focusing on the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Woodwell Climate Research Center, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey; and lastly, a guide to the numerous Cultural Activities in town that include our libraries and the local radio station WCAI.

The League of Women Voters of Falmouth was established in 1954. Our League believes that the right to vote must be accompanied by responsible, informed, and active participation in government. Membership is open to all who support the purpose of the League.

Copies of *Falmouth in Focus* have been distributed to LWVF members. If you would like to obtain an additional copy, please contact Judy Fenwick to let her know.

## Reading for the 250th, cont.

age that we have actually comes from Longfellow's poem, "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." In fact, there were a number of riders, a pre-established network of communication; Revere himself was eventually detained by the British that night.

Raphael continues on through many of the stories and well-known figures that fill our textbooks in the chapters on the Revolution and its results: Sam Adams as an inciter of angry mobs, Molly Pitcher as the heroic female figure in battles, the nobility of the soldiers suffering at Valley Forge without complaint, and the hagiographic descriptions of the writers of the Constitution. He fills in with well-researched contemporary sources that point out discrepancies and omissions to the glorified tales that have shaped our national self-image.

But the end result is not to demean the Founders, but rather to show that they were in accord with movements that were happening around the colonies. A case in point: in 1774, citizens of Massachusetts were incensed with the Massachusetts Government Act, which revoked the colony's charter, took power from elected officials and gave it to Crown appointees, and restricted town meetings. Thousands of local militia men surrounded the government officials and forced them to tender their resignations. The revolution had already begun, two years before the Declaration of Independence was written and approved.

Both books are fascinating to read and provide a helpful underpinning to our textbook versions of the Revolution.

## Thoughts from a Founding Mother



As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and praise the courage and wisdom of those who drafted it, our focus has been on men like Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Benjamin Franklin.

Abigail Adams was one of the colonial women of that time who carried the burden of maintaining their homes, supporting their Patriot spouses, and even helping occasionally with supplies for the Continental Army. Abigail was an original thinker and a model of female courage. A few excerpts from her writings:

*"I long to hear that you have declared an independency.... I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember, all men would be tyrants if they could. If particular care and attention is not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any laws in which we have no voice or representation."*

*"A people fired ... with love of their country and of liberty, a zeal for the public good, and a noble emulation of glory, will not be disheartened or dispirited by a succession of unfortunate events. But like them, may we learn by defeat the power of becoming invincible."*

*"Arbitrary power is like most other things which are very hard, very liable to be broken."*

—Abigail Adams, Letters

<https://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/archive/letter/>

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

## **Contact Information for Your Legislators and Governor**

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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](mailto:paradise@capenews.net).  
General email: [newsroom@capenews.net](mailto:newsroom@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.

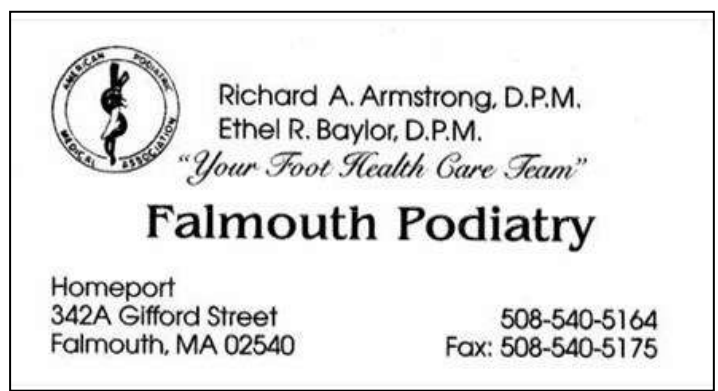
### ***The Boston Globe***


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.



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***2026 Friends of the LWVF***  
Maria Moniz

## LWVF Board of Directors 2026-27

### Board Members

First Vice-President	Janet Lauer*
Second Vice-President	Sheila Scott-Gordon*
Secretary	Richard Johnson*
Treasurer	Joan Boyer
Legislative	Judith Ziss
Natural Resources	
Voter Service	Lynne Rozsa
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging	Don Gibbons*
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Observer Corps	Meghan Palanza
Publicity/Bulletin	Mary Fran Buckley*, Eileen Mattingly
At-Large	Lisa Halvorson
At-Large	Susan Loucks
At-Large	Marinna Martini

### Off-Board Specialists

Historian	Kathy Mortenson
Facebook	Eileen Mattingly
Email Communication	Kathy Mortenson
Web Administrator	Gayle Simundza
FCTV	Lynne Rozsa

### Nominating Committee

Chair

\*Member of Steering Committee

## Meeting and Event Calendar

**Wednesday, June 17,**  
**Civil Defense Room in**  
**Town Hall, 6:30 p.m.**      **Reading of Observer**  
**Corps reports**

**Thursday, June 18, 6–7**  
**p.m. on Zoom.**      **Discussion with Fal-**  
**mouth Civil Rights**  
**Officer Lt. Ryan Hergt.**  
**Topics: hate crimes, ICE**  
**issues, and more.**

**Wednesday, July 1, in**  
**the Civil Defense room**  
**in Town Hall**      **Board meeting**

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

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

# welcome

**To our new members:**

**Donna Buckley**  
**Molly Hauck**

Please note: Submissions for the summer issue of the LWVF Bulletin are due by July 10, 2026. Please send copy, photos, and other material to both of these addresses:

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**June 2026**

**JOIN THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**

***Democracy in Action***