



League of Women Voters[®] of Falmouth Bulletin

May 2026

Steering Committee Report

The phrase “all politics is local” is often attributed to Tip O’Neill, a former Speaker of the House of Representatives. I have read two different origins for this phrase: that it was coined by O’Neill, and that it actually dates back to the early 1930s.

However, the phrase was most aptly used by O’Neill in his Massachusetts campaigns and when he was Speaker of the House. Andrew Gelman, in a FiveThirtyEight column, defines the meaning of “all politics is local” as usually “...referring to constituency service.”

Gelman also notes that “...elections in the United States have become increasingly nationalized in recent decades.” Indeed, turnout in Falmouth is very low for our annual town elections, as opposed to the turnout for mid-term and presidential elections.

Gelman notes that members of Congress are focusing on national issues such as terrorism and the Iraq War (in 2006), and this year the war with Iran. He ends his column saying “... if members of Congress want to stay around, they should remain on good terms with the powers in their states.” However he notes that he doesn’t “see this as the ‘local politics’ that people are always talking about. Sure, politicians will want to do their best when it comes to constituency service, but that’s not what kept Tip O’Neill, or most members of Congress, in power.”

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The outcomes of the local elections have a direct effect on the lives of residents. This year in Falmouth, there are contested seats for the Planning Board, School Committee, and Select Board. At our League’s Candidates Night, retiring Town Clerk Michael Palmer urged all attendees to be sure to vote — but more than that, he advocated that we urge family members, friends, and neighbors to join us at the polls.



Falmouth’s Annual Town Election Day is May 19; early voting is Monday, May 11, through Friday, May 15, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., in the Civil Defense Room on the lower level in Town Hall.

Make sure your voice is heard — it’s important!

—**Mary Fran Buckley**
Steering Committee

Member News

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

Zoom Mini-Lesson

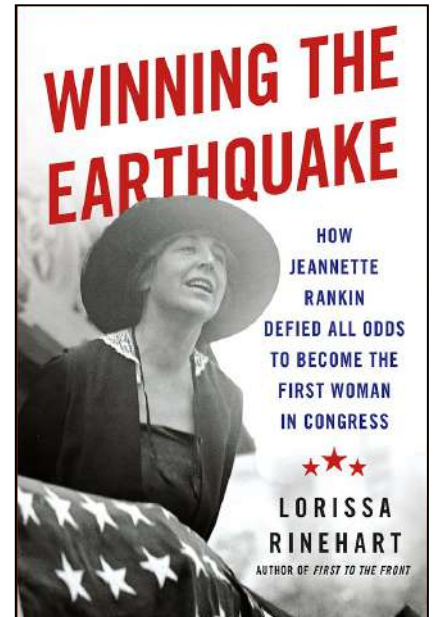
When you attend a large Zoom meeting for the LWV or other organizations, and you wish to ask a question or make a comment, you can electronically raise your hand to let the moderator know. Just click on the word “React” at the bottom of the screen, and then on the words “Raise hand.” A small hand icon will appear on your picture, and it will disappear after you have begun talking.

Another way to ask a question or offer a comment is to click on “Chat” at the bottom of the screen and type out what you would like to say.

LWVF Book Club News

The next meeting of the League book club will be held on Monday, May 11, at 1:30; the meeting will be at Sheila Scott Gordon’s home at 71 McCallum Drive in Falmouth.

Winning the Earthquake by Lorrissa Reinhart, our next LWVF Book Club read, brings us a living, breathing, fresh-from-the-West Montana woman, Jeannette Rankin, who can light a fire, ride a horse, and read the sky for weather. But her greatest gift was being able



to talk with people and listen to their needs, and speak for them when she was elected as a Republican member of Congress.

As level-headed as her big-brimmed sombrero, she stood her ground and worked to get the vote for women (the Susan B. Anthony bill, otherwise known as the 19th Amendment). Rankin spoke out against warmongers (World Wars I AND II), insisted on employers recognizing workers' rights, and fostered disarmament. Her fervor in practicing and promoting citizenship should inspire us today; the parallels with our own time are amazing for this reader.

—**Linda Jeffries-Summers**

Herring Pond Tribe Gets Back Land Taken Years Ago

Our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Committee hosted an event at Morse Pond School on April 19 with the chairwoman of the Herring Pond Wampanoag tribe, Melissa Ferretti. She gave a very informational and at times heart-wrenching talk about her nation, a nation that was here centuries before the Declaration of Independence. (Ms. Ferretti is also the chair of the Bourne Select Board.)

The Pilgrims gave 3,000 acres of land back to the Herring Pond tribe. That is three square miles of land from their nation that had gone from Plymouth to Sandwich to Bourne. But over many years, particularly in the 1800s, much of that land was given away to the settlers. She said the most “devastating federal policy” was the Dawes act of 1887 that took the most valuable land from the tribes. The act, named for Massachusetts Senator Henry Laurens Dawes, followed what our state had done to our tribes 37 years earlier.

In the past few years, the tribe has tried to get some of its land back and has received three parcels so far. The members of the tribe still fish, hunt, and gather from the woods and these parcels help them with that, as well preserving land near a sacred burial ground. Ms. Ferretti noted that the tribal word for land means “I am the land, the land is me.” She talked about ways their nation uses the rights to land as stewardship and support for environmental preservation. The tribe last year initiated the Native Land Conservancy.

Ms. Ferretti talked about efforts now to make sure these advances do not pass away. Governor Maura Healey’s executive order in 2024 recognizing the tribe is not law and could be rescinded by future governors. Tribal members are working to have the Massachusetts legislature pass a law that will give tribes a way to confirm their status in law, not merely executive order. They are also asking the federal government to recognize their tribe, as it has done for Mashpee and Aquinnah Wampanoag tribes.



Melissa Ferretti, chair of the Herring Pond Wampanoag and of the Bourne Select Board.

Part of the recent land acquisition is to achieve food sovereignty, as Ms. Ferretti said, “where we can fish, hunt, and gather as we used to, while we also go to the store.” As the issue of sovereignty produced our Declaration of Independence, she said she does not worry about that for the tribe. As she said, “We are all sovereign when we are born into the tribe.”

—Don Gibbons
Chair, DEIB Committee



ANNUAL MEETING

**9:30 a.m., May 9, 2026
Meigs Room, Swope Building**

Join us for a delicious brunch with seasonal fresh fruit, home-fried potatoes, mini-danishes and mini-scones, bacon and sausages, scrambled eggs, cinnamon raisin French toast, and a yogurt and juice bar.

Our guest speaker will be Sheriff Donna D. Buckley, who has proudly served as Barnstable County Sheriff since Jan. 4, 2023. She is the first female sheriff in Barnstable County's 334-year history, and only the second female sheriff ever in the history of the Commonwealth.



Since receiving her degree from Suffolk University Law School, she has served as in-house counsel for the National Association of Government Employees/International Brotherhood of Police Officers, run her own law office for nine years, and delivered legal services for the Massachusetts Teachers Association. Sheriff Buckley taught Criminal Law and related courses at Massasoit and Massachusetts Bay Community Colleges. In 2018, she became the general counsel for the Barnstable County Sheriff's Office. She lives in Falmouth with her husband Troy Clarkson.

Please RSVP to sheilascottgordon@gmail.com by May 2 to reserve your place. The ticket price is \$25.00, payable by cash or check. (Any additional contribution will be gratefully accepted.)

Parking lots are available for our use on Millfield Street and North Street because it is Saturday.

Candidates Night: An informative and Enjoyable Evening

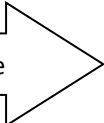
Candidates Night in the Hermann Room at Falmouth Public Library this year was particularly friendly and informative. Michael Palmer was present to speak and to be recognized for his years of service to the Town of Falmouth as Town Clerk.



Honoree Michael Palmer, retiring Town Clerk.

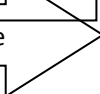
The candidates spoke candidly about what they felt qualified to offer in the roles they sought, as well as open and honest about what they would need to learn on the job. Incumbents were helpful in sharing the expertise they have gained in their roles. Candidates were complimentary of each other's answers to questions. A Falmouth high school student presented complex questions that impressed the candidates running for School Committee. All candidates were clear in their desire to serve the residents of their community.

Mindy Todd, a skillful moderator, put the candidates at ease, and kept the program moving. FCTV provided the community with live coverage of the event as well as the option to view the three panels of Candidates for Planning Board, School Committee and Select Board in the Bay Room of the library

Continued on next page 



Planning Board candidates John Druley, James Fox, Eric Hryniewicz, and Kenneth Medeiros II.

Continued on next page 

Candidates Night, cont.

School committee candidates Susan Augusta, Brandon Edsall, Nicholas Lowell, Jane Norton, and Megan Zottoli. Not pictured: Patricia Morano



where there was a large screen for guests who could not be accommodated in the Hermann Room.

Many thanks to the Voter Service Committee and the many volunteers who showed up to assist with greeting candidates and guests; they also served as timekeepers to ensure fairness in the allotment of time for each response. As outgoing Chair of Voter Service, I

want to say thank you for the opportunity to work with incredibly talented and thoughtful individuals. Congratulations too to the incoming chair of Voter Service, Lynne Rozsa, who opened this important community event with a statement from the LWV of Falmouth.

—Felicia Bordick
Chair, Voter Service



Select Board candidates Katerina Cedrone and Elizabeth Klein



Select Board Candidate Robert Mascali

Make your voice heard today!

Contact Information for Your Legislators and Governor

Governor Maura Healey
[https://www.mass.gov/info-details/
email-the-governors-office](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/email-the-governors-office)
(617) 725-4005

Senator Dylan Fernandes
(617) 722-1330
dylan.fernandes@masenate.gov

Representative David Vieira
(508) 548-8683
David.Vieira@mahouse.gov

Representative Thomas Moakley
(617) 722-2800 x7302
Thomas.Moakley@mahouse.gov

Senator Elizabeth Warren
(202) 224-4543
[https://www.warren.senate.gov/
contact/shareyouropinion](https://www.warren.senate.gov/contact/shareyouropinion)

Senator Edward Markey
(202) 224-2742
[https://www.markey.senate.gov/
contact/share-your-opinion](https://www.markey.senate.gov/contact/share-your-opinion)

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 paradise@capenews.net.
General 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.

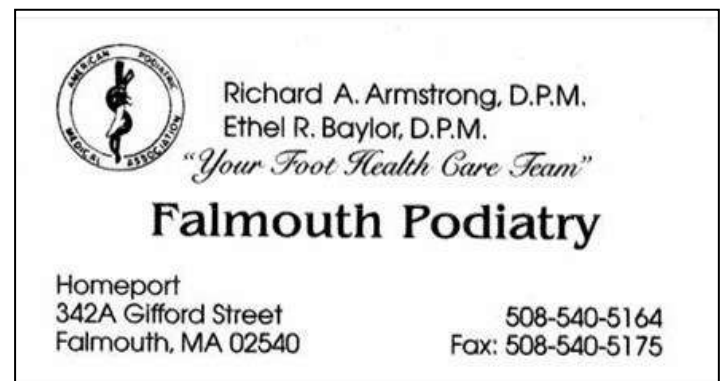
The Boston Globe


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Stephanie Miele
Certified Piano Technician

Tuning
C: 508-685-9866
H: 508-548-1759
steplen@comcast.net



 Richard A. Armstrong, D.P.M.
Ethel R. Baylor, D.P.M.
"Your Foot Health Care Team"
Falmouth Podiatry

Homeport
342A Gifford Street
Falmouth, MA 02540

508-540-5164
Fax: 508-540-5175

2025 Friends of the LWVF

Maria Moniz
Robert and Barbara Schneider

LWVF Board of Directors 2025-26

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Second Vice-President	Sheila Scott-Gordon*
Secretary	Richard Johnson*
Treasurer	Joan Boyer
Legislative	Judith Ziss
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Voter Service	Felicia Bordick
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At-Large	Susan Loucks
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Facebook	Eileen Mattingly
Email Communication	Kathy Mortenson
Web Administrator	Gayle Simundza
FCTV	Lynne Rozsa

Nominating Committee

Chair	Kathy Mortenson
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*Member of Steering Committee

Meeting and Event Calendar

Saturday, May 9, 9:30 a.m., Meigs Room, Swope Building, Woods Hole **LWVF Annual Meeting**

Monday, May 11, 1:30, at 71 McCallum Drive. **LWVF Book Club, *Winning the Earthquake.***

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 Falmouth Civil Rights Officer Lt. Ryan Hergt. Topics: hate crimes, ICE issues, and more. (See p. 2 for Zoom tips.)**

Tuesday, June 23, at Gus Canty, 6 p.m. **Board meeting**

Contact us:

Address: League of Women Voters of Falmouth
P.O. Box 450
Falmouth, MA 02541

Email: FalmouthLWV@gmail.com

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

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

Please note: Submissions for the next issue of the LWVF Bulletin are due by June 5, 2026. Please send copy, photos, and other material to both of these addresses:

maryfran55@earthlink.net
eileenmattingly@yahoo.com

welcome

To our new and renewing member:

Diane Weisman