



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FALMOUTH

P.O. Box 450 • Falmouth, MA 02541

web: www.lwvf.org

email: league@LWVF.org

*The League of Women voters, a nonpartisan national organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.
Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.*

Bulletin – June 2011

Member Events Calendar

June 2011

- 16 7:30 p.m. Meeting: Observer Corps
Falmouth Town Hall (Dinner at Peking Palace at 6:00 p.m.)
- 28 7:30 p.m. Board Meeting (Board Room, Falmouth Hospital)

July 2011

No Meetings

August 2011

- 9 Noon Porch Party at Judy Stetson's

LWVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2011-2012

STEERING COMMITTEE

First Vice-President	Betsy Fontes
Second Vice-President	Barbara Kanellopoulos
Secretary	Sylvia Szulkin
Voter Service	Alice Carey
Development	Kathy Mortenson



Treasurer	Joanne Voorhis	Natural Resources	Pam Polloni
Bulletin/Web	Joan Boyer	Observer Corps	Deborah Siegal
Legislative	Meg Borden	Outreach	Landi Landrau
Local Study	Doris Epstein	Publicity	Marcia Easterling
Membership	Maureen Sullivan		

If you wish to join the League, membership dues are \$50.00 for an individual membership and \$25.00 for an additional household member.
Send your check made out to *LWV of Falmouth* to the address shown above.
Please include your name, address and phone number.
You do not have to be a resident of Falmouth to join.

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

Sylvia Szulkin

A synopsis of the 2010-2011 Steering Committee Annual Report

1. GREETINGS

As we enter a new League year I'm happy to report that our chapter membership number remains stable at 100 and that attendance at our monthly meetings has increased. Moreover, the number of non-members at our meetings has also increased.

The Steering Committee continues to function well as a congenial and productive unit. Although Joan Boyer will be stepping down to become our **Bulletin** publisher, with your approval this evening Alice Carey, our very able Voter Service Chair, will be joining the Steering Committee on July 1st. Speaking of Joan Boyer, we're very pleased to report that Joan has been elected as Treasurer of the State League. Congratulations Joan and congratulations to the State League.

2. SUMMARY OF THE YEAR

This has been a year of big ambitions, notable successes and some disappointments for our League. Much of what we've done as a League this year has incorporated the advice we received from you at our last annual meeting, i.e., reach out to the community, partner with other Falmouth organizations on issues, and go on-line to recruit younger members and increase League visibility. Above all, you told us to keep rethinking ways for the League to maintain its relevance.

3. REVIEW OF NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This year's local study tapped into town-wide dissatisfaction with local government. The study—titled "The Effectiveness of Local Government"—was originally intended to examine the ways in which the operations of Town government

followed or deviated from the requirements of the Town Charter. However, within the first few weeks the committee chose another course—to hold public meetings to involve the whole community in efforts to improve local government. The local study committee lined up a substantial number of community organizations as co-sponsors for three public meetings. The co-sponsors publicized the events to their memberships. This approach helped attract a diverse group to the meetings.

The first program, titled "Government in the Round -- A Conversation about Falmouth's Future"—attracted ninety people to the main library to discuss Falmouth's most pressing issues. Each group—and there were approximately 10—was led in discussion by a community leader and asked to come up with four priorities for action. **The discussions yielded a variety of responses but four areas of primary concern emerged: the environment, affordable housing, civic engagement and improving government operations.**

The second meeting—"Joining for Action"-- aimed to bring Falmouth residents together with local organizations already addressing priority issues. Once again attendance at the meeting was good despite icy roads and frigid temperatures. However, many of those who came to the meeting were already involved with an action-oriented group. The meeting's main thrust turned out to be activists networking with other activists.

The last meeting, "How to Run for Public Office"—was intended to encourage residents to run for elected boards and Town Meeting or to apply to serve on an appointed committee. A truly stellar panel discussed the major aspects of occupying public office—the ethical dimensions, the ingredients for a

successful campaign, the challenges facing a Selectman, the demands on members of elected and appointed Boards. The event does not appear to have produced any new candidates for elective office. **THIS WAS A MAJOR DISAPPOINTMENT FOR OUR LEAGUE.** However, we have seen a number of new candidates for Town Meeting, including a handful of people under thirty. We can only speculate and hope that the local study committee's programs have contributed to this positive trend.

An update of **Falmouth in Focus** is now on the League website and also accessible through a link on the Town website. Plaudits to Deborah Siegal, who initiated the update, corralled knowledgeable contributors, and oversaw the editing.

Legislative Chair Meg Borden put together another excellent informal conversation among our two State Reps and their constituents. This year the meeting had an additional element of interest since we now have State Reps from two different parties. We were happy to note that our State Reps have already reached across party lines to work together on local issues. League members in the audience took the opportunity to inform our new State Rep, David Vieira, of the League's legislative priorities.

Our well-attended Candidates Night featured carefully-crafted questions for the candidates for Selectman and Planning Board, but also offered all candidates to introduce themselves to the electorate. Questions from the audience were incisive and varied. They showed that many townspeople are paying close attention to this election. Voter Service Chair Alice Carey always makes her demanding job seem easy. We salute Alice and her committee— Doris Curran, Marcia Easterling, Barbara Fanger, Judy Stetson, Sylvia Szulkin, and Fran Weiffenbach.

4. UPCOMING EVENTS

The Observer Corps will make a presentation on June 17 in the Civil Defense Room in Town Hall. Observing Town Boards and committees has encouraged many Leaguers to enter into Falmouth's public life. Please speak to Observer Corp chair Deborah Siegal about joining the Observer Corps.

A variety of study groups will be starting in the fall of 2011. The local study of the Effectiveness of Town Government will reconvene this fall with an emphasis on the Town Charter. A study of privatization of government functions will be led by Barbara Kanellopoulos. Alice Carey will follow the study of the federal government's role in education.

5. NEW IDEAS IN THEIR INFANCY

A book club focusing on political issues and personalities began meeting this fall. Kathy Mortenson is willing to continue leading the group if more members join the group.

The Board has established scholarships for people with limited financial resources who would like to become League members or continue their League memberships. If you yourself or someone you know needs a scholarship, you may contact Membership Chair Maureen Sullivan. **The Board has established an outreach portfolio** to which Landi Landrau has been elected. You'll be hearing more about her activities in upcoming Bulletins.

6. EXPERIMENTS WITH FORMAT AND VENUE FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

This evening's meeting features hors d'oeuvres and desserts in place of a formal dinner and an informal low-budget venue in place of a restaurant. The Steering Committee is now considering recommending that next year's Annual Meeting be a brunch. *(On a show of hands, most of those present would be interested in attending a brunch for the Annual Meeting.)*

7. **CHANGES IN BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

- **ALICE CAREY** is joining the Steering Committee.
- **JUDY FENWICK** will be **STEPPING DOWN** from the Board. As editor of **The Bulletin**, she produced a professional product and set the bar very high for her successor.
- **JOAN BOYER** is **stepping down from the ex-officio position on the Steering Committee** but she will take over the position of **Bulletin** editor, while continuing as Webmaster. The **Bulletin** is now on-line, which saves us money and enables us to reach a wider community audience.
- **SALLIE GIFFEN** is leaving the development post. Her wide network of contacts and the esteem with which she is held in our community have been valuable assets for the League .
- **KATHY MORTENSON** will step down from Membership and take over the duties of development chair to put her distinctive stamp on the position.

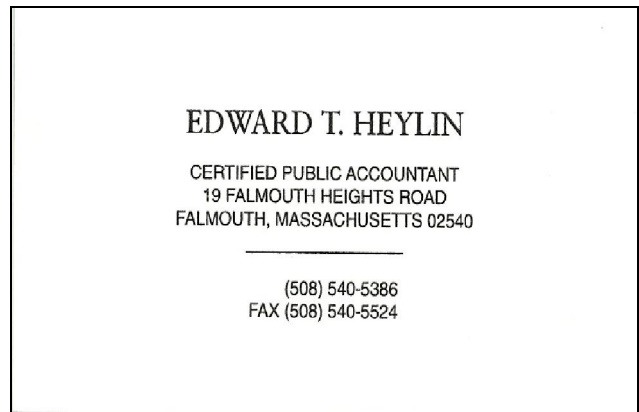
- **MAUREEN SULLIVAN** will become our new membership chair. Everyone who has worked with Maureen knows that she has the competence and focus to handle this multi-faceted position.

Please tell us about issues that you'd like to see studied, actions you'd like us to take, recruitment strategies you'd like us to try and anything else that you think will continue the League's legacy into the next decade. You'll also have a chance to weigh in on the controversy about the national League's ads chastising Senators Scott Brown and Claire McCaskill for voting against the Clean Air Act. Do you want the Falmouth League to follow this model of activism on issues we have studied? **(On a later page, please see the letter that was sent to the LWVUS in accordance with the members' instructions.)**

In closing, I stress that the **Board wants to keep in close touch with our League's membership**. We urge you to read the **Bulletin**, and to send the **Bulletin** editor your comments and suggestions. **We value your input.**



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CIVIC LEADER AWARD 2011

The League of Women Voters of Falmouth Civic Leader Award for 2011 was given to Ruth Brazier and Virginia Gregg for their tireless work on solid waste management.

As Ruth stated, "Ginny and I started working together on trash issues for a LWV action item back in the 1980's. We came to the conclusion that Falmouth needed a Solid Waste advisory Committee and sponsored a warrant article which passed in 1989, I think.

The first SWAC included the entire recycling committee, a group interested in trash and a group concerned with household hazardous waste. We produced a lengthy report and urged the town to consolidate solid waste into a single department under a solid waste supervisor.

Meanwhile there have been many improvements: Curbside recycling has increased town recycling enormously, the Swap Shop, the Service Center collection of deposit bottles and cans, the Salvation Army drop off for clothing, the composting program,---all divert waste effectively.

Although there still remains much to be done, we have come a long way in dealing with Falmouth's solid waste... and the League got us started. "

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SUPPORT THE OBSERVER CORPS

Deborah Siegal, Chairman

The focus of our final member meeting for the year is always on the Observer Corps. **On Thursday, June 16 at 7:30 p.m. the observers will present their annual reports about Town boards and committees in the Civil Defense Room (downstairs) at Town Hall.**

If you're thinking about becoming an Observer, this is a great opportunity to learn

more about it or to bring a prospective member who is interested in the League and the Town. The Corps is at an all-time low, with enough choice of boards and meeting times to accommodate almost any schedule. We always hear things that are intriguing and, occasionally, baffling, so put us on your calendar and look forward to a different sort of night out.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Kathy Mortenson

Please fill out the 2011-2012 League renewal form, write out a check for your dues, and mail both items to our post office box. Thank you for renewing your membership!

Please add to your directory, returning member:
Leila Jacobson
174 Queen Street Unit 1-C
Falmouth, MA 02540

LWVF FRIENDS FOR 2010-2011

Dorothy and Duncan Aspinwall
Frank Egloff
Sally Fritz
Avery Funkhouser
Avis and Marv Grosslein
Christina Jacobi
Susan Kingwill
Winnie and Bill Mackey
Polly Montgomery
Dorothy Ryder
Robert Schneider
Deborah G. Senft
John and Freddy Valois

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF LWVUS
FROM THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF FALMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS**

At its Annual Meeting on May 12, 2011, our membership directed our Board to convey its dismay over the LWVUS "Clean Air Act" ad appearing in the media during the past month. Our members support vigorous advocacy on League-supported stands. However, our League strongly opposes advocacy that singles out specific politicians for censure.

Our members found the League-sponsored ad troubling on several counts:

1. The ad blurs the line between advocacy and partisanship by criticizing two specific political figures out of many who voted against provisions of the Clean Air Act.
2. The ad distracts from the importance of the Clean Air Act with its repeated condemnation of those two particular Senators. The issue is clean air standards, not specific public officials and not the League itself. The ad failed by undercutting and distracting from the primacy of the issue. Moreover, instead of generating support for the Clean Air Act, the ad has instigated widespread negative commentary about the League.
3. The League is perceived as a force for rational discussion in our community; the ad undermined that perception with its emotional and visceral appeal.
4. Our League has advocated strongly for civility in political discourse. The ad belies our efforts with its inflammatory and uncivil tone.
5. Our League members felt blind-sided by the ad. It would have been helpful to have received advance notice of the ad, along with an opportunity to discuss the wisdom of its approach to the subject of clean air standards.

The appearance of partisanship generated by the ad could weaken support for local non-partisan League Candidates' Nights. Equally important, at a time when local and state League memberships have been shrinking, we are concerned that negative commentary about the ad will undercut our League's initiatives to increase and diversify our cohort.


Sincerely,
Betsy Fontes, 1st Vice-President, LWVF



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LEAGUE STUDY GROUP MEMBERS WANTED

The LWVUS is working on two studies this year. We need your involvement!!! At our January meeting Barbara Kanellopoulos gave us a great over view of these two studies and why we should participate.

The Federal Role in Public Education is our National Study for 2010-2012. Issues of equity, funding, standards, and assessment are the Study's central concerns. The expectation is that we will participate and reach consensus this fall. Please call or email Alice Carey to work on this study.

The Impact on Local Communities of Privatizing Government Services was a study brought to the National Board and was accepted

by a majority vote at Convention. The Seattle League mounted a strong argument for this Study. Please call or email Barbara Kanellopoulos to participate in this study.



ANNUAL MEETING THANK YOUs

Kathy Mortenson

The Steering Committee is most grateful to Betsy Fontes and Barbara Kanellopoulos for planning and organizing the Annual Meeting and to Marcia Easterling and Lyn Dalzell who made the set up and clean up go so very smoothly. Marcia and Lyn knew where to find tables, how to make the coffee and set up the microphones. Their help was invaluable.

The Steering Committee would like to thank Sallie Giffen for once again serving as parliamentarian. Sallie's expertise was most helpful to Betsy who ran an excellent meeting.

Alice Carey has produced the Annual meeting program for many years now. Board members are most appreciative of her gentle reminders to send their reports to her.

While planning Candidates' Night every May, Alice puts together the program, formats the program and then arrives at the Annual meeting with the programs all printed. Thank you, Alice.





League of Women Voters of Falmouth Membership Renewal for July 2011-June 2012

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Mailing address: _____ Email: _____

City/State/Zip _____

For inclusion in the directory, please list up to 3 appointed or elected positions **currently** held in Falmouth:: example: Town Meeting Member, Prec. 5
1) _____ 2) _____
3) _____ (League Board position: _____)

I wish to **renew** my membership in the **League of Women Voters of Falmouth**:

Individual membership (\$50) _____
Additional household member (\$25) _____
An additional contribution will benefit your local League _____
TOTAL _____

National dues, coupled with state dues, now result in the LWVF paying \$53.30 per member with nothing left for our local organization. We do not want to increase the LWVF dues at this time. Any additional contributions that you can send will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your support.

Dues are not tax deductible. If tax deductibility is important to you, make your check out to LWV Education Fund. We will process your check through the national LWV which will give credit to the Falmouth LWV.

Please send this letter with any changes and your renewal check made payable to:

**League of Women Voters of Falmouth
PO Box 450, Falmouth, MA 02541**

Receipt of Your Membership Renewal by JULY 15 Will Ensure That You Are Included in the Directory

I am interested in the following committees:

___ Effective government ___ Legislation
___ Observer Corp ___ Wastewater
___ Natural resources
___ Voter Services

I am skilled at:

___ Researching topics/ideas ___ Fundraising
___ Working in small groups ___ Organizing
___ Membership outreach ___ Writing
___ Website maintenance ___ Video/Photography

Questions to Membership Chair, Maureen Sullivan

