



Neighborhood Falmouth
 PO Box 435
 Falmouth, MA 02541

Address Label

May Neighborhood Happenings

The Fortress, The River, and The Garden: A New Metaphor for Knowledge Symbiosis

Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, Author of Braiding Sweetgrass

Friday, May 15 Book signing 4:30– 5:30, Lecture 6:00-7:00 PM

Acclaimed author, scientist, and educator Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer discusses new paradigms for knowledge exchange and ecological understanding. Free & open to the public. Books available at Eight Cousins, at the event, or bring your own. RSVP at events.who.edu/rwkseminar.

Member-Volunteer Lunch — Liam Maguire’s

Wednesday, May 20, Noon

Food, fun, and conversation! Join our monthly lunch at a local spot. Order from the menu and pay for your own. Cash helps for splitting checks. RSVP to the office if you plan to be there.

Digital Navigation Session: Healthcare Portals

Friday, May 22, 10-11 AM at NF Office

Need help with MyChart? Digital Navigator and NF Board Member Dr. Mike Bihari will talk about healthcare portals and offer help. RSVP by email to officemanager@neighborhoodfalmouth.org.

Monthly Brew: Volunteer Connections & Information Session

Wednesday, May 27, 9-10 AM at NF Office

Stop by for our morning social & volunteer information session with coffee, tea, and assorted breakfast items. Bring a member, a friend, or a neighbor—all are welcome!

NF Library Talk — Legacy Letters

Wednesday, May 27, 1:30-2:45 PM at Falmouth Public Library Hermann Room

Join us and Deb Levy at the library for a talk on how and why to write a legacy letter.



Neighborhood Falmouth News

May 2026

A Note from the Office

Happy May! Thank you to all who participated in Neighborhood Falmouth’s annual meeting on April 2 at the West Falmouth Library. We’re grateful to all who returned their ballots, and we’re happy to welcome Fran Spadafora, Annie Outlaw, and Carol Erhardt to our 2026-2027 Board of Directors. Each brings a wealth of experience and a strong commitment to our mission. They have already played an important role in preparing for our May 1 Spring Gala, and we’re excited for the insight, creativity, and energy they will continue to bring.



Our annual meeting is a chance to reflect on the past year—and 2025 was a year of growth for our organization. Our membership grew by 15%, reaching 152 members, and volunteer engagement flourished. New volunteer onboarding increased by 14% compared to 2024. Our volunteers fulfilled 4,341 requests—an 8% increase from the prior year. We are deeply thankful for the time, care, and dedication that made this growth possible.

We’re also excited to share more about a new initiative. In partnership with FCTV, we just launched our Digital Navigator Partner program with an introductory session. Moving forward, we’ll host sessions about a topic of interest, followed by time for questions and hands-on support. These sessions are open to members, volunteers, and the wider community. Our goal is to offer welcoming guidance in both one-on-one and small-group settings, helping our participants build confidence and comfort with today’s digital tools. Read more about the program inside.

Our next session will take place on Friday, May 22 at 10 AM: Digital Navigator Dr. Mike Bihari, will offer support with healthcare portals such as MyChart. You’ll find a Digital Tip of the Month on this topic here in our newsletter.

Later this month, we’ll begin offering access to Chromebooks and laptops that are being generously provided through FCTV’s digital equity grant. These devices will be available for use in our office by appointment, as well as during open sessions beginning next month. If you’d like to learn more, please don’t hesitate to call us at 508-927-1678.

With gratitude,
 The Neighborhood Falmouth Team

Volunteer Spotlight: Fran Spadafora

By Bill Laberis, Volunteer

Several years ago, Fran Spadafora decided to follow the lead of her husband, Bob, by volunteering for Neighborhood Falmouth. Her initial assignment was one of the toughest – helping recruit new volunteers to assist with the many roles NF fills for seniors. Recruitment efforts usually garnered low single numbers of prospective volunteers. But in one fell swoop she engineered and arranged for a staff member presentation and appeal at Cape Cod Church, which netted 60 recruits – about half of whom would go on to donate significant time and effort to helping seniors age in place in their own homes.



Q: Your next role with Neighborhood Falmouth will be a seat on the Board of Directors; what is it about the organization that continues to interest you?

A: I just love what the organization tries to do, and it is based on a great concept. Most seniors prefer to stay in their own homes but as they age, they need help and assistance with a lot of activities, like rides to medical appointments, hair stylists, food shopping, and other things apart from transportation. The recent huge snowstorm and power outages highlighted the many needs of seniors at home. Responding to these needs means recruiting and keeping lots of volunteers, and one thing I have learned is that Falmouth is a great volunteer community. I’ve also served on the committee for the annual Gala, a big fundraiser for Neighborhood Falmouth.

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Q: Are you a Falmouth native?

A: I was born and raised in Braintree and went to Massasoit Community College and earned an associates degree. I went to work in financial services at State Street Bank and later at Shearson Lehman Brothers. It was at State Street that I met my husband. I continued working in financial services until Bob and I adopted a baby, Matthew, from Santiago, Chile. It was through Bob that I fell in love with this area. We bought a home here in the 80s. I continued working part-time while staying home as much as I could, raising our son. Eventually I opened a clothing boutique and continued there until Bob retired – for the first time – in 2008.

Q: Did Bob “unretire”?

A: He got a great job offer that took us both to San Diego to live. Off we went to the best weather anywhere. I took a job with Dove Apparel, which sells nursing uniforms online, where I ran the customer service department. Then in 2016 Bob retired for good and we headed back to Falmouth. I continued working and do so to this day, part time at Port Cargo here in town

Q: How do you like to spend your time when you are not working?

A: Bob had two children from a previous marriage, and they have given us four wonderful grandchildren. The oldest works in New York City while the others are in the Boston area, as is our fifth grandchild from our son. We see them as often as we can. There is nothing like grandkids. And with Neighborhood Falmouth, the work in preparation for the Gala is in full swing. That is a big part of my work with them.

Q: Anything else?

A: I love to paint, a hobby I started back in the 80’s. I do murals as well as some decorative furniture painting using both acrylic and watercolors. I’ve taught some informal classes with neighbors, sharing what I know with them. It’s a great way to relax. And I really enjoy traveling now that we have more time for that. We have a trip to St. Thomas upcoming, and we’ve been to Italy as well. Amsterdam is another favorite destination we’ve visited.

About the Digital Navigator Program

Falmouth Community Television (FCTV) has launched the Digital Navigator Program to help Falmouth residents gain the skills, tools, and confidence needed to thrive in today’s digital world. The program provides free, personalized support and one-on-one guidance, offered in accessible, community-based locations throughout Falmouth.

Many of us have difficulty accessing online healthcare portals and mobile banking applications; trouble applying for jobs or obtaining benefits and town services online; and problems using email, messaging, and video calls. This is known as the “digital divide” and it is more difficult for people who lack basic computer skills and have limited or no access to home computers or reliable, affordable internet.

The program connects Falmouth residents with local, trained volunteers, known as Digital Navigators, who will provide patient, nonjudgmental, one-on-one support and small-group learning. The goal of the program is simple: *Help every Falmouth resident feel comfortable and capable in the digital world.*

Getting Help

Currently, FCTV has partnered with several community organizations, including the Falmouth Public Library, the Falmouth Senior Center, the Falmouth Service Center, the Cape Cod Cape Verdean Museum and Cultural Center, the Falmouth Veterans Center, and Neighborhood Falmouth. Once the program is fully up-and-running you will be able to attend classes in small group settings and receive individual help with:

- Navigating smartphones, tablets, and computers
- Accessing telehealth and healthcare portals
- Applying for jobs and benefits
- Using state, town, and federal online services
- Setting up accounts, passwords, and digital housekeeping and security



If you do not own or have access to devices to help you get online, each of the locations will have PCs and Chromebooks that you can learn how to use and borrow to use at home or in other community locations. Starting May 22, Neighborhood Falmouth will offer weekly classes, digital guidance, and/or support in our Palmer Avenue office—across the street from the Coffee O. For other locations and class schedules or to learn more about the Digital Navigator Program, visit the FCTV website at: <https://fctv.org/digital> or call (984) 528-6633.

May Birthdays

MEMBERS

- Jean Holmes 5/4
- *Sharon Mekelatos 5/4
- Frances Buehler 5/7
- Jim Liljestrand 5/8
- Susan Starke 5/9
- Steve Chotkowski 5/10
- Peggy Dimmock 5/11
- Ellen Lively 5/11
- Richard Bower 5/12
- Jacqueline Webster 5/16
- Kit Olmsted 5/18
- Pauline Gradeski 5/23
- Joan Wickersham 5/25
- Nancy Porter 5/25
- Tiny Catrambone 5/27
- Connie Brown 5/28

*Both a member and a volunteer

VOLUNTEERS

- Jim Shannon 5/1
- Valerie Gates 5/3
- Richard Sherman 5/5
- Jordena Backnick 5/16
- Lisa Campbell 5/16
- Amy Loewenberg 5/23
- Harry McCormick 5/27
- Henry Brown 5/29

In Memoriam

*Carl Bowin
Mary Rice*

special thanks to our sponsors

- AARP
- Advanced Audiology
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- Behrens Fund
- Bilezikian Family Foundation
- Caithness Foundation
- Cape & Coast Bank
- Cape & Islands United Way
- Cape Cod Church
- Falmouth Toyota
- First Congregational Church of Falmouth
- Ghelfi's Candies
- Hermann Foundation
- James E. and Caroline Schea Lloyd Foundation
- The Edward Bangs Kelley & Elza Kelley Foundation
- Lyndon Lorusso Charitable Foundation
- Martha's Vineyard Bank
- Paul and Betty G. McDonald Foundation
- The Rossley Fund
- Waquoit Congregational Church
- Woods Hole Foundation
- Mary & Redwood Wright Foundation

welcome

we are glad you are here

our newest volunteers

- Jeanette Kruger
- Sandy Stosz
- Joanna Schaffer
- Andrea Bonanno

our newest members

- Liz Aberdale Andrews
- Jackie Dufur
- Sandra Emery
- Leslie Lichtenstein
- Joy Stosz



Healthy Living for Older Adults



By Dr. Michael Bihari

Neighborhood Falmouth Board of Directors

Dr. Michael Bihari, immediate past president of Neighborhood Falmouth and current board member has been selected by FCTV as a Digital Navigator. Each month he will provide, along with a healthy recipe, some tips or advice about using your digital devices to help manage your daily life.

Digital Tip of the Month: Using Your Patient Portal

If your primary care provider or specialist is part of Cape Cod Healthcare you most likely have access to MyChart, our health system's patient portal, an online tool to help you keep track of your health visits, test results, billing, prescriptions, and so on. You can also message your provider questions through the portal.

With your patient portal, you may be able to:

- Make non-urgent appointments
- Request referrals
- Refill prescriptions
- Check benefits
- Update insurance or contact information
- Complete forms
- Ask questions through secure messaging



You also may be able to view:

- Test results
- Visit summaries
- Your medical history including allergies, immunizations, and medicines
- Patient-education articles

Your providers can also get in touch with you through the portal. You may receive reminders and alerts or an email asking you to log in to your portal for a message.

The Bottom Line

With your patient portal you can:

- Access your secure personal health information and be in touch with your provider's office 24 hours a day. You may not need to wait for office hours or returned phone calls to have basic issues resolved.
- Access personal health information from all of your providers in one place. If you have a team of providers, or see specialists regularly, they can all post results and reminders in a portal. Providers can see other treatments and advice you are getting, which can lead to better care and better management of your medicines.
- E-mail reminders and alerts help you to remember things like annual checkups and flu shots.

How do I get a MyChart account? If your primary care provider or specialist is part of Cape Cod Healthcare (and most local medical offices are) you have access to an online health portal known as MyChart. By using the portal you will be able to receive and send messages to your provider's office, get after-visit summaries, view lab and diagnostic studies, request appointment and prescription medications and have access to a wide-range of health information. If you do not have a MyChart account, you will need an activation code that you can get from your doctor's office.

Go to www.capecodhealth.org and click on the MyChart logo on the top of the page. Then follow the directions to open your account. If you do not have an activation code the site also provides directions how to get on board. If you have any questions, you can contact the help desk at 508-957-8888. Although it may seem a bit of a hassle, having ready access to your health providers and information is important. If you need further help join one of our digital navigation programs at the Neighborhood Falmouth office.

Dr. Mike's Kitchen

Spring has arrived and with it the height of the asparagus season. This light and creamy soup is perfect for lunch with a small salad and some crusty bread from our wonderful French Bakery on Main Street.

Asparagus, Leek & Scallion Soup

- 1/4 cup sliced almonds, for garnish
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup thinly sliced leeks
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced scallions
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 cups veggie broth, preferably low-salt
- 3/4 teaspoon dried thyme, more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 1/2 pounds asparagus, trimmed and thinly sliced
- 1 15-ounce can white beans (cannellini), rinsed and drained
- 1 cup non-dairy milk or cream (optional)



Toast almonds in a large saucepan over medium heat. Set aside on a paper towel to cool.

Heat the olive oil in same pan and add leeks and scallions. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 5-6 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for another minute. Add in the broth, thyme, and pepper; bring to a boil and add the asparagus and beans. Bring back to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, partially covered, until vegetables are soft, about 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly.

Puree the soup in a food processor or standing blender or use an immersion blender. Heat through, ladle into soup bowls, and garnish with the almonds. For a creamier soup, add the milk after pureeing.

The recipe makes four generous servings, each with about 225 calories, 10g fiber and 13g protein. I use Silk Cashew Milk, which is very creamy and low in calories and fat.

About Asparagus



Asparagus is a perennial vegetable that's unusually long-lived for a crop—once established, a well-maintained asparagus bed can keep producing for 15–20 years or more. From a horticultural perspective, asparagus plants are dioecious, meaning individual plants are either male or female. Male plants are often preferred in cultivation because they tend to yield more edible spears, while female plants divert more energy into producing seeds.

Nutritionally, asparagus is notable for being rich in folate and vitamin K, which supports blood clotting and bone health.

And if you have asparagus left over from your soup, roasting it is easy! Snap off the tough ends, toss the spears with a little olive oil, salt, and pepper, and spread them on a baking sheet. Roast at about 400°F (200°C) for 10–15 minutes until they're tender with slightly crispy tips. Eat them as-is or finish with a squeeze of lemon juice or a sprinkle of parmesan for extra flavor. It's simple, low-effort, and brings out the natural sweetness of the asparagus.