



Massachusetts PATRIOT

Massachusetts Life Care Residents' Association (MLCRA) APRIL – JUNE 2022

The Residents' Advocate – Management's Friend • www.mlcra.org

President's Message: Annual Meeting

By Jean Stringham, Lasell Village

We are pleased that forty participants from our member communities and our board participated by Zoom in our 2022 Annual Meeting on May 4th. We invited the leadership of each council and their MLCRA representative. This was the second year we were able to have a Zoom meeting thanks to the expertise of Liz Flaig, president of OMA Communications. Following the meeting we emailed participants a survey. They responded that the meeting was excellent or very good and that it was a good way to discuss topics. Several people commented that they would not have been able to attend if the meeting were held in person.

After the business meeting, which you will read more about in this issue, we broke up into two groups. One group consisted of the MLCRA representatives who had met together 3 times over the last year in Community Conversations. The second group was the council leaders or their designees. This was the first time ever that council leaders had a chance to meet each other and discuss topics of interest. The question posed to both groups was "What are some of the biggest challenges facing your community today?"

In both groups technology was the hot topic. People observed that as the world makes more and more use of technology, many residents have difficulty learning and adjusting to such things as new apps, online registration and how to access information. I've been

thinking that those of us in retirement communities have seen many changes in our lifetimes. We might remember mimeograph machines with purple ink that smelled nice, and now we have wireless printers.



Or, Brownie cameras with black & white film, and now we have phones that make color videos. I'm sure you can think of many more examples. No wonder we're amazed by the new technology that we encounter every day!

Another common theme was levels of care and dealing with aging populations — people that age in place or come into the independent living area with medical problems. How is that issue being dealt with by management? The MLCRA board will be reviewing the annual meeting discussion and using it to help guide our activities this coming year.

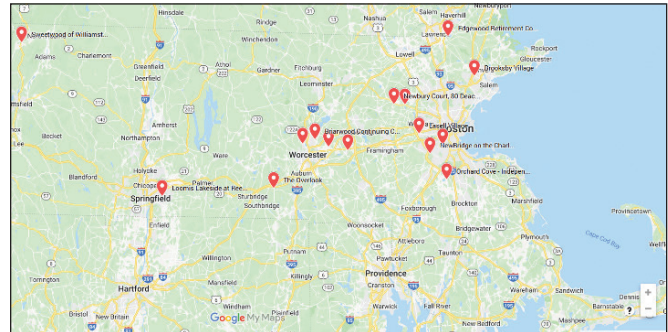
At the close of my president's message, I reminded people that next year will be the 25th anniversary of MLCRA. If you have ideas or suggestions about how to commemorate that milestone, please let me know! Many thanks. ♦

MLCRA ANNUAL MEETING – Business Meeting Summary

Jean Stringham, MLCRA president, opened the annual meeting with comments about the past year, noting that MLCRA had a busy year despite the pandemic and “did not go into sleeping or hibernation mode.” One of our accomplishments was 501(c)(3) non-profit status, which will save MLCRA money in some of our business transactions. Another development is that we’ve been invited to meet by Zoom with the retirement communities from other states to compare notes.

Lauren Hale, retiring from the board, was recognized for her significant contributions to MLCRA, both as a past president as well as editor for the Patriot, MLCRA’s quarterly newsletter. As editor, Lauren improved the level of journalism of the articles by focusing on accuracy and good writing. She also introduced color to some of the pages and expanded the number of articles about fun and interesting activities in our communities. Jean also introduced **Suzette Barbier** who is our new design and layout professional, and **Elizabeth Losa**, a resident of Brooksby Village, who is the Patriot copy editor.

In the context of communication, Jean also introduced MLCRA’s digital consultant and webmaster, **Allen Broughton**. He is a retired mathematics professor from Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Indiana, and a former Board member of MLCRA. Over the past three years Allen has digitized our paper history, organized our Digital Archives, and managed our Constant Contact email communications. He is also key to tracking MLCRA membership by communities, working with the Treasurer, Allison Dolan. In addition, he manages the MLCRA website — *mlcra.org*.



MLCRA Communities in Massachusetts

In the last three months, the website had over 440 visits. The photos submitted by members have significantly enhanced the visual appeal of the site — please continue to send photos to Jean!

The business meeting also included reports from Membership, Community Conversations, and Advocacy and Education — their updates are on the next pages. Treasurer **Allison Dolan** reviewed last year’s expenses, and the 2022 budget. Producing the Patriot is the single biggest MLCRA expense.

The meeting concluded with the election of the board. **Dave VanArsdale**, from Edgewood, was nominated for the previously vacant position of Vice-President for Advocacy and Education. The slate of nominations was unanimously approved. (*See page 10 of this issue for the updated list of Board members.*)

As mentioned in the President’s Report, after the election, the community leaders and representatives divided into two discussion groups for 45 minutes and then came together to share the results.

To see a recording of the business meeting, go to *mlcra.org* under ‘Annual Meeting’. ♦

MLCRA Membership

By Caroline Jacobs, VP Membership, The Commons in Lincoln

The ‘grace’ year for membership dues in 2021 produced many new members. The challenge this year has been to ensure that these new members renewed for 2022. In spite of Covid restrictions, the MLCRA representatives found many creative ways to spread the word about MLCRA. Please find an opportunity to show your appreciation for their hard work. If you’re not sure who your MLCRA representative is, I will be happy to let you know, or you can find the name on the website, <https://www.mlcr.org/member-associations>.

As of June 1, we have 936 fully paid members for 2022. We were pleased to see that many new members saw the value of a long-term membership — 117 signed up for multi-year or lifetime memberships. They join 220 others with ongoing multi-year and lifetime memberships.

Thank you to those who have renewed, and welcome new members! ♦

MLCRA Community Conversations

By Cynthia Childs, The Overlook, and Caroline Jacobs, The Commons in Lincoln



In the absence of Area Meetings, we have introduced Community Conversations on Zoom. Since last fall, we have held three of these meetings. Community

representatives were all invited and given advance information on the topic for discussion. It has been a great opportunity to become acquainted and to share information on topics of mutual interest — one of the main goals of MLCRA.

Topics for the three meetings were “Welcoming New Residents,” “How is your community responding to current labor shortages?” and “Provision of healthcare/nursing support in Independent Living.” We have already reported on each of these discussions in previous issues of the Patriot. If you would like more information, feel free to contact your community representative.

The feedback has been positive and we are planning more of these meetings this year. ♦

Advocacy Update

By Joan Kerzner, Edgewood

Thanks to advocacy from the MLCRA Board and membership, and individual CCRC residents, our two bills have advanced: **S.2656** (formerly S.409), **An Act authorizing common sense health services in assisted living**, is with the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, and **H.746, An Act relative to disclosing continuing care retirement community entrance fees**, is with the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Now is the time we really need all CCRC residents to contact members of these two committees to advocate for the bills' passage. They both need to be sent to the floor for a vote before the legislative session ends on July 31, 2022.

This will not happen without action on our part. The membership of Senate Ways & Means may be accessed at: malegislature.gov/committees/detail/S30, and House Ways & Means at: malegislature.gov/committees/detail/H34

The best approach is to contact any committee member who represents your CCRC. You can refer to the last Patriot for information about your senator or representative, or go to mlcra.org and select "Legislation and Advocacy" for a link to how to find your legislators. Even if your legislators are not on the committee, you can contact the Committee Chair(s) as a CCRC resident on behalf of your neighbors and other CCRCs.

Email is the most efficient way to contact your legislator. In addition to including the bill number and bill title, your email or letter should include brief comments on why the bill is important to you. You can read MLCRA's original testimony supporting the bills on mlcra.org under the Legislation and Advocacy section, at the bottom of the page.

Thanks for your help! Remember that old saying: "The squeaky wheel gets the grease!"



Our thanks to Allison Dolan for agreeing to be the interim managing editor of the Patriot. However, we are still looking for an editor to join our editorial board.



Please contact **Jean Stringham** at jean.stringham@gmail.com or **617-244-2492** if interested or if you have any questions.

Sharing Knowledge

By Caroline Jacobs, The Commons in Lincoln

Inspired by the vast education and experience of residents at The Commons, a small group thought how rewarding it would be to share this knowledge with our associates. That was three years ago.

Thus began the Resident Associate Mentoring Program (RAMP). With Management approval, the RAMP committee distributed forms to ascertain resident interest, expertise and experience. Human Resources presented the program to the associates and also created program guidelines. Twenty residents volunteered and some associates expressed interest through supervisors, resident recommendation or on their own initiative. Unfortunately, Covid intervened and prevented the program being launched.

In February, 2021, Management suggested starting with a pilot program in English as a Second Language (ESL). Associates would be tutored for one to two hours per week, to be decided between tutor and tutee. Initially two associates were paired with residents for ESL tutoring.

RAMP continues to grow. In addition to ESL, help is now being offered under the title of 'Guidance' in areas such as citizenship preparation, business skills, driver's license preparation, further education and career planning. To date, RAMP has helped sixteen

associates, of whom twelve are currently being tutored in ESL and one is receiving advice on career planning.

Without exception, every associate and every resident has expressed appreciation for and enjoyment of the RAMP experience.

One associate who had been in the ESL program for a year told us, "When I came to the U.S. from Brazil three years ago, I knew almost no English and was embarrassed to speak. Thanks to the knowledge and patience of my tutor, I now feel comfortable having a conversation in English. My heart is full of gratitude." ♦



Associate Yudis Reyez with resident Nancy Steinmann. Photo by Flo Baumuel.

“And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.”

—F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Celebrating Cinema AND Community at Lasell Village

By Chris McMorrow, Lasell Village

On March 27, the Lasell Village Movie Club rolled out, quite literally, a red carpet as part of the Village's *First Annual Oscar Red Carpet Gala* in honor of Hollywood's Academy Awards ceremonies. An event in the making since January, the party was the culmination of the Movie Club's long-standing dream of encouraging residents to get excited about great cinema following recent lifting of restrictions from the long period of Covid isolation.

To make the event extra special, the Club asked attendees to put on their fanciest party attire to raise a glass in honor of cinema's highest prize ceremony. To build excitement, and with the help of our programming director, a total of 17 Oscar Best Picture, Actress and Actor nominated films were live-streamed via the Village's closed circuit TV, throughout late February and March.

In the weeks prior to the Gala, word of mouth took flight with flyers and weekly teasers in our weekly Events Newsletter, resulting in more and more residents signing up to attend. When the appointed hour finally came, 100 residents (close to half our population) turned out to vote for their favorite films and hear Movie Club members debate the merits of each of ten nominated Best Picture films. There were prizes for the winners the next day!

But even more important for management and residents, the Gala served as an unofficial welcome to Spring, as well as an end to the Covid-induced isolation that had prevented

community interactions and socialization during the long pandemic. One thing you can say about cinema: it provokes strong reactions, and Villagers are not shy about expressing their opinions. Doing so in the company of peers, with festive food and drink to mark the occasion, did more to reunite us as a CCRC community than 100 films beamed into individual apartments.



Gala Party Planners by Caroline Schastny

And that was certainly a win-win for Lasell Village — and our Movie Club — no matter which Hollywood films and performers won in the end! ♦

Newbury Court Madrigal Singers

by Lynn Stroud, Newbury Court

One of the exciting things I learned upon moving into Newbury Court is that there is a “Can Do” attitude from the top staff to the residents. If you have an idea for something new and fun, do not hesitate to share it. That is the way the Newbury Court Madrigal Singers came to be. I sang Madrigals in college and truly enjoyed the experience.

I talked to fellow resident, Betsy Moyer, about the idea and she loved it. Betsy is a trained musician, who knows more about music than anyone I know! At the next weekly community meeting I asked for interested residents who can read music to get in touch with me. In June of 2019 we gathered quite a group to sing the music we love.

We are now a group of 17 both men and women, singing a cappella. We meet every week for a little over an hour. We start with a vigorous warm up and then sight-read a new piece (usually not a Madrigal). Then we rehearse our Madrigals either from a book dedicated to Madrigals or other Renaissance songs.



Newbury Court Madrigal Singers

When the Pandemic appeared, we all wanted to continue our weekly singing so we went to Zoom. I must admit, that singing my part by myself muted was not as entertaining. But we

were singing together — that is what counts. When we could finally be together, we socially distanced and for such a long time, sang wearing masks. We are now back to joyfully singing without masks.

As for our performances, we recently sang for our entire community

(post Covid). We have also sung with the Acton/Boxborough High School Madrigal group. We have sung in the Newbury Court Talent Show on an annual basis and in the Newbury Court Duvall Chapel during the service. There are no limits to where we might perform with Betsy Moyer always thinking of “taking us on the road!”

Besides the obvious pleasure that comes with making new friends who share my passion, it has been a wonderful experience to learn more about singing Madrigals. So if you have an idea, don’t deny it. Start something new and different! ♦

“Keep your face to the sunshine and you will never see the shadows.”

—Helen Keller

Reprinted with permission from Hebrew SeniorLife Inspire

The Show Must Go On!

Lifting residents' spirits with "Guys and Dolls" production

As an experienced cinematographer, Beth-jana Friedberg's belief in the power of the performing arts is no surprise. But her passion for promoting cultural activities among seniors is deeply personal.

Beth-jana's father and aunts spent their later years living at Hebrew SeniorLife's independent living community at Orchard Cove, and Beth-jana has warm memories about the positive impact of the arts programming on her family members. "My very last visit with my dad was on Chanukah, and Orchard Cove was putting on a talent show. When I entered the room, I noticed my dad and my aunt holding hands, side-by-side in their wheelchairs. I was moved by the way that this type of artistic sharing provides opportunities for meaningful connection."

When Beth-jana's father passed away in 2012, she founded the Selig M. Friedberg Family Fund in his honor with the purpose of inspiring Orchard Cove residents with the performing arts. And when Beth-jana learned that Music Theater International (MTI), a theatrical licensing agency based in New York City, offered to waive the royalties for a production of "Guys and Dolls" at Orchard Cove, she enthusiastically funded the rest of the production costs.

Preparations for "Guys and Dolls" began just as the COVID-19 pandemic was taking hold. Though many other communities would have postponed the show, the Orchard Cove staff and residents decided to push through. Auditions were switched to Zoom, rehearsals were held outside. Everything possible was



Orchard Cove's "Guys and Dolls" cast members were thrilled to put on two live performances last December.

done to protect participants' physical health, while supporting their mental well-being with a common goal and challenge.

"There was never a question of quitting," says Susan Tovsky, resident program manager at Orchard Cove. "It was such a dark time. 'Guys and Dolls' brought so much joy and happiness." Beth-jana agrees: "The pandemic was such a hard time to be social. It seemed like a great opportunity for people to be involved."

The production brought hope in more than the obvious ways when MTI awarded the Orchard Cove team their Courage in Theater award. "Our group persevered," says Susan. "We met people where they were, whether that meant dancing and singing from their wheelchairs or using special equipment to amplify their voices."

The entire production was filmed for broadcast on the in-house Orchard Cove TV channel and included conversations with participants. "When I saw the performance, I was so moved — not only by the production, but also by the interviews," says Beth-jana. "To hear directly from them helped me to understand the significance of it in their lives." ♦

MA ‘Death With Dignity’ Bill Under Consideration

By Rev. Dr. David VanArsdale, Edgewood

Although MLCRA has not advocated for or against the Act Relative to End of Life Options, many residents have expressed interest in the bill under consideration by the Massachusetts’ Legislature.

The bill, **An Act Relative to End of Life Options** (S.1384), was introduced for the 2021/2022 legislative session by sponsors Senator Jo Comerford (Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester) and Representative Jim O’Day (Worcester). If approved by the Legislature and then signed by the Governor, this bill would allow Massachusetts residents a range of options for care at the end of life, including medical aid in dying.

The End of Life Options Act would allow adults who are Massachusetts residents with a diagnosis of six months or less to live to request medication that would end their lives, provided they follow several steps. Specifically, a patient requesting such medication will have to be:

- at least 18 years old and a Massachusetts resident
- mentally capable of making and communicating health care decisions, and
- diagnosed with a terminal disease that will result in death within six months.
- A patient who meets the requirements will be prescribed aid-in-dying medication if:
 - The patient makes a verbal request to their doctor, who will explain options including hospice and pain or symptom management.
 - At least 15 days after the verbal request, the patient gives a written request to the doctor, signed in front of two qualified, adult witnesses. (The law sets out the specific form that the patient must use.)
 - The prescribing doctor and one other doctor confirm the patient’s diagnosis and prognosis.
 - The prescribing doctor and one other doctor determine that the patient is capable of making medical decisions.
 - The prescribing doctor refers the patient to a licensed psychiatrist or psychologist for counseling to determine that the patient is not suffering from a mental disorder that could cause impaired judgment.
 - The prescribing doctor confirms that the patient is not being coerced or unduly influenced by others when making the request.
 - The prescribing doctor informs the patient of any feasible alternatives to the medication, including care to relieve pain and keep the patient comfortable.
 - The prescribing doctor asks the patient to notify their next of kin of the prescription request. (The doctor cannot require the patient to notify anyone, however.)
 - The prescribing doctor offers the patient the opportunity to withdraw the request for aid-in-dying medication before granting the prescription.
 - The patient must be able to take the medication on their own.

The law is based on Oregon’s law; in the 20 year history of that law, there haven’t been any documented cases of coercion in seeking this medication. You can read the full text of the Massachusetts End of Life Options Act on the Massachusetts legislature’s website — Google “ma legislature s.1384”. ♦

MLCRA Board and Resident Associations

MLCRA represents about 1,000 older residents throughout Massachusetts. Its membership includes individual resident members and 17 Resident Associations

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The Briarwood Community,
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The Commons in Lincoln

The Overlook, Charlton

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The Willows at Worcester

The Massachusetts Patriot

The Massachusetts Patriot is the quarterly newsletter of the Massachusetts Life Care Residents' Association (MLCRA). As the residents' voice, the Patriot covers news about Massachusetts retirement communities, monitors laws and regulations that affect residents of retirement communities, and serves as an advocate for residents' rights. Readers are encouraged to send letters or articles to: Allison Dolan, Patriot Interim Editor, *allisondolan77@gmail.com* or 978-587-29555

Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association

MLCRA Membership Application/Renewal Form for 2022-2023

Date: _____

Name(s) of member(s): _____

Check here if this is a renewal. (The date on mailing label is when your current membership expires.)

IF YOU ARE A NEW MEMBER: fill in information below; or attach a personal address label. If you are an existing member: fill in **only if you are making changes.**

Street: _____ Apt. # _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip code: _____

Email: _____ (for MLCRA purposes only)

Your Retirement Community: _____

Dues for New Members and Renewals - Circle your choice.

1 year (expires 12/31/2023) Individual: \$15 **or** household: \$25

5 year (expires 12/31/2027) \$75 (individual/household)

Lifetime Membership \$150 (individual/household)

Please make checks payable to MLCRA.

If your community is having a membership drive, please give this form with your check to your MLCRA representative; otherwise mail form and check to:

Allison Dolan, Treasurer
104 Brooksby Village Drive, Unit 405
Peabody, MA 01960



Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association

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NOTE: The date next to your name on the mailing label above indicates when your membership expires.

<p>Join MLCRA now to maintain your quality of life!</p>	<p>What is the Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association? <i>The voice of residents of Continuing Care Retirement Communities</i></p> <p>The Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association (MLCRA) was founded in 1998. MLCRA is a state-wide non-profit volunteer organization with 501(c)(3) status. It represents individual members and resident associations located in non-profit and for-profit retirement communities know as Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) or Life Care Communities. These communities are also sometimes referred to as Life Plan Communities. They provide facilities and services for independent living and assisted living/skilled nursing care or both.</p> <p>The general purposes of MLCRA are communication, education, advocacy, and collaboration with members, resident associations and other organizations to support the well-being of seniors living in retirement communities. MLCRA is the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Continuing Care Residents Association (NaCCRA).</p> <p>MLCRA recognizes and respects the common interests of residents and management. It supports efforts to promote a mutually beneficial relationship. When the interests of management and residents occasionally diverge, MLCRA serves as the residents' advocate.</p>
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