



# Massachusetts PATRIOT

Massachusetts Life Care Residents' Association (MLCRA) JANUARY - MARCH 2021

The Residents' Advocate-Management's Friend [www.mlcra.org](http://www.mlcra.org)

## GRACE MEMBERSHIP YEAR OFF TO GOOD START

*by Jean Stringham, Lasell Village  
MLCRA Vice President for Membership*

Our grace membership year has gotten off to a good start! Last fall the Board of Directors of MLCRA voted to make 2021 a grace membership year because of the pandemic and the inability to gather in large groups. This was a wise decision and it is working out well. New residents of Continuing Care Retirement Communities are joining our ranks. Current members are happy to get an additional year of their membership extended. We now have over 1,000 members statewide in MLCRA.

Usually, communities hold membership drives in January and February. This year individual conversations and Zoom visits are taking the place of meetings and outreach events. We are happy that some good results have come out of the grace year decision. One community that is new to our association, the Willows in Worcester, has recently had over a dozen new members join through the efforts of the Residents Advisory Committee. We are pleased that the Willows in Worcester is eager to learn more about our organization and they plan to send two residents to our Annual Meeting in May. They'll write about MLCRA in their upcoming newsletter to help get the word out. We encourage other communities to write about the grace year and spread the word.

At Brooksby Village we recently gained over 100 new members because of the grace year. Allison Dolan used a resident network of

“building facilitators” and “floor liaisons” to connect with current and new residents, and to share information about MLCRA's efforts on behalf of CCRCs like Brooksby.

MLCRA started in 1998 when residents in a few Massachusetts CCRCs realized the value of communicating with other communities. Over time we have grown and now have 17 communities involved in our association. If you know someone at a community that is not yet part of MLCRA, please let us know and we will reach out to them. If you have neighbors who don't know about MLCRA, please feel free to recruit them this year. All they have to do is fill out the information on our membership form and send it in to us. Thanks for your help.

Hopefully, next year we will be back to normal and can gather again in large groups.

Cross your fingers!●



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## MLCRA BOARD OPPORTUNITIES

*by Caroline Jacobs, the Commons in Lincoln and Eunice White, Orchard Cove in Canton*

The MLCRA Nominating Committee is looking for new board members for 2021-2022. Our goal is to have most of our member communities represented so that we can have a wide range of experience on which to draw. Serving on the board is a fun and convenient way to network with other communities and contribute to a better life for all CCRC residents.

Board meetings are held by Zoom, which enables members to attend from communities across the state. We usually meet six times a year and officers meet on the alternate months. Much of the communication is done by email.

In addition to at-large board members, we are also looking specifically for:

**Vice-President for Advocacy and Education:** This person will identify and research issues of concern for MLCRA members and engage members to advocate for legislation of benefit to CCRCs and their residents. Experience with legislative advocacy on the state or federal level is useful but not required.

**Treasurer:** Will receive checks and pay bills. We hope to engage a bookkeeping firm to help us.

**Editor or Assistant Editor** for the Patriot quarterly newsletter.

If you are committed to improving life for all CCRC residents, have experience on other volunteer boards and have some knowledge of financial, legal or health issues, we would love to hear from you by April 10. If you are interested or have any questions, please feel

free to contact a member of the Nominating Committee, listed below.

Caroline Jacobs, The Commons in Lincoln, 781-430-6119,  
*c.jacobs57@gmail.com*

Eunice White, Orchard Cove, 339-502-8985,  
*eunicewhitehome@gmail.com* ●

### 2021 ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE VIRTUAL

*by Allison Dolan, Brooksby Village  
MLCRA Technology Chair*

This year's MLCRA Annual Meeting—scheduled for Wednesday, May 5, 2021 from 1:00 to 2:30—will be virtual, using Zoom. We are excited to try this approach, as it may encourage more communities to participate—no driving involved! Each community will be invited to have two participants: their MLCRA representative and their Resident Association/Resident Council president. If one or both are unavailable, the community may designate alternate(s).

Since not everyone is familiar with Zoom, especially in large group settings, we will be offering a practice Zoom session in late April for those who register to attend. Details on how to register for the annual meeting and the Zoom practice session will be sent via Constant Contact email to Resident Association presidents and MLCRA reps. ●

## STAYING INFORMED DURING THE PANDEMIC

by Lauren Hale, Southgate, MLCRA President



Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused many changes in the lives of residents of MLCRA communities. Our communities were shut down to varying degrees. All of us experienced periods of no visitors, no communal dining and no in-person activities.

Management decisions have been based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. With the welcome arrival of vaccines and the easing of restrictions by Governor Baker, we are entering a period when our communities are opening up again. Communities are reopening at different paces, depending on how

their managements assess the continuing risk.

During these challenging times, it is important for residents and Resident Associations to remain engaged with management. Before meeting with management, residents should try to understand what options have been available since Governor Baker declared the state of emergency in March 2020.

One way to keep up with changing information is through the Coronavirus Resources page of the MLCRA website ([www.mlcra.org/covid19](http://www.mlcra.org/covid19)). It has links to reliable sources of information about the emergency orders, the vaccines and other COVID-19 topics.

One of MLCRA's links is to the Leading Age Massachusetts COVID 19 site, which includes a compilation of official pandemic guidance for Assisted Living facilities. There is also a link to the Reopening Massachusetts site, where you can find the reopening plan published in May 2020 as well as sector specific protocols for places of worship, restaurants, movie theaters, indoor and outdoor performance venues, and other businesses.

In most of our communities, management has chosen to wait for varying amounts of time before moving on to the next official reopening phase for dining, movies, live music, health clubs and other community activities.

Although management has the final word, residents may ask questions and make suggestions about these COVID-related decisions. A Massachusetts "residents' rights" law, initiated by MLCRA and passed by the legislature in 2012, gives CCRC residents the right to comment on issues that affect their health and welfare ([www.mlcra.org/legislation](http://www.mlcra.org/legislation)).

The law also gives residents the right to receive information about the organization, operation and finances of their communities. Much of the information covered by the law is available "upon request". That means that CCRC providers do not have to give us the information unless we ask.

An important document that is available "upon request" is a disclosure statement that includes a financial statement as well as information about the legal status (e.g., for profit or non-profit corporation) and organization of the facility. As this *Patriot* goes to print, we are entering tax season. This is the time of year when many providers make the disclosure document available.

Most of us are in communities with a tradition of good communication between management and residents. We do not always have to make an official request to get information. But the law is behind us if we need it. ●

## Seeing Your Doctor, Virtually

by Allison Dolan, Brooksby Village  
MLCRA Technology Chair

Virtual doctor visits, also known as Telehealth visits, have been a necessity



Self Photo by Allison Dolan

during the pandemic. However, even when the crisis is over, some doctors and patients have said they would like to continue them.

So, is a virtual visit as “good” as

an in-person visit? Not only can it be as good, but it is often better. For many seniors, there are costs and logistical issues associated with getting a ride and parking, not to mention the time spent in travel and in the waiting room. People with hearing problems may benefit by being able to control the volume. For people with mobility issues, it is much more comfortable to stay at home.

Doctor visits are frequently conversations. If you are at home, you may be more relaxed, and more comfortable referring to your list of questions. You can be at a table or desk, making it easier for you to take notes about what the doctor said. You can prepare for a virtual visit by weighing yourself, and checking your own temperature and blood pressure (with perhaps less “white coat” impact). You will have access to your own documents and medicines; if you can’t remember the name of something, you can go get it.

Virtual visits may also allow you to have family members or caregivers “join” the appointment – either with you in your room, or connecting via their device from another location.

A virtual visit will often follow the familiar pattern of the doctor asking about how things are going, reviewing medications, addressing concerns, and any follow-up from the previous visit. Doctors can assess things like eye movements, and can ask you to do some physical things - e.g. watch how you stand up.

The biggest drawback for many people is the technology.

Prior to your appointment, your doctor’s office should send you instructions for “connecting to the portal” or “downloading the app”. If you

*The biggest drawback for many people is the technology.*

rarely use a computer or tablet, you definitely should consider having a more knowledgeable friend help you through the initial set-up. Some doctors may offer a ‘practice’ session – i.e., scheduling a time to connect with an office administrator who can help you work through the issues before your appointment with the doctor.

If you are already familiar with using Zoom, Skype, Facetime or similar technology, you will be able to focus on the visit itself. These technologies work with pretty much any device that has a camera, (cont’d on p. 5)

## MY MASK

by Ruth Margolin Silin

LasellVillage 2020

Photo: Jean Stringham



I've grown to love my little mask  
that covers nose and mouth and chin  
and keeps the dreaded Covid  
from getting out or coming in.  
No lipstick, rouge or powder now  
to primp for those who see me.  
You are so few, it matters not  
as I hide my naked face.  
Outdoors. my hat placed low upon my brow  
you squint to figure out if I am who  
you think I am and take a chance and wave  
and I in turn am quick to do the same.

Back home, in isolation, sans the mask,  
the mirror is reflection of the truth.  
It shows my hair in need of trim,  
uneven ends delayed too long.  
I shall make a call, improve my looks,  
raise my spirit and my hope.  
Meanwhile, my little mask  
Is doing all it can to keep me well.  
It saves me from your breath and yours from mine,  
and keeps me safe each time I wear it. ●

## Virtual Appointments *(cont'd from p.4)*

microphone, and a screen.

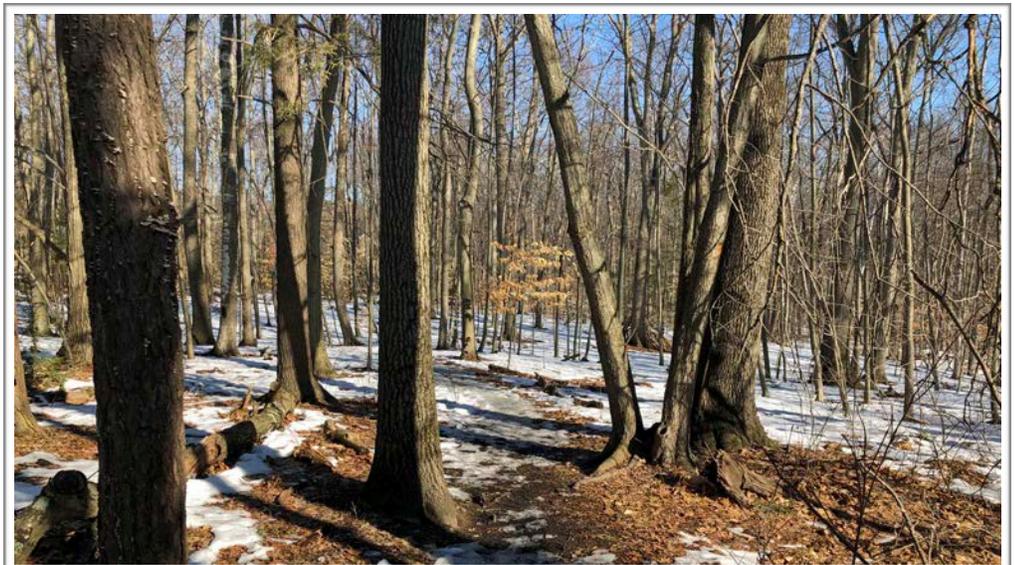
If you are using a tablet or computer, your internet speed might be a factor – slow internet will make the interactions very frustrating. Smartphones will usually work well. It can be helpful to have a back-up device in case your primary device doesn't work for some reason. Plan the area where you'll have your appointment – ideally at a table, so you don't have to hold your device the whole time.

If you are using a cell phone, you'll need to reverse the camera i.e., like you are taking a selfie. Having another person in room with you may help – they can hold the smart phone or adjust lighting or take notes.

If any technology is “too much”, ask if you can have just a phone call. Although visual interaction is helpful, the voice-only approach may be as effective.

In many cases, a virtual visit is sufficient. In some cases, however, your doctor may recommend a follow-up in-person visit. Regardless, the virtual visit has been of value and you and your doctor are better prepared for the next steps. ●

*Almost Spring*  
Photo by Dave VanArsdale  
Edgewood.



## MLCRA Board and Resident Associations

MLCRA represents over 1,000 older residents throughout Massachusetts. Its membership includes individual resident members and 16 Resident Associations.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### President

**Lauren Hale**  
Southgate at Shrewsbury  
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#### Vice-President for

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**Jean Stringham**  
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617-244-2492  
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#### Treasurer

**Jean Stringham**  
Interim MLCRA Treasurer

#### Recording Secretary

**Mary Louise Eggimann**  
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### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

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### PATRIOT EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

**Lauren Hale and Jean Stringham**, interim co-chairs; **Patricia Walsh**, Sophia Snow Place, Design and Layout; **Elizabeth Losa**, Brooksby Village, Copy Editor

### MLCRA COMMUNITY MEMBERS

**The Briarwood Community**, Worcester

**Brookhaven at Lexington**

**Brooksby Village**, Peabody

**The Commons in Lincoln**

**Edgewood**, North Andover

**Lasell Village**, Newton

**Loomis Lakeside at Reeds Landing**, Springfield

**NewBridge on the Charles**, Dedham

**Newbury Court**, Concord

**Orchard Cove**, Canton

**The Overlook**, Charlton

**Sophia Snow Place**, West Roxbury

**Southgate at Shrewsbury**

**Springhouse**, Jamaica Plain

**Sweetwood of Williamstown**

**The Willows at Westborough**

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## The Massachusetts Patriot

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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 by email to:

Lauren Hale, MLCRA president and Interim Co-Chair of the Patriot Editorial Committee,  
[LHale20003@aol.com](mailto:LHale20003@aol.com), 508-842-0515 or

Jean Stringham, MLCRA Vice President and Interim Co-Chair of the Patriot Editorial Committee,  
[jean.stringham@gmail.com](mailto:jean.stringham@gmail.com), 617-244-2492

Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association  
MLCRA Membership Application for 2021  
(please print)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

If a couple, 2<sup>nd</sup> Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ (for MLCRA purposes only)

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ (for MLCRA purposes only)

Retirement Community \_\_\_\_\_

*Due to the pandemic we are waiving membership fees for 2021 for new members.*

*Current members will automatically have one year added to their membership. You may use this form to update your information.*

*Thank you!*

Please give this form to your MLCRA representative or mail it to:

Jean Stringham, VP Membership

130 Seminary Avenue #114

Auburndale, MA 02466-2661



## Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association

Lauren Hale, MLCRA President  
Southgate  
35 Julio Drive- Apt 208  
Shrewsbury, MA 01545

**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><b>What is the Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association?</b></p> <p><i>The voice of residents of Continuing Care Retirement Communities</i></p> <p>The Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association (MLCRA), founded in 1998, is a state-wide non-profit volunteer organization. It represents individual members and resident associations located in non-profit and for-profit retirement communities known 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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