



Massachusetts PATRIOT

Massachusetts Life Care Residents' Association (MLCRA) APRIL - JUNE 2021

The Residents' Advocate—Management's Friend www.mlcra.org

President's Message

by Jean Stringham, Lasell Village

I am very excited to be writing my first President's message for MLCRA. Thanks to those council presidents and MLCRA representatives who attended our Annual Meeting on May 5th for voting for me and showing your support of our board. I've been the president of many organizations in my life but nothing as big as a state wide association of seventeen communities with almost 1200 members! Thank you for this opportunity.

We have a strong board and I am looking forward to working with them this year. On page 6 of this Patriot newsletter you will see all their names and read about our two new board members, Cynthia Childs from Overlook and David VanArsdale from Edgewood. If you would like to help volunteer for any of our activities please be in touch with us. We are especially looking for an assistant managing editor for this quarterly newsletter, The Patriot. Thanks to Lauren Hale for continuing to manage it this coming year.

Our website, thanks to our consultant Allen Broughton, has many resources and links to other groups, to our past Patriot newsletters and more. Please take a moment to visit at www.mlcra.org

In this issue you'll be able to read about our Annual meeting, our speakers, and our musical interlude. We handled our first annual meeting on Zoom for almost fifty people with the assistance of our consultant, Liz Flaig of Oma



Communications. Please read more about Liz's help and about the feedback we received on our first Zoom annual meeting.

As you may know, our board declared 2021 as a grace membership year. Over two hundred new people have joined so far this year. It is not too late to join as a new member. We also welcome our seventeenth community --- The Willows in Worcester. You'll hear more about them in a future issue.

Lastly, I want to wish all of our individual members and our community members well in the coming year. We got through the first year of the pandemic, and hopefully we will continue to move forward in the coming year.

Stay well, Jean ●

STATE LAWMAKERS ADDRESS MLCRA ANNUAL MEETING

The top lawmakers from the Massachusetts legislature's Joint Committee on Elder Affairs spoke via Zoom to the 2021 MLCRA annual meeting on May 5. They discussed the impact of the pandemic on seniors, the challenges of long-term care, workforce issues and pending bills of interest to MLCRA.

The Joint Committee on Elder Affairs has members from both the State Senate and the State House of Representatives. The Committee holds hearings on bills that have been referred to it by the Clerks of the House and Senate. If the committee makes a favorable recommendation, the bill continues to move through the legislative process.

We were honored to have the **Senate and House Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs** join our Zoom annual meeting. Senate Chair Patricia Jehlen, House Chair Thomas Stanley, Senate Vice Chair Julian Cyr, and House Vice Chair Kate Lipper-Garabedian shared their views with us.

Senate Chair Patricia Jehlen, a longtime member of the Committee, helped MLCRA to negotiate the bill that became the CCRC residents' rights law several years ago. She is the author of the pending bill that would allow some basic health care services to be provided in Assisted Living residences in



Massachusetts. (See p. 4)

Senator Jehlen has been chair of Elder Affairs for much of her fifteen years in the legislature. She said that she became chair almost the same week that she became caregiver to her father. She learned about the limits of Assisted Living. She said that her bill would allow nurses in Assisted Living to use more of the skills for which they are licensed.

Senator Jehlen noted that it has often been difficult to get attention for issues affecting

older adults. The pandemic changed that. She pointed to the extraordinary number of deaths and illnesses in nursing homes. She said that we must make nursing homes safe, well financed and accountable and that we should encourage new facilities to be single room occupancy.

We need to strengthen the entire spectrum of care for older adults. A crucial concern is that caregivers do not make enough money and many do not stay in their jobs. Senator Jehlen supports "pay-to stay" legislation to help retain these essential workers. *(cont'd next page)*



MA State House David Mark Pixabay

by Lauren Hale, Southgate



House Chair Thomas Stanley has been in the legislature for many years but is new to the Elder Affairs Committee. He believes it is an important time to be on the Committee. He sees its mandate as covering the whole continuum of care.

From his perspective, no group has endured more loss and hardship during the pandemic than older citizens and the people who care for them. He said he is proud to have played a role in the House to increase funding for health care providers to pay the workers who take care of seniors. Like Senator Jehlen, he emphasized the importance of recruiting and retaining healthcare workers.

Representative Stanley said that the two bills that MLCRA is supporting – one about CCRC entrance fee refund policy and the other about services in Assisted Living – “make sense.” (See p.4). As the new chair, however, he said he would refrain from committing full support until the hearings are held.

Senate Vice Chair Julian Cyr said he agreed with Senator Jehlen that issues affecting older people have not always been considered important on Beacon Hill.

He noted that Senate President Karen



Spilka has said Massachusetts should use some of its federal stimulus money for intergenerational care. That would cover care across the lifespan from children to the elderly. He said it is “very powerful” to have the Senate President put intergenerational care at the forefront of the agenda and that he will work to support those efforts.

House Vice Chair Kate Lipper-Garabedian was elected to the legislature in a special election in March 2020 as the pandemic was beginning. Agreeing with her colleagues’ points, she said that we need to look at what we have experienced over the past year to ensure that state policies address the losses that we have suffered and the future we want to embrace.



Because she is new to senior issues, Representative Lipper-Garabedian has been meeting statewide with organizations involved with the concerns of older adults. She said she was happy to be able to participate in the MLCRA annual meeting.

MLCRA is privileged to have had the opportunity to meet with this important group of legislators. We look forward to strengthening our connection with them. ●

Bills Supported by MLCRA in Massachusetts Legislature

The preceding article about state lawmakers mentions two bills that MLCRA is currently supporting in the Massachusetts legislature. Here are description of both bills:

SENATE BILL 417/ HOUSE BILL 746

An Act relative to disclosing continuing care retirement community entrance fees.

Residents pay a significant entrance fee when they enter a CCRC. A portion of the entrance fee is refunded when the resident moves out or dies. Some residents and family members do not understand how this process works in their community. This bill would require all CCRCs to give prospective residents a separate document that clearly states the amount of the entrance fee to be refunded under their contract. It would also explain the terms and conditions by which the refund is made.

SENATE BILL 409/ HOUSE BILL 753

An Act authorizing common sense health services in assisted living.

Massachusetts law does not currently permit Assisted Living facilities to provide medical services. This bill would allow Assisted Living facilities to offer some basic health services: injections, application or replacement of simple non-sterile dressings, management of oxygen, and application of ointments or drops. Before offering any of these services, the facility would have to submit an operating plan to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs for its approval.●

Grace Membership Year *by Caroline Jacobs*

The Commons in Lincoln, MLCRA Vice President for Membership

As reported by Jean Stringham in the last issue of The Patriot, the Grace Membership Year has attracted new members in many communities, so that MLCRA now has almost 1200 members statewide and 17 member CCRCs. There's still time for other CCRC residents to take advantage of a free membership in 2021!

At The Commons in Lincoln, Bob Anderson, our MLCRA rep, and I distributed a one-page description of the benefits of belonging to MLCRA and an invitation to take advantage of the grace year. There was a link to the website, where people could find more information and a membership form attached. We were thrilled with the response rate and welcomed 43 new members.



If you think there are residents in your community who would like to join MLCRA, we hope you will find a way to tell them that 2021 is a great time to join without any membership dues. Please let me know if I can help with your outreach.●

“Forward” for CCRCs by Allison Dolan, Brooksby Village

Elissa Sherman, President of LeadingAge Massachusetts, was one of the featured speakers at the May 5, 2021 MLCRA Annual Meeting. For long-time MLCRA members, Elissa is a familiar figure. Her organization focuses on not-for-profit housing for seniors (continuing care



Elissa Sherman

retirement communities, nursing homes, etc.), and advocates with the state legislature on issues important to seniors.

Elissa mentioned that during the pandemic, LeadingAge was among those who worked with the CDC and state health

departments to get Independent Living communities prioritized and included with long term care facilities in the first wave of vaccinations; not all states did that. Elissa reported that, in Massachusetts, there is a close to 100% vaccination rate of residents in continuing care retirement communities; staff vaccination rates are also relatively high.

LeadingAge Massachusetts had their annual meeting the week prior to MLCRA. Their theme was ‘Forward’. Elissa shared some key learnings from the pandemic:

1. *Our workforce is our most important resource.* Staff really responded to the changing nature of work during the pandemic, while dealing with an increased regulatory burden, as well as personal health and family issues. These challenges all impacted recruiting and retaining staff. There will be a focus on ‘pay to stay’ legislation, living wages, as well as ensuring the right training and that position definitions are appropriate to attract people.

2. *Technology has become critical for health and wellbeing.* This includes the role of Zoom in helping people stay connected and engaged, as well as telehealth, aspects of which will continue even after COVID; and ensuring more consistent access to technology.

3. *We need to rethink our models of care.* This includes ‘Green House’, shared living areas that are less like hospital environments.*

4. *We need to leverage the power of community.* At the Leading Age annual meeting, Carol Silver Elliot, the chair of the LeadingAge Board of Directors had shared an analogy (which someone else said to her) that dealing with the pandemic was like driving in a blizzard without snow tires or windshield wipers. However, there was also a wonderful sharing of ideas and what was working.

5. *We need to tell our story.* Unfortunately, during the pandemic, the stories on TV regarding senior housing weren’t very positive, and yet there was much good that didn’t make the news. Many residents of senior housing were saying ‘I’m so glad I’m not living in my home; I’m not in this alone.’ So there is a challenge in how to get this positive story out.

We thank Elissa Sherman for sharing her perspectives and we look forward to continuing to working with her and LeadingAge.

*‘Green House’ is a trademarked term referring to an increasingly popular model of nursing home care based on providing a real home (typically, a private room with shared common areas), meaningful life, and empowered staff. See Greenhouseproject.org. ●

WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Two new at-large members were elected to the MLCRA Board of Directors at our Annual Meeting on May 5. Please join us in welcoming them to the board.



Cynthia Childs
The Overlook in Charlton

Cynthia Childs and her husband moved to The Overlook in June 2020 having lived 20 years in Rindge, NH and 20 years in Sterling, MA. She spent her career in health care service and management. Recent community service included: Rindge Zoning Board member, Church Moderator, Chairman of the Rindge Food Pantry and co-chair of a “Got Lunch Program”. At The Overlook she is the secretary of the Resident Council and a member of the Health Advocacy Committee. Her hobbies include knitting, quilting and card making.



David VanArsdale
Edgewood

In 2016 Dave moved from Arizona to Edgewood in North Andover MA. He had retired in 2013 after over 41 years in ministry in the Presbyterian Church. His wife Ellen retired at the same time after 44 years of public health nursing. They have three sons and eight grandchildren. Dave’s background also includes experience on the boards of two CCRCs (in Ohio and Arizona). Presently he is Vice-chair of the Council on Aging in North Andover. Dave enjoys swimming and walking at Edgewood.

And congratulations go to the entire 2021-2022 Board of Directors,
elected at our Annual Meeting

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Jean Stringham, Lasell Village

Vice President for Membership

Caroline Jacobs, The Commons in Lincoln

Vice President for Advocacy and Education

Vacant

Recording Secretary

Eunice White, Orchard Cove

Corresponding Secretary

Mary-Louise Eggimann, Southgate at Shrewsbury

Treasurer

Allison Dolan, Brooksby Village

Members at-Large

Cynthia Childs, The Overlook

Lauren Hale, Southgate at Shrewsbury

Charlie Sokoloff, Orchard Cove

David VanArsdale, Edgewood ●

MEETING VIRTUALLY *by Allison Dolan, Brooksby Village
MLCRA Treasurer and Technology Chair*



Liz Flaig

Like many organizations, the MLCRA Board's primary challenge in planning the 2021 annual meeting was 'meeting'. We knew that it wouldn't be feasible to host an in-person meeting. On the other hand, while we had all participated in Zoom meetings, none of us had ever run a large, formal Zoom session. Fortunately, a board member knew of an expert: Liz Flaig of Oma Communications. Liz had already impressed the Lasell Village community with her ability to not only use technology, but also to help seniors get comfortable using the tools. The Board worked closely with her to structure a session that would be informative and accomplish the business needs.

Resident council leaders and MLCRA representatives were invited to the May 5th Zoom meeting. In a positive sign of how accustomed people have become to Zoom, only four people signed up for the Zoom class that the Board offered. Thirty-five MLCRA members attended the annual meeting representing 14 of the 17 MLCRA member communities.

Our guest speakers included the top two Senators and the top two Representatives from the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs of the Massachusetts legislature, as well as Elissa Sherman, President of LeadingAge Massachusetts. Although Zoom doesn't allow the informal conversations that are so valuable at in-person meetings, it did allow us to hear from many different speakers. Thanks to Liz, the speaker portion of the program was recorded, and is available on the MLCRA website. There is a direct link to the 2021 annual meeting from the top of the MLCRA homepage (www.mlcra.org).

Liz also helped design a follow-up survey which was sent to attendees via email after the meeting. Despite the absence of in-person interaction, the large majority of survey respondents found the meeting 'excellent' or 'very good'. Everyone agreed the meeting length (90 minutes) was 'just right', while almost half said they would not

have attended the meeting if it had been in person.

Per the survey responses, the speakers were generally well received and respondents said they would be interested in hearing from these speakers in the future. The most common complaint was that the way we structured the Zoom meeting, attendees couldn't ask questions.

The music interlude, a short musical video by Steve Straus, of Orchard Cove, and his Generations Saxophone Quartet, was well received. (See article page 8 for more about Steve.)

A key part of the business meeting portion of the agenda was the election of new board members. Candidate information had been sent out ahead of time to attendees. Liz Flaig ran the Zoom election during the meeting. Most attendees were comfortable with the way the voting occurred. The new slate was unanimously voted in.

Based on the positive survey responses, the Membership Committee will be exploring ways to bring back 'area meetings', perhaps starting with Zoom.

Our thanks to the attendees, the speakers, and Liz for making our 2021 annual meeting productive! ●

Musical Interlude at Annual Meeting

by Eunice White, Orchard Cove



A delightful musical interlude at the Annual Meeting was led by Orchard Cove resident Steve Straus with his Generations Saxophone Quartet. Steve also has led a Dixieland jazz band for over thirty years. The Riverboat Stompers were actually formed and first played at Orchard Cove twenty-eight years ago during its opening, and have entertained residents at Orchard Cove many times since.

Steve's full plate includes playing the clarinet in the Sharon Community Chamber Orchestra and alto saxophone in the Wheaton College Southeastern Massachusetts Wind Symphony. He also creates and with fellow musicians performs musical pieces for holiday programs at Christmas and Valentine's Day, in the Commons at Orchard Cove and its Enhanced Living Area for less mobile residents.

Three years ago, Steve collaborated with fellow Orchard Cove resident, David Rubin, and CiCi Hunt, the Orchard Cove choral director, to re-write the lyrics of the familiar song, Gloria Gaynor's "I will survive". With the help of videographer Mollie Wasserman

they made a video for YouTube in support of the Democratic Party.

Two years ago at Orchard Cove, the Riverboat Stompers made a CD which they still sell at the on-site grocery store. All proceeds from Orchard

Cove residents are donated to the Orchard Cove Scholarship Fund. The saxophone quartet will do the same with its recently produced CD.

The Riverboat Stompers are scheduled to perform at Edgewood in August. Both groups are always delighted to perform at any senior facility. The websites for the two groups are riverboatstompers.com and gensax4tet.com

Both groups are extremely proud of the educational component that they offer to audiences. They often include information on the various composers, as well as fun "factoids." At times, they visit local schools, sharing the richness of their programs.

We hope you enjoyed the brief musical interlude and that this article just might give you an idea of an event for your own communities! ●



Photo: Steve Straus

GSQ roster is left to right: Baritone sax; Gail Ferr; Soprano sax; Steve Straus; Tenor sax Ray Hebert; and Alto sax- Tommy VanDuyne

Pandemic Year in Review

by Lauren Hale, Southgate

As the outgoing MLCRA president, Lauren gave this report during the May 5, 2021 MLCRA annual meeting.



Over the past year, MLCRA has continued some activities despite the coronavirus pandemic. We have shared information and ideas among communities. We have increased membership. We have improved and strengthened the technology that supports our programs.

A major purpose of MLCRA is the exchange of information and ideas among residents of different retirement communities. Last summer we conducted a survey to learn how MLCRA communities handled various aspects of the pandemic. The results were published in the Patriot and

on the website. Some MLCRA members shared ideas from the survey with their management.

The Patriot also carried stories from different communities about their activities during the pandemic. I want to thank Pat Walsh, the design and layout editor, and Elizabeth Losa, the copy editor, for the work they do to make the Patriot a high quality publication.

We have used the MLCRA website to inform and educate. It has been difficult to keep up with changing information about CDC guidance, the vaccine, and Massachusetts government orders. The MLCRA website has a coronavirus resources page with links to reliable sources of information that are constantly updated.

Although we did not have an active advocacy program during the pandemic, we maintained contact with the offices of key Massachusetts legislators. We very much appreciate the participation in today's meeting of the Senate and House Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs. We look forward to working with them and with their staffs during 2021.

MLCRA membership has grown during the pandemic. We have made 2021 a grace membership year. Jean Stringham will report separately on these efforts.

In their responses to our pandemic survey, some Resident Association president asked MLCRA to support efforts to help residents become more comfortable with technology. Allison Dolan, a MLCRA board member from Brooksby Village, became our first-ever technology chair. She has written articles about technology for the Patriot.

With the help of consultant Allen Broughton, we have built a digital office, where we keep membership lists and other important records

We will be electing a new MLCRA board today. I want to thank Jerry Lyle and Terry Barton, who are both retiring from the board. I am stepping down as president. In accordance with MLCRA bylaws, I will remain on the board for one year as an at-large member. I will continue as Patriot editor for the next year and look forward to stories from all of your communities. Thank you.●

MLCRA Board and Resident Associations

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

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Loomis Lakeside at Reeds

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Dedham

Newbury Court, Concord

Orchard Cove, Canton

Sophia Snow Place

West Roxbury

Southgate at Shrewsbury

Springhouse, Jamaica Plain

Sweetwood of Williamstown

The Commons in Lincoln

The Overlook, Charlton

The Willows at Westborough

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 by email to:

Lauren Hale, Chair of the Patriot Editorial Committee
LHale20003@aol.com or 508-842-0515

Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association

MLCRA Membership Application for new members

for year ending 12/31/2021

(please print)

Date _____

Member Name(s): _____

Street _____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip code _____

Email _____ (for MLCRA purposes only)

Phone _____ (for MLCRA purposes only)

Your Retirement Community _____

Due to the pandemic, MLCRA is waiving membership dues for 2021 for new members; current members automatically have had one year added to their membership.

*Members will receive renewal information in the Oct-Dec 2021 Patriot.

Current members may use this form to update their information if there are changes, or send email with updates to allisondolan77@gmail.com

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

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



Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association

Lauren Hale, Editor
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.

Join
MLCRA
now to
maintain
your
quality of
life!

What is the Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association?

The voice of residents of Continuing Care Retirement Communities

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.

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).

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.