



Massachusetts PATRIOT

Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association (MLCRA) OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2024

The Residents' Advocate – Management's Friend • *Serving our community for 26 years* • www.mlcra.org

A Gift of Serenity

This past summer the Willows at Worcester welcomed a wonderful gift: a second Koi pond. Michael Shore and his wife Brenda, enjoyed having a Koi pond at their previous home in Dudley, MA. Upon moving to The Willows,



Mike offered to donate an additional pond to the campus and stock it with his Koi fish.

“Shore Haven Pond” has now become a serene reality on the grounds, enjoyed by residents and staff alike. The pond has become a rest, reflection and gathering place for residents out for a walk. It’s perfectly located on the campus, and there are 2 benches, where, as Mike said, folks can “ponder their thoughts.”

Residents enjoyed watching the installation, and were collectively surprised how the large pile of stones, black plastic and scurrying group of men could produce such a beautiful series of natural looking

cascading waterfalls in only three days. Willows resident and MLCRA representative, David McKinley noted, “We were hooked when the first koi appeared. Truly a special gift of Michael and Brenda Shore that Willows residents and staff will be forever grateful for.”

The ponds are designed so the fish can safely remain in the pond in the winter; they hibernate at the bottom so to speak. While care is mostly done by staff, Mike also lends a hand. ♦

**“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.”**

President's Message

By Jean Stringham, Lasell Village

It's hard to believe we are closing out another year! I'm happy to say that MLCRA has had a very good year, and we are extremely pleased that the Long Term Care bill passed and that the Special Commission to study CCRCs is part of that. I was invited to represent MLCRA on the Commission and I was delighted to accept. You'll hear more about that from me in the months to come.

Congratulations to our friends at LeadingAge Massachusetts who celebrated their 70th anniversary on October 9th at their Annual Meeting. They are an association of not-for-profit providers of aging services, including many of our own communities. Special thanks to Elissa Sherman who has been their President since 2000, having joined two years earlier as their Director of Public Policy. We were happy to see that Elissa was chosen to speak at the State House when the Long Term Care bill was signed into law this past September. Thanks to LeadingAge MA for their many efforts on behalf of seniors in Massachusetts. We look forward to continued collaboration with them.

In this issue of the Patriot you will also find other good news. We welcome a new community member, Linden Ponds in Hingham. We look forward to getting to know your community and your activities and interests. Please see page 8 for an article

about Linden Ponds written by Christine Griffin who deserves much thanks for her efforts to introduce Linden Ponds to MLCRA.



There is additional progress on the topic of membership. We have reduced the membership fee of \$25 for a household down to \$15. This will hopefully encourage more households to join MLCRA and also enable us to build our membership total by adding the names of additional people in households. Another bit of progress is that members can now join or renew online. Please see that article on page 3 for more information.

The year 2025 will see plans for nominating new board members, especially for President. I'll be stepping down in May at our Annual Meeting and will continue on the board for a year as allowed in our bylaws. We hope that folks will consider serving on the board. Learning first-hand about other communities is a not to be missed experience and I hope you'll consider it.

Thanks for your ongoing interest and support of MLCRA, the only statewide association of retirement communities in Massachusetts. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year to all. ◆

Did You Know...

AirPods Pro 2 now provide a clinical-grade Hearing Aid feature for perceived mild to moderate hearing loss and a Media Assist feature, which enhances the clarity of music, video, and calls. You'll also need an iPhone or iPad running iOS or iPadOS 18.1 or later. The FDA called it an advance for "the availability, accessibility and acceptability of hearing support."

Membership

By Caroline Jacobs, The Commons in Lincoln

MLCRA is the only state-wide association for seniors living in Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) and similarly organized retirement communities in Massachusetts. Membership gives us a way to participate in meaningful outreach to other communities and learn about their policies and activities. In addition, MLCRA supports advocacy efforts with the Massachusetts legislature on topics of general interest to residents of CCRCs. Every MLCRA member is important!

As 2024 draws to a close, we are planning the membership drive for 2025. If your membership is due to expire on December 31, 2024 (check the date next to your name on the address label on the back page of this issue), your MLCRA representative will be in touch with you to fill out the renewal form on page 11 of this issue.

This year, we are excited to introduce two improvements to make the process easier:

1. The one-year membership will be the same (\$15) for an individual or a household. If you are renewing at this or any other level, please let us know the name(s) of any other people living in your household so that we can accurately report our full membership.
2. You can now renew online using a credit card. You can easily find this option on the MLCRA website (mlcra.org). Under 'Join MLCRA or Renew,' there is a link to a secure third-party processing site to make your payment.

If you are becoming a member for the first time, please fill out the form completely so that we have your contact information. If you pay by check, please give the form and your check to your MLCRA Representative or send them to our Treasurer, Allison Dolan, at the address given. Contact information for all MLCRA representatives is on our website, www.mlcra.org, under Member Associations. ♦



Graphic courtesy of vecteezy.com

Attention photographers!

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MLCRA's website has been refreshed with new photos, and we'd love to see some more local winter scenes. Go to mlcra.org to check out the current collection gracing the top of each section. Then review your digital photo files for horizontal photographs of Massachusetts scenery.

Send your best to: jean.stringham@gmail.com (including your community name and a caption). Your winter photograph may appear in a future refresh of the MLCRA website!
Thank you!

MA Legislature Updates

As the last issue of the Patriot was going to print, the MLCRA Board was delighted to learn that the conference committee looking at assisted living and long term care produced compromise legislation — “An Act to improve quality and oversight of long-term care” (H.5033) — which passed the Massachusetts House and Senate. The bill was sent to Gov. Healey on August 30 and signed the following week. MLCRA would especially like to thank the architects of the bill, the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs, Senator Patricia Jehlen and Representative Thomas Stanley.



Photo by Jean Stringham

The final legislation includes two provisions for which MLCRA has advocated: it allows Assisted Living Residences to offer basic health services and it establishes a special Commission to study continuing care retirement communities.

The bill is long (66 pages!) and, as the name suggests, it touches virtually every part of the long-term care continuum. It included several other bills that had been worked on over many years covering nursing homes, assisted living residences, LGBTQI rights, pooled trusts, prior authorization, estate recovery and more. For more details go to mlcra.org/advocacy.

This bill incorporated Senator Jehlen’s common sense in assisted living bill: it makes permanent the temporary allowance for Assisted Living Residences (ALRs) to offer basic health services. ALRs are certified by the Executive

Office of Elder Affairs, not the Department of Public Health (DPH), and are considered non-medical facilities. Although they had nurses on staff, those nurses weren’t allowed to administer eye drops or insulin injections — things that even family members were permitted to do.

Exceptions were made during COVID. Under the new bill, assisted living communities will be able to offer basic health services, including injections; the application or replacement of simple, non sterile dressings; oxygen management; diagnostic home testing; and the application of ointments or drops.

The bill also expands DPH tools for nursing homes, including more oversight with the ability to limit, restrict, suspend, or revoke a license; or deny a license or license transfer. They can also appoint temporary facility managers for troubled facilities, and impose significantly increased penalties. For example, the previous maximum fine for noncompliance with regulations was \$50/day — the same as the minimum fine for a speeding ticket! DPH can also require regular inspections and outbreak response plans.

H.5033 also authorizes a special legislative Commission to study oversight of continuing care retirement communities to protect the consumer and financial rights of residents. The Commission will look at several topics, including the care contracts; financial viability of such communities; the payment and return

of entrance fees; and regulatory procedures for the closure or change of ownership. The Commission has a deadline for the report of August 1, 2025. MLCRA was explicitly included as a member of the Commission. As Jean noted in her message (page 2), she was invited to represent MLCRA, and she has agreed to serve.

As some of you may be aware, the prior Secretary of the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) stepped down in June. We were very

pleased to learn that Acting Secretary Robin Lipson was named as Secretary of EOEA on November 20. Prior to her appointment as Acting Secretary, Robin served as Deputy Secretary of the EOEA. She was the keynote speaker at the 2019 MLCRA annual meeting, which was held in-person at Southgate. For the past 40 years, she has held leadership roles in the public, not-for-profit, and private sectors. Robin will be joining the December MLCRA Board Meeting. ♦

Community Conversations

By Caroline Jacobs, The Commons in Lincoln

Community Conversations on Zoom were introduced in the fall of 2021, as we were beginning to emerge from the Covid pandemic. Most of us had become familiar with Zoom as an alternative way to keep in touch, stay healthy and save time. Since then we have held seven conversations on a wide range of subjects, including welcoming new residents, responding to labor shortages, technology and web portals, navigating the levels of health care and dining services. The most recent conversation in September was on Governance. We exchanged information on for profit or non-profit ownership, resident representation on boards of directors/ trustees, and composition and election of resident councils. We soon learned that no

two communities have a similar governance structure. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for December 5 to discuss Standing Committees.

We always invite MLCRA representatives from each member community to join us and sometimes the president of the resident association. A summary of each conversation is sent to representatives so that they can report back to their community. There are also summaries in the quarterly Patriot newsletter. We are currently planning our topics for 2025 and hope to come up with five or six topics of general interest. Top of the list so far is the management of rollators and electric mobility vehicles. Please let us know if you have any other suggestions. ♦

“Age is something that doesn’t matter, unless you are a cheese.”

— Luis Bunuel

Cub Scouts Honor Southgate Veterans

By Lauren Hale, Southgate at Shrewsbury

Shrewsbury Cub Scout Pack 158 came to Southgate on Veterans’ Day weekend for their annual tribute to Southgate residents who served in the Armed Forces.

The Cub Scouts and their parents met with veterans in Southgate’s Gazebo Park. The Cub Scouts thanked the veterans for their service. The veterans introduced themselves and gave their branch of service. Some recounted details of their time in the military. The Cub Scouts, their parents, and residents then sang God Bless America.

The Cub Scouts placed American flags around the Gazebo and in the surrounding garden area. The flags will remain there for a few weeks in recognition of the service to their country by Southgate veterans. ♦



Cub Scouts and Residents Meet. Photo by Ruth Skala.



Flags on Display. Photo by Kiran Easterbrook.

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Immigrant Stories

By Elaine J. Baizman, Orchard Cove

There were many activities this summer which emphasize the close relationship between staff and residents at Orchard Cove: the scholarship program; the talent show, the six word story telling; fun day; immigration stories. The one that touched so many were the immigration stories of our diverse population, including our director, Aline Russotto, who comes from Belgium. The audience was huge and really appreciated the stories of what brought these folks to our country. The stories were riveting, from Ester Adler’s story of emigrating from Germany in 1938 to Palestine and eventually to America,



to more recent migration of our younger staff. I have lived in Orchard Cove for one year and I have been overwhelmed by the incredible warmth and sense of community there. ♦

The Briartones: Briarwood's New Singing Sensation

By Kathy Krieger and Lynda Skerry, The Briarwood Community, Worcester



Briartones after Oct rehearsal

Every December for many years, a small group of residents of The Briarwood Community (Worcester) has led a sing-along of Christmas carols for our Assisted Living, Memory Care, and Nursing Centers. In January 2023, some of the carolers said, "Wouldn't it be nice to do this year-round?" Thus, the Briarwood glee club — soon named the "Briartones" — was born. The club, which currently has 34 members, now performs five to six times a year, touching the lives of nearly all residents of our community.

While the main goal of the Briartones is to lead sing-along programs, some members choose to participate in rehearsals, but not to perform. All residents are welcome to drop in at any rehearsal, to sing or just to listen.

February's sing-along featured Valentine songs, from old classics like "Love and Marriage" to Broadway hits like "People Will Say We're in Love." Spring programs offered ballads like "April Love" and more modern toe-tappers like "Rockin' Robin".

On the 4th of July, "Songs of Summer/Songs of Freedom" was performed in our main gathering

room to a packed house of Independent and Assisted Living residents, their families and friends. Song lyrics were projected onto a large screen, reminiscent of the old Mitch Miller TV show — albeit without the bouncing ball. Traditional patriotic favorites like "God Bless America" brought inspiration to all. The freedom of summer travel was celebrated with choices such as John Denver's "Country Roads."

Briarwood is a diverse community with residents of many backgrounds and talents. Several soloists were featured in the Briartones' November program on the theme, "Songs of Autumn/Songs of Thanksgiving." An arrangement of "Autumn Leaves" was sung in French and English. Standards like "September Song" were included alongside favorite Thanksgiving hymns.

In December the Briartones joined with *Betty Machete and the Jumping Fleas*, our local all-female ukulele group, for a joint concert of Christmas and Hanukkah songs. And of course, the Briartones returned full circle to their roots with a round of campus-wide caroling to close out their first, very enjoyable and well-received, year. ♦

Get Acquainted with Linden Ponds

By Christine Griffin, Linden Ponds



Linden Ponds is grateful and excited to become a MLCRA community member and we look forward to working to continue to improve life in a continuing care community. Coincidentally, Linden Ponds is now celebrating its 20th anniversary as a residential community. We are a nonprofit whose governing board is National Senior Communities, and they contract with Erickson Senior Living to provide day to day management, including the more than 750 full and part time staff.

The Linden Ponds campus, a certified arboretum, is home to over 1400 residents living in 13 buildings. Like many CCRCs, our average age is around the mid 80s, with majority women. We enjoy 4 different dining venues in two clubhouses. Amenities include medical center, fitness center, mini CVS, and hair salon. Resident gardeners enjoy 123 garden patches and 8 raised beds. We will be opening a new Assisted Care

building in January 2025, more than doubling the number of available units. Situated in historic Hingham, we have access to distinctive shops, antique homes and inviting restaurants. Residents generously support our key philanthropies: the Resident Care Fund, the Scholarship Fund and the Staff Appreciation Fund.

As noted in our 10th anniversary resident newsletter *Life at Linden Ponds*, although our community is new, the land goes back eons. Where we walk and drive was, millions of years ago, covered by the great continental ice sheet, which left behind the granite the area became famous for. Englishmen and women founded the Puritan town of Hingham in the 1600s. Over the years, our stretch of land along Rt. 53 became the source of a butter-colored stone called Hingham/Weymouth Seam-faced Granite. It has been a top choice for buildings throughout the U.S. and around the world, including buildings at Boston College and Yale University. The area was pockmarked with little quarries owned by various residents. Then in the 1990s, John Erickson bought over 100 acres and hired an internationally known firm of landscape architects to create a 20-year plan for the tumble of stone; that desolate, overgrown site once shaped by a glacier became “Linden Ponds”. ♦

Worried about your memory? The book, *Seven Steps to Managing Your Aging Memory — What’s Normal, What’s Not, and What to Do About It*, by Andrew Budson and Maureen O’Connor, references dementia-like issues that aren’t dementia, and perhaps can be corrected. For example, a number of common medications can affect memory, such as beta blockers, antidepressants, anticholinergics, sleep aids, and others. If you are taking multiple medications, their interaction could also result in memory changes.

Seeing and Speaking

A Poem by Jim Herbert, Newbury Court

One day recently I had to go to the dentist
Or, more properly speaking, to an endodontist.
One of my molars seemed to have an infection
Making the dreaded root canal a likely direction.

My situation, however, turned out to be more complicated.
A front root of my molar was blocking the view of a back root,
an obstacle no normal X-ray could get around.
Guided by the dental assistant, a slender, blondish young woman,
I followed to another room for my first encounter
with a 360 degree X-ray machine.

You do it standing up
And she rotates the 360 around your head
Seeking the best viewing angle
At one point I was looking straight into her eyes
Close, clear, steady

Afterward I complimented her on her English
And asked — as is my wont — what was her first language
“Ukrainian” she said staunchly
I vented my sorrow and regret at what had been done to her country
And asked if she still had any people there
“My husband.”



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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Newbury Court, Concord

Orchard Cove, Canton

Sophia Snow Place,
West Roxbury

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Springhouse, Jamaica Plain

Sweetwood of Williamstown

The Briarwood Community,
Worcester

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 articles, topics of interest, comments and questions to:

Allison Dolan, Patriot Editor, *allisondolan77@gmail.com* or 978-587-2955

Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association
MLCRA Membership Application/Renewal Form for 2025

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 12/31/2025) \$15 (individual/household)

5 year (expires 12/31/2029) \$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

Alternatively, go to mlcra.org/join-mlcra to pay by credit card.



Massachusetts Life Care Residents Association

Allison Dolan, Editor
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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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