



Lexington Field & Garden Club

143 Years of Making Lexington More Beautiful

Member of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

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Co-President's Letter

At the January board meeting, one board member challenged us, “We are the oldest and largest club in Massachusetts, yet we use disposable coffee cups and plates. Shouldn't we set a better example?”

As an organization, we have tried to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing our waste and being more ecologically sensitive. We shed those Styrofoam cups; we send the newsletter out by email; but we still use paper cups, which are usually coated with grade 4 low-density polyethylene, making them unsuitable for recycling in most states. Some experts also argue that paper cups emit methane when they decompose.

Technically, paper cups will biodegrade, but experts warn that it can take up to 30 years for cups to decay. Ultimately, they are not really an ecofriendly option.

The website, Sustainability at BU, points out “The average American office worker uses 500 disposable cups a year, or 1.4 per day. Americans throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour. Help reduce this waste by using a reusable mug or bottle.”

According to our research, the truly eco-friendly alternative to the paper cup is a reusable cup. Why don't we who say we care about the environment make it a priority to reuse? And, could it be so difficult?

What if all coffee or tea drinkers brought their own mugs (BYOM) to the different garden club meetings? It would require some planning — just like remembering to bring our reusable grocery bags into the supermarket. It's easier not to change, but is that the right choice?

Regards,

Ruthanne Igoe and Ashley Rooney



Programs

Consider the Cactus with Marc Raibert

Several years ago, Morning Study Group members were enchanted by their visit with Marc Raibert. And February in Massachusetts would be a perfect time to forget the weather outside and learn about cactus from him at the February 12 meeting of the Lexington Field & Garden Club. The meeting is held at the Depot and begins at 10 AM. Social hour is before.

Marc Raibert is the designer of “Ouch House,” a collection of spiny cactus, euphorbia and other succulents located in Carlisle, Massachusetts. He has about 300 plants in all, ranging in size from the 14 foot tall 3-armed Saguaro down to the humble quarter-inch-tall field of Lithops. There are thirteen varieties of Opuntia, all growing like mad. Raibert will take us on a visual tour of Ouch House and describe how this unique desert landscape came to be. For a brief time, we will feel the warmth of the desert and forget February in Massachusetts.

Bring your favorite piece of floral jewelry to display at the February meeting.



Quabbin to Wachusett: a Multi-town Massachusetts

Land & Water Conservation Project



Settled in the early 1700s, the Quabbin area grew to a population of about 2,700 by 1938. It was doing well, but the eastern part of Massachusetts needed drinking water, and the government needed a place to put it. The project scope was immense: relocating all those people, their homes, businesses, and relocating the 7,613 bodies from local cemeteries.



Loon by David Malysa

The Quabbin Reservoir, the largest inland body of water in Massachusetts, was built between 1930 and 1939. Today, along with the Wachusett Reservoir, it is the primary water supply for Boston, some 65 miles to the east, as well as 40 other communities in Greater Boston.

Executive Director of Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, Leigh Youngblood, will discuss the construction of the reservoir, the four lost towns of the Quabbin Reservoir, and the land, water, wildlife, and people that persevere

there today. Many individuals living in the greater North Quabbin region have parents who experienced the relocation, keeping the legacy very much alive today. Constant encounters with landowners, foresters, biologists, surveyors, historians, artists, anglers, poets, and others inform a balanced perspective between the practical and the personal.

Several years ago, we began this Sunday Library gathering for those who couldn't attend the monthly meetings and to share forces with the library. These meetings are most popular. We suggest you come early.

The program will be on Sunday, March 15 at 2:30 PM in the large meeting room of Cary Library.



Bull Moose by Dale Monette



A Special Present for 25 Members

Member **Judy Uhrig** had this great idea and was willing to research it once we okayed it. She proposed that we visit the grounds of the Encore Boston Harbor casino and hotel. Patrick Chadwick, Director of Horticulture and Floral for Encore had roughly 1,000 mature trees and tens of thousands of shrubs installed as the backbone of a 6-acre park-like setting along a new river walk through the resort property. Some 50,000 flowering plants are changed out several times a year to create new color schemes with the seasons, and there is a lawn created by a proprietary type of synthetic grass.

Encore has agreed to give 25 members a free tour on May 20. Think of it as a gift to yourself for work on the Plant Sale! The bus will leave Lexington at 9:30 and be back at 2:30. The cost is \$25 for the bus; your lunch at one of Encore's many restaurants is on your own. **Kathy Leva** will collect reservations and payment at the April meeting.



Garden Club Scholarship

Lexington Field & Garden club awards an annual scholarship to a Minuteman Technical High School student interested in Horticulture & Landscape for their future career. Some of these students helped clearing the woods surrounding the gardens at Munroe. At the March 11 meeting, several students will present a brief talk on the school's Landscaping Program.

After that meeting, our five-member committee, who will have read their essays, will select one student to receive the \$1,000 scholarship.

On April 3, we will present the scholarship to the student and have a tour of the new Minuteman High School. We will then have a self-paid lunch at the District Restaurant at the school. Please contact **Linda Lindell** if interested in having lunch and for more detailed information.



Valentine Party

Winter Social



Visit with friends and make new ones!

Members (and their mates) are invited to:

Bridget Galdes

1 Douglas Rd Lexington

Sunday, February 16, 5-7 PM

Bring your own liquid refreshment and an appetizer to share!

RSVP to **Kathy Leva** if you plan to attend...





Creating Beautiful Objects d' Art

Eighteen members visited **Christina Gamota's** preview. She presented five different categories of style: natural, scented, Nordic, contemporary, Victorian. She is waiting to hear from them about which style they would like to make. She intends to have the first workshop in February. For more information or to become involved, please contact **Christina Gamota**.

Program Planning

Several people spoke to us about the Peter Alden lecture and wanted to know about our Program Planning process. Each year the Vice President (**Marilyn Ryniewicz** for 2020/2021) gathers together a committee to help select the speakers. We invite members who are interested in participating to speak to her.

Meanwhile the subgroups are planning their programs and nominating their boards for next year. Please speak to them if you have a desire for a certain program or wish to participate more comprehensively.

Open Board Meeting

Want to know how the Garden Club works? Interested in being on the board? Please feel free to attend our open board meeting on March 4 in Room 230-232 at the Community Center. Bring your own coffee cup.



Horticulture News

Ada Govan Bird Sanctuary

Ethel S Ollin

When we first moved to our home on Colony Road back in 1982, I noticed an area of our street that was devoid of houses. Turns out it is the Ada Govan Bird Sanctuary. It abuts the entrance to the Fiske Elementary School. There are a few paths from the parking lot of Fiske that leads students and others to Woodland Street.

The sanctuary is home to falcons, hawks and other varieties of birds. I once saw an eagle perched on a tree. Their Facebook page shows a few pictures and provides some history. Ada Clapham Govan founded it in 1937. This bird sanctuary was created for the sole purpose to protect the various bird species living in Massachusetts. Ada Clapham Govan and her husband David Govan's final resting place in Munroe Cemetery, Lexington Massachusetts, is less than two miles away from the Ada Govan Bird Sanctuary.

Ada wrote a book, *Wings at My Window*, that you can order from AbeBooks.com website. There is a copy at the Lexington Public Library.

I grew up in Manhattan. We always fed the pigeons and once had a nest outside one of our windows and I was thrilled to see the eggs hatch. We would leave food out on the ledge for the birds to eat. We also had a hawk visit our backyard. S/he would hang out on the brick walls and would drive our cat crazy!

It is a special treat having a bird sanctuary so close to my home. Birds are so important to the health of our gardens as well as ourselves.



The Bees of Lexington

Alexandra Bartsch

Did you know that bees have now been declared as the most important living thing on earth? So says the Royal Geographic Society at their most recent meeting in London. (<https://www.sciencetimes.com/articles/23245/20190709/bees-are-the-most-important-living-being-on-earth.htm>) Here in Lexington, I'm happy to report that the bees are doing pretty well. Of course, I think we need more, but they are doing their part for our gardens and flowers.



Bird hives

I have been keeping honey bees in Lexington since I was inspired by my AP Biology teacher at Lexington High School (LHS) decades ago. I took a course at Drumlin Farm in Lincoln, and have been keeping bees on and off at my home on Follen Road ever since. Now I am one of three Eastern Apiculture Society certified Master Beekeepers in Massachusetts and have numerous apiaries around Lexington. I took advantage of the mild weather we had recently to check them out. On a strange January weekend, where the temperatures soared into the upper 60s, it was

easy to tell how the bees were doing. Most of my apiaries around Lexington are thriving. Since the winter solstice has passed, I fed them patties made out of sugar syrup and protein to assist them in raising the baby bees for this spring. I am hopeful that they will be healthy and pollinating our spring flowers.

Bees not only provide us honey, but provide beeswax, one of the most useful substances around. On February 10, I will be leading a workshop at the Cary Memorial Library on creating "bee wraps... These are a fabric covered with beeswax, with a little pine resin and sweet almond oil, that can act as a reusable substitute for plastic wrap. All of us who are attempting to "deplastic" our kitchens may wish to attend. If you can't attend, you can buy them ready-made at the Firefly Moon gift store downtown.

The LHS Bee Club has also prepared a presentation that it will give the Select Board this spring in order to make Lexington the first "Bee city" in Massachusetts certified by the Xerxes Society. This designation celebrates the fact that Lexington is pro-pollinator and pro-gardening. The high school students, in both the LHS Bee club and the LHS Honor Society, have put together a fabulous program.

Finally, more families than ever are keeping are interested in keeping bees on their property. Our friend, Carla Fortman, who runs the interfaith garden on Harrington Road reports that "once we obtained bees, the produce doubled in our garden." If you would like to keep bees, but don't have the time and expertise-and it does take a serious financial and time commitment-the Lexington Bee company can help. We are offering fee-based pollination services this spring.

Like all gardeners, the beekeepers take these quiet winter months for contemplation and planning of the season to come. We know, spring is coming, and it will be filled with beautiful gardens and happy pollinators.



The Membership Committee is Seeking New Members!

The purpose of the Membership Committee is to promote the Lexington Field and Garden Club, make members feel welcome and valued, and provide and act on ideas that improve the membership experience. To that end, we recruit new members, maintain their records, help them navigate their way within the Club and finally ensure their satisfaction which will guarantee a long term engagement with the Club. Examples of our work are that we provide a welcome table and greeters at every meeting, advertise the Club at Club events and elsewhere, perform the practical tasks of membership by recording new members, and ensuring that all are welcomed at the time of entry into the Club. Within our Committee is a mentoring group to pair newer members with more seasoned gardeners if that is requested. The membership committee meets approximately five times during the Club's active season. To learn more, please contact **Jan Avallone**.



Penny Pines Program – Please Help Save the Forests!

The National Garden Club and the USDA Forest Service have formed a partnership to help sustain forests through this reforestation and forest education program. Garden Clubs across the country can participate in this project by contributing to a Penny Pines plantation to help support the costs of replacement trees indigenous to an area damaged by fire or other natural catastrophes. The forest service does the planting using our donations and federal funding. The goal is to have each Club donate a multiple of \$68.00. Please bring your spare change or perhaps some bills to our February 12th meeting as we pass along the “Penny Pines” collection bag. Read more about this program on the GCFM website. Thank you so much!



Get Ready for Art A-Blooming!

Enjoy the joy and freedom of floral expression!

LFGC members get to choose a piece of artwork created by Lexington Arts and Crafts Society members to interpret with flowers. **Kathy Leva** and **Donna Dennison** are the Co-Chairs representing LFGC.

The date for choosing the artwork will be sometime in April.

Set-up – Thursday, September 24 • 11 AM – 1 PM

Reception for Artists and Arrangers – Thursday, September 24 • 7–9 PM

Open to the Public on:

Friday, September 25 • 11 AM – 4 PM

Saturday, September 26 • 11 AM – 4 PM

Sunday, September 27 • 11 AM – 4 PM

Location— Lexington Arts and Crafts Society • 130 Waltham Street, Lexington

Arranger signups for the show will take place at the February and March monthly LFGC meetings or by emailing **Kathy Leva**.