

President's Message

While I'm writing this, snow is falling again - not a big snow, but another few inches, and I'm glad for it. What a wonderful winter for photography, finding animal tracks in the snow, ice skating on some of the safe ponds, and dusting off the cross-country skis or snowshoes for an invigorating trip around the local park. The bitter temps have subsided, and robin sightings are more frequent. On occasion you may hear the "cheer, cheer" spring song of the cardinals. We have to believe that under the snow are crocuses and daffodils just waiting for the right moment to make their appearance and give us proof that life will persist in its annual cycle.



Daffodils

In Newton, the Garden City, we tend to take the presence of our green open spaces and playgrounds as a given. In his continuing series, Michael Clarke outlines the fascinating story of how many of our beloved parks came to be from the late 19th to the early 20th century. One of most beautiful open spaces, Houghton Garden, underwent some important restoration work last fall, which is also detailed in this issue. Substituting for our canceled Spring Walk Series and following up on the great success of last fall's inaugural Webinar Series, Beth Wilkinson has put together another great lineup, starting in April, with local experts on vernal pools, Cold Spring Park birding and exploration, and timely sessions on planting for pollinators.

And if you are looking for a way to volunteer, please consider joining our invasive removal team under the tutelage of Katherine Howard, who continues to lead this important work in a socially distanced fashion. On a related note, Councilor Alicia Bowman has initiated a working group to explore a possible pollinator policy and plan for the City and to provide information on suitable plantings to support pollination. Our website may soon be a repository for information on desirable pollinator plants as it has been for the undesirable invasive ones. And Councilor Alison Leary is working on a multi-community "adopt-a-space" initiative to deal with invasives and trash along the Charles River. Recently, Newton Conservators lent their support for a new DCR redesign of Hammond Pond Parkway that includes a multi-use path. Watch for further developments in all these great initiatives.

Due to the pandemic, slower rollout of vaccine, and continuing need for distancing precautions, our annual meeting, scheduled for May, has sadly been postponed again. It has been rescheduled for Wednesday, October 27, at the American Legion Nonantum Post 440 in celebration of our 60th Anniversary, with dinner, in-person awards, and an engaging speaker. In a new twist, we will be streaming it online for those not present in person! And this year, we may try additional interactive meetings on Zoom for our membership.



Breslyn Clinton

Last spring, when the pandemic began, inspirational and colorful painted rocks began appearing along the trails at Dolan Pond Conservation Area. A photo of her rock "WE WILL BE OK" was featured in Mayor Fuller's weekly message then and more recently in her annual "State of the City" address. We were so pleased to learn that the artist in question was a third grader by the name of Breslyn, who wanted to spread some joy in an open space area adjacent to her home.



Message of hope

Please don't take our wonderful open space for granted. Get out and enjoy it as it returns to a lush green in the aptly named miracle known as Spring!

All the best,

Ted Kuklinski

Ted Kuklinski
President, Newton Conservators