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Eileen Entin, Chair

September, 2016

Kate Fricker, Editor

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2016 CLC Dues are Payable Now

The status of your dues payment is shown on the address label of snail-mailed newsletters or near the top of the e-mail announcing this issue. If it says Dues paid September, 2015 (or earlier), it is time to renew your membership for 2016. If it says "Complimentary Copy," you are receiving a complimentary copy of our newsletter because you are a Town Meeting member or other public official in Lexington. We hope that those who receive complimentary copies will find our organization of value and will in time become dues-paying members. To join CLC or renew your membership, please send \$20.00 to Citizens for Lexington Conservation, P.O. Box 292, Lexington, MA 02420-0003. Dues can also be paid by credit card through PayPal from a link on our web site, <http://www.clclex.org>.

There is an electronic version of the CLC newsletter, sent as an email notice, with a link to the newsletter on the CLC web site. This version of the newsletter has illustrations in color and live links, it arrives much sooner than the snail mail version, it saves paper, and it costs CLC about \$1 less per copy. If you are currently receiving your newsletter by snail mail, you may convert to e-mail by contacting Judy Mello at jmacmello@comcast.net.

But Please Note:

CLC receives very low non-profit bulk mail postal rates as long as it follows the prescribed postal regulations. To keep these rates we must send at least 200 snail mail copies at each mailing. If everyone were to ask for the email version of the newsletter, then we wouldn't have the required 200 copies in the mailing, and it would cost us much more. For that reason, sometimes we send a paper copy to someone who expects the electronic one. If this should be the case for you, we can change you back, or you can just pick up your electronic version at [clclex.org](http://www.clclex.org).

CLC Board, Open Positions

Newsletter Assistant Editor: Would you like to help put together the CLC Newsletter? We are looking for an individual to assist our current newsletter editor, Kate Fricker, in organizing and putting together the CLC newsletter. The editor's duties include soliciting ideas for articles, accepting submitted articles and laying them out in the newsletter, and getting the newsletter printed. We publish three newsletters each year, our Candidates Newsletter in February, a spring newsletter in April and a fall newsletter in September.

Walks Coordinator: Would you like to organize and help publicize our fall, winter, and spring walks? The coordinator's duties include contacting previous and potential walk leaders to arrange scheduling details as well as helping to publicize the walks through local media outlets and list-serves. Keith Ohmart, who is currently arranging our walks, will guide you through the process initially to help you gain experience. He has a list of walk leaders that he can pass on.

Participation in bi-monthly Board meetings is beneficial, but is not a requirement for either position. If you are interested in further information about either of these positions, please contact Eileen Entin (eileenhome@gmail.com, 781 862-6418).

CITIZENS FOR LEXINGTON CONSERVATION 2016 FALL WALKS

All walks are free and open to the public

September 25, 2–4 pm, ACROSS Lexington Route G Inaugural Walk

Here is your chance to explore ACROSS Lexington's latest addition, Route G, which connects the Lower Vine Brook Conservation area portion of Route B with Countryside Green and the Shaker Glen Conservation area. The route is just under 3 miles in length with a combination of woods trails, sidewalks and quiet streets. Meet in the rear parking lot of the Christ Revolution Church, 451 Lowell Street.

Walk Leader: Bob Hausslein (781-862-9102, rhausslein@rcn.com)

October 8, 10:00-11:00am, Family Exploration, Hennessey Field

Come see what Hennessey Field has to offer in the fall! The weather is getting cooler and the leaves are starting to fall - that's how we know it's autumn. Let's see what we can find as we take a look around this newly restored meadow - we might see birds, bugs, mammals, and certainly plants. This adventure is designed for families with children of all ages, from toddlers to teens. Meet at the dead end of Robinson Road, where the pavement turns to a cart path.

Walk leaders: Alex Dohan (781-863-5882, amdohan@gmail.com) and Millie Webster (sethandmillie@gmail.com)

October 16, 2-4 pm: ACROSS Lexington Bicycle Ride

Explore ACROSS Lexington trails by bike! This easy-to-moderate 2-hour ride will take us through a number of Lexington's most scenic open spaces including Upper and Lower Vinebrook, Cotton Farm and Dunback Meadow, the Old Res, and Lincoln Park. We will travel via town streets, paved bike paths and unpaved walking trails. Be prepared for somewhat rough trail conditions; a bike with sturdy tires for trail riding and helmets are required. Bring water and a snack. Meet in the Town employee parking lot adjacent to the Minuteman Bikeway crossing at Fletcher Avenue. Bonus points for those who ride their bicycles to this event. Questions? Call Peggy at 617-308-8185.

Walk leader: Peggy Enders (617-308-8185, peggyenders@gmail.com).

October 29, 1:30-3 pm, Whipple Hill Trail Sign Inauguration Walk

If you have ever been lost on the trails in Whipple Hill or been too intimidated to explore this property, this is the walk for you. We will be exploring the Conservation Department's new trail signage system for this property that was installed earlier this year. The trails are steep in spots with uneven footing, so bring your hiking poles if you rely on them when hiking. Meet at the Winchester Drive entrance parking lot where Winchester Drive becomes Johnson Road on the Lexington/Winchester line. Park on Berkshire Drive across from the parking lot entrance on Winchester Drive.

Walk Leader: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216, kohmart@verizon.net)

November 5, 10-11:30 am, Conservation Restriction at Cotton Farm

CLC is in the process of assuming a Conservation Restriction for Cotton Farm. If you would like to learn the basics about Conservation Restrictions, join us for this combination field lecture and ramble about the property. We will explain the [reasons for establishing](#) a Conservation Restriction, its basic elements, and the annual monitoring process. [Expect](#) some standing interspersed by casual walking around this gently sloping property. Meet at the entrance to Cotton Farm on Marrett Road opposite Bacon Street. There is very limited parking on the property so please park along Marrett Road.

Walk Leaders: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216, kohmart@verizon.net), and Eileen Entin (781-862-6418, eileenhome@gmail.com)

Thank you, Walk Leaders

CLC is grateful for the people who volunteer to lead our spring and fall walks. Our thanks to Bobbie Hodson, Harry West, Roger Wrubel, Alex Dohan, Alissa Lauzon, Karen Longeteig, Tom Whelan, Bob Haussein, Keith Ohmart, Peggy Enders, Russ Cohen, and Fran Ludwig for leading walks last spring.

Fall Walks were arranged by Keith Ohmart, kohmart@verizon.net.

Publicity by Cynthia John, cbj190@yahoo.com

The Genius of Birds

By Jennifer Ackerman

Reviewed by Keith Ohmart

Who would ever think of using the phrase, "bird brained" as a compliment, but that is exactly what you may come to consider after reading Jennifer Ackerman's latest book, **"The Genius of Birds"**.

Birds are all around us, whether ordinary- appearing urban birds such as pigeons or

house sparrows, suburban birds that frequent our yards such as robins, seasonal visitors such as Baltimore orioles in the warmer months, or our familiar chickadees and juncos of fall and winter. What other class of wild creatures is so easy to observe yet because of this familiarity, so easy to dismiss as just feathered adornments of our everyday world with no special abilities.

The genius of writers like Ackerman is that they pull aside the veil on seemingly ordinary parts of our lives and offer us a window into parts of our world that we are too busy to notice on our own. And what a world it is as she explores the latest developments in the science of the intelligence of birds.

Feats of way-finding such as exhibited by homing pigeons or the thousands of species of migratory birds are well known, but consider what a Clark's nutcracker must do in keeping track of over 30,000 seeds and other food items cached over dozens of square miles, and then doing it again the next year and the next. And did I forget to mention that in the case of the more perishable food items stored, that the nutcracker needs to remember the use-by dates as well? Or consider our familiar Ruby-throated hummingbird which must keep track of hundreds if not thousands of flowers visited on a daily basis so as to not to revisit the same flower twice, wasting precious seconds in its frenetically busy day.

In the course of her book, Ackerman delves deeply into many different types of intelligence exhibited by birds beyond more familiar mapping and way finding skills. Complexities of social interactions that go way beyond danger alerts are explored that include evidence of gifting, consolation, deception and even grieving. Aesthetic awareness is explored in the fascinating structures that bower birds build in order to woo a mate. Astonishing feats of problem solving are described by members of the corvid and parrot families, including the ability to learn to use simple tools.

As Ackerman investigates some of the latest findings about avian brain development, she takes the time to explore just what this might mean in terms of what it means to be intelligent and how to measure intelligence. All in all, this book is a most satisfying read and will leave you not only with a renewed appreciation for the intelligent lives of birds, but with more questions about just what constitutes intelligence in general and how it shapes the lives of all creatures.

Lexington Conservation Division Focuses on New Invasive Plant

by Jordan McCarron, Conservation Stewardship Program Coordinator

The Lexington Conservation Division has been busy this summer managing a new invasive plant in Lexington: [Japanese stiltgrass](#). The annual grass was identified at Wright Farm by Mass Audubon Ecological Extension staff during land management planning in 2014; the population covers roughly 1.5 acres of open field at the historic property. This summer, the Conservation Division organized a series of five hand-pulling sessions to try to contain the invasion.



Japanese stiltgrass invades the lower field at Wright Farm Conservation Area in Lexington. Photo by Jordan McCarron.

Japanese stiltgrass has been designated an Early Detection & Rapid Response (EDRR) species by the [Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group](#) (MIPAG). EDRR is a central component of any statewide strategic management plan for invasive species. The concept of EDRR is to control small populations of known or suspected invasive plants before they become widespread environmental problems.

Japanese stiltgrass was first documented in Tennessee around 1919 and may have accidentally escaped as a result of its use as a packing material for porcelain, according to the National Park Service's Plant Conservation Alliance Alien Plant Working Group; it is native to Japan, China, Korea, Malaysia, and India.

DESCRIPTION

Japanese stiltgrass, or Nepalese browntop, is an annual grass with a sprawling habit. It germinates in spring and grows slowly through the summer months, ultimately reaching heights of 2 to 3½ ft. The leaves are pale green, lance-shaped, asymmetrical, 1 to 3 in. long, and have a distinctive shiny midrib. True to its name, Japanese stiltgrass grows on long, wispy, stilt-like roots that are very easy to pull. Slender stalks of tiny flowers are produced in late summer (August through September-early October) and dry fruits called achenes are produced soon afterwards.



Japanese stiltgrass close-up. Photo by Jordan McCarron.

ECOLOGICAL THREAT

Japanese stiltgrass is especially well adapted to low light conditions. It threatens native plants and natural habitats in open to shady, and moist to dry locations. Stiltgrass spreads to form extensive patches, displacing native species that are not able to compete with it. Where white-tail deer are over-abundant, they may facilitate its invasion by feeding on native plant species and avoiding stiltgrass. Japanese stiltgrass may impact other plants by changing soil chemistry and shading other plants.



Volunteers from Thermo-Fisher Scientific in Bedford pull Japanese stiltgrass at Wright Farm Conservation Area in July 2016. Photo by Jordan McCarron.

RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT

Because Japanese stiltgrass is a late-season annual, it is recommended to either hand-pull or cut the plant in August or early September before it goes to seed. Recent information suggests that stiltgrass plants that are cut too early in the summer will respond by re-growing and flowering soon after cutting and much sooner than they would normally. In the case of hand-pulling, pulling too early before all the plants have germinated may require multiple pulls over the same area. Due to these two factors, it is recommended not to cut or hand-pull the plant earlier than August. While herbicide use is a viable management method for stiltgrass, the Conservation Division remains committed to managing this plant without the use of chemicals; we will revisit herbicide use in future years if hand-pulling and cutting prove ineffective.

DISPOSAL

Like most herbaceous invasive plants, Japanese stiltgrass can be composted before it goes to flower or seed; to be safe, it is recommended to place stiltgrass in black contractor trash bags and let them bake in the sun to fully dry and die before composting. Once the plant has produced a flower or gone to seed, it must be either burned or disposed of with your household trash.

NEXT STEPS

Moving forward, Conservation staff will cut what has not been pulled in order to keep it from going to seed this season; we expect to continue hand-pulling and cutting at the site over the next several years until the seed bank has been exhausted. Ideally, the newly cleared areas will self-seed with grasses and wildflowers in the adjacent meadow; conservation staff will seed with a site-appropriate meadow mix as necessary.

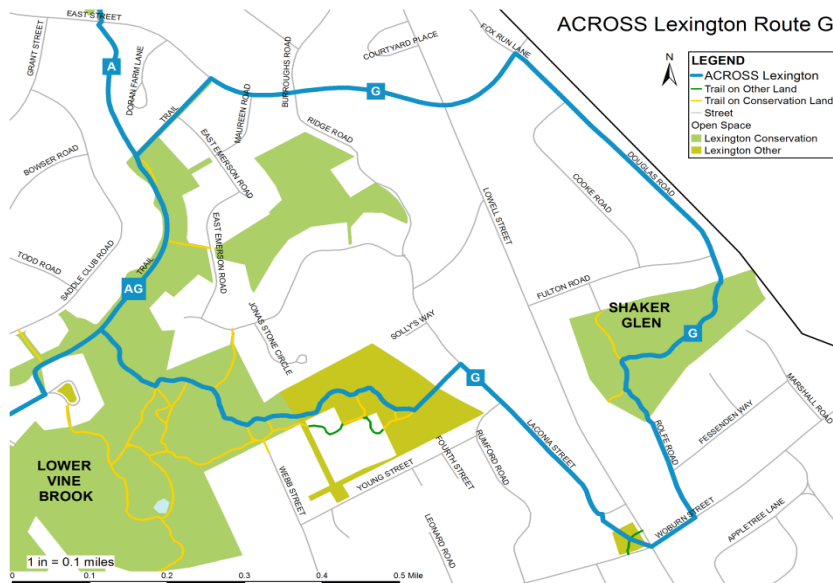
To learn more about the invasive plant and to get involved with volunteer efforts to eradicate the plant next season, contact Jordan McCarron, Conservation Stewardship Program Coordinator, at jmccarron@lexingtonma.gov or 781-698-4532.

Introducing ACROSS Route G

By Keith Ohmart

The Greenways Corridor Committee is pleased to announce the completion of the latest section of *ACROSS Lexington: The Rick Abrams Memorial Trail Network*.

Trail signs for Route G, connecting the Lower Vine Brook Conservation Property, the Shaker Glen Conservation Property and the Lower Vine Brook Bike Path, were installed this summer. In addition to the more well-known Conservation properties noted above, the route also traverses the lesser known Town properties of Countryside Green, located at the Four Corners intersection of Lowell Street and Woburn Street, as well as the School Department's Ashes Hill property located off Laconia Street. Including underutilized public properties such as these latter two parcels is in keeping with the larger mission of the Greenways Corridor Committee to create enjoyable and easily identifiable walking and bicycling routes throughout the town that maximize the use of Town owned



green space. This often involves marking previously unidentified points of access known only to the local neighborhood.

The route itself is a loop measuring 2.8 miles in length. It departs from Route A along the paved bike path bordering Lower Vine Brook at a marked sign post about 200 yards in from the Fairfield Drive entrance to the bike path. It crosses through the woods in Lower Vine Brook before

exiting right onto Laconia Street via the Ashes Hill School Department parcel, then follows Laconia Street, continuing straight ahead to the back side of Cunningham Park where Laconia Street makes a 90° degree turn to Lowell Street. Cross Cunningham Park to the light, cross Lowell Street following Woburn Street then turn left onto Rolfe Road. At the end of Rolfe Road enter the Shaker Glen property following ACROSS Lexington route markers to where the trail exists onto Douglas Road. Follow Douglas to its end, then turn left again onto Russell Street, which becomes East Street at the Lowell Street traffic light. Cross Lowell Street at the traffic light and follow East Street about a half mile watching for the ACROSS Lexington route marker directing you to turn left down a Town owned cart path, which brings you back to Route A along the Lower Vine Brook bike path.

Shaker Glen can be a rewarding place for early winter bird watching. Watch for Cedar Waxwings feeding on the bittersweet berries, listen for the chuckle of Red-bellied woodpeckers that frequent this property, and just maybe you might find a late season Yellow-breasted chat skulking in the underbrush. The Lower Vine Brook property offers ample acreage for exploring including a decent sized pond near the Utica Street entrance that is home to a sizable turtle population.

CLC will be sponsoring a walk this fall on the afternoon of September 25th introducing this latest ACROSS Lexington route. Meet at 2pm in the rear parking lot of the Christ Revolution Church at 451 Lowell Street. See further details elsewhere in this newsletter under the CLC Fall 2016 Walk Schedule.

Conservation Restriction Monitoring Update

By Eileen Entin and Keith Ohmart

CLC is moving forward in the process of acquiring a Conservation Restriction (CR) on the Town's Cotton Farm property. CLC Board Members Alex Dohan, Eileen Entin and

Keith Ohmart have been working closely since late spring with Jordan McCarron, the Town Conservation Steward Coordinator, to assemble the paperwork required for the CR application. Once the application is completed, it will be reviewed and formally approved by both the Conservation Commission and the Board of Selectmen before then being submitted to the State Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs for acceptance and recording.

Conservation Restrictions provide a formal process for ensuring that properties that have been designated as Conservation parcels are protected in perpetuity from inappropriate development. Typically this level of protection is applied to properties owned by private individuals or non-profit organizations such as land trusts that have agreed to permanently protect a property from future development. In addition to the ecological benefits accruing from this level of protection, there are also tax benefits in the form of property tax relief that accrue to the person(s) or organization that places a CR on a property.

When a municipality acquires a property for conservation using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds (as was the case in the acquisition of Cotton Farm), one of the requirements in the CPA legislation is that a third party must hold the CR for the property. While this might seem to be a redundant step in the case of municipal ownership, the logic is that a property owner cannot also hold a CR on their own property as this would be a conflict of interest.

The holder of a CR must document in detail the ecological and aesthetic features of the property including those features that are of specific merit in warranting protection of the property from future development. This Baseline Documentation Report includes not only an extensive written description of the property but also a complete photographic file and detailed maps of various kinds that locate and describe the property boundaries. The purpose of this report is to provide a record for future monitoring of the property, which is done on an annual basis.

As announced last year, CLC will eventually acquire and maintain CRs on a total of five Town properties. In addition to Cotton Farm these will include the Leary property, Wright Farm and two smaller landlocked parcels known as the Goodwin parcels.

Once the documentation phase has been completed for each of the properties, CLC will need to monitor each property annually. This will consist of walking the property, typically in the fall after leaf drop, to compare the conditions recorded in the Baseline Documentation Report with current actual conditions. Any changes will need to be recorded in the Report and any violations of the CR that are found will need to be brought to the attention of the property owner and corrected.

If you would like to get involved with either the documentation phase of CLC's CR project or the annual monitoring phase, please contact Eileen Entin via the CLC web site. No prior experience is necessary, just an interest in observing the landscape and mak-

ing notes of your observations. It is a great way to put your interest in nature and furthering CLC's mission to work for a good cause.

CLC will be sponsoring an educational walk at Cotton Farm on Saturday, November 5th, from 10:00 to 11:30 am_ (see section on fall walks) to offer a hands on opportunity to learn more about the CR process. Periodic reports on CLC's CR project will appear in future editions of the CLC newsletter.

Marked Trails at Whipple Hill

By Mike Tabaczynski



In early July, Whipple Hill conservation area visitors would have noticed that trails are now marked with colored arrows, and intersections now have directional signs. These are the results of a project to meet public demand for wayfinding aids as well as Town conservation management needs to better define which trails are official and encourage users to stay on them. Designed by Conservation staff Stewardship Program Coordinator Jordan McCarron and conservation steward Mike Tabaczynski, the marking system is based loosely on

one used in the Town of Wellesley. Over the past several years, input was gathered from many sources via site visits, research, and public meetings. The existing trail system had to be thoroughly reviewed to determine which trails were important for users to gain access to natural and cultural resources and which were redundant or created by users without any permission or plan. Loops were created to loosely showcase three resource themes: geology, historic farms, and wetlands. The prototype to test the design at Whipple Hill will eventually be rolled out to all conservation areas.

Physical arrows and signs were chosen to be visible to users but to minimally intrude upon ambient scenery. Low replacement cost and labor were also important considerations since theft and vandalism are not unheard of on public land. The markers were installed earlier this year on two separate days by multiple teams of volunteers from the Ride Studio Café lead by Jordan and conservation stewards.



To use the new signs, download the map from:

<http://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/pages/current-conservation-projects#anchor_whipple> from the Conservation web site to print or view on mobile electronics, or photograph the map on an information kiosk as you enter the land. The color of the arrows matches the trail color on the map. The ACROSS Lexington route that goes through Whipple Hill is marked with light blue arrows, and the non-loop trails that connect to loops, trailheads, and parking are marked with green arrows. Some trails have multiple colors where various routes overlap. Following any color besides green will always return you to where you started. Brown directional signs at intersections tell direction and distance to important points in or near the conservation area. Each brown sign also has a number that matches its location on the map.

Please do not use any unmarked trails. They will cause environmental damage over time because they were not constructed to standards of sustainable design, and keeping them open will confuse new visitors trying to navigate using the map.

Questions and feedback about the new signs as well as reports of damaged or missing ones can be directed to Jordan McCarron, Conservation Stewardship Program Coordinator, Town of Lexington Community Development Office, Conservation Division, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA 02420 or (781) 862-0500 ext. 84505 or jmccarron@lexingtonma.gov.

CLC Will Celebrate Its 50th Anniversary Next Year

By Eileen Entin

Citizens for Lexington Conservation will be celebrating its 50th year in 2017. Over the years, CLC has helped to preserve conservation lands, supported the development of a recycling program, educated people about the value of conservation, and offered spring, fall and winter walks that introduce people to Lexington's conservation areas. Across each of these years we have hosted an annual speaker and published two or three informative newsletters. We also host the CLC website, on which you can find copies of past newsletter, information about related organizations, and notices of current CLC activities. Most recently, CLC has agreed to become the holder of Conservation Restrictions on 5 of Lexington's conservation parcels (see related article).

How should we celebrate our 50th anniversary? What stands out in your mind about CLC? What should CLC be doing in the next decade? The next 50 years? I think we are all aware that the complexion of Lexington's citizenry is undergoing a significant change. No surprise, but the generation that founded CLC is diminishing with each passing year. This is making it especially important that we identify ways to reach out to the increasing number of new Lexingtonians in an effort to recruit both new members and new board members.

We look forward to hearing from our members as well as others in the community with ideas on how we should go about doing this. Please send your ideas about how we should celebrate to us via our website (CLCLex.org). We're looking forward to receiving your thoughts and suggestions.

Betsy Whitman Environmental Education Fund Grant Report

By Karen McCarthy

In March of 2015, I submitted a grant proposal for \$300 to the Citizens for Lexington Conservation, Betsy Whitman Environmental Education Fund, to support pollinator habitats at each of the elementary schools in Lexington. The funding allowed us to purchase a collection of 12 plant seedlings in June of 2015: asters, cone flowers, and bergamont, for each school yard. Grade two students took part in planting the seedlings last June and although some plants did not survive the summer, most have contributed to native pollinator habitats in the schoolyards for student observations.

During the months of September and October of the 2015-2016 school year, second grade students participated in their Big Backyard Walks to survey the plants and animals in the schoolyard to answer the question, "is this a place for butterflies"? During this interactive walk, they made observations and collected data on the behavior of the insects they saw in the different habitats surrounding the schools. The plantings at the schools allowed students to see that those areas with more flowering plants had more insects and the insects were moving from flower to flower. The plants contributed to this walk and they will be expanded upon as we further develop our insect and plant interactions curriculum. Students might eventually be able to connect different insects with different plant species, etc. In addition, students have been experimenting with the best growing conditions for milkweed and classes will participate in habitat conservation as they each year encourage the growth of monarch habitat.

We very much appreciate the support provided through this grant and look forward to expanding upon the ideas that have begun to take root to inspire students to participate in conservation efforts.

A Nature Moment in my Yard

By Alexandra Dohan

"Uuwheeeet!" and then a little later, "Uuwheet!" and again, and again. I kept hearing the sound, in different places in my yard, most often in the evening, but sometimes late at night and occasionally in the daytime. For a long while I was unable to identify the noisemaker. Each time I tried to search for the source of the sound, I was thwarted by the foliage and darkness. Eventually I figured out that the sound came from up in the trees, but I still wasn't even sure if it was a bird or a mammal. I had heard the sound in prior years, but not as frequently as this summer.

Finally, early one evening as I was at the grill cooking supper, I heard it again, and again quite quickly. Several calls came fairly rapidly in the same area. I crept quietly over toward the corner of the yard where the sound seemed to originate. A movement high up in an oak tree caught my eye. And then the sound again. A barred owl! In fact, more than one! I went back inside to get my binoculars for a better view. An adult barred owl had a red squirrel carcass in its talons, and three juvenile owls were sharing the feast. One that was not eating at the moment tilted its head and peered back at me.

I've had barred owls in the woods surrounding my yard for years. I hear the adults calling frequently, and I've seen the young ones learning to hunt in previous years. I'm not sure why it has taken so long for me to hear and learn the juvenile call. And yet, one of the most fascinating parts of nature study is that there is always something new to learn. Even when I think I know pretty much everything about a plant or an animal, it frequently turns out that there is something of which I am ignorant.

Barred owls are a common large owl in Lexington, but due to their typically nocturnal habits and excellent camouflage, we rarely see them. They are one of the few black-eyed owls around - most owls around here have gold eyes. Males and females have similar plumage, so you can't tell just by looking at them which is which.

Anybody who has studied owl calls knows that the adult barred owl says "who-cooks-for-you, who-cooks-for-you-all", but in researching this article I only found one reference to the juvenile call. David Sibley writes that the juvenile begs "kssssssship", and that is as reasonable a spelling as the one I made up at the beginning of this piece.

I also looked into nesting habits of barred owls and was surprised to learn that they will use either cavity or platform nests, as long as they don't need to do any significant work to get the nest ready for the eggs. They may spiff it up a little, but won't take the trouble to build a new nest. They like to nest up high, 20-40 feet, according to Cornell's "All About Birds" site, and they incubate their 1-5 eggs for approximately a month. The young hatch around the end of March or early in April, here in Massachusetts.

Barred owls are opportunistic hunters and are not picky about what they eat - rodents, birds, reptiles, amphibians are all fair game. In the winter, when food is scarcer, they are happy to hang around bird feeders, looking for lunch. They also don't move much, as individuals, staying in essentially the same territory for their entire lives. As a species, they have moved westward over the last century and have hybridized with spotted owls when they are in the same area. And more than other owls, they can be active during the day, as well as during the stereotypical dusk-to-dawn hunting time of most owl species.

There are many sources of natural history information online these days, and many are very good - I looked at several in writing this. My favorite, however, is Mary Holland's blog "Naturally Curious". She has many entries about Barred Owls, for which you can search, and will send you a near-daily email with a paragraph of natural history information, if you wish.

Climate Change and the Path to Sustainability

Lexplore Sustainability: Practical Tools to Thrive in Our Changing Climate

By Ricki Pappo

Plans are underway for an exciting one-day sustainability fair. *Lexplore Sustainability: Practical Tools for Thriving in our Changing Climate* will be held on Saturday, October 29 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Lexington High School and will be an opportunity for families, town officials and businesspeople to learn, ask questions, enjoy family activities and get the latest expert advice on all matters sustainable.

Ticks—year-round ticks! Climate change has allowed ticks to expand their range and extend tick season (Now vets advise dog owners to use tick protection year round, while a few years ago we had time off during the winter). The higher temperatures also helped the wooly adelgid insect threatening our hemlocks. Lexington, Massachusetts and the nation need to reduce our carbon footprint to stem and reduce the rising levels of CO₂ in our atmosphere and learn ways to mitigate these changes and adapt our behaviors to be sustainable.

Climatologist Heidi Cullen wrote in the New York Times (8/28 Sunday Review) that “July wasn’t just hot — it was the hottest month ever recorded, according to NASA. And this year is likely to be the hottest year on record. Fourteen of the 15 hottest years have occurred since 2000, as heat waves have become more frequent, more intense and longer lasting. A study in the journal Nature Climate Change last year found that three of every four daily heat extremes can be tied to global warming.”

The National Wildlife Federation reports that “The mismatch between timing of migratory return of birds and insects and food availability when plants respond to temperature signals (and animals don’t) may interrupt food chains.”

Lexplore Sustainability will emphasize ways in which consumers can help to combat climate change. Lexplore will feature inspirational speakers, hands on workshops, a variety of vendors, and demonstrations, in six broad topic areas: “Renewable Energy and Efficient Buildings;” and “Clean Food, Gardening and Landscaping;” “Public Health and Avoiding Toxics;” Clean Water and Healthy Oceans” “Public and Private Transportation;” and “Greener Schools.”

There are plans to have three panels on local Initiatives, statewide and national initiatives; and a panel on the subject of sustainability.

Additional plans include exhibits or speakers from groups such as green financial planners, climate activist groups such as the Sierra Club, and local civic groups who are involved in areas that are affected by climate change.

The Town of Lexington and its residents have done many things over the years to address climate change. Solar panels have been installed on municipal buildings and schools, and planning is underway for a solar installation at the landfill. A town appointed committee, Sustainable Lexington has been hard at work on these initiatives and

others, and this spring Town Meeting approved a “Net Zero Task Force” to further energy reductions throughout the town. While many residents have installed solar panels and had energy audits, there is much more that can be done to help the town be sustainable and resilient in the face of changing and challenging climate events.

For many people sustainable practices are new and often confusing. Lexplore Sustainability is an opportunity to learn from experts, get questions answered and take away some practical steps and changes that can be accomplished.

Come learn how to make all lives, for both adults and children, healthier and more resilient. This is a special opportunity to learn more about the sustainable practices we need to adopt in the face of inevitable changes in climate.

Lexplore is being made possible by a generous grant to Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition (LexGWAC) from the Community Endowment of Lexington (CEL), an endowed Fund of the Foundation for MetroWest. CEL promotes a spirit of philanthropic giving to help enhance the quality of life for all Lexington residents now and for the future. For more information, visit

www.lexingtonendowment.org.

For up-to-date media news on the fair, visit the website, LexploreSustainability.org. Facebook users can go to the Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition’s Facebook page and “Like” the page to get updates on Lexplore. The twitter account is “@LexploreSustain, and will be updated as new plans develop.

The email address is LexploreSustainability@gmail.com. Get in touch if you have an idea, want to be a vendor, non-profit, or community group at the Fair. Also, be in contact if you can volunteer to help in the planning of the Fair or on the day of the Fair.

