MEMBERS OF THE MGH Military Veteran Partners (MVP) joined 700 volunteers May 23 on a sun-filled Boston Common to help plant thousands of flags honoring the sacrifices of fallen soldiers.

“These flags are a recognition of those who have fallen before us, a recognition of our community standing together,” said Francisco Ureña, secretary of the Massachusetts Department of Veterans’ Services, who spoke during a brief ceremony before the flag planting began. “Most importantly, it serves as a recognition for those who have forgotten the true meaning of Memorial Day. Let us all live our lives worthy of their sacrifice.”

Organized by the Massachusetts Military Heroes Fund, the Boston Common Memorial Day Flag Garden is planted annually – solely by volunteers – in front of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Each flag represents a Massachusetts service member who gave his or her life defending the country since the Revolutionary War. There are 37,268 flags.

“Today’s flag planting meant a lot to me,” says Cheryl Brown, of Human Resources and MVP member. “It was great to see so many people coming together, taking time out of their busy lives to remember the sacrifice of the comparatively few who died to protect liberty for all. Memorial Day serves as a sacred time to reflect and remind ourselves to be grateful.”

(Continued on page 4)

From the MGH Archives: Memorial plaque

This bronze plaque is dedicated to the memory of seven MGH nurses who gave their lives in service of their country in World War I.

In Memory Of
Frances E. Bartlett
Mary F. Emery
Lucy N. Fletcher
Jessie Brown Jaggard
Constance M. Sinclair
Anna E. West
Graduates of the Massachusetts General Hospital School for Nurses
They gave their lives in the service of their country in the Great War.
Dedicated September 10, 1920

Memorial Day:
A sacred reminder to honor the fallen
The late spring and early summer are great times to get outside and hike, play sports or barbecue with family and friends. Just remember, some uninvited guests may show up at your party – ticks like this time of year, too.

Ticks are parasites that can transfer diseases, like Lyme disease, when they bite people. In the Northeast, Lyme disease is a major concern. It can cause fever, headache, fatigue and rashes. Serious complications include arthritis, heart palpitations and loss of facial muscle tone.

N. Stuart Harris, MD, chief of the MGH Division of Wilderness Medicine and director of its wilderness fellowships, shares tips on how to have fun while also being mindful of ticks.

PREVENTION

Unlike mosquitoes, ticks are active all day and night. But a few simple tricks can reduce the risk of getting a tick-borne disease.

• Create a barrier. Wear long-sleeves and pants and tuck your pants, into your socks. Ticks tend to latch on around the foot and ankle and slowly crawl up your body.
• Use DEET-containing insect repellents. The range of 12 to 25 percent should be sufficient. Read the label. DEET is OK to use on children, but not on infants.
• Clean up your yard. Remove leaves that are decomposing and keep the grass cut short.
• Perform tick checks when you, your children and pets come inside. Check the entire body. Look in the hair at the top of the head, in and around the ears, the armpits, in the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs and at the waist. Have loved ones examine difficult to see areas. Take a shower. Check clothes and backpacks and tumble them in the dryer.
• Talk to your veterinarian about protecting pets.

TICK REMOVAL

Don’t panic. Removing a tick within 24 hours reduces the chance of contracting a disease.

• If you are outside and the tick has not bitten you yet, simply flick it off.
• If the tick has attached itself to you, grab a pair of clean tweezers. Grasp the tick close to your skin surface and pull upward—slow and steady. Clean the area and your hands with soap and water and/or rubbing alcohol. Then, either flush the tick down the toilet or save it in a sealed bag for your doctor.
• Call your doctor, especially if you think the tick may have been on you longer than 24 hours. Antibiotics are effective in preventing Lyme disease, but must be taken soon after the bite.
• If you are on Nantucket or Martha’s Vineyard, call your doctor. These places are epicenters of Lyme disease. Your doctor may be more likely to recommend that you take an antibiotic.
• Watch for signs of infection, including fatigue, rash and fever.

Asthma awareness: Get to know seasonal triggers

With the arrival of spring comes fresh blooming flowers, greener grass and leaves growing on trees. But what also arrives is pollen – a common trigger for allergies that can lead to over-inflamed ear, nose and throat passages – which may be especially troublesome for individuals with asthma.

“It is always important for an asthmatic to understand their triggers and problem months,” says Erik Hinderlie, director of the Pediatric Asthma Education program at the MGH Chelsea HealthCare Center. “Spring is one of those times there tends to be a spike in ER visits for people with asthma.”

KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS AND TRIGGER MONTHS

“Pollen is a potent trigger,” says Hinderlie. “Your immune system overreacts to the allergic reaction which causes swelling in the ear, nose and throat area. This over-inflammation is what triggers the asthma to flare up.”

Allergy medications are most helpful during these months, as they help control the inflammation, Hinderlie says, noting many find it helpful to start taking this medication throughout May, or at peak allergy times, which can help keep asthma from flaring up.

For pediatric patients, the end of summer may be another peak time for ER or doctor visits. “End of August, early September when school is back in session can be very challenging because viruses and colds tend to trigger asthma,” says Hinderlie. “When your children go back to school, they are with a bunch of other kids and germs spread more easily. One kid sneezes and everyone can be affected.”

Patients should take care to wash their hands and monitor their symptoms. Hinderlie also recommends patients visit with their care team in August for a “tune-up” to know what to look out for before going back to school and hitting the next peak asthma season.

USE CONTROLLER MEDICATIONS AND SPACERS

Inhaled corticosteroids are commonly used to keep asthma in control and are the active ingredient in many anti-inflammation medications. The inhaled steroid relaxes the airway muscle and keeps it open. “With asthmatics, the airways are
INSIDE THE ROOM sits a sleek white machine, recognizable as a large medical imaging scanner. Computer monitors in the control room look out upon the scanner. Outside the room sits a seemingly less-familiar, less hi-tech object. It looks like a blue hula hoop – with one half sitting inside a copper stand and a glowstick-like object attached to the outer curve of the hoop – on wheels. A sign hanging from it reads: “Physics Research.”

The hoop – known as a D-hoop – was used in the first MGH cyclotron, a type of particle accelerator used to create radioactive particles needed for positron emission tomography (PET). Fifty years ago, that hoop was a central part of the new technology. Upon his retirement, Gordon Brownell, PhD, was given the D-hoop in appreciation for his work in establishing the MGH as the world leader in PET.

It was fitting that this integral historical piece was on display during an April 13 ribbon-cutting celebrating the Gordon Center for Medical Imaging’s opening of a new imaging suite in the Edwards Building and the launch of its GE-Discovery MI PET/CT dedicated for research.

“We are very excited about the new research PET/CT scanner located proximate to the cyclotron and radiochemistry labs in the Edwards Basement,” said James Brink, MD, MGH radiologist-in-chief. “Through the GE-MGH research collaboration that made this possible, we expect to further advance our understanding of health and disease with molecular imaging.”

The day-long celebration included opening remarks by Brink and his predecessor, James Thrall, MD, followed by presentations highlighting the history and advances in imaging technology at the MGH Gordon Center. The event also was attended by John Flannery, GE CEO, and O’Neil Britton, MD, MGH chief medical officer and senior vice president.

“Fifty years after the installation of the first cyclotron at MGH, the Gordon Center perpetuates the PET imaging research tradition of the hospital with the support of two generations of researchers including some of the earliest pioneers who are still working at our center,” said Georges El Fakhri, PhD, director of the Gordon Center.

Groundbreaking Tradition: Ribbon-cutting at the new Gordon Center imaging suite

**Office Supply and Recycle event**

**OFFICE SUPPLY SWAP AND RECYCLE EVENTS** enable departments to reduce waste and save on costs by trading in their new and unused supplies for the new and unused supplies of other departments. This year, the swap will take place:

- **May 31,** Charlestown Navy Yard 149, Conference room A:
  - 9 - 11 am: Drop off old items
  - 12 - 2 pm: Pick up new items

- **June 14,** MGH Main Campus, Bulfinch Tent:
  - 9 - 11 am: Drop off old items
  - 12 - 3 pm: Pick up new items

All attendees must present an MGH ID to participate. Recycled supplies will be available on a first come first served basis, and are intended for use at the MGH. All items left at the end of the day will be donated or recycled.

For more information, including detailed lists of accepted items, visit apollo.massgeneral.org/recycle.
Picturing a leader

BETSY NABEL, MD, president of Brigham Health, was the featured speaker during the 10th annual Nancy Tarbell, MD, Faculty Development Lectureship Series May 9, sponsored by the Center for Faculty Development. This lectureship was established to provide career advancement and professional development insights from highly regarded leaders to MGH faculty. In her presentation, “Picture a Leader: Is it You?” Nabel focused on the disparity between the number of male and female leaders in health care and what changes need to be made to provide more women and underrepresented minorities a seat at the table.

“When we look at leaders we ask ourselves, ‘Does this person fit the image I have in my head?’” Nabel said. “When asked to describe a leader, people almost always describe a male and use male-related language. This is an example of confirmation bias. We want the idea in our heads to match the potential leader. We are evaluating based on a stereotype rather than reality.”

Nabel highlighted the need for more women in leadership positions, noting that, although women are finding more overall representation in academic medicine, the ratio continues to lag at the leadership level. She discussed data gathered by Harvard Medical School and Harvard Dental School in which the breakdown by gender is about 50-50 at the instructor level, but at the full professor level only 17 percent are women. She also highlighted recent statistics featured in the journal Nature, which reported that although 54 percent of editors were women, only 18 percent of scientists profiled were women and only 19 percent of commissioned articles had a female author.

To combat confirmation bias and other prejudices that can keep women from leadership positions or opportunities, Nabel emphasized the importance of sponsorship. She encouraged both men and women to publicly support the advancement of those with untapped leadership potential even if they do not match the “established image” of leaders. “Encourage female colleagues or others that are underrepresented in leadership roles to chair committees, join editorial boards, apply for promotions, join professional groups and take leadership classes,” she said.

When taking advantage of these opportunities, Nabel added, “It is important to engage and step up to the plate. Make mistakes, volunteer and make your interests and passions known. Don’t wait to be a leader. You’re a leader now.”

Sprinkle of thanks

Both Sides of the Bulfinch Tents were bustling May 24 at the annual Research Staff Appreciation Day event. More than 2,000 research staff members – including lab technicians, research coordinators and technologists – were invited to enjoy a picnic-style lunch, ice cream and raffles for tickets to the Museum of Science. Bowls of ice cream were scooped by volunteers from the research community and topped with whipped cream by Harry Orf, PhD, senior vice president for Research, pictured below.

The Flag Garden will remain up through the evening of Memorial Day to honor and remember the fallen soldiers and pay tribute to their families. “It is an honor to participate in the Flag Garden, but let us remember that it is the brave men and women who these flags represent and who we owe thanks for the freedoms that allow us to be here today,” says Christine Cugini, MGH Development coordinator and MVP co-president. “I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else today.”

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– Memorial Day

(Continued from page 1)

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Added Maurizio Fava, MD, director of the Division of Clinical Research, “Research is a team sport. Teamwork is what makes the terrific strides made here in research possible. Just like the Boston Celtics showed last night in game five of the NBA Eastern Conference Finals! Our principal investigators rely on a daily basis on the critical role research staff plays in their projects. I am proud to be part of an institution that values research very much and that shows a genuine appreciation for our research staff.”

Earlier in the week, research staff at the Charlestown Navy Yard enjoyed a similar event. Both were sponsored by the Office for Research Career Development.