

# M-C News

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-CAMBRIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION  
AND THE LONGFELLOW NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL

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## Annual meeting upstaged by oral history play

For the first and probably only time, the annual meeting of the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association on May 20 was conducted as part of a dramatized oral history titled "Our Town, Mid-Cambridge." An audience of over 150 enjoyed the unusual production in the beautifully restored theater in the Cambridge Family Y. The celebration of life in our neighborhood was based on interviews conducted for the Longfellow Oral History Project, inspired by Thornton Wilder's beloved play "Our Town," and assembled by John Pitkin.

MCNA President Joan Pickett played lead roles as an oral history interviewer in the first and third scenes and as chair of the Annual Meeting in the second scene. Neighborhood residents Alice LaRocca, Doris Wheeler Mitchell, Judy Bibbins, George and Jane Metzger, Sara Mae Berman, Penelope Kleespies, Rebecca Lieberson, Simon and Amelia Babb, and Eleni Macrakis, ranging in age from 5 to 82 years, appeared as themselves, and each recounted their own stories in short interviews.

The production brought more residents together than any event in recent years. The personal histories began from the opening of the Longfellow School to serve the children of immigrants in the 1930s to graduation from Cambridge Rindge & Latin School this June. The interviews were recreated around two kitchen tables on an otherwise bare stage. There were also two theatrical interludes. John Pitkin re-enacted his speech about the life of Joan Lorentz at the dedication of Joan Lorentz Park in 1998, and Fritz Donovan reported on the early history of Mid-Cambridge.

The Longfellow Oral History Project is preparing a compilation of oral histories due to be published later this year. The Longfellow Neighborhood Council deserves thanks for organizing the oral history project. Thanks also to the Cambridge Family Y for use of the theater and the S&S Restaurant for generous after-theater refreshments.

### Coordinating Committee election

During an intermission, the membership elected the 2009-2010 Coordinating Committee. They are: George Bossarte, Francis (Fritz) Donovan, Elizabeth Gombosi, Debby Knight, Frankie Lieberman, Margaret (Tuny) McMahon, Doane Perry, Joan Pickett, John Pitkin, Christopher Robinson, and David Szlag.

### Upcoming events

#### Don't miss our giant annual fall yard sale!

Collect your gently used and in-good-condition stuff, pack it up and bring it to the MCNA 2009 Yard Sale on Saturday, September 12 (rain date Sunday the 13th). Our location for this year's event is Bill and Judy Bibbins' house at the corner of Harvard and Hancock Streets. It's the same great sale you love, and once again the proceeds will benefit Food for Free.

#### Donate your 'stuff'

We will be setting up the sale starting at 7 a.m. and will be ready for buyers from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. We can always use an extra set of hands, so please let us know if you would like to volunteer to help in any way. You can deliver your goods before 9 a.m. Saturday, or if you can't do that, let us know and we will try to make arrangements to pick up your boxes. Call Tuny McMahon at 617-945-4440 to make donation arrangements, to volunteer or if you have any questions.

Last year members made it possible to donate \$600 to Food for Free, which in turn helped them deliver 800,000 pounds of food to hundreds of Cambridge residents. Even if you don't buy anything, please drop by with non-perishable goods which we will take to the Margaret Fuller Food Bank. The MCNA supports both these efforts and appreciates your contribution at a time when the need is so great.



#### Candidates' Night set for October 21

The MCNA will host a Candidates' Night for City Council candidates on Wednesday, October 21, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Cambridge College, Room 152, 1000 Mass. Ave. All of the candidates on the ballot for the Nov. 3 citywide election are being invited. They will vie for nine positions on the council, and a two-year term.

Come and meet the candidates and find out their positions on the issues!

## Neighborhood happenings

### Neighborhood Plant Swap

The Fall 2009 Mid-Cambridge Plant Swap will take place on Saturday, September 12, from noon to 2 p.m. at Fayette Park (across from the former Longfellow School, off Broadway). Rain date—in case of *downpour*—is Sunday, Sept. 13, same time.

Bring anything that's growing in too much abundance in your garden. Elegant packaging is not required, but please do write down the names of plants. We expect to have perennials, biennial seedlings, seeds, potted plants, catalogs, pots, and lots of "whatever." To join the Mid-Cambridge Gardeners' ListServ, to swap plants, advice and gardening resources, contact [HMSnively@aol.com](mailto:HMSnively@aol.com).

A week after our swap is the Somerville Garden Club Plant Sale on Saturday, Sept. 19, starting at 9, in Davis Square. They have great stuff at good prices, and lots of advice. Mark your calendar!

### Harvard Square Agricultural Fair

The first annual Harvard Square Agricultural Fair will take place Sunday, Sept. 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Winthrop Park in Harvard Square, the site of the first Newtowne marketplace in the 1630s.

This is a celebration of urban gardens, growers and food, focusing on our incredible locally grown fruits and vegetables. Prizes will be awarded for the tastiest, the biggest, the most interesting, and in some cases the ugliest fruits, veggies, baked goods, honey, flowers, preserves, pickles and eggs! Cooking demonstrations from local chefs, gardeners, and "Cambridge school student-growers" will be held throughout the day. Come to sample recipes and/or to stock up on the bounty of our harvest from our local farmers' markets, get tips from local experts on composting, community gardening, rain barrels, and bee-keeping.

All events are free, open to the public and family-friendly. Kids are encouraged to enter to win Student Prizes in every category. Prizes will be awarded in several categories of produce and there will be demonstrations from local chefs, gardeners and Cambridge School student-growers. This event is organized by the Harvard Square Business Association.

### MCNA begins food donations to Margaret Fuller House

On May 5, City Councilor Henrietta Davis chaired a meeting of the council's Health and Environment Committee to discuss ways to meet the increased demand in services for Cambridge's food pantries. Also present were officials from the city, local food pantries, church and community organizations, MCNA representative Chris

Robinson and several members of the public.

All food pantries described a recent increase in demand with the Harvest and East End House saying that their clientele has doubled. Food pantries are clustered in the eastern sections of the city with the exception of Saint James Church. Councilor Davis stated her intention to develop partnerships, particularly partnerships between neighborhood associations and community groups with nearby food pantries.

The Cambridge Economic Opportunity Commission (CEOC) at 11 Inman Street is the location of Food for Free, which also distributes to the other food pantries. Since Margaret Fuller House is located in Area 4 which borders Mid-Cambridge at Prospect Street, Bryan Hewitt and Chris Robinson agreed to partner together. Individual residents who would like to participate in this partnership should contact Chris at 617-661-4731 or [chrisrobinson@rocketmail.com](mailto:chrisrobinson@rocketmail.com).

Darwin's on Cambridge Street immediately pledged to donate their day-old bakery items--bagels, muffins and double-size sandwich loaves. The Broadway Supermarket suggested setting up a shopping cart where customers can make donations of non-perishable groceries. This has resulted in several deeply appreciated deliveries.

### Youville Hospital ownership change

Many MC residents were surprised to learn about the sale of Youville Hospital and concerned about what it may mean for our neighborhood institution. Youville Hospital has had a long-term joint venture with the Spaulding Rehabilitation Network (a member of Partners Healthcare) since 2001 and with ongoing losses, Youville approached Spaulding regarding the sale. The purchase of Youville Hospital will not impact Youville House, an adjacent 95-unit assisted living residence. Spaulding will continue to operate Youville Hospital as a long-term acute care facility, retain its 450 member staff, and maintain current referral arrangements without interruption. The sale is expected to be finalized in late 2009.

### Get involved with CCTV

Cambridge Community Television offers many resources to Cambridge residents, including classes in media production and computers, the ability to host your own TV show or crew on others, and the opportunity to connect with other Cambridge residents who are excited about learning how to use media to communicate about the issues that are important to them. You can get involved at CCTV by attending an orientation Thursday, October 1, 6:30 p.m., at CCTV, located at 675 Mass Ave. in Central Square. Orientation is free and no RSVP is required. For more info, go to [www.cctvcambridge.org](http://www.cctvcambridge.org).

## 'Living Well' outlines elder services in Cambridge

In its ongoing program to help Cambridge residents remain in their homes as long and happily as possible, MCNA's Quality of Life Subcommittee recently distributed the 67-page booklet "Living Well, A Guide to Elder Services in Cambridge" to over 1,000 Mid-Cambridge households with one or more registered voters 55 years of age or over.

Recipients are encouraged to pass on extra copies to anyone who might be interested. We will also be glad to provide one to any Mid-Cambridge resident who might benefit but did not receive one.

The booklet was written by Kristina Snyder, M. Ed., a 40-year Cambridge resident who recognized the growing challenge of "aging in place" here, and set out to pull together all available information on Cambridge resources to help meet that challenge. Subjects of her 17-chapter work include housing, transportation, nutrition, staying healthy, continuing education, financial and legal help, insurance, assisted living, palliative and hospice care, and volunteer opportunities. Comments or suggestions may be directed to MCNA Quality of Life co-chair Tuny McMahon: [tunymcm@comcast.net](mailto:tunymcm@comcast.net) or 617-945-4440.

## Ice Cream Social 2009: The flavors of summer

Many Mid-Cambridge residents came together on June 25 to enjoy an evening of delicious ice cream and neighborhood camaraderie. The event was relocated to the Wilder/Lee Street Park this year while Joan Lorentz Park was temporarily closed for the library construction.

Early arrivals helped erect the tent and even caught a glimpse of John Pitkin mowing the lawn minutes before the festivities began. As more people arrived, lively conversations developed about everything from gardening to local politics, and a number of people signed up as new MCNA members.

Many thanks to Gus Rancatore and Toscanini's Ice Cream for providing the community with a wonderful feast of flavors for this occasion. Many people found it difficult to pick a favorite when sampling French vanilla, Belgian chocolate, and chocolate chip ice cream, along with mango sorbet. A

s neighbors came to eat and to socialize, many also brought food contributions for the Margaret Fuller House food pantry. Six boxes of food and personal care donations were collected. Thanks to all for making this event such a success.

## MCNA seeks nominations for Good Neighbor Award

Think of the person or organization who really has made a difference to you, your neighbors or your block.

It can be from making sure the sidewalks are always clear and ice-free after a storm, the person at the ready to help with a home emergency, or just a friendly wave and kind word on the way home from work. We encourage you to nominate this person, organization, or institution for the MCNA Good Neighbor Award.

The award was established in 2006 to recognize and encourage those MC individuals, organizations or institutions who have contributed to the welfare and general improvement of the quality of life and environment of our neighborhood.

The Coordinating Committee is seeking nominations for its 2009 award from our members. Please send your nomination to [gbeng@world.std.com](mailto:gbeng@world.std.com) or by mail to George Bossarte, 4 Antrim Street, Cambridge, MA 02139.

Nominations should include the following:

- Nominee's name, organization or institution, address, phone and email;
- Highlight the activities the nominee has done to improve the quality of life and the environment of the neighborhood and/or what the nominee has done to contribute to the welfare and general improvement of the neighborhood;
- Nominator's name, address, phone and email.

The 2009 Award will be presented at the MCNA Annual Holiday party on December 6.

## Ellery Street Drainage Project

This project, to reduce flooding and sewer backups during heavy rainstorms, is running pretty much on schedule. Most residents agree that the city's representative, Lou Mothon, and the P. Gioioso & Sons Construction Supt. Sam Doolan, have been especially helpful in making life easier for the abutters. The work has brought a 7 a.m. alarm to Ellery residents as the haul-away truck slowly backed down the street to the place of excavation, and many residents have had to find parking on other streets in the area.

The 36-inch drainpipe has been connected to the pipe from the underground storage tank in front of the new library, and is moving up Ellery from the point of connection to Cambridge Street. When the drainpipe is brought to Cambridge Street, work will commence to bring a new sanitary sewer up Ellery from Cambridge Street. Then, a new gas main will be brought up Ellery. Lastly, some utility pole replacements will be made.

The new stormwater drainage system will require a major drainage structure in Cambridge Street in front of the driveway of Harvard Vanguard. It will take about a month to construct and will cause traffic to slow around the location. This year's construction will likely run until December. Next year new sidewalks and street paving will complete the project in late spring.

## Library expansion, Joan Lorentz Park project wind down

The new main library expansion looks very inviting and almost ready to go. Excitement is building in the neighborhood as pieces of the Joan Lorentz Park on the Broadway side park are being unveiled bit by bit.

The tot lot area (closer to the high school) was the first to be revealed, and many neighbors with kids in tow have asked when they can start to use it. In the past few weeks, the other side of the park along Broadway and Ellery Street has been unveiled as the green mesh fencing has been removed.

Alan Burne, library expansion project manager, indicates that the library project is almost complete, now in the 'punch list' stage. The last delivery of furniture and equipment is expected by the end of September. It is currently looking like mid to late October will be the

official opening of both the new library and the renovated original historic building. Work started on the project in 2006.

The Joan Lorentz Park renovation is also almost complete, with only some minor work items remaining. The most significant is final testing of the pumps in the 350,000-gallon underground stormwater retention tank and its connection with the street construction that is ongoing on Ellery Street.

While the grassy areas are not open for use, residents can walk on the newly designed walkways through the remainder of the Joan Lorentz Park as the heavy equipment and other construction material is now removed. We will keep the neighborhood informed as to when the park and tot lot will be ready for public use.

### NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

**Saturday, Sept. 12, MCNA's annual Giant Yard Sale, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., corner of Harvard and Hancock Streets.** Rain date Sunday the 13th. Call Tuny McMahon at 617-945-4440 for more info. See full story on Page 1.

**Saturday, Sept. 12, Neighborhood Plant Swap, Noon to 2 p.m.,** Fayette Park (off Fayette Street near Broadway). Full story, Page 2.

**Wednesday, October 21, City Council Candidates' Night, 7 to 9 p.m.,** Cambridge College, 1000 Mass. Ave., Room 152. See Page 1 for more info.

**Sunday, December 6, MCNA Holiday Party.** Save the date for this fun seasonal get-together at a neighborhood home--location to be determined.

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**M-C NEWS**  
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**Yard sale!**  
**Candidates' Night!**