

# M-C News

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

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## CRLS renovations set to start in June

The \$125 million renovation of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School will begin next June and take a little over two years, according to school officials at an Oct. 23 meeting held to update the public about the project.

Jim Maloney, the chief operating officer of the School Department, Chris Saheed, principal of the high school, and Robert Tynes, the assistant principal, chaired the meeting. Also present were Dana Hamm of the Plant Maintenance Office and Justin Martin of the Office of Public Information, School Committee member Fred Fantini and City Councillor Sam Seidel. About thirty-five members of the public attended.

The highlights of this complex project are that it will take place in two main phases. The first will start right after the end of school in June 2009 and will involve the Arts building. The second will begin in September 2010 and will comprise the Rindge building.

The expected end date will be September 2011, however, some construction to areas not used by students may be finished somewhat after that. While a section of the building is undergoing construction, it will be sealed

## City Council backs effort to save Shady Hill Square

Neighborhood efforts to save Shady Hill Square took an important step forward Sept. 22, when the City Council voted to allocate \$175,000 of Community Preservation Act funds (out of a total \$1.09 million for historic preservation) toward the effort. Residents of the historic square hope to purchase the property from developers who sought to build a new single-family mansion to replace the historic "village green"-style park.

This funding, along with abutters' considerable contributions, will support the Shady Hill residents' efforts to place preservation restrictions on a historic open space and save it for future generations.

The Park is to be maintained by the residents, and will be available to everyone in the city of Cambridge to enjoy in perpetuity. The resolution of this matter is not final yet, but this vote was one important step towards a successful conclusion.

off from the rest of the building so that interference from dust, noise, etc. is anticipated to be less than is currently experienced from the library construction.

Grade 9 will be located at the Longfellow School, which will be freed up for classroom use on completion of the new library this summer. The daycare currently located at the high school will also be moved to the Longfellow. The high school extension program has moved from the Longfellow to the Graham and Parks building on Upton Street.

No student will be out of the main building for more than one year, the officials said. Every effort has been taken to minimize the impact on students' education and to provide that students will be kept with their peer groups. More details about the phasing and the project itself may be viewed at the CRLS renovation project Web site at [http://www.cpsd.us/cpsdir/CRLS\\_renovation.cfm](http://www.cpsd.us/cpsdir/CRLS_renovation.cfm).

The renovations to the 35-year-old high school include electrical upgrades, new science labs, new technology centers, and a modern cafeteria for students and staff.

Any questions about the project can be addressed to Justin Martin at 617-349-6512 or [info@cpsd.us](mailto:info@cpsd.us).



### Celebrate the Season at the MCNA Holiday Party

Please join us in an evening of holiday cheer at  
The Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association's

#### Annual Holiday Celebration

Sunday, December 7, 5-8 p.m.

4 Antrim Street

Home of George Bossarte

Please bring a dish to share.

Light refreshments and snacks will be served.

Suggested donation \$3; kids and seniors free. Cash bar.

Call George at 617-876-0390 for more information.

# M-C plagued with unexpected power outages

Over the last several years Mid-Cambridge has experienced frequent, and for many residents, excessive electrical outages related to maintenance work. These power outages often occur between midnight and 6 a.m. Usually NStar mails a notice to customers about ten days before a planned outage. However, more and more often, these outages are unannounced. On Oct. 23, several unannounced outages occurred on Irving Street between

## Ellery St. drainage project aims to prevent flooding

Ellery Street residents received a briefing on the upcoming Ellery Street drainage project which is likely to start in February 2009, at an Oct. 28 meeting sponsored by the DPW. Key issues such as street and parking access, project time line and project scope were reviewed and discussed.

This project is tied to the Main Library Expansion project and includes a large stormwater tank designed to help reduce flooding and sewer backups that affect certain properties during large rainstorms. This winter, the City of Cambridge will construct a large stormwater diversion structure at the intersection of Cambridge and Ellery Streets, and a new drainage line down the center of Ellery Street to provide connections to this tank.

The Agassiz neighborhood, as well as the Youville and Cambridge Hospital area of Mid-Cambridge, have a history of flooding and sewer backups during heavy rain. The Ellery Street Drainage Project will connect the drainage systems in these areas to this stormwater storage tank. The city expects construction to start early in 2009 and be complete within 4 to 6 months.

In order to place this stormwater infrastructure, the contractor will have to occupy parking spaces and put periodic detours in place. They will be required to provide abutters access to their properties at all times, which means they will be coordinating closely with neighbors as each phase of construction moves forward. However, at some times residents might not have access to their cars or parking for periods of time but will be notified in advance. Municipal and other services such as mail, plowing, trash and recycling collection, and access for people with disabilities will continue throughout construction. We do not anticipate significant utility (gas, electric, telephone, water, and sewer) interruptions beyond minimal interruptions in water and gas service; these interruptions will be carefully coordinated with affected residents so as to minimize the impacts.

Go to [www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks/contents/constInfo.html](http://www.cambridgema.gov/TheWorks/contents/constInfo.html) to find construction updates. To get updates via email, contact [rfuentes@cambridgema.gov](mailto:rfuentes@cambridgema.gov).

midnight and 7:35 a.m., causing disruption and annoyance to residents affected. Previously, smaller outages during the day on Ellsworth Street lasted long enough to cause problems with computer and alarm clock functioning. On Cambridge Street recent outages at 2:30 in the morning set off smoke detectors. On Oct. 30, Irving Street experienced another unannounced power outage, this time at 10 a.m.

The Agassiz neighborhood has surveyed its residents on this subject and has published the results in the October issue of their newsletter, "The Whistler." In the survey, 80% of the respondents reported they experienced outages that they had not been informed about and 46% experienced outages somewhat often. In addition, outages seemed to be more frequent and caused damage to computers and health-related equipment.

On Oct. 7, representatives from NStar met at the Pole and Conduit Commission of the Licensing Commission to address community complaints about this problem. Commission Chairman Richard Scali chaired the meeting and Bill Zamparelli represented NStar. City Councilors Craig Kelley and Henrietta Davis were also present. NStar's testimony must be characterized as somewhat defensive. For example, Mr. Zamparelli claimed that the reason notification is erratic is that many people have not updated their account telephone information. One person related that he was told to fax a picture of his house to get his complaints addressed. Henrietta Davis also mentioned that customer service is not responsive. It was suggested that customers could opt-in to an e-mail notification system, and that NStar might post planned projects on its Web site.

On November 3 the City Council approved an order by Councilor David Maher requiring NStar to appear before the council to address citizens' complaints. With winter approaching, health and safety issues such as street and traffic lights must be also considered, along with the annoyance that these interruptions cause.

If you have any comments on the NStar outages, please contact Joan Pickett at [jpickett@mcna.org](mailto:jpickett@mcna.org).

## Former Hubley's building sold

We have learned that the Hubley's site (which includes the former auction house on 364 Broadway as well as a triple-decker directly behind it on Broadway Terrace) has been sold to two Mid-Cambridge residents.

A renovation of the triple-decker with the potential conversion to condo units is underway. The former auction space is currently being used for staging. The fate of the auction site is still uncertain at this time. Hubley's closed its doors last summer after being in business there since 1935.

## 2008 Yard sale nets \$650 for food charity



**MCNA's Tuny McMahon presents a check for the proceeds of our yard sale to David Leslie, executive director of Food for Free on Inman Street. The organization distributes food to food pantries, meal programs and shelters.**

For the first time in two years, the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association Yard Sale didn't have to be postponed because of rain. And, we were able to support a local charitable effort--Food for Free--by presenting David Leslie, executive director, with a check for \$650!

The event began early on the morning of September 13 and with the help of members of your Coordinating Committee and, most particularly, two volunteers -- Sarah Johnson and Jesse Halvorsen—who arrived at 7 a.m. for setup and stayed until mid-afternoon.

With many helping hands, we carted all the boxes from Joan Pickett's basement to Ellery Street, set up three long tables plus the tarped parking lot we had commandeered, unpacked, priced hundreds of items -- and opened at 9 a.m.

Besides the Association's tables, at least seven different households/neighbors set up tables to buy/sell "stuff" along Ellery Street from Cambridge to Harvard Streets. All in all, it was a perfect day, a successful outcome, and a very happy work crew.

Now we have to get to work for next September! We really need storage space: Joan Pickett won't have as much room in her basement this coming year, which means we must find additional storage areas. If anyone has space or knows someone who might lend us space to store our collections for 2009, please contact Tuny McMahon at [tunymcm@comcast.net](mailto:tunymcm@comcast.net).

Remember when you are throwing something out, think about the yard sale and instead of putting it on the street, keep it for the sale. If we find that space we can pick it up and store it for you. We will need plenty of useable and clean items to make next year's effort an even bigger success!

### Composting just got easier!

As you may know, the city began a pilot composting program this past spring. One compost tote bin per household has been available for free, and residents have been able to drop off materials to compost at the DPW during the regular recycling drop-off hours on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

The program has now been expanded so that you may drop off your compost every day at the Whole Foods Market at 115 Prospect Street. The bins are located in the rear of the parking lot and are unlocked when the store is open (from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m.).

Since the composting for the city is done on a large scale, it's possible to compost many items you might not want to put in a home compost pile. The finished compost is purchased back by the city and can be picked up for small-scale residential use at the DPW. For detailed information on the composting program, check out [www.cambridgema.gov/The Works/departments/recycle/compost\\_dropoff.html](http://www.cambridgema.gov/The Works/departments/recycle/compost_dropoff.html).

### Escape winter at Sargent Camp

On the weekend of January 30-31/Feb. 1, 2009, people from the Longfellow community will gather for the annual Ski Trip/Winter Retreat and Social Weekend.

This will be the 33rd annual trip and the 30th at Sargent Camp in Hancock, N.H., just outside of Peterborough. Some people have attended all 33 trips. This is a wonderful way to get outdoors, but with heated cabins and prepared meals waiting for you. Sargent Camp is just what you think of when you say Camp: there are woods with trails, cabins sited along a frozen lake, and a dining hall and lodge, away from the bustle of the city.

Depending upon the weather, there is skiing, snowshoeing, ice skating, and hiking, or you can just enjoy the company as the children romp outdoors. Charades and a bonfire are on for Saturday night.

If you are interested in attending or would like more information, please contact George Bossarte at 617-876-0390 or [gbeng@world.std.com](mailto:gbeng@world.std.com).

## Police review recent crimes in Mid-Cambridge

Sergeant John Fulkerson, police liaison for the M-C neighborhood, met with members of the community on October 21 to discuss recent criminal incidents in the neighborhood. Of these, 53 were property related, two were drug-related, and three were aggravated assaults with no weapon violations.

Leading were 24 larcenies from motor vehicles, half of which were entered through a broken window. The main targets were GPS navigation systems and accessories, followed by car stereos and other electronics, such as laptops. Broadway, Cambridge, Harvard, Inman, Prospect and Trowbridge Streets all experienced multiple incidents. Of the six auto thefts, three involved Acura Integras, two Honda Civics and one Vespa. Three were subsequently recovered, but only one had not been stripped for parts.

There were eight incidents of malicious destruction of property, six of which involved motor vehicles. There were 13 housebreaks, nine of which resulted in missing

property, and there were two arrests.

Two street robberies occurred: on September 21 a pedestrian was robbed of his wallet on Cambridge Street near CRLS high school, with a silver revolver pressed to his stomach. On September 30, a victim was robbed at knifepoint by three suspects while walking on Broadway near Dana Street. Officers were able to apprehend all three men, two of whom were juveniles.

In response to an inquiry about incidents of domestic violence, Sgt. Fulkerson stated that no such incidents had been reported in the area. He also mentioned that the Police Department is offering domestic violence awareness programs.

The current opening date of the new police station is December 6 and there are plans to invite the public for the ceremony and a tour of the building. Finally, the Text-A-Tip function of the "Alert Network" was described, whereby an anonymous text message can be sent by texting Tip650 and your message to CRIMES (274637).

### NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

**MCNA Annual Holiday Party, Sunday, December 7, 5 to 8 p.m.** at the home of George Bossarte on 4 Antrim Street. See Page 1 for details.

**Evening with Longfellow, Monday, January 12, 2009, 7 p.m.** What better thing to do on a winter's day than dream of faraway places? Charles Rogers will talk about his adventures bicycling through Holland and Judy Bibbins will talk about her trip to Ireland last summer at the Longfellow Community School Office, 359 Broadway (to enter, ring the bell at the Fayette Street door).

**December 1: Snow Park begins. Snow Park offers indoor play for children from 11:30 to 12:30 Mondays and Wednesdays through the winter.** For more information, contact Penelope Kleespies at 617-349-6260.

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The M-C News is published by the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association and the Longfellow Neighborhood Council. *Editor:* Paula Lovejoy. *Reporters:* Chris Robinson, Joan Pickett, Tuny McMahon, Debby Knight, George Bossarte. The MCNA does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

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