

M-C News

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

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April, 2008

Harvard to begin museum renovations

Fogg, Busch-Reisinger to close June 30; Director to speak at MCNA meeting

Tom Lentz, director of the Harvard University Art Museums, will attend our May 21 meeting to brief the Mid-Cambridge community on Harvard's plans and goals for 32 Quincy St., home of Harvard's Fogg and Busch-Reisinger Museums.

Both museums are set to close June 30 for a major renovation that will transform the aging facility into a state-of-the-art home for all three of Harvard's art collections: the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger and Arthur M. Sackler Museums.

The 32 Quincy St. project is expected to start in 2009 and end in 2013. During that period, selected works from all three museums will be displayed at the Sackler, located across the street at 485 Broadway. The Sackler will close temporarily to install those exhibits and re-open in September.

When renovations are complete, collections from the three museums will be moved back to 32 Quincy St. The Sackler building will no longer be used as a museum, and instead will house university offices and the Fine Arts Library.

Built in 1927, the Fogg is Harvard's oldest art museum and has structural and climate-control issues that pose a serious risk to the collection, one of the largest and most important in the United States. It holds over 260,000 works of art, but currently fewer than 1% can be displayed due to space limitations.

Harvard aims to achieve several goals with the project, including upgrading the building infrastructure to protect the collections and bring together the three museums into one facility at 32 Quincy. Plans include new visitor amenities, and other changes to improve access to the collection for students and the public. It also plans to promote outreach to the community through public programs.

The Renzo Piano Building Workshop, along with local design partner Payette, is currently developing the design for the 32 Quincy St. building.

MCNA annual meeting focuses on construction

The 2008 annual meeting of the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association will be held on Wednesday, May 21 from 7 to 9 p.m. in a new location this year, at 1000 Mass. Ave. in the Cambridge College Building.

The meeting kicks off with reports by Doane Perry, President, Frankie Lieberman, Treasurer, and election of Coordinating Committee members. Following that will be presentations on the unprecedented number of major construction projects occurring in Mid Cambridge.

One of the most significant and dramatic visual changes to Mid-Cambridge is the construction of the main library addition. Simultaneous with that project and just next door is the renovation of the War Memorial, and the CRLS renovation is not too far behind. The Harvard University Arts Museums at 32 Quincy Street are poised for their own major renovation beginning in June (see story above.)

Since these projects will impact Mid-Cambridge and its residents for the next several years, we have invited those in the know to update residents at the MCNA annual meeting.

Coordinating Committee nominations

At the meeting, the membership will elect the 2008-09

slate of 11 members to the Coordinating Committee (CC). The CC, the MCNA board, meets monthly to manage the overall business of the Association. All MCNA members are welcome to submit nomination papers. The papers must be signed by ten MCNA
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Annual Meeting Agenda

Business meeting

- President's report: Doane Perry
- Treasurer's Report: Frankie Lieberman
- Election of Coordinating Committee

Membership meeting

- Update on CRLS renovations and plans for the Longfellow School
 - The Library Project: We are here now – Alan Burne
 - War Memorial renovations – Alan Burne
 - Future Vision for the Harvard University Arts Museums – Tom Lentz, director

Construction project update

Construction Committee reports on CRLS, hotel

Two projects--a new hotel and the renovation of Cambridge Rindge & Latin School--topped the agenda at the first meeting of the MCNA Major Construction Subcommittee, held on January 28. The first item was the proposed hotel for the 1131 Massachusetts Avenue/5-7 Remington Street site, the other, the renovation of Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

The former MacKinnon Motors business on Remington Street and the adjoining property on Massachusetts Avenue had been sold with the object of building a 32-room hotel.

Chris Robinson, the subcommittee chair, intends to seek clarification from the Cambridge Community Development Department on the reason for placing the property in the Harvard Square Conservation District rather than within the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District.

On March 27 a public auction was scheduled for this property, according to a notice in the Cambridge Chronicle on March 6, "for breach of the conditions of the said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same." The auction has been postponed until May 8.

CRLS Project on Schedule: The March update on the Cambridge Public Schools website for the CRLS renovation [http://www.cpsd.us/cpsdir/CRLS_renovation.cfm] states that the project is meeting its target date to begin construction by July 1, 2009.

This schedule is connected to the completion dates for the War Memorial and Library construction. Two noteworthy feasibility studies for producing power using cogeneration are also posted on the site. The \$96.7 million project is scheduled for completion in late 2011.

Main library is 45% complete

As of the end of March, construction of the main library expansion is 45 percent complete, according to Project Manager Alan Burne. The structural skeleton of the new building at 449 Broadway is in place and most of the floor decking is installed.

During the next several weeks, the final bolting-up and welding of steel connections will be completed, followed by a sequential pouring of various floor slabs in order to bring the building into plumb, level and square. Tradesmen have begun running their conduits, pipes, and ductwork.

At the historical building, renovations are in full swing, with stud-walls being placed in the basement, as well as electrical/telephone/data boxes being set in the new Reading and Computer Commons room floors. The new concrete basement floors have been poured and the

new Young Adult room floor (the old ground stack wing floor) will be poured next.

Mechanical/Electrical/Plumbing (MEP) installation of the work of the individual trades in the historical building continues. Re-pointing of the exterior mortar joints has begun, as has the repair of various brownstone and granite pieces along the exposed west elevation. Off-site carving of replacement brownstone panels is underway, as has been the cutting of various pieces of Dedham granite replacement stones. The repair and replacement of the historic windows is being worked on off-site. Re-roofing of the historic building will begin in April.

General contractor Consigli's green recycling efforts continue at the impressive rate of 97%.

For ongoing updates, please visit the Web site at <http://www.cambridgema.gov/~cpl>.

War Memorial gets new roof

Currently, the roof of the War Memorial at 1640 Cambridge St. is being replaced and the new rooftop HVAC units are being crane-lifted into place, according to Alan Burne, the project manager.

The interior masonry partitions are halfway complete, and the new pool concrete is about to be installed. The overall project completion stands at around 38%. MEP and fire protection trades are continuing at full pace on a sequence moving from the basement crawl space through the first floor and up to second floor.

As we move into the spring and the roofing work is completed, exterior masonry repairs will begin along with window repair and replacement. Interior finishes, including new flooring, will follow.

MCNA Annual Meeting

(Continued from Page 1)

members and submitted to Membership Secretary George Bossarte no later than April 30 in order to qualify. Nomination papers are available at www.mcna.org, or by calling George Bossarte at 617-876-0390. The Membership Secretary can assist you in contacting members to sign your nomination form.

Current Coordinating Committee members are: Doane Perry (President), George Bossarte, Fritz Donovan, Elizabeth Gombosi, Frankie Lieberman, Margaret McMahon, Sue Meyers, Joan Pickett, John Pitkin, Chris Robinson and David Szlag.

The Coordinating Committee shall hold office until the next annual election. Please read the Association's full Charter for all the details. The Charter is available on the Web site at MCNA.org, or from the Membership Secretary.

Neighborhood News

Plant Swap set for May 3

The 2008 Mid-Cambridge Spring Plant Swap will take place on Saturday, May 3, from 12 to 2 p.m. at Fayette Park, a short private way between 5 and 7 Fayette Street.

Bring anything that's too abundant in your garden. No need for elegant packaging, but it helps to record plant names. (In case of downpour, the swap will be held on Sunday, May 4, 12-2 p.m.) We expect to have perennials, biennial seedlings, seeds, potted plants, catalogs, pots, and lots of "whatever."

For questions, contact Helen Snively at snively@post.harvard.edu or 617-547-1326. Even if you're not a gardener, feel free to drop by and schmooze with neighbors.

Housebreak wave ends

Cambridge Police announced that a pattern of housebreaks in Mid-Cambridge appears to have ceased. At least 10 Mid-Cambridge homes were burglarized between Jan. 5 and Jan. 23. Streets affected included Inman, Hancock, Fayette, Bigelow, and Clinton. On February 18 police arrested a suspect for a housebreak on Lee Street. For more info, see the Web site at <http://www.cambridgema.gov/cpd/index.cfm>.

Fundraising: The check was in the mail!

Thanks to all the MCNA members who generously contributed to our recent fundraising effort. Frankie Lieberman, treasurer, reports that over 122 members contributed about \$4,886, making this one of the more successful fundraising efforts in recent memory.

This represents an average contribution of \$40. A special thanks to the generous contributors who gave over \$50 to support the Association's ongoing needs.

Although our budget is modest, we are faced with increasing costs of postage, printing, and Web site costs. And, with the temporary closings of the main library and the Longfellow School, we face the added challenge of paying for meeting space.

Your thank-you note is in the mail (really!) and if you have not yet contributed but would like to, please send your check to: MCNA, PO Box 380907, Cambridge, MA 02238. And thanks!!

Sign up for police alerts

Residents interested in receiving email alerts from the Cambridge Police Department can now register with the Alert Network, an innovative service used across the country that sends important messages to residents via electronic text messages and e-mails.

Effective May 1, 2008, Residents who have already been receiving community alerts via email must register with the Alert Network to continue receiving these

notices. The police department will send out community alerts, information on community safety, Police Department sponsored meetings, and news updates.

To register for the Alert Network, visit www.cambridgepolice.org and click the link for the Alert Network Registration. Please contact the Community Relations Unit at 617-349-3236 for questions about this new service, or assistance with your registration.

BZA postpones Shady Hill decision

At a packed April 10 meeting, the Board of Zoning Appeal delayed taking action on the hotly contested issue of construction on the historic Shady Hill Square. Residents are vigorously opposing building on the open green their homes cluster around.

The BZA stated that if Land Court rejects the residents' pending request to decide on zoning issues, the BZA will decide them. If Land Court hears both zoning and ownership issues, there will be no need for BZA action since Land Court findings supercede the BZA's. Also before that court is the issue of determining ownership of the land. Construction is currently halted by a stop work order which will not be lifted until the ownership question is decided. The BZA continued the Shady Hill Square case to its July 24 agenda as a placeholder, should the court rule in time for that meeting.

Longfellow summer programs

The Longfellow Neighborhood Council and Community School is sponsoring a number of events and classes for children and families this summer.

- **Park Days 2008** is a free program that runs from June 16 to August 9. Morning sessions consist of simple craft and play activities such as chalk drawing, face painting, bubbles, and music. The schedule is:

Hancock Park: Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Maple Ave. Park: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to noon. Programs are cancelled on rainy days.

- **Park Days potluck desserts and family entertainment** will be held in Hancock Park from 6 to 8 p.m. on five Thursdays: June 19, June 26, July 10, July 17, and July 24.

- **Music lessons.** The Longfellow Council offers private music lessons for adults and children in piano, voice, flute, recorder and recorder ensemble. The next session of six private 30-minute lessons is April 28 to June 6. Classes run from 2:30 to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please call to arrange time.

- **Yoga Wednesdays** with instructor Melinda Bruno.

The Longfellow Council and Community School is at 359 Broadway. For info, contact Penelope Kleespies at 617-349-6260 or pkleespies@CambridgeMA.GOV.

MCNA to develop program to support retirees at home

Although “quality of life” can cover just about everything that goes on in Mid-Cambridge, the MCNA Quality of Life Subcommittee has agreed to concentrate on two goals: One is developing support programs for retirees who want to live at home as long as possible.

Ann Bookman, executive director of the MIT Workplace Center at the Sloan School of Management, calls this “Aging in Community.” The subcommittee hopes to develop programs to help with chores or transportation, etc., and other programs that offer social activities to suit different interests and pursuits.

To understand what our over-60 population in Mid-Cambridge really wants, the group is preparing a questionnaire which will be mailed as soon as it is put together. If any of you have ideas you’d like to contribute to this endeavor, please contact Tuny McMahon, the subcommittee chair, at tunymcm@comcast.net.

The group’s second project is convincing the state to designate Joan Lorentz Park as an official park with all the attendant advantages of such a designation. Although Joan Lorentz Park is currently called a park, it can be fully protected from development only when it is officially declared so by the state.

NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

MCNA Annual Meeting, Wednesday, May 21, 7-9 p.m., at 1000 Mass. Ave. in the Cambridge College building. Business meeting and speakers on four major construction projects in the neighborhood. See Page 1 for agenda.

Spring Plant Swap, Saturday, May 3, 12 to 2 p.m. at Fayette Park (off 5-7 Fayette Street). Bring anything that’s too abundant in your garden. In case of *downpour only*, rain date is Sunday, May 4, 12-2 p.m.

Fogg Museum Community Open House, Saturday, May 17, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday, May 18, 1-5 p.m. Take one last stroll through the galleries before the noted art museum is closed for renovations until 2013. Free and open to the public. 32 Quincy St.

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

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Annual Meeting
May 21