

# M-C News

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

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May, 2002

## Library Report Due at May 15 Annual Meeting

Come to the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association Annual Meeting from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday, May 15, in the Sakey Room in the Main Public Library, 449 Broadway. On the agenda is:

- Election of members of the Coordinating Committee;
- Report of president;
- Report of treasurer;
- Update on Harvard's request for Cambridge Street tunnel easement;
- Update on the "rules for living with Harvard expansion" endorsed at our January neighborhood meeting;
- Report of Library Design and Open Space Committee, and
- New business. Proposals for new projects and activities are invited.

The following association members are running for the 11 slots on the Coordinating Committee. All are currently serving on the committee, except for Alex Loud and Laura Roberts. Each candidate has prepared a brief statement, as follows.

**Ted Carpenter**, 175 Hancock Street: I am running for a second term on the MCNA Coordinating Committee. Over the past year, I have built and managed the new MCNA Web site, and have volunteered to help with many activities that foster communication and collaboration among neighbors. I believe in taking care of the little things that make for a strong community, like maintaining our neighborhood sign boards.

I serve on MCNA's Library Sub-Committee, and am a candidate to represent mid-Cambridge on the Mayor's Design Advisory Committee for the library project. I have raised five children, and my youngest son is a sophomore at Cambridge Rindge and Latin.

**Elizabeth Gombosi**, 42 Irving Street: As a renter in the '70s and a homeowner since 1994, I've seen constant nibbling away at the quality of life we so enjoy here. We must all "act locally" to preserve our wonderful neighborhood and city. The MCNA provides opportunities to exchange ideas and concerns. My two years on the Coordinating Committee have been an education and a challenge. I'd like to continue hearing from you and helping solve the issues we face.

**Frankie Lieberman**, 24 Ellsworth Ave., has been  
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## City Delays Vote on Harvard Tunnel; Mediation Group Formed

As ordered by the City Council, City Manager Robert Healy has formed a committee of mid-Cambridge residents, Harvard representatives and city officials to work out issues regarding Harvard's application for an easement to construct a tunnel on public land under Cambridge Street. The tunnel would link two large new buildings comprising Harvard's Center for Government and International Studies (CGIS).

Though the City Council was expected to vote up-or-down on the tunnel at a public hearing April 3, they instead voted 9-0 to direct Healy to form the mediation group to "engage in forthright negotiations" regarding the tunnel and the CGIS project.

The city's representatives will be Mr. Healy, Mayor Michael Sullivan, and City Councilor David Maher. A working group of neighbors has met and decided to nominate Rick Childs of 1709 Cambridge St., Betty Collins of 1716 Cambridge St., and MCNA President John Pitkin as resident members.

Healy was also instructed to see that Harvard hires an independent engineering consultant to evaluate the tunnel's long-term impact on the city's future utility needs, and evaluate the construction impact on traffic, neighbors, and neighborhood utilities.

Despite steady rain, the April 3 council hearing was packed with 150 or so attendees from Cambridge, mid-Cambridge and Harvard officials (including FAS Dean Jeremy Knowles), employees and students.

Harvard officials said that after five long years of planning, public meetings and hearings on the CGIS project, the review processes had worked well to reshape and gain approval for the project.

Offering a different view in a presentation organized by the MCNA, Rick Childs, Laura Roberts and John Pitkin led a chorus of residents' arguments against the construction and long-term impacts of the tunnel, the size and use of the south building, and a  
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## Coordinating Committee Candidates' Statements

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a mid-Cambridge resident since 1977 and a member of the Coordinating Committee since 1987. As a founding member and past chairperson of the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Conservation District Commission, she encouraged the educational component of the Commission by advocating the publishing of "Maintaining Your Old House in Cambridge," published by the Cambridge Historical Commission.

Frankie continues to be very interested in issues facing the neighborhood, especially institutional expansion and excess infill. She feels that participation in the neighborhood as a member of the CC is an effective method of community activism.

**Alex Loud**, 43 Antrim Street: Compared to many of our neighbors, my wife Nancy and I are Cambridge short-timers, having moved to the neighborhood in 1998. Because, however, we purchased a condo in Foxcroft Manor at that time, we quickly found ourselves embroiled in the CGIS debate.

Since then, I have spent considerable time with MCNA members: planning, strategizing and supporting each other through interminable meetings. Although there is no resolution yet, I believe we impacted the process and may still see a compromise. Although I can't say I relished the long hours spent fighting CGIS, I will say those hours strengthened my belief in the things neighbors can accomplish together.

**Martha Osler**, 4 Irving Terrace: My reason for running for a Coordinating Committee position is fairly straightforward—I believe strongly in participating in the immediate world outside my door.

Over the years I have been involved in many local issues, and have tried to be an important link between the MCNA and the Conservation District Commission, of which I am a member. Additionally, I maintain the MCNA database and email members about upcoming events, and as Membership secretary, try to bring new members into the organization.

**Doane Perry** of 1657 Cambridge Street seeks to mitigate impact of Harvard and Library construction and promote the neighborhood quality of mid-Cambridge. Doane has a son, Curt, at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, and is married to green activist Karen Carmean. He also serves on Friends of Joan Lorenz Park, Association of Cambridge Neighborhoods, Cambridge Tree Project, Cambridge Action Fund and Cambridge Residents for Growth Management.

**Joan Pickett**, 59 Ellery Street: It is important for the MCNA to seek to preserve the quality of life for

residents by proactively working with the City Council and city agencies to ensure projects are appropriate in design and execution. It was for this reason that several neighbors and I joined forces to try to stop the development of the Swiss House on Broadway.

Traffic and parking issues are also a concern, particularly as the Main Library addition is likely to add more traffic to our neighborhood.

**John Pitkin**, 18 Fayette Street: I was a founding member of the association in 1975 and have served as president for the past 16 years. My priorities for the coming year will be to continue as the Coordinating Committee's contact with Harvard University and to write for the *M-C News*.

I want the association to pay more attention to the Inman and Central Square areas and to find new ways to serve families with young children.

**Laura Roberts**: My husband, Ed Belove, and I have lived for 13 years in one of the "houses with the wisteria" on Cambridge Street. That puts us squarely between Harvard's planned government buildings and the library—projects which will have a serious, and potentially harmful, impact on mid-Cambridge.

But my interest in MCNA extends beyond those projects and to the more general issues of sustaining our quality of life in a changing urban neighborhood. I have particular interests in historic preservation and landscape but have learned a great deal about noise, traffic, and related issues of city life in recent years.

I am a management consultant with nonprofit organizations, and teach nonprofit management.

**Keren Schlomy** of Irving Terrace has been a resident of mid-Cambridge for six years, served on the MCNA Coordinating Committee for four years, and has been co-recording secretary for the past three years.

Keren chaired the Neighborhood Stewardship Task Force, which created principles and guidelines for development that were approved by the MCNA, and negotiated with Harvard concerning their adoption. She is also a member of the city's Tree Protection Task Force.

**Rachael Solem**, 14 Ellsworth Avenue: As a resident and business owner in mid-Cambridge since 1990, I joined the Coordinating Committee of the MCNA to more actively participate in the community and to get to know my neighbors better.

I see the work of the MCNA as providing a forum for open, informative, lively discussion of issues affecting all of us, helping neighbors get to know each other and effectively voicing residents' concerns with the large institutions in our neighborhood.

# Fund-Raising Call Yields Generous Response

Once again our call for funds to help us operate was heard. Some 137 MCNA members contributed nearly \$5,000 in response to our most recent fund-raising letter. The last time we asked for money was in January of 2000. More than 70 people who gave two years ago also gave this time.

These contributions will be well used during the next year or so to continue to provide a forum for neighbors to learn about and discuss issues which affect us all. This newsletter, our Web site ([www.mcna.org](http://www.mcna.org)), the red sign boards that dot the streets of mid-Cambridge, our neighborhood meetings, and biannual candidates' nights all require dollars in addition to our energies.

We thank each and every one of you who answered the call. Our work is especially challenging and important during the next few years, as both the Main Library and Harvard's CGIS developments make their presence known to us on a daily basis.

Comments from some contributors ranged from the repeated request to put phone and electric wires underground to encouraging more ways for neighbors to meet each other, such as block parties and community patrolling. We will be addressing those we can as time at meetings and space in the newsletter allows.

## List of Contributors

Mary Akerson and Steven Cohen, Renee Arb, Alisa Aronson, Timothy Bemis and Anita Raj, Pamela Berger, Lawrence and Sara Mae Berman, Ethel Bernard, Amy Blake, Francis X. Bolger, Thomas Bracken, Lawrence and Adeane Bregman.

Richard and Eleanor Brimley, Robert Campbell, Kathryn L. Carleton, Beatrice and Frederick Childs, Ann Chronis, Rose Ciampi, Helen Clark, Vera Cohen, Marian and William Connor, Timothy Connor, Mary and Nic Cooper, Marie Costello, Albert Darling, Susan P. Davies and Richard W. Talkov.

Samuel De Merit, John Devaney, Richard & Elizabeth Dionne, Astrid & Douglas Dodds, Dawn Drevers and Michael Buck, Emma Duchane and Jayant Shah, Alford and Edda Dyson, Chantal Eide and Richard Schooler, Lei-Anne Y. Ellis and Paul Bloom, Albert Feingold, Virginia Guest Ferriday.

David and Anne Ferry, G. Flannelly and DW King, Robert Flint, Donald Forte, R. Dara Foundyller, Kathleen M. Fox, Dana Gallup, Frank J. Garlis, John W.

Gintell, Elizabeth Gombosi and Fritz Donovan, Cynthia Goodenough, Ann V. Goodsell, Nancy Goodwin, Frieda Grayzel, Mary E. and Robert A. Greene, Deborah Greenman, Ann Elizabeth Groban, Sharon Grollman, Ann Hartmere.

Sarah Heintz, Ilse Heyman and Philip Schwartz, Hong Liu, John Hsia, Charlotte Ikels and Ezra Vogel, Anne Jenks, E. Dolores Johnson, Nancy Jones and Charles Segal.

Mary Kelley and Tom Field, Mary Kendrick, Judith S. King, Thomas and Vera Kreilkamp, Weston Jesuit Community La Farge, Drs. Philippe and Guillermine LaCoste, Steven and Ricki Lacy, Blair Lent, Nancy Leonard, Aleksander and Anita Leyfell, Sanford Lieberman, Robert and Judy Lindamood, Arthur Lipkin and Robert Ellsworth, Alex and Nancy Loud, Kenneth Lynch and Emily Talcott.

Adam Manacher, Jean Ann Martin, Connie and Jeff May, James McLaughlin and Loretta Lennon, Margaret McMahan, Priscilla McMillan, Yvonne McQuilkin, Benjamin and Mary Lou Mehrling.

Mary Lou Melcher, George and Jane Metzger, Susan Michaelson, Mary L. Moise, Elaine Morse, Elizabeth Neild, Miriam and Edward Newman, Emilie N. Norris, Roy E. Norris, Kevin O'Connell and Kathleen Kelly, John O'Keefe and Mark Smith, Martha and David Osler, Diane Paul, Joan Pickett, John and Helina Pitkin, Kathryn and Robert Preyer, Eleanor Pyle, Arnold Robbins, Laura Roberts and Edward Belove, Zev Rosenthal and Jerald Gebo.

Hugh Russell, Elizabeth Samit, Elizabeth Schultz, Maxine Schuster, Debra Shapiro, Benita H. Shaw, Sandra Sherwood, Robert Skenderian, Sandia Smalley, Marcia and William Smits, Helen Snively, Avi Soifer and Marlene Booth, Rachael Solem, Karen R. Sollins.

Judith E. Somberg & Lawrence Rosenberg, Francis Fox Spinks and Cynthia MacDougall, Constance Spinos, Judith Stitt, Valerie and Thomas Stone, David Szlag, Richard and Patton Tabors, Toscanini's, John Walsh, Mary Waters and Ric Bayly, James and Rubie Watson, Maria E. Weintraub, Allen C. West, Murray Wheeler, Richard White, Nan Wilson and Tony Gomez-Ibanez, Rachel Yasui.

# Residents, Harvard to mediate on tunnel

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flawed, frustrating review process.

The residents were not convinced that the tunnel is critical to the CGIS project, as asserted by Harvard officials. Childs said the benefits of the project go primarily to Harvard, not the city.

Residents agreed there are only two benefits to the tunnel, neither of which justifies granting the easement: It would allow the building's users to easily move between the two buildings underground, and eliminate the need for a loading dock at the south building.

Offsetting these benefits are significant public costs, primarily the short-term public safety hazards and the disruptions of traffic, noise, and vibrations during construction and the long-term implications for access to the land and utilities under the street.

The easement would also result in the permanent loss of access for the city to install new utility technologies in that area. In addition, servicing all utilities beneath the tunnel will be problematic.

MCNA president John Pitkin said that city policy should not encourage the expansion of Harvard's core campus activity into a block that provides housing for over 200 people. He also noted that the lengthy regulatory process had undercut the city's 11-year policy of encouraging direct discussions between universities and neighbors affected by expansion projects.

Harvard has made no official statement about its intentions since the April 3 hearing, but, according to a reliable source, Harvard has told the occupants of Coolidge Hall to vacate the building by June 8. (If the CGIS is approved, Coolidge will be demolished.)

How these issues and concerns are ultimately resolved in the process as now set forth by the City Council is still unfolding. Looking ahead, lessons learned from this project need to be incorporated into a more coordinated review process to avoid similar frustrations on the part of residents and institutions.

*(For the full story on the hearing and its aftermath, go to the MCNA Web site at [www.mcna.org](http://www.mcna.org)).*

## NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

**Saturday, May 4, 10 AM-Noon** Mid-Cambridge neighborhood plant swap, Fayette Park, across Fayette Street from the Longfellow School.

**Wednesday, May 15, 7 to 9 PM.** MCNA Annual Neighborhood Meeting. Sakey Room, Main Public Library, 449 Broadway.

**June 24-August 2, 10 AM to Noon** weekdays (tentative schedule--exact schedule to be posted at park at start of program). "Park Days," the annual summer program at the Hancock Street Park. Potluck desserts on July 11, 18, and 25, and August 1.

**July 1-August 16** Longfellow summer camp, "Summer Songs." Seven-week camp with a performing arts focus. 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM, with a 5:30 PM extended day option.

Note: For info on all Longfellow events and schedules, contact Penelope Kleespies at (617) 349-6260.

### M-C NEWS

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### MCNA Annual Meeting May 15