

HNA REPORTER

HELDERBERG NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

ACADEMY STATION, P.O. BOX 8841, ALBANY, NY 12208

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**Next HNA Membership Meeting:
WEDNESDAY, January 17, 2007
7:00-9:00 pm**

At the Sage Colleges, Campus Center, Room 224

**Guest speakers include representatives from:
Albany Public Library
Department of General Services
Dept. of Fire and Emergency Services**

**Additional topics:
February 6 Library and School Vote
Board Elections
Calendar of HNA Events**

**“You can walk to the library.”
Vote “YES” on February 6**

How many times have you said, “You can walk to the library” when describing our neighborhood? Our branch library is something we deeply value, a hallmark of our neighborhood. The public library may be our most important democratic institution because of the opportunities provided for each and every individual to discover, learn and grow.

On February 6, Albany residents will have an historic opportunity to improve our neighborhoods by voting to approve a \$29.1 million dollar bond referendum to overhaul its branch library system. The vote is being held the same day the Albany School District is holding a public referendum on a separate question which also needs your YES vote. Polls will be open from noon to 9 pm on February 6th.

...it’s the same cost as purchasing a couple of hardcover books!

The tax impact of the libraries is \$.47 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The owner of a \$100,000 home would pay \$47 per year. In practical terms, it’s the same cost as purchasing a couple of hardcover books! For the money you get five new and/or updated branch libraries, including a brand new 8,370 sq. ft. New Scotland branch library, located next to the firehouse in the heart of our neighborhood. The current \$29.1 million price tag put forth by the library board and the focus on rebuilding the neighborhood branches, is a major compromise from the original \$65 million plan that included rebuilding the main branch. The New Scotland branch was made smaller, too, to save taxpayer money and save considerable open space between the firehouse and the library.

You wonder if we can afford it? The truth is we must afford it! The neighborhood libraries will give Albanians another reason to stay here in the city. Every dollar invested in libraries brings back \$4 to \$10 back on that investment in the form of economic development,

Continued on page 2

The Helderberg Neighborhood Association meets on the third Wednesday of January, March, May, July, September and November. Meetings are held from 7:00 to 9:00 pm at the Junior College of Albany, Campus Center. Remaining 2007 meeting dates: 3/21, 5/16, 7/18, 9/19 (Picnic), 11/21.

HNA Reporter is published every other month. Deadlines for articles or ads are 2/26; 4/29; 6/25; 8/27; and 11/1. Ads and articles may be mailed to HNA, Academy Station, P.O. Box 8841, Albany, NY 12208. HNA Editors reserve the right to accept, reject or edit articles for content and space considerations.

A portion of the printing of this newsletter has been provided as a public service by David Phaff, Associate Broker at RealtyUSA.

DEAR NEIGHBORS:

As we celebrate the start of a new year, a new Governor, and a snow-free neighborhood (so far), it is also a time to plan for the coming year. There are many projects on the horizon - Spring Spree '07, the Neighborhood-wide garage sale, and our annual picnic in the fall will all make a return - but there is so much more. We are planning a series of cultural events - on the months we don't have business meetings - to bring neighbors together in new ways, sharing creative pursuits. You will be hearing more about that program as we head into Spring.

Of more immediate concern, we have two very important votes coming up on February 6: the Board of Education's proposal on school facilities funding for renovations on the last 3 elementary schools under the 2001 rebuilding plan; and the proposed Library Bond, which will directly affect our neighborhood for years to come. The plans by the Albany Board of Education to pursue voter approval for additional facilities money on the same date as the library vote may distract attention from the more immediate need of the Library. I share your concerns regarding any expansion of the tax burden on Albany residents but I would ask that you keep the following points in mind:

1) The Board of Education fully anticipates an equivalent amount of state aid will be received for the work on the three remaining schools within a few months and that money, coupled with EXCEL (Expanding our Children's Education and Learning) aid will result in **no cost to the taxpayers**.

Continued on page 3

Slate of Candidates for 2007 HNA Board

In January, HNA members will elect a Board of Directors for 2007. At the November 2006 meeting, the following slate of officers was nominated: Chair, Craig Waltz; Vice Chair, Jennifer Viggiani; Treasurer, June Price; Secretary, Kim Alvarez; Communications, Debra Schramek; and Membership, Susan VanDeventer.



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The February 6 Library Bond: The cost for Albany's Branch Libraries

NEW SCOTLAND AVENUE BRANCH—\$4 million—Construction of a new two-story building next to the Firehouse on New Scotland Ave. totaling approximately 8,400 square feet (SF).

DELAWARE AVENUE BRANCH—\$4.7 million—Conversion of the Chicorelli Funeral Home at 331 Delaware Ave (opposite Spectrum Theater) to a library totaling 10,100 SF.

PINE HILLS BRANCH—\$4.8 million—Expansion of the current library to the second floor totaling 9,500 SF.

ARBOR HILL/WEST HILL BRANCH—\$5.7 million—Construction of two story new building at Henry Johnson Blvd. and First Street totaling approximately 11,900 SF.

HOWE BRANCH—\$5.2 million—Complete renovation of building and construction of a new addition to bring the total building size to 11,600 SF

Total Cost: \$29.1 million. That's 47 cents for every \$1,000 of valuation or \$47 per year for the owner of a \$100,000 home.



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Vote Yes, *continued from page 1*

increased property values and better educated citizens. The money to rebuild our libraries is money wisely spent. Our new branch will have: dedicated space and programs for teenagers; larger children's collections and programming space; large community meeting room and small meeting rooms for tutoring and study; more space for computers; and more space for books.

Our current branch will close in June, 2007 when School 19 closes for renovations. Imagine our neighborhood without its library branch if the February vote fails. The incentive is there for us all to get out and vote YES for the libraries and our schools!

Cathy Fahey
Council Member, 7th Ward

Jim Sano
Council Member, 9th Ward

POLLING LOCATIONS:

- ⇒ 7th Ward: Delaware Community School (School 18) on Bertha Street
- ⇒ 9th Ward: School 19

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February 6: Albany School Project Goes to the Voters

On February 6, Albany residents will vote on the city school district's plan to borrow \$19 million for renovations to Arbor Hill, Giffen and TOAST elementary schools. That \$19 million will be repaid through state building aid and the state EXCEL program. The result: new schools ready for the 21st century at no additional cost to the taxpayers.

Vote YES on the February 6 School referendum!

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Tania Maynard & Candace Chang

Highlights of November 15, 2006 HNA meeting

Guest speaker Mike Yevoli, Director of Planning for the City of Albany, discussed Re-capitalize Albany including the 12 neighborhood strategy areas. He will attend future HNA meetings to hear members' concerns, ideas for improvement, traffic flow, etc.

Guest Speaker Jeff Cannell of the Albany Public Library, and Melissa, New Scotland Branch Librarian, talked about the plans for the new library building in this neighborhood.

Guest Speaker Joe Isgro, Jr., Fire Investigator for the City of Albany, is our liaison for codes, building issues, grounds upkeep, and general appearance of the neighborhood. He discussed the plan to renovate the Eden Park building on Holland Avenue to a Town Suites hotel for extended stays.

Guest Speaker Officer Kathi Rissberger reviewed the crime report for this area, including the two robberies at the Mobil Station and the recent arrest of 3 teens who were breaking into cars on Grove Ave. She mentioned a scam to watch for – two men were going to elderly women's homes, saying they were with the water department and power department, hoping they'd be invited in. If anyone experiences this, report it to the police right away. Kathi may be reached at 458-5669 or krissberger@albany-ny.org.

The following nominations for HNA's Board of Directors were accepted: Chair: Craig Waltz; Vice-Chair: Jennifer Viggiani; Secretary: Kim Alvarez; Treasurer: June Price; Communications: Debra Schramek; Membership: Susan VanDeventer; CANA delegates: Craig Waltz and Don Dugan; CANA alternate delegates: 2 slots are open

Voting on the slate of candidates will occur at the January meeting. Nominations for the 2 CANA alternates will be accepted at the meeting.

Dear Neighbor, *continued from page 1*

- 2) The Library Board of Trustees has repeatedly revised (downward) the amount of their bond proposal in an effort to limit the burden on taxpayers.
- 3) They have consistently behaved in a fiscally responsible manner while simultaneously looking for new ways to meet the literary and information needs of young and old alike.
- 4) Their ongoing dialogue with our Neighborhood Association and the others affected by the proposal – and the revisions made to their proposal - are further proof of their commitment to responsible action derived from public input.

The Library Board of Trustees and its staff have earned our trust and the Library Bond proposal deserves our support. On February 6 you and I will have an opportunity to show our support for fiscally responsible governance that actively seeks input from the citizens it serves; we must not waste it.

See you at the meeting!

Craig Waltz, Chair

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Calling All Artists!

Once again, HNA will sponsor a Spring Spree on New Scotland in April (date to be determined.) This year, we are considering an art display, either outdoors or in the stores along New Scotland Avenue.

If anyone is interested in displaying their artwork, or volunteering to help organize or set up the Spring Spree, contact Dennis Gaffney at 482-9813.

Albany High Students Show Film

On January 25 at the Madison Theater, three Albany High School students will show their films that they have entered into a film competition in France. Ticket proceeds will go towards their trip to the competition. Two showings: 7 and 9 pm. Cost: \$5.

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HNA thanks David Phaff of RealtyUSA for his assistance in financing the cost of the HNA Reporter.

HNA Author to Hold Book Signing, Lecture

Congratulations to Helderberg neighbor and author Chris Ringwald on the publication of his latest book, *A Day Apart: How Jews, Christians and Muslims Find Faith, Freedom and Joy on the Sabbath* (Oxford University Press, Jan. 2007). Join Chris on Wednesday, January 24 at the Opalka Gallery (Sage College, 140 New Scotland Ave.) from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. for a reception and book signing. To RSVP call 292-1727 or e-mail ringwc@sage.edu.

The reception is sponsored by Sage's Office of Academic Affairs and Office of Cultural Enrichment and Diversity. *A Day Apart* is available in bookstores and on-line.

Other local events include:

- Roundtable with the author and the families portrayed in *A Day Apart*, Wednesday, January 17, 5:30 pm potluck, 7 pm discussion. Catholic Worker House, 45 Trinity Place, Albany. Contact Fred Boehrer for details: 482-4966.
- Lecture by the author, Thursday, January 25, at the Albany Public Library, 161 Washington Ave. Albany. Contact John Sirin (427-4344) or sirinj@uhls.lib.ny.us.
- Lecture by the author with responses by Jewish and Muslim clerics, Wednesday, February 28, 7:00 pm, at Bush Memorial, Russell Sage College, First and Congress St., Troy.

Exhibits at the Opalka Gallery

January 22 to February 25, 2007: Joh Schueler: The Sign of the GaleJon Schueler, Fantasy: Snow Cloud 1, 1968, oil on canvas.

- Curated by Victoria Keller.
- Courtesy of ACA Galleries, NY and the Jon Schueler Estate.
- Reception, Friday, February 2, 4:30-7:30 pm.
- Curator's presentation: Sunday, February 4, 1:00-4:00 pm.

March 11 to April 15, 2007: The Illustrated Heart.

- Curated by Esther Tornai Thyssen.
- Reception, Sunday, March 25, 1:00-4:00 pm.

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HNA's membership year runs January to December. Your dues help support the cost of this newsletter and several free events throughout the year. Time to renew your membership!

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

- Household: \$ 5.00
- Business: \$10.00
- Associate: \$10.00

Each household membership has one vote. Business members will receive one free ad in the HNA Reporter, and will have voting rights. Associate Members (not living within our boundaries) will have the HNA Reporter mailed to them.

Please enroll me as a member of the Helderberg Neighborhood Association. Enclosed is a check, made out to HNA, in the amount of \$_____ for a _____ membership. (Checks may be mailed to: HNA, Academy Station, P.O. Box 8841, Albany, NY 12208 OR brought to the next HNA meeting.) Date mailed: _____

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