

HNA REPORTER

HELDERBERG NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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

PHONE INQUIRIES: C. Waltz 446-1919; D. Schramek 482-2775

Website: www.hnaalbany.com

E-mail: hna@hnaalbany.com

**Next HNA Membership Meeting:
WEDNESDAY, March 15, 2006
7:00 PM**

**Sage College, Campus Center, Room 224
Guest Speaker: Jessica Blain Lewis,
Criminal Law Associate
Albany County DA's Office**

Park South Plan Takes Shape

City leaders are currently considering a draft urban renewal plan for the Park South neighborhood between Washington Park and Albany Medical Center. The plan, presented by Rochester-based Winn Development and two other firms, calls for the demolition of 237 residential units (not buildings) and the rehabilitation of another 221 units. An additional 45 units would be lost through conversion to other uses. The plan recommends construction of:

- A 100,000 square foot 5-story office building
- A 4-story (6-level) parking garage
- Several 3-story buildings with apartments above retail spaces
- Several 3- and 4-story apartment buildings and one with a setback rising to 7 stories
- A net increase of 669 parking spaces
- Other residential construction, including rehabilitation and infill
- Nearly \$8 million in infrastructure improvements including sewers, sidewalks, streetlights, and underground wiring on lower New Scotland Avenue

An alternate plan is similar, but includes fewer residential units and more office space along with a larger parking garage. Most of the offices and the parking garage would be constructed west of New Scotland Avenue, where Albany Med is a major property owner.

Both plans strive to respect the urban character of the neighborhood and call for preserving many structures of historic and aesthetic interest, including the townhouses on Madison Avenue and Knox Street. Ideally, properties would be acquired through negotiated sales; however, the plans do not rule out the use of eminent domain if a reluctant seller refuses offers for a key parcel.

A copy of the plans, including numerous maps and drawings, is available at the main branch of the Albany Public Library on Washington Avenue. A public hearing on the draft plan is scheduled for March 16 at City Hall.

Susan VanDeventer

Save the Date: Spring Spree on New Scotland Ave: Saturday May 6 (rain date May 20). See page 4 for details.

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. The remaining 2006 meeting dates are: May 17, July 19, September 20 (picnic) and November 15.

HNA Reporter is published every other month. Deadlines for articles or ads are 1/2; 2/22; 5/1; 7/1; 9/1; 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.

DEAR NEIGHBORS:

Spring is nearly upon us! You can tell because it appears that the coldest weather of the season is finally upon us.

Amid your preparations for the "hopefully" milder weather, please mark your calendar now two HNA spring events. On April 29, we will hold the 2nd annual Plant Swap. For those of you without a green thumb or a plant to swap, \$1 will buy you a plant. See page 4 for all the details.

Then, plan to attend the 2nd annual HNA Spring Spree on New Scotland, scheduled for May 6, 2006. Last year's event was a great success and the planning is well under way to make this year's event even better. Event Chair Dennis Gaffney has been holding meetings to attend to the myriad of details that go on long before the first balloon is blown up. Don't worry! There are still plenty of opportunities to assist with this neighborhood-wide event so any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

Sadly, I must report the passing of two long-term supporters of HNA, Sam Cohen and Evelyn Sturdevan. Sam was an active member of HNA in its early days, and rarely missed a meeting. Evelyn was the heart and soul of HNA's efforts at neighborhood beautification for many years. A founder of several garden clubs throughout the City and a member of the Tulipfest committee, she volunteered her time to help with the installation of tulip beds along the islands on Hackett Blvd. To all of our friends who garden, I ask that, if possible, you plant a few bulbs in memory of Evelyn this year. The ensuing beauty throughout the neighborhood would be a fitting tribute for years to come.

See you at the meeting!

Craig Waltz, Chair

2006 HNA Board of Directors Elected during January Meeting:

Chair:	Craig Waltz	446-1919
Vice Chair:	Jennifer Viggiani	489-3824
Secretary:	Kim Alvarez	458-8942
Treasurer:	June Price	
Membership:	Susan VanDeventer	
Communications:	Debra Schramek	482-2775

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Spot Zoning on Holland Avenue

Spot Zoning is the rezoning of a single lot or parcel held by a single owner that would permit land uses not available to the adjacent properties or parcels. It is considered legal only if the rezoning of a single parcel is found to be consistent with the community's land use policies, if it complies with the community's comprehensive plan (which Albany does not have) or if it is found to advance the health, safety and welfare of the community.

The Common Council voted to allow a zone change at 41 Holland Avenue from Commercial Office to Commercial Highway at their December 20 meeting. This will allow a 14,000 sq. ft. drive thru Walgreen Pharmacy and an 8,000 sq. ft. Panera Bread to be built.

Citizens for Responsible Zoning, a coalition of organizations and concerned individuals, has raised concerns about spot zoning for 41 Holland Avenue. Chief among their concerns is the precedent this would set, allowing other big businesses to move into the area, and affecting the traffic pattern (Holland Avenue is a main thoroughfare for ambulances.) The issue also has city-wide implications as far as our municipal decision-making processes and impact on guided growth in all neighborhoods. For information on "spot zoning" go to the NYS Department of State website: www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/pdfs/zncmplplan.pdf

Councilmember Cathy Fahey (7th Ward) introduced legislation to rezone the property back into compliance on February 6th. Citizens for Responsible Zoning is filing an Article 78 law suit against the city. The organization is asking for donations to help pay legal fees. A number of neighborhood associations have signed on to help raise funds. Donations may be sent to Citizens for Responsible Zoning, c/o 27 Summit Ave., Albany, NY 12209.

A public hearing on the proposed legislation is scheduled for Monday, March 20 at 7:00 pm in Council Chambers, 2nd floor of City Hall. It is very likely the legislation will go to a vote by the full Council that evening. A two-thirds vote is needed to pass the legislation, which may be difficult to obtain. *(Continued on page 4)*

Report from the Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations (CANA) March 1, 2006 Meeting

Albany Common Council President Shawn Morris spoke about the direction for the Council in 2006. The Council is working on several priorities related to ensuring the quality of life in the City of Albany: coordinating youth services; dealing with education needs and issues; continuing to address violent crime; finding solutions for the city landfill; and creating a community benefits package related to the convention center to ensure positive impacts of the project for city residents. The Common Council will be working on short-term and long-term goals and actions for these issues.

CANA's Comprehensive Plan Task Force presented a summary of its "Guiding Principles for Conducting a Successful Comprehensive Planning Process for the City of Albany Vision 2020." CANA voted unanimously to support a proposed, amended Common Council resolution to conduct a city-wide comprehensive plan project and public process that is led by a committee appointed by the Common Council to ensure a diverse representation. The CANA task force was formed following a Neighborhood Works Conference in Dec. 2005. Mayor Jennings announced a city initiative to create a comprehensive plan on Dec. 30, 2005.

For more information about the CANA Comprehensive Plan Task Force and the recommendations, please contact Jennifer Viggiani at 489-3824 or jvigg2005@yahoo.com; Leif Engstrom at leifengstrom@earthlink.net or Gene Solan at gsolan1@yahoo.com. See CANA's website at <http://councilalbanyna.tripod.com/> for future updates.

Jennifer Viggiani

SuzyYoga Studio



Suzy Sherer Arenos, MS, LMT

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Mon.—Sat. 10am-6pm

Vogue Nails

Vogue Nails, located at 579a New Scotland Avenue, across the street from St. Peter's Hospital, just opened in the neighborhood. The shop offers manicures, pedicures and waxing. Their hours are Monday through Saturday from 10:00am to 8:00pm and Sunday from 11:00am to 5:00pm.

Go to www.valpak.com and print out coupons for 15% off any service, a free French manicure with the purchase of a manicure or pedicure, and \$5 off a manicure or pedicure. They are also offering a special--\$5 off with the purchase of \$25 or more.

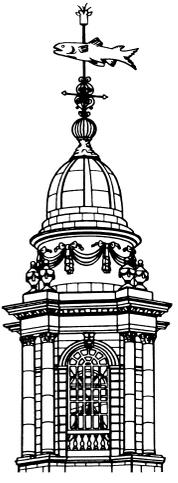
The owners just moved here from Brooklyn. Call them at 438-1849 and welcome them to the neighborhood.

Cyra Nealon

Fish and Pumpkin History

Originally, and for many generations, the Fish and Pumpkin that adorns The Albany Academy was on the spire of the Albany's old Second Presbyterian Church. It had been installed in 1854, twenty-five years after the church was built, and probably graced another unidentified church before that.

During late 1921, when remodeling on the Second Presbyterian Church began, the Trustees of the church were persuaded by architect Marcus Reynolds to transfer the Fish and Pumpkin and the tower bell to The Albany Academy in Academy Park, opposite Albany City Hall. The bell was installed on December 13, 1921, and the Fish and Pumpkin followed six months later, in June, 1922.



The bell is fifty-eight inches tall, and with a diameter of fifty-three inches. It weighs an unbelievable three thousand pounds! Manufactured in 1852 by the famous Meneely Company of West Troy, its tone is E-flat.

In archival material, the fish is referred to a cod. While debate continues to this day, the facts about the fish are as follows: it is eight feet, seven inches in length and weighs two hundred thirty pounds. The hollow pumpkin is thirty inches in diameter and weights six hundred pounds, including the spindle. When the present Academy was built in 1931, the Fish and Pumpkin bell were installed; the bell in the cupola and the Fish and Pumpkin at the very top.

*Regina Luttrell
Albany Academy*

A note from Jim Sano.....

Just a reminder: Please lock your car doors! Even when it is parked in your driveway overnight, thieves seeking money will steal your loose change, CD's and anything else they find.

I'm interested in setting up a neighborhood graffiti committee. We have experienced problems with graffiti, here as well as in other parts of the city. We need to come up with some strategies to help us protect properties and report occurrences immediately. Call me (438-4631) or send me an e-mail if interested: Jsano15@aol.com.

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Holland Avenue, continued from page 2

However, it is important that residents continue to voice strong opposition to Council votes like this past December's spot zoning vote, that are not in the best interests of the community. Please consider contacting members of the Planning Committee and the full Council (see list, next column) regarding their stance on this legislation.

Cathy Fahey
Council Member, 7th Ward
482-6159

Council Members on the Planning Committee:

- Dan Herring—Chair
- John Rosenzweig
- Carolyn McLaughlin
- Jim Sano
- Cathy Fahey

Street Repaving

The city of Albany expects to spend \$1.9 million to redo about four miles of streets this spring. The following streets within our neighborhood have been chosen to be repaved: Ramsey Place, Van Schoick Avenue and South Main Avenue.

Phone: 518.478.0224 **Open House**
March 16 6:30-7:30



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THIRD ANNUAL PLANT SWAP

We'll be exchanging perennial plants on Saturday, April 29 from 1 to 2:30 pm at 51 Lawnridge Ave (use the Helderberg entrance). If you want plants but have none to trade, we'll accept a \$1 donation per plant which will go to the neighborhood association.

Bring your plant in a plastic grocery bag, styrofoam or plastic container, or cardboard box. Water regularly after digging. Keep it in the shade.

Examples of plants to divide might include lilies, iris, black-eyed susans, echinacea or coneflower, lamb's ear, bee balm, geraniums, coreopsis, chrysanthemums, rose campion, hosta, and groundcovers like lamium, pachysandra, sweet woodruff and sedum (stonecrops).

Whatever you offer, please AVOID INVASIVES.

COMMON COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION
(including how they voted on the spot zoning change)

- Common Council President**, Hon. Shawn Morris, shawnmorris7@aol.com; 426-0530; VOTED NO
- 1st ward** Hon. Dominick Calsolaro, dcalsol1@nycap.rr.com; 463-3356; VOTED NO
- 2nd ward and Majority Leader** Hon. Carolyn McLaughlin, cmclaughlin3@nycap.rr.com; 462-1458; VOTED YES;
- 3rd ward** Hon. Corey Ellis, coreyellis11@yahoo.com; 429-9457 (newly elected)
- 4th ward** Hon. Barbara Smith, BarbaraSmith4@aol.com; 482-0837; (newly elected)
- 5th ward** Hon. Willard Timmons, no email; 462-0159; (newly elected)
- 6th ward** Hon. Richard Conti, rc6thward@aol.com; 463-3356; Common Council President Pro Tempore, VOTED NO
- 7th ward** Hon. Catherine Fahey, cmfahey@nycap.rr.com; 482-6159; (newly elected)
- 8th ward** Hon. John Rosenzweig, Rosenzweig8@nycap.rr.com; 482-6883; (newly elected)
- 9th ward** Hon. James P. Sano, Jsano15@aol.com; 438-4631; VOTED YES
- 10th ward** Hon. James R. Scalzo, Jr., jscalzo10@yahoo.com; 434-9936; VOTED YES
- 11th Ward** Hon. Glen Casey, caseyg2@hotmail.com; 626-9025; VOTED YES
- 12th ward** Hon. Michael O'Brien, twelfward@aol.com; 482-1160; VOTED NO
- 13th ward** Hon. Daniel F. Herring, danherring47@hotmail.com; 438-7527 (missed the Dec. vote due to a death in family)
- 14th ward** Hon. Joseph Igoe, Jigoe19932@aol.com; 489-3014; VOTED YES
- 15th ward** Hon. Sandra Fox, ward15fox@aol.com; 489-1675; VOTED YES

Sorry to use the alarming capital letters, but these plants are extremely difficult to eradicate. Horticultural bullies, they crowd out other plants, spreading by very aggressive root systems. Among these are japanese honeysuckle, bittersweet and some groundcovers like bishop's weed or goat's rue. When in doubt, do not exchange plants growing in the same bed as such plants.



Attach a description of flower color, height of plant, sun/soil/water requirement, and how it spreads (broadening clump, self-seed).

Contact 482-9813 for more information.

Save the date:



Second Annual New Scotland Spring Spree
Saturday, May 6, 11 am to 2 pm
(Rain date: Saturday, May 20)



Support your local businesses at the second annual New Scotland Spring Spree on Saturday, May 6. A treasure hunt, business promotions (including free samples), kid activities, police horses, free gift certificates from local businesses, the purple bookmobile and more! If you'd like to lend a hand organizing the event, or volunteer during the event, or you are a neighborhood artist or independent business who would like to set up a table or display on New Scotland Avenue that day, call Dennis Gaffney (482-9813) or e-mail dgaffney@nycap.rr.com; or, Kim Alvarez (458-8942, kcalvarez@landmarkconsulting.net).

HNA Mourns Loss of Two Former Members

On February 21, our neighborhood lost two long-time members: Evelyn Sturdevan and Sam Cohen. Both were strong supporters of HNA meetings.

Evelyn Sturdevan was an avid gardener and volunteer at Albany Medical Center. She served as president of the Albany Med Auxiliary and of many garden clubs. She coordinated the annual front yard tulip contest, and was active in Albany's annual Tulip Festival. Neighbors remember her for her charm, grace and her efforts to

beautify our city. Donations in Evelyn's name are being accepted at Albany Medical Center's Children's Hospital or the Daughters of Sarah Nursing Home.

Sam Cohen was an involved member of HNA in it's early years. He was active in Peace Now and the Men's Club of Temple Israel. He loved music and literature. Contributions in Sam's name may be sent to Parsons Child and Family Center.

City to Offer Street Tree Program Again

Albany's Department of General Services is now taking orders for street trees, while supplies last. If you would like a tree planted in front of your home, the city will share the cost, and will plant the tree for you. To learn about the tree

program, to see the variety of trees available, or to order a tree, call 434-2489, or go to the city's website, www.albanyny.org. The deadline for spring planting is April 15, and in fall, September 15.

Free Trees for 9th Ward

Once again, Common Council Member Jim Sano is offering his free tree program to residents in the 9th Ward. Anyone, regardless of income, can have a tree planted in the right of way at no cost to the homeowner. This program has planted many trees in the last five years and has been a huge success. If you would like a tree, please contact Jim Sano at 438-8631, or by e-mail: jsano15@aol.com. All trees will be planted in the fall.

Crime Victims Rights Week

The week of April 23-29 has been designated National Crime Victims Rights Week. Local Albany events include:

April 27: Ground breaking ceremony for Albany County Crime Victims Memorial, 10:30 am, Academy Park.

April 27: Take Back The Night March and Rally Against Sexual Assault, 6:00 pm, Empire State Plaza, South Concourse.

April 29: Crime Victims Memorial Walkway Dedication, 1:00 pm, Empire State Plaza, behind the Legislative Office Building.

The public is invited to attend these events. For more information, call the Crime Victim and Sexual Violence Center, 447-7100.

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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, including the annual September Picnic.



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: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

E-mail: _____