

HNA REPORTER

HELDERBERG NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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

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**Next HNA Membership Meeting:
Wednesday, November 21, 2007
7:00 pm
Sage Campus Center, Room 214**

**Topic: Review of Plans for the New Scotland
Branch of the Albany Public Library
And
Nominations for the 2008
HNA Board of Directors**

DEAR NEIGHBORS:

All Hallows has come and gone, the leaves are filling our yards, and the days are getting shorter, but there is still a lot of activity in our neighborhood. New businesses are getting ready to open, the rehabilitation of School 19 is underway, and the public input process into the new branch library is in full swing. I encourage all of you to attend as many of the public meetings on the new branch as you possibly can and make yourselves heard. Representatives of the Library will be at our November meeting for just that purpose.

As some of you know, I have decided not to seek another term as HNA Chair. This is not because I intend to stop coming to meetings or help with neighborhood projects. It is simply because I have some new challenges and adventures to pursue in both my professional career and in married life (all good thankfully!). I believe that something as important as HNA deserves nothing less than a chairperson who can devote the time and attention needed to protect what we have developed and guide our Association into the future. Therefore I decided to end my tenure with this term. I am confident that the Association will be in very capable hands.

As our final meeting of the year is the day before Thanksgiving, I thought I would share a few of the things that I am thankful for:

- I am thankful for the efforts of my fellow board members, through their tireless dedication, to making our neighborhood the best in the city.
- I am thankful for having had the opportunity these past few years to lead a neighborhood association that has been so successful in developing relationships among neighbors, promoting responsible economic development, and overall quality of life for more than four thousand men, women, and children.
- But most of all, I am thankful to all of you, for the trust you have placed in me during this time, for sharing your advice, your humor, and your humanity.

If you are unable to attend the November meeting due to planned holiday travels or preparations, I extend to one and all my best wishes for a wonderful and (hopefully not too snowy) holiday season! See you at the meeting!

Craig Waltz, Chair

Hollywood Seeks a New Star

After many years of delivering the HNA Reporter to his neighbors on Hollywood Avenue, Nacr Hechihoncki has decided to "retire" from this position. The Newsletter Committee is grateful for his dedication to HNA and hopes to find someone to fill his shoes. If you enjoy reading the HNA Reporter, and can spare 1 hour every other month to make deliveries, call 482-2775 to volunteer. Thanks!

HNA Picnic Featured Wonderful Weather, Fine Food, Generous Gifts

The eighth annual HNA Picnic was held on September 19, 2007 next to the firehouse on New Scotland Avenue. The weather was perfect for an evening picnic that drew close to 150 people who enjoyed good food and good company. It was also our last chance to party in the open lot before it becomes our new library branch.

We are grateful to the following volunteers and establishments who have generously contributed services, supplies, food and/or financial support for our picnic. Please patronize these businesses and thank them for their support over the years.

SERVICES:

- Jim Sano, 9th Ward Councilman, for securing the permit to use the field
- Albany Firehouse Engine No. 11 for their assistance during the picnic
- Our cooks, Mike Anton, Ron Silverman and Don Dugan
- Picnic assistants Cyra Nealon, Pat Baker, Cathy Fahey, Dennis Gaffney, Maxine and Eric Goldberg, June Price, Marilyn Silverman and Susan Van Deventer
- St. Teresa of Avila School for the use of their tables (Father Vincent J. Ciotoli, Pastor; Sister Patricia Houlihan, Principal)

FOOD:

- Domino's Pizza (Kamrul Islam, Manager)
- New Scotland Mobil (Keyvan, Owner, Triq, Manager)
- Pasquale's Pizza Restaurant (Victoria Gelaj, Owner)
- Sainato's Market (Mr. & Mrs. Lou Sainato, Owners)
- Sweet Treats (Lori and Nick)

GIFTS FOR THE RAFFLE:

- Isn't It Sweet (Frank Voce, Owner, Brian Bennett, Manager)
- New Scotland Florist (Tanya Manard, Owner)
- Ritmo's Barber Salon (Joe Ritmo, Owner)
- Sheehy Opticians (Matt Sheehy, Owner)
- Shutter Speed Photo (Karen and Sami, Owners)
- Frank Smith Signs (Frank Smith, Owner)
- Debra Schramek, HNA Communications Chair
- Curves (Sarah, Owner)
- Cheryl Moore of David Phaff & Associates

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- St. Peter's Health Care Services
- Turley Hearing Aid Service

Debra Schramek, Communications Chair

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 Sage Colleges of Albany, Campus Center. The 2008 meeting dates are: 1/16, 3/19, 5/21, 7/18, 9/19 (annual picnic) and 11/21.

HNA Reporter is published every other month. Deadline for articles or ads the last day of the month preceding a meeting. Ads and articles may be mailed to HNA, Academy Station, P.O. Box 8841, Albany, NY 12208 or e-mailed to hna@hnaalbany.com.. HNA Editors reserve the right to accept, reject or edit articles for content and space considerations.

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Library Meeting Postponed

The meeting to introduce the new library plans for New Scotland Avenue has been postponed until December. No new date has yet been scheduled. When a date has been chosen, it will be posted at the Albany Public Library Website (www.albanypubliclibrary.org). For more information or to find out the date, please call Interim Director Tim Burke at Albany Public Library at 427-4379 or Library Trustee Dennis Gaffney at 482-9813. If you have any questions, call Dennis at 482-9813.

Nominations Sought for 2008 HNA Board

During the November 21 HNA meeting, the Board will present the proposed slate of officers for HNA's Board for next year. There are still openings for two positions, Secretary and Membership. Anyone wishing to join the board is urged to call 482-2775 to nominate themselves or another person (with that person's permission, of course.) Elections for next year's Board will take place at the January 16 membership meeting.

The slate so far:

- Chair: Jennifer Viggiani (formerly Vice Chair)
- Vice Chair: Kim Alvarez (formerly secretary)
- Secretary: OPEN
- Membership: OPEN
- Treasurer: June Price (currently in the position)
- Communications: Deb Schramek (currently in the position)

New AMCH Parking Garage and VAMC Administrative Offices Planned

Albany Medical Center (AMCH) plans to build a 7-story parking garage with a capacity for 1,500 to 2,000 cars on 3 acres of the Stratton VA Medical Center's (VAMC) property. In addition, AMCH would tear down two outdated VAMC administrative buildings and a storage building and replace them with a 19,000 sq. ft. building, to be used as VAMC administrative offices. The garage would provide needed additional parking for AMCH and updated office facilities for the VAMC.

The cost of the project is estimated to be in the range of \$4 million for the office buildings and \$25 and \$35 million for the garage. The design phase will take one year with an additional one to two years for construction for completion in 2010 or 2011. Though the project is on federally owned property, it must conform to local building and zoning laws. (Authorization for the project is through the federal Enhanced Use Lease Program and falls under Title 38 USC, Sections 8161-8169 of the National Environmental Protection Act.)


A public hearing was held at the VAMC on September 24. New Scotland Avenue area residents were not notified of the hearing except through an article in the September 21 Times Union. Despite the low attendance, questions were raised by residents

regarding the need for the parking facility and the concern that there doesn't seem to be a plan to improve the quality and increase the use of public transportation, both for employees and individuals receiving medical services. Another issue concerned how the streetscape will look with two parking garages side by side. One suggestion favored creating a mixed-use facility with retail on the street level similar to the nearby Hilton Hotel.

Officials from both medical centers said residents' concerns would be

Continued on page 3

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Being "Green" at Home and in Our Community

These days being, thinking and living *green* or *sustainable* is the new trend. In the last month, I have received four magazines ranging from architecture and residential design to parenting to health that all have feature articles on "going green." This is indeed a good thing. Everyone's individual efforts towards reducing their "carbon footprints" will in effect reduce the strain we collectively put on the environment. More importantly, this will reduce the burden of our children's and grandchildren's generation in preserving the environment and precious natural resources we have taken for granted. What are some ways in which we can each do our part?

- Change your method of getting to work: consider options like work from home, walk or bike (clean air modes of transportation), drive a hybrid or better yet carpool in a hybrid, or make use of public transit (buses will be on the road using fuel whether or not they are filled with passengers).
- Consider where your food and other products come from: join a food co-operative that encourages and supports local suppliers, support local farmers markets, participate in a CSA program (community supported agriculture), or at last resort make a conscientious effort while grocery shopping to purchase products that have traveled the shortest distance to get to your home.
- Reduce unnecessary energy usage in your home by making sure things like cell-phone chargers and coffee makers are unplugged, computers and other electronics are turned off by means of a power strip and the use of high-efficiency appliances.

We are fortunate that our early 20th century neighborhood has all the options of being green and supporting a sustainable philosophy. We live in a walkable neighborhood with easily accessible public transit and local businesses. Our homes were built at a time when quality craftsmanship and long-lasting materials were the norm. In fact, it is widely acknowledged that "*the greenest building is the one that already exists*" since the act of constructing a new building today typically consumes 15-30 times the building's annual energy use. Demolition or "extreme makeovers" account for 25-40% of the nation's landfills, so the approach of preserve, repair or recycle is the greenest approach to building projects.

November 15th marks the annual "America Recycles Day" and this year Albany got into the act with the first annual Eco Show at the Empire State Plaza on November 12 and 13. This event offered educational seminars for adults and school groups. Watch for this show next year for more ideas on how to "go green."

Kim Alvarez

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Scotland Planter Projects Ongoing

A group of local gardeners has been mulching the planters between Quail and Ontario. City Gardener Judy Stacey and her staff provided us with wood chips and also with a variety of tulip bulbs which will be planted sometime in November. Expect a Spring rainbow of pink, orange, purple, yellow and white.

Kathy Ray

Holiday Volunteers Needed

The Albany Police Athletic League will once again present Capital Holiday Lights, the 11th annual lights spectacular in Washington Park that benefits the children and programs of PAL. Volunteers are needed during the events for various tasks to ensure the safety and enjoyment of the public. Call 435-0392 to see how you can help.

Albany Forum:

Universal Healthcare Proposals: Fears and Facts.

Sunday, November 18, 2007, 2:00—4:30 pm

Emerson Community Hall

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany
405 Washington Avenue, Albany

Guest Speakers: Bryan O'Malley, Legislative Aide to Assemblyman Gottfried; Courtney Burke, Rockefeller Institute; Andy Coates, MD, Physicians for a National Health Program

Panel Discussion: featuring Mary Rappazzo, MD, American College of Physicians; Renee Gecsed, MS, RN, NYS Nurses Association; Duane Matcha, Ph.D, Siena College; Howard L. Tanenbaum, MD, The Center for Sight

Sponsored by: the Capital District Alliance for Universal Healthcare. Co-sponsors: Physicians for a National Health Program, Capital District Chapter; Social Responsibilities Council of FUUSA; League of Women Voters of NYS. For information, call 439-3758.

Parking Garage, continued from page 2

taken into consideration as the project develops. Gary Kochem, AMCH's Chief Operating Officer, and Peter Potter, VAMC's Public Affairs Officer have offered to come to any neighborhood association meeting or community gathering to discuss the proposed development.

Cathy Fahey

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2007 STAR Property Tax Rebate Application Deadline Extended to December 31

NYS homeowners who receive STAR exemptions on their property taxes may be eligible for a rebate. If you are a senior citizen receiving an **enhanced** STAR exemption, you should have received your rebate check already. If you have not received your rebate, call the Department of Taxation and Finance.

Homeowners who receive **basic** exemption must apply for the rebate. The deadline for applications has been extended to December 31. Use the "STAR code" the Department of Taxation and Finance sent to apply online (the quickest way to get a rebate) or apply by mail. For homeowners in Albany, the basic STAR rebate ranges from \$203.25 to \$406.50, depending on income. For more information visit the Tax and Finance website: <http://www.tax.state.ny.us/star/2007/default.htm> or call 1-877-678-2769.



I'd like to remind HNA homeowners to make sure you are receiving all the property tax deductions for which you are eligible. The following table shows who is eligible for each type of deduction.

School Tax Allowed Deductions	Age Requirement	Income Limit
STAR	No	No
Senior STAR	65	\$35,400
Senior Citizen Discount	65	\$35,400
Disability Through Social Security	No	\$35,400
Property Tax Allowed Deductions	Age Requirement	Income Limit
Veteran Benefit*	No	No
Senior Citizen	65	\$35,400
Disability Through Social Security	No	\$35,400

*Homeowner or Spouse served in Armed Forces; extra discount for serving in Combat Zones.

Jim Sano

The Albany Public Library's Bookmobile will be parked in front of School 19 on Tuesdays from 9:45 am to noon and Fridays from 12:30 to 2:00 pm during the month of November, except the Friday after Thanksgiving.



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Kim and Jack Alvarez at Landmark Consulting would like to thank all our neighbors for being patient with us while we restored the exteriors of 84 and 85 Grove Avenue.

We appreciate your understanding while putting up with the sights and sounds of contractors and construction equipment this summer even during the early mornings and late evening.

We would also like to thank our local contractors and craftsman that helped make these projects a success: Scott Jackson Carpentry (Fleetwood Ave), Pat Mucci of DiPaMar Construction (Grove Ave), Danner McGuiness of Adirondack Hardwood Floors (Lawnridge Ave) and Jerry O'Neil of O'Neil Paving (Hackett Ave).

Landmark Consulting ■ 83 Grove Avenue, Albany NY 12208 ■ 518.458.8942
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HNA thanks David Phaff of RealtyUSA for his assistance in financing the cost of the HNA Reporter.

HNA's membership year runs January to December. Time to join or renew your membership. Pay at the November 21 meeting and your membership won't expire until December 31, 2008!

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 _____

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E-mail: _____

