

HNA REPORTER

HELDERBERG NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

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

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Blog: newscotlandneighborhoods.blogspot.com

Next HNA Gathering:

HNA's Annual Picnic
Sunday, September 18, 3-6 pm
Rain Date September 25
Sage College, Academy Road, Albany
Corner of New Scotland Ave. and Academy Road

Next HNA Meeting:
Wednesday, November 16

Annual HNA Picnic to be Held September 18

We hope everyone can join us for the annual HNA picnic on the lawn of Sage College, at the intersection of New Scotland Avenue and Academy Road. The picnic will be held from 3:00-6:00 pm on Sunday, September 18, with a rain date of September 25.

Crazy Herb's BBQ will lend us his grill and "chefs" Jim Sano and Mike Anton will be flipping hamburgers and hotdogs. This is a pot luck picnic, so please bring a dish to share (salads, appetizers, desserts) or drinks (soda, iced tea, lemonade or water). Label your dish if you want it back. Also, list the ingredients so anyone with food allergies will know which foods to avoid. You will also need to bring lawn chairs or a blanket to sit on.

Several local businesses have donated items for our raffle, so be sure to get your ticket when you first arrive. We will also have a 50/50 raffle. Our Membership Chair, Will Thomas, will be there to collect the annual HNA membership fee of \$5 per household (\$10 for businesses and people residing outside our borders.) People who pay their dues between September and January will be covered through December, 2012.

The Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences will have a blood pressure screening table at the picnic, staffed by students from the college.

If inclement weather is expected, we will cancel the picnic the day before, and send out an e-mail letting everyone know. If we're only expecting sprinkles we will hold the picnic anyway. In either case, we will need to notify everyone via e-mail. Please help us get the word out by letting your neighbors who do not have e-mail know what's happening. Thanks.

If you wish to help with the picnic, send an e-mail to hna@hnaalbany.com or call 482-2775 to leave a message (with your contact information), letting us know which days you are available (Sept. 18, 25, or both) and what you'd like to do.

Hello, Everyone!

It's been a great summer. It seems like everyone I talk to has commented on how fast this summer has flown by.

The neighborhood is a busy place! Right now I'm watching the Luizzi Bros. take down multiple trees on Sycamore St. to make way for paving. It's amazing the work it takes just to prepare for paving the street. I hate to see those big trees go, but they are interfering with the sidewalks, streets and sewers. We're looking forward to having a freshly paved street. The City did a great job on S. Main and Academy Rd. What a difference.

I've seen the concerned e-mails and heard neighbors talk at the meetings regarding some of the crime taking place. I've been in touch with Loren Grugan (our neighborhood police officer) and he has been keeping a close eye on our streets. He is very aware of which vehicles belong and which ones don't. He also interacts with everyone walking in the neighborhood. I'm very happy with his presence, and the open door policy Chief Krokoff has established. I have met with both of them on several occasions, and they have been very helpful. They also rely on our help. We must keep an eye out for one another. I installed a camera system on my house, and I recommend others do the same. It's the best way to help the police.

There has been concern regarding the closing of the Academy Station Post Office. I see this happening across the country. With computers, emails and online bill paying, business for the post office has dropped. But it is still a well used facility in our household. We mail out packages and large envelopes there quite regularly. It is part of the community, especially for seniors. I would love to see it stay open. There are certain facilities that are nice to have in your community, and this is one of them. I think the combined Helderberg and New Scotland-Woodlawn Neighborhoods can sustain such a service.

A communications agency specializing in web design and multimedia is planning to establish it's business in the empty St. Teresa's Church. They are presently located in a brownstone on Hamilton Street, and need more space. I think this will be a great asset to the neighborhood. The church is one of several anchors in the neighborhood, and having a cutting edge-

A message from the Communications Chair, Deb Schramek: After 17 years, I am looking for someone to take over the HNA newsletter. I have enjoyed my work, but now I have many opportunities to explore new places and try out new things. Contact me at HNA@hnaalbany.com if interested.

Last HNA meeting in 2011: November 16. All meetings are held at 7:00 pm at Sage Colleges of Albany.

The HNA Reporter is published every other month. The deadline for articles or ads is six weeks before the next 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.

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

Continued on page 4

Highlights from the July 2011 HNA Meeting

Officer Loren Grugan now has a department-issued cell phone: 542-1328. If he doesn't answer, leave a voice message or e-mail him.

Crime Reports:

There have been several car break-ins, thefts and scams. Here are some tips to keep you safe:

When outside:

- Be alert to your surroundings; go with friends, not alone
- Don't carry large amounts of cash
- Carry a purse close to your body, not dangling by the straps
- Put a wallet in an inside coat pocket or your front pants pocket
- Drive with doors locked and windows up
- Be alert in parking lots and garages
- Sit close to the driver or exit while riding the bus

Home security:

- Install good locks on doors and windows
- Ask for ID from service or delivery people before letting them in. If concerned, call the company to verify their employment
- Watch out for con artists. Don't be taken in by investment schemes, funeral or home improvement scams, sweepstakes, free vacations, or other promotions that seem too good to be true.
- Be wary of phone solicitors asking for personal information (credit card or checking account numbers)
- Don't let anyone rush you into signing anything
- Solicitors must have a city permit. Never let sales or other people into your home without seeing the permit.

Auto theft prevention:

Lock your car at all times

- Don't hide a second set of keys in your car
- Park in attended lots
- Close your windows when parking
- Hide your valuables
- Clean out the visible change in the center console
- Plug in the auxiliary power outlets or else thieves will think there are electronic devices in the car

Remember: support suspicious activity: 438-4000

Parking on the street—a red parking signs always supersede a green parking sign.

New CDTA bus schedules and routes were discussed. Members were urged to contact CDTA if the changes will affect them.

Continued on page 5

New Owners for St. Teresa's Church and Rectory

On Tuesday August 16, the owners of Overit Media, Michelle Toch and husband Dan Dinsmore, along with 3T Architects, hosted a meet & greet at the vacant St. Teresa of Avila Church on the corner of New Scotland and Maplewood. Overit Media is under agreement to purchase the church and rectory property and to reuse the church as the new home of their multi-media business. (<http://overit.com/company/>).

The website design and audio and video production business is currently located in a row house on Hamilton Street near Robinson Square in Albany. As Michelle and Dan have described it, they are looking for a bit more "elbow room." They are attracted to the church because it will allow them increased space for marketing their sales to clients, while giving those clients access and a view of the production space where the designers work. Right now these functions are isolated on separate floors of their downtown building.

Because the Albany Catholic Diocese was not interested in splitting the church from the rectory, the purchase agreement will involve Michelle Toch's mother purchasing the rectory to serve as her home.

Dan Dinsmore is on the board for Senior Citizens Services, an organization that will be using the renovated grammar school adjacent to the rectory. He discussed plans to open the church building up to Seniors after work hours for computer classes. There may be additional space for other community functions as well.

At this point the new owners are planning very minor changes inside the church to accommodate their business functions, primarily computer work stations for their 20 employees. They like the open plan of the church, which won't require extensive construction, and they plan to keep many of the decorative elements, including the stained glass windows.

On the exterior, Michelle and Dan are planning signage about the same size as the existing church sign and possibly tapestry-type banners on the front over the main doors. Parking is available behind the church. At the meeting it was requested that they take advantage of the wonderful landscaping around the buildings, which unfortunately has been neglected since the church closed. They intend to maintain the grounds on par with the expectations of their high-end clientele, which in the end will only benefit our community.

On August 24, the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) approved their use variance application, subject to the following two conditions: all alterations must conform to the traditional neighborhood overlay district design guidelines; and the business must be limited to regular operating hours between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. No one spoke in opposition to the business. The owners of Overit Media were very pleased with the decision.

Kim Alvarez

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Crime Corner

Senior Crime

On August 12 an elderly woman on Forest Avenue awoke to find two people with flashlights in the hallway of her Forest Avenue home. They left the house after taking cash and jewelry. Albany Police told the woman's son that some gangs have been targeting the elderly in specific neighborhoods.

Seniors are easy targets for the following reasons:

- They are often hard of hearing, making it easier for thieves to enter the home without being heard.
- Often, they are lonely, so when someone comes to their door, the senior is willing to talk to them, giving thieves and scam artists an opportunity to learn more about the senior's daily routine, or what valuables may be in the house.
- Seniors are polite. They may invite a stranger in if asked if they can use the bathroom or their phone.

- Seniors are less likely than others to have alarm systems.

If you know a senior who resides on your street, try to keep an eye on them, or their home. If you see something that seems out of the ordinary (broken window or lock, a bruise on the senior) ask about it, and call police if it sounds like the senior was a victim of a crime. Be their link to law enforcement.

By the way, a suspect in the Forest Avenue theft has been arrested with the woman's credit cards and other items in his possession. Thanks go to Detectives Vanamburgh and Martin of the Albany Police for their diligent work on this case.

Thanks to Jeanne Hewitt for help with this article.

Help Fight Crime on Your Street

There have been many crimes occurring in and around the HNA neighborhood since the last *HNA Reporter* was published, including garage, home and car break-ins. While we can report the crimes in our neighborhood, we need to be more pro-active. Kim Alvarez, HNA Vice Chair, makes this suggestion: What if someone on each block in our area kept a phone list of the residents of that block? Then, if something suspicious is observed, they could all be in communication with each other and the police, sort of a neighborhood watch, without the formality. After all, communication and more eyes on the street are the best ways to deter criminal activity.

Officer Richard Romand replies:

HNA members, starting and maintaining a neighborhood watch may be easier than you think! We have recently revamped the program to include two presentations; the first is a basic overview of what a neighborhood watch is (30 minutes) and the second is for those of you who want to make it happen in your area (45 minutes). This can be a section of a Street, a whole Street, a block or a few blocks. Whatever works best for your area. The truth is many of you are already fulfilling the requirements!

Community Policing depends in large part on community involvement, and taking part in a Neighborhood Watch can be a great way to do it. I hope you will all consider starting and being a part of a Neighborhood Watch. To set up a training or to get more information, email me at rromand@albany-ny.org.

Rick Romand



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Crime Statistics for the HNA Area

Between the middle of July through August 23, 16 crimes were reported to the Albany Police:

- 2 burglaries (the one on Forest Avenue included)
- 1 arrest related to the incident on Forest
- 9 larcenies: 4 from vehicles, 3 from buildings, 2 other type of larceny (re: stores)
- 8 Arrests: 3 DWI, 2 Controlled Substances, 1 Disorderly Conduct, 1 Violation

House Rental Scams Persist

Don't get taken by this common Craigslist rental scam.

It's simple. An individual (almost always in Africa) posts a listing on Craigslist.org saying that they have had to leave their home due to a religious mission, a family emergency or illness, and they want to rent out their house for a small amount – usually between \$500 and \$800. They promise to send you the key as soon as they receive your money (via Western Union). But it never happens. They're crafty, often taking the name of a local real estate agent or former resident of the property and setting up an e-mail account with their name.

A play on this is when they want you to send them a completed application with just enough information


Continued on page 4



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**Remember:
If you see something,
say something!
Alert police by calling 438-4000
if you see something that makes you feel uneasy.**

Single Stream—One Bin—Recycling Made Easy

You can include these items in one bin— No separation needed

Plastic Containers (Clean & Rinsed) Numbers 1 - 7

- Soda Bottles
- Milk & Water Jugs
- Windshield Washer Jugs
- Mustard & Ketchup Bottles
- Beverage Containers
- Butter & Yogurt Containers
- Prescription Pill Bottles
- Soap & Detergent Bottles
- Mouthwash Bottles
- Salad Dressing Bottles
- Peanut Butter Jars
- Flower Pots & Containers
- Plastic Drinking Cups
- Plastic Food Containers
- Pancake Syrup Bottles

Metal & Aluminum (Clean & Rinsed)

- Food & Beverage Cans (including metal lids)
- Deposit Cans
- "Tin" Cans & Containers
- Spray Cans (e.g. cooking spray, hair spray)
- Aluminum Foil (e.g. pie plates, foil trays)

Glass Containers (Clean & Rinsed)

- Green, Blue, Brown, & Clear
- Food and Beverage Containers
- Liquor & Wine Bottles
- Deposit Bottles
- Canning & Food Jars

Food & Beverage Cartons

- Milk Cartons
 - Juice Cartons & Boxes
 - Paperboard Egg Cartons
 - Frozen Food Cartons
- ### Paper
- Newspapers & Inserts
 - Magazines & Catalogs
 - Phone Books
 - Paperback Books
 - Soft-covered Workbooks
 - Brown Grocery Bags
 - Lightweight Cardboard
 - Dry Food Boxes (Cereal, Cookie, Snack, etc.)
 - Microwave Containers
 - Non-Food Boxes (e.g. health care, gift)
 - Toilet & Paper Towel Tubes

Corrugated Cardboard

Junk Mail

- Cards & Envelopes (plastic windows do not have to be removed)
- Letters & Enclosures

Other Paper

- Notebook Paper
- School Papers
- White & Colored Ledger Paper
- Computer & Fax Paper
- Shredded Paper

Note: shredded paper can be contained in a small plastic bag.

DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Broken Glass
- Ovenware & Ceramics
- Window Panes, Mirrors or Windshields
- Mercury-filled Light bulbs (i.e. Fluorescent Bulbs)
- Cups, Dishes, Drinking Glasses or Plates
- Diapers
- Plastic Bags (i.e. Grocery Bags, Snack bags)
- Clothes Hangers
- Styrofoam (i.e. Trays, Blocks, Packing Peanuts)
- Furniture
- Clothes, Shoes
- Needles & Syringes
- Six-pack Holders
- Toys
- Caps & Lids
- Plexiglass
- Straws & Wrappers
- Foil Wrap or Trays
- Silverware
- Small Appliances (i.e. Toaster, Blender)
- Paint Cans
- Spray Cans (i.e. Paint Cans, Insecticides)
- Pesticides & Chemicals
- Gasoline & Motor Oil Bottles
- Compost & Yard Waste
- Food & Trash

If you have any questions, call the Department of General Services, 434-2489.

Rental Scams, *continued from page 3*

to enable them to commit identity theft.

Never send money anywhere by Western Union. Never give out ANY personal information. No reputable owner or agent should ever ask for personal information until after you've seen the property. Always arrange a showing of the property first and get the name of the person who shows it and their local number. If you see that the house you are interested in renting is for sale, call the listing agent to confirm that it is also for rent and ask the agent to see it.

*David Phaff
Realty USA*

Rescheduled HNA Garage Sale a Success

While the rainy weather canceled the June 25 HNA-wide garage sale, the rescheduled July 23 date was very successful. Many thanks to our two organizers, Donna Vincent and Maryann Reese. They came up with some great ideas to publicize the event.

Each household holding a sale was asked to register their location. A map showing all the sales in the neighborhood was created. While not all the sellers got the flyers to hand out, due to a mix-up with HNA's e-mail, the buyers who did receive the maps appreciated the information.

In addition to maps, the organizers registered the garage sale with the Times Union and Craig's list. This brought in many more buyers than we've had in the past.

If you'd like to help with the 2012 garage sale, call or e-mail HNA and your contact information will be forwarded to Donna and Maryann.

Keeping Your Homes Safe

If a young boy rings your doorbell, and leaves quickly without saying anything when you answer the door, be careful. He may be casing your house to see if the homeowner is around. Call the Albany police on the non-emergency number (438-4000) to report it. They may have received similar complaints from other residents and will look into it.

Hello, *continued from page 1*

business is good for the neighborhood.

HNA's annual picnic is scheduled for September 18. I'm looking forward to the event. We have some volunteers, but can always use more. Contact us if you'd like to help. It's never too late to lend a hand. It's all part of the fun.

There's so much to talk about: the work at Albany Med, St. Peters and the colleges; the closing of Pasquales and the opening of a new restaurant there; St. Teresa's church and rectory; the city's new recycling program. Many of these topics have been discussed at past meetings. We always have great representatives at our meetings from the City, local businesses and colleges.

See you at the picnic, and hopefully at our November 16 meeting.

Greg Coons

Save Our Post Office

Once again, the Academy Station Post Office (opposite St. Peter's Hospital) has been proposed for elimination by the the US Postal Service. The post offices in the Capital building and Empire State Plaza may also be eliminated.

The Academy Station is the closest post office for residents in the New Scotland-Woodlawn, Whitehall and Helderberg associations. Residents from all three have started petitions requesting that the Academy Station PO stay open. Jim Sano, 9th Ward Councilman, will meet with Assemblyman Paul Tonko in mid-September and present the petitions to him. Mr. Tonko's office has offered to help keep this neighborhood post office open.

If you'd like to sign a petition, several stores on both ends of New Scotland have them. If none are available, call 482-2775 and leave your name, address, e-mail address and phone number, and one will be sent to you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Help Wanted: Board opening: At the end of December, Kim Alvarez, HNA Vice-Chair, will step down from her position. If you are interested in this position, contact Greg Coons, HNA Chair, at gregcoons@nycap.rr.com or call 669-4728.

Newsletter Distribution Coordinator needed. Contact Deb Schramek at hna@hnaalbany.com.

The next two dates in 2011 for the City of Albany Household Hazardous Waste drop off are October 6 and 20. You must pre-register by calling 434-2489, or register on-line at www.albanyrecycles.com. Proof of Albany residency is required. The drop off site is the City of Albany Landfill, 525 Rapp Road, Albany (off Washington Avenue Extension.) The web site will tell you which items are accepted.

The U.S. News and World Report Best Hospitals 2011 and 2012 report ranked Albany Medical Center as the region's top hospital. St. Peter's Hospital ranked second. Congratulations to both facilities!

Pasquale's Restaurant closed on August 18, and new owner Kevin Everleth will open a restaurant in the space, called Capital City Gastropub. Everleth, who also owns the Wine Bar and Bistro on Lark Street, hopes to open on September 7.

DiGregorio's Bakery House, 28 Maple Avenue, has opened a second location in Cohoes at Harmony House Marketplace. It will be called Francesca's Specialty Bakery and Deli.

Highlights, continued from page 2

Final route decisions will be published in September.

HNA September picnic will be held on September 18 (rain date 9/25) from 3-6 pm. College of Pharmacy and Health Services will offer free blood pressure checks during the event.

Please use the **HNA listserv** instead of HNA's e-mail for discussion among each other. (see below.)

Would you like to be on HNA's e-mail list? Do you think you are already on the e-mail list but you never get any mail from HNA?

Often issues come up in between newsletters (which are published every two months) that need to be sent to our members. We can't contact you if we don't know who you are!

If you'd like to join the list, send an e-mail with your contact information (name, street, phone, and e-mail address) to: hna@hnaalbany.com. If you'd like to join the HNA listserv, send your e-mail address to HNACommunity-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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The membership year runs from January to December. Time to join or 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, Inc. 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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Zoning Board of Appeals Decisions

Clas Florist's request to add a medical office in the vacant side of their building was approved by the Board of Zoning Appeals on August 10. It must meet the following condition: the property must adhere to the C-1 District Design Standards.

Sake Café's request to change their business from a restaurant to a restaurant serving alcohol with take-out, delivery and/or alcohol service has been temporarily approved. In three months, the ZBA will review the request again.

Crestwood Deli, 22 Picotte Drive, moved to a larger space within the Crestwood plaza, and now has a catering hall, bar and dining room that can hold 140 people. They are open Monday through Saturday, 10:30 am to 7:00 pm and Sundays, 10:30 am to 3:30 pm.

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