



OUR VILLAGE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4 SPRING 2006

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

The winter chill is finally being replaced by the spring thaw. Flowers are starting to sprout all over Waban. The Waban Improvement Society has a couple of events to help get the "spring" in your step. With Waban's 3rd Annual Progressive Dinner behind us, which was another huge success, we are gearing up for the Second Annual Waban Village Day. It is being held on Sunday, May 21st from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. in Waban Square. New this year, is a 5K Fun Run, sure to be fun for the whole family. For more information on this event and other information, please check out the website at www.wabanimprovement.org.

With spring in the air, there is always some gardening work around the square, and your help would be appreciated. So let Gail Wintersteiner, gardener extraordinaire, know.

If you want to take a stroll from Newton to Needham, you can still do it over Echo Bridge, thanks to Friends of the Hemlock Gorge and so many concerned neighbors. See what they did!

I am looking forward to a great spring and summer. Hope to see you all at Waban Village Day.

GARDENING UPDATE

Well, it's spring and the gardens and beds in Waban Square are starting to grow and bloom again—and of course, they are always in need of extra TLC, mulching, weeding, etc.. If you can volunteer any time, please contact Gail at 617-965-1038 or email her at g.winters@rcn.com. Also, if anyone wishes to adopt a barrel that would be great. Note: Angier parents, and any other interested parties, there will be a group mulching on 4/30 for Newton Serves Day. Looking forward to seeing you in the Square.

Gail Wintersteiner
Gardening

KEY DATES

Sunday, May 21st
10a.m. - 3p.m.

**Waban Village Day
And
5K Fun Run**

June (date TBD)
WIS Annual Meeting

THIRD ANNUAL PROGRESSIVE DINNER

An important aspect of the mission of the Waban Improvement Society is to provide events and activities which promote community participation and interaction. The Progressive Dinner, is one such event, and it was held on March 24th. There were almost 100 Waban residents in attendance for the Third Annual Progressive Dinner. Small groups in-

terchanged at various homes for appetizers and dinner. The evening ended with the entire group meeting at the home of Portia Pantages for dessert. This event was a huge success and we will look forward to March 2007 for the next Progressive Dinner. We try to schedule it the second or third weekend in March, so mark your calendars and spread the word.

MAILING LABELS

Please keep in mind that the mailing labels we use are generated by the City of Newton using taxpayer data that they have on record. The WIS apologizes in advance if the label on this newsletter contains misspellings, does not properly represent a new or moved resident, or is absent of one of the owner's names. Thanks for your understanding.

YOUR SUPPORT

Thank you to the nearly 400 families who used the envelope enclosed in the last newsletter to pay their annual dues. This is just 30% of the total Waban households. It is a goal of the WIS to have 100% participation. The WIS is a volunteer based organization dedicated to improving our wonderful Village of Waban. Volunteers are full of great ideas and eager to execute them. It is through your continued support that it all happens. Thank you to all the current members for your generous contributions and welcome to our new members.

WABAN VILLAGE DAY, MAY 21, 10 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Waban Village Day will draw neighbors both near and far to enjoy world-class music entertainment, amusement rides, a petting zoo, cuisine from Newton restaurants, hand-crafted jewelry, and organic produce from local farmers. This year, for the first time, a **5K Fun Run** will kick off the day at 10 a.m. The main events will take place between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. along Woodward and Wyman Streets.

David Polansky, who has been heard at the mayor's annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony, and has been teaching Newton's moms and toddlers music for years, will kick off at 11 a.m. He has garnered awards and national attention with his recordings and performances for children. Drawing on his background as a Dixieland musician, his songs have a snappy and creative edge which keeps children and parents glued to their seats, if they're not dancing!

Derrick Clarke, certified fifth degree black belt in Kempo Karate, has been teaching Karate in the area schools and has opened several karate schools of his own. At the age of 12, he became one of the youngest black belt instructors in the Northeast. His demonstration team will be performing on the main stage at 11:30 a.m.

Waltham native Tom Rudd's classic rock band **Smilin' Jones** has been growing its audience with appearances at area clubs. Tom Rudd just released his latest CD of country rock originals, "Pawn Shop Guitar," to favorable reviews. Perhaps one of the most interesting Waban connections is veteran musician Smilin' Jones' keyboardist and vocalist Ronnie Rizzo. Most of Waban knows him as one half of the Ronnie and Rocco duo of Waban Salon fame. When Ronnie was a teenager and something of a local prodigy, his band appeared alongside many rock icons from Richie Havens to

the Rascals. That experience propelled him into decades of rock-and-roll bands and performances. His father Sal owned the Waban Hair Salon, and Ronnie always kept a foot in the family business – "Money wasn't so steady in rock bands" Rizzo states with a wink. Smilin' Jones performs on the main stage at noon.

The **Metropolitan Boston Youth Jazz Project (MBYJP)** was started by veteran jazz musician and Waban resident Chris Pitts. The group

includes high-school age youth who are extremely advanced in jazz performance and already performing with various professionals from Boston and New York. Last year's performance featured Newton locals Ben Stepner and Dan Karp, along with Brookline saxophonist Eric Fulwiler. The MBYJP performs at 2 p.m.

Further information about Waban Village Day and all its performers can be found at www.wabanimprovement.org

SOUND BARRIER UPDATE

Construction of a sound barrier along Route 128/95 at the Quinobequin Rd. stretch of Waban is still being actively considered. As this newsletter goes to print, the release of a draft report from the Massachusetts Highway Department is expected. The report is the result of a three month study undertaken by MHD with respect to potential impacts from construction of a sound barrier on the wetlands

and conservation land adjacent to the highway. Waban residents are urged to log on to www.wabansoundbarrier.com where a brief summary will be posted. Also listed will be ways for residents to get involved in the process to complete this project.

Sona Petrossian
Neighborhood Advocacy

WABAN SQUARE ISLAND

There once was an island in Waban Square that needed some attention. It was located in front of Bank of America. The curbing was falling over, the snow plows were moving the macadam type of curbing each winter, and the dirt from the center of the little traffic island was being pushed into the roadway. In the summer of 2004, I contacted the Public Works Department in an attempt to remedy this unfortunate situation. I was put in contact with Steve Tocci. He was interested in helping out Waban Square, but said that his schedule was overflowing for that season. In the spring of 2005, I called Mr. Tocci again to remind him that Waban Square was in need of an island lift. He again thought

that the schedule for road construction was full, but would keep us in mind. After a few more gentle reminders, the island was repaired with new granite curbing and new loam was put inside. Gail Wintersteiner was quick to notice another spot in Waban for flowers and she made short work of enhancing this little spot. Waban Improvement Society would like to thank Steve Tocci for keeping us on his list and for completing this little space, which not only enhances traffic flow and increases safety, but is now another addition to our wonderful Waban gardens.

Anki Wolf Javitch
Neighborhood Advocacy

HOSPITAL UPDATE

Newton-Wellesley Hospital is in the final stages of the parking garage and Emergency Room construction projects. If you live near NWH, you might have noticed more than you wanted to of the new parking structure and the ED building. The hospital will be replacing all the trees that were taken down during construction. This will help screening our views. The plantings will take place during the most appropriate times, in order to ensure a higher survival rate for the trees. The hospital is continuing to update its website with news about the construction. For more details sign onto www.nwh.org.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEES

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Committees include:

- Events
- Gardening
- History
- Neighborhood Advocacy
- Newsletter and Communication
- Welcome Neighbor

We welcome all calls

SURVIVAL OF ECHO BRIDGE

The Friends of Hemlock Gorge were informed at the beginning of March, 2006 by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) that Echo Bridge would be closed temporarily to pedestrians on March 17. It was to remain closed for an indeterminate length of time. The reason is safety--the deterioration of the railings. Check the FOHG web site, www.hemlockgorge.org to read the text of the official announcement from the MWRA, the October 2005 inspection report that raised the issue, or to see illustrations of the past and present Promenade. The Friends discussed this matter at their March meeting and formulated plans to keep the bridge open, or at least ensure timely repair and re-opening of the bridge.

The Friends did bring the problem and interim solution to the attention of Rep. Ruth Balsler and other legislators on both ends of the bridge. Special thanks to Rep. Ruth Balsler, Kay Khan and Cindy Creem on their efforts to keep the bridge access open.

The Friends are pleased to report that the Echo Bridge Promenade has re-opened in response to the efforts of the Friends and local officials, the protests of many local residents, and the publicity generated by front page stories in the last two issues of The Newton Tab. The MWRA informed FOHG on Friday, March 17, 2006 that, instead of closing Echo Bridge to pedestrians indefinitely, temporary "snow barriers" will be installed along the railings to warn pedestrians away from the edge. This will permit the Promenade to remain open during the process that will lead to a permanent solution to the railing repair problem. The safety "snow barriers" are made of wood slats and are actually not unsightly. Congratulations to the

MWRA, Friends, journalists, officials, and all concerned citizens who helped achieve this. We now look forward to working on the permanent solution to the railing problem.

All interested should contact their local representatives and urge them to work for funds to define the cost of repair and replacement of the railings to start. Note - \$250,000 was authorized in the Transportation Bond Bill of 2004 for the railings but not yet released.

Hemlock Gorge Reservation Annual Spring Spruce-Up 4/29 10am – 12 Noon

The Friends and MA Department of Conservation and Recreation will sponsor the Annual Hemlock Gorge Reservation Spring Spruce-Up on Saturday, April 29th, 2006. Volunteers should meet at Hamilton Place between 9 and 10 a.m. Materials and tools supplied. Refreshments provided. Please dress appropriately for the work and the weather (rain or shine). Meet at the parking lot at Hamilton Place, Needham. For map/directions or further information, check the FOHG web site.

FRIENDS OF HEMLOCK GORGE WEB SITE

The monthly minutes of the meetings are on line and additional information on all activities is available at the FOHG web site, www.hemlockgorge.org.

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____
Email Address* _____ *(Email addresses are only used for WIS communications)
Address _____ phone _____

Yes, I wish to support the Waban Improvement Society. Enclosed is \$20 (per household per calendar year) for membership.

I wish to make an additional donation to the Waban Improvement Society to defray the cost of the Annual Tree Lighting and Sing Along and Waban Village Day. Enclosed is \$ _____ towards these events.

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Other ways to volunteer:

Yes, I am interested in:

- helping with gardening activities. (Please specify activity. _____)
- helping with Waban Village Day. (Please specify activity. _____)
- being on a committee (Please specify activity. _____)
- hosting a Welcome Neighbor coffee & tea or hosting a course for The Progressive Dinner (specify _____)
- distributing Welcome Neighbor information packets.