



The Neighborhood Newsletter

Volume 16 Number 1

The Drenched Issue, July, 2009

MONEY MATTERS

By Mary Cummings (Jason Street)



We're all in this economic crisis together and many of us have stories and tips to share. So, we launched a **Neighborhood Newsletter** e-Survey to find out how our neighbors are doing and how we might help each other through this financial ordeal. Christopher Wren put my eight questions into a web-based survey that elicited the following information.

What are the criteria you use for saving and spending your money? Necessity and responsibility were the most frequent criteria neighbors cited. Paying off old debt and avoiding new debt came in next. The needs of children were also high on everyone's list.

Is it a necessity? If we are going to have to get it anyway, can we afford to do it now? If we can afford it now, maybe we should buy it now (stimulate economy, good deals).

Beyond basic necessities, time saved is high on a list of things worth paying for.

Foremost, we spend on what my son might need . . . and what we need for our second child expected in July.

We are more cautious with some of our expenses, but our habits have not changed that much.

We are keeping much better track and limiting spending on credit and on the little things that add up.

More things are not really necessary when you don't have money.

Charities are important to us in this economy so we are donating more money and items.

We're less likely to spend money on things we won't use often and more likely to ask that question before purchasing.

What expenses are you putting off because of the country's financial situation? Home improvement projects were frequently cited as expenses to be postponed along with cars and furniture.

Home improvement projects of all kinds

We're putting off a new roof, but wonder if now might be a good time to get a better deal

Not spending a lot of money landscaping my yard — sorry, neighbors!

Newspapers, cable, going out for dinner and movies, clothing, and travel

What is one indulgence you refuse to give up? House cleaners and food topped the list of precious indulgences.

Liquor budget hasn't changed

My housecleaner, who contributes greatly to my sanity

Chocolate

Dinners out at reasonably priced restaurants

What money-saving or money-making tips can you share with neighbors? Responses to this question were too varied and valuable to be summarized.

Use coupons, especially at the supermarket. Buy clothes at thrift shops.

Let's make lists of the many things we own that we would be happy to let our neighbors use.

Sell your excess, refinance your house, never carry a credit card balance, sell your car and use public transportation.

Yard sales, e-Bay, Craig's List, etc.

We could hire each other's kids. My teenage children . . . would like to do your chores for less than what you would pay the usual folks.

My kids would do better working for someone else than me.

How might we help each other?

I think sharing, renting, and bartering are great ideas. Can we use the newsletter website to help?

Bartering, share, lending; but that only works if people take the time to talk to each other about needs.

Neighborhood skills exchange

We have tried not to cut back on spending so that we don't hurt our local restaurants and . . . locally owned retailers . . .

Do you have an uplifting economic story you can share?

I bought my spring wardrobe for under \$50.00 and found a \$5.00 bill.

Having less to spend can lead to more time for getting together with friends.

Found a \$5 bill in the bottom of the washer this morning. Now I can get a latte at Starbucks without feeling guilty.

"Got no diamond, got no pearls, still I think I am a lucky girl. I got the sun in the morning and the moon at night." Tra La

SUMMER READING

Marianne Curran (*Hillsdale Road*) collected this list of summer reading suggestions from people all over the neighborhood. Do you have a good read to add?



FICTION

Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks: A novel about the bubonic plague in England in 1666. Good, plus very timely.

North River: A Novel by Pete Hamill: A romantic historical novel of family, honor, and courage set in Depression-era New York City.

The Last Life by Claire Messud: This is a pretty serious fiction book, definitely has some heavy topics but is beautifully written by a local author (Somerville).

The Senator's Wife Sue Miller: New fiction book, it's interesting but not too fluffy.

Handle With Care by Jodi Picoult: An emotional story of one family's coping with a handicapped child and the steps they take, which show the fragility of the family. Not a particularly easy or happy read, but I became absorbed in it, because it shares and takes us into lives so different from most of ours.

On Borrowed Wings: A Novel by Chandra Prasad: A young woman disguised as a male attends Yale during the Depression. Interesting view of coming of age, class and gender discrimination, ethnicity, sexuality.

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows: Beautiful love story and war story with deep understanding of human nature. Told in a series of letters from a young female writer in London to several persons on Guernsey Isle just after WWII, which had been under German occupation during the war. Funny, sad, & beautifully written.

The American Wife by Curtis Sittenfeld: This is a good beach read. It's based on Laura Bush and her life with George, but characters and states are changed.

Florence of Arabia & No Way to Treat a First Lady by Christopher Buckley: Absolutely crazy stuff and an easy read.

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Junot Diaz: It is a multi-layered read which tells a great story, teaches history (Dominican Republic, Trujillo, etc.), culture, shares insight into being a Dominican immigrant in New Jersey, life as a nerdy, overweight adolescent—just to name some of the topics. My bookgroup had one of its longest discussions ever about this book. It received raves from all of us.

Born on a Blue Day by Daniel Tammet: A non-fiction journey about autism and savant syndrome by a brilliant man who

has both.

Nineteen Minutes by Jodi Picoult: Intense novel dealing with issues including high-school violence, peer acceptance, parent-child relationships, and bullying. Suspenseful and thought-provoking.

Those Who Save Us by Jenna Blum: Novel about Nazi Germany and ordinary Germans during the war, things people did and didn't do to resist or survive, and family secrets. Setting alternates between then and now, and shame, guilt, and responsibility are themes.

Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout: Wonderful collection of related short stories set in coastal Maine and dominated in one way or another by the compelling title character. Author just awarded the Pulitzer Prize for this work.

Any of the **Jacqueline Winspear** mystery novels that take place after WWI. Quick and easy reading, but fun.

SOME PERENNIAL FAVORITES

Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenidis

The Red Tent by Anita Diamont

Plainsong by Kent Haruf

A Long Way Down by Nick Hornby

NON-FICTION (oddly, all suggestions are cooking-related!)

The Sharper Your Knife the Less You Cry by Kathleen Flinn: About her experiences in cooking school.

Julie Julia by Julie Powell: She made every recipe that Julia Child had in her first book. It took her a year and there are some really funny parts. It's also been made into a movie.

A Cook's Tour by Anthony Bourdain: Non-fiction musings about his travel around the globe. If people like his show on the Travel Channel they will like this. He has a biting wit, goes to neat places and eats crazy stuff.

My Life in France by Julia Child: An interesting read by a fascinating woman.



THEATER NOTES FROM **ARLINGTON FRIENDS OF THE DRAMA**

By Judy Weinberg (*Venner Road*)

I've lived in our neighborhood since 1985, and passed the beautiful building at 22 Academy Street many times, but it wasn't until the fall of 2001 that I attended my first performance at Arlington Friends of the Drama (AFD). I was impressed by the quality of the presentation, and won-

dered how I – who loved theatre – could have lived here for as long as I have without really knowing anything about it.

I have seen dozens of productions at AFD since then, and it is truly a gem. My adoration for the theater induced me to get involved backstage, and I'm honored to start serving on the Board beginning in July as Membership Secretary. Since this theatre is a wonderful resource right in our Neighborhood, I'll plan on writing occasional articles about it here.

Every season, the five-show line-up includes a major musical, and this year's was Tim Rice and Elton John's *Aida*. I attended the show on Saturday night, April 18th, and it's a good thing it was unseasonably warm. There was a local power outage about an hour prior to the scheduled 8:00 curtain, and when I arrived at the theater the cast, crew, and audience were milling about on the sidewalk. When the power finally came back on at approximately 8:20, everyone hustled to get the show mounted, and the audience seated, as quickly as possible. It was a fantastic production, and the audience applauded wildly for the curtain calls. Just as the two leads were about to take their bows, the power went out again, and the appreciative audience was ushered out by flashlight. It made a memorable night at the theatre even more so.

I'm looking forward to seeing the final show of this season, *Brooklyn Boy*, in June. This comedy is a terrific way to round out a great season of theatre. All tickets are only \$18.



“TO BE OR NOT TO BE....”

HAMLET: 2009 SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

Bring a picnic, a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy this year's Shakespeare in the Park performance on Sunday, July 19 at Robbins Farm Park. The performance begins at 5 p.m., but come early to picnic and stake out your spot on the grass. Desserts and drinks will be sold. This is the 9th year that the Arlington Center for the Arts has collaborated with the Friends of Robbins Farm Park and the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park to bring the bard to Arlington. The performance is free, but donations are appreciated.

A new troupe of actors, The Rebel Shakespeare Company, will be performing a slightly abbreviated 90 minute version of Shakespeare's tragedy, *Hamlet*, considered by many to be his finest work. Rebel Shakespeare is a 20-year old organization in Salem, MA that runs an educational program in the summer. The older teens (ages 15-19) travel to

various sites near Boston to perform at the end of their intensive four week training. Many of the actors have been involved since they were young and are now mature Shakespeare performers. Since the students learn many parts, last year they used the “rock/paper/scissors” method to decide who would play each part on the night of each performance.

When Hamlet returns from his studies to find his father dead, and his mother married to his uncle, he grows suspicious. After being visited by his dead father as a ghost, his suspicions are confirmed, and Hamlet falls into a mental pit of revenge, deceit and self-doubt. The play is set at Elsinore Castle in Denmark, and was first performed in about 1600.

Located at 41 Foster St in East Arlington, the Arlington Center for the Arts (ACA) offers classes for all ages, a full day vacation arts program for kids, gallery exhibits, art and music studios, performances and events. Go to www.acarts.org for more info.

PLANNING A NEIGHBORHOOD SKILLS EXCHANGE

By Deborah Goldsmith (*Devereaux Street*)

We are at the brainstorming stage of developing a Skills Exchange in our neighborhood. Our neighborhood is full of talented and creative people, with a lot of know-how. In this economy, there could be many benefits for neighbors meeting, sharing, and working with others in new ways. I'm told there is software to help organize such an exchange. The real questions are: what we want the exchange to accomplish, and how it will work.

Think: What skills, information, or services would I like to learn, or get help with? And what skills, information, or services would I offer? There are local and other models to check out, so we don't have to reinvent the wheel, but rather can learn from others. We would want to choose a flexible plan with attractive, useful, and creative offerings helpful to different age groups, with a simple, user-friendly exchange system.

If you are interested in planning or participating in a neighborhood skills exchange, we would like to hear from you. Please contact me at gsmithd@aol.com, or (781) 643-3984.



MEMORIES OF A NEIGHBORHOOD SUMMER

By Jason Irving

[Editor's Note: Jason Irving is using a pen name for this boyhood reminiscence. He is one of the few who grew up in our neighborhood and still lives here.]

Growing up on Jason Street in the 60s was great fun. The large Victorian homes were all full of children, especially boys. The summer days were long and we enjoyed a lot of unsupervised fun. It was never a problem to get a group together for Run the Bases, Hide and Go Seek, or One Two Three, Red Light.

Sometimes we would make some money working for a neighbor; I used to do chores for Mrs. Teel who lived on the corner of Jason and Irving, across from the Misses Yerrinton. I would oil/turpentine her porches for a dollar. With that princely sum, I'd venture down to the "White Store" at the corner of Jason and Mass Ave. (The building was later taken down when the Arlington Historical Society expanded its grounds ... I've never forgiven them.)

The "White Store" was a small storefront in the basement of a Victorian house. It was slightly scary, but it was full of penny candy, some even two for a penny (banana splits and mint juleps). The best find was "punks"; they consisted of thin sticks with some sort of slow-burning aromatic compound. It was rumored and believed that it was in fact camel dung. No matter, when lit it made an ember and smoke, and it was very cool.

Sometimes we'd go up to the Park (Menotomy Rocks) to go to the playground. We'd always bring a big piece of wax paper to prepare the stainless steel slide. With the proper waxing the slide became a sling shot defying anyone to get their feet down quickly enough to prevent a serious tumble. Another favorite was the merry-go-round. The older boys would be in charge. They'd sit in the middle and have us 8-year-olds as the mules to power the ride. The little 5-7 year-olds would have the pleasure of the ride. The goal was to get it spinning so fast that a kid would fly off or start crying. It was always successful. Someone also would regularly throw up.

As we got older we continued to hang out at the Park. Fishing, playing guns, and baseball – no matter what, there was always a crowd of boys. For many years, the town had a recreational program that we'd drop in on for a while to make a potholder or a gimp bracelet. The

main event was always a knock hockey competition. When we got bored with that, we might get a model car, load it with firecrackers, and see what would happen.

But mostly we played baseball. It was never a problem to find at least 15-18 kids to play. We played in the "front field" with home plate being on the high side, and a home run was over the fence past the road. When we were thirsty, we would have to go to the bubbler by the back field because it was well known that the bullies always put fish guts in the front field bubbler, or they would at least jam a small pebble in it so that it would squirt you in the face.

Summer was long and filled with lots of fun. After dinner, though, most of us littler kids would be restricted to our own yards to play with siblings or the next door neighbor. (Or maybe lying on the grass debating whether the Dave Clark Five, Herman's Hermits, or the Beatles were best.) Later in the evening, I'd sit on the screened-in veranda and listen to a baseball game, or WMEX-AM to hear the Top 10 hits. Life was slow, easy, and unstructured. We watched very little TV (and had no video games). By the end of August we'd be ready to go back to the Parmenter School for another year. Life was good.



NEIGHBORHOOD ART NEWS

Art Camp: Karen Dillon, a neighborhood art teacher on Brantwood Road, writes, "Starting June 29th, I will kick off my first of four weeks of summer art camp in my studio. In art camp we walk to Menotomy Rocks Park or Spy Pond each day and field sketch for an hour or more." If you're interested, contact Karen at kpdillon@rcn.com.

And a local exhibit: Check out an exhibit at the Town Hall second floor "gallery" through June. It's a family show, by Jason Street residents Lorraine Sullivan, (mother), Phil Young (father), and Jessie Young (daughter). Lorraine and Phil are retired art educators, and Jessie is an art teacher (digital imaging) at Cambridge Rindge and Latin.



Following represents all transactions in our neighborhood from October 25, 2008 – June 29, 2009:

THE HOUSING MARKET

By Judy Weinberg (*Venner Road*)

Aah, summer. We waited so long, and there are so many things to love about it.

For those who watch the real estate market, spring and early summer are traditionally the strongest periods for home sales. To get a realistic handle on how the market is doing, it's best to wait for the March – June season to determine the level of sales activity. Seeing "For Sale" signs in the ground during this time are as predictable as seeing the daffodils emerge, but whether these turn into "Sold" signs in short order are the indication of a strong market.

I'm happy to report that our Town continues to fare very well. There are currently 112 properties in Arlington that have gone under agreement in the past 2 months (May and June), and 99 that have sold in that same time period. This is a high level of activity, and represents a very busy market.

Conversely, the foreclosure crisis has had minimal impact in our town. There were 10 residential properties that were foreclosed on in Arlington between January 1, 2008 and June 29, 2009, and none in our Neighborhood. According to the assessor's office, there are 13,539 residential properties, so this represents just a tiny fraction of home owners.

Single Family Homes

Sale Price

33 Academy Street	\$830,000
30 Addison Street	\$823,000
36 Bellevue Road	\$675,000
42 Bellevue Road	\$525,000
54 Brantwood Road	\$750,000
10 Hillsdale Road	\$822,000
78 Kensington Park	\$585,000
10 Lincoln Street	\$890,000
10 Longfellow Road	\$440,000
18 Peabody Road	\$510,000
259 Pleasant Street	\$417,000
101 Spring Street	\$620,000
106 Spring Street	\$370,000
8 Valley Road	\$565,000
35 Wall Street	\$307,000
19 Windermere Avenue	\$766,000

Condominiums

169 Gray Street	\$369,900
30 Hopkins Road	\$400,000
32 Hopkins Road	\$385,000
40 Pleasant Street, # 1	\$351,500
60 Pleasant Street, #421	\$199,000
114 Pleasant Street, #206	\$263,000
125 Pleasant Street, #106	\$250,000
31 Windermere Ave, #2	\$465,000

STEVE'S PEEVES

By Steve Johnson (*Jason Street*)



It suddenly seems as if there's a lot of litter scattered around. Venturing in public spaces, no matter how remote, means finding the ugly evidence of an irresponsible lifestyle. Cigarette butts are probably the most prevalent, maybe because of their convenient throw-away size. It's impossible to go anywhere by car and not see them. What kind of person can't manage a one-inch remnant? Finish what you started! I don't know what could inspire so many people to adopt more respectful behavior, but our local volunteers set a noble example. I'm grateful for the successful efforts of those who pitch in to keep our neighborhood pristine.

DOINA'S DELIGHTS

By Doina Iliescu (*Jason Street*)



I may be one of those rare types who actually revel in the pre-dawn call of the neighborhood feathered sentinel, who at 4:30 each morning rouses the forest of birds just beyond my window. I love the singular steady call of that bird and the slow awakening of others—blue tailed, red bellied, gradient gray. It cheers me, despite the hour. And then, the flocks of children waiting for the bus that take on bird-like chatter, and sometimes shrieks that set boundaries, and define roles. Indeed, maybe we all are birds, just of a different feather. My parakeet seems to think so!



We've Got Ideas...

For this issue of the Newsletter, we asked neighbors to send us some of their ideas that would enrich our neighborhood, or that would make good topics for future Newsletter stories. We were gratified to hear from a number of you. Here's a sampling of what you've got in mind:

* In our never-ending quest for clear surfaces, we've been trying to get rid of tons and boxes and huge amounts of STUFF. My suggestion is to have a Craigslist-type feature in the Newsletter, so that neighborhood folks would have first dibs on junk – I mean treasures – that some don't want but others might. (*Ilene Rosin, Academy Street*)

* One idea I had was for the whole neighborhood was to plant their sidewalk green area with hosta. A few residents along Jason have done this already. The recently renovated home on the corner of Gray and Jason has also just added hosta. What a spectacular GREEN line of solidarity this would be! (*Cliff Hakim, Jason Street*)

* Something I've been doing is putting my garbage across the street, consolidating it with my neighbor's, and eliminating the need to stop the 30-ton garbage truck for my pitiful can of garbage (and I am not talking about the stuff I put on Town Meeting seats). Different blocks in the neighborhood could make a project of encouraging those who are able to do this, especially those who live on narrow streets. Such a trash consolidation project would help reduce the pollution from the trucks stopping and starting so often. (*Andrew Fischer, Lombard Road*)

And some ideas for future Newsletter stories: Want to write any of them up?

Community vegetable gardens – who's planting for the first time and why; who's starting up again; who's always planted a garden; gardening styles; organic vs. standard; dealing with pests & weeds; cost vs. benefit; photos.

Neighborhood car sharing – why or why not? How would this work? Has it been done elsewhere? Timing and communication coordination. Supplement with biking, ZipCar, etc.? Insurance issues?

Neighborhood wildlife – what's been spotted lately? Birds, raccoons, deer, turkey, coyotes, turtles, fisher cats, opossums? Other? More or less than before?

Arlington Community Television – what's been going on in the past two years since Comcast turned ACMI over to the Town and all three cable companies are served by community programming? Profiles of producers, programs, and staff.

Local Politics is Alive and Well

Interest in politics – at least the local variety – appears to be alive and well in our neighborhood. On April 26, the Town Meeting Members of Precincts 8 and 10 (which cover most of our Newsletter distribution area) sponsored a meeting to review the then-upcoming Town Meeting session and to hear neighbor ideas and concerns. It was the first time this kind of Precinct meeting had been held in some while.

The meeting was lively, it was informative, and it was surprisingly well attended, with close to 100 people filling the Senior Center on a lovely spring Sunday afternoon. After John Worden (Jason Street) reviewed the Town Meeting warrant, comments ran the gamut from budget cuts to the possible sale of the Parmenter School, from senior services to marijuana fines, from the projected new CVS store to the Mass Ave Corridor Project, and (hot-button issues this year) backyard hens and off-leash dogs. More than that, there were suggestions: for skills exchanges, community gardens, sharing ideas about saving energy, and adopting projects to help the less fortunate.

Following the meeting, Barbara Costa (Woodland Street) wrote up notes and also an article that appeared in the May 7 *Arlington Advocate*. Josh Lobel (Jason Street) created a Google Group for residents of Precincts 8 and 10. (To join, go to <http://groups.google.com>, search for Arlington8-10, and then request membership.) And plans are underway for e-mail addresses of all Town Meeting Members to be available through the Town web site, to stimulate better two-way communication.

Thanks to Barbara and Josh for notes, group lists, and refreshments, to Deborah Goldsmith (Devereaux Street) for promoting the meeting idea, to Laura Wiener (Jason Street) for arranging the meeting space, and to John Worden for facilitating the meeting, as well as to all the Town Meeting Members and neighbors who attended.

It would be excellent to hold a similar meeting next year, and make this an annual neighborhood tradition.

A related political footnote: While the Newsletter is nonpartisan, our practice has been to print candidate statements of neighbors running for town-wide public office. We haven't been totally consistent about this in the past, however, and we hope to be do better in the future.

The Neighborhood Newsletter is produced through generous contributions from neighbors, the assistance of Swifty Printing, and the underwriting support of Judy Weinberg of Venner Road and RE/MAX Leading Edge Real Estate, judylynnweinberg@gmail.com.



WE'VE GOT MAIL!

MOVIES IN THE PARK?

Dear Neighbors,

I've been thinking about how nice it would be to have a summer monthly movie festival on the big lawn at Menotomy Rocks Park. In recent years there have been productions of outdoor Shakespeare plays that have brought the community together and infused the summer park air with the fragrance of culture. I'm all for it! In fact, I want more!

A friend of mine and I, when we used to work at the same company together, would sometimes set up a screen in her back yard in Weston and rent 16mm films and project them; people would bring stuff to eat, and the grill would be fired up. Even in cool autumn evenings when blankets were required, the conviviality added another layer of warmth. In those days, renting a 16mm film was expensive, and we sold home-made baked goods every morning to our office mates to fund the rentals. Technology has made it much easier now, though. All that is needed is a Netflix account, a DVD projector, a screen, and an outlet.

Okay, so maybe the need for an electrical outlet poses a problem... Does anybody know if there is any outlet or way to tap into the electrical grid in the park? I was told that sometimes in the past in similar situations an electrical cord was extended from an abutter's house. I guess that's an option. As for a projector and lamp, I propose getting a local business (or individual) to lend one for the series in return for an advertisement.

Same could hold true for a screen, though there is more flexibility on that front. I have a friend in Fort Point Channel who runs a similar series in Wormwood Park, and he just uses some white sheets that have been sewn together. I also remember a little film series that used to be held in the Cambridge Carberry's parking lot. They just projected the films on the side of the building. They also had live music sometimes, accompanying silent films. All very low tech and low key, but memorable and much fun!

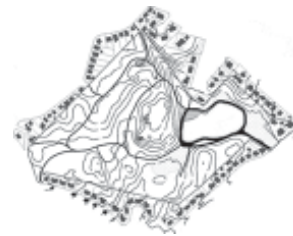
I know that there are others in our neighborhood who would embrace an excuse to get together under the stars in our beautiful park and escape into movieland al fresco. I bet some of them would even like to help make it happen. Please let me know if you are one of them....

Dear Editors,

Hi, Aidan Lees here, lover of Menotomy Rocks Park! There's so much life in there, with all of the park's natural beauty. I wouldn't fish anywhere else. The pond has big fish, small fish, even an occasional turtle. I lose track of time when I'm there....

A recipe for a good afternoon is a walk down my street to the park with my Dad, my avid fisherman friend Otto, the poles, and the trusty bait. Mostly we use worms, but we have also used tiny sunfish, about 2" long, and fake shiners.

Aidan Lees (*Jason Street, and 5th grade, Bishop School*)



MENOTOMY ROCKS PARK NEWS

By Judy Weinberg (*Venner Road*) and MaryAnna Foskett (*Brantwood Road*)

FILM: Emerson College students filmed a movie in the Park in early April. The movie is titled "*The Small Stuff*" and is "an upbeat character study involving everyday people in a park, distracted by technological devices, and a lost duck that helps them gain a new sense of grounding." Every aspect of film production was involved during the four-day stint – site scouting, permitting, support & crew operations, acting (including a trained duck and duck wrangler), and filming.

BIKE RACKS: The Town of Arlington has received grant funding to install bike racks around Town, and two will be located in Menotomy Rocks Park. The installation of the inverted-U-shaped racks should be completed by October at the latest.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK: The Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park will be co-sponsoring the annual production of Shakespeare in the Park – scheduled this year for Robbins Farm Park. "*Hamlet*" will be presented on Sunday, July 19th at 5:00 p.m. and performed by a new troupe of older teens from Salem, MA called "Rebel Shakespeare."

HILL'S POND: There has been early and extensive appearance of algae in the pond. Every year the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park contracts with Aquatic Control Technologies to treat the pond for algae and invasive pond weeds, and a treatment was completed on May 21st.

ECOFEST: The Friends participated in the town-wide Ecofest held at Town Hall on March 28th. Thanks to the many people who stopped by, made suggestions or signed up to volunteer.

SCHEDULE OF VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS: Monthly volunteer work days have been scheduled for the summer and fall. Please post these remaining dates to your calendar. Work time will be from 10:00 a.m. to noon on the following Sundays: June 28, July 12, August 23, September 20, and October 18.



PRINT OR ONLINE?

The publishing industry is gradually changing from print to online. And while our Newsletter is not exactly part of that industry, should we be changing too?

We looked for feedback on this question in a recent e-mailing to our

Neighborhood Announcement List, asking members whether they would prefer to receive the Newsletter in print or online form. (Want to join that List? Send an e-mail to jhitesnews@comcast.net.) A dozen of you responded; and though that does not come close to a scientific sample, six of you preferred print, three voted for online, and three suggested some combination of both.

Some sample comments: I love getting the Newsletter delivered. I take it right out to the front porch in nice weather and read it. I vote for having the Newsletter online, as I use a screen reader. I would be pleased to receive the Newsletter by email only . . . [but] I hope that the Newsletter will still be available via print, for those who prefer.

What does this mean for us? In fact, we already have something of a hybrid model, for although we don't now deliver by e-mail, both current and past Newsletters are online at www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org. One way or another, we plan to stick around. For the immediate future, we plan to keep delivering print copies door-to-door, as we've always done as long as we have distributors to deliver them, and as long as we can raise money (about \$2000 per year) to support printing costs.

But the longer-run future is more of an open question. Since the Newsletter belongs to all of us, as always we'll be guided by what you, our readers, think. Let us know.

BB



IS THERE A MULCH DAY IN YOUR FUTURE?

By Eileen Eisele (*Brantwood Road*)

One fun idea for a neighborhood activity could be a Mulch Day, like the annual one we have on Brantwood Road. My husband Greg organizes it and it has become a kind of rite-of-spring ritual. The mulch, I can attest, is black gold, not the dyed cedar bark. We started getting a delivery four or five years ago, I think, and since then word has spread, no pun intended, on how good the stuff was. Now about 12 families are in on the delivery.

What is so fun is that the company that delivers loves coming to the neighborhood as much as the neighbors love the mulch. Everyone is out with wheelbarrows and shovels, talking and laughing. The same guy comes every year and he said he looks forward to the call from Greg. When he arrives everyone is waiting for the truck and greets him like an old friend. The whole thing is incredibly festive.

I think this year there was even an impromptu luncheon involved. If you want more information, Greg's email is gregruccio@yahoo.com.

WE NEED YOU TO KEEP IT COMING

By Mary Cummings, Editor

If you have any experience or interest in desktop publishing and would like to help put the Newsletter together, I could really use some help. I use Adobe Pagemaker but any desktop publishing program would work. The job entails collecting the edited articles, dumping them in place, adding some clipart, and sending it off to Swifty Printers.

CONTACT THE NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSLETTER

We always welcome your letters, articles, or suggestions, as well as any donations you might be able to make. To contact Mary Cummings, Editor:

Write to: 135 Jason St.

E-mail: Jhitesnews@comcast.net

Website: www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org

To make a contribution to **The Neighborhood Newsletter**: Make checks payable to "Menotomy Rocks Neighborhood Association" and send to Bill Berkowitz at 12 Pelham Terrace. Thank you for your support!