

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Cleared Sidewalks = Pedestrian Safety

With early winter snowfall already reaching record heights, we thought it would be useful to recap some of the city's snow policies and procedures that pertain to sidewalks.



For many years, the City has had an ordinance requiring property owners to shovel their sidewalks. This ordinance, which applies to both residential and commercial property owners,

requires owners to remove snow from all sidewalks next to their property or business within 12 hours after snow stops falling in the daytime, and before 1 p.m. when the snow has fallen during the night.

The Cambridge Department of Public Works (DPW) reminds snow shovelers to make paths wide enough (at least 3 feet, preferably 4 feet) for someone using a wheelchair, walker or stroller. Also, corner property lot owners are advised to not forget to shovel their side-street sidewalks and to clear curb ramps at crosswalks.

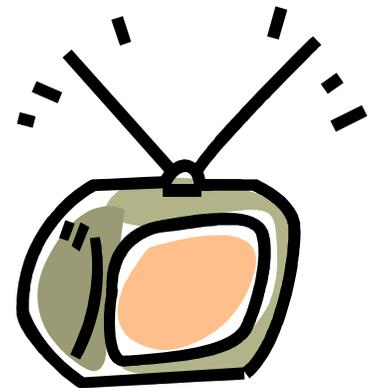
The City ordinance also requires property owners to remove or melt all ice within 6 hours of the time the ice forms. DPW asks property owners to remember that, for people on foot, ice can be worse than snow – it can cause dangerous falls. Property owners are as responsible for ice as they are for snow.

(Snow continued on page 2)

Digital TV Garbles Closed Captioning

New technology can bring enhancements to our lifestyles -- faster travel, labor saving machines, faster production, world-wide communication, -- but it usually presents new challenges and requires some adjustment in the way things are done. (Horse drawn buggies did not like sharing the roads with noisy automobiles, and new factory machinery required workers to learn new skills.)

Today, advances in technology for broadcasting television programs is in the process of switching from the old analog to a new digital transmission process. The new digital technology will enable broadcasters to transmit television programs with better picture and sound quality, offer multiple programming choices called "multicasting," and even provide interactive capabilities. But this change means that TV sets with the old analog tuners will no longer be able to receive over-the-air broadcasts when they are transmitted in digital format.



A little over a year from now, on February 17, 2009, full-power TV stations in the United States will cease broadcasting on their current analog channels. TV stations will air exclusively digital television (DTV) programming, instead of the mix of DTV and analog programs they currently broadcast. DTV is an advanced broadcasting

(Captioning continued on page 2)

(Snow continued)

There is a \$35 / day fine for failing to comply with the City's sidewalk clearance ordinances. Even if the property owner isn't around, it is still his or her responsibility to ensure that someone clears the sidewalks and curb ramps next to his or her property.

You can report the address of unshoveled or icy sidewalks to the Snow Hotline, 617-349-4903 or email <snow@cambridgema.gov>. During the winter months over 30 Cambridge parking control officers, along with several enforcement personnel from the Department of Public Works, will be deployed to help enforce the City's snow removal ordinance. They have already issued over 400 tickets to recalcitrant property owners this season.

While ignorance of the law is no excuse, the City has nonetheless embarked on additional efforts this winter season to educate property owners about their snow removal obligations. For starters, DPW has revised its snow brochure and mailed it to all Cambridge property owners. To help remind property owners about their obligations to remove snow and ice following a storm, the City recently initiated a Reverse 911 notification, sending a prerecorded telephone alert to all Cambridge households.

Representative Tim Toomey has filed a home rule petition on behalf of Cambridge. If passed, the petition would allow Cambridge to place liens on property owners who fail to pay fines associated with violations of the snow removal ordinance.

Help for low-income homeowners who are elderly and/or disabled

If you are a homeowner on a low income (\$22,947 or less for a one-person household in 2007), and you are elderly or disabled, you may be eligible for the City's Snow Exemption Program. If you qualify the City will shovel your sidewalk. To apply, call the Cambridge Council

on Aging, 617-349-6220 (voice) or 617-349-6050 (TTY).

If you do not qualify, the Council on Aging can provide you with a limited list of professional snow removal companies and a list of students who want to earn money by shoveling – you contact the company or student yourself and negotiate a price.

(Closed Captioning continued)

technology that will transform your television viewing experience.

Analog TVs will need additional equipment to receive over-the-air TV programming when the DTV transition is complete

Consumers who rely on antennas (including outside antennas and “rabbit ears”) to receive over-the-air broadcast signals on TV sets that have only analog tuners will need to obtain separate digital-to-analog set-top converter boxes to watch over-the-air TV. These boxes receive digital signals and convert them into analog format for display on analog television sets. Analog sets connected to such converter boxes will display digital broadcasts, but not necessarily in the full, original digital quality.

How will these changes affect closed captioning?

Closed captioning provides a critical link to news, entertainment, and information for individuals who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing. Also, individuals whose native language is not English can improve their comprehension and fluency with English language captions. The captions can also improve literacy skills. You can turn on closed captions through your remote control or on-screen menu.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is concerned that consumers may experience difficulty in receiving and/or viewing closed captioning on some DTV programming,

including high definition television (HDTV), provided by a programming distributor such as a cable company or a satellite television provider.

These difficulties could arise from two causes:

- the consumer's set-top box and/or DTV are not properly adjusted to allow closed captions to be displayed; or
- there are technical problems with the cable or satellite provider's system that prevent closed captions from being received and decoded by the set-top box and/or DTV.

(Note: The FCC does not regulate captioning of home videos, DVDs, or video games.)

Cable and Satellite TV

Cable subscribers may need new DTV equipment to view DTV programming in digital format. You should ask your cable provider what you will need and when. Satellite subscribers may need new DTV equipment to receive and view high definition digital programming. You should ask your satellite company what you will need and when.

Converter Box Coupon Program

Between Jan. 1, 2008, and March 31, 2009, all U.S. households will be eligible to request up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, to be used toward the purchase of up to two, digital-to-analog converter boxes. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) has responsibility for administering the coupon program. More information can be found at www.dtv2009.gov.

The Transition to Digital TV

The FCC's digital tuner rule specifies that as of March 1, 2007, all new TVs must include digital tuners. This rule prohibits the manufacture, import, or interstate shipment of any device containing an analog tuner, unless it also contains a digital tuner. Despite this prohibition on manufacture and shipment, retailers may continue to sell analog-only devices from existing inventory. As a result, at the point of

sale, many consumers may not be aware that this equipment will not be able to receive over-the-air-television signals after February 17, 2009.

To address this issue, the FCC has adopted a rule requiring sellers to display the following text if they are selling TV equipment with only an analog broadcast tuner:

Consumer Alert

This television receiver has only an analog broadcast tuner and will require a converter box after February 17, 2009, to receive over-the-air broadcasts with an antenna because of the Nation's transition to digital broadcasting. Analog-only TVs should continue to work as before with cable and satellite TV services, gaming consoles, VCRs, DVD players, and similar products. For more information, call the Federal Communications Commission at 1-888-225-5322 (TTY: 1-888-835-5322) or visit the Commission's digital television website at: www.dtv.gov.

Winter Recreation Opportunities in Boston

Snow on city streets and sidewalks presents major problems, but on the slopes it creates a wonderful recreation environment. All the snow we have had so far should make this a great year for skiing, snow-shoeing, and kick-sledding! Get outdoors and enjoy the crisp air and bright landscape through accessible recreation opportunities!

People with disabilities and their friends and families can participate in a variety of programs in supportive environments using adaptive equipment and instruction as needed. Activities vary depending on the site and the weather conditions. Some are sponsored by non-profit organizations and many by the Universal Access Program of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

For more information contact the Universal Access Program Coordinator at 413-527-8980 or <Marcy.Marchello@state.ma.us>. Some programs have minimal fees, but many are free.

At the ***Mt. Wachusett Adaptive Ski Program*** certified instructors help students identify their challenges, set attainable goals, refine their skills, and gain confidence while having fun. Lessons are by reservation only. Fees are determined by equipment required, type of ticket needed, and whether the instruction is private or in a class.

This adaptive ski program is affiliated with Ability Plus Inc. Staff are trained to work with people with physical, cognitive, hearing, visual, and developmental disabilities. For more information call 978-464-2300 for go to <www.wachusett.com/lessons>



At the ***Weston Ski Track*** on the Leo J. Martin Memorial Golf Course in Weston you can join *Venture Into Well-Being* on Sundays: Jan. 27, Feb. 3, 10, 24, March 2, and Presidents Day,

February 18 for ***cross-country skiing, snowshoeing*** and ***kick-sledding***. This location near Boston has a 2-kilometer trail on moderate terrain that allows everyone to enjoy participating. There are fees for equipment rental (skis, poles, boots) but the trail pass is free for all Universal Access Program participants. Call 413-259-0009 to register.

Outdoor Explorations (OE) also has a ***snowshoeing*** program in Massachusetts and NH state parks. They provide adaptive equipment, winter gear, snacks, instruction customized to your needs, and transportation from the OE office to the trailhead. Outdoor Explorations makes adventure programs available to people with all types of disabilities along with their friends, families and co-workers. Snowshoe days are Jan. 26 and Feb. 10 and 23; the fee is \$35/person. For more information call 781-395-4999 or go to <www.outdoorexplorations.org>

Accessible Ice Skating programs at several indoor rinks in the Boston area provide instruction and support as needed. You can also use ***ice sleds*** on your own schedule. There are minimal fees for admission and conventional skate rentals. Programs take place during public skating hours at rinks in Brighton (617-527-1741), Medford (781-395-8492), Milton (617-696-9869), and Quincy (617-472-9325). Call for specific days and hours.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

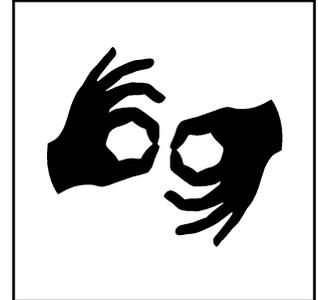
January 8 & 10 **MDDA (Manic Depression & Depressive Association) Support Group at Mass. General Hospital** meets every Tuesday and Thursday, 7-9 p.m. on the 4th floor in the Yawkey Building. Follow the signs. Meetings are free and open to public. For more information call 617-855-2795.

January 8 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. They meet 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Rm.135. To find out more about meetings and discussions go to <www.bostonvoiceusers.org>.

- January 9 **Weekly support group for adults with LD/ADHD** (learning disabilities & attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) meets in Cambridge near Harvard Square, 6 to 7:30 p.m. every Wednesday. Currently there are a few openings in this group, so if you are interested, contact Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117.
- January 9 **An IEP for My Child** – Every child with a disability who receives special education services must have an Individual Education Program (IEP). This workshop takes parents step-by-step through the development of the IEP including how to articulate a Vision for their child, use the results of evaluations to write measurable goals and how to assess their child's progress. Workshop materials are available in Spanish. Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), the workshop will be held at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge from 6:30-8:30 pm. Register by contacting FCSN at 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 or online at <register@fscn.org>.
- January 9 **Manic Depression & Depressive Association (MDDA) Bipolar Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7 to 9 p.m. at **McLean Hospital in Belmont** (Demarneffe Building, 1st floor lobby). Includes a lecture; 7 to 8 p.m., on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. Call 617-855-3665 for more information.
- January 9 **Basic Rights** –This workshop provides families with an introduction to their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Massachusetts Special Education Law and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It is designed to help parents learn how to be effective partners with the school, to decide the child's eligibility for special education, to plan, make decisions and to monitor the educational progress of their child. Workshop materials are also available in Spanish, Portuguese and Russian. Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this workshop will be offered at Cherney Middle School, 95 Washington Street in Belmont, 7:30-9:30 pm. Register by contacting FCSN at 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 or online at <register@fscn.org>.
- January 10 **Transition: Planning the Next Steps for Youth 14-22** is a workshop about designing the right curriculum and supports throughout high school so that the student will be on the right track for becoming self-sufficient after graduation. Information and strategies will be provided to help parents and students translate individual preferences and dreams into meaningful goals in the IEP. The workshop, presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), will be held at the Bay Cove Human Services, 66 Canal Street in Boston, 11 am – 1:30 pm. Register by contacting FCSN at 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 or online at <register@fscn.org>.
- January 10 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) monthly meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment.
- January 15 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1 to 3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston.
- January 17 **LD/ADHD Task Force for Adults with Learning Disabilities / Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and meets at MRC State headquarters, 27-48 Wormwood Street in Boston (south of Fort Point Channel) in the 6th floor conference room. Business meeting from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information contact Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 voice, 617-497-5257 fax.
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January 17 **Autism Support Group** – meets the third Thursday of each month at the Central Square Branch Library, 45 Pearl Street in Cambridge, 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information contact Lorraine Iacopucci at 978-624-2304 or <liacopucci@nsarc.org>.

January 21 **Open House at the MFA with FREE admission for all** – On Martin Luther King Day the Museum of Fine Arts welcomes all, but especially art lovers who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind or have low vision. At 12 noon the MFA Teen Arts Council will present Walk Our Way: A “Symbols of Power” tour interpreted in American Sign Language (ASL). Assistive Listening Devices will also be available. Then at 1:30 pm Deaf artist Ayisha Knight-Shaw will do a guided tour of “Symbols of Power” in the MFA’s Permanent Collection in ASL with no spoken English. Also at 12:30 pm there will be a Feeling for Form tactile tour for blind and low vision visitors of the MFA’s permanent sculpture collection to the background of music of the New Life Jazz Orchestra. For more information, call 617-369-3302 voice or 617-267-9703 TTY, e-mail <access@mfa.org> or visit <www.mfa.org> The MFA is at 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston and can be reached via the MBTA - Green Line #39, or E Line to Museum of Fine Arts stop, or the Orange Line to Ruggles Station and walk to Museum Road. Parking is available for a fee.



January 25 **Billy the Kid, premier showing at Coolidge Corner Theatre**, 290 Harvard Street in Brookline – This new, and highly acclaimed documentary tells the compelling story of a teenage boy with Asperger syndrome. With humor and sensitivity it challenges viewers to imagine themselves beyond labels. The film is based on the book, *Look Me in the Eye*, by John Elder Robison (2007), who will be available along with Jennifer Venditti Director/Producer to respond to questions on the Opening Nights, Jan. 25 and 26. Members of Asperger Association of New England (AANE) may request discounted tickets at \$6.75; donors of \$100 to AANE’s annual fund drive may receive a pair of tickets for any of the showings from Jan. 25-31. Donations may be made online at <www.aane.org>. For more information contact Coolidge Corner Theatre at <www.coolidge.org> or 617-734-2500.

January 29 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets 1–3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room #4. Call 617-973-7507 voice, or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information, to request Interpreters, or confirm date and time. Due to security measures, please bring proper identification to gain entrance to all meetings.

February 1-2 **Families Organizing for Change Leadership Series** – This training is the first in a three-part series to help families gain a greater understanding of their own power and ability to create quality lives for themselves and their children with disabilities. Upon completion of the program families will continue to work for change and help other families in their area. Dates for the other two parts are April 4-5, and May 2-3. Sessions last from 9 to 4 each day and will be held at the Courtyard Marriott in Stoneham/Woburn. The DEADLINE for applications is Jan. 18; participation will be limited to 20-25. Respite/child care support, transportation and translation will be arranged on an as-needed basis. For an application and more information contact Susan Nadworny, Coordinator for the Northeast Region of Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change (MFOFC) at 781-665-5179 or <snadw@aol.com>.

February 2-3 **Winter Family Camp** – \$60/ person (scholarships are available) Treat yourself to a relaxing winter weekend getaway in a comfortable cabin located in the mountains of beautiful New England. Take a guided snowshoe, play games, roast marshmallows over a campfire, and sleep in a warm cabin amongst the snow covered trees. Outdoor Explorations is committed to breaking down the barriers to adventure for people of all abilities. More information about times and transportation and registration is available at 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY or <www.outdoorexplorations.org>.

February 6 **RSI (repetitive strain injury) Monthly Drop-in Support & Information Meeting** (no registration is necessary) on first Wednesday of each month, 5:30 to 7 p.m. at 650 Beacon Street in Boston, 4th floor Conference Room, steps from the Kenmore Square MBTA station and near the Barnes and Noble Bookstore. RSI Action volunteers will answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view our provider evaluation book. For more information, call 617-247-6827, or check website at <www.rsiaction.org>.

February 6 **Manic Depression & Depressive Association (MDDA) Bipolar Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7 to 9 p.m. at McLean Hospital in Belmont (See January 9 for details.)

February 7 **An IEP for My Child** – See January 9 listing for a description. Will be held at Brackett Elementary School in Arlington, 7-9 pm.

February 8-9 **Workshop for Church Sign Language Interpreters** – Two-day training (Friday 6-9 pm & Saturday 9 am – 4 pm) will focus on ways to increase auditory memory capacity in order to produce the equivalent message in American Sign Language (ASL) and includes hands-on practice and work in small groups. The certified instructor is Diane Fowler, who has been interpreting professionally since 1990. Workshop will be at Grace Chapel, 59 Worthen Road in Lexington, MA. The registration fee of \$125 on or before January 25, otherwise \$150 and includes Friday and Saturday meals and workshop materials. Space limited to 25. Requests for a sign language interpreter must be received by Jan. 25. For registration form and more information <IDMD4@hotmail.com>. It is sponsored by Institute for Deaf Ministry Development, Inc. (IFDMD), BU Interpreter Education Center, D.E.A.F., Inc. and Grace Chapel. CEUs or ACET credits are available through Northeastern University Regional Interpreter Education Center.

February 12 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meets 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. second Tuesday of the month (January 8 listing for details.)

February 13 **Celebrate Yourself: Self-Determination and Successful Students** – This workshop is designed for students with disabilities and their parents. It emphasizes knowing your learning styles and explaining to others how you best learn, recognizing your talents and strengths, and developing leadership skills. Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), this workshop will be offered at Cherney Middle School, 95 Washington Street in Belmont, 6:30-8:30 pm. Register by contacting FCSN at 617-236-7210 or 800-331-0688 or online at <register@fscn.org>.

February 14 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) monthly meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment

February 19 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) monthly meeting** on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston.

- February 21 **Autism Support Group** in Cambridge – See January 17 listing for details
- February 26 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets 1–3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room #4. Call 617-973-7507 voice, or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information, to request Interpreters, or confirm date and time. Due to security measures, please bring proper identification to gain entrance to all meetings.
- March 1 **Visions of Community** – Annual conference for Federation for Children with Special Needs and associated parent advocacy organizations at the World Trade Center in Boston, 8 am – 5 pm. Keynote speakers are Paul Reville, Chair of the Mass. State Board of Education and a former teacher and principal in urban alternative schools, and Keith Jones, an entrepreneur and strong advocate for quality independent living for people with disabilities in the community. Conference will also feature workshops, 35 break-out sessions and exhibits by 50 vendors. Registration is \$65 before Feb. 1; some scholarships are available. Interpreters will be available for some workshops with advance notice. For more information call 617-236-7210, ext. 198 English, 197 Portuguese, or 199 Spanish or email <conf2008@fcsn.org>.
- March 13 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) monthly meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment.
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Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

The Commission was established in 1979 to act as a clearinghouse on disability and access issues throughout the City of Cambridge. We strive to raise awareness of disability matters, to eliminate discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity for people with all types of disabilities - physical, mental and sensory. The Commission provides information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to individuals and their families, employers, public agencies, businesses and private non-profit organizations.

The goal of our 11-member citizen advisory board, comprised primarily of individuals with disabilities, is to maximize access to all aspects of Cambridge community life. Our regularly scheduled Commission meetings, which always include an opportunity for public comment, are held at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

Access Notice: The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability. This newsletter is available in e-mail, large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

Cambridge City Council

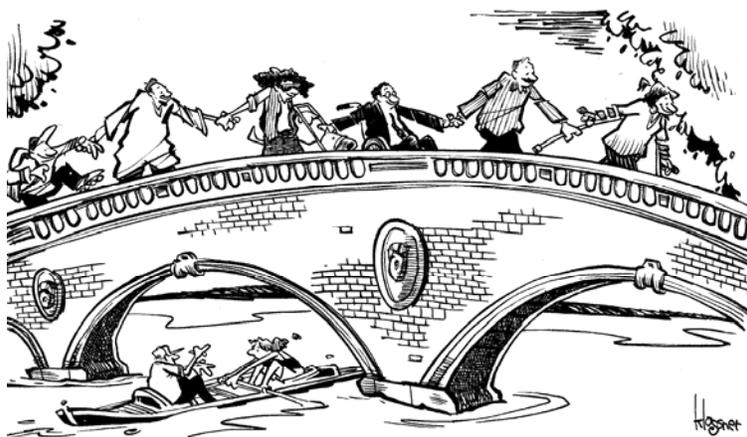
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ACCESSLetter is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,

part of the Department of Human Service Programs,

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We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

Read past issues on our website: www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/disabilities.cfm

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