

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Cambridge gets an A when it comes to access

Which are the most accessible cities in America? That's hard to say. There's no national organization or government agency keeping score. But, as it turns out, Cambridge has some bragging rights.

Over the past three years, the National Organization on Disability, an advocacy group established in 1982, has held an Accessible America Contest. And last year, out of 64 cities across the country that applied (Boston did not), Cambridge was one of 11 finalists, with Phoenix emerging as the eventual winner.

"We were very happy to be a finalist," said Michael Muehe, head of Cambridge's Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

The competition, he said, highlighted proactive work with preservationists to make the city's many historic buildings more accessible.

"People sometimes assume that if it's a 200-year-old building, it can't be made accessible," says Muehe. "But lo and behold, when we put our heads together and get some creative thinking going, we come up with a solution."

"It's so much easier," said Nancy Starnes, vice president of the national organization, "for communities that are being created from the ground up. But the judges want to address how communities are overcoming their barriers to accessibility. This shows that the community gets it."

Beside Cambridge's work to modify historic buildings, the judges were impressed by the city's accessible cab program and an initiative bringing people with disabilities to schools to speak with third-graders.

Cambridge hasn't yet decided whether to apply for the 2004 contest, which has a deadline of Oct. 31, according to Muehe. He said a lot of time this year will go toward special programs to mark the 25th anniversary of the city's disability commission, founded in 1979.



"We'll be celebrating, but also looking at our next 25 years in terms of the challenges and opportunities that are ahead for people with disabilities."

Past winners of the Accessible America Award include Phoenix, AZ in 2003..., Irvine, CA in 2002..., and Venice, FL in 2001.... For more details on the National Organization on Disability and the contest visit <www.nod.org>.

by Chris Berdik, reprinted with permission from the *Boston Sunday Globe*, 4/4/2004

CVS drugstore chain pledges accessibility improvements

CVS Corporation promises to improve access to its 336 Massachusetts drugstores and will pay up to \$250,000 in penalties, under the terms of a consent judgment filed in March with the state Attorney General's office, to settle alleged violations of federal and state disability rights laws.

"Despite the mandates of our previous agreement, CVS has failed to make basic accommodations for disabled citizens and allow them full access to merchandise," Attorney General Thomas Reilly said. "These accessibility problems most directly impact the independence of our disabled residents, but also effect many of our seniors who need walkers or other assistance to move about the stores."

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(CVS accessibility continued)

In April 2001, CVS signed a two-year Assurance of Discontinuance agreeing to comply with state and federal disability rights laws by keeping aisles clear of displays and other merchandise for customers with disabilities. It also agreed to conduct self-audits of its stores on a quarterly basis and re-train any managers of stores found to violate CVS's obligations to customers with disabilities.

David Peterson, who has a mobility limitation and is a member of the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, said, "I'm thrilled to hear the Attorney General is enforcing the law, and in the process supporting disabled folks. The previous agreement lacked teeth; now this new one gives CVS some actual motivation to comply."

With over 4000 drugstores in 27 states, including 336 stores in Massachusetts and six in Cambridge, CVS is the largest retail pharmacy chain in the Commonwealth and the second largest in the nation.

The judgment, filed in Suffolk Superior Court, settles allegations that CVS repeatedly failed to keep aisles clear for customers with disabilities, in direct violation of a 2001 agreement filed previously by AG Reilly.

Site visits conducted in 27 Massachusetts CVS stores by staff from the Attorney General's Disability Rights Project, including Assistant Attorney General Patricia Correa, revealed over 60 instances in which CVS failed to live up to its agreement. In fact, only 5 of the 27 stores reviewed by Reilly's office were in complete compliance. Among the violations cited by Reilly's investigators included placement of displays and deliveries in aisles to reduce aisle width and turning radius clearances below the 36 inches required by law. In addition to the accessibility violations, CVS failed to conduct all self-audits of aisle and turning radius clearances at its stores and did not re-train all managers of stores it found to be out of compliance.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and state access requirements, stores like CVS are required to maintain 3-foot-wide aisles as well as turning radiuses. Aisles with less than 36 inches do not adequately accommodate customers who use wheelchairs or have other mobility impairments.

While disappointing this major drugstore chain continues not to get it right," said Stan Eichner, Director of Litigation for Boston's Disability Law Center, "it's commendable that the Attorney General's office stayed on top of this to ensure their agreement is complied with."

Under the consent judgment, in addition to paying fines, CVS must also meet the following requirements at all Massachusetts stores:

- Maintain aisles and turning radiuses with a 36-inch clearance, effective immediately;
- Develop and distribute new internal policies and procedures that will assure the maintenance of minimum aisle and turning radius clearances;
- Designate an ADA Coordinator responsible for taking complaints from customers, establish customer complaint policies and procedures, and post notices to customers at all Massachusetts stores telling them how they can make a complaint;
- Train all employees about CVS's obligations to maintain minimum 36-inch aisle clearances and turning radius;
- Conduct self-audits of stores every other month during the first six months of the consent judgment, and quarterly thereafter; and
- Re-train all managers of stores found to have violations in self-audits, discipline managers of stores who are repeat violators, and take self-audit results into account when evaluating managers for employment action such as promotions and raises.

Under the consent judgment, which will be in effect 3 years and can be extended up to 5 years, CVS will pay \$200,000 up front and up to \$50,000 in additional fines for every future violation identified by Reilly's office.

The aisle access requirements cited in this case apply to all retail stores in Massachusetts. In conjunction with this settlement, Reilly issued a letter to CEOs of the Commonwealth's major retail stores reiterating the accessibility requirements under the law. Consumers who believe a particular retail store is not in compliance with the law can contact the Massachusetts Office of Disability at 617-727-7440.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

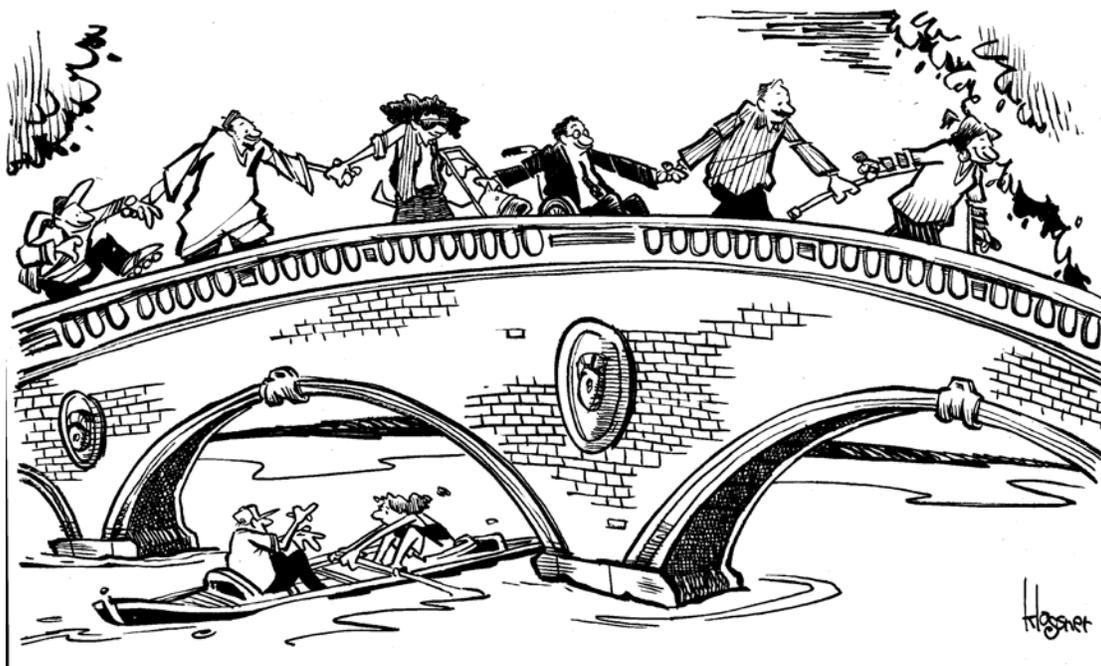
- April 19 **Ask the Doctor, an evening with Ken Duckworth, M.D.**, Assistant Prof. of Psychiatry at Harvard, at 7 p.m. at Congregation Kehillath Israel, 384 Harvard Street in Brookline. The program is sponsored by *Refuah*, a Jewish organization to support families living with mental illness. For more information contact Nancy Lewis at 781-961-2815 or check the website at <www.refuahboston.org>. Free and open to the public without regard to race, religion or nationality.
- April 20 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston. For more information contact Bob Hachey, Chair, or Maloney at 617-216-5181.
- April 21 **Latest Research on Alternative and Complementary Medicine**, free seminar at Shriners Hospital Auditorium, 51 Blossom Street in Boston across from Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). This is part of a **Seminar Series on Mental Health and Wellness** sponsored by the MGH Dept. of Psychiatry. These seminars are intended for people who are affected by any of the major psychiatric illnesses, their family, friends, and caregivers. Because space is limited, registration is required. Contact the Mood and Anxiety Disorders Institute Resource Center at 617-724-8318 or info@moodandanxiety.org for more information or visit website at www.moodandanxiety.org to download a registration form.
- April 22 **LD/ADHD Consumer Group** for persons with Learning Disabilities/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and is now meeting at MRC State headquarters, 27-48 Wormwood Street in Boston (south of Fort Point Channel) in the 6th floor large conference room. Business meeting at 11 a.m. and Support Group at 1 p.m. For more information contact Jim Fratolillo at 617-204-3854 (voice), 617-204-3847 (fax) or Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 (voice).
- April 24 **All New England Deaf Ministry Prayer Meeting**, 10 – 12 noon at the Alpha Omega Deaf Church, 13 Vandewater Street, Providence, RI. Will be led by Pastor Paul Tomasian in ASL with voice interpretation on request. For more information contact Anne Freeman of Vision New England at annefreema@aol.com or 617-325-3809 (voice only).
- April 27 **Respite Provider Training** for any person (respite providers, paraprofessionals, extended family members) who cares for a child with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) will cover overview of autism and behavioral support strategies. This free two-session workshop (2nd on May 4) will be at the Pollard Memorial Library, 401 Merrimack Street in Lowell. To register contact Gloria Castillo at 978-777-9135, ext. 201 or gcastillo@nsarc.org.
- April 28 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1-3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 2. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request interpreters. For problems with The RIDE service, call 617-222-5123 voice, or 617-222-5415 TTY.
- April 28 **Risks and Benefits of Psychiatric Medications for Children**, free seminar is part of a **Seminar Series on Mental Health and Wellness** sponsored by the Mass. General Hospital (MGH) Department of Psychiatry. See listing on April 21 for more information and registration details.
- April 28 **“Shattered Windows” – annual City of Cambridge Holocaust Commemoration Program**, 7-8:30 p.m. at Temple Beth Shalom, 8 Tremont Street (off Broadway near Central Square), Cambridge, MA. The program will feature music, readings and special remarks from Auschwitz Holocaust survivor, Dan Golomb. The venue is wheelchair accessible; for other reasonable accommodations contact the Cambridge Peace Commission before April 15 at 617-349-4694 voice or 617-492-0235 TTY.
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- May 2 **Benefit Concert & Silent Auction for Tunefoolery**, 7 pm at Jimmy Tingles Off Broadway, 255 Elm Street (Davis Square) in Somerville, MA. Tickets are \$20 adults, \$15 students & children under 12. Tunefoolery is a music group composed of and run by musicians with psychiatric disabilities. For more information call 617-591-1616 or check web at <www.jtoffbroadway.com> .
- May 5 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, a peer support group for women with physical or emotional disabilities and/or chronic conditions meets at The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 2-3:30 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. Wheelchair accessible; contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or <woman@braintrust.org> for more information.
- May 5 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in Group** (information & support) on first Wednesday of each month, 6-8 p.m. New location is the 2nd floor library at the Brookline Public Health Center at 11 Pierce Street. For more information, visit web site <www.rsiaction.org>, email <cnot@rsiaction.org> or call 617-247-6827.
- May 7 **The Autism Spectrum: Social and Emotional Development**, one-day Annual Conference at the Autism Support Center, 6 Southside Road, Danvers, MA. \$75 Registration fee, some scholarships are available for parents. Simultaneous Spanish translation will be made available if there is sufficient demand. For a brochure contact Gail Kastorf at 978-777-9135, ext. 204 or gkastorf@nsarc.org.
- May 7 **Assistive Technology, Disability and the Arts** – exploring the performing arts, fine arts, popular culture and expression through the context of disability and assistive technology, a one-day forum at Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. Presenters include Bill Shannon, NYC's "Crutch Master," and Stephanie Moore, Director of the nationwide VSA arts program. For more information contact 413-559-5613 or <www.atforum.hampshire.edu>.
- May 8 **Exploring Plum Island - a beginning bird watching program**, noon to 4 pm. offered by Massachusetts Audubon Society and Outdoor Explorations. The program is free and some optical equipment will be provided. There will be an indoor introduction to birding at the Joppa Flats Education Center in Newburyport, followed by an excursion onto Plum Island with stops at accessible viewing points. Call 978-462-9998 x 1 to register.
- May 10 **Special Education Law: Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder**, 9:30 – 11:30 am at Kennedy Elementary School, 5 Cherry Street in Somerville. The facilitator is Maureen Branconnier who can be reached at mbranconnier@nsarc.org or 978-777-9135, ext.205.
- May 10 **RSI Action monthly planning meeting**, 5:30 -7:30 p.m. in 4th floor conference room, 650 Beacon St. in Boston. Help plan activities, talks, support groups, the drop-in group and the web site. If you are interested, please contact us at <cnot@rsiaction.org> or call Kathy at 617-.262-0657 and provide your phone number so we can let you know of any last-minute changes to the date or location.
- May 11 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meets 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Room 143. There is often a guest speaker. Go to their website at <<http://harvee.billerica.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/boston-voice-users>> and click on Boston-voice-users Archives to find out more about meetings and discussions.
- May 12 **Parenting a Difficult Child**, free seminar is part of a **Seminar Series on Mental Health and Wellness** sponsored by the Mass. General Hospital (MGH) Department of Psychiatry. See listing on April 21 for more information and registration details.
- May 13 **Accessible Hiking at Walden Pond**, also offered on May 23 & 27 - Enjoy a spring outing in the woods around Walden Pond and learn more about the life of Henry David Thoreau. Contact Venture Into Well-Being at 413-478-5546 to register for this free program.
- May 13 **Basic Rights workshop on State and Federal Special Education Laws** will be given 7-9 p.m. at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School in the Library, 459 Broadway in Cambridge. This training for parents

provides information to assist them in the planning, decision-making and monitoring of their child's IEP. (Individual Education Plan) It will take place in Presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN). To register or for more information call 617-236-7210, 800-331-0688 or email the Federation at <fcsninfo@fcsn.org>.

- May 13 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.
- May 14 **Parents of Autistic Children (POAC) of MA Annual Conference** at The Four Points Sheraton, 420 Totten Pond Road in Waltham, MA. Featured speakers will be Dr. Temple Grandin, Dr. Margaret Bauman and Speech Pathologist Tamara Kaspar, MS CCC/SLP. For additional information contact Donna at donna@poac.net or check the POAC website at www.poac.net/ma or www.verbalbehaviornetwork.com.
- May 15 **Partnering for Recovery and Rehabilitation: Joining Together for a Brighter Future** is a one-day conference at the Worcester Centrum Centre for anyone who wants to learn more about how people recover from mental illness and/or addictions. This free event is sponsored by Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP) that manages mental health and substance abuse services for some MassHealth Members. Program includes keynote speakers, a play and workshops. Contact wade.sanders@valueoptions.com or call 800-495-0086, press 2, extension 4147 for more information or to register.
- May 16 **Tunefoolery Concert Ensembles 10-year Anniversary Concert**, 7 pm at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave. in Cambridge (Central Square). Tunefoolery is a music group composed of and run by musicians with psychiatric disabilities, their friends and allies. For more information about the concert or **auditions** scheduled for June, call 617-576-6570, ext. 22 or check the web at www.tunefoolery.org.
- May 19 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1-3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 2. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request Interpreters. For problems with The RIDE service, call 617-222-5123 voice, or 617-222-5415 TTY.
- May 19 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now** – see the May 5th listing for details.
- May 19 **Step-by-Step Strategies for Enhancing Well-Being: An Introduction to Cognitive-Behavior Therapy**, sponsored by the Mass. General Hospital (MGH) Department of Psychiatry. See listing on April 21 for more information and registration details.
- May 19 **“First they came for...” a forum to commemorate the Holocaust** will feature panelists and discussion on contemporary lessons of exclusion and fear in times of war including the experience of Arab-Americans and immigrant groups. This 7-9 p.m. program will be held at City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway. The venue is wheelchair accessible; for other reasonable accommodations contact the Cambridge Peace Commission before April 15 at 617- 349-4694 voice or 617-492-0235 TTY.
- May 21 **All Means All: Welcoming and Supporting Children and Youth of All Abilities within Out-of-School Time Programs** – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Curry Student Center Ballroom at Northeastern University. The goals of the conference, are to help practitioners and community resource agencies: Increase access to out-of-school time programs for children and youth with disabilities, help program providers develop skills to operate effective inclusive programs, advocate for inclusive opportunities and the related needs of youth with disabilities, and develop the skills of youth with disabilities and empower them to become leaders. More information is available in the registration materials on the Parents United for Child Care website at www.pucc.com. The conference is sponsored by the Lead to Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities Initiative (LOYD) of PUCC, the Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services, and the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University. For questions, contact Susan Tufts of Parents United for Child Care at (617) 426-8288 x241.
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- May 22 **One-Day Retreat for Parents and Children with Autism**, 9 am to 5 pm at the First Baptist Church of Worcester, 111 Park Ave. This event is sponsored by the Special Ministries of the American Baptist Churches of Mass. (TABCOM). The deadline for registration (\$5/ adult or \$10/ family) is May 1. For more information contact Regina Pinto-Moura at 781-321-4202 or RevReginaPmoura@BasileiaMinsitry.com.
- May 25-27 **Conference at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. will focus on employment** opportunities for individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing and Late-Deafened and provide training and networking opportunities for State Coordinators of these services. Other VR professionals who work with the target population and leaders of consumer organizations are invited to participate. For more information contact Pat Tomlinson at 732- 477-9346 or mandalay@comcast.net.
- June 2 **MISSION EMPLOYMENT** – a statewide conference for Massachusetts workforce, disability and employment professionals at the Royal Plaza Hotel and Trade Center in Marlborough, MA. Learn about innovative strategies and approaches to help people with disabilities get good jobs. Sponsored by Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass Boston in partnership with the Dept. of Mental Retardation and the Dept. of Workforce Development. More information at www.missionemployment.org.
- June 3-4 **Building Parent and Teacher Alliances that Support Student Learning**, one day conference at Northeastern U. in Boston with guest speaker, Dr. Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot speaking on “The Essential Conversation” What Parents and Teachers Can Learn from Each Other.” \$55 for whole conference. Co-sponsored by Institute for Responsive Education and Parents’ PLACE,
- June 10 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.



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. Examples of our ongoing work include:

- Work with various City departments to ensure **compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** (ADA) and related state and federal disability rights laws;
- Provide free **disability awareness training** upon request for any Cambridge business or nonprofit entity;
- Issue **temporary disability parking permits** to Cambridge residents;
- Cosponsor the **taxi discount coupon program** with the Cambridge Council on Aging; and
- Facilitate additional **accessible parking spaces** through the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department.

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.

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

Read past issues on our website: www.cambridgema.gov/~CCPD

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