

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Let's Go to the Beach

When the sun is shining and the air is warm, there's no better place to be than at the beach, relaxing and having fun with family and friends. Here in Massachusetts we are fortunate to have miles of great beaches for people to enjoy. For individuals with mobility impairments, however, getting to the water's edge can seem like it is more trouble than it is worth. After all, you don't want to get your best set of wheels sandy and drenched with saltwater. This is where you need a special form of transportation – a beach wheelchair. Beach wheelchairs are a great way to make that seaside outing accessible to everyone.

What is a beach wheelchair? These are lightweight wheelchairs designed especially for water and a sandy terrain. They are made largely of plastic and have fat tires of rubber or plastic that will not bog down in the sand.

The person using a beach wheelchair will probably need a push because the fat wheels are not high enough for the users to propel themselves. Bring along a friend or a team of pushers. You will probably want to use an inexpensive inflatable cushion with some towels rather than a special expensive foam cushion that would probably get wet and sandy.

Most beach wheelchairs can go into the water if the bottom of the lake or bay is fairly flat and relatively smooth with no big rocks. There should also be no sudden drop-off. The chair can go into water about ten inches deep, into the shallow

waves breaking on the beach, through tidal pools or roll out to a sandbar. Do not try to go into deeper water because these lightweight chairs with their balloon tires tend to float and can tip over easily. If you want to go into deeper water you will need some sort of flotation device or raft. Even for a beach wheelchair built from PVC pipe the price is about \$2000.

Luckily, many of the state parks make them available for a low rental fee or even let you use them for free. Reservations are sometimes required and usually a good idea. Check the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) website and look for "accessible beaches": www.mass.gov/dcr/universal_access/a-swim.htm.



Locations fairly close to Boston are Cochituate State Forest (Natick), Halibut Point (Rockport), Harold Parker State Forest (North Andover), Hopkinton State Park (Hopkinton), Salisbury Beach State Park (Salisbury) and Walden Pond (Concord). On Cape Cod check out Nickerson State Park (Brewster), South Cape Beach State Park (Mashpee/Falmouth), and Scusset Beach State Reservation (Sandwich).

For more information about these beaches, parks and their accessible features you can also contact the DCR at 617-626-1250, mass.parks@state.ma.us or write to:

Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114-2104

MIT Media Lab Explores The New Science of Human Adaptability

In a day-long symposium hosted by MIT's Media Lab, people with disabilities, scientists and others examined new frontiers between technology and the human brain and body. The lively multimedia forum, hosted by journalist John Hockenberry, entitled "h2.0: New Minds, New Bodies, New Identities," explored emerging trends in human-machine interfaces, biomechanics, robotics, neuroscience, universal design, and other topics.



new minds, new bodies, new identities

MIT President Susan Hockfield described in her introductory remarks how society is on the threshold of a new era in human adaptability. "New technologies can move beyond rehabilitation to allow the disabled to redefine themselves as human beings," said Hockfield. "Looking ahead, it's clear that adaptive technologies represent a unique opportunity to enhance quality of life, and also to build a new generation of businesses built on innovation."

Keynote speaker Oliver Sacks discussed his experiences working with people with various disabilities, including amputations, blindness, and neurological impairments such as Parkinson's disease. Sacks described his explorations of phantom pain and phantom limb movement, as experienced by people with amputations.

Novel stimuli, such as music, or walking a dog, can act as a sort of "prosthetic" to help people with Parkinson's who might otherwise be unable to initiate movement. In the brains of blind people, said Sacks, the visual cortex can be "recruited" to handle other sensory inputs, such as fingertip skin sensors by braille users.

Sacks advised caution that advances in technology, when offered as adaptations to individuals with disabilities, might inadvertently strip people of a significant portion of their identity. Before offering people with disabilities radical technological adaptations, said Sacks, "One has to look at the complexion of a human life as lived up to this point, the equilibrium which people have made, their particular perceptual and social identity." "We must humanize technology, before it dehumanizes us."

One audience member at the symposium was Judy Brewer, director of the Web Accessibility Initiative at the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Cambridge resident. Brewer, who uses a motorized scooter for mobility, said the forum reminded her of something important -- "when it comes to assistive technology, don't just take whatever they hand you. Adapt it, redesign it, decorate it -- make it outrageous if you want to, but make it yours."

For video of the full day symposium, go to: <http://h20.media.mit.edu>.

New Accessible Taxicab Dispatcher

Starting June 18, there is a new toll-free phone number for accessible Cambridge taxicabs: **1-888-872-6721**, answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



In early June, The Cambridge License Commission awarded a new management contract to Ambassador

Brattle & Yellow Cab of Cambridge, to handle all accessible taxicab requests. Accessible Cambridge Taxi (ACT) is designed to provide transportation

to Cambridge customers with disabilities, including those who require a wheelchair-accessible taxicab.

“We are excited about the opportunity to serve our Cambridge community and offer the best level of transportation service,” said George Fiorenza, general manager of Ambassador Brattle. Fiorenza

continued, “We look forward to producing meaningful results with the ACT program.” The prior manager of the ACT program, Hisham Hegazy, had provided the accessible taxi dispatching services for the past three years. “I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the previous management company operated by Hisham Hegazy,” said Fiorenza.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

- July 3 & 5 **MDDA (Manic Depression & Depressive Association) Support Group at Mass. General Hospital** meets every Tuesday and Thursday, 7-9 pm 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.
- July 4 **INDEPENDENCE DAY – Have fun, be safe!** (no RSI Monthly Drop-in Group)
- July 6 **DRIVEN, National Juried Exhibition for Young Artists with Disabilities** - Sponsored by VSA arts and Volkswagen of America, Inc. for youth ages 16-25. Carl Jung said that “Art is a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him (her) its instrument.” The exhibition is looking for art – representational and abstract – that illustrates what drives, motivates, and sustains the artist. The work may reflect the role that disability plays in this process. The grand prize is \$20,000 and the top three finalists will be honored in Washington, D.C. in late September. The **DEADLINE** for submitting all materials in digital format through café at <www.callforentry.org> is July 6, 2007. For more information and assistance contact Jennifer Wexler, Visual Arts coordinator at 202-628-2800, ext. 3885 or <jenniferw@vsarts.org>.
- July 7 **Know Yourself: The Key to a Better Life** – a conference for adults with Asperger Syndrome will be held in the LaCava Campus Center at Bentley College, 175 Forest Street in Waltham, MA from 9:30 am until 4:30 pm. Keynote speakers are Zosia Zaks, an adult with AS and author of *Life and Love: Positive Strategies for Autistic Adults*, and Stephen Shore, author of two books, the latest being *Ask and Tell: Self-Advocacy and Disclosure for People on the Autism Spectrum*. There will also be a choice of three workshops and a opportunity to join various interest groups. Registration is \$50; partial scholarships are available. For more information contact Jamie Freed at <Jamie.freed@aane.org> or 617-393-3824, ext. 5 Sponsored by Asperger’s Association of New England, at <www.aane.org>.
- July 9 **Kayaking on Walden Pond in Concord**, 10 am – 3 pm each Monday through August 13. Join *All Out Adventures* to learn the skills of flat water kayaking. Adaptive equipment, instruction, lifeguard and assistance are provided. The fee is \$5 per person. Call 413-527-8980 to register. This activity is sponsored in part by Universal Access Program of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.
- July 10 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. They meet 7:30 to 9:30 pm 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>.

- July 11 **Kayaking at Hopkinton State Park, 10 am – 4 pm each Wednesday** through August 15
Join Outdoor Recreation of Hopkinton for flat water kayaking; learn new skills. Fee is \$5 per person. Call 508-435-3965 to register; sponsored by Universal Access Program of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- July 11 **Manic Depression & Depressive Association (MDDA) Bipolar Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7 to 9 pm at **McLean Hospital in Belmont** (Demarneffe Building, 1st floor lobby). Includes a lecture; 7 to 8 pm, on the second and fourth Wednesdays. Call 617-855-3665 for more information.
- July 12 **Kayaking on Spot Pond / Middlesex Fells** in Stoneham, 10 am – 4 pm, Thursdays through August 15 (*skipping July 5*). Join Outdoor Recreation of Hopkinton for flat water kayaking; learn new skills. Fee is \$5 per person. Call 508-435-3965 to register; sponsored by Universal Access Program of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
- July 12 **Adaptive Sailing on the Charles River** – Meet at Community Boating on the Esplanade near the Hatch Shell each Thursday from 11 am to 3 pm. Learn to sail in modified sailboats with adaptive support, life guard on duty and assistance with launching. Several different seating configurations are available depending on the person's needs. Participants may choose between a short sailboat ride or a more formal extended lesson. The program is co-sponsored by the Universal Access Program of the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Pre-registration is required and each session costs \$1. For more information call Marcin Kunicki at Community Boating, 617-523-1038, ext 23 or go to the website at <www.community-boating.org/>. This program is also available at the same time on these Saturdays: July 7 & 21, August 4 & 18, and Sept. 1, and select Sundays from 10 am to 2 pm: July 29, August 12 & 26, and Sept. 9.
- July 12 **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.
- July 14 **Afternoon tour of Edward Hopper exhibition at Museum of Fine Arts given in ASL** – One of the 20th century's most popular artists, Hopper's luminous paintings captured classic images of middle-class America. This new exhibit features nearly 100 of the artist's most celebrated paintings, watercolors, and prints. This FREE tour, 2 – 3 pm for Deaf visitors will be given in sign language only (no spoken English). The tour is limited to 10 visitors; pre-registration required! Contact Ruth Kahn at <rkahn@mfa.org> by Monday, July 9 to register. Go to the West Wing entrance, on Museum Road, off Huntington Avenue. The tour will be presented again from 6 to 7 pm on Thursday, July 19.
- July 17 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) monthly meeting** on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston.
- July 19 **Evening tour of Edward Hopper exhibition at Museum of Fine Arts given in ASL** – This FREE tour, 6 – 7 pm, for Deaf visitors will be given in sign language only. The tour is limited to 10 visitors; pre-registration required! Contact Ruth Kahn at <rkahn@mfa.org>. See July 14 listing for details.

- July 23 – Aug.10 **Access to the Theater Summer Institute for young people ages 13 – 24** will meet Monday – Friday, 9 am – 3 pm for three weeks at Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont Street. This award winning program provides an inclusive theater based experience for youth with and without disabilities. Tuition is \$300; scholarships are available. Sponsored by Partners for Youth with Disabilities. For more information contact Deep Chinappa at <dchinappa@pyd.org> or call 617-556-4075, ext. 20 voice or 617-314-2989 TTY.
- July 25 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets 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, to request Interpreters, or confirm date and time of meeting. Due to security measures, please bring proper identification to gain entrance to all meetings.
- July 26 **Celebrate the 17th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act** with the Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Councils annual ADA Celebration & Picnic at Dunn State Park, Rte. 101 in Gardner. Food and entertainment will be provided, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you can offer PCA's or any other types of support or assistance, or, if you just need additional information, please let us know; to join us, R.S.V.P by July 16, 2007 to Steve Higgins, <steveh@masilc.org> or (508) 620-7452.
- July 26 **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 large 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
- August 1 **Manic Depression & Depressive Association (MDDA) Bipolar Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7 to 9 pm at McLean Hospital in Belmont (See July 11 for details.)
- August 1 **RSI (repetitive strain injury) Monthly Drop-in Support & Information Meeting** (no registration is necessary) on first Wednesday of each month, 5:30 to 7 pm at 650 Beacon Street in Boston, 4th floor Conference Room, steps from the Kenmore Square MBTA station, and a few doors to the right of 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, check NEW website at <www.rsiaction.org>
- August 9 **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.
- August 14 **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 (See July 10 listing for details.)
- August 21 **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.

- August 22 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. [note different time] at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room #2. 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.
- August 25 **Kayaking on regional lakes and rivers** – Learn new skills in a two-person kayak adapted to meet your needs. Fee of \$55 includes equipment, individualized instruction, snacks and transportation between departure and activity site. Sponsored by Outdoor Explorations (OE) whose innovative and cooperative approach to adventure helps make the outdoors a welcoming place for people with disabilities. For more information or to register, contact OE at 781-395-4999 or <info@outdoorex.org>. Offered again on Saturday, Sept. 8.
- Sept. 5 **RSI Monthly Drop-in Group** – first Wednesday of the month, see August 1 for details
- Sept. 5 **Manic Depression & Depressive Association (MDDA) Bipolar Support Group** meets every Wednesday evening, 7 to 9 pm at McLean Hospital in Belmont (See July 11 for details.)
- Sept. 8 **Kayaking on regional lakes and rivers** –Sponsored by Outdoor Explorations (OE); see August 25 listing for details.
- Sept. 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.
- October 16 **Employment for People with Psychiatric Disabilities** will be the topic of a panel discussion sponsored by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities. This noontime presentation will be at the “City Hall Annex” 344 Broadway in the second floor conference room. Watch for more details.
-

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

Kenneth E. Reeves, *Mayor*
 Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., *Vice-Mayor*
 Henrietta Davis
 Marjorie C. Decker
 Anthony D. Galluccio
 Craig A. Kelley
 Brian Murphy
 E. Denise Simmons
 Michael A. Sullivan



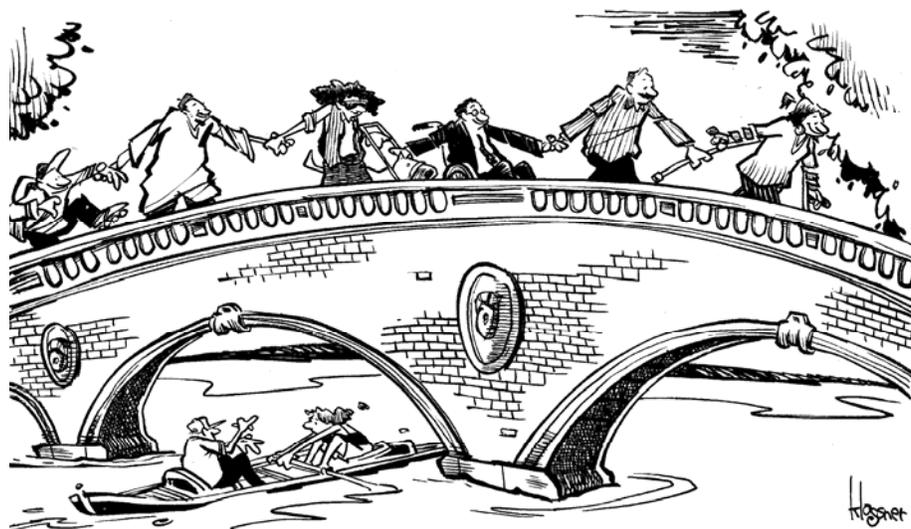
City Administration

Robert W. Healy, *City Manager*
 Richard C. Rossi, *Deputy City Manager*
 Ellen Semonoff, *Assistant City Manager, Human Service Programs*

Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Michael Muehe, *Executive Director/ADA Coordinator*
 Carolyn Thompson, *Disability Project Coordinator*

Laura Brelsford, <i>Chair</i>	David Krebs
Kate Patton, <i>Secretary</i>	Owen O'Riordan
Larry Braman	Donald Summerfield
Maureen Coyne	Rachel Tanenhaus
Susan Ellis Holland	Dave Wood
Eileen Keegan	



AccessLetter is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
part of the Department of Human Service Programs,
51 Inman Street, second floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

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

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

If you would rather receive your copy of AccessLetter electronically, please provide us with your name and e-mail address. To request that your name be removed from our mailing list, contact us at: 617-349-4692 Voice, 617-492-0235 TTY, 617-349-4766 Fax or

cthompson@cambridgema.gov

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

51 Inman Street, second floor
Cambridge, MA 02139