

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Accessible Taxis to Share Dispatcher

Responding to longstanding complaints from people with disabilities about the lack of wheelchair-accessible taxicab service, the Cambridge License Commission initiated a centralized dispatch program in August. Called Accessible Cambridge Taxi (ACT), the program will ensure that people with disabilities can obtain an accessible taxicab anytime of the day or night by calling a single toll-free number: 1-800-6161-ACT (or 1-800-616-1228).

Following a bid process, the City of Cambridge awarded a one-year contract to Cambridge Cab Company, which will manage the ACT program and coordinate dispatching among the city's seven accessible taxicabs. Over the next year, the program will be evaluated to determine any adjustments that need to be made. ACT manager Hisham Hegazy, who has many years of experience operating accessible taxicabs, stated, "My priority is people with disabilities and the elderly--I want to satisfy this community and the city." Continued Hegazy, "My goal is to be committed to this program full time, to run it full time."



Accessible Taxicabs in Cambridge

Prior to the start of the ACT program, people with disabilities often had to dial several numbers before finding any accessible taxicabs available, and often found evening and weekend taxi service completely unavailable.

Cambridge's seven wheelchair-accessible taxicabs -- a mix of minivans and full-size vans -- charge the same rates as conventional cabs. When not serving priority customers -- people with disabilities and elderly -- these taxis are free to serve the general public.

The ACT program was the result of a two-year collaboration by the License Commission, the Commission for Persons with Disabilities, the Cambridge Council on Aging, and the Taxicab Subcommittee (made up of taxicab owners, drivers and radio services).

In announcing the ACT Program, Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi said, "working together with a new idea and unique approach we can have improved service delivery for the citizens of Cambridge."

25th Anniversary Celebration & Forum on Assistive Technology

The Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities is staging two big events this fall and you are invited. To highlight October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month we are holding a forum on Assistive technology during the day on October 6. Then on the evening of November 17 (*not Oct. 12 as earlier advertised*) at the Citywide Senior Center we will observe our 25th Anniversary with a Gala Celebration where Robert Reich will be the keynote speaker. There will be more information about this party later. Please mark both these dates on your calendars!



Assistive Technology Removes Barriers to Work

Being able to do a job or stay on the job for many individuals with disabilities means having the tools and technology they need to perform certain tasks. This might be as simple as a text messaging cell phone, a monitor with a larger screen or an adapted keyboard. For others it could mean an ergonomically designed chair or voice activated software for their computer.

(Assistive Technology cont'd page 2)

(Assistive Technology continued)

Come to a forum on *Assistive Technology at Work* during your lunch hour on Wednesday, October 6 to see what's available and talk to the experts. Interactive exhibits set up around the room where individuals will demonstrate the technology, answer questions, and maybe let attendees try it out. This will all take place from 12 – 2 p.m. at the new

City Hall Annex (2nd floor conference room), 344 Broadway at the corner of Inman Street in Cambridge.

There will also be information available on how employees can request reasonable accommodations related to their jobs.



This event is being co-sponsored by the Cambridge Employees Committee on Diversity and the Commission for Persons with Disabilities. It is open to the public, but all City staff are especially invited to attend. Lunch will be provided.

Since 1945 October has been designated National Disability Employment Awareness Month to call attention to the experience and skills of Americans with disabilities. These individuals comprise a large and often "...untapped source of capable employees and customers" says Roy Grizzard, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy. We all need to tackle the unnecessary obstacles to employment that many people with disabilities face everyday.

Cambridge Resident Volunteers at DNC

Early in the summer, the Democratic National Convention (DNC) actively recruited the Boston area disability community to serve as volunteers to help with disabled delegates, press, guests and other visitors attending the Convention. It was an extraordinary opportunity to serve and many disabled persons responded to help other disabled persons at the Fleet Center in late July. Their gratitude to the disability volunteers, became a source of fun, as did the camaraderie that developed among the volunteers

On Monday, the first day of the Convention, we assembled in the staging area, a nearby church, and then walked over to the Fleet Center as a group, where we were given our credentials to get in. This was a color-coded, boarding pass-sized cardboard with a holographic imprint on it,

which you wore it around your neck with a long black cord. The color of the pass reflected the level of access to the Convention that you had.

The overwhelming massive security was the first thing you noticed. Outside the Fleet Center a cadre of police in black armored suits trotted, not fast walking nor running, but an actual trot, as a group, perhaps as many as 30, which is very impressive. Snipers were on rooftops, secret service agents in black suits and ear coil wires, emergency decontamination tents and vans were in readiness, fire trucks and police cars by the tens parked on the streets, and police were evident every 10 feet or so. On top of this were the armies, the Army reservists and the National Guard, including MPs and SWAT teams. Not to mention the low-flying and noisy helicopters. Despite the surreal militaristic atmosphere, one felt safe.

We had our credentials scanned and then walked to the magnetometer area, which, because they are situated in large white tents, was called "Mag Village." At this security checkpoint you walked through magnetic arches, and if you set off an alarm you then got wanded by a guard, similar to airport security checkpoints.

The Disability Access Service Center office for the DNC was in reality the Customer Service Office on the 4th floor of the Fleet Center, opposite the larger-than-life statue of a brown bear, which became a point of reference to those calling for directions to our office. The DNC convention staff had made a very large DNC T-shirt for him so he looked like a very ferocious gargantuan version of Winnie-the-Pooh, which became a popular backdrop for pictures.

My job evolved into staffing the desk and telephone in the office. We had lots of inquiries from the press who mistook our office for the Press Office next door. While we were working in the office, Caroline Kennedy stopped by to say hello, which was extraordinarily thoughtful of her.

In essence, the transportation plan for getting disabled individuals to their appointed places was to have them come on a shuttle from their hotels, disembark at the Fleet Center where golf carts [from the Transportation Office] would take them inside the entrance to the Convention Hall. From there they would be met by our volunteers with wheelchairs and taken by elevator to their floor seats. It sounds easy enough, but I got so many calls from people trying to arrange specific times to meet their arrivals, where they should get on the golf carts, whom to talk to about it, the address for the Fleet Center, etc. These were mainly from people who didn't want to take their shuttle

but arrive by taxis that couldn't get near the Fleet Center because of the security. The transportation office could only provide golf cart transportation from the shuttle stop, near the Fleet Center, not from several blocks away.

The Secret Service would only allot one elevator for people with disabilities and it could only carry three wheelchairs at a time, which made getting the disabled delegates to their seats very time consuming.

Unfortunately, for a short period on the first night, the elevator got stuck between the 2nd and 3rd floors with people in wheelchairs, but it was fixed and the slow elevation and descent continued until the crisis at the end of the evening when all of them wanted to leave at the same time. Surprisingly, there were no elevators allocated to able-bodied people and many didn't want to use the escalators, which caused a problem by making it very difficult for those in wheelchairs to get to their designated seats. Finally, we had to station people at the elevators to insure that the disabled delegates were able to get where they needed to be.

We had only 13 wheelchairs for about 60 people the first night. The plan was to wheel them to the special areas where the regular seating had been removed to provide access to wheelchairs, help them transfer to folding chairs there, and then return the wheelchairs to the office to use for the next person who needed one. However, the wheelchairs all disappeared, probably taken by people using them to go to the restroom or to their parties, etc.

On the second day the disability services were much more organized and ran more smoothly, due in part to the arrival of 30 additional wheelchairs, even though they had arrived late because the truck that delivered them was in an accident and then they had to be gone over by security before they could be brought into the convention center. The Fleet Center has a family unisex rest room, but it was behind the press area where the floor was strewn with cables that had been covered with cardboard. This must have made it hard for the people using wheelchairs to navigate.

I also gave out assistive listening devices and a man who needed one helped me to figure out that the suitcase that stored the batteries was also the charging unit, so I charged the 20 or so batteries. The long-necked loops for the Assistive listening devices arrived on the third night, but by then the hearing impaired had mostly given up on the technology since they didn't work well with the short cords that they had originally been given. We also got requests for the many ASL [American Sign Language] interpreters for the deaf who were on call at all times, and

we located a limited number of closed caption TV's for delegates who needed them. We had only four or five requests for the Braille Convention Handbook while I was there, though we had five or six boxes of them. For such large [12"x12" and about 3" thick] books, they are surprisingly light. The last night when I got home my final task was to call and remind a DNC staff person to find out if we could donate the boxes of Braille handbooks to a school for the blind.

As the 100,000 red, white and blue balloons stationed in the ceiling were in countdown to release, I left the Convention to catch my ride home. While walking down the streets leading out to Gate D, I passed the ubiquitous state and municipal police, the men in black swat uniforms, the men in black with white ear coils, the Mag Tent where people were still being screened and wanded, the Port-A-Potties lined up in a row, the green covered fence with no vocal demonstrators on the other side, all marking the final night of the Convention and the Army MPs still standing guard over all.

The DNC's disabilities consultant, Kevin McGuire, said "Without question, [the disability volunteers] all made access for people with disabilities work at the DNC convention." Another one of our supervisors, Tim Schofield, said, "Let me add my voice to the chorus of praise and gratitude [to the disability volunteers]. I was truly honored to work with all of you and am absolutely in awe of your commitment and hard work."

It was hard work yet thrilling for all of us to be there helping disabled Conventioneers, but it was even more thrilling to share in being part of the greater community of Americans and concerned world citizens. Great for the Democratic Party's commitment to inclusiveness and great for the disabled and able volunteers who rose to unexpected heights and personal fulfillment! It was a Win-Win-Win experience: a win for the disabled, a win for Americans, and a win for the Democratic Party.

Here are some comments shared by disability volunteers after the Convention, that reflect our experiences of working together:

"It was great to work with all of you. You can tell a great group of people not when times are good but when they are not – cart batteries that were not charged, an elevator that broke down, chairs that were not returned, and VIPs who thought they were very, very, very, special. Yet we coped. We improved every day. To see and hear that the delegates were enjoying themselves is proof enough. That,

my friends, is how a team works together. I hope to see all of you soon.”

“Well, it has now been a week and we have all had a chance to recover from the Convention. I want to add my thanks to the chorus. As a person with disability, I must tell you no matter how frustrated I got over the four days, my heart was happy to see so many people with disabilities participating in the democratic process. You should all

take pride in having made it possible for more than 100 people (minimum) to participate in the process. Without your help their voices would have been shut out of the Convention. Once again thank you for your great work. I hope we will all stay in touch.”

--by Anonymous

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

- Sept. 7 – Nov. 6 **Magnificent Obsessions** – Gateway Gallery at 62 Harvard Street in Brookline presents an exhibit that probes the realms of abstraction and non-objective art making by local artists with disabilities. Gallery hours are 9-4:30 Monday - Friday and noon to 5 on Saturday; the Craft Store is open 11-6 Monday – Friday and noon to 5 on Saturday. For more information go to <www.gatewayarts.org>.
- Sept. 19 **“Freedom Machines” on WGBH 44 at 9 pm takes compelling look at Assistive Technology.** The film challenges viewers to look at the gap between potential and reality for many Americans with disabilities - and what can be done about it. Freedom Machines is not a profile of "unusual" people who have "overcome their disabilities" or succeeded "despite" their physical conditions. Rather, in showing what is possible, the film asks viewers to question accepted ideas of what disability means. The program explores how human experience and technological innovations are outpacing social policies-and the perceptions that have guided them. For more information about this film, go to the WGBH website at <www.pbs.org/pov/pov2004/freedommachines/index.html>.
- Sept. 21 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston.
- Sept. 22 **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.
- Sept. 23 **Autism Parent Support Group in Arlington**, 9:30-11 a.m. at May Center for Early Childhood Education, 10 Acton St. Facilitator is Gail Kastorf <gkastorf@nsarc.org>. For more information contact the ASC Autism Support Center at 978-777-9135 or check their web page at <www2.shore.net/~nsarc/>
- Sept. 23 **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 or Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 (voice).
- Sept. 27 **Want to go to work? Can't Get a Job?** Why are so many people with disabilities currently unemployed? Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL) is holding several community focus groups for people in the disability community who want to tackle this employment puzzle. Come to Curtis Hall, 20 South Street in Jamaica Plain at 2 p.m. for the first of these meetings. Organizers want to particularly hear from people who have been in job training or counseling programs and are still out of work or are in jobs for which they are not suited. For more information or to request accommodations, contact Andrew Forman at 617-38-6665 voice or 617-338-6662 TTY. (see Oct. for meeting in Brookline)

- Sept. 28 **Connecting Communities: Collaborating to Improve Sexual and Domestic Violence Services for Survivors with Disabilities** is a Jane Doe, Inc. one-day training institute to strengthen the capacity of member organizations to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. If you need ASL interpretation or some other accommodation for a disability, contact Jane Doe, Inc. at 14 Beacon Street in Boston or 617-557-1829 voice, 617-248-0902 fax, 617-263-2200 TTY or <training@janedoe.org> by Sept. 14. Conference will be held in Worcester at the Holiday Inn from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration is \$25 / person; each member organization can send two attendees at **no charge**.
- Sept. 28 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Support Group** will meet *weekly* Sept 28 through Nov. 16 on Tuesdays evenings from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Harvard Vanguard Building (4th floor conference room) in Kenmore Square, 650 Beacon Street. Facilitated sessions will feature expert speakers on topics such as medical treatment, legal issues and speech recognition. Advance registration is necessary. \$10 fee covers costs. For more information, email <info@rsiaction.org> or leave message at 617-247-6827.
- Sept.28 **Support Group for Parents of Middle and High School Students with Autism**, 6:30 - 8 p.m. in Burlington Public Library (2nd floor meeting room) 22 Sears Street in Burlington. Facilitator if Susan Gilroy, <sgilroy@nsarc.org> or 978-777-9135, ext. 202 or go to www2.shore.net/~nsarc/.
- Sept. 29 **Reasonable Accommodations for People with Physical and Mental Disabilities**, a seminar for housing management professionals, service providers and residents that covers information on disability fair housing laws and gives practical examples of reasonable accommodations, especially for people with psychiatric and mental disabilities, alcohol and drug addiction and HIV/AIDs. Registration fees vary from \$25-60 depending on professional membership. Seminar will be held at Blake Estates, 1344 Hyde Park Ave in Hyde Park (Boston) from 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. For access accommodations contact Carol St. Cyr no later than one week prior to the training date at 617-854-1090 voice, 617-854-1025 TTY, or <cstcyr@masshousing.com>.
- Sept.30 **The Student with Traumatic Brain Injury**, a seminar at Children's Evaluation Center, 193 Oak Street, Suite 1, Newton, MA from 7 – 9 p.m. for parents and professionals. Speakers will offer jargon-free explanations of what traumatic brain injury (TBI) is and how it impacts the child or adolescent at school and home. Child and adolescent survivors of TBI frequently display a challenging array of learning needs, but often do not receive the supports that they require. Practical suggestions and recommendations will be offered with time for questions. Presenters are Joseph E. Moldover, Psy.D, a fellow in pediatric neuro-psychology, Sarah Ward, M.S., a speech-language pathologist and past president of the Massachusetts Brain Injury Association, and Ann Helmus, Ph.D., co-director of the Children's Evaluation Center. RSVP to Joseph Moldover at 617-641-0900 ext. 17 or Email to <joe_moldover@hotmail.com>.
- October 1 **Legislative Advocacy Training** from 1-3 p.m. in Room A1 (annex) of the State House in Boston. Sponsored by the Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) and the Mass. Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) this is an opportunity to learn about the legislative process and how to be more effective in talking with your legislators. CART and ASL will be available. To request accommodations or reserve a place contact the DPC at 617-542-5540 or <dpc_ma@yahoo.com>.
- October 1 **Want to go to work? Can't Get a Job?** Come community focus group at Brookline Public Library, 361 Washington Street in Brookline at 2 p.m. to share your experience. (For details, see listing for Sept. 27. See Oct. 8 for meeting in Boston.)
- October 4 **New Freedom for Elders: The Path of Least Restriction**, Mass. Home Care's 16th Annual Network Conference at the Hogan Campus Center, Holy Cross College in Worcester. Presentations from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. will focus on new and innovative housing and services for elders in the community with a keynote addresses by Meryl Price, Asst. Secretary in Mass. Executive Office of Elder Affairs and Patrick Flood, Commissioner of the Vermont Dept. of Aging and Disabilities. Conference registration DEADLINE is Sept. 27; fee of \$50 covers all workshops and lunch.
- October 5 **Repetitive Strain Injury Support Group**, 6-8:30 p.m. (See Sept. 28 listing for details.) Speaker from 7:30-8:30 will be Attorney Jeffrey Mazer on Employment Issues.
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- October 6** **Assistive Technology at Work** will showcase various forms of equipment and software that can help employees with disabilities handle a variety of tasks in the workplace. October is Disability Employment Month so come talk with the experts and learn how technology is creating new job possibilities. All City staff and the public are invited to this event at City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway in Cambridge from 12 noon to 2 p.m. The exhibits will be in the second floor conference room. A light lunch will be served. This interactive forum is sponsored by the Cambridge Employees Committee on Diversity and the Commission for Persons with Disabilities. For more information contact Carolyn Thompson at 617-349-4692 voice, 617-492-0235 TTY or <cthompson@cambridgema.gov>.
- October 6** **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, a peer support group for women with chronic illness or physical/emotional disabilities meets from 2-3:30 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. in Cambridge. Contact For more information contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or <woman@braintrust.org>.
- October 6** **RSI (repetitive strain injury) Monthly Drop-in Group** (no registration is necessary) on first Wednesday of each month, 6-8 p.m. in the 2nd floor library at the Brookline Public Health Center at 11 Pierce Street. RSI Action volunteers answer questions and provide resources and support, including the opportunity to view our provider evaluation book. For more information, go to <www.rsiaction.org>, email <cnot@rsiaction.org> or call 617-247-6827. Include your phone number so you can be informed of any last-minute changes to the date or location.
- October 8** **Want to go to work? Can't Get a Job?** Come community focus group at Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL), 1st floor conference room, 95 Berkeley Street in Boston at 2 p.m. to share your experience. (For details, see listing for Sept. 27.)
- October 9** **Asperger Connections**, All-day conference (8:30 – 4) at Best Western Hotel Marlborough, MA. featuring workshops for parents, adults with Asperger syndrome, educators and professionals. Keynote speaker: Diane Adreon, Associate Director, Center for Autism and Related Disabilities, University of Miami. More information may be found on www.aane.org <<http://www.aane.org> /> or by calling 617-527-2894. at \$75/AANE member (individual); \$100/AANE member (professional).
- October 12** **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.
- October 13** **Advocating for Your Child**, 7-9 p.m. at Autism Support Center, 6 Southside Road in Danvers. North Shore ARC advocates Nancy Hofferty and Karla Murphy will teach parents how to become active members of their child's educational team through positive negotiations and effective communication. Parents will learn tips for keeping records, telephone logs, documenting conversations with school personnel and writing letters that get results. To register, please call Stephanie at 1-800-7-AUTISM, ext. 211 or email asc@nsarc.org
- October 14** **Legislative Advocacy Training** from 1-3 p.m. at the Worcester Public Library, Salem Street in Worcester. Sponsored by the Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) and the Mass. Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC) this is an opportunity to learn about the legislative process and how to be more effective in talking with your legislators. CART and ASL will be available. To request accommodations or reserve a place contact the Center for Living and Working at 508-363-1226, ext. 114 or the DPC at <dpc_ma@yahoo.com>.
- October 14** **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.
- October 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.
- October 19** **Repetitive Strain Injury Support Group**, 6-8:30 p.m. (See Sept. 28 listing for details.) Speaker from 7:30-8:30 will be Lisa Cohen, MS, PT, OCS, Physical Therapist licensed in Orthopedics - Medical Issues.
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- October 20 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, peer support group. See Oct. 6 listing for details.
- October 21 **Magnificent Obsessions RECEPTION includes a fabulous Wearable Art Fashion Show** at Gateway Gallery, 62 Harvard Street in Brookline. Music and refreshments from 6 – 8 p.m. (For more information see listing under Sept. 7 – Nov. 6.)
- October 26 **Repetitive Strain Injury Support Group**, 6-8:30 p.m. (See Sept. 28 listing for details.)
- October 27 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1-3:30 p.m. (on the 3rd Wednesday this month.) 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.
- October 29 **Making Room at the Table – Opportunities in Theological Education for People with Disabilities** is a one-day conference at Princeton Theological Seminary for seminary administrators, faculty, and students and for church leaders involved in education and clergy placement. Kathleen Black, author of *A Healing Homiletic: Preaching and Disabilities* will be the keynote speaker. \$25 fee includes lunch. DEADLINE to register is Oct. 22. For more information contact David Wall, program coordinator a Center for Continuing Education, 609-497-7990 or <david.wall@ptsem.edu>.
- October 30 **Empowerment: Mass Advocates Standing Strong annual conference** for self-advocates and professionals, 8-4 at the Holiday Inn in Worcester. Registration is \$20 for self advocates, \$30 for others. Keynote speaker is Christine Griffin of the Disability Law Center. For more information contact M.A.S.S. at 1-866-IAMABLE or 1-866-426-2253.
- October 30 **Accessible Bird Watching Open House**, 1-4 pm, at Great Falls Discovery Center, Turner's Falls, MA - This indoor / outdoor event will introduce bird watching as a multidimensional activity, with accessibility options for people with disabilities. Anyone interested in birds - with or without disabilities is welcome! Weather permitting, short excursions to view local bird life in and around the Connecticut River will be offered with carpooling. Advance registration requested, please call All Out Adventures at 413-527-8980. Reasonable accommodations available upon advance request.
- Nov. 2 **Repetitive Strain Injury Support Group**, 6-8:30 p.m. (See Sept. 28 listing for details.) Speaker from 7:30-8:30 will be Attorney William Troupe, Worker's Compensation Issues.
- Nov. 3 **RSI Monthly Drop-in Group** (see October 6 listing for details.)
- Nov. 9 **Putting Creativity to Work: A Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities** at the Radisson Hotel in Boston from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. This event is for artists with disabilities who are establishing their careers, art and business administrators interested in hiring artists with disabilities but question how to start, vocational rehabilitation professionals who want to better understand careers available in artistic environments, and educators who teach the arts and/or students with disabilities. Keynote speaker is Lisa Thorson, popular Boston based jazz vocalist and music educator. Registration fee is \$25 for artists with disabilities and \$50 for organization representatives. For more information and accommodations, contact Bonnie Kaplan, Director of Cultural Access and Conference Director, VSA arts of Mass. at 617-350-7713 voice, 617-350-6836 TTY, 617-482-4298 fax or <bsk@vsamass.org>.
- Nov. 9 **RSI Support Group**, 6-8:30 p.m. (See Sept. 28 listing for details.) Speaker from 7:30 to 8:30 will be Michael Schneider with a Speech Recognition Demonstration.
- Nov. 9 **Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meets 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. (See Oct. 12 listing for details.)
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- Nov. 11 **Accessible Bird Watching Open House**, 9:30 - 11:30 am, Massachusetts Audubon Arcadia Wildlife Sanctuary, Easthampton, MA. This indoor open house will introduce bird watching as a multi-dimensional activity, with accessibility options for people with disabilities. Everyone welcome! Special emphasis on winter bird feeding and crow behavior. Weather permitting, short excursions on sanctuary trails will take place. Advance registration requested, please call *All Out Adventures* at 413-527-8980. Reasonable accommodations available upon advance request.
- Nov. 16 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1-3:30 p.m. (on the 3rd Wednesday this month.) 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.
- Nov. 16 – 18 **Build Boston – regional tradeshow and convention for the design and construction industry** will take place at the Seaport World Trade Center in Boston. Watch for details on workshops that will focus on Universal Design. Call 800-544-1893 or visit <www.buildboston.com> for more information.
- Nov. 16 **RSI Support Group**, 6-8:30 p.m. – last meeting. (See Sept. 28 listing for details.) Speaker from 7:30 to 8:30 will be Robert Burgess, Feldenkrais Practitioner - Medical Issues/
- Nov. 17 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities – 25th Anniversary Gala Celebration**, 6 – 9 p.m. at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave. (Central Square) in Cambridge. **Keynote address by Robert Reich**, former Secretary of Labor, and recognition of the individuals and events that have helped make the City of Cambridge a leader in accessibility and services for people with disabilities. There will also be music, refreshments, and entertainment. Come join the festivities!
- Nov. 18-20 **The Arc National Annual Convention will be in Boston.** The major theme will be the participation of individuals with disabilities in the arts and public media. Registration information is available at www.thearc.orgT or call 773-348-3196

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.

Cambridge City Council

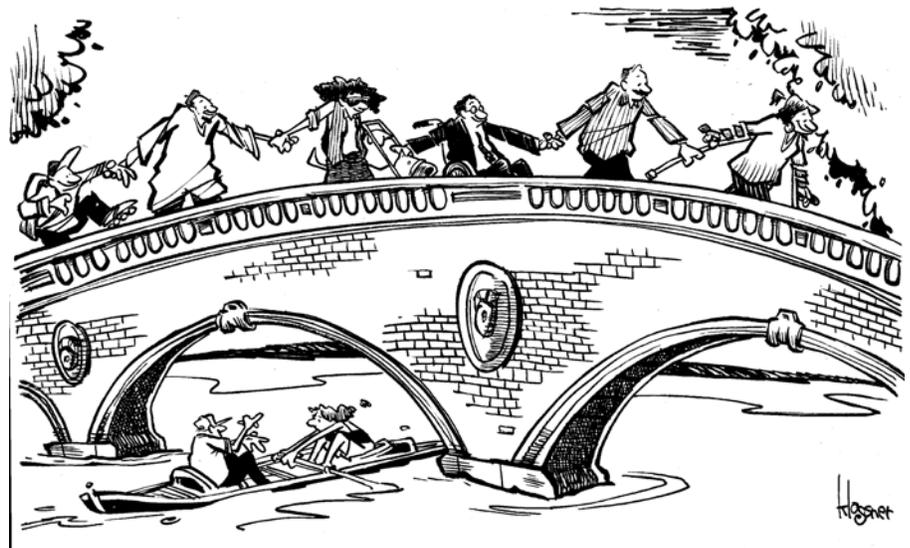
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Access**Letter** is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
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