

AccessLetter

Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities

Wheelchair Lifts Soon to Be Easier to Use



After years of advocacy by state and local disability rights activists, the Massachusetts Elevator Board announced in October that wheelchair lifts (sometimes called porch lifts) should no longer be equipped with a key in order to operate them.

Accessibility advocates have long complained that wheelchair lifts in buildings and other facilities were unnecessarily difficult to use because of an Elevator Board rule requiring lifts to be equipped with a key locking mechanism.

People who use wheelchairs often reported frustration using inclined and vertical platform lifts because building management staff were unable to locate the lift key. In some cases the staff person in possession of the lift key was not present; in other cases the lift key was simply nowhere to be found.

Also, many people with manual dexterity limitations found it difficult to operate platform lifts because of the fine motor control needed to complete this task.

“Keys, and their frequent absence from these kinds of lifts when actually needed, have been torturing people with disabilities and our friends and family for years,” said John Kelly, founder of the Neighborhood Access Group.

(More on Platform Lifts, page 2)

ADA Update Event a Success



Kathy Gips explains ADA changes

On Tuesday, October 19, CCPD hosted a noontime panel presentation entitled “The ADA Turns 20” at the Cambridge City Hall Annex. Panel presenters Kathy Gips, from the New England

ADA Center and Rachel Tanenhaus, from the Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health described recent changes in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and how those changes will affect people with disabilities and employers.

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recently issued new regulations for businesses and state and local governments. These revised DOJ rules clarify the responsibilities that businesses have under title III of the ADA, and that state & local governments have under title II of the ADA. The rules contain new definitions for service animals, wheelchairs, and other power-driven mobility devices. New ADA rules on ticketing policies for concert halls and sports arenas were also included, to promote better access for people with disabilities to these venues.

DOJ also recently adopted new ADA Standards for Accessible Design. In addition to a complete reorganization of the standards, the new rules also include more specific accessibility requirements for

(More on ADA Update, page 2)

Platform Lifts (cont. from page 1)

In a press release, the Elevator Board stated “This change will bring the elevator code into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and ultimately lead to greater access for individuals who rely upon these lifts for access.”

The old regulation requiring a key lock mechanism was rescinded as of October 15, 2010. All key mechanisms in existing platform lifts will need to be deactivated by November 1, 2011.

Myra Berloff, Director of the Massachusetts Office on Disability explained her office has been attempting to persuade the elevator board to eliminate the lift key requirement since 1997. All along, explained Berloff, the Elevator Board believed they were protecting people with disabilities by ensuring that delivery people and other unauthorized persons would not use wheelchair lifts inappropriately, denying their use by people with disabilities.



A full house at the “The ADA Turns 20” event Oct. 19

Charles Letendre, a community access monitor from Wales, Massachusetts, had filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice, pointing out that the state’s lift key requirement was in conflict with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA accessibility standards prohibit operating mechanisms from requiring tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist to operate. “I’m extremely happy – I’ve wanted this for years,” said Letendre. He said the new rules will make it easier for him and his wife, who uses a wheelchair, to attend concerts together and participate in public meetings.

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courthouses, detention facilities, and places of recreation, such as swimming pools, golf courses, children’s play areas, amusement rides, fishing piers and boating facilities.

For more information, visit www.ada.gov.

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community (See end of Calendar for all weekly/recurring events)

- Dec. 1 **FREE Cambridge Flu Clinic at the Citywide Senior Center** – Cambridge residents (age 3 and older) can receive a free seasonal flu shot at any of the Cambridge Public Health Department’s annual flu clinics this year. This clinic will be held at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Mass Ave. in Central Square from 10am to noon. While there is no charge to the public for flu shots, seniors are encouraged to bring their Medicare health insurance cards with them to the clinics. The health department is able to bill Medicare and Medicare HMOs, which helps offset program costs. For more information, call 617-665-3855 or see <www.cambridgepublichealth.org>.
- Dec. 4 **Zola Center Holiday Bazaar** – The Irving K. Zola Center for Persons with Disabilities, located at 20 Hartford Street in Newton Highlands will hold a Holiday Bazaar from 10:00AM-2:00 PM. Artists with Disabilities will sell jewelry, photography, woven items stained glass and other crafts. There will also be a

rummage sale to benefit the Zola Center with many donated items. For more information, call 617-277-5131 or email <zolacenter@juno.com>.

- Dec. 8 **FREE Cambridge Flu Clinic at the Windsor Street Health Center** – Cambridge residents (age 3 and older) can receive a free seasonal flu shot at any of the Cambridge Public Health Department’s annual flu clinics this year. This clinic will be held in the second floor large conference room at the Windsor Street Health Center, 119 Windsor Street in Cambridge, from 5pm to 7pm. While there is no charge to the public for flu shots, seniors are encouraged to bring their Medicare health insurance cards with them to the clinics. The health department is able to bill Medicare and Medicare HMOs, which helps offset program costs. For more information, call 617-665-3855 or see <www.cambridgepublichealth.org>.
- Dec. 9 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge from 5:30pm-7pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month, unless a holiday, with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 (voice) or 617-492-0235 (TTY) or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Dec. 9 **MFA Disability Film Festival Presents *Universal Signs*** – The Museum of Fine Arts will show to this film by Ann Calamia (2008, 90 min.) at 8pm in the Remis Auditorium, 465 Huntington Avenue, Boston. *Universal Signs* is the first major motion picture made in sign language, and is presented as a “foreign-language film” for hearing audiences, with English subtitles. After his fiancée’s daughter dies while in his care, a hearing-impaired man shuts himself off from the world. Haunted by memories, it is only through new friendship that he can learn to forgive, reconnect, and rediscover love. Tickets are \$8 for members, \$10 for non-members, and may be purchased online at <<http://www.mfa.org/programs/film/universal-signs>>. For more information, Contact Valarie Burrows at 617-369-3302 (voice) or 617-267-9703 (TTY), email <vburrows@mfa.org>, or see <www.mfa.org>
- Dec. 10 **Cell Phone Accessibility Solutions from the Perspective of Three Users** –Offered by Easter Seals of MA, this FREE presentation will compare and contrast the accessibility features of three popular high-end cell phones, the Droid by Motorola, the iPhone from Apple, and the Samsung Haven, from the personal perspective of three low vision users. Running applications on mobile phones has become quite popular as of late. Non-visual Access Technology companies have made applications available for DAISY playback, GPS navigation, and OCR. These users will discuss their first hand experience of using their cell phones to accomplish their day to day tasks. Although free, pre-registration is required and can be done by calling 617-226-2634 (voice) or emailing <atrc@eastersealsma.org>.
- Dec. 11 **FREE Cambridge Flu Clinic for Ages 6 months and up at the CambridgeSide Galleria Mall** – Cambridge residents 6 months and older can receive a free seasonal flu shot at this clinic sponsored by the Cambridge Public Health Department. The clinic will be held from 1pm to 4pm at the CambridgeSide Galleria Mall, 100 CambridgeSide Place, and the FluMist will be available. While there is no charge to the public for flu shots, seniors are encouraged to bring their Medicare health insurance cards with them to the clinics. The health department is able to bill Medicare and Medicare HMOs, which helps offset program costs. For more information, call 617-665-3855 or see <www.cambridgepublichealth.org>.
- Dec.11 **Visually Impaired and Blind User Group (VIBUG): Discussion about iPod and iPhone Apps and Online Shopping for the Holidays**– Members of VIBUG, which is a group serving blind and visually impaired computer users, are meeting from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at MIT, 77 Mass Ave, Building 5, Room 134 in Cambridge. At this meeting, members will share their various iPod and iPhone applications and techniques for getting the most out of their devices, and there will also be presentations from participants who use online sites to shop for holiday gifts. There will also be some computer trivia, with a prize for the winner! Annual membership dues are \$20. For more information, call 617-383-9560, email <president@vibug.org>, or see <www.vibug.org>.

- Dec.13 **Understanding Asperger Syndrome: Interventions and Strategies for Parents** – Offered by the Asperger’s Association of New England (AANE), this workshop, designed for families of newly diagnosed children, describes in detail and through real-life examples, some of the most common characteristics of AS. It also includes basic information about behavioral issues, parenting strategies, disclosure and school concerns. It offers “first step” help for parents as they begin their journey as parents of a wonderfully quirky, socially awkward, sometimes precocious, often challenging child with AS. This workshop will be held from 7:00 to 9:30pm at AANE, 85 Main St., Suite 101, Watertown, MA. Cost is \$35 for members, \$45 for non-members. For more information or to register, call 617-393-3824 or see <www.aane.org>.
- Dec.18 **Zola Center Annual Holiday Open House** – The Irving K. Zola Center for Persons with Disabilities is holding a Holiday Open House from 12:00pm to 3:00pm at 20 Hartford Street, Newton Highlands. This FREE event celebrating the holiday season will include a lunch buffet, live entertainment, and door prizes. For information, call 617-277-5131 or email <zolacenter@juno.com>.
- Jan. 8 **Another FREE movie presented by Disability Reframed: a Community Film Series** – Film title TBA. The screening, followed by comments and an open-forum discussion, will be held from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Ave. in Central Square, Cambridge. This is a free public event; bring your friends! The site is wheelchair accessible. No need to RSVP. For questions, contact the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities at 617-349-4692 (Voice), 617-492-0235 (TTY) or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov>.
- Jan.10 **Understanding Asperger Syndrome: Interventions and Strategies for Parents** – Offered by the Asperger’s Association of New England (AANE), this workshop, designed for families of newly diagnosed children, describes in detail and through real-life examples, some of the most common characteristics of AS. It will be held at AANE from 7pm to 9:30pm. Please see the December 13 listing for further details.
- Jan. 13 **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting** – meets in the 2nd floor conference room at 51 Inman Street, Cambridge from 5:30pm-7pm on the 2nd Thursday of each month, unless a holiday, with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 (voice) or 617-492-0235 (TTY) or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.
- Jan. 16 **Asperger Syndrome and Adult Life: Navigating the Massachusetts Public and Private Supports & Service Systems** – Offered by the Asperger’s Association of New England (AANE), this workshop is designed for parents of older teens and adults and for adults with Asperger Syndrome (AS), and will cover topics such as Social Security, public housing options, alternative housing and independent living options, employment supports, healthcare options and healthcare reform, and financial and legal planning. This workshop is being held from 8:30am to 4:30pm at Massachusetts Bay Community College, 50 Oakland Street, Wellesley Hills, MA. It has a snow date of January 16, 2011. Cost is \$45 for AANE members and \$95 for non-members, which includes lunch and a one-year membership. Pre-registration is required. For more information, call 617-393-3824 or see <www.aane.org>.

Weekly & Recurring Events

Ongoing by Appointment

Injured Worker Support Meetings – Meetings are scheduled by appointment, often the 1st Wednesday of the month, 5:15 - 6:45 pm. Meetings/appointments usually take place at 650 Beacon Street, Kenmore Square, Boston, 4th Floor Conference Room. Volunteers provide resources and support. For more information or to set up a meeting, call 617-247-6827, or go to <www.rsiaction.org>.

Mondays

NAMI Connection – a support group for adults with mental illness sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, meets every Monday, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Cambridge Somerville Recovery Learning Community, 153 South St, 2nd Floor in Somerville. The group is free and open to all who self-identify as having a mental illness, regardless of diagnosis. For more information, contact Janel Tan at 617-863-5388 or <tanj@vinfen.org>.

Tuesdays

Boston Voice Users – this group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software meets from 7:30 – 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>.

Wednesdays

Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA meets 1 – 3 p.m. at the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor Conference Room #2 on the 4th Wednesday of each month. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY or email <aact@ctps.org> for more information or to request interpreters. Security measures require proper ID for access to meetings.

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group meets every Wednesday evening, 7 - 9 p.m. at McLean Hospital in Belmont (de Marneffe Building, 1st floor lobby). Includes a lecture on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. Call 617-855-2795 or see <www.dbsaboston.org> for more information.

Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors – The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston offers a series of introductory one-on-one guided tours to the Museum and its collections for blind and low vision individuals who want to build a deeper relationship with the Museum. Each monthly session focuses on a different collection and includes wayfinding and verbal description of spaces. These tours are given on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10:30 am and the 3rd Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Individuals can attend one or more sessions, whichever interests them. Guided tours can also be scheduled at other times. Pre-registration is not required unless a visitor needs a sighted guide or other access accommodation. Contact Valerie Burrows at 617-369-3302 or <vburrows@mfa.org> to register. Call 617-369-3189 or email <access@mfa.org> or go to <www.mfa.org> for more information. The MFA is located at 465 Huntington Avenue in Boston, 02115 and is accessible by the Green line “E” train to the “Museum of Fine Arts” stop, or the Orange line train to the “Ruggles” stop.

Free introductory tour of MFA in sign language & with assistive listening devices –A new monthly offering at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) in Boston for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. These tours will be given at 6:30 pm on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. No pre-registration is required; meet at the Sharf Visitor Center in the MFA. For more information about accessible programs Valerie Burrows at 617-369-3302 voice, 617-267-9703 TTY or email <access@mfa.org>.

Open Support Group for Adults on the Autism Spectrum – Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 7-8:30 pm at the offices of the Autism Association of New England (AANE), 85 Main St., Suite 101, Watertown, MA. Hosted by Jamie Freed; a \$5 donation is suggested. RSVP to 617-393-3824, x310 or <Jamie.Freed@aane.org>.

Rainbow Support Group for Adults with Developmental Disabilities – Funded by Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong and the Department of Developmental Services, and hosted by Cambridge Family & Children's Service (CFCS), this group provides an opportunity for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals with developmental challenges to find their voice, be heard and supported in a safe, friendly environment. Participants must be at least 22 years old. Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, 6:00-7:30 pm through December at CFCS, 60 Gore Street, Cambridge, which is accessible by taking the MBTA Green Line to the Lechmere station. NOTE: Beginning in January, the meetings will take place from 4:30pm to 6:00pm. For more information, contact Leah Meiselbach at <lmeiselbach@helpfamilies.org> or 617-876-4210, x133.

Senior Support Group for caregivers over 60 – meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Family Resource Center, 20 Gould Street in Reading. Share and learn with other seniors who have adult family members with developmental disabilities. For meeting times or more information, contact Judy SantaMaria at 781-942-4888, x4022 or <familysupport@theemarc.org>.

Thursdays

Autism Support Group – meets 3rd Thursday of each month, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at the Central Square Branch of Cambridge Public Library, 45 Pearl Street in Cambridge. For more information contact Lorraine Iacopucci at <liacopucci@nsarc.org> or 978-624-2304.

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) Monthly Meeting – meets on the 2nd Thursday, unless a holiday, of each month at 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7 p.m. with opportunity for public comment. Call 617-349-4692 or email <kthurman@cambridgema.gov> for more information or to request accommodations.

DBSA-Boston (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance of Boston) Support Group – meets at Mass. General Hospital every Thursday, 7 - 9 p.m. in the Schiff Conference Center Room, Suite 4A 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 or email <mghgroup@dbsaboston.org>.

“Piecing the Puzzle,” a Parent to Parent Autism Support Group – meets in Jefferson Park Community Room #1, at Jackson Place in Cambridge every Thursday from 10 am to 12 noon. The purpose of this group is to provide support and understanding to families with children on the autism spectrum and to increase autism awareness in the community. Sponsored by Cambridge Family & Children's Services in collaboration with the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS). For more information or to become a member, contact Yevett Fraticelli at <piecing_the_puzzle@yahoo.com> or 617-876-4210, x105.

Saturdays

Boston Acquired Brain Injury Support Group (BABIS) – The mission of this free support group is to provide a positive forum for peer socialization, hope and education for people with acquired brain injury, their family and friends. This group is held on the 1st Saturday of the month (NOTE: the group is not meeting in October) from 10am-12pm at Spaulding Rehab Hospital, conference rooms 8A & AB, 125 Nashua Street, Boston. No registration required, just show up! For more information, call Sally Johnson at 617-573-2539, email <babisgroup@hotmail.com>, or see <www.babis.info/>.

Sundays

Feeling for Form Introductory Tour of MFA for blind & low vision visitors –These tours are given on the 1st Sunday of the month at 10:30 am. Pre-registration is not required for the Sunday tours unless a sighted guide or other access accommodation. See Wednesday listing for 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

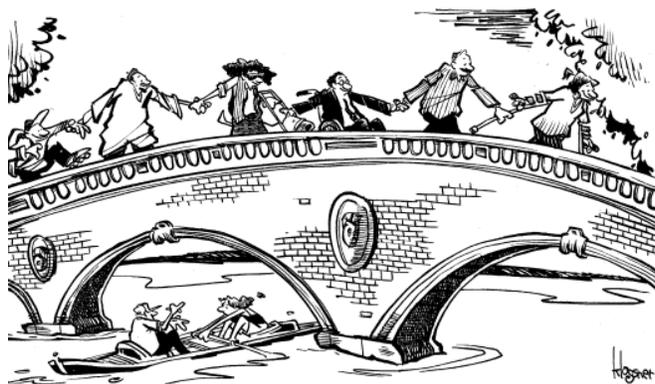
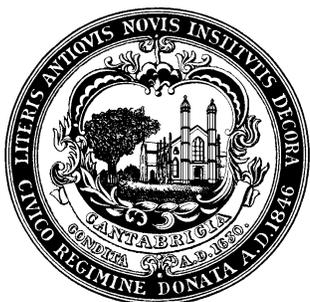
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AccessLetter is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
part of the Department of Human Service Programs,

51 Inman Street, second floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

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

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