

CAMBRIDGE AT HOME

NEWSLETTER

April 2008, Volume II, Issue 1

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OPEN HOUSE

Bring your friends to learn more about Cambridge At Home!

Saturday, May 3rd, 10 a.m.
Piper Auditorium
Harvard Graduate School of Design
48 Quincy Street
(across from Memorial Hall)

Membership drive aims for 350 households

When Cambridge At Home opened its doors in October 2007, our membership total was 189 households. In the months that followed, more than 30 additional households became members, raising the current total to 223. To maintain this momentum, the organization launched a 2008 Membership Drive in January.

Kathy Spirer, Executive Director of Cambridge At Home, says that “our goal is to reach 350 households, the size at which we project that we can break even financially without significant gifts or funding from grants.” By the end of February, membership had reached almost two-thirds of that goal.

The membership drive began with a letter to 2,100 households, mailed on January 22. The slogan of the drive is “Make sure that Cambridge At Home is

there when you need it.” As the recruitment letter went into the mail, a message went out to all current members, asking for their participation in the membership drive. Shortly afterward, trustees and volunteers began writing personal notes to people they know, urging them to join.

Alice DeLana, chairperson of the Membership Committee, invites as many members as possible to join in the recruitment efforts. She notes that “if each current member could recruit just one other, we would be ahead of our goal.” The ideal, she said, is “Each one reach one.”

President Steven Stadler noted that “constant attention to recruitment is a permanent and critical element in the business of Cambridge At Home.”

See membership profile on page 2

Ensuring safety in the home

The weather outside was frightful, but the light-filled private dining room of Henrietta’s Table was a cheerful retreat for members and staff of Cambridge At Home. They enjoyed a convivial lunch there while hearing talks by representatives from two of our strategic allies, who described ways to adapt our homes to make them safer for older residents.

Nicole Deaner from HouseWorks started off by distributing information about risk factors for falls, and ways to prevent them. She identified areas of the

house that deserve special attention, including the entryway, the kitchen, the bathroom, the bedrooms and closets, the stairways and other paths of frequent travel.

HouseWorks can arrange for a representative to visit a home, assess the possible danger areas, and advise residents about how to improve their safety. Common recommendations include better lighting, use of non-skid mats under scatter rugs, grab bars in the shower and tub, and handrails on all stairways.

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Taxi complaints

In our last issue, we described how members could obtain taxi discount coupons through the CAH office. We now hear that Cambridge cab drivers are not always enthusiastic about accepting coupons as part of the fare! Riders have recourse through a complaint form that can be lodged with the Cambridge License Commission. The forms are available from the office; please call 617-864-1715. This is a way in which CAH members can apply pressure to ensure that cab drivers treat older citizens with the respect and courtesy that they deserve.

Help wanted

Bridge players

Walking-group members

Interest-group hosts:

- *coffee & conversation*
- *music*
- *sketching, drawing, & painting*
- *knitting & needlework*
- *woodworking*
- *play-reading*
- *current events*

Volunteers to help other members with transportation, errands, home visits, etc.

Please call the office at 617-864-1715 to volunteer for any of these activities!

Profile of membership

Current membership in Cambridge At Home is 223 households. Comprising 118 singles and 105 couples, the total is 328 individuals. Members range in age from their mid-50's to their mid-90's, with the largest cohorts in the 70's and 80's. At the right is a chart showing distribution by age.

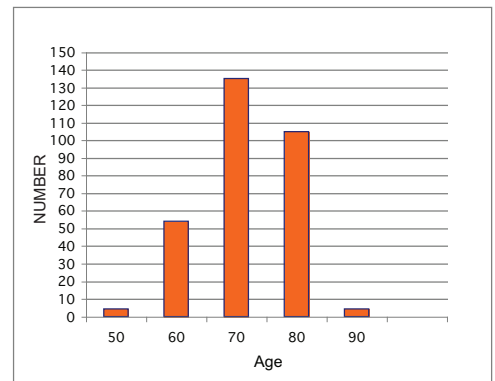
Members are very actively using services and participating in planned events. According to Sarah Marcotte, Membership Coordinator, a recent poll by the staff indicates that all but 34 members have contacted the office for household help or attended one of the events.

She reports that "interest is high in the free grocery shopping trips that now occur four times a week." She added that free exercise classes, held thrice weekly, are also popular.

Requests for household help have included appeals for chimney sweeps, in-

home podiatrists, hot-tub repairmen, and tree removal experts, as well as everyday needs like housekeepers, snow removers, window washers, and handymen.

Special events that focus on the arts attract many members, reports Kristen Cahill, Activities Coordinator, but members have also enjoyed presentations about scientific topics, such as the search for water on Mars.



Upcoming events

Call the office at 617-864-1715 to reserve your place at these events.

April 4, Friday – Bruni Barber, a member of CAH and docent at the Harvard University Art Museums, will give a tour of the Busch-Reisinger Museum, which specializes in Central and Northern European art from the 20th century. Lunch follows at the nearby *Grafton Street Pub and Grill*. Visit the museum now, before it closes for years.

April 10, Thursday – David G. Strachan, Jr., a Vice-President and Trust Officer at the Cambridge Trust Company, will discuss legal documents that individuals should have to manage their assets and financial affairs properly during their lives and in case of incapacity or death. He will also discuss financial, tax, and estate planning that people should consider as they plan for the future. The discussion will be interactive, with attendees free to ask questions and review individual situations.

April 29, Tuesday – Need a break from cooking? Some of our personal chefs and local food shops will be offering samples of their wares at 38 Cameron Street in Cambridge at 12:00 noon. Join the tasting party, and find out what you can order to serve family and friends in your own home!

May 13, Tuesday – Cathy Hoffman, Director of the Cambridge Peace Commission, will join us for lunch and discussion. The Commission, founded in 1982, promotes peacemaking in Cambridge at personal, neighborhood and citywide levels by promoting ideas and programs that affirm diversity and build community.

June 9, Monday – Professor Marshall Goldman, an internationally recognized expert on Russian history, politics, and economics, has met with Mikhail Gorbachev and interviewed Vladimir Putin. He will discuss his latest book, *Petrostate: Putin, Power, and the New Russia*. Books will be available for signing by Professor Goldman.

June 17, Tuesday – Timothy MacDonald, Manager of Water Operations at the Walter J. Sullivan Water Treatment Facility at Fresh Pond, will describe the Cambridge water system. A picnic lunch follows, with an optional walk around the pond.

Member services

Since Cambridge At Home started last October, there have been a few changes in service schedules. Free trips to the grocery store are now available four times a week, Monday through Thursdays at 2:30 p.m. Free exercise classes meet three times a week, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 2 p.m. at 357 Huron Avenue. Please call the office at the beginning of each month to sign up for exercise -- classes are nearing capacity!

Our list of suppliers, for whose services members pay a fee, has grown to 200 names. Available services include: personal trainers; computer instruction in the home; personal chefs to prepare a special dinner or to stock your freezer; dog walkers and pet sitters; help with bookkeeping and bill paying; personal shopper for gifts, clothing, or household needs; audio and video repair; locksmiths; handymen; and organizers for

the office, kitchen, closets, attic, or basement.

All suppliers on our list are there by member recommendation. The only way for the office to keep tabs on their current performance is through feedback from members who use them. If you employ one of our vendors, please let us know how they perform. That's the only way we can ensure that we recommend the best!

Like all similar organizations, we find transportation to be our greatest challenge. Member volunteers can drive people to medical appointments at which a driver is required (chemotherapy, colonoscopy, etc.), but they need advance notice, preferably 48 hours. Until we have more volunteer drivers on call, we are not able to accommodate last-minute requests. Please call the office if you would like to volunteer as a driver.

Changes in Board of Cambridge At Home

In recent months, there have been changes in the composition of the Board of Trustees of Cambridge At Home.

At their November meeting, the Trustees regrettably accepted the resignation of Jack Cobb, a founding member who made strong contributions to starting the organization. Jack and his wife Ann continue to be active members and supporters of Cambridge At Home.

In December, acting on the recommendation of the Nominating Committee, the Trustees unanimously elected two new members of the Board: Elaine Arseneault and Carl Sapers.

Elaine Arseneault is already known to many members as Manager of the Huron Avenue branch of the Cambridge Trust Company. She is a Vice-President of the bank, where she has been for 26 years. A graduate of the New England School of Banking at Williams College, she is married to Henry Arseneault and has two daughters, three step-daughters and nine

grandchildren.

Elaine, who combines a broad knowledge of the community with enthusiasm for working with Cambridge At Home, is already active on the Membership Committee.

Carl Sapers practiced law in Boston for 45 years as a partner at Hill & Barlow. He served as Moderator of the Town of Brookline for nine years, and Treasurer and Trustee of The Commonwealth School. In addition, he was a Director of the Handel & Haydn Society, the National Building Museum, and the American Arbitration Association.

Carl, who lives in Cambridge with his wife Judy, is particularly interested in matters of Board governance, and will chair a new committee on that subject. Of Cambridge At Home, he says he is "delighted to be part of this important effort to ease aging."

Future trips

We are in process of planning trips to two locations that drew enthusiastic response in our poll of members.

On June 5, we will visit the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) in Woods Hole, MA. Member Victor McElheny, formerly science editor of *The Boston Globe*, technology columnist for *The New York Times*, and Director of the Knight Science Journalism Fellowships at MIT, will be our leader. After a tour of WHOI facilities, conducted by WHOI personnel, we will hear a lunchtime talk by an oceanographic scientist.

The major trip in the fall will be to Hartford, CT, where we will visit the Wadsworth Atheneum, the oldest public art museum in the United States. The trip will also include one other local site of artistic and historical interest. We are fortunate that Trustee Alice DeLana has consented to lead this trip. Her informed comment on previous CAH tours of the Yale University Art Museums and the Fogg Museum of Art in Cambridge has been praised by many CAH members.

Lifeline

The Mount Auburn Hospital offers CAH members a 10% discount on Lifeline monitoring fees, and they waive the installation fee. In addition, they guarantee 24-hour response time if a unit malfunctions. Please call them at 617-499-5525 to obtain service.

Safety at home (continued from page 1)

Maureen Kelly of Dovetail described various monitoring devices that contribute to safety and peace of mind at home. These include wireless technology that allows daily contact with a central office, and keeping a current chart of all medications, both prescribed and over-the-counter.

She advocates placing medication charts in locations that an EMT would search in case of an emergency. Examples are in a wallet, behind the driver's license; or tacked on the refrigerator with a magnet. Both the Massachusetts Medical Society and the Association for the Advancement of Retired Persons (AARP) distribute such forms. You can find templates for them on the Cambridge At Home website.

Medicare benefits

Heather Hurd of Blue Cross/ Blue Shield recently demystified the benefits of Medicare Parts A, B, and D, as well as Medigap and Medicare Advantage plans at a talk for Cambridge At Home members. She will repeat the presentation in the fall, during the annual election period for Medicare subscribers.

Heather reminded us of a service available through the Cambridge Senior Center. Staff members, called SHINE counselors, (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders) are trained to help seniors with health-insurance questions. For more information, please call Caryn Eichenbaum at 617-349-6220.

Cambridge At Home staff

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Nicole Deaner from HouseWorks discussing safety in the home

Cambridge At Home is a non-profit organization of Cambridge residents over age 50 who are creating the means to remain in our own homes as we grow older.

We invite you to join us, or to make a tax-deductible contribution to ensure that the organization will be there when you need it!

Please clip and mail to:

Cambridge At Home
1770 Massachusetts Avenue, PMB 232
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02140

Please send me information about Cambridge At Home and an enrollment form.

Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution.

