



The Neighborhood Newsletter

Volume 11 Number 4

The Election Leap Year Issue, October, 2004

DEAR READERS:

HAVE WE HEARD FROM YOU?

To come right to the point, we could use a bit more financial support from you, our readers.

Here's our fall financial report: It costs us about \$1500 a year to produce the **Neighborhood Newsletter**, if we stick to our three-times-a year, eight-pages-per-issue schedule. That's the amount we need to raise, roughly \$500 per issue. Printing the Newsletter is our only expense. Conversely, your voluntary contributions are our only source of income.

We keep a small savings account in a local bank under the name "Menotomy Rocks Neighborhood Association," solely and exclusively for Newsletter transactions. As this issue went to press (but before we paid for it), our bank balance was about \$250.

If we heard from even a small percentage of you on an annual basis, we should be fine. That's since the Newsletter gets delivered to approximately 1300 neighborhood households. But between the last issue and this one, there weren't many checks in the mail. We think we can do better. If you value the Newsletter, we'd appreciate hearing from you.

So this note is to encourage more of you to come forward and make a contribution to the Newsletter, as always in an amount that is comfortable for you. This is especially true if we haven't heard from you recently, or have never heard from you before. Checks should be made payable to the Menotomy Rocks Neighborhood Association and sent to Bill Berkowitz at 12 Pelham Terrace.

Thank you! We're confident that with your support, your ideas, and your participation, we'll be coming your way for many years down the road.

A footnote: At our last planning meeting, when Newsletter finances came up, we also wondered whether some of you might be interested in becoming a Newsletter underwriter – a regular annual sponsor – for which you could be credited in the Newsletter on an ongoing basis. What do you think of this idea? Does it interest any of you? Are there ways to improve it? Let us know what you think, and we'll be guided by your response.



UNWIRED NEIGHBORS

By Mary Cummings (*Jason Street*)

My new 3.6 oz iPod Mini MP3 player can hold 1000 songs which would be roughly 70 LPs or CDs. I no longer have to get out of my chair to change albums and can readily pick any particular songs I want to hear from my whole collection. I can snap all 1000 songs onto my belt and dance on into Menotomy Rocks with my dog, Tess (she walks; I dance). I might clip my cell phone right next to the iPod and since my cell is also a Palm Pilot, I have enough room on the belt for a buckle – or a beeper. I usually leave my digital camera at home.

My Palm Pilot and iPod are synchronized with the the laptop and desktop computers on our wireless network. I can sit on my porch managing e-mail from the Dell on my lap and listening to my iPod as it synchronizes itself with the desktop upstairs. I no longer attribute my memory loss to the aging process but rather to wireless brain frying.

Such technological wonders have put entertainment and communication at our finger tips but they can also blow up in our faces. I decided to do a series of articles comparing my technological experiences with those of other neighbors. Cell phones are the topic for the moment because their use is pervasive across generations and everyone has had some experiences with cells, whether their own or others'.

This was a totally "E" survey. I sent a questionnaire to neighbors on our e-mail list and received responses from 15 households with a total of 24 cell phones - actually the 24 cells were divided among 12 households. Here's a sample of our responses.



Is yours a cell free household? I was surprised to find that 3 out of the 15 responding households have been living full lives without cell phones. Their reasons varied:

- Nobody has held a gun to our heads yet.
- About once every three months we could use one

for a call, but that does not seem enough potential usage to justify having and paying for one.

- I do see its utility, especially in coordinating ongoing activities or as a device to promote safety. But it's expensive, and, on the whole, I have no real use for it.

How many cell phones are there in your household? Numbers ranged from one to four, with two and three being average.

How many of those cell phones are camera phones? Only four of the cell phones were camera phones and three of them were in one family.

On a scale of 1-5, where 1 = "highest" and 5 = "lowest," how essential are cell phones to your household's life? Answers ranged from 1.5 to 5 with a pretty even distribution across the range.

How are cell phones used in your household? Business calls and family chatting were the most common uses, followed by keeping track of the kids. One responder noted, "To take advantage of extra time waiting for something or another. 95% is family logistics."

Who is (are) the biggest cell user (users) in your household? Dads using cells for business calls were tied with teenagers.

How old do you think children should be before getting their own cell phones? Answers ranged from 12 to 18 years centering at high school age.

How, if at all, do you regulate children's use of cell phones?

- I say that we will pay for regular monthly fees but any overages are to be covered by them.
- Limit on minutes to avoid extra charges and obviously turned off at school and other places where they're obnoxious. They also can be taken away when behavior warrants it.
- Regulate?



Do you believe talking on hand-held cell phones while driving should be made illegal? All but one responder said "yes" to this question. One commented, "Yes, or at least immoral when driving in traffic."

Have cell phones changed your lives? If so, how?

- Gives my kids more freedom because I can talk to them when they're hanging out with friends, or I'm late coming home from work.
- It has made communication a thousand times easier, to let people know of changes of plans, whereabouts, something that they forgot to check or need to shop for, etc.
- Fewer mix-ups from lack of communication
- People are less considerate about being in public spaces and talking loudly on the phone. No one seems to feel weird about saying the most personal things to people on the phone while they are sitting right next to a stranger.
- Yes, better access; faster
- Not much, except for emergency contact
- Makes us all more productive and safe.

Do you think cell phones have a significant positive or negative impact on the neighborhood? Why?

- I don't see that it has much of an impact on the neighborhood.
- Yes, I have actually seen people do dangerous things when distracted by their phone conversation.
- They may have a positive impact in that they make it easier for people to be outdoors longer. However, overall I find the impact negative, because private conversations in public places are such a nuisance.
- Some of the folks driving up Jason Street aren't paying attention to the

road because they are talking on their cell phones. Also, the #77 bus is less convivial because people chat on their cells.

- It worries me when I see young people walking with friends while talking on their cells.

Have you any other thoughts about cell phones that you would like to share?

- Just the obvious about users of cell phones being considerate to others around them.
- They are great for emergencies; however, normal rules of etiquette don't seem to apply to the use of cells. What is the fascination with talking constantly on a cell phone? It beats me.
- I concur with the very common observation that there are too many rude people ostentatiously carrying on their cell phone conversations in public places.
- Is 24/7 contact necessary? The abundance of cell phones may be causing the disappearance of pay phones, which would inconvenience the cell phone free.
- My main concern is about careless driving; I've seen people run through red lights while talking on their phones.
- General courtesy and cutting down on personal conversations in public spaces will probably improve over time as people become more aware.

Our experiences and opinions seem to be in accord especially when it comes to the danger of driving while talking on a hand-held cell and the bothersome rudeness of some users. If most of us agree that driving while talking on a hand-held phone should be illegal, can we do something to make it happen? What about cell phone etiquette; should we respond to cellular rudeness in some way other than putting up with it? Let us know your thoughts.

The Neighborhood Newsletter is produced through contributions from neighbors and the support of Print Aspects.



SHOWCASING OUR NEIGHBORHOOD AUTHORS

By Bill Berkowitz (*Pelham Terrace*)

It's no surprise that there's lots of talent in our neighborhood, talent not always visible to the naked eye. But who knew that there were so many published or soon-to-be-published authors hidden on our streets? Yet word does trickle out; check around, and you'll find enough literary output to fill a small bookshelf. Or maybe more.

Here's just a sampler of recent and forthcoming books by neighborhood authors, those very same folks you see walking their dogs or tending their yards or standing at the school bus stop every day. Congratulations to everyone! But "sampler" is the operative word, for we suspect there are many more literary lights on the neighborhood horizon, and we hope you'll tell us about them.

★ Cliff Hakim's (Jason Street) most recent book is *"Life's Too Short to Drink Cheap Wine: A Salute to Friendship,"* a tribute to his friend and mentor Vin Calia, someone who exemplified living life to the very fullest. Cliff's work is a personal and heartfelt memoir about friendship, but not only that: it also helps us look more closely at the role of friendship in our lives, and holds up a model for friendship in our own neighborly relations – to recognize, in Cliff's words, "the magic of friendship right at home – our neighborhood." *"Life's Too Short..."* was published this year by Classic Day Publishing in Seattle; it can be ordered by calling 800-201-7892, x 17 or by visiting the book's web site at www.lifes2short2.com.

★ Also just out: Charlotte Pierce (Brantwood Road) and her colleague Robin Schoenthaler have released the brand-new second edition of their local

bestseller, *"The Compleat Day Tripper: An Annotated Compendium of Short, Family-Friendly Expeditions in and around Boston and Northeastern Massachusetts."* This newly-revised 2005 edition features up-to-date information on more than 350 day trips for families, as well as 60 site suggestions for birthday party fun. The book can be purchased at the Book Rack (on Medford Street), ordered by e-mail at daytripper@piercepess.com, or on the web at www.piercepess.com, or by phone at 800-879-5693. A portion of the proceeds will go to benefit Arlington Public Schools.

★ One day (or night) trip you can take anytime is to read *"The Phantom Pirate: Tales of the Irish Mafia and the Boston Harbor Islands,"* by David Kales (Bartlett Avenue). Here you'll find a story about a modern day pirate, "the most ruthless gangster and feared crime boss to ever come off the streets of Boston." David, who has been a journalist, foreign correspondent, and editor for over 40 years, says that names have been changed to protect the dead – or those who could become dead. This work of fiction (but maybe closer to reality than we think) was published in July by AuthorHouse, and can be ordered at www.authorhouse.com, or by calling 888-280-7715.

★ Some of our neighbors have traveled back in time to do their research. Elaine Maclachlan (Peabody Road), whose special field is Italian literature, is translating and editing the poetry and prose of Chiara Matraini, an Italian woman poet of the Renaissance. Elaine's book (*"Selected Poetry and Prose"*) is part of a series on women writers of early modern Europe. It's scheduled for publication next year by the University of Chicago Press.

★ ...While other neighbors have traveled around the world to find their subject matter. *"I Laugh So I Won't Cry"* is Helena Halperin's (Gray Street) account of nine years of conversations in mud huts and market stalls throughout Kenya. In "I Laugh....," Helena

notes, women tell their stories in their own words, with chapters on marriage, child-rearing, sexuality, work, self-help, and the difficulties of government reform. The text "shows the full panorama of women's struggles in sub-Saharan Africa," and should interest anyone seeking to understand African life today. Look for Helena's book to be released soon by Africa World Press; to learn more, send an e-mail to halperin1@earthlink.net, with "please send publication notice" in the subject line.

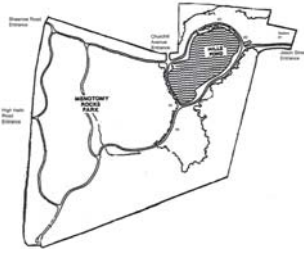
★ Finally, local theatergoers take note: Marilyn Plotkins (Jason Street), will have *"The A.R.T. Reference Book: The Brustein Years"* published by Praeger Publishers early next year. As Marilyn describes it, "The book is a comprehensive reference guide to one of America's most progressive and provocative regional theaters. At the heart of the book is a chronology of every production produced for A.R.T.'s subscription series during the Brustein years – nearly 200 entries. Other sections of the book include a history of the A.R.T.; historical highlights; biographies of key personnel; and 75 pages of appendices organizing data from A.R.T.'s entire artistic work force."

See also the books about Menotomy Rocks Park by our neighbors Don Mattheisen and Pat Thomas, both mentioned in Don's article in this issue. But have we missed you? Do you have a book – or other notable accomplishment – you'd like us to publicize? Let us know, and we'll try our best to do it.

CALLING ALL TREE HOUSES!



Do you have or know of a cool tree house in our neighborhood? In the next Newsletter issue, we would like to do a piece on neighborhood tree houses and we are seeking those who would be willing to show and speak about their tree houses. If you (or someone you know) is interested, please contact: Cindy Starks at 781-646-8887 or acmi@comcast.net.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS OF MENOTOMY ROCKS PARK

By Don Mattheisen (*Churchill Avenue*)

Our good neighbor Bob McKersie has suggested that The Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park, Inc., is now old enough to have a history, and that visitors to the park might be interested in knowing how the organization got started and what it has accomplished.

The park itself was created in 1896, and it got along just fine for almost a hundred years without any formally organized help from its Friends. But a crisis arose in the 1990s that ended up mobilizing citizen support. The occasion was the silting up of Hill's Pond, a process hastened by nutrient-rich runoff water from neighboring lawns. The pond is not a natural phenomenon: it is actually a former bog that Farmer Hill had dredged out to make an irrigation pond for his market garden back in 1884. The Town now had to recognize that Mother Nature was rapidly returning the pond to its former condition as a bog. So it set about to restore the pond by re-dredging it.

But complications developed. The dredging job vastly exceeded original estimates, and soon enormous mountains of pond muck were being dumped on the park lawns. Also, an unsightly new structure was built to filter nutrients out of the runoff water. To quote a history of the park that was later commissioned by the Friends: "Scores of people lodged complaints with the Town authorities. Eventually they organized and took their case to the Board of Selectmen. The Selectmen . . . appointed 90 of them in January 1994 to be the Menotomy Rocks

Park Advisory Committee, to 'advise the Board of Selectmen' and 'to participate and coordinate in the upkeep and maintenance of the park.' This Committee set about at once to fulfill its charge. . . . In early 1995 it made itself permanent by incorporating as The Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park, Inc., a non-profit corporation devoted to helping the town maintain and promote this public park. . . . The Friends, the Town Manager, the Park and Recreation Commission, the Conservation Commission, and the project engineer worked closely together to find solutions to the two main problems." That cooperation continues to this day.

The Friends currently has a 20-member board of directors and 5 executive officers, all elected by the membership. There are currently about 200 dues-paying members. Membership dues provide most of our revenue, though we also solicit grants for specific projects.

In the 9 years from 1995 through 2003 we spent over \$74,000 on park-related activities. We organize a lot of volunteer efforts, and our members have put in many, many hours assisting the official Town bodies on various projects. We have been involved in such things as building the new playground, the Jason Street bulletin board, and the new stone retaining wall in the pond; in installing the new memorial park benches and the electric pump that keeps the pond water level up during droughts; in maintaining the quality of the pond water; in planting and caring for much of the flora throughout the park; and in promoting numerous educational and cultural events.

We do have a website: www.friendsofmenotomy.org. There you can find information about membership, and about our two extremely informative publications: Don Mattheisen, *Menotomy Rocks Park: A Centennial History* (2nd printing, 2003), and Patricia Thomas, *The Benches of Menotomy Rocks* (2004).

UPDATING NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE REFERRAL LIST



It's time to update our Neighborhood Service Referral list. We see lots of contractors and other artisans working around the neighborhood and wonder if they might be added to our list. We have had recent requests for referrals for handymen, masons, roofers, and general contractors. Please let us know if you have any service providers to add to our list or if you have had problems with those on our existing list.

Rebecca Perlo (Irving St.) and Charlotte Pierce (Brantwood Rd.) both recommended Colleen Cunningham's play group. Colleecunningham@earthlink.net, 781 648-2628. Charlotte provided some specifics: My daughter is graduating after two delightful years with Colleen Cunningham of Kensington Kids home daycare/preschool/playgroup (we could never decide what to call it, but she calls it a playgroup). Colleen taught kindergarten and pre-K at Belmont Day School and at an American school in Japan and the kids get a very low-key but rich, caring, and well-thought-out experience; including language arts, music, math skills, visual arts, and just plain fun!



NEIGHBORHOOD WEBSITE UPDATE: INTERACTIVE SERVICE LISTINGS

By Ken Lubar (*Gray Street*)

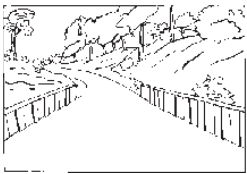
You can read the current and past issues of the **Neighborhood Newsletter** online at Neighborhoodnewsletter.org. Coming soon will be significant enhancements to our neighborhood service listings. Not only will you be able to read others' comments about the listings, but you'll also be able to recommend addi-

tions to the list and help keep it current by adding your own comments and ratings. More frequent updating and live comments will help ensure that the list is valuable, whether you're looking for a neighborhood electrician or window washer. You can find the service listings by clicking "Service listing" on our home page.

We've also added an option to sign up for a neighborhood mailing list. Don't worry – this list will be guarded like the gold at Fort Knox. We will not rent, sell, trade, exchange or leave this list out in the rain. And we guarantee that you'll never get more than two e-mails a month from it. To join, click on "Mailing list" on the home page.

There is in addition a Neighborhood Notices section on the web site. If you're trying to get the word out about a garage sale, looking for a dog walker, or organizing an activity, drop me an e-mail and I'll post your announcement on the site.

If you have suggestions for features that you'd like to see on the site, please e-mail me at ken@lubar.net. Or if you're looking to demonstrate (or improve) your web design and coding skills, we're always looking for more help to make the site better.



SOUND BARRIERS ALONG ROUTE 2?

By Joe Cavicchi (*Bellevue Road*)

An investigation has been initiated to determine if the noise levels on the Eastern side of the Concord Turnpike – approximately between the junction of Venner Road with Pleasant Street and the intersection of Arlmont and Spring Streets – will qualify under state and federal guidelines for the installation of a sound barrier.

As of this date, the approach has been first to determine if the present noise levels exceed certain thresholds set by highway agencies. For 3 days in June 2004, measurements were made for 24 consecutive hours at 3 locations along Spring Street. Measurements revealed hourly equivalent sound levels in excess of specified threshold levels. (Levels need to be above 67 db averaged over an hour-long period, and were as high as 73 db at one location.) The next step is to document the results and apply various analytical guidelines that take into account the number of homes along the route and the extent to which traffic has increased over the years, to "rate" the proposed location consistent with state guidelines.

The results will determine how the location compares to other locations previously rated by state highway engineers. Thereafter it is expected that an effort will begin to request that the state add this location to its current "list" of proposed sound barrier locations. This process may be time consuming, as Route 2 is not considered an interstate highway and would not have initially qualified for sound barrier consideration. Nonetheless, it is likely that the area's dense population, combined with the fact that traffic has increased considerably over the past decades, will result in a strong rating and a strong basis for inclusion on the state list. This work, though, will realistically take a while; stay tuned for an update in a future Newsletter.



NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY PROGRESS REPORT

By Bill Berkowitz (*Pelham Terrace*)

Some of you may know that I have been involved in a study designed to learn more about our neighborhood. Here's an update on the background, what's been happening, some apparent

themes so far, and some next steps in the works.

I started this study because I have been interested in neighborhood life, both personally and professionally, for many years. That's because neighborhoods – under the right conditions – can enrich our lives greatly. They can provide strong support networks; they can help improve safety; they can foster greater happiness and well-being. Yet in fact, not very much is known about neighborhoods resembling ours, even though more than half the U.S. population lives in suburban neighborhoods broadly defined. It made sense, then, to find out more.

Our own neighborhood seemed like an excellent place to start. So I have been talking with a number of you this year, to learn more about your thoughts and feelings about neighborhood life right here. I'm very grateful to all those who have shared their views with me, in such generous, insightful, and open-hearted ways. And as this study proceeds, this is a good time to share some themes that have surfaced.

First, most people I've spoken with like this neighborhood, and like it a lot. Not everyone – for it would be unusual if we all felt the same way – but certainly a solid majority. The fact that people like living here may not seem remarkable at all; but the degree of liking and the extent of enthusiasm have both been striking, considerably more than I might have expected.

Second, most people (though again not everyone) do care quite a bit about neighborhood quality of life; and they are willing, in theory, to help in maintaining it. For some of them, theory translates into practice – they are actively involved in one neighborhood activity or another. That much is welcome news.

But third, and hardly surprisingly, most people are busy. Some are not just busy, but over-the-top busy: they have family, work, kids, finances, home maintenance, plus many et ceteras, with hardly a moment to call their own. For

many of those busy people, neighborhood life gets back-burnered; good intentions don't quite make it into action. If this is true, the task for those of us interested in building stronger neighborhoods is to learn more about how talented, caring, and totally-extended people can take part in neighborhood life, in ways that are realistic, feasible, meaningful, and satisfying. That's one of the biggest issues that have emerged; it's one I hope to keep thinking about in the future.

Over the next few months, I plan to be continuing these conversations (many questions being asked have been shaped by your earlier feedback), and also to supplement them with a written survey to a broader sample of neighbors, intended to gather a different form of knowledge. If you should receive a survey in the mail, I hope you'll be able to respond.

But more than that, as this work continues I welcome any comments or suggestions you may have, including specific questions you would like to see asked; for I am strongly motivated to make this study as collaborative as possible. You can reach me easily at 646-6319 or at Bill_Berkowitz@uml.edu.

I'll try to keep you posted as this work progresses. When it's done, I'm looking forward to sharing more specific results with you, and discussing with you how we could use those results to make our neighborhood even better. Thank you for helping to create a portrait of neighborhood life as it stands now, and for suggesting what it could be like in the future.



Spooky Walk in Menotomy Rocks

Oct. 23rd starting at sundown

Don't miss it!



Dear Neighbors,

I was thrilled to see in your pages the photograph of the statue from Potter's Grove. Helena Halperin gives an accurate history of the property with one glaring error. She mentions that the garden "gradually fell into neglect and disrepair" until 1999 when the McKee's arrived.

You see, my parents, Bill and Irene Regan, bought the house in 1964 and took great pains to fix and maintain the property over the next thirty years. Unfortunately, the bridges, observation tower, waterfalls and statues were gone by 1964 save the "Boy with Dove" fountain. We kids loved to play on that statue and you could always count on finding an Easter Egg hidden there or a clue from one of our many scavenger hunts. Indeed, there was a continuous stream of neighborhood kids in the yard playing Kick the Can, Run the Bases, Relevio (an intense game of tag that only ended when supper was called) or putting on musical "numbers" for hours of amusement.

A lot of hard labor went into making those gardens so hospitable to us kids. Whether it was mowing the lawn, raking the leaves, cutting down and then stumping dead or diseased trees or building the cobblestone patio, Dad worked diligently on maintaining a behemoth of a property.

We are so pleased to have the McKee's not only as our neighbors, but also as stewards of Potter's Grove. In fact, last summer when my family gathered at my house for my father's funeral, Andrew graciously offered to give us a tour of the old homestead. It was an emotional experience and we all agreed, "Dad would be pleased".

As I told Andrew and Kristen when they purchased the home, if they have 1/10th of the joy we experienced living there, they will enjoy exceedingly happy lives.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Regan Dellanno
Academy Street



THE ROVING REPORTER

By Jessie Brown and Ben Kuhn (*Jason Street*)

Here was the question we asked for this issue: "What feature of our neighborhood would you like to eradicate?"

"I'd get rid of some of the apartment buildings, and put in bookstores and playgrounds." Gabriella, Jason Street

"The wipe-out surface in front of the old Parmenter School. There are plenty of scrapes on the kids' knees!" Rebecca, Pleasant Street

"The climbing structure, because Tommy keeps getting there first." Sam Gruber, Pleasant Street

"Unleashed dogs!" Katherine, Gray Street

"I'd eliminate the opening to Route 2 on Jason." David, Jason Street

"The way this place has become so expensive that people who've lived here for 30 years can't afford to any more." Anonymous, Mass. Ave.

"The rush hour traffic on Pleasant!" Lorri, Woodland Street

"Shut up the sirens! I'm even willing not to mention the leafblowers and the lawnmowers if they'll kill the sirens." Peter Gordon, Pleasant Street

"The way the Senior Center schedules dancing at 9:30 in the morning, instead of after lunch. The Center's fantastic, though, and Town Day was great." Rose DeMarinis, new to Pleasant Street

"The trash that's all over!" Kirsten Gronlund, Windermere Lane

"Bees. I wish the bees would go away. They're all over the place. There was a huge beehive at camp, and 10 kids got stung!" Zoe Sachs, Academy Street

The Citizens Bank billboard that's been proclaiming the wrong time and temperature for most of the several years that it's

been at the site.” Peter, Jason Terrace

“Speeders on Jason Street!” Charlie Foskett, Brantwood Road

“I would eradicate snow and ice on the sidewalks all winter long.” Heid, Longfellow Road

“The funny new traffic island at Jason and Pleasant View. The shape of it doesn’t make any sense.” Rob, Woodland Street

“Mosquitoes. And dog poop.” Alison, Spring Street.

“The bumps in the road up on Lincoln.” Angelina, Temple Street

“The dirt, because it has worms.” Leo, Temple Street



REMEMBER SUMMER?

By Cindy Starks (*Monadnock Road*)

By now, the summer of 2004 is a fond memory and you are busy with kids back in school and all of those wonderful New England autumn activities. But I am not one to let go of summer so easily; and if you aren’t either, then hopefully you will enjoy reminiscing with me for a moment.

When we are kids, summer is that Mecca that we all can’t wait to get to. We work so hard all year long to get to those glorious weeks where school and schedules are but a faint memory. Then we grow up, get jobs – and I don’t know about anyone else, but I lost that sense of summer. Not that I didn’t enjoy it, but summer seemed to be just another season, the one that was warmer and allowed things like swimming and grilling to happen more frequently. It was nice, but it just didn’t have that wondrous feel that it once did.

But then I had kids of my own, and now that they are in school, suddenly

they have helped me to find summer again. Now I am the one counting down the days in June until school is out and we can escape from our everyday lives and all that we get caught up in, and head into summer.

It made me start thinking about what it is we like about summer and what makes it so special. For my family and me it is the lack of alarms and schedules that we like so much. Whether we wake up early or late, most days we sleep until our bodies feel rested and never wake up to that annoying beep, buzz, or bell that by now has become part of our routine. We also tend to go to places and see people we haven’t seen all year. On both sides of our family, summer is the time for family reunions, so it is a time to catch up with all of those cousins, aunts, and uncles who live in places we don’t get to during the course of our busy school year.

Our friends and neighbors, Kiele and her mom Mary Ellen, said that their favorite memory of the summer was a day that they spent digging for worms in preparation for a day of fishing. The funny part was that even though they found lots of worms, they also discovered that the mud had the consistency of clay, and before they knew it, they found themselves having spent the day playing in the mud and completely forgetting to fish! I just love that ability to go with the flow that we seem to have in the summer. We may plan to do one thing, but when something better or even just different presents itself, we have the flexibility to change our minds and do something else.

Another friend and neighbor, Wendy Stewart, was telling me that she found pleasure in just being able to enjoy the little things that because we are in such a hurry we so often forget to notice. For example, she remembers one day doing her morning drive to summer camp with a car load of kids when she noticed the sun through the trees, the cool air, the silent river, and the happy, beautiful children. All of these combined to make her smile and she simply rev-

eled in the happiness of a summer morning.

Summer seems to let us have the time to notice things that we often miss in the hustle and bustle of fall, winter, and spring. I am not sure if it is the warm weather, the fact that we have so much daylight, or that some level of stress is lifted, but suddenly we see things differently and notice the beauty that fills our lives.

Yes, summer is once again my favorite of the New England seasons. I truly enjoy each one as it comes, but I have to admit, there is just that certain something I love about summer.



GATHERINGS IN THE PARK

In any neighborhood, parks are focal points for activity, and ours is surely no exception. Menotomy Rocks Park, which can be so quiet and restful during the day, has also been host to numerous events over this past summer and coming up this fall.

Just a few examples:

A neighborhood photography exhibit in June drew 20 neighborhood photographers displaying their images of neighborhood life. About 200 visitors filtered through the park on that gorgeous Spring Saturday. Thanks go to the photographers, and to the many neighbors who helped design and coordinate the event, especially to Ken Lubar (Gray Street), who took the lead in building and mounting the display boards, together with Eileen Eisele (Brantwood Road), and Mary Cummings, Steve Johnson, and Doina Iliescu (Jason Street).

Then, on Sunday, July 11th, more than 600 people of all ages staked out their seats on the Park’s front lawn to enjoy a beautiful evening of lively entertainment as the Trinity Repertory