



Volume IX

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## Around the Old Village and Beyond Sidewalks in a Recession

Old Village Main Street sidewalks have been in deplorable shape for years, but unfortunately, the town's budget does not allow for an extensive repaving in the immediate future. Under difficult economic constraints, Jeff Colby, Director, Department of Public Works, is triaging the necessary work into a multi-year repaving program, which will also include downtown Main Street. He hopes to repave the worst sections in the Old Village this year and asks that we all be patient and understanding. The OVA Board of Directors has an on-going conversation with Jeff and will gladly pass along any of your thoughts. Needless to say, this is not an ideal situation, but the sidewalks are yet another victim of the economic turndown. Watch your step!

### Reminder: New "No Parking" Areas for School Street

Late last summer, the Traffic Study Committee voted unanimously to post the following NO PARKING signs on School Street:

- on the east side of School Street from Main Street to a point across from Sunset Lane.
- on the west side of School Street, 25 feet north/back from the intersection at Eliphamets Lane.
- on the east side of School Street from the intersection of Hallet Lane to the fire hydrant 40 feet to the north.
- on the west side of School Street at Sunset Lane, 25 feet north and 25 feet south of the intersection.

These new restrictions should increase visibility and make it easier for cars to negotiate turns.

## Guess What? The Town Now Has a Formula Business Establishments ByLaw

On April 25th, the Attorney General approved, with minor modifications, the Formula Business Establishment Bylaw that was passed by almost 75% of the voters at the September 2009 Town Meeting. The bylaw requires that any new chain stores and franchises (FBE) coming into town that have two or more standard characteristics (such as logos, facades, colors, uniforms, etc.), first receive Site Plan Review approval from the Planning Board and then a Special Permit from the ZBA. This means that while a chain store is not barred from coming into Chatham, it does need to demonstrate that its visual effect and operational standard characteristics will not be detrimental to both the neighborhood and to the town as a whole.

The first test case will take place very soon since CVS is planning to take over the Village Market building and establish both its regular convenience store operation and a pharmacy. The Planning Board is already reviewing this operation as a FBE and if they grant Site Plan Approval, then the ZBA hearing should soon follow. Gloria Freeman and Norm Pacun, who sponsored the bylaw, hope that it will provide the level of supervision the townspeople want in order to protect Chatham.

## Progress on the Zoning Bylaw Rewrite

For the first time in months, there appears to be some progress on the zoning bylaw rewrite, and this time with respect to the issue of greatest importance to the town – how to control development which will come about from sewerage all or even half the town, which has already begun. The Planning Board, acting with the impetus of a "white paper" prepared by an Old Village resident, will be scheduling a series of meetings starting in June to discuss whether our existing bylaw, along with other town regulations and policies, will need to be changed and augmented in order to cope with the real possibility that otherwise there will be larger residences and an unlimited number of bedrooms as soon as homes start getting hooked into the sewer. So please stay tuned and plan to attend the Planning Board meetings to learn more.

## EDITORIAL

If this issue looks more like a literary magazine than a neighborhood association newsletter, the responsibility lies with an entirely felicitous series of events. First of all, thanks to Nancy Koerner with her trusty tape recorder and to our video-recorder Margaret Fallon, the Association had at its disposal a transcript of the 2009 Annual Meeting gam session, pieces of which we wanted to share with one and all. And then—who could guess?—my plea for reader contributions was answered, not once but twice. The result is two very personal essays about the Old Village by Jennifer Longworth and Cheryl Gardner. Their recent experiences offer proof that the affection for our neighborhood, eloquently expressed by participants in the gam session, still continues in 2010.

However, don't think that we've gone soft and fuzzy. To be effective, a strong neighborhood association must have two primary goals: first, to honor its past and record its stories, as we do in this issue; second, to insure that the Old Village's historical assets and quality of life are preserved. The latter goal is not as much fun and is considerably more difficult to achieve. These essays and letters are wonderful examples of the importance of the Old Village in our lives. Do keep them coming—they will warm our hearts! But also know that we need your help in our important preservation work. Thank you for your pride in the Old Village and your commitment to save our historic neighborhood.

*Carol Pacun, Editor*



Aubrey and Noel Meyer and their dad Matt attempt to count crabs

## Mill Creek Footbridge Spans a Summer

Last summer we were fortunate to have long stretches of beautiful Cape weather – cool mornings, brisk afternoons, lots of sunshine. The nicest benefit of this weather (or lack of it) was the many opportunities it afforded for taking walks. We made several forays into pockets of Old Village and one that was particularly resonant was the path through Mill Pond, and its new crown, the footbridge over Mill Creek.

Our first walk across was July 4. We took a group of friends along, both grownups and children, and were amazed at the variety of wildlife living so close and yet so hidden from our yard. The band included boys and girls who live near us in New Jersey. Our town is close to but distinct from the urban bustle of New York City, with plenty of parks, mountains and lakes, but still bordered by grids of shopping areas, sidewalks and plenty of blacktop.

It was great fun to hear the initial yelps of dismay ("Eeeewh .... what is that? Is it alive?") on the part of some turn into cries of glee and amazement. We tromped along, feet and flip-flops sinking into squelchy, sulfuric sand, legs brushing along marsh grass, heather, sea beans and (mercifully) avoiding poison ivy. We stopped to survey horseshoe crabs, clam and mussel shells. We poked gently around rocks. We threaded seaweed through our fingers, articulating knobby, brittle cat's cradles. We tiptoed around nests, and tried (unsuccessfully) to count lightning-fast fish. We watched the boats sway in the water and clamdiggers drag a huge bin of shellfish onto the sand. Red-winged blackbirds flickered by, green herons and a great blue heron circumspectly watched us. An osprey plunged a couple of times into the pond, startling both us and the fish.

Summer progressed, and we used the path many times to walk into and back from town, ferrying ice cream, gewgaws, candy, skimboards. We made our final trip September 1, nearly two months after our first crossing. Right on cue it seemed the light became more golden, benevolent and gentle, especially in the later afternoon. We stopped on the footbridge and watched as the streams of water and sand below pulsed with a multitude of tiny, powerfully clawed crabs. The heather was still abundant; the beach roses had given way to waxy, sour hips. We walked slowly, and spoke only occasionally, as we wended our way from the bridge to home. We are grateful to everyone who helped put the bridge in place, especially Mr. Olmsted. It's a wonderful pathway to the Old Village's special patch of sand and sea.

*Jennifer Longworth*

## The Night the Old Village Woke Up

My dog, Gus, and I love to take walks in different parts of town, and our favorite is the Old Village. For him, it's a chance for new sniffs at every turn, and always the possibility of a fun encounter, whether human, canine or wild (the ultimate, in his estimation). For me, it's all about the pure pleasure of an up-close, unhurried observation of the magical Old Village elements: doorways and arbors, gardens in all their stages, nearly irresistibly inviting walkways and secret staircases, glimpses of sparkling water at the end of a lane, reflected light off wavy old glass, roof lines put together like a puzzle and the graceful slope of a well proportioned dormer, additions that tell the story of a family's journey, working shutters and charming fences, and cottages out back framed by noble old trees.

We love it in all its seasons. Dressed for any weather – Gus in his trusty Samoyed coat, I in gear to allow for a comfortable amble year round – we leave the car near the Chase cottages, and head out to breathe it all in.

Early evening is, to us, prime time in the Old Village. The daytime sounds of construction and landscaping are finished, and a delightful quietude allows for Nature's song to emerge.

One evening in late May, we set out for our special place. We had been drawn back nearly every day, seeking the serenity provided by rains all month. It had been such a cold, soggy spring, but we did not mind; the result was a slowed down progression towards summer and the busyness of high season. We loved that nearly every house was dark and still quiet. We loved the hush that descended with the rains. Even the later-than-normal blossoming of spring flowers seemed perfectly acceptable; we knew that actually it was a gift of extra time to watch the season unfold. I tugged on my still necessary winter hat, harnessed up Gus, and off we went into the lovely mist.

Anticipating the tranquility we had become accustomed to and enamoured of, what a shock it was to hear the loud

bang of a shutter being slammed open on Water Street! I swung around to the source of the sound and realized that a house that had appeared to be still closed for the winter was, despite the dismal conditions, actually in the process of being opened! Mildly disturbed, we moved on to Silverleaf. Again, a loud sound stopped us in our tracks! This time, a storm window which was stubbornly refusing to abandon its winter's hold, was being forced into screeching submission in yet another seemingly uninhabited house!

Even more startling was the sound of a crowd of people heading our way! What could possibly be going on? Long before we saw only a party of four, and realized that their voices had seemed doubled and amplified in the fog. We could not imagine why the lanes that had been so captivantly silent were, all of a sudden, overrun! Chatham Squire doggy bags heading towards us (much to the delight of you know whom) were the clue, and finally it dawned on me: It was the Friday night of Memorial Day weekend.

In a School Street front yard, we witnessed the over-the-top excitement of a family reunion as a Jeep with a Connecticut College banner pulled in. A young woman jumped out and was greeted by a whole house emptying out for hugs and kisses, shouts of joy and the yelping welcome of a golden retriever (this especially appealed to Gus).

A few doors down, we glimpsed a lady in a cottage unpacking her suitcase into a vintage bureau. The cozy feeling and sweet scent of wood smoke rising up a chimney caught our attention on Hallet Lane. And the sight of a golden sliver of sunset, low on the Mill Pond, viewed from the head of Eliphamets Lane, along with freshening, fragrant breezes, made us certain that change was upon us, and there was no holding back the season now.

How lucky we were to be part of it ... to have been there for the night the Old Village woke up.

*In memory of my dearest Gus (1/3/95-11/19/09)  
Cheryl Gardner*



### *In Memoriam*

*Kay Baker*

*Patricia Brossi*

*Edith Reade*

*John Weil Uhlmann*

*Special friends of preservation:*

*Rob Carlisle*

*Candace Jenkins, NRD Consultant*

### **Keeping Andrew Hardings Lane Beach Clean and Clear**

This summer, the beach at Andrew Hardings Lane has sand – lots of it. In order to make sure the beach remains clean and clear of litter, the Association Board has offered to monitor the beach on a regular basis. Marty Fairbanks did a fine clean-up job early this spring. To keep things in tip-top shape, beach users should take particular care to take everything with them every time they leave the beach – from pails to paper cups. (The town will, of course, be responsible for more serious debris, such as dead animals and large pieces of wood.)



POST OFFICE BOX 188  
CHATHAM, MASSACHUSETTS 02633  
www.oldvillagechatham.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## Important Dates to Remember

**Tuesday, May 25**  
**4 p.m. at Town Hall**  
**Selectmen's Meeting**

Selectmen will discuss the reconstruction of the Mitchell River Bridge with MassDOT and the Friends of the Mitchell River Wooden Drawbridge. All are encouraged to attend and ask any questions they might have about the project.

**Wednesday, July 21**  
**Iced Tea and Cool Conversation**

on a variety of Old Village and Chatham topics. Time and place TBA.

**Sunday, August 22**  
**6:30 p.m.**  
**Old Village Association Annual Meeting**

Special program to be announced later.



Smiles at the gam session 8/30/09

### **The Old Village Association Board of Directors 2009-2010**

Debbie Aikman  
Mary Ann Gray, *Treasurer*  
Wendy Johnson, *Secretary*  
Nancy Koerner, *President*  
Winnie Lear  
David MacAdam  
Ken Miller  
Mary Olmsted, *Asst Treasurer*  
Carol Pacun, *Corresponding Secretary*  
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