

# 4word

## news & views in area 4

### Beat the Belt!

“We have to beat the belt, it is coming through Charlie’s bedroom,” said Helen Meehan as she went door to door organizing Area 4 families in 1966. Helen and her husband, Charlie, were directly in the path of an eight-lane highway that would go from the Somerville line, down Elm Street, across Massachusetts Avenue, down Brookline Street and across the Charles River.

Two major marches to the State House proved to be pivotal in the fight against the Inner Belt. The first march occurred on October 15, 1966, with more than 1,500 Cambridge residents. The 1966 march became the turning point in a nearly 25-year campaign that began in 1948 when Inner Belt plans were first announced. On January



The Bernard LaCasse “Beat the Belt” mural on the wall at Microcenter.

25, 1969, more than 2,000 residents of Cambridge, Somerville, Brookline, and Boston marched to the State House where they confronted Governor Francis Sargent and squashed any credible movement to build the Inner Belt. The plan for the Inner Belt officially ended when federal highway funds were withdrawn from the project and diverted to mass transit.

In 1985, then-governor Michael Dukakis told the crowd at the opening of the Alewife Red Line Station that 85% of the federal money that built the Red Line Extension from Alewife to Braintree came from funds originally intended to build the Inner Belt—construction that would have destroyed some 5,000 homes and hundreds of businesses. “One of the major reasons we’re here today,” he said, “is that 20 years ago residents gathered in a massive grassroots movement to say ‘no’ to highways that would have destroyed their neighborhoods, and said we should concentrate our resources on mass transit” (*Boston Globe*, March 31, 1985).

The eight-lane Inner Belt, initially proposed in the 1948 Highway Master Plan, was to be connected to today’s Central Artery, which was completed in 1952. The Inner Belt Loop was intended to connect route I-95 to I-93. In 1956 the

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### People Pride

#### An Interview with Eliza Rose Fichter and Debra Wise

*Interviewed by the 4word editor*

*Editor’s Note:* Eliza Rose Fichter, age 13, lives in Area 4. An accomplished actor, among her many awards is a special citation from Boston’s prestigious Elliot Norton Awards for her performances in *Reason*, *One Flea Spare*, *The Miracle Worker*, and *The Russian Tea Party*. Eliza recently appeared in *Swords and Ploughshares* with her mother, Debra Wise. Debra Wise is a founder and current artistic director of the Underground Railway Theater.

In *Swords and Ploughshares*, Eliza played the role of a prince in command of an army. The prince must decide whether to lead the troops into battle and begins a journey through history where he meets famous figures and hears their words as a way of reflecting on his decision. Debra Wise played the roles of Gandhi and General Patton, among others.

The Underground Railway Theater, now located in Arlington, will be moving to the site of the former Bradford Cafe on Mass. Ave. in Central Square, where it will collaborate with the Nora Theater Company.

**Q.** Eliza, why do you think seeing *Swords and Ploughshares* would be helpful to young people who want to think about war and peace?

**A.** Teachers aren’t allowed to talk about the war, but outside of class we talk about it. *Swords and Ploughshares* shows you history. Almost everyone I know is against

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# From the Editor

Local, state, and federal government budget battles are now taking place. Voters and politicians are faced with choices. How do we want to spend our resources? Who should get the benefits from our taxes, and who should benefit from tax cuts? As we read in the *4word*, we want to support our schools, theater and the arts, health care, affordable housing, anti-crime and safety efforts, libraries, decent jobs at decent wages, open space, mass transit, and the rights of children, elders, and families to live a long and healthy life. What political choices do we support?

\$1.9 billion—that's what Massachusetts is currently required to give to the Iraq war effort. For that amount of money we in Massachusetts could pay 34,160 elementary school teachers, or we could have 242,666

additional Head Start places for children, or have healthcare for 845,666 children, or receive 290,347 housing vouchers.

The 110 cruise missiles fired during just the first two days of the Iraq invasion cost over \$67 million. That is more than all the recent emergency cuts to Massachusetts public-health programs, including nutrition for pregnant women and children, and HIV and hepatitis-C programs.



Gerald Bergman

Fighting budget cuts at the State House.

The Massachusetts budget deficit, about \$3 billion, would have been nearly eliminated if there had not been an Iraq invasion and the money had gone to the states to help close their budget gaps.

President Bush succeeded in getting \$80 billion from Congress to cover war-related expenses, and is likely to get another \$350 billion in tax cuts that will take money from our state and local services

and will benefit primarily the wealthy.

On average, 53¢ from each tax dollar goes toward supporting the military. Can we support half of our tax dollars going to the military? What is your answer?



Gerald Bergman

Area 4 residents speak out about the cost of war.



Gerald Bergman

Richard Cate of Veterans for Peace at the vigil for justice and peace, held every Wednesday in Central Square from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

## Which Path Will We Choose to a Safer World?

### TOOLS FOR PEACE

3-day training for 160 youth in peace building	\$4,000
Enroll 2 children in Head Start	\$14,000
2 home health aides for disabled elderly	\$40,000
Associate Degree training for 29 RNs	\$145,600
Rent subsidies for 1,000 families	\$586,000
Annual salary/benefits for 15 RNs	\$763,000
Improve, repair, modernize 20 schools	\$46 million
WIC program nutrition for 200,000 families	\$130 million
Eradicate polio worldwide	\$275 million
Vaccinations for 10 million children worldwide	\$350 million
7,000 units of affordable housing	\$494 million
Prevent cuts to education programs (FY2003)	\$1.1 billion
Annual salary/benefits for 38,000 elementary teachers	\$2.1 billion
Double federal funding for mass transit	\$12 billion
Healthcare coverage for 7 million children	\$16 billion
Save 11 million lives worldwide fighting infectious diseases	\$38 billion

### TOOLS FOR WAR

1 rocket launcher
1 cluster bomb
1 hellfire missile
1 bunker-buster guided bomb
1,000 M-16 rifles
1 minute of war on Iraq
1 hour of war on Iraq
7 manned Predator drones
3 tests of missile defense system
6 Trident II missiles
1 year military aid to Colombia
1 day of war on Iraq
1 Stealth bomber
1 year cost of war in Afghanistan
1 year nuclear weapons program
1 month U.S. military spending

Resources for documenting the Cost of War: War Resisters League, [www.warresisters.org](http://www.warresisters.org);  
 United for Justice with Peace, [www.justicewithpeace.org](http://www.justicewithpeace.org); United for a Fair Economy, [www.faireconomy.org](http://www.faireconomy.org)

## Voting Rights

On May 5, the Cambridge City Council passed a resolution 5–3 to petition the State to allow noncitizens to vote in School Committee and City Council elections. Supporting the voting-rights bill were Councilors Simmons, Decker, Reeves, Murphy, and Davis, and voting against were Mayor Sullivan and Councilors Maher and Gallucio. Councilor Toomey was not present for the vote. He later said he would have voted against the voting-rights bill.

Several weeks earlier, the City Council voted 8–1 to give 17-year-olds the right to vote in city elections. Both resolutions now need to be passed by the state legislature. With the highest proportion of non-citizen immigrants and people under age 18 of any neighborhood in the city, Area 4 will have the most to gain by these victories. Passage of this legislation will mean that Area 4 will be taken more seriously by City Councilors and School Committee members.

Noncitizen immigrant community members are real stakeholders in the city, paying federal, state, and local taxes, sending children to school, abiding by laws, volunteering for military service, paying rent, owning property, working at neighborhood jobs, running busi-

nesses, speaking out about crime and community safety, and caring about the future of the city. Noncitizens do everything that citizens do—except vote!

It can take many years for an immigrant to become a citizen (see the March 2003 *4word* online at [mit.edu/dryfoo/area4/4word](http://mit.edu/dryfoo/area4/4word)). For many nationalities it can take as long as fifteen to twenty years! The home-rule petition passed by the City Council contains a request for a pledge from noncitizen voters that they intend to become citizens if eligible.

Contrary to popular belief, the question of who can and who cannot vote has been constantly changing throughout U.S. history. The right to vote usually had little relationship to who was a citizen. For much of U.S. history, white men who owned property could vote, while Black men, women, and propertyless white men could not vote.

In 1848, the First Women's Rights Convention passed a resolution calling for the right of women to vote, partly due to the urging of Frederick Douglass. In 1879, forty years before the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution gave women the right to vote, Massachusetts permitted women to vote in school elections.

1965 marked the year of the Voting Rights Act, the culmination of historic movements that finally began to end the deliberate exclu-

**"The vote was awesome! I feel liberated. It is about time for immigrants to be able to clearly express their choices in local elections. For years, although willing to participate in local activities, a growing number of immigrants have been turned away because of their status...this has excluded them from the local community."**

—Gabriel Mondon

Area 4 resident, who attended the May 5 City Council meeting with his daughter Isabelle



Library of Congress c. 1911

**Women faced strong opposition during their campaign for the right to vote.**

sion of African Americans from voting.

In 1971, the Twenty-Sixth Amendment gave the right to vote to eighteen-year-olds, which came as a result of the U.S. draft during the Vietnam War. If you fight for this country, you should be able to vote. In the war on Iraq, one of the first U.S. soldiers killed was U.S. Marine Lance Corporal José Gutierrez, a Latin American immigrant who, because he was not a U.S. citizen, had been denied the vote.

Throughout history, and until the present day, the exclusion of certain groups can be traced to the political and economic interests of the powerful. While the foundation of American democracy was intended to be "by the will of the people," sadly not all people are entitled to equal access to the ballot box.

For more information about the Voting Rights Campaign, contact the Campaign at 617-354-1300.

## Letters to the Editor

I am excited about my new role as the executive director of the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House (MFNH). One of my first experiences as the new executive director was attending the MFNH 100th Anniversary Gala. I came away from that evening feeling the strength of the House's connection and history with the community.

The MFNH is a focal point for many families in the community, whether it is where you send your children after school or in the summer for a truly quality experience, where

you pick up food from the food pantry on a monthly basis, or where you are able to use up-to-date computer software and hardware to access the Internet, do a job search, or write a resume. The House is a place for all members of the community.

We plan to expand the services to meet more of your needs and to keep the House a community center for generations to come. Please feel free to stop by and say hello. I welcome your advice and input into what you would like to see at the House.

Sincerely, Elizabeth "Liz" Johnson

Uncovered garbage, trash, and dog feces equals—RATS, RATS, RATS AND MORE RATS! Certain areas of our community are being inundated with rodents, specifically RATS. Rats, in their search for food, are attracted by vegetables, fruit, and dog feces. This is what we can do: Keep all trash in garbage cans with lids, pick up your dog feces, and inform the Department of Public Works of sightings of rats or other rodents.

Sincerely, N. Johnson

*Editors note:* For assistance with rodent problems or for more information, call DPW Operations Manager Annette C. Rodibaugh at 617-349-4846.



## Cambridge Schools: What Next?

By a vote of 5-2 in April, the Cambridge School Committee adopted an elementary school consolidation plan. This sweeping reorganization will result in 2,000 students (40% of elementary school students) heading to a different school in September.

The plan was supported by School Committee members Sullivan, Turkel, Fantini, Walser, and Grassi. Their vote reversed a School Committee vote passed just three months earlier stating that consolidation would not go into effect until 2004. Voting against the plan were Alan Price and Area 4 resident Richard Harding, Jr.

While the plan does not directly affect the two elementary schools in Area 4, the Cambridgeport School on Elm St. and the New Fletcher-Maynard Academy on Harvard St., it does affect hundreds of students who live in Area 4 who are bused to schools across the city. The major aspects of the plan are:

- The Peabody program will move to the Fitzgerald School and the Fitzgerald program will close;
- The King Open program will move to the Harrington School and the Harrington program will close;
- The Longfellow program will merge with the Kennedy program in the Kennedy building, and the Longfellow building will close. It is anticipated that the School Central Administration will move their offices to the Longfellow building;
- The Graham and Parks program will move to the vacated Peabody building. The Graham and Parks building will close, possibly to be taken over by the Community Learning Center;
- The Amigos program will move to the vacated King Open space at the King school.

The School Committee voted unanimously to offer the position of Superintendent of Schools to Thomas Fowler-Finn, currently the superintendent in Fort Wayne, Indiana. When he was told that 70 seniors failed the MCAS and will not receive diplomas, he stated, "Some kids don't do well in high-

stakes exams; it's not a setting that allows young people to demonstrate how much they really know. I would want to look at a waiver system."

The 70 seniors who did not pass the MCAS will not receive a local diploma. Despite the School Committee's 4-3 vote to authorize the Superintendent to grant local diplomas, neither Interim Superintendent Carolyn Turk nor the principal of the high school, Sybil Knight, will sign a local diploma. The School Committee, ignoring its earlier vote, has decided not to challenge the Interim Superintendent.

To ensure that all seniors can participate in the commencement ceremony, the School Committee unanimously voted to grant a "meaningless" certificate of attainment to the 70 seniors who met all local graduation requirements but did not pass the MCAS (an additional 40 students will not graduate because they have not met local graduation requirements). Certificates of attainment will not



Gerald Bergman

**Seventy Cambridge students are being denied a diploma because of MCAS.**

make students eligible for state and federal financial aid. School Committee members Alan Price and Richard Harding, Jr., are leading the effort to grant local diplomas to special-needs students who failed the MCAS. As the *4word* goes to press, the fate of more than 30 Rindge and Latin special-needs seniors, many of them from Area 4, has yet to be decided.

In a *4word* interview conducted with Richard Harding, Jr., he had this to say about his vote opposing the renewal of Bobbie D'Alessandro's contract as superintendent and his recent vote against the new elementary school consolidation plan:



Gerald Bergman

**Two thousand students will be moved to a different school building in September.**

"The most glaring needs of the school district were not addressed by the former superintendent. I did not believe that Bobbie could move the district forward. Student achievement did not rise significantly in a system that has great disparity between children in relation to race and income. The superintendent should be the visionary leader in the district.

I voted against Interim Superintendent Carolyn Turk's consolidation plan because I wanted to delay the actual consolidation until September 2004. I fear that a consolidation in September of this year will make massive disruption for teachers and students alike. We needed more time to plan. Two thousand children will be moving to other school buildings. We learned from the merger process between the Fletcher and Maynard schools that mergers and consolidations take time.

I also have specific problems with the plan as presented. For example, why move Amigos into the King building? Why not just combine King and King Open in their current building and not disrupt hundreds of children by moving them from one building to another.

I did not agree that budget problems forced an immediate consolidation. I wanted to cut waste and inefficiencies in the system, especially in central administration. Now we will have little opportunity to make real budget changes. If we put off the actual move for one year, we would have been forced to find and deal with the waste and mismanagement in the system. I could eliminate at least 30 people in Central Administration for a savings of \$1.5 million."

## Short Updates

### Street-Worker Program Eliminated!

Area 4 residents were shocked and dismayed by the recent decision of the City Manager to eliminate the City of Cambridge's only youth street-worker program.

For the past 14 months, Area 4 residents have marched, held meetings, signed petitions, and challenged the Cambridge City Council to respond to violence, drug activity, and crime in Area 4 with a more comprehensive street-worker program that would have the resources to meet the needs of young adults ages 17–25. Planning sessions with Area 4 residents were held and initial approval had been given by the city to expand the Positive Edge Street Worker Program to five full-time positions in July (one coordinator and four outreach workers).

Was this elimination necessary? What will be the impact on Area 4 and the rest of the City in coming days and weeks as youth job programs are cut back and the economy worsens? Let the City Council know how you feel.

### Living Wage Decision

On May 7, the Living Wage Commission, an advisory commission to the City Manager, voted to deny Associated Early Care and Education, Inc., a hardship waiver from the provisions of the Cambridge Living Wage Ordinance. The hourly living wage in Cambridge is now set at \$11.44, while Associated pays their assistant teachers only \$9.11.

Workers at Associated are unionized and UAW Local 1596 hailed the decision. According to Douglas Baird, CEO of Associated, "this 4–1 vote is a train wreck waiting to happen, and now we may be forced to close the center." If Associated refuses to pay a living wage and closes the center, 19 workers will be laid off and 68 children will be left without affordable childcare.

Adding to the frustration of some Commission members, Assistant City Manager Jill Herold did not provide answers to several important questions concerning the future of an existing contract with Associated that

provides for city subsidies in return for annual childcare tuition assistance to Area 4 families. In addition, she did not call a meeting of the Area 4 Tuition Negotiation Committee to address the crisis. The Commission is now waiting for the final decision of the City Manager.

For background information see the March 2003 *4word* online at [mit.edu/dryfoo/area4/4word](http://mit.edu/dryfoo/area4/4word).

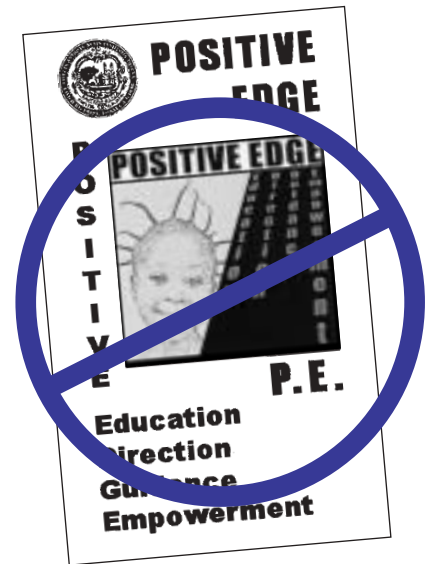
### Affordable Housing

On Columbia Street, Homeowner's Rehab, Inc. (HRI) recently purchased "expiring use" property and preserved it for affordable housing. This housing across from Columbia St. Park had been affordable for the past 30 years, but last year the owner made the final mortgage payment and all federal affordable-housing use restrictions were removed. Panic set in among dozens of residents because they had no way of paying market rents and displacement was the likely outcome. But HRI was able to purchase the property and embark on the \$11-million effort to upgrade the property and preserve it for affordable housing.

Approximately 11,000 people are on the waiting list for public housing in Cambridge. The Cambridge Housing Authority is now calling people who had applied for a one-bedroom apartment in 1995! Nearly 7,000 people are on the Cambridge waiting list for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8), which assists renters of private apartments.

### Property Tax Reform Spells Victory for Area 4

Ninety percent of owner-occupied homeowners in Area 4 will save hundreds of dollars when next year's tax rate is set because of their successful advocacy on behalf of the *4word*-led campaign to raise the owner-occupied property-tax exemption rate from 20% to 30%. After the City Council stalled this progressive tax change in committee for two years, a benefit to high-end property owners across the city, the Council responded to the outcry from Area 4 homeowners and voted



*Positive Edge is eliminated from the City budget!*

9–0 in favor of the property-tax exemption change. It is expected that this tax rate home-rule petition will easily win approval from the state legislature, as has already happened in the case of Boston and Somerville.

Next year, for example, an owner-occupied home assessed at \$350,000 will save over \$300 on its tax bill. All owner-occupied homes assessed at under approximately \$900,000 will save money. For more information on the property-tax campaign see the June edition and the Fall edition of the *4word* online at [mit.edu/dryfoo/area4/4word](http://mit.edu/dryfoo/area4/4word).

### Sennott Park Water Play

In response to requests for water-play equipment, the city has agreed to construct a small water-play feature in Sennott Park this year along a portion of the pathway leading from Broadway to the Area 4 Youth Center (next to the basketball courts). Starting in June, information about the water play feature will be posted in the park and distributed to abutters. Construction is likely to start in late summer or fall. Residents are invited to contact the Cambridge Community Development Department (CCD) with comments or questions about this project.

To be placed on the mailing list or for more information, contact Rebecca Sozanski of the CDD: 617-349-4639/TTY 617-349-4621, or email: [rsozanski@ci.cambridge.ma.us](mailto:rsozanski@ci.cambridge.ma.us).

## Beat the Belt!

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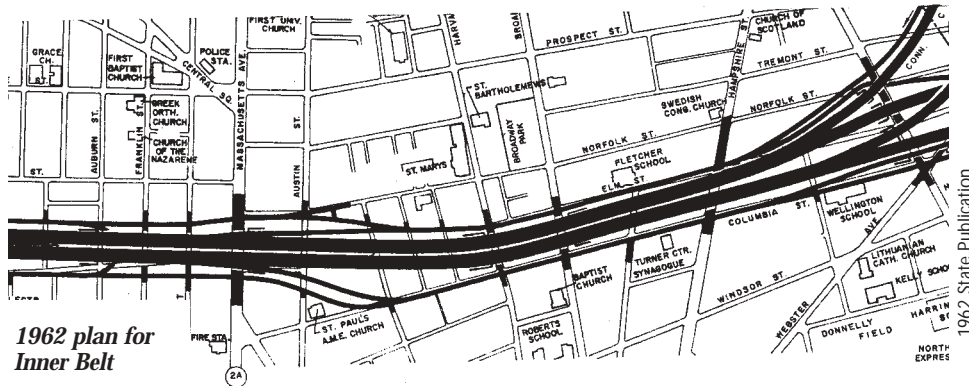
federal government guaranteed a 90% subsidy of interstate highway construction, and the Inner Belt came closer to reality. Through most of the 1950s, Cambridge residents discussed various alternative routes, hoping that the final highway plan would spare most of their neighborhood.

In 1958 a group of tenants at Columbia Terrace and others from Suffolk Street in Area 4 wrote to Mark Fortune, Cambridge Planning Director, an advocate for the Inner Belt: "Your proposed route of the Express Highway, cutting through our city, especially in the heart of Central Square Cambridge...tenants are opposed to it. We are a group of tenants who live in Columbia terrace for many years and if the proposed route goes through we will have to vacate..." (*Crossroads, Stories of Central Square*, p. 186).

In 1962 the state and federal governments again proposed the Elm-Brookline route as the preferred route. The highway planners' Inner Belt dream would have destroyed the Area 4 and Cambridgeport communities by displacing as many as 1,800 families and more than 5,000 individuals, dislocating 155 retail and service establishments and industries, ending more than 2,500 jobs, destroying five churches and their communities as well as three public schools with 1,700 children.

Residents of Area 4 and Cambridgeport spent the next three years (1962-65) attempting to convince legislators to support an alternative route down Portland Street and Albany Street, following the current railroad route. This alternate route was eventually blocked by M.I.T., which pressured the Department of Defense to stop any alternative to the Elm-Brookline Street route in order to preserve M.I.T. military research projects. At about the same time, in August 1965, the State Legislature fully repealed a special veto power that Cambridge had exercised over the Inner Belt since 1961.

In early 1966, residents had no veto power and little hope for an alternate route. In March 1966, new DPW Commissioner Francis Sargent issued an announcement stating



1962 plan for Inner Belt

that the final decision was to locate the Inner Belt along the Elm-Brookline route. Governor Volpe announced his support of Sargent's decision over the radio the following Sunday.

In September 1966 the Cambridge Civic Association published a glossy protest booklet entitled "VI Speak," which showed the plight of families in the path of the Inner Belt. This publication gained the attention of residents and politicians and was used as an effective political weapon in the Inner Belt battle. Featured in the booklet were John Mosely of Columbia Street and John Scott of Washington Street.

"I won't move from here until the bulldozer comes and

makes me....I'm 74 and I'm still working. I was the only colored locomotive boiler maker on the entire New York Central system....My three children live in Cambridge, and I have grandchildren and great grandchildren and their houses will be taken too....the automobiles count more than people. Where will I go? I have no answer." *John Mosely*

"I've been here over 40 years and my wife for 30 years and I know almost everybody in the neighborhood and to leave it now I'd be completely lost....The bulldozer is going to come right through my living room and mow everything down. If I could just live in Cambridge. That's where I'd be happy. The road is a catastrophe." *John Scott*

Residents marched to the State House on October 15, 1966, in order to take advantage of the election year. Governor Volpe was campaigning for re-election and also for the first four-year term for a governor of Massachusetts. Groups were urging a restudy of the highway plan and a delay in construction.

The "Anti-Inner Belt Day" program was arranged by the United Effort to Save Our Cities and was sponsored by Neighbors United, the Cambridge Committee on the Inner Belt, St. Mary's and Blessed Sacrament churches, and the Central Square Ministers' Association. St. Mary's brought their 20-piece band led by the drill team from Blessed Sacrament Church. People carried signs and posters saying "Beat the Belt" and "Cambridge is a City, NOT a highway."

Lorraine Scott, daughter-in-law of John Scott who was featured in "VI Speak," remembered the 1969 "People Before Highways" march: "We organized and carried a plywood black casket representing the death of the neighborhood and the death of Model Cities, with a sign saying 'Here Lies Model Cities.' Cambridge Model Cities plans were carried in the coffin to remind people what would happen to that program if the Inner Belt were built. Women were dressed as widows and they marched with their children. Marchers came from Elm Street, Washington Street, Columbia Street, and all the streets around Central Square. The line of marchers stretched from City Hall to M.I.T. We carried signs saying "Beat the Belt" and "People Before Highways." Off duty policemen and firemen marched behind a drum and bugle corp. Mayor Walter Sullivan flew overhead in a helicopter. How could we lose, we were all united!"

Ansti Benfield, a coordinator of the 1969 "People Before Highways" march and a leader in the Inner Belt struggle in both Area 4 and Cambridgeport, felt that local churches, especially St. Mary's, played crucial leadership roles in stopping the Inner Belt. Meetings were regularly held at St. Mary's Church, and its pastor, Father McManus, was often in the lead. Father McManus was chair of the Greater Boston Committee on the Transportation Crisis and was the leading

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Gerald Bergman

Lorraine Scott, outside her home on Washington Street



## A Voice for Seniors and Their Families

For 22 years, the members of the Massachusetts Senior Action Council (MSAC) have been making their presence felt in the halls of power. They mobilize hundreds of members to chant at State House rallies, generate floods of postcards, letters, or phone calls on important health-care legislation, and arrange local meetings with political representatives to press for support for affordable housing. MSAC members are outspoken on behalf of issues of social and economic justice.

During a time when civic apathy is a subject of regular complaint, MSAC members show what energy and teamwork can accomplish. They are organized into 10 chapters, spreading from Lynn to Fall River, Boston to Amherst. The Cambridge chapter, one of the most active, meets monthly at the Cambridge Senior Center across from City Hall. Typically, 30 or more seniors meet to discuss campaigns for single-payer health care, lowering the price of prescription drugs, or protecting Social Security from phony privatization schemes.

MSAC is one of the state's most effective grassroots

organizations. Although run by seniors, membership is open to anyone of any age. Members must be 50 years of age or older to run for elected office and to serve on the board of directors.

Most MSAC members have always had an interest in public life and have been involved in social issues through their unions, churches, or community groups. For some, this is the first opportunity to become involved in grassroots advocacy.

How does this spirit translate into action? The Cambridge chapter members sponsored a gubernatorial debate last summer and worked with other chapters on a petition drive to support a Medicare prescription drug benefit. More than 17,000 signatures were gathered over a six-week period.

Currently, members are engaged in trying to stop the Romney administration's attempts to kill the state's prescription insurance program, Prescription Advantage. They are also leading the campaign for passage of the Massachusetts Prescription Drug Fair Pricing Act. This bill is designed to dramatically lower the prices the Commonwealth pays for prescrip-



MSAC board member Leroy Cragwell, from Cambridge (center), is joined by other "Prescription Patriots" calling for passage of the Fair Pricing Act at a State House rally.

tion medicines. Cambridge members joined their colleagues in a massive rally last April at the State House. They listened to testimony from seniors who were harmed by the Romney administration's additional charges targeting low-income seniors. They chanted, marched, and visited with their representatives. The fight will continue, with letters, meetings, and calls.

More information about MSAC can be found at [www.masssenioraction.org](http://www.masssenioraction.org). If you want to join, call 617-442-3330 and ask for an application.

*Editor's note:* John "Jack" Boesen, a 14-year resident of Area 4, is the executive director of MSAC. Jack is an attorney who has been director of Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services and has served on the City's Fair Housing Committee.



Jack Boesen, director of MSAC

## Beat the Belt!

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spokesperson for the nine Greater Boston communities that participated in the 1969 march.

"I remember when I went with others, door to door, warning people about the loss of their homes. Twenty mothers and children nailed a petition to stop the Inner Belt to the wooden doors of City Hall. We marched to the State House and we traveled in buses to Washington to meet with Tip O'Neill, Senator Ted Kennedy, and Senator Ed Brooke. We sat in our kitchen with neighbors blowing up thousands of helium balloons with "Save Our Homes!" written on them before the 1969 march to the State House. We sat and ate

peanut butter sandwiches with our children outside the office of M.I.T. president James R. Killian. I got up before 600 people at a meeting at St. Mary's Church and spoke in public for the first time in my life and said that "not only can you fight City Hall, but you can win," said Benfield.

For more information and recollections on the Inner Belt struggle read *Crossroads, Stories of Central Square* by Sarah Boyer. Copies are available at the Cambridge Library and are for sale at the Cambridge Historical Commission.

Residents of Area 4 and Cambridgeport, supported by clergy and local organizations, were the heroes of the Inner Belt struggle. If you have recollections of the ways in which

Area 4 residents were involved in the Inner Belt campaign, and if you have photos or stories to share, please contact the *4word* editor, Gerald Bergman, at 617-354-2648 or e-mail at [gerberg@aol.com](mailto:gerberg@aol.com). Information is being gathered for inclusion in the special Area 4 Walking Tour publication planned for fall 2003.



Ansti Benfield, outside of St. Mary's Church, holding a photo of Father McManus

# Neighbors for a Better Community

Interview with Jay Carroll,  
an Area 4 resident and  
consultant with NBC

Interviewed by the 4word editor

*Editor's note:* It has been more than five years since some residents of Area 4 and Area 3 formed Neighbors for a Better Community (NBC) and negotiated an agreement with Bulfinch Companies, Inc. The Bulfinch Company agreed to give NBC, as a community trust, cash and land valued at more than \$1.5 million in exchange for NBC's support of their development at 205 and 210 Broadway. This agreement fractured community efforts at gaining control of 46,000 sq. feet of vacant land at 210 Broadway as well as efforts aimed at reducing the size of the high-rise office building planned for 205 Broadway. While some residents celebrated the fact that NBC won a \$1.5 million agreement, which brought much needed resources into Area 4, other residents were left to wonder about what could have been won if the neighborhood had stayed united.

**Q.** NBC's Medical Interpreter's Program is terrific. I want to congratulate NBC. Tell me about the progress of NBC programs. (To learn more about the Medical Interpreter's Program see the October 2000 *4word* on line at [mit.edu/dryfoo/area4/4word](http://mit.edu/dryfoo/area4/4word).)

**A.** There have been over 160 Medical Interpreter graduates since the first graduation in

2002. I do not know how many Area 4 residents started the program or finished it. Area 4 residents have skills, they just need someone to help them realize they have them and they need someone to help them market the skills.

We are also working with the biotech industry. We are looking at the possibility of a job fair just for Area 4 residents, with people available to help residents adapt a resume for the biotech field. We are exploring with Cambridge College other certificate programs for our community, especially for people that have multi-language skills.

**Q.** Please give the neighborhood an update about the following cash payments [totaling over \$1,000,000] that Bulfinch, Inc., promised to an Area 4 community trust:

- \$360,000 to be used at the community's discretion (\$275,000 from the development at 205 Broadway and \$85,000 from the development of a new building at 210 Broadway);
- \$100,000 for the purpose of purchasing computer equipment or otherwise funding the establishment in a local school or community center of a computer-training program for neighborhood residents;
- \$400,000 (\$40,000 annually for 10 years) for job internships;
- \$150,000 (\$15,000 annually for 10 years) for scholarships to disadvantaged youth and adults in their pursuit of higher education, including technical and vocational training and continuing education;



*The NBC office at 216 Broadway*

- \$120,000 for staff assistance;
- \$25,000 (\$5,000 for five years) for a "family day" which was to be a day of celebration and sharing of information on issues of concern to the community.

**A.** The developer's payment of the first \$360,000 has been put into the NBC community trust. We have done some computer training. A lot of the money was linked into the Medical Interpreter's Program. We were told that the original uses planned for the computer money were no longer needed. We used job internships for the Medical Interpreter's Program. In addition, there have been job internships at Add Inc., Bulfinch, CDM, and NBC, among others. The agreement was amended so that money can be reallocated. Much of the money is being held over until a later time.

Scholarships are being used for medical interpreters. Janis Peterson was our first staff person and NBC used the staff money for her salary. I am a consultant and get paid out of the trust. I recently managed the National Conference of the Massachusetts Medical Interpreter's Association. This two-day conference was held at St. Paul Center on Harvard St. and at Cambridge College and it was a great success with over 500 participants on each day. We don't hold a specific "family day" event, but we have helped sponsor two cleanup days. In addition, we give money to the churches and to the Fletcher-Maynard Academy. There is still money available to the community.

**Q.** Tell me about the developer's donation to the community trust of 10,000 square feet of land at 131 Harvard Street, which has an estimated value of \$450,000. How are you going to jumpstart the land process?

*continued on following page*



Gerald Bergman

*Once vacant land at 210 Broadway. The Area Four Neighborhood Coalition offered to donate \$200,000 in UDAG funds to the City or a non-profit organization if they would purchase this 46,000 sq. ft. parcel for affordable housing and open space for Area 4. Bulfinch, Inc., later rejected a \$2,000,000 offer from Just-A-Start for affordable housing, citing support from NBC for their development.*



## Black Pastors in Area 4

### Interview with Reverend Lorraine A. Thornhill

*Interviewed by the 4word editor*

*Editor's Note:* Reverend Lorraine Thornhill is pastor of the First Holiness Church, 211 Columbia Street, and president of the Cambridge Black Pastors Association. She was recently named by Mayor Michael Sullivan and City Manager Robert Healy to the new nine-member Independent Advisory Committee on Cambridge Public Education, set up at the request of the City Council to look for ways to achieve excellence in education while adhering to fiscal responsibilities.

**Q.** What do you see as the role of the Black churches in Area 4?

**A.** We are bringing pastors together to recognize the power that we have in our voice, in our presence, and in our resources. Before last summer's violence, we marched with neighborhood residents about the Market Street Park, graffiti, trash, community policing, and the need for youth street-workers. We joined neighbors to make a difference. Last summer, Black pastors did walks on Friday nights and on Saturdays. We will do this again this year. We need to take back our streets. We want to be more invested in our community. That is why our church does the annual Back to School Festival.

**Q.** Do all the Black pastors share your enthusiasm?

**A.** The Black pastors have been great. Education is our number-one priority. We brought a letter about the first school merger plan to the School Committee. We said how people who needed to be at the table should be at the table. We were troubled by the way the schools were being closed, it was not morally right. How is the School Committee deciding what to close? Is it based on the number of votes they will get? It is an election year. You can get rid of the superintendent, but the achievement gap between the races has been a problem for many years. It is the political blame game. We in Cambridge pay the most, but we are not getting the most. What will happen to the children who are not graduating because of the MCAS? There should be standards, but who is holding whom accountable?

**Q.** Are members of your congregation in the peace movement?

**A.** I have seen protests and there are not many Black people involved, yet the military is predominantly made up of people of color. We must choose our battles. Sometimes people [in the peace movement] are upset that we are not out there. They have to realize that Black folks can't be in every battle. It may depend on who is leading the protest. You have to be strategic about which battles to fight, and when you need to fight.



*Reverend Lorraine Thornhill (center) with members of her congregation.*

First Holiness Church staff

**Q.** Diversity has always been important to Area 4 residents. Is the neighborhood changing?

**A.** The demise of rent control has greatly affected Area 4. Now we are seeing a different population. How could we have allowed this to happen? My family grew up at 189 Windsor Street. This is the church I grew up in. My roots are in Cambridge. Many folks in my congregation have not been able to afford to stay and live in Cambridge. Unless we collaborate, our diversity will be gone. The churches have to be a presence and a voice in the neighborhood.

*Editor's note:* In April 1918, the First Holiness Church was established at 59 Moore St. In 1941 that property was taken by eminent domain to build Washington Elms and Newtowne Court. In that same year, the former St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church at 211 Columbia St., built in 1892, was purchased as the new location of the First Holiness Church. St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church is now located at 239 Harvard St. in Area 4.

## Neighbors for a Better Community

*continued from previous page*

**A.** NBC has the deed for the Harvard Street land. We have met with the City several times about including this land as part of the adjoining City of Cambridge land development project on Harvard Street. Our concern is that once the City gets the land, you lose your chips, you lose control. The NBC board would like to see a lease with

the City, not just hand over the land to them. We could do a 99-year lease. I wanted to start a community process a week after our meeting with the City but I cannot get the dimensions of the City land. I think personally that the money is not there anymore. My guess is that the City is delaying the project. I don't know if they want us to sit down and agree. Add Inc. is waiting to meet with neighbors to draw up designs. In the best of all possible worlds, a process would begin in the summer. All we need are the blueprint dimensions.

*(Editor's note:* The 4word facilitated getting Jay Carroll the blueprint dimensions of the City-owned land.)

For more information about NBC, the Medical Interpreter's Program, and/or about money that is available for community events, contact Jay Carroll at 617-864-9911 or fax: 617-864-9933. You can write him at the NBC office located at 216 Broadway.

## UDAG Funding

The Area Four Neighborhood Coalition is now seeking proposals for the 2003–2005 grant cycle. Every two years the Coalition, after public meetings and a public voting process, awards approximately \$200,000 to neighborhood groups and individuals. Over \$1,250,000 has been given in grants over the past several years. The money comes from the repayment of a federal Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) loan given to US Trust when it built its headquarters on Portland Street in the 1980s. Grant size usually ranges from \$1,000 to \$50,000. In 2001, the Area 4 community reviewed and voted on 21 proposals that requested a total of \$519,597 and awarded 14 grants totaling \$247,782.

All grants must benefit low/moderate-income households in Area Four. Priorities for this grant cycle include:

- **Community Building** projects that bring together different community constituents, such as youth and elderly populations; immigrant women and U.S.-

born women; long-term residents and new residents; etc.

- **Employment Opportunity** initiatives that encourage entrepreneurship, especially micro-enterprise development and job-training programs;
- **Community Development** projects, such as improving parks, playgrounds, and community facilities;
- **Human Services** proposals that address a specific unmet challenge to members of the community such as providing educational enrichment or summer recreation;
- **Affordable Housing** projects including the creation of affordable housing for renters, homeowners, and first-time home-buyers.

The Area Four Neighborhood Coalition encourages submission of innovative proposals from Area 4 residents and organizations. The Coalition will assist applicants



Gerald Bergman

*Area 4 residents discuss UDAG grant proposals.*

who desire help in developing their proposal. Proposed projects will be voted on at the November 2003 Coalition meeting. In order to vote, Area 4 residents must attend at least two of the four Coalition meetings prior to the vote.

For further information about submitting a proposal, guidelines, for specific information about the needs of the neighborhood, or to see past proposals, contact Elaine Thorne at the Cambridge Community Development Department, 617-349-4603/ TTY 617-349-4621.

## Announcements

### Job Opening for Coordinator

The Area Four Neighborhood Coalition is looking for a part-time coordinator. The person hired will do outreach to increase the number and diversity of Area 4 residents active with the Coalition. S/he will assist in convening and facilitating meetings, communicating with Area 4 residents and the City of Cambridge, helping with a neighborhood newsletter, fundraising, and coordinating neighborhood grant cycles, including publicity, information sessions, grant reviews, and contracts.

The Coalition prefers to hire a neighborhood resident who is bilingual (Spanish, Portuguese, or Kreyol). Experience in community organizing/coalition building, office management, and meeting facilitation is beneficial. Good verbal and written communication skills are required.

**Hours:** 17.5 hours per week, flexible hours with some evening and daytime meetings

required. **Salary:** \$22/hour, 6 hours per month vacation/sick time. (Other benefits to be determined.) Computer, printer, and project support materials will be furnished by the Coalition.

Send a letter and resume by **July 15** to Renae Gray, 84 Columbia St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

### Area 4 Scholarship Program

Thanks to \$40,000 in UDAG funds from the Area Four Neighborhood Coalition, the Area 4 Scholarship Program, which is administered by the National Black College Alliance, has been able to help dozens of young people from Area 4 complete their studies at colleges and job-training programs.

Preference for grants of up to \$500 will go to students ages 18–24 who attend college or a job-training program (with priority to local colleges); students who live in the Area 4 neighborhood, or have been displaced by rent control; and stu-

dents who have financial need.

Applications can be picked up at the Area 4 Youth Center, the Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House, or the Community Art Center. Eligible students have until **June 30** to submit their application for grants. For more information, contact Chip Greenidge at [chipgreenidge@aol.com](mailto:chipgreenidge@aol.com) or [ggreenidge@nbcalliance.org](mailto:ggreenidge@nbcalliance.org) or call Chip at 617-442-8045.

### Community Celebration Funds

The Area Four Neighborhood Coalition has set aside limited funds to help Area 4 individuals and community groups hold neighborhood celebrations, block parties, and special events that can help unify and celebrate our neighborhood. Up to \$400 for first-time grant recipients (\$200 for repeat recipients) is available for each event. For more information contact Gerald Bergman, PO Box 390768 (02139), 617-354-2648, e-mail: [gerrberg@aol.com](mailto:gerrberg@aol.com)

## People Pride

continued from page 1

the war but they have not thought about the history of war. Often kids get opinions from parents but they don't have real conversations. They repeat what their parents say. *Swords and Ploughshares* helps kids form their own opinions.

Kids are often underestimated. It is true we do not have as much experience or knowledge, but we are affected by things like the war and the moving of schools. Parents should not decide everything by themselves. Kids often do not have a say. Theater helps to ask questions and it helps kids form their own opinions about subjects.

**Q.** Debra, were you a creator of *Swords and Ploughshares*?

**A.** Yes. I was a creator and writer of the play. This is the third of four programs created for the Mary Baker Eddy Library: *Freedom, Discovery, Swords and Ploughshares*, and *The Quality of Mercy*. Eliza has been in all three productions so far. The Underground Railway Theater makes theater about social and political issues and makes social, political, and spiritual connections. We stress the juxtaposition of ideas and thinking processes. We can't present an entire complex issue in the short time we are provided, but what we do leads to conversation and leads to reflection. We stir up and provoke ideas and questions.

**Q.** Debra, Tell me more about the Underground Railway Theater. Will you be involving young people from Area 4 when it moves to central Square?

**A.** One of the reasons I am hopeful and excited about a theater right in the middle of Central Square is that we can engage young people, who have a great potential with each other and the world. The theater can be part of helping to recognize, maintain, and celebrate the existing vitality in the community. We are already developing a theater youth program by working with after-school programs. *How Do You Spell Hope?* by Melinda Lopez was recently performed in Cambridge with and for students from several community schools and programs. We are getting kids involved at 11 years old so that when we arrive, we will already have an ensemble of youth representing the entirety of youth in Cambridge.

The Underground Railway Theater was founded in 1977 in Oberlin, Ohio, one of the Midwestern stops on the underground railroad. We present theater that provokes discussion; builds bridges between people often isolated from one another; and reflects the cultural diversity of our audiences. Our theater often combines puppets and actors that cross boundaries. It is intergenerational theater about people and collaboration. The Underground Theater moved to the Boston area in 1979. I have been a co-director of the company for more than 20 years.

**Q.** Eliza, I know you are busy doing many things besides theater. [Eliza's favorite subject



courtesy of Debra Wise

*Eliza Fichter (l) and Debra Wise (r) in Swords and Ploughshares.*

is math; she loves playwrights Shakespeare and Naomi Wallace; her favorite role was playing Helen Keller in *The Miracle Worker*; and her heroes are her mom and dad.] I heard that you were an organizer of a walkout at Graham and Parks.

**A.** My friends and I wanted to protest the plan to close the Graham and Parks School and move the program to another school. A bunch of us, mainly girls but some boys, had meet-

ings and talked about ideas of what to do. We were also really angry that no one was listening to us. Teachers did not tell us about meetings. Parents were invited to come to meetings but we wanted to be listened to as well.

We organized really quickly and called CNN and other media so newspapers and TV would be present. We walked out of the classrooms and held posters. When it was over, we got a day of school suspension. The teachers were against the move, all except one. We just left the classroom, but teachers freaked out. Kids know it is hard to be listened to, or when we are, we are put on the spot. Some of us realized we were not thoughtful enough about the other kids in the classes when we walked out. How else could we have gotten the message out?

For more information about the Underground Railway Theater see [www.undergroundrailwaytheater.org](http://www.undergroundrailwaytheater.org) or call the theater at 781-643-6916.

## Neighborhood Book Discussion

Debra Wise has volunteered to lead or coordinate discussion group(s) on James McBride's book *The Color of Water*. For the past four years the City of Cambridge has given all 8th-grade graduates a copy of *The Color of Water*, which is discussed the following fall when they enter Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School. A program called Cambridge Reads: Cover-to-Cover invites the entire community to read the same book. If you are interested in

participating in an intergenerational neighborhood book discussion, please contact Debra Wise at 617-491-5816 or [dwise@undergroundrailwaytheater.org](mailto:dwise@undergroundrailwaytheater.org). If you would be interested in being a discussion coordinator, contact Gail Willett at 617-349-4020. Copies of *The Color of Water* are available from the Cambridge library.

## Access for All

The *4word* is putting together a list of wheelchair-accessible businesses in Area 4. Recognition will be given to those businesses and organizations that have made a special effort to meet the needs of disabled people. For example, check out the new ramp and push-button doors at the Newtowne Variety on Windsor Street. If you want to be involved in this project, or if you know of a particular business that you want mentioned for an award or placed on the list, please contact the *4word* editor, PO Box 390768 (02139) or e-mail: [gerrberg@aol.com](mailto:gerrberg@aol.com).



## A New Name for Area 4?

Should the residents of Area 4 petition the City to officially rename the neighborhood? Already some residents of Area 4, such as the "Port" Action Group, have begun to unofficially rename the neighborhood.

Area 4 was once called Cambridgeport (along with the neighborhood between Mass. Ave. and the Charles River). It was later called the "Old Port" or simply the "Port." When the City put together planning studies and police/community districts, Area 5 received its designation as Cambridgeport and Area 4 was left with a number, but no name. All neighborhoods of the city have numbers, but most also have popular names. Sometimes those names have changed over the years, such as "Area 6," now called Riverside, once popularly called the "Coast."

What do you think about renaming the neighborhood? Many residents want a change, and others want the designation to remain the same. What are your suggestions?

Please fill out the renaming questionnaire below. Three returned questionnaires will be randomly drawn at the July 10 meeting of the Area Four Neighborhood Coalition and awarded Toscanini's ice cream gift certificates.

### New Name for Area 4? What Do You Think?

\*Name (print):

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\*Address:

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Do you think the neighborhood name should be changed from "Area 4" to something else?

Y  N Why?

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What is your suggestion for a name for Area 4?

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Please mail to Gerald Bergman, *4word*, P.O. 390768, Cambridge, MA 02139 or bring the questionnaire to the July meeting of the Area Four Neighborhood Coalition. (July 10, 6:30 pm [free dinner], Area 4 Youth Center, 243 Harvard Street) \*Not required, but in order to be eligible for the Toscanini's ice cream gift certificate drawing, you must give your name and an address.

Deadline for receiving mailed responses is July 7.



The Area Four Neighborhood Coalition holds its regularly scheduled meetings on the **second Thursday of every month** from 7 to 9 p.m., at the Area 4 Youth Center, 243 Harvard St. The next meetings will be on **June 12, July 10, and September 11**. Free food and refreshments from local restaurants is served beginning at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is invited.

On **Thursday, June 26**, the Cambridge Business Development Center (CBDC) will hold the second in a series of free workshops for Area 4 residents from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the Area 4 Youth Center, 243 Harvard St.

CBDC will teach you how to repair your credit and build credit. This workshop is developed to give you personalized attention and answer your questions. CBDC is a Central Square non-profit, dedicated to helping people launch and grow small businesses. Financial education is one of CBDC's services to the Cambridge community.

If you have questions about the CBDC workshop or would like to register, please call Ellie at 617-349-4690 or e-mail [ellie@cbcd.org](mailto:ellie@cbcd.org).

Read all 16 editions of the *4Word* in PDF at [mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word](http://mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word).

## Translating the *4word*

### Para Residentes Que Falam Português

Se precisa de ajuda com traduções ou qualquer outro assunto, a MAPS oferece serviços de traduções assim como assistência social a pessoas de lingua portuguesa que residem na zona. Para mais informações, por favor contacte a MAPS através do número 617-864-7600. A MAPS está aberta de segunda a sexta feira das 9:00 da manhã as 5:00 da tarde.

### Pou Rezidan Ki Pale Kreyol

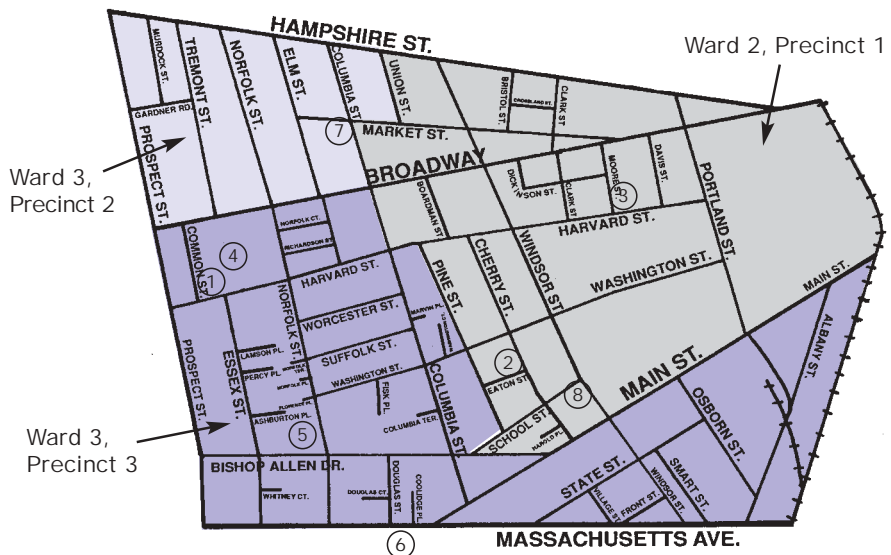
Si'w yon moun bezwen èd pou li JOURNAL ZON 4 LA e pou nou byen konpran enfòmasyon yo tou. Silvoulè rele Biwo Ayisyen: 617-349-6351.

### Para Residentes Que Hablan Español

Si necesita ayuda en inglés, tenemos intérpretes que le pueden acompañar a sus citas y traductores que pueden traducir sus documentos personales por escrito. Sólo llame a Concilio Hispano al 617-661-9406 y comuníquese con Sandra o Cecilia. Nuestro horario de atención es de lunes a viernes de 9:00 a.m. a 5:00 p.m.

### LOCATIONS MENTIONED IN THIS ISSUE OF *4WORD*

1. Harvard St. childcare center and the Area 4 Youth Center
2. Margaret Fuller Neighborhood House
3. NBC community trust land at 131 Harvard St.
4. Location of proposed Sennott Park "water play" project
5. Eviction Free Zone and Voting Rights Office at 55 Norfolk St.
6. Future location of the Underground Railway Theater/Nora Theater Company
7. First Holiness Church
8. Newtowne Variety



**Ward 3, Pct. 2:** Rep. Tim Toomey (617-722-2230) & Sen. Jarrett Barrios (617-722-1650)

**Ward 3, Pct. 3:** Rep. Paul Demakis (617-722-2460) & Sen. Pres. Robert Travaglini (617-722-1500)

**Ward 2, Pct. 1:** Rep. Tim Toomey & Sen. Pres. Robert Travaglini

about



The *4word* is funded by a UDAG grant from the Area Four Neighborhood Coalition. We thank the Community Art Center for administering the grant. Suggestions about articles and interviews and contributions to People Pride, the Walking Tour, and Your Calendar are invited. Contact Gerald Bergman, *4word* editor, PO Box 390768 (02139), telephone: 617-354-2648, fax: 617-864-2519, e-mail: [gerrberg@aol.com](mailto:gerrberg@aol.com). Read all 16 editions of the *4Word* in PDF format at [mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word](http://mit.edu/dryfoo/Area4/4word).