

THE BALLARDVALE GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BALLARDVALE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Vol. 9, No. 2

BallardVale, Massachusetts

November 2009

Winter Is Coming!

Rumor has it --- and so does the *Farmer's Almanac* --- that this winter is going to be a doozy! Instead of fretting, come celebrate instead. The annual tree lighting on the BallardVale Green will be held on Sunday, December 6 at 5:00pm. Join neighbors and friends for some holiday fun and singing. Dress warmly and bring your holiday spirit and "carol singing" voices. Dogs are welcome, but please bring them on a leash. Refreshments will be provided by the BallardVale Historic District Commission.

And don't forget to help your neighbors and our local fire department by adopting a fire hydrant! Locate the fire hydrant, or hydrants, nearest your home and remove snow from the area with each snowfall. Clear a 3' circle around the hydrant so that all the ports are accessible. Remember to clear a path to the street for the fire hose --- the build-up of heavy icy snow from snowplows can make hydrants difficult to reach. Alternate the job of shoveling with a neighbor or join forces to make short work of it! Adopt a hydrant and keep it accessible. Help the fire department keep your home and BallardVale safe this winter.



Impact on BallardVale

Several state and local projects are underway in Andover that will have an impact on BallardVale, including the building of a new fire station, the development of land made accessible as a result of the I-93 interchange plan, and the Shawsheen River Restoration Project.

The Town of Andover applied for federal stimulus funding to help construct a new fire station in BallardVale to replace the current station located at the corner of Andover Street and Clark Road. The town hopes to build a new, larger facility to house at least two fire engines, a boat and ambulance. According to an article in the October 29 issue of the *Andover Townsman*, construction of a new facility would have to be completed within three years of the funding award date, which is scheduled for the fall of 2009. (The status of the stimulus money was not available at the time of the Gazette printing.) The Fire Station Building Committee is in the process of reviewing several possible sites.

Construction of the long-awaited proposed I-93 interchange, to be located between the Dascomb Road (Exit 42) and Route 125 (Exit 41) exits is getting closer to reality. A Tri-Town Task Force, made up of officials from the towns of Tewksbury, Wilmington and Andover is soliciting input from residents regarding the development of the approximately 700 acres of land, known as Lowell Junction, that will be made accessible by the new interchange and auxiliary roads. A

public meeting planned for November 19 has been postponed until January 2010. Check the *Andover Townsman*, or the project schedule at <http://andoverma.gov/planning/i93/> on the Andover town website, for date and location.

The Shawsheen River, a 25-mile tributary of the Merrimack River, runs through several towns including Andover. The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game named the Shawsheen a priority in its River Restoration Priority Projects 2005-2007. The purpose of the project, as articulated by the department on its website, is to “restore aquatic habitat, stream processes, and native river ecosystem functions and values, including migratory fish passage, to the Shawsheen River

in Andover.” In particular, the state hopes to remove three privately owned dams along the river --- at Marland Place on Stevens Street, at Balmoral Street near Shawsheen Square, and at Andover Street in BallardVale Center. Studies have been carried out by the Shawsheen Renaissance Task Force and the Shawsheen River Watershed Association. While the Andover Conservation Commission and other interested parties seem generally favorable toward dam removal, concern about the impact caused by altering the Shawsheen River water levels in BallardVale and other areas of town has been expressed by several BallardVale residents. There are no known public meetings scheduled.



The Shawsheen River rushing over the dam in BallardVale

BVHD Commission

The BallardVale Historic District Commission welcomed a new member at their October 2009 meeting. Madelyn Mitton of Andover joins the seven current members, bringing her energy and interest in historic preservation to the group. Madelyn is currently restoring her property on Andover Street --- one half of the original BallardVale train depot --- using the original blueprints and material specifications written when the structure was built in the 19th century.

Members of the Commission include Jim Sheldon, Chair, Diane Derby, Vice Chair, Ron Abraham, Bruce S. Taylor, Sherry Kirby, David Hart, Leo Greene and Madelyn Mitton. Mary (MP) Bogan serves as the *BallardVale Gazette* editor. The Commission is looking to seat an additional alternate member. If you are interested, please contact Jim Sheldon at jlsheldon@verizon.net, Diane Derby at derby01@comcast.net or any other member of the Commission. To suggest articles or offer information for the *Gazette*, please contact Mary Bogan at mpbogan@comcast.net.

Fire Station Building Committee

A seven-member committee assembled by Andover's Town Manager regarding the need for updating BallardVale's fire station has been hard at work. The membership reflects a variety of experience, talent and viewpoints, and includes James Ash, engineer; Dan Caspar, attorney and BallardVale resident; James Curtis, engineer with a business located in BallardVale; John Kiely, real estate developer; George Thompson, Jr., retired fire fighter; Emily Samansky, attorney and BallardVale resident, and Bruce Taylor, member of the BallardVale Historic District Commission.

Starlings

You may have been awakened one morning by what sounded like wheels turning outside your window or a very squeaky swingset. According to Linda Cocca, Coordinator of the Wildlife Information Line for the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the noises you heard were probably the squeaks and chirps of European starlings. Introduced to the United States in the late 1900's, these non-native non-migratory birds gather into feeding flocks in the fall. "It's easier for 100 eyes to find food than for two, and it's safer for them to roost or travel in flocks when the trees are bare of leaves", says Ms. Cocca. They fly "almost as one bird" as the flock swoops down to feed on the ground and then lifts again to fly to another location. A Shakespeare enthusiast who hoped to bring all birds mentioned in William Shakespeare's plays to the United States, successfully introduced European starlings to New York City's Central Park in the late 1900's. Sixty birds released in 1890 and forty birds released one year later, have increased to a population believed to exceed 200 million in North America today. Their ability to mimic sounds led Shakespeare to write in Henry IV

...in his ear I'll holla 'Mortimer!' Nay,
I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak
Nothing but 'Mortimer', and give it him
To keep his anger still in motion.



One of BallardVale's white squirrels

**BallardVale
Historic District Commission**

*Andover Town Offices
36 Bartlet Street
Andover, MA 01810*

US POSTAGE
PAID
ANDOVER, MA
PERMIT NO. 41

*See you at the Tree Lighting on
Sunday, December 6 at 5pm!*

Visit <http://andoverma.gov/boards/agendas/bvale.pdf> for the BallardVale Historic District Commission meeting agenda and schedule changes.

CALENDAR

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dec. 2 (Wednesday) | BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting
Town Offices – 2 nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm |
| Dec. 6 (Sunday) | Annual Tree Lighting – Ballardvale Green – 5:00pm |
| Jan. 2010 (TBA) | Development of Lowell Junction area and I-93 Interchange
Public Meeting |
| Jan. 6 (Wednesday) | BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting
Town Offices – 2 nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm |
| Feb. 3 (Wednesday) | BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting
Town Offices – 2 nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm |
| Mar. 3 (Wednesday) | BallardVale Historic District Commission monthly meeting
Town Offices – 2 nd Floor Conference Room – 7:00 pm |