



# Natick Bulletin & Tab

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## Why should Natick care about a calendar?

By **Tod Dimmick**/ Guest Columnist

There's a rumbling coming from down by the river. It's the sound of a new community project taking off.

Over two years in development, the Oldtown Calendar is a simple idea with an audacious goal: to help bring a community together. How? The project seeks to unite photographers, nonprofit groups, businesses, and community members, around a common theme.

The theme is "Oldtown", a name coined by Harriet Beecher Stowe (in her book *Oldtown Folks*) for the area of Natick along the Charles River. Over a century ago, her novel made this small part of the world famous. That theme opened the floodgates for a range of images, including Broadmoor, Elm Bank, the River, the bridges, and more.

The photographers are passionate fans of the area. Those featured in the 2008 Oldtown Calendar include Natick residents **Joseph Creary, Karen Balcom, Elaine Early, David Parish, Frank Diaz,** and **Nancy Burrel** (and others from nearby). The 2009 calendar introduces new hometown photographers to the mix. These photographers generously donate the use of their work to the project.

The selection process is an essential part of the fun. This year thirty photographers entered the Oldtown Photo Calendar Competition, and almost two hundred community members came to vote for their favorites for the calendar.

Many local businesses stepped in with financial support to help make the numbers work, led by sponsors Faith Casler Associates and Hughes & Hughes Real Estate. Their participation helped cover much of the printing cost.

Who benefits? Local nonprofit groups, including the **Bacon Free Library, Mass Audubon's Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary, The Eliot Church** (the organizer of the project), **The Morse Institute Library, Massachusetts Horticultural Society, The Natick Historical Society,** and the **West Virginia Work Camp**, are now selling the 2008 Oldtown Calendar as a fundraiser. It can also be found at [www.oldtowncalendar.org](http://www.oldtowncalendar.org).

The other people who benefit from the

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calendar, of course, are those of us who have one. When we buy our calendars -for ourselves or as gifts- we get a practical work of local art on our wall all year. We learn a bit about our area, and make a charitable contribution at the same time. It's a unique purchase for those of us who live here, and a

reminder of home for friends who live far away.

*So will it work? Can a simple calendar help bring a community together, spotlight local photographers, build awareness of our local history, and raise funds for local groups?*

To find out, visit your favorite local nonprofit, take a look at the calendar, and see what you think!

Tod Dimmick is chair of The Oldtown Calendar Project.

The organization's Web site is [www.oldtowncalendar.org](http://www.oldtowncalendar.org).