

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

December '07

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ANC News

NOTES FROM THE NOV. 14 MEETING

Neighborhood Crime Stats

Sergeant Paul Oppedisano of the Cambridge Police Department (CPD) joined the council to introduce Sergeant Stephen Sennott and provide the current neighborhood crime report. Also in attendance were two Harvard University police officers.

The six-month report is as follows:

- 2 aggravated assaults
- 0 drug-related incidents
- 3 street robberies. Two occurred within minutes of each other on Oxford and Wendell Sts, the third occurred on Sacramento St.
- 14 housebreaks with multiple incidents on Forest St, Frost St, Newport Rd, and Oxford St. The officers reported this number as low compared to the number of housebreaks elsewhere in Cambridge. Also, Sgt.

Oppedisano explained that the majority of the breaks occurred during the day when no one was home.

- 58 larcenies from motor vehicles. In most, GPS navigation systems were stolen. These systems have been the “hottest theft” city-wide.
- 9 malicious destruction of property incidents. Four were car windows broken to obtain items within.

The officers reported one significant arrest on Mass. Ave. that solved ten larcenies. The stolen items were recovered.

Harvard University officers explained that Harvard’s statistics are reflected in CPD’s re-ports, “If our officers come upon something on a city street, we act and then contact CPD.”

Much of what Harvard reports to Cambridge are thefts of unattended property. To date, 49 laptops, iPods, and similar personal items have been stolen on campus since November 2006. Harvard Police also report a minimal number of car breaks, which usually occur in the evening. The officers noted, “Our people are aware of the trends reported by CPD.”

Sgt. Oppedisano told the council, “CPD has a good working relationship with the Harvard

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



DECEMBER 19 - 7:30 PM

Baldwin School Cafeteria
28 Sacramento Street
(Press buzzer for entry)

AGENDA

- Information about the campaign to preserve open space in **Shady Hill Square**
- Other agenda items TBA

police. I consider Harvard and MIT excellent departments to work with.” He added that crimes on Lesley University’s campus are reflected in CPD’s neighborhood crime reports.

Agassiz residents asked several questions.

Q: How many of the car breaks resulted in stolen vehicles?

A: Most are larcenies. Residents leave their GPS units in sight believing that car alarms will prevent attempted theft. However, the alarms don’t go off if someone enters through a window, which is how people often break into cars. Uncovered laptops are also frequently stolen.

Q: Is there any way to get cyclists to obey traffic laws?

A: We approach people on bikes if we’re out of the police vehicle. This is an issue to bring to your city counselor.

Q: The new traffic calming tables on Oxford at Wendell and Hammond don’t seem to convince cars to slow down. Drivers don’t stop, not even for children.

A: The traffic department is aware of this and is working on it.

Streets and Sidewalks

Owen O’Riordan, City Engineer for the city of Cambridge, joined the council to provide updates on the Department of Public Works’ (DPW) sewer and stormwater separation and drainage project, as well as on the condition of streets and sidewalks in the neighborhood.

At an ANC meeting back in November 2005,

Mr. O’Riordan presented the sewer and stormwater drainage project to the council, detailing the city’s plan to divert sewer drainage and street runoff into separate below ground pipes.

As detailed at the 2005 presentation, sewer separation has been ongoing in the drainage system that serves the Agassiz community. The city completed sewer separation and surface restoration projects on numerous streets in the neighborhood, including Wendell, Sacramento, Carver, Crescent, Museum, Hammond, Howland, and Gorham Streets as well as Francis Avenue, Irving, Scott, and Holden Streets. Mr. O’Riordan explained, “The department’s capital plan for the Agassiz area is to reconstruct its drainage and sewer system infrastructure on every street to the extent necessary.”

Citywide, the city uses a computer model to predict street conditions and assign higher importance to street systems in need of reconstruction. High-priority areas include high-traffic pedestrian areas, such as schools, major business areas, Elderly Housing areas, municipal buildings, etc. Agassiz is in a somewhat unique situation as the underlying infrastructure must be addressed before the streets can be reconstructed. This makes projects in the Agassiz area much more expensive.

“We’ve recognized that Prentiss, Frost, Forest, Roseland and Newport Road are in poor condition,” Mr. O’Riordan said of the neighborhood. To this end, DPW will attempt to pull money from their budget to design and fully restore these streets one street at a time, beginning with Prentiss, as part of their capital project. The restoration will include sewer and stormwater separation as well as surface repairs.

Mr. O’Riordan told the council that, although the department receives some of its funding from the state for street restoration, “Sewer and drainage assistance from the federal and state government is not what it was. Cambridge is better off because the city recognized that we needed to do sewer and stormwater separation and infrastructure renewal a long time ago to

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properly maintain the system.” He expects that, over the next three to four years, DPW should be able to repair the worst streets in the neighborhood.

Mr. O’Riordan noted his plans to return to the council in March with more information about the streets they can begin work on, according to their budget, “In March we’ll have a better sense of our revenues. And this will better inform us as to if and when we can begin reconstructing the infrastructure on these streets.”

Snow Removal

Concerned about winter parking shortages due to piled-up snow and corners made impassable by deep puddles of melting snow and ice, residents invited DPW’s Bill Dwyer to the November council meeting.

Mr. Dwyer told the council, “Due to cost and space constraints, we don’t remove snow from the city. Instead, we work to move snow off the sidewalks and clear streets for driving.” The city’s priorities are to clear school bus stops, fire hydrants, and catch basins that, if they become clogged with ice, can create large puddles at street corners. Mr. Dwyer stated that snow removal is, of course, time-sensitive, and the DPW works to address all areas of the city.

“Depending on the storm, you get the freeze/melt syndrome,” He explained. “Sometimes snow gets caught on the low points of the street.” Through use of smaller plows, DPW has been able to increase its range, working to clear some of the more heavily traversed sidewalks and bus stops. However, snow requires continuous maintenance. “You can’t go out just once. We deal with it constantly to remove as much as we can. A lot of the snow, before it melts, needs to find its way to an open area. Some of the slush in pedestrian areas can be attributed to people clearing their parking spots.”

Owen O’Riordan added, “There are 6000 pedestrian crossings in the city and 200 people employed at DPW, many less who do the manual work of snow plowing. We need Cambridge

residents to participate in shoveling and snow removal when they can.”

Meeting chair Stephen Diamond concluded the discussion, “A cooperative partnership between city and residents to effectively remove snow from pedestrian areas is something to think about and work towards. Thank you for coming.”

Lesley Working Group Update

Stephen Diamond provided an update on the city-appointed Lesley Community Working Group. At the group’s request, Lesley University brought to the meeting information on the square footage of space needed to meet programmatic needs for the Art Institute of Boston (AIB.) This program is now available online at www.lesley.edu/public_affairs/portersquare/aibrlocation.html.

The Lesley Community Working Group also asked Lesley to produce a master plan that would encompass all of the university’s properties and development needs before plans are made for the North Prospect Church site. Lesley has hired a planning consultant for this purpose.

At the Working Group, Lesley announced plans to build a dorm on the National Car Rental site at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Wendell Street. They’ve hired an architect, interviewed construction firms, and are looking to build in

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September 2008. They will include first floor retail and attempt to keep the ATM banking in that location.

Lesley also announced that Agassiz Preschool, the parent co-op preschool that has operated out of the basement of the church for over thirty years, has another year to relocate. They are now expected to move in June 2009.

The Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center (MMVAC) is being studied as one program element at the Porter Square location. The ABC Board has taken the position that they prefer MMVAC to be built in the University Hall building, formerly known as Porter Exchange.

ABC Executive Director Terry Delancey stated, "As the council and community seemed comfortable with going ahead with the discussion, Miriam Goldberg, Wendy Prellwitz, and I will be meeting with Lesley President Joseph Moore after Thanksgiving. However, I want to be clear that we continue to keep all our options open, including building MMVAC at 20 Sacramento St. as we originally planned."

ABC/ANC Name Change Discussion

A motion was made by the council to form a committee to discuss the agency's name change and work on the council's bylaws. This committee will present its findings and suggestions to the council at a future meeting. Residents who are interested and who can devote time to this issue are invited to contact Phoebe Sinclair, Community Liaison at psinclair@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x10.



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ABC Community

SIGN UP NOW FOR ABC'S SNOW REMOVAL SERVICE



Don't get caught out in the cold! Sign up now for ABC's snow removal service available to residents of Agassiz and adjacent neighborhoods

age fifty and older. The service is performed by D&M Masonry & Restoration of Brighton, MA and includes any combination of driveway, walkways, sideways, stairs, and salt/sanding.

D&M Masonry & Restoration is an established, reputable business that is fully insured with general liability and worker's compensation. To enroll or get additional information, please contact Phoebe Sinclair of ABC at (617) 349-6287 x10 or email her at psinclair@agassiz.org.

Please pass this information on to anyone you know who might be interested in our snow shovel service! Thank you.

AGASSIZ RESIDENT FEATURED IN EDUCATIONAL VIDEO

"No Guilty-Conscious Living"

Agassiz resident Linda Wolf was recently filmed for a video project for the Strong Women program created by Miriam Nelson, Director of the Center for Physical Activity and Nutrition, and Associate Professor of Nutrition at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University.



Ms. Wolf, who participates in the "Strong Women" class at Healthworks gym in Porter Square, volunteered to help with the video.

Her participation included being interviewed by Dr. Nelson, and taking interviewer and camera crew through her daily routine that includes mindful eating, carrying laundry up and down

three flights of stairs, and going for a stroll outdoors. She stated, "We talked about maintaining a healthy lifestyle in your day-to-day life."



PHOTOS FROM THE ANNUAL THANKSGIVING POT LUCK DINNER

ABC warmly thanks all who contributed to and attended the 36th Annual Pot Luck Feast, particularly those who cooked and carved! We hosted another well-attended event and hope to see you again next year for turkey, veggie dishes, pie, good company and conversation, and all the rest!

Please enjoy these photos from the event.



Agassiz Afterschool Programs

AFTERSCHOOL THEATRICAL PRODUCTION - LA BRUJA

Prepared by Afterschool Director Andrea Bellomo

Agassiz Afterschool students put together a musical production! The show debuted on November 13th and was titled "La Bruja." The story was about a mariachi boy searching for his lost bride amongst a host of dancing ghost people. The ghost people were haunted, yet friendly, sad, and happy!



La Bruja Set

The afterschool students worked extremely hard on set design, writing the story, learning the songs, and choreographing the steps to the ghostly dances! Using all recycled materials, the 4th and 5th grade students built a large house out of cardboard with spooky portraits and a large black cauldron. The students divided tasks and shared responsibilities as they worked through the creative process of this production.

The play not only helped students develop skills in putting together a musical, it also gave them the opportunity to work together as a team. The teachers and parents of the Agassiz Afterschool students are proud of their dedication to this project and hope to see many more performances!



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AFTERSCHOOL STAFF - GOODBYES AND HELLOS

We'll Miss You Alex Lewis!

Prepared by Afterschool Director Andrea Bellomo

As the month of October came to an end, we sadly said goodbye to one fantastic director and educator, Alex Lewis. Alex worked as the Director for the Agassiz Afterschool since August of 2006. She has been an extraordinary member of the Agassiz Afterschool staff.

All will miss her as she travels back to her home country, England.



Alex has accomplished a great deal over the last year. She strengthened relations with the Baldwin School and helped to create what is known today as the Agassiz Baldwin Community. Some of the things students will miss about Alex are, "her nice English accent," "her nice ways," and her "funny times at Outback."

We wish her nothing but the very best that life has to offer!

Introducing New Staff

Rowan Elowe

Hello! My name is Rowan Elowe and I am the new lead teacher for the 1-3rd grade students in the Agassiz Afterschool Program. I recently graduated from Wheaton College and moved to the city from coastal Maine. I am having a blast getting to know the students and the city as a whole. In



my free time I enjoy reading, music (particularly guitar), and art. Say hello if you see me around!

Caleb Sweet

My name is Caleb Sweet and I've joined my comrades here at Agassiz

Afterschool Headquarters. I hail from Maine and became tired of moose and lobster so I ventured south. I attend



Berklee College of Music and my major is . . . music! I've been working with school-age children for two years and find it grand. I look forward to a great year with the Agassiz Afterschool students and staff!

KIDS ONLY HOLIDAY SALE 2007

Children can bring a list and enlist the help of Agassiz Afterschool and ABC staff to purchase gifts for family and friends. But remember, this sale is for KIDS ONLY!



City Wide

NEW BUS SERVICE LEAVES FROM CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge residents might be interested to learn that a new bus service "Vamoose Bus" is

now offering round trip service between Cambridge, MA and New York City. The service includes:

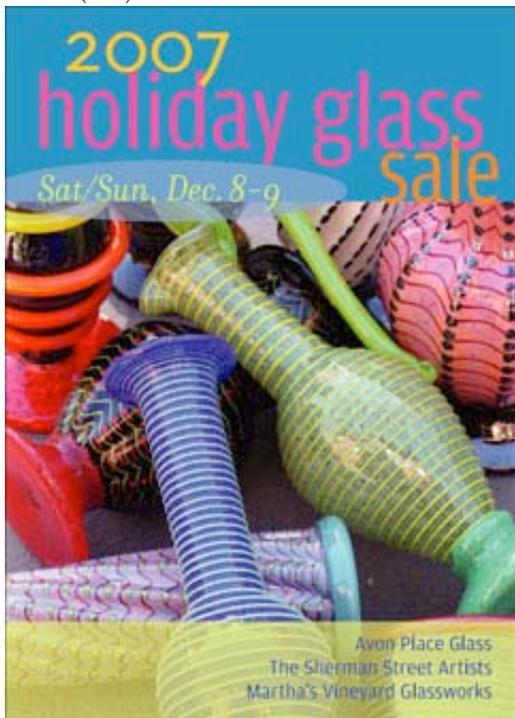
- Free complimentary Wireless Internet (WiFi),
- Brand new comfortable buses,
- Luggage assistance,
- Carefully selected, convenient pickup/drop-off locations,
- Ability to book and pay for tickets online

For more information please call (877) 393-2828 or visit Vamoose bus online at www.vamoosebus.com/info_nybostonline.php.

STUDIO SALE

Andrew Magdanz and Susie Shapiro, artists whose colorful glass pieces are featured annually in the Small Works Show, are hosting a holiday glass sale that is sure to please. Don't miss it!

- What:** Holiday glass sale
- When:** Sat/Sun December 8 & 9, 11 AM to 4 PM
- Where:** Avon Place Glass, 147 Sherman Street, Cambridge
- Info:** Cash & checks only. For inquiries, call (617) 492-8784.



Sacramento Street Gallery

OXFORD STREET QUILTERS HOST QUILT RAFFLE

Sacramento Street Gallery will host a reception and quilt raffle on **Sunday, December 9th from 2:00-5:00 PM**. Proceeds from the quilt, created over the past two years by seven neighborhood quilters, will benefit Rural Project M's of Hale County, Alabama, "Buyameter Project."

The Oxford Street Quilters, Jill Burrows, Meg D'Ambra, Abi Fafchamps, Andrea Kadomiya, Ann Sitkin, Ada Park Snider, and Seddon Wylde, first came together after two members of the group became captivated by the vibrant quilts created by the internationally acclaimed women in the Gee's Bend Collective. Each created and pieced together their own original designs to be incorporated into the larger quilt.

Please join us for this event! For more information on the quilt or the event, call (617) 491-6888 or visit www.hurstgallery.com or www.buyameter.org.



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Community Calendar

December 2007

Tuesday, December 4		Kids Only Sale 2007 begins and runs through Friday, December 14
Wednesday, December 5		Hanukkah begins at sundown
Wednesday, December 12	6:00 - 7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St, 2nd Floor Public welcome
Wednesday, December 19	7:30 - 9:00 PM	ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Baldwin School Cafeteria, 28 Sacramento St. All are welcome
Saturday, December 22		First day of Winter
Monday, December 24		ABC office and programs closed through Tuesday, Dec. 25, Christmas Day
Monday, December 31		New Years Eve, ABC school programs closed

The Whistler is published monthly September - June by the Agassiz Baldwin Community, distribution 2,000. Call (617) 349-6287 to receive by mail or email. The newsletter is also posted each month online at www.agassiz.org. Items of interest to the neighborhood may be submitted for consideration no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

THE WHISTLER DECEMBER 2007



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