

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

January 2008

IN THIS ISSUE

ANC News: Snow Removal on City Sidewalks, Name Change Update	1
ANC News: Shady Hill Sq. Update	2 - 3
ABC Community: Snow Removal Service, Tai Chi Classes, Contest	3 - 4
ABC School Programs: Kids Only Sale A Success, Afterschool Restaurant, Hip Hop Fest.. in February	4 - 5
Sacramento St. Gallery: Camille Musser "Tropical Seascapes"	5
City Wide: Shovel Your Walk, Bus Service Suspended, Recycle 08, Flood Insurance, Last Chance For Flu Shots	6 - 7



Agassiz Name Change Update

A subcommittee of the Neighborhood Council will meet on January 14th to discuss issues surrounding the name change. They will develop a recommendation to be presented at the January 16th ANC community meeting. The subcommittee's members include ANC Meeting Chair and Board Member Stephen Diamond, ABC Executive Director Terry Delancey, Board Member Andrea Walsh, Community Liaison Phoebe Sinclair, and community members Fred Meyer, Willie Bloomstein, and Astrid Dodds.

For more information, please see the November and December issues of *The Whistler*, or contact Phoebe Sinclair at psinclair@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x10.

ANC News

NOTES FROM THE DEC. 19 MEETING

Snow Removal On City Sidewalks

ANC meeting chair Stephen Diamond sent correspondence to Bill Dwyer of the Cambridge Department of Public Works regarding city sidewalks made impassible by winter snow and ice. He included with his email several photos (see below) of neighborhood streets and corners following a snowstorm, and copied it to two Cambridge City Counselors. Mr. Diamond will report on the response to his email at an upcoming council meeting.



NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



JANUARY 16 - 7:30 PM

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

AGENDA

LESLEY PROPOSAL for a NEW DORMITORY on the National Car Rental site

Discussions:

- Parking problems related to Harvard Construction near Hammond St.
- ANCI/ABC name change presented by subcommittee
- City Snow Removal
- Letter to support Shady Hill Sq.

Shady Hill Square Update

Shady Hill Square resident and advocate Merav Gold joined the council to provide an update on the fate of the square’s communal green.

Originally the site of the Shady Hill School, Shady Hill Square is an intimate circle of stucco houses built in 1915 and designed to incorporate open, communal space. Ms. Gold referred the council to the 1999 Cambridge Historical Commission report, noting that, “the green is the center of an ensemble property. A building on the green would devastate Shady Hill Square in its entirety, detrimentally impacting each property that is a part of it.”

Built on land purchased from the Charles Elliot Norton Estate, Shady Hill Square is a historically significant example of urban design seeking to preserve open space. Ms. Gold explained that abutting two densely populated neighborhoods with a low ratio of open space, the green is an irreplaceable aesthetic, historical, and environmental asset.

The entire Square was owned and maintained as rental property by the original 1915 developers or their heirs until the late 1960s. At that time it was purchased by one of the renters who then re-sold most of the houses to their neighbors, but retained ownership of a duplex and the center green. They sold the green to Stonehouse Holdings, LLC in September. On September 28th, 2007, Merav Gold and other residents of Shady Hill Square received their first and only notice from Stonehouse stating the developers’

intention to build. The notice declared that Stonehouse, after working with the city for a year, held all the necessary building permits.



Historically, Ms. Gold explained, the green has always been in common use. A number of those who purchased properties in the 1970’s were given verbal promises that the green would remain untouched by the same family who later sold to Stonehouse. The city has only recently assessed taxes on the green. For most of its history it appears that the city, like the neighborhood, saw it as open space rather than a buildable lot.



Rendering of semi-attached homes around central green

When Shady Hill Square residents received notice from Stonehouse holdings, LLC they quickly moved to protect the green. First they brought their predicament to the Cambridge City Council. On October 15, the city council voted to encourage the Cambridge Historical Commission to open a landmarking study and to initiate an open investigation of the permitting process.

Directly following the City Council meeting, Shady Hill Square advocates confronted the developer and work crew when they arrived on the green on October 17. The advocates then appealed to Cambridge Inspectional Services, who issued a reprieve and order to temporarily stop building. In the meantime, the Cambridge Historical Commission voted to initiate a landmarking study on November 1, which would have protected the green for up to a year. Ms. Gold noted, “Unfortunately, if the developers’ permit is not revoked by the Board of Zoning Appeals, the City Council, or the Building

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Commissioner, the Historical Commission's vote may be rendered powerless."

On November 29, Shady Hill Square advocates attended a Board of Zoning Appeals Meeting where City Counselors Henrietta Davis and Brian Murphy spoke in support of preserving the open green at Shady Hill Square. State Representative Alice Wolf and City Counselors Anthony Galluccio and Craig Kelley wrote the Board to request the revocation of the developers' permit. The case with the Board of Zoning Appeals will continue until February 7, 2008.

While the fate of the green remains under discussion in various Cambridge offices, the developer has begun the process of regaining permission to build. Ms. Gold reported that Stonehouse intends to appeal the stop work order, issued by Inspectional Services, on January 29, when they will meet with the Massachusetts State Building Code Appeals Board.

In conclusion Ms. Gold told the council, that while advocates are still working on saving the green, they are grateful for the support they've received from the Cambridge City Councilors, the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association, and the Agassiz Neighborhood Council. Mid-Cambridge composed an official statement to oppose development of the green at Shady Hill Square, and following this council meeting, Agassiz is considering doing the same.

Ms. Gold stated, "I am grateful to Agassiz and Mid-Cambridge residents for their attendance at meetings and their powerful words and letters. The Square would be lost without you."

For more information on Shady Hill Square, please contact Merav Gold at (617) 868-7426 or email address hnhgold@yahoo.com.



Ms. Gold on the green

ABC Community

AGASSIZ SNOW REMOVAL SERVICE UPDATE

ABC has arranged an agreement with a new contractor for our snow removal service. Socelvic Company, is family owned and provides building, carpentry, painting and snow removal services for residents of the Greater Boston area. They are fully insured and licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



Agassiz residents over the age of fifty who have not yet signed up for snow removal are welcome to contact us for more information. Please email psinclair@agassiz.org or call (617) 349-6287 x10.

SIGN UP NOW FOR AGASSIZ AFTER 50 TAI CHI CLASSES

A new session of Tai Chi classes for Agassiz residents age 50 and older will begin at the end of January/beginning of February. For classes to run, there must be a minimum of eight people enrolled for a full ten-class session. Please contact Phoebe Sinclair at psinclair@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x10 to have your name added to the sign-up list. Additional information below.

- Date: Mondays, 6:00-7:30 PM
Ten sessions \$150
- Location: TBA
- Description: Taijiquan, often referred to as "Tai Chi" in the west, is a more than 400-year-old system of life



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force cultivation and martial art. The martial movement practice is infused with Daoist and Buddhist energetic and breath methods, and operates in accordance with traditional Chinese medicinal principles.

Phoebe Sinclair at psinclair@agassiz.org or 20 Sacramento St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

*Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare

NAMING CONTEST FOR AGASSIZ'S "AGING IN PLACE" INITIATIVE

Prepared by Miriam Goldberg, ABC Board Chair

"What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would be as sweet.*"

Perhaps true of flower but not, apparently, of activities and programs designed by those over the age of fifty.

In fact, the Over Fifty Task Force, a program of the Agassiz Baldwin Community that seeks to create a sustaining community for older Cambridge residents, is having a difficult time coming up with an original, appealing, and descriptive way of referring to the initiative designed to assist people continuing to live in their homes and community as they age. Therefore, we are asking YOU, the community at large, to contribute your ideas for a suitable name with broad, welcoming appeal.

The Over Fifty Task Force, through the generosity of Porter Square Books and Tavern in the Square, will reward the winning entry with a copy of "Encore: Finding Work That Matters in the Second Half of Life" by Marc Freedman. The runner-up will receive a gift certificate to Tavern in the Square at Porter Square.

Please email or mail your suggested names to



Agassiz Afterschool Programs

2007 KIDS ONLY HOLIDAY SALE A SUCCESS

ABC extends thanks to all the young shoppers who helped raise over a \$1000 for ABC's Children's Programs Scholarships. The kids had a terrific time at the Kids Only Sale, where they purchased gifts for friends and family. We look forward to seeing them again next year.

Additionally, the ANC would like to thank Joie de Vivre, Cambridge Naturals, and an anonymous donor for their support. We owe the success of the Kids-Only Sale to the generosity of Agassiz neighbors and kids. Thanks again!



SOMETHING HEALTHY COOKING AT AFTERSCHOOL ...

Beginning this January children in the Agassiz Afterschool will create a RESTAURANT for HEALTHY EATING. A unique program-wide opportunity, children will collaborate to develop a restaurant to share with each other, families and community members. Afterschool students will work on every aspect of the restaurant including planning menus, selecting food, cooking, creating ambiance, decor, entertainment, service, money, and business management.



Through creating the restaurant, students will learn about the food they eat and about balanced nutrition in meals, as well as discover new foods and learn how to make good choices. Parents will be invited as guests at the end of the 5-week project to enjoy a festival of healthy dining.

The Agassiz Afterschool staff has worked hard to plan this project-based activity that will allow children to choose and work with teams in their areas of interest. The teams will include Visual Arts, Entertainment, Healthy Eating Promotion, Menu, Ambience, and Money Management. The conclusion of the Restaurant for Healthy Eating project will be a three-day restaurant festival for parents, families, and the community.

Check back soon for updates!

If you are interested in registering your child for afterschool programs at Agassiz Afterschool, please contact Children's Program Director Michelle Quinlan at mquinlan@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x11.



INTRODUCING ARTS AGASSIZ HIP HOP FESTIVAL

Save the date, **Thursday, February 21st at 2 PM**, for the 12th Annual Hip Hop Festival, a showcase of hip hop dance and rap. Held on the Baldwin School Stage in the Maria L. Baldwin School, this popular event draws talented performers from all over Cambridge.



Seating will be general admission and tickets are \$2 per person or \$5 per family group. Afterschool groups free, but please call ahead. For more information, con-

tact Andrea Bellomo at abellomo@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x14.

Sacramento Street Gallery

The Sacramento St Gallery is proud to present paintings by Camille Saunders Musser. Ms. Musser's work, richly colorful and imaginative, shows vivid memories of the Caribbean landscape.

Although the artist now lives in Cambridge, she is originally from St Vincent and the Grenadines and has, "images of the sea, hills, the tropical vegetation, and moonlit nights . . . permanently etched in my memory, even though I now live thousands of miles away . . ."

Sacramento St. Gallery Director Anne Hyland writes, "This is one of the things that particularly makes the show so comforting to the viewer, and one that will make seeing the show so valuable in these wintery days: the beautiful images of the sunny Caribbean are just wonderful to see."

Camille Musser lives in Cambridge and visits the Caribbean regularly.

Please join us for the Opening Reception on Friday, January 11 from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Light refreshments will be served.

Gallery Hours: M-F, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM



"Moonlight Sail" by Camille Saunders Musser



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City Wide

SNOW/ICE FREE WALKING FOR EVERYONE

Please shovel your walk! Cambridge residents of all ages and levels of mobility require passable sidewalks free of snow and encrusted ice. Help keep our famously walkable city accessible for everyone. See below for a message from the city of Cambridge:

The DPW will clear the streets as soon as possible. Our goals are to chemically treat all major arteries within three hours of when snow begins, to keep main arteries plowed during all stages of a storm, and to clear all streets and the sidewalks bordering City property once a storm has stopped. Staff clear over 18 miles of sidewalk areas including those around schools, public buildings, parks, and high volume bus stops.

When Shoveling

- When digging out your car, think about how you pile snow: don't create new problems in the street or sidewalk.
- Please don't take it personally if the DPW plows push snow back into your driveway or parked car. This is really unavoidable as we work to keep streets passable during all stages of a storm.
- It is illegal to "reserve" cleared parking spaces; objects left in on-street parking

spaces will be removed.

- Think safety: dig out fire hydrants and street drains. Together, we'll get the job done.

When Parking

- Pay attention to "No Parking" signs during snow emergencies. Four parking facilities provide free off-street parking during declared snow emergencies:
 - Galleria Mall in East Cambridge
 - First Street garage on Spring Street
 - Green Street garage in Central Square
 - Harvard University's 52 Oxford Street garage
- Always park at least 20 feet from the street corner so plows can push snow away from the crosswalk. Parking away from the corner improves visibility and safety year-round.

VAMOOSSE BUS SERVICE SUSPENDED TEMPORARILY

As announced on the website, Vamoose express bus service between Cambridge, MA and NYC is temporarily suspended until certain issues with the City of Cambridge are resolved. For more information please call (877) 393-2828 or visit Vamoose Bus online at www.vamoosebus.com/info_nybostonline.php.

RESOLVE TO RECYCLE IN 2008

Recycle your Computers & Televisions

Prepared by Cambridge DPW

Harmless while intact, computer and television screens, or "CRTs", contain about 5lbs of lead and are banned from landfills and incinerators in MA. If your computer or television still works, think about donating it! Many organizations have established programs to transform old or surplus computer and peripheral equipment into functional and useful computer systems for non-

Fred Meyer, Realtor

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profit agencies and persons with low income.

Donation / Recycling options:

- Does it work? Donate it!
- The City will pick up one computer monitor or television per household per week.
- SONY products can be dropped off at: Somerville Transfer Station, 10 Poplar St., Somerville, MA 02143.

For more information about consumer electronics recycling, or for a list of places to donate your used items, visit www.mass.gov/dep/recycle/reduce/electron.htm.

Recycle Your Christmas Tree

curbside **christmas tree** collection

- ✓ **Remove stand and decorations.**
- ✓ **Do not put in a plastic bag.**
- ✓ Weather permitting, bare trees will be collected for recycling on your regular pickup day.
- ✓ Remember that collection is delayed one day during holiday weeks.

simplify the holidays!

- reuse the comics as gift wrap
- send e-cards
- donate to charity (in your friend or relative's name)
- give gifts of time (babysit, dinner, or theater)



617.349.4800

www.cambridgema.gov/recycle

UPDATED FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAPS FOR CAMBRIDGE AND MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Prepared by Cambridge DPW

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is in the process of updating Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Middlesex County. This process will revise the limits of the flood plain in Cambridge, which is principally located in the Alewife area of the city. Property owners in the flood plain who have mortgages provided by a federally regulated lender are required to purchase flood insurance.

The preliminary maps indicate that the flood plain and flood way have expanded, therefore more Cambridge residents/property owners

may be required to purchase flood insurance.

FEMA recently issued preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for Middlesex County. FEMA and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Flood Hazard Management Program (FHMP) will be hosting six community coordination meetings throughout Middlesex County, where representatives from FEMA, their consultants, and the FHMP will discuss the mapping process and address comments and questions.

To learn more, or to view the Flood Insurance Rate Map for the Agassiz neighborhood, visit www.cambridgema.gov/theworks/stormwater/fema.html. If you have difficulty locating your property on one of these maps, you can contact Cambridge DPW at (617) 349-4800. You may also contact the FEMA Map Assistance Center at (877) 336-2627 (toll free.)

IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR A FREE FLU SHOT!

Prepared by Louise Rice, R.N., Cambridge Health Department

In response to popular demand, the Cambridge Public Health Department has scheduled an additional flu clinic on Wednesday, Jan. 16 from 4 PM-6 PM at the Windsor Street Health Center, 2nd Floor large conference room, 119 Windsor St., in Cambridge.

The department is also offering pneumonia vaccine to people over 65. All vaccines are free. For more information, call (617) 665-3855 or visit www.cambridgepublichealth.org.

Nina Alonso Hathaway

Fresh Pond Ballet

1798a Mass Ave. Cambridge, MA 02140

617.491.5865 www.freshpondballet.com

Community Calendar

January 2008

Tuesday, January 1		New Years Day Holiday, ABC office and programs closed
Wednesday, January 9	6:00 - 7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St, 2nd Floor Public welcome
Wednesday, January 16	7:30 - 9:00 PM	ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Baldwin School Cafeteria, 28 Sacramento St. All are welcome
Monday, January 21		Martin Luther King Junior Holiday, ABC office and 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 JANUARY 2008



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DO NOT FORWARD