

the **Whistler**
Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council *October '05*

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ANC News

NOTES FROM THE SEPT 21 MEETING

Lesley University Air Rights Progress Report

Bill Doncaster, Director of Public Affairs at Lesley University, joined the Agassiz Neighborhood Council this past Wednesday to discuss Lesley's bid for air rights in Porter Square. The area under negotiation stretches from the head house to the bridge and, if the MBTA agrees to the deal, the space will be leased to Lesley University for 85 years. Mr. Doncaster confirmed that an agreement is likely and explained how a platform will be built over the MBTA Commuter Rail tracks with a building placed on top.

A *Boston Globe* article from September 11, 2005 reported that the MBTA is expecting to sign a deal in 30 days. Mr. Doncaster explained that, while this may not occur, an agreement is anticipated by fall '05. He told the ANC that Lesley will begin to concrete its plans for the air rights space soon after. Lesley does expect input from the surrounding communities, which include Porter Square, the Agassiz Neighborhood,

Neighborhood 9, and Somerville. They hope to channel the residents' concerns into one place, with Porter Square taking the lead.

Also, as part of the agreement with the MBTA, Lesley University will acquire the Secondary Naming Rights to change the name of the Porter Square station (but not the MBTA maps) to "Lesley-Porter". The university will also assume responsibility for maintenance and seasonal-care of the plaza, though it is yet to be decided whether that care will or should extend to the bike racks, sunken cement arena with trees, or the wind sculpture. Public safety will remain under the jurisdiction of the MBTA.

During the course of the meeting, all were curious about whether Lesley intends to build dorms in the air space over the tracks. Currently, the university has 640 students living on campus in three locations, none of whom are permitted to keep cars in Cambridge. The university does expect an increase in enrollment since going co-ed and there's a standing commitment to move their Kenmore Square-based Art Institute of Boston to Cambridge. Regarding Lesley's overall plan for Porter Square, Mr. Doncaster reassured the council, "[Lesley] is aware that not everyone can be pleased by the outcome, but they will work their hardest to build a win-win situation." To that end, a resident commended Lesley for the care it takes in the upkeep of its properties and said that, despite her concerns, she's encouraged

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



OCTOBER 19 - 7:30 PM

Baldwin School Cafeteria - 28
Sacramento Street
(Press Buzzer for Entry)

AGENDA

Welcome Mark Wolf of Rosie's Bakery, soon to the Agassiz Neighborhood.

Cambridge Public Works presents street & sidewalk maintenance and improvements, as well as future plans. Bring your questions!

about what's to come.

For more information on Lesley, or University-based development in Cambridge, consult the Town Gown report (see below), compiled by the Cambridge Department of Development. You may also email Mr. Doncaster directly with questions at wdoncast@lesley.edu.

Town Gown Report:

www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/data/educ/towngown_2003.html

Other Helpful Websites:

www.cambridgema.gov
www.lesley.edu

Retaining Independent Businesses on Mass Ave.

Members of a three neighborhood collective (Agassiz, Porter Square, and Neighborhood 9) have been working to protect existing small businesses on Mass Ave for many months. The current outcome of this work is a proposed amendment to the North Massachusetts Avenue Overlay District, which the group worries will unintentionally promote development by offering incentives on the sites of the existing one story commercial buildings, forcing out desirable local merchants and services, and raising the rents. The proposed amendment drafted by the Cambridge Community Development Department, has been reviewed and adopted by the Cambridge Planning Board and then sent on to the City Council's Ordinance Committee for consideration.

Also discussed was a new eye-catching map of all of neighborhood businesses along Mass Ave, stretching from Cambridge Common to Alewife. This project was initiated by the Porter Square Neighborhood Association, with the help of ANC members, to encourage all of us to "SHOP AND EAT ON MASS AVE FIRST." Lesley and Harvard Universities have already printed a limited number of these maps and distributed them amongst their new students. Other funding has been obtained to print up more maps to give out to the public. Also, residents at the ANC meeting reported about organizing a mid-winter arts event, similar to

the Christo Gates in NYC, to attract shoppers. Planning for such an event is still in its infant stages.

Shops, New and Established, introduced via The Whistler

The Agassiz Neighborhood Board and Council would like to invite neighborhood retail shops and restaurants to the monthly ANC meetings, as well as have *The Whistler* newsletter feature them in a short article. An open invitation is extended to all Agassiz neighborhood business owners, established and new! Please contact the ANC Community Liaison at 617-349-6287 ex 10 (or psinclair@agassiz.org) to schedule an interview for *The Whistler* or to learn more about attending a future ANC meeting.

Spread the Word!

As always, The Agassiz Neighborhood Council extends a warm welcome to all residents who are interested and able to attend Council meetings on their newly established day and time. Meetings are on the third Wednesday of every month from 7:30 to 9:30 pm. Snacks will be provided and guest speakers are often present. These community meetings are a necessary sounding board for neighbors with issues that need to be addressed and provide excellent networking possibilities for help with neighborhood-related problems. They're also a great way to learn about exciting arts events and neighborhood improvements. For the freshest

Fred Meyer, Realtor

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Past President, MA Assoc. of Realtors.
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news about Agassiz, join the Neighborhood Council!

Neighborhood News

COMMUNITY ALERT!

The City of Cambridge Police Department issued this alert on September 20, 2005:

“Between September 15 thru September 18, 2005 there was one burglary and two attempted burglaries reported in the Oxford Street area. In one of these incidents a Caucasian male was observed by a witness and in another unrelated incident an African American male was likewise observed. Both suspects are reported to be in their twenties and fled upon being observed. Entry at the break-in was gained thru a window, while on another occasion an individual was observed acting suspiciously near a door. These incidents were reported to have occurred during the night time hours.

All citizens are asked to be alert for these or other suspicious individuals and to call 911 if observed. If anyone has any information regarding these incidents please contact the Investigation Section at 617-349-3370 or the Police Operations Desk (24 hours) at 617-349-3301.”

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Cambridge City Council Candidate’s Night on Environmental and Energy Issues
October 5, 2005 at 6:30 - 9:00 PM
Senior Center Ballroom
806 Massachusetts Avenue
Central Square, Cambridge

Meet the candidates for City Council and hear their views on the environment and energy issues facing the city. Also, feel free to send your questions via email or mail ASAP to: greencambridge@comcast.net

or
Green Decade/Cambridge
31 Chilton Street #3
Cambridge, MA 02138

Alden Park “Tot Lot” Renovation Meeting on October 6, 2005 at 6:30 PM
Baldwin Cafeteria
20 Sacramento Street

Residents are invited to attend the second public meeting concerning renovations to the playground on the corner of Sacramento and Oxford Streets. Staff from the Community Development Department will present a preliminary design plan for comment and discussion. Feedback is encouraged and welcome. Those who would like to be involved but cannot attend are invited to send questions via email, postal mail, or phone.

Contact Jeff Roberts, Neighborhood Planner at 617-349-4639 (TTY 617-349-4621) or jroberts@cambridgema.gov.

Visit the project web page at www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/cp/parks/alden/index.html

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City Wide

VOTE NOVEMBER 8 FOR CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL AND CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE!

Polls open at 7am on Tuesday, November 8, 2005 for the City Council and School Committee elections. There are twenty-six candidates in all, with fifteen running for re-election. Nine seats must be filled for Cambridge City Council, seven for the Cambridge School Committee. Agassiz Neighborhood residents will be voting at the Baldwin School (28

Sacramento Street) --**be sure to get your vote in before polls close at 8pm!**

Listed below are statements that Cambridge School Committee candidates provided to *The Whistler* upon request.

Fred Fantini

Statement for the Agassiz School Community

One of the things that make Cambridge a great city is its unified public school system, including the single high school, where everyone comes together. This year, more than at any time in recent memory, we can look ahead with so much more hope and promise for the stakeholders of our school system. We've made difficult decisions, and we've looked forward. Everyone will benefit!

We have:

- strong and stable leadership and management,
- financial resources,
- capital funds to repair our older schools,
- new initiatives at elementary and high school levels,
- a new media arts facility,
- no fees for student participation in extra curricular activities and sports,
- a fully accredited high school, including Rindge School of Technical Arts - fully certified and expanding, and
- strong and productive collaborations with local universities.

We have a new era of school committee collaboration for school improvement, unprecedented as we all focus on student learning and closing

the achievement across the city.

I have worked very hard to build consensus and focus on the future. As we continue the job of transforming our schools and pursuing excellence, I welcome the opportunity to continue to serve you.

Patty Nolan

Statement

My management background distinguishes me from all other candidates, and would be a great addition to School Committee.



As an involved Cambridge parent, I've served on boards, volunteered, and worked with parents across the district on behalf of all students. As head of two small companies, and strategic and financial consultant for non-profits and businesses, I learned about organizational change, governance, oversight.

My platform: given our kids, city, teachers, community, AND budget, Cambridge should be a city people move to BECAUSE of our schools, not DESPITE them. I can help get us there. Our stellar costs (\$20,000/student) combined with less than stellar results (below state average) is distressing. There ARE urban schools with higher achievement, with far less money.

For too long, we tolerated disparities, and ignored the desire for greater challenges. Therefore, our district has lost many students over the past decades, more than surrounding communities, including high rent ones. We can address these needs. My experience can improve policy discussions and help move us forward with productive action plans to put more resources into our classrooms, where they

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Better oversight = better management = better results. Our city deserves the best. Please give me your vote # 1.

Luc Schuster

An Agassiz Neighborhood Educator for a Change



As a teacher and recent graduate of the Cambridge Public Schools, I am excited to be running for Cambridge School Committee! I grew up in Common

Place, a housing cooperative on Oxford Street and, like most Common Place kids, attended the Agassiz School. I also went to the Agassiz Preschool on Mass. Ave. and was a camper and counselor at Outback. I fondly remember working on two separate productions of "Maria Baldwin of Agassiz" while attending the Agassiz Afterschool.

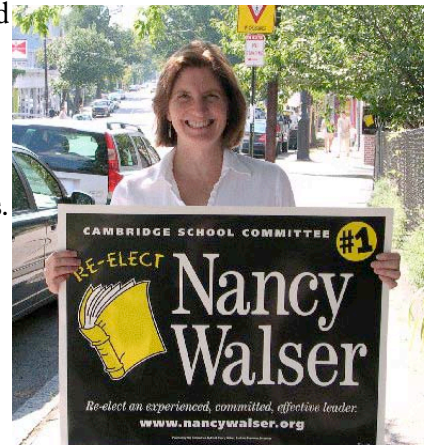
After graduating from CRLS (class of '98), I taught in four different CPS summer programs. I also worked as an assistant humanities teacher at King Open the year after it merged with Harrington. Of the six current School Committee members, there is not a single teacher. As a teacher—I teach GED classes in Roxbury's Dudley Square—I will fill a glaring void. On a six member School Committee there should be space for a classroom perspective such as mine.

I know firsthand the promise of Cambridge's unique approach to meaningful, participatory education and will ensure that our schools engage young people in education that demands the highest quality work from all students. For more information on my campaign please go to www.voteluc.org.

Nancy Wasler


Walser Champions Quality Teaching and Excellence in Cambridge Schools

Her black and yellow signs sport a big "Nancy Walser #1; Re-elect an experienced, committed, effective leader." Campaigning for a fourth term on Cambridge School Committee, Walser is often described as having "the vision, courage, and commitment necessary to make the hard choices," according to Owen Andrews, a parent co-chair of the Graham & Parks Steering Committee. Since her first win in 1999, Walser has maintained constant focus on long-range stability and educational excellence in all our schools.



Walser's experience has taught her there are no quick fixes. Instead, her pragmatism and consensus building skills have played a major role in focusing the School Committee on the key issues -- quality teaching and teacher training-- needed to keep our school system moving in the right direction. She has pushed for improved communication with parents and residents and, as a three-time budget co-chair, she has been successful in streamlining administration to fund new academic initiatives and to begin a long-range capital plan for upgrading and maintaining our school buildings.

Her campaign is being managed this year by Baldwin parent Fran Cronin. To contribute or



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volunteer, please call Fran at: 617-306-0719 . For more information and to read Nancy's campaign blog, go to www.nancywalser.org.

ALSO RUNNING FOR CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

- Joseph Grassi
- Richard Harding
- Ben Lummis, www.benlummis.org
- Marc McGovern, www.marcmcgovern.com

For more information on the candidates, go to vote.rwinters.com

NEXT MONTH: Statements from Cambridge

**ANC Community
PRENTISS STREET BLOCK PARTY**

Residents of Prentiss Street held their annual block party on September 4th. The event ran from 4 to 6 pm and featured a potluck spread, grilled fare, a band, a politician and a mime! In attendance were neighbors from cross streets Oxford and Frost, as well as others who were drawn by the delicious aromas and music. A new Agassiz resident kicked off the afternoon with a mime demonstration, and then offered informal lessons to neighborhood children. Next the band The Embraceables, lead by Harvey Cox, provided a lively backdrop of the 50's music, as well as swing, jazz and some pop. Also present was Cambridge School Committee candidate and Agassiz/Baldwin school alumni Luc Schuster, who addressed the crowd about his campaign for public office.

Events like the Prentiss Street party are a great way to meet new neighbors and foster interest in community. If you'd like to organize a block party for your own street, you might want to block traffic for the day. For more information on how to do so, contact the Cambridge Traffic Department at



Enjoying the afternoon

617-349-4700 or visit the website: www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/.

Harvey Cox and the Embraceables are available for weddings, fundraisers, parties and other events. For bookings, call 617-876-2190.



The Embraceables play a set



Mime Exhibition

**Agassiz Community School
Programs**



Limited space is still available in **Agassiz Afterschool**, a program that offers school-age children safe and comfortable afternoons with activities of their choice ranging from sports to arts, and from drama to outdoor play. There is also a homework choice with a teacher to help older students with their assignments. Children may register part or full-time.

Sacramento Street Preschool, for children from two years, nine months to kindergarten age, also offers full and part-time program options

between 8:30 AM and 2:30 PM. Some spaces are still available in the preschool.

ANC offers vacation weeks, early release day performances and many community events and activities.

AGASSIZ AFTERSCHOOL KINDERGARTEN

The **Agassiz Afterschool Kindergarten** is a fun choice based program. Children from various schools in Cambridge have the opportunity to choose from three activities twice each day. Derived from a Leading for Quality training provided by the Agenda for Children Out-of-School Time Initiative, the program introduced "Theme Months" in the Spring of 2005. This is a chance for children to define how they spend their own out-of-school time. Children suggest ideas for the monthly theme and then participate in a blind vote. After the theme is selected, children have a brainstorming session where they get to suggest activities to do during the month. Teachers then adapt those suggestions into curriculum enriching activities that focus on individual learning styles.

Beginning in October 2005, the Kindergarten Program will include a **Teachers in Training Program**, TNT. Four different local teens will participate once a week for a period of ten weeks, receiving a suitable stipend at the completion of the program. TNT is an opportunity for teens to gain practical experience in planning, developing, and leading activities with Kindergarten students through working with a teacher-mentor. Our Kindergarten Afterschool staff are both welcoming and excited about this new addition to our already wonderful Kindergarten Program.

YOUNG AUDIENCES 9-29 PROGRAM CANCELED

Due to a flood at the Baldwin School, the "Kudos for Courage and Kindness" performance by Leeny del Seamonds was postponed. The new date is Wednesday, October 26; same time same place.



Sacramento Street Gallery

SMALL WORKS '05

The Sacramento Street Gallery presents: Small Works Show '05 --Cambridge Artists Support the Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center Building Fund. 50% of all profits benefit the Fund.

Opening Reception Friday, October 14

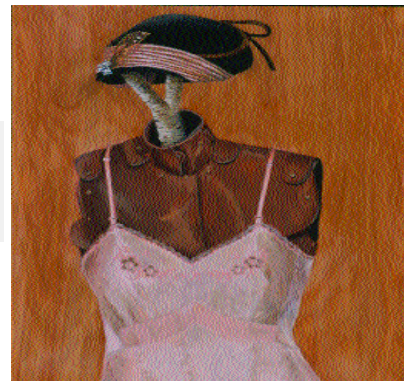
5-8 PM

Gallery Hours:

M-F 9AM - 5PM

Saturdays Noon - 5 PM

Jane Ehrlich



Marcia Halperin

Jeannie Motherwell



Community Calendar

October 2005

Wednesday, October 5	6:30 - 9:30 PM	ANC Co-Sponsors: Cambridge City Council Candidate's Night on Environmental and Energy Issues Senior Center Ballroom, 806 Massachusetts Avenue Central Square, Cambridge
Thursday, October 6	6:30 PM	Alden Park Renovation Meeting Baldwin Cafeteria 20 Sacramento Street
Friday, October 14	5:00 - 8:00 PM	Sacramento Street Gallery: Small Works Opening Reception
Wednesday, October 19	6:00 - 7:30 PM	ANC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento Street, 2nd Floor All are welcome
Wednesday, October 19	7:30 - 9:30 PM	ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Baldwin School Dining Hall, 28 Sacramento Street
Monday, October 31		Halloween

The Whistler is published monthly September - June by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, distribution 2,000. Call (617) 349-6287 to receive by mail or to be advised by email of its posting on the web at www.agassiz.org each month. 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 October 2005



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