

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

September 2015

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ANC News

NOTES FROM THE JUNE 10 MEETING

Discover Lesley's Guyana Study Abroad Program

"I'm here today because we'd like to start a village-to-neighborhood partnership, based on mutual exchange," stated David Morimoto, Associate Professor of Biology and Director of the Natural Science and Mathematics Division at Lesley University.

Professor Morimoto introduced Guyana Lesley Abroad Service Semester (GLASS), an award-winning cultural exchange program that he co-developed with Alice Layton, President of Rupununi Learners Foundation. The conversation between Professor Morimoto, Ms. Layton, and neighbors took place via Skype video conferencing, a first for the Neighborhood Council.

Studying Abroad in Guyana

Guyana is an English-speaking country located in northern South America. With a population of 750,000 people, it is one of the few Caribbean countries that is not an island, as well the third smallest country on mainland South America. It is over 75% forested with largely pristine, tropical rain forests and significant biodiversity.

Ninety-nine percent of Guyanese live along the coast.

Guyana is experiencing pressures due to development. According to Lesley University's website, the region where GLASS is located, North Rupununi, is:

[. . .] undergoing rapid change, with a burgeoning and unique village-run sustainable ecotourism industry competing with oil interests, gold mining, timber harvesting, and habitat conversion for soybeans.

Students participating in the eleven-week GLASS program study in Guyana for majority of that time, learning indigenous knowledge and tropical ecology. GLASS is open to all college majors – science, writing, art therapy, psychology, etc.

Professor Morimoto explained, "The essence of the way we work is dialogic. The American side has ideas and resources, the Guyanese side has the same, and we collaborate."

GLASS & Rupununi Learners

GLASS is celebrating its fifth year in Yupukari,

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



SEPT. 8 - 7:30 PM

Maud Morgan Arts
20A Sacramento Street

Agenda:

- **Urban Agriculture:** Developing an Ordinance for the City of Cambridge
- Meet **Slate2015**, candidates for **Cambridge City Council & School Committee**

a hilltop village home to 500 indigenous Makushi. Residents live in huts built from river-bank mud, hunt with bow and arrow, build dug-out canoes, and practice small-scale agriculture.

Again, according to Lesley's website:

Communities and leaders recognizing [the pressures of development] have stated that youth education is a priority. With the introduction of the new Amerindian Act in 2006, the Makushi have legitimate land rights but a stated challenge is a need for wider spread literacy and numeracy that are required for communities to participate effectively with growing interests in ecotourism and community development.

When Professor Morimoto first visited Yupukari in 2001, the graduation rate among young people was 0%. The creation of a public library and educational programs have helped to increase graduation to 60-65%. In addition, the village operates a nursery school, primary school, after school program, as well as the community-owned social enterprise, Rupununi Learners Incorporated (RLI).

RLI, a Guyanese nonprofit since 2007, operates

the Caiman House Field Station and Guest House, which sees around 450 visitors per year and income from which supports the library. RLI is "dedicated to a holistic approach to environmental conservation, encompassing wildlife research, education, economic development and cultural preservation." They work closely with and are supported by Rupununi Learners Foundation, a US-based non-profit begun in 2001.

Neighborhood-to-Village

Professor Morimoto and Ms. Layton discussed options and opportunities for a meaningful exchange between Agassiz Neighborhood residents, Agassiz Baldwin Community program participants and the residents of Yupukari. Ideas included letter writing between children of both communities, hearing from college students who've participated in GLASS, neighborhood-to-village conversations via Skype, and a book drive to support literacy via recreational reading among young people.

After learning that RLI's funding doesn't stretch far enough to regularly purchase books, Council members expressed interest in participating in the nonprofit's existing book drive. Ms. Layton detailed the specifics:

- To increase the sense of connection, donors are asked to contribute "the one book that made you a reader"
- Books must be in decent condition
- The reading level is Kindergarten through 8th grade
- Fiction is preferred, particularly picture books
- Duplication is not a problem as books get read over and over, and passed between many people
- Art supplies and classroom supplies are also welcome - "a case of crayons and a roll of butcher paper go a long way"

Visit GLASS and Rupununi Learners online, and watch a video about the program:

- lesley.edu/study-abroad/guyana-semester



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You don't need to be a student or associated with Lesley to visit Caiman House Field Station and Guest House in Yupukari! Interested? Contact David Morimoto at: morimoto@lesley.edu to learn more.

New at NeighborMedia

"When it was founded in 2007, NeighborMedia was a means to bring together the website and the TV channel," explained Frank Morris, NeighborMedia Coordinator at Cambridge Community Television. "Today, the program helps inform, educate, and move Cambridge residents to action. The stories our reporters share aren't found anywhere else. It's hyper-local journalism, produced by residents with a resident's perspective."

Mr. Morris updated the Council on changes to NeighborMedia. The website has re-launched online with a brand new look, and now aggregates Tweets from the Cambridge Twittersphere, as well as news from other local media sources. In addition to viewing videos and articles by its team of citizen journalists, visitors to NeighborMedia.org will also find updates from local nonprofits and neighborhood associations. A new feature allows visitors of the site to search for stories by neighborhood.

About NeighborMedia

NeighborMedia is comprised of 10-25 reporters, including interns from Lesley University. Participants range in age from 18 to 81 and represent many different backgrounds and neighborhoods. Although they aren't professional reporters, contributors receive training, can take journalism and media production classes, meet monthly at CCTV, and are encouraged to collaborate.

There are several options for getting involved:

- NeighborMedia Reporter: Cambridge residents can produce two written stories or one video per month and receive a free \$75



CCTV membership and unlimited CCTV classes

- Guest Contributor: submit a Cambridge-centric story of interest; this option is for those looking to contribute only occasionally or who live outside the city
- Nonprofits and neighborhood associations are also welcome to post

"If you can think of any particular Agassiz resident who might be a good fit for NeighborMedia, someone involved in the community and who has a passion for it, please suggest them! We'd be happy to invite them in for training," added Mr. Morris.

Want to check out the content and learn about what's of interest to your fellow Cambridge enthusiasts? There are many options for interacting with NeighborMedia:

TV

- BeLive: NeighborMedia Tonight with Frank Morris, 5:00 PM on Tuesdays, Channel 9

Internet

- Facebook at facebook.com/neighbormedia

- New weekly 'Facecast,' a Facebook news roundup of happenings in Cambridge
- Twitter at: twitter.com/neighbormedia
- For other social media outlets see www.neighbormedia.org

About CCTV

Cambridge Community Television is a nationally recognized community media center that is the voice and vision of all residents, businesses and organizations in the city. CCTV provides tools and training to foster free speech and creative expression, and involves people from across the city as producers and viewers of media that is informative, engaging, and as diverse as the Cambridge community.

Q&A

Q: What if someone doesn't want to produce a story, but wants something covered? Can they contact CCTV?

A: Stories can be suggested to newstip@cctvcambridge.org. This information is shared with volunteer reporters.

Q: How many people does CCTV interact with in Cambridge?

A: It's difficult to give exact numbers, but a lot of people interact with CCTV and Neighbor-Media via the websites and social media:

- Facebook - approximately 2000 combined likes
- Twitter - approximately 2800 combined follows
- Videos are shared on both websites and CCTV's television channels (8, 9, & 96)

New Development Proposed for 1718 Mass. Ave.

Bruce Gorsky, owner of the building and parking lot between Chang Sho restaurant and Cambridge Trust Bank, and David Chilinski, co-founder and president of Prellwitz Chilinski Associates, an Inman Square-based architecture firm, joined the Council to present a proposed project at 1718 Mass. Ave. in Neighborhood 9.



Proposed Residential Apartment Building

According to the developer and architect, plans for a new residential apartment building have been under works for two years. They've met with and solicited input from neighborhood groups and abutters and, according to Mr. Gorsky and Mr. Chilinski, the structure meets all zoning and building requirements, with the exception of parking and having the lobby entrance under the building instead of facing Mass. Ave.

The project:

- Would create 18 residential units, 2 of which will be affordable
- Is a mix of studios, 1 & 2 bedroom units
- Has 3 loft-style with 2-story elements, and 2 townhouse-style units
- Would meet all requirements for setback, height, and floor-area-ratio (FAR)
- To meet the height requirements, the building is taller along the Mass. Ave. edge which is zoned for business/commercial uses, and shorter at the rear, where it abuts residential zoning
- Meets the open space requirement (not currently met by the existing building)
- Incorporates Cambridge Trust's drive-through window
- The existing trees, located at the rear of the lot, will remain
- A new fence will be constructed along the back edge
- If the project is granted relief for the parking requirement, the chiropractor will be relocated

Zoning Relief for Parking

Mr. Gorsky and Mr. Chilinski reported that commercial buildings with less than 10,000 square feet don't need to provide parking. How-

ever, since the existing commercial building is 10,800 square feet, the developer must provide parking for all uses in that building as well as for the proposed residential building, totaling 47 spaces. The developer has submitted a request to reduce the required parking to 24 spaces, which will be shared between retail (day use) and residential (evening use). This includes:

- 8 parking spaces beneath the building and 2 behind the 1st floor lobby
- 14 behind the building
- Included in the 24 are 2 handicap-accessible spaces (currently none exist)
- Parking would be first come, first serve

The developer hopes to appear at the Cambridge Planning Board in October. The plan is to break ground in fall 2015.

Q&A

Q: How do the affordable units differ from the market rate?

A: They're the same. The city will choose the units that are representative, and these will remain affordable into the future.

Q: What are the plans for snow removal?

A: The additional green space will create a new, impervious area where snow can be piled.

New Shop and Eat on Mass. Ave. Maps for 2015

A new edition of the Shop and Eat on Mass. Ave. map/business directory, compiled and produced by Porter



Square Neighbors Association, is in process. The map includes all places to shop and eat on Mass. Ave. from the Cambridge Common to the Arlington line.

As in previous years, Agassiz Baldwin joins Harvard & Lesley Universities to support the cost of printing. Maps will be available at 20

Sacramento Street, as well as at many businesses along the Ave. Learn more at: portersquare.net/shopandeat

Update: Maps are now available! Come to 20 Sacramento Street to get your copy now.



Maud Morgan Arts

SPIRIT AWARDS: CO+MOTION

Please come and enjoy a night of Art, Music, Friends and Fun! Your support will help Maud Morgan Arts (MMA) expand programming to fulfill our mission of connecting, inspiring, and transforming individual lives by building community through the visual arts.

Each year MMA honors one or two artists who embody the "spirit" of Maud Morgan and the community arts center that bears her name.



This year Maud Morgan Arts will present awards to Judith and H. Peik Larsen.

We look forward to having you join us for this celebration!

- What:** Spirit Awards: CO+Motion
- When:** Sunday, September 20, 2015, 6:30-9:00 PM
- Where:** Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St.
- Tickets:** \$35 before Sept. 15, \$45 at door (\$10 of each ticket is tax deductible); bit.ly/Spirit-Awards-Co-Motion-2015

For questions about the event, please contact Catherine Kernan, MMA Director, at (617) 349-6287 x15 or ckernan@agassiz.org.

Community Calendar

September 2015

Tuesday, September 8	7:30-9:00 PM	ANC Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Maud Morgan Arts, 20A Sacramento St. All are welcome, please join us!
Wednesday, September 9	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St., 2nd Floor Public welcome
Wednesday, September 9		Agassiz Baldwin Afterschool begins
Thursday, September 10		Sacramento St. Preschool begins
Sunday, September 20	6:30-9:00 PM	Spirit Awards benefit, honoring artists Judith & H. Peik Larsen, 20 Sacramento St., back yard For tickets, visit bit.ly/Spirit-Awards-Co-Motion-2015
Monday, September 28		Maud Morgan Arts classes begin

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 should be submitted for consideration no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

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