

# The Agassiz Whistler

Vol. 1, No. 7

December 7, 1970

Ten Cents

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAM REOPENED AFTER A WEEK'S SUSPENSION

(As our Agassiz Community School Program has grown, it has become increasingly evident that the original staffing of the program is now inadequate. Early in October the neighborhood Council asked permission to hire additional staff to provide more specialization for the program and to man the school for activities six days a week, fourteen hours a day. This request did not require any additional money.)

After nearly two months of inquiries, phone calls, and meetings in an effort to resolve the Agassiz program's staffing problems, the local Council decided on November 22nd that it was necessary to close down all community school activities. This action was taken essentially because two of the four staff people did not receive paychecks from the City Manager's office the previous Friday. It was felt by the Council that closing down the program would bring this problem to the attention of the widest possible audience.

Since a number of programs (playgroups, the Whistler, the drug problem series, etc.) would be completely lost without the full staff, the Council decided that the time of the other staff members could best be spent in trying to restore the whole program, rather than in continuing with their particular Community Schools activities.

### Paychecks Held Up Earlier

The two staff members who had not been paid had already put in a week's work without compensation -- they were not expected to continue work until pay arrangements were made. While discussions were taking place with city officials over this issue during the

fall, paychecks for three of our staff people had been held back for a period of three weeks.

Early in November the City Manager denied our Council's request to hire two part-time people to share one full-time salary. The Council then asked for and received the backing of the Cambridge Community Schools Commission for an appeal of the decision. The Commission, in turn, requested that the City Manager pay the two staff people in question until the matter could be resolved. This request was not honored.

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### DRUGS SERIES TO BE RESCHEDULED

A four-part series on the drug problem, to be held for teenagers and adults, was postponed from November because of the Community Schools cancellation of activities Thanksgiving week and the events which led up to it. The program, to be sponsored by the Agassiz School, the PTA, and the Community Schools Program, will be held early in the new year, providing that the Community Schools staffing problems are settled in the next few weeks.

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EDITORIALS

COUNTRY STORE SALE A HUGE SUCCESS

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When the Agassiz Community Schools Council asked City Hall early in October that two staff people be permitted to share one full-time salary, they requested not one extra penny for our Community. They asked only that the talents of our staff be used to the best advantage, that their hours at work complement in the best possible way the community's volunteer hours.

It is unfortunate that no one in the city administration involved in this issue visited our neighborhood when the above request was first made. Our vital and growing program should be observed at work and questioned firsthand. Then it will be apparent that what we are requesting is, and always has been, well-considered.

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Our apologies to our subscribers for two short November Whistlers. The past weeks were chaotic ones for our small staff because of cancellations in the Community Schools Program. We hope our local staffing problem is resolved soon so that the newspaper may continue publishing a diversity of community stories.

Which reminds us -- we could use a larger staff. We always have a need for people who are able to research articles, write them, help with circulation, or contribute creative pieces of their own. If you can help, please call the Community Schools office.

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The Whistler is sold at the Oxford Spa and the Agassiz Food Shop (both on Oxford Street). Our thanks to our neighbors at these stores for helping us with the distribution of the newspaper.

Books, records, toys, clothes, bric-a-brac, handmade gifts, baked goods and the hard work of a number of people netted \$209.25 at the Country Store sale held on November 23th and 24th at the Agassiz School. The sale was held by the school's PTA with the help of the Community Schools program, which provided publicity and some of the workers at the tables.

Mrs. Elizabeth Basa was in charge of the sale; helping her were Mrs. Martha Lang, Mrs. Margaret Michalski, Mrs. Barbara Stevens, and Mrs. Rose Vela. At the baked goods table were Mrs. Jean Alonso, Mrs. Ruth Atkinson, Mrs. Mary Nagatomi, and Mrs. Pat Southard. Community Schools workers were Michael Almeida, Jane Gabriel, Andy Gabriel, and Don Hoban. Thanks go also to the many neighborhood people who provided items for the sale.

Proceeds are to be apportioned between the PTA and the Community Schools program.

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THE AGASSIZ WHISTLER is published twice a month by the Agassiz Community Schools Program for the entire neighborhood. The cost is 10¢ per issue or \$1.00 for six months' subscription mailed to your home. Call 876-9268 for more information or visit the office at 28 Sacramento Street. We welcome your literary contributions, letters, suggestions, or advertisement requests.

Kate Mattes, Agassiz Community Schools Co-ordinator  
Jay Lord, Assistant Co-ordinator  
Jill Norton, Editor for The Whistler

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MORE ABOUT THE FOOD COOP

(In the October 26 issue of The Whistler, Janet Burns, a participant in the food coop started last spring on Prentiss and Frost Streets, told of the basic idea and plan of such a group. As so many neighborhood people have shown interest in the food coop, we are running this second article giving a more detailed description of its operation. For more information, call Ann and Richard Michelini at 491-3910 or Chris and Rae Burns at 625-9383.)

The initial emphasis of the food coop was to find less expensive sources of food for its members. This was done primarily through quantity purchases at wholesale prices, and through neighborhood volunteer distribution. The source of the food products has been the New England Produce Market in Chelsea. As yet, a reliable source for dry and canned goods has not been found, so of course purchases are supplemented at local stores.

As a first step in organizing the co-operative, it was suggested that each member household record its food purchasing habits for two weeks. Information on the sources, costs, and packaging of food can then be used to estimate the monetary savings a coop would offer, and supply members with alternate sources of food products. Additional questions were asked to determine the products to be included in the first purchases.

Each family paid a membership fee (\$5 for 1-2 persons, \$10 for 3 or more) to establish a "kitty." This minimized the bookkeeping required and assured an amount sufficient for the week's purchases. It also provided funds for a cashbox and scale, two necessary items in the operation of a coop.

The coop was organized on the principle that every member order and pick up his groceries on the days established by the coop, and that he

volunteer to handle the purchasing, and also the distribution of food, on a rotating basis so that any one member need take his turn at these jobs only once every few months. One problem, however, has been that some members' cars cannot handle the weight and bulk of purchases made in a "run."

Food is purchased on a regularly weekly basis; the order might be determined on a Monday evening, the purchasing "run" made early Tuesday morning, and the food distributed that evening. Specific information about making the run -- where to buy what -- and the bookkeeping requirements are passed on to the purchasers and distributors each week.

Orders are made at the current week's distribution point. A list of suggested products, compiled from members' suggestions and market bulletins is posted from which members can choose their purchases. Only those products which are ordered in sufficient quantity are purchased. Members pay in cash each week for whatever they buy. All prices are wholesale with no mark-up.

A sense of neighborhood was a pleasant outgrowth of the food coop last summer when the members joined together for backyard potluck suppers.

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UNICEF COLLECTION

Agassiz School students collected a total of \$192.79 on Halloween for UNICEF, the world organization for children. One hundred collection boxes were provided by the local UNICEF chapter.

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LOOK FOR WHISTLER SUBSCRIPTION  
COUPON!!!

### THE COMING OF WINTER

Winter is like a blustery visitor who comes uninvited to track your floors with snow and leave your door ajar to the cold, yet makes good company when the day is done and the fireplace takes over as host. Nietzsche said it nicely in referring to winter as "...a bad guest that sits with me at home; my hands are blue with his friendly handshakes."

In the country, coldness is measured not only by the thermometer but also by the wind. It is when the farmhouse curtains move with the draft, and fireplace smoke puffs out into the room, that cold really penetrates and makes itself most known.

When snow has piled up around the frame farmhouse or barn it is easier to keep it warm, for snow actually keeps out the wind. This is the time of year that the old-time farmer piled dried leaves and cornstalks around the base of his barn and around the north side of his house. He probably learned this trick from the rabbits and mice that tenanted every snow-covered pile of cornstalks in the fields. But the Indians knew it too; all along the trails of two hundred years ago there were "brush shelters" that were mentioned in early writings of cross-country travelers. George Washington often spent the night in a brush shelter during his surveying days.

The brush shelter was simply a lean-to of sticks and dried leaves that backed against the north and during the winter gathered a roofing of snow. By building a fire on the south side, or by hanging a blanket over the opening, the traveler was assured of a comfortable place to rest during a bad snowstorm.

(Reprinted from Eric Sloane's Almanac

and Weather Forecaster, Duell, Sloan & Pearce - Little, Brown, Copyright 1955. The text of this book, by a New England author, is illustrated with his sketches.)

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### NEW NEIGHBORHOOD BROWNIES

Ten girls from the Agassiz School joined the Brownies, the Girl Scout group for seven and eight year olds, at a meeting held at Mrs. Patricia Whitlock's house on November 3.

After forming a circle and reciting the Brownie promise, the girls received their official Brownie pins and exchanged the traditional handshake. Parents were invited to the ceremony, which was followed by a tea.

The new Brownies are: Elizabeth Bolger, Alice Carmen, Leslie Fraumeni, Lisa Iannuzzi, Sarah Liberman, Alexis Limberakis, Nisha Mehta, Mamiko Taguchi, Mary Rose Vela, and Jill Wagner. Mrs. Whitlock and Mrs. Mary Nagatomi are troop leaders. There are thirty girls in the troop.

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### DRUGS SERIES

(continued from page 1)

Miss Lena DiCicco, who is Mental Health Coordinator for the Somerville-Cambridge Mental Health and Retardation Program, has agreed to act as a consultant for the series. Other professionals will be invited to participate in the evening sessions.

A supplement to the Whistler dealing with this series has been prepared and is ready for the printer, awaiting only the dates for the sessions. It will be distributed to the entire neighborhood.

SUSPENSION  
(Cont. from page 1)

Neighborhood Action Provokes Meetings

Notices were posted at the school on November 23rd which stated briefly the background of events leading to the closing of our program. Neighbors were asked to call the City Manager's office if they wanted to restore the program. That morning the City Manager asked for a meeting with Community Schools people which was held the day before Thanksgiving, with three local representatives in attendance. It was stated by Mr. Corcoran, the City Manager, that paychecks were on their way to the Agassiz staff. (The checks were finally received that day.)

A special edition of the Whistler was prepared that day for distribution to the entire neighborhood announcing the results of this meeting, the fact that the Acting Director of Community Schools had said that all staff paychecks would continue until the problem was settled. Another meeting was to take place between the City Manager, the Acting Director for Community Schools, and the Chairman of the Community Schools Commission.

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CURRENT STATISTICS  
AGASSIZ COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Number of Programs.	35
Number of Different Programs*	26
Number of People Involved in Programs/week. (fluctuates between)	500-600
Number of Volunteers/week.	46
Number of Volunteer Hours/week.	100

\*Some Activities are organized in separate groups, as the three playgroups. They are counted once in this listing.

THE CITY MANAGER'S POSITION

John H. Corcoran, Cambridge City Manager, stated in a letter to the Acting Director of Community Schools, and again at the November 25th meeting reported on the front page, that he did not feel it was "proper personnel management practice" to employ two part-time people for one job, and that the emphasis in Community Schools should be on volunteer effort.

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A PERSPECTIVE ON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

(From the Community Action Workbook, 1965, as reprinted in "Community Schools in Cambridge," a summary of the report by the Committee on Community Schools of the Cambridge Council of the Parent-Teacher Associations.)

The Community School seeks to improve the quality of human living, on both a current and projected basis. It involves lay people in school policy and program development, providing a curriculum organized around the major problems and processes of life ... It provides opportunities for broadened experiences in human relationships, cooperative action, exploration of vocational interests, remedial help, compensatory and enrichment activities, community and leadership development, and recreational activities for all ages.

The Community School is very flexible and responsive to local needs. It is susceptible to innovation, modification, and continual adjustment to new requirements.

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Thanks are due from the Community Schools Program to the 25 neighbors who regularly distribute flyers door-to-door for the program.

NEWSPAPER RECYCLING PROJECT

by Priscilla Ellis

As many of you may know by now, the Salvation Army is no longer collecting newspapers in the Agassiz Community. The reason for this is economic; the Salvation Army pays more in labor and transportation costs than it makes selling the paper.

The economic difficulties of our project reflect (unfortunately) the economic distress of paper recycling in general, according to several paper dealers we have contacted. Basically, it is the problem of supply and demand. Paper mills that use waste paper in this area are operating at capacity with a less than vigorous demand for their products. The market for recycled paper faces severe competition from the timber interests, and the recession in the economy as a whole imposes further constraints on the recycling market. Paper dealers are now storing larger amounts of waste paper than usual in their warehouses. The price for waste paper is consequently being forced down to a point where it becomes difficult for organizations such as the Salvation Army and paper dealers to make paper salvaging pay.

In the meantime, what about the Agassiz project? Because we produce a relatively small amount of waste paper each month, we may be able to find a place to sell it. But it is unlikely that we will find anyone willing to collect it on a regular basis. If we wish to continue a collection service, then, we would need volunteers, with station wagons, vans, trucks, or even wheelbarrows! Another possibility would be to designate a central location where people would bring their newspapers each month for transportation to a mill or dealer.

Please give us your suggestions by phone (876-9268), note, or personal appearance at our Wednesday evening meetings (every other Wednesday; next meeting December 16th, 8 p.m. in the Agassiz School). If you are interested in being a volunteer collector or transporter, please let us know.

(The Agassiz Community Schools Program has made arrangements for a truck on Wednesday, December 9th, so newspapers may be left out for pick-up on that day. The neighborhood will be informed if further arrangements are able to be made.)

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GREGORY PECK AT THE AGASSIZ SCHOOL in the movie "To Kill a Mockingbird," based on the Harper Lee novel. To be shown on December 18 at 8 p.m. Admission 75¢. Everyone is invited to this film and others in the series presented by the teens to raise money for their teen center.

THE WHISTLER SUBSCRIPTION APPLICATION

Please mail me The Whistler twice a month for the next six months. I enclose \$1.00. (Check or money order only, please, made out to the Agassiz Community Schools Program. Send it to 28 Sacramento Street.)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_