

the AGASSIZ WHISTLER

February

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council Newsletter

1982

COMMUNITY EVENTS

SACRAMENTO STREET GALLERY
FEBRUARY OPENING: WORKS ON
PAPER: Drawings and Collage by
Robert Covelman, Donna Maderer,
Madge Slavin, Brenda Steinberg,
and Kuniko Yukiye Kanai; Friday,
February 5, 8-10 p.m. (Regular
gallery hours: Weds. 6-8 p.m.,
Sat. & Sun. 1-4 p.m.)

AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
MEETING, Wednesday, February
10, 8-10 p.m. in the Agassiz
School library.

SENIOR CITIZEN EXERCISE
CLASSES, Fridays, 10-11 a.m.
in the parlor of the North
Congregational Church, corner
of Mass. Ave. and Roseland
St. Ongoing. FREE.

FEBRUARY VACATION: Feb. 15-
19. No School. Agassiz After-
School Day Care Program will
be open 8:30-6:00 p.m. Tues.-
Fri. Watch for flyers of
special events for K-8th
graders.

FEBRUARY RELEASE DAYS: Thurs.,
Feb. 11 & Tues., Feb. 23. FEB-
RUARY RELEASE DAY FILM: ARISTO-
CATS: 1:00 p.m. at the Peabody
School. .50¢ per child. (on
Thursday, Feb. 11).

AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL NEWS

At the Neighborhood Council Meeting
on January 13, 1982, elections were
held for Council officers. The
results of the elections were:

NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL NEWS, CONT.

Chairperson - Joel Bard
Vice-Chairperson - Karen Tarter
Treasurer - Linda Brion-Meisels
Secretary - Miriam Goldberg

There was some discussion of the
Tot Lot. A letter has been sent
to the Department of Public Works
to request better lighting there.
It was also suggested that it would
be helpful for neighborhood people
to contact the Police Department, the
Department of Public Works, and mem-
bers of City Council with concerns
about the situation at the Tot Lot
(as a follow-up to a letter which
went to these city officials and
departments earlier from the Council).
Anyone who is willing to contact city
officials should get in touch with
Andrea Kadomiya at 492-0248.

Ann Marie Masiello, the youth worker
from the Department of Human Service
Programs in our neighborhood, described
the activities she has introduced for
teens and pre-teens. She would wel-
come help and ideas for her program
and can be reached at 498-9660.

Because cuts in the Human Services
budget will directly affect programs
in our neighborhood, much of the
meeting was devoted to a discussion
of the priorities of needs and pro-
grams in the Agassiz community.
Among the opinions expressed were the
following:

- We need to keep local staff posi-
tions.
- All the programs we have are cri-
tical and we can document need and
effective administration of these.
- Most of these programs are fee
supported and derive little if any
funding from city program funds.

AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, Cont.

- We need additional programs so we do not see where cuts can be made.
- Our programmatic needs and effectiveness should be evaluated by the consumers of the programs and the accountability can be determined at the local level.
- Additional needs are: adult programs, more senior programs, attention to housing issues.
- We need to draft a letter to the City Council and Human Services Department about the needs and desires for programs in this neighborhood.

On the agenda for the next meeting on FEBRUARY 10 at 8:00 p.m.:

- update on the Human Services budget process.
- discussion of 2½ issues. Rena Leib, chairperson of the Coalition for Cambridge will come and inform us of recent developments about 2½.

Many thanks to Audrey Entin for serving as Acting Chairperson of the Council until a new Chairperson was elected.

NOTE: The Chief of the Cambridge Police Department, Captain Paolillo, will be at the March 10th Council meeting to discuss issues concerning the Tot Lot with members of the community.

AGASSIZ P.T.A. NEWS

BUDGET ISSUES - Parents concerned about next year's budget for the Cambridge Schools met on January 20th to begin to gather information and to communicate with city officials. One plan which the group endorsed was to collect signatures all across the city on a petition of support for a more equitable distribution of money for the elementary school level. For more information, call Nancy Johnson (492-6644).

AGASSIZ P.T.A. NEWS, CONT.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION UPDATE - Parents of the Agassiz School have raised enough money to have a physical education program for grades K-5 for 10 weeks. The program is scheduled to run from the first week of February until April vacation. An additional sum of \$480 would allow continuation of the program through the school year. Please make whatever contribution you can to this worthwhile effort. Checks should be made payable to the Agassiz P.T.A. and can be mailed to the school or given to classroom teachers. Thanks!

T-SHIRTS! - Agassiz School T-shirts are still available in all sizes. Make a friend, child, neighbor, relative happy with a bright and beautiful AGASSIZ FOREVER t-shirt! The perfect Valentine's Day present! And remember, each t-shirt sold provides badly needed funds for P.T.A. projects like the physical education program described above! To purchase one, call Meredith at 864-8947.

SENIOR CITIZENS' NEWS

On January 18th, we had a coffee hour and meeting with seniors at the North Congregational Church to talk about ideas for needed services or programs in the Agassiz and Peabody neighborhoods. Here are some of the ideas we tossed around:

- a weekly social hour (or hour and a half) with guest speakers.
- an exercise class.
- special events, to be planned by seniors who come to the weekly social hour.
- beano, cards, other games.

Judy McGinnity, from the Recreation Division of the Department of Human Service Programs, will be starting a weekly exercise

SENIORS' NEWS, CONT.

class on Friday, January 29, from 10-11 a.m. in the parlor of the North Congregational Church at the corner of Mass. Avenue and Roseland Street. This will run for 10 weeks for free and is open to any interested older member of either the Agassiz or Peabody neighborhoods. Come and join! You'll feel better!

Also, if you have ideas for events or speakers, please call Mary Ellen Ryan at 498-9065 or Julie Osherson at 498-9056 during the afternoon. (tax information? legal information? weatherization? a book club? history? art? food? cooking? health? nutrition? sewing and other kinds of handiwork?) As we are facing additional budget cuts in the coming year, we need to think of ways to plan for events or services which either cost very little or can cover their own costs through fees. We want to hear from you!

INFORMATION FROM THE COALITION FOR CAMBRIDGE ON 2½

City Budget time is here again. And with budget time comes another look at what Proposition 2½ will mean to those of us living in Cambridge during the second year of this law. Fortunately, local communities in Massachusetts now have a chance to slow down the impact of 2½ by making use of the amendments recently passed by the State Legislature.

These "technical amendments" are crucial to Cambridge for they allow this city to regain some local control over the level of public services and the quality of life that would otherwise be stripped away under the full impact of Proposition 2½. The passage of these amendments also may portend that the State Le-

COALITION NEWS, CONT.

gisature is ready to work on the issue of comprehensive tax reform - including decreased reliance on the property tax, plus more equitable distribution of local and school aid among cities and towns. In the interim, a YES vote on the referendum question allows voters to slow down the pace of cutting revenues and city services.

The recent law specifies the following options:

1. By a simple majority, voters can reduce by up to half the amount that presently must be cut from Cambridge's budget to comply with 2½ next fiscal year.

2. Also, by a simple majority vote, taxes may be raised beyond the 2½ "cap" to cover the city's debt service payments. (Among other things, this could improve our bond-rating and lower the rate of interest the city pays.)

(In effect, the city could keep next year's taxes and funding of services and programs level with this year's if a simple majority of voters approves both the above ballot questions.)

3. By a 2/3 majority, the voters could further reduce the amount cut from the budget to the point of "0" additional cuts.

These options give Cambridge voters the means to preserve essential services and programs like schools and public safety. Because a ceiling remains on the tax levy, however, the new scheme still contains incentives for our City to improve productivity and efficiency. Moreover, the possibility of gradually reducing the property taxes further is also preserved.

Although some people may not have directly felt the first year cuts in service, there are many others who did. Police and fire vacancies went unfilled, old equipment was not replaced, 150 teachers were laid off resulting in larger class sizes and reductions in physical education, art,

COALITION NEWS, CONT.

science and music, custodian vacancies went unfilled, and Public Works lost 78 workers. But all these cuts will seem small in comparison to what will have to be cut to meet a second year of reductions if voters do not vote to slow down the process. These cuts may sharply curtail such services as: neighborhood branch libraries, health centers, community and youth services, elderly programs, recreation, and maintenance, in addition to further cuts in schools and public safety.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP? The Coalition for Cambridge is a group of Cambridge residents who have been working for over a year to help preserve the level of services we need in our City. Over the last three months the Coalition has been instrumental in drafting and working with our elected representatives at the State House to get these amendments passed. But the real work is still ahead. They need your help in ex-

plaining to the voters the newly passed amendments and working on a special election to be held in the spring. If Cambridge is to survive we must all work together to prepare for the referendum. For more information, come to the weekly meeting of the Coalition for Cambridge on WEDNESDAYS, 5:30 p.m. in City Hall (2nd floor) or write the COALITION FOR CAMBRIDGE, 42 Walker St., Cambridge, Ma. 02139 (354-4390).

COMMUNITY CLASSIFIEDS

Professional Typist Available - extensive experience, neighborhood references, Call Victoria at 492-2708.

BABYSITTERS:

Emma Weiler (age 12) 864-2937
 Rachel Emmons (age 12) 497-4242
 Rachel Westbrook (age 11) 868-3275

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