



the agassiz
WHISTLER

February 1989

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL



Community News

(notes from the January 11th ANC meeting)

General Business

The January meeting included a presentation by Cambridge Housing Authority on their plans to rehabilitate 71 Hammond St. as a community residence for eight adults with mental illness. The meeting began in the community center but soon moved to the Agassiz School gym with a group of more than 70 people in attendance.

People spoke from the Cambridge Housing Authority (CHA) and from the Cambridge and Somerville Mental Health Center (CSMHC). They described their plans to purchase and renovate the property and to hire an agency that will actually run the day to day operation (the vendor).

They expect to hire Cambridge and Somerville Cooperative Apartment Project (CASCAP) as the vendor, but a hiring process will be followed. CASCAP's program was the one described, and slides were shown of other sites run by CASCAP. They were examples of residences similar to the one proposed at 71 Hammond St., and they included Aberdeen House (not running yet), Highland Ave. (which is being constructed now), and Lee St. (since 1980). The Hammond St. residence is proposed for adults who are chronically mentally ill, but do not need an institution. The residence is staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. There are 9 staff assigned and two on site. There is a carefully arranged transition from institution to community living which includes overnights. Once a resident moves in, treatment continues, which is geared to that individual's needs.

next council meeting...

January Council Meeting

Wednesday February 8th at 7:30 p.m.

Agassiz Community Center* 20 Sacramento St.

STEPHEN JAY GOULD -neighbor, writer and member of Harvard faculty, will speak on Louis Agassiz (AGASSIZ SCHOOL namesake) and the racial attitudes of his time.

Most concerns from the audience centered around the issue of safety, both physical and emotional, for current Agassiz residents and their children. Professionals from the above mentioned programs explained that there have been no problems with other sites. Residents would be sober and drug free without a pattern of violence. Residents would be chosen for their ability to live in a community, and they expect residents to remain for at least one year. They invited the Agassiz community to speak to abutters of other, similar residences, and find out just what the impact has been on their communities. They added that in order to run a residence the vendor must have a permit, which would be lost if there were complaints from neighbors.

Another concern was that the area immediately surrounding Hammond St. is saturated with special needs programs. These include one alcohol detoxification center, one drug rehabilitation center (both on the Cambridge Somerville line) and the residences for Lesley College's Threshold program. It was pointed out that the majority of beds for mentally ill adults were already in Cambridge, and why were the residences not more evenly divided between Cambridge and Somerville?

Questions were raised about the professional training of on site staff.

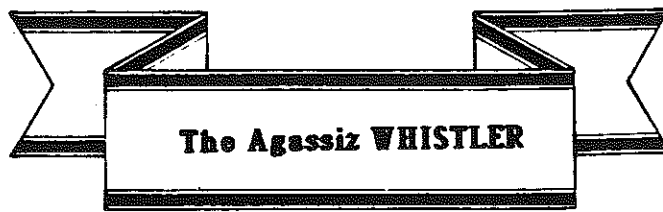
Another concern regarded the future-what if CASCAP did not become the vendor? What if CASCAP left? What if the CHA decided on another use for the building?

A final note was made by Alice Wolf, Cambridge City Councillor and Vice Mayor. She explained that the meeting was the beginning of a process for developing this kind of residence. As a city councillor she has never received a complaint from a neighbor regarding the Lee St. residence. Her advice was to be sure that the vendor (and she endorsed CASCAP) will be 100% reliable. (For more information, see Community Residence at Hammond St. below)

Due to the delay in beginning our meeting and the many important questions, other agenda items were put aside for the future.

SUPPORT THE WHISTLER-

A special letter has gone out to neighborhood businesses seeking advertizing in The Whistler. If you are interested in advertizing your business in *The Whistler*, call us for more information.



Community Residence at Hammond St.

(See neighborhood council notes for a complete description of the proposed project at 71 Hammond St.)


The Agassiz Neighborhood Council has agreed to facilitate future meetings, to help organize visits to similar residences, and to help find community representation for the CHA's next steps: design committee and the vendor selection committees. We would like to hear from you. We encourage you to contact us if you are interested in any of the above or if you would like to be on the mailing list for future neighborhood meetings. Call the neighborhood council office at 498-9056, or send your written comments to: Agassiz Neighborhood Council, 20 Sacramento St., Cambridge, MA 02138. (Everyone who signed in at the 1/11 meeting is already on the mailing list.)

The Cambridge Housing Authority has already purchased the property at 71 Hammond St. After they select an architect, they must go to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) this spring. They can be more certain about what they need from the BZA (special permits, variances) once the architectural plans have been drawn. Anyone who wishes more specific information on the project should call either Chris Weller or Terry Lurie at the Cambridge Housing Authority 864-3020. The *Whistler* will keep you updated.



Porter Square Development

A traffic study is in progress to determine the feasibility of several possible parking arrangements behind and across from the new Porter Exchange. There will be a report on the study in *The Whistler* when we receive it from the traffic experts.

Visitor Parking Permits -Use and abuse 

We have had misuse of visitor parking permits reported to the council on Frost St. Visitor permits are being used by guests for extended periods of time, and residents cannot find parking.

We have been in touch with Lauren Preston of the Cambridge Traffic and Parking department. He said that the traffic officers will be notified, and if misuse is found, holders of visitor parking permits will be contacted and if the misuse does not end, permits will be revoked.

LESLEY COLLEGE News and Events

The Agassiz-Lesley Resource Committee will be meeting in February. If you have any Agassiz-Lesley community issues, please contact the council office at 498-9056.

***Whistler deadline for March is 2/17.
Please call or send us any newsworthy information.***

Special Cultural Programs

Stephen Jay Gould to discuss Louis Agassiz

As a part of our continuing series of explorations into neighborhood social history, the Agassiz Neighborhood Council presents Stephen Jay Gould, neighbor, writer, scientist and Harvard faculty member on Wednesday February 8th at 7:30 p.m.

He will talk about the life of Louis Agassiz, a nineteenth century neighbor, writer, scientist, and Harvard faculty member, and how Agassiz's work reflected the racial views of his time. The talk will be presented at the Agassiz School, named for Louis Agassiz himself, in Baldwin Hall.

Join us at the next Agassiz Neighborhood Council meeting!

May Day Celebration

The Agassiz Community May Day Celebration is looking for an administrator or co-administrators. Duties include parent communications, treasurers responsibilities, organizing wreath making and basket making. This will be the 6th year of May Day dancing in the Agassiz neighborhood. Please consider helping to keep the tradition going! Call Ada Snider at 661-2961.

Agassiz to Study Oral History

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council is currently organizing an oral history project to preserve all the history of the Agassiz neighborhood. We are especially interested in the history of our neighborhood that so far has not been written down, the stories from everyday people. Contact us now if you would like to help organize the project, and look for information on a March meeting in the next *Whistler*

Maria Baldwin-Research and Rededication

The life and times of Maria Baldwin (1856-1922) is currently being researched by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council. Maria (pronounced Mar-EYE-a) Baldwin, born and educated in Cambridge, was appointed teacher in 1882 and in 1889 was made principal of the Agassiz School, the first black woman principal in Massachusetts, a position she held until her death.

The Agassiz Community School afterschool drama program will present a play in late March based on Maria Baldwin's life.

The Agassiz School has spent some money renovating Baldwin Hall (the gym) which was named for Miss Baldwin. When the space is renovated it will be rededicated to the venerable lady.

If you have any information on Miss Baldwin, please contact Terry DeLancey at the council office 498-9056. Informational sources, family anecdotes or any memorabilia from her time are welcome!



Family Folk Dancing at Agassiz

The next session of Family Folk dance with Jill Gleim will be held on Friday, February 10th from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. in the Agassiz Gym. The cost is \$2. per person. Everyone, adults and children, are welcome.

Of interest to the neighborhood...

Black History Month Events

The following offerings are from CMAC (Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center) located at 41 Second St. in East Cambridge near the court buildings. Call them at 577-1400 for a complete listing.

African Rhythms

Jan. 15 - Feb. 17
Opening Reception:
Sunday, January 15, 3-5 p.m.

Foundations of Our History

Jan. 22 - Feb. 10
Opening Reception:
Sunday, January 22, 3-5 p.m.

Let Them Come Alive

Video Presentation
Feb. 5, Sunday, 3 p.m.
FREE

Foundations of Our History

Children's Workshop
Feb. 7, Tuesday, 3 p.m.
FREE

Orisha

African Experimental Dance Theatre
led by Cornell Coley
Feb. 11, Saturday, 8 p.m.
FREE

African Dance

Children's Workshop
led by De Ama Battle
Feb. 23, Thursday, 1 p.m.
FREE

Bagful of Culture

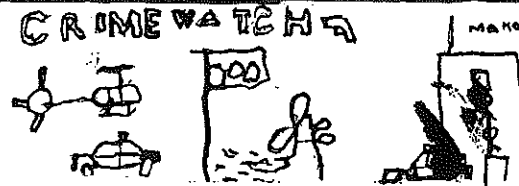
Workshop for Children and Adults
Feb. 25, Saturday, 1 and 3 p.m.
Tickets: \$5 adults, \$3 children under 12

Early Childhood Community Forums

The February 15th forum entitled "How to integrate a non-sexist, multicultural approach into your curriculum" will be held in the King School Cafeteria, 100 Putnam Ave. 6-8:30 p.m.

The forums are free and available to parents, teachers, early childhood program providers, administrators and community workers. A buffet dinner (for a small fee) and childcare are available to all who preregister. For more information call Sheli Wortis 498-9200 x9518.

The illustrations in this month's Whistler were done by Agassiz Community School students in Courtney Skinner's afterschool illustration classes



- This is a list of crime in the Agassiz Neighborhood
.....December 15, 1988 - January 20 1989....
- Crescent St..... Break and entry (1/1)
 - Everett St..... Car theft (12/24, 1/12);malicious destruction (12/26,1/12)
 - Forest St..... Break and entry (1/12); Armed street robbery w/gun (1/10, 1/11)
 - Francis Av..... Malicious destruction (12/17)
 - Holden St..... Unarmed street robbery (1/13)
 - Mellen St..... Armed street robbery (12/28)
 - Oxford St..... Indecent exposure (1/15); Theft from unlocked car (1/8); malicious destruction (1/13)
 - Mass. Ave..... Assault and battery (1/17);Theft from unlocked car (1/18);Malicious destruction (12/29)
 - Museum St..... Malicious destruction (12/29)
 - Prentiss St..... Break and entry (12/15)
 - Sacramento St. Malicious destruction(12/26);Hit and run -person(12/28)
 - Wendell St..... Hit and run property (1/19); Malicious destruction (2 on 12/16, 2 on 12/18)

Crimewatch note: There has been a young white male arrested in connection with the series of armed street robberies. Police believe the gun and knife may have been toys. These robberies occurred in the past month on either side of Mass. Ave. between Harvard and Porter Squares.

ADS* HELP AVAILABLE* HELP WANTED

Dog Walker Wanted

for one half-hour each afternoon. Two blocks from Agassiz school. Must be dependable and **STRONG**, for large silly, very friendly dog. Please call Dr. Cohen between 6-7 p.m. at 492-2239.

Yoga

Danielle Levi Alvarez has announced the winter schedule for her Yoga Classes at the First Church, 11 Garden St.:

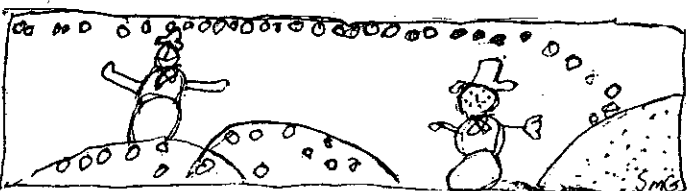
Tuesdays 12:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Thursdays 5:30 p.m. and 6:45 p.m.

For cost and more information call 354-2113

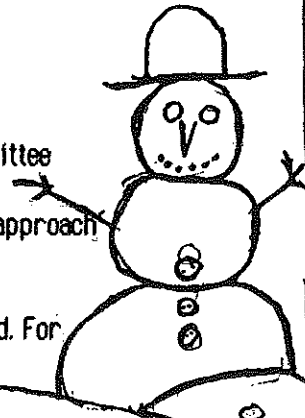
Harvard Volunteers will tutor

The Harvard Hand Program, which coordinates volunteer services to Cambridge from Harvard students, has afterschool tutors in many subjects available. Call the council office at 498-9056 for more information.



FEBRUARY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

- 2/7 Tuesday.....Early release day. School closes, afterschool opens 12:45 p.m.
- 2/8 Wednesday..... Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting
7:30 p.m. Agassiz School (See page one for agenda)
- 2/8 Wednesday.....Agassiz School Improvement Committee
3 p.m. Agassiz School - Resource Room
- 2/14 Tuesday.....Agassiz Community School - Parent Steering Committee
6-7 p.m. Childcare and snacks
- 2/15 Wednesday.....Early Childhood Forum "Non sexist, multicultural approach
to curriculum" 6 p.m. King School (see article)
- 2/20 Monday.....President's Day-No School or afterschool
- 2/21 Tuesday-24 Friday.....Vacation Week Childcare - Preregistration required. For
children who participate in afterschool program



Ellen Sitkin

February 1989

Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

498-9056

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