



May 1988

The Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

COMMUNITY NEWS

## Neighborhood Council Notes.....

from 4/13 meeting.....

### Campaign to Save Harvard Square

"This is probably our last chance. If we, the citizens of Cambridge, don't take action to define the future of our City, others will be very happy to do it for us." From literature of the Campaign to Save Harvard Square.

Phil Dowds, representing the Coalition for Harvard Square, addressed the neighborhood council on the recent flurry of development in that area of town. Although Harvard Square development has been well covered in The Cambridge Chronicle, the map Dowds displayed brought home the reality of the many large sites that will be developed soon. Some of these sites have already received "special permits" which allow reduction in the parking requirements and additions to height requirements.

Negative consequences of these developments include:

- A change to 5-7 story buildings as compared to the existing 1-4 stories. This will dramatically change the scale and density in the square.
- Unmanageable traffic and parking congestion which will be bad for both local merchants and abutting neighborhoods.
- Displacement of traditional businesses and uses, as high rent offices and chainstores drive out existing tenants
- Infill of needed open space, and destruction of valuable old buildings.

## next council meeting...

### COME TO A PARTY !!!

Wednesday May 11, 1988

7:30 PM Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento Street

Our annual celebration to relax and enjoy

Refreshments and good company

The Coalition for Harvard Square has filed a petition which will come before the Cambridge City Council in June. They have produced an excellent paper\* which describes in detail the changes they have proposed in the Cambridge Zoning Ordinance Section 11.50 for the Harvard Square Overlay District.

The Coalition hopes to accomplish the following with their petition:

- Reduce the scale and density of new commercial construction by

- (1) cutting in half building size relative to lot size, (from 4 times lot size to 2 times lot size), and
- (2) reducing maximum height from 80' (7 floors) to 60' (5 floors).

These changes would reduce the size of new projects, discourage marginal projects, and help stop an ominous trend toward "transferring" development rights among seemingly unrelated parcels.

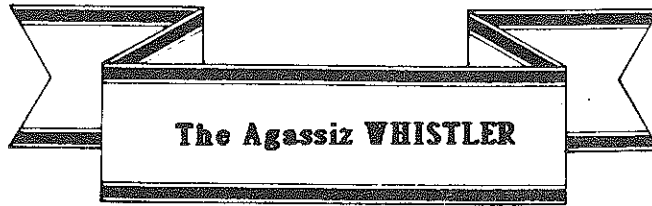
- Encourage new and mixed-income housing in the Square by permitting new construction with housing to be bigger than all commercial buildings (up to 3 times lot size). In order to qualify for this bonus in size (density) projects would have to be 65% housing, and of that housing, 30% would be put on the market as "affordable".\*

- Close some loopholes currently existing in the Overlay District rules by stiffening the requirements (now almost non-existent) for special permit height and parking exceptions.

Only with CITY WIDE support will the City Council make any major zoning changes, and the Coalition for Harvard Square urges us and any other neighborhoods to join with them and show the City Council that the base of support is wide. This idea is not new to the Agassiz neighborhood, but the time and place may be right for the neighborhoods to finally join together and fight for responsible development in Cambridge.

*\*Interested citizens are urged to call the Coalition for Harvard Square at 354-5670 or write them at PO BOX 19, Cambridge 02238 for detailed written information on both the petition and "affordable" housing. Then sign the petition.*

*Those interested in helping with the signature drive can contact Jonathan Myers (491-8745), who is co-ordinating that project.*



CDIA DEVELOPMENT in Porter Square

**HOLIDAY HEALTH CLUB**

There was some very discouraging news regarding one of the "Porter Exchange's" soon to be tenants. It seems that the Holiday Health club has enrolled enough people to cause major traffic and parking problems when it opens. A variety of consumer complaints is being investigated by the attorney general's office, but there is no information available now.

**MT VERNON ST**

Residents have attended ongoing meetings with CDIA about the Mt. Vernon St. townhouse project for which plans have changed to include the White Hen Pantry site. The status of making Mt. Vernon St. a cul-de-sac on is uncertain.

A meeting will be held soon by CDIA to advise the community members who have been meeting with them regarding final plans for Mt. Vernon St. Look for more information in the June *Whistler* or contact the council office at 498-9056.

7-8th GRADE FALL PROGRAMMING

There was a short discussion on 7-8th grade programming which included the possibility of drama and weekend events such as skiing. It was hoped that groundwork could be laid this year in the way of meetings and brainstorming with the 6-7th grade students in school.

PUBLIC SAFETY DAY

May 14th is Public Safety Day in the City of Cambridge at VFW Post 8818 Huron Ave. (across from the Golf Course) between 10 AM and 2 PM.

There will be Police Department Demonstrations:

- Drug Awareness
- Crime Watch Information
- Children's Fingerprinting
- Officer Caring

There will be Fire Department Demonstrations:

- Equipment Displays
- Fire Prevention Techniques
- Smoke Detector Demonstration
- CPR (proper method of administering)

Police VS Fire Softball Game - Glacken Field 9:30 AM

Other Neighborhood Updates.....

Nominating Committee to Convene

The Nominating Committee of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council will convene to determine a slate of Officers which will appear in the June edition of the *Whistler*. Elections will be held at the June 8th Neighborhood Council Meeting.

Anyone with nomination suggestions should call Nominating Committee Contact Carol Hantman at 354-5118 or Terry DeLancey, Neighborhood Co-ordinator at the council office, 498-9056.

Homeless people in the neighborhood

The neighborhood has had an influx of homeless people with the return of the good weather. One man has walked into homes and yards, another woman has insulted people. There was another living in his car which was parked in one specific spot. Many residents have been concerned about the best way to deal with homeless people whose behavior troubles them.

"It depends on who the person is" says Phil Mangano from the Department of Human Services in Cambridge. The MULTISERVICE CENTER FOR HOMELESS, located at 15 Pearl St. in Central Square (864-6340) is available for assistance. It is helpful if you can provide them with a name or description since many of the Cambridge homeless are known to them. A worker will come out within a day and speak to the person, try to establish a relationship, and explain what services are available.

Mangano stressed that people living on the streets cannot be coerced into services, and there are those who have chosen not to make use of the services. Mangano said that he felt the Cambridge Police (911) deal with the homeless in a sensitive manner, and can be called for assistance. They are not taken to jail but rather to a shelter. The police should be called if any criminal or illegal activity has been witnessed.

TRASH BASH '88

Come and join the North Cambridge Clean Up, sponsored by the Business Association of North Cambridge (BANC) on SUNDAY MAY 15 FROM NOON-4 PM

- Clean up your neighborhood
- Meet Cambridge Business Owners
- Make new friends
- Meet local politicians
- Enjoy refreshments after your hard work !

Meet at Frameworks, 2067 Mass. Ave. at Noon sharp. Rain date May 22, 1988.

FOR SENIORS

CONSUMER WORKSHOPS

On Friday May 13th at 10:00 a.m., a Workshop will be conducted by the Cambridge and Somerville Consumer Councils on your consumer rights and remedies with Home Repair and Improvement Contracts. The Workshop will be held at the North Cambridge Senior Center at 2050 Mass. Ave. in Porter Square. Senior Citizens from Somerville and Cambridge are invited to attend to also learn useful tips about how to find a reliable contractor and how to negotiate a fair contract.

The arrival of Spring prompts many homeowners to consider finally tackling those overdue home repairs and improvement projects. The workshop has been scheduled at this time to also coincide with Older Americans Month. The Consumers Councils are recipients of a Title III B Grant from Somerville Cambridge Elder Services, Inc. to assist area seniors with consumer problems and to do educational outreach about their rights as consumers.

Homeowners' Rehab, Inc. (HRI) and the Cambridge Energy Office of the City's Community Development Department are co-sponsoring the Workshop and will present information about the home improvements services they can offer to eligible Senior Citizens.

HRI is one of the three non-profit home improvement programs in Cambridge that offer low-interest loans to eligible homeowners and will find the contractor and negotiate the contract for you. Information and questions about its services will be part of this workshop.

The Energy Office staff will present its variety of programs designed to help eligible clients make conservation improvements to their homes. Homeowners and tenants may qualify for free weatherization work or zero interest energy loans.

For more information about this event, call the Cambridge Consumer Office at 498-9023. The phone at the senior center is 495-0110.

CRIMEWATCH

This is a list of crime in the Agassiz Neighborhood .....April 1988.....

- Arcadia.....Hit and Run to property (4/11)
Carver St.....Car theft (4/10)
Crescent St.....Attempted break and entry (4/11)
Irving St.....Break and entry (4/6)
Mass. Ave.....Theft in a building (4/20); Hit and run property(4/21); Theft from unlocked car (4/6)
Oxford St.....Annoying and accosting (4/5)
Sacramento St. ....Trespassing (4/9); Break and entry (4/14); Malicious Destruction of property (2 incidents on 4/9)

ADS \*\*\* HELP AVAILABLE \*\*\* HELP WANTED

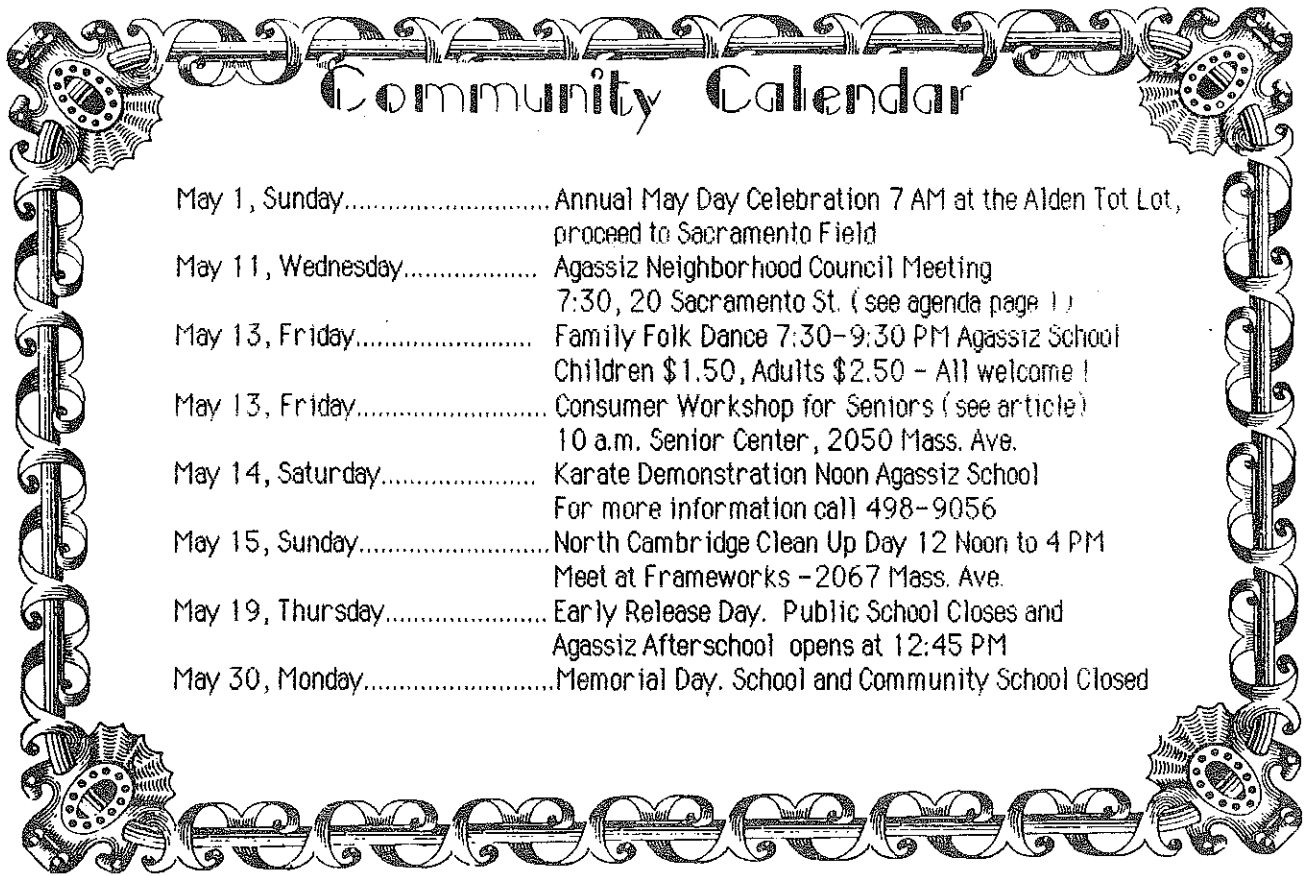
CAMBRIDGE COUNCIL ON AGING is looking for a volunteer office assistant 4-8 hrs. a week. Organize files and library, type correspondence and learn some basic computer skills. Work in a friendly informal atmosphere where your help will be appreciated. Call Mary Mengel or Sandra Kahn at 498-9039.

Part time library job: \$6.50 hr, 2-3 hrs. day Shelving magazines, typing records, helping patrons. Accuracy and reliability are important Call 495-2415 anytime from 9-3.

YOGA

The Yoga Experience—Classes in Kripalu Yoga, taught by certified teacher Danielle Levi Alvares. For every age and condition—men and pregnant women encouraged to attend. Class information below, for more information and fees call Danielle Levi Alvares at 354-2113.

Whistler Deadline is the 25th of Each Month. Send us articles, ads, letters to the editor, or any information that you feel would be of interest to the Agassiz neighborhood.



# Community Calendar

- May 1, Sunday..... Annual May Day Celebration 7 AM at the Alden Tot Lot, proceed to Sacramento Field
- May 11, Wednesday..... Agassiz Neighborhood Council Meeting  
7:30, 20 Sacramento St. ( see agenda page 1 )
- May 13, Friday..... Family Folk Dance 7:30-9:30 PM Agassiz School  
Children \$1.50, Adults \$2.50 - All welcome !
- May 13, Friday..... Consumer Workshop for Seniors ( see article )  
10 a.m. Senior Center , 2050 Mass. Ave.
- May 14, Saturday..... Karate Demonstration Noon Agassiz School  
For more information call 498-9056
- May 15, Sunday..... North Cambridge Clean Up Day 12 Noon to 4 PM  
Meet at Frameworks -2067 Mass. Ave.
- May 19, Thursday..... Early Release Day. Public School Closes and  
Agassiz Afterschool opens at 12:45 PM
- May 30, Monday..... Memorial Day. School and Community School Closed

## THE WHISTLER

Agassiz Neighborhood Council  
20 Sacramento Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
498-9056

**May 1988**