

# the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

January 2009

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## ANC News

### NOTES FROM THE DEC. 17 MEETING

#### Results of Community Survey on Lesley Development

A community survey, drafted by resident Willie Bloomstein, was distributed to Agassiz and other neighborhood groups in November 2008 via email lists with the goal of identifying residents' opinions and concerns about Lesley University's proposed development in Porter Square. Three major topics included parking and traffic, open space, and construction mitigation.

Mr. Bloomstein reported that he received 129 survey responses via email and postal mail from residents of Agassiz, Neighborhood Nine, and Porter Square. Mr. Bloomstein presented a summary of the survey results to the Council and shared residents' comments about Lesley's projects, explaining, "While I wouldn't claim that this survey is statistically perfect, it does

give a clear snapshot of what people are concerned about."

The findings below are organized by the number of respondents who rated each a "highest priority." (Respondents marked multiple issues as high, medium, low, or not a priority.) For example, for the first item listed, 100 out of 129 respondents indicated that they believe additional parking in Porter Square is of the highest importance. Parking, traffic, open space, and construction mitigation were the top-rated issues.

Issue	Highest Priority
Additional parking as required	100
Parking and traffic study	99
Construction Mitigation plan	98
Trucks on neighborhood streets	96
Traffic flow	95
Parking underground	95
Open space/green space	93
Traffic - Mass. Ave./ Roseland St. intersection	87
Non-Lesley properties	84

### NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



**JAN. 21 - 7:30 PM**

Baldwin School Cafeteria  
28 Sacramento Street  
(Press buzzer for entry)

#### AGENDA

- Discussion of **Oxford Street traffic** in view of a recent accident
- Learn about US Post Office's **Customer Advisory Council** with **Postmaster Katherine Lydon** and other USPS representatives.
- Update on strategic planning for ABC's "aging in place" program **STICK**

Smaller owner-occupied retail	80
Pedestrian safety/improvements	78
Overall height of AIB	77
Trash storage	74
Interactive design	70
Additional retail	67
Heights along Roseland St.	66
Open space - Mass. Ave.	53
Tradeoff between height/open space	45
Public art gallery	35
Public art library	26
Open space behind Porter Exchange	20

The complete report is available online as a PDF file at [www.charityadvantage.com/agassiz/LesleyDevelopment.asp](http://www.charityadvantage.com/agassiz/LesleyDevelopment.asp).

Mr. Bloomstein, a member of the city-appointed Lesley/Community Working Group that has been meeting to discuss the project over many months, acknowledged that the community welcomes the idea of an arts district, which may include the Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center, at Porter Square. He added that he believes important issues need to be resolved before the community supports Lesley's proposed development.

Lesley University is currently applying for a new re-zoned Porter Square "overlay district" that includes all of its buildings and properties on Mass. Ave. and nearby Somerville Ave. Lesley has included 3,000 square feet of open space at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Roseland Street, intended for both public and University use, in its plans to bring the Art Institute of Boston

(AIB) to Cambridge.

Bill Doncaster, Director of Community Relations at Lesley, stated, "The issues mentioned in the community survey are very much part of the discussion the Lesley/Community Working Group has been having for the past two years."

**Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center Wins in Court**

ABC Board Director Wendy Prellwitz explained that the Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center (MMVAC) project began many years ago with the idea of restoring the mid-1800's carriage house behind 20 Sacramento St. to create an art center for children and adults. ABC hired an architect and raised 1.2 million dollars in a capital campaign.

In 2003, following a year of negotiating with the center's abutters, ABC obtained a special permit to build. The special permit was appealed, and ABC was in court for the next six years.

While awaiting the conclusion of the court case, a committee from ABC initiated a partnership with Lesley University to include MMVAC in a proposed arts district, including AIB, in Porter Square. Additionally, Maud Morgan Visual Art classes began in the fall of 2008, with successful drawing studios for teens and adults, and a ceramics class to be added in winter 2009.

Through the support of pro-bono legal help, ABC won the original case and the two appeals that followed. In late 2008 the Massachusetts Supreme Court declined to review the case, as was requested by the abutters. The agency is now free to move forward with plans for the art center. They are currently in the process of applying for grants to assist with the increased cost of building, and plan to begin a fundraising program.

Ms. Prellwitz explained that, presently, ABC is reviewing a number of options. One is to continue to work with Lesley to locate MMVAC at Porter Square with AIB, another is to return to



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the original plans and build behind 20 Sacramento, and a third might be a combination of the first two. Each option presents a set of challenges, Ms. Prellwitz stated, including issues of timing and fundraising.

ABC Board Director George Hein added that, despite the difficulties, the agency is not starting from zero, "They now hold a viable building permit, \$600,000 in funds from the original capital campaign, and renewed energy."

**"Living Well" Guide Now Available**

"Living Well, A Guide to Elder Services in Cambridge," was compiled and edited by Kristina Snyder with the support of a grant from the Cambridge Agassiz Harvard (CAH) Fund.

The Guide, a free resource for people seeking to "age in place" in Cambridge, is now available. Copies can be found at 20 Sacramento Street in the 2nd floor waiting room. Interested parties may also contact Phoebe Sinclair at (617) 349-6287 x10 or [psinclair@agassiz.org](mailto:psinclair@agassiz.org) to have a copy sent via postal mail.

**February ANC Meeting**

A volunteer is needed to run the ANC meeting in February. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 25th at 7:30 PM in the Baldwin School Cafeteria. Please contact Phoebe Sinclair at (617) 349-6287 x10 or [psinclair@agassiz.org](mailto:psinclair@agassiz.org) to volunteer or for more information.

## ABC Community

**PLEASE SHOVEL YOUR WALK**

Prepared by Cambridge Dept. of Public Works

Ice and snow-free sidewalks are everyone's responsibility.

Please:

- Shove your sidewalk on all sides of your property, down to bare pavement
- Make a path at least three feet wide
- Chop or melt all ice

- Clear ramps at corners and crosswalks
- Keep street drains clear of snow

Reach out to your neighbors. Are there neighbors on your street who are elderly, have a disability, or may have difficulty shoveling for any reason? Work with your neighbors to ensure your entire block is safe and accessible for all!

Remember to remove snow from all sidewalks next to property within 12 hours after snow stops falling during the day, and before 1 PM when snow has fallen overnight. Also, remove or melt ice within six hours of the time that it forms.

Avoid a violation. Residents who do not comply will be in violation of City Ordinance and may be fined \$50 per violation per day.



## Agassiz Baldwin Children's Programs

**ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR KIDS ONLY HOLIDAY SALE**

ABC extends thanks to all the young shoppers who helped raise over \$1,000 for Agassiz Baldwin Children's Program



Scholarships. Children age three and up had a terrific time at the sale, where they purchased gifts for friends, family and (of course) for themselves.

Agassiz Afterschool's contribution of homemade



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paper wreaths, beanbags, beaded ornaments, and cards, and a myriad of cute items donated by Joie de Vivre were this year's popular sellers.

Additionally, ABC thanks Joie de Vivre, Greenward, Tags Hardware, and an anonymous donor for their generous and continued support. We owe the success of Kids Only Holiday Sale 2008 to the generosity of our retail partners, neighbors, and the kids.

### **MEGAN'S FABULOUS BIRTHDAY PARTY**

Prepared by Alice Vogler, 1-5 Site Director

These are the words of wisdom that the performance, inspired by the Mali folktale: "Mee-An and the Magic Serpent" by Baba Wague Diakite, better known as "Megan's Fabulous Birthday Party" gave us all on December 5th.



The 1-5th graders in Agassiz Afterschool, with the help of some great kindergartners from down the street, truly worked as a group to put on the performance, which took place in the Baldwin School gym for family and friends.

Everyone in the Afterschool program was involved in one way or another. Whether it was helping to make the costumes, drumming with Joh for the party scene, helping to make and paint props, preparing snacks, opening the curtains for the scenes, or just supporting friends, everyone was part of the production.

Our kids were so inspired by the Introducing Art performance, "The Women Who Outshone the Sun," presented by Behind the Mask, that they wanted to adapt their own folktale into a play. And although it was a little hard to hear, the actors and actresses truly made their characters their own during the performance. The celebration was a hit for all the parents who turned out.

Everyone in the Agassiz Baldwin Afterschool program wants to give a special thanks to teacher Sarvi Moshfegh for working so hard to

make this a special performance for the audience, but especially for the kids.



### **COOL HAPPENINGS DURING VACATION WEEK**

Prepared by Alice Vogler, 1-5 Site Director

It has been great to have all the students in both the Kindergarten Program and the 1-5th Program together down here in the basement of the Baldwin!

Monday was Pajama Day and we did things like make bubble bath, watch movies, construct sheet forts, and create awesome wire sculptures, dream catchers, and paper dreidels.

Tuesday was Artic Animal Day and we started the day off with a field trip down the street to the Harvard Natural History Museum to see an exhibit about how animals use their color in dif-



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ferent ways. The afternoon was spent making marshmallows igloos, doing scavenger hunts (including a Temperature Hunt), creating snow globes, and making camouflaged self-portraits.

We spent Wednesday morning making all sorts of stuff for our 12 noon New Year's celebration, like New Year's hats, sound poppers, confetti balloons, and a big sign, as well as some home-made pizza for morning snack. In the afternoon we looked at how Russia, India, China and Ecuador celebrate New Year's, and did some fabulous crafts from those countries. We also welcomed the New Year's snowstorm and headed home a little early!



### **PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Prepared by Priscilla Browne, Preschool Lead Teacher

December was an exciting month in preschool. We learned about shapes by having a shape scavenger hunt and making shapes out of our bodies. We also had some new friends join our group, and have continued to enjoy hosting mystery readers. Micah Eglinton-Woods, our Administrative Assistant, came one day and read!



### **INTRODUCING ARTS - ANNUAL HIP HOP FESTIVAL**

Save the date, Thursday, February 19, for the **13th Annual Hip Hop Festival**, our yearly showcase of Hip Hop dance and rap. Held



on the Baldwin School Stage in the Maria L. Baldwin School, this wildly popular event draws talented performers from all over Cambridge.

Seating will be general admission. Tickets are \$2 per person or \$5 per family group. After-school groups free, but please call ahead.

This year's Hip Hop Festival is co-sponsored by Club Passim's Culture for Kids performance series.

**What:** 13th Annual Hip Hop Festival,  
**When:** Thursday, February 19 at 2 PM  
**Where:** Baldwin School Stage, 28 Sacramento St.

For more information, contact Jacy Edelman, School Age Director, at [jedelman@agassiz.org](mailto:jedelman@agassiz.org) or (617) 349-6287 x11.

## **City Wide**

### **VOLUNTEER WITH HOSPITALITY HOMES**

Prepared by Hospitality Homes

Hospitality Homes provides short-term, no-cost housing for families and friends of patients traveling to Boston for medical treatment. Our wonderful volunteer host families provide accommodations in their own homes and in doing so, enable patients to have their loved ones by their sides while they receive treatment at area hospitals.

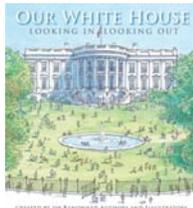
We have an urgent need for more host families in Cambridge and surrounding areas due to a substantial increase in demand for our service. If you have a spare room available, please contact us for information on how you can make a meaningful impact from the comfort of your own home. You decide how often to host and what types of guests you're able to accommodate, and guests provide their own meals and transportation. Hosting is a unique and tangible way to teach children valuable lessons about helping others.

Make a difference in the lives of patients and their families! For details on hosting and other volunteer opportunities, please contact Hospitality Homes at (617) 482-4338 or visit [www.hosp.org](http://www.hosp.org).

**CPL FAMILY NIGHT**

Prepared by Cambridge Public Library

Join Gregory Maguire and Tim Basil Ering for a festive evening celebrating the new book *Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out*, created by the National Children’s Book and Literacy Alliance. This book is full of stories, letters, illustrations, and more by over one hundred award-winning authors and illustrators!



Gregory Maguire is the bestselling author of many books for children and adults including, *What-the-Dickens: The Story of a Rogue Tooth Fairy*, *Wicked*, and his latest novel, *A Lion among Men*. Timothy Basil Ering is the illustrator of *The Tale of Despereaux*, *The Story of Frog Belly Rat Bone*, and more.

More fun for children age six and older and adults: write your own thoughts to the President! Postcards will be provided and pizza served.

**When:** Thursday, January 22 at 6:30 PM  
**Where:** Central Square Branch Library, 45 Pearl St., Cambridge, MA  
**Register:** Call: (617) 349-4409, TTY (617) 349-4421

Sponsored by Candlewick Press and the Friends of the Cambridge Public Library.



**GET READY FOR THE DIGITAL BROADCAST TRANSITION**

Prepared by the Mass. Department of Telecommunications and Cable

At midnight on February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations in the United States will stop broadcasting in analog and switch to 100% digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting promises to provide a clearer picture and more programming options and will free up airwaves for use by emergency responders.

**Who is Affected?**

If you have one or more analog-only TVs that don’t have cable or satellite service connected to them and are using a “rabbit ear” antenna to receive your local-over-the-air broadcasts, you will be affected by this transition, and will need to take action to continue receiving any local over-the-air broadcasts after February 17, 2009.

If you are affected by the Digital Broadcast Transition, you have three options.

Option 1: Buy a box that converts digital signals to analog signals that your analog set can display. Estimated Cost: \$40-\$70 if you buy a basic converter box. (\$10-\$30 if you use a coupon worth \$40.)

Option 2: Buy a new television set with a built in ATSC digital tuner. Estimated Cost: \$100 and up. (High Definition is not required.)

Option 3: Subscribe to cable or satellite video service (if available). Estimated Cost: At least \$8-\$20/month (\$96-\$240/year) plus possible equipment rental fees.

**Converter Box Coupons**

Between January 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009, you can request a coupon while supplies last in one of four ways:

- Apply online at [www.dtv2009.gov/ApplyCoupon.aspx](http://www.dtv2009.gov/ApplyCoupon.aspx)
- Call the Coupon Program 24-hour hot-

line 1 (888) DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009), TTY 1 (877) 530-2634

- Mail a coupon application to: P.O. BOX 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000
- Fax a coupon application to 1 (877) DTV-4ME2, (1-877-388-4632)

For more information contact the Department of Telecommunications and Cable by calling 1 (800) 392-6066 or emailing [consumer.inquiry@state.ma.us](mailto:consumer.inquiry@state.ma.us).

Find out more online at [www.mass.gov/dtc](http://www.mass.gov/dtc).

### **RESOLVE TO RECYCLE MORE IN 2009**

Prepared by Cambridge DPW, Recycling

#### ***Christmas Tree Collection***

Curbside collection of bare Christmas trees will be Jan 2-16. Decorations and stands must be removed and trees should not be in a plastic bag. Weather permitting, Christmas trees collected during this time don't get buried or burned. Last year, City residents recycled over 4700 trees. The chipped trees were used as mulch in natural areas in Cambridge.

#### ***Recycle Old Phonebooks***

Delivery of 2009 phone books has begun! Please recycle old phone books and any unneeded new ones. Just remove the plastic wrap. On collection day, place phonebooks with mixed paper in a paper bag next to your blue bin or in a paper "toter" on wheels. If every Cambridge household recycles an old phone book or a new one that is not needed, we could keep about 225,000 pounds of paper out of the trash. That's almost 2000 trees! Call DPW at (617) 349-4800 or visit [www.cambridgema.gov/recycle](http://www.cambridgema.gov/recycle) to order a free recycling bin.

### **FIRST MONDAYS @ CAC GALLERY**

Prepared by Cambridge Arts Council

Cambridge Arts Council (CAC) starts the new year with the launch of a new monthly series "First Mondays @ CAC Gallery" on Monday, January 5, 2009, 6-8 PM at the Cambridge City Hall Annex. These free, multi-sensory gallery

events include a mix of visual and performing arts and a food tasting from a local purveyor, along with an introduction to a local community organization.

The January 5th event celebrates the completion of Cambridge-based artist Mela Lyman's large-scale mural entitled, *Anxiety of Beauty – Revisiting the Fountain of Youth*, which the artist created in the gallery over the past several months. The mural will be installed in Paine Park (St. Mary Road, a few blocks from the Gallery) in the spring.

**What:** First Mondays @ CAC Gallery  
**When:** Monday, January 5, 2009  
6-8 PM  
**Where:** Cambridge City Hall Annex at 344 Broadway, at the corner of Broadway and Inman Street

For more information call (617) 349-4380 or visit [www.cambridgeartscouncil.org](http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org).



*Mela Lyman's mural in progress. Photo taken 12.18.08.*



**Sacramento  
Street Gallery**

### **BALDWIN SCHOOL CERAMICS SHOW**

Beginning January 20th, please stop by the Sacramento Street Gallery to enjoy a children's ceramics show curated by Baldwin School Art Teacher Robyn Zeller. The show will run for two weeks.

Additional details to be announced. To learn more visit our website at [www.agassiz.org/SacramentoStreetGallery.asp](http://www.agassiz.org/SacramentoStreetGallery.asp).

# Community Calendar

## January 2009

Thursday, January 1		New Years Day Holiday, ABC office and programs closed, office reopens on Friday, January 2nd
Wednesday, January 14	6:00 - 7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St., 2nd Floor Public welcome
Wednesday, January 21	7:30 - 9:00 PM	ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Baldwin School Cafeteria, 28 Sacramento St. All are welcome
Monday, January 19		Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, ABC office and programs closed

*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](http://www.agassiz.org). Items of interest to the neighborhood may be submitted for consideration no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

### THE WHISTLER JANUARY 2009



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