

the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

September 2008

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ANC News

NOTES FROM THE JUNE 18 MEETING

Brief Announcements

Mr. Diamond welcomed new faces and reminded everyone that the Council, a forum for neighborhood issues and the sharing of ideas, meets the third Wednesday of every month, September through June. Phoebe Sinclair, ABC's Community Liaison, converts each meeting's minutes into "ANC News" section of *The Whistler* newsletter. If you are not on the email list to receive *The Whistler* electronically, contact Ms. Sinclair at psinclair@agassiz.org.

Mr. Diamond, who serves as a Board Director at ABC, announced that the ABC Board requested he report on activities of the Board at Council meetings going forward. He reiterated that ABC's school programs: Sacramento St. Preschool, Agassiz Afterschool, and Outback Summer Program, are all citywide programs

whose tuitions help run the agency.

Additionally, the Board invites neighbors to work on several projects and initiatives, including advocacy for the Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center, and volunteering for ABC's aging in place program "STICK." Contact ABC for more information.

New Lesley Dorm

Lesley University's application for a variance for an increase in height to allow first floor retail in their new dorm at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Wendell St. has been approved by the City. Lesley expects to do the most significant construction work on the dorm in August 2008, and anticipates minimal interruptions. Learn more at www.lesley.edu/constructionupdates. Call Lesley Security at (617) 349-8888 with immediate questions or concerns.

Attendees of Note

State Representative Alice Wolf, Jesse Dickson, of Rep. Wolf's staff, and City Councillors Fred Fantini and Craig Kelley were in attendance at

NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



SEPT. 17 - 7:30 PM

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

AGENDA

- **Lesley Development**
 - Proposed Rezoning Petition to expedite making space for AIB at Porter Square
 - New Dorm Construction and Impact on Neighborhood Traffic
- **Discussion of Traffic Safety on Oxford and Sacramento Streets**
- **Results from ABC's Electrical Power Outage Survey**

the June ANC meeting.

Upcoming Street Repair in Agassiz

Cambridge City Engineer Owen O’Riordan, accompanied by John J. Struzziery, Principal Engineer at SEA Consultants, detailed plans for Agassiz neighborhood streets that are currently in the poorest condition. Due to costs, all streets that require repairs cannot be worked on at the same time.

Mr. O’Riordan stated, “We think it is important to try to repair the worst streets in the neighborhood. Now that the capital budget has been approved, we will try to repair one to two streets at a time over the next three to four years, starting with Prentiss.”

As mentioned previously in *The Whistler*, the Department of Public Works has been working on a sizable sewer separation project in various sections of the neighborhood for the past 12-13 years.

Following Prentiss, the next streets scheduled for repairs are Frost St., Forest St. and Newport Road. There is also some level of repair planned for upper Oxford St. No large structures or tanks are planned as part of this project. DPW expects the major portion of construction on Prentiss St. to take approximately 12 months.

Over the next few months, neighbors in the Prentiss and Oxford Street area should expect to be contacted by DPW. Mr. O’Riordan stated, “We will do intense customer relations in the fall, working with representatives from the community.”

Residents should contact DPW or call the Superintendent of Streets to request temporary repairs.

Zoning Changes Coming to Porter Square?

Residents of Porter Square and the Agassiz community are concerned about the consequences of Kaya restaurant’s proposed changes to the area’s zoning. The owner of Kaya, who plans to replace the existing restaurant with a hotel and

ground-floor restaurant, requested zone changes in order to increase the size of the hotel. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) turned down their application this past spring on the grounds that it was a rezoning rather than a variance.

Currently, the zoning on Mass. Ave. in Porter Square includes an Overlay that extends 100 feet back from the property line. The Overlay aims to promote pedestrian-friendly amenities at the street level, including retail, as well as protect the character of Mass. Ave. Many properties in the Overlay District exist in more than one zone. For example, the Kaya restaurant building is located in the “Business C” Zone District, but the parking lot behind it is in a “Residential” Zone District.

At the Council meeting, Architect Michael McKee, representing Kaya, explained that the proposed variance was rejected by the BZA because they considered it a rezoning of the site. Upon suggestion by the BZA, Kaya looked into other options, including making changes to the zone Overlay District in Porter Square. Mr. McKee stated that Kaya decided to try to amend the Overlay language in such a way that would allow them to build the hotel without affecting the base residential or business zoning, or permitting other developers to purchase residential lots and consolidate them with their business lots.

Les Barber, Director of Land Use and Zoning at the Community Development Department,

Fred Meyer, Realtor
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added, "Kaya is seeking a special permit, which would be issued by the Planning Board. Although a change to the Overlay would apply to any use, the floor area ratio (FAR) is for hotel use only. They do run the risk of opening the floodgates to others who might try to take advantage of the changes."

John Howard, member of the Porter Square Neighbors Association (PSNA) explained that PSNA President Susan Hunziker and other members spent more than a year working with Kaya. They discussed the project with the architect and queried abutters for their opinions about the proposed hotel. PSNA didn't come to a full consensus, but they did agree to support the variance despite their reservations about the building's proposed size.

Agassiz neighborhood residents worried that, in the future, a developer might take advantage of Kaya's strategy and propose a change that would negatively impact the neighborhoods. Their questions included:

- Would a change to the Overlay set a bad precedent?
- What would the implications be for future institutional development?
- Is it financially feasible to build the hotel within the current zoning restrictions? If so, would Kaya consider/re-consider that course?

The Cambridge Planning Board met on this issue on July 15. To learn more, visit the Porter Square Neighbors Association website at www.portersquare.net.

ABC Community

REMEMBRANCE

ABC remembers Kathleen Manion, who died on June, 18, 2008 in York, Maine. Her funeral was held on June 23 at St. Paul's Church in Harvard Square, with burial at Mount Auburn Cemetery. She was 83.

After retiring as a professional fundraiser, Ms.

Manion joined the Agassiz Neighborhood Council Board and was involved in a wide variety of neighborhood issues. As Chairperson of the Board, Kathleen founded the capital campaign to build the Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center.

States Terry DeLancey, ABC Executive Director, "Kathleen convinced me that we could raise the funds for a children's art center, and she was right. We ultimately raised \$1.2 million. Kathleen's expertise laid a foundation for success, but I will remember most fondly her humor and kindness."

Ms. Manion worked as a fundraiser for Arthur D. Little and Smith College. She lived in Cambridge for 50 years, mostly in the Agassiz neighborhood on Wendell Street and Newport Road. She was active in many charities including volunteer work at St. Paul's Church.

STREET WORK NOTICE

Prepared by Cambridge Dept. of Public Works

DPW has initiated soil boring and surveying to plan for the long awaited reconstruction of Cambridge's 100 year old combined sanitary and storm sewer system from Garfield to Roseland Streets.

For more information, call Rebecca Fuentes, Community Relations Manager, at (617) 349-6949.

LESLEY DORM UPDATE & GROUND BREAKING

Prepared by Bill Doncaster, Director of Community Affairs

On September 10, Lesley University will ceremonially break ground on two new residence halls at 1663 Mass. Ave. The buildings mark Lesley's first ground up new construction since 1973.

A group of seven neighbors worked with Lesley administrators and the architectural firm of Bruner/Cott on the design of a residence hall that met the University's goals for new student

housing, but also addressed neighborhood goals of improvements to the residential character of Wendell St. and the addition of retail spaces on Mass. Ave.

“At Lesley we use words like ‘community’ a great deal, and it’s a central component of our mission of preparing men and women for important public service careers in our schools, non-profits, and agencies,” said University President Joseph B. Moore. “This project and the good work that was done with neighbors shows how that mission is also applied through our campus planning here in Cambridge.”

The two residence halls will be constructed at 1663 Mass. Ave. and 3 Wendell St., two adjacent parcels formerly used by Alamo Car Rental. Facing the Ave, two new retail spaces will span the front of the first floor of the five story building. The second building, facing Wendell St, is a wood frame three story building designed to blend with the Victorian residences of the street. Together, the two structures will house 98 students.

The project was designed by Bruner/Cott Architects, a Cambridge firm, through several months of meetings with a representative neighborhood group, many of whom spoke in favor of the project and the process to support a number of variances before the Cambridge Zoning Board of Appeals. The building contractor is William A. Berry & Sons, Inc, and full construction is expected to be complete by September of 2009.

The design builds on Lesley’s commitment to “green” building standards. Using the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system as a guide, the design meets certification standards through the utilization of sustainable building materials, energy efficient HVAC and water systems, and other methods.

President Moore, members of the Lesley University Board of Trustees, members of Lesley Student Government, and the community members and Lesley administrators who served on the design’s working group will gather on September 10 at 2:30 PM on the site to break ground.

BECOME A CITIZEN JOURNALIST

CCTV’s NeighborMedia Program is designed to help people in Cambridge tell stories that matter to their community. We provide the tools and training; you provide the content!

NeighborMedia journalists will receive a free one-year access membership at CCTV, which includes a \$100 class voucher and free use of facilities upon certification. We also provide:

- One-on-one support
- Comprehensive training and access to a wide variety of media production equipment
- A community of media-makers with whom to share ideas and feedback
- Both a citywide and global audience online for your work!

To apply, check out www.neighbormedia.org to get a sense of the material produced by our last group of citizen journalists. We welcome all types of content and would not expect new participants to conform to any reporting standards. However, all stories must have a Cambridge community focus.

Application deadline is September 22, 2008. Drop off your application at CCTV, email it to neighbormedia@cctv.org, or fax it to (617) 661-6927.



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Agassiz Afterschool Programs

SNAPSHOTS FROM OUTBACK 2008

ABC's popular Outback Summer Program for children grades K through 6 has come to a close. 179 children enjoyed games, Friday drama and dance performances, creating imaginative art, a Summer in the City performance sponsored by the Cambridge Arts Council, and field trips to beaches and parks every Thursday!

In addition, 50 Counselors-In-Training were on hand to assist teachers and help Outback kids have the best summer program experience possible.

ABC extends a warm thanks to all who attended, taught, or volunteered their time. We hope to see you back again next year! In the meantime, please enjoy these photos taken at a variety of Outback summer events. Also, stop by Porter Square to see our window display featuring a Chinese dragon created at Outback.



SCHOOL PROGRAMS - WELCOME POTLUCK

Join us on Tuesday, September 16th from 5:30-7:00 PM for the Children's Programs Family Welcome Potluck. Come meet the teachers, staff, and other Afterschool families. You are welcome to bring side dishes, salads, chips, veggies, dessert, and more. Please, no nuts.

To learn more, contact Jacy Edelman, School Age Director, at jedelman@agassiz.org or (617) 349-6287 x11. We look forward to seeing everyone there!

NEW ARTS PROGRAMMING AT AGASSIZ AFTERSCHOOL

Agassiz Afterschool has some exciting new programming planned for the upcoming year, with a variety of specialists rounding off our staff.

Afterschool programming includes:

Mondays: Instructor Joh Camara leads African Dance and African Drumming lessons (drums included)

Tuesdays: Drama club led by our in-house Theatre Specialist, Sarvi Moshfegh

Fridays: We look forward to hiring a specialist to lead an Architecture, Science, or Language Club

Also new this season is our individualized, paid-for programming, which includes:

Sunny Hitt will be offering hour-long **dance instruction** in Creative Modern, Hip Hop, or Ballet on Wednesdays. The

cost for this 14-week dance program will be \$210.

Sarvi Moshfegh will be offering half-hour one-on-one **piano or cello lessons**. The cost of this 13-week program will be \$390.

Scholarships are available. Please contact Jacy Edelman, School Age Director, at (617) 349-6287 x11 or jedelman@agassiz.org for more information. We have information about cello rentals as well.

INTRODUCING ARTS WITH BEHIND THE MASK THEATER

ABC opens its 2008/09 Introducing Arts Performance Series with Behind the Mask Theater, presenting “The Woman Who Outshone the Sun.”



“A beautiful and mysterious woman with magical powers is exiled from a mountain village and she takes its water source, a river, away in punishment. Through their suffering for what they have lost, the villagers learn important lessons of tolerance, forgiveness, and the frailty of the ecosystem. Performed as a bilingual story (Spanish & English), and based on a poem by Alejandro Cruz Martinez.”

When: September 23, 2:00 PM
Where: Baldwin School Stage, 28 Sacramento Street
Tickets: Afterschool groups free, \$2 per person, \$5 per family. School groups please call ahead.

For more information, call (617) 349-6287. We hope to see you there!

City Wide

THINK SWIM, THINK SWISS

Come celebrate the unveiling of an outdoor exhibit with a Swiss Beach Day at the Charles

River, and enjoy music, games, snacks and drinks. Taste Swiss sweetness offered by Lindt Chocolate, receive free ThinkSwiss give-aways, and enter to win a trip to Switzerland sponsored by Swiss International Air Lines and Switzerland Tourism!



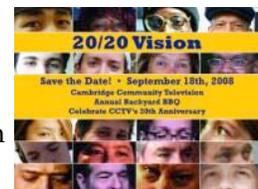
The exhibition is part of the ThinkSwiss program, and is organized by the Consulate of Switzerland/swissnex Boston and the Charles River Conservancy.

What: Reception for exhibit “Think Swim, Think Swiss: Bringing Swiss-Style Swimming to the Charles River”
When: September 7, 2008, 2:00–5:00 PM
Where: Weeks Footbridge near Harvard Square, Cambridge

To RSVP, and for more information about the exhibit visit www.thinkswiss.org/thinkswim.html.

CCTV CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

On Sept. 18th, Cambridge Community Television will celebrate its 20th anniversary as the Voice and Vision of Cambridge by inducting 20 individuals into an Honorary Board at the Annual Backyard BBQ. CCTV’s first ever Honorary Board recognizes individuals who have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to CCTV’s mission, providing guidance, advice, and advocating on behalf of the organization.



The annual BBQ, sponsored by the Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation and 20 other businesses and individuals, is first and foremost a fundraiser for CCTV’s special outreach programs.

As is the tradition at CCTV’s BBQ, all food will

be provided and prepared by chefs from a diverse group of local restaurants, and there will be an auction with donations from over 40 individuals and businesses. The BBQ will feature music by Zili Misik.

For more information, visit
www.cctvcambridge.org/bbq.

When: Thursday, September 18, 2008, 5:30 PM

Tickets: \$45, \$20 for seniors, \$18 for those under 12. Order before Sept. 10th by mail or at
www.cctvcambridge.org/stores

Contact: Susan Fleischmann at (617) 661-6900 x127, susan@cctvcambridge.org, or Clodagh Rule (617) 661-6900 x 117, clodagh@cctvcambridge.org

BOOK GROUP FOR PARENTS

The Cambridge Public Library Children's Room is starting a new book



group for adults--Making It Up As We Go Along: A Book Group for Parents. The book group will meet on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Children's Programming Room at the Main Library.

When: Monday, September 22, 7:00 PM

Where: Children's Programming Room, Main Library, 459 Broadway

What: Join us for a lively and informal discussion of "Life Among the Savages", by Shirley Jackson. The author of "The Haunting of Hill House" and "The Lottery" tells of the real-life horrors and joys of balancing work and family in small town Vermont in the early fifties.

Contact CPL Children's Room at (617) 497-4038 to register and get a copy of the book.



Sacramento Street Gallery

"DUNES" PAINTINGS BY HEATHER PILCHARD

Full time painter Heather Pilchard, is inspired by nature. Her colorfield landscape paintings are meditations on places she has visited. She currently lives in Wellfleet, MA.

The artist states, "Dunes" is an exhibit inspired by a week I spent living in a rustic dune shack immersed in a desert-like terrain with none of the distractions of modern-day living . . . this region of shimmering sand hills, dense scrub pine, and windswept beach dunes is a powerful reminder of the magic of land left wild and untouched by development."



"Dunes at Sunset" Oil on Board, 9"x 27" 2008

Ms. Pilchard graduated from the School of the Museum of Fine Art in Boston with a BFA in 1995. She has been painting since 1984 and has exhibited in numerous galleries and museums in MA, NC, and IL. Ms. Pilchard's paintings are represented in MA by BayOMar studio in Duxbury, Cambridge Art Association, the Alpers Gallery in Andover, and Harmon Gallery in Wellfleet.

Please join us for an opening reception on Friday, September 12th from 5:00 -7:00 PM.

The show runs through October 10.

The Gallery is open Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM.



Community Calendar

September 2008

Monday, September 1		Labor Day Holiday, ABC Closed
Tuesday, September 2		1st day Cambridge Public Schools
Wednesday, September 3		1st day Sacramento St. Preschool & Agassiz Afterschool
Tuesday, September 16	5:30-7:00 PM	Welcome Potluck, Children's Program
Wednesday, September 17	6:00-7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St, 2nd Floor Public welcome
Wednesday, September 17	7:30-9:00 PM	ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Baldwin School Cafeteria, 28 Sacramento St. All are welcome
Tuesday, September 23	2:00 PM	Introducing Arts Performance with "Behind the Mask Theater" at Agassiz Afterschool, Baldwin School Stage, 28 Sacramento St.

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. 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 SEPTEMBER 2008



Agassiz Neighborhood Council
20 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
P: (617) 349-6287 F: (617) 497-4388
www.agassiz.org

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