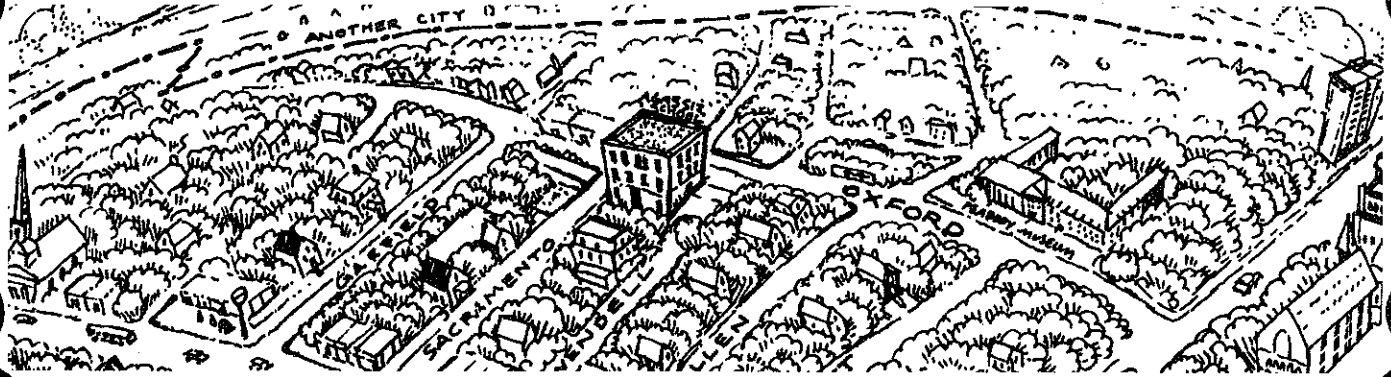


The Whistler

October 1996



Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

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ANC NEWS

Notes from the September 17 ANC Meeting

Community Development Visits

Chair **Janet Rustow** opened the meeting and introduced **Susan Schlesinger**, Assistant City Manager for **Cambridge Community Development (CDD)** and **Liz Epstein**, Deputy Director for CDD. They gave the council an overview of their department and answered some questions from the floor. [For a detailed report, see Neighborhood News below.]

Susan said she knew of no plans for new development other than those already on the table. They include the renovation of Porter Square Shopping Center, construction of public housing at the corner of Garfield St. renovation of the purple house at 1734 Mass. Ave. and the ongoing efforts by Lesley College to consolidate their campus at Porter Exchange and at Mellen Street. Susan said the kind of development along the Agassiz stretch of Mass. Ave. would be in parking lots and empty lots, which virtually do not exist. The focus for this area would be more design and use rather than development.

The replacement and planting of trees along Mass. Ave. was a concern that the Council agreed to address. Susan said that replacement trees should just be a matter of reporting the loss to the Department of Public Works. She advised the Council to contact the DPW and set up a meeting to request new trees which would need to be budgeted.

The role of Community Development in the Harvard sale of housing to the City of Cambridge was raised, and **Terry DeLancey** let the council know that a meeting was planned for October 15 that would focus on housing, and Roger Herzog, CDD Housing Director would be in attendance. She invited people with an interest in housing issues to attend that meeting.

The Cambridge neighborhoods are being studied, and Agassiz has not been done yet. When this occurs, possibly in

the next fiscal year, there will a specific plan organized by CDD. Susan shared several other neighborhood assessment letters

A variety of pamphlets that explain the programs and services provided by the department were left and are now available in the Neighborhood Council office at 20 Sacramento St. Susan and Liz offered to come back again.

Porter Square Shopping Center Update

Janet introduced **Paul Myers**, **President of Porter Square Neighbors Association**, who gave the neighborhood an update on the Porter Square Shopping Center renovation project. For a detailed report, see Porter Square below.

Sacramento St. Sewer Construction

Louis Kustwan was the final speaker. He is the on site engineer for the current construction that will upgrade the sewer on Sacramento St. From Mass. Ave. To Oxford St. and Sacramento Place. He was accompanied by **Steve White**, who is the Assistant Commissioner at the Department of Public Works and in charge of the sewer renovations. Louis said that the only work done up until now was preparatory. Pipes had been cleaned out and television cameras have viewed the pipes to determine their condition. He reported that on September 18 they would begin to install a temporary water pipe on Sacramento Street to prevent any interruption of water service in case of a construction problem. This will begin the heavy work, and construction workers and their equipment would soon be on the street into the winter.

Next Council Meeting


October 15, Tuesday

7:30 p.m.

Agassiz School, 28 Sacramento St. Entrance

AGENDA:

- 1). Pat Dixon from the Cambridge Arts Council will talk with the council on neighborhood arts.
- 2). Discussion of Lesley College's application to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a change in 13 Mellen St. from residential to office use.
- 3). Roger Herzog, Housing Director from Cambridge Community Development Department, will discuss the City's purchase of Harvard housing and other housing issues.



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Community Development ~ A Special Report

Cambridge Community Development Department

Susan Schlesinger attended the September 17 ANC meeting and provided the neighborhood with a comprehensive overview of her department. There are approximately 40 permanent employees in the department whose mission is to preserve the diversity of the City and enhance the quality of life.

There are five divisions which include:

- 1). Administration, 2). Housing, 3). Economic Development,
- 4). Community Planning, and 5). Environmental and Transportation Planning.

HOUSING

The Housing division provides advocacy and direct help to residents. The pamphlet "**Guide to Cambridge Housing Programs**" gives more information on the variety of services available that provide financial and technical assistance to a variety of homeowners. There is assistance for residents who wish to buy with limited equity; cooperatives; and non-profit ownership. There is an extensive lead safe project, a program for first time homeowners and a mailing list of prospective buyers and tenants that informs them on new affordable units and the release of existing deed restricted units.

There is a special program for first time condo owners called the **Cambridge Condo Buyers Initiative**. The Cambridge Condo Buyers Initiative is an affordable home ownership program for low and moderate income Cambridge residents. Technical and financial assistance are provided to income eligible residents:

- 1 person household=\$29,100 or lower
- 2 person household=\$33,300 or lower
- 3 person household=\$37,450 or lower
- 4 person household=\$41,600 or lower

The **Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust** has been around since 1989. It provides funds to build and rehab property as long term affordable housing for the City of Cambridge.

CLASSES FOR FIRST TIME HOME BUYERS

CDD provides classes for first time buyers to help with the intricacies of purchasing property. In October they will be offered at the Peabody School on 44 Linnaean Street. The class will last for two hours. There will be one each Tuesday in October beginning October 8 at 6 p.m.

Classes are free but participants need to register. Also needed for this class is a credit report. For more information call **Penelope Pelton at 349-4600**.

**CDD has a Housing Information Hot Line -
Call 349-HOME (4663).**

Concern was raised about the "no parking" posting on Sacramento St. all day long for two months. Steve said they would deal with that immediately. While they would need the even side of Sacramento to place the temporary water pipe, this parking ban will be adjusted down to only the area the contractor is working in at the time. There was also storage of sand bags and cones on the tot lot which Steve promised would be removed by the next day.

During the recent school construction, contractors were parking in areas where residents could not, and residents were concerned that this would happen again. Steve said that this would be monitored as well as any storage of construction equipment where it does not belong.

CALL THE HOT LINE WITH ANY CONSTRUCTION CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS AT 497-4388.

Information on the October 15 Meeting

Pat Dixon, consultant for the **Cambridge Arts Council**, plans to attend the meeting and learn what Agassiz neighborhood has to offer in the arts. This is being done as part of a city-wide assessment of all Cambridge neighborhoods. The Arts Council would like to better understand what is available in Cambridge to better develop programs.

There will be time at the next ANC meeting to discuss the application submitted to the Board of Zoning Appeal by **Lesley College** regarding the conversion of 13 Mellen St. from a residence to an office. This will be heard on October 17 at 7:15 in City Hall.

Roger Herzog, housing director from **Cambridge Community Development** will be our guest speaker on housing issues. He will update the council on the impending purchase of 100 units by the City of Harvard's formerly rent control housing. He will also be able to provide information on all the other initiative.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This division in its "Guide to Cambridge Economic Development Programs" explains the programs that provide support to businesses to provide a good tax base. This including small business assistance, a listing of commercial property for sale or rent, a Women's Business Directory of 400, a nonprofit organization dedicated to entrepreneurship in Cambridge, a free job matching service and workforce development to enhance work opportunities for Cambridge residents. Financial support is available through loans to attract certain businesses, venture capital, tax exempt Industrial Revenue Bonds and a Central Square facade improvement program.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

This division is the one the Agassiz neighborhood most often seeks out for help. Here is where the issues of land use and zoning are discussed. The planning board is part of this department, and they provide consultation on planning matters. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) is managed by the Inspectional Services Department, and while their cases are reviewed by the Planning Board for general policy issues, specific cases are handled by the BZA. There has been progress with these two boards working together in the past few years, and issues of general policy are now better coordinated than in the past.

This is where the neighborhood studies are generated. It is where all neighborhood planning is based, including parks. A resident survey is prepared through this division, and the Agassiz neighborhood will use this kind of tool in preparation for a neighborhood study. The study focuses on resident needs for shopping and services in the neighborhood. It also studies some demographic information and resident interest in community events, fairs, etc.

Mass Ave. Overlay District

The portion of Mass. Ave. that abuts the Agassiz neighborhood is governed by a set of special regulations and procedures. These rules are spelled out as the Mass. Ave. Overlay District. Its purpose is to create a more harmonious and consistent image for development along the Avenue, to encourage good building design and site development to enhance the pedestrian amenities along the Avenue, to be sure that changes along the Avenue are compatible with the scale and character of the abutting neighborhoods, and to discourage new development inappropriate in both scale and design.

The restrictions themselves limit height and density. It controls the siting of parking on lots and dictates the kinds of use particularly on the ground floor. Large development proposals (exceeding 6,000 square feet) require additional review.

The North Massachusetts Avenue Urban Design Guideline Handbook is the study in which these regulations were conceived. It contains a great deal of information about design elements, historic preservation and needs for the area.

All the pamphlets and handouts mentioned above can be obtained by calling Cambridge Community Development at 349-4600 or the ANC at 349-6287.

Neighborhood News

Update on 1734 Mass. Ave.

The last residential home on the Agassiz/Neighborhood Nine stretch of Mass. Ave. will no longer have a resident use. It is the purple house next to Nomad (and the Hollywood Express drop box). Originally the plans called for townhouses, but a recent Board of Zoning variance allows for a small publishing company and studio for photography to create car manuals.

Sacramento St. Sewer

Work on this project has just begun and will extend until the winter. Remember to check out the front door at the Community Center, 20 Sacramento St. where bulletins will be posted. You can call the DPW with any problems or questions at 349-4800 or you can call the ANC Hot line at 497-4388 to report any problems or concerns.

City Wide

YWCA Hosts Conference on Racism

On **SATURDAY OCTOBER 19** the YWCA on 7 Temple Street in Cambridge will hold a conference from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. entitled **BREAKING THE SILENCE: RAISING OUR VOICES - TAKING ACTION AGAINST RACISM:** Corporate Culture, Education, Government and Public Policy, Health Care and Media. For more information call 491-6050.

Housing Meeting Planned

The Community Development Department is planning for a large scale meeting to discuss issues of housing after rent control. They will discuss the resources Cambridge has available for its residents who have been affected by the loss of rent control. Please call Penelope Pelton at 349-4600 for further information.

"Cambridge After Hours" makes Central Square Safer

This initiative will create a late night safety zone for patrons of establishments in Central Square. Looked on as a pilot that could provide safety to other areas of the City, it has been created through the collaboration of the Cambridge Licensing Commission, the Women's Commission, Community Oriented Policing Leadership Council and the Central Square Neighborhood Coalition, as well as owners of cafes, bars and clubs.

The program will feature posters and buttons to encourage patrons to ask for help getting home if necessary. There will also be a sidewalk presence by owners at closing times who will bid farewell and encouraging patrons to take care of each other and be considerate of the surrounding neighbors. The taxi industry has been encouraged to provide extra cabs at closing time, and police will give extra attention to routes in the area.

Harvard Housing Update

There was some concern this summer that the deal Harvard cut with the City of Cambridge would be off unless the City Council rescinded an order that required Harvard to meet with neighbors on the issue of affiliate housing. The City has agreed to purchase 100 units of Harvard's formerly rent controlled property as affordable housing. The total deal will cost the City \$3.1 million. Approximately half of those units are in the Agassiz neighborhood.

The problem was solved in early September when the City Council rewrote the order. Harvard says it will continue to talk to the neighborhood, and Harvard has agreed to look for long term residents, not just undergraduates on Ware and Prescott Streets, where Harvard did not offer any units in the deal.

Porter Square

Porter Square Shopping Center Renovations

Plans for the Porter Square Shopping Center include some major changes. The owners, Gravestar, would like to begin on these changes as soon as possible, but they will have to iron out some details with the neighbors and the City prior to any variance granting;

Basically the plan calls for an expansion from 40,000 square feet to 56,000 square feet.

Owners will construct a new building at the corner of White Street (the former site of the Shawmut Bank kiosk) of 12,000 square feet. This area will be occupied by the CVS whose space will be taken over by the Star Market. The new building will also provide additional retail use that has not been decided. The owners are committed to keeping the shopping center a neighborhood center, with Tags and Decelles remaining as tenants.

Facades will be renovated, landscaping will be created, driveways will be recreated and the center will be made pedestrian and bicycle friendly. There will be a 50' plaza with benches. From an urban design standpoint, the renovations will create a sense of place for Porter Square.

Concerns voiced by neighbors focus mainly around

parking. The renovations will remove 10% of the parking while there will be an estimated 10-20% increase in use. There will also be an increase in truck delivery. Another major concern is the litter and lack of general cleanliness of the center. These and other issues were drafted in a letter sent by the Porter Square Neighbors Association in July to the owners. An independent review of traffic studies done in preparation for this development was done, and the City of Cambridge has also insisted on traffic mitigation including T passes for employees and off site parking for employees. The owners have agreed on a letter of understanding between them, the City and Porter Square Neighbors Association. They are now working out a satisfactory draft of that letter.

Gravestar would like to break ground in November. They will need two curb cuts, possibly one on Elm Street, and variances for signs. However, most of the work they plan does not require variances and can be done by right.

Next Porter Square Meeting

The Porter Square Neighbors Association meets in the Metropolitan Baptist Church at the corner of Beech and Orchard Streets the third Thursday of each month from 7:00-9:00 p.m. The October meeting will take place on October 17. For more information call Paul Myers at 576-3542.

New Arborist for Cambridge
Larry Acosta has been named at the new Arborist for Cambridge. He can be reached in the Department of Public Works Forestry Department at 349-4886.

Lesley College

Porter Exchange will host a Visual Arts Show - See Cultural Happenings page 6


Donors

Thanks to recent donors to the ANC Annual Fund:

- Charles Beye and Richard Deppe**
- Rita De Souza**
- Deborah Galef and Kevin Brown**
- Charles, Mary and David Groark**
- Les and Gwen Wood**

This year the ANC has raised \$5,000 in donations from neighbors and neighborhood businesses. You can still contribute a tax deductible donation to the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, 20 Sacramento St. Cambridge 02138. **THANK YOU.**

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Agassiz Community School

PLEASE CALL JODY GARBER, PROGRAM DIRECTOR AT 349-6287 FOR A BROCHURE OR INFORMATION ON ANY OF THE ANC PROGRAMS LISTED BELOW including scheduled activities, registration and visits.

Agassiz Afterschool

The Agassiz Afterschool Program for the 1996-97 School year began on September 9th and will continue through the last day of school in June. The Afterschool provides programming for children in kindergarten through grade five at two sites: at the Community Center at 20 Sacramento St. for children in kindergarten and at the Agassiz School at 28 Sacramento Street for children in grades one through five. Daily activities for children in the older grades include a mix of active sports and play, arts, crafts, and other specialty areas such as drama, karate, music and woodworking.

Children from almost every Cambridge Public School attend the program which has been in operation for over twenty five years. Spaces are still available for both full and part time care.

Afterschool for Older Students

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council also sponsors after school programming for students in grades six through eight. This year the choices include Drama, Illustrative Drawing, Creative Writing and Video Production presented in collaboration with CCTV. In addition there will be short term workshops throughout the year in areas such as bread baking, printing and music. Classes have just begun, and there is still time to enroll.

Sacramento Street Preschool

Sacramento Street Preschool began its new year on September 9th with a resumption of its programming for children ages two years, nine months to five years of age. The Preschool is a part-day program and scheduling options are available for two, three or five mornings per week. We are a small, community based program with the capacity to provide individualized attention to the needs of young children. The program is located in the Agassiz Community Center at 20 Sacramento St.

Evening Programs

TEEN BASKETBALL has begun on Tuesday nights from 6-8 p.m. This drop in program for teens will cost \$1 per session.

ADULT BASKETBALL has begun on Wednesday nights from 6-9 p.m. This drop in program for adults will cost \$2 per session

YOGA CLASSES will begin soon. For more information, please call Jody Garber at the council at 349-6287.

Do you have an idea for an evening program??? Call Jody Garber at 349-6297 and let her know your ideas.

Announcements

AmeriCorps Has Openings


AmeriCorps is President Clinton's new national service initiative to promote community service throughout the country. Through AmeriCorps, people of all ages and backgrounds come together to address community needs through service. In return, AmeriCorps members receive an education award to help pay for college or vocational training, or to pay back student loans. For more information on this program call Virginia Gold at 876-5214

PLEASE NOTE:

There was some confusion among voters regarding their congressional district. Most of Agassiz (Ward 7, Precincts one and two) is the 28th congressional district. The democratic primary was won by Alvin Thompson for state representative. The 27th district is across Mass. Ave., and that democratic primary was won by Alice Wolf.

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Cultural Happenings

ART comes to Porter Exchange

The Lesley College Arts Committee is pleased to announce the inauguration of a series of Art Exhibits at Porter Exchange (corner of Mass. Ave. and Roseland Street). The first show will open on October 21 and is designed to celebrate the theme of diversity. It will run through January 10. Everyone is welcome to attend the opening on Monday, October 21 at 6:30 p.m. on the 3rd floor.

There are three additional shows scheduled in February, late March and June. Members of the Lesley community are encouraged to submit work for the shows. For more information you can contact Cathi McNary at 349-8537

ANC Receives Cultural Grant

The Massachusetts Cultural Council has awarded the Agassiz Neighborhood Council a grant of \$4,910 to provide cultural programs in the Agassiz neighborhood. This money will help support cultural programs like the Sacramento St. Gallery, keep the prices down on release day performances for children, and provide evening family events such as folk dancing and much more.

THIS PROJECT IS FUNDED IN PART BY



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MANY THANKS TO THE MASS. CULTURAL COUNCIL !

SINGERS NEEDED

The North-Prospect Church (UCC) choir invites you to join them for fellowship, fun and refreshments as they rehearse to sing to the glory of God. The church is located at 1803 Mass. Ave. (corner of Roseland Street). Rehearsals are Sundays at 9:30 a.m. for the 11:00 worship service. For more information, please call Christian Carey, Music Director at 562-0306.

Music Classes

Group or private lessons are being offered in musicianship (includes theory), voice and piano. Price and time to be arranged with instructor. Please call Christian Cary, Music Director at 562 0306.

Cambridge Community Television

Fall Classes Begin

If you are a Cambridge resident you can get basic training in video for the price of a \$35 membership fee. Basic training is provided in the use of camcorders, editing equipment and CCTV's professionally-equipped studio.

CCTV, located at 675 Mass. Ave. (Entrance on Prospect St.) will offer an orientation on Wednesday October 2 at 6:30 p.m. New classes begin weekly. For information call 661-6900.

Do You Have a Good Video to Show ???

CCTV operates channels 19, 54, 55 and 66. Residents can present their own programs. For more information, and a schedule every month, call 661-6900.

Sol y Canto comes to Agassiz October 23

This group will present music of Central and South America at 2:00 p.m. Wednesday October 23 (a Cambridge elementary school release day) on the Agassiz School stage. Sol y Canto present rich vocal harmonies with contemporary and traditional instruments in the musical styles ranging from flutes of the Andes to drums of the Caribbean.

Admission is \$1.00. Children and adults are welcome.



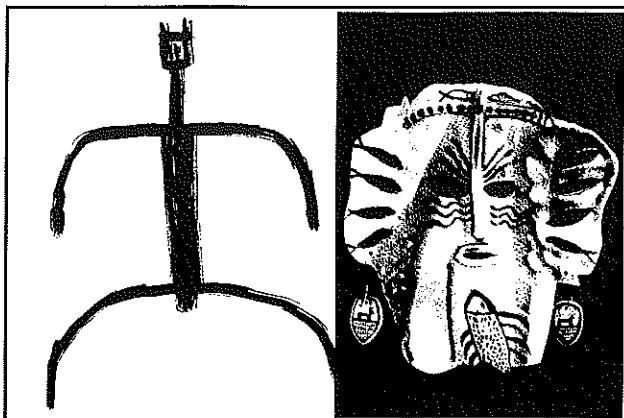
Photo by Susan Wilson

Sacramento Street Gallery

The Sacramento St. Gallery is proud to present a collaborative exhibit of works in various media by two Cambridge artists, Elaine Gifford and Jacqueline Fitzwater. The title of the show "private markings" alludes to the personal and idiosyncratic nature of the work.

Both artists reveal themselves in glimpses through natural images of animals, plant life and weather: the accompaniment of language in the form of titles and text deepens the connection between the work and the viewer.

Elaine Gifford is a graduate of RISD. Jacqueline Fitzwater has been making pictures for a long time. The two women have worked together on different project over the years.



private markings

dogs, angels, faces, boats, legs, weeds, souls, homes, mystery

JACQUELINE FITZWATER

Drawings & Paintings

ELAINE GIFFORD

Clay Masks & Vessels * Monoprints

OCTOBER 4 - 31, 1996

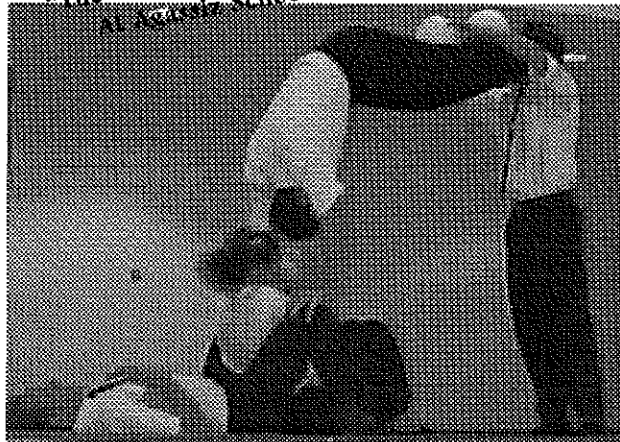
Opening Reception :
Friday, October 4 from 5 - 7 p.m.

gallery hours: Monday - Friday 9 - 5
also : Sat. & Sun. October 5 & 6 11: - 4



Sacramento St Gallery
20 Sacramento St
Cambridge, MA 02138
617 349 6287

EVERETT DANCE THEATRE performs
"The Marriage of ART and SCIENCE"
At Agassiz School on September 17



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October 1996 Community Calendar

October 4, Friday	5:00-7:00 p.m.	Opening reception "private marking" by Jacqueline Fitzwater and Elaine Gifford Sacramento St. Gallery, 20 Sacramento St.
October 10, Thursday		School Closed-Teacher Professional Day
October 14, Monday		Columbus Day Holiday-No School
October 15, Tuesday	6:30 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	ANC Board Meeting (Open to public) ANC Monthly Meeting (Agenda page one) Agassiz School Cafeteria 28 Sacramento St. entrance
October 23, Wednesday	2:00 p.m.	Introducing Art Performance Series for Children "Sol y Canto"-music of Central & South America Agassiz School Stage 2:00 p.m. Admission \$1
October 26, Saturday	All Day	City Year Workathon Agassiz Community Center 20 Sacramento St.
October 31, Thursday		Halloween

The Whistler is published monthly September - June by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council, distribution 2,000. Call 349-6287 to be on the mailing list. Items of interest to the neighborhood may be submitted for consideration to address below, no later than the 15th of the month prior to publication date.

OCTOBER 1996



AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
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