SUMMER ACTIVITIES FOR OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Members of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council are in the process of developing a number of summer activities. There will be several focal points of activity within the community.

The school will be used from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for the playgroups. (See the article on page 5.) Afternoons and evenings will be devoted to the adult and teen programs such as English as a second language, sewing, and pottery. Also, Bill Hirsh, an MIT graduate student in architecture, has been hired to work with interested residents building equipment and benches for the school classrooms and the playground.

Another focus of activity will be the Sachs Estate (Norton's Woods), which the Harvard Corporation has generously leased to us again this summer. As described in the last issue of The Whistler, the Sachs Estate Program will be open to all people in the area — adults, and children who have completed one year of school at least.

Although the legal problems have not been solved yet, we hope to supervise recreational activities on the Sacramento "Y" Field again this summer. Baseball, basketball, and volleyball will be offered for adults in the evening and children during the day. Bill Hirsh would like to do some building there also with a group of community folks.

The Alden Playfield (our Tot Lot) is another area we hope to focus on, working with the city's Recreation Department employee to set up interested groups for various times in arts and crafts, dance, and drama. Young people will be working there in the evenings as well, to try to make the Tot Lot a place for teen activities.

When all these plans have been worked out, flyers will be distributed in the neighborhood giving the total schedule of events.

Kate Mattes

RUMMAGE AND BAKE SALE TALLIES

The Agassiz Community Schools rummage and bake sale held Saturday May 22nd netted $211.46 for the community as the result of many generous contributions from households and stores in our area, as well as hours of work contributed by those who priced and sold items.

Despite the morning rain, the teens held their planned car wash behind the school. That and the raffle which they organized took in $103.00 for the Teen Center. Also, the Brownies' troop, which held their own bake sale at the school, made $27.00.

Special entertainment for the day was the dance recital held in the school auditorium. More than 60 people came to see the three Community Schools classes perform. Two children's groups led by Linda Micheli and Sandy Platt — first and second graders and fourth through sixth graders — danced as well as the adult group which meets in the evening.

(continued on page 8)

NOTICE

The next COMMUNITY SCHOOLS COUNCIL MEETING will be held on Wednesday, June 9, at 8 p.m. in the school. Everyone is welcome.
THE OXFORD STREET AREA

(Reprinted with permission from the Cambridge Historical Commission’s Report Two: Mid Cambridge, 1967, p. 31.)

The Oxford Street area did not begin to grow into a residential suburb until after the middle of the nineteenth century. In 1854, for example, it contained only twenty houses... The area grew rapidly thereafter, for in 1873 there were nearly 150 buildings; by 1903 there were over four hundred. Oxford Street itself was extended gradually as each new parcel of land became available for development.

The cluster of pre-Revolutionary structures that stood on the Little Common gave way to later buildings, such as the Rustis House of 1822-23 (now at the corner of Rustis and Oxford Streets), and then to Harvard University. The station of the Harvard Branch Railroad and the Hastings-Holmes house were demolished to make way for Harvard Law School buildings. In 1867 the Baptist church at the corner of Kirkland Street was moved up Massachusetts Avenue to the corner of Roseland Street. With the acquisition around 1900 of the house now known as Gannett House, the university had acquired all the property around the triangle of land; in 1929 an act of the legislature enabled the university to acquire the Little Common itself in exchange for the triangle at the junction of Cambridge Street and Broadway where the Fire Department headquarters now stand.

Harvard has also occupied the land of the Nathaniel Jarvis estate just north of the Little Common. This fourteen-acre property remained intact through the early nineteenth century, while the daughters of Nathaniel Jarvis occupied the family house on Massachusetts Avenue.

In 1861 the land was opened for development with the laying out of Jarvis Street. Only eight lots on Massachusetts Avenue were sold, and in 1870 Harvard bought most of the estate. For many years it served as an athletic field known as Jarvis Field, but it has since been used for university buildings.

North of the Jarvis estate, the heirs of Samuel Hastings had sold their homestead in 1792 to Katherine Wendell, daughter of General William Brattle and widow of John Misco Wendell. Madam Wendell died in 1821, but her heirs did not begin to develop the property until 1847. Names of streets in the area recall the family: Wendell Street, Madam Wendell herself, and Mellen Street, her son-in-law the Reverend John Mellen. The heirs also laid out part of Oxford Street parallel to Massachusetts Avenue; their plan for the area (small streets perpendicular to the main thoroughfare) was identical to the pattern established on Dana Hill decades earlier in the century. Only six houses had been constructed by 1854, but within the next twenty years these streets were almost completely built up.

East of the Wendell land was "Hazelwood," the estate of John G. Palfrey. The main portion of Palfrey's land consisted of twelve acres, formerly a swamp, described in deeds as the "Low Pasture." Palfrey bought the

(continued on page 4)

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THE AGASSIZ WHISTLER is published twice a month by the Agassiz Community Schools Program for the entire neighborhood. The cost is 10¢ per issue. Call 876-9268 for more information or visit the office at 28 Sacramento Street. We welcome your literary contributions, letters, suggestions, or advertisement requests.

Kate Mattes, Agassiz Administrative Coordinator
Eric Kington, Teen Coordinator
Jill Norton, Editor for The Whistler

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- EDITORIAL -

A PERSONAL OPINION ON RECENT EVENTS AND THE NEXT ELECTION

Shaping up our Agassiz program for the summer has had its hilarious moments and some really grotesque times that together lead me to the personal opinion (I do not speak for the Council) that SOC'M (Save Our City Manager) was a mistake. What Cambridge needs is not the former or the present or another City Manager but no City Manager. Why do I come to this position?

Memory of last year's fine experience in Norton's Woods has parents and children alike full of pleasure and certain that this summer's outdoor school with its real learning in the last wood lot in the middle of the city will be even better.

For children too small for the Woods, there is the Alden Tot Lot with sand, sun, water and care promised on the corner of Oxford and Sacramento. And among those who happily call themselves "middle-aged youth" there are plans about the use of the "T" field between Sacramento and Garfield. There are plans for trips out-of-town. For those of us who are really middle-aged, and older, there are fair prospects for renewed pleasure, satisfaction, and learning because the Community School is alive and well in Agassiz. It is one of the finest things that has ever happened in this old city. I find it a pleasure to work in the neighborhood Council.

And then there comes one of those hilarious handfuls of gravel in the Agassiz gears. While the Council was in the enthusiastic middle of planning all these good things and happy with the way Kate, Eric, and Madeline helped us and made us all work well together, the City Manager sent us a copy of an abrupt memo saying our staff was fired. And not just Agassiz -- he fired two staff members at Houghton-King as well. What do you do with an act like that?

We caucused separately at Agassiz and at Houghton-King, and then together, and we set out to squawk. We didn't squawk on the rule that the squealing wheel gets greased but in a clear assertion that community control of community schools is a reality and that some of the wheels in City Hall needed to get turning in the same direction.

We started out to touch all the bases of power involved and made it home the next day with only a few bases touched, but with the assurance that our staff and the Houghton-King staff were appointed, hired, on the city payroll, and permanent. The gravel came out of the gears in an appropriate public context. There was a Northeast Regional Conference on Community Schools at the Morse School and many of us from Agassiz and Houghton-King went there and provided a live case-study of the role of the community and the Neighborhood Council in the Cambridge Community Schools Program. The Mayor was there, and the Assistant City Manager, and we had a lively discussion of community control.

Our point was that the way up to the decision-maker and the way down was the same, that this thing happened and we would not accept it; the Mayor's point was, why did this happen; and the Assistant City Manager explained it as a procedural failure in the central office and -- it really hadn't happened!

There was more, but I came out of this most recent and relatively minor experience with the office of the City Manager feeling sorry for the man and with the personal conviction that, for his own good and for the good of the city, the office should be abolished. It is not so much that he makes all those decisions but that they are given to him to make. Not even a philosopher-king or a Solomon could make all the big and little appointments and decisions that are entirely his responsibility. The times have changed and our needs have changed. Civic grease is not for some
palms or for certain squeaky wheels at the expense of others, but to make the wheels and gears of the city run.

Somehow, the thought of wheels leads to the impression that the City Manager-Council plan of government under which we presently labor is as impossible to conceive as Ezekiel's vision of wheels within wheels. I doubt that the system is fair to the man or to the city right now. It would be appropriate, therefore, for the community to develop an educational forum for those who care and for those who aspire to office in the next City Council to address the issues that meet us today in Cambridge.

In the meantime, Agassiz should have a good summer and I personally am grateful to the Mayor and the City Manager for keeping our staff on and our program alive.

--- Richard Mumma

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO RECRUIT VOTERS

Within the past few weeks a group called the Cambridge Committee for Voter Registration has opened offices at 15 Brattle Street and is now actively seeking volunteers. The non-partisan group's undertaking is to assist in the registration of some 25-30,000 eligible people in Cambridge (including students) in time for this fall's elections.

This is an important election year -- both the School Committee and City Council seats will be voted upon, a total of fifteen places.

Many telephone solicitors are needed by the CCVR, as well as precinct captains who will canvass door-to-door to see that information on registration is provided to those who need it. Call Theresa Neighbor at 491-0405 if you would like to help with door-to-door solicitation in your own area or Sandy Scheir at 876-6784 if you can do telephoning. For general information, you may call the Brattle St. office, 661-8661.

YOU QUALIFY TO VOTE if...

you will have been a six-months' resident of Cambridge by November 2 and are 19 years of age by then.

The election commission will accept as proof of residency:

- leases
- old phone and utility bills with your name on them
- 1970 phone book listings
- rent receipts including your address
- supermarket courtesy cards
- a notarized letter from your landlord stating the date you moved in

To register, go to the Election Commission Office at 362 Green Street, Central Square, Cambridge (the side entrance of the Police Station). The office is open from 8:30 to 4:30, Monday through Friday. Take your proof of residency with you.

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OXFORD STREET - (continued from page 2)

twelve acres in 1831, adding to them two southern strips acquired from Harvard College in 1847 and 1852, Palfrey's house, built in 1831, still stands near Hammond St. Like Warren House on Prescott St., it is a two-story gable-front structure that exemplifies the transition between the Federal and Greek Revival styles. The Palfrey grounds once contained a summer house built of parts of the old Medford meeting house; the pilaster pulpit window formed the back of the summer house and the sounding-board the roof.

The 1854 map shows Carver, Gorham and Hammond Sts. as planned and surveyed but no construction aside from the Palfrey House occurred until the 1890's. The house and the land south of Hammond are now owned by Harvard.

I As one stands on Oxford St, facing the Engineering Sciences Laboratory, the Palfrey House is to the left, beyond the parking lot, its front entrance facing the rear of the Cyclotron Laboratory. According to Harvard's Buildings and Grounds Department, Palfrey House now contains miscellaneous offices, overflow from other Harvard buildings.
NEW PLANS FOR THE PLAYGROUPS

by Madeline Taylor

There has been lots of discussion during the past month about the future of the Agassiz playgroups and plans for extended (3 to 4-hour) in the fall for the Agassiz community. A proposal has been written by a group of interested mothers and myself, suggesting that in the fall we have facilities for 30 to 45 children, and that the operation of these groups continues to be on a cooperative basis.

This half-day children's nursery may or may not be run with the assistance of Lesley College; the proposal in detail will be printed and distributed in the neighborhood by the Community Schools Program and open to revision as befits the needs of the community. The cost of this program is yet undetermined.

In the tentatively proposed plan for the summer, we have attempted to include and involve more parents and children in the area and also to allow ourselves to grow into readiness for the longer playgroups suggested for the fall. Both of these programs are in the planning phase and can be modified with input from other members of the community.

These are the summer plans:

Two playgroups can be run at Agassiz School. Each may have space for 15 children. Each may have a salaried leader and two parent volunteers (on a rotational basis). Each may be mixed age groups of 1 ½ to 4 year-olds. One can be headed by the Community Schools staff person and run two hours a day, five days a week. The other can be lead by a community person chosen by the parents who will be participating, and will run three hours a day, five days a week. Enrollment can be by sessions, four weeks in July and four weeks in August, and the fee will cover the salary of the community person plus food and supplies.

Under this system the cost will be $8.25 a session for two-hour playgroups and $11.00 a session for three-hour playgroups. It is also possible that the fee will be proportionately less if parents wish to register their children for two or three times a week instead of five.

That's the plan so far. We'd like to know how many people would like this idea and participate if it went into effect, and we're especially open to alternative suggestions. So if you're interested, please fill out the brief questionnaire below and send it to Jill Herold, 31 Gorham St., Cambridge, as soon as possible.

Your name ____________________________
Child's name ________________________ Age ______

We'd be interested in:
(Check those that apply)

- 2-hour playgroup
- 3-hour playgroup
- July session
- August session
- both sessions
- 2 days a week
- 3 days a week
- 5 days a week
- I'd like to be contacted to discuss alternative plans.

My phone is ____________________________
A Statement from the Steering Committee of the LESLEY COLLEGE-COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROJECT

(What follows is a simplified statement of the grant which Lesley College has received. This statement has been delivered to all Community Schools coordinators, with copies available for members of councils and other interested parties. Immediately after June 1, when the grant period actually begins, Peter Siegle and the Steering Committee will set up exploratory meetings with coordinators and council members to discuss the project.)

The Making Community Project is a joint effort of Community Schools and Lesley College. It is based on the simple premise that neighborhoods can develop a greater sense of community by having their constituents participate in meaningful activity together.

For this reason this project, which is funded through Title I of the Higher Education Act, is concentrating on having each neighborhood decide on action programs and development programs to improve its quality of life as a neighborhood. As many programs as possible will be supported by the project.

The kinds of programs to be developed by neighborhoods cannot be decided in advance. We have been fortunate indeed to have received a grant under such open-ended conditions. We expect, however, that neighborhood councils will develop programs which they are anxious to pursue and in which available resources of people and money can be of help during the grant period of one year from June 1, 1971. The programs do not have to be presented in any particular form, which leaves all parties free to work out details for maximum benefit.

The underlying assumption, as contained in the original proposal:

Community is made when we struggle to find common cause and work out problems collectively. We become a community rather than a neighborhood or area of residence when we actively engage in neighborhood improvement, when we take pride in our physical and social environment, when we gain a sense of control over our destiny as a neighborhood, when we relate comfortably to the various public and private agencies that affect our lives, when we continue to educate ourselves in the ways of urban living, and when we identify closely with the place we live in.

We assume also that examination of the needs of our neighborhoods and the attempt to satisfy them will require continuing learning activity of both formal and informal nature.

We expect that within participating neighborhoods there will be a general improvement in involvement, pride, understanding, and morale; and that neighborhoods working with other neighborhoods will develop a greater sense of the whole city.

The project is important to Lesley College not only because the college wishes to participate with its neighbors, but also because Lesley students can benefit greatly by working together with people in the community. Lesley students will be recruited as helpers in the neighborhood projects in accordance with needs expressed by the neighborhoods. Moreover, under the conditions of the grant, Lesley will make available courses and seminars to Cambridge residents as the need and desire develop.

Lesley College is the recipient of the money because the conditions of Title I grants require that a college or university be involved. However, since there is a joint enterprise we are making every effort to insure the grass roots spirit of community schools activity. For this reason we have established a governing board of the project called "The Steering Committee", which consists of seven members: four elected from the advisory committee, one from community schools staff, one Lesley student, and the Director from Lesley College. The Steering Committee will make its own rules of procedure and will report regularly to the advisory committee on its progress.
Since the amount of money is really very small, the number of specific neighborhood projects that can be undertaken will of necessity be limited, but the steering committee will set up criteria for selection of projects which will gain the maximum over-all value. The steering committee has been working on criteria which have already been shared in their current form with the advisory committee.

The tentative criteria for selection are:

- variety of programs
- importance to the neighborhood as indicated by interest shown
- opportunities of learning
- transferability of learning to other neighborhoods
- number of people involved
- cost

We will also consider population distribution such as:

- age
- economic level
- race and ethnic distribution
- region

and problems, such as:

- politics
- facilities
- physical conditions
- drugs
- sex

and state of readiness for change.

These criteria will be applied to the choice of programs to be sponsored by the grant as the steering committee works with each interested neighborhood council to explain the project and to work out plans.

The money for the project will be used primarily to pay leaders and part-time instructors in specially prepared courses and seminars that emerge from the various projects. These leaders and teachers will be recruited in the neighborhood whenever possible. In addition, Lesley will provide relevant college credit course to Cambridge residents participating in the project.

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NEW PTA OFFICERS

Millard and Jancis Long, residents of Sacramento Street who have three children in the Agassiz School, have accepted the joint presidency of the Agassiz Parents and Teachers Association for the next school year. At the last executive board meeting of the group, some of the officers were selected for next year's board.

Rosemary Logan will be vice-president, with the responsibility for attending city School Committee meetings; Gail Slater is to be corresponding secretary; and Jill Norton, treasurer. Barbara Bower will head the PTA's enrichment program for the school and Betty Basa has agreed to help with fund-raising. Ginny Hailey will be the PTA's representative at the Cambridge Council of PTAs. Miss Elenore O'Brien, who teaches third grade, is to be one of the teacher members of the board. Harvey Cox has also agreed to serve on the board.

The Longs want an active board and will be asking others to join when they return to Cambridge in the fall. They would like to hear from anyone who would be interested in a specific job or who would like to serve as a voting member, helping occasionally on various projects. Parents from Rindge Towers are especially welcome so that their area will be better represented. (Call 354-5963.) Specifically needed: another representative from the Agassiz teachers, a recording secretary, someone else to help with fund-raising, and a hospitality chairman.

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The PTA expects to contribute towards the hiring of Bill Hirsh, (see first page) who with community people will do some building for the school classrooms this summer.
RUMMAGE SALE - (continued from page 1)

The Whistler would like to extend thanks on behalf of the community to the following stores in the area whose owners contributed items for the sales:

Agassiz Food Shop; Art Explorers; Avenue Supermarket; Big Fish - Little Fish; Cambridge Coffee, Tea and Spice; Cave Atlantique; Crosby's Hobby Center; Evergood Food Market; Fabrications; The Five and Ten Economy (Irwin's); The Flag Center; Fogel's Antiques; Lucille and Vivian; Mustard Kup; Oxford Studios; Paul's Card and Gift Shop; Raden Co.; Stadium Hardware; and Temple Bar Books. Minuta Man in Harvard Square sold the stereo to the teens at cost.

The Community Schools staff would also like to thank the many people who helped with pricing and selling of rummage and bake sale items:

Michael Almeida, Jean Alonso, Betty Basa, Meg Cafasso, Paula Cassella, Eric Cassim, Robert Cassim, Pam Covert, Rachel Cox, Holly Cratsley, Maura Der Hovanesian, Andy Gabriel, Helen Gabriel, Betsy Harshbarger, Ginny Healey, Maribeth Healey, Jill Herold, Don Hoban, Leslie Kline, Carol Knights, Millard Long, Susan Morris, Aki Nagatomi, Mutsumi Nagatomi, Richie Ning, Jill Norton, Tommy Norton, Mary Platt, Rose Mary Ponte, Tonje Stromholm, Sarah Wright, and Nancy Voynow.

Plans are being made to send some of the unsold clothing to a Black community in the Delta area of Mississippi.

NOTICE - On June 8 at 7:30 the Recreation Commission will meet in City Hall. This is a board of community residents who advise the city Recreation Department on the programs and schedules it offers. The Agassiz Neighborhood Council will attend this meeting to make the requests they outlined to Mr. Cowles on April 27, most of which have not been fulfilled.

BROWNIE AND GIRL SCOUT LEADERS NEEDED

A Brownie leader and assistant are urgently needed in order that the Agassiz neighborhood troop headed by Mrs. Patsy Whitlock and Mrs. Mary Nagatomi (who are "retiring" this spring) may continue in the fall. This past year the troop numbered thirty girls; meetings are held once a week in the school. No previous scouting experience is necessary. Call Kate Mattes at 876-9268 if you are interested. Anyone who might like to start a Girl Scout troop in our neighborhood may also call Kate.

MOVING SOON?

Or doing an extensive spring cleaning? The Agassiz School can use such things as area rugs, small chairs, bookcases, old typewriters, and games. Miss Barron would like to provide small reading and study areas for children within classrooms and other parts of the school, and would welcome donations to help furnish them. Call Mrs. Grenelle Bauer (492-5837) if you have something you believe might be suitable.

THREE-YEAR-OLD GIRLS SOUGHT

Garden Cooperative Nursery at 24 Farwell Place off Harvard Square has places available for girls in its three-year-old class for next year. Three-year-olds meet two days a week. For more information, call Mrs. Rosenblatt at 354-7034.