COMMUNITY NOTICES

AGASSIZ COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING, Weds., March 11, 8:00 p.m. in the Agassiz Library.

FUTURE OF AGASSIZ-BUILDING COMMITTEE MEETING, Weds., March 11, 7:00 p.m. in the Agassiz Library.

AGASSIZ SCHOOL P.T.A. POTLUCK DINNER, Friday, March 13, 6:30 p.m. in the Agassiz gym.

SACRAMENTO STREET GALLERY - GRAND OPENING, Friday, March 20, 8:00-10:00 p.m., 20 Sacramento St. (in the Agassiz Community Center).

CAMBRIDGE COALITION MEETINGS, every Wednesday, 5:00-6:30 p.m. in the Mayor's Office, City Hall.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY, Tuesday, March 17, No School, No Community Schools.

MARCH RELEASE DAY, Tuesday, March 24, Half-Day of school, After-School Day Care open from 12:30-6:00 p.m., no other Community School programs.

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ASSESSORS AT COUNCIL MEETING. Cont.

the Community Council meeting this month to answer questions on 100% re-evaluation. Come and find out how the assessments were done, what it means in relation to a new tax rate, and how all this relates to Proposition 2%. These measures will affect you, whether you rent or own your property. Come to the Agassiz School library on March 11 at 8:00 p.m. See you there!

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GRAND OPENING

On Friday, March 20th at 8:00PM in the Agassiz Community Center, Joanna Soltan will be the featured artist for the GRAND OPENING of our neighborhood art gallery, the SACRAMENTO STREET GALLERY. Sponsored by the Agassiz Community School and the Agassiz Community Center with financial support from the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Gallery was conceived and developed to encourage community artists to share their talent with the neighborhood by providing a space to show their art. The renovations and scheduling of shows is the responsibility of a volunteer coordinating committee made up of neighborhood artists and interested residents. We hope the success of this venture will encourage other neighborhoods to undertake similar projects and, in turn, give local artists an opportunity to become an integral part of their community through their work. Please come to the opening, watch for the announcements of upcoming shows and for more info call Ken Basler at 498-9056 (afternoons).

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UPDATE ON RACIAL BALANCE

A Public Hearing was held last Tuesday in order for concerned people to have a last opportunity to discuss the final desegregation plan adopted by the Cambridge School Committee. The School Committee will vote on this plan on March 3rd, and it will then be submitted to the State Board of Education for a vote on March 24th. Upon approval by the board, Cambridge will have completed its development of a plan to racially balance the Cambridge Public Schools. A summary of the primary elements of the plan follows:

1. Roberts/Kennedy—the two neighborhoods will be merged into a single district with the Roberts becoming the lower school (K-4) and the Kennedy the upper (5-8).

2. Caps/Webster—Committees from both schools are continuing to work together on a solution. At present, most are leaning toward the development of one school which will combine the two. A decision must be reached by March 15th.

3. Long Range Assignment Policy—New students entering the school system, and those whose parents' request for transfer has been approved, will be assigned to the "nearest appropriate school" by the Central Assignment Officer in the Office of Desegregation. That school will become the student's home school from which s/he will not be moved for desegregation purposes for at least 4 years. Criteria for assignment have been precisely defined and are as follows:

   Parental Preference: At the time of registration or at the time a transfer is requested, a parent may indicate three preferences in order of importance. Preferences will be honored within the constraints of racial balance, special needs, and space available within the school, program, or grade. If an assignment is made which is not one of the 3 choices and the parent is dissatisfied, the parent may file for a hardship appeal.

   Space Available: This will be defined by the superintendent for each school, grade, program.

   Special Needs of Student: Any student requiring a bilingual program or a special education program will be assigned to the appropriate program regardless of other assignment criteria.

   Racial Balance: Transfers and assignments (exc. sp. needs) must meet the requirements of racial balance. If a school is racially isolated (less than 30% minority), no minority student may transfer from it. If a school is racially imbalanced (more than 50% minority), no non-minority student may transfer from it. Minority student will have the right to be assigned to a school, grade, or program having a minority population below 30% provided that the sending school requirements are met. And the same is true for non-minority students in a school having a minority population above 50%.

Anyone can apply to a racially balanced school if sending school rules are met, but there are some priorities in making assignments. Non-minority students will be given priority if the program, school, or grade is 5% or more above the citywide average of 37% minority. Conversely, minority students will be given priority if the minority population is 5% or more below the average.

Place of Residence: This is the final criteria to be used in most cases when all other criteria have been met. All other things being equal, the
student living nearest the desired school will have priority. However, a student with a sibling at the request school will be given preference regardless of distance from school.

4. Early Registration - Parents will be encouraged to register children in the fall (Oct.-Nov.) of the year prior to the time the children will start school. At the end of the fall registration period, assignments will be made (Nov. 15). Parents will be given a period of time to indicate acceptance of the assignment. Thereafter until spring, registrations will be accepted as they come in and assignments will be made monthly. There will be another long registration period in the spring (Feb-Mar.) for the following fall. At that time parents who have accepted assignments previously will be asked to reconfirm their acceptance. This year, registration will begin soon in Program Information Centers, with the goal of defining available space and making Kindergarten assignments on April 15th. Information sites will be published in the Chronicle and other media, at Parent Information Centers, and at the schools.

Because this plan gives some preference to those who register early and those who are informed and understand the choices, there will be a tremendous effort made to disseminate all vital information as widely as possible. It's critical that all concerned have the facts and understand them, and know where to register.

The final plan is very comprehensive and contains many specific details. This report is only a summary. Copies of the final plan can be obtained in the public libraries, Parent Information Centers, and the Office of Desegregation. If there are further questions, I will be glad to try to answer these.


POT-LUCK SUPPER AT AGASSIZ

On Friday, March 13th, at 6:30 p.m. there will be a pot-luck supper in the Agassiz gym. The purpose of this gathering is for Agassiz parents and staff members to informally meet and share information about the effects of Proposition 2½ and the future of Agassiz School. Hopefully, there will be a member of the City Council, the School Committee, and the school's central administration who can bring us up to date on recent developments.

Please plan to bring either a main dish, bread, salad, or dessert that will be enough for six or more servings. It might be good to leave children at home, if that can be arranged.

Hope to see you there. (If there are questions, please call Miriam Goldberg at 547-8429.)

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A DOG FOR MAYOR?

Hey, why not? Us dogs already have a unique political power base in Cambridge, yeah, a powerhouse. We affect peoples' lives in this town. More and more of us are hanging on the streets, right? Usually in packs of 4 or 5 - people can't help but notice us. We bother, scare, or follow school kids, grown ups, bike riders, and other non-dog types; we get into as many garbage cans as we can find; we poop anywhere we like, mess gardens, run in between moving cars; and, if we get bored, we just take over the tot-lot, right? Far out! Who knew being a city dog would be so much fun! Our motto is: Forget the leash law! (It's never enforced.) You don't even have to have shots or be licensed in this town. No one checks; in fact, the Animal Commission doesn't even have a truck to pick us up these days, so hey, free sailing.

All unleashed dogs meet at our usual place, Wendell St., at 7 a.m. for general barking and more stra-
DOGS, Cont.

tegy planning. Today Cambridge, tomorrow the world!

-Carolyn Krimsky

IS OUR NEIGHBORHOOD GOING TO THE DOGS?

Want to help get the Cambridge Leash Law enforced? Here are some things you can do:

1. Write down 498-9041 and call that number 7 am-5 pm, M-F, to report any loose dogs you see to the Cambridge Animal Control Commission.

2. Speak to your neighbors whom you know habitually let their dogs out unleashed. Give them the 498-9041 number to find out about the Leash Law, licensing, and low-cost spaying and neutering programs.

3. Try to match chronically loose dogs with their addresses or owners and report them to the Animal Com.

4. Insist that the Animal Commission enforce the Leash Law in the Agassiz neighborhood. Ask them to make daily sweeps of this neighborhood at different times of the day.

5. Call me at 354-6553 and let me know what you'll be willing to do - in concert with other Agassiz residents - to help get the law enforced. Are you willing to leaflet a couple of streets? Put up flyers on telephone poles? etc. etc.???

Are you tired of excrement-covered sidewalks, garbage-strewn gutters, hour-long bayings at the moon, and 4-8 dog packs? These don't have to be a way of life, but changing this may take some effort.

-Astrid Dodds

FUTURE OF AGASSIZ - BUILDING COMMITTEE UPDATE

With three coordinating meetings past, sub-committees formed and working, preliminary reports being done and lots of positive energy it's obvious to all those involved that this community will not roll over and disappear when the powers to be try and close or change the Agassiz School. We all have too much to lose, but we must all help out. The following sub-committees are of and running but need all the help and support they can find. If you are concerned about our school's future and have some time to give, come to the next coordinating meeting Wednesday, March 11 at 7:00 PM in the Agassiz School Library or call one of the contact people listed below.

Recruitment of New Students: This sub-committee is working on an informational flyer to help in recruitment of in-coming students from pre-schools in Camb. Active recruitment of parents in other schools worried about quality of education and an on-going publicity drive to get the word out on Agassiz. Contact person: Diane Weinstein 661-1256

Value of the Small School Experience: This sub-committee will be doing research on available information that supports our contention that one of the reasons Agassiz is so attractive is its size. Contact person: Steve Brion-Meisels 492-6397

New Building or Renovate the Old: This sub-committee is exploring alternatives to the old building by linking up with another institution in a joint building proposal. Both Lesley Col. and the Cambridge Housing Authority have expressed interest in the idea, and on-going meetings are scheduled. They are also exploring the possibility of renovating the existing structure, making it energy efficient and staying put. Contact person: Gene Thompson 864-8947 or Ken Basler 498-9056

Merger With Another School: So that no future possibility is overlooked, this sub-committee will monitor the current merger of the Webster and CAPS schools. They will also explore potential Agas links such as the Longfellow or King. Contact: Merideth Thompson 864-8947
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS and 2½

With all the attention and energy focused on the public school situation for next year its very discouraging to get hit with similar problems in another department - Community Schools Program. The budget for the Dept. of Human Services, of which Community Schools is a sub-department, has been submitted to the City Council reflecting major changes in the dept. as a whole and very serious cut backs for the Community Schools Program. Prop 2½ strikes again. The following is part of the narrative submitted to the council explaining the changes in the program next year.

Community Schools - Priority has been given within the program to maintain a program at each of the fourteen sites (elementary schools) in Camb. and to increase the program funds, the single source of flexible funds which can be utilized by neighborhood councils to support programs and/or part-time staff resources.

Administrative reductions have been achieved in three ways. First, one administrator has assumed specific dept.-wide responsibilities; second, the salary for the division head has been brought in line with those of other division heads; and third, several central office positions have been eliminated.

The proposed budget for staff calls for a reduction to one coordinator at each site. All existing positions will be phased out by July 1, 1981 with people currently in the dept. applying for the remaining (newly created) openings. Along with the new positions will be a new salary structure. Non of the existing salaries will be carried over if an individual stays with the new dept.

Finally, program funds (the $5,000 each school gets to run its program) have been increased from $5,000 to $5,500, although the real increase is higher, since all administrative costs will be assumed by the central office.

What does this mean for Agassiz?

The three positions at Agassiz (Steve Gerow, Coop Kdg. teacher, Julie Snow, afterschool cood., and Ken Basler, Cood.) will be reduced to one position. Anybody with the dept. at this time can apply for this position and, potentially end up with it. There are no guarantees that any of the existing staff will be hired back. Programs will be cut back, support to the Agassiz Pre-school will be cut back drastically if not altogether, the extended day kindergarten will be lost or restructured with a dramatic increase in tuition, all programs face a dramatic tuition increase, evening programs may have to be cut out along with Sat. gymnastics.

It is hard to predict at this early stage the full impact of the above changes. More information will be shared at the March Community Council Meeting on Wednesday, March 11 at 8PM in the Agassiz School Library. We need your help now more than ever.

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HOW TO DESTROY A CITY...... in 2½ Steps

It may be hard to believe that city government in Cambridge will come to a halt because of Prop 2½, but it is a fact. We have tried to outline below exactly how Prop 2½ works and what its effects will be on our city.

HOW 2½ WORKS. Prop 2½ requires that the amount of money we raise from the property tax be cut back annually in 15% intervals until the total amount equals 2½% of the city's property value. After that level is reached, amounts raised from the property tax may rise by no more than 2½% a year. It also requires that the auto excise tax by cut by two-thirds.

What this means for Cambridge is that we must reduce our property tax levy next year by $14.7 million. $12 million equals 15% of $80 million, the amount being raised from the property tax this year; $2.7 million equals the revenue lost from the excise tax.
WHAT WILL THE CUTS MEAN NEXT YEAR?
The first year's cuts alone total $14.7 million without counting employee raises and other inflationary factors such as increases in energy costs, likely to be $4.5 million. The total amount to be cut, when these costs are added, rises to $19.2 million. This means cuts in services of at least 25% across the board in all city departments.

POLICE DEPARTMENT. Comander Anthony Paolillo has said that his 285 person department must cut its $8 million budget to $6.4 million. We can estimate that 80 patrolmen would have to be cut. Paolillo explained that "because of vacations, sick days, etc., we might have as few as six patrolmen covering the city on any one shift." 56 school crossing guards could be laid off as well.

FIRE DEPARTMENT. The dollar amount would be similar to the police department, as the fire department operates on a $7.5 million budget. 90 fire fighters could be laid off. The city's rescue/ambulance service would have to pay for itself, if at all.

OTHER DEPARTMENTS. The Department of Public Works expects to lay off as many as 100 workers. All branch libraries would be closed. The School Department would lose over $6 million and 300 teachers.

As is the case in most cities, women and minorities would be most affected by the first round of layoffs. And for every two workers laid off, one more will have to be fired to meet unemployment costs.

WHAT CAN WE DO? Share this information and work with the Coalition for Cambridge. Use these facts in letters to state officials (sample letter on Page 4).

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
-Agassiz-
28 Sacramento St.
Cambridge, Ma. 02138