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Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

❖ ANC News ❖

Announcements
Janet Rustow, ANC Chair opened the meeting, and several announcements were made. A Winter Dance sponsored by the ANC for adults will be held on February 8th, and a flyer was circulated. [See Page 8]

Dudley House Co-op (better known as the Center for High Energy Metaphysics) located at 3 Sacramento St. circulated a flyer for an open house January 27 at 7:30 p.m. for neighbors to meet residents and see their house. Flyers were to be delivered to nearby residents.

Lester Lee spoke briefly about the initiative that would have the legislature repeal the rent control ban (question 9), and he handed out bumper stickers. Janet introduced the first speaker, Nancy Woods.

Library Seeks Input on Renovations
Nancy Woods is Co-Chair of the committee (with Deputy City Manager Rich Rossi) that is working toward the renovation of Cambridge Library Main Branch on Broadway. This is the branch most commonly used by residents of the Agassiz neighborhood. She visited the council meeting to explain what is happening with the committee, known as Library 21, and to gather any input from neighbors.

The committee was created after Mid Cambridge neighbors protested original plans for library renovation (74,000 sf) because plans called for use of the parkland in front of the Main Branch Library. When Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School was built, that property was promised as permanent open space.

It was decided to look first at the program needs of the entire library system and begin there. Physical renovations (which are sorely needed) to the Main Branch would naturally follow once the program needs for the system were well known. The committee is now finishing up its fact finding, and the committee has visited other libraries for ideas as well as residents all over Cambridge in the past three months.

Nancy assured the council that the Main Branch would remain in use, but some services may not be housed there. Physical plans to house services will not be developed until the committee pulls together their findings.

Anyone who would like more information on the process or would like to suggest services they see lacking in the Cambridge Library system, should contact Nancy Woods c/o Library 21, City Manager’s Office, City Hall, 795 Mass. Ave. Cambridge 02139.

Janet then introduced Roger Herzog, Housing Director for Cambridge Community Development Department. He visited the council to respond to questions developed at the December council meeting regarding affordable housing. These questions were sent to Roger after a review by the committee, and Roger was prepared to discuss the issues. He added that the City had developed a number of new housing initiatives that will be voted on in the subcommittee on housing next week and then forwarded to the City Council.

Roger Herzog Addresses Affordable Housing
Roger said that he would be happy to work with a new committee on affordable housing (another recommendation from the December meeting). Roger was glad to see the questions framed in the larger context, and he went on to address each one.

Next ANC Council Meeting
February 18, Tuesday
7:30 p.m.
Agassiz School Dining Hall
28 Sacramento Street Entrance

AGENDA:
1). State Representative Alvin Thompson will address the council.
2). Community Development will begin discussions on traffic calming for Oxford Street.
This was objected to strongly by Joanne Preston who said that preferences have been given all over the City to other neighborhoods. She suggested a point system for preference that would include previous residency. She said it was inhumane to move people around the City like so many chess pieces. Other neighbors agreed that residents, especially long term, should not be displaced from their neighborhoods if eligible for affordable housing. Preference must be given now while the tenants are still in the neighborhood. Initiatives won’t work once people are forced to move, and long term residents should receive preference.

Roger said that preferences were given to other neighborhoods in purchasing, never in renting. There are significant differences in homeownership, since the owner must prove bankability, good credit history and sufficient equity.

Other suggestions to develop preference was a wider net, perhaps an Agassiz-Neighborhood Nine preference or an Agassiz-Riverside-Mid Cambridge preference. This would provide more demographic diversity, and include other areas also hard hit by the demise of rent control. These issues will be dealt with in the soon to be established committee.

The City is willing to work with tenants on a case by case basis to help individuals with specific rental issues, and the City has made specific progress in this area. The Department of Human Services will hire three new case management workers who will help tenants negotiate with landlords, and they will target the elderly, disabled and families.

The City has met with the ten major landlords in the City to ask them to follow the model established by Harvard, which included low cost sale of units to the City for use as affordable as well as permanent protection for existing tenants who were previously protected. While none agreed to this model, various landlords did agree to some limited protection for tenants. Most agreed to deal with tenants on an individual basis.

Although the process of purchasing the units from Harvard took more time to resolve than expected, Roger believes that within 30 days Homeowners Rehab will take possession of 100 affordable units. Some units are in need of extensive work, others are in good condition. There are now 10-12 units available, half in Agassiz, and prospective tenants will be notified as soon as the selection process is completed, even if they must wait for renovation.

The selection process begins when tenants fill out forms for the waiting list. The management company will recieve the waiting list data, then screen applicants for good tenant history. Ultimately, qualified tenants will go through a lottery process. Although the City does not select, it will refer the list and develop the criteria for priority.

Roger said that eligibility could go as high as 100% of the median income before rents would be phased up to market rates. These rates will be determined based on the financing of the buildings.

Concern was raised by tenants in the buildings to be converted as affordable housing. If tenants must pay market rents, they will need ample time to consider their options. Roger said market rates would be phased in, and no changes will take place before 90 days notification.

Janet asked participants to be sure and sign in to be notified about the first meeting of the committee that will
Neighborhood News

Agassiz Auto Repair

The old site of Russ's Gulf, now owned by Elie Tannous, is open and doing business as Mass. Ave. Gulf and Agassiz Auto Repair. Elie does foreign and domestic auto repairs, and his shop is located on Mass. Ave. at the corner of Garfield St.

Sacramento Garden Supports Path to Field

Last month The Whistler reported that a tenant who abuts Sacramento Field and the path onto the field from Sacramento Place asked the council to consider changing its support for the access to the field at Sacramento Place in favor of a path through the Sacramento St. Garden. The ANC suggested the tenant contact the gardeners.

We have since received a copy of a letter from members of the Sacramento Street Garden addressed to the City in support of keeping the path where it is. The City, in a letter, has advised the garden members that the path will remain between the field and Sacramento Place. There are no plans for another access.

Work completed on Sacramento (almost)

Sewer construction work is finally done on Sacramento St and Place, with new brick sidewalks and a smooth road surface. The only remaining work should be completed in April or whenever the weather allows for 50 degree temperatures. The construction workers will do a final paving that will bring the street up to the correct height for the curbs. Trees will be planted in early spring.

More Housing Information

Property Owners Meet with City Officials

Results of the meetings between Cambridge Community Development (CDD) and the major property owners have been outlined in a letter forwarded to us by CDD. Below is an excerpt from it:

Over the last month we have contacted representatives of nine large, rental based housing property owners. These property owners were selected on the basis of having a significant number (over 20) of protected tenants living in their buildings ... We also discussed the possibility of adopting other City policies designed to maintain affordability including a tax incentive for owners who keep rents lower that market rate and a city funded rental subsidy program for all or a subset of protected tenants. One large property owner was extremely enthusiastic about a City funded rental subsidy; other owners did not seem to feel that a city rental subsidy was a prerequisite for moderating rent increases to protected tenants ... they had questions about the value of the abatement versus the complexity of the process to obtain one.

Information on Next Meeting

State Representative Alvin Thompson's office has contacted the ANC and requested that Alvin be on the February agenda in order to say a few words to the council.

Cara Seideman from CDD (or her representative) will discuss the process that will develop "traffic calming" for Oxford Street. Cara visited the ANC last year with her slides, and showed us how simple it can be to develop calming on a city street. If possible we will repeat that slide show at the meeting. Check with the office at 349-6287 closer to the meeting for an update or for more information.

See page 1, ANC News, for more housing information.
Traffic and Transportation

Wanted: Safe Sidewalks for All

The DPW appreciates the assistance of Cambridge residents in keeping sidewalks snow and ice free. Unshoed or icy sidewalks can be reported by phone to the DPW's sidewalk snow removal 24 hour hotline: 349-4903. All you need is an accurate street address. The property owner doesn't get a warning ticket until a DPW Inspector has confirmed that a violation exists. Later violations incur $25 a day fines. If you or someone you know needs help finding a shoveler or paying one, call the Council on Aging at 349-6220 during business hours or the DPW hotline, 349-4903, and leave a message anytime.

Remember: Stock up on sand. Ice is lethal. Elders and the disabled can become truly house-bound when conditions get icy. The DPW provides FREE SAND at the following locations near the Agassiz neighborhood (Bring you own bucket): DPW yard, 147 Hampshire; Fire Station at Huron-Garden-Sherman; Fire Station at Mass. Ave. and Blake St., above Porter Square.

Please shovel openings at the corners. One reason why pedestrians walk in the street in snowy weather is because property owners forget to shovel openings to the street at corners. Shoveling out openings at street corners will be very much appreciated by all. The DPW will try to push snow back from the corners to lighten the burden of the corner property owners.

Snow notices courtesy of Astrid Dodds

❖ City Wide ❖

Earned Income Credit Workshops

The EIC or Earned Income Credit is a special tax benefit for working people who earn low or moderate incomes. It has several important purposes: to reduce the tax burden on these workers, to supplement wages and to make work more attractive than welfare.

To learn more about this credit, COM Electric, in cooperation with the IRS and the Cambridge Council on Aging, is sponsoring a workshop to help qualified workers complete their tax forms. Go to the Cambridge Council on Aging, 806 Mass. Ave. FEBRUARY 27 AND 28 from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Tax professionals will be on hand to assist in answering questions.

With the EIC you can receive some or all of the federal income tax deducted from pay during the year.

If you are:

- raising one child in the home with an income less than $25,078 you can get up to $2,152 back;
- or raising more than one child in the home with an income less than $28,495 you can get up to $3,556;
- or if you are not raising children but are between 25 and 64 and had an income less than $9,500, you can get up to $323.

Porter Square

The next meeting of the Porter Square Neighbors Association will be held on the third Thursday, February 20th at the Metropolitan Baptist Church, 16 Beech St. at the corner of Orchard from 7-9 p.m. For more information contact President Paul Myers at 576-3542.
Agassiz Public School

Principal Search
The long search for an Agassiz School principal continues. At this time candidates have been screened, and community interviews are about to begin. The interview committee will forward their choices to the Superintendent.

The next step will be interviews at the Superintendent level, then thorough reference checks before selection of a Principal by the Superintendent with committee input.

Hopefully in March we will have a new principal for the Agassiz School named.

Martin Luther King Breakfast January 31
As The Whistler goes to press, the Agassiz School is about to host the First Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Breakfast on Friday January 31. Volunteers will cook the breakfast in the school kitchen and wait tables while participants will hear speakers and enjoy a home cooked breakfast.

Agassiz Community School

If you have any questions (or suggestions) regarding our programming, please call the Council office at 349-6287.

Reminder: We accept mid-year registrations for our Preschool and Afterschool programs. A few spaces remain in both part time and full time options in each of our three areas: preschool, kindergarten after school and after school for grades one through five.

FREE Computer Classes for Community
Thanks to a library grant in the Agassiz School, and help from the Agassiz Librarian Nancy Rial, the Agassiz community will be treated to some free computer training in the Agassiz School Computer Lab. The lab is located on the top floor of Agassiz School.
28 Sacramento St.
February 25 from 7-9 p.m.
Getting Started on Your Personal Computer
March 11
Internet Training Time TBA
Call Jody Garber at 349-6287
for more information or to register.
You MUST PREREGISTER to attend.

Outback Summer Camp
We have started to receive inquiries regarding Outback camp for the summer of 1997. The camp will run for eight weeks, starting Monday, June 30th and will run through the week of August 18th. Stay tuned, please. Brochures and registration forms will be available in March.

Evening Programs

BASKETBALL
On Tuesday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., the Agassiz Neighborhood Council sponsors basketball for teens in the Agassiz School gymnasium. Cost: $1.00.

On Wednesday evenings from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., it's adult basketball night at the Agassiz gym. Cost: $2.00. Great exercise, casual atmosphere.

YOGA
Also on Wednesday evenings from 6:15 p.m. to 7:15 p.m. join Tasha Hansen, our instructor, for an hour of iyengar yoga. Feel free to come every week or whenever the spirit moves you. Wear comfortable clothes and be prepared to feel relaxed and refreshed.

Cost: $6.00 per class.

COOKING
Tired of the same old hors d'oeuvres? Come join Chef Lisa Beaudin and learn how to create such delights as "Sesame crepe "towers" filled with coconut chicken and vegetables * Soft Asian beef tacos with wild fungi * Pork wonton crisps with sesame and scallions - along with other ideas to Jazz up a bored palate. One session for adults: Wednesday February 26th from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Agassiz School. Cost is $20.

Agassiz Afterschool
February vacation week programming for children enrolled in the Agassiz Afterschool will include a trip to the Boston Baked Theater in Davis Square for a performance of Robin Hood. If the weather cooperates, we may try to visit the newly refurbished skating facility on Boston Common. And, of course, a highlight of the week is our second annual Hip Hop festival on Thursday, February 20th. Registration forms for vacation week care will be distributed to after school families by Friday, February 7th.

Our classes for sixth through eighth grade students (cooking, illustrative drawing, and creative writing) are now in full swing for the middle term, but can also be joined mid-term at a pro-rated tuition. New sessions will start at the beginning of April. Please call to be on our mailing list.
THROUGH CARIBBEAN EYES, Oil Paintings by Winston Breedy opened on January 10 with a reception from 5:00-9:00 p.m., and again on January 17th. The show features landscapes and city scenes of Barbados and New England that reflect the intense colors and vibrant culture of the artist's native island. Whether painting Newberry Street scenes, rural Vermont, or the Kadooment Festival in Barbados, Winston brings a strong sense of color, warmth, and rhythm to his work.

Winston R. Breedy emigrated to Cambridge MA in 1994 from a small village in Barbados. He is self-taught as an artist. The show will run through February 21. Gallery hours are 9-5 on weekdays, and special hours Saturday and Sunday February 1 and 2 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

❖ Cultural Happenings ❖

Gallery 57

Agassiz neighborhood resident Aparna Agrawal will be showing her work in February at Gallery 57. It is the gallery of the Cambridge Arts Council, located at 57 Inman Street in Cambridge. Her show is called RECLAMING, with sculpture that reflects upon the artist's own Indian culture and personal relationships through delicate constructions of muslin, tissue paper, wax, jute and wire.

The show will run from February 4-28, and the gallery is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. There will be a reception on Thursday February 6th from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Concerts for Housing Justice

In cooperation with the Eviction Free Zone, the Campaign to Save 2,000 Homes presents Cambridge Concerts for Housing Justice. These concerts will fund legal services for tenants facing eviction.

February 6 at Lizard Lounge:
Mudhens, Push Stars, Asa Brebner

February 13 at T.T. the Bears
Kevin Salem, Jules Verdone, Inhale Mary, Fur

February 20 at Middle East
Upstairs:
Doug Thoms, Ramona Silver, Flexie,
Bison, Standing on Earth
Downstairs:
Sam Black Church, HonkeyBall,
Scissorfight, Big Wig

Call clubs for start times.
More To Come In March!

Introducing Art:
A Performance Series for Children
Presents
AGASSIZ 2ND ANNUAL HIP HOP FESTIVAL
THURSDAY FEBRUARY 20 AT 2:00 P.M.
Hip Hop Music, Song and Mostly Dance
FEATURING EMCEE NAHEEM ALLAH AND GIRLZ NIGHT OUT
Dreamers
Jaminastics
Knights in the Round
Majestic
Next Generation
Upn' Jamin

FRESH POND BALLET
Nina Alonso Hathaway Studio
1798A Mass. Ave. • Cambridge
491-5665
• Classical Ballet
• Pre-Ballet to pre-professional
• Adult Classes
Harvard to Replace Aiken Building

Several years ago Harvard initiated the University Campaign aiming to keep Harvard open and affordable to students from a broad range of economic and cultural backgrounds, and to further strengthen the quality of the university by improving both facilities and faculty resources. In October, Harvard received a generous gift linked to the campaign, from Microsoft founder and co-chairman Bill Gates, and Microsoft Executive Vice President Steven Ballmer to benefit research and improve teaching in computer science and electrical engineering. The $25 million dollar gift enables Harvard to move forward with plans to build what will be known as the Maxwell Dworkin Building where the Aiken Computation Laboratory building currently stands. The Aiken building is located at 33 Oxford St., opposite the Peabody Museum. The new building will include classrooms, seminar rooms, offices and laboratory space. It is also planned that the Mark I computer, built by George Aiken in the 40's and credited as one of the first computers ever built, will be displayed in the new building.

From a programmatic perspective, the building creates an opportunity for Harvard to widen the scope of its computer science and electrical engineering research and teaching. From a physical planning perspective, Harvard welcomes the opportunity to replace the Aiken structure which was built in 1946 as a temporary facility. Later in 1964, the structure was enlarged with a second story addition on stilts. The proposed new building will allow for more efficient use of the site while also creating opportunities to improve site planning and design.

Harvard plans to bring an architect on board in the spring and begin site work this summer. If you have questions about this project, please call Mary Power, recently appointed as Director of Community Relations at Harvard, 495-4955, or Terry DeLancey at the ANC, 349-6287. If there is interest, an update can be made at the February 18 ANC meeting.

Announcement

Swedenborgian Reading Room Opens

The Church of the New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian) announces the opening of the Cambridge Swedenborgian Reading Room and Library, at 50 Quincy St., near Harvard Square. The Reading Room is located in the Church, and the library contains books and materials of the writings of Christian theologian, scientist, philosopher and mystic Emanuel Swedenborg, with additional collateral works on Swedenborgianism, Christianity, philosophy and other religions.

Hours are Monday 6-9 p.m., Wednesday 9 a.m. to Noon, Friday 1-5 p.m., Saturday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Call 864-4552 for more information.

Vacuum needed—Do you have an old vacuum that you would like to donate to the Agassiz Afterschool? If so, call Jody at 349-6287. Donations are tax deductible.

Donors ANC Annual Fund

Thanks to several more donors:
Ron and Andrea Kadomiya,
Bruce Posner and Betsy Rudnick,
Lisa Sjordstrom, Dr. Susan Coffin,
Nancy Sommers and Patrick Harp

Your Neighborhood Realtor

Elizabeth Browning
For Your Real Estate Needs

1730 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
HUNNEMAN & COMPANY
864-4430 x 354
## Community Calendar February 1997

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 8, Saturday</td>
<td>8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Winter Dance for Adults, Agassiz School Dining Hall 28 Sacramento St. Entrance</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 17, Monday</td>
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<td>President’s Day Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 17-21</td>
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<td>February Vacation, Public Schools Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 18, Tuesday</td>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>ANC Board Meeting - Open to the Public</td>
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<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for details) Agassiz School Dining Hall 28 Sacramento St. Entrance</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 20, Thursday</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>2nd Annual Hip Hop Festival for Children Agassiz School Gym 28 Sacramento St. Entrance</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 25, Tuesday</td>
<td>7:00-9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Free Computer Training “getting started on your PC” Preregistration required - See page 5</td>
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**FEBRUARY IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

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**The Whistler February 1997**

**AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**

20 Sacramento Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
617 349-6287
Fax and Hot Line 497-4388
EMail Agassiz@concentric.net

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**You are Invited to Attend a Winter Dance**

Saturday February 8 at 8:00 p.m.

sponsored by the Agassiz Neighborhood Council in the Agassiz School Cafeteria - 28 Sacramento Street entrance

**MUSIC by The Embraceables,** a neighborhood group that features notable Agassiz alum parents Harvey Cox, Mark Schuster, and Jim Wallace

**REFRESHMENTS provided by**

CAMBRIDGE COMMON, CHRISTOPHER’S, COTTONWOOD CAFE, CHOCOLATE BOX, FINNEGAN’S WAKE, FRASER’S, INDIA CLUB, MEXICAN CUISINE, , STAR MARKET, BOCA GRANDE, AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, and others

Singles $7, Couples $12 in advance/ $8 and $15 at the door

You must be 18 years of age or older to attend.