ANC News

Notes from the February 17 ANC Meeting

Vice Chairperson Joan Squier opened the meeting and introduced Katherine Watkins, Traffic Calming Director, and David Black from the consulting firm, TAMS.

They had refined the traffic calming plan from the last meeting, incorporating neighborhood suggestions and ideas. The new draft is similar to the one published in the February edition of The Whistler with refinements. In this new draft there is a plan for the north end of Oxford St. that is technically in Somerville. They have confidence that Somerville will cooperate in the reconfiguration of the end of Oxford Street. This reconfiguration will make the entry to Oxford a more definite left turn from Oxford coming south, and it will shorten the crosswalk with a curb extension.

There were further suggestions that a sign be placed at Oxford announcing “Entering Cambridge” to signal a change of roadway to the driver.

Other residents recommended further changes to the draft, and there was more discussion on use, loss of parking and safe emergency vehicle access.

Agassiz Seeks Nominees for Board

The ANC Nominating Committee will meet in March to decide on a slate of candidates for ANC Board membership. Board members steward the non-profit organization, review policy, and finances to ensure excellent programs and a forum for neighborhood discussion that allows neighbors themselves to set the neighborhood agenda.

Interested candidates should send a letter of interest and a resume if available to the Nominating Committee, ANC, 20 Sacramento St. Cambridge 02138. Please let the committee know why you are interested in joining the ANC board and what you believe to be your qualifications.

The nominating committee seeks a wide variety of candidates. All community members are welcome to apply.

Neighborhood News

Traffic and Transportation

Truck Traffic Committee Has 2 Recommendations

We have heard from Paul Myers, President of Porter Square Neighbors Association, who advised us that the truck traffic committee has issued two reports. He has spent much time on this issue, and he has offered to visit the ANC to explain why he favors one report, and what each report means for our city and neighborhoods.

He was away as The Whistler went to press, but stay tuned for more information on this subject.

David Black and Katherine Watkins will report back in April with a final plan for review. There is a very interesting evaluation of traffic calming at Berkshire St. and York St. that was made available at the meeting. [Call the ANC office at 349-6287 for a copy of this evaluation.]

The finalized plan will be part of the designs that must be approved and financed as part of Phase Three Sewer Reconstruction, scheduled to begin in the Agassiz neighborhood this fall. Street reconstruction that includes the traffic calming solutions will be done at the end of the sewer project, from 2.5-3 years after it has begun.
Learn About Lead Safety March 24

Lead-Safe Cambridge is a program of the City of Cambridge Community Development Department. The program is HUD-funded and serves the community by providing funds to eligible properties for testing and abatement as well as general outreach and education about the dangers of lead.

Lead is a highly dangerous substance that exists everywhere in our environment. It is particularly toxic for young children as it can have severe effects on their development. Lead poisoned children can suffer from learning and emotional problems like difficulty learning to read or increased violent behavior. Other effects include damage to developing internal organs, deafness, stunted growth, coma, convulsions, and ultimately death if left untreated.

Children are exposed to lead in various places in their environment. The biggest contributor to increased lead levels in young children is lead dust found in the home. Other sources of lead exposure include lead in soil, lead-painted ceramics used in food preparation and service, lead in water from lead pipes or lead in fixtures, as well as others. While it is difficult to completely eliminate any exposure to lead, there are some important things parents and homeowners can do to make children safer.

Lead dust is often found in the home in window wells (the area where the window fits into when it is closed), on floors, around doorways and other friction areas. Lead dust is the result of wear and tear on lead painted surfaces like window and door frames. Friction causes the paint on those surfaces to break down into tiny lead particles. Lead particles can also be tracked into the house from the outside where the soil is often contaminated from exterior paint and the historical use of leaded gasoline. Because small children play on the floors and often place hands and toys into their mouths or noses, they are at high risk for being exposed to lead in the home.

But there are other high risk behaviors that can affect a family living in an older home. If you live in a home or apartment built before 1978 (over 95% of the homes in Cambridge fall into that category) be concerned about lead paint if you are planning any remodeling or renovation. Even repainting the smallest of areas, which often involves scraping or sanding of old paint, is dangerous when lead paint is involved. Entire families can be lead poisoned by improper handling of lead painted surfaces. Larger renovation or remodeling projects are even more dangerous. Even if you hire a licensed general contractor or painter, there is no guarantee that the work will be performed safely. In fact, painters have some of the highest rates of occupational lead poisoning.

Any work done inside or outside your home should be done following safe work practices. If you aren’t sure whether or not your home has lead paint, you should have it tested before beginning any dust generating work, especially if you have small children or if someone in your household is pregnant. It is also important to know that the MA Lead Law requires that any home, where a child under 6 resides, be deleadened by a licensed lead abatement contractor. If you own rental property and a child living there becomes poisoned, you will be held liable. Deleading is the only way to protect your interests.

Lead in soil is another concern for parents and gardeners. Cambridge has an industrial past and has been a densely populated urban area for a long time. These factors combined with the number of homes painted with lead exterior paint contribute to often dangerous levels of lead in the soil. Parents should try to keep children away from bare dirt and should wash children’s hands often. If possible, families should also try to remove their shoes upon entering the home. This significantly reduces the amount of lead dust and dirt tracked into the home.

Creating barriers to leaded soil is another great way to reduce a child’s exposure to soil. Shrub around the perimeter of the home, also known as the drip line, prohibit kids from playing in a high danger area. Try to keep bare areas of dirt covered - either with grass, gravel, concrete, or other plants. A covered sandbox is a good play area for children.

Gardeners should consider soil testing before planting vegetables and fruits for consumption. Other options include planting in raised beds or containers. Always use clean fill dirt when container gardening. Also, some fruits and vegetables absorb more lead than others. Root vegetables like potatoes, carrots, turnips, and beets are in direct contact with the soil for their entire growing cycle. These plants absorb the most lead. Leafy vegetables and herbs are the next highest absorbers. To be safe, try to plant fruits and vegetables that do not come into contact with the ground. Tomatoes, peppers, and cucumbers are good options. They have little to no direct exposure to the lead in the soil. Always wash and try to peel fruits and vegetables before eating and wash dirty gardening clothes as soon as possible so as not to track dirt into your home.

Lead-Safe Cambridge will conduct a presentation for the Agassiz Neighborhood Council on Thursday, March 24. (See page one.) Lisa Motter, Outreach Coordinator will be discussing renovation and remodeling dangers, deleading, easy and inexpensive ways to deal with lead in the home, lead in soil, lead-safe gardening, the Lead-Safe Cambridge program, financing deleading, and she will also be available to answer your questions. We look forward to seeing you there.

For more information, contact Lead-Safe Cambridge at 349-5323 or check out our website at http://www.ci.capebridge.ma.us/~LeadSafe/.

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Housing Issues

Eviction Free Zone Still Fighting Evictions
Rent control no longer exists in Cambridge. Low income people are still losing their homes, and apartment prices are still going up. The Eviction Free Zone and the Campaign to Save 2000 Homes continues to appeal to landlords to follow the example of others and show mercy to low income tenants in the form of reasonable rent increases and the creation of some protected rent apartments.

Eviction Free Zone encourages all citizens to remain active in supporting tenants at risk. They will place you on their mailing list, so you can write letters to landlords who are about to evict tenants. These letters ask landlords to help Cambridge keep its citizens in the City by creating affordable opportunities for them.

You can reach them at 868-2900.

Crime Watch
Cambridge Police Visit Neighborhoods
The Cambridge Police Department has assigned Sgt. Kathy Murphy to the Agassiz neighborhood. She conducted a Quarterly meeting on February 24 in the Agassiz School to report on issues raised at previous meetings and listen to citizen concerns. Also present were Lt. Regan, Officer Lyons, Deputy Superintendent Giacoppi and two members of the Emergency Communications Center, Dispatcher Christina Giacoppi and Director George Posque. Also in attendance was civilian Vicky Boulrice, Community Coordinator.

There was a preview of the 1997 crime report, that is due out in the next few weeks. Crime is down in general. Noteworthy was one street robbery in late January on Gerham St. in the evening when armed teens demanded money, then fled. At Porter Exchange a man directed a woman to a side door saying the floor was wet, then demanded money. See The Whistler in April for a full report on current and last years statistics.

Many interesting topics were covered, and residents were able to ask specific questions of their own. Participants learned about the difficulty the police have in getting the courts to take quality of life issues seriously: bicycle, dog, and graffiti citations. Other communities are making use of a community court system, which the Cambridge Police department is learning more about.

Enhanced 911 was explained, and police in Cambridge now have the name of the telephone subscriber and the address of the caller when 911 is dialed. If you call 911 in error, DON’T HANG UP. Just let them know you misdialed, since they must follow through to be sure there is not an emergency.

The police have followed up regarding illegally parked cars at the end of Sacramento Place. They also agreed to bring representatives from Somerville Police to a future meeting to discuss border issues.

Each Cambridge neighborhood has had a least one meeting with the Cambridge police. The Leadership Council of the Cambridge Police, a group of interested civic leaders and residents, has listed concerns over the city as discussed in the meetings. Issues from the Agassiz neighborhood were car thefts and house breaks, access to the sexual offenders list, bikes on the sidewalk, traffic on Carver St. and cars parked to close to corners.

Some common concerns listed by neighborhoods of the city include speeding traffic, dim street lights, wrong way driving, bikes on the sidewalk, and cars not stopping for pedestrians.

The meeting was very informative, and residents were able to meet the police who patrol Agassiz and get to know them. There will be another Quarterly meeting in three months. Look in The Whistler for the date or call 349-6287 to be on the mailing list.

RAD Training
The Cambridge Police provides free of charge, ongoing classes in women’s self defense, known as RAD training. This training is designed specifically for adult women. For more information call Officer Sue Kale at the Cambridge Police, 349-6009.
Agassiz Community School Programs
For general information, call 349-6287 or 497-4284

Outback Summer Camp
Outback Summer Camp for school age children entering grade one through grade five will begin registration in late March. For information, please call the ANC at 349-6287. The program runs for eight weeks in the summer beginning on June 29, and children may be enrolled for any number of weeks. Camp is held 8:30-2:30 with an option until 5:30 p.m.

Agassiz Afterschool
Current and Fall Registration
New parents of kindergarteners who are interested in having their children attend Agassiz Afterschool next year can contact Dawn Greene in the a.m. at 349-6287. For children who will be entering grades one through five, you can contact Michael Brown after 1 p.m. at 497-4284.
You may also call Dawn Greene or Michael Brown regarding current availability of Afterschool spaces.

Sacramento St. Preschool
Diane DiMaine is the Preschool Teacher/Director. This program provides a developmental preschool experience in a cozy, individualized atmosphere. This program serves a small group of children from age 2 years, 9 months to kindergarten age. This program runs from 8:30-1:30 five days per week with many part time options. Call soon to register for next year. Limited space is still available this year.
For more information or to visit call 349-6287.

Middle School Afterschool Programs
Ellen Morrison will begin the new semester of Creative Writing for grades 6-8 on March 6. Anyone interested who has not yet registered, should call Michael Brown at 497-4284 for more information.
Our middle school activities began on January 12 with a cooking class conducted by Lisa Beaudin. Illustrative drawing, taught by Courtney Skinner, began January 14.
For more information on any of these classes or to be on the mailing list, call Michael Brown at 497-4284.

Evening Programs
Drop In Basketball (closed all school holidays)
Tuesdays - Teen basketball runs each Tuesdays from 5:30-8 p.m. The cost is $1 per session.
Wednesday - Adult basketball runs each Wednesday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. The cost is $2 per session.

Yoga
Taught by Isa Mattei - $100 for ten classes
Tuesdays - Advanced Yoga Classes 6:15 - 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays - Yoga Classes 6:00 - 7:15 p.m.
For specific information call Isa Mattei at 661-6242.

Agassiz Public School
What’s Happening at the Agassiz School?
In September, the Agassiz School got a new Principal, Miss Peggy Averitte from Indianapolis, Indiana. Miss Averitte came to the Agassiz School with the strongest of credentials after a two year search that involved the Agassiz community and a private search firm. She was the number one recommended candidate of the Superintendent’s Committee, which included Agassiz parents, community members, teachers, and parent liaison. Other members included senior level city wide administrators and staff.

This September, Miss Averitte, a strong and dedicated principal, went forth to correct several inherited problems including student safety and slipping test scores. Some parents were delighted with the changes, others objected to her methods. These parents felt that there should be more parent input in decision making.

This situation should have been unremarkable. A new principal, who has a great deal of spirit and a past track record of tested and tried methods, bumps up against a new culture and a variety of long term problems. A healthy clash would have been normal. Miss Averitte’s leadership style was a distinct change, and changes upset the regular way of doing business. With reasonable patience, and give and take on both sides, the conflict should have naturally been resolved over a few months.

Something went terribly wrong. The healthy clash of ideas became an ugly, emotional assault on the principal. The situation became so charged that the Superintendent of Schools, Bobbie D’Alessandro, felt it necessary to bring in both security and police to protect the principal’s safety.

The situation is now so off track that the Superintendent has called in consultants CMI, to help restore civil communications among the entire community of teachers, parents and the principal.

The Agassiz School community can only hope that CMI can restore the situation to where it should have been in the first place: some parents are concerned with the methods Miss Averitte has used to bring positive change. There needs to be a forum for discussing these concerns within the bounds of civil discourse and with respect for the principal’s need to discharge his other duties.

Instruments Needed Now
For many years the Cambridge School Department has provided free use of musical instruments by students in grades 3-12, one of the few schools that do not charge for use. All instruments are needed especially FLUTES, CLARINETs, TRUMPETS, VIOLINS and CELLOS immediately. Other needed instruments are: woodwinds, brass, percussion, strings and pianos.

If you can donate one of these instruments that is in good working order, please call the music department at 349-6786. You may qualify for a tax deductible donation based on the value of the gift.
Lesley College

Lesley Lists Events for Black & Women's History

* "Words of Reflection" with David Coleman II - March 5, 1998 - "Words Of Resistance" is the first in a three part series of one-act dramas that will be presented March 5. The entire trilogy is called "Words of Reflection" and is about the history of Black Presence in New England. The second and third one-act dramas are called, respectively, "Words of Revolt" and "Words of Renaissance."

"Words of Resistance" is a participatory one-act drama about the response of Boston's African-American community to the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. This is a one performance, produced, and directed by David D. Coleman II, a Lesley doctoral student and a professor at Roxbury Community College. This drama will be performed by the Roxbury Repertory Theatre Company in Alumni Hall on March 5, 1998 at 7 p.m.

* Cecilia Smith Jazz Quartet - March 24, 1998 7:00 p.m. - Welch Auditorium
* Presentation on recent visit to South Africa - Dr. Holly Carter April 1, 7:00 p.m. - Miller Room in Wolford Hall

For more information call Lesley College at 349-8700.

Announcements

Chocolate Fools Day Sunday March 8

This chocolate tasting will be held in the ballroom of the Sheraton Commander Hotel from 1-3:30 p.m. to benefit the Cambridge Performance Project. Tickets are $18 in advance, $15 for seniors and groups and $20 at the door. For more information call 661-6384.

Citizens Police Academy

The Cambridge Police Department is offering a ten week program open to city residents to introduce them to what is involved in the work of a Cambridge Police Officer. Sessions will focus on criminal law, constitutional issues, domestic violence, and many other topics. Participants will also have the opportunity to ride along/walk along with a patrol officer.

This training is ongoing, so call 349-3236 to learn about the next training session.

Cambridge seeks Ace Recyclers

Do you know someone who recycles everything? Nominations are being accepted for the City's Annual Recycling Awards in the following categories 1. outstanding individual; 2. extraordinary business; 3. impressive large building (over 13 units); 4. exceptional commercial building maintenance staff; 5. notable citizen volunteer; and 6. best City building or school program. Send the nominee's name, along with a brief description of accomplishments to the Cambridge Recycling Program, 147 Hampshire St, Cambridge, MA 02139. For more information, call Jan Aceti, Director of Recycling at 349-4866.

SEEKING PARENTS OF INFANTS

I have formed a parent/infant play group that has begun to meet on Monday and Friday mornings from 11 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Agassiz Community Center, 20 Sacramento St. Please call Debbie Miller at 497-0368 before 9:30 p.m. for more information.

The Agassiz Neighborhood Council is currently working on the feasibility of developing a family center in the Agassiz Neighborhood. Call Terry DeLancey to receive further information on that issue: 349-6287.
LANDSCAPES
A show of oil paintings by David Faust
The Sacramento St. Gallery is proud to present a show of oil paintings by **David Faust**. In this body of work Faust has been influenced by the history of places. He exploits the charged enigma of memory and he uses paint to remember places which are familiar and nostalgic. The drama of things is in the recollection; Faust’s memories are suggestive of the presence of a particular place, and paint flows onto the canvas as memory recreates events. The poetry of his work lies in their personal symbolic weight.
The show is free and everyone is invited.

Introducing Art: A Performance Series for Children
**March 10. Tuesday Peter and the Wolf**
2:00 p.m. Agassiz School Stage Admission $1.00 For information call 349-6287

**National Marionette Theater** presents their newest show, **Peter and the Wolf**. Join Peter and his friends: Trinka the bird, Boris the cat, and Natasha the duck as they perform accompanied by the music of Prokofiev.

This puppet production is a synthesis of the arts: sculpture, design, music, mime, dance and theater. **Artistic Director David Syrotiak** and his troupe—mainly family members—performed the exquisite version of **Aladdin** last year on the Agassiz stage. The audience was treated to beautiful scenery, elaborate costuming and wonderful stage effects to the delight of all.

Don’t miss this entertaining performance that will be enjoyed by children and adults alike.

This series celebrates its third season this year.

**Other Local Cultural Events and Programs**

**FRESH POND BALLET**
Nina Alonso Hathaway Studio
1798A Mass. Ave. • Cambridge 491-5865
- Classical Ballet
- Pre-Ballet to pre-professional
- Adult Classes

**Gallery 57 - 57 Inman Street**
**Sensual Constructions by Noreene Leddy March 5-27**
Combining coy tresses of human hair, fur, fake pearls and delicate ribbons with "man"/machine made objects such as hooks, electrical switches, and test tube racks, **Noreene Leddy’s** sculptures question familiar perceptions of femininity.

**Reception Thursday March 5 5-7 p.m.**
**Bag lunch March 19 from 12:30-1:30 p.m.**
For information call Cambridge Arts Council at 349-4381.
Calling Cambridge Senior Artists

The Cambridge Arts Council seeks participants for its About Time, an exhibition of art created by seniors who live or work in Cambridge. The exhibition will take place at University Place Gallery, Harvard Square, in June.

To join our mailing list to receive Call to Artists, which will outline the criteria and jurying process for the exhibition, contact Sabrina Myole, Gallery Director/Arts Administrator, Cambridge Arts Council at 349-4381.

It’s About Time is being organized by the Cambridge Arts Council, the City-Wide Senior Center, The Friends of the Senior Center, and the Cambridge Art Association. It is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Drama Vacation Week Program in April

The Arts Council, Human Services and the Department of Drama in the public schools are collaborating on a spring art program for youth 9-13. The program is four days April 21-25 and will be held at Harrington School. Children may choose three of the following four disciplines in which they will have daily sessions (in addition to a computer diary session): dance, theatre, music and visual arts. The week will culminate with a performance and exhibition for parents. The program will have a sliding fee scale and can accommodate 50 youth.

For more information, call Rosilyn Shoy at Human Services at 349-6227.

Poetry Celebration for April

The Arts Council will be celebrating National Poetry Month in April by placing three magnetic poetry walls in Harvard, Central and Kendall Squares. The walls will be in place for the entire month and will be utilized by school programs, local poetry programmers, organizations, businesses and street performers for workshops and performances. Poets are encouraged to make impromptu creations or to “book time” at the walls to work with the public in whatever way they wish. For more information, call Cherie Martin at the Arts Council at 349-4383.

CCTV Offers Course for Parents and their Kids

In response to growing interest among Cambridge families for fun and educational activities that adults and kids can do together, Cambridge Community Television is starting up another TV Production Workshop just for kids and their parents/guardians/ grandparents. Adults will work side-by-side with their kids to learn video production skills, engage in critical viewing exercises, and produce their own television programs at CCTV.

The next workshop is scheduled to meet on three consecutive Saturday afternoons, March 21, 28 and April 4 from 4:00-6:30 p.m. Anyone interested in joining this workshop, or being notified of workshops on other dates should call John Donovan at 661-6900. Enrollment is limited, so call right away.

CCTV also offers many computer and video classes at their location, 675 Mass. Ave. in Central Square on an ongoing basis. Call 661-6900 for information.

Chamber Music by Candlelight Series March 23

Cambridge Society for Early Music presents Luca Pianca, lutenist from Switzerland, in a concert of 17th and 18th century works for solo lute from Italy, France, and Germany by Raimondo, Melli, Piccinini, Kapsberger, deVisse and Weiss. The performance will be held in Adolphus Busch Hall at 29 Kirkland St. at 8:00 p.m. on Monday, March 23. Tickets are $18, $15 for students and seniors. Call 423-2808.

Lesley College Poetry Series Celebrates the Green

On March 17, Tuesday, at Noon in the Miller Room, there will be an Irish celebration sponsored by PEAL (Poetry Events at Lesley). Martha McKenna has been invited to sing a few Irish songs and local poet Tomas O’Leary will beguile you with his poems of wit and wonder, sly humor and shy romance and accordion. The event will wrap up with a rollicking story from Marjorie Farrell, renowned writer and teacher in the Lesley community. For information on this free event, call Peggy Barrasso at 349-8634.

Women and Religion Forum Sunday March 8

Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center and Cambridge Forum present this forum free of charge at the First Parish Church at 3 Church St. in Harvard Square from 3-5 p.m.

As America searches for ways to bridge the gaps of difference and ignorance that fuel all forms of bigotry, we, as a nation, must be willing to ask if we are ready to respect religious plurality, as well as racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity. Please join us for this and other discussions. For more information call 577-1400.

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March 1998 Community Calendar

Friday March 6 5:00-7:00 p.m.  
David Faust “Landscapes” Artist’s Reception  
Sacramento Street Gallery, Agassiz Community Center  
20 Sacramento St. Hours: Monday - Friday 9-5

Tuesday, March 10 2:00 p.m.  
PETER and the WOLF - National Marionette Theater  
Agassiz School Stage, 28 Sacramento St. Entrance  
Admission $1.00, All ages welcome

Tuesday, March 17  
St. Patrick’s Day - Agassiz School Closed

Tuesday, March 24 6:30 p.m.  
ANC Board Meeting - Open to the Public  
ANC Monthly Meeting (See page one for agenda)  
Agassiz School Dining Hall, 28 Sacramento St. Entrance

Tuesday, March 24 7:30 p.m.  

Thursday, March 26  
Teacher’s Professional Day - Agassiz School Closed

COMING IN APRIL!  
Saturday, April 18 9:00 a.m.  
Agassiz Neighborhood Tree Walk- Meet in the Tot Lot  
Corner of Oxford and Sacramento Streets.

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.

The Whistler March 1998

AGASSIZ NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL  
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