

# the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

March 2009

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## ANC News

### NOTES FROM THE FEB. 25 MEETING

#### **Lesley University's 2009 Centennial Plan**

"Having the University embedded in neighborhoods is a reflection of our pedagogical underpinnings," stated Will Suter, Lesley Campus Planner, during his brief presentation of the University's 2009 Centennial Plan. Initiated by a number of changes, including hiring a new president, developing a strategic plan, and partnering with the Episcopal Divinity School (EDS), the 2009 Centennial Plan looks at Lesley as a three-node campus with distinct academic units.

- Porter Square campus houses Lesley's School of Education and will be the future home of the Art Institute of Boston.
- The Quad, comprised of buildings on Mellen, Oxford and Wendell Streets, includes Lesley's undergraduate housing. Lesley College will be consoli-

dated on this portion of the campus. Plans also include creating a "Threshold Mini-campus" to support Lesley's program for students with cognitive disabilities.

- Lesley recently entered into a partnership with the Episcopal Divinity School through which the two schools will share a number of buildings on EDS's Brattle Street campus. Lesley also purchased two buildings from EDS outright. This location will become the home of the Social Sciences and graduate programs.

Mr. Suter added, "Sustainability is our goal. We recognize the lack of green space and feel there's a lot of blacktop that needs to be addressed." Among changes the University is considering are interior building and landscape improvements, as well as converting the parking lots on Wendell St. into an underground parking garage to create more green space. Mr. Suter announced that the University has decided not to pursue constructing a gym on the quad campus.

### NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



**MARCH 18 - 7:30 PM**

*Baldwin School Cafeteria  
28 Sacramento Street*

#### **AGENDA**

*Updates on:*

- *Strategic planning for ABC's aging in place initiative*
- *Streets & Sidewalks with Owen O'Riordan and Cambridge DPW*
- *"Living Well: A Guide to Senior Services in Cambridge"*
- *Additional items TBA*

Lesley University will celebrate its Centennial anniversary beginning September 2009. The Centennial Plan is now available for viewing on the City's website at

www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/cp/tg/index.html and on Lesley's website at:

http://lesley.edu/administration/campus\_planning/index.html.

**Zoning Overlay District Proposal**

Bill Doncaster, Director of Public Affairs at Lesley, briefly reviewed the process leading up to Lesley's decision to create a zoning overlay district in Porter Square. He explained that the zoning proposal grew from the neighborhoods' request to look more holistically at the whole campus in Porter, rather than redefining its needs with each new project. Lesley University has engaged neighbors through the city-appointed Lesley/Neighborhoods working group for over two years, and in addition has sought community input through a number of community-wide and neighborhood-based meetings.

Because their previous application has expired, Lesley has re-filed for the zoning permit to create the overlay district that will serve several functions:

- Extend Porter Square's Business C district to include the North Prospect Church property, which would allow for academic use (the site is currently zoned for residential use)
- Increase floor area ratio (FAR) and allow building rights to be transferred

between Lesley's properties. Lesley will be required to apply for a special permit for each project, a process that includes community input.

Mr. Doncaster added that Lesley decided to remove 815 Somerville Ave. from the overlay district proposal, in large part because including the building would draw the overlay district over the MBTA Commuter Rail Line.

Designs for the new Art Institute of Boston have been suspended until the zoning is resolved. The proposed buildings will include a public gallery, an "arts common" that also serves as an all-season quad, and an art library placed in the church in a way that will keep the church's interior largely intact. In addition, although Lesley has not presented a timeline for developing their property across from University Hall or the parking lot behind it, the zoning application would set strict parameters for these lots in the future.

**Community Discussion**

Following Lesley's presentation, meeting attendees shared a variety of opinions, concerns, and perspectives. Those in attendance included members of the Lesley/Neighborhoods working group: Harriet Ahouse, Joel Bard, Willie Bloomstein, Fred Meyer, and Gordon Moore of Neighborhood 9; abutters to the proposed new Art Institute of Boston building; Cambridge City Councillors Craig Kelley and Sam Seidel; and State Representative Alice Wolf.

**New AIB Building**

Residents noted that, at five floors above ground and two below, the proposed new home of AIB is substantially larger than what the current zoning allows. They feel that Lesley has a very ambitious program planned for a small site, and some prefer Lesley move a portion of AIB's programming behind University Hall. Scale, height, and character remain important to residents, as well as Lesley's plans for activity that draw people in and add value to Mass. Ave.



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### **Parking & Traffic**

As plans for Lesley's Porter Campus develop, working group members and residents requested that the University place as much parking underground as possible. They questioned the accuracy of a traffic study, conducted by Lesley in September 2008, that claimed AIB's addition in the square would draw around 50-60 additional car trips per day. Residents also requested that concise mitigation plans be established early in the process.

### **Open & Green Space**

While supportive of Lesley's commitment to incorporating open, publicly accessible space with its plans for AIB, residents questioned the value of the allotted open space in front of AIB on Mass. Ave., adjacent to the current bus stop. They also requested that Lesley be more specific about its plans to develop green space behind University Hall and/or along Roseland St.

### **Community Benefits**

Although many felt that AIB's relocation to Porter Square will bring some benefits, possibly increasing neighboring home values, many people at the Council meeting wondered how the neighborhoods would ultimately benefit from their support of the project. With months of construction, noise, potential increased traffic, and other issues impinging on quality of life for abutters and visitors alike, meeting attendees wanted a clearer idea of what Lesley plans to give back.

Joel Bard, a member of the Lesley/Neighborhoods working group and long-time Agassiz resident, stated, "We've been extremely impressed with the University's efforts to work with the community, and President Joe Moore has been very forthright. Lesley has done some interesting things and grown in positive ways, but what are we getting back, other than cooperation?"

### **Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center Update**

Wendy Prellwitz, ABC Board Director and member of an advisory group working on building the Maud Morgan Visual Arts Center

(MMVAC), stated that ABC's plan is to raise money to build the majority of the art center behind 20 Sacramento Street. She told the Council, "We're still in discussions with Lesley to locate studios at the Art Institute of Boston. However, now that we've won the lawsuit and can build at 20 Sacramento St., the number of studios we plan to locate in Porter Square has dropped from four to two."

The University has offered to build out space for MMVAC studios at AIB, as well as pay for common area maintenance charges. However, Lesley has asked that MMVAC purchase the space in order to reimburse Lesley's cost to build. Several residents stated that asking ABC to purchase space at AIB is not the partnership they envisioned with the University.

In the interim, ABC needs to find space for two studios for next fall's Maud Morgan Visual Arts programming. The advisory group has approached Lesley about renting the ground floor at the new dorm on the corner of Mass. Ave. and Wendell St., which has not yet been resolved.

Ms. Prellwitz concluded, "Discussions are ongoing, and we continue to feel that a win-win partnership and mutually beneficial relationship is possible between MMVAC and AIB."

### **New Hotel Proposed for Beacon Street in Somerville**

Agassiz resident Astrid Dodds informed the

#### **Fred Meyer, Realtor**

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Council that a hotel is proposed for 369-371 Beacon St., the site of a now un-used gas station next to the Beacon St. bridge near the top of Oxford St. The hotel requires a special permit from the city of Somerville. Somerville Alderman Maryann Heuston hosted an informational meeting for abutters on February 24.

Abutters were concerned that plans do not now include an off-street pick-up and drop-off site, and asked about the status of environmental cleanup required of former gas station sites. The developers told meeting attendees that they would not move forward with the project until these issues are addressed.

Ms. Dodds reported that another issue of interest to Somerville and Cambridge residents of this area is how the top of Beacon and Oxford Streets can be reconfigured in ways that better accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists as part of a 2011 reconstruction of Beacon St. planned by Somerville and Mass Highway. Alderman Heuston plans another informational meeting on these topics in the near future.

#### **ABC Website Redesign**

Phoebe Sinclair, Community Liaison, reminded the Council that ABC is in the process of redesigning the agency's website. She asked Council members to contact her with suggestions about what they would like to see included on the Council's portion of the site. Ms. Sinclair can be reached at [psinclair@agassiz.org](mailto:psinclair@agassiz.org) or (617) 349-6287 x10.

## **ABC Community**

### **2008 END OF YEAR DONORS**

The following donors were accidentally omitted from last month's list.

#### **Donors**

Rite Way Cleaners  
Temple Bar & Restaurant

In addition, we misspelled donor Nancy Webb's

name. We regret these errors.

Donations to Agassiz Baldwin Community provide valuable funds for many programs, including scholarships, community events, services, and this newsletter.

Tax-deductible donations can be sent to: Agassiz Baldwin Community, 20 Sacramento St., Cambridge, MA 02138.

### **ABC TAKES STEPS TO REDUCE ENERGY USE AT 20 SACRAMENTO ST.**

This past February, ABC took advantage of NSTAR Electric's Small Business Solutions program to reduce energy use at 20 Sacramento St. NSTAR performed an energy audit of the building and made a number of improvements and adjustments to electrical and lighting fixtures. These improvements were funded in part by the Cambridge Energy Alliance.



## **Agassiz Baldwin Children's Programs**

### **FLYING ZUCCHINI CAFÉ**

Prepared by Jacy Edelman, Program Director

For two nights only, March 11th and 12th, the cafeteria at the Maria Baldwin School will be transformed into a full-scale restaurant called "The Flying Zucchini Café". The restaurant will be entirely run (with the guiding help of the Afterschool staff) by the Kindergarten and 1-5th grade Agassiz Afterschool students and will be open to their families. The students will be the chefs, sous chefs, cooks, waitstaff and entertainers of the Flying Zucchini Café!

In the eight weeks leading up to this event, students have been learning the ins and out of restaurateuring with a special focus on healthy eating, international foods, and local agriculture. Lessons have included:

- Making cheese with local owner and

cheesemaker of Fiore DiNonno, Lourdes Smith.

- Participating in a workshop run by The Food Project in Lincoln, MA, where students taste-tested different local produce and learned about local seasonal produce.
- Creating an original skit, dance, and song focused on healthy eating and exercise to be presented the evenings of the restaurant event.
- Participating in a "food group tasting" workshop led by the Cambridge Public Health Department School Health Program.

The menu for March 11th will feature Caribbean inspired food, including empanadas and cornmeal pumpkin fritters. The menu for March 12th will feature Mediterranean foods such as falafel, 7-vegetable couscous and garlic roasted green beans. *Buen provecho!*

**INTRODUCING ARTS AND PASSIM CULTURE FOR KIDS PRESENT LAURA CORTESE**

Put on your dancing shoes for Laura Cortese's fiddling and singing! She's sure to get you on your feet with her foot-stomping tunes. Singer, songwriter and fiddler, Laura Cortese lights up the stage with a radiating smile, dazzling musicianship, and uninhibited delight. She deftly strums, plucks and chops her fiddle behind her raw and rootsy voice.



**When:** Tuesday, March 10, 2:00 PM

**Where:** Baldwin School Stage, 28 Sacramento Street

**Tickets:** Afterschool groups free, \$2 per person, \$5 per family. School groups please call ahead.

For more information, call (617) 349-6287.

**MARCH AT SACRAMENTO STREET PRESCHOOL**

Prepared by Priscilla Browne, Preschool Lead Teacher

During March, we will be gearing ourselves up for a month of transportation. We will create cars, boats, airplanes, and hot air balloons out of recyclables. The children will also have an opportunity to drive the cars through paint, make paper airplanes, and float homemade boats in the water table.



**A LOOK BACK AT HIP HOP FESTIVAL 2009**

The 13th Hip Hop Festival brought a fresh take to our annual favorite event by highlighting four elements of hip hop: rapping, DJing, graffiti, and breakdance.



With the help of Agassiz Afterschool kids, star Emcee Naheem Garcia, and dancers from Deborah Mason School of Dance, OrigiNation, Jam'nastics, The Community Art Center (CAC) Kids, and The



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Floorlords, event participants enjoyed an show full of fast moves, infectious beats, and a surprise breakout session that let the crowd strut its moves.

After the festival, Afterschool students were treated to Master Classes taught by dancers from OrigNation and the Floorlords, learned about the history of hip hop music at activity tables, and tried their hands at scratching records with DJ Luke Duke.

This year's Hip Hop Festival will be aired on Cambridge Community Television. Contact [psinclair@agassiz.org](mailto:psinclair@agassiz.org) for more information. Please enjoy these photos taken by photographer Phil Fryer. See you next year!



## City Wide

### **PARTICIPATE IN CAMBRIDGE'S FIRST CITY-WIDE OPEN STUDIOS**

Cambridge Open Studios is collaboration between the Cambridge Arts Council, Cambridgeport Artists Open Studios (CAOS), North Cambridge All Arts Open Studios (NoCa), and artists and organizations in East, West, and Mid Cambridge.

All artists, musicians and artisans living and/or working in Cambridge or collaborating with a participating institution are invited and encouraged to participate! Artists are welcome to show in their own space (i.e. a studio or home) or in a group venue.

For details and to register, go to [www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/CambridgeOpenStudios.html](http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/CambridgeOpenStudios.html) or contact the Cambridge Arts Council at [cos@cambridgema.gov](mailto:cos@cambridgema.gov) or (617) 349-4385.

Registration closes **Thursday, March 19, 2009**. Registration fees apply.

### **CAMBRIDGE ART ASSOCIATION PRESENTS ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**

Celebrate 65 years of the Cambridge Art Association (CAA) at the Venetian Night Gala. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, elegant food stations, an open wine bar, dancing, and silent and live auctions. The event is \$100 per person and \$75 for artist members (bring a guest for \$75.)

**What:** Venetian Night Gala  
**When:** March 14th, 2009 at 7 PM  
**Where:** Cambridge Boat Club, 2 Gerry's Landing, Cambridge  
**Tickets:** Call (617) 876-0246 or email the CAA office at [info@cambridgeart.org](mailto:info@cambridgeart.org)

Learn more online at [www.cambridgeart.org](http://www.cambridgeart.org).

### VOLUNTEER FOR MASSRECYCLE



MassRecycle, Inc, the Massachusetts Recycling Coalition, is seeking energetic individuals to help represent the organization at community events and trade shows, and to educate the general public about recycling. Events include Down2Earth (April), EarthFest (May), Lowell Folk Festival (July) and others. We are a volunteer-based organization in need of enthusiastic, committed individuals to join our team.

**How to apply:** If you are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer, please contact MassRecycle at (617) 338-0244 or at [info@massrecycle.org](mailto:info@massrecycle.org).

### CARDULLO'S OWNER REMEMBERED

Prepared by Harvard Square Business Association

I am sure that by now many of you have heard that Frances Cardullo has passed away. Frances epitomized the essence of Harvard Square and will be dearly missed. Anytime we needed an extra hand, a passionate opinion about Harvard Square, a genuine and no-holds-barred opinion about the business association, Frances was always by our side.

Frances attended Harvard Square Business Association board meetings devotedly; be it as a board member or simply as a member-in-good-standing. Our great neighbor, community partner, Harvard Square cheerleader, hard worker, and opinion-maker will be missed and not forgotten.

As many know, Frances generously shared that same Cardullo's window with every Boston Red Sox fan that passed by; even those who rooted for the other teams. It is with that passion for the game, and that love of life that we say, Rest in Peace, dear friend.



## Sacramento Street Gallery

### "A DRAWING SHOW"

Sacramento St. Gallery is proud to present "A Drawing Show", featuring works by Raul Gonzalez, Jane Sherrill, and Ellen Stutman.

Raul Gonzalez, founding member of the art collective The Miracle Five, creates larger narratives through drawing and painting that draw upon history and the fictional landscape to create images that reflect the human experience.

Jane Sherrill states, "Over the years I've come to experience life as a dense web of shadings and markings, and it is this that I depict in my work. I tear old paintings into strips which I then weave together to form new collages . . ."

Ellen Stutman's says of her work, "These small drawings made with watercolor and black walnut ink are an exploration of the texture of a landscape rather than its form."

Please join us for an opening reception on **Sunday, March 29th** from 4:00–6:00 PM. Light refreshments will be served. "A Drawing Show" runs through May 1st.

Gallery hours are Monday-Friday from 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM.



Starting top left: "Bison with Thorns" by Raul Gonzalez, "Rockface" by Ellen Stutman, "Redscape" by Jane Sherrill



# Community Calendar

## March 2009

Tuesday, March 10	2:00 PM	Introducing Arts Performance & Club Passim's Culture for Kids present "Laura Cortese" Baldwin School Stage, 28 Sacramento St.
Wednesday, March 11	6:00 - 7:30 PM	ABC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento St, 2nd Floor Public welcome
Tuesday, March 17		Evacuation Day Vacation Baldwin School closed, Afterschool & Preschool closed
Wednesday, March 18	7:30 - 9:00 PM	ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Baldwin School Cafeteria, 28 Sacramento St. All are welcome
Friday, March 20		First Day of Spring

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### THE WHISTLER MARCH 2009



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