

# the Whistler

Newsletter of the Agassiz Neighborhood Council

February '06

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## ANC News

### NOTES FROM THE JAN. 18 MEETING

#### **Agassiz Community Considers Options for Aging Population**

Kate Frank, Agassiz neighborhood resident since 1972, once provided at-home care for her aging mother. During this time, she compiled a pool of useful contacts, people she felt comfortable recommending to friends when they too were looking for assistance. Mrs. Frank told neighbors at the January 18th ANC meeting, "Bit by bit, I met people I could go back to."

For Mrs. Frank, the ideal program for retirees living at home would include a range of specific services they were seeking rather than something initiated by a for-profit group. Such a program might be designed as a membership and offer access to information and referrals for known and trusted home-based service providers. Mrs. Frank explained the program could also seek assistance from local universities as well as enlist volunteers, people happy to assist with everyday

tasks like helping an older person taxi a pet to the vet. A barter exchange of services among members might also be considered.

"We don't need to reinvent the wheel," she told neighbors at the meeting, "We can look to framework evolved by other groups." Her interest in what is often referred to as "virtual retirement" was supported by an inspiring article she read in *AARP Bulletin* (Dec. 2005) that detailed a similar program across the river in Beacon Hill. She also learned that, while she was polling her neighbors to gauge their levels of interest, Agassiz Neighborhood Council Executive Director Terry DeLancey and staff were constructing a proposal for a similar program. Mrs. Frank has since begun working with the ANC on this issue.

Mrs. Frank feels that the key to starting such a program is to pull together a core group of passionate, resourceful people. As Mrs. Frank concluded her presentation, ANC Chair Stephen

### NEXT ANC MONTHLY MEETING



**FEBRUARY 15 - 7:30 PM**  
Baldwin School Cafeteria - 28  
Sacramento Street  
(Press buzzer for entry)

#### AGENDA

Welcome Michelle Chouinard of  
PolkaDot Pajamas

Cambridge/Agassiz/Harvard Fund rep.  
Miriam Goldberg provides a review of  
two proposed projects:  
"Aging in Place" (see page 2)  
Media lab

Harvard provides updates:  
Construction  
Law School Plans

Fuel & chemical storage at LISE building  
(see page 5)

Diamond thanked her, saying, "This is the beginning of what we hope is a really good initiative coming out of the neighborhoods."

To learn more about Beacon Hill's virtual retirement program see: <http://www.beaconhillvillage.org>. To get involved with Agassiz's initiative contact the ANC at (617) 349-6287.

### **Neighborhood 9 Works Towards Becoming A Neighborhood Conservation District**

Charlotte Moore joined the ANC to describe Neighborhood 9's experience with becoming a neighborhood conservation district. "This is a concept in use in about 30 cities in the country," she told the council. "It's a way for a neighborhood to express what it feels is important to itself and to protect its defining features."

Covered under Article III of Chapter 2.78 of the Cambridge City Code, conservation districts are less restrictive than historic districts and only apply to a property's features that are visible from a public way. Mrs. Moore passed around a pamphlet produced by the Cambridge Historical Commission that explained: "Districts may adopt both binding and non-binding categories of review, allowing regulations to be closely tailored to the needs of a neighborhood."

Following the submission of a petition signed by 144 Neighborhood 9 residents, the Cambridge Historical Commission began a yearlong study to decide whether the area should become a conservation district. The city manager chose seven people to serve on a study committee that operated from 2004 to 2005, during which time the neighborhood operated as a conservation district and the Cambridge Historical Commission reviewed construction projects proposed during that year. Also, the study committee's meetings were open to the public. Mrs. Moore, while not an official member, attends meetings and is closely involved with the project.

The same evening that Mrs. Moore spoke at the ANC meeting, Neighborhood 9 held its own meeting concerning issues the study committee has been working on, including determining the

district's boundaries (the debate being whether they should end at Chauncy St.). Mrs. Moore told the council, "Our neighborhood's defining features are large through streets with big apartment buildings enclosing the more intimate pedestrian-scale streets; many double houses, Mansards, and Queen Anne homes often built up to the edge of the sidewalk; and low fences surrounding front yards, with higher fences at the back."

According to Mrs. Moore, threats to the neighborhood's architectural landscape included incremental changes like the enclosure of open porches and verandas to create greater space indoors, and out-of-scale additions like dormers to buildings. In the near future, the study committee plans to take a postcard poll of the entire neighborhood. The committee will also present a study report at a later meeting, where they will hear recommendations and take the public's opinions into account.

Agassiz neighbors posed several questions:

**Q:** Why did Neighborhood 9 apply to become a conservation district?

**A:** At a time when both Harvard and Lesley Universities are growing, Neighborhood 9 residents want to take steps to protect the quality of life in their quiet, architecturally varied neighborhood.

### **Fred Meyer, Realtor**

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**Q:** What does the study group imagine will happen if someone attaches a handicap ramp that doesn't comply with the conservation district's wishes?

**A:** The committee might grant them a certificate of hardship or make suggestions upon seeing the plans to build a stylistically appropriate addition.

To learn more about Historic Conservation Districts in Cambridge, visit [www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~Historic](http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~Historic). Those interested in pursuing such a project in the Agassiz Neighborhood should feel free to contact the ANC at (617) 349-6287.

**Listed below are Neighborhood 9's study committee meeting dates:**

Lower Common Study Committee: *Should the City Council establish a Neighborhood Conservation District in the southern half of Neighborhood 9 (below Linnaean St.)?*

Public meetings at Harvard Epworth Methodist Church, 1555 Mass. Ave.

Wednesday, January 25, 7:30-9:00 pm (neighborhood forum)

Wednesday, February 1, 7:30-9:00 pm (study committee regular meeting)

Avon Hill Neighborhood Conservation District Boundary Study Committee: *Raymond Street has petitioned to be removed from the District. Should the Avon Hill NCD change its boundaries to accept this? To learn more about this process and how Conservation District Commissions and study committees operate, you can also attend the following meetings:*

All the meetings are held at St. Peter Parish Lower Church, 5:30-7:00 pm (\*Tentative dates)

Thursday, January 19, 2006

Wednesday, February 8, 2006

Wednesday, February 15, 2006

Wednesday, March 8\*

Wednesday, March 29\*

Wednesday, April 26\*

Wednesday, May 17\*

Wednesday, June 7\*

Wednesday, June 28\*

**Lesley University Update**

Bill Doncaster of Lesley University told the ANC that Lesley's deal with the MBTA concerning the air rights space in Porter Square is still awaiting finalization. They hope to settle at the end of the month.

Lesley is currently in discussions to purchase the North Prospect Church on Mass. Ave. and Roseland Street. Mr. Doncaster explained, "The desire to own the church is that it went on sale and is near our campus. Lesley might want to use it as a meeting space as it seats about 400 and currently Lesley's largest hall only seats up to 180." He added that the congregation plans to move to Medford and the Agassiz Preschool will talk to Lesley about its options. He agreed to report back to the university that the community is concerned about:

- Future use or changes to the building
- The Preschool and the Christmas Tree Sale it holds in December
- The open space next to the building

Mr. Doncaster also mentioned that Lesley University will join Harvard University and MIT to present their Town Gown Reports on Tuesday, February 7th at 7:30 pm at Cambridge City Hall, 344 Broadway, 2nd Floor Conference Room (corner of Broadway and Inman Streets.)

Also, the ANC is searching for people who are interested in joining a Lesley University/Porter Square working group. For more information, call (617) 349-6287 ext. 10 or email [psinclair@agassiz.org](mailto:psinclair@agassiz.org).

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# ANC Community

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## Become a Donor!

Donations to the ANC provide valuable funds for many programs and services, including this newsletter. Donations also fund scholarships, community events and mailings.

Tax deductible donations can be sent to: Agassiz Neighborhood Council, 20 Sacramento St., Cambridge, MA 02138.



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## **NOTES FROM A LICENSE COMMISSION MEETING**

Prepared by Kate Frank

On Tuesday, January 24, the City of Cambridge Licensing Commission held a hearing to review Harvard's application for a permit to store fuel for an emergency generator and other chemical products that will be used in teaching and laboratory work by faculty and students engaged in research in the Laboratory for Integrated Science and Engineering (LISE) building. This building is currently under construction on Oxford Street across from the MCZ Museum. Charles Studen and Tom Lucey spoke on behalf of Harvard's application, assisted by Jonathan Eisenberg, a fire protection engineer who has been addressing the safety aspects of the LISE building's design and construction.

Eight Agassiz residents attended the hearing and posed questions concerning the specific names of chemicals to be stored. Concern was expressed that *industrial* quantities of potentially hazardous materials may be stored on this site that is located in a *residential* neighborhood with an elementary school close by. Agassiz residents sought more specifics than could be provided at the time of the hearing. In particular, they requested more information as to the risks posed to people who might be exposed to fumes or debris in the event of an accident on site.

In response to the concerns of the public expressed at the hearing, members of the Licensing Commission voted to continue their discussion of Harvard's application for a permit until February 21 at 6:00 pm. They encouraged Harvard representatives to meet with Agassiz residents for a more complete review of neighborhood questions about safety issues at the LISE building. Harvard representatives explained that they were already on the agenda for the next ANC meeting, on Wednesday, February 15, at 7:30 pm. Tom Lucey asked if a member of the Fire Dept. could also attend the ANC meeting since they are first responders for emergency handling of hazardous materials and must approve Harvard's plan before a permit can be issued.

The ANC meeting will provide Agassiz residents and parents of children attending the Maria L. Baldwin School a forum to voice their concerns, raise questions and judge for themselves the adequacy of Harvard's plans or whether additional precautions should be requested.



## **Agassiz School Programs**

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### **"UGLI CREATURES" CREATIONS**

Prepared by Aven Paquette, 4th grade

This month my Mom came in to ask if she could do a project with us. She had a whole bunch of cool ideas and she chose to make "Ugli Creatures." Ugli Creatures are little dolls with special names, powers and stories. We created the shape for our own creatures, picked out fabrics (that my mom brought in) gave them names and wrote stories about their powers and their lives.

I have an Ugli Doll named Wage, (which is were she got the idea) who is orange and wears an apron. Wage works in a supermart, where nobody knows he works there. I think we got Wage from Strawberries. For this choice I made Spark. Spark has a twin brother on the other side of his body. Spark and his brother are orange and red.

### **Here's a list of other Agassiz Afterschool kids and their Ugli Creatures:**

Zoe Bourgoin-Stone & Crazy Head  
Jacob Henebry & Jaze  
Danielle Heims-Waldron & Star Dust  
Samantha Mai & Sandy  
SaDaryl Parham & Pinhead & Bobo Macho  
Anna Klug & Crabbie  
Emmett Vorspan-Stein & Bart  
Katie Laurila & Jeepers  
Jimmy Comeau & Pie

### **A Message from Ayano Strickland, Afterschool 4-5th Grade Site Director**

Aven's mother Mary Ellen has been an active and involved parent since she and Aven joined our community this fall. When Mary Ellen came to me with a list of activities she was willing to do, I was thrilled that she cared so much about Aven's program as to offer her time, tal-

ents and attention. Almost a dozen kids chose to do this activity and it went on for both choice periods! I so look forward to the next activity Mary Ellen runs.

So, with a story like this who will be the next parent to offer their time and courage? Far from a challenge, rather please consider this a heart-felt invitation to parents to share their children's program with us!



Bart by Emmett Vorspan-Stein

## Introducing Arts Event!

### AGASSIZ HIP HOP FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING 11 YEARS WITH A SHOWCASE OF OLD FAVORITES AND NEW ARTISTS

Cambridge, MA (January 2006) – The Agassiz Neighborhood Council presents an Introducing Arts series favorite for school age kids – the 11th Annual **HIP HOP FESTIVAL**, a showcase of hip hop dance and rap performed by local talent. The event will be held at the Maria L. Baldwin Elementary School on **Thursday, February 23rd at 2:00 P.M.** on stage in the gymnasium. Seating is general admission and tickets are \$2 per person or \$5 per family group.



Hip Hop Dance

“This program is the highlight of our season,” explains ANC Executive Director Terry DeLancey, “It’s an age-appropriate performance of a style of music the children love and it’s a great way for students from across Cambridge to interact, as well as a networking opportunity for young



MC Naheem Allah

artists that perform.”

Longstanding Master of Ceremonies Naheem Allah will host the event, which includes returning favorites

OrigiNation and Jam'nastics dance companies, and newcomers hip hop/rock artist EJ Labb, kid's rap group CAC Kids with Joseph Corby, and more.



EJ Labb

Call or email for more information: 617-349-6287 ext. 10 or psinclair@agassiz.org.

## City Wide

### City of Cambridge Energy Fair

The Cambridge Community Development Department is hosting a home and energy fair to provide residents with expert advice on simple and effective ways to save energy and cut costs, as well as improve the health of their homes and families. Admission to the fair is free, and there will be childcare, along with kids' activities and environmental giveaways. The fair will be held Saturday, February 11, from 10 AM to 1 PM at Cambridge Rindge and Latin (high) School, 459 Broadway.

The fair will feature energy, home, and health experts from the Building Materials Resource Center, NSTAR, Mass Energy Consumers Alliance, Energy Bucks, and the Cambridge Health Alliance, among others. Workshops and exhibits will run throughout the fair and high-light easy, affordable ways for Cambridge residents to improve their homes.

There will also be information about the city's affordable housing and transportation programs, fuel assistance programs, renewable energy, lighting, yard design, personal health, Energy Star products, consumer protection, and other subjects. For more information, call 617-349-4604 or go to [www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/](http://www.cambridgema.gov/~CDD/).

### Snow Removal Reminder

The City's Sidewalk Snow & Ice Removal Ordinance requires Cambridge property owners to remove snow from all sidewalks next to their

property or business within 12 hours after snow stops falling in the daytime, and before 1 p.m. when the snow has fallen during the night. Property owners must also clear ice off sidewalks or treat them with an ice-melting substance within 6 hours of the time the ice forms. Violations of this ordinance will be enforced with a \$25 fine.

If your home or business is on a corner or a crosswalk, please shovel an opening wide enough to enable passage from the sidewalk to the street. If your business is next to a crosswalk, please shovel an opening wide enough to enable persons with strollers or in a wheelchair to get onto the sidewalks safely! Also, don't forget to shovel the side-street sidewalk as well as the sidewalk in front of your business.

**Recycle Your Unneeded Phone Books!**

Delivery of 2006 phone books has started! Remember to recycle old phone books and any unneeded new ones.

Just remove the plastic wrap!



Place phonebooks on collection day with mixed paper in a paper bag next to your blue bin or in a paper "toter" on wheels.

If every Cambridge household recycles an old phone book or a new one that is not needed, we could recycle about 225,000 pounds of paper. That's almost 2000 trees!

**Harvard University Event**

The Harvard Museum of Natural History (HMNH) announces that David Suzuki, geneticist, author, and Canadian television broadcaster, will be the recipient of the 2006 Roger Tory Peterson Medal. Suzuki will be the Keynote speaker at the Peterson Memorial Lecture on Sunday, March 19, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. in the Science Center Hall B, Harvard University. Suzuki argues that homo sapiens have a unique capacity to engage in long-term planning based on predictions about the future and that we must use our innate ability to connect the dots between our behaviors and their consequences if we are to shape a better future in a lecture entitled, "Homo Sapiens: Out of Balance with Nature."

For more information, see [www.hmn.harvard.edu](http://www.hmn.harvard.edu) or call 617-495-3045.

**Lesley University AIB Event**

*Drawing Breath: A Retrospective Whisper from Ralph Steadman*

February 2-March 19

Reception: Thursday, February 16th, 5-7 pm.

AIB Main Gallery, 700 Beacon St, Boston

Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sunday, 12:00 - 5:00 pm

The Art Institute of Boston's latest exhibit features 65 works by British illustrator and caricaturist Ralph Steadman, who created the pieces specifically for AIB's gallery. Call (617) 585-6600 for more information.

**Accessible Ice Skating**

February 26 - Accessible Ice Skating program offered by DCR Universal Access Program at the Flynn Memorial Rink, Woodland Road in Medford, 12 - 1:50 pm and again on March 12, same time. There are minimal fees for admission and conventional skates. One end of the rink will be coned off for sled skating. Call All Out Adventures at 413-527-8980 to register.

**Culture for Kids at Club Passim**

*Crossing Borders - A musical journey with Guy Mendilow*

February 20th (3:30 - 5:30 pm.)

Guy Mendilow is making his first appearance as a Culture for Kids performer. Please join us for what is sure to be an enthralling afternoon crossing musical boundaries. For more information call (617)492-5300 or go to <http://www.clubpassim.org/cultureforkids>.

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# Community Calendar

## February 2006

Thursday, February 2		Happy Ground Hog's Day!
Tuesday, February 14		Valentine's Day
Wednesday, February 15	6:00 - 7:30 PM	ANC Board Meeting, 20 Sacramento Street, 2nd Floor Public Welcome
Wednesday, February 15	7:30 - 9:00 PM	ANC Monthly Meeting (see page 1 for agenda) Baldwin School Dining Hall, 28 Sacramento Street All are welcome
Monday, February 20th		President's Day, Baldwin School and ANC closed
Tuesday, February 21st		Baldwin School vacation week through Friday, February 24
Thursday, February 23rd	2 PM	11th Annual Agassiz Hip Hop Festival Baldwin School Stage

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## The Whistler February 2006

Agassiz Neighborhood Council

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