



# Environment & Open Space

**T**he Alewife area embraces numerous open spaces, parks, undeveloped lands, and the city's only wild land, the Metropolitan District Commission's

Alewife Reservation. It is hardly the glorious link in the Emerald Necklace envisioned a century ago by Charles Eliot, but it does serve to contain transportation and commerce, to limit urban growth, and to preserve natural scale and livability for all. Alewife is a valued asset to many neighbors, employees, and transit users, who can glimpse its geese winging overhead on their way to work, or spot its heron seizing fish at lunch hour, or explore its secret sumac jungles at the edges of the day.

These open spaces are fragmented by highways, railroads, office parks, and shopping centers, and we think of them as different places (see map, page 22). Yet together, they comprise a great wealth of urban open space, unique in Cambridge. Periodically, nature reminds us that Alewife's spaces were once one place, a vast tidal swamp that served as sponge for waters draining from nearby hills after rains, and for ocean tidal flows rising on storms and waxing moons.

We have stemmed the tides, but not the floods, which now find little sanctuary in the old swamp. After 150 years of filling, trampling, and building, what remains of this vast storage system is a beggared fragment. Today, these waters take refuge instead in basements of homes and businesses.

Like the traffic that passes through Alewife, most of this water neither originates nor terminates in Cambridge. Unlike the traffic, the water is natural, bringing with it disconcerting news that Alewife is a watershed — a complex ecosystem with its own borders that flout our borders, and with behaviors that continue to challenge the welter of political jurisdictions with which we attempt to manage or control it. The floods at Alewife have also finally taught us that these wetlands are an economic asset, a fact we have long ignored at our expense.

A few stalwarts, who have understood these things for decades, have long fought to protect and restore this ecosystem and its vital parts. Their ranks have grown of late, and their persistence begins to show substantive fruits. (Ironically, it is the persistence of traffic here, more than anything, that has united concern about fragile lands, as Alex Stryksy notes here).

We now can measure progress on many open space fronts. Former wastelands have been recovered in style or set aside for restoration, and many efforts are in the works to recover the long neglected reservation. Yet as our stalwarts are quick to caution, the forces that transformed Alewife from a bucolic marsh are still with us. The opportunity now is to work with them, because we know that they are us.



Wishful fishing at Jerry's Pond

## A New Ecological Vision: Forward to the Past

by Alex Stryksy, Director  
Cambridge Conservation Commission

**F**rom the native Americans who trapped fish along its waterways to the corporations that create technology around its wetlands, humans have long recognized Alewife's enormous potential. Each generation has had its own vision of the place, invariably reflecting its needs at the time: food, raw materials, transportation, industry, dump, commerce, office, bioengineering.

Today, Alewife's natural riches remain hidden to many who see only the shopping centers and traffic jams. But for many others, these rare urban woods and wetlands offer an opportunity to enjoy wilderness and wildlife close by. For these people, a new vision of Alewife's future is emerging that includes protecting and restoring the abused remnants of a vast, ancient marsh.

It is ironic that Alewife's future includes a return to its past, and that controversial land-use proposals here have served as vital catalysts to stimulate interest in restoring the Alewife watershed. The Route 2 highway expansion and more recently, Arthur D. Little's proposal to acquire MDC park land (see page 28), have brought together the diverse Coalition for Alewife with a strong agenda for cleaner water,

enhanced wetlands and wildlife habitat, and a better protected floodplain. These goals are essential for maintaining the flora and fauna that still inhabit Alewife, and for preserving the beauty and value of this unique urban wild.

Besides fulfilling its legal responsibility to regulate wetland and floodplain activities, the Cambridge Conservation Commission is working with its counterparts in Arlington and Belmont to create a "new Alewife" in other ways. It has launched volunteer efforts to monitor pollutants in storm water entering Alewife Brook, and to study the anadromous fish run which still brings a few alewives from the ocean every spring to spawn. It has joined the MDC and a new state wetlands restoration agency in a successful effort to obtain a federal Floodplain Management Study for the Alewife floodplain. And it has participated in discussions about an ADL-MDC exchange that could have tremendous benefit for the reservation. The commission also continues its vigorous support of many activities to restore Alewife by other agencies and groups described in this section, including the formation of an Alewife Watershed Association.

This is an exciting time. Perhaps as never before, the opportunity exists to contribute to a new vision for Alewife's future, and to help make that vision real. The Conservation Commission welcomes your participation and support.

## MAPC Open Space Plan

**O**ver the years, many studies and reports addressed Alewife open space for other planning purposes: highways, public transit, economic development. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council's Open Space Plan, completed in 1985, billed itself as the first "formal planning exercise" focused specifically on Alewife open space.

The plan described Alewife open space as fragmented and unconnected, with many conflicting land uses under a host of different jurisdictions and owners. While some clearly understood the intrinsic value of open space, many regarded it as window dressing or wasteland.

Most importantly, no agency or group was advocating for open space or working to develop it as a network that could serve and enhance other uses at Alewife. The MAPC said that the time had come to inventory lands and establish guidelines to inform future planning here by any group for any purpose. Their recommendations:

- **Preserve natural quality of Alewife Reservation:** Sensitive and logical balance of landscape improvements and retention of natural character, encouraging plant diversity to enhance wildlife habitat, ecological stability, and esthetic value. Encourage more intensive uses where land is already disturbed and public access is easy; discourage intrusion in more sensitive wild areas.
- **Purchase/preserve unprotected lands:** Numerous sites were identified, several since purchased by the MDC. One high priority was the Belmont Uplands held by Arthur D. Little, Inc.
- **Create landscape design guidelines** for highways, pathways, and private development, providing buffers and emphasizing natural plantings.
- **Manage floodplain:** Improve wetlands management for flood retention and pollutant filtration, reduce paved areas, and require compensatory wetland storage for new development.
- **Identify open space network and provide linkages:** Tie diverse elements together and link with surrounding uses through system of pathways, using native plants and opening scenic views.
- **Integrate public & private open space:** Encourage owners to follow design guidelines, invite public review, provide physical connections, and manage function and appearance



Danehy Park skyline

Photos by Jerry Howard



# Alewife 101: How the Watershed Works

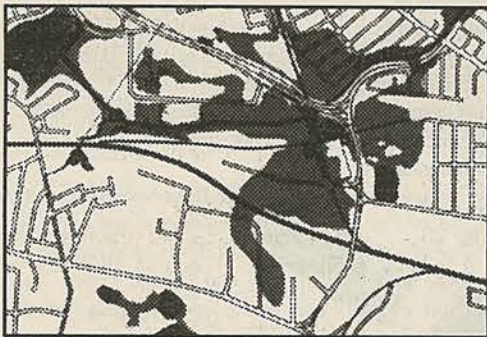


Flooding at the east parking lot at ADL in 1979

**G**eologists believe that for millennia, a river flowed south through what is now Alewife and Fresh Pond, joining the Charles. Some 12,000 years ago the last glacier rearranged the Boston Basin, filling this river valley with impervious layers of clay and leaving a moraine that stretched from Porter Square to Watertown, forming a new watershed divide.

A great swamp formed, serving as a giant sponge for seven square miles of present-day Belmont, Arlington and Cambridge, which drained into this new basin. Unable to seep into the ground or escape to the Charles, these waters found their way out Alewife Brook northeast to Mystic River into Boston Harbor — as the fish swims, a distance of nine miles. And at mean tide, a horizontal drop of less than one foot (see chart).

En route, Alewife waters joined a far larger flow from the 62-square mile Mystic River watershed. Because there was virtually no gradient, all this drained very slowly indeed. On high tides and after heavy rains, the water actually reversed direction, flooding



Alewife area 100 year flood plain

back into Alewife. As human activity fouled the swamp, putrescent waters backed up into Fresh Pond, polluting the city's water supply.

In the 1880s, the city solved that problem by severing the brook from the pond, but not the one caused by anopheles mosquitoes that bred in festering sloughs. The ensuing malaria epidemic led to the state's Freeman Hydrology Study in 1904. Charged to improve sanitary conditions in Alewife brook and

meadows, consulting engineer John Freeman concluded that the wetlands needed to be ditched to drain stagnant waters, and then periodically flushed. A flush could occur only when storm waters from the hills created pressure, but many forces resisted this. There was virtually no gradient (a problem actually increased by ditching, which lowered the area 10 inches as soils compressed). The only escape route, a meander, was clogged with sediment and debris. Downstream, flow was impeded as water met the larger surge from the

Mystic Lakes or the incoming tide. To hold the tides, Freeman prescribed a dam at Medford Center, built in 1906. To improve

**Factoid:** Percent of Belmont's watershed that drains through Alewife: **70%**

velocity, he advised a V-bottomed concrete channel for Alewife Brook, built in 1912 (see photo, page 4). To increase water storage, Freeman proposed linking the ponds and empty claypits into "a beautiful park like Back Bay Fens."

Instead, claypits became dumps, wetlands were filled for roads and factories, and much of the floodplain was paved. Flood water took refuge in East Arlington, North Cambridge, and Belmont basements. In 1955 Hurricane Diane, the storm of the century, almost floated Arthur D. Little's new building from its foundation beside the Little River. The MDC responded in 1965 by building the Amelia Earhart Dam farther downstream, 6.25 miles from Alewife, adding giant pumps in 1975. Before major storms, engineers now drain the system by releasing water at the Mystic Lake dams and lowering the level of the Mystic River Basin by pumping water through the dam into the harbor, creating greater capacity upstream.

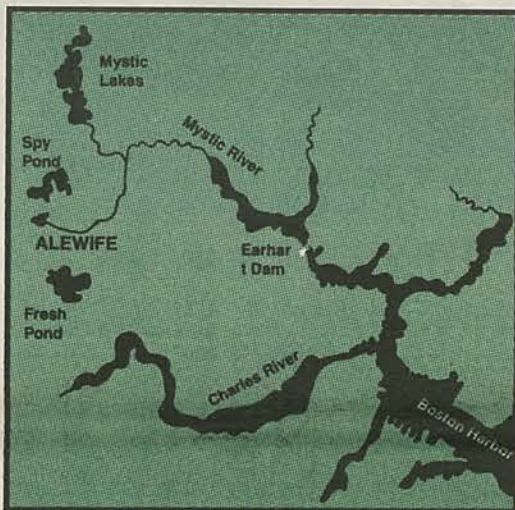
Even with these costly control measures, economic impact remained substantial: a 1981 MDC watershed study

tagged the flood damage of a major storm in the Alewife area at \$1.3 million. The study notes that flood levels in modern Alewife are almost exactly what they were in 1904. What has changed is that tidal fluctuations have been replaced by urban growth.

The best flood control management is ultimately futile if the floodplain continues to disappear. To build in the Alewife floodplain, developers must now demonstrate how they will compensate for the water storage they displace. (In the 1980s, the city actually allowed the basement level of two parking garages to serve this purpose, no longer allowed). The MDC and other groups want to recover lost storage capacity in the Alewife area, one reason for the upcoming Army Corps watershed study.

### Elevations

Just how flat the Alewife-Mystic River Basin really is — and why water drains so grudgingly toward the ocean — becomes clear by examining the elevations. Consider that over the 6.25 miles from Alewife to the Earhart Dam in Everett, the water level drops only 0.4 feet — five inches — and that, at normal high tide, Alewife is more than



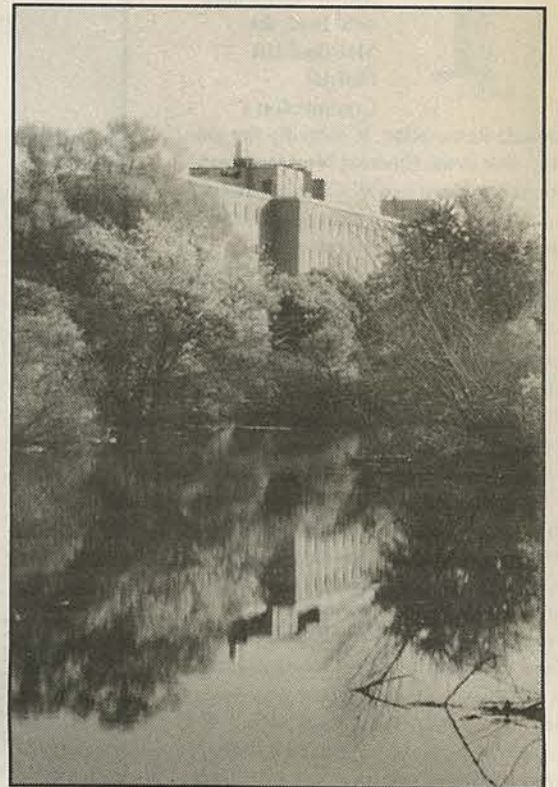
Mystic River watershed

three feet below Boston Harbor. During the Blizzard of 1978, Alewife was 8.2 feet beneath sea level! (See chart below.)

### Water Quality

Little River and Alewife Brook are "Class B-NS" (non-supporting) waterways, neither swimmable nor fishable. The sluggish flow allows decomposing organic matter to collect, which feeds algae and gobbles oxygen needed by aquatic life forms. While fecal bacteria levels are very high after a storm, sewage accounts only for a small percent of total pollution. The most significant source is urban runoff — storm water fouled by petroleum, road salt, sand, lawn fertilizer, industrial chemicals, etc., that washes into the watershed. Control of this "non-point" pollution is extremely difficult, because it comes from everywhere. While Mass. Water Resources Authority (MWRA) improvements will reduce sewage overflows, storm water runoff will probably increase as a result, so little net water quality gain is expected. A storm drain detection project is underway, and may help.

# Alewife Open Space Inventory



View from Little River

Discussion of the traffic aspects on these spaces can be found on the annotated map on page 17, which also shows how the emerging path network will connect the areas. Reservation properties are described on page 26.

### 1 Belmont Uplands

This valuable 12-acre section of woodland above Little Pond, once farmland, is zoned residential and owned by Arthur D. Little Inc., which has steadfastly preserved its option to develop the site but says it has no plans. Belmont and Cambridge officials are on record opposing development because of the impact on the contiguous wetlands.

### 2 MDC Rink Site

Unused since 1970, the 1957 Metropolitan District Commission rink in this Route 2 cloverleaf was removed last fall and replaced with a wildflower meadow that collects highway runoff during rainstorms, increasing floodwater storage and irrigating a fine collection of wild crab apples.

### 3 Route 2 Frontage

Arthur D. Little removed the ruins of an old gas station on its frontage property as a goodwill gesture last summer after complaints. Larger blights, including an abandoned nightclub, remain on this commercial strip, which the city hopes to upgrade to a proper gateway to Cambridge. There is strong concern that roads and development do not impinge on the wetlands here.

### 4 Arlington corridor

The land north of Route 2 is comprised of the MDC's recently-acquired 2-acre cattail marsh, Arlington's Thorndike Park and Magnolia playground, and the 17-acre Mugar site, zoned for mixed-use. Since 1951, neighbors have weathered a series of schemes to develop this land, including proposals for 2.1 million square feet of office space and three Rindge-like towers. All were foiled because of difficult access. At present, no plans are in the works. Many groups would love to save this flood-prone spot as open space. The nearby 2-acre cattail marsh was purchased by the MDC in 1991.

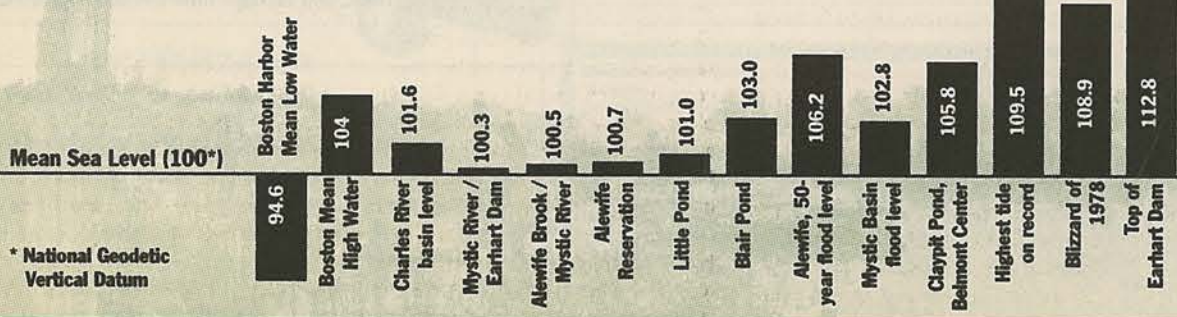
### 5 Linear Park

Completed in 1987 after the Red Line tunnel was dug beneath it, this elegant, mile-long park designed by Wallace Floyd Associates connects Davis Square with Alewife and the neighborhoods between. Its meandering path, rolling terrain, lush landscaping, and historic lampposts mask its history as a freight rail right-of-way.

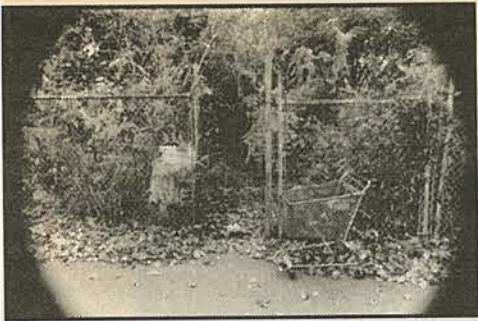
### 6 Alewife Center

This area between Alewife Brook Parkway, Clifton Street, and Russell Field was permitted for five office buildings in 1987. Only one has been built, but developer David Vickery and owner W.R. Grace are now floating plans for a supermarket-retail-hotel complex for the 23-acre site.

## Mystic River System Water Levels







The Concord Ave. entrance to Fresh Pond



Russell Field



Danehy Park

*"Perhaps Danehy's central mound can become a symbol that this is not an ordinary park but an extraordinary new kind of land that we all created."*

— Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Artist



Russell Field under snow



A view from the tracks



Linear Park

**7 Russell Field**

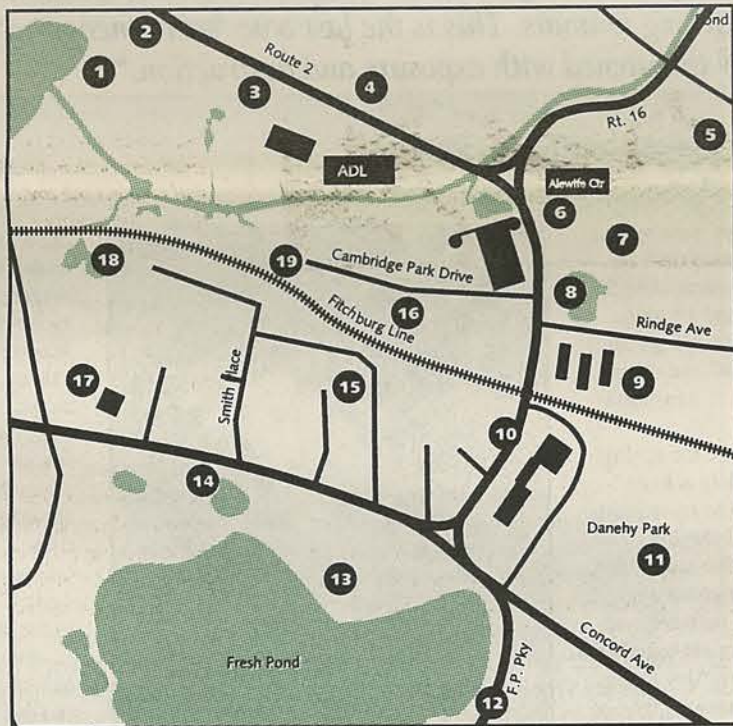
The city's 9-acre athletic field was restored in 1987 after Red Line construction. Pending results of a feasibility study by consultants Brown & Rowe to begin this July, this may become the site of the new football field and track complex originally planned for Danehy Park, where settling problems have prevented construction. Because the Friends of Russell Field's proposed tot lot and community garden will be included in this planning, their final placement and construction will be delayed. Planning for a supermarket complex and hotel, for reclaiming Jerry's Pond, and for the various bike and pedestrian path that will pass through here will affect the field. With careful oversight of these efforts, the entire 30+-acre area between Rindge Avenue and W.R. Grace could be vastly improved.

**8 Jerry's Pond**

A claypit in the 1860s, Jerry's Pond was a local swimming hole until the 1970s, when it was fenced and the adjacent eatery (Babo's) and factory (Lehigh Metals) were razed. This summer the MDC hopes to purchase 5.2 acres of pond and abutting land, long a priority for open space acquisition. Ultimately the MDC intends to improve the ecological functions and landscape, and to provide public access for passive recreation and education. Official designation as park land will also protect the area from future highway development. Despite weeds and trash, great blue heron and other wildlife are frequently admired by residents on the way to the MBTA station. Less obvious are the numerous huge carp, the Norway rats of urban wetlands, that thrash languidly in the polluted shallows amid shopping carts. What other species might thrive here, to be admired from a restaurant terrace where residents can come sip coffee in the morning sun?

**Patapanian site**

**9** This paved 3-acre site between Rindge towers and Jefferson Park, now used mostly for automo-



*Some places lie vacant, left to nurse their industrial wounds while we determine their fate.*

tive purposes, is for sale. The city has identified it as a possible site for a supermarket or housing. It is also mentioned as a "missing link" in the green corridor that links Alewife Reservation with Danehy Park and Fresh Pond.

**10 Alewife Brook Parkway**

A commercial strip for 50 years, the 1,500-foot stretch from Rindge to Concord Avenue should look like a parkway after construction is done this fall. Future landscape improvements to Fresh Pond Parkway will restore the green belt that connects Charles River with the Mystic Valley Parkway in Medford. It will also provide a crucial physical and visual connection between neighborhood open spaces.

**11 Danehy Park**

Perhaps more than any site, this park is a symbol for "Alchemy at Alewife." Once a maple swamp breeding malarial mosquitoes, it was excavated as a claypit and later filled as a city dump. With the coming of the Red Line to Alewife, the city's Community Development Department seized the moment to make a mountain: the MBTA needed a disposal site for more than a half-million cubic yards of crushed stone from the tunnel, and the city needed a cap for its landfill. After compacting, the site was transformed into a spectacular 55-acre park. The highest spot in Cambridge, this gracefully landscaped hill is surrounded by sports fields and playgrounds that serve nearby public housing and offer rustling grasses, blooming roses, and a rare vista of open sky. Twenty tons of broken glass were recycled into the

glittering "glassphalt" paths here by artist Mierle Ukeles. To transform the garbage mound into a cultural symbol of the community, Ukeles has new funding to refigure more elements of the landscape's past — old bricks, discarded tires, compressed kitchen appliances — into open air dance platforms and rest areas. "I see these big objects, highly densified, becoming friendly and meditative," she told Sanctuary Magazine in September 1994. Ukeles will also collect small items considered "precious by memory" from residents representing the 50 cultures living around the park, and encapsulate them into her structures.

**12 MDC Fresh Pond Parkway**

The MDC and city will soon begin planning to restore the parkway from the Concord Avenue rotaries south to Huron Avenue. This project will reclaim park land now used by businesses, and include sidewalks, curbs, plantings, period lighting, and a bike path.

**13 Fresh Pond Reservation**

This 316-acre area includes a deep 166-acre great pond encircled by a 2.5 mile path; three small ponds; Kingsley Park; the city's water treatment facility; a nine-hole golf course; and Lusitania Field, where Hispanic families gather for soccer on Sundays, much as Irish families before them enjoyed horse racing at the Racecourse and baseball at Rindge Field. The reservation is a primary source of city drinking water, a major recreation spot, and a layover area for migrating waterfowl.

**14 Concord Avenue west**

Seedy is too kind a word for this entrance to the Fresh Pond woods off Concord Avenue. Aesthetics, public safety, and conservation are key concerns for improving this area. The city plans to replace the chain-link fence and upgrade the sidewalk along the Fresh Pond side as part of a make-over of Cambridge's western gateway. With city assistance, the Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood Association recently landscaped the traffic triangle at Blanchard Road on the Belmont line.

**15 Quadrangle**

The city's 1979 revitalization plan for this area included a network of small parks with water features doubling as flood retention basins. While the scale of the new master plan is much reduced, the city still hopes to create some new open space here. Some would like to exhume Alewife Brook, long buried in a culvert.

**16 Freight Yards**

The MBTA has recently removed the surplus track and debris beside the Fitchburg line, where it is constructing a half-acre interim maintenance facility for use during reconstruction of the Boston Engine Terminal. This project should take about 3 years, after which the T says it will find another use for the structure.

**17 Rafferty Park**

Reconstructed last year, this public neighborhood park offers a new tot-lot, basketball courts, and playing field. It also helps buffer Cambridge Highlands from the Quadrangle and Sancta Maria Hospital.

**18 Blair Pond**

A master plan is now underway for this 7.1 acre site, including pond, acquired in 1991 by the MDC. To improve control of its new park land, the MDC has authorized the city to erect a fence on its property line across the middle of the cul-de-sac at the end of Mooney Street off Smith Place, long used as a truck turnaround. Cambridge Highland abutters have chronic complaints about noise and encroachment on this edge. Widely used as an illegal dump, the filthy cul-de-sac remains a shameful eyesore.

**19 Black Island**

The former site of Black Island, this 6-acre triangle at the end of Cambridge Park Drive is owned by commercial developer Spaulding & Slye, which has no immediate plans for its use. The MDC would consider acquisition of the land if it became available at an affordable price but the cost is prohibitive.



# The Alewife Reservation



*“The best approximation of the (area’s) natural state can be seen at the MDC reservation behind Acorn Park. This was sanitized before World War I; yet, at present, protected by a screen of dense brambles, it maintains an inner sanctum of wandering trails, swamp willows, and scuttering animals. This is the last true “terra incognita” in Cambridge, but one that is now threatened with exposure and destruction.”*

— Arthur Krim, 1977

The 133-acre Alewife Reservation, originally obtained with land for the Alewife Brook Parkway in the early 1900s, is part of the Metropolitan District Commission’s 17,000-acre parks system, founded by Charles Eliot in 1893. Eliot envisioned Fresh Pond, Alewife, and Spy Pond as links in a chain of unique open spaces stretching from the Charles River to the Mystic River Valley and Middlesex Fells, connected by landscaped parkways.

Alewife Reservation had a less kind fate. Long a kind of ugly ducking amid the MDC’s preened flock of parks and reservations, this land has not been managed as a reservation and enjoys no operating budget. After almost a decade of concerted efforts by MDC plan-

urbanization. All its waterways were rechanneled, and much of it was farmed until the late 1940s. In 1953, the state earmarked 55 acres for a subway terminus and a storage yard. The land was not freed from legislative hold until 1980, when the MDC and other agencies were embattled here in transportation planning.

During these decades, before the ecological value of wetlands was widely acknowledged, the MDC gave priority to more prominent properties with parks and playing fields. And Alewife Reservation, unlike many MDC lands, had no strong advocacy group until the late 1980s, when the threat of massive roadways through the wetlands brought together the tri-community Coalition for Alewife and MDC in a battle to save the parkway, finally won in 1990 (see page 9).

The Coalition has formed a firm alliance with the MDC’s planning staff. Members note that the MDC fought valiantly, and successfully, against more powerful state agencies to restore its parkway, and has since then worked arduously to secure the resources needed to restore and develop the reservation. The Coalition has highest praise for the MDC’s recent commitment to

neighborhoods and environment, but faults the agency for its long-term lack of management.

MDC Director of Planning Julia O’Brien allows that the reservation has been a victim of benign neglect, and explains that this has cut both ways: Mere ownership of park land



Great Blue Heron at Perch Pond

has kept a myriad of encroachments at bay, and the lack of intensive management has given nature a chance to regenerate.

The wetlands, so critical for wildlife habitat and flood control, have been invaded by aggressive, non-native weeds, yet a surprisingly diverse plant and animal community has emerged. These scarred acres have a diverse topography with varied habitats and a wonderfully wild feel. There are wide vistas and hidden groves, where one can almost get lost. The reservation is a testament to nature’s power of regeneration, and an inspiration to the groups that have come forth to protect and restore it.

The rising interest in the Alewife Reservation leads many advocates to worry

about how to prevent people from “loving it to death,” a fate of too many urban parks, where the only wildlife are pigeons, carp, and rats. Advocates insist that greater use must be accompanied by higher sensitivity to species that depend on the area for survival, and expect issues of public access to become important subjects of debate. Some feel that human intrusion must be minimal. Others argue that Alewife needs a passionate constituency to support it. Without “visitation rights,” this will be hard to sustain. They believe it can be achieved with sensitive trail design, careful management, and restrictions in the more delicate areas.

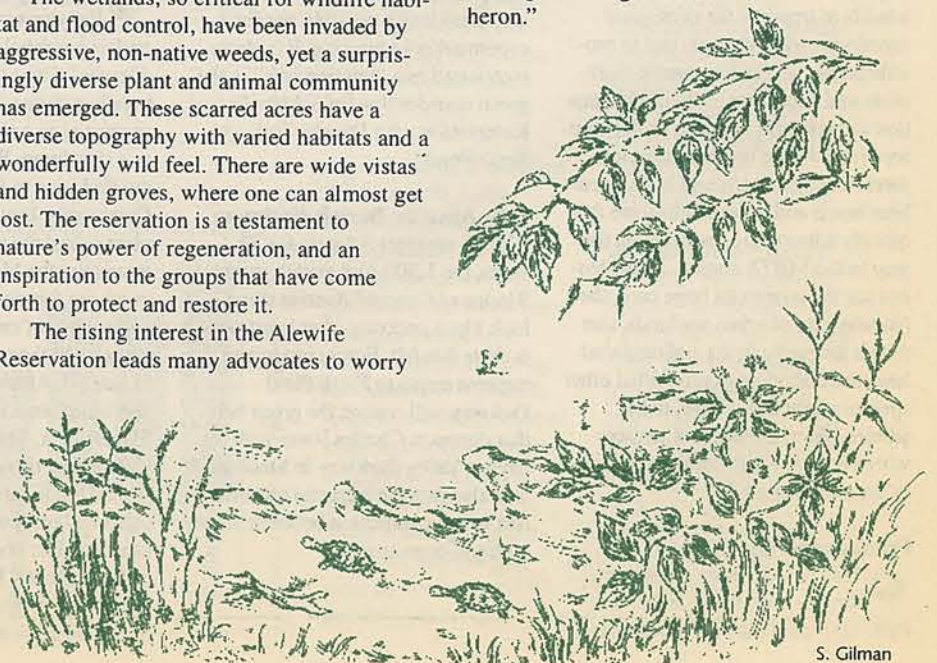
And most agree with former MDC planner John Krajovic, who insists that “Alewife can become a great teaching tool. The land and its inhabitants offer effective ways to engage people in the site, make them aware of basic ecological precepts, and demonstrate that a wetland or watershed boundary does not stop at an MDC property line. We hope that here, more people will learn that what they do in their back yard affects what happens to the blue-backed herring and the great blue heron.”



Wild grapes scale the fence surrounding Black Island

ners and community advocates, however, Alewife now seems poised to emerge as, if not a quite a swan, a full-fledged self-respecting duck.

Certainly no part of this reservation is virgin land, and there is precious little that has not been scarred by centuries of industry and



S. Gilman



## The MDC's Commitment to Alewife

By Julia O'Brien,  
Director of Planning,  
Metropolitan District  
Commission

The Alewife Reservation preserves important remnants of the extensive wetlands that once bordered the Mystic River and its tributaries, and is a critical component of the natural systems that underlie urban development at the northwestern gateway to Cambridge. It provides flood storage, wildlife habitat, ground water recharge areas, and the scenery that gives a sense of place to the border between suburb and city. Few urban properties offer the diverse opportunities afforded here for hiking, canoeing, bird watching, and the study of ecology and natural history.

The MDC proposes to manage the Reservation as an "urban wild," where natural conditions predominate and public use is focused on the enjoyment of those conditions. A new land management plan will emphasize wetlands restoration to improve natural habitats and water quality. The apparent simplicity of this approach is deceptive, as management of a natural area in an urban setting is a constant challenge.

The MDC has taken several steps to begin the restoration and enhancement of the Reservation, including:

- Completing a boundary survey;
- Removing the remains of the



Belmont skating rink, eliminating a community eyesore and restoring more than two acres of natural flood storage;

- Acquiring the cattail marsh north of Route 2;
- Initiating a master plan for Blair Pond, now underway;
- Securing commitment from the Army Corps of Engineers to update the MDC's 1981 hydrology study, to begin this fall;
- Completing a master plan for upgrading Alewife Brook Parkway from Route 2 to Medford;
- Initiating plans to purchase Jerry's Pond.

For the past three years, the MDC has also conducted extensive negotiations with Arthur D. Little, Inc. and the Coalition for Alewife on the future of the parking lot on the Reservation's east

end, which ADL has leased since 1961. Regardless of the outcome of these discussions, this process has brought new energy and resources to bear for the future of the Reservation (see page 28). In partnership with the MDC, the Coalition for Alewife has succeeded in assuring that the Reservation will be a significant, well-protected piece of park land, and that systems will be in place for its improvement and management.

The MDC stands committed to the conservation of the Reservation, its environmental diversity, its flood plain and wetlands; to the creation of recreational and educational opportunities for neighbors and park users; to the protection of the parkways; and to our historic, system-wide planning approach. Our goal is to manage Alewife like the MDC's Belle Island Marsh and Blue Hills Reservations, urban wilds that comprise more natural land than manicured landscapes. Each reservation has benefitted from a professional ranger staff that has developed site-specific management and conservation plans.

To achieve these ends, the MDC depends on the sustained and informed advocacy of citizen groups, local conservation commissions, and the many caring individuals who know and love this land. Together we will achieve a landmark urban wild.



Bird watching on a Sunday afternoon, Little River

## Reservation Riverway Park

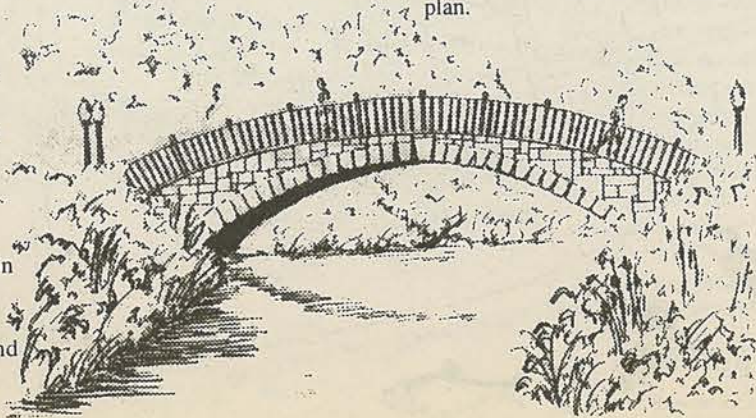
The 1955 MAPC study recommended that the MDC develop a passive recreation area at the east end of the reservation between the Alewife Station and Arthur D. Little, a site already seriously disturbed by construction. Planners envisioned a "pleasant, natural setting with limited site development where residents, workers, and visitors could enjoy quiet activities along Little River," possibly echoing the theme of Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace landscapes in Boston. The proposal for the park included:

- Crushed stone pathways and foot bridge

- Water fountain, bike racks, lighting, canoe launch, picnic tables
- Vegetative buffer to prevent encroachment on more sensitive wetlands

- Reclaiming and restoring 3.3-acre parking lot used by ADL

While the Riverway Park concept appeals to MDC planners, nothing is likely to happen here until the Reservation gets a master plan.



## Progress & Projects:

### Alewife Boundary Survey

Completed last winter, this \$50,000 MDC survey reestablishes the exact acreage and boundaries of the MDC reservation and surrounding parkway lands, now marked clearly with cement posts. This will inform abutters of property lines, help prevent encroachment, and enable better policing to deter illegal dumping. It also includes "planning quality" maps deemed essential for future master planning and wetlands restoration.

### Open Space Expansion

The MDC has expanded the Reservation as opportunities have become available since 1980, when it acquired a most sensitive acre near Perch Pond then planned for an office building. It has since obtained the old Fitchburg freight cut-off (now the Belmont bike path), the Blair Pond area (7.1 acres, 1991), and a cattail marsh just across Route 2 (1.9 acres, 1993). Negotiations are presently underway to purchase Jerry's Pond (5.2 acres).

Several other Alewife sites are listed for possible purchase through the MDC's computerized acquisition program, which evaluates potential properties according to many variables, determined in part by community participation. While the MDC "acquires aggressively" from its priority and short-term categories, says program author Dan Driscoll, these ratings serve as guidelines, not directives. The MDC is unlikely to pursue larger alewife parcels before funding its master plan and park restorations.

On the Alewife list are the Mugar site (short-term), and the Triangle tip (Black Island) and ADL wetlands (both medium). Soon to be added as a priority is the short section of Wellington Brook between Blanchard Road and Blair Pond.

Purchases are funded through state open space bond monies determined annually by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. The three-phase purchase process includes land survey, appraisal, and negotiation.

### Army Corps Floodplain Study

At the MDC's request, this fall the Army Corps of Engineers will begin a floodplain management survey of the Alewife watershed that will update the MDC's 1981 hydrology study — answering pleas of the three local conservation commissions, who for years have pressed for a "detailed analysis tool" to guide development planning. This report should help predict the cumulative impact of projected development on the watershed, and yield data that will guide wetlands restoration efforts. The year-long study will determine the location and extent of existing flood problems, and identify potential locations for future flood storage in the watershed.

### Wetlands Restoration Program

Alewife is one of three pilot sites chosen for a new state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs program that has pledged to help identify available programs and find funding to restore degraded wetlands. Director Christy Foote-Smith says that it's hard to predict just what restoration could mean for Alewife without more careful study of the hydrology and ecology. To get funding, she says local advocates need to clarify their priorities, which might include: Controlling rampant spread of such exotic invaders as phragmites and loosestrife; restoring the alewife fishery and spawning grounds; and upgrading water quality and wildlife habitats.

### Parkway East Master Plan

The MDC is completing a master plan to upgrade the character of the Alewife Brook and Mystic Valley parkway lands from Route 2 east to Medford. The restoration, funded by Algonquin Gas and developed by landscape architects Brown & Rowe with extensive community review, clarifies the MDC's vision and will serve to secure funding. The plan recommends that the Alewife Brook Parkway land be officially included as part of the Reservation. The \$13 million, 3.2 mile project will include new curbing, historic lighting, landscaping, signage, and a multi-purpose commuter path that will connect at Alewife with the Minuteman Bikeway and other paths in the regional system (see page 16). A major challenge will be designing a safe crossing of Route 2/16. The plan also proposes removing the old fence along Alewife Brook, and naturalizing the section of brook channeled in 1912. Soil testing and a hydrology study will be required. The MDC's Julia O'Brien foresees that this work will be done in phases, and does not expect the project to compete with the Reservation for funding.

### Reducing Sewage in Alewife Brook

Raw sewage contributes to poor water quality in Alewife Brook. Sewage enters mostly during rainstorms, when street runoff enters catch basins, mixing with sewage from households and businesses in the combined sewer system. The sewers and storm drain systems are interconnected in much of the Alewife drainage area. Much of this goes where it's supposed to, out the 1884 Alewife Brook sewer line toward Deer Island. But some — about 18 million gallons annually — overwhelms the system, escaping through 13 combined sewer overflows (CSOs) into the brook and eventually, Boston Harbor. As part of the \$6 billion harbor clean-up, the MWRA, Cambridge Department of Public Works, and other cities have been separating this antiquated system into so-called "sanitary" and storm sewers. This will eliminate most, but not all, of this overflow.

To solve the CSO problem to the Environmental Protection Agency's satisfaction, the MWRA initially planned a \$42 million, 9,000-foot "consolidation conduit" along the brook in 1989 — a project the MWRA admitted would improve water quality from only "grossly offensive to just offensive." Seeking cost efficiencies, the MWRA identified the worst CSOs in 1992. The agency will modify these outlets between 1997 and 1999, adding screens to keep unseemly solids out of the brook, says project director Lise Marx. This will vastly reduce both volume and frequency of overflows. Other CSOs will be plugged for good. The biggest offender, "CAM 004," now dumps 9 million gallons into the brook behind the Alewife Station in 16 gushes a year; this should drop to two overflows totaling 200,000 gallons. Overall, these repairs should reduce sewage volume from 18 to under 3 million gallons per year.



# Reservation Inventory

Alewife Reservation, including Blair Pond:

**92 Acres;**

Alewife Brook Parkway (from Concord Avenue to Medford):

**41 acres.**

## Alewife Brook



Once the site of an Indian fish weir, Alewife Brook was the only route to herring spawning grounds in Fresh and Little Ponds. Severed from Fresh Pond about 1870, channeled east of Route 2 in 1912, and later confined to a culvert beneath the Industrial Quadrangle and Triangle, the brook now surfaces just behind the MBTA garage. It meets Little River just west of Route 2/16, and runs northeast along Alewife Brook Parkway to the Mystic River in Medford. Along this stretch, combined sewer overflows (CSOs) contribute to the stream. In 1989, MDC Commissioner Illyas Bhatti pronounced the brook "grossly, grossly polluted, approaching the quality of a sewer," and authorized a \$140,000 clean-up. The Mass. Water Resources Authority (MWRA) is planning major work on the CSOs (page 25), and the MDC has completed a parkway master plan that includes restoring sections of the brook. Some river buffs want to exhume the brook from its culvert under the Quadrangle and Triangle, restoring a green link to Fresh Pond.

## Little Pond

The headwaters of Little River, this shallow 18.7-acre pond, rimmed by Belmont homes, is fed by Winn Brook and a 36" culvert from Spy Pond. A stop-over for waterfowl, the pond contains bass and panfish and is breeding ground for a few herring.

## Little River

Once a meander through farm bottom land, Little River was rechanneled in 1930 into

Perch Pond. From here it runs slowly east over a muddy bottom, joining Alewife Brook just west of Route 2/16. It can be canoed.

## Perch Pond

The wildest and most secluded spot in Alewife, this tiny pond is a favored haunt of great blue heron, which also lurk along the banks of Little River.

## Yates Pond

A former claypit wedged between Alewife Station, ramp roads, and the Route 2/16 intersection, this area has been seriously disturbed during construction. It tempers the surrounding infrastructure and suffers its runoff, harboring many painted turtles.

## Infield and Parkway Ponds

The two small, half-wild storage ponds between the MBTA Head House and Alewife Center belong to the MDC, and are appreciated by walkers. A small wooded grove here serves as a welcome visual buffer from Route 2.

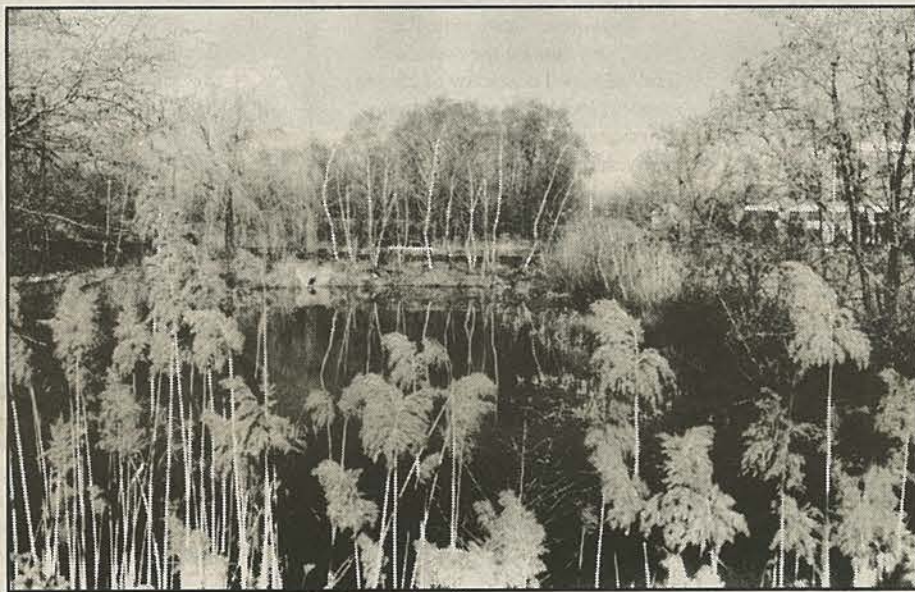


Painted turtle, Yates Pond

## Blair Pond: A Triumph Of Friends

**B**lair Pond sits on the western edge of Cambridge, wedged between the railroad, a truck depot, a trash transfer station, apartments, and commercial buildings on Belmont's Blanchard Road. The 1.3 acre pond began life as a claypit first dug in 1874, after which, according to local mythology, it was used as a dump for dead horses. Once a fertile spawning ground for herring and a venue for skating parties, it was half filled by illegal dumping in the 1950s and narrowly escaped become a large housing site in the late 1960s.

Clogged with car skeletons and giant carp, badly polluted with urban runoff and lawn fertilizers, the pond is silting in at an alarming rate, fast becoming a wet meadow. Fed by



Parkway Pond viewed from the MBTA headhouse

Wellington Brook, it receives 45 percent of Belmont's watershed, which drains through Alewife.

Still, the pond remains a refuge for many waterfowl species, including heron and teal; a home for kingfishers and huge painted turtles; and a critical flood storage area. The overgrown 7-acre site was acquired by the MDC in 1991 as part of Alewife Reservation. In 1992, it was adopted by a local Quaker group, which wanted "to strengthen our spiritual unity with nature and to facilitate a project that could engage us in a local earth-healing process," explains chair Gwen Noyes. Expanding to include neighbors and other advocates, the group became the Friends of Blair Pond in 1993.

Their dedicated work led to the MDC's funding of a master plan that began this spring with the Berkshire Design Group (BDG). The agency will use this document as a tool to get capital funding for restoration; dredging and soil disposal alone could easily cost \$250,000.

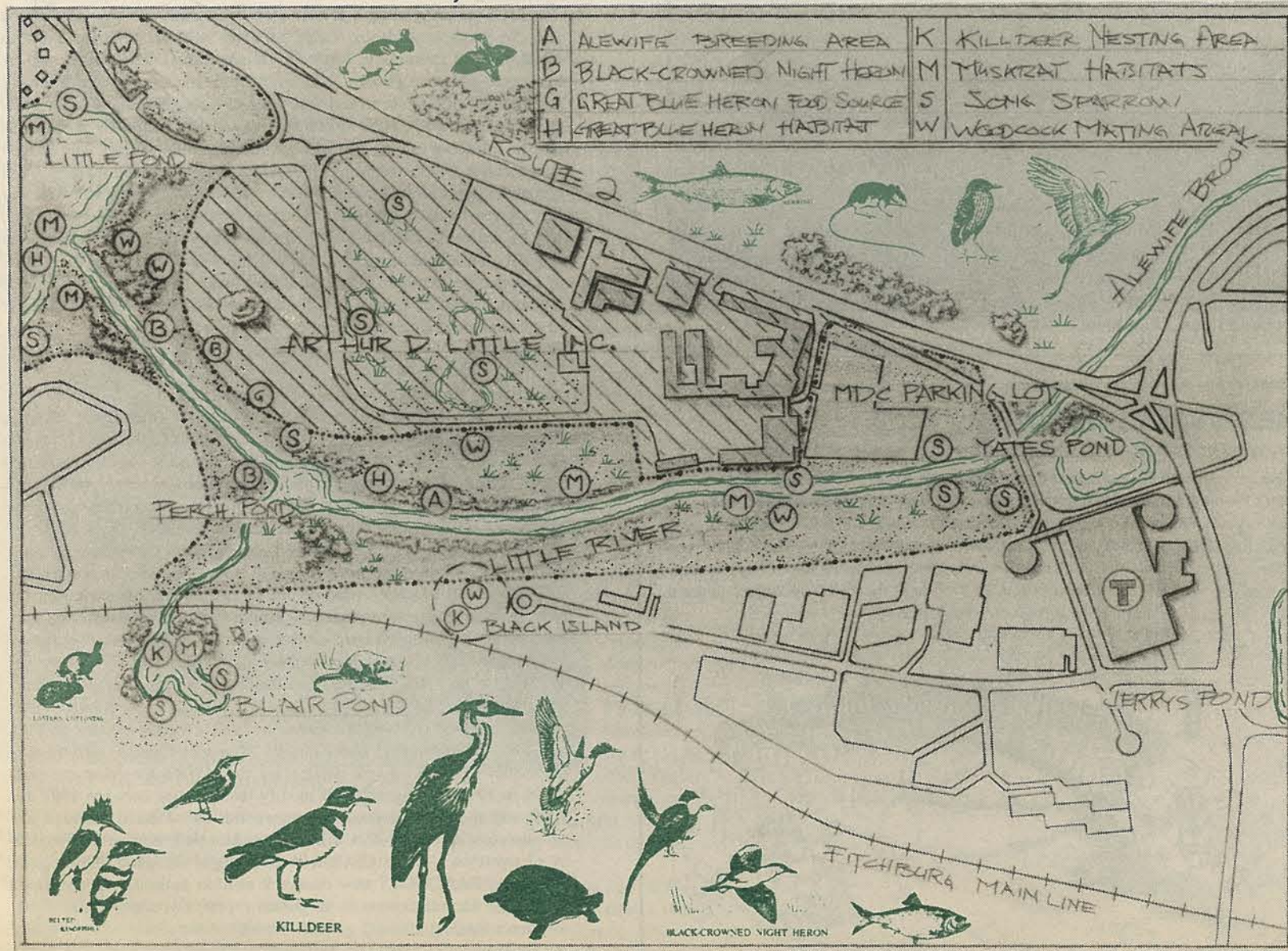
In preparation, the Friends spent winter meetings brainstorming to determine their priorities for the project. The challenge here, says member Walter Johnson, "is not to preserve or restore a native wild — the pond is mutilated — but to design and create a sustainable urban wild, and to balance the needs of the ecosystem, wildlife, and people." The Friends' goals include:

- Promoting stewardship, education, and nature study;
- Providing for passive recreation in an urban wild;
- Improving water quality and flood control;
- Developing a healthy year-round wildlife habitat;
- Defining the pond's special niche in the Reservation.

After site analysis, BDG will present several alternatives for review. Working with the designers and the MDC, the Friends hope to create a vibrant aquatic ecology in natural surroundings where public use is encouraged, but limited and carefully controlled. Access is a key issue: the site can be reached only by a circuitous path from Mooney Street in the Quadrangle, or from a private parking lot behind White Hen Pantry on Blanchard Road.

Former MDC Planner John Krajovic, who worked closely with the group, says, "The Friends succeeded because they held a shared vision very focused on one small site. They're just the sort of small but passionate constituent the MDC needs to help attract resources to properties, and are a great model for other groups."

Friends of Blair Pond meet monthly. For information, call Gwen Noyes at 491-9100.



## Fauna Present Partial list of observed species

\* Indicates confirmed breeding

- American woodcock
- Belted kingfisher
- Black-crowned night heron
- Blueback herring \*
- Chimney swift
- Common yellow-throat \*
- Eastern kingbird \*
- Great blue heron
- Green-winged teal
- Kestrel
- Killdeer \*
- Muskrat \*
- Northern oriole \*
- Osprey
- Red-winged blackbird \*
- Warbling vireo \*
- Ring-necked pheasant \*
- Snapping turtle
- Song sparrow \*
- Yellow warbler \*
- Willow fly-catcher

## Disappeared

- Least bittern
- Puffed grouse
- Pickering
- Virginia rail





Blair Pond, looking North

## Stew Sanders, Alewife Guide

If the Alewife Reservation has a resident daemon, Stewart Sanders must be its first cousin. An amateur naturalist, he has explored and guided groups at Alewife for over two decades. There is probably no one who knows more about this place, and no more eloquent advocate for its wild things. His field notes and records have appeared in many environmental studies, and the trash he's carted off might fill the basement level of the MBTA parking garage.

A disciple of the late Herbert Meyer (see page 8), Stew has worked closely with citizens' groups, public agencies, and corporations. His avowed goal, stated in his recently published *Alewife Area Ecology Guide*, is "to be a voice for the natural communities in the decisions that affect their habitats, so future generations may experience William Brewster's 'primitive, beautiful wilderness.'" He sees himself as heir to the tradition of such naturalists as Brewster, who have chronicled Alewife since 1634, when William Wood wrote *New England Prospect*.

His crusading bent is tempered with an endearing sense of humor, evident in his self-description: "Stew Sanders lives on a Belmont street that supplies runoff to Alewife Reservation." Get him going, and he'll tell you about the strange mating dance of the American woodcock, which he has seen performed on the abandoned industrial site that was once Black Island. Or the herring that swam through 1,000 feet of culvert to become landlocked in



Belmont's Claypit Pond. Or the flock of robins that got tipsy on fermented crabapples one fall, and missed the migration south.

Stew's quirky, conversational tone resonates through his *Guide*, worth reading for its prose alone. Listing "species out of balance" here — carp, Canada geese, cats, and humans — he recommends for geese: "Prepare for table and distribute to the needy." And for people: "Court with beauty and ecological sensitivity; help others raise their young."

He cares deeply for the humans he finds on this landscape, and understands the odd ways in which we seek our sense of wonder or enact our primal rights of passage here. Stew reports encounters with corporate employees playing flutes on the banks of Little River; with boys spit-roasting a fresh-killed rabbit; and with

resident vagrants warming themselves by burning construction debris. He makes it his business to converse with the invading minibikers and beer-swilling hooligans who leave their spoor, fauna all.

The prospect that the MDC might really restore and manage Alewife as a public reservation — something Stew has long labored for — has caused him to ruminate on the possible price of the success he shares with other Alewife advocates. Gravely concerned about just how much human enjoyment and traffic this fragile habitat can suffer, he admits to feeling proprietary about this place, and is torn between protecting his secret "like a good fishing hole," and shouting the gospel from a pulpit. In 1993, he told a *Globe* reporter, "You don't have to build paths here. People can get a lot of satisfaction just knowing herons are there." But with the publication this spring of a second edition of his *Guide*, it appears that his second impulse is winning.

Limited guided tours may be the best way to accommodate people here, Stew thinks, allowing frankly that there's nothing he'd rather do than retire from his data entry job at Harvard, and become an Alewife ranger and guide.

*Sanders gives tours, and can be reached at 73 Fairmont St., Belmont, 02178, 489-3120.*



## Alewife Nature Calendar

*From An Ecology Guide to Alewife,*  
by Stewart Sanders

The foliage and blossoms change like scenery in the theater; here is your program for the annual event. Just as a hawk may make several tries before catching a rabbit, actual sightings of wildlife may occur only after multiple visits to Alewife.

### Spring:

Listen and watch for the courtship flights of the male American woodcock at twilight ... record the calls of song sparrows on a music sheet... look for herring spawning at Winn Brook Culvert on Little Pond... watch for black-crowned night herons arriving for summer. (They can be found resting high in trees or looking for fish from low limbs over water. Move quietly and slowly, and listen for movement in foliage and for "quawk." Then stop, step back, and look up.)

### Summer:

Launch a canoe at the MDC-ADL parking lot and paddle to Little Pond ... Look for painted turtles upstream of Perch Pond ... Find and identify wildflowers along the [Belmont] bike path: purple vetch, St. John's wort, purple loosestrife, rabbit foot clover, Queen Anne's lace, goldenrod, tansy, thistle, aster ... Pick and eat blackberries but watch out for poison ivy. (To pick blackberries without trespassing on the Hill Estates, wade across the brook from the bike path a few feet to the right of the place where you are in line with the left edge of the nearest building.)

### Fall:

Watch for fingerling herring returning to the Atlantic... Look for osprey, great blue heron, spotted sandpipers, and monarch butterflies... pick and taste Concord grapes along the bike path... enjoy the brilliant colors, especially of sumac.

### Winter:

Join the Audubon Society's Christmas bird census... Look for tracks in the snow of the cottontail, pheasant, muskrat and meadow mouse... Watch ponds for visits of fish-eating ducks, including mergansers.



Marsh land south of Little River

## An Alewife Ecology Guide

In the works over a decade, the first edition of this intriguing 64-page guide by Stewart Sanders was sold out just weeks after it came out last fall. Replete with maps, artists' sketches, and explicit tables, it is the only published ecology information on the area. It contains essential, well-organized information on geology, habitat, natural and human history, water quality, species, edible plants, access, safety, and stewardship efforts. And it tells you exactly when and where to find wildlife, even spelling out the three warnings a skunk gives before it sprays you. Stew Sanders hopes that his guide "may help you to see what other species require for their well-being." He spares no effort on their behalf, including suggestions on "how to observe some of these creatures without disturbing them or others." Published by the Mystic River Watershed Association (funded by the state Riverways Program, with printing donated by Arthur D. Little).

*It is available at the Bookcellar Cafe, Animal Vegetable Mineral, and the Alewife Station newsstand.*



Eating at Alewife:

# Wild Culinary Delights

by Russell A. Cohen

Although now undergoing a gradual recovery from its degraded past, the Alewife Reservation continues to exhibit characteristics of a highly disturbed ecosystem. Two of the most visual indicators are a lower diversity of species and larger populations of "weed" species that tolerate disturbed conditions. Nevertheless, many of these so-called weeds happen to be edible. While their potential value as wildlife food and the possible presence of soil contaminants should make you think twice before collecting plants here for the table, the Reservation is a good place to observe and learn about many edible species. Here are some of the more common and tasty plants you'll find on a foraging walk:

**Black Cherry:**

Look for these trees especially along the old railroad grade. Although its bark and leaves contain cyanide, the ripe fruit is edible in late summer. It makes a delicious jelly.

**Cattails:**

Euell Gibbons called these plants the "supermarket of the swamps" because they have so many edible parts: the sprouts (boiled like cabbage); the hearts (marinated, sliced and eaten raw like hearts of palm); the young bloom spikes (boiled and served with butter); the pollen and the starch from the rhizomes (both added to flour to produce delicious biscuits, pancakes, and other baked products.)

**Japanese Knotweed:**

Despised by many homeowners because it is almost impossible to eradicate, this is a close cousin to rhubarb with a similar flavor. Either steam new shoots in the spring, or peel the older stalks and make Stewed Knotweed or Strawberry-Japanese Knotweed Pie.

**Pineapple Weed:**

A close cousin to chamomile, it may be used in a similar fashion. Look for it at the eastern

end of the old railroad grade near the T parking garage. It is a low-growing plant with finely dissected leaves and greenish flowers without petals that, when pinched, smell like canned pineapple.

**Sumac:**

This shrub grows so profusely here that it is fortunately not the poisonous variety (edible sumac has tight, upright clusters of red berries, while poison sumac has loose, drooping clusters of greenish-white berries). To determine whether or not a berry cluster is ripe, lick your finger, jam it into the center of the berry cluster, and then lick it again. If you taste a pleasing lemony flavor, then the berries are ready to use. To make a delicious Sumacade, gather a number of clusters, immerse them in a container of water, wring the clusters to remove the acid flavor, and then strain the liquid through a cheesecloth.

**Stinging Nettle:**

Well-armed with stinging hairs that inflict a painful (albeit usually short-lived) sensation on bare skin, this plant is not only delicious but quite nutritious as well. The chemical responsible for the sting is rendered harmless by cooking and actually turns to protein, making nettles one of the highest-known sources of green protein. To avoid being stung, harvest with gloves. Although most books say that nettles taste like spinach, to me they taste more like split peas. To make a delicious Cream of Nettle Soup, simply steam the leaves for a few minutes, puree in a blender and add chicken stock and/or light cream. Cooked boiled nettle greens are good in any recipe calling for cooked spinach, and also freeze well.



To learn more about the wild culinary delights at Alewife, obtain one of the many field guides on edible wild plants or accompany me on one of my scheduled plant walks.

Rivers Advocate Russell Cohen works with the Riverways Program of the Mass. Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife, which helped fund the Alewife Area Ecology Guide. To obtain a 1995 walk schedule, send him a stamped, self-addressed envelope c/o Riverways, 100

ADL-MDC Negotiations, 1992-1995:

## Much Ado About Parking

Perhaps no piece of Massachusetts macadam has been the subject of such epic negotiations as the MDC parking lot at the eastern tip of the Alewife Reservation, which international consultant Arthur D. Little, Inc., launched efforts to purchase almost four years ago.

ADL has leased the 496-car lot since 1961. The lease expired in the late 1970s, according to MDC Director of Planning Julia O'Brien, but because so many Alewife transportation issues were unresolved, ADL was allowed to remain as a tenant at will.

After the Cambridge parking freeze ordinance went into effect in 1990, ADL learned that it could not transfer the parking rights from public land to its own property. Through the years, it had enjoyed this parking at a bargain. The MDC had continued to charge ADL 1961 rates (10¢ per car per day), even when patrons at the MBTA parking garage next door paid \$4.00 per day. In late 1991, ADL moved to secure its parking by asking Senator Bob Havern to file bill no. 1158 to begin the process of disposition of public park land.

When the Coalition for Alewife (CFA) (see page 9) was first informed about the bill, some members favored the idea, but many objected vehemently. The community did not appreciate being "blindsided" by the legislation without prior public discussion, says Co-chair Carolyn Mieth, and some members were alarmed that the MDC might sell public assets to rescue the Reservation. The MDC, which knew of ADL's interest, was also surprised by the bill.

O'Brien says that MDC policy opposes the diversion of public park to non-park uses. At Alewife, however, there are compelling reasons to consider an exception: The three-decade lease; the abject condition of the Reservation; the MDC's lack of funds; and ADL's renowned expertise in environmental planning, which could be leveraged to improve the park land. Any such exception would require legislation.

While the possibility of selling the parking lot offered tantalizing support for the Reservation, it raised many challenging questions, ranging from details of wetlands management to long-term vision. The Coalition reviewed these issues for almost a year while the MDC held preliminary discussions with ADL to develop the proposal and a public process. Both the Coalition and the MDC shared concern that the sale of public park land not set a precedent. Some CFA members opposed this on principle, especially since three prior studies had urged reclaiming this parking lot for wetland.

When the Coalition joined the ADL-MDC talks in early 1993, all three parties agreed that without wide-spread community support, no proposal would go forward. At this time, the Coalition presented a list of 90 questions and heard ADL's proposal. The initial offer included \$2 million for purchase of 5.7 acres (3.3 acres of parking, 2.4 acres of wetland); \$150,000 for a Reservation master plan; \$25,000 toward rangers' salaries; and corporate leadership for raising more business support. ADL would limit height of any development on the lot, and create a 100-foot buffer along the river.

The Coalition questioned the basis of the parking lot appraisal and the



ADL/MDC parking lot

loss of public land. To justify the precedent of a sale, all agreed that any deal must guarantee a significantly greater long-term gain for the Reservation, including no net loss of park land. But a satisfactory deal continues to elude the three parties — very different animals indeed, with distinct agendas:

- Arthur D. Little, Inc., a command-oriented, private corporation dedicated to client service, seeks a market-rate business deal that secures its parking and preserves development options on its aging campus.
- The Metropolitan District Commission, an underfunded state bureaucracy under relentless pressure to further reduce its costs, wants to reclaim and manage its Reservation. It needs technical information to make informed decisions, the resources to proceed, and good partners to help.

- The Coalition for Alewife, a diverse, informal amalgam of citizens' groups and individuals, represents the public interest and operates by consensus. It holds the long-range vision for the area, and seeks permanent protection for the entire Alewife ecosystem, including private wetlands.

In November 1993, ADL made a new offer, proposing to buy only the parking lot, not the surrounding wetlands. The amended plan included the transfer of an equal amount of ADL wetland to the MDC, and leadership in helping to establish an Alewife Watershed Trust to raise funds and help manage the Reservation. At that time, the Coalition offered a radically new plan, proposing a range of creative options it hoped would offer



The flooding of ADL's campus, 1979

more value to all parties: ADL would get a 99-year lease, protecting parking and reducing its capital outlay. The city would cede its portion of Acorn Drive (which bisects ADL's wetlands and campus) to the firm, giving it more flexibility to restructure its campus, which ADL had described as its top priority from day one. In turn, ADL would cede its development rights to the Belmont Uplands, allow the MDC to manage its wetlands as part of the Reservation, and consolidate its new

campus farther from sensitive areas.

The idea, said CFA member Joe Joseph, was to shift the emphasis from land ownership and money to land use and management, a more creative model of public-private partnership. But according to Mieth, ADL rejected the offer, telling the Coalition that it could not analyze the long-term costs and benefits of this proposal because it did not have a master plan of its own at this time. Startled by this response from a renowned planning consultant, the CFA returned to the November 1993 proposal, making a "bottom-line" offer in August 1994.

In ensuing negotiations, ADL rejected the idea of a long-term lease and refused an offer to swap ownership of the parking lot for the development rights on its 12-acre Belmont Uplands. ADL is now reviewing the coalition's offer.

This spring, ADL and the Coalition have had separate meetings with the new MDC Commissioner, David Balfour, who wants to bring the talks to closure. Most weary participants agree that it's time to "fish or cut bait." Yet even if the three parties finally do reach consensus, there's no guarantee that a fine-tuned agreement will survive the complex legislative process that must follow to sanctify the deal.

Regardless of the outcome, all parties agree that this four-year marathon has done more than anything else to focus energy on the Reservation.

The Coalition credits ADL — especially Senior Vice-President Sam Gallo — for sticking with negotiations that have been frustrating and exhaustive. Says CFA member Don MacIver, an officer of the Mass. Association of Conservation Commissioners, "Few businesses would have the patience to deal with a rambunctious citizens' group." However, speakers for the Coalition and the MDC agree that ADL management has yet to see this as more than another business deal. So far no one has persuaded the nation's foremost environmental consultant to seize this public opportunity to create a demonstration urban wild in its own back yard.

Until recently, many Coalition members regarded the ADL deal as the only good prospect for restoring and enlarging the Reservation. But with Alewife's rising profile, the formation of the Watershed Trust, and the MDC planning and management efforts now underway, members are increasingly comfortable about saying no to a proposal they feel falls short. Says Carolyn Mieth, "We see that there may be more than one road to the center of town."



# Four Ways to Help

## Alewife Watershed Trust: A Business Opportunity

The MDC and local conservation commissions encourage the formation of an official friends' organization to protect and help manage the Alewife Reservation. Such a legal entity would serve as advocate for the urban wild and a conduit for funds to operate and restore the reservation, including park rangers. The Coalition for Alewife is now working to form this non-profit group, which would work closely with the MDC and include representatives from towns, citizens' groups, landowners, and businesses.

The MDC regards private sector partnership as critical for success at Alewife as it has been along the upper Charles River, where the Commission has recovered miles of park land from encroachers to create a scenic walk and linear park through four towns. "Many businesses that were initially hesitant have come to play a major role in the project, enthusiastically donating land and money," says MDC project manager Dan Driscoll. "Their response has been overwhelmingly encouraging."

A reservation enhanced by corporate participation will upgrade Alewife's image as a recreation and work place, reflect well on its benefactors, and improve corporate quality of life. As one ADL employee noted, "There's nothing quite like going out for a noontime stretch and watching a great gangly blue heron stalking his own lunch." The Coalition welcomes help in creating or supporting this organization. Contact co-chair Carolyn Mieth, 864-6751.

## Cleanups, Anytime

While serious dumping at Alewife has decreased in recent years, the area never fails to yield tires, appliances, shopping carts, etc. This detritus, with a daily influx of fast-food wrappings and beer cans, provides volunteers and businesses with dependable opportunities to serve. Annual cleanups have been held recently by City Year (451-0699) and Outdoor Explorations (491-4200), a group dedicated to helping people of all physical abilities appreciate the environment. Just before the fish run this May, the MDC ran a highly successful cleanup of Alewife Brook coordinated by Stew Sanders, who adds: "Feel free to pick lit-

*"There's nothing quite like going out for a noontime stretch and watching a great gangly blue heron stalking his own lunch."*

— ADL employee

ter on your own time." Or call him at 489-3120 to borrow cleanup equipment or join a group.

## Teach Your Children

The Alewife Reservation holds great potential for introducing children to the joys of the natural world and allowing them to participate in stewardship of the area, says Laurie Bennett, director of the Massachusetts Audubon Sanctuary at Habitat in Belmont. This area offers a unique opportunity for students of all ages to learn about local natural resources. While experiencing the excitement of exploring diverse habitats, students can learn about the functions of wetlands, discover native plants and animals, study ponds and rivers, weigh the impact of water quality on wildlife populations, and participate in service projects to clean and protect the Reservation, says



Teacher Martha Costa-Grady of The Fitzgerald School leads a third-grade class home after an afternoon of nature study.

Bennett. The Tobin School now has a four-year grant from Habitat for nature study. Using a city-owned trailer equipped as a science lab based at Neville Manor, students of all grades explore the wonders of Black's Nook. (Teachers say the trailer would get far more use if there was a safer way to cross the Fresh Pond Parkway.) Habitat hopes to develop more programs at Alewife in association with the MDC and area schools.

Interested teachers can call Bennett at 489-5050.

## Join Fish Census, Pollution Hunt

Alewife Brook and Little River are still part of an annual run for the anadromous river herring, ocean species that are born in fresh streams and return to spawn. Spring migrations of alewives and blueback herring once swarmed local waterways, but are now minimal because of poor water and other factors. The return of these fish is one good (and symbolic) measure of the area's ecological health. The Cambridge Conservation Commission organizes volunteers to monitor the fish run each spring, and is now training a team of volunteer "storm drain detectives" to pinpoint new pollution sources and monitor water quality. The CCC hopes that these intimately related monitoring efforts will lead to a healthier aquatic ecosystem and restored herring populations. Volunteers needed! Call Alex Strycky at 349-4680.



John Krajovic

## Thanks, John Krajovic Welcome, Dan Driscoll

Thanks and farewell to John Krajovic, the dedicated MDC planner who spearheaded progress at Alewife over the past eight years, working tirelessly with local groups, officials, and businesses. For years a part-timer with the MDC, John has moved to Massport where he's a full-time program manager for the upcoming \$1.5 billion Logan 2000 airport restoration. He plans to stay involved as a member of the Coalition for Alewife, which honored him with a toast and cake. Dan Driscoll has assumed John's Alewife responsibilities. For nine years an MDC planner, he has a strong background in land negotiations, community relations, and urban wilds. MDC Planning Director Julia O'Brien praises his "enormous experience getting parks going," most recently along the upper Charles River and at Metropolitan State Hospital, and believes he is the right man for the next phase of development at

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## THE CITY'S PLAN FOR ALEWIFE

## A Plan for Sustainable Development

## Alewife Steering Committee

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32 Linnaean Street  
Carolyn Mieth,  
15 Brookford Street  
George Spartichino,  
93 Normandy Avenue  
Jonathan Yeo,  
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Al Wilson,  
Wilson Cambridge  
Realty Trust

## Community Development

## Department Staff:

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Roger Boothe  
Cara Seiderman

## Urban Design Consultant:

Chris Chadbourne

## Alewife Public Agency Committee

Massachusetts DPW  
Metropolitan Area  
Planning Council  
Metropolitan District  
Commission  
Town of Arlington  
Town of Belmont  
M.B.T.A.

## We want to hear from you!

Please send us your comments or questions on the Alewife Plan. If you would like to be notified by mail of future public meetings on Alewife, send your name and address, with any specific areas of interest, to:

Stuart Dash  
Community  
Development  
Department  
57 Inman Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Introduction by Susan Schlesinger  
Assistant City Manager for Community Development

The Alewife area has been in continual evolution, from its first settlement 365 years ago to the present mix of business, housing, wetlands, and open space. The City's draft plan, "Alewife: A Plan for Sustainable Development," considers possible next steps in the area's transformation. This report — the product of a steering committee of residents, property and business owners, and city officials — is the first major planning document since the 1979 plan, "Alewife Revitalization," commonly referred to as the "Fishbook." The committee's work has laid a strong foundation for further planning, with an important phase of work still to come.

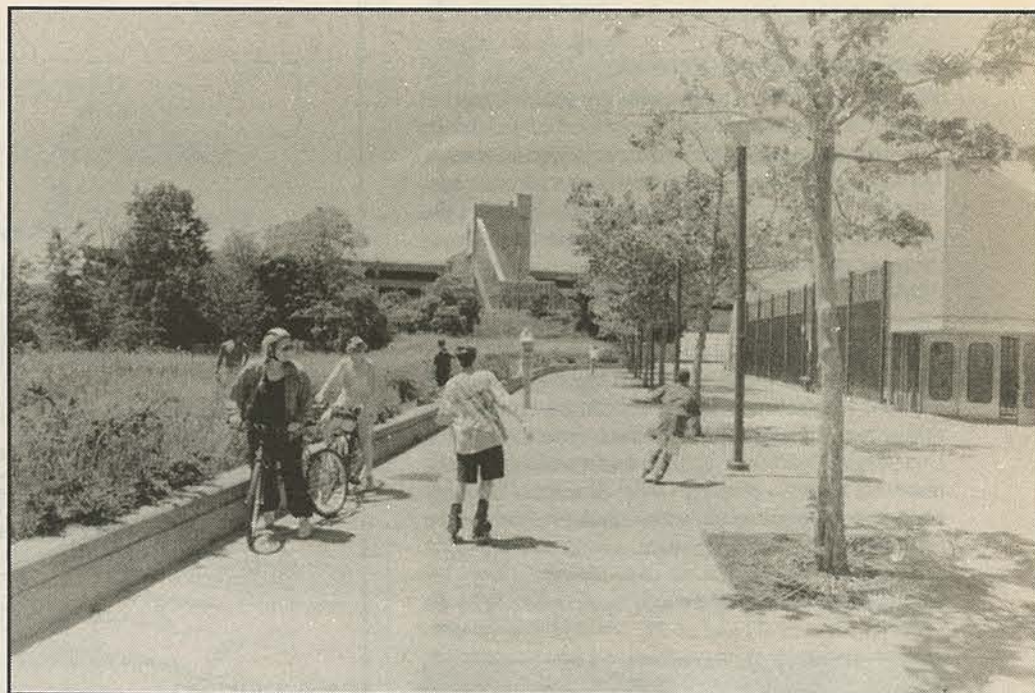
I would like to discuss the spirit of this plan, and how its vision of development differs from past efforts. Most importantly, I want to invite everyone interested to participate in the ongoing work of making Alewife truly a part of the Cambridge community.

Alewife means many things to people. It is an urban wild and a wetland, with significant recreational and environmental benefits to the City and region. It has an important role for the residential communities that surround it, Cambridge, Arlington, and Belmont. It is also a place of economic vitality and potential, one of the best areas in the city where job-creating businesses can find reasonably priced space.

As the location of the Alewife MBTA station and the crossroads of Route 2 and the Alewife Brook Parkway, Alewife's transportation role also impacts the planning process. The paramount goal of this planning is to integrate Alewife with the surrounding community in a way that sustains the area's people and its environment, while meeting its potential for economic development and job creation.

Our approach to development in Alewife builds upon the city's growth policy document, "Towards a Sustainable Future." ("Sustainability" is the ability to meet the needs of the present without denying future generations the ability to meet their needs.) This concept moves us beyond the choices of "no growth" or "more growth" to focus on better growth, by maintaining the mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented qualities that give Cambridge its unique, livable character. Alewife, though rich with potential, lacks many of these qualities. It is largely automobile dependent, compared to the rest of Cambridge; it is not well integrated with its surroundings; and it lacks an overall sense of place. The plan seeks to weave Alewife into the fabric of the city, ensuring that its uses, pattern, and design not be dictated merely by outside forces, but by the needs of the community.

The draft plan and the growth policy document represent a departure from prior planning assumptions and methods. One important difference is that of scale. The 1979 Revitalization Plan envisioned office towers and hotels as the leading edge of Alewife's economic development. Market conditions have changed in 16 years, as have the City's views of development for Alewife. Today, we envision creating jobs in smaller-scaled, research-based companies, particularly through reuse of former industrial buildings, and employing more Cambridge residents. We



hope to see a mix of uses, including retail, commercial and, possibly, a public or institutional use such as a training facility.

Similarly, where past proposals often called for large roadway investments, today's emphasis is on the reduction of single-occupancy-vehicle trips through encouragement of transit use, bicycling, carpooling, walking, and transportation management. With limited public resources available, we envision that planned changes in Alewife will occur incrementally over a number of years rather than all at one time.

This is a particularly good time to evaluate the possibilities for Alewife. The real estate development market, which heated up regionally in the 1980s, has moderated. While Alewife did not experience the explosive growth experienced elsewhere in the 1980s or see the Fishbook vision materialize, its work force has more than doubled since 1976, from 5,200 to nearly 13,200.

Although no net square footage was added in the 1980s, the replacement of warehouses and factories with office and research buildings brought more employee- and vehicle-intensive uses to the area. While the recurrence of 1980s scale growth is unlikely soon, it is important to put measures in place now that ensure that future growth is balanced, human-scaled, and supportive of community and economic vitality.

Positive changes are presently occurring in the area. The opening of the Minuteman Bikeway provides continuity and connection with the Linear Park and other sites for recreation and open space. The MDC's railroad truss bridge is being replaced, and the city is planning three pedestrian crossings over and under the tracks. At the nearby Fresh Pond Reservation, enhancement of Kingsley Park and



Top: Encouraging transit use, cycling, and walking. Above: Building with design guidelines.

improved park access are going forward. Along Fresh Pond Parkway, the City, in cooperation with the MDC, will address the need for better lighting, sidewalks, tree planting and other landscaping. We will discuss these and other planned improvements with the neighborhoods and the business community. Meanwhile, a transportation study will soon be underway. But much remains to be done.

As we continue the dialogue on Alewife that began with the committee's careful and thoughtful work, it is important to consider what the draft plan is and is not. It is a policy plan to guide future development. It is not a block-by-block blueprint for development of specific sites. Although zoning changes are suggested as a tool in selected areas, the document does not propose a comprehensive rezoning for Alewife, portions of which were down zoned substantially after the publication of the Fishbook. Most of all, it is a draft document, not a policy cast in stone. It is an invitation to all people who care about the area to join a process of making Alewife a better place for all.

## Environment and Open Space

The Alewife area is rich in open space with significant benefits to the City and region. Resources include the Metropolitan District Commission's Alewife Reservation, Blair Pond, Alewife Brook Parkway, Little River, Alewife Brook, and (probably) Jerry's Pond; the MBTA/City's Linear Park; and the City's Fresh Pond Reservation. Determining the appropriate mix of activities for these sites will help to balance two important needs: protecting environmental resources and accommodating recreational use.

The district is also bordered by three city-owned recreational facilities: Rafferty Playground, a small neighborhood park in Cambridge Highlands; and Russell Field and Danehy Park, both city-wide, multi-use facilities. To ensure that Alewife's generous resources provide maximum benefit to Cambridge and the region, the following goals are proposed.



Jerry's Pond, a potential open space addition

## Protect and Upgrade Existing Resources

The Alewife Reservation is a special urban wild. Its sensitive ecology provides a habitat for many wildlife species, and its wetlands are crucial for flood control. In addition, it offers nature lovers opportunities to walk or canoe through its unique landscape. Limited public resources have made it difficult to control littering and dumping in the Reservation as well as Blair Pond, which both require substantial upgrading. Careful planning is required to ensure that human enjoyment of this delicate area does not harm its natural features. It is essential that the MDC develop a master plan for the Reservation that identifies sensitive areas to be preserved, and specifies a management plan for proper maintenance and oversight, including control of public access. The City is prepared to work with the MDC to ensure the success of this planning process.

The master plan should also indicate areas

where more intensive public use is appropriate. The southeast corner of the Reservation near the Alewife MBTA station is a less sensitive area, easily accessible to the public, where benches and tables might be located to encourage people to stop, eat, sit, and enjoy the view. The MDC's plan should also explore the siting of an interpretive center or museum, which could serve as an educational center for the community and region.

Jerry's Pond, an important open space and water resource, should be upgraded by the private owner or by public agencies (the MDC is now negotiating purchase). Public access to the site should be available, but limited to protect sensitive flora and fauna.

Blair Pond, a neighborhood asset recently bought by the MDC, should be part of the Alewife open space system and accessible from the Quadrangle, but should not be targeted for heavy public recreational use. The MDC and the Friends of Blair Pond are now developing a



master plan for this area.

Similarly, the 320-acre Fresh Pond Reservation is a unique natural resource, providing the city with its public water supply and high quality open space and recreational opportunities including the city golf course, paths for bicycling, walking and jogging and areas for sledding and picnicking.

**Expand Open Space Network**

With the exception of the Alewife Reservation, most of Alewife's existing open space is located around its perimeter. As a result, much of its environment is stark, lacking pedestrian-oriented amenities or pleasant connections between the open spaces that exist on the perimeter. An important goal of this plan is to expand the open space network into the interior portions of the district with improved sidewalks, landscaping, and new bicycle paths. The area's open space resources should be planned and used to create a safer environment for both daytime and nighttime users. Opportunities to create new public open space should be considered throughout the entire Alewife area, especially in the Quadrangle. One way to achieve this is a zoning mechanism that allows a property owner to transfer development rights from one parcel to another, allowing the first parcel to become open space.

*Detailed inventories of Alewife open spaces can be found on pages 22-24 and 26-27.*



Research and software development form the core of activity in the Triangle.

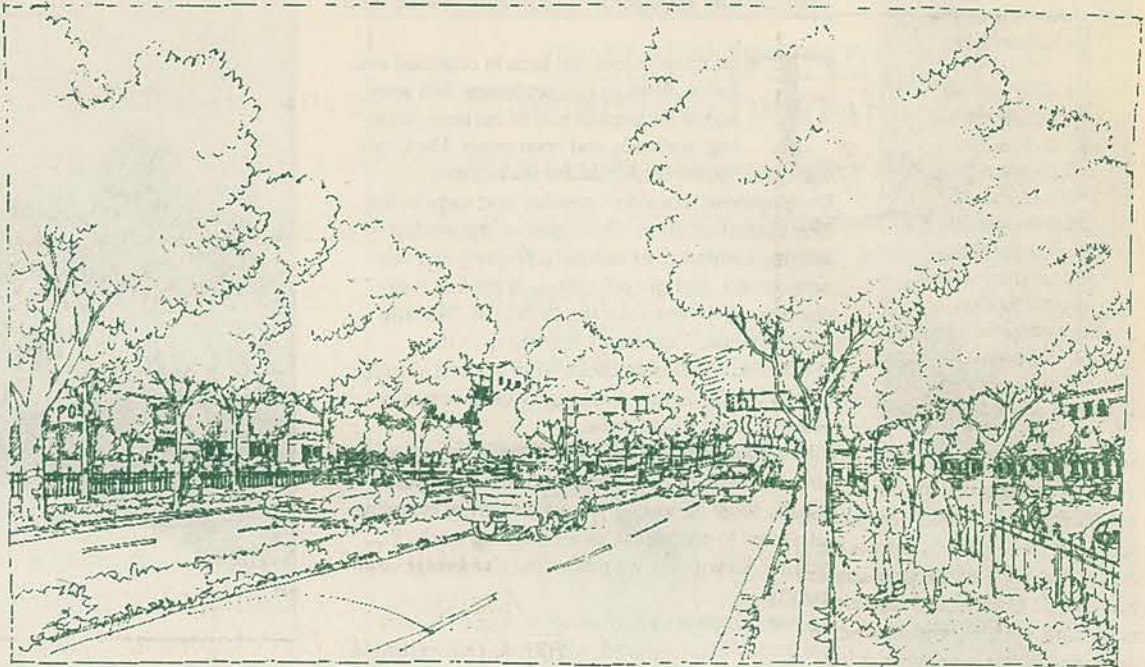
## Economic Development

Alewife is a valuable economic resource for Cambridge. With its abundant land and relatively inexpensive rents, it is one of the prime areas in the City where new economic growth can occur. Such growth is critical to sustaining the City's tax base and creating jobs with a diverse range of occupations. Tax revenues from commercial property enable the City to fund high quality schools and public services such as roads, police and fire protection. (In Cambridge, the commercial tax base is especially important, since two-thirds of revenues come from commercial rather than residential taxpayers).

In recent decades, the basis for economic growth in Cambridge has changed dramatically. As recently as 1972, almost one in four jobs in the city was in production of goods (manufacturing, construction); key industries ranged from candy manufacturers to the steel fabricators once common in Alewife. Today, services comprise over two-thirds of all jobs, while less than one in ten jobs produce goods. The most dynamic service providers are small, research-based firms with the potential to grow the next generation of technology-based industries. With its highly educated work force and its superior research universities, Cambridge is well positioned to capture this growth, yet it faces strong challenges from other communities that offer cheaper rents and lower tax rates, both in Massachusetts and beyond.

With its mix of older industrial buildings that can be converted to small-scale manufacturing and its available land for building modern research facilities, Alewife is particularly suited to host the next generation of emerging technology companies. Specialty materials firms

# Works in Progress: Imp



The MDC's construction is improving parks. While ways, the a virtually tree landscaping, these large

## Urban Design: Planning for Alewife

As the western gateway to Cambridge, Alewife plays an important urban design role in the life of the City. However, there is little of the vitality that flows from the mix of uses in most of Cambridge's other areas, and the scale and pattern of development are almost completely automobile-oriented, with few incentives to stroll through or linger in the area. Two strategies can help make Alewife a more positive part of the city.

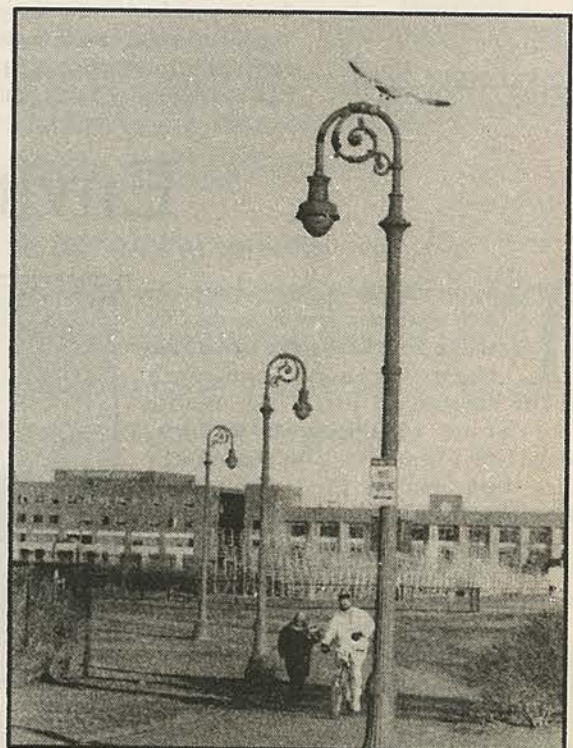
- First, build on the many existing assets in the area: Jerry's Pond, Fresh Pond, Daney Park, the Minuteman Bikeway; the pleasant, well-established, surrounding neighborhoods; the road patterns that form the basis for a comprehensive street network in the Quadrangle.
- Second, intervene realistically. The federal dollars that marked urban programs in the 1970s and 1980s have dissipated and are not likely to be available again. An urban design plan must rely on modest capital investments, public-private partnerships, and regulatory rather than fiscal devices to guide development.



The broadest urban design challenge is to make Alewife feel more connected to Cambridge. To create a more cohesive and livable environment, area-wide height limits and setback requirements should be considered as a way to help make a clearer, more people-oriented pattern of development. Otherwise, the strip pattern of individual buildings will continue. Public signs marking the entry to the city are needed, and private signs should be designed to respect the Cambridge sign ordinance. The landscaping provisions of the Parkway Overlay District should be followed throughout Alewife.

To improve connections, the infrastructure for each transportation mode should be upgraded, enabling the pedestrian, public transit user, bicyclist, and carpool driver to travel more easily along the parkways and major roads.

To improve the western gateway, the City should work with Arlington and the MDC to develop a consistent landscape, lighting, and signage treatment along the corridor from Route 2 in Arlington to the Fresh Pond traffic circle at Concord Avenue. Transforming the pedestrian bridge across Route 2 linking Arlington and Cambridge into a recognizable celebration of entry



Historic lighting enhances the connecting pathway through Russell Field.

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# Improving the Alewife Area



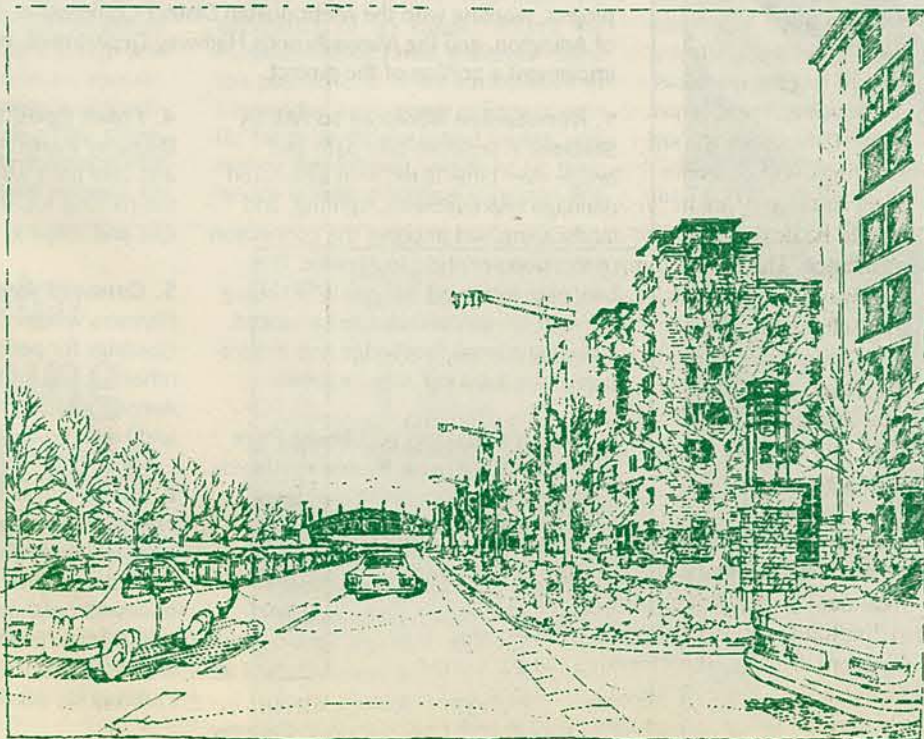
The Brook Parkway and bridge project (above, under construction) sets the stage for a major upgrade of this area. Accessibility to all users, including bicyclists and pedestrians, will be new walkways and bike paths in the public spaces. Shopping centers on either side of the parkway are planned. The city and neighborhoods alike would welcome a safer, clearer, safer routes for cars, cyclists, and walkers in busy parking areas as in the artist's rendering at left.

*The plan seeks to weave Alewife into the fabric of the city, ensuring that its uses, pattern, and design not be dictated merely by outside forces, but by the needs of the community.*

Susan Schlesinger  
Assistant City Manager  
for Community Development



To create a more welcoming entryway into Cambridge that also complements neighboring East Arlington, buildings on the west side of Route 2 should be set back enough to allow for a well-landscaped edge. The relationship between street and buildings should reflect the pattern found in the most successful urban parts of Cambridge, with buildings close enough to Route 2 to relate to the road in a positive and coordinated way. In addition, the massing of new development should be kept away from the wetlands.



ould be considered. As Arthur and/or rebuilds its aging building complex qualities that exist should be preserved. Construction with the following exceptions: cutting Route 2 should orient way and to internal campus abutting Alewife Reservation at park land as an asset of campus respecting the public's right to park should not dominate public space along the River.

pleasant, less chaotic urban environment. In the Alewife Quadrangle, site planning must respect the relationship of buildings to main streets. Main entries should front on streets. Parking areas should not be cluttered into the landscape. Creating a new, public open space would help create a park in the Quadrangle. To improve the Fresh Pond Commercial Area, signs, including billboards, should be limited and extended. As parcels are redeveloped, signs should be sited closer to the street. Relocated behind these structures, signs may be advisable for all or some of the parkways.

such as Merlin Metalworks (manufacturer of titanium bicycle frames) and biotechnology firms such as Advanced Magnetics are harbingers of this trend.

## The Quadrangle

Located within easy reach of the city's research centers, the Alewife Quadrangle is uniquely positioned to capture the expansion of the City's thriving technology firms as they outgrow their facilities in more central industrial areas, such as East Cambridge and Cambridgeport. Helping these firms expand in Alewife — while respecting the surrounding neighborhoods and natural environment — requires careful planning. The draft plan promotes appropriate use of underutilized land, while preserving older structures suitable for reuse. As an economic development strategy, this represents a major change in approach from large-scale, intense development of mainly white collar jobs encouraged earlier, to smaller-scale, locally initiated development. By minimizing traffic impacts and reusing existing buildings, this strategy advances the environmental and traffic goals for the area. Specifically, the City would do the following:

- Promote the revitalization of the Quadrangle as an emerging technology district that maintains a variety of development options, including development of state-of-the-art research, development, and production facilities that offer Cambridge residents a diverse range of employment options;
- Support economic development by 1) improving connections in the Quadrangle roadway network without encouraging additional outside traffic; and 2) by encouraging travel by transit, car and van pools, bicycling, and walking to reduce reliance on single-occupancy-vehicle travel.

## The Triangle

The Alewife Triangle is an office/research and development district with the convenience of an MBTA station and parking garage at its entrance, and the natural beauty of the Alewife Reservation on its north border. Anticipating incremental growth in these uses here, the draft plan recommends strategies to eliminate the sense of isolation commonly experienced by people in this district. Walkways connecting the Triangle with the Quadrangle and Fresh Pond Shopping Center will enable Quadrangle employees to use the MBTA with greater ease, and enable Triangle workers to shop and eat without using their cars. Ground floor retail uses that meet workers' needs (lunch places, coffee shops, dry cleaners, etc.) will make the Triangle a more appealing workplace and enliven Cambridgepark Drive. Urban design improvements will enhance the pedestrian street frontage by adding entryways and windows opening onto storefronts at the ground floor of buildings.

## Housing

Although surrounded by residential areas of Cambridge, Arlington and Belmont, only a handful of homes on the Concord Avenue edge fall within the Alewife area. Housing would add vitality and provide opportunities for people who work nearby to live here, limiting automobile use and increasing safety and human activity on neighborhood edges after business hours.

While additional housing would make the area more inviting and less isolated from the city's residential fabric, it must be balanced with other land uses. To satisfy diverse needs for housing and jobs and to prevent future land-use conflicts, housing should be encouraged near similar or compatible uses. Areas along the edges of Alewife offer the best opportunities to expand existing residential areas. The design of new construction should respect the character complement existing housing and strengthen residential edges by the use of complementary detail, setback, pattern, and height.

The plan recommends analyzing the potential of the following areas for expanded housing. As all the sites identified are privately owned, it is anticipated that the private sector will undertake any future housing development.

**Concord Avenue west:** The north side of the avenue west of Fresh Pond Parkway includes an appropriate mix of housing, office, and commercial uses. Additional infill housing would build upon the residential character of the nearby Cambridge Highlands neighborhood. A 32-unit condominium across from Neville Manor is now under construction. In addition, the Sancta Maria site may be appropriate for such residential uses as a continuing care retirement home, if it is redeveloped.

**Fresh Pond Commercial Area:** Although currently used only for retail and commercial purposes, housing is a permitted use here. In the longer term, redevelopment of the Fresh Pond Shopping Center is a



# THE CITY'S PLAN FOR ALEWIFE



Safe parkway crossings are a key goal of the plan.

distinct possibility. This site, which borders Daney Park and the North Cambridge residential community, has potential to become a mixed-use project with a significant housing component. Zoning should provide incentives to encourage developers to include residential uses when redevelopment occurs.

**Concord Avenue east:** The block east of Fresh Pond Parkway between the Tobin School and Daney Park is currently zoned for industrial and commercial as well as housing uses. Consideration should be given to rezoning this district as residential, which will allow the existing light industrial uses to continue, but will ensure that any new development that occurs on the site is residential.

**End of Harvey Street:** Current zoning of this vacant 1-acre triangle between Linear Park and Russell Field allows certain types of residential development. The appropriateness of this designation should be analyzed. Beyond these recommended sites along residential edges, housing will continue to be a permitted use in many Alewife districts, including the Route 2 entryway and the Triangle. This allows the flexibility to develop housing in the future, based on changes in the area and in market conditions. However, there are areas, particularly in the interior of the Quadrangle, where housing should not be encouraged, as is incompatible with other uses that might require truck deliveries, late hours, or rooftop mechanical equipment.

## Transportation

Over recent decades, the Alewife area has had more than its share of controversial transportation issues. As a result of these debates, the Route 2 ended as a freeway at Alewife, the Red Line terminus was located west of Alewife Brook Parkway with a 2,200-car parking garage, and the parkway capacity remained unchanged. In addition, even with the growth of employment in Alewife over the past two decades, only 40 percent of the vehicles traveling on Alewife Brook Parkway actually have a destination in Cambridge, much less Alewife. Thus, any program to increase capacity would only encourage through traffic, and in all likelihood, attract more traffic.

Although a traffic study has not been conducted recently for the Alewife area, all previous analysis has indicated that most intersections are now at or above capacity, and that this condition is not likely to change soon. Thus, the issue facing the City is how to provide suitable access to expanding businesses and more employees, while protecting abutting neighborhoods from potential impacts of traffic.

### Transportation Study

To help answer this question, an issues-oriented transportation study will be conducted for the Alewife area this summer. The study will evaluate the effect of potential traffic increases and investigate ways to promote non-automobile modes of travel; develop transportation demand management (TDM) strategies; determine flow patterns for Alewife-destined and through traffic, and identify present and potential traffic short-cuts that avoid congestion. The study will also include a proposed TDM strategy to reduce automobile use for access to and within the area; recommendations for eliminating short-

cuts and protecting abutting neighborhoods from future traffic; and recommendations for improving transit and high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) use in, and access to, Alewife.

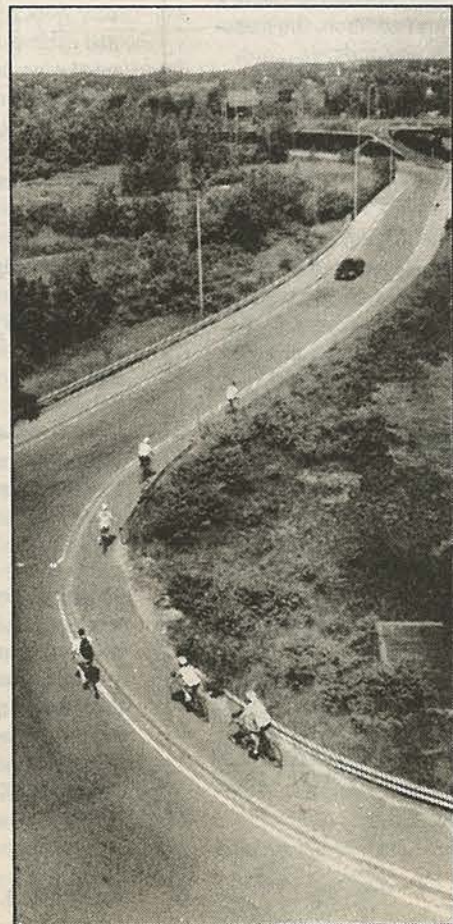
### Recommendations:

- Encourage non single-occupancy-vehicle (SOV) travel by implementing projects and programs to make travel easier by transit, bicycle, walking, and car/van pools.
- Promote the transportation demand management (TDM) measures contained in the Cambridge Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance such as HOV use, bicycle and pedestrian access, and additional transit services;
- Work with area employers to form transportation management associations to implement joint solutions to common problems. (See TDM story, page 14)
- Provide better connections for buses, bicycles and pedestrians from the Quadrangle to the MBTA Station.
- Improve the MBTA's feeder bus system and extend bus service to the Quadrangle.
- Work with the state to construct commuter parking facilities along Route 128 and beyond with shuttle buses to Alewife.
- Determine the demand for and feasibility of an Alewife commuter rail station.
- Implement infrastructure improvements that will improve safety, enhance bus circulation, and promote bicycle and pedestrian use (see Implementation.)

### Implementation:

#### Alewife/Fresh Pond Corridor

The draft Alewife Plan proposes ambitious and diverse goals for Alewife. Translating them into reality will take significant investment and effort by the public and private sectors alike. The Alewife/Fresh Pond Corridor Improvements, public investments now underway, will enhance the stretch of



The Enhancement Project will improve the connection between the Minuteman Bike Path and Alewife Station.

MDC parkway between the Alewife MBTA station and Huron Avenue. They include improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities; upgraded landscaping, lighting, and signage; and mitigation of water pollution in Alewife Brook, Little River and the Reservation.

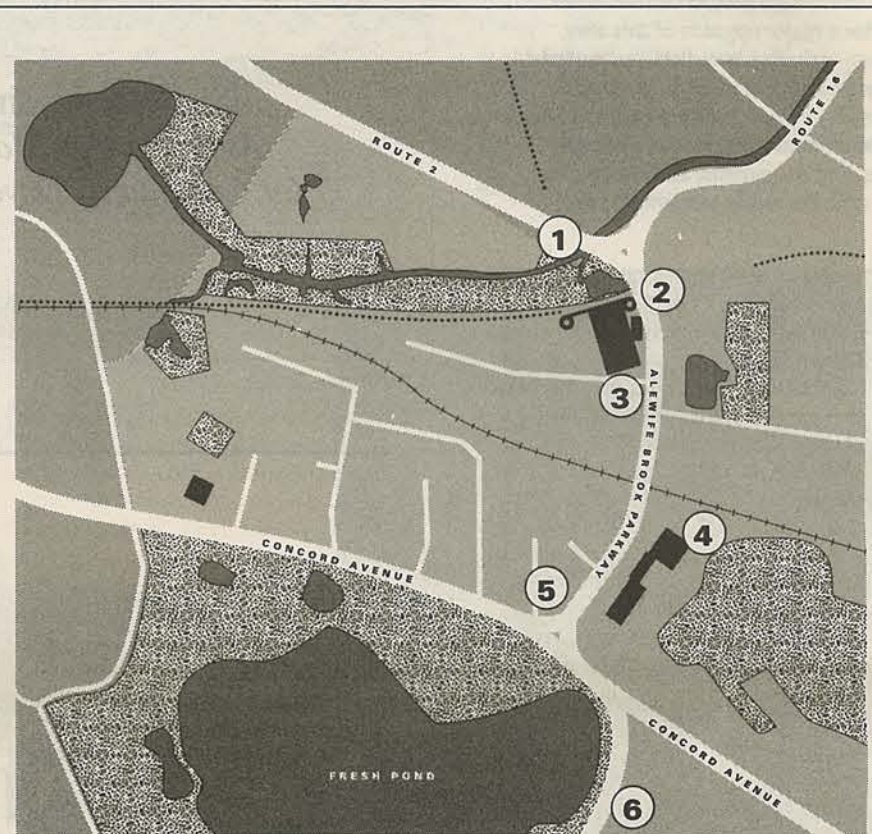
These projects weave together the diverse strands of the plan by enhancing Alewife's gateway and its primary travel routes; by making ecological improvements to waterways; and by creating safer, more people-oriented systems of travel.

Walkway and bikeway improvements, with accompanying landscape features, demonstrate how the Plan's environmental, transportation and urban design goals work together to create a more positive image for the area. The replacement of large areas of asphalt with trees, grass, and shrubs will provide shaded pathways for travelers on foot or cycle, and help establish a more cohesive environment. The creation of greener, more appealing connections between places will also expand the

open space network. Reclamation of the edges of Alewife and Fresh Pond reservations will help to protect and upgrade natural resources. Better drainage will help minimize road runoff harmful to wetlands and waterways. Restored open spaces and the new MDC bridge over Alewife Brook Parkway will make driving more pleasant for motorists, while new crossings of major roads and rotary intersections will make travel safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

These enhancements will also improve connections between surrounding neighborhoods and Alewife, making the entire area more vital and appealing as a place to live and work. A more attractive and pleasant environment will help attract new jobs in Alewife, an important economic development goal.

The first improvements will be seen in late 1995 or early 1996, with the Minuteman Bikeway connection to Alewife Station. Other work will follow in 1996 and 1997.



## Alewife Enhancement Project

For the last few years, community members, the Planning Board, and City staff have considered ways to improve the western gateway into Cambridge, from Route 2 to Alewife Brook and Fresh Pond Parkways. From those deliberations the City developed the Alewife Enhancement Project, for which it has obtained funding under the 1994 ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) program. The project will be designed and constructed over the next couple of years at an estimated cost of \$1.75 to \$2 million, including matching City funds of \$200,000 for survey and design work, approved in this year's capital budget. This project is more complicated than it seems, given the numerous public agencies involved in ownership and implementation. The City will coordinate the project, working with the Metropolitan District Commission, the MBTA, the Town of Arlington, and the Massachusetts Highway Department, which will design and implement a portion of the project.

#### 1. Minuteman Bikeway to MBTA Station:

A separate bike path and bridge over Little River, with associated drainage improvements, lighting, and landscaping, will improve the connection of this popular route to Alewife. The bike path along the Belmont/Fitchburg rail right-of-way will also be enhanced, including a small footbridge and restoration of the banks of Alewife Brook.

**2. Alewife Station to Linear Park and Alewife Brook Parkway:** Bicycle and pedestrian paths with drainage, lighting and landscaping.

**3. Alewife MBTA Headhouse to Rindge Avenue:** A pedestrian and bicycle path with drainage, lighting and landscaping, including improvements at the Rindge Avenue/Alewife Brook Parkway intersection. Access to the new MDC bridge will be improved, and open space will be upgraded.

**4. Fresh Pond Shopping Center to Daney Park:** A designated pedestrian and bike path will be created through the parking lot, using appropriate materials and striping.

**5. Concord Avenue to Fresh Pond:** Planners will soon begin designing safe crossings for pedestrians, cyclists, and others at and/or between Concord Avenue intersections with Alewife Brook and Fresh Pond Parkways.

**6. Fresh Pond Parkway:** Landscape improvements and historic lighting fixtures will be installed from Concord Avenue to Huron Avenue, including a pedestrian and bicycle path to Kingsley Park Bridge. In addition, Huron Avenue will be reconstructed from Fresh Pond Parkway to Concord Avenue.



# Business & Growth

**A**lewife is often described as the city's last frontier for economic growth. It is precisely this frontier ambiance — the open spaces, free-wheeling roads, and relative freedom from constraints of the denser city — that have accounted for Alewife's historic appeal to business. This can be measured today not only by the presence of 200 businesses here, but by the range of companies that have adapted to their frontier niche, coexisting cheek by jowl.

One finds Arthur D. Little, Aladdin Auto Repair, Bread & Circus, Royal Sauna, Bolt Beranek Newman, the National Spinal Cord Injury Association, Laundry Land, the Armenian Children's Milk Fund. There are mattress discounters, adoption centers, holistic dentists, trash haulers, Gestalt therapists, day care centers, and visiting nurses. Strange bedfellows indeed, but all making it in this curious corner of Massachusetts — a corner shaped not by careful planning, but by the needs of the market and the moment over its 350-year history of service as an urban fringe. Transected by a railroad and strip-developed parkways, pocked with old warehouses, former dumps, and other vestiges of its industrial past, Alewife has become a classic 20th century sprawl — neither quite city nor suburb, a No Man's Land sorely lacking the urban amenities enjoyed elsewhere in Cambridge.

Yet lack of amenities was no obstacle to Arthur D. Little Inc., which as the first of several prestigious consulting firms to settle here in 1952, created its own along the banks of the Little River, as did Abt Associates in the old industrial Quadrangle. Biotech pioneer Genetics Institute followed suit on Rindge Avenue Extension, now Cambridge Park Drive.

Ambiance notwithstanding, Alewife has much to recommend it for businesses. By standards elsewhere in the city, the area offers an abundance of space, a wide variety of buildings, decent access by public transportation, even some parking. And it comes with the prestigious Cambridge address — nationally associated with great universities, computer software, and biotechnology — at an affordable price, with excellent access to the northwestern suburbs.

As such, the area has considerable potential for increasing the city's tax revenue and providing a wide range of needed jobs for its residents. City planners first acted on this in the 1970s, when the proposed arrival of the Red Line extension signaled that Alewife's aging industrial spaces were ripe for economic growth. The Community Development Department created an urban design plan to transform Alewife into an upscale, mixed-use commercial center in a carefully orchestrated landscape. This vision, presented in the 1979 Revitalization Plan (Fishbook), was an elegant proposal for



Cambridge Park Drive looking west to Spaulding & Slye's 1980s office park

the imminent real estate boom that swept the city in the 1980s, but fizzled before it reached Alewife, where only about one of four million square feet permitted were actually built. Since 1990, there has been virtually no growth here.

The community was not pleased that the Fishbook vision did not materialize, as noted in the 1989 North Cambridge Neighborhood Study, which stressed that Alewife "remains stark, mundane,

and isolated from surrounding neighborhoods." Increasingly, this environment has troubled many businesses as well. And as the city's belt tightens and space disappears, the economic importance of Alewife looms ever larger. In 1991, these concerns prompted city planners to reassess their vision with a steering committee representing

Alewife owners, businesses, and abutting communities (See Alewife: a Plan for Sustainable Development, page 31).

Like the Fishbook, this plan is a barometer of its times. Where the Fishbook offered a bold, grandiose vision, this plan reflects 1990s uncertainties. It foresees few large private projects or public funds to do the grand things, and expects development here to be far more modest in scale, piecemeal in process, and

incremental in progress. It is a "working document" that admits that its proposals aren't cast in stone. Where the Fishbook deemed the Quadrangle's old warehouses as virtually ready for the dumpster, this plan touts those same buildings as ideal low-cost facilities for a new generation of emerging technology, baby biotech, and specialty metal firms that comprise the latest wave of Alewife pioneers.

While few expect the 1980s to return, few doubt that office construction will resume here, although no one dares predict when or how much. After 1980 rezoning, the full build-out potential of Alewife can be calculated on paper at 17.5 million square feet, almost five times what exists today. But this is theoretical, as several factors work to limit that (See Alewife: Edge City?). Many agree that five million more square feet may be realistic. But the larger figure haunts residents who remember just how close Alewife came to becoming an expressway, and have enough traffic on their streets without new development.

As developers scan the horizon for hopeful signs, a cadre of community watchdogs keeps their ears to the ground for tectonic activity that could send the next wave of commercial development westward. They do not want the city to be caught unprepared. Some believe this wave will come as a temptation the city can't resist. Others, less cynical, feel that a sound development plan, created by a thorough public process and firmly implemented, is the best insurance. That opportunity will come when the City Council debates the new Alewife plan in the coming year. ☺



## Alewife: Edge City?

In his 1991 book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*, Washington Post writer Joel Garreau identified Alewife as an emerging Edge City — one of the sprawling, often sterile, office-retail-entertainment complexes that have been gobbling acres of old farms, woodlands, and desolate spaces along suburban beltways and highway intersections like so many peanuts (think Route 128 or Tysons Corner, Va.) Garreau, a booster of what he calls the most sweeping landscape change in a century, wrote his lively chapter on Boston at the time when Cambridge Park Drive, under Spaulding & Slye's command, was marching westward toward the sunset. While still shy of Garreau's requisite 5 million square-foot size, Alewife made his list because it certainly looked like an emerging Edge City, and he felt it had (at least potential for) the qualities an Edge City needs to evolve: Affordability, Mobility, Convenience, Accessibility, and Niceness.

But Garreau didn't look closely enough. While Alewife is indeed nearby suitably nice CEO suburban bedroom towns (a factor that Garreau cites as the most critical in siting businesses), it also has, unlike most Edge City sites, a real history.

This gives it a surfeit of limiting features — Garreau calls these "Insurmountabilities" — thorny little problems that make the actualization of true Edge Citiness improbable. Alewife has traffic congestion, limited parking, hazardous industrial residues, wetlands, flood plains, soft soils, many small landowners, and vocal neighborhoods. In so many words, character. We should count our blessings. — J.H.

## Urban Design Reclaiming the parkway

**D**ecades ago, Fresh Pond and Alewife Brook Parkways were actually parkways. In the 1930s and 40s, when no one was standing guard, businesses began to nibble and gnaw the parkway's edges until the green was gone. As traffic and commerce have proliferated here in ensuing years, we have finally achieved a streetscape that rivals Route 1.

A riot of randomness assaults the eye and



Fresh Pond Parkway

signs veritably howl as they compete for attention, attracting vehicular passersby like flypaper. All this does have a kind of kitschy charm, but it wears thin quickly. It had worn thin enough by 1980, in fact, for the City Council to pass the Parkway Overlay District, a regulatory effort that intended, in effect, to squeeze the toothpaste back into the tube.

Retail businesses had long had their way along the parkway and were generally displeased by the overlay, but most weren't bothered by it, as their storefronts, signs and parking existed before the ordinance. As long as these "grandfathered" businesses do business as usual or meet building codes, the most draconian zoning can't force them to change. There's no way to simply go in and clean house. The law allows the owners of vacant eyesores to let them stand and decay. After all,

(Continued on page 40)



## Alewife 101: Players and Process

One way to see the process of real estate development is as a kind of elaborate ritual dance among members of independent tribes who share the same territory. They have different and sometimes conflicting agendas, but share many common interests, though not always apparent to their members. To observe this dance in motion, see two stories of development proposals in progress on the next pages.

### Businesses

Alewife has a great range of businesses with vastly different needs. International corporations prefer prestige streets, ambiance, amenities, and ease of access for well-paid employees and high-profile clients. Some want "statement" buildings away from the commercial fray, and are willing to pay for them.

Emerging technology and research firms find older buildings on less charming streets cheaper and better suited for lab use and light manufacturing, as interior spaces are larger and more adaptable. Tiny start-ups need "incubator" buildings with lower rents and shorter leases. Both prefer quieter locations with convenient parking, and benefit from the cachet of a Cambridge address.

Retail stores need high visibility, convenience, access, and volume. In a word, lots of traffic, without construction or jaw-tightening traffic jams. While people will climb stairs for a dentist or an accountant, a deli or liquor store has to be at ground level, and obvious. Owners don't want their customers driving around the back of a shopping center for a cup of coffee or six-pack. If a location doesn't work for a business, it's history there.

Most (but not all) businesses agree on these priorities for Alewife: An improved image for the entire area; Solutions to the traffic problems; Better public transit, including service from nearby towns not served by MBTA or buses; Good connections to and from transit within the Alewife area, including a direct connection between the Quadrangle and Alewife Station; An upgraded physical environment with attractive, safe paths and crossings and good access to improved open spaces; Amenities for workers, including "accessory" retail and service stores, especially restaurants; A less restrictive regulatory climate, especially regarding parking.

### Property Owners

There are 77 property owners in the Alewife area — corporations, family businesses, state agencies, realty trusts, individuals. Businesses that own their own property have different interests than owners who lease properties or who want to develop their land. Many small property owners in the Quadrangle are businesses that once leased with options to buy years ago when that was the norm, says Carol Hickey of Moulton Realty. While she finds that the Cambridge address does not buy as much as it used to — properties like hers compete with cheaper suburban industrial-office parks off Route 128 — she says there is a good market for these properties, and that her clients like things the way they are. By contrast her abutter, Al Wilson of Wilson Realty Trust, vigorously supports intensive growth and better traffic connections to Alewife.

### Developers

Typically, they are specialists who develop property for others to use, whether they work with an owner or keep and manage the property themselves. Successful developers must be entrepreneurial, clever, realistic, and politically adept. They need great patience and a long view, but must be able to move fast in a business driven by a fickle marketplace. As many learned in the 1980s, it is expensive and risky, with great rewards and punishments. Lease rates for new construction are substantially higher than for existing properties, about \$8-10 per square-foot. Prime office rates in Alewife, once \$25 a square foot, are now \$15-18. To build more office space here, market demand needs to drive rents back up to around \$25.

### Lenders

To get financing today a developer must go to a bank with tenants in tow. Once quite free with money, banks have become the most conservative link in the developer's chain of approvals, because so many had to repossess the speculative buildings they financed in the 1980s. Banks do not want to own real estate. They want to see letters of intent and signed leases, and need assurance that tenants are economically viable. A chain or franchise with an established market is more attractive to a bank than a small, unknown independent. Ambiance and amenities are fine if they increase economic viability, but most banks would prefer a McDonald's or a Walgreen's.

### Neighborhoods

Economic viability is also a concern of neighborhoods. No one wants weedy lots or empty storefronts. Everyone needs the city services that business tax dollars bring, and many would like nearby jobs. But because neighbors live with the consequences of development choices around the clock, so called "quality-of-life" factors are often more important than pure economics in their equations.

Perspectives range (often along ideological lines) from (Continued on page 38)

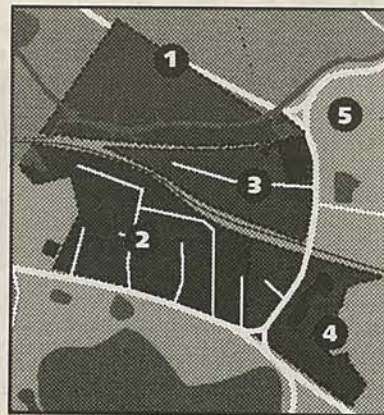


### 1 Route 2 Corridor

This bereft stretch, the city's western gateway, boasts a defunct nightclub, a working bowling alley and motel (all non-conforming uses) and the backside of Arthur D. Little, whose campus clusters around Acorn Park Drive. The city is eager to transform this strategic highway strip and establish office space here, but cannot do so without the cooperation of property owners, who are not now so disposed.

### 2 Quadrangle

Across the tracks, the so-called industrial Quadrangle is a colorful mosaic of business activity. With two sentinel high-rises and Sancta Maria Hospital along an otherwise lackluster Concord Avenue, this area varies from orderly, suburban streetscapes with modest lab and office buildings to a chaotic wasteland of random streets used by all sorts of enterprises (see Smith Place Ramble below).



### 3 Triangle

Once the site of vast steel fabrication sheds between the railroad and Rindge Avenue Extension, most of this area west of the MBTA station was transformed into an upscale office park by Spaulding & Slye. While some light industrial and commercial uses remain, the future here is definitely white-collar.

### 4 Fresh Pond Shopping Areas

Alewife's intense retail activity is clustered primarily in two main shopping areas on either side of Alewife Brook Parkway, also extending to New Street along Danchy Park and between the hectic rotaries along Concord Avenue and south along Fresh Pond Parkway. This strip offers many shopping opportunities for area residents and pass-through commuters. Ongoing reconstruction and landscaping will improve the appearance of the edges, but the city may have to wait for redevelopment to see significant changes here.

### 5 W.R. Grace/Alewife Center

About 23 acres of commercially developable land here belong to W.R. Grace, which, with developer David Vickery, had a special permit for a six-building office-hotel complex that was never built. Preliminary plans for a supermarket and retail complex are underway (see page 39.)

## A Smith Place Ramble



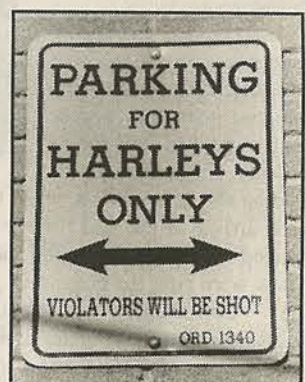
Smith Place at Concord Ave.

A stroll down Smith Place explains why Joel Garreau (*Edge City*) was so wrong about Alewife. This narrow road — once a 17th century cow path through the swamp and, in the Fishbook, proposed as the way of a grand boulevard — suggests all that Alewife has been and much that it might become. Walking north, always watchful for large trucks, one passes two buildings that housed workers for a 19th century slaughter house and glue factory; Bay State Pool Supply; Cinderella Carriage Co.; A.O. Wilson's

1923 steel fabrication building, now home to Merlin Metalworks and Hyperion Catalysis International; a NYNEX depot; the new green corrugated home of Elks #839; Belmont Springs Water; Mike's Original Gym; and the Gymnastic Academy of Boston. The route offers glimpses into a post-industrial landscape of real estate signs, rusty rail spurs, rubble piles, crumbling concrete ramps, sprawling industrial buildings and warehouses in varied states of repair or decay, and small forests of ailanthus trees.

Reaching the railroad, the route doglegs left, becoming Mooney Street, and passes Excel Limosine, Detail Auto Body, the faux-brick haunt of a graying motorcycle gang, C.J. Mabardy's trucking depot, gravel mountains, and trash transfer operations, and finally the new research labs of Advanced Magnetics. Just beyond the trash-strewn cul-de-sac, unseen through the tangle of brush, is the eutrophied Blair Pond, soon to be outfitted with a new, improved ecosystem.

Could Smith Place become the site for a museum that celebrates this history and showcases the 21st century technology emerging in its indistinct buildings?



Sign on Mooney St

## Statistics

Courtesy Community Development Dept. & Cambridge Assessors' office

### Statistics

Total Land (acres)	370
Developable Land (acres)	310

By District	Acres	% Build Out
Route 2/Alewife	79.4	15.4
Triangle	71.3	21.3
Quadrangle	90.7	25.3
Commercial Area	41.2	13.6
Total *	282.0	20.2

\* Figures do not include the 30-acre Grace site.

Total Square feet built 3.9 Million

Primary Land Uses	Acres	%
Gov't/Open space	88.7	31.4
Commercial/Vacant	52.4	18.5
Commercial/Office	46.0	16.3
Commercial/Retail	40.5	14.3
Warehouses	19.0	6.7
Industrial	15.0	5.3
Private Utilities	9.1	3.2
Research/Development	6.0	2.1

### Largest Landowners

MDC	47.5
Arthur D. Little	34.2
W.R. Grace	30.0
MBTA	27.4
Spaulding & Slye	23.9
Fresh Pond Shop Ctr. Trust	16.2
City of Cambridge	10.9
Wilson Realty Trust	10.3
Boston Edison	8.0

Total businesses 200

Total Jobs 13,200  
Cambridge employees 10%

### Leading employers

Arthur D. Little	1,317
Bolt Beranek Newman	1,100
American Express Travel	428
Abt Associates	394
W.R. Grace	380
Genetics Institute	360

### Alewife Business Tax contribution

\$10.7M

Percent of City's Tax Base paid by Alewife Owners 7.4

### Largest Taxpayers

Cambridge Park Ltd./Spaulding & Slye  
Arthur D. Little



# Who's Who in Alewife

*"Alewife is wonderful.*

*It's convenient to the suburbs, and it has lots of texture. We work with a lot of designers and our building has wonderful views of the surrounds. It is accessible and safe, and our employees are comfortable working here."*

— Mary Howard, President, Athena Design

## 1 Arthur D. Little, Inc.

Begun in 1886, ADL Inc. is an international consulting company that employs 2,400 people in 34 offices, including 1,400 at its "campus" headquarters at Acorn Park, which it began building in 1952. Employee-owned ADL enjoys a worldwide reputation for finding the answer to virtually any problem in any industry. Its contracts have ranged from tasting beer and creating Captain Crunch cereal to supervising Superfund cleanups and managing safety on Boston's Third Harbor Tunnel construction. It operates in three divisions: management consulting, technology and product development, and environmental health and safety.

## 2 W.R. Grace

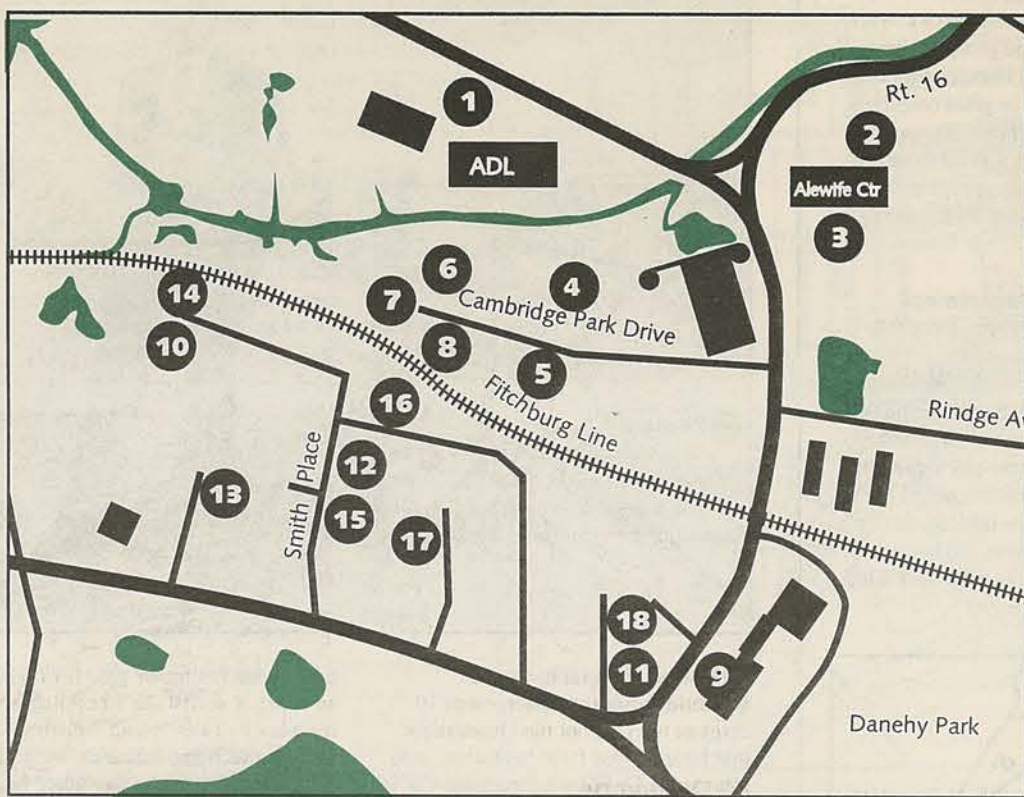
The worldwide headquarters and labs of W.R. Grace Co.'s Construction Products Division are located on the former Dewey & Almy chemical site that this Fortune 100 company has owned since 1954. Products developed here include waterproofing systems, fire protection products, and cement additives.

## 3 Looking Glass Technologies

Looking Glass is an 11-year-old interactive entertainment company producing computer games and simulations at Alewife Center. With 40 employees, the firm is thriving in a competitive software market. Its latest project, a flight simulator for the earth-bound, uses 3-D photo realistic graphics to give a "virtual reality" flight experience.

## 4 Genetics Institute

Founded in 1980, biotech leader Genetics Institute has its research and corporate headquarters in the Triangle. The company develops pharmaceutical products for treating hemophiliacs, cancer patients, and HIV-infected persons. Its products include blood cell growth factors, bone-inducing proteins, and agents to treat cancer, infectious disease, and hemophilia. The company is also a proactive corporate citizen (see page 15).



## 6 The Dodge Company

Family-owned since 1893, the Dodge Company manufactures and distributes embalming chemicals and cosmetics for the funeral industry, controlling 50% of the domestic market with subsidiaries overseas. Dodge moved to the Triangle in 1975, before it became an office park. Says fourth-generation spokesman John Dodge: "The area was not too pretty to look at then, with corrugated metal factories lining the road, but it was a great real estate deal."

## 7 Bolt Beranek Newman

First occupying a Moulton St. warehouse in 1958, BBN (founded 1948) now has 1,100 employees in two Alewife locations. Designer of ARAPANET, the foundation of today's Internet, BBN helps its clients succeed in a world awash in data. BBN creates internetworking technologies and services, develops software, and solves problems for the Defense Department, the National Institute of Health, and 70 Fortune 100 companies.

## 8 Athena Design

Athena Design Systems, Inc. set up shop on Cambridge Park Drive four years ago. Woman-



C. J. Mabardy 18-wheeler

by Whole Foods Markets, the country's largest natural foods chain, for \$26 million in 1992. The phenomenally successful Alewife store opened in December 1993, and met its two-year goal within two months. It offers a coffee bar, nutrition and healthy cooking courses, and child care.

## 10 C.J. Mabardy Co.

C.J. Mabardy runs trucking, sand and gravel, and trash transfer operations at the end of Mooney Street in the Quadrangle. The last heavy industrial operator in the area, Mabardy hauled gravel for the new Alewife Brook Parkway bridge.

## 11 Interface

A holistic education center exploring new trends in health, science, spirituality, and personal growth, Interface brings the likes of Drs. Deepak Chopra and Bernie Siegel, Marianne Williamson, Joanna Macy, and Robert Bly to local courses, workshops, and conferences. Established in 1975, Interface moved to Wheeler Street in 1992.

## 12 Hyperion Catalysis International

A venture-funded company in business for 10 years, Hyperion Catalysis International is the world's leading producer of a unique form of carbon called Fibrils, a material that allows plastics to conduct electricity for use in batteries, auto parts, and other components.

## 13 Harvard Design & Mapping

Harvard Design and Mapping provides high-tech Geographic Information System services and custom desktop mapping systems to clients in environmental, utility, and transportation fields. The 30-employee firm recently relocated to Spinelli Place. Co-founder and CEO Kija Kim is widely recognized in the women's and Asian communities for her efforts to promote business opportunities and combat domestic violence.

## 14 Advanced Magnetics

Biotech firm Advanced Magnetics opened in 1981 on Concord Avenue and later built new headquarters at the end of Mooney Street. AVM produces contrast agents for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) equipment, diagnostic materials that enhance images of body organs and play a key role in early detection of cancer and other diseases.

## 15 Merlin Metalworks

Manufactured by hand at 40 Smith Place, Merlin titanium bicycle frames have carried thousands of competitors in hundreds of races around the world, including the Tour de France and the Olympics. Merlin Metalworks, owned by Gwin

## Alewife Company Sampler

- Alfa Software
- Allagash Group
- American Express Travel
- Armenian Childrens Milk Fund
- Bay State Pool supply
- Best Western Inn
- B&B Towing
- Boston Ladder & Scaffold
- Chasma Scientific
- Cinderella Carriage Co.
- Cognetics
- Eastman Kodak
- Educators Publishing
- Ensytech
- Excel Car & Van Co.
- Free Romania Foundation
- Garment Machinery Co.
- Graham Clean Technology
- Kendal Confectionary Co.
- Learningsmith
- Mentor Counseling Services
- Monica G. Patience & Assoc.
- Number Nine Computer
- Parade of Shoes
- Payne Elevator Co.
- Protein Engineering Corp.
- Prudential Insurance Co.
- Recurrent Solutions
- Rich & Famous Restaurant
- Rob Kanzer Delivers
- Royal Sauna
- Sexton Can Co.
- Spaulding & Slye
- Steadfast Research
- Sumwrights
- Tropical Banana Co.
- Ultimate Technographics
- Venalum
- Wainwright Bank
- Werner Erhard & Associates
- Wordsmith

Jones, was formed nine years ago in Somerville by a cadre of former Fat City Cycle employees on a quest to create a bike frame lighter and tougher than the steel alloy standard. The tiny firm moved four times before settling in A.O. Wilson's renovated 1923 steel fabrication factory in 1992, heralding a new generation of industrial activity in the

Quadrangle in a far freer work environment. Today, Merlin's 26 workers build six styles of frames in 41 different sizes, exporting 40% of the 2,400 frames they make each year to 35 countries worldwide. Titanium, the stuff F-14 landing gear is made of, is difficult to work with and does not come cheap. A Merlin mountain bike frame retails for almost \$2,000. That's just the frame — no seat, handlebars, or fork. But its maneuverability, shock absorbency, endurance, and light ride compensate for the price, and it holds its value, as it never corrodes, scratches, warps, or loses its finish. To those for whom biking is a way of life, a Merlin is the ultimate investment.

## 16 Anderson & McQuaid

Anderson & McQuaid has operated a 72,000 sq. ft. lumber mill on Fawcett St. since 1952, specializing in custom hardwood moldings for architects, builders, and historic preservationists. Their craftsmanship can be found throughout the region.

## 17 Virus Research Institute

Founded by four Harvard virologists in 1992, Virus Research Institute develops vaccines to treat and prevent infectious diseases. While no products are on the market yet, one candidate is a vaccine to prevent rotavirus, a diarrheal infection common to young children (and lethal in developing countries). Located at 61 Moulton Street, VRI employs 50 people.

## 18 Abt Associates

Builder of the Quadrangle's first landscaped office park in 1971, Abt Associates is a 400-employee policy research and consulting firm serving businesses and governments worldwide on contracts ranging from agricultural economics to survey research. Recent projects in the news: a \$57 million USAID contract helping Russian military families resettle, and a White House report on illegal drug use.



Merlin Metalworkers Alex Tegelaar and Jennifer Miller enjoy the workplace.

*"We needed good, clean, dry manufacturing space, and a lot of it. The [Alewife] building attracted us. We'd like to see the traffic situation cleaned up. Those traffic circles are a war zone. They're lethal."*

— Ted Costantino, Merlin Metalworks

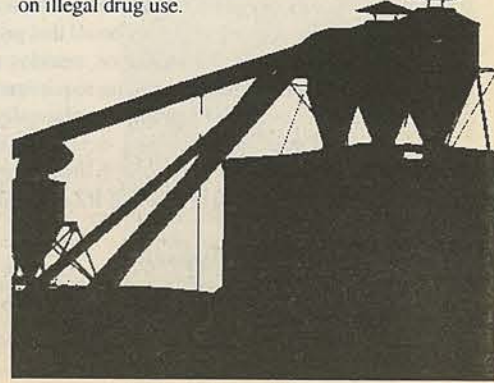
## American Express Travel

Thomas Cook Travel, the nation's third largest travel company based on Cambridge Park Drive, was recently purchased by American Express, the world's largest. American Express's Travel Services Group is now based here, providing administration, sales, account management, customer relations, and marketing services to over 1,700 offices worldwide.

owned and operated, the firm produces software for artists, engravers, and engineers in the surface design industry — wallpaper, porcelain, clothing, etc. Athena's computer-integrated design tools "think" like a designer for such clients as Fruit-of-the-Loom and Wedgewood China.

## 9 Bread & Circus

Starting as a tiny storefront in Brookline in 1975, Bread & Circus grew into a chain of six local natural foods supermarkets that was bought



Anderson-McQuaid's rooftop



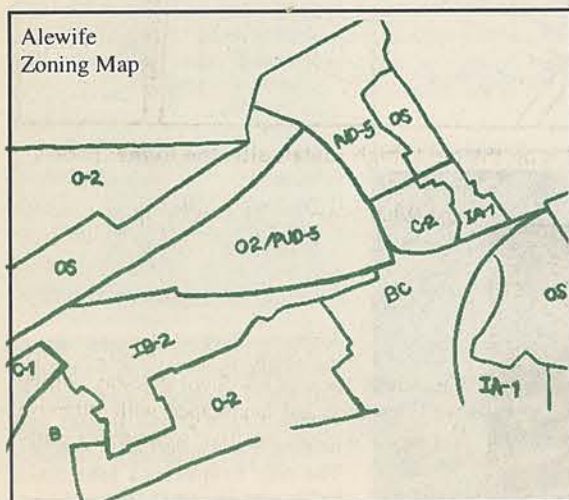
## Alewife 101: Players and Process

(Continued from page 36)

"pro-business" residents who don't believe neighborhoods should interfere with development, to the "anti-business" residents who view development as a juggernaut that will, given favorable market conditions, steamroll the city. Within this continuum of opinions, neighborhood groups strive to participate in the public process, seeking some control over development and asking that businesses be good neighbors. They see their function as ensuring that protections are in place to assure this, and that city officials uphold those protections. Public process allows community groups and individuals to weigh in on issues. Abutters have legal standing in decisions by local boards.

### The Community Development Department

The role of choreographer in the development dance falls primarily to the city's Community Development Department, working with a range of other city departments and boards under the auspices of the City Manager and the City Council. Community Development has four tasks in this regard: To develop policies to guide the city's growth, such as the Cambridge Growth Policy Document and the new Alewife plan; To develop and oversee regulations that guide development; To help both developers and businesses negotiate the challenging permitting process; To work with existing businesses as they expand or change.



- O-2 - Offices and Multi-family Housing
- C-2 - Multi-Family Residence
- IB-2 - Manufacturing, Warehouse, Office
- PUD-5 - Planned Unit Development
- BC - Business, Office, Retail
- OS - Open Space
- B - Two-Family Residence

### The Zoning Ordinance

The primary document guiding the development process is the city zoning ordinance, which defines what people may and may not do with their property. The zoning map divides the city into zoning districts (27 in all); the text spells out the regulations for each district. These determine land uses (the city specifies 100 different types); dimensions (maximum floor area, density of development, building height, and minimum open land around buildings); and parking required. These regulations define what an owner can do "as of right."

In addition, there are:

- **Overlay Districts**, with special regulations in addition to, or in lieu of, the underlying regulations in that district.
- **IPODs, or Interim Planning Overlay Districts**, a temporary ordinance that supersedes existing zoning when serious development concerns arise. While preferred to the dreaded moratorium, these are not popular with developers and owners and rarely pass City Council easily. (An IPOD was proposed and soundly defeated for the Quadrangle in 1992.)
- **Planned Unit Development Districts (PUDs)** apply to larger parcels. They encourage new building in revitalization areas such as Alewife and enable public and private interests to collaborate on large projects. Typically, they give a developer more flexibility, allowing more intense or diverse development; and give the city more control over the shape, appearance, and features of the development.

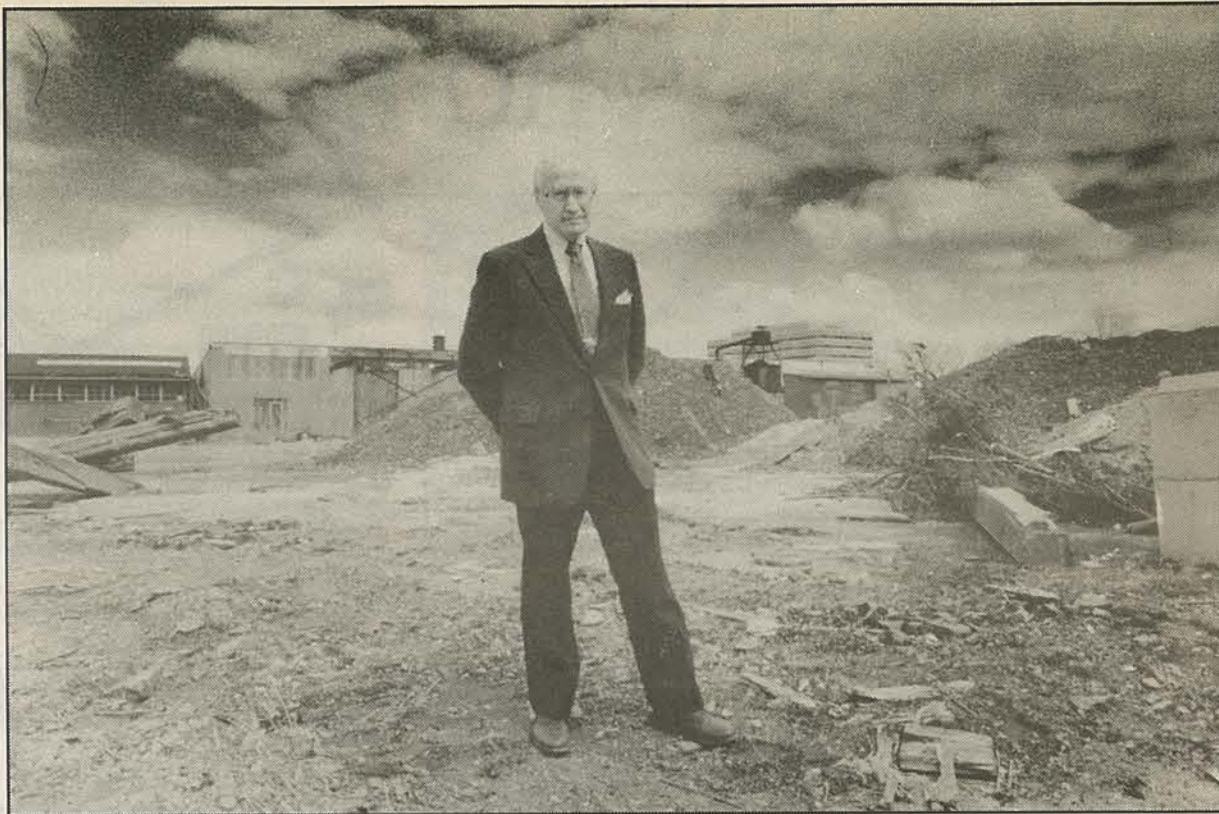
The zoning ordinance also allows Special Permits to be granted for some exceptions (i.e., building height), if they are deemed reasonable and meet designated criteria. An owner can obtain a Variance (or exemption from the zoning ordinance) to vary use or increase dimensions if it can be demonstrated that the property has unique conditions that create hardships — and that the variance will not "result in substantial detriment to the public good."

### The Planning Board

Developers customarily present plans to the Planning Board, a seven-member appointed volunteer board that provides oversight for the city's zoning ordinance, working with residents and developers to meet the zoning requirements during the permitting process. The Planning Board usually grants special permits. Developers seeking a variance from the Board of Zoning Appeal fare better with the blessing of the Planning Board, which also reviews all BZA decisions.

### The Board of Zoning Appeals

A five-member appointed volunteer board empowered to grant variances and some special permits, the BZA also hears appeals from owners who have been denied permits by the Building Department.



**Al Wilson, 79**, grandson of a Cambridge house builder, owns 10 acres in the heart of the Quadrangle that he inherited from his father, who founded A.O. Wilson Structural Co. in 1923. An MIT engineer, Wilson has long been a moving force for the revitalization of Alewife, most recently serving on the city's new Alewife Steering Committee. He manages property now worth more than 100

times what his father paid for it (10¢ an acre). A realist, he's building homes for what he calls "clean industry," small biotech and research firms. But he still dreams of the day when he can dust off his far grander plan for an eight-story, 900,000 square-foot office complex. Wilson believes we're paying the price now for not building the regional highway infrastructure planned in the 1960s.

IF YOU HAVE A BIG DREAM, YOU CAN'T compromise. You've got to do it. If we'd done all those things, we'd have a great traffic pattern here today. In an ideal world, we'd build a tunnel from Memorial Drive to the middle of the Quadrangle.

—Al Wilson, Wilson Realty Trust

THE QUADRANGLE IS THE BEST OPPORTUNITY to create blue collar jobs across the city. The question is, can the city pull it off, and does it have the commitment? If zoning forces these [blue collar] uses to compete with office — if you allow both uses together — it won't work. You'll lose them.

—Ed Cyr, former city councilor

IN CAMBRIDGE, IT'S NOT JUST A SIMPLE bottom-line formula of jobs and tax base. The city attracts businesses with the kind of employees who bring something to the party besides tax revenue. Our businesses, in turn, give the city something many urban neighbors lack, a generous tax base. Economic development continues to assure residents a good quality of life, but the city's restrictive policies are pushing businesses to go elsewhere, even if they don't want to. We have more [resources], but cities like Boston and Worcester are more aggressive hosts. The city has to work harder.

—Gerald Oldach, Director, Cambridge Chamber of Commerce

IF WE'RE TALKING GOOD JOBS FOR RESIDENTS without college degrees, their future lies in getting technical training and working in the emerging technology sector, which has the most potential to grow the next generation of jobs in Cambridge. One nice thing you'll find moseying around out at Alewife is an emerging technology district for small, creative, start-up companies with the potential to grow. Some are developing materials with specialized performance characteristics, like ceramics, composites, and plastics. They don't want to spend a lot of money on fancy offices, and many don't want to be in traditional office buildings because floor-to-ceiling heights are wrong for their lab work. Here they can convert older industrial buildings and have land available for expansion. They're also a plus because as a commercial use they're far less dense than offices, and they reduce the traffic issues that come with growth. I think Alewife should continue developing as it is. Once the Alewife plan is accepted, we need to address implementation: How do we leverage resources? What's the time frame?

—Jeanne Strain, Director of Economic Development

WHAT THE ALEWIFE AREA REALLY NEEDS are a few good restaurants, like the old Fantasia's. I miss that place.

—Brendan Noonan, Sr., Noonan Realty

### MIT's Quadrangle Square

An MIT graduate urban design team spent fall 1994 working with the Community Development Department, preparing a redevelopment plan for the Quadrangle. Among the recommendations of the intriguing 54-page report:

- Develop a **public square** at the Smith Place-Concord Ave. junction—with transit connections, retail, amenities, and surrounding housing—as a gateway to the Quadrangle, creating a sense of place among existing mixed uses and encourage pedestrian and transit use.
- Create a **diagonal roadway spine** along an abandoned rail spur between this square and Alewife Station, establishing a strong visual connection between the two isolated

areas. If possible, complete the connection with an at-grade pedestrian and commuter van crossing here rather than farther west at the end of Smith Place (the study challenges the utility of the city's proposed connector as too distant to encourage walking and likely to stimulate traffic demand, both counter to the Alewife plan goals).

- Develop a **technology training center** and **public exhibit space** to support emerging Quadrangle industries.
- Encourage **light industry and supporting retail** in the large Quadrangle office (O-2) zone. Give density bonuses for programs supporting alternatives to auto commuting. Provide a better zoning buffer for the Highlands neighborhood.

For information, call Emily Szold at MIT's Urban Design office, 253-7419.

**Carol and Pam Hickey**, a mother-daughter team at Moulton Realty, own and manage their family's commercial property in Alewife. Carol treasures her office view of a vestigial farmyard on Concord Avenue, where apples and pears still bloom in spring and pheasants thrived until they were eaten by feral cats. Carol's family, the Spinellis, built many of the local warehouses and industrial buildings. Pam's great grandfather was a Cambridge blacksmith; her great-great aunts, "the milkmaids," drove cows down Concord Avenue to pasture at Fresh Pond.



GEOGRAPHICALLY SPEAKING, this a wonderful place to for tenants to locate and to do business in. It's cohesive, like a neighborhood. Many of us have been here for a very long time. We enjoy a subur-

ban feeling, almost like a campus. Most of my buildings are single story. They attract a certain kind of tenant. I like things the way they are here, and I'm concerned about increasing traffic. I don't want to stand in the way of future development, but I think you have to keep in mind the impact you'll have on other areas when you raise density. Some of the build-out plans are too ambitious for such a small area. Practically speaking, I know what this will do to my kinds of clients. I think businesses really have to be sensitive to residents who live around them. You can't forget they're there.

—Carol Hickey, Moulton Realty



# Vickery Floats Supermarket Scheme for W.R. Grace Site

**R**emember Alewife Center — the 1 million square foot, six-building office park and hotel planned for the 20-acre old W.R. Grace site in the late 80s that wasn't built? Developer David Vickery of Spaulding & Slye is now testing local

waters for a supermarket-retail complex on this site between Alewife Station, W.R. Grace Co., and Russell Field. Initial response from community has been largely positive, with reservations about impact of traffic and operations on neighborhoods.

### The Project

Vickery is proposing a 70,000 square-foot mega-food store (Star, Shaw's, and Stop & Shop have shown interest) and 70,000 additional square feet including a clothing store (possibly Marshall's), smaller shops and a restaurant overlooking Jerry's Pond. He also hopes to build a 200-room, 150,000 square-foot hotel on the old Lehigh Metals site, primarily for business use.

All told, says Vickery, this project will be 750,000 square feet smaller, or less than one-fifth the size of the original proposal. Except for the 4-story hotel, all buildings will be one story. There will be 750 parking spaces instead of 2,100 originally permitted, with no underground or structured parking. Spaulding & Slye expects to buy the land from Grace and then lease and manage the site.

### The Site

The entire Grace site is now 23 acres, including a three-acre piece just north of Russell Field (tentatively slated for the market), Jerry's Pond, and surrounding land, including the old Babo's and Lehigh Metals sites (see map). The MDC is now negotiating with Grace to buy 5.2 acres including the pond and Babo site. Vickery might restore and landscape the pond, a vital amenity for his project, before passing ownership to the MDC. The MDC is also exploring the purchase of the Lehigh Metals site, where Vickery plans the hotel. Many want this land to remain open space, but given its value as prime commercial land (developers paid \$4.2 million for the Lehigh / Babo site in the 1980s), few have hopes that it will survive unbuild.

### Traffic & Parking

With retail use, traffic impact should be both less and different, says Vickery. Most office park traffic is confined to weekdays; retail traffic is spread out, with heaviest times on Thursday and Friday nights and weekends. The downside of office use is the deluge at rush hour. The downside of retail is traffic at more hours, and more likelihood that shoppers will try to cut through abutting neighborhoods and park there. Two primary access points to the Alewife Center are from the MBTA garage exit ramp, and from an existing curb cut at the light

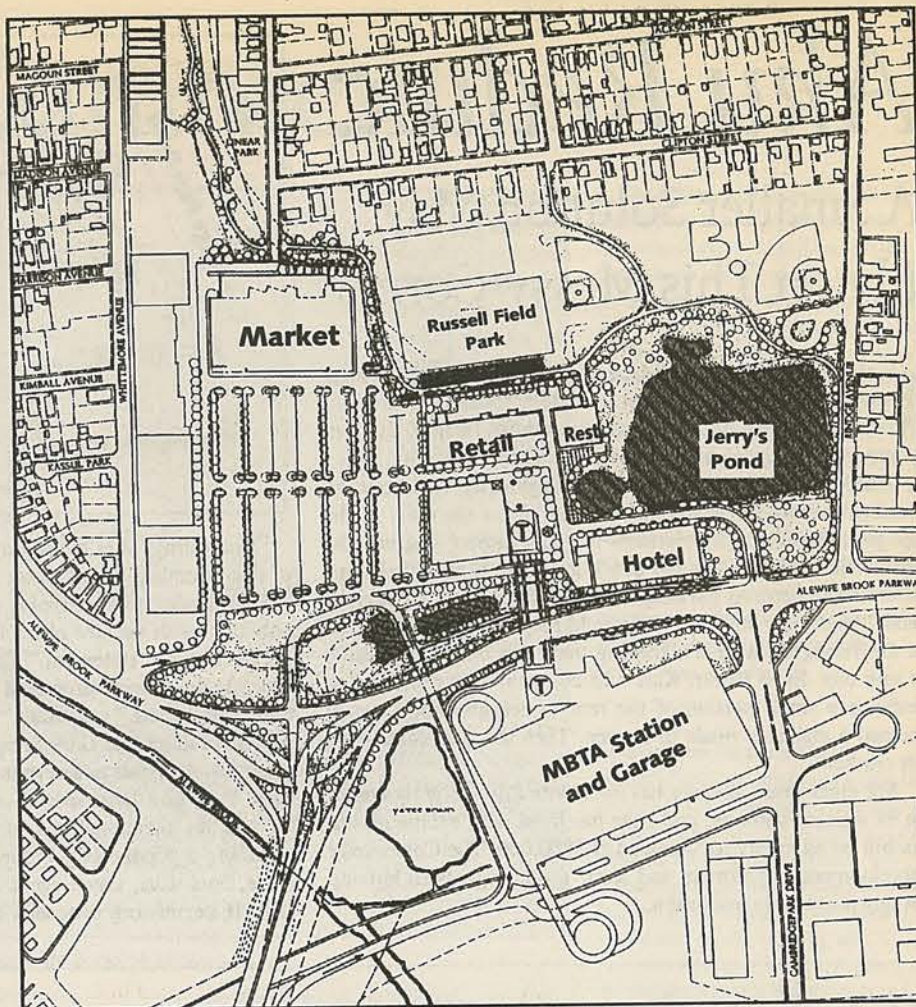
across from Cambridge Park Drive. A neighbor describes this access as "tortured." Conceding that the route around the T station is "somewhat convoluted," Vickery believes that regular shoppers will have no problems getting here once they learn the way, and that if retailers have doubts, they won't sign the required 15-20 year lease.

As a requirement for a state highway permit, Spaulding & Slye will commission a study of the traffic impact on public ways in a wide circumference around the site, which the city says its own traffic consultant will review.

The MBTA has a floating easement through the site to allow pedestrians and cyclists safe passage along the various pathways that intersect here. Vickery says he is willing to work with local groups to find the best traffic patterns.

### The Process

While Vickery completed the complex city and state permitting process for his original project, he expects to go through it all again — if tenants sign on and the community supports the project. Otherwise, he expects Grace will wait for the office market to return. If the project goes forward, there will be many community meetings and public hearings. Under the required Planned Unit Development special permit, the city has additional control on the project, including design review. Vickery



Proposed retail complex: The hotel is on the old Lehigh Metals site; the former Babo's site is to the right of the hotel.



Alewife Center viewed from the MBTA garage

expects the process to take from 18 to 24 months from permit filing to grand opening.

### Community Benefit and Concerns

Unlike the office scheme, this project would provide a needed supermarket, offering a range of lower-paying jobs to city residents and youth. It would also clean up this scruffy area, including Jerry's Pond, and attract off-hour activity, a deterrent to crime.

**Traffic & Parking:** As Route 16 is already near gridlock every rush hour and many drivers now cut through the Whittamore / Seagrave neighborhood, residents worry that the market will prompt even more to drive through the area

or park on local streets or in handy Grace parking lots and walk to the shopping area. Vickery says he'll consider closing the third access road to the site via Whittamore Avenue, if the community desires. Residents want an accurate study on where shoppers will come from (some fear this will become a market for Arlington) and on the traffic impacts to Mass. and Rindge Avenues and Sherman and Cedar Streets. Planning Board member William Tibbs is concerned that the market could impact traffic even farther afield.

**Siting:** Some neighbors object strongly to the tentative siting of the market, which would leave truck deliveries and trash nearest Harvey

and Whittamore neighborhoods. In response to their request, Vickery has agreed to explore other locations, possibly close to the MBTA station, but he remains unconvinced that these options will work.

**Appearance:** Residents want assurance that this site at the city's western gateway will be well designed and landscaped with attractive signage, "a clear, positive welcoming statement." Vickery says he won't even ask for a roof sign, and expects the market will be custom-designed for the site.

**Other:** Many worry about environmental impacts — adequate flood storage and hazards buried in the old Grace chemical site. Some want a special effort to make this area an appealing destination for pedestrians, cyclists, and MBTA shoppers. A few wonder if this modest retail center could provide a "toe in the door" for a far bigger retail operation, perhaps an enclosed mall — if, as it seems, the emerging market for Alewife is retail.

*"Previous proposals in this area have neglected the neighborhood. It is important that we feel a part of this project, vs. feeling apart from this project."*

— George McCray, NCSC



## David Vickery

As the former assistant city manager for community development, David Vickery was mastermind of the Fishbook, the 1979 Alewife Revitalization Plan, and is himself a fish in water here. With an intimate understanding of local issues, he seems willing to put in long hours planning with the city and neighbors to avoid problems down the pike. Recently he's had many meetings with community groups, city councilors, and officials to discuss his proposal, which would still be called Alewife Center. When one resident proposed renaming it "Graceland," Vickery responded with a wan smile.

## Background

Vickery's 1980s Alewife Center project was the first and only planned unit development (PUD) approved for Alewife by the city under 1980 zoning laws, but the real estate market crashed before it got off the ground. Vickery is vocally grateful he did not build, as many developers who did lost their shirts. While office occupancy rates are on the upswing, rents remain low.

In 1993, W.R. Grace was approached by a "big box user" wanting to put a giant BJ-type retail warehouse here. Grace and Vickery determined that this was unfeasible. They were approached again after the demise of Stop & Shop on Memorial Drive by supermarkets responding to the city's call — articulated in a recent city study last year that identified the Grace land as a possible site.

One Alewife Center Rents (per square foot annually)

	Gross	Taxes etc.	Net
1989	\$24.50	\$5.50	\$19
1995	\$15	\$8	\$7

## Real Estate Recovery

Realtors report commercial vacancies are down from a high of about 25 percent to 6 percent in the Alewife area — encouraging, but not yet enough to send up more buildings like 185 Alewife Brook Parkway, which was bought by Fresh Pond Shopping last year and has been vacant for some time, largely due to bridge construction. Last fall Senator Ted Kennedy took advantage of the empty ground floor to rent campaign space here (North Cambridge activists Carolyn Mieth and Ed Cyr, with Ed's daughter Abigail, model campaign signs). Alewife was nonetheless relentlessly bipartisan: GOP candidate Mitt Romney also rented campaign space on nearby Fawcett Street.





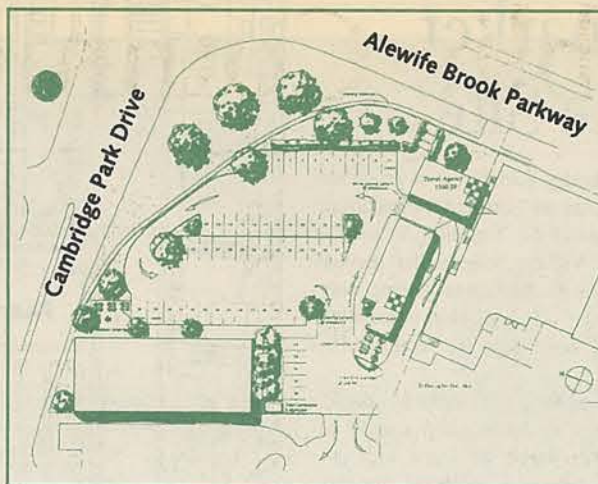
# Aku Redux:

## A Smaller Solution May Fly on This Messy Corner

In the late 1980s, Aku-Aku restaurant owner Jeffrey Katz and his partners were all set to build a 150,000 square-foot office building on the vacant lot across from T Station, where John D. Lyons had sold seed for many years.

Unlike other new, suburban-looking office buildings on Cambridge Park Drive that had slipped under the radar of the design guidelines, city planners felt this project had just the right scale and tone for the city's gateway. It included three floors of structured parking and 15,000 feet of "accessory retail" on the ground floor that would help meet daytime needs of the Triangle's workers, keeping their cars out of city traffic at mid-day. Even better, Katz and company had promised to dedicate a small portion of the rent to neighborhood use. It seemed a marriage made in heaven. Then the real estate market crashed.

For eight years, the city has lived with this unsightly corner on its western gateway, and Katz has lived with a large annual tax bill on an empty lot assessed at \$800,000. The Community Development Department and Katz' group have been looking for any reasonable resolution.



This spring, after modifying details to meet most concerns of the Planning Board, Katz got city approvals for a small (15,000 square feet) shopping area to be called Alewife Plaza, only one-tenth the size of his earlier proposal. It also makes a very different "statement." There's no longer an impressive office building with structured parking, "but it's what the city told us to do here," says Katz, "accessory retail."

Katz and partner Gary Snerson say they've talked to scores of potential tenants to determine what companies need to settle here. They now have several occupants seriously interested in the site, an intentional mix of chains and small independents including a popular bagel store, a coffee franchise, a chicken place, bookstore, travel agent, and possibly an Indian restaurant. If permitting proceeds as hoped, says architect Greg

Etter, they hope to open by late fall. Plans include remodeling the existing building on site (now housing Metro Cellular) to match the architecture of a new building to go up just north of the existing Aku-Aku restaurant. Signs will be incorporated into the facade of the two-story building that might include a digital clock and temperature. This structure will include a drive-through into a landscaped parking area. Katz plans two outdoor sitting and eating areas in the complex. The large free-standing Aku-Aku sign will go, but the revolving yellow circle atop the restaurant stays, Katz says.

From the perspective of the Planning Board and city planners, there's one rub: Passersby approaching this conspicuous corner on Alewife Brook Parkway will see first and foremost a parking lot, not a building as specified by the existing Parkway Overlay District and proposed master plan. In a word, it looks *suburban*. Planners want Alewife to look more like *city*.

Katz says banks won't fund his project if he puts the new building on the corner as planners prefer, because it would confuse patrons and hide the smaller building. "The banks say you can't do something weird, or you won't get tenants. No tenants, no financing, no project," adds Katz, who says that the parking will be attractively landscaped and partially obscured by a landscaped berm, which his group will maintain.

Parking is the last major hurdle. Developers need 58 spots and claim there are 99 established spaces. The city's inventory says there are 42. The matter will be settled shortly by the Interim Parking Control Committee.

While Alewife Plaza is not all the city wanted on this corner, most agree it's the best that can be done here now, given economic realities. ■

## Urban Design Challenge: Reclaiming the Parkway

(Continued from page 35)

improvements, even small signs, cost money.

This, of course, is the American Way, and it leaves us with the old Getting-the-Horse-to-Water problem: you can't make a business drink until it's ready. It has to need something from the city to come for approval. Then, changes can be negotiated. Otherwise, planners must pray for good will and wait patiently for owners to come forward with proposals.

The decisions facing the city's permitting departments and boards are often minor ones: a larger sign here, a little overhang or parking space there. Dependably, each supplicant has some dire hardship or other pressing reason to allow an exception. It is hard to hold the line here, especially when so many see this strip as beyond hope. To its credit, the city has resisted the intrusion of several larger proposals here, but why on earth did it allow the four-story Fresh Pond Reservoir Place to jut into the parkway district, looming over the Ground Round rotary?

Today the strip looks little better than it did 15 years ago, but that's about to change, as the MDC has reclaimed its long-encroached edge (see photo, page 32). The new bridge, roadwork, and landscaping on Alewife Brook Parkway should be completed

### Parkway Overlay District

A 400-foot wide corridor along Route 2, Alewife Brook Parkway, Concord Avenue, and Fresh Pond Parkway. Its purpose is "to upgrade the image of the area, to enhance public safety by reducing visual confusion and haphazard development, and to encourage development that will protect and enhance public open space." It requires special permits for new buildings over 80,000 square feet, and subjects all new buildings and major alterations to design review.

this fall. Working with the MDC, the city has secured funding to improve the parkway edge with historic lighting, landscaping, and sidewalks from the Ground Round Rotary to Huron St. Joint planning begins shortly.

This still leaves the riotous hodgepodge, which the the Community Development Department proposes to address in its new Alewife plan with a wider overlay district, encompassing an urban design plan that aims to make this area look and feel more like

Cambridge. The city proposes certain zoning measures to achieve this, a set of carrots and sticks that offers builders added benefits and flexibility for conforming to the city's new guidelines, and in return gives the city more control over development. (Example: A developer gets more floor space or a higher building than zoning allows, in return for including public open space and giving the city design review). This "give and get" process is a kind of sophisticated horse trading that, if done well, can work for the good of the entire community, as it did with East Cambridge's Galleria Mall.

City design consultants Chris Chadbourne and Ron Fleming have suggested ways to

entice grandfathered businesses to make changes, used elsewhere, such as a tax break to help owners to improve facades, signage, and landscaping. Whether Cambridge can legally use it has not been determined.

Saving that or the unlikely appearance of large piles of public money, we must hope that retailers choose to upgrade voluntarily. Perhaps the parkway improvements will engender a new civic pride in the Alewife area, giving businesses incentive to improve and city regulators the moxie they need to hold a tougher line on appeals. Without civic pride and political will, master plans and overlay ordinances are little more than paper.

— J.H.

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- 1985 — Alewife "T" Station opens on area site purchased from Grace. The Red Line extension brings rapid transit, new opportunity and added convenience to the residents of North Cambridge.
- 1995 — The Cambridge site continues as headquarters and research center for Grace Construction Products, worldwide manufacturer of fireproofing, waterproofing, masonry, and cement and concrete products. The original Dewey & Almy structure remains today.

Grace is proud of its Alewife heritage and continued involvement in the North Cambridge community... may our relationship continue to flourish.



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# Public Comment

Community groups and individuals were invited to comment on the city's proposed plan or other concerns and visions for the Alewife area. This dialogue can continue in subsequent issues of the North Cambridge News. Feel free to subscribe. — Ed.

## Grace Area Traffic Issues

Our neighborhood—consisting of the northernmost tip of Cambridge, off Mass. Avenue and Route 16—is in the sense of vehicle traffic an island, accessible to the rest of Cambridge only via these major thoroughfares. We are primarily a quiet residential neighborhood with two major commercial neighbors, W.R. Grace and One Alewife Center.

Our major traffic concerns result from through-traffic traveling too fast near our playground and through our streets, putting our children at risk. Commuters use our neighborhood as a way to avoid the traffic light at the corner of Route 16 and Mass. Ave. Two of the possible routes involve fast moving traffic barreling past the playground at the intersection of Kimball, Columbus and Seagrave.

As part of playground renovations, our neighborhood is beginning the process of addressing these concerns. The community needs to be more involved in designing a solution to this critical situation.

Of future concern to us is the imminent development of W.R. Grace's various parcels as part of the Alewife area development. We would like to go on record as being completely opposed to allowing any vehicular access between our neighborhood and any commercial development.

*Alma and Mitchell Balonon-Rosen,  
Madison Avenue  
Janet and Gavin Malenfant,  
Harrison Avenue*

## Preserving the Neighborhood

Cambridge Highlands is a seven street neighborhood with a unique geographical location. In the northwest corner of Cambridge, it is bordered by two very busy streets, Blanchard Road and Concord Avenue; by the Blair Pond/Alewife Reservation, and finally by the undeveloped Alewife industrial area that includes a trash transfer station.

Approximately 250 multi-ethnic working class families live in the Highlands, and make up the body of Cambridge Highland Neighborhood Association (CHNA). CHNA's goal is to maintain the old neighborhood ambiance—neighbor knowing neighbor, neighbor helping neighbor, neighbor protecting neighbor.

It has been our resolve to work hand in hand with the City, Community Development, other abutting neighborhood associations/towns and developers to protect our community from being engulfed by four-lane highways and high-rise buildings. To that end, CHNA's involvement in the redevelopment of Alewife property has been great and our reputation has been to work with development, not against it. CHNA is also involved in the restoration of Blair Pond and linking the corridor of greenery and wildlife from Blair Pond to Alewife Reservation. With that said, we need to stress certain issues to which we do take exception:

1. Opening Cambridge Park Drive or any other road connecting Concord Avenue to Route 2 or the Alewife Triangle. This would create overwhelming traffic around the Highlands. As it is, our residents now have trouble exiting onto the heavily trafficked Concord Avenue and Blanchard Road.
2. Construction of high-rise buildings.
3. Allowing Concord Avenue to become another Route 1, with a potpourri of multi-level, multi-use buildings. This road is the "Gateway to Cambridge," and as such, should maintain an aspect of beauty.

To summarize: The Highlands are willing to work with all towards a common goal, but we must keep in mind that we live in Cambridge and this is our HOME. The businesses wishing to



Public comment on the new bridge abutment under Alewife Brook Parkway

develop will be passing through and going home to the suburbs after work. We must work to keep our home Cambridge livable.

—Ann M. Tennis, chair  
Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood Association

## Development Takes Toll on Belmont Streets

In the past two decades, Belmont has become slowly trapped in an ever-tightening vise of commercial development in abutting Lexington and Cambridge. During this time, a weight restriction has prevented heavy vehicles from crossing the truss bridge on Alewife Brook Parkway; the Alewife MBTA station has opened; and employment in Alewife has increased 250 percent.

As a result, every day, thousands of trucks and commuter cars find alternative routes through Belmont. Most of this traffic passes through Belmont Center, along Brighton Street and Blanchard Road, and on many side streets where children once played safely. Long known as "the town of homes," Belmont is now the town of traffic jams, potholes, gullies, bumps, bursting water and leaking gas mains.

Traffic studies by the Belmont Police Department have shown that many large trucks traveling through town have a destination in Cambridge or Watertown (a sand and gravel company in the Alewife Quadrangle makes several runs through town every hour). A single 40-ton truck has the same impact on road pavement as 9,000 passenger cars. The Belmont Warrant Committee estimates that it will cost \$21.3 million to repair all the road damage that has been caused over the past 10 years by this increase in through-traffic. (By comparison, The town's annual non-school budget is \$27 million.) As a residential town, Belmont has no commercial or industrial tax base to pay for these repairs.

Meanwhile, abutting communities plan more development that will inevitably produce more traffic—and more damage. While the desire of towns and cities to increase their tax base is understandable, this should not happen at the expense of other municipalities.

Development recommended in Cambridge's new Alewife master plan will have major impacts on Belmont and its residents. The most devastating part of the plan is the proposed connection between Smith Place and Cambridge Park Drive. This will offer drivers from the Alewife T station and Triangle a quick escape into Belmont, avoiding the traffic jams at Routes 16 and 2. As a result, the residential streets bordering Cambridge will be choked with traffic, and property values will plummet. The City needs to rethink its Alewife plans, and consider a more neighbor-friendly approach.

—Mary Jo Frisoli, Belmont Traffic

## Advisory Committee

**Ed. Note:** Frisoli got involved after she and her two children, on a bicycle ride, were almost run over by a very large Quadrangle-based truck that could not stop coming down a hill. While Frisoli and kids escaped shaken but unhurt, her bicycle was demolished.

## Fishable Water by 2000 A.D.

The Mystic River Watershed Association is a non-profit volunteer citizens' group established in 1971 to protect and improve the ecological health of the 63 square-mile watershed and its lakes, ponds, tributary streams, and related lands. Representing 19 communities in the watershed, including Cambridge, Arlington, and Belmont, the MRWA strives to create linkages with other citizens' groups, businesses, and government agencies. Its main goals include protecting water quality and habitats, identifying pollution sources, advocating for sound watershed policies, promoting citizen education and involvement.

The seven square-mile Alewife watershed, which feeds the Mystic River, has always been an important focus of MRWA's work. Under Dr. Herb Meyer (page 8), its members worked vigorously to preserve endangered wetlands and urban wilds during the Red Line extension and related roadway planning. It acted as parent organization for the Friends of Blair Pond during its successful efforts to obtain Riverways Program funding for a study and MDC funding for a master plan, and secured a Riverways grant to publish the Alewife Area Ecology Guide in 1994. It has sponsored or assisted in numerous nature walks, canoe trips, cleanups, and other events in the Alewife Reservation, Alewife Brook, and Blair Pond.

To help achieve its vision of swimmable and fishable waters in the watershed by the year 2000, the MRWA informs people and urges them to follow Herb Meyer's example of speaking out, getting involved, and doing homework by reading studies and reports. New members and contributions of time and money are welcomed.

—Stew Sanders, vice-president, 73 Fairmont St., Belmont, MA 02178.

## Frosting and Salt

In the master planning process, Community Development created a community participation atmosphere in which we think we're really involved in the planning, but all we're really getting is frosting: do we want big trees or little trees? So I take this participation with a little bit of salt. Yet, we're largely in agreement with what's come out of the process. Generally we're very supportive of the efforts of Community Development here.

I strongly support the crossing of the RR which is controversial, especial-

ly with Belmont. I think traffic can be regulated there. The potential to increase economic base and local jobs in Alewife is very important. From what I can ascertain, Belmont would like no development in Alewife at all. They would like it turned into a quiet park. The cost of that would be astronomical. Unlike Belmont, which shudders at trucks, we can't afford the luxury to maintain a non-industrial identity. This is a far more complex place.

The proposed road under the new truss bridge from the Quadrangle to New Street could be a nuisance but it could be a convenience as well, getting people in Cambridge to the other side of the shopping center without getting on the main roads.

—Jack Joseph, president,  
Neighborhood 9, Alewife Steering Committee

## Haven for Handbag Snatchers

Establishing a better sense of physical security, access, and comfort for pedestrians in the Rindge Avenue-Alewife Brook Parkway area is absolutely essential for meeting the goals of the city's Master Plan. This area is heavily trafficked by people from local neighborhoods and housing developments, shopping centers, recreational users, and employees who use the Alewife MBTA Station.

This area is now scruffy in appearance, confusing to pedestrians, inviting to criminals, and sometimes downright dangerous to passersby. Several years ago here, violent crime, including rape, reached a crisis point for residents and businesses alike. When police presence was increased in the area. Unfortunately, police presence has since declined, and the criminal element has returned.

The plaza around the MBTA Station's east entrance is a haven for handbag snatchers, offering many hiding spots and avenues for quick escape. Landscape improvements, pedestrian walkways, and lighting for this area are in the city's Alewife plans, and should increase safety in the long-term, as will increased activity from the proposed Alewife Center retail development. But in the meantime, short-term action is needed.

## Recommendations:

A much stronger city police presence is now needed at this location as a visible deterrent to crime. Restoring the traffic booth at the Rindge-Alewife intersection or erecting a tower booth with an area view are possibilities.

2. At great effort, the community persuaded the MBTA to reopen the T station pedestrian entrance (Headhouse) near Russell Field several years ago. The MBTA promised then that its police would patrol this area, but they are rarely present here (although dependably found in their cruisers outside nearby Dunkin' Donuts). The MBTA needs to honor its commitment to the community.

3. The police call box at the MBTA Headhouse is hard to use and the response is often slow. This service needs to be improved. The box should be more obvious and directions for use should be written in several languages.
4. The light that allows pedestrians to cross Alewife Brook Parkway at Rindge Avenue is much too short. Walkers often have to run to get across before the light changes, and many people cannot run. Increase the length of this light.
5. Improving pedestrian access and security in the Fresh Pond Shopping Center and Cinema area are also critical, especially for youth and female employees who must come and go on foot from businesses after dark.

N.C. Crime Task Force:

## Friends of Russell Field

Russell Field has neighbors to the east along Clifton Street and to the south along Rindge Avenue in Jefferson Park, Alewife Parkway Apartments, and Fresh Pond Apartments. On the west and north, it is bordered by the old Grace site; on the west, by the "T" entrance and Jerry's Pond. As the gateway to the Alewife Reservation and a crossroads in the regional pathway system, Russell Field is becoming a part of the larger metropolitan domain.

We the Friends of Russell Field envision this superb open space becoming a rediscovered place of year-round activity for all. We see gardeners preparing for spring planting, kids on the baseball diamond, families frolicking in the pool, soccer players and footballers on the gridiron, ice skaters on the pond—and always, people walking alone, talking together, sitting on benches, watching children at play in the tot lot or the sun setting on the pond.

As camaraderie and security flourish on Russell Field, specters of loneliness and fears of crossing this area withdraw. Not since the days of the Racecourse (the old trotting track) has the community had such a chance to meet and enjoy the outdoors.

Friends of Russell Field has had three recent initiatives: Improving the MDC's McCrehan Pool, and establishing a community garden and tot lot. Meetings with the MDC have provided timely pool openings, swim and safety programs, and welcome physical improvements (shade trees, tables and chairs, apron resurfacing, and a noise reduction program in response to abutters' needs).

Our proposed tot lot and community garden, partially funded in 1994 by the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee, have been put on hold by the city pending a comprehensive study of many desired community uses for this area, to begin this June. These include current sports activities, a new track, athletic changing facilities, and the garden and tot lot.

We, as Friends, invite you to join us in work with other constituencies to shape our field for its new role as gathering place for the increasingly diverse North Cambridge community, and as a welcoming gateway for many others who are drawn to the Alewife area. We urge you to participate in the city's public meetings on the future of the field—and by all means, contact the Friends of Russell Field Organizing Committee: Ginny Berkowitz, 354-2043; Nancy Cyr, 354-1859; Joel Nogie, 547-6463; Jo Madden, 547-1679; Wattie Taylor, 868-6219.

## Will Alewife Work for Pedestrians?

It's exciting to think that the Alewife-Fresh Pond area might become Cambridge's transportation showpiece. The 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act ("Icetea") greatly increases federal transportation dollars available to state and local governments for walking, bicycling, and public transit. ISTEA funds can help make the Alewife area a better place for everyone. But if the area is going to work for pedestrians—and for T riders who walk at either end of their trip—



Cambridge must alter the way it conducts some of its transportation business.

ISTEA requires public participation. So far the City has shown little interest in ISTEA's requirement that public participation be early and genuine. Millions of dollars are already committed to an Alewife area "Regional Path Network" for bicyclists and pedestrians that has not yet had the benefit of any sustained pedestrian input. What do pedestrians want? They have to be asked.

Pedestrians and bicyclists must be separated. At Alewife, as elsewhere in Cambridge, bicyclists and pedestrians don't belong on the same "path." Combining these two motorless modes in the original ISTEA legislation has led to fuzzy thinking — and even fuzzier funding — at every level of transportation planning. Most bike-ped ISTEA funds have been spent on projects originated and designed by bicyclists primarily for bicyclists. And it shows. Here at Alewife we have an opportunity to see if it is possible to develop paths which pedestrians of all ages (vision, hearing, mobility, and attention span) can enjoy.  
—*Astrid Dodds, Wendell Street*

**Full of Sound and Fury**

The most insoluble planning dilemma at Alewife is of course the very limited traffic system. Protecting the MDC reservation, building within the flood plain, the loss of potential open space are compelling concerns, but they can be mitigated to at least debatable satisfaction whereas the traffic constraints most assuredly cannot. If there is a soul stubborn enough to insist that this is not so, gather your list of bicycle, pedestrian and public transit suggestions along with a two hour supply of chic

and clever concepts like "sustainability," and I'll meet you out there by the roadside at rush hour, all ears. I'll even supply the gas masks.

Given 370 acres of developable space seasoned liberally by our city's pathological unwillingness to say "no" to any three-piece Charlie with a hot franchise, our former parkway, now a Route One in the making, has the potential of becoming perhaps the city's penultimate achievement in its now vast catalog of untamed vehicular embarrassments. I find it curiously reassuring, perversely so, that after three years of public urging, the city has finally consented to do a transportation/traffic study of the area. Why the wisdom of such a study was not envisioned at the beginning of the process, one can only speculate. Perhaps it would have confirmed a rarely spoken truth, that our city has achieved a level of overly dense development that can only be expanded further by diminishing the quality of residential life. Or perhaps someone just simply forgot to think of it. More on "sustainability" later.

Fess up time. The Alewife Masterplan is in fact no plan at all. Divorced from the whistles and bells, it is little more than a prosaic pep-talk for tax revenue enrichment. Claiming to make the area more a part of Cambridge is merely an artful way of admitting that there is in reality no shared vision for Alewife. The area's identity will most certainly not be dictated by "community" concerns. The "community" has in fact been accorded no meaningful place at the table, a fact made plain by the previous City Council's unwillingness to approve a very timid interim overlay district. Deemed meddling and irrelevant through a stunning Monday night combination of mayoral sermon and true developer grit, direct community

input has been laid to final rest. Opportunity thus squandered, Alewife's "identity" will be dictated as it always has, by the whims of the marketplace.

Without substantial mechanisms like down zoning and IPODs, without boards and councils with the chutzpah to make such mechanisms meaningful, without a significant public investment in something distinguishing and ambitious (i.e., a municipal performance center or some such benefit that might justify the very real burdens of development shouldered by the public at large), and most assuredly without a sober recognition of obvious traffic limitations (the normal initial expectation when planning is executed thoughtfully), the whole notion of master planning becomes rudderless and inane — "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."  
—*Joseph J. Joseph, Dudley Street*

**In Praise of Rotaries**

Removing the rotaries will increase delays and accidents. The only reason to change them is for pedestrians, bikes, and frazzled nerves of drivers. Because traffic rarely ever stops in unsignalized rotaries, they can handle vast amounts of traffic without being serious bottlenecks, but they rattle the serves of sensitive drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists. Only aggressive drivers and a few renegade traffic engineers like them, but they do provide U-turns rotaries. One solution to getting cyclists and pedestrians across: put an activated crosswalk between them, such as exists between the two shopping centers on Alewife Brook Parkway. This will stop traffic, but often when it's moving slowly anyway.  
—*Steve Kaiser, Hamilton Street*

**Beware the Highway**

The bridge is much wider than we wanted. It is a compromise between a small parkway and a superhighway, but there is still room to add an additional lane. We have to be vigilant. We can't assume the Big Build is dead. If the Mass Highway Department took over the the MDC's roads, which Governor Weld would like and almost happened last year, they would have the authority to do exactly what they wanted. (see old issue) It would mean the dissolution of the entire parkway system.  
—*Carolyn Mieth, Brookford Street*

**Danehy Community Gardens**

As pedestrian overpasses from Jefferson Park and Rindge Towers make Danehy Park more accessible to 3,000 residents of those buildings, why not create community gardens on the periphery of Danehy Park? This would not only serve many ethnic families who have a gardening tradition, it would create a human presence at dawn and dusk. Some of the open space around Jerry's Pit could also be put to similar use.  
—*Dan Geer, Chestnut Street*

**Make Concord a Proper Avenue**

On Concord Avenue, I'd like to see the city push the fence back along the golf course, make an avenue out of the street, and put up granite posts with nice wood between the road and the sidewalk. That's what they did on Cambridge Common when the needed to widen those streets.  
—*Al Wilson, Quadrangle*

**Revive the Fish Weir**

We should recreate the historical site of the ancient Indian weir, also used by early settlers, on lower Alewife Brook along Route 16 across from Matignon.  
—*George McCray, Mass. Avenue*

**Proposals for Public Amenities**

- A city folk museum commemorating its industrial past
- an environmental resource area for school children
- an open air theatre for city-sponsored performances
- a municipal fairgrounds or farmers' market
- a community college or university branch with recreational facilities
- a pedestrian square with vendors, fountains, cafes, easily accessible by bike or foot from surrounding open space areas.



Join Members Of The North Cambridge Crime Task Force, Friends And Neighbors in

**National Night Out**

Rindge Field (behind The Fitzgerald School)

Tuesday, August 1, 1995  
9:30 A.M. - 9:30 P.M.

Our 3rd year in the 12th Annual "National Night Out" crime and drug prevention event. Last year, among stiff competition— 8,750 communities., 27.5 million people —the North Cambridge Crime Task force was selected an All-Star Award Winner by sponsoring National Association of Town Watch Organizations.

9:30 am: **Morning Out for Children:** rides, fire & railroad safety programs, crime & drug prevention, poster coloring contest, clowns, pony rides, McGruff the Crime Dog, & cookout!

6 p.m: **Neighborhood Going Away Party** for crime and drugs: many of the daytime activities plus entertainment: a dunk tank, invited official guests, and more.

**PLEASE PARTICIPATE**

Take this opportunity to meet your neighbors and join in the spirit of crime prevention and community/police partnership.

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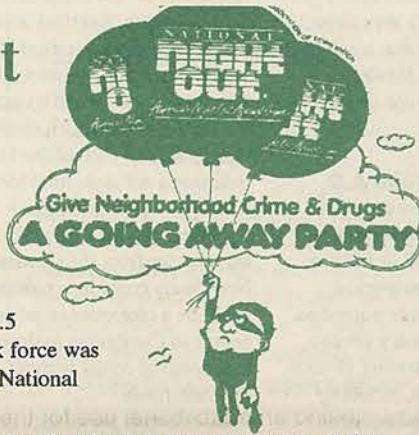
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Help us make this a success! Please send contributions to North Cambridge Crime Task Force, P.O. Box 948, Cambridge, MA 02140. Thank you! QUESTIONS? Call Lisa Deller, Coordinator, 349-6286.



**THANK YOU!**

The North Cambridge Crime Task Force is pleased to acknowledge these generous early supporters of "National Night Out" 1995.

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Your regular *North Cambridge News* will return with our next issue, which we plan to print by early August. If you have stories of moment or interest please call us at 661-6121.

**Parent / Child Programs**

Beginning in mid-July, the Center for Families of North Cambridge will offer four education and support groups for parents with children. All are eligible. For information call Caroline Ross. 349-3002

- Parent & Child Arts & Crafts (a.m.)
- Parents of Toddlers & Preschoolers Support group (a.m.)
- New Mothers (p.m.)
- Working Parents (eves).

**NORTH CAMBRIDGE STABILIZATION COMMITTEE**

**VICE-CHAIRS**

Dottie Giacobbe, Van Norden St. 868-4513  
 Michael Brandon, Seven Pines Rd. 864-3520  
 Bill O'Hearn, Dudley St. 876-1674

**NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNER**

Stuart Dash 349-4638  
 Community Development Dept.

**WHAT:** The NCSC is a city-sponsored group charged with monitoring change in and promoting the well-being of North Cambridge (Neighborhood 11). Our committee guides city spending on many neighborhood projects. In its effort to protect residential character and diversity, the NCSC regularly addresses development, zoning, licensing, crime, traffic and parking, and urban planning issues—and makes recommendations to the city.

**WHO:** Any Neighborhood 11 resident can join our discussions, make proposals, serve on subcommittees, and become eligible to vote. All are urged to participate.

**WHEN & WHERE:** Meetings are usually held at 7:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays, upstairs at the Gately Shelter, Fitzgerald School, 70 Rindge Ave.

**AGENDA:** To suggest an item for the NCSC's agenda, contact Dottie Giacobbe or Stuart Dash nine days before meetings.

**HIGHLANDS:** The Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood Association provides a similar function for Neighborhood 12. Contact is Ann Tennis — 492-4250.



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**A**s Blair Pond Friend Walter Johnson so delicately phrases it, we have indeed mutilated the landscape in our 350-odd years at Alewife. But if you think for a nanosecond that the great swamp has lost its *puissance*, try writing about it. Over the nine months' gestation from our first meeting to press time, we have slogged through so many sloughs out there that we count ourselves lucky to have escaped at all. The swamp is a jealous and wily old dog. As soon as you think you've figured a safe route through it, it sucks you in again.

Consider me last week, screaming into town on Route 2, late for a 6 p.m. production deadline. Eyeing the accustomed traffic jam at Route 16, I slip foxily onto the inbound ramp to Alewife Station, leaving me two reliable moves. Wrong. Every intersection is gridlocked. The temperature is 95 degrees. Should have tried Belmont at this hour. Twenty minutes later, I have moved 50 feet. Finally, I do escape, *westbound* into the Triangle. Wrong way. I take refuge in a convenient parking lot. Wrong parking lot, but who cares? I'm free! I hop on the T! For 85 cents, I ride in air-conditioned comfort, and swiftly reach my destination in Porter Square! I return at 11 p.m. to find my car is not in the parking lot. It has migrated south, like ground water, toward Fresh Pond. I find it in the bowels of the Quadrangle at a local towing venue, where, at midnight, I liberate it for approxi-

mately 100 times more than the price of T fare. We elude the swamp again, not without cost. We have more stories.

In precisely this way, the November 1994 issue of the *North Cambridge News* has grown from its usual eight pages to a 44-page June 1995 issue, and it has taken draconian discipline — the sort of metal-edged fierceness inimical to the squishiness of swamps—to get us to the printer.

**A Word of Thanks**

This said, we have barely probed the surface here, and I suspect one could spend most of a lifetime and never get to the bottom. We are privileged to have had this chance to explore Alewife with the rich cast of characters mentioned in these pages and below, to whom we are profoundly grateful. (Surely we have forgotten some, to whom we apologize.)

Carole Barnes, S-C Management Corp; Belmont Historical Society; Richard Betts; Belmont; Richard Clarey, NCSC; Suzanne Costas; Richard Curran; Else Fiore, East Arlington; Kiko Denzer, former editor; Frank Duehay, City Councilor; Jim Forte, East Arlington; Sean Fisher, MDC Archives; Dan Geer, CLNN; Dottie Giacobbe, NCSC; Carol Hickey, Moulton Realty; Alan Hoffman, MIT Urban Design Team; James Howard; Walter Johnson; Joe Joseph, NCSC; Arthur Krim; Lise Marx, MWRA; George McCray, NCSC; Don MacIver, MACC; Bill Monahan, Belmont selectman; Brendan Noonan Sr.; National Spinal Cord Injury Assn.; Gwen Noyes, Friends of Blair Pond; Julia O'Brien, John Krajovic, & Dan Driscoll, MDC Planning Department; Bob Patterson, Cambridge DPW; Sally Powers & Nancy Carney, City Assessors' Office; Tom Raphael; Stewart Sanders, MRWA; George Spartichino, Cambridge Highlands; Charles Sullivan and the Cam-

bridge Historical Commission; Larry Susskind, MIT Urban Studies Dept.; Alex Strycky, Cambridge Conservation Commission; Terry Szold, MIT Dept. of Urban Studies & Planning; Jack & Ann Tennis, Cambridge Highlands; Sharon and Leonard Tom, DDS; David Vickery, Spaulding & Slye; Al Wilson, Wilson Realty Trust; Richard Yorke; and Bud Wyman, Arlington.

Special thanks to:

- Our advertisers, many new to this issue, who are a crucial part of the Alewife community and who helped us afford more pages of the Alewife story.
- The Cambridge Community Development Dept., which prepared and funded the four-page summary of its new Alewife plan and paid for the printing and mailing of the entire issue to Neighborhoods Nine and Ten. Community Development and the Environmental Program, in turn, helped us assemble parts of our story and provided a helpful review. We are grateful to the many members of their staffs who worked diligently and patiently with us, especially to former neighborhood planner Stuart Dash, who served as faithful liaison with the newspaper and has just become Director of Community Planning. Congratulations, Stuart!
- The North Cambridge Stabilization Committee and the Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood Association, which not only provided the bulk of the funding but steady steering and unflagging encouragement and faith;
- For their countless hours of labor, long-suffering, and good humor as writers, editors, artists, advisors, readers, proofreaders, and helpers, *prodigious* thanks: Kelly Mendonca; John Harmon; Alissa Dubois; Astrid Dodds; Steve Kaiser; Carolyn Mieth; Jim Kahnweiler; and Arn Franzen.
- And most of all to Megan Hanna, who produced this entire issue on desktop in her third-floor garret studio under constantly challenging conditions, with aplomb and style. Without Megan, you'd never even have seen this issue.— *Jerry Howard, editor*

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- Sept 9 Fund Raiser (at the club)
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Garden plots will soon be available at the community garden in the new Don McMath Park on Pemberton Street, which will officially open at the end of the July. Constructed with city funds budgeted by the North Cambridge Stabilization Committee, it holds approximately 15 plots, each about 10 by 12 feet. They will be awarded by lottery. Preference will be given to North Cambridge residents who do not otherwise have land available for gardening. Plots will be assigned for two to three years, at which time each plot will be again made available through the lottery. Please call the Conservation Commission at 349-4680 by July 14 to have your name entered into the drawing.

**Host a Spanish Student**

Expose your family to foreign influence! Twenty-five students from Spain, aged 11-18, will be visiting Cambridge between July 1-29 for a cross-cultural program and some still need local family hosts or backup families. All students come equipped with some English, spending money, excitement, and insurance. Host families provide a warm welcome, bed, meals, and some transportation. In return, they receive a \$100-400 scholarship good for participation in an International Education Forum (IEF) world travel/study program over five years. Local contact is Billie Jo Joy of Humbolt Street, 876-5069.

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