

# *Jamaica Plain Gazette*

## Letters

April 15, 2005

### **Stop putting pesticides on the Southwest Corridor Park**

Beginning April 1, and throughout the following week, the Southwest Corridor Park, between Boylston Street and Green Street in particular, has been blanketed with pesticides. A dog owner and resident for eight years, I have experienced the putrid vapors, dizziness, mild trembling and headaches that go along with this annual event. My dog has gotten sick each season, either vomiting or with diarrhea. I have listened to my neighbors complain about similar symptoms that both they and their animals experience. More tragically, there are the dogs that have had seizures, and worse, developed cancer. There has been a clear pattern of dogs in this neighborhood developing cancer, and within the past year, several have died.

Exposing Jamaica Plain residents to these pesticides must stop. For months, there have been meetings among the Neighborhood Pesticide Action Committee (NPAC), 522-0205, and the Boston Health Commissioner, Boston Parks and Recreation, and the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). An understanding has been established among these parties, except DCR, to stop usage and explore safer alternatives. In talks of a pilot program leaving all of JP's parks and open spaces pesticide-free for three years, the hope of NPAC and our community was that nothing would be put down this season. Nothing.

Then, early on the morning of April 1, the poisoning began again, marking another season of anticipated illness, discomfort and worry for those walking on the Corridor.

What I wonder is: Who made the choice to harm us with these pesticides again? Was it Patrick Flynn, DCR director of Urban Parks and Recreation, 626-4985? Or was it Gerry Lambert, acting DCR district manager or DCR acting commissioner Stephen Pritchard, 626-1103? I have heard that this decision is not fiscally-driven. Within-budget, pesticide-free plans have been offered to DCR by community experts.

Please don't be shy. Everyone should come down to the Corridor each morning the pesticides are put down and do as the dogs do — put their noses in the dirt, take in the toxic vapors, experience the pesticide cocktail (little white pellets and grass stuck together), get down on all fours and walk through the grass and dirt, and then, when they get home, lick their "paws" clean. Should a toddler be exposed? Should anyone be exposed to the Corridor's pesticide-infested grasses?

**Dara Fruchter**

**Jamaica Plain**