

36 De Wolfe Street,
Cambridge 38, Massachusetts,
August 30, 1945.

The City Council,
City of Cambridge,
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Gentlemen:

The writers are of the opinion that recent destructive acts on the Weeks Memorial Bridge cannot be considered apart from the whole social life of the kids of Cambridge. The bridge is lighted by several lamps on bronze columns that are heavily bolted into the concrete structure. One of these columns has long been missing--now five are missing, and a massive bronze ring has been removed from one of the stone columns. Removing this metal could not have been an easy thing, but must have taken crowbars and other machinery. The purpose of those doing this seems not to have been to sell the metal for cash but just for "fun", as most of the bronze lamp-posts have been recovered from the river. One of the stone steps has been broken at the corner and several concrete pillars have been removed. The navigation warning lights have also been taken.

Why were these acts of vandalism committed? We believe that the causes of the trouble lie deeper than mere innate badness in certain teen-age boys, to be punished by jail methods. Boys and small children rove the neighborhood, "on the loose". The children of women who have been taking part in war work or who have large families have not been properly taken care of by nursery schools and have not had adequate playground facilities or supervision. The young fellows of ten-fifteen are the graduates of this teacherless school. Like all of their age they are essentially good but have grown like weeds and have been neglected. Most of them have outgrown the playgrounds; they find their chief amusement paddling home-made boats and swimming in the mucky water around the bridge.

What is the way to deal with these youngsters? Reform schools, if they are really prepared to reform, may be desirable for a few most warped by negligence. But we believe that city-wide planning could guide them into constructive instead of destructive activities. It happens that our small daughter has recently been given a little fifteen-dollar set of swings. The yard swarms with kids, ages three to nine, as many as eight or ten fighting for a chance to use them. When the swings are up there are seldom fewer than four or five children around. This situation suggests to us that the playground about two blocks

away is in some way inadequate. The first step should be to make the playgrounds really function with better appropriations, more equipment and attendants--and there should be more playgrounds. To give healthy and partially supervised fun for the smaller children is to help prevent their becoming roving gangsters later on, and for older boys organized sports, such as baseball, at the playgrounds, should be an outlet for a gang-spirit.

A second, purely local solution would seem to be to make use of the river. If our City Council in cooperation with those of other communities, would put up a strong fight, it should be possible to get rid of most of the filth from the river. Whether the filth comes from the abattoir or from factories, the water is certainly unwholesome. Let us clean it up, stock the river with trout, and permit swimming. In Boston the sailboats in the Basin have been very popular. Boathouses run in conjunction with the playgrounds and beaches along the river would go a long way toward providing happier and more useful boyhoods for the children of Cambridge.

The condition of the bridge is a symptom of serious social diseases in the city of Cambridge.

Sincerely yours,

Elinor C. Arguimbau
L. B. Arguimbau

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L. B. Arguimbau.

Communications
From Elinor C. and
L. B. Arguimbau & U relative
to recent destructive acts on
the W. side Memorial Bridge

In City Council OCT 8 1945
Referred to Police & Park &
Recreation Dept

Frederick H. Burke City Clerk

In City Council SEP 10 1945
Referred to the Committee on
Public Service

Frederick H. Burke
City Clerk

Refer to Police
and Park and
Recreation Dept

October 10th, 1945.

Mr. Timothy F. Leahy,
Chief of Police,
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Dear Sir:-

At a meeting of the City Council held on October 8th, 1945 a report of the Committee on Public Service was adopted recommending that a communication from Elinor and L. B. Arguimbau, relative to destructive acts on the Weeks Memorial Bridge, be referred to the Police Department.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the communication as aforesaid.

Truly yours,

Frederick H. Burke,
City Clerk.

October 10th, 1945.

Mr. Stephen H. Mahoney,
Supt. of Parks & Recreation,
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Dear Sir:-

At a meeting of the City Council held on October 8th, 1945 a report of the Committee on Public Service was adopted recommending that a communication from Elinor and L. B. Arguimbau, relative to destructive acts on the Weeks Memorial Bridge, be referred to the Park Department.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the communication as aforesaid.

Truly yours,

Frederick H. Burke,
City Clerk.

City of Cambridge

In City Council October 8, 1945

The

Committee on Public Service

to which was referred a communication from Elinor and L. B. Arguimbau
relative to destructive acts on the Weeks Memorial Bridge

Reports, Recommending that the
communication be referred to the Police and Park-Recreation
Departments

For the Committee

James Zitter Jr.

REPORT

Committee on Public Service

Recommending that communication with
reference to Weeks Memorial Bridge
be referred to the Police and Park-
Recreation Departments

October 8, 1945
Report received and
recommendation **ADOPTED.**

Attest: Frederick H. Burke
City Clerk