

Jack's March report

The February ANC meeting was a bust. Only two of the five commissioners, Rosa and I, attended the meeting. The law requires a majority of the commissioners – three -- to be present for the ANC to conduct any official business. We waited for 90 minutes, hoping that a third commissioner would arrive, but none did, so there was nothing for it but to close the meeting down and go home.

The January meeting was also a failure, due to the blizzard messing up the Library's hours, so this ANC has been unable to conduct any official business since December.

This is the first time, in my 13 years on this ANC, that a monthly meeting has failed for lack of a quorum.

A resident pointed out that somebody is offering, on-line, **visitor parking permits (VPPs)**. "Free Parking, any zone, \$60" offers the Craigslist listing. I've forwarded that information to DDOT.

The visitor parking program is a very popular service here in Mount Pleasant, allowing residents to have people come provide child care or housework, or visit, without worrying about RPP tickets. What it's not supposed to do is allow commuting employees of neighborhood businesses and institutions to park all day on our residential streets. The VPP user is supposed to be in someone's residence.

The potential for commuter abuse of the VPP program has been apparent from the beginning, and there have been persistent reports of such abuse from certain areas, for example, Newton Street. I worry, of course, that commuter abuse could lead to the termination of the VPP program, while residents of certain blocks complain about commuters taking up their curbside parking all day, every day.

It is illegal to sell one's VPP pass, and to use one for anything other than visiting the pass owner: *DCMR 18, 2414.18 The forgery, counterfeiting, sale, exchange for value, or unauthorized use or replication of an annual visitor parking pass shall be punishable by a fine of three hundred dollars.*

This is, as is perhaps painfully obvious from the national news, **an election year**. Locally, two at-large Councilmembers (Vincent Orange and David Grosso) are up for a vote, as well as, of course, every one of us ANC Commissioners. As for our ANC, it's not too soon to think about who might want to try their hand at this. I speculate that a couple of our five commissioners, tired of this all-work-and-no-pay job, will decide against running for another term, and volunteers will be needed to fill any vacancies.

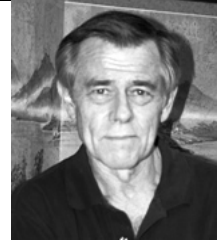
ANC commissioners don't participate in the primary election (June 14), because we're not supposed to be candidates of political parties. The ANC contests start in August, when materials will be made available for would-be commissioners to collect petition signatures (just 25 needed) to be on the November 8 ballot.

Will I run again, for yet another term on this ANC? Sure. Is there someone in the area who would like to try to replace me? Well, it would be fair to offer residents a choice, surely. I haven't had a serious challenger since 2004.

ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER #158

Jack McKay, March 13, 2016

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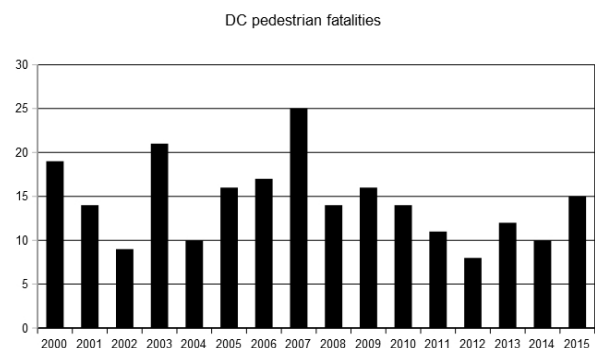
Had we been able to have our February meeting, the first item of business would have been my resolution challenging the **steep increases in traffic fines** proposed by Mayor Bowser; for example, \$200 for failure to come to a complete stop for a right-turn-on-red, four times the current \$50 fine. I argue that the current fine would be ample deterrent, if enforced, because no drivers are unbothered by \$50 fines. It's the lack of enforcement that is the problem, resulting in an effective fine of zero.

Furthermore, I know of no pedestrian deaths that would have been averted, had a driver simply come to a complete stop before a right-on-red. Pedestrian deaths are due to *drunk* driving, *drugged* driving, *distracted* driving, and *drowsy* driving, and these increased traffic fines do nothing about those far more serious problems.

A recent report by the Governors' Highway Safety Association noted that **72% of pedestrian fatalities in 2014 occurred after dark**. Even on our city streets, pedestrians dressed in dark clothing can be very hard to see, especially on rainy nights. Wintertime clothing, worn when so many people are walking after dark, tends to be dark in color. Simply wearing light-colored clothing after dark would surely save pedestrian lives.

A chart of DC pedestrian fatalities since 2000 shows no clear trend. One might surmise that the proliferation of speed cameras in the District since 2001 would yield some reduction in pedestrian deaths, but there's no hint of that in the data.

I suspect that the increase in recent years, after a minimum in 2012, is a statistical "reversion to the mean".



Pedestrian fatalities in DC, 2000-2015 (MPD data).

The DDOT plan to enhance bus service on 16th Street calls for **elimination of the bus stops at Lamont and Newton**, northbound and southbound. I am offering a resolution to retain these stops, arguing that whatever time might be saved by reducing the number of stops will be lost at the adjacent bus stops, as the people who would have boarded at the Newton and Lamont stops board instead at the nearby stops. The time cost of a bus stop is not so much the stop and start of the bus as it is the time taken for passengers to board and pay fares. What little time might be gained is surely outweighed by the inconvenience of forcing passengers to walk an extra block or two.

That resolution was ready for the February meeting, but of course that failed, so I'll try again at the March meeting.

Someday there will be a **new bakery/cafe/restaurant at the Heller's location**. We've assured the new proprietor that the ANC will be as helpful as possible in welcoming the new business venture. No one can say when this new venture will start operations. The ANC is not going to hold anything up.

Marleny's Restaurant has said that they want to make some changes, beginning with an entertainment endorsement, which the ANC supported, last September. Now, along with the renewal of the liquor license, Marleny's wants to have its two settlement agreements, formerly known as "voluntary agreements", terminated. I expect the ANC to support the restaurant at the March meeting.

First the Radio Shack on 14th Street closed, and now **Staples** is about to do the same (April 9). On-line shopping is just killing these storefront operations, eliminating the convenience of those shops to us nearby residents.

There have been numerous reports of **men pretending to be Verizon employees**, knocking on front doors and asking for access to homes, claiming to want to "check" computer speed or FiOS network speed or such. It's bogus! A Lamont Street resident says that she's been approached three times in this manner. Don't let them in, they're would-be thieves.

Everyone's read about **the Zika virus** and the terrible birth defects it's caused in Brazil. One has to worry, in this era of climate change, whether such tropical diseases could appear here. The answer is, it's not impossible, and we would all do well by implementing stringent mosquito control around our homes.

The mosquito that is the primary "vector" for Zika is the *Aedes aegypti*, the mosquito most notorious for spreading yellow fever. Happily for us, that mosquito doesn't tolerate cold weather, and is rarely found this far north. Not so happily for us, a very similar mosquito, the *Aedes albopictus*, has become all too common here. That's the infamous "Asian Tiger" mosquito, inadvertently brought here around 1986 in used automobile tires shipped from Asia for recycling.

Both of these mosquitoes can carry tropical diseases: yellow fever, dengue, chikungunya, and Zika. The viruses aren't endemic in the mosquitoes; the mosquito must pick up the virus by biting an infected person. The virus multiplies in the mosquito, and then is transmitted, some days later, to another victim of its bite. Because these tropical diseases are not

found naturally here, Asian Tiger mosquito bites are merely a nuisance. But many people in this area frequently travel to tropical countries, and can be infected there, then return here with the infection. Then Asian Tiger mosquitoes may acquire the virus and spread it.

Hence, while getting any of these tropical diseases from our Asian Tiger mosquitoes is very improbable, it's not at all impossible. This adds to the desirability of doing all we can to suppress the Asian Tiger mosquito population.

As has been evident in Brazil, control of these mosquitoes depends largely on efforts by residents. The traditional "fogging" techniques for mosquito eradication do not work well for these "container" mosquitoes. Unlike the original *Culex* mosquitoes of this area, which breed in ponds, these *Aedes* mosquitoes breed in anything that can "cup" water. The eggs are laid on the dry walls of a container, and hatch when rainwater fills the cup and submerges the eggs.

Mosquito control requires that we residents carefully seek out and empty all such containers after any rain. It takes only a thimblefull of rainwater to breed more Asian Tigers.

Pretty soon it will be mosquito season again. Because mosquitoes do not travel far from their breeding spots, if we and our nearby neighbors are careful about eliminating these rainwater containers, we'll have few mosquitoes in our own yards. These aggressive mosquitoes are not just dawn-and-dusk feeders, like the *Culex* mosquitoes here before the Asian Tigers arrived, but feed all day long, and they can make outdoor activities quite unpleasant, aside from potentially spreading serious diseases.

DC's water is rated "moderately hard". That turns out to be enough to cause our dishwasher to pretty much stop washing dishes clean. Opening it up, I found filters so clogged with scale that the water flow was significantly reduced, hence the poor performance. It took some serious effort to remove the scale buildup and restore proper washing. Now that I'm aware of the problem, I dig into the dishwasher every couple of years to remove scale buildup.

I wonder if other Mount Pleasant residents have noted **deteriorating dishwasher performance**, and didn't know why. On-line searches show that this is a common problem. But it took me 40 years of homeownership to discover it by personal experience.

Perhaps it's time for me to repeat that this newsletter is **funded entirely out of my own pocket**, with no ANC funds, and no public funds. This is my effort to reach out to all my constituents, so everyone in my single-member district knows who their ANC commissioner is, and what I, and the Mount Pleasant ANC, are doing. No one should have to attend an ANC meeting to learn what the ANC is doing.

And yes, I deliver these newsletters myself, hiking up and down countless stairsteps. I can use the exercise, and it gets me to every corner of my single-member district.

The next meeting of the ANC will be on Tuesday, March 22, 7:00 pm, at the Mount Pleasant Library.
