

## July report to constituents

Here is news of the July ANC meeting, and notes of other events in the neighborhood.

The ANC met on July 12. Mr Gottlieb Simon, the Mayor's special assistant to ANCs, took care of the voting for filling the vacancy in 1D04, while we went about our regular business. Mr Simon agreed that holding a special election at a regular monthly meeting is a bad arrangement, and blames this provision of the DC Code on a misunderstanding. In any case, he set up his "voting booth" in the back of the room, and kept the "poll" open until 9 pm. At that time, the votes were counted and the results announced: Gregg Edwards, 21 votes; Matt Silverman, 6.

This vote count illustrates the inadequacy of this special-election procedure: those 27 votes represent a tiny proportion of the 2000 residents of this single-member district. But that's the legally required procedure, and Gregg will be the Commissioner for that district for the rest of this year.

I know Gregg well, and I think he'll be a good ANC Commissioner. He is a 31-year resident of Mount Pleasant, and he is closely associated with the residents of the large apartment houses along and close to 16<sup>th</sup> Street. He is also, like me, a Ph.D. physicist, though he's a theoretician, while I'm an experimentalist. Gregg agrees that we must work to preserve the ethnic and economic diversity of Mount Pleasant, despite the pressures of gentrification and the escalation of rents and property values.

The ANC considered the problem of **posters on lampposts**, which have been a bit of a plague lately. As I noted last month, I object to the heavy-handed approach of calling on the District to "enforce the law", i.e., fine residents who don't do their posters properly. I suspect that few people know the rules, and that most will follow the rules, once told what the rules are.

The ANC has largely gone along with my more neighborly approach (see box). If people knowingly ignore the rules, then we can call for enforcement.

The important poster rules are, I think, (1) posters must not be attached with anything that leaves a residue on the pole, e.g., adhesive tape, and (2) posters have to be removed within 60 days. Other Commissioners added the note about "registration" of posters. The law calls for copies of posters to be turned in to the Department of Transportation (see below). In my opinion, this law is an example of intrusive, pointless, obnoxious bureaucracy. At the meeting, Denise Wiktor, who is Public Space Manager for the Department of Transportation, as well as a Park Road resident, asserted that any poster not "registered" was "illegal". Perhaps so, but I think it unreasonable that anyone who wants to advertise a yard sale or a lost dog must "register" every poster with DDOT. No benefit to the community results from this,

DC Municipal Regulations 24, 108.11: **Within twenty-four (24) hours of posting each sign, advertisement, or poster, two (2) copies of the material shall be filed with an agent of the District of Columbia so designated by the Mayor.**

## ANC 1D03 NEWSLETTER

Jack McKay, July 26, 2004

Opinions expressed here are those of Dr. McKay alone, speaking for himself, not for the Mount Pleasant ANC.

Much to my dismay, **Inspector Hoey is leaving our area**, having been promoted to Commander of MPD District 6. The Inspector is the top MPD officer for Mount Pleasant, Columbia Heights, and Pleasant Plains. We've been very happy in working with Inspector Hoey, who has been instrumental in focusing police resources on our Park Road drug-dealing problem, and on our street robbery problem, to very good effect. He will be replaced by **Inspector Diane Grooms**, of the Third District, promoted to this position from Captain. Inspector Grooms comes very highly recommended, and I expect her to continue the same initiatives against drug dealing and robberies.

This is the letter agreed upon by the ANC:

Dear neighbors,

We on the ANC have received numerous complaints about posters on streetlight posts and other surfaces, all too often left in place for months, deteriorating to rain-damaged tatters, giving our neighborhood a sloppy, neglected appearance. We'd like to remind everyone about some of the rules for putting up such posters:

- Posters must not be put up with adhesives that leave a residue, or that cannot be completely removed without damage to the surface. For this reason, posters may not be put up with adhesive tape.
- Posters must indicate the date on which they were put up, and must be removed within 60 days of posting.
- Posters may not "relate to the sale of goods or services".

For further information and to ensure compliance with the regulations, we ask neighbors **to register their posters** with the District Department of Transportation at 202-442-4670. If we will all abide by these rules, we'll have a cleaner, neater neighborhood.

because DDOT is not going to check that the poster meets regulations, nor that it is removed on schedule. I am in fact unable to find out exactly how one is supposed to file copies of our posters. This absurd law seems to have been ignored, and DDOT should continue to ignore it.

Indeed, my monthly ANC meeting announcement posters (required by law) have never been registered, and I don't intend to start registering them now. Let the DDOT poster police come and get me.

Jack McKay  
3200 19th St NW, DC 20010  
462-8692  
jack.mckay@verizon.net

The **rock wall at the corner of 19<sup>th</sup> and Park Road** is failing, and the Department of Parks and Recreation is planning to replace it with a concrete wall with rock facing. A huge, ancient oak tree in this corner lot is threatened by the planned work, because taking out the wall will likely cause the tree to fall. Duff McCully of DPR is devising a means of saving that enormous, priceless tree.

The **August ANC meeting** will be on August 2, 7:30 pm, La Casa Community Center, 3166 Mount Pleasant Street. Topics: restaurant liquor license renewals; grocery cart racks in front of Best Way; zoning variance for 3360 18<sup>th</sup> Street; ANC grants policy.

The **mailbox at 19<sup>th</sup> and Lamont** has disappeared, presumably removed by the Postal Service due to the gas line excavation. I'm trying to get it back.

The **3400 block of Mount Pleasant Street** (bordering Bancroft Elementary on the east, and quite separate from the business district) has long been scheduled for a road upgrade. The road is simply too narrow to park cars on both sides and leave an adequate path for traffic. Parking lanes require 8 feet, while a traffic lane requires 10, adding up to 26 feet – but the paved road is only 24 feet across. People make up for the deficiency by parking with wheels on the brick sidewalk on the east side, a practice that has caused great damage to that sidewalk.

In August, 2002, work was to begin on widening the road by eliminating the “tree box” on the Bancroft side. For reasons unknown, the work was not done. It took some doing, but I succeeded in getting this project revived this June.

Unfortunately, DDOT planted trees in the tree box during this long hiatus, so elimination of the tree box now entails removing those young London Plane trees. The great majority of residents along this block want the project to go forward, despite the loss of these saplings, in order to have legal parking on both sides of the street, a smooth sidewalk with proper curb support, and an adequate passageway for trash and delivery trucks. This was confirmed by a letter affirming the plan, signed by 19 of the 27 households on this block, and in a meeting of the residents with DDOT on July 20.

I am hopeful that DDOT will now proceed with the long-delayed upgrade to this street.

Several **restaurant liquor licenses** come up for renewal shortly, including Don Jaime's, Corado's, Haydee's, Don Juan's, and Tonic. We propose to “protest” all of these, essentially in order to establish our participation in the “voluntary agreement” process. I think we agree with almost everything that is contained in the existing voluntary agreements with the Mount Pleasant Neighbors' Alliance. The one area where I want to see some change is in the prohibition on live music and live entertainment included in the MPNA agreements.

Everyone agrees that we do not want Mount Pleasant to become another Adams Morgan, jammed with noisy crowds of people far into the night. We do want our restaurants to be reasonably prosperous, and we want Mount Pleasant residents to be able to find the entertainment they want here, and not have to go to Adams Morgan. I think it is absurd that our restaurants are prohibited from providing music by mariachi bands, entertainment that would greatly strengthen our appeal as a neighborhood of unique ethnic flavor. Given the competition from Adams Morgan, and greatly increased competition from the 14<sup>th</sup> Street corridor, we must give our restaurants some latitude to attract customers.

**About the March Drug Arrests on Monroe Street:** In my March newsletter, I quoted verbatim an Internet posting by our MPD Lieutenant Grogan, reading in part: "This message is in reference to the seven drug arrests at 1833 Monroe Street, Northwest on Friday, March 19, 2004 at 9:30 PM. The Officers Ricks, Quiles, Earl Brown, Morales and Duclos responded to a call for subjects selling drugs in front of the above address.

"The officers arrived on the scene and observed seven subjects standing around a clear plastic white ziplock bag containing a white rocklike substance . . . a field test for drugs . . . came back positive for cocaine base. . . . The subjects arrested were: Mr. Gregory Lomax II of 1807 Kilbourne Place, NW; Mr. Carlos Bates of 1943 Vermont Avenue, NW; Mr. Eric Woodfolk of 1869 Monroe Street, NW; Mr. Dwayne Davis of 1943 Vermont Avenue, NW; Mr. Terrance Jamal Mobley of 129 Florida Avenue, NW; Mr. Charles Mobley of 129 Florida Avenue, NW and Mr. Anthony Wood of 4324 23rd Place, Temple Hills, MD."

Two important clarifications are needed. First, as the report noted, the drug activity was “in front of” 1833 Monroe Street, not at that address, and no connection to the residents of that address was reported. Second, the individual who cited 1869 Monroe as his address is not, I am told, a resident of that address, and was in fact claiming an address associated with an ex-girlfriend, who in turn no longer lives there. The residents of both 1833 and 1869 Monroe are justifiably embarrassed by this police report, which seems to imply drug activity associated with those addresses. **There is no evidence whatsoever connecting any residents of 1833 and 1869 Monroe Street, past or present, with these drug arrests.**