

The Corner Forum

for the 1200 and 1300 blocks of E, the 400 and 500 blocks of 13th,
Duncan Place and Emerald Street NE

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A Reverend's Wisdom

The Rev. Randolph Clay, 80, 1250 E St. NE, spoke to Marc Borbely about the history of the neighborhood, his experience in World War II, his family, and his views on living a Christian life.

Tell me your idea.

Oh, to have a cookout on a Saturday or a holiday — either one, at Kingsman Field, for about an hour or two. Hot dogs, potato chips, half-smoke, something like potato salad. Somebody can make good potato salad, or you can buy potato salad already made.

Wouldn't have anything to lose, anyway. You



Rev. Clay

could try it one time. If it doesn't work that good this time, maybe the next time.

And what's the purpose?

Oh, to make more relationships in the neighborhood, to meet one another, just kind of unity-like. You meet people, and just socialize, just to eat and have a little sandwich together, you know. Something like that.

Of course if you've got anybody in the neighborhood that is in business, it might help to promote their business. It wouldn't do any harm. Just pass out a few cards, something like that. I would say in May — don't want to wait too long 'til the summer's gone. Might want to have

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Singles Sold at Excello; License Up for Renewal

BY MARC BORBELY, 536 13TH ST. NE

Excello's (419 13th St. NE) liquor license is coming up for renewal, which means it's a good time for us as a community to consider whether we want Excello to continue selling alcohol.

When the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board decides, in June, whether or not to issue a renewal, the Board must, by law (D.C. Code Title 25, Chapters 3



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Sundberg Sees Protest On Horizon for Excello

RICHARD SUNDBERG, DUNCAN PLACE NE
Interviewed by Marc Borbely, 536 13th

Richard Sundberg spoke Saturday about the voluntary agreement he helped negotiate with Excello in December 2001, and about his sense of how well Excello has met some of its obligations..

In December 2001, you and [ANC Commissioner] Ronald Nelson and [Council member] Sharon Ambrose signed this agreement with Sung S. Bang of Excello Liquors, requiring Excello to do certain things. Can you explain a little about how you were able to persuade Excello to sign this agreement?

Jeff Coudriet worked on that with us. He used to work in Sharon Ambrose's office, and he works in another capacity in the D.C. government now. He has ex-

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Please Subscribe!

Dear Reader,

This issue is being distributed free to everyone in the Corner Forum area, in the hopes that a reminder like this will encourage more people to subscribe. **For subscription details, please see the box on the back page.**

(We have also extended all current subscriptions by one week.)

Rather than depend on advertising or donations, the Corner Forum relies fully on subscriptions to pay for its costs, and on the submissions and time volunteered by its readers to provide its content. The Corner Forum accepts no advertising and no donations.

The cost for the Corner Forum is 37 cents per issue. The 37 cents pays for the ink (9 cents), paper (4 cents), printer (4 cents), camera (3 cents), voicemail (2 cents) and Web site (2 cents), and for the 13 issues (13 cents) that have been distributed free to everyone (12 issues last year, and one today).

No one is making any money off this newsletter — it's a 100% volunteer effort.

Thank you to the 62 households in the area (22 on E Street, 21 on Emerald Street, 13 on 13th Street, and six on Duncan Place) that are already subscribing. And a special thank you to those people who have contributed thoughts or stories for the newsletter. §

— Marc Borbely
Editor

Street Scenes



On Emerald Street. Back row, left to right: Diane Douglas, Tammi Cioffi, Alaina Johnson, Karen Ostlie, Stephen Smith, Scott Douglas. Front row: Brandon Jackson, Lea Mesner, Debra Wynn.

*Photos by
Marc Borbely and
Tammi Cioffi,
536 13th St. NE*



On E Street. Jane Funderburk and Charles Cleatham.

More Than 16 Residents Hit the Streets for Neighborhood Cleanup

The following people were among those sweeping and picking up trash on our streets during the neighborhood cleanup on Saturday: Dorothy Bess, 1336 E St. NE; Marc Borbely, 536 13th St. NE; Tammi Cioffi, 536 13th St. NE; Charles Cleatham, 1306 E St. NE; Sharon Cochran, 1300 block of Emerald; David Cromartie, 532 13th St. NE; Diane Douglas, 1309 E St. NE; Scott Douglas, 1309 E St. NE; Andrea Fuller, 1227 E St. NE; Jane Funderburk, 1304 E St. NE; Brandon Jackson, 1309 Emerald St. NE; Jim Laise, 1248 E St. NE; Lea Mesner, 1300 block of Emerald; Michael Richardson, 1227 E St. NE; Stephen Smith, 1311 E St. NE; Betty Taylor, 1303 E St. NE; and Debra Wynn, 538 13th St. NE.

Thanks to everybody who came out to clean! Thanks, also, to Mr. Cromartie for suggesting the cleanup in the Corner Forum, back in February. Thanks to Ms. Cioffi for writing in the Corner Forum in support of the idea. Thanks to Ms. Cochran for obtaining rakes, shovels, brooms and garbage bags from the city and for coordinating trash pickup with the city. Thanks to Ms. Cochran also for designing the flyer, copying the flyer, and distributing it to residents throughout the week, and for bringing drinks. Thanks to Mr. Smith for distributing flyers all week. Thanks to Mr. Borbely for distributing flyers and bringing food and drinks. Thanks to Ms. Johnson (645-7190), a Department of Public Works solid waste inspector for Ward 6, for being very gracious and accommodating in arranging the drop-off and pickup of our supplies. Thanks to the city for supplying materials for neighborhood cleanups. Thanks to Ernest Spriggs, 430 13th St. NE, for donating \$17 for the food (juice, water and donuts) at the cleanup. §



On 13th Street. Left to right: David Cromartie, Scott Douglas, Marc Borbely and Stephen Smith.



On 13th Street. Left to right: Stephen Smith, Karen Ostlie, Diane Douglas and Scott Douglas.

In Forum

Holiday Plans

Stephen Smith, 1311 E St. NE, conducted a survey in the Corner Forum area on Saturday. Passers-by were shown a paper asking, "What are your plans for this holiday?" The responses he received follow.

On Sunday, I will be meeting with a group of high school students that I used to teach in Michigan. They'll be taking part in Close-Up.

—Mark Van DeWege
1300 Emerald St. NE

We plan to have a family reunion at our daughter's house in Waldorf, Maryland. We also plan to attend our church's sunrise service at 6 a.m. in the morning.

—Catherine and Emanuel W. Bego
1308 Emerald St. NE

Relax and eat a nice dinner.

—Robert Neil
412 13th St. NE

I'm going to my parents house for a barbecue.

—Tammi Cioffi
536 13th St. NE

Host friends and family for dinner and go to church on Sunday for services and breakfast.

—Jim and Kristen Laise
1248 E St. NE

I will be resting.

—Betty Taylor
1303 E St. NE

I'm planning on cooking out and enjoying myself.

—Oliver Humphrey
1321 E St. NE

I plan to go to church and give thanks to the Lord!

—Larry Epps
1302 F St. NE

I'm cooking hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken, wings, tuna fish salad and egg salad at my house with my family and friends.

—Stephen Smith
1311 E St. NE

I'm relaxing and taking in a movie.

—John McCalvin
1312 Corbin Place NE

This weekend we will be spending time with the dogs and neighbors, working in the front yard, putting in landscaping materials and chatting with the neighbors.

—Randall Fox and Patrick Dennis
1259 F St. NE

Spend time with my grandchildren.

—Curtis L. Williams Sr.
1302 F St. NE

Spend time gardening.

—Donna Klee
1300 F St. NE

Gardening with my wife! Happy Easter!

—Zak Klee
1300 F St. NE

Getting settled into our new home.

—Kevin and Rebecca O'Neil
1306 F St. NE

Going to church with my sisters and mom. Hopefully yours will be great!

—Nicole Henderson
2330 Q St. SE §

Spingarn Hoops Star To Play for Winchendon

By JIM LAISE, 1248 E St. NE

Babacar Thiam, the high-flying Spingarn High product who thrilled audiences at the neighborhood secondary school in recent years, reportedly will take his skills to Winchendon Prep in Massachusetts for the 2003-04 season. Babacar, highly recruited this season, will refine his game in New England, according to a prominent recruiting service. Babacar, who recently immigrated from Senegal, played in the preliminary game of the prestigious Jordan Capital Classic at the MCI Center, on April 17.

Babacar is but the latest Spingarn product to make his way in the basketball world. The 6-foot-7 wing player is the exclamation mark that followed Elgin Baylor and Austin Carr to make a name for himself. Baylor, now an executive with the NBA's Los Angeles Clippers, may be the greatest player of all time to come from D.C., and is certainly the best from Northeast. A close second would be Carr, whom many over 40 describe as the best "street baller" every to leave the playgrounds here. Baylor teamed with Jerry West and Wilt Chamberlain on great L.A. Lakers' teams of the '60s and early '70s, while Carr played at Notre Dame and then in the NBA.



Spingarn's Babacar Thiam takes a free throw during the Jan. 17 home game against H.D. Woodson.

All is not lost for local hoops fans, however. Spingarn will welcome back talented 6-5 forward Sohi Frazier to next year's edition. Frazier is defensive minded, with shot-blocking and rebounding skills. A rising senior, he is being followed closely by several Big East and ACC schools, reports say. §

A Loss for Emerald Street

BY SHARON COCHRAN, 1300 BLOCK OF EMERALD STREET NE

Emerald Street lost some of its diversity this week, and, more importantly, part of its heart. Last Tuesday, Michelle Winslow and her family moved from 1337 Emerald St. NE to far Southeast Washington.

Michelle just got tired of fighting city hall to fix up her house. She lived in city-owned housing, and the house had fallen into such disrepair that Michelle's mom had fallen through the floor some years ago. When the city's Housing Authority offered her the four-bedroom home in Southeast, Michelle relented because she is expecting twins, who she said she could not bear to bring home to a house in such poor shape.

Even though they have promised to come back and visit, I am going to miss little Tony's enthusiastic greeting as he flies down the sidewalk on his bike. I am going to miss Dee's blowing bubble gum and her joyous skip to meet and commiserate with her friends. I am just going to miss their "happy kids having lots of fun" sound. It was a nice greeting after a long day at work. §

Updates

PARKING ON EMERALD: Wickey Cartwright (671-0579), the Department of Public Works parking specialist and manager for Ward 6, said today that Emerald Street will not be zoned for residential parking until June or July. He said he will wait until early May to see if Lacey Bigelow (1317 Emerald St. NE) is able to gather enough signatures on his petition *against* zoned parking. A petition circulated by Maureen and Klaus Nielsen (1312 Emerald St. NE) late last year and signed by a majority of the block's residents had requested the zoned parking. Mr. Cartwright said that the city did not want a repeat of what happened on the 1300 block of E Street, where a counter-petition forced the city to take down signs that had already gone up. He said that, to his knowledge, the 1300 block of E and Emerald Street are the only blocks in the city where residents have pursued counter-petitions. He also said that even if there was no talk of a counter-petition on Emerald, the process would not be any faster, since zoned parking is established only once every quarter, and he had been unable to get all the paperwork done for it to be established this quarter. (—Marc Borbely, 536 13th St. NE) §

HOUSES FOR SALE: If you have met one of the area's new residents or know someone about to move out, please ask them if they'd like to introduce themselves or say goodbye. According to the Long & Foster Web site, <http://www.longandfoster.com>, viewed Saturday, the real estate listings for the Corner Forum area have changed as follows... Three houses are no longer listed: 1205 E St. NE; 1219 E St. NE; and 1342 E St. NE. One house is newly listed: 1386 E St. NE (\$159,000). Four listings remain unchanged from last week ago: 408 13th St. NE (\$412,000); 1364 Emerald St. NE (\$365,000); 1302 E St. NE (\$459,000); and 1227 Duncan Place NE (\$320,000). (—Marc Borbely, 536 13th St. NE) §

CORRECTION: David Kinsey's (524 13th St. NE, Apt. A) current studies were incorrectly identified in last week's issue. He is taking pre-law at American University. §

Neighbor News

Eleanor Shannon Gorham Is Born

BY REBECCA RICHARDS, 1318 EMERALD ST. NE
INTERVIEWED BY MARC BORBELY, 536 13TH ST. NE

Eleanor Shannon Gorham was born seven days ago to Rebecca Richards and Josh Gorham.

When was she born? And how did you name her?

She was born on Monday, April 14, at 1:41 a.m., and she's named after her great-grandmother on her father's side, and her grandmother on her mother's side.

Is she your first baby?

She's our first baby. She was 6 pounds, 6.5 ounces, and 20.5 inches.



And how has she been so far?

Wonderful! We just got home from the hospital. §

Excello's Voluntary Agreement

The following are the terms of the voluntary agreement signed in December 2001 by Sung S. Bang (Excello), Richard Sundberg, Council member Sharon Ambrose (Ward 6) and ANC Commissioner Ronald TT Nelson.

1. In order to avoid the over concentration of beer and wine stores offering similar products in the area, Excello Liquors will:

(a) Refuse to sell single serving containers of alcoholic beverages (including any 20 oz. or more single serving of beer or a wine container under 750 ml);

(b) Refuse to sell single serving containers of malt liquor beverages; refuse to sell malt liquor beverages in packaging that consist of containers of 20 oz. or more.

2. In order to keep the peace and quiet of the surrounding neighborhood, thereby making the store appropriate for the neighborhood, Excello Liquor will:

(a) Ensure that there is a daily street cleaning of the 400 block of 13th Street NE up to the alley adjacent to the store, as well as the entire length of Duncan Place, NE. Excello will place two trash cans for public use by the store door and by the street curb;

(b) Remove public pay phones and prevent any fu-

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ture installation of pay phones in and around store premises;

(c) Place and maintain “No Loitering” signs on the premises and request loiterers to “move on”,

(d) Keep a daily log of any calls made to the Metropolitan Police Department regarding loitering or alcohol consumption on the store’s premises; additionally, the Protestants shall have the right to review the log at any time during business hours;

(e) Excello Liquors shall not lease, rent, and/or provide parking space for unlicensed/licensed vehicles.

(f) Comply with all applicable laws and regulations related to its business.

3. While the 1995 agreement reflects some of the same above elements, the following 1995 points are included in this agreement

(a) Excello agrees not to sell or give away “go cups” to customers of the business and will sell cups only in packaging containing forty (4) or more such cups.

(b) Excello agrees to install four (4) 500 watts spotlights outside its store that will be turned on during hours of operation.

(c) Excello agrees not to display signs on the front windows of its store.

(d) Excello agrees to work with protestant and other members of the community in an effort to prohibit sales of alcohol to minors.

(e) Excello will continue its practice of refusing to sell products associated with illegal drug activities, such as cigarette papers, pipes, bong, amongst other things.

4. In consideration of, and reliance upon, the commitments reflected in paragraphs 1 through 2, the Protestants hereby withdraw their opposition to the applicant’s pending license application.

5. The parties further agree that any failure of Applicant to adhere to the foregoing commitments would constitute grounds for the ABC Board to revoke the Retailer’s Class A license for premises 410 13th St. NE, and for the Protestants to petition the ABC Board for issuance of an order to show cause pursuant to 23 D.C.M.R. section 1513.5 (1997) or any regulation of similar purpose adopted by the ABC Board.

Excello signed another voluntary agreement in 1995 . Among the terms of that agreement, which was included in the 2001 agreement: that Excello will pick up trash on both sides of 13th from D to E every day it is open for business; operate 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday; sell cups only in packages of 40 or more; have four spotlights lit during hours of operation; not allow phones to be installed outside the store; and not display signs on the front windows.

A copy of both agreements can be obtained up from Karen Hill (442-4441), records management assistant in the D.C. Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration. §

Excello Says Singles Sold as Doubles

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and 6), consider whether Excello is “appropriate for the locality, section, or portion of the District where it is to be located.”

To determine appropriateness, the Board shall consider “all relevant evidence of record, including: (1) the effect of the establishment on real property values; (2) the effect of the establishment on peace, order, and quiet ...; (3) the effect of the establishment upon residential parking needs and vehicular and pedestrian safety; and (4) ... the licensee’s record of compliance with this title and the regulations promulgated under this title and any conditions placed on the license during the period of licensure, including the terms of a voluntary agreement.”

One key factor, then, that the Board will have to consider, is how well Excello has been meeting its obligations under a voluntary agreement it signed in December 2001. At that time, Excello agreed, among other things, to: (1) refuse to sell single-serving containers of alcoholic beverages; (2) ensure there is daily street cleaning of the 400 block of 13th Street from D to the alley next to the store, and the entire length of Duncan Place; (3) request that loiterers “move on”. The complete terms of the agreement are reprinted starting on page 4.

A visit to the store on Saturday showed that Excello was selling single-serving containers of beer (see photo on page 1) and malt liquor. The following 24-ounce, single-serving cans were in refrigerators: Ice House, Key Stone, Redhook, MGD, Budweiser, Bud Ice, King Cobra, Schlitz Malt Liquor. I observed a woman purchase a can of Schlitz Malt Liquor.

The Board will consider Excello to be appropriate for the area unless an objection is filed. Protests can be filed by any group of five or more residents sharing common grounds for their protest, by an affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission or by a citizens association within the affected area.

In the interview starting on page 1, Richard Sundberg (1200 block of Duncan Place NE), who helped negotiate the December 2001 voluntary agreement, describes his sense of how well Excello has met its obligations since December. He concludes that Excello has not followed many points on the agreement. “I have problems with that, and I expect the neighbors to put together another protest on their license, and the grounds will be not having adhered to the items in the current agreement.”

When asked about the cases of single-serving containers in Excello’s refrigerators, Sung S. Bang, of Excello, said he does not sell those singly, but rather requires customers to buy at least two at a time. When asked about the woman I observed buying just one, he said maybe she had bought two before and was exchanging one of them.

Mr. Bang said he cleans 13th Street daily, from D Street to his store. He said he does not clean Duncan Place. He said he has tried for two years to get the phone removed from outside his store, but he said the phone company won’t come to pick it up. He said the signs in and underneath Excello’s window are permitted under the voluntary agreement. He said when there are people hanging outside the store, he asks them to move on. He pointed out the spotlights above the storefront. §

Sundberg: Store Not Complying Fully

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tensive experience with the problem liquor stores in the area, and fashioning neighborhood agreements with them. We were fortunate to have him helping us, and he and Ron put together that proposal and, surprisingly enough — you’ve seen it, so you’ve seen how extensive it is — Mr. Bang signed it, on advice of the person that was representing him, who was Doris Wallace, our former ANC rep here.

In general, what kind of leverage does somebody have to sign an agreement?

What kind of leverage? The Board in its new configuration and new outlook is trying to be more responsive to neighborhood concerns. Previously, the Board seemed to have found always in favor of the liquor industry, evidently.



Richard Sundberg

Why would a liquor store even want to sign this kind of thing?

Well, I’m unsure. They do know that with the protest having been submitted in a timely fashion, that when the hearing came up, they were going to be told to meet with the community representatives to see if an agreement could not be fashioned, because if the agreement is successfully completed between a business and the neighborhood, then the protest is withdrawn and the license is reissued. The interesting thing about this is that that agreement is part of that license now. They’re up for renewal again — that agreement stays; a new agreement does not have to be fashioned. And if that business were to be sold, that agreement travels with [the license] to the new owner.

Let me ask you about some of the specific things in the agreement, and [ask you to] tell us why you and the [other] protestants asked for these things, and also your sense of how well they’re being followed. For instance, refusing to sell single-serving containers of alcoholic beverages and not to sell go-cups. Why did you ask for that?

Because, since you’ve spent some time in the area now, you know just from walking around, the problem we have with litter, and people hanging out and drinking. And the go-cups and the singles just encourage that. They encourage the public urination and a variety of other things. So that’s why those two items were put in there.

And is Excello doing what it agreed to do?

Initially, they were. I have not kept track of that, so currently I do not know.

Another thing was to ensure there is a daily street cleaning of the 400 block of 13th Street NE up to the alley next to the store, as well as the entire length of Duncan Place.

[Laughs.] Oh, Marc. When you create an agreement, each

side comes forward looking for everything they can get, and then negotiate down. It’s just part of the philosophy of that — at least that was Ron’s philosophy and Jeff’s philosophy. And frankly we were surprised that those things were agreed to.

How well is he following them?

Marc. [Laughs]. I don’t think it’s being followed.

“Remove public pay phones.” Why did you ask for that?

That was asked [for] because we’ve historically had a problem with those phones being used, unfortunately, for drug transactions. The police know about that, and the phones were removed at one point, with the old phone company. When Mr. Bang purchased the business, he contracted with another firm to put that phone in, and that activity started again, and so we were looking to curtail it. And it’s unfortunate in a way, because there is a legitimate need sometimes for a pay phone in the area.



Have you ever asked him about the phones — how come it’s still there?

We asked about that early on, and the phone company that owns it — the private concessionaire — was holding Mr. Bang to the agreement contractually. I don’t know if that agreement is still in effect or not. That’s just an item that needs to be addressed.

What about the cleaning of Duncan Place? Did you ever follow up with him and say, “Look, you’ve agreed to do this. Where’s the street cleaning?”

Well, Ron had done that before he left. He had followed up, and followed up with the ABC as well, and the inspectors. And, quite frankly, the response was very disappointing.

The response from the city?

The inspectors, yeah.

“No loitering” signs, and that they request loiterers to “move on.” I guess the intent there is obvious. How are they doing on that?

There’s loitering there, still.

“Four 500-watt spotlights” operating “during hours of operation.”

Those are not there.

“Not to display signs on the front windows”?

They are there, and they continue to be there.

And what was the idea behind asking them not to display signs?

Because we have so many young people coming to the area,

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going to the stores, and the displays glamorize the consumption of alcoholic beverages, and it just sends the wrong signal to them, and just frankly makes the block look a little trashy, besides, and it's the feeling that a store can prosper on its merits — it doesn't have to do that. It's a little complicated, I know, because merchants get some sort of gratuities from the firms that sell those products for putting up the displays.

And the last one I wanted to ask you about was “agrees to work with protestant and other members of the community in an effort to prohibit sales of alcohol to minors.” What was the thinking behind that? Were you trying to address something specific?

Well, there's a feeling that minors in the neighborhood are buying alcoholic beverages at the stores, and it's not a problem limited to there. Trants, over on the 1300 block of Constitution had a habit of doing that, and that was one reason why the neighbors were successful in shutting that store down, because that was well documented, happening time after time.

Is there a sense that they're not carding properly, or that the kids have fake I.D.'s? Or how would they be getting it?

I don't think people are routinely carded, and I don't think that problem is limited to Excello.

Overall, then, what are your feelings about Excello's bid to renew its license in June?

I think that they have not followed many points on the agreement, and I have problems with that, and I expect the neighbors to put together another protest on their license, and the grounds will be not having adhered to the items in the current agreement.

Will you be part of a protest again or are you going to stay out of the next one?

I'm undecided. How's that for a cliff-hanger? It'll be interesting to see what happens. It's not my intent to run merchants out, and I'm certainly not against people drinking, but, having lived in the neighborhood you know yourself some of the difficulties we face around here, and certainly more stringent controls by the stores themselves, coupled with the police, would be a big help in alleviating those problems.

Would these things that were in the agreement — would they really help?

Yes, they would. For instance, not selling singles. The people that hang out in front of the stores, that hang on the corners here, are usually buying singles. I'm talking about people that loiter all day long. And when they have a couple of singles, they then use our neighborhood as a latrine. They throw their containers just anyplace, and then they get food items and buy the time they have a few beverages of their choice, they throw that stuff around too. I mean that intersection of Duncan and 13th is always trashy, and it's because of the way the people behave around there.

Thank you very much, Richard.

Oh, you're quite welcome. §

Behind 1327 E: All Kinds of Mess

TIM SULLIVAN, 431 13TH ST. NE

Interviewed by Marc Borbely, 536 13th St. NE

At 1327 E — obviously people moved out, and they just piled trash in the backyard. I've been calling the city. Harold Beckham was out here the other day, and said, “Oh, we're gonna take care of it — but you understand the process. We have to serve them, and if the city has to clean it up, they have to pay for it, and blah blah blah.” So it's gonna sit there. We got rats, and all kinds of mess. Go take a look at it. You'll see the pile.

And you've called a lot, you said.

At least a dozen times. He was out this past Thursday, the 17th — big runaround: “Someone's gonna take care of it.” Well, I've been calling for six weeks. What I do, to be honest, and you can put this in the newsletter, too: I call and say I'm other people. I make up names and make up addresses, just because the only way they respond is if more people call. So I just go down the row, and I say, “I'm calling from 423 13th St. I'm Mr. Jones, and there's trash in my alley, and there's drug dealers on the corner, and kids are pissing on my house, and everything else.”

I mean, I've taken extreme measures. And I've put up all these lights up on the outside of my place that come on at night, to try to scare them, and I keep a bucket of water on the porch, so when they come out here to pee on the house, I dump it on them. They just come out of the liquor store, and they come

over here and they urinate. And this girl that moved into this place is running some kind of — I don't know *what* goes on over there.

But there's kids out here all the time, and there's trash. And this alley has become a dumping area.

People just throw things in this alley. It's just a matter of calling and calling and calling. But the guy [with the city] is Harold Beckham. For this Ward, he is what is called the sanitation education enforcer.

Would you be willing to sort of coordinate, if other people around here really care about —

— If other people are interested in helping out, absolutely. I [clean] once a week. I'm out here when I come home from work. And Mr. Lee's great. Him and his boys come out here and they clean up as much as they can. But it's a respect issue.

Well, thanks a lot for telling us about it.

Yeah, I've been meaning actually to get on the Web site and send something in to the newsletter. But by the time I get home every day — it's easier just to do it myself. That's the nature of the [contracting] business I'm in, too: I don't want to explain it to you — I'll just do it myself. §



(continued from page 1)

more than one during the whole summer. Make the first one for May. The money has to come from somewhere. Maybe ask for donations. Wouldn't need much. If you had a few that are willing to make potato salad — some people just like to cook!

What was the last time there was a neighborhood party like that?

Last time? I think Amy [Fisher] was in something one time, and she wanted me to be in it, but I told her I wouldn't be interested. You know Amy — everybody knows Amy. She's a real good person. She's real friendly — she has a good attitude, and that's all anybody can do.

You've got a very good start there [with the Corner Forum] — it's improving all the time. I can take notice, by reading. In a while, you might want to add on a couple more pages! And after a while, people will read that and say, "Well, I'd rather get this than get the Post — I think I'll stop fooling with the Post." [Laughs.] You don't believe that, do you? But it's a lot of interesting news, and that's good, and it's good to know what's going on in the neighborhood. It's good to know what's going on around you. See, you would never find out by reading the Post — I guarantee you that. That's a fact. So I think it'll work pretty good.

You know, I still want to find that thing in the Post. You were saying how they had that picture of your house?

Oh man, that was years ago. Lord knows, they might not even have that nowhere down in the Smithsonian even. These same steps here — I had a stripe painted in the center of them. I had gray on the sides — something like purple or maroon in the middle. And they used color film. Boy, that thing was pretty. That's been 20, 25 years. Lord knows where that thing could be.

It was close to when you moved in here? And you moved in here about what year?

Oh man, I've been here — I'd have to really get some kind of literature to be sure, I would miss it a few years.

Was it before the [1968] riots, or after the riots?

Oh, way before the riots. My kids was all grown and married by the time the riots started. You heard about the Safeway that used to be back here [on D Street]? They had the riots, and after that, they set it afire and took everything.

Were you out here, that day?

Oh yeah. They were stealing stuff, bringing stuff from down H Street. TVs. Had TVs on their shoulders. Man, that was a sad time. But they didn't care nothing about King getting killed. They just wanted to steal. See, people use excuses to steal. They didn't care nothing about King, man. But they sure stole a lot of stuff — I can tell you that much.

You saw people with TVs?

Yes, sir. Coming right through here. Tables, furniture, dressers, chairs — just anything in the furniture stores down there. H Street never been the same since then. Right over here, I seen them passing by. And I didn't go down nowhere near

there, because I didn't want to get in no trouble. I didn't want to have anything to do with it. I didn't go down there to see what's going on, where they were getting it from. And then H Street never did get built back anymore since that. It was pretty good — they had stores, furniture stores. They still have a few things, like barber shops. But not like it used to be.

What did it used to have?

Oh, auto parts place, something like Pet Boys. Barber shops, food stands, used stores. They have a Goodwill there right now, but they don't have half the stuff down there they used to have. And there were a lot of empty stores for a long time, because they burned them out, and they just sit there. They restore them now, once in a while. But it used to be good. You didn't hardly have to go downtown for anything.

What else was different back then?

I think on this corner [of 13th and D], there used to be a cleaners, I think. Where the church is. I thought, sometime, if I could get enough people to rent it, get some money to back myself up, I would start a church and have a church in there. But it takes money, see. I can't do it out of my personal money. It would have to be done some way where you can raise funds or get donations. It's a good spot for a church. Of course the man that was there — I don't know why he left. He asked me if I could come in and help him. See, some religions are different, and they vary a little bit, and I didn't agree with what he was teaching, so I couldn't work with him. I don't condemn him, but I couldn't work with him.

Aren't there two churches there?

Oh yeah, two. Right there on the alley. They don't use that no more. I think they're remodeling that. They're making that something else, and the one right on the corner — that one is yet a church. I don't know who owns it. You've got to have a few people that's for the church, willing to donate some money. That's the way you would start out. It's gonna have to come out of somebody's pockets to start with. Then you make yourself a secretary and a treasurer, like you do anything else. That would be good. But I couldn't do it by myself.

Yeah, there's a lot of things you can do in the neighborhood. And then that corner is a bad corner, because you have a lot of drug addicts up there. 13th and D. This one [at 13th and E], too. They don't come out too regularly [here], but they come out often up there. The church is out there sometime, and it's a way to clean it up, but nobody's interested in doing. A lot of us have ideas — and that's all I have, see. But you've got to have help, and you've got to have a little money. I've got some ideas — that's all I have.

The mayor [Marion Barry] lived real close to you, right?

Yeah, right over where you see that place cut out at [at 1236 E]. The gray one. It was good when [he was here, because there was always] police sitting next door. But I'm not afraid of nobody killing me. I live for the Lord, and the Lord protects me.

Would you ever see him around?

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Oh, yeah. I seen him coming in and out, yeah. Sometimes. It was kind of an honor to have him in your neighborhood, I thought. I enjoyed it. But, you know, whatever a person do in their life, he did whatever he did — he hurt himself. The crack and women and stuff. He did that. He couldn't blame nobody but himself, see. He hurt himself, and they didn't want him to be the mayor noway. As far as I'm concerned, even if he didn't do that, they didn't appreciate him being the mayor. Because he didn't do what they wanted him to do, as a mayor. So they just used that as a chance to get him out of there. They took pictures, and made him look bad. I don't worry about that. They're gonna tell lies on you anyway, whether they see you do anything [or not]. I live for the Lord. I go by the Bible a whole lot. I'm not perfect, and I got a long ways to go.

Does this neighborhood feel safer now than it did a while ago?

Oh yeah, oh sure. They still break in the cars now, once in a while. Of course, I keep mine in the back. They can go back there, but they don't go back there, because the dogs back there, they bark at night.

What about prices in the neighborhood? They've gone up.

Oh, yeah. Tremendously. I bought my house, it was 13-something. Now, these houses are 100-something. That's a big jump. Everything has increased — that's why that is. A lady come along, she asked me — and you know I felt bad! — she said, how much you pay for your house? I told her. She lived in the neighborhood before. She said these houses were only \$500, brand new! [Laughs.] \$500, brand new! And then when I bought it, it was 50, 60 years old. \$13,000. And since that time, \$150,000!

Or more.

Or more, right! You know, that's a shame, how property goes up like that.

I guess some people are moving out.

Back and forth. Out and in. Old people moved out. Because their jobs changed and all. I don't think because of money. And then the people moving in now, they're people that never lived in here before. Why would the same old people move out and move back in, after the prices went up? You ever think about that? They use the term, like it's the city whites that move in, the blacks run out. It's terms like that — I don't agree with it. I mean, you got the money — it's the money that talks. They don't care what you are. You can be a Jew, or any nationality you want to be. They say they're taking advantage of blacks. They're not taking advantage of blacks. You got the money — who can chase you around if you got money? These people coming in here now are people that never lived here before. They come from elsewhere. Or they have jobs here — the jobs have moved here, stuff like that. So I don't worry about it.

You mentioned the other day that you were thinking about moving out. But I hope you don't move.

No, I hope not neither. I'm trying to get my wife back. You

know, anything can run across your mind. You say some things sometime you don't mean, too. You don't mean everything you say all the time. But I'd like my wife to come back and be happy for the rest of the days that she lives. The reason she's down there now [recovering from her illness, in Portsmouth, with her sister] is they wanted her down there. It *was* more convenient, because everything is on one level. So I didn't put up a quarrel. I like peace, you know.

It's tough thinking about the war, and how the war killed all these young soldiers, and these mothers — you know, they're upset over it. They figure the president shouldn't have had this war.

You were in the Army.

Yeah, in World War II. Yeah, man. I was tough. I liked it then. But you can't be too tough when you're old. When I was young, I was tough. I went to Europe for almost four years, seen a lot. Been to Italy, been to Africa. I didn't get to France — you know, I got on the border with France. But I got to see a lot. If I'd never have been in the Army, I never would have seen that, neither. I was glad I went, after I went.

What was it like? What was the war like?

Oh, it was not like it is now. It was a military war. The war they've got over there now, civilians — everybody's in it. They dress up like civilians. It's sneaky, dirty. I hauled everything down there they had. Food, gas, ammo. Dead men, live men. Dead men stinking. Hauled live soldiers up to the front to fight, and hauled dead soldiers back from the front. Boy, I tell you. I was in a truck company, see. I had my life on the line. You get near the front, while the war is going on, and your life is just about hanging on a thread. I was glad, but I was scared. I won't say I didn't care, because I wanted to come back, but I didn't care as much.

How old were you?

Oh, I was 20, 22. Young.

That was in —

— 1942, 43, 44, 45.

And you joined, I guess, after high school.

Oh no, they drafted me. No, I didn't join. No, sir. No, I didn't join no Army! Boy, they drafted me. I didn't have no choice. When they draft you, if you don't go, they'll lock you up. So you gotta go. I don't know about this war — but I understand it's different now. These young boys, soldiers, they're volunteering. These are volunteers, now. These are not draftees, that are going over and getting killed. But they're young boys — if that's what they want to do, what can you do? They want to fight. They want to make a sacrifice with their lives. What are you gonna do? They're not afraid, that's one thing. They're bold. To be bold means a lot, but sometimes it don't pay to be too bold, neither, sometimes. [Laughs.]

Where were you drafted from? Where were you, about then?

Oh, I was in D.C. Georgetown. That's my home. I don't

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hardly go through there now.

Your family — did they move out of Georgetown?

Oh no. They were older than I am. See, I'm young, and all of my relatives are mostly dead. I don't have but one or two relatives that are living now. I don't have nobody to even carry on the Clay name. I had one brother. He just died. I had five sisters. They died. And all my uncles and aunts and everything, they're all dead — they all were older than me, see.

They died out. Get drunk and drink yourself out. You know, throw your life away. You know how drinking and living a fast life — you shorten your days. And that's what they all did. Oh, I did it too. Lord bless me, I caught it, and I don't do it no more. I prolonged my time, because I don't do that stuff no more.

Drinking, smoking, I've done everything. I never fooled with drugs. But I fooled with liquor and prostitutes and stuff like that. Liquor, alcohol, and gambled. I done all of it. Thank God I didn't fool with drugs. By the time the drugs stuff came out, I had straightened up and got out of it.

What made you straighten up?

Oh, I just had a desire to live a better life. That's the way I want to be — a Christian. You got to be taught how to.

I met my wife — she was already in church. She helped me a lot, and she helped get me in church. I liked her. I was willing to give up even drinking for her. She said, "That's all right, go on, keep on doing it!" [laughs.] I didn't think I'd lose her, but I could see, by keeping it up. But I was willing to make a choice, to give up the drinking for her. But then she told me I didn't have to even stop, so I went on and stopped anyhow. And I got in church, and been in church ever since. I had been going off and on, but she was younger than me.

I'm 10 years older than my wife. That's not much. If a man and woman get married, 10 years don't make much difference. 20 years don't make no difference if you love her!

How old were you, when you married her?

Oh, I'd just come back from the Army — a little after that. I was about 25, 26, around that. I worked for the zoo for 35 years. I've been retired 25! Add that together! You know I'm not no young man. I've been drawing a check 25 years.

You said you're 80, right?

Yes, 80, that's right. [Laughs]. I'm not tired of living yet, but I'm not as happy as I want to be, because there are some things I want to do for the Lord, not for myself. I don't need no fine house and Cadillac and all that. That doesn't bother me. I just want to live a life that's pleasing to the Lord, and try to change some other people's lives. That's what I desire to do.

How old were you when you kind of straightened up?

Oh, I was about — let's see, got out of the Army in '46, and then I started living like that, and then got married, and we were living right down there. 453 Tennessee, right on the corner, there was a store there, — a lot of people never know that — I used to live over the top of the store, a grocery store.

I was about 32 or 33, something like that. Changed my life, started slowing down. Naturally, I didn't do any of that after I got married, because I know it isn't right. You're not supposed to run the street and run women after you get married. Then I got into church. It's good to go because you get a different viewpoint on life — you get a mind to do better.

What church did you go to?

Across town. Northwest. And I got out with a good preacher, and he helped me. He didn't marry me — I got married down in Virginia where my mother-in-law lives.

Everything in the church is not right. Now remember that. You get into the church and see some stuff that you think ought not be in there. And there's nothing you can do about that. But you do right yourself. Just like the world — any other part of the world. You know everybody in the world is not doing right, but you don't want to do the way they want to do, so you do right, and let them do wrong. So that's the same thing with church. You won't find a perfect church, where everybody is doing right. So just because you see somebody "I'm church, I'm part of the church" — don't you think that everybody in there is doing right. They can't. They don't want to.

When you say not doing right, what are you talking about?

I mean living according to the Bible. Jesus said, "Do this." See, you have to change your lifestyle. You have to change your environment in order to do what the Bible said. You can't do it on your own. "Well, I'm gonna change and be a Christian now." You cannot do it. Jesus has to help you. God has to help you make that change. That's the reason you have to be real sincere and want to do it.

Therefore, you don't condemn anybody. You pray for them, if you're in a position to pray. You can't do anything and pray. Your lifestyle has to come up to a certain point before you can even pray. A lot of people don't know that. I used to try to pray when I was drunk! What good do you think a drunk's prayers can do? None. Doesn't even sound right. What the devil can a drunk pray? Man, he can't pray. Use the Lord's name in vain a lot — that's what he'll do. And he's lucky, because God could kill him. I say, man, you've got to stop using the Lord's name in vain. I tell them. If you tell him that, and if he don't do it, I don't want to be in the environment. I say, look, I see, I'm leaving.

Did you grow up in a religious family?

Oh no, no. My wife — I met her in the church. Then we raised our own family.

But when you were growing up, you weren't really in the church?

Oh, no. I was going, but I didn't know anything about Christianity. I went because I was forced to go — you know, like your parents force you to go. I went because I was eating their food, and I was under their roof, and I had to go [laughs.]. That's the only reason, see! I was constrained. No, that's what you're supposed to do. How many children do you have?

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No children.

Oh, okay. But if you have children, you would bring your children up to fear the Lord. Get them in church. You can't make them be Christians, but it's right for you to teach them and go to Sunday school and learn the word of God. But you cannot make them be Christians. Nobody cannot make nobody be a Christian. God wouldn't even accept it noway. You have to do it on your own free will.

My father was a drunk man. My father married, well he supported my mother and us, but he was like a street man. He was kind of whorish. You know, he was still running women — it wasn't right. Of course, you see how a child can look at something and know it's not right — but what can he say?

I'm 80. I have a lot of wisdom. I don't know if you know about chickens or animals. In a chicken yard, they have a fence around it to keep them housed in a certain area. You know, I used to watch animals. I used to watch everything — that's how I learned a lot. You know what'll happen if you put a hole in the fence, and you put a piece of new wire that'll cover that hole? Those animals will come back and look at that new wire. See, they've never seen it before. It'll get their attention. They'll look at that new wire. Things like that could help you in life!

You worked at the [National] Zoo for a while, you said.

A while?! Thirty-five years! That's a good while! [Laughs.] You know what? I don't even go by there. Thirty-five years, and I'm gonna go past a place like that? They've got all new employees out there. I saw a fellow yesterday — him and I used to work together. I don't have anything against the Zoo, but the point of it is, I worked there so long I don't want to have no part of it. It was a good place. I didn't have no trouble, and I advanced a little bit — far as I wanted to.

What were you doing there?

I worked in a boiler room. I chauffeured for the top man. I worked my way up. See, I'm mechanical-minded. I can do mechanical work. Drove a truck. Worked with plumbers, and electricians. I can do anything now. I'm not real dumb. I *call* myself dumb, but not real dumb.

A lot of times, life is shortened by the way [a man is] living, where if he didn't drink, and smoke and run women, he might live 50 years longer. I know that. All the guys I was raised up with — they're all dead. Most of the guys I went to school with — they're dead, because I don't live the way they lived. That's part of the reason. I don't say it's 100 percent of the reason. That's part of the reason.

See, you gonna die anyhow. Like people get cancer. Well, you're gonna get the cancer whether you don't drink or smoke. You have people accuse people of smoking — they call cigarettes “cancer sticks.” But you get cancer whether you smoke or not. You can get cancer from food! You've got to eat, haven't you? But that's the way the world is. It's a tough world. People are selfish, ornery, evil, got race-hate in them — hate is hate, ain't too much difference whether it's race-hate or not.

You said you wanted to spend the next few years of life living the way God wants you to live.

Oh yeah! I've been doing it all along. I've been doing that all along anyhow, for 35 years, at least. But I desire to do more — more zeal. You know, because my time is getting close to dying.

How would that look like?

Like, get some people to change their way of living and be Christian and go to church. Not only go to church, but I mean be Christians. You can go to church and not be a Christian. If you go to church without being a Christian, you're not doing no good. It don't help you. You can go to church every day, and live in that church, but if you don't allow God to change your heart, you still go to hell.

How do you be a Christian, then?

You ask God to forgive you for your sins. You're born a sinner — everybody is. What happens when you ask God to forgive you — that you're a sinner and forgive you, what you call accepting the Lord — then you will be a different person altogether. Then you stop doing the things you used to do. And then you start living for the Lord Almighty. See God comes in and helps you to do it. You don't have to drop one bad habit at a time. God can fix you so can just cut off the desire for everything.

But it's good to be morally good. Whether you're Christian or not, it's good to be kind and treat your neighbor right. Be nice. Be friendly. The Bible says love your neighbor as yourself. In other words, you should have a love for your neighbor just like you have for your own self. You're not supposed to commit adultery and want your neighbor's wife. That stuff is wrong.

Just love your neighbor. You know who your neighbor is? Anybody you run across. When it says neighbor, it don't have to mean my next-door. I can run up to the corner, meet a man from New York, the way God looks at it, he's my neighbor. In other words, a man can be your neighbor and you not know him. See, a lot of people don't know that. That's the reason a lot of people need to be taught the Bible, because they're not taught it, and they don't run across anybody who teaches it.

And then a lot of people can't teach it, because they're not living the right life. In order to teach it, you have to do it. Would you want somebody to teach you something and you look at them and see that they're doing different? No. You look at him, and you say, I wonder if he's doing what he's teaching me! If I say, “Hey, don't you smoke! Smoking is no good!” And every time you see me I got one that long [Rev. Clay points about six inches in front of him], sucking on it. You must be crazy, telling me not to smoke, and you smoke! A lot of people don't know how to break it down, keep it simple. The point is simple. In order to make the Bible simple, you have to do it. What do you want a preacher he's doing different and he's gonna tell you to do good, and he's doing bad? He'll make you sick — you tell him get out of your face.

Thanks a lot, Reverend Clay.

Okay, have a good day! §

Calendar of Upcoming Events

If you attend any of these events, please send in anything from a few lines to a long article about what happened.

And if you know of any upcoming events that other readers might be interested in, send them in!

Events are free, unless otherwise noted, and open to all.

— COMPILED BY MARC BORBELY
536 13th St. NE

Tuesday, April 22

3:30 p.m. Junior High School and Middle School DCIAA Outdoor Track Developmental Meet. At H.D. Woodson Senior High, 5500 Eads St. NE, 724-4500.

6 p.m. Washington in Maps, 1606-2000. Iris Miller discusses her new book. By the Library of Congress's Geography and Map Division and the U.S. Capitol Historical Society. At Library of Congress, Mumford Room, Madison Building. Info, Center for the Book, 707-5221. <http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2003/03-059.html>.

6:45 - 8:45 p.m. Know Your Rights! Cops & Courts 101. "Learn about your fundamental legal rights and the limits on those rights so that you can be prepared in the event of a potentially unpleasant encounter with the police. This course will cover the basics of freedom of speech and assembly; the basics of stops, searches and arrests by police officers; the basics of being in police custody, including being in jail; and the basics of what happens in court if charges are brought against you." By Alexis Baden-Meyer, D.C. Justice and Solidarity Collective Stephanie Joseph, D.C. National Lawyers Guild. At Social Action and Leadership School for Activists, 733 15th St. NW, Suite 1020, 234-9382 ext. 229. <http://www.ips-dc.org/salsa/dateresults.asp>.

Wednesday, April 23

3:30 p.m. Boys Softball. Hine Junior High vs. Browne Junior High, at Ft. Greble; and Eliot Junior High vs. H. Johnson Junior High, at H. Johnson, 1400 Bruce Pl. SE, 698-1017.

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Thursday, April 24

All Day. Public Schools: parent-teacher meetings. Students off.

5-6:30 p.m. Azalea Twilight Tour. "Want to experience thousands of azaleas in bloom, but can't deal with the crowds? Now's your chance to enjoy the ethereal beauty of azaleas in full bloom and learn the history of our collection during this intimate, after-hours stroll with curator Barbara Bullock." \$7. At National Arboretum, 24th & R Streets NE. Meet outside the Administration Building. Enter through R Street Gate. Registration required, 245-5898 or <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Education/events.html>.

Friday, April 25

3 p.m. The Results Are In. "Come see how we scored on the 2002 customer satisfaction survey." By the D.C. Public Library. Survey assessed how well the libraries are serving the public. Also on April 21 at 9 a.m. At Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Room 443, 901 G St. NW. 727-0321.

3:30 p.m. Boys Softball. Browne Junior High vs. Terrell Junior High, at Eliot Junior High, 1830 Constitution Ave. NE, 673-8666; and Eliot vs. Jefferson Junior High, at Jefferson, 801 7th St. SW, 724-4881.

Saturday, April 26

10 a.m. Corner Forum weekly meeting. Participate in the planning of next week's issue. Northeast Branch of the Public Library, meeting room, 330 7th St. NE, 544-2447.

1:30 - 4 p.m. Costume Parade and Talent Contest for Dogs and Dog Owners. Talent categories: Name That Breed; Funniest Costume; Best Couple; Most Creative Costume; Best Tricks/Talent; Best Owner Dog Look-a-Like. By the D.C. Department of Health. At Stanton Park, 5th and Massachusetts Avenue NE. Info, Department of Health, 535-2323.

Sunday, April 27

Noon - 4 p.m. Shakespeare's Birthday Open House. "Enjoy jugglers and jesters, music, song and dance, stage combat workshops, and more. It's the one day of the year when the Folger Reading Room is open to all. ... Free children's activities; Shakespearean fortune-telling; quill pen writing; brooch-making; felt shield-making; potpourri-making; face-painting; ivy garland-making; and other Elizabethan crafts." At Folger Shakespeare Library, 201 East Capitol St. SE, 544-4600. <http://www.folger.edu/public/lectures/menu.asp>.

Ongoing

Capital Neighbors: A Walk About Capitol Hill. 1 p.m. April 26 and then the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month from April through October. "Stroll the charming 19th-century streets where hometown Washington met national politics. Your DC Heritage Tours guide shares captivating Capitol Hill lore while showing you a virtual museum of Victorian architecture." \$12. Meet at the Eastern Market Metro Station, corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 7th Street SE. Info, 828-WALK. http://www.dcheritage.org/information2546/information_show.htm?doc_id=156823. §