

# The Corner Forum

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

Issue #32  
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37¢ + 2¢ D.C. sales tax  
<http://www.thecornerforum.org>

## Fire Ravages Row House Shared by Rena Quallis and Seven Children

BY MARC BORBELY, 536 13TH ST. NE

This morning, a fire forced Rena Quallis, her daughter Nicole, and four grandchildren to flee 525 13th St. NE, their home of 11 years. Three very young children Mrs. Quallis recently obtained custody of were away, visiting their mother, at the time of the blaze.

No one was hurt.

George Cromartie Jr., 532 13th St. NE, gave blankets to the children, who were walking across the street huddled together, some of them crying, and he escorted them into his home, where they stayed throughout the day while their mothers and grandmother cleared their possessions out of the house. E-rika, 11, the oldest of the children, also helped. Nicholas Robinson, 8, whose song was featured in the Nov. 23 Corner Forum, Michaela Robinson, 10, whose photo appeared in the Jan. 12 issue, and Eboni Robinson stayed with the Cromarties. As of this evening, the family's dark gray cat, Soldier, had not been found.

The fire began in the rear of the building, which sustained the most damage.

At least seven fire engines responded to the scene.



Firefighters, who entered the building through the front door as well as by ladder, knocked the house's windows out and tossed out furniture.

Enoch Gray, who lives next door, at 523 13th St. NE, said firemen had broken a hole through his ceiling in their efforts to put out the fire.

Mrs. Quallis said it appeared as if the firemen had destroyed many of her possessions without cause. She said a fireman had been about to kick her front door in, when she told him it was unlocked.

Chester W. Hunter's (1310 Emerald St. NE) daughter was among the fire investigators working on the scene.

Mrs. Quallis said the fire was an electrical one that had started at a socket behind the couch, where the space heater was plugged in. She said that she had tried using the fire extinguisher to put the fire out, but that the extinguisher's pin was stuck, making it inoperable.

George Cromartie Jr. reported that firemen told him that fire engines had first responded to the 900 block of 13th Street, instead of the 500 block, because they had been given the wrong address.

*Continued on page 2*

## Excello Not the Problem; Protesting Residents Are Wasting Their Time

BY JAMES L. CLARK, 1311 EMERALD ST. NE

All the residents who attended the Advisory Neighborhood Commission meeting regarding the Excello liquor store wasted valuable time. They could have done something constructive, such as helping the elderly or tutoring some youngsters. I have been living in the area a long time and have no complaints regarding the liquor store. A small group of homeowners are blaming the liquor store because people are hanging in the streets in front of their homes. If they have a problem with people hanging in front of their homes, they should kindly tell them to "move on."

The problem is not the liquor store, but people selling drugs. As I stated previously in an article for the Corner Forum, to solve the drug problem, the people who are doing the complaining should contact the appropriate government agency to put up signs stating that anyone driving into the area to purchase drugs will have their vehicles impounded. §

## N-A Minit Intends to Buy and Close Excello, and Then Start Selling Liquor

BY MARC BORBELY, 536 13TH ST. NE

Mr. and Mrs. Lee, owners of N-A Minit, at 421 13th St. NE, hope to purchase Excello Liquors, at 419 13th St. NE, and its Class A liquor license, Mrs. Lee and her attorney, Paul Pascal, said Monday at a meeting that was called by Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A05 Michael Musante.

"Mrs. Lee is entering into an agreement to purchase the liquor license of Excello and then close that store," Mr. Pascal said. Instead of having two licenses at that corner, a Class A and a Class B license, there would be just one Class A license.

According to the Web site of the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (<http://dcra.dc.gov>), a Class A license would allow N-A Minit to sell "alcoholic beverages, spirits, beer, wines and light wines." Currently, N-A Minit holds

*Continued on page 3*

(continued from page 1)

Fire department spokesman Alan Etter did not return five messages left on his pager, seeking information on the fire.

Two officials from the American Red Cross came and provided a voucher enabling Mrs. Quallis her four grandchildren to stay at a hotel on New York Avenue for three nights, by which time she hopes the D.C. Housing Authority, which operates the HUD-owned row house, will be able to find a new place for them to stay. Mrs. Quallis said she hopes to receive a Section 8 housing voucher so the family does not have to live in a housing project.



Mrs. Quallis said she does not expect to be able to come back to the house. She said the Housing Authority has been trying to get her to move out

so as to sell the property to a developer, and will now be able to do so.

The firemen and police left without offering any assistance in regards to patching up the windows or the back wall. As a result, the family was forced to salvage whatever items they wanted to keep, taking them either to neighbors' homes for safekeeping, or into their car, to take with them. §

## Correction

### Trash Was at 1329 E St.

BY CYNTHIA GARDNER, 1327 E ST. NE  
From a voicemail message

I'm just reading my copy of the Corner Forum for Sunday, May 4, where you're saying "Trash Gone from 1327 E Street Yard." I want to let you know that trash was never in 1327 — it was at 1329, and I would like to have this information corrected. It was a nuisance, however it was not in my yard.

*Editor's Note: Apologies for the error, which was in the issues of April 21, April 27 and May 4. §*

## Residents Protest Excello

*The following letter was circulated by Patricia White (400 block of 13th Street) and signed by five households.*

*Protests can be sent by groups of five of more residents by May 20 to the D.C. Alcohol Beverage Control Division, Room 7100, 941 North Capitol St. NE.*

*Another letter has been signed by ANC Commissioners Michael Musante, 548-2542 or mfm81472@yahoo.com, and Jessica Ward.*

Pursuant to D.C. Code Section 25-115(b), we hereby oppose the renewal of ABC License No. 323 to Excello Liquors based on the fact that Excello Liquors has consistently violated the Voluntary Agreement that was agreed to and signed by Sung S. Bang, owner of Excello, in December of 2001. Additionally, Excello's business practices have had the effect of disrupting peace, order and quiet in the neighborhood, reducing residential parking needs and pedestrian and vehicular safety.

We the undersigned have been longtime residents of the 1200 Block of Duncan Place and 13th Street NE. Excello Liquors has long been a neighborhood trouble spot. The peace, order, and quiet of the neighborhood is impacted by: loitering problems, (from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m., daily) public drunkenness, (often by the same offenders every day) public littering, public urination and defecation. Several cars have been vandalized on Duncan Place. On any given day, empty beer bottles and food wrappers can be found strewn on adjacent residential properties, having been left there by loiterers outside the liquor store. Most serious of all, drug trafficking has been witnessed in and around the vicinity of Excello, on many occasions.

In the Voluntary Agreement, Excello agreed to ensure that there was 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. It has already been established that trash can be found on a daily basis, having been left by Excello customers, within the area enumerated in the Voluntary Agreement. Therefore, Excello is not adhering to this tenet of the agreement.

Loitering is the most systemic problem. The individuals who loiter are the same people seen urinating, drinking from single-serving beer cans in and around the store, and adjacent neighbor's front steps, displaying public drunkenness and at times sleeping under the pay phone outside Excello (a pay phone that per the Voluntary Agreement was to be removed). According to the Voluntary Agreement, Excello agreed to urge loiterers to "move on." Clearly, that has not occurred.

Pedestrian and vehicular safety is exacerbated by the loitering. Excello is located next to a fire hydrant. On Friday nights and weekend, the hydrant is often inaccessible due to people parking and "hanging out" in front of the liquor store. Illegal parking makes visibility nearly impossible at times, endangering the safety of those who are attempting to turn onto 13th, or who are traveling on 13th.

Finally, almost all of those that are loitering on any given day, are doing so while drinking a single-serving beer they have purchased from Excello. It is the single-serving beers that neighbors find strewn and littered around the neighborhood. These beers are being consumed immediately outside of the store, in public space. According to the Voluntary Agreement, the sale of single-servings beers was to be prohibited. As neighborhood witnesses, we can attest that they are being sold on a daily basis. Some neighbors have had loiterers as early as 9 a.m., sitting on their front steps drinking single-serving beers, quasi-disguised in a paper bag.

Quite simply, their record of compliance with the law does not recommend their continued licensure. The store negatively impacts on residential parking needs, pedestrian safety and overall peace, order and quiet in the neighborhood. We have continuing concerns with this licensee's compliance with other District laws as well and would welcome the Board examining such issues much more closely than it has in the past. We are especially concerned with the licensee's compliance with 23 DCMR 709 [which refers to hours, selling miniatures, and selling "go cups"], among other provisions of law and regulation. §

(continued from page 1)

a Class B license, which allows it to sell “only beer and light wines.”

After purchasing Excello’s license, Mrs. Lee would file an application to move the license next door, to N-A Minit. Mrs. Lee would be taking Excello’s license along with its voluntary agreement, but she would like to modify it in two ways: she would like to be able to sell 24-ounce beer containers as singles, and she would ask to drop the provision in the voluntary agreement requiring that Duncan Place be cleaned on a daily basis.

Mr. Pascal said Mrs. Lee would have control over 419 13th St. NE, and would work with the neighbors to choose a good commercial tenant to replace Excello. Mrs. Lee said she would see to it that the telephone outside Excello is removed. She said that with her video cameras outside the store, she would be better able to monitor activities outside the store than Excello.

Mr. Pascal said that no agreement was expected before May 20, the date by which protests against Excello’s liquor license renewal would have to be filed. He said that after any protests are filed, Mrs. Lee would begin negotiating an agreement with protestants. He said her acquisition of Excello would be contingent on being able to come to an agreement and receiving permission from the city to transfer the license to N-A Minit’s location.

Many residents at the meeting expressed concern about Mrs. Lee’s desire to sell singles. Mr. Pascal said Mrs. Lee felt that selling singles was necessary for her store to be economically viable.

He also said that if more neighbors shopped for groceries at N-A Minit, the store would be in a better position to be serving less alcohol. Some residents said they refused to shop at both N-A Minit and Excello because of the chronic loitering and drug activity outside the stores.

One resident asked if Mrs. Lee would stop selling singles immediately, except for the 24-ounce containers, as a sign of good faith, even prior to the voluntary agreement. Mr. Pascal said he would discuss the issue with Mrs. Lee.

Another resident said the drug activity outside the stores was an issue of police enforcement, and had nothing to do with whether or not singles were being sold. He recalled that neighbors had shut down another liquor store, Trants, on the 1300 block of Constitution Avenue, and suggested that the neighborhood anti-liquor-store sentiment amounted to a racist targeting of Korean Americans.

The meeting was held at 7 p.m. at the Washington Community Fellowship church, at 901 Maryland Ave. NE. There were 23 people present at 7:10 p.m., and 28 at 8 p.m., toward the end of the meeting. §

## Committee Opposes Excello Renewal

BY ELIZABETH HAGUE  
500 block of 14th St. NE

*The following are notes taken by Mrs. Hague during a discussion about the Excello liquor store (419 13th St. NE) at Wednesday’s meeting of the Alcoholic Beverage Licensing Committee of Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A, chaired by Commissioner Jessica Ward (6A06).*

The deadline for submitting protest petitions is May 20. The roll call date is June 4. On May 21, a special ANC meeting will be held at Miner Elementary School to address Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration issues.

Ms. Ward explained the protest process. She said that it is difficult to get a voluntary agreement between a merchant and the community without a protest. Generally, after a protest is lodged, mediation meetings follow to discuss issues such as peace, order and quiet. At that time, each side should draw up and present agreements.

The ANC commissioner dealing with the Excello issue is Michael Musante, who can be reached at 548-2542, or mfm81472@yahoo.com.

A resident asked whether the committee’s intent is to put Excello and other small stores, for whose license renewals the committee had drafted protest letters, out of business. Ms. Ward replied that the eventual goal would be to develop a standard voluntary agreement for all Class A licenses, particularly on H Street, to be negotiated as that street is revitalized. This will be beneficial to both the residents and the merchants, she said: a standard agreement will not put any individual merchant at a disadvantage with other merchant competitors.

One commissioner, Wanda Stevens-Harris (6A01) said that, after talking to her constituents about what they wanted, she wondered why there was not an approval petition as well as an opposition petition being offered to residents to sign — wouldn’t this be more balanced?

At this point, Ellery Vaden, 1348 Emerald St. NE, noted that 13th Street had had to petition to get Excello Liquors there in the first place.

Richard Sundberg, a member of the committee and a resident of the 1200 block of Duncan Place, noted that things are no longer as bad as they were a few years ago, thanks to community involvement that reduced the selling, drinking, crowds, and urine smells in that area.

Mr. Vaden, after a brief exchange with Jessica Ward about whether or not, due to time limitations, he would be allowed to speak, said that Excello provided food for the homeless on Thanksgiving — and what other liquor store does that? Also, he noted (responding to a comment by Ms. Ward that she had seen someone drinking a bottle of vodka inside of Excello) that no one can tell a person who buys alcohol where to drink it.

Ms. Ward suggested that people who feel strongly in favor of Excello should circulate a petition of approval.

The ANC committee then unanimously approved a motion to oppose the renewal of Excello’s license. §

# 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

## **Sunday, May 18**

8:30 a.m. Capitol Hill Classic 10K. 9:45 a.m., 3K & 10:30 a.m., Kids Fun Runs. “Run the historic streets around the U.S. Capitol and support the Capitol Hill Cluster Schools (Peabody, Watkins, Stuart-Hobson).” Registration begins at 7 a.m. at Peabody School, 5th and C Streets NE. \$25 late registration for 10K; \$20 for 3K. \$10 for Kids Fun Runs. Info, 301-871-0400, <http://www.runwashington.com>.

10 a.m. - 5 p.m. City Museum. “Free exhibit admission in celebration of International Museum Day.” At 801 K St. NW (Metro: Gallery Place), [reservations@hswdc.org](mailto:reservations@hswdc.org), 383-1800, <http://www.hswdc.org>.

1 - 4 p.m. Baseball Clinic. “Come play ball in RFK Stadium. Learn how to hit the baseball hard and throw it fast! Get autographs from Jimmy “The Toy Cannon” Wynn, Darrell Evans, Fred Valentine, Steve Lombardozi.” At RFK Stadium, Independence Avenue and 22nd Street SE. <http://dc.gov/events/index.shtm>. Call to confirm, Mayor’s Office of Community Outreach, 727-1000.

## **Monday, May 19**

3 p.m. Board of Education Committee of the Whole meeting. Fifth floor board room, 825 North Capitol St. NE. 442-4289. <http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps/boe/boecalendar.html>.

4 p.m. Wizard of Oz (103 minutes). Film. At Northeast Branch Library, Children’s Room, 330 7th St. NE. Info, Michelle Jackson, 698-3299, <http://dclibrary.org/branches/noe>.

6:30 p.m. Spingarn Senior High School PTA Meeting. “We will be nominating and electing new officers. ... Only paid members can vote, nominate officers and speak at the meeting.” At Spingarn, 2500 Benning Rd. NE, 724-4525, <http://spingarn.k12.dc.us>.

7 p.m. Community Outreach Committee of ANC 6A. At the Church of Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, annex, across street from 1235 C St. NE. Agenda includes discussion on possible listserv standards; grant request from the Friends of Sherwood Volunteers in Action program. Info, ANC Commissioner (6A05) Michael Musante, 548-2542 or [mfm81472@yahoo.com](mailto:mfm81472@yahoo.com).

## **Tuesday, May 20**

10:30 a.m. DCIAA Outdoor Track Championships — Preliminaries. At Spingarn Senior High School, 2500 Benning Rd. NE, 724-4525, <http://spingarn.k12.dc.us>.

## **Wednesday, May 21**

6:30 p.m. Police Service Area (PSA) 511 Monthly Community

Meeting. “The focus of this meeting is street calming, specifically on [the [800-1400 blocks of] C Street. Please come to listen to the presentation as well as voice your concerns about other issues. As always, there will be a neighborhood walk following which is your opportunity to point out to our police where you have trouble spots.” At Teacher’s Credit Union, 9th and D streets NE.

6:30 p.m. Stated Board of Education Meeting. Fifth floor board room, 825 North Capitol St. NE. 442-4289. <http://www.k12.dc.us/dcps/boe/boecalendar.html>.

6:45 p.m. Consumer Utility Board. “Discuss current utility issues from the consumer’s perspective. ... The CUB is an independent group of D.C. citizens that works to advance and protect the interests of District of Columbia utility ratepayers and consumers.” At 1133 15th St. NW, Suite 500, 727-3071, <http://www.opc-dc.gov/caldrfrm.htm>.

7 p.m. Special Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A Meeting to Consider Liquor Licenses. The ANC will consider nine liquor stores, including Excello Liquors (419 13th St. NE), Northeast Beverage (1344 H St. NE) and Viggys’s Liquors (409 15th St. NE). At Miner Elementary School, 600 Block of 16th St. NE. Info, ANC Commissioner 6A06 Jessica Ward, 396-3193 or [jward.anc@verizon.net](mailto:jward.anc@verizon.net).

## **Thursday, May 22**

3:30 p.m. DCIAA Outdoor Track Championships — Finals. At Spingarn Senior High School, 2500 Benning Rd. NE, 724-4525, <http://spingarn.k12.dc.us>.

7-9 p.m. Planning, Preparing & Protecting A Nation’s Capital: An Evening Exchange About SARS. “The forum, opening with introductory remarks from city leaders, will seek to inform District residents about the dangers, risks and ramifications of this new and terrifying disease known as SARS.” At Hine Junior High School Auditorium, 335 8th St. SE. Info, Charles Ellison, D.C. Department of Health, 442-9187.

7-9:30 p.m. H Street Zoning Discussion. By ANC 6A and ANC 6C. “The purpose of this meeting will be to forward zoning recommendations to a joint ANC meeting based on deliberations of the zoning committees and informed by community input.” At Miner Elementary School, 600 Block of 16th St. NE. Info, ANC 6A03 Commissioner Cody Rice, 544-3734.

## **Friday, May 23**

3:30 p.m. Boys Softball. Browne Junior High vs. Deal Junior High, at Deal, 3815 Fort Dr. NW, 282-0100; and Hine Junior High School vs. Eliot Junior High School, at Eliot, 1830 Constitution Ave. NE, 673-8666, <http://www.k12.dc.us/schools/eliot/homepage.htm>.

## **Saturday, May 24**

10 a.m. Corner Forum meeting. “Help assemble the current issue and plan future ones.” At the home of Marc Borbely and Tammi Cioffi, 536 13th St. NE, 544-2447. §