

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 #44
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37¢ + 2¢ D.C. sales tax
<http://www.thecornerforum.org>

Lawrence Smith, 1969-2003

Lawrence Smith, born February 3, 1969, died Tuesday night while out fishing at Solomons Island with two friends. One of the two friends with him, James Oxley (of Upper Marlboro, Md., formerly of 1345 Emerald St. NE), reported that Mr. Smith had gone off to use the restroom and apparently drowned after hitting his head and falling in the water.

Mr. Smith lived with his mother, Florence Smith, and his grandmother, Henrietta Slade, at 406 13th St. NE, where he was born and raised. In addition to his mother and grandmother, he leaves behind a fiancée, Stacy Wilkins, and seven children.

The funeral will be tomorrow, at Freedom Baptist Church, 1519 U St. NW: viewing at 10 a.m., service at noon.

The following comments are from his family, friends and neighbors. If you have a comment you would like to add, please send it in.

He was the sweetest child — my

only baby. That's my heart. He was kind and nice to everybody. He tried to help everybody.

What schools did he go to?

He went to Miner for pre-kindergarten, Kingsman from kindergarten to sixth grade. I remember seventh grade, he went to Browne, and then the last years he went to Eliot. Then he went to Street Academy. He went to Woodson for ninth grade.

What did he like to do?

His favorite hobby was music. He played with Northeast Confunction. He started the band when he was little boy. They had paint cans and trash cans and stuff. They used to play over here at Kingsman playground. They did the block parties around here. He played with the Polymers when he was little.

He worked a lot.

He worked seven days a week. He worked days with Precision Moving and Storage Company — he was a supervisor there. Wednesday nights, Saturday and Sunday nights he worked at Walter Reede as customer service, at the pathol-

ogy building.

Did he speak about his plans?

He wanted to get another job, because he wanted to buy a home for his kids. That was his desire — to get a house. He loved his family. He would do anything he could, when he got ready [laughs]. He went to church when he could. When they changed his hours, then he stopped going. He just got baptized last year and joined my church, which is Freedom Baptist Church, on U Street [NW]. He would always be there for their anniversaries and programs; then he would go to Walter Reede after that.

What kind of food did he like?

Any kind! He loved crabs, but only when Stacy was having my grandbabies. I could always tell when I was having a grandbaby, because he would crab down all the time. I'd say, "Oh oh, Stacy's pregnant!" He loved seafood. He loved pizza — and chitlins. That's his favorite.

How was he with his grandmother?

Oh, that's each other's heart. He goes to her before he comes to me.

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17-Month Birthday for 'Miracle Baby'

Aleeyah Smith celebrated her 17-month birthday on Wednesday. In the photo below, she is shown with her mother, Katina Bigelow, and her grandfather Lacey Bigelow outside their home at 1317 Emerald St. NE, .



Aleeyah was born on March 21, 2002. She weighed 1 pound, 4 ounces. Now, her mother said, "she jumps around, plays, walks around."

"She's a miracle baby," her grandfather said. §

Missed Recycling Pickup

BY CHESTER W. HUNTER, 1310 EMERALD ST. NE

The recycling contractor didn't come last week.

I called Tuesday, and he came out last Wednesday. The District is getting screwed. The contractor has a contract with the District, and when they sell that recycling stuff, they make money again.

The District is not getting screwed — the *citizens* of the District are getting screwed. We're the ones paying taxes for this stuff. §

Problems / Solutions

Sharon Cochran: “Please Clean Up and Renovate the Pepco Property.”

Sharon Cochran, 1300 block of Emerald Street NE, sent the following letter this week to Pepco President William J Sim (701 Ninth St. NW, Washington, DC 20068-0001). She sent copies of the letter to City Council member Sharon Ambrose (Ward 6), Mayor Anthony Williams, Police Lt. Renato Caldwell and the Corner Forum.

Dear President Sim,

Please clean up and renovate the PEPCO property at 13th & D St. NE. The PEPCO property and adjacent public property areas such as the sidewalk and tree boxes are filled with trash. I do not think that this property has been cleaned a single time this year. The property should be cleaned at least once a week.



Friday, 7:30 a.m.

In addition, I would like for PEPCO to renovate the property by taking down the industrial type fence, renovating the building, and landscaping the property. PEPCO decommissioned the substation a number of years ago; there is no reason for the chained linked fence with hazard signs and the gravel on the ground. The property looks abandoned, and therefore it makes the neighborhood more vulnerable to criminal invasion. While this block has had a history of loitering accompanied with drinking and drug sales, the Police are actively monitoring to prevent these activities. The “Broken Window” theory of Community Policing says that a disorderly property like yours is linked to crimes because it says that no one cares.

This is a residential area and the appearance of the PEPCO property should be more in keeping with that use. This site has a historic use of a trolley car station and there is no reason for it to look so shabby. The PEPCO property in Penn Quarter does not.

This property has a history of being an eye sore for a number of years and this is not the first plea from the community asking for you to clean it up. I know that former ANC Commissioner Ronald Nelson had to plead for your company to clean the lot. He led staff from PEPCO on a tour where they found lots of trash, rat holes and a hypodermic needle. This should not be the case for any business that operates in the District of Columbia, much less one that promotes its community ties. I am looking forward to the successful resolution of this problem.

P.S. I’ve enclosed some pictures of the PEPCO property to give you an indication of its terrible condition. §

Pepco: “They’re Gonna Start Keeping It Clean.”

BY MARC BORBELY, 536 13TH ST. NE

In response to Ms. Cochran’s letter (reprinted at left) and a call to the Pepco spokesman’s office (872-2680) Wednesday morning requesting a response to the letter, three Pepco workers came out Friday and spent a good part of the day cleaning up the property.

One of the three workers, Aaron Tyler, gardener class A, who is one of the two people responsible for all of the substations and grounds for Pepco — in D.C., Prince George’s County, and Montgomery County — explained that the substation at 13th and D had fallen off of Pepco’s radar screen this year.

When a list was prepared for the contractor who maintains the grounds for Pepco’s substations, the substation was inadvertently left off the list.



Friday, 10:15 a.m. — left to right: Steve Johnson, substation technician, Elton Pittman, construction maintenance first class, and Aaron Tyler, gardener class A.

“We had reorganized our vendors. ... It wasn’t on the list.” So far this year, Mr. Tyler said, Pepco’s own employees have come out at least four times to cut the grass. But he said Pepco has now added the property to its regular schedule, so that for the rest of the year Pepco will be coming by at least every two weeks.

Mr. Tyler offered to work with neighbors to beautify the area. “We’re going to make every effort to work with the community,” he said. “We can have a partnership.”

At a substation at 12th and O Streets NW, he said, Pepco and the community have been working together to maintain a garden. It’s so well kept, he said, that the mayor was entertained there recently. Pepco takes care of one side, and the community takes care of the other. Mr. Tyler said the same could be done at the 13th and D Streets NE substation, and that any ideas should be faxed to Charles Myers at 388-2272, at Pepco’s 3400 Benning Road headquarters.

David Morehead, Pepco’s spokesman, said Pepco had not had time to prepare a formal response to Mrs. Cochran’s letter, but he said, “I can tell you that they’re gonna start keeping it clean.” Regarding Ms. Cochran’s requests that Pepco take down the industrial-type fence and renovate the building, he said, “I can’t really comment on that, because that’s starting to get into our capital expenditures.” §

SEND IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND YOUR NEWS — by phone (544-2447); by voicemail (517-9128);
by e-mail (news@thecornerforum.org); or by mail (536 13th St. NE).

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He'd do anything for grandma. She took care of her baby. That's hers. I was the mother; grandma was the "mother mother." She let nobody bother Lawrence. "Leave him alone! He ain't did nothin'!" He was real spoiled. All of his friends been wonderful to us. We never knew how kind people could be, until my son died. My new neighbor next door — she came over with a card. When she moved in, he helped move her stuff in the house. He would help anybody. He don't like to see ladies carrying packages. Even all the fellows on the corner — they've been wonderful. You can see their love. Lawrence was born here. This is the only place he lived.

— Florence Smith, mother, 406 13th St. NE

He was a real nice person. Everybody around here knows him and loves him and misses him. He was real popular. He'd



From left: Mr. Smith's daughter Terry, 9; foster daughter Tilisha, 15; daughter Lashaun, 4; son Christopher, 5; fiancée Stacy, 35; and daughter Lauren, 1½ (all Wilkinses). Not shown: Derryck Green, 11.

give his friends his last penny. He was always there for his friends, when stuff happened. And he loved his kids. He had six children — three boys and three girls — and he had a foster daughter. She wasn't his real daughter, but he said she was. We always took a family trip up to

Myrtle Beach. We didn't get to go this year. He loved to play the congas. He was in different bands. Him and his friends had started up a band. He loved to go to church. He went on a lot of trips with them. And he liked to go fishing, at Solomons Island. I met him through one of my friends. I've been with him for like 13 years. We was around each other every day, except when he had to work. He's gonna be really missed. He took part of my heart away, when he died.

— Stacy Wilkins, his fiancée and the mother of five of his children, 3800 block of 9th Street SE

It's gonna be rough without him. He treated me with the respect I wanted. And he gave me discipline. And he loved to look at scary movies with us. And he liked to do what's best for us. And he likes to get on roller coasters. He liked to go to amusement parks.

— Lawrence Wilkins, son, 12



He was just a standup dude. Slim been around here for since forever. He was a father — he was an uncle out here to everybody. He was just a genuine guy. Everybody around here

loved him. He's the one that started the Minit Sports [clothing line] — headbands and stuff. That was him. He's gonna be missed like I don't know what. "L. Boogy." That's my man.

— Brown, friend and neighbor, 1200 block of D St. NE

I used to hold Lawrence in my arms when he was a baby. It shocked me, when I heard it. **So you saw him growing up.** Mmm hmm. **What was he like?** Kinda quiet.

— Chester W. Hunter, 1310 Emerald St. NE

When we grew up, we'd always go to the go-go — every go-go that was there. Because Lawrence was in go-go bands ever since we was growing up. And he used to play the congas — he was real good at it. And dress up and go out to the cabarets, and just have fun. He had a loving, kind heart. He had a smile that just made your day. If you was feeling down, he had a smile. He never got into any kind of altercations or any fights, unless somebody provoked him. But he was the kind of dude he would be there for you. Anything went down, and he was there — you better believe Lawrence got your back.

— James Oxley, of Upper Marlboro, Md., formerly of 1345 Emerald St. NE

He was a good dude, man — loved to help everybody. He took anybody anywhere, where they wanted to go. God got him in his hands now.

— Samuel Ronald Tilley Jr., 518 14th St. NE

He'd come in every evening, in my house. Just to see Pete [Samuel Ronald Tilley Jr., her grandson]. He was a very nice fellow. Always called me mom. He was very nice. I loved him.

— Ruth Robinson, 518 14th St. NE

Mr. Vaden: For me, he's truly missed. He's up there with my boy Antoine — I know he's looking down on us. Only thing that I can say is that we've just got to get our circle a little tighter now. We've got to help each other out, as well as his mother, in time of need.

Mr. Greene: He was one of a kind. Willing to help and lend a hand. He was a conga player — he loved playing conga. We know him as "L. Boogy," "Lawrence," "Bam Bam," "Receding Hair Line Lawrence," "Playboy Lawrence," "Go-Go Lawrence."

Mr. Vaden: He was always cracking on me — always told me that he wanted to be my height.

Mr. Greene: We all grew up together, man.

Mr. Vaden: One big family. Even though we're not related, he's still a brother of ours we just lost. We just have to be strong for his mother right now. It hurts. I mean, one minute, we're sitting here talking, and the next morning he's gone. Life is short.

— Ellery Vaden, 1348 Emerald St. NE, and Greg Greene, 1350 Emerald St. NE §

Updates

LAKE FORT FISHER: The Mayor's Call Center reported Tuesday that D.C. Department of Transportation inspectors had come out on Aug. 8 to inspect the large body of stagnant water behind 419 and 421 13th St. NE. The Call Center operator said that as a result, the department's potholes division repaired eight potholes. However, Amy Fisher (427 13th St. NE) says no repairs have been made at all. The stagnant water is still there, though it's smaller than it was in the photo that was taken by Mrs. Fisher and that was published with her article in the June 21 issue of the Corner Forum. At the suggestion of someone in the crew working on Kingsman Field, Mrs. Fisher called the Health Department on Friday and spoke with someone whose specialty is West Nile Virus (535-1954). That person referred her back to the Call Center, to follow up with alley repair. So Ms. Fisher called the Call Center and reported that the repairs had not been made. An operator referred the matter to her supervisor, who has 48 hours to investigate.

HOMICIDE ON 300 BLOCK OF 13TH: The police have still not released any further details, including the victim's name, related to the incident of the 23-year-old man found fatally shot alongside 309 13th St. NE on Aug. 14.

CORNER FORUM ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The following people helped produce or distribute the Aug. 17 issue of the Corner Forum: Marc Borbely (editing, folding, distributing), 536 13th St. NE; Tammi Cioffi (folding), 536 13th St. NE; and Sharon Cochran (distributing), 1300 block of Emerald Street NE. There are 72 households in the Corner Forum area that are subscribed to the newsletter (26 on E Street, 24 on Emerald Street, 16 on 13th Street, and 6 on Duncan Place). §

“Too Hot ... to Be Walking Out Here”

BY MARC BORBELY, 536 13TH NE

On Friday, Minnie Evans, 1234 13th St. NE, was walking north on the 500 block of 13th Street NE. A car stopped. Inside were Kevin Braddy, 524 13th St. NE, his mother, Shirley Braddy, who was just moving from New Jersey to North Carolina, Mrs. Braddy's young grandson, and lots of boxes.

The Braddys didn't know Mrs. Evans, but they stopped and asked whether she was going far. “To 8th and H,” Mrs. Evans replied.

After the Braddys offered Mrs. Evans a ride and she gratefully accepted, Mr. Braddy got out of the car to make room. He waited while his mother dropped Mrs. Evans off and came back for him.

Mrs. Evans and her daughter, Delores Holly, were featured in the Dec. 14 issue of the Corner Forum. At the time, Mrs. Evans was 80. “It's way too hot for her to walking out here,” Mr. Braddy said. §



Calendar of 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.

Tuesday, August 26

7-9 p.m. ANC 6A Economic Development & Zoning Committee. Draft agenda includes a discussion with Ira Holland of the D.C. Youth Services Administration on the planned construction of a new group home for youth offenders, on the 1600 block of Kramer St. NE. ANC committee chairman Cody Rice (6A03) says he hears from Mr. Holland that the group home is under construction now and, when completed, will house up to six children who are court-ordered to live in a supervised setting. At Capitol Hill Towers, 900 G St. NE, community room. Info, ANC 6A03 Commissioner Cody Rice, 544-3734.

Thursday, August 28

5:30-7 p.m. Calle Luna con Imani. “Afro-Brazilian and Afro-Cuban arrangements ... sultry and rhythmic vocals with conga, guitar, percussion, and bass.” At Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Plaza, 7th Street and Independence Avenue SW. 633-4674. <http://hirshhorn.si.edu/programs/events.asp>.

6 p.m. Let Freedom Ring. “An evening of reflections and music celebrating the 40th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic ‘I Have A Dream’ speech, featuring actor and activist Ossie Davis and Georgetown student leaders, with music by the Metropolitan Baptist Music Ministry and Georgetown University Gospel Choir.” At the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Millennium Stage, 2700 F St. NW, 800-444-1324. <http://www.kennedy-center.org/programs/millennium/schedule.html>. §

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