

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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Snow Can't Stop the Newspaper Delivery Man

AN INTERVIEW WITH WALLACE POWELL
BY LIBO LIU, 500 BLOCK OF 14TH ST. NE

Washingtonians have ushered in the first snow of the season. Several inches of wet snow covered the neighborhood Saturday morning around 8.

As I walked down Emerald Street to take in the view, a man pushed a cart up the street while expertly picking plastic-wrapped newspapers from the cart and tossing them to people's front yards.

His name is Wallace Powell, and he is the Washington Post delivery man for three of the six blocks in the Corner Forum area. He has been serving our neighborhood for the last 20 years.

I caught up with him on 1300 block of E Street and started asking him questions. Our conversation ended in front of his



Wallace Powell

house on the 1100 block of Park Street NE, when Mr. Powell finished the delivery for the day.

Are you cold, Mr. Powell? You are not wearing gloves?

I am all right. You get used to it.

It is so cold out here, and it is snowing. You still deliver paper?

Oh yeah. I do it every day, 365 days a week, rain or shine, snow or not. I don't get no vacation.

How many papers do you deliver everyday? How big an area do you cover?

I deliver about 240 papers on weekends, and about 190 on weekdays. My area is C Street, Park Street, D, E, Emerald, F,

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There Was an A&P Next to the Safeway

BY CHESTER W. HUNTER, 1310 EMERALD ST. NE

Mr. Hunter called the Corner Forum last week to expand on some of the local history related by Herman Brown in the Dec. 1 issue. His comments during a conversation with Marc Borbely, 536 13th St. NE, follow.

Where N-A Minit is now — it used to be an A&P. And next door, where the liquor store is, it used to be Safeway.

Safeway moved around D Street NE, where the playground is now. That used to be a Safeway. A&P moved down to 18th and Benning Road. But now it's an apartment house there. I just wanted to get that straightened out.

He mentioned a store — didn't you work at that store?

Right here on the corner. At 517 [13th]. It was a Jewish store.

Oh, and he was talking about apartments. That apartment building across the street — I used to take orders up there. It was all white. I must have been in the service when black people moved in! I went in the service in 1950, and there wasn't any black people living in there.

Was that just because whoever owned it didn't rent out to black people?

That's what it was.

And when you worked at the store — how old were you?

I went there when I was 12 years old, and I worked until I was 17.

He was talking about the sodas, how it used to be these cases where you put your hand in the ice and pulled out the sodas. Is that how you remember it?

Yeah. Old Coca-Cola box. It have ice in it, and your sodas in it.

And he mentioned the horses. Do you remember that too — people going up and down the streets with the horse and buggies, selling things?

Mmm hmm. As a matter of fact, I saw on 13th Street, when a horse came by, pulling a wagon, but coming down the hill, the horse was sliding on the asphalt — it was amazing! It was on a hill — you know that hill coming down.

And they had troughs for the horses?

That was on H Street, for the horses. I didn't see any on this side. In Northwest by the old library, they used to have troughs — and some other places.

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Chester W. Hunter

G, 13th, 14th, 15th, Maryland Avenue and 14th Place — [the 1100, 1200 and 1300 blocks of C; Park Street; the 1200 block of D; the 1300 block of E; Emerald; the 300, 500 and 600 blocks of 13th Street; the 1300 and 1400 blocks of F; the 1300 and 1400 blocks of G; the 500 and 600 blocks of 14th; the 600 and 700 blocks of 15th; the 1200, 1300 and 1400 blocks of Maryland Avenue; and the 600 block of 14th Place.]

I see you now have just a few newspapers to deliver? You must have started very early?

I usually get up three o'clock in the morning, start delivering around 3:30 or 4 o'clock. By six, I am all done.

So I guesst you are running a little bit late because of the snow. But you normally finish by six. What do you do for the rest of the day?

In the summer, I cut grass for homeowners. But in the winter, I just stay home and watch television or something. I have to fight with my wife over what channel to watch, though.

Everybody on the street says hi to you. How long have you been living around here? And how long have you been delivering papers for us?

Yeah, I know everybody. I have lived here for at least 50 years. I started delivering the paper before I retired in 1988, so it has been 20 years since I started doing that.

What did you do before you retired?

I picked up trash for a trash-removing company — a private company.

Do you mind if I ask you how much you make a month delivering newspaper?

I make about \$560 a month delivering paper. Then I have about \$314 Social Security money.

That is not much. It is less than \$900 a month. Can you make ends meet?

Yeah, you'll make do with what you have. I can get by all right.

You look very healthy. How old are you?

I am 70 years old. I was born in 1933 and just had my birthday in November.

You don't look like you are 70 years old at all. What's the secret?

Coming out and delivering newspaper has been real good to my health. I quit smoking 40 years ago and quit drinking after I had my surgery 16 years ago.

Good for you. Do you have any complaints? I notice you don't have a list with you. How do you know who gets a paper?

I don't need no list. I know everybody. I remember who gets the paper and who doesn't. Sometimes, people complain their paper got stolen, that's about it.

Okay, you are home now. You take care, and thank you for talking to me.

Okay, see you. §

ANC 6A06 Seat May Become Vacant

BY MARC BORBELY, 536 13TH ST. NE

Those of us in the northern half of the Corner Forum area should prepare ourselves for the possibility that we may soon be without a representative on Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6A, and interested residents should start thinking about volunteering to represent us on the Commission.

Jessica Ward, our representative, has put her house, 1310 G St. NE, up for sale. There was a for-sale sign outside her house early last week, and the house was still listed as being for sale yesterday on the Long & Foster Web site. If Ms. Ward moves out of the area, she would no longer be able to represent us on the ANC.

The ANC makes recommendations about local affairs, including zoning, economic development, public safety and alcoholic beverage licensing issues. City agencies must, by law, give great weight to ANC recommendations. The ANC also receives city funds it can use to give grants to local initiatives.

Ms. Ward did not return two phone messages left yesterday evening on her cell and home phones, seeking a comment for this story.

If Ms. Ward moves, the ANC would have to declare her seat vacant and make petitions available to residents interested in representing the 6A06 area (roughly bounded by 12th, 15th, E and Florida) on the ANC. Once petitions are made available, candidates would have 21 days to gather at least 25 nominating signatures. At that point, the ANC would have to announce an election (if there is more than one qualified candidate) at a public meeting, and the election would be held at the ANC's next regularly scheduled meeting. At that election, candidate would be elected to represent us for the remainder of Ms. Ward's term — through 2004.

The next ANC meeting will be held tomorrow evening (see Calendar). §

Updates

COMINGS AND GOINGS: According to the Long & Foster Web site, <http://www.longandfoster.com>, viewed yesterday, the two properties listed Dec. 1 — 1246 Duncan Pl. NE and 1325 Emerald St. NE — are no longer listed. (— compiled by Tammi Cioffi, 536 13th St. NE)

CORNER FORUM ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: The following people helped produce or distribute the Dec. 1 issue of the Corner Forum: Marc Borbely, 536 13th St. NE (editing); Tammi Cioffi, 536 13th St. NE (proofreading, folding); Sharon Cochran, 1300 block of Emerald Street NE (distributing, proofreading); Lea Mesner, 1300 block of Emerald Street NE (proofreading); and Stephen Smith, 1300 block of E Street NE (distributing). There are 85 households in the Corner Forum area that are subscribed to the newsletter (31 on E Street, 29 on Emerald Street, 18 on 13th Street, and 7 on Duncan Place). Thank you, to all. §

(continued from page 1)

Did you hear that story from anyone else too, about the grenades? He said he heard that they found some grenades in the garden area? It must have been a long time ago.

I don't know anything about that.

There was a bakery [by the Safeway and A&P] too, I think?

In the back. Ottenburg Bakery. That's part of the playground now, too.

Did they all shut down during the riots?

No. Safeway built another Safeway where the playground is now, on D Street. And I told you A&P moved. Safeway, after the riots, the Safeway on D Street closed up, because they took everything out of it.

I'm still having a hard time picturing A&P or Safeway in such a little —

It was small!

There were a lot of stores around here, back then.

Mmm hmm. Those two, and Milton — he was on the corner of 13th and E. And also on 13th and E across the street was Benders. He had a store. And where I worked, the name was Simon. That was on the corner of 13th and Emerald. And 13th and F had a store down there.

When you worked at Simon's, what kind of work would you do? Were you at the cash register, or —

Heh. He didn't trust black people with the cash register. No, I used to take out orders and stuff, clean up. You know, general cleaning and stuff.

And who did you work for?

Mr. Simon. He had a heart attack in 1945, and he died, and then she had [the store]. She and Mr. Milton — they got married. The one on 13th & E Street, on the west side. He married her. I was in the service then. Did you ever know that on 12th & H Street, they had a big old, tin, modern-looking structure down there. It was an open-air market! It's one of those quick cash places now. All that was an open-air supermarket.

I remember there were two-man streetcars, and one-man streetcars.

Two-man streetcars, that's with two drivers?

Mmm hmm. See, they couldn't back up, at that time. One driver would drive forward, and the other one would drive back.

And around here, where were the streetcars?

They came all the way down to 13th and D. Then they turned around at 13th and D and went back out C Street. As a matter of fact, that old power plant at 13th & D — if they had to go to the bathroom or something, they used to drive there and they had a little rail go inside of it. They would back up on out, and go down C Street.

Around here, it got nice history.

On this street, if somebody catch me doing something

wrong, I'd get a whipping. And when my mother find out, I'd get another. You'd better *not* hit anybody's kids now — they'll get you! You can't chastise kids any more, like when I was growing up. How about you?

I grew up in an apartment building, and it was just mostly my parents. My parents were split up, but I was just one kid, and they watched me pretty carefully.

Mmm hmm. Mmm hmm. You need more of that now. Right now, you can see a kid doing something wrong, and you walk on by, like you don't even see him, because you're afraid to get involved in something.

Sometimes when I see kids, I'm thinking maybe they don't have anything else to — if there's no jobs, for instance — maybe there's no better alternative.

But what they're doing now — making all these parks around here. How do you like Sherwood?

I haven't been inside. Have you been inside?

No, I'm going in. But I had talked to some people who work there, and they said they got something for everyone — even senior citizens. So I got to go in there one day and look around.

When I was small, where you got Kingsman, after school they had a counselor up there, and he would have basketball and stuff with the kids. But black kids couldn't participate in it until later on. They would tell us, "You can't come over here." We used to go down there with the white boys, but they would tell the black boys, "You can't come here." They said, "Go over to Lovejoy" — that was for black kids. Later on, they would let us in. Then, money must have gotten tight, and they stopped that. But what I'm trying to say is, in the afternoon, kids had somewhere to go, or something to do. Of course, Lovejoy didn't have a counselor. The black school didn't have one. White kids had it.

Now what about jobs? You worked at the store — I guess that paid you a little bit.

Well, I would get about \$10 a week.

I guess you used that to buy little things here and there?

Yeah, little things. And I gave Momma about half of it — helped them out. And my father, at that time, he worked two jobs. And sometime he worked overtime on one job — didn't see him that much back in those days, because he was out working! Trying to make ends meet.

People wasn't making any money, and what little you make, you had to spend — especially if you had kids. I didn't understand it back then, but it was kind of rough. But I can say, Marc, I never been hungry (except maybe in Korea, but that don't count) around here. We were poor, and I didn't even know it! You know what I mean? 'Cause my mother always had a lot of food. Back in them days, kids would go to each other's house, all down the street. We'd go to each other's house and eat, and have fun.

Okay, Mr. Hunter. Thank you.

You're welcome, and nice seeing you again! §

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.

— COMPILED BY SHARON COCHRAN
1300 BLOCK OF EMERALD

Thursday, December 11

7-9 p.m. ANC 6A Monthly Meeting. Preliminary agenda includes a discussion with Council Member Sharon Ambrose on PSA boundaries and 1626 Kramer St. NE; and consideration of using security cameras in high-crime areas. At Miner Elementary School, Student Dining Room, 601 15th St. NE. Info, ANC 6A Chairman Joseph Fengler (6A02), 423-8868. <http://www.anc6a.org>.

Saturday, December 13

2-5 p.m. Fort Dupont Ice Arena Holiday Celebration. Activities include public skating with the elves (2:30-4:30), pictures with Santa, face painting, arts and crafts, adult skating lesson for parents, and special guest appearances. Each activity will cost a small fee. All proceeds will go towards the purchase of new skates for the Kids On Ice programs. Fort Dupont Park Ice Arena, 3779 Ely Pl. SE. <http://www.fdia.org/fdia/Home.asp>.

10 a.m. - 7 p.m. The Capitol Hill Art League will offer an all-day exhibit and sale of smaller-scaled works with on-site gift wrapping services available. At Capitol Hill Arts Workshop, 545 7th St. SE. <http://www.chaw.org>.

Sunday, December 14

1-5 p.m. The Capitol Hill Arts Workshop 18th Annual Winter Revelry House Tour. This a tour of six homes and Friendship House with performing artists and refreshments at each location. This is a fundraiser for the Capitol Hill Arts Workshop and usually lots of fun. Tickets are \$5 for children under 14 and \$25 for adults. <http://www.chaw.org>.

Wednesday, December 17

6:30 p.m. PSA 511 monthly meeting. At Teachers Credit Union, 9th & D Streets NE. <http://psa511.juniperdc.com>.

6:30-8 p.m. H Street Transportation Study — Third Public Meeting. “At this meeting, we will briefly review the work done so far, and then move quickly into a discussion of preliminary recommendations, [including] bulb-outs, or sidewalk extensions, at most intersections; parking on both sides of the street at all times; innovative sidewalk designs; new street trees and tree boxes; a new set of colors and materials; double-headed lights all along the corridor; and a new, pedestrian-friendly plaza at the “Starburst Intersection.” At the Capital Children’s Museum, auditorium, 3rd & H Streets NE. Info, Rachel MacCleery, Ward 6 D.C. Transportation Planner, 671-2555. §

Help Protect Gay Civil Unions

BY DAVID J. KINSEY, 524 13TH ST. NE

The House and the Senate have introduced resolutions to amend the United States Constitution to require all marriages to be between one man and one woman. This is it. We need your help today.

As many of you know, my partner, Dustin, and I have been fighting for equality in the recognition of our partnership. This amendment would outlaw gay civil unions, like the ones from Vermont, and domestic partnerships like here in D.C. We need to have these rights to be able to visit one another in the event one of us is hospitalized.

If you have Internet access, please go to hrc.org/marriage and sign the petition and see what else you can do to stop these hatemongers here in DC.

If you don’t, please call Eleanor Holmes Norton’s office (225-8050) and urge her to speak to her colleagues in coming out against the marriage amendment — she can lobby on our behalf. People could also take it on themselves to call other members on the issue.

There are over 1,049 rights gay and lesbian couples are not offered by virtue of being gay. We are NOT equal under the law, and this amendment would be a shortcut to legalizing hate and entering it into the U.S. Constitution. Does it remind anyone else of misogyny laws? There were days in the not so distant past when the government claimed it had to save marriage from interracial couples as well.

Please stand with me NOW. Help protect our families. §

Goods and Services

Free Furniture...

BY KRISTEN LAISE, 1248 E ST. NE

We’re de-cluttering the house and have the following items available for FREE:

- 1 large armchair and ottoman
- 2 single futons, one with a black cover, one without, both clean and in good condition
- 1 lightweight single mattress, clean and in good condition
- 1 single trundle bed, great for a guest room or as a child’s bed

The Salvation Army and Goodwill won’t take these items, and we’d rather they didn’t have to go to the dump.

Call Kristen or Jim at 546-4098 §

SEND IN YOUR THOUGHTS, NEWS AND PHOTOS! — 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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