

# NEWSLETTER

DUPONT CIRCLE ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 2B

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Vol. I, No. 1  
October 1995

## ANC 2B UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

HENRY FERNANDEZ, ANC 2B06

### Crime Down; Thefts from Autos Rise Assaults Alarm Residents

During the past 18 months, crime in the Dupont Circle community has dropped significantly, according to the police representatives from three "police jurisdictions", the Second and Third Districts of the Metropolitan Police as well as the U.S. Park Police. These representatives report the crime statistics for the Dupont Circle area at the monthly ANC meetings. The bad news is that theft of property left in parked automobiles has almost doubled during the same 18 month period. Police representatives stated that thieves are stealing "anything they can sell quickly and for a few bucks." They advise residents not to leave anything which can be easily spotted inside a parked vehicle. Thieves are stealing loose change, gym bags, umbrellas, tape cassettes, and other small items. They appear to be especially targeting cars from outside the District; we need to warn our visitors. The police are trying to catch the criminals, but admit that thefts from autos are difficult to prevent without the help of vehicle owners and residents. The U.S. Park Police were using "decoy" mini-vans to lure and catch thieves preying near the Mall. The Third District is utilizing undercover bicycle patrols to apprehend the criminals. The police need our help to prevent these crimes.

In apparently unrelated incidents, several people in the Dupont Circle area have been the victims of unprovoked assaults during the past few months. Three of the crimes may have been biased-related, including the brutal beating of a male and a female outside the 17th Street Safeway in July. In another instance, two men sprayed mace on a woman walking alone on 21st Street, and knocked her down. I have helped alert our community about these crimes by speaking with the press, and have brought these incidents to the attention of police commanders. Everyone can help stop crime, such as by warning

our guests about thefts from autos and by joining a group or citizens patrol. At the January ANC meeting, I created the ANC Safety Committee, which I chair, and appointed two residents. We have met with the Commanders of the Third and Second Districts and discussed with them community concerns. I would like to have more of our neighbors join the committee. For more "excitement," the Dupont West Citizens Association has an "Orange Hat Patrol," a citizens crime-watch group, looking for additional volunteers who can devote one hour per week to "foot patrols" with the group. Our patrol provides visibility, which is a deterrent to crime. It's true what cartoon character and mascot McGruff says, "Together, we can take a bite out of crime."

### What is the ANC?

Under the Home Rule Act, the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions were created to give the residents a voice in local matters through elected non-paid representatives. The ANC is a government body, not a civic organization with a dues-paying membership. Under D.C. statute, government agencies and regulatory bodies must give "great weight" to the position of the ANC when considering certain neighborhood issues, such as zoning variances, liquor licenses, public works, and historic preservation. Meetings of the Dupont Circle ANC are held the second Wednesday of each month, at 7:30 pm in St. Thomas Church, 1772 Church Street (off 18 Street). For information, please call 822-6222.

### ANC Office Moves to Dupont Down Under

As the District's financial crisis affected the ANC budget, I negotiated a \$1 per year lease for an office in the Dupont Down Under complex, near the 19th Street entrance. This new lease saves the ANC and the District government \$5,000 per year in rent. The ANC is grateful to Dupont Down Under C.E.O. Geary Simon for his assistance.

## Public School Reform

Our public schools are in crisis. In April, Mayor Marion Barry and School Superintendent Franklin Smith appointed me to serve on the District's school reform team, the D.C. Goals 2000 Panel. This group of parents, business representatives, and community leaders will submit a detailed plan early next year to the U.S. Dept. of Education and Congressman Steve Gunderson. The key provisions will include curriculum reform, school choice, high academic standards, safety plan, re-engineered school administration, and support services for students with special needs. My colleagues and I on the reform team are committed to turning our schools into high-quality educational institutions.

## Public Space Guidelines Approved by ANC

In January, the most contentious issues facing the newly-elected Commissioners related to the applications for use of public space by businesses. The ANC, for example, reviews the applications from restaurants which seek to operate sidewalk cafes. While outdoor cafes are delightful and are helpful in crime prevention, they may hamper foot traffic on a sidewalk and foster noise. Zoning flaws also have caused some tension by placing residential blocks across the street from active businesses. In the past, the ANC has endorsed and rejected public space plans without having written guidelines. In March, I created the ANC Public Space Committee to draft guidelines, and appointed Commissioner Erik Wemple to chair the group. Mr. Wemple, joined by Commissioners Jonathan Heller and Brad Haransky, recruited business representatives and residents, and held a town meeting to get input from constituencies. In July, the ANC adopted public space guidelines. The document suggests, for example, appropriate hours for an outdoor cafe's operation. Copies of these guidelines are available from the ANC office.

## P Street Improvement Plan

P Street, from Dupont Circle to 23rd Street, is an important thoroughfare for the Dupont Circle community and has tremendous potential. It ties Rock Creek Park and the green lawns of Dupont Circle, and is the connecting route between the Dupont and Georgetown communities. P Street is also an important traffic link between the Dupont Circle and Rock Creek Parkway. This stretch of P Street could be much more than it is today. It could be "greener" to more appropriately connect the two parks. The sidewalks could be wider to accommodate strollers from one neighborhood to another, or from Rock Creek Park to the Dupont Circle fountain. I am concerned about the state of P

Street; it suffers from social and urban development problems. Perhaps the most serious and complex of the social problems is the homeless/ panhandlers. These individuals suffer from a variety of illnesses, from alcoholism and drug abuse to mental disabilities and, as a result, are responsible for a variety of nuisances from public urination to theft. This problem requires a multi-faceted response designed with input from residents and experts. Simply applying one measure, such as the closing of the public rest rooms on the Circle or periodically arresting some of the individuals, will not solve this complex social problem. Another somewhat complex problem is the design of an urban development plan for P Street. While the street suffers from seemingly disjointed development from the past 100 years, there are some projects which can aesthetically improve the street scape. Although complex, the aesthetic/urban development problems can be addressed. Here are some ideas:

- 1) Planting more trees and spacing them and the lamp posts at equal distances from each other;
- 2) Accentuating parallel lines (such as a brick trim on the sidewalk);
- 3) Widening of side-walks and eliminating the glass bus stops (the tree boxes could be expanded and additional shrubbery planted to "green" the promenade);
- 4) Reducing street parking;
- 5) Encouraging the development of the PMI parking lot (which is private property).

I need assistance from residents and businesses to draft a comprehensive plan for the improvement of P Street. Please call me. I am looking forward to discussing the plans with residents of the Dupont Circle community, especially those who live and work around P Street.

## **FOR THE RECORD...**

Commissioner Fernandez voted to:

- \* support Sutton Place Gourmet opening at 1647 Connecticut;
- \* ban heavy trucks from Q St.;
- \* support Council bill giving police noise enforcement powers;
- \* oppose Brookings from constructing a PUD on P St.;
- \* remove public phones on Hopkins Street;
- \* urge Dept. of Public Works to retain sanitation inspectors;
- \* support J.R.'s application for a sidewalk cafe, with restrictions;
- \* oppose Trio's application for enclosing a sidewalk cafe
- \* prevent the placement of an eight-foot iron cross on the center facade of historic Fraser Mansion;
- \* support the Freedom Festival and P St. block party.

Hello Neighbors!

Welcome to the Dupont Circle ANC newsletter. Since becoming your commissioner in January, there has been quite a bit of activity in our SMD. Before I get to that, I have a phone number for you. Please keep it handy - (202) 232-3089 - this number is dedicated for only your calls!

Does the address 1910 18th Street sound familiar? One of the issues that had plagued the two previous commissioners, and what got me interested in becoming a commissioner was the Ambassel fiasco. If you haven't noticed by now, they are gone!!! Due to the continued efforts by many of us, they left. While in yet another final voluntary agreement negotiation before the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board, the owner just called it quits. Without any notice to anyone, the owner just packed up his bags and left town!!! A very overdue but sweet victory for the neighborhood.

Now even greater news - 1910 18th Street will have a new life. Mr. Ramzi Osseiran, former manager of Cafe Luna and Skewers has chosen this location to open his own restaurant. You might have noticed quite a lot of activity lately as Ramzi has been working endless hours to get his new restaurant opened. Ramzi is very much into becoming part of the neighborhood and has already spoken to many of his neighbors assuring us of just that. I'll have more next time.

Ruth's Chris Steak House is now in the process of enclosing their outdoor public space. I must admit, I was at first against any enclosures on public space, but after careful consideration of their location and the plans submitted, I was supportive. Although I was out of town for the April ANC meeting to support this effort, I did send word through Henry Fernandez, your ANC Chair, and the vote passed. So far, it's looking good.

The Government of the State of Eritrea came before the Commission in June to request our support regarding a zoning application for the purchase of the building at 1708 New Hampshire Avenue. In previous conversations, I had expressed several of the concerns residents have when a Chancery wants to locate in a primarily residential community. At the ANC meeting, the applicants assured us that there is a special budget to maintain the building in its present splendor. The current owners of the building have had special street parking privileges very similar

to that of a Chancery - you've seen the signs. Representatives for the State of Eritrea agreed to only 2 spaces on the street in front of the building, a reduction of one or two spaces opened up for residents (thanks to Commissioner Heller for bringing that situation to light). I have seen a SOLD notice on the FOR SALE sign, so I am assuming we will be seeing them soon.

I get quite a bit of comment on the present state of our pocket parks, sidewalks, and streets. The District has not been that responsive in the past, and given the present budget situation, even less now. The single most common frustration I hear is the abuse to our neighborhood by others, i.e trash thrown in the streets and yards, dogs using our lawns and streets as bathrooms and the owners not cleaning up, property owners, single and multi-units, not keeping their areas clean, etc. The most discouraging news I hear is when the abusers are our own SMD residents.

At this time, I would like to comment on behalf of dogs and their owners. While I do love animals, I do not love cleaning up after them. For the most part many of the owners have been great cleaning up after their dogs, but for those who do not, please keep the following in mind. Many of our trees have been adopted by residents. D.C. does not maintain the tree boxes. Please show some respect. In addition, we have some pocket parks that residents and/or businesses have adopted, since D.C. also does nothing. A great amount of work and dollars have gone into the beautification and upkeep of these parks. In fact one of the parks has become a favorite for dog owners to use. The business that has adopted the park has let me know that the maintenance crews are getting upset with the amount of dog waste they consistently encounter. So I have been watching, and was quite surprised by the number of dog owners who use this park and do not clean up. Again, show some respect. I would hate to lose a park sponsor.

#### TIDBITS

Recycling is back. If collections on your day are missed, please call the D.C. Office of Recycling at (202) 727-5887. To request a recycling bin, call Eagle Maintenance Services at (202) 291-0200.

The work on T Street is for water main replacement from 19th to New Hampshire and 13th to Vermont Avenue. The project is due to be completed in December. At the end of the project, all streets and sidewalks are to be restored to their original condition. Well, I hope for better than that.

more...

Larry Ray will be heading up the 18th Street Business Association. Watch for an announcement of the next meeting - it will be coming soon.

Crime is up and your calls and letters have not gone unnoticed by me. I do pass the information on, but it comes down to the proper D.C. agency, the Police Department, to do something. Car break-ins are still the worst. Be smart and leave nothing visible - but this doesn't mean it won't happen. An ambitious neighborhood plan is in the works; see the local papers for more details.

ANC meetings are held the second Wednesday each month at St. Thomas Church, 1772 Church Street at 18th. The meetings start at 7:30pm. If you have never been to one, stop by some time and learn about your neighborhood. At the beginning of each meeting, representatives from each police jurisdiction (we have three) attend to give updates and field questions. Here is a chance for you to voice your concerns.

THANKS to all of you I have sought out for advice on issues. I appreciate conversations and advice by many of you and look forward to getting more done in our SMD this Fall.

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STEPHEN SMITH, ANC 2B02

### Everything's Coming Up Restaurants!

Hello! And greetings from ANC 2B02! Well, things are really shakin' lately in Central Dupont. Sutton Place Gourmet has begun to renovate the old Café Rabelais. Opening this Fall, they plan to be offering their new Sutton On The Run menu that will include favorites from the full service Sutton Places as well as fresh sandwich fare and fresh produce. Sutton Place will retain the outdoor café with some new additions that will make it suitable for year-round usage. This much needed renovation of this old eyesore is a welcome sight.

The new market is now running at full speed in the old Larimer's location. If you haven't been by yet, you should definitely make a point of it. Along with a full-service deli counter, they offer a wide variety of breads and cheeses, produce, hot prepared foods, wines, and hard to find gourmet items. They've got the closest thing to a New York market, I would venture to say, anywhere in Dupont (including great deli sandwiches and kosher dills).

In yet more restaurant news, the owner of Red Cage downtown has taken a lease on the old Café Rondo on the corner of 19th and Q Streets. The spot will be renovated (and I've sneaked a peak at the plans and they are *fabulous!*) The new restaurant will be called RAKU and will feature Asian fare as only a restaurant of their caliber can present. For anyone interested, they will have made a presentation at the October 11 ANC public meeting, complete with beautifully executed architect's elevations. Information will be available in our office for examination.

### In brief ...

Toast and Strawberries has moved across the street to the other side of Connecticut Avenue where 1940 was. Comfort Zone shoes will be moving into their spot from across the street.

Scientology is nearly finished with their renovation of the Fraser Mansion at the corner of 20th and R Streets; a welcome message I'm sure to those of us living near the site! My summer-long efforts to reduce noise achieved some results and I'm told they will be through by the end of the month, whew!... but what a welcome restoration job they have done to this beautiful and historic building.

On October 5th, Chairman Henry Fernandez and I called a special meeting with the Central and West Dupont neighbors and businesses to discuss the city's new, high sanitation violation fines (at the time, presumably DC's answer to stopping street cleaning and public trash can collection). Unfortunately, I was ill that day and unable to attend, but I must extend my deepest gratitude to Commissioner Erik Wemple, and West Dupont resident Cynthia Eastment for their time and effort in making the meeting happen.

### Cheap plugs for neighborhood residents/business owners ...

Ongoing congrats to Gwen of Floral Expression at 1627 Connecticut for keeping the area in front of her store neat, clean, and beautiful. The inside's just as great, maybe even better.

In a hurry? Not all the recent arrivals on Connecticut are all coffee houses or pricey eats. Be sure to check out the Burro for some of the best Fresh Mex in the city. Say hi to Tony if you see him (a neighbor who owns the place).

Until next month... if you have any good ideas for Central or West Dupont, or the neighborhood at large, please bring them to an ANC meeting. Nobody ever said ANC meetings *have to be* dull, boring, and negative! **HAPPY HALLOWEEN!**

**JONATHAN HELLER, ANC2B03**

Dear Neighbors,

I'm glad to have this first opportunity to let you know how things are going with your ANC and single member district.

As you are probably aware, it has been a transition time for citizens' relationship with the DC government, as it gets more difficult to get timely services from various front-line agencies for day-to-day problems. Residents must now be better prepared and advised on how to deal with their public servants, either directly or through the ANC. Such ongoing problems as trash, noise, and street repair have become more difficult to solve because of budget and personnel cuts at the Department of Public Works, for example.

I would like to work with you in addressing these problems. And I would like to focus on a couple of them. Complaining to DC agencies, as some of you may already know, can be a long drawn-out process. Replies taking two months are the norm, even, unfortunately, for ANC commissioners. However, there might be strength in numbers, and success if enough voices are heard on a specific complaint.

**ARE EARLY TRASH PICKUPS WAKING YOU UP?**  
I have spent a lot of effort in the past and during this summer to stop early morning trash pickups. The law prohibits trash collection in residential neighborhoods before 7:00am. Previous complaints were always answered quickly. This summer that hasn't worked. People in my SMD were woken up typically at 5:30am twice a week. Previous discussions with DPW got no results. Finally, last month, threats of legal action seemed to succeed but we need to stay vigilant against backsliding. I suggest all of you who are fed up with this write or call the following:

Larry King, Director  
Department of Public Works  
2000 14th St., NW, 6th Floor  
Washington, DC 20009  
939-8000

Chief/Dispatcher  
DPW Solid Waste Disposal Div.  
2nd & N Place, SE  
Washington, DC 20003

Administrator, Solid Waste Management 767-8512  
Chief, Solid Waste Disposal Division 727-4821  
DPW Public Information 939-8099  
Trash Collection 727-4825

### Theft from Auto

The other big issue afflicting our neighborhoods, is car break-ins. It is vital that all residents and visitors are aware of this endemic problem. It is important to remove all possessions from your car, no matter how small, if they are in plain sight. Please tell everyone who visits you to do the same, even if they're parked for a short time. The problem is bad but not exclusive during the night. Police advise us that cars with out-of-state tags are targeted. Residents should make sure that there are no loose bricks in tree boxes or other items that could be used to break car windows. I introduced a motion supported by the ANC to ask the DPW to put up signs warning of this problem. There have been no results yet, but we will continue to work on it. Meanwhile, maybe piles of glass on the sidewalks will make people more aware.

### My ANC Philosophy

As I promised during my campaign last fall, I have continued to make a special effort to ensure that decisions made by the ANC are based on fairness and facts, not fiction, exaggeration, or innuendo. I want to avoid the onesidedness that was all too usual for the previous ANC, and I always insist on presentation of factual evidence, hearing all sides, and on reaching fair compromises. I will always fight against the small minority of people who insist their opinions are the only valid ones, and who will often not even allow for other sides of an issue to be open for public comment. The negativity and confrontational tactics of these residents has taken a lot of the ANC's time and effort away from some of the more beneficial things we would like to work on. We hope that once these issues such as public space, and J.R.'s are behind us, that we can accomplish more positive and proactive things for the benefit of our constituents throughout Dupont Circle.

### Accomplishments

I would like to highlight a few of the issues I worked for since taking office. I was able to be a liaison with residents, business, and police to help solve the drug dealing problem in front of MacDonalds, and similarly recent problems in front of Safeway. I continue to oppose unnecessary new public phones, and existing troublesome ones, recognizing the detrimental effects they can bring. I will continue to work towards limiting diplomatic parking, as I recently introduced a deal to do so at the new Eritrean embassy on New Hampshire Ave., in order to preserve as much on-street residential parking as possible. My work on

public space guidelines has focused on dealing with real issues, and not anti-business sentiment, and on reaching fair compromises that are beneficial throughout the ANC. I also continue to press for adequate public notice on issues that affect specific blocks. A variety of public comment is always necessary for us to reach our decisions.

As I gain more experience as your ANC commissioner, I want to take the next step and open up the lines of communication beyond this newsletter, ANC news in the local press, and posted meeting announcements. I need to find other fair-minded and interested residents to be liaisons for apartment/condo buildings, and for individual blocks. This is especially important as our budget was cut by 50% and mailings are no longer possible. I need neighbors who can help distribute our newsletters, and who can let me know what concerns and problems you have that the ANC can help with. I will be glad to arrange to speak with building resident groups and other constituents throughout my SMD. Please let me know if you're interested.

All too often our efforts have been focused on a very small part of the ANC. I want to reach out to all of you, not only at 17th and Q, but north on 17th, on 16th, New Hampshire, Corcoran, R, 18th, and 19th Streets. I also want to reach out to Spanish-speaking residents, to senior citizens, and others, who feel that talk of diversity in Dupont Circle doesn't always translate into action. If you want to help, please contact me. I welcome your involvement. Thanks.

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#### **DONALD JACKSON, 2B04**

Although I have only been an official Commissioner for a few days, I have already had several meetings with constituents. From these there are two important announcements to make. First, the Board of the Jewish Community Center has approved the plans for renovation of the building at 16th and Q Streets. They expect construction to begin this month. We also hope to have them tell us about their program plans for the Center at an upcoming ANC meeting.

The second announcement is that in order to facilitate communications, I have arranged for an open discussion time for our Single Member District (SMD). St. Luke's Church at 15th & P has graciously allowed us use of their Parish Hall on Saturday, October 21, from 10:00am to noon. I am looking forward to that morning since it will give me an opportunity to learn how you would like to be represented in our monthly ANC meetings. If you cannot attend, feel free to contact me at (202) 332-0028.

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#### **ERIK WEMPLE, ANC 2B05**

Greetings, neighbors!

First things first. On September 27, I hosted a meeting of 2B05 Scott Circle residents at the Sumner School, 17th and M Sts., in the Lecture Hall. The meeting agenda addressed the various concerns that neighboring residents have posed to me: crime and police protection, public works issues (i.e. garbage, sewer clearance, tree maintenance, recycling, etc.), chronic neighborhood problems and nuisances, and other special concerns. I hope to continue this kind of dialog in order to hear any other concerns that you have, and to discuss how we can improve our neighborhood.

Now for some other matters. This past Summer was a good one for your ANC. Under my direction, a special committee on public space use drafted a set of guidelines for future ANC decisions on applications by local businesses to operate sidewalk cafés throughout Dupont Circle. In recent years, the ANC's agenda - month after month - has been dominated by these applications, to the neglect of other, more pressing issues such as crime and sanitation. At the root of the problem was the absence of a concisely articulated community consensus on public space use. With the help and support of the Dupont Circle community, the committee was able to forge such a consensus, clearing the way for ANC approval of the committee's guidelines at the July ANC public meeting.

In addition, I have spent much of the Summer working with the League of 8000 to improve sanitary conditions throughout the District. The League of 8000 was formed this Spring to save the District's Department of Public Works (DPW) from budget cuts that would have crippled the city's garbage collection and sanitation enforcement functions. Having won that battle, the League has now moved on to other projects, most notable a city-wide clean-up that will begin in early October. If you are interested in participating in the Dupont Circle part of the Clean-up, please contact me at (202) 328-9794.

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## KYLE PITSOR, ANC 2B07

I represent the Single Member District (SMD) that is bounded by 17th Street on the east, Q Street on the north, 19th Street on the west, and Pennsylvania Avenue on the south. It encompasses the Dupont Circle park and large sections of commercial downtown. Having passed mid-way through my first year as a Commissioner, I am continually struck by the attractive facets of Dupont Circle community life. This community is gifted with rich resources that continue to sustain the evolution of the community and still preserve and enhance its most attractive characteristics that make it the best in-town community in Washington. I am pleased to report on a few items of interest.

### Dupont Circle Park

Earlier this year, I brought together various business and civic stakeholders and the U.S. Park Service to discuss the health and safety of our namesake community park. The meetings yielded positive results: a 1995 landscaping and restoration plan has been developed by the Park Service involving new plantings, additional trash pickups, bench and gaming table improvements, and sidewalk replacements. Longer range improvements under discussion include new lighting and restoration of the fountain itself. The park is receiving additional Park Police visits including specific assignment of a scooter patrol. Discussions are continuing about an "adopt-the-park" agreement with the Dupont Circle community.

### Constituent Issues

I am assisting various residents to address matters of public safety, trash pickup, recycling, sidewalk repair, traffic lights, street tree replacement, noise complaints, street cleaning, and traffic control. I have worked with the city to implement a resolution I introduced based on residents' requests - and passed by the ANC - that seeks to limit bus and heavy truck traffic, except for local deliveries, along Q Street. I have also advocated that use of public space by bars/taverns located across the street from or proximate to residential buildings, without the proper/suitable license, is inappropriate.

### Zoning

The Zoning Commission agreed in part with the ANC and approved an interim use until September 9, 1997, of a parking lot on the previously approved mixed-use PUD site at 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, the former location of what used to be the *Gramercy Inn*.

The D.C. Court of Appeals overturned the Zoning Commission's action in 1993 which extended the *St. Matthews* PUD on Rhode Island Avenue for an additional two years. The court ruled that the Commission had erred in not holding a hearing to determine whether good cause was shown to extend the validity of the PUD. ANC 2B, and others, had previously filed a protest against an additional extension of this 10-year old PUD. The matter has been remanded to the Zoning Commission for action.

The ANC supported a request for a 2-year extension to the *Brookings* PUD. Brookings stated that negotiations were in final stages with a lead tenant, a necessary condition before construction could begin. In supporting the extension, I expressed my concerns over the delay and the continued need for further extensions. This PUD, involving property on Massachusetts Avenue and P Street, will consist of residential and office units with underground parking.

### Historic Preservation

I have the honor of serving as the ANC's liaison on historic preservation matters. The ANC supported two applications on buildings outside of the Dupont Circle Historic District for recognition and protection as landmark buildings under D.C. Law 2-144. The ANC asked the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board to act favorably on applications for the Codman Carriage House (1415 22nd Street) and the Spencer Stable Building (2123 Twining Court). During the year, the ANC has also provided advice on a number of proposed exterior building alterations. As the liaison, I also attend Dupont Circle Conservancy meetings and have recently participated as a member of the Advisory Committee on the 16th Street Historic Context Report.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at (202) 457-8448 (work) or leave a message at the ANC office.