



KEN JARBOE

Ken Jarboe came to Washington as many do—as a summer intern for a congressman. It was 1976, and even though Congressman Phil Ruppe was a Republican, Ken was smitten with the city and with politics.

After a brief post-college sojourn with a beltway bandit, he returned to the University of Michigan and received a PhD in technology management. His ticket back to D.C. was a teaching post at the University of Maryland, which led to a job in Congress, where he really wanted to be. For 10 years, he held jobs in which he exercised his expertise in how technology should influence public policy. Then came the Republican revolution of 1994, and ardent Democrat Jarboe was “out on my ear.” He became a consultant and has started a think tank called Athena Alliance, which is focused on the “emerging global information economy.”

In other words, he is a man of detail. He is being honored tonight for his work as a Commissioner of ANC 6B, including a term as chairman, a job which calls on his ability to analyze arcane details while dealing patiently and thoughtfully with a sometimes fractious public.

“Ken brought order to the ANC process,” says one longtime observer. “The city charter says that the government must give ‘great weight’ to the advice from ANCs, and Ken made it his mission to have that advice taken seriously.”

It is through the ANC that house additions, liquor licenses, and major building projects can be derailed or sent up the approval process with a blessing. Bills proposed in the city council must be scrutinized for possible impact on our neighborhood, and complaints and neighborhood feuds aired.

It is certainly no coincidence that Ken comes from a small town, and looks upon the 22,000 people in 6B as neighbors, and Capitol Hill as a village that needs a balance of housing, small businesses, and community services to survive. Ken’s goal has always been a “livable, walkable neighborhood,” a place where people from all parts of society can truly call home.

He started in local politics in a small town way, too—putting up signs for Sharon Ambrose. In 1998, a seat on ANC 6B became vacant, but too late for Ken to get on the ballot. So he ran a write-in campaign, leafleting every house in the district and also utilizing a unique advantage—his house on 10th Street was opposite the polling place at Tyler School. With the help of a large banner on his house and some friends handing out cards to voters as they went in, Ken received one of the largest number of write-in votes—more than 200—in city history.

Ken is also known for the Halloween displays in front of the house on East Capitol Street which he shares with Jane Nuland. This year the yard featured various witches and goblins holding signs in support of their favorite candidates—Adrian Fenty, Tommy Wells (whose campaign Ken chaired), and one skeleton hanging from the tree with a slightly different message: “Ask for a Paper Ballot.” The Trick or Treaters may not have paid attention, but their parents certainly did.