



OUR VIEW: Help change the city this summer

By HENRY BOUSQUET

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Here we go again. Summer is officially in full swing and so are the thugs we have allowed to take our city away from us. Why New Bedford? A shotgun shooting, a guy stabbed, and another shot in the back. Why have we let these punks with no regard for human life affect the way our children play and the way we enjoy our summer days and nights here?

This is no way to live. We should never be letting these people who are fighting over drugs, money and turf disrupt our ability to play in our sprinklers or go for a walk or enjoy clean, safe city streets. If you listen to me, I am certain I know how to change it. Report these fools.

Call the police. Call, call, call. That's the only way they will know your neighborhood has a real problem. The officers use statistics and track that information in order to strategize their approach. That's the least we should be doing as citizens. If you care even in the slightest bit, it's important to notify the authorities any and every time you see something suspicious. You never want to be the person who says, "I wish I had called."

If you're a person of action, someone who is so tired of the problems that you feel compelled to act, well, I know what you can do for that, too. Volunteer! The city of New Bedford offers you a myriad of activities designed to improve public safety.

Attend your neighborhood meetings. In Ward 3 where I live, we have two: the Hope Six crime watch meetings that meet at Caroline apartments every second Wednesday of the month and the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood Association, which has members who attend from as far away as Hathaway Road, Bay Berry, and nearby Adams and Cedar Grove Streets, and they meet the last Wednesday of every month at Holy Name of Sacred Heart of Jesus parish center.

Then there is the New Bedford chapter of the Guardian Angels. They are organizing under the same structure, training and preparation as the folks in New York. However, they are all local guys and girls. They could use your participation, too. "Kenpo Joe" Rebello is teaching them

self-defense, and I know (because I volunteer with them) they are eager to get to work patrolling. They have been patrolling areas of the downtown and parts of the South End. The hope is to be a visual deterrent to crime, aid as first responders and collect and share information from neighborhoods to assist the police.

So a shotgun shooting, a guy stabbed, and another shot in the back. Is this what we want the rest of our summer to read like? Or are you, the citizens of New Bedford, going to embrace these opportunities to help and join one of these organizations?

National Night Out is coming up fast, Tuesday, Aug. 3. Put your porch lights on and keep your eyes peeled. Let's make every night a chance to take our community back. Come on, New Bedford, and dare to care!