



The Destructive Alternate Side Dance

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The lure of free parking encourages excessive driving. Most side streets in Manhattan have free parking 24/7, except for a couple of hours a week when they clean the streets. This results in a little dance that happens everyday on NYC's streets that most people shrug off as inconsequential, but in reality serves to destroy quality of life and public health. I call it "The Alternate Side Dance".

On the day when the street cleaning happens on one side of the street, people simply do a quick sidestep and double park across the street. This gift to drivers is in not only a theft of valuable public space from pedestrians, but causes increased ground level pollution and noise.

The other day I decided to document the dance that occurs on my block every alternative side day.



8am: An hour before Alternate Side, the street is still full and you can see a heating oil delivery truck (it's cold out there baby!) double parked, trying to make it's delivery. Which is a better use of scarce public space, a fuel delivery truck or the passenger automobile in it's way?



8:15am: The spots on the left are all still full despite alternate side starting in 45 minutes



8:30am: Still full - when will they move?



8:50am: Like magic, everyone's gone.



Except this one which got a ticket at 9:10am - The traffic cops know how to meet quota.



9:15am: The Double Parking begins. This SUV will idle for over an hour waiting for the end of Alternate Side.



9:30am: Now the whole street is filled with double parked cars! Most are idling causing the street to smell of exhaust



10am: The Street cleaner has just gone by and despite the fact that there is 30 min left in alternate side, they cross over and continue idle until 10:30am.

At least enforcing NYC 3 minute idling and double parking laws would be a good start, but this is a clear giveaway to car owning New Yorkers. We should charge market rates for all parking in Manhattan and make room for necessary delivery trucks.



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