



Riderwood Dems

RIDERWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB NEWSLETTER October, 2024

President's Corner

As I start this newsletter, I am beginning to get more anxious. The days until the election are getting fewer and fewer and I think we have more and more to do if we are to make sure that both the Harris-Walz team and Angela Alsobrooks win. I do think this remains possible if we are all working on something to contribute to this result.

A number of our members were enthusiastic as they left the program at our September meeting. Our keynote speaker was quite good as she spoke about things which will be important not only for us but across the nation if we are to assure that the Project 2025 Plan does not come into existence.

At the September meeting, we also heard from representatives of both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties who spoke about some of the activities and events available for volunteers. A few days after the program, all of those on our mailing list should have received a memo which included links for both jurisdictions that can be filled out and returned to our county contacts.

The Prince George's County link has an opportunity to indicate an interest in writing postcards to voters in Maryland. Montgomery County did not include this opportunity. But if you are in either county and would like to write postcards, please notify Trudy Downs (trudydowns@gmail.com) and me (BMRodgers201@gmail.com). We will develop a list and work with the representative from Prince George's County.

I was pleased to note that the Washington Post endorsed Angela Alsobrooks today!! This is very important for her at this stage of the campaign

with only 30-some days left. Please note that Angela Alsobrooks and former Governor Larry Hogan will be debating on Maryland Public Television at 7:00 PM on October 10. We will try to provide reminder information via email closer to that date.

Let's get busy and help make Maryland shine AND stay blue!

– *Bea Rodgers*

October Meeting and Future Plans

The Program Committee has been working hard to find timely topics and interesting speakers to challenge and energize Democratic Club members to thought and action. In the October 16 Democratic Club meeting (2:00 PM in the Encore Theater), we will focus on what are known as ballot initiatives, those long, wordy proposals usually at the end of our ballots.

Very often, the purposes and impact of initiatives aren't entirely clear when we read the summary on the ballot. Some are minor, but others are critical; some are state-wide, others county-wide. This year, both kinds will be on our ballots, whether we live in Montgomery or Prince George's County, and those ballot initiatives can make significant differences in the governing of our State and communities. Before you turn in your mail ballot, head off to an early voting site, or await in-person voting on November 5, come to our October meeting to learn all about them.

These are some of the topics we are looking at for future regular, third-Wednesday Democratic Club meetings:

- Efforts to establish an ethics code, impose possible term limits and even expand the size of the Supreme Court. [A second

presentation in a few months will explore the impact of recent Supreme Court decisions on federal regulatory capacity, the powers of the President, and the future of abortion rights.]

- The future of the Maryland Medical Aid in Dying legislation being reintroduced by State Delegate Terri Hill, and what we can do to help secure its passage.
- A Chesapeake Bay Foundation round-up of activities to help advance critical environmental issues before the Maryland State legislature this session and beyond.
- Outcomes of the 2025 Maryland legislative session in areas such as environment, healthcare, taxation and more.

If YOU have an issue that you believe would be of interest and import for Club membership, please reach out to me, Thea Fine, (editted@gmail.com), Joanne Coen (joanne.m.coen@gmail.com), or Nancy Oppenheim (nancyaoppenheim@gmail.com).

– *Thea Fine, Program Committee*

Q & A: The Election is One Month Away

By now, most of us who requested vote-by-mail ballots have already received them, but many Riderwood residents have asked questions related to the election, including:

What are the key dates to register and vote?

See the table on page 5. **Important Dates**

How can I find the county, Congressional district, and Legislative district where I live?

Go to vote411.org and enter your mailing address to find this information. Note that all residents of Village Square, Charles Terrace, Kings Court, and Berkshire Gardens live in Montgomery County. Some apartments in Hampton Square are in Montgomery and some are in Prince George's. All of Town Center, Lakeside Commons, and Arbor Ridge are in Prince George's County.

Riderwood's Montgomery County residents live in Congressional District 8 and Legislative District 14. Riderwood's Prince George's County residents live in Congressional District 4 and Legislative District 21..

How can I help in the "Get Out The Vote" initiative?

Go to the [website](#) of the national Democratic Party to see a real-time list of events and opportunities.

How can I help on Election Day?

On November 5, we hope to staff Democratic tables to provide info and sample ballots to in-person voters at both the Wellness Center (Prince George's County) and Montgomery Station (Montgomery County) voting sites. We need your help. Save the date and watch for a mailer asking you to sign up for a two-hour shift at one of the sites. No experience necessary; bring a smile, the ability to chat amiably, and a hand to pass along the Democratic sample ballot.

Where can I get more information about the lesser-known candidates on the ballot?

Vote411.org also provides a link for each candidate, listing their contact information and giving their answers to questions posed by the League of Women Voters. That website also provides details about the *Questions* on the ballot, with a clear explanation of what it means to vote FOR or AGAINST each measure.

I haven't decided which Senate candidate to vote for. Larry Hogan was a good Governor!

Keep in mind that while Larry Hogan is campaigning as a moderate Republican who got things done in Maryland, click [here](#) to learn some facts he would rather not have you know.

Summary of September Democratic Club Meeting

On Wednesday, September 18, Dana Vickers Shelley, the Executive Director of the Maryland ACLU, spoke to the Riderwood Democratic Club about her organization's positions and values. She emphasized that the ACLU is decidedly non-partisan and emphasized "we protect our Constitution."

She went on to say that this year, all the rights that the ACLU have been defending for more than a century are under fire. She referred to the Project 2025 document that was produced by the Heritage Foundation and is a 922-page blueprint for how the Republicans might re-shape government if Donald Trump is elected.

One of the key initiatives of the Maryland ACLU is their voter empowerment project. Ms. Shelley said that "protecting democracy is a full-time, lifetime job," and added that it was important to take nothing for granted with regard to voting or the electoral process. She noted that in a previous election in Prince George's County, voters waiting in line after the official closing time of the polls were told to go home, even though

anyone in line at that time is allowed to wait in the line and finally cast a ballot.

Ms. Shelley was joined by Sarah Brand-Wiita of the Montgomery County Democratic Party and Michelle Garcia, chief of staff to Tom Dernoga, chair of the Prince George's County Council. Both of them emphasized the importance of actually voting, and Ms. Garcia said that only 12 percent of the registered voters in Prince George's County turned out to vote in the August special election for the council's at-large seat.

Update from the Gun Violence Prevention Project

The struggle for sanity on guns in America is long – very long – but we are making progress. Here are some successes to savor:

► One year after creating the Office of Gun Violence Prevention within the White House, President Biden and Vice President Harris announced last week the creation of a federal task force to target emerging firearms threats. The executive order seeks to crack down on unregistered 3D-printed guns and on illegal machine gun conversion devices. Law enforcement leaders cite machine gun conversions as a significant issue in their efforts to reduce gun violence.

► The Washington Post reported that the steep decline in crime rates, including both homicides and assaults, in many U.S. cities is linked to a new focus on guns and gun crimes by law enforcement officials. This is in part because police are working faster on tracing bullet casings from gun crimes, identifying the guns involved and thus making arrests faster, so criminals are not loose to shoot again. (Incidentally, Donald Trump claims that crime is rising in American cities, but the actual numbers tell a different story. Trump is just plain wrong on the facts about crime.)

► The prime TV coverage of the Democratic National Convention featured several speakers who spoke eloquently about surviving gun violence. Among them were former Rep. Gabby Giffords, who was shot in the head at a public event, and Rep. Lucy McBath, whose son was murdered with a gun for playing music loudly. In campaign speeches both Kamala Harris and Tim Walz have spoken clearly and directly of their support for measures to reduce gun violence.

► Brian Schwalb and Anthony Brown, the Attorneys General of D.C. and Maryland, are working together to reduce gun violence. They

recently announced that Brown is suing three federally licensed gun stores in Maryland for illegally selling 34 weapons to straw purchasers who then illegally trafficked those guns into D.C.

► Governor Gavin Newsom of California signed eleven bills into law that will make his state safer. Among them are: requirements that all gun owners store firearms at home in a locked container, that all seized and surrendered guns be totally destroyed, and a mandate that all reports of inspections of gun dealers be made public.

► William Tong, the Attorney General of Connecticut, announced a settlement in his case against Hell Fire Armory (what a name!) for illegally selling ghost guns in that state. The company agreed to halt ghost gun sales, reconfigure its website and take other steps to prevent further sales. The agreement requires that Hell Fire report its compliance to the Attorney General for six years. This is the second compliance settlement that Tong has reached with a ghost gun dealer; cases against two others are pending.

– **Bob Tiller**

Why is Composting Important?

When we dispose of food scraps in landfills, they release methane. "Landfills are the third largest source of U.S. methane emissions" says R. Albrecht of WWF. Nearly 60% of landfill methane comes from food. Methane is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide over 20 years. More and more cities and private companies are offering compost collection.

Related to compost is food waste. If food waste were a country, it would be the third worst cause of greenhouse emissions after the U.S. and China.

"Methane emissions are now rising at the fastest rate in known history! The largest growth come from expanding landfills, booming livestock production, increased coal mining and surging consumption of natural gas."(WaPo)

"Cutting methane is the fastest way to slow the rate of global warming" (EDF). There are a number of ways to accomplish that. Most are inefficient, time-consuming and it's difficult to identify the exact sources. Planes, drones, and vehicles have been used in measuring methane but were not efficient enough. The recent exciting invention that has taken a dozen years to accomplish, was brought about by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). They

brought together 140 scientists from 40 institutions, publishing dozens of peer-reviewed papers. They worked with Harvard and the Smithsonian. They studied methane for years as it used to be less understood than CO₂; no longer true.

At the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (“COP26”) more than 150 countries agreed to a collective effort to reduce global methane emissions by 30%.

The COP26 “methane moment” contributed to the March 4, 2024, MethaneSAT (satellite) launch in CA at the cost of \$88 million, not including the software. The important software can run the models to quantify those emissions. Algorithms had to be developed.

This satellite is 590 kilometers above, orbiting the earth 15 times a day, scanning for methane pollution. It is in a pole-to-pole, low-earth orbit, circling as the earth spins. Every 95 minutes it circles seeing a different piece of the earth. But it cannot see through clouds so it will take several passes to see everything.

MethaneSAT’s spectrometers will locate and quantify methane emissions from oil and gas operations and track progress over time. The data gathered will be available free of charge and is critical for EDF’s advocacy strategy to hold companies and countries accountable for meeting agreed upon emissions targets. Both carrots and sticks will be used to get compliance and to reward or criticize the nonresponsive.

There are many other sources of methane but composting is something everyone can do right now to reduce it. The Environmental Defense Fund is a major player but needs support politically and financially. They took a huge risk in the years it took to developing the software and satellite as they are merely a moderately sized non-profit. After several years’ delay they finally triumphed. One of EDF’s originators was a resident at Riderwood.

The over 35 tons of compost that we residents have collected is a significant reduction in methane and composting fees are significantly cheaper than landfill fees. Keep it up and get a neighbor involved..

– *E. Anne Riley, Chair, Environmental Committee*

Update on the Postcard Project

We have met our target of preparing 10,000 postcards to be sent to eligible voters in four swing states (Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin).

If for any reason you still have any postcards in your possession, please return them without delay to the person who assigned them to you (Carol Elliott, Thea Fine, Elaine Mondschein, or me). The deadline for returning postcards is Wednesday, October 16, the date of the next Riderwood Democratic Club general meeting.

Democratic Club officers will then check all postcards, put postage on them, and mail them to the 10,000 addresses in the four swing states. The date provided by the Progressive Turnout Project for posting them is October 24, which is just twelve days before the November 5 election.

By then we will have pivoted our efforts to Maryland, which happens to be particularly important this year (i.e. to make sure that Angela Alsobrooks is elected to the U. S. Senate).

This is my last newsletter article in this series. I thank all of you who have provided your efforts, ideas and donations (e.g. for postage). Thanks also to Bea Rodgers and Trudy Downs for their guidance. In this crazy, unpredictable election year we have found a way to make a difference.

– *Tom Neu*

Membership

Friends, we need your dues. During the past years we have had some terrific and informative programs and speakers, including Jamie Raskin, Diane Rehm and Chris Van Hollen. We are sure you have enjoyed our meetings!

Some of you have not paid your membership dues. The membership form is on the next page, a bargain for \$10 a year. If you are unsure of your status, someone from the membership committee is always at our monthly meetings, at the table before you enter the Encore Theatre.

– *Nancy Oppenheim*

Reminder: Newsletter in Paper

Beginning in January, 2025, the Riderwood Democratic Club newsletter will be distributed in paper form to our dues-paying members **only**. Anyone who is not a current member will no longer receive a paper copy. The Democratic Club Board of Directors has decided to take this step as a way of addressing the time, effort, and cost involved in producing, printing, and distributing the paper copies.

The newsletter has always been available as a PDF attachment to an email, and we encourage all newsletter recipients to select that option. If you are currently receiving a paper copy of the

newsletter and would like to change to the electronic version, please send an email to trudydowns@gmail.com with that request. And

another option is to join the Democratic club! See the membership form on Page 6.

Important Dates

Date	Subject	Location	Time
Tuesday, October 15	Last day for voter registration online or by postal mail		
Wednesday, October 16	Democratic Club General Meeting Point-by-point discussion of the ballots for Montgomery County and Prince George's County	Encore Theater	2:00 PM
Friday, October 18	Environmental Book Group discusses "A Life on Our Planet" by David Attenborough	Lakeside Commons Card Room	1:00 PM
Thursday, October 24 to Thursday, October 31	Early voting (in person) For early voting locations in Montgomery County, go to 777vote.org For a list of early voting locations in Prince George's County, click here .		7:00 AM to 8:00 PM
Tuesday, October 29	Last day to request a mail-in ballot that will be delivered to you in the mail		
Friday, November 1	Last day to request a mail-in ballot that will be sent to you via email		
Tuesday, November 5	General Election Day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same-day voter registration is available • Mail-in ballots must be postmarked November 5 or earlier • Drop boxes will be closed at 8:00 PM 	Montgomery County polling place: Maryland Hall in MST Prince George's County polling place: second floor, Wellness Center	Polls open 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Note: If you want to vote by mail, it is better to request an absentee ballot to be sent to you via snail mail than to request a ballot via email. The actual paper ballots are 17 inches long and are intended to be read by voting machines. If you print an email ballot, it will be on different-sized paper and your votes will need to be manually entered by an election official.

Also, the paper ballots sent by the Board of Election include a postage-paid return envelope! If you print your own ballot and mail it, you will need to pay the postage. (You can also deposit your completed ballot in the drop box for your county. At Riderwood, the one for Montgomery County is located next to the front desk in Village Square, while the one for Prince George's County is outside the Wellness Center on the Gracefield Service Road side.)

RIDERWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB
MEMBERSHIP DUES: 2024-2025

The purpose of the Riderwood Democratic Club Is to further the policies and goals of the Democratic Party at all levels and to work for and support the election of Democratic candidates.

Specifically, the club seeks to:

- Elect Democratic Party candidates at all levels of government who support the platforms of the national, state and local Democratic parties;
- Persuade the public and elected officials to implement the party's agenda;
- Educate and inform members through monthly meetings and the newsletter.
- Discuss issues of interest to the membership.

Membership is open to all Riderwood Village residents. Our membership year runs from July 1 through June 30. **Annual membership dues are \$10 per person. Additional contributions are gladly accepted. You may also obtain a Lifetime Membership for \$100.** Your membership dues help meet Club operating expenses, such as the newsletter and costs associated with the monthly meetings, and enable the Club to support the election of local Democrats. **Please make your check payable to Riderwood Democratic Club and send it with this completed form by campus mail to Democratic Club, c/o Trudy Downs, MS621, Lakeside Commons.** Please do not send cash.

Questions/problems – Contact Carol Elliott (carolelliott@usa.net or 301-273-2325).

Please PRINT CLEARLY:

Date: _____ Apartment Number _____

Name: _____

Telephone: ____ (____) _____

Email address: _____

Total amount enclosed (\$10 dues plus any additional contribution): \$_____

How do you want the Riderwood Democratic Club newsletter delivered?

_____ Please send it to me by email*

OR

_____ Please place a paper copy of the newsletter in my cubby

* Email delivery saves paper, reduces printing costs and minimizes the work of our label stickers and cubby stuffers. You may then print out your own copy if you wish.

Thank you for supporting the Riderwood Democratic Club!