



Riderwood Dems

RIDERWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB NEWSLETTER

October, 2025

President's Corner

As I write this, the summer of 25 has come to an end, school is in full swing and our attention is turning to the last quarter of the year and the prospects of next spring's primary elections. In addition, we have the closing of the Federal government, its impact on Federal employees, and whatever else is planned by the administration with this impact on our world. The Democratic Club will need to be hard at work to try to counteract these changes.

But I do want to thank the volunteers who again participated on the postcard writing project which continued this Fall. We have sent 4000 cards to voters in Virginia because of the election for state officials that will take place on November 4. We will be looking for a Democratic win, and when this happens, we can take pride in our contribution. Thanks, also, to the number of residents who contributed stamps or funding for their purchase. All the writers can rest their fingers until spring when the 2026 election year comes into focus, and we can work to keep Maryland blue!

And looking toward 2026, our work has already begun. After taking August off, our Program Committee brought our two local State senators and most of our delegates to speak at our September program. We've heard from many in attendance that this was one of the best programs, as the speakers shared what had happened in the last session and what we might expect in the upcoming year.

If you are interested in any specific issue or topic, please let a Board member know. Better yet, join

our Legislative Committee and help to make it happen. Perhaps there may even be some bill up for a hearing that has sufficient interest so the Club could arrange for transportation to Annapolis!

Please keep up with our weekly What You Can Do (WYCD) mailing. It will continue throughout 2026 and will contain important information as the Club and other Democratic organizations and advocates work to take back control of Congress. Lee and Thea will be continuing their tireless research, and will work to assure we have both information and opportunities to make our voices heard.

Don't forget to thank our team of Senators and Congressional representatives, who are always working hard to protect the constitution and America!

– *Bea Rodgers, President*

October Democratic Club Meeting The Media and the White House: A Conversation with a Press Corps Pioneer



Ann Compton, veteran reporter for ABC network news, will be the speaker at the October 15 general meeting of the Democratic Club. All Riderwood residents are welcome to attend the meeting at 2 P.M. in the Encore Theater.

Before cable TV, the 24/7 news cycle and the internet, three major networks provided nightly national news to American living rooms. And for 41 years, almost every evening on the ABC network news through 2014, Ann Compton reported from the White House, or from wherever the President was traveling. A pioneer as the first woman assigned to cover the White House on network television, both her longevity and impact have been unparalleled.

Her tenure spanned 10 presidential campaigns and a half-dozen presidents. The Commission on Presidential Debates tapped her to serve as a debate panelist during televised debates in 1988 and 1992. Traveling with President George W. Bush on September 11, 2001, Ann was the only broadcast reporter allowed to remain on Air Force One to report on behalf of all the press during the chaotic hours following the terrorist attacks when the President was unable to return directly to Washington. That coverage earned ABC and Ann special recognition: an Emmy, a Peabody, and the Silver Baton from the DuPont awards at Columbia University. Her retirement was announced by none other than President Barack Obama when he called on her at a West Wing news conference.

Ann Compton began reporting from the White House in 1974. This was one year after she joined ABC News and made her the first female correspondent to be assigned to the White House on a full-time basis by a network television news organization. Her agility to navigate a changing media landscape, to adapt to different political White House cultures, and to maintain her clear-eyed reporting are nonpareil.

Here at Riderwood on October 15, Ann will be engaging in a conversation with her former college colleague, resident Louisa Scott. You don't have to be a Club member to attend. And bring your questions, too. We all can learn from Ann's insights on how we can better discern news from opinion, and better navigate the 24/7 news barrage.

– **Thea Fine, Program Committee Chair**

Summary of the September Democratic Club Meeting

On Wednesday, September 17, the Democratic Club of Riderwood had the pleasure of hearing from seven members of our state delegation. They included Senator Craig Zucker and Delegates Anne Kaiser, Bernice Mireku-North and Pam Queen from Montgomery County, and

Senator Jim Rosapepe and Delegates Joseline Peña Melnyk and Mary Jane Lehman from Prince George's County.

The main message these representatives wanted to convey to the scores of members in the Encore Theatre was simple: **DON'T GIVE UP!** Yes, there's plenty of acrimony in the air, they said, but this is not a time to shrink from our responsibilities. They emphasized this idea by urging us to run for office and/or to find more ways to become politically active.

Senator Jim Rosapepe underscored that Maryland was the state most affected by budget cuts due to DOGE. To counteract the damage those cuts meant for Marylanders, the state transferred money to the Attorney General's office so that the state had enough money to join class action suits with other states. In addition, the senate worked with the Attorney General's office to find new positions for some of the thousands of federal workers who lost their jobs earlier this year.

Delegate Anne Kaiser, a professor at the University of Maryland, was due in class 20 minutes after she started speaking. She strongly recommended talking to neighbors about political issues and encouraging everyone to vote.

Delegate Mary Jane Lehman is heavily involved in environmental issues. She was disappointed about the \$315M that was cut from the clean energy budget. She hopes that the Bottle Deposit Bill will pass this year as well as the Mattress Recycling Bill.

Delegate Pam Queen talked about how the history of the Civil Rights Movement can show us how to be politically active today. She reminded us of the difference the young men who bravely sat at that segregated Woolworth's ice cream counter in North Carolina made to the history of our country. She says the same kind of activism can spur social change today. In the legislature, she wants to focus on economic development as well as the issue of caregivers for dementia patients. She also wants to ensure that people who work in restaurants get the proper training in understanding how to deal with customers with dementia.

Delegate Joseline Peña Melnyk is well-known for her interest in health issues. She is pleased that the percentage of uninsured citizens went from 14% to 6% between 2008 and 2023. She also wants to be sure that all the protections of the ACA will be maintained in any new health-

related bill. In addition she wants to make sure that the Covid vaccine will continue to be available at no cost throughout the state.

Delegate Bernice Mireku-North has long been known for her interest in gun safety. She is concerned that the “Big Awful Bill” may make it easier for people to buy a gun. Not surprisingly, she wants develop programs to prevent gun violence. She is also concerned about the increasing numbers of seniors among Maryland’s homeless population.

Senator Craig Zucker returned to the issue of the acrimony that so many Americans are feeling these days. Like his colleagues, he urged us not to give up. He also saluted Delegate Pam Queen on her upcoming retirement after ten years in the House of Delegates. In terms of his legislative priorities, he mentioned the \$25 million that is being invested in open space in the state. He also highlighted the \$1M that was recently restored for disability issues.

The discussion concluded around 3:30 p.m. but most of the legislators stayed in the theater to speak with residents individually.

– **Paula Einaudi**

Opinion: Comments on the Environment

On your Resident Satisfaction Survey, don’t forget to include the word “Sustainability” somewhere in your comments. We hope that many residents will use this exact word to indicate that they actually care about the environment. Then we can count on the computer how many used that significant word. Administration may be beginning to hear us as DeeDee used the word “Sustainability” this week. Add your concerns in the survey as to where you feel they have or need to improve.

ECO- R hosted a terrific presentation by Sierra Club’s Martha Ainsworth re litter reduction and the “bottle bill” ([HB0232](#)).

The Maryland Bottle Bill is impressive because it has taken many of the problems that the other 10 states have had and corrected those for a highly effective way to dramatically decrease litter pollution, eventually by as much as 90%. The manufacturers of these bottles and cans will be the ones expected to fund the program. The Beverage Container Recycling Refund and Litter Reduction Program would give a 10 or 15-cent refundable deposit for metal, glass and plastic beverage containers. Now is the time to send an email to your state delegates and state Senator, asking them to support the Bottle Bill.

Methane is just one of the huge problems for the world’s atmosphere. “Just 122 fossil fuel and cement companies are responsible for more than 94% of all industrial CO2 emissions since 1959 and 75% since 1981” says Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS). After their recent report, *Decades of Deceit*, outlining the harmful role of Big Oil in misleading the public and blocking policy changes, Exxon/Mobil was identified as a major contributor of misinformation and should have to pay for the damage they did.

Apparently, they were very unhappy with the revelation of their part. Court documents show evidence that ExxonMobil allegedly got revenge by indirectly paying a 3rd party to conduct phishing attacks on UCS staff email accounts.

In Fall 2022, ExxonMobil committed to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. While they were way behind many other oil companies, they were working to limit methane leaks. Although they often present as a reformed company, in the background they undermine many efforts to help the environment, especially about natural gas.

Riderwood composters have saved much methane from the atmosphere by reduced food in the landfill!

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

Participate in Nationwide Protests on No Kings Day, October 18

Riderwood residents are invited to join other Americans in nationwide protests led by Indivisible, Move-On, ACLU, Democracy Forward, and many other organizations to maintain our Democracy and fight cruel policies on immigrants as well as cuts to programs that provide support to low- and middle-income residents. The theme of October’s protest is: We want “NO KINGS” in America. More than 2000 rallies nationwide are planned.

These same organizations sponsored national NO KINGS protests in June. These drew over 5 million people at over 2000 rallies nationwide—the largest protest in our nation’s history.

Riderwood residents Tony Hausner, Jean Umiker-Sebeok, and Judith Dighe, along with the RW Democratic Club, are supporting this event by encouraging and/or organizing carpools. We will drive to the area in Downtown Silver Spring surrounding 825 Ellsworth Drive, at or near Veterans Plaza, where the protest will take

place. The event is planned to start at 10:30 a.m. and continue to 1 p.m.

Please leave a message for Judith at judithdighe@gmail.com if you are willing to drive (or reserve an Uber or Lyft) to take yourself and others to this event. If you want a ride, please contact Tony Hausner thausner@gmail.com. We will form carpools at Town Center at 9:45 a.m.

More information can be found later on WYCD weekly reports that are sent to residents who subscribe.

Note: there will not be a major demonstration at Leisure World as residents there are hiring bus transport to the Washington DC event..

– **Tony Hausner, Jean Umiker-Sebeok, Judith Dighe**

New Guidelines for Receiving the Democratic Club Newsletter in Paper

Beginning in January, 2026, 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. Regardless of whether you are a dues-paying member or not, 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 your request.

An alternative for other residents is to join the Democratic Club! Membership forms are available at all our meetings, and can also be downloaded from [our page on Riderwoodlife](#). You can fill one out, accompany it with a check, and send it via internal Riderwood mail to *Democratic Club c/o Trudy Downs, MS621*.

– **Trudy Downs, Treasurer**

Important Dates

Date	Subject	Location	Time
Wednesday, October 15	General Meeting of the Riderwood Democratic Club, featuring Ann Compton, longtime White House correspondent for ABC News	Encore Theater, LSC	2:00 PM
Friday, October 17	Environmental Book Group discusses <i>The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature</i> by David George Haskell	LSC Card Room	1:00 PM
Saturday, October 18	No Kings Day (see article above)	Nationwide	Starts at 10:30 AM
Monday, October 20	Evelyn Lee, a Master's student in Human-Computer Interaction at the University of Maryland, discusses <i>What You Need to Know About Social Media</i> in a program sponsored by the Riderwood Computer Club. Everyone is welcome!	Encore Theater, LSC	11:00 AM
Friday, November 7	Democratic Book Group discusses <i>By The Fire We Carry: The Generations-Long Fight for Justice on Native Lands</i> by Rebecca Nagel	LSC Card Room	1:00 PM
Wednesday, November 12	Save the date! Riderwood's Gun Violence Prevention group presents a talk by Jen Pauliukonis, Director of the newly established Maryland Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention (more details in next month's newsletter)	Encore Theater, LSC	2:00 PM