



RIDERWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB NEWSLETTER

November, 2025

President's Corner

Well, fall is upon us and it not only brought with it some cooler weather but also a great result in the election on November 4. The messages could not have been better and also are great for the Democrats to take forward to the next round of elections! Let's hope we can build on this as we work through the next year or so to change the current actions from Washington. We can also be quite proud of almost all of the Senators and Representatives from Maryland who are leading efforts to stop so many initiatives and are tracking what might be coming, particularly the Administration's plans to continue efforts which will have a great negative impact on the senior population across the country.

While the election results had a great positive impact, our hard work has just begun. I would like to thank all those who participated in the postcard writing project and Elaine Mondschein who led the effort. Thanks also to those who donated stamps or money to purchase them. We plan to launch another postcard campaign for the 2026 election, likely in early May. We have committed to almost three times as many postcards.

We are looking for new members as the board and committees work to refine our structure, committees, activities and leadership. Thanks to Patric O'Brien and the committee who have worked hard to update our bylaws and develop opportunities for members to be involved and help expand benefits to the community.

Best wishes to all for a very Happy Thanksgiving!

– *Bea Rodgers, President*

NEEDED

The Democratic Club of Riderwood needs people willing to help with outreach, programming, and membership activities.

Help make 2026 a banner year for Democrats!

Contact Patric O'Brien, 614-981-6372, to learn about the Club's plans and how you may be of service.

November Democratic Club Meeting

In today's fraught political climate, we increasingly worry, think and talk about the panoply of issues and dilemmas confronting our State and nation. We've talked with one another, expressing our opinions and concerns about living in Maryland and, indeed, in the US today.

Well, on November 19, 2025, at 2 pm in the Encore Theater, we will have a unique opportunity to meet a key new actor at the pinnacle of the Maryland Democratic Party, to

hear his message, and present our concerns. We are delighted that Stuart Pittman, Chair of the Maryland Democratic Party and two-term County Executive in Anne Arundel County, will join us at Riderwood as part of his ongoing listening tour around the State,

Pittman, a Davidsonville, MD, native, first ran for public office – as Anne Arundel County Executive – in 2018, won that race, and was reelected in 2022. His philosophy is anything but doctrinaire; he's a pragmatic Democrat. Perhaps due to his background as a community organizer, he searches out down-to-earth, realistic solutions to challenging problems. As Chair of Maryland's Democratic Party, he continues his strategy of engaging communities from every sector and practicing transparency and data-driven policymaking, proven effective in his tenure as County Executive.

That strategy underlines his current listening tour around the State. He wants to hear from all of us. Perhaps, we're particularly interested in issues related to sustainability and our environment; perhaps gun control and school safety remain foremost in our thoughts. Maybe we're worried about healthcare or the cost of living, human rights or voting rights, taxation, regulation. We have an opportunity to talk; Chair Pittman absolutely wants to listen.

So, gather your questions, suggestions and concerns, bring your friends and neighbors, and join us on November 19, 2025, at 2 pm in the Encore Theater for what we expect will be a lively, respectful and solution-focused exchange about the future of our State in the coming year and beyond.

– **Thea Fine, Program Committee Chair**

Director of Maryland's Center for Firearm Violence Prevention to speak at Riderwood on November 12

On Wednesday, November 12, *Gun Violence Prevention of Riderwood* will host a presentation by Jen Pauliukonis, Director of Maryland's Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention. The program will be held at 2:00 PM in the Encore Theater, and everyone is invited!

The Center was created last year by the state legislature, with the specific intention of approaching gun violence as a public health issue. Many Riderwood residents were active in urging their elected representatives to support the legislation, and this is a great opportunity to hear a report on the entire project.

Hundreds of Marylanders – and tens of thousands across the country – die from gun violence each year, both suicides and homicides. The Center seeks to bring new thinking and new dynamism to this stubborn and difficult problem.

Ms. Pauliukonis, who was formerly on the staff of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, was appointed to lead the new effort by Governor Wes Moore. Her new office will coordinate all available resources – local, state and national – to reduce both gun homicides and gun suicides in our state.

On November 12, she will speak on "Ending the Epidemic: Maryland's Public Health Approach to Gun Violence," and will outline ways that citizens can be involved in reducing gun violence.

– **Bob Tiller**

Summary of the October Democratic Club Meeting

The featured speaker at the October general meeting of the Riderwood Democratic Club was Ann Compton, a television news reporter who retired from ABC in 2014 after serving as a TV correspondent for the White House, covering seven presidents, from Gerald Ford to Barack Obama, for 41 years.

She was introduced by Louisa Scott, a Riderwood resident who met her in the 1960's when they both attended Hollins College in Virginia ("a high point in time for women's colleges," she observed). An internship at a TV station in Roanoke led to a full-time job, from which she was hired by ABC and became a White House correspondent in 1974.

Ms. Compton pointed out that in the 1970's, Washington journalism was dominated by print publications, and she continued by saying that this gradually gave way to TV news, which today has been taken over by social media. Niche commentators on substacks and podcasts appeal to audiences who share their points of view, contributing to the polarization of the American people.

She added that people need to get out of their comfort zones when keeping abreast of current affairs, and she presented three rules for doing this:

- Don't get all your news from one place
- After reading the headlines, ask **why** these events happened, and try to take the longer view

- Follow the local news. These items are usually more optimistic and provide a different perspective on the bigger picture.

During the Q-and-A period that followed, she emphasized that when differentiating between facts and “alternative facts,” we need to be more proactive than we were 20 or 30 years ago, and do some independent research to help us understand which interpretation is correct.

She ended her remarks by describing her experiences on September 11, 2001, when she was the designated reporter from the press pool assigned to accompany President George W. Bush on his schedule for that day. She was with him on Air Force One as his security detail took him from his meeting with elementary-school students in Florida to a series of undisclosed locations culminating in a bunker in Omaha, Nebraska, where she provided real-time coverage of his actions.

She concluded by contrasting the unified spirit of Americans following that day with the current fracturing of the population..

– *Jill Shindelman*

New Bylaws and Democratic Club Membership Procedures

The Board of Directors of your Democratic Club of Riderwood is reorganizing in anticipation of the important work that all Democrats must do in the election year 2026. In order to re-energize the Club for this important task, the bylaws have been rewritten and approved by the entire Board. You probably are thinking “I will stop reading now!”

OK, bylaws are boring, but here’s why the changes are important:

In the past, the entire Board would be elected every two years to serve two-year terms. Often the Board’s size and scope would be reduced by illness and aging of its members. Therefore, fewer people were left to conduct the business of the Club. This rotation also diminished the introduction and exchange of new ideas.

The new bylaws provide for the election of one-third of the Board Members every year. Board Members will be limited to two consecutive terms. In order to accommodate the changes in the terms of the Directors under these new bylaws and to transition from the existing process, all current Directors will be asked to resign at the February 2026 general meeting of the entire Club. This change aligns the

Democratic Club bylaws and procedures with the ones followed at Riderwood for elections of the RAC, the CEC, and other major organizations.

Any Club member, including former Directors, who wish to be considered for election to the Board shall place their name up for consideration. During the February meeting the club members will elect the new board. Five Directors will be elected for a term of three years, five Directors for a term of two years and five directors for a term of one year. Thereafter, each February, five Directors shall be elected to a term of three years in duration.

But this re-organization of the Board is only one step on the way to gearing up for an active 2026 election year. We need YOU to help with membership recruitment, organizational tasks, and outreach to the community. We need people ready to put their hats into the ring and run for places on the Board.

We are motivated to make the next election a banner year for Democrats. If you would like to explore running for the Board, or joining a committee, or if you have comments or suggestions, give Patric O’Brien a call 6149816372 or send an email patricobrien46@gmail.com.

WE NEED YOU.

– *Patric O’Brien*

Update on the Postcard Project

THANK YOU to all the volunteers who quickly responded to the call to join the Democratic Club’s Postcards to Virginia team! Almost 90 Club members participated in organizing, writing, delivering, stamping, mailing and donating funds for stamps for **4,000 postcards** to likely Democratic voters. Our postcards were an integral part of a huge, multi-faceted grassroots mobilization effort for Virginia’s consequential November 4th election.

We have much to celebrate! Democrats swept the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Attorney General races and expanded their majority in the House of Delegates. Governor-elect Stamberger will be Virginia’s first Democratic Governor in almost 40 years to begin serving with a trifecta. Everyone who worked on the Club’s postcard team helped make this historic outcome happen!

Our important work has just begun. This spring, we will again be partnering with Progressive Voter Turnout, the country’s largest direct voter contact organization, to send **10,000 postcards**

helping mobilize voters for the midterms. Details will be finalized soon, so stay tuned.

It's not too early to be thinking about becoming involved in our midterm postcard project and reaching out to others to join the team. As the saying goes, "Many hands make light work!"

We reached our goal of \$2440 for stamp donations for this campaign, which included both cash donations and actual stamps. We thank those who provided funds and stamps to support this successful effort.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to let Trudy Downs (trudydowns@gmail.com) or me (Mondschein.elaine@gmail.com) know.

– **Elaine Mondschein, Coordinator, Riderwood Democratic Club 2025 Postcard Project**

Opinion: Comments on the Environment

Happy Days are Here Again: In NYC, Virginia, Penna., California & NJ! There is much work still to do. Remember, nothing lasts!

Politics is lagging behind reality. Tackling climate change is a race against time. COP30 is going to take place in Belem, Brazil from Nov. 8-20, 2025, 10 years after Paris. TED Countdown House states that there is real world progress underway from many businesses and citizens wanting to move faster. Current plans will not limit warming to 1.5 degrees C. Yet renewable energy, electric vehicles, and battery storage are all scaling with prices falling much faster than expected. Community-based projects are reportedly flourishing. Innovation continues in spite of resistance. The countries present are expected to set the trajectory for the next decade. You can follow COP30 @TEDCountdown on LinkedIn, Instagram or X.

Trump's EPA is undermining clean air standards that limit toxic pollution from coal-fired power plants. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that causes brain damage in infants. The Mercury & Air Toxic Standards are under threat. "In just the first 5 years of its implementation mercury emissions had dropped 86%... compared to 2010 levels", reports the Environmental Defense Fund, which is suing the EPA. There are many other standards under threat.

As much as many of the different Erickson communities struggle to get their administrations to prioritize sustainability, it is enheartening to know that there are a few retirement corporations, such as Kendal, (which have a Quaker influence) that proudly work with their

residents toward improving the environment. Collington is the local Kendal affiliate. In their library I found copies of their exquisitely impressive newsletter, which I had already seen and found amazing. The attitude reflected is much more of a cooperative nature in their Senior Stewards Acting for the Environment (SSAFE) Newsletter. It was so refreshing and hopeful. Check it out.

Recently I have been receiving a few Republican mail pieces. One, Americans for Prosperity, is very sophisticated and good at hiding its conservative Republican adherence. Beware of vague generalities that just sound patriotic.

China has the most plastic-making capacity on earth; more than twice the US capacity, which comes in second. Plastics production continues to grow explosively according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation & Development. Of the 16,000-+ chemicals in plastics, more than one-quarter are known to be hazardous to human health, but the majority have never even been tested for toxicity (Nature). Please think thirty times before eating or drinking anything in plastic. ECO-R is selling nice, safe bottles. Think of buying items for your grandchildren over this holiday to replace whatever they may be using.

We expect to be supporting a Maryland bottle bill in 2026, among other environmental bills, regarding plastic. Stay tuned.

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

Reminder: 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, send an email to trudydowns@gmail.com with your request.

An alternative for other residents is to join the Democratic Club! A membership form is on page 6 of this newsletter. 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**

Protests on No Kings Day, October 18

Organized by the Riderwood Democratic Club, more than 30 residents participated in the October 18 No Kings Day protests. About 25 of our group went to Georgia Avenue in front of Leisure World where we joined with about 1500 other citizens, mostly from Leisure World. Jean Umiker-Sebeok and Tony Hausner led that group. Led by Judith Dighe, four went to Downtown Silver Spring near Chick Fil-A, and at

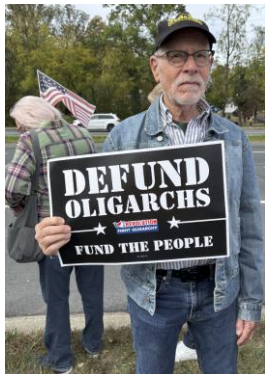
least four more went to Hastings Drive and US29, near I-495.

Other Riderwood residents also went independently to protests on Connecticut Avenue, in Columbia, Chevy Chase, and many other locations in the DMV. Our residents reported excitement, good spirits, families with children, dogs with signs, cars honking, chants, songs, and lots of clever posters.

Photos from the October 18 protests appear below. Others from Judith and Tony can be found [here](#).

More than seven million people participated in the No Kings Day protests in over 2600 places in the U.S., making it the largest rally in our nation's history. There was also many other participants all over the world.

– **Tony Hausner and Jean Umiker-Sebeok**



John Doellinger



Tony Hausner and Riderwood residents



Jennie Lane

Important Dates

Date	Subject	Location	Time
Wednesday, November 12	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 (details in article on Page 2)	Encore Theater, LSC	2:00 PM
Wednesday, November 19	General Meeting of the Riderwood Democratic Club, featuring Steuart Pittman, Chair of the Maryland Democratic Party	Encore Theater, LSC	2:00 PM
Friday, November 21	Environmental Book Group discusses Wild New World: The Epic Story of Animals and People in America by Dan Flores	LSC Card Room	1:00 PM
Friday, December 5	Democratic Book Group discusses The Message by Ta-Nehisi Coates	LSC Card Room	1:00 PM

RIDERWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB

MEMBERSHIP DUES: 2025-2026

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!