



Riderwood Dems

## RIDERWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB NEWSLETTER

February, 2026

### President's Corner

As all Marylanders endure this unprecedented deep freeze, we can turn our attention to indoor events and begin to focus on the 2026 midterms. Plan to learn more about the issues and the candidates – the Democratic club is looking forward to having several candidate forums later this year as we approach the primary election on June 13 and look forward to the general election on November 3.

Meanwhile, we will have our own election – for members of the Club's Board of Directors – at our meeting on February 18, where all paid members are eligible to vote. Brief biographies of all the candidates are on the Democratic Club page of [Riderwoodlife.com](http://Riderwoodlife.com).

– *The Editors*

### February General Meeting to Feature Panel Discussion on *Running for Office*

Have you ever thought about running for public office? Several of our neighbors here at RWV have done more than think about it. They will be sharing their experience as candidates for public office in a panel presentation at the Democratic Club's February 18, 2026, meeting at 2:00 PM in the Encore Theater following the election of Club Board of Directors that will be held at this same meeting. We may not have located everyone at RWV who has ever run for public office, but we do have six residents who have agreed to participate.

Although some of the panel members were ultimately elected to public office, campaigning for office will be the focus of the questions posed to the panel by the moderator, Club member Lee

Finney. Lee herself was a candidate for local office in California. Win or lose, becoming a candidate for public office can be life-changing. Come to the February 18th meeting and learn all about it from people you know. This is your chance to ask all the questions you might have thought about if you ever wondered whether you couldn't do a better job than the person in office in front of you and what it would take to get elected.

As noted elsewhere in this Newsletter, the February 18th Club meeting is also the RWV Democratic Club Annual Meeting when we will be electing the Board of Directors for the next three years. You must be a Dem Club member to vote, so please, renew your membership and join us for an interesting afternoon. (A membership form is on Page 4 of this newsletter.)

### News from the Gun Violence Prevention Group

In Maryland the state legislature meets for only 90 days each year, meaning the window of opportunity is not open long and everything moves rapidly. The 2026 legislative session is in full swing, with adjournment slated for April 13.

While many of us are disappointed about the national picture on laws to prevent gun violence, our state situation is quite positive. We have a strong majority in the legislature working for sensible gun laws, as well as a supportive governor. Several good bills are getting hearings this year, and now is the time to contact your legislators, urging them to support these bills.

- The **Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act**, SB20 and HB83: to close

significant gaps in current procedures for surrendering firearms by people legally prohibited from possessing them under domestic violence protective orders.

- The **Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act**, SB118 and HB197: to create a tax on firearm sales, with the revenue dedicated to a funding stream supporting violence prevention and survivor services, thus treating gun violence as the public health issue that it is.
- Reform of the **Handgun Roster** process (not yet introduced): to modernize the state's handgun approval process, assuring that decisions are transparent, efficient, and grounded in public safety and consumer protection.
- The **Machine Gun Convertible Pistols** bill, SB334 and HB577: to prohibit the manufacture, sale or transfer of any semi-automatic pistol that can be converted into a machine gun solely by the attachment of a small plastic switch.

Interested in more information about these bills? Go to the website of Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, [mdpgv.org](http://mdpgv.org), then click on the tab for Resources and you will find fact sheets on the first three bills listed above.

You may wonder about the most effective way to communicate with your state legislators. My opinion: first is face-to-face, second is a personal e-mail, third is a phone call, fourth is snail-mail, fifth is social media, sixth is a prewritten (i.e. by someone else) e-mail, seventh is a group petition.

– **Bob Tiller**

### Summary of the January Democratic Club Meeting

Brooke Lierman, the Comptroller of the state of Maryland, was the featured speaker at the January 21 meeting of the Riderwood Democratic Club.

Ms. Lierman, the first woman to be “independently elected to one of Maryland’s constitutional offices,” was elected in 2022 on a campaign promising “we all do better when we all do better.” She agreed that the state is in an “existential crisis” regarding revenue and the budget, and said that it is essential to make the government work better.

She noted that 21% of the Maryland workforce is foreign-born.

When she took office, she took the lead on the Earned Income Tax Credit initiative, reaching out to eligible residents to make sure they were aware of the program. She is advocating a program of Baby Bonds, and her office published a report on this proposal in December.

With tax season approaching, she reminded us that Maryland’s Office of Taxpayer Advocate is available to help us file our taxes or get answers to tax-related questions.



**Brooke Lierman with Bea Rodgers, Democratic Club President** (photo by Paula Einaudi)

### Opinion: Comments on the Environment

Annapolis’ Legislative session is in full motion, grappling with the realities of our major budget deficits. Both the Maryland Sierra Club and the Maryland League of Conservation Voters (LCV) are working diligently to not have some of the unhappy surprises of the 2025 session.

Every year the various environmental groups get together to decide their priorities for the environment. Both of my favorite activist groups are working on preserving and protecting the Strategic Energy Investment fund (SEIF).

Last year \$500 million was raided from it by the General Assembly to make up for their budget crisis. They oppose \$400M more that the Governor wants to further decimate the fund. It is the single largest non-taxpayer generated source of state revenue dedicated to conservation, clean energy, climate change and energy assistance. Its critical programs include energy efficiency grants, decarbonizing schools, clean energy rebates, community solar, electric

vehicle rebates and infrastructure, electric school buses and energy assistance.

Both organizations are also prioritizing the **Transportation and Climate Alignment Act**. Maryland's transportation sector continues to be the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and a leading contributor to our poor air quality. We need to invest in cleaner and more affordable energy, slashing tailpipe pollution, and bike paths.

Both also prioritize the **Cherish Our Communities Act** about cumulative harms to environmental restoration for improving our shared health. They also support Power Maryland Forward, which supports an affordable, reliable, fossil-free future for Maryland.

The Maryland Sierra Club is also prioritizing the Maryland Bottle Bill. About 5.5 billion beverage containers are sold in this state annually. The beverage container recycling refund and litter reduction program would create a container deposit program with a 10- or 15- cent refundable deposit on metal, glass and plastic beverage containers, depending on size. They expect at least a 90% recovery rate.

PLEASE EMAIL OR SNAIL MAIL TO YOUR DELEGATE AND SENATOR about several of these bills. Your legislators only know your wishes if you communicate with them. Their contact information is on the [Democratic Club page](#) of Riderwoodlife.com.

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

**NEEDED**  
**Your Vote for**  
**Democratic Club Board Members**

Voting will be held at the beginning of the February 18 general meeting at 2:00 PM.

Not only will you be treated to a lively discussion on the joys and perils your fellow Club Members experienced while running for elective office, but you will help guide the future of the Club in this most important year.

### Important Dates

Date	Subject	Location	Time
<b>Wednesday, February 18</b>	Annual Meeting of the Riderwood Democratic Club, featuring the election of Board of Directors and a panel discussion with Riderwood residents who have run for public office	Encore Theater	2:00 PM
<b>Friday, February 20</b>	Environmental Book Group discusses <b>A Sand County Almanac</b> by Aldo Leopold	LSC Card Room	1:00 PM

**RIDERWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB  
MEMBERSHIP DUES: 2026-2027**

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): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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OR

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\* 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!**