



Riderwood Dems

RIDERWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB NEWSLETTER

March, 2026

President's Corner

One of the highlights of last month's Democratic Club meeting was the annual election for the Club's Board of Directors. Patric O'Brien, Chair of the Nominating Committee, presented a slate of 15 nominees who were elected by acclamation. Officers were chosen at the first meeting of the new Board on March 4.

The new Club By-Laws provide for a 15-member Board, with terms of five Board members expiring every year, giving a possible full turnover of Board members every three years.

These are the new Board members and their current terms:

- Lee Finney - President - 3 years
- Bea Rodgers - Vice President with focus on Prince George's County - 2 years
- Patric O'Brien - Vice President with focus on Montgomery County - 3 years
- John Szabo - Secretary - 1 year
- Trudy Downs - Treasurer - 1 year
- Joanne Coen - 2 years
- Judith Dighe - 1 year
- Thea Fine - 3 years
- Tony Hauser - 3 years
- Bruce McConachie - 1 year
- Nancy Oppenheim - 2 years
- E. Anne Riley - 2 years
- John Scott - 3 years
- Jill Shindelman - 1 year
- Sarajane Siegfriedt - 2 years

At its next meeting the board will consider the formation and responsibilities of standing committees such as Membership, Governance, Communications, Programs, Environment and

Political Action. If you would like to volunteer for any of these committees at this point, please contact Lee Finney, leefinney43@gmail.com. More information about the standing committees and their functions will be in the next Newsletter.

Please watch for ongoing information about how to participate in 2026 election activities at every level of government.

A third NO KINGS DAY planned for March 28, 2026. Look for information about how to participate in local NO KINGS events in the **What You Can Do** report next week.

– Lee Finney

Anthony Brown, Maryland's Attorney General, to Join Us at March Meeting

In today's fraught political environment, Attorneys General across the country have been in the forefront of litigation to safeguard the rights of their residents against this second Trump Administration. To date, Democratic state attorneys general have filed over 300 lawsuits, targeting policies on immigration, environmental regulations, and funding.

However, the work of our State Attorneys General does not end there. They supervise the overall legal business of the state, advise government agencies, and protect public interests. They enforce consumer and civil rights protection, and securities laws; monitor juvenile justice activities; investigate police-involved deaths; ensure social and economic equity; and provide legal opinions to state officials. They work to secure the integrity and ethics of their State justice and legal systems, and to uphold the tenets of their State and federal Constitutions.

It's a big job and takes a special person to fill those shoes.

At **2:00 on Wednesday, March 18**, in the Encore Theater, we will have the opportunity to hear from Maryland's 47th Attorney General, Anthony Gregory Brown. He is the first African American to hold the position in State history, a man who has stepped into the job at a politically charged time and who has embraced the challenge as an opportunity.

He'll be discussing his current experiences in that job, and how his strengths as the State's chief legal advocate have been built on a history of public service, whether as a member of the US House of Representatives, Maryland's Lieutenant Governor, Vice Chairman of the Maryland House of Delegates Judiciary Committee and Majority Whip, a lawyer, or military JAG officer and soldier.

Our Attorney General and his office have been working to safeguard our democracy, our residents, our community, from our State's panhandle to the Eastern Shore and everything in between. In fewer than 10 months, Brown's office has filed or joined other Democrat-led states in 43 lawsuits against Trump administration actions and has filed or joined in about 70 legal briefs in support of lawsuits by others challenging administration policies. The lawsuits began the day after Trump's inauguration and have continued ever since, sometimes at a pace of several per week.

Among the suits against Trump's administration, which our Attorney General has either initiated or joined, many have focused on:

- *Immigration and detention*, including a suit to stop conversion of a Washington County warehouse into a 1500-bed ICE detention center.
- *Funding cuts*, such as challenging the termination of Congressionally mandated education, health services, energy and infrastructure funding.
- *Federal projects and appointments*, suing to stop redirection of funds from the Greenbelt FBI headquarters project and to halt changes to the vaccine schedule.
- *Civil Rights and Governance*, such as defending birthright citizenship at the Supreme Court and fighting against the dismantling of federal agencies like AmeriCorps

- *Environmental/Energy*, such as legal actions to challenge attempted freezes for offshore wind development
- *Consumer Protection*. Suing to prevent the defunding of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB).

Join us to hear how Attorney General Brown has been protecting Marylanders' rights under the law and our state and federal Constitutions, and in protecting our democracy. It should be a lively and informative presentation, followed by a Q&A session.

– **Thea Fine, Chair, Program Committee**

News from the Gun Violence Prevention Group

Crunch time is here. The Maryland General Assembly will be in session for only five more weeks this year, meaning we have limited time to push bills through to completion. If you want to have an impact, March is the month to contact your senators and delegates. Do not assume that they will do the right thing (or the wrong thing) – use your voice to tell them what you hope they will do.

Our legislature has a strong majority supporting sensible gun laws, but their attention is pulled in many directions by many issues. They need to hear from us about the pending gun violence prevention bills, so please contact your elected officials now and urge their support for 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, SB830 and HB 1339**, 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.

For more information about these bills, go to the [Resources](#) tab on the website of Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence.

– **Bob Tiller**

Summary of the February Democratic Club Meeting

In addition to being the annual meeting that included the election of the Riderwood Democratic Club Board of Directors, our February meeting featured a panel discussion with residents who had run for political office.

The panel was moderated by Lee Finney, who had run for Chair of the Board of Directors of Mendocino Coast Health Care District in 2022, and won.

Also on the stage were

- April Moore, who ran for State Senate in SW VA in 2015 and 2019
- Sandy Morse, who ran for MD District 14 House of Delegates in 1994
- Andy Schmookler, who ran for US House of Representatives on SW VA in 2012
- Sarajane Siegfriedt, who ran for Washington State House of Representatives in 2014

John Scott, who ran for the Iowa State Senate and won, was planning to join the panel but had to cancel at the last minute.

All the panelists agreed that among the challenges of running for office were raising money and interacting with potential voters.

Opinion: Comments on the Environment

POTOMAC DISASTER

Neglecting protection of our Potomac River is a shocking situation. Through the apparent neglect of needed repairs of nearby wastewater infrastructure a disastrous amount of pollution has entered the river and our Chesapeake Bay. A mere 6-foot stretch of sewer pipe called the Potomac Interceptor lost 243 million gallons. It has been called the worst sewage spill in American History! After two days, the University of Maryland School of Public Health researchers reported E. coli bacteria at 10,000 times above the federal limit. The bacteria that cause staph infections were also present.

It is particularly upsetting that inspectors had reported more than one segment was in danger of collapse prior to the actual collapse. It seemed to me that the situation was getting superficial coverage by TV and newspapers as if it was not important. That pharmaceuticals are present and harmful algae blooms are possible are just a few of the ramifications to be considered.

The repair to this section will not be completed for an unbelievable time frame. I'm sure that I do not appreciate the immense challenges but it seems reasonable that a magnificent effort could resolve it sooner if the political motivation were there from the involved parties.

KILLER METHANE

Colorado is now a global leader in methane reductions, proof that much can still be done at the state level in spite of this federal administration's repeated destructive environmental actions. Colorado is the country's fourth largest oil producing state. It requires gas and oil companies to find and repair leaks in many aspects of the condition of their well sites. According to the Environmental Defense Fund, this progress offers the opportunity to reduce air pollution and protect the health of our communities.

CHINA & US

China is the world's top polluter. In 2024, China accounted for 29% of greenhouse gas pollution, compared to the 11% contributed by the U.S, the second ranked nation. China continues to support the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, while this U.S. Administration no longer does. In 2025, China's Carbon emissions fell 0.3% but they recently seem to be prioritizing the development of green industries, rather than aggressive emissions curbs, says Bloomberg Green.

The GHOST of the U.S. GOVERNMENT

As of January, in total, government science agencies have had nearly 95,000 departures. The New York Times points out that not only have we lost billions of dollars of research and also institutional memory. These are among the things we were most famous for, but it will take decades to recover!

– **E. Anne Riley, Co-Chair,**

Democratic Environmental Committee

Opinion: The Data Center Controversy

A number of environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, are organizing to express concerns about the growing use of available land to build

data centers and to pass legislation that addresses data centers. The Maryland Data Centers Reform coalition was set up last year to work together for more responsible, equitable, and transparent data center development policies at a State level. Their priority bills are listed at <https://shorturl.at/XEfZZ>

The group will be holding a rally for data center reform in Annapolis on Wednesday, March 11. For more information, see

[https://actionnetwork.org/events/lobby-day-for-data-center-reform?source=direct link&](https://actionnetwork.org/events/lobby-day-for-data-center-reform?source=direct_link&)

I have a proposal to address data centers that has advantages over the above proposals. See <https://shorturl.at/eF4VO> . I welcome comments on my proposal.

– **Tony Hauser, Ph.D.**

Important Dates

Date	Subject	Location	Time
Wednesday, March 18	General Meeting of the Riderwood Democratic Club, featuring a conversation with Anthony Brown, Attorney General of Maryland	Encore Theater	2:00 PM
Friday, March 20	Environmental Book Group discusses <i>The Age of Deer: Trouble and Kinship with our Wild Neighbors</i> by Erika Howsare	LSC Card Room	1:00 PM
Saturday, March 28	Another No Kings Day - Reach out to Tony Hauser at Thausner@gmail.com for more information - See the <i>What You Can Do</i> newsletter for details on local events	Nationwide	All Day
Friday, April 3	Democratic Book Group discusses <i>Strongmen: Mussolini to the Present</i> by Ruth Ben-Ghiat	LSC Card Room	1:00 PM