



NORTH FOUR CORNERS NEWS

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Monarch Magic on Cavalier Drive

By Robin Loube

As you may have heard, milkweed is the essential and sole food of monarch butterfly caterpillars. And where there are black, white, and yellow striped monarch caterpillars, gorgeous orange and black butterflies may appear. But there are some critical—I call them magical—steps in between.

We grow lots of milkweed in our garden (it's easy to grow, by the way) and I had a delightful time last summer and fall observing (and sometimes, just trying to observe)

the stages of the monarch's incredible life process. I'd like to share what I saw with you. Perhaps you'll grow milkweed, too!

I only noticed one or two



Two monarch butterfly caterpillars eating milkweed.

monarch butterflies in our garden earlier last summer, but at least one of them must have laid her eggs on our milkweed plants because, lo and behold, in mid-August I counted at least 12 caterpillars that had hatched from the eggs and were munching away on milkweed leaves. The caterpillars chow down! They just about defoliated all the swamp milkweed plants in our garden.

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Next Meeting on Wed., 7 February

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 7 February 2024, at 7:30 p.m. **The meeting will be held in person at Forest Knolls Elementary School as well as virtually** (see access codes online).

Our speaker will be **Marlene Smith of the Xerces Society**, a nonprofit environmental group focusing on the conservation of butterflies, moths, bees and other pollinators. Smith will educate us on the wonders of monarchs, their life cycle and migrations, and the perils they face as a species (see article at left).

All residents of the Northwood-Four Corners-Forest Knolls area are invited to attend and express their views. Please note that only paid members of the NFCCA (see page 3) are eligible to vote. ■

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year!

We tried something new in December; instead of a business meeting, NFCCA hosted a Winter Wonderland Holiday Social. In addition to fun and games for the kids to enjoy, there was a collection box for food donations to Manna Food Center—wow, you all came through!

While I'm on the topic of holidays, the February General meeting will shift to the first Wednesday, 7 February, instead of Valentine's Day. Marlene Smith, from the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, will present material both on monarch butterflies and on supporting pollinators and biodiversity in general. Educational materials from her organization—as well as Wild Ones, a group that promotes native plantings, etc.—will also be made available.

So far for the 2023–2024 cycle, NFCCA has collected dues from 172 households, which is only 10% of the neighborhood. Last year we hit an all-time membership high of 276 households. To hit that goal again, please do your part. Use the QR code on page 2 (one year's dues only), or go to nfcca.org to pay your dues via Paypal (you can pay for multiple years at once this way), or bring a check to an NFCCA meeting or event, or mail/drop off a check to NFCCA Treasurer Sondra Katz at 10905 Lombardy Road.

Membership dues mainly pay for the newsletter you are reading. Other expenses include the cost of events NFCCA hosts for the neighborhood and subscriptions for the Montgomery County Civic Federation, our listserv, and Zoom.

There are two upcoming neighborhood events. A fundraiser, the Second Annual Chili Cook Off, will start at 3:00 p.m. on **Sunday, 3 March**, at Forest Knolls Elementary School. Last year this event collected over \$550 for NFCCA. A team is also planning another vine-cutting cleanup on **Saturday, 9 March**, at 1:00 p.m. along the creek on Lockridge Drive. Last year, 48 volunteers worked together to cut windows in nonnative, invasive vines from approximately 60 trees, and picked up a lot of trash as well. We hope a group of neighbors can participate again this year; it takes persistence to keep the weedy overgrowth in check. For further details on these events, check nfcca.org or upcoming posts on the NFCCA listserv (see how to sign up at right above).

Who knows how likely another snow storm might be, but I'd like to remind everyone that unshoveled sidewalks are much more than a simple inconvenience. Children need to get to school safely and cleared sidewalks allow us to enjoy our walkable community. Anyone interested in shoveling snow for extra money or just out of the goodness of your heart for elderly or physically challenged neighbors can post a message on the NFCCA listserv.

—Sharon Canavan

Communicate!

NFCCA Listserv

To join:

nfcca+subscribe@groups.io

[add "un" to unsubscribe]

To send messages to group:

nfcca@groups.io

Facebook: www.facebook.com/nfccamoco

NFCCA Deals!

Buy Nothing Forest Knolls/North

Four Corners/Woodmoor

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/517319962826076>

Compost Crew: 5-gal. @ \$22, 12-gal. @ \$29, compostcrew.com

Seasonal Roots: Sign up @ \$25, seasonalroots.com/nfcca

NORTH FOUR CORNERS NEWS

The *North Four Corners News* (formerly *Northwood News*) is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the 1,607 households in the area bounded by Colesville Road (Rte. 29), University Blvd. (Rte. 193), Caddington Avenue, and the Northwest Branch.

Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$15 per household and may be paid online, at any Association meeting, or mailed to the treasurer.

The *North Four Corners News* is published five times a year—in October, December, February, April, and June. To place an ad or discuss a story, please contact the editor.

Editor

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Visit Our Website
www.nfcca.org

Are You a Member This Year?

Belton (7/48, 14%) 109, 200, 201, 303, 307, 308, 428	Ladson (3/18, 16%) 302, 303, 315
Caddington (8/83, 9%) 810, 810, 901, 909, 913, 1203, 1302, 1308	Lockridge (2/31, 6%) 10607, 10706
Cavalier (9/53, 16%) 302, 303, 10601, 10603, 10607, 10701, 10703, 10707, 10803	Lombardy (6/88, 6%) 10900, 10904, 10905, 10911, 11013, 11108
Chiswell (9/39, 23%) 1005, 1014, 1019, 1023, 1025, 1104, 1110, 1112, 1118	Lorain (1/22, 4%) 10207
Colesville (0/22, 0%)	Loxford (10/135, 7%) 813, 816, 847, 901, 904, 927, 931, 1014, 1137, 1144
Dennis (4/40, 10%) 301, 308, 311, 500	Malta (6/45, 13%) 802, 808, 812, 813, 814, 906
Eastwood (8/54, 14%) 10310, 10417, 10425, 10427, 10617, 10619, 10627, 10831	Margate (13/50, 26%) 10608, 10614, 10615, 10701, 10708, 10801, 10808, 10819, 10820, 10822, 10827, 10828, 10831
Edgewood (9/72, 12%) 10213, 10216, 10217, 10306, 10400, 10405, 10514, 10707, 10712	Marvin (1/18, 5%) 314
Eisner (2/32, 6%) 412, 505	Mountain Quail (5/23, 21%) 10407, 10412, 10420, 10422, 10426
Foxglove (1/4, 25%) 11108	Northwood (3/13, 23%) 100, 115, 123
Glenwild (7/33, 21%) 10600, 10606, 10611, 10613, 10619, 10620, 10713	Ordway (3/26, 11%) 10608, 10615, 10703
Hannes (7/104, 6%) 100, 229, 236, 304, 326, 328, 403	Pinewood (3/13, 23%) 315, 317, 319
Irwin (3/31, 9%) 308, 314, 411	Playford (0/31, 0%)
Kerwin (2/42, 4%) 410, 502	Royalton (1/31, 3%) 405
Kinsman View (6/83, 7%) 3, 5, 39, 45, 107, 135	Snowy Owl (6/23, 26%) 100, 107, 113, 122, 125, 127
	Southwood (7/21, 33%) 107, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 136
	Sutherland (6/31, 19%) 10150, 10152, 10158, 10205, 10209, 10213
	Thistle (5/22, 22%) 208, 211, 215, 218, 220
	Timberwood (3/25, 12%) 310, 315, 317
	University (0/52, 0%)
	Whittington (1/15, 6%) 804
	Woodridge (5/13, 38%) 111, 115, 119, 124, 130
	The Oaks (1/121, 0.8%): 136
	TOTAL: 172/1,607, 10% ■

PAY DUES HERE



NFCCA BOARD

The Board of Directors for the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association serves for one year and meets every month except July and August. Current officers (until October 2025) are:

President

Sharon Canavan
10213 Edgewood Avenue
240.281.3911
president AT nfcca DOT org

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**Pending approval by member vote at 7 February meeting*

WWW.NFCCA.ORG

Monarch Magic

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

However, their numbers diminished quickly. Where had all the caterpillars gone? Had they all been eaten by ants, spiders, wasps, birds? That would have been its own contribution to our natural ecosystem. But I was hoping at least a few had hidden themselves nearby to enter their next stage of development—forming a chrysalis, from which an adult monarch would emerge. I saw nothing, and wondered. Had all that serious munching come to naught?

Then, on 20 September, walking the pup, I glanced at our tiny sweetbay magnolia tree, and there, attached to the underside of a large leaf, a caterpillar hung in the shape of a J. The telltale J indicates the caterpillar is on the way to becoming a chrysalis.

Thrilled, I took Barkley around the block, returned to the little tree and stared. I wanted to watch the chrysalis as it formed. But no luck. I returned a few times later that morning. Zip.

We needed groceries, so I headed to the Giant. Upon my return, voila! In the time it took to drive to White Oak, shop, and bring the bananas and eggs home, the J caterpillar had transformed itself into a pendulous green jewel bedecked with a row of tiny gold pearls. A monarch butterfly chrysalis. Wow!

I watched and waited. Online sources say typically the butterfly will emerge (it's officially called "eclosing") in 10 days to two weeks. By 1

October, nothing had changed with that chrysalis, but the milkweed continued to provide entertainment and wonder. Two other chrysalises appeared, attached to wire fences surrounding the garden, and a friend discovered a newly emerged monarch butterfly in a different flower bed. I hadn't even noticed the chrysalis for that one, hidden as it had been under the leaves of a coneflower plant. Wonderful!

Meanwhile, on 14 October, three and a half weeks from the day of its appearance—the cool weather may have delayed its development—the first chrysalis in the little tree turned black, or at least it looked black from a distance. Up close, you could see through a milky white outer layer of the chrysalis, the folded orange and black wings of the butterfly inside. I knew the butterfly itself would appear any day now. Of course, I wanted to watch as it emerged.

OK, I missed that event, too. On the 16th, I headed out to the garden and checked out the black chrysalis, still hanging there. After weeding a little while and chatting with a friend, I picked up my tools and checked out the chrysalis again. There she was! The monarch had emerged while I was weeding. (I say "she" advisedly, because I have learned that male monarchs have a black dot on their hind wings, and she had no such dot.)

Her wings hung limp, her proboscis curled and uncurled. Perhaps I could watch her take her first flight when she was ready?



Robin Loube

The chrysalis.

The next morning, there she was, still hanging. Was she dead? No! I returned from an exercise class to find that she had moved from one twig to another in the little magnolia. That was so heartening. A couple of hours later, I looked for her again, but didn't see her. I guessed I had missed her first flight. Then I noticed her nearby on a nodding onion plant. I watched her walking around in the dirt. Would she fly? Should I do something to help?

I put a pot of blooming flowers near her, thinking perhaps she needed to drink nectar from the flowers. Using a large dried leaf and a dry stem, I placed her gently on the flowers. She moved around, but she did not drink nectar. Nor did she fly.

I picked up the pot of flowers topped by Madame Butterfly, put it in the sun, and sat down to watch. Very very soon, touched by the sun, she fluttered her wings. She fluttered and she flew, up and away. I had witnessed her first flight. Did she find enough nectar plants to fuel a long migration? Is she wintering in Mexico? I hope so!

[Loube, a Montgomery County Master Gardener, has lived on Cavalier Drive for 34 years. More pix online.] ■

Lockridge Creek Cleanup 9 March

Time once again for a neighborhood effort to cut the nonnative, invasive vines (especially English ivy and porcelainberry) on the creek on Lockridge Drive. This event will take place Saturday, 9 March 2024, from 1 to 3 p.m. (rain date on Sunday, 10 March, same time). We'll meet at the bandalong trash trap (Lockridge Drive and Belton Road) at 1 p.m. (orientation first) and work our way to Dennis Avenue.

Wear long pants that cover your ankles, long sleeves, and

sturdy, closed-toed shoes or boots. Dress for the weather; it will be chilly. Wear gloves! Bring loppers and/or hand pruners if you have them; a few tools will also be made available. No power tools or machetes are allowed. Please email susan@nfcca.org so we can get an accurate headcount for the food and drinks afterward. Bring your own reusable water bottle.

Note: We are all volunteers and this activity is at your own risk. See more details online. ■

Second Annual Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser

NFCCA will hold its second Chili Cook-Off to raise funds. But we need our cooks, aka the "Chili Masters," as much as we need our tasters. The event will be held on Sunday, 3 March 2024, from 3–5 p.m. at Forest Knolls School. We are looking for neighbors who would like to bring their homemade chili to the NFCCA's Second Chili Cook-Off. Contact chili@nfcca.org to sign up to participate as a Chili Master.

Tickets will be sold for those who want to taste and vote! Plenty of more details to come so be on the lookout for upcoming announcements via the listserv, on our website, www.nfcca.org, or Facebook page. We hope to make our Second Chili Cook-Off a fun and delicious time for all. ■

Segunda Competencia de Cocina de Chili

NFCCA celebrará su segundo Chili Cook-Off para recaudar fondos. Pero necesitamos a nuestros cocineros o "Chili Masters," tanto como también necesitamos a nuestros degustadores. El evento se llevará a cabo el domingo 3 de marzo de 2024, de 3 a 5 p.m. en la escuela Forest Knolls. Estamos buscando vecinos a quienes les gustaría traer su chili casero al segundo concurso de cocina de chili de la NFCCA. Comuníquese con chili@nfcca.org para registrarse y participar como Chili Master.

Hay muchos más detalles por venir, así que esté atento a los próximos anuncios en el listserv y en nuestra página de Facebook (ver página 2). Esperamos que nuestro segundo Chili Cook-Off sea un evento divertido y delicioso para todos. ■

Walkway Clean-Up 16 December

Seven people (and one dog) cleared the area between Hannes St. and University Blvd., as well as the walkway between Whittington Terrace and the Luther Rice Church parking lot. Thanks to Melissa Ferguson (Hannes St.) who came up with the idea and arranged the clean-up date. ■



Photos by Diane Jankels

Dance School in the Neighborhood

By Frances Spiegel

Don't be confused by its name. P.O.M. Squad (Positive Outcome Mentoring and Dance), located upstairs at 10126 Colesville Road, is a dance school. Owner and founder Latasha Casey, a former NFL cheerleader with a B.A. in Dance, founded the school ten years ago seeking to provide a positive environment for students to learn dance.

Growing from an after school program at a local elementary school, P.O.M. offers dance classes for toddlers through teens, a performance team, a competition team, as well as full-day and half-day summer camp. Officially, the classes start at age three with

a preschool fusion class called "pombo," a mix of jazz and ballet; however, P.O.M. will take students as young as two years old if they are able to participate.

Casey admits that the dance school's name does sometimes create confusion. This is not a cheerleading organization and, while pre-pandemic there was a more formal mentoring aspect to the program, currently the main focus of the studio is dance instruction. Positivity continues to be a cornerstone of the school's instructional philosophy. Casey takes high-school-aged dancers to visit college dance programs and positive affirmations are integrated into the classes.



P.O.M. took over the upstairs area on Colesville Road near the Pub in October 2021, after the space was vacated by the ballet school that was there for many years. There are two large dance studios in the suite, as well as a waiting room for parents. P.O.M. offers free trial classes for new students. Reach out to P.O.M. at enroll@thepomsquad.org.

[Spiegel has lived on Margate Road 8½ years and grew up in Four Corners.] ■

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Dec. Meeting Was a Winter Social



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for more photos of the fun!



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