

NORTH FOUR CORNERS NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ DECEMBER 2024

Winter Wonderland Holiday Social

Get into the holiday spirit at the NFCCA Winter Wonderland Holiday Social from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. on Wednesday, 11 December, at the Forest Knolls Elementary School (10830 Eastwood Avenue). This event replaces NFCCA's December general meeting.

Come meet and mingle with your neighbors! Bring sweets or appetizers to share. Water and sodas will be provided, but no alcohol is permitted on school grounds.

There will be activities for kids, music, and a holiday

market with vendors selling their arts and crafts. Sign up to show your wares at the holiday market for a nominal fee of \$10 (see nfcca.org for further details or to rent a table).

In the giving spirit of the holiday season, there will be a Food Collection Box for Silver Spring based Manna Food Center, which encourages healthy eating choices. The most needed foods include instant brown rice, whole grain pasta, canned tuna, salmon, or chicken packed in water, dry or canned beans, canned vegetables or fruit, shelf-stable milk boxes, cooking oil, spices, instant formula and baby foods. Low-sodium products are preferred. Manna does not provide goods such as soda, cakes, cookies, or candy to their customers.

If you have decorated your home for the holidays with festive lights, etc., and want a photo posted on our community Facebook page, send your photo to ipp@nfcca.org. Include your address in the email to add your home to the **NFCCA Holiday map**, which will be posted to the listserv and available on our website to make it easy for everyone to take a self-guided walk or drive through the neighborhood to see holiday decorations. ■

Next Meeting on Wed., 11 Dec.

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 11 December 2024, at 7:30 p.m. ***The meeting will be held only in person at Forest Knolls Elementary School; there will be no virtual session.***

In lieu of our usual meeting, we will hold our second "Winter Wonderland Holiday Social" (story at left)! Lots of activities for kids, lots of yummy treats, so get into the spirit of the season with us!

All residents of the Northwood-Four Corners-Forest Knolls area are invited to attend. We very kindly ask that you pay your annual dues of \$15 per household, which may be paid at the meeting or online. See a list of members current as of press time on page 7. Please support us! ■

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DECEMBER

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm pleased to report on the October election results for NFCCA's Officers and Board members. We have a new At Large Board member, Richard (Ricky) Fitzpatrick, who lives on Hannes Street. The rest of NFCCA's Officers and At Large Board members are continuing in their previous positions.

I would like to remind everyone about the beginning of the 2024–2025 NFCCA dues cycle. In 2023–2024, NFCCA had 251 paid memberships, near our all-time high of 267 member households. To date for 2024–2025 we've received dues from 190 households (see page 7)—a good start, so join up if you haven't already done so. NFCCA annual membership only costs \$15 per household.

The blizzard of planning proposals that our neighborhood is facing will affect us for decades to come. Reminds me of the head-spinning action in that movie *Everything Everywhere All at Once!* Read the article on page 8 that takes a stab at summarizing the various housing and transportation-related planning initiatives that are underway.

In past General Meetings, NFCCA has invited speakers to answer your questions and hear your views on these proposals. Also, *North Four Corners News* articles are a good resource to re-read if you need to brush up on the details. Our listserv discussion threads reflect comments that oppose the changes these planning initiatives would bring to our neighborhood, while other community members defend the potential benefits of more affordable housing types and a safer walkable/bikeable community with convenient public transportation.

My goal as NFCCA President is to craft a fair process to hear the concerns we as a community have and, ultimately, develop a formal policy that reflects a consensus position that NFCCA can transmit to the Planning Board and the County Council as they continue their deliberations. Three Steering Committees are developing a position and strategy for responding to these proposals: (1) Housing Issues, (2) Traffic and Transportation Issues, and (3) Education and Outreach. If you are interested in participating on a Steering Committee, please contact *president AT nfcca DOT org*.

Real-time communication is key at this point, so NFCCA is creating a dedicated webpage titled "MoCo Planning" located on the top banner of our *nfcca.org* website. This webpage will be updated with current information about these initiatives and our policy development process. The webpage will also include information about timing of the various initiatives and contact information to send your own thoughts and comments to the Planning Board and Council members responsible for making these important decisions.

On a much lighter note, NFCCA is hosting a Holiday Social on Wednesday, 11 December (for further details, see the article on page one in this newsletter or go to *nfcca.org*).

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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](https://www.compostcrew.com)

Seasonal Roots: Sign up @ \$25, [seasonalroots.com/nfcca](https://www.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 1,606 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

Jacquie Bokow
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Visit Our Website
www.nfcca.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

Have some fun, bring your kids for games and treats, meet your neighbors, and come prepared to chat with the NFCCA Officers and Board about your thoughts and ideas for next year!

—Sharon Canavan

NFCCA Dues

Online Payment ★ Check ★ Cash

Mail your \$15 annual dues, check payable to “NFCCA,” to Treasurer Sondra Katz at 10905 Lombardy Road. *Please don't mail cash.*

No stamps? Hand-deliver your check or cash to the mailbox at the Treasurer's home. Or, at one of our meetings or events, give your dues payment to any NFCCA Board member. Or, arrange for a Board member to pick up your payment by calling *North Four Corners News* Editor Jacquie Bokow (landline 301.593.8566).

Pay online at nfcca.org or use the QR code below. Online payments via PayPal can be made by debit card, credit card, or a transfer from a PayPal account.

PAY DUES HERE



How Does MCPL Stack Up in U.S.?

By Jacquie Bokow

Using 2022 data compiled by the Institute of Museum and Library Services from all the public library systems in the U.S. and analyzed by *The Washington Post*, we can compare our own Montgomery County Public Library (MCPL) system with those across the nation.

By expenditures, MCPL is 55th of the 9,030 library systems surveyed, but in number of visits (2.54M), it's 18th (D.C. is 19th). The New York Public Library is #1 in visits (9.258M).

In electronic audiobook collections, Clark County, Ohio, Public Library (15.38M) is #1. MoCo ranks 1,280th. I guess few of us listen to audiobooks.

In Ebook collections, MCPL ranks 1,342nd, one less than the Mesa (Ariz.) Public Library, which has only three libraries compared to MoCo's 21. Mesa has one-fifth the number of visits MCPL has, so I presume it's easier to download than visit in person. Plus their population size is one-third of our County's.

In number of books in MCPL's collection, MCPL ranks 25th; NYPL is again first, with 24.5M volumes. (New York also has 94 libraries and 3.6M in population, three times MoCo's.)

In electronic circulation, Los Angeles PL is first with 12.4M, we a paltry 2.4M, 37th in rank, right behind D.C.

In circulation of physical books, MCPL ranks 15th

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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
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978.502.4412
john AT nfcca DOT org

Immediate Past President

Mario “Ema” Perez
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703.400.9560
ipp AT nfcca DOT org

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MCPL Statistics

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

(6,937,916), right behind Baltimore County PL (6,953,650) even though BCPL serves a population of 827,370 and MoCo 1,032,963. They have 19 libraries to our 21, but they spend more (\$45.6M to MoCo's \$38.7M). Since MCPL patrons have access to BCPL books through the State-wide InterLibrary Loan program,

however, perhaps that doesn't matter.

Top readers seem to be in Cincinnati and Hamilton County (Ohio), where their 41 libraries circulate 12.7M books to a population of only 830,062. (New York PL is only 7th here, circulating 3M fewer books than Cincinnati despite the latter having less than half the number of libraries—41 to 94.)

But the Jessie Wakefield Memorial Library in Port Li-

ons, Alaska, serves a population of 169 yet circulates 5,252 books per year from its collection of 10,702 books.

Round Top (Tex.) Family Library, with only one library and serving a population of 93, loans 4,708 books a year from its collection of 9,901 books, plus 27,863 eBooks. That's 50 books per person a year! How many books do you read annually?

[Find more of this story at nfcca.org.] ■

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GET TO KNOW US BETTER:

I'm Deren Blessman. As Realtors, my wife Jeni and I study the market regularly for our real estate business and to monitor the values of our own home on Malta Lane.

As fall is in full swing and the holidays are approaching, we are navigating an interesting real estate market, as well as enjoying our neighborhood trails and parks with Bader and Kobe.

(Pictured here this spring at the Northwood HS track before it closed ☺)

If you have any real estate questions or concerns, or need to sell or buy a home in Maryland, D.C., or Virginia, **The Blessman Team with Keller Williams** has YOU covered with over 35 years collectively in the business!

Give us a call, text, or email:

Deren (retUSAF) | MD & DC | 240-793-2794 | dblessman@kw.com
Jeni | VA | 571-437-5656 | jblessman@kw.com



SEE YOU IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD!

NFCCA Members for 2024–2025 as of 21 November

Belton Road & Court (6/48, 12%)
107, 109, 201, 300, 307, 428

Caddington Avenue (4/83, 4%)
827, 901, 1203, 1302

Cavalier Drive & Court (7/53, 13%)
302, 10601, 10602, 10603,
10703, 10713, 10723

Chiswell Lane (8/39, 20%)
1000, 1012, 1023, 1025, 1108,
1019, 1110, 1112

Colesville Road (1/22, 4%)
10216

Dennis Avenue & Court (7/40, 17%)
301, 308, 311, 402, 421, 500,
510

Eastwood Avenue (9/54, 16%)
10304, 10405, 10417, 10425,
10427, 10611, 10619, 10621,
10831

Edgewood Avenue (13/72, 18%)
10213, 10216, 10226, 10301,
10306, 10400, 10405, 10408,
10428, 10607, 10707, 10712,
10831

Eisner Street (2/32, 6%)
404, 416

Foxglove Lane (1/4, 25%)
11108

Glenwild Road & Court (9/33, 27%)
10600, 10606, 10610, 10611,
10613, 10617, 10619, 10620,
10711

Hannes Street & Court (6/104, 5%)
100, 209, 229, 236, 326, 403

PAY DUES AT [NFCCA.ORG/JOIN.HTML](https://nfcca.org/join.html)

Irwin Street (2/31, 6%)
314, 405

Kerwin Road & Court (3/42, 7%)
410, 502, 508

Kinsman View Circle (6/83, 7%)
3, 5, 39, 45, 107, 139

Ladson Road (2/18, 11%)
302, 312

Lockridge Drive (4/31, 12%)
10602, 10607, 10706, 10707

Lombardy Road & Court (11/88, 12%)
10625, 10700, 10815, 10816,
10900, 10903, 10905, 10911,
11013, 11019, 11207

Lorain Avenue (2/22, 9%)
10108, 10206

Loxford Terrace (13/135, 9%)
816, 826, 847, 913, 915, 920,
921, 931, 1009, 1023, 1137,
1144, 1145

Malta Lane (5/45, 11%)
802, 812, 814, 904, 924

Margate Road (17/50, 34%)
10608, 10610, 10612, 10614,
10615, 10708, 10710, 10711,
10801, 10808, 10811, 10822,
10827, 10828, 10829, 10831,
10833

Marvin Road (2/18, 11%)
300, 314

Mountain Quail Road (4/23, 17%)
10407, 10420, 10426, 10428

Northwood Avenue (2/13, 15%)
100, 107

Ordway Drive (4/26, 15%)
10608, 10611, 10702, 10705

Pinewood Avenue (6/13, 46%)
301, 305, 317, 319, 322, 324

Playford Lane (0/31, 0%)

Royalton Road & Court (2/31, 6%)
405, 414

Snowy Owl Drive (5/23, 21%)
100, 113, 121, 122, 125

Southwood Avenue (4/21, 19%)
113, 114, 115, 136

Sutherland Road (4/31, 12%)
10147, 10148, 10209, 10213

Thistle Drive & Court (4/22, 18%)
203, 208, 214, 220

Timberwood Avenue (9/25, 36%)
202, 208, 303, 304, 309, 311,
313, 315, 317

University Boulevard W. (2/52, 3%)
321, Apt. 116; 321, Apt. 136

Whittington Terrace (1/15, 6%)
803

Woodridge Avenue (3/13, 23%)
115, 119, 130

Total 190/1606, 11%



Zoning, Transportation Issues Progressing

By Sharon Canavan

The Montgomery County Planning Board directed planning agency staff to develop a Working Draft Plan for the University Boulevard Corridor Plan (UBCP) at a 31 October hearing. Although the UBCP covers the entire area along University Boulevard from the I-495 exit east of Woodmoor to Amherst Avenue in Wheaton, this article focuses on how the plan's proposals could affect traffic flow, transportation, housing, and commercial redevelopment in our NFCCA neighborhood.

Upzoning Housing

The UBCP recommends upzoning over 200 single-family homes in the NFCCA community to allow higher density housing redevelopment. The Planning Board's goal is to "expand housing options and unit types for residents at different stages of life and at different price points." The recommendations are also designed to promote denser transportation-oriented redevelopment near the projected Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stops along University Boulevard at Arcola and Dennis Avenues, as well as the Four Corners intersection. To be clear, the UBCP does not propose that the County redevelop properties. The decision to redevelop one's own property or to sell to a redeveloper is solely up to a landowner.

The UBCP recommends upzoning for specified R-60 single-family blocks to Commercial Residential Neighbor-



hood (CRN), which will allow different dwelling types, such as duplexes or triplexes, up to 50' high. Within 500 feet of University Blvd. or Colesville Rd., a quadplex is permissible. Currently, height limits in an R-60 zone range from 30' (up to the mean height level of attic space) to 35' (flat roof). Redevelopment for eligible types of multi-unit dwellings is "by-right," which reduces the approval steps before construction can begin to submission of a building permit and sketch plan, rather than

having to seek a variance from the Planning Board as current single-family zoning requires.

The CRN recommendation in our NFCCA area limits the maximum square footage of a building to one times lot size; for example, if a lot is 1,800 square feet, a redeveloper could build a 3-story multi-unit building with a 600-square-foot footprint or a duplex with 900-square-foot units. The UBCP recommendation does not allow commercial use for CRN-

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Zoning, UBCP

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

designated properties in the NFCCA area.

Commercial Residential Town (CRT)

Closer to the Four Corners “Town Center” intersection, the UBCP calls for denser CRT zoning with varying proportions of commercial and residential mixed-use redevelopment rising up to 60’–75’ high. CRT is proposed for properties with frontage on University Blvd. from Lorain Ave. to Lexington Dr., including properties in the median “island” dividing University Blvd. Religious institution properties located on University Blvd. nearer to Arcola are also CRT-zoned, with redevelopment primarily as multi-family residential with limited commercial use.

Attainable Housing

In a separate workstream, the County Council is beginning consideration of the Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative (AHSI), which proposes upzoning for redevelopment “by right” for more than 80% of the single-family residential properties in Montgomery County. AHSI also envisions denser housing redevelopment at medium-scale (quadplex, stacked flats, and small multifamily up to 19 units) and large-scale mixed use housing/commercial redevelopment in certain other areas. (See the October 2024 newsletter article explaining “How the CC’s Attainable Housing Strategies Proposal Will Affect Us.”)

The County Council con-

ducted a series of public Listening Sessions on the AHSI and met on 19 November to be briefed on the public’s views. At this writing, the timeline for further Council consideration of the AHSI and accompanying zoning text amendments is not clear.

Parking Issues

In the neighborhood within ¼ mile of the FLASH bus stop on US 29/Colesville, redevelopers will not be required to provide any parking spaces. (See the April 2024 newsletter article, “Parking Requirements Reduced Near Public Transportation by CC.”) BRT on University Blvd. is not yet funded, so the UBCP will not change the current parking requirements (one or two spaces per unit depending on number of bedrooms). Depending on the availability of on-street parking, AHSI recommends reducing or eliminating parking requirements for redeveloped residential properties.

For properties that front onto University Blvd., the planning agency would like to require redevelopers to consolidate or relocate driveways to side streets or alleys and limit future driveways that can be directly accessed from University Blvd.

Transportation

On University Boulevard, the UBCP envisions a Dedicated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Lane, widening sidewalk pathways for walking and biking, and consideration of options to change how traffic flows through the complex Four Corners intersection with US

29/Colesville Rd.

At the UBCP Transportation Workshop on 25 September, planning staff described two alternative traffic routing scenarios near the Four Corners intersection at University Blvd. and Colesville Rd: Limited Change and Street Grid. A pedestrian/multimodal (bike, scooter, etc.) lane in each direction is recommended for both scenarios.

The Limited Change scenario has three traffic lanes in each direction, with buses running in mixed traffic. The Street Grid scenario envisions extending Gilmoure street in South Four Corners for use as a local street. The Street Grid scenario would eliminate the current “jug handles” and incorporate a grid pattern of cross streets from South Four Corners and Blair High to Northwood and Woodmoor. There is strong opposition to this second scenario from South Four Corners Civic Association.

At the 31 October Planning Board hearing, planning staff recommended limiting University Blvd. to three lanes in each direction with buses traveling in mixed traffic, while studying a longer-term approach to be unveiled in the future. Several Planning Board Commissioners questioned this “interim solution” and asked planning staff to submit a more workable reconfiguration of the Four Corners intersection in their Working Draft, adding that the current confusing traffic pattern contributes to accidents.

In another workstream

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

Zoning, UBCP

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

focused on U.S. 29/Colesville Rd., the engineering design for a Dedicated BRT Lane for the FLASH bus is well underway. Currently, the engineering plan will install a curbed busway (which will restrict access/egress to and from our community by blocking turns at Lorain) and reduces roadway on Colesville to construct a two-lane wide FLASH bus stop in the middle of Colesville Rd. between the church building and 7-Eleven.

Next UBCP Steps

The Planning Board directed staff to develop a Working Draft; the timeline for finishing this step is Fall 2024. After the Working Draft is complete, the Planning Board will hold a hearing in Winter 2025 and there will be an opportunity for the

public to testify or send statements or letters expressing their views. If the Planning Board directs the staff to make adjustments, those will be made before a Draft UBCP is sent to the County Council for work sessions in Spring 2025.

Then the Council will hold a public hearing, where public testimony, statements, and letters can be submitted. The timeline for this step is Summer 2025. When the Council concludes its hearing process, its vote on the UBCP as a Master Plan Amendment will incorporate zoning changes and does not need further adoption by Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA).

NFCCA Policy on UBCP

NFCCA has no policy positions on the UBCP and AHSI. There are differing views in our community on the UBCP proposal as well as AHSI. **Three Steering**

Committees will be established to begin developing a position and strategy for responding to these proposals: (1) Housing Issues, (2) Traffic and Transportation Issues, and (3) Education and Outreach. If you are interested in participating on a Steering Committee, please contact president@nfcca.org.

The best way to stay abreast of these fast-moving developments is to go to NFCCA's dedicated webpage titled "MoCo Planning" located on the top banner of our nfcca.org website. This webpage will be updated with current information about these initiatives, our process for developing NFCCA's policy, and contact information to submit your own views to the agencies and Council members responsible for making these important decisions. ■

A festive poster for the NFCCA Holiday Social. The background is light blue with white snowflakes and bokeh lights. The title "NFCCA Holiday Social" is in a large, black, serif font. Below it, "Winter" is written in a blue cursive script, and "WONDERLAND" is in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The event details are listed on the left: "Wednesday, December 11", "7:30 to 9 pm", and "Forest Knolls ES". On the right, there is a bulleted list of activities: "Kids Activities", "Holiday Market", and "Refreshments".

NFCCA Holiday Social

Winter
WONDERLAND

Wednesday, December 11
7:30 to 9 pm
Forest Knolls ES

- Kids Activities
- Holiday Market
- Refreshments

The Long-Gone Four Corners Citizens Association

By Jacquie Bokow

While dropping off an NFCCA Welcome Kit to them on Cavalier Drive, new neighborhood residents Nicholas and Elizabeth Dragonette were excited to pass on to me a box they'd found in the attic of their new home. In it was some sort of mimeograph or stencil machine. With it was an "Instructions" booklet (which crumbled more every time I touched it), an envelope containing unused "Duplicator Pads No. 4278," and—the reason it came to me—a copy of the front page of the June 1958 "Four Corners Citizen," the newsletter of the Four Corners Citizens Association, which must have been the last item printed on it. Since I'm the editor of the current neighborhood newsletter, they thought I might be interested.

That house was built in 1955 and, according to the newsletter nameplate, the original home owner, Milton E. Abramson, was president of the FCCA from 1957-1958 and the newsletter editor. I imagine the machine has been



The mimeograph machine, FCC newsletter front page, ink pads, and instruction booklet were in great shape until I started touching them!

in that attic since 1958.

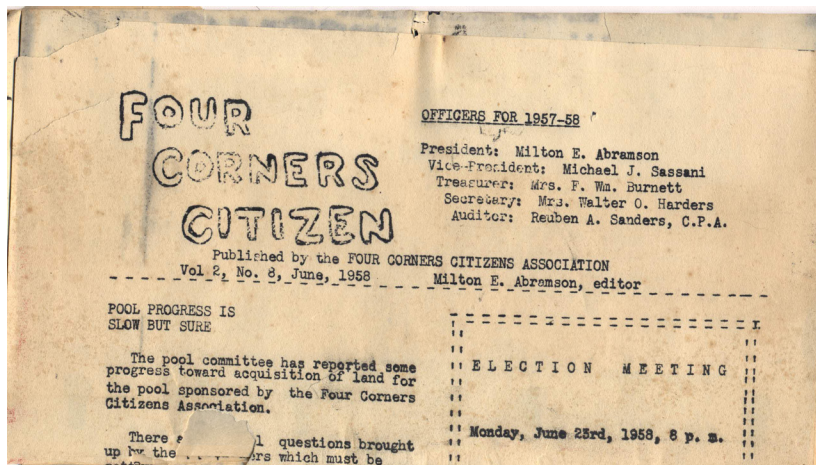
In September, I contacted Montgomery History (formerly the Montgomery Historical Society) to ask if they could tell me anything about the Four Corners Citizens Association or its newsletter. As far as I can tell, the FCCA no longer exists. In the past, "citizens" association tended to be code for an organization for Whites; "civic" associations were subsequently set up by People of Color excluded from membership. This neighborhood, remember, used to have a covenant restricting it

to Whites only, racist housing discrimination common throughout the United States. (See "Guarded by Protecting Restrictions": The Color of Law in the Four Corners Subdivisions of Silver Spring," a June 2021 "History Corner(s)" column by Ken Hawkins on our website.)

Despite numerous emails sent, Sarah Hedlund, the Montgomery History librarian/archivist, never got back to me about the FCCA.

I hated to just throw out the mimeograph machine, which was in near-perfect condition despite the crumbling box it was in, but what could be done with it? I contacted the Smithsonian Institution and exchanged several emails with Joan Boudreau, the Curator of the Graphic Arts Collection at the National Museum of American History, but—once I sent photographs—it seems they already have something similar.

In September, I asked Montgomery History if they'd be interested in receiving this relic. Sammie Hatton, the Montgomery History Director of Collections, said their Collections Committee had to make the call. That group finally met later that month and "were excited to see the mimeograph," she wrote. They voted to accept it and the other materials I had. Sammie came by and picked everything up. So perhaps someone will look at it there some day and be astonished that that's how neighborhood newsletters were printed "in the olden days"!



The crumbling front page of the June 1958 'Four Corners Citizen.'



HOLLY M. BECK, D.P.M.

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