

NORTH FOUR CORNERS NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ FEBRUARY 2026

Save the Date: NFCCA Chili and Curry Cook-Off is on 22 February

Get ready! One of neighborhood's most anticipated events is coming up fast! Mark your calendars for the NFCCA 2026 Chili & Curry Cook-Off, happening Sunday, 22 February 2026, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. in the All-Purpose Room at Forest Knolls Elementary School (10830 Eastwood Avenue). This community tradition returns with an exciting lineup of chili and curry dishes, friendly competition, and fun for all ages.



SIGN UP TO COOK OR VOLUNTEER HERE

Everyone is welcome!

We're looking for chili and curry masters to make this tasty competition possible. Whether you have a signature recipe, love to cook, or just want to share food and fun with your neighbors, this is your moment. Bonus: there are prizes!

Last year, we had nearly 15 chili and curry masters, including The Trini Crew's Curried Chicken with Dumplings by Antoinette Ramdath, the fan favorite. The J Smith Squared team took home two wins, with Julie Smith's chili and Jaclyn Smith's curry dish. Will the reigning champions hold their titles, or will a new cook rise to the top? The stakes are high ... and delicious.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Next Meeting On 11 February

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 11 February 2026, at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in person at Forest Knolls Elementary School as well as virtually.

To find the access codes for the online meeting, go to the NFCCA website at www.nfcca.org; the codes will be posted the week of the meeting. This meeting will be an open forum to discuss events and projects in the upcoming year, and to vote on changing the name of the NFCCA.

All residents of the North Four Corners-Forest Knolls area are invited to attend and express their views. Only paid members of the NFCCA are eligible to vote. Annual dues (\$15 per household) may be paid at the meeting or online. Please support *your* civic association! ■

INSIDE

- Thanks to all NFCN Deliverers3
- Wazzup?.....4
- Lockridge Creek Vine-Cutting Cleanup 7 March5
- US29 BRT Phase 2 CIP Funding ...7
- Another Author in the Neighborhood Asks: Who Sits at Your Kitchen Table?.....9
- Proper Shoveling Technique10
- Free Printing at Public Library....10
- Winter Social Photos.....12
- 13 Rules to Protect Yourself While Protesting14

FEBRUARY						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
S	M	T	W	T	F	S

WWW.NFCCA.ORG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year!

Our Third Annual Winter Holiday Social was a blast. We had balloon shapers, carolers, games, and treats. Thanks go out to all of our Hot Chocolate competitors and participating vendors who helped raise \$419 for the NFCCA, and we also collected food donations for Manna Food Center. A big round of applause to everyone who made this event such a success!

In December NFCCA also participated in a campaign to raise donations for the Capital Area Food Bank. Our Community Cares Campaign met our \$5,000 target goal, attracted 46 donors from our neighborhood, and came in 5th out of 17 participating teams. The generosity of our neighbors is one of the features that makes our community such a fantastic place to live.

NFCCA has just started the 2025–2026 dues cycle. So far, NFCCA has collected dues from 126 households, compared to last year's total membership of 282 households. Your dues mainly go to pay for the newsletter you are reading. Other expenses include the cost of events NFCCA hosts for the neighborhood, our listserv and website, and Zoom. The box on the next page explains how to pay your dues.

NFCCA's next General Meeting is on Wednesday, 11 February, at 7:30 p.m. at the Forest Knolls Elementary School and we will have an Open Forum to discuss your thoughts and ideas for events and projects in the upcoming year. We will also be voting on a resolution to change the name of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association to North Four Corners Civic Association. Voting is limited strictly to NFCCA members.

This potential name change was discussed by attendees at the October 2025 meeting, but the vote was not finalized pending review of our bylaws requirements. The December issue of *North Four Corners News* described our bylaws requirements. Pro and Con arguments regarding this potential change were discussed in a previous newsletter article at nfcca.org/news/nn201302i.html.

NFCCA is also still one Board member short. Some of our current Board members are contemplating retirement moves and we need a succession plan to make this transition go smoothly. Everyone is busy with work and family, but serving on the NFCCA Board doesn't have to be a heavy lift. You can choose to concentrate on an area or on an issue that is of particular interest. Become more engaged by running yourself or nominate someone you believe can contribute special expertise.

In particular, NFCCA needs help with planning our social events, organizing newsletter distribution, editing the newsletter, administering the nfcca.org website, building out our communications efforts, or managing the association budget,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

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 1,600+ 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
10603 Cavalier Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20901
301.593.8566
editor AT nfcca DOT org

Visit Our Website
www.nfcca.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

so NFCCA will be looking for residents to fill these vital roles—either on the Board or as volunteers. Please contact me at *president AT nfcca DOT org* or call me at 240.281.3911 if you have any questions about serving or suggestions

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



for a nominee.

It's time again 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 to help our elderly or physically challenged neighbors can post a message on the NFCCA list-serv.

—Sharon Canavan

Thanks to All NFCN Deliverers



Rebecca Pagel

We thank our many volunteers—currently covering 51 routes (although Timberwood Avenue, Hannes Street, and Ordway Drive still need distributors)—for hand-delivering this newsletter to every household in NFCCA territory, more than 1,600 homes! We salute you for your service to our neighborhood! ■

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 2026) are:

President

Sharon Canavan
10213 Edgewood Avenue
240.281.3911
president AT nfcca DOT org

Vice President

Jessica Boback
10707 Edgewood Avenue
410.207.5693
veep AT nfcca DOT org

Treasurer

Sondra Katz
10905 Lombardy Road
301.593.4542
treasurer AT nfcca DOT org

Secretary

Sarah Dye
10911 Lombardy Road
703.380.7468
secretary AT nfcca DOT org

At Large

Brandon Boback
10707 Edgewood Avenue
717.873.0665
brandon AT nfcca DOT org

Richard Fitzpatrick
403 Hannes Street
973.598.5943
ricky AT nfcca DOT org

Vacant

Why not you? Get involved and help your community by volunteering!

Immediate Past President

Mario “Ema” Perez
10608 Margate Road
703.400.9560
ipp AT nfcca DOT org

SEARCH PAST ARTICLES, GOVERNMENT REPS, AND MORE AT
WWW.NFCCA.ORG

Cookoff 22 Feb.

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Not interested in cooking chili or curry? There are plenty of other ways to participate. We're also looking for volunteers to bake cornbread (the perfect side with chili), bake desserts, and help with setup, teardown, refreshments, and more.

Sign up to cook or volunteer today by using the QR code on page one or sending an email to *cookoff AT nfcca DOT org*.

This event is family-friendly fun for everyone. Kids can enjoy activities—including the return of the popular balloon artist from the Winter Social—while adults can savor the competition and community spirit. Last year's Cook-Off showcased an incredible variety of dishes from classic beef chili to brisket, sausage, and vegan options. Curry entries featured chicken, cauliflower, peppers, dumplings, and more. No matter your taste or dietary preference, there's something for everyone. Make this a family event or bring your friends to sample it all!

This is NFCCA's biggest fundraiser of the year, and your support means a lot. It helps fund the *North Four Corners News*, community activities, Zoom meeting coverage at the school, and other neighborhood events, like the All-Ages Bicycle Rides, National Night Out, and our Winter Social. Most importantly, it helps us connect with neighbors and build a stronger, more vibrant community.



Tasting tickets are \$2 per chili sample. Online sales are now open at *nfcca.org*. There are also blocks of 5, 10,

15, and 20 tickets available. Refreshments will also be available for purchase. Each tasting ticket includes one voting ticket, so you get to help choose the winners for our 2026 Cook-Off.

Think last year's competition was HOT? This year's event is shaping up to be even HOTTER, and we can't wait to see you there. Come cook, taste, vote, and celebrate our fantastic community! ■

Wazzup? Wazzup? Wazzup?

There are several upcoming neighborhood events, so Mark Your Calendars!

Top billing goes to our **Fourth Annual Cook-Off** that will start at 3:00 p.m. on **Sunday, 22 February**, at Forest Knolls Elementary School (see story on page one). To add an international wrinkle to this annual event, we are calling for Curry Master volunteers as well as Chili Masters. Last year this event netted \$797 for NFCCA, so it's an important component of our association's fiscal health. Come on out and support NFCCA!

A team is planning our annual **vine cutting cleanup** on **Saturday, 7 March**, at 10:00 a.m. along the creek on Lockridge Drive (see story on next page). Last year, volunteers worked together to cut windows in nonnative, invasive vines and picked up a lot of trash as well. We hope a big group of neighbors can participate again this year; it takes persistence to keep the weedy overgrowth in check.

Montgomery County Parks and Recreation is hosting **Acoustics and Ales** in the North Four Corners Local Park on **Saturday, 14 March**, from 11:00 a.m. til 2:00 p.m., featuring the band La Unica. There will be food trucks and local breweries. NFCCA will have a booth there so come and chat with us. For details on food trucks and local beer providers who will be there go to <https://montgomeryparks.org/event-team/acoustics-ales/>.

Meet at North Four Corners Local Park at 10:00 a.m. for our **All-Ages Community Bike Ride** on **Sunday, 26 April**. Donuts, coffee, fun!

This year's **Community Yard Sale** (our fifth!) will take place in **May**, but an exact date has not yet been set. See the April issue of the *North Four Corners News* or see our website or listserv for participation details.

For further details on these events check *nfcca.org* or upcoming posts on the NFCCA listserv. ■

FAMILY HAIRSTYLING BARBER
 Your Full Service Salon
 Haircuts For You and Your Family
 Men • Women • Children
 Cuts • Color • Perms • Highlights



Mon-Fri • 10am-4pm
 Sat-Sun • 10am-2pm

215 University Blvd. West • Near NFC Park
 Call 301-593-8059 • Walk-Ins Welcome!

**SELLING HOMES
 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

Great home sales start with real relationships. By truly listening and advocating for my clients, I deliver results that go beyond the transaction. Let's connect and make your next move a confident one.



Sarah Dye

LONG & FOSTER
 REAL ESTATE

703-380-7468 (m) | 240-497-1700 (o) | Sarah.Dye@LongandFoster.com



Little Earth, LLC

Montessori Family Child Care
 For children 2.5 to 6

Viola Dabrowska

www.littleearthfcc.com

Little Earth, LLC
 10119 Brunett Ave.
 Silver Spring, MD 20901

(916) 475-8157
info@littleearthfcc.com

Fully licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care (OCC)

**DID YOU
 READ
 THIS?**

Then others will, too!

YOUR AD HERE

reaches all 1,600+ homes in
 the North Four Corners and
 Forest Knolls neighborhoods!

Lockridge Creek Vine-Cutting Cleanup 7 March

It's time once again for our neighborhood effort to cut the nonnative, invasive vines (especially English ivy and porcelainberry) along the creek on Lockridge Drive.

This event will take place Saturday, 7 March (10 a.m. to noon); rain date Sunday, 8 March (10 a.m. to noon). We'll meet at the bandalong trash trap (Lockridge Drive and Belton Road) and work our way to Dennis Avenue.

An orientation to demonstrate and explain everything to do before we start cutting starts promptly at 10 a.m. It's cold this time of year, but it's best to start cutting before all the plants turn green and bushy again. That will make it easier to access and identify our target species. Come join us, meet neighbors, and help save our trees!

This event is meant for

everyone, although it's geared towards adults and older children. Some sections of Lockridge are quite steep and we'll be using sharp tools to cut plants. All children 16 and younger must be accompanied by an adult; this is not a drop-off event. Please remember, we are all volunteers and we're all in this together!

Wear long pants that cov-

er 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. No power tools or machetes are allowed.

Our wonderful neighbor, Robin Loube, has offered again to pick up some treats for the volunteer crew. Please email robinloub@earthlink.net to RSVP so we can get an accurate headcount. If you cannot bring your own reusable water bottle, a limited supply of bottled water will be provided.

This event will be supervised by Corinne Stephens (Thistle Drive), weed warrior volunteer coordinator for Montgomery Parks/M-NC Park and Planning Commission. If you have questions, email corinne.lackner@gmail.com.



Corinne Stephens



KRAJA + SIDHU DENTAL



Your allies in lifelong oral health

Kraja and Sidhu Dental was founded with a clear mission: to help people build a lasting relationship with their oral health in a welcoming environment.

We combine advanced technology with compassion to provide families a unique dental experience. We focus on prevention, personalized treatment plans, and extra attention and dedicated time to help our patients achieve lifelong oral health and feel empowered in their decisions.

After years in large practices, Drs. Kraja and Sidhu aim to provide a more personal, compassionate care in our small, private Silver Spring practice.

www.ksdental.com
301.495.9222
info@ksdental.com

To book:



12510 Prosperity Drive, Suite 220
Silver Spring, MD 20904

SELL YOUR HOME FOR IMMEDIATE CASH!

Avoid all the headaches, repairs, contingencies, inspections & Appraisals! ACE BUYS HOMES AS-IS!!

- ✓ NO HIDDEN FEES
- ✓ NO CLOSING COSTS
- ✓ NO COMMISSION
- ✓ FREE MOVING HELP



SELL YOUR HOME
"AS IS"
GET CASH FAST



Mark Hishmeh
☎ 301-448-0704
✉ AceConstruction127@gmail.com

SELL SMART. SELL FAST. SELL TO ACE

CIP Funding for US 29 Bus Rapid Transit Phase 2

The Montgomery County Council has begun consideration of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027–2032 Capital Improvements Program (CIP), which includes recommendations for funding capital projects and programs for all agencies. County Executive Marc Elrich submitted his proposed CIP in mid-January. See <https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/BASIS-CAPITAL/Common/index.aspx?FY=2027&VER=REC>.

The CIP proposes \$115.16 million to make further changes to the Flash Bus Rapid Transit Phase 2 route (BRT Phase 2) on U.S. 29/Colesville Road. In 2022, the County Council recommended a Dedicated Bus Lane for BRT Phase 2, but only approved funding to create the 35 percent design, which is now virtually complete.



The Four Corners northbound FLASH stop in front of Montgomery Blair High School.

The BRT Phase 2 design recommends significant changes on Colesville Road from the U.S. 495 Beltway cloverleaf to Burnt Mills. In our area, starting just south of the Beltway cloverleaf and moving north, the changes proposed in the 35 percent design include:

- Near Leighton Avenue, construct a single-lane,

curbed north-bound busway in the median for the Flash bus (southbound buses will travel in mixed traffic);

- Expand to a two-lane, curbed busway from the U.S. 495 Beltway to Timberwood Avenue to accommodate moving the Flash bus stations at Four Corners to the middle of the University Boulevard intersection with Colesville Road;

- Return to a single, curbed median lane after Timberwood Avenue with the north-bound Flash bus operating in the right curb lane. The Flash bus curbed median lane will eliminate left turns into and out of the NFCCA and Woodmoor neighborhoods at Lorain Avenue;

- Add three new traffic lights: two for Woodmoor-only access at Timberwood Avenue and Crestwood Drive and another at Hillwood Drive near Burnt Mills;

- Relocate the Flash bus stations at Burnt Mills; and

- Require a north-bound right turn at the Burnt Mills Avenue traffic light and eliminate the angled right turn from Colesville Road onto Lockwood Drive.

The proposed changes to the Flash bus route can be viewed at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/Resources/Files/US%2029%20Flash%20BRT%20CAC%20Roll%20Plots%20September%202025.pdf>.

At present, BRT Phase 2 does not involve taking any property in the NFCCA community, although some property will need to be acquired in



Michael J. Wilson

Woodmoor and Burnt Mills.

On 9 February, NFCCA is scheduled to testify at the Montgomery County Council's hearing on the FY 27-32 CIP. NFCCA's testimony will raise the following concerns about the BRT Phase 2 concept: (1) a two-lane-wide median Flash bus stop at Four Corners will create a traffic chokepoint, which will likely further increase cut-through traffic in our neighborhood; (2) the curbed bus lane will eliminate left turns across Colesville Road to or from Lorain Avenue, which will limit our neighborhood's vehicle access solely to the Southwood traffic light; and (3) the dedicated bus lane will have limited usefulness as it will not allow all types of public transportation, such as Metrobus or Ride On buses, to use the bus lane.

NFCCA will recommend reconsideration of the less expensive Managed Lane alternative that the county studied, because a dedicated curbed-running lane will decrease run time for the Flash bus as well as other types of public transportation. In fact, the transportation study found that the Managed Lane alternative was faster for the Flash bus, because the curbed dedicated lane requires additional traffic signals along Colesville Road. ■



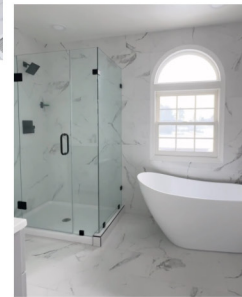
ACE HOME RENOVATION LLC

PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT, CHOOSE ACE
FOR YOUR NEXT PROJECT

SERVICES OFFERED:

- ✓ Roofing
- ✓ Bathroom and Kitchen Remodeling
- ✓ Painting & Drywall
- ✓ Flooring
- ✓ Additions

**FREE
ESTIMATE**



BRANDON OBEID

301-356-1226

MHIC# 157098

acehomereno1@gmail.com



DISTINCTIVE LANDSCAPES

INNOVATIVE | SUSTAINABLE | MAINTAINABLE

Exquisite Garden Design & Installation
 Decks & Patios | Custom Fences | Arbors & Pergolas
 Garden Walks & Walls | Water Features & Lighting
 Planting & Maintenance

BEST of BETHESDA AWARD WINNER | WASHINGTONIAN AWARD WINNER

**Mark Willcher Landscape
Design & Build**

*Building Sustainable Gardens
Since 1980*



www.markwillcherco.com

☎ 240-672-3191

✉ info@markwillcherco.com

Another Author in the Neighborhood

Who Sits at Your Kitchen Table?

By Katherine Pickett

My debut novel, *Debra Lee Won't Break*, centers on Debra Lee Morales, a 38-year-old mother and widow living with multiple sclerosis (MS) who undertakes a two-day, 150-mile cycling challenge. Along the way, she must face the ghosts from her past and reconcile with her onetime best friend, Caroline.

The ride at the heart of the story is based on the Bike MS Chesapeake Challenge, which takes place each June in Easton, Maryland. As I was crafting the scenes leading up to the ride, I realized I was bluffing my way through some details. A nagging feeling told me that readers would notice.

Now, there's a saying in the writing community, "Write what you know." The idea is that you will be better able to represent people and events if you have personal experience with whatever you're trying to depict. Was I really going to ride 150 miles just to get to know my character better?

Of course I was!

And I was glad I did. Not only did I learn more about the actual ride, but I also had several inspirations during the training that shaped the novel and added a level of realism.

Learning from Others

While it's possible to experience many things firsthand, when writing fiction, you may choose to include elements that you can't or don't want to experience yourself. Getting shot at and leaving the Earth's



Photos courtesy of Katherine Pickett

atmosphere are but two examples. Living with a chronic illness is another.

When I decided my main character would have MS, I knew it carried some risk. Although I live with chronic illness (epilepsy), and helped care for my father through his Parkinson's disease, I don't have MS and, at the time I made this decision, I didn't know anyone personally who did. Certainly MS falls into the realm of experiences you can't train for. Could any amount of research fill that size of an experience gap?

I recalled another bit of writing advice that said, when considering who you can comfortably represent in your novel, think of the people who sit at your kitchen table. I liked that idea, but I had to admit, no one with MS sat at my table.

I was somewhat familiar with the disease from popular culture, but not to the point of being able to capture the life of a person who lived with it every day. In fact, I was sure

someone with MS would have a very different life from mine. I dug in to the MS manuals, self-help books, memoirs, and websites. I even had the privilege of joining an MS support group, with permission from the coordinator to sit in and join the conversation for a few months.

The Big Surprise

What I discovered was that I actually have a lot in common with Debra Lee. The tests someone with MS must undergo to get a diagnosis overlap with epilepsy tests. Even some of the medications are the same. And the pain and stiffness that accompany MS are similar to the muscle spasms that attend Parkinson's disease. While my life experience wasn't identical to someone with MS, it gave me a head start in understanding it.

To make absolutely sure I was portraying the disease correctly, I enlisted the help of five beta readers who live with MS: four people from the support group and one medical doctor. By the end of the process, one reader said if they didn't know differently, they would've thought I had MS. Achieving that level of realism was a point of pride for me.

In another surprise, which really shouldn't have been so surprising once I started talking about MS and showing my interest in the subject, I found more and more people who live with it or know someone who does. What's more, they were pleased to know I was writing about it.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

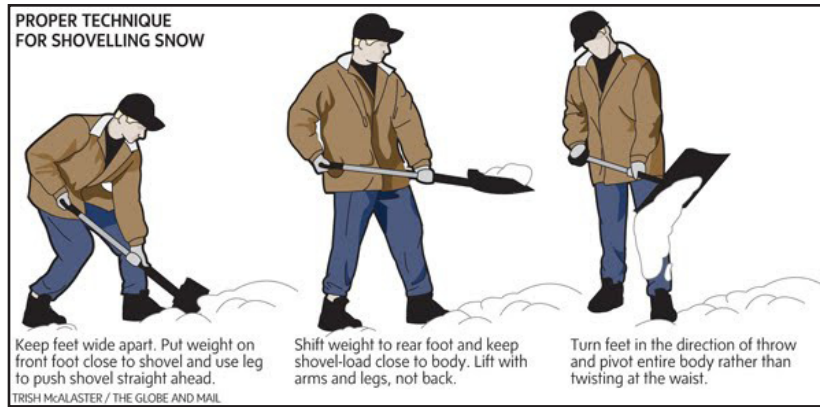
Local Author

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Don't Be Afraid to Learn New Things

I had been nervous about representing someone else's lived experience, but what I found was that, by and large, people were glad to have another book available that depicts life with chronic illness and to meet an author interested in learning about their worldview. It's been a privilege.

"Write what you know" is good advice, but it's only half



the story. The better advice is: Write what you know—and don't be afraid to learn new things.

And when you think about

who sits at your table, who you can comfortably represent in your books, remember, you can always welcome more people to the table.

Beyond helping me write a better book, my research broadened my understanding of myself and bridged the gap between me and the MS community. And that ability to connect people is the real beauty of fiction.

[Pickett lives on Lombardy Road.] ■

About Debra Lee Won't Break

Debra Lee's life is overflowing—widowed at 38, raising a son, supporting a daughter in college, and caring for a mother with dementia, all while managing her multiple sclerosis. Determined to seize the moment, she sets out to conquer the 150-mile Chesapeake Challenge bike ride before her MS slows her down.

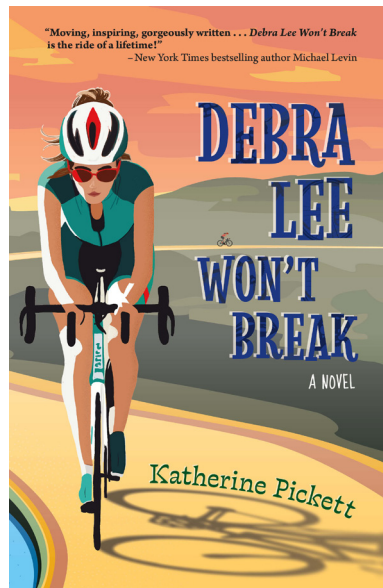
But just as she gathers the courage to push forward, ghosts from her past resurface. Caroline Cook—the friend who once betrayed her—wants back in her life. And the man who shattered her world as a teenager is suddenly appearing in unexpected places.

As old wounds reopen, will she find the strength to cross the finish line, or will the past derail her journey?

"An electrifying tale of grit, heart, and unshakable resolve.... [Pickett's] words don't just tell a story—they pull you in, wrap around your heart, and linger long after the last page."

—Suzie Housley, *Midwest Book Review*

Debra Lee Won't Break is available in print and ebook editions from Bookshop, Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and anywhere else books are sold.



Free Printing Now at Library

In January, Montgomery County Public Libraries began offering free daily printing and copying. Users may print up to 15 black-and-white pages or two color pages at no cost at all branches except Noyes Library for Young Children. Printing and copying beyond the free daily allotment is now payable exclusively through customers' online library accounts.

In addition, some items like earbuds and flash drives will now be available free of charge to County residents on a limited basis. ■

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

I have good news! My listing on 10146 Sutherland Road in our neighborhood Sold! Since the closing, we've taken the Sold sign over to the house so we can also check out all the utility work that's been going on the neighborhood, closing many streets, including Caddington, a main entrance into Forest Knolls! We've learned they're replacing the poles, which seems to be a big job. Bader & Kobe love nighttime walks and thank goodness the weather has been nice so far this winter.



The real estate market is changing daily, so if you have any questions or concerns in Maryland, D.C., or Virginia, Jeni & I are here for you, and your friends and family. Even if you're not ready to sell, let us know if you'd like a free Home Market Analysis for your home. We also have excellent Realtor associates throughout the country if you need an excellent agent referral.

The Blessman Team with Keller Williams has YOU covered with over 40 years collectively in the business. Please give us a call, text, or email for any of your real estate needs:

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

Much love and peace to you all!

Deren & Jeni

A Cheerful Night to Remember at the Winter Social

The Forest Knolls Elementary multipurpose room was bustling on Wednesday, 10 December 2025, as more than 100 neighbors gathered for our Winter Holiday Social.

A BIG shout out goes to Rebecca Pagel for organizing the first-ever NFCCA Hot Chocolate Competition, which raised over \$400 for our neighborhood. Six creative entries featured festive twists like spice, eggnog, peppermint, orange, and raspberry flavors. Briana Teller's delicious hot chocolate eggnog won!

Families enjoyed balloon candy canes, creatures, and funny hats as a balloon artist made his NFCCA debut. This came with the occasional "pop!" that startled a few of us from time to time, but everything worked out okay. Games and activities kept children busy throughout the evening.

NFCCA carolers opened the night with a round of seasonal songs and, later, the McKim Family Singers performed a nice set featuring both vocals and instruments. Six neighborhood vendors showcased beautiful displays of products including paintings, cards, jewelry, nail polish, wreaths, and collectibles, that were all available for purchase.

Donations were taken for Manna Food Center. While contributions were about half of last December's total, there was still a generous assortment of pasta, beans, and other pantry staples.

Neighbors generously

brought appetizers and treats. They disappeared by the end of the night as everyone shared the goodies while enjoying their hot chocolate and watching a slideshow highlighting memorable moments from 2025 community events.

The Winter Holiday Social was a wonderful way for neighbors to connect, and there are already great ideas in the works for next December. (More pix online!) ■



Jacquie Bokor

Photos from Julie Whitcomb except where noted

More Winter Social Pix



Jacque Bokow



Jacque Bokow

Jacque Bokow



Jacque Bokow

Jacque Bokow

13 Rules to Protect Yourself While Protesting

[Excerpted from the “Let’s Address This” column by Qasim Rashid, Esq., 13 January 2026. See link at end for entire column.]

Peaceful protest is enshrined in the Bill of Rights. Americans have exercised this right throughout our nation’s history to protest government overreach, tyranny, and injustice. ...Preparation matters.

1. If you are undocumented or your immigration status is in processing, it is highly advisable you avoid these protests altogether.

a. This is not a judgment on courage or commitment. It is a safety assessment in a moment of heightened enforcement.

b. If you still insist on protesting, follow the below rules and additionally have your A number memorized.

2. Ensure your loved ones know where you are and what time you will meet them at a predetermined location. Do not leave your location to chance; ensure your loved ones are in the know.

3. Have the phone numbers of your [A] lawyer and [B] loved ones memorized in case you need to call them from memory. [Ed.: You can also write them on your arm.]

4. If stopped by law enforcement for any reason, ask simply if you are free to go. If they answer yes, then walk away and do not double back.

5. If the answer is no, do not voluntarily talk to police, the National Guard, ICE, or any member of law enforcement. Do not volunteer any information about yourself.

Do not initiate conversation. You always have the right to remain silent.

6. Do not lie to law enforcement. Law enforcement can lie to you to get what they want. You cannot lie to law enforcement. *Under no circumstances should you lie to law enforcement.* The best way to not lie is to not speak. Simply remain silent.

7. Ask for a lawyer immediately if you are in fact detained or arrested. Do not sign anything, do not admit to anything, and do not confess anything. Simply ask to speak to your lawyer. Repeatedly ask in the clearest terms possible that you would like to speak with your lawyer. Period.

8. You can lawfully ask any law enforcement officer or military person to share their name and badge number with you, and what department they represent. You should do this if your rights are violated. But do not volunteer any information about yourself. Some states require you to disclose your name. [Editor’s Note: According to the *Immigrant Legal Resource Center, D.C. has no such statute; Maryland Criminal Law Code §4-206, allowing “limited search, seizure, and arrest” only triggers when the officer reasonably believes the person is “wearing, carrying, or transporting” a handgun; Virginia has no state statute, but some localities may require individuals to identify themselves.*]

9. You can lawfully record in any public space, anything that is in plain view.

ICE [agents] might threaten to arrest you for recording. These are threats, and may be real threats because ICE does not follow the law, but they are not legal threats.

10. You can march in the streets or on any public space and the police cannot arrest or detain you. However, if you are deliberately obstructing public thoroughways, you can be detained.

11. Be especially cautious in states where MAGA-controlled governments have expanded legal protections for drivers who harm protesters or openly encourage violent responses to demonstrations. Several states use vague standards such as a driver “feeling threatened” to justify driving into crowds—language that is deliberately ambiguous and dangerous. Know your state’s laws, stay situationally aware, and prioritize your safety, especially where officials have signaled hostility toward protesters.

12. Generally speaking, law enforcement can ask you to unlock your phone by Face ID or finger print, but not by entering your passcode. Set your phone security to require your passcode to unlock it. *Do not voluntarily unlock your phone for law enforcement for any reason.*

13. Be fearless and speak truth even if your voice shakes. Know that you are standing on the right side of history, of protecting our Republic from fascists.

[Source: <https://www.qasimrashid.com/p/13-rules-to-protect-yourself-while-a1a>.] ■



FOUR CORNERS

FOOT HEALTH CENTER

AT THE BURKLAND MEDICAL CENTER

Holly M. Beck, D.P.M

Patient Name: _____ Date: _____

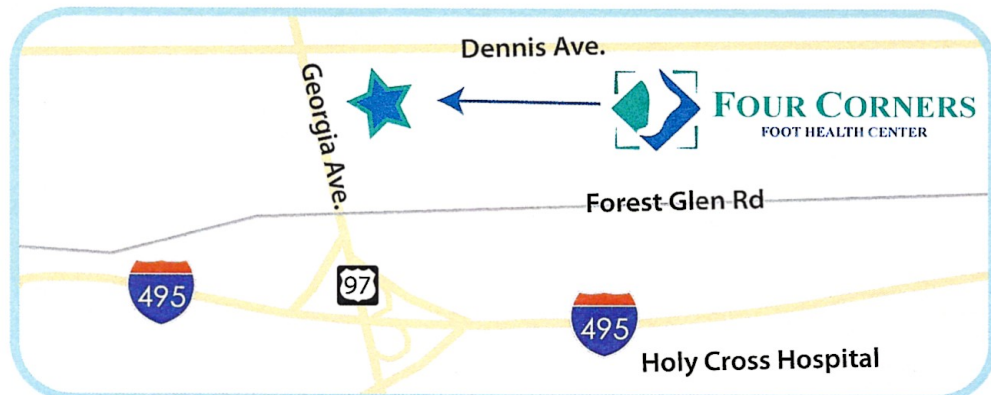
Reason for referral: _____

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> X-Ray | <input type="checkbox"/> Pediatric foot care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive Foot Exam | <input type="checkbox"/> Ganglion/soft tissue mass |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Achilles tendinopathy/rupture | <input type="checkbox"/> Ingrown Toenail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bunions | <input type="checkbox"/> In-toeing/Out-toeing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hammertoes | <input type="checkbox"/> Heel pain/Arch pain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Custom orthotics/bracing | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail fungus |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corns/calluses | <input type="checkbox"/> Numbness/painful neuropathy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetic foot care | <input type="checkbox"/> Flat feet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Injury/Medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> Wound (acute or chronic) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foot/Ankle Fracture | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Referring physician: _____ Phone: _____

Physician signature: _____ Date: _____

****Please include demographics and insurance cards.***



10313 Georgia Avenue, Suite 105 • Silver Spring, MD 20902

Phone: 301-681-8400 • Fax: 301-681-3339

info@fourcornersfoothealth.com

www.FourCornersFootHealth.com



FILIPPO'S

Italian Specialties

11224 Triangle Lane | Wheaton, Maryland
Phone: (301) 949-4150
Filipposllc@gmail.com
www.filipposdeli.com



Scan the QR Code
to access our
website from your
mobile phone!

Subs & Salads Available Daily
Cookies from New York
A Variety of Italian Deli Items and Groceries
Gluten-Free Options
Frozen Homemade Meals
Locally Made Sausage AND Cannolis
Fresh Bread Delivered Daily (except Sunday)
Catering Available! 3-Foot & 6-Foot Subs!

All Your Italian Goodies in One Place | Serving the Community Since 1955



Marc Donnelly

PIANO LESSONS

*Steps from
Blair, in
North 4
Corners*



*Lessons for
children or
adults*



*A holistic approach,
focusing on
technique, music
theory, and history*



*Trained in Music
Together, for
especially young
children*

**Marc is a knowledgeable piano instructor, organist,
choral director, and singer, with experience in both
university and private settings.**

Contact: marcsdonnelly@gmail.com, 401.529.3312
116 Southwood Ave.