

NORTHWOOD NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ FEBRUARY 2022

The Laws on Occupancy Limits, Parking in Our Neighborhood

By Linda S. Perlman

Maximum Permissible Occupancy for Homes and Apartments (or 'How Many People Can Live in a House or Apartment?')

The size of the home determines whether it is overcrowded. Each dwelling unit must have at least 150 square feet of floor area for the first resident and 100 square feet for each additional resident of

the house or apartment. Each bedroom ("sleeping room") of a dwelling unit with two or more rooms must have at least 70 square feet of habitable space for one occupant and must be at least seven feet in width. If the bedroom is occupied by more than one person, then there must be at least 50 square feet of habitable space for each occupant. Further, the sole access to any bedroom must not be through another bedroom.

Disclaimer: This is not a complete listing of all space, use, location, and other requirements for a habitable house or apartment. If the housing is rental, with a few exceptions, then it must be licensed by the County.

Parking (or 'Why Can't I Park in Front of My Own House?')

■ *Off-Street Parking.* Vehicles parked in front yards must be on surfaced areas. Inoperable or unregistered vehicles are not allowed anywhere on the property. One light commercial vehicle and one recreational vehicle per household can be parked off-street on surfaced areas in residential neighborhoods.

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Next Meeting on 9th of February

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 9 February 2022, at 7:30 p.m. ***The meeting will be held virtually.***

To find the access codes for the online Zoom meeting, go to the NFCCA website at www.nfcca.org. The codes should be posted the week of the meeting.

The agenda includes speakers about the Anacostia River and our Northwest Branch stream and trail (see story on page 14).

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 are eligible to vote. (Annual dues are \$10 per household and may be paid online.) ■

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WWW.NFCCA.ORG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It has been two long years since the COVID-19 pandemic began and COVID case rates and hospitalizations still are high. Fortunately, mask requirements, along with COVID vaccines and vaccine boosters, have proved effective in preventing, or at least lessening the severity of, COVID infections. I am vaccinated and boosted and wear a mask in public indoor places.

I picked up free COVID Antigen Rapid At-Home Self-Tests from a Montgomery County Public Library. If I need more rapid self-tests, then my health insurer will reimburse my claim for the costs of COVID rapid tests bought after 15 January. That should be true for your health insurer as well. More accurate PCR tests are available from multiple sources, although you must wait for the test results.

I am immunocompromised, so I do not take unnecessary risks. However, I have resumed most normal activities and go out to stores and restaurants (outdoor dining is strongly preferred).

In October 2021, I also traveled, with my partner, to Arizona to see the Grand Canyon and Sedona. The vastness and colors of the Grand Canyon and the red rocks of Sedona are simply awe-inspiring. Of course, my partner and I wore masks whenever we were inside, even as most other people went maskless. Later this month I am traveling, by plane, to sunny Florida to visit my best friend from childhood who winters in a Miami Beach oceanside apartment.

I am training to become certified as a volunteer tax counselor to be able to prepare income tax returns for seniors and low-income persons through the Montgomery County AARP Tax Aide Program. There is a lot of material to learn, and I must pass IRS and Maryland certification tests to qualify as a tax preparer. Fortunately, all volunteer-prepared tax returns are reviewed for quality control by a second tax preparer before final tax returns are prepared and filed.

Our Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association meetings have been conducted remotely via Zoom since April 2020. In-person meetings and other civic association events will resume when the worst of the pandemic is over and it is generally considered safe to resume in-person meetings.

The 8 December 2021 NFCCA meeting featured presentations on community safety from two Montgomery County Police Officers for the 3rd (Silver Spring) district: Joy Bartholomew, Community Services Officer, and Craig Cupaiuolo, Neighborhood Traffic Enforcement. You can reach the Community Services Officer at 240.773.6817 or .6818, email 3DCommunity@montgomerycountymd.gov, and traffic enforcement at the main 3rd District phone number: 240.773.6800. Of course, in case of emergency, call 911.

The next NFCCA meeting will be on Wednesday, 9

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Communicate With Neighbors

NFCCA Listserv

To join:

nfcca+subscribe@groups.io

[add "un" to unsubscribe]

To send messages to group:

nfcca@groups.io

Nextdoor/Northwood-Four Corners

<https://nextdoor.com>; enter your street address; choose "Northwood-Four Corners."

Twitter: @NFCCAMoCo

Facebook: www.facebook.com/nfccamoco

NORTHWOOD NEWS

Northwood News is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the ~1,600 households in the area bounded by Colesville Rd. (Rte. 29), University Blvd. (Rte. 193), Caddington Ave., and the Northwest Branch.

Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$10 per household and may be paid at any Association meeting or mailed to the treasurer.

The *Northwood 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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Silver Spring, MD 20901
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Visit Our Website

www.nfcca.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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February 2022, at 7:30 p.m. The Zoom link for this meeting will be publicized via the NFCCA *Groups.io* listserv and Nextdoor/Northwood-Four Corners and will be available on the home page of the NFCCA website at www.nfcca.org. All residents of the Northwood-Four Corners-Forest Knolls area are encouraged to attend this virtual meeting.

If you are not already a member of the NFCCA, please pay your dues (\$10 per house-

hold, per year) to support civic association activities, including this newsletter. See Page 11 to check your status.

Our 9 February NFCCA Zoom meeting will have speakers about the Anacostia River and our Northwest Branch stream and trail, part of Anacostia River watershed. See the article on the “bandalong” trash trap recently installed in Lockridge Creek (page 14). I hope to “see” all of you at this meeting.

—Linda Perlman

Baskin-Robbins/Dunkin' Donuts Franchise to Open in Neighborhood

By Sondra Katz

A combined Baskin-Robbins and Dunkin' Donuts is coming to Four Corners in what used to be the Capital One bank building. Construction has begun; there is now a fence around the property. A drive-through window is on the left where the bank's ATM used to be. There is no reported date for the opening, nor could we get confirmation from either organization.

If it's anything like the “next generation” BRDD that opened on New Hampshire Avenue in White Oak in July, it probably will feature a “premium pour system of taps for eight cold drinks” and “Dunkin' on Demand,” an app-based mobile order for the drive-through and a dedicated pick-up area inside.

Let's hope the parking lot is large enough. Or better yet, walk there! ■



The Baskin-Robbins/Dunkin' Donuts at 115 University Blvd. in Four Corners will have both drive-through pick-up and eat-in.

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 2022) are:

President

Linda Perlman
1203 Caddington Avenue
301.681.3735
president AT nfcca DOT org

Vice President

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ipp AT nfcca DOT org

Occupancy Limits, Parking Here

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

■ **Home-Based Businesses.** Residents are permitted to operate businesses from their homes, subject to certain restrictions based on the type of business and its impact on the neighborhood. Parking for home businesses is limited to two off-street parking spaces on the property. Lawn maintenance companies may park only one single-axle trailer or truck on the property at a time.

■ **On-Street Parking.** Heavy commercial vehicles (i.e., those with a gross vehicle weight of more than 10,000 pounds, manufacturer's rated capacity of more than one ton, more than 21 feet long, etc.) and recreational vehicles—such as motor homes and trailers—may not be parked on residential streets except temporarily for loading and unloading or when the vehicle is being used by the owner or operator while engaged in work on a property abutting the street. Businesses may not perform services or repairs on vehicles parked on public streets, but emergency service or repairs are allowed.

Vehicle owners may use the public street to perform minor services or repairs on their vehicles provided that the vehicle is otherwise legally parked or operative or the vehicle is awaiting imminent transfer to or from a garage, repair shop, or service or parking facility. Vehicles parked on the street may not block or obstruct or park within five feet of either curb edge of the entrance to any public or private

driveway, except that an owner may obstruct his own private residence driveway. Parking within 35 feet of an intersection is prohibited. Parking is prohibited on a sidewalk, on a crosswalk, within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, in a direction other than the flow of traffic, or at any place an official sign or traffic control device restricts or prohibits parking.



You cannot stop anyone from parking in front of your house.

■ **Parking on the Street in Front of Your House.** Residents do not “own” the portion of the public street in front of their residences and cannot restrict or prohibit other vehicles from parking on that part of the street. With a few exceptions—such as where signs prohibit or restrict parking in certain areas or during certain times or to vehicles with parking permit passes or handicapped designations—vehicles may park wherever parking is allowed on public streets in residential areas. In general, there is no limit to the number of private vehicles associated with a particular address that can park on a residential street. Most neighbors are courteous and allow residents to park their vehicles in front of their own homes, but there is no right

to park on the public street directly in front of your home. This is true even if you live in a house without a private driveway.

How Are These Laws Enforced?

Enforcement is primarily by complaint. The Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) handles complaints regarding rental licensing, rental housing conditions, exterior property

maintenance, maximum occupancy, and unregistered and inoperable vehicles on private property. Complaints about home occupations, the paving of front yards, and off-street parking issues are handled by the Department of Permitting Services (DPS). Complaints can be filed through the County's 311 service or online with the appropriate County department at <https://montgomerycountymd.gov>. On-street parking complaints are made to the Montgomery County Police nonemergency phone number at 301.279.8000, to the 3rd District (Silver Spring) at 240.773.6800, or the 4th District (Wheaton) at 240.773.5500.

[Perlman, an attorney and president of the NFCCA, lives in the house she grew up in on Caddington Avenue.] ■

Did You Know? Services Available in the Community

By Melissa E. Ferguson

Greetings, neighbors!

This new column is for sharing public services and information that may be of interest. Some of these announcements have been shared on the listserv (nfcca@groups.io), but not everyone joins the listserv and information is power. Please feel free to share information that may assist people you know.

■ Free rapid, at-home COVID-19 test kits and N95 masks are available to all Montgomery County residents at area libraries on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last. County residents can receive two testing kits; each kit contains two tests. The Wheaton library is distributing the free kits starting at 5:00 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays, and at 3:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. For more information and a list of the other libraries that are participating, please visits: <https://montgomerycomd.blogspot.com/2022/01/county-providing-rapid-at-home-covid-19.html>.

■ Anyone who is struggling to keep up with mortgage payments or other housing costs *due to COVID-19 related financial hardships* should check out the Maryland Homeowner Assistance Fund (<https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Residents/Pages/HomeownerAssistanceFund.aspx>). Information is also available at 1.833.676.0119, Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Housing

counseling and legal services information is available at 1.877.462.7555.

There are two local organizations that are designated by the State of Maryland to help people apply for the Maryland Homeowner Assistance Fund:



Housing
Initiative
Partnership

1 Housing Initiative Partnership in Gaithersburg, <https://hiphomes.org> or 301.916.5946.



**LATINO ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

2 The Latino Economic Development Center, which has an office in Wheaton, <https://www.ledcmetro.org> or 1.877.966.LEDC (5332).

■ On another community note, you may recall that in August 2016 the residents of Flower Branch Apartments, in the Long Branch area of Silver Spring along Piney Branch Road, suffered a tragic explosion and fire in which eight people died. On 8 January 2022, the same apartment complex suffered from a fire that destroyed two apartments and damaged a dozen others, displacing 52 people. People who are interested in helping the displaced families purchase clothing, supplies, and obtain funds for transportation, can donate to Making Home Possible at <https://mhppartners.org/helpflowerbranchfamilies2022>.

■ In climate protection news, Montgomery County leaders are urging residents to use less road salt (sodium chloride) to treat sidewalks and driveways in icy conditions. The “Salt-Wise” campaign ([Montgomery CountyMD.gov/salt](https://montgomerycountymd.gov/salt)) encourages people to shovel snow and ice right away, use less salt or an alternative ice-melt, and sweep up salt after the ice melts to reuse it. The problem with using too much salt is that it corrodes concrete and masonry (brick or paving stones), gets stuck in dogs’ paws and harms wildlife, damages the roots of trees and lawns, and all that damage is before salt leaches into our streams, where it is extremely hard to remove. One way to use less salt is to dilute it in water before spreading it on sidewalks with a broom. And alternative ice-melt concoctions that are safer for pets are available at hardware stores.

Thanks for reading and sharing these announcements for the health, safety, and betterment of our community. Until next time, wishing you patience and kindness in these trying times.

[Melissa E. Ferguson is an expert in grants, contracts, and project management; nonprofit and government partnership; and equitable access to health care and social services. She has lived in North Four Corners since 2013 and Mont. County since 1996. She is also a gardener and an aspiring novelist.] ■

White Oak Town Center is Now Under Construction

By Jacquie Bokow

I spoke with Amy Lindsey, the Planner Coordinator at Mont. Planning for the White Oak Town Center (WOTC) project; the final plans were certified on 19 January 2022. Although the original plans called for 289 apartments, they had to remove the residential portion “due to problems with [the] State Highway” Admin. “It was an economic decision,” she said. “It was easier to go with a commercial venture plan.”

She told me that the site where the Gannett Newspaper building is has been rezoned for residential use and that the owner of the WOTC property (Finmarc Management, Inc., which also owns the buildings immediately behind and beside WOTC) “is planning on doing residential in future development.” Despite the thriving businesses in those “industrial” buildings, I suspect their leases will be terminated within a few years.

Lindsey said the Planning department “recognized that the area is changing” and



The original plans included five stories of residential apartments over the building containing the grocery store.

wanted to “bring in a mix of uses.” She added, “We know that this area is under-served” as far as access to groceries is concerned.

Finmarc—owned by two men who grew up in our area (they used to own both Woodmoor and Burnt Mills Shopping Centers but have sold both)—“really pushed us as their retail client was anxious to get going,” she said. “They’re trying to get it done as fast as possible.”

Finmarc originally tried to get a Trader Joe’s in the 41,000-square-foot grocery space (the largest area out of a planned 105,000 square feet), but the company declined.

Lindsey could not discuss who the major tenant would

be. “[Finmarc] signed agreements they would not release this information,” she said.

My guess (which no one would confirm) is that the grocery store chain in negotiations with Finmarc is Amazon Fresh. Expanding rapidly, the first Amazon Fresh opened in August 2020 in California; now there are 23, including one in Chevy Chase and one in D.C. near Logan Circle. Six of those locations use “Just Walk Out” technology, which uses a cashierless system of (quoting from their website) “overhead computer-vision cameras,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)



It looks like this sign will be coming down soon. Montgomery Industrial Park is being developed into a commercial and residential area.



The proposed White Oak Town Center (here looking north from Colesville Road) will be all commercial space, including a ‘boutique’ grocery store in the north building, and a clock tower.

White Oak Center

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

weight sensors, and deep-learning technology to detect merchandise that shoppers take from or return to shelves and track items selected in a virtual cart.” I guess we’ll see!

There will be 405 parking spaces, including eight for motorcycles and several for car-sharing and electric vehicles. There also will be four long-term and 12 short-term bicycle parking spaces; the applicant must also provide “one bicycle repair station.”

Although the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan calls for separated bike lanes (one-way) on both sides of the street, Finmarc got MCDOT to agree that “a sidepath is a more appropriate and flexible facility



The American Postal Workers Union building—vacant for a decade—has been torn down.

for the site’s anticipated users, and as such, the proposed separated bicycle lanes were replaced with a sidepath.”

The large and specimen trees on-site were conveniently removed prior to plan submittal, allowing the developer to pay a fee instead of meeting forest conservation requirements of 1.29 acres of trees.

The sign/clock tower is subject to the approval of a sign variance by the Sign Review Board, so that could still change. But I doubt it. ■



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Protecting Your Identity Information from Theft

By Jay Santiago

With continued uncertainty regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, it's safe to say that fraudsters will continue to exploit our situation to commit fraud. The seemingly dire picture is perpetuated by data breaches that have exposed our Personally Identifiable Information (PII). The reality is that everyone's PII may already be on the Dark Web and it's only a matter of time before our name is next on a criminal's list (<https://www.foxnews.com/tech/your-personal-data-may-be-on-the-dark-web-what-you-need-to-know>). The question may not be *if* someone will try to access my network, device, or accounts, but *when*?

In order to fully understand how vulnerable we are, it is imperative that we review and assess our digital footprint. By "digital footprint" I mean our online accounts with their login information, Internet browsing habits, how we use our email, and how much information we share on social media.

Data breaches include any combination of dates of birth, phone numbers, email addresses, and account numbers with usernames and passwords. With your PII in hand—or portions of it—identity thieves try their luck on different retail or bank websites to hack your accounts or create new ones in your name (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-to-use-a-free-password-man>

agerand-make-your-logins-safer-11642341602).

Presuming an identity thief has your information and is seeking to access your accounts, there are three main entry points he or she can use: your Network, your Devices, and your Accounts. This is where we make a stand and protect ourselves.

Protecting Home Networks

Ensure your network has a firewall to stop threats before they access your devices. Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have this already in place. Make sure it is on or you can call their customer service for help on setup. You can also change the preset name and password on your internet router. If you change the name on your router, it will make it more difficult to identify which ISP you use, the type of router, and any vulnerabilities it may have.

Next, set up a guest "Wi-Fi" account and separate password for your guests. Unfortunately, we can't always ensure that everyone who enters our home is as mindful about cybersecurity as we all need to be. You may open your network to vulnerabilities if a guest with an infected phone gains access to your network and password.

Protecting Devices: Phones, Tablets, Computers

Always update the software on your devices when prompted. These updates

generally include security patches for newly identified vulnerabilities. This will ensure the software on your devices is protected against the latest threats.

Use facial recognition to unlock your phones or set up at least a six-digit PIN to unlock your device. You can also set up a PIN for your SIM card on your phone and, perhaps more importantly, place a lock on your number with your cellular service provider to prevent anyone from porting your number onto another device.

Never click on links in text messages or emails, even if they appear to be from your bank or your utility company. The more tech-savvy fraudsters clone legitimate websites and embed links in emails to lure you to click on them to download malware on your machines and devices. Instead open up your browser and look up the website.

Protecting Accounts: Banks, Utility, Online Retail, Social Media

Refrain, as best you can, from giving your cellular telephone number and email at retail stores. Any company that does not employ the best cybersecurity protocols will be susceptible to attack. Sadly, we can't assume companies will promptly announce a breach when it occurs (<https://scarincihollenbeck.com/law-firm-insights/cyber-security/not-report->

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FOR YOUR AWARENESS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

a-data-breach-costly). The best option, then, is to use temporary or “burner” cellular numbers and/or a separate email just for retailers. Google Voice is an option when giving your phone to join rewards programs, for example.

Use a Password Manager and *never* reuse Passwords. This cannot be stressed enough. With so many accounts and logins, it is easy and tempting to reuse the same ones. There are several free and paid managers you can download from the app store. Bitwarden, 1Password, and LastPass continue to make the top-rated lists. I recommend at least 16-character passwords with numbers, letters, and special characters and change them every 90 days. Luckily, password managers can create new and complex passwords with ease. All you need to do is remember the master password for the manager to access the list of your logins.

In addition to complex passwords, use multifactor authentication (MFA) when logging onto your accounts online (learn more about MFA at <https://cybersecurity.osu.edu/cybersecurity-you/passwords-authentication/multifactor-authentication>). MFA is an added security feature to login to your accounts. In short, the MFA app will generate a code that you enter after your username and password. If your login credentials have been compro-

mised, the person trying to hack into your account will be prompted to enter this code, making it virtually impossible to gain access. Google has its own authenticator and Authy is also a great choice. Fortunately, more banks and retailers are adding this feature to their websites.

Finally, “anonymize yourself” as much as possible. Use an alias instead of using your first and last name in your email address. Instead of *jane.doe@gmail.com* use *juniper.d@gmail.com*. Also use aliases on your social media accounts and make everything private. While it may feel great to have your friends wish you a happy birthday on Facebook, it may not be worth having your date of birth on there for everyone to see.

Remember, if you take

certain precautions to make accessing your network, devices, and accounts difficult to ID thieves (i.e., implementing long and complex passwords and using MFA codes), they will likely move on to the next person because they generally don’t have the patience to keep trying. In my line of work, most if not all victims reuse passwords, liberally share information on social media, and click on links from unknown senders.

Lastly, visit the Federal Trade Commission’s website—<https://www.identitytheft.gov/#/> or <https://www.idtheftcenter.org/>—to learn more on identity theft.

[Jay Santiago is a pseudonym for a former local police officer now in federal law enforcement who grew up here and moved back.] ■

Northwood Garden Club Forming

By Sharon Canavan

A group here in the neighborhood is forming the Northwood Garden Club. We are interested in sharing gardening tips, practices, sources, and information. We welcome beginners and experienced gardeners.

So far, since we began organizing this group, our meetings have been via Zoom. But hopefully—as the weather and the COVID outlook improve—the group can start to meet in person. Our next meeting will be scheduled in March.

If you are interested in joining this group, send an

email to NorthwoodGardenClub+subscribe@nfcca.groups.io. ■



Compost Crew Might Give Our Area a Reduced Rate

By Jacquie Bokow

Compost Crew has been servicing our neighborhood since 2018. I contacted CC on 15 December to see whether our neighborhood qualified for a discount. I was told, “the five-gallon bin is \$20/month and the 12-gallon bin is \$24/month.” I was already paying \$25 for a five-gallon bin.

I told Sarah Cedro, a Residential Composting Analyst at Compost Crew, that their boundaries didn’t match our neighborhood. I asked her how many more homes are needed for the price break.

She responded that she couldn’t change the boundaries “since there are already discounted rates applied.” (The area they designated “Kemp Mill” included part of our neighborhood and they had the discount.) “However,” she continued, “if you could get six more sign ups within the boundaries, I will decrease the rates to \$16/month for the five-gallon and \$20/month for the 12-gallon.”

On 17 December, I sent her a map of NFCCA’s territory as well as a list of the streets in our neighborhood. By this time, six more households had mentioned on the listserv that they had signed up, so we should have reached the criteria they set for the discount.

A month later, on 19 January, she finally responded, telling me that, once she updated the boundaries to the ones I gave her for the NFCCA, “that service area will decrease significantly from 65 to 29 active members.” Instead of just adding our

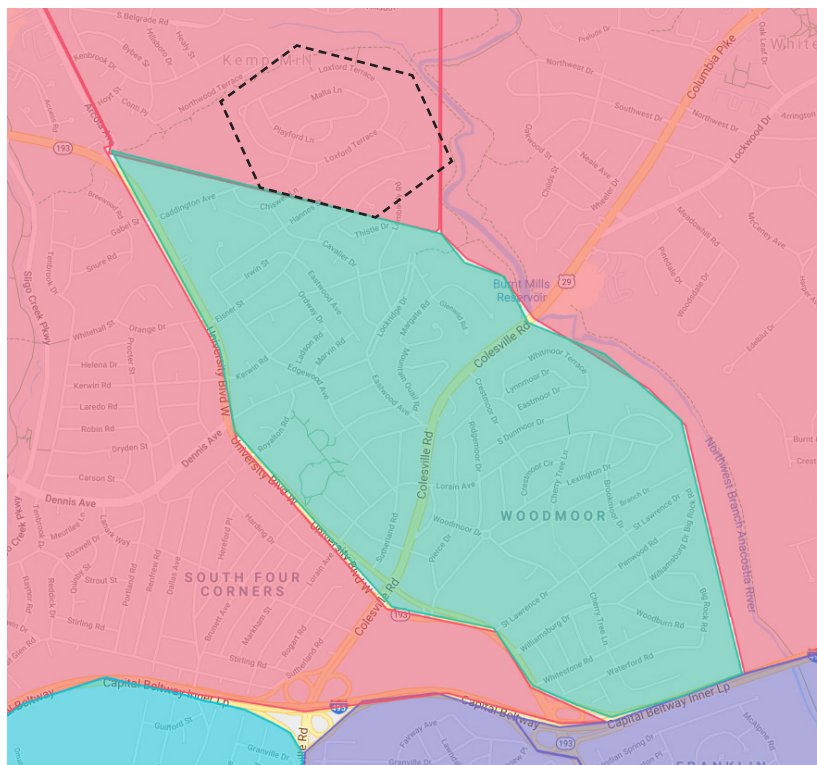
missing territory, she had cut Woodmoor out of the service area! She also said, “I’m still waiting to hear back from my team about how many people we will need to be able to decrease the rates.”

Aghast, I told her, “I don’t expect you to remove the Woodmoor neighborhood from the territory you include in our rates!” I just wanted her to tell me *how many more* we need to get the discount and *how* we get it.

After another email requesting a response, on 21 January she wrote, “I updated the boundaries so it is just

North Four Corners, because we cannot have two neighborhoods with one community program” (although they did before and it seems she does have the power to change it). Then she wrote, “Since the boundaries have changed, I cannot decrease the rate to \$16/month quite yet but if more people sign up then I absolutely can. I’m sorry if there was any confusion, I hope this clears things up.”

They’ve increased their price to \$32/month (five-gallon). And she still didn’t say how many more we need to sign up to get the discount! ■



The area of our neighborhood that Compost Crew designates as one service territory includes all of Woodmoor and most of NFCCA’s territory except for the part shown within the dotted line. Some homes within that portion get a reduced rate since they’re considered part of Kemp Mill’s territory. When I tried to get them to redraw their border to include all of our neighborhood so we could get a group discount, the plan backfired.

Have You Joined Your Civic Association Yet?

Membership in the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association as of press time is:

Belton (4/48, 8%)

107, 200, 313, 418

Caddington (6/81, 7%)

909, 1113, 1203, 1302, 1303, 1312

Cavalier (8/53, 15%)

303, 10601, 10603, 10611, 10704, 10713, 10800, 10803

Chiswell (5/39, 12%)

1014, 1019, 1025, 1112, 1118

Colesville (0/22, 0%)

Dennis (1/44, 2%)

506

Eastwood (2/53, 3%)

10619, 10711

Edgewood (7/72, 9%)

10209, 10306, 10400, 10404, 10428, 10508, 10514

Eisner (4/32, 12%)

404, 412, 413, 416

Foxglove (0/4, 0%)

Glenwild (4/32, 12%)

10600, 10606, 10619, 10711

Hannes (5/104, 4%)

229, 310, 330, 403, 10904

Irwin (4/31, 12%)

303, 314, 405, 411

Kerwin (3/42, 7%)

407, 410, 508

Kinsman View (4/83, 4%)

5, 39, 45, 139

Ladson (2/18, 11%)

305, 315

Lockridge (3/29, 10%)

10600, 10602, 10707

Lombardy (11/88, 12%)

10625, 10700, 10706, 10806, 10900, 10904, 10905, 10911, 11012, 11013, 11201

Lorain (3/22, 13%)

10205, 10207, 10209

Loxford (8/135, 5%)

813, 907, 920, 1013, 1111, 1014, 1144, 1145

Malta (4/45, 8%)

808, 813, 814, 906



Margate (11/50, 22%)

10608, 10610, 10615, 10701, 10801, 10811, 10822, 10823, 10828, 10829, 10831

Marvin (1/18, 5%)

300

Mountain Quail (3/23,

13%)

10407, 10410, 10426

Northwood (2/13, 15%)

100, 104

Ordway (2/26, 7%)

10615, 10702

Pinewood (1/13, 7%)

319

Playford (0/31, 0%)

Royalton (2/31, 6%)

405, 414

Snowy Owl (4/23, 17%)

100, 107, 113, 125

Southwood (4/21, 19%)

111, 114, 115, 136

Sutherland (3/31, 9%)

10158, 10205, 10209

Thistle (2/22, 9%)

202, 211

Timberwood (3/25, 12%)

208, 315, 317

University (1/43, 2%)

209

Whittington (0/15, 0%)

Woodridge (1/15, 6%)

119

Total: 128/1,475 (8%)

[With The Oaks (0/126, 0%), it's 128/1,601, or 7%.]

Margate has the highest percentage, at 22%, and is tied with Lombardy for the most members, 11.

To join, send a check to our Treasurer (see page 3) or pay online on the nfcca.org website and click on "Join Us." It's only \$10 per household per year! ■

What the Winter Woodpecker Can Tell Us About Our North Four Corners-Forest Knolls Neighborhood

By Lisa Schamess

If you've spotted a few of the several species of woodpeckers we see around our neighborhoods lately, you'll be happy to know their presence means good conditions for many other birds. That's because woodpeckers are the housing developers of the avian world. While they are fairly solitary creatures themselves, nesting alone from a young age, the holes and widenings they create in dead trees for nesting are enormously useful to other, smaller, cavity dwellers such as nuthatches, titmice, and chickadees.

In my yard, I see three kinds of woodpeckers daily, although almost never in pairs: the imposing Red-Bellied Woodpecker, the medium-sized Hairy Woodpecker, and the baby Downy Woodpecker. That littlest one is my favorite, as it peeps and hops about its business in its snazzy checkerboard tailcoat.



Downy Woodpecker

The Red-Bellied will convince you that birds really are dinosaurs if you didn't think so before, while the Hairy is a bit of a middle child, liked well enough but not necessarily getting much attention.

Contrary to what we've been led to believe, woodpeckers do not cause much damage to healthy trees; if anything, they keep the population of potentially harmful insects down by consuming amazing quantities of grubs and beetle larva. Woodpeckers prefer to do their major renovations to rotted or dead trees, called snags, which are unfortunately scarce in your typical suburban neighborhood. Snags literally fall prey to human ideas about aesthetics or productive usefulness, but, if you happen to have a dying or dead tree that is not actively diseased, consider leaving it up. You can lop off any potentially dangerous branches and leave the trunk and a few projecting branches for nesting birds. You'll be repaid in glorious sights, bird song, and knowing you are helping to protect many species now threatened by habitat destruction and climate change.

So anywhere you see a woodpecker, look for plenty of delightful small birds and songsters, from the tufted titmouse to the nuthatch to the chickadee (see the Smithsonian study done right here in Montgomery County that connects native plants to chickadee survival rates: [https://](https://tinyurl.com/yc5ky4nk)



Red-Bellied Woodpecker

tinyurl.com/yc5ky4nk). All are made more viable and comfortable by the presence of woodpeckers.

How to Feed the Woodpeckers (and their Bird Buddies)

■ **Woodpeckers are especially fond of suet in the winter**, along with bigger nuts such as peanuts. Purchase good-quality suet that is embedded with seeds and other treats like meal worms. **Don't DIY.** While there are a lot of "suet recipes" floating around, most are not using suet, which is a hard fat with a high melting point. Any recipe that advocates using leftover cooking oil or grease from hamburgers is a terrible recipe for disaster for all birds, as the grease can coat birds' wings or

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 13)

Woodpeckers!

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12)

feet, contributing to their risk of illness or death.

■ **Hang suet cakes liberally** and as close to trees and high shrubs as you can. You're likely to attract woodpeckers and other companion birds in no time (as well as the occasional enterprising squirrel).

■ Don't spice your seeds with chili powder to keep squirrels away. First, it really doesn't work. Second, it is a harmful experience for mammals and can confuse, disorient, or burn them, particularly young animals.

■ **Expect a ton** of black-chinned sparrows, starlings, and others, and plan for them. I have two separate seed stations, one nearest the tree our songbirds like, and the other a little further. Since sparrows and starlings are highly social, they will tend to congregate at one feeder while the other is relatively clear, and that will alternate through the day. If you have the ability to be home during the day, you can observe feeding times and adjust your feeder fill-ups accordingly.

■ **Keep water handy.** It's easy to forget how essential water is year-round. When there's ice, hack into your water bowls or warm the water slightly to make it accessible. You can invest in a heater or bubbler designed for bird baths if you want to consistently attract winter birds and keep the water healthy.

■ **Garden for year-round food sources.** Make sure to plant straight native species rather than cultivars

or exotics. You may even already have some of the following and may have thought they were nuisances. The birds disagree! Try Staghorn Sumac, viburnums, Virginia Creeper, Service-berry, native Winterberry Holly, and others. Your evergreen trees provide seeds from cones, too. More tips on making a bird-friendly winter garden are here: <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/k12/bird-friendly-winter-gardens>.



Female Hairy Woodpecker

■ **Get the tallest poles you can**, or put any shorter poles enough in the open to make cats and other predators show themselves before trying a hunt. Poles should also be within flying range of a tall shrub or tree. Tree proximity with enough open space for ground predators to be seen will be your best bet.

Get more feeding tips and tons of learning resources from Project Feeder Watch (<https://feederwatch.org/learn/common-feeder-birds>).

[Lisa Schamess is a certified Weed Warrior in Montgomery County and is training with the Anacostia Watershed Society to become a Maryland Master Naturalist. She lives on Loxford Terrace with her husband, son, and three extremely thoughtful cats.] ■

Texting to 911

If you're experiencing an emergency and are unable to place a voice call, you can send a text to 911. Follow these steps to request emergency services:

1. Enter 911 in the "To" line.
2. Enter a brief message that includes the location of the emergency and type of service needed—police, fire or ambulance.
3. Hit send.
4. Respond to questions from the responding 911 specialist and follow the instructions provided.

Tips for Using Text-to-911

■ If text-to-911 is not available in your area, or if it is temporarily unavailable, you should receive a message from your carrier letting you know to place a phone or relay call.

■ Pictures and/or videos cannot be received by 911 via text.

■ If you include another contact on your text, it may not be received by 911.

■ English is the preferred language for text; however, some limited translation services may be available.

■ Text in short, simple messages; do not use abbreviations or slang.

■ Do not text and drive. ■

Our Own Lockridge Drive Tributary to the Northwest Branch Hosts a County Environmental Pilot Project

By Robin Loube

If you walk along Lockridge Drive, surely you have noticed something new near the end where Lockridge meets Northwest Branch Park: a V-shaped contraption in the stream, constructed of two long black pipes anchored in cement up on the hill, converging on a light green metal trap. This is a “bandalong” litter trap, the first such trap in Montgomery County. It has been installed as a pilot project of the county Department of Environmental Protection through a \$250,000 grant to Anacostia Riverkeeper, a nonprofit group dedicated to cleaning and protecting the Anacostia River.

A few weeks ago, I observed a team of men installing the contraption and went over to ask one of them about it. He turned out to be Mark Kirves, co-owner of Stormwater Systems, an Atlanta-based company that fabricates and installs the traps all over the United States. They have installed 26 such traps in 10 states from Florida to Texas to California, including three in streams in Prince George’s County and four in the District of Columbia.

Kirves told me that the bandalong trap was invented in Australia over 25 years ago. The word “bandalong” is an aboriginal term meaning “the place where two rivers meet.” He said the Australian engineer who created the trap said he went to fish one Saturday at such an area near Mel-



Mark Kirves, co-owner of the company that fabricates the traps, stands along the Lockridge Drive creek installation.

bourne. He came upon a lot of litter and spent time cleaning it up. The next Saturday, the same thing happened. On one Saturday, he told Kirves, he picked up litter all day instead of fishing.

Frustrated, he went home and began designing the bandalong trap. It is constructed of aluminum, stainless steel, and polyethelene, with two long beams the guide the litter into the trap, which has no bottom. The beams and the trap are designed to float upward as the water rises to avoid inadvertently capturing wildlife, Kirves said, adding that “the traps are 85 to 90 percent effective at capturing litter.”

The purpose of the bandalong is to keep trash out of Northwest Branch, the Anacostia River, and the Chesapeake Bay, where, in addition

to the obvious eyesore it creates, it can entangle, choke, and poison wildlife.

For answers to my questions about how Lockridge was chosen for this project and how and when the accumulating trash will be removed, Kirves referred me to Trey Sherard with Anacostia Riverkeeper. Sherard supervises the maintenance of the bandalong traps in D.C. and Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties, as well as serving as the primary public face for the group, meeting with media and local jurisdictions and giving boat tours of the Anacostia. “I speak on behalf of the river,” he told me.

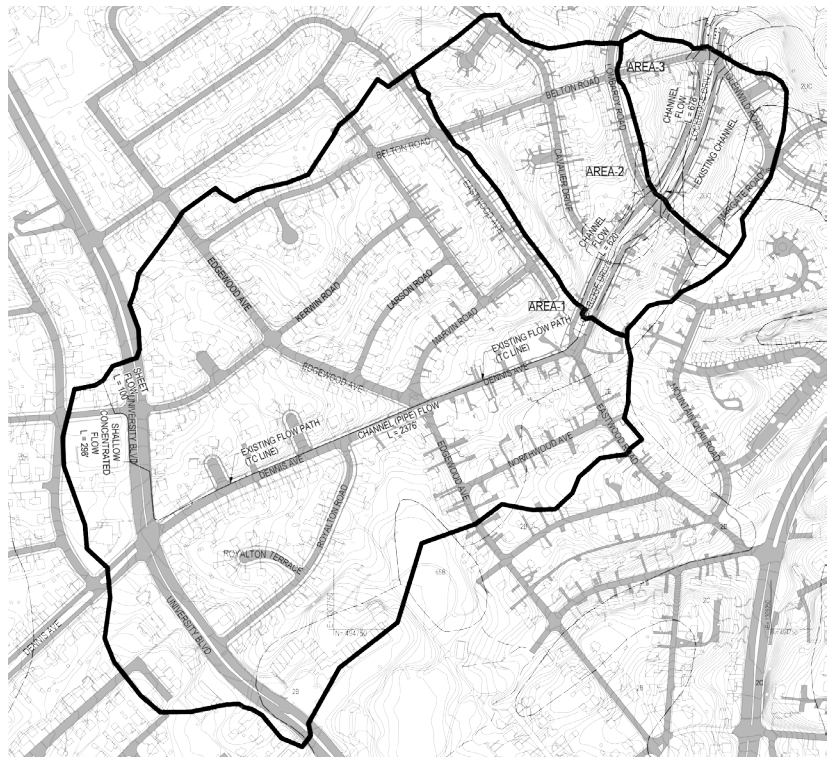
Sherard said the Lockridge tributary location was chosen based on county litter surveys in which objects in streams like glass bottles,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)

Bandalong

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14)

plastic bottles, Styrofoam, aluminum cans, food and drink wrappers, caps and labels, and toys, including balls, are counted and weighed. He noted that the Lockridge Tributary collects stormwater and trash that washes down streets and sidewalks and into storm drains in a substantial oval-shaped portion of our neighborhood, bordered approximately by just beyond University Blvd. to the northwest, Belton Road to the northeast, Glenwild and Mar-gate Roads to the south, and Northwood Avenue and North Four Corners Local Park to the southwest (see the map at right).



This partial map of our neighborhood shows the area that funnels stormwater to Lockridge Drive creek and the river.



The trap—which is securely anchored in concrete on either side of the creek—has a unique design that requires no mechanical assistance. Instead, it relies only on the water’s natural current, staying above the water to catch buoyant debris. The Bandalong is an economical way to capture floating litter before it reaches the Northwest Branch, the Anacostia River, the Chesapeake Bay, and the Atlantic Ocean, where it becomes marine debris. Still needs to be emptied by someone, though!

The county’s \$250,000 grant to Anacostia Riverkeeper purchased the bandalong and paid for its installation and maintenance. Sherard pointed out that the grant money came from the stormwater management fee that appears as the line item “water quality protection charge” on county property tax bills.

Sherard said normal maintenance of our bandalong will be conducted by members of the Montgomery County Conservation Corps, which hires local youths for a green jobs training program. The team is scheduled to come weekly to take a photo, clean the trap, and sort the trash to provide data for the evaluation of the pilot project.

Sherard is scheduled to speak at the NFCCA neighborhood meeting on Zoom at 7:30 p.m. on 9 February. ■



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My Team is thankful to have worked throughout 2021, in a very active real estate market, and achieved our highest level of sales production ever in 2021! We expect more of the same regarding, pandemic and housing in 2022. The pattern of low inventory over the past three years has not improved. If anything, it is getting tighter. Let me be straightforward, it is a seller's market across most areas. We have experienced that in representing many of our buyers in competitive contract bidding wars. It is very stressful for buyers and agents! Our sales results speak for how well we represent our clients and customers!

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I have never felt more strongly that owners who try to sell their homes by themselves are giving up significant dollars. They don't realize what possibilities come from the broadest exposure to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). Some owners

get too eager to sell and sometimes accept offers while in Coming Soon status. My owners, who held off for all contracts to come in, did best.

We Help Home Owners Sell for Top Prices

Sellers who have followed our advice have enjoyed minimal fix-up expenses and received offers well above what they desired. Our professional contacts help prepare homes quickly and for reasonable costs. Our sellers have been satisfied with the clean-up and renovations we helped arrange.

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Recent Sales in Northwood/Forest Knolls

ADDRESS	LIST/SOLD PRICE	LIST PRICE	RATIO (S/L)	CLOSE DATE	STYLE	BR	BA/HBA	DOM	LOT SQ FT	SUBDIVISION
510 Dennis Ave	\$750,000	\$649,000	115%	1/14/2022	Rambler	6	3	3	7,405	Northwood Knolls
315 Hannes St	\$531,000	\$525,000	101%	1/7/2022	Colonial	4	3/1	3	7,313	Forest Knolls
107 Kinsman View Cir	\$422,500	\$395,000	106%	12/17/2021	Townhouse	3	2/1	7	1,500	Northwood Park View
109 Kinsman View Cir	\$453,000	\$449,900	100%	12/10/2021	Townhouse	3	3/1	10	1,500	Northwood Park View
10700 Eastwood Ave	\$625,000	\$625,000	100%	12/8/2021	Bi-level	4	3	15	8,083	Northwood Village
415 Eisner St	\$515,000	\$500,000	103%	12/8/2021	Split Level	3	3	7	6,127	Northwood Park
840 Loxford Ter	\$525,000	\$525,000	100%	12/3/2021	Split Level	4	2/1	16	6,966	Forest Knolls
10304 Eastwood Ave	\$750,000	\$745,000	100%	11/30/2021	Cape Cod	4	3/1	5	10,702	Northwood Park
10610 Lockridge Dr	\$541,000	\$525,000	103%	11/24/2021	Rambler	3	3	4	7,440	Northwood Park View
71 Kinsman View Cir	\$405,000	\$435,000	93%	11/22/2021	Townhouse	4	3/1	48	1,604	Northwood Park View
1143 Loxford Ter	\$560,000	\$559,000	100%	11/5/2021	Split Foyer	3	3	14	6,906	Forest Knolls

For a real-time update for Northwood Sales: www.ciment.com/northwood

In the above chart, we now show **Sold Price and List Price** and **Ratio of Sold Price to List Price (S/L)**.
The **SoldPrice/ListPrice Ratio** gives you a sense of the strength of **Seller Market** versus **Buyer Market**.

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