

MIDTOWN NEWS

— BRANDYWINE —

VOL. 3 NO. 4
NOVEMBER, 2023



The autumn leaves pile on my walk,
We rake them up, we hope they're hauled
We blow them by each others' alleyways
We're glad the birds and bees need the autumn leaves.



BLOCK PARTY 2023



A VERY GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!



MTB Block Party 2023 is in our memory books, facebook pages, and photo libraries! The food was fantastic, the friends old and new were delightful, and the raffle/silent auction donations amazing. There are so many volunteers and donors to thank!

The wind was brisk but the sun came out and the fun, food and friendship brightened the day.

Please visit our website midtownbrandywine.org for more photos and a list of volunteers and donors who made the day possible.

FALL PLANT SALE

Midtown Brandywine's first annual fall plant sale wrapped up at the 2023 Block Party. Neighbors carted off 346 native plants which will enrich the neighborhood for years to come with beauty and color and will be an important food source for native butterflies and birds. We were able to obtain an additional 70 plants which will be planted in our beautiful West Street Pocket Park!

This project was a great success, and we want to do it all over again in Spring 2024. Watch out for more information in *Midtown Brandywine News*, our neighborhood website, or the neighborhood Facebook group for future neighborhood plant sales!
- Jes Reed

MAGNIFICENT MONARCHS IN MIDTOWN

An interview with Jason Hoover on Midtown Brandywine's 2023 Monarch butterfly program

Midtown Brandywine resident, Jason Hoover, has passionately spearheaded the Midtown Monarch butterfly program, establishing an enthusiastic community around these beautiful creatures in a single season.

Aside from his butterfly endeavors, Jason is the proprietor of the renowned digital marketing
continued



MIDTOWN BRANDYWINE NEIGHBORS' ASSOCIATION
midtownbrandywine.org ✦ Delaware's Loveliest Neighborhood

Monarchs, continued

and website firm, Trolley Web. Although web development was never in his initial plans, he found joy in aiding businesses and nonprofits in Delaware, thereby deepening his connection to his community. Jason's commitment to bolstering the ambitions of ordinary individuals trying to achieve commendable objectives is commendable.

We caught up with **Jason** to discuss the achievements of the 2023 Midtown Monarchs program and to look ahead to 2024.

Midtown Brandywine News: "What inspired you to focus on monarch butterflies? With the myriad of fascinating insects available, why do monarchs hold such a special place in this project?"

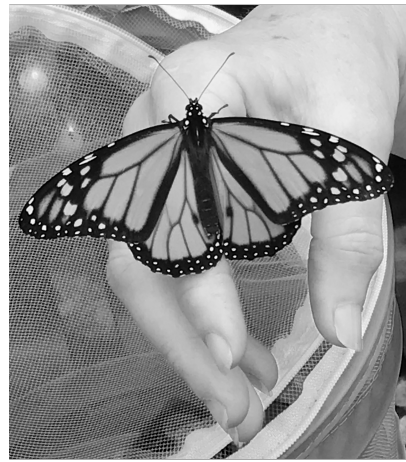
Jason Hoover: "While the project revolves around monarchs, it's not exclusively about them. Monarchs are undeniably magnificent. Their distinct appearance and awe-inspiring migration from the U.S. and Canada to Mexico are unparalleled. But beyond their beauty and fascinating life cycle, there's an alarming concern: their declining numbers. In the past 30 years, their population has dwindled to just 20% of its original size. You know, Monarchs are exclusive to North America.

"What captures my interest is that, like countless other insects, monarchs play a crucial role in our ecosystem. Although people often find bugs repulsive, the monarchs serve as a captivating introduction to the entomological world. Their transformation from eggs, through several caterpillar stages, and into butterflies is mesmerizing. And this metamorphosis isn't unique to them; it's a phenomenon that many insects undergo. Monarchs specifically, with their dietary restriction to milkweed due to a unique co-evolution, shed light on the intricate relationships within our ecosystem and emphasize the importance of supporting it."

Midtown Brandywine News: "Given the milkweed's co-evolution with the monarch, is it correct to assume milkweed is native to America?"

Jason Hoover:** "Yep, most milkweeds are native to America, although there are some exceptions like the tropical milkweed. Promoting the monarch program has inspired many of our neighbors to plant milkweed in their gardens."

MTB: "Has this milkweed initiative sparked an interest in native plantings in the neighborhood?"
Jason Hoover: "Absolutely, yes. Planting milkweed



New Monarch enthusiast Jes Reed retrieves Misha, Natasha Poppe's first viable Monarch, from his habitat. We learned that the two large spots near the body identify them as male.

has been a steppingstone to recognizing the significance of native plants in preserving the balance of our ecosystem. While we often plant based on aesthetics or to deter pests, it's essential to appreciate the role of insects in the food chain. They're the foundation. Birds, for example, rely on bugs to synthesize plants into protein since they can't do that on their own. It's all interconnected."



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your phone, or visit <https://midtownbrandywine.org/midtown-monarch-butterfly-program-founder-jason-hoover/>

PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

November in Midtown is a great time. Weather is getting cooler. Pumpkins, gourds, and turkeys replace jack o' lanterns, spiders, ghouls and skeletons on front porches and windows. Our trees quickly empty their limbs of leaves onto our yards, sidewalks and streets. As you stroll along our neighborhood, don't forget to enjoy the best of autumn in Midtown.

And as we get closer to carving that Thanksgiving Day Turkey (or Tofurky), I want to share how grateful I feel to live in Midtown Brandywine. I am thankful for all the neighbors who watch out for each other while also keeping things fun. I appreciate the diversity of thought, beliefs and the individual differences that can be found here. We are fortunate to have a strong neighborhood board engaged in keeping longstanding neighborhood traditions alive while also seeking out new ideas. This is truly a special place to live, so join in on the fun.

Our next meeting is 6:30 pm on Tuesday, November 14 in the Little Church. Keep an eye out for our neighborhood cleanup day. There is a lot going on in Midtown Brandywine so get involved. You can check out our website, look at the Facebook group, or simply reach out to me for more information.

Thank you
Joel Stango
302-438-9834

A SHORT REFLECTION ON THE MIDTOWN LIFE OF LYN DOTO, A PILLAR OF THE MTB COMMUNITY

Many of you who are reading this knew Lyn (Marilyn Doto) for many years, much, much longer and better than I. My husband and I were lucky to buy the house on 14th Street that she and Bill Montgomery inhabited since the end of the 70s. Here are just a few things that I know:

- Lyn and Bill fixed up the house, mostly on their own, stripping paint from bricks and woodwork, installing a kitchen island, second floor laundry (both radical in those days!), and painting rooms with the bright colors that she loved.

- Lyn made costumes for the neighborhood kids for Halloween and for the Christmas parade. "Themes" for the Progressive supper became challenges to create sculptural monuments.

- They both served extensively on the MTBNA Board. She not only created the strong community feeling our neighborhood now has, co-founded the book club, worked on the Block Party, but she fiercely protected the neighborhood from industrial encroachment, securing funds and an agreement when the Hercules Building went in.

- She and Bill loved art and both are amazing artists themselves.

- She and Bill hosted numerous porch parties and other events at 306 West 14th.

- She sent me pages from the book *Growing Up Black in Wilmington, Delaware* so that I would know something about the history of the neighborhood and its members.

- Natasha Poppe

Read a full memorial to Lyn on our website, midtownbrandywine.org



For those who wish to remember Lyn, contributions to The Carter Center or Sojourners' Place are suggested, both causes close to her heart.



Read Lyn's In Memoriam by scanning the QR code with your phone, or visit <https://midtownbrandywine.org/in-memoriam-tribute-to-marilyn-j-lyn-doto-a-pillar-of-midtown-brandywine/>

CAR THEFTS ON THE RISE LOCALLY

New Castle County Police, the state's second-largest law enforcement agency, has recorded about 600 car thefts in 2023, more than double the number recorded at this same time last year. This alarming increase in car thefts is a cause for concern for both the police and the residents of New Castle County.

About 40% of the thefts, or approximately 250, have been of Kias or Hyundais that don't have electronic immobilizers, which confirms the key belongs to that vehicle. This means that these vehicles are particularly vulnerable to theft. Nationally, police attribute the rise to a viral social media trend that encourages the thefts and shows viewers how to steal the cars without a key. Many of these suspects are teenagers, highlighting a worrying trend.

With the official start of winter just two months away, Midtowners who start their cars in the morning to warm them up and then go back inside to finish getting ready for work or school may want to rethink their morning schedule. This is because some stolen vehicles are being used to commit other crimes.

Cars with remote start buttons are less likely to be stolen as long as the doors are locked, police say. But people with traditional keys that remain in the ignition should avoid leaving their unattended car running. The Wilmington Police Department has free steering wheel locks which can be used to prevent car thefts (available on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last).

Source: Delaware Online/News Journal

- Bob Blanchard
MTBNA Safety Committee

HEADS UP -- NOVEMBER PICKUP AND SWEEPING CHANGES

October 31 is the FINAL DAY of regular street sweeping! There will be some leaf sweeping without parking limits.

Recycling will be picked up WEDNESDAY, NOV 8, not 9, due to Veteran's Day

Recycling will be picked up WEDNESDAY, NOV 22, not 23, due to Thanksgiving

COUNCILMEMBER JAMES SPADOLA ON MIDTOWN BRANDYWINE AND WILMINGTON AT LARGE

Midtown Brandywine News recently sat down with Wilmington Councilmember At-Large, **James Spadola**. James, elected to the Wilmington City Council in 2020 with a record-breaking margin, began his journey in public service post-9/11, enlisting in the US Army Reserves and later receiving the Combat Action Badge for his service in Iraq. A dedicated advocate against childhood illiteracy, he serves as the Executive Director for **Read Aloud Delaware**.

Before this, he was notable for his community outreach initiatives with the Newark Police Department, including the acclaimed #HugACop video. Apart from his political and social endeavors, Spadola is a talented guitarist and holds both a B.A. in Political Science and an MBA. Recognized with awards such as the Outstanding Young Wilmingtonian and "40 Under 40," Spadola, in his downtime, enjoys life with his wife Lianne, 20 month-old son, and their unique rescue dog, Hoss.

Midtown Brandywine News: "Thank you for agreeing to talk with *Midtown Brandywine News*, James. You've been advocating for what you call 'a systemic approach to parking reform' for some time. In fact, I think the issue of parking has been one of your key platforms since you were elected to council."



'LITE UP THE NIGHT' TO BE SAFER

As we all know, the nights are getting longer and winter is still a few weeks away. National police statistics point to well-lit neighborhoods being among the safest in an urban setting. We can all help by leaving our front porch/back door lights on from dusk to dawn. Let's all get into the 'Lite Up the Night' habit!

- Bob Blanchard

SAVE THE DATE

Be sure to mark Tuesday, December 12, on your calendar and join your neighbors at the Pocket Park for our annual Holiday Caroling event. We'll get underway at 6:00 pm and conclude with the lighting of our community tree, funded by Council members Michelle Harlee and James Spadola. Details are still be worked out for the Holiday Party which will follow. Be sure to join us for a wonderful start to the season.

James Spadola: "Yes, it wasn't something that I initially envisioned, but numerous people reached out to me about parking issues, especially given my campaigning throughout the entire city. I received complaints from residents about parking tickets that seemed unfair. So rather than dealing with these issues on a case-by-case basis — or playing Whack-A-Mole, as I call it — we realized the need for a more systemic approach. The administration, along with several of my colleagues on council, has been working on parking reforms. It's an ongoing process. It's often two steps forward, one step back, but we're making progress."

MTB: "How do you feel about the most recent slate of parking reforms introduced by the mayor's office?"

James Spadola: "You're referring to the appeal process now being handled by the JP court; I see it as an overwhelmingly positive change. The only downside might be the new appeal process."

I had been working on legislation advocating for this, so I'm glad the mayor's office took the initiative."

MTB: "If you could implement every parking reform that you feel is necessary and achievable, what would the ideal parking situation look like in Wilmington?"



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your phone, or visit <https://midtownbrandywine.org/councilmember-james-spadola-on-midtown-brandywine-and-wilmington-at-large/>



THANK YOU!!

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HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE GETS UNDERWAY

November 1 marks the start of the Midtown Brandywine Holiday Food Drive. Working with our partners at YouGiveGoods, the generous residents of Midtown have contributed nearly \$19,000 to the Food Bank of Delaware since 2016. All your contributions stay here in Delaware to help alleviate food insecurity for our less fortunate Blue Hens. Full details will be sent out by October 31.