

# MIDTOWN NEWS

— BRANDYWINE —

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DECEMBER, 2023



A winter's day... In a deep, and dark, December  
I'm not a-lone! I've got my friends on Tatnall, On West I've got a few,  
Winchester and on Orange you know it too!  
Love all the lights! And all the joy in Midtown!



## SHARE THE JOY OF THE SEASON DEC 12 @ 7PM

Lights, holiday song, snacks, cookies and drinks -- Midtown's annual holiday party returns to the Pocket Park for 2023! Special holiday lights and decor will grace the park courtesy of City Council funds from James Spadola and Michelle Harlee.

Rather than traveling to sing carols, we will gather in the park to sing carols (or hum, or just enjoy!)



Set-up is planned for 6:30

Snacks and sodas, and we hope cider and hot chocolate will be served, please bring a thermos or cup to save styro. **Neighbors are asked to bring a favorite holiday cookie or other treat to share.** BYO adult beverages for yourself or to share, and chairs if you wish.

There will be heat, friends, and fun to brighten up the night!

## POCKET PARK CELEBRATION

### PRESIDENT'S UPDATE

The holiday season in Midtown Brandywine is such a special time and I wanted to take a moment to extend warm wishes to each and every one of you. It's a time of joy, fellowship and gratitude. Neighbors come together and share their traditions, food, decorations and lights. Families and friends visit from all different places. We should feel incredibly fortunate to be a part of this community.

During this festive season, take some time to stroll through Wilmington's diverse neighborhoods and look at the lights and holiday decorations. I encourage you all to embrace the spirit of giving and compassion. Learning about other traditions and celebrating together is an awesome way to spread the holiday cheer.

May the season bring you happiness, peace and

love. May your homes be filled with warmth and laughter and may all your dreams and aspirations find fulfillment in the coming year.

Another **VERY SPECIAL THANKS** to the generous neighbors and the following businesses who donated items for our Block Party raffle:

**RIV Athletics, Pure Yoga Pilates Studio, Hagley Museum and Library, Dorcea, Cafe Mezzanotte, The Quoin, Swigg Real Wine Craft Beer & Spirits, Scout Café, Pet Supplies Plus Wilmington, StretchPlex, Zyng Nails & Spa, OperaDelaware, The Chancery Market, and Moore Brothers Wine Company.**

Joel Stango 302-438-9834



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

# MICHAEL ANDERSON: DIVING DEEP TO SAVE CORAL REEFS

By Simon Cousins, *Midtown Brandywine News*

In the heart of Midtown Brandywine lives a man whose passion for the ocean has led to a global initiative. Michael "Mike" Anderson, a longtime resident of Midtown Brandywine and retired educator, has made it his life's work to preserve and restore one of the planet's most vital ecosystems: coral reefs. As the founder of the Aquarium Divers For Coral Society (ADFC), Mike's journey from a local educator to a global conservationist is a tale of passion, perseverance, and the power of community.

## Mike Anderson: A Midtown Brandywine Resident with a Global Vision

"I've been here about seven and a half years," Mike reflects on his time in Midtown Brandywine. Previously residing in Forty Acres, Wilmington, and New Jersey, Mike's local roots run deep. But his love for the ocean and scuba diving, fostered through regular diving at the Adventure Aquarium, soon steered him towards a larger purpose. Birth of the ADFC.

ADFC's inception was a response to a pressing need Mike observed during his diving expeditions. "It was in Bonaire in 2013... I saw the first nursery for coral restoration, and it was like a hook," Mike recalls. His experiences in the Florida Keys, witnessing bleached and dying corals, further fueled his deter-

mination. "In 2016, we saw bleached out coral... the temperature of the water was like 89 degrees."

Frustrated by the barriers for volunteer divers in coral restoration and the dire need for help, Mike set forth to create ADFC in 2020, amidst the global pandemic. The organization, now a 501(c)3 non-profit, unites aquarium divers in a concerted effort to restore coral reefs.

## Why Coral Matters: The Heart of Marine Ecosystems

"Coral reefs are essential to the ocean," Mike explains. "25% of all marine life lives in coral reefs." Like trees anchoring a mountain, corals are living animals that form the backbone of marine biodiversity. Their decline, Mike warns, not only affects marine life but also poses significant threats to human economies and coastal protections.

## The Coral Crisis: A Call to Arms

"The biggest issue is the CO2 in the atmosphere," Mike highlights the primary driver of the Coral Crisis. The ocean's absorption of human-made CO2 has led to its acidification and heating, causing widespread coral bleaching and diseases like stony coral tissue loss disease.



Continue reading by scanning the QR code with your phone, or visit

<https://midtownbrandywine.org/mike-anderson-adfc>

## PUBLIC SAFETY & PARKING COMMITTEE

**PORCH PIRATES ON THE PROWL** -- It's the time of year when porch pirates make their presence known by carting away those special gifts you looked high & low for. A recent article in AAA News made some suggestions that may prove helpful in preventing your special Santa Something from being snatched.

**DELIVER TO A WORK ADDRESS** -- If you're back in the office and your workplace allows it, have items sent to that address.

**INSTALL A SECURITY CAMERA NEAR THE DELIVERY AREA** -- Digitally-based security cameras connect to your phone or tablet. If someone triggers the camera, you'll receive a notification. Then, view the live footage or talk to the person via the security system's app.

**\* CREATE A PACKAGE RETRIEVAL ARRANGEMENT WITH NEIGHBORS** -- If you aren't home, ask a neighbor to keep an eye on your property, particularly if you're traveling. Let them know when the package is scheduled to be delivered and they can keep a look out for it.

**HAVE ORDERS SENT TO A CLOSE-BY AMAZON LOCKER** -- I have personally used this approach for particularly valuable orders. Some of the lockers can be accessed 24/7, making pick up very convenient. Area locations can be seen here <https://www.amazon.com/ulp/view>.

None of these suggestions may be new to you - many Midtowners have security cameras - and no suggestion is fool-proof. Consider what steps make sense to you and take those steps to help prevent that very special gift from being pirated.

- Bob Blanchard

# NATASHA POPPE: CRAFTING VOTES, ONE POSTCARD AT A TIME

By Simon Cousins, *Midtown Brandywine News*

In the world of digital bombardment, Natasha Poppe, a local artist and volunteer member of the Midtown Brandywine Neighbors' Association, is bringing a unique, personal touch to civic participation through voter postcarding. Her activity is not just about sending messages – it's a creative crusade to boost voter turnout across the United States, one beautifully crafted postcard at a time.

## The Essence of Voter Postcarding

Voter postcarding is a grassroots initiative aimed at encouraging Americans to participate in the electoral process, especially in smaller, local elections that often go unnoticed. Volunteers across the country, including Natasha, create and send hand-written postcards to targeted voters, delivering a personalized appeal to engage in the democratic process. This nation-wide project focuses on raising awareness and growing voting as a behavior from the ground up, not just during presidential elections but for every opportunity that democracy presents.

"Voter postcarding is our way of gently nudging fellow Americans to participate in their civic duties," explains Natasha. "Each postcard is a piece of art, a tiny personal billboard, carrying a simple yet powerful message: your vote matters."

## Natasha Poppe: A Creative Force in Civic Engagement

Natasha's voyage into voter postcarding began with

"Postcards to Voters," a national network of volunteers. "I was drawn to this initiative in 2017, and since then, it's been a journey of over 6,000 postcards and countless stories," she shares. Besides writing, Natasha mentors new volunteers through her **YouTube channel, "DIY Voter Postcarding."** "My channel is about empowering people. It's about showing that anyone can contribute, irrespective of their artistic skills. Multiple artists' shops have sprung up on Etsy, selling lovely cards, rubber stamps, and decorative tape with slogans. My goal has been to teach very simple 'fun and frugal' techniques anyone can learn, SAVE money, brighten their cards, and easily fill the space beyond the scripts we write."

## Crafting a Community of Change

Natasha's postcards are more than just paper and ink. They are vibrant, whimsical, and full of life – mirroring her belief in the power of personal connections. "I believe that a hand-printed card can make politics feel more personal, more human," she says. "It's not just about creating something beautiful; it's about sending a message from the heart – and something that might go on the fridge rather than the bin."

## The Tangible Impact of a Thoughtful Gesture

The success of the Voter Postcarding efforts is reflected in the data. "We've seen studies, like one in Florida, showing that these postcards can make a real difference, especially in tight races," she notes.



Continue reading by scanning the QR code with your phone, or visit

<https://midtownbrandywine.org/natasha-poppe-crafting-votes>

## Midtown Brandywine Neighbors' Association Board Members and Officers 2023-2024

Bob Blanchard  
Simon Cousins  
Jason Hoover  
Jeff Mazzella, Treasurer  
Nancy McGrath  
Rhea Phillips  
Natasha Poppe, Secretary  
Jessica Reed, Vice President  
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John Stafford  
Joel Stango, President  
Irene Vogel  
Michael Yingling  
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## MIDTOWN SETS RECORD FOR HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

**YOU DID IT!** Starting on November 1, Midtown Brandywine held its traditional Holiday Food Drive to benefit the Food Bank of Delaware. Little did we know that Midtowners would respond in such an amazing fashion. As of 11/30 at 11am (drive ends at midnight), our amazing neighborhood donated **\$5,000.25**, smashing our ambitious goal of \$3,700. **THIS IS THE MOST CONTRIBUTIONS THE DRIVE HAS EVER GENERATED**, easily surpassing our previous record of \$4,132 set just last year. Since 2016 including this year's record amount, the Holiday Food Drive has donated nearly \$24,000 to help fellow Delawareans facing food insecurity. Thank you seems somewhat inadequate to convey our sincere appreciation to all those who participated. Once again, you have demonstrated that Midtown Brandywine is the BEST neighborhood in Wilmington.

**Editor's Note:** Please extend a special thanks to Bob Blanchard for organizing this effort!

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## MASTERING THE MIDTOWN BRANDYWINE MARKET: A DEEP DIVE WITH REAL ESTATE EXPERT SCOTT DEPUTY

Simon Cousins, *Midtown Brandywine News*

Nestled in the heart of Wilmington, Delaware, the Midtown Brandywine neighborhood has developed and grown as a beacon of urban charm and community resilience. Understanding the intricacies of its real estate landscape is an art mastered by few. Scott Deputy, a seasoned realtor with over 27 years of experience and a lifelong resident of Wilmington, offers a treasure trove of insights into this unique market in an exclusive interview with Midtown Brandywine News.

### Scott Deputy: A Wilmington Story

Scott's journey in the world of real estate and his personal life story intertwines seamlessly with the narrative of Wilmington itself. "I started in real estate back in 1996. It's been a fascinating journey, not just professionally but personally as well," he reflects. "I live here in the city with my wife and seven-year-old daughter. And we are active in our community where we live and active outdoors, enjoying the park systems and green spaces that the city of Wilmington and the park system has created for us."

A martial arts enthusiast and a safety advocate for fellow Realtors, Scott's multifaceted life adds layers to his understanding of the community he serves. "In my spare time, I stay active outdoors and I am a practicing martial artist and martial arts instructor. Something that was sort of an unexpected develop-

ment because of my two passions, real estate and martial arts, I've also become a Realtor safety and self-defense expert. In 2016, I created the first of its kind Realtor safety and self-defense course that was subsequently approved for continuing education credits for licensed salespeople in Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey."

### Midtown Brandywine: More Than Just a Neighborhood

Scott describes Midtown Brandywine as a neighborhood that stands out for its artistic flair and active community involvement, setting it apart from other city areas. "What makes Midtown Brandywine unique is its soul, the people, and the community spirit you find here," he says.

Asked about his experience brokering homes in the neighborhood, he says, "It's been about a half dozen or so in the last five years, maybe a little more than that on the buying and selling side, of course, properties on Tatnall Street, West Street and in between."

Scott paints a picture of a neighborhood that's not just a place to live but a neighborhood with a true sense of local community.

"I'm a huge fan, quite frankly, of the Midtown Brandywine neighborhood. Historically, the Trolley Square neighborhood had been the hip, walkable neighborhood. But as it became less and less affordable, I started educating my buyers about the Midtown Brandywine community ...



Continue reading by scanning the QR code with your phone, or visit

<https://midtownbrandywine.org/midtown-brandywine-property-market-2023-2024>