

MHNA NEWS

*Miller Heights
Neighborhoods*

www.MHNAnews.com

February 2026

A MESSAGE FROM THE MHNA PRESIDENT

Dear Neighbors,

On January 7 we held a Virginia Legislative (and Candidate) Forum at Flint Hill Middle School. It was originally planned for Senator Salim and Delegate Bulova to brief us on their 2026 legislative agendas but with Delegate Bulova's seat up for election we turned it into a briefing from Senator Salim and a candidate forum with Democrat Gretchen Bulova (our new Delegate) and Republican Adam Wise. We had about 50 folks there and I think it was a lively and entertaining forum.

As many of you know, I ran for Delegate Bulova's seat. I lost the election but learned a lot and am extremely grateful for all the support from family, friends and neighbors. Apologies if you received some frantic emails from me trying to get some votes - it was rather chaotic with a three day election cycle that I learned about on my way home from an overseas business trip.

Regarding the Oakton Elementary School kiss and ride, we are still working with the County to get a better solution to avoid blocking Miller Rd. They eliminated some on street parking which has improved things a little bit but still need more space for cars to wait. They are looking into widening the road just west of the kiss and ride but say it will cost some exorbitant amount of money.

We heard that VDOT is finally approving the designs for the center medians at Miller Rd & Miller Heights Rd and Oakton Rd & Miller Heights Rd. We may have our medians by springtime... fingers crossed. These are landscaped medians and MHNA will be responsible for planting and maintaining them. If you'd like to contribute

something (labor or money) to the median planting please let us know. And if you happen to see a crew out there PLEASE notify me because we want to make sure they do it right the first time (e.g. not leave a bunch of junk inside the median that we have to dig out for plantings).

The AT&T site development at 3033 Chain Bridge Rd is in its final stage of getting their zoning application reviewed by the County. Rumor has it that VDOT is putting the screws to EYA, the developer, over some of their proposed traffic solutions (e.g. the Rosehaven "innovative" solution) but we really don't know the details. Supervisor Palchik seems to be advocating hard for approval of the project regardless of community concerns around local impacts. It is still a great time to weigh in with your own concerns by writing to Supervisor Palchik, Providence Planning Commissioner Jeremy Hancock, and/or At Large Planning Commissioner Phil Niedzielski-Eichner. While most of the decision making is at the County level, VDOT is a state agency with great influence over the traffic analysis and proposed solutions, so you can also reach out to Senator Salim and/or Delegate Bulova with your concerns.

Fairfax County is continuing the Oakton Congestion Mitigation and Safety Study <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/study/oakton-safety>. There will be more meetings with preliminary plans coming up soon - we will keep you apprised. Please join and share your ideas!

We were planning for MHNA elections at our January 7 meeting but we had a last minute nomination. Judith Schneider Fletcher has nominated herself for Vice President and Michelle Cline has decided to step down and become the MHNA legal advisor. We

(Continued on page 2)

CONTACTS

(Continued from page 1)

have not received any other nominations. We will hold a meeting soon to finalize the new board with the rest of the current board members remaining in place. We will need a new Secretary as Sammy Shuster is going to college in the Fall. This is a great position for a high schooler who is looking to build their resume and learn about how local civic organizations work.

As always, I remind everyone to please let us know if you have any questions about what we are doing or have suggestions for what more we can do or how we can do things better. And if anyone wants to work on something in the neighborhood that fits the MHNA mission, let us know. We can always create a committee and support you in your efforts.

Thanks for being great neighbors!

Doug Shuster
MHNA President president@mhnanews.com

MHNA Board Officers

President	Doug Shuster
Vice President	Judith Schneider-Fletcher
Secretary	Sammy Shuster
Treasurer	Abheshek Narain
Communications	Barry Ingram

MHNA Committee Chairs

Membership	Abheshek Narain
Hospitality	Patti Ogden & Marjorie Itkin
Trails & Environment	Sara Holtz
Landscaping	Judith Schneider-Fletcher
Legal Advisor	Michelle Cline

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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Emergency - Police, Fire, Medical)	911
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
Poison Control (TTY)	711
Police (non-emergency)	703-691-2131
Victim Assistance Network (Crisis Hotline)	703-360-7273
Animal Control	703-691-2131
Animal Shelter	703-830-1100
Fairfax County Fire Dept. Hdqtrs.	703-246-2126
Fairfax County Health Dept. (Code compliance)	703-324-1300
Fairfax County Health Dept. (sewer/septic)	703-246-2201
Fairfax Park Authority	703-324-8700
Fairfax Water Authority (after hrs. emergency)	703-698-5800
Hazardous Trees	703-324-1770
Household Hazardous Waste Infoline	703-324-5230
Miss Utility (underground utility marking)	1-800-552-7001
National Weather Service	571-888-3500
Storm Drainage Flooding (after hrs. emergency)	703-323-1211
VDOT (road hazards and conditions)	1-800-367-7623
Washington Gas emergency	844-927-4427
Power Outage (Dominion Power)	1-866-366-4357
Report Potholes (VDOT)	1-800-367-7623
Wildlife Assistance Helpline	703-440-0800

OFFICER AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

A Beaver Dam on Difficult Run!

Submitted by Doug Shuster

As some of you know, I've been advocating for a while for wetland restoration along Difficult Run in the parkland behind Miller Heights. I've been trying to get the County to support efforts to build small structures called beaver dam analogs or post assisted log structures along the stream and tributaries. These would slow the flow of water that runs off down heavily incised channels and promote breaching of the banks to push more water into the drying/degraded wetlands. It would also result in lower nutrient and sediment loads being carried downstream and ultimately to the Chesapeake Bay. These structures can also encourage beavers to take up residence and contribute to the work. There was a large beaver meadow south of the Stevens Family Bridge in the 1990s that served this purpose well and there is a beaver dam upstream across Waples Mill Rd. Well, Tucker Newberry recently noticed this small beaver dam a few hundred yards south of Vale Rd along the trail. Hopefully he and his friends can build strong enough to withstand the heavy flashing of runoff that this area experiences. No word from the County on supporting these efforts yet.



Walking Safely!

Submitted by Rebecca Pick

WALK ON LEFT SIDE FACING TRAFFIC! You need to be able to see what is coming at you.
Thank you!

OUR MHNA WEBSITE

As we mentioned in previous newsletters, the MHNA website is continually updated with new features and information for you. The site works well and allows you to join MHNA and update your directory and sitter information yourselves. The **Member Portal** contains the MHNA Member Directory and the Sitter/Helper Directory. You can quickly pay your MHNA dues on the site and can easily access and update your information.

Check our website at www.mhnnews.com

To claim your household, register and update your profile and pay your dues, go to:

[MHNA Member Portal Login - MHNA Membership Portal \(mhnnews.com\)](http://MHNA Member Portal Login - MHNA Membership Portal (mhnnews.com))

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We send out over **579** emails to our MHNA residents each time we have MHNA announcements, meeting notices, Newsletters, and other communications. Although we have **565** homes in Miller Heights, we only have email addresses for about **393** unique homes, since many homes have multiple email addresses and others have not supplied their email addresses. If you know some of your neighbors are not receiving our mailings, please suggest they provide their email addresses to us. They can provide this information by contacting us at: info@mhnnews.com or going to our website www.mhnnews.com for more information. When residents provide their information, such as address, phone numbers and email addresses, they have the option of keeping the information private if they prefer. We also see that many who are receiving the announcements and newsletters are not opening their emails or their emails may be going into their JUNK or SPAM folders.

You can help get the word out



OFFICER AND COMMITTEE UPDATES (CONT.)

MEMBERSHIP & TREASURER UPDATE

by Abheshek Narain

Membership & Treasurer Update

On the 6th of January, 2026, Miller Heights Neighborhoods Association (MHNA) held an annual meeting to provide a status of our association and major efforts done in 2025. During that meeting, we provided a brief update on our Membership status (revised) and Financials, which we've included for those of you who were unable to attend.

Membership

MHNA has seen a 55% drop in paid memberships since May 2025, a significant number given the number of households that are aware of MHNA (as measured by claimed households). This is an alarming drop, yet during our meeting, we heard from many residents how valuable MHNA is and how much they were grateful for the Association.

Most recently, I connected with a neighbor who submitted a request for snow removal through the MHNA portal. They were in desperate need for help. I was able to speak with them a few times via the phone to provide them contacts for snow removal and they were extremely appreciative of the support MHNA provided. This is the reason MHNA was established – to support one another in times of need.

MHNA Membership as of January 29, 2026

	Membership		
	7/1/24	5/6/25	1/29/26
Total Households	565	565	565
Claimed	245	252	254
Paid	139	138	62
Expired	103	114	197
Unclaimed	322	313	311

We are grateful for our current members and the support they provide, but encourage you to share the benefits and value of supporting MHNA with your non-member neighbors and request they join to support. Neighbors can join by visiting MHNA's website (www.MHNAnews.com), re-register and submit the annual donations. Only together can we continue to keep our neighborhood as amazing as it is.

If you have any updates to your contact information, please visit our Membership portal (<https://www.mhnaneWS.com/portal/login.php>), or reach out to membership@mhnaneWS.com.

Financials

Below is a quick snapshot of our financial position for the full calendar year 2025. In the summary, we have shared the largest expenses for the calendar year, with our PO Box being the largest single annual expense. Most of our donations are coming in via the website's PayPal option, but we do receive checks via the PO Box from some neighbors. We are evaluating whether the cost of maintaining the PO Box is warranted given that PayPal seems to be the preferred route. While our reserve balances may seem high, we anticipate an uptick in landscaping expenses in 2026 should VDOT complete their planned median at the entrance of Miller Heights.

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OFFICER AND COMMITTEE UPDATES (CONT.)

(Continued from page 4)

MHNA Financials: Calendar Year 2025

<u>Calendar Year 2025</u>			
Account	Beginning	Ending	Net
	Balances	Balance	
	(1/1/25)	(12/31/25)	
Checking (Truist)	\$ 5,279.75	\$ 7,028.45	\$ 1,748.70
PayPal	\$ 1,793.05	\$ 2,408.12	\$ 615.07
			<u>\$ 2,363.77</u>

<u>Membership</u>		
	<u>Donations</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
		<u>% Expenses</u>
Paypal	\$ 3,653.18	
Checking (Truist)	\$ 655.00	
Website Maintenance		\$ 160.00 8.39%
Marketing		\$ 118.68 6.23%
Block Party / MHNA Bash		\$ 394.47 20.69%
Entrance Landscaping		\$ 562.15 29.49%
PO Box / USPS		\$ 671.00 35.20%
Total	\$ 4,308.18	\$ 1,906.30
		\$ 2,401.88

Current Balances (as of Jan 06 2025)

Paypal	\$ 2,426.93
Checking (Truist)	\$ 7,028.45
Total Reserves	\$ 9,455.38

As a reminder, if you prefer to remit your donation by check, please feel free to submit payment to "Miller Heights Neighborhoods Association" P.O. Box 538, Oakton, VA 22124

Thank you for your continued support of the Miller Heights Neighborhoods Association and its goals and activities. We look forward to your engagement and the continued sharing of information about MHNA and our activities with your neighbors.

-Abheshek Narain
Treasurer & Membership Chair
Miller Heights Neighborhoods Association (MHNA)

OFFICER AND COMMITTEE UPDATES (CONT.)

Officer Message

Submitted by Judith Schneider-Fletcher

Retirement 2026!

It finally happened - I officially retired on January 16th! For my next chapter, I'm going back to weaving and plan to make 40 rugs before I get too old. I'm starting out slow with just some kitchen towels to get back on the groove, but the big loom is waiting and I have a lot of yarn stashed away to last all year – and then some.

Two resolutions for 2026: Say YES to anything except going back to full time work. I'm looking forward to doing everything and anything – so if you want to try something new, call me.

The 2nd resolution – don't buy any new yarn for 12 months. It will be hard to resist, but I have a lot of yarn and fabric stowed away, should be able to do it.

Kids News – passing the torch

Sami Shuster our editor for the last 5 years for Kids News is getting ready to head off to college and so we needed to find an eager replacement to take the reins. We found not one, but three future journalists to take the job. Evelyn Brubaker, Ida Brubaker and Ginny Brubaker are ready to step up. Sami worked with the Brubaker girls on the latest edition and will officially turn over the pages to them this summer.

Sami, you will be missed! Good Luck Evelyn, Ida and Ginny!

Vice President Changes

First, a big Thank You to Michelle Cline for her service as Vice President for the last two years. With an active family and a new role at work, Michelle has chosen to take a step back and will just offer legal advice if we need it. She will still be active in our community with projects like the Bash and helping out with spring clean ups at the entrance.

I will step into the Vice President role as interim VP until we find a permanent replacement. Please consider becoming a Board Member for Miller Heights. We're a fun group! you'll have lots of support and no micro-management!

A final note, I am a Notary in Virginia (since 2004) and will continue to offer my services for notarization of any member of the Miller Heights community. I do ask that you are a paid member. In over 20 years I have never charged for notary services, except for the occasional cup of coffee or a beer at Settle Down Easy. Just a reminder - I'm not a lawyer. I do not verify the legal document, only the signature(s) of those signing. It may be easier to come to your house rather than my house; just send a note on the MHNA FB or text to discuss.

Front entrance and Medians

We are still waiting for the medians to be built by VDOT, we hope that maybe this is the year. There will be a clean up of the front entrance scheduled for April – contact me if you want to help. (Service hours for students).

Coat Drive

Our coat drive for 2025 was disappointing with just 6 bags donated down from the previous year by 18 bags. We will need your help this fall to get back to our high numbers. Save your coats!!

MILLER HEIGHTS FACEBOOK GROUP

The **Miller Heights Neighborhoods Facebook group** is for residents of Miller Heights in Oakton, VA, to share news, information and upcoming events that might be of interest to our neighborhood. This closed group has grown to **627** members and it is still growing with lots of posts.

The MHNA Facebook group is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with neighbors.

You can be invited to join by your neighbor or you can request to join yourself. Check [202611111111111](https://www.facebook.com/groups/202611111111111) Miller Heights Neighborhood | Facebook .

PLEASE SLOW DOWN!

We are still seeing far too many instances of drivers, especially on Miller Heights Road, exceeding posted speed limits. We have many neighbors walking and enjoying the fresh air along the roads, children playing throughout the neighborhood and contractors providing service to our residents. Over the years, we have had speed bumps and speed limit signs installed and have asked the FFX County police to place speed cameras in various locations now and then. Now, we have added more visible yard signs and speed humps to remind drivers to slow down .

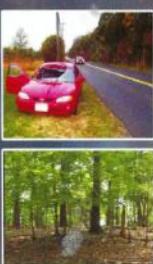


OFFICER AND COMMITTEE UPDATES (CONT.)

THE MILLER HEIGHTS SOCIAL CLUB

The Miller Heights Neighborhood has another neighborhood group called the Miller Heights Social Club (MHSC). Originally called the Miller Heights Co-op, the organization was formed for families with young children. Over the years the group has changed focus to social events for families and adults of all ages. Our annual events are intended for neighbors to come together, get to know one another, and build relationships. Our events have included: Wine & Beer Tasting, Halloween Family Party & Chili Cook-off, Ladies Bunco Night, Men's Poker Night, Thanksgiving Turkey Trot, Holiday Cookie Exchange, Progressive Dinner, Spring Family Party, Summer Fiesta, and Family Pizza Party. To join visit: <https://forms.gle/RmvgQgkq7YvE3Nvh9> or with questions email: millerheightssocialclub@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you at a future event!

FAIRFAX COUNTY DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM



Each year, deer management is conducted in select Fairfax County parks.

The program is conducted by the Fairfax County Police Department, in partnership with the Fairfax County Park Authority, NOVA Parks, and other public landholders.

You are receiving this postcard because you live adjacent to a park where the "Archery Program" management activity is planned to occur this upcoming season.



For more information scan the QR code on the back of this card or visit our website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/archery-program

2026 CAMP GUIDE

Fairfax County Park Authority

REGISTRATION FOR SPRING AND SUMMER CAMPS BEGINS FEBRUARY 3 & 5

SPRING AND SUMMER 2026 CAMP REGISTRATION OPENS THIS WEEK!

Back by popular demand, camp registration will be split between two dates for Team Green and Team Blue based on camp location for your ease once again.

2026 Spring and Summer Camp Registration Start Dates:

Register starting Tuesday, February 3 at 9 a.m.

Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/camps for information and register online.

OFFICER AND COMMITTEE UPDATES (CONT.)

Oakton Nature Instagram Page

(@oakton_nature)

Check out this new Instagram account featuring beautiful photos & fun facts about nature in our amazing Oakton community.

- Follow us!
- Comment on our posts!
- Share your best photos of nature in Oakton (with or without captions) & we'll post them!
- Share Oakton_nature with nature enthusiasts!

(@oakton_nature) • Instagram photos and videos

instagram.com



To those of you on Instagram, check out our new account **@oakton_nature** & follow, like, comment, share our stories & posts. Message us through IG to share nature photos you take in Oakton

A Special Note on Trash and Recycling

There is a lot of very good and helpful information on handling your trash, composting and recycling at the following Fairfax County link for the Fairfax Recycles Newsletter:

[Recycling and Trash | Public Works and Environmental Services \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/public-works-and-environmental-services/recycling-and-trash)

MHNA has been a big supporter of recycling and composting, an effort that Sara Holtz has championed for our neighborhood.

NEWSLETTER NEWS

This is your newsletter. We want to get community event updates, block party news, general neighborhood news, questions and answers about issues, opinions (not political), and just neighborhood stories written by our residents. **If you have information, items of interest to our community, or human interest stories you would like included in the Newsletter, send it to us. Photos are always invited and welcome.**

If you do have input or ideas about content, contact Barry Ingram at:
editor@mhnanews.com

FARMERS MARKETS

Farmfresh Mosaic Market

April - December

On District Ave, between Merrifield Town Center & Strawberry Lane

2920 District Ave
Fairfax, VA 22031

<https://www.freshfarm.org/markets/oakton>



UPCOMING NEARBY EVENTS

Friends of Oakton Library Book Sale

April 22 - 26

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

10am– 5:30pm

Friends of Chantilly Library Book Sale

Wednesday, April 29, Friends Presale (members only)

Friday and Saturday, May 1 and May 2

Sunday, May 3, Box Sale - 1 - 4pm

Need service hours?

Join our effort to remove invasive plants from parkland in Miller Heights and replace them with native plants, for the benefit of local wildlife such as birds and pollinators/butterflies.

Contact Sara Holtz at sh12sh34@gmail.com for upcoming dates.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

Fairfax County Parks

Looking for things for you or your family to do? Classes to take? Recreation or exercise? Well, take a tour through the Winter Guides from the Fairfax County Park Authority. Of course, the Oakmont Recreation Center is the closest one to Miller Heights. You can also view the guide at the Park Authority website: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes>

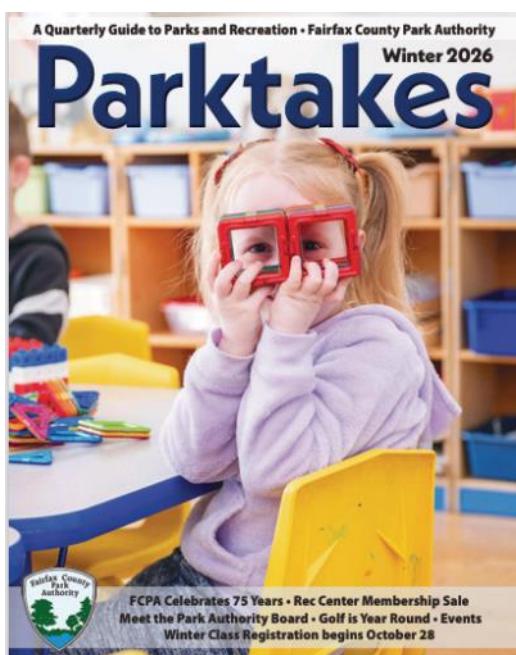
Outdoor, indoor and virtual class options are available in a wide range of interest areas including:

Choose from a variety of options and formats:

- Outdoor and indoor fitness classes
- Learn to swim group lessons and private lessons
- Children's and adult classes
- Summer Camps
- Nature & history programs
- Sports
- Scouting
- Golf lessons
- Gardening
- Virtual classes and camps – Fitness, nature, music, drama, coding
- Astronomy

The fitness centers offer a wide variety of cardiovascular machines, including treadmills, ellipticals and bikes, most with personal television viewing screens. For strength training, we have several lines of Cybex and Free Motion strength training machines as well as free weights.

Winter 2026



GOCA Update

(Greater Oakton Community Association)

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

With the snowstorm bearing down on us, we made the decision to **cancel Oakton's 143rd Birthday celebration**. Our sincere thanks go to **Settle Down Easy Brewing Co.**, who generously offered to host our gathering—we look forward to celebrating together another time.

All of Oakton's restaurants will feel the impact of this storm, so if you're able, today and tomorrow are great times to show your support. We say **Oakton is a small town with big flavor—and even bigger community spirit ... and moments like this prove it**. Thank you for continuing to show up for one another. The participating restaurants [are listed here](#).

Oakton's 143rd birthday is still a time for community pride. We calculate our community's birthday from the date Oakton's name was officially applied to the rural settlement in central Fairfax County known in the mid-1800s as Flint Hill. When residents applied for a U.S. Post Office in 1883, the Postal Service declined the name "Flint Hill" because another community with that name already existed in Rappahannock County, Virginia.

Local resident and first postmaster Squire Ernest Smith suggested the name "Oak's Corner," inspired by the large oak trees nearby. The Postal Service opted for a shorter form, and the community was officially christened **Oakton** when the post office opened on January 24, 1883.

GOCA continues to document and celebrate Oakton's history, with many more stories to share. Most recently, Fairfax County's Channel 16 featured one of Oakton's stories—highlighting the historic Oakton Schoolhouse and GOCA—in an [episode of Providence Perspectives](#).

In closing, we encourage you to support our local restaurants when you can—and to check in on your neighbors as the snowstorm approaches.

Warmly,

The GOCA Board

Lauren Crum and Shelley Deutch, Co-Chairs

Linda Byrne, Jackie Davey, Mark Deaton, Janet Kerr-Tener (Founding Co-Chair), Kris Olsen, Robin Thurman, and Gary Wong

Visit us at www.greateroakton.com

Editor's Note: We really appreciate all our residents and other contributors for providing us with all the input for our MHNA Newsletter. Thank you!

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS



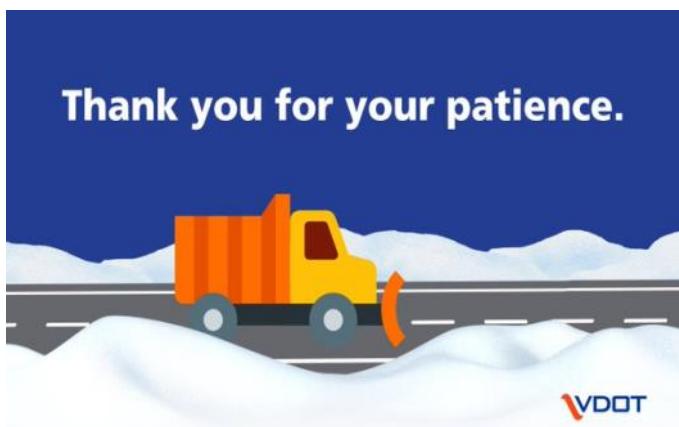
A Message from Supervisor Dalia Palchik

Dear Miller Heights neighbors,

Honored to speak at the @fairfaxparks IMA 20th Anniversary at Frying Pan Park on Sunday, February 1st! This program is vital to the health of our native ecosystems and does a great job of combining action with education. Since its inception the program has grown from 20 sites to 65 (!) with over 150 acres in the county under IMA management.

Continue to stay off the roads so [Virginia Department of Transportation](#) plows can work without snow and ice compacting to the road surface.

Snow removal for private streets is the responsibility of property management companies or homeowners associations.



Sign up to receive my bi-weekly updates on what's happening at the Board, local events, ways to give back, and more (bit.ly/PalchikPost)!

All my best,

Supervisor Dalia Palchik

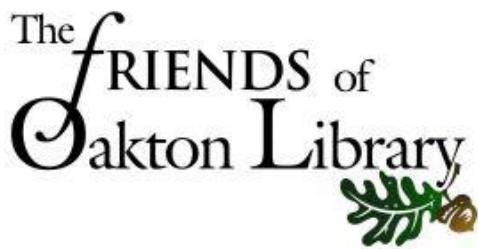
Dalia Palchik

My office, along with many partners, collected 2000+ coats, beanies, gloves, and other winter gear items for our neighbors in need.



Not Too Long Until Spring Once Again!

NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS (CONT.)



The Friends of The Oakton Library could use your donations! We welcome your gently used books, DVDs, CDs, and puzzles. Come and shop for the family. Stock up on kids books, and great reads from current fiction to vintage classics, from non-fiction to memoir and biography. All profits support programming at the Oakton Library and help purchase materials for the county library system. Think of us when you clear out your bookshelves. You may bring up to three bags or boxes per day to the donations cart in the library foyer.

There are plenty of other events going on at the Oakton Library to fill your summer days with fun!

[**Events - The Friends of Oakton Library**](#)

<https://www.friendsofoaktonlibrary.org>

Mary Colombi - VP Friends of the Oakton Library

Oakton Community Library Hours

Monday & Tuesday - 10 am to 9 pm
Wednesday through Saturday - 10 am to 6 PM

BOOK DONATION INFORMATION

Your book donations help to finance Oakton Library's programs and FCPL's collections as a whole.

When donating used books please note:

- Donations should be in good to excellent condition
- There is a limit of 3 grocery sized bags or small boxes per donation
- All donations should be left on the green cart just inside the Oakton Library lobby

The Oakton Public Library is grateful for all the support from our Miller Heights neighbors.

Please Protect Our Libraries from New Legacy Donate Books Bins

Neighbors, you may have noticed that in the past months big green Donate Books bins have made their appearance at the I 66 Transfer Station on West Ox Rd. These bins are owned by a for profit company called New Legacy Books. They collect discarded books, discard the bulk of them, and sell those of value through third parties such as Thrift Books or Amazon Marketplace. Only 15% of the profits are returned to Fairfax County.

New Legacy bins compete directly with nonprofit Friends of the Library groups across Fairfax county. When you donate books to the Oakton Library 100% of the profits from our twice yearly used book sales and ongoing sale shelves in the library foyer, go to support programming at Oakton, and to augment the collections budget of the Fairfax Public Library System. Last year the Friends of Oakton Library gave \$41,000 to our library system to buy print, audio, and ebooks, in addition to research materials, etc.

The current “collection budget” for new materials for the FCPL is less than half of what the budget was in 2003, a continuing decline as the cost of materials increases. Wait lists for popular books in Fairfax are many weeks and months longer than they are at neighboring Montgomery County. Other than a few best selling titles, Oakton receives no new books. Only the larger regional libraries receive new materials.

The county budget will soon be proposed. If you would like to see our library collections budget restored to what it was 23 years ago, please write to our supervisor, Dalia Palchik, at providence@fairfaxcounty.gov.

And please keep your donations coming! Your generosity all comes back to support the library that serves our community so well. Thank you, Miller Heights!



Mary Colombi

Friends of Oakton Library Board Member

TRAILS & ENVIRONMENT

Submitted by Sara Holtz

Habitat Restoration Year in Review

225 volunteers spent nearly 700 hours volunteering on parkland in Miller Heights & nearby Oakmont Park. Volunteers included Fairfax County Public School students, Scouting America scouts, Girl Scouts, Master Naturalists, and elected officials including Congressman James Walkinshaw, Delegate David Bulova, State Senator Saddam Salim, Supervisor Dalia Palchik, Providence School Board representative Karl Frisch, and Providence Park Board representative Ken Quincy.

In addition to removing invasive plants, rescuing trees from invasive vines, and planting native trees & plants, for the first time in 2025 we created five fenced areas (deer exclosures) to protect native plants from deer browse.

Another first in 2025: Tucker Newberry, Nick Newberry, Karin Lehnigk & Sara Holtz (FCPA volunteer site leaders) started treating invasive plants with herbicide. During our National Public Lands Day 2023 volunteer event, Delegate David Bulova volunteered with us and we advocated to allow trained volunteers like us to use herbicide to treat invasive plants. As a result of our advocacy, Delegate Bulova introduced a bill during the 2024 session, it passed the Virginia House and Senate, and Governor Youngkin signed it. [House Bill 320](#). For more information about herbicide see the [Fairfax Tree Rescuer PRISM](#) page.

Thanks to Tucker, Nick, Karin & our amazing volunteers for an incredibly successful year!



Walking Safely!

WALK ON LEFT SIDE FACING TRAFFIC! You need to be able to see what is coming at you.

Thank you!



MILLER HEIGHTS REAL ESTATE UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2026

Predicting the Housing Market in 2026

Hi All,

You may not be interested in buying or selling right now—but chances are, someone in your life is. As we start 2026, economists and housing analysts are rolling out their forecasts, and while no one has a crystal ball, several clear trends are shaping what this year is likely to bring.

Here's what matters most.

First-Time Buyers Are Waiting Longer—and Paying for It

The average age of a first-time homebuyer has steadily climbed over the past decade, rising from about **30 to nearly 40 years old**. One major consequence of that delay is that buyers who wait an extra 10 years to purchase a home miss out on an average of **\$150,000 in wealth accumulation**. Time in the market continues to matter more than timing the market.

Inventory Remains Historically Low

When factoring in population growth, the number of homes available for sale for the buyer pool is at the **lowest level since records have been kept**. This ongoing supply shortage continues to favor sellers and supports home values nationwide. In simple terms, there are still more buyers than houses.

Inventory Is Expected to Improve But Not Flood the Market

Economists predict the number of homes for sale could increase by **around 20%** this year. That's meaningful but it's not enough to swing the market dramatically. What it likely means is:

- Homes may stay on the market a bit longer
- Fewer bidding wars
- More breathing room for buyers

Still, the overall dynamic remains a **seller's market**, just a calmer one.

Interest Rates Are Unlocking Pent-Up Sellers



As interest rates hover flat or trend slightly downward, more homeowners are re-entering the market. Many have been sitting on the sidelines since COVID, holding ultra-low mortgage rates and waiting for clarity. The prevailing sentiment now is that dramatic rate drops aren't coming—so life decisions are back in the driver's seat. This is expected to contribute to the gradual rise in inventory.

Price Growth Is Slowing but Still Positive

Nationally, home prices have risen roughly **50% over the past five years**. That pace was never sustainable. In 2026, prices are expected to **level off**, with growth in the **2–4% range** compared to last year. That's healthier, more normal appreciation and a sign of market stabilization, not decline.

Home Equity Remains a Major Strength

Since the 2008 housing crisis, homeowners have seen **steady, long-term growth in equity**. Unlike that period, today's homeowners are far less leveraged, lending standards are stronger, and equity cushions are deeper. This foundation reduces the risk of widespread distress and continues to give homeowners flexibility—whether that means selling, moving up, or tapping equity strategically.

The Bottom Line

The 2026 housing market looks less dramatic but more durable. Inventory is slowly improving, price growth is moderating, and equity remains strong. It's not a market driven by fear or frenzy; it's a market driven by fundamentals.

For buyers and sellers alike, clarity not chaos, is the theme of the year. For a monthly market update, feel free to contact me.

Liz Potemra

703-581-7759

lizp@longandfoster.com

Long and Foster Vienna/Oakton

Your referral is the best compliment I can earn!

Recent Real Estate Activity in Miller Heights:

Status	Address	Number of Beds	Last Update	List/Close Price	DOM
Closed	10906 Miller Rd	4	1/8/2026	\$1,118,500	3
Closed	3014 Apple Brook Ln	5	12/5/2025	\$2,250,000	21
Closed	11008 Devenish Dr	4	12/19/2025	\$1,250,000	25
Closed	3118 Miller Heights Rd	5	12/10/2025	\$1,175,000	92

COMMENTS AND INPUT FROM OUR RESIDENTS

Chasing Chill Hours, Dodging Disaster in the Grip of a Gardner's Winter.

Submitted by Farmer Brown

As the forecast threatens a proper deep freeze with single digit temperatures next week, this feels like the last call to admit defeat and drag the tender plants indoors again. My olive and two feijoa trees have been stoically braving the deck so far, soaking up every scrap of weak winter sunshine in the perhaps misguided hope that the extra light will improve their chances of fruiting this year. In truth, they have probably endured more cold than is strictly kind and hauling them in now is less an act of heroism and more a sheepish acknowledgment that they still need coddling if they are going to reward all this fussing with so much as a single fruit, which I'd consider a respectable harvest. That said, I'll still need approval from my wife and getting that will take an act of heroism of its own.

One big lesson from past winters in Miller Heights is that not everything needs our intervention. Leaf litter still shelters countless insects, larvae, and other tiny garden allies that are biding their time under the duff, and clearing too aggressively can evict them before they are ready to emerge. The crows love my garden, and I've watched a Red-shouldered Hawk snag a mouse from the leaf litter, so the food web clearly approves of a slightly scruffy look. Instead of raking every bed bare, pick one or two trouble spots to neaten and let the rest remain a little wild until temperatures warm consistently. The garden police are not issuing citations for messy corners, and your pollinators will thank you later.

Indoors, this is prime time to indulge in a bit of controlled gardening optimism. Seed-starting stations, whether elaborate setups with LED lights and heat mats or a humble tray in a sunny window, can stretch the season and scratch the itch to grow something green while the ground outside sulks. A small flat of basil, lettuce, or kale is often enough to remind you that the growing year will return, and it is far easier to experiment on a dozen seedlings than on an entire bed once the weather turns fickle. For those who like a challenge, trying one new variety this year keeps things interesting without turning the garden into a full-blown agricultural experiment gone wrong, like I do every other year because I have a short memory. This insight also comes from time spent with a work colleague who is already colour-coding spreadsheets and planning his beds for spring; these over-achievers, hey.

Tucked in among the indoor experiments was also a humbling victory of sorts: one lonely sweet pepper, grown from a salvaged plant in autumn, that topped out at about the size of two cherries. It looked adorable, promised nothing, and delivered even less – the flavor was memorably, comically bitter, as if the plant wanted to make absolutely sure there would be no complacency about off-season success. The good news is that such microscopic, underwhelming harvests can still bring a laugh, confirm that peppers are perennial, and serve as proof that something is photosynthesizing in the depths of winter that might, just might, put me slightly ahead in summer.

This odd shoulder season is also a good moment to take stock of what winter has already taught us. Trees and shrubs that struggled with snow or ice might need a careful look for cracked limbs or broken branches, and any potted plants that were dragged indoors in a hurry may appreciate a more consistent watering routine and a bit of patience as they sulk and drop leaves. Rather than seeing every casualty as a failure, it helps to view them as tuition paid to the School of Gardening Reality, where the curriculum is written by weather, deer, and our own occasional forgetfulness.

For those thinking about upping their ecological game this year, consider setting a modest neighborhood challenge: one native plant added, one invasive plant removed, or one small change to reduce your lawn's footprint or its chemical appetite. Swapping even a strip of turf for native flowers or herbs can boost pollinators, and rethinking a bit of our lawn care reduces both fuel use and costs over time. If you have questions, ideas, or just want to commiserate about garden mishaps and unexpected successes, the Miller Heights Garden Club remains a great place to trade seeds, stories, and friendly advice as we inch toward another growing season together.

If you are so inclined, join the Miller Heights Garden Club Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/share/g/17AXY8o744/>. We'd love to have you!

That's it for me, Farmer Brown
Gordon Brown <gordon.brown81@gmail.com>



COMMENTS AND INPUT FROM OUR RESIDENTS (CONT.)

Interesting Use of Pine Cones

Submitted by Linda Tiani

Pine Cones: Turn Forest Floor Finds into Garden Gold

Pine Cone Weather Check
Hang a dry pine cone by your garden.
• Open = dry → safe to water
• Closed = rain → skip extra watering

Garden-Safe & Gentle
Mature, dry pine cones won't strongly acidify soil. Use them freely around most plants without worrying about pH.

Spiky Pest Fence
Ring tender plants with pine cones to slow slugs, snails, and digging cats. Leave a small gap for watering and you.

Easy Pine Cone Feeder
Spread peanut butter or suet on a pine cone, roll in birdseed, and hang nearby. Birds repay you by eating garden pests all season.

Lighten Heavy Soil
Crush dry pine cones and mix into clay soil. They create air pockets so roots and water can move more easily.

Slow-Release Mulch
Lay pine cones on bare soil as mulch, or break them up for compost. They help hold moisture and add carbon as they slowly break down.

Bug & Bee Hideaways
Tuck clusters of pine cones in a dry corner to shelter ladybugs and solitary bees. They're tiny "insect hotels" that boost natural pest control.

PlantCareToday

COMMENTS AND INPUT FROM OUR RESIDENTS (CONT.)

Snow Photos from Our Residents

In all this cold , snow. Ice and sleet, you can still have a good time outside.



Sara Doing a Little Cross-Country



Just having FUN!



In Miller Heights



Bundled Up!

COMMENTS AND INPUT FROM OUR RESIDENTS (CONT.)

More Snow Photos



Mom and Dad Cardinals Like to Share



MHNA **February** Newsletter

Kids Edition

By: Ida, Evelyn, Virginia and Sammy

And other participants from around the neighborhood!

Welcome to the MHNA Kids Edition! We hope you enjoy the activities and fun stories that we put in here for all of you! If you have any ideas or want to include something of yours in the next edition, please email sammypecci@gmail.com. Enjoy!

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1. Winter Narwhal Plate Craft
2. Fun Winter Activities
3. Book Recommendations
4. Raspberry Banana Breakfast Tacos
5. Superbowl Updates
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Narwhal Plate Craft

In the mood to do a fun winter craft? Here we have a Narwhal plate that you can create with your

What you need:

- ⇒ Glue
- ⇒ Paper plate
- ⇒ Blue paint/markers
- ⇒ Colored paper
- ⇒ Scissors
- ⇒ Glue
- ⇒ Ribbon/other fun decorations

Instructions:

Watch [this Narwal Plate video](#) or read the instructions linked [here](#) on how to make them and use [this](#) template.

If you complete this project, send us some pictures of your results and we will put them in the next newsletter

Raspberry-Banana Breakfast Tacos

Ingredients

- Pancake Mix
- Yogurt

Optional toppings:

- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Bananas
- Blueberries
- Chocolate Chips
- Whipped Cream

Recipe found at [Tasteofhome.com](https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/raspberry-banana-breakfast-tacos/)

Instructions

1. Make pancakes according to the instructions on the pancake mix box
2. Add yogurt and fruits of your choice on top of pancakes.
3. Enjoy!



Fun Wintery Activities

We had an awesome week off because of the recent snowstorm and we hope everyone enjoyed it! But sometimes it can get a bit boring staying at home, and you cannot think of anything to do. Well, here is a list of fun wintery activities that you can do alone or with your friends and family!

- * Build a snowman or a whole family (you can even make one look like Olaf!)
- * Make hot cocoa with whipped cream, marshmallows, chocolate chips, and sprinkles
- * Build an igloo- use a box to make blocks during the day when the snow is a bit warmer
- * Make Snow Ice Cream: With a few key ingredients and 8 cups of snow you can make your very own snow ice cream! Follow directions [here](#).
- * What better way to spend your time inside than to play a few games with your loved ones? Just one deck of cards lets you play hundreds of games, so pull out a game and get ready for some serious competition! [Here](#) are a few ideas to get you started.



Snow makes the outdoors look so much prettier, grab a paint brush, a canvas, and the best view in your house and paint a picture that you can hang up in your room or gift to friends or family



Book Recommendations by Age

5-7 years old:

Lunch lady and the Cyborg Substitute

Junnie B. Jones

Green eggs and ham

One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish

Buffalo Fluffalo and Puffalo

The Princess in Black

Magic Tree House

Mercy Watson

Owl Diaries

Diary of a Wimpy Kid

Captain Underpants

8-11 years old:

Bed Nobs and Broom Sticks

Charlotte's Web

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone

Restart

The Little Prince

The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

The Bad Guys

12-15 years old:

Anne of Green Gables

Hunger Games

One of Us is Lying

Skyward series

Heartstopper

The Uneventful Life of a Cactus

The Perks of being a Wallflower

Stargirl

The Book Thief

Divergent

Wonder

Superbowl Update

Sunday, February 8th is the date set for the 2026 Superbowl, and it is going to be an exciting one. On January 25th the first and second seeds of AFC (the Broncos and the Patriots) played each other, with the Patriots winning by a mere three points with a final score of 7 to 10. That same day, the first and fifth seeds of the NFC (the Seahawks and the Rams) battled to a final score of 31 to 27 with the Seahawks coming out on top. The Patriots and the Seahawks will duke it out in Santa Clara, CA in the 60th Superbowl!

This is not the first time that these two teams have come head to head at the Superbowl, in fact, this will be a rematch of the 2014 Patriot Superbowl victory, where cornerback Malcolm Butler made a game-winning interception in the end zone. According to CBS Sports, the Seahawks are favored to win the match. Another important point to note is that the quarterbacks of the two teams, Drake Maye and Sam Darnold are the two players most favored to win the Superbowl MVP. We hope everyone gets a chance to watch some great football, dance along to the halftime show, and, of course, eat some great food!

puzzle

P	R	E	D	V	X	F	A	Z	T	N	F	A	V	E	D	H	F
B	V	E	S	P	U	K	D	K	Z	T	L	Q	I	N	X	O	E
C	H	A	D	B	R	H	V	J	S	F	O	L	K	C	R	L	K
Q	H	X	L	E	Z	E	L	J	A	R	W	G	H	U	T	I	Z
Q	C	O	T	E	Q	X	S	J	E	B	E	C	E	P	M	D	E
H	S	A	C	C	N	J	L	E	J	J	R	S	A	I	I	A	P
M	C	T	N	O	Z	T	R	A	N	P	S	L	R	D	R	Y	C
K	T	R	G	D	L	G	I	O	S	T	I	N	T	U	O	I	A
J	P	K	L	L	Y	A	F	N	S	V	S	N	S	D	B	G	R
E	D	V	Y	U	R	L	T	V	E	E	R	W	K	O	N	U	D
L	V	T	S	J	L	O	V	E	A	S	P	Q	W	M	Y	C	W
B	Q	U	F	I	Z	R	C	P	H	M	T	P	H	E	M	I	B

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden →, ↓, and ↗.

CANDY
CARD
CHOCOLATE
CUPID
FLOWERS

HEARTS
HOLIDAY
LOVE
PINK
PRESENTS

RED
ROSE
VALENTINES

Created by Ida using the Word Search Generator on
Super Teacher Worksheets (www.superteacherworksheets.com)

FAIRFAX COUNTY 2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Fairfax County Public Schools 2025-2026 Standard School Year Calendar

July 2025	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025
A calendar for July 2025 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes a 'H' for Holiday on the 4th and a 'Labor Day Break' from the 29th to the 31st.	A calendar for August 2025 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'NT' for New Teacher Training on the 4th, 11th, and 18th, and a 'Labor Day Break' from the 29th to the 31st.	A calendar for September 2025 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'TW' for Teacher Workday on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd, and 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd. It also notes '1 Labor Day Break', '8 Special Election', and '29 Rosh Hashanah (begins sundown 9/22 - sundown 9/24)'.	A calendar for October 2025 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd, and 'SD' for Staff Development Day on the 12th. It also notes '1 Yom Kippur (begins sundown 10/1 - sundown 10/2)', '13 Indigenous Peoples' Day', and '20 Divali'.	A calendar for November 2025 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'SP' for School Planning Day on the 10th, 'TW' for Teacher Workday on the 11th, 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 11th, and 'QE' for End of the Quarter / 2 Hour Student Early Release on the 30th. It also notes '1-5 All Saints Day / Día de los Muertos', '4 Election Day', '11 Veterans Day', and '26-28 Thanksgiving Break'.
December 2025	January 2026	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026
A calendar for December 2025 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'O' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd, and 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 29th. It also notes '8 Bodhi Day', '14 - Chanukah (begins sundown 12/14 - sundown 12/22)', '22 - Hanukkah Winter Break', and '25 Christmas'.	A calendar for January 2026 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd, and 'SD' for Staff Development Day on the 29th. It also notes '1 New Year's Day', '3 Three Kings Day/Epiphany', '7 Chinese New Year', '19 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday', and '19 Orthodox Epiphany'.	A calendar for February 2026 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd, and 'TW' for Teacher Workday on the 10th. It also notes '16 Washington's Birthday and Presidents' Day', '17 Lunar New Year', '18 First Full Day of Ramadan (begins sundown 3/17 and continues with daily fast and nightly prayer until 3/18)', and '19 Ash Wednesday'.	A calendar for March 2026 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd, and 'QE' for End of the Quarter / 2 Hour Student Early Release on the 30th. It also notes '30 Eid al-Fitr (begins sundown 3/19 - sundown 3/20)', '20 Nowruz', and '28-30 Spring Break'.	A calendar for April 2026 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd, and 'SP' for School Planning Day on the 11th. It also notes '1 First Evening of Passover (begins sundown 4/1 - ends 4/9)', '2 Second Evening of Passover', '3 Good Friday', '10 Orthodox Good Friday', '12 Orthodox Easter', and '13 Orthodox New Year'.
May 2026	June 2026	Legend		
A calendar for May 2026 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd, and 'TW' for Teacher Workday on the 29th. It also notes '35 Memorial Day' and '27 Eid al-Adha (begins sundown 5/26 - sundown 5/27)'.	A calendar for June 2026 showing days from Sunday to Saturday. It includes 'YE' for Last Day for Regular Classes / Early Release on the 17th, 'TW' for Teacher Workday on the 20th, and 'H' for Religious and Cultural Observance on the 25th. It also notes '19 Juneteenth'.	 <p>FCPS</p> <p>Some holidays and observances, such as Eid al-Fitr, may shift due to anticipated lunar sightings.</p>		

Quarter	End Date	Duration
1	October 31	48
2	January 28	48
3	March 27	37
4	June 17	48

Number of 5-Day Instructional Weeks		
1st Quarter	- 4	
2nd Quarter	- 6	
3rd Quarter	- 6	
4th Quarter	- 8	

www.fcps.edu/calendars
Updated 12/30/25

