

# MHNA NEWS

*Miller Heights  
Neighborhoods*

[www.MHNAnews.com](http://www.MHNAnews.com)

April 2024

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MHNA PRESIDENT

January 2024

Dear Neighbors,

Happy Spring!! I'm not sure anyone can argue that Spring-time in the DMV is spectacular...unless of course you suffer from pollen allergies.

If you missed our March MHNA quarterly meeting, we had a great presentation from Karl Frisch, our Providence District Schoolboard Member. The focus was on the 2023-2030 Strategic Plan and the proposed FY25 School Operating Fund budget. The proposed budget is \$3.8 billion, a net increase of \$301.8 million, or 8.6%, over the FY24 Approved Budget. Turnout at the meeting was very light. We are trying to bring in guest speakers who we think will be of most interest to members. If you have ideas let us know.

By this time everyone has seen (and felt) the speed tables (and hump). Lot's of reaction from our neighbors (love them, hate them, too abrupt, too many signs, etc.). We have shared your questions and concerns with FCDOT and they assure us the tables and signage all comply with VDOT specifications. Please keep in mind two things: 1) speed tables/humps were never considered to be a perfect solution to the need for traffic calming – there is no perfect solution except to have perfect drivers and we haven't figured that one out yet; and 2) no one actually likes driving over speed tables or humps. That was never the intention - they are by design annoying! But they are a necessary evil in our collective opinion to ensure the safety of our highly active non-vehicle road users.

**It's (still) time to pay your 2024 dues!** We can't keep up the work we do without your support. All of your MHNA board members have paid their dues – no free rides! And to make it easier, we have created a new QUICKPAY BUTTON : [Quick Dues Pay - MHNA \(mhnanews.com\)](http://QuickDuesPay-MHNA(mhnanews.com))

The Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services is starting up planning again for the Cinnamon Ridge Outfall & Retention Pond Rehabilitation

Project (at the corner of Miller Heights Rd. and Langton Arms Ct. Adjacent neighbors should have received a notice by email from Supervisor Palchik's Office, which is spearheading community outreach. If not, please let me know and we will share your information with them – or you can reach out directly.

Supervisor Palchik's Office and Karl Frisch are both still looking into solutions to the Oakton Elementary School Kiss and Ride traffic problem - there doesn't seem to be much will to find a solution from Oakton Elementary – for example they could eliminate on street parking in front of the school and immediately (and at no cost) create another six spaces for the kiss and ride but they refuse to consider that.

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 else 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.

Doug Shuster

MHNA President [president@mhnanews.com](mailto:president@mhnanews.com)

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## CONTACTS

### 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 **613** 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 [\(20+\) Miller Heights Neighborhood | Facebook](#).

### NEXTDOOR MILLER HEIGHTS

**Nextdoor** is the private social network for you, your neighbors and your community. And, it's free. Nextdoor's mission is to use the power of technology to build stronger and safer neighborhoods

**The Miller Heights Nextdoor group has grown to 920 members as of now and it is growing every day,**

You can be invited by your neighbor or sign up directly on the website. The link to the site is :

<https://millerheightsva.nextdoor.com>

### OUR MHNA WEBSITE

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

Check our website at [www.mhnanews.com](http://www.mhnanews.com)

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

[MHNA Member Portal Login - MHNA Membership Portal \(mhnanews.com\)](#)

### MHNA Board Officers

<b>President</b>	<b>Doug Shuster</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Michelle Cline</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Sammy Shuster</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Abheshek Narain</b>
<b>Communications</b>	<b>Barry Ingram</b>

### MHNA Committee Chairs

<b>Membership</b>	<b>Abheshek Narain</b>
<b>Hospitality</b>	<b>Patti Ogden &amp; Marjorie Geraci</b>
<b>Trails &amp; Environment</b>	<b>Sara Holtz</b>
<b>Landscaping</b>	<b>Judith Schneider-Fletcher</b>

### IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Emergency - Police, Fire, Medical)	911
Poison Control Poison Control (TTY)	1-800-222-1222 711
Police (non-emergency)	703-691-2131
Victim Assistance Network (Crisis Hotline)	703-360-7273
Animal Control	703-746-4774
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	703-324-5033
Miss Utility (underground utility marking)	1-800-552-7001
National Weather Service	703-652-1210
Storm Drainage Flooding (after hrs. emergency)	703-323-1211
VDOT (road hazards and conditions)	1-800-367-7623
Washington Gas emergency	703-750-1400
Power Outage (Dominion Power)	1-800-366-4357
Report Potholes (VDOT)	1-800-367-7623

## OFFICER AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

### AT&T SITE UPDATE

On April 18th, EYA hosted a meeting at Oakton High School to show the recent changes to their proposed development plans for the AT&T property. Over 120 residents attended and were able to ask questions at the end of the presentation. Residents were most concerned with issues relating to traffic and pedestrian safety due to the 854 homes and 120,000 SF retail in the proposed plan. There were also questions about adding green space and gathering areas for the community, multi-modal transportation and types of retail. To learn more about the proposed development, follow this link <https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.3033chainbridge.com%2F&data=05%7C02%7C%7C5031f3ebfa7f4331990608dc62c78aff%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C638493856393558553%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6IjEhaWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=wY6lDPcRn9GENqQlcYpyNhK8xXVshsCIkuT e3LYbQqY%3D&reserved=0>.

Options for Oakton will hold a meeting on Monday, April 29th at 6pm at the Oakton Community Library with the goal of bringing the community's feedback and vision to the county and developer. You can follow the conversation and receive the latest on development efforts by joining the Options for Oakton's Facebook page or visiting their web site at [Options for Oakton](#)

### 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.

### 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](mailto:sh12sh34@gmail.com) for upcoming dates.

### UPCOMING NEARBY EVENTS Oakton Library Book Sale

April 24 — 27

Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 10 to 5:30 and  
Saturday 10 - 4.

<https://www.friendsofoaktonlibrary.org>

### Dulles Expo Center Events

#### Stamp & Scrapbook Expo

April 26—27

Friday 9:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Saturday : 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

<https://scrapbookexpo.com/2024-expo-show-list/va-24/>

### International Gem & Jewelry Show

May 17 - 19

Friday 12:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Saturday : 9:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sunday : 11:00 am - 5:00 pm

<https://www.intergem.com/events/upcoming-shows/chantilly-va-may-17-19-2024>

### WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We send out over 560 emails to our MHNA residents each time we have MHNA announcements, meeting notices, Newsletters, and other communications. Although we have 560+ homes in Miller Heights, we only have email addresses for about 380 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@mhnanews.com](mailto:info@mhnanews.com) or going to our website [www.mhnanews.com](http://www.mhnanews.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**

Treasurer & Membership Chair

Miller Heights Neighborhoods Association (MHNA)

### Membership

As of April 16, 2024, Miller Heights Neighborhood Association has seen a 79% increase in paid membership since late January 2024. Thank you to all for supporting MHNA!

We also see that over 200 households have registered themselves and confirmed their residence via our site. Thanks to the reminder signs placed throughout the neighborhood by Judith Fletcher, we continue to see an increase in your support.

However, our membership numbers and donations are *significantly lower* than previous years, with more than a 50% drop in membership and donations. As such, we continue to *encourage you* to speak with your neighbors and urge them to visit our website ([www.MHNAnews.com](http://www.MHNAnews.com)), re-register and submit the annual donation.

To make dues payment easier we have recently added a QUICK PAY BUTTON

<https://www.mhnanews.com/quick-dues-pay/>

Below are a few highlights of our membership levels.

### MHNA Membership as of April 16, 2024

	Total Membership Status
Total Eligible Households	564
Claimed	242 (42.9%)
Paid	131
Unpaid	111
Unclaimed	322 (59.8%)

### Financials

We recently shared some updated financials during our Quarterly meeting in March 2024, highlighting our major expenses and how MHNA uses your membership donations. One of our major annual expenses (approximately 16%) continues to be cutting grass across open areas within the neighborhood (e.g. entrance area, side areas along Miller Heights Rd., etc.) which are not maintained by Fairfax County. Absent of MHNA, these areas would remain unkempt.

As an update to that meeting, and in response to several requests, we have provided a brief breakdown of MHNA's current account balance as of April 16, 2024:

	Current Balances (as of April 16 2024)
Paypal	\$ 3,337.89
Checking (Truist)	\$ 3,801.59
Total Reserves	\$ 7,139.48

(Continued on page 5)



## OFFICER AND COMMITTEE UPDATES (CONT.)

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### MEMBERSHIP & TREASURER UPDATE (CONT)

As always, if you have any updates to your contact information, please visit our new Membership portal (<https://www.mhnanews.com/portal/login.php>), or reach out to [membership@mhnanews.com](mailto:membership@mhnanews.com).

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)

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## VDOT, THE COUNTY AND MHNA WORKING TOGETHER





## 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](https://www.instagram.com/oakton_nature)



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/recycling)

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

**EARTH SANGHA'S  
SPRING  
OPEN HOUSE  
& NATIVE  
PLANT SALE**

**SUNDAY, MAY 5th  
9AM TO 1PM  
WILD PLANT NURSERY**

Shop the DC region's most comprehensive source of local ecotype, native plants AND learn about grassroots conservation efforts by our partners.

### FARMERS MARKETS

#### Farmfresh Oakton Market



Open Saturdays 9am-1pm year round

Oakton United Methodist Church  
2951 Chain Bridge Rd  
Oakton, VA 22124

For more information

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

#### Oakmont Farmers Market



Open Wednesdays, May 1-November 6, 2024  
8 am to noon

3200 Jermantown Rd  
Oakton, VA 22124

For more information:

[Oakmont Farmers Market | Park Authority \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/park-authority/oakmont-farmers-market)

### 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](mailto:editor@mhnanews.com)

## NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS



Sign up for the Palchik Post: [Signup Form \(constantcontactpages.com\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/providence/constantcontactpages.com)

The Board held three days of Budget Public Hearings this week. We heard from nearly 190 of you who brought up helpful insights, feedback, and concerns for our Board to consider. Many thanks to all who made the time to provide your testimony. Your participation is key to reaching an effective FY 2025 budget.

The Budget Policy committee will reconvene on **Friday, April 26th** to discuss the budget pre-markup package, which will reflect changes proposed to the County Executive's budget, followed by a full Board meeting on **Tuesday, April 30th to vote on the final proposed package**. The Board will then adopt the FY 2025 Budget on Tuesday, May 7th.

As a reminder, Fairfax County provides real estate tax relief and vehicle tax relief to citizens who are either 65 or older or permanently and totally disabled and meet the income and asset eligibility requirements. Returning applicants must file no later than **May 1st**. However, the due date may be extended to December 31 under certain hardship conditions that have hampered the applicant from filing on time and are no fault of the applicant. Read more about tax relief here.

Lastly, I hope you can join us in celebrating **Earth Day and Tysons' Birthday on Monday, April 22nd!** I have partnered with Celebrate Fairfax, Tysons Community Alliance, and Hunter Mill District Office to bring you a day full of family- and earth-friendly activities in Tysons.

With gratitude,

*Dalia Palchik*

### Bike to Work Day

Gear up for Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 17th! I hope you can join us at the Jim Scott Community Center pit stop from 7am to 9am to enjoy free coffee, snacks, and other goodies.



### 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 Parktakes Fall Guide 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.



## NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS (CONT.)

### FRIENDS OF THE OAKTON LIBRARY

Don't miss our semi-annual book sale.

## BOOK SALE APRIL 24 - 27, 2024



### OAKTON LIBRARY

10304 LYNNHAVEN PLACE  
OAKTON VA 22124

Wednesday, Thursday  
& Friday 10 - 5:30  
Saturday 10 - 4:00



[friendsofoaktonlibrary.org](http://friendsofoaktonlibrary.org)  
[friendsofoaktonlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofoaktonlibrary@gmail.com)

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library)



Fairfax County Public Library  
12030 Government Center Parkway  
Suite 324  
Fairfax, VA 22035



To request reasonable ADA accommodations,  
call 703-224-8380 or TTY 703-324-8365.

The Oakton Public Library will be holding its Spring Book Sale April 24 - 27. We 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

### 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.

### Oakton Community Library Hours

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

### Visit The Friends of the Oakton Library

[Home - The Friends of Oakton Library](#)

### THE MILLER HEIGHTS SOCIAL CLUB

Submitted by Chrissy Moggio, Stephanie Loritz, Irene Pao, and Sarah Soto

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](mailto:millerheightssocialclub@gmail.com). We look forward to seeing you at a future event!



# NATURE'S CORNER

## TRAILS & ENVIRONMENT

Submitted by Sara Holtz

### Habitat Restoration

Thanks to our AMAZING park volunteers

We're incredibly grateful for all the fantastic park volunteers including students, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Fairfax Master Naturalists, and county residents who regularly volunteer at our sessions to restore habitat in Difficult Run Stream Valley Park! So far in 2024, nearly 90 volunteers spent over 180 hours removing invasive plants such as periwinkle, multiflora rose, winter-creeper vine, English ivy, pachysandra, honeysuckle, incised fumewort from parkland in Miller Heights. We strongly encourage Miller Heights residents to consider removing these & other invasive plants from their property and replacing them with native plants that provide ideal, nutritious food for native wildlife. On Saturday 4/20 to celebrate Earth Day, we planted Virginia bluebells, phlox and asters. For more information, see the Fairfax County Park Authority Invasive Management Area (FCPA IMA) page (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources/ima>)

You can follow our efforts and see the wildlife we see in Oakton by following us on Instagram (oakton\_nature)([https://www.instagram.com/oakton\\_nature/](https://www.instagram.com/oakton_nature/)).





### Time to Pull Invasive Plants

#### Garlic Mustard

##### Identification

Garlic mustard is not difficult to identify once you familiarize yourself with it. The leaves form a basal rosette and are dull green and said to be kidney-shaped – rounded with a heartshaped base surrounding the leaf stem. They have prominent scalloped edges. The veins in the leaves are quite conspicuous, creating a quilted texture. In early spring, second-year plants send up a single, slender or branching flowering stalk. The best way to identify garlic mustard is to crush and sniff the leaves. They are pungent and smell like garlic and mustard.

##### Manual removal

Hand-pull rosettes any time of year when the soil is moist. Grab the stem under the rosette at soil level, twist and pull. Be sure to get the entire taproot because the plant will regrow from a piece of root.

##### Disposal

Bag and dispose of these in the garbage (NOT the yard waste), taking care not to scatter seeds during bagging.

##### History

This beastly invasive, a mustard-family member, was brought to North America by European settlers as a medicinal and culinary herb. All parts of garlic mustard, sometimes nicknamed GM, emit a strong garlic odor.



**While walking on the trails– or even at the edges of your yard, you may get the opportunity to see some little flowers poking their heads above the leaves and limbs.**

**All a good thing!**





## NATURE'S CORNER (CONT.)

### Invasive Species Alert

#### Identification & history

**Asiatic false hawkbeard** (*Youngia japonica*) is a relative of the dandelion native to eastern Asia that is quickly spreading from roadsides and lawns to pristine natural areas. This annual produces huge amounts of seeds that spread through the wind and will take root just about anywhere.

While it's been present in our area since the 1950s, its populations have taken off dramatically in the last few years: look around just about any street and chances are you'll find *Youngia* newly growing nearby.

#### Removal

If you simply pull up or mow over its flowering stalk, *Youngia* sends up not one, not two, but **\*up to TWELVE more\*** in its place!

To remove it properly, you have to get the entire taproot (luckily not too deep, since it's an annual) — it can help to use a screwdriver to loosen up the ground. The vegetative parts can go in yard waste, but the flower parts need to go in the trash: they can still produce viable seed **\*after** they're pulled off the plant.



**Invasive Species:  
Asiatic False Hawksbeard**



### Wind. More wind. And Bluebells

By Farmer Brown (Gordon)

This isn't the first time that I've moaned about windy weather. Some gorgeous days have enticed me out to the garden, only to be overcome by the incessant breeze that accompanies "the great pollening\*". (\*I heard this term from a work colleague recently and am quite taken by it). This phrase now holds a place among the season's most desired commodities Pataday, Zyrtec, Benadryl and Claritin. While I've been avoiding the pollen, I've read tons of articles about forsythia being both beautiful and aggressively invasive. Concerned gardeners recommend switching it out for spicebush just in case you were interested?

While we all know spring in the Eastern US is prime time to think about getting your garden ready for a bountiful harvest, its hard to stand back and leave the garden that little longer so all the critters can hibernate until the time is right – it's both necessary and important! I've found it hard leaving the leaves in my flower beds and I don't have the heart to cut my grass because of the gorgeous violets and dandelions that infest my lawn. But I've enjoyed seeing all the birds that both attract and am appreciative of the good nutrients they're giving back to the soil.

So, now the pleasantries are out the way, lets do a super quick rundown of what you can tackle now we're well into spring:

- **Planting:** Common knowledge hints at sowing seeds for cool-season veggies like lettuce, peas, spinach, and kale directly outdoors once the danger of frost has passed (usually late April/May). Hold up! Really, you should have started peas in late February/Early March, and spinach and kale may have survived winter already – they are super hardy – remember that for next year. As for lettuce, go ahead and get those seeds in. One tip is to consider planting brassica's in late summer to harvest in late fall or early winter instead. You can, however, start warm season crops like tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants indoors beforehand or get these from your nearest garden center to get a head start.
- **Soil prep:** I know you've left last year's leaves in your beds but now's a good time to amend your garden beds with compost or aged manure to replenish nutrients. Be sure to check your manure sources to make sure it doesn't come from a farm where they spray to kill weeds, or you'll learn the hard way that tomatoes are weeds. Loosening compacted soil and removing winter debris will help with drainage and aeration.
- **Planting trees and shrubs:** Spring is a great time to plant new trees and shrubs as the cool, moist conditions promote good root growth so race off to Merrifield and grab yourself a couple of native species. When you plant your new purchase, for the love of God, please don't build a mulch volcano.... Go for a mulch donut instead.
- **Maintenance:** Divide overgrown perennials like Hostas to refresh those bald spots in your flower beds. Prune dead or diseased branches from trees and shrubs to encourage healthy growth. Also, don't be shy and apply a layer of mulch around your plants to retain moisture and suppress weeds. I've found my Pawpaws suffered last year from the unequal rains and have some bark splitting occurring which makes me sad.



Also, it's always a good idea to consult a local planting guide or gardening expert for the most up-to-date recommendation, visFor my longer time readers who know me and my love of trees, here's a nifty acronym I abide by **GROWN** when looking after my trees:

- **Growth:** Pruning aims to encourage healthy growth by removing dead, diseased, or overcrowded branches. This allows the tree to focus its energy on producing more flowers and fruits.
- **Removal:** Target branches that are unproductive, like suckers, water sprouts, and inward-growing branches that rub against others. Be careful to cut correctly and use sharp and clean/disinfected clippers. Removal also relates to fruiting – be judicious

*(Continued on page 13)*

## COMMENTS AND INPUT FROM OUR RESIDENTS (CONT)

(Continued from page 12)



but pluck off any overcrowded bunches of young fruit to focus the plants energy on giving you best and juiciest fruit!

- **Opening Up:** If the deer haven't marauded through your yard and mutilated young trees, prune to create an open canopy that allows sunlight and air to penetrate the center of the tree. This helps with fruit ripening, reduces disease, and improves overall tree health. Word has it, your tree should allow a bird to fly right through it!
- **Weak Points:** Remove branches with weak crotches (where two branches meet at a sharp angle) that are prone to breaking under the weight of fruit or snow.

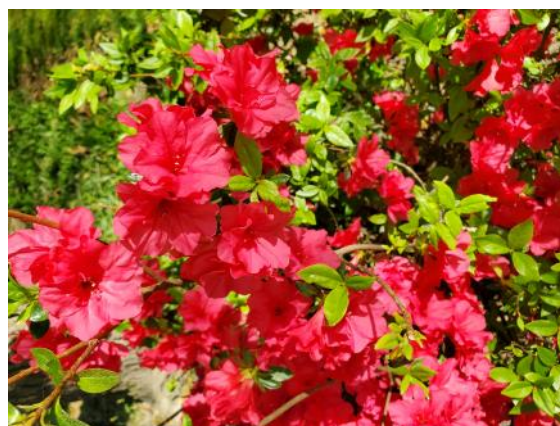
I've traded my Gojiberry (*worst purchase ever, the berries taste like old shoes - uuugh*) for a few Jostaberry cuttings which have sprouted and seemingly flourishing. My Methley plum has a net over a limb or two to protect from the awful codling moth and I'm excited as my Asian Pears, Pawpaws (12) Serviceberries (7 in total), Shawnee Plum (1) and Nanking cherries (2), among others, have flowered well and the promise of fruit is exciting!

Lastly, I had the pleasure of my annual pilgrimage out to Riverbend Park for their annual native plant sale. Their list came out many moons ago and I just had to get a few. And then some more. And one or two extras... Oh and one more, why not? The orders were consolidated and with family visiting, I had enough arms and legs to carry the oversized order back to the car. Strict instructions to water, water, water were the last words I heard as we wandered down to the Potomac and then along the paths strewn left and right with the most gorgeous Virginia Bluebells, woodland Flox and so on. It really is a treat for anyone who has not yet seen the Virginia blue bells so do yourself a favor and consider a trip down there.



I've got so much more to write but will leave it here... See you in a few months or on Facebook!

### Just Pretty Flowers — Not Invasive





## COMMENTS AND INPUT FROM OUR RESIDENTS (CONT)

### Historic School House Day

Submitted by Jackie Davey

#### Historical School Houses across Fairfax County Open Their Doors

The Historical School Houses of Northern Virginia (HSNVA) will host open house events at six participating historic schoolhouses on **Saturday, May 4th from 10am - 2pm**. Both the Oakton Schoolhouse (in the Oakton Community Park at 2841 Hunter Mill Road) and the Vale Schoolhouse (at the corner of Fox Mill and Vale Roads) will be open to visitors. Each location will have activities for adults and kids alike. Please drop by and learn about how these beautiful schoolhouses played a role in the history of our community. <https://www.sydenstrickerschoolhouse.org/hsvna.html>

#### Pony Rides in Oakton Community Park

On **Saturday, May 4th from 10am - 2pm**, the Greater Oakton Community Association (GOCA) will host pony rides for kids in the Oakton Community Park (2841 Hunter Mill Road). Cost is \$5 per rider. Advance registration is required - you can select a timeslot - and registration is limited.

[Please register here.](#)



The Historic Schoolhouses of Northern Virginia presents

# HISTORIC SCHOOLHOUSE DAY


Saturday May 4th  
10:00 AM-2:00 PM


Join us at any of these schools for a fun, educational and interactive day celebrating the history of our schools and early education in Fairfax County

Laurel Grove      Forestville      Sydenstricker

Crouch      Oakton      Second Street

Vale



 **Adult Events**

Imagine • Discover • Connect

**Free Puzzle Exchanges, EBOOK Clinic, Seed Library,, Free Jigsaw Puzzle Exchanges, One-on-One Technology Help, Quilting --- And MORE**

**Follow this link to get a full description and locations. [Adults](#)**



## COMMENTS AND INPUT FROM OUR RESIDENTS (CONT)

**Linda Tiani captured this article from The Nature Conservancy. Very appropriate for Earth Day (and Year Around)**



### Best Management Practices: Right Tree, Right Place

When considering what tree and where to plant it, remember the phrase "Right Tree, Right Place." Choosing the right tree depends on many factors including soil type, climate, and the amount of space the tree will have both underground and overhead.



#### Q. What species of tree is right for me?

A. There are many factors to consider when choosing the right tree species for you. Soil type, light exposure, soil moisture, average climate, hardiness zone, surrounding vegetation, and the goals you have for your tree (e.g., shade, protection from wind) are important considerations. There are many resources available online to help you identify choices of tree species appropriate for you such as Arbor Day Foundation's interactive "Best Tree Finder: Tree Wizard" (<http://arborday.org/shopping/trees/treewizard/intro.cfm>).

#### Q. What are the benefits of planting the Right Tree in the Right Place?

A. By carefully selecting the right tree for your planting location, you can maximize the immeasurable benefits trees provide. For instance, to help cut the cost of high energy bills in the summer, consider planting a shade tree along the east, west or northwest sides of your house to block the hot summer sun. To break the force of harsh winter winds, plant evergreen trees along the northwest side of your house.

#### Q. Can I plant a tree if I have limited growing space on my property?

A. Yes! However, it is important to choose a tree that does not require more space than your site can provide. To avoid any conflicts with overhead obstructions (e.g., powerlines, utility poles, buildings) or underground obstructions (e.g., pipes, building foundations), consider the tree's height and shape at maturity. If there are no overhead space limitations, consider a tall shade tree (e.g., oak, London plane tree) which may provide the maximum ecosystem services to the community. For spaces with overhead space limitations, smaller ornamental trees are most appropriate, and will still provide your community with great tree-related benefits. A tree needs plenty of room to grow underground too – tree roots can extend up to two to three times the width of the crown (the leaves and branches of the tree). There is a free service available nationwide to have your planting site surveyed for underground utilities – call 8-1-1 at least three days prior to planting to schedule a survey.

#### Q. Who can I contact for further advice or help?

A. It never hurts to get an expert opinion – consulting an expert early on in your tree's life will ensure that your tree lives a long and healthy life in your community. A tree care professional can advise you on the best species choice for your location. To help you communicate the specifics of your site, complete a site checklist such as the one available through the Brooklyn Botanic Garden website (<http://www.bbg.org/pdf/treesite.pdf>) and share it with your local nursery, licensed arborist, or others (see chart below).

**Local Nursery:** Your local nursery will be able to provide you with valuable advice pertaining to your geographic location. Experienced in understanding what trees are well suited to your area, they can help you pick a tree that is compatible with the local climate.

**Agriculture Experiment Station:** Every state has an agricultural experiment station, and many offer free soil testing. Some state universities offer similar services.

**Licensed Arborist:** A licensed arborist is well qualified to advise you on optimal tree selection and especially the stewardship of mature trees.



# MILLER HEIGHTS REAL ESTATE UPDATE

## JANUARY 2024

Hi All -

### Good Movement in Our Neighborhood



Selling a home in 2024 can be easy, but buying one is a whole different story. Interest rates and lack of inventory continue to be the driver in this robust housing market, creating increased selling power.

In this highly competitive market, what do you do if you want a smooth transition when selling and buying a home concurrently? It's one of the least risky times to buy your next home before selling your current home. If you're able to handle the payments on two homes for six months or so, then buy first and sell later.

For those that may not have the funds available to purchase a home while owning one, here are some options to consider.

Home of Choice Contingency. Written into the contract, this agreement protects the seller from having to sell their current home before finding their next home.

Rent Back Agreement. This post-closing occupancy agreement allows the seller to continue to live in the home for a fee or for free, typically up to 60 days, temporarily making the buyer the landlord.

Bridge Loan. A bridge loan enables you to borrow money to pay for the down payment on your next home based on the equity in your current home.

Home Equity Line of Credit. Tap into the equity of your current home by taking out a home equity loan before you put your home on the market to provide the funds needed to make your purchase first.

In this market, it pays to talk to a real estate agent to evaluate your options to decide which to do first and how to optimize both transactions.

Happy Spring

**Liz Potemra**

**703-581-7759**

**[lizp@longandfoster.com](mailto:lizp@longandfoster.com)**

**Long and Foster Vienna/Oakton**

### Recent Real Estate Activity in Miller Heights:

Status	Address	Last/Next Update	Close Price	List Price	DO M
Contract	11106 Lochinver Ln	3/23/24	,	\$995,000	3
Closed	3317 Cranbrook Ct	4/8/2024	\$1,275,000	\$1,225,000.00	4
Closed	11181 Tattersall Trl	4/10/2024	\$1,200,000	\$1,134,500.00	5
Contract	310 Miller Heights Rd	4/13/2024		\$1,200,000.00	5
Coming	11115 Lochinver Ln	4/17/2024		\$1,150,000.00	0
Active	3204 Wheatland Farms Dr	4/19/2024		\$1,775,000.00	1

# MHNA NEWSLETTER

## Spring Kids Edition

By: Siya and Samantha

And other participators 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 to enjoy! If you have any ideas or want to include something of yours in the next edition, please email [sammypecci@gmail.com](mailto:sammypecci@gmail.com). Enjoy!**

### Table Of Contents

1. Spring Activities
2. A Short Story
3. Spring Word Search

## Spring Activities

Spring is finally here! I have personally been waiting for Spring to arrive for what feels like an eternity! Now that the weather is great, here is a list of perfect activities you can do by yourself, or with friends.

- Go on a picnic
- Climb a tree
- Go bike riding
- Explore the woods
- Take pictures of wildlife
- Create flower headbands
- Sell lemonade, treats, bracelets
- [Make flower art](#)
- Do DIY projects
- Lay on a blanket in your yard and read (with snacks)
- Plant a flower garden
- Plant a vegetable garden
- Go on a walk
- Make a bouquet with wildflowers
- Draw with chalk
- Make a stick fort
- Catch fireflies
- Play a sport outside
- Make [Shaved Ice](#)
- Blow bubbles
- Paint rocks



A decorative border of pink beetles surrounds the text. The beetles are arranged in a rectangular frame, with some beetles also placed along the top and bottom edges of the page.

# A Short Story

by Siya Narain

5<sup>th</sup> Grade, Waples Mill Elementary School

## **PROLOGUE:** The Magician's Story

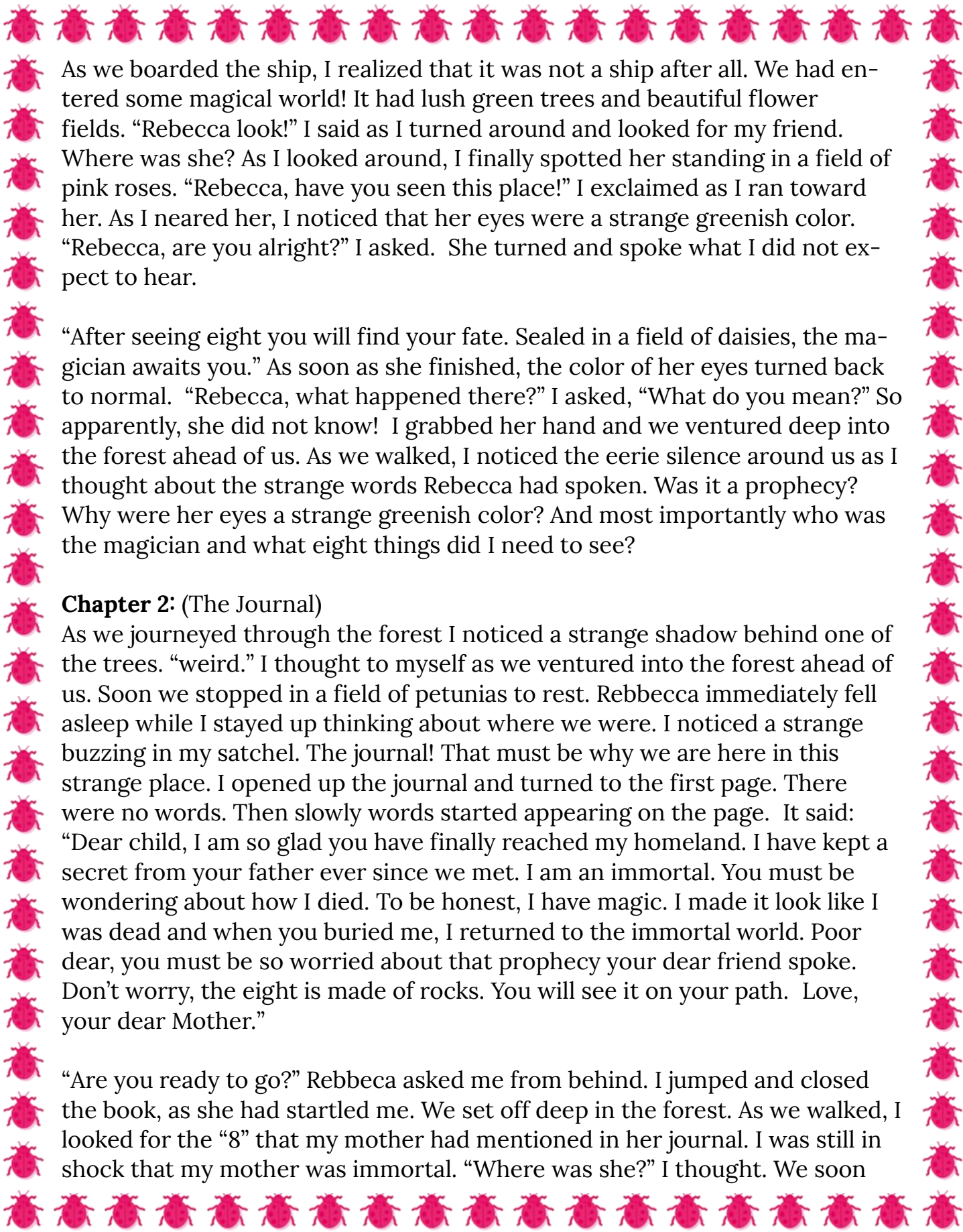
One morning I arose to the sound of Viktoria babbling in her sleep. Oh, how sweet she and Yulia sounded when they babbled. I slowly got out of bed, careful not to wake Anastasia, and tiptoed into my closet. I grabbed my magician's robe and quickly changed. The Magic Council elders had asked me to meet them at the House of Magic for an early meeting. They had been very secretive about the topic though. I arrived and instantly noticed the silence and emptiness of the room. Suddenly Magician Kuznetsov burst out from behind a pillar with a dozen more magicians. "You're under arrest, Popova" he sneered.

## **Chapter 1:** (Russia-Saxolavia)

One cloudy morning I arose to the sound of bells clanging in the field near me. The last thing that I remembered was that I had just finished my eight hour walk from my home city of Khalmer-Yu to Yary and was exhausted. I checked my satchel and was relieved to see that my eight rubles were still there. They were gifted to me by a very nice lady named Viktoria Popova that I met along my walk. My name is Sasha Petrova and I am 11 years old. My parents died of starvation when I was 10 and I have been living in an old barn for the past year. I am only in Yary because of my mother's last wish.

"You will take my journal and travel to America." were my Mother's last words.

I had made it to the port just in time to buy myself a ticket. The ticket cost three rubles! As I boarded the ship, I bumped into a very tall girl looking about only nine years old. "Sorry" she said as she turned toward me. "My name is Rebecca Aronovich and I am 10 years old. Where are your parents? What's your name?" "Oh, um, my name is Sasha Petrova." I stammered. I was not used to people talking to me. "And about my parents" I slowly gained my confidence. "They're dead." "Oh! I'm so sorry." Rebecca said "I understand. Mama and Papa are too sick, and I did not want to leave them, but they insisted I make it to America." CLANG, CLANG, CLANG. The sound of bells rang. It was time to board the ship.

A decorative border of pink beetles runs along the top, bottom, and sides of the page. The beetles are arranged in a repeating pattern, with some facing left and some facing right.

As we boarded the ship, I realized that it was not a ship after all. We had entered some magical world! It had lush green trees and beautiful flower fields. “Rebecca look!” I said as I turned around and looked for my friend. Where was she? As I looked around, I finally spotted her standing in a field of pink roses. “Rebecca, have you seen this place!” I exclaimed as I ran toward her. As I neared her, I noticed that her eyes were a strange greenish color. “Rebecca, are you alright?” I asked. She turned and spoke what I did not expect to hear.

“After seeing eight you will find your fate. Sealed in a field of daisies, the magician awaits you.” As soon as she finished, the color of her eyes turned back to normal. “Rebecca, what happened there?” I asked, “What do you mean?” So apparently, she did not know! I grabbed her hand and we ventured deep into the forest ahead of us. As we walked, I noticed the eerie silence around us as I thought about the strange words Rebecca had spoken. Was it a prophecy? Why were her eyes a strange greenish color? And most importantly who was the magician and what eight things did I need to see?

## **Chapter 2: (The Journal)**

As we journeyed through the forest I noticed a strange shadow behind one of the trees. “weird.” I thought to myself as we ventured into the forest ahead of us. Soon we stopped in a field of petunias to rest. Rebecca immediately fell asleep while I stayed up thinking about where we were. I noticed a strange buzzing in my satchel. The journal! That must be why we are here in this strange place. I opened up the journal and turned to the first page. There were no words. Then slowly words started appearing on the page. It said: “Dear child, I am so glad you have finally reached my homeland. I have kept a secret from your father ever since we met. I am an immortal. You must be wondering about how I died. To be honest, I have magic. I made it look like I was dead and when you buried me, I returned to the immortal world. Poor dear, you must be so worried about that prophecy your dear friend spoke. Don’t worry, the eight is made of rocks. You will see it on your path. Love, your dear Mother.”

“Are you ready to go?” Rebecca asked me from behind. I jumped and closed the book, as she had startled me. We set off deep in the forest. As we walked, I looked for the “8” that my mother had mentioned in her journal. I was still in shock that my mother was immortal. “Where was she?” I thought. We soon

passed a stone shaped like an eight. Next to it was a field of daisies. "Rebecca we're finally here!" I said as I led her into the daisy field. "Sasha, why are we in this field?" Rebecca asked me. "Because of the prophecy you gave me." I replied, "We're looking for a magician." Suddenly the journal buzzed again. I took it out and opened it up. It read: The magician you are looking for lies in the center of the field. Child, you have magic in your blood. Close your eyes, open them, and blink twice. Then you will see the magician's prison. The magician was a powerful man. When he grew up, he met a beautiful sorceress. Her name was Anastasia Popova. Yes, child, the woman you met on your walk was none other than your very own Aunt. And the magician is your grandfather.

Sadly, the magician was imprisoned by an evil man named Aleksandr Kuznetsov. And it is your duty to free your grandfather. I took in everything Mama had told me in the journal. As I did what she said in the first line I thought about how the magician was my grandfather. Suddenly my surroundings changed. I was no longer standing in a daisy field; I was standing in a prison. "Rebecca, where are you?" I said. "Hush child. Your puny little friend is mortal," said a voice in the darkness, "She is unable to reach this magical space." "Who are you?" I questioned. "Magician Kuznetsov." the voice replied.

**Presents:** Artwork by Lidia Baer





# Spring Word Search

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

Play this puzzle online at: <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/6994382/>

CLIMB

BUMBLEBEES

FROG

DAISIES

KITE

POLLEN

BUTTERFLY

NEST

SPROUT

SHOWERS

BIKING

CATERPILLAR

GREEN

PICNIC

GARDENS

SUNSHINE

TULIP

DUCKLING

# FAIRFAX COUNTY 2023-2024 SCHOOL CALENDAR

## Fairfax County Public Schools 2023-2024 Standard School Year Calendar

Approved

July 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

3-4 Independence Day Break

August 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

1-4 Labor Day Break  
16 Rosh Hashanah (begins sundown 9/15 - sundown 9/17)  
25 Yom Kippur (begins sundown 9/24 - sundown 9/26)

October 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

9 Indigenous Peoples' Day

November 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

1-2 All Saints Day / Día de los Muertos  
7 Election Day  
11 Veterans Day  
12 Drivall  
22-24 Thanksgiving Break

December 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

7 Chanukah (begins sundown 12/7-sundown 12/15)  
8 Buddi Day  
18 - 31 Winter Break  
25 Christmas

January 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

1 New Year's Day  
6 Three Kings Day/Epiphany  
7 Orthodox Christmas  
15 Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday  
19 Orthodox Epiphany  
26 Option to work at an alternate location

February 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

10 Lunar New Year  
14 Ash Wednesday  
19 Washington's Birthday and Presidents' Day

March 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

5 Presidential Primary  
11 First Full Day of Ramadan (begins sundown 3/10 and continues with daily fast and nightly prayer until 4/9)  
22-29 Spring Break  
29 Good Friday  
31 Easter

April 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

1 Option to work at an alternate location  
19 Eid al-Fitr (begins sundown 4/9 - sundown 4/10)  
22 First evening of Passover (begins sundown 4/22 - sundown 4/23)  
23 Second evening of Passover  
24 Theresada New Year

May 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

3 Orthodox Good Friday  
3 Option to work at an alternate location  
5 Orthodox Easter  
27 Memorial Day

June 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

14 Option to work at an alternate location  
17 Eid al-Azha (begins sundown 6/16 - sundown 6/17)  
18 Option to work at an alternate location  
19 Juneteenth



Some holidays and observances, such as Eid al Fitr, may shift due to anticipated lunar sightings.

Legend	
F	First Day of School
ER	2 Hour Student Early Release
QE	End of the Quarter
YE	Last Day for Regular Classes / Early Release
O	Religious and Cultural Observance(s)
O	Religious and Cultural Observance(s) - Evening Only
SD	Staff Development Day / Student Holiday
SP	School Planning Day / Student Holiday
TW	Teacher Work Day / Student Holiday
H	Student Holiday
NT	New Teacher Training

Quarter Duration		
Quarter	End Date	Duration
1	November 3	51
2	January 25	42
3	March 22	38
4	June 12	48
179 Instructional Days		

Number of 5-Day Instructional Weeks  
1st Quarter - 7  
2nd Quarter - 5  
3rd Quarter - 6  
4th Quarter - 6

Updated 9/6/23

