

# Friends of Colvin Run Mill

10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls, VA

703-759- 2771



April-June 2024

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## SPRING IS IN THE AIR



## WE’RE CHANGING OUR NOMENCLATURE

The new name for “Grind Day” is (drum roll):

**“Mill in Motion”**

Here is the full new Parktakes description:

“We’re running the mill like it’s 1811 when the mill was first operating. Come see one of the country’s remaining examples of early American mass production. Learn why Oliver Evans’ plans for an automated mill received one of the first US patents and revolutionized food production in the young country. After you explore the Mill, visit the 19th century Miller’s House exhibit and stop in the Colvin Run General Store to purchase grain ground at the mill. “

The nomenclature change kicked in with the Spring Parktakes.

## OTHER EVENT INFORMATION

In addition to the specific events listed on page 4, the site offers programs on Simple Machines, Producers and Consumers, and the Mill in Motion during April and May for school sponsored groups.

By-request programs for Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts.

Summer camps including an All-American Girls; Living Dolls Camp; a Camp Colvin; and two Cooking and Crafts events, one for 5-8 year olds and another for 8-12 year olds.

## NORTHERN VIRGINIA CARVERS 2024

Teaches Beginning Wood Carving  
Open to the public 12 years old and older

Below are the dates that Northern Virginia Carvers will be at Colvin Run Mill.

The Education Center will be set up  
Sundays

From 12:00 noon to 3:00 pm.

\$5.00 cash for a wooden blank

Come at least 1 hour prior to closing time.

**Open to the public: call ahead (703-759-2771) to verify dates.**

April 7, 21; May 19; June 2, 16; July 21; Aug 18; Sept 15, and Nov 3, 17.

## ON-GOING EVENTS

**General Store:** Open 11-4 Thursday thru Sunday

**Miller’s House Exhibit and Mill Tours:** Saturdays and Sundays. .

**Mill in Motion:** Milling resumes in April and continues on the first and third Sundays (12 to 3 PM) through October

**See note opposite and page 4 for complete list of exciting educational opportunities**

**Details and information at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvin-run-mill](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvin-run-mill)**

## OUR NEXT ENDEAVOR: RESTORING THE SHED BY THE MILL



*Before Cleanup*



*After Cleanup*

Having helped with the restoration of the Formal Garden, the Friends have voted to help with restoration and enlargement of the shed adjacent to the mill. As a start, we have contracted for cleanup around the shed with OakTree Property Care (which has done great work on the garden).

The county removed some of the dead or dying trees and has been working to reduce the spread of wisteria.

Now we're in the process of clearing the hillside around, in front of, and behind the shed. It is no good having a renovated shed bashed by falling timber or embraced by energetically growing wisteria. Volunteers, staff, and OakTree started the cleanup process in February. Photos of this initial effort are above. The transformation of the hillside is truly amazing

Once the clearing is completed and necessary approvals secured, work can begin on elongating the shed. Dan Dyke, a Friends Board member, and Doug Cobb, a long time resident of Great Falls, have volunteered to undertake restoration and slight enlargement of the shed itself. Other volunteers would be greatly appreciated!

Not to worry. The architectural integrity will be maintained so it will still look like this old shed. Just longer, to fit modern times and machines.

This enlargement will permit the shed to house the site's Kobada utility vehicle near the mill where it is primarily used and eliminate dangerous driving on Colvin Run Road or tearing up the lawn.

The old shed itself has stood the test of time. Reportedly a Boy Scout project to learn to build without nails, the beams feature mortise and tenon joints. A thing of beauty is a joy forever. Well, almost. Times change.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Snowdrops, bluebells, redbuds, daffodils, hellebore. Spring is slowly making its way back in the park. The mill will soon be in motion. Getting that 20-foot waterwheel rolling again after a winter's slumber will take weeks of preparation. Don't miss its annual debut on April 7! But before then, we look forward to seeing you at other educational and fun events at the park.



On a rainy unusually warm March Day, the dulcet baritones of an army of frogs in the wetlands on the south side of Route 7 gave proof that, despite the long-running, disruptive road construction project, nature persists. That natural area of the park's south side will be safely and easily accessible to families. The tunnel under Route 7 is nearly completed, and the Fairfax County Park Authority has staked out the path of a proposed trail on the south side that will connect with the Rails-to-River and Cross County Trail. The FCPA will conduct a cultural resource investigation of the proposed route then proceed to plan development and permitting. Progress.



We are grateful for your support and for the many volunteers that make programs at the mill successful. We are particularly grateful for new volunteers that have found joy in working at the mill and with the public. Join in the fun. The more the merrier.

**Jim Wallar**

**President, Friends of Colvin Run Mill**

For more details see the [President's Grindstone blog](#).

***Great articles on water wheels, the grits contest, the Archimedes screw, mill stones, and much, much more]***



## Black History Month: We Should Know Their Names

By Jim Wallar

Fairfax County Park Authority experts explain that the first owners of the mill, Philip Carper, and John Powell, were enslavers. But little has been known about the enslaved individuals.

New on-line genealogical data bases and digitalization of Fairfax and Loudoun County Court House records allow us to dig a bit deeper. Not much exists in the way of direct evidence linking the enslaved to the enslavers, so the following should be treated with caution. Even if we don't know what they did around the mill, the homestead, and farm, we should know their names.

In 1830 Philp Carper recorded ten enslaved people, five males and five females.

Some of their names might have been Matilda, Joseph, Isaac, John, and perhaps Molly. John Powell's census records reveal eleven enslaved people in 1850, six males and five females. Names of the enslaved associated with John Powell over several years include George, Sinah, Letty, Harriet, Kitty, Verlinda, Nat, Daniel, Maria, Eliza, Frank, Tom, Amanda, Jeff, Lizzy, Davy, Mina, and Jarrett.

Who were they? Where did they come from? What did they do? What became of them? Some of them were freed. Some passed away. Some might have moved west. Others were sold south where demand for labor was high to tend cotton crops.

We seem to know the most about Matilda. She was fourteen years old when she was sold by Suzanne Fenley to Carper in 1813 for \$300 by the direction of the Fairfax County Court to settle her deceased husband's debt. Fenley's had lived for generations in Prince George's County Maryland and held a significant number of enslaved. As of 1810 these included Jenny and her children, Matilda, Kitty, Harriet, Cicely.

As farmers in Fairfax County shifted from labor-intensive tobacco to mixed farming of grains and livestock, some enslavers sold their excess labor. In December 1836, Loudoun County slave trader William Ish recorded purchasing a Matilda Carper and her children Emily and Mary for \$1,200. Ish transported the enslaved he purchased to Richmond, a major trading center, to be sold at auction and moved further south. As many as 660,000 enslaved people were relocated from the Upper South (Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina) to the Lower South (Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana). Matilda vanished into the unknown, but we know her name.

For more details see the [President's Grindstone blog](#).

## "Sap to Syrup" The Annual Maple Syrup Boil Down



The Fire Crew: Dan Dyke, Steve Golobic, and Tom Milton

Some 870 visitors (a record number) during three weekend days in February came to watch Steve Golobic and his fire crew make the magic work, converting sap from site trees into "maple" syrup.

They were using a Friends acquired boiling pan that more efficiently distributed the heat from the fire and more quickly boiled off the water inherent in the sap (it takes some 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup).



Visitors at the boil down

While the boil down was the main attraction, many visitors also toured the mill and the Miller's House. The FCPA's decision to furnish the Miller's House with reproductions again proved beneficial. Visitors can sit on the couches and chairs and a number decided to engage in chess matches. Final scores were not recorded but a few matches actually went until "checkmate" could be declared.

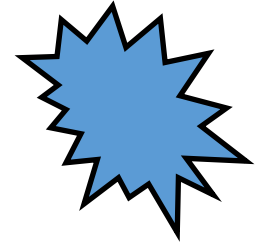
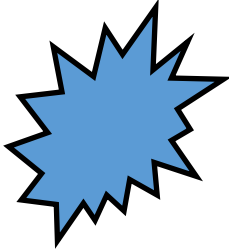


Chess players in the Miller's House

## THE MILLER'S RING

*By Dan Dyke*

This photo shows a pile of flour surrounding the circumference of the mill stones. The wooden hoop that contains the flour while the runner stone is turning has been removed. The space between the stones and the hoop is called the **mill ring** while the remaining flour that has not continued through the milling process is called the **millers' ring** because the miller got to keep this flour as part of his payment.



### UPCOMING EVENTS SCHEDULE

April through June 2024

**SEE PARKTAKES FOR SPECIFIC TIMES AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

April 2024	May 2024	June 2024
<p>Sundays, April 7: <b>Mill in Motion; Blacksmith and Wood Carver Demonstrations</b></p> <p>Sunday, April 7: <b>Science Meets History: Power.</b> Learn about solar and hydro power and visit our water powered <b>Mill in Motion.</b></p> <p>Monday, April 8: <b>Mini Millers: Motion in the Mill.</b> Preschoolers and adults.</p> <p>Sunday, April 21: <b>Mill in Motion and Wood Carver Demonstrations</b></p> <p>Monday, April 22: <b>Mini Millers: Spring at the Mill.</b> Preschoolers and adults.</p>	<p>Saturday, May 4: <b>Spring Tea Party.</b> 19th century afternoon tea, crafts, and treats.</p> <p>Sundays, May 5 and 19: <b>Mill in Motion</b></p> <p>Sunday, May 5: <b>Blacksmith Demonstration</b> (tentative)</p> <p>Sunday, May 19: <b>Wood Carver Demonstrations.</b></p> <p>Sunday, May 19: <b>Engineering Then and Now.</b> Learn about engineers of the past and speak with and problem solve with contemporary engineers.</p>	<p>Sundays, June 2 and 16: <b>Mill in Motion and Wood Carver Demonstrations.</b></p> <p>Sunday, June 2: <b>Blacksmith Demonstration</b> (tentative)</p> <p>Saturday, June 8: <b>Brownie Badge Day.</b> Young Girl Scouts can earn 2 badges</p> <p>Sunday, June 16: <b>Father's Day Mill in Motion.</b> Fathers and Grandfathers admitted free.</p>