Friends of Colvin Run Mill

10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls, VA

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October—December 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

October thru December

October

2nd Baloo the Builder - Bear Elective
2nd CGS-Woodworker
3rd-24th, Fridays Homeschool - Kitchen Adventures
4th Movie at the Mill - Sleepy Hollow
5th Mill in Motion; and Northern VA Carvers
11th Fall Tea Party
11th 12th 18th, 26th Cider Making
12th Science Meets History - Spies; and NVA Carvers
13th and 27th Mini Millers
13th JGS-Playing the Past
19th Historic Crafts and Trades
19th Mill in Motion
24th and 25th Virginia Hauntings - Legends & Lore
26th Northern VA Carvers

November

2nd The War of 1812 and the Homefront
3rd-4th Eat What You Grow - School Day Out Camp
10th Mini Millers
16th Northern VA Carvers
15th Science Meets History - Flight

December

6th and 7th Children's Holiday Shopping at Historic Colvin Run
13th and 14th Sensory-Friendly Santa at the Mill
13th and 14th Santa at the Mill
19 and 20th Holiday Lantern Tour

Specific times and registration requirements are available in Parktakes

"MINGLE AT THE MILL"

(In collaboration with Celebrate Great Falls)

Threatening thunder and rain could not dampen the enthusiasm of the 125 people who mingled at the mill Saturday evening, September 6. Celebrate Great Falls organizers, notably Beth and Deana, went all out to create an elegant and memorable evening. Folks whetted their whistle upon arrival with a Mill Mule (ingredients secret but included maple syrup in honor of Colvin Run's maple syrup boil downs). Hors d'oeuvres crafted by Brx included shrimp and Colvin Run grits, corncakes using Colvin Run cornmeal and flour, as well as dainty ham sandwiches, tuna and beef lettuce wraps, and apple fritters in acknowledgement of the approaching days of apple pressing at the mill.

Our friends from Mt. Defiance Distillery and Cidery offered samples of whiskey, other spirts, and cider. Our own Dan Dyke fascinated folks with a demonstration and explanation of the lost art of moonshine distilling. Pearmund Cellars poured their lushest wines throughout the evening, and Lost Barrel craft beers quenched the thirst of others. Energetic tunes by the King Street Syncopators, demonstrations by Plein Air artists, and a silent auction added to the festivities. Participants were fascinated by working blacksmiths forging hooks and visited the miller's house and the mill for exposure to Great Falls history. Thank you Celebrate Great Falls, park staff, volunteers, and participants for a fabulous event.

MAKING APPLE CIDER

Our annual cider making extravaganza is nearly upon us. We will be hosting 18 groups during October, the best season for making fresh apple cider in Northern Virginia. We are so happy that so many visitors are excited to learn about and press their own apples.

For those interested in the apple cider process without making cider, we will be demonstrating that process at our Historic Crafts and Trades event on October 19th from 12-3pm-no apples required!

Learn the craft this year and come back next year to make your very own apple cider!

BLACKSMITHS AT THE MILL

Chip Leonard answered the call we issued last month for a blacksmith. A member of a local blacksmithing guild, he heard we were in the market for a volunteer to replace Christen who will soon be headed overseas. Chip will be blacksmithing on weekdays for school groups and some weekends for larger events. Chip made his debut at the Mingle at the Mill event where he and Christen delighted the visitors with their skills and storytelling.

We thank Christen for his service, wish him the very best, and look forward to Chip's engagement.

COME JOIN THE TEAM

We are always looking for additional FCPA volunteers to help with our school programs (simple machines) and any of our other offerings. Just a few hours a month will help us and provide you with a great sense of accomplishment.

Contact Kiersten Fiore at 703-759-2771
or: **fcpacolvinrunmill@fairfaxcounty.gov**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Cooler weather means that apple pressing at the mill is just around the corner. Those participating must bring your own apples – a mix is best – and containers and will have fun slicing, mashing, and pressing them to yield a delicious natural beverage made with only one ingredient.

Next month Colvin Run Mill will be participating in the Mid-Atlantic Grain Fair at Pierce Mill on October 18th sponsored by one of our partners, the Mid-Atlantic Common Grains Alliance.

A new county budget season has started with all agencies, including the Fairfax County Park Authority, being asked to cut five percent of their general operating budgets. The Park Authority has forwarded "non-recommended" actions to reduce field mowing, impose a parking fee at Riverbend and Burke Lake on weekends, and eliminate several full-time positions that would total $1.8 million in budget reductions. Nonetheless, the Park Authority has requested $1.2 million to cover operating expenses for five new or updated parks so it can continue to offer excellent service to county residents.

The trail on the south side of Route 7 is slowly advancing. A firm budget for the project now is in sight, with final permitting and financing decision due in the next month or so. Keeping our fingers crossed.

In my last message as president, I want to thank all the board members, park staff, volunteers, visitors, and the curious for supporting Colvin Run Mill. Keeping history alive, keeping the grain ground, keeping the gardens growing, and keeping the technology of the mill functioning have made being a Friend of Colvin Run Mill fun and educational.

Jim Wallar

President, Friends of Colvin Run Mill

For more from the President, see President's Grindstone blog on our web site

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

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

By Jim Wallar

What can be better than yummy cheesy grits? How about little grits cakes? Perhaps a tad healthier than fried macaroni and cheese. Grits cakes are a riff on Italy's fried polenta slices topped with mozzarella and sun-dried tomatoes. After all, the Italians appropriated America's tomatoes and corn for their own cuisine, so turnabout is fair play.

The American version is straightforward, frying rich grits. The key is allowing cooked grits to firm up in the fridge before frying. A sure winner for any meal. Give it a go.

In large Dutch oven bring 4 cups chicken broth, 3 cups milk, 2 grated garlic cloves, and a pinch of salt to simmer. Wisk in 2 cups of Colvin Run stone ground grits and cook over medium heat until tender. This can take a while, but the taste is worth it.

Beat a large egg in a small bowl. Stir in ¼ cup of the cooked grits, then add back to the pot of grits. Stir in 2 cups of shredded cheddar cheese and 4 tablespoons of butter. Add salt and pepper to taste. Now comes the interesting part.

Spoon the grits mixture into a well-buttered 13X9 inch baking pan. Smooth the top and cover with plastic (preferably compostable) wrap.

Let grits cool for 30 minutes then pop them into the refrigerator for at least 3 hours, longer if you like, even to the next day or two.

Cut the grits with a 2-inch cookie cutter and dredge them in flour seasoned with salt and pepper.

Heat oil in a cast-iron skillet that covers the bottom by ½ inch to 350 degrees. Fry the grits cakes in batches, 2-4 minutes a side, carefully flipping them over.

Drain on paper towels. Watch them quickly disappear.

Recipe from The Pioneer Woman:

https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a60203183/grit-cakes-recipe/

NEW MERCHANDISE IN THE STORE

The historic General Store at Colvin Run Mill is now selling local goods that are crafted by Veteran and Women Owned businesses that are American and sustainably made. Weird Brothers Coffee, River-Sea Chocolates and Knueven Soap. In addition, to celebrate the coming 250th anniversary of the American Revolution , we are selling Oliver Pluff & Company teas.

BECOME AN OFFICIAL "FRIENDS OF COLVIN RUN MILL" MEMBER

Membership dues are as follows: Individual - $35 a year, Family - $55, Business - $100.

Join now by completing the membership form on the Friends of Colvin Run Mill site (focrm.org/be-a-friend).

Young Carvers Shine at Craft Camp Week

This July, the historic Colvin Run Mill played host to a lively group of young artisans during its annual Craft Camp Week, held the week of July 9th, 2025. Eighteen campers, ages 8 to 12, rotated between activities like weaving, candle making, hiking, and more—all designed to awaken creativity and hands-on exploration.

Among the most memorable rotations was the **wood carving workshop**, where campers learned the art of spoon making under the expert guidance of a passionate instructor (Joyce). Working in groups of six at a time, the children not only shaped their own wooden spoons but absorbed valuable lessons in safety, technique, and craftsmanship.

Camp counselor **Madox**, a standout assistant throughout the workshop, helped create a safe and encouraging space for learning. After a safety presentation and proper outfitting with gloves and goggles, the campers were introduced to the **push cut**, a foundational carving technique. With steady hands and focused expressions, each young carver rounded off the handle of their spoon before sanding their piece to a smooth finish.

To personalize each project, the instructor (Joyce) wood burned every spoon with an identified leaf, the camper's name, and the words **"Camp Colvin 2025"**—a thoughtful touch that transformed each piece into a keepsake of their summer adventure.

The workshop wasn't just about carving; it was about connection—building confidence, patience, and pride in craftsmanship. From shy beginners to eager hobbyists, every camper walked away with a hand-carved treasure and a smile.

"A good time was had by all," summed up the spirit of the week—one of mentorship, creativity, and hands-on joy. Thank you to all counselors.

FOCRM Annual Meeting

Tuesday, October 7, 10:30 At the Mill

Friends of Colvin Run Mill

Notice of General Meeting to Elect Board of Directors

Under the bylaws of the Friends of Colvin Run Mill, the Board of Directors serve two year terms. They are elected by a majority of members attending the Annual General Meeting. This meeting will be held on **Tuesday, October 7, 2025 at 10:30 in the Education Center at the mill.**

The Board of Directors consist of at least four and up to ten members. Current Board members are myself, Dan Dyke, Kitty O'Hara, Wes Callender, Alex Block, Bob Colbenz, Michael Henry and Gene Bacher. Seven of the current eight board members have agreed to serve again. The floor will be open to additional candidates.

After the Board of Directors are elected, they will elect the officers of the Board. The President and Vice President may not serve more than two consecutive terms. Since I have served two consecutive terms as President, I am unable to stand for re-election.

You are cordially invited to attend the Annual General Meeting. Please let us know if you will be attending so are certain to have enough donuts, coffee and juice on hand. Reply to: focrm1811@gmail.com

James Wallar

President

Friends of Colvin Run Mill