

MILL CREEK

Homeowners Association

Summer 2005

<http://millcreekhomeowners.org>

President's Message

Hello, my name is Chris Zitnay and I am the newest president of the Millcreek Homeowners Association. The last several years has seen no less than four different presidents; Ed Carder, Jack Culbreth, Kurt Illig and now me. I come into the position having served for three years on the board. As chairman of the architectural review committee, I have seen and heard all manner of things from our homeowners and I have seen many changes in our neighborhood. I, like everyone else, have seen our peaceful blissful life in the United States vanish on 9/11, only to be replaced by fear and anxiety. For most of us, our personal safety was no longer something we could take for granted. We have become focused on the **World** and all of



the threats therein.

In this issue of our newsletter there are several articles about common threats around our own homes that were present well before 9/11 and continue to be bigger threats to our selves and our families than global terrorism. It is with this in mind that I would like to push all of the residents of Millcreek to step up to the plate and begin to examine our homes and work toward making our homes and neighborhood a safer and more beautiful place to live.

When I first looked to move to Millcreek in 1999, the well-kept houses and yards, by the distinctive mailboxes, and the people outside working and playing, are what attracted me. Since 9/11 our focus seems to have changed. We seem to have lost some our desire to maintain our surroundings, somehow thinking that it no longer matters. I think that this is a normal response to such a devastating event,



but it is time to **renew** our homes, our community, and ourselves. Let's begin to talk more with our neighbors, open up and find out more about them, be a friend. Let's look at our houses and fix what needs to be, cut the grass, paint our mailbox or house if needed, and plant that garden which we have been delaying. Let's pick up that trash that we see as we walk along rather than leave it for someone else. In general, let us all work together toward a cleaner, safer, and more attractive neighborhood. To paraphrase President Kennedy," Ask not what your community can do for you, but ask what can you do for your community."

I look forward to working with everyone in our community. I invite anyone to come to the board meetings. I encourage everyone to come to the annual neighborhood picnic in October for food, fun, and a chance to meet all of our new homeowners. Finally, I encourage people to call, write, or e-mail me any thoughts, suggestions, or comments you might have.

*Christopher Zitnay, MD
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Hazardous Household Chemicals!

Although most of us would think twice before moving in downwind from a chemical plant, many do not think twice about dangerous chemicals willingly brought into our homes. Almost any household chemical can be dangerous if swallowed or spilled. Potentially dangerous chemicals include such common items as ammonia, bleach, drain cleaner, furniture polish, oven cleaner, paint, turpentine, and common garden pesticides. Household chemicals are usually **safe if used properly**, but they can cause injury or even death if care is not taken when using them.

Keep these tips in mind

- NEVER sniff or taste household chemicals. Keep them away from your skin and your eyes.
- Ensure that all household chemicals are kept away from children and pets, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Do not store household chemicals in a non-approved container. Chemicals can react with the materials of a new container in unpredictable ways.
- Use household chemicals in a well-ventilated area to prevent a build-up of fumes.
- Periodically dispose of bottles of household chemicals that you do not use anymore or which are almost empty. Make sure to do so in an environmentally safe manner.

If you or anyone in your house is **exposed** to a household chemical, **flush** the affected area with water and get the victim to a hospital. *If* the chemicals are swallowed, read the label to determine whether to induce vomiting, then call poison control and get the victim to a hospital **immediately**.

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Mailboxes Etcetera:

The mailboxes at Millcreek are one of our distinctive features. They can be difficult at times, but if properly maintained, they look can look great and make a fantastic first impression on someone new to the neighborhood. If you are not in the mood to paint your mailbox this summer, I have made

some arrangements with local students to paint and do repairs on the mailboxes. The cost for painting will be \$15, while the cost of repairs will vary depending on the extent of repairs needed. If you would like you mailbox painted please call me at 244-7406 and leave me your name, address, and I will make the necessary arrangements to have your mailbox painted.



A good mailbox



Needs Some Work.

Beware of Identity Theft!



Intent on taking

a free ride on the good name and reputation of others, identity thieves obtain personal information and then essentially impersonate their victims as they open credit-card accounts, make purchases, or take out loans. While there is no way to have complete protection against identity theft, these common-sense measures can and do decrease the odds of

becoming a victim:

Jealously guard personal information like your Social Security number and account numbers and passwords, divulging it only in a communication that you initiate.

Keep your wallet from becoming a gold mine for potential thieves by carrying the minimum in checks, credit cards, or other bank items, not keep your Social Security number in

your wallet.

Retrieve your mail promptly and do not leave outgoing mail in your doorway or home mailbox.

Tear up private papers like bank statements, receipts, and credit-card



applications before throwing them away. Store valuable financial information at home in a place that is not available to prying eyes.

Review bank account and credit-card records regularly, as well as your own credit report prepared by a credit bureau, so that you can pick up the first signs of trouble, such as a missing payment or an unauthorized withdrawal.

WE NEED A FEW GOOD ~~MEN~~ PEOPLE

With the departure of Kurt Illig from the Mill Creek Homeowners Association's board of directors we have shrunk to only five members. We'd love to have a few more members to fill out our ranks. Usually I avoid this sort of position like the plague. I suspect it's a trap, and once I'm in I'll never get out. But I was moved to volunteer for two reasons. Last year when Jnanam MacIsaac resigned after several years on the board, she was clearly torn about leaving the great group of people she'd gotten to know as a board member. The second reason was guilt. My arm was gently and persistently twisted by Dr. Chris Zitnay, a neighbor and the board's current president.

After attending four meetings I have to agree with Jnanam: the Mill Creek board is a great and generous group of people, and it's fascinating to learn all that goes on in our little community. At our most recent

meeting I asked the other members why they joined the board and what benefits they derived from it. Their responses were similar.

Kevin O'Connor, who's been treasurer for seven years, said "I have an interest in serving the community. I get a lot of satisfaction out of working with these fine people and

solving problems."

Chris Zitnay, current president and head of the architectural committee, also wants to serve the community. "I like interacting with other board members," he added, "and this is a

great way to get to know my neighbors."

Barbara Mann, secretary, was out of town as I wrote this piece, but I know from things she's said in board meetings that serving on the Mill Creek board is an enjoyable, not onerous, responsibility.

Miles Weiss, who joined the same time as I did, said, "I'm a

new homeowner in Mill Creek. I wanted to see what was going on in the neighborhood. I know homeowner associations can be pretty powerful influences on a community. It's also great to discuss situations and help solve problems."

So here's your opportunity to learn the inside scoop and help your neighbors. Our next meeting is on Wednesday, June 9, at 7:00. Call one of the board members for the location. I have to admit I'm pretty proud of my first accomplishment as a board member: getting the potholes filled on Mill Creek and Gristmill Drives. Okay, they had to be filled twice, but I have the satisfaction of knowing that runners aren't going to break their ankles, baby carriages aren't going to lose their wheels, and cars aren't going out of alignment all because I made three little phone calls to VDOT.

Roussie Jacksina

