

the Spring Bank News

The Spring Bank Community Newsletter



Spring Bank Manor

An Historical Lesson Dating Back to the 18th Century

Mount Vernon, Gum Springs and Alexandria, Virginia's history is America's history. Much has been written about historic Virginia: Mount Vernon, Gunston Hall, Monticello, Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg. However, very little is known about Spring Bank, one of many historic places that

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Spring Bank Yard Sale

April 16 | 8am-1pm



Spring Bank Dinner Club

April 25 | 6:30 pm
El Paso Restaurant

First Fridays



May 6 | Jenn Morris
Flemming Street

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Join your neighbors in some Spring Bank fun at one of our social events!

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CONTRACTOR RED FLAGS

Run if you see any of these flags fly

Spring Bank Social

Want to Join Some Spring Bank Fun?
Come out for one of our social events!

There are lots of ways to get social with your neighbors in Spring Bank. Between First Fridays, Book Club, Dinner Club and Garden Club, there's just about something for everyone.

Here are a few social events to add to your calendar. Join one—or all—and meet your neighbors or hang out with old friends.

First Fridays are happy hours hosted at a neighbor's house, typically on the first Friday of the month. Friday, May 6 Jenn Morris will host at her home on Flemming St. You can reach her for more information and the address at jennmorris2011@gmail.com. Friday, June 3 Chris Bender will host at his home located at 2500 Dawn Dr @ cseanbender@gmail.com If you are interested in hosting a future event, please contact Lisa Delmonico at lisa.delmonico@yahoo.com.



Book Club is a group of readers who meet every other month to discuss a book. If you want to participate, please contact Stone Bond @ stone.bond.mail@gmail.com. The next meeting is May, 18 at 6:30 book is *A Second Chord* by Geraldine Brooks (available on Amazon).

Community Yard Sale is a great opportunity to sell some of your gently used, unwanted items at your house, or come out and check out what your neighbors have to sell! Contact Susan Isard for details at susanjoy59@verizon.net, or see the article in this newsletter for more info. Saturday, April 16, 8 am - 1 pm.

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ADVERTISE IN THE SPRING BANK NEWS

The Spring Bank News accepts advertising for our community newsletter. If you are interested in advertising in future newsletters, please **send ads to Michelle Zelsman at MLZelsman@gmail.com**.

Send your payment, payable to Spring Bank Community Association, to the SBCA Treasurer, **Jim Ernst**. At 6616 Oak Dr, Alexandria, VA 22306.

Ad Rates

- \$100 for a full-page ad
- \$50 for a half-page ad
- \$30 for a quarter-page ad
- \$20 for an eighth-page (business card size) ad

All proceeds will be used to offset the cost of printing the newsletter.



Spring Bank Social

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Dinner Club is a group of neighbors who want to try out the local eateries. We meet monthly at a local restaurant for a mid-week dinner.

The next Dinner Club outing will be Monday, April 25 at 6:30 at El Paso Mexican Restaurant, located at 6151 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22303. Contact Lisa Delmonico at lisa.delmonico@yahoo.com if you'd like to join.

“there’s just about something for everyone.”

Garden Club is a group of neighbors who are interested in gardening, both veggies and flowers, who meet weekend mornings to discuss all things garden. The members work together to share knowledge, seeds, plants and ideas. A great place for all levels of interest. If you want to learn more and join, please contact Jenn Morris at jennmorris2011@gmail.com

Want to see something else here on the community social calendar? Let's get it started! Contact Lisa Delmonico with your plans!



Spring Bank Manor: An Historical Lesson

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helped to make Fairfax County the wealthiest county in the nation and Alexandria, Virginia the famous and historic city that it is.

Spring Bank's origins go back to the beginnings of Alexandria in middle of the 18th-century and the West family, who owned a lot of property in and around Alexandria. Col. John West owned land we now know as Belle Haven Golf Course, the Belle Haven neighborhood and some residential areas east of Route 1 including the area that is our neighborhood. In 1748, one year before the founding of Alexandria, West built a manor for his plantation called "West Grove. A few remnant foundation stones are still visible at the Belle Haven Country Club and Golf Course on Ft. Hunt Road.

A raw goods merchant in Alexandria, Robert Patton, owned a three-story dwelling at 218 N. Royal Street and purchased 128 acres from Roger West's former plantation, West Grove, in 1805. With his new wife, Ann Clifton Reeder, they built Spring Bank Manor around 1809. The land was fertile and held a peach and apple orchard. A creek (Quander Brook) ran from Great Hunting Creek and spawned several springs on the property hence the origin of the name Spring Bank. Patton and his wife raised Merino sheep on the land.

It was around this time that the construction of a turnpike and bridge crossing Great Hunting Creek was undertaken. The Hunting Creek Turnpike crossed on a new bridge from south Henry Street in Alexandria to what is now the Fort Hunt Road and Route One intersection.

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Spring Bank Manor: An Historical Lesson

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The turnpike established a new route from Hunting Creek to Penn-Daw, known today as King's Crossing, then continued south on what is now South King's Highway. Before the turnpike, all traffic had to cross the creek into Alexandria at Cameron Run where Telegraph Road crosses the stream today.

Patton passed away in 1826 and his heirs rented Spring Bank in 1833 to John Armfield, a coach driver from North Carolina who became co-owner of a slave pen in Alexandria located at 1315 Duke Street. From this location, Armfield and his uncle, Isaac Franklin, teamed up to run a business that sold over 8,000 enslaved humans. It was the largest such firm in the United States.

Spring Bank's next owner was George W. Mason, a grandson of George Mason, the famous patriot and the architect of The Virginia Declaration of Rights and The Virginia Constitution, which became a model for The U.S. Bill of Rights, The Declaration of Independence and The Constitution of the United States. In 1844, Mason bought Spring Bank and lived there the rest of his life. Spring Bank at that time "consisted of a twenty-five-room mansion, a three-story brick barn, stables, and other outbuildings."

During the Civil War, many Virginians in Alexandria and in the surrounding countryside worried about their homes. In need of supplies, Union forces often confiscated homeowner's property. A couple of books touch on the occupation of Spring Bank by the 2nd Vermont Brigade. 5,000 soldiers were stationed there

and used the mansion for their headquarters. The 63rd Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers, were quartered at Spring Bank from October 14, 1861 to March 17, 1862. Their duties included building Fort Lyon where the Huntington Metro station is today.

Mason witnessed Fort Lyon go up, as well as Fort Weed, Fort O'Rourke, and Fort Farnsworth. These forts were located in neighborhoods close to the Metro station. Mason was said to be bitter about the Union Army troops that camped at Spring Bank farm. He was described as a "haughty, overbearing autocrat." He pleaded for military protection from General Robert E. Lee who was unable to do so. Upon his death in 1870, the obituary in the Alexandria Gazette referred to him as a "high toned Virginia Gentleman of the old school. Eight years later, fire damaged the Spring Bank home. Mason's son George was burned rescuing family heirlooms.

Fitzhugh Lee, Robert E. Lee's nephew and former Confederate cavalry general lived at Spring Bank as a renter. His father was the older brother of Robert E. Lee. His mother was Ann Maria Mason Lee, the great granddaughter of George Mason. Fitzhugh Lee rented Spring Bank from the Mason family in 1884 while he successfully ran for governor of Virginia. Winning by the slimmest of margins, he became the 40th Governor of Virginia in 1885.

In 1885, Johnson Downey of Frederick, MD bought Spring Bank from the Mason family. After his death his widow, Mrs. Rose E. Downey sold eighty-eight acres of Spring Bank Farm to Charles Henry Quander, a freed slave, who had been held in slavery two years beyond The Emancipation Proclamation. Charles, born in

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Maryland, was the first African American to settle at Spring Bank. After his emancipation from the Hayfield Plantation in Fairfax County, he earned money and bought parcels of land south of the Spring Bank manor. The Quander farm sold milk and produce to Alexandria markets. Charles willed portions of his land to his children. Paying tribute to the Quander family, Quander Road runs from Richmond Highway past West Potomac High School, which honored the family by naming one of its buildings Quander Hall. The present day Spring Bank community had the stream that runs through the community all the way to Hunting Creek officially named by Fairfax County as Quander Brook.

The Quanders are one of the oldest documented Black families in America, dating back to 1684. Some were slaves at Mount Vernon, and they have traced their roots back to the Amkwandoh family in Ghana, West Africa. Several Quander family descendants live in the Spring Bank area and community today.

During World War II, Robert Bowman converted the old manor house into apartments and added a trailer park behind the house. By that time, the once-stately manor had been shorn of its portico, window and door pediments, and all of the embellishments that led to a description of the home one hundred years earlier—"One of the best and most extensive mansions in this part of Virginia." S.S. Kresge Company bought Spring Bank Manor in 1970 in order to build a K-Mart store on the site. Just hours before its scheduled 1972 demolition, the late Fairfax County historian Edith Sprouse and other

volunteers salvaged a few mementoes from the home. Included were the front steps that were reportedly taken from the U.S Capitol after the British burned it during the War of 1812.

On Monday morning, February 7, 1972, a bulldozer turned the house at Spring Bank, the once grand home to the famous Mason family, the house of a Civil War general and Governor of Virginia, the residence of an Alexandria slave trader and an ignominious host to a trailer park into a pile of rubble all for the purpose of offering consumers the infamous K-Mart blue light specials.

The K-Mart later relocated to Hybla Valley Shopping Center where the present day Home Depot is located and the old K-Mart building became a Builders Square Building supply store, then a Michaels Arts and Crafts which relocated to the newly renovated Mount Vernon Shopping Center in Hybla Valley and lastly a National Home Liquidators Merchandise before developers built the King's Crossing version we have today consisting of retail and restaurants with a Walmart.

As the Route 1 corridor continues to revitalize and prosper with new development, don't we owe it to the people that once lived here more than just another place to live, eat and shop? We should ask as part of the new residential development proposal that the proposed pedestrian park area have a fitting and appropriate marker or monument to commemorate the rich history of this location to public memory.

Article by Martin Tillet

Spring Bank Restaurant Dinner Group Reviews Alexandria's Cosmopolitan Grill



Location: 7770
Richmond Highway,
Alexandria, VA Next
to Gold's Gym |
703.360.3660

Hours: Tuesday
thru Saturday, 11:00
am-10:00 pm
Sunday 11:30
am-9:00 pm |
Closed Mondays

The Spring Bank Restaurant Dinner Group met for the first time at **Cosmopolitan Grill** on February 24. This review is written by Kelly Brinley and includes a compilation of reviews from six members of the dinner club. Our next dining experience will be on Wednesday, March 30 at the Peking Duck. All adults in the Spring Bank Community are welcome to attend.

*****Overall Rating:** Because the food was so outstanding and the service very good, the group felt this outweighed the overall location and atmosphere and rated it as 4 out of 5 stars. "We both thought the restaurant was very nice...On a star system, I'd give the Cosmopolitan Grill 4 stars on this visit...I would give it a 5 for a local place... So I give Cosmopolitan Grill four stars...Rounding to 4 stars."

****Surroundings:** Cosmopolitan Grill is located in the strip mall next to Gold's Gym. There are reserved parking spaces for the restaurant located near the entrance. "The location in a strip mall, next to a gym is deceiving."

****Atmosphere:** Décor is nice- geared for adults, but not super romantic. It is a single room with both booths and tables that can be pushed together to accommodate larger groups. There is a long bar across the back of the room with several television sets. "The interior and ambiance were very nice... The ambiance is ok, but it is a little weird with the

gym literally connected to the restaurant. I also don't love TVs in a restaurant, but that may just be me."

*******Menu:** The menu is based on traditional dishes from the Balkans. They offer a variety of appetizers, salads, entrees, sandwiches, and desserts. Entrees included a variety of seafood, chicken, veal, lamb, beef, pork and vegetarian. They have a full bar and offer a limited wine list. They serve wines from both the Coastal and Continental regions of Croatia, as well as from nearby Slovenia. "I had the mixed grill with extra cevapcici (Bosnian sausages) and a shopska (Bulgarian tomato, cucumber, onion, pepper and feta cheese salad) and ajvar (roasted red pepper and eggplant dip). I get this every time I eat here because I love it....Bread was delicious along with whatever that butter was. Portion size was generous. Great for veal lovers... The Balkan-influenced menu offers something different from the chain restaurants along Rt 1. My choice for the evening, Grilled Chicken with Mushroom Sauce, was excellent...I never eat veal, but I allowed myself to enjoy it this time. I don't regret it. It was buttery and delicious. The food was really good, starting with that warm bread and white sauce...The veal with the mushroom sauce and spatzel were great. The portions are huge The creamy cheese served with the bread is addictive... Not a spot for wine drinkers, the wine list was pretty sparse."

*****Service:** Our group had one server for the 10 of us. "Service was good...Service is attentive...Since we were the only ones there for a while during the severe rain and tornado warnings, evaluating the service might not reflect an ordinary night. But for that evening, the service was excellent. I was shocked at how quickly our food was served. The waiter was very attentive, checking back on any needs regularly...The only downside was the service—it could've been a bit speedier...They were very accommodating."

*****Price:** Entrees range from \$15-\$25. The restaurant was voted as one of the 100 Best Bargain Restaurants by the Washingtonian Magazine. "Food prices seemed reasonable to me, particularly given the quality and quantity"

WHY SHOULD YOU JOIN THE SPRING BANK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION?

The Spring Bank Community Association (SBCA) is a group dedicated to improving the lives of the people in the Spring Bank neighborhood. So what does that really mean to you?

We're a neighborhood community group, not a Home Owners Association (HOA). We represent EVERYBODY who lives in Spring Bank, not just the folks who own the houses here.

Ok so we're not an HOA, so what does that mean? It means, we do all sorts of public service but don't shirk on the fun as well. We have social groups for just about any interest, a book club, a dining club, a garden club and also have a variety of other social events throughout the year.

On the first Friday of every month, someone hosts a first Friday Happy Hour, some are themed, some are just an opportunity to get together and meet the neighbors. We have neighborhood block parties, garage sales, movie nights and other social gatherings. If we don't have something that interests you, we're always open to new things! We aren't just a group of folks, we're your neighbors! Wouldn't it be nice to know that you have an electrician down the street or someone who is a local history buff close by for when you have that burning question? Well, the good news is, we have that someone living just around the corner.

But we're much more than just a social organization. We are always working to improve the community and make it a better place to live. By working together as a Community Organization, our voice is much louder and carries more weight than any single resident can hope to hold. For example, we are working closely with Fairfax County to ensure that a new planned development near the Walmart is a beneficial addition to the area. Tired of all the water running down Fairview Drive or all the mud on Oak when it rains? Well, we're working with the County to get storm water management improvements into the neighborhood. Wonder what's going on with the local school budget and want to help? We're heavily engaged with the school board and the Board of Supervisors to ensure our voice is heard. Think there should be more parks in this area? We're working with the parks and recreation service to develop the land behind the Walmart as a neighborhood park. And we don't just work with the County, we're involved with the Boy Scouts to help them put some trails into that area so us residents can enjoy some green space right in our backyard as we work on the formal park.

Have you always wanted to get involved in something? We're a great entry point for just about anything you could possibly imagine. Want to help make sure the Route 1 corridor gets developed and have a voice in how that happens? We have a committee for that. Want to get involved in local education? We work with the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens' Associations and represent the community's interest on the Education Committee. Want to get involved in local politics? We hosted a debate/forum for the Board of Supervisors and School Board Nominees last fall prior to the election. No matter how you want to get involved or even if you're not sure if you do, we're a great avenue to learn what's out there and how to be a part of it. Or if you just want to know what's going on in the local community, we're a great place for that as well.

And we're also a wonderful source of general information too! We regularly have guest speakers on topics that may be of interest to you. We've had a local botanist come in and talk about local flora and fauna, we're planning a visit from an Emergency Management group to talk about what we can do within our own neighborhood in an emergency situation. We also get regular visits from our local police force to keep us up to date on the activities in our area and things we need to know to keep our homes safe. These are just a few examples of the sorts of interesting things you can learn when you're part of the SBCA

Why be a part of the SBCA? Because we're your neighborhood, your neighbors and your future electrician/florist/accountant/handyman/etc. But more than that, we're the voice of where you live, play and thrive!

Contractor Red Flags

By Michelle Zelsman

Run If You See Any of These Red Flags Fly

Are you ready to put an addition onto your home, or maybe just a beautiful outdoor deck? Then it's time to find a contractor to do the work. Your home is one of your most valuable investments, which is why it is vital for you to pick a dependable and honest contractor to complete the work on your home. Make sure to watch out for these six contractor red flags.

No References

Before you hire a contractor, make sure to check out his or her references. Word of mouth is a strong selling point for contractors looking for repeat business and new business. Reputable contractors will be more than happy to provide you with a list of references from those who were satisfied with the work the contractor did.

Payment Demands

A huge red flag to look out for is a demand for the payment upfront. You should never pay for the work until the job is done and you are satisfied with the completed project. Some contractors may ask for an upfront payment, but reputable and trustworthy contractors will never ask for the full amount upfront. Also beware of contractors asking for only cash payments — this leaves no proof of the payment, and you will not be able to get your money back if the project isn't completed or done to your liking.

Low Pricing

Just because a contractor is offering you a low price for the work doesn't mean the work will be of good quality. Make sure to do research so you know at least a ballpark figure for what you'll be paying, so that you will be able to gauge whether the price offered is too low for high-quality work.

No Proof of Insurance

Contractors should always carry personal liability and property damage insurance. If the contractor you hire fails to have insurance, you will be liable



for any property damage or injury that occurs on the job site.

No License in Your State or Area

Licensing qualifications vary by state and local area, so it's important to make sure that the contractor is licensed to work in your state and your area. Check out your local building department to learn more about the specific licensing requirements needed in your state and local area.

Refusal to Provide a Bid

If the contractor will not provide a bid in writing that outlines the cost of labor and materials, timelines, payment terms and a detailed description of the work to be done, then run — fast! This means that after the work has been completed, you may end up being charged much more than you should be. Make sure to get a bid in writing before you hire the contractor to do the work.

Hiring the right contractor may take a lot of research, but you will be glad you took the time to look up the facts before hiring anyone. The best place to start looking for a contractor is to reach out to family and friends to see whom they have used and what their experiences were.

You're Invited to Join SBCA!

The Spring Bank Community Association is pleased to invite you to become a member or renew your membership for our neighborhood association.

Please complete the form below and return it to SBCA Treasurer Jim Ernst, 6616 Oak Drive, Alexandria, VA 22306

Last Name(s): _____

First Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (C) _____

Email: _____

Annual Dues

\$15.00 per household.

Annual dues are \$15 to join or re-new your membership in SBCA. Payment in the form of cash, personal check or money order is accepted. Please make check or money order payments to SPRING BANK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION.

Spring Bank Committee Interests

Please print your name next to the committee on which you would like to serve or learn more. Please note, these committees are specific to the affairs of SBCA and focus on neighborhood-related issues and activities to benefit members and the community.

Communications and Publications Committee

Neighborhood Watch & Safety Committee

Membership, Help a Neighbor Network, Welcome Committee

Community Spirit/Social Committee

Community Development Committee



SPRING BANK LEADERSHIP

SBCA President

Joshua Delmonico
jdelmon@gmail.com
703.861.9545

SBCA Vice President

Bill Brinley
wbrinley@verizon.net

SBCA Secretary

Josh Neveln
joshneveln@yahoo.com

SBCA Treasurer

Jim Ernst
bette.ernst@gmail.com

Board Member At-Large

Martin Tillett
mwtillet@verizon.net

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy Spring! I hope everyone is enjoying this great weather and is looking forward to the summer. I know we are. We have had a busy spring getting our garden in (yes we have plants already in the ground and have been eating asparagus already). The kids just got back from skiing in Vermont for spring break and we are heading full swing into soccer season!

Elections were held at our January meeting. The results are as follows: Josh Delmonico – President, Bill Brinley – Vice President, Jim Ernst – Treasurer, and Josh Neveln – Secretary. At that meeting, the bylaws were amended to add an At-Large seat on the Board. Martin Tillet was elected to this position. Congratulations to all!

I am excited to start the new term as President. Here are my priorities for SBCA this year (not necessarily in order): Represent Community Interests to the County on the re-development of Kings Crossing and other issues affecting our neighborhood; Continue Community-building Events (First Fridays, Clubs, National Night Out, Holiday Potluck, Fall Festival); Increase community participation in SBCA and number of members paying dues; Investigate Officer Insurance for SBCA Officers; Incorporate SBCA into a nonstock corporation; Obtain permission for community to be on Fairchild Property and determine access options; Run neighborhood fundraisers including selling SBCA T-Shirts; Explore additional communication options (e.g facebook and instagram); Increase newsletter advertising; Publish 4 newsletters; and Increase SBCA dues to \$20 annually. Please contact me if you are interested in helping with any of the above.

We continue to engage with the Developer of the Kings Crossing Site. We held a joint meeting with the Developer and Supervisor Storck recently and everything appears on track for the development to move forward. We are also working with the County on obtaining permission for an Eagle Scout project to be done on the Fairchild property. There will be a presentation at a future meeting by the Scout on his proposed project. These two projects are the major focus of the Association right now. If you are interested in helping out – please contact me.

We have had a surge in social events this winter/spring. The Spring Bank Book Club met for the first time several weeks ago. Contact Stone Davis (Davis.Stone@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining. The Spring Bank Dinner Club had its first outing in February. You can read more about the experience in the article by Kelly Brinley. Contact Lisa Delmonico (Lisa.Delmonico@yahoo.com) if you are interested in joining the Dinner Club. Additionally, the Spring Bank First Friday's continue. These events are hosted by a different person in the neighborhood every month (please contact Lisa Delmonico at Lisa.Delmonico@yahoo.com if you are interested in hosting a first Friday or any other social event). Note that the Community Association voted to provide \$50 to anyone hosting a First Friday to offset the cost of food and drinks. Please send our Treasurer (Jim Ernst) an email at Bette.Ernst@gmail.com and let him know you have hosted and he will provide you a check. If you haven't made it to a First Friday or other Spring Bank event, please come on out and meet your neighbors. They are lots of fun.

We are having a neighborhood yard sale on the April 16 from 8 am to 1. You can still sell items at that sale. Simply put out a sign in front of your house and start selling. It is also a great time to go shopping right in your own backyard. There are at least 10 houses who have signed up to sell. I am sure there are treasures to be found at every stop!

The SBCA wouldn't be what it is today if it weren't for its volunteers. Thanks for all you do. If you are interested in Volunteering please contact me at jdelmon@gmail.com or 703-791-9239 and I will help you get started. There are a lot of opportunities to help out. Lastly, there is a membership form at the back of this newsletter. 2016 dues were due 1 January. They are \$15 for the year. They help us to print newsletters, pay dues to the Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Associations and contribute to events benefiting the neighborhood.

We are YOUR neighborhood association and want to hear from you! We host monthly SBCA meetings (the third Tuesday of every month (we take a break June – Aug and we skip December) at 7:30pm at the Groveton Baptist Church. All are welcome and encouraged to attend. I look forward to seeing you around the neighborhood. Happy Spring!

Joshua Delmonico
SBCA President
jdelmon@gmail.com
703-861-9545

Spring Bank website <http://springbankca.weebly.com>
Spring Bank Google Group <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/springbankva>
Spring Bank Next Door site <https://springbank.nextdoor.com>