



LYON PARK Citizen

July
2015

President's Message

Good News All Around

It is with great pleasure that we announce an agreement with First Virginia Community Bank that will allow us to complete renovation of the Lyon Park Community Center.

Following legal objections concerning the previous financing plan, the Board of Governors pursued numerous alternative methods of securing financing for the project. We are happy to share that First Virginia Community Bank has agreed to provide a line of credit to complete the renovation that does not encumber the park or the property as a condition of the loan.

First Virginia Community Bank is a local partner, focused on helping residents, businesses, and communities in Northern Virginia with banking services. We are truly grateful for their review of the Community Center's business and fundraising plans as well as for their creativity in helping find an innovative solution. As an added bonus, the terms of the agreement are quite favorable, enabling us to save a significant amount of money over the duration of the repayment period.

What does this mean for the Community Center project?

We move forward without delay, and are on track to reopen this fall. Thanks to the generosity of hundreds of neighbors who stepped forward to support the Center in June (see page 10), we were able to keep the project going without costly disruptions. We still have a long way to go with construction and fundraising, but are able to continue the momentum and complete the Center that the neighborhood envisioned, designed, and deserves.

With deepest thanks to and renewed awe for our great community,

John Goldener
President, LPCA

Jeannette Wick
Chair, LPCC BoG

The Entire Lyon Park Woman's Club
A Consensus-Driven Organization

Are you on the Listserv?

The Lyon Park Community has an active listserv. It's the fastest way to

- Find a cleaning team
- Sign up to scrape windows
- See the area Crime Report
- Find a pet sitter
- Keep up with local news

Don't want to see what's for sale? No problem! You can tailor your selections to just what you want or need.

Visit BigTent group Lyon Park to enroll:
<https://www.bigtent.com/groups/lyonpark>

FVCbank
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Sirena Pearl, 13, Red Cross certified, Call or e-mail to schedule: 606-3277 or sirenajbpearl@gmail.com

Izzy Franklin, 18, Red Cross certified, Babysitting and Mother's Helper. (571) 236-2008

Sam Yarnell, 14, Red Cross certified, Babysitting and Mother's Helper, no infants. Call or e-mail to schedule: (571) 451-3076 or iamyayasam@gmail.com

OTHER SERVICES

Lawn care: Daichi (Jennifer) Monma (15 years old) Phone: (571) 488-8918 E-mail: cafeпаzzo@gmail.com

Lillie Scheer, math tutoring services for kids. Contact susan@fishinfiddler.com or (703) 527-3960

B. Brennan, Mandarin Chinese tutoring services for people of all ages. Contact B2water@Yahoo.com or (703) 618-8808

Taylor Henninger, piano lessons to students of all ages. Contact tahennin@indiana.edu

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Need to restore and/or repair an antique or contemporary piece of furniture? Custom designs and quotes available. Contact Jason Busby at 528-4567





KAREN LAM

703-585-6333



The Lyon Park Citizens Association
P.O. Box 100191, Arlington, VA 22201

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4TH ANNUAL
LYON PARK - ASHTON HEIGHTS
**GOLF
TOURNAMENT**

**SUNDAY JULY 19, 2015, 1:00 PM
SOUTH RIDING GOLF CLUB.**

PROCEEDS TO THE COMMUNITY CENTER RENOVATION

This is a “Captain’s Choice” team scramble.

- Each team member plays a tee shot.
- Next the team determines the best ball to play, and all team members then play their next shot from that location.
- Players purchase Mulligan Certificates, to allow “do-overs,” a very stress-free way to play golf!
- At the conclusion, teams gather for a “Picnic Awards Banquet” for team and individual prizes.

This year’s event returns to **SOUTH RIDING GOLF CLUB**, a beautiful Dan Maples design. It’s a well maintained and conveniently located course just south of Dulles Airport. The 1 PM shotgun start enables all players to tee off and finish play at the same time.

Mail your payment and application today.

- Entry fee of \$125 per person pays for golf, golf cart, range balls, picnic dinner after golf, prizes
- Fee includes a \$35 tax deductible donation toward Lyon Park Community House renovation
- Invite friends to play with you or we will place you in a foursome with your neighbors!

Last year’s Tournament raised \$1,700 and featured prizes generously donated by:
**Saul Centers/Lyon Place Apartments, Saul Centers/Lyon Place Apartments,
Lyon Hall, Liberty Tavern, Northside Social, Circa, Peete’s Pizza,
Ri Ra Irish Pub, Bracket Room, Green Pig Bistro, Hard Times
American Taproom, Mexicali Blues and South Riding Golf Club**

Mail application and check, \$125 per player, (\$35 of which is a tax deductible donation) payable to “**Lyon Park Community Center**” to:

Lyon Park / Ashton Heights Golf Tourney
c/o Bill Anhut
929 N. Cleveland St
Arlington, VA 22201

Name(s) _____
E-mail(s) _____
Cell or Home Phone _____
Payment Amount \$ _____

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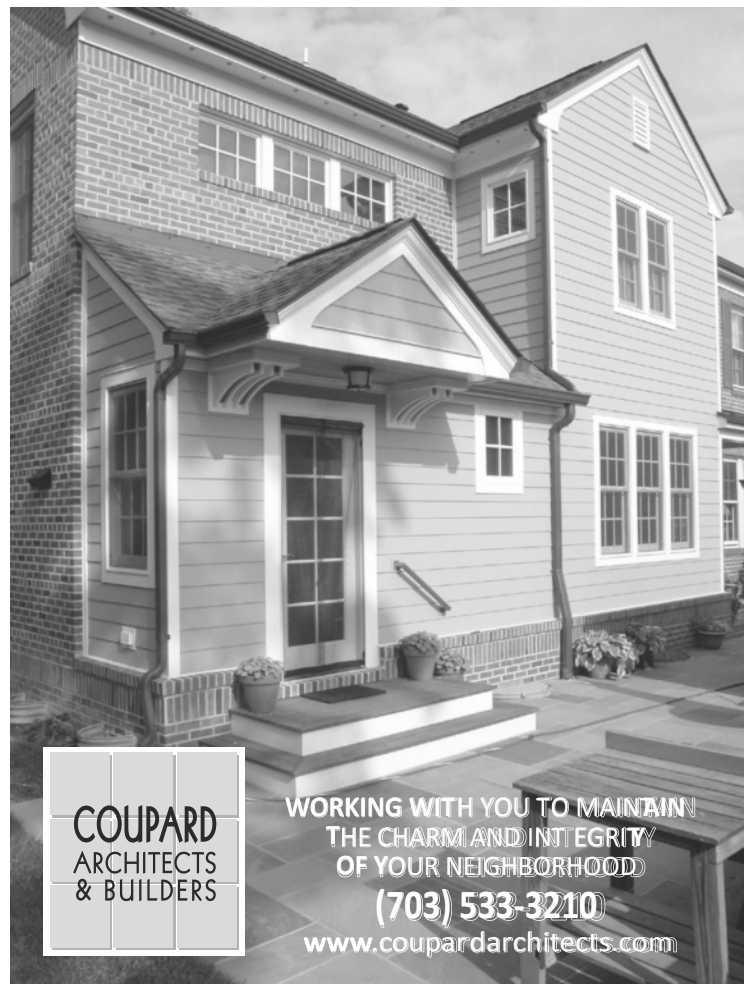
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Dan's unique Guaranteed Sale Program guarantees the sale of your home at price and timeframe acceptable to you. If it does not sell he will buy it. There must be a catch right? There is none.

Dan's past education and experiences set him apart from the average agent. As a 2002 Naval Academy graduate and nuclear submarine officer, Dan has a unique combination leadership and operational experiences not found in the real estate industry. As a graduate from Georgetown University's MBA program, Dan also has a unique background in strategy and finance, not often found in real estate. In addition to helping traditional buyers and sellers Dan has experience in the area working with builders, contractors and developers on projects including: big and small home renovations, new construction and sub-division development.

Since the Orange Line Living team sells more homes in Arlington than anyone, Dan has more resources to dedicate towards marketing your home and getting it sold for top dollar. Dan has built a team and system to support his clients throughout the real estate process in order to deliver top service and results. As a result, Dan and the Orange Line Living Team can offer their clients GUARANTEES that the typical agent simply cannot do.



Go to OrangeLineGuaranteedSale.com to see our client's testimonial.

"Without Dan and the Orange Line Living Team we would not have been able to move forward comfortably with building our dream home. His guarantee took the risk out of building our new home and then selling our previous home."

-Eric Blazer

Orange Line Living Average Agent

Homes Sold in 2014:	261	12
Average Days on Market:	25	66
Average Sale Price:	99.6%	95.7%
		(Of Asking)

*MRIS Smart Charts data as of November 2014

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Advertise in The Lyon Park Citizen

The Lyon Park Citizen is hand delivered to 2,000 homes around the 10th of the month from September through June (10 issues), with artwork and copy due the 20th of the previous month. These are our advertising rates:

Ad size	Measures (in inches)...	Cost
Business card	3.5 by 2.3	\$85/month color \$59/month B&W
Quarter page	3.5 by 4.5	\$130/month color \$89/month B&W
Half page	7.5 by 4.5	\$210/month color \$149/month B&W
Full page	7.5 by 9.5	\$350/month color \$249/month B&W
Full page free-standing insert	8.5 by 11	\$400/month color \$350/month B&W

We offer a 5% discount for residents who have paid their LPCA dues, and an additional 10% discount for advertisers who commit to three or more months in a row. A designer will draft artwork for an extra 10% charge.

Your Lyon Park Real Estate Specialist



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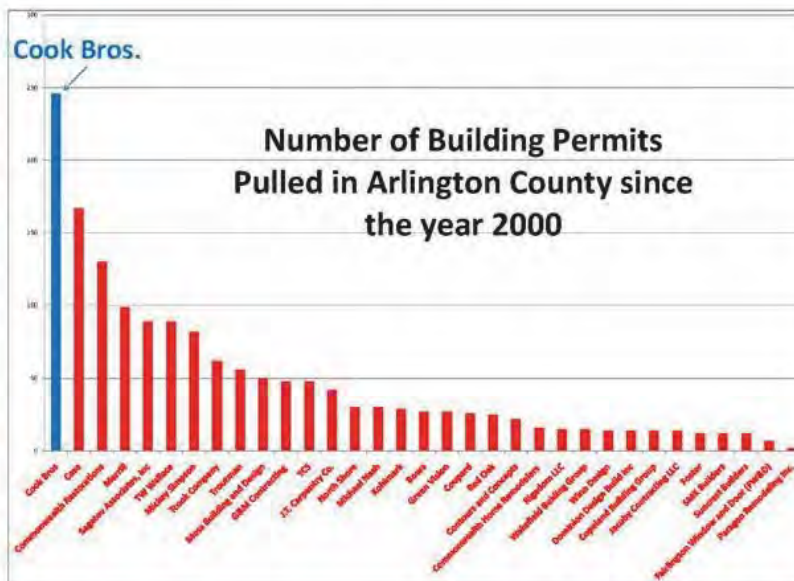
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Firefighters Check Smoke Alarms in Lyon Park

Jennifer Hart

Local firefighters are going door-to-door in Lyon Park to get out an important message: "Working smoke alarms save lives."

Under a new program, members of Fire Station 4 on North 10th Street will visit Arlington homes every Saturday until October, to check smoke alarms and install a free one if needed.

The uniformed firefighters will knock on your door and ask permission to inspect your smoke alarms. If invited in, according to Lt. Chris Robinson, "we will check the dates on your alarms, make sure batteries are being changed regularly, and give you a pamphlet on fire safety." They will also perform a quick visual inspection for other possible fire hazards, such as electrical outlets that are overloaded.

According to Fire Chief Jim Schwartz, during the first two weekends of the program, the firefighters "contacted more than 700 homes, installed 100 new smoke alarms and verified that 185 homes have working smoke alarms."



Firefighter Jeff Zynel and Lt. Chris Robinson display a new smoke alarm. Members of Fire Station 4 will knock on doors to inspect and install free smoke alarms every Saturday until October.

To get the best fire protection from your smoke alarms, remember to:

- Test all smoke alarms once a month by pressing the "test" button.
- Change the batteries in your alarm at least twice a year, unless you have a 10-year lithium battery. "Change them when the seasons change, when you move your clock back or forward," advises Firefighter Jeff Zynel.
- Replace all smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Vacuum smoke alarms regularly to remove dust.

Your family should also have a fire escape plan that you practice at least once a year:

- Make sure there are two ways out of every room.
- In case of fire, stay low to the ground or crawl underneath toxic smoke. Check doors for heat when leaving the room and close the door behind you.
- Decide in advance where all family members will gather outside in case of emergency. Call 911 once everyone is outside.

For more information on smoke alarms or fire safety, see the web site at <http://fire.arlingtonva.us> or call the Fire Prevention Office at (703) 228-4644.

A collage for the "BUILD LYON PARK With Arts FUNDRAISER". It features a central red banner with the text "BUILD LYON PARK With Arts FUNDRAISER". To the left, a calendar shows "12 SEPT SATURDAY". Below the banner, a list of activities is provided: "COOKIES & MILK", "THE TASTE TEST", "RAFFLES", "BAKE OFF", "SILENT AUCTION", and "UNDER THE STARS". The collage also includes photos of people, including a group of children holding up their artwork, and a "SAVE THE DATE" graphic with a tree icon. The website "www.lyonpark.org" and the date "July 2015" are at the bottom left, and "Page 7" is at the bottom right.



"There is more to life than beer alone, but beer makes those things even better."

—Stephen Morris, The Great Beer Trek

It is with great pleasure that we introduce the newest member of the Lyon Park community, the Lyon Park Brewers Association (LPBA). The LPBA—a subgroup of the Lyon Park Citizens Association—is dedicated to community, camaraderie, and a shared passion for great beer.

If you brew, you know that you become better by experimentation, collaboration, and help from others around you. Your beers are better when you share them, and you thrive on feedback, praise, and support.

If you don't brew but enjoy craft beer, have a discerning palette, and appreciate surprising finds and good company, then this group is also for you! Even those that don't know much about beer will find the group a fun place to learn.

- The **inaugural event for the LPBA will be a SMaSH (Single Malt and Single Hop) tasting**. The LPBA is co-hosting the event on **August 15** with our good friends Julie and Beth from The Brew Shop (online at www.arlbrew.com, and coming soon to Courthouse).
- The Brew Shop will bring six single hop beers brewed specifically for the event, and we will also have numerous one-hop craft brewery offerings and delicious food pairings.
- Julie and Beth will help lead event participants on a sensory tour of these unique hops, explaining the nuances of each hop varietal and their unique flavor and aroma profiles



Note that **this is an exclusive event, and we only have 20 spots available**. Tickets are \$125, and 100 percent of the funds raised will go to the Lyon Park Community Center renovation project. **Contact Aaron Schuetz ASAP at ajschuetz@yahoo.com to reserve your spot.**

Future events will include tastings, guest lectures from local brewers, beer swaps, and collaborative brewing sessions in the soon-to-be amazing Community Center kitchen. Brewers and craft beer lovers are all welcome; join the LPBA subgroup on BigTent to keep up-to-date on coming events and discussions.



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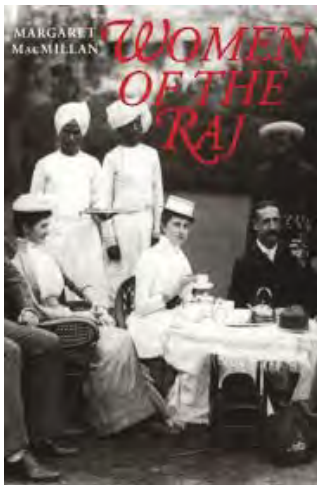
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Women of the Raj

Margaret Dean



MacMillan recounts the history of middle class British women in an extraordinary situation. They came to India (1858 to 1947) to be wives, not adventurers, diplomats or businessmen. They came not knowing what they would face. "Sometimes they were magnificent. Sometimes...awful" (xi). These women seemed to be stubbornly persistent in retaining their ignorance of India and in treating Indians as "wayward children" (xii) who needed civilizing.

Men had come first, of course, as traders, or gamblers, starting in the 16th century. The East Indian Company developed a strong presence and slowly eliminated its European rivals. Able administrators, the British defeated their Indian opponents, the Sikhs and the Muhrattas, by the mid- 1850s. Brits, both men and women, regarded India as a stagnant civilization of barbaric religions, primitive arts, and incomprehensible culture.

Most women—wives of viceroys or governors, government bureaucrats, or soldiers—came to make homes for their families; they found India a kaleidoscope of shifting and changing layers. They tried to re-establish a British presence for their families and were frustrated when they failed. Life was physically different with heat, rainy seasons, snakes, typhoons, illness, scorpions and other insects. British styles and clothing, with their heavy stocking, dresses to the ground, covered arms, petticoats, camisoles and stays and flannel cummerbunds, designed for England made life miserable. And there was always the plague of boredom. They were spiritually isolated, surrounded by different gods, people with no

apparent morals, and cultures that exploded with color and sex. In every age a few independent women (missionaries, teachers, some doctors) escaped the system, but they also had to deal life's natural differences, even if they did avoid boredom.

Women were alone or lonely. MacMillan tells of one male diarist who records speaking to his wife once, but notes regularly engaging his dog. Life with cheap labor and multitudes of servants appeared grand, but dealing with the caste system was draining. Women had to behave in ways that would not weaken the Raj's authority. They had to do it without friends and families. With one Brit for every 167,000 Indians, the balance of power lay in the hands of the Indians, as the 1857 Mutiny shows.

The writing is readable, but occasionally repeats facts that a good editor would have removed. The Raj encompassed what is today India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma, although those differences are not made clear in the book. In doing her research (pre-1988), MacMillan visited some of the now elderly memsahibs and spent a year in India. Most of her focus was on the more isolated camps, and she wishes that she knew more, had written more about life in the big cities and about the scorned Eurasian women.

Women of the Raj, the Mothers, Wives and Daughters of the British Empire in India, by Margaret MacMillan, Random House, NY 1988 and 2005, paperback, present, 295 pp.



Save the Date:

- 2015 Golf Tournament, Sunday, July 19
- Beer Tasting, August 15
- Art in the Park, September 12
- Annual Yard Sale, specific September date to be determined

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7 DAYS A WEEK

703•527•5929



Photo: J. Hart



Photo: J. Hart

Renovation Direction: Up? Down? Back? FORWARD!

The last six weeks introduced this neighborhood to many extremes.

If you retrieve most of your community news from this newsletter and you aren't a listserv member or a Facebook fan, you're probably wondering, "How so?" You missed a huge chunk of drama!

In the June newsletter, we published a short article describing renovation's progress. Annemarie Selvitelli also launched our first end-of-the-fiscal-year fundraiser. All of this went to press just days before we learned the presiding judge ruled that the LPCC Board of Governors (BoG) needed to re-file its petition to encumber the property to obtain a line of credit.* The Board of Governors and some concerned citizens acted immediately.

Here's a rough timeline of events:

- The sense of urgency surrounding renovation increased precipitously.
- The BoG verified that further petitions to the Court would again meet opposition.
- The end-of-the-fiscal-year fundraiser ran for 30 days on the listserv. Neighbors contributed astonishing incentives and unprecedented matching funds.
- BoG members began drafting a list of options.
- Community consensus clearly supported finishing the project if possible.
- The BoG met on June 11, and nine non-member neighbors joined us.
- Our attorney, Barnes Lawson, did some pro bono work on financing options.
- Bernie Rostker, Farrokh Jahandari, and Elizabeth Sheehy drafted a flyer that was delivered to every door in Lyon Park.
- Neighbors formed a work party and scraped old windows (and did other laborious tasks), saving us thousands of dollars.

These actions produced two results:

Our fundraising campaign raised more than \$81,000.

We have financing from

First Virginia Community Bank.

I'll repeat here: The last six weeks have introduced this neighborhood to the extremes. As expected, people closest to the project have done a considerable amount of self-examination, hand-wringing and Monday morning quarterbacking. We passed through extreme confusion, anger, fear, and concern remarkably quickly and jumped into extreme collaboration, mobilization and teamwork.

Ultimately, we focused on making sure renovation is completed and the community house can continue to do its work—hosting this community in celebrations and supporting itself and the surrounding park via rentals.

The BoG sends thanks to everyone who donated incentives or cash, suggested paths forward, made calls, sent e-mails, met with potential funding sources, and kept eyes forward, attitudes positive and minds open. Special thanks to Barnes Lawson, who introduced us to FVCB and advocated for us, and Alissa Curry Briggs at FVCB, who is a simply marvelous bank contact. And very, very special thanks to three Lyon Park families who stepped forward to sign as guarantors on this new loan. Their generosity will ensure that future generations enjoy Lyon Park.

Jeannette Wick, Chair
LPCC Board of Governors



Find news and more pictures on Facebook at
<https://www.facebook.com/lyonparkcommunitycenter>

*Space does not allow a full description of all events, but interested parties can find some documents in the BigTent listserv files or contact me at jywickrph@aol.com or (703) 524-8531 for more information.

Neighbors Pitching In!

In June, seven volunteers stripped the windows on the North Fillmore Street side of the community center. John Cibinic, Anthony Dimidis, Jodie Flakowicz, Brian Harner, Elsa Haubold, Nancy Hopper and Mark Ilich are pictured hard at work. Rich Robinson had done the prep work the day before, so they jumped right in. Chuck Phillips later touched up those windows and finished the ground window facing North Pershing. Paul Showalter finished the upper window facing North Pershing. Gary Putnam loaned equipment and brought ice water. We are very, very grateful to all of you.

Photo: E. Sheehy



RENOVATION

2015

The Cost Questions

(1) How much will the Community House Renovation cost?

The short answer: Approximately ~ \$1.1 million

The long answer: This includes all costs from start to finish: architectural design, engineering and environmental assessments required by the County, surveying, permits, legal costs and estimated constructions costs.

(2) How much have we raised so far?

The short answer: \$580,000

The long answer: We had raised \$499,000 as of June 1, 2015—to my way of thinking, that's one half million and about one-half of what we needed. Our June 2015 fundraising campaign raised more than \$81,000. Our fundraising totaled \$150,000 during the 2015 fiscal year, a record amount and \$82,000 greater than our previous six-year annual average of \$68,000.

(3) How much have we spent so far?

We've paid \$565,000 in invoices related to construction.

(4) How much do we need to complete construction?

The short answer: About \$410,000

In addition to \$580,000 in donated funds, renovation disbursements of approximately \$180,000 have been paid from the LPCC and LPCA treasuries. We need additional cash of approximately \$410,000 to complete the renovation.



Photo: J. Hart



*Here's to all volunteers,
those dedicated people
who believe in
all work and no pay.*

~Robert Orben

Photo: E. Sheehy

Whither Lyon Park's Tree Canopy? Elaine Simmons

Lyon Park's most attractive feature is our tall shade trees, and we should care about preserving our unique and magnificent canopy. Unfortunately, many developers remove these trees during construction and renovation projects, without regard for the impact on neighbors' shade, drainage, and lovely views.

Is there anything we can do?

We can improve our own properties by planting shade trees in appropriate locations. Resilient and stunning shade trees for this area include White Oaks, Pin Oaks, Red and Sugar Maples, American Sycamores, and Ginkgos. When planting new trees, be sure to water your young shade trees until they are well established, as well as during drought conditions.

Second, we can let developers and newcomers know how much we treasure these trees, and that they are a critical component of our neighborhood's character. It seems ironic that people attracted to our leafy neighborhood move in and immediately start removing trees. If a new owner removes trees from their lot, we can urge them to plant shade trees (NOT ornamentals like Dogwoods) to replace the mature ones lost.

Third, we must recognize that many of the shade trees in our neighborhood are in decline from old age, drought, and root compaction. Please prioritize the maintenance and preservation of your trees. Not only will your healthy and mature trees enhance your property value, your efforts will be appreciated by your neighbors.

The removal of each tall tree in Lyon Park impacts us all. We want all neighbors to continue to be attracted to Lyon Park for its stately tree canopy.

Please do your part to preserve and replenish the our neighborhood's beauty!



The map above shows our current tree coverage at 37%, below recommended levels of 40% (and falling)..

Arlington has an additional map that very clearly shows we are losing our tree canopy, and it's more serious in Lyon Park and Ashton Heights than in many other neighborhoods. You can see it here: <http://tinyurl.com/nbwrxe>.

Need to create or update an estate plan?
Considering a charitable gift to Lyon Park?
Contact a neighbor.

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Matthew Bergstrom, Managing Attorney mjb@bergstromtaylor.com 703.291.8838 Arlington, Fairfax, DC

Shed Light on Sunscreen Labels

Robert Gaudette

Summer lures Americans outside with warm temperatures and sunshine. Without proper protection, however, sunlight can cause premature skin aging, sunburns, and cancer.

A recent survey showed that most consumers don't know how to read sunscreen labels. Researchers at Northwestern University surveyed 114 people and found that fewer than half—just 43%—understood Sun Protection Factor (SPF), 7% understood broad spectrum, and 29% could explain photoaging. This is despite the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) efforts at making labels easier to understand. Let's review.

SPF measures a sunscreen's ability to prevent Ultraviolet-B (UVB) radiation from damaging the skin. Since UVB causes sunburns and cancer, it's important to choose a sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15. SPF 15 indicates that sunscreen will 1) prevent reddening 15 times longer than SPF 0 if applied properly and 2) block 93% of UVB rays.

Figure 1 shows that UVB protection is capped between 97% and 98% between SPF 30 and SPF 50, respectively. Sunscreens above SPF 30 have little additional benefit.

The broad spectrum label is a new requirement from the FDA which indicates UVA and UVB protection. UVA radiation causes photoaging (pigmentation changes, spider veins, loss of color in the lips, wrinkling and leathering) and may contribute to cancer. It can also pass through clouds and windows, making broad spectrum sunscreen important on cloudy days or inside. It's important to note SPF doesn't measure UVA protection.

Water resistant sunscreens offer 40 minutes of protection while swimming or sweating, and very water resistant sunscreens offer 80 minutes. Once you leave the water and dry off, apply sunscreen again. Remember that there's no such thing as a "waterproof."

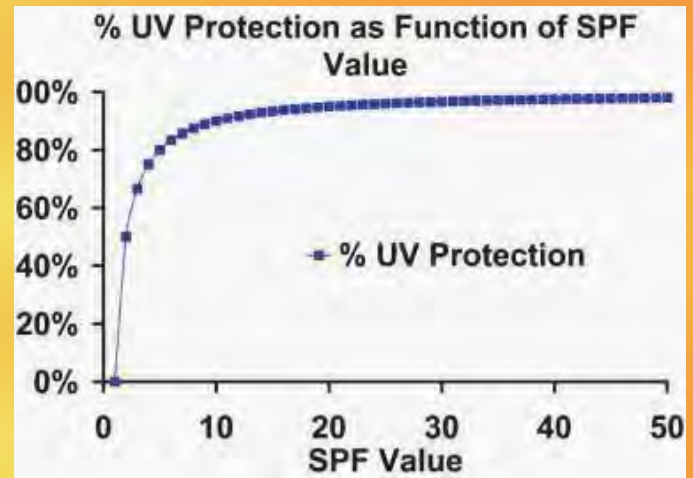


Figure 1: UVB Protection Associated with SPF Values

Please Join Lyon Park Community Center's Give an Hour Campaign

Don't have time to volunteer but would like to help sustain the community?
Donate an hour of your salary every month to Lyon Park Community Center.

Give an Hour is an easy way to give a relatively small donation, one hour of your pay every month for a year or more to make difference.

Donating is easy. You can set up a recurring payment or donate a lump sum online at <http://bit.ly/lphour> by Paypal or credit card. Prefer to send a check? Mail your donation to Lyon Park Community Center, P.O. Box 100191, Arlington, Virginia 22201. We are happy to arrange a monthly debit as well.

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**Just an Hour..
That's All!**

Frozen Treats

Sophia Delmar

In the hot, muggy Virginia heat the first thing on everybody's mind is finding a way to cool off. One great way to accomplish this while spending time with family and friends is to pick up a frozen treat. Wanting a combination of the best treats within walking distance to Lyon Park, I've compiled a list guaranteed to satisfy anyone's summer sweet tooth.

7-11: Slurpees

Simple and sweet, Slurpees are not only a 7-11 staple, but a summer tradition. With a location only a couple blocks away from Lyon Park itself, 7-11 is the easiest and most affordable option for a frozen treat. Flavors include classics like Coke and Mountain Dew, as well as tart fruit flavors from Fanta.

Bakeshop: The Chipwich

Usually known for its cupcakes, Bake Shop now advertises its own frozen treat, the chipwich. Made of two chocolate cookies with vanilla ice cream in between, the chipwich is a force to be reckoned with. Keep in mind that it's coming from a shop that specializes in cookie making, so this chipwich is sure to knock you off your feet. Located at 1025 N. Fillmore St. in Clarendon.

Nicecream Factory: Gourmet Ice Cream

Relatively new to Clarendon, Nicecream Factory is already a hit among many locals. The ice cream parlor is found on Clarendon Boulevard and sports handcrafted ice cream made with their unique freezing agent, liquid nitrogen. With a variety of great flavors made from farm fresh ingredients, this gourmet ice cream is definitely something to try. Find them at 2831 Clarendon Blvd across from The Container Store.

Silver Diner: Milkshakes

If you're looking for the classic milkshake, Silver Diner is the place to go. Located in the heart of Clarendon, Silver Diner serves huge portions and satisfying flavors that are hard to beat. Flavors such as Nutella Banana, Oreo Cookie and Peppermint Patty don the menu and keep regulars coming back for more. You know where the Silver Diner is!

South Block Juice Co.: Smoothies

Healthy and fresh, South Block Juice Co. rules when it comes to the perfect smoothie. Only a short walk from Lyon Park, South Block resides in Clarendon at 3019 11th St N. Smoothie options include Classic Smoothies, Boosted Smoothies, Green/Raw Smoothies, Protein Smoothies, and Acai Smoothies. All guaranteed to keep you feeling healthy and as well as satisfied.



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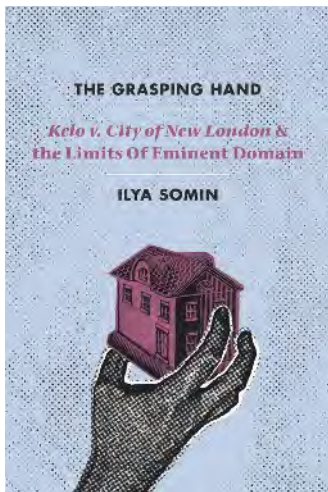
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ANIMAL CARE

Neighbor Ilya Somin: Author Extraordinaire Jeannette Wick



Our neighbors surprise us in unlikely ways. Take for instance, Ilya Somin, a Garfield Street neighbor who has just published the book *The Grasping Hand: Kelo v. City of New London*. Another neighbor recommended this book for a couple of reasons: it could be a good book for review, and it's about my old and current stomping ground.

In 2005, the United States Supreme Court heard *Kelo v. City of New London*, a case involving use of eminent domain to forcibly transfer land from several long-time private owners to another private owner to stimulate economic development. In short: the city of New London, Connecticut, used eminent domain to take privately owned property as part of a “comprehensive redevelopment plan,” and the

Court agreed it could do it. Public reaction was fast, loud and negative. Somin's book is a critical review of this decision and the multiple actions leading to it. I took it with me to read while I had my car serviced. Two hours into the book, the service manager came out to apologize and tell me it would be another hour. The book was so engaging, I was delighted for the delay.

I grew up in eastern Connecticut. Mystic was Cinderella—a really pretty location with lots of history that struggled to be anything but a hard working tourist attraction. New London was the ugly step sister—a sprawling transportation hub of trains, ferries and barges. Like many seaport towns, its commercial and industrial center eroded over the years to become a tangle of salty bars and sailor's haunts. While parts of it retained its beauty, some sections roughened and decayed. (In my 20s, simply alluding to a visit to New London's downtown Bank Street area could put my mother into a tizzy, so bad was its reputation for booze, drugs and ladies of the evening.)

Somin introduces readers to all the players thoroughly, so even without a first-hand acquaintance with New London, the picture is clear. The plaintiffs—a small group of residents who refused to sell their property voluntarily—speak for themselves in quotes. They articulate why, despite being labeled as blight, the Fort Trumbull area was “home.” The Goliaths to these Davids are the city and its New London Development Corporation, whose polite offers to buy property spiraled into aggressive, bullying behavior. And lurking in the background was Pfizer, a corporate giant with no plans to use the land itself, but disdainful of its rundown condition and pushing for its demolition.

We know how it turns out: New London won. But like all legal actions that are so emotionally fraught, the win was empty. The nation's outrage “whooped New London's butt,” as they say in that locale. The private developer was unable to obtain financing and abandoned the redevelopment project. Pfizer vacated the area, taking 1400 jobs with it. Most states reacted with legislation, much of it useless.

And today, Fort Trumbull is a barren patch, a desolate, undeveloped memory. I visited it recently. That such a small space created such a large brouhaha is understandable. I, too, would have fought to keep a home that regardless of where it was on that 5 acre plot, was mere feet from Long Island Sound and constantly bathed in a sea breeze. I heartily recommend this book even if you are not a lawyer or have not visited this area. Do enjoy Ilya Somin's book, and then visit eastern Connecticut!



Avner Gregory paid \$1 for The Pink House (pictured above), which was Susette Kelo's home. He spent \$100,000 to dismantle and move to a property near downtown New London. The plaque in front reads, “This little pink house was the subject of the landmark 2005 U.S. Supreme Court case *Kelo vs. City of New London*, one of the most widely despised decisions in the Court's history... This house, moved from the Fort Trumbull neighborhood, stands as a testament to Susette Kelo and her neighbors, and to the thousand of others who have battled and are battling the abuse of eminent domain across the country. Ms. Kelo no longer occupies this house.”



Today, the former Fort Trumbull neighborhood (pictured above) is a jumble of weeds and bushes that extend to the shore.

On June 20, 2015, scatters of pink flowers (pictured below) bloomed across the site. They seem to memorialize the Little Pink House that Susette Kelo called home.



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