

The ompass

Newsletter of the Cameron Station Community Association, Inc.

Volume 19 Issue 2 • March-April 2018

Meet Our New President of the Board

By Margaret "Megan" Brock

Dear Cameron Station Neighbors,

As your newly elected President, I wanted to introduce myself, along with the other board members, and provide some information about where our Association is headed in the coming year.

My name is Margaret Brock, but most of you know me by my nickname "Megan." I moved into my home in Cameron Station in 2010. Like most of you, I was drawn to this neighborhood by its beautiful landscaping; architecture; fantastic amenities, such as our clubhouse and gym; and location, which is bordered by two beautiful parks. Most of all, this community has a small-town feel and spirit captured by the caring, engaged, and active residents.

Our other board members are Jon Dellaria, Vice President; Martin Menez, Treasurer; Michael Johnson, Secretary; Mindy Lyle, Director; Elliott Waters, Director; and Paul Rocchio, Director. It is our intent to serve the entire community well and work collegially to ensure we are effectively and efficiently administering our multi-million dollar budget that impacts every resident's quality of life.

As you know, our community includes more than 1,700 households and over 5,000 residents, and we are working on a series of projects to move us toward the future and retain the unique character of the neighborhood. Some highlights of the projects and issues we hope to tackle in the upcoming year include: complete replacement of the gazebo located on John Ticer; continued replacement of the exercise equipment in the clubhouse; replacement of the basketball court flooring; asphalt repairs and sealant; brick repair and replacements; updates to the Cameron Club, such as the HVAC and furnishings; updates to common area park benches; revision of the pet policy that was changed in 2017 to allow pet access to the pocket parks as well as the gazebo area on Cameron Station Boulevard; and the creation of a pathway between Cameron Station and Cambria Square, located near the intersection of Knapp Place and Barrett Place.



We welcomed Judy Johnson, our new Community Manager, about six months ago, and she has competently taken over the day-to-day operations of our community, leading the hardworking team that includes Deirdre Baldino, our Assistant Community Manager; Angie Mariano, our Covenants Administrator; Bethlehem (Mimi) Kebede, Administrative Assistant; and Craig Merritt, Maintenance Engineer. For questions or information, you are welcome to contact our Community Manager, Judy Johnson, at communitymanager@cameronstation.org.

Please consider helping out however you can, whether it's volunteering for a committee or a discrete event, helping retain the green spaces, getting involved with the Civic Association, or visiting the businesses on Main Street. We all have a vested interest in retaining our community's beauty and competitive edge in the northern Virginia area. It's a great way to meet your neighbors, make great friends, and build a stronger community.

I also encourage everyone to visit the Cameron Café coffee shop, London Curry House, Toka Salon, and the Dry Cleaners on Main Street. Our retailers add value and convenience to our community, and we are fortunate to have those businesses here.

Finally, I would like to thank the hard-working and dedicated members on the committees and volunteers who give their time, energy, and creativity to Cameron Station. We owe the committee members a huge thanks for all they do to add value to our community.

I am honored to serve as your President, and I look forward to working with you all to keep Cameron Station the place we all love to call home! Please contact me at president@cameronstation.org if you would like to discuss any particular issues impacting our community.

Sincerely,
Margaret Brock

Record-Breaking Spring Eggstravaganza!

By Pat Sugrue

More than 500 children, parents, grandparents, and neighbors attended what turned out to be a perfectly sunny annual Spring Eggstravaganza on Saturday, March 31. The event was presented by the Cameron Station Community Association, and it was sponsored by Thorpe Homes.

Every year, neighbors David and Stephanie Thorpe generously donate their time and talents to creating this extravagantly fun event for the children of our community. They turned the pocket park on Killburn and Donovan streets into a springtime wonderland with an egg hunt, face painting station, a balloon artist, and a special appearance by the Easter Bunny! Music and refreshments were also provided courtesy of Thorpe Homes, as well as special prizes for the winners of the egg hunt, in addition to the treats found inside the eggs themselves.



Photo credit: David Thorpe

Kudos to Michelle Rampey, Andy Yang, Sarah Tressler, Phyllis Frantazier, David Thorpe, and all of those volunteers who rose up early to lay some colored candy-filled eggs and put this colorful event together. Thank you, David and Stephanie, for your generosity. Happy Spring to everyone!



Photo credit: David Thorpe



Photo credit: David Thorpe



Photo credit: David Thorpe



Photo credit: David Thorpe



Photo credit: David Thorpe



Photo credit: David Thorpe



Photo credit: David Thorpe

It's the Season for Pride of Ownership

By Linda Greenberg

It isn't difficult to "think spring" today as the snowbells have bloomed and the tulips and daffodils are making good progress. The maple tree buds are pink and ready to burst, and snow seems to be over – or so we hope.



The weeks ahead will provide ample time to trim unruly bushes and weeds, plant your front spring garden, and generally spruce up your front (and back) patches for the annual Pride of Ownership event, which is judged in late May. The deadline for submission of entries this year is May 18, 2018.

Beautifying each home helps beautify all of Cameron Station and enhances the community's residential value. You can nominate yourself, your neighbor, or both. Judging considers the overall attractiveness of the residence, condition of grass or mulch and plants, and creativity of the plantings. Award categories include single family home, corner townhome, townhome, and condominium.

Send nominations by May 18, 2018, to commonarea@cameronstation.org. Judging will take place soon after, and winners will be notified. If you are interested in contributing to the prizes for the winners, please e-mail the above address.

Thanks to all for your participation and enthusiasm.

Tucker News

By Julie Painter

Tucker Teacher Appreciation Week

May 7-11 is Teacher Appreciation Week. This community is so fortunate to have amazing teachers at Tucker. If you or your business would like to donate a gift certificate or sponsor a breakfast or lunch for the teachers, please contact Aimee Wieland at ahenneke@gmail.com or 512-787-4168.

Purchasing Textbooks

The Tucker Parent Teacher Association (PTA) continues to work on raising money to support purchasing textbooks for the classrooms as well as for the fine arts department. If you or your business would like to become a Tucker Community Partner, please e-mail Mike Johnson at mike@mikejohnsonlaw.com.

Harris Teeter's Together in Education Program

It is easy and FREE. If you, grandparents, family, friends, or neighbors shop at any Harris Teeter and have a VIC card, you can sign up and help. Simply give the cashier our school code, 6272, the next

time you are checking out at Harris Teeter, and ask them to link your VIC card to Tucker Elementary. This program does NOT interfere with your VIC savings nor does it cost you any money.

Papa John's Pizza

Do you like Papa John's Pizza? If so, for every large pizza you buy at regular menu price with your pizza card, you get one free! This means that if you order 10 pizzas with your pizza card, you get 10 free! This offer is valid for carryout at over 100 participating locations in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. For more information, please contact the Tucker PTA at tuckertigersroar@gmail.com.

Shop on Amazon

Do you love Amazon? Do you want to support Tucker without ever leaving your house? The Tucker PTA has teamed up with the Amazon Smiles program to donate to Tucker every time you shop at Amazon. Use the link below to link your purchases to Tucker Elementary, and shop away: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/54-1998920>.

About... *The Compass*

The Compass is the newsletter for the Cameron Station Community Association and is run entirely by volunteers.

The Compass welcomes your articles and photo submissions, as well as your suggestions for future issues.

Please send us an email at TheCompass@cameronstation.org.

Previous issues of *The Compass* are available online at www.cameronstation.org.

Go under the "News" tab on the home page and click on "Community Communications" on the left hand side.

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Committee Corner

HARD AT WORK ON BEHALF OF OUR RESIDENTS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(boardofdirectors@cameronstation.org)

Margaret Brock - President

Jon Dellaria - Vice President & Liaison to the Cameron Club Facilities Committee

Michael Johnson - Secretary & Liaison to the Communications Committee

Martin Menez - Treasurer & Liaison to the Financial Advisory Committee

Elliott Waters - Director & Liaison to the Architectural Review Committee

Paul Rocchio - Director & Liaison to Activities and Events Committee

Mindy Lyle - Director & Liaison to the Common Area Committee

Meetings are the last Tuesday of every month,
unless otherwise indicated.

CSCA COMMITTEES

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS PLANNING COMMITTEE
events@cameronstation.org
Andrew Yang - Chairperson

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
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Mark Brzezinski - Chairperson

CAMERON CLUB FACILITIES COMMITTEE
facilities@cameronstation.org
Ray Celeste, Jr. - Chairperson

COMMON AREA COMMITTEE
commonarea@cameronstation.org
Robert Burns - Chairperson

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
communications@cameronstation.org
Kimberly Dillon - Chairperson

FINANCIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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Jeff Gathers - Chairperson

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Committee Corner

HARD AT WORK ON BEHALF OF OUR RESIDENTS

Architectural Review Committee

By Mark Brzezinski

As spring and summer roll around, make sure you read the Cameron Station Design and Maintenance Standards (DMS), and submit your applications to the ARC before beginning any work. It's a great time of year for tree replacement, landscaping, and other projects that require nicer weather, so make sure you get the appropriate guidance and permissions to make your project a success!

Cameron Club and Facilities Committee

By Ray Celeste, Jr.

The Cameron Club and Facilities Committee would like to highlight a long-time community member and Fitness Center employee, Enrique Villalobos. Many of you who visit our Fitness Center during the weekday know Enrique who works at the front desk from 4:30am to 12noon, Monday through Friday. Enrique is always there on time, day-in and day-out. This is very much appreciated by all of our morning Fitness Center users, as Enrique is the weekday Fitness Center opener. He is known for his enthusiastic and pleasant demeanor and willingness to help our residents in any way possible. He lives in our community along with his wife, daughter, and granddaughter. We are blessed to have him and his family among us. Thank you, Enrique, for over five years of dedicated and diligent service to our beloved Cameron Station! We greatly appreciate YOU!

Common Area Committee

By Kathleen McCollom

Spring Landscapes and Gardening Upkeep

Spring landscape cleanups have been underway since March, especially common area tree pruning and turf improvements. Annual flowers will be planted in early May.

The committee will once again conduct monthly walk-throughs of the community from May through September. These focus on particular sections each month. In addition to looking at general common-area maintenance, the committee looks for areas that have evolved due to tree or bush growth or that now have drainage problems, which may require action to correct. There are many more deeply shaded areas of the community that require different plants from the builder originals or replacement of sparse grass with mulch or paving stones.

The committee reminds owners that they are responsible for maintaining trees and plants in their private lots. In general, trees require pruning every three years or so. Most bushes should be shaped once a year for best appearance. Branches should not extend over sidewalks or streets where they block pedestrians or vehicles.

Pride of Ownership Nominations

The committee will once again conduct the Pride of Ownership awards. Judging will be in May. Details about nominations and award categories can be found in the article on page 2. In recent years, the judges have been very impressed at the creativity that's possible in very small garden patches.

Communications Committee

By Kimberly Dillon

Due to concerns that were expressed by residents regarding the effects that the new developments in the West End of Alexandria would have on property values in Cameron Station, the Communications Committee has been working closely with the Public Relations (PR) Subcommittee over the last six months to research the underlying impact of the surrounding developments. The report summarizes the results of the PR survey, which was distributed to residents last fall, and the recommendations of local realtors based on the findings. The article that summarizes the full report, which was presented to the Board, can be found on page 6 in this issue of *The Compass*.

Moving forward, the committee will be working on ways to improve Cameron Station's visibility in the community. Recommendations for doing so include reworking the community's website, creating a welcome packet for renters, showing our sense of community through photography and video content, and reaching out to local press in order to have more of an online presence. We are excited about what the future holds for our community!

Financial Advisory Committee

By Jeff Gathers

In light of the diverse services provided by our management company, you might expect a detailed system of financial recordkeeping and reporting, and you would be correct about that. Each month, the Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) members receive the same financial reports provided to the Board – in both summary and detailed form. These reports include an updated Income Statement and Balance Sheet, along with management commentary on actual versus budgeted expenditures. We address questions directly to the Community Manager but also identify points we feel should receive specific attention from the Board.

In recent months, we have been working with Board Treasurer Marty Menez to focus on the Balance Sheet. In particular, we are looking on the Asset side for the mix of cash, money market accounts, and longer-term CDs. The Association needs some of each to ensure our ability to cover commitments in both the short- and long-term. Our guidance in this analysis comes primarily from Cameron Station's formal Investment Policy. Among other things, it specifies our avoidance of any investment with even a hint of risk. The complete Investment Policy document is available on the Cameron Station website.

City Council Race Includes Cameron Station Resident

By Sarah Meyer Walsh

2018 is an election year in Alexandria, and the Mayor and six City Council seats are up for grabs. For the first time ever, the council race will include a resident of Cameron Station, former Cameron Station Civic Association President Dak Hardwick.

Dak lives on Brawner Place with his wife, Mary Beth, and is no stranger to civic involvement in Alexandria. In addition to his time in the Civic Association, Dak has served as Chair of the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, President of the New Hope Housing Board of Directors, Chair of the Alexandria Democratic Committee, and received the Mark Pillow Award by the Cameron Station Homeowners Association in 2016. In his day job, Dak serves as Assistant Vice President for International Affairs at the Aerospace Industries Association, where he specializes in trade and export policy for the aerospace and defense sector.



Photo credit: Dak Hardwick

Dak has just released “The Empower Alexandria Plan,” a comprehensive, city-wide action plan that looks at the many issues facing Alexandria and outlines a blueprint of actions he’ll pursue to address if he’s elected. West End issues are particularly near and dear to his heart: “Education is critical to Alexandria’s future, and I’ve seen firsthand how Tucker Elementary serves as a center of our community here in Cameron Station,” said Dak. “Redeveloping Landmark Mall into a vital, active destination is a priority for me – it will pay dividends in the quality of life for West End residents.”

Dak is one candidate in a crowded field in this year’s City Council race. In addition to a competitive Mayor’s race between incumbent Mayor Allison Silberberg and Vice Mayor Justin Wilson, it’s expected that as many as a dozen Democrats (including four incumbents) and an unknown number of Republicans will be vying for the six City Council seats.

How Do I Vote?

Here’s what you need to know in order to make sure you can vote in both Alexandria’s city elections as well as the House and Senate races:

- The primary elections are on June 12, and the general election is on November 6. Polls are open from 6am to 7pm those days.
- The voter registration deadline for the June 12 Primary will be May 21. Virginia residents who are U.S. citizens and will be 18 years old by November 6, 2018, may submit a registration application. The fastest way to register to vote is to apply online through the Virginia Department of Elections at <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/>.

- The polling place for Cameron Station is at the Cameron Club.
- Absentee voting for the June 12 Primary begins on Friday, April 27. You may vote in-person absentee at the Voter Registration Office (132 North Royal Street) during regular office hours, Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm. Weekend and evening hours will be posted in the spring. You may also submit an application requesting a ballot by mail. The fastest way to apply is online through the Virginia Department of Elections at <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/>.

For more information on voting in Alexandria, visit the following web page: <https://www.alexandriava.gov/Elections>.



The Impact of Area Developments on Cameron Station Property Values

By Stewart McHie

Last year, a number of residents expressed concern about the effect that the new Pulte developments in the West End of Alexandria would have on property values in Cameron Station. The Communications Committee recruited a subcommittee to examine the issue and report back to the Board the findings as well as the recommendations moving forward. Thanks to our new PR Subcommittee for all their hard work. Below is a summary of their findings presented to the Communications Committee and the Board.

A full report is available by sending a request to the office at managers@cameronstation.org.

Executive Summary

1. The committee believes the Pulte developments will NOT negatively affect Cameron Station housing values and, in fact, could have a positive effect on Cameron Station real estate.
2. Cameron Station homeowners can take simple actions to preserve and perhaps improve real estate values by improving the curb appeal of the community for prospective homeowners driving through the area.
3. The Board should play a large role in continuing the maintenance of the public areas and enforcing standards intended to preserve the attractiveness and value of the community.

Study Activities

1. A survey of residents was commissioned to understand what attributes are deemed most desirable and, therefore, should be highlighted in all communications (e.g., website, social media).



Photo credit: Cameron Station Grapevine

2. Major realtors in the area were interviewed to assess what prospective buyers value when considering a purchase in Cameron Station. Likewise, they identified any potential drawbacks they encounter working with buyers.

3. The new Pulte units were visited to determine how they compared to the older Cameron Station homes.

The Pulte Investments

The two Pulte investments at Cameron Park (corner of Cameron Station Boulevard and Pickett) and Cambria Square (Pickett near Duke Street) represent a total of 6% of the total homes in Cameron Station. This is an insignificant share to draw buyers away from Cameron Station. However, due to aggressive advertising by Pulte to quickly fill these buildings, more prospective homeowners would have been drawn to the West End and exposed to Cameron Station. This view is supported by the realtor community.

The Pulte units lack almost all of the amenities that Cameron Station residents enjoy. They are very modern with large, open, well-lit spaces and the latest in hardware. This type of unit appeals to the urban dweller who is seeking more living space but still in proximity to the city. This market is generally young, childless, and not attracted to the community aspect and amenities Cameron Station has to offer.

In conclusion, the markets for the two types of homes are dissimilar and not conflicting. It is more likely that someone initially attracted to the Pulte homes might be pulled toward Cameron Station (gym facilities, free shuttle to Metro) than vice versa.

Satisfaction with Cameron Station

Fifteen percent of residents responded to the e-mail survey fielded in the fall of 2017. Seventy five percent of respondents indicated a high level of satisfaction with their homes in Cameron Station. Particular strengths of the community are shown below.

Clubhouse	Sense of community
Fitness Center	Proximity to parks
Pool	Bike/walking trails
Range of floorplans	Dog friendly
Multiple price points	Reasonable HOA fees

In contrast, some weaknesses were also identified and are shown below.

Age of construction	Uncertain West End development plans
Visitor parking	Landmark Mall
Pool capacity	School ratings
Dog waste	Rental properties

Ideas to Improve/Maintain Attractiveness of Cameron Station

Curb appeal: Whether someone wanders through the area unintended, is visiting friends, or actively seeking a home, his or her first impression of our community is external. A tree-lined boulevard intersected by a gazebo gives the immediate sense of calm and quiet after turning off Duke Street/I-95. The pocket parks and Ben Brenman Park, with its youth recreational fields and the relative absence of traffic and signage that would be reminiscent of a suburb rather than a relatively closed-in community, are attributes that likely appeal to the senses of the first-time visitor. How might we improve on this external sense of calm and order? Below are some suggestions we would like to relay to residents.

1. Maintain all landscaping to the highest possible level. This does not translate to needing expensive landscape and architectural planning but, rather, speaks to the goal of having neat, colorful, thriving plant life in our community. No one has large plots of ground to maintain. Having fresh mulch, planting colorful seasonal flowers, replacing spent shrubbery, and weeding and trimming are all inexpensive ways to maintain a nice physical presence and to increase our own enjoyment of the community.
2. Likewise, the Board is responsible for continuing the maintenance and beautifying the common areas.
3. Reduce the clutter. The community is blessed with a relatively clutter-free environment. Other than a few necessary traffic signs and trash units that blend into the pocket parks, we don't have a lot of external and annoying clutter. We do have, however, a lot of cars parked in driveways instead of garages due to lack of storage. If possible, consider having garage sales to free-up excess space in your home.

Interior Upgrades: One way to overcome the age of the community, which is now going on 20 years, is by refreshing the interiors and upgrading to the latest amenities. While these efforts can require thousands of dollars, consider this: You may be motivated to upgrade bathrooms and kitchens to get the highest possible sales price for your home, but will you recover your investment? Our realtor friends say you likely will not recover the expenses entirely. So, why not do it now and enjoy the new amenities yourself before passing on the property to the next lucky homeowner? Did you receive a tax refund or 2017 growth in your 401(k)? Some areas to think about improving are listed below.

1. A small investment in updated mirrors and lighting fixtures can improve and update the look and feel of a bathroom and kitchen.

2. Granite or Corian countertops in kitchens and bathrooms provide a modern, new look.
3. New kitchen appliances not only improve the look of the kitchen but provide you with the pleasure of the latest innovations and energy efficiency.
4. Tired of hearing that old washer and dryer clanking along for 50 or 60 minutes? Watch for Home Depot and Best Buy sales on the new, high-efficiency, quiet units.
5. You may have seen the recently published article "Homes With Blue Bathrooms Sell for \$5,440 More Than Expected." Who knew a blue bathroom could add \$5,000 to your house value?



Photo credit: Cameron Station Grapevine

Conclusion

From this survey, we were able to assess that the overall results show that our community has more to offer than surrounding communities and the new developments are geared to a different kind of buyer than one who would consider moving into Cameron Station. We believe that improvements to exteriors and upgrades to interiors by residents will aid in the desirability to buyers.

Along with the continuing maintenance that the Board manages, below are suggestions on how the Communications Committee could improve presenting Cameron Station to the outside world in its best light.

- Make updates to the Cameron Station website to include content, videos, and a photo gallery.
- Continue to improve layout and content in the weekly news blasts.
- Create an Instagram page to feature updated photos of the community and the social events planned by the Activities & Events Planning Committee and private parties held by residents to show the sense of community we have.
- Create a welcome packet for renters in addition to one for buyers.
- Create a Public Relations campaign headed up by the Public Relations Subcommittee to improve resident satisfaction and visibility to new homebuyers.

Thanks to all who contributed to this important and timely examination of our community. We have, perhaps, one of the best-kept secrets within a 10-mile radius of the most powerful city in the world. It is pretty darn good as it stands. A few adjustments here and there can certainly pay dividends for both our current standard of living and our future investments.

Guide to Gluten-Free Dining

By Debby Zusman and Martin Smith

Two years ago, I was diagnosed with gluten intolerance; I learned that my body will not tolerate foods containing gluten, which is found in wheat, barley, and rye. The result of this diagnosis was removal of all gluten from my diet and that of my husband, who has chosen to be gluten-free (GF) with me.

Gluten intolerance comes in two forms: Celiac disease, which is a genetic disorder, and gluten intolerance, which generally manifests at some point during one's lifetime. It's not well understood how or why someone becomes gluten intolerant if they don't have Celiac disease. I have gluten intolerance rather than Celiac, and while I do not know how long I was gluten intolerant before I was diagnosed, I was certainly not always this way. Regardless of whether you have Celiac disease or gluten intolerance, the resulting symptoms and coping mechanisms are the same – the only way to deal with it is to avoid all gluten.

My symptoms are neurological rather than the more common gastrointestinal (GI); I get a migraine — an intractable, untreatable, and very bad migraine that lasts between 3-5 days, during which I am completely non-functional, followed by another day or two of extreme fatigue. And although I don't suffer from GI issues after eating gluten, I would imagine that for those that do, it's the GI equivalent of my migraine. I avoid gluten at all costs because I have no wish to ever be that sick. Symptoms start within 30 minutes of ingesting gluten.

Learning to be GF is an eye-opener. Most of the supermarket becomes off-limits because most processed foods contain gluten. The obvious candidates are those containing wheat, barley, and rye (e.g., breads, cereals, pastas, pastries) and everything that contains them. The less-obvious candidates are foods to which gluten is added such as soy sauce, granola, soups, and seasonings. A third category are those foods that do not contain gluten but are produced in a facility that also processes products containing gluten. Gluten is measured in parts per million (ppm), and the generally accepted limit is 20 ppm. Foods that are processed in a facility that also processes gluten may be contaminated at a level high enough to trigger a reaction in someone who is gluten intolerant.

So, while shopping is challenging, dining out is positively terrifying. I can't ask for an ingredient list, and I don't know their food-prep system. My husband and I adore dining out, but the risk of getting glutened has made us much more cautious about trying new places and eating at familiar places, and we have learned to ask a lot of questions before we go. We often call rather than waste a trip; you can get a good feel for a place's gluten awareness over the phone with the right questions. Obviously, a restaurant that is entirely GF is entirely safe. Everything else requires some vetting.

Here's how we vet; this system is not perfect, but it works for us, and perhaps can give you some ideas.

1. Look them up: I use a website and app called Find Me Gluten Free. I also leave reviews on it, both positive and negative, so others know about my experience as it relates to gluten. Yelp

also has some reviews that mention gluten, but read carefully as it is often someone who is not GF stating that the menu has notations rather than a personal experience dining GF.

2. Look at the menu online so you have an idea of what they serve: We tend to avoid places where gluten is endemic:

- Bakeries – Flour is pervasive, and I assume it coats the surfaces of the establishment, even if it's not obvious. Avoid.

- Places where most food is fried or cooked on a grill – It's a good bet that the grill was used to cook something with gluten; therefore, it's not safe for GF cooking. The same is true of the fryer. Some places have dedicated cooking spaces or fryers for GF food, but you need to ask. Mostly avoid.

- Places where most food is prepared off-site and reheated to order – You don't know what the off-site prep area is like, and it's unlikely that the servers in the restaurant do either. This means we avoid restaurants such as TGI Friday's.

3. Call and ask what is GF: If the menu is very limited and you only have one option, it's best to know that before you go. If they say things can be made GF, ask what changes; gravies, for example, often contain gluten, and a dish without the gravy or sauce may not be as palatable.

4. Keep in mind that some types of food are more likely to be GF than others: Tex-Mex, for example, usually offers a lot of options, while Italian is more problematic because of the focus on pasta and bread. Chinese and Japanese can be problematic because of the sauces – particularly soy sauce, and you have to trust that they will use GF soy sauce and a dedicated prep area. If you don't have that trust, avoid it.

5. If there is any doubt, call and ask: There is a crepe place in Old Town that makes buckwheat crepes; in spite of the name, buckwheat doesn't contain wheat and is safe for a GF diet. Their website lists their food as GF, but when we called to inquire about separate cooking surfaces, we were told shortly that they use the same surfaces for both and that they are "gluten friendly, not celiac friendly." There was a lot wrong with that statement, but it didn't seem worth arguing.

6. Don't assume that because their menu has GF notations that it's safe: We've learned this one the hard way.

7. Always, always, always tell them you are intolerant of gluten: We note it when we make a reservation and when we speak to our server. Even if the menu has a GF notation, they need to know so your food can be prepared in a way that avoids contamination.

The biggest risk when dining out isn't from accidentally eating a gluten product, such as bread; it's from cross contamination. When my meal is prepared, it needs to be in its own space, one that wasn't used for the regular meal prepared for someone else. If croutons were in the bowl they use to mix salad, my salad needs to be mixed in a different bowl, or I will get sick (this happened). Many places don't take this extra step

because of time or space constraints or simply because they don't accommodate food allergies.

Also keep in mind that you may need to remind staff that you can't have gluten. Some things are automatic – a bus boy (or girl) may not know you're GF and will bring bread to the table when you are seated because that's his or her job. Just politely refuse before it's placed on the table. Remind them not to give you a roll with the entrée since your entire plate will need to be remade if they do. At some restaurants, a small cookie or pastry is served with coffee, often on the same plate as the spoon, which means I can't use the spoon or the plate. Remind the server when you order dessert that you just want the coffee, not the sweets. While we certainly don't wish to be glutened, we realize that it's easy for staff to forget the small things. A polite reminder goes a long way.

We have had wonderful experiences at several local restaurants, though, and here are some of our favorites, in no particular order:

- **Happy Tart** (locations in Falls Church and Del Ray) – As a GF bakery, they have crepes in Del Ray and a larger food selection in Falls Church. Everything is GF, and the bread and pastries are delicious! Many local cafes and eateries sell or use products from Happy Tart, such as the Holy Cow.

- **Los Tios** (locations in Van Dorn Plaza and Del Ray) – This Tex-Mex option consistently has good food and service and ranks as one of our regular spots. Ask for corn tortillas for fajitas, and they can also substitute corn tortillas for flour tortillas in some of the dishes if you ask.

- **Rosa Mexicano** (local locations in National Harbor and DC) – This Tex-Mex establishment has several items on the menu that either are or can be made GF without sacrificing taste.

- **Vermilion** (1120 King St., Old Town) – This American-focused menu is small and made smaller with GF restrictions. Still, this is one of our favorites, and the food and service are consistently excellent.

- **L'Auberge** (332 Springvale Rd., Great Falls) – This French-themed menu is nearly all GF! Even the fabulous dessert soufflés are GF! My husband likes it so much that he was most disappointed to learn that we cannot yet book it for Valentine's Day 2019.

- **Del Ray Pizzeria** (2218 Mt. Vernon Ave., Del Ray) – This pizza joint offers GF pizza crust that is thin and crispy by nature, which is not my preference for pizza crust (I seriously miss Big Bite Pizza). Nevertheless, they do a great job with GF pizzas.

- **Holy Cow** (2312 Mt. Vernon Ave., Del Ray) – This restaurant offers great burgers and fries! They have a dedicated GF fryer and GF buns (from Happy Tart) for the burgers.

- **Cheesetique** (locations in Shirlington and Del Ray) – For the cheese lovers, this location offers GF bread, which makes for fabulous grilled cheese sandwiches, and they can do GF macaroni and cheese.

- **Ted's Montana Grill** (2451 Eisenhower Ave.) – If you're in the mood for steak, they have a GF menu, dedicated GF fryer, and GF buns for the burgers.

- **Taverna Cretekou** (818 King St, Old Town) – This Greek-themed restaurant has a menu that mostly contains gluten, but there are several nice options for GF diners. The restaurant can get very loud though, so be warned if you're looking for a more intimate experience.

- **Lebanese Taverna** (Pentagon Centre) – With this Mediterranean-themed restaurant, we were impressed with our servers' knowledge of GF-food preparation. GF limits your options, but there are still several nice dishes available.

- **The Melting Pot** (1110 Glebe Rd., Ballston) – For the fondue enthusiast, they have GF bread for the cheese fondue course. Much of the menu is GF, but the GF products are clearly identified.

- **P.F. Chang's** (multiple locations) – This Chinese establishment has limited GF menu options, but the food they can make for you is good, and they have a dedicated GF prep and cooking area. We have also requested simple off-menu dishes, such as stir-fried snow pea pods, and they have accommodated us. Again, remind them you are GF if you do this, as regular soy sauce contains gluten.

- **Chipotle** (multiple locations) – If you're looking for fast food, Chipotle does GF safely. If you let the person helping you know you are GF, they will wash their hands and help you at all of the stations to avoid contamination. Most of the food on the line is GF, although I personally have had problems with the chips and avoid them.

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Carla's Picks

By Carla Besosa

Alexandria

Mar. 31-Apr. 17 - Water Taxi to Cherry Blossom Festival

Anacostia Playhouse (DC)

May 10-June 17 - *Flood City*

Arena Stage (DC)

Mar. 30-Apr. 29 - *Two Trains Running*
Apr. 13-May 20 - *Snow Child*

Atlas Performing Arts Center (DC)

Mar. 29-Apr. 22 - Mosaic Theater Company: *Paper Dolls*
Mar. 23-Apr. 15 - Rorschach Theater: *410 [GONE]*

The Barns at Wolf Trap (Vienna)

Apr. 14 - Gay Men's Chorus of DC
Apr. 27-28 - Annual Evening of Comedy

Birchmere (Arlandria)

Apr. 14 - Don McLean
Apr. 23-25 Brian Culbertson
Apr. 27 - Najee
Apr. 29 - Herb Alpert & Lani Hall
May 3 - Madeleine Peyroux
May 26 - Walter Beasley
May 27 - 10,000 Maniacs
May 30 - Taj Mahal Trio

BlackRock Center for the Arts (Germantown)

Apr. 7 - Sister Sparrow & The Dirty Birds
Apr. 13 - Bob Margolin & the Nighthawks
May 5 - Hot Club of Cowtown

Blues Alley (DC)

Apr. 9 - Dave Kline Band
Apr. 26 - Veronneau
Apr. 27-29 - John Pizzarelli - Sinatra to Jobim
May 10-13 - Arturo Sandoval

Carlyle Club (Alexandria)

Apr. 12 - The Legends of R&B: The Ladies Edition
May 11 - All 80's All Night

Creative Cauldron (Falls Church)

Apr. 12-May 6 - *Witch*

Dance Place (DC)

Apr. 7-8 - Uprooted Dance
May 19-20 - Sean Dorsey Dance

DAR Constitution Hall (DC)

Apr. 13-14 - The Neighborhood Barbershop Live

Del Ray Artisans Gallery (Del Ray)

Apr. 6 - Opening Reception: A Touch of Magic
May 4 - Opening Reception: Atomic Dog

Dulles Expo Center (Chantilly)

Apr. 28-29 - D.C. Big Flea Antique Market
May 18-20 - International Gem & Jewelry Show

Eagle Bank Arena (Fairfax)

Apr. 12-15 - Disney on Ice - Follow Your Heart

Evening Star Café (Del Ray)

Apr. 12 - Janna Audey Band
May 3 - Janna Audey Band

First Stage Theater (Tysons)

Apr. 12-May 6 - *Fly by Night*

Ford's Theater (DC)

Mar. 9-May 12 - *The Wiz*

Gadsby's Tavern Museum (Old Town)

May 11 - History by the Glass: Gin
May 13 - Facetime with History - Dolley Madison
May 31 - Lecture: Right Hand Man? - Washington & Hamilton

Gala Theater (Adams Morgan)

Apr. 12-May 13 - *En El Tiempo de las Mariposas* (In the Time of the Butterflies) - Spanish; English subtitles

GMU Center for the Arts (Fairfax)

Apr. 5-8 - *The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail*

Hamilton (DC)

Apr. 1 - Easter Gospel Brunch
Apr. 14 - Red Molly

Harman Center for the Arts (DC)

Apr. 4-8 - *C.S. Lewis on Stage: The Most Reluctant Convert*
Apr. 17-May 20 - *Waiting for Godot*
May 22-July 1 - *Camelot*

Hub Theater (Fairfax)

Mar. 30-Apr. 15 - *The Pavilion*

Imagination Stage (Bethesda)

Apr. 14-May 20 - *Robin Hood*

Jammin Java (Vienna)

Apr. 11 - Antigone Rising
Apr. 13 - Janiva Magness

Keegan Theater (DC)

May 5-27 - *The Undeniable Sound of Right Now*

Kennedy Center (DC)

Apr. 8 - NSO Pops: Black Violin
May 23 - Itzhak Perlman & Martha Argerich

Little Theater of Alexandria (Old Town)

Apr. 21-May 12 - *Harvey*

Lorton Workhouse (Lorton)

Apr. 21, May 19 - Cabaret Series

Masonic Temple (Alexandria)

Apr. 8 - ASO: Bach in E flat Major, Piazzolla, Brahms
May 6 - Mozart Requiem Mass in D Minor

Metro Stage (Alexandria)Apr. 13-29 - *I Did it My Way in Yiddish* (in English)**MGM Stage (P.G. Co.)**

May 4 - Temptations & Four Tops

May 6 - Tom Jones

May 13 - Boyz II Men

Miracle Theater (DC)

Apr. 7 - David Wilcox & Carrie Newcomer

Mount Vernon (Alexandria)

May 5-6 - Revolutionary War Weekend

May 18-20 - Spring Wine Festival & Sunset Tour

National Harbor (P.G. Co.)

Apr. 28-29 - National Wine & Food Festival

May 12 - New Orleans Seafood Festival

National Theater (DC)Apr. 14 - *Let it Be: A**Celebration of the Music of the Beatles*May 15-June 3 - *Waitress***Port City Playhouse (Falls Church)**May 18-June 3 - *American Buffalo***Roundhouse Theater (Bethesda)**Apr. 11-May 6 - *"Master Harold" and the Boys***Schlesinger Center for the Arts
(GMU Alexandria Campus)**

Apr. 5 - Airmen of Note Jazz Band

Apr. 7 - ASO

Apr. 15 - US Marine Band

Apr. 22 - New Dominion Chorale

Apr. 29 - US Marine Band

Strathmore

Apr. 6 - Bobby McFerrin

Apr. 26 - *Just Call Me God*,

Starring John Malkovich

May 11 - Rob Lowe

Signature Theater (Shirlington)Apr. 3-June 10 - *Girlfriend***State Theater (Falls Church)**Apr. 14 - *Almost Queen***Studio Theater (DC)**May 16-June 17 - *The Remains***Synetic Theater (Roslyn)**Apr. 25-May 27 - *Titus Andronicus***Theater J (DC)**Apr. 3-29 - *Roz & Ray***Theater on the Run (Arlington)**Apr. 13-28 - *Border* (dance) - Jane Franklin Dance**Thomas Jefferson Theater (Arlington)**Apr. 13-28 - *Sweeney Todd***Union Stage (DC Waterfront)**Apr. 21 - *The Nighthawks***Warner Theater (DC)**

Apr. 7 - Patti LaBelle

Apr. 15 - Engelbert Humperdink

May 3 - National Ballet of Ukraine: *Don Quixote***Woolly Mammoth Theater (DC)**Apr. 4-29 - *Underground Railroad Game*

And Another Thing...

(in my stream-of-consciousness order)**Walkers Grille** has a new Chef, Jay Caputo, who is a multi-time James Beard finalist from Rehoboth Beach.**Makeda** is a new Ethiopian restaurant in Van Dorn Station (516 S. Van Dorn St.). It is an attractively renovated space, has a very friendly owner and accompanying staff, and there is a large bar that offers happy hour.**Smoking Kow BBQ** will replace Sinbad's on Duke St.**Charlie's on the Avenue** will replace Fireflies in Del Ray at 1501 Mount Vernon Ave. These are the same folks who created Live Oak on Commonwealth Ave., and the restaurant will offer a Pan-American menu.**Delia's Mediterranean Grill & Brick Oven Pizza** will open at 2931 S. Glebe Rd. (formerly Tazza Kitchen).**Mia's Italian Kitchen** will open at 100 King St. (Alexandria Restaurant Partners).**Yves Bistro** closed at 235 Swamp Fox Rd.**Casa Tequila Bar & Grill** is coming soon to 1701 Duke St.**Old House Cosmopolitan** is opening at 1024 Cameron St.**Taste of Eurasia** now open at 428A Hume Ave.**Glory Days** will replace Lone Star at 3141 Duke St. They also recently opened in Barcroft Plaza (Lincolnia Rd. and Columbia Pike).**Executive Diner** will open on Duke St.**Portner Brewhouse** now has trivia on Mondays.Check out **DUOLINGO**, which is a free phone app to refresh your foreign language skills (Thanks, Shelli)!**What Am I Listening To?**Pink - *Beautiful Trauma*Rolling Stones - *Blue & Lonesome* (2017 Grammy winner for Best Traditional Blues Album)

Celebrate!

Apr. 13 is Scrabble Day (Go, Pat Sugrue!)

Apr. 16 is Stress Awareness Day

(Do they think we need reminding?)

Apr. 26 is Richter Scale Day (Shake things up!)

May 1 is World Laughter Day

(Solution to international conflict.)

May 6 is Tuba Day (An otherwise unappreciated instrument.)

May 11 is Eat What You Want Day

(Whoops! I was supposed to wait for May 11?)

May 13 is Blame Someone Else Day (But only on this day.)



By Victoria Gravini

Even when you begin changing your eating habits for the better, incorporating cleaner foods and better practices, you can still fall victim to the massive carb craving.

Sometimes, we attribute these carb cravings to a lousy day at work or a stressful week of deadlines, but carb cravings can also come from physiological imbalances.

When you feel stress, cortisol, the stress hormone, skyrockets along with your blood sugar. To compensate, your body releases the fat storage hormone, insulin, to help bring your blood sugar back to stable. When that happens, the insulin tends to overcompensate, and your blood sugar dips lower than it should. Your body becomes confused and thinks it needs more energy, and thus, a carb craving is born.

Now that you know this, you can take steps to outsmart your body when it comes to carb cravings. First, you can take steps to reduce your stress or learn healthy coping mechanisms for when it arises. Next, you'll need to change your eating habits to satisfy that carb craving without derailing your progress.

Here are a few of my favorite tricks on how to do this...

The Salty Swap

Next time you can't shake your craving for a crunchy, salty snack like potato chips, go for something that gives you what you want in a healthy way. For example, carrot and celery sticks with a side of hummus will fill you up and fuel you for the rest of your day. You can also air-pop popcorn or roast chickpeas, sprinkling each with a little sea salt to fulfill your saltiest desires.

The Sugary Sweet Swap

Is that sweet tooth at it again? Next time you're longing for a dessert, trick your brain with something naturally sweet that isn't full of refined sugars and processed junk. A square of dark chocolate, as long as it's at least 80% pure, is a satisfyingly indulgent choice that won't derail your habits. You could also have a banana "shake" using almond milk, a dash of cinnamon, and a few drops of vanilla extract for a treat will satisfy your sweet tooth, guilt-free.

The Pasta and Bread Swap

And of course, there are the staple items you've always eaten with every meal because that's what you're used to. Rice, pasta, bread, even cereal...these are all high-carb foods that will derail your efforts if you eat them too often. Luckily, there are swaps you can make that will fill you up while still being wholly satisfying.

Cauliflower is a great way to make pizza crust, breadsticks, mashed "potatoes," and rice. Using a spiralizer will help you make noodles out of vegetables that taste amazing, too.

Now that you've gotten some ideas on how to tackle those carb cravings — arm yourself with these ingredients in your kitchen at all times, so these swaps become second nature.

Victoria Gravini, NASM CPT FNS, MSNW
Victoria@arlingtonpainandrehab.com
www.alignment-studio.com

In last month's issue of *The Compass*, Bruce Greenberg was featured in the "1967 Unmet Need Culminates in 2018 Toy Train Guide" article.

For those interested in contacting Bruce, his phone number is 703-461-6991.

Please refer to page 14 of the January/February 2018 issue for the complete article.

Musical Celebrations at Tucker Elementary

By Linda Greenberg

Debra Kay Robinson Lindsay, the new music, drama, and vocal teacher at Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School, is a very energetic and creative staff member. She specializes in musicals, and her musicals involve a lot of students as she prefers to use music to teach history. Ms. Lindsay loves her role of engaging students in acting and singing their way through history. Her enthusiasm is evident in the successful events she has staged and the transformation of the students into accomplished singers and actors. Two of Ms. Lindsay's November 2017 productions were the *Veteran's Day Celebration* and a play that she and her husband wrote, *James Madison: Little Man, Big Ideas*.

Veteran's Day Celebration

The *Veteran's Day Celebration* at Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School on November 10, 2017, was patriotic and uplifting. The program took place in the school auditorium. A PowerPoint backdrop of patriotic activities and images enhanced the songs sung by students, teachers, and guests and later provided the closing action shots, showing the military in action. The audience sang each of the military service songs.

Four American military service personnel spoke of their service experience. One of the speakers was Cameron Station resident Al Luna. Al is Tucker PTA President and a Technical Sergeant with the U.S. Air Force. Al described how he had decided to enter the service. He came from a small town, and after high school, he didn't know exactly what he wanted to do. Joining the Air Force, he thought, would provide a job and training for the workforce. This turned out to be a wise decision, and he rose through the ranks. He joked that he had been asked to wear the military uniform to the ceremony, but, unfortunately, the only military items that still fit were his boots!

The four speakers came from different backgrounds, each with a purposeful place in society. We owe them our gratitude for helping to defend our country and keeping us safe and free.

James Madison: Little Man, Big Ideas

The James Madison musical was written and directed by Ms. Lindsay and her husband

Ronald A. Lindsay, was produced by the Tucker Community After School Theater (TCAST), and took place in the auditorium at Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School on November 30, 2017. The play's focus on James Madison, the primary drafter of the U. S. Constitution, tied in with Tucker's participation in the U. S. Constitution Proclamation signing at City Hall with Mayor Silberberg in September. Very kindly, Ms. Lindsay dedicated the play to the John Alexander Chapter of the National Society of the Daughter of the American Revolution (DAR).

In five acts, the play chronicled James Madison's life from his days at Princeton University in 1769 to his death at Montpelier in 1836. The cast even visited Montpelier to better understand Madison and 18th-century America. The characters sang appropriate patriotic songs, composed by Ms. Lindsay. After the play, the cast signed autographs and were treated to refreshments provided by the John Alexander Chapter of the DAR.

After attending the musical productions at Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School, concerns were raised regarding the quality of the audio system. It is probably not on the school's "must have" list, but an improved audio system would indefinitely improve the quality of any performance, which we hope to see many more of in the coming months. If there are any readers looking for a worthwhile undertaking, Tucker's audio capabilities could certainly use the extra love and attention.



Planting Ideas for Spring: Choosing Annuals

By Kathy McCollom and Linda Greenberg

Annuals give color from spring to fall for one year only. A small number can add a bright pop to your garden or a container. If you think you're a "brown thumb," it could be only a mismatch between what you select and where you plant it. Picking the right plants for the right locations is the critical first step to having happy plants that last the season.

Some plants need a lot of sun while some only grow in shade. If they don't have enough sun and need it, they will stop blooming and decline. Shade-loving plants will have stunted growth and burned leaves if planted in too much sun.

How do you know which is which? Garden centers put the sun plants out in the open, and they place shade plants under a covering. Garden center employees are very knowledgeable about what grows best where. At mass-market plant sellers where all plants go in the same area, the little plastic tab in each plant lists the plant's requirements.

Annuals look best planted in groupings rather than as isolated plants. Again, the little plastic tab tells you the mature height and needed spacing. Some tiny plants get surprisingly large by fall.

All annuals need some ongoing care. This means watering often to get them started, weekly deep watering if there is no rain, and watering as often as daily in the hottest summer days. Plant food every few weeks will keep them blooming.

Garden centers have pansies as early as March. They are good for early color, although they cannot survive the heat and will fade by June.

To get you started, below are some gardening suggestions to coincide with Cameron Station's growing conditions.

Strong Afternoon Sun

- Small wax begonias: These are what you often see in landscape plantings. Unlike their fancy begonia cousins, these tough little plants can handle our clay soil, strong sun, and occasional dryness. The double varieties have cute ruffled flowers. They stay small and, when closely planted, fill areas with color.

- Euphorbia: These resemble baby's breath with small white flowers and delicate foliage. In spite of their fragile look, they are tough plants. They get a foot tall or more and will bloom until a hard frost kills them. These work great as a fill plant for containers.



- Angelonia: This variety comes in white, pink, and purple, with small blooms along blooming stems. They tolerate heat and some dryness. They get tall — more than a foot — and blend well in container mixes.

- Purslane: This low-growing cascading succulent is ideal for containers in the hot sun. They bloom profusely through early fall and can tolerate bouts of dryness.

- Pentas (Egyptian Starflower): These come in pink shades, white, and red. They need regular watering and do better in improved soil (our clay mixed with fine mulch or compost) rather than clay only.



- Scaevola: This variety has cascading flowers that look like little fans, and they come in white or blue and bloom steadily until a frost. They will survive hot summer sun with regular watering and look wonderful in hanging baskets or window boxes.

Morning Sun

- Petunias: For instant color, this variety with its many blooms can deliver, but they require regular care to stay that way through the summer, including pinching back the dead flowers, feeding them plant food, and watering appropriately. The tiny petunias are extremely sensitive to overwatering and need good drainage.

- Geraniums: These need sun but struggle in the heat (unless they are a heat-resistant variety). They do well if they get morning sun only.

- Coleus: This type has color in the leaves rather than in flowers. New varieties



have dazzling variety in colors and leaf detail.

- Vinca: These will bloom through fall, and they require good drainage. If they are planted in our clay soil, dig a hole much larger than the pot, and mix it with a soil lightener such as vermiculite.

Part Shade

- Dragon Wing Begonias: These cascade beautifully from hanging baskets away from wind. Buy as established plants rather than as bulbs. Bulbs can take months to get to a mature blooming size.

- Ivy Geraniums: This variety also cascades beautifully. They need some morning sun to keep blooming, but they need to avoid the hot afternoon sun.

- Caladium: These have color in leaves, including pinks, reds, and white. New varieties have very striking patterns. They do best out of windy areas.

Deep Shade

- Perennial Hostas: These are the best plants for deep shade. Almost all annuals need some sun to bloom, and they will languish in deep shade. Hostas take several years to become large, attractive mounds. When older, they need to be divided. They can have white, yellow, or blue tones in the leaves, plus white or lavender flowers in late summer, so these will add some color.

- Ferns: If a shady area can stay constantly moist, ferns are varied and attractive.

If you still have questions, volunteer gardeners can help!

Contact us at gardeners@cameronstation.org for a consult before doing this year's planting. We can help identify what a previous owner left behind and recommend design and plants that will be happy in your garden.

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Cameron Station Friends of Beatley Central Library

By Kathy McCollom

It's hard to miss the large modern Beatley Central Library across from Cameron Station's Duke Street entrance. We are fortunate to be so close to Alexandria Library's flagship location and its many excellent programs. The library offers much more than the opportunity to check out books. There are programs for children, teens, and adults all year 'round. The main Alexandria Library website has full details: <https://alexlibraryva.org>.

Much of the support for the library's facility and programs comes from the Friends of the Beatley Central Library program. The generous Friends' donations of time and their fundraising efforts make a significant difference to the library's community offerings.

Anyone can join the Friends of the Beatley Central Library. An annual family membership is only \$25, and an individual membership is \$15. Further information is on the Friends

website, (beatleyfriends.org), or you can join in person at the information desk in the library.

Many Friends, board directors, and book sale volunteers live in Cameron Station, and more are always welcome. When you join the Friends, you can indicate if you'd like to offer volunteer time too.

Another way to help the library is through Amazon Prime. Orders through the Amazon Smile program (<https://smile.amazon.com>) donate a small percentage of each order to the nonprofit of your choosing; Friends of Beatley Central Library is one of them.

The major Friends fundraising activities are the spring and fall book sales. The next one is September 12-16. The library accepts donated books and media from the public throughout the year. Friends volunteers, who organize and conduct the book sales, sort and store these donations. If you've never been to a book sale, you've missed something very special. There are bargains on great books, plus DVDs and CDs. The Friends also maintain two "dollar shelves" of donated books for sale just inside the front door all year round, all only a dollar each. There are many great finds there, too.

Being a Friends member gives you access to the book sale preview day and first dibs on the best choices before the sale is open to the public.

Come join the Friends of Beatley Central Library, have a good time, and help make a difference in your community!



Photo credit: Beatley Central Library

Cameron Station Pioneers

By Deborah Rouff

"We have a community to build" as stated by Greg Brooksher, Community Manager, in Volume 1, Issue 1 of *The Compass* newsletter in June 2000. If you have just recently moved into Cameron Station, if you know someone who has recently relocated here, or if you've lived in Cameron Station for a number of years, have you ever stopped to wonder about the intrepid "first movers" who made our community what it is today?

I had the pleasure of interviewing six residents who made the move to Cameron Station almost 20 years ago. They include David and Lois Solomon, Pat Sugrue, Steve Abbott, Elizabeth McAlee, and Pat McCombie. They all moved in around the same time: 1998-2000. The community was built in five phases, and they all moved in during Phase One.

Some of them remember seeing the "neighborhood" for the first time when the Cameron Station army base was being levelled. The models weren't up. Trailers were the only onsite structures; the models and individual home plans were just ideas on paper, so moving to Cameron Station was the proverbial leap of faith. The Van Metre homes went up first and were soon followed by properties on Gardner, Waple, and John Ticer.

Just close your eyes and try to imagine the vast emptiness, never-ending dust and dirt (six feet of soil was dug up and cleaned before being returned to the site), the dumpsters, and the maddeningly intelligent crows, which always knew when it was garbage collection day. Then, there was the spate of flat tires from the errant nails used in the initial construction. Someone said that a local reporter had the audacity to call Cameron Station a "slum." Today, however, Cameron Station is continually recognized for its unique "Old Town" charm and architectural detailing. This "small town within a small town" concept was the magnet that drew these fearless buyers to Cameron Station. It represented the promise of "a new community in an old town."

Community association meetings took place at the Carlyle model home by the clock on Somerville Street. The Cameron Station community was a grand, new experiment. It was the first time in history that a former military base was being converted to residential housing, along with mixed-use buildings, which provided an opportunity for small retail businesses (coffee shop, dry cleaner, florist, pet supply store, daycare) to serve the neighborhood. Tucker

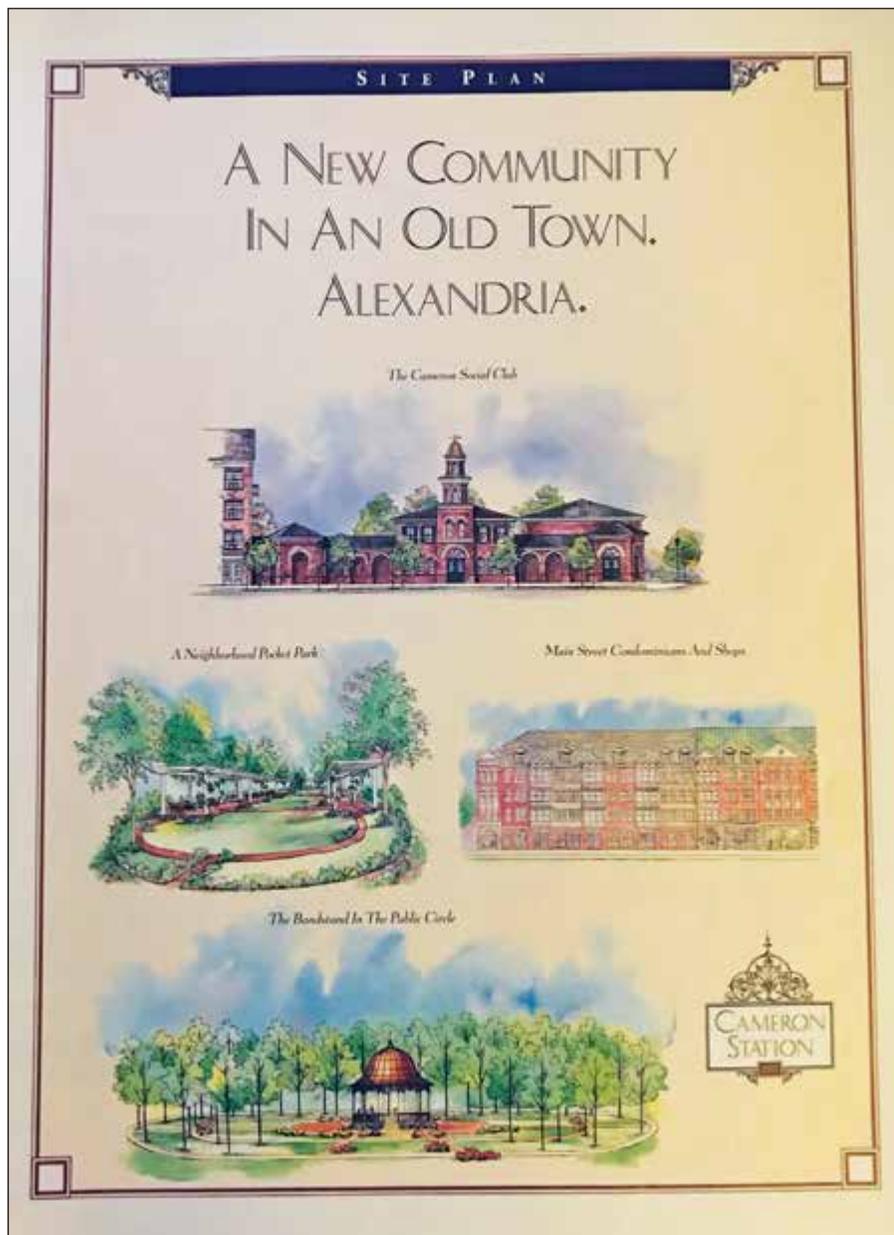


Photo credit: GreenVest LLC

Elementary went up next, followed by the linear parks, and finally the Beatley Library. By 2001, the community was almost 80% complete. It's hard to imagine now, but the Cameron Club was only dedicated in 2002.

Initially, all of these residents pulled together to turn a construction site into a vibrant community. Some of the builders, such as Van Metre, hosted socials to bring together those who had moved in, along with those considering doing so. Individual residents also took the lead, such as "mayor" Emily DeCicco. She took the time to introduce residents to one another and kept a notebook with the names of everyone she met. She even knew her neighbors' pets' names. She started the first listserv to share items of

(See *Cameron Station Pioneers* continued on page 23)

Advertising & Submissions Policies & Procedures

Publishing Deadlines

January/FebruaryDecember 30
March/AprilFebruary 28
May/JuneApril 30
September/OctoberAugust 30
November/DecemberOctober 30

Advertising:

The Compass newsletter is published bimonthly and distributed to approximately 1,800 residences, as well as displayed on the Cameron Station website. Advertising space is filled on a first-come, first-served basis, and the ads published in each issue are solely at the discretion of the newsletter staff or Communications Committee. **Only one ad per advertiser per issue is permitted. Ads must be submitted NO EARLIER than the 15th of the month preceding issue date and no later than the 30th (see box).** Payment must accompany all ads. Artwork must be camera-ready in JPEG or TIFF format: 65 line screen or 300 dpi. ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS ARE PREFERRED. Ads appear in black/white in printed copies; but are displayed in color on the website. Advertisers will receive a copy of the newsletter in which their ad appears. Estimated (not guaranteed) time of delivery for the next issue is the last week of May to first week of June.

Article Submissions:

Any submissions for publication must include the writer's name, address, and phone number and must be received **by the 30th of the month preceding issue date (see box)**. The newsletter staff, Communications Committee, or Board of Directors reserves the right to edit submissions. They will also determine the newsletter to be "full" at their discretion. Articles are to be factual and of public interest. Editorial content may be deemed inappropriate at the discretion of the newsletter staff, Communications Committee, or Board of Directors. Photographs submitted will be returned to sender if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Advertising Rates:

Display Ads (Camera-ready)
1/4 page (3.5" x 4.5").....\$150
1/8 page (3.5" x 2").....\$125

Classified Ads

(Limit 35 words)
Resident.....\$5
Non-resident.....\$25
Lost & Found, Carpool, etc.....Free

Checks should be payable to Cameron Station Community Association and sent with camera-ready artwork to *The Compass*, 200 Cameron Station Boulevard, Alexandria, Virginia 22304. Artwork may be emailed to admin@cameronstation.org.

Note: The included advertisements, articles, or references to websites of third parties do not indicate an endorsement by Cameron Station Community Association, Inc. and are not verified for accuracy. *The Compass* will not be responsible for poor ad reproduction due to the quality of the material provided by advertisers.

West End Farmer's Market

Opens Sunday,
May 6
8:30am-1pm

Book Clubs

Reading Between the Wines

April: *Sing for Your Life: A Story of Race, Music and Family*
by Daniel Bergner
May: *Beautiful Souls* by Eyal Press

Monday Night Book Ball

April: *Wonder* by R. J. Palacio
May: *Beartown* by Fredrik Bachman
If you are interested in joining the Monday Night Book Ball Book Club, please contact sottilepj@aol.com.
We would love to have you!

Third Thursday of the Month Book Club

April: *Hummingbird House* by Patricia Henley

If you are interested in joining the Third Thursday of the Month Book Club, please contact MHBirchler@gmail.com.
We would love to have you!



Cameron Station Pioneers

(continued from page 21)

interest with her neighbors. Another woman got the first Neighborhood Watch going. Champions worked hard on community-wide events to get everyone involved, such as the massive clean-up of Cameron Lake, where five tons of duckweed was removed by volunteers; and the candlelight vigil a few days after 9/11 to remember those who were lost and to give thanks that, in spite of all the residents who worked at the Pentagon, no neighborhood lives were lost.

All the while, residents dedicated themselves to the unique organizations and events that continue to serve the community to this day. These represented mechanisms to engage current and new residents. This included establishing the Homeowners' Association (HOA), where David Solomon and Victoria Hebert served as the first resident members of the Board; creating various committees; and hiring CMC as the community association management services company. It also meant initiating a host of community-focused events: Toga, Pink Flamingo, and St. Patrick's Day parties; Martini Mondays; Friday-night cookouts on Martin Lane; Brawner block parties; book clubs; power walkers and gardening groups; community-wide garage sales; and fundraisers in support of local events. Even *The Compass* started with a handful of dedicated residents who wanted to ensure that everyone knew what was going on or what was on the horizon for Alexandria's West End.

The unique accomplishments of one corner of Cameron Station naturally carried over to subsequent corners, until all of the neighborhood had established a variety of year-long traditions and events.

The neighbors with whom I met are still as close and committed to Cameron Station today as they were when they first moved to the community. Steve Abbott is a member of the Public Relations Subcommittee. Elizabeth McAlee served as the chair of the Architectural Review Committee of Northern Virginia and was recognized at the February 2017 Board meeting for her excellence in community leadership. Pat Sugrue was editor of *The Compass* for nine years and remains on its staff as a primary contributor. For years, Lois and David Solomon entertained the children as Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus during the holidays. Pat McCombie continues to be a tireless volunteer at community social events. They are all genuinely pleased with how things have turned out. While Cameron Station is now a mature development, today's residents are replicating what the original residents started nearly two decades ago.

What advice do these "first movers" have for today's homeowners? You get out of Cameron Station what you put into it. Get to know your neighbors, get involved, and participate. Serve on the Board or on a committee. But, whatever you do, put your mark on Cameron Station. You and the entire community will be better for it. Now that the community has been built, it needs to be cherished.

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