Dr. Belinda Crompton Straight died on December 5th, aged 95. During a remarkable life she bucked the gender stereotypes of her generation; she was a psychiatrist, a civil rights activist, an advocate for abused children and a mother of five herself. She was also the last woman to live in the Historic House. In 1970 she and her husband Michael Straight jointly gifted the house, springhouse and 16 of our present-day 31 acres to the Fairfax County Park Authority.

On September 30, 2002, former Green Spring historian Sherrie Chapmann interviewed Dr. Straight at her home in Washington, D.C. Following are excerpts from that interview, describing her memories of Green Spring Farm as “home.”

Belinda and Michael married on September 10, 1939. The young couple rented a house on Prince Street in Alexandria. When the lease expired, they searched for a home to call their own:

“We both liked the country…. I went out with the real estate agent and I was looking around and saw this house in the distance and I said, ‘What’s that, can we see it?’ So we drove up. And I just thought it was wonderful, and he said, ‘Well as a matter of fact it’s coming on the market tomorrow.’ We looked at it and that same night we decided absolutely. It had an old log cabin, and the springhouse….and the wonderful old house…it was so lovely…. something to fall in love with, so we did.”

The Straights bought the house and 32 acres in late 1941 for $32,500. The house needed repair and America was at war so they moved quickly to restore it and install a garden. They were young but had the advantage of prominent social connections. They commissioned two American masters of 20th century design: distinguished restoration architect Walter Macomber and pioneer landscape gardener Beatrix Farrand. The 1942 collaboration later earned Green Spring its Virginia Landmark status and a listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

On Walter Macomber:

“Walter Macomber was a very good architect....We knew we wanted a fireplace and he brought in the old paneling....I thought he was quite handsome, grey hair and tweed jacket, and quite comfortable to be with and much revered evidently in Williamsburg. He was very much a gentleman.”

On Beatrix Farrand:

“I was a little in awe of Beatrix Farrand when she came out and she was definitely not into having all the goods in the shop window....I thought a border of flowers and she said ‘no, absolutely not.’ I thought there would be different flower beds and she early on said, ‘No, we can’t do that.’ And she was very precise and her carriage was fine and upright...and very decisive. I think she came out three or four times.”

(At the time, Farrand was completing her signature work for Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.)

Belinda and Michael entertained many important guests on the lawn that Farrand created behind the house. On hosting atomic physicist Leo Szilard of the Manhattan Project in June, 1961:

“Well, we were sitting out there and somebody said something like aren’t you afraid of a nuclear...
Manager’s Message

Access for All

By the time you read this, the new bridge across Turkeycock Run will be open. It’s been a long 12 weeks and I know many of you have been anxious to complete your walking loop from the main garden area, through the Virginia Native Plant Garden, around the ponds and back to the Historic House. We think the new bridge design fits well into the landscape. Considering the equipment required to remove the old bridge and install the new one, McKee Civil Engineering has been as gentle on the site as possible. There will still be numerous plantings to restore over the next year to enhance your enjoyment of the area.

Reopening the bridge is not the only access improvement you will see over the next year or two. The Fairfax County Park Authority has made a commitment to upgrade a number of its facilities for physical mobility accessibility, and Green Spring Gardens is on the list. There are federal standards outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to which we must adhere, but perhaps you have had an idea for a change you would like to see.

The revised master plan will be completed in the spring. One of its goals is to improve circulation. For example, one of our annual appeal donors spoke with me about having a railing along the pedestrian section of old Green Spring Road. She wants to be able to reach for something if needed along the route. It’s a great idea and one that we will investigate in our planning.

Here are two almost hidden available accommodations. Did you know there is an elevator outside the Historic House kitchen that can be used by those who cannot climb steps? Give us a heads up before you come or when you arrive, and we will operate it for you. Our main restrooms in the Horticulture Center were not built large enough for a wheelchair to enter an individual stall. We can assist you in finding the restroom in the staff area, which is fully wheelchair accessible. Please ask at the front desk for directions if you are not sure where it is.

Most access accommodations address mobility issues, with ramps instead of curbs, railings to provide support, automatic doors, etc. There are ways to ensure equal access for those with other limitations, such as vision or hearing loss. If you encounter a great strategy for accomplishing an accommodation, let me know by calling 703-642-5173 or sending an email to mary.olienn@fairfaxcounty.gov. If you need an accommodation for one of our programs, especially for a sign language interpreter, please call 7-10 days in advance, so we can schedule someone.

We strive to have Green Spring Gardens be an enjoyable respite and place to learn for people of all abilities. Be sure to let us know how we can ensure that your visit meets your needs each time we have the pleasure of seeing you around the gardens.

Mary Olien
Park Manager
Spring! What a perfect time to visit Green Spring Gardens (GSG) and watch everything come alive! This is a time of rejuvenation and renewal for all as we leave our firesides and wander through our gardens, envisioning them in full bloom. And who can resist the temptation of more plants? After attending the Harry Allen Winter Lecture Series (the lectures run through March), we are ready for the Garden Gate Plant Shop to open on April 9th. Watch for a reminder postcard and a chance to win a prized plant from GSG. Spring Garden Day follows on May 14th. That’s when you can find the plants still on your shopping list.

FROGS proudly hosts the Summer Concert on June 28, Fall Garden Day September 17, and the annual Gardeners Holiday in December. These functions allow us to meet and greet our members, neighbors, and friends. Over 600 people attended our Gardeners Holiday this past December. Be sure to mark your calendars and join us at these events. We want to get to know you!

Did you know the FROGS Board also hosts a GSG Staff Appreciation Event? Every March we gather one evening for a few hours to socialize and thank the staff for all the hard work they contribute to the success and beauty of GSG. It is fun to take them away from their desks and gardens, giving us a chance to express our appreciation. Next time you are visiting GSG, be sure to say “hello” and thank these hardworking folks for all they do. And, if you have a gardening question or want to learn more about the historic house, they are more than happy to share their knowledge with you.

Our 2015 list of accomplishments was quite something! The gazebo renovation, purchase of two club cars for the staff, painting the parking lot lines, and the front entrance signs are just a few. Thanks to everyone who attended meetings and sent in comments for the GSG Master Plan. All comments are now being reviewed and the final proposal will be presented to the Park Authority Board for a vote. We will keep you posted on what happens with this plan. Lastly, through the generosity and support of our members and donors, the 2015 Annual Appeal was one of our most successful with over $23,000 to date. We will watch and wait with great anticipation as the Glasshouse Renovation project begins this fall.

Let’s keep Green Spring growing … come visit and get involved; you’ll be happy you did!

And visit us at www.friendsofgreenspring.org; follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. ☎️

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DOWNTON ABBEY: The Titanic to the Twenties

History Symposium
Saturday, March 19, 2016
9am–1pm

Downton Abbey has transported viewers from the Titanic era through the tumultuous years of World War I, and into the Roaring Twenties. As Downton closes its doors, celebrate the popular series that showcased British estate life in the early twentieth century and the separate but interconnected lives of landed aristocrats and their servants. Through lectures and exhibits, discover the history lessons that the fictional story wove into its plots, from the impacts of the Great War and advances in women’s rights, to fashion, dining and social etiquette. Test your “Downton” knowledge and look back at memorable moments as we bid a fond farewell to the landmark drama.

To register: Go to Parktakes online: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes and enter program code 290 103 4601, or call 703-642-5173. For more information, call 703-941-7987. ☎️
Gingerbread House Contest Winners

**Adult Category:**
First place: Lisa Bridges  
Second place: Susan Jewett  
Third place: Becky Van Meter

**Family Category:**
First place: Kramer family  
Second place: Schuttinga family

**Youth Category:**
First place: Nico Granieri  
Second place: Thomas Granieri

*Congratulations and thanks to all who entered.*

![Left: First place winner in Family category. Right: First place winner in Adult category. Both photos by Kathy Trichel; all rights reserved.](image1)

What's New in Children's Education

**Birthday Parties at Green Spring Gardens**
Happy birthday! Not your birthday? It is for many children who celebrate their special day at Green Spring Gardens. Green Spring’s Children’s Education staff regularly host the birthday child and their family and friends at the Horticulture Center. The kids enjoy fun educational games and activities with themes like Fairy Gardens, Animal Tracks, Pond Party, or Beatrix Potter, followed by family-hosted cake and presents. Find more information about our party programs at our website, [www.greenspring.org](http://www.greenspring.org).

**Introducing Our Newest Staff Members and New Programs**
Children’s Education has added two members to our already wonderful staff. Amelia Vogel and Priscilla Plumb have joined our team and will help out with garden education curriculum. Look for new program offerings starting this summer, including the new *Go Native! Community and Scout Workshops*, which offer education on native plants and their importance to our Virginia ecosystem. The workshops, cosponsored by the Virginia Native Plant Society, include a “take action” project of invasive plant removal and a chance to purchase discounted native plants from the Virginia Native Plant Society. Another new series to look for is our Thursday afternoon *Let’s Grow Garden Club* programs which offer youngsters the chance to work in the Discovery Garden planting flowers and edible plants, make garden harvest pizza in a solar oven, learn about pollinators and more. Find out more about these wonderful programs and our summer camps at [www.greenspring.org](http://www.greenspring.org) or in your Green Spring Program and Events calendar.

**Looking for Education Volunteers**
Are you looking for a way to get involved at Green Spring? Join the Children’s Education team as a volunteer. Children’s Education needs volunteers to help out with weekend programs, summer camps and school field trips. Duties include helping with children’s craft programs, assisting with Scout programs, educational walks and teaching nature related topics. This is a perfect volunteer opportunity for people who enjoy working with children, love plants and nature and have a special interest that they can share. We have been especially fortunate to have volunteers share their expertise in bee keeping, geology, gardening and art. What talent would you like to share with the youngsters? Green Spring staff will provide all needed curricula and materials to help you be successful. Send an email to [susan.eggerton@fairfaxcouny.gov](mailto:susan.eggerton@fairfaxcouny.gov) for more information.

We look forward to seeing you and your children at Green Spring Gardens! 🌿

Susan Eggerton  
*Senior Interpreter*
The love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies.” Gertrude Jekyll. 

Library Hours: Monday – Saturday: 9:00am – 4:30pm; Sunday: noon – 4:30pm
NPR INTERVIEW WITH DEBBIE WAUGH

Check out the December 20, 2015 NPR interview with Historic House Coordinator

Debbie Waugh discusses the origin and significance of “figgy pudding,” a traditional British Christmas favorite served during last December’s holiday tea programs at the house. She also shares the amazing recipe so you’ll be able to make it yourself. Kudos, Debbie!

http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2015/12/20/460488236/oh-bring-us-some-wait-what-is-figgy-pudding

BOB BROWN PUPPETS have been a major children’s theater company for the past fifty years, offering the finest in children’s education and entertainment and performing to over 300,000 children a year.

Spring Blooming in the Gardens

Come and enjoy a few of the many plants that will bloom here this spring:

**MARCH**
- Amelanchier (serviceberry)*
- Corylopsis (winter hazel)
- Crocus
- Helleborus (hellebore)
- Lindera benzoin (spicebush)*
- Narcissus (daffodil)

**APRIL**
- Cercis canadensis (eastern redbud)*
- Cornus florida (flowering dogwood)*
- Epimedium
- Magnolia
- Mertensia virginica (Virginia bluebells)*
- Phlox subulata*
- Prunus (ornamental cherry)
- Syringa (lilac)

**MAY**
- Aquilegia (columbine)
- Deutzia
- Fothergilla
- Itea virginica (Virginia sweetspire)*
- Peony
- Salvia
- Spyrea

*Native to Virginia
YOU WON’T WANT TO MISS the Garden Gate Plant Shop grand opening on April 9! For you herbaceous Peony lovers, we’re offering ‘Dr. Alexander Fleming’ this year, a tried-and-true cultivar with a double-pink bloom. You’ll find native Azaleas too, including the beautiful Pinxterbloom azalea, native to Virginia. We’ll have a wide variety of Hibiscus too, including ‘Cherry Cheesecake,’ ‘Blue River II,’ ‘Kopper King,’ and ‘Lord Baltimore.’ These plants will be stunning additions to any garden.

For native spring bloomers, look for Trillium luteum (trillium), the wonderful yellow blooming trillium, or Mertensia virginica (Virginia bluebells) in lovely shades of blue, or Stylophorum diphyllum, our common yellow wood poppy. These natives tend to sell out quickly, so get here early! Try Polygonatum biflorum (Solomon’s seal) or the variegated Polygonatum odoratum var. pluriflorum ‘Variegatum,’ for foliage interest in shady gardens. In addition, we’ll have Pachysandra procumbens, commonly called Alleghany spurge, for a slow-growing, shade-loving groundcover. Heucheras will abound in the shop too, in a wide variety of colors from silver to red to almost black. Come check them out and take a few home.

To attract pollinators, we’ll have many Monarda, Phlox, and Coreopsis to choose from, as well as Asclepias tuberosa (butterfly weed), and Pycnanthemum muticum (short toothed mountain mint). Bees, butterflies, and other pollinators will keep returning for more. If hummingbirds are what you love, try Lobelia cardinalis (cardinal flower), and Spigelia marilandica (Indian pink). Both of these natives do well in part shade.

Why not try a new shrub this year? We’ll have two different Potentillas (bush cinquefoil) in our shop, Happy Face® Yellow and Happy Face® Pink Paradise. These little native shrubs grow two to three feet tall, are drought and deer resistant and will provide wonderful blooms all summer long. Or, how about a Deutzia? We’ll be offering ‘Yuki Cherry Blossom’ this year. Deutzias love sun and are deer resistant. This particular one is covered with small pink flowers in the spring. For foliage interest, we’ll have Sambucus racemosa ‘Lemony Lace’ and Sambucus nigra ‘Black Lace.’ These shrubs are also deer resistant, tolerant of alkaline or acid soils and are beautiful additions to any garden. Of course, we’ll also be carrying a wide variety of other shrubs to choose from including the ever-popular winterberry (Ilex verticillata).

Evergreen shrubs have an added benefit of providing structure and year round color to your garden. Why not try Ilex crenata Patti O? This wonderful small evergreen holly is perfect for smaller gardens and patios, and can be used in containers to flank formal entryways. It has a wonderful upright, columnar habit and can be used in a number of different ways in your garden.

Spring is such a great time to visit Green Spring Gardens! Come to the shop on April 9 and keep coming back throughout the season. We’ll be putting out new plants all summer long. Be sure to mark your calendars for Spring Garden Day on May 14, and make plans to come and enjoy the day. Happy Shopping!

The Garden Gate Shop is open 9:00am-4:00pm, Monday-Saturday; noon-4:00pm, Sunday.

Diana Shannon
Plant Shop Coordinator

Spring Art Shows at Green Spring

Don’t miss the beautiful artistic achievements you’ll see throughout the Horticulture Center and Historic House this spring:

THROUGH APRIL 25:
East Indian brush painting from the Sumi-e Society of America
Reception at Green Spring: April 3, 1–3pm

FROM APRIL 27 THROUGH JUNE 26:
Watercolors from the Potomac Valley Watercolorists
Reception at Green Spring: May 1, 1–3pm
friends don't let friends miss out on what's fresh for spring...
follow, share and otherwise propagate!

WWW.FRIENDSOFGREENSPRING.ORG