

EVERGREEN

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Evergreen Manor House is a fixture and a fixer-upper in the community

By KRISTA KIMBLE
 Observer staff

The Evergreen Manor House has been a fixture in the community since Lewis Berkeley built the house in 1827. According to Dave Prokop, chairman of the Manor House Preservation Committee, the house then passed to Berkeley's son, Col. Edmund Berkeley who formed Company C, the Evergreen Guard, of the Eighth Virginia Infantry at the start of the Civil War.

Following the Civil War, Berkeley was the ranking Confederate veteran and participated in monument dedications. He was the co-chairman of the 1911 Manassas National Jubilee of Peace, an event which brought together Union and Confederate veterans 50 years after the first major battle of the Civil War.

Originally, Evergreen was a plantation of over a thousand acres. Evergreen Country Club is now located on the grounds. No plans to use the Manor House have ever materialized, and the house now sits vacant.

"The Manor House Preservation Fund [MHPF] was formed by concerned neighbors," Prokop reported. "It was incorporated as a nonprofit to help preserve the historic Manor House. The MHPF functions as a separate entity from the Evergreen Country Club.

"The MHPF has received permission from Evergreen Country Club, the property's owner, to apply to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to place the property on the National Register of Historic Places. This honorary designation will help in securing grants and make available state and federal rehabilitation credits." He hopes the National Park Service will approve the manor house's inclusion on the National Register by January 2008.

The MHPF signed a cooperative agreement with the Evergreen Country Club to conduct fund raising and make repairs to the exterior of the building to help weather-proof, preserve and improve the appearance. "Included in this are the replacement of rotten wood, gutter repair and replacement, painting, masonry repairs, flashing and stucco repairs," explained Prokop.

Tina Boyd is the head of the fund-raising committee. "This old building holds a lot of history and helps make meaning of the past. It has a great story to tell and should not be left sitting this way, old and falling apart!" she said at a recent outdoor concert held to help raise funds for the Manor House Preservation.

"We need to bring it back into our present and have it ready for the future. We can tell the story of the past by using it here and now," she



The stately Evergreen Manor House is historical and holds hopes for the future for many area residents.

Courtesy photo

continued.

Boyd and her committee have held numerous events to help raise the needed funds to make that vision a reality. The MHPF has conducted raffles, hosted the Berkeley Ball and is running a summer concert series.

The concert events are held in the lawn of the Manor House and include live music with food and beverages available for purchase.

The next concert will be held July 21 featuring the jazz sounds of The Brown Street Band. The final

summer concert will be Aug. 25 when Andre Fox plays Motown to rock. The concerts run from 6-9 p.m. Concertgoers should bring chairs or blankets.

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Residents look to future; summer concerts to fund manor preservation

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Even Boyd's daughter Olivia has enjoyed getting in on the fund-raising efforts. "The fund-raisers are a lot of fun. I organized my own contest, which was a Jolly Rancher guess. People paid 50 cents to guess how many were in the jar. I raised about \$70."

All proceeds from the summer

concerts go toward the Manor House preservation efforts. "The fundraising efforts of Tina Boyd and her volunteers have been quite successful thus far," Prokop reported. "The MHPF has received about \$145,000, but this is only about half of the amount required to help preserve the exterior of the

building."

Prokop said the Manor House is eligible to be included on the Civil War Trail Sign Historic Sites List. It is also eligible to be nominated to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, as it is located in an area stretching from Charlottesville to Gettysburg

identified as "The Journey through Hallowed Ground."

Boyd and many other members of the community enjoy having a building with such a historic past but are eagerly looking forward to the Manor House's future as well. Boyd cites a quotation from Patrick Henry, "I like the

dreams of the future better than the history of the past."

Some of the plans for the future include work on the interior and deciding on a productive use for the house, Prokop said.

More historical information and images may be found at www.evergreenmanorhouse.org.