

THE *Cobbham Courier* GAZETTE

Containing the freshest Advices

Occasional Newsletter for Historic Cobbham District

December 2005

HCF Annual Meeting Set at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11th

The annual meeting of the Cobbham neighborhood association will be held at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11th, at the offices of Carson Advisory, 470 Hill St.

Cobbham Holiday Party Set Sunday, Dec. 18th

The Cobbham party this year is at the home of Reign Streiter and Monica Huff at 724 Cobb Street (site of the Cobbler-Off during the recent Festival). As usual, the party is potluck with Cobbham providing drinks (alcoholic and non). The party will begin at 3 p.m.

The possibility of luminaires this year will be decided at the annual meeting. If yes, volunteers will meet at the Old Jail Sunday morning. Volunteers will be needed to assemble, distribute, light and clean up. Mimi Elliott-Gower agreed to serve as volunteer coordinator if there is sufficient interest. She can be reached at 543-3199 or 207-0936.

News from the 'hood...

Tim Dondero and his son-in-law, Andrew Pearson, have opened a new gourmet take-out shop called Dondero's Kitchen. Located at 584 N. Milledge Ave., they give a 5 per cent discount to walkers, bikers and bus riders. Weekly menus are available by e-mail. With prices that are entirely reasonable and delicious fare, this kitchen is a welcome addition to Cobbham.

The metal sign designating the Cobbham historic district has been returned to its location on Prince Avenue near the Fire Hall. The sign was hit and badly damaged during an ice storm last winter, requiring it to be restored. The Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation supported its repair at Tucker Iron Works.

Kemp Jones, a fixture on the Athens' music scene for years, has written a children's book with a 9-song CD. Titled "F.O.L.L.O.W.," it's the story of a lost cat and Stone, the boy who finds him. Stan Mullins, who lives on Pulaski St., was the illustrator. The new hardcover book sells for \$16.95 and is now available at local bookstores/gift shops, online at www.followthecat.net <<http://www.followthecat.net/>> or by calling Kemp himself.

869 Hill St., the long-time home of the late Alva Jo Evans and more recently her daughter, Joyce Chapman, has been sold to an unnamed developer. The expectation is that the house will be restored and put on the market again.

David and Jessica Bell and their children, Aidan and Sherrod, are the very happy new owners and residents at 889 Hill Street in the Phinizy-Leathers-deBaillou-Bell house. The original part of the structure was standing

before 1816 – and it never looked better!

Melissa Clegg and Todd Frizzelle and their daughters, Mozie and Grayson, have moved to a small town near Firenze in Tuscany. They did great things for 889 Hill while they were in it. We miss them!

535 Prince Ave., the home of the late Roy Jahn, has been sold to Keith Rabideau, Athens restaurateur (Basil Press, Porterhouse Grill, Copper Kettle)

The House at Meigs and Harris, the residence of cotton broker James Rogers until 1912, when he built what is today Magnolia Terrace, is being restored by Keith Rabideau (qv). It was Joe Fobes's place to lay his head for years (between Dunkin' Donuts and Tybee), and it is great to see the place coming back. Mr. Rabideau stated that he and his fiancée are debating whether to live in the Jahn house on Prince or on Meigs Street.

Magnolia Terrace B&B is again for sale. Dottie and Ty Sigmund, due to Mr. Sigmund's medical condition, will not be able to continue operating the guesthouse. The 8-room guest house located at 277 Hill St. was originally developed in 1994.

New infill: Getting Started at 101 The Plaza

By The Songsters

As Cobbham folks traveling the western end of Hill St. may have noticed, we have begun preparation for the construction of our new house at 101 The Plaza. Within the next two weeks, weather permitting, the basement will be excavated and construction will commence. The design, approved by the HPC in October, will be much like our existing house at 437 N. Pope St. in both appearance and scale, with adjustments to the roofline to facilitate construction on the new site. We hope to make the move from Lower Cobbham (call us if you know anyone who needs a house seconds from Big City Bread, Bischero, etc.) sometime around mid-summer.

PABC Properties to be Cobbham Homes Again

By Laurie, Lewis and Kemp Jones

For years we have been asking the church if they were interested in selling the two houses on the corner lot of Cobb and N. Harris, or in the event they were coming down, we wanted to buy the stone and construct a wall behind our house. Prince Avenue Baptist Church had been using them for storage over the last 15-20 years. When I asked last year, Bill Horvell told me that they might be interested in selling them. The houses share a lot and we purchased the two in March 2005 and started the renovation on the stone house, 220 Cobb. We figured we best have a little control over our setting here, secure the borders.....Parking to left of me, renters to the right, here I am, stuck in.....

220 Cobb required gutting it completely. This house, as we learned from Suzanne Ginn, Mrs. Merks's daughter, was built in the mid-forties. It looked older and it was evident that older parts were used in its construction. Mrs. Merk, from whom we purchased 735 Prince, had told me years ago that her husband, Harry, was angry that the roof hung over their driveway. After restoration, it is really a cute place now, a small house with four rooms and many windows that does not feel small.

The wooden house, 609 Harris, is almost ready for living. We think it was constructed in the 20's and it is apparent that there were at least 3 pretty distinct periods of building and altering. We've begun to like this one as well, now that it is almost complete, and we are a few minor fixes and a few polyurethane headaches away. We wish we knew more about both houses, so if anyone has any information please pass it on. They are unoccupied for a few more days so stick your head(s) in if you wish.

Celebrations (the PC term)

Hano and Mary Anne tie the knot:

Mary Ann Tamplin, of Madison and Cobbham, was married to Ligon Milikonahanohano McWhorter Leathers of Athens on September 10th by her female priest (Yikes! Don't tell PABC. She is Episcopalian). The ceremony was at the Cator Woolford Gardens on Ponce deLeon in Atlanta. They are "at home" at 942 Hill Street.

The dance with ARMC continues...

By Margie Spalding

As we all know, Athens Regional has begun its three-year emergency room expansion project. The removal of the trees was a disappointment, but apparently necessary because of water lines that needed to go in. The new emergency room is off King Ave, and parking is across the street from it. Express Care is in the old orthopedic building across from the ER. There is free valet parking available and a crossing guard to stop traffic for pedestrians.

A concern of the Citizens Advisory Committee at this point is the potential fill of the culvert on Hiawassee Ave, across the street from the hospital. The plan is to use the dirt from the excavation of the parking deck to fill the culvert. There is a stream in the property which will have to be piped in order for this to be done. This is the current plan, and the hospital is waiting for the necessary approvals from various state and local agencies.

If anyone is inconvenienced by the new ER setup or the construction, let me know and I'll contact the hospital. They've asked me to tell them if there's anything specific they need to change.

The "Bit Pink" Update: the T.R.R. Cobb House

By Jane Cassady

The restoration is progressing well due to the expertise of the design team and contractors working for The Watson-Brown Foundation. According to Richard Cloues at the State Historic Preservation Office, this is only the second restoration project they have reviewed.

Restoration of the T.R.R. Cobb House involves meticulous attention to detail and period appropriate materials and finishes. Frank Welsh sampled interior and exterior paint samples to assist in the architectural investigation of how the building evolved. Who knew that pink was the original color for the Cobb House? Yet, microscopic layers of undisturbed paint chips revealed a coat of pale pink as the original color. Translating the historic color to current paint standards results in a brighter and glossier paint.

In addition to historic detail, the house must meet building code issues and accessibility. Handicap access is provided through the rear addition to house the elevator and restrooms. The garden level will feature offices with public space, a small gift shop, while the Main Floor will function as a house museum. Plans are still being developed for the top floor of the house.

All Hail Quercus Falcata...

A Tree Replanting Celebration was held on the porch of Jeff and Carol Bishop at 649 Hill St. on Nov. 19th. Organized by Teresa Bethke, the educational ceremony honored the grand old cherrybark oak that once stood on the site in front of Lafayette Square Apartments. It had to be removed because of interior rot. A new tree of the same genus was planted there and Cobbham residents gathered to water it and to offer incantations for it to grow into a landmark tree as well.

Athens arborist Connie Head told residents that she was available for assessments of individual yards. You can call her at 613-3561. Representatives of the Athens Tree Council were on hand to sell locally adapted tree saplings.

2005 Cobbham Festival Fallout...

By Tom Reynolds, HCF Prexy

Thanks to all the committee members, volunteers, neighbors and visitors who made the Cobbham Semi-Occasional Summer Festival a smashing success. I hope that everyone enjoyed the day as much as my family. Thanks also to all those who donated their belongings, time and money to the neighborhood yard sale. It was the Summer festival held 16 years ago that brought me to Cobbham. I am sure we will gain some wonderful new neighbors as a result of this one. I can't think of a better place to live, and those who know me well know that I have spent the last several years trying. If Cobbham and her sister in-town neighborhoods last a thousand years, surely, men will say, "This was their finest hour" (at least it was in the top 3).

Thanks again to all who made the weekend possible. With the tragedy that has befallen those on the Gulf Coast, it is great to be reminded about the strength of community, the power of volunteerism, and the joy of friends old and new.

By Mimi Elliott-Gower

The final decision is to send only the amount we collected specifically for Hurricane Relief (minus the \$65 already sent to the Red Cross) to the InterCommunity Council of the Athens Housing Authority. We will be sending a check for \$1100 to this organization. The reasoning: (1) We did not have a full Festival accounting at the wrap-up meeting when we voted to "round up" the donations. Expenses were greater than predicted that night. (2) The IRS seems to have a renewed interest in Historic Cobbham's tax bills so it seems important to hold out money in the event that we do owe IRS and (3) It seems appropriate to discuss the budget in more detail at the Annual Meeting on December 11th.

Brushing Away the Cobb-webs, Some History of our Neighborhood's Festival

By Milton Leathers

The following piece was written for a pre-2005-festival Cobbham Courier. It never came out, so, from the voluminous and ever-shrinking HCF archives, here it is:

Back in the late '80s, an idea hatched for a neighborhood block party to be held during the "dull" period of the summertime in Athens, when nothing was really going on. Is anyone reading this old enough to remember those days? It was 1988, to be exact – even though the event was being publicized as Cobbham's sesquicentennial, which rightly, some thought, should have been held in '84).

Opening day began with a "Dress As Your Pet" parade. David Edens and his camo-clad golden retriever won. Unlike his master, that was the only time any of us saw that dog in camo. There were performances on various people's front porches. I best remember Patsy Cline (Jane Kidd) and Porter Waggoner (John McLeod), who were sensational. Gay McCommons and Jim McGown did readings of Moliere ("Le Misanthrope," je me souviens) in French. Pretty good

crowd at that stop. Food vendors from without and within the neighborhood set up stands. Cobbham Fowl Mull (made with 2 chickens, 1 turkey and 1/2 a duck) was sold @25 cents a paper cup. Plenty left over. There was a clown and a man who made fanciful animals out of balloons. We had face painting and a dunking booth and rides on (what Margie Spalding called) "a terrified pony."

The finale was "The Micobbo" under the capable baton of director/encourager/tyrant John O'Looney. (Let no one ever say his yoke is light!) In their roles as the sons of the mayor of Cobbham (Phinazy) Phin and David Spalding leered resentfully at the skit's organizers -- while the being smooched from both sides by the mayor's "daughters-in-law elect"

Katherine Downs chaired the whole event, and Julie McLeod worked like a dog (along with others). And, as

The Gravity Creeps played into the cooling night air, we all felt it was a fine day indeed.

The 1989 Cobbham Festival was very similar, only with rain. Julie McLeod had been promoted to chair for her previous summer's efforts, proving once again that no good deed ever goes unpunished. There was some discussion during a recap meeting that the year before had not really been the 150th anniversary of Cobbham, so -- mainly in order to confuse the public -- we billed the '89 event as "Sesquicentennial II: the Sequel." Athenians and outlanders (and politicians) came from all over the town and state. Even two tourists from Italy showed up that year.

The musical finale was a raffle embedded within "Der Ring des Cobbelungen." To the strains of Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyrie" and the clippity-clop of Steve Elliott-Gower's half-coconut-shell horse hooves, the tension mounted. The lyrics were: "It's time for the raffle. It's time for the raffle! It's time for the raffle!! The raffle is here!!!" After a brief intermezzo -- when someone tripped the cord to the CD player and all of us on stage stared at one another and the audience for about two minutes (until we got back to the part we knew) -- the raffle was announced. The winner won....Who remembers? I don't. In keeping with neighborhood tradition, the musical masterpiece was all style and no content.

But the entire summer festival was extremely well received, and Margie advised us that if, building on our success, we did it three years in a row, then folks would really come to expect the event annually and look forward to it. That remark sealed the fate of the Cobbham Summer Festival(s). Oh, but only temporarily. Here it is a mere sixteen years later. The groundswell of interest can be contained no longer! So....we're back.

Another Archival Project?

In 1980, Phinzy Spalding and John English applied for and received a grant from the Georgia Council for the Humanities to document a neighborhood in transition, namely Cobbham. With the \$3,000, HCF hired noted architectural photographer Dennis O'Kain (of Lexington, Ga.) to photograph the entire neighborhood, as it was then. Those framed pictures were exhibited at the Fire Hall on occasion and are now in storage. They are still in good condition. The question becomes what to do with them. It would seem most appropriate to hang them in the Phinzy Spalding Building (the old jail) so they could be viewed. It might be worth the effort to apply for a new grant to update the survey 25 years later. Any ideas here? (JE)

2006 Dues Due...will say no more, if response is prompt!

Some Views of ACC Commissioner David Lynn:

Prince Avenue vote:

As you are well aware, at the November voting session the Athens Clarke County Commission decided not to three lane Prince Avenue from Milledge to Pulaski, nor assume control from the State the section of Prince from Milledge to the bypass. This vote was contrary to my views and ran counter to the wishes of both the Historic Cobbham Foundation and to many of you individually. It was my hope that reconfiguring Prince Avenue into three lanes would enhance pedestrian safety, foster alternative modes of transportation and reduce vehicular speeds. Thank you for the many letters and emails I received in support of my position and for all of your work to increase safety on Prince Avenue. I will keep trying on Prince!

Budget goals:

As part of next year's budget preparation, the Mayor and Commission set broad policy goals they wish to implement in the coming fiscal year. Commissioners Hoard, Jordan, Kinman, and Sims have joined me in an effort to re-implement the neighborhood traffic-calming program. The traffic-calming program installed several traffic calming devices in Cobbham and many other neighborhoods before the project was terminated for lack of adequate funding. I hope that this program will be funded in the upcoming fiscal year and we will see new projects to control excessive speed in our neighborhoods.

Brookwood Drive:

Brookwood Drive, which joins Hillcrest Avenue to King Avenue, may be due for a name change. After unification in 1991, several streets in Athens were left with duplicate names. Brookwood Drive is one of those. I have received numerous complaints from Brookwood residents regarding missed mail, forgotten pizza deliveries and most important, delays in emergency response. In all likelihood, that section will be renamed to Hillcrest Avenue. Ironically, the notices of the name change from the planning department went to the wrong place!

Cullen Timmons Sets Blistering Pace at Clarke Central

Cullen was chosen for the Governor's Honors Program in chemistry and spent six weeks this summer studying in Valdosta. This school year he's co-captain of the varsity Academic Team, which is undefeated and hoping to win the regional honors. He's also a National Merit Scholarship semi-finalist (the only one from Clarke Central). Plus he's a member of the high school's cross-country team, which recently won the Athens city meet. I'd say the lad from Cobb St. is having a very good year. Congratulate him when you see him! (JE)

Neighborhood Links to Chase Street School

By Chris Sugiuchi

At the "meet and greet" that was held at Chase a few weeks ago, I was asked to create a group for the neighborhoods and the school. This group has been created to facilitate communication between Chase Street Elementary School and the surrounding neighborhoods. Here we can discuss school events, issues pertaining to neighborhood attendance, and other relevant topics. Several folks have signed up and I know more are interested. If you want to sign up on your own go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/chaseneighborhood/> and click on the "join this group button". If you would like for me to add you, please drop me a line at chris@sugiuchi.net. As a former teacher at Chase and a neighborhood parent I am excited to see all the discussion!

How to join the Cobbham listserv:

By Chris Sugiuchi

I have just figured out that AOL (A, Oh Hell! as I call it) blocks Yahoo! group membership invitations. Here's an alternate way to join--feel free to send it on: Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cobbham/> Look for a blue button that says "Join This Group". The next screen will give you a chance to sign in if you have a Yahoo! ID or create one for free if you do not. Please include your house address when you sign up as this helps me keep out spammers. After I receive your request for membership, I'll set up the rest.