



# MEMO

PUBLISHED BY AND FOR WILLIAMS PARK NEIGHBORS

We're on the web at [www.williamsparkneighbors.org](http://www.williamsparkneighbors.org)

## MEMO NOTES

Claire Crowley has signed on to create a fun new column for the MEMO. It's called "The Lost Tooth News... Kids' Reports," and here's how it will work: Neighborhood kids and parents are invited to send news and happenings to Claire who'll compile and edit the items, then submit her finished version to this newsletter. A kid-filled neighborhood like WP should generate lots of content. Send your news and photos to Claire at [clairecrowley08@gmail.com](mailto:clairecrowley08@gmail.com).

Find us on the web at [www.williamsparkneighbors.org](http://www.williamsparkneighbors.org).

Join us on facebook—Williams Park Neighbors.

When a new neighbor moves in near you, contact Joan Friedman at [friedman1500@gmail.com](mailto:friedman1500@gmail.com) or 678-239-4987 so WPN can welcome them.

**We encourage contributions to the MEMO.**

Tell us something about yourself — tell us something about your neighbor — send your contributions to Casey Clavin at [dingoblu@earthlink.net](mailto:dingoblu@earthlink.net)

**Thanks!**

PHOTOS BY KEITH BENTLEY

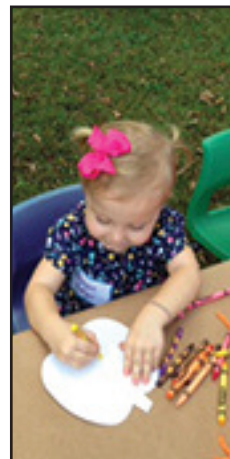
## WP Cooks... Chili, that is. *by Keith Bentley*

Rain threatened in the morning but cleared mid-day and the annual Williams Park Chili Cook-Off came off without a hitch. An even dozen WPN chili chefs entered their best time-tested concoctions (or threw together whatever they had in the kitchen). Bob Crafasi said he spent more time on the sign for his chili than actually making his dish. I don't think any road kill was involved but there was that possum on the road one day and gone the next... hmmm.

Judges were Jeff Haeger, chef and owner of Crooked Tree Cafe; Brett Ward, the principal at Smyrna Elementary School; and Len Friedman who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Tasting twelve chilis and trying to distinguish between #10 and #2 has to be a real challenge—especially if #3 singed your taste buds off. Poor Mr. Ward had already attended a chili cook-off that morning, a fund raiser for the Smyrna Elementary PTA. He was flirting with the risk of an overdose of Tums in the evening.

At the end of the day, first place went to Lauren Schniederwind (Highland Ave.), second went to Judi Kessler (Highland Ave.) and third went to Eva Cook (Gilbert St.). Each winner received a shiny new chili pot medal on a ribbon for wearing around the neck to impress friends. It was reported that judging was close and attendees enjoyed sampling all the chilis.

Drew Stipe had his wide screen TV set up outside and the football faithful could keep up with their favorite game. This could



*continued on next page...*

# '14-'15 CALENDAR

wpn pergola decorating  
November 29, 10 am  
Williams Park,  
Roswell Street

wpn pergola lighting  
December 5, 6 pm  
Williams Park,  
Roswell Street

wpn happy hour  
December 19, 7 pm  
Jonathan & Jenni  
Stroble  
1318 Roswell Street  
678.414.8316

wpn book club  
no meeting in December

wpn happy hour  
January 16, 7 pm  
details TBA

wpn board meeting  
January 21, 7pm

wpn book club  
Sun, January 25, 3 pm  
Debbie Savage's house  
2583 Old Roswell Rd.  
Book: TBA

wpn happy hour  
February 20, 7 pm  
Dave Chambers  
2616 Highland Ave  
817-372-9628

wpn book club  
Sun, February 22, 3 pm  
Host: TBA  
Book: TBA

wpn general assembly  
February 24, 7pm  
details TBA

wpn membership  
renewal begins  
March 1

wpn happy hour  
March 20, 7 pm  
details TBA

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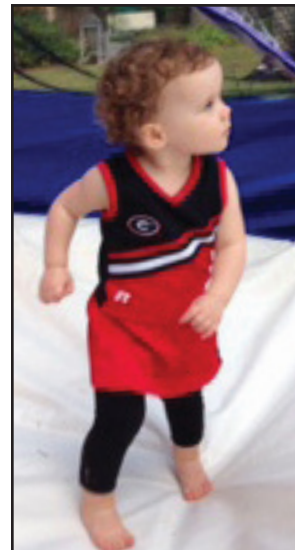
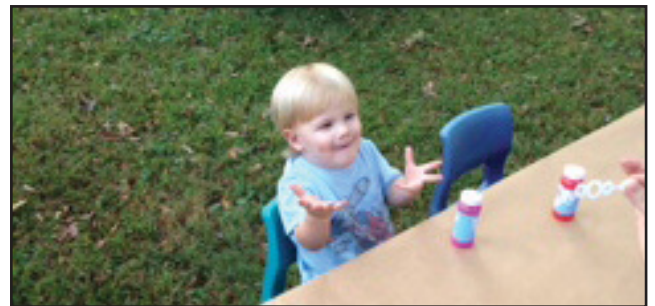
## Williams Park events in review *cont'd*

become a regular amenity for our neighborhood parties. Right Drew?

The kids enjoyed the always-popular "jumpy" generously provided (once again) by Judy Brassfield. A piñata beat-down, supervised by Leon McElveen, produced no serious injuries to the kids or supervisor. Small children also enjoyed just sitting and coloring... what a simple pleasure.

The event, planned and executed by Liz Davis and Susan Bentley, came together perfectly. They made it look easy but you'd be surprised how much effort it takes to line up judges; acquire prizes for winners; arrange for the fire truck to come; ensure that tables (and chairs) get delivered, set up and decorated; line up some music; tell the WPN president what announcements to make (TALK LOUDER!!!); clean up after; get tables and chairs back where they belong; etc, etc. Lots of thought, phone calls and running around to pull it all together. Whew!

Liz said she's so pleased about how WP has grown up and evolved, particularly with so many children here now. Susan observed that it's always great to see everyone having such a good time with lots of laughter. And one neighbor remarked to me how much he enjoys relaxing with good food and visiting with friends while children run and play in the background on a beautiful October afternoon. "It just doesn't get any better than this," he said, and I had to agree. In this day and age, we really do have a special neighborhood.



Second place chili chef Judi Kessler shows us her medal.



# '14-'15 CALENDAR

wpn book club  
Sun, March 29, 3 pm  
Host: TBA  
Book: TBA

wpn board meeting  
April 15, 7pm

wpn happy hour  
April 17, 7 pm  
Marcia Gipson  
2622 Devin Court  
770-321-1663

wpn book club  
Sun, April 26, 3 pm  
Host: TBA  
Book: TBA

wpn spring event  
May 2, 4pm  
details TBA

wpn happy hour  
May 15, 7 pm  
Bev and Jimmy Denny  
1460 Roswell St  
678-361-8008

wpn happy hour  
June 19, 7 pm  
Mike & Michelle Penny  
2601 Gilbert Street  
404-432-8154

wpn happy hour  
July 17, 7 pm  
details TBA

wpn board meeting  
July 29, 7pm

wpn summer event  
August 1, 4pm  
details TBA

wpn happy hour  
August 21, 7 pm  
Dan Kissner & Korey  
Whitchurch  
1562 Hawthorne Ave  
612-889-4990

wpn happy hour  
September 18, 7 pm  
details TBA

## News in and around Williams Park

Lee and Joan Friedman hosted the neighborhood happy hour at their Wright Street home in September. Joan, involved with Operation Christmas Child via Samaritan's Purse, collects hygiene items (soft toothbrushes, toothpaste, mild soap, clothes detergent) for distribution to children in need. So this happy hour had a different little twist in that neighbors were encouraged to bring such items along for donation. If you missed that opportunity but want to help, Joan will be happy to answer questions or take donations. She can be reached at 678-239-4987.

In October we gathered at Leon and Linda McElveen's Whitfield Street address. Asked to say a few words about the evening, Leon hazarded these happy hour highlights. "As habitual Halloween heralds, the McElveens hosted happy hour at their humble hovel of a home. The hip happening held forth a harmonious hoard of highbrow hobnobbers hemmed in by the hacienda's handrails. There was a high-tide of humor, a heap of hyperbole and a hint of heritage and history. The handsome harvest of haute-cuisine on hand was given the height of honorable homage. The hungry hedonist herd had huge helpings of ham hocks high in hazardous heart harming HDL, while the health-conscious herbivores had a hodgepodge of hummus and hazelnut hors d'oeuvres. Both huddles harbored hair-raising highballs of hard stuff or harmless humdrum Heinekens. Yet, with all the histrionic he's and hers, no one got harshly hammered, no



Joan Friedman BRIGIDA TELLEZ PHOTO



Linda and Leon McElveen WENDY AMUNDSON PHOTO



Korey Whitchurch and Dan Lissner WENDY AMUNDSON PHOTO



Susan and Keith Bentley WENDY AMUNDSON PHOTO

humiliating hoochie-coochies to the hindquarters, no haphazard hanky-panky to keep hush hush and no heathen hijinks to hasten the harrowing heebie-jeebies. Honestly, happy hour was a hit."

Dan Kissner and Korey Whitchurch had enjoyed hosting halloween parties at their home in Michigan. When they moved here, Williams Park was happy to provide the guests they needed to carry on their old tradition in their new Hawthorne Avenue location. "It's a nice habit I've gotten into, and I just don't want to change it," said Dan, referring to both the costume he was wearing and the long-standing halloween tradition. "Anyway, change of any type confuses Korey. It's true what they say about it being hard to teach an old bag new tricks and Korey really is an old bag." Amen, sister.

Susan and Keith Bentley hosted November's happy hour in their Gilbert Street home. They attracted a good size crowd and a really nice spread of hors d'oeuvres and such. Attendees are to be commended for bringing a nice variety of very enjoyable fare. When our happy hour events were new and novel, people cooked (or bought) really nice dishes to these events. After some hit and miss performance, neighbors are doing this thing right once again. Thanks, everyone—I really enjoyed grazing the WPN offerings.

continued on next page

# News in and around Williams Park

## births

Congratulations to Melissa and Wayne McGill on the birth of their son. Jacob Cecil McGill arrived July 24, 2014.

Congratulations to Rebecca and Mitch Fielder. Reagan Reese Fielder arrived September 22, 2014 weighing 6 pounds, 10 ounces and measuring 20 inches.

## illness

Sam Hamby has undergone surgery for a broken hip suffered as a result of falling from a ladder. He's currently recuperating and expected to make a full recovery. We hope to see him back out walking with his brothers as quickly as possible.

Cat Porch is resting at home after a tonsilectomy. Parents Don and Helen are looking after her so we know she's in good hands. Get well soon, Cat.

## deaths

We extend condolences to Nancy McGee for the death of her mother. Helen Terrell McGee, who grew up in the 1906 Terrell House on Roswell Street, was 95 years of age.

We offer sympathy to Leanne Fey whose mother died in early October after a long-term illness.

Did you see the hay wagon full of happy families circling the neighborhood recently and wonder what was up? It turns out that the **Crowley twins, Analivia and Benjamin**, were celebrating their second birthday in full fall festival style. Friends and family gathered on a sunny Sunday afternoon in early November to bob for apples, paint faces, and take a hay ride before digging into a delicious cake decorated with owls, pumpkins, & fall leaves. While neighborhood kids enjoyed the hayride most, daddy Brendan also loved driving the tractor! Big bro, Finn, and big sis, Bella Claire, had a great time planning the whole thing and helping the twins unwrap their gifts. It was so fun that we're already looking forward to another hay ride.



Above, Brendan and Benjamin. At right, Analivia and Benjamin.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CLAIRE CROWLEY

Repairs have been made at Whitfield Park after a small group of WP neighbors brought to the city's attention several areas in the park needing repairs replacement. The old fence along the front of the park, in an advanced state of disrepair and missing sections, was replaced this fall by the city with a new cedar split rail fence. Also a heavy layer of new mulch was placed under playground equipment making it safer and easier for our toddler neighbors to reach the equipment.

SUSAN BENTLEY



On November 23, the WPN book club celebrated the upcoming holiday season enjoying delicious refreshments made by hostess Nancy Smith (Gilbert Street). The tradition of having the final book club meeting of the year at Nancy's home was continued both for her gracious hospitality and because she is an outstanding baker and chicken salad maker!

Following discussion of November's book, *Orphan Train*, book club members observed another of their traditions: giving back to the community. An array of clothes and toys were brought by members to make Christmas a little brighter for homeless children in the Cobb County school system. Colorful bags were filled with games, books, clothes and stuffed animals.

Although book club members departed in a chilly rain, they were well fortified with hot cider, good food and fellowship with good friends. —Susan Bentley

SUSAN BENTLEY



continued on next page...

## WELCOME

to these new members:

— on elizabeth —  
Brad & Taryn Tarter  
Jacob & Jessica Bock

— on hawthorne —  
Jeff Halter & Lauren  
Schmidt

— on highland —  
Nancee Franken

— on marston —  
Terry Sherali  
Brett & Francesca  
Kohler

— on mimosa circle —  
Jon & Val Gardner

— on north avenue —  
Patrick & Emily Guillory

— on princeton trail —  
Chris Knight

— on roswell street —  
Mitch & Rebecca Fielder  
Todd Magill  
Drew & Tanya Stipe

— on telfair drive —  
Brian & Blair Frey  
Tim Gravitt

— on walker street —  
Stephen & Justine  
Ashworth

— on whitfield —  
Viktoriya Mahoney

— on windy hill place —  
Nina Parker

When a new neighbor  
moves in near you, contact  
Joan Friedman at  
friedman1500@gmail.com  
or 678-239-4987  
so WPN can welcome  
the newcomers.

## News in and around Williams Park

Eight and a half years ago when this publication grew from a single-page flyer to a multi-page newsletter, we reserved the column at left to acknowledge new members of WPN. The purpose is to welcome them to the neighborhood and thank them for joining our community. Imagine, though, how insincere that welcome would feel if one person's name was mangled and their spouse was completely omitted. That's exactly what happened last issue so, to make amends, we extend a second welcome to **Syreeta Skelton-Wilson** and her husband **Amin Wilson**, our neighbors on Bernard Way. We hope you are both enjoying your new home here in Williams Park.

We're pleased to announce that our improved **Neighborhood Watch Program** (NWP) has officially begun! The program enables Williams Park residents to work with Smyrna's Police to make our neighborhood more crime resistant. It will be most effective if everyone participates. We currently have 15 Block Captains. Their "job" is two-fold: 1) to reach out to neighbors on their block and encourage participation and 2) to serve as a point of contact for communication.

Current Block Captains:  
Jill Huitron and Stephen McQuade —  
Roswell Street to Five Point area  
Melissa Downey — Roswell Street  
Beverly Denny — Roswell Street  
Liz Davis — Roswell Street  
Doug Erickson — Old Roswell Road  
Sonja Ingle — Highland Ave.  
Wendy Amundson — Marston & Gilbert  
Judy Brassfield — Gilbert Street  
Ray Miller — Riley's Walk  
Stacey Scott — Bernard Way  
Brenda Eaddy — Anderson Circle  
Maureen Carter — Ivy Springs  
Louisa Cohn — Whitfield Street

Block Captains still needed:  
West side- Hawthorne Street-  
Hawthorne Court  
Mimosa Circle  
Spring Street  
Walker Court  
Walker Street  
Mathews Court  
Whitfield Parc

Beverly Denny (at left)  
with Neighborhood Watch  
Liaison, Wendy Amundson.

As we all know, many small crimes go unreported. With a NWP in place, police are better informed and their presence is increased. Better communication makes the neighborhood a safer place to live. Watch groups are not vigilantes and do not assume the role of police. Citizens are asked only to be more alert, observant, and caring, and to serve as extra eyes and ears for law enforcement.

Block Captains are in the process of contacting their respective neighbors, asking for a commitment to participate in the program. Your responsibility as a participant is to call 911 and report any suspicious activity you see or hear. We will continue to use our neighborhood email distribution list as a means of communication. WPN also has a Facebook page (reserved only for members of Williams Park—individuals not living in WP are not allowed to join the page). <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1437003413189903/>

We've added three new NWP signs to the entrances of WPN in addition to several signs already posted throughout the neighborhood. And we'll be adding a letter describing the NWP to the welcome gifts distributed to newcomers moving into Williams Park. When NWPs are done properly, crime drops as much as 70%. Thanks to everyone for the positive response to the kick-off of the renewed Neighborhood Watch Program.

— Wendy Amundson  
Neighborhood Liaison  
1335 Marston Street  
770-865-2347  
wendyamundson@att.net



# WPN BOARD 'D

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770-433-0350

vice president  
Lee Friedman  
678-239-4987

past president  
Ron Davis  
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recording secretary  
Lem Ward  
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corresponding  
secretary Liz Davis  
770-431-9786

treasurer  
Myrna Evans  
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membership  
Leon McElveen  
770-856-1544

communications  
Casey Clavin  
dingoblue@earthlink.net

hospitality  
Joan Friedman at  
678-239-4987 and  
Beverly Denney at  
770-231-6274

beautification  
Thelma Hancock and  
Robyn Phillips  
678-844-4441

at large member  
Jeremy Fort  
404-993-4774

## Housing market update — by Jill Huitron

Statistics are interesting. They tell part of the story but not the whole story. Some showed up in my email recently and, pondering them, I thought I'd share with you some eye opening facts about the Marietta and Smyrna housing markets over the past year. As you read, remember that Marietta is a larger city than Smyrna.

Marietta's picture: The average sales price for the period between October 2013 and October 2014 went up 7.77%, from \$277,079 to \$298,606. Average days on the market went down 3.06%, from 98 to 95. The number of Marietta properties sold was down 2.47% this last year—where 3,199 sold from October 2012 to October 2013, only 3,120 sold from October 2013 to October 2014. The current absorption rate is just over five months, meaning it's still essentially a seller's market. A six month supply of homes in a normal market keeps it from being a seller's or buyer's market—more or less a level playing field.

Looking at Smyrna's statistics: The average sales price for the period between October 2013 and October 2014 went up 12.48%, from \$258,682 to \$290,977, while the average days on the market dropped 6.86%, from 102 to 95 days! Smyrna also had fewer properties sold this last year—where 777 properties sold from October 2012 to October 2013, only 739 sold from October 2013 to October 2014—down 4.89%. The absorption rate in Smyrna is about four and a half months, also lower than in Marietta.

Those are the statistics. The other part of the story is what transpires with each individual or family who takes part in a real estate transaction—they have their own stories to tell. Some properties sell quickly, some slower. Some sell for more than the asking price while some sell so low that the seller has to bring money to the table, even in this market. Each transaction has it's frustrations and it's celebrations, it's anxious moments and it's smooth sailing moments.

Each participant goes through emotions, the whole gamut, as they sell the family home where they raised their children, get transferred with a job, marry and move away, move to be closer to kids, start having kids and need a bigger house, move to

be closer to aging parents, or downsize—whatever the reason. Seeing the house in which you raised your kids be demolished, or having to move into a retirement community when you don't want to leave your house—those changes can also be emotional.

There are relationships and stories that go along with each "sold" property out there. Where you buy is where you meet new friends and create new stories. In Williams Park, those new neighbors become part of your life in much more than just a passing way if you choose to get involved. On the third Friday of each month, one of our neighbors hosts a neighborhood Happy Hour in their home. It starts at 7pm and runs until the last person leaves (don't let the misnomer "hour" keep you from coming late-ish). It's a great opportunity to meet, connect and get involved in WPN.

Statistics are one way to define our neighborhood but, by no means, the whole story. The people and relationships are the most important part. Building relationships is why I love what I do, not the statistics.

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## Meet your neighbor, Robert Harrison — by Casey Clavin

Saturday, November 15 was a chilly night for an outdoor party but nobody had a problem staying warm at Robert Harrison's event. Given seven sources of steady fire, some occasionally accelerating dramatically (plus two flamethrowers), nobody could dispute the idea that this party was a flaming success.

Though fairly new to the visual arts, Robert is not hiding his light under a bushel. He's a fire artist—he builds sculptures which exude flames. This is the point he currently occupies on a linear progression—a journey through several phases accessed by passing a series of opening doors.

So, a couple of doors back, here's what happened. He was at a welding shop, waiting for some work to be done on his van, playing around with some cast-off metal bits and thinking about how they might be arranged to form a table base for a glass table top he had. Could the shop weld something like this for him? Yep—and they did. After bringing a few more assemblages to them, Robert decided he'd rather learn to weld than continue bumping up against the frustration (and expense) of using somebody else's hands to create what he saw in his mind's eye.

When Robert bought his first welder (around 2007) and commenced to weld up his own set of chairs to go with his glass top dining



room table, he'd become a designer/craftsman making other chairs, candlesticks and lamps—all functional items assembled from found parts. In a blacksmithing class he later learned to alter metal—bending and shaping it expanded his capabilities. Later, when he decided to leave off the candle-holding part of an assemblage, he completed a transition from craftsperson to artist—if a thing had no function it was sculpture, if he made sculptures, he was an artist.

His first sculpture to incorporate flames took the form of a stringed instrument. It was inspired by a comment about a friend learning to play a banjo, "the only good banjo is a flaming banjo." Robert welded up a fairly convincing facsimile of the round-bodied instrument, incorporated a half dozen gas nozzles connected by hoses to an propane tank, then lit it—"Flamjo." Next came "Global Warming," an earth-like sphere rotating due to the heat rising from its central flame.

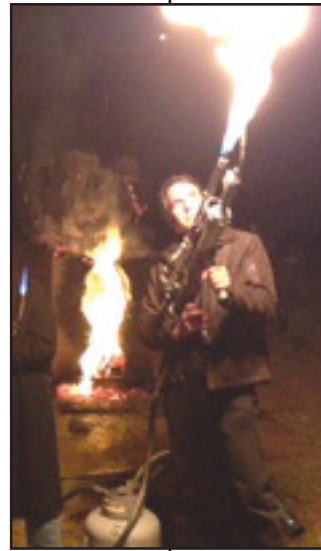
Displaying these in his own yard and loaning them for display at friends' parties, Robert enjoyed the way people responded. He saw viewers drawn to them as humans are drawn naturally to fire. These are more like living things than static sculptures are, and they provide the warmth which we all need.

He made a self portrait—a seated figure with a drink in one hand and a guitar in the other (Robert was previously a musician). That piece spent a month on view in the Atlanta Botanical Garden's scarecrow show (sans flames, for liability reasons).

Reinserting functional elements while maintaining a strongly sculptural form, Robert built the "Seuss Machine," a fully functional grill,

pizza oven and smoker which, according to a friend, "looks like something Dr. Seuss would have in his back yard." This one is wood fired, rather than gas.

Robert enjoys making both light-hearted and meaningful pieces. Among



the former, whose titles often involve word play, is a recent audience participation piece called "Fire in the Corn Hole," pictured at bottom left. It's very much like the common game of tossing a bean bag through a hole. In Robert's version, though, when a player successfully targets a fire-proof "bean bag," the modest flame atop a stand pipe explodes like a flamethrower and fire shoots out of the "hole."

Among the more meaningful pieces, "Burnt Offering," which incorporates both fire and water, speaks to the beauty of a sincerely given and/or received gift. His most recent piece, and the largest to date, is nine feet tall and eight feet wide. "Singing Serpent" takes the form of a fire breathing snake rising above a peace sign and coiling around flowers. Is the beast protecting these symbols or smashing and burning them? Robert leaves it to the viewer to choose one of those narratives, devise a third story, or do entirely without. He doesn't require a viewer to find any more meaning in the snake than in the bean bag game. While some of his sculptures hold deep meaning for him, he offers them to viewers without expectations.

Beside displaying them in his Williams Park back yard, Robert transports his work for exhibition at fire friendly festivals from Georgia to as far away as Nevada. He shares them—he has loaned them, rented them, even set one up for a movie shoot—but he doesn't sell them. "They're too personal," he says, "They're part of me."

You can see more at [Flamewerx.com](http://Flamewerx.com).

**LAUGH**  
IT'S GOOD  
FOR YOU

Seasonal jokes  
for WP children:

**Q:** Why does Santa like to garden?

**A:** Because he likes to "hoe, hoe, hoe."

**Q:** What did the ghost sing to Santa Claus?

**A:** "I'll have a boo Christmas without you."

The one good thing about having coyotes in the neighborhood is that they keep the road runner population under control... at least they might if they could ever catch one.

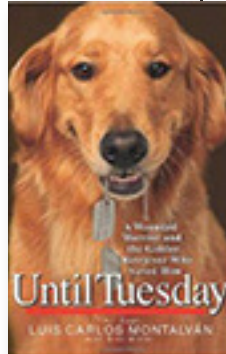
**Williams Park Reads** — by Leanne Fey

The WPN Book Club, meets the last Sunday of the month at 3:00 pm at a host home. We always welcome new participants. To learn which books we'll be reading in the up coming months, see the calendar on pages 2 and 3. To learn more, call Leanne at 770-863-9580. Here are our latest books.

**Until Tuesday**

by Luis Carlos Montalvan  
★★★★

Marine veteran Luis Montalvan returned from multiple deployments in the Middle East with physical and emotional trauma. He details his difficult recovery with help of a very special service dog named Tuesday.



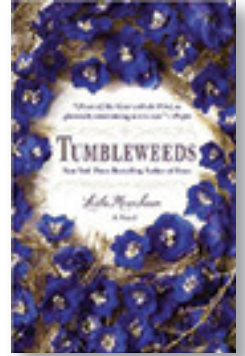
Our rating system:

- ★ No one liked the book
- ★★ We thought it was ok
- ★★★ It was good
- ★★★★ It was excellent
- ★★★★★ Fabulous -- don't miss it.

**Tumbleweeds**

by Leila Meacham  
★★★

A sprawling Texas saga revolving around three friends, two boys and a girl, which explores tragedy, love and resiliency.



**Orphan Train**

by Christina Baker Kline  
★★★★★

Molly Ayer, close to "aging out" of the foster care system and likely headed for juvie, finds unexpected friendship with an elderly woman. Helping Vivian sort through her possessions and memories, Molly learns their lives are both buffeted by luck and chance.



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circa  
**1900**  
**Osburn House**

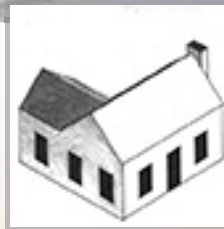
Historic homes within the Williams Park neighborhood

*The greatest concentration of surviving older buildings in Smyrna lies within Williams Park. Nineteen houses still stand that were built before the First World War. This is PART SIX in a series of articles covering these houses based on research done in 2012 by WPN members Casey Clavin and Vic Koch.*

1486 Spring Street **GABBLED ELL COTTAGE**



This house, a Gabbled Ell Cottage at 1486 Spring Street, was built some time circa 1900. We're calling it the Osburn House for its earliest known owner, Claude T. Osburn, though he never lived in it and was certainly not its first owner. Osburn lived next door at the corner of Spring and Foster (currently an empty lot). This is one of several properties in the immediate area bought by Osburn in the 1930s and rented primarily to African American families. As such, it played a role in that grim chapter of local history, the Smyrna race riot.



On October 16, 1938, a 66-year-old white farmer named George Washington Camp, and his 26-year-old daughter Mrs. Christine Camp Pauls were murdered off Cooper Lake Road. Mrs. Pauls' 9-year-old son Cecil, severely beaten, later regained consciousness and went for help.

He identified the assailant as Willie Drew Russell, a 31-year-old African American construction worker, previously employed on Camp's farm. Arrested in Atlanta on October 17, Russell confessed. He said he'd been drinking and went to see Camp about a debt but, after Camp struck Russell with a cane, things escalated. Russell was transferred to Tattnall Prison in South Georgia.

That night and the next, a white mob numbering in the hundreds, rioted in Smyrna. Allegedly gathered to look for Russell, they rampaged ruthlessly through town attacking any blacks they came upon. Brandishing weapons, they pulled black passengers off street cars and out of automobiles, broke into homes, beat and stoned many, and burned Smyrna's black elementary school. The mob was eventually dispersed, though it required the combined efforts of Smyrna's Police Department, Cobb County's Sheriff's Department, and the Georgia State Patrol.

While warrants were eventually issued for more than 90 rioters, it appears only 20 or 27 were arrested (accounts vary), all men between the ages of 17 and 31. From those,



# circa 1900 Osburn House

only 17 or 19 were indicted, (accounts vary), including several prominent local men. Only one indictment reached any resolution, though—a year in prison for a man who pled guilty to “Chasing Negroes and leading others in the chase.” All the other men failed to appear in court, forfeiting bonds of \$1,000 (equal to \$16,327 today) or \$2,500 (equal to \$40,817 today). No further action appears to have been taken against those who failed to appear—they were simply allowed to walk away from the charges.

A *Cobb County Times* article (October 20, 1938) enumerating injuries and property damage from the riot specifically cites “...the case of Claude T. Osburn, life long resident of Smyrna [who] has 14 tenant houses. [The] mob damaged 11 of them...” The subject house here was one of those houses. It was occupied around that time by the family of a black man who worked for Osburn assembling venetian blinds in the garage/workshop behind Osburn’s home next door. That family moved away in the early 1940s.

Blanch Dobbs had lived seven doors up the street as a child—her father, C.L. Groce, served on the city council (1920, 1929-30, and in 1946). Blanch had noticed the house was vacant and approached Osburn—she and her husband Charles, looking for an “affordable rental.” By then, Osburn wanted to sell so he talked the couple into buying the rather basic four room house in 1944. Charles and Blanch raised three children here, one of whom, Madge Dobbs Jackson, still lives within sight of this house. She recalls that when they moved in, the house had three bedrooms, a hall way and a living room. Cooking was done on a provisionally enclosed back porch and the toilet was in an outhouse in the yard.

Charles, a roofing foreman for Randal Brothers before starting his own roofing business, was familiar with the building trades. In 1945, he tore the dilapidated back porch off the house, then framed and roofed an addition to accommodate a dining room, a kitchen and a bathroom. He also enlarged the living room by removing the wall between it and the central hallway. Later, when he replaced the small front stoop with the big front porch, the house reached the configuration it has today. Though the clapboards have been covered by composite shingle siding, the trim work is still visible. The single exterior chimney serves a fireplace in the living room.



circa

# 1900 Osburn House

### Chain of ownership for parcel 17055900020

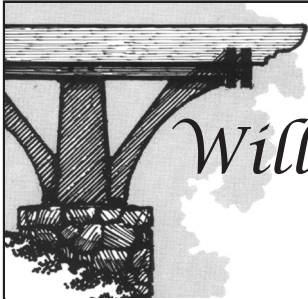
year	purchaser	date	book/page
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1944	C.F. Dobbs	2-1-44	116/281
	B.G.D., C.C.D., E.D.E, B.D.J.		
1998	Matt & Dru Bennett	5-15-98	11297/102

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C.T. Osburn  
1944 C.F. Dobbs 2-1-44 116/281  
B.G.D., C.C.D., E.D.E, B.D.J.  
1998 Matt & Dru Bennett 5-15-98 11297/102

We don't know who owned the house before Osburn. Because he acquired so many properties in a short time and in close proximity, deed research for this place is complicated. But clearly, based on its historic fabric, this house dates back to the turn of the 20th century. Original doors retain rim lock latches. In the original rooms, the 10' 11" ceilings are 3 1/2" tongue and groove wood. And, though most interior walls have been sheetrocked over, the front bedroom retains original wood walls, 2 1/2" ship lapped boards applied horizontally. Painted nicely, this makes a beautiful wall surface.





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