

Cobb Group

By the spring of 1983, the idea of establishing a men's recovery residence in Athens was being seriously considered by a number of people. An initial step was to find a site. Margaret R. first recognized the potential of the empty Cobb House, owned by Emmanuel Episcopal Church at 698 Pope Street, as a possibility. She spoke with Spaulding (Russ) R., and they in turn discussed this matter with Bill T. Soon, these 3 approached Warren R., Jim H., and Harry N. with the concept. They met and decided to make the antebellum Cobb House the home of the Athens Recovery Residence (A.R.R.).

From the start, they recognized that a successful recovery residence would require, among other things, a strong Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) approach. Therefore, almost simultaneously, a new AA group was formed -- the Cobb Group. Jim H., Spaulding R. and Bill T. were the original three spearheads. They were closely followed by Randy A., Vicki M., and Philip M. Other persons joined on a steady basis. Of course, the men living in the Recovery Residence were regulars at those early meetings.

The first recorded meeting of the Cobb Group was held on Saturday evening, May 18, 1983. This was an open speaker meeting. A Tuesday evening open discussion meeting was the next to develop. It was followed by a Wednesday evening men's closed discussion meeting. Still later, a Sunday evening open discussion meeting first met on New Years Day in 1984.

The noon meetings, which began on May 9, 1984, initially met only on Fridays. Soon, however, Monday and Wednesday meetings were added. In 1993, noon meetings were held Monday through Saturday. They consisted of both closed non-smoking and open smoking types. There was also one on Sunday morning at 10:00. Including night meetings, 22 meetings were held each week by the Cobb Group. For several years a Thursday evening Living Sober meeting was held; it folded in 1993. Another group, Happy Hour, rented space for AA meetings. Alanon meetings were also held in the building.

The Cobb Group registered as an official group with the General Service Office on October 7, 1983. The original trusted servants were Randy A., GSR, and Vicki M, Secretary-Treasurer. Later, Randy became the DCM for District J 68.

In the early days, the Cobb Group gave half of its contributions to the ARR. When ARR changed locations for economic reasons, the Pope Street Association (PSA) was formed to promote AA activities in the Cobb House and to insure its maintenance and upkeep. Hence, the Cobb Group began giving its contributions to PSA rather than ARR.

In the early 1990s Cobb Group provided a central location for many of the area AA meetings, the District 16B monthly meetings, the Athens Area Intergroup meetings and various workshops put on by the Athens Area Intergroup.

Approximately 100 persons daily made their way to Cobb Group meetings, with noon meetings being the most well attended. Typically on holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas and the Fourth of July, food was served after the noon meetings. These events were always well attended and appreciated.

Members of the Cobb Group devoted many hours of hard work to maintaining the Cobb House and shared many hours of fun and fellowship, laughter and tears, joys and sorrows, as well as support, strength and love. The end result was always the same - a spirit of recovery, unity and service.

The group continued to grow in 1990s. In 1995 there was discussion of splitting the group with the formation of a separate Noon Cobb Group. The split was approved and the Noon Cobb Group was registered on May 5, 1995. In fall of 1995 evening meeting times were changed to 7:30 p.m. and the Monday and Thursday meetings dropped.

In 1996 the Friday night meeting was dropped, leaving meetings on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday. This has continued to the present date. The group has had active participation in District, Area and Athens Area Intergroup. Several members were instrumental in opening an Intergroup office in the early 2000s which existed until 2009. The group grew to about 20 members with attendance at meetings being 30-40 per night.

In 2007 the meeting site at the Cobb house was sold as a private residence and was no longer available. The group moved temporarily to Jittery Joe's Roasting location, and in the fall of 2007 the permanent meeting site became First Christian Church. Attendance stayed constant through the moves.

Because of remodeling at First Christian Church, the group moved in November 2011 to First Presbyterian Church, which is the present site. The group has shrunk in size, but is still active. There was discussion of reducing meetings, but four meetings still exist. The Tuesday meeting became a Big Book Study to help strengthen the group and reinforce commitment of the group to the Steps and Traditions. The group is slowly growing in size again.