

Prestonwood Notebook

Club's pianist learned to perform in father's church

By Ron Page

When Floride Allen sits down at the piano in the formal dining room of the Prestonwood Country Club, she has no idea of what she will play. "It will be something classical, to be sure, and it will be soft, background music," she says. "But exactly what it will be and what will follow for the rest of the evening, I have no idea. It depends on the mood of the room, the atmosphere that particular night."

Mrs. Allen has been the pianist at the club for the past four years, ever since one of the servers suggested her to the banquet manager who was looking for someone to provide music when the formal dining room first opened. She answered the call and the job has been hers ever since.

Attractive, modest, and with a grace and a dignity to match the room in which she performs, Mrs. Allen admits music has played a major part in her life ever since her school days and in the churches where her father was pastor. "I played the organ in the church, but have not continued with it," she said. "It's the piano that provides more of a challenge, at least it does to me."

A native of South Carolina who has spent most of her life in North Carolina, Mrs. Allen has two brothers and two sisters, all of them trained in music. "My father wanted us to learn music, and I was taught both the piano and the French horn, as well as the Mellophone," she says.

When she was in the fifth grade, her teacher had her play in the high school band. "I was a kid in grammar school traveling with high school kids to away games and other performances," she recalls.

Did she get a thrill out of traveling and performing with the older kids? "I really didn't think about such things, then," she laughed. "I was in the fifth grade and it was just fun doing all sorts of things at that age."

Floride Allen is not comfortable speaking about herself and her family. Her comfort is in the music she plays, softly...quiet background music, never loud or upbeat for a setting such as Prestonwood's formal dining room. You'll hear melodies such as those from Phantom of the Opera, Les Misérables, from Cats, and old favorites like Misty, Deep Purple and "some of the Disney stuff," she says, "but it will be quiet music that lends itself to the environment for eating such a room provides."

"There is a couple who dine here from time to time who enjoy 'On Green Dolphin Street' and sometime during the evenings they are there I will include that piece," she notes, "but never in a manner that would point to them or infringe on their personal privacy." But she also admits going upbeat. "Oh, there are times on other occasions and other locations when the mood is different and the audience is stuffing down hot dogs!"

She recalls the first time she played in public. It was when she was 12 at the Church of God where her father was pastor. Piano lessons followed in her college years at Lee College in Tennessee, but her career today is in the business world. She is executive secretary for the vice president of dermatology at Glaxo-Wellcome.

But the challenge she gets from playing piano has never left. So much so that dinner guests find she takes no breaks during an evening. "I love to play the classics," the Cary resident says. "Sometimes from 7 to midnight or until the last table leaves, my hands don't leave the keyboard. By then I am a little tired, I'll admit."

Prestonwood's first Kids Dinner Theatre will take place Friday, March 8, under the sponsorship of the Prestonwood Kids Club.

Members of TEENCO of Wake County are taking an improvisational play with audience participation. TEENCO is in its twelfth year and its membership includes high school students from throughout Wake County.



COMFORTABLE WITH MUSIC—Floride Allen taylor's her background music to the mood of the room but her favorite tunes are the classics.

Refreshments will be served at 6:30 p.m. followed by a pasta buffet at 7 p.m. The show itself starts at 7:45. Members are encouraged to make early reservations because of limited space.

On March 24, members of the Kids Club will be modeling fashions from Talbot's Kids at the second annual Kids Club Fashion Show at Tea. The 4-6 p.m. event also will feature several members who will model spring lines from the golf and tennis shops.

Flavored teas and pastries will be served in the formal bar after the show. Members can make reservations by calling 467-2566.

A wine tasting, St. Patrick's Day dining, family night buffets and Prime Rib Night are included on the March calendar.

The tasting, which will feature Heitz Martha's Vineyard, has been scheduled for March 22. The event will take place in the formal bar starting at 6:30 p.m.

Reservations are recommended for those who plan to stay over for dinner in the formal dining room.

A St. Patrick's Day theme will be featured at the Family Night Extravaganza on March 14 at 6 p.m. The menu will feature braised Irish lamb shanks, trout and corned beef brisket, accompanied by fare such as stewed Irish potatoes, braised cabbage and Irish soda bread. A St. Patrick's Day buffet will be served Sunday, March 17, from 6 to 8 p.m. in the casual bar.

Family night buffets are scheduled for three Thursday nights: March 7, March 21 and March 28. The serving hours are 6 to 9 p.m. Prime Rib Night is March 29 from 6:30 to 10 p.m.

Senior men's interclub play resumes March 18 with a match at Wildwood Green in Raleigh. That will be followed by a March 26 match at Raleigh Country Club.

Prestonwood men 50 and older are invited to participate and should sign up in the pro shop one week before each match.

Other golf activity includes Multi-Flag Day on Saturday, March 23. A shotgun start is scheduled for 9 a.m. in this four-person, full-handicap, best-ball event.

Prestonwood Country Club is a private club and attendance at all functions and activities is for members and guests only.

Cary Montessori chooses Church Road site for school; plans August opening

The Cary Montessori School is a step closer in its goal to build a new \$4.5 million campus in Morrisville. Now located in a 6,000-square-foot building at the intersection of High House and Old Apex roads, the school has been seeking a new school site for months and has selected a six-acre parcel on Church Road at Treybrooke Boulevard for its new facilities. The immediate problem, however, is time.

"They are on an optimistic schedule and want to open the school by the end of August," Town Manager Bill Cobey told town commissioners Feb. 12. "That's a fast track."

The school asked commissioners for permission to get a county permit to begin clearing and grading the site before the town approves a site plan which was just submitted Feb. 1. The work would include cutting timber, pulling out stumps and grading the land. In a normal progression, the town board would receive the site plan and recommendation for consideration on April 1, and site work would then begin.

The board went along with the request, unanimously voting to ask Wake County to approve a grading permit so work could start March 7. Commissioner C.T. Moore was assured by the town staff that if the board approved the request about grading it would not be obligated to approve the site plan.

Request for the action was made in a letter to the board by officials from LHU (Laura Holland Uzzell) Foundation, a non-profit group which is planning the new school. "The LHU Foundation needs to occupy the new school by late August, 1996, in order to coordinate the public school's schedule and to provide space for current students which are now housed in a temporary facility which is inadequate," Andrea Uzzell, foundation director, said in her letter to the board.

The Church Street site is zoned residential management and will not have to be rezoned. It was pur-

chased from the Tom Adams family, Ms. Uzzell said, and an additional eight acres will be bought later when a proposed second phase of construction is realized.

The foundation earlier selected another site off Morrisville-Carpenter Road for the school. Complications arose, however, when fill dirt was put in by adjacent property owners which created wetlands on the proposed school property. The foundation looked at several other sites in Cary and Apex, and was unsuccessful in bids for property on Church Street during a public auction last month.

Two buildings, each about 7,000 square feet and housing some 18 classrooms, are planned for phase one of the project as well as a 1,100-square-foot administrative area. In the next couple of years, phase two will be developed on an adjacent eight acres. That's when 12 more classrooms will be constructed, as will an auditorium and cafeteria, library, gym, ballfield, media center and administrative offices.

The project will be designed by Innovative Design Inc. and built by J.W. Grand Inc. Both are Raleigh firms.

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Coffee, bagel shops open in Preston Center

Caribou Coffee and Bruegger's Bagel Bakery share a common lobby in the new Preston Business Center on the west side of Cary Parkway, just north of High House Road.

Located next to the ABC Centre which opened late last year, the newly opened center has been designed for six tenants. Papa John's Pizza and Monteith Travel will follow shortly, with the final two tenants yet to be signed. Both ABC Centre and Preston Business Center are part of a 44-acre tract that encompasses Preston Corners, including Preston Village Shopping Center, several banks on outparcels and other businesses.

Robert Price of the Matison Group, owner of the new center, says the design was included as a convenience to both Caribou and Bruegger's customers. "Wood, marble and stone has been used to provide a very pleasant appearance

inside," he said. "The common lobby theme was designed to allow customers for those stores more convenience, and caters to the fact that more and more meals are being eaten out during the day."

Price, his wife, Margaret, and son, Michael, own Matison, whose operations also include Matison

Motor Sports in Raleigh. He said the selection of Preston Corners as a site for a 12,256-square-foot venture was no problem. "It was location, location, location. Preston Corners is an ideal place where we just felt the location was what you would call a no-brainer," he said.

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