



FOR THE JOURNAL

Robert Phillips designed and constructed this sign for Old St. John's Meeting House to correctly identify the old St. John's Episcopal Church, circa 1889. The building is being restored under the wing of Walhalla Partners for Progress (WP2) as a meeting place and wedding chapel. The first wedding has already been planned.

## Old St. John's Meeting House gains new support

BY JESSICA SIBLEY  
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WALHALLA — The rain on the tin roof probably never sounded so good, at least that's what supporters of the Old St. John's Meeting House would say.

The structure, an 1889 church building, is being rallied behind in order to preserve it as a community venue.

Recently, the roof was replaced and further progress continues, according to Maxie Duke, Walhalla historian.

"That was a big step, especially considering that it sat with a tarp on it for months, enduring large amounts of rain," Duke said. "We are thrilled about it, but there is still a lot of work to be done."

Frank Strickland, pastor of Bethel Presbyterian Church, said the other needed repairs will run a tab with which the community will hopefully assist.

"To get the roof on, complete the entryway, get the electric wiring and finish the interior, including the windows, will cost more than \$50,000. The money is out there; it's just a matter of getting the right people and the money together," he said.

"You need to get the people together,"

Duke said. "People who possibly could have used the building in the past for a wedding, a public gathering, a high school class or family reunion. A small, intimate place like this would suit many people, and it would be revenue for the city of Walhalla."

In order to keep the interest in supporting the project alive, a fundraiser is being held in conjunction with Walhalla's Mayfest on May 7.

Spring Fling II will include a Silent Auction, "A Nice Italian Dinner" (reservations required — call (864) 638-5200) and a concert of all-time classic tunes by the Dixie Keys starting at 4

p.m. Saturday evening. Door prizes, good times, good music and good food await Oconee and Walhalla patrons, she added.

Students at the Hamilton Career Center are in line to construct an entryway so further work can take place inside the building.

"The community has been great to us, and we've already come a long way," she added. "However, in order for this building to serve the community and stand as a historic landmark, we must not forget about its priceless value."

