

Village News

Views from the Heart of Historic Plano

January - February 2007

New Year ... New Opportunities

The new year brings new opportunities for residents and visitors alike in Historic Downtown Plano.

Cultural opportunities are abundant. Texas Nonprofit Theatres, Inc. will host the Quad II AACTFest, a festival of one-act plays and musical, at the Courtyard Theatre on February 2 and 3. Three of the competition performances are Friday, and five are Saturday.

Rover Dramawerks is celebrating their first anniversary at the Cox Building Playhouse. Rover produces lost or forgotten works of well-known authors; revives excellent scripts that have suffered from lack of exposure; and discovers unknown gems of the stage. This year's season begins in January with Steven Dietz's "Private Eyes," and will include four mainstage shows as well as two children's productions. In addition, they will enter "Two Rooms" by Lee Blessing into the AACTFest competition, and produce two *One Day Onlys* in the Courtyard Theatre. *One Day Onlys* are events during which playwrights, actors and directors join together to write, produce and perform an original play in 24 hours.

Repertory Company Theatre has also begun performing in Historic Downtown Plano. This nonprofit, professional theater serves the Plano/North Dallas area, and presents Broadway musicals, classic plays and special presentations at the Courtyard Theatre and Cox Building Playhouse. Upcoming productions include "Love Songs and Dedications" in February, "The Miracle Worker" and "Broadway's Best II" in April, "The Secret Garden" in June and "Damn Yankees" in July.

The Classical Acting Company, the resident company of The ArtCentre Theatre, is pleased to add to Plano's rich artistic tradition. To secure art's future place in our community, the company includes students as both artists and audiences. Their January performance is "Shakespeare's Keeper."

Other theater companies performing in Historic Downtown Plano are AmeriStage Players and Word of Mouth Productions. Word of Mouth Productions will present "Mail Order Brides" in February at the Cox Building Playhouse.

There are performance opportunities nearly every weekend, as well as art displays. See the "Village News" calendar for a complete list. Make a day of it--see a show, eat at one of the fine area restaurants and do some shopping.

Interurban Railway Museum's new expansion will soon be complete. The exterior work will be finished at year's end. The staff is busy planning the interior. The redesign will



15 th Street Café & Bakery	972-424-4700
Aparicio's	972-423-8980
Dickey's Barbecue Pit	972-423-9960
Dish Neighborhood Cuisine	972-633-1200
Fusion Café	469-241-9099
Go-Gorditas	972-392-9771
Into My Garden Tearoom	972-509-0292
Jorg's Café Vienna	972-509-5966
Kelly's Eastside	972-424-9200
La Paloma's Bakery	972-422-4860
La Paloma Restaurant	972-578-2267
Lillian's Back Porch	214-207-0772
Los Potrillos	469-467-9590
The North South Café	972-578-1500
Porta di Roma	972-943-3533
Rainbow Donuts	972-881-3619
Ye Ole Butcher Shop	972-423-1848

include restoration of the front area, a conference and office area, plenty of storage and a large loft for research. Stop by to see the new motorman display, enhanced by contextual audio and authentic artifacts.

Later this year, you will be able to visit the completed Plano African-American Museum at the corner of 13th Street and Avenue H. The exterior

was finished in June. Interior work is now underway. Volunteer Facilitator Jerry Kolesiak is supervising all phases. Prior to completion, events will be held in January and February in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Black History Month. T.J. Johnson chairs the museum's Board of Directors. The Executive Director is Louise Davis.

Historic Downtown Plano will soon be linked to the DART Transit Village Veloweb. The primary goal of these new public hike and bike routes is to encourage non-polluting modes of transportation among communities and cities served by DART. Of course, recreational use is also welcome. The trail will follow DART right-of-way from the Bush Turnpike Station, will veer through the eastern edge of the Douglass Community, will proceed through Haggard Park, and then will join the DART right-of-way until its end a few blocks north of the Parker Road Station.



Plano Housing Authority will soon have a new administrative office and training facility at the corner of Avenue G and 18th Street. The 8,400-square-foot facility will be complete in mid-January, and has been approved by the Heritage Commission. Design services were donated by architect Frank Pollacia, owner of Architettura, Inc. Rich Beardmore, a partner in Latimer Sommers and Associates, donated mechanical and electrical engineering services.

New opportunities for home ownership in Historic Downtown Plano will soon be available at Lexington Park at Rice Field. This new townhome development on Avenue G north of 16th Street will have elements honoring the history of Rice Field, upon which it is being built.

Village People



Churches often serve as the cornerstone of the community. Having begun in 1884 with just a handful of faithful believers, the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church is founded in rich history. Though the church has a congregation spanning more than 120 years, it has only had 11 pastors. The current pastor, Pastor Isiah Joshua, Jr., is in his 12th year. The church built a new sanctuary in 2001 on 14th Street. In 1999, with the groundbreaking for the new structure, the church had 700 members. The combination of the new facility, innovative teaching, cutting-edge technology and a powerful pastor have the church now boasts 2,200 members. Its old sanctuary has become a youth church with its own youth minister for ages eight and older. In planning for its continued growth, the church is purchasing available surrounding property with the hope of building a multi-life center in the future. Shiloh Missionary

Baptist Church strives to meet all the spiritual needs of its community through a variety of ministries.

Its most popular ministry is music. Roy Smith is the Minister of Music, under the direction of Deacon Irice Jones. The church has five main choirs with a total membership of nearly 300. This includes the main choir with 135 members, a youth choir, a men's chorus, a women's chorus and a children's choir. The choir has been growing at the rapid pace

of 30 percent each year since the new sanctuary was built. Three new ministries have been developed by Roy Smith – *The Voices of Joshua*, which performs at special events; *Chapter 7*, a contemporary-style group of seven men; and *The Shiloh Aires*, a men's quartet.

The choir performed recently at Dickens in Downtown Plano. Their magnificent voices could be heard throughout the area. They participate in the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration at Douglass Community Center and at the Kwanzaa Gospel Fest at Fair Park in Dallas. They have performed in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and California. This year, the choir will be traveling to New York or Florida for their musical tour. Most importantly, they can be heard each weekend during services.

Street Talk

The Plano City Council appointed **Justin P. Nichols** as chair of the Heritage Commission. He took office in November. The Heritage Commission is charged with reviewing and approving construction, alteration and demolition plans to properties existing in historic districts. The Heritage Commission also makes recommendations to the City Council regarding the distribution of funds to area preservation organizations and administers a tax abatement program for business and homeowners in historic buildings.

Scribbles and Dribbles opened on 14th Street, next to Central Vision, in November. Owner Debby Frey offers creative expression classes for preschoolers. Having taught preschool for 12 years, she loves working with children. Three regular six-week classes are available: "Mini-Masters" for future artists, "Story Bugs" for creative writers and "A to Z Theatre" for aspiring actors. In addition, Debby has a drop-in program called "Creative Play Time" from 11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. No reservation is required for this two-hour class. Drop off your child and spend time shopping or having lunch in the Historic Downtown Plano area.

Across the street, **Two Brothers Cigars** offers tastings and rollings every Friday night, and has entertainment regularly.

You'll find the same great Zoi's Closet styles at the same location under a new name, **Dellas's Unique Boutique**. New sole owner LaDella Stone is excited about her store's new name and new spring line. Stop in and check out the special sales.

The North South Café is open on Avenue K, just north of 14th Street, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The menu includes hot and cold hoagies from the north and a selection of Mexican favorites from the south. Also available are vegetarian items; tilapia served three ways; and a selection of salads and combo meals. Owner Roy Rocha lives in Lewisville with his wife Valerie and their two daughters.

Dr. Don Loeffler, D.C. has opened his chiropractic office in the ArtCentre. He focuses on creating and maintaining wellness rather than merely fighting symptoms. He has been in business for 28 years, 10 of them in Plano. Originally from Wisconsin, he now lives in Murphy with his wife of 31 years, Tracy.

Develop your strength and cycling technique indoors during the winter months at **Plano Cycling & Fitness** on 18th Street. Ten-weekly classes are offered from January to March. Participants ride their own bike on a magnetic trainer, maintaining comfort while providing a full range of resistance options.

Babies, Bottoms and More opened on 15th Street in November. Owner Diana Alatalo is assisted at the shop by her mother, Karen. The store specializes in easy-to-use Kushies brand cloth diapers. They also carry toys, cribs, bassinets and carriages.



Happenings

January/February 2007

1/4-14	Exhibit by artist Pamela Rabin Courtyard Theater Lobby	972-941-5215
1/5-2/3	World Lens Photography Exhibit ArtCentre of Plano	972-423-7809
1/7 & 1/21	PSO Kids Corner Plano Symphony Orchestra Courtyard Theater	972-473-7262
1/12	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance Plano Senior Center	972-424-9278,
1/18-28	"Shakespeare's Keeper" Classical Acting Company, ArtCentre Theatre	1-866-811-4111
1/18-2/10	"Private Eyes," a play by Steven Dietz Rover Dramawerks Cox Building Playhouse	972-849-0358,
1/19-20	Ballet Festival Plano Metropolitan Ballet, Courtyard Theater	972-969-0017
1/23-3/01	Collin County Community College Photography Class Exhibit Plano Municipal Center	972-941-5215
2/2-3	One Act Play Festival Texas Nonprofit Theatres, Courtyard Theater	972-941-5600
2/7-3/6	Master of Fine Arts Exhibit Corey Kent Johnson, artist, ArtCentre of Plano	972-423-7809
2/14	Plano Civic Chorus Performance & Fundraiser, Courtyard Theater	972-773-7911
2/16-25	"Mail Order Brides" Word of Mouth Productions, Cox Building Playhouse	214-734-7326
2/19-3/31	Trash to Treasure Plano Art Association, Courtyard Theater	972-941-5215

Valentine's Day Performance

This Valentine's Day enjoy an evening of romance and fun at the Courtyard Theater. On February 14 at 7 p.m., the Plano Civic Chorus will perform a concert featuring the love songs of George Gershwin, Cole Porter and many others. The chorus will be directed by Ralph Frederick Stannard and accompanied by Jon Schweikhard on piano, and a jazz ensemble. Ticket price includes champagne and dessert. A silent auction will feature a wide variety of items. All proceeds from the evening will benefit the chorus. Plano Civic Chorus' 34th season is funded in part by the City of Plano.

Historic Views

Just as Historic Downtown Plano is now in the midst of revitalization and renovation, our ancestors in the late 1800s also saw the potential of the area. The small community, first settled in the mid-1800s, became a truly vibrant community when the railroad built a depot here in 1872. Major fires were a problem in those early days, occurring in 1881, 1893, 1894 and 1897. Between the arrival of the first settlers in the mid-1800s and the first fire, these businesses were documented among Plano's business community.

There were two cotton gins downtown. The first was located on the current First Christian Church property and was owned by John Moreman, Olney Davis, George Bowman and T.J. Jasper. The second, powered by steam, was owned by John Lovelace and located where the Plano Municipal Center is today.

Many others were active in businesses and professions during this time. East of the Schell building was the post office, with Chester E. Dewey as postmaster. Just east of the post office was the office of Doctors Henry Dye and A.L. Jones. Moving east along the north side of present-day 15th Street, next to their office was C.U. Yancey's boot and shoe business, followed by merchants Gilpin and Graham. J. H. Reedy's store was next and John Alexander's grocery store was east of Reedy's shop. East of Alexander's was James M. Wilcox's storehouse.

On the south side of 15th Street, at the corner of Avenue K was Frederick Schimelpfenig's dry goods store and next to it Dr. Jesse P. Coffey's drug store and office. To the west was Peter Wetsel's furniture store, followed by Asa Y. Lewis' tin shop. Further west was W.H. Chaddick's and D.O. Williams' grocery and dry goods store, Daniel McCullough's Livery, Blalack's Restaurant, and the Baker and Harris Drug Store. Facing west and fronting on the "jockey lot" was the Moore House, a hotel owned and operated by Ulysses and Julia Moore. Next door James L. Florence and George Cassell had a carpentry and building shop. Other businesses included Sam Chamberlain, a wagon maker; August Lamm, the public weigher; James P. Farrell, a hardware store owner; Fred Netzer, a barber; Michael M. Fagan, a boot and shoemaker; Luke Parmer and James M. Skelton, billiard halls and saloons owners; Homer L. Murry, a grocer and saloon owner; J.C. O'Neil, a grocer; and William L. Meroney, a physician.



North of 15th Street on Avenue K was Andrew Wetsel, a furniture maker and undertaker; and south of him was Charles Lamm's store. On the corner was a saloon, owned by Oscar Schevenell and W.C. Chaddick. Across the street were Blalack's livery stable and H. C. Overaker's general store and exchange office. Kendrick, Aston and Honaker had a general store on the northeast corner of Avenue K and 15th Street. Across 15th Street was Benjamin Ward's restaurant and J. O. Flack's store. Next to his store was the J.M. Skelton and Company Saloon with Andy Klepper's blacksmith's shop.

In the 1870s, two churches moved into the downtown area from Spring Creek. The I.O.O.F. Lodge and the Masonic Lodge were growing rapidly. As a result, the downtown area of Plano became not only the focus for business but also for the spiritual and social life of the community.

Information found in "Plano, Texas: The Early Years," copyright 1985. Photo courtesy of the "Frances G Wells Collection" at the Gladys Harrington Library.

Shopping

Valentine's Day is a favorite holiday for the Coles at **Candy Bouquet and Gifts**. In addition to offering Sweet Shop chocolates and the largest selection of fudge around, they would love to make a beautiful basket for your sweetheart.



You can also express your passion with beautiful red candle holders from **Natural Elegance**. Complete the thought with some fragrant fresh roses.



The camouflage look is in at **Jewels and Jeans**, where you'll find a great selection of pants, skirts and tops. The pants have an added touch of bling, with rhinestones on the pockets and satin belts. Anything in the store can be customized with beads, rhinestones and jewels.

Douglass Community

Douglass Community Center will be busy in January and February, with the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration and Black History Month.

This year's MLK celebration begins Saturday morning January 13 with a parade in Historic Downtown Plano. After the parade, a program and Health Fair will be held at Plano Municipal Center. At noon, lunch will be served at the Douglass Community Center. All events are free and open to the public. For more information, go to www.planomlk.org.

On February 14, the DCC Girl Talk group will host a Valentine party for the Douglass Community senior citizens.

On Saturday, February 24, Douglass Community Center will have a program from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., celebrating Black History with a variety of entertainment including contests and refreshments. Winning essays will be read during the program. The essay contest is open to all youth and the deadline for submission is February 12. During the week, there will be art contests sponsored by the schools and judged at the center.

City Scene

Entering Historic Downtown Plano will soon be a slightly different experience. Improvements to 15th street from Avenue G through Avenue I will begin this winter. The city has received a winning bid that, following approval from TxDOT and the final awarding by City Council, will see construction starting around early February. The project will rebuild the four traffic lanes; lay a new road surface resulting in a smoother ride; and install underground utility, which will eliminate the poles along 15th Street. New landscaping and 10-foot brick sidewalks will complete the project. During the estimated 10 months of construction, one lane of traffic will always remain open. While the project will require patience, it will create a safer driving experience and a more up-to-date look for downtown.

The modifications to 16th Street are close to completion. Parallel parking installation and additional infrastructure improvements to the 16th Street and Avenue G area will be completed this winter, with landscaping and final touches being installed by March. The improvements will reduce speed and increase pedestrian safety as new townhome construction continues at Rice Field.

The City of Plano provides the Village News to members of our community to keep citizens informed about the activities in the heart of Historic Downtown Plano.

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