

# Village News

Views from the Heart of Historic Plano

May • June 2004 Issue

## New Construction Springs up Downtown

Like a well-tended garden, progress tends to sprout along rail lines, ushering in tourism, trade and commerce, feeding the economy and creating new growth. As in previous eras, when towns grew along rail lines, Downtown Plano, with the advent of the DART Light Rail, is no exception. Savvy business leaders are eyeing Historic Downtown as a "new frontier," and are planting their roots along the train tracks. This resurgence of energy and money increases property values and encourages construction.

### 15th Street Village

Richard Howe, a Dallas area developer, researched possible locations for his dream to build town homes and condominiums. He chose Downtown Plano for its sense of community, access to the DART Light Rail and the up-and-coming nightlife. Howe said, "In real estate, location is everything—and Downtown Plano has it all—restaurants, shopping and theaters all in walking distance, plus Dallas is only a short rail ride away." His hunch is proving correct. The April 2005 Issue of D Magazine named Downtown Plano "one of the most desirable inner-city neighborhoods in which to live."

"My wife and I are excited about Downtown Plano and live here ourselves," said Howe. Marketing to empty nesters and young professionals, the town homes and condos range from 1,700 to 2,100 square feet, and are priced from \$154,000 to \$303,000. Buyers who get in on the ground floor have a say in designing floor plans. Each unique town house is reminiscent of the architectural style of early Plano. "Input from the city and neighborhood groups helped us to design the look of the new homes," said Howe. 15th Street Village, is located on Avenue G, two blocks from the Downtown DART station, and should be ready to move in by the end of the year.

### First Christian Church

The First Christian Church at 15th Street and Avenue H is getting a long-awaited renovation to house a Mother's Day Out program. A fire in 2001 caused by lightning destroyed the chapel and structure of one of Plano's early landmark buildings. "We are busting out at the seams and need new space," said the Rev. Bruce Greutz.

### Aparicio's Restaurant

Breakfast burritos and Tex-Mex lunches have brought crowds to Aparicio's Tortilla Factory for years. Now, the family-owned restaurant is expanding to a spacious building next door for an upscale Mexican restaurant. On the corner of Avenue I and 18th Street, Aparicio's will serve fine Mexican food. The contemporary interior with floor to ceiling windows, interesting lighting and a great bar, is Downtown Plano's exciting newest restaurant. Innovative ideas such as a tamale station, where diners can watch as tamales are handmade, and a tequila bar make this venue unique.

"We are excited about this location. Our family has worked on the plans for years," said Yolanda Aparicio. Open by May of 2004, and next to the DART Light Rail, this new restaurant is sure to be a success.



The Aparicio family is proud to announce the opening of their new restaurant.

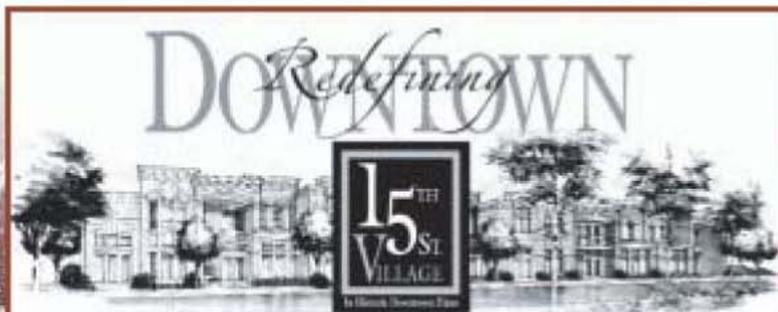
### Espresso Yourself

Connie Imhoff, owner of Espresso Yourself, is happy to announce the expansion of her store by 1,800 square feet. A favorite among locals, this coffee shop is also known for Blue Bell Ice Cream and delicious fudge. With more space, Imhoff plans to serve sandwiches and have additional seating. On weekends, live musical performances and extended hours will add to the local nightlife.

### Habitat Homes

A total of 13 homes built by the industrious volunteers of Habitat for Humanity are planned for the Douglass Community. "The City of Plano is great to us and the citizens support us with donations," said Bill DuBois, chair member. On Saturday June 12, Habitat for Humanity is sponsoring *Home Run*, a 5K Race to create awareness for the program, starting at Shiloh Baptist Church. To register for the run, or to volunteer for the program go to [www.planoareahabitat.org](http://www.planoareahabitat.org).

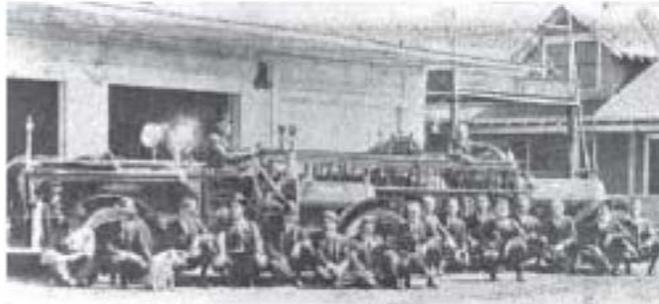
Visit downtown soon to see the construction springing up all over.



## HAPPENINGS

<b>May</b>	
1 - 2	"R & J" Plano Repertory Theatre <b>Courtyard Theater 972-422-7460</b>
1 - 15	PAA National Juried Show <b>ArtCentre of Plano 972-423-7809</b>
7 - 9	Danza de la Pasion Plano Symphony Orchestra <b>Courtyard Theater 972-473-7262</b>
16	Chinese Heritage Week Celebration <b>Courtyard Theater &amp; Haggard Park</b>
18 - 20	"Grain of Thought" Sculpture by Don Schol <b>ArtCentre of Plano 972-423-7809</b>
26	Senior Wellness and Information Fair <b>Plano Senior Center 972-941-7250</b>
27 - 30	"Violet" Plano Repertory Theatre <b>Courtyard Theater 972-422-7460</b>
31	Memorial Day Observance <b>Plano Municipal Cntr. 972-941-7250</b>
31	Free Concert Plano Community Band <b>Haggard Park planoband.com</b>
<b>June</b>	
1 - 12	"Grain of Thought" Sculpture by Don Schol <b>ArtCentre of Plano 972-423-7809</b>
2 - 12	"The Lion the Witch & the Wardrobe" Plano Repertory Theatre <b>ArtCentre Theatre 972-422-7460</b>
12	Habitat for Humanity <b>Home Run 5K planoareahabitat.org</b>
2 - 20	"Violet" Plano Repertory Theatre <b>Courtyard Theater 972-422-7460</b>
3	Picnic In The Park Plano Parks & Recreation <b>Hoblitzelle Park 972-941-7250</b>
10	Picnic In The Park Plano Parks & Recreation <b>Bob Woodruff Park 972-941-7250</b>
14	Free Concert Plano Community Band <b>planoband.com</b> <b>Haggard Park</b>
16 - 26	"The Fairy Tale Courtroom" Plano Repertory Theatre <b>ArtCentre Theatre 972-422-7460</b>
16 - 30	"Sewing up History" The Art of the Quilt <b>ArtCentre of Plano 972-423-7809</b>
17	Picnic In The Park Plano Parks & Recreation <b>Liberty Rec Center 972-941-7250</b>
17 - 19	Juneteenth Celebration <b>Douglass Community Center 972-941-7250</b>
28	Free Concert Plano Community Band <b>Haggard Park planoband.com</b>
30	"Hank the Cowdog: Thank You God for Making Gals" Plano Repertory Theatre <b>ArtCentre Theatre 972-422-7460</b>

## HISTORIC VIEWS



The "Fire Boys," Plano's first volunteer fire department, shown with their hook and ladder wagon.

### Wells Collection

#### Fires Plague Early Downtown

On Sunday morning, June 16, 1889, the buildings at the southeast corner of Main and Mechanic streets burned, a harbinger of other fires that would plague Plano during the 1890s. The fire consumed the extremely successful Skelton and Company Saloon.

The need of a water supply for fire fighting purposes was recognized on September 9, 1890, and the City Council ordered a well dug for the use of the city at the intersection of Main and Mechanic streets. Aldermen A.H. Fortner, W.S. Cummins and J.R. Abernathy were appointed as a committee to contract for a 30-foot well which cost \$225 and was completed about December 1, 1890. It was to be locked and used exclusively for city purposes such as bucket brigades. Reprinted from "Plano, Texas: The Early Years."

## VILLAGE PEOPLE

### Former Mayor Puts Money on Downtown

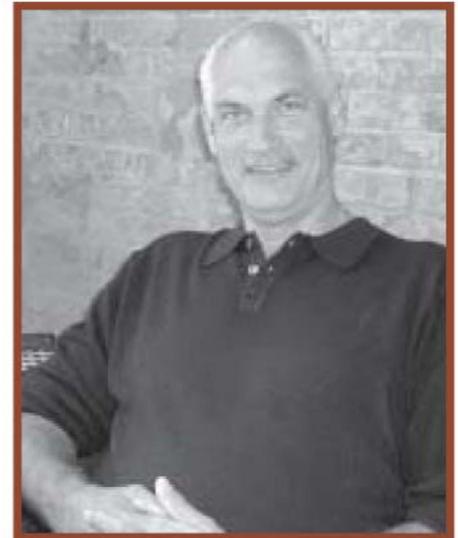
When Jeran Akers looked to purchase a building for his business, he set his sights on Downtown Plano. Mayor of Plano from 2000 to 2002, and council member of six years, Akers said he wouldn't dream of living anywhere else. Akers, who moved to Plano in 1985, said, "I chose Plano for the schools, the quality of life and friendly atmosphere."

"Plano is well managed. It's a tribute to those who came in the '30s and '40s, who brought leadership with vision. One of the challenges of growing a city on the prairie is having a water supply. Former Mayor A.R. Schell, Jr. envisioned that need and helped create Lake Lavon to supply Plano and surrounding areas with plenty of water," explained Akers.

Akers, who grew up in Alabama, realized the value of education and graduated from the University of Alabama. He then served as captain in the U.S. Air Force. Later, while working full time, Akers attended night school to earn a Master's degree in Public Finance from the University of North Colorado. He settled in Texas and founded his company, Akers & Associates, a wholesale distributor for beauty products. "What I love about Texas is the can-do attitude. There's not a dream that's too big."

Akers, on the forefront of the wave to invest private money in the redevelopment of the historic area, somewhat surprisingly convinced long-time Plano resident, Louise Bagwill Sherrill, to sell him her property on 15th street. Originally built in 1895, it replaced a building which burned in the great fire of 1895, and has a long history in Plano. It once housed a saloon, a hardware store and the Harrington Pharmacy. The building then served as headquarters for the Plano Star Courier from 1934 until the 1970s.

When purchased by Akers, the building had stood vacant for 15 years and required major renovation. It took two years to gut and restore the structure. The wood ceiling was replaced with new bead board, wide-plank oak flooring was laid throughout, and sheetrock was removed to expose the original brick walls. The building was finished out with handmade wood trim and paint colors chosen for historic accuracy.



Jeran Akers, property owner in Downtown Plano.

## STREET TALK

### Special Events

- Don't miss the *Chinese Heritage Week Celebration Sunday, May 16 in Haggard Park and the Courtyard Theater. Enjoy an afternoon of dance, food and culture.*
- Register for *Habitat for Humanity's Home Run 5K Fun Run on Saturday, June 12* by logging on to [www.planoareahabitat.org](http://www.planoareahabitat.org).

### New Store Openings

- A big welcome to **Dutch Mill Flowers**. This full-service florists in business for over 30 years at Coit and Beltline in Richardson, moved to 15th Street.
- **The Master Suite** is moving to a larger location beside Jorg's Café Vienna.
- Visit **The Seventh Moon**, a new antique shop in the former Master Suite location.
- **Aparicio's Restaurant** is opening a new upscale location on 18th Street.
- **The Doll Mart** is a new store on 15th Place specializing in vintage Barbies and toys.
- **Nature's Art** next to Olde Town Gallery sells rocks, gems, jewelry, art and more.

### For Kids

- **Jump Start for the Arts**, beginning at the ArtCentre Theatre in June, is a free program to expose children ages 8 to 15 to dance, theater, art and poetry. For information call the ArtCenter at 972-423-7809.
- **Passages Life Training for Girls** is signing up now for summer classes. Catering to girls 8 to 18, the activities are a great way to build self-esteem and confidence, exposing girls to positive experiences. Call 972-633-5500.

### Hanging Out

While away an afternoon downtown. Stop in **Two Brother's Cigar Shop** on Avenue K to watch a movie or enjoy a great cigar. Next door **Kelly's Eastside** serves great burgers, chili and grilled chicken for lunch, or grab a pizza at **Poppy's**. Around the corner, stop by **Jorg's** for a lager in the beer garden, or enjoy coffee at the **Coffee Haus** or **Espresso Yourself**. If you haven't been downtown lately, make a trip to Plano's greatest destination.

### Worship Service

The Providence Community Church, a non-denominational church, is leasing the ArtCentre for Sunday worship services. The band and service, led by Pastor Mark Moore, meets in the main gallery. Find out more at [www.providencecommunity.com](http://www.providencecommunity.com).

### Art in the Park

The Public Art Committee has chosen three semi-finalists for a permanent sculpture exhibit in Haggard Park. View the proposals of Eliseo Garcia, David Hickman and Michael Pavlosky on the city's website and give opinions and comments at [www.plano.gov](http://www.plano.gov) under public arts, or view the proposals displayed at Municipal Center.



Habitat for Humanity is building 13 homes in the Douglass Community. Plan to run the 5K Home Run on June 12 to show support.

## SHOPPING THE VILLAGE

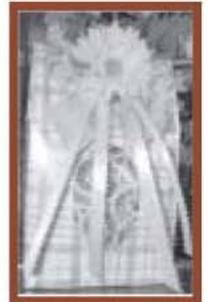


### Floral Finds

**Dutch Mill Flowers** is no garden-variety florist. In business for 35 years at Coit and Beltline, this specialty florist delivers unique designs all over the country. By using organics, unusual florals and containers, this group creates breathtaking arrangements. Call 972-235-7123 to place an order for Mother's Day, graduation, or just to say "I love you."

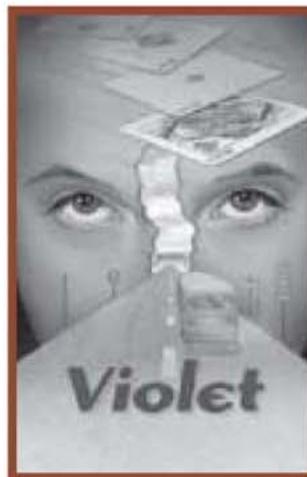
### Aroma Therapy

**Just Gotta Have It!** Has a new must-have item. The Lamp Aire is aroma therapy at its most elegant. Striking urns and decorative boxes diffuse blends of oils to eradicate migraines, headache, hot flashes or allergies, and renew romance, bliss and energy. These fragrant scents can be added to drinking water and ingested, or burned to perfume the air. Stop by to try the benefits of aroma therapy. It works!



### Gift Candy

Need a present for a favorite teacher or a hostess gift? **Nikki's** sells beautifully-packaged delicious nuts and pretzels coated in white chocolate for only \$7.95!



### A New Season of Plays

Plano Repertory Theater is hosting its new season at the Courtyard Theater beginning in April and running through December. See the many great plays and musicals: *Shakespeare's R&J*, *Violet*, *Swing!*, *The Drawer Boy*, *Camelot* and *The Underpants*. Call 972-422-7460 for tickets.

## CITY SCENE

### Chinese Heritage Week Celebration

Talent from the local Chinese community will take the opportunity to showcase their culture and heritage in a public event on Sunday, May 16 in Haggard Park and the Courtyard Theater. Activities in Haggard Park from Noon to 5 p.m. include a fashion show, Tai Chi demonstration, cultural arts and crafts, traditional Chinese music and the popular Lion Dance. Additional performances and dances, as well as an art display, will be hosted in the Courtyard Theater from 7 to 9 p.m.

### In the Works

**Parking on Avenue K** - The Plano City Council will determine whether the parking spaces along Avenue K will be permanent. If made permanent, additional work will be completed by the city on the curbs and markings.

**Parking lot signs** - The City of Plano and Amicus Partners are working on additional signs directing drivers to the public parking lots available in the area. These signs will focus on options available to drivers along Avenue K.

**15th Street reconstruction** - The portion of 15th Street from Avenue G eastward to the railroad tracks is slated for reconstruction. If funding and construction timing can be resolved, the project is expected to begin in early 2005. If timing is not appropriate, then construction will be put off until 2006. Project completion is estimated at 10 months from its beginning.

### Picnic in the Park - On the Road

The Parks and Recreation Department will host its annual series of Picnic in the Park concerts on three Thursdays in June — the 3rd, 10th and 17th. The first concert features The Signature Band playing classic rock and pop variety in Hoblitzelle Park. The second concert at Bob Woodruff Park features Beatlegras playing Beatles' music, acoustic style. Ghostown will play the final concert at Liberty Recreation Center with vintage country sounds. For more information call the Parks and Recreation Department at 972-941-PARK or check the web site at [www.planoparks.org](http://www.planoparks.org).

## The Band is Back!

The Plano Community Band begins their free concert series at Haggard Park beginning May 31 at 7 p.m. Bring a picnic and enjoy the music in the city's newly-renovated park every other Monday night during the summer.



**Correction:** The January/February Issue of The Village News stated incorrectly that David B. McCall, Jr. was instrumental in forming the water district for the City of Plano. While he was a member of the water board, Mayor A.R. Schell, Jr. was Plano's representative on the Tri-County Reservoir Committee that crafted plans for a municipal water supply for Plano and surrounding areas with water from Lake Lavon in the late 1940s. Mr. Schell was a charter member and the first Director appointed to represent Plano on the North Texas Municipal Water District.

#### VILLAGE NEWS May/June Issue

PUBLISHER  
Dana Conklin

EDITOR  
Deborah Dickson

CONTRIBUTORS  
Lisette Briley  
Pam Hatcher  
Debbie Holman  
Susan Lee  
Mary Jo Montgomery  
Jan Peacock  
Dolly Thomas  
Nikki Tuttle  
Jim Wear

City of Plano  
P.O. Box 860358  
75086-0358  
972.941.7250  
email: [danac@plano.gov](mailto:danac@plano.gov)

**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 Plano.**

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City of Plano  
P.O. Box 860358  
Plano, Tx 75086-0358



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