



The Downtowner

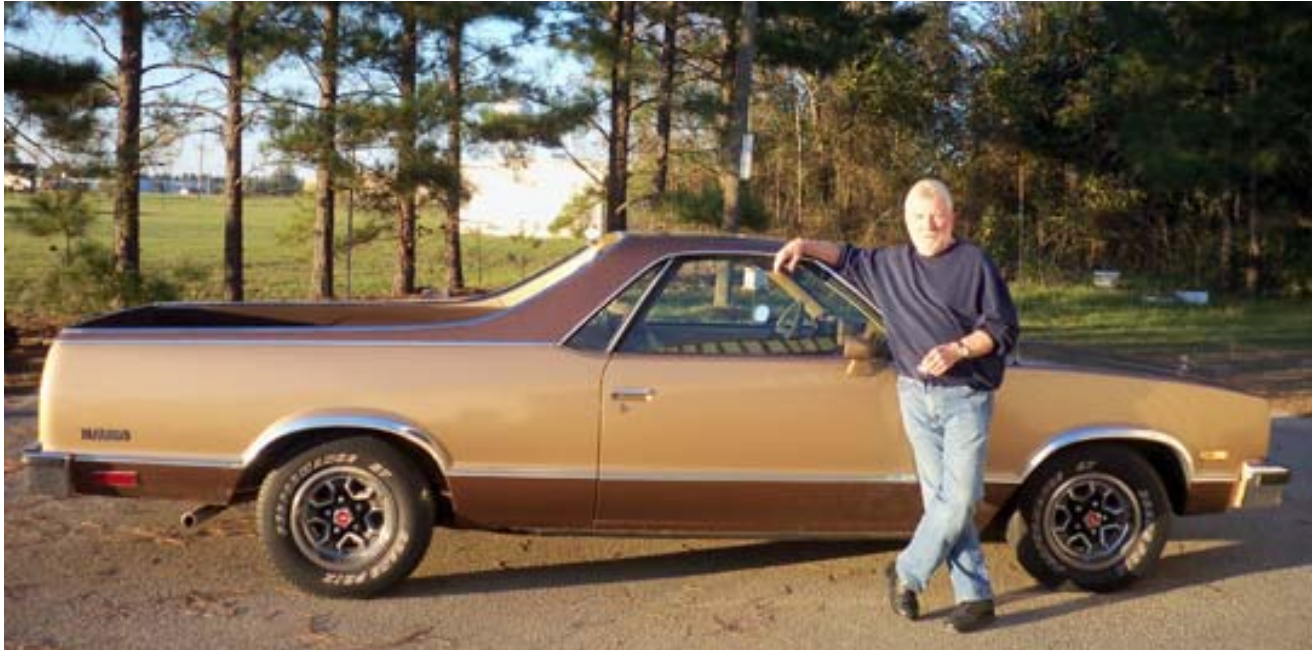
The Newsletter of Friends of Historic Downtown Louisville

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Driver Education –

Larry Morgan Prepares to Take the Wheel



Mayor-elect Larry Morgan poses with his splendid ride.

If you have taken on a household or garden project around Louisville in the last quarter century, chances are you encountered Larry Morgan working as general manager of Smith Shepherd Concrete out on US Highway 1. After running his own business a good while, Mr. Morgan took the helm for Smith Shepherd some twenty-five years ago and never looked back. “I’ve been here a long time,” says the city’s new mayor-elect, “and I’ve served a lot of people.” Indeed, Mr. Morgan has lived in town more than forty years in a house over near the city cemetery. A boyhood transplant from Washington County by way of North Augusta, Mr. Morgan has become a familiar sight driving around Louisville with his windows rolled down and his arm extended in a wave. That, he says, is one of his favorite things about Louisville: the friendliness of shared greetings whether passersby are

strangers or familiar faces.

Reflecting on these encounters, Mr. Morgan describes how his father walked more than twenty miles one day from Edgemoor to Louisville as an eighteen year-old seeking work. He found a job as a brick mason and continued in that profession for many years. After his dad passed, Mr. Morgan found the man who had bought the family’s 1985 Chevrolet *El Camino*, a sleek brown and gold coupe with an open back like a pickup; and he bought back and restored the car. Mr. Morgan still means to replace portions of the interior dash and trim, but the *El Camino* itself is a joy to drive and keeps the mayor elect connected to his family roots.

It is from this vantage point that Mr. Morgan is now taking in the city with fresh eyes – riding along with various city managers and workers to better understand how Louisville operates day to day. “At

this point, it’s a matter of getting to know who does what, who’s on what crew,” he explains. “I want to know everything that’s going on, follow everybody around and see what they’re doing.” Acclimating this way, through deliberate driving excursions with people like Ken Hildebrandt, who handles the city’s general maintenance, and through sit-down conversations with city managers such as Don Rhodes, should help make for a smooth transition in the city’s leadership, Mr. Morgan says. “I’ve asked a lot of questions and they’ve been free with the answers,” he adds.

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The Downtowner's Image of the Month



Ode to the Grange Road – Frosty First Light Heading into Louisville. Photo by Kathleen Galvin

Continued from Front Page

Mr. Morgan is not new to public service. Having spent the last few years as chairman of the county's planning and zoning, he likens elements of city management to his prior retail experience. "The city's like any other business," Mr. Morgan suggests. "It just has a lot more customers."

Mr. Morgan plans to continue what he sees as strengths of Louisville's city government – from sound fiscal management and conservative spending to attention to the needs of citizens and key services such as public safety. He also aims to fully capitalize on recent grant awards for improvements in streetscaping, school safety, police infrastructure and the city's fire station.

"One of the first things I hope we're going to do is finish our streetscape downtown," Mr. Morgan offers, "and it looks like in March we're going to be able to do that." Anticipating considerable effort associated with the move to a new firehouse – which will also incorporate a new city hall and police department – the mayor elect is

nevertheless excited about these changes. Louisville was one of only two Georgia cities to earn a firehouse grant from the Federal government, he notes, and the funds awarded to the city's police department through the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) will bring the city modern technology and equipment for improved law enforcement.

Mr. Morgan notes the \$658,000 COPS grant alone will bring in new police computer, camera and radio equipment, back-up generators to enable uninterrupted communications in the event of an outage (as occurred with the tornados last year), laptops in squad cars and more. "It boils down to 21st Century equipment," he says. "And that's not all. There's another grant [the city was recently awarded] which is for the Safe Routes to School program. That one involves Louisville Academy and will consist of new sidewalks and getting some of the pavement fixed that's around the school."

Alluding to the program's objective to increase the number of children who walk

or bicycle to school by making it safe for them to do so, Mr. Morgan notes these improvements will aid in handicapped access (an objective he would like to see realized for other parts of the city) and more general neighborhood improvements. A web-site for the Safe Routes grants notes that thirty years ago, sixty percent of children living within a two-mile radius walked or bicycled to school; today, that number has dropped to less than fifteen percent.

"The next four years are going to bring a lot of positive changes to the city," Mr. Morgan concludes. Necessities of the city government such as job creation, attracting business investment, seeing to the needs of the community's citizens and preserving the town's historic heritage are going to require a lot of hard work and careful attention, he says. Looking optimistically toward the future and his new role in city government, Mr. Morgan asserts, "We've got a wonderful city council and we'll do whatever we have to, to make the right decisions that are going to be best for this town."

News from

The Fire House Gallery



An Abundant Harvest of Homegrown Art



Sharon Sasser demonstrates weaving techniques at the Guild's October meeting.

Annual Fall Exhibit of the Arts Guild

November 18 through 29; Opening Reception, Saturday, November 21, 7-9 p.m.

Once again, it's time for one of your – and certainly one of the Gallery's – favorite fall traditions – the Annual Fall Exhibit of the Arts Guild. This event rolls around each year as reliably as the season itself – so much so it's easy to forget all the year-round effort that goes into getting it all together. The Guild holds meetings every month with programs tailor-made for its membership – for example, the demonstration offered by weaver Sharon Sasser, who is pictured above at the Guild's October meeting. Our fine local artists are toiling away largely unseen through the months between the spring and fall shows.

This year, as artists around Jefferson County are once again in the throes of putting the final touches on their prints, paintings, sculptures, and textiles, Kelsey McMillan gives us the following look into the collaborative relationship of longtime Guild members Mary Reynolds and Sam Morgan.

Mary began painting when her parents gave her an oil painting set and a book about famous masterpieces for her twelfth birthday. Although she was never formally trained to become an artist, she has taken numerous classes and workshops throughout her life with many professional artists. When reminiscing on her artistic career, Mary says, "It seems that painting is just something that I've always done. I've even tried to stop at times, but it's just something I've always had to do."

Although Mary is not originally from Georgia, she moved to Louisville with her husband, Bob, about ten years ago. It is here that she met Sam Morgan, a local Louisville artist who is well known for his eye-catching watercolors and drawings. As Sam describes it, "I started out doing a lot of drawings with pencils, pens, and charcoal, and in 1995 I took watercolor lessons with Jim Gensheer." It was through these lessons that Sam discovered his love for the transparent paint, and began to practice regularly.

Both Mary and Sam soon became close friends, and remain just as close today. As they both put it so eloquently, "we encourage each other," both in painting, and in life.

This holds especially true for the past couple of months because Sam has decided to step out of his comfort zone and try something he has never attempted before – oil painting. He was initially inspired to switch from watercolor to oil paint after he received a generous gift of oil paint brushes about six months ago. With the other essential oil painting materials easily accessible to him, Mary encouraged Sam to come by her studio and practice painting with oil paint while she worked on her own artwork. "I'm not teaching him," Mary says, "he experiments on his own. I just make sure he doesn't pick up any bad habits." Sam confirms Mary's statement, and adds, "I pick up on a lot of her techniques when I study the paintings that she's done, or watch her do a painting."

Although Sam admits he was nervous during his first session with Mary because he "didn't have a clue" how to paint with oils, since then he has picked up several techniques with the help of Mary, and has begun to really enjoy the new medium. "I'm really enjoying the oil painting!" says Sam. "Certainly, it's a whole different world than watercolor. It's a challenge for me, but I'm enjoying it." When asked if there is anything he didn't like about it, he quickly adds, "The cleaning up bit afterwards. I'm used to watercolors where all you have to do is rinse out your brushes and that's it, but with oil you have to take a few more steps."

Together, both Mary and Sam have been working long hours the past couple of months to produce some new and exciting paintings. For Mary, it's been exciting to watch her close friend really progress with his painting techniques over the course of two months. As for Sam, "She's been a huge inspiration to me," he says. "She helped me to understand that every artist goes through phases of painting, both good and bad, and without her I don't think I would have continued painting as much."

Both Mary and Sam, along with several other Jefferson County artists will exhibit their most recent creations at the Arts Guild exhibit starting November 18th at The Fire House Gallery.

Art ... Memory ... Honor –
 Students Mark Veterans Day with a Trip to “An Artist’s Response to War”



Louisville Academy fifth graders experience Cis Rossey’s monumental work *War Memorial*

“And some there be, which have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been; and are become as though they had never been born; and their children after them.”

When we think about art, and teach our young people about it, we often overlook its irreplaceable value in commemoration. This November, the month in which we honor our war veterans – and especially after the terrible massacre at Fort Hood – we felt it

apt to give children the chance to explore the role of art in framing the collective memory of toll – military and civilian – that war exacts.

On Friday, November 6, the fifth graders of Louisville Academy visited The Fire House Gallery as part of the ongoing *Gallery Days* partnership between the Gallery and Louisville Academy, to have their first taste of art as a witness of sacrifice.

Says the Gallery’s intern manager, “The

kids’ favorite was Cis Rossey’s *War Memorial*. They were captivated by the sheer number of printed figures. It definitely helped them to grasp what an enormous loss of life the war has caused.”

Day in, day out, the *Gallery Days* program is teaching Louisville children a lesson that many kids do not learn till much later in life, if at all – that art is not the trivial business of decoration – it is an essential tool for extracting meaning from experience.



Fifth Graders ponder *Caprices of Aggression from Rembrandt to Goya to Us*, by Nelida Otero Flatow.



A group of students considers Cynthia Aldrich’s ironic sculpture *The War Cabinet*.

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Don't Look Now –

Sneak Preview of December in The Fire House Gallery!



Recognize this gentleman? The Fire House Gallery will be showing the work of renowned painter Philip Morsberger and the acclaimed sculpture of his lifelong acquaintance Anita Huffington in December and January. Read more in the December issue of *The Downtowner* and meanwhile stay tuned to the Gallery's Facebook page for updates!

For several years now, we have reported the schedule of events at Louisville's *The Bistro* in this spot. We were sorry to hear that Broad Street would lose this important dining and entertainment establishment, and we certainly hope the rumors of a new venture in the old Clark Hardware building are true. Time will tell. Come what may, we want to thank Connie Barrow for her years of energy and devotion to an effort that brought an important change to Downtown.