Commerce Public Library Seeks Community Support

By Mike Odom

The Commerce Public Library is seeking help from the citizens of Commerce to restore and preserve the city’s once lovely 96 year old library building. The library restoration effort desperately needs the community’s financial support.

For the past few weeks contractor Mike Hudson has been hard at work restoring the library’s portico. He has undertaken the painstaking and labor-intensive effort of scraping and sanding away decades of old paint and also replacing decayed and damaged wood with new materials.

Although the library building is owned by the City of Commerce, the Friends of the Commerce Public Library organization oversees its operation and pays the library staff. The private non-profit organization is also funding the restoration work.

Several thousand dollars were raised during the “Save the Library” campaign in May and June of 2012. In spring 2012, the building’s failing air conditioning system was replaced, with help of a generous grant from the First United Methodist Foundation.

The current restoration campaign has raised more than $30,000 toward the goal of getting the library ready for its 100th birthday celebration in 2017. However, those funds are dwindling and there is still much restoration work to be done. In order to just finish work on the portico the library has had to dip into its savings.

The Commerce Public Library needs the community’s financial support now more than ever.

All donations are tax deductible and will go directly toward making this historic building once again something community can be proud of.

Corporate and individually recognized sponsorships are available. For more information or to donate to the library restoration fund, please call the library at 903-886-6858 or e-mail director@commercepubliclibrary.org. You may also donate online at www.commercepubliclibrary.org.
Dear Chamber Members,

I hope everyone is enjoying this mild summer we are having. It certainly made for a nice Fourth of July celebration! I’d like to welcome our new chamber members for the month. We love to see new businesses opening and we wish you best of luck. Bash preparations are under way and we are hoping to have another successful year. We also want to welcome teachers and students back and we hope you had a wonderful summer!

Please contact the chamber if we can help you and your business in any way. We look forward to hearing from our members.

Sincerely,

Julie Gentle

More interesting Commerce facts:

Commerce High School has had two state football championships


The university homecoming was originally held in May on the campus with a large picnic and 2 day celebration called the May Fete
Recycling Day in Commerce .......................... August 3
Chamber Membership Drive .......................... August 12 – 13
Aracely’s Hair Salon Ribbon Cutting .................. August 20 (noon)
Luigi’s Italian Cafe Ribbon Cutting .................... August 23 (11 a.m.)
New Teacher Welcome Luncheon ...................... August 23
Update Your Network ........................................ August 26
Recycling Day in Commerce .......................... September 7
Bois d’Arc Bash Golf Tournament .................. September 27
CLI BBQ Fundraiser ...................................... September 27
28th Annual Bois d’Arc Bash .......................... September 27 – 28
Miss Bois d’Arc Pageant ............................... September 28
Bois d’Arc Bash Parade ................................... September 28

If you would like to us to showcase your event or have it added to the Calendar of Events please e-mail your event information to the Chamber of Commerce at info@commerce-chamber.com

COMMERCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Chamber of Commerce shall be to promote the common business interests of merchants and citizens living and working in the City of Commerce, Texas, and in the immediate area; promote the free enterprise system; encourage the commercial, industrial and agricultural development of the City of Commerce and the immediate area; assume a role of active leadership in community improvement. The Chamber shall stand for local harmony, cooperation, and progress and shall be non-partisan, non-sectarian and non-sectional in its activities.

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Susan Oliver, Manager

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lonestareatery.com | facebook
903.886.2121
**ARACELY’S HAIR SALON OPENS IN COMMERCE**

*By Doug Rohrabaugh*

The Fix & Feed shopping complex is beginning to fill up as they welcome another new business. Aracely’s Hair Salon opened their doors for business in late July and has recently joined the Commerce Chamber of Commerce. In order to celebrate the opening of Aracely’s the Chamber of Commerce will be holding a ribbon cutting ceremony for the salon on Tuesday, August 20, 2013 beginning at 12:00 p.m. (noon).

Aracely, a hair stylist with many years of experience, had been working at a salon in Greenville and commuting everyday from Commerce. Tired of her daily commute and wanting to contribute to the growth of business in Commerce, Aracely opened her own family salon at 2542 Mangum Street.

This full service salon offers haircuts, waxing, tints, perms, highlights, and much more. Aracely’s is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m. They also have a play room where your children will be safely entertained while you are able to relax and enjoy your salon experience.

Please visit Aracely’s Hair Salon soon to welcome them to the Commerce community and join us on Tuesday, August 20 at 12:00 p.m. (noon) for the ribbon cutting ceremony. For more information about Aracely’s Hair Salon please call 903.348.0734.
Braums: A History of Greatness

Courtesy of Braums (Intro by Doug Rohrabaugh)

Have you ever really thought about how large corporations came into existence? If you are like most Americans, you shop at numerous restaurants and department stores without thinking about how they got started. In many cases these large businesses had a very humble beginning and our local Braums is one of those cases. In this edition of the Commerce Connection we will explore the early years of the Braums Corporation.

In 1933, Henry H. Braum (Bill Braum’s Father) leased a converted house and used it as a small butter processing plant located in their hometown of Emporia, Kansas. A year later, the owner built a new 25×80 foot building so Henry moved production to that facility. Later, milk processing was added. Throughout childhood, Bill Braum helped his father with the family business learning every aspect of the operation.

In 1940, Henry Braum expanded the business to include ice cream processing. In 1945, Bill Braum arrived at the University of Kansas and enrolled in Engineering School. After only one semester, he found his calling and enrolled in Business School. After graduating with a degree in Business Administration from the University of Kansas, Bill Braum returned home to Emporia to work for his father and take an active role in the family business. At this time, Bill’s sister introduced him to his future wife, Mary.

In 1952, Bill and his father sold the wholesale part of the business. They purchased an old Kraft Cheese Factory that they remodeled into an ice cream and processing plant and began specializing in milk and ice cream. They developed a chain of retail ice cream stores in Kansas called “Peter Pan Ice Cream” named after a local park in Emporia.

In 1961, Bill Braum purchased the company from his father and bought his first dairy farm in Emporia. In 1967, Bill grew the chain to 61 stores and increased the business tenfold. He then sold the “Peter Pan” retail stores to a large wholesaler. The sale did not include the Braum dairy herd and processing plant. As a condition of the sale, the Braums were not allowed to sell ice cream in Kansas for 10 years. In 1968, Bill and his wife, Mary, opened the first Braum’s Ice Cream and Dairy Store in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. That year, twenty three more stores opened throughout Oklahoma. For three years, because the Braum dairy herd and processing plant were still located in Emporia, Kansas, all ice cream, dairy products and other supplies were transported daily from Kansas to Oklahoma.

Hunt County Tax Office
Commerce Sub-Station Hours
At the Chamber of Commerce

Wednesdays from 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
(Closed 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. for lunch.)
CHAMBER WELCOMES
THE KILTED MONKEY

By Doug Rohrabaugh

Members of the Commerce community gathered on Friday, July 5th to welcome The Kilted Monkey as new members of the Commerce Chamber of Commerce. Michael and Jennifer White purchased the Irish pub a few short weeks after the original owners closed the doors. Michael and Jennifer chose to keep the original name and look of the pub and even re-hired much of the original staff. Michael stated that giving back to the community is very important to him. “We are asking the community to support us so we need to be willing to support the community” stated White.

The ribbon cutting ceremony was attended by several community leaders including: Dr. Dan Jones, President of Texas A&M University-Commerce; Mayor John Ballotti, City of Commerce; City Councilwoman Jean Klaus, City of Commerce; Marc Clayton, Commerce City Manager; Julie Gentle, President of the Commerce Chamber of Commerce; Randy “Rip” Ripley, Ben E. Keith Corporation; Niki Grobe, CAN Independent Business Owner; Arvie Turner, Eagle Energy; Quay Throgmorton, Hunt County Real Estate; Michael Odom, Commerce Office of Cultural Affairs; Chad Gentle, Under Construction; and Russell Armstrong, AIS Financial Services.

The Kilted Monkey is open Monday thru Wednesday from 11:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., Thursday and Friday from 11:00 a.m. until 12:00 a.m., and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 a.m. They offer daily lunch and happy hour specials. The Kilted Monkey is also a child friendly atmosphere with a special kids menu. Be sure to stop in and welcome them to our community and let them know that the Chamber sent you.

Photo Upper Right: From left to right: Mayor John Ballotti, Jean Klaus; Marc Clayton; Niki Grobe; Randy “Rip” Ripley Melissa Norman, General Manager of The Kilted Monkey; Arvie Turner; Jennifer White, Owner of The Kilted Monkey; Quay Throgmorton; Michael White, Owner of The Kilted Monkey; Dr. Dan Jones; Julie Gentle; and Chad Gentle.
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO HOLD MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

By Doug Rohrabaugh

The Commerce Chamber of Commerce will be holding a major membership drive on Monday, August 12th and Tuesday, August 13th. The membership drive is being organized by Paul Oliver of the Chamber of Commerce Consultants. This firm has been used to assist Chambers in various aspects of Chamber business throughout the United States and Canada.

This membership drive is no small undertaking. Twenty-two volunteers will gather during those two days working diligently to grow the Chamber. Growth is essential to any organization and the more the Chamber grows the more it is able to give. During the past seven months the Chamber has added over 16 new members under the leadership of our Vice-President of Membership Niki Grobe which is the same amount of new members gained throughout 2012. In 2010 the Chamber Board of Directors set a goal to obtain 100 new members. With this membership drive we are confident that the Chamber will reach that goal.

With the support of our current members the Commerce Chamber of Commerce has been able to promote our town in a variety of ways. We participate in the Northeast Texas Tourism Council and advertise Commerce in the Northeast Texas Visitors and Events Guide which is distributed throughout the region and beyond. The Chamber is also creating a video to attract people to move to Commerce by highlighting various aspects of our town including our churches, service organizations, the university, our Bois d’Arc history, and of course our wonderful businesses and Chamber members.

By increasing the size of our Chamber through this membership drive we will be able to continue to promote Commerce in new and innovative ways. If you have a business and are called upon to invest in Chamber membership we hope that you do so for the betterment of our entire community. To find out how to assist with the membership drive or to become a Chamber member, please contact the Commerce Chamber of Commerce at 903.886.3950.
4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION A BLAST!

By Doug Rohrabaugh

The Commerce 4th of July Celebration brought community members together at Centennial Park on Saturday, July 6, 2013. Volunteers from the Commerce Food Pantry greeted participants at the gate collecting nonperishable food items as well as cash donations to help support the Commerce community. In an effort to encourage support of the Commerce Food Pantry, Magnuson Hotel Commerce donated a gift certificate for a FREE two night stay in a Jacuzzi sweet.

Thanks to the generosity of event sponsors community members and visitors alike were able to enjoy the festivities without having to spend too much money. “We wanted to hold an event that the entire community could enjoy regardless of their economic status” said Chamber President Julie Gentile. By keeping costs down and using sponsor money wisely the Chamber was able to attract participants from all over the Northeast Texas region.

The live entertainment provided by event sponsors began with a performance from country music artist Shaun Michaels on the Ben E. Keith stage. Shaun played a mix of well known country hits originally recorded by famous artists and his own original songs. Dancers from the Li-Sher Studio entertained the crowd with their patriotic performance. The Cross Trails Band played some up lifting music and impressed the crowd with their talented version of Amazing Grace. The event headliner, Outta Hand, had the crowd cheering with excitement with a masterful blend of original recordings and cover songs from popular artists including Cross Canadian Ragweed.

The evening concluded with an amazing display of fireworks that some believed to be the best in the area. The generosity of event sponsors, including the City of Commerce, allow the Chamber to contract with Pyrotex for a truly spectacular fireworks presentation.
**LUIGI’S ITALIAN CAFÉ SCHEDULES RIBBON CUTTING**

*By Doug Rohrabaugh*

Luigi’s Italian Café recently joined the Commerce Chamber of Commerce and has scheduled a ribbon cutting ceremony for 11:00 a.m. on Friday, August 23, 2013. The opening of this fine family restaurant was a highly anticipated event in the Commerce community. Citizens seemed to become more and more excited as a new phase of construction on the new building was completed. Luigi’s finally opened their doors earlier this year and the community has been keeping them busy ever since.

With locations in Rockwall, Royse City, and Quinlan many people are under the impression that Luigi’s is a “chain” restaurant but that is simply not true. These are four family owned and operated restaurants. Owner Mario Smajli his brother and two nephews have been in business for over 20 years. They have been fortunate to open several Luigi’s restaurants but they are certainly not a chain. That quickly becomes apparent when you enter Luigi’s. It is not uncommon to see Mario going from table to table getting to know his customers and ensuring that their dining experience is a pleasant one. Customers are treated like family when they walk in the door and are always encouraged to return.

The Commerce location of this family owned establishment is overseen by General Manager Ari Isufaj. Ari is more than excited about the Commerce location and is looking forward to the opening of the Fall semester at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Ari noted that the summer has been a bit slow but also stated that “we’re here to stay”. 10 – 20% of the customers at Luigi’s in Commerce are “first timers” according to Ari which shows that their business is continuing to grow.

Another common myth about Luigi’s is that they are expensive. However, most menu items are under $10 and Luigi’s offers lunch specials starting at $6.99 that include an entrée, salad, and rolls. Their entire menu is available on their website www.luigisitaliancafe.com. Luigi’s also offers wonderful daily specials.

Stop in today to experience the delicious food and amazing service at Luigi’s Italian Café in Commerce and join us for the Ribbon Cutting ceremony on Friday, August 23 at 11:00 a.m.

For more information about Luigi’s Italian Café please call 903.886.2000, follow them on facebook at luigisitaliancafecommerce, or visit their website at www.luigisitaliancafe.com.

**THALIAN CULTURE CLUB FOUNDATION AUCTION SET FOR AUGUST 3**

*By Jalinna Jones*

The Thalian Culture Club Foundation is hosting its 46th annual fundraiser – a signature and live auction – on Saturday, August 3, 2013 at 6:30 pm at Sand Hills Country Club. The annual event is the organization’s only fundraiser of the year, and supports numerous local charitable efforts, as well as provides scholarship opportunities for eligible seniors from Commerce High School. This year’s theme is “Fiesta de las Thalians”.

Some of the local charities supported by the Foundation include the Northeast Texas Children’s Museum, School Supplies for Commerce ISD, Commerce Schools Educational Enrichment Foundation, Commerce Lil’ Angels, Commerce Literacy Project, Commerce Public Library, Parks and Recreation, Rachel’s Challenge, and funding for downtown Christmas decorations.

“We invite our community to our fundraiser to not only enjoy food, festivities and fellowship, but to help us raise funds that we donate one-hundred-percent back into our community. The auctions are a fun away to support the organization while getting something in return,” said Donna Tavener, Thalian president. “In the past items for auction have included furniture, home accessories, children’s and baby items, floral arrangements, and artwork. It is a fun evening of joining together with friends, while raising funds to better our community. What could be better than that?” she added.

For more information, or to donate an item to the auction, please contact Jalinna Jones at jalinnal@aol.com or 903.886-5016.
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CHAMBER WELCOMES NEW TEACHERS

By Doug Rohrabaugh

Join the Commerce Chamber of Commerce in welcoming new teachers from Commerce ISD and Texas A&M University-Commerce to the Commerce community. The Chamber will host their New Teacher Welcome Luncheon on Friday, August 23 at the First Baptist Church beginning at 12:00 p.m. The event is hosted by the Chamber to provide their members with an opportunity to welcome new teachers to the Commerce community.

The theme for this year’s festivities will be “Roaring Big Cat Circus”. Tickets for this event are available at the Commerce Chamber of Commerce for the low cost of $10 each. This luncheon is made possible by the generosity of Cypress Bank. Robin Alexander, President of Cypress Bank and a member of the Commerce Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, was instrumental in bringing back the New Teacher Welcome Luncheon as a Chamber event. Alliance Bank will also be contributing to this year’s event by providing and preparing the lunch.

For more information about the Roaring Big Cat Circus (New Teacher Welcome Luncheon) please contact the Commerce Chamber of Commerce at 903.886.3950

RAE-LILI FARM RIBBON CUTTING A SUCCESS

By Doug Rohrabaugh

The corner of Highway 11 and FM 275 was busy with activity on Tuesday, July 9 as Chamber members gathered to welcome Rae-Lili Farm and Outlaw Tamales into the Commerce Chamber of Commerce. Owners Rosendo and Sofia Martinez of Cooper were pleasantly surprised by the large turnout. Chamber members such as: Duncan Insurance Agency, ACN Independent Business Owner Niki Grobe, Eagle Energy, Under Construction, Bread of Life Church of the Nazarene, and Texas A&M University-Commerce were present at the event. Participants also enjoyed some shopping before the ribbon cutting purchasing some of the fresh produce available.

Rosendo and Sofia began their business three years ago, growing natural produce on their farm in Cooper and traveling to Garland every weekend to sell what they could not use themselves. The quality of their produce was quickly noticed and demand for their goods increased. Wanting to expand their business Rosendo and Sofia purchased the produce stand on the corner of Highway 11 and FM 275 (Cumby Road) in order to properly prepare Tamales to sell at the market.

Rae-Lili Farm and Outlaw Tamales is open Tuesday thru Saturday for lunch and their produce including farm fresh eggs are also available for purchase. For more information about Rae-Lili Farm and Outlaw Tamales please call 469.733.2099 or follow them on facebook at Rae-Lili Farm.

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