



Garden District News

Roseland Terrace, Kleinert Terrace and Drehr Place Historic Neighborhoods

Summer 2013

Custom Threads that are Made to Measure

By: Mindy Piontek

For Andy Plaisance, fabric and thread run through his veins along with blood. As a child growing up in Baton Rouge, he spent many afternoons at his family's upholstery shop, Steve's Upholstery.

"My favorite grandmother, Aline, worked in the back making drapes," says Plaisance, who spent hours in her company. His future was probably settled because of a challenge, practically a dare, from his mother. "She bet me that I could not make a shirt." Andy rose to the challenge, grabbed a simple pattern, fabric and thread and promptly ran up a basic shirt. "It had no buttons, just slipped over my head, but it was a shirt."

For much of his adult life, though, Andy set aside that youthful sewing enthusiasm and focused on a career as a buyer for Young Fashion. Once that business closed, however, his earlier ambition returned,

and he decided to start his own business in 2001. He returned to the family occupation, though not the same business, which had closed following his father's death.

Andy's business, Custom House, is located across from the Westdale Shopping center on Government Street near South Acadian, a short drive from his Terrace Avenue home of 19 years which he shares with his partner, Dickie Howzer. Most days, you can usually find Plaisance and his miniature black poodle, Buck, at Custom House. Andy has advanced considerably from his days of buttonless shirts and now offers draperies, bedding, pillows, tabletops, cushions, valances, cornices, blinds and shades. "My draperies are all hand finished. Finish work is my favorite thing—it's almost spiritual. You are making these beautiful stitches by hand," says Andy.

Andy's work has another

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Buck and Andy Plaisance take a break at Custom House.

The Garden District Civic Association Takes a Stand

By: Mindy Piontek

In a concerted effort over the last few months, the Garden District Civic Association has worked to bring a change to the management of Camelia House, a group home located in the neighborhood. After members of the media sought the GDCA's input on issues related to criminal activities emanating from the house and its effect on the neighborhood, members of the GDCA

board met with Representatives Alfred Williams, Steve Carter, and Patricia Hays Smith as well as Councilwoman Tara Wicker to obtain a resolution regarding Camelia House. The group agreed to a resolution adopted by the owner stating that either Camelia House would be sold or, if retained, would house disadvantaged women, not boys or men.

Prior to the resolution of Camelia House, a potential buyer of a house on Camelia St.

contacted the GDCA regarding the status of the group home and its effect on the Garden District. After being informed of the resolution, they put a contract on the house. Moreover, another potential buyer of a home on Camelia has contacted the GDCA to obtain information about the group home.

Thanks to the GDCA for pursuing the

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First Sustainability Tour Great Success!

By: Dorothy Prowell

The First Garden District Tour of Sustainable Homes and Gardens was well attended, fun and informative. An exceptional spring day brought out the crowds. About 150 tour-goers on foot and bikes filled the sidewalks and streets. Visitors wandered through homes and yards snapping photos, getting ideas, talking with professionals and homeowners, and generally enjoying the ambiance of our lovely historic neighborhood. Feedback from professionals indicated a spike in calls from our area suggesting some positive outcomes from the tour. Chickens were a big hit at the Forbes house and perhaps a few more are living in our midst. After we closed our gates to

the public, tour hosts, board members, and volunteers took to the streets for a tour of their own, walking through the neighborhood, stopping for wine, snacks, and conversation into the twilight. Friendship and connections among like-minded neighbors and others were also an outcome of this novel event.

Thanks to the many folks who helped make the tour a success. Beryl Mack coordinated a large number of volunteers like a pro. Professionals (3 solar company representatives, Slow Food founders, and an energy guru) talked and answered questions during the entire event. Garden District Nursery sold edible plants at a 20-percent discount to tour ticket holders. Paul Miller helped with free graphic design. The event

would not have happened without enthusiastic homeowners who welcomed the opportunity to showcase their efforts by opening their yards and houses to others.

After costs we made about \$600, which we plan to use for a sustainability project in the neighborhood. If you have ideas email Dorothy at dprowe@lsu.edu.

NEWS BRIEFS

Multi-Yard Garage Sale!

You know you've got some. We all have odds and ends lurking at the back of the closet, huddling neglected in the attic or just taking up more than their fair share of space in the garage. So on August 24, join your neighbors and host a garage sale. The GDCA will handle the advertising, you just need to handle your stuff and rake in those not-so-outrageous profits!

Garden District Multi-Yard Sale August 24

Champagne Stroll September 22

Fall Social October 27.

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Save the Dates!

And look for more information to come in a future issue of the Garden District News, on the website, or on signs posted around the neighborhood.

Back to School Party August 3



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Michael Paul Miller calculates an order with the help of his mom, Jaime Miller.

A Perfect Summer Project

By: MINDY PIONTEK

When Jaime Miller was looking for a summer activity to make math seem relevant for her seven year old home-schooled son, Michael Paul, a lemonade stand was a natural choice, one seconded by Michael Paul. "I kind of wanted to do it to get some of the money, and second of all to do math for the summer," he says. Thus was born Michael Paul's Perfect Lemonade, a very small, very local business, operating out of

a white wooden stand shaded by oaks and a large green market umbrella festooned with green and yellow flags on Drehr.

The math angle is obvious to his customers who watch Michael Paul carefully record their orders and how much they spend in his small notebook, which he checks, quickly identifying a purchase of \$9.50 as his biggest order so far this summer.

Besides tallying his orders and making change, Michael Paul is also learning about

budgeting and money management. "He has a DBA and a check book and keeps track of the check register and sees where the money goes," says Jaime. "He sees why we buy in bulk and how we budget, referring to their frequent trips to the produce stand to buy lemons by the more economical box.

Besides lemonade, Michael Paul offers a daily cake, cheerfully prepared from scratch by his mother. Michael's favorite cake is the lemon pound cake, which he sells for \$2.50 a slice. Customers can wash it down with either a small lemonade for \$1.50 or a large for \$2.50.

Besides the more tangible lessons, Jaime Miller hopes the lemonade stand will help Michael Paul cultivate a strong work ethic and an appreciation for being a business owner. "I want him to see how fun it is to have your own business and watch it grow. Both Paul and I work from home," says Jaime, an arrangement that suits both of them with its lack of workplace conflict and traffic and an innate sense of satisfaction and freedom.

The stand has also provided a new way to interact with neighbors. "All different kinds of people have stopped," says Paul Miller, Michael Paul's father. "We really want to thank all of our neighbors for their support."

You can follow Michael Paul's Perfect Lemonade on Facebook, a marketing suggestion from Michael Paul's older sister, Gabrielle, or you can look for the signs, designed by Paul, along Drehr, pointing the way toward Perfect Lemonade.

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Garden District News

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Mindy Piontek

If you have comments or story ideas that you would like to submit to the publication contact Mindy Piontek at mmpiontek70@yahoo.com.

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THREADS

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spiritual dimension as well. "I make everything for the Cathedral," says Plaisance, referring to St. Joseph's Cathedral downtown. He makes the altar cloths, vestments and banners. "It's really a privilege to work on something so beautiful," Andy says while displaying some of the magnificent gold and aquamarine trim he will use to decorate a future vestment.

Although much of his work at Custom House comes from decorators, Andy welcomes walk-ins. No job is too big and no job is too small," he says. Recently, he has worked on several projects in Country Club of Louisiana, but he has worked for decorators from as far away as Utah, as well as from New Orleans, Lafayette, and Lake Charles.

Besides the formal fabrics Andy uses for the Cathedral, he enjoys working with silks and printed and embroidered linens. "Linen is so timeless and Southern," he says. Andy offers a wide range of fabrics and styles that a customer can order from his shop, or customers are welcome to bring their own fabric.

The shop features a front wall that is all glass, letting in plenty of natural light. Dominating the space is a pressing table to accommodate the yards of fabric needed for full length drapes. There are bright rolls of cloth and backing materials on rolls suspended from a frame in the back, and most importantly, there are four large dog beds located in all of Buck's favorite places.

STAND

Continued from Page 1

removal of this thorn from our collective side. Without the involvement of the GDCA the resolution for Camelia House would not have been possible, and the home would have continued to contribute to crime in the neighborhood. The GDCA can only be as strong as its members. Please consider joining the Garden District Civic Association and help it help you.

To join through the mail send your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address along with a check for \$120 made out to Garden District Civic Association to:

Treasurer

Garden District Civic Association
P.O. Box 4113
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

To join online go to www.gdcabr.org/board_join.php, where you may pay with PayPal.



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