



Downtown Details

News from the Downtown Mobile Alliance

March 2009

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Dear Carol,

At recent economic and real estate summits, we've been reminded that there are winners and losers in every economic crisis. Mobile in general and Downtown in particular seem poised to come out of the current recession in better shape than much of the rest of the country. Our overall economy is fairly diversified, with a healthy mix of manufacturing, health care and knowledge-based industries.

As for Downtown, Richard Florida, the economist who coined the term "creative class," has written recently that urban centers will fair better than the suburbs as the economy shifts. The cost and aggravation of commutes will encourage many to move closer to city centers, which has the additional benefit of fostering more innovation since living a little closer together encourages the exchange of ideas.

So will we be a winner or a loser in this "reset" of our economy? Much depends on how livable our Downtown is. Do we offer the amenities people are seeking, is there a variety of housing options and is it a place of constant delight? These are the issues the Alliance works on daily, because, in the words of the great urbanist Jane Jacobs, "When a place gets boring, even the rich people leave." With our "colorful" personalities and events (see the photo of the Cathedral Square fountain on St. Patrick's Day), it is a fate we stand a good chance of avoiding!

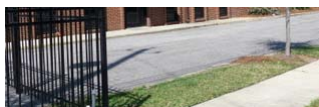


Development Buzz

The Gulf Coast Real Estate Summit last week may have painted a grim picture for some aspects of our market, but Downtown is still adding businesses, and sidewalks are still filled with people (each of whom is a potential shopper or diner).



The Gardner Law Firm soon will be moving into the former Hargrove and Associates offices at Washington and Canal Streets.



The firm is currently on Government Street in the Oakleigh Garden District, in superbly renovated space that was once a motel. It's very encouraging that such a significant corner was not vacant for long, and we look forward to another beautiful renovation.

In other development news:

- The beautifully repainted Daniels, Elgin & Co. Building at 2 South Water Street is now home to Louisiana-based **Iberia Bank**. **Seabulk Towing** has also moved into the building from offices on the State Docks property. **Austal** has also moved some of its offices into the building from across the river.
- Our arts and entertainment district is expanding with the addition of two new galleries. **Blue Velvet Studio** will open next month at 709 Dauphin Street in the newly renovated Carriage Works project. Artist **Brad Robertson** will be opening up a studio/gallery in the wonderfully funky space at 450 Dauphin Street.
- The former Fashion World on Dauphin Street is in the process of being converted into space for a new silk-screening business. **Unity Print Collective** will be a screen printing operation and gallery for local artists to showcase their talent.

Retail Happenings

Shopping, Dining and Entertainment News

With Mardi Gras a distant memory, our thoughts have moved on to springtime, and downtown retailers and restaurateurs are busy getting ready for Easter and Mother's Day. Next week look for an email detailing all the specials and promotions being offered, and be sure to take advantage of shopping local!

But before we move off Mardi Gras completely, the Alliance is compiling recommendations regarding this year's Carnival season. Did things work as well as they should? Are there things we could do to make the experience better? If you have some thoughts, please email them to esanders@downtownmobile.org.



In other retail news:

- A new restaurant is planning to open in the space that housed the popular Courtney's Cafe at the corner of St. Francis and Jackson Streets. The restaurant will feature home cooking, which could be exactly the kind of comfort food we need in these stressful times.
- **Downtowners Restaurant** has been a lunch-time hot spot for years, and new owner Jed Davis says he plans to continue the tradition. Jed trained at The Pillars and has been a chef at an Eastern Shore eatery.

Some upcoming entertainment:

- **Crescent Theater**

- **TimeCrimes, through March 19th** - Lauded short film director Nacho Vilalondo makes his feature debut with this tense, unstoppable vision of science and natural law gone awry. A man accidentally travels back into the past and meets himself. A naked girl in the middle of the forest. A mysterious stranger with his face wrapped in a pink bandage. A disquieting mansion on the top of a hill. All of them are pieces of an unpredictable jigsaw puzzle where terror, drama and suspense will lead to an unthinkable crime.
- **FanBoys, March 20-26th** - Set in 1998, FanBoys is the story of a group of friends who, eager for the premiere of Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace - and because one of them is suffering from cancer and wishes to see the film before his death, decide to break into Skywalker Ranch and steal an early print of the film. They travel across the country and on their way they encounter William Shatner, obsessed Trekkies, and bikers who make them undress for water.

- **Soul Kitchen**

- Above Zero - Friday, March 20 at 10:30 pm
- The North Mississippi Allstars with Hill Country Revenue as opener - Saturday, March 21 at 10:00 pm
- Laura Reed & Deep Pocket - Thursday, March 26 at 10:00 pm
- Frontier (tribute to Journey) - Friday, March 27 time TBA
- The Uglistick - Friday, April 3 at 11:00 pm
- The Molly Ringwalds - Saturday, April 4 at 11:00 pm
- Fusebox Funk with Past Pluto and Subject Matters - Friday, April 10 at 10:30 pm
- The Original Wailers feat. Al Anderson and Junior Marvin - Friday, April 24 at 10:00 pm
- Satisfaction (tribute to the Rolling Stones) - Saturday, April 25 at 11:00 pm
- DL Logic, New Mastersounds and Moon Taxi - Tuesday, April 28 at 9:00 pm

- **The Blind Mule**

- Final Nights and Angora Reunion - Friday, March 20 at 8:00 pm
- The debut of Eraser Eyes and Seduction Bomb - Saturday, March 21 at 10:00 pm
- For Fans of Zoogma: The Great Big No! - Friday, March 27 at 8:00 pm
- Trees Leave and Chris McFarland - Saturday, March 28 at 8:00 pm
- Red Mouth and Come On Go With Us - Friday, April 3 at 8:00 pm
- Smiley With A Knife and A Living Soundtrack - Saturday, April 11 at 8:00 pm
- Blind Mule artfest ARTS ALIVE! - Friday, April 17 at 10:00 pm
- The Blind Mule artfest ARTS ALIVE! - Saturday, April 18 at 10:00 am
- The Blind Mule artfest ARTS ALIVE! - Sunday, April 19 at 11:00 am
- Brian McGee and the Hollow Speed - Friday, April 24 at 8:00 pm
- Blaine Duncan and the Lookers - Saturday, April 25 at 8:00 pm

- **The Alabama Music Box**

- Nelaska, Muskrat Hannah, Slow Claw, One Small Step for Landmines - Friday, March 20 at 9:00 pm
- Criminal Envy, Within Reason, Maybe Later - Saturday, March 21 at 9:00 pm
- This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Shallshag, Future Virgins, Stupid Party - Sunday, March 22 at 4:00 pm
- Wizzard Sleeve, The Headliners - Sunday, March 22 at 9:00 pm
- Prizzy Prizzy Please, Cbend - Monday, March 23 at 9:00 pm
- Bathrop Alabama, Paper Moons, Amy Lavere - Tuesday, March 24 at 9:00 pm
- Maylene & the Sons of Disaster, Son of Gun +2 - Friday, March 27 at 7:00 pm
- TKO: Round 2! Dance Party with: DJ Charles III, Jeerz, Blacwaldo - Friday, March 27 at 10:00 pm
- Final Nights, Little High-Little Low, Lollipop Factory, Elle Duhe - Saturday, March 28 at 9:00 pm
- Muskrat Hannah, Vertigo, The Ingalloids - Sunday, March 29 at 9:00 pm
- Vulture Whale, The Photonicas, Last November - Friday, April 3 at 9:00 pm
- O' Brother - Sunday, April 5 at 9:00 pm

- Stone Avenue, Stangefather - Tuesday, April 7 at 9:00 pm
- Sons of Hippies - Thursday, April 9 at 9:00 pm
- Roma, Magnolia Sons, The Drownout - Friday, April 10 at 8:00 pm
- Geronimo 2! Electric Boogaloo, Night 2 with Wild Sweet Orange, El Cantador - Friday, April 24 at 9:00 pm
- Against Me, Pinehill Hiants, Off With Their Heads - Saturday, April 25 at 9:00 pm

Gulf Coast Exploreum Offers Stimulus Package



Although many exhibits across the country are noting a drop in attendance, the state-of-the-art health exhibit, **My BodyWorks**, has proven to be an overwhelming success. In the opening weekend, more than 4,000 people visited the exhibit, presented by Mobile Infirmity Health Systems and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama.

The impressive turn out can be attributed to a new "stimulus package," making the Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center more affordable than ever. In light of the current economic state, the Exploreum has significantly lowered ticket prices. You will find a savings of more than \$10 per ticket. For example, in 2008 an adult combo ticket was \$25. Now, for only \$14, you can get a combo ticket which includes admission into the Exploreum as well as an IMAX film.

Don't forget to sign up for your membership package to the Exploreum! With more savings than ever, a membership includes free admission to the entire Exploreum, discounts on IMAX tickets, and 20% off of birthday parties, gift shop purchases, camp registrations and café items.

[For more information about the Exploreum](#)

"Trend Czar" Offers Advice for Mobile

Jonathan Miller, President and CEO of Miller Ryan, a New York based real estate consulting firm, was in Mobile last month to visit family and present some of his observations of recent trend patterns. Fred Rendfrey, our Director of Downtown Economic Development, was in attendance and shares some of the highlights of Jonathan's presentation.



Connectivity is the key to successful cities in the 21st century

- Miller says we must begin to address the regressive tax that typical suburbs place on our citizens. Cities without extensive mass transit systems require most families to have multiple cars and the expense that goes along with operating them. Folks that live in connected cities, such as San Francisco and Washington, DC don't have to shoulder this burden, making the cost of living in those cities lower than it might first appear.

"24-hour cities" have become the drivers of our national and international economy - Miller believes these communities, such as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, are the most attractive cities for business and are successful at luring brainpower. As a result the health care, financial services and high tech jobs are being created in these communities.

Education - We also need to do everything we can to support our K-12 public education. These students are going to be the workforce of the next generation. It is unacceptable to allow anything but the best and we should do everything we can as a community to see that our schools are well funded.

How does Mobile fit into this 24-hour, connected picture? - Mobile can improve its chance of succeeding by modeling these communities, and Miller believes we're doing a great job in some areas. Three examples are the growth of the container port, the Mitchell Cancer Research hospital and the redevelopment of downtown. The port allows us to increase our global connectivity to the international markets and the Mitchell Cancer Institute attracts both experts in the life sciences as well as patients who require the services of these bright minds. The redevelopment of downtown allows people to live and work downtown while never stepping foot inside an automobile.

[Jonathan Miller Blog](#)

[Link to Miller Ryan Consulting](#)

Call for Performers

City is Looking for Bands and the Alliance is Seeking Street Performers

The City of Mobile's Neighborhood and Community Services Division is calling all local artists to participate in Fridays @ 5. Started last year, Fridays @ 5 features local musical talents in downtown parks and street corners after work on the second Friday of April, May and June. The event coincides with LODA Art Walk in which local art galleries open their doors to the public from 6-9 p.m.

Applications can be found on the NCS website, www.ncsmobile.org. Please submit your application and a CD by March 20, 2009 by mail or drop off at NCS, 2900 Dauphin St., Mobile, AL 36606. For additional information please call Angela Gibbons at 251-470-7730.

Additionally, the Downtown Mobile Alliance is exploring the idea of engaging street performers to enliven our sidewalk scene. Know any jugglers, acrobats, musicians or mimes? Know any who are currently out of work? Send them our way and we'll see if we're able to weave them into an engaging array of entertainment for our Downtown residents, workers and visitors.

Our favorite cities feature the kind of spontaneous delights that street performers provide. Mobile should be that kind of city. After all, our own Eugene Walter says of Mobilians, "They're all crazy down there." We might as well live up to our reputation!

Contact Carol Hunter at chunter@downtownmobile.org with suggestions.

De Tonti Square is Growing



Neighborhoods across the country are turning to community gardens as a way of connecting to each other and to the land...not to mention the benefits of adding food to the table! The De Tonti Square Neighborhood Association, with the help of the City of Mobile, has pulled together the first such garden in the Port City. The raised beds, which were installed this week in a city-owned lot in the neighborhood, will be tended by De Tonti Square residents.

City officials hope this is just the first of many community gardens to sprout up all over town. Volunteer Mobile is partnering with the City to provide volunteers for the effort, especially in low-income and underserved areas. If you'd like to learn more about community gardens, contact Volunteer Mobile at 251-433-4456.

Downtown Doings

Some Upcoming Events

Grand Canyon Adventure: River at Risk - IMAX Film
Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center: Now through June 7



This stunning IMAX film takes audiences on an exhilarating river-rafting adventure down the Colorado River, lead by a team of explorers who are committed to bringing awareness to global water issues. Floating down the river, audiences will learn about the challenges and opportunities that exist for conserving and restoring the Colorado River watershed. For more information including educational resources and a film trailer, please visit www.grandcanyonadventurefilm.com



Our Neighbors in Space, Hearin Chandler Virtual Journeys Digital Theater Gulf Coast Exploreum Science Center: Now through June 7, 2009
[Gulf Coast Exploreum](#)



Pirates!, Museum of Mobile

Now through July 4, 2009

This exhibition, made possible by the Museum of Arts & Sciences in Daytona Beach, provides an historic account of some of the more famous Pirates of Florida's East Coast. Found on display are artifacts, including coins, bullion, ingots and tools recovered from shipwrecks off of the East Coast of Florida. Grab your cutlass, don an eye-patch, hoist the Jolly

Roger, and climb aboard as we set sail for a glimpse of the characters that charged local waters with their intrigue and exploits. No passports are necessary, only a desire for adventure. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for students and free for kids under 6.

[Museum of Mobile](#)

Government Street Presbyterian Church Thursday Lunch Forums **All Forums begin at Noon**

March 19 - Teresa Ramsey, Director of Interfaith Hospitality Network/Family Promise

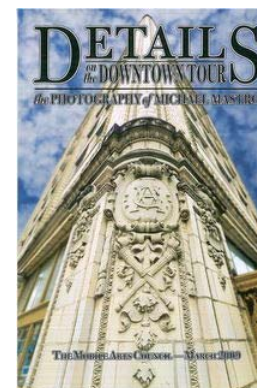
March 26 - Jimmy Lyons, Director of the Alabama State Port Authority

[Government Street Presbyterian Church](#)

Downtown Tour: Photographs by Michael Mastro, Art from Dunbar Middle School, and Art by students of Zack DePolo **Mobile Arts Council**

Now through 27

[Mobile Arts Council](#)



Mind, Body & Soul, Cathedral Square Gallery

Open studio each Sunday in March from 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Artwalk March 13 from 5:30 to 8:30

Benefiting the local Daughters of the Nile Naiad 109 General Fund.

[Cathedral Square Gallery](#)

Azalea Bloom Out!, Bellingrath Gardens and Home



March 14-29 (dates may vary depending on weather)

Enjoy the blooms or more than 250,000 vibrant azaleas in an explosion of color throughout the 65 acres of Bellingrath Gardens.

[Bellingrath Gardens](#)

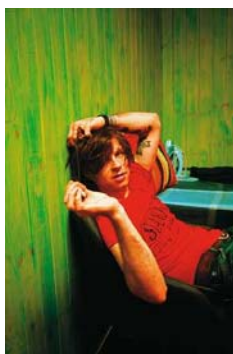
Film: Random Lunacy: Videos from the Road Less Traveled, Bernheim Hall

2008-2009 Southern Circuit of Independent Filmmakers

March 19 at 7:00 p.m.

Presented by the Mobile Arts Council and the Mobile Public Library

[Mobile Arts Council](#)



The Cardinals featuring Ryan Adams, Saenger Theatre

March 19 at 8:00 p.m.

With his backing band, The Cardinals, Ryan Adams has found great success and acclaim through both singing and songwriting. He has produced and contributed albums for artists such as Willie Nelson, the Wallflowers and the Counting Crows. On his last tour for the foreseeable future, Adams has chosen Mobile as his second to last stop. Don't miss out! Tickets range are \$36.50, \$27.75 or \$19.50 (plus service charge).

[Saenger Theatre](#)

Mobile Historic Homes Tour

March 20 and 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Visit architecturally significant private homes and sacred spaces in select historic districts. One day ticket \$12 for HMPS members, \$15 for non-members. Two day ticket \$20 for HMPS members, \$25 for non-members. For more information or to order tickets, please call 251-432-6161.

[Historic Mobile Preservation](#)



Murder at the Carnival Museum

March 21, 7:00 p.m., Mobile Carnival Museum

Two hours of hilarious "whodunit" by the Mystery Dinner Players, dinner from the Pillars Restaurant, open wine bar and tour of the museum, all for \$55/person.

"1863 Murder at the Mansion" - Uninvited guests have invaded this elegant 1863 mansion because of one of Mobile's torrential rainstorms. The horses have been stabled and guests are trying to stay dry, but certain guests are not what they seem. To top it off, there is a murderer among them! Reservations required: 251-479-3212.

[Mobile Mystery Dinners](#)



***The Clean Up Woman*, Saenger Theatre**

March 22 at 4:00 p.m.

[Saenger Theatre](#)

***Ani Difranco*, Saenger Theatre**

March 24 at 7:30 p.m.

[Saenger Theatre](#)



Christ Church Cathedral Lenten Series

11:30 a.m. - Holy Eucharist in Chapel

12:05 p.m. - Speaker in Church

12:30 p.m. - Luncheon in Chapter House

March 25 - The Reverend C. Neal Goldsborough, Rector of Christ Church Parish in Pensacola

April 1 - The Most Reverend Thomas J. Rodi, Archbishop, Archdiocese of Mobile

Workshop: Thursday Art Club, Ben May Main Library

March 26 at 4:00 p.m. for ages 7 and up.

Presented by the Mobile Museum of Art and the Mobile Public Library

[Mobile Public Library](#)

Mobile Opera Presents: Susannah

Mobile Civic Center Theater

March 26 and 28 at 7:30 p.m.

Composed by Carlisle Floyd and directed by Michael Ehrman, Susannah is a moving story that is brought to life by music that sounds both folksy and familiar while sounding stirring and powerful. Filled with an insightful mixture of human frailties, the story of Susannah was transported by Floyd from the biblical setting in Susannah and the



Elders to a small mountain town in the Carolinas. Call 251-432-6772 to purchase tickets.

[Mobile Opera](#)

Spring Concert, Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

March 27 at 8:15 p.m.

Presented by Musica Sacra Choir and Chamber Orchestra



32nd Annual Azalea Trail Run, streets of Downtown

March 28 at 8:00 a.m.

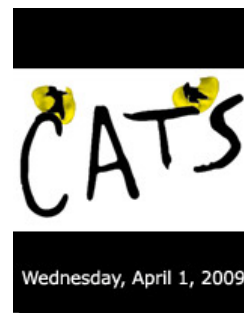
Through Fri, May 1. Mon - Fri, 9 AM - 5 PM. Free.

CATS, Mobile Civic Center Theater

April 1, 7:30 p.m.

Winner of seven Tony Awards, including Best Musical, CATS is the second longest running show in Broadway history and features 20 of Andrew Lloyd Webber's timeless melodies, including the hit song, "Memory."

[Ticket information](#)



USA Graphic Design Association Show, Mobile Arts Council

April 1 - May 1. Monday - Friday, 9p.m. - 5p.m. Free.

Three exhibitions: paintings by Cindy Phillips; designs by University of South Alabama students; photographic portraits by William Bunce.



Mobile Symphony Youth Orchestra Event featuring Midori, The Saenger Theatre

April 2 at 7:00 p.m.

All proceeds go to the MSO (Mobile Symphony Orchestra) educational programs.

[Saenger Theatre](#)

Camellia Classic Car Show, Bellingrath Gardens and Home

April 4, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

More than 300 vintage and antique cars can be seen on the Great Lawn of beautiful Bellingrath Gardens. Visitors are invited to come out and experience the beauty of spring and the nostalgia of antique cars and trucks. The event is presented by Bellingrath and the Mobile Bay Mustang Club, which donates the proceeds to local charities. Guests who bring a food item for the Bay Area Food Bank will receive a \$1.00 discount on admission.

[More Camellia Classic Information](#)

**Old Mobile 8k and 1-Mile Run, Fort Conde Village**

April 4 at 8:00 a.m.

Presented by the Port City Pacers

[Port City Pacers](#)

Quantum Energy, The Saenger Theatre

April 4 at 8:00 p.m. and 5 at 2:30 p.m.

Presented by the Mobile Symphony Orchestra

[Saenger Theatre](#)

**Arts Alive! - Cathedral Square and the Downtown Arts District**

April 17 - 19

This free, outdoor arts festival offers three days of varied artistic experiences and interactive and hands-on activities. The hallmark of Arts Alive! since inception has been its multi-dimensional arts platform. Each festival showcases a wide selection of art genres - theater, film, visual, music, dance - all featuring local and regional talent.

[Arts Alive! Complete Schedule](#)

Volunteer Mobile 6th Annual Shrimp Cook Off, Bienville Square

April 18, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Gather together a team to compete for bragging rights and raise money for one of Mobile's most active organizations. Or if you're not much of a



cook, then be sure to come down to enjoy the fruits of someone else's labor!

[Shrimp Cook-off Details](#)



[For more events](#)

Sincerely,

Carol Hunter
Downtown Mobile Alliance

The Downtown Mobile Alliance exists to support the redevelopment of Downtown through marketing, advocacy and the management of BID services.

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