

# A room with a view

By Cindy Gilbert

Whether you're looking out the window, walking down the street or driving around the block, the quaint, little city of Lawrenceville is slowly rising out of the ashes and disrepair.

Three years ago, when my partner, Patty, and I spied a "for sale" sign in an upper window in the historic square, little did we realize that we were about to become part of the reincarnation of a whole city.

Shabby-chic is how one might have described Lawrenceville back then. Buildings in desperate need of repair, some burned and boarded, yet others with almost secret, yet beautiful, treasures hidden to drivers as they sped by unaware.

I know how much work can go into revitalization; one floor was enough for me. Our education in renovation took a lot of blood, sweat and tears as we turned our dream of a musical coffeehouse featuring gourmet coffees, desserts and yes, karaoke, into reality.

As I sit listening to milk steaming, I hear our newest customer say, "We had no idea this was here!"

"It wasn't always like this" Patty said. "The more we tore down, the more damage we found."

It's amazing what passion, desire and vision can do to bring out beauty from aged disrepair. Looking back now I can't imagine doing it again — let alone over and over again — yet that's what's happening in Lawrenceville.

Visionaries like the people of The Morsberger Group and Willis



Partners take on building after building and are changing the way Gwinnett County sees its county seat. Every day there is something new.

Dilapidated metal awnings come down as new stylish awnings emerge. Broken glass, so hazy with age that it appears to be haunted, is made new and sparkling with sunlight, like a bright-eyed toddler waiting to see what's next. Beautiful murals are painted by our own Bobby Sikes, and unique signage by our local sign man adorns the little town that we call home.

If you haven't been to Lawrenceville lately, you're in for an incredible treat. The new stores range from antique to eclectic, as well as red-hat heaven for those poem-driven ladies.

Imagine spending a day with us in Lawrenceville. You can start your morning with breakfast and coffee. Then shop 'til you drop, eat lunch in one of our restaurants and go back

out and hunt for treasures around the square.

Create projects — from glass to clay — in one of the unique stores that offer classes. The day's not over; it's time for a relaxing dinner before enjoying a play by our latest cultural phenomenon: The Aurora Theatre.

No evening is complete without enjoying a steaming latte and gourmet dessert while you're seeing the view that I see from our unique vantage point at The Singin' Bean. While you're here, perhaps you might share your own singing talent at one of our karaoke nights. What a perfect getaway for a day or a weekend!

We at The Singin' Bean are proud to be part of the revitalization of Gwinnett's great county seat. □