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Roswell: Hollywood at home on Main Street in Dallas

By Vicki Griffin

4:49 p.m. Friday, February 25, 2011

A recent weekday morning found me driving westward from Roswell toward Paulding County and points unknown. My sons tease me and tell me I get lost as soon as I pull out of our driveway, and that is overwhelmingly, unfortunately, true. If ever there was a reason to employ GPS guidance, it's me. But only simplified directions and a dismal array of incomplete and ineffective maps covered my quest and the passenger seat as I drove past the few remaining guideposts I was familiar with.

I knew Paulding County wasn't far, I know friends who live there, but had previously not had opportunity or occasion to visit. Work is all I do these days, and that was my mission on this morning.

But as my destination neared, I turned off the larger two-lane roadway and onto what would become Main Street in Dallas.

Even more enchanting than I'd imagined, Main Street in Dallas is replete with historic buildings and homes that echo an earlier time, with a tidy freshness as crisp as a broom-swept welcome mat. A small-town Hollywood set come to life and an ambiance so complete that I almost missed my turn for the second time. But the yellow signs beckoned me toward the decorous First Baptist Church of Dallas and my eventual destination.

A short walk away, I joined the more than 300 other local folks there to help make the movie magic of "Joyful Noise" in the Dallas Theater. Built in 1927 and renovated in 2004, it has more than 500 seats, including the balcony. But on this day, most were occupied by stage technicians, klieg lights, a choir on stage that included many major musical stars, and a camera on a huge crane that sat in an aisle and then swooped over the seated audience comprised of us ordinary locals.

The delightful Dolly Parton, wearing fitted choir robes that accentuated her whittled waist and punctuated her positives, greeted us and introduced us to Queen Latifah, the choir members and Kris Kristofferson. Later, inexhaustible director Todd Graff, who also wrote the screenplay, took the stage dancing a jammin' jig and led us in applause to the beat.

This is not metro Atlanta's first brush with silver screen stardom, as Georgia frequently hosts Hollywood movies. Just this summer MTV's sequel to "My Super Psycho Sweet 16" was shot at Sprayberry High School in Marietta, with coffee shop scenes in Roswell. And "Terminal," the sequel to "Quarantine," came to life not far from Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. "The Lost Valentine" featured beloved Betty White and a background showcasing our locally cast military veterans. Clayton County recently wrapped

“The Odd Life of Timothy Green.” And with Hollywood coming here to work, there is more work for Georgia.

Paulding County is one of the fastest-growing counties in the country, but it still maintains the heart that resides in the small-town community’s pride. A Hollywood ending would hold a premier at the picture-perfect Dallas Theater, with red carpet and search lights, because it’s lights, camera, Dallas!

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