
The Thrasher Newsletter

Volume 43. No.2

Spring 2024

All aboard for Norcross

Six reasons to attend the 50th Anniversary Reunion



By DAVID E. SUMNER

The planning committee has been hard at work for a year planning the 50th Anniversary Thrasher Family Association reunion. The site team visited Norcross restaurants in January and again concluded that The Crossing Steakhouse had the nicest and best facilities for a large group. The Saturday night meal (with taxes and a 20 percent service charge) accounts for most of our \$125 reunion registration fee, and we must give them a count ahead of time. That's one reason we need your check by April 30.

After taking your seat at a table on the covered outside patio, a server will ask for your entrée choice: Sirloin Steak, Sienna Chicken, or Salmon Velouté. Side dishes include a baked potato and grilled vegetables. You'll start your meal with a traditional salad with house balsamic dressing.

Please call The Crowne Plaza reservation number at (770) 448-4400 and ask for the Thrasher rate. We have reserved 15 rooms at the Thrasher discount rate. You can also use this link: [Thrasher Family Association Reservation Link](#)

Mail your \$125 (per person) registration checks to David Sumner at 4009 Colonial Drive, Anderson, Indiana 46012. Elise and I are driving to Florida on May 20 and returning by way of Norcross for the reunion on May 31. This registration fee is the lowest possible we could determine to break even. Please note that you must make the hotel registration separately from the reunion registration.

Our planning team includes John and Paula Thrasher, Steven Wang, Celestea Sharpe, Ivy Darnall, and David Sumner, chair.

Here are six reasons to visit Norcross and attend the 50th Anniversary TFA Reunion:

Welcoming: The main reason I volunteered to plan this reunion was the friendliness and hospitality of the community we experienced in 2015. They reached out to welcome us with open arms in 2015 and have done so again this year. The Gwinnett Daily Post wrote two articles about the Thrasher reunion in 2015—one before and one after. Our community hosts feel honored that the Thrasher Family Association wants to have its 50th anniversary reunion in Norcross. They include Stephanie Newton, director of the Norcross Visitor's Center; Tanya Gilmer, director of the Lionheart Theatre Company; Gene Ramsay, a local historian and tour host; Christina Howell-Scott, director of sales and marketing for the Crowne Plaza; and Francesca de Los Santos, manager of The Crossing Steakhouse.

Affordable: The Crowne Plaza hotel offers the lowest rates of any of the last three reunion hotels. The site planning team visited Norcross in January and came back with rave reviews of the hotel's spacious, modern facilities. I also visited the hotel in 2015 and attest to its spaciousness, its wooded surroundings, and proximity to Norcross about a mile away. A downtown shuttle runs at the top and bottom of every hour between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m.

Entertaining: Special guests will inform you, educate you, and entertain you. Mark Pifer, author of "Hidden History of Old Atlanta," will speak about Cousin John's pioneering role in the early years of Atlanta. Gene Ramsay, as noted in the last newsletter, will offer informative tales about how Cousin John ended up in Norcross and what he did there. Finally, the Lionheart Theatre group directed by Tanya Gilmer will offer an entertaining tour of old Norcross with a special appearance by Cousin John and a couple of citizens from the historic town's past. As always, there will be drawings for local door prizes over the weekend. In addition, during Saturday's business meeting, you'll have the opportunity to win a special commemorative door prize, handcrafted and donated by one of our members.

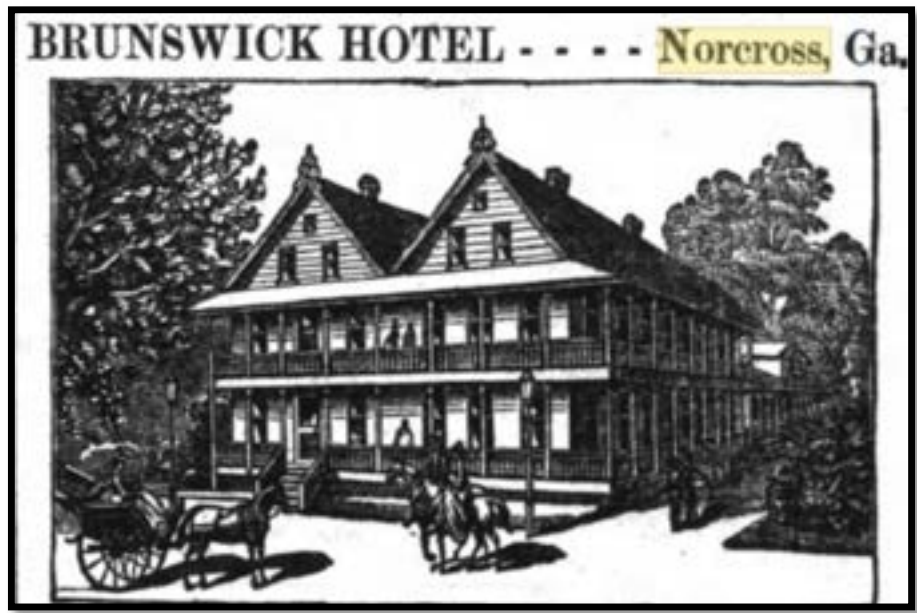




Charming: The first time I visited Norcross I fell in love with its charm. Seven downtown restaurants were open and busy on a Friday night. Most of the downtown buildings were constructed in the late 1800s and have retained the architectural charm of the era. The quiet residential areas surrounding downtown sustain that charm.

Accessible: Norcross is a half hour northeast of Atlanta just off I-285 and within a day's driving distance of most TFA members: 181 miles from Montgomery; 227 miles from Charlotte; 166 miles from Birmingham; 455 miles from Orlando; 265 miles from Savannah.

Historic: "Cousin John" Thrasher built the city and the Brunswick Hotel in 1870 to create a weekend tourist destination for Atlantans wanting to take the train and get away for the weekend. The town today has embraced his legacy and honors him with three historic markers, a park, and pictorial displays at the Norcross Visitors Center. He was a co-founder of the Norcross Baptist church, donated land for a children's home, and gave homesites to clergy to create "Holy Row." The more I researched his life, the more I admired his character and felt it was worthy of emulation.



More things you should know:

Friday evening dinner is on your own. Those who wish to get together with fellow TFA members, please meet in the hotel lobby at 6 p.m. to carpool. Downtown Norcross restaurant choices within walking distance of each other include: The Crossing Steakhouse (Saturday night dinner venue), Dominick's Italian Restaurant, Mojitos Cuban Cafe, Zapata Tacos and Tequila Bar, Paizanos



Bistro, B&W Burgers, Buns & Brews, and Iron Horse Tavern. For late arrivals, the hotel has an onsite restaurant and a room service menu.

The Crowne Plaza rates are: \$129 (King or two Queen beds) per room without breakfast or \$139 with breakfast buffet for two (plus state and local taxes). Reservations for the TFA rate will be accepted until April 30 by calling 770-448-4400 and asking for the Thrasher reunion

rate. Hotel reservations at the Thrasher rate are due by April 30.

Your reunion registration check (\$125/person) is also due by April 30. It covers the Saturday dinner and box lunch, meeting room rental cost, door prizes and speaker honorariums.



REGISTRATION

Please mail registration checks (\$125/person) to:
David E. Sumner, 4009 Colonial Drive, Anderson, Indiana 46012.
NOTE: Registration deadline is April 30.

Questions? Contact David:
email: davidesumner@gmail.com or call: 765-313-6251.

Number attending: _____ Amount enclosed: _____
Name: _____
Address: _____
City and zip: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Lionheart Theatre Company to entertain

By **DAVID E. SUMNER**



Tanya Gilmer says she is planning a “Ghost Tour” of 19th century Norcross for the 2024 TFA reunion, which will include a special appearance by Cousin John Thrasher. She is the founder and producing artistic director of the Lionheart Theatre Company: www.lionhearttheatre.org

The Company entertained visitors at the 2015 reunion with reenactments about 19th century Norcross characters. They will make an encore performance again this year on June 1. The company is the oldest community theater in Gwinnett County and has been honored with several awards by Georgia civic theater organizations.

Tanya is a Georgia native who majored in communication arts and theater at Georgia Southern College in Statesboro. In 1995, she was the founder of the Norcross Presbyterian Church Drama Ministry, which evolved into the Lionheart Theatre Company in 2000 with the church’s support. “We wanted to provide an outreach to the community and visitors with affordable entertainment and education in theater arts. All our performers, stage producers, designers and other staff are volunteers,” she says. In addition to several performances each year, the company offers summer camps and theater workshops. This summer it will offer an auditions workshop, performance camp, and film class camp for children and teenagers. Tanya enjoys producing, directing, and acting at Lionheart and is a mother, grandmother, and schoolteacher.

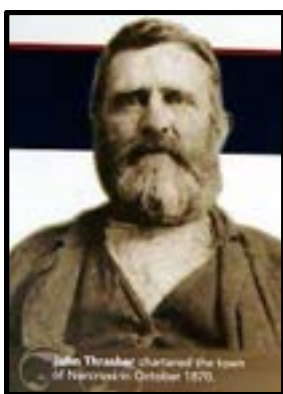
Asked if the name “Lionheart” had any special meaning, she said, “No, it just sounded theatrical.”

The company’s home, stage, and auditorium are in the old Methodist church at 10 College St., which was built in 1877. The city now owns the building and makes it available to the theater at a nominal cost. Past performances in 2024 included “The Radio Play Disaster” in January, “Love, Sex, and the I.R.S.” in



March, and “Breaking Legs” in May. Future performances this year will include “The Enchanted Bookshop” in July, “Perfect Arrangement” in September, “Lawless Spirits” in October, and “The Game’s Afoot” in December.

“Because Lionheart is so ingrained in the Norcross community, we are always looking for ways to give back,” she says. “Whether it’s by using productions to raise donations for organizations like Norcross Cooperative Ministries, Relay for Life or local children’s programs, Lionheart is dedicated to contributing to a town that has supported it for so long,” she says. “I hope that Lionheart will continue to fulfill our mission to enrich, entertain and educate our community by making art accessible to the entire population. We are delighted to again host the Thrasher Family Association and look forward to meeting and entertaining you in June.”



Cousin John says, “Remember to pay your dues for 2024”

TFA dues are \$20. Please make your check to:

The Thrasher Family Association

Mail it to:

**Warren Thrasher, Jr.
Thrasher Family Association Treasurer
50 Sassafras Trail
Savannah, Georgia 31404**

We also collect dues at the annual reunions.

Editor’s Note

The Thrasher Family Association newsletter needs your input. Share ideas for stories – or better yet, suggest an article you'd like to submit. We're looking for profiles of TFA members, articles focused on family history and heritage, genealogy, photographs, reviews of books on topics related to the family, features on books written by members, and news about people and places. Get in touch with newsletter editor Paula Thrasher by calling or texting [770-328-7716](tel:770-328-7716) or email to pthrasher@numail.org. The newsletter is published via email four times a year on a seasonal basis.

Staff members include:

Paula Thrasher, newsletter editor
David E. Sumner, chief contributing writer
Sue Q. Thrasher, layout and design
John Paul Thrasher, production director

**Remember you can always send
your stories and photos
for future newsletters!**

See y'all in Norcross!



Crowne Plaza reunion hotel

TFA Reunion Schedule

Friday, May 31

- 3:00-6:00 p.m. Check-in at The Crowne Plaza, 6050 Peachtree Industrial Blvd N.E.
- 6:00-9:00 p.m. Dinner on your own. Meet in the lobby at 6pm to discuss options and carpool. Downtown restaurants include Mojitos Cuban Café, 45 South Café, The Crossing Steakhouse, Paizanos Bistro and the Iron Horse Tavern.

Saturday, June 1

- 9:00-11:00 a.m. Business meeting in the Danville Small Ballroom at Crowne Plaza
- 1:00-11:30 a.m. Talk by Mark Pifer, author of “The Hidden History of Old Atlanta”
- 11:30-11:45 a.m. Take the hotel shuttle or carpool to Thrasher Park.
- 12:00-1:00 p.m. Box lunch at Thrasher Park, 93 Park Drive.
- 1:00-1:30 p.m. Dr. Gene Ramsay, local historian (at Thrasher Park)
Tanya Gilmer, Lionheart Theatre Company (at Thrasher Park)
- 1:30-3:30 p.m. Lionheart Theatre Company: Tour of downtown historic sites led by Dr. Gene Ramsay and featuring costumed story tellers. Conclude with stop at Norcross Visitor’s Center and Museum with welcome by Stephanie Newton.
- 3:30-6:30 p.m. Free time for leisure or shopping downtown Norcross.
- 6:30-9:00 p.m. Dinner at The Crossing Steakhouse, 40 S. Peachtree St.

Sunday, June 2

- 7:00-9:00 a.m. Buffet breakfast at The Crowne Plaza and checkout

DOWNTOWN

HISTORIC NORCROSS



MAP KEY

- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| 1. Lillian Webb Park | 16. The Rectory | 28. Refuge Coffee | 39. The Space in Between, Massage & Movement Studio | 51. Tomlinson Law Office |
| 2. Betty Mauldin Park | 17. Lionheart Theatre | 29. Butter & Cream | 40. Bleu House | 52. Video Innovation |
| 3. Thrasher Park | 18. Cultural Arts & Community Center | 30. The Rose & Hemp | 41. Norcross Family Dentistry | 53. La Fontaine Language Center & AUM Sweet Home |
| 4. Discovery Garden Park | 19. Norcross Presbyterian Church | 31. B & W Burgers | 42. 45 South Café | 54. The Crossing Steakhouse |
| 5. Welcome Center & Museum | 20. Norcross Garden Club | 32. Antique Traditions & Rem-i-nisce Vintage Style | 43. Allied Chiropractic Clinic | 55. Paizanos |
| 6. Fire Station Museum | 21. Gwinnett County Public Library: Norcross Branch | 33. Dominick's Italian Restaurant | 44. Harrington Insurance Company | 56. The O Gallery |
| 7. Gwinnett County Fire Station | 22. The Brunswick | 34. Studio 87 Yoga | 45. Mojitos Cuban Bistro | 57. Zapata Tacos & Tequila Bar |
| 8. The Local Peach | 23. Design in Flowers | 35. VSOP Taproom | 46. Nails & Beauty Salon | 58. Red Hound Gifts |
| 9. In The Garden Salon Studio | 24. 173 Carlyle House | 36. Taste of Britain | 47. Social Fox Brewing | 59. Iron Horse Tavern |
| 10. Print Solver | 25. Norcross Gallery & Studios | 37. Good Things Home & Garden | 48. Glitter G | |
| 11. Insignia Promo | 26. Ivy Teahouse | 38. Anna Balkan Jewelry & Gifts | 49. Norcross Hair Salon | |
| 12. The Lash Girl | 27. Carolee's | | 50. Norcross Barber Shop | |
| 13. The Baig Firm | | | | |
| 14. Norcross Police Department | | | | |
| 15. City Hall | | | | |