

May Mayor's Report: Cultural Amenities of Alton

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Many times the cultural aspects of our community are overlooked. Some of our areas greatest cultural treasures are at our fingertips and can bring hours of unique, local entertainment.

The following groups are proud to announce the coalition and formation of “Arts Around Alton”. The objectives of this coalition are to bring a greater awareness of and support for all of the arts organizations. With the exception of the Alton Municipal Band, which is funded by tax dollars, these cultural venues are surviving, but need public support in these tough economic times. If you are not familiar with any of these groups, please visit their websites and you will find something for everyone.

The Jacoby Arts Center (JAC) serves as an integral component of our community’s growth and progress. JAC is a catalyst for cultural development and provides

fulfillment of creative potential for our citizens. Access is provided to the arts and culture through their professional art gallery, educational programming, Arts in the Park, ArtSplash, Alton's Farmers & Artisans Market, and Art East (the annual studio and exhibits tour). JAC sponsors two monthly live music concerts known as Live at Jacoby and Last Saturday Nights, featuring the talents of musicians—local, regional, national, and international! Their website is www.jacobyartscenter.org.

Alton's Little Theater (ALT) will be kicking off its 78th season with two musical productions, the comedy *Whodunit* and *Curtains*, and the high energy, *Hairspray*. ALT produces five to six musical or theatrical productions each season. ALT also provides the actor/historians for the "Lincoln Legacy Living History Tours" and for "Vintage Voices" each October in the City Cemetery. Their participation in First Night, Christmas Wonderland, and "STARS OF TOMORROW" (which provides musical experience for young, hopeful singers) solidifies their commitment to serve and enrich the community through the Arts. Their website is www.altonlittletheatre.org.

Alton Marketplace is sponsoring two events at the Amphitheater to showcase our creative community and bring visitors to the downtown district. The Big Gig Local Music Show, on July 23rd, spotlights local bands performing original music and the Mississippi Earthtones Festival, on September 17th, is a celebration of our greatest asset, the Mississippi River, through art, music, and conservation. Their website is www.altonmarketplace.com.

The Great Rivers Choral Society (GRCS) is celebrating their 10th year. The purpose of the GRCS is to promote, encourage, and foster educational and cultural enrichment of its members and residents of the communities. They promote and cultivate an interest in, and appreciation of, choral music through performances. One aspect of their mission is to promote youth-focused educational opportunities, in school programs, and talent based vocal music scholarships. Their website is www.grcs-sing.org.

The Alton Municipal Band, one of the oldest municipal bands in the country, has brought many generations of Alton families together to share in wholesome entertainment. The Municipal Band performs on Thursdays and Sundays throughout the summer months at Riverview and Haskell Parks. Their website is www.altonmuniband.org.

The Alton Symphony Orchestra (ASO) is a reflection of the great musical talent our community has to offer. They are currently entering their 67th season. ASO's long history and mission is to enhance the education of young people, provide a venue for the development of the community's adult musicians, and provide cultural benefits to the community. The ASO is proud to present the incredibly talented musicians living in our community. Their website is www.altonsymphony.org.

The Greater Alton Concert Association provides area residents an opportunity to embrace and embellish their cultural life in the realm of music, dance, and theatre. Their website is www.altonconcerts.com.

As you can see, cultural activities abound in the Alton Area. I invite you to attend these events and support our local arts and cultural institutions.

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