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One mac daddy of a deal

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The McDonald's at 2738 S. Main St. in High Point, torn down in September, is scheduled to reopen Wednesday with a fresh new look, a coffee bar and free Big Macs for a year for the first 100 customers.

The store will be the first in High Point and Greensboro to serve a variety of coffee drinks, similar to those sold at the McCafe chain.

A neighborhood landmark, the McDonald's was built in 1977 and has been owned by Tony Delligatti, grandson of the inventor of the Big Mac and owner of four other area McDonald's.

"As we say in McDonald's, I have ketchup in my veins," Delligatti said.

The original Main Street McDonald's was built in the Colonial Williamsburg design and had an aquarium and salad bar and one of the first drive-throughs in the area. The new store makes another drive-through first, with the Triad's first side-by-side drive-through.

The interior includes leather seating, a two-sided fireplace, flat-screen TVs and two touch-to-play video game systems. The artwork features furniture, since the location is High Point -- "furniture capital of the world."

Delligatti said he nicknamed the store Chez McDonald's.

"They spared no expense," said Barbara Dudley, Delligatti's assistant. "You would think you're in one of the nicest restaurants in Manhattan."

Said Delligatti: "One of the electricians on the job worried that he might have to wear a tie inside.

"I reassured him that, of course, there will be no dress code. You might want to brush off your boots, though, before you come in."

In honor of the redesign, Dudley put together a time capsule of memorabilia from 1977 and today. She buried and marked it with a PVC pipe in front of the building Jan. 9 with the help of Adam Johnson, student body president of partner school Archdale Elementary.

The time capsule included tidbits of information from when the store opened. Jimmy Carter was president, and the price of a five-bedroom cottage overlooking Badin Lake was \$20,000. Also included were a letter written by Dudley about the new store and design, a Happy Meal toy, McDonald's price list and a newspaper for that day.

Dudley took the time capsule to Archdale Elementary before Christmas. She gave each student a Happy Meal and let them put their good behavior dog tags in the capsule.

"When it opens, the kids at Archdale Elementary are going to remember that," Dudley said. "Thirty years down the line, maybe it'll be rebuilt again, and they'll be parents, and when we dig up this time capsule they'll be the ones that'll remember when that store opened."

Delligatti's father and grandfather opened their first McDonald's in 1957 in Pittsburgh, Pa. It was the 19th McDonald's in existence and one of the first to serve breakfast. It was the first to serve the

Big Mac, of course, for 45 cents in 1967.

Delligatti started working at McDonald's for his father in 1986.

The store's grand opening will be Feb. 9, with appearances from Ms. North Carolina, the Panther from High Point University and Two Guys Named Chris from Rock 92. Chris Whitley, High Point's mayor pro tem, will cut the ribbon. There will be giveaways, including a giant crayon, mountain bike and TV.

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