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A CUP OF JO

The house that may have formerly been the telephone exchange switchboard for San Marcos at the turn of the 20th century has returned as the talk of the town.

“I don’t have a lot of info, but I’ve been told by several people that come in who have either lived there or partied in that house, stories go on and on and on,” said Liz Rios about the small wooden house with distinct rock trim that houses her newest business venture.

Jo’s Café, at 310 Mary St., has revitalized this unique structure with a full-service espresso and coffee bar, along with a kitchen lovingly run by co-owner Leah Molina. It’s a place that maintains its history while allowing people to spend hours inside its walls to create their own.

It took a year and a lot of work for the café’s doors to open, according to Rios. She’s owned Jo on the Go for 15 years and a second location that recently closed after five years off Wonder World.

Since the beginning of the New Yorker’s foray into coffee there have been plans to open something else. What that something else was going to be, well, that may have been easier to decide

than what that something else was going to be called.

Originally, Jo’s Café was going to be called Cosmo’s Café after Rios and Molina’s young son. The couple, however, has an older son, Max, whom they didn’t want to exclude.

“We didn’t kind of want to put the boys in between it,” said Rios. “Then Cosmo would have to grow up with, ‘Ya, that’s my café. Ya, ya, those are my two moms,’ things like that, and we didn’t want to put the pressure on him. And we didn’t want to leave Max out, so we decided not to go that route.”

A lot of names came into play, she said, but people know Jo on the Go. So, Rios and Molina rolled with it.

Jo’s Café now rolls out the popular breakfast tacos and baked goods also sold at Jo on the Go. Create-your-own tacos, paninis and other sandwiches are sold exclusively at the café.

Rios said the café is an opportunity to provide more food options for the San Marcos community and help residents develop their palate for bagless food.

As San Marcos grows and changes, Rios and Molina will continue to stay grounded – while grinding a mean cup of jo.