

# That Same Old Story

**NOTICE: Public hearings on completing I-40 will be held August 18 and 19 in the City Council Chamber beginning at 9 a.m.**

Harland Bartholomew and Associates completed its report on Memphis interstate routes in August, 1955, in line with the newly mandated \$50 billion system proposed by the Eisenhower Administration and the transportation industry. Memphians got their first taste of I-40 on April 16, 1957, when maps of the proposed routes were published in the *Commercial Appeal* for the public hearing two days later. About 300 people turned up to protest the route through Overton Park, including Mayor Edmund Orgill, who criticized the hearing for failure to give the public adequate opportunity to see the route maps. Two years later, Frank Ragsdale, traffic engineer and longtime chief of the Traffic Advisory Commission, proposed that the circumferential routes would serve Memphis just as well and that the north-south and east-west routes be abandoned.

Thus far, feeling was still running high against the I-40 route, but in 1960, the Downtown Association of the Chamber of Commerce began a campaign to begin work on I-40 before the circumferential routes of I-240 were completed. On February 13, 1960, the *Commercial Appeal* editorialized in "East-West Next" that changes should be made in the construction schedules to help Downtown Memphis. Though it was the highways that had killed downtowns in the first place — everyone could drive to work but live out in the suburbs and do all their shopping there — now the *superhighway* was called upon to bring Downtown back to life.

Various people also noticed that the real supporters for I-40 were not the Downtown merchants but those representing building, mortgage, and real estate interests. Apparently, large tracts of land were being bought up along the I-40 right-of-way.

With the competent opposition of the Committee to Preserve Overton Park, public feeling against the expressway continued to stall off the project. But when the lure of a new Mississippi River bridge surfaced in the mid-1960s, public officials began saying we wouldn't have the bridge unless I-40 were built as originally planned.

When Memphis changed from commission government to mayor-council government in 1968,

the new City Council was asked to take a stand for or against the route. On March 5, 1968, it voted unanimously against the park route; thirty days later, the day Martin Luther King was assassinated, a majority of the Council voted for the route. The importance of the Council's support was explained by Federal Highway Administrator Lowell Bridwell: the Department of Transportation could defend the Overton Park route in court against the environmental interests "with the support of City Council representing the people of Memphis," but "our position would be endangered without it."

Just before the lawsuit actually took place, in 1969, the Committee incorporated as the Citizens to Preserve Overton Park. It has been fighting ever since.

On March 2, 1971, the Supreme Court reversed the decisions of the lower courts and remanded the case back to District Court for a full review of the Secretary of Transportation's decision as to whether there was a "feasible and prudent alternative" to the park route.

Since then, the go-throughs have been plugging away. They have convinced public officials to either support them or be silent on the issue. They have completed I-40 on both sides of the park and put off the northern half of I-240 as an alternative to the I-40 route.

In the twenty-year battle, a multitude of design alternatives have been generated; the most expensive one to date is an elevated highway (\$238 million) above North Parkway. A current favorite is the proposal of the Tennesseans for Better Transportation, an association of transportation industry people, for a partial cut-and-cover design (\$50 million) featuring a sunken highway covered at intervals with landscaped plazas. On February 18, 1975, the *Press-Scimitar* ran a full-color artist's rendering of the design, quite woody and flower-filled, except that no motor vehicles were visible on the roadways. It was also unclear who would be strolling on the paths surrounded by noise and exhaust fumes, for no people were pictured.

A recent telephone survey conducted by the *Commercial Appeal* showed that, of 308 drivers interviewed, 65% were for the immediate completion of I-40 through Overton Park, 24% were against it, and 11% were undecided. If you had a telephone in your car, odds are that you'd be for I-40 too. — David Bowman

# The Gourmet That Ate Main Street

As *Center City* told you a few weeks ago, the radical chic place to eat in Memphis (now that Burkle's has closed) is the P & H Cafe at 1528 Madison Avenue.

While it is probably better known for cheeseburgers and beer, the P & H also serves an excellent plate lunch Monday through Friday. A recent trip to the cafe at noon was a real treat — the menu offered the best fried okra in town. There were large portions of vegetables, and the barbecue chicken was quite tasty. Most importantly, the prices are reasonable.

The most reasonably-priced hot lunch to be found in the Downtown-Medical Center area is the Civic Center Community Culinary Club at First Presbyterian Church, Poplar Avenue at Third Street. The \$1.50

lunch includes meat, vegetables, and tea or coffee. The fried chicken served each Thursday is not to be missed — it may well be some of the best served in the city.

The newest restaurants on the Downtown eats scene are the two Zinnie's — one located in the basement of the Porter Building at Court and the Mall, the other on Jefferson between the Mall and Front Street. The Porter Building location is open from 11 a.m. until 3 a.m. Their delicious hamburger became the *piece de resistance* of the original Zinnie's at Madison and Belvedere. Zinnie's on the Mall also offers a full line of deli sandwiches and several types of bread. If it's crowded at noon, don't get discouraged; go back in the evening for supper — it's a pleasant experience. — Andrew S. Scott, III

# center city

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## City Health

*This is the first in a series of articles designed to acquaint readers with the available health services in the Downtown-Midtown area.*

Clinics have traditionally been the end of the medical road, servicing those too poor to afford private care. However, the economic and social climate of the last ten years has changed this limited use of clinics. But there is no need here to reiterate the high cost of health care in the United States.

Today clinics offer several benefits to the patient-consumer. First, lower cost care makes preventive medicine, rather than just crises or problem treatment, possible. Second, clinics are an educational experience in which the patient as well as the student doctor can participate. The patient-consumer has the right and an obligation to understand examinations and procedures, and to have explained the results and significance of tests and treatments.

The Southern College of Optometry, 1245 Madison, offers clinical examinations by fourth-year students for \$12.00. If the exam reveals

visual impairment, the patient is referred to the low vision clinic for specific analysis. If there is a physiological disorder, the patient is referred to a private ophthalmologist. Appointments should be made at least three weeks in advance; call 725-0180.

There is a \$3.00 charge for eye-glass prescriptions, and glasses, if ordered, will be completed in 14 working days. One pays for the glasses when ordering; the full amount if by check; one half the amount if by cash. (I made a quick phone survey of optometrists' offices and found that the basic examination prices tend to increase the farther east I called: Midtown O.D. — \$15.00, Poplar Plaza O.D. — \$20.00, German-town O.D. — \$25.00.)

The UT School of Dentistry, 800 Madison (entrance on Dunlap) has a screening procedure and last year serviced 75,000 patients. All preliminary examinations are free and are made by an instructor. If accepted, the patient pays \$14.00 for a complete dental examination, including the required x-rays. If further work is indicated, the patient is routed to the appropriate department. Dental problems such as crown and bridge work are referred to private dentists. For further information and appointments call 528-6220. — Pat Waters

## MoviesMoviesMov

**SILENT MOVIE** with Mel Brooks, Sid Caesar, Dom Deluise, Marty Feldman

A man walks out of an acupuncture clinic with a lot of long needles stuck in his back; diners in a restaurant which serves hot, spicy food are blowing smoke out of their mouths; a pie is accidentally thrown into a policeman's face — is that funny to you? If so, this little gem is for you.

Plunk down your \$3 and you will see all of the forementioned plus one or two sight gags and jokes so absurd they would make anyone laugh.

For the rest of us, *Silent Movie* will result in a silent audience. This picture must have cost about \$35 to make and is, literally, a silent movie about a director making a modern-day silent movie. — Robert A. Lanier

**WANTED: New Editor for Center City**  
PAY: Fifty dollars per issue and all the words you can eat. **REQUIREMENTS:** Commitment of one year; reside and work in the Downtown-Midtown area; interest in community journalism; at least a polite reference to freshman grammar; determined enough to bully and coax well-intentioned, talented contributors to productive and publishable ends; and a lunchbox full of fresh ideas. **CONTACT:** Gerald Murley, Manager, c/o Front Street Arts, 9 N. Second Street, Suite 1300, 38103.

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# Double Parked

On these hot August days when it's too sultry to eat your lunch outside but you feel like you've got to get out of the office for a little while, quickly consume your lunch at your desk and head for the library. It's cool, quiet, and offers everything from light reading (magazines) to heavy-duty research material. The Business and Industry books are concentrated at the Downtown Cossitt-Goodwyn branch, but all the other subjects are covered to a limited extent, and of course, there is a selection of fiction.

Rediscover the Downtown library at the corner of Monroe and Front - it's a good place to get your brains together.

**WANTED:** Room and board for twelve nifty theatrical-type people who make up the cast of Otrabanda. The crew, which floats down the Mississippi River on a raft and does shows in towns along the way, will be appearing here as part of the Memphis Waterfront Faire. This is their fourth trip to Memphis, and having been put up in hotels on their previous visits, they're wondering about that famous Southern hospitality. If you can take one or more of the folks for the nights of August 27 and 28, please call the Mid-America Mall Office at 523-2322.

## THE DEN

Comfortable Lounge Serving the Medical Center and Downtown  
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## Front Street Arts

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Copy for the August 19 issue must be in by August 9. Copy for the September 2 issue must be in by August 23.

Plans are in the works for the Second Annual Memphis Waterfront Faire, to be held this year in Tom Lee Park on August 27, 28, and 29. It will be a more strictly regional river-lore and folk-life festival than last year's event. More details will be in the next issue of *Center City*.

What we'd like to bring to your attention now are several competitions that will be part of the activities, and that may require some advance preparation.

One is the Bring-Your-Own-Piece-Of-Shade Fancy Parasol Contest, in which you are asked to decorate a parasol or umbrella in any manner you wish, for judging on Sunday, August 29. You can paint it, attach things, hang stuff from it, whatever you want. They will be functional as well as decorative in keeping that hot August sun from beating down on your head. (The parasols should be ready for judging on arrival. Materials for decoration will not be provided.)

Then we have the Mississippi Mud Molding Contest, which will be held on Saturday, August 28. In this one you will be asked to create sculpture from real Mississippi riverbank earth. No advance preparation is necessary other than polishing up your mud-pie skills. Wear something washable.

Again, all the details on the entertainment and exact times of the contests, judges, prizes, etc., will be in the next issue. But meanwhile, get out the Elmers and start sticking stuff on that old leaky umbrella.

- B. C.

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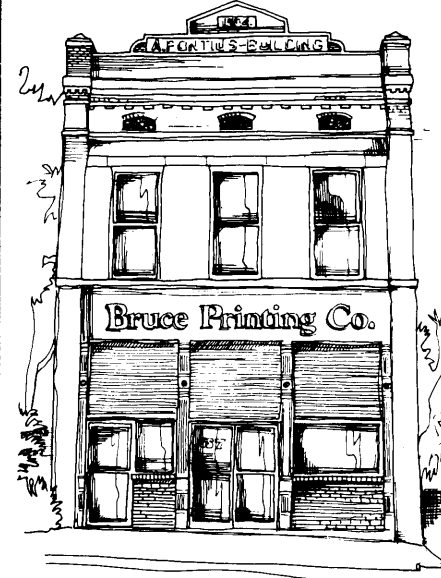
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## earthly delights

### DOWNTOWN EXHIBITS

**NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE\***  
August 9-27 - Bicentennial graphic banners, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition - lobby  
**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - lobby**  
Through August - 'Barns and Rural Scenes' - photography by Barney Sellers

### DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES

**SUMMERFEST\***  
August 6 - Bill and Paula Webster - Court Square bandstand - 11:30 a.m.  
**SHOWTIME ON THE MALL - Noon**  
August 12 - Collier & Goswick  
August 19 - Grandma Dixie's Jug Stompers  
August 26 - Nell Aspero II

### FILM

**LYCEUM FILM THEATER - 7:30 p.m.**  
- First National Bank auditorium  
August 10 - 'Bus Stop'  
August 17 - 'Nights of Cabiria'  
**FRIDAY FLICS - 4 & 7:15 p.m.**  
- Peabody Library\*  
August 6 - 'Summer Odyssey' & 'My Majorca'  
August 13 - 'The Forbidden City' & 'Shanghai: The New China'  
**CENTER FILM SOCIETY - 7:30 p.m.**  
- UT Student Alumni auditorium  
August 13 - 'Elviria Madigan'

### MIDTOWN ACTIVITIES

**ARTS IN THE PARK - Overton Park Shell\***  
August 7 - Strings and Things Band Concert  
August 10 - Libertyland Talent  
August 12 - Bye-Bi-Centennial

### THEATRE

**PLAYHOUSE ON THE SQUARE**  
August 6-29 - 'An Evening Of Soul'  
- Wednesday through Sunday  
**CIRCUIT PLAYHOUSE**  
Through August 29 - 'Doctor Holocaust' - Friday - Sunday at 8:30 p.m.

\*FREE

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