

# The Supermarket Sidestep

On Saturday mornings the garage behind 1486 Monroe looks like a rummage sale for food. People mill about, going through boxes of fruits and vegetables, cheeses, and grains, doublechecking next week's prices, and trying to decide what, if any, bargains they should add to this week's shopping list.

The shoppers are members of the Ananda Marga Food Co-operative. Mostly young and casually dressed, they have come to Monroe street to pick up food ordered earlier in the week and to buy whatever surplus stock is remaining after volunteers have filled their orders. They keep coming because they know that they are saving an average of 30% on comparable items found in three Midtown grocery stores.

The co-op, now eight months old, is one of several projects sponsored by the Ananda Marga Service Organization. The group's original purpose was to provide low-cost food to the community and, when possible, to make available hard-to-find items such as unadulterated peanut butter, bread, and yogurt, whole grains and seeds.

The co-op keeps prices down by buying food in wholesale lots. Members who have paid a \$5 fee to join prepay their food orders by Wednesday evening. One set of volunteers totals the orders; then another group buys the food from local distributors. Members pay only a 5% markup on the wholesale prices.

Decision-making in the co-op is informal and democratic. Meetings are held periodically to discuss such business as ordering organic foods from out of state, increasing co-op membership, or the need for better co-ordination in the work schedule.

Do they feel that they have succeeded in providing good but inexpensive food to the community? "Yes," says long-time co-op manager Candy Whitsell. "We feel like we've made a good start. One of our long-range goals, though, is to have a storefront where we would be able to have stock on hand at all times. We need a lot more members to do this and we welcome anyone else who'd like to join."

Anyone interested in finding out more about the co-op may call 272-1179.

— Polly Chase

# Center City

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## Neighborhoods

### LAUDERDALE TENANTS NEED PROTECTION

Older Memphians are likely prey for the huckster and confidence artist, but seniors in public housing seem particularly vulnerable to outright attack as well. So the increase in crime at Lauderdale Courts and the subsequent alarm of Lauderdale tenants are not very surprising in themselves. What is shocking is the apparent indifference of the public and public officials toward the problem. It seems that only the residents of Lauderdale and MHA Director Lawrence Wade are concerned.

On August 24 Wade spoke to a

racially mixed crowd of nearly two hundred persons who had assembled to discuss security. Besides a rash of break-ins resulting in thefts and assaults, the major problem is a recent series of muggings at the first of the month when seniors walk to a neighborhood bank to cash their Social Security checks.

Wade outlined several changes including locks on the doors of unit foyers, improved lighting, closer scrutiny and surer screening of tenant applicants, evictions of criminal elements and a whistle alert program. He also implored residents to participate and cooperate with fellow residents and the Authority, but by all means to become cautious.

An accord was reached by all present at the meeting. However, it was

(Continued on page 2)

# Tale-Telling Brought Home

Not long ago I met with Bill Ferris, a founder of the Center for Southern Folklore. He teaches folklore at Yale nine months out of the year. The other three months he comes home to Mississippi in order to tape and film the people who carry on the living traditions of the South — people for whom the past is a memory, not a dead letter.

**FARRIS:** My interest in folklore is a result of the conviction that there are a lot of very special traditions in the South that really are not anywhere else in the country. It's very quickly passing....

**WATERS:** I'm reading C. Vann Woodward's *The Burden of Southern History*; his idea is that the South is becoming more homogenized: that we're becoming not more diverse but more American. We are losing our Southernness, whatever that is. We are accepting the national myths, our Southern myths having been destroyed by both civil rights movements because of our reprehensible moral position. What do we have to take the place of our myths?

**FERRIS:** I think we have a lot: we have a tradition of people, of families, of a relationship to the soil, religion — a lot of things that are intangible but are there. Even in the supermarkets, the paved areas that are increasingly covering the landscape — when you come back from the East or from outside the South, even though you may be in an A & P or a MacDonald's, you know so clearly you are back in the South by the way people talk, and they take a little more time to see what you want. There is just a difference.... I am not sure that will ever be destroyed. But a lot of things are changing and I think that a lot of things need to be looked at very carefully. As a folklorist, the language, the crafts, the houses — just the whole lifestyle of the people has never been examined closely.

**WATERS:** You mean there has never been an anthropology of the South?

**FERRIS:** If you call it that. I am not talking about a discipline in the sense of an anthropologist coming in with a set of theories and proving them. I am talking about going to people and understanding them in their terms as much as possible and not trying to draw conclusions and generalities.

**WATERS:** To me the failure of anthropology has been that these people come in and then they leave. They make no commitment to the persons they deal with. If they did, they would live there and die there. Woodward says that despite the new prosperity and mobility of the post-war era, we still cannot forget our poverty. Is the legendary poverty of the South still so pervasive that it won't be erased for quite some time?

**FERRIS:** ...With that poverty came a sort of forced self-sufficiency. Everyone had a garden, put up and smoked their meat, made their own quilts, made their soap, made their own whiskey. When my father was growing up most families who were living in rural areas were totally self-sufficient and, except for coffee, salt and basic staples, everything was grown or raised right on the farm. Today that is no longer the case. People have transportation and they have communication. If they are not making a living wage, they can get government support. Things have changed an awful lot; which is not to say the poverty is not there, but it is a different sort of experience.

There are no longer the self-sufficient families who are the standard. There are still plenty of people who do what I'm talking about, but for the younger generation it's too hard. They simply don't want to do it when it's easier to go live in the city.

...We do begin to accept the myths of national culture rather than regional culture. The way to understand this most clearly is to talk to people. You talk to an older generation and you are talking to another world, another set of values, a different experience....

**WATERS:** Woodward writes that the South has never accepted the idea of success: that it is one national myth we've had beaten out of us. The myth of national success is not all that real to us. The Populist movement was a reaction to this. Do you have any plans for exploring the old Populists?

**FERRIS:** I'd really like to do that — it's an important part of our history; it should be studied. I have a student at Yale who's from Arkansas and who did a project on the folklore of Southern politicians and their stories. This has changed radically. Running for office was telling stories or singing.

**WATERS:** Stumping the court house squares?

**FERRIS:** Yes. Mississippi has a long history of this — Bilbo and others. The stories are important because these people are remembered by their stories. My father remembers Bilbo talking near Poplarville. Bilbo came through and held up a brick. He said, "If I'm elected, I'll pave every road in Mississippi with bricks, and when they wear out on one side, we'll turn 'em over and use the other side." People just loved that. Mr. Ray Lum, on whom we did a film, tells a story about when Bilbo was running for office and was also under indictment. Somebody told him, "Bilbo, we'll either send you to the governor's chair or to the penitentiary." He said, "I'd be a damned good man in either place." And he made it to the governor's chair....

Other regions have their folk traditions, such as Maine or the West, but no other region has been as isolated as the South. No other region has the history of storytelling and music to the extent we do....

**WATERS:** In the face of things changing so much, do you feel you're working against time?


**FERRIS:** No, because you can't afford to feel rushed. You can't rush things; you do them in your own time. To some degree I do, because things are changing. I have a sense of death: people dying whom I love, whom I want to understand,

whom I want to preserve so other people can have the pleasure of knowing them and hearing what they talk about. I do feel, on the other hand, it is like Faulkner said, man will prevail. There is a thread of understanding, a constant reaffirmation of spirit and of life. And there will be other great people who will tell stories and who will do things in their own times just as amazing as the people we've looked at and tried to understand. What is important is to do your job thoroughly and carefully so that 50 or 100 years from now there won't be any pieces missing or fewer pieces missing than there would have been otherwise. You look at your own work with perspective and try to collect or record or describe the uninteresting, the everyday events in the person's life, as well as the spectacular performance, the focus of the film. You want a sense of the whole person and that takes time.

— Pat Waters

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# Double Parked

To find out what all is going on in Downtown during the months of September and October, pick up a copy of the newly published *Downtown*, a comprehensive schedule of events. It includes the particulars on various movie clubs, lecture series, classes, book reviews, mall promotions, and more. Distribution is handled in much the same manner as *Center City*, i.e., you can find them in many public places where people gather (such as City Hall, the Convention Center, some restaurants, some bank lobbies), as well as at the locations directly involved with the schedule (such as the library, the Y. W. C. A., Shelby State, the Mid-America Mall Office).

Hopefully, the schedule will be published bimonthly to keep everyone aware of the many activities Downtown has to offer. Pick up a couple — they're free — and post one in your office or building.

— B. C.

Got an overpowering craving for Greek food? Try out the new little restaurant at the corner of Madison and Morrison, just west of Overton Square. It's called Yifto's, and offers a limited menu of authentic, inexpensive Greek dishes. We had the souflaki, a tasty shish kabob arrangement of peppery-flavored beef, onion, and bell peppers, accompanied by rice pilaf, a sweetish rice dish. A friend had the moussaka, made up of eggplant, potatoes, and ground beef, and said it was very good.

The atmosphere is very pleasant, with well spaced tables and subdued lighting. Greek music makes up about 25% of the jukebox selections, and if you pick an early hour to visit, chances are the obnoxious pin-ball machines will be silent.

The owner-operator is a colorful little man who aims to please and who is just as apt to fire the busboy with a loud demonstration, only to rehire him five minutes later, as not. He'll also talk you into trying the baklava, a traditional honey-laden, multi-layered Greek pastry, for dessert.

Yifto's is the place to go to eat when you can't decide where you want to go to eat.

— B. C.

# 'Streetcar' Departs At Playhouse

Playhouse On the Square has opened its second season with a taut, controlled and faithfully poetic production of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

The now familiar story of Blanche's destruction at the hands of the brutal Stanley is just as powerful and meaningful today as it was when first produced 29 years ago.

Stephen Mauer's direction catches the balance between Blanche's ethereal retreat into a world of illusion and the primitive realities imposed upon her by her brother-in-law. The force of time and the relentless tearing down of a more manageable way of life, and Blanche's dependence on a happiness no longer reliable, are the elements that make Williams' play a strong commentary on the anguish of false hope when it is made to march before unsympathetic faces.

As Blanche, Donna Neuwirth brings a restless quality that is tender and tragic. She is particularly effective in her creation of a woman gradually being trapped in her own illusions.

Ellen Tolleson as Stella, Blanche's sister, has some extraordinary moments, torn between love for her sister and love for her husband. Miss Tolleson presents a believable woman who has opted for a reality not always pleasant but obviously inevitable.

John Dunavent brings a kind of grandeur to his portrayal of Stanley, giving him a more

menacing human aspect than the usual interpretation. He plays the character with a directness that reduces the comic element to a more credible level. He gives us a man who is unpleasant, but the reasons for his ugliness are open and understandable.

As Mitch, the man Blanche feels is her last chance, Ken Miller also avoids the stock approach of humble oaf. Miller makes the character a more likeable person, imbuing him with a feeling beyond the surface.

Others in the overall fine company include Maureen Burns, Al Culpepper, Darryl Smith, Lee Petrone, Christopher Nunnally, Debbi Harrison, Bob Hutchens and Patrick Doyle.

Joe Lowery's split-level scene design for the New Orleans house is a towering piece of work, almost more than necessary. It's shabbiness is somewhat overdone, but the technical aspects of the setting are quite remarkable.

Playhouse On the Square's season also includes *Happy Birthday, Wanda June* by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., October 15-November 14; *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, a musical version of the Shakespeare classic, November 19-December 19; *Hay Fever* by Noel Coward, December 29-January 23; *A Thurber Carnival*, January 28-February 27; *The Misanthrope* by Moliere, March 4-April 3; and *The Three-penny Opera* by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, April 8-May 8.

— Howell Pearre

# MoviesMoviesMov

**THE GREAT SCOUT AND CATHOUSE THURSDAY.** *Written by Richard Shapiro. Directed by Don Taylor.*

The comedy western has a sub-species status. It's more often less of each and therefore an unsatisfactory kind of film. *The Great Scout and Cathouse Thursday* is an unattractive example of how comic and western motifs don't blend. In this case, they coagulate, separately. Unpaid debts, venereal disease, prize-fighting, kidnapping and politics are the main ingredients. It all takes

place during the Taft-Bryan campaign. Trashy dialogue and lavatory humor abound. None of this should be taken seriously unless one is interested in studying the decline of mediocrity. Lee Marvin, Robert Culp, Elizabeth Ashley, Sylvia Miles, Oliver Reed, Strother Martin and Kay Lenz are the chief participants. They should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves.

— Howell Pearre

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## LAUDERDALE PROTECTION

Continued from page one

obvious that no one was deceived. The problem may improve, but it will not be quickly resolved. Until the City Administration and Council find ways to protect these Memphians, or until the Police Department obtains a federal grant for a Lauderdale security force similar to the squad policing at Le Moyne Gardens, these Downtown dwellers will have to continue to live in fear.

The police and City officials have recently been boasting of the decrease in crime on the Main Street Mall. Has this overpolicing of the Mall been at the expense of the residents of this housing project? How about a little protection for Lauderdale residents?

— Don Donati

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**LECTURES/DIALOGUE**  
MEMPHIS & SHELBY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY THIRD ANNUAL GENEALOGY WORKSHOP—Peabody\*  
October 1 — This first session is concerned with teaching how to begin genealogical research and how to use the library's facilities. The three following sessions, each on a Friday night, have such diverse topics as Black genealogy, Revolutionary War records, and how to write off for genealogical information. — 6:30 p.m.  
**CRIME PREVENTION SEMINAR\***  
October 7-8 — Conducted by Shelby State in the National Bank of Commerce auditorium, this seminar is going to focus on the problems Downtown merchants have with crime. Bad-check passers, credit card fraud and shoplifting prevention are the topics. — 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. — Call 528-6778 for registration information.  
**MUSIC**  
**WEVL BENEFIT AT LAST LAUGH**  
—1335 Madison — 6 p.m. - 1 a.m.\*  
September 26 — Local musicians will play and donations from beer sales will help support community radio. — Performers scheduled: Sid Selvidge, Jim Dickinson, Jimmy Crosthwaite, Etc., Travis Jenkins Ensemble, Mud Boy and the Newtrons  
**MEMPHIS OPERA THEATRE**  
September 30-October 2 — 'Madame Butterfly' — South Hall Auditorium — 8 p.m.

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Assistant Editor: Pat Waters  
Art Director: Beverly Cruthirds  
Contributors: Howell Pearre, Polly Chase, Don Donati, Pat Waters, Beverly Cruthirds  
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