

M Center City

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From where I stand...

by David Bowman

When America was thirteen separate provinces, there was a great need to adopt a nationalistic attitude: our military, economic, and cultural survival depended on it. Now that we are one nation, indivisible and indistinguishable from one another, there is a great need to bring back provincialism again.

Memphis announces at its city limits it is MID-AMERICA'S BIG NEW CITY. How does that distinguish it from Louisville, Kansas City, Cincinnati, St. Louis, or any other overgrown city in this part of the country. Our city-limits sign gives no reason at all why anyone would want to stop here or come here for a convention. Our convention center gives no view of the river, which should have been the best reason for its being built there; as a windowless box, the building could have been stuck under the Poplar viaduct.

But the city-limits sign is all-too-accurate: we have seceded from the mid-south; we have sprawled, annexed, and homogenized too many genuine communities that could have kept their own identities; and we have torn down the old Memphis in our frenzy to be new. We are big, new, and not as nice as we used to be.

For one thing, Memphis is fast losing its locale—literally, its "sense of place." In a few more years it will be Anywhere, U.S.A. Visitors looking for MEMPHIS can't find it anywhere.

Remember the Fairgrounds Casino? The Loews-Lyceum Theatre? Union Station? Goodwyn Institute? Memphis & Charleston Depot? Remember what Cossitt Library looked like before it was defaced with plate glass and blue louvers? Remem-

LET'S BE PROVINCIAL

ber the Venetian Gothic facade of the Memphis Steam Laundry? Remember how alive Beale Street was before Urban Renewal came to town? Couldn't we stop bulldozing old one-of-a-kind buildings and find new uses for them?

Old buildings are an endangered species. They also seem to be replaced by uglier buildings. We once built Peabody Hotels and Porter Buildings; now we build Albert Picks and 100 North Mains. As William Faulkner saw, years ago, a Sartoris gets replaced by a Snopes.

If a villain is needed for all this, I'll nominate New York. For fifty years, New York has been



This is the Cossitt Library before "improvements."

Courtesy of the Memphis Public Library & Information Center

telling us what to wear, read, think, build, and buy. So today we see ourselves through the jaundice-journalism of *TIME* magazine. We trade our own provincialism for the *NEW YORKER*'s provincialism in hopes we'll be cosmopolitan. Our window on the world is the *TODAY SHOW*.

The result of this New York saturation-campaign has been disastrous. We despise our locale; we want it more like New York. The First National Building might be fine on Broadway, but it has a depressing effect on the humbler and human-scaled buildings around Third and Madison. We are not Gotham, nor were meant to be.

Some days our local newspapers seem to be written entirely by the national wires--not just by AP and UPI, but by other cities' news services and syndicated columnists. It's not the papers' fault, however: many Memphis readers prefer it that way. To them, news that is local must be trivial.

We don't even seem to love our local artists. Until its demise, the high-priced Concerts International outdrew the fantastic free concerts of the MSU String Quartet. Local publications like the *DELTA REVIEW* die, confirming our writers' mistaken belief that the one thing needful for their salvation is publication in a national magazine. Painters, sculptors, singers and others are ignored by us until their work "breaks" in other cities. If New York likes someone's stuff, it's alright for us to go for it. We can't trust our own senses.

We assume that our culture, like fancy foods or furnishings, must be imported. We also assume that for it to be any good, we must pay dearly for it. So we flock to see James Whitmore impersonate Harry Truman. I'd much rather see Buck Clark do Ed Crump at the Circuit Playhouse.

Enough complaints. Here is my advice, in no particular order, for becoming provincial again: (1) tell your radio stations to play Memphis Music, because there's a great deal of it that never gets local air-play; better still, ask for a half-hour show every night devoted exclusively to playing new releases of Memphis stars past and present and interviewing them when in town; (2) tell WHBQ-TV to go ahead with its *SOUL CITY* series for national distribution to help our cultural balance-of-payments problem; (3) urge Mrs. Awsumb to hold off demolition of any vacant buildings in the new Community Development program until alternatives such as "renovation" or "urban homesteading" (already supported by federal programs) have been examined by historians, neighborhood organizations, architects, and other interested people; (4) cancel your subscriptions to all New York-published magazines and start getting MEMPHIS magazine;

(5) find innovative money to do something fine for downtown nightlife with the Cotton Row buildings like Overton Square did for midtown; (6) open up access to the riverfront south of Beale and elsewhere; (7) find out how to get at least 500 residential units downtown; this might mean renovating and converting some vacant hotels as successfully as the Parkview did; (8) think up good uses for the Memphis Public Library's new color-TV production facilities for community-service programming for either cable TV or UHF distribution; (9) get up an anthology of Memphis writing in time for the Bicentennial festivities; (10) push Memphis State and other local egghead institutions into helping Memphis solve its problems; our Ph.D's are cheaper and almost as smart as the hotshot out-of-town consultants; and (11) support local alternative media.

Ride On

by Carol Coletta

"Ride On!", a special bicycle exhibit, will open May 12 in the lobby of Commerce Square at the corner of Main and Monroe in downtown Memphis.

The exhibit, which was organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, provides the visitor with a little of "everything there is to know" about bikes. Information is silk-screened onto silver panels which are grouped into historical periods. For example, a section of the exhibition deals with the period of the 1870s when Americans rode velocipedes, bicycles with pedals attached to the front axles. During the 1880s, the ordinary or "highwheeler" was the bicycle of the day. The panels tell the story of how the big wheel got to be so big and what life was like when men rode the big cycle. The 1890s were known as the Golden Age in Bicycling. The safety bike was introduced with chain-drive to the rear axle and with comfortable pneumatic tires. It seemed that everyone rode this bike--in fact six million Americans did in 1899.

The exhibition was researched and organized by Andrea Stevens of the *SITES* staff, and was funded by a grant from the Charles E. Merrill Trust Foundation.

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In conjunction with the opening of "Ride On!", Elizabeth Drake, nationally noted bikeway planner from Tempe, Arizona, will speak at Memphis State University May 12.

Ms. Drake is a member of the Tempe Planning Department and authored the Tempe Bikeways

Study. The study is a compilation of the results of over 26,000 questionnaires distributed to Tempe residents and the subsequent bikeway plan and design.

In response to the increasing hazards of mixing auto traffic with bicycles, much of Tempe's plan consists of Class I bikeways which are completely separate bike paths. In contrast the only existing Memphis bikeway, which is in Raleigh, is designated Class III or a bike route designated by signs only.

During her visit Ms. Drake will meet with local architects and City officials, the Memphis and Shelby County Planning Commission, and the Memphis State University Department of Planning.

WHY BIKES?

More and more Americans are turning to the bicycle as a legitimate means of transportation. The bicycle, what was only recently considered simply a children's toy in America, is now experiencing its greatest growth period with the 18-34 yr. age market. In 1972 13 million bicycles were sold, and 50 percent of those sales were among adults.

Increased adult bicycling is the result of several factors. In congested urban areas the bicycle is often faster than either the automobile or the bus for commuter travel. A bicycle is also faster, easier, and less expensive to park.

Bicycling is economical. It has a low capital outlay and negligible maintenance and operating cost. The total cost for a commuter who bicycles 10 miles a day, year round is around \$5.50, 1/100 of the cost of driving. And bike enthusiasts point out that 43 percent of all urban work trips in this country are four miles or less.

Commuting by bike is a way for working people to build exercise into their daily routine. Even a leisurely bike rider burns up 100-120 calories per mile, and bicycling aids muscle tone, circulation, digestion and nerves. Bicycling ranks right behind running and swimming as the best means of exercise.

LECTURES, DISCUSSION & COALITION

University Interfaith Center

May 13 - "Death: Medicine and Law, a luncheon lecture by McCarthy Demere*

Center for Dialogue

May 13 - "The Wilmington Ten"*

Southwestern-Fraser-Jelke Center

May 14 - The Peoples Bicentennial Committee-Organizational Town Meeting*

Bicycling has yet to be considered an integral part of our transportation network, particularly for the growing number of commuters who get to work by bicycle. This is an area where more positive public policy actions clearly need to be undertaken, if the obvious consumer choice for the use of the bicycle is to be assisted. We need more trails and paths, traffic lanes, safety regulations, and all of the myriad transportation planning aids which other forms of travel enjoy. Bicyclists have rights, responsibilities, and needs, just as users of the car, bus, train, truck and airplane do.

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

The question I put before you is: Do you have a moral obligation to give life after your death to others by willing your organs for transplant?

Currently the law allows each of us to donate our organs at the time of death to others. The art of transplantation is advanced to the degree that thousands of eyes and kidneys have been successfully implanted, restoring normal life to persons doomed to death or sightlessness. This gift may be made by filling out a Uniform Donor Card or the Donor Card on the reverse side of your Tennessee Driver's License. When it is witnessed by two individuals, it becomes a "Pocket will."

Only people dying as a result of head injury, cerebral hemorrhage or central nervous system cancer can be kidney donors. Requirement for eye donors are less restrictive. It is conservatively estimated that 25% of all who die in auto accidents could be kidney donors.

Your reaction may well be, "so what!" If you are one of 150 people in West Tennessee who needs a kidney to live, you will answer, "Life - that's what." Currently, there are about 26 kidney transplants done in Memphis each year. Since 10% of the patients on Artificial Kidney Machines die each year before receiving a donor kidney, it is a big gamble that a patient will die before a matching donor is found.

Memphis has the facilities and the medical expertise to transplant at least 75 kidneys each year. The reason more aren't being done is because there is a critical shortage of donors. There are just not enough people who are signing donor cards, indicating to their families and physicians that they wish to leave their usable organs to help save other lives.

Call your local Kidney Foundation, 725-1379 and ask for organ donor information.

earthly delights

DOWNTOWN EXHIBITS

National Bank of Commerce (Lobby)

May 12-June 8 - Smithsonian Bicycle Exhibit*

Sterick Building (Lobby)

May - Paintings by Mrs. Mabel Tual*

DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES

Confederate Park

May 15-16 - "All About Bikes"
Front Street Market *

Confederate Park

May 16 - Memphis Bicycle Commuter Day (free breakfast)*

FILM

Southwestern

May 9 - "The Last Detail"

UT-Student Alumni Center

May 16 - "Walkabout & "One-Eyed Jacks"

Peabody Library

May 16 - "Goldrush"*

MUSIC

Auditorium North Hall

May 12 - "L'Assedio de Corinto"
Beverly Sills, Soprano—
Metropolitan Opera

May 13 - "Cavalleria Rusticana"- Elinor Ross
Soprano, Lucine Amara, Soprano
James McCracken, Tenor

May 14 - "Romeo et Juliette"-Metropolitan Opera

*Free

Announcements

TRANSITIONAL CENTER LAWN WORK, CLEAN-UP & ODD JOBS

Transitional Center, the halfway house for men on parole, probation, and bond, has added a new service to its program. This is a small business which does lawn work, groundskeeping, clean-up and other such odd-jobs on either a regular or a one-time basis. The purpose of the project is to provide temporary work until permanent employment can be found and at the same time promote good work habits and build up experience which will aide the men in their job hunting. Therefore, if you are in need of someone to do any work of this type, call Transitional Center, 726-6823, and ask for Tom. Free estimates are gladly given.

CIVIC CENTER COMMUNITY CULINARY CLUB

Serving from 11:30 to 1:00

First Presbyterian Church, 166 Poplar Avenue

PRICE: \$1.50 per serving, including drink

MENU FOR MAY 8 - MAY 16

THURSDAY, MAY 8

Ham, Macaroni-Cheese, Turnip Greens, Light Bread

FRIDAY, MAY 9

Barbecue Beef, Baked Beans, Pineapple/Cottage Cheese, Salad, Rolls

MONDAY, MAY 12

Beef Stew, Tossed Salad, Corned Bread

TUESDAY, MAY 13

Pork Chops, Potatoes Au Gratin, English Peas, Rolls

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

Spaghetti, Cole Slaw, Rolls

THURSDAY, MAY 15

Fried Chicken, Spanish Rice, Apple Sauce, Rolls

FRIDAY, MAY 16

Meat Loaf, Whipped Potatoes, Congealed Fruit Salad, Rolls



166 Poplar

Memphis, Tenn. 38103

*Second-class
postage paid at
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