

MC Center City[©]

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Pedestrian's Progress

or

A Memphian Tries to Walk in Memphis

by Elinor B. Bridges

Last week the morning was sunny and the brisk wind of October put pep in every step. As I left home, I threw my shoulders back inhaling with exuberance and exhaling, "Ah, this is more like it!" Then, set out.

My street is in the garden center of Memphis in easy walking distance of fine old homes and beautifully kept lawns. This should be one of the most delightful walking areas anywhere. But, did you ever try to walk there? It's nearly impossible.

On this day I took an appraising look at my street. Its sidewalks were cracked, lop-sided, and to use the vernacular "kate west and crooked." Gravel washed down from driveways had never been removed from years past. Passage and maintenance of balance were, at best, precarious. The rain from the previous night had run off but there were muddy puddles at intervals. They had to be skirted and keeping the bottoms of my pants legs dry became an exercise in futility. As I neared Central Avenue and the small places of business only two blocks from the Parkway, tall weeds growing in sidewalk cracks had been left all summer and still hindered walking. My steps became considerably less peppy. However, my destination was the Memphis Public Library on McLean and I would not be deterred.

The most direct route took me down Central Avenue to Cooper Street. At the bus stop located beside the Spanish American War Park the quantity of litter was incredible—soft drink cans, beer cans, candy wrappers, hamburger sacks, fried chicken boxes, crumpled cigarette packages, old wet newspapers, and the contents torn from a ringed notebook. There were the fallen leaves of autumn and the wind blew all of this conglomeration into the street. Pieces of jagged glass from bottles carelessly tossed from passing automobiles lay where they fell. Where else? Glass was on the sidewalk and on the grassy strip beside it. Suppressing a shudder, I kept doggedly on course.

On busy Cooper Street between Central Avenue and Peabody, with the heavy traffic whizzing by, I was forced to creep gingerly by a parked truck being unloaded on the sidewalk and to inch nervously around a police dog running loose. There is a City Dog Ordinance, but such laws are made to be ignored.

Just as I walked upon Peabody Avenue a teenager leaned out of a Volkswagon shouting jeering remarks accompanied by obscene gestures, despite the fact that I am obviously a senior citizen and comparatively inoffensive, unless walking on a Memphis street is considered an offense.

I walk every day in many areas of Memphis. My doctor has ordered long walks as a means of keeping down high blood pressure. I will continue daily walks, but am inclined to doubt their efficacy in lowering blood pressure since I become angry every time. Ire is not a noticeable deterrent to raised blood pressure.

Several years ago I contemplated writing a letter to our Sanitation Department suggesting their entering the guano business. This was a hot day when I waded through the birdlime on sidewalks in front of and beside the old Lowenstein building at Main and Monroe. I rejoiced with loud hosannahs when a tenant was found and the olfactorily offensive accumulation was scraped away. There is still too much pigeon dung in the alleys downtown. When will it all be cleaned up? Without such cleaning our beautiful new mall will resemble the facades put up by Russians to deceive the eyes of visiting VIPs.

On the first warm days of spring when Memphis is lovely with blossoming iris, red bud, dogwood, and azaleas many of my walks have been made miserable by unkind motorists who pull into the crosswalks forcing the pedestrian into the line of traffic. O yes, I am aware that the pedestrian has the right of way as well as the redlight, but what

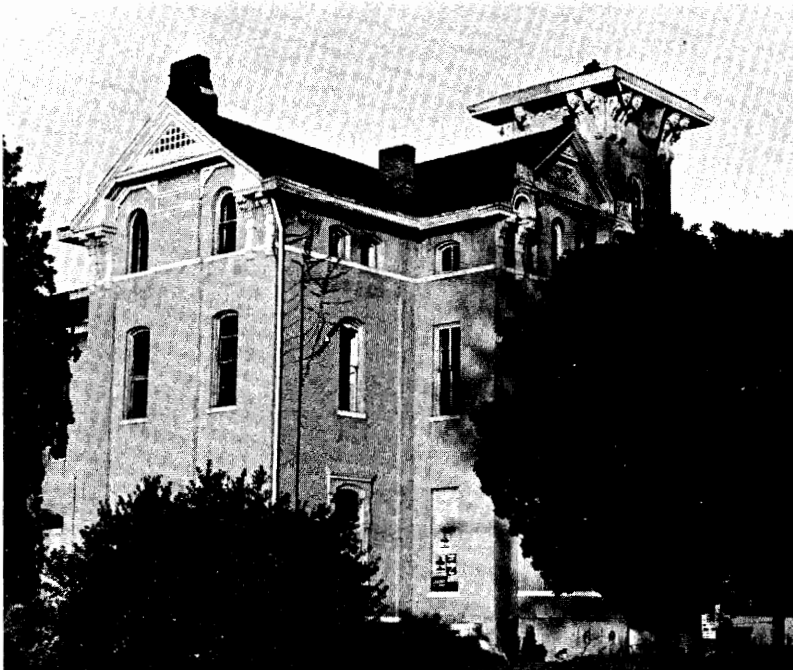
person on foot is in a position to demand rights?

Watch with me for just one day. You will find cars and pickup trucks parked on sidewalks. Sometimes they are so close to the building that no one may squeeze behind them and so far out the walker must go into the street to pass in front. Again, the pedestrian has the right of way on sidewalks, but they haven't devised a way to use them.

Perhaps the Memphis motorist is not the most inconsiderate in the world. I believe the lack of consideration is due to the fact that drivers forget that we are all pedestrians part of the time. There are places where a car simply cannot be driven. Has the motorist analyzed the reason why he doesn't dare allow his children to walk to school? Why he compulsively uses a car when the trip takes him only two blocks to buy a toothbrush? Why he doesn't know that the ruthlessness of his ilk is the cause of his dilemma? Why he can't see that conditions become worse each year?

I wholeheartedly support completion of downtown malls, construction of needed bikeways, and barring traffic in city parks; but until we make Memphis a city you can walk in, we are not yet civilized. The day we are all aroused and demand change will be Memphis' finest.

Let's hasten its coming! Starting today!



*HERE IS 546 BEALE — WHERE IS THE
MEMPHIS LANDMARKS COMMISSION?*

Photograph by Alan Copeland

Letters

Open Letter to David Bowman

Dear David:

I just read your "Another Atlanta?" in CENTER CITY. You look at situations with a different eye and force me to think and rethink my position on many current issues. Thanks for sharing your researched views with us who may not have the time and/or talent for critical analysis.

Mary Robinson

Does Money Talk?

CENTER CITY will pay up to \$10 for articles selected for publication. Persons unable to donate their time and work can now be compensated for their articles, poems or fictional material (unrelated to their regular employment). However, we have only ten dollars a week to be distributed according to the quality, interest and magnitude of accepted works.

If you are interested write to CENTER CITY, 166 Poplar, 38103. All articles for-pay-only must be designated as "free-lance" or they will be considered donated material. "Free-lance" material which cannot be paid for will not be printed and will be returned, provided a stamped, self-addressed envelope is sent with the entry.

Reprimand

Dear C. C. Seer:

Your editorial of November 13th had more holes in it than a street beggar's socks. More apropos it should have been entitled "Give the people a UFO and they'll call it unintelligible."

"...Localism. because there is a stress given to reorganizing the political structure to function fundamentally for and within the actual life-sphere of the individual so as to make the operations of government more nearly simultaneous with his requirements..." Now I ask you, what kind of overintricate hog-calling is that? Surely it is clear to all that History is moving in the direction of greater concentrations of power. And that's how it should be: those that can rule will rule; the "people" don't want to participate in government, want peace and stability. You want anarchy!

Isolation is what you preach. That's an old, old doctrine of short-sightedness. Are we to fight the unionism vs. confederacy issue all over again?

Please be so discreet as to put the dustcover back on your typewriter.

B. Sterner

Redress

Dear Mr. Sterner:

No more efficient method has been devised to so debilitate initiatives and maintain the status quo than your tactics of conjuring up distorted proofs of the futility of effort.

By no means does *radical localism* preclude the existence of a world order—as for a world government, can you imagine the personal chaos? Perhaps this new localism is but the necessary corollary of political and economic concentration—the sugar and spice that makes so bitter and bland a dish more palatable: the human links that make it civilized.

GDM

earthly delights

DOWNTOWN EXHIBITS

First National Bank Building (Lobby)

December—1976 Masters Photography Exhibit*

National Bank of Commerce

December—Photography by Jones Lamb*

FILM

Lyceum Film Theatre

December 2—"Closely Watched Trains"—
First National Bank Auditorium—7:30 p.m.

Center Film Society

December 5—"The Conversation"—UT
Student Activity Center Auditorium—
7:30 p.m.

Brooks Gallery

December 7—"Oliver"—2:30 p.m.*

MUSIC

Calvary Episcopal Church

November 28—Organ recital by Idabelle
Gay—performing works by Bach, Reger &
Walther—8:00 p.m.*

MSU Harris Auditorium

December 2—Memphis State String Quartet—
works by Baber, Beethoven & Kreisler*

DANCE

Galina & Valery Panov

December 4—Dixon-Myers Hall—8:00 p.m.

LECTURES—REVIEWS—DIALOGUE

The American Issues Forum

December 2—"A President, An Elected
Executive"—discussion led by Mrs. Martha
Schaeffer, National Director, Women's Con-
sumer Congress—First National Bank
Auditorium—12:15 p.m.*

December 4—"A President, An Elected
Executive"—Cossitt-Goodwyn Libraries—
12:15 p.m.*

*FREE

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Serving from 11:30 to 1:15
First Presbyterian Church, 166 Poplar Avenue
PRICE: \$1.50 per serving, including drink

MENU FOR NOVEMBER 27 – DECEMBER 8

THURSDAY & FRIDAY
NOVEMBER 27 & 28

Closed, Happy Thanksgiving
MONDAY, DECEMBER 1

Chicken Fried Steak, Potatoes Au gratin, Green Beans, Rolls

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2

Turkey-Dressing, English Peas, Cranberry Sauce, Rolls

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3

Spaghetti, Cole Slaw, French Bread

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4

Fried Chicken, Lima Beans, Squash, Rolls

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5

Fish Crispies, Tater Tots, Slaw, Rolls

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8

Roast Beef, Whipped Potatoes, Green Beans, Rolls

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