

# "Put News Out... Tell 'Em To Open It Up"



Illustration by Brad McMillan

For decades Beale Street was wild, but generous, offering its residents the variety and excitement of an urban life. Now, the Street is dormant and the neighborhood is vacant. But the residents remember and reminisce. Recently, a group of former residents talked to *Center City* about Beale Street.

— Don Donati

**CENTER CITY:** What was Beale Street like in the 20's and 30's?

**MRS. LENA ARNOLD:** It was a busy street, night and day.

**MR. ERNEST "DEEP SIX" ABERNATHY:** Night and day, walkin' up and down the street, in the park. Most of the places sold beer and whiskey. Bootlegged whiskey! Beer and a restaurant in front, and gamblin' in the back. Open gamblin' — all over, everywhere!

**MRS. ARNOLD:** Gambling on the street, sidewalk, anywhere. People had to step over 'em. Police runnin' them all day — never catchin' anybody. That's the way it was. . . . What was the place on Beale and Fourth?

**MR. ABERNATHY:** Panama Club! We had a club called Yellow Dog. Same thing — serving whiskey and gamblin' in the back. Oh, Yeah! We had policy. They played policy all up and down the street.

**CENTER CITY:** How did it work?

**ARNOLD:** Numbers. You bought three numbers, just like if you bought a dime and you played 3, 6, 9 or 3, 8, 21. If those numbers come straight down or across you'd caught one.

**CENTER CITY:** Did you ever win?

**ARNOLD:** Sure man! Many times.

**CENTER CITY:** Was there a market down there?

**ARNOLD:** Beale Street Market!

**ABERNATHY:** Big old market with different stalls in there. Some sold vegetables, some sold meat, some sold fruit, some sold bakery products. All fresh.

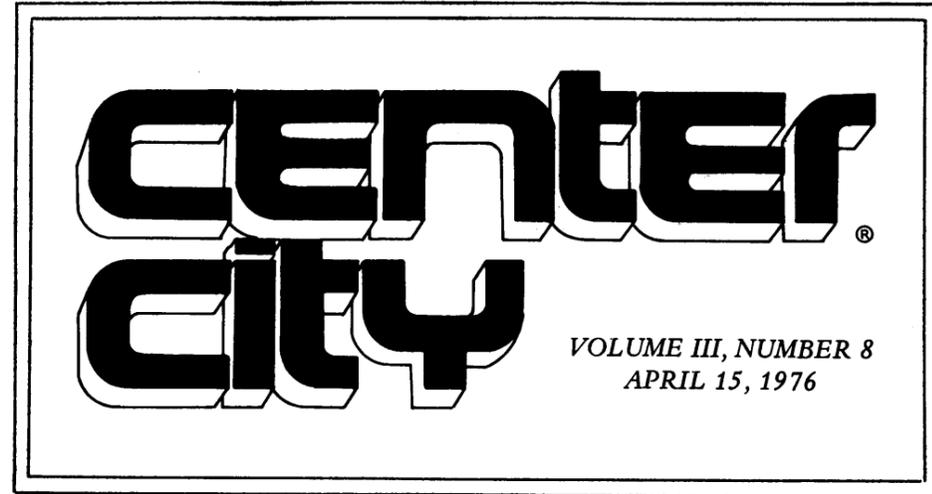
**ARNOLD:** What about the old wagon yard? [laughter] At Second and Beale. They had a restaurant at the corner. People from the country — Whitehaven and different places — would come. They'd bring their vegetables. . . . They didn't know no other place to go. They'd park their mules and wagon, go back there and they were ballin'! Go into the cafe to drink and have a good time.

**CENTER CITY:** Did you meet most of your friends on Beale Street?

**ABERNATHY:** Yeah! Hell! Meet people on Blue Monday. And the cooks were off on Thursday. We'd have a hell of a time on Thursday! [laughter]

**CENTER CITY:** Blue Monday?

**ARNOLD:** Everybody on Monday mornin' go to Beale. Everybody balled! Spend that money and buy that oil!



## Memphis Celebrates Its Ethnic Origins

Carol Coletta

The many faces of Memphis will be reflected in the city's first International Festival to be held April 29-May 2 in the Court Square area of Mid-America Mall. The event will begin a new season of community-wide celebrations in Downtown Memphis.

**CENTER CITY:** What's oil?

**ABERNATHY:** Corn Whiskey and beer. [laughter] It was enough for you to enjoy yourself. Nobody had money, but they had a good time. . . . We had everything — Memphis Meat Market, Coles Grocery, Pantaze Drug Store, doctors' offices, lawyers — everything! Saloons! Old Peewee's place. Fascini owned it. Most Italians had saloons, Jews had pawn shops and Greeks had restaurants — Alabama Cafe, New Orleans, One Minute.

**ARNOLD:** One Minute Cafe. [laughter] Service in a minute. Buy you a hot dog and mug of beer. You turn your head and you look back that dog and beer were gone. You didn't have that, someone got it. [laughter]

(Continued on page 3)

All of the major international groups are cooperating to provide a full four-day schedule of entertainment, demonstrations, fashion shows and displays. International food booths representing China, India, Greece, Germany, and France will round out the activity.

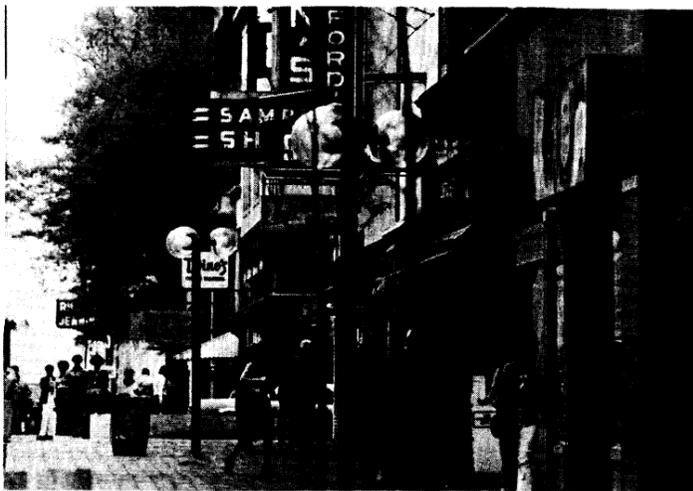
Jeanette Spann of the International Group of Memphis, Inc., is coordinating the center stage entertainment. The events include most everything from Thai dancing and Venezuelan music to a strolling violinist. (See *EARTHLY DELIGHTS* for more complete entertainment listing.)

The colorful, canopied booths used frequently last year in Confederate Park will house an international bazaar. Some of the items to be sold and displayed include Year of the Dragon posters from San Francisco's Chinatown, pottery and baskets from Chucalissa, origami-fashioned paper birds, and ribbons bearing your very own name in Chinese.

The Memphis International Festival is an officially recognized event by the Memphis Bicentennial Commission.

## The Eloquence of Simplicity

Photos by Alan Copeland



# Beale St. Repertory Succeeds With Philip Dean Play

## 'STY OF THE BLIND PIG'

The play is set in Chicago during the late 1950's; the upheavals of the Movement are yet nascent. This is neither a *black* nor a *political* play. It is a love story — or rather a story of those who seek for love.

Alberta is a middle-aged spinster who lives with her mother, a clinging, emotionally greedy woman, blind to everyone's needs but her own. Alberta works as a maid for a white family with whom she has no personal bonds (not excluding the husband's ass pinching). Although she finds no solace in her mother's unquestioning religiosity, she writes obituaries and funeral orations. A chance encounter with a blind street singer is the catalyst which enables her to confront the empty, unloving life she leads. She recreates a funeral service given for the man she loved but had never

dared to approach. This *cri du coeur* is emotionally raw — a trance-like melding of fundamentalist religion and sexual frustration — and is terribly moving.

Jean Sumler exemplifies the unfulfilled spinster; her movements are marvelously tight and nervous. Harold Gentry, as Blind Jordan, seems an impassive Buddha, accepting the violence of his bordello-born art. Hazel Wright can wag her chin as the maligned mama with wonderful self-righteousness.

Deborah Hardin orchestrated this play with superb direction. The set is one of immaculate poverty. The eye cannot help but stray to a crucifix superimposed on a mirror and surrounded by ornamental flowers and lights.

— Pat Waters

# Don't Put Ketchup On The Bean Sprout Burger

Downtown Memphis and health food have something in common.

They've both got a bad name. Ask the average Memphian what Downtown is like and he'll tell you it's crowded and dirty and dangerous. Mention health food to the same person and he'll "probably turn up his nose and argue that it has all the flavor of a roasted Philodendron.

Repeat either of the above fallacies to Helen Hillsman and you're likely to have a fight on your hands. But, most probably, you'll get a stern lecture, both on Downtown's potential and the delights of organic fruits, vegetables, and meats.

Helen felt so strongly about both subjects, in fact, that on March 1 she opened Shangri-la in the Emerald-Cay Mall at 99 South Second Street. It is Downtown Memphis' only health food restaurant and devotees of the place are enthusiastically spreading the word about it.

Visit Shangri-la and there's a variety of sandwiches to choose from: all-beef bologna and cheese, and avocado and hard-boiled egg, for instance. Both are served with sprouts, herb seasonings, and dills on grain wheat or home-style white bread with delicious home-made mayonnaise.

There's also fresh-ground peanut butter and preserves sandwiches. Beverages include Hot Spring

Mountain Valley Mineral Water, and the Shangri-la Health Shake (a blending of kefir, honey, and protein). Herb teas also are available in flavors such as peppermint, rose hips, chamomile, alfalfa, and the ever-popular Red Zinger. Yogurt and organic fruits are served, and, on certain days, apples baked with honey, nuts and raisins.

Helen Hillsman came Downtown because — in her words — "I saw the need for a good, fast, nutritious, and delicious lunch." She is amused by people who vow that all health foods are unappetizing and without taste.

"We've converted a few since we've been Downtown," she laughs. Helen tells the story about a young couple who came in and ordered, very hesitantly, peanut butter sandwiches. They enjoyed the sandwiches so much they proceeded to order chef salads, bologna and cheese sandwiches, yogurt, and apple juice while Helen watched, amazed.

Helen and assistants Judy Journey and Sharon Amis also take phone orders at 523-1599.

"I think we're Downtown to stay," Helen says. "Already, customers are asking us to buy more tables and chairs!"

— Jim Roper

Photo by Alan Copeland



Cartoon by Brad McMillan

# Budget-Watching: A Study In Minutiae

"Effective budgeting requires continuing inquiry, analysis, review, feedback, and planning if maximum service is to be provided to the community from available resources."

City of Memphis Budget Procedures Manual

Once a year we get a newspaper insert called *Report to the Taxpayers* which describes what the City of Memphis does with our money. It doesn't give much information; but then most people prefer it that way. If you'd like to know more, lots more, you'll need to go to the seven fat volumes of the City of Memphis *Operating Budget Request* for the coming fiscal year.

Conventional wisdom says that even if you have the budget document, there's too much information there to make sense of it. This is at least half true. But there is a way, if you do your homework, to get into budget-watching and find out what's happening to your money.

The key to the operating budget is the *Procedures Manual*; it explains what the numerical codes mean, what the abbreviations stand for, and what the various request forms reproduced in the documents do. Get a copy and keep it with you for reference.

Let's pick a sample volume and see what information it has — the first volume of the Division of Public Works budget request, a two-volume set, for the fiscal year 1975. (City government is divided into divisions, which are subdivided into bureaus.)

First comes the "letter of transmittal" from the division director. It needs to be read carefully, because it should tell what general changes have been made — major budgetary increases, administrative re-organizations, and so on.

Next come the budget statements of each bureau. Bureaus present their own letters of transmittal, display their organizational charts and give line-item accounts of every salaried position. Of particular interest are the forms requesting "additional personnel," telling how many new people are being requested, and why.

Further on in the bureau budgets, "units of activity" are reported; these are tabular totals designed to justify their output in measurable work units (man-hours, square feet, miles, etc.).

"Materials and supplies" requests follow; they show the dollar cost and justifications. Evaluation here is particularly difficult. For example, when the Director of Public Works is allocated 1800 gallons of gasoline, about 6.9 gallons per working day, who is to know whether this is enough

# Front Street Arts

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Copy for the April 29 issue must be in by April 19. Copy for the May 13 issue must be in by May 3.

or too much for his job?

We conclude this sample volume with "capital outlays" forms, more elaborate as to the information demanded, and "vehicle replacement" forms.

In reviewing the request of each bureau, about 80 or so in city government, we might remember there is a "domino effect" at work: each additional personnel request will usually be followed by an additional desk, office equipment, auto maintenance allowance, gas and oil allowance, and a new car or truck.

Since the budget requests are sent to the City Council for legislative review in the eleventh hour, say in May, and approval is expected by June, it's not surprising that choice cuts are difficult to come by. For every line item cut there are thousands of items that stay in simply because no one has the time to wade through all the requests and cross-check their justifications.

An alternative to the "fine tooth comb" technique is to look at each bureau as a whole as it relates to the city. If, for example, construction of new subdivisions in Memphis has stopped due to overbuilding or a downturn in the economy, then bureaus like Subdivisions Development or Civil Design should be examined for drastic cuts in their activities, materials and supplies, and capital outlays.

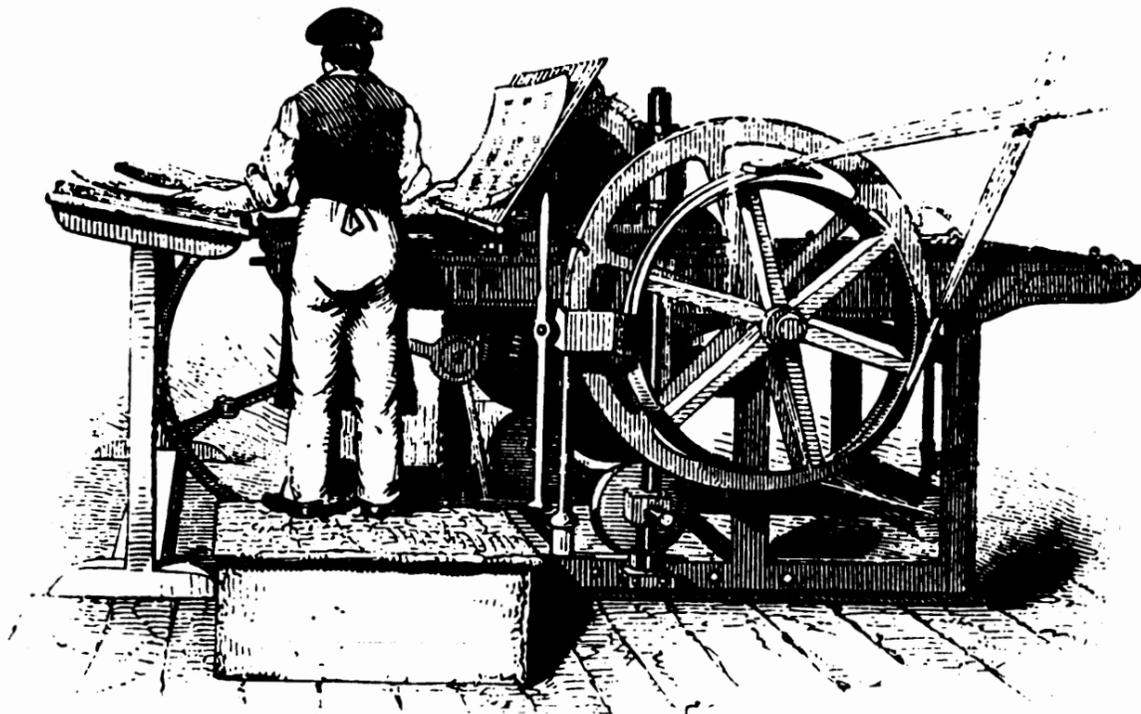
When we talk of *the budget*, we are really talking about what we want the city to be. We're not merely talking about dollars: we're talking about what goals and priorities are needed to keep Memphis a good place to live.

— David Bowman

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'... OPEN IT UP' (Continued from page 1)

ABERNATHY: What 'bout Old John Mills? Barbecue King. Nothing but barbecue. White side and colored side.

CENTER CITY: What happened to him?

ABERNATHY: Well, for one thing, he got old and died. [laughter] People sent from California for his barbecue—Bing Crosby sent for it by air.

CENTER CITY: Did Crump bother Beale Street?

ABERNATHY: Nah, "Mr. Crump ain't goin' to allow it here." That's the song. Hell, but they did it, got around it by tipping the police. They had a machine. Voting day they came down and get people in wagons. Get corn whiskey and watermelon for votin'. [laughter] The machine did it to stay in business — that's how Mr. Crump stayed healthy.

CENTER CITY: What about entertainment?

ABERNATHY: All the joints had music, live music, not victrolas, but people playin' piano. Clubs had the Midnight Ramblers, Brown Skin Molls, Ma Rainey, Butterbean and Susie, Pegleg Bates . . . Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway, Lionel Hampton at the Orpheum — that's jazz — for 55 cents a ticket.

CENTER CITY: What happened to Beale?

WILLIE "BO'WEEVIL" MARTIN: It was wide open till '39. After Mayor Crump got rich he wouldn't let anybody do nothin'. . . . Man, I'm Bo'weevil! I've been on Beale since 1920, lived at 598 Beale till Housing Authority moved me out. . . .

CENTER CITY: What was on the streets around Beale Street?

ARNOLD: People livin' in houses, flats, warehouses, apartments.

MARTIN: They had a wide open sportin' house in Memphis!

CENTER CITY: Sporting House?

MARTIN: Yeah, place where girls were. [laughter] Where you had fun. Go in and do whatever you wanted to do. . . . I wish they'd do it again.

CENTER CITY: Will that happen? Beale Street alive again.

ARNOLD: Nah, no way to be the same. All the old times are dead and gone.

MARTIN: Man, you put news out there — tell 'em to open it up again! It needs recreation, where people can play. Man, Keep your money here, not across the river.

## 1st Annual Forum On Women's Health Issues

The Memphis Center for Reproductive Health is sponsoring its first annual Forum on Women's Health Issues. A series of public discussions on these issues is scheduled for April 27, 28 and 29. This year's featured guest is Sandra Elkin, the producer-moderator of *WOMAN*.

Ms Elkins' *WOMAN* series is aired on 183 PBS stations, one of which is WKNO, where it is presented on Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m. The approach taken by Ms Elkin in her interviews is to offer factual information, given candidly, unsensationally, and carefully in quiet conversation. She and her guests talk about things like health-care alternatives for women, mothers who leave home, contraception, divorce and divorce insurance, single parents, sex bias in education, female homosexuality and other concerns of women previously ignored in public discussion or dominated by male viewpoints.

For a full calendar of Forum events and encounters with Sandra Elkin, see *EARTHLY DELIGHTS* on page 4.

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c/o Front Street Arts  
9 N. Second Street  
Memphis, Tennessee 38103

# Double Parked

So, you think that, since Federal Bakeshop made their ill-timed and not particularly regretted exit from Downtown, there's no place to go to grab a donut for breakfast, or pick up a fresh-baked dessert for tonight's dinner. Incorrect! In each of the two large department stores on the Mall, Goldsmith's and Lowenstein's, you will find a better assortment of cakes, cookies, and pies than Federal ever offered.

The Goldsmith's Bakery is located on the main floor between the greeting cards and the ticket office; it has been in operation for twenty-three years. Everything is brought in fresh daily from the Broyles Bakery in Whitehaven, which does all of Goldsmith's actual baking. The specialty item is "Goldsmith's Famous Cheesecake," selling at \$5.25 for the small size and \$8.10 for the large. The carrot cakes are also best-sellers, as are the apple cakes. The ladies there say that they are often sold out by Saturday afternoon, the busiest day of the week.

Lowenstein's bakery is actually a branch of Radefeld's, which has two other stores elsewhere in the city. Located for five years on the main floor, they boast of a complete line of bakery goods including wedding cakes, birthday cakes (to order a day in advance) and thirty-five different handmade breads. The Radefeld's bakeries are members of the Telecake system, whereby you can order a cake through them to be delivered in another city. Try the Chopped Butter Bread (66 cents a loaf) toasted for breakfast. It's excellent.

Both Downtown bakeshops say that business is as good as ever, which suggests that the Federal demise had peculiar causes — but that's a very stale story, isn't it?



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Have you ever wondered where you would look if you wanted to find out how to set your sundial for the correct time? Do you need the address of the company that sells the Rock-It Automatic Fish Scaler? Or perhaps you just need a good recipe for Southern cornbread.

These fascinating bits of information and much, much more can be found in *A Catalogue of the South*, a 343-page, 8" x 11" paperback. Its cover states that it contains, "Thousands of things to make, buy, and enjoy: games, utensils, recipes, furniture, handwork, recreation, food, books, crafts, celebrations, gadgetry, art, animals."

The book offers hours of browsing enjoyment and loads of nearly-forgotten Southern trivia, even if you're not in the market for a Duck Decoy Kit.

Look for it at Cossitt Library under catalog number 917.5034 098C

## Legal Briefs

Arguments heard and decision awaited by U. S. Supreme Court in a consumer action which seeks to invalidate state prohibitions on commercial advertising of prescription drugs as a violation of the consumer's "right to know." (Vol. 44, *U.S. Law Week*, pages 3043, 3273, 3436.)

U. S. District Court of Southern Ohio finds that prospective homebuyers who claim they were denied a mortgage because they chose to buy a home in an intergrated neighborhood have a cause of action against the lending institution under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968. (Vol. 44, *U.S. Law Week*, page 2381.)

### ARMENIAN WORKSHOP

The Loosahatchie Folk Dancers, an MSU-sponsored club, is planning a three-day instruction workshop in Armenian dance and folklore April 23-25.

The workshop will be at the Newman Center, Patterson and Mynders. Instruction in dance will be given by Tom Bozigian, an Armenian dancer who specializes in the dances of his native country.

Activity begins at 6 p.m. Friday night with a program of dancing and instruction. Instruction continues Saturday morning and afternoon, with a picnic at Audubon Park. A Saturday Night Festival begins at 6:30 p.m. It includes an Armenian dinner, a film and lecture on Armenian folk customs, and a costume party with general participation dancing. The workshop ends Sunday morning with a review session and discussion of dance techniques by Mr. Bozigian.

Cost for the workshop is \$18. Reservations are necessary for the Saturday Night Festival, which costs \$5. For more information, call Rod Miller at 725-0800.

# earthy delights

## DOWNTOWN ACTIVITIES

SHOWTIME ON THE MALL (Commerce Square — Thursdays at Noon)\*

- April 22 — Suzuki Performing Group (outside)
- April 26 — Vollintine Children's Chorus & Westwood Chorus (outside)
- April 29 — Treadwell High School Swing Choir (outside)

MEMPHIS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL (Court Square on the Mall)\*

- April 29 — International Fashion Show at noon — Memphis City Schools Foreign Languages Department at 1 p.m. — Bill Thurman, strolling violinist, at noon till 2 p.m. — Memphis City Schools Foreign Language Department at 2 p.m. — Wamblee Wasechee at 3 p.m. — International Children's Choir at 4 p.m.
- April 30 — Venezuelan Band at noon — Memphis City Schools Foreign Language Department at 1 p.m. — Loosahatchie Folk Dancers at 2 p.m. — International Children's Choir at 4 p.m. — African Dancers at 5 p.m. — Miss International Goodwill Pageant at 7 p.m.
- May 1 — New Southwestern Players at 11 p.m. — Venezuelan Band at 12:30 p.m. — Jim Crosthwait and his puppets at 2 p.m. — Suzuki Players at 3 p.m. — East Indian Dancers at 5 p.m. — German Folk Dancers at 6 p.m. — Filipino Dancers & Fashions at 7 p.m. — Thai Dancers & Fashions at 8 p.m. — Venezuelan Band at 9 p.m.
- May 2 — Japanese Dancers & Fashions at 1 p.m. — Southwestern Madrigal Singers at 2 p.m. — Bill Thurman, strolling violinist, at 1 p.m. till 3 p.m. — Greek Dancers at 4 p.m. — African Dancers at 5 p.m.

## DOWNTOWN EXHIBITS

NATIONAL BANK OF COMMERCE (Lobby)\*

April — Textiles by Dena Yancey, Rosemary Doherty and Doris Spence

MEMPHIS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL (Booth displays at Court Sq.)\*

## FILM

CENTER FILM SERIES (UT Student Center Auditorium)

- April 23 — "Take the Money and Run" — 7:30 p.m.
- April 25 — "Nazarin" — 4 p.m.
- April 30 — "Paper Chase" — 7:30 p.m.
- May 2 — "Paths of Glory" — 4 p.m.

BROOKS GALLERY (2:30 p.m.)\*

- April 18 — "Richard II"
- May 2 — "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea"

COMMUNITY BOOKSHOP PRESENTATION\*

- May 6 — "Dreams and Nightmares" — Room B of Peabody Library — 7:30 p.m.

## LECTURES - DIALOGUE

FORUM ON WOMEN'S HEALTH ISSUES featuring SANDRA ELKIN\*

- April 27 — WOMAN showings with feedback: "Unnecessary Surgery," "Breast Cancer" & "Childbirth" in MSU Speech and Drama Building, Room G-25 at 7 p.m.
- April 28 — UT School of Nursing in Wassell-Randolph Auditorium at 11:30 p.m. — MSU Student Center at 2 p.m. — "The Total Woman: Our Bodies, Our Selves" and a reception in Memphis Academy of Art Auditorium at 7 p.m.
- April 29 — Southwestern University in East Lounge of Student Center at 10 a.m.

AMERICAN ISSUES FORUM\*

- April 20 — "In God We Trust" — Father Milton Guthrie, Holy Names Catholic Church — First National Bank Auditorium at 12:15 p.m.
- April 20 — "In God . . ." — Rev. William B. Trimble, Grace St. Luke's Episcopal — Main Library — 7:30 p.m.
- April 22 — "In God . . ." — Dr. James A. Wax, Temple Israel — Cossitt-Goodwyn Libraries — 12:15 p.m.
- April 27 — "A Sense of Belonging" — family counselors from Family Service — First National Bank Auditorium at 12:15 p.m. & Main Library at 7:30 p.m.
- April 29 — "A Sense . . ." — Cossitt-Goodwyn Libraries — 12:15 p.m.

## MUSIC

GINA BACHAUER / MEMPHIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

- April 24 & 25 — Auditorium South Hall — Saturday at 8 p.m. & Sunday at 3:00 p.m.

MEMPHIS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL\*

## DANCE

ARMENIAN WORKSHOP

- April 23-25 — For details see article on page 4

MEMPHIS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL\*

## THEATRE

WORKSHOP THEATRE (162 North Tucker)

- Through April 25 — "Stopwatch" & "Asylum" — Fridays thru Sundays at 8:30 p.m.

PLAYHOUSE ON THE SQUARE

- April-May 2 — "Bus Stop" — Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays & Sundays at 8 p.m. — Saturdays at 6:30 p.m. & 10 p.m.

BEALE STREET REPERTORY COMPANY (Circuit Playhouse II)

- Through April 25 — "The Sty of the Blind Pig" by Philip Hayes Dean  
Fridays through Sunday at 8:30 p.m. — Call 726-9429 for reservations — tickets are \$4 & \$3 with a student ID

\*FREE

MEMPHIS ARTS COUNCIL INFORMATION — 278-2600