

Downtown Looks Toward Recovery

by Hank Howard

Life in the United States certainly seems to be on the decline, these days. The economy is said to be on the decline, while prices are on the constant rise. In addition, we Americans are told that our very own wastes are killing us off, one by one. Why, even the spray cans which we use to extinguish our pests, hold our hair in place, and freshen our homes and bodies are said to be potential threats to our very existence.

We have left our cities in a state of neglect, crumbling as we fled to the vast open spaces of the suburbs ringing the inner cities. The art form of the city, one of man's more pleasing creations, is disappearing as fast as our steel-plated gas guzzlers can roll off the assembly line.

Vast urban sprawl has spread compatibly with the distribution of the automobile, creeping on its endless journey like a grinning green monster hovering over former pastures and once great forests, leaving in its wake pizza parlors, beauty salons, massive supermarkets, drive-in theaters, neon flashing lights, all beckoning weary travelers to their lairs along once "scenic" parkways.

All the while, the inner cities lie dingy, desolate and decaying as the suburbs ring up the sales, like leeches drawing each drop of life-blood from the once vibrant downtown areas. Stately edifices, unlike the "shoe boxes" of today, which were meant to last a lifetime are now leveled for parking space which "wishful thinking" downtown merchants hope might draw more customers.

But empty streets, strange-looking shadows in cracks and crevices, and boarded up, deserted storefronts discourage even the bravest souls from lingering in such districts any longer than necessary (and never after dark.)

Similarly, Greensboro's downtown, once a vibrant community, popular as a shopping and entertainment center, literally lies as a ghost town. Oh, there are

still a number of retail businesses clinging to abandoned Elm Street, but an overwhelming majority of prominent retail establishments have carried the masses out with them. Out, out, they have flown to plastic coated, mammoth, Muzak-tuned shopping malls encompassing deafening, splashing fountains and ice skating rinks catering to shrieking chocolate-smudged kids who go skating 'round and 'round hollering all the way, and having a great time. It is little wonder the businesses retreated from their weary posts along once traffic-choked, telephone-line entangled, narrow, dirty city streets (alias: the present semi-mall).

America's love for man's new "best friend," the automobile, and impossible means of storing it, drove the masses out of downtown and promoted the exodus of retail, industrial and institutional services from the central business districts of our cities.

Yet, downtown will come back. So says *Time* in its July 1976 issue so say numerous articles in the *Greensboro News and Record*. The questions that remain are: When, and how, will downtown Greensboro come back?

Let us look, first at advantages which back up the statement: Downtown Greensboro will come back.

Luckily enough, Downtown Greensboro is strategically located near the heart of the city and is therefore easily accessible from all quadrants of the city. Governmental, banking, financial and cultural services are all represented downtown. For example, the \$18 million city-county governmental center with its spacious plaza, the

several high-rise office and bank buildings, and the proposed cultural center in the old Greensboro Daily News Building and in the Carolina Theater are all pluses for downtown.

What Downtown is lacking is a strong focal point to hold the community together. This focal point could set a basis for new retail, office and cultural life for downtown. I believe strongly that this focal point should center around Jefferson Square, the crossing of Market and Elm Streets. I also believe this area should be developed to look like the center of downtown; that a two-level mall should be constructed along Elm Street with a large plaza at the Square.

Already new life for the Square is being partially planned. A proposed office building is to rise on one corner, to be the home office of First-Citizens Bank. It is even rumored that Belk-on-the-Square is considering renovating and reopening their old downtown store.

I, too, have devised a plan for Downtown Greensboro. This is a plan, which I feel, if put into effect could make Downtown Greensboro the people place it ought to be.

My plan includes extensive use of landscaping and street furniture. I propose a city-owned convention center adjoining a large private-run convention hotel at the corner of Friendly Avenue and Davie Street. I also believe that "Old Greensborough," the historic district below Washington Street, should continue to be renovated and turned into a living museum of shops and entertainment spots with the intent of pumping new life-blood into the old city core.

Every citizen of the Gate City should have his own ideas about the urgent need for the center of our city to be beautiful and made into as fine a showcase as the rest of our city.



This is the present view of Downtown Greensboro. Hank Howard feels that there should be some changes. See related story.

I would appreciate any ideas Grimsley students might have about the revitalization of Downtown Greensboro. It is high time some action was taken about

this matter. Write to: Hank Howard, 1914 Swannanoa Drive, Greensboro, North Carolina 27410.

Personals

K.B. -- How was halfim: at Homecoming?

Lefty: Hang Low!

Mark K. -- How much money did you put in the parking meter?

C.F. -- The old in and out real Savage.

K.B. -- You said, "State playoffs!"

D.S. -- My friend here would like to order a delicious yahoo for the house.

T.T. -- lefty on the loose!

E.S.B. - to E.A.; I still care.

K.S. -- How's yellow journalism.

To Mr. Mac -- Happy Halloween!

T.S. -- Want to go parking next Friday nite? M.H.

K.W. -- I hope you worked hard, and observed well! M.H.

M.C. -- What about your 7th sense? M.H.

J.B. -- Where's my ribbon? M.H.

D.N. -- Seen anything BLUE lately? M.H.

Big "M", How about a game of spades and a glass of Moa Moa Punch? K.B.

C.P. (Dear Frank), Would shut the doors but, naahh! Your friend, ME

Igore says, "HEIN QUOI?" to wet pockets!

Hey Leitner, Please don't ever give it up!!! K.G.

Give up on dancing! We all know who won't ever come through, don't we???...but at least you'll get it (someday) --C.E.

To all Zoto fans: it will conquer!! --A.R.

Henry -- Meet me at the charming pub off of S.J. Park at 2:15 a.m. - Margaret

Wot Paige?

Zoto got caught in the rain and lumped up.

Screw Zoto! Zoto wears Combat Boots!

Mrs. I. Trust me! Trust me!

B. Love the tennis form on and off the court --C.B.

D.F. Winking right along!

Teri -- Duckie needs a bug with a back seat space! Marsh

Duckie -- Who's a big mouth?

--Red

L. Lane -- remember the windshield wipers? Big Knees

Chunky Ching -- Poo Poo?

...Doris

Jennifer -- Is he a good catch?

...L.B.

Charlie -- we can tell you're Irish because you have a potatoe head -- Devil Woman

Norman Jean: You wanna buy a bunny? Madman

Confucius say: Pickle make squishy bookmark.

For Sale. 64 inch O'Brien Water Ski. Used Three Times. \$100. See Mark McDowell. Homeroom 803.

For Sale. Automatic G.E. Phonograph. Barely used, in perfect shape. Good Christmas present! Call Carol at 292-4613.

Bashar Rizk

'Student of the Month'

by David Bulla and Steve Theriot

Bashar Rizk has used the advantages of industry, diligence, and prudence for his own behalf; thus, Mr. Rizk is the idea example of an automaton, an individualist who takes great pride in his education. His juvenile interest and adult assiduousness have allowed him to condescend to a point few students at this school can reveal. Hence, Bashar Rizk is our "Student of the Month."

Bashar, a Semitic of the Syrian people, was born in Damascus. His family immigrated to the United States in 1963. His parents have always pressed the necessity of education; his father is a French professor at UNC-G. Without further comment, it can be said that his belletres is inherent. His verbal score of 740 is easily admired, and that also

places him out of college freshman English, though he went ahead with A.P. English because, he said, it provides for "more reading." He did suggest that he was mulling over that course.

Besides the intellect there is the athletic and the activist side. He is a brawny young man, strong, once a wrestler, a tennis player, and a volleyball player. His semi-ascetic life keeps him, though, from participating in more sports - if there were thirty-six hours in the day, he would find the time, though. Education is obviously more important.

The extend of his activities extends into the world of cliques. The list, I might add, is extraordinary in length. Here are

some salient groups and activities that make this rather vivacious

human; GYC councilman, District Champion of the Bicentennial Youth Debates, Torchlight member, and French Club, Medical Explorer, and he attended the Governor's School; he studied English, naturally.

The most prominent interest in the future of Mr. Rizk is his plan to study at Harvard. He plans to study in depth, "the brain, its and mechanics," Bashar reports that Neurology, the study of the nervous system's diseases, will be his major or Neuro Psychology, the study of the characteristics involved in the mental process, emotions, feelings, desires. So a bright and arduous future is ahead of Bashar.

