

# Come out, shop

Keep your gay dollars in your local economy for a better community

In these trying economic times, everyone is searching for way to save a dollar and make a quick buck. Most of us are tempted to head out to that big box, super-retailer promising to offer us the lowest prices around.

But, local business owners say spending your hard-earned cash locally helps create a better community for everyone — business owners, employees, customers and community members all benefit.

Ron Wooten, owner of Charlotte specialty shop Paper Skyscraper, says locally-owned retailers bring a sense of community that larger businesses can't offer.

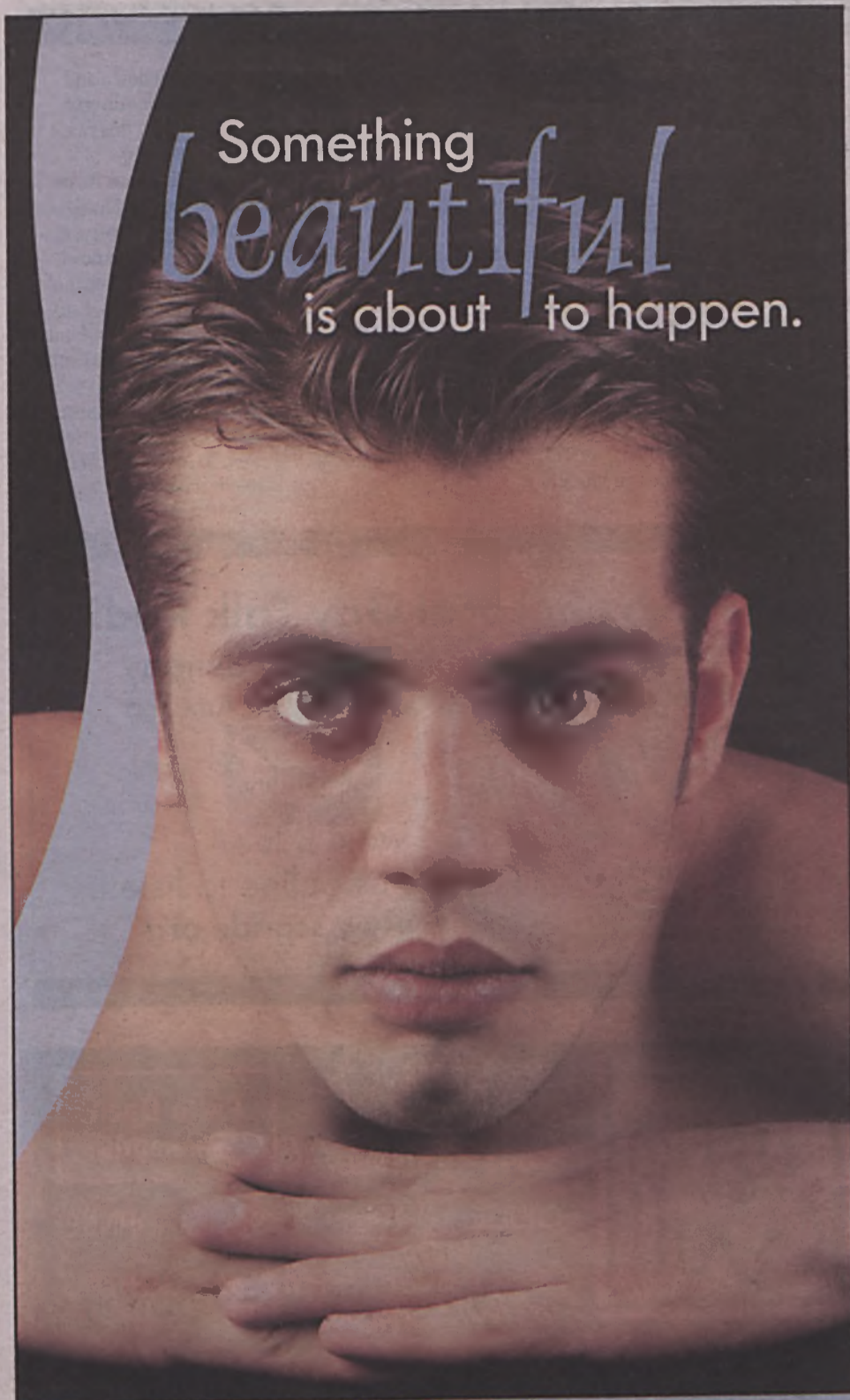
"It isn't as anonymous as going to a big box retailer or the shopping mall," he says. "It

is a more personal relationship with a more 'caring about you' attitude than you get at a big box store. We have a little bit more focus on



the customer as a person because you are a part of our community."

Fida Ghanem owns The Mad Hatter's Cafe & Bake Shop in Durham. She's a self-

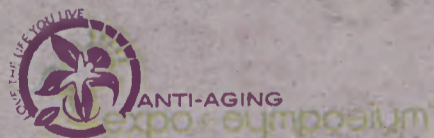


Something beautiful is about to happen.

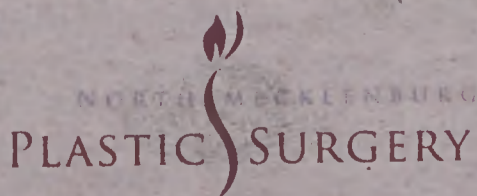
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