

# Photos display Afghan life Option of alcohol meets critique

BY MICHAEL TODD  
STAFF WRITER

Community members can now view pieces of Afghanistan's history, courtesy of a Chapel Hill resident.

"Afghanistan in the 1970s" will be on display at Orange County Historical Museum in Hillsborough until April 28.

Chapel Hill resident Richard Schenck captured the displayed photographs while stationed in Kabul during the 1970s. He said he spent his free time venturing out into the countryside, snapping photographs of the Afghan people and their homeland.

"I made it to southern Iraq and to the Hindu Kush mountains along the border with Pakistan," he said.

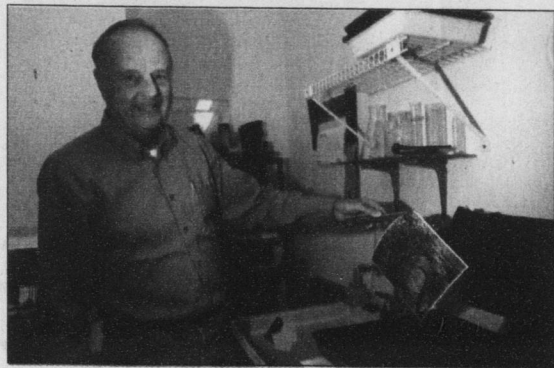
His photos depict women covered in traditional burqas, men tending to and selling livestock on Kabul's city streets and nomadic horsemen traveling between camps spanning the hilly deserts.

"I took photos of everyday life there," Schenck said. "These are images of boys playing together, of men working, pouring tea and thrashing wheat."

He also captured shots of ancient monuments, important to the country's history. A color photo titled "Great Buddha," showing a giant 2,000-year-old statue of the religious deity carved in a cliff wall, hangs at the gallery's entrance. The statue was destroyed by the Taliban regime in March 2001.

Museum Executive Director Jennifer Koach said the photographs portray a more peaceful side of Afghanistan than she expected.

"This is not the image of a coun-



DTH/RACHAEL HYDE

Richard Schenck shows some of his photography in his darkroom in Chapel Hill. His photos from Afghanistan are displayed in a Hillsborough museum.

try at war," she said. "These are photos of people in beautiful scenery."

Mary Jewell, a museum board member, said Schenck's photos changed her view on the country.

"(His work) has a certain spiritual quality," she said.

Schenck recalls his experiences in the country as a foreign service officer for the U.S. State Department as being relatively peaceful.

He said the country was politically stable until he and his family were forced to leave in 1973, when the king who had ruled for 40 years was dethroned by his cousin.

Graduating with a master's degree in international relations from Columbia University, Schenck said he has always had a special interest in the Cold War era.

And the unique atmosphere of Afghanistan left a lasting impres-

sion on Schenck.

"It was like living in Colorado in the 1800s," he said. "You had to fire off your shotgun before going to bed while camping in the desert to let others know you were there."

The museum is open from 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Starting this Friday, the museum will be open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission to the exhibit is free.

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

BY CHRIS CARMICHAEL  
STAFF WRITER

A recent decision by a local economic-development board to explore allowing alcohol vendors at Chapel Hill's summer concert series has come under fire from the Downtown Commission.

Commission Chairwoman Mary Jo Stone submitted a letter on behalf of the commission to Mayor Kevin Foy last week cautioning that the proposed changes might alter the event's family-oriented atmosphere.

"I think it will totally change the nature of the concerts," commission member Charles House said.

The commission organized the concert series until the creation of the Downtown Economic Development Corporation last summer. The DEDC received the town funding previously earmarked for the commission.

Commission member Pat Evans called the timing of the discussion terrible in light of recent efforts to curb underage drinking.

She said she is skeptical of the viewpoint that serving alcohol would attract more people to the event.

"It's not like we don't have any places that serve alcohol downtown," Evans said.

This year's series is scheduled to start around June 23, with one concert each week until August.

If alcohol is included at the events, it will likely be provided by an outside vendor, DEDC members have said.

Harris Inc., an Anheuser-Busch distributor in Durham, has expressed interest in the concert series and has been in contact with town officials, said Jim Hanson, the company's sales manager.

Hanson said that similar events in Durham and Raleigh have been successful and have not featured any security breaches.

In addition to selling alcohol, a company would likely help arrange for and fund the musical acts.

Stone's letter to Foy also addressed a concern about the plan to move the series from McCorkle Place — the venue for the last few years — to a downtown parking lot in order to increase benefits for other downtown businesses.

Evans said that although the event has taken place at several different locations over the years, the "best location with the best availability to town citizens and students was the site at McCorkle Place."

The idea of a large gathering of

people baking over black asphalt in the hot summer sun is not a very enticing option compared with a shady, green courtyard, Evans said.

The commission's role in the debate might reflect its transition from a fully funded organization to an advocacy group without the resources to tackle bigger projects.

"Now, because we have no funding, we have to focus on being an organization that communicates with downtown businesses and people and advocates on their behalf," Evans said.

Despite the current disagreement, she added, it is important that the commission work with the DEDC to support a downtown that will undergo substantial change for years to come.

"We have a great downtown," Evans said. "But we also have some cracks. Those of us who work with the downtown and care about it want to make sure that those cracks don't become crevices."

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