

Lindsay Martin and his wife, Lena, stand in a doorway of their home at 502 37th St. N.W., where they've lived since 1964. Lindsay Martin is president of the Loudon/Melrose Neighborhood Organization. The Martins were one of the first black families in the neighborhood.

Loudon/Melrose: Pipe for revitalization

STORY BY MARY BISHOP / PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE KLEIN-DAVIS
THE ROANOKE TIMES

It was just a few weeks before the Rev. Greg Jackson was to leave his Seventh-day Adventist congregation for a new church in Pennsylvania.

He sat on the side steps of his Roanoke church at 1601 Melrose Ave. N.W. one afternoon last summer and talked about the troubled neighborhood he was leaving behind.

As he pondered it all, violent words erupted in a front yard around the corner on Orange Avenue. A shot was fired. A young woman, crying, cursing, stalked out of a house and walked toward the church. She held a small black gun in her hand.

Following on her heels, a man carrying a small child pleaded with the woman to put down the gun. They circled around and disappeared inside the back of the house. Minutes later, the woman returned to the street with the child in one arm and a butcher knife held down along her other thigh.

Two older women rushed toward her. After a brief quiet talk, one of them pried the knife from the woman's hand and the young woman scambled on down the street with the child.

"The police wouldn't have done anything," Jackson observed as peace returned to the street.

"That," he said, gesturing toward the older woman as she headed back down the alley, holding the glowing knife as nonchalantly as if she'd just bought it at a yard sale, "is what we need right there."

The neighbor who intervened, it so happened, was a member of Jackson's recently revitalized Loudon/Melrose Neighborhood

Organization. Its boundaries are Orange Avenue to Shenandoah Avenue, 14th Street to 24th Street.

The group was formed in 1982 by Georgea Croson of Moccasin Hill, a retired school maid who ran Charly House, a 22nd Street community center that tutored children and provided social services until it burned in 1995. Croson and her neighbors in the Loudon/Melrose Neighborhood Organization installed dusk-to-dawn lights, put dead-bolt locks on old people's doors, cleaned vacant lots and started a crime watch.

But by the mid-1980s, many members had died. Only a handful were coming to meetings when Jackson, 47, and his wife, Marilyn Walker Jackson, decided to join. Jackson put off his regular Seventh-day Adventists pastoral rotation for two years to stay in Roanoke, recharge the church and become its president.

Marilyn Jackson had lived in the neighborhood as a child. The 39-year-old was doing door-to-door signing up members among



THE INVISIBLE INNER CITY

Poverty, crime and decay in Roanoke's oldest neighborhoods

Company policies called 'immoral' Baptists try to escape Disney giant

Movies, television, books, retail products and sports teams are all targeted by the religious boycott.

LOS ANGELES — Want to watch ESPN's Sunday night baseball game? That's off limits, if you're a Southern Baptist.

Take the kids to a matinee of Hercules? Scratch those plans.

Catch a rerun of "Home Improvement" or pop in a "Bambi" video? Try again.

The Southern Baptists voted overwhelmingly Wednesday to boycott all things Disney, including ABC, condemning an immoral and "gay-friendly" everything from the company's same-sex employee benefits to TV's "Bibi."

The non-binding resolution

passed on a show of hands by the Southern Baptist Convention's 12,000 delegates, urges the 15 million members of the nation's largest Protestant denomination to take action against Disney's "anti-Christian and anti-familial direction." It means the faithful must somehow avoid the world's most pervasive entertainment giant.

Many Southern Baptists object to Disney's policy of giving health benefits to same-sex partners of employees and allowing "Gay Days" at its theme parks, and the release by Disney subsidiaries of movies with violence and sex, such as "Tulp Fiction" and "Kiss."

Convention spokesman Herb Hollinger said the last straw was the episode of the ABC sitcom

PLEASE SEE D2/9A-9C

News greeted with joy, skepticism Broadcast claims Pol Pot surrender to Khmer Rouge

If it's true, the man who is the death of more than a million people may face an international tribunal.

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia — One of the most reviled figures of the century, the fugitive Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, surrendered to his former comrades on Wednesday, a candidate rebel broadcast said.

The broadcast was greeted with astonishment, joy and skepticism by Cambodian officials and by foreign analysts who have spent much of their lives trying to comprehend the brutal and often bizarre creators of the country's killing fields.

The development suddenly overrode the gossip that Pol Pot, 69, could be handed over to the government or the international community and put on trial for the killings of perhaps more than a million Cambodians during his reign of terror from 1975 to 1979.

The unexpected announcement came at a moment when the capital was in a state of tension after a gun battle Tuesday night



Former Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, shown in a 1975 news conference photo.

between rival political factions that was the worst street fighting here since the Khmer Rouge were driven from power by a Vietnamese invasion.

A trial of Pol Pot was something few people had believed could ever come to pass.

"If it happens it will be the first time in a long time that we have had such a figure available for trial," said Steven Heder, a lecturer at the University of

PLEASE SEE POL POT/4B

PPL Therapeutics has impregnated several cows with cloned embryos

Moo-ve over, Dolly; you might have bovine company from Blacksburg

The cloned animals will be used to produce milk that carries proteins that can be used in drugs to fight such diseases as cystic fibrosis.

By MARK CLOTNER
THE ROANOKE TIMES

BLACKSBURG — The Blacksburg branch of the Scottish company that cloned a sheep last year is close to cloning the first cow.

Will Eyestone, head of large-animal technology for PPL Therapeutics, said cows impregnated with cloned embryos could give birth to at least one cloned calf

this year or early next year. But until a calf is born, nothing is definite, he cautioned.

"We've put out of the woods on any of the cows," he said. "The only thing that really counts is a calf on the ground. Speculating over eggs before they've hatched, but the chances are good for the stage of the game we're in."

Eyestone wouldn't say how many cows at the company's farm near Blacksburg are pregnant with cloned embryos. The pregnancies began this spring, so the cows, which have a roughly nine-month gestation period, could give birth late this

year or early next year. If and when a calf is born, Eyestone said, the cloning first would have to be scientifically verified. The official announcement probably would be made in a scientific journal, as was the case with Dolly, the first clone of an adult mammal. The historic birth would take place on the company's 800-acre Montgomery County farm.

Cows have been cloned from the cells of cow embryos in a process similar to the creation of identical twins. But, if successful, the clone produced by the Blacksburg branch of PPL Therapeutics

PLEASE SEE CLONING/4B



Will Eyestone, head of bovine technology with PPL Therapeutics, said cows impregnated with cloned embryos could give birth to at least one cloned calf.

THE INVISIBLE INNER CITY

A SPECIAL REPORT

FROM A1

Ripe

the 1,000 residents. They met a growing number of renters — almost half of all residents. Because many had lived there only a short time and might not stay long, the Jacksons had trouble getting renters interested. Homeowners are moving out, Jackson said. "People who don't care are moving in."

The Jacksons tried again with owners who were still in their homes. Martin Jeffrey, community development and outreach director for Total Action Against Poverty, got behind the effort and provided maps, homeowners' names and neighborhood statistics.

ON LINE

Want to see the complete records on Roanoke's inner-city rental housing and how City Hall spent nearly \$50 million in federal grants that were supposed to help poor neighborhoods?

The Roanoke Times has compiled databases of Community Development Block Grant money between 1975 and 1996 and of building code violations in rental properties from 1982 to 1996. You can search both databases on line at:

www.roanoke.com/tratimes

Look under "The Invisible Inner City."

tics. 193 owner-occupied homes in the neighborhood, 187 rental units — and 219 vacant lots.

Greg Jackson plainly laid out the stakes to homeowners. "I tell those who live here," he said last summer. "You do need to believe in the community, because you do live here."

Jackson, a Vietnam veteran and recovered heroin addict, wanted homeowners not to look down their noses at renters. "We live next to them," he said. "It doesn't feel like we're all that different and unwell and ed. They may be a little different, but they are people who live in a community believe in themselves," Jackson said. "They can't come all those other odds. I want to do an interview with them. They're drawing 30 neighbors — plus a panel consisting of an architect, a banker, an accountant, a contractor and other advisors."

At one time we didn't have to go out of this neighborhood for anything," Lindsey Martin said. "We had our churches, we had our businesses, we had our service stations. We even had our funeral homes — our supermarkets."

Then old homeowners began to die, and younger relatives who inherited the homes lived out of town or didn't want to move back to the old neighborhood. The number of abandoned homes multiplied, stores shut down, and

neighborly connections began to fray. Vacant lots abounded.

Boxy, cheaply constructed vinyl-sided houses with few windows sprang up almost overnight on vacant lots. Some near Martin were vandalized by teenagers.

"Cracker boxes," Martin called them. "I don't know why the city allowed that type of housing." Crime was on the rise. Two people who played in the Martin's yard as children were murdered in Roanoke as adults.

On a drive around the neighborhood, Martin pointed out the homes of former neighbors, now dead. He paused at one empty house to tell the story of a young woman who moved back to Roanoke to renovate her family home. Her money fell short and she gave up. Another house had a happier ending — the grandmother of a longtime resident are fixing it up.

Much of the Loudon/Melrose neighborhood is shady and green, countrylike. Many homes are as attractive and solidly built as those in Raleigh Court, but maintenance is spotty.

"You can see how long it's been since anybody's been able to borrow any money in this neighborhood," Martin said. "About 30 years. Nobody has a penny money."

Ollie Buckner, 77, a retired cook who lives at 1715 Melrose Ave.,

A winter view of Melrose Avenue Northwest at midcentury.



STEPHANE MELROSE / THE VISIBILITY TRUCK

Boys play basketball in a park on Melrose Avenue Northwest last fall.

Boys play basketball in a park on Melrose Avenue Northwest last fall.

help with a leaking roof, missing window panes and cantankerous kitchen pipes. "A whole lot of things you see need to be done," the homeowner said, "and you can't afford to do it."

First Virginia Bank offered the neighborhood group \$2 million in five-year, 7.49 percent home improvement loans, but many elderly residents on fixed incomes were reluctant to take on new debts. So far, only two have taken the loan.

Martin understands. He's 68, and his house is as old as he is. At his age, he's reluctant to borrow the \$25,000 he figures it would cost to remodel it.

The only way to shore up the neighborhood, Martin feels certain, is to attract young homeowners. He's talking with one of his sons, in his early 30s, about moving back to the Martins'



Minnie Hill rents this house at 1501 Melrose Ave., N.W. from Claudia Whitworth, publisher of The Roanoke Tribune. His's father and grandchild live with her.



A winter view of Melrose Avenue Northwest at midcentury.



ROBERT LIPSFORD / THE VISIBILITY TRUCK

WHY IT MATTERS

'People who move to the county thinking they're avoiding the impact of deterioration are really whistling Dixie because the burglars go where the property is.'

WALTER DALHOUSE
VETERAN CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF FIRST UNION NATIONAL BANK OF VIRGINIA

house. The Martins would move to Lindsey Martin's late mother's home a few blocks away.

Ted Koebel, director of Virginia Tech's Center for Housing

Research, and his students are doing a market analysis for Loudon/Melrose. Koebel wants to see if competitively priced single-family homes — maybe town houses — can be built on vacant

lots.

"My hunch," he said in February, "is that in the adjacent areas there are a fair number of families currently paying rent that could be put into an affordable housing product."

"I see Raleigh Court potential," TAP's Jeffrey said. "I tell them the main difference between them and Raleigh Court is the level of participation by the homeowners."

Koebel and others' realistic appraisal of the Roanoke Valley temporarily discouraged Lindsey Martin. "What they pointed out is that Roanoke is not in an economic boom anymore that would merit banks and real estate companies to really go into anything big" in the way of neighborhood development, Martin said.

But Martin keeps working. He wants his neighborhood to follow in the footsteps of Florine Thernhill, founder of the Northwest Neighborhood Environmental

tract.

tract.



Ollie Rucker, 77, a retired bus station cook, has lived at 1715 Melrose Ave., N.W. for 23 years. "The house is falling to pieces," he said. "A whole lot of things you see need to be done but you can't afford to do it."



A vacant house stands unattended on Melrose Avenue Northwest.

Organization just east of Loudon/Melrose. Her group did a house-by-house analysis of that area, raised more than \$750,000, acquired 30 vacant lots and

group has scores of other houses, projects on its list at 1715 Melrose Ave., N.W. for 23 years.

Loudon/Melrose wants to hurry up and get some visible progress on the streets to ignite hope and get people to meetings. A \$10,000 neighborhood development grant from the city's Neighborhood Partnership will be spent soon to brighten the exteriors of three homes.

Lindsey Martin figures his organization must settle in for the long haul. It will take several years just to build up enough grants and low-interest loans to buy housing and start rehabilitation.

"This," he said, "if we can do, say, three houses a year, we would be very happy."

More info can be reached at 985-3388 or mary@roanoke.com

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WHO TO CALL

Need help? Information? Want to get involved?

• Lindsey Martin, president, Loudon/Melrose Neighborhood Organization, 343-8561

Need help? Information? Want to get involved?

HUND
High lower 90s.
Low upper 60s, 30%
chance of 70s.
Details on A2

THE ROANOKE TIMES

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EXTRA 2

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

www.roanoke.com

SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 1997 50C

Slaying led to new laws

Jurors give Megan's killer death penalty

The jury found that aggravating factors outweighed mitigating factors, including the defendant's sordid childhood.

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TRENTON, N.J. — A jury ordered the death penalty Friday for the child molester whose rape and strangling of his 7-year-old neighbor led to a national movement to notify neighbors of sex criminals in their midst.

The jury rejected defense arguments that Jesse K. Timmenogues' life should be spared because a childhood of violence and abuse left him unable to control his lust for little girls like Megan Kanka.

Timmenogues, 26, pleaded quickly when the verdict was read and began to shake nervously, but his face remained expressionless. Spectators outside the courthouse applauded.

Megan's parents clasped hands as they avoided the verdict. When it was announced, her mother, Maureen Kanka, began to cry. She hugged her face in husband Richard's shoulder and he put his arm around her.

As the clerk asked each juror, "Is this your verdict?" some seemed to be checking back tears as they answered.

The same jury that convicted Timmenogues on May 30 of murder, aggravated sexual assault and kidnapping decided unanimously that he should receive death by injection rather than life without parole.

Timmenogues lived across the street from the little girl in suburban Hamilton Township. He lured her into his house to see his puppy, then raped and beat her, strangled her with a belt and dumped the body in a park nearby.

The 1994 slaying caused even more outrage when it was learned that Timmenogues had two prior sex crime convictions for a 1981 attack on a 5-year-old he lured into woods, and for an attempted sexual assault the following year on a 7-year-old.

Megan's parents channeled their grief into a campaign for laws to notify a community when a sex offender moves in. New Jersey and most other states passed versions of Megan's Law, and President Clinton signed a national version last year.

The law has undergone several court challenges by opponents who say the policy tramples sex offenders' privacy.

The jury deliberated about 10 hours spread over two days. They determined that aggravating factors

PLEASE SEE MEGAN'S/3A

Companies agree to pay \$368 billion, bow to government limits

Tobacco makers reach deal

In return, the industry gets protection from legal losses that, if left to jurors, could rise to billions of dollars.

KNOW-NOTHER-DOES-Y
WASHINGTON — In a historic settlement, cigarette manufacturers agreed Friday to pay \$368 billion to offset the effects of smoking and to submit to unprecedented government limits on the way cigarettes are advertised and sold.

The deal limits the amount of money that cigarette makers have to pay to people who win lawsuits that claim their health was damaged by smoking.

The industry, which has vigorously fought lawsuits and government inquiries, does not have to apologize for any past conduct. It also agreed to strict measures intended to significantly reduce the number of young smokers and to make payments to the legal and medical funds every year for the next quarter-century.

In return, the industry gets



Tobacco farmers Cecil Pinner (left) and his son, Lynn, said Friday at a farm near Gretna that the industry's settlement might prove costly for farmers. See story A3.

protection from legal losses that, if left to juries, could skyrocket into billions of dollars.

"We wanted to do something that would punish this industry for their

past misconduct, and we have done that," said Mississippi Attorney General Michael Moore, who led the negotiations for the states.

The tobacco industry was relieved

Will racing to have a settlement, but go up in officials characterized it as "a bitter pill."

"Our companies have made concessions that were extremely difficult, but on balance this plan was preferable to the continuation of a decades-long controversy. The nation's four largest cigarette companies said in a joint statement. The companies are Philip Morris, RJR-Tobacco, Brown & Williamson and Lorillard.

The agreement, struck with attorneys general from 31 states after three months of negotiations, lays out an ambitious blueprint to keep children from smoking, to repay states billions of dollars spent treating smoking-related ailments, and to impose sharp limits on the way cigarettes are marketed.

If Congress approves necessary legislation, nicotine would be regulated as a drug for the first time and stores that sell cigarettes would be licensed much like liquor stores.

The agreement does give the com-

PLEASE SEE TOBACCO/2A

HORSIN' AROUND



ALICIA HANSEN / THE HIGHLAND PRESS

TRACY BARTKO of Waldorf, Md., rides Quantum in Thursday's \$10,000 Jumper Open Stakes in the weeklong Roanoke Valley Horse Show at the Salem Civic Center. Bartko will compete tonight in the Grand Prix Show jumping event on a different horse, Paul Harvey. Story on B1.

Tobacco maker sued for millions

Local inmates: Tobacco smoke makes us cough

Nine prisoners say they thought they were smoking healthier tobacco since the bug had no warning.

BY JIM WERTHEIMLE
THE HIGHLAND PRESS

As if the public and political pressure weren't enough, the tobacco industry is catching heat from members of one of its most loyal constituencies: prison inmates.

Nine inmates have filed lawsuits against Republic Tobacco Co. in recent months in U.S. District Court in Roanoke. The prisoners, all housed at the Botetourt Correctional Center, maintain that Republic misled them to believe its tobacco was healthier than other companies. Now, they say, they're playing cough.

The inmates all say they bought bags of Republic's loose tobacco in the state prison camp's canteen to use in their own cigarettes, which is cheaper than buying them already rolled.

The inmates claim that since there were no general warnings on the bags, they were led to believe "that the tobacco

was different from other tobacco products." They're asking for \$750,000 to \$1 million apiece, saying they've developed health problems from the tobacco.

"As a direct result [of smoking the tobacco], the plaintiff has developed a continuous cough

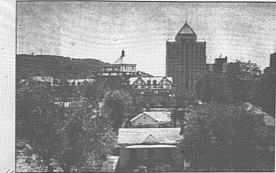
The Troutville inmates haven't hit on a new idea; inmates around the country have unsuccessfully tried the same claims before, starting in the 1980s.

and aggravation in his chest and lungs from the defendant's product," each says.

The Troutville inmates haven't hit on a new idea; inmates around the country have unsuccessfully tried the same claims before, starting in the 1980s.

Republic points that out in its

PLEASE SEE INMATES/2A



The Public Responds

Readers have called about the week's stories on what other cities are doing about neighborhood decay and what Roanoke is — or isn't — doing. A selection of their comments is on page A4.

THE INVISIBLE INNER CITY
Poverty, crime and decay in Roanoke's oldest neighborhoods

Defendants insist they did not cause deaths

Stop sign thieves sentenced

Three friends were killed in a deadly accident in an intersection the day after the stop sign was stolen.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TAMPA, Fla. — As family members on both sides of it courtroom wept, three friends were sentenced to 15 years prison Friday for pulling up a stop sign for kicks and causing the deaths of three teens who drove into the path of an 8-ton truck.

"I understand your parents love you as much as these parents loved their children. There are winners in this case," Circuit Judge Bob Mirman told the young woman and two young men who were convicted last month manslaughter.

On Feb. 7, 1996, three-year-old buddies — Randall Why Kevin Farr and Brian Hernandez — who were driving around looking to make after a night bowling, were killed when the car breaved through the intersection and was struck broadside by the truck. The stop sign was found lying on the roadside near the accident.

Turning to the sobbing families of the killed, Mirman said, "My heart breaks for you."

"Though a pre-sentence recommendation called for up to 5 years in prison, the judge — known as "Maximum Bob" for his harsh sentences — decided to let the defendants off easy.

"I don't believe for an minute that you or the other two defendants pulled these signs up with the intent of causing the death of anyone," he told Christopher Cole, 20.

He then sentenced Cole to 3 years, suspending half, and did the same for Nova Ballie, 22, and Thomas Miller, 20. The three could be eligible for parole in little more than 12 years.

All three cried and repeated wiped their eyes with tissues as each stood before the judge in orange jail jump suits, their hands cuffed. Their families and friends stood behind them. The families of the victims stood across the courtroom.

Cole testified he and his friends stole as many as 19 stop signs.

PLEASE SEE SENTENCES/2A

THE INVISIBLE INNER CITY

A SPECIAL REPORT

Readers respond to 'The Invisible Inner City'

In the third and final week of our series, "The Invisible Inner City," we showed that cities nationwide have learned that saving neighborhoods makes more than just fixing houses.

Many cities, such as Pittsburgh, Pa., and Portland, Ore., are using comprehensive strategies to bring back old neighborhoods. Some are controlling suburban sprawl. Others are raising private development money, training people for work, opening health clinics and returning retail stores to neighborhoods to help the poor and lure back the middle class.

We wrote about how Roanoke still has no housing and neighborhood strategy, even though seven housing studies have been during nearly 30 years that the inner-city neighborhoods were in trouble.

Yet a few Roanoke neighborhood organizations have made progress, and others are starting to take more action. The Northwest Neighborhood Organization has restored 19 homes and built five. Old Southwest Inc. has preserved hundreds of historic homes. The Loudon/Melrose Neighborhood Organization has enlisted architects and accountants to do an inventory of neglected properties and draw up plans for the neighborhood.

We also profiled two new organizations — the Southeast Roanoke Christian Partnership, which brought together five churches and a community center to rekindle neighborhood pride, and the Presidents Council, a year-old organization of neighborhood groups' leaders who hope to wield greater influence over the city's neighborhood and housing policies. Here's what our readers had to say this week:

I have loved living in Roanoke, but I was really tired with shame when I read of the apartment maze of family closeness that plagued the poor. We seem to compare so poorly with cities faced with the same problems — you handling them successfully — that it is disgrace. I hope you'll print an article on what the average citizen can do to change this sorry situation.

LINDA GONZALEZ
ROANOKE

I've done repair work for some less-than-reputable landlords, and I found out that many want just enough done to please the inspectors and as cheaply as possible. I think there should be a public specification one month prior to inspection, citywide, perhaps using temporary inspectors if necessary. If landlords agree the grace period before the inspections, then the court should give violators a choice: make all necessary repairs with cost documentation within 30 days, and guarantee all tenants that no rent increase will occur for one year, or pay fines in an appropriate amount up to \$100,000. If the city would use to contract repairs with rent quarantine as stated above, or sell the property within 30 days under the conditions that the city contractor would do all necessary repairs or forfeiture of property to the city to be auctioned for repair cost. This plan would force landlords to get off their backs in one way or another and bring properties up to code.

TOM CLARK
ROANOKE

I think Roanoke has abandoned the older neighborhoods — just left them alone and not helping landlords or business owners. One of the things I would like to see is a sidewalk on it — we've asked for that. I have a lot of ideas. One is building perimeter. They ought not charge landlords or anybody that wants to renovate an old, dilapidated house. They make up for it on their taxes after they renovate it. Another thing is the landlords — they charge as landlords \$35 a ton to had that, but every time I clean or remodel a house, I'm doing one or two a year, and it's no stop. The city should put charge people for landlords when they're upgrading and repairing the neighborhoods. That would help a lot for landlords who are remodeling houses, and extra discounts on the taxes.

STEVE YIAR
ROANOKE

Tazewell Avenue is turning out to be a ghetto for the poor. It's not getting a dime about anything. It's getting so corrupted that it's hard to

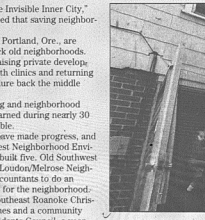
breath. It makes me cry sometimes when I see all these junkies down around this part of the city. . . . We all know how this used to be a nice neighborhood, and then it started getting corrupted. — EDGEE MORAN, FERRIS

"I do agree that one of the things that is going to be solving some of the problems in the older neighborhoods downtown is that, particularly when we deal with minorities, we need jobs. We need to work with the local business. I hope that with President Clinton making that a national issue, that we here in Roanoke can be able to address it locally. I think Roanoke Valley is a great place to live. In fact, I think if it truly wants to live up to the recognition of being the 'Star city,' it truly needs to be a city that includes all people of all different backgrounds, whether they're black, white, green, yellow or whatever." — BRENDA ALLEN

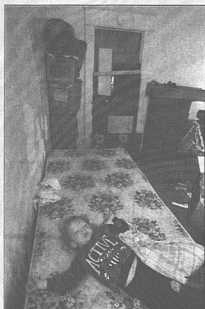
"I work in a lot of these areas in Roanoke, and some customers tell me to come to the house at 7 or 8 at night to meet with them. They think Roanoke is a great place to live. I don't see any police in the neighborhood doing anything, it's just like they're not there. . . . I've seen some of the houses that have worked on, and they call that fixing. They got a lot of money. I tell you, looks to me like a lot of neglect goes on here, and we could do a lot more work." — CLAY JOSEPH, BEDFORD

"I can imagine that you did an awful lot of research and a lot of legwork in compiling this beautiful compilation of history or events that occurred. I am sure you will get a lot of feedback from a lot of sources for having done so. It's hard to describe in words all that's come out that needed to be put before the public." — LAVIAN N. REED, ROANOKE

"Although your photograph of Liverpool Street in the Manchester neighborhood of Pittsburgh was pretty, you failed to mention that the Manchester area of the North Side is very dangerous. Gang activity, drug sales are all daily occurrences in that area. . . . So what you have is an area that may look nice but that is still very dangerous to live in. I would hope that if the city of Roanoke does try to fix up certain areas around downtown, they remember there's more to a community than just pretty houses. If it's not safe to live there, they're just rotting off the money to spite their face. I don't know if the city of Pittsburgh was entirely honest with you about that area (that is, if you asked them), but after seeing the area around downtown for a few years, I can say I'd rather be a so-so neighborhood that was safe to live in and to walk around



STEPHANE KLEIN-DAVIS / THE WASHINGTON POST
Sue Dichter holds Damian Dichter, 3, in the doorway of their side apartment on Day Avenue Southeast.



STEPHANE KLEIN-DAVIS / THE WASHINGTON POST
Last winter, this 2-year-old's grandmother had to barricade the entrance of her doors behind to keep the child out. City inspectors had cited the landlord for building code violations inside the house.

freely at night so one that may look nice to the outside observer but in fact isn't a very safe neighborhood to live in at all."

WILLIAM R. DAVIS III,
BEDFORD COUNTY

"The stories show the detrimental effect of historic designation. They're justifying forcing on a rotten cake. — JOHN COLE, ROANOKE COUNTY
"Until this city gets some new leadership you're never going to see anything happen in South East Roanoke. . . . We've lost the best city manager when we lost Bern Ewert."

HILLARY LANZ,
ROANOKE

"Part of the comment is on the city development mission is on that, you know, they say 37 percent of the money went to helping Mr. Pabson and Hotel Roanoke and all these other large people who don't need the money. It can borrow it. Small people like us, whenever they cut the road off for redevelopment down here, it cut our restaurant's business in half and it's been a long haul ever since. It's pretty tough on the small businessmen. The big guys get all the bucks they want and the little guy down here — you get to put up your money to borrow \$10."

RICHAED MARDIAN,
ROANOKE

"I was disappointed that your [June 15] article did not include the concept of community policing. Community policing is a process in which the police stimulate community problem-solving and partnership to enhance the qual-



STEPHANE KLEIN-DAVIS / THE WASHINGTON POST
Last winter the flea on this woodstove leaked smoke into the Roanoke Northwest house that was occupied by Alice Robertson and her son, Marshall.



STEPHANE KLEIN-DAVIS / THE WASHINGTON POST
Last winter the flea on this woodstove leaked smoke into the Roanoke Northwest house that was occupied by Alice Robertson and her son, Marshall.

tified with HUD. Because I'd be interested in talking with them too and maybe letting them get some copies of the tapes of the public hearings over the past five years where citizens have been screaming about exactly what's in your article and have not been able to get a local official's attention. Maybe this article you've done will."

KAYE HALE,
ROANOKE

"While the landlords seem to be taking the biggest part of the blame, I would like to suggest another approach. . . . How about making it a legal requirement that all landlords (owners of two or more rental properties) be licensed in order to rent. . . . First, their rental properties must be inspected and approved by the city inspectors without any exceptions prior to renting. Also, they should be required in the event of complete deterioration, if the building or home is to be torn down. . . . a bond in the amount of the cost of tearing it down should be posted and paid by the landlord." — JIM WONDERBAAR, SALEM

"I was a resident of Southwest Roanoke for over 50 years. I'm 86 now. I don't like the bad paint you're painting of Southeast and some of its residents. Ben Kelly, for instance, maybe he's not doing some things just right now. But in the past I know he taught me about having a spiritual relationship with Christ and what the Holy Spirit within us is all about. He fixed his members' homes when they were in bad need. No charge. . . . I think you should build up Southeast instead of tearing it down. The old people gave their all. Now they don't have a bank, no grocery store in walking distance.

"I know money is the main reason for banks and grocery stores leaving Southeast. What's happened to compassion for old people who are disabled? They've got to live. How can they when they can't get out to get food? . . . I still live Roanoke. Please quit tearing it down. Build it up so the old folks can live in peace in their last days. Find a way to make it easier on them."

BEATHA EDWARDS,
BEDFORD

"Basically, my comment is, as

long as you open Roanoke County, Roanoke city, Salem, Yon and all to collaborate on these programs, you will never get it done, because as long as I have lived here — 21 years — they have never agreed on anything."

LOUAIN MULLEN,
ROANOKE

"They pushed us all back to the Northeast area [during urban renewal] and pushed us into this area. People bought houses any way they could get them. I've paid for this house three times over, the way they string the interest out over 30 years. If I could have paid for the house 15 years ago, I could have gone on and gotten a remodeling loan and completely remodeled the house. I have more or less been able to keep my house from being sub-standard, yet it was 'standard' either."

LINDSEY MARTIN,
PRESIDENT,
LOUDON/MELROSE
NEIGHBORHOOD
ORGANIZATION,
ROANOKE

"The [Charlotte Chamber of Commerce] went on an annual inner-city trip. . . . to go to other cities and learn what was being done. . . . to revitalize downtown and take care of neighborhoods. . . . I say all of that simply because there was a real commitment, and there continues to be a real commitment in Charlotte on the part of the chamber of commerce and the business community to do more to help neighborhoods and the community in general. . . . The banking and financial industry. . . . made some low-interest money available to people to go back into the First Ward and revitalize and remodel and recondition and bring back to life this old historic neighborhood. They were very successful in doing that, and now that first ward section, right in the edge of downtown Charlotte, is a showplace. It took it takes a commitment on the part of the financial industry in an area to make such incentives available for developers and re-developers to go back into an area and provide that kind of financial assistance."

EDWARD J. BENNETT,
ROANOKE

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The making of a musical

"The Who's 'Tommy'" at Mill Mountain Theatre

EXTRA



GENERAL ELECTRIC Layoffs

A lot of mixed emotions

BUSINESS



Bronx restoration

Botanical Garden regains its glory

TRAVEL



SUNNY
Possible storms.
High near 90.
Low in upper 60s.
Details on A2.

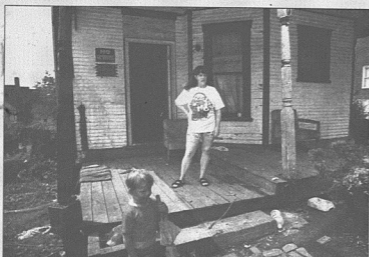
THE ROANOKE TIMES

Homes D1
Classified D4
Deaths C2
Local C1
Sports C1

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

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SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 1997 \$1.50



STEPHANIE HELEN-DAVIS / THE ROANOKE TIMES

Tammy Schiffer, shown with her grandson, Kevin Overstreet, 3, rented this house at 711 Tazewell Ave. S.E. for about three years. They later moved to a newly renovated duplex on the same street.

Roanoke leaders vow to focus on inner city

By MARY BISHOP and S. D. HARRINGTON
THE ROANOKE TIMES



THE INVISIBLE INNER CITY

Poverty, crime and decay in Roanoke's oldest neighborhoods

Roanoke community and political leaders are calling for a focused attack on problems in the failing neighborhoods near downtown.

"It's going to take a concerted effort between the city, the private sector, the nonprofit sector and the citizenry," former banker Bill Skeen said. "If you lose one of the legs on that table, that table is not as strong, it's not as stable."

Skeen and about 30 other leaders were contacted last week at the conclusion of the newspaper's three-week series, "The Invisible Inner City: Poverty, Crime and Decay in Roanoke's Oldest Neighborhoods." Their comments can be found on pages A4, A5 and A6 of today's paper, along with a summary of the series and other features.

The business leaders, anti-poverty agency heads, neighborhood activists, nonprofit directors and city and state officials all said something must be done to rescue the seven poorest neighborhoods that encircle downtown.

"It is critical, no matter where we live. So goes the inner-city, so goes our existence," said Martin Jeffrey, president of the Roanoke chapter of the NAACP. "The problems of the inner city tend to have a ripple effect in terms of what they do to our community."

Some are urging the creation of a new housing commission to plot a long-term housing and neighborhood plan — something, they say, the city has never had.

Others call for specific actions such as establishing more community development corporations, cracking down on irresponsible landlords and reappraising how the city spends its share of federal money designated mostly for poor neighborhoods.

For a few of the leaders, the deeper issue is that Roanoke is carrying much of the weight of social services for Western Virginia while surrounding governments offer little support. At the same time, middle- and upper-class families continue to move out of the city, taking their tax dollars with them.

"There has to be more of a regional approach to social services," said Baghdad Shareef, professor of political science at Radford University. "Roanoke just can't be the magnet for the homeless, the poor, the battered" without getting help from other localities.

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S.D. Harrington can be reached at 961-3236 or sharron@roanoke.com.

The first phase began in 1994

Settlement is end of long tobacco talks

Although the tobacco industry seemed safe years ago, recent lawsuits signaled the big change.

By MYRON LEVIN and HENRY WEINSTEIN

LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON — The landmark tobacco settlement reached Friday represents a dramatic about-face for an industry that for years had lived in a parallel universe — successfully defying public and scientific opinion and

billions-a-year industry could be a deal. Add Virginia attorney general Herbert S. Goldhamer's take on tobacco issue. C4.

Questions and answers about the deal. Add Virginia attorney general Herbert S. Goldhamer's take on tobacco issue. C4.

Once tobacco fees "got enough dogs together to cover the forest, the fox is cornered and makes a deal."

More than three decades of anti-smoking activism had caused little real damage to the industry. But the dogs began closing in for real in 1994, when a series of dramatic events shifted the balance of power in the smoking wars.

The first bombshell fell in late February of that year, when Food and Drug Administration Commissioner David Kessler announced

and scientific opinion and

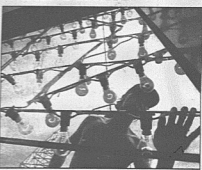
thruving in a legal system that had cloistered other makers of dangerous products.

The short explanation for the tobacco peace accord is that public vilification and the endless barrage of mega-lawsuits finally became more than the \$50

ANALYSIS

PLEASE SEE TOBACCOA07

NO JOB FOR THE LIGHTHEADED



AP/WIDE WORLD

OUTSIDE THE 46TH FLOOR of a Hong Kong building, a worker replaces a display's light bulbs in preparation for June 30, when Britain returns Hong Kong to China. Stories in Horizon.

Reading, 'riting and religion
'Oldest textbook' is back in Florida class

About 100 students in six high schools have signed up for the elective-class on Bible history.

By DONALD P. BAKER

HAWAII POST

PORT MYERS, Fla. — About the time the head of the Christian Coalition said he "would rather have a thousand school board members... than a single president," local members of the conservative political group began showing up at meetings of the Lee County School Board.

Now, two years later, the coalition's influence on the 53,000-pupil system on the Gulf Coast is apparent. Over the

objection of many residents, the five-member School Board has ordered high schools to begin offering a Bible-history class this fall.

It has fired a superintendent for dragging her feet on the plan and accepted the resignation of its lawyer, who warned the new curriculum, as originally proposed, "plainly contravenes the Constitution."

But as Bill Gross, a real estate broker and board member who proposed the Bible-study program, said, "In Florida, we must teach both history and the Holocaust. It's mandatory. So why not the Bible as an elective? It's the

PLEASE SEE TEXTBOOKA2

THE INVISIBLE INNER CITY
A SPECIAL REPORT

Why Roanoke's core communities are rotting away

By MARY BISHOP
and S.D. HARRISON
THE BISHOPS TRIPS

For the past three weeks, The Roanoke Times has documented the decline of Roanoke's central neighborhoods.

They stretch from Shufflers Crossing in the west to Fallen Park in the east. They extend north from the railroad tracks to Orange Avenue and south to Elm Avenue — a five-minute walk from the bustling and well-tended Roanoke City Market.

"You can't have a good downtown with frayed edges," said Matt Kennedy, director of Downtown Roanoke Inc.

Many other cities lost the beds of their downtown neighborhoods decades ago, in urban renewal and highway construction, said Penny Cook with Partners for Livable Communities in Washington, D.C.

"Those cities that for a variety of reasons have been able to preserve those inner-city neighborhoods are lucky," she said. "It's a definite asset."

But that asset is rotting away in Roanoke.

This series has shown that: ● Roanoke's downtown neighborhoods — and their social services and cheap rental housing — long have attracted poor and needy people from across the region. ● That Roanoke had all kinds of goodies to give away, said landlord Richard Beard, who says many of his tenants come from as far away as Tennessee and West Virginia.

● As homeowners fled or moved away, speculating landlords bought houses cheaply and divided them into apartments. Some houses were held for rent money by landlords who did just enough to meet the state's building code. With renters coming and going in rapid succession, the houses began wearing out.

● Some landlords are taken to court frequently for not fixing their houses but are given months to comply and minimal fines, if any.

● A disproportionate share of Roanoke's crime occurs in these neighborhoods. ● Three a two-mile radius around City Hall, and you have the worst crime, the worst drug dealing, anywhere for hundreds of miles, developer Bob Feter said.

● Nearly every block in the central neighborhoods is marred

by weed-choked vacant lots or boarded-up houses. The minority of homeowners who remain often contend with sagging vacant houses next door that have homeless squatters, drug dealers and fires.

"We have historically made a big mistake in this country, aggregating low-income housing" and putting it only in poor neighborhoods, said Nancy Book, a Roanoke lawyer who specializes in housing law. "You tend to compound it with sagging vacant houses next door that have homeless squatters, drug dealers and fires."

● Many other cities are far ahead of Roanoke government and nonprofits in halting the decline of their old neighborhoods. While cities like Pittsburgh are using comprehensive plans to bring back old neighborhoods, Roanoke still has no long-term housing strategy and few nonprofits organizations devoted to developing housing in these neighborhoods.

● Roanoke, a five-time All-American City winner, has invested more than a third of its federal block grant money in economic development projects and its award-winning downtown bus-



Houses on the 1400 block of Chapman Avenue Southwest differ in condition, but they share a view of the littered vacant lot on the corner.



IN ROANOKE'S MOST TROUBLED NEIGHBORHOODS

- 40% of people live below poverty level.
- 27% of adults have less than ninth-grade education.
- 11 of Roanoke's 14 murders in 1996.
- 42% of 1996 prostitution charges.
- About 60% of housing units are rental (vs. 43 percent citywide).
- Nearly 25% of properties have been cited for building code violations.
- Median assessed property value is \$20,000 (vs. about \$60,000 in the rest of the city).

ROANOKE: THE SOCIAL-SERVICE MAGNET

- Of 83 non-revolving Roanoke shelter social service programs mainly for the poor, 79 are in Roanoke and seven each are in Salem and Roanoke County.
- 4 of 460 subsidized housing units in the Roanoke Valley, 258 are in Roanoke, 30 are in Roanoke County and 216 are in Salem.
- Since 1981, Roanoke's spending on social services and welfare has grown from \$72 to \$173 per capita.

low- and middle-income people. ● Some experts say that even with millions of dollars poured into impoverished neighborhoods, cities like Roanoke will never really growover until they stop the suburban sprawl and draw economic growth back into the city.

Washington, D.C.-based urban expert David Book said:

"You just can't revive Roanoke city neighborhoods or the downtown core as long as it's more affordable to plow up the next corridor."

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S.D. Harrison can be reached at 981-3220 or strahock@roanoke.com

THE LANDLORDS

- Roanoke's 20 most frequently cited landlords have been brought to court on 125 building or zoning charges since 1986.
- The results: 24 convictions, \$60,000 in maximum potential fines, \$2.150 in fines actually levied.
- Some landlords received 44% of city's building code citations during the past 15 years.

THE CITY

- Of nearly \$50 million in federal Community Development Block Grant money, Roanoke spent:
 - 1% on affordable grants and community centers
 - 2% on non-housing help for the poor
 - 8% on parks, landscaping and infrastructure
 - 10% on elimination of blight
 - 22% on housing
 - 56% on economic development, downtown renovations and City Hall renovation

SOURCES: U.S. Census data; grants by administration; Roanoke annual reports; Roanoke Building Inspection reports; and partner performance reports in the city's Office of Grants Compliance



This vacant house on Marshall Avenue Southwest is one of the city's three best street numbers. A fourth number, 907, is on a notice from the building inspector that declares the structure unsafe.

Robert Lunsford, City Manager, said he would put money into housing, "if we can get up to \$60 million for an overpass bridge to go to Wald-Mart, surely we could come up with \$10 million from a bond referendum to start redeveloping our neighborhoods."

Feter said he has an urban home-steading program that assisted homeowners.

● A conference on the problems of the inner city sponsored by the Roanoke Regional Housing Network.

Feter said one reason Charleston, S.C.'s downtown neighborhoods are making a comeback is the strong leadership of Mayor Joseph Riley. "We need to have leadership like that," he said.

● Ted Edlich, executive director, Total Action Against Poverty: "I would hope that the City Council would shut off the '88 study [by a city task force] and perhaps council would appoint a committee or commission to revisit that study, to update it and come up with a plan for approval."

"I don't fault the [city] administration for support for economic development, but even if you get jobs and good wages, unless the

PEASE SEE LEADERSIAS

Roanoke leaders speak out on the inner city

Martin Jeffrey, president, Roanoke branch, NAACP.

Jeffrey said a public decision is needed to create a plan to save Roanoke's inner-city neighborhoods. "I don't see a study it needs to involve everyone from the Fifth [Planning District Commission] to TAP to the city to the Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership." But, he said, it also should include residents of the neighborhood.

He said the group should be independent. In the past, task forces by the city and studies by Total Action Against Poverty were all done from one or a few perspectives. This group should include all perspectives, he said.

"I think new leadership could emerge. We don't have to have the traditional people initiate the dialog. It may help if we had a fresh approach."

"One of the things I've always said is we can help Southwest. If Roanoke increased it has the same difficulties ... as Southeast has, and it has similar problems as Southeast. We can get people to understand we are all in this mess together."

Jeffrey is willing to take this information and create a living process that moves us further along. One of the follow-ups the newspaper could do is to get people on the forum. Whoever's interested in these issues, come on in here, let's talk about it. I'd like to see the newspaper take a step fur-

ther. What the newspaper could do is offer the opportunity for these people to come together. This information can sit there and nobody responds to it. That would be tragic."

Warner Dalhousie, former chief executive officer, First Union National Bank of Virginia.

He said an umbrella organization similar to TAP, the group that revived the Roanoke City Market, is needed to redeem Roanoke's inner-city neighborhoods. He was asked who would lead.

"I hate to put this back on the city. The city government has an awful job on its plate at any time. But if the city could somehow coordinate the thing. It's got to be banks and nonprofit organizations and landlords and tenants," he said, as well as businesses, neighborhood organizations "and maybe some churches."

He called for more innovative programs under the federal Community Development Act, which mandates equal treatment of poor and affluent by lenders. "I'm thinking in terms of not just low-

income loans but outright grants" for homeowners, he said.

Dalhousie said he's been reading general news stories with a different eye this month — such as a recent account of a North-West Meidan teen-ager who held a gun to his head and threatened to shoot himself. When neighborhoods get down and people lose hope, he said, "That's what happens."

He said his friends were talking about the old neighborhood at a Center in the Square event last week.

"People were saying 'I didn't know it was that bad.' I had to tell them, 'How would you, if you live way out in Southwest?'"

"All the wealth in this nation is waagring. Come down to Smith Mountain Lake and see the million-dollar homes being built as weekend houses," said Dalhousie, who lives in the lake. "But everybody's not benefiting."

Bob Feter, Roanoke developer:

"There's got to be a long-term approach on this. You can't use a Band Aid approach." Feter said. "I think that the city must take a

lead role in trying to reverse blighting trends."

Among the things Feter would like to see are:

- A bond referendum that would put money into housing.
- Return of an urban home-steading program that assisted homeowners.

● A conference on the problems of the inner city sponsored by the Roanoke Regional Housing Network.

● Ted Edlich, executive director, Total Action Against Poverty: "I would hope that the City Council would shut off the '88 study [by a city task force] and perhaps council would appoint a committee or commission to revisit that study, to update it and come up with a plan for approval."

"I don't fault the [city] administration for support for economic development, but even if you get jobs and good wages, unless the

PEASE SEE LEADERSIAS

City Council, staff members express views on housing

City Manager Bob Herbert:

When asked who should take the lead in saving Roanoke's deteriorating inner-city neighborhoods and whether the city should be doing anything that it is not already doing, Herbert said he will listen to the ideas of neighborhood and civic leaders before reaching any conclusions.

Herbert said the Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership has and should continue to play a prominent role.

"The partnership seems to be something that is not recognized. We probably have had stronger recognition about our partnership outside Roanoke" than within the city, he said. "I've been written about in books, and planners from other cities have visited Roanoke to see the model. I don't know that it's gotten all the attention it needs" in Roanoke.

Mayer David Bowers:

"I continue to be very concerned about the housing stock in

the inner city of the city of Roanoke."

He said the city has made progress recently, such as having a new rental-inspection program and ordinances to prohibit junk cars, parking in front yards and front porch storage.

"You can't park in your front yard anymore," he said. "I've been amazed at the junk-car ordinance that's removed 1,000 vehicles in the last three or four months."

When asked what can be done for housing and neighborhoods, he said, "I think that can always be improved."

He said John Baker, now executive director of the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, "has had some success at developing inner-city downtown housing" in Richmond.

"I'm interested in hearing what other people think we should do," Bowers said. "I don't think we can ever say that we've done enough."

PEASE SEE COLUMNIAS

Jeffrey



Dalhousie



Herbert



Baker



Bowers

THE INVISIBLE INNER CITY

A SPECIAL REPORT

FROM A4

Leaders

housing is stabilized, they'll go get housing somewhere else. I think it's time for housing to have the same type of dedication that economic development has."

Tom MacMichael, program developer, Presbyterian Community Center:

"There needs to be an examination of the process for allocating Community Development Block Grants, but most people agree we need to address economic development, but it is that being fairly balanced" with neighborhood development. "Just what people just up as examples of efforts [to rehabilitate housing] were really going to do," he said. "Housing projects — often crosses of public jobs and limited periods, but in the name of economic development, the city rebuilt the Hotel Roanoke."

"It's a double standard," he said. "Now, maybe the focus needs to be on neighborhood."

MacMichael also thinks Southeast Roanoke needs a community development corporation to get some government and private money to restore and build housing.

He also would like to see Habitat for Humanity of the Roanoke Valley rehabilitate old houses. "Whatever groups have the resources and the mission, those groups need to help Habitat, he said.

Reginald Sharpe, professor of political science, Radford University, and a national authority on leadership and organizational change:

"There has to be leadership for this issue, primarily from the city officials, and political leadership from the mayor and from City Council. I make a distinction between leader and manager. Leaders create a vision. They inspire people. They put forth the reason organizations do things. That's what's missing here. Nobody's doing that. The '88 report should be...

WHO TO CALL

- Need help? Information? Want to get involved?
- City Manager Bob Herbert, 833-2322
- Mayor David Bowen, office 833-2444; home, 427-1150
- VICE Mayor Linda Wyatt, home, 345-1111
- Councilman Nelson Hamt, office 342-6482; home 344-9547
- Councilman John Parratt, office 393-1096; home 348-1408
- Councilman Carl Swan, home 366-8788
- Councilman James Toot, home 345-8353
- Councilman William White, office 342-1440; home 553-0414
- Habitat for Humanity in the Roanoke Valley 344-0747
- Roanoke Housing Department, 833-1208 or 833-2222
- Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority, 983-9281
- Roanoke Office of Homelessness, Compliance, 983-6003
- Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership, 345-6250
- Urban Housing Development Corp., 774-7408
- Total Action Against Poverty 345-6781

received. A more current strategic committee should update that report. Then the council needs to commit itself to act on the most pressing recommendations within a year, and that means finding the money to do it.

"There has to be more of a regional approach to social services. Roanoke just can't be the magnet for the homeless, the poor, the battered...not getting help from other localities, he said. "There needs to be some type of remunerative compensation."

He said Florine Thornhill, who started the Northeast Neighborhood Environmental Organization and headed its successful department of housing, could train people from other neighborhoods.

Other community leaders should model her social and political leadership skills. Being a community leader is not just preaching but also developing the



Neighbors said this house on 14th Street Southwest has been vacant since shortly after its last occupant was taken into custody several years ago.

WHAT NEXT?

Our three-week series about decay in Roanoke's oldest neighborhoods, "The Invisible Inner City," ended the following ideas:

FROM COMMUNITY LEADERS:

- Hold a citywide forum on how to solve inner-city neighborhoods.
- Set up a commission on long-term housing strategies.
- Develop a long-term plan for building and rehabilitating housing.
- Create an umbrella group like Design 83, which received City Market.
- Set up a community development corporation in Southeast Roanoke.
- Develop a statewide land-use plan.
- Create a revolving housing loan fund.
- Develop low-income housing more widely.
- Analyze Community Development Block Grant allocations.
- Develop a manual on how to leverage housing.
- Hold workshops on neighborhood housing.
- Develop new upscale housing downtown.

skills to knock on doors, to talk to people, to negotiate."

Del. Victor D.-Roanoke: He said it hasn't been a popular idea, but cities and counties need to share more resources. "Special is killing us deadlier than 4-0," he said.

"Regionalism was a bad word 30 years ago. That was a word related to communist munitions somewhere or other. But now we've come to the point where we see what we've got to do. Our police departments — we've got what's Four of them."

"We're getting to where we can't afford four of everything. Without us thinking about it, we got off-regionalism, with our sewer and our airports. We'd like to see our state encourage more city-county cooperation."

Tony Stovola, past president, Greater Radford County Civic League, and member, the Presidents Council:

"Some of us were saying [at a Presidents Council meeting last week], this is not a problem that will be solved just by the landlords or just by the tenants or just by the neighborhood or just by the banks. All of them need to work together," he said, adding, "I think the banks need to come forward more."

"We need to look at whether there's the capability to develop more mixed-income patterns, where no one [population] is so dominant that it sets the tone for the whole neighborhood."

Henry Woodard, general counsel, Legal Aid Society of the Roanoke Valley:

"The ultimate problem is the people who have minimum-wage income. The good part of them can't afford decent housing unless it's subsidized in some fashion. Everybody's trying to dodge that bullet — the landlord by not providing decent housing, the government by eliminating

FROM READERS:

- Impose an income tax to be paid to the locality where you live. — Jimmy B. Sherrill, Roanoke, and James Alan Roanoke
- Use city employees who are in excess capacity with the neighborhoods to maintain housing conditions. — Susan Barber and Shari Stonebraker, Roanoke
- Fund the names of owners, property or displaced, vacant properties. — Ann Subank, Buchanan
- Escrow the work of Habitat for hundreds of the Roanoke Valley to include housing rehabilitation. — Bill Monte, Roanoke, and Jay Wheeling, Roanoke
- Set up a housing rehabilitation fund to be supported by local funds. — Robert property owners and renters — Rosetta Kirkman, Salem

FROM NEWSPAPER EDITORS:

- Organize a "Friends of Rights" effort to push for legislation on growth management.
- Organize a Roanoke Community Investment Group to encourage bank investment in 2000 neighborhoods.
- Develop a landlord training program.
- Set up a nonprofit legal service to help neighborhoods fight waves of displaced tenants in court.
- Form a tenant rights organization.

the subsidies, and the city by saying we don't want these people anymore."

"The answer has to be statewide land-use pressure on the existing localities to look inward instead of going outward. It just makes so much sense." Nothing will change, he said, "as long as the people who want to escape can go out and crash more of the countryside. It's a replaying of the great themes of American history — it's like your life in the situation where you find yourself, you just move out."

Paula Prince, president, Old Southwest Inc.:

"What Roanoke neighborhood-based to see the city to recognize it as their greatest asset. If the city decides tomorrow that Old Southwest is a jewel in their crown, then it would see to it that subdivisions would no longer be able to do what they do and its ordinances would be enforced to the fullest extent of the law. Neighborhoods are not the primary focus of Roanoke. The city programs are not...they're there."

Bill Skeen, former banker, deputy director of Total Action Against Poverty:

"There needs to be a more concerted understanding of the role housing plays in the quality of life for the community at large. A long-term comprehensive plan needs to be developed by the city, the neighborhoods, the nonprofits and housing groups, and that needs to be backed up with dollars. We've demonstrated that as we as a city can tackle the big stuff. The Hotel Roanoke is an example of that."

"There are creative things that have been done in other cities that we ought to take a look at."

He was asked who should take the lead. "It has to be a coalition of people who respect community corporate leader. I think it needs to be someone who's been here for a long time and has the ability to leverage whatever resources are necessary."

It's going to take a... PLEASE SEE LEADERS A6

FROM A4

Council

Housing Development Coordinator Dan Pollock

"The one very basic element that comes to my mind is a set of tools for people to take more responsibility for their properties and for their lives. In every other instance of crime, the perpetrators are punished. I don't think that ought to take six months or nine-months with continuance after continuance. That is not in any way encouraging people to take responsibility. If people don't believe they are going to be fined, then where is the incentive to do what they are supposed to do? It's an extremely interesting process. I think it would take the council taking these cases more seriously and sending the message. Yes, these are important cases. No, they're not up there with rapes and drugs, but by the time we get these cases in court they typically had months to deal with the problems. It's not working as a deterrent. I don't know if I'm frustrated in knowing whether it's worth going through the process at all."

"When asked what City Council could do, he said it could set "real good strategic policy and give direction on how we deal with responsible property owners and irresponsible tenants."

City Councilman Jim Trout:

"I think the City Council ought to consider appointing a commission to look into housing. Our neighborhood leaders... can't seem to develop a city-wide strategy. They can only develop neighborhood activity. We ought to do a study to find a median strategy for what we will have 20 or 30 years from now."

"The city has an enterprise zone for industry. Why not one for housing, with the same kinds of tax concessions," he asked. "Roanoke has a reputation as being a city with a big heart for 50 years, but this big heart has gotten to the point where it can't stand any more... We need to take what does exist and re-evaluate that."

City Councilman William Whittier:

"I think the city and the housing authority probably have a pretty good program. It's going to take some public participation to bring the [housing] stock back quicker."

"Write sub when for the city and the housing authority could lead the effort. I think the nature of the problem would be the Roanoke Redevelopment and Housing Authority."

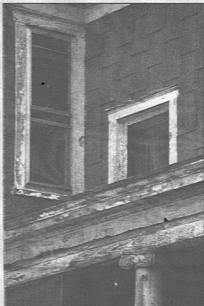
"I think our problems are there, but I don't think the housing authority and the city have turned their heads. I think the [housing] program needs to be higher, and it needs to be coordinated better. I think we have the ingredients here. I don't think we need to re-create the wheel to solve the problem."

City Councilman John Parratt:

"I have no answer for it right now. I think we've got to do some creative things."

He said the city may want to look at the enforcement of the laws that govern landlords and tenants "a better system to have some penalties for tenants and landlords."

"It seems to me from what I have read, the balance is between tenants and landlords. It's got a lot of ramifications. PLEASE SEE COUNCIL A6



This vacant house on Marshall Avenue Southwest shows signs of wear and tear — and neglect.

Information from series available via databases

As part of the research for this series, The Roanoke Times compiled databases of Community Development Block Grant expenditures in Roanoke from 1975 to 1996, and of building code violations in rental properties from 1982 to 1996. It's the first time such databases have been compiled — even by the city government — and made available to the public. The newspaper compiled CDBG data for the city's annual reports to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The results were used to show how the city has spent nearly \$30 million in the federal money that is intended to benefit poor neighborhoods.

The building inspection data compiled from about 1,500 files in the Roanoke Housing Department, were used to determine which landlords have had the most rental properties cited for code violations in the past 15 years and where those properties are located.

Both databases are searchable on line at www.roanoke.com/roanoke. Look under "The Invisible Inner City."

—MARY BISHOP AND S.D. HARRINGTON

EDITOR'S NOTE

Mary Bishop and S.D. Harrington did the research, reporting and writing of "The Invisible Inner City." Stephanie Klein-Davis was the principal photographer. The project editor was Jeff Dell. Sherri Winkler served as page designer. Mike Kennedy and Betty Tyler were the copy editors.

Graphics were prepared by art department chief Bob Lundberg and his associates: Beth Day and Andrew Sive. Diane Pritchard and Anthony S. Clair provided transcriptions of records. Hedy Berensbach, Jim Elston, Dwayne Yancy, Karen Skewes, Keith Graham, Carolyn Daugherty, David Poole, Leslie Poole, Dave Hertz and others.

Today's installment begins "The Invisible Inner City" to its conclusion, although from time to time The Roanoke Times will revisit the issues that have been raised.

A whole new world for tobacco regulations

Questions raised by settlement

Cigarette ads, sports sponsorship and tobacco prices will be affected by the settlement.

ANN BY TED BROWN

WASHINGTON — How would the big tobacco deal work? Some questions and answers about how it approved by Congress, it would affect smoking in America.

Q: Would the deal change the price of cigarettes?

A: Cigarette prices probably would rise — perhaps by as much as 75 cents a pack — to finance the more than 5,000 billion dollars.

Q: Could I still buy cigarettes at the local market?

A: Yes, but they'll be kept behind the counter. No more self-service displays. And forget about vending machines. They'll be phased entirely.

Q: Would cigarettes themselves change?

A: Possibly. The Food and Drug Administration would have authority to regulate nicotine and other ingredients in cigarettes. That means the agency could order cigarette makers to reduce nicotine levels in cigarettes or make other changes in ingredients. But the agency has to go through Congress — 20 years in the making — to do that, says an industry spokesman.

Q: Would cigarette packaging change?

A: Yes. Black labels would cover the top third of cigarette packs, and carry stronger messages like "WARNING: Smoking can kill you," or "WARNING: Cigarettes are addictive."

Q: What about smokeless tobacco products?

A: They would have to carry messages like "WARNING: This

product is not a safe alternative to cigarettes," or "WARNING: This product can cause mouth cancer."

Q: How would ads change?

A: Lots of new restrictions, no more billboard ads, no Internet ads, no humans or cartoons in ads. In other words, goodbye Marlboro Man and Joe Camel. And look for a ban on Joe Camel for a campaign. The tobacco companies would pay for it, with no control over its content.

Q: What about big sports events that have traditionally been sponsored by tobacco companies?

A: No more brand-name sponsorship of events like auto racing's Winston Cup. You could forget about those big signs that line the racing tracks and the tennis courts.

Q: Any help for people trying to quit smoking?

A: People who wanted to quit but couldn't afford cessation programs could get financial help to pay for aids like nicotine gum or patches, which can run more than \$200 for a 10-week regimen.

Q: Could smokers still sue the tobacco companies?

A: Individuals could still sue, but class-action suits would be banned. People could collect compensatory damages for expenses, lost wages, pain and suffering. They would not be able to get punitive damages for past industry misconduct, but any future wrongdoing would remain subject to punitive damages.

Q: What about existing class-action suits and individual suits?

A: At the class-action suits would be settled. Plaintiffs wouldn't get any cash settlement but could be eligible for

smoking-cessation help. The individuals lawsuits now in court would not be affected.

Q: What about that big second-hand smoking lawsuit filed by airline flight attendants?

A: It wouldn't be affected by the agreement.

Q: What's the price tag for all of this?

A: The tobacco companies would pay out more than \$300 billion over 25 years, most of it for anti-smoking campaigns and to repay state Medicaid money spent treating sick smokers. After that, they would pay \$15 billion a year.

Q: How are the 10 states not represented in negotiations affected?

A: Once Congress accepts the deal, its provisions are binding on every state. All states also will share in tobacco industry Medicaid reimbursements.

Q: What do the tobacco companies get out of this?

A: Sharp reductions in their potential legal liabilities, and thus a measure of financial certainty.

Q: How does it affect kids?

A: The agreement puts special emphasis on discouraging smoking by youngsters. Ads in magazines with high kid readership could be text only — no pictures.

The tobacco industry would pay big fines if the percentage of young people who smoke doesn't decline quickly enough.

Q: When will all of this happen?

A: No one knows when — or if — any of this will take place. Much of it is subject to approval by Congress, whose opinion is divided. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi has said Congress won't act at least until September.

FROM A5

Leaders

crete effort between the city, the private sector, the nonprofit sector and the citizenry. If you lose one of the legs on that table, that table is not as strong, it's not as stable."

Estelle McCadden, president, Melrose-Rugby Neighborhood Forum:

"It's going to take a lot of effort," she said. "The neighborhood organization is a good sounding board. The city needs to realize, if it didn't have them, what a problem they would have."

McCadden's neighborhood group will soon send out letters to absentee owners of dilapidated houses in the Melrose-Rugby neighborhood.

"They don't live in your area. They don't care. We're going to ask them to do something about it," she said.

Members of the group will be willing to help clean up

properties. "They'll help us and we'll help them, and let's clean it up," she said. And if that doesn't work, they will go to the city for help enforcing building and zoning codes.

"Neighborhood organizations and the neighbors are going to have to put a higher rein on it," she said. "We've got to put pressure on these people."

Joel Richert, board member and activist, Old Southwest Inc.:

For a rescue of inner-city neighborhoods, she said, "Five people in the city's administration must work on changes — [City Manager] Bob Herbert, [City Attorney] Wil Dibling, [Public Works Director] Bill Clark, [Housing Development Coordinator] Dan Polow and [City Planner] Eve Lander. With their attention to what needs to be done everything will work. If these key players can't do it, I don't know how it's going to

work." She said the city needs to encourage home ownership and enlist the help of key neighborhood people with imagination, creativity, confidence, courage and stubbornness.

Sushela Shrestha, executive director, Northwest Neighborhood Environmental Organization:

"I think there ought to be a partnership between people and agencies concerned with housing as an issue. There should be an effort to develop a strategy to stabilize and overcome the problem. There should be a cohesive planning effort that includes all organizations and the city to develop a plan of action."

"The housing problem in our urban areas is big enough that it needs all the brains all the brains and all the dollars available. No one can afford to ignore it, because it affects everyone and everything."

FROM A5

Council

on all sides. It's a problem, and it's hurting Roanoke. Council's got to do something. We've got to take a lead on this thing."

But, he said, "What we can do within the law is another problem. The contracting within the law for its handling of building and zoning code violations? They have to act within the law."

City Councilman Carroll Swain:

"The only thing I can see for the city administration is to take a look at all the procedures for

handling these kinds of things, such as building code enforcement. He also believes the city needs to work more closely with neighborhood groups. "If there's a great money outflow, let's get it."

"The key to it is to get businesses in here. Every time there's an announcement of an industry opening up in the industrial sector, that's music to our ears."

When asked how well Roanoke neighborhoods are organized, Swain said neighborhood activism "is growing. We've got more that are more organized than others." He recommended Marain

Also, coordinate with the Roanoke Neighborhood Partnership, for her work.

"It's on target, the city administration is on target," Swain said. "The landlords — we can't blame it all on them."

"On the importance of the neighborhoods to the city, he said, "It's the backbone. If you don't have the neighborhoods, you can forget about it."

"Let's face it. The federal state and all of [the governments] — we need to join in and face this problem because it's widespread throughout the country. It's not an easy job. If we get the right focus, we'll straighten it out."