

HOBOS' LULLABY

NEIL HENRY's "Down and Out" series may have concluded last Thursday, but the experiences captured in those 12 articles are not likely to leave him for a long time.

"The experience is still happening," said Henry, a 26-year-old Metro reporter who for seven weeks lived among the homeless and downtrodden of Washington and Baltimore. "It's not something that ended when I came back here. It's not like a vacation, or that you went somewhere for a while."

He still wanders down 14th Street, going now in neat blue jeans and sweater to places he had been in grubby old clothes, trying to get back in touch with the feelings he had living as a bum. "I'm not sure exactly what was so special about these people," he said, "maybe it's that you don't have all that materialism coming between people."

Henry's editor, DAVID MARANISS, a fan of George Orwell, had him read Orwell's "Down and Out in Paris and London." Henry liked the book, liked the idea of writing about this culture first-hand, and on January 7 set out for Baltimore with little more than his wits and resourcefulness.

"We're always writing about this culture from the outside," he said. "We write about



By Peggy Gage

street people when something's happening—when a shelter closes or if a street person freezes to death. Living as a derelict is one way to write about the lifestyle and understand it and learn from it."

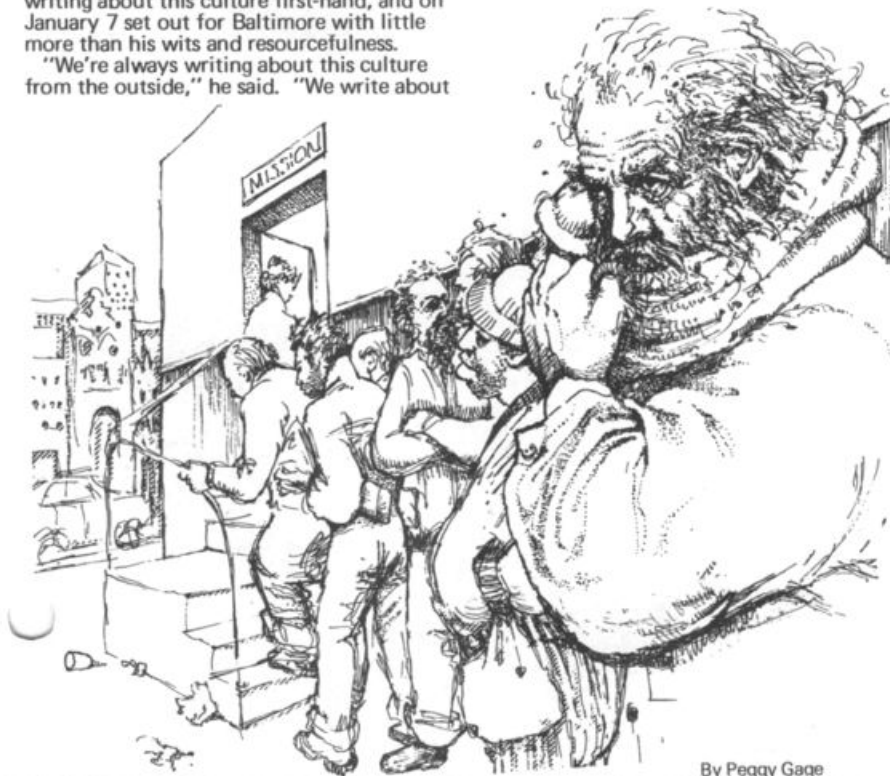
Henry learned from his experience that he liked his companions much more than he thought he would. And although he enjoys the constant congratulations of his coworkers, the most important compliment he received, he said, was from his street peers. "I think the most important thing this series did was show bums as people who other people can appreciate. A couple of them wrote to say that my perceptions were accurate, that I showed things as they are, but they added that they personally would never stoop so low as to sleep on grates."

Nevertheless, when he began the assignment he was somewhat apprehensive. So was his mother. "She made it clear to David that she disapproved. He convinced her of the assignment's ethics and socially redeeming qualities, but she still would have held David fully responsible if anything had happened."

"I was scared to death. Not of anything specific, just a general fear of the unknown. I was afraid for my physical safety; I didn't know what these people were about, whether they had knives or guns. My first night in the dormitory (in Baltimore's Helping-Up Mission), everything was strange—the smells, the god-awful cold, the people."

Another fear was that of being uncovered. "I didn't think I'd pass. But you let your hair grow, your beard grow, put on some floppy old clothes that don't fit too well, and you're halfway there. A lot of the people I met were a mess, but there were others who would fit right into the mainstream."

(Continued on page 3)



By Peggy Gage

ON THE STREET WHERE YOU WORK

The area of 15th Street between L and Massachusetts seems to have a knack for sprouting new buildings—residences become hotels and hotels become office buildings. This area has changed considerably over the last century, and the landscape of banks, office buildings and parking garages was in its past life an assortment of houses, apartment buildings, hotels and few commercial structures.

In the early 1890s, a warehouse and a church shared the property where The Post's 15th Street building now stands. The Security Storage Warehouse, which was razed when The Post bought the land in 1965, was a formidable structure on the block. James M. Goode wrote in "Capital Losses" that the warehouse was judged the most "atom bomb proof structure in the city during the rage to build and locate civil defense shelters.

"No commercial structure in Washington can do more for the adage, 'form follows function,' than the design of the crenelated fortresslike warehouse built for the safe storage of household articles by Security Storage Company."

In the mid-20th century, because the business center of Washington had expanded northward and encircled the warehouse, the property value had increased tremendously. Security Storage had paid \$2 a square foot in 1890; in 1965 The Post bought the land for \$95 a square foot.

Where the Prudential Office building is going up, and where the Pick-Lee Hotel recently stood, was a Roman Catholic church. St. Augustine's, thought to be the first black Catholic church in the country, was built in the late 1880s. The founder of the church had gained permission from Abraham Lincoln to hold a fund-raising party on the White House Lawn. The event raised \$1,000, and in 1946 St. Augustine's was sold for \$300,000.

The turn of the century saw the construction of the Episcopal Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital on the site of the present Madison Office Building. The institution celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1947, and was torn down in 1960 to make way for the Madison complex.

In the early 1900s the block was considerably residential; people named Edward Carrol, Clara Marbury, Elizabeth Crowley and Minna Brixen lived on 15th Street. Because of the proximity to the hospital a number of nurses also lived on 15th Street.

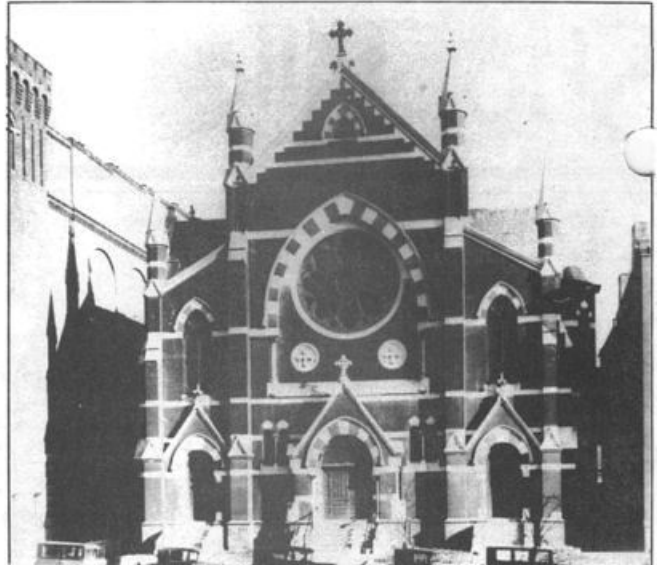
The early Twenties brought the Colonial Hotel to 1156 15th Street, at the corner of 15th and M. It was a seven-story building with 200 rooms, and was used by the telephone company during World War I to house the additional operators employed during the war. In 1928 it became the New Colonial Hotel and was demolished during the Fifties. Another hotel was built at this time, The Lee House, which survived from 1924 to 1979.

The number of apartment buildings on these blocks increased during the 1930s. The French High Commission of the Republic of France's headquarters became Monroe Courts apartments. This site is now occupied by the National Association of Home Builders.

Services came to the area as apartment buildings flourished. Samuel Portnoy had a tailor shop at 1148 15th Street, and Charlie Wu had a laundry across the street.

Safeway opened a store in the mid-Forties, on the site that St. Augustine's had recently vacated. The World War II years also brought a used car lot, Mayflower Auto Co., to the property where The Washington Post Credit Union is now located.

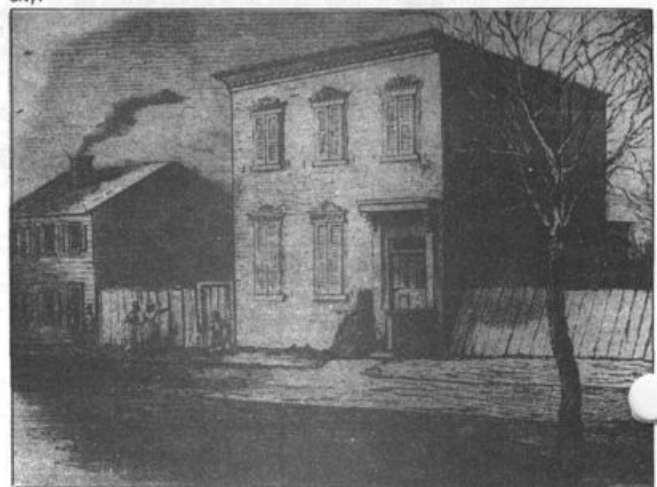
In the late '50s and early '60s Fifteenth Street was in the process of changing from a mixture of business and residential buildings to an almost completely business area. By the late '60s no houses remained on these blocks, and apartment buildings were being torn down to make way for more modern hotels and a greater number of office buildings.



St. Augustine's Church, thought to be the first black Catholic church in the country, was, from the late 1880s to 1946, on the site of The Post's 15th Street building.



Security Storage Warehouse was a formidable structure on 15th Street. During the Forties and Fifties it was judged the most "atom bomb proof" building in the city.



In the mid-20th century the business center of Washington spread northward to 15th Street. A century before, however, this area was almost completely residential.

(NEIL HENRY, continued from page 1)

Except for a brief respite, Henry lived as a street person from early January to early March. He returned eight or nine pounds lighter, a considerable amount for his small frame. He didn't lose weight from lack of food, but from the energy he used walking and the streets.

I am surprised by the sheer strength of these people, by their intestinal fortitude. They can survive all this—being beaten by guards, getting kicked out into the cold, and I mean cold. The days are really long. I was exhausted when I came back. In Baltimore they kicked you out at five in the morning and let you back in the mission in the evening. I guess they got us up that early to instill some sort of discipline. In D.C. they kicked us out at five to save money. I haven't been up that early in years, except when I used to go fishing when I was younger."

Henry's role as reporter was discovered by only one street person, Allie, who was profiled in the series' conclusion. Metro reporter **MOLLY SINCLAIR** recognized him in Georgetown, but didn't speak to him.

"It was difficult being a reporter and a bum at the same time. I didn't take notes in front of people; I'd run to the bathroom or someplace to scribble notes. But I wasn't playing reporter. Reporters are inquisitive, always asking questions. I learned to use my eyes and ears more. Plus, you're not on deadline, there's not an hour to get the story in, so you can become more involved with the story."

The business manager of the mission in Baltimore wrote, mentioning that he had seen part four of the series, and asking Henry to forward to rest. The letter also said, according to our records, you had five nights and you paid for five. We trust you were satisfied with the food." Henry



By Peggy Gage

sent them some money and a note which read, "The shelter and the food were deplorable, but the people were great."

Even after the experiences of selling his blood to buy food, of celebrating a \$7 windfall he got for pawning a bracelet he found by "pigging out" on hamburgers, and of getting a little loose on Wild Irish Rose in

Dupont Circle, Henry said he could go through this all over again.

"Anyone can become a bum. It could happen to you, it could happen to me. You could never say that it wouldn't happen to you. And if the economy keeps going the way it is," he laughed, "this series might be used as a reference."

THE INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER ASKS, "PARDON ME, BUT..."

"What's your favorite junk food?"



JOHNNY BUCKLEY—Pressroom
"McDonald's. I usually have a Big Mac for lunch every day."



NIKO—Engineers
"I don't eat junk food. I never had that problem; I never craved it."



JO NICOLE CAYA—Classified
"Pringles potato chips. Even though it's my favorite junk food, I still stay away from it."



DANIEL DUPREE—Mailroom
"Candy, especially peanut chews and Fifth Avenues. I sure eat enough of them."



SHARMEEN DOSKY—Display Advertising
"Chocolate. All kinds of chocolate; I'm not picky."



LINDA JAMES—Insurance
"Donuts. I like wheat donuts, which I guess isn't junk food."

Do you have a question you'd like the inquiring photographer to ask? Jot it down and send it to Camille Recchia, sixth floor.

POST SCRIPTS

UP IN THE AIR — The Public Relations Department gave a warm farewell to our guide **PORTIA WILLIAMS**, who has accepted a flight attendant position with World Airways. Williams, who has been a tour guide at The Post for almost two years, is looking forward to her new career, and only hopes that she doesn't greet her first flight with "Welcome to The Washington Post."



Public Relations gave **PORTIA WILLIAMS** an engraved gold disc as a going away gift, but she had to unwrap three empty boxes before she got to the present.

SIXTH-FLOOR AWARDS — Nearly 1,500 entries were submitted in Editor & Publisher's 45th annual competition, and The Post walked away with two of the prizes. The contest recognizes the best promotion, research and public relations efforts of newspapers. The Post's Research Department received first prize for newspaper research. The award was given for the VIP study, which surveyed members of Congress on their readership habits. The study concluded that more of the nation's top legislators read The Post than read The Star, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal combined. The Promotion Department was awarded a certificate of merit in the Television Promotion category for an animated commercial that ran last spring.

CIRCULATION GAINS — While newspaper readership in many cities across the country is down, The Post's circulation recently hit record highs. Weekday circulation topped the 600,000 mark, and Sunday circulation surpassed 827,000 (as filed with the Audit Bureau of Circulation, subject to audit). For the six-month period ending March 31, The Post's circulation was 601,417 daily and 827,938 Sunday.



Baer's Promotion party with **LINDA GORECKI** and **TOM NEUBAUER**.



Baer's Public Relations party.

DOUBLE THE FUN — School Services' **STAN BAER** left one surprise birthday party last Wednesday to be greeted by yet another. Promotion's **LINDA GORECKI** presented Baer with a birthday cake, and a little later he wandered into the Public Relations Department to be met with another surprise party.

RECREATION ASSOCIATION NEWS



DIPS SOCCER — The New York Cosmos will be in town on June 1 to take on the Washington Diplomats at 2 p.m. at RFK Stadium. The first 5,000 children will receive a free Adidas soccer ball. Deadline for tickets is May 27. Contact **VERA MATTHEWS**, Accounting, at x7814.

WHITE ELEPHANT SALE — If you've done your spring cleaning and don't know quite what to do with your "white elephants," bring them to the Recreation Association's White Elephant sale on Wednesday, May 21 (rain date May 28). The sale of items is limited to association members. Call **GERRI PANCOAST**, Classified, x7022, for price tags.

AIR CONDITIONER — J.C. Penney's, 18,000 BTU window unit. 220 volts. Call Charlie at x7685 after 10 p.m.

ANKLE/WRIST WEIGHTS — \$10. **METAL SERVING TRAYS** (2) \$5 ea. Restaurant size. Call x7737.

FIRST AID CLASSES — Free first-aid classes sponsored by The Post. If interested, call Ulysses Smith, Security, x7874, from 4-11 p.m., or leave name with the Security Center.

CAMERA LENS — Minolta Rokkor, 50 mm, f/1.4. Perfect condition. \$75. Call Cynthia at x6688.

KEMPER OPEN TICKETS — One clubhouse and grounds ticket and one grounds ticket. Good for the entire tournament. Reasonable. Call x7802.

KITTENS — Free. Four females, one male, assorted colors. Call Al at x7933.

FOR RENT — Beautiful, sunny room in fashionable Adams-Morgan. Share kitchen and use of rest of large six-room apartment. \$150. Call x6311.

MARKETPLACE

MONTE CARLO — 1980 Chevy Monte Carlo. Won in Koon's MacDonald's contest. V-6, air-conditioning, automatic transmission, AM radio, radials, etc. Sticker price \$7,700; asking \$6,700. Call Gordon at x6802.

SPRING FEVER — Rent a lovely three-bedroom cottage on the St. Lawrence River in the Thousand Islands region of upstate New York, available early May. Directly on the water for swimming, boating, fishing. Some weeks in June, July and September still available. \$175 per week. Call Phil McCombs at x7427.

TUPPERWARE — Anyone interested in purchasing Tupperware products call Penny Telesford at 568-6307 after 5:30 p.m.

SEWING MACHINE — Zig zag model, with table. \$45. **VACUUM** — Hoover upright, with attachments. \$35. Call x7737.

MOPED HELMET — \$20. Was \$38. **AM/FM** Transistor radio - \$5. Call x7737.

PUPPY — Free to good home. Brittany Spaniel, 10 months old. Female. All shots. Call Dennis Knell, Mailroom x7149 or x7145.

REFRIGERATOR — Sears Kenmore. Brand new. Avocado green. 14 cubic feet. Frostless. \$200 or best offer. Call Rita at x7310 or 265-7781 after 7 p.m.

PRINTING — Business cards, letterheads, envelope business forms, flyers and brochures. The finest selection of thermographed or engraved invitations and announcements to choose from. All at a discount to Post employees and their families. Call Erwin Sessler daily at 262-9430; Monday-Friday, 6-7 p.m. at x7788.

What would you like to read about in Shop Talk? Your suggestions and ideas are always welcome. Editor Camille Recchia x6803.