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HOUSTON fired up

More than 20,000 chiliheads will give their stomachs a workout at the seventh annual **Houston Hot Sauce Festival**, September 16–17. Their taste buds will burn amid some 100 hot sauces, salsas, dips, jellies, and other fiery foods. For the kids, there are cooler activities like face painting and coloring contests. And bands including Zydeco Dots and alternative rockers Lean, Mean Texas Machine perform live. It all benefits a good cause: the Stehlin Foundation for Cancer Research. Now that's hot. 281.558.3518; houstonhotsauce.com

— Michele Meyer

NEW YORK/NEWARK short cuts

The films are short, but the event lasts awhile. The **Manhattan Short Film Festival** takes place in several different venues nationwide starting September 14. Audiences from Houston to Anchorage vote on their festival favorites. It all culminates in New York's Union Square Park on September 24, when a grand prize winner is announced. 212.529.8640; msfilmfest.com — David McDonough

all that jazz

Wynton Marsalis, artistic director of **Jazz at Lincoln Center**, delivers a fall season with the wide-ranging theme of "Innovations in Jazz." **Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola**, the Lincoln Center venue named for trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie, offers events throughout September in its Women in Jazz series. René Marie and Marian McPartland are among the performers. 212.258.9595; jalc.org — D.M.

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Street Spirit

THREE DECADES AGO, THE CITIZENS OF RALEIGH THOUGHT TURNING THEIR MAIN thoroughfare, **Fayetteville Street**, into a pedestrian mall would save their moribund downtown. Instead, of course, they nearly killed it. Ever since, Raleighans have been a people looking for a downtown, and — wouldn't you know it — they recently found one. Right where they left it. This past July, Fayetteville Street finally reopened to traffic. Now visitors can enjoy the unobstructed view from Raleigh's Greek Revival gem of a State Capitol (opened in 1840) at the top of the street to the columned portico of Memorial Auditorium at its end. The two classical buildings once again mirror each other, as they were intended when the auditorium opened in 1932.

Over the past year, the street looked more like an archaeological excavation than a main street, and, like a dig site, it has yielded some treasures. Twenty-five hundred new housing units are either planned or under construction, and dozens of new bars and restaurants have sprouted on and near Fayetteville Street. Among actual artifacts, those with the most distinctly Southern flavor are preserved in the Raleigh Times, a bar located half a block from Fayetteville Street, on Hargett. The preserved turn-of-the-20th-century building housed the city's much lamented afternoon paper and features a great display of Southern and journalistic relics found during the renovation, like packets of Piedmont cigarettes and a pocket New Testament.

Some parts of Raleigh's downtown need no rediscovery, however. A block south of the Times, on East Martin Street, is Mecca Restaurant, with its ceiling fans, wooden booths, and colorful octagonal-tile floor, and seemingly the same state legislators who claimed a chair when the coffee shop opened in 1930. Another block south, in a building that had separate entrances during segregation, is Cooper's, serving traditional vinegar-based eastern North Carolina BBQ. Of course everybody eats together there now — the double doors serving as a reminder of mistakes past. Like when they shuttered that great old newspaper. Or when they turned beautiful Fayetteville Street into a mall.

— Scott Huler

1975

was the last time a passenger vehicle drove down Fayetteville Street before it reopened this past July.

Source: The Raleigh City Museum