

ARCH:HORSE

A CLICHE IS AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME, BUT THEN IT JUST HANGS AROUND & WON'T LEAVE, SORT OF LIKE THE ATRIUM WON'T LEAVE ARCHITECTURE.



THE ATRIUM GOT A BOOST IN THE EARLY 1970'S WITH EFFORTS TO SAVE SUCH BUILDINGS AS WASHINGTON'S OLD POST OFFICE & PITTSBURGH'S P&L.E. STATION.



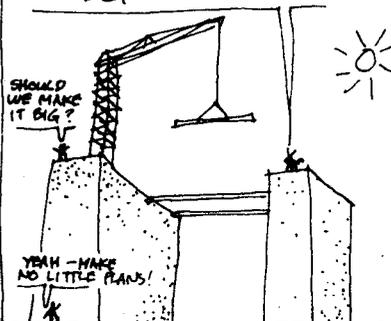
THE PRESERVATIONISTS SAID THESE WERE HISTORIC BUILDINGS & -BESIDES- THEIR VAST ATRIA COULD BE USED BY THE PUBLIC AGAIN...



THESE & OTHER OLD ATRIA WERE SAVED, & NOW THEY PROVIDE BIG SUN-LIT SPACES FOR SHOPS, CAFES, MUSIC & FOR JUST MILLING ABOUT.



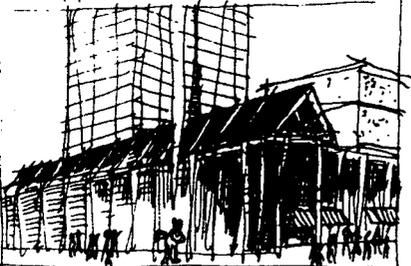
THESE CAUGHT ON, & NOW BIG BUILDINGS EVERYWHERE HAVE BEEN PUT UP WITH BIG SUN-LIT SPACES.



A GREAT GAUDY ATRIUM WAS BUILT INTO NEW YORK CITY'S TRUMP TOWER - IT HASN'T MUCH FORM BUT IT HAS ENOUGH SHOPS & CAFE TABLES TO MAKE IT LOTS OF FUN.



A CLASSIER ATRIUM WAS PUT UP IN DENVER'S TABOR CENTER WHICH HAS BROUGHT SPIRITED NEW ORDER - AS WELL AS SHOPS & CAFES - TO DENVER'S BIG, DULL DOWNTOWN...

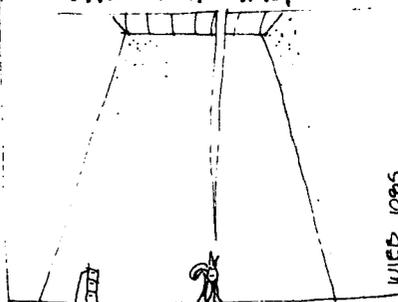


THESE OLD ATRIA & THEIR NEW COUNTERPARTS ALL HELP MAKE THEIR CITIES LIVELIER BY USING BIG SUN-LIT SPACES TO CELEBRATE & ENHANCE MARKET PLACES

& THAT'S WHERE PEOPLE ARE



BUT OTHER ATRIA HAVE BEEN BUILT THAT CELEBRATE ONLY LOBBIES & ENTRANCE ONLY FILE CABINETS, BECAUSE THEY ARE DEEP WITHIN OFFICE BUILDINGS



ONE OF THESE WAS BUILT IN WASHINGTON BY THE CARR CO. & EQUITABLE LIFE, WHO HAD TO KNOCK DOWN THE OLD EBBITT GRILL & RHODES TAVERN TO GET ENOUGH SPACE FOR A VAST ATRIUM...



THESE LANDMARKS COULD HAVE BEEN KEPT AS PART OF A LIVELY PUBLIC PLAZA OF HISTORY, WERE IT NOT FOR PLAZAS BEING CLICHES OF THE 1960'S & ATRIA BEING CLICHES OF TODAY

THIS MEANT FILE CABINETS GOT A BETTER DEAL THAN HISTORY OR PEOPLE...



THE MORAL:

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH USING CLICHES AS LONG AS YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO GET THE RIGHT ONE



THE END.

CHARLES MCDOWELL

High Tech Standard

There is a new coffee-making gadget at my house, and it turns itself on in the morning. When the alarm clock goes off a little later, I can wake up to the smell of fresh-brewed coffee. Sometimes this benevolence of high tech makes me feel so good and looked-after that I go back to sleep for an hour or so.

But usually I get up and sit at the kitchen counter with the marvelous coffee machine and read the paper. Doing that one recent morning, I felt communion with the crew of the space shuttle Discovery, which had returned to Earth after deploying three new satellites in space and fixing one that was already out there but on the blink. The wonder of it was that it was almost routine in the age of high tech.

As for me, I had set the digital timer on the coffee machine the night before, and I had set it tight and true, and now I was drinking the coffee. All of us are in the age of high tech together, although some of us date back to low tech and Lindberg.

We are all in it together, but some of us have to admit that we are less at home in it than others. To tell the truth, some of us easily could feel confused, inept and hardly a part of the remarkable rush of technological progress that we are living through. We just have to adapt to it as best we can, and try not to let high tech get us down.

My own capabilities as a high-technician end pretty much with the coffee machine. I know how to set its digital timer. Yet the digital timer on the videocassette recorder is at a level of technology I have not mastered.

I know how to record a program that is on the television while I am looking at it. In programming the thing to record a program in the future, I have been successful about 50 percent of the time. As for programming it to record two different programs in the future, I have never been successful. The thing will do it if you send it the right sequence of signals, and I have seen my wife succeed at it, but it is beyond my range.

To live with self-esteem in the high-tech era, each of us has to accept his or her range of capability. There are people who are confident about programming supercomputers to steer spaceships to the stars, and there are people whose confidence runs out somewhere between the coffee machine on the kitchen counter and the TV-recorder in the next room.

Let me return for a moment to TV-recorders. There was an item in the paper the other day saying their sales are increasing at some absolutely astonishing rate. Millions of them are being taken into American homes every month. Well, my hunch is that not half of the owners, probably fewer than that, have ever successfully set their TV-recorders for the future, remote-control recording of two separate programs. They use the things mostly to show movies or something on cassettes, anyway.

In stating my fairly comfortable resignation to ineptitude with high tech, I am not trying to identify with Robert Benchley's bemused bumbler of another age. My point is that high tech bewilders so many of us that we should not be thought of—or think of ourselves—as bumlbers. I suspect we are the standard.

Some years ago, before I knew the phrase "high tech," I acquired an automatic, high tech watch. It was cheap. Its control button was to be pushed in a madly complex code to set seconds, minutes, days, months and years. The manufacturer, in Texas, gave a number to call for human help, and I called it.

The operator who answered guided me through the procedure in perhaps 15 minutes. She was friendly. I asked her if many people were so dumb they had to call Texas to set their watch.

"We have 12 operators taking these calls, on shifts, day and night," she said, "and we're always busy."

Richmond Times-Dispatch