

City viewed through different eyes

As a child, Taunton always depressed me.

The only time we ever seemed to drive through the city was on our way to my grandmother's house in Pennsylvania, and it wasn't at pretty times of the year.

I remember driving down Route 44 past what used to be beautiful mansions, but by then they were dilapidated and tired-looking.

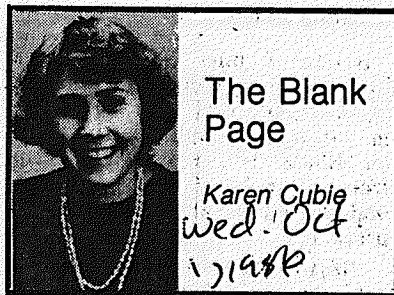
The city always seemed overcast, and downtown looked terribly shabby. Weather-beaten chipped and cracking brick buildings lined the streets. Unlit fluorescent lights hung heavily in store windows, and the sidewalks seemed dusty and covered with debris.

I never thought the Green was very pretty. It seemed worn and shabby, and I only saw it in winter when the grass was frozen, or during summer heat waves when it was fried a dried brown color.

When I first got this job at the *Taunton Daily Gazette* the idea of traveling to Taunton every day depressed me. I think the fact that I worked from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., left my apartment before dawn, and left the *Gazette* after sunset added to my sense of gathering gloom.

Taunton didn't seem to have changed much since the days I had driven through as a child, I thought as I drove into town on my first day of work. The mansions still looked dilapidated, and a big plastic Santa Claus grinned at me from the edge of the Green.

I didn't like the look of the heavy, brown Taunton Savings Bank building which seemed to dominate its little corner of town, and the weather at that time of year (November) was just plain lousy.



The Blank Page

Karen Cubie
Wed. Oct
1/19/88

I struggled through December, January, and February. I watched the ice melt and the mud gather, and I stayed indoors.

Then, one day at the beginning of March, the sun came out and I took a drive across town.

The mansions, I noticed, seemed better groomed, the sidewalks more carefully swept, and the Taunton Savings Bank corner was brightened by the carefully stenciled sign on the window of a new restaurant and a new awning.

"Maybe Taunton isn't that bad," I thought. "Maybe I could even like its looks."

Since March, my view of Taunton has changed completely.

When the flowers on the Green came out in full force and the fountain was turned on, I was awed. The grass seemed meticulously kept, and a few flowers even blossomed in front of the courthouse.

I drove around town and saw Lake Sabbatia, visited a couple carefully groomed cemeteries, and oohed and aahed over the city's Church Green.

I've grown to appreciate its cityish center and tightly knit community plopped dead in the middle of miles and miles of farmland and country.

The city's history is also fascinating. It's gone from a coun-

try town, to a booming city, to a dying city, and now, suddenly, it's struggling to get back on its feet again.

It boasts of generals and legendary heroes, patriotic incidents, and historic sites.

Taunton, I've discovered, is a beautiful and exciting place to be.

There are still some things that puzzle me, however.

No matter how hard I try, I'll never understand City Hall politics, Bristol-Plymouth School

Regional School Committee ofrels, and the *Gazette's* awkward parking lot.

I'll never figure out a safe way to drive all the way around the Green without missing my turn, and I guess I'll never be a Tauntonian because I just can't seem to pronounce Taunton correctly—"Tanton."

It seems that Taunton has grown since I've been here.

But maybe I've just grown enough to see it better.



Press, government roles differ

CAMBRIDGE — One of the puzzles for politicians and journalists alike this fall has been the widespread public skepticism about the tax-revision bill passed by Congress last week and now waiting the President's signature.

While President Reagan, its original proponent, and leaders of both parties in Congress hailed it as a major step toward economic rationality and political equity, voters have appeared either indif-

ferent or hostile. Claims that six million of the working poor will come off the tax rolls entirely, that 76 million mainly middle-income people will receive a tax cut of about \$800 apiece by 1988, and that only 20 million — mainly wealthy — will pay more, seemingly have fallen on deaf ears.

What has come through to voters so far is that the government is changing the tax system. And any sentence that contains the words "government"

and "taxes" spells bad news to them.

This oddity of public opinion provided a peculiarly fitting background for the ceremonies here last weekend opening the Joan Shorenstein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

The event had special meaning for me, because Joan, who died of cancer last year, was a dear friend for the last 16 of her 38 years. I met her when she was a graduate student at Harvard, encouraged her to come to The Washington Post as a political researcher in 1970 and watched with pride as she outgrew that job,



Point of View

David Broder

What both journalists and government officials would agree, I think, is that cynicism is equally a threat to both of us. When the public distrusts what its elected and appointed officials say and what its journalists report, the chances of maintaining a health-

From our readers