

# SENIOR Sampler

Southern Utah's Senior point of view

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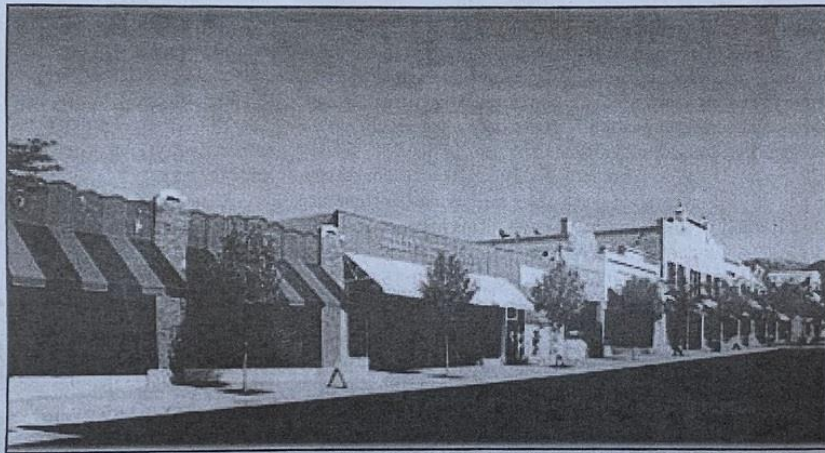
## Mainstreet U.S.A.

### The Most Endangered Historic Place

By Lucia Duncan

I was very surprised to see a large color photograph on the front page of a national newspaper about "Vanishing America," the many things slowly disappearing from our American Landscape." Fittingly enough, the article appeared on the Fourth of July.

The article placed Main Street, USA as Number One on the list of the "Most Endangered Historic Places." I found this absolutely stunning and was unaware that there was a National Trust for Historic Preservation. They are commemorating their 50<sup>th</sup> year of "Protecting the Ir-



*Mainstreet, St. George, like those all across America, faces the challenges of competing with large chain stores and shopping malls*

replaceable." Others on this endangered list are; Mom and Pop restaurants, with their honest, home cooked meals; privately owned drugstores, unlocked churches, and independent bookstores. But at the top of the list was "Main Streets across America."

The trust thinks the situa-

tion is so grave that it's putting old-fashioned business districts - what it calls the corner of Main and Main - at the top of the 11 most endangered historic places in America.

Preservationists say a community's character is irrevocably altered once historic buildings are torn down. There is a

fear that what is already lost is irretrievable. "It's hard to feel an identity with a generic new store surrounded by a parking lot," says Anne Stilton, author of a book on drugstores. Studies have also shown that emotionally disturbed youngsters need to

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### Mainstreet...

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see something older than they are, even if just a chair. Could it be that normal and healthy adults also need to see something older than they; does it nourish our spirit to have visible connections

with our past?

What is state of our own Main Street? Those mostly concerned with its future are the Main Street Merchants who are truly in the middle of the path of change. Some of their visions for the future of Main Street are both creative and bold.

The buzzword in Washington, D.C. is, "smart growth," policies that tame urban growth and reclaim cities. Ron Utt, a fellow at the Heritage Foundation, says "smart growth is politically brilliant," and he gives this recipe for an "American Renaissance"; eat in diners, shop on

Main Street, put a porch on your house, live in a walkable community." Sounds like the very reasons many of us have moved to St. George.

I remember first seeing St. George from a nearby lookout point above the city. I was totally intrigued, and wanted to explore this lovely city so different from my own childhood home in New York City. St. George reminded me of a city that I had always somehow believed still existed somewhere. It was love at first sight.

I loved the Dixie Theater, its simplicity, a reflection of days

when life was simple and I found that somehow reassuring. The restaurants and shops in the area are equally unique, one of a kind. I felt a sense of nostalgia and serenity, a sense that I had come home. My instinct was to reach out and preserve this wonderful legacy for future generations, and to offer our friends and families a place to come home to, especially during the festive Christmas Holidays.

I eventually found a thirty year old house, not far from Main Street, in the Opera House Neighborhood and settled in. but that's another story.