

"I'M DRIVEN AND I'M REALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT THE SUCCESS OF THIS CITY."



RYAN SHELL: COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

You often can find **Ryan Shell** in his office-away-from-the-office.

Mind you, it's really just a table in the back room of the Green Bean where Ryan spends a lot of after-work hours in the late afternoon.

And more times than not, it's the middle table in the back room.

"When I've really got something on my mind, I sit back there. It's like I'm here but I'm not here, and I can escape for a moment. I kind of chill out."

With all that's on his plate, it's a wonder that he can find any time to flip open the laptop, sip green tea and eat a cookie while checking email, writing or just brainstorming.

Consider his resume: president of the Southside Neighborhood Association, president of the Southside Community Watch program, member of the city Board of Adjustments and creator of the Greensboropolitics.com website -- 70,000 visits so far. Then there's his day job as marketing communications supervisor at Truliant Federal Credit Union in Winston-Salem.

And on the side he's adopted three streets to clean and take care of as part of the Adopt-A-Street program.

It's a safe bet that some of that time at the Green Bean in recent days has been spent on his latest project: Greensboro Community Watch.

It spun to life just a few weeks ago with a website and emails. The idea is that the city has more than 70 community watch organizations but little communication with each other. His vision is to create a network among them.

"Say there's a lot of car break-ins in a neighborhood. I might be able to help

them communicate with other neighborhoods and tell them what's going on. We're doing that on a city-wide basis," he says.

Thus far, 112 people have signed up, though he's not yet sure how many of the watch organizations they represent.

The members send emails to him telling of any incidents in their neighborhood and he compiles them and sends out a weekly email synopsis to all of them, including a statistical map to plot the crime areas. Each can keep up with crimes and suspicious activities going on around the city.

Heady stuff for a 29-year-old who only a few years ago was a nighttime disc jockey at WKZL radio in Winston.

So why do it?

"At the end of the day, crime's really important to people. And if we can do small things to make people safe, it's a win-win situation. It's just been received with open arms."

It seems others are also impressed with his resume. The Business Journal this year named Ryan one of its "Forty Leaders Under 40."

And it's not exactly a secret that he's been talked up as a potential City Council candidate to fill a seat in the November elections. He doesn't comment about that.

But he does admit: "I'm driven and I'm really passionate about the success of this city."

And he's an unabashed community activist.

"The only thing worse than starting something and failing is not starting something at all."