

Serve the People Coalition News

Len Schafer

1970

“We have finally seen that we are brothers and sisters in spite of ideological differences. We finally sense that we hold much in common.”

—STP Coalition

Working together on this basis, 16 community based organizations got together May 19 to define the structure and direction of the SERVE THE PEOPLE Coalition.

Issue orientation was the agreed direction of the coalition. As issues arise that effect the whole community, STP will establish various functions needed to deal with the problems. Operating in this direction, the coalition will be able to side-step wasteful expenditures of energy on ideological disagreements by concentrating its efforts on specific problems and programs that are relevant to the social and political groups within STP.

At recent coalition meetings three issues were discussed. One issue being the rip-offs of the community by Detroit rock-ballroom promoters. Another issue being the common need of funds for community programs. Combining the two issues, STP with the initiative of the Universal Angles (a separate political off-shoot of Open City people) started a boycott of the Eastown Ballroom. Among the demands made upon Eastown man Bob Begaras was that he improve the ballrooms' degenerate plumbing, lower its high admission prices on certain days, and provide the STP Coalition with the ballroom for monthly benefits.

The third issue discussed was combined with the other two. Jack Forrest, a White Panther that was busted on “conspiracy to bomb” state charges, needed cash and publicity via one of the STP monthly benefits. Because this would coincide with the federal bombing conspiracy trials of John Sinclair, STP could raise defense money and educate the community as to how the government uses conspiracy laws to repress revolutionary and cultural leaders.

Centering on these three issues the STP-Jack Forrest coalition was formed. The groups within the coalition are: Boones' Farm Commune, *Creem Magazine*, *Fifth Estate*, First Universal Life Church, Keep On Truckin' Co-op, Mother Waddles, People Concerned About Urban Renewal, Radical Education Project, South End, SRC and the Up, Tartar Productions, Universal Angles, White Panthers, Woman's News Co-op, WABX and WKNR.

Other community organizations in the general coalition have taken the option not to directly express their support for the STP-Jack Forrest Coalition.

Also discussed at the last meeting was a proposal to change the name of the coalition. Certain Open City and Boones' farm people suggested that some organizations were reluctant to relate to the coalition because of STP's former relationship with the White Panther Party. The White Panthers first organized the STP Coalition last year. Another objection was the use of the STP symbol by different political organizations in out-of-state underground newspapers. The White Panthers and other Open City and Boones' Farm people argued to keep the STP name because it was felt that the 'title' of the coalition was not a significant reason why organizations would not want to participate within STP. This is in view of the current publicity of STP as not being a super-organization serving one political line or group.

The coalition decided to ask all the organizations that are reluctant to join the coalition because of anti-name sentiment, to attend the next meeting to reach an agreement on a coalition name, if such a problem exists.

Getting back to the monthly benefits, Pete Andrews of the SRC and the Up will be working with Jack Forrest of the White Panthers, Steve Booker the ace drummer, and Larry Kaplan of Tarter Productions (Wayne State University media department) on contacting local bands and arranging benefit locations. The Universal Angles, Boones' Farm Commune, Keep on Truckin' Co-op, and the *Fifth Estate* will represent the STP Coalition in dealing with Eastown's Bob Begaras for use of the ballroom and the other demands.

The results of these efforts will be discussed at the next meeting along with plans to have a combination STP meeting-community feast at an agreed time and location. There is also a request for the meeting times of the individual organizations in the coalition for the purpose of publishing a bulletin containing information on each member group.

Once again, STP will meet on Tuesday, June 3, 7:30 p.m., at the Unitarian Church, McCollister Hall, 4605 Cass at Forrest. It's open to all groups or individuals that are interested in getting together to Serve The People.

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