

# Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1982

## FE Moves

It might seem self-indulgent, in the face of mounting worldwide horror, to call what has occurred around the FE the past several months a “crisis,” but a more precise word fails to come to mind. In August we were told by our landlord that we had one month in which to vacate the FE office, in order to allow construction workers to tear out the ceiling and undertake renovation of the building.

The condition of the office had deteriorated over the past four months, as work being done on the floors above us caused plaster, dirt and water to rain down upon our books and equipment. It was becoming obvious that the end was near, and in June we were told informally that eventually we were going to have to move out. Still, this impending situation seemed unreal; after all, the FE had occupied this space since 1970, and it had, in many ways, come to seem like “home.”

But the reality of business and landlords soon intruded, and in August we received a 30-day eviction notice. Over the summer, in anticipation of this eventuality, we had made a number of half-hearted efforts to find another space, but nothing we had seen seemed satisfactory. Only in August, with eviction notice in hand, did we make serious efforts in this regard, though still without much luck. Several places had potential, but whenever we talked about one of them, someone raised an objection to it that convinced us not to take it.

As our eviction date drew near, we assured the landlord we had made serious efforts to find a place, but that the logistics of moving were so complicated (including finding a home for our ancient process camera weighing nearly a ton) that the 30-day notice was untenable.

Eviction day came and went, and as we had not vacated the premises, court proceedings were initiated by the landlord. But shortly thereafter, however, the landlord proposed a deal whereby we would grant the construction workers immediate access to the space in exchange for allowing us continued occupancy, with only a modest rent increase, after the renovation is completed. The landlord seemed anxious to make some kind of deal; conceivably, we might have held up construction for as much as 90 days, costing him thousands of dollars. After some haggling, we agreed to let the construction workers in to work, on the condition that they construct a protective wooden box around our camera.

In the meantime, we have moved our office to one of the FE staff members’ homes. We were told we might be able to get back into our offices as early as November; however, a friend who just started working on the construction project said other construction workers laughed when he mentioned the November date. One of them told him the construction “might never get done.” And even if it gets done, moving back in and setting up the operation once more after the space has essentially been bulldozed by work crews will be a problem. Hopefully nothing will have happened to our camera and there will be no problems with the landlord, but no one can ever say for sure.

We have also been beset by technical problems, with numerous breakdowns of our vintage typesetter. Not only have repairs been costly, but the delays held up our producing this issue to the point where we started to feel as if

we were presenting a schema of the Old Testament rather than a discussion of contemporary Middle East events. We had to add an introduction to our cover story, and then rewrite it. Events always race ahead of us!

Our circa 1916 process camera lies interred in a large plywood box in the basement of a semi-demolished building, and the typesetter threatens to give out at any time. We have finally come to the realization that we must find another if we are not to write by hand or chisel it out on blocks of stone as some of our critics have suggested. Since we already publish far too infrequently to write it out (at any rate, our handwriting is atrocious) and mailing costs of stone tablets would wipe us out, we have begun pricing new equipment.

Meanwhile, we have had our phone temporarily disconnected, but will retain the same number when service is restored. Our address remains the same, however, and all correspondence should continue to be addressed there as usual.

## **Numbers Game**

No, you haven't missed an issue of the paper. This issue is Volume 17, No. 3 (310). There was no Volume 16. We skipped a volume in order to have the numbers correspond with our first year of publication—1965. This is our third issue of this year, the last having been published in June. Also, please note that we have raised our subscription price to \$5 a year which was necessary due to our ever rising publication costs, including our recent rent hike.

## **Subscription Renewals**

Thanks again to all of you who have recently sent us money to renew your subscriptions, and for your continuing donations and support. Please be aware, though, that we are sometimes lax in sending out notices to people whose subscriptions have already expired and if you are also slow in sending back your renewals, you may receive several issues while this exchange takes place. Therefore, the number of issues you have paid for may appear to be used up more quickly than you expected, but rest assured that we send everyone at least the number of issues paid for, and most times they actually get several issues extra. We usually send out two notices of subscription expiration before removing someone from our list, so you will help us save money on postage if you will renew your subs promptly. And keep those letters coming in as we all look forward to hearing from you.

## **Dept. of Gloating**

We tried to tell Curtis Sliwa to keep out of Detroit, but the boss of the Guardian Angels was bent on expanding his gang punk vigilante empire to the Motor City. The local chapter is currently in open revolt against the "national leadership" who they charge are publicity hounds, more interested in headline grabbing than patrolling neighborhoods. The disillusioned Angels also complain that the heavy hand of Sliwa comes down hard on those who dare to dissent against his "suggestions," so 23 of the 30 Detroit group have quit to strike out on their own. Not to be undone, ubergruppenfuhrer Sliwa ordered in 35 of his toughs from his New York City chapter to fill the diminished Detroit ranks. However, unable to provide the troops with bus fare, several of them fell afoul of the Philadelphia police and were arrested for hitchhiking. Pity.

## **Insufferable Mistake Dept.**

We seem incapable of printing the correct address of Be Free: Here's our third try: Box 11331, Eugene OR 97440. They will send you their flyers upon request; postage would be appreciated.



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