

Detroit Seen

Fifth Estate Collective

1984

Yes, you've noticed; we're damn late with our Fall edition. The reason is that we were forced into a hurried move to new quarters due to a total lack of heat at our old place. The move was an unfortunate one beyond just the disruption of our production schedule since it has also effectively ended what had turned into a very nice cooperative situation with the Layabouts and Private Angst bands.

We are now tucked into an out-of-the-way warehouse belonging to a long-time friend of the Fifth Estate which, while adequate for our office needs, pretty much cuts off our access to the public. We still welcome visitors, but directions are necessary, so please call before coming down; our phone number is the same: (313) 831-6800, but we've now taken a box number to assure safe mail delivery; write us at: The Fifth Estate, P.O. Box 02548, Detroit MI 48202.

Since this is only our third issue of the year, we must get another out before January, so look for our next issue (much shorter) Winter edition before year's end.

The end of September saw an extremely successful fund-raising dinner attended by a good number of Detroit-area anti-authoritarians and anarchists. \$438 was raised amongst good cheer and excellent food. The money donated was distributed to the Vancouver 5, the Ken Deyarmond Defense Fund, The Daily Barbarian, Toronto's Kick It Over magazine, Montreal's Librarie Alternative, *Pravda* (a Portuguese anti-authoritarian journal), and the Leonard Peltier Defense Fund.

Many thanks to those of you who have added an extra bit to your subscription renewal. Between that, a good percentage of subscription renewals, and our Sustainers we have been able to maintain a level of solvency which permits us to concentrate on the production of the paper rather than on constant money woes. Also, if you have a renewal notice sitting around please send it in so as not to miss any issues.

November marks the 19th anniversary of continuous publication by this newspaper and the 9th since it became an explicitly anti-authoritarian project.

From its origins in 1965 as "the voice of liberal Detroit," it quickly passed through a number of stages: hippie, "underground," the militant anti-war New Left which included a weekly printing schedule and the paper's largest circulation. By the early 1970s it entered a phase of dull workerism followed by a stab at being a hip, commercial weekly, and finally, after a near collapse, entered its current existence in 1975. Although we have had birthday bashes in the past, a note in this column has usually been the only recognition we've made of each passing year. For the 20th anniversary, however, we want to do it up big and put together a festive celebration which will bring together as many as possible of the 600 or so people who have worked on the paper since its beginning. Nothing has been arranged yet, but it's not too early for former staffers to let us know where you are if you've fallen out of touch with us. Also all ideas and suggestions for a celebration are welcome.

In a town like Detroit, where almost all traditional neighborhoods have collapsed under the assault of industrialization and white flight, it was a pleasure to see the hundreds of Cass Corridor residents who turned out for the annual North Cass Street Fair's "Daily in the Alley," September 8. It was an all-day event and the entire community turned out and displayed its diverse ethnic, cultural and social components.

It was a combination flea market, festival and rip-roaring party featuring jugglers, clowns, mimes, fortune tellers, delicious eats and a list of musicians and entertainers too long to mention here. The music was non-stop from morning until almost midnight and it was the two bands we shared our office space with who brought the festivities to a conclusion with some fine rock and roll.

Private Angst's high-decibel assault on the senses had everyone screaming by the time the Layabouts took the stage to end the evening with the audience dancing and slamming their fists into the air as the band let loose with "Governments Lie" and "Police Reaction."

The only sour note of the-day was the generally unwanted presence of the self-appointed protectors of the people, Curtis Sliwa's Guardian Angels. These two-bit — hoods strutted through the crowds not so much to "stop crime," since absolutely none was in evidence, but rather to "show the colors." Dressed in a style which is a cross between military (red berets today, green berets tomorrow) and a tough, teen-age gang, their only purpose in being present was to legitimize their unwelcome appearance in the community.

The last thing the Cass Corridor needs is self-styled vigilantes whose allegiance is not to the community, but to the gang, with its policies and right-wing ideology shaped by a glory seeker in New York City. When the Angels arrived in Boston, they were run out of town by an enraged group of residents, and had to be saved by the police. Certainly, violence against the Angels is not the solution and would only serve to enhance their sense of martyrdom, but the construction of paramilitary, uniformed gangs who see crime as the problem rather than as a result of a collapsing social system lays the groundwork for a fascist movement.

Next time you see a Guardian Angel, tell him to get lost!

Karen Norman defended herself against a rapist. Now she may spend the rest of her life in prison. Karen, a 19-year-old black woman, a sophomore at Wayne State university in Detroit and the mother of two, was raped in her home on the night of May 5th. The rapist threatened to kill her and her children if she did not submit. He continued to threaten her and she grabbed a knife and stabbed him. Karen called the police, who arrived hours later and found the rapist dead.

Karen now faces first degree murder charges. The real issue in Karen's trial is the right of women to defend themselves. A support committee has been organized in Detroit and is doing fundraising, legal work and public relations. If you can assist in any of these, please contact the

The third issue of the *Daily Barbarian* hit the streets just in time to excoriate the great electoral fraud plus containing other juicy items of outrage and pith. Copies available from us free with book orders or direct from the Barbarian c/o Urbane Gorilla, Box 02455, Detroit MI 48202.

Every time those of us around the paper and our friends attend a function held by a mainstream peace or anti-intervention group we usually leave thinking, why did we even bother? Several of us participated in a 6-1/2 mile "Survival Line" on October 20 which stretched between two Detroit National Guard armories. The demonstrators held hands along the line for eight minutes (the time a first-strike would take) and then went home. It was a non-event in the extreme—about as exciting and engaging as waiting for a bus and probably with the same political impact. Maniacs threaten us with nuclear extermination and the best the anti-war movement comes up with is ten minutes of total passivity. Actually, there may have been more to it in the minds of the organizers, since the minute we arrived we were bombarded with a deluge of exhortations to get out the vote for Mondale. The line we were on had more to do with the survival of the Mondale candidacy than it did with the human race. The dead-end liberal politics of the Freeze movement were at their culmination in urging a vote for Mondale even to the point of extolling his anti war qualities at a time when the candidate had become nothing but a Reagan clone moving More to the right with each day he campaigned. Even the Freeze's pitiful attempt to get "publicity" fell flat as the *Detroit News* and *Free Press* gave as much coverage to 20 fascist counter-demonstrators calling the anti-nukers "traitors" as they did to the 10,000 of us on the Survival Line.

The image of Detroit as a bad-ass, riotous town continues to be a favorite theme of the national media. The aftermath of the World Series was followed by widespread coverage of the arson spree on Devil's Night, an activity which seems to be becoming a bit of a tradition around these parts. According to information released by the city government, there were 938 recorded "fire incidents" in the city during the 48-hour period of Devil's Night and Halloween, including fires, rekindled fires, and false alarms. A fire official was quoted as saying, "We just couldn't put out all the fires, not all our pumps were working because the vandals stole the handles."

fifth Estate

Fifth Estate Collective
Detroit Seen
1984

<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/318-fall-1984/detroit-seen>
Fifth Estate #318, Fall, 1984

fiftheestate.anarchistlibraries.net