

11/26/67

Hippie Paper Proves Successful, but Bumps Into Establishment

By RICHARD S. VONIER
Of The Journal Staff

The editor explained the advertiser's wish to the photography chief: "All he wants is a picture of a chick in a bikini with his head on it." "Yeah," replied the photographer, rummaging through a briefcase. "Hmmm, I don't seem to have a chick in a bikini in here." "Well, I'll get someone to pose for one," the editor decided quickly, and went on to other matters.



Kois

The task of finding a young woman in a bathing suit in this weather may be an unusual editorial problem. But for John Kois, editor of a new Milwaukee newspaper, Kaleidoscope, it probably will be more simple to solve than some of the other difficulties he is beginning to encounter.

By publishing what they label an underground newspaper, Kois and his staff are beginning to run into heat from news dealers, parents, principals and police who feel Kaleidoscope's subject matter is a bit touchy.

At least three dealers have

removed it from their stands, school principals and parents have objected to it and the news editor has been arrested for selling a poster the police said was lewd. Kois believes the arrest was prompted by an advertisement that appeared in Kaleidoscope.

\$250 Loan

The idea for the paper was conceived by Kois, 26, of 3463 N. Oakland av., a writer, and some friends in August when they began to feel that a true hippie and bohemian community was emerging on Milwaukee's east side.

With a loan of \$250 from George Richard of the Wisconsin Arts Foundation and Council, and some advance payments for advertisements, the group got the first issue of the paper printed in Port Washington Oct. 3. The run was 3,500 copies.

"We distributed them ourselves to drugstores and newsstands and there were kids who took them out on the street and hawked them," Kois said. "In three days they were all gone."

"We got good response. Everybody who dug it said we were doing a tremendous job."

Sold 7,000 Copies

The second issue sold 7,000 copies and the third — the most recent one — had a press run of 10,000.

"We were really scraping to get some bread for that third issue," said Kois, "but it looks like we're getting past the break even point."

Besides the east side and downtown, Kaleidoscope, published every three weeks, is sold in Madison and Chicago. Although the size of the staff varies from issue to issue, about two dozen persons have worked on the issues, which are prepared in their homes. No one is paid except the printer and the dealers.

The newspaper carries poetry, music and theater reviews, psychedelic art and articles on subjects ranging from drugs to philosophy to civil rights to war.

School Bans Issue

After the first issue, a druggist near the University of Wisconsin — Milwaukee campus declined to stock the second because a customer complained, Kois said.

The principal of Brown Deer high school banned it from the school.

When the third issue came out, a downtown news dealer removed it from his shelves, and a store in Whitefish Bay

stopped selling it at the request of the police, Kois said.

The issue carried a defense of marijuana and an advertisement of posters at the Indianhead, a psychedelic poster shop co-owned by George Johnson, news editor and "idea man" for Kaleidoscope. The advertisement showed posters featuring drawings of nude couples making love.

Ad Tipped Police

Kois said Johnson had not yet stocked the posters that were advertised, but was arrested after a vice squad officer said he bought a different poster of a nude man embracing a nude woman at the shop. Johnson, 25, of 905 E.

Turn to Newspaper, page 16, col.



—Journal Photo

Turning out an "underground" newspaper for Milwaukee's hippie population has brought the staff rebuffs from news dealers, police and parents. Here John Sahli, 1934 N. Oakland av., an assistant editor, lays out a paper.

Newspaper

Milwaukee Journal

November 26, 1967

Hippie Paper Feels Pressure

From page 1

Pearson st., has been charged with the sale of lewd, obscene or indecent matter.

"When George got busted only a couple of days after the third issue came out, we knew immediately it was the ad," Kois said. He now is considering running a picture of the offending poster in his next issue, because the courts have not yet declared it obscene.

"Our stand is that the D.A. made an obvious mistake," he said. "By whatever stand-

ards, that poster just isn't obscene."

Invitations to Talk

Kois said he had heard that police were planning to arrest Kaleidoscope staff members and that teen agers selling the newspaper in high schools had gotten in trouble with officials.

As a spokesman for Milwaukee's hippies, Kois often is invited for speaking engagements. Recently he spoke to the Glendale Woman's club.

"I started by saying that Kaleidoscope was so clean I'd be embarrassed to print it in San Francisco or New York," said Kois, who has worked on other underground publications on the west coast. "Then I turned it around, and asked them what they were so horrified about."

He said the women were concerned about marijuana

and sex among young people.

"Kids know about sex at age 12 today, but their parents said they weren't ready yet," he said.

"I said, 'Isn't it better to have it presented as a straight, honest thing? Now they're getting it some other way — the gutter stuff.'"

Expects Pressure

"I asked them what they tell their kids about marijuana. They said, well, that it's bad, a no-no. They're not giving them the facts. The only real bad points are that it's dangerous in excess, like anything else, and that it's illegal."

Kois believes that public officials will apply pressure against Kaleidoscope because they fear the hippie movement will grow here.

"They don't want to see a Haight-Ashbury here or a big bohemian underground," he

said. "The hippies used to be regarded as cute or funny. Now all of a sudden, they're starting to get uppity. We have a circulation of 10,000 and that's serious."

"So the big fathers in city hall have decided to clamp down."

Hippies Called Fad

Kois estimated that between 2,000 and 3,000 persons in Milwaukee could be classed as hippies.

Although he believes the movement is a fad, he said he would like to see the hippie community swell to 10,000 here before it diminishes.

"I think what we'll have left then is a respectable bohemian community," he said. "It would be a good thing for the city, especially for culture."

Milwaukee's Hippies Not as Hip As Counterparts Elsewhere

Milwaukee Sentinel
Sept. 23, 1967

IN SOME WAYS, Milwaukee's hippies just aren't as hip as their New York and California counterparts. Hippies here use less grass (marijuana) and acid (LSD). Likewise, in the hippies' numerically modest east side settlement, there is hardly a plethora of free love—a movement which has many hip devotees elsewhere.

But, Milwaukee's hippies seemingly are sincere spreaders of the flower power philosophy ("love thy fellow man, even if he is a straightie or a cop.")

About 300 hard core hippies and 600 or 700 "plastic" or part time flower children brandish that creed here.

THEY HAVE hangouts (the Avant Garde, 2111 N. Prospect av., a kind of coffee-house, featuring poetry readings and live psychedelic bands; O'Brads, a bar at 827 E. Locust st.; O'Reilly's Tap, 1405 N. Franklin pl., and the Wayside Inn, 722 N. Water st.). But they lack three institutions that are central features of hippie sects elsewhere.

Missing are "head shops" (stores that sell items of psychedelic significance), permanent free stores (havens where destitute hippies are given handouts) and large gatherings of hippies in communal settings.

However, Milwaukee does have a part time free store, a weekly affair where hippies dump discards and take what others bring. But, the store's existence has been alternately threatened by building code restrictions, police and neighbor complaints.

ONE MEMBER of the group that organized the free store here, the Milwaukee Diggers, said that there weren't enough hippies in Milwaukee to support a permanent free store.

The Digger, Robert Watt, 30 of 3226 W. Juneau av., who doubles as a poet and

pest exterminator, added, "Our hippies are too rich (to have need of a permanent free store)."

Surprisingly, though, Milwaukee's free store has helped some hippies to a better standard of living.

"I'm living proof that the idea works," said David (Crazy Dave) Becker, 24.

He pointed out that since the inception of the store he and his wife, Judy, 23, have collected about \$35 worth of free merchandise, including two pairs of pants, several LP's, a poncho and an electric fan.

THE BECKERS live in a \$10 a month attic apartment at 1540 N. Jackson st., sparsely furnished with mattresses on the floor, a few chairs, a TV and a new record player.

"We spend about \$35 a week for all expenses. When it starts to get cold, we'll go to Mexico and the (west) coast for the winter," Becker said.

Where does the money come from? "Odd jobs, occasionally as a salesman of household items, and sometimes from sales of my paintings. Judy earns most of our money though, sewing at a knitting firm," he explained.

To conserve their funds, Judy rides a bicycle to work and makes 25c meals with rice and beans.

HOWEVER, unlike the beatniks of yore, who also believed in frugality, hippies don't curtail expenditures for soap.

"Hippies are not dirty like beatniks. Most of us bathe a couple of times a week," Becker said.

In addition to cleanliness and flower power, what other beliefs do hippies hold dear?

"Well, you can't be a hippy and be in favor of the war in Vietnam. Also, most hippies believe in civil rights. . . . And about 98.8% believe that marijuana should be legalized," said Becker.

"They should make grass legal, because it is not habit

forming, not dangerous to your health and not morally wrong. If it was legal it would separate it from dangerous drugs like heroin or cocaine."

ALSO ON the hippie belief list, according to Becker, is a simple adage, "Doing your own thing." That entails dressing outlandishly or veering from conventionality in almost any manner.

How well do Milwaukee's hippies avoid the conventional in comparison to their counterparts elsewhere?

"They're just as hip as the hippies in other towns with the exception of knowledge of drugs and the Diggers' movement," said Becker, who has visited many of the country's hippy communities.

[In San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district the Diggers sponsor free stores that furnish all necessities, including bed and board. In other places Diggers operate farms for hippies who want to work.]

"FOR INSTANCE, a lot of hippies here don't know what a lid is. In San Francisco, it's a very standard item for one ounce of marijuana.

"But in the midwest, Milwaukee's hippies are top running. Milwaukee's hippie community is superior to St. Louis', Cleveland's and Pittsburgh's.

"In fact, I like it here better than in San Francisco. Here, I know everybody; there, it is too big. You can really get lost, there are so many of them (hippies) there," Becker said.

But the hippie movement here is gaining followers and attention.

THE NOVELTY of Milwaukee's free stores attracted many plastic hippies—young persons of high school age who still live with their families.

Similarly, Watt and another hippie spokesman, John Kois, 27, of 3463 N. Oakland av., have had several speaking engagements before meeting of 'straighties' (non-hippies).

Kois also plans to edit a hippie newspaper here. Ten-

tatively, the paper is named Kaleidoscope. The first issue is scheduled for publication early in October.

"People don't realize the beautiful relationships they can have if they just love one another instead of hating," Kois said.

He advocates use of marijuana, but tempers his advocacy with a belief in "doing one's own thing."

"It can make you understand everything so clearly, everything is so beautiful, but I don't recommend it to everyone. It's an individual thing," he said.

HOWEVER, Watt, whose poems (published in a book "Watt's Happening") have made him something of a hippie guru in Milwaukee, take a different stance on drugs.

"Some people are naturally high. They don't need grass or other drugs. I don't use them," Watt said.

And that difference of opinion is one of the keynote of the hippie movement. Excepting a few possibly valid generalizations, there is no standard hippie way to think, dress or live.

"That's what's great about it. We're trying to get away from conventionalism," on bearded youth said.



Hippie gatherings attract the young and curious. Left to right are: Miss Jean Holst, 17, of 2020 E. Park pl.; Miss Lenore Rinder (sitting), 17, of 2843 N. Prospect av.; Lenore's sister Tammy (standing), 16, and Miss Terry Mosher, 17, of 917 S. 89th st., West Allis. Prevailing mood is flowers.

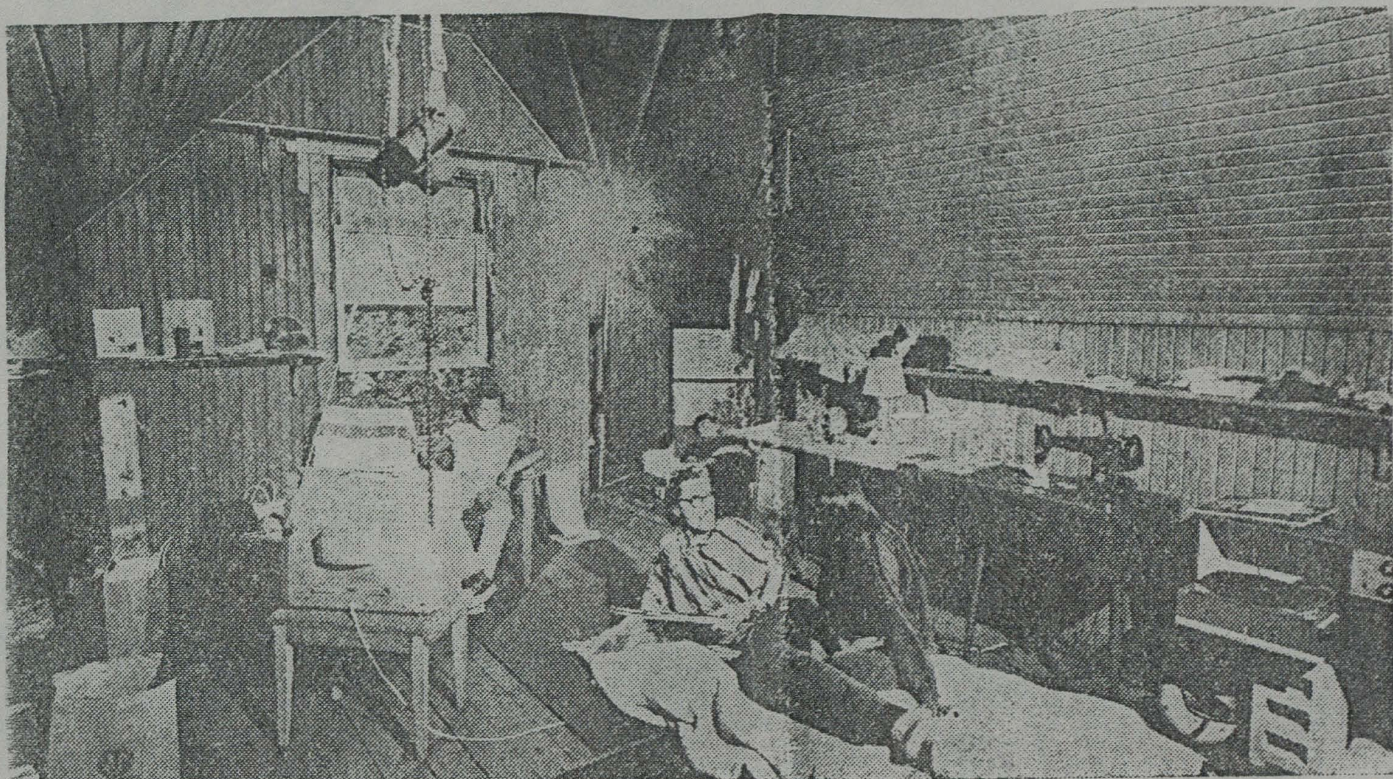
—Sentinel Photos by Paul M.



Watching over a baby at a hippie free store gathering is Mrs. David (Crazy Dave) Becker, 23, of 1540 N. Jackson st.



Post exterminator - poet Robert Watt, 30, of 3226 W. Juneau av., is an organizer of the Milwaukee Diggers, who sponsor the hippie free stores.



Relaxing in their \$10 a month attic apartment at 1540 N. Jackson st. are (front to rear): David (Crazy Dave) Becker, 24; his wife, Judy, 23; her

brother, Desmond Mike, 11, and Becker's brother, Randy, 18. The brilliant flash in the background is the strobe light belonging to the photographer.

—Staff Photo by Frank Lodge



Richard Bussian, "The Richard" of the Velvet Whip. The Velvet Whip, a freak-rock group, appear every Thursday at the Avant Garde Coffee House, 2111 North Prospect Avenue.



—Journal Photos by Fred Tonne

LAKE PARK "BE-IN"—About 300 persons attended a "be-in" Sunday, in Lake park. Thomas Mueller, 22, of 1245 N. Hawley rd., climbed a tree (left)

to hang balloons. Others danced across the grass (upper), while Victor Plasmovitch (right), 15, of 2844 N. Hackett av., was forever blowing bubbles.

National
Gold Medal
Winner

Men's Fall Fashion

Fine Arts Preview: The Liveliest Season Yet

Campaign Primer: Are Dollars Worth More Than Votes?

SEPTEMBER 1988 \$1.95

Milwaukee

WHERE WERE YOU IN

'68

POT.

POETRY.

PROTESTS.

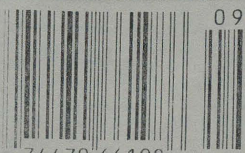
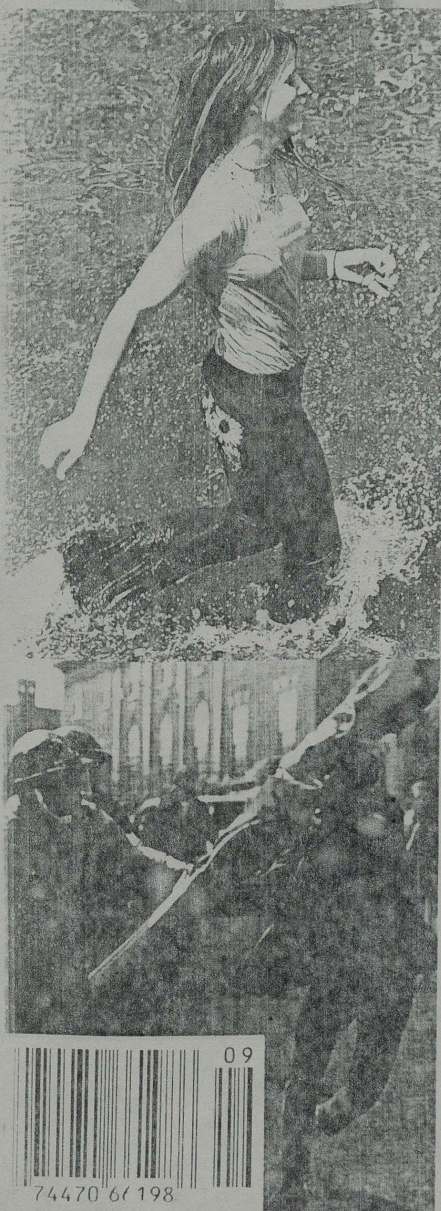
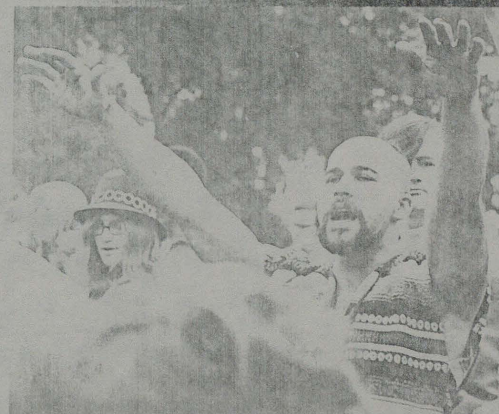
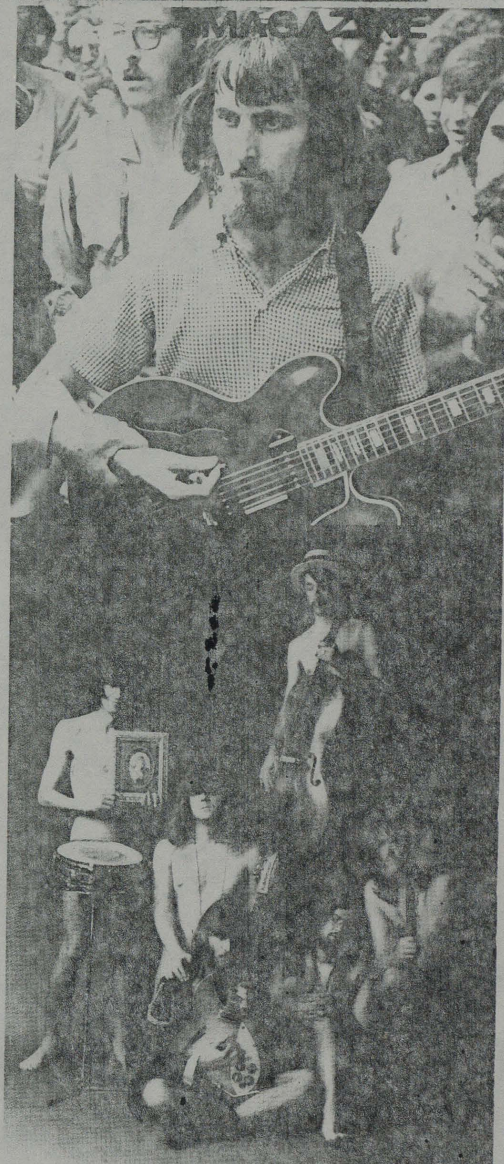
ONE CRAZY,

CONTROVERSIAL

YEAR IN THE

LIFE OF

MILWAUKEE.



74470 61198



DAVE BEGEL

Then: "In 1968, I was getting out of the Navy. I had spent two years in Southeast Asia and I got out in June of 1968. The day I arrived from the Philippines — I arrived in Los Angeles — it was the night that Bobby Kennedy was shot and killed. I was just a couple blocks away. I had checked into a little, bitty hotel and I had turned on the TV to watch my first American television in better than two years. I was watching a local news broadcast and all of a sudden they broke in to announce that Bobby Kennedy had been shot and killed.

"My feelings [toward the war] changed a lot. When I was in the service . . . I thought we were over there fighting to stop the spread of communism; the reports were generally optimistic at that time. When I got back, I will confess that I got swept into the growing feeling that what we were doing over there was not a correct thing to do, that it was a waste. I became involved in the anti-war movement at UWM. I led a couple of demonstrations at the university."

Now: Channel 12 News managing editor.

PROFILES BY JONATHAN SCHNUR

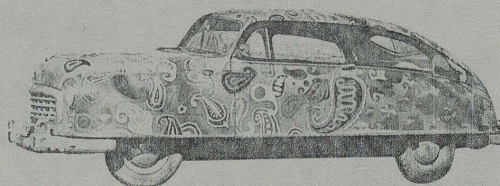
Jonathan Schnur is an editorial intern at Milwaukee Magazine.

James Romenesko is senior editor of Milwaukee Magazine.

BY JAMES ROMENESKO

THE HIP CHURCH

and other reflections of
Milwaukee in 1968.

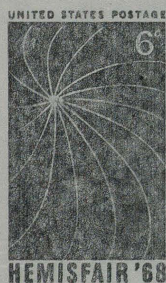


A 1950 Nash restyled for the '60s by Milwaukeean Denis Kitchen.

Alan Magayne-Rak

January 7
Stamps go up to 6 cents.

January 14
The Green Bay Packers win Super Bowl II by defeating the Oakland Raiders, 33-14.



February 21
Milwaukee's underground community holds its first Town Hall meeting. "That 150 or more attended demonstrates the interest there is in the future of an East Side hip community," reported one scribe.



UWM Photo Services

February 26
The first disruptive anti-war demonstration is held on UWM's campus. Two students are arrested after blocking doorways.

Twenty years ago, a young person who didn't exemplify Norman Rockwell's vision of American youth was denied entrance into Marc's Big Boy on East North Avenue. A rent-a-cop guard stood patrol at the door and decided whose appearance was worthy of a double-hamburger sandwich. The hippies didn't like that.

"No beads, beards, long hair, flowers, sandals, funny glasses or anything else that might offend the Midwest-minded Big Boy management," wrote a young poet named Robert Reitman. "All we are asking is that clean people with money be allowed to eat there when they please. And as it stands for now, they can't. It will stand that way for a long, long time."



The Velvet Whip

In 1968, it was a struggle for young people everywhere, not just on Milwaukee's East Side. There were issues more serious than getting into a hamburger joint, although the Big Boy battle against disheveled youth (the alternative newspaper, *Kaleidoscope*, pegged it "Bigot Boy vs. the Hippies") was indicative of the discrimination against Milwaukee's counterculture in that era.

"One thing that came out in 1968 was that it's Them, and it's Us," says Jim Soricic, a radical Milwaukee poet of those days who now gives advice on pension plans from his Fifth Avenue office in New York. "That doesn't exist now. I'm 40 years old

now and I look into the baby faces of policemen and forget what a battle it was in 1968."

Of course, the battle is over. Big Boy no longer is overly choosy about its clientele, and shoulder-length hair isn't the fashion these days (it's those with shaved heads who are looked upon with suspicion now). Vietnam, which spawned the counterculture movement, is but a curiosity among college students and is being taught in overflowing classrooms.

Twenty years have passed, and it's now safe to reflect on those turbulent times. Everybody's doing it. One local bookseller has an entire shelf devoted to recently published books on the '60s and the year 1968.

As *Rolling Stone* magazine said in its 20-year retrospective, "Oh, what a long, strange trip it's been." Twenty years ago, *Hair!* premiered on Broadway and *Rosemary's Baby* hit the silver screen. "60 Minutes" debuted on CBS, while "In-a-Gadda-Da-Vida" became a hit. On the fashion scene, "The Nehru jacket, worn with a turtleneck and jeweled pendant, swept the country, reaching almost epidemic proportions," noted the *Collier's* yearbook for 1968.

A Gallup Poll conducted that year showed that 49 percent of Americans believed that U.S. involvement in Vietnam was a mistake. Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. Lyndon Johnson resigned after Eugene McCarthy and his "Clean For Gene" supporters surged in popularity. Richard Nixon, though, was elected president.

In Milwaukee that year, two young men named James Lemke and Arthur Greifeld became the first locals arrested in an anti-war demonstration when they blocked the doorways leading to Dow Chemical recruiters in a University of Wisconsin — Milwaukee building. Later in the year, the so-called "Milwaukee 14" got national publicity by burning draft files on Wells Street and Planckton Avenue. Hippies flooded onto Brady Street and hung out at Water Tower Park in the evenings, much to the dismay of the police. That year, Milwaukeeans listened to groups like the Velvet Whip and the Shags, and hung out at O'Reilly's on Ogden Avenue, the Scene on Second Street and



KATHLEEN DUNN

Then: "I was at the University of Iowa, a year away from graduating. I was very concerned about the state of world and I was going to change it after I graduated. I was extremely idealistic. I was either going to go to the Peace Corps or VISTA, and I ended up joining VISTA in 1969. . .

"I remember that year being very disturbing. The two assassinations [Kennedy and King's] hit me like a ton of bricks. I took a month off of school to campaign for Eugene McCarthy. I remember coming back and taking my exams and writing on them, 'I spent the last month involved in the American political process. I hope you'll excuse my absence.' "

Now: WTMJ Midday Show host.



January 30
Viet Cong launch the Tet Offensive.

March 12
Eugene McCarthy nearly wins the New Hampshire primary with 40 percent of the vote.

March 31
Lyndon Johnson declares he's not a candidate for re-election.

UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos



April 4
Martin Luther King is assassinated.

April 23
Eight-day student strike at Columbia University in New York begins.

June 6
Robert Kennedy is assassinated.

June 12
The controversial film *Rosemary's Baby* is released.

June 14
Dr. Benjamin Spock is convicted of conspiracy to counsel draft evaders.



June 27
A survey of the use of marijuana on UWM's campus, published earlier in the year as a supplement to the *UWM Post*, was denounced at the summer conference of the Wisconsin District Attorneys Association. It was revealed at the conference that the Milwaukee County DA's office was investigating the supplement.



TONY EARL

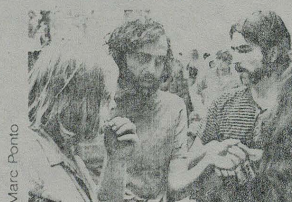
Then: Age 32; city attorney in Wausau and chairman of the Marathon County Democratic Party.

"As a city attorney, I was also a counselor for the draft board and I sat in with the draft board. But a group called the Fellowship For Resistance or some such Quaker group asked if I would help young people who were seeking deferments from the draft. I said, though I'd like to do that, I thought it would be a conflict being with the draft board. But I went to the board and said this group — this peace group of Quakers — had asked me if I could give legal advice to young men who were seeking deferments, and though I'd like to do that, I thought there was a conflict. The draft board said no, go right ahead. So that shows how different it was in Wausau.

So I counseled on my own time people who were seeking deferments for religious and moral grounds. At the same time, I represented the draft board."

Now: Candidate for U.S. Senate and ex-governor of Wisconsin.

Bob Reitman (center) raps.



Marc Ponto

O'Brad's on East Locust Street. The AM radio dial was still strong, and WOKY, the Mighty 92, was the rock 'n' roll leader. On the FM dial, WZMF 98 ("Just under body temperature," said its ads) was getting its start as a progressive radio station.

Busloads of Milwaukeeans went to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago and suffered the blows of police nightsticks. Many of them wore their scars proudly, showing their commitment to that cause.

"One immediate picture I have of that year," says poet and UWM professor James Hazard, "is of all those people who were down there and then tried to keep their head bandages on as long as possible afterward. I remember how dirty they were, but they didn't want to give them up."

"Despite the intensity of the opposition, the hippie subculture flourished in the summer of 1968," wrote Mark Goff in *A History of the Counterculture in Milwaukee*, published in 1975. "The lower East Side began to swell with young people, many of them suburbanites who abandoned the straight life for a freer and, to many, more fulfilling lifestyle. If Milwaukee ever had a 'Summer of Love,' it was in 1968."

Kaleidoscope was still a fledgling publication in 1968, the official newspaper of Milwaukee's hippie community. The paper was the brainchild of a Shorewood High School graduate and *Milwaukee Journal* stringer named John Kojs. Originally, he and two others, John Sahli and Robert Reitman, were the driving forces behind the paper (Sahli was the designer; Reitman the poetry editor), which reflected the creativity, the weirdness, the anger and the intensity of the times. It also fueled the Us-versus-Them fervor that ultimately resulted in the formation of the police department's tactical squad, the duties of which, it was later discovered, included monitoring, through phone taps and trailing, the activities of the hippie leaders.

As editor of the paper, Kojs was looked upon as the head of the hippie movement —

a position he didn't relish and one he didn't exactly fit into. Although the late 1960s were very political times, Kojs was essentially apolitical.

"My interest at the time was largely in the creative end — the music, the poetry and other forms of writing," he says. "The political issues, I thought, were extremely important, but there were others much more equipped to handle the theory or dogma."

Of Kojs, *Kaleidoscope* photographer Marc Ponto recalls: "He was softspoken but thoughtful. You knew the wheels were turning. I guess if you could point to someone who looked like they might be conspiring to do something, he would be the individual."

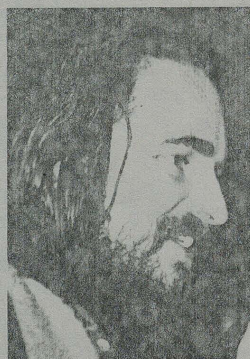
The police had to agree. They arrested Kojs and his staffers several times in 1968 for publishing material they deemed offensive — photos and poems that are tame by today's standards. (Today, Kojs is philosophical about the harassment of 20 years back. "It was just part of the territory; it was not surprising. If they had not reacted the way they did, we would have had no reason to exist.")

In May of 1968, Kojs was charged with publishing obscene material when a picture of an embracing black man and a white woman — both nude, although no genitals were exposed in the photograph — appeared in his paper. Three months later, he was charged with printing an obscene poem, titled "Sex Poem," and fined \$2,000. The editor fought the charge to the Supreme Court and eventually won. (Kojs vs. Wisconsin is mentioned in Bob Woodward's *The Brethren* as a precedent-setting case. "[With the case, the court] seemed a hair's breadth from at least establishing that printed material without illustrations could never be obscene," Woodward wrote of the Kojs vs. Wisconsin battle.)

Captain Robert Ziarnik was at the helm of the police department's vice squad at the time. The department's concern with lewdness seems comical today. On September 30, 1968, officers raided a performance at a South Side club called Bastille and arrested a body-painted guitarist named Brian Marker for wearing nothing but a jockstrap (and paint from head to toe).

July 5
The Jehovah's Witnesses national convention at County Stadium draws 21,124 attendees. A news account notes: "Jehovah's Witnesses teach a moral code that outlaws not only necking and handholding, but teenage dating, and promotes free discussion of problems between parents and youths."

July 15
A *Journal* story reports: "A majority of voters in the four-county metropolitan area do not think that Mrs. Dorothy Knowles's recent Mexican divorce from Gov. Knowles will hurt his candidacy for re-election in November, according to a *Milwaukee Journal* survey."



Marc Ponto

August 13
Kaleidoscope Editor John Kojs is arrested on obscenity charges for publishing a poem called "Sex Poem."

August 20
Soviets invade Czechoslovakia.



Marc Ponto

John Kojs.

Nobody, it seems, was safe from Milwaukee's morals squad in 1968. A writer named David Neuberger was sitting in the Sherwood Forest bar at 35th Street and Villard Avenue one evening penning some poetic thoughts when a man peered over his shoulder and commented on his work. "What does this line say?" asked the interested party, who actually was a plainclothes police officer. Neuberger, then 24, read the line, which included a four-letter expletive, and was put under arrest for profane and disorderly behavior.

"The cop then began to badger Neuberger, telling him that he was 'crazy,' 'way out in left field' and a marijuana user," reported *Kaleidoscope*. "He was then told that he had to be on LSD to write such insane material and was asked where he got the acid. When asked whether he was a hippie, Neuberger replied he was German."

Neuberger was jailed overnight on the profane poetry charge, then paid a fine for his offense. (Since then, he's abandoned his literary aspirations. "I gave that up," says Neuberger, who is unemployed today. "I didn't have any talent anyways.")

If there was anyone who offered some comic relief in those oppressive times, it was Bob Watt, a poet/rodent exterminator who wrote a rambling *Kaleidoscope* column in which he was identified as "The Last of the Great Existential Rangers."

"I've been working like a tiger writing all kinds of wild books and magazines," he began in one of his columns. "Trying to save a soul here and there and save some folks from themselves. I have been working something like 16 hours a day, between killing rats and saving souls. . . . I come bopping in as an exterminator and sometimes have trouble convincing them they have a Zen Master there who can easily save their souls from their own inner hell, heat and hassle. Don't worry about your rats, cool your head is my message to them."

Kathleen Wiegner, then a UWM creative writing instructor, describes Watt as the city's folk poet of the late '60s. "His stuff was energetic, inconsistent and probably not great," she says. "He was sort of like an institution, certainly at the center of whatever was going on."

Watt offered a poetic commentary on local controversies, including the banning of "freaky" patrons from Marc's Big Boy. That controversy, which had been a concern only to the hippie community, became a racial issue when the restaurant manager refused, in September 1968, to serve a black lawyer and Milwaukee Assemblyman Lloyd Barbee and his family because Barbee's son was "improperly attired." The boy's offensive garb was a neck chain he wore that was popular among black youths in that year. Barbee responded with pickets supplied by the local NAACP Youth Council Commandos.



A 1968 "Be-in."

While hippies scorned Big Boy, feminists targeted Heinemann's in their 1968 protests. For years, the restaurant on Wisconsin Avenue prohibited women from sitting at its counter. "The explanation was that men needed faster service than women because they had important business to do," according to the *Bugle-American's A History of the Counterculture in Milwaukee*. "Also, men needed some peace and quiet away from women and children to discuss this important business."

The National Organization of Women began their sit-ins at Heinemann's that year, only to provoke sexist remarks from restaurant manager Thomas Burns. Writer Rebecca Davis recounted the demonstrations: "When women brought their children in to help occupy the booths [the tactic was to never order food, just tie up the booths], the manager asked, 'Where'd you get those kids, Abbey Rents?' " (Burns later was sued by NOW for slander. It took two years of protests to change Heinemann's men-only policy.)



Gino Altano

JOHN HAGEDORN

Then: Draft counselor for the Milwaukee Organizing Committee, an anti-draft organization. Arranged publicity for the Milwaukee 14 draft file burning. Also marched with Father James Groppi, as pictured above.

"I went to a reporter I knew at *The Journal*, and I called Channel 4 to tell them there would be a headline news story for them sometime during the week.

"I picked up the reporter from *The Journal* on the day of the burning, as well as the guys from the television stations and took them to the draft board at 135 West Wells [the site of the file burning]. They got pictures of the draft files being lit and of the singing . . .

"The Milwaukee 14 was a turning point [in the war protest]. People said, My God, these are priests willing to go to jail for this cause! The images of these priests burning these records had a real impact on the people of Wisconsin.

"Two felony convictions I got for it. I got two counts of conspiracy to destroy government records. They were right. I gleefully admitted my guilt to both. The second count of conspiracy was to hinder the administration of the Selective Service Act. That was also absolutely true. I got probation for two years."

Now: Youth Initiative Coordinator for Milwaukee County and author of a just-published book on gangs.

August 28
Hubert Humphrey and Edmund Muskie are nominated at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Police and protesters clash in a street confrontation (later dubbed a "police riot").

September 10
The Soul Place, a UWM gathering spot for black students, is closed by a building inspector on zoning violation charges. "The direct neighbors of Soul Place, although somewhat upset at times by the large number of Negroes and an occasional party, have tried to settle their differences by discussing their complaints," according to one report.

September 19
Tigers pitcher Denny McClain wins 31st game.

September 26
The Milwaukee 14, including five Catholic priests, set fire to 5,000 draft cards outside the selective service office on Wells Street.



Marc Ponto

October 7
The Eleventh Hour, "an acid-rock program featuring Bob Reitman as moderator" (as the program was described in *Kaleidoscope*), debuts on WZMF.



TOM DONEGAN

Then: Seminarian at St. Louis University.

"I was involved in a real peripheral way with SDS (Students For a Democratic Society). All I really did was join; I went to a couple of meetings. That's my claim to radical fame. . . I lost my membership card.

"SDS appeared to me to be peopled primarily by the wealthier students, and they were trying to out-radicalize one another. There was a lot of shouting to try to determine who was more radical. But there was a lot of frustration and anger and proposals; I didn't see much activity. I would sit and watch while there was a lot of discussion of when the revolution was coming; they would argue for hours whether it was coming this year or next.

"I didn't know: Should I be joining the revolution or should I just keep trying to fix things. Like a lot of serious young students at that time, I spent many long hours talking about what is morally right or wrong with our society and what role I should play. I was tempted by the Weatherman types who said that [the government] was so corrupt that the only answer is to overthrow it. But in the end, I just found that wasn't in my make-up, I guess."

Now: Milwaukee Common Council president.

Twenty years ago, Milwaukee's first head shop, the Indianhead, closed its doors at 1625 E. Irving Pl. (now the Constant Reader location) — a victim of harassment by police and an organization called the Mothers of the East Side. "The Indianhead brought in a mixed clientele," wrote Goff in his counterculture history. "Besides the freaks, who were attracted by such delicacies as chocolate cigarette papers and imported hookahs, curious suburbanites, ethnic neighbors and the Outlaws came around regularly."

So did the police. They were especially interested in a poster sold by Indianhead owner George Johnson, which showed a naked couple embracing. Although the poster had no frontal nudity, vice squad officers deemed it offensive enough to arrest Johnson.

"I never really thought it would be prosecuted because [the poster] had been sold all over the country," says Johnson, now 46. "But it got all the way to court. They were selecting a jury and suddenly my attorney, Jim Shellow, got it thrown out on a technicality."

Although he won that battle, Johnson had to close shop early in 1968 when his landlord refused to renew the lease.

While Milwaukee's authorities showed their blue-nosed nature, counterculture leaders encouraged the city's young to be free and uninhibited, to accept nudity and sexual freedom. This new permissiveness was explored at a rather sparsely attended Lake Park Nude-In in early June of 1968. It was declared successful by the hippie newspaper: "Seven females and two males removed their clothing and began playing among the trees and bushes of Lake Park," the paper reported. "It is clear now that the sexual revolution is alive and well in Milwaukee and can only grow."

No revolution would grow too much, though, with Milwaukee's hippies being surveyed by the tactical squad and its infamous leader, Sergeant Frank Miller, nemesis of the counterculture. ("He came up to John Kois one night in a bar and whispered that he'd like to put a bullet in his head," Sorcic says of Miller. Retorts the ex-sergeant: "Maybe there was a time when I would've liked to have kicked his butt, but

I'd never have shot him. I didn't have to; I could've handled it with my fists.")

As he arrested and tailed movement leaders, Miller was harassed by *Kaleidoscope*. Some of its methods were trivial — it sponsored a "Draw Sergeant Miller" coloring contest, which drew a large number of entries of the officer resembling a pig — while others were more threatening (the paper once published his address and home phone number).

Miller knew where he stood in the counterculture community. "My popularity in those days with the young people was low," he says. "A reporter told me that you could

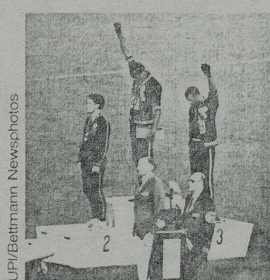


Marc Ponto

go into UWM and buy a cookie in order to vote for the most unpopular person in Milwaukee. I was second only to the pope. The pope beat me out because he was against the pill. I beat out [Mayor Henry] Maier, [Police] Chief Breier and [Judge] Christ Seraphim."

Miller's tactical squad was suspected of throwing spark plugs through the windows of the Avant Garde, a coffeehouse and hangout for the counterculture on Prospect Avenue. The Garde had gone through a few owners in its six years of operation; for a short time in 1966, local businessman Richard Weening ran the coffeehouse, but, according to the *Bugle's* counterculture history, "Weening was a man of greater

October 11
Sixteen-year-old Thomas Breen is expelled from Williams Bay High School for refusing to cut his hair, prompting a lawsuit by the American Civil Liberties Union. The state's superintendent of schools says Breen's disobedience "constitutes a disruption in the school."



UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos

October 17
Two U.S. runners are expelled from the Olympics for giving black power salutes.

October 20
Jackie Kennedy weds Aristotle Onassis.



UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos

October 20
The Open Door, an underground newspaper published by Milwaukee high school students, debuts. Wrote one critic of the effort: "From the looks of their first issue, these kids are into some heavy ideas, and the only place they'll be going is deeper down the hallway and into their open doors."

motivations and he feared the image of the Garde would be a personal liability, so after two months [Weening and his partner] also put the place up for sale."

The Garde also had undergone several programming changes over the years. When it first opened, the coffeehouse held poetry readings under the direction of Reitman, who, according to poet Jim Hazard, "seemed more like a beatnik than a hippie." By 1968, the Garde was home to acid rock bands, and the sounds of screaming electric guitars annoyed neighbors, who complained to a sympathetic Common Council. In October 1968, the Milwaukee poetry/blues/rock landmark was closed when the council failed to renew its entertainment license.

The Garde's closing didn't affect the city's large poet population, though, as it had drifted to the Juneau Village Church for readings. In 1968, poets were very serious about their work and their politics, but they didn't always agree on the same issues and that created factions within the poetry community.

Wiegner recalls a reading at the church that was interrupted by poetry extremists. "They trashed the reading," says Wiegner, now a reporter at *Forbes* magazine in Los Angeles. "A whole bunch of them came in and started turning over chairs. I guess they did it because we weren't politically radical." (Wiegner's work tended to be more emotional than anarchistic. One of her locally published works was entitled "For Rosalie, My Student, Arrested For Picking Wild Marijuana.")

The most radical poet of the times was Sorcic, who was described as a "firebrand." He stole a printing press to begin his publishing venture, which he called Gunrunner Press. His poetry seethed with anger directed at the war-mongering establishment. Even a local anchorman — the mere messenger of bad news — felt Sorcic's poetic wrath. In part, "Poem For John McCullough: Channel 4 Newscaster" read: "Come on, John/convince us/with your films of gasping children/who lost arms, breasts and balls/in the great American furnace/that hope springs eternal./Show us the light/at the end of the tunnel."

Although it had a solid and sometimes

disruptive presence in the community, the counterculture couldn't get serious recognition by the mainstream press. "As most institutions like that, [*The Milwaukee Journal*] distrusted us and didn't like us," says Kois. "Internally, there were memos from the higher-ups to reporters saying they shouldn't cooperate with us."

Eventually, *The Journal* found a way to acknowledge the city's "hippie element," although it did it in what seemed a slap-in-the-face manner — putting the story in the light-news-only Green Sheet and assigning a middle-aged reporter to the piece. The paper reprinted a speech presented by a Harvard psychiatrist who claimed that the hippie movement had died, then sought reaction from Milwaukee hippies, including Reitman, Sahli and Kois. The trio disputed the opinion, and said that so-called underground activities, including drug use, also were discreetly practiced by the establishment, including the police.

"The image-conscious vice squad, led by Captain Ziarnik, became concerned [about allegations made in the Green Sheet piece]," reported *Kaleidoscope*. "Nothing bothers the morality police more than the thought that they, too, are merely mortal. So two detectives were dispatched to Reitman's home at 1:15 in the morning to ask him to appear at the vice squad office the next afternoon." The department wanted Reitman to name names, the account reported, but he declined.

Reitman, even then, was considered the godfather of progressive radio, having had shows on several stations. But his interests were greater than music and airwave communication. He was a poetry editor and coordinator at the Garde ("He had a very innovative poetry light show extravaganza that he used to put on," says poet Jeff Poniewaz) and was active in a variety of underground movements, including the formation of Milwaukee's first "Hip Church."

Pegged as the city's "first new experience in religion," parishioners gathered the first week of June for debut services. An



Jim Moy

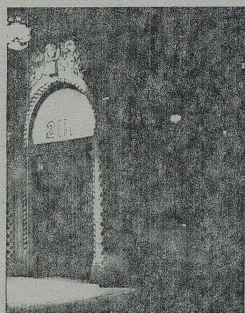
ART HEITZER

Then: President, Associated Students of Marquette University.

"... Marquette thought that if anybody came on campus and spoke, that must imply that the university endorsed whatever that person had to say, and therefore, they couldn't allow anyone to speak they didn't endorse. They refused to allow Alan Ginsburg to come to read poetry.

"On the question of institutional racism, we did succeed in resulting in a concrete programmatic change in the university that has affected the lives of hundreds of black students who wouldn't have been students there otherwise. In terms of changing the way people thought about issues, including Vietnam, and including that they should have some ability to organize themselves and some empowerment, I think we did that to some degree. It was probably more successful at other universities than at Marquette. But Marquette — we came from a place where everybody said it was impossible to do anything like this."

Now: Attorney, concentrating on labor/civil rights law and employment discrimination issues. Op-ed page columnist for *The Milwaukee Journal*. Teaches a UWM course called "Class, Law and American Society."

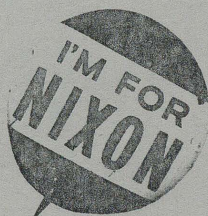


Marc Pontio

October 27
The Avant Garde coffeehouse, headquarters for the bohemian community, closes.

November 5
Richard Nixon narrowly defeats Hubert Humphrey.

December 11
Argument over shape of table stalls Vietnam peace talks in Paris.



December 21
The city's hip community goes Christmas caroling, singing such tunes as "Why Don't We Do It in the Road?" and "Coca-Cola Douche."

December 28
The Beatles' "White Album" leads the national LP chart.



UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos

account of the Hip Church's formation noted that "Reitman announced that Spero Lavish, who has interpreted the Bible in an amazing way, as a space exploration from another planet, will present this experience at the church next week."

Twenty years later, the Hip Church, the poetry wars and the police department's blue-nosed nature seem somewhat comical, although Reitman and most of the key figures of that era don't make light of their past.

"I never look back at the period and laugh," says the WKTI morning disc jockey. "I look back at that time as a really important time in my life. I will occasionally say I'm still a hippie, that the heart of a hippie still beats in my chest. The thing that attracted me to that whole movement was the humanist aspect. I hope that is what I was and still am. . . . I miss the large groups of people I used to hang out with when I was just one of the gang."

Now 46, Reitman says he still writes poetry, but finds it difficult to read locally. His audiences, he says, see him as Reitman the DJ, not Reitman the poet. Thus, when he reads, he does it out of town.

Firebrand poet Sorcic, who left Milwaukee for New York and now works for an actuarial consulting firm, says he holds onto the values he had in 1968 and still gets angry — although over different causes. ("I'm angry that I started smoking," he says.)

"I still have very strong feelings about the war," says Sorcic, who is married and has two adopted Korean children, ages 9 and 11. "I still think I'm a very good writer, but I don't have the same burning intensity that I had when I was 20. . . . I think the focus [of my life] has changed and I guess that's quite natural. My concerns now are more personal, more family-oriented."

Bob Watt, another poet, is probably the least-changed figure from that era. He still writes offbeat poetry (with the recent release of "Sunflower Seeds For Any Tramp," Watt claims to be the state's most published poet) and concedes that he's somewhat stuck in time. "In a way, I dress the same and I talk the same as I did then," he says.

George Johnson, the city's first head shop proprietor, is a high school English teacher in Waukesha. "I have some embarrassment about that, although I never was a drug dealer," he says of his days as a drug paraphernalia shop owner. "I think the Greeks' attitude that nothing [should be] done in excess is a fair thing to guide your life by."

The problem today is with the excesses, which he's seen at home and in school. "I'm concerned because I see them abusing it and wrecking their lives," he says.

While Johnson still thinks of himself as a humanitarian-bohemian sort who hasn't changed a great deal in 20 years, others have nearly abandoned their past. Marc Ponto, one of the most prolific countercul-

ture photographers of the era and then a young man with a strong anti-war consciousness, confesses: "I'm very apolitical now. I haven't voted — now this is a confession — I haven't voted since 1972."

"Between 1968 and '72, we spent years on the streets trying to smash the State or whatever, fighting against Nixon, but ironically, I voted for Nixon in both 1968 and 1972." (His votes, Ponto says, were not endorsements of Nixon, but protests against the Democrats' choices for those years.)

"Obviously, there were some very naive thoughts at the time — for example, that we could somehow change the culture. It's interesting to think what would have happened had we really changed it to the degree we wanted to."

Frank Miller left the tactical squad in 1970 to work on County Stadium security. In 1985, he retired and moved to Wautoma, Wisconsin, where he fishes and does wood-working. "I miss the stadium work, but I don't miss police work," he says.

In 1968, Kojs wrote: "The fantasy of the old world, small-town *gemütlichkeit* is just that — a fantasy. It may be an illusion to believe in executive suites or in distant suburbs, but here on the streets, the pace is quicker, the breathing heavier. And because you like it here does not mean we like it here."

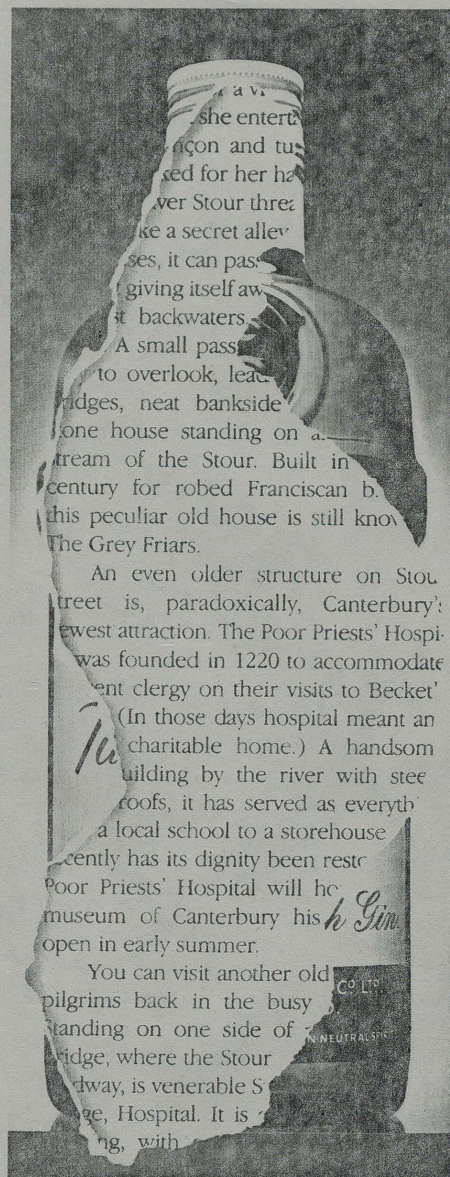
Kojs tried his damndest to make it here, running a newspaper (he quit *Kaleidoscope* in 1971, selling it to a staffer for \$1), a bookstore, a coffee shop and a craft shop. All ended in failure, and Kojs left Milwaukee for New York, where he got into another alternative publishing venture, *SCREW* newspaper. He initially served as associate editor of the paper, which is owned by porn personality Al Goldstein, and moved up to second in command. ("I was vice president or something; it's a loose organization," he says.)

Ironically, Milwaukee's one-time bankrupt hippie is today a successful capitalist who dabbles in real estate and stocks and serves as a publishing and computer consultant. The last time Dennis Kojs, a local PR man, saw his brother in New York, John was wearing a pin-striped suit, riding in a limousine and dining at the four-star Windows on the World restaurant.

Now 47, Kojs hasn't held onto the old issues of his hippie newspaper; nor does he dwell on an era that's gone. "I spend a lot more time thinking about the future than I do the past," he says.

He doesn't get back to Milwaukee often and doesn't seem to miss it. ("It's a quiet town; I rarely need that much quiet," he says.) On a recent holiday visit, though, he noticed the transformation of Brady Street, the hippie haven of days passed.

"Brady Street sure has changed, hasn't it?" he asks. Indeed it has. The building that once housed *Kaleidoscope* (and was fire-bombed in 1968) is now a French café and patisserie that serves \$2.50 brownies. ■



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