

[\[Print this article\]](#) [\[Close this window\]](#)

Our Guardian Angels: A blessing or a curse?

Received with high fives from pedestrians, bells ringing on passing streetcars, waves from drivers and scattered applause, the controversial (only-in-Toronto) Guardian Angels began their patrols of Downtown July 13. A dozen or so sauntered from Billboard Central at Dundas and Yonge to what residents call Street-Crime Central at Dundas and Sherbourne where they had a peaceful conversation with a pair of patrolling 51-Division bike cops before receiving a briefing on the neighbourhood from Stephen Paquette.

In unemotional and understanding words the Angels' assistant national director explained the difficulties the homeless, mentally ill and addicted both caused and endured in the area.

Walking through an alley, he pointed out the dangers of finding used hypodermic needles with your feet instead of your vision and cautioned wariness.

The only dissenters of note were some OCAP members, perhaps because the Angels are non-union volunteers, unlike police and TCHC in-house security which have unions.

Not dissenting in person, but in practice were Mayor David Miller and Coun. Pam McConnell.

The latter forwarded to Toronto Community Housing Corp. brass an invitation sent to her by the William Denison Seniors' Home resident security committee that a day earlier had invited the Angels to conduct their induction ceremony for new members in the TCHC building's meeting room.

The residents' group says McConnell's forward of the invitation triggered the lockout of the Angels from the building, forcing them to conduct their ceremony in Allan Gardens.

Some were speculating that the NDP mayor and the NDP councilor are so committed to labour unions that they shun the Angels on ideological rather than logical grounds.

In a note sent to all residents by McConnell, she denied any part in the cancellation of the Angels' event.

At the July meeting of St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association, the delegates rejected a motion that the Angels be invited to make a presentation at the September meeting.

One delegate called them "vigilantes" and threatened to resign if they were invited to speak.

2006-08-01 16:06:41