



March 30, 2005

## **Guardian Angels patrol high-crime areas in Jackson**

**By Camille C. Spencer**

[caspencer@jackson.gannett.com](mailto:caspencer@jackson.gannett.com)

Wearing their signature red berets and jackets with a winged logo on the back, the Guardian Angels stopped by Charles "Hollywood" Buckley's corner store a few weeks ago during their patrol.

Buckley, owner of Buckley's Ridgeway Street Grocery & Grill in Virden Addition, said he was glad to see the group.

"People don't hang around outside (as much)," he said. "My business is picking up because of the Guardian Angels and the Jackson Police Department."

With the goal of aiding law enforcement by patrolling high crime areas in Jackson, the Guardian Angels are attempting to make themselves a staple in the Virden Addition and Farish Street districts since the Jackson chapter's recruiting class graduated in early March.

They patrol about three times a week for an hour in a group of six walking in loose military style and handing out recruiting information.

The Jackson chapter has 13 members who rotate patrolling depending on their availability.

As they approached residents in Virden Addition recently, chapter leader Chris Jennings said "Have a nice night" to residents walking by, who waved back.

At Sears and Ridgeway streets, Jennings halted the group and ordered them to "post up," standing still with their hands behind their backs for a few seconds as they surveyed the neighborhood.



Greg Jenson/The Clarion-Ledger

**Cassie Jennings (left) of Pearl, co-leader of the Jackson Chapter of the Guardian Angels, and fellow members James Henson of Jackson, Lisa Carpenter and Willie Hudson, both of Utica, "post up" or survey the area recently during patrols in the Virden Addition neighborhood near Bailey Avenue and Ridgeway Street. The Jackson chapter has 13 members.**



**Cassie Jennings**

The Guardian Angels, a volunteer group, was founded by Curtis Sliwa 25 years ago in New York. There are 5,000 members in 32 cities worldwide.

While the Guardian Angels are not allowed to carry weapons, they can make citizens arrests.

JPD Precinct 2 Officer Terence Ware, who patrols Farish Street, said he hasn't seen the Guardian Angels patrolling but welcomes the idea of them making citizens arrests or helping with the area's vagrants.

"They might be there if I'm not there," Ware said.

While the reaction from the community has been largely positive, some are not receptive to the Guardian Angels, said co-chapter leader Cassie Jennings.

"Some like to yell, they don't know what we're about," she said. "But we just ignore it and go on."

Sitting on her porch on Ridgeway Street, retiree Sophia Thompson Culpepper, who has lived in her home for a year, said the presence of the Guardian Angels makes her feel safer.

"It brings about change in the community," she said. "I saw them walking down Ridgeway. When people see them, they tend to get more respect. I have a small grandson, so I think it's a very good idea."