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Underneath the skyline

t's New Years and we're out here on the corner of 11th and Delaware, down here where the Loop turns East. PUBLIC NOTICE is on the watch for possible jam-ups as East Lawrence heads for the City Limits, in a lemon-colored cadillac.

Dennis Smith is out front now, in a cheery holiday mood. Though he lost City Manager by a narrow 5 votes, he had the consolation of the mayorality. He is a fierce watchdog for the town in a trying moment. Who would have thought Lawrence would get 200,000 residents this quickly?

East Lawrence and Old West alike are rolling towards Kansas City on wheels of fire, and they are traveling the multi-million dollar Haskell Loop route.

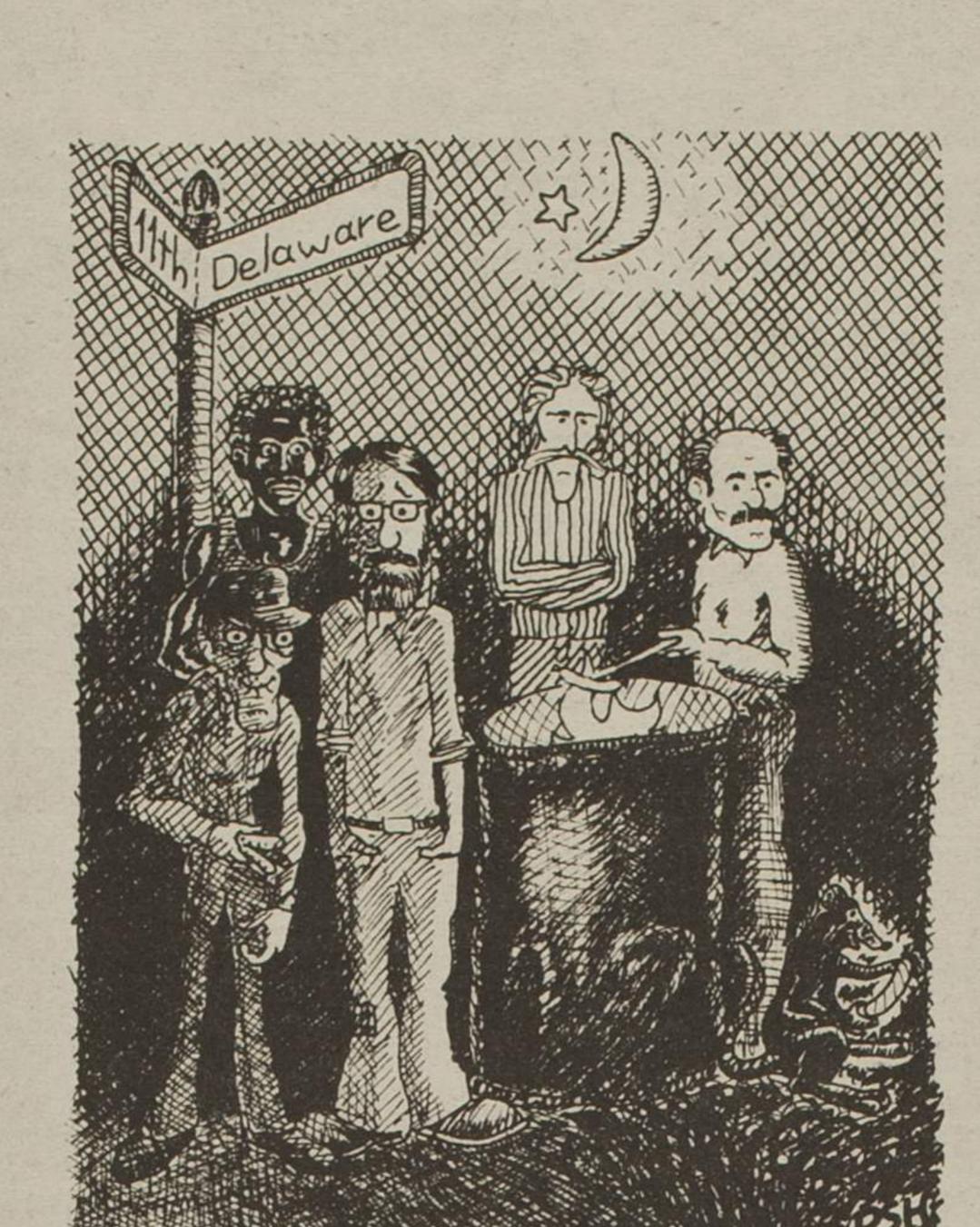
They finally built the road they call the Loop in 1989. Within a few years Lawrence was the bean capital of the U.S.A. New beaneries dot the floodplain, and it takes a ton of trucks to radiate out the rich harvest. East Lawrence itself is now a bullish industrial capital. The two new IBM factories guarantee a quiet future for the whole town, industry-wise.

That's what brought us here to 11th and Delaware tonite, all of this and more. So we're standing around a newpaper fire in an ash barrel, munching wænies, keeping warm. We've been here since 2 and we intend to stay here all night.

Traffic peaked at noon. A spectacular wreck involving a candy-apple red plymouth and a truck full of swinging meat hardly stopped the rush of traffic downtown, coming in from boarder out-lying areas, headed for Ray Audio Appliancences and White Goods. Late, all the afternoon, they streamed past us and on West to the suburbs, some north across the double gleaming Kaw spans. Lawrence is finally, after years of struggle, knocking on Topeka's door.

But now it is night. The last few East Lawrence.

survivors, Harry Puckett, George Elston, Tom Patchen, Ed Down, Mark 'The Clown' Kaplan, and others are standing around, smiling.



Harry Puckett, long time lover of life says, 'Well, the road took everything. I built these houses with my own hand, and now they're all gone. I told Mayor Clark it was wrong. In 1987 I put a new roof over that house. He's in Washington now. I put 280 roofs on over here. So I know what I mean. In 1932 I put plumbing in this place. Last year the last few places went, now mine. It's no good this way. I told Clark. I know what I mean. "

We all smile, remembering. Harry is passed a toasted dog cooked in a no. 10 can over the flames.

George asked, 'Why in the heck did they let Turkey Tims chain in here?" (They line the Loop access roads now).

No one had the answer. We turned to Tom, recently arrived, who's now a giant supplier to International Business Machines, still at the corner of 9th and Haskell Loop. 'It's a mystery to me, "Tom said goodnaturedly. 'This was all zoned residential at one time. you know."

Mark walked up griping in a clownish way then, Woozie Suzie was combing her hair over in the dark. Kirshenbaum called to say he wasn't coming--that he wanted to watch the all new Fred Pence address the five-county area.

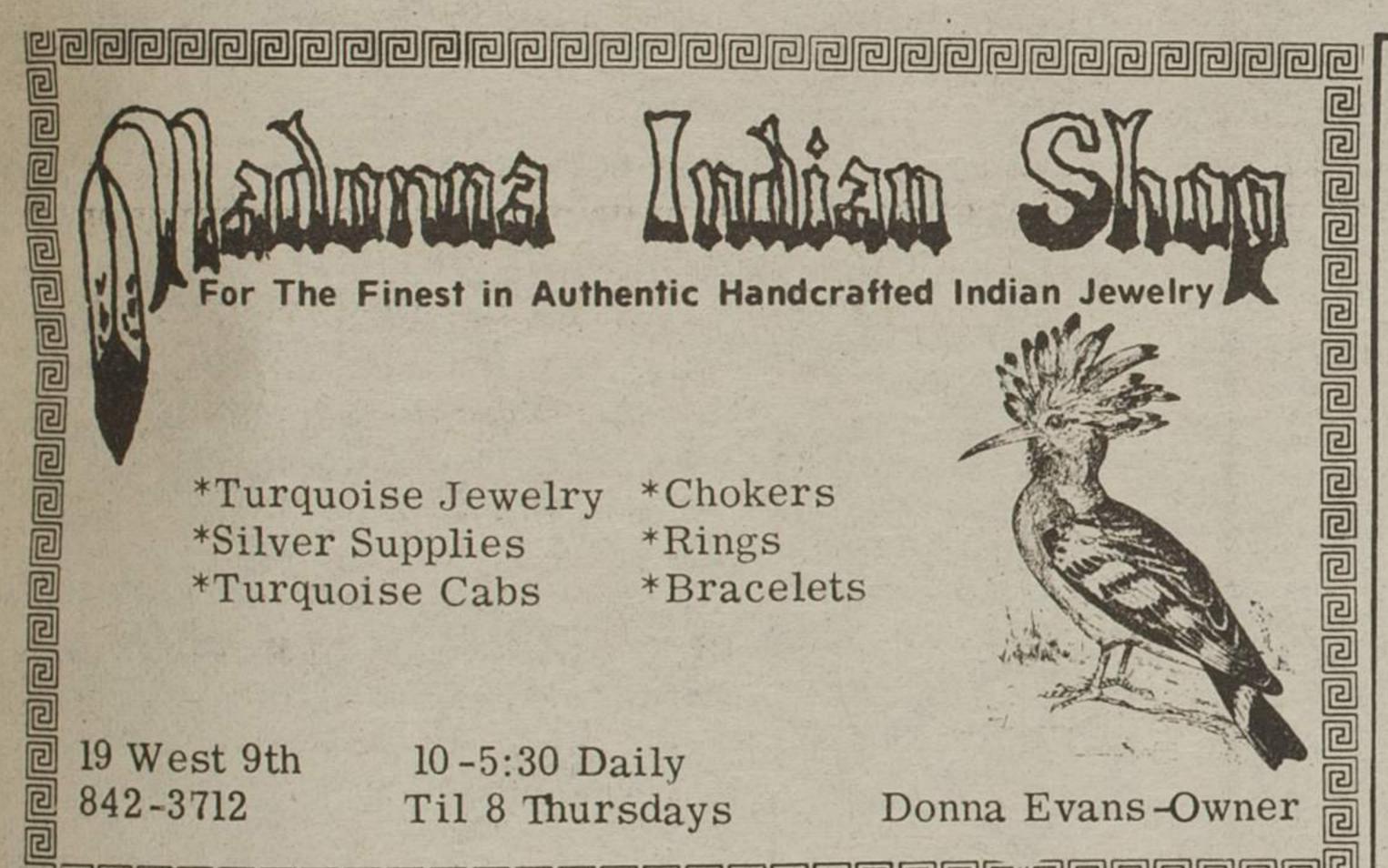
We were all really waiting for Buford, humbled now. Then we saw him twist his body out of a coffee-colored Lincoln. We passed him a dog.

These reunions are getting slimmer now, as the years roll by, as townspeople begin, once again, to lose interest in the East Side. We'll be here again next year though. We invite everyone to come out. We need fresh blood. WRITE BOX 114.



HOW DO PEOPLE REACT?

That's what we'd like to know. A community paper can't function for long without response from the community. These two pages begin a regular feature section on EAST LAWRENCE. Got neighborhood news? Send any and all to BOX 114.



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