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## **IRREGULARS SEEK QUIET SLEEP**

**Tom Ardies**

The second reason why we have never run for city council (the first is no one would vote for us) is because we would hate to have to choose between things like The Flat 5 and the West Eighth and Dunbar Irregulars.

If you like jazz you would have to support The Flat 5. But, on the other hand, if you like to sleep at night, you would have to back the West Eighth and Dunbar Irregulars.

The Flat 5 is "Vancouver's Newest Contemporary Music Club" which has been operating since December in rented premises on Broadway a few doors west of Dunbar.

The West Eighth and Dunbar Irregulars are the householders who live behind The Flat 5 on West Eighth and Dunbar.

The Flat 5 is open the nights of Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and the band plays long into the mornings of Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

Like usually until 3 a.m., and sometimes until 4 a.m., and sometimes even to 5 a.m.

The Irregulars say that as a result they often lay awake until these hours.

The matter is about to come to a head. The Irregulars, who, incidentally, are 10 strong, have sent a petition to city hall. The petition petitions for relief from the noise – it disdains the use of the word music – emanating from The Flat 5.

R.G. Hughes, 71, of 3642 West Eighth, a retired railway engineer who has made some noise himself in his time, is the leader of the Irregulars.

"The Flat 5," he says, "is full of beatniks. If that was music they were making you wouldn't mind. But they are not making music. They are making noise."

"I," says his wife, Catherine, "could make a better noise on my pail. It sounds like they play nothing but drums and cymbals. It sounds like they are beating on old tin cans."

"Why," demands Hughes, "should this noise be allowed to go on after midnight? Everything else around here – the dance hall, the Legion, the bowling alley, the billiard hall – *all close at midnight*. Why not The Flat 5?"

"We," says his wife, "deserve a little peace in our older days."

John M. O'Brien, 82, of 2421 Dunbar, a retired contractor who is another staunch member of the Irregulars, says that not even his deafness is a defense against The Flat 5. "I," he says, "am deaf. I have a war pension to prove I am deaf. If I am deaf how come I can hear The Flat 5? That noise after midnight is completely unreasonable."

"Bang," says his wife, Ellen, "bang, bang. That is the noise they make. Bang, bang, bang. The later it gets the crazier it gets.

"The police say they can't do anything about it. The licence inspector says he can't do anything about it. If somebody doesn't do something soon I am going to start beating on a wash tub in front of the mayor's home."

Gary Keenan, 21, the manager of The Flat 5, replies that the club is located in a commercial zone, that jazz is its business, and that jazz business hours run to 3, 4, and even 5 in the morning.

"We," he says, "have got to stay open that late, the band has to play that late, and the music has to include drums. Drums are part of jazz.

"We've insulated the walls and roof and doors as well as we can. We appreciate the neighbor's position but what else can we do? This is a commercial zone. We are entitled to be here.

"In fact we are really proud of what we have accomplished. If you like jazz this is the best jazz club in town. Admission is only \$1."

Well. What a problem. Commercial zoning vs the anti-noise bylaw. Free enterprise vs the rights of free sleep.

It will be interesting to see how city council handles this one.