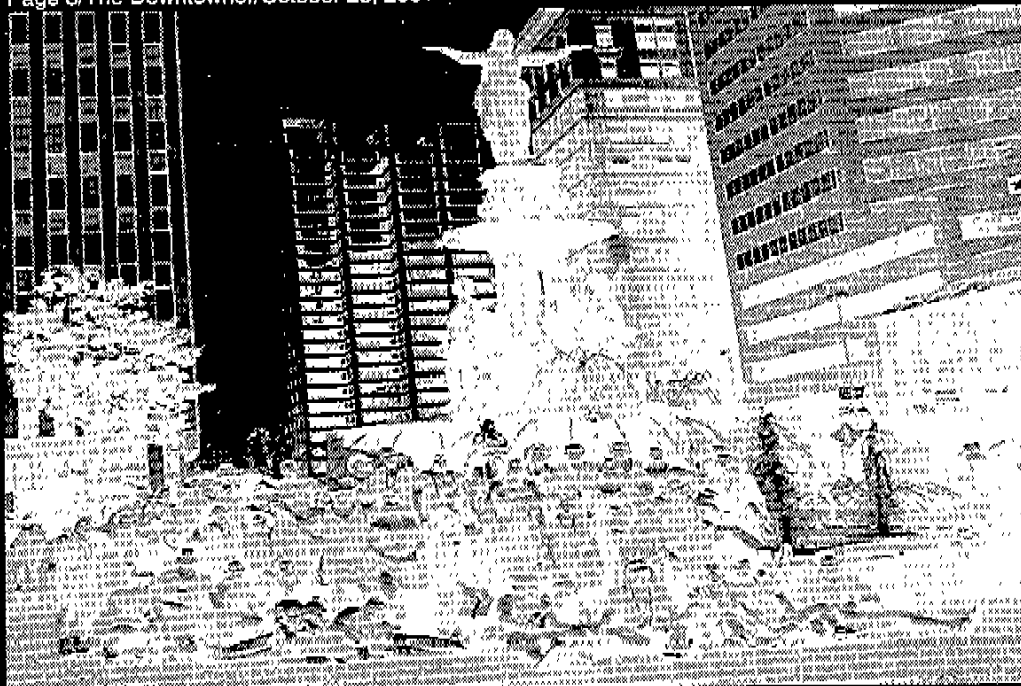


Page 8/The Downtowner/October 23, 2001



The Hashers Red Dress Run began and ended at Head First Cafe on Third St. with several rest and beer stops in between, including Fountain Square.

Runners race mystery trail, slide into Head First

By D.C. STANFA

Special to the Downtowner

On your mark, get set, accessorize! The Sin City Hash House Harriers and Harriettes (SCH4) are running amuck in red for the seventh time in their annual Red Dress Run.

The group that calls itself "a drinking club, with a running problem" will host the event Saturday, Oct. 20 at the Head First Sports Café, 218 West Third St. The 100 or so participants run through streets, buildings and alleys in full-red-dress fashion following a chalk and flour marked trail that can lead anywhere.

During most SCH4 "hashes" the end of the trail is usually a mystery for everyone in the group, with the exception of the "hare" who leads them purposefully into the confusion.

It is a pretty safe bet that it will end up in a bar, with a lot of beer chugging and bawdy song-

singing. Just one of over 1,400 hashing groups worldwide, the Cincinnati chapter is diverse but mostly professional iconoclasts, exhibitionists and Peter Pan followers. Not to forget the serious runners in the group, that are forbidden to discuss "competitive events" (like the Flying Pig Marathon) while at a "Hash", one of the many "crimes" which can result in a beer-chug-penalty.

Although the group changes venues and themes on the two Saturdays a month they hash, the downtown area is one of their favorites for blazing a trail. Several years ago the red dress runners stopped, appropriately, at the Reds' stadium for a couple of innings and a few brews. According to Dave Nelson, a local attorney, downtown resident and singles for charity leader, "Downtown is hasher-friendly, due to the close proximity of a variety of bars."

The disorganization doesn't

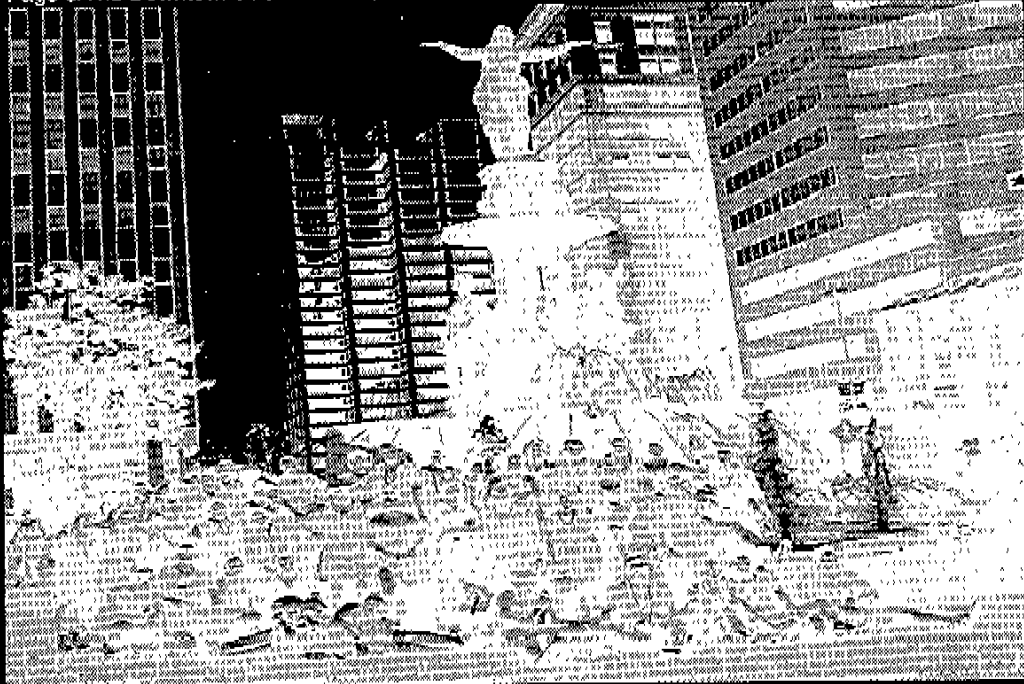
pretend to be a philanthropic group, although they have sponsored a few events and made charitable donations (including United Way, Women's Crisis Center and The Red Cross). "It's a welcoming, friendly group. If you want to increase your heart rate and lift up your spirits (preferably in a mug) check us out," invites Nelson.

The running sometimes gets extreme, and so does the fun. Known for off-road running, (and notorious for benign trespassing) they don't mean any harm. While creek beds, hillsides and railroad tracks are typical terrain, the occasional golf course is not out of the question. So, if you see a group of runners with whistles climbing over your back fence, just offer them a beer.

For more information on the group call their hot-line (513) 956-7234.

Their website is
<http://www.SCH4.com>

Page 6/The Downtowner/October 23, 2001



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