

# HIP STAFFERS LAUNCH KICKSTARTER TO PRESERVE 1970s ALTERNATIVE NEWSPAPER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

You might (or might not) know that many years ago...well, at the dawn of prehistory, in 1971, before Watergate, before Woodward and Bernstein, before the Internet and before the current president's attacks on the free press... I helped found a weekly newspaper in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.



The paper, called the *Harrisburg Independent Press*, or, HIP (unfortunate acronym, I still think) was created to cover the trial of the Harrisburg 8—a group of nuns and priests and such who were accused by then FBI director J Edgar Hoover of conspiring to kidnap Presidential Advisor Henry Kissinger and blow up underground heating tunnels in Washington, DC (no, I'm not kidding)—and to report issues and concerns besetting the city, the state, and the nation.

Formed as a nonprofit, HIP was supported largely by subscriptions (\$5 for six months, \$8 a year) and advertising (the local dirty movie theater owners appreciated our not censoring their ads, tho one of them did ask us to airbrush a

certain bodily area out of a photo).



The paper, which ran for nine years, became known for its muckraking, community and creative spirit. For example, in the very first year, our reporting led to the shutdown of a migrant camp and to new statewide labor regulations. *HIP* also covered housing, education, prison reform, government corruption –as even sports and the arts. Perhaps most notably, *HIP* beat the traditional press by uncovering safety problems at the nearby Three Mile Island nuclear power plant, as acknowledged in the national news.

Anyway, I've been working on a memoir of *HIP* and my days of independent newspapering...and am most grateful to a group of former staffers who recently scanned and archived every issue.



Jim Zimmerman worked at the Harrisburg Independent Press from 1973 to 1977 in various capacities. He was a writer and editor, sold ads, and distributed the paper, among other duties.

[Those staffers, led by Jim Zimmerman, recently launched a Kickstarter campaign to fund a Website where those issues will be housed and readily accessed by current and future journalists, researchers and other citizens.](#) The team has set a goal of \$6000—to be reached by COB August 18, 2019.

With just over a month to go, they've raised more than half that amount.

I'm writing in hopes that you will donate to help them raise the rest of the dough by August 18 so that the project will be a go.

### **What's in it for you?**

#### **Rewards!**

If they reach their goal,

-For a \$25 contribution, you get a CD of the complete set of issues—some 300, in all.

-For \$100 you get a t-shirt with a HIP logo

-For \$500 you get a poster suitable for framing: your choice of (1) the front page of the first issue from 1971, or (2) the front page of the August 1978 issue: headlined "Meltdown: Tomorrow's Disaster on Three Mile Island."

The HIP team is hoping that other alternative newspapers of the 1960s and 1970s will follow their lead so that the amazing journalistic work of those times will not be lost to future generations.

[Here's a link to the kickstarter page.](#)

—Anita M. Harris

*Anita Harris is a writer and communications consultant based in Cambridge, MA. A graduate of Cornell University and the Columbia Journalism School, she held a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard, and fellowships at Radcliffe, the Boston University College of Communications, and Tufts Universities. She taught journalism at Harvard, Yale and Simmons Universities. She is the author of Broken Patterns: Professional Women and the Quest for a New Feminine Identity (WSU Press/Cambridge Common Press) and Ithaca Diaries, (Cambridge Common Press), a memoir/social history of Cornell University in the late 1960s. She is currently working on a book about the Harrisburg Independent Press.*