

Guardian Angels gear up for Flames playoff run

Anti-crime group wants to keep an eye on areas away from Red Mile

By [SARAH KENNEDY](#), SUN MEDIA

It won't just be 17 Ave. that will be seeing red if the Flames make the playoffs this season.

Calgary's new red beret-clad crime fighters say they will be stepping up patrols during play-offs in areas where there may be less police presence.

Greg Martin, spokesman for the Calgary Guardian Angels, say they have no intention of trolling 17 Ave. or other areas packed with drunken revellers but instead want to be the eyes and ears for police in quieter neighbourhoods surrounding the hoopla.

"We don't want to interfere with police," said Martin.

"But we would want to keep an eye on the outside areas."

Martin said their bright red hats and jackets may make them a target for rowdy drunks filing out of the bars after hockey games, and the Guardian Angels have no desire to incite fights, he said.

"With drunkenness, people lose their inhibitions and become more aggressive," he said. Martin said it's the more remote areas or situations where people may be walking back to their cars when the Angels can really provide a service.

"If someone is getting a hard time, we can act as escorts," he said. Martin said they plan to step up patrols to at least twice a week if the Flames make the play-offs but that could increase depending on membership.

During the 2004 and 2006 playoff runs, 17 Ave. S.W. — or the Red Mile as it dubbed — became a national spectacle due to thousands of red-clad celebrants that packed the street each night after home games.

Since the Guardian Angels officially set up shop in Calgary on March 29, they have conducted only two patrols, in large part due to cold temperatures and bad weather, said Martin.

"When the weather improves, we anticipate more patrols," he said, adding the angels were planning to hit the downtown streets for a four-hour patrol tonight.