

OBSERVATION POINT

MOTOREDE Tactics Do A Great Disservice

By Philip H. Power
Publisher

One of our reporters, a veteran of many a tough story, came into the office last week. She plopped down on her chair, puffed a big sigh, and said, "I just spent two hours looking at a bunch of lousy sex movies."

She had been in Southfield, viewing films allegedly used in Farmington school system's courses in sex education. The program is currently under attack, mainly by a group called Movement to Restore Decency (MOTOREDE), which is at the heart of a drive to recall four board of education trustees who support the program.

The re-emergence of MOTOREDE in this area should come as no surprise. As an action committee organized by the John Birch Society, it was active two years ago against the Southfield schools and was involved last year in anti-sex education drives in Livonia, Garden City and Westland.

THE TECHNIQUES used by the group in Farmington have been called into question by a Farmington Township mother, who charged over the weekend that flyers distributed door to door by the South Oakland MOTOREDE were inaccurate.

Preliminary investigation by our reporters has revealed that some of MOTOREDE's charges are incorrect--the schools are not using some movies the flyer alleges, and the cost of the program is not nearly what is charged.

"The opponents (of the program) are entitled to their opinions," the Farmington woman sensibly observed, "but they should stick to the facts. It has always been my feeling, especially in raising children, that it is important to try and stick to the truth."

She's absolutely right.

HER OBSERVATIONS raise other issues. The first is that merely to charge (accurately or inaccurately) that a group -- MOTOREDE, for instance -- is an arm of the John Birch Society and let it go at that is to engage in irresponsible smear tactics.

Members of MOTOREDE or the John Birch Society have just as much right to have their own feelings about things such as sex education as any other citizen. The fact that they happen to be members of certain groups does not in itself affect their rights to have their own opinions.

But when organizations to

which they belong get directly involved in the issue, start distributing flyers door to door and stimulate recall drives against board of education members, it becomes appropriate to inquire about the tactics and methods being used.

It's at that point that I start getting troubled.

THIS NEWSPAPER has covered the activities of MOTOREDE and of the John Birch Society here in the suburbs for some time. Such coverage is warranted by the argument that they are making news of importance to our readers.

Over these past years, I have observed a pattern in the

public activities of these two organizations: A tendency to let emotion run ahead of fact; use of charges, both printed and verbal, which are either wholly or in part simply not true; an attempt to organize ad hoc committees, seeking to give the impression of a grass roots movement of plain citizens, where in fact no such movement exists.

The same pattern is now being repeated in Farmington, and it's time it was stopped.

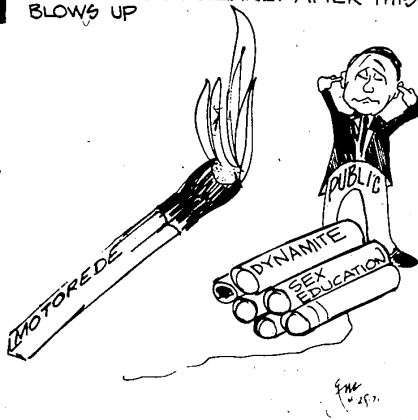
SEX EDUCATION is a tough subject, on which many legitimate differences exist. But it's an important one.

School boards have the obligation to run the kind of school

system their communities want and need. Their deliberations are not helped when organizations go around making inaccurate charges, threatening members of the board with recall on very flimsy evidence, and doing everything they can to cause a rumpus.

In the kind of climate that such tactics produce, any sensible or thoughtful consideration of the issue of sex education becomes difficult if not impossible. Which may be just what MOTOREDE wants to do. But for myself, I'll hold with the Farmington housewife, and argue that it's important, especially in raising children, to stick to the truth. I think most folks will agree.

TRY AND THINK CLEARLY AFTER THIS BLOW'S UP



Corrine Abatt writes

Dollars For Arts?

In these days of the Vietnam war, serious housing, school, and unemployment problems, racial unrest and unresolved youth sub-culture activities, is it fair to ask government for money for the arts?

In the midst of an intensive and ultimately successful campaign for New York State to fund the arts, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller said, "A civilization without culture is no civilization at all."

Indeed, it is in times like now when the beauty of art, music, ballet, theater, poetry and the prophetic statements of visionary artists are most needed to enrich and balance our lives.

GOV. WILLIAM MILLIKEN has recommended a state appropriation of \$367,000 for the arts. President Richard Nixon has asked for \$60 million plus administration costs for the arts and humanities -- \$30 million each. Both sums are in danger of being drastically cut by government appropriations committees. This has been the pattern in the recent years since government has been funding the arts.

On both the state and national level, a group called Partnership for the Arts is urging those who love the arts to contact government officials to plead for the full amounts as recommended.

IF FUNDING of the arts at

the state and national level seems remote, it should not. It has already touched our lives.

The Detroit Symphony continues because it received \$100,000 last year from the National Endowment Fund.

It is through the assistance of the Michigan Arts Council that the Detroit Symphony was able to perform in places like Marquette in the Upper Peninsula and Roseville in the Lower.

Direct and indirect benefits from the fundings intermix. The \$30 million of federal funds for the arts gets divided into five major areas. One portion, \$5.5 million, goes directly back to the states. Each state which can match it will receive \$100,000.

THE EFFORTS of the Michigan Council for the Arts become more evident every year. Its presence has been felt in Southfield helping to organize the 1 1/2 year-old Southfield Arts Council and in bringing several outstanding art shows and programs to the area.

One of these, a fine print exhibit of the work of John de Martely, artist-in-residence and faculty member at Michigan State University, is now showing at the Southfield-Lathrup High School Gallery.

It is the Michigan Arts Council which brought the Group 17 photography exhibit to Livonia and will send it to Southfield next month.

This is true of the concert of the Dorothy Ashby Trio in Farmington, the Harold McKinney Quintet in Southfield, the Igbo exhibit in Livonia, the appearance of the Performing Arts Repertory Theater of New York at Clarenceville High School and the planned appearance of Arrtrain in Plymouth next year -- and there is more.

The critical time at the state level is now! State Sen. Carl D. Pursell (R-Plymouth) is chairman of the senate appropriations sub-committee and Gariand Lane (D-Flint) and Charles O. Zollar (R-Benton Harbor) are committee members.

The appropriations subcommittee for the State House is chaired by Rep. Marvin R. Stempien (D-Livonia) and includes Thomas G. Ford Sr. (R-Grand Rapids) and Richard A. Young (D-DeARBorn Heights).

The thought behind it all was expressed at a Partnership for the Arts meeting at Ford Auditorium last week by former State Sen. Roger Craig.

He pleaded for people to contact their elected representatives on the issue and in one of his few serious moments he said: "The arts -- they are what make life worth living."

Maurie Walker writes

Why Police And Fire Depts?

A lone fireman mans a township fire station. In the station are two fire trucks and an emergency vehicle. He gets a call. A woman and two children are seriously injured in an automobile accident. Still alone, he rushes to the scene and when he arrives is faced with the decision of which person to tend to first.

In another incident, a lone fireman is summoned to a factory where a man has been injured. Before he can load the man onto the stretcher, he has to ask for assistance from a bystander.

A skeleton police force is faced with a disaster. A job which requires, perhaps 20 men, is handled by five or six, under the most adverse conditions.

To the average citizen this may sound far fetched. But these incidents are facts.

The lone fireman is not manning his station alone by choice. The inadequate police force is not understaffed for any valid reason.

The sad fact is that too many cities and townships have their "head in the sand" when it comes to supplying money for the all-essential police and fire departments.

IN MANY CASES, when a budget needs trimming, the first departments the governing fathers aim at are the police and fire.

With the expanding population and with it growing crime in the suburbs, the urgent need is for increased

manpower in both the fire and police departments.

In some instances, communities are buying new fire equipment. A good move in the right direction. But who is going to man these trucks?

Today's overtaxed fire and police departments are doing a valiant job with the meager staffs they have. But instead of increasing manpower, some communities refuse to add to the departments.

In some instances they are even considering cutting the manpower. Suggestions, even pleas by fire and police officials for additional men fall on deaf ears.

A look at the case files of the various police departments is almost unbelievable. Detective squads can't possibly trace every complaint. Patrol cars are overworked responding to accidents and family trouble.

Undermanned fire departments, many relying on volunteers, are handicapped since these volunteers are not always available in time of an emergency. Even those that are available must be contacted when needed, a time consuming procedure.

THE POLICE and firemen who stand guard over our communities find it difficult to understand the reasoning behind the unconcerned views of the men in power.

The men aren't bitter. They just wish that those who disregard the departments in the budget meeting could be with them on the firing line.

As one dedicated fireman put it: "I guess we are all human. Unless we are touched by an emergency, we don't realize the value of having enough trained men to handle the situation."

The cities and townships in this area are growing rapidly. More people, more industry are finding their way into this area. The chances of serious fires, greater crime waves continue to grow.

Instead of putting money into frills or cutting police and fire budgets, those in control of the various purse strings would do well to look at the status of their police and fire departments.

It would be far better for a hard-pressed community to trim expenses in other departments rather than these two vital segments.

W.W. Edgar writes

Maybury Project Needs Support

If you would like to see the 865 acres on which Maybury Sanitarium was located for years developed in a state park with year round activities, here's your chance to help make it possible.

The State Department of Natural Resources is now working on a plan to purchase the property from the City of Detroit and is applying for a federal grant and is applying for a Bureau of Outdoor Recreation to match state funds for the project. It's located west of Northville between Seven and Eight Mile.

This is where your help is needed.

To show the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation the need for a park, the DNR is seeking letters of endorsement from interested groups, public officials and individual citizens.

THESE ENDORSEMENTS are to be sent to Samuel A.

Milstein, Deputy Director of Recreation; State Department of Natural Resources; Stevens T. Mason Building, Lansing, Mich.

Under the plans for development now being studied, pending approval of the federal funding, the site will be what is termed a state-urban park. A wide range of activities is proposed to make it different in character from most state parks or recreation areas.

THE PROGRAM for recreation includes both indoor and outdoor activity on a year around basis and oriented to all age groups. Even the physically handicapped will have a special program.

The type of facilities being considered include a major complex capable of hosting large crowds for scheduled events. In this complex will be such things as athletic fields, court game areas, picnic areas,

camping facilities, organized group camp grounds, living farm, lakes and outdoor pools, a winter sports area and several nature trail systems.

The most important factor at the moment is urgency. The state is anxious to obtain the federal grant and acquire the property before it falls into the hands of private developers and is lost forever as a park site.

Mayor Roman Gribbs, of Detroit, has indicated that the sale of this city property must be completed by the close of the fiscal year in June in order that the City of Detroit budget can be balanced.

STATE REP. Marvin Stempien (D-Livonia) majority floor leader, in whose district the Maybury site lies, issued a plea for help during the past week.

So there is no time to waste. Your help is needed NOW.

Editorial & Opinion

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