

R.O. Park Fight Looms

Ray Stock

1969

Memorial Park in Royal Oak has been a hang-out for suburban youth for a long time. Freaks and even a few straight kids and neighborhood families visit the park frequently and it is seldom seen deserted. For the past two months the scene there has changed from placid, bored and stoned to something far more relevant—the control of the park has become a major issue.

Yipfugs, a suburban youth organization with a revolutionary perspective, has been working to build a real community in Memorial Park. They began to ask kids to come to the park on Friday nights, just to get together, have fun, talk, and get to know one another.

From there came the idea of free films to take the place of the usual Friday get-togethers, free films of political relevance to be shown at the park. To do this, they had to have a permit.

After first being refused a permit through the “proper channels,” personified by Parks and Recreation chief Lindell on the basis that there would be too many people and the police wouldn’t like it, they then took the issue before the Royal Oak City Commission.

A lot of kids showed up for the Commission meetings (they had to go back several times because the permits were issued on a “trial” basis). From there, the participation broadened from just Yipfugs to a lot of local freaks who identified with what was going on. At first the Commission was blatantly hostile to the kids and the whole idea.

They never would have gotten anywhere if it weren’t for the fact that the fifty to seventy-five kids who showed up scared the fuck out of them. For three weeks they came and haunted them, until they presented a permit for four consecutive Fridays.

Going to City Commission meeting not only gained the permits and hassled the porkchop City Fathers, but also served as a golden lesson in City government and the Wonders of Democracy for those yet uninitiated.

About three Fridays ago in the park, a Birmingham kid called a pig by his right name—pig—and was busted as a disorderly person. Bond was set at \$1000. A Collection was taken at the park that evening and he was bailed out the next day.

Alice Schoenhoeltz, who is a burly-faced woman in her late 40s or early 50s, looks like the kind of person who starts out fresh every morning with a bowl of wheaties and prune juice. She described the aforementioned incident as an example of “police brutality in reverse.”

Alice Schoenhoeltz is a member of the Royal Oak City Commission. She voted against the movie permits. She accused it of being a subversive plot by outside agitators. Right on, Alice!

Newsreel has donated a number of good political films to show at the park. The majority of those shown have been well received by the people there.

Come to see the films on Friday nights, starting at around 8 pm. And come to the park on Wednesday, around 6 pm for communal suppers. Please bring food if you can. Memorial Park is located at 13 Mile and Woodward Ave.

There maybe something real coming out of all this. The crux of the whole struggle is education—getting people hip to the Amerikan system—and maybe people will take what they learn in the park back to school with them. And tear up.

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