

Parents say 'too much, too soon'

By Steve Lehn

Those who criticize sex-education in schools have created a furor which has hit several school districts in Minnesota.

To better understand the issues involved, Blueprint interviewed people affiliated with anti-sex education organizations and other parents opposed to sex education in schools. Most of those interviewed asked that their names not be printed.

One organized group is P.O.S.E. (Parents Opposed to Sex Education in the Schools) whose president, Mrs. Zimmerman, is a registered nurse and mother of a grown family.

While some parents oppose the program on religious grounds, the majority of them oppose it because they feel younger children are being force-fed on facts which are making them either fear adulthood, or better equipped with knowledge to take "out behind the barn"

In many schools, parents feel that a sacred and delicate subject is being treated with coarseness and poor taste.

They resent their children being told, "Do not go home and tell your parents what you are seeing; they would not understand." "Who is exploiting and manipulating the generation gap, and to what ends?" asked a University professor with sons in Fairview and Ramsey.

This father added, "What most of us supported as good biology courses, we find to be something very different. Both proponents and opponents of sex education speak simply-mindedly as if we must be either for or against it.

"Before I can say I am for or against it, I must know what constitutes sex education. It has never been clearly defined. I am for some aspects taught in the schools, against other."

"Apart from the biological, there are social and personal dimensions of sex education," he went on. "If the social dimensions do not reflect the values of the society in question, sex education becomes a lever to destroy. The church and the home are social institutions which have a major stake in this and must have a part."

In the spring of 1969, one mother said, her 14 year-old girl in Hosterman Junior High in Crystal, Minn., was in a mixed class which was shown film slides of cartoon characters demonstrating how boys and girls masturbate. For this they had both a man and a woman teacher. Then the woman teacher discussed more in detail with the girls alone, describing how it could be done with doorknobs.

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Another said her boy in Twin Lake kindergarten refused to go back to school for a time in 1968. He cried a good deal before he explained, "Babies kill!"

She discovered he has seen the film, "The Magician," which dealt with childbirth and was far beyond his years.

"This is as dangerous as withholding truth later," said one father.

One parent quoted from Dr. Rhoda L. Lorand's book, "Love, Sex and the Teenager." Dr. Lorand has been a child analyst for over 25 years. She says: "Such materials is fine for individuals old enough to pursue nursing and medical studies, but it is inappropriate for little

children's minds. One with minimal understanding of children would recommend that sixth graders be preoccupied with misadventures and abortion, or even the details of normal childbirth. Or that fifth grade is the appropriate one in which to discuss the marriage act and childbirth...

"Sexual excitement, confusion, anxiety and fear of adulthood will inevitably result... We have learned that it is harmful to force sexual preoccupation on children of the elementary grades...

"These emotions, far from

promoting mental health, put children under a heavy burden... thereby creating an unhealthy split between sexuality and emotion."

As for the teacher's personal ideas, a seventh grade girl in White Bear Lake reported being told by her teacher in sex education class that if they found someone with whom they could have a personal, intimate relationship, to go ahead and have it if it could be meaningful. The teacher added that the only guilt would be in getting caught.

Parents who oppose sex education in the schools point out that the number of pregnancies among school girls is increasing. They say that tearing down moral guidelines is not a teacher's job.

A parent summed it up in the words of a newspaper editor: "Parents do not want their children to be the rope in a psychological tug-of-war that should have been settled by adults."

(Editor's Note: Next issue, Blueprint will report on proponents of sex-education in schools. Ramsey's sex-education program will also be examined.)



Harriet Jordan keeps in touch with students.

Mrs. Jordan quits school board

By Kathy Haggerty

Mrs. Harriet Jordan, who recently resigned from the District 623 school board, calls working in education the most exciting thing she has ever done.

After much thought, but with no misgivings, Mrs. Jordan submitted her resignation Sept. 11 in protest of the board's decision to increase their salary offer to teachers. Teachers had previously rejected an offer based on a report by an adjustment panel.

She felt that the adjustment panel's report provided an adequate increase in salaries. "And," she added, "I can think of no other profession where there is a guaranteed annual increase in pay.

"If I had it to do over," she added, "I'd do it again."

Mrs. Jordan felt that it was very unprofessional for the teachers to carry their dispute into the classrooms. But she says that students may have learned a little, mainly about mob control.

During the Ramsey sit-in, someone on stage had yelled, "We wanna stay, don't we?" Someone else had yelled, "We wanna go, don't we?" Both times the crowd yelled back, "Yea!"

Mrs. Jordan had served on the school board for seven and one-half years.

Although retired, she will always be interested in education, and pledges to do all she can for it. Not to be involved in it, she feels, "would be like not living."

Johnson attends education convention in Africa

By Andi Dewahl

Principal Curtis Johnson spent an "exciting 10 days" in Africa this summer. He was chosen as a delegate of the World Congress Teacher's Preparation to participate in an educational convention with delegates from 80 countries throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa.

They discussed problems of education, and how well developed countries might help underdeveloped countries in this field.

countries visited

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson traveled via New York, Copenhagen, Denmark and Italy on their way to Ohana and Acra in Africa. They landed in Abidjan on the Ivory Coast.

Once in Abidjan they went to the University of Abidjan, where they stayed during most of their visit.

Since many different languages were spoken, the convention delegates were equipped with earphones and translators. When a delegate got up to speak, translators would translate into different languages what was being said, and transmit it to the delegates by earphones.

Though the discussions were generally formal, a little informality was present since the audience and delegates could ask questions after the speaker had finished.

local customs

After leaving one of the conventions, Johnson was surprised to see squatters in a makeshift hut on the campus. They had been there about 6 months and would probably stay there indefinitely.

"The people of Africa have to work the land to live, and when it's used up, they move to a different place. These

people chose the campus," Johnson commented.

wheels shimmy

Johnson took an amusing ride in a taxi driven by a little Frenchman.

"I don't think it had ever been greased," Johnson stated. "He would get that car up to about 15 or 20 miles per hour and then the wheels would start to shimmy! So, the guy would stop, and start again, get it up to 15 or 20 miles per hour



Curtis Johnson

and stop again. Our whole ride was like that!"

The Johnsons didn't have time to tour any African villages, but they did visit an open air market where raw meat, fish and other miscellaneous items were sold. "You name it, and it could probably be found there," Johnson stated.

While waiting for the plane to take them home, the Johnsons heard a group of Africans dressed in black robes, standing around a white couple, singing a song lasting the 45 minutes or more.

Johnson decided that the white couple must have been missionaries about to return home. "It was touching to see those people singing their farewells to that couple, really touching," said Johnson.