

Movement Growing To Curb Comics, Blamed For Juvenile Delinquency

WASHINGTON — Charles A. Storke, co-editor of the Santa Barbara Calif. News-Press, sat down one evening recently to some odd reading—comic books he'd bought on the city's newsstands.

He had read of the Senate's investigation of juvenile delinquency and its hearings on comic books dealing with horror, crime and sex. He wanted to find out for himself what children were free to buy at 10 cents a copy.

Midnight came, and Storke was angry. He had read about wanton sex, how to murder and how to steal. Next day he went to see Fred J. Salter, who distributes more than half the 442 such magazines sold in the Santa Barbara area.

That night Salter also sat down to read.

"BAD DREAMS"

"What I found gave me bad dreams," he said. "How writers and publishers are insane enough to issue such things is more than I can understand."

Salter canceled 30 of the comics he was distributing and laid down a code for others banning such things as lewdness, ridicule of law

enforcement agencies, vulgarity and religious and racial prejudice.

Distributors are not always so responsive. In Santa Barbara and elsewhere campaigners against the inflammatory type of comic ran into buck-passing—"Policy is determined in New York," one dealer declared—and downright disinterest.

But the News-Press crusade won terrific response from parents and others, the paper's columns were full of letters from readers praising the idea and Storke concluded: "The only real solution lies in an informed and aroused public opinion."

ORDINANCE PASSED

In Fort Worth, Tex., the city council passed an ordinance this summer banning lewd comic books and those which tend to incite minors to disregard the law. Baton Rouge, La., Oklahoma City, Stockton, Calif., Grand Rapids, Mich., and other cities have written for information on the ordinance.

The council took action after a young Baptist ministerial student, the Rev. Albert S. Johnson, father of two children, appeared before a council meeting with a stack of

cheap, trashy comic books he had purchased at a newsstand near city hall.

He called the books "a first class lesson in crime for a dime."

With such interest, publishing house cash registers are telling an interesting story.

George T. Delacorte who, as publisher of Dell Comics, does not handle crime and horror plots, says his sales are going up.

"I think it proves that good stories sell the best," he says. "We publish only 10 per cent of all comic books, but we make more than 40 per cent of the sales."

The Dell line included animal stories and book versions of some newspaper comics.

WORLD-WIDE APPEAL

"Comics," says Delacorte, "are a natural pleasure for children. The appeal apparently is world-wide—we've just had an order from Indonesia. One of our subscribers is a middle-aged American admiral. Delacorte admits sales suffered in the campaign against horror and crime comics, which spread to include all comics.

"That seems to be changing," he says. "We think that since parents have been looking over comics available to youngsters, they're channeling their children's reading habits toward our kind of books."

At the other end of the comics book business was William Gaines, publisher of Entertaining Comics Group. Gaines did specialize in crime, horror, science and lampoon plots, but told a reporter:

"Our sales have dropped off a third since the campaign started. I'm discontinuing three of my horror books, and two suspense books."

But Gaines says he is puzzled over the howl:

"I don't think anyone was ever harmed by anything they read. Neuroses are caused by real emotional experiences. Anyone who has studied psychiatry knows horror stories provide a harmless outlet for the hates that are normal to children. They can hate a figure on paper."

Gaines, now 32, graduated from New York University's School of Education but never taught. Instead he took over his father's publishing concern.

STANDARDS OF TASTE

He once startled a Senate committee probing the influence of crime comics on juvenile delinquency with his standards of taste.

During hearings, Tennessee Democratic Sen. Estes Kefauver held up one of Gaines' comics. The cover showed a man with a knife in one hand and the head of a woman in the other.

"Is this in good taste?" asked the senator.

"Yes, for comic books," testified Gaines.

"What would make it in bad

taste?" asked Kefauver.

"If the head were held higher so you could see the blood dripping from the neck," Gaines replied.

In an interview later Gaines said he had failed to make himself clear. The drawing at first had shown the dripping blood, and he had ordered it changed.

"Besides," he said, "our books never use red for blood. We always make it black."

Most of Gaines' books include a lot of reading in each picture. He thinks children under 15 don't buy his publications for this reason.

He's currently trying out two new ideas: A comic called "Piracy," a collection of sea stories, and a flying saucer comic.

POLICING COMMITTEE

But despite cleanup moves by individual publishers, the industry as a whole is so alarmed at the turn in public sentiment it has set up the Comics Magazine Assn. of America for policing purposes.

The association hired New York City Magistrate Charles F. Murphy to act as "czar" of the industry and administer a code of ethics.

Murphy, 44, a vigorous campaigner against juvenile delinquency during nine years on the bench, pledged that horror books would be abolished from association members' lists immediately.

But he admits that in his tenure as a magistrate, he never had a case of juvenile delinquency that could be blamed on reading comic books.

Aside from the questions of taste, there is this basic issue behind the comics furor: Can a comic book turn a youngster to crime?

Many publishers agree with Gaines. The blame, they say, lies deeper—in the home and in the neighborhood.

But some psychiatrists and law enforcement officers emphatically blame the horror and crime comics and other cheap periodicals.

Acknowledging the majority of comics are harmless, they claim they can trace many instances of juvenile crime to trashy publications.

DUPONT BOOK REVEALS

America's Industrial System, If It Is Not Hampered, Can Provide Millions Of New Jobs By Year 1975

WILMINGTON, Del. — America's industrial system, if allowed to progress unhampered, can provide a quarter again as many jobs by 1975 as it does now. This was the conclusion reached in "The Story of Employment Opportunities," a new booklet published by the Du Pont Company today.

"It is a system," the booklet says, "that by 1975, assuming no catastrophe intervenes, can bring 23 million more industrial jobs, and a national total of some 80 million. These can be better jobs, with increased purchasing power, shorter working hours, and a higher living standard."

The 32-page illustrated booklet points out that "tomorrow's 'help-wanted' advertisement is being written by the research of today. . . . If research were ever stopped, we might see the end of a system which already has brought this nation to a point where 17 million are employed in manufacturing industries, and more than 60 million in the nation's civilian economy."

WORKER BENEFITS


"The cold statistics of a nation's economic progress," the booklet makes clear, "acquire meaning only when they are reflected in the life and work of people." The chief beneficiary of industrial progress is the worker. Fast climbing pay scales have pushed his purchasing power to five times what it was 100 years ago, twice what it was 25 years ago. Shorter hours and higher pay have sparked a boom in the recreation business to the tune of \$31 billion annually.

But continued progress, the booklet emphasizes, "is only possible, not inevitable; these new opportunities will not create themselves. They will come into being only if research is expanded to encompass the ever widening horizon of knowledge, only if industry pours many billions into research and new plants."

"The sums for expansion can come only if individuals are free to save, if corporations are free to earn a profit commensurate with the risks involved, and if a fair share of the earnings can be retained without penalty from taxes that are inequitable. These freedoms must be jealously guarded, for if they are not we may destroy an economy that has brought plenty to so many."

In addition to the climbing pay scales, the booklet points out, "a \$7 billion benefit package is tacked onto the paycheck of workers in the U. S." The Du Pont Company alone "spends \$12 million a year on its medical and benefits programs; just one facet of it—disability wages—meant the expenditure of \$3.2 million by the company last year, and \$35 million in the past 17 years. On a nationwide basis, 38 million people have some protection against off-job disability, and the benefits paid out in a typical year now total \$475 million."

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What Is A Safe Highway Speed?

RALEIGH — Major David T. Lambert, executive officer of the State Highway Patrol asked Tar Heel motorists this week, "What is a safe speed?"

"The average person expects the answer to be given as a certain number of miles per hour," Lambert said. "Actually, no definite speed can be labeled as 'safe.'"

"A safe speed can be determined only after consideration of four highly variable factors. These factors are weather, the condition of the road and traffic, the mechanical condition of the car, and the driver's own physical and mental condition."

Everyone realizes that rain reduces visibility, and wet roads make cars harder to control, Lambert said. But not every driver takes these factors into account when his foot is on the throttle.

Heavy motor or pedestrian traffic tends by its very nature to slow down drivers, yet those who haven't slowed down have been responsible for many fatal accidents, Lambert pointed out.

And too often the car with under par lights or brakes is driven as though it were in first class condition, he said.

"Probably the single factor least generally considered in determining safe speed is the driver's physical and mental condition," he declared. "The driver who is suffering from a bad headache or extreme fatigue cannot react as rapidly to unexpected highway hazards as can a healthy and well rested man."

Like the major said, the worried, nervous, emotionally upset driver should not travel at the same speed as when he is care-free. Part of this driver's attention is on the road, the rest may be on his troubles.

Posted speed limits are helpful in telling drivers the maximum speed a certain road can be traveled safely, but these posted limits are based on favorable conditions and cannot be relied upon when hazards are present, he explained.

"Even though the sign may say 35 miles per hour," he said, "that doesn't mean 35 always is a safe speed in that zone. Safe speed depends on actual conditions that exist at any given moment. This is the idea that the State Highway Patrol is constantly trying to put across in its continuing traffic safety program."

Late in November 1941, two officers and forty-seven enlisted Marines drawn from the Hawaiian area arrived at Wake Island under the command of Major Ealker Bayler to take over maintenance of air patrol and communications with Hawaii and the mainland.

Color Parade Continues In North Carolina

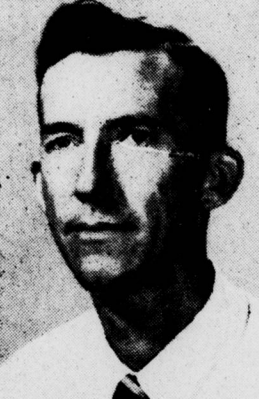
North Carolina's autumn foliage parade has marched up the higher mountains and is marching down again to spread out over the slopes below 3,000 feet and extend across the rolling Piedmont hills.

Just past the peak of color but still brilliant with the red and orange of maples, dogwood, black gum, sassafras and sumac is the Blue Ridge Parkway between Blowing Rock and the Virginia line. From the Rock itself and from Grandfather mountain, Parkway overlooks and the high Smokies, there is a splendid panorama of color on the lower peaks and slopes. In the Thermal Belt region around Tryon and Rutherfordton, there is still much summer greenery to contrast with autumn colors. The Newland section between Roan Mountain and the Blue Ridge Parkway was in full color this week, and U. S. Forest rangers reported 70 per cent coloring on Roan, 60 per cent on Flat Top and 55 per cent on the slopes of Mount Mitchell in U. S. 64, which traverses a 500-mile stretch of North Carolina from the mountains to the coast, there is beautiful coloring in the hardwood forests bordering Piedmont farms and the Uwharrie Mountain Range east of the Appalachians.

A Blue Ridge Parkway ranger, predicting a good color show through October 24 at altitudes up to 3,000 feet, has this advice for sightseers: on Sunny days, he says, the best time to really enjoy the color is either early in the morning or just before sundown. At these times, the color shades stand out more.

The USS Hugh Purvis honors Marine Sergeant Hugh Purvis, winner of the Medal of Honor for action in Korea that took place in 1951.

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