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APPLICATIONS CLOSE SEPT. 29/77



Wormwood back in business

by Sheena Masson and David Craig

Those in Halifax who consider the medium of film to be more than a source of entertainment had begun to take the Wormwood Theatre for granted.

Opening just over a year ago, Wormwood had been providing a banquet of classical and progressive films to devotees who had been subsisting on the occasional classics at the two film clubs run at Dal. Run with humour and elan by Gordon Parsons, Wormwood has kindled an excitement and awareness of the potential of this medium which has for too long been buried in the celluloid wasteland of the commercial cinemas in Halifax.

Wormwood was started as part of Parson's work with the Atlantic Film Co-Op, a government funded organization. Through his agency, films that were once obscure references in film magazines now could be seen and their contribution to the medium appreciated. Films such as *The Magic Lantern Cycle* by Kenneth Anger or the original version of *King Kong* are examples of Wormwood's diverse repertoire. Another outstanding contribution during its first year of operation has been the input given by visiting artists such as Robert Frank and William Wiseman, film-makers of international importance.

It was a matter of concern, then, that in July this main "alternative" theatre was forced to close in response to the threat of legal action presented by the Amusements Regulations Board (ARB), the provincial regulatory board which handles everything from pinball machines to movie theatres. Wormwood shows only 16mm films and the law in N.S. states that one must form a club with memberships to show 16mm films near commercial cinemas. This law protects commercial outlets and unprepared Haligonians from the entrepreneurs of vice, already anxious to set up 16mm porno theatres.

Up until May admission to Wormwood had been by monthly membership only, but the sale of these memberships did not cover the cost of renting the films. Gordon's only alternative was to charge single admissions if Wormwood was to continue. Attendance increased dramatically as the freedom to pick and choose attracted the less committed and the rental costs were now just covered.

Charging single admissions however was illegal and Wormwood was found out in June of this year when the Chair of the ARB, on phoning the theatre, received a taped message containing information about which films were being shown that particular weekend as well as the price of single admission at the door. Just as Wormwood's success was becoming firmly established, its doors were firmly closed, much to the dismay of those who had been regularly supporting it.

Two months later Wormwood has made a colourful comeback, once again due to Gordon's extensive efforts. His first move was to investigate changing the law (following MacNeil's example which abolished censorship in N.S.). Any legal action, however, would have been too expensive (\$30,000 and up). He then appealed to the Provincial Secretary and was referred to the Deputy Secretary. After a summer of phone calls and legal quagmire, there is still no solution that will allow Wormwood to operate in the clear and perhaps get legal financial support. The provincial government has finally decided to ignore the problem and allow Wormwood to continue as it is, neither a porno-theatre nor a profit making enterprise.

Postings for this month's movies, to be shown in the regular location at the N.F.B. theatre on Barrington Street, are once again a welcome sight around the city and they are, almost appropriately, a bright pink.

Cryptoquote

Here's how to do it:

OXRUT OILZY
is
HENRY HICKS

One letter simply stands for another. In the sample O is used for the two H's, X for the E, Z for the K, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

Readers are encouraged to submit quotes.

This week:

XAL WJZ AP ROMJT CWNZ. XAL DPAD OZ BMEE OMR W
OMFO VEG. ROZ KLZNRMAP MN BOZROZJ RA JLP.

—TAP HSPWEEY

Last week's answer:

You're never alone with schizophrenia.
--Graffiti