

Music Banned from Roundhouse

By Michael Makuch

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I read in the February edition of the Tippecanews newsletter, which is put out by the city, a disappointing bit of news regarding the Roundhouse in Tipp City Park. Aside from raising the deposit from \$30 to \$75, which in and of itself, is not terribly expensive, the Parks Advisory Board has seen fit to ban all sound amplifiers and concerts from taking place in the Roundhouse. What does this mean? It means no more rock music in Tipp City. It also means that teens, as well as adults, have one less interesting thing to do in Tipp City.

I have attended concerts at the Roundhouse and have always found them to be fun and non-threatening experiences, which brings me to my question; why were concerts banned from the Roundhouse? I contacted Tipp City's City Manager, David Collinsworth, to find out. I discovered that the Parks Advisory Board and Maintenance staff, which governs the Roundhouse, gave several reasons for banning concerts at the facility. They are as follows: First, the Board were concerned that the Roundhouse was being used in a way that, they felt, was incompatible with its traditional use. (Define traditional use: Tennis inside the Roundhouse, anyone?) Second, amplified sound conflicted with athletic events at the stadium. Third, there have been reports of occasional alcohol use. (By minors or adults? Both? Only when concerts take place?) Fourth, the Roundhouse and park property has been damaged after some concerts, which is one reason the security deposit was raised.

First, the Board were concerned that the Roundhouse was being used in a way that, they felt, was incompatible with its traditional use. My question to this first reason given by the Board is: What is untraditional about people getting together in a park to listen to music? My suspicion is that someone like, easy listening star, James Taylor would be allowed to plug in because his music wouldn't be considered threatening. Is it that hard rock or punk music is considered threatening and therefore is incompatible with the Roundhouse's perceived traditional use? Let's look at this. Hard rock has been around for 40 years and punk rock has been around for over 30 years now. What is threatening about music that can be considered "classic" and is technically "vintage" in style in this year of our Lord 2007? I realize that personal taste is probably at the root of this but, come on, live and let live. Just because you don't like a particular form of music doesn't mean it's bad. Personally, I retch when I hear too much Bluegrass music, which in my opinion is overly abundant in Tipp City, but I wouldn't try and ban it from being played just because I don't care for it. How selfish would that be? With respect to all forms of music, consider this: They were all considered untraditional when they were new.

The second reason given by the Board was that, amplified sound conflicted with athletic events at the stadium. This is curious to me, as the Board are responsible for scheduling events at the Roundhouse. Why would the Board schedule a concert, or any event for that matter, during athletic events which are sure to draw a lot of people to the park? I would think the Board doesn't have a foot to stand on in this argument. I would also think this would be a fairly easy problem to solve: Don't schedule concerts during athletic events. There are plenty of other times in a week that athletic events don't take

place. And at these times there usually aren't more than 20 people in the park that I've ever seen.

Third in the reasons given by the Board is there have been reports of occasional alcohol use. I checked with Chief Davidson of the Tipp City Police Department on this claim. Since 2004, there have been three, let me say that again: three, police calls for underage consumption at the park. Specifically, one call has been made for each year starting with 2004. No calls have been made for 2007. Does underage consumption at the park qualify as a problem when only one call is made per year? That seems like a pretty good record to me. Furthermore, and ironically I might add, Chief Davidson explained that the calls regarding the consumption of alcohol **are normally related to sporting events**. This says to me: People are drinking alcohol at sports events and not at concerts performed at the Roundhouse. Should the Board ban sports events because of three reports of alcohol consumption in the last three-plus years? Using the Board's reasoning, yes, it should be banned as that would be consistent with their reasoning for banning concerts at the Roundhouse. Underage consumption shouldn't be used by the Board to buttress its justification of banning concerts at the Roundhouse when there is no evidence of such activity.

Finally, the fourth reason given by the Board for banning concerts at the Roundhouse is that park property has been damaged after some concerts. According to Tipp City Police records, there have been seven reports of criminal vandalism and two reports of breaking and entering at the park in the last three years. The information I was provided on this, does not distinguish where these criminal acts occurred or what time these criminal acts took place. However, I will accept the Board's claim that the Roundhouse has been damaged and/or vandalized which is the main reason the deposit was increased. That being said, how much damage was done if the deposit is only \$75? It is strange that the deposit would be raised, in that, if damage was done during concerts and concerts are now banned, why should the deposit be raised? If there are no concerts, this should no longer be a problem. What this says to me is that damage was done at times when there were no concerts, which would justify raising the deposit, since these other, unspecified events, would still be taking place.

I feel the reasons given by the Board are weak and unfounded. I don't mean to criticize the Board, but I wonder if a little personal bias crept into the mix when deciding to ban concerts at the Roundhouse as the reasons given by the Board are, more or less, unsupportable. I hope the Board will consider removing this ban as it excludes a large number of people from making use of the Roundhouse. The Roundhouse should be available to everyone and not just a SELECT FEW.