

COMMUNITY

Film showing protested at area college

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Capital Times Staff

As sixty demonstrators gathered to protest Harrisburg Area Community College's showing of the film *The Last Temptation of Christ*, strong autumn winds blew around the auditorium like the controversy that has surrounded the film since its release in 1988.

The conservative Christian protesters, who came to voice their opinions of the film's portrayal of Jesus, handed out religious pamphlets, and formed a large circle in front of the auditorium, in which they quietly sung hymns and prayed.

"We believe the film to be slanderous and blasphemous of the Son of God," said George Boutieller Sr., pastor of Brookfield Bible Church in Harrisburg. "The filmmaker doesn't know the gospel."

The Christ of the film, he said, "was confused, immoral, angry and not sure who he was."

Boutieller and others admitted they had not seen the film.

"I've never seen the movie," said

Bud Smitley, the State Director of the Fellowship of Christian Atheletes, "but I don't have to get bit by a rattlesnake to know its poisonous."

Before the group formed a circle, one unidentified protester, who refused to be interviewed, started shouting at people going into the theater.

A lone counterprotester who carried a sign that read "He who is without sin . . . call me sinner," stood alongside the protest group.

"I didn't want to be here," said Dan Shutters, Pastor of St. Christopher Lutheran Church, "but when I saw in the paper that someone said its blasphemous, I decided to come."

"I protest someone else defining what is sin for me, and claiming that they only speak for God," he said. "They should be pointing to an alternative rather than saying you oughtn't do this or that."

The protesters, however, denied they were trying to tell people what to do.

"We don't have a right to keep people from seeing the film," said Smitley, "but we do have a right to tell

the truth."

Those interviewed from among the 420 people who filled the auditorium to its legal capacity also disagreed with the protesters.

"It didn't change my beliefs," said Joseph Bryner, a student at Penn State Harrisburg. "The driving motivation for me to see the film was to see what the controversy was about."

"I felt the movie portrayed a human Christ; almost a frightening Christ, that the average Christian isn't aware of--he didn't want to die," Bryner said. "I enjoyed the movie."

A pastor saw the film as a "provocative interpretation of the Jesus story."

"I don't think its offensive," said George Yoder, Pastor of First Lutheran Church in Carlisle. "The more I think about it, the more positive I feel."

"Some elements of the tradition were authentic and some were not authentic," he said. "It was a typical movie presentation of Jesus."

Campus security reported that no major incidents occurred, and that the

protesters were "orderly and well-behaved."

"We prepared for the worst, and got the best," said John Fritz of Physical Plant Services at HACC.

"It served its purpose," he said. "It established the Democratic right to discuss these matters--we had the movie, we had protests, we had people come to see the movie and we had counterprotest."

The protest movement got underway through the influence of various evangelical leaders.

According to Boutieller, an unnamed representative from the National Association of Evangelicals was hired to promote the movie within the evangelical community.

"He saw the film and was disgusted," Boutieller said.

Psychologist and radio personality Dr. James Dobson got involved in the movement when he sent newsletters to his listeners bearing the headline "Hollywood's War on Christianity," urging people to protest the showing of the film.

Odds are, students know little about college's neighbor *Odd Fellows' home has been around since 1875*

Mary Lee Schnable
Capital Times Staff

Just a stone's throw from Penn State Harrisburg, a stately Georgian mansion rises from a broad expanse of lush green lawn dotted with imposing evergreen and oak trees, with its white columns and brass cupola that invite passers-by to ponder its contents. Could it be the campus, or is it perhaps a relocated mansion from a southern plantation?

"Students wander in thinking it's the college," said Pat Peavy, Activity/Volunteer coordinator at the Odd Fellows Home located on Route 230 just outside of Middletown.

The home, established in 1875 by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, has been undergoing major renovations for the past several years, and is even more grand looking on the inside than it is on the outside.

The renovations have changed small, dingy rooms with cracked plaster and single windows into personal care suites with brightly flowered drapes, carpeted floors, and a modern call system that allows residents to contact the nursing stations in the event of an emergency.

Elevators provide easy movement between floors, and the wide, carpeted hallways lined on both sides with sturdy wood and brass handrails and brass candle-like light fixtures.

In the carpeted chapel, Roman arched windows line the sidewalls, and red and blue hues of sunlight filter in through a large stained-glass window behind the altar. Antique wooden chalices and hand made symbols of the Order of the Odd Fellows are enclosed in glass cases along the back wall.

They are fortunate, Peavy said, to have such a beautiful chapel on the premises. Not all nursing homes do.

A look into the personal care dining



The Odd Fellows Home on Route 230.

photo by Mary Lee Schnable

room reveals a large stone fireplace, more Roman arched windows along the sides, and wood and brass chandeliers hanging from the high ceiling. The tables set with matching cloths and napkins folded to fit in the coffee cups await the diners, much as they would in many fine restaurants.

A small group of residents gather in the lobby near the dining room. Women wear bright dresses, and most men wear suits and ties. The terrazzo floor, the brass handrails on the marble steps, and the brass chandelier would blend as well in the lobby of a first-class hotel as they do here.

"It's almost lunchtime!" Peavy said as he greets the residents with a smile and often reaches out to touch a hand or shoulder. Diners here are required to be dressed. No nightgowns or bedclothes, Peavy said -- a reminder that this room is indeed part of a nursing home facility.

Peavy's office is a small glasse-in cubicle between an activity room and an area being used for physical therapy. A wheelchair bound man sitting quietly in the activity room, with his helmeted head moving only occasionally, and a woman strapped into an upright therapy apparatus, moaning softly, serve as a

reminder that some of the residents will not be able to enjoy the beautiful garden setting or the carefully laid table in the dining room.

The corridors in this area, too, are wide and brightly lit. They sparkle with cleanliness, but are lined with people in wheelchairs, often not speaking coherently, lap pads providing warmth for aged legs.

The home buzzes with life and activity for nearly 140 residents; some bedridden and requiring around-the-clock skilled nursing care, and others needing only the occasional assistance that can be provided by a sheltered environment.

One of the more fortunate residents is Clarence Brown, formerly of Myerstown, who moved to the personal care section with his wife on Aug. 3.

"I had a stroke on March 29," Brown said. "I wanted to make the decision when I could do it myself, rather than wait until it became a burden for someone else."

Brown, at first partially paralyzed by the stroke, now gets around with just a cane, and often walks down to the benches near the road to enjoy the outdoors.

Perched atop Brown's head is a white

cap bearing the emblem of the Odd Fellows, three overlapping rings. The symbol, with the letters "F", "L" and "T" in the rings, also adorns the faded sign along Route 230, and the cupola centered on the roof of the brick building.

The letters stand for friendship, love and truth, Odd Fellows' Grand Secretary Willis Robinson said.

Robinson lives and works in a smaller building just west of the home that serves as the headquarters for the organization's Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania.

At one time, the organization, following its commitment to relieve the distressed and educate orphans, had eight old-age homes and four orphan homes in Pennsylvania.

Now, only two old-age homes are left, Robinson said. He added that membership in the Order has gone from a high of 22,000 in 1922 to about 9,000 today.

The name Odd Fellows stems from the organization's origin in 18th century England, when men who formed a mutual aid fraternity to work among the distressed and underprivileged were labeled as "old fellows."

According to administrator David Mills, the home in Middletown is now run by a non-profit charitable corporation established under Pennsylvania law. The home retains the Old Fellows' name, but admissions now are on a first come, first served basis.

Old Fellows are not guaranteed admission to the home, Mills said, which is not always understood by members of the Order.

He said funds for the extensive renovations that have taken place have been generated over the last seven years,

more Odd Fellows on 15