

National commission studies pornography's effects

By WENDY JOHNSON
Staff Writer

AT THE VERBAL REQUEST OF President Reagan, Attorney General Edwin Meese appointed an 11-member commission on pornography in May 1985. The commission's task — to study the effects of pornography on human behavior.

"The president said he had heard from many segments of the country on this issue and thought it was something that needed to be looked into," says Dee Kuhn, spokeswoman for the commission.

Pornography was last studied by a national commission in 1970. The earlier commission found no correlation between pornography and crime. The present commission, however, has made a "tentative proposed finding" that pornography has become more graphic, more vi-

olent, more sexually explicit and more accessible since it was last studied.

But Philip Nobile, editorial director of Penthouse's Forum magazine told the Houston Chronicle that he fears the commission has already made up its mind to recommend "repressive, anti-constitutional legislation" to combat pornography.

Kuhn, however, says the panel is merely on a fact-finding mission.

"The Attorney General told them (they) must stay within the First Amendment," she says.

"(Members of the panel include) a professor, social scientists, a reverend, a woman from Woman's Day magazine, and a lawyer — all have touched the field," Kuhn says. "That was the main criterion, that they already be involved in some way." Henry Hudson, a prosecutor from Arlington County, Va., is the chairman of the panel.

Panel members make themselves available one week per month to

travel to various cities to hear testimony. Panelists also have regular full-time jobs.

The commission must hear all testimony before reporting its findings to the Attorney General in June 1986. The Attorney General will evaluate the findings and report to the president if any action is to be taken.

The commission will hear testimony in six cities around the country from people on both sides of the issues. The cities were chosen to give a cross section of the country.

EACH OF THE SIX HEARINGS will be on a different aspect of pornography. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the commission was in Los Angeles to hear testimony on the production and distribution of pornography. Members heard from talent scouts and agencies on such subjects as how pornography is performed and how the performers are paid.

In September, the commission

was in Houston studying the social issues involved in pornography, specifically the relationship between the use of pornography and anti-social behavior such as rape. The commission listened to testimony from 24 social scientists, police officers and alleged victims of pornography. Only two of those testifying were from Houston.

The next hearing will be in Miami, where child pornography will be studied. The final hearing will be in New York on Jan. 21 and 22, and the subject will be the alleged involvement of organized crime in pornography.

The commission has no subpoena power, and a very small budget, so it must rely on volunteers to testify or submit written testimony.

Written opinions and information on the committee's subject may be sent to The Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, 320 First St. SW, Suite 1018, Washington, D.C. 20530 □

Woman dyes dogs' hair to make clothes

By VIRGIL SWING
Associated Press

SAGINAW, Minn. — While most dog owners toss the loose hair in the garbage without a second thought after grooming their pets, Peggy Swan is recycling that hair into clothing for family and friends.

The Saginaw woman spins yarn from the dog hair, dyes it with Kool-Aid and creates sweaters, hats and vests that are soft to the touch, comfortable to wear and appealing to the eye.

"I kind of like the grape and lemonade myself," she says.

Making clothing from animal hair isn't unheard of — after all, that's what wool, angora and mohair are.

But, Swan says, "You don't want to be ordinary. I like to do different things."

Swan says she read about the techniques of spinning dog hair into yarn and dyeing it in magazines. The practice of spinning dog hair into yarn is quite popular in some areas, she says. "In Alaska, you have to buy it (dog hair)," she adds.

The Swan family once raised Samoyeds, the large, white, long-haired dogs popular in Alaska and other northern climates. It was during that time she learned about spinning dog hair into yarn in a magazine for Samoyed owners.

Coincidentally, this came not long after Swan had learned to use a spinning wheel and not long before she read about the process of dyeing the yarn. So it's logical that her mind

brought a spinning wheel, dog hair and Kool-Aid together into an unusual knitting art.

Here's how it works:

Swan gets dog hair from dog-owning friends, relatives and others aware of her hobby. She's tried Samoyed, malemute, Newfoundland, elkhound, Shetland sheepdog, husky and poodle hair, but likes Samoyed best.

The hair is easily collected by brushing shedding hair off the dogs, she says.

Swan used to wash and comb, or card, the hair herself but now sends it to a St. Peter, Minn. firm specializing in the process.

Then she turns the hair into yarn on her spinning wheel. Swan says spinning dog hair is not much different from spinning other material.

Some of her garments are pure dog hair, but she usually mixes it with half wool because the blend is easier to spin and to extend her supply of dog hair.

The yarn can be dyed with sugar-free Kool-Aid (she's tried lemon-lime, lemonade, grape, black cherry and raspberry), or with coffee, tea and onionskins, Swan says.

The yarn knitted into garments usually is four-ply, meaning four strands of yarn from the wheel are intertwined by running the wheel backward. The techniques for knitting dog hair yarn are no different from those for other yarns, she says.

When the garments are done, Swan doesn't try to sell them. "You couldn't get enough to pay for your time," she says. "So they end up as presents." □

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