

Local activists try to rid area of porn

By GIGI SHAMSY
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PATTY JONES HASN'T SET FOOT IN A 7-Eleven store in more than a year "... except to check on pornography."

She and her husband, along with about 200 people, are on a rampage against pornography in Bryan-College Station. They've been checking on pornography in 7-Elevens and stores all over the Brazos Valley.

For the last four Friday evenings, Jones and other members of the Citizens for Decency have been demonstrating in front of the Adult Video Store on Texas Avenue. Members of the group are doing everything they can to remove pornographic magazines from shelves of convenience stores.

"They (stores) say they're family stores, which is great, but they are infesting our community with this material," Jones says. "We're trying to get people in Bryan-College Station to tell these store owners that they disagree with what's in these magazines. I mean, what was Playboy 25 years ago is Cosmopolitan today.

"We want to get pornography out of our city, away from our families and away from our children," Jones says. "We've been making our rounds to convenience stores in Bryan and College Station, asking store managers to not display magazines like Playboy and Hustler. It's really shocking to see what's in them. We want the public to know that people are enacting what they read in these magazines and it is hitting home daily."

Jones says the group also is trying to combat public apathy toward pornographic publications.

"We just want people to know that pornography is a problem here," she says.

Pornography is hitting close to home. In July, a 72-year-old Navasota man was charged with involving his nine-year-old son in pornographic films.

Latham Boone, assistant district attorney of Grimes, Leon and Anderson counties says a representative from the Department of Human Resources was sent to John Foty's home in Navasota after receiving reports from neighbors that his son Joey was unsupervised.

"People became suspicious because the boy was left by himself much of the time," Boone says. "When the representative from the Department of Human Resources went to investigate, the boy showed her a collection of about 400 reels of pornographic movies and then said, 'If you push this button on this wall, I'll show you some good stuff.'"

Boone says the button opened the door to a

secret room where Foty filmed home videos of his son and his friends who participated in "love scenes."

Foty also may have been involved in the distribution of pornographic films to Tennessee and Florida, Boone says.

Jones, of College Station, says the Citizens for Decency are committed to rid the community of this type of activity which results from public access to pornographic material.

"When people's eyes are open to the dangers of pornography," Jones says, "that's when they'll be aware. Studies have shown that rapes and child molesting really do result from pornography in magazines or obscenity in pornographic videos."

She adamantly insists that such magazines as Playboy, Penthouse and Hustler can induce criminal behavior (i.e. rape, child pornography, incest) in readers. She contends people are growing accustomed to shocking pictorials seen in these publications and in X-rated videos.

"We're going to keep on demonstrating at the Adult Video store until they stop showing pornographic films," Jones says. "The first couple of times we were out there, cars started

"We want to get pornography out of our city, away from our families and away from our children." — Patty Jones, with the Citizens for Decency

disappearing from the lot in front of the store. So I think what we're doing is effective.

"The other week, we even demonstrated despite the sprinkler system that was turned on while we were out there."

SHE SAYS IT'S HARD TO CLASSIFY something as pornography without being subjective. Each community must decide on its own if a publication is obscene, Jones says. Section 43.21 of the Texas Penal Code defines obscenity as:

"Material or performance which depicts or describes patently offensive representations, normal or perverted, including sexual intercourse, sodomy and bestiality; or patently offensive representations of masturbation, excretion, sadism, masochism or lewd exhibition of human genitals and taken as a whole, the work lacks serious literary, artistic, political, and scientific value."

Mark Weaver, director for the 16-month-old Austin-based group, Citizens Against Pornography, says a lot of controversy surrounds the classification of pornographic materials.

"Pornography is a crime in the state of Texas," Weaver says. "Constitutional laws clarify obscenity, but pornography is still left to individual interpretation.

"We've given about 85 workshops in Texas about pornography. We show a video presentation featuring actor Ephraim Zimbalist Jr., who's a real ally in the fight against pornography. At our workshops, we also have something which is really controversial. We have a covered table displaying all types of pornographic magazines and objects to show

them examples of what's available."

THE CITIZENS AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY has already made a \$2.5 million impact on pornographic materials in Texas. Weaver says they've removed porn from 167 stores — "convenience stores, gas stations, motel lobbies and bus terminals."

Weaver says he began his fight against pornography when he walked in a convenience store one day and just said "enough."

"I mean I was just fed up with seeing intercourse and lesbianism being shown on the cover of magazines," Weaver says. "For instance, there's a magazine called 'Family Letters' which is devoted to incest. In one issue, they had a picture of a woman looking at herself in a mirror and, under this picture, were the words 'The family that plays together stays together.'"

He also told of a popular porn brochure called "How to have sex with kids," written by an Austin man.

Weaver and members of the Citizens Against Pornography combat porn in print and in videos by setting up appointments with "policy makers" in convenience stores and establishments which offer pornographic materials. They then explain the destructive nature of pornography.

"Some of these store managers may have in mind the '60s idea of Playboy magazine: just a slightly erotic picture of a woman," he says. "It's much worse than that and it really does influence behavior."

He cited the case of an Austin businessman, Gary Wayne Polson, who forced a woman at knife point to pose like models he'd seen in pornographic magazines and videos.

"Pornography provides a blueprint for rape," Weaver says. "It shows men as aggressors and women as pieces of meat. For example, the cartoon of 'Chester the Molester' in Hustler centers on the monthly activities of a child molester who spies on girls in locker rooms. Cartoons are extremely effective and adults are being desensitized by cartoons like this. We're overlooking them because we're turning it into humor.

"It's not humorous and it has nothing to do with sex. It's a crime. Pornography is destroying the mental health of our society." □

A rose is a rose ...

People love to label sexually explicit materials in their own little ways. This is the way Webster's New World Dictionary defines some of those names.

erotica — material of or arousing sexual feelings or desires; having to do with sexual love; amatory.

obscenity — the state or quality of being offensive to one's feelings, or to prevailing notions, of modesty or decency; lewd.

pornography — writings, pictures, etc. intended primarily to arouse sexual desire.

smut — pornographic or indecent talk or writing.