

anti-pornography action group

SEPTEMBER 1985

Hello! This is a one-off newsletter to let you know how the group is going, what our activities have been, what our current concerns are, etc.

MEETINGS

The group has met four times since it was formed in May. We are currently meeting at 7.30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of each month, at 65 Jellicoe St, Wanganui East. Anyone who is interested is welcome to attend.

ACTIVITIES

The group's actions have included

- writing a letter of protest to the promoter of the "Top Cats" show
- handing out leaflets outside Dylan's on the second and final night of "Top Cats" in Wanganui. This was very successful, getting a favourable response from many people entering and leaving the Riverside Complex
- writing a submission on the Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on the System of Dealing with Videotapes which may be Indecent (available from Margaret Shields, Minister of Customs, free). The submission countered many of the most pernicious themes of the report, arguing that consumption of pornography is a public concern and not simply a private matter; that the individual's freedom to use pornography in his own home must be weighed against the freedom of women to live without physical and psychological abuse, or fear of such abuse, which pornography condones and promotes; and that there is growing and justified concern about pornography in the community. The submission also commented on the definition of "indecent" and the possible composition of a body to monitor videos. The submission was sent to Ms Shields, with a copy to Ann Hercus as Minister of Women's Affairs
- commenting in support of the stickering of People posters, in the Wanganui Herald. These posters are soft-porn and of particular concern because they bring pornography literally onto the streets, and are an insidious means of desensitizing people who are apathetic about pornography
- writing a letter to the editor, published in the Herald, in protest at the "Confessions of an All Black" promotion.

The group has had fairly good coverage in the local newspapers and has been able to establish something of a public profile.

THE HOSPITAL SHOP

A number of the group's members are concerned about the display of pornographic magazines in the Hospital Shop Dairy. The magazines are ranged along a shelf in front of the counter, at such a height that even very young children are able to see them and in such a position that it is impossible to avoid them as you pay for your goods.

The legal requirements for displaying pornographic material have been investigated and it appears that the shop is not breaking any laws with its display. The only way we can get it changed is by convincing the people working in the shop that it is offensive to a significant number of people who go into the place.

Individual people have been protesting to the shop's staff and management for some time by speaking to them and by turning the magazines face down, but they have so far been dismissed as cranks.

You are urged to

- write a letter to the newspapers stating your opposition to the display of pornography, particularly in such a prominent place (eg because you object to being confronted with these images as you go about your daily business; because you are concerned that young children who go into the shop are going to pick up the harmful myths about women and their sexuality which are portrayed in and on the magazines; because you object to pornography, which exploits and denigrates women; etc.)
- visit the hospital shop and
 - tell its staff that you refuse to buy their goods because of their promotion of pornography ; or
 - turn the magazines face down ; or
 - buy something like a milkshake and accidentally spill it over some of the magazines.

If you would prefer to have support from someone when taking one of these actions (eg by writing a joint letter or making a joint visit), call someone you know or the next person on the telephone tree (see below) or Kerry on 38895.

It takes little time and effort to carry out one of these suggestions, and they will only be effective if they are done en masse. So please do something - nothing will change if you don't.

STICKERS & BADGES

Stickers bearing the message "STOP This is offensive, insulting and degrading to women" are available from Kerry for 35 cents each. If there is sufficient demand we will look at producing our own stickers. Stickers can be put on advertising posters or on shop windows with offensive material on display - if you feel uncomfortable about using them, wait until after hours or after dark to put them up.

A variety of badges (eg women for peace, anti-pornography) are available from Cathy - phone 36662 after business hours.

READING MATERIAL

Laura Lederer's "Take Back the Night" is available at the public library, and is highly recommended. It contains articles by a number of people on the issue of pornography and is very readable.

If you have not seen some of the material produced by the group (letters, leaflets, submissions etc - see Activities above) please call Kerry.

TELEPHONE TREE

A telephone tree was established at the first meeting but has not been working very efficiently. A revised tree is set out below. When you receive a call, or when you want to initiate some action or alert the group to something yourself, simply call the next person on the list and pass the message on. If you can't get through to the next person, ring the person after her on the list so that the chain isn't broken - then you can get back to your first contact at your leisure.

<u>Clare Campbell</u>	<u>32-492</u>
<u>Valerie Caldwell</u>	<u>39-548</u>
<u>Marge O'Keefe</u>	<u>36-984</u>
<u>Bev Anderson</u>	<u>32-355</u>
<u>Marilyn Payne</u>	<u>55-738</u>
<u>Hilary Wooding</u>	<u>55-275</u>
<u>Christine Roberts</u>	<u>50-997 (work)</u>
<u>Dianne Lamont</u>	<u>55-069</u>
<u>Lyn Haywood</u>	<u>55-960</u>
<u>Sandra Ward</u>	<u>52-650</u>
<u>Sue Wait</u>	<u>55-816</u>
<u>Barbara Stewart</u>	<u>51-487</u>
<u>Sandra Ward</u>	<u>55-479</u>

<u>Jenny Saywood</u>	<u>38-931</u>
<u>Cathy Flynn</u>	<u>36-662</u>
<u>Kerry Hines</u>	<u>38-895</u>
<u>Joanne Atwell</u>	<u>56-416</u>

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held at 7.30 on Wednesday 18 September. Items for discussion will include opportunities for protest about grill advertisements (eg for People) on the footpaths outside shops, progress on the Hospital Shop, and a survey of video shops.

Hope to see you then.

Kerry