

'Soft porn' magazines target of picketing

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"I don't know where they would get that because we don't release that kind of information," he said. The sale of periodicals does not contribute that greatly to the company's overall profits, he added.

Prior to the planned picket, Stewart talked with the local 7-Eleven manager, who refused to remove the adult magazines.

As he recounted, "He was very nice. He said, 'I wish you wouldn't (picket).' The federation encouraged us to talk to managers first to see if they would remove the magazines."

Despite the federation's annual pickets of 7-Eleven stores, Reed said the organization's opposition has not hurt business.

"We don't market or publicize the magazines," he said.

In fact, this year's national picket targeted only "an insignificant number of stores" compared to previous years. Several years ago, he said, the federation picketed 4 percent of the corporation's stores, Reed said.

ALTHOUGH STEWART says 7-Eleven is targeted for an annual picket because of "federal information about the chain's big business in adult magazines, she is also contacting managers of other convenience stores, drugstores and any other business that sells such publications.

"I have started speaking to managers. I share the federation's viewpoint.

These are family stores and markets. If they believe in the family, they shouldn't sell the magazines. I believe pornography is anti-family," Stewart said.

Although he acknowledged it might seem as though the federation is "picking" on 7-Eleven stores as opposed to others that also sell the magazines, Reed acknowledged that the chain of convenience stores is the largest in the country.

"We are one of the largest chain stores in the country. Yet, we do have one of the more restrictive policies in the country," Reed said.

AT LEAST with the corporate-owned 7-Eleven stores around the country, the policy regarding adult magazines requires store managers to keep the publications behind the main cashier counter. The publications must also be covered from public view, Reed said.

"We think this is equitable. We retail them in what we believe is a responsible fashion," Reed said, adding that the magazines are available for those who want to buy them without offending those who are not interested.

Despite the corporate policy, however, the adult magazine restrictions can-

not be enforced in some of the franchise stores. The managers/owners of these stores can follow corporate policy or develop their own, Reed said.

According to federation officials' contacts with the Southland Corp., Stewart said, "They (corporate officials) felt it was up to the discretion of the buyer what they bought. I think it really gets down to the dollar or quality of life."

Federation officials are asking people to contact the Southland Corp. to "express your displeasure" with the sale of adult magazines. Officials are also asking 7-Eleven customers to stop doing business with the store until the sale of the magazines is stopped, Stewart said.

ALTHOUGH STEWART said she is aware that law prohibits the sale of adult magazines to those younger than 18, she questions whether all stores follow the restriction.

"7-Eleven says they care people. That's a step in the right direction," she said.

But ideally, Stewart would like to see a total halt in the sale of such magazines.

"I really believe we are becoming desensitized. What was soft pornography has become accepted," she said. Increased nudity, profanity and violence appears to be more acceptable today, she added.

Armed with facts she has gathered through various publications, such as the federation's journal, Stewart maintains that 70 percent of all pornography material is eventually read by children.

"You can't protect your kids as long as it's out there. You can't police it."

Stewart acknowledges a difference between what she calls soft pornography — Playboy, Penthouse and Playgirl magazines — and hard pornography — the type of books and films found in most adult book stores. But the sale of soft pornography concerns her as much as hard pornography.

"A lot of people don't even feel Playboy and Penthouse are offensive. They (the magazine's publishers) are illustrating that it is more and more acceptable," she said.

STEWART MAINTAINS that in just the last 10 years, the tone of Playboy magazine has changed from basic nude

photographs to detailed graphic photographs.

"There has been an increased focus on pornography. I've read them (magazines). And I have been getting concerned."

What really concerns Stewart is the effect pornography has on the reader and consequently the rest of society. For example, she maintained, pornography contributes to child abuse and child prostitution. "People who victimize kids usually feed on pornography."

Referring to information provided

by a Utah psychologist, Stewart believes pornography generally leads to people acting out what they see in the magazines.

In a four-step process leading to acting out what is seen in pornography, the reader travels through a process where the need to see "meaner, rougher sexual material" is followed by acceptance of what was at first shocking and disgusting, Stewart said.

"Pornography and its components are so pervasive. Pornography is polluting our environment," she said.

Halsted flooded, but passable

Halsted Road, between 13 and 14 Mile roads, flooded but was passable Monday afternoon.

"Water crested about 4 or 5 o'clock," said Dan Rooney, Farmington Hills Division of Public Works superintendent. "The problem was more because of the rapid snow melt than because of the rainfall. There was a standing water problem — a common spring occurrence on that stretch of Halsted."

The stretch is gravel and there's a low point just south of 14 Mile, he said.

With the mercury hitting a high of 60 degrees Monday, Rooney said, "We went from winter to spring in a day. And that's always a problem."

Rooney said his department "alleviated the conditions on Halsted as best we could and posted a water over road sign."

Elsewhere in the Hills, weather-related problems resulted from frozen culverts, causing ditches to fill.

Also, Haggerty, a county road, was reported flooded but passable Monday.

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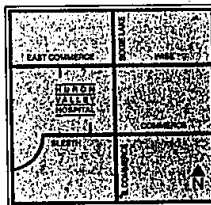
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