

POINTS OF VIEW

Pornography debate

Ingrained sexism shows that no one 'gets it'

For Paul Denenfeld. He's an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union who took the place of Lisa Gleicher, another ACLU attorney, at a recent forum on pornography.

Denenfeld was uncomfortable and said so when he claimed that Gleicher, who was tied up in Lansing, was better suited to argue the subject of pornography as a mode of free speech.

Denenfeld missed Sharpe's message — that incidents of pornography can involve men as well as women, children as well as adults and gays as well as the "straight" community.

"Men just don't get it," said the young woman, who had listened intently throughout the program.

"All people are afraid, but women don't get a voice."

Sounding more like he was trying to win a case than understand her point of view, Denenfeld said that only violent sex crimes are directed more against women.

"Men just don't get it." That premise kept me amazed in the last two weeks at how differently men and women think as certain events unfold.

Even my two Joes apparently don't understand, and that hurts. After listening to them on the radio so often, I feel that I know them on a first name basis.

Anyway, on a recent radio show, McCarthy told what I considered to be a very sexist joke about best-selling dolls.



SANDRA ARMBRUSTER

We are free in this country to speak, write, compose music and produce art that is pornographic. But we are also free not to; moreover, we have the responsibility to accept the consequences of our actions.

tell McCarthy that he was "right in line." Did Antonini really believe that, or was he just being polite? I don't know,

but I wondered how many women listeners of WJR and customers of Kmart thought the joke was funny.

Certainly no one could in any way call my two Joes pornographers, but they should have heard Sharpe's definition of pornography as that which depicts the subject as an object in a graphically sexual way.

They also should have heard the argument between Denenfeld and Sharpe over whether pornography was an issue of free speech or harm done.

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Doing just that are Toys R Us stores, a nationwide chain with a location in Southfield, that is pulling one graphic video game from its shelves.

That's also why right now there are at least two women, written about by Tedd Schneider in his column on McDonald's and Wayne's World videos, who are engaged in what Denenfeld calls counterpeech — the act of

opposing what they see as harmful. Now my colleague, Tedd, thinks those women ought to get a life, but I contend they have a much better life than those who wink and nod over the not-too-subtle nuances of sexism found in some venues.

We also have to take responsibility for our inaction. It may well be that women "just don't get it" either when they allow themselves to be debased without objection, for a wide variety of reasons.

During the forum, Denenfeld argued that banning pornography would limit free speech, a First Amendment right. Sharpe said that wasn't her mission.

Let the debate continue. And in the meantime, I wish my two Joes a happy holiday season. But most of all, I wish they would be more conscious of the impact that subtle, ingrained sexism can have on the public.

Sandra Armbruster is Oakland County editor for the Eccentric Newspapers. You can reach her at 901-2587.

LETTERS

Concerts cost

As anybody else realized how expensive concerts are becoming? Call me crazy, but I think \$20 minimum price is just a bit too much to see a band perform one time.

"It gets worse; Other groups charge \$100 or more for just one seat. It may even be a bad one.

"Most people who have been to concerts have really enjoyed them, but it does usually find a place somewhere in your wallet. Many of us ask how can they do this?

"It seems as though there really is nothing we can do. One way this may be able to slow down a bit is to limit the prices that record labels can charge for each ticket. If that does not work, it

looks as though we are caught in this price trap.

What about the bands? Are they worth the money we pay to see them or is millions of dollars not enough? One reason they can charge so much is because they know that the people will pay the money.

The "alternative" band Nirvana has skyrocketed in popularity since it entered the music world. Band leader Kurt Cobain said in an interview once something to the effect of, "Most people think that we are really rich, that's not true. We still have to pay for all of our shows and equipment, that doesn't leave us with a whole lot."

Now, if that is true, most of us will never know, but I doubt that will change many people's minds on the

subject. It looks as though we will have to keep shoveling money to them if we want to keep being entertained by live music.

Brian Dawol, Farmington

No put-down

Parents, teachers and policemen have stereotyped teenagers. This is a problem faced in all communities regardless of class. We see this among our lower, middle and upper classes.

Teens are often viewed by those in authority as "Don't-give-a-damn gangsters, and swaggering, backward-hat bad boys." Authority figures have been

extremely prejudiced about our youth today.

So much has been written up and presented in the media about teen violence and the lack of respect teens show toward any authority figure. Even television shows have presented teens unjustly.

Adults need to look at the whole population and recognize that there are a lot among them to be proud of. Teens are assuming more responsibility within their families and their communities, working so that they can help pay their way in school.

There are teens volunteering their time and energy to help people in need. There are also teens very active in their churches. A lot of teens care and are helping other teens with problems.

Rather than people being against teens, it should be people for teens. Instead of looking at the negative, they should focus more on the positive.

Dan Kysar, 10th grader, Farmington High School

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