

S.T.O.P. ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2004 (1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2004)

COMMITTEE

The Committee comprised Chairperson, Secretary/ Treasurer and three additional members.

Three evening meetings were held, the first being our Annual General Meeting on 8 March. This took place in Meadowridge Baptist Church hall with an attendance of approx. 150 and 11 apologies. Two other meetings were held in the Meadowridge Library. On 26 July 40 persons attended with 23 apologies and on 22 November 27 with 17 apologies.

Events in 2004 kept us busy at a barely manageable pace. This has once again highlighted the need for more help in routine administrative tasks. Overall results have been encouraging and, even when a final outcome has been disappointing, we have encountered nothing but positive support from everyone involved. The enigma is that, whilst anti-porn sentiment on the ground is everywhere apparent, our country continues to be exploited by the purveyors of porn in every imaginable form - videos, magazines, cinema, films, T.V., the Internet, cell phones and computer games. Indeed the confluence of technology has become the arch-enemy in making porn easily available to every person - and child.

Another visible trend is that the ever-increasing incidence of porn/sexual addiction, with its tragic effects on personal relationships and family life, is being recognized world-wide in the media and in scientific publications - and indeed is reflected locally in the number of calls for help received by S.T.O.P.

During the year recognition of the harmful effects of exposure to porn, specifically on children and young people in our country, came from media statements by the senior police officer co-ordinating the Gauteng Child Protection and Sexual Offences Unit, the Manager of the Teddy Bear Clinic, Gauteng, and the Tygerberg Unit for traumatised children. They all reported an increase in child-on-child sexual abuse and pinpointed the role of T.V. in encouraging imitative behaviour.

Lastly, on the positive side, helpful amendments to the Film and Publications Act were gazetted during the year. These are aimed at more effectively

combating child porn and at further restricting access to pornographic material by children.

This, then, is the background to S.T.O.P.'s activities in 2004 which are summarized in the following report.

1. INPUT TO GOVERNMENT

1.1 National Government

Contact has been maintained with the Deputy Ministry of Home Affairs with whom we have a co-operative relationship.

1.1.1

In mid-August "Adult World" relocated to Plein Street, virtually in the precincts of Parliament. Mr Patrick Chauke, M.P., chairman of Home Affairs Portfolio Committee came out in strong opposition to the location which "terribly tainted the integrity of our national institution".

On 16 August, we phoned Mr Chauke to inform him that the shop could be closed, at least temporarily, on the grounds that a "new" licence to trade had not yet been granted by Cape Town City Council, and that, further, in the event of the licence being officially granted there was a legal route of appeal available to "any aggrieved person". He was very appreciative and acceded to our request to meet with him.

Accordingly on 18 August we met with Mr Chauke and others. He expressed his conviction that "loopholes" in the Film & Publications Act should be closed and was adamant that Adult World should not be permitted to trade within close proximity of schools, St Mary's Cathedral, and Parliament. We stressed the basic need for an amendment to the Business Act, the inadequacies of which lie at the root of local governments' inability to control adult entertainment businesses.

Shortly afterwards Adult World was obliged to close its doors pending

finalisation of the licensing application. An Appeal citing objections was sent from Parliament to Cape Town City Council.

On 11 November City Council officially issued the licence to trade to Adult World. As objectors had the right to appeal to the City Manager within 21 days, we encouraged the nearby Cathedral and schools in the vicinity to submit objections. Letters were thus written by Gardens Commercial High School, Good Hope Seminary High School, Cape Town High School and St. Mary's Primary School. (On 4 January 2005 they and Parliament were informed that their appeals had been unsuccessful).

1.1.2 Department of Home Affairs Workshop

On 14 August, S.T.O.P. was invited to a one-day "Child Pornography" workshop held at Cape Town International Conference Centre. This was chaired by the Deputy Minister, Mr M. Gigaba, who is the executive authority responsible for the Film and Publication Board. The purpose was to discuss plans and objectives for combating child porn. About 21 members of the Task Team which had been constituted for this purpose were present. One of the topics discussed was the about-to-be-launched child porn phone "Hotline", a mechanism whereby members of the public will be able to report illegal porn. The Hotline is to be part of the National Initiative "Every Child Is My Child" which aims to encourage public support and involvement in the campaign against the sexual exploitation of children. It appeared that the Deputy-Ministry favoured the inclusion of S.T.O.P. in the Task Team.

We subsequently received an invitation to be present at the Hotline launch in Johannesburg in December.

1.1 Local Government

1.2.1 Wynberg Adult Premises

On 6 October, Clive Borman, Film & Publications Board Compliance Inspector, notified us that the sex-shop "Inn-X-Cess" had moved to 347 Main Road from its previous situation in a nearby arcade. Although the licence to operate in the new location was still awaited, the shop

was trading. As this was illegal it was subsequently closed pending the licensing decision by Council, to be taken after receiving the routine report from the South Peninsula Administration.

After meeting with Mr Gideon Topley of the South Peninsula Health Department we lodged objections in a letter to Dr Ivan Bromfield, South Peninsula Health Directorate. In summary these were based on the general sleaziness of the immediate surroundings and the proximity of schools, religious institutions, including two Mosques, and residential areas. The letter was copied to Councillor Debbie Schafer of Wynberg and the City Manager. We alerted various bodies in the area as to the situation and this resulted in several more letters of objection being submitted.

On 2 November 2004 we received a letter from the Director: City Health, informing us that "the relevant licence will be issued" and that we could "within 21 days appeal to the City Manager against (the) decision....."

On 17 November, we lodged an appeal with the Premier followed by an appeal to the City Manager. We also contacted Councillor Schafer of Wynberg to suggest she act similarly.

1.2.2 City of Cape Town Draft Zoning Scheme

This was published for public comment in May 2004. On the whole this was unsatisfactory regarding provisions for adult entertainment businesses (a.e.b's) with one exception, viz. "an a.e.b. shall not operate from the ground floor of a building" in a General Business Zone.

We therefore drew up a petition strongly recommending that the "consent use" provision be more widely applied and that "consent" should be subject to compulsory public participation in the decision-making process. Further we recommended that the "non-ground-floor" proviso be extended to other zones and that a.e.b's must not be situated within a certain distance (e.g. at least 1 kilometre) of a residential area, school, or place of worship. The petitions were widely circulated with the result that 1712 signatures were obtained from diverse areas. These were delivered to Council's Land Use Manager on 6 August.

In December the final Draft Zoning Scheme was published for public

comment. It was gratifying that most of the above recommendations, put forward by ourselves and others, had been included, although the "non-ground-floor" restriction had been watered down and the distance of a.e.b's from schools etc. had been set at only 500m.

Written comment was invited before the end of January 2005. We would recommend that the above provisions be "strengthened" and also make suggestions re adequate policing of a.e.b's.

1.2.3 City of Cape Town Ward Committees

These Committees were established towards the end of the year. They are advisory groups, comprising 10 persons representing various sectors of community interest, under the Chairmanship of a Ward Councillor. They are intended to serve as a channel of communication between the community and, via Sub-Councils, City of Cape Town Council. S.T.O.P. falls under Councillor Herbert Syré's Bergvliet/Meadowridge Ward 73.

As S.T.O.P. is on the Council database we were invited to a meeting on 28 October to nominate a representative and an alternate. The upshot was that, after further processes by Council, the chairlady was elected as representative of the Health and Welfare sector with the secretary as alternate.

2. MUSLIM JUDICIAL COUNCIL

We were phoned early in October by an Imam who has a particular interest in youth matters and who was currently involved in a series of broadcasts on Voice of the Cape (Moslem). He serves on the Executive Committee of the Muslim Judicial Council (M.J.C.) and had originally spoken to us some six years ago. He requested information on porn matters and also expressed interest in us joining him in a radio programme. We took the opportunity to inform him about the Wynberg Sex-Shop issue insofar as two mosques were situated in close proximity to the shop and he immediately contacted the Imams.

We were subsequently phoned several times as he was enthusiastic about supporting our efforts in Wynberg. The result was that he put us in contact with the General Secretary of the Muslim Judicial Council, to whom we sent, at his request, the information he needed in order to

write a letter of objection from the M.J.C. He recommended that S.T.O.P. should meet with the head of the M.J.C. at a future date.

3. S.T.O.P WEBSITE

The site has now been updated and given an overall "face-lift".

4. INVITED SPEAKERS

4.1

Mrs Joan Campbell, M.A., family and child therapist, was the speaker at our A.G.M. in March. She is a social worker with a special interest in the sex-education of children and child-on-child sexual offences. She is currently completing a doctorate on pre-teen sexual offenders. Her talk on the inappropriate sexual behaviour of children and the effects of pornography on children and adolescents was undoubtedly the drawcard which resulted in the record attendance of approx. 150 persons amongst whom were many "first-timers".

4.2

Dr. Donald Craythorne was invited to our 26 July meeting. In his presentation on City Council's Draft Zoning Scheme, he expanded on various issues such as liquor outlets, home businesses and building regulations as well as discussing the provisions envisaged for adult entertainment businesses. He emphasised the need for public vigilance.

5. MEDIA MATTERS

5.1 PRESS COVERAGE

Three of our letters were published in the daily press - one in the Argus, one in the Weekend Argus, and one in the Cape Times during June/July. We also received good publicity for our March AGM - beforehand in Weekend Argus and Constantiaberg Bulletin and afterwards in the Constantiaberg Bulletin. This was due to the interest sparked by our speaker, Joan Campbell.

5.2. RADIO

On four occasions we took the opportunity to "phone-in" to topical Cape Talk programmes on porn. We were also invited to answer questions on a C.C.F.M. Radio Tygerberg broadcast on the Council Zoning Plan.

5.3 TV DOCUMENTARY

In September we were requested to be involved (via interview) in a student production by Cape Town International Film School students on "the theme of freedom of expression as it pertains to the adult entertainment industry in S.A. and how it affects society by restricting it or not". In early November we met with the team of three young people who seemed deeply impressed with what we could tell them. The project is ongoing, no longer as a student production, but as a professional documentary for which funding is being sought. To quote from an email sent by the producer, Paul Andrews, "The more I research this subject the more I feel this issue should be publicly addressed".

5. 'OUR' VIDEO - THE SILENT SIN

An 8 minute video/DVD featuring a young man's escalating addiction to porn was voluntarily produced for S.T.O.P. by a professional film company. The vision was for S.T.O.P. to use it as an education tool particularly in schools as the addiction usually starts in childhood. It has certainly made a huge impact wherever it has been shown and our most grateful thanks go to the producer and his team for so generously giving of their talents. S.T.O.P. would like to market the video/DVD widely as it serves as a powerful warning to young men.

6. OUTREACH

6.1 "Porn Sunday"

On 12 September Meadowridge Baptist Church dedicated all four services to the dangers of porn, the launch of the Support Group and the video "The Silent Sin". A question-and-answer presentation, involving S.T.O.P. with the pastor as question-master, also helped to drive home the message. Approx. 20 people responded, all being grateful for enlightenment on their own porn-related problems.

6.2 Talks and Responses

The urgent need for public education on the harm of exposing youngsters to porn, increasing addiction, coupled with the lack of professional help and support groups and the absence of immediate counselling facilities for child-on-child sexual abuse were problems confirmed again this year.

6.2.1

As a result of Joan Campbell's talk at our A.G.M. in March as well as the media coverage, 16 parents phoned to either share experiences of children having been exposed to porn and then abused, or to ask for help. 4 dealt with child-on-child abuse and 2 with adult porn addiction. An educator also asked for help dealing with teen addicts and 3 parents expressed the need for schools to become pro-active in exposing and dealing with this ever-increasing problem.

6.2.2

During the course of the year we were contacted for help by 4 wives of addicts, a female addict as well as by other individuals, including psychologists, needing more information. A typical parental problem was that of a 7 year-old girl accessing porn websites as a result of a teacher having told the class one can find anything on the internet using the search engine Google. The word 'sex' immediately exposed her to porn websites. This was then shared with her friend, sibling and others. The mother handled the problem well after seeking S.T.O.P.'s advice.

6.2.3

S.T.O.P. was invited to give 4 talks to groups which included counselors, a men's breakfast, and a conference of 100 pastors wives and women in leadership. A recovering addict was also involved in our presentations.

6.2.4

In overview the above "Outreach" exercises yielded an encouraging response. Contact was made by men and women of all ages or their spouses, and by people in need of information or referrals. All in all approx. 50 people responded. (This includes those who responded to the "Porn Sunday" as well as the article on addiction in the Argus last year. It was always stressed that S.T.O.P. does not offer professional counseling, but the callers were always grateful to have a 'listening ear' and to be given insight and reassurance that they were not alone. As one addict put it: "Hearing S.T.O.P. speak gave her the freedom to ask for help".

6.2.5 Support Group

After a meeting with the Meadowridge Baptist Church pastors in mid 2004, it was decided that a pilot support group for men struggling with pornography

addiction should be formed. This was in response to many desperate calls from addicts and victims, many of whom were trying to save their relationships.

The group was launched at the anti-porn Sunday services in September. The response was immediate with 15 people requesting help from S.T.O.P. or the pastors.

The first support group of 7, including 2 facilitators, met in October and thereafter once a week till the end of November. The support group, based on Christian principals and beliefs, is a forum for the participants to discuss problems faced daily, to be accountable, and to help and encourage one another. The participants are from all parts of the Peninsula. All involved are being greatly encouraged by the visible positive results and more men have requested joining the next group.

This ministry has also involved us in being available to chat telephonically, frequently to meet one-on-one and also to meet with couples. We have also liased with counsellors who see the need for many support groups to be established.

7. FINANCIAL REPORT (Abridged)

All workers are voluntary. Income is derived from donations and bank interest.

For year ended 31 December 2004 income was R8 950. Expenditure was R14 149 (mainly for admin. expenses e.g. telephone, stationery, printing, web-site). The net loss of R5 199 was offset by the balance of R6 805 carried forward from the previous year.