

S.T.O.P. ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2005 (Edited)

(1 JANUARY TO 31 DECEMBER 2005)

Committee

This comprised Chairperson, Secretary/Treasurer and three additional members. In addition a young male university student accepted our invitation to serve as our youth representative. Later in the year one member had to resign due to career commitments.

Three evening meetings were held during the year, the first being our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 14 March. This took place in Meadowridge Baptist Church hall with an attendance of approx. 90 and 14 apologies. Two further meetings were held in the Meadowridge Library. On 27 June, 23 persons were present with 11 apologies and, on 24 October, 26 with 27 apologies.

At our March AGM business matters were kept to a minimum in order to allow adequate time for our invited speaker, a Senior Primary and Remedial teacher who has had a special interest for some 22 years in the effects of TV on children and who has given many talks on the subject. Her informative presentation on "TV – How Much is Too Much?" was very well received.

In overview we can say that 2005 has been our busiest year ever. (The need for regular secretarial assistance remains critical.) Seemingly our credibility has continued to increase and awareness of STOP's functions and activities has grown. This has been boosted by increasing usage of our website.

Whilst our work has multiple facets which occupy a large part of this report it must be said that the activities recorded under the heading of "OUTREACH" are of prime importance. In essence this is the "people" aspect and embraces creating awareness of the dangers of pornography and responding to those needing – and usually in desperate need of – help. A very worrying lack is the nationwide absence of counselling/ support facilities, and professional psychological treatment for those with limited incomes.

Encouragingly, and despite the ever-increasing flood of porn threatening to engulf us (or is it because of?), the groundswell of public awareness and dissatisfaction – often visible in radio and TV debate – is burgeoning. This

has been reflected in Government's expressed intention to take decisive steps to counter an out-of-hand situation.

New and valuable amendments have recently been made to the Film & Publications Act to close loopholes and extend the provisions of the original Act of 1996. However, law enforcement and the will to prosecute offenders remain noticeably absent. The law of the land thus appears to have no teeth and, increasingly, the public is saying "Enough is enough!" Moreover, there is frustration that it is not recognised that the freedom to inundate society with porn can not be equated with the freedoms entrenched in our Constitution – and that freedom of the press was never intended to sanction the pollution of our printed and electronic media with sleaze and filth.

The challenge, given current trends, is to "seize the moment" in 2006!

The following report summarises the events of the past year.

1. CONTACT WITH GOVERNMENT

1.1 NATIONAL

Our cooperative relationship with Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Malusi Gigaba, and Mr Patrick Chauke MP, Chairman Home Affairs Portfolio Committee, has continued.

On 10 November, Mr Chauke invited us to meet in his Parliamentary office for discussion on sexually explicit material on cell phones. Due to his being unavoidably detained he instead arranged for us to attend his scheduled 2.00 pm meeting with the ANC Research Group. We were each given about five minutes to address the approximately 8 MP's present. We focused mainly on the sleazy tabloid "newspaper" issue and explained the evident lack of an effective mechanism to deal with the accountability of the press.

On 15 November and 10 December we attended the Home Affairs Committee hearings at Parliament as observers. The subject under discussion was the unacceptable amount of unrestricted pornographic material available to all ages – in particular on TV, cell phones and in the tabloids. Representatives of these media were required to give account of themselves. All in all it was clear that the ruling party, supported unanimously by all political parties present, was determined to clip the wings of enterprises intent on flooding the country with porn.

1.2 PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

In June we submitted an Appeal to the Premier against the dismissal of our earlier appeal to Cape Town Municipality re the licence issued to the Wynberg "Sex-Shop". In reply four letters were received. The matter finally reached its correct internal destination and thence the Legal Department, where it is ongoing. It is encouraging that the Province is seriously considering our challenge for them to initiate negotiations with Government to have the Business Act amended (personal communication). The provisions of this Act have long been a major stumbling block in the adult businesses licensing issue.

1.3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1.3.1 At the end of May we were notified by the Cape Town City Manager that our Appeal against Council's decision to issue a licence to the Main Road, Wynberg, sex-shop had been dismissed. As always, the provisions of the Business Act were cited as the deciding factor.

1.3.2 After the close of the August meeting between the Mayor of Cape Town, Nomaindia Mfeko, and ReCast (referred to later in this report), we spoke briefly to the Mayor about the delay in the finalisation of Council's new Integrated Zoning Scheme. We asked whether the regulations for adult premises could be fast-tracked by implementing them via a by-law. The Mayor agreed that this could be done. We followed this up with a letter to the Mayor on 16 October.

2. SEX-SHOPS

2.1 The sex-shop situated near Parliament as well as the one in Wynberg Main Road have closed down. One assumes that this was due to lack of business rather than to public protest!

2.2 On 16 August Mr Malusi Gigaba, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, paid surprise visits to several adult shops and Internet cafés around Cape Town as part of an anti-child pornography campaign. He was accompanied by the CEO of the Film & Publication Board, Ms Shokie Bopape-Dlomo, and members of the SA Police. This was reported in the media.

3. DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS AND FILM & PUBLICATION BOARD NATIONAL CONFERENCE AGAINST CHILD PORNOGRAPHY, PORT ELIZABETH, 1-3 JUNE 2005

This proved to be a groundbreaking experience for STOP! During May we

were invited to present a 20-minutes paper expressing our concern on pornography “across-the-board” rather than on child porn per se, which was the main focus of this national conference. It was decided that two committee members would make the trip to Port Elizabeth, the cost of the flight for one being sponsored by the Board.

The proceedings were opened by the Chairperson, Mr M. Gigaba, Deputy Minister, Home Affairs, followed by addresses by the CEO of the Film & Publication Board, Shokie Bopape-Dlomo, and the Minister of Home Affairs, Ms N. Mapisa-Nqakula.

Our presentation, entitled “The Harmful Effects of Pornography on Children”, was the first to be presented to the audience of approximately 200 delegates. We were immediately warmly congratulated by the dignitaries for “an excellent, extremely well-researched presentation”. Our talk was followed by the Scotland Yard Detective Superintendents who spoke on “What is Child Porn?” and “Strategies to Combat Child Abuse Imagery – International Experience”.

During tea-break (and for the rest of the Conference) a number of representatives of other organisations congratulated STOP on a well-researched presentation and all offered their support. Radio 702 immediately interviewed our speaker about porn in men's magazines and its effects on children. Copies of the presentation had to be made at the request of most of the delegates.

After tea, “Assessment of Government Interventions on Child Porn” (this included cell phone porn) was discussed by the National Youth Commission, Mr P. Chauke, Chairperson of the Home Affairs Portfolio Committee, the Department of Social Development, and Mrs S. Shabangu, Deputy Minister of Safety and Security.

After lunch, “Strategies to Deal with Child Porn” were investigated by representatives from Vodacom and Cell C. Mr Malambo from HIREZ, an Internet service provider, spoke passionately about the alarming increase of child porn on the Internet. There are more than 1 million child porn websites.

Joan van Niekerk, National Director of Childline SA, spoke very informatively on the effects of child porn and also its links with child trafficking.

A workshop was held in the afternoon with delegates split into working groups to draw up recommendations for a plan of action. All STOP's recommendations were agreed on and presented at the report back the next

day.

The Conference Declaration presented on the final day included the following statement: "Further recognising that the creation, production, processing and distribution of any pornographic material severely imposes untold misery to normal childhood development."

Many valuable contacts were made during the three days and STOP appears to have gained much credibility as was also evidenced by the rapid disappearance of all our brochures and business cards! Extracts from our presentation were quoted in three separate editions of the Cape Argus, Die Burger, and the PE Herald.

4. SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MATERIAL ON CELL PHONES

In late February something of a furore had arisen in the press and on radio about easily available sexually explicit material that cell phone users can download onto phones by sending text messages (SMS's) to advertised numbers. Clearly this could not be restricted to adults. However, what really had aroused the public outcry were the explicit adverts thereof being flighted at inappropriate times on eTV, some as early as 22h00. Unsolicited SMS's advertising this material were also being received on cell phones.

4.1 On 23 February, a committee member wrote to the Advertising Standards Authority of SA (ASA) in her private capacity. Subsequently we were approached for comment by radio and press (see later in this report under "Media"). There was also a significant response by the public and the media and STOP received nationwide emails voicing concern and support. The response from ASA to STOP and other complainants about explicit TV ads was only that they should be flighted "during films or programs of similar, suitable mature adult content".

4.2 Earlier in the year Dineo Pooe, ASA Spokesperson, had said that cell phone sex ads may appear in adult publications and not in family magazines or newspapers accessible to children.

4.3 The Film & Publication Board informed us that ICASA (Independent Communications Authority of SA) would be meeting with broadcasters to discuss, amongst other things, TV watershed hours for children.

5. OFFENSIVE ADVERTISING

5.1 In May, our secretarial assistant sent a letter of complaint to ASA (co-signed by five other young people) about a very suggestive Radio Good

Hope TV and cinema advert which appeared belittling and demeaning to women. Altogether 22 people called for the removal of the advert and the ASA ruled in favour of the complainants, causing it to be removed. The Commission for Gender Equality had also submitted four negative points.

5.2 Midyear, News 24 published a report where Deline Beukes, the Chief Executive of the ASA, urged the media to use less sex in advertising, saying that they had received over 500 complaints over the past three months concerning this issue. Apparently parents feel that the general media should not be used for sexual advertising.

6. OUTREACH

This “portfolio” was handled by two committee members.

6.1 SUPPORT GROUP

A male committee member and a co-facilitator have successfully run a support group over the past year for men struggling with pornography addiction. Some of the members have felt ready to leave with the help of accountability partners. New members have replaced them. The facilitators have felt very encouraged by the progress made and the healing taking place. A young member, has bravely shared his story of healing at talks given by STOP and this has given other addicts the freedom to ask for help. The group participants are representative of all ages and are from various parts of Cape Town. The group facilitator is regularly being contacted by desperate addicts and victims nationwide. It is apparent that there is still not enough support and professional help available as the devastating effects of addiction are not widely known.

6.2 TALKS

STOP was invited to give five talks which involved taking three services at two churches (Somerset West Baptist in August and St Matthews, Table View, in September), a community meeting and a men’s breakfast held in October at St Thomas Church, Rondebosch. The Somerset West and Table View churches are both keen to start support groups. The young adult from our support group shared his experience with addiction at all the church talks – this has had a powerful effect particularly on youngsters. He also gave a talk to a junior high school on the topic “It’s Just Porn, Mom”.

6.3 We have been contacted over the past year by at least 60 people as a result of media information, talks, referrals, our website, etc. Many have asked for help with their addiction (including women) or because they are

victims of addicts, often with marriages falling apart. (This shows a very real need for victim support groups.) Robin Meintjies of Elim Clinic, Gauteng, dealing mainly with drug and alcohol addiction, phoned for assistance. We were also able to refer him to a counsellor at Mondeor Community Church. Others needed information or advice on how to add their voices to the anti-porn campaign.

6.4 MUSLIM COMMUNITY

An Imam who serves in the Macassar area phoned on 30 September in response to the Special Assignment television broadcast featuring child prostitution in Macassar, which had become of great concern to their community. He invited us to give a talk (together with other organisations) to the Helderberg Forum and community at a one-day seminar in November at Macassar.

He also kindly invited STOP to contribute to other meetings but due to a busy schedule we declined. This included speaking at a youth seminar on 22 October involving some 250 children from a wide area – Cape Town, Khayelitsha and Helderberg. It was intended to give each child a “scroll” to take home and meditate on. As we could not attend we faxed appropriate material for this, as requested. The Imam had been referred to STOP by a member of the Executive of the Muslim Judicial Council, with whom we have had ongoing contact over past years.

7. MEDIA MATTERS

7.1 RADIO

In mid-March, following public outcry against eTV’s explicit advertising, we were contacted by Voice of the Cape (Muslim radio), Cape Talk, Radio 5FM and UCT Student Radio. There was a surprisingly good nationwide response off Radio 5.

Three more radio opportunities came in September:

- a) Bush Radio interview on the link between child porn and trafficking.
- b) Request by Reagan Thaw, Radio 702 newsman, for comments for a news service.
- c) Cape Talk six-minute interview with John Maytham. This Cape Talk discussion resulted in three days of radio debate with most of the public supporting our standpoint. We subsequently supplied John Maytham and Cape Talk’s Mike Wills with further relevant information.

On 5 October, SABC Radio SAFM broadcast an excellent "phone-in" debate on the topic "Are we protecting our children sufficiently?" This was interesting in that current public opinion was reflected. The guests were Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Malusi Gigaba, a representative from Child Welfare, and Sexy Mobile. 99% of the callers, mainly men, parents, teachers and the Child Abuse Action Group, challenged government to do something about all forms of pornography, not just cell phone and child porn, and also not to rely only on parents to protect children. STOP "phoned in."

7.2 TELEVISION

Our TV debut came in July when we were invited to fly to Johannesburg to take part in the Interface Debate screened unedited on 3 July on SABC3 from 19h30 to 20h00. This programme reaches an audience of 400 000. The topic was "Cell phone porn – Does it make children more vulnerable to porn and does it promote child abuse?" The panel included Deputy Minister Gigaba and Gavin Penkin of Exactmobile. There was an encouraging response to STOP's input from around the country, including Dr Joan Campbell of Muizenberg.

In August we were phoned by Johan Abrahams of SABC3's Special Assignment, who was contemplating a programme on child porn. Later SABC2 contacted us for help with an envisaged Sunday programme, "The Big Question" on "Does pornography lead to violence?"

7.3 PRESS

On 12 March, Weekend Argus, in a half-page spread, published two articles by Melanie Peters on cell phone porn. The first featured STOP's standpoint and quoted at length from a committee member's letter to the Advertising Standards Authority whilst the second included a prominent photograph of the two matric schoolboys who had taken a successful stand against porn at their school. Immediately after this we were phoned by the Cape Times and a short article quoting our comments appeared in the Cape Times of 15 March.

The Argus of 19 March published a full-page well-researched article by Jeanne Viall under the headline, "TV – How much is too much?" This had been the subject of our speaker at our March Annual General Meeting, the article being based on interviews with herself and other educators.

The Constantiaberg Bulletin of 24 March published a short, well-written

report on our speaker's talk.

At the beginning of June extracts from our presentation at the Port Elizabeth conference were quoted in the Cape Argus, Die Burger and the PE Herald.

Midyear we were approached by Melanie Peters of the Argus and the Sunday Times for comment on the offensive Radio Good Hope advert. Other organisations' strong feelings about women being used as commercial commodities were also expressed.

8. "WOMEN OF VALOUR"

In August, "Women's Month", Councillor Herbert Syré nominated the STOP chairlady and secretary to be recognised in the Protea Sub-Council's plan to honour contributions to society made by women in our ward. Subsequently at a very pleasant function at the Alphen Centre, Councillor Syré delivered the citation which affirmed the achievements of STOP over the years.

9. MEETING WITH CEO OF FILM & PUBLICATION BOARD (FPB)

On 27 September, the Chairlady and Secretary met, at their request, with Ms Shokie Bopape-Dlomo and her colleague Yewande in Cape Town. They discussed various areas of mutual concern, e.g. "cell phone sex", unrestricted advertising of this and other "sexual services", pornography on TV, pornographic material in the tabloid "newspapers", and the illegal distribution of pornography. They found it very encouraging that Ms Bopape-Dlomo shared these concerns and that various avenues to deal with the unacceptable availability of pornography to children were already being actively explored by the FPB.

11. ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS AT NAZARETH HOUSE, CAPE TOWN

11.1 The Chairlady attended the first of these on the subject of Human Trafficking on 17 August after STOP had received an invitation from the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office (Director - Father Peter John Pearson). This office operates as a function of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference. The opening address was given by Home Affairs Deputy Minister Malusi Gigaba. Presentations given included those by Debbie Mobilyn of Molo Songololo (child rights organization), Advocate Bronwyn Pithey of the National Prosecuting Authority and representatives from the Departments of Justice and Social Development. Comments were invited from the three MP's present, viz. Imam Gassam Solomon, ANC member (for Grassy Park area) who also serves on the Justice Portfolio Committee, Mrs Sheila Camerer of the DA, and Mrs Cheryllyn Dudley of the ACDP. We contributed briefly from

the floor citing organised crime links between trafficking of women and children, drugs and pornography.

11.2 In November we were invited to another similar morning Round Table Discussion, this time on "Child Pornography". The keynote address was given by Deputy Minister Malusi Gigaba and papers were presented by Joan van Niekerk of Childline and Carol Bower of Rapcan. As before, delegates included representatives of various political parties. Discussion from the floor, in which we participated, was to the point and also embraced all porn which is harmful to children – as distinct from only child porn. Two participants introduced the tabloid "newspaper" issue. There was good opportunity for valuable exchanges with other like-minded delegates at tea and lunch breaks.

12. TABLOID "NEWSPAPERS" – THE DAILY VOICE AND DIE KAAPSE SON

These cheap (R1,50) sleazy dailies have been with us in Cape Town for approximately one year. They are modelled on the British "red-top" tabloids but are of a lower standard in the sense that the language usage is vulgar in style and much of the content, pictures and advertisements openly pornographic. The hallmark female nudity on the traditional page 3 is particularly offensive. In the Daily Voice the Christian faith is frequently disparaged in sensational articles highlighting any negative happenings in the Christian Church. Moreover the name of Jesus has been virtually blasphemed repeatedly on posters and in headlines such as "Jesus is in my toilet" and "Jesus has had his chips", the articles being allegedly based on factual experiences.

Die Son is published by Media 24 (publishers of Die Burger) and The Daily Voice by Independent Newspapers (Argus and Cape Times). The Cape Flats is the main targeted circulation area hence the use of the local vernacular. A "toned-down" version is sold in the country areas!

There has been a huge groundswell of objection and resistance by the community and Church leaders who have formed the ReCast organization (Religious Communities Against Sleazy Tabloids) under the leadership of Father Noble Scheepers of St John's Anglican Church, Athlone, and supported by a significant number of local Churches and the Muslim Judicial Council. A resident of Athlone had originally taken up the cudgels by lodging a complaint against Die Son's nudity display with the commission of Gender Equality who, in turn, referred it to the Press Ombudsman. This complaint was not upheld and her subsequent Appeal in June 2005 to the Press Appeal Panel, chaired by retired Judge Edwin King, was dismissed. This was

followed by a scurrilous personal attack on the complainant by Die Son's editor in an editorial. The background to the formation of ReCast and the above events were fully reported on in two editions of "The Good Hope", the monthly publication of the Anglican Church. By invitation we subsequently attended six ReCast meetings at St John's Church. The Editor of Die Son, Rashied Seria, and his Marketing Manager were present at the last meeting to answer questions. As no satisfactory answers were forthcoming the tone of the meeting became confrontational.

13. DVD SUPERSTORE – "XXX ADULT DVD's"

During the weekend of 17 September hard-quality billboards appeared overnight on a large number of lamp-posts and traffic signs in the Meadowridge shopping and residential neighbourhood. We later found that they had been put up liberally throughout the Peninsula – and further afield. The website address, and phone numbers were given on the posters. These posters were illegal insofar as they (i) had been put up without prior permission by Cape Town City Council and (ii) provided no physical address (certified adult material may only be distributed from within a building). We reported to Clive Borman, FPB Compliance Inspector, and to City Council. Mr Borman had already taken action and was also in the process of temporarily closing down the shop which had opened in Cape Town, despite the licence-to-trade not yet having been issued and registration not yet applied for. Council initiated the process for having all the posters removed after which the miscreant would be billed. However, after their removal, they reappeared over a wide area of the City and environs! We tried, by drawing the attention of Council officials to these infringements of the law, to prevent Council from issuing the licence-to-trade, but to no avail!

15. FINANCIAL SUPPORT (abridged)

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