

S.T.O.P. ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2006

(1 January to 31 December 2006)

Three evening meetings were held in the Meadowridge Library, the first being our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 27 March, with an attendance of 29 with 27 apologies. On 24 June, 25 persons were present with 16 apologies, and on 30 October, 28 with 11 apologies.

Our 2006 AGM differed from the usual format of being mainly devoted to a speaker. As several interesting events had taken place during the five months since our previous meeting, time was taken to update our supporters. This was followed by two interesting talks, attentively listened to, by Clive Borman, Film & Publication Board Compliance Inspector for the Western Cape, and our Youth Representative.

In overview we can say that the past year has been even busier than 2005 – not forgetting that year 2005 was reported as being the busiest ever! This can be attributed to the scope of our activities, nationwide requests for information and help, and our credibility being ever on the increase.

Although the flood of porn in our country shows no sign of abating, it is encouraging to note that Government, people of influence and the public are realising that effective steps to halt this need to be taken urgently.

The challenge for 2007 is to soldier on!

The following report summarises events of the past year.

1. LEGISLATION

1.1 Films & Publications Amendment Bill

In essence, the Bill seeks to protect children from potentially disturbing, harmful and age-inappropriate materials regardless of the medium or format. These include, amongst others,

publications, films, cellular phones and TV. The Bill represents a landmark in legislation in that **all media** would be subject to the same guidelines. Thus for the first time television and newspapers (which hitherto have enjoyed exemption) would be subject to regulation.

Predictably an outcry ensued from the press on the inroads into press freedom perceived to be tantamount to the first steps towards a "slippery slide into censorship". The Film & Publication Board (FPB), on the other hand, have been at pains to reassure the media that the intention is merely regulatory and primarily intended to encourage a more responsible attitude by the media.

A series of nationwide public hearings scheduled for September/October was advertised in the press and written submissions were invited. We accordingly forwarded a submission with the intention of later participating in the scheduled stakeholders' public hearings at Parliament in October.

One of the points in our submission dealt with the ever-increasing trend of popular magazines to mainstream pornography and the sexually explicit nature of material in the tabloid newspapers. We included information regarding identical concerns that have arisen overseas, with retail giants in the UK and USA having taken steps to prevent the indiscriminate sale of this genre of publications. In June discussion took place in the British House of Commons on the Regulation and Display of Sexually Explicit Material.

In the event of mandatory age classification for TV being introduced, this classification may not be very different from the advisory flags already routinely put in place by broadcasters. However, it is encouraging that Mr Malusi Gigaba - Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Patrick Chauke (MP) - Chairman Home Affairs Portfolio Committee, and Ms "Shokie" Bopape Dlomo - CEO FPB, have their faces firmly set against pornography, violence and unsuitable material on TV and are determined to do something about it.

The outcome to the Amendment Bill exercise (anticipated to have been finalised before the end of October) is not yet known due to

the postponement of the necessary Parliamentary debate until early 2007. Stakeholders' public hearings scheduled for the last phase of the planned programme were also cancelled. This was due to the nationwide meetings with stakeholders (particularly the print and electronic media) having been a huge undertaking for which it had been realised more time was needed. Thus STOP has not had an opportunity to give an oral submission. Rescheduled dates for public hearings are awaited.

1.2 Sexual Offences Bill

It had been noticed that certain aspects of pornography were also being dealt with in the context of this Bill. We therefore felt it appropriate for STOP to make a submission to the Justice Committee. In summary, whilst the Sexual Offences Bill stated that any person who exposed children to age-inappropriate material of a sexual nature would be guilty of an offence, there was no mention of advertisements. This then was the main thrust of our submission as there is presently a hiatus in the law in respect of advertisements which are not under the jurisdiction of the Film & Publication Board. (It is interesting that in Australia all adverts are classified as to what publication they are allowed to appear in.)

1.3 Legislation on the Status of Women

In early June an invitation was issued by the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women and the Joint Monitoring Committee on Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Children, Youth and Disabled Persons. This invited all interested organisations and individuals to submit written comments on the impact of legislation passed since 1994 which gives effect to the principle of equality. Further invitations to make oral representations during the public hearings to follow would be based on the written submissions. As we felt that the legalisation of pornography in 1996 discriminated against women we forwarded a submission on 11 June.

2. FILM & PUBLICATION BOARD (FPB) GUIDELINES

The FPB has established a set of Guidelines which examiners use to determine what is inappropriate, potentially disturbing or harmful to children in particular age groups. They are supposed to be updated and published annually with a response from the public being invited. These comments and representations are taken into account in determining the final Guidelines.

A fresh set of Guidelines gazetted on 24 February 2006 gave us the opportunity to submit suggestions for improvements. These included a "tightening up" of some of the criteria applied to films, publications and computer games for assessing their suitability for various age groups.

The new Guidelines published later in the year in booklet form were disappointing, particularly in two areas which deserved attention, viz. sexual violence and age classification for publications.

Apart from these Guidelines a number of helpful booklets for parents were published during the year. Please see section 9 for titles.

3. COSMOPOLITAN MAGAZINE

3.1 The March issue of Cosmopolitan was a "shocker". The impact of the scantily clad model on the cover was amplified by the tag "XXX Adult Material". This was contained inside as part of the magazine in a sealed section which was virtually a no-holds-barred "How To..." manual explicitly describing and illustrating every imaginable form of sexual conduct including deviant practices.

A committee member, in his personal capacity, and STOP both sent letters of complaint to the Film & Publication Board. STOP provided a number of specific legal references to back up their complaint. Comprehensive replies dated 30 March and 10 April were received. The Film & Publication Board (FPB) Classification Committee of three persons had systematically refuted all the points put forward by ourselves to support our view that the sealed "sex section" of the magazine should be accorded X18 classification. In essence, the Committee had agreed unanimously that the visual presentations did not constitute explicit sexual conduct and that the material as a

whole was not “harmful or disturbing” to children. In addition, it had been determined that “the content of the sealed sex section **does** in fact constitute bona fide scientific and documentary material” and was therefore, in any event, exempt from classification!

The decision of the Classification Committee was open to appeal but we decided there would be little to gain from pursuing this option.

Prior to the above ruling we contacted several retailers (Pick `n Pay, Checkers, Woolworths, Spar and Clicks) by letter/phone to inform them re the March “Cosmo” and also to explain their obligations as distributors, in terms of the amended Film & Publications Act, should certain publications attract age restrictions. Letters in reply from Clicks and Spar were cooperative in principle, even appreciative, whilst Pick `n Pay awaited the ruling from the FPB and, in addition, felt that any further action would not be justified given the lack of customer complaints. Woolworths showed much concern and was particularly helpful.

3.2 A second “Sealed Sex Section” was published in the June Cosmopolitan. This was very similar to that in the above March issue, being equally explicit and totally inappropriate for young readers. A letter of complaint to the FPB was submitted by one of our supporters citing objections from her point of view as an experienced high school teacher. The Board’s reply based on the Film and Publications Act was, in effect, unhelpful.

[It is interesting to note that copies of Cosmopolitan and FHM (a pornographic magazine for men), are included in the “Starter-Packs” of all UCT first-year students.]

4. MEDIA

4.1 The tabloids, “The Daily Voice” and “Die Son”, have continued throughout the year to feed their readers a diet of trash, sleaze and sex.

4.1.1 Child Porn in “Die Son”

In January "Die Son" reported on a "Wet T shirt competition in Robertson featuring girls aged 14 to 15. Unbeknown to the girls they had been photographed naked in the changing rooms and this was being circulated as a porn movie referred to in the tabloid (and posters) as a "Slet Video". The reports were accompanied by suggestive pictures of the partially clothed girls in two editions over two full pages including the front page. As we felt that this was tantamount to child porn, a committee member contacted Mr Billy Downer, Deputy Public Prosecutor, who agreed she could lay a charge. This was done. The investigating officer kept in touch but the overall feeling was that this would be a difficult case to prosecute.

4.1.2 "The Daily Voice"

Childline's Wynberg director, in conversation with STOP, voiced her concern about certain issues of "The Daily Voice" – one with shocking graphic photos, and another with an article about the rape and death of a young child in which they felt the language used, together with the "Page 3 girls", could sexually stimulate a potential sex offender.

4.2 The Sunday Independent

The Sunday Independent of 7 May published a half-page article by Charlene Smith, a well-known journalist, under the heading "Restricting a few magazines will do nothing to reduce our 1.69 million rapes." In effect, this was intended to be a comment on the new Amendment to the Film & Publications Act. However, in three instances she had taken a swipe at STOP and in general her expressed views were clearly very different from ours and, in some cases, less than valid. STOP's reply was published in the "Letters" section in the Sunday Independent of 28 May.

4.3 Constantiaberg Chronicle

A staff journalist contacted us in July for STOP news items. We accordingly forwarded the excellent letter, "The Silent Addiction" written for parents by a headmaster following 2 committee members' talk to the Parents Educational Forum at Somerset

College and published in a private Somerset West community newspaper. This served as the basis for the article in the Chronicle.

4.4 Cape Times Article

In the Cape Times (and Pretoria News) of 24 October 2006 there was a prominent front page article headlined "Child on child violence out of control". It opened with "Eighty-two children are charged in courts across the country every day for raping or indecently assaulting other children." Other statistics were equally shocking, e.g. "Between 25% to 43% of the perpetrators of sex and violent crimes against children are children themselves – some as young as six years old." Significantly groundbreaking research states that "a huge proportion of these children claim their sexual abuse of other children was inspired by acts witnessed on television." Soweto Protea Court prosecutors confirmed this, citing "The Bold and the Beautiful". Further, "Childline studies in KwaZulu Natal last year revealed that 90% of all male child sex offenders between the ages of 13 and 18 had been exposed to pornography and 'believed that this had an impact on the development of their abusive behaviour.'"

5. RADIO AND TV

5.1 Interest was shown by Tim Modisa and the manager of an addiction centre who was being interviewed on Cape Talk (9 June) after we had phoned in to bring up the issue of porn addiction. As a result, Tim Modisa also gave out STOP's contact details. Subsequently we received calls for help from three wives of porn users and from the Elim Addiction Centre in Johannesburg.

5.2 In October, when public interest in the Films & Publications Amendment Bill was running high our Chairlady was interviewed on CCFM and Radio 786.

5.3 On 11 October, Sheldon Morias, news anchor for Radio 702, contacted S.T.O.P. for comment on the growing market in Johannesburg for pirated porn DVD's sold on the street. He stated that he had interviewed street vendors who reported that 85% of their business came from pirated porn DVD's.

5.4 Cape Talk gave a significant amount of “air space” to pornography during the year and we used several opportunities to phone in.

5.5 Public Opinion on TV

In the 27 September TV3 programme “Rights and Recourses” when the Films and Publications Amendment Bill versus Freedom of expression in the media was being discussed, it was interesting to note that 83% of the viewers polled were in favour of porn being banned, and all the phone-ins and SMS comments were anti-porn.

6. NETWORKING

There is some overlap in this section which includes linking up with like-minded organisations, attending conferences and workshops, and awareness talks on the dangers of porn and the protection of children.

6.1 Africa Unite

Africa Unite is a registered non-profit organisation which started as a project of IDASA (Institute for Democracy in South Africa) and was officially launched in 2003. It had its beginnings in 2001 when a group of concerned young adults from New Crossroads came together to discuss ways of solving the problem of the ever-increasing levels of crime, alcohol, drug abuse and xenophobia in their community. Sponsorship at the time was being provided by an organisation concerned with the incidence of AIDS amongst young people.

Our contact with Africa Unite came about as a result of our Youth Representative having spent a short while working at their headquarters (Idasa House, Cape Town) during University vac early in 2006. As a result we were subsequently invited by the director to address a group of young people (15 to 18 years) on “The effects of pornography on youth and adolescents” on Youth Day, 16 June, at the Silvertree Youth Centre in Manenberg. (A report on this event follows – see 6.2.) A few days later we again met at Idasa House to

explore ways in which we could work together. This holds promise for the future.

6.2 Youth Day Talk

At the one-day debate organised at the Silvertree Youth Centre in Manenberg, 2 committee members addressed an interracial group of about 40 high-schoolers from differing areas, e.g. Rawsonville, Mitchells Plain, Khayelitsha, Camps Bay. These were selected youngsters with leadership abilities.

The group responded to the talk by enthusiastically acknowledging the accessibility of porn in their communities, e.g. via TV, cell phones and print media, and confirming the negative impact on them. During question time they shared the need for counselling for porn addiction.

They then broke up into five groups to discuss the impact of the talk and to form resolutions. They also created imaginative posters to show their plan of action to create awareness, e.g. "abstinence is better than cure". Ten leaders were nominated to later meet and discuss how they would carry the resolutions further under supervision of Africa Unite.

Their "Manenberg Resolutions", which they had drawn up "after considering the negative impact of distribution of pornographic materials amongst children and adolescents...", were then read out. The first point mentioned was "We are saying 'no' to pornographic material." There were 15 points in total with two stating: "(13) Government must be more vocal about the dangers of porn than they are about the dangers of HIV/AIDS; (14) Government must promote and protect African traditional morals and values."

STOP members were deeply moved and encouraged by the vision, passion and creativity of the adolescents.

6.3 Men's Convention (organised by the City Partnership) at Cape Town International Conference Centre – 14 October 2006

The topic of the Conference was "What is Man?" and 2 committee members were invited to speak on "Man and Pornography". There were about 900 men in the audience and the time allocated was 20 minutes but extended to about 40 minutes. The aim of the talk was to raise awareness – including addiction – and to offer healing. The feedback from the audience was very encouraging and a number of people subsequently contacted STOP for help and invitations were extended to speak at churches. They were approached after the talk by a renowned South African film maker, who was hoping to make a documentary on the effects of pornography from a victim's point of view. STOP was persuaded to accept a generous donation towards the costs of their pamphlets.

6.4 Children's Day

On 1 June (International Children's Day) and as part of Child Protection Month, we were invited to attend a morning function at Goodwood Prison. This was set up by the Western Cape Government's Child Protection Committee and involved, amongst others, the Department of Correctional Services. The object was to "strengthen and affirm child protection providers and services." It was interesting to meet up with the six women commissioned officers (social workers) who run the Sex Offenders' Rehabilitation Programme operating in Cape Town and the Boland. Pornographic material is listed as one of the external risk factors that can lead to re-offending. Cheryl Blanckenberg, who heads the Provincial Administration's Child Protection Department, invited STOP to join their task team but we had to decline due to time constraints.

6.5 Provincial Trafficking Task Team Consultative Workshop – 1 August 2006

We were invited to attend the above to discuss draft legislation, published by the SA Law Reform Commission, focussing on the prevention of human trafficking, protection of victims and prosecution of offenders. Our suggested definition of pornography (hitherto undefined in law) was well received and recorded.

6.6 SA Association for Pastoral Workers (SAAP) Conference, 19 to 20 September 2006, at NG Kerk, Stellenberg

The theme: The Crisis of Families in a Changing World.

A local Clinical Psychologist, had suggested that STOP should reply to the Association's call for envisaged two-hour workshops. Together we decided that "The family and pornography: An unrecognised crisis and a community response" would be an appropriate subject for a workshop. The Conference was designed to reach, amongst others, professional, specialist, pastoral and lay counsellors nationwide. Our abstract was approved and 10 delegates "booked" to attend our workshop. This was presented mainly in a question and answer format with the psychologist as facilitator and 3 committee members providing the "answers". Positive feedback was received.

6.7 Film & Publication Board

On 16 November, at the invitation of the FPB, we attended an informative Stakeholder Workshop at a Cape Town hotel. The subject was the Anti-Child Pornography campaign.

6.8 In early December we were invited to a lunch to mark the opening of the new FPB office in Wynberg, Cape. The main speaker, Mr Patrick Chauke, MP, reiterated his conviction that there is no place for porn in South Africa, and that it should be banned.

6.9 Talks

In addition to the above Men's Convention, S.T.O.P. committee members gave the following talks by invitation:

February – to the Parents' Educational Forum at Somerset College Preparatory School

March – at three Sunday services at Pinelands Baptist Church

April – First Baptist Church, Khayelitsha

July – Kirstenhof Young Adults Cell Group (Meadowridge Baptist)

August – Playdale Pre-primary School, Meadowridge

August – Pikkewouter Pre-primary School, Somerset West

November – two evenings at Lakeview Baptist Church

The aspects covered included the harm of porn to adults and children, the dangers of addiction, child porn and ways to protect children from exposure to porn and paedophiles on the electronic media.

Without exception, talks were received with great appreciation, it being apparent that they had served as eye-openers. Tangible results were evident, e.g. the formation of support groups targeting particular needs and responses from church ministers who planned to open up the subject to their congregations and to develop support.

7. SUPPORT

The Support Group for pornography addicts continued to function well with positive results. Some members had been able to leave and new ones had joined. Average attendance stood at five.

7.1 The Support Group for wives of addicts formed by a lady in Mowbray as a result of STOP's talks at Pinelands Baptist Church has provided wonderful support to an increasing number of wives.

7.2 During the year we received some 50 phone calls from persons, nationwide, seeking help, advice and counseling. All were grateful for the assistance received. However it was always stressed that STOP does not provide professional counseling

8. DIARY

We were offered the wonderful opportunity by the manager of diaries for CTP printers to design four informative pages in their

national primary school homework diary for 2007. This diary is sold in large retail stores and might be given away in women's magazines, and all-in-all will reach approximately 750 000 children. We are extremely grateful to a senior primary and remedial teacher, for very imaginatively creating games for each page in order to convey the effects of inappropriate sexual material to young children, to a graphic designer for designing the layout in a short space of time, and to Childline for their contribution. All four pages submitted by STOP were accepted.

9. ACTION FOR "WATCHDOGS"

We continued to be greatly encouraged by supporters who had voiced their complaints about magazines or adverts and had had positive responses, showing that one person can make a difference.

At our June meeting we handed out "Action for 'Watchdogs'" material containing extracts from the Film & Publications Act to help equip complainants. STOP also requested a volunteer to spearhead a campaign to effectively monitor offensive and harmful material in the print media.

We drew attention to a new Porn Blocker Service for cell phones initiated by SMSWEB which can prevent children from downloading adult content from major providers. Informative booklets/brochures from Childline and the Film & Publication

Board were also handed out, viz:

Frequently Asked Questions (about the function of the FPB);

Child Pornography;

Internet Safety;

Watching What Your Children Watch – Age Ratings.

10. "MEDIA-WATCH"

STOP had frequently made appeals for a volunteer to head a team to monitor offensive and harmful material in the print media and to write letters of complaint to the appropriate bodies. We are therefore extremely grateful that a supporter come forward at the close of our October meeting to undertake this task.

11. SPEAKERS

We extend grateful thanks to Clive Borman, FPB Compliance Inspector for the Western Cape for presenting interesting and informative talks at our AGM in March and at our October meeting.

12. STOP OFFICE

STOP is thrilled to have been offered a permanent office at Meadowridge Baptist Church as well as a paid assistant for three mornings a week. This permanent base and assistance will help strengthen the smooth running of the organisation and we extend our grateful thanks and appreciation to Meadowridge Baptist.

13. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

STOP's major income has continued to come from Meadowridge Baptist Church. This has been boosted by individual generous donations. Our gratitude is immense as without this funding we could literally not function. Details are given in our financial report.

14. THANKS

STOP has been greatly encouraged this year and is extremely grateful for the support shown not only by individuals willing to help at a moment's notice by key figures in Government and by Organisations who have encouraged, advised or worked with us.

To our loyal supporters, "watchdogs" and those who so faithfully attend our meetings – thank you. Your support and communicating of useful information are deeply appreciated.