

Many view adult entertainment

By CHRISTY CONROY
Staff Writer

Timidly the young boy pushes a pack of gum, a can of Coke and the latest issue of Playboy across the counter. His face turns crimson under the piercing gaze of the salesman looming over him. "You look about 13 to me, young man," the salesman says. Shakily the boy replies, "I shave real close, sir."

As most people know, you have to be 18 years old to purchase adult magazines or rent adult videos. Often salesmen, such as J.A. Mousmoules, who works at Jeff's Campus Confectionery, which stocks adult magazines, have to deal with curious adolescents.

Although flashing neon signs shouting such slogans as "topless," "bottomless," and "girls, girls, girls," are not something commonly seen in Chapel Hill, this town still has its share of what could be considered pornographic material. And many people feel the state is not effectively regulating this market.

If one is willing to search a little bit, a section of strictly "adult entertainment" can be found. An interested person may be faced with the embarrassing task of asking where the adult section is located. "Sometimes people walk in, look around, and when I ask to help them, they just say "no, no thanks," and leave — you know that's what they're looking for," said Walter McFall, owner of

Show and Tell Video Tapes.

Often adult entertainment is tucked away in a small, well-disguised room around the corner or behind a curtain. Sometimes, the curtain is a forbidding dark color, and sometimes it deceptively matches the rest of the decor — so as not to arouse any unwanted attention or appear overly conspicuous.

McFall stressed that carrying adult movies was a matter of freedom of choice.

"We are a full service video store, we carry it for the public that wants it. We don't advertise that it is here."

Once the age barrier of 18 is broken, and the patron finally slips behind that dark video store curtain, his or her eyes are bombarded by hundreds of detailed images and titles, the only advertisement for what waits inside the boxes.

"Anyone in the adult room has a prior knowledge of what is back there. If they are offended, then it is not for them," McFall said.

Out of the local video store and down the street, in your favorite magazine store, another version of "adult entertainment" exists. Adult magazines line store shelves, sometimes side-by-side with Seventeen, GQ, or Cosmopolitan. More often, adult magazines such as Playboy, Hustler, Velvet, Gent and Torso claim a shelf or two of their own, either to the side or above and out of the

eyesight or reach of those too young to buy them.

Despite the discreet location of these magazines and videos, they don't sit around collecting dust.

"The adult magazines sell fairly steadily, I'd say, as good as anything else," Mousmoules said.

The stereotypical greasy, sleazy, hairy, polyester-wearing, gold chain- and medallion-swinging adult entertainment connoisseur perpetuated by movies and television doesn't apply in reality.

All kinds of people are buying and renting adult entertainment.

"People of all ages buy it, from college age to people in their 60s, girls too," Mousmoules said.

"Before, I'd say that 99 percent of the people who rented them were males; now, it is more like 25 percent to 75 percent," McFall said.

Proof of age is always required when purchasing such material. Show and Tell Video Tapes requires that members' age go on their membership cards.

Opinions over exactly what is and is not pornographic vary from person to person. What is available on the shelves of local stores follows N.C. guidelines. The video rented as a local sorority gag, or this month's Playboy, is considered by many as harmless.

To many other people, adult entertainment falls under the negative and harmful shadow of the image produced

by the word pornography. Women are often its victims, while child pornography, though illegal, has not disappeared.

Myron Liptzin, associate director of Student Psychological Services, said studies involving the viewing of the kind of material available in local store led to callous attitudes toward women and had negative repercussions on female and familial relationships.

The issue of pornography is a very divisive one. It goes beyond sexual explicitness and dives deep into arguments over women's rights, child abuse and censorship.

UNC Student Stores offer only Playboy. Rut Tufts, general manager of Student Stores, said the decision was based on internal guidelines of what is appropriate, content and interest of readers.

Deciding what to sell is a delicate issue.

"People who deal in books should avoid slogans and bandwagon ways of deciding issues," Tufts said.

Due to the issue of censorship versus exploitation and all the thousands of differing opinions about how much is too much, and if anything is too much, pornography is one of the many ongoing arguments on which people may never agree.

"The issue of pornography is a bed of coals, and as long as people stir the ashes, there are going to be sparks," McFall said.

Porn stirs controversy among students

By MARA LEE
Staff Writer

"Angel Kelly is one of those porn stars who was born to —. You really can't imagine her doing anything else."

[This quote is from a movie review in Live!, a pornographic magazine. Sexually explicit material may consist of words as well as pictures, and the validity of reading just for the articles' becomes a point of debate.

Not all students agree on the definition of pornography.

"I never really thought about it. I let society define it," said Sheldon Grigg, a junior chemistry major from Kings Mountain. He does not, however, consider Playboy pornography.

Similarly, Joe (not his real name) said pornography was "more than just nakedness. Blatantly sexual poses and acts on films. Playboy I wouldn't consider pornography — that's just basically nakedness."

Carolyn Pou, a senior industrial relations major from Charlotte, researched pornography for a class. She said the definition they used was "anything that was sexually explicit; exploitation of women where they were degraded or dehumanized." They found that Playgirl was used mainly by homosexual men, she said.

George Stiles, a freshman political science major from Charlotte, said, "It's kind of an individual thing."

Many students found certain types of pornography more offensive than others. The five students sampled agreed child pornography was distasteful, and most people found pictured sexual acts unacceptable as well.

"I don't think pictures of women are bad — not that great, but not necessarily bad — but when it gets to pictures of erotic acts, I find that offensive," Stiles said.

In contrast, Joe said, "I've never seen anything offensive. If I saw children, brutality, S & M, it wouldn't interest me." He does find sexual acts, including female-female and group pictures, appealing, he said.

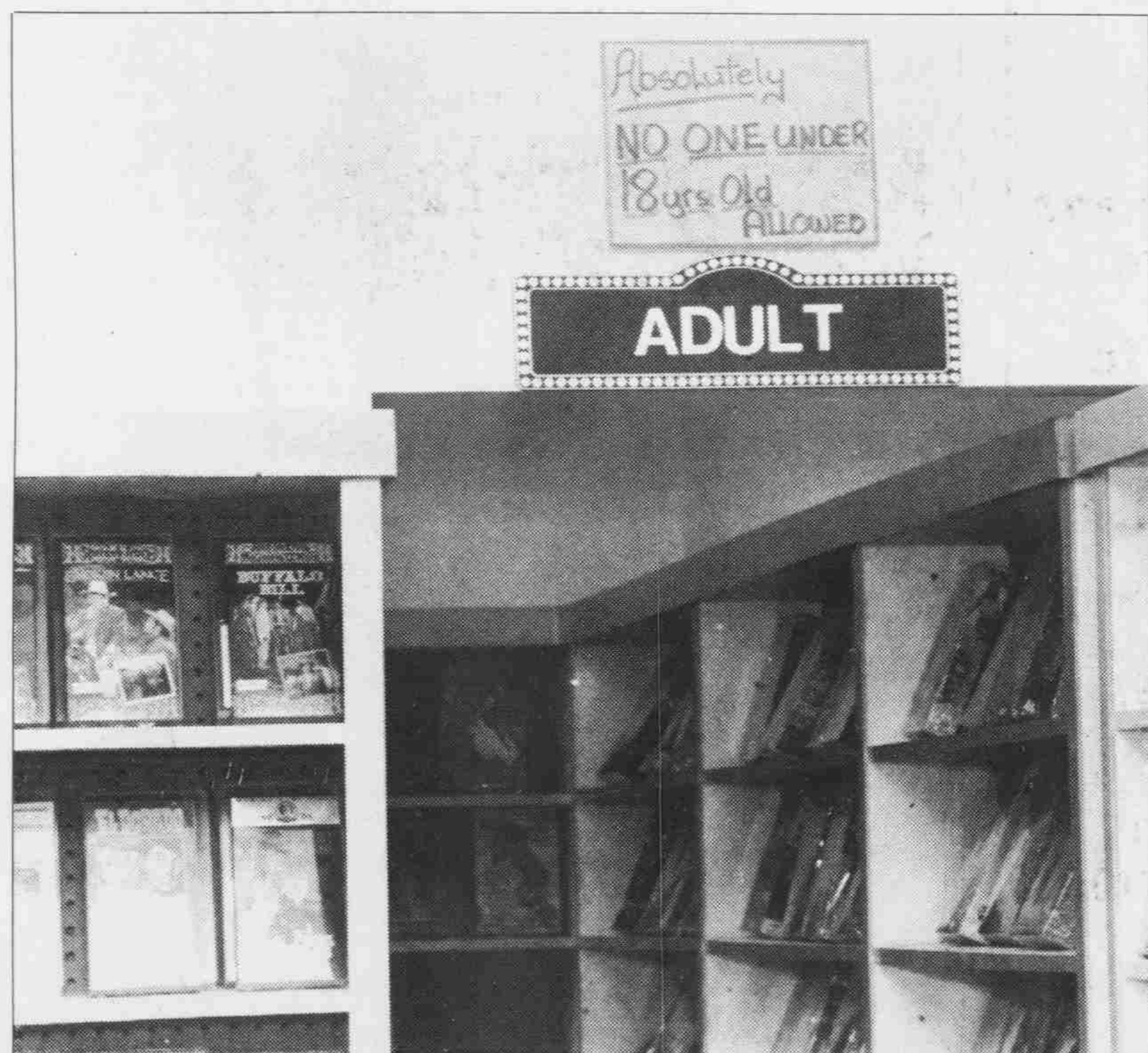
Ristin Cooks, a senior interdisciplinary studies major from Fayetteville, said, "I object to it being exploitative — objectifying (material) is a better word (than pornography)."

"Snuff films (porn and slasher mix) have to be about the worst things anybody's ever come up with," she said.

"My objection to pornography is not to sexual content per se. I think that sex is great and that people's bodies are great. I think being a person with a body and sexuality is personal. And what is obscene to me is turning that type of thing into something to be marketed.

"It's obscene to me that it's OK for me to take off my shirt in a magazine, but it's not OK for me to take off my shirt and walk down Franklin Street. There's something wrong with my body if there's a person in it," Cooks said.

Pornography is more familiar to some students than others. Everyone interviewed had seen explicit magazines, though most males had only seen the most mainstream —



Playboy and Penthouse.

Joe, however, had owned Hustler and High Society and seen four or five pornographic movies. His reaction to the movies was less than enthusiastic.

"Basically, all porn movies are repetitions on the same thing — non-stop sex and no plot. That gets boring," he said.

Opinions varied on the issue of pornography's demeaning potential. Grigg said, "I think it's as equally demeaning to men as to women."

Stiles said, "It's not something I get into, but I think it

should be protected under the First Amendment. These groups get all worked up about it — it wouldn't be around if people didn't want it."

He said that pornography was not demeaning and added, "I think women perceive that it does (demean them). No one's forcing the women to do it." But he did find the Live! quote demeaning.

But Joe said, "I think if women want to do that (pose) to make money, I don't think there's anything wrong with that." He said about the Live! quote: "That's very stereotypical. I don't think it's really meant to demean, I think

it's meant to appeal to the sort of people who read that. It's trying to appeal to that sort of mentality."

He responded to a short story about a woman who "lived for sex" from the same source. "The statement itself is demeaning, but it's blatant fiction. I'm sure there are women out there like that but not in general."

Cooks reacted differently. She said, "A lot of what they call simply advertising demeans women. Everything in our society, in the media, is linked to sex. Bodies are linked to sex. And your success as a person is connected to how your body looks — this unattainable ideal."

Reactions to vocal anti-pornography groups were also mixed, about half and half. Stiles said, "In a way, they are extremists. The girls who did the ACC-Playboy thing had a right to do that. I don't think you can force your opinions on other people."

Males overwhelmingly dominate the market for pornography. Students tried to explain this fact in several ways.

"More men are willing to use and purchase porn. I can't see women going in and buying movies of men, and I don't know why. I guess men are just more sex driven," Stiles said.

Pou said, "It's a huge industry. People do enjoy it, but I don't understand it. Maybe we just don't think the same way."

"I think it's a cultural thing that men tend to be stimulated visually more than women," Cooks said.

"More importantly, men have always had the economic power in our culture. Products are produced so that men will buy them."

Joe said, "Appearance is much more important to men. I know it's very important to me. Male nakedness doesn't appeal to women as much as female nakedness does to males. I don't know why."

Students supported restrictions on child pornography but realized enforcement was difficult. "Zoning laws don't seem to work," Pou said, but added people were too apathetic to effectively form grass roots opposition. If such an organization were to form they'd "start with the most harmful — with children. Where women have chains and things and they're totally not seen as a human anymore, they're just this object."

Cooks agreed, "I think there should be restrictions on violent acts and definitely on the act of producing child pornography. I'm opposed to the North Carolina law on pornography because I don't think you can legislate problems." She pointed out that sexist attitudes pervade society.

"The fact of the matter is that it's legal in North Carolina for a man to rape his wife, and she has no recourse. We need to talk to people, and educate people, and change the society."