

Oklahoma Needs to Clean Up Pornography, Crime, Litter

OKLAHOMA — and particularly Oklahoma City—needs a clean-up in the New Year. In fact, we need a triple cleanup to get rid of pornography, litter and crime in the streets.

The three are not unrelated. All are undesirable. All are under attack by leading citizens, churches and civic organizations. None will be eliminated until each citizen accepts responsibility for cleaning up his community.

Early in 1973, a leading news magazine reported that "what might be described as a backlash against pornography is building up around the country." In June that year, rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court opened the way for a pornography plague. Since then, pipelines of pornography have brought forth a flood of obscenity.

Movies so dirty that newspapers (including this one) will not accept their advertising are shown at neighborhood theaters. The movie rating system has been properly called "an exercise in ambiguity" because it is meaningless and unenforced.

Television has brought violence and explicit sex scenes into our homes. The so-called "family hour" was devised for the purpose of restricting indecent materials to other times.

Magazines and newspapers now publish words and pictures that would have been totally unacceptable a generation ago. Standards of decency have suffered a tremendous setback.

A few cities have tried futilely to fence off pornography and immorality by setting up zones of unrestrained license. Efforts to hide such filth do not work. Like a cancer, it will spread and eventually will destroy the body.

The district attorney has forced the most vicious movie houses to close, but indecencies still are shown on other screens. Distributors of publications have agreed to eliminate the most salacious ones but lewd literature is still displayed openly at newsstands, groceries and drug stores.

This will not stop until people demand that it stop. There need for new community perspectives on litter applies to pornography, too. A leader in the Oklahoma City Beautiful campaign declared: "This is not just a cleanup campaign. It is a drive to change community attitudes about litter." It seems reasonable that people with dirty minds are not going to worry about littered streets.

There is a connection between pornography and crime. More than a year ago, The New York Times reported that "nearly all of the major hardcore pornographic newspapers and periodicals in the United States are distributed by companies controlled by organized crime members."

Pornography will continue to be catered to youth and adults, our streets will continue to be littered, and our homes will be unsafe from crime until public attitudes of permissiveness are changed.