

Slide show raises eyebrows

A controversial slide presentation on abortion was presented to about a dozen local teachers and other interested parties Monday at St. Theresa's High School, and the general consensus among the viewers was that the material could be of value to the education of young people on the subject.

The presentation, which comprises the visual segment of the Right to Life Association's program discussion of abortion, has been banned from schools within the Simcoe County Board of Education jurisdiction because of a series of four slides contained within the presentation.

The slides show fetuses which have been aborted by suction, salt poisoning, hysterotomy, and shows another photo of a garbage pail containing aborted fetuses taken, according to the taped script, at a Canadian Teaching Hospital.

The Simcoe County Board voted against the presentation being shown complete with the controversial slides when the Barrie Right to Life Association approached the Board last August.

"We agreed with them that it was emotional," says Mary Van Lange, president of the Barrie Right to Life Association, part of an

international body which describes itself as an educational group. "They argues that it's a shock tactic to show the scenes, but we believe it's just stating the facts. It's no more shocking than showing the carnage in car accidents to promote safe driving -- something teenagers are exposed to all the time."

The Right to Life Association argues that life begins from the time of conception, and to abort is to take a human life.

The slide presentation has been shown in Roman Catholic schools including St. Theresa's High School in Midland and several private schools, Mrs. Van Lange said, though the slides in question are removed when the presentation is made to children below the high school level.

"The object of the presentation is not to give children nightmares," says Father Steven Somerville of St. Margaret's Church in Midland, whose Parish Council invited the Barrie Right to Life Group to Midland for Monday's showing.

Father Somerville wrote Board superintendent Irving Harris asking why the presentation would not be allowed into the Simcoe County Secondary Schools.

Mr. Harris returned a copy of the Board's most recent judgement - that the presentation was "inappropriate" --

and added a general comment pertaining to the Board's attitude when discussing the presentation:

"It was decided that it was too graphic and powerful for presentation to teenagers," the statement said.

Mr. Harris could not be reached for comment, but trustee Alvin Gravelle said that material outside of the

presentation can be used by SCBE teachers as source material, and that all that's not permitted is the slide show.

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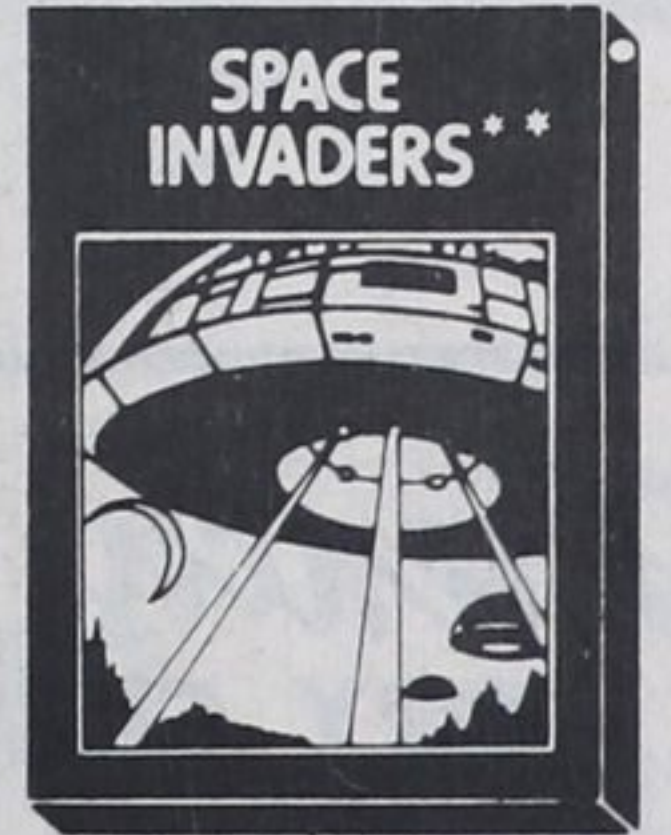
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