

Weekender

Comment

Need law to fight porn — not art

Asked to draw a line between artistic expression and pornography, the law is sure to fall short.

Still, librarians need a definition they can use to protect themselves from the fringe element in society — which could interpret the nude paintings of Michelangelo as pornography.

Classic art and literature should not be denied our young people — The Diviners, by Margaret Lawrence being banned from school libraries was a travesty.

The proposed federal Bill C-54 could result in charges against library boards and the onus would be on the library to prove innocence.

The intent of the bill is to crack down on violent and child pornography yet its application could create chaos.

Let's hope the second reading will note the librarians' concerns in their country-wide petition, yet keep its focus on the goal — prevention of degrading and exploitative pornography.

— Jo Ann Stevenson



The beguiling ways of children

You know that Christmas is fast approaching when your own daughter starts putting price tags on her artwork.

My darling daughter is forever drawing those flowers, hearts, and ladies-in-their-finery pictures that little girls are noted for. The type of stuff you normally have to peel off the refrigerator door when the accumulated weight of six months worth of artistic offerings threatens to tip the big appliance right over on its face.


The Kid has some talent. I'll admit. But it did throw me for a loop the other day when I picked up her latest effort.

I was just starting to go into my "That's the most beautiful piece of art I've ever seen" bit, reaching out to pick it up, when she stopped me short, pulling my hand back with a scolding gesture. "Not so fast, Dad!" she said sharply. "That will cost you \$1.75. Can't you see the price tag?"

"Since when have you adopted the role of artist-mercenary?" I inquired.

From Where I Live

Bruce Stapley



"What?" she scowled, her face overcome by that confused look she always gets when I use words that I myself can barely understand.

"Come on, Dad. I need the money for Christmas shopping. Do you want a present this year or don't you?"

While respecting her entrepreneurial initiative, I was having some moral difficulty with the entire concept. "Here, give me the goods." I instructed her. "We'll negotiate when we go out Christmas shopping together."

I sometimes think that kids have all the cunning and guile of a snake oil salesman. For the little darlings are forever trying us on.

And it's almost as if they lie in wait for weak moments, those times when we parents momentarily take our guard down.

For instance, the 50 cents you promised them for a little treat at the snack bar when you are on holidays always seems to have become \$1 when it comes time to collect. Hey, they know you're on holidays too, and that means a potential weakening of the usually rigid standards upon which you base your parental decisions.

It's always best to write down for future reference any promises you make to your kids. They are not above causing you to question your own soundness of mind if

they think it will work to their advantage.

You mustn't introduce them to the meaning of the word "senile", as they will try to convince you that it is a form of premature senility that causes you to so often remember deals being struck that are out of whack with their vivid recollections.

Now, one child on his or her own is usually enough to test your powers of restraint and good judgment. But when two or more of them gang up on you, look out, especially when they are girls who have mastered the art of getting to you through the sly use of facial expressions.

My daughter has a complete repertoire of pouts, chagrined looks, and pleading expressions that only the most heartless of human beings could possibly resist. Unless you've seen them all before. Which I have.

However, I find it extremely difficult to maintain a curmudgeonly stance when she comes to me with one of her friends

explaining that their little lives will never be able to absorb the trauma of being told, no, they can't go ahead with their hastily conceived plan for a sleep-over party that very night, which just so happens to be a school night.

So you stick to your guns, but feel like such a stick-in-the-mud that you offer to take them to McDonald's for dinner instead. Which is really all they were hoping for in the first place.

Air Canada's ground workers could surely achieve their every demand were they to install a couple of kids like my daughter on their negotiating team!

Yes, even as I write this column, she's at it again, insisting that it's her turn to use the typewriter. Which means I'll be expected to give her a quick course on how to use the machine.

Oh, how fine is the line that lies between the maintenance of at least a semblance of control, and out and out resignation to the fact of the irresistibility of children.

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