

# 'Peek' A Peek into the Kinsey Files

Erotic photographs fill an upcoming book intended to raise interest and funds.

By Dan Carpenter  
STAFF WRITER

**T**he objects on the outdoor barbecue grill could be steaks or they could be hamburgers, but there's no doubt about the cook. She's a she. Our apprehension of that fact is unhindered by smoke, shrubbery or garments. Indeed, all the well-proportioned young chef is wearing is a pair of black-framed glasses, and she peers through them intently, perhaps at the food, perhaps at the perilously small gap between the hot kettle and her vividly exposed epidermis.

At least she looks more comfortable than the nude person in another picture, wrapped head to foot in thick tight tape. Not to mention the Cupidesque couple shooting a bow and arrow on a snowy hillside, who remembered their galoshes and only their galoshes.

Welcome to the odd, whimsical, quaint, gross and elegant world of erotica, Kinsey Institute-style.

The venerable, world-renowned — and controversial — center for sexual research at Indiana University is making a small portion of its massive photograph collection available for public consumption, at \$60 per hardback copy.

"This is an amazingly rich archive of material that should be shared with a larger audience," says James Crump, publisher of Arena Editions of Santa Fe, N.M., which will release *Peek: Photographs From the Kinsey Institute* in the fall.

To boost the book, and its revenues, Arena has ar-

ranged with "a large-circulation magazine" — which Crump declines to name — to publish some of the pictures beginning in August.

"We believe we will be able to sell the book and reach a large audience," says Crump, whose interest traces to his stint as curator of the Kinsey collection in the early 1990s. "The Kinsey Institute is a very strong name in the United States and also has power in the Asian and European markets that we serve. But this is a quintessentially American book."

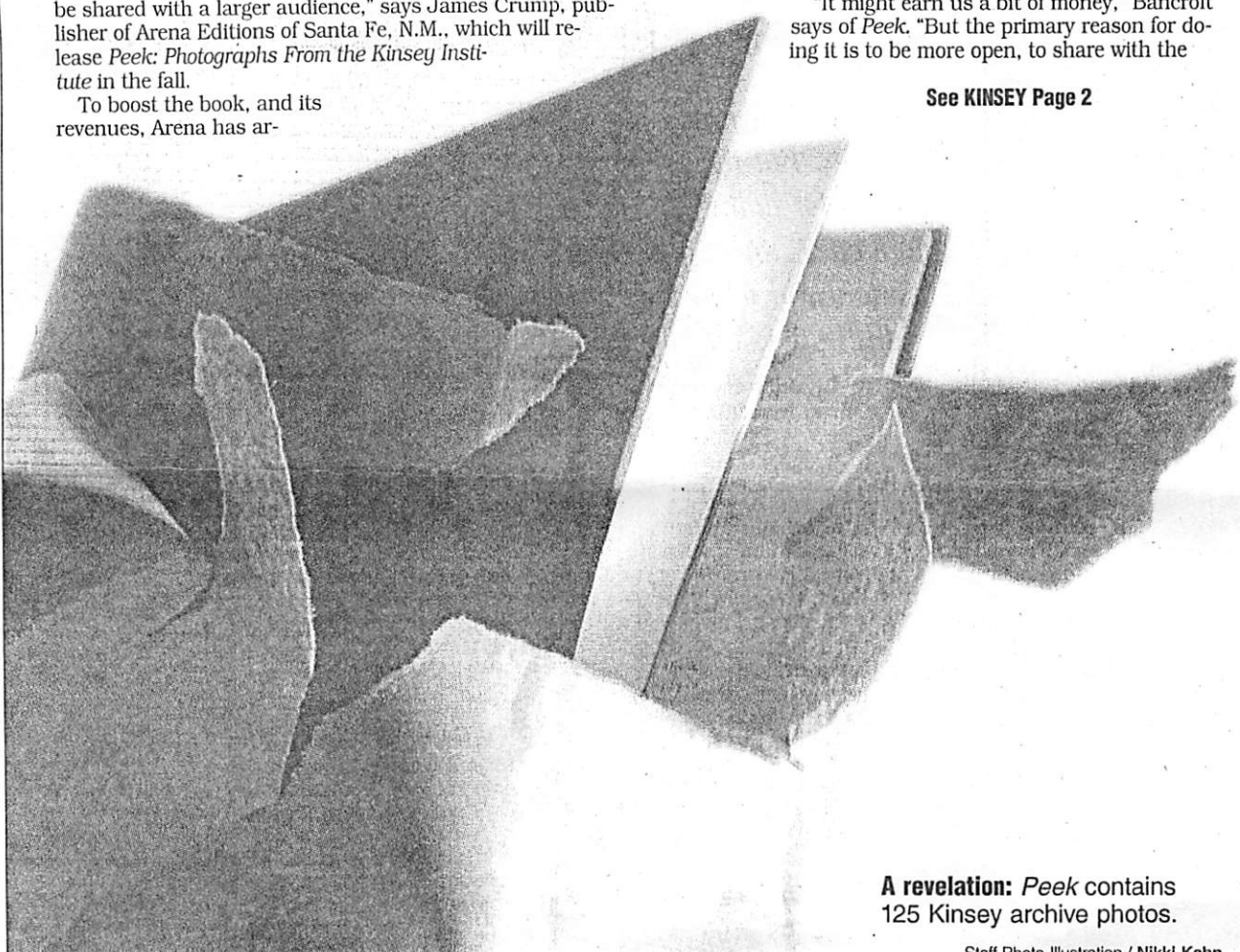
Kinsey Director John Bancroft says (ahem) exposure, more than money, is the objective of this first-ever publication of Kinsey photographs, which follows three well-attended and well-received photo exhibits on campus since 1994.

"We've been sort of coming out of the closet in recent years after many years of being considered secretive and closed — which we have to be to some extent because of the sensitivity of some of the things we deal with," Bancroft explains.

The British-born psychiatrist took the helm in 1995 after several years of turmoil at the Kinsey, centered around his flamboyant and ultimately ousted predecessor, June Reisch. Political flak, mostly from the Religious Right, continues, as does the flow of articles and books scrutinizing, attacking and defending the late Alfred Kinsey. What does not flow, Bancroft says, is any university money for the Kinsey's image collection, though IU does fund the Kinsey's basic operations.

"It might earn us a bit of money," Bancroft says of *Peek*. "But the primary reason for doing it is to be more open, to share with the

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**A revelation:** *Peek* contains 125 Kinsey archive photos.

## KINSEY

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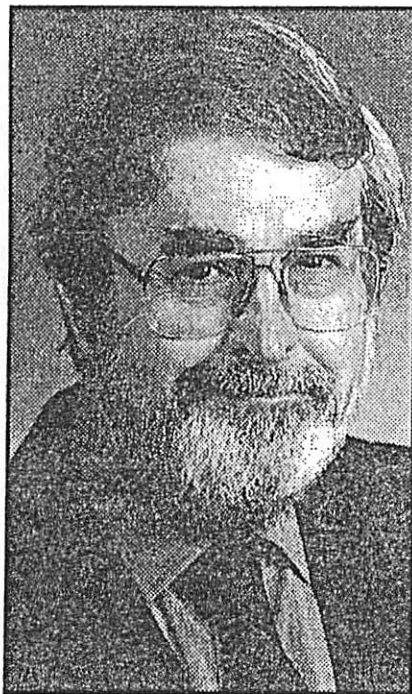
outside world what the Kinsey Institute is all about.”

While neither he nor Crump will disclose the financial arrangements for publication, Bancroft insists it's no blockbuster deal. “If we can earn 10,000 bucks, it would be nice.”

Unlike Crump, Bancroft doubts the book — part of a spate of deluxe erotica and sexual how-tos on the mainstream market these days — can be presented to a truly general audience. Even its cover shows bared breasts, against which a woman is pressing a picture frame. Hardly pornographic by Third Millennium standards, but not ready, for example, to accompany this newspaper article.

Selection of the book's 125 photographs from the archive of about 75,000 fell principally to Jeffrey Wolin, chairman of the art department at IU and an acclaimed published photographer; Betsy Stirratt, director of the IU Fine Arts Gallery; and Jennifer Yamashiro, former curator of the Kinsey collection.

The images date back as far as



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**Kinsey Institute director**

the late 19th century and cross a wide range of sexual preferences, postures, props, anatomical parts and points of view. They include amateur shots as well as the work of such celebrated artists as George Platt Lynes, a *Vogue* photographer of the 1930s and 1940s who rendered nudes in socially enforced secrecy and gained Alfred Kinsey as a patron.

“We wanted the collection to be sort of representative,” Bancroft says. “Some of the photographs we

have, I think, are very beautiful; some are funny; some are bizarre; some are weird. We don't want to shock people. We don't want to offend anyone, though you can't avoid offending everybody.”

If the Kinsey couldn't take the heat, he adds, it would back away from the kettle.

“We won't be surprised if there's criticism. There is a sustained ongoing campaign to discredit the Kinsey Institute and Dr. Kinsey's work. We live with that.”