

ALA Denies Porn Played Role in Library Rape

By Bruce Sullivan

CNS Staff Writer

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(CNSNews.com) - In response to charges by a Michigan family group that Internet pornography available online in a Muskegon library may have contributed to the rape of a 10-year-old girl in the library's restroom last week, a spokesperson for the American Library Association told CNSNews.com that she finds the accusation unfair.

"It was outrageous," said Linda Wallace, ALA director of public information, concerning a statement issued by American Family Association of Michigan President Gary Glenn the day after the attack, which claimed that the library's lack of Internet filtering software lured pedophiles and porn addicts to the facility.

"Given the brutally violent nature of child pornography available on the Internet, we are thankful the little girl is alive," said Glenn in a news release.

"We believe it is fair to observe that this is exactly the type of incident an irresponsible policy invites. You can't put out bait for pedophiles and be surprised," added Glenn.

Glenn went on to say that all public libraries in Michigan should install filtering software on its library computers to block access to web sites featuring pornography or advocating violence against minorities.

CNSNews.com calls to America Family Association headquarters were not returned.

On November 2, police allege that an unidentified male hid in a basement restroom at the Hackley Public Library and raped the girl while her father waited for her upstairs in the children's book section.

According to multiple news sources, police have several leads, plus a sketch of one suspect drawn by an amateur artist, who told the *Muskegon Chronicle* that "she got a brief look at the suspect" when she was using the library.

A librarian told police that the drawing resembled a man seen at the library "a couple of days before (the rape), acting suspicious. He was coming in and just looking around and not getting any books," said the librarian.

Library officials say that there is no evidence that the suspected attacker accessed pornography on the library's computers. "This (rapist) was not seen by anyone on the floor where Internet access is. At this point, we

don't think he's a regular library user known to us," said Martha Ferriby, Hackley Library director.

The assault has raised anew the issue of filtering public Internet sites for obscene and objectionable material, with many conservative family interest groups asking Congress to address the matter.

In the press release Glenn said officials at the library where the girl was raped only "pays lip service and little else to protecting Muskegon children from the hazards of Internet pornography and violence. It does nothing to stop a pedophile who ignores the policy and manages not to get caught, especially since some of the most dangerous forms of child pornography are written accounts of sexual abuse and torture of children," which he said cannot be easily observed by librarians.

Library officials disagreed with Glenn's charges of lax viewing policies. Wallace told CNSNews.com that libraries have strict policies concerning the viewing of pornography, adding that patrons who are caught doing so are warned, and then if they continue to surf the net for porn their computer privileges are revoked.

"We use people, and we have close staff monitoring. Pornography is not viewed at Hackley Library," said Ferriby, confirming Wallace's statement.

Nevertheless, Wallace did concede that some patrons may use libraries to watch and read pornography. "Libraries are very safe places, but they are also public places," she said, adding that she has never actually seen anyone using library computers to access pornography.

David Burt, a conservative activist who monitors incidents involving pornography and children in public libraries has compiled a report, *Dangerous Access*, available on his website - [Filtering Facts](#) - that he says documents hundreds of occurrences of people accessing pornography in libraries.

"The problem of children and adults accessing pornography in public libraries is far worse than organizations such as the American Library Association have led Americans to believe," said Burt