

Letters to the Editor

# Don't Sell the Kids Short—They Read Too

Recently several thousand little girls in Europe opened their newspapers to an article by staff writer Cal Posner, entitled "Idol of the Pre-Teenyboppers" (S&S, July 27). Perhaps Mr. Posner had imagined that girls and boys between 10 and 15 years old could not read. It would seem so!

In this article on David Cassidy, the thousands of children who hang on every word printed about him in such magazines as "Tiger Beat", "Sixteen", and "Spec" discovered that not only did he find it a lark to steal bicycles at 14, but that he also experimented with drugs. Perhaps the writer felt it necessary for the sake of realism to mention that the "idol" had feet of clay, but need he run on about it for five paragraphs?

Children are inevitably followers and now, with a veritable endorsement from "David", they will try anything that he has. For some, the article may have ruined his image and perhaps this is what Posner had in mind. For others, it will only make him seem that much more cool.

In the magazines which I mentioned earlier there are usually

several articles on David Cassidy in each issue. They have not found it necessary to mention his misdeeds to give their readers a glimpse of his life. One article did mention that he had "stopped smoking". In another the youngsters are told that he eats health foods but never, never that he stole bikes or tried drugs.

California is presently in the grip of a bike stealing epidemic without any help or endorsement to kids by the news media. Perhaps Europe's "little Americas" are now due for the same. As for the drugs, even our elementary school children are tempted by them regularly. Why tell them that "David tried it"? Now they may too.

It is too bad that when Stripes prints such articles you do not keep in mind the entire reading public instead of the majority who are adults. You put in a comic strip for kids only, i.e. Sesame Street, but you assume that that is all the kids read. Believe me it is not!

—Patricia A. Little  
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