

CSL hashes out pill hubbub

Although a recent policy statement by the University Health Center prohibits prescription of contraceptives unless a student is married or planning to be married, the center's medical director said Tuesday it's still the individual physician's prerogative to prescribe contraceptives.

"If that's the way things are, then that's what the policy should say," said ASUN President Steve Fowler. Fowler, along with about 10 women students and Health Center staff members, was at a meeting of the Council on Student Life to help clear up confusion over the new policy statement.

The women on campus are unaware they can see a physician and that it is his decision whether to prescribe contraceptives, Fowler said after the meeting.

The Health Center should inform students of what it's actually doing instead of issuing policy statements that aren't followed, he added. Fowler said he plans to meet with the medical director

to try and clarify the Center's position.

Dr. Samuel I. Fuenning, director, explained to CSL members that a physician runs the risk of criminal and civil liability when prescribing medication for minors.

Because of this risk and controversy over contraceptives, the new policy statement limiting prescriptions of contraceptives was adopted, Fuenning said.

"There's a general feeling among a good number of people that by prescribing contraception medication you do promote promiscuity. I don't feel it does, but I can't prove it," he said.

When CSL Chairman Franklin Eldridge suggested that the policy statement be amended so that it would apply only to those under the age of majority, Fuenning said he was sympathetic but "I do recognize the political climate we're in at this time."

Fuenning said he could refer to the Center's Executive Committee the suggestion of CSL member John Humlicek that the policy include a

statement about the physician's prerogative.

Several women students told CSL members that women's needs weren't being recognized and that denial of contraceptives can mean unwanted pregnancies.

Fuenning said he was sympathetic to the desires of students, and "We're doing whatever we can within the framework of the law."

He suggested that students work with Legislators to change the law. "This would go a long way in erasing the controversy surrounding the issue today." He added that he thinks "a good number of the Legislators would have a sympathetic ear."

Members of the University Women's Action Group began circulating petitions Monday in support of a more liberal policy on contraceptives and have about 900 signatures, according to Gail Folda. The women also will talk in dormitories about the policy and plan to present the petitions to the Board of Regents, she said.

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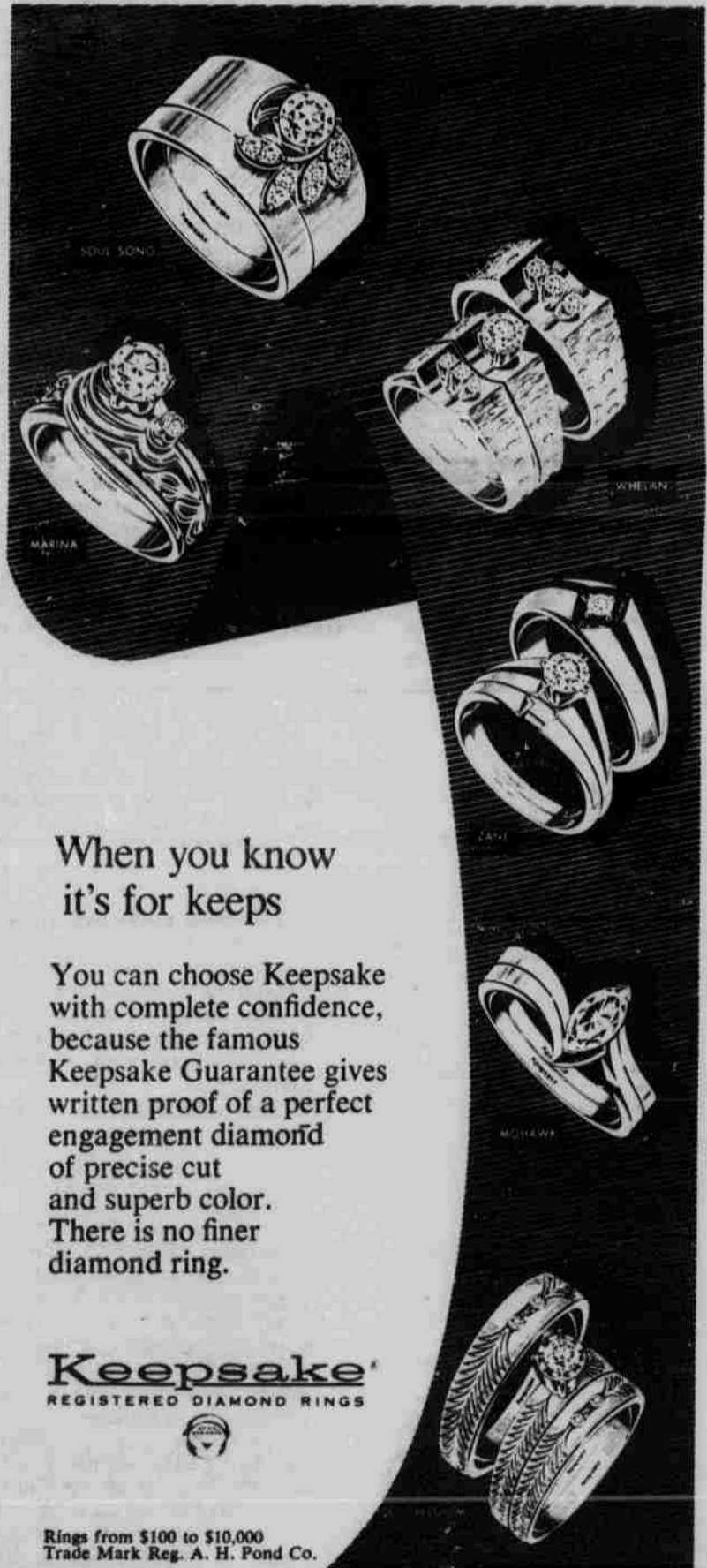
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