

ACLU prepares to battle Maloof's 'terrorism'

By SCOTT WILLIAMS
of the Journal Star

The American Civil Liberties Union on Thursday labeled Peoria Mayor Jim Maloof a "terrorist" for launching an anti-pornography crusade that has prompted several area merchants to halt the sale of magazines that the mayor finds objectionable.

ACLU officials at the state and local level said Thursday they will

fight Maloof's plans to blacklist and boycott merchants who are selling magazines that the mayor says are "warping the minds of our children."

Arnold Feldman, president of the ACLU chapter in Peoria, reacted angrily Thursday and immediately contacted attorneys at the Illinois ACLU headquarters in Chicago to begin planning a challenge of the mayor's crusade.

"This is a campaign of terror,"

Feldman said. "If I was a retailer and someone told me I was going to be blacklisted — there's a word for it and that's 'terrorism.' "

Jane Whicher, an ACLU attorney in Chicago, said her organization will try to avoid a lawsuit by negotiating with the mayor to preempt his crusade, which the ACLU believes is patently unconstitutional.

Earlier this week, Maloof asked a group of local clergymen to compile

a list of area retailers selling magazines like Playboy and Penthouse, distribute that list within their churches, and ask members of their congregations to boycott those stores.

Maloof later explained that he first would send a letter to the blacklisted merchants and ask them to either stop selling such magazines, or peddle the magazines only from under the counter.

Whicher said Thursday the mayor's crusade is identical to an anti-pornography campaign earlier this year by a federal commission sanctioned by U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese — much of which was later declared unconstitutional.

A federal judge in Washington, D.C., ordered the Meese Commission to retract a letter sent to merchants

Please see MALOOF, Page A8