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WORTH TALKING ABOUT

On Dec. 28 Phil Donahue devoted an episode of his show to lesbian, gay, and bisexual teens ("Gay Teens in a Straight World"). While Donahue made the appropriate challenges to homophobic—and largely adult—assumptions, he primarily let the queer youth tell their own stories. The panel represented a variety of life experiences, and included a gay boy who wore drag to school, a lesbian couple, and teen actor Wilson Cruz, who plays a gay high school student on the TV series

Media briefs

My So-Called Life.

All of the teens were able to make many important, instructive points. For example, when an audience member demanded that queers should be better behaved in order to earn respect, Wilson Cruz replied: "Respect isn't something that is earned. Respect is something that we should all have for individuals, for being human. And it's not something that you have to earn because you are homosexual."

Significantly, Donahue made a point of asking for—and securing—a lesbian perspective. One young lesbian panelist told how she came out to her father: "I sort of explained it to him like this: 'You know those shirts, Dad, that people are wearing that say "Love Sees No Color"? Well, I'm going to get one for you that says "Love Sees No Gender," because it's, you know, the same thing.'"

Send encouraging feedback to Patricia McMillen, executive producer, Donahue, NBC, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10012, tel.: (212) 664-6501, fax: (212) 757-5386. Also remember that *My So-Called Life*—the only network TV series to offer a recurring, contemporary role model for queer youth—is at risk for cancellation by ABC; send supportive letters to Randi Cohen, ABC Productions, 2020 Avenue of the Stars, Fifth Floor, Century City, CA 90067, tel.: (310) 557-6901, fax: (310) 557-6147; and Marshall Herskovitz and Ed Zwick, executive producers, *My So-Called Life*, Bedford Falls Company, 409 Santa Monica Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90401, e-mail: savemsc@aol.com.

FUNDIE "NEWS": QUEER EARTHQUAKES

A recent issue of *The Bay Area Christian News* is illustrative of the irrational fears and insane hatred that are the hallmarks of homophobia. In an article titled "God's Warning to America," John McTevnan explains that "a careful study of...disasters, especially the stock market crash and major earthquakes (six of the top 11 earthquakes this century) reveals that they occurred in connection with abortion- and/or homosexual-related events."

According to McTevnan, the Oct. 11, 1987, lesbian and gay March on Washington caused the Oct. 19, 1987, stock market crash. He also lists a number of homosexual-related tremors—quakes for queers. He writes, for example, that "On June 28, 1992, hundreds of thousands attended national 'Gay Pride Day' parades throughout America. On the very morning of the parade, powerful earthquakes hit Southern California."

Significantly, McTevnan suggests that such earthquakes are the answers to "Christian" prayers. He writes: "On Jan. 17, 1994, the Los Angeles Area was rocked by a powerful 6.6 earthquake.... On Jan. 16, 1994, over 50,000 churches in America were praying to end abortion." Perhaps it's a short step from praying for someone's death by disaster to actually firing a gun at the "sinner's" head.

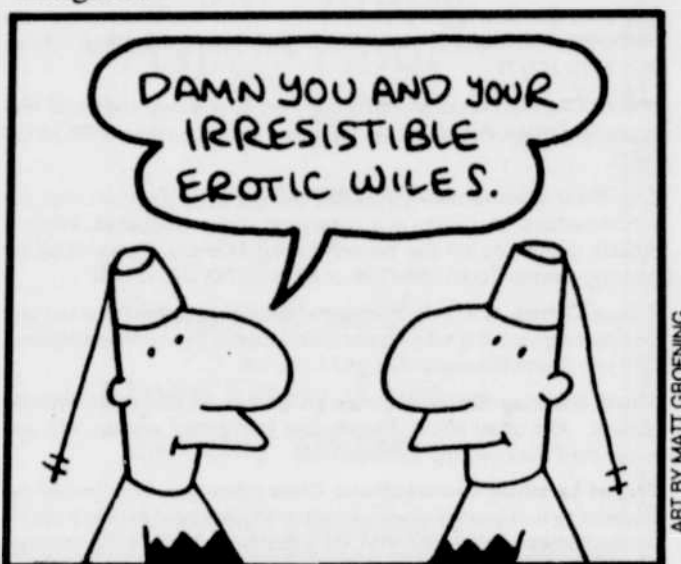
The mainstream media must be encouraged to investigate and report on such displays of bigoted blood lust; this "fundie news" should be front

page news, allowing the light of public scrutiny to shine on the darker recesses and realities of homophobia.

Information on combating right wing/fundamentalist activities is available from such national organizations as *People for the American Way*, 2000 M Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036, tel.: (202) 467-4999, fax: (202) 293-2672; and the "Fight the Right Project" of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 2320 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009, tel.: (202) 332-6483, fax: (202) 332-0207, e-mail: ngltf@aol.com. The Bay Area Christian News can be contacted at PO Box 25473, San Mateo, CA 94402, fax: (415) 349-6321.

HEAVENLY CARTOONING

Cartoonist (and *Simpsons* creator) Matt Groening has consistently offered public affirmations of lesbian, gay and bisexual people. In a recent installment of his "Life in Hell" (a cartoon series distributed nationally by ACME Features Syndicate), Groening expertly deconstructs the political agenda of the 104th Congress.



Jeff (left, or is it right?) and Ackbar

Under the title "The New Pledge," Groening provides an annotated version of the Pledge of Allegiance. His version reads: "I pledge allegiance to—and wrap myself in—the flag of the United States Against Anything Un-American, and to the Republicans for which it stands, two nations, under Jesus, rich against poor, with curtailed liberty and justice for all (except blacks, homosexuals, women who want abortions, Communists, welfare queens, treehuggers, feminazis, illegal immigrants, children of illegal immigrants, and you, if you don't watch your step)."

If your local newspaper carries "Life in Hell," send a letter of support; if it doesn't, ask for it (the cartoon also features a gay couple, Jeff and Ackbar).

VICTOR, VICTORIA, VICTORY!

Blake Edwards, producer of the upcoming Broadway show *Victor, Victoria*, has asked that homophobic lyrics in one of the show's planned songs be changed. The song "You'd Be Surprised" will "either be reworked so that it reflects the sensibilities of the movie or it will not be in the show," says Edwards.

The 1982 movie version of *Victor, Victoria* received praise in the lesbian and gay community for its positive message. However, the new song, written by lyricist Leslie Bricusse, contained lines such as, "If you knew who's a tough, but who's a real powder puff, you'd stand with your back to the wall," and "Till the laws are revised...convicts are compromised...Boy Scouts and choir boys terrorized."

Direct comments to Blake Edwards, 11777 San Vicente Blvd., Suite 520, Los Angeles, CA 90049.

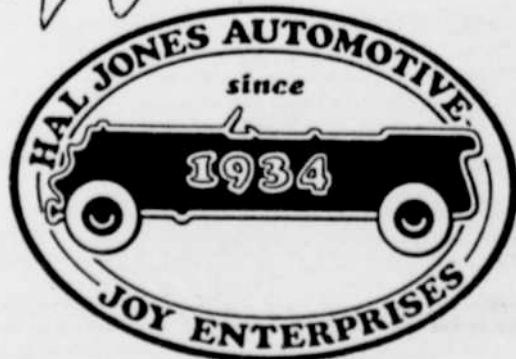
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