

TELEVISION ON SEX

On June 1, the ABC television network broadcast *In a New Light: Sex Unplugged*. Through fast-paced edits and celebrity sound bites, the prime-time special targeted young viewers with information about safer sex.

In a breakthrough for network television, *Sex Unplugged* examined teenage sexuality with a tone more positive than pedantic. The program went beyond the usual rhetoric of abstinence, which has consistently failed to educate or empower youth.

Media briefs

The program's hosts, Rosie Perez and Ed Love, were supported by a large celebrity cast that included Greg Louganis and Melissa Etheridge in brief appearances. One segment of *Sex Unplugged* was devoted exclusively to gay concerns.

The lesbian-and-gay-youth segment opened with an apt lament from C. Everett Koop. The former surgeon general noted, "Nobody is paying much attention to homosexual teenagers." From there, the youth took over the dialogue and explained some of the (literally) lethal consequences of homophobia.

In addition, *Sex Unplugged* addressed the often-overlooked role that self-esteem plays in HIV prevention. This issue is particularly pertinent for lesbian, gay and bisexual youth, who are relentlessly deprived of affirmation at all levels of society. As one youth asked, "If no one wants to talk to me about what it means to be gay, how are we ever going to get to a place where it's OK to talk about safer sex for young gay men?"

Unfortunately, the diversity that characterized other segments of *Sex Unplugged* evaporated when it came to the gay segment. No lesbians or bisexuals were included, and not one of the young gay men was a person of color.

Despite that serious drawback, *Sex Unplugged* managed to provide a few precious minutes of sex-positive education in an otherwise barren media landscape. Of course, even those few minutes are certain to raise the hackles of right-wing censors. The postcard campaigns—demanding that ABC stop "promoting homosexuality" and "corrupting family values"—probably began even before the show aired.

Counter the critics and encourage ABC to move even farther ahead, producing more diverse and long-overdue prime-time programming that is focused on lesbian, gay and bisexual youth.

Send feedback to Ted Harbert, President, ABC Entertainment, 2040 Avenue of the Stars, Los Angeles, CA 90067, (310) 557-7777, fax: (310) 557-7170, comment line: (212) 456-7477, e-mail: abcaudr@ccabc.com; and to Joseph F. Lovett, Executive Producer, *Sex Unplugged*, Lovett Productions, 19 Van Dam St., New York, NY 10013, (212) 242-8999, fax: (212) 242-7347, e-mail: 74757.721@compuserve.com.

HARPER'S: A GOOD BI

A significant contribution to bisexual visibility has been made by one of the nation's oldest fashion magazines. The June 1995 issue of Harper's Bazaar (in publication since 1867) features two articles on bisexuality.

In the first article, Lynn Darling explores bisexuality as it is focused through the lens of popular culture. Examining the relationship between media images and social values, Darling

argues for the recognition of bisexuality as an orientation that is both valid and worthy of validation.

The second article was written by Rachel Cohen, a young bisexual woman. Cohen offers a personal perspective on the myths, fears and ignorance that bisexuals confront—in both the heterosexual and lesbian and gay communities.

Send supportive feedback to Elizabeth Tilberis, Editor-In-Chief, Harper's Bazaar, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

ARRESTING LANGUAGE

Mike Royko, a longtime *Chicago Tribune* columnist, was arrested for drunk driving (and a related traffic accident) in December of last year. Recently, a copy of the police report on that incident was made public. In the report, a litany of homophobic and racist slurs are attributed to Royko.

Among other things, Royko is quoted as saying "jag off, queer" and "fuck you, fag" to the arresting officer. To the ambulance crew, he reportedly said: "What are you, fags? Why are you wearing those fag gloves...?" And while being processed, Royko is said to have asked, "You fucking loser, what's your ethnicity, you fag?"

Meanwhile, in his newspaper columns, Royko stands up for "traditional family values" and "Christian ethics." He regularly attacks homosexuality as that "lifestyle" that is crude and degraded.

Of course, police reports are hardly exemplars of truth or accuracy. But the comments attributed to Royko are consistent with his own writings. Actually, those comments are the logical extensions of the more "refined" homophobia found in Royko's columns. But it should come as no surprise that the "articulate" columnists and "well-mannered" politicians who publicly say they are "simply opposed" to "special rights for gays" or "quotas for lesbians" are, in fact, the same people who say "fuck you, fag" behind closed doors.

Questions and comments can be sent to Mike Royko, Columnist, and Howard Tyner, Editor, *Chicago Tribune*, 435 N Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611, (312) 222-3232, fax: (312) 222-3143.

IN SHORT

Look Who's Talking: HBO Sports has hired tennis superstar Martina Navratilova as a Wimbledon commentator. Unless they are closeted, lesbian and gay athletes aren't offered very many high-profile positions in sports journalism. Support for HBO's hiring decision can be directed to Ross Greenburg, Executive Producer, HBO Sports, Home Box Office, 1100 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY, (212) 512-1000.

Submit: Cine Acción is seeking entries for a festival of film and video works that reflect the dignity and diversity of Latino/a, Latin American and Caribbean communities. Organizers are particularly interested in works that treat such subjects as migration/immigration, youth issues, and the Latin American response to oppression and injustice. Deadline for entries is June 12, 1995. For details, contact Cine Acción, 346 Ninth St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 553-8135, fax: (415) 863-7428.

Rewarding Experience: The National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association is seeking nominations for its Electronic Media Awards, "rewarding excellence in electronic journalism on issues concerning the lesbian and gay community." All works submitted must have been broadcast between July 1, 1994, and June 30, 1995. Deadline for submissions is Aug. 15, 1995. For details, contact contest coordinator Darrel Adams at (612) 825-9932 or (612) 642-4284, or write to NLGJA National Office, 874 Gravenstein Highway South, Suite 4, Sebastopol, CA 95472.

Compiled by Al Kiewasser of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, San Francisco Bay Area chapter.



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