

# WARNING:

This Show Contains Adult Content  
(or... Gays Shouldn't Be Blatant)

BY PEGGY LUHRS

I am watching *Mad About You*, something I don't normally watch but this is the coming out episode for the main character's sister. But I am struck by the rest of the story which is about the Paul Reiser, young husband, racing home to meet wife Helen Hunt's ovulation schedule as they plan a pregnancy. He goes home on the subway noting every short skirt, every sexual come on in the ads. Everywhere he looks he is reminded of sex including a saxophone whose opening is level with his crotch. And this is on at 5 pm for all the after schoolers to see. Is there an adult content label? No. In fact there are a dozen shows with more blatant sexual content including gay content than *Ellen* and not a one has the Adult viewing label. Leaving aside what it means to live in a culture where adult and mature equals pornographic, one has to ask why *Ellen*? This show is very tame, often corny and oh so mildly sexual gets the dreaded warning. Its on now at 9:30 later than its original 8: pm slot but that's not enough for ABC/Disney. No doubt the religious right is besieging the network with calls to end this show.

Watching *Ellen*, I realize the right really hates this show because it makes gays so human and normal. It shows two women relating in a caring situation and makes it seem as common place as it actually is. Not to mention a bit boring. Just like life. It is wonderful to finally have a show that comes

from a gay perspective and doesn't just have a minor gay character for comic relief. This show is about Ellen who is gay among other things. And I can still relate when Lea Delaria says "hey I was out from the get go and I can't get the TV time Ellen does." Yeah Ellen is pretty white bread, a very particular type of lesbian. But this is sitcom land with its own rigid conventions. When we get to the lesbian version of Roseanne and tackle working class gays maybe there'll be role for Delaria. For now thankfully there is one sitcom that is not about a heterosexual couple, a single dad, or any number of office "families" The episode with Emma Thompson was brilliant. Her coming out not only as a lesbian but as an American was very funny. Kudos to Thompson for having the guts to do this. On ABC's *The View* Thompson said, "Americans ought to get over it and Ellen is helping them do that."

Once we had a gay liberation movement instead of the current stampede to assimilation. That movement would have challenged this type of offensive labeling in droves. This label, in effect, says that merely being gay is pornographic. This is a real denial of our humanity. Kids should see the *Ellen* show. They should know the world has gay people in it. I know the fundi's cry that their values are being negated. Sorry but they do have to get over it. They cannot make homosexu-

ality go away. It has been with us since time immemorial and is here to stay and to stay out of the closet. Offended Christians don't have to watch. I am forced every month to pay for cable network's religious programming that I find offensive and hate producing. Christians can have their values...what

so do a lot of other people. Disney ran an Internet poll about lesbian kissing on TV. From GLAAD's report on the Disney poll: This afternoon at 3:45 PM the poll had 8,200 votes cast: 63.5% 'yes' in favor of a lesbian kiss; 36.4% 'no' against lesbians kissing on TV. And then too one of the

& women to go hide in the closet. So to you straight folks I say — Sure, I'll go if you go too, but I'm polite —so — after you.

I'm with Parker; lets end the double standard. When I don't have to see endless hetsex in movies in-sitcoms in every TV program on soaps all day long and in wedding announcements advertisements, billboards and even in our bars maybe I'll consider refraining. But since we are bombarded with hetsex public displays of affection I have a hard time thinking that hand holding and kissing between lesbians is just too far out. Heterosexists will just have to get over themselves but they won't do it if

## television

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they can't do is force them on the rest of us. Of course I don't think their values are very valuable.

I think lesbians and the rest of the les-bi-gay-trans community have a lot more to offer than Christians who have probably caused more bloodshed than any other religion. We should be telling ABC and Disney that this is an offensive act, that our lives are human content and ought to be treated as such. Some have said that label probably gets more teens to watch the show and this may be true. Nothing like a forbidden flag to get the youngsters interested. Still it is an objectionable label and a slap in the face to lesbians and others in the queer community. I want to see lots of lesbian kissing and men too and sex on TV between same sex partners. And

*Burlington Free Press* numerous right wing columnists wrote that Ellen and Anne should refrain from their offensive public displays of affection. An excerpt from the late Pat Parker's poem from the 1970's speaks eloquently to this idea and the Ellen double standard.

Fact is, blatant heterosexuals are all over the place. Supermarkets, movies, on your job, in church, in books, on television everyday and night, every place—even in gay bars. They want gay men

we are silent. Here's how to contact ABC/Disney:

Jamie Tarses, Entertainment President ABC 2040 Avenue of the Stars Los Angeles, CA 90037 fax: 310.557.7679 e-mail: abcaudr@ccabc.com Michael Eisner, Chairman & Dean Valentine, President of Network TV and Television Animation The Walt Disney Company 500 South Buena Vista Street, Burbank, CA 91521 fax 818.560.1930 feedback for www.disney.com.

OITM  
Your community forum  
www.vtpride.org

necessary beginner's introduction at 8:00 p.m. lease bring soft-soled shoes to dance in (or dance in bare/stocking feet) smoke/drug/alcohol free space call Mike Duffy for more information 802-257-8984.

### 8 SUNDAY

Full Moon and Candlemas ritual, potluck, and Burlington UU Circle meeting. All who support the Covenant of UU Pagans' mission are welcome. Wear garb if you like, and bring something for feast, a musical instrument, and a cushion to sit on. HC accessible. 6 p.m., First UU Society of Burlington, 152 Pearl St. FMI Dian 658-9689.

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### 9 MONDAY

Gay/Lesbian Ballroom Dance, Montpelier. 4th of 4 sessions. 6-7 p.m. Waltz and Foxtrot, 7-8 p.m. Tango and Mambo. No partner or experience needed. \$10 per person per hour. FMI call instructor Nancy Schulz 223-7035.

7 p.m. Potluck at Andre & Craig's 10 Green St. Extension, Brattleboro FMI Craig or Andre call for directions (802) 257-2165

Self Defense/rape awareness workshop. Second in a series of two three-hour classes sponsored by the Burlington Women's Council in cooperation with the Burlington Police Department. 6:30-9:30 at Fletcher Allen Hospital Campus in Burlington. Open to all women regardless of ability to pay. 865-7200

Gay And Lesbian Literature Discussion Book Night. Vermont author Lisa Alther's 1995 novel Five Minutes in Heaven will be our reading for February. 10% off at

Chassman & Bem if you mention Glitter. Monday Nights At The Rhombus Gallery 7:30-9:30 PM - Note NEW Times!! The Rhombus Gallery is located at the intersection of College & Church Sts. in Burlington. 652-1103. Enter on College St. Gallery is on the second floor.

### 10 TUESDAY

Social Alternative for Men meeting at 7:30 p.m. Call 649-3133 for directions and details.

10-14: The works of more than 40 local artists will be on display in the Cafe Beyond at Collected Works, 29 High Street, for one week only, February 10 through February 14. This show, "Visual Heart: Art for AIDS" is an exhibit and silent auction to benefit the Brattleboro Area AIDS Project. The opening gala, complete with music and complementary beverages and snacks, starts at 6 p.m., Feb. 10 when visitors may meet the artists. Local poets Lynn Martin and Verandah Porche will read from their works. The silent auction will

begin at the opening gala and continue for one week only through February 14th. Hours are 10 am - 6 p.m. and Friday till 9 p.m. For more information call the Brattleboro Area AIDS Project at 254-8263.

### 11 WEDNESDAY

HIV/AIDS Awareness Day 8:30 a.m. to Noon State House, Montpelier, Join with people living with HIV/AIDS and our supporters from all over the state at a breakfast meeting with your senators and representatives to share your needs, hope and concerns. This year we need to ensure the AIDS Medication Fund and support services receives adequate funding and HIV confidentiality bill passes. Speak out and let your voice be counted. Together we can make a difference. Sponsored by the Vermont People with AIDS Coalition, Vermont CARES, Brattleboro Area AIDS Project. Call (800)698-892 or (802)229-5754.

### 12 THURSDAY

The St. Michael's College Ally Group presents a panel discussion by TRANS (Transgender Radical Action Networking and Support). 7 p.m. Saint Michael's College, Saint Edmund's Hall, Farrell Room. FMI 654-2388.

### 13 FRIDAY

8 p.m. "The Atomic Fire Ball - Third Time's the Charm" \$6 Admission Rainbow Cattle Company Rte 5, Dummerston, VT Join us for the 3rd Annual St. Valentine's Day Dance & Drag Show to benefit "HOT for Life," the Men's HIV/AIDS Outreach Team at the Brattleboro Area AIDS Project Music & Dancing, Door Prizes For more information, call Carey (802) 254-4444

**CALENDAR**  
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