

Bucknell University: Students get an earful

By Jaime North

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— LEWISBURG — About a fourth of the 1,200 people, who were mostly Bucknell University students, packed inside the Weis Center for the Performing Arts admitted Tuesday night they had seen the top-selling porn movie of last year, “Pirates 2: Stagnetti’s Revenge.” The impromptu hand survey, requested by porn star Ron Jeremy, was a selling point for his defense of pornography in a debate with Craig Gross, a 33-year-old California pastor and founder of xxxchurch.com, an online ministry devoted to helping people suffering from porn addiction. Jeremy, 55, claimed the \$14 billion a year industry isn’t evil but a healthy escape for sexual fantasy. The perceived filth of porn is created by few, he said, not the majority.

“We don’t blame Seagram’s 7 (whiskey) for alcoholism, so we shouldn’t do the same with porn,” said Jeremy, who has two college degrees and is credited with performing in more than 1,900 porn movies. “Just because we’re in the adult industry doesn’t mean it’s wrong,” he said.

The hourlong debate, which included a question-and-answer session with students, was organized and sponsored by Bucknell’s Student Lectureship Committee. A majority of the questions were directed at Jeremy, as expected.

The more colorful and insightful questions dealt with what advice he’d give an aspiring entrepreneur looking to get in the porn industry, what inspired him to do porn, does he have energy to have sex off camera and if he had a daughter, would he let her do porn.

Gross, who said he began his efforts to help porn addicts while seeing how easily youths accessed porn, said the adult industry degrades women, is too easily accessible for minors and creates unrealistic expectations.

“Everything in porn teaches you to focus on yourself,” Gross said. “In real relationships, it’s not that way. You will be disappointed with the real experience.”

In retrospect, students said they enjoyed the debate and felt it was a worthy campus event.

Kathleen Lyons, a freshman, said she and her friends were drawn to attend by Jeremy’s reputation for being funny. In the end, she said the debate also proved to be informative.

“I didn’t know the porn industry was so self-regulated,” she said. “I was surprised to hear there are so many actions the industry is taking to help keep track of things.”

Dave Pieper, another freshman, attended the debate with several buddies from Larison Hall. They came away with what they were expecting.

“I guess it made sense for us to come see it,” Pieper said. “We are an all-guys dorm.”

Pieper, however, said the debate was productive and a good choice by the Student Lectureship Committee. “It’s a really big topic and something good for debate,” he said. “It was good to see both sides argued.”

Before the 30-minute question-and-answer session with students, Jeremy jokingly ended his debate with a simple comparison.

"We're basically the same guy here," Jeremy said. "I've had sex with 3,000 to 4,000 women, and he has had sex with his wife 3,000 to 4,000 times."

Gross quickly responded, "Yeah, the same."

-- E-mail comments to jnorth@dailyitem.com.

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Photos



Paul Honencik, a junior at Bucknell University, laughs during the debate on pornography Tuesday night.



Adult film star Ron Jeremy



Pastor Craig Gross