

Porn fight pits actor vs. pastor

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— LEWISBURG — An actor who has appeared in more than 1,000 pornographic films and a minister will debate at Bucknell University whether sexually explicit material is addictive and destructive, or a window to a fantasy world.

Porn star Ron Jeremy and the Rev. Craig Gross will square off in “A Debate on Pornography” at 7 p.m. Feb. 24 at the Weis Center for the Performing Arts.

James Peterson, assistant professor of English at Bucknell, will moderate the debate on the multi-billion dollar industry in the United States.

The participants will take questions from the audience.

The debate will be hosted by the school’s Student Lectureship Committee, a panel of about 15 students who sponsor one or two lectures a year, and funded by student fees, said Tom Evelyn, a Bucknell spokesman.

“Bucknell University, like campuses across the country, is an academic community where open dialogue, including on controversial issues, is encouraged and fostered through numerous events covering a wide range of subjects,” Evelyn said. “This particular debate has been held on many university and college campuses and includes speakers who represent different views on the subject.”

The odd couple of the porn star and the pastor are represented by the same promotions company that works with the stars of “MythBusters,” a television show on The Discovery Channel. Adam Savage and Jamie Hyneman, the hosts of “MythBusters” appeared at Bucknell last April.

As a young pastor in southern California and founder of Fireproof Ministries, Gross noticed his congregation’s struggle with pornography and started a Web site — xxxchurch.com — to address the problem.

In the four years since it began, XXXchurch.com has had more than 60 million visitors. Gross has been featured in GQ magazine, Good Morning America, Newsweek, CNN, The Los Angeles Times and The New York Times. His ministry is the subject of an award-winning documentary and a new reality TV show. He has written several books, including his latest, “Porn ... The Dirty Little Secret,” and “Starving Jesus: 40 Days Of Nothing.”

Jeremy’s film career began soon after his girlfriend sent his photo to Playgirl magazine. At the time he was working as a high school special education teacher and moonlighting in off-Broadway theater. Since his first film appearance in 1979, Jeremy has appeared in more than 1,000 pornography films as well as on numerous talk shows. He has served as a consultant for the films “Boogie Nights,” “9 1/2 Weeks” and the documentary “Heidi Fleiss: Hollywood Madam.” He also has appeared as an actor in mainstream films, including “Killing Zoe” and “Detroit Rock City” and performs in comedy clubs across the United States.

Doors open at 6:15 p.m. for Bucknell ID holders; remaining seats will be released to the public at 6:45 p.m. The debate will be simulcast in Trout Auditorium, Vaughan Literature Building.

Photos



James Braxton Peterson, Ph.D. , Assistant Professor of English at Bucknell University.