

Nutley Sun

January 18, 2007

Nutley mom maintains vigil against lewd TV

BY DAVID HINRICHS
of Nutley Sun

For those who are tired of feeling like they can't turn their backs on the television set without having their children view something inappropriate, help is on the way.

The Parents Television Council (PTC), a nationwide organization aimed at informing audiences of television program content, has recently opened a new chapter in New Jersey in an attempt to further stretch their reach. "We are like a watchdog organization for the network: Our goal is to protect our children from smut, which is gratuitous scenes of sex and violence," said Crystal Madison, PTC North Jersey Chapter Director and a Nutley resident. "We want to make sure that parents are informed of what is being shown on network TV during primetime hours."

The PTC categorizes programs into "winners" and "losers" every week, with winners being shows that parents can leave on the television while they are not around and losers being programs filled with inappropriate material. Along with the lists, which can be found at the organization's online site at

www.parentstv.org, are quotes from the show with dates and times of its airing. "Sadly, there are a lot more losers than winners on cable TV but we try and give parents the knowledge to make the right choice for their children," said Madison. "Almost everyone has basic cable and we need some kind of decency standard for the shows that are put on these channels."

One show in particular that Madison feels completely breaks the standard is Nip/Tuck, a drama on the channel FX about two plastic surgeons and their day to day affairs. "This show is actually what got me started with the PTC. I was watching it with my husband one night while I was pregnant and the episode we were watching alluded to a woman sexually seducing her dog. The program was on basic cable during primetime and it made me sick to my stomach. I thought to myself that my child would be able to watch this someday and I knew I had to try and do something," said Madison. "Another episode featured a boy who was begging his mother to have sex with him while she was having an affair with his best friend, just wild themes that I

would not want my child watching. It seems as though nothing is out of bounds for these networks. It used to be shocking to see two people in the same bed."

Members of the PTC have contacted advertisers that promote shows such as Nip/Tuck and Fox's late night cartoon comedy "American Dad" and told them that they will no longer be supporting their products as long as they continue to associate themselves with those programs. Another tactic the PTC uses is constant communication with state senators and congressmen, something that can be done by all through their Web site.

The MTV network is another channel that the PTC feels violates standards of programming and sends poor messages to the youth of the country. "The state of MTV now is sad because I grew up on it but it has changed so much now you wouldn't even know it was the same network. Most people from my generation grew up on MTV too and they think it is ok to leave it on but a lot of the time it's not," said Madison.

According to information compiled by the PTC in a recent study, 171 hours of consecutive MTV

programming yielded 1,548 sexual scenes containing 3,056 scenes of sexual content of various types of nudity. Viewers of MTV during that period were subjected to roughly 9 sexual scenes per hour. "Their Spring Break special is one of the biggest offenders and it airs during the afternoon," said Madison.

Although the PTC is aimed at trying to bring standards back to television, it is by no means an anti-television organization or religiously driven. "I am not against television, I have DirecTV and I don't know what I would do without it but I want to be able to turn on my set and have more than 5 or 6 shows to choose from to watch with my child," said Madison. "We aren't a Christian or Catholic group either, we are simply just out to try and send a message to these networks that we are tired of the low standards they keep setting for their programs. It is an ongoing battle but one we are prepared to fight."

A new study by the PTC called "Dying to Entertain" revealed that violence on prime time broadcast television has increased by 75% since 1998 and the television sea-

son that began in the fall of 2005 was one of the most violent ever recorded by the PTC.

In addition to research studies and online information guides, the PTC sends its members to organizations around the country to inform parents of the content being shown on today's basic cable prime time lineups. Madison is scheduled to speak to a New Jersey mothers group this March about censoring what your children watch and the violence and sex that can be found on TV. "Parents, in particular mothers, are a key audience to speak to because they are usually the ones who stay at home with the children. I will hold a question and answer, give a presentation and hand out fliers about the PTC and what we do," said Madison. "The more members we could have the better. People are out there that agree with us, we just need to lift up their voices so that they can be heard."

Currently, Madison is the only volunteer member of the North Jersey Chapter but is looking for more support. To join the PTC or to find out how to make an impact on this issue, visit their website or call 1-800-TVCOUNTS.