



ASK DEANNA!
*Real People,
Real Advice*

Ask Deanna! Is an advice column known for its fearless approach to reality-based subjects!

Dear Deanna!

I am in a relationship that I now see as potentially abusive. My boyfriend is older than I am, and he tries to control me. At first, I thought it was cute and protective. Now, I'm afraid because he shouts at me if he sees me looking at another man, and he makes me dress and look like an old maid. I hardly recognize myself, and I am miserable and unhappy but afraid to leave. What suggestions do you have that could help me live again?

Trapped
Dayton, OH

Dear Trapped:

All you have to do is realize you only live once, and life doesn't give you a practice test. You have one shot, and your one shot is being taken away by an insecure older man. Use your mind and find a job and a place to live. Once you have this established, get up one day, take a bath, pack your bags, lay your key on the table, and walk out the door. The only way you can have freedom is if you choose it. If not, your life will become worse, and then you die.

Dear Deanna!

My girlfriend lives in a fantasy world and it's hilarious. There's always drama around her and she looks really weird. Initially, I was fine with the hair extensions, fake eyelashes and breast implants. Now, she's injected her lips and her extensions are past her waist. I've been slowly pulling out of the relationship because her behavior and appearance is embarrassing. She tries to act like a diva; she thinks she has class, and I'm tired of being in a cartoon. Help!

Jake
Wilmington, NC

Dear Jake:

You know good and well you were attracted to this dumb stuff in the beginning, and that's why you entered the relationship in the first place. However, after the character you call a girlfriend started affecting you, it became a problem. You can always be bold and ask, "Will the real person stand up?" Or you can be like Elmer Fudd and say, "That's all folks!" — and keep it moving.

Dear Deanna!

I wish my friends would stop imposing their views upon me. I don't have to reveal my religious beliefs to any one because it's my business. My friends are high and mighty in the church and always want to judge me and tell me that I'm going to Hell when I die. They always want to look at my life but forget that they're fornicating, drinking and living with men. How do I get them to leave me alone without being too rude?

Alisha
Queens, NY

Dear Alisha:

You can shut them down immediately with the scripture from John 8:7 in the Bible: "Let he among you who is without sin cast the first stone at her." You'll notice that if you flip the script and highlight the Word on them, they'll back off and take a look at themselves. As for judgment, no human can determine who goes where. However, you can stay on the plus side and avoid the heat by doing the right thing, living right and keeping the faith.

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Black collegians, alumni link

By Donna Marbury
Special to Sentinel-Voice
COLUMBUS, Ohio (NNPA) - Who would guess that the nation's second largest Black-owned website was stationed in Columbus? Since 1999, brothers William R. Moss, III and Daniel C. Moss, who founded HBCUConnect.com, have more than 275,000 current students and alumni of Historically Black Colleges and Universities registered to the site.

Daniel Moss, who is the vice president of business development, says that a site geared specifically toward Black college students and alumni and their needs is a

necessity. "There are thousands of HBCU students and alumni. As alumni organizations serve their members by keeping them abreast of their school's news and events, we serve the alumni of HBCUs by providing them with relevant career, networking and event information relating to their respective schools," said Moss noting the website features all 105 HBCUs.

"We fund several scholarships ourselves, as well as provide internship and co-op opportunities. Attending an HBCU is a unique experience. We recognized the need for a website uniquely tailored to the unique needs of

our members." Moss, a graduate of Claflin University in South Carolina joined his brother William as he developed a site at his alma mater Hampton University's alumni chapter. From their grassroots effort, 80,000 people registered to the site.

"It's funny because this all started as a hobby of sorts, although we recognized very quickly that a business model for our service needed to be made, so we did. We are the number one HBCU-related website and the second largest Black-owned site now," said Moss. "We have positioned ourselves as the agency for brokering ser-

vices and products to the Black college audience, and have become the clearing-house for everything related to Black colleges."

The site offers career advice, information on scholarships and a place for students to dialogue about their unique experiences at Black colleges. New features like blogs and celebrity profiles allow site members to express themselves and connect nationwide.

"Many blogs are personal, 'what's on my mind' type musings. Others are collaborative efforts based on a specific topic or area of mutual interest. Some blogs are for (See HBCU, Page 10)

Party invite depicts color divide

DETROIT (AP) - Yasmine Toney describes herself as a "dark-skinned sista." So when she heard about a recent club promotion in Detroit, allowing all-night free admission to Black women with fair or light skin, she was incensed.

"It's offensive," Toney said. "It continues a negative stereotype."

"I'm perceived to be aggressive, assertive, attitude-having ... a lot of things, because my complexion is darker," said the 24-year-old receptionist.

The party was canceled last week after its promoter, who is Black, received dozens of complaints. But for Toney and other Black women, the issue reopened old, deep wounds as word of the party spread through the Internet.

How Black women are viewed — and treat each other — depending on the hue of their skin, eye color, and the length and type of their hair has long been a point of contention for many in the Black community.

Many women with lighter skin frequently are accused of believing they are better than those with darker com-

plexions. Many women with brown or dark-brown complexions complain that they too often are not treated as well socially or professionally as those with lighter skin.

"I think they get to slide in a little easier," Toney, who is pursuing a master's degree in counseling, said of women with lighter skin: "They are assumed to be passive and nice and sweet. I feel I have to do a little bit more. Number one, I'm Black. Number two, I'm dark, and I have short hair."

Ulysses Barnes, who goes by the name DJ Lish, says he canceled his "Light Skinned Women & All Libras" promotion after complaints rolled in from women, activists and organizations across the country.

"I thought it was a brilliant promotion at the time," said Barnes, who has spent the last several days apologizing to people. "I didn't anticipate any type of feedback. It was just a party thing."

Barnes, 27, canceled future "sexy chocolate" and "sexy caramel" promotions and just wants the controversy to go away.

But Detroit author and

anti-racism advocate Elizabeth Atkins believes it's time for open, effective dialogue on how Black women truly see and interact with one another.

"The celebrated standard of Black beauty have been the Lena Hornes of the world," said Atkins, referring to the fair-skinned singer and actress who became one of the most popular Black performers in the 1940s and 1950s. "It's been the fair-skinned, straighter hair, bigger eyes and pointed nose."

Horne got her start as a dancer in the famous Cotton Club in Harlem. Most dancers at the nightclub in its early years had light or fair complexions.

Atkins and Los Angeles author and women's movement activist Pearl Jr. say media portrayals of Black women feed into the stereotypes that are perpetuated by Blacks. Women who should be embracing their shared racial and cultural heritage instead harbor suspicion and resentment, Atkins said.

"They might be talking about flowers, or the weather or a wedding," she said, "but in the back of their minds they're thinking: 'She's look-

ing at my dark skin or kinky hair.'

Whereas the lighter-skinned woman is thinking: 'She's looking at my skin, or she's looking at my eyes and my hair, and making all kinds of assumptions of how much easier I must have it.'"

There may be something to that perception.

A 2006 study by University of Georgia doctoral candidate Matthew Harrison shows skin color may play a role in hiring. Psychology undergraduates, most of whom were White, were given fake photos and resumes to make hiring recommendations.

Lighter-skinned women applicants were preferred over those with darker complexions but equal credentials.

Light-skinned Black men also were preferred over those with dark skin who had better credentials.

Such thinking is rooted in America's slavery past, Harrison says. Lighter-skinned children of slaves and their owners were given better treatment and less strenuous household chores than darker slaves who toiled (See Color Divide, Page 11)

Nas names CD after racial slur—N-Word

NEW YORK (AP) - To some, it's a hurtful racial epithet. For Nas, it's an album title. The rapper told MTV News that he would indeed be naming his new album after the N-word. And he denied earlier reports that the album's title would be spelled "N—a," considered in some circles a less inflammatory epithet. He said the disc is due out Dec. 11.

"[People] shouldn't trip off the [album's] title; the songs are crazier than the title," he said in an interview posted on MTV's website.

But some have been outraged by the rapper's choice.

"The title using the n-word is morally offensive and socially distasteful. Nas has the right to degrade and denigrate in the name of free speech, but there is no honor

in it," Rev. Jesse Jackson said in a news release. "Radio and television stations have no obligation to play it and self-respecting people have no obligation to buy it. I wish he would use his talents to lift up and inspire, not degrade."

There were reports that his label, Def Jam, had scuttled the title idea. But Nas told MTV that he has had no opposition from the

label, and said his intent in naming the album the n-word was to take the sting out of it.

"We're taking power from the word," he added. "No disrespect to none of them who were part of the Civil Rights Movement, but some ... in the streets don't know who [civil rights activist] Medgar Evers was... they know who Nas (See Nas, Page 6)