



ASK DEANNA! Real People, Real Advice

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

Dear Deanna!

My husband and I argue over our daughter's weight and lack of happiness. She's 15 years old, and I let her eat what she wants and tell her to love herself, regardless of her size. My husband is arrogant and places too much emphasis on weight, body size and always looking a certain way. He's upset because she's not popular, and he tries to force her to lose weight. He feels that her weight makes her miserable. I need a way to tell him to get over it.

Martha
Denver, CO

Dear Martha:

Your husband thinks you're allowing your daughter to become terribly overweight, and he's not having it. He has a right to encourage her to be healthy, because he knows body image can determine self-esteem and confidence at an early age. Work with a nutritionist to help your child eat better and maintain her weight. This will aid in preventing future disorders, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. She may not be a size five, but at least she'll be happy and healthy.

Dear Deanna!

I let my brother move in with me, and my household has been a wreck. He has shown no intentions of getting a job. However, he eats enough for two people, leaves the bathroom a mess and thinks he has a built in maid. This wasn't part of the plan when I agreed to help him get back on his feet. This has been going on for months, and I'm at the end of my rope. What do I do at this point that won't come back to haunt me?

Sorry Sibling
Online Reader

Dear Sibling:

Your brother is grown just like you, and this game will continue as long as both of you allow it. If you were able to have enough conversation to get to the point of him moving in, you can have just as much dialogue to get him out. All you have to do is give him a timeline and let him know that he has to get a job and start saving. Then start the next plan that involves him getting his own place, getting out and, of course, keeping it moving.

Dear Deanna!

My teen daughter drinks a lot and I think it's a problem, but others seem to think it's okay because she's a freshman in college. Her grades are average, she has no sense of responsibility, and I can't seem to get through to her. She is very rebellious and although I hate to say it, she's horrible and nasty when she's drunk. I can't recall the last time she was sober. I need to tear her away from her loser friends and get her some help, but everything I've tried has failed.

Anonymous
Dallas, TX

Dear Anonymous:

Alcohol abuse is never acceptable. You need to get some help immediately from Alcoholics Anonymous. Yes, young students new to college drink and party, but your daughter's problem is more intense and dangerous. Her problems are more than the college experience, and she needs to take a break, get herself together and go to school once she's cleaned up her act. If not, your money will go down the drain, and she'll continue on a fast track to self-destruction.

Write: Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or 264 S. LaCienega Blvd. Suite 1283 Beverly Hills, CA 90211 Website: www.askdeanna.com.

'First Sunday' sad minstrel show

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

When a movie resuscitates this many offensive African-American stereotypes, you half expect somebody to be passing out watermelons and barbecuing ribs right in the lobby of the theater. I had problems with virtually every aspect of "First Sunday," starting with its basic premise.

The plot revolves around a couple of petty thieves, Durell (Ice Cube) and LeeJohn (Tracy Morgan), who hatch a plan to rob a house of worship after overhearing that its congregation had finally collected enough money to break ground on a new church.

It's bad enough that these creepy heathens wouldn't hesitate to steal from the Lord, but what's worse are their reasons for needing the money.

Durell is so far behind in child support that his ex, Omunique (Regina Hall), is threatening to move from Baltimore to Atlanta with their young son (C.J. Sanders) unless her deadbeat baby-daddy comes up with \$17,342. Meanwhile, LeeJohn is on the run from Rastafarians because of a black-market business deal gone bad.

By now, you might have noticed that some of the characters have strange names. LeeJohn explains that he got his because his mother was a tramp who had been sleeping with two men at the time she



The Ice Cube-produced "First Sunday" is a minstrel show that fails to produce laughs.

got pregnant, and she didn't know whether the father was Lee or John.

Omunique is pronounced "I'm unique," and is no doubt a throwback to 19th century minstrel shows when White men sporting similarly silly-sounding names appeared in Blackface as caricatures of African-Americans, invariably portraying them as some combination of lazy, cowardly, stupid, immoral, criminal and buffoonish.

Besides reviving ridiculous, minstrel-like monikers, "First Sunday" is a crass "coon"-type show that resuscitates the outlawed genre's general themes and demeaning dialogue. Most guilty in this regard is Katt Williams in his capacity as Rickey, the First Hope Community

Church's flamboyant choir director.

Rickey is an ignoramus given to blurting out inane non-sequiturs, which fail to further the story and whose only apparent purpose is to make the audience laugh out loud. For example, there's a courtroom scene where a judge (Keith David) sitting on the bench calls the defendants "miscreants." Rickey's response is to sass the jurist by asserting that they're not miscreants but "African-Americans," the joke being that he obviously doesn't have a clue what the word means.

He repeatedly employs malapropisms, such as confusing "affecting" with "infecting." While being held hostage, Rickey's cowardly:

"This isn't even my church. I just saw this on MySpace," faints and generally behaves like a buffoon; he says in another line, "I'm gonna need therapy!"

The self-hating antics of co-stars Tracy Morgan and Ice Cube aren't any better as the as the bumbling burglars.

In sum, if you still like to laugh at the sight of a Black man in a dress, at lines about nappy hair ("Your hair looks like an S.O.S. pad!") and at African-Americans pretending to be mildly retarded, you're apt to find "First Sunday" hilarious.

A cringe-inducing, cinematic tribute to the Golden Age of Minstrelsy!

Poor (0 stars). Rated PG-13 for profanity, sexual humor and drug references.

Cultural awakening hits local roots

By John T. Stephens III
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Black Extravaganza: A Cultural Awakening! is running now through March 2 at the West Las Vegas Arts Center at 947 West Lake Mead Blvd. On Saturday at 2 p.m., author and poet John T. Stephens II will lecture on the exhibit and its important role in revealing a significant, yet not-so-well-known, era of Las Vegas history and the early African-Americans who lived it.

Black Extravaganza is a presentation of pictorial collages in color, along with black and white images, commemorating the contributions of local Black artists, dancers, fashion and musical talents.

In May 15, 1905, an estimated 110 acres were purchased, and more was auctioned off to found a city, but

it was a city whose powers-that-be proved less than welcoming of its African-American citizens.

As Las Vegas experienced unprecedented growth from a small patch to become a landmark destination for adult play underneath record breaking high temperatures, Blacks had second-class citizenship, or worse.

By 1945 and the end of World War II, eye-appealing hotels and casinos opened and offered top-flight entertainment by the likes of the Sammy Davis Jr. and the other Rat Pack members, Elvis Presley, Lena Horne, and Josephine Baker, just to name a few.

Only those with White skin, however, could enjoy the fruits of the main industry.

African-Americans had a curious, painful experience.

Hotels and casinos on the Strip were barred to them, and Black artists in the 1950s who performed in the showrooms were required to use the kitchen to enter the stage and could not stay in the hotels.

This segregation and isolation of the Black performers, along with the "no-colored" allowed policy on the Strip, earned the town that never sleeps the popular moniker, "The Mississippi of the West."

In 1968, Black Extravaganza was born to feed a gnawing hunger, to inspire Black youth, and to pay homage and respect to the elders who wanted to live and witness a new Las Vegas that included everybody.

"It was a lacking and restless period," said John T. Stephens II, author and owner of the Black Extrava-

ganza Exhibit, the pioneer who accepted the call for a Harlem-style renaissance in the desert, a period they would call a Black Cultural Awakening.

That community voice — expressed through music, singing, dancing, comedy, poetry and fashion — began emanating from the Black experience in the newly segregated Las Vegas, and especially in the area known as the Historic West Side near downtown.

"We were the first non-profit, African-American corporation chartered in the state of Nevada," said Stephens II, who co-founded it with Rev. Willie Jacobs Jr.

The production was first introduced with the backdrop of the world famous Las Vegas Strip in 1968 and enjoyed a successful following of en- (See Extravaganza, Page 12)