

ASK ARTS

(By Del Reed) 8/9/2005

We saw the Jay Leno TONIGHT Show filming crew at the 54th NSDC in Portland and heard how the correspondent stuffed her skirt inside her petti-pants and how she said to a black male, "Do you know you are black?" We cringed at the thought of our activity being portrayed negatively on a popular late-show. Then, when we viewed the segment on July 20th, we were both pleasantly surprised at the spoofs that appeared in the show.

We were happy to see the youth dancers right at the start. The sexual innuendo came only from the correspondent, Chelsea Handler, and not from the dancers. She certainly did put a new spin on the "yellow rock!" ARTS, what are you hearing from others and what are your thoughts.

Relieved in Reno

Dear Relieved,

I, too, was relieved and found the humor to be typical Jay Leno material. It left no doubt that dancers and callers have a ready wit, and can laugh at themselves; it even highlighted the fact that this is a worldwide dance activity.

I received many comments by those who were insulted by the program. Several suggested boycotts of the Leno show; one thought Chelsea Handler was "crude," and someone even asked for "equal time." Overall, however, the positive responses were somewhat more numerous than the negative ones.

Jerry Reed, ARTS Secretary and CALLERLAB Executive Director, was quite pleased with the segment. "Their coverage says a lot about how they view the event as a major activity and, for the most part, they poked good natured fun at our beloved pastime. There were good comebacks from the dancers. I believe they did not hurt our image."

Another favorable respondent had been worried because the editing was out of our control, but the piece actually turned out to be "a lighthearted look by someone ignorant of the sport." Other remarks were about the fun people were having and how they laughed about their weight, skin color and costumes.

Overall, we were pretty pleased with what showed friendly, happy dancers with a quick wit and a ready smile. It shows we are comfortable in our belief that this is indeed a wholesome and wonderful activity.

Don't forget to visit us at www.arts-dance.org.

ARTS-DANCE

Please direct any questions for ASK ARTS to Del Reed at 321-635-8815, or e-mail at delreed3@aol.com. This column is the idea of Aileen Pichecho (new individual member of ARTS-DANCE) after attending the Oct. 2004 meeting in Orlando, FL as a guest and observer. Its purpose is to spread the word about the organization to all dancers.