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# News of the Week

## Porn debate piques interest of thousands

BY KYLIE MENDONCA

On Nov. 16, Ron Jeremy, perhaps the most famous adult film star in history, and hip, young, online pastor Craig Gross met at Cal Poly's Chumash Auditorium to sort out the fact and fiction, the hype and horror surrounding the adult film industry. Associated Students Incorporated (ASI) hosted the debate as part of a True Life Philosophy series, to help students make their own decisions on controversial topics.

The event was built up to look like a battle between one far-leaning liberal and a right-wing pastor, complete with mock campaign signs in red and blue (the blue were promptly stolen). But neither of the speakers was all that his title or the stereotypes surrounding it implied. Jeremy, who got into the adult film industry unintentionally, holds a Masters degree, speaks intelligently, and can be perfectly serious. Gross, by contrast, is energetic and youthful. He speaks candidly about sexual issues, and never gives the impression that he's judging someone.

More than 3,000 people, mostly students, lined up at the door of the student center and around the block to see the aging star and hear him (presumably) defend pornography. Students showed up hours in advance with cameras and pink plastic Jesus figures to be signed. Those who arrived late were turned away from the auditorium, which seats less than 1,000.

Ben Morgan, a Cal Poly student who got in line almost two hours before the doors opened, said he didn't know what to expect.

"I'm just kinda curious," Morgan said, "to see how a priest and a porn star can have a sensible debate."

The debate, in fact, was quite sensible. Gross, who founded xxxchurch.com to combat porn abuse on the Internet, brought forth issues such as the degradation of women in films, the effects of porn on relationships, and the damage that porn does to individuals. Jeremy and Gross, who've been touring together for more than a year, seem quite at home in each other's presence, each laughing and cracking jokes at the other's expense. Each man knows the other's positions on the issue of porn well enough to argue either side and even helps the other avoid weaknesses in logic in order to keep the discourse focused. Most of the time at the event was given to audience members to ask questions and promote open dialog.

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