

Why Am I Getting This?

By Mary Bailey

Why? Because either you're a Montgomery County NOW member or you're a friend of the person who forwarded this to you. Either way, we want you to read The Watchful Eye and become involved in our issue: the unprecedented sexualization of girls that is swamping our mainstream culture. Besides, this newsletter is free, no MC NOW membership required!

Almost always when I tell people we're starting a Sexualization of Girls project, they get the gist and say something like, "Good for you!" -- followed by "Are you talking about what girls are wearing these days?" Yes, that's part of it. But there's a whole lot more, as you will see if you become a regular reader of these pages.

Our main mission is to increase people's sensitivity to the sexualization of girls. We want them to find it as disgusting as dogfighting, for nothing is more effective than strong public revulsion. In fact, nothing significant will change without solid, widespread, and durable public disgust.

A few particulars: Our project is inspired by the American Psychological Association's report, "The Sexualization of Girls." The report covers the mainstream cultural landscape -- not only how the media, parents, teachers, and peers contribute to the way girls are viewed as sexualized beings, but how girls come to view themselves in that way as well. You can read a summary of the APA report at www.mcmdnow.org, or the full text at www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html. We'll also cover parts of the report as we go along.

In brief, the APA has found that sexualizing girls during their formative years limits their future options by sidetracking their interest in schoolwork and affects their health by discouraging involvement in sports. Most tragic of all, it interferes with girls' ability to develop their own identities, which is a major task of adolescence.

We want to reverse this ugly trend. May we count on you? We hope you will read our monthly newsletter on the sexualization of girls and forward it to people and organizations you think will (or should) be concerned with this fast-growing assault on girls.

If you already get our chapter newsletter, "From NOW On," you automatically will receive "The Watchful Eye" about two weeks later. But if someone forwarded this to you, and you want to continue receiving it (it's free, remember), please contact thewatchfuleye@rcn.com. Send your name, email address, general area where you live, and any thoughts, recommendations, and queries you may have. And please review your list of email addresses for possible forwardees anywhere in the world. Thank you for supporting this effort to spread concern about the sexualization of girls as far and as wide as possible.