

amny.com/news/politics/am-guv0321,0,4505804.story

amNY.com

Expert: Sex makes politics interesting

By David Freedlander

dfreedlander@am-ny.com

March 21, 2008

And you thought politics was boring.

But New Yorkers who have been reading the papers lately have seen headlines like "Out With A Bang," for [Eliot Spitzer](#)'s hooker scandal, "Trystin' in the Wind" for Gov. [David Paterson](#)'s extramarital affairs and "McG: It was 3-Mendous Sex," regarding former Jersey governor Jim McGreevey's three-ways.

When did the tri-state become a perverse version of "The Love Boat"?

"We are living in a culture of celebrity where everyone in the public eye is now fair game," said Elayne Rapping, author of "Law and Justice as Seen on T.V."

"The hunger for gossip has always been there, but it used to be an over the back fence kind of thing," she said "In [New York](#) especially, we live in such fragmented times where you don't know your own neighbors, so the common thing that holds us together is the common knowledge of public figures."

As it easy as it is to blame unscrupulous journalists for their never-ending hunger for salacious details public officials' sex lives, media critics say newspapers are just trying to catch their readers' eyeballs.

"The rational side of our brain is saying this is ridiculous, and in the best of all possible worlds the media would give people what they need to act as citizens," said Robert Thompson, professor of popular culture at Syracuse University. "On the other hand, a lot of intellectuals, myself included, are watching a whole lot more CNN these days. Let's face it, it's been really interesting."

Others say that the wall-to-wall coverage of the private lives of public men shows that in fact the media is acting as guardians of society's standards.

"What all these articles are saying is that if you can't trust someone that holds a position of power in the personal life, how can you trust him in public life," said Ted Baehr, chairman of the Christian Film and Television Commission.

Regardless, New York's politics free-swinging style, and the prurient gaze of their constituents, isn't going away.

Get great maneuverability
without giving up durability.
The Mustang™ Zero-Turn.



Enter here for your chance to win the Troy-Bilt®
Love Your-Yard Makeover Sweepstakes!

Lawn Questions?
Just Ask.

TROY-BILT
BUILT FOR LIFE™

"It's like what happened to [Times Square](#)," Rapping said. "Everything gets pushed underground and when it emerges it's more taboo and that makes it more attractive. And then every time this happens it's like the guy in Casablanca and we are just supposed to be shocked, shocked, shocked."

Copyright © 2008, [AM New York](#)