

Howard Stern on Satellite Radio

Contributed by Thomas Westerman
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Howard Stern rocks. He kicks butt. Though you don't have to take my all knowing word on it: if you missed his terrestrial radio broadcasts, check out his satellite-transmitted show, backed by Sirius Satellite Radio—which, according to AP news articles, had 6000,000 subscribers until it announced Howard Stern's switch—and immediately skyrocketed to a listener-ship of "more than 2.2 million" (a number that is "expected to hit 3 million by the end of this year").

So Stern has a huge following, one that includes another 12 million viewers and listeners of his New York-based Howard Stern Show, which will finish in typical shock-jock Sternequeness on E! (airing Monday through Friday, 11 and 11:30 p.m. and 2 and 2:30 p.m., and every Saturday, at 12 and 12:30 a.m.).

The fan base extends to his books, *Miss America* and *Private Parts*, which tell the story and reveal the inner workings of the gutsy one with the gusto that offends—books, essentially, about Howard Stern by Howard Stern.

And the genius that is Howard Stern is most clearly revealed in his battle with the FCC and those stations and networks that kowtow to the regulating gods. For the magna cum laude from BU (where he earned a degree in communications) with the early established confrontational "Lenny Bruce style," censorship has bitten him on the ass a number of times and in a number of ways. The anti-Sternites have recorded and posted transcripts of his shows; the gawkers have mocked him; and the FCC has fined him (the stations) in numbers that reach seven figures.

One school of critics vilifies Howard Stern as a smut slinger; another group sympathizes with Stern as a victim of oppressive intellectual megalomania; still other groups—well, many, actually—imitate the Stern model of ball-breaking other-directed humor, only enhancing his popularity and boosting his ratings even higher. [So it becomes less exasperating and more bewildering how critics and the thought police don't make the obvious connection between their punitive measures and the escalating of audience numbers.]

But in the name of the first amendment and freedom of speech, in true "King of All Media" form, Howard Stern prevails. He will continue to have phone sex on the air, will proceed with his detailed critiques of everyone from celebrities to ethnicities, and will carry on with his candid, challenging needling of prostitutes with low IQs and non-prostitutes with big ones—this time uncensored.