

## Common Ground

## CAMPUS PROFILE

## Wylen shares speaking tips

By MAUREEN HENNESSY  
Aquinas Managing Editor

Rabbi Stephen M. Wylen, of Temple Hesed, an adjunct professor of theology/religious studies, believes that speech has the power to destroy or create relationships. His book, *Gossip: The Power of the Word*, which was released on Dec. 2, applies his ideas to "practical, everyday issues," Wylen said.

Wylen sees careful speaking as the center of a peaceful life.

"If you want to have deep friendships and a happy life, which stems from good relationships, watch what you say," he said.

"Don't say things that put other people down. That's harder than it sounds."

In some situations, Wylen noted, the best thing to say is difficult to judge. For example, when is it morally proper to lie?

"There are times when you should lie," he said. "If someone asks 'where is Jane? I want to kill her,' lying would be the best response."

He also noted that situations affect speech. "There are things that you say about a person that could be good or bad depending," he said.

Wylen cited the example of mentioning that someone made a chocolate cake.

While this might be appreciated at a gourmet club, Weight Watchers would not be the appropriate place to bring it up.

Another topic Wylen spoke of is dealing with anger.

"Sometimes you will hear the advice that it is important to vent anger. The truth is, the more you express anger, the angrier you will feel," he said.

He recommends using self control. "Hold it in for a few weeks." When you can see the conflict from the other person's point of view," Wylen said, "then you can talk about it.

"Why make enemies just because you are mad?" he said. "I don't always follow my own advice on this. When I don't, I always regret it."

He emphasized the importance of bringing up the conflict after time has passed. "It is a moral obligation to tell people when you are angry," he said.

The book also brings out the problems of stereotypes and prejudice, Wylen said.

"A strong person can say in the middle of an ethnic joke 'I don't want to hear this'. It is difficult to do," he said. "You know the joke is going to be funny. I really admire someone who can do that."

"Too much of the wisdom for living that we hear these days is based on a self-centered view of what it is to be human," he said. "I truly believe that even from the point of view of selfishness, in being selfish, there is nothing in it for yourself."

Wylen is originally from Philadelphia. After he was ordained, he lived in Seattle, then moved to Huntington, W. Va. He has spent the last six years in Scranton.

"I first started college teaching at Marshall University in West Virginia," he said. "It is one of the joys of my life. I think Scranton is a great school."

Wylen is currently teaching The Jewish Way of Life and Judaism and the Time of Jesus.

"The teachings in this book are not my own," Wylen said. "I have acquired them from my years of study. I see them as valuable for people of all religions, as well as those without strong religious beliefs."

A signing and reception will be held for Wylen's book on Friday, December 10, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the University Bookstore in Hyland Hall.

"If the book draws people to a more religious point in life, that would please me," Wylen said. "But if it just makes them treat one another better, that's okay too."

## Hicks amuses audience with 'Bald Ambition'

By GARY KOELLHOFFER  
Aquinas News Editor

Hell is not getting any colder and pigs still can't fly, but Student Government actually found a very funny comedian for their Comedy Night Series.

Renee Hicks, a comedian from San Francisco who got her big break on Donahue and MTV, came to the Archives Friday night to perform. Hicks, who shaves her head, started the show with a series of jokes regarding her appearance.

"People say that I look like the girl on a cover of a magazine," Hicks said. "Of course they mean National Geographic."

"And most people would crawl on the floor to avoid Jehovah's Witnesses," Hicks said, "but when they see me, they leave me alone."

Hicks kept the crowd laughing when she began to talk about the University and college life.

"My god, it costs 17 grand to come here?" Hicks asked. "That's too much — they would have to give me a car to come here."

"And what about your bookstore? Do they buy your books back?" Hicks asked. "Buying books back? (With those prices), I believe that's called stealing your books back."

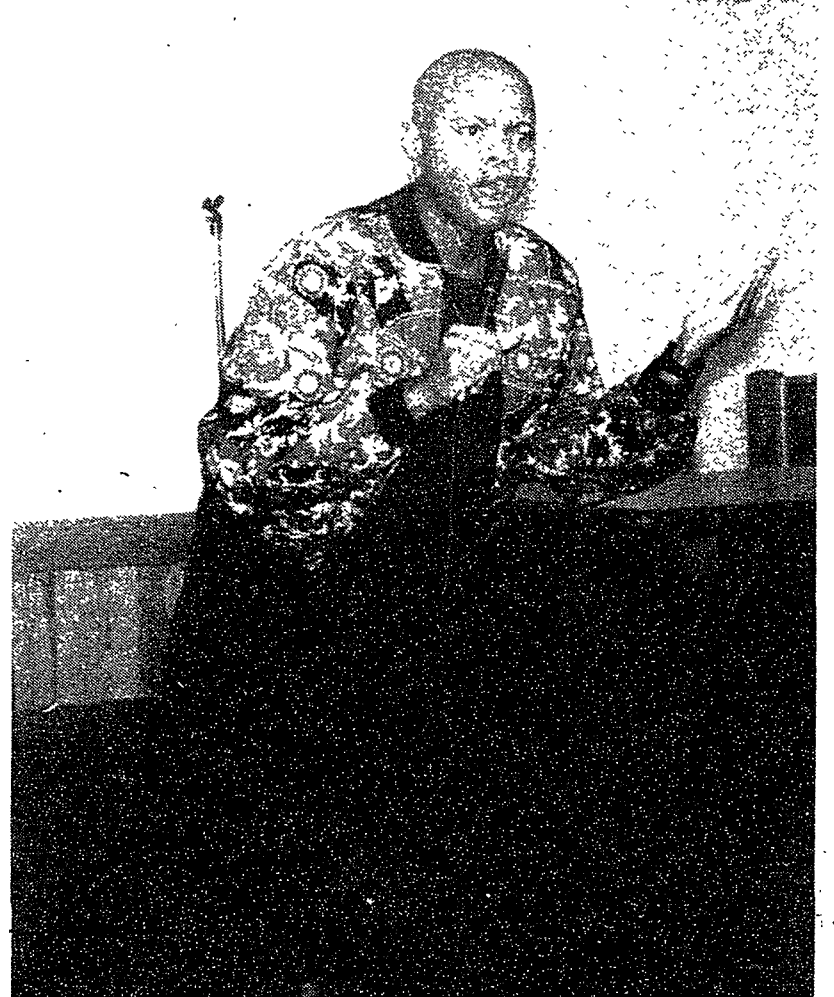
"Most times, you buy a book for \$90 and they'll give you five bucks for it," Hicks said. "Five bucks? Excuse me lady, but that book has never even been opened!"

Hicks said that she thought of going to Bible college because "they're only going to have one book for me to buy," but she wound up majoring in "low-interest student loans and beer drinking."

Hicks learned to control her drinking because "drink too much and sometimes you wake up with ugly people."

"There are no frats here?" Hicks asked. "Geez, these Jesuits don't want you to have any fun."

After discussing the many aspects of college life, Hicks went on to talk about a variety of issues, including television, skiing and football.



Aquinas Photo/Ryan Duffy

Comedian Renee Hicks gestures to the audience during her performance at 10 p.m. on Friday in The Archives. Prior to coming to the University, Hicks appeared on Donahue and MTV.

"They don't make TV shows the way they used to," Hicks said. "Remember the Incredible Hulk? The Hulk was my role model; they didn't have black superheroes so the Hulk was green and I'm black — close enough."

"When I went to Utah, a lady asked me why don't more black people ski?" Hicks said. "I told her that it was because the snow looks just like cotton — and we don't like that!"

"Since a lot of women are watching football now, advertisers are going to have to change their approach," Hicks said. "Men, imagine watching football and drinking beer, then that douche commercial comes on — you can't find the remote control fast enough and suddenly the beer takes on a vinegar taste."

Hicks, who is going to be on the

Arsenio Hall show, interacted incredibly well with the crowd — poking fun at one audience member's love of country music.

"I like rap music," Hicks said, "and one thing you'll never have to worry about is rap groups getting together 30 years later for reunion tours."

"And then there's gospel rap," Hicks said. "They thought Jesus was the first rapper, you know ... untied sandals, baggy robe. What would they call him — MCMessiah?, Jazzy Jesus? — definitely not Vanilla Christ."

Hicks recently co-hosted a Geraldo episode about 'women who are losing their hair' and she has completed a sit-com pilot called "Jumpstart" which is currently being offered to NBC and other networks.

Happy Holidays from the  
Common Ground Staff