

The World Will Be Watching

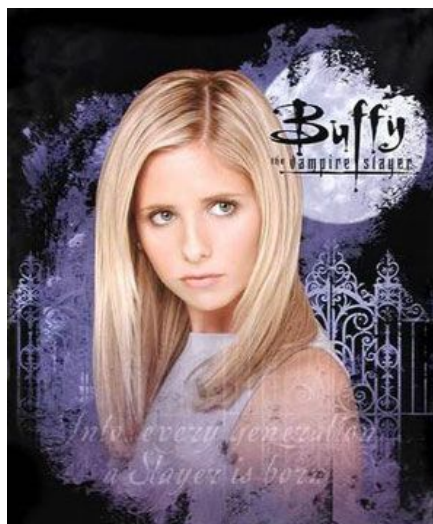
The *Youth Culture Newsletter* has regularly informed its readers about youth events and personalities before they were front page items. Facebook and sexting were YCN articles well before they became household words. Lady Gaga, Justin Bieber, and Katy Perry were hardly known, even among youth, when they were featured here.

Well, it has happened again. Two and a half years ago, in July 2009, the YCN featured the book, *The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins. If you haven't heard of it by now, you soon will. Parents and youth workers should be out front on this youth culture event!

The Hunger Games will be released on March 23rd. Fandango, the movie ticket seller, announced that advance sales for the movie have shattered the records set two years ago by *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse*. In the first 24 hours hundreds of theaters were sold out. Two sequels are already in the works.

The signs of the times say this will be big. See page two for more details.

She's Slaying More Than Vampires



Buffy the Vampire Slayer was one of those "cute" television shows. Starring Sarah Michelle Gellar, it ran from 1997 to 2003 with the story line of a ditzzy high school girl who also happened to be the fiercest vampire slayer on the planet. It was the classic story line of good versus evil, where good always triumphed.

When the TV show got canceled it was spun off into a comic book series. It has become another

example of something that might have been OK fifteen years ago, but has since fallen off the edge. Parents really can't take anything much for granted today.

In the next issue of the comic book Buffy gets drunk at a party. She has sex with someone she can't

even remember. The result is a pregnancy. Of course she agonizes over the decision "*as anyone really should,*" but, at the end of the day, she has the abortion.

Today, unfortunately, Buffy is slaying more than vampires.



It is worth revisiting the *Hunger Games* story line. It is set in the future after the human population has been decimated by war and climate change. North America is one country (named *Panem*) with 12 fenced-in *districts* that all work to feed the enormously wealthy and technologically advanced *Capitol*.

Capitol keeps the districts under its control by organizing an annual, mandatory-to-watch, reality TV game show in which 24 teens are chosen at random to fight to the death. Only one survivor will go home – triumphant, rich and popular.

Katniss Everdeen, 16 (played by academy award nominee Jennifer Lawrence) lives in the poorest district. Her mother and sister only survive thanks to her illegal bow-hunting outside the district's fence. With the help of her promo team,



her skill at killing with the bow, and a bit of luck, Katniss wins the game of murder.

Expect the movie to be a big event in the high school world. Most teens will see it. Virtually every teen will know about it. Why? The theme song for the movie, Taylor Swift's *Safe and Sound* is the #1 music video this week on MTV. The sequels to the movie, *Catching Fire* and

Mockingjay are already in the works as is the video game.

Most youth who see the movie will be impressed by the acting, action and cinematography. They will like the pretty girls, the cute boys, the fame and popularity.

What's a parent to do?

Don't miss the opportunity! If it is likely that your teens will be around those who talk about this, get

tickets now. Go to the movie with your teens. (Note: it is rated PG-13 for intense violence, thematic material and disturbing images.)

Also remember, this is Hollywood. Any story of good vs. evil needs its villain and its heroes. The movie has them. The heroine is definitely Katniss and the viewer will want to defend her. Often, but not always her motives are noble. The moral choices she faces are often difficult and her circumstances quite dire.

The real discussion is about what forces are at work in our world that are moving us towards a sick world where reality TV controls the life of a nation and people cheer teens on to murder one-another.

The YCN works to tell you what is hot in the youth culture world and how it might impact youth.

The *Hunger Games* will be hot.



SIGNS OF IMPACT

Prepare yourself for an advertising onslaught on everything *hunger games*. As the film claims in its equivocal caption: *the world will be watching* – or at least Lionsgate Films hopes to make it so.

There will be some significant signs of the impact of *The Hunger Games*.

One will be jewelry/body fashions. The mockingjay emblem (pictured left) will soon adorn pins, brooches,

necklaces, bracelets and tattoos. The jewelry will cost upwards from \$20.

Also don't be surprised when teenage girls come home sporting an orange backpack or braiding their hair in the style of Katniss Everdeen, as pictured right. There are hundreds of instructional videos on *Youtube* already.

Also expect an increase in the number of girls who sign up for the bow and arrow workshop at summer camp.

