

Response to the 6.29.09SOS/Save Our Soap! General Hospital Press Release
By The Liason Haven
theLiasonHaven.com

GENERAL HOSPITAL RATINGS COLLAPSE Time for ABC/Disney to Improve Product Before It Is Too Late

As fans of General Hospital's Jason Morgan and Elizabeth Webber, the members of The Liason Haven wholly support the SOS/Save Our Soap! General Hospital Campaign. A vast majority of the board members are 20-35+ year viewers of the show who are now entirely disgruntled and frustrated with the current state of affairs on General Hospital (GH). Many, however, are not surprised by the spiraling decline in the ratings because they either know someone who is no longer watching, or they have stopped watching or now only watch via TiVo or DVR so they can fast forward through the program. What is surprising is that this soap opera that used to be ABC's flagship soap opera is now **so** far down in the ratings on a weekly basis that it has hit new lows more than four times throughout the first half of 2009.

The ten year push-and-pull, tease, then separation of the pairing of Jason Morgan and Elizabeth Webber is wearing thin with fans. Both characters are from legacy families of GH; both legacy families have been a part of the show in one way or another since its inception. Sadly, these two characters that have shared a history for ten years by being friends, confidantes, allies, heroes to and for one another, and briefly lovers, have never been written as an actual couple. Many viewers believe that these two characters, if written as a couple, could join these two legacy families and virtually renew two bloodlines. Many feel this would be a golden opportunity for the writing team, but instead this opportunity has been completely dismissed. [It is something that is necessary since GH's Management has seen fit to kill off or write off most of either family to the point that there are less then three members of either family on the show on a regular basis.](#)

In addition, there is a strong need for new blood in these families and for the future of Port Charles and GH. By continually adding new, young characters that are related to or are the children of Sonny Corinthos only shows the short-sightedness of the current management and writing team. So many characters will populate Port Charles that are either full- or half-siblings, or first cousins, that there won't be any male or female characters left in town that can be paired with one another, since they will all be related to each other one way or another. By allowing Jason and Elizabeth to be a couple with a family, the writers could remedy that situation, while taking advantage of the irrefutable chemistry of the characters and the two under-appreciated and under-utilized, talented actors who portray them, Rebecca Herbst and Steve Burton.

Currently, viewers are tired of the focus being placed on sleazier female characters, such as Claudia Zacchara, Sam McCall, and Olivia Falconeri who manipulate, lie, have no skills, work in illegal professions, marry their way into wealth, and/or actually plan and/or cause physical harm upon children. Having female characters whose morals are less than questionable being given prominence in storylines and screen time is pushing the women 18-49 demographic away from the television, as evidenced by the massive decline in ratings for that demographic. Having these characters never pay for their crimes, never suffer actual consequences for their misdeeds, or "win" the man after manipulation is not something women want to watch or want their impressionable children or teens to watch.

Moreover, these characters start out on GH as femme fatales or evildoers, yet for some unknown reason, very suddenly their crimes and misdeeds are whitewashed and the audience is supposed to just accept they have changed their ways and now are good, honorable women. **Where is the continuity?** [Why can't GH have a female character who is evil and plotting upon entering the show and leave her that way?](#)

Many viewers sense that Management believes viewers are "trainable animals" and not human

beings with emotions, logic, morals and memories. **That is not the case.** Loyal and long-time viewers do not forget what these characters have done, the hypocrisies they have spewed or the crimes they have committed. If the argument by Management is that it is just a TV show and the emotional connection is not an issue to be considered, it is completely wrong and misguided. Viewers watch a program for 15, 20, or even 35 years because they are emotionally invested in the show and its characters; those bonds are not easily broken because someone in Management has decided the character needs redemption to be more likeable by the audience.

Most viewers want to see more strong female characters like Elizabeth Webber who, as a troubled teen overcame her rebellious ways, learned how to support herself and her son with a career, and continually puts her needs and wants behind those of the people she cares about most. She has always been a strong female and one who has accepted Jason and his job completely and been there for him when he needed her. Similarly, Kate Howard is a strong, intelligent, independent woman who worked her way from nothing to the top of her business. She has been Sonny's equal, challenging him and bringing out the best in him every step of the way. These are the strong types of women viewers want to watch. These are the women viewers can identify with, empathize with, and want their daughters, nieces, goddaughters, and even themselves to be inspired by. One fan summarized it perfectly, "The woman of the 21st Century doesn't want it all – she has it all whether she wants it or not; it's what she makes of it that makes the difference."

Viewers don't want to see the same storylines played over and over again, but want the characters to grow and develop. Watching Elizabeth settling for being with Lucky Spencer yet again is pathetic and degrading. He has cheated on her more than once, abused her, been selfish and jealous of her when she was trying to protect him and their family, and been unsupportive of her throughout their relationship. Showing such a strong female character, who is willing to fight for her loved ones, suddenly weak and settling, is nothing less than disjointed character writing and character degradation, while being intolerable and disrespectful to Rebecca Herbst who has portrayed Elizabeth for all these years.

Likewise, Jason has wanted a family since he met Elizabeth ten years ago when he gave up Michael. He has always protected her and protected those he loves. To have his character simply walk away from Elizabeth and her children because his life is too dangerous, when she has killed to protect herself and her children, and has fought to protect him, is ridiculous and shows nothing but character stagnation and assassination. At the same time, having him run around town virtually babysitting Kristina, the child of Alexis and Sonny, the child that Alexis has for years fought to keep away from Jason and Sonny because their business is too dangerous, is hypocritical and completely unbelievable for Jason, Alexis or the show as a whole, while being disrespectful of Steve Burton's portrayal of Jason Morgan.

Viewers long to see strong, independent, relatable female characters with families, facing unreasonable circumstances and fighting unreasonable odds within enduring romantic relationships. Viewers long for more romance and humor for their favorite couples, not just one dangerous, toxic, life-threatening crisis after another. They want to see families like the Quartermaines, Spencers, Cassadines, Hardys and Scorpios that last, through thick and thin. All of these help to create an enjoyable escape for one hour Monday through Friday.

As loyal fans, Liason Haven members have voiced their displeasure for the show through the various channels offered by the ABC/Disney Network. They have provided opinions on what needs to be repaired for the show to amass continued viewer loyalty and improved ratings, however, it seems those efforts have been given little attention or ignored. They have pointed out that specific episodes that highlighted Jason and Elizabeth many times garnered the highest

ratings for the week (8/17/06 – 2.6; 2/19&20/07-3.3 & 3.1; 8/20&21/07 - 2.7 & 2.6; 11/16&19/07 - 2.5 & 2.6; 9/15/08 – 2.5). Even with Jason and Elizabeth not being written as an actual couple,

they are consistently ranked in the top 5 in *Soap Opera Digest's* and *ABC Soaps In Depth's* poll for Best Couple, as well as having Steve Burton and Rebecca Herbst consistently ranked in the top 3 for Best Actor and Actress. All of this information seems to fall on and deaf ears.

The SOS/Save Our Soap! General Hospital Campaign has offered the members of The Liason Haven a way to take a more active role in making their voices be heard. By joining together with fans of Sonny and Kate, Patrick and Robin, and Jax and Carly, Jason and Elizabeth fans cannot and will not let this show that many members grew up watching continue on this decline without seeking help from higher-ups at ABC/Disney. These viewers want to make an impact by taking whatever steps are necessary to rescue and resuscitate General Hospital from the downward spiral in which it is currently headed. This challenging task is a labor of love for them as long-time, emotionally invested fans. This is why The Liason Haven fully supports the SOS/Save Our Soap! General Hospital Campaign. They believe in the mission of SOS, and believe that if the issues of the SOS campaign are addressed, and these four couples are emphasized, the show could recover from its dismal ratings if ABC/Disney is willing to listen.

For more information or to submit questions or comments, you may contact The Liason Haven at theliasonhaven@gmail.com.