

On the Air

Queersville, a half-hour gay and lesbian radio series to premier in early March, has created controversy already. (See *Just Letters* for a sample.) The creators of *Queersville*, Howie Bierbaum and Michelle Burns, have met with success before airing even one segment since the aim of their endeavors is to be controversial. Each week the show will begin with a disclaimer, "The following program contains material which may be offensive to some people. Listener discretion is advised, especially if you suffer from homophobia, puritanism or tastefulness."

Using a long-running radio show called *Fruit Punch*, broadcast from KPFA in Berkeley, CA, as their inspiration, Michelle and Howie say "*Queersville* is going to be right up front. We're going to laugh at ourselves as gay people, and we're going to laugh at the outsiders' view of gay people. We're not going to just be taking pot-shots at the community. This will be a response to gay people taking themselves too seriously."

Gay radio in Portland has never had programming such as the *Queersville* duo are devising. Gay radio has been mostly talk shows featuring listener participation and this team say they are preparing an alternative to the mainstream.

"Sometimes I feel queer in the queer community," Howie says. "There are many other people who feel like that and we want to create another option, another voice. Mainstream voices are heard all the time, so we're going to present an alternative."

So what can we expect to hear on *Queersville*? Redefined erotica. A write-in contest for

photos by Karin Sandwick



Howie Bierbaum and Michelle Burns, co-hosts of *Queersville*.

the Mayor of Queersville. Trends in the gay and lesbian community. Dr. Goof. A community affairs calendar. The First Annual Radio Lip-Synch Contest. Letters. Gays of Our Lives.

Most of the show's elements will consist of preproduced comedy skits emanating from volunteers from the community.

"*Gays of Our Lives* is guaranteed to offend everyone," Howie says. "my only fear is that people are going to be committed for only a few episodes and that we're going to have a lot of car crashes to kill off the characters. Then all of a sudden we'll have a whole busload to do in."

Since *Queersville* will depend on volunteers, Howie and Michelle are soliciting help from the whole community. They have been prepping for their task under the able direction, technical and otherwise, of Linda Shirley, L.C. Ernest and Garcia Phelps, all veteran KBOO volunteers.

Both Michelle and Howie represent a new generation in the lesbian and gay community; both are in their 20s (Michelle is 22; Howie is 27), and neither feel oppressed.

"We think we will be able to affect a change among gay people in the way they view a once-derogatory term," they say.

Queersville will have three previews: Thursday, January 30, 10 a.m. on RadioZine; a repeat on Friday, January 31, 10 p.m. on Woman Soul; and a second show on Friday, February 14, 10 p.m. on Woman Soul. Check KBOO's new program guide for *Queersville*'s permanent slot beginning in March.

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