

# TELEVISION TYRANT

Portland-area viewers will soon be able to watch controversial commentator Dr. Laura Schlessinger on KGW by Inga Sorensen

She has dubbed gays and lesbians "deviants" and the products of "a biological disorder." She touts so-called reparative therapy.

And within a few months, folks nationwide will have the opportunity to flip on their television sets and watch her espouse her assorted beliefs every weekday.

She is none other than Dr. Laura Schlessinger, a physiologist whose radio talk show, *The Dr. Laura Program*, attracts a staggering 20-million listeners.

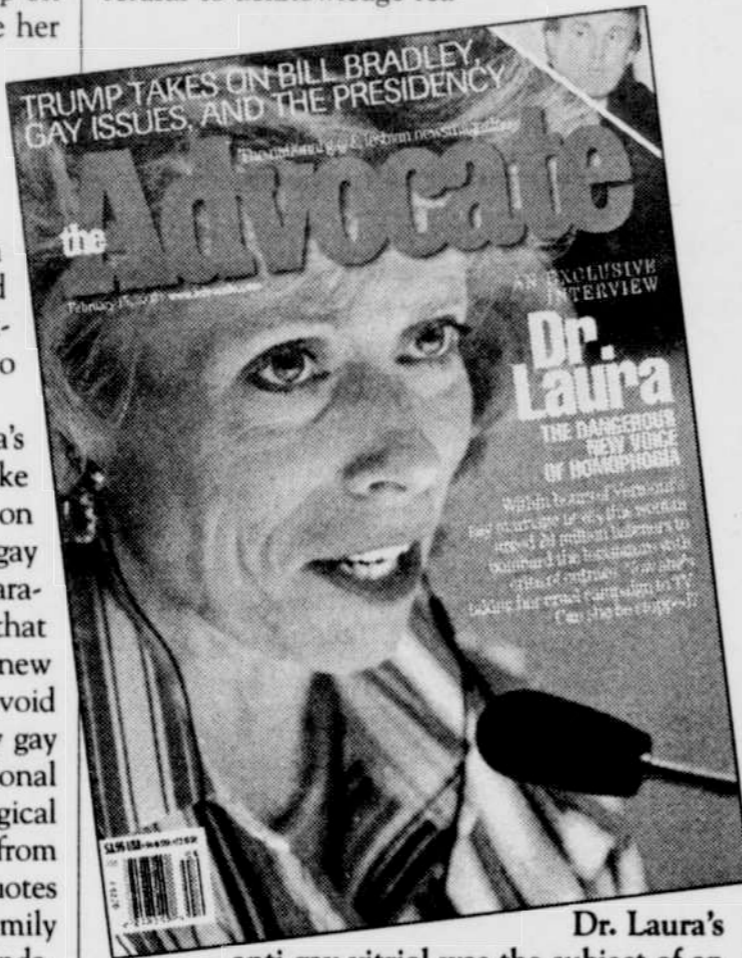
Paramount Television is launching a boob-tube Dr. Laura show in the fall, and KGW Channel 8 is where fans in the Portland metropolitan area will be able to turn to get their fix.

According to Reuters/*Variety*, "Dr. Laura's view of the world makes Gary Bauer look like a liberal weirdo.... Indeed, her sermons on homosexuality have enraged a sector of the gay community, especially within the walls of Paramount.... Her perorations strongly suggest that many gays are predators, eager to convert new members to the faith. She urges parents to avoid bringing kids into the company of possibly gay relatives. She denounces those professional organizations like the American Psychological Association for removing homosexuality from lists of 'mental disorders.' She frequently quotes the supposed research of groups like the Family Research Council that are essentially fundamentalist propaganda groups, suggesting that their studies hold greater validity than those of, say, the American Medical Association."

When the Vermont Supreme Court ruled in December that same-sex couples should receive the rights afforded to married couples, Schlessinger railed via the radio waves: "You very kind and very reasonable people have been swayed and manipulated into misplacing your compassion with specious arguments of discrimination when I'm here to tell you, of course a society should discriminate. Of course it should. It should discriminate against certain behaviors. And man-on-man and woman-on-woman sexual activity is a deviant sexual orientation, and it does not promote any of the values set forth biblically."

Joan Garry, executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, a media watchdog group, says: "GLAAD's concern with Dr. Schlessinger is three-pronged. Her

incendiary rhetoric continues to threaten people in our community; her reliance on information sources that advocate so-called 'reparative therapy' and obstruction of basic civil rights nurtures an anti-gay bias in her audience; and her refusal to acknowledge rea-



Dr. Laura's anti-gay vitriol was the subject of an article in the *The Advocate's* Feb. 15 issue

sonable, differing views effectively blinds her sizable audience to the truth of our lives."

And of Paramount's promotion of Schlessinger, Garry warns: "This marriage of broadcasting and anti-gay advocacy poses a serious threat both to our community and to the integrity of what Americans expect of mainstream media."

Brenda Buratti, KGW's program director, says her station began negotiating with Paramount last summer.

"We were not aware of [Schlessinger's] anti-gay positions," she tells *Just Out*. "The show was pitched on her solving relationship issues, which is what she was known for."

Over the past few months, Schlessinger's on-air diatribes against gay men and lesbians seem to have escalated, however, and Buratti says she is now aware of some of those remarks.

"Internally we are very concerned," Buratti says, adding, "We don't want to put forward any program that disparages people."

She says she intends to contact Paramount and let the company know of KGW's concerns.

"I will go on the record with them that we don't want to see that kind of thing," she says. "We don't air *Sally* or *Jerry Springer* or any of those trashy shows.... We want to present thoughtful programming."

Schlessinger's television talk show is scheduled to air on KGW from 11 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday beginning in early September.

Her radio program currently airs weekdays in the Portland area on KEX 1190 AM. Programming officials say they haven't received any calls from listeners concerned about Schlessinger's stances on gay-related issues.

■ To send a comment to PARAMOUNT TELEVISION, e-mail to [television@pde.paramount.com](mailto:television@pde.paramount.com).

## NEW LEADER AT OUR HOUSE

Nancy Sellers has been appointed the new executive director of Our House of Portland, a nonprofit, 12-bed residential care facility for people in the advanced stages of AIDS. The board made the announcement Jan. 26.

"I'm honored to serve as executive director of this respected and treasured community-founded agency.... It's a privilege to work with an agency that has been on the front lines of the pandemic in this country," says Sellers, who has served on the organization's board.

As executive director, Sellers is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agency, including staffing, financial management and stewardship of relations with governmental and regulatory bodies.

Sellers served on the management team at Automatic Data Processing for 13 years and also worked for the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, where she was responsible for securing funds to promote adult literacy. She holds a master's degree in adult and continuing education from Washington State University.

Our House of Portland, located at 2727 S.E. Alder St., serves people in Oregon and southwest Washington. For more information, call (503) 234-0175.



PHOTO BY MARTY DAVIS

## THEY'RE BAA-ACK

Anti-gay protesters spotted at PFLAG meeting

Demonstrators popped up again at a meeting of Portland Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

It's not the first time protesters have made their anti-gay feelings known near the PFLAG meetings, which are held at the First United Methodist Church at Southwest 18th Avenue and Jefferson Street in Portland. A few months back, a tiny smattering of naysayers hovered about on the sidewalk outside the church. But on Feb. 8, a bigger group—perhaps as many as 10, according to one witness—came with anti-gay signs and bullhorns in tow.

"It was the largest number I've seen so far," says Joel Corcoran, a gay man who has attended Portland PFLAG meetings regularly since August.

"They were on the sidewalk directing their bullhorn at the church," he recounts. "They were yelling at anybody who fell into their net."

Understandably, Corcoran was agitated.

"It's one thing to come after me as a gay man, but when they go after people's families and parents, well, that just gets to me!" he says.

Corcoran surmises that the protesters are showing up in larger numbers because of the recent publicity around the Vermont Supreme Court ruling and the subsequent legislative action regarding same-sex unions. Portland Mayor Vera Katz's Jan. 28 announcement that the city is pursuing a domestic partnership registry program that would include same-sex couples could also have something to do with it, he says.

As for what can be done to curtail the anti-gay protests, Corcoran notes: "Unfortunately, there's not a whole lot that can be done.... They have the right to go out in public and say whatever they want as long as it doesn't escalate into an assault—as long as they don't cross the line."

■ Reported by INGA SORENSEN

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