

To Air is Human

But a little respect would be divine.

This morning I did my radio spot. Once a month our local Air America affiliate invites me to the studio to read one of my lesbian humor columns and shoot the breeze with the host. I get to joke around, chat with fans who call in and talk about all things queer.

Today, as usual, the host had me read my essay, laughed in the right spots, and played the canned applause at the end. Then she took a call from a listener.

Now, I assume this show's audience is folks who enjoy an occasional lesbian point of view and can appreciate the tongue-in-cheek (or wherever) tone of my humor. Sometimes listeners call in with supportive comments. But this was no fan call.

It was a man named Mike. I should have known Mike was a trouble-maker when he opened with "How can I say this without anyone taking offense?"

Apparently Mike listens to progressive programming so he can set people straight, and I mean that literally.

After years of coming out, sitting on gay panels, and patiently educating everyone who'll listen, you'd think queer activists could count on a little R.E.S.P.E.C.T. (I hear you, Aretha.) But nooooo. Mike felt entitled to douse my 20 minutes of public levity with dismal Bible references – notably side-stepping *love thy neighbor, welcome the stranger*, and *judge not*.

Mike rambled on. "Homosexuality is an illogical lifestyle choice because a man and a woman fit together, two women or two men do not."

Illogical? Don't fit? People who think same-sex couples don't fit together haven't seen me and Wifey, the reigning sovereigns of mesh and merge. But Mike wasn't interested in an image of loving embrace. He was fixated on Adam and Eve and the lifestyle thing.

I lost it. I generally maintain a courteous persona, at least on the radio, but Mike pissed me off.

"Lifestyle? What do you know about my lifestyle? You think my being a lesbian tells you anything about how I live?" I noticed the host pot down the volume on my mic. Guess I was shouting. I should've known better than to engage with the supreme bizarritude of this a-hole, but I couldn't help it.

Mike kept trying to get a word in edgewise, blubbing tired BS about gayness causing disease, but I was on a roll. I felt it was my moral and revolutionary duty to interrupt, to stop this caller from further fouling the air waves with his ignorant spew.

"You sure know how to kill a party, Mike. You're bringing us down. This is supposed to be a humor segment. You're not funny."

Time was up. The host thanked me, announced the upcoming news program, and signed off. I left the studio feeling rattled and ungrounded.

I thought of all the things I woulda-coulda-shoulda said to Mike. *Don't you have a dial on your radio? If you can't handle 20 minutes in Queerland, change the channel, Buddy. Why listen if you know it's going to tweak your rigid binary heterosexist eensy-weensy world view?*

Come to think of it, I can say all that on the air next month. After all, my blatantly queer-positive perspective is exactly what the talk show host invites me to bring to the program – how cool is that? Amidst the right-wing bluster of Bill O'Reilly, Lars Larson, and Dr. Laura, our town sustains a progressive commercial radio station – what a giant step forward from the pre-Ellen past.

Things have improved, but the crap is still out there. Some people have a huge problem with the mere existence of queerfolk and, amazingly, continue to believe they can Bible-thump us out of it. Fortunately, most LGBTQ people feel fine about who we are, and I for one am going to continue writing and broadcasting as if my readers and listeners are – and should be – OK with that.

Tune in to "That Time of the Month with Sally Sheklow" on KOPT-1600 AM Tuesday, March 28 and the last Tuesday of every month at 8:40 a.m.



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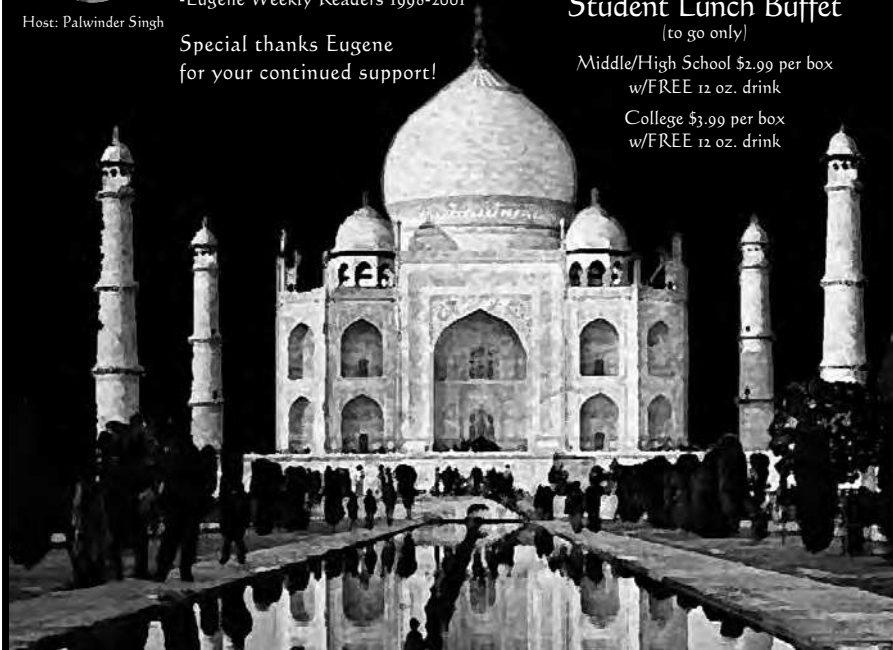
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