

You Shut Up, Senator

Don't talk about what lesbians do in the bedroom

I'll never forget the first time I saw lesbians on TV (if you don't count Wimbledon). In the early 1980s – years before our goddess Ellen cracked daytime TV's lavender ceiling – Phil Donahue hosted a panel of unabashed, openly lesbian lesbians on his talk show. The Amazon grapevine buzzed like crazy. We all tuned in.



The host introduced his guests, all groomed and smiling in the TV studio's swivel chairs, ready to chat with the affable, white-haired husband of *Free to Be You and Me*'s Marlo Thomas. What could go wrong? Donahue was a respectable show. Phil would keep things civil.

The lesbian guests talked about themselves, their communities, how they were people like everyone else. Gays and lesbians, they said, all too often lost jobs, custody, homes – and sometimes their lives – because certain people considered queers a danger to society (same as now, only with fewer allies to raise a stink.)

What a thrill to watch confident out-of-the-closet lesbians advance our militant homosexual agenda of getting folks to stick up for us when our basic human rights are violated. Ya gotta give Donahue props for bringing it to daytime TV.

Hello? 'I'm gay' does not mean 'Let's talk sex.'

He turned to his studio audience. Someone in the back row had a question. Phil jogged up the theater steps and reached his mic across the row. The camera zoomed in on a husky 30-something guy in a baseball cap. The whole world was watching. His question? "Is cunnilingus still the main deal?"

I kid you not.

Keep in mind this was back in the pre-wardrobe malfunction day, a time of unbleepable nondelay live TV broadcast. Poor Phil Donahue. He was stunned. His erudite discussion had just plummeted straight into the gutter.

The chance of a lifetime to explore these amazing women's insights into human dignity, equality and justice, and some tool reduces their entire life experience to genital stimulation. Hello? "I'm gay" does not mean "Let's talk sex."

That mentality should've been dumped back in the '80s. But no.

Just last week, State Sen. Gary George explained why he's cosponsoring a bill to repeal Oregon's anti-discrimination law. And I quote, "My advice to the gay community is SHUT UP, just don't talk about it. If you walk around talking about what you do in the bedroom, you should be on the Pervert Channel."

I kid you not.

The Pervert Channel? Here is a supposed representative of the people pushing an initiative to take away people's protection from discrimination, and he calls us perverts?

It's so not about what we do in the bedroom, senator. A law dictating what my domestic partner and I do in our bedroom would have to regulate folding laundry, working crossword puzzles and flea-combing cats.

Sen. George and his Repuglican cosponsors have a bad case of xenophobia. Difference freaks these people out, and what differentiates gay from straight, by definition, is the gender of whom we have sex with – even though that criterion has its exceptions (Sen. Wide-Stance 'I'm-not-gay!' Larry Craig, for example). Still, you don't see us obsessing over what heterosexuals do sexually. We don't have to. That information is everywhere – New York's now ex-Gov. Spitzer joining the pantheon of heterosexual public officials whose sex habits dominate the media one recent case in point. As I understand it, though, those antics didn't take place in the governor's bedroom.

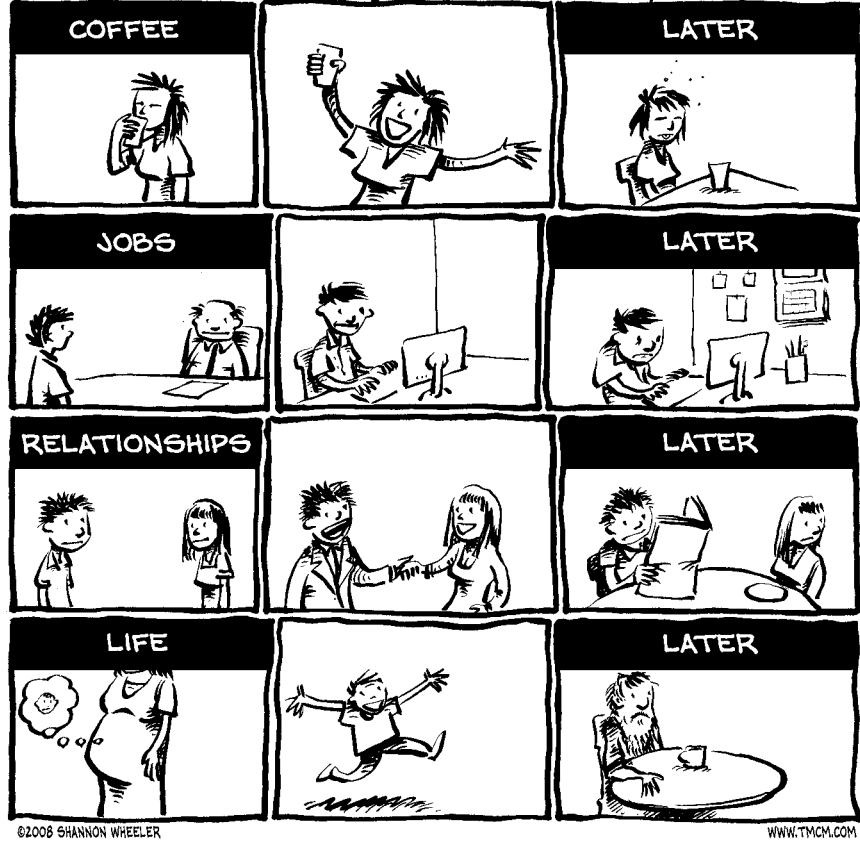
Even so, curiosity is human nature. You can find lesbian sex info on *The L-Word* (fiction), bad porn (sexist), and Dan Savage (gay man), but when can you really ask a lesbian? I kinda see where the *Donahue*-audience guy was coming from. In honor of Sen. George telling me to shut up, I'll tell you what I know.

Besides our struggle to end anti-gay discrimination, hate crimes, rejection from relatives and religious condemnation, I'd say most lesbians' main deal is groceries, dishes, health care, work, family and community. OK, OK, and maybe sometimes, on a good day, cunnilingus.

Sally Sheklow has been a part of the Eugene community since 1972 and is a member of the WYMPROV! comedy troupe. Her column, which began at EW in 1999, also runs in several other newspapers and magazines around the country and Down Under.

How to Be Happy

by Shannon Wheeler



MARCOLA HIT, TOO

I read the cover story (2/28) on Triangle Lake School with much interest. The schools in Marcola are in a similar situation. The Oregon Toxics Alliance has a series of maps that show the spraying that has taken place over the past 10 years within a mile radius of both the grade school and the high school. Both schools have been drenched, it would seem, with herbicides.

The Mohawk Valley is currently being aerial sprayed by Weyerhaeuser in several of its watersheds. And the county is threatening to bring back an herbicide spray program of its own.

I wonder what the long-term health effects are on the people who have lived in this heavily sprayed valley over the past 40 years. I personally know people with birth defects, autism, asthma, kidney disease and cancer who have been born, raised or currently reside in the Mohawk Valley. Perhaps you could do a story on the Mohawk Valley spray situation next.

*Diane Albino
Mohawk Valley*

JUSTICE FOR PEDOPHILES?

On Feb. 14, 2007, Jeff Luers received a long overdue Valentine when the Oregon Court of Appeals overturned the prison sentence of almost 23 years imposed on him in 2001 by Judge Lyle Velure. Recently Judge Jack Billings reduced Velure's disproportionately harsh, politically motivated, and illegal sentence to 10 years.

Just a few days after Judge Billings' ruling, lawyers for the Archdiocese of Portland forced a return to federal court for the victims of pedophile priests in the 175 cases settled last year. They refused to release documents currently kept secret under seal in the bankruptcy court file — even though Archbishop John Vlazny had promised openness regarding how much church leaders knew about the abuses and subsequent cover-ups. "Getting the secrets out," said abuse-victim attorney Kelly Clark, "was a big part of what my clients wanted." The Archdiocese

also insisted that victims who file new lawsuits be identified by name in court proceedings, despite the time-honored practice of using only victims' initials to safeguard them in child sex abuse lawsuits.

Here's the kicker: Judge Velure, now retired, will mediate the question of which, if any, documents are released. If the two sides do not agree, U.S. District Judge Michael Hogan will settle the matter through binding arbitration. Velure and Hogan worked together to protect the financial interests and the secrecy of the Archdiocese in negotiating the original settlement.

How convenient for the Portland Archdiocese. Let's hope that the sexual abuse victims of pedophile priests receive more justice than Jeff Luers did. Don't, however, hold your breath.

*Jerome Garger
Yachats*

A CONCRETE PROPOSAL

The 4J School Board is currently considering the future of two properties it owns. One is Fox Hollow School on Mahalo Street. The other is Civic Stadium. Although no decision has been made yet regarding either, it seems likely that both will be sold to developers in the foreseeable future.

I have an idea for redevelopment. I propose that we tear down the existing structures and replace them with two prisons, one on each site. Perhaps they can be joined by a tunnel.

The potential benefits to the community are numerous. First of all, the school board will make a mint on the land sale. Secondly, prison building is a growth industry. Their construction provides high paying wages, not to mention the additional long-term jobs. The extra security will only add to the feeling of safety in the neighborhood.

Prisons can be imposing buildings, but with proper native landscaping they can be made to blend right in to the surrounding neighborhood. Some might worry about the security risk of housing prisoners so close to a residential area. Don't worry! With modern