

[KNOCKING]

HOST 1: The following program contains language or images of a frank or sensitive nature which may be considered objectionable by some. Listener discretion is advised

[MUSIC PLAYING] (SINGING) After Hours. After Hours.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes. You've tuned in to *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude right here on KPFT, Houston, 90.1 FM. The crew of *After Hours* is ready to bring you news, interviews, dialogue, and music geared for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people and their friends. Here at *After Hours*, we may be diverse, but we have one thing in common, we are all out of the closet and urge everyone to come out of their closets.

That means standing up for yourself, taking responsibility for your own life, and being proud of who you are. Realistically, we know not everyone can do that because of age, job, or frame of mind. That's OK. We're here for you too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of *After Hours*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hello, Houston and College Station and Huntsville. And welcome to the March 10th edition of *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude. I'm Jimmy Carper.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: And I'm Vanessa Edwards--

JIMMY CARPER: Tada, tada.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Vanessa Edwards Foster.

JIMMY CARPER: I'm sorry.

[LAUGHTER]

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Tada, tada. Oh, well.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. It is--

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: I can do a little softshoe--

JIMMY CARPER: We have--

VANESSA --soft you can't-- so soft you can't hear it.
EDWARDS
FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: We have transgenders here tonight, I mean, just about everybody but Phyllis Frye is in the house tonight.

VANESSA Um, yes, I've actually got a special guest tonight, someone who normally sits over on this side of the window.
EDWARDS
FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

VANESSA One of our guests is actually our usual host. In fact, the first hostess of the transgender show, Miss Sarah
EDWARDS DePalma--
FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: You bet.

VANESSA --and also a couple of other guests, including Miss Monica Roberts of NTAC and TGAIN.
EDWARDS
FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

VANESSA --and Beth Richard, also of NTAC and TGAIN.
EDWARDS
FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Wow.

VANESSA And we've also got a drop-in, Alyssa Wright, just fresh from her very first lobby experience up to Austin. And we
EDWARDS will soon be calling the board chair from the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition--
FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Really?

VANESSA --NTAC, Mr. Yosenio Lewis.
EDWARDS
FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: OK. I see Jackie Thorne over there also.

VANESSA Yes, hey Jackie.
EDWARDS
FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: She's got some information on the court that she'll be giving to us later. Before we get into all of this, I want to tell you about the music that you heard because that first piece was brand new to this station. It's by a man called Richard Isen, I-S-E-N, from his brand new CD called *Let It Fall*. And that was the title cut from it.

He has music just like that all over this place. It's like a 21st century art song kind of CD here. But lots of-- there's some long songs, some short songs. And all of them having that catchy kind of hook.

**VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER:** Swing thing.

JIMMY CARPER: And this last one, Gwen Avery from her CD *Sugar Mama*. And that was *Georgia on My Mind*. And she puts a whole new meaning to the song, especially considering she's a lesbian. And it just makes you think. We've got a whole lot of music coming up.

We also in the second half of the show have-- Francisco Sanchez is going to be here with Sandy Lopez. And in the middle, we'll have the news and views with Chris. So let's go to another piece of music. And you're going to--

**VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER:** I am going to give a call out to Yosenio Lewis with NTAC out in San Francisco.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

**VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER:** And then we will get started with the beginning portion of the show.

JIMMY CARPER: Great. And so thanks to Katrina Rose, I happened to have this CD from Dana international. And it's one of the many versions of *Diva*. You're listening to it on After Hours queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS, College Station.

**VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER:** Be ready as soon as [INAUDIBLE]. Hello. We are back, queer radio with attitude, KPFT, Saturday night. We are actually going to talk tonight about lobbying, especially the transgendered lobbies. We just got through with the TGAIN lobby day, in fact, oh, god, what's-- 2 and 1/2 weeks ago. And it was wildly successful. And we've also got a National Lobby Day coming up. But we'll get into that in a little bit.

Right now, I want to get some impressions of some of the folks about these past lobby days in Austin. We're going to start off with our newest member to the lobbying team, Miss Alyssa Wright, a local girl from here in Houston. Alyssa.

**ALYSSA
WRIGHT:** You know, I think we did the right thing by taking the high road. Someone commented that lobby day was empowering. And I really had to agree. I thought it was exactly that, a bit of hyperbole, I said on the internet. If I can traipse through the halls of the state legislature anywhere as a woman, I mean, I can do so anywhere.

And somebody said, well, you know, you're exaggerating. The Capitol is probably the safest place to cross-dress in Texas. Don't keep that attitude as it will get you in trouble. But I thought it was really terrific. I know my personal confidence grew over the course of the day. I was reasonably optimistic at the beginning. But I felt a bit of nervousness and butterflies at the beginning. They went away.

And I will say that, just my own personal experiences, everybody was polite. I wound up talking to, maybe, half a dozen legislative aides. About the worst that happened was I talked to one rather conservative legislative aide, who got involved in a rather genteel debate with us and brought up arguments of being transgendered as a choice. God made us the way we are at birth.

Finally, it became clear we'd agree to disagree, and we left, and no hard feelings. But I went away with the feeling, well, this is a rather genteel, civilized female Archie Bunker. But it was an exception. And on a more positive angle, one legislative aide said their legislator hadn't made up his mind about how he would vote.

VANESSA So there was no real negative aspects, then?

EDWARDS
FOSTER:

ALYSSA Oh no. It was absolutely fantastic. And I would--

WRIGHT:

VANESSA You would recommend this then to just--

EDWARDS
FOSTER:

ALYSSA I guess if I was to make one more point here, it would be, if you're worried you'd be embarrassed or something, forget it. You know, I'm fairly passable. Perhaps, I could be even more so. But even if you're a less passable than I would, people will treat you with the respect if you go in there and with a--

WRIGHT:

VANESSA Right.

EDWARDS
FOSTER:

ALYSSA --good attitude. And I would encourage each and every person listening, if you're a transsexual, if you're cross-dresser, what have you, come on out next to lobby day. We need you.

WRIGHT:

VANESSA Thank you. Thank you very much.

EDWARDS
FOSTER:

ALYSSA You're welcome.

WRIGHT:

VANESSA In fact, that's exactly what we want from all of our newbies and people that have thought about it but have not gotten off the fence yet. We actually have a lot of fun when we go up there. And it really is. It's a very empowering situation. Or I shouldn't say, situation, circumstance.

EDWARDS
FOSTER:

I'm sorry. I'm trying to do a little quick chair shuffle here and get in one of our other guests. With us also in the studio is Sarah DePalma the executive director of the Texas Gender Advocacy and Information Network, also known as TGAIN. In fact, Sarah, you want to go ahead and say a little hello quickly?

SARAH OK. Hello, quickly.

DEPALMA:

[LAUGHTER]

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Welcome to being a guest on the show for the first time.

SARAH DEPALMA: Yeah. This is strange being in this studio.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Have you ever sat at this table before?

SARAH DEPALMA: Yeah, actually, we did an entire show in here one night when we couldn't get either microphone in the studio to work. I see Jimmy nodding his head madly.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: So it's not the first.

SARAH DEPALMA: Oh. Oh, no. In fact, I did a show in here one night, perched between Ray Hill and Dan McKellar and didn't get to say 10 words all night. So yeah, but it's the first time I've been here as a guest. So this feels a little different.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: One good thing about being in the studio now, at least, the rain does not drip in anymore.

JIMMY CARPER: That is so true.

SARAH DEPALMA: Yeah, it's amazing, when you all send your money in here, they actually use it for repairs.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Oh, yes.

SARAH DEPALMA: You know the best part about this? The toilet works.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Yeah.

SARAH DEPALMA: God, I'm not used to the--

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Indoor plumbing.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

VANESSA Hey, we don't have to go out in the backyard anymore.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

SARAH Yeah. So keep those cards and money, little cards, the letters coming and keep the checks in them.

DEPALMA:

VANESSA Oh, you bet. That's a scary sight.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

SARAH You know, I feel like Ray Hill in here. We should start talking about jails in here next.

DEPALMA:

VANESSA Oh, please, please.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Please, please.

VANESSA Oh, by the way, speaking of that, I guess I had a letter that was sent up here from someone with TDC, someone
EDWARDS by the name of Richard Squares or Skweres, S-K-W-E-R-E-S. But anyway, I just wanted to give a shout out and a
FOSTER: quick hello. And it was a very sweet letter. I do have to let you know that, no, I am not looking for any kind of a
relationship. My relationship is activism. I have zero time for a personal life and, sometimes, don't even have
time for a shower.

SARAH And trust me. I know her. She's telling you the truth.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: True.

BETH RICHARD: I am married, and so I just don't sleep.

VANESSA Yes. Well, for different reasons.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

SARAH Yeah, the biggest joke that me and Vanessa have. We live about eight miles apart from each other, and the only
DEPALMA: time we see each other is in Austin or Washington, DC.

VANESSA It's a busy life, but it's fun. It's never boring. Anyway, I wanted to first touch on the TGAIn lobby day that we just
EDWARDS had actually 2 and 1/2 weeks ago.

FOSTER:

SARAH Right.

DEPALMA:

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: And just get some impressions on this from, first off, the executive director. What was your thoughts going into lobby days and then after lobby days, after the result?

SARAH DEPALMA: Well, you know me, I'm always really pessimistic going into a lobby day. No matter how much work I put into it and how much preparation I put into it, I always go into it expecting a disaster. And it almost never happens. It didn't happen again this year.

On the contrary, we had 82 people show up. And one of the things I was really pleased about this time is it wasn't just 82 people from Houston. They truly-- we truly did have representation from all over the state this time.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: And we brought people in from Dallas this time.

SARAH DEPALMA: We had people from Dallas. We had some people come in from Valley real late in the day. I was really pleased with that. And the other thing is this is really largely an attempt to community building. We have a real problem in Texas.

Because the state is so large, it's hard to build a sense of community. I was really struck when I was out in New Mexico, how they called a state community meeting, and everybody lived within two hours of one another.

If we call a state meeting here, we're talking about people coming in from El Paso on one side of the state in Amarillo from the other from the Valley. I mean, it's just-- it's a logistical nightmare.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: It's enormous.

SARAH DEPALMA: Yes. So to get 82 people to come from around the state is really a miracle. When they held a lobby day in New Mexico, they didn't have to worry about any kind of hotel expenses. There were-- no one needed to stay overnight because everyone is able to drive home. It's not the kind of thing that we can pull off so easily here.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Not quite.

SARAH DEPALMA: And so I was really pleased that we had the turn out that we did and a very-- I'm especially pleased that we've been so successful after it's been over. Both bills, the bill, our Name and Gender Change Bill, especially, is doing very well. That's coming up in both sides of the house. And so I feel like we really-- we achieved what we set out to do.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Excellent.

Beth, give me your impressions as to the TGAIN lobby days this year. You do a lot of, I guess, local activism. But this was your first time going up as well, wasn't it?

BETH RICHARD: Yes, it was. My primary activism is in my corporation. I'm right-- well in fact, I was just voted the human resources liaison for our executive board for our employee gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered organization. We have two transgendered people on the seven-person executive board for our company.

VANESSA Can we say the name of the company or no?

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

BETH RICHARD: Well, I don't have a problem with that. The name of the group is Compaq Plus. We are the Compaq employees who are the people like us. And we've got about a 15-year history running back into deck. And we're now moving it into the Houston.

Once Compaq had picked up 10M and DEC, we grew from there. And so this is the first time that we've had more than just myself as transgendered people on the board. And so I'm really excited about what's coming up this year. We've got a really full slate. So anyway, my activism has primarily been very local.

VANESSA What is your impression of actually taking this to the state level? And what was your impression--

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

BETH RICHARD: So taking this to the state level, for me, personally, I had always wanted to go do this. And taking vacation time for me is not an easy thing to do with the way my schedule goes. But what really pushed it over the edge this year was the Littleton decision.

And that was what really kind of got knee up off my behind, as it were, to go and talk to these people. And my impressions of it were that my reasons for going haven't been because I was shy-- I was too shy or anything like that. So I said, well, give me some of the hard ones because I'd be bored if it was too easy. So Sarah found quite a challenging list for me to go see.

VANESSA Oh, yes.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

[LAUGHTER]

We sent you to some good ones.

BETH RICHARD: Yeah. And I was surprised because some of the most conservative senators, who had the reputation for being the hardest to work with, turned out to be really not as hard to work with as we thought. On the other hand, most of the time, I was seeing an aide, rather than the legislator themselves.

SARAH But we've had a lot of compliments about the presentation of our people.

DEPALMA:

BETH RICHARD: That's true.

SARAH We've had a lot of compliments on the handouts that we gave.

DEPALMA:

BETH RICHARD: Mm-hmm.

SARAH We've had a lot of compliments on the presentation of the people. I even heard from conservative legislators,

DEPALMA: who said that even though they didn't necessarily agree with us, they respected us for coming. Overall, the response has really been terrific.

BETH RICHARD: One of the things that I noticed, especially in one of the senators who had a particularly bad reputation, as I was speaking with the aide, the aide was asking questions back to me that really told me how well she understood what we were saying. She was paying attention, and she was getting it.

So to me, the act of educating the people who are in a position to if not be the legislators, at least, discuss these issues with the legislators really makes the difference. I mean, it's not so much of-- so I'm a pessimist all the time.

Do I think we're going to get any of our bills through? Well, we'll just have to submit them next session. But I think that we have made huge strides in educating the people that could get it through. So go ahead prove me wrong I'd love it. I really would.

SARAH Don't discount that Name Change Bill. It's doing well.

DEPALMA:

BETH RICHARD: Yeah, yeah. But still, prove me wrong, please.

SARAH God knows I'm trying.

DEPALMA:

VANESSA Christie Littleton was phenomenal. I cannot believe she actually had that ready to go and have the Senate sponsor in hand before we even got up there and managed to keep it secret the entire time.

FOSTER:

BETH RICHARD: So--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--is this our first time on the radio since the lobby days?

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

VANESSA Yes it is.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

BETH RICHARD: OK. So maybe it's secret to most of the people listening.

SARAH No, it was a secret to me too.

DEPALMA:

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Oh, yes.

BETH RICHARD: What I'm saying is it may still be a secret. What are you guys talking about?

SARAH DEPALMA: Well, that's a good point. Christie Littleton is now married into the Van de Putte family. Well, it so happens Leticia Van de Putte is a State Senator. And so she, ahead, already written the Bill that she was going to introduce into the Senate.

And Christie knew it all day long, all day long. And not once did she mention it to me. So all day long, I'm sweating and saying, when are we going to get to Leticia? We've got to talk to Leticia. And the whole time, she knew what's in the bag.

[? PARTICIPANT:] ?] That saucy tot.

SARAH DEPALMA: She waits till the end of the day to show up with Phyllis and say, nothing to worry about. And I'm like, what do you mean there's nothing to worry about?

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: It was fun watching you sweat.

[? PARTICIPANT:] ?] Sweat.

SARAH DEPALMA: I was wired, I was, like, if we don't get there, I'm going to go see her myself. No, no, no, that's all right. What do you mean that's all right? It's OK. It's covered. And then, finally, at 4 o'clock, she says to me, oh, I knew it since a week ago. I was ready to strangle the woman.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Saucy tot. Welcome to the good surprises.

SARAH DEPALMA: Oh, I was ready to strangle-- you know, she took on Fred Phelps by herself last week?

[? PARTICIPANT:] ?] What?

[? PARTICIPANT:] ?] What?

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, she did.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: I heard about that.

BETH RICHARD: Oh, man. I missed this one.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: She was actually out there in front of the Sheriff's Department.

SARAH DEPALMA: Out in front of the Sheriff's Department.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: In San Antonio.

SARAH DEPALMA: The Fred Phelps idiots where in San Antonio.

BETH RICHARD: Both of them, weren't they?

SARAH DEPALMA: And Christie-- well, the whole group is a bunch of idiots but--

BETH RICHARD: Yeah. But as I understand it, they managed to muster up a large group to come down from Kansas City, both of them.

SARAH DEPALMA: Both of them. And it turns out they're all related to Fred Phelps, anyhow.

BETH RICHARD: Yeah. They're inbred.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, inbred--

SARAH DEPALMA: But Christie went out there and took them on by herself.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Yeah, she has actually become quite the activist.

SARAH DEPALMA: Oh, she's fearless.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Yeah, it makes me very, very proud, especially after the story first broke about the Littleton case. And I got nothing but hell from a bunch of people that were saying that, oh, well, she's a closet case. She went back into the closet and basically turned her back on the transgender community. And I basically told everyone, look, this happened back in the '70s--

[?] ?] That's right.

PARTICIPANT:

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: --in a very different time when they told people to do that.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I said, give her the benefit of the doubt. And sure enough, the benefit of the doubt has really worked to the betterment of the Texas transgender community, especially this year.

SARAH DEPALMA: Well, we have a select group of people that are going to be going back to Austin, probably, in a couple of weeks, probably no more than eight people. And Christie made it real clear to me that she expects to be one of the eight.

[? PARTICIPANT:] ?] Yeah.

BETH RICHARD: And I think she's a good choice.

SARAH DEPALMA: And I said, like, we would really go without Christie, you know? But then-- and she's so funny. She says, I don't want to get left out. She says, yeah, I don't want you to think that I'm dumb. And I said, well, whoever thought you were dumb? I said, if you could hide that secret from me for all an entire day, you're not dumb, sneaky, maybe but not dumb.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Actually, that points out a very, very good aspect to this. You do not have to be the world's brightest person to go up there and to lobby. A lot of times, the thing that makes the biggest impact is the personal stories.

BETH RICHARD: Oh, yeah.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: What actually happens to the individuals and how they can actually see the humanity involved there.

[? PARTICIPANT:] ?] Yeah.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: How they can--

[? PARTICIPANT:] ?] Absolutely.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: --see the tragedies.

JIMMY CARPER: That is very true because I was part of a group that-- Katrina was part of it, along with her mom.

SARAH What a group.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And we were a triple threat team for the most part. I had Kat there to explain the legal end of it. And I made my-- and I made my talking points. And then Kat's mom would follow up with the personal. And in one office-- in one office, her mom said, now, here is my daughter. She was educated here in the state of Texas and at a taxpayer-supported State University.

And unfortunately, my daughter is now 1,500 miles away from us because she couldn't find a job here. She had to go to a state where transgender rights are covered. And that made some very big impressions on a lot of legislators that we've visited during the day, especially hearing the viewpoint of a mom.

SARAH That's one of the things I was disappointed by. And that we had been promised several spouses who were going to come with us and speak on behalf of their marriage. And several of them backed out for the last minute for various reasons.

And what's one of my goals for the next lobby day. But honestly, our big step now is twofold. Number one is to get the Name and Gender Change Bill passed. And the information that I needed from Dr. Cole came in the mail yesterday.

[? ?] Good.

PARTICIPANT:

SARAH So we're starting to put that packet together. And we'll be ready to go in a couple of weeks. And then between
DEPALMA: sessions, we're going to be doing a lot of educating to legislators in their home offices.

VANESSA Oh, yeah.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

SARAH So when we come back the next time to undo the Littleton case, we will have a consensus agreement as to what
DEPALMA: will have to happen and have legislators lined up to sign on as co-authors for that. And that's one of the things that, Vanessa, that I think that Yosenio will probably talk about when you have him on. And that is the experience you get from going each time.

VANESSA Yes.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

SARAH Every time we've gone, we've learned something new, something more important, and something that makes us
DEPALMA: more effective as a community.

VANESSA Exactly. In fact, Yosenio, are you still on the line listening? Oh, sorry.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: He can't.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Oh. Well, I guess he's not

MONICA ROBERTS: He's on hold. I don't think he can hear you.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Oh, is he on? Hello, Yosenio?

MONICA ROBERTS: He's still on hold.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: He's still on hold. He is really on hold.

MONICA ROBERTS: Well, while you guys are-- while you guys are doing that, I wanted to mention-- Sarah brought up the issue of spouses. My spouse, just because of working in an elementary school, where you have tons of vacation, and they tell you exactly when you're going to take it, there was no way she could get out to go do this. So rather than bring my family with me in person, I brought a picture.

SARAH DEPALMA: Yeah. The picture is great.

MONICA ROBERTS: And I had a little paragraph right up at the bottom, a couple of paragraphs about how our family came to be and where we are now and then a little-- one paragraph for each of us.

YOSENIO LEWIS: I thought that was wonderful.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

MONICA ROBERTS: Thanks, Yosenio.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Is Yosenio on now?

MONICA ROBERTS: Yep.

YOSENIO LEWIS: Yes, I'm here.

**VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER:**

Hey, how are you?

**YOSENIO
LEWIS:**

Hi.

**VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER:**

I hope you were at least able to hear some of this stuff. I didn't even realize we had on hold all that time.

**YOSENIO
LEWIS:**

Yes, I heard it all.

**VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER:**

Oh, very good.

**YOSENIO
LEWIS:**

Very inspiring.

**MONICA
ROBERTS:**

Yeah, how's it going Yosenio?

**YOSENIO
LEWIS:**

It's going quite well, Monica.

**VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER:**

Speaking of, I guess this is probably a good time to dovetail into the national arena, as far as transgender lobbying. We don't just do this at the state level. We do also do this nationally, and in fact, are doing it with a brand new organization going up there for our first organized lobby event, the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition.

Yosenio Lewis, for those of you who may not be aware, is the board chair of NTAC, the acronym. And in fact, that's a group that both Monika and myself and Beth are all members of. Yosenio, give us a little, I guess, bit of your background, your affiliations, your activist background, et cetera.

**YOSENIO
LEWIS:**

Oh, boy.

[LAUGHTER]

Well, I have been a transgender activist or an activist for transgender issues, I should say, since 1990 and been more involved in the political arena in the national arena since '96.

Basically, I'm on the board of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force as well as, as you said, the chair of the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition, and involved in several local organizations here in San Francisco, in California.

I have focused more on the national component because I believe that we do need to have a greater voice there. We do need to have an opportunity to speak for ourselves rather than having others speaking for us. And we do need to ensure that our particular issues are addressed in a way that facilitates the ability for us to have our rights.

VANESSA Amen.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

VANESSA How many times have you been lobbying now?

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

YOSENIO Honestly, I have never been to a lobby day, federal lobby day.

LEWIS:

VANESSA Oh, another newbie.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

YOSENIO I guess I will be a newbie.

LEWIS:

VANESSA You're in for a treat.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

BETH RICHARD: Wear comfortable shoes, Yosenio.

VANESSA Oh, yes, no high heels, no spikes.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: And especially if you're running with Vanessa.

BETH RICHARD: If you're running-- if you're running with Vanessa, let me give you a piece of advice. Take all the caffeine you conceivably can put into your body. She will run you into the ground.

YOSENIO You seem to think that she hasn't already done this.

LEWIS:

[LAUGHTER]

VANESSA I mean, not lobbying. I managed to spend the afternoon with Vanessa lobbying in Austin. And it was all I could do to keep up with that woman.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

YOSENIO I completely understand.

LEWIS:

VANESSA I was walking slow. I didn't even have any sleep that night. I know I wasn't walking fast.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

SARAH Yosenio, it's 5:30 on the day of lobby day, and we're all heading out the door. And we turn around, Vanessa is gone and as we hear her yelling, I'm going to see one more senator.

DEPALMA:

BETH RICHARD: Yeah, that's when she dragged me and her off to Buster Brown's office.

SARAH So you're in for it.

DEPALMA:

YOSENIO I fully expect that. I will learn new directions and new ways of being in Washington, DC, that I never knew before, specifically because of Vanessa.

LEWIS:

JIMMY CARPER: Hey, she taught me a few shortcuts around Capitol Hill that I didn't know about on the last one we went to. We made one wrong turn, ended up in Gucci Gulch once.

YOSENIO But I am looking forward to the opportunity to do lobbying on a federal level precisely because I think it's important for us to remember that the people, who are there, are there at our pleasure. They are there to take care of us, to serve our needs.

LEWIS:

And as we are taxpayers, we have every right to go to them and say, this is what I'm concerned about, this is what I want you to be concerned about. And because I put you here, I expect you to pay attention to me.

VANESSA Hear, hear.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

YOSENIO I think it's very important for us to remember that. When we go to the Hill, when we go to any Hill, we need to remember that we put these people there. And they are there to serve us. And therefore, we are the ones with the power. We are the ones in control.

LEWIS:

And we should not go in, as was being said earlier, we should not go in afraid or concerned that we might say the wrong thing, or we might not look correct to them, or we might, in some way, be less than they are. If anything, it's the other way around. And we need to walk in with that confidence and say, I put you here, and I have these issues. And you need to pay attention to them.

VANESSA Exactly. Spoken like a veteran lobbyist. Are you sure you've never done this before?

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

YOSENIO Not-- not federal lobbying. No, I've never done that.

LEWIS:

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Oh, you've done state lobbying then.

YOSENIO LEWIS: I have done some state lobbying.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Oh, well, then, see, that was-- you're belying the fact there. We thought, OK, well, we were having our brand new board chair going up for the first time to go lobby. And obviously, that's not the case.

SARAH DEPALMA: Yosenio, that's exactly what I told our people on our lobby training day too. And we talked about the fact that it would be easy to be intimidated by the size of the building or by the position or the desk or whatever. And we told everyone there to remember that these people are our employees.

YOSENIO LEWIS: Exactly.

SARAH DEPALMA: We pay their salaries. We have a right to be there.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Exactly.

SARAH DEPALMA: And I'm glad to hear you say that because that's exactly what we've been preaching here now for years. And I think we're finally getting people to believe it.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: And we have to continue bringing in the new people. Those are the folks that replenish our ranks. Eventually, everybody gets a little tired at times. Sometimes, they need vacations right, Sarah?

SARAH DEPALMA: Every once in a while, my life partner would like to see some part of me beside the back of my head.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: As you're sitting at the computer desk?

SARAH DEPALMA: Yes.

VANESSA EDWARDS FOSTER: Drop her an email. The thing is, though, that there are a lot of folks out there that we really need to reach. They really have not done the lobbying before and are intimidated by it. And you brought up an excellent point that, really, it's not something that we should allow, intimidation, to affect our decision whether or not to go.

We should take that initiative and just jump in with both feet because it does make a difference. It really does. Just out of curiosity, how do you go about bringing in a lot of the newbies, a lot of the people that really have not lobbied before? What do you say to them to encourage them or to, I guess, give them the selling point to go lobby?

YOSENIO Which you are you speaking to?

LEWIS:

VANESSA Either you or Sarah.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

SARAH Go ahead, Yosenio. And I'll listen first.

DEPALMA:

YOSENIO This will be good since I've never lobbied on the federal level. How would I get people to come to it?

LEWIS:

VANESSA State-wide even.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

YOSENIO Well, statewide, it was very clear that we had a lot of support. I mean, this is California. And you're always going to get a few people who are bound and determined to make something happen and not willing to sit by and wait for it to occur.

LEWIS:

On a national level, there are a variety of ways that I would use to entice people. First and foremost is making the statement that they have every right to be there, that the Hill is their Hill, the Capitol is their Capitol.

And they have every right to go to it and request a meeting and voice their opinions and voice their desires and say to whomever they might speak with, this will not be the last time that you see me. I will be here as often as I need to be here. I will write to you as often as I need to write to you. I will call you as often as I need to call you because this is my life I'm talking about. And I am worth this effort.

VANESSA Mm-hmm.

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

YOSENIO So the more that we can instill in people that they are worth the effort, the more or they will show up, the more they will do the work, the more they will show up for their lives.

LEWIS:

[? ?] Absolutely.

PARTICIPANT:

YOSENIO And the more others see people showing up for their lives, the more enticed they will be to, in turn, show up for their own lives.

LEWIS:

SARAH
DEPALMA: That's completely right. I think this is really about community building. The gays and lesbians have had a community as such now for 30 or 40 years. Transgenders are really new with the idea of community. And I know-- I remember hearing Kate Bornstein say that she didn't think that being transgendered was enough reason to have a community.

As much as I like Kate, I disagree with her on that. I think it's really important that we do have a community. We just had a murder of a transgendered person here in Houston. And we saw exactly how important it was that we had a community that [? would ?] rally and get things done quickly.

And I'm glad to hear you talk-- to say this because, really, in the end, this is about community building. And you've got the same problem in California that we have in Texas. And just the sheer size of the state makes organizing difficult.

YOSENIO
LEWIS: Yes, it does.

VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER: Just out of curiosity, how long has it been since you've lobbied in California? Did you lobby this year?

YOSENIO
LEWIS: No, not this year. It was three years ago, actually.

VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER: OK. So were you, I guess, involved at all when the Employment Non-Discrimination came up at the time and the situation that arose where transgenders were excluded from it.

YOSENIO
LEWIS: I was not involved in that. I actually was involved in the subsequent attempt to include transgender people within the Fair Employment and Housing Act.

SARAH
DEPALMA: Actually, Vanessa, I was one of the people that was involved with the ENDA. I was up there with Ricky Wilkins and Jessica Xavier and Phyllis Frye and a handful of other people at the national level. Yeah. I sat in in that meeting. And I'm surprised there still isn't smoke in that room.

VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER: In fact, when are we going to get you involved in the national level again, Sarah, speaking--

SARAH
DEPALMA: No, no, no. Laurie is sitting out in the lobby. And I want to go home alive so I'm not volunteering to do anything more.

VANESSA
EDWARDS
FOSTER: Washington is lovely in May. The flowers are blooming. It smells so wonderful.

SARAH
DEPALMA: I've been--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

[? ?] Cherry blossoms.

PARTICIPANT:

SARAH I've been there. I worked as an aide to Senator Lowell Weicker. I'm going to stay home with Laurie.

DEPALMA:

VANESSA Oh. The fact, though, is that we do need a lot of our newer members involved in things. And as Sarah pointed
EDWARDS out, there is the need for community. One of the things that community will do-- oh, I see Laurie.

FOSTER:

SARAH See? She's [INAUDIBLE].

DEPALMA:

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Laurie just came in, waving her finger at me, see. So I'm not lying, folks.

VANESSA She's wagging your finger-- she's wagging her finger because you're not going to Washington, right, Laurie?

EDWARDS

FOSTER:

SARAH Oh, no. I know better.

DEPALMA:

VANESSA Getting back to what we were talking about, the community building, this is something I felt that the transgender
EDWARDS community for quite some time has almost looked both, I guess, in envy and in awe of a lot in the gay and
FOSTER: lesbian community as far as organizing, especially politically organizing. We've still got a lot of catching up to go.
But we've really closed that gap very quickly with what we've done just over the course of the past--