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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, group, convention, s&m, houston, folks, community, seminars, good, southern comfort, transgender, work, little bit, year, meeting, scene, happening, expand, gay, large

SPEAKERS

Jimmy Carper, Sarah DePalma



00:01

In the newspaper, its job is to reflect the community it serves. And so we're gonna have a focus on local news. Of course, we're also going to, you know, have in there in addition to, you know, a very strong local news package, you know, what's going on on the on the statewide level on the national level, and even the international level of stuff in there about health. You know, I've fun stuff in there, we're gonna we're gonna expand the fun stuff from the back of the book, you know, we're gonna expand the entertainment coverage and cartoons and columns, and, you know, those kinds of things, because they're very important in a newspaper, also, you know, you know, sometimes as a journalist, it breaks my heart to read, you know, scientific readership surveys, because, you know, comic strips, in fact, are the number one thing you know, comic strips and obituaries of the two best read things in any newspaper. You nice, y'all are laughing, but



00:45

it's no, no, no, no, I know. It's true. That's



00:47

true. I break my neck for a month on an investigative report, you know about something and you know, what's the first thing someone opens up? Like, Oh, what happened to you know, yeah, he's in green this week. And yeah,



00:57

I'm laughing or when you I've said this many times, and for years, whenever people pick up the twit, the first thing they do is go to the back to see who died.

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Sarah DePalma 01:05

Yeah, it's I'm laughing because I have a friend who works for the Houston Chronicle. And she says the number one letters that they get or something, but Chris, the Doonesbury would have said, yeah.



01:17

But we also we have this this community radio, we're all volunteers. So that that's one media. But we also we know that people in the voice have to like eat. And there's an economic factor.



01:32

Yeah, we are. We're a private enterprise. Absolutely. And we are in business to stay in business, there's no doubt about that.



01:37

And, you know, if the money comes in for like, two reporters, then that's all your newspaper is gonna be. So if you can expand, get more advertisers, and



01:49

absolutely, that's, thanks to the better paper. Absolutely, that's a goal. And it also reflects very well in the community, you know, if you have, you know, large car dealerships, and real estate agents, and grocery stores, and, you know, hospitals and, you know, daycare centers, and those kinds of businesses that are advertised in the newspaper, and then you're a gay person, you pick that up, and you say to yourself, wow, you know, that makes me feel kind of good, that these people want my business and are soliciting me to be a customer with them. Yeah. And, and, you know, and it helps pay salaries, and it helps expand circulation, and it and it adds to the, you know, the we're, this is America, we're a capitalist society, and money talks, doesn't it, and the gay community has a lot of money, we haven't always, you know, flexed our own economic muscle the way necessarily that we might have or should have, and, you know, supporting gay media, you know, in this case, you know, private for, you know, private sector media is one way of doing that. And we're not asking anybody to do because they want to, we're asking them, you know, we're we're, we're approaching this from a standpoint of, we bring something very valuable to the table, and people who want to participate will do so out of their own enlightened self interest.

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Sarah DePalma 03:00

Let's switch gears a little bit. Now, let's talk about Southern Comfort,



03:00

 Jimmy Carper 03:02

okay. And while we're doing that, let me re remind people that they're listening to KPFT, Houston, after hours, not ke O 's yet, take them on with us at one o'clock, one o'clock, one o'clock, te O 's College Station comes in here at one o'clock.

 Sarah DePalma 03:19

Now, let me let me fill the audience in a little bit. And if you're new to the show, and maybe you're catching us, for the first time, you're coming back from the rodeo, or whatever, we have, in the past, discuss the idea that there are conventions that are held in various places around the country. And they are wonders especially good. For people who don't get out in public in a lot of other ways, it's a good place to build confidence is a good way to make contact. Many of them are strictly crossdresser oriented. But one of the largest as a group isn't always Southern Comfort. And I think what separates it is is not strictly crossdresser oriented. Once you talk about that little bit.

 04:03

Well, there's probably a half a dozen major conventions around the country and transgender conventions for the tea community, I like to say are a lot like Pride weekend for the larger queer community. There. It's a gathering of the Klan. It's a ritual celebration of commonality. And, and yes, it it does serve that function for that coming out function that you referred to serve for some folks. But, again, when we when we as we mentioned before, we're talking about gay newspapers and who their readers are. There's not any one person who's transgendered. You know, the, the transgender community has as many different stripes of people as the larger gay community does. And a gender convention attracts all of them. I'm not aware of any particular convention that's primarily for cross dressers Are you referring although I've heard say that the Texas tea party is that way as

 Sarah DePalma 04:56

Texas tea party is and there are a couple of that would know their affiliate We'll try yesterday specifically

 05:00

the holiday and family. Yeah. So those two if those two then then only those two but I mean, if you look at Fantasia Fair in the ifwg Convention and esprit in California dreamin and fant Fall Festival, and, and Southern Comfort, you know, as far as I know all of them strive to serve the entire community Southern Comfort is a fairly large, probably the large window now everyone says, you know, I'm no size queen, so I'm not going to go there. But we had 240 paid attendees last year plus about 75 staff and presenters combined. So we had a large crowd last year. And our programming during the where we were at what a convention is all about, for those of you don't know, is people go to class during the day, essentially, for three days. And there's a variety of different kinds of classes on all different sorts of subjects. And then at lunchtime, when each of those days, we have a big meal together in a ballroom, a hotel ballroom, and

someone makes a speech. And that could be, you know, it's very carefully, you know, thought out ahead of time who's going to make that speech. But over the years, you know, this, those speeches have addressed all different kinds of issues. And then again, at nighttime, we all gather for big dinners, and those are more celebratory and more, more fun than anything else, right. And then typically have entertainment attached to those to those meals. And then a lot of times a lot of folks who go out on the town after that. So that's the physical makeup of what a convention is all about. And the spiritual side of it is determined by who shows up, of course, and then what the what the seminars are all about. And if you have a very diverse program of seminars, you're going to get a very diverse group of people that are going to attend your convention,

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Sarah DePalma 06:39

right. Right. Now southern guys, I don't know what the weather Southern Comfort is largest not. But let's put this way it's one of the larger ones, it says yes, for sure. Easily. Okay, now, for the audience who's never been, you've described a little bit about the classes and said, Who attends these Exactly? Well,

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06:58

there's three as I, I over the years, because I've been doing this for quite a number of years. Now over the years, I've identified sort of three groups or classes of people that sort of show up, maybe four, depending on how you look at it. But one one group of people is what I who are who I call the circuit queens, and these are typically cross dressers typically married heterosexual cross dressers, who, for the most part, live a life the other 51 weeks of the year, that is indistinguishable from, you know, a conventional person's life. And then they pack up their cross dressing life and head for the airport and come to Atlanta in the case of southern comfort for the week, and they show up like the Saturday before, and they spend the entire week in a dress. And this is their vacation. I mean, it's it's what they, you know, it's it's, they look forward to it, and they plan for it, and they they buy, you know, new stuff in advance, and you know, all the rest of that and they show up and they spend the whole week as Sally or Mary, whoever they are. And then at the end of the week, they pack up and go on home. And that's, that's their expression of their transgender, you know, and, and they've made peace with that. And God bless him is what I say and that Yeah, absolutely. And we get, we get a good chunk of ours, you know, and a lot of those gals, a substantial percentage of those gals will bring their spouse with them, and it and it becomes a couple's vacation, and they'll go to the theater, they go out to dinner, they'll participate in all the activities and all that kind of stuff. They typically don't go to very many of the seminars, right? Okay, so that's one class of folks that comes out. A second class would be a second group of people would be folks that I say are going to surgery school, and those would be

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Sarah DePalma 08:36

okay, I know there's giggling Good.

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08:39

Well, every year we have we present seminars, by endocrinologists, and surgeons who specialize in sexual reassignment surgery, which is for some people the ultimate goal of their transgender journey. And we present you know, hormone seminars and surgery seminars, both for male to female transgender people and for female to male. And so we have surgery shoppers, you know, who come because they know they're going to be getting surgery within a year or two. And they want to, you know, go and see Broussard or Schrang, or whoever we have, and they want to sit there and see the presentation and ask questions and you know, do all that kind of stuff. So we have the surgery shoppers, and they do attend those seminars in particular and are very adamant about being you know, being there for that. Usually, it's one full day of that kind of stuff. So that's one class people that come in another class of folks that come are they are the folks who are just dipping their toe in the transgender water and this is a very safe and enjoyable way for someone to, you know, take whatever step it is that they're taking along the way. And you've had that experience or

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Sarah DePalma 09:50

Yeah, it's been I've been to several of the conventions. And And my experience has been that a huge group of people who come RP People who are really trying it out for the first time, whether it's been southern comfort or in California or wherever. And I think that that's great. And it's one of the things that we've talked about is that this trend, the attract these conventions, attract people from all over the country. And if nothing, if for no other reason, then it gives people a chance to feel things out. These conventions are absolutely worth doing.



10:24

Oh, yeah. And the fourth, if there was a fourth category, that would be the folks who, who simply enjoy the conventions and are not necessarily just coming out, or not necessarily shopping for surgery, and who not necessarily are who are not necessarily circuit queens, where this is their only expression, transgender, there's a lot of folks who really enjoy the experience because of their lease at Southern Comfort. Anyway, there's this really marvelous and sometimes transformational sense of community that that occurs. And it's a spontaneous thing. When you get 300, transgendered people in, in this case, a hotel Convention Center for you know, three and a half days. It's really a rare experience for a transgendered person. If only because for one weekend, in a year in a hotel in Atlanta, Georgia, you are a member of a majority. Yes, that's exactly right. Yeah, that is an entirely foreign it was, for me an entirely foreign experience, the first time that I that I experienced that, and this was at the number to Southern Comfort. Eight years ago, I almost fell out, because it was just, you know, such a tremendous revelation for me really was a small epiphany like, Oh, my God, you know,

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Sarah DePalma 11:43

and we're not the only I'm not the only one. But no, it's not. It's



11:47

Wait, it's much more profound than that, frankly, because I knew that already. I had been in

support groups. Yeah. You know, I'd been out in the sense that, you know, I'd been going out of the house and I'd been socializing, and I've been going to what this meeting or that meeting, but to be in the majority. Yeah. You know, for a non transgender person to walk into the hotel that weekend. They felt strange. Yeah, it's nice to put the shoe on the other foot. Yeah. And I had never in my life had that, that tremendous sense of belonging, not that I was alone in the world, but that the here was my tribe. Yeah. And we were ruling we were in charge. And we were it, we were the deal. And everyone had to everyone had to, like, you know, negotiate life on our terms. And, and to me, that was profound. I mean, it really was it. You know, I, you know, I'm not a religious person. But I think I'm pretty spiritual. And for me, that was a spiritual experience that was transformational, in, in a profound way. Not in a, you know, saw struck from from the past on the road to Damascus kind of wasn't an overnight transformation. But it was a profound, very spiritual transformation for me to understand that there is a place in the world for me that included pride and dignity and self esteem. And that came from that ritual gathering of the clan. It was a very profound experience.

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Sarah DePalma 13:08

I know Phyllis Frey has spoken many of these. I've spoken at several. I know Ricky Wilkins has a Kate Bornstein. Jessica Xavier. And it's really a good place for people to start to get the sense of transgender politics to go ahead, Jim,

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Jimmy Carper 13:22

I have to remind everyone that they're listening to KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station. This is after hours. I'm Jimmy Carper. And Sarah dipalma is here. And

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Sarah DePalma 13:36

this is Sarah dipalma. In the studio, and we have with us Terry Murphy. And right now we are talking about Southern Comfort, which is a transgendered Convention, which takes place in Atlanta, Georgia. Okay, I'm sorry, go ahead.

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13:51

Well, actually, you know, we can expand the conversation to include the crossing borders convention that's going to be held next month in Toronto. And that's the, the annual convention of the of AI f g, which, if your readers your listeners may not know, listen to me, the journalists, your readers, your listeners may not know is the International Foundation for Gender Education. And this is for those who aren't familiar with the transgender community is the largest advocacy organization, that transgender world. They're based in Boston, they have an annual convention, Sarah knows. And it jumps around from city to city every year. Last year was in on the Queen Mary actually docked in Long Beach, California. Wow. Yeah. And this year, it's at the colony Hotel in downtown Toronto, which is really a fascinating town. It's really great fun. And I'm actually co chairing that convention for them this year, as well.



14:43

So you you're busy.



Sarah DePalma 14:44

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.



14:46

Yes, I am.



Sarah DePalma 14:49

One of the one of the truisms in the transgendered world. Is that night just like it is in the gay world is that 90% of the work is done by 10% of the people. Yes, yes, that's true. Yeah. and interiors one of the 10%. You know, they could just 90% of the work. And I was just talking to Jessica Xavier the other day from inside America. And she was talking about how she's getting tired. And he said, Well, now you know why I left his national director. And we're looking at looking at different ways we could spread responsibility around. And we're lucky in that ITA is a growing organization. So there are people spreading around to now. But in some cases, like with the if GE, for example, it's an organization that's trying very hard, but it's really been stagnant. And so the leaders have had to do the overwhelming majority of the work. And at times, it's really been way too much. You know, they've really had to struggle with it. So, Terry, I'm really glad to have had you on the show. It was my pleasure. How long are you going to be in here?



15:48

Well, it's a little bit of an open ended thing. But it looks like I'll be here, through the towards the end of March. So it looks like it's gonna end up being a three month deal, because we are in the process now, right about halfway through interviewing for the candidates for editor. And we should be making a decision on that in the next two weeks. And then there'll be a period of time where the new editor will come in, and they'll be some training. And then you'll can pack me off on my mule train and head back to Georgia, I have heard a nasty rumor that the building that contains the Houston voice is going to be sold or something has been sold actually. And that are all the all the tenant, all the tenants in there will be moving and on top of everything. Yeah, we're moving right, exactly. It's not a bad thing. Because since we'll be adding staff and expanding it's really actually comes at a very appropriate time. So we're shopping for new office space and we're will stay in Montrose. There's no doubt about it, because it is a you know, it's the central location for the community. So we'll definitely stay in Montrose. Sure, it probably within a few blocks are where we are now. But we're gonna need more space. And so that's it's actually comes along at a pretty good time for us.



Sarah DePalma 16:58

Give me Are they kicking people out? Or is just they want new tenant?



17:02

No, they're actually cleaning out the whole building. I understand that the that whatever that thrift mission thrift store is that's next door. They purchased the building and they're there expand as I understand it, they're expanding their their facilities, they're going to be incorporating that building in their in their thing. Oh, girl bigger thrift shop. She's rubbing her hands together over there.



Sarah DePalma 17:22

I'm just sitting here. I mean, I'd have to spend 100 bucks a dress anymore. Okay, this is working out good.



17:28

But everyone is in that building. We'll be leaving in the next whatever. It's not tomorrow. We don't have to move this weekend. But, but yeah, the building has been sold. And so this is, you know, no, no leases will be renewed. So yeah, everyone was in there, twit and everybody else will be moving along. As your offices in that building. Yeah. And the landlord who's been there, you know, has, you know, he's wonderful. And his has made a situation available to everybody that make it very simple to move from one place to another. And then I don't know how many tenants are gonna take advantage of that. And, and I'm not in charge of that stuff myself. But But yes, it's true. That building is well I'm,



18:03

you know, I work for the gay and lesbian switchboard and other groups. And so I, from a personal standpoint, I hate to see the voice and the twit in separate buildings, it's so much easier to drop



18:20

everything off right, by that I have to say, That's an unusual circumstance, you know, and that's how lucky you know how good for Houston to be able to support to find quality publications like that. That's terrific. Well, they have different audiences. I mean, it's just like the, you know, the New York Times and The Daily News in New York City. I mean, they're both great newspapers, they just happen to serve different purposes, totally different. But both very high quality publications that are put out very conscientiously by, by good folks



18:48

who are very good for somebody who also do other things in the community. Yes,



18:52

absolutely. Yes. And isn't it good that Houston is big enough, large enough, and prosperous enough community support both of those publications. So that's great. It is unusual that they are happened to be right next door to each other. In most cities. There's a little bit more of a friendly, friendly, there's when you talk about friendly rivalry between gay publication, you know, it's more friendly here in Texas than it is rivalry. And that's good. That's a good thing. But it's different than I'm accustomed to.



Sarah DePalma 19:20

Texas and Texans are a different breed.



19:23

I've come to discover that that's true. They told me that when I got off the plane, they said, now you have to understand, and I didn't believe my Sahara now read different. Yes, yes. And delightful and delightfully different as when I



Sarah DePalma 19:34

sang. It's really funny. Jimmy, we were having a roundtable internet discussion. I say we those of us who are directors in ITA, and always telling him that one of the key issues here in Texas for the upcoming legislative session is going to be child custody. The general belief is there will be a concerted effort to get a bill passed that would deny gay lesbian, and specifically we're including Would it in this would be transgendered people to deny them custody their kid



20:04

Why do you know here we go with a bill that specifically has transgender and we don't



Sarah DePalma 20:08

want it yeah but but even it was just gay and lesbian it would still include us as far as I'm concerned. And even worse the bill as I have seen early drafts of it would actually actually allow CPS Child Protective Services to investigate these situations where the transgender transgendered people have children with the idea of taking them out of the homes or who would get the children that's that's one of the big bugs in this is



20:36

so interesting to me that the social conservatives you know, all they can do is yak about

getting government off our back unless you're a queer and then we're gonna have the government to come in and yank your kids out of your house. How do you how do they rationalize that? Sue? None what universe to those two things make sense together?

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Sarah DePalma 20:51

The funny part about is the heart here all these other ita directors, right politically astute people. Here's what the hell was wrong with you people in Texas, said, Hey, Texans, it's a different world here. We are different. There's the United States of America. And there's Texas, and they are loose.

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21:06

You've got Florida, you've got Louisiana, you know. Anyway, we've got about 20 people dressed in black in the lobby.

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Sarah DePalma 21:14

We got a bunch of leather folks in the interior. Thank you very much. I really appreciate it. My pleasure. I really enjoyed it. I come back next week

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21:22

to Jimmy here. In fact,

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21:24

this was fun. Thanks, Jamie. Thanks.

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21:27

I'm gonna put a few things in your ear and Sarah we'll be back.

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21:36

KPFT is Houston's listener supported community radio station providing unique radio for the Houston area since 1970. If you'd like to learn more about KPFT the station's advisory board invites you to a special presentation being given on Sunday February the 15th at 1pm. The presentation will include a general history of Pacifica and KPFT discussions about the various types of programming heard on the station and a question and answer session. The presentation will be held at the Greenway Plaza facility of leisure learning that's near Richmond and Kirby. It's all happening Sunday afternoon February the 15th at 1pm. If you're interested in learning more about KPFT calls 713-877-1981 to sign up.



22:19

You're listening to after hours queer radio with attitude right here on KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station, and now another one from Monica grant from her parody Zach album. It's entitled merely boyfriend



22:43

Monica grant from her parents easy act album called boyfriend. I'm Jimmy Carper and Sara dipalma is with me you're listening to after hours and we have tickets to give away folks.



Sarah DePalma 22:54

We have tickets tickets tickets at three is the key phrase. Hello.



22:58

Well, you know Elvis Eldorado Almodovar has a new film out now. And so to commemorate that landmark theaters is having a like midnight movie of of all of his past hit where they're doing a retrospective sort of on Yeah, yeah, Sarah Gish over there has given us free passes for a whole bunch of them.



Sarah DePalma 23:21

You know, she has really been very good to that. In this community. She's been wonderful.



23:26

Yeah, She sure has. And it's happening at the landmark River Oaks theatre. This is women on the verge of a nervous breakdown. And there's gonna be two showings February the 21st. And February the 28th. That's the next to Saturday nights. Now Roy is waiting for your phone calls. Because we're going to take the first four callers for a pair of tickets each at 526573852 6k p f, d call now.



Sarah DePalma 23:59

Call now that means this minute. That's it. That's it. You know, I was laughing about that song. She says she says have you ever driven a Maserati? No, I've never driven a Maserati. But I will tell you kind of an interesting story of a friend of his at a brand new Porsche. And he was we driven up to Boston and he got tired. So you let me drive. And I'm wondering why all the other cars going so slow. And I can't feel like me. I can't figure it out. And I was gonna realize we're doing 110 miles an hour. And this car didn't feel any different at 110. And it did it 60 The noise

was the same. The handling was the same. I thought, this is a frightening automobile. Featuring 110 You don't feel it? That's a scary, scary car. So you have a whole bunch of folks here we do. Let's go ahead and introduce everybody. Now we have an audience full of stuff and let me explain a little bit about what's happened here. Several months ago, we did a little brief piece on s&m and transgenders. And we had It does Steven in the show. And Laurie, in our response to that was excellent. Wow, we had a lot of people.



25:08

Listen on the fourth Saturday when we have John Bennett VTEs doing the leather program.



Sarah DePalma 25:12

Actually, Travis was on with John Bennett. That's right. But I think that our audience is probably different from John's because we have a lot of people who, too, you know, and vice versa. All right. And there are a huge number of transgender people who come to SNL or especially to fetish issues. One of the nice things about most of these organizations is that this is a very safe place for transgender people to go. If all they do is just show up and dress. And that's their idea of a scene. That's cool. Okay, that's cool. And it's in it's really unusual to have to just have complete openness like this. And it's not the image that that that s&m people have. And so we're going to try and correct that tonight to that the train that s&m folks are not, they're not out to get your daughter, okay? Don't get for your son or your son either. Yeah, or your child who isn't sure. So, with that, with that in mind, why don't we start with Travis and let's go around the table everybody introduce themselves. Let everybody know what organization you're with and tell them a little bit about it.



26:22

My name is Travis and I'm with a group called Houston people exchanging power generally referred to as h pep here in Houston and we're the largest of the local fetish, s&m social support groups and Houston pepper has been around eight or nine years now and holds monthly meetings and actually has two or three meetings and two three fetish nights and things like that. And it's kind of an umbrella outfit for some of the people that you will hear from tonight who have separate clubs but also belong to Houston pack. Yeah, I



26:56

am John. I'm also with H pep i I primarily work with the newcomers that come in all the scared folks who are wondering if we're going to bite them. Just know we don't bite unless you ask very nicely. Unless you



Sarah DePalma 27:13

like being bitten. And then you get and then it has to be consensual



27:20

Morgan Morgan, I'm with H pep attend to have a little bit of influence on the creative side of things. I'm helping plan the next s&m ball. And we're working on getting some different little more fun social events and things going that are a little easier for newcomers and people to get a nice, anonymous sort of intro to s&m without having to jump right in.



27:49

Okay. Hello, I'm Victor. I'm with the bound collective. We're actually an s&m group in Galveston County. But we drag our members up here to Houston so that we are informed on what's happening in the scene.



28:03

A Victor are you're there? Are you do you belong to the group that meets like at the Denny's.



28:08

We used to meet at the Denny's we're now meeting at Reno's I mean,



28:11

that just we've been talking about this group who meets at Denny's and that just like flips me out?



28:18

Well, we're an unusual group, I'd say that much. We actually have a format and a style to our group. So we'll accept pretty much anybody in our outfit, even



28:30

people from Denny's.



Sarah DePalma 28:35

I'm gonna leave that alone.



28:38

I'm Clay with the erotic row society arrows. We're a fairly new group. And we're a group of mostly new people. We have a mixture of some people who have been in s&m for a while, but a lot of our membership is under a year. And we meet weekly and have two parties a month. Okay, and

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Sarah DePalma 28:55

we'll talk about what kind of parties they are and what happens at parties and stuff and a little bit. Okay, I'm sorry, go ahead.

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29:01

I'm Trish. I'm with the bound collective and we're kind of one of those groups that came under the umbrella of pep. We are down in the Webster Galveston area. And we have parties as well. In fact, we have a big party coming up the end of this month.

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Sarah DePalma 29:16

Trish has got 120 pounds of Mardi Gras beads on her so if you hear this clicking sound No, there's nothing wrong with your set. That's just Trish trying, trying not to breathe too loudly. Thank you anytime. Okay, why don't we start out with with some of the basics. When I talk to people and I say the word s&m They look at me as if I've lost my mind. And we have this image like being a motorcycle gang. You know. They expect us to all kind of ride in with whips and in they're a little surprised to find that we're like normal people. So why don't we start out with that and start talking and what I want to start out with

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29:56

is you're more than like normal people. You are normal. Yeah. I'd like

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Sarah DePalma 29:59


to talk about out the educational programs and how you introduce people into your organizations. Because I know for example, Pep has, they have the newcomers meeting and we talk about the newbies as we call them all the time. So why don't we start with that that's a good place to begin.

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30:15

Excuse me. Yeah, the H pep newcomers meetings are specifically designed to be non threatening. I know, it's very, very difficult for folks to come to a quote unquote s&m group, where we're all supposed to be so horribly mean. And the newcomers meetings are a great chance for folks to come in and sit down, relax, and get a chance to talk. In a nice, relaxed atmosphere, there's, there's, you know, we get a chance to talk a little bit about, about the

nature of the grid, and that we don't actively recruit people. We have always had the philosophy that you should seek us out. And in doing so, you know, we'll just tell you a little bit about ourselves. If you like what you say stick around and, and come on to a few events. And learn that we're, we're nice friendly, folks. So we don't bite unless, ya

 Sarah DePalma 31:20

know, no one has held it at pep and by force that they're there by choice.

 Jimmy Carper 31:25

It's kind of scary. They'll go into your first meeting. I think all of you have gone to your first meeting at some point in your life and and what does it take to get up the gumption to do it?

 31:38

Well, you know, there's a lot of people there's a lot of kinky people out there that are just unbelief that it's easy for them to come to probably any one of us at any one of our meetings and feel comfortable. We don't want people to to feel like we've got horns growing out of our heads or we're going to flog them the first time or anything like that. It's just a matter of showing up and realizing that we really are normal people.

 32:05

And one of the one of the things that I think is real nice clay is I'm gonna throw a plug in for clays group and for Trish his group although I'm with Houston Pep. We'd like to think it Houston people real friendly to new people. And we are but Houston pepper has gotten a little bit big. We love it that way. That way we can throw balls and and other events. But from the fact that we've gotten pretty big there been some other groups grow clays group arrows, the erotic Rose Society grew up this past year. And it's a tremendous place. If you are new they meet every week. They are the least threatening group of humans you will ever find. They are warm, caring, tremendously nice, great fun. Their parties are are great fun and an s&m way, but also in a kind of a loving, caring, nurturing way. And if you're new, it's a great place to go. Some of the smaller clubs do that. What generally happens and I'm not being too terribly unselfish by plugging those groups. Because when people join those groups, they generally generally end up also coming into Houston pet and becoming part of the overall Houston fetish community. And so it just everything kind of works together, we have a very mutually supportive group in Houston. Some cities don't have that. But Houston has been lucky. And we pretty much do have

 33:26

absolutely one of the things that we have to that the smaller groups has been able to do is to teach people different aspects of the Fetish lifestyle. Our group just recently had a flogging seminar and there were about 12 people there. And we were able to teach them on an

individual basis, the do's and the don'ts and the safety aspects. So belonging to a smaller group and coming in where you don't feel so overwhelmed. Going to a pet meeting, which you'll eventually get to, after you get to one of these small groups has really helped some of the people come out and feel a little bit more comfortable about getting into the lifestyle.



34:02

Yeah, one of our groups helped because rocking like no everybody in our club by name. We don't have hundreds and hundreds of people we have around 100 people



34:11

and they're growing every day. Even the small groups, there's there's such a need for them out there right now. We're just we're people are just calling and emailing. And the response has really been tremendous over the past couple of months,



Sarah DePalma 34:23

just like Jimmy was talking about earlier about the importance of a sense of community. I think that's what's happening here is never one of these organizations, I think really kind of helped people to learn to feel better about themselves. Right? They think a lot of times I heard you use the word kinky up earlier. And I take that as a good as a good connotation, but many people don't.



34:44

Everything, though, has a kink. Okay. Yeah.



Sarah DePalma 34:47

Yeah. And I think a lot of people come to these groups, and if nothing else, they get to feeling a little better about themselves that, gee, they're not the only ones number one and number two, there are a lot of other people who like what they do. Number three, it's okay. Yeah. Have fun with it. You know,



35:02

I think the overwhelming thing too, is a sense of acceptance that you have. Yeah. When you when you go to these groups, it's like, oh, cool, I really am normal.



35:14

Whatever they leave to actually find people that that actually encouraged that side as opposed

to trying to stifle it actually wanted to share their knowledge and, and help educate me and anybody else that comes around with, you'll find that there's so many people who have so much knowledge of safe play that they want to share with people that all you have to do is ask, and you're just gonna get this overflow of information. Exactly. It's too much information. But I love to teach. And I think everybody else here does too. And we'd rather teach ourselves than to have someone learn the wrong way.



35:49

Exactly, exactly. I



35:51

agree with more good education is a big focus of all of our groups. And a



35:55

lot of people once they get into these groups, they realize that they have opened a door into their sexuality that they can never close again. So they feel part of a community they know that that support is always there for them to learn new aspects of the Fetish new aspects of their own sensuality or sexuality and go further with it. Yeah, I'm have to suppress it. I've always been doing yeah,



Jimmy Carper 36:19

I've always been impressed with the educational aspect of s&m groups. I'm a gay man. And you know, when I came out into the community, you know, there wasn't any sucking one on one, you know. There just wasn't any educational aspect at all period. And there still isn't really, that's what I really appreciate about the s&m groups



36:47

that isn't needed only in the gay community, I want you to that's how I learned was. Okay, we may hold that as our next seminar in Houston.



Sarah DePalma 37:07

Let's talk about safe, sane and consensual. Now another thing that when I talk to people about s&m, and let me let me explain where I'm coming from on this, there are a lot of people in my community in the transgender community. They're not real comfortable with the idea that I am politically active, but also very open about being an s&m. It's the same kind of an issue that Ray Hill has about being gay, but also having been in prison. Yeah, that's basically my response to you. We can't really tell what the audience what you just did. But but but the fact of the

matter is that there there's, it's a misconception. They don't know what s&m is, is, that's and and I'll say to them, well, but you know, that three, there's a mantra in this community safe, sane and consensual. They all kind of look at me and go, What? So why don't we tackle that?



37:53

I think the big thing, safe and sane, sometimes. I don't think climbing Mount Everest is saying. And I don't think running a marathon is saying I'm an older potbelly, bullheaded guy, and I'm not gonna go run a marathon. What is he kidding? What is extraordinarily important to our community is the concept of consensus reality. We like to think that people talk about playing somebody, we call what we do playing. We talk about playing somebody, actually, you don't do things. When you play, you don't do things to somebody, you do things with somebody, you find somebody that happens to want something done, that enjoys what you do. And the two of you do a dance together. You play together. We generally use things we call Safe words. For people are having a good time together, if something goes beyond what somebody wants, they they're entitled to call a scene or stop things. But what we're doing is a dance that is supposed to be both physically and emotionally rewarding to both people. So the concept of consensual reality is absolutely I think the at the very center we can argue about what is safe are saying but but we don't argue about what is consensual.



39:07

Yeah, I agree with Travis. The, the sanity part of it. what two people do together may not seem sane to each other to people when they see it being done. If that makes any sense at all. The sanity part of it is the hardest one, I think to explain to anybody.



Sarah DePalma 39:25

Yeah, especially when we're at the parties, Laurie and I try to make it a point to watch for the people who look like they're starting to turn pale. Exactly. And we'll go to them and say now remember two things here. First of all, there's nothing going on here that both people don't want to have happen. And number two, they this person who's having it done to them could have it stopped anytime. I was



39:49

told one time by by someone in the scene that I respect very much that a scene has to be consensual on not only two sides, but three sides. words from the the person giving to the person receiving and anyone else that's watching your you have a an obligation to prepare people for your scene that would be observing it as a contextuality issue that especially if it's a heavier scene, they need to know what's coming up so that they have the choice to watch or to not watch your scene, even though you've already negotiated with your your top or your or your submissive, that that it's okay the people who are watching may not may not feel comfortable with it.

S

Sarah DePalma 40:33

I have seen some scenes like that, where if someone had warned me it wouldn't have been there. And I don't have I don't have a weak stomach. But my but my tolerance level is mine. And another person says there is and that seems some scenes that we just assumed not been there had I known. Well, that's



40:47

why a lot and a lot of the bigger play parties like the pet play parties, we have areas that are set aside for heavy players. And people know that that's the heavy play area of if they don't want to see something really heavy, they don't have to be there.



41:01

Now also at the larger play parties or even some of the smaller player parties we have what's referred to as dungeon masters, right? They can be a dungeon submissive, but generally these are folks who are in charge of safety around the place. They try and make sure that the party rules