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SPEAKERS

Dennis Spencer, Anise Parker, Kay Harper, Jack Valinski, Deborah Bell

- J** Jack Valinski 00:01
Well, what type of referral? I mean, do people call up for information on bars on AIDS information?
- K** Kay Harper 00:07
Bars, AIDS informations. If you want a lawyer or a doctor who's gay sympathetic, do you want to get involved in a group like the outdoor group or the symphonic band, we can put you in touch with people to do that.
- J** Jack Valinski 00:20
So a lot of smaller groups who can't really afford to have their own phone number, or somebody crazy enough to give their own phone number for their group. They can use the switchboard.
- K** Kay Harper 00:28
Yeah, that's one of the things we do and just the fact that you know, we know what's out there. And if you don't know what the Diana's are or whatever,
- J** Jack Valinski 00:36
what are the you don't have your book in front of you.
- K** Kay Harper 00:39

No, but the Diana's are a service organization, and they do a big party every year. Actually, I'm not sure we have them listed. But

D

Deborah Bell 00:48

the switchboard itself is a service organization to the community. And they operate fully by volunteers

K

Kay Harper 00:57

extremely much all volunteer, do it on a little bit more than \$800 a month, all donated,

J

Jack Valinski 01:04

and it's a 501 C three organization,

K

Kay Harper 01:07

it's 501501 C three, so you can write it off.

J

Jack Valinski 01:10

So like I could just go over there and answer phones for the switchboard, right?

K

Kay Harper 01:13

No, no, no, no, you have to go through training, we want to make sure that you can pick up a telephone properly. And we offer training. We've got two more classes this year, and then we're gonna be offering it six times next year.

J

Jack Valinski 01:25

Wow, that's almost around the clock then. But how many volunteers you have answering telephones?

K

Kay Harper 01:31

Um, ideally, we would have 42. We're a little bit less than that right now. We are understaffed. And that's one of the things that we're working on right now.

J Jack Valinski 01:40
So you need people to get involved in the next training session is

K Kay Harper 01:44
August 10 11th 12th 18th. And 19th. Boy,

J Jack Valinski 01:47
that's good. And you weren't even looking at the paper? That's because it's not on the paper.
It's

D Deborah Bell 01:52
a little what, 36 hours of training. Yeah. So that people are well versed in what's going on in the community, what's available in the community that they can answer those phones answered those calls intelligently?

K Kay Harper 02:05
Yeah, a lot of it is just learning what kinds of calls we take, and getting to where you're, you're comfortable answering some of the scary kinds of calls, like AIDS calls or crisis intervention calls. You know, we do a lot of AIDS, we don't do very much crisis intervention. But they're scary calls to pick up.

J Jack Valinski 02:23
And also young people or people coming out. Yeah, we we

K Kay Harper 02:27
do a lot of coming out calls. And it's not just young people. A lot of them are 3540 year old people who've been married and have kids and have lots more different ramifications to the process. But we also we also give a chance for younger people to volunteer. We are one of the few organizations that that will let you volunteer at 18.

J Jack Valinski 02:48
Is it also an organization where people can get to know the community? I mean, if you volunteer to become phone answers, is it sort of you sort of operate like a family? In other words, do you fight to

K Kay Harper 02:58

Oh, yes, we fight a lot. But we're a really is it's been a wonderful experience thing involved. I've been involved for almost three years. And it is some of the best friends I have ever made have been through switchboard and it really is a family.

J Jack Valinski 03:13

Great. Well, thanks for coming by. And we wish you the best of luck and continuing the switchboard because it's very important organization to our community. Kay Harper, are you have a title or are you just vice president? Vice President? Okay, yeah,

D Deborah Bell 03:25

she was the official switchboard person.

J Jack Valinski 03:28

We always see her always associate

D Deborah Bell 03:29

the two.

K Kay Harper 03:30

Now I am the official switchboard dyke comes out.

D Deborah Bell 03:36

That's not quite true.

J Jack Valinski 03:38

Well, thank you. Okay. Have a good day. You're listening to KPFT Pacifica radio here in Houston. KPFT. Houston is part of the Pacifica foundation and we do these things we do live broadcast. We're at Star night 90, which is part of the game lesbian Pride Week celebration. It's the final part of the gay lesbian Pride Week celebration for 1990. And there's a live stage here. Thelma Houston will be here later. And it's getting going now it's getting going. People are coming in because it's cooling off a little bit. The sun's going down. Yeah,

D Deborah Bell 04:08

I think the final part of the parade is actually making it over to the military service center, which is at 1475, West gray between Dunlavy and wall drive. And if you haven't had a chance to come out today, to be part of the festivities, this is a chance to still do so you can't park right at the center. There is a bank parking building right at the corner of what's gray in wall drive where free parking is available. And then along the side streets in the area you can park and so there's an admission charge to get in it's \$5. It goes to help the Montrose activity center and you can have access to the entertainment the rides the food, and it's really exciting to be here to wind up this Lesbian Gay Pride Week 90 in this way

J Jack Valinski 04:56

and wind down a little bit to planning and the time that was put into putting this event together, and basically the reason we do pride work,

D Deborah Bell 05:06

I mean, it really I wish people could realize the amount of work that in commitment of people involved that the committee that gets together, they've been working on it for a whole year. And this is their day, it's our day for our community is happy Lesbian and Gay Pride down here, we're working. And here we are working.

J Jack Valinski 05:25

No, this is volunteering. And that's what the community is made up. It's made up of volunteers, as we were talking about all the contingents that went by the parade, we were talking about all the different art nonprofit organizations, even the businesses, the businesses that support many of the organizations in town, and the gay and lesbian businesses, most of them pay a double tax, they pay the normal taxes, they pay the community. Plus, they also support a lot of the organizations in town. And a lot of them got started to that. And the bars have a very special meaning to this community. Because that was the first place where people were able to feel comfortable in coming there. They weren't there. It wasn't a Montrose clinic 10 or 20 years ago, our counseling center or board or any of those organizations, or you know, KPFT is just celebrating its 20th anniversary, and

D Deborah Bell 06:10

also the fact that the Stonewall Rebellion began at a bar.

J Jack Valinski 06:15

And the amazing thing in the hot summer, the interview we were listening to with Quinton crisp was he wrote that back in the late 60s, the naked civil servants, which was then made into a tele movie, a television movie, Telly, you got British there for a moment. It was really

interesting because they tried to make it into a real movie. But they couldn't, there wasn't enough support for that. So it ended up on television, which meant it got a lot wider distribution.

 Deborah Bell 06:38

He was so wonderful. And like I said, it is such a delight to see someone that you've heard about all for a long time. And then to find out they're really like the way you always are.

 Jack Valinski 06:49

Well, we have another guest with us. His name is Chris and he's with the month. Explain that to me. Again, that's a newer I didn't quite know it.

 06:57

It's the Houston Clinical Research Network. We're a division of the Montrose clinic. We're funded partially by the American Foundation for AIDS research, which is the group that Liz Taylor started to bring community based experimental drug trials for HIV and AIDS to the community level and make it available to more people and get these drugs approved faster than the normal means.

 Jack Valinski 07:15

Okay, I didn't know that was going on here and used and how extensive is it,

 07:19

we're up and going now we've been around for about six months, we haven't done a lot of promotion, because we didn't want to get 1000 people onto our patient registry and get them all excited, and then not have anything going on, we now have four drug trials going on, we have some more coming. So we're really getting up and started and advertising and letting people know that this is available to them. It's a really nice thing for the HIV and AIDS infected individual because Houston has the fourth largest HIV infected population in the nation yet has a terrible, terrible record of doing these experimental trials. So this was developed to try to bring some of this to Houston and do some of the things they're doing in San Francisco in New York, and some of the other areas to make these experimental drugs available.

 Jack Valinski 08:00

Well, it was sort of embarrassing that Houston is considers itself a Medical City, and in fact that it's supposed to be the largest medical center in the world. And yet we weren't doing this. It was also very embarrassing that those eight hospitals was set up a few years ago and didn't make it.



08:15

On top of that. It's just it startles me, the number of of even physicians in Houston that I talk to that really are not knowledgeable at all about HIV disease, and have to call us and ask us questions about how they should treat these patients. And to me, that's just just a terrible position to be and when we're such a large city, and we're supposed to be such a great medical community, well, why don't they know these facts? So that's, that's what we're here for. That's we're here to change that.



Jack Valinski 08:40

Okay. Are you familiar with some of the other things that the clinic does? Yes, I am. Well, let's tell me a little bit about the HIV testing.



08:46

Okay, we have anonymous HIV testing that the clinic does. I'm sorry, I'm not aware of exactly what hours they do that because I'm not that involved with that area of it. However, there is pretest counseling, and after test counseling, which is very, very important. We also have a program called the next step, which in English is done the first two Tuesdays of each month and in Spanish, the third Tuesday of each month. And that is for people that have recently tested HIV positive, and it's a counseling session, to let them know what's available to them what they need to do next, we do a T for evaluation for free for them, so that we can then give them medical advice about where they stand with their infection.



Jack Valinski 09:25

Okay, it is my understanding when somebody goes in there to get tested, their name isn't even taken, that they just are taking a number is given to them. And the only way that they can come back and get the results is have that number,



09:35

right? That's absolutely true. It's always anonymous, the patient can request that they would like their name put on it so the record can be sent to their doctor or something along those lines. That's fine, but unless they requested, it's



Jack Valinski 09:46

entirely anonymous. Okay. And there is a charge for that. No, that's



09:50

11 09:50

that there's no charge for the HIV testing. We request a \$10 donation however, that's optional. If they don't want to give the \$10 We'll still do the test and there is no charge for

J Jack Valinski 10:00

I'm hearing that the counseling that the clinic is basically growing out of its facility. It's been growing so much.

10:06

We have branched off quite a bit they what is known as the Montrose clinic or what people think of us as is now actually the tama saw debt clinic. The Montrose clinic, is the parent organization, which runs not only the Tamasa dead clinic where we do the STD testing and the HIV counseling. We have Thomas Odette Center, which is more of the psychological and the social karma that where we do the next step program and counseling for HIV positive the women's outreach groups that we do that kind of thing. And then the Research Network, which I am part of is another branch of the Montrose clinic. Okay, and the Montrose clinic is located at 1200 Richmond corner of Richmond and growl Stark. Okay, the phone number 5285554 is clinical research. 5285535 is where they can reach the

J Jack Valinski 10:53

clinic. Okay, thank you, Chris, for coming by and talking about the clinic and some of the areas that you're involved in. Okay,

D Deborah Bell 10:57

thanks for that work. The, if you think that you may be at risk for HIV infection, it is so important to get tested. First of all, because you need information, you need information about what resources are available in the community to help you, you also need to know what drugs are available that can maybe help you stay healthier, longer, we're getting more and more a new language concerning AIDS. And instead of saying PWA, people with AIDS, those phrases becoming PW li people living with AIDS. And that is what AIDS is really about more and more, it's not so much that people are dying, which is still taking place. That's true. But the chances of living longer and healthier, while you're infected, are increasing because of some of the drugs. And that's one of the things that they're doing over there at that clinic, and trying to make those more accessible to the people that are in need. There are certain we're going to be having Bartlett as you're on to talk about safer sex practices, which is the first step for prevention. And one of

J Jack Valinski 12:07

the issues we're gonna address is a relapse. I've been hearing some stuff about that, that men who have been practicing safer sex, all of a sudden are getting well,

D

Deborah Bell 12:15

the amount of infection in the gay community among gay men had decreased. And so people were saying, well, it's really not there where we flipped a, it's not so much a concern for our community, because eight is moving more towards other communities, there's more minority people affected, there's people that are drug abusers that are getting infected, there's women and children that are becoming infected, it is spreading more in this country among the heterosexual population, because unsafe sex practices take place there as well. And because of people that use drugs in that community, so it's, it's has caused for some of the guys to thank Well, it's really okay. And I don't have to be as cautious as I have been. But that's simply not true. Maybe more than ever, we need to take the responsibility for ourselves and our partners and and participate in safer sex. Deborah Bell,

J

Jack Valinski 13:15

you amaze me and how much you know about eight? Well,

D

Deborah Bell 13:18

you know, I, I worked on the issue in my employment, but also because of people that I have known and unfortunately have lost. And because it's a mother of male children, I feel like it I have to be able to know to tell them to educate them, they don't even want to hear it. They're still fairly young. And there's they're yet not being sexual. But when they're prepared, they're going to be prepared, because I don't want you to have conversations with your children about sex. I certainly have. And I tell you, I'm very explicit. And I'm very blunt, because what does it take? Not too long ago, Bartlow. Sure. And Blanca Balderas did a program on breakthrough where they were talking about safer sex, you know, safer sex is becoming more of an issue in the women's community. An area was that we really thought we were pretty safe. But now there's some questions about that. And, you know, what should we be doing? And some someone heard that and they said, Oh, aren't they being too graphic? And I said, No, they're not being too graphic. If it if that's what it takes for people to understand what is involved, it's saving a life. If one person hears that, and it makes a difference, then that's what it's all about. That's what it takes.

J

Jack Valinski 14:34

And it's also talking about community standards. The standards for the gay and lesbian community are different than probably the standards of many other communities.

D

Deborah Bell 14:41

And if, you know, there's been a reluctance in this country, for people to educate properly, their children about sex and about sexuality, about loving one another, and in all the ways that are encompassed in that and maybe in a mixed blessing kind of way. Ah has done that it has forced

people to say yes, we better make sure the information is out there because otherwise we're killing our children.

 Jack Valinski 15:08

This is Jack Valinski, along with Deborah Bell, and we're doing live coverage behind the stage the the sort of vacant stage right now behind the scenes of the Metropolitan multi service center here on 1475. West grey, it's part of star night 90, which is a big finale celebration of Lesbian Gay Pride Week 1990. And there's still time to come on down. But if, you know we're taking a very serious approach, as we usually do in our show about what's going on in the community, because it's it's made up so many people who volunteer and help out. And not only one organization, but many different organizations.

 Deborah Bell 15:43

They turn tonight on the outdoor stage, they've already had a couple of things take place here today. But the they're going to be having a pride awards presentation. With the sandy band doing the presentation. She's the comic that it was here last night and we'll be here again tonight performing the Houston Lesbian Gay Pride Week committee members will also be presented. Fine bunch of people have done an outstanding job this year. And then at 530, there should be political representatives speaking out the 630 the brass is river bottoms. Brazzers river Ban 730. There's an open mic and then at 830 will be the performance by Selma Houston with Sandy van now is plenty of time for people to get over here. There's a picnic area, there's a food court community booths, the names project is here with some of the banners actually even get things like iced tea. Yes, there's iced tea and lemonade and some nice deli sandwiches. From site cheese over there. There's

 Jack Valinski 16:48

designer cups. Yes, I understand. Impressive

 Deborah Bell 16:51

that there's hot air balloon rides. And it's a nice facility from the city of Houston that we're able to use. And I think we have another person to talk to here. Joe Thornton

 Jack Valinski 17:01

with this is with us right now is bright fluorescent organization. Are you representing today? ACT UP Houston. Okay, among some of the many other organizations you're involved in?

 17:12

Correct.

 Jack Valinski 17:14

Tell us a little bit about act up. I don't know if you were able to hear some of the coverage Pacific has done from San Francisco. But of course, a lot of that was around act up and what they were doing. I understand during the speech this afternoon from the Secretary of Health, that many people stood up and turn their back as he was giving the speech.

 17:30

Well, that's the kind of thing active does act F is the demonstration organization. That's really all we do. And it's intended to educate the public and particularly politicians on the issues surrounding aids, and additionally, the gay community and as how that impacts aids.

 Jack Valinski 17:52

It's really interesting. I don't know if you saw it today. But in the post, they had an excellent article in the Style section about the community Pride and Prejudice. But also in the post on page four. See, this gentleman named Charles Reese was saying that some of the things that have been done by these organizations probably hurt more than they helped, and that they're really screaming for more attention than they really deserve talking about people with AIDS.

 18:16

Well, as a friend of mine says, the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. And the Bill of Rights gives us the privilege of being able to speak out on public issues. And as long as we're exercising that right and doing it in a nonviolent way, I really don't understand why Mr. Racist problem is perhaps he needs to go to East Europe, and find out how those people feel about those kinds of freedoms.

 Jack Valinski 18:43

Okay, that's a excellent answer. I wish I thought of it. So act, what does that cup used to do?

 18:50

ACT UP Houston, is like all the other aids chapters in the United States. We meet on a more or less regular basis, we keep track of what's in the news and what's going on in public events. And when we see an opportunity to express our views on public issues, particularly being in the AIDS crisis, when people who have opposed legislation to help people with AIDS or to help with AIDS research, or who, like Jesse Helms, not ultimately opposes the legislation, but then offers amendments rocking out the gay community somehow rather from what is past. We try to make sure that people understand what's going on. And let the politicians know that we don't appreciate it. For instance, the demonstrations that the INS last week, which which not only

occurred in San Francisco, but all over the United States, including here in Houston. There are a lot of people that I know at work who know me as being an actor who said, I didn't know that one. aren't letting people into the country, that's terrible, you know that, you know that they come here to, you know, to for a conference or to travel or to for medical care? You know, that's not right. And I just tell them well, you know, you need to talk to the people who control that kind of thing.

 Jack Valinski 20:16

What are some of the things specifically that you snack of chapter has done in demonstrations?

 20:21

Well, we've we've been fairly tame here in Houston. We haven't done a civil disobedience yet. We have we've demonstrated when President Reagan was that George R. Brown Convention Center, I think that was the first one of the first demonstrations at the George R. Brown. We've done excuse me, the we've demonstrated so much that it's almost hard for me to remember all the actually what we're interested in usually, as well, we're going to do, you know, we the current item of interest, two things, first of all, that Metro is going to change the the route of one of the Metro buses so that it provides to the door service to the Thomas Street Clinic, which is kind of thing that we had asked for over a year ago, when the Thomas Drake clinic

 Jack Valinski 21:18

sort of surprises me that it took that long for Metro because I thought it was a very progressive organization. But I guess we're not always finding that out to be true. And

 21:26

the reason that they part of the reason they did that we think is because we were studying the list of possible places to demonstrate during the economic summit, and I think somebody sort of mentioned to Metro that they might be one of those places. And so that service change occurs on July, the second, seven days before the time it starts. Coincidence, coincidentally, and we are working on a number of demonstrations for the economic summit. We're expecting people from other active chapters, especially in this part of the country. But we do know that people from New York and Boston are coming is sort of difficult, because there are over 1000 people in San Francisco that have been demonstrating at the World AIDS conference. So it's, you know, you really can't expect people to do that. And then two or three weeks later, come to Houston, but some of them will do that.

 Jack Valinski 22:21

Oh, you mean you just don't fly in all these cities all the time, like they accused us have been able to vote



22:25

that way? No. And and they, you know, for some reason, people think we have all kinds of money that we don't have. I think someone's been saying that we're the Houston act app has been getting grants from New York act up and we haven't seen a penny



Jack Valinski 22:38

yet. Where's that trickle down theory?



22:41

Yeah. In fact, that's really all I want to say about that, because I think there's some legal acts in common contemplated.



Jack Valinski 22:48

Okay, let's put on a different hat here. I know shortly also on the police Advisory Commission, city of Houston and representing the gay and lesbian Political Caucus. We've had been hearing a lot of reports reading stories in the Montrose voice about violence in the Montrose area. And also rape is apparently on the uprise in the Montrose area. What is happening on that front?



23:11

Well, I'll tell you, it's kinda difficult to find out. The police Advisory Committee met last week for our regular monthly meeting and no one was there from the police department.



Jack Valinski 23:21

I read it. Wait a minute, wait a minute. This is the Houston it's the Houston Police Advisory Commission. And they didn't show up. Now. We're really out fishing or something. No one's



23:31

quite sure what they do down on reasoner Street. Apparently, we just don't have their attention. You know, I understand the concern about violence and Montrose . I had something stolen out of my car today on the way to the lineup for the braid. So I'm not probably not an interested bystander when talking about crime problems and Montrose . I think that's something that that happens all over the city. I don't live in Montrose. I live in southwest Houston and people out there are dealing with the folks that are breaking into people's houses and beating them up and taking their cash and jewelry. So you know, that's something that happens all over the city. Part of the solution to that, of course, is higher visibility of the police and to do that we're going to have to have more police. But you know, we kind of hesitate to go

to your city council member and say give them more money when they don't seem to be doing a very good job with what they've got. A lot of people don't realize that Houston Police Department spends over \$170 million a year and if they aren't getting enough bang for that money, then you started don't want to give them any more.

J Jack Valinski 24:46

Okay, well, thank you, Joe, for coming by your hand. Keep us posted on the progress. Okay. Thank you. You're listening to live coverage of star night 90. We're talking to many different community leaders. This is Jack Valinski, along with

D Deborah Bell 25:00

Deborah Bell - you always made me say my own name. When I say this is Jack Valinski,

J Jack Valinski 25:05

and this is Deborah Bell.

D Deborah Bell 25:08

And and we have another VISTA here with us Live at the Star night Nani event. This is Dennis Spencer and Dennis is the president of the Houston gay lesbian Political Caucus. Welcome.

D Dennis Spencer 25:19

Thank you very much.

J Jack Valinski 25:21

So what's happening with G RPC these days? Are you all like taking a vacation because it's a summer season.

D Dennis Spencer 25:27

Now that you're saying that in jest, because you're well aware that we're in the process of organizing our political endeavors for November general election. This includes not only having speakers come to our general meetings on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, but voter registration. We'll be doing block walking, we'll do our and our election news and work the precincts on election day as well as have very good precinct organization.



J Jack Valinski 26:02

One of the things that was mentioned in the article today in the Sunday post, I don't know if you got to see it. But he mentioned that the mailing list of the gay and lesbian Political Caucus that only a small portion of it is actually in Montrose. Is that true?

D Dennis Spencer 26:14

Well, actually, if you consider 1/3 A small portion, that's approximately what we estimate that live in zip code Oh 698. And in 19, to the north of Montrose. The rest of our individuals live throughout the city, our second largest ZIP Code interesting, the love is 56, which is the gallery of post oak area.

D Deborah Bell 26:38

Okay. So around the city and people that are even outside of Houston can be involved. That's quite

D Dennis Spencer 26:45

true. On our mailing list, not only do we have Houstonians, but individuals live in Harris County, Texas, and numerous cities throughout the nation.

J Jack Valinski 26:55

One of the things that's been said about the game has been Political Caucus, that the screening process is very tough for a candidate get an endorsement, is that true?

D Dennis Spencer 27:04

We've been told that it's the best screening process of any political organization in the city. Not only does it include a written questionnaire, but a verbal question period or interview. Some people call it an interrogation. We're very, very interested in the candidates views on gay and lesbian issues. And if they don't come up to our standards, per se, then they certainly don't get the nod or the endorsement of the organization. Now, is

J Jack Valinski 27:33

it only gay and lesbian issues? No,

D Dennis Spencer 27:35

we also it's a myriad of issues, because we're the citizens of the city and the state just like anybody else. So we're in taxpayer taxation, we're interested in schools, we're interested in

quality of life. We're interested in very, very small things. It's very large things, women's issues and the ecology. So our questionnaire is broad base, though it does specialize in gay and lesbian issues.

 Jack Valinski 28:06

Okay, well, thank you for coming by Dennis, you have a booth here today.

 Dennis Spencer 28:09

Well, not only have a booth, we're very proud to be co sponsors of the star night 90. That's right. We've been working for almost a year in the planning stages and certainly 10 hours a day or 12 hours a day, these last two days, staffing, the tickets, entrances, having our own information booth and the voter registration booth I think is very beneficial in this being the first is the pilot for a series which I hope will be an annual event. And what the proceeds going to are the building of the Montrose activity centers Community Center for gay and lesbians in all of Montrose. This is something that we've needed for years and this organization should be commended for undertaking such an aggressive and far looking project.

 Jack Valinski 28:57

Thank you, Dennis Spencer, president of the game lesbian Political Caucus. We're here live at Star night 90, and I think it's time to take a little bit of break. Let's let some people know about some other things happening at KPFT and then play a little bit of music and we'll be back. This is KPFT Houston. Repeating we're not in Kansas anymore. We're certainly not in Kansas. This is Houston, Texas and you're listening to kph T Pacifica radio in Houston. This is a special edition of Wildenstein radio, the radio forget about the gay and lesbian community and we're doing live coverage here of the Lesbian and Gay Pride Week. coverage that's happening here at the Metropolitan multiservice Center. 1475 West grey, Deborah Bell. We'll be back shortly. But we're here talking about some of the many different events and organizations that are part of the community. Jim Owens is with us now and he is president of Montrose activity center. Now we've been talking a lot about the activity center this day. And in fact some people think There actually is one right now. Tell us what Mac does Jim. Mac in a short to, you know, short set,

 30:08

really. Mac is right now a dream. And it shelters groups in the community to help them deal with Steve Meyer to get him started and helps them to shepherd along toward their purposes team uses one of those groups, the Gay Lesbian Student Association and University of Houston.

 Jack Valinski 30:25

That's a strange one. Why would the Gay Lesbian Student Association of University of Houston want to be part of the Montrose activity center?



30:32

It helps them to integrate into the broader community. And they they're really an independent organization on campus. This apparently organization our camp on campus, our I think makes perfect sense to affiliate with us.



Jack Valinski 30:46

Okay. And as the organization itself, what



30:50

does Mac do? Mac is an organization that not only shelters, other groups, but as intense, in fact, to build a community center here for the city of Houston. And we hope to start in a modest way, perhaps even as early as late this year, but we'll see. And eventually to have a community center.



Jack Valinski 31:06

Okay, what does it mean? What would a community center do? What are we lacking here in Houston that a community center might be able to do?



31:13

One of these the community center traditionally does and other cities are a gay and lesbian Resource Center, if you will, ranges from a very small Center, which may just provide a networking function may provide mailboxes, telephone answering services and that kind of thing to community groups. Because Jack is, you know, when a group of five or six people to get together and decide to form a group, whether they're engineers or nurses, the first questions to ask is, where are we going to send the mail? And whose phone number are we going to use? What newsletter are we going to do? What newsletter what can we use, so we have to provide that function and then they go all the way age range all the way from the small to the very large ones of both coasts, that provide a services include legal, social services, and so on. We don't know where Houston is going to end up, but we certainly want to get on that same road.



Jack Valinski 32:01

Now the one in Los Angeles has a budget of like \$4.1 million dollars, which is an incredibly big organization. I spoke one time to the executive director who is Tory Osbourne and very impressive person works very hard. And in fact are Tom Coleman from Houston served as their legal director for a number of years. So is that something that Mack maybe someday?



32:27

We certainly hope so Jack, but I think we're starting a little bit more modestly. Centers evolved depending on the needs in the community and La may need a legal services while Houston in fact, may need a different type of service. So it's certainly going to be built and structured based on the needs here in Houston, Texas. Even as we speak here at this festival, similar festivals are taking place across the country. And in New York City. In fact, they're dancing on the pier this evening. And that benefits the New York Center.



Jack Valinski 32:55

Well, it made the national news today that the Empire State Building is lit up in lavender colors this past weekend.



33:02

Yes, thanks to GLAAD. They've been working for several years on this. They were successful, as you'll recall, and getting the postage stamp, the postage imprint for Stonewall for last year. And this year, the accomplishment is lavender and the Empire State Building. They



Jack Valinski 33:16

named part of crystal street stone wall way as a commemorative, which last year was the 20th anniversary of Stonewall, which has very much significance to us. How can people get involved if they're interested in being part of the community center? What can they do?



33:34

They can get in touch with Mac, it's listed in twit degumming give you an address, you can write to a telephone number you can call 5291223. Glad to provide you information about Mac right now we really would hope that through starting of groups like Tim used to go to Vancouver and glue the Pride week as part of the groups that we shall do that involvement in those groups. In fact, his involvement in



Jack Valinski 33:59

Mac. Great. And this whole event tonight is a benefit for the Montrose activity center. Is that correct?



34:04

It sure is. The festival is in fact a benefit. And moreover, the most important purpose really is for this festival is to provide a sense of pride and worth here and in a very major festival. And I think that we've accomplished that.

J Jack Valinski 34:18

It's really interesting because I've been going to some of the primary conventions over the past couple of years. And when I talked about their event, which was a two day events around the parade, and talked about all the booths and the different stages they had. I thought wow, that's really incredible. And I think Houston has made a good step in copying that and doing it in our own way. I mean, getting some of their great ideas, but doing it the Houston way.

i 34:41

I think you're right check. We've got over 40 community group booths out there. The stage here continuous entertainment for two days, culminating with Thelma Houston coming on stage this evening, Sandy van opening that act. A lot of wonderful space here with crowds and we've got something else Jack we got something for the children as well. While they're placed, placed swings here, there's a carnival here with adult and children's rides. So we haven't forgot the children. A lot of gays lesbians are adopting and have children and they need a place to take them where they can enjoy it also, and I hope that they'll come on out to the festival this year and in future years.

J Jack Valinski 35:15

Great. Well, thank you, Jim, thank you for coming by. And remind you if you want to get involved in Montrose Activity Center, you can call the switchboard and they can get you in touch.

i 35:23

Thank you. Appreciate it.

J Jack Valinski 35:25

And Deborah Bell is back joining us as she's took a stroll around what's happening

D Deborah Bell 35:29

oh, I was checking out things talking to a few folks and you know, it's not just that the Carnival is here for children because apparently it brings out the child in all ages. So there there's a lot of people there are taking advantage of that being here and really enjoying it. The food 10 is full of people munching out on really good food in the community organizations. 10 is very full right now. Kind of wall to wall people. The crowds are still coming in to the gates people are coming in to enjoy this final event of Lesbian Gay Pride Week Nani they're getting ready to present the awards for the entries in the parade. Leti Victoria Lawson, who was parade co chair is here in her finery with all her pearls to show to be one of the presenters, I hope a

J Jack Valinski 36:23
strong gust of wind does not come by or she may be the flying

D Deborah Bell 36:27
when she has a lovely pink feathered hat and lush chiffon looking pink ensemble. And then Debbie Holmes is in a white Tux with a pink cumberbund and bow tie. She's the other coach here for the parade. Just an incredible job that has been done by everyone this year on the pride committee. All the events have just been things that we can all be proud of as a community.

J Jack Valinski 36:53
W served as co chair of Pride Week for Well, yours, how long ago was that? Memory is sort of last too soon,

D Deborah Bell 37:01
it was a year before last that was the flood 87 and 88 was the word of the years that I served one year with Bruce Reyes as co chair and when you're with Ray Hill, and it is a joy to be able to do some things where you're so involved in the community, but it's also an incredible amount of work. And, you know, I think that everyone, all of us should take time to be part of putting Pride week together and be part of Pride Week and certainly part of today. Once again, this is our holiday, Lesbian and Gay Pride Day. And there's a feeling this afternoon of kind of a family reunion. as I as I went through the crowd, I was thinking as people were saying hi and giving me hugs and things. It just made me think of what a family we are as a community and the friends the friendships that we make. As you get involved in organizations, you find that that's where your friends are. And you tend to that tends to be the people you socialize and do other things with as well. And you look forward to those events that come up because you're gonna see your friends there.

J Jack Valinski 38:11
But let's talk a little bit about the history of Pride Week and why it's around and how the all this thing got started 20 years ago, 21 years ago today, or actually, it's Wednesday, 21 years ago today, the there was a riot. So there was a rebellion at what was called the Stonewall Inn in New York City, which was on Christopher Street. And it's my understanding, of course, all the details is not known that people at that time were routinely rested, because it was not legal to have a bar that catered to gay or lesbian people. And that some of these people, some known as drag queens, were there and tired of getting arrested all the time tired of seeing their names printed in the paper, and they began to riot.



D

Deborah Bell 38:50

Well, it was also a matter of the New York Police Department continually raided the bars trying to accuse them of liquor violations. That was what they would go in on the pretense of. But then of course, they would round people up and take them downtown. They would publish their names in the newspapers, it was outing, long before outing was a term and it was done by people who were not part of the community but who really saw that they were doing something that they were persecuting a whole group of people. And there were several things that were going on that summer. It was of course the time of Woodstock. It was the Vietnam era. And it was the day of the funeral, Judy Garland who had been an idol to many gay and lesbian people. And it just seems to be something about that time that made people want to fight back or to stand up and so it was what it's known as the birth of the modern Are you gay rights movement, but it certainly has gone beyond that, that when we're celebrating today and this week, it's not simply that we're celebrating some riots from a bar, it has to do that we're celebrating our community, ourselves as a people and our right to love one another. Because that's what it's all about. And a

J

Jack Valinski 40:22

lot of gay and lesbian people decided to either buy on their own behalf or because their family break away from their family, some of their family, people rejected them. So we begin to form our own family. So our own friends became our families, and it was a chosen family. And that's why we celebrate, we celebrate Pride week, once a year, and talk about our community, our community of friends and family.

D

Deborah Bell 40:46

It's so impressive just seeing the people that were represented in the parade and some of the people we're talking with this afternoon of what is our community what is what is comprised by we have gay atheist, we have gay churches, we have gay and lesbian organizations of all kinds, political, religious, social, we have to use an outdoor group, the woman space people are here. So mica put on a fine event during Pride Week. And I think that one of the things that Pride Week does is to once again remind us of that pride for us to have in ourselves, and to probably give some people a chance to see our community to be visible. And I think probably people I kind of would like to know the statistics, but I'm sure that a lot of people start coming out after experiencing Pride week that they, they realize that there is this community.

J

Jack Valinski 41:43

And so, you know, basically we try to talk to people who are in the process of coming out, or may have those feelings or questions and we try to give them some information about it. I wish when I was growing up that there was such a program of this that there was the access to know about what's going on. Stage entertainment is starting, Sandy van is up there on stage. But we also have with us one of the

D

Deborah Bell 42:11

various themes and messages and what we want to see in the future

various themed grand marshals and we're gonna put her in the not

J Jack Valinski 42:15
seat right now. And he's Parker, welcome back to

D Deborah Bell 42:19
lovely and nice Parker.

A Anise Parker 42:20
I'm glad to be here. This is an absolutely outstanding festival we can we have room for about 20,000 more people in on the ground. So well come on out. Come on, out, come out, come out and come out.

J Jack Valinski 42:33
Tell us a little bit about serving as Grand Marshal.

A Anise Parker 42:37
It was very interesting experience. I had a great time with Walter Carter, who's the the Grand Marshal,

J Jack Valinski 42:43
you had to compete with his dressing though. Yes.

A Anise Parker 42:47
Walter was rather noticeable for someone who's kind of quiet and like to be out front, he is wearing hot pink hot pink shirt and hot pink rubber boots that are just to die for.

D Deborah Bell 43:03
are designed from looking from and if they're

A Anise Parker 43:05
blinding in the sunlight. One of the duties of the grand marshals is to pick the best theme entry

for nonprofit organizations. So after we were at the front of the parade, and so after we got to the end of the parade route, we got to jump out and stand on the sidelines and write the entries as they went by.

J Jack Valinski 43:25

So you want to disclose that to us now.

A Anise Parker 43:30

You're gonna have to wait for the official and it's almost gonna happen. Yeah,

D Deborah Bell 43:33

the people are gathering in front of this stage at this time, because Sandy van just announced that they will be presenting the award and she said, If anyone wasn't here to get it, they weren't gonna get it.

J Jack Valinski 43:46

Nice. You are involved in many different organizations. How did you get so involved? Why do you do this type of thing.

A Anise Parker 43:56

I saw I see a need. And I do it. It's really easy to get involved. There's so many places that that people can can plug themselves in. And you can work in long term efforts, join an organization do things month after month. Or you can participate in a single big event like star night 90 are very intense activity that bring something so wonderful to the community. So there's just a little something that anybody can do. They're always jobs. This festival is using about 150 volunteers.

J Jack Valinski 44:30

That's incredible. I don't know how they were all found. But I am incredibly surprised.

A Anise Parker 44:36

I actually we learned a new technique after many years of working with volunteers is that we are paying volunteers but we're not paying the volunteers. We asked organizations to provide us with a certain number of volunteers. And then for each volunteer, we are making a donation to that organization from the festival. So it benefits the benefits everybody.

D Deborah Bell 44:58

Great idea. So first thing that you ever did that was an involvement in the community.

A Anise Parker 45:05

I helped found a lesbian organization at Rice University back in the mid 70s. With Bonnie Hugh ball and a couple of other rice dikes the next organization I belong to I was one of the founding members of the Rice University gay and lesbian support group. And

D Deborah Bell 45:24

that group is still continuing. Yes, the organization

A Anise Parker 45:27

is is it's not as active as it once was. But there are a lot more organizations out there now than there were in 1979. It's thinking

D Deborah Bell 45:33

klingspor is doing well today. I hope so. The Inklings is a book stop shop for gay and lesbian literature and feminist literature is at 1846. Richmond and you are the co owner of that establishment.

A Anise Parker 45:51

Inklings is unique. It's the only business that I know of in Houston that is owned and operated by two grand marshals, pokey Anderson, my partner's a former Grand Marshal of the Pride Parade.

D Deborah Bell 46:03

About that, how do you feel about I mean, being named Grand Marshal is an honor, it means that you're being recognized by the community for your contributions. Do you have any feelings about that?

A Anise Parker 46:17

I was honored to be named Grand Marshal, I was a little surprised. But it's nice to get some recognition for some of the activities. One thing that there are volunteer efforts or are activities that always need volunteers, and there, there's a place for so many people to participate. But

when you take a chance and try to get out front in an organization or for an activity, you never know how it's going to be received. And I was very pleased that the community honored me as a Grand Marshal. And I guess I didn't make too

D Deborah Bell 46:53

well. You know, in West Hollywood, the grand marshal is Elvira. So here in Houston, we have a much lovely or Grand Marshal.

A Anise Parker 47:04

Thank you. Father, Carter, outdid himself and he's our answer to Elvira the hot pink, wherever. You're really picked

D Deborah Bell 47:13

Elvira, to shame. But then of course, so do you.

A Anise Parker 47:18

Elvira, the idea of choosing a virus, a lot of fun. But always in this brave. We have taken the role of Grand Marshal very seriously. We have honorary grand marshals, with Craig Washington and Deborah Dan Berger, or honorary grand marshals. But in terms of the Grand Marshal, we really like to honor people who've given something to community and I'm really thrilled to be chosen.

D Deborah Bell 47:40

I think it's a well deserved honor. Thank you. And nice and nice is being called up to the stage. Yes, we speak because they are about to do the presentation of the trophies for the parade. So we've got a great view here from the side. We do and more people have gathered in the lawn in front of the group to hear what's what's going to be presented the beautiful trophies about what.

J Jack Valinski 48:10

And we may go to the stage and hear a little bit of some of the presentation. But we want to thank, you know, a nice is a very impressive person. She has been involved in so many different organizations.

D Deborah Bell 48:20

And from an early age. She she's done a couple of radio shows on commercial stations, where

she talks about her experience of being a lesbian, and is a very wonderful representative for our community. Someone we certainly are very proud of John Nicks is being called to this and he's co chair male co chair of Pride Week this year. Yeah, Johnny Diaz

J Jack Valinski 48:48

worked very hard this year to get all this. I mean, it's very impressive that what was put together this year. You know, there's over 70 Different organizations in the community, many of those small, but I think almost every organization is somehow represented in Pride Week, whether they put on an event where they send volunteers, and as you know, many people are involved in many organizations, many different organizations.

D Deborah Bell 49:11

We have social groups, we have aid service providers groups, the Montrose clinic, the Montrose Counseling Center, both are here today. Lesbian Gay rights lobby, of course, his here gay, lesbian Political Caucus, so many people that are involved in the community have and who do things and they're not doing it just for themselves. Because if you if you're if you're doing it just for yourself, it doesn't make much of a community and it's all of us coming together that makes it happen.

J Jack Valinski 49:46

George greediness is up on the stage along with Deborah Danver. George Prineas was the City Comptroller, and formerly was the the representative from District C, which is the district that encompasses Montrose and and some other places. I mean, basically the city districts are made up of pie shapes, and they cover both the inner city and the outskirts. Glen Maxey just waved to us and I'm sure he's gonna come over a little while when he gets finished with the stage. Applause for

D Deborah Bell 50:16

Ronnie Diaz

J Jack Valinski 50:18

has worked incredibly hard as even though she's female co chair. She's still up there with her walkie talkie

D Deborah Bell 50:33

All right, proud to be gay and lesbian. Wanting was out along the parade route, still selling tickets just don't I? She's still running around.

J Jack Valinski 50:45

This is the part where they're talking about

D Deborah Bell 50:53

the winners, John Nicks is at the mic right now and we're going to try to get a little closer in so we can pick up exactly what's being said. As we as they announced the product. They trophy awards for the parade entries associated with it. But I mean, we're just stretching out some board which seems to be terribly tangled

J Jack Valinski 51:19

was with us. Brian, we're having a little tangle here. We're gonna take a break. Now you're listening to special coverage by Wildenstein of the events you have been here at Star 90. Play a little piece of music and come back. You're listening to KPFT Pacifica Houston.