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SPEAKERS

Jimmy Carper, Roy McCarthy, Chris, Vanessa Edwards



00:01

He's people but a lot of celebrating life, and hope. And, and that's what I remember of this thing. And I will carry this with me the rest of my life it was it's even if I participate in many, many more of these down the road, this will be a special one to me. It was the first one. And and it will be very special to me.



Vanessa Edwards 00:27

It's very interesting point that you brought up that you worried at the hands of law enforcement of being a victim. And indeed that does occur, maybe not so much in this country. But one of the victims is here, in fact of Vanessa Ledesma was killed while in police custody and especially in Latin America that occurs very frequently. It's something that we don't really, I guess, consider I'm not trying to, I guess, bring a negative light on law enforcement. But we do have, I guess, to be vigilant at all times, regardless of who are where we are in even in times when we think we might be safe. We're still unfortunately vulnerable. Melanie, I think you're over there. So I can't say I'm sorry. My mic on.



01:30

Yeah, there's a opaque wall between us right here. Yeah, I didn't know I was getting called on right now. But yeah, I'd I associate with with tres quite a bit, and I know the preparation that she had done getting ready for this. And even before after looking over the remembering our dead website, Chris had developed some flyers and things she had arranged all the names of short bio and things like that. So I had helped her arrange a little bit of it when she had finally been staring at the screen so much she had got cross-eyed. And it's I know, it's seeing the last on there. And some of the very, very brutal circumstances of the deaths were. Yeah, it's a very sobering thing as as Chris said, it's the the, the feeling that that you know, there are people out there that will kill you just for being yourself. And you know, it can really, really affect you in profound ways. As Sarah was talking about what she had done with the candle that she had, I discovered that I I couldn't just discard that candle. One of the things that we were having a bit

of a problem with the weather, it was a bit windy that night. And we were having a lot of problems keeping the candles lit during the ceremony, I know I relented mine several times off at Jimmy's and, and back and forth. And one of the things is like there's the song about a candle in the wind. And you know, what that means to me is it you know, life as it is, is very fragile, it doesn't take that much to blow the flame out. And you know, as we seen, we had a lot of difficulty just keeping them going to get through the vegetable. And you know, to think of lives like that, to think that someone would come along and deliberately snuff it out is just, it really affected me at took my candle and I was I don't really have an altar at home or anything but at the the transgender community center we have here in Houston, there has been this empty candle holder setting there for a long time. And so I finally figured out what to do with it. And I took my candle and put it in that was a small note. This candle is never gonna burn again. And that's all I have to say right now.



04:50

If I could jump in real quick,



v Vanessa Edwards 04:52

hang on a second. I think we need to the station.



04:56

I don't know. I want to talk Oh, sorry. as well as as an openly HIV gay man. I was so honored to be a part of this. We were honored to have. And as I mentioned earlier in the show is the beginning of the show. While I was standing there hearing it all, I had the same exact emotions were welling up inside of me is the first time I saw the quilt. And it's amazing that hearing Sarah Jane and Melanie talk about the candles, my candle and, and, and the Tyra Henderson. The paper that I had because I read her name is at the Gulf Coast archives and museum. I yeah, I could couldn't throw it away, was no way.



05:58

Thank you, thank



05:59

you. That's where it belongs. People need to know this is



v Vanessa Edwards 06:04

true. And it's actually



06:06

next year, we're gonna do it again. And we're going to build on it and build on it. And until that whole area in front of City Hall will be filled with people. Cool. It's dripless candles.



06:28

Sorry,



06:28

I did have one additional thought that I forgot to share with people. Sarah Jane mentioned, problems with law enforcement. And it occurs to me that our mental health professionals don't always get it either. I just finished reading a few days ago, a book called The last time a word duress by Daphne Szalinski. Yes. And she had been no, she, to be fair, she had had some conduct disorder problems. And she had fooled around with drugs and alcohol, which got blown out of proportion. But she spent three valuable years of her high school, in and out of mental hospitals, where they, in her words spent about a million dollars trying to get her to conform to standardized female gender patterns, and was branded with a gender identity disorder that I used to be ambivalent about that as well, you know, in a way that could be a door opener that they have that in there. But from what I read, there's psychiatry so forth. And I know there, there are exceptions, probably some wonderful exceptions, but there's so much double talk and so much abuse out there. And that's just one more way that they do it. Sometimes a lot of these kids, I think, get thrust into this tiny little box.



07:53

So well, it's just one of the things that this, this vigil did for me. And not only made me painfully aware of some of the more violent discrimination that we face, it also really brought home the 1000s of little discriminatory ways that society deals with us. That really, really, really hit home for me that night. But what also hit home for me was that as we stood there, we did have a city official. And we had several people there in the transgender community, not just one, not just two, that are very dedicated to this community. And that there were people from the gay and lesbian community and PFLAG they all came together. And, and it really, really hit home, how mature our, our community has become, that we're able to reach across lines and, and pull together for something like this. And I felt honored to be able to speak and I felt honored to just be there.



V Vanessa Edwards 09:24

Actually, that was something that I guess touched me as well. But I guess the most poignant part was the most spontaneous of all. At the very end when Jackie Thorne came up, and I was not expecting this at all. And Chris did not put the candle in. Well, this is going to go on for quite some time. Jackie got up and let us in. Song in we shall overcome and it was the perfect



09:56

I have never seen Jackie in tears before tackling



09:58

never, never For either Yeah,



10:00

she, she, whenever she came up and she was tearful and her voice was shaking, it moved me to tears I, I was kind of struggling to make through, make it through what I was trying to say, without my, without my waist breaking my voice tightening up and, and it was difficult and whenever she got up there I, you know, I lost it. It was it was moving, it was probably thinking back and it's, I can't think of another thing that I have attended that has affected me in this way. Without attaching to



10:53

this, it brought back some things for me because I was active in the civil rights movement back in the early 60s. And there were many times we got, we would take hands together insane. And we had some tough times during those times. And I had rocks thrown at me and I've been stupid at for just trying to help others. And it brought back all those feelings to when when Jackie started that all this whole that whole night just filled me with all sorts of memories that I had from the past and also from what we were trying to do that night and I'll be forever grateful for I'm sorry that we have to have this type of thing.



V Vanessa Edwards 11:45

I guess probably the most memorable thing to me was the actual readings. I had been running around trying to get the things coordinated and getting things scripted and set up. And for the most of it, it was just too hectic. I didn't really it didn't actually start affecting me or hitting me until the name started getting read. And suddenly I realized my god it's actually happening. And it I guess it came very unexpectedly. I wasn't expecting those motions to, to well up. And suddenly even before I got to my name, I felt the the tugs at my throat as well. It was difficult just trying to maintain. Gwen, just out of curiosity, what was your most memorable event at the San Francisco vigil?



12:40

Definitely the reading. The reading was definitely very powerful. And there were two speakers that were specially astounding. James Green was simply incredible.



12:56

I read speech. Yeah, he

13:01

he really sort of really brought it home. I actually have his speech on tape, one of the big

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you know, it was just it was incredible. And then Yesenia Lewis has a poem that he had actually written some time back and he updated it for the event, a poem he calls. I wish I looked like Matthew Shepard which is incredibly powerful. You know, talking, speaking as these various transgender people who, you know, they wish they looked like Matthew Shepard so that people would pay attention to them.

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How many people showed up out there in San Francisco?

13:43

Between 100 and 125? Wow.

13:47

Maybe here in Houston next year, we could do something like this. Yeah.

13:51

We were hoping to do more next year. I did want to mention to Sarah and to y'all that the white candle that I had from the Center for the San Francisco visual 99 is up on my altar.

14:10

Actually, I carry some of the wax from my candle with me and I just handed something Sarah and who that's what that was.

14:19

Yeah, I have to break in here and let everyone know that they're listening to after hours. Queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and ke O 's college station. Thank you



14:39

um, I can just break in here real quick. Something I was just wanting to add thought of that. One of the things really for me interest about this kind of culminated is something that kind of got us started back in July. I've just stopped in it and one of the the stores in In the neighborhood that has other things for transgendered people on. And the lady that runs a shop asked me, you know, what about that girl that got killed? I'm like, What girl, and she was the TJ girl that got killed. That was, you know, there was a little bit of something on the news this morning. And I didn't really know much about I hadn't heard my radio doesn't work on my track. But I called a couple of people that I could get a hold of to see. And they said, Yeah, there's, there's, there was a little bit of stuff that on the news, not much. So I had for lunch, picked up a copy of the Houston voice to look through it. And I, at that point, I had seen that at the gay and lesbian community center that night, they were having a forum on hate crimes. And I hadn't heard about it previously. So I called her actually, I showed up over at Chris's house and just kind of drafted her into running up there with me. And while we were there, one of the speakers on the handle was a detective from the Houston Police Department. And you know, when they're asking for questions, we asked if they had any information on this, and it turns out it was actually occurred in Webster, which is not under HPDs jurisdiction. And what the I so I can let Chris finish this, she did a lot of legwork with finding out exactly what happened. You want to finish about?



16:49

Sure. Whenever I call the detective Well, first of all, let me say that we had a couple of people in our TJ support group, who are retired police officers, and they strongly suggested that I give it a few days, a little while for them to do some work. Because otherwise, if I were to call, my name would go down on this special list. And, you know, I would have background check done on me and all kinds of stuff. So I let a few days pass and then I called the detective. And he wasn't exactly rude, but he wasn't exactly respectful. He constantly referred to this person as a gay man. He and him refused to use her name Julia. He was under the impression that this was probably not motivated by his quote unquote, status, that it was maybe a lover's quarrel. And that, that they weren't going to classify it as a hate crime or anything like that. So the way that that's how I kind of got drawn into all this in and I just coming up against the wall of resistance with with Webster PD, and getting nowhere and not finding any information about it. And though they did say it was a murder, they're going to do their best to solve it and things like that, they assured me that if the man that did this, or was ever caught that he would be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. However, it just didn't sound very enthusiastic and not interested in talking to me. And and were very resistant to even referring to this person as anything other than a man or confused man. And it made me sick to my stomach. And it was right after that maybe a month or two that I started hearing things over the internet about the Day of Remembrance and I went back to your site and look through them spent some time and I you know, it for me it all started off with her murder. And and this has just been the past few months has been just, you know the war I hate I overused this word but sobering. Um, it it's affected my life and my perception of the world in profound ways. I, you know, I, I, I can't express how much that has just galvanized my not only, you know, not only my, what was that not only my desire to do more and and be there for people whenever they're transitioning or just be there to talk to someone late at night, and something that you touched on Sarah is, is one of the people that were remembered this year was an individual who committed suicide. And we in our support groups have had individuals who have chosen death over some of the

things that we as transgenders have to face on a daily basis. I all I can say is, I, I'm, I'm proud to be a member of this community. I think I think the the courage that takes to be to make it through transitioning to make it to face the discrimination that we face, probably takes more courage than most people will ever know. So I, I wanted to thank you for the work that you've done on your side. Thank you,

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Vanessa Edwards 21:58

what you've seen from the other cities across the US, what was the most memorable or poignant Institute heard from some of the other potentials? Oh, why?

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22:12

There are quite a number. I try it before I answer that, though, just to bring this up. About a year ago, there was a case a year and a half ago now in a render California, which isn't too far from where I live, which was Eman, Bodfish, case and FTM. And I had almost the exact experiences in dealing with the local law enforcement, almost the exact as in Webster. And that case, which is an FTM, who was bludgeoned over the head from behind, and killed. They want to continually label a suicide.

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22:58

You gotta be kidding me? No, they're

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Vanessa Edwards 23:01

actually stating what that he arranged.

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23:04

Yeah, it was an arranged suicide, which makes no sense.

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23:14

Do they have any shred of proof whatsoever?

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23:16

The only the only thing that they have to point to it is that Imin talked about suicide in his diary. And I should say, who doesn't? Yeah, I have to say I hope they don't get a hold of too many people's diaries.

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Vanessa Edwards 23:35

And just, it amazes you sometimes when you actually, you see the stark disregard for individuals, it's almost as if we are objects in their eyes, there is no, there's no feeling there's no emotion, I guess, on their part to to what it is that we or our families, or families of the victims, could

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23:58

adult. Could it help the police officers sometimes tend to be in that macho frame of mind, even if they're female, they tend to fall into that authoritative, masculine mode of thinking and also, I read about a case not too long ago in Connecticut, where a guy was turned down for a job with a police department because he was too intelligent. They were afraid. I can't believe they were they were afraid that he would get bored with the police work. And this is not to put down our our men in blue who do such a good job on the line for his day by day. I'm not an anti police person by any stretch, but if their intelligence is limited, and they're in that macho mode

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24:53

you know, like like anything, education is the key and the here Some police department was much like that until some transgenders got together and did some sensitivity training. Right? Exactly and a deep deep McKellar did that for for quite a few years. dipalma and Sara De Palma. And that's what it takes and it takes it constantly. You can't let up because you're getting new people in there all the time.

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25:22

You may need this on a nationwide basis from the biggest police departments in Los Angeles, New York, Houston, to the smallest, tiniest Hamlet's and Hicksville, Mississippi really.

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25:36

That's one reason why, in fact, it was with Astra and I did a class up in Huntsville at a graduate criminal justice class. Which to help get that across. Just

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Vanessa Edwards 25:52

real quickly, Gwen, where do you plan on going next year? With this? What are there any specific plans? Are we going to step this up of it? I

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26:02

think? Well, I think it's, it's definitely going to grow yet again. As a matter of fact, I've been contacted by some activists who want to do the first day of remembrance event outside the

United States. In Brazil,



26:22

it's needed there. Yeah, definitely.



26:25

Which I was very excited to hear that it's actually reached down there. You know, that people have really started to pick it up. And the way I'm reading a lot of the the press on it, the event? It's definitely, I think that it's, it's brought attention, it's bringing attention, and people are seeing it as something that will be ongoing.



Vanessa Edwards 26:53

Well, I'm sorry. Um, I actually, I was very impressed to hear that Brazil was going to be taking this home. In fact, he should mention this is something that is very needed there. Have we received any kind of feedback from the European countries? I know, we've gotten a bit of press on this. I don't know exactly how wide the story was disseminated, but I was kind of curious as to whether or not they might consider doing something.



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I haven't really heard a lot from them, which I was expecting, perhaps something this year because they did have a very high profile case this year. I'll certainly be following up with press for change in England, and other some of the other groups to see if they'll be willing



Vanessa Edwards 27:42

to take something regarding the Christine Chappell, Christine Szabo case, yes. In fact, it was kind of ironic, right before the event, the facts of the murder actually came out. And it was a bit of a shocker to discover that it was her wife, right. That had arranged for the killing. And actually just plays up the aspect that you don't really know exactly where the violence is going to be coming from at any one time. Any, any one of us can be a victim at any time. Again, kind of touching back on the question. What was your most memorable



28:25

of the other? The other events? Probably the a lot of what I heard out of the Boston area, Boston, of course, the Rita Hester case was in Boston, and is also what has started the remembering are dead project. They held their second Rita Hester Memorial March. Which amongst the things that they did there, they did go to the clubs that Rita had gone to the night of her murder, as probably the place that she met her murderer and left a poster and you know, a very small memorial out in front of the nightclub. And then they marched across the

Boston calm and they didn't just read the cases from last year. They took all the cases that are on the remembering site, which was 212 and read that as they went across Boston Common and after each name. The group chanted we remember.



29:30

Very powerful. Yeah.



29:33

Yeah, that was probably of the ones I read. That was probably one of the ones that really hit.



v Vanessa Edwards 29:40

That's actually something that kind of touched me as well. I think we'll probably adopt the we remember Chad from the audience. For the most part, I really liked the rest of the ceremony. It was beautiful. Thanks, Jimmy. Just out of curiosity from someone I guess from outside of the community this was I guess, maybe your first transgender vigil?



30:04

Yes. Oh, yes. I didn't know what to expect at all. And like I said, I was honoured and it really, really took me by surprise, I didn't know that I would feel that deeply.



v Vanessa Edwards 30:21

I guess I kind of felt maybe a little similar during the Matthew Shepard vigil in a sense, I, I felt it even before the actual death, this had gone on on hand, and in fact, the local activist network here for quite some time before. And there was talk of maybe trying to do some kind of action. And then of course, he passed away. And as soon as the the vigil was announced, myself and Brandon Wolf, and Francisco Sanchez, and a few of the others joined up with the organizer, Gary van autumn. And it was something that I knew would touch me, but I had no idea, the depth of how much that would affect me. Even though this may not have been a transgender death, this was something that affected me personally, it was part of what we go through as well. I saw the humanity there, I saw the vulnerability not only of our specific community, but everyone around us that can be considered a target. In fact, minorities as well, this was a not too long before the the James Byrd incident, which was rather well publicized. Yes. And it, it drives home. The the aspect that even though we go on with our lives, on a day to day basis, we still have this spectrum of violence and hatred, born of ignorance really, of nothing. That really makes much sense, ignorance and fear.



32:00

Yeah, exactly.



32:03

Here's a question for each and every person listening out there, I would say, you don't necessarily have to answer me directly, although you can. What each person can ask him or herself, what am I going to do to spread the word about this? To make sure that mobile first of all that we deal with this fear and ignorance? More specifically, how are we going to pay for the Day of Remembrance next year and get more attendance and more participation? I mean, it was a very good event. But here we have San Francisco with over 100 people already. How are we going to beef up to Houston Event, just something for each of each of us to think about?



V Vanessa Edwards 32:50

I guess one way is to personalize it, personalize



32:53

it and get the word out. And you can never get it up too early or too often.



V Vanessa Edwards 32:59

Yes, this is true. Well, I actually, I've got to commend you for the side, just taking the vision that you had in putting it out there is really created so much as a result of it, I have to give you the ultimate of kudos for that of transgender history in this nation. And I for one one time, at least recognize this. You give the web address,



33:28

I was just gonna say yeah.



33:32

It's www.gender.org/remember.



33:38

How easy www.gender.org/remember



33:41

that Fred slash or back slash, Fred slash. You can also find it@tinder.org. Fairly easy.

v

Vanessa Edwards 33:56

Gwen, you've done a lot of great work for the community. For years, you've been moderating gazebo, which in itself deserves a medal. But the website itself and now the Day of Remembrance, I just, I can't thank you enough for what you've done for this community. And even here in Houston, your effect has been filled. You've done something that's really touched a lot of people and is created a lot of activity, just from the simple task of taking and remembering and actually documenting these and showing them to us. It's something that I guess we could have done. Maybe before rather simply enough, but the fact is that no one really took the time to do it. You took the initiative and took the time. And for that, we oh, you Well,

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34:50

I thank you. I thank you for your words. They honor me.

v

Vanessa Edwards 34:56

Anytime you want to come back down to Houston Gwendy Yeah, no,

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34:59

I No, I gotta get back down there. Definitely. Sorry to meet you sometime in about three years.

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35:04

Okay, that'll work.

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35:06

Gwen, thanks for being on.

v

Vanessa Edwards 35:08

Thank you. Thank you. Um, I guess any last thoughts from the members here? Just real quick. I just kind of recap what your thoughts on your first visual were and what we can do next year. Any ideas? I

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35:25

think one of the things that a couple people mentioned is that they didn't think there was

enough advanced warning or advertisement of the event, which I know, both of you worked really hard on it. But yeah, maybe now that we have a format and everything. Next year, we can get started getting the word out, announce it in the voice, the outsmart the triangle and all of its like that.



35:59

And often, yeah. Did



36:01

anybody bother to did anybody bother to notify the mainstream media? I mean, at you know, to 1113 26? The Houston Chronicle?



36:11

I don't know. I actually. Well, go ahead.



36:14

Finish? Well, yeah, I was just gonna say that you. You're saying that I'm better. You know, we're kind of hesitant and getting the word out to everyone because of possibly making ourselves targets for people who just think that transgender murderer is just fine. And you know, that that was, that was a delicate balance. Yeah, there's



V Vanessa Edwards 36:43

the reason that I did not send this out to the media was, indeed to keep this required to keep the yokels from driving in and targeting us. But I also realized that for the size of the group that we were looking for, to have security out, there was an extra expense as well as the permit. And I realized that there was no need for that. And as a result of us being out there without the security, I did not want to risk anyone safety. So for that reason, I did want to keep it more or less under wraps until right before the event, I



37:20

feel like we're telling we're we're telling the ROI far and wide here. And on the one hand, the risk is having it get out of hand and having having a media circus and having vehicles drive in from the woodlands or wherever. On the other hand, we risk being a voice crying in the wilderness. Granted, it won't be that because we I personally believe that there was a real spiritual edge to this. And we were putting out that energy into the universe to heal us and heal our planet in this way, which was very good and very healing. But from a very temporal point of view. Without more publicity, we risk just being voices crying in the wilderness. Does anybody hear or trees when they fall in the forest? I mean, to mangle a cliche?

V

Vanessa Edwards 38:19

Oh, well, I do hear what you're saying. I realize this being our first visual, it was probably going to take a while before this caught on with the community. It's not very often that you create something in your first event just wow is everyone you have really 1500 people showing up. And this also gave us an opportunity to more or less kind of figure out what we were going to do with it and how to proceed. And on top of it to at least make people aware of what we're doing and to inspire their interest for next year. Now everyone is aware of it. I'm still a little bit hesitant in getting the mainstream media out there because I realized we will hopefully be getting more of crossdressers participating and I realize that there is an aspect of the community that really, you know, does not want to be identified publicly that way and would like their participation because unfortunately, they are also disproportionately victims of hate. Oh, they're out there and are very easy targets and I want their participation more than I want the media. I have

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39:34

to admit it might have been dangerous, at least to my career aspirations if the wrong people would have seen me out there. But an

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39:41

end to this was not just a media ploy, it really was something for us. It was something to galvanize our own spirits and to remember these people and

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39:55

Christian Christian net I think we succeeded brilliant. Oh, you know, my dad, I didn't realize So this was our first ever event I think we did Dard welled

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40:04

up actually, I think this was just a mustard seed that was planted.

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40:07

Very good. Thank you very good.

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40:12

Another decent show



40:13

another wonderful show. Thank you Vanessa. And the guest sorry



V Vanessa Edwards 40:17

about it seems like every time I come on here we have these series web series.



40:22

Yeah, we didn't have time to get Danielle in here. Exactly. We do fun stuff.



V Vanessa Edwards 40:27

Are comedy going to do a transgendered comedy show? We'll make it light hearted. Nothing but laughs and jokes. Fortunately, until then, we've got more serious subjects.



40:39

I thought it was a very good show, actually. Thank



40:41

you. Thank you,



V Vanessa Edwards 40:42

Glenn. Thank you for being with us. Thank



40:44

you for having me.



40:45

You bet. Okay, we need to get on to after hours news and views with big right and Chris and so before I have a little song you know, I always have a little song. And this one is by the capital city Men's Chorus from Austin. And it just I don't know it just had the right feel the words have the right feeling for me. And so let's see at 128 in the am off of their CD silent noon. We are not afraid to love by the capital city Gay Men's Chorus.



42:01

Oh yeah, it is time for the after hours news and views with big Roy. And Chris.



R Roy McCarthy 42:11

Yes like to welcome everyone to this week's edition to after hours news and views. Want to give shout outs to Randy down there at rosharon to Greenwich and Chris up there in just north of us. Yeah.



J Jimmy Carper 42:34

Hi, guys. Yeah, I got I got the pansy division Christmas song coming up.



R Roy McCarthy 42:38

Yeah, for that that is special for greenlink.



42:44

This certainly is and what's Bobby



C Chris 42:46

doing in there with a chicken that he just had to cackle like that.



42:51

He's feeling his oats so to speak. Last week he was deli humor. Last week he was feeling mine.



C Chris 42:59

Huh? Very interesting. Oh, those are older oats and Wilford Brimley has Oh my god.



R Roy McCarthy 43:08

Okay, want to start off this week's after hours news and views with our lead story of healing the hurt. Chase Bank has an underwritten PFLAG, which is the parents were friends of lesbians and gay. They've underwritten their billboard campaign, recently awarding them a grant of \$7,000 to help with the billboard and for their upcoming conference of healing the hurt

 Chris 43:38

as part of their campaign that they've had recently on the billboards that I've seen a couple of them around town here and yes, I'm gonna put more up.

 Roy McCarthy 43:46

Right and the billboards are part of a campaign against hate. And they were posted, as Chris said at strategic locations around Houston, as well as in Santa Fe. They have one that says Safe Schools in Santa Fe and it's creating a bit of a controversy and a bit of a stir. Stir there