

**SPEAKER 1:** And then, of course, tomorrow is the end of Ramadan.

**SPEAKER 2:** And see that's something I've been recently interested in.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, the Eid al-Fitr service and the feast afterwards. And then the Zakah, which is the contribution to the poor.

**SPEAKER 3:** Then we've got Christmas and Kwanzaa.

**SPEAKER 2:** Right. Kwanzaa.

**SPEAKER 1:** And Kwanzaa in the African community.

**SPEAKER 2:** They each have certain traditions that are different from others that are really interesting-- not just what they're doing, but why they're doing these things.

You know, I'm not one of these people who believes Christ rose up again. But I can appreciate this holiday season because I can say that while Christ, in my opinion, may not have been the Son of God, he certainly was worthy in his teachings to be honored throughout history. So I have no problem celebrating his birthday.

**SPEAKER 3:** You know, I think probably just about everybody celebrates something at this time of year. If it's the pagans, it's the Yule.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, the Sat-- actually you have--

**SPEAKER 2:** It's not Christ's birthday. The reason they celebrate now--

**SPEAKER 1:** You have the Saturnalia. And of course what it was-- the early Roman church co-opted the Saturnalia, which was a pagan festival, and made it Christmas.

**SPEAKER 2:** Celebration.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, made it the celebration of Christmas--

**SPEAKER 2:** They stole it.

**SPEAKER 1:** But actually, when you go back to the biblical times, if you examine the situation and you look at the timing of the census that was called by Caesar Augustus that they speak of in Luke, that was not done in the winter.

**SPEAKER 2:** No.

**SPEAKER 1:** First of all, it was too damn cold down there. And so it was actually done sometime in the late spring or early summer. But then, of course, we celebrate Easter then.

**SPEAKER 2:** Yeah, there you go.

**SPEAKER 3:** There are so many--

**SPEAKER 2:** And the church needs so many days to beg for, you know--

**SPEAKER 3:** Money. Oh my goodness.

**SPEAKER 2:** So they had to divise us, separate them out.

**SPEAKER 4:** There's so many holidays.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well, I think the Christian church is just amazing on how it can co-opt things. I mean, look at South America. I mean, no matter where they go, they kind of mix in the local-- whatever the local--

**SPEAKER 2:** Don't get me started.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well, you know, it's not such a bad thing.

**SPEAKER 2:** Well, in other places it is a bad thing. We've sent missionaries into countries who don't want missionaries who are trying to convert people and punish them because they're not converting.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well--

**SPEAKER 2:** And then we get into a war because they have been treated like this for 30 years. And we are a little-- the citizenship of this country are not even aware of the torture we've put these people through in the name of our Christianity.

They don't want it. They don't need it. They're happy with their own.

**SPEAKER 3:** How did we get there?

**SPEAKER 2:** That's why I said, don't get me started.

[LAUGHTER]

**SPEAKER 4:** I saw you start.

**SPEAKER 1:** I have two--

**SPEAKER 3:** She has-- she's got a point. I'm like, I've been-- OK. We have all been watching stuff on the news about the war and--

**SPEAKER 2:** No we haven't. Not all of us.

**SPEAKER 3:** Or have been listening to something or heard something. And most of us have heard about those happy, little missionary-type girls who got--

**SPEAKER 2:** Yeah, I didn't feel a bit sorry for those girls.

**SPEAKER 3:** I'm sorry, but I have a really hard time feeling sorry for a bunch of people who were in a country that, one, the majority of whom didn't want them there and, two, were trying to convert people from a belief system that their people have had for thousands of years.

**SPEAKER 2:** That they swear they're doing genuinely just out of the love of God. But they use this coercion about, well, here, I have food. Here, have supplies. I can teach you to read. But you have to accept my savior. You know, there's actually--

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, I have two words for people who have a problem with missionaries-- the Spanish Inquisition.

**SPEAKER 2:** That's right.

**SPEAKER 3:** Stanley looks at it from an entirely different angle. He likes the missionaries. He says that they--

**SPEAKER 2:** They give the lions something to eat.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yo, they provide much needed protein to the diets of--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**SPEAKER 4:** You know, there's actually two people celebrated in the season who would not take very kindly to the way things are treated now. First one, of course, is Jesus. He would have a problem with it.

**SPEAKER 3:** Oh, yeah.

**SPEAKER 4:** There really was a Saint Nicholas.

**SPEAKER 3:** Sure was.

**SPEAKER 4:** The one that became Sinterklaas and Santa Claus, he would have a problem with it too.

**SPEAKER 2:** Yes, he would.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yeah, he probably would.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, I don't have a problem with the missionaries until they start imposing their beliefs on someone else.

**SPEAKER 4:** Yeah, I'd have a problem.

**SPEAKER 1:** It's all well and good to share your belief with someone else. But you don't go in. And you don't impose them. And of course--

**SPEAKER 2:** And not a service you give to those [INAUDIBLE].

**SPEAKER 1:** That is what a lot of the overseas missionaries try to do, particularly from the fundamentalist religions. And they do it to a certain extent here in the United States.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well, yeah. It's the whole assuming that you're wrong--

**SPEAKER 1:** John Ashcroft

**SPEAKER 4:** I told you not to start me.

[LAUGHTER]

I told you.

[LAUGHTER]

I told you not to get me started. I told you.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**SPEAKER 2:** Do we have any dyke Christmas carols?

**SPEAKER 1:** No, let's--

**SPEAKER 2:** Do we have any Venus Envy in there?

**SPEAKER 1:** Let's verbally crucify John Ashcroft.

**SPEAKER 2:** Yeah, I can do that. I can stand that.

**SPEAKER 1:** And of course, the other thing is, one of the things that was floating around in the hand, that is, is there's a new nomination for some guy by the name of Brahme, B-R-A-H-M-E, or something like that, who makes-- I mean, he's--

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**SPEAKER 2:** Makes Ashcroft look liberal.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, he made John Ashcroft look like a liberal. I mean, you know, he's somewhere to the right of Attila the Hun.

**SPEAKER 2:** He wants to go back. He's one of the traditionalists who wants to take this-- literally, he admits that he wants to take it back to a traditionalist Christian-- where the wife stays home and the husband is absolute control and owner of both property, his wife, and the children.

**SPEAKER 3:** And the economy will go to hell then.

**SPEAKER 2:** The whole kind of "let's take it back to the old days" kind of thing.

**SPEAKER 4:** Two words.

**SPEAKER 2:** He wants to reconstruct America.

**SPEAKER 4:** Two words-- dark ages.

**SPEAKER 2:** That's right. Thank you. Darker ages. Oh well, I didn't want to get off on politics. Actually, tonight I want to talk a little bit about the community center. And we need to light a fire under some butts about this community center.

You know, it is-- yes, I think people are just a little smug in their remarks that oh, yes, we have a community center. Barely. And I'd like to talk about that. We barely have a community center. We need to talk and find some organized effort to get a bigger place and be able to afford-- to find permanent funding.

**SPEAKER 3:** I am so happy that we have what we have because for so many years, we had nothing. And a lot of people put a lot of hard work into what we have now.

**SPEAKER 2:** And I say--

**SPEAKER 3:** And it is utilized pretty damn well.

**SPEAKER 2:** If other big cities can do it, so can we. And some big cities in this country have dream community centers. I don't expect that we're going to get a dream community center. But we can get an adequate one.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes. Well, you see, in other cities the buildings and money is provided by the to the community.

**SPEAKER 2:** Well, I want to come to one of these. I think we need to get to one of these things where Janey comes down and talks to us and carries the message back to the mayor. I think it's time to have the mayor do something and encourage the city do something like that.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes. Other cities have done it.

**SPEAKER 2:** That's right.

**SPEAKER 3:** The other thing that other cities do is that GLBT people with money, when they die, they leave it in their will to--

**SPEAKER 2:** We need to encourage that too. I don't have any money but there'll be something left.

And I definitely am going to leave it somewhere. And it's too little for my family to fight over. It'd probably be too little for them to even drive here to get it. But every little penny helps.

And we're not talking about, necessarily, the mega wealthy. We're talking about average-Joe guy out there who's going to have some little piece of something left over. If not cash, maybe property. The Salvation Army takes old cars. Maybe you should just leave your car and your will to the community center. They can take care of it from there.

It doesn't have to be cash. It can be property.

**SPEAKER 3:** It sure can.

**SPEAKER 2:** And you know what? You don't have to wait to die. You could donate your car today. You can donate that money today. Don't wait.

**SPEAKER 3:** That's the Lesbian and Gay community Center 803 Hawthorne at Stanford. And of course, tomorrow at 6:00 PM is going to be potluck.

**SPEAKER 1:** The monthly potluck.

**SPEAKER 2:** And they do great things. They have a movie night. We had our mixer the other night, which was wonderful, a lot of good people getting together for a good time.

**SPEAKER 3:** Wednesday night the place is packed. Oh my God, Wednesday night, we can't-- they can't even take another group in because-- there have been some nights when groups had to meet in somebody else's office because, I mean, just--

**SPEAKER 2:** It's so many people meeting.

**SPEAKER 3:** Every room is taken.

**SPEAKER 2:** Have you seen the-- I said this on [? Handnet-- ?] have you seen the pride office. The pride--

**SPEAKER 3:** No, I haven't.

**SPEAKER 2:** The office there, let me tell you, it is a wonder of organizing. They have gotten stuff in places that I didn't think they really had place to put it. But they used every--

**SPEAKER 3:** Jack knows where to stick it, doesn't he?

**SPEAKER 2:** Oh, I'm telling you, he's very efficient. They've used up every tiny piece of that room. You're literally stepping over and moving amongst it. It's so tight in there. I don't know how they breathe while they're working.

But you know, obviously it is bulging at the seams. How do you like that one? I set that one in there for you guys. Bulging at the seams. And we need to start thinking about the future.

**SPEAKER 1:** It sounds like what my ex-wife looked like in some of her dresses.

**SPEAKER 2:** And that's how I look in a sports bra.

[LAUGHTER]

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, in a related vein, Jimmy.

**SPEAKER 3:** Oh, mercy.

**SPEAKER 2:** Don't forget the 52nd Street house fund.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, in a related vein, last weekend, last Friday and Saturday, down in Galveston, Deb Murphy had a seminar down there to get the people together for the transgender shelter down there and do some brainstorming and work towards funding that as well.

**SPEAKER 3:** That's right. That's the 52nd Street house.

**SPEAKER 1:** Of course, one of our primary goals is once we get the one in Galveston up and running and financially capable, we would like to provide some sort of a transgender shelter here in Houston as well.

**SPEAKER 2:** And see, that's the other thing I want to talk about is that there are so many organizations who, not necessarily in your situation but your situation too, so many organizations who want to go out and do their own thing when if they came together and pool the resources, we could get one hellacious community center--

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes, we could.

**SPEAKER 2:** --that could be used by everybody.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, exactly.

**SPEAKER 2:** And I think that, not only just cramming people-- I think these groups would complement each other. If somebody-- an idea was-- somebody suggested on hand that like a coffee club place where you come in for coffee, some place for the youngsters who can't go into the bars and obviously are annoying people at Crossroads need a place to hang out.

So a place like that, which could be run by people who are at the shelter or who are volunteering for the archives. It doesn't have to be by the community-center people. It can be run by other people and organizations--

**SPEAKER 3:** That's right

**SPEAKER 2:** --who, by doing that part or donating their part into the community center.

**SPEAKER 3:** I'm very interested in the next community center that there is space for the museum.

**SPEAKER 2:** I am too. I think that would be perfect.

**SPEAKER 3:** If only for just a small drop in.

**SPEAKER 2:** It's perfect-- a community center and its community's history. I mean, it's perfect.

**SPEAKER 1:** The archives and museum, I mean they had literally outgrown the location where they are now before they even moved in. I mean, because I'm sitting there with three boxes of *OutSmarts* and *Montrose Voices* that were moistened in the flooding. And I've since dried them out. And I talked to Judy, and I said, when would you like me to bring those back to you? And she said, could you keep them for a while? They're working on the floor right now.

**SPEAKER 3:** We are just out of room. We really are.

**SPEAKER 2:** And that's the story we hear all over town.

**SPEAKER 3:** And that's good. I am really happy because people are donating really wonderful things to the museum. Ooh, yeah.

**SPEAKER 2:** And that's what's happening all over town. Organizations are starting to burst at the seams. And we need to get some central location where we can-- you know, some organizations come and go. And they would need space for this kind of stuff too. But other organizations are around forever.

The star-people here. I can never say it--

**SPEAKER 3:** The RSICSS girls.

**SPEAKER 2:** The RSICSS girls. I can never get the whole name down.

**SPEAKER 3:** Royal Sovereign and Imperial Court of the Single Star.

**SPEAKER 2:** He does that every time I tell him I don't know [INAUDIBLE].

**SPEAKER 1:** The Reese's Pieces.

**SPEAKER 2:** Reese's Pieces. But you know, they're around forever--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**SPEAKER 3:** Hear about their pieces.

**SPEAKER 2:** --you know, been around for from forever, from the beginning. And we need to be aware that there are going to be groups that come in and are going to be short lived. Something doesn't work right, it's going to be-- but we also need to be aware that there are going to be long-term groups who are going to need space long term.

**SPEAKER 3:** When Chris interviewed the guy who is the director of the Lesbian and Gay Community Center of New York, he was talking about how their meeting rooms get turned over three times a day. I mean, they really utilize their space. And they've got an old school.

**SPEAKER 2:** And that's what I think. We need to look at, like, major apartment complex or-- but the problem is that they need money now. We can't focus on getting something in the future. They need money now.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes, they do.

**SPEAKER 1:** They need operating expenses rather than trying to fight a capital situation.

**SPEAKER 2:** I'm building a wishing well. A lot of people laugh at me, but it is something. A wishing well-- they can sit outside the community center, people can throw their money in and make their wishes.

**SPEAKER 3:** There you go.

**SPEAKER 2:** Or that's portable enough they can pop it on the back of a pickup truck and take it to any event.

**SPEAKER 3:** Hey, good idea.

**SPEAKER 2:** You know, and just put a little sign up there-- your wish will help make our wish come true.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes.

**SPEAKER 2:** A wishing well. And I was telling somebody, they said, well, people don't do that. I said, people throw money in water everywhere. I mean, if it's a toilet outside, somebody's going to throw a penny in it and make a wish.

When I worked at Disney, we would scoot up in the rides and-- where the water rides and all kinds-- had to get out there in waders and sweep up the money down there. And we'd come up with \$20,000 a night.

**SPEAKER 3:** Wow.

**SPEAKER 2:** In pennies and nickels and dimes and quarters.

**SPEAKER 1:** When was the last time you were down at Tranquility Park? And I mean, there's pennies and everything else in those fountains down there.

**SPEAKER 2:** So I'm going to make this portable wishing well. Yeah I've got this \$800 worth of wood in the backyard for a deck I'm not going to build.

**SPEAKER 3:** Shoot, let me just--

**SPEAKER 2:** I'm going to make a wishing well.

**SPEAKER 3:** Next pride parade let me just go pee and see who throws money.

**SPEAKER 2:** And I said-- yeah, really I sent Tim an email the other day I want to know about bingo why can't we do bingo there bingo pays off for churches and all kinds of non-profits.

**SPEAKER 3:** But with bingo there are licenses you have to get. So there's an outlay of money at the very--

**SPEAKER 2:** Well, bingo seems to be very profitable. And it's-- I think we need to think about it because I was talking to some friends today. That's where I was at before I came here.

**SPEAKER 3:** I see. Friends or bingo?

**SPEAKER 2:** Friends.

**SPEAKER 1:** I'm trying to remember whether it's San Antonio or Austin that has bingo out there--

**SPEAKER 2:** Can you imagine doing play bingo with 50 or 75 other gay people?

**SPEAKER 1:** --at their community center as a fundraising-- as a fund-generating activity.

**SPEAKER 2:** That's right. Not like you can play anywhere else.

**SPEAKER 3:** Oh, I know it. You can be--

**SPEAKER 2:** You can be there with your lover or flirt, whatever. Live-- have-- actually, enjoy some-- OK.

**SPEAKER 3:** I need to remind people that they're listening to *After Hours Queer Radio with Attitude* KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. And you were saying, Jewel.

**SPEAKER 2:** Them beavers are looking at me.

**SPEAKER 3:** Oh, my. I think they've got to go to some music.

**SPEAKER 1:** Jimmy, I have a question here.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes.

**SPEAKER 1:** This clock that's on the table here-- are we early or late? It's 8:00 in the morning.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**SPEAKER 3:** 8:03.

**SPEAKER 1:** 8:00 in the morning. Are we early or late?

**SPEAKER 2:** We used to actually tell time.

**SPEAKER 3:** Ooh.

**SPEAKER 2:** Send your money to KPFT.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well, that's-- I think that's just to confuse everybody in there. And so--

**SPEAKER 1:** You're succeeding.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes.

**SPEAKER 1:** Hey, we don't need to be confused. We already are.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well, I have a musical request. Lynette and Terry in Pasadena are celebrating their 18th anniversary.

**SPEAKER 2:** Oh yeah, bravo.

**SPEAKER 3:** Isn't that cool? And they want to listen to some lesbian Christmas music. Well, I just happened to have a little.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yes.

**SPEAKER 2:** Oh, no. Really?

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes, indeedy. I sure do. Venus Envy-- good old Venus Envy. Yes, indeedy. And--

**SPEAKER 1:** Can't imagine where you got it from.

**SPEAKER 3:** And this is just for them, Lynette and Terry. Happy, happy anniversary from *After Hours*. We'll be back in a bit.

**MALE SINGER** (SINGING) God help you merry dykes, and poofs, for much to your dismay, you have to see your family, at least on Christmas Day for relative discomfort or for total disarray. And they dare call this comfort and joy, comfort and joy. And they dare call this comfort and joy.

**SPEAKER 3:** I want to invite you to tune in Christmas Eve to *Lesbian and Gay Voices* for a special edition of *Queer Music Heritage*, hosted by JD Doyle. I'll play the Christmas music. You won't be sick of by then. Christmas music with lesbian and gay lyrics-- that's Christmas Eve at 9:00 PM.

**FEMALE SINGER:** (SINGING) I'll be homo for Christmas and every other day.

**MALE SINGER** (SINGING) Bells on.

**2:**

**SPEAKER 3:** The late, great Sid Spencer from his Christmas CD called *Family Ties with Bells on*. And before that, just for Lynette and Terry, Venus Envy doing to--

**SPEAKER 1:** "I'll be a Homo for Christmas."

**SPEAKER 3:** "Rhonda, the Lesbo Reindeer" and some-- there will be "Homo for Christmas." Yes.

**SPEAKER 2:** I like "Dyke the Halls," too.

**SPEAKER 3:** You like "Dyke the Halls." I haven't played that yet this year.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, and of course, for the transgender community is "Walking Around in Women's Underwear."

**SPEAKER 2:** That's right. I love that.

**SPEAKER 3:** I have that. I have that. I've got it.

**SPEAKER 2:** Women's underwear. Good, I'm glad you got that one. Those are things that really make me smile. Those are the kinds of things I look forward to this time of year. In the middle of summer, I'm asking you if you've got all your tapes for this Christmas show.

**SPEAKER 3:** That's right. In the middle of that I played a plug for JD Doyle's Christmas show *Queer Music Heritage* will be the fourth Monday.

**SPEAKER 2:** JD is so cool.

**SPEAKER 3:** Isn't he?

**SPEAKER 2:** I got to spend some more time with him at the mixer.

**SPEAKER 3:** Oh, good.

**SPEAKER 2:** It was so cool.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes.

**SPEAKER 2:** He's such a nice guy. And God, does he know what he's talking about.

**SPEAKER 3:** No kidding.

**SPEAKER 2:** I'm telling you.

**SPEAKER 3:** This guy knows queer music.

**SPEAKER 2:** And he knows it in a way where he's not shoving it down your throat like some people who know too much. He just gives you what you asked for. Just the hint more-- just a hint more to make you a little more interested in knowing a little more.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well, he and Joan Devlin will be interviewing Rosemarie Kroll on Monday's show.

**SPEAKER 2:** Cool.

**SPEAKER 3:** And I expect Rosemarie to be calling in here at about 1:30.

**SPEAKER 2:** And Rosemarie is--

**SPEAKER 3:** We'll be talking to her.

**SPEAKER 2:** She is the local--

**SPEAKER 3:** An Austin singer-songwriter. And she has a new CD out called *Spotty Sprinkles of Love*.

**SPEAKER 2:** *Spotty Sprinkles of Love*.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well she was from the Houston area previously, was she not?

**SPEAKER 3:** I guess she was.

**SPEAKER 2:** Yeah.

**SPEAKER 3:** And then she moved to Austin because she was going to the University of Houston, I think, for an art degree.

**SPEAKER 2:** And she managed to put out a CD. She did this by herself?

**SPEAKER 3:** With her brother.

**SPEAKER 2:** With her brother.

**SPEAKER 3:** Her brother is--

**SPEAKER 2:** I love people who do that.

**SPEAKER 3:** --a musician and has studio time.

**SPEAKER 2:** Love conviction to do that.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, see what it is the GLBT community here in Houston is sending out missionaries to Austin. We're sharing our--

**SPEAKER 3:** Wealth of talent.

**SPEAKER 2:** There you go.

**SPEAKER 1:** --wealth of talent, exactly.

**SPEAKER 4:** I was telling some friends of mine about the music that you play this time of year, some of the titles there'll be a for Christmas and Nick et cetera. And so on.

**SPEAKER 3:** And they were like--

**SPEAKER 4:** I think they thought I was joking. I hope they're listening.

**SPEAKER 3:** In fact, I got a Christmas card from a long-term listener of *After Hours*, he's been listening for years and years and years. His name is Wayne. And he wrote he said, as I'm writing this Christmas card, I'm listening to the radio. And you are playing "I'll be a Homo for Christmas." So yes. I love that song. And I play--

**SPEAKER 5:** And "My First Christmas as a Woman."

**SPEAKER 3:** Yes, my first-- by The Vandals.

**SPEAKER 2:** There's some great ones. When I think-- when I envision this show every year, I always envisioned that we're going to constantly do all these songs. I just want to do them all. And then, I want to tape it and take them home, so I can play them at home. That's why I want them so I can tape them and play them over and over again.

**SPEAKER 3:** Got you. Got you.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, well, I still-- one of my favorite is the "Grandma Got Run Over with the Reindeer." Yeah

**SPEAKER 2:** That is a perennial favorite.

**SPEAKER 1:** But the last line there you wonder if there's not some GLBT influence there. It talks about a guy who drives a sleigh and plays with elves.

**SPEAKER 3:** My mother hated that song, which is probably why I love that song.

**SPEAKER 2:** I loved it the first time I heard it.

**SPEAKER 3:** And as we stop--

**SPEAKER 2:** Well, you know, I was going to tell you. I was thinking whether I should tell you or not.

**SPEAKER 3:** Go ahead.

**SPEAKER 2:** But a couple of years ago, when I was working at the workshop with mentally retarded adults out there as a volunteer, later in the evening we got together with a bunch, probably about 40 or 50, and we went caroling. And let me tell you, that was an experience that you just can't pay for. Caroling with 30 or 40--

**SPEAKER 3:** Now, did you know all the words?

**SPEAKER 2:** I didn't. No, I didn't.

**SPEAKER 3:** Hell yeah.

**SPEAKER 2:** Caroling with 30 or 40 mentally retarded people. And they've been rehearsing. We've been working with them and rehearsing so that we could at least start on the same beat. And not get so--

**SPEAKER 1:** Don't worry about the same key.

**SPEAKER 2:** And truly, truly you do what you can. And the point was these people all standing out there giving it their all with a big smile on their face.

**SPEAKER 3:** That's right.

**SPEAKER 2:** It was the most hideous racket I have ever heard. But it was the most wonderful thing I'd ever participated in. It was great. And part of the hideous racket was me, I know.

This lady next to me was another volunteer. I'd heard her sing at a church. She was good. And I was throwing her off. I had to move away from her. But it was the most hideous noise. And we went to, like, six or seven places. One of them being a nursing home where everybody ran. And a couple of other places.

We went to a couple of group homes where the people were confined to wheelchairs and couldn't get out much. Or bed, and they couldn't get--

**SPEAKER 3:** Couldn't get away.

**SPEAKER 1:** Talk about a captive audience.

**SPEAKER 2:** But to stand there and look at these people and their faces and the range from ages from young and 20s to in their 60s-- at least 30 or 40, I think it was like 40 people and about seven or eight volunteers who went with them and drove him around and everything-- and to stand there and look at them beam while they're singing these songs for these other people, it was such-- It gave me the Christmas spirit.

**SPEAKER 3:** There once-- one year, there was a group. And I'm thinking it was from U of H. And I can't remember if it was the gay group or the fraternity there that as a group did queer Christmas carols. It was the regular Christmas carols, but they had written different lyrics. And at the time I was giving Christmas Eve parties. And they came and caroled.

I mean, very old fashioned, knocked on the door. We all went out on the porch, and they sang several songs.

**SPEAKER 2:** How neat.

**SPEAKER 3:** Yeah, it really was.

**SPEAKER 2:** One of my first experiences with carols was when I was still young, in my early 20s. I was friends with some people from Puerto Rico. And they do it a little differently in Puerto Rico.

**SPEAKER 1:** Like last year?

**SPEAKER 2:** Yeah, really. I wish. They do it differently. They go to a house, and they have a party. And then everybody leaves from that house and goes to the next house where they carol. They have a party, and then, everybody leaves from that house. So you're constantly building up this great thing.

**SPEAKER 3:** I've heard of this.

**SPEAKER 2:** And when everybody's drunk enough and at this last house--

[LAUGHTER]

**SPEAKER 3:** They better save the-- the last is going to be the biggest house.

**SPEAKER 2:** You really, literally hit six or eight big, huge parties because you're taking the party with you.

**SPEAKER 3:** Wow.

**SPEAKER 2:** And you're going to a party to a house where there are people there. So it gets bigger and bigger every time you go. And by the time the end of the night, it is humongous. And people are really-- I woke up that night about 4:00 in the morning between the toilet and a wall in a strange house.

[LAUGHTER]

Last time I'm caroling with Puerto Ricans.

**SPEAKER 3:** Oh, like that's never happened before.

**SPEAKER 2:** Like it'll never happen again, either.

**SPEAKER 1:** The Hispanic community puts a lot more emphasis on the Epiphany, or the Three Kings Day January 6, which was, of course, the original idea of you celebrated Christmas, the birth of Christ, on Christmas Day. But then, you had the 12 Days of Christmas that ran to January 6. And January 6 was when you actually gave the presents.

**SPEAKER 2:** Oh, really?

**SPEAKER 1:** And of course I would because, having been raised in Central America, I was very familiar with that. And I tried to convince my kids that the January 6 was one we ought to be giving presents. They wouldn't buy it.

**SPEAKER 2:** I think corporate media has made our Christmas.

**SPEAKER 3:** Oh, yeah.

**SPEAKER 2:** Don't get me started.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, when did they start when they start decorating the mall on the day

**SPEAKER 2:** Who designed Santa Claus?

**SPEAKER 1:** --after Labor Day--

**SPEAKER 2:** Coca-Cola designed Santa Claus.

**SPEAKER 3:** Hey, don't point at me.

**SPEAKER 2:** They had a similar character that they based him off of. But he is the image that 99% of all children in this country have of Santa Claus.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well, because Nast is the one who had the Victorian Santa Claus. And he was not-- he wasn't always friendly looking.

**SPEAKER 2:** No, he wasn't. He was kind of scary actually.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, actually, they have--

**SPEAKER 2:** And he was supposed to be an imposing authority figure that you needed to atone to at the end of the year.

**SPEAKER 3:** Do you know in the Netherlands, Sinterklaas comes on December the 6th, I believe. December the 6th.

**SPEAKER 1:** January 6.

**SPEAKER 3:** No, December. Early in December.

**SPEAKER 2:** Early in the month.

**SPEAKER 3:** For some reason, I don't know.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, in Russia, of course, they have Father Christmas, which is basically an offshoot of Saint Nicholas who is personified as the archimandrite of the Orthodox Church, as far as the Mitre and the vestments and so forth like that, rather than the red suit with fur. But--

**SPEAKER 2:** We need to get our own version of Santa Claus.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well, I have my own version of Santa Claus. It's a doll that stands about 18-- 12 inches, dressed in pink with wings.

**SPEAKER 1:** Oh, my goodness.

**SPEAKER 2:** Did I ever tell you the time Ricky talk me into putting on a Santa suit and going to her third grade class?

**SPEAKER 3:** No.

**SPEAKER 2:** You know, I knew that afternoon what Mick Jagger must feel like. I was so popular. They scared me to death. I walked out of a room. And that's back when I wear those funny little glasses that looked very much like Santa glasses.

**SPEAKER 3:** That's right, yeah.

**SPEAKER 2:** And I walked out of that room. I had the beard and the makeup. B the makeup, but the hair and the suit. And you know, I filled the suit pretty well. And I walked out of the room and it was a madhouse.

Children were rushing at me from all angles. It was, like-- and I swear to God, I knew what Mick Jagger must feel like when he comes off that and the girls come rushing at him. It was such-- it scared me initially. I'd never been mobbed. But I was mobbed.

And once the teachers waded into this throng of waving children, this moving, seething mass of children, and pulled and pried me loose from these little hands and got me separated, then, they managed to get the children under control.

But the first few minutes, it was-- I was panicked. It panicked me.

**SPEAKER 3:** Wow.

**SPEAKER 2:** But after that, it was another experience I wouldn't have traded for a million dollars. But, oof, let me tell you.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, you know it is very interesting, the different cultures, that how they assimilate or interpret Christmas and St Nicholas and the symbols that are associated with Christmas celebrations. I know in the Far East, in the Oriental things and so forth like that, they've got their own. They've got their own little thing there that they do with the-- that relates to their various religions, to Shinto and the Buddhist and the Hindu and the what have you.

And they're not exactly Saint Nicholas or Santa Claus or something like that, but it's a very similar type of--

**SPEAKER 2:** Experience there.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, it's a very similar type thing. So it's interesting.

**SPEAKER 2:** It's really interesting.

**SPEAKER 1:** And of course, actually, when you get right down to it-- we're going to get you started off again on a religion here--

**SPEAKER 2:** Don't do that.

**SPEAKER 3:** Don't get me started.

**SPEAKER 1:** But when you go back to some of the mythology and the lore of the various and sundry religions, you'll find that many of the same stories arise in the different religions. Of course, one of the most common ones is the flood, Noah and the Ark and the flood. And--

**SPEAKER 3:** I will never buy that story. That's-- I never did.

**SPEAKER 2:** Not exactly the way it was told to us.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well--

**SPEAKER 2:** I have no doubt there was no flood.

**SPEAKER 3:** That, and the impossibility of putting two of every creature on one boat is--

**SPEAKER 1:** Exactly. Well, my only objection--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**SPEAKER 1:** --is he left off the unicorns and he included the damn mosquitoes.

**SPEAKER 2:** Mistake.

**SPEAKER 3:** Actually, there wouldn't have been enough room for the insects.

**SPEAKER 2:** That's right. Beetles-- just beetles insects. Like two million different species.

**SPEAKER 3:** Every square inch of Earth has some bug on it.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, somebody was saying that there are literally thousands of species of insects that no one has ever seen or classified.

**SPEAKER 3:** Oh, yeah.

**SPEAKER 2:** Somewhere in-- you know, I've heard recently, is there's some talk that Christ may not have died on the cross. That they have found writing in caves in Southern France that suggests that were written before the Dead Sea Scrolls, before the Bible, somewhere around 100 years after Christ's death but the Bible's written somewhere around 400 years after Christ died.

And they're finding these writings that were predate the Bible and all this other stuff that suggests that Christ not only didn't die on the cross, but that he had a family and raised children.

**SPEAKER 3:** Because they know that Mary Magdalene--

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, of course, the--

**SPEAKER 3:** --moved to France.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah. He was, I don't want to say he was affiliated with, but many of the people who were in the Essene community, which were the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran and so forth like that, had very similar philosophies and belief as Christ was preaching at that time that come down to us, basically, as Jan said, with the oral tradition of about 300 years before they finally put it in writing.

And so that--

**SPEAKER 2:** The only thing wrong with religion is that it's involved with money.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, no. My thing is-- I have no problem with religion. Where my problem arises is denomination.

**SPEAKER 3:** There we go.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah.

**SPEAKER3:** There we go.

**SPEAKER 5:** Well, I admire anyone who has faith in something.

**SPEAKER2:** I have faith in you.

**SPEAKER 5:** They believe-- no, they believe something so strongly that they said this is truth. This is truth for me.

**SPEAKER 3:** Even though it makes no sense.

**SPEAKER 2:** I was having that discussion with my friend. I was over Diane and Cindy's earlier, and we were having that discussion out on the back patio about what is faith. What is that? It's a blind believing in something that there's no evidence or proof for.

**SPEAKER 1:** That you can't prove or disprove.

**SPEAKER 2:** And then we discuss the terrorists. These men thought they were going to paradise. They were sacrificing themselves to do the greatest good they could possibly do. And when they did this, their reward was to go to heaven and be in paradise.

**SPEAKER 3:** Well, not only that--

**SPEAKER 2:** We think they were wrong.

**SPEAKER 3:** Stanley was explaining to me that to die as--

**SPEAKER 1:** As a martyr.

**SPEAKER 3:** --as a martyr, not only do they go to see Allah--

**SPEAKER 2:** But they get everything they want.

**SPEAKER 3:** They get 70 virgins. And I'm thinking--

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, Jay Leno said--

**SPEAKER 3:** --where the hell does Allah get all these virgins?

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah, Jay Leno--

**SPEAKER 2:** Not here.

**SPEAKER 1:** Jay Leno was saying that because of the number of martyrs that they've kind of run out of virgins. So instead of 70 virgins, you get one 70-year-old virgin.

[LAUGHTER]

**SPEAKER 2:** They give you the Tijuana mule, right? The Tijuana donkey.

**SPEAKER 5:** I'd say, man, forget that. Give me somebody who knows what they're doing.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, I would feel-- of course, again, having spent time in Turkey which is a Muslim country, although it is not an Arab

I feel like I have somewhat of an understanding of some of the conflict that is occurring. The bulk of it is caused by the Arabs and their unwillingness to assimilate the Palestinians into their country.

I mean, these people have been in these refugee camps for over 50 years.

**SPEAKER 3:** Wow.

**SPEAKER 1:** And the various Middle Eastern countries have made absolutely no effort whatsoever to assimilate these people into their country. And it's, basically, you've got this festering sore--

**SPEAKER 2:** That we don't get on the news here. We don't hear anything about it. But it's festering. And it doesn't stop because we're ignorant of it. And the result of it is the two towers coming down.

**SPEAKER 1:** The thing about it is, the Arab, and particularly the extreme Arabs, i.e., the al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden and the rest of those, are perverting Islam.

**SPEAKER 2:** That's right.

**SPEAKER 1:** And my only problem is I would feel a heck of a lot better if some of the more moderate Muslim mullahs would denounce Osama and his radical beliefs. I'm wondering why that is not happening.

**SPEAKER 3:** They're afraid.

**SPEAKER 1:** But the main thing is, the vast majority of the Muslims are not Arabs. I mean, my God, you've got Indonesia--

**SPEAKER 2:** It's the largest religion on the planet.

**SPEAKER 1:** Yeah. You've got Indonesia, which is 90% or better Muslim. And they are not Arabs. The Turks are not Arabs. God, don't ever call a Turk an Arab.

**SPEAKER 3:** So how about them gay Muslims?

**SPEAKER 2:** That's right.

**SPEAKER 1:** Well, there are.

**SPEAKER 2:** There's an interesting [? method ?], but there are some.

**SPEAKER 1:** But again, the interpretation, you know.