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SPEAKERS

Jack Valinski, Jimmy Carper, Mary Helen Merzbacher



00:01

This is 90.1 FM you're listening to Pacifica radio KPFT Houston. Good afternoon. The PRISM program sunny dirty Pakistan and the Arabic hour will not be heard this week so that KPFT can present our annual celebration of Gay Pride Week with your host Mary Helen. That follows momentarily prison program sunny tardy Pakistan and the Arabic hour all returning the regular time slots next week here on listener sponsored Pacifica 90.1 KPFT.



Mary Helen Merzbacher 00:34

Good afternoon. I'm Mary Helen. And welcome to kp FTS annual celebration of Gay Pride Week. For the next four hours we'll be highlighting various aspects of gay culture, both here in Houston and around the country. We'll be looking at where we've been and where we're going. And Houston's annual gay pride parade begins at about 530 down on Westheimer street, so you have still have time to get down there. We'll be bringing you live reports from the parades reviewing stand, will also have lots of music, and some special features looking at both the joys of gay lesbian life, and the difficulties that gay and lesbian, gay men and lesbians face as a hidden minority in our community. And a few moments, we will present a 1988 award winning documentary from producer David I say which revisits the Stonewall riots that began the modern American gay rights movement. We'll finish the hour with some thoughts from older local men and women. And after all, Stonewall was in New York, lesbians and gays in Houston have a number of individual battles with political and social system here in our community. But first, I'm going to talk to two of the real movers and shakers here in Houston's gay and lesbian community. I'm joined this afternoon by co chairs of this year's Houston pride celebration. Join us in welcoming Carol Clark and KPFT s own Jack valinski, also producer of the Wildenstein program on KPFT welcome, Carolyn Jack.



J Jack Valinski 02:24

It's great to be here. Thank you.

 M

Mary Helen Merzbacher 02:25

Thanks for joining us today. I'd like to start off by telling our listeners a little bit about Houston's pride celebration. How many years has this celebration been going on?

 J

Jack Valinski 02:38

According to Sherry Dar Bone who's the editor of Montrose Voice it's been 14 years and this includes one of the early first years that they actually had a Nina Brian anti March because she came down here after she really helped defeat the Dade County ordinance. And many of the many of our sisters and brothers were boycotting orange juice and basically trying to boycott her because of her stance against us came down to you're raising money or to have a benefit. And our people and this is way before I was in Houston I've only been here nine and a half years. So Houston has had a history of celebrations. In fact, Houston has the largest in the state of a Pride Week celebration,

 M

Mary Helen Merzbacher 03:20

has it always been a a parade type format, or

 J

Jack Valinski 03:24

mostly it goes about 10. Now it's sort of settled down to 10 days, sometimes it's been up to two weeks, but it's 10 days now. And it includes the biggest event of course is the parade but the size the parade, there's the route sort of rally which is Star Night 91, which is happening starts at three o'clock and goes to 10 o'clock at the Quick Copy parking lot at Montrose and love it. And so there's always been some type of celebration included with that

 P

03:47

they had different formats, number of years they used to have parties in the park, they had spots parked for number of years and festivals with fireworks and etc. So it's had different types of format. But as Jack said, I think for the last couple of years, it's gotten down to this format of starting a week or so prior to the parade and climaxing with this afternoon's parade.

 J

Jack Valinski 04:08

And the neat thing is, is that all these events cover so many different aspects from theater being cultural. We have a spiritual things with churches, like the MCC ever will have celebrations and including even the National Weather Association. They had a nice party Friday night and they had a workshop on Saturday.

 M

Mary Helen Merzbacher 04:27



MARY HELEN MERZBACHER 04:21

One of the things that people often ask that aren't familiar with gay and lesbian culture is why a pride celebration or why should Why should gay and lesbian people be different and singled out to have their own pride celebration? I mean, what what is the significance of that? What does this mean? Do



Jack Valinski 04:49

you have four hours? Yes. Yes, it is very important. We're a very different type of in a lot of people don't like to be called as minorities, but we are very different in so many other minorities, blacks grow up young, black women and men grow up in a black family, Hispanics grow up in a Hispanic family, we women, the women's minority they, at least there's there's usually women in the family or they have women role models, gays and lesbians don't. They go through some of the worst type of child abuse because they are told all the way through in school, in church, in their family, that gays and lesbians are terrible people. Of course, they're not really sure at some time when they're growing up. But then when they start to realize that they need role models. Now, recently, we had a state representative who was openly gay elected in the Texas House of Representatives, Glen Maxey, and now that's really important now that that person is listed in the newspaper that this is an openly gay person. This year, we've been very lucky in the media coverage. Of course, we've always been very lucky with Pacific and KPFT. And having our own shows, this is the one place where gays and lesbians can do radio programming, and not have to worry about who they are.



06:09

I think also especially it plays a vehicle for us in the community to be proud of ourselves. And sometimes it can, this might be the only thing that some people in our community code to, which is kind of sad at some point, but at least they have this that they can go out for one afternoon in their lives, for whatever reason, meaning they have, they can at least come here from one afternoon and say, Yes, I'm gay, and I'm proud and I can I have this hour or two. So I think it's very important that we continue at least to offer everything that we can,



Jack Valinski 06:40

it's really important because the suicide rate of young gays and lesbians is like 30%. And when we only make up 10% of the population, and of all the street people on the streets in New York, young teenagers, half of them are gay and lesbian. And that's it's very difficult for us people who work with people, not necessarily myself, but people who work in social services, that there's always that difficulty in working with younger people because the society says we're trying to recruit them, which is not true.



Mary Helen Merzbacher 07:11

You just you feel that you're trying to help them help them how to cope with their own sexuality in a way that so yeah, so something posits are self esteem.

J

Jack Valinski 07:21

Exactly. And that's basically what we've been doing here on KPFT. We've been able to talk openly to people to talk about our community what our community is doing. Our community's response to AIDS is just incredible. Basically, the city and state has not done very much. But our communities built the organizations like the AIDS Foundation, the Montrose clinic, the Montrose Counseling Center, and we've had to live in the battlefield.

M

Mary Helen Merzbacher 07:44

How's the nature of the the gay and lesbian pride celebration changed with the advent of AIDS and with you know, with that coming on as such a factor in the community.

J

Jack Valinski 07:56

Houston has a very different, not very different, but has each city sort of has their own way they celebrate Pride Week. And Houston has always been a been trying to have a very professional parade that's open to all the community. But during those years, and right after the referendum in 1985, it got very subdued and and our numbers didn't turn out like it used to. And for a year or two, we really tried to discourage having professional floats, floats that we felt that people should spend more money and giving money towards aids and spending all that money on floats. So it has changed. Now we're starting to celebrate again, just as the city's economy is coming around, our people are feeling a little bit more open. And sure we're still doing all the hard work in organizing and volunteering for all these things. But it's time to celebrate too.

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08:43

I think we're, this parade is even gonna be larger than last year, and we're having more organizations and community input this year. And last year, it was highly successful. Again, we're growing as Jack said, momentum is picking up again, I think that the age issue is, in some part has brought the community together that both lesbian and gay men are standing together, hopefully and taking pride and being supportive

M

Mary Helen Merzbacher 09:10

of each other. Well, it used to be called just the gay pride parade. When was the word lesbian?

J

Jack Valinski 09:17

And it's been about four or five years now. And every year we switch off when you're at scale as being the other year as lesbian, gay. And I'm just thinking about how we finally get listed in the phone book. How are we going to do that?

M

Mary Helen Merzbacher 09:28

Have to have two listings? Well, I know that you all have been working really hard co chairs of the gay and lesbian pride celebration, Carol Clark and Jack Valinski. How many people do you expect? How long have you been working on this and how many people do expect to turn I've

J

Jack Valinski 09:45

been involved in Pride week since 1982. I've been in this year Jack Welch, neither one of us actually started out being co chairs. We both had to sort of fill in somebody else's shoes because of different reasons and Carol and I are just two people. There are hundreds of people that are really involved in pride. We, the Pride Week, organization itself is not very big. We have co chairs of the parade of fundraising, of media, and all these different different aspects of it. But we're only two people. It is the committee that did a lot of work. And it's a community at large. It's really putting Pride week together. We're sort of like a super organization that we're, we're an organization of all these different organizations. Because when you look at the parade, that we're looking at upwards of 80 units this year at different contingencies, which is just incredible. It's made up of different groups, the Counseling Center, the clinic, churches, churches, bar, we even have a commercial radio station this year, even Miller, Miller,

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10:43

and let me know when they give you airtime. Okay. Yeah,

J

Jack Valinski 10:46

yes. Actually, this year, we had some PSAs, right on a commercial radio station, which we're very surprised. It's great. It's about time. It's about time. That's absolutely right. And we've gotten some good press coverage. This year, the Houston press has done an incredible cover story. And it's very incredible, very timely, because a nice Parker, who's on the cover is going to be running for city council district C, as an openly lesbian person just announced this week. So that's really exciting that we're really excited now because things are starting to turn around in the community.

M

Mary Helen Merzbacher 11:18

For Great, thank you for joining us here today. We're going to go back a little bit in time and back to the beginnings of the the gay and lesbian movement here in the United States. That was in New York.

J

Jack Valinski 11:33

Can I just ask everybody, you still have time to get out and see the parade as you're all take your walk person with you and listen to the coverage because we're gonna be going live coverage at 530 of the parade.



Mary Helen Merzbacher 11:42

That's right, we're gonna have Bruce Reeves and Deborah Bell. Tony Freeman. We're going to have live updates from time to time during the parade. So we hope that you'll join us here on KPFT. And join all your sisters and brothers out on Westheimer for a beautiful celebration. Thank you. Thank you. Okay, now, we're about ready to go back in time. Back to New York City. Back to 1968. You're listening to Pacifica radio 90.1 KPFT Houston, with our annual celebration of gay and lesbian pride. I'm Mary Helen.



12:28

Today, this white two story building across from Sheridan Square and Greenwich Village is a clothing store and a closed Chinese restaurant 20 years ago. This was the Stonewall Inn. I'm Michael Shirker and I'm working on the first comprehensive history of the Stonewall riots. In 1969, the Stonewall was one of the most popular gay bars in New York City, and, like all other gay bars was routinely rated by the Vice Squad. The patrons of these bars, many of whom were frightened and having their identities revealed would quietly submit to any orders coming from the police. Yet, on June 27 1969, that all changed. The patrons of this bar with the drag queens at the forefront decided to fight back against the police. What happened here on that night would spark a revolution?



13:25

My I'm Jean Harwood, and my age is AD.



13:32

Hi, I'm Bruce Mero.



13:35

He wants to he also would like to know what your age is. So



13:38

my age 78. Yes,



13:42

I don't I don't, I don't know if it's really true. But now people do refer to us as the two oldest gay men in America. We do have I think, have maybe a record relationship of almost 60 years together. Bruce's memory started going bad in 1984. Fortunately, we have we have our music

together which we've which we've done over the years we've we've written any number of of songs, Bruce remembers the melodies very well and the lyrics for the songs.



14:25

And you would judge me when you took my hand something happened. I had never



14:37

being gay before Stonewall was was a very difficult proposition because we felt that in order to survive, we had to try to look and act as as straight as possible because the attitude the general attitude of society as far as employers Were concerned and landlords. All of these people were very hostile and and to protect ourselves we had to act as rugged and manly as possible to, to get by and my name



15:16

is Randy. I was the first openly gay person to appear on radio in 1962. And on television in 1964, as a self identified homosexual in the air before Stonewall people felt a need to hide because of the neat, precarious legal position they were in, they would lose their jobs. There was a great hostility socially speaking in the sense of people found out you were gay, they assume you were a communist or a child molester. Any of another dozen stereotypes are rampant in the public media at the time.



15:49

I'm Jerry fair, and I'm 80 years old. I started a gay lifestyle in 1948, when I was around 39, or 40, at that time, if there was even a suspicion that you were gay, that you were a lesbian. You were fired from your job. And you're in such a position of disgrace that you slunk out without saying goodbye, even to the people that like during your life, never even bothered to clean your desk. You just disappeared. You just disappeared you went quietly because she were afraid that the recommendations that would come if you even stood there protested would be worse than just



16:40

leave. My name is Sylvia Rivera. My name before that was bravery bearer until I started dressing in Dragon 1961. There are before us now more. As a hider there was always the gay bash and under drag queens by heterosexual men, women and the police. We learned to live with it. Because it was part of the lifestyle at that time, I guess. But none of us were very happy about it.



17:17

My name is Seymour pine. In 1968, I was assigned as Deputy Inspector in charge of public morals in the first division in the police department which covered South Manhattan from 38th Street to the battery, including the Greenwich Village area. It was the duty of public Marlins to enforce all laws concerning vice and gambling, including prostitution, narcotics, and laws and regulations concerning homosexuality. The part of the penal code which applied to drag queens, was section two four 0.35 section four, being masked or in any manner disguised by unusual or unnatural attire, or facial alteration, loiters remains or congregates. In a public at that time,



18:18

we looked at the universe with the sky around not try to figure out when, when this mastery harassment would come to an end. When knowing and or he would always dream that one day it would come to an end. When such an ad we prayed and we looked for it wanted to be human beings



18:54

My name is Rob Mahoney. I've been hanging out drinking, partying and working in the gay bars for the last 30 years. In the era before Stonewall, all, all of the buyers 90% of the boys were mafia controlled. They were controlled because the mafia had the right connections. There wasn't there wasn't that many gay bars. He had had maybe one to Uptown. In the Upper East Side, they would get closed down and they'd be wanted to on the west side. They get closed down in Midtown, they'd be 123 maybe open. As they would get closed down. They'd move around and they would dump



19:40

I'm Joe Nestle, co founder of what is now the largest collection of lesbian culture in the world. The police raided lesbian bars regularly and they did it they both did it in the most obvious way which was calling women away and paddy wagons but they there was regular weekend harass smell, which would consist of the police coming in regularly to get their payoffs. And in the sea colony, we had a back room with a red light. And when that red light went on, it meant the police would be arriving in around 10 minutes. And so we all had to sit down at our tables. And we would be sitting there almost like schoolchildren. And the cops would come in now, depending on who was on which cop was on, if it was some that really resented the butch women who were with many times very beautiful women. We knew we're in for it, because what would happen is they would start harassing one of these women and saying how you think you're a man, come outside, we'll show you and the woman would be dragged away. They throw up against a wall. And they'd say, so you think you're a man? Let's see what you got in your pants. And they would put their hand down her pants a



20:51

stone. Whoa, that was good. That was just to get into the stone wall. You'd walk up and you'd knock on the front door. In knocking the door opening? A Mary sent me good question. And qirls, you know, when you walked in to your right was your bar wrong to know, windows down

at the far end of the bar was an opening in the wall, going into the dance room with the jukebox in that room. And no one does in that room either. The stone wall, like all gay bars at that time, with painted black, charcoal black. And what was the funny part, the place would be so dimly lit. But as soon as the cops are gonna come in, to collect their percentage or whatever they were coming in for, from it being a nice, dimly lit, dump. The place was lit up like Luna Park, I



21:50

felt well two guys, and that's very often all we sent in would be two men could handle 200 people. I mean, you tell them to leave, and they leave. And you say show me your identification. And they all take out their identification and file out and that's it and you say, Okay, you're not a man, you're a woman, or you're vice versa and you wait over there. I mean, this is a kind of power that you have. And you never gave it a second thought



22:25

a drag queen took a lot of oppression and we had to we we were at a point where I guess nothing would have stopped us. I guess, as they say was Shakespeare says we were ladies in waiting, just waiting for the thing to happen. And when it did happen, we were there.



22:55

On Friday night, June 27 1969. At about 1145 eight officers from public morals First Division loaded into four unmarked police cars. From their headquarters on 21st Street and Third Avenue. They headed downtown and then west towards the Stonewall Inn here at Seventh Avenue and Christopher Street. It was the second time the bar was rated that week. The local sixth precinct had just received a new commanding officer who kicked off his tenure by initiating a series of raids on gay bars. And New York was in the midst of a mayoral campaign. Always a bad time for homosexuals. Mayor John Lindsay had good reason to agree to the police crackdown. He had just lost his party's primary and needed a popularity boost. And the Stonewall Inn was indeed an inviting target. Operated by the Gambino crime family without a liquor license. This dance bar drew a crowd of drag queens, hustlers miners, and more masculine lesbians known as Bulldogs. Many were black or Hispanic. It was a warm night in New York City and a somber day for many. Judy Garland, who had died earlier in the week was buried that morning. It was almost precisely at midnight that the moral squad pulled up to the Stonewall Inn, led by Deputy Inspector Seymour pine.



24:19

There was never any reason to feel that anything of any unusual situation would occur that night.



24:28

He could actually feel it in the air. He really good. I guess Judy Gall was just really helped us
Billy had faith and for some



24:37

reason things were different this night. As we were bringing the prisoners out. They were
resisting.



24:45

People started gathering in front of us shutters square park right across the street from
Stonewall. People were upset. No, we're not going to go and people start With screaming and
hollering one drag



25:03

queen, as we put her in the car, opened the door on the other side and jumped out. At which
time, we have to chase that person. And he was caught put back into the car, he made an
another attempt to get out the same door the other door. And at that point we have to handcuff
the person. From this point on, things really began to get crazy.



25:36

My name is Robert Rivera. And my nickname is Bertie, and I think cross-dressing All of my life. I
remember the night of the riots, the police were escorting the queens out of the barn into the
paddy wagon. And there was just one particularly outrageously beautiful queen with stacks and
stacks that allows you to style or this tail style hair. And she was asking them not to push her.
And they pretended to push her and she turned around and she matched the cop with her high
heels. She knocked them down and then she proceeded to frisk him for her the keys to the
hacker so she got them and she ended herself and pass them to another queen that was
behind her. But that's when all hell broke



26:21

loose. And then we were we had to get back into the stonework.



26:28

My name is Howard Smith. On the night of the Stonewall riots, I was reported for The Village
Voice locked inside with the police covering from my column. It really did appear that that
crowd because we could look for little peep holes in the plywood windows, we could look out
and we could see that the crowd Oh, my guess was within 510 minutes is probably several
1000 people. Two to 2000 Easy, and they were yelling, kill the cops. Police brutality. Let's get
them we're not going to take this anymore. Let me out is a group of



27:09

persons attempting to uproot one of the parking meters in which the in which they did succeed. And they then use that parking meter to as a battering ram to break down the door. And they did in fact, open the door. They crashed it in. And at that point is when they began throwing Molotov cocktails into the place. It was a situation that we didn't know how we were going to be able to control remember,



27:46

someone fell in a Molotov cocktail. I don't know who the person was, but I mean, I saw that and I just said to myself in Spanish I said oh my god, the resolution is finally here. Since I started screaming freedom. We're free at last it out. It felt really good.



28:05

There were a couple of cops stationed on either side of the door with the pistols like in a combat stance aimed in the door area a couple others was stations and other places behind like a pole. Another one behind the bar. All of them with their guns ready. I don't think up to that point I ever had ever seen. Cops that scared.



28:25

Remember, these were pros. But everybody was frightened.



28:29

There's no question about that.



28:32

I know I was frightened.



28:35

And I've been in combat situations. There was never any time that I felt more scared than I felt that



28:50

it was just you know there was no place to run.



28:54

When the moral squad officers barricaded themselves inside the Stonewall Deputy Inspector pine put in a 1041 call an emergency help request which can only be placed by a high ranking officer. That call was mysteriously canceled, and the telephone inside the Stonewall went dead. It took nearly 45 minutes for the riot police to get to the Stonewall and rescue the moral squad from the smoldering bar.



29:22

Once the tactical police force showed up. Think I really started us a little bit.



29:35

My name is Martin boys. In 1969. I was a drug known as Miss mark. I remember on that night when we saw the writers, all of us directors we linked arms, like the rockets and sang the song we used to say we are the village girls. We wear our hands and girls we wear our dungarees are above our daily news and a few When crazy hearing that and they just immediately rushed us, gave one kick and fled. My name is Rudy. And the night of the Stonewall. I was 18.



30:10

And to tell you the truth,



30:13

that night I was doing more running than fighting.



30:15

I remember looking back from 10th street and they're on Waverly street. There was a police I believe on His cop and his on his stomach in his tactical uniform and his helmet and everything else. With a drag queen straddling him. She was beaten the hell out of him with her shoe. Whether it was a high heels or not, I don't know. But she was beaten the hell out of this hysterical.



30:42

My name is mama Jean. I'm a lesbian. And I guess you would label me as a butch. I remember on that night, I was in the gay bar, a women's bar full of cookies. We were coming out of the gay bar going towards H treats. And that's when we saw everything had been blasting away

people getting beat our police coming from every direction hitting women as well as men. But then if six gay men running down the street, all over the face. We decided right then and there with the scanner. Now we didn't think about it. We just jumped in. But here



31:19

this queen has gone completely bananas, you know, jumping and hitting the windshield. And next thing you know the taxi cab has been marked all brother cars are being turned over since Windows was shattering all over the place. Fires were burning around. It was a beaut it was beautiful. It really was.



31:38

I remember one kept coming at me, hitting me with the nightstick in the back of my legs. I broke loose and I went after again. I grabbed this knife stick my girlfriend went behind him. She was a strong seven. I wanted to feel the same pain I felt. And I kept on saying to him, he liked the pain. Do you like it Do you like and I kept on hitting him and I was angry. I went to the kill. At that particular minute I went I wanted



32:03

to do every destructive thing that I could think of at that time to hurt anyone that have hurt us the years.



32:16

Just when you see a man protecting his own life. They weren't the queens that people call them. They were men fighting for their lives. And I try to work side any day medical it was a lot of heads for people. But it didn't hurt their feelings. They all came back from when you could tell that nothing could stop



32:45

anytime in the future.



32:55

The media covered the riot extensively. The Daily News featured it on its front page. There were reports on all the local television and radio stations. By the next day graffiti calling for gay power had appeared on buildings and sidewalks all over the West Village hastily worked up flyers distributed on street corners touted the night as the Hairpin drop heard round the world. And the next night 1000s of men and women converged on the West Village. They came here back to the stone wall to see what would happen next. Wild trash cans were set on fire stones were thrown and sporadic fighting broke out between police and gays. The more than 400 riot

police milling around the village ensured that the previous night's violence would not be repeated. But on this night, for the first time, gay couples could be seen walking hand in hand or kissing in the streets just by being there surrounded by reporters and photographers and onlookers. 1000s of men and women were proclaiming to themselves and the rest of the world that they were gay. And the crowds grew and came back the next night and for one more night the following week. What happened here on those nights helped to usher in a new era, both personally and politically for gay men and lesbians.



34:16

When when Stonewall happened, Bruce and I were still in the closet. And we're where we had been for nearly 40 years. But we realized that this was this was a tremendous thing that had happened at Stonewall and it it gave us the feeling that we were not going to be remaining closeted for very much longer. And soon thereafter. We did come out of the closet. My



34:48

name is Julia Prusa. In 1969 I was in the convent. I was in the Sisters of Charity and When Stonewall hit the press it hit me with a bolt of lightning It was as if I had an incredible release of my own outrage at having to sequester so much of my life. I made white my way down I seem to recall, in subsequent nights, being down on the, you know, kind of just in the periphery looking observer, clearly an observer, clearly longing to have that courage to come out and was a matter as I recall, it was only a matter of weeks before I left the convent and started a new life.



35:45

I'm Henry Baird, in 1969. I was in the US Army, a specialist three stationed at long been posed near Saigon in Vietnam. I remember I was having lunch in the army mess, reading the Armed Forces news summary of the day. And there was a short paragraph describing a riot, led by homosexuals in Greenwich Village against the police. And my heart was filled with joy. I thought about what I had read frequently, but I had no one to discuss it with. And secretly within myself, I decided that when I came back stateside, if I should survive to come back stateside, I would come out as a gay person, and I did



36:24

for those of us in public morals. After the Stonewall incident, things were completely changed from what they had previously then they, they suddenly were not submissive anymore, they now suddenly had gained a, a new type of courage. And it seemed as if they didn't care anymore about whether they were whether their identities were made known. We were now dealing with human being. My name



36:57

In this four and this is the mid 60s along with Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. I was one of the

is Jimi Lord, and I'm in the mid bus along with Annie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin. I was one of the founders of the of the hippie movement. I remember the third night of the riots, there was this meeting called by Madison society at St. John's Church on West on new Waverly Place. We went and Randy wicker was running the meeting.



37:17

For 10 years, I've been going on television, as Randy wicker, the respectable homosexual dressed and dark suit and tie, explaining to people that most homosexuals look like everybody else and behave like everybody else. And when Stonewall began happening, you had chorus lines and queens kicking their heels up at the police bonfires burning in the corner, trash baskets, and throwing bricks and stones at the police. I was horrified because this violated everything that we thought of as responsible behavior, that this was not the way respectable citizens behaved.



37:51

Everyone hooker was a sociologist, I believe Randy hit introduced her and she got up and she suggested that we should have a candlelight March that we should turn the other cheek because gay people were really different. We were really nice. And we had to show how nice we were in Stop all this riding because people were going to get hurt. I remember I stood up. And I said, No, we are not going back. And people felt the same thing I felt, and we marched out of that room. And that was the night that the Gay Liberation Front was born.



38:31

Today, I live in a senior citizen apartment building. What's different now is that I can be free. I have a daughter who's a senior citizen, and my son is 58. They know about my homosexuality. My three grandchildren in the 30s know about their grandmother. I have a great granddaughter who at the age of 10 learned that grandma Jerry was a lesbian, and she thought that was most interesting. And yet, I still don't have the personal courage to not care if these yentas in the building knows that Jerry's a lesbian.



39:18

Well, I



39:19

retired from the police department in 1976 20 years have passed, I'm going to be 70 in a few months. I still don't know the answers, I would still like to know the answer. I would like to know whether I was wrong or whether I was right. In ever thinking that there was a difference, and ever thinking that maybe you shouldn't trust a homosexual because something is missing in his personality archives



39:48

of lesbian culture, which surrounds us now and was created four years after Stonewall owes, at least from my part, its creation to that night in the courage that found his voice in the streets. That night, in some very deep way. We finally found our place in history. Not as a dirty joke, not as a doctor's case study. Not as a freak, but as a people on my



40:32

way



40:35

from remembering Stonewall was engineered by spider blue, it was produced by David Isay with a grant from the Pacifica national program fund. I'm Michael Shirker. Ah



40:50

ha, I'm a 38 year old drag. I can keep my long hair, I can pop by eyebrows and I can work wherever the hell I want. And I'm not going to change for any body. If I change that, I feel that I've that I'm losing 1969 brought into my life. And that was to be totally free.



Mary Helen Merzbacher 41:21

And here we are at 90.1 FM 22 years after the Stonewall riots. If you'd like to get a copy of that documentary, remembering Stonewall they are available from the Pacifica radio archives. You can obtain one by calling the phone number 818-506-1077. If you'd like more information, or a catalogue of Pacifica radio archives tapes you can reach someone that can give you that information here at KPFT at five to six 4000 during the week during business hours. Good afternoon. I'm Mary Helen and welcome to KPFT annual celebration of gay lesbian Pride Week. We'll be with you until seven o'clock with coverage of Houston's own gay and lesbian celebration. It's the parade starts at 530 down on Westheimer Street. If if you'd like to go see that you still have time to get on now to the gay and lesbian Pride Parade. The prison program Sony, dartie, Pakistan and Arabic our normally heard at this time. We'll return next week. So hope that you'll join us for our celebration today. And we're gonna go a little bit of music from a woman that you just heard in the remembering Stonewall documentary, a woman whose pain and whose sum pathos are often identified with by gay and lesbian people. Judy Garland. You're listening to KPFT special coverage of Houston's gay and lesbian pride celebration, we'll have live coverage of the braid, which begins at 530 coming up, then, right now. It's about 10 minutes until four o'clock at 90.1 FM. First thing on our agenda right now is going to be to hear from some of the people that were around in Houston. Circa the Stonewall riots, you you listened a little while before about to documentary from 1969 of events occurring in 1969. But what was Houston like in that day and age, we're going to talk to some people that remember. And we're going to hear from some of some voices that are be real familiar to you. If you're a listener to KPFT prison program, or if you're a listener to the after hours program, a gay and

lesbian program heard on Saturday nights from midnight to 4am. So we're going to hear from Jimmy and we're going to hear from Ray and some other people that are around in Houston during those days on KPFT is continuing celebration of gay and lesbian pride.

J

Jimmy Carper 44:14

Hello, Happy gay and lesbian Pride Day. This is the time of year that we remember the Stonewall riots in New York City circa 1969. I'm Jim Carper. When Ray Hill and I got together to interview people, we decided to concentrate on those who would remember that era 1969 Everyone was given the same questions. And what follows are their responses. Lee Harrington

Ω

44:42

is my name and I began to deal with my sexual orientation in 1977, really, and it was a disconcerting experience so much so that when I came to Houston in 1979, I had to wear a mask at the first gay pride parade calm might also add that also had turned left on Westheimer, our South by the tower theater. The first week I was here and I had Michigan license plates still on my car. And so the police stopped me. And they said, What have I done wrong? And they said, Well, you've turned into a one way street and the other officer realized that they'd made a mistake. It was only one way on the other side of Westheimer. And the people in front door mirrors were standing there watching all this take place. And so since they had to say face, they looked and found that my son had Michigan plate asked me how long I'd been here. So finally just said, Well, you know, we just said, Where are you going. And I was not quite as bold as I am now. And I wasn't quite sure what to say. And so I pointed between Mary's and boobie rock, and I looked that day straight enough that they thought I was going to Baby rock. And I regretted it ever since.

Ω

45:49

My name is Eleanor Hanley, and I came to accept being lesbian, approximately three years ago. And the best way to describe it, it was like coming home. I felt like I finally got the whole picture together what my life was all about. In 1969, I was living in a little town in upstate New York called Holly. What I was doing was being a wife and mother, I had four children, ages four to nine. And that's what I was doing. What was what was it like? Good and bad. I enjoyed it a lot. And part of it was pretty difficult.

Ω

46:37

My name is Pat Gandy and I first came to accept the fact that I was a lesbian. Actually, five years ago, when I came out, I had strong suspicions of at all my life, but I didn't do anything about it. In 1969, I was living in Deer Park, Texas, teaching in Pasadena and trying to sympathize with all the for adolescents who are getting drafted for the Vietnam War. And as as always, all my life, I've always been sympathetic with the press people's I suppose that was a projection of my own hidden non acceptance of myself, for what I actually knew I was I was lesbian, and projected by helping other folks and I sympathize with these adolescents. And it was it was a very upsetting time for me because I could see the power and the and the

the awfulness of the federal government as it did it in society stomped on any young person who dared to disagree. And I feel that it's somewhat similar to the fact the way the situation we are in many times by society that they want to squash and step on us the same way.



48:02

Okay, my name is Laurie lingo. I accepted being gay. In 1974, when I was 37 years old, calculate fast. It was very liberating. When I finally came to terms with it. I'd known I think for some years I was gay, but really come to terms accepting it was about a year after my divorce, and it was, as I say, very liberating 1969. I was married, I was living in Fort Worth, Texas. I was teaching history at Texas Christian University. And that was it.



J Jimmy Carper 48:38

Lee, Eleanor, Pat and Larry, now tell you when they first heard about the Stonewall Rebellion, and what they thought of it, you will find out what a gay and lesbian pride means to them, and how they will celebrate their pride this year?



48:54

Well, I was not aware of it at the time. Of course, I when I first heard about it probably was when I began to deal with leaving East Lansing, Michigan, where I had gone after I graduated in University of Alabama. And probably, I really can't remember exactly which troubles me because it's such a profound moment. But I wouldn't have remembered it. Like I remember the day that Kennedy was shot because I knew where I was. And when I wasn't aware of all this enough at that time to remember what it was exactly the spot. But in 1977, I would say I began to hear about it. But in seventh year when I arrived in Houston, and saw the likes of you and others at the Astro Hall, in town meeting one sort of new thing. Well, I think it's I think it's a glorious moment for all liberated people. And a special moment for gays and lesbians is the thing I look forward to most each year, I always want the parade to be bigger and better. I want the mainstream businesses to enter floats and I weigh myself to death. Are you long but I finally got good on the phones and talk them into it and work with Academy and talk them into it and, and I always am so busy with other projects, I never get to go and help Gay Pride Week do that. Also by this year, of course by being at the parade and and thinking back when I wear the mask and the first one, and how far I've come. And I think also how far we still have to go.



50:25

I heard about the Stonewall Rebellion about two years ago, shortly after I came up. From what I've heard about it when I've, you know, heard about it from other people, they had good reason to riot in the streets and write on Lesbian and Gay Pride means means my own personal pride. Since I am a lesbian, and proud to be one. I feel like there's a lot of work to be done for us to have had the the real recognition that we should have as citizens of this world. I will be celebrating Pride Week, I started celebrating by going to the the dinner last Saturday, the awards dinner, I will be marching in the parade. And this will be the second year of march in the parade. And it'll be the third year I knew there was a parade.



51:26

Well, I probably heard about it when it happened. But I don't remember. Because I usually read the paper very avidly I wasn't out then. But I spent most of the first part of my life as an alcoholic trying to suppress the fact that I was a lesbian. So there are a lot of blank spaces in terms of memories of things. But after I sobered up, and when I was in the process of coming out, I read about it and being an old sort of semi mover and shaker and radical myself, I thought that they're probably long overdue and doing it and they should put should have done it sooner. But it's wonderful because being gay pride means to me accepting who I am. And, and being cool with that. And participating in the life of the community and doing what I can to further the cause of gay and lesbian rights. And I plan to celebrate it by doing as I do normally. And then participating in the events of Gay Pride Week such as going up to the banquet last Saturday night. I will attend several events and participate in the parade. Sunday,



53:01

of course, I heard about when it happened because I read The New York Times. My feeling was, again, secretly knowing I was gay. I was very sympathetic. I was involved in the anti war demonstrations myself at the time, I thought it was a great thing. Well, let me answer the let me say celebrated by being. I'll be in the parade Sunday, the store our store, Lobo will have a booth at Star 91. So I guess in that sense, that's part of how we celebrate it. We decorate the store. We celebrate gay pride. We actually a year round at Lobo. But we do get a little more involved during Gay Pride Week. What Gay Pride means to me. Again, I think it's something that everybody should experience here around. I think it's very important that we take pride in being gay and lesbians first of all, because it's good for us individually. Everybody, I think should have a very positive attitude towards themselves. And that comes I think with pride. I think they should be proud if they are gay and if they're lesbian.



Jimmy Carper 54:06

Now Lee, Eleanor Pat and Larry will tell you how gay and lesbian people have changed over the years in their perception. You will hear what they think of young gay and lesbian people today. And what advice the four of them offer ever uncovering