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Wed, Mar 22, 2023 1:52PM 32:32

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, transgendered, transgender, conference, votes, community, ftm, lobbying, congress, talk, called, senator, gary, masculine, contact, employment non discrimination, includes, important, maryland, washington



00:01

Boys network in one of the leading voices at the F two M for females meal transferring sexual movement. Uri. Let's talk a little bit about the conference you have coming up. It's called the true spirit conference. What is that all about?



00:15

True spirit conference is conference for anyone who was born a female, but feels that that's not an adequate or complete description of who they are. And that includes but is not limited to tomboys, which is masculine females crossdressers drag kings, F two m m two M, transsexuals, intersexual, and this is very important, our significant others, our friends, our families, and our allies. So the true spirit conference is going to be addressing the full spectrum of the FTM, transgendered community providing information on medical, legal, social, personal, and other issues of interest to the community.



00:56

OK, now, let's talk a little bit about this is a fairly new concept, as far as I know how to how did you come up with this idea?



01:06

Well, there's been a couple of FTM conferences on the West Coast and prior years, and that was the uptime of the Americas conference. There are a lot of us over here on the East Coast that wanted to say conference that we could actually attend. And we also felt that a broader focus would serve the community, at least on the East Coast, better than perhaps the other conference had done. Now, there's also another conference being held up in Boston this year. So we're going to have two FTM conferences in one year. And that Boston conference will be the FTM of the Americas conference. So I have always said that I welcome conferences of as many kinds as possible. And I think the FTM community really needs a lot of options, a lot of

different possibilities to be made available to them. And I'm glad to see that there are people in the community that are willing to make the effort to make these things happen. I'm very excited about it.



02:02

Now, I know you really mean all our effort to keep the costs low, as low as humanly can be done. Why don't you talk a little bit about that.



02:11

The conference is going to be held this February the 22nd to 23rd. In Laurel, Maryland, the conference cost after January 1 is \$25. We also have working scholarships, and some other assistance for people who have special needs. And we kept the price as low as we possibly could. We're depending on donors, and we always can appreciate more donation, because we wanted people to be able to attend the conference. And we didn't want costs to be a barrier. As I mentioned earlier, a lot of F two M's are in financial challenge positions. And we think that people deserve to have access to the information regardless of what kind of income they personally have.



02:51

When they here's a conference, we're looking at Noosa, the cost is \$25. Now, of course, that means people are going to have to get their own airfare and that sort of thing. But even so \$25 for conference is just as as little price as I've ever heard of I think. Let's talk a little bit about what's going to happen as the conference. Person attends, what can they expect?



03:11

Well, they're going to be several things. Saturday night, we'll have our opening ceremonies which will feature a keynote speech by Leslie Feinberg, who is the author of transgendered warriors, which is very fine book on the history of transgendered people. We will also have other speakers, Reverend Jenny Maynard will give the invocation. And I'll be giving a welcome speech etc. That will be followed from nine to 12 by a mixer, a dance by transgendered musicians. And we'll have a mixture of F to M and M to F musicians and singers and performers, putting on kind of a musical review of, of transgender talent. And all these people are very skilled, professional people, cut CDs and so forth. And we're really very proud to be able to showcase their talent. Then on Sunday, the panels will get started, we'll have three tracks of programming. There'll be two tracks the panels that will be covering different aspects of FTM issues. There'll be a panel called exploring our options, which are various non surgical ways to live with the masculine identity. There'll be medical panels about surgery, Dr. Toby Meltzer, who is the very prominent FDM surgeon will be attending and giving a presentation. There'll be discussion of legal issues like changing your document documentation, and what to do if you go to the hospital or even arrested. There'll be panels about personal issues like coming out coping with your family. Mary Bonnke, who is of PFLAG to transgender support network will be there and is going to be hosting an informal meeting for family members. And then in our third

track of programming, we'll have transgender authors reading from their work and we have a slate of various People who are written transgendered work is fiction, nonfiction plays, poetry, novels, etc. We also have an exhibit hall where we'll have displays by various educational organizations. And we also have vendors. So they'll be, there'll be booksellers and musicians selling CDs, and so forth. So if you're looking for information, you can go shopping and find it there. And then we'll wrap up on Sunday evening with an informal pool party. Just relax and unwind. So there's really going to be a very lot happening. We're providing Spanish interpretation and death interpretation and onsite childcare. And any person who has a special needs should contact us. And we'll do our best to accommodate them. Because we really want to see everybody be here.

05:46

Well, I know that you have spent an awful lot of time and energy putting all of this together. And I am I'm sorry that I'm not going to be able to be there or for you to be involved. But I'm really glad that this is happening. It is it is really exciting to me to see the men get get, finally get their place in the sun, and finally get get recognized by the rest of the community. And let's let's just talk about that a little bit. The whole idea of after ama is finally getting involved, whether it was in gender PAC, or it's time America, or in the American boys network is fairly new. And I know American boys network was one of the pioneers want to talk about that a little bit. But we're the second

06:34

largest FM organization in the country. FTM International is the oldest and largest. We were started about three years ago, because it was not able to find an FM support group in the area. And I wanted one. And these are the kinds of things that if you want it, you have to do it yourself. And we've grown greatly over the last three years, we now have local contacts in nine different places throughout the eastern seaboard. And we also have the special contacts for Spanish deaf minority issues, etc. We provide a free monthly newsletter to anyone in our service area. And we also have a free online email forum. And coming next year after the conference is completed, we'll be putting up a website, and that will have Spanish and English materials.

07:21

Well, now how long have you been involved in getting the movement forward? And when you started, I guess man must have been just about invisible.

07:29

I'm sorry, I couldn't hear you.

07:30

I just think how long have you been involved with this? Because I'm still when when you started

I just think how long have you been involved with this? Because I imagine when you started, man must have been just about invisible.



07:39

Well, I personally started about three years ago, because as I say, I was looking for services myself. Now I'd had these issues before that, but as we've talked about is very difficult to find the information. And, you know, I grew up this way. And I was always trying to find role models of some nature. That, that I don't know, you know, you watch a cowboy a movie and you say, Gee, I can be a cowboy. But of course, you know, you've never seen a woman do that.



08:11

Yeah, you know, it. That's one of the things that I wanted to I'm glad that you said that because I think there's a sense in the community that said that a an apt to M is so extremely different from the transgendered women. And yet, that's not always true. Our the way that we grew up and the real times that we realized that we didn't fit in, I think in most ways are still pretty similar. Let's let's talk a little bit about, about the, the political aspects. Now, as we get ready to go to Washington to do lobbying in February, I understand that there will be a lot of men there for the first time. Once you talk a little bit about what's going on in Washington in February and lobbying effort there.



09:00

Well, so as far as organizing the February trip to educate members of Congress, this is not a lobbying trip, per se, it's an opportunity to educate them on issues and to introduce them to a wide spectrum of the transgender community, men and women, people of color and other minorities within our organizations as well. We are holding the true spirit conference in conjunction with these lobbying days because we think it's very important that ft m know what's happening politically. The political movement is largely led by Him to at this point, although there were a number of trans men who are also participating. And we think that it's important that they know about what's going on that they be given the opportunity to participate and that they received the training necessary to be effective political members of this movement. The Phyllis fry and other political speakers will be coming to the conference and giving information and training and we will also be facilitating those people who will is to go to facilisis event, which is the Monday and Tuesday following, so they can pursue those political issues further if they so desire.



10:09

Now, if somebody wants to attend your conference, Gary, how do they get in touch with you?



10:14

They can contact me care of the American boys. That's Bo YZ at Post Office Box 1118 Elkton, el que te o n, Maryland 21922. Or they can phone me at 410-392-3640. I'm sorry to say I don't

have any answering machine, it just broke. So I'm hard to get ahold of mail is the most reliable way to reach me at this point.

10:37

Yes. And you also have an email address. Also,

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if I do, I can be reached at trans man at net gsi.com.

10:46

Okay, we'll be giving that information out again, in a few minutes. Gary, it's really a pleasure to finally get to get the some of the man on the program. From this ended it, we're going to continue to talk about the issues and men as best we can. And I'm glad that we finally get an opportunity to present present some of the issues, even in this brief time, because I think it's really important that the men get recognized is important members of this community.

11:15

I'm working on some materials with Jessica Xavier, that we will be distributing to various organizations. And I've been contacted by other organizations such as Renaissance, and try us to work with them about developing more inclusive materials. For anyone who wants to follow up on FTM inclusion with me, I'd be happy to hear from them. And there will be materials available in the near future.

11:39

Well, Gary, I think that's terrific. I want to just for the record, I want to make it known publicly that I really appreciate the work that you're doing. I understand just how time consuming it is, and how difficult it is to do on what is going to be close to a zero budget. And I really applaud your efforts. I think you're genuine pioneer in this.

11:58

Well, I'd like to make the effort if I can to appeal to for donations, because since you mentioned zero budget, we operate entirely on the voluntary contributions if whoever wants to donate to us, that we were able to provide our services without any cost to the people who need them. So if anyone would like to make a donation to the true spirit conference, or to the American voice, they can also contact me at the address we just gave.



12:23

Gary, thanks very much. And thanks. Thanks for being part of after hours. Thank you.



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After the discussion that we had prior to the interview with Gary Bowen, and after listening to Gary, it just seemed like the flirtations, something inside so strong, was the perfect piece of music to do.



12:47

Yeah, it was,



12:49

I'd say, that's one of my favorites, and always has been. But after talking about the feelings and vow with being transgender Ness, listen to Gary talk about how there was no support group for it. And so he started one. I mean, that's strength. You know, it really is. It is. Let's talk a little bit about what's upcoming in February, Gary touched on it briefly about the the lobbying event that's going to be coming up education, education this lot in you know, let's let's start out with some with the basic, I want to give a little backdrop. As most of the regular listeners to this show know, we have had some ongoing discussions with the Human Rights Campaign. And immediate enemies meeting was held with Human Rights Campaign recently. And they make a long story short, the upshot of it was, in essence, HRC said, prove it. The transgender people have been telling them for a long time, look, if you include us and a few includes in the employment non discrimination act, not only will it not cost you votes, but it might win you some votes. And the HRC Human Rights Campaign has essentially said prove it. And so we're going to try and prove it. And they take it from there.



14:14

Okay, in conjunction with the true spirit conference, we're working together very closely with them on on the dates on this thing. starting Sunday evening, the 23rd of February, we're going to have training. We're gonna be just down the road from Laurel in College Park, Maryland, which is a fairly traditional site now for transgender lobbying and education events to be based. We're going to have a training session Sunday night, Monday morning, bright and early eight o'clock, we're gonna head down to the metro station and go downtown, and we're going to talk to Congress. We're going to have appointments. We're encouraging everybody to make appointments now with their congress people, we're going to be talking to representatives to senators. Whoever comes we're going to do just like October of 95, we're going to assign as many people as we can. We have no idea how many people are coming. But Monday and Tuesday, we're going to be on the hill. There are a few key legislators that we have targeted in the Senate and in the house, that the leadership is going to be involved in visiting. We will be actually lobbying to get to get transgender inclusion in the employment non discrimination act.

And the basic The reason we're giving it that the priority is number one, that is one of the hot issues in this session of Congress. But the big issue for us is if you can keep your job, you can start to cope with some of the other problems. But once you lose your job, you're dead.



16:11

Now, let's back up here a little bit. First of all, for those who don't do not know, the employment non discrimination act, is a law which would forbid discrimination against lesbians and gay people primarily, to this point, transgenders are not included in the language of law. Through a series of parliamentary maneuvers, the Human Rights Campaign managed to get it onto the floor of the Senate last year, were lost by one vote. Now, the Human Rights Campaign is essentially saying, look, we got to within one vote, why should we include transgenders in it you people are going to cost us votes, when all we need is one. So although we think that, you know, you probably belong in the employment non discrimination act, we're not going to do anything special, so make sure you get in it.



17:14

Well, one of the reasons for that is there is a tradition in Congress, that once an individual has voted for a bill. In one session, he's fairly well committed to voting for that same bill, as it comes up in future sessions. And by making a major change, what the HRC is saying is that by making this major, major change to the bill, we will be giving people an excuse to drop their support. And so they they're afraid that that those 49, Senate votes are going to turn into 45 votes. For example, well,



17:56

they might do that. Anyway, almost a third of the Senate turned over in this last election. Well, let's, let's tie what's reality here, you know,



18:05

but, of course, putting us in makes it much less of a special rights bill, and it takes away the special rights argument. So besides making it morally, a much more sound bill, that's the only lobbying we're actually going to be doing. The rest what everybody else is going to be doing. What we will be doing when we're not talking to those key congress people is basic education, just like we did in October 95. We're going to demo and we're going to demolish stereotypes. We are going to demonstrate to Congress that the transgender community is half female to male that it's filled with people of color as well as white people. That it includes heterosexual cross dressers, it includes gay drags as well as transsexuals. We're going to educate them that transsexuals can be finished without surgery, which is extremely important to the men, as we mentioned earlier, that we've got a political spectrum within the community from conservative Democrat to ultra liberal art. Whoa, conservative Republican to ultra Liberal Democrat. We understand



19:35

that in Texas, we don't have a liberals we have various shades of conservative right.



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There are actually some liberal Republicans in the northeast and



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19:51

in the Senate, and he's a very good friend of ours. That we've got same sex marriages represented in our community. We've got all varieties, all shades of education, careers, military backgrounds. And we're going to make the point that we are the target of hate crimes and employment discrimination.



20:21

Now there are people in the audience right now we're trying to picture what transgender people look like, okay, they may not know much about us. Maybe they've seen us on Geraldo, right? So they're trying to picture these transgendered people going to Congress. Now they picture these six foot, drag queens on stilts, heels in sequence, right? Or we're in what Phyllis likes to call the saran wrap tube tops, going to Congress and trying to tell Congress that we deserve political rights. And your correction, Madame is?



20:57

Well, first off, those those spiked heels aren't gonna last long.



21:03

Oh, honey, you don't know what long hallways are even in the hallways of Congress.



21:09

And the floors are hard, and there's no place to sit and you're gonna. But what they're going to see is people who are as varied in appearance as straight people are as the mundane, non transgendered world where you have fat people, skinny people, short, tall, beautiful, ugly, whatever. Same with us. Some of us don't look real good. Some of us look gorgeous, like me,

but continue. But what we're going to be telling, telling them and demonstrating is that we are real people. And that were discriminated against in ways that we just flat don't deserve. And we need to get the protection that other Americans have.



22:15

Let me point out something to folks in the audience. I've had people say to me in the past, well, I could never go and talk to a congressman. And let me tell you, as somebody who worked in Congress, I worked as an aide to Senator Lowell Weicker for a couple for a few years. Let me make a couple of observations here. First of all, your representative or your senator is your employee. Hello. You pay their salaries, pay attention, repeat after me. Legislators are not specially privilege, folks. They are your employees. Can you talk to your employee? Yes. Better believe? You betcha. That's number one. Number two, people say me, well, transgenders, no congressman is going to sit still for transgenders wrong. We have something that I jokingly called the fascination factor. And it works. It



23:16

works. We had a situation in October of 95. And a senator from a rural state, rural, lightly populated etc. made an appointment with a gentleman from his home state, basic 10 minute constituent appointment. This gentleman showed up wearing a dress looking quite attractive, very definitely non masculine, and said, Hi, I'm Chuck.



23:55

What happened was the senator was so impressed by by the fact that there were there was an Iowa somebody like this, he that had never even occurred to him. Of course, there are lots of transgender I told the state I didn't mean to do that. There are lots of transgendered people in that state. This particular senator was completely unaware.



24:23

There was someone speak to a senator from Oklahoma who's flatly said that there are no transgender people in Oklahoma. And the person said, I'm actually the the Oklahoma transgender organization is based in your community, Congressman.



24:38

But anyhow, this farm state senator ended up spending 25 minutes with this constituent. There was a Russian trade delegation, waiting in his outer office for 15 minutes cooling their heels. While this Senator talked to this one for RMS state crossdresser. And that can happen to anybody.



25:05

25:05

And I really want to stress the importance of your participation in this limit. People say people say to me, Well, I could never go to talk to a congressman, what what in the world could I possibly have to say? Tell them your story? Absolutely. It's that simple. When Congress when people are voting in Congress, the laws tend to get lost, they tend to forget they are voting on issues that affect people. D had it exactly right. Put a face on the vote. It

25:37

works. And what's more, you don't have to go to Washington.

25:42

You can do it right here in Houston. Every Houston congressman, comes back to Houston frequently, some come back every week. They make a point of being in their home district very, very often, so they can talk to their constituents. You.

26:05

Yeah, I just want to I just wanted to point out, you can also contact your congressman, by writing. That's exactly right. And it's very important that you do right, because they have a Now Sarah, maybe you might be able to give a breakdown on this a little better as to why it's like this. Why it is I don't know. But every individual now I'm not talking about a petition. But every individual written letter that goes to Congress to the sob Building in Washington, the Senate office building, or to the House of Representatives building. Those, each letter counts for, like 1000 or more. So

26:52

the rule indigent the rule of laws, Wakers office was one letter was where it was a representative 100 votes. Now I'm talking about handwritten letters, not not these postcards, but handwritten letters, because they figure for every one person that writes that was representative of 100 votes, you have influence.

27:09

That's right. And your petition letters are counted as one for one. In many cases, they're simply not even read, right. But those handwritten letters are so important. And if you do not know how to contact your congressman, or your Senator, pick up a copy of the voice, the Houston voice has their address, every issue of the Houston voice. This on how you can contact your representative in Washington,

27:36

You can call the Houston Chronicle and they'll give you the information for free over the phone

you can call the Houston Chronicle, and they'll give you the information for free over the phone.



27:40

Well, let's send the blue pages in your phonebook. And you can call the League of Women Voters and get all kinds of information both on local office and on Washington office.



27:49

Now let's explain to the audience for a minute why gays and lesbians should care. If transgenders are included, if you're a gay or lesbian person right now you and you're saying Well, look, we only lost by one vote. Why should we take the risk? Why should we include you people? Why do we care,



28:07

because ended does not protect most gays and lesbians. What it's going to do is it's going to let you talk about your weekend with your partner, it's going to let you put your partner's picture on on your desk, it's not going to let you wear an earring. It's not going to let you dress in anything other than corporate drag. And any mannerisms, any speech, speech or physical, any clothing variations from the standard they can use to fire you and say, well, it's not because of what what he does in bed. It's because he's acting like a woman or because she is acting too masculine. All of a sudden, that's a transgender thing. And it's not covered by and



29:06

yeah, see, that's what the point that people don't seem to understand. If you if you're a very butch woman, just as an example, the boss is going to isn't going to be stupid. The boss is gonna say, Well, I didn't fire the person because you're lesbian. I bet I fired them because they're their appearance or their mannerisms or their behavior doesn't conform to what the company wants or what the company needs. All of a sudden we'll have what you will find is you didn't get fired for being gay and lesbian. You got fired because your gender a parents or gender behavior, or gender, whatever, didn't conform. If you leave a loophole the size of gender, or gender or in this case, gender identity, you leave a loophole and they're the size that size in ENDA, and isn't going to be worth the paper that there was printed on and we keep trying. We keep trying to get people to understand that. And slowly the gay and lesbian communities become I understand that indeed being gay and lesbian is being transgendered, that indeed gays and lesbians and transgenders are all from the same family. It's unfortunate that it has taken so long. I hope we have not learned too late.



30:16

We'll just have to see. Okay, now



30:19

if people want to go with you to Washington, how do they reach a day?



30:22

Well, again, they can reach me at the eclap office telephone as SRS T GLC 7778452. Area code is 713. Email ICT lep@aol.com. Mayo, I don't get to the post office very much. So that's not a real speedy way to communicate. And I we can give you information as to where the hotel is how to make the arrangements, et cetera.



30:57

I had promised Gary Bowen that I would read his information one more time. If you're interested in attending the Two Spirit conference, you can contact the true spirit conference, you can contact the American boys at PO Box 1118 Elkton, E L, k, T, O, N, Elkton, Maryland 21922. Or if you have email they can be reached at trans men. That's TR N S, ma N, at any t s gi.com. D as always, we're up. We're up against it already. I couldn't believe it. And we have as often the case around here we have managed to do a five hours of programming and we still have stuff left over that we didn't get to, never seems to fail. We're going to leave you with a piece of music called from Mary travers, called Sweet survivor. And I want to encourage you to get involved with us. Get involved with get involved with lobbying, get involved with your community. Do what you need to do me. Remember the motto of this program. When decorum becomes repression, the only dignity free people have no just to speak out. Good night, folks. God bless you