

HARLAN: He's not exactly--

JIMMY CARPER: He's made a lot of money from cheesy commercials.

HARLAN: Yeah, cheesy was the word I was looking for. Yeah, and he's not at all. He's not at all. He's a very nice man, and he's done a whole lot for us. And I really wish we could find a better way to say thank you than just, gee, come be our guest at this party. Hopefully, over the next year, we'll be able to do something like that, because he's a great guy.

JIMMY CARPER: No, I need to close it out.

GIGI: I've got one last bit. We've been working very hard at Bi-Net USA on fundraising, and we are under reorganization and getting ready to hire an executive director July 15th. And we're lining up a full working board that will be in place July 15th. We're getting real close to our mark, but we definitely need some donations. And we now have credit cards on our website, the ability to accept credit card donations.

JIMMY CARPER: That's way cool.

GIGI: So anybody that wants to donate, go to binetusa.org.

JIMMY CARPER: That's easy.

GIGI: And go to the project 387 page on that website. And at the bottom of that page, you can hit the link to go to a secured site and make a credit card donation. And we definitely need your help.

JIMMY CARPER: You bet. Thanks, GiGi.

GIGI: You bet.

HARLAN: I'd like to mention one more thing.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

HARLAN: This is the Stonewall Lawyers Association of Greater Houston. Anybody that would like to join, we have \$20 memberships for associate members. Attorneys are \$40 memberships, and we're working on getting some benefits to go along with membership. But we're trying to expand and trying to rebuild like everybody else is.

But anybody that's interested, John Nechman is our president. Brenda Selby is our secretary. Reg Hill's on the board. Phyllis Frye's on the board. They're stuck with me. Oops, did I say that? But seriously, everybody do come out to this, and do consider joining, because we really could use you.

JIMMY CARPER: Great, Harlan, thanks for being here. Tristan, thank you for being a very entertaining guest.

FEMALE HOST: Yes, thank you very much.

TRISTAN: Thank you for having me. Appreciate it.

GIGI: I think this is a first. Just never had a live author here.

JIMMY CARPER: No, that's right. They've all been dead.

TRISTAN: I was going to thank you all for having me, but there's a joke in there that I don't want.

JIMMY CARPER: OK, you bet. Coming up, right after this song will be Big Roy and Chris with the *After Hours News and Views*. This song coming up is brand new from David Marr from his EP, *Only You*. It's the title cut. You're listening to it all on *After Hours*, Queer Radio with Attitude, on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station.

Oh yes, it's time for the *After Hours News and Views* with Big Roy and Chris.

BIG ROY: We'd like to welcome everyone to this week's edition of *After Hours News and Views*. Big Roy, with me is my inseparable and partner that I could not do news without, Chris.

And before I begin the news and views, I'd like to give some shout outs to a number of people, as always, to Randy down there in Rosharon, to another Randy who called in tonight out there at I-10 and Wilchris, who's listening in-- hello, Randy-- and to Tony up there in Midway and to John here in the Montrose, to Melvin, a new listener here in the Montrose, and a bunch of others.

CHRIS ARASIN: Of our international fans?

BIG ROY: Our international fans, to Katuwe out there in Bali, Indonesia. And we've got people out there in Australia that are listening to us and to all kinds of places.

CHRIS ARASIN: How many R's did you just put in Australia?

BIG ROY: Oh, I don't know. I don't count. All right, so we're going to begin this week's news and views with some sobering statistics that Chris has got together for us.

CHRIS ARASIN: Yes, here it is now, the 20th anniversary of the AIDS crisis. Since it started, it began as just being called the gay cancer and moved into--

BIG ROY: It was called the gay plague.

CHRIS ARASIN: The great gay plague, gay cancer, GRID, and some interesting studies have come out now on the 20th anniversary.

BIG ROY: Do you know what that term, GRID, stood for?

CHRIS ARASIN: Gay-Related Immunological Disorder.

BIG ROY: Infectious disease.

CHRIS ARASIN: Yeah, close enough. I didn't watch band play it on that often. But a few stories that have come out regarding some new statistics on this, "Black gay or bisexual men who took part in a new AIDS study were five times more likely to become HIV-infected rather than their white counterparts," the Center for Disease Control and Prevention announced on Thursday.

But the CDC stressed that there was not enough participants in the study for it to reflect national trends. The new AIDS study of 2,942 young men who were gay or bisexual was released to mark the 20th anniversary of the CDC'S first report on the deadly incurable disease.

It also cites US progress in fighting AIDS but calls for further reduction in infection rates for HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. The report is based on a CDC study of infectious patterns of young gay men aged 23 to 29 in Baltimore, Maryland; Dallas, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Miami, Florida; New York City; and Seattle, Washington from 1998 to 2000. It found that the rate of new infections among all study participants was 4.4%.

Yeah, these two stories are pretty close. One is from CNN, and one is from Fox News. They found the rate of infections among all study participants was 4.4%, 2.5% among whites, 3.5% among Hispanics, and 14.7% among African-Americans.

And it's sobering to see here how after 20 years of the virus and how far we've come to, possibly within the next couple of years of possibly a vaccine or a cure down the road, and to see these numbers starting to increase-- there's another study out that says that 60% of all new infections are of gay men. And the disease is coming back, and a lot of people are just not paying attention to where it's coming from.

BIG ROY:

True, gay men too young to remember the earliest reports of AIDS are now spreading the disease at alarming rates. That reminded health officials of the explosive first years of the epidemic. And as Chris was just mentioning, 4.4% of gay and bisexual men between the ages of 23 and 29 are newly infected with HIV each and every year. The rate is even higher in the Black community.

And the government's efforts to contain HIV/AIDS may be cursed by its own success. And the CDC is saying that the numbers they're publishing right now are more like the numbers that you'd see in the '80s than the findings that you'd see in the '90s.

And like I was just saying, the CDC is saying that they may be cursed by their own success. CDC analysts are saying that new HIV infections have leveled off in America at about \$40,000 a year, and improved medicine allows AIDS patients to live longer and healthier lives. "People don't perceive that you get infected and die in two months anymore," said Phil Wilson, who is the executive director of the African-American AIDS Policy and Training Institute at the University of Southern California.

All these posters are around to say that you can climb mountains and do whatever with HIV and AIDS, it's really throwing people off, and there's not enough message about the price that you have to pay. And I'm willing to bet that in just about every minority community, you're going to be finding this.

Also among younger white folks, you're also going to be finding kids who think that my generation, the pre-Stonewall and just after Stonewall, the pre-AIDS generation of gay men, that we had, quote, all the fun, because we were able to have all this unprotected sex without any consequence and everything. Well, there were a lot of consequences, especially in the early '80s. And the virus can hide for 10, 15 years before it gets noticed.

CHRIS ARASIN: And part of the fact of talking about the posters that show all the people who are taking the AIDS drugs and are improving that, I believe San Francisco recently passed an ordinance banning some of those ads because they don't show the true picture of AIDS.

BIG ROY: Also, I would like to remind our listeners that it was Chris here in one of his very early news reports when he first joined the *News and Views* segment, Chris, who alerted us to these bareback clubs that he stumbled across on the web.

CHRIS ARASIN: Oh yeah, there were some articles coming out about them. And it's just amazing, seeing how far this unfortunately has gone back to people thinking that it's curable, there's no problem, there's no risks.

BIG ROY: And while we have all these so-called miracle drugs, folks, everybody's body chemistry is different, and the miracle drug that's keeping one person alive may not be good for you. And frankly, there may not be any funding to give it to you for free.

CHRIS ARASIN: Oh Yes. The Navy discharges more seamen. Jimmy not paying attention.

BIG ROY: I know, that one just passed right on by Jimmy, and he's just waving at us.

CHRIS ARASIN: I'm going to start using the seven words. That got a reaction. "The number of military personnel discharged for homosexual conduct or stating their homosexuality rose by 17% last year to the highest total in years," the Pentagon reported on Friday.

The Army's total more than doubled, while the Air Force had 50% declined. In all, 1,200 members of the Armed Services were discharged during the 2000 fiscal year that ended last September 30th. That compared with 1,034 the year before and 11,145 the year before that.

Of last year's totals, all but 106 discharges were cases in which military members stated their homosexuality. Others were discharged for homosexual acts. The military permits homosexuals to serve as long as they do not engage in homosexual conduct or state their sexual preference.

The Pentagon gave this breakdown by service-- Army, 573 total discharges up from 271. All but 35 were troops who stated their homosexuality. The rest of the people, the Army said, engaged in homosexual conduct.

The Navy had 358 total discharges, up from 314. All but 42 were for homosexual statements. Air Force, 177 total discharges, down from 352. 19 of those were for homosexual statements. And the Marine Corps had 104 total discharges up from 97, and all but 10 of them were for making statements that they were homosexual.

So basically, it looks like it's the Air Force that's the queer haven. No wonder we have so many flight attendants and pilots.

BIG ROY: OK, a gay veteran's group unveiled a monument to remember gay service members killed in combat. That happened just this past weekend, which was Memorial Day weekend. And this past Sunday, there was a ceremony that was attended by veterans in uniform, the mother of a Navy serviceman beaten to death at age 23 for being gay, and the color guard carrying the rainbow banner that symbolizes Gay Pride.

The activists who pushed for the monument in this desert city just south of Palm Springs says it is the first of its kind. "It's a turn-of-the-century event," said Dennis Pope a former air force staff sergeant who served in Vietnam. I hope for this, but you could never have thought that it would become a reality in the '70s, '80s, or '90s. It's fabulous.

And I am reminded of an army sergeant whose name escapes me right now. But he was a Vietnam vet, and he was discharged for being gay. And he said, they gave me two medals for killing men and kicked me out because I loved one.

CHRIS ARASIN: I don't recall his name. But actually, he didn't say that. Well, he said that, but it's also engraved on his tombstone. And probably someone is calling in to tell us who that was.

BIG ROY: OK.

CHRIS ARASIN: The harassment of gays is part of the daily routine at schools. Homophobic slurs are commonplace at schools across the nation, interfere with students' education, and are too often ignored by campus administration according to a new study.

The Human Rights Watch Hatred in the Hallways report was released on Wednesday and was based on research interviews in seven states with 140 students and 130 teachers, school administrators, counselors, and parents. Houston is a part of this survey, as the director of HATCH, Carol--

BIG ROY: Petrillo?

CHRIS ARASIN: I forget. Her last name escapes me on that one-- was interviewed for this as well as other Texas teens. Among the study's findings were that gay youth who described homophobic slurs as part of the normal daily routine often worried about getting safely to and from school, avoiding hallways and cut class when other students were present to avoid slurs and shoves.

School officials often condone harassing behavior through inaction or because they harbor anti-gay beliefs. And only five states-- California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Wisconsin have enacted laws that explicitly prohibit harassment or discrimination against gay and lesbian students, and there is no federal law that prohibits anti-gay harassment at school. If you want to get more information on this study produced by the Human Rights Watch or purchase a copy of the report or read it online, you can go to their website at www.hrw.org.

BIG ROY: OK, moving right along now from Gerald McNeil, who's president of the Colt45. We have this hot off the computer. "Greetings on behalf of our active and honorary special members along with our executive board. I would like to extend a warm welcome to join us on June 15th and 17th as we celebrate 25 years of community service.

The Colt45 celebrate with a run every five years or so. Please join us for running registration on Friday the 15th at 8:00 PM at our home bar, the Brazos River Bottom, BRB. Through your support, the Colt45 has given over \$1 million to the Houston community to fund breast cancer and HIV/AIDS service and prevention. Attached to our website, colt45.org, is a run registration form.

You can complete and mail to the address in the form or complete and bring with you for registration. If by chance, you cannot join us for this fabulous weekend, your donation to one of our funds will be gratefully acknowledged.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me anytime. We would appreciate if you wish to send a special invitation to everyone you know. Our run is open to all our brothers and sisters. And if you'd like more information on the Colt45s, call me right after the news because I will have the phone number for the Colt45s in our back lobby there and also the phone number for the BRB.

CHRIS ARASIN: The Transgender Task Force for HIV/AIDS and Health Issues has been established. They're currently meeting every other Tuesday at the health department for two hours. The next meeting is on June 5th. They need volunteers. Do you want to make a difference, and do you care about transgender issues? Can you spare two to three hours a week, enjoy discussing sex?

Well, they all are welcome. At this point, they have completed a presentation and brochures, and they need outreach. And we also have a needs assessment survey, and they need a lot more to get completed, and so they're asking for volunteers.

We need members of the F to M community to join us, we also need a member of the intersex community to join us, and we also need folks who are involved in the drag community to join us. For more information, contact Brenda Thomas at the Transgender Outreach Project city of Houston Health Department, HIV prevention. The number is 7137949113.

BIG ROY: I also want to mention, unfortunately, that a former member of the court, Buddy Thompson's father, he passed away this past afternoon. And services for Buddy Thompson's father will be on Sunday, June 3rd, at the Howard Glendale funeral home at 10:15 Federal Road beginning at 2:00 PM. Also want to mention that Tom Browning's mother, another member of the court, she passed away this past week. So you might want to give him your condolences, as well.

Now, down in Galveston, the CATS, which is the Community Awareness for Transgender Support, has opened a small halfway house in Galveston for transgenders who would otherwise be homeless. The facility has been up and running since mid-February of this year. If you would like more information on this, go ahead and give me a call here at the station at 7135265738, 713526-KPFT.

CHRIS ARASIN: Don't forget, Euphonia, an evening of acoustic music to benefit the gay and lesbian switchboard of Houston featuring Kristi Ray and Joel Stein, this will be happening on Friday, June 15th, at Bocados Restaurant and Bar, 1312 West Alabama. That is from 8:30 to 11:00 PM, and a donation is requested at the door.

This is an official Houston Pride 2001 event. Euphonia aims to increase awareness of the Switchboard Houston, recruit new volunteers, and increase the Switchboard's base of community support. For more information on the Switchboard, you can call them at 7135293211. For information on the event, contact Tracy Diskin at 7135226287.

BIG ROY: OK, I'd like to remind you of an upcoming event, the PFLAG monthly meeting of Gay Couples in a Straight World. And it's going to be later on today, Sunday at 2:00 PM at the Christ Church Cathedral. Gay Couples in a Straight World is a topic for panel presentation of gay and lesbian couples.

Following the program, small groups will meet for discussion. Small groups are the heart of a PFLAG meeting. In addition to our regular small groups for parents, gays, lesbians, transgenders, and friends, there are also two special groups-- a Latin group for Spanish-speaking people and a spouses group for those who have concerns with a gay spouse. Please remember, PFLAG facilitators are not therapists.

For directions to PFLAG meetings, you can contact them at pflaghouston.org, meetings, .htm. And you can also call them at 71346-PFLAG. OK, and that's all the time we have for this week's edition of *After Hours News and Views*. For Jimmy, Chris, I'm Big Roy. Thanks for listening.

CHRIS ARASIN: If you want to send us news, information, love mail, hate mail--

BIG ROY: Dirty pictures.

CHRIS ARASIN: --you can email us at afterhourskpft@hotmail.com.

BIG ROY: OK, folks, and thanks for listening, and who knows what kind of craziness we'll have next week for *After Hours News and Views*?

WOMAN: Mary Smith Hughes does not advocate drug use.

JIMMY CARPER: You're listening to KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. We're *After Hours*, Queer Radio with Attitude. And that is *Proud*. I'm going to keep that in the background. That's *Proud* off of the *Queer as Folk* soundtrack done by Heather Small. It's a great song, really is a really great song.

CHRIS ARASIN: I guess we have to mention that it's *Queer as Folk*, the USA version. There's five *Queer as Folk* music CDs that are out there.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh my god.

CHRIS ARASIN: British 1, which has two CDs; British 2, which has two CDs; and the American one that just came out. This is one of my favorite ones from that.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, it's really a great song, and a wonderful song to introduce a Pride segment.

CHRIS ARASIN: Yes, on the next generation show here, we're going to be talking about Pride. This is the beginning of the Pride month of June and 32nd anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. And we've got with us Jack Valinski with Pride committee.

JIMMY CARPER: And part of the last generation. You are the executive director, are you not?

JACK VALINSKI: Yes, I'm the executive director of the board. We have six board members, including me, and then we have about a total of about 30 people on the committee this year. I'm just overwhelmed, still trying to remember people's names. I am very, very, incredibly lucky to have some of the most fabulous, hardworking, dedicated, passionate people working on this committee.

And I just got to tell you that we don't sit around the table fighting. We certainly exchange ideas and have different opinions and stuff like that, but I have a group of people on this committee who just do a fabulous job into putting things together.

CHRIS ARASIN: Is this more than you've had in past years?

JACK VALINSKI: More than ever. It's still a struggle. I'm not going to say that I just sit up there in that office and tell people what to do. They usually tell me what to do. But over the years, we keep on building this momentum, and we keep finding people who do an incredible job. This year we're bringing back the festival.

And we solve the problem on doing the parade and getting people out by putting it at night. Well, now we're going to go back and try to get the festival back up and going. And person named Jeffrey Neves who came from Atlanta and saw the way festivals are supposed to be done, they have an incredible festival in Atlanta. We brought some of the ideas back, and we're going to do that on the 24th on Sunday, the day after the parade from 1:00 to 7:00 at the garden in the heights, Shirley Knight from the Women's Festival.

And that's another thing in this community. We always sometimes talk about-- we don't have the volunteers. People are interested. They don't do this. They don't do that. But sometimes, if you just ask people for help--

Shirley Knight, who's been doing the Women's Festival for a number of years, very successful, incredible event. Last fall, we said, can you help us? Can you just give us some ideas? And she told us everything she knew. And hopefully, we will learn from some of her past experiences and make it work right. And originally, we were going to make the tickets a little bit higher price, but we brought the price down because we want people to be there.

CHRIS ARASIN: Oh yeah, it's great to have so many organizations like that who have put on large events, the Women's Festival, and so much in Houston, that we can be able to tap those resources.

JACK VALINSKI: Yes, and when you say Pride, everybody pretty much thinks about the parade where we have 150,000 people out there watching it, thousands of people putting it together, and stuff like that. But Pride is also these little events that an organization will put on that may only have five or 10 people, and what we try to do is help promote that and let people know about it, that this is an incredibly diverse community and that we have all aspects.

Just like this year we have been so incredibly lucky on putting together this Pride magazine. Our only problem now is that we can't keep enough of them out there. Ken Donnelly, whose concept and working with the company, and the fact that it didn't cost us a dime to put this thing together, because in the years past, when we'd try to do it, we'd lose money.

We felt that we had to do it. We had to get the word out. But being able to work with this national company-- and not only did we put together the Houston content of it, but the national content, we had some say on how it was going to do, the cover, all of this type of stuff. And we worked with the other cities that did this, and it was a cooperative effort.

CHRIS ARASIN: When this came out, I'm looking at it. To ship this to somebody would be a fortune. It's almost like a Vogue inside. It is a huge publication. And to go through and see the artwork, and especially the pictures from the last Pride parade, to see where we've been with this, especially the articles on there with people in the community of the theme of this year's pride parade, of what it means to them, going as far as some of the hatchlings who contributed to that. GiGi's in there from the first half of the segment.

Everyone thinks it's this one vision we have in the gay community, and only the white gay men speak for everyone. And you see a wide range of what the spectrum is of our community is.

JACK VALINSKI: Well, I am very lucky enough that we have this committee that is really dedicated. And I've got to be honest, our committee isn't as diverse as it needs to be, and we are trying very desperately to make it more diverse. But the people who are in the committee are very committed to try to show the diversity in the community, try to help spotlight those things that not everybody knows about.

And Ken just did a fabulous job of trying to do this. And he'd sometimes say, well, if you know somebody from this or somebody from that, and I just help point him into the direction, and he would go after it. And he did just a great job in putting that together, and I'm incredibly proud of the fact that they did that and did it in such great professionalism.

And like I said, after putting this thing together and getting it out earlier than it's ever been put out there, his toughest job was just distributing it, going through the community. And every time we put it in the bars, that night, they're gone. And you only can put so many out because there's only so much room on where they put these publicly. Yes, exactly.

CHRIS ARASIN: And I remember last year, you were commenting about the Pride guide from last year, that you had so many of them left over. You were putting two of them in a trash can to hold them from people, keep the trash cans from floating away. And this year they're just flying off the shelves, and the racks, wherever these are going. This is something people are taking and hopefully keeping onto for the information and resource in there.

JACK VALINSKI: Well, years ago, when I used to watch the New Year's Day Parade, Tournament of Roses parade and stuff like that, they'd always interview the people behind the scenes and say, well, when do you start planning for next year? And they'd say, tomorrow. Well, we really start planning before the end of the first year.

And last year, we had-- you don't always see the behind the scenes, that things don't always go as smoothly as you'd hope they would. Well, we were working with a different national company last year, and everything that went right this year went wrong last year. It got here later than it was supposed to and et cetera, et cetera, all these things that happened.

But we're also lucky that a number of the people on the committee stay more than one year. And hopefully, we don't burn them out too much, is that we learn from our mistakes, and we learn from what didn't go right last year to try to incorporate it for this year.

And every once in a while, we'd get a call a week before the parade or a week before stuff starts and say, oh, I want to do this, I want to do this. And I say, well, maybe we can't do it this year because the plans are already there, but surely, we want to talk about doing it next year. because

CHRIS ARASIN: The ball has progressed over the years, when we started the original planning. And then to have it continue on, and actually, some other venues have used the same ball, haven't they?

JACK VALINSKI: Yes, now, we don't own the ball. And part of what we do is we've got crazy people in this community. And I feel very lucky that we've been able to work with the crazy people, and these crazy people, including me.

You have to have the people with the ideas, but you also have the people that do the stuff. And Lee Harrington, who is crazy, absolutely certifiably crazy, and it's redundant to say Crazy Lee Harrington, came up with some of these ideas. But he helped us to be able to follow through with those ideas.

The whole idea of the Night Parade, that was incredibly controversial. We didn't know if it was going to work. We always thought that we needed to move the parade to the spring or the fall. But in the city, so many other stuff happened at that time. We'd be competing with those things.

And then to take pride away from the time that it happened in New York, that last weekend in June for a major city such as Houston, would not have worked. We realize that now it would not have worked. But we also realized the afternoon Sunday parade was not working. The crowds were getting smaller, and smaller, and smaller. And doing this idea that was completely crazy. We didn't know if it would work.

This is a city where people get in their cars and will drive across the street from one event to another. And I've seen it happen. Would they come out for a night parade? And they did. And it took us two years to convert from the day parade to the night parade, because we really wanted to make sure everybody knew about it, and we wanted to make sure that the businesses were on board with it. And at first, there were people who were just totally against it. It's not going to work. But it did.

CHRIS ARASIN: That was the first-- I wasn't able to go to the Daytime Parades because that was right before I came out. My first time going to the parade was the first nighttime, watching Jimmy and his pink sequins outfit there, which thankfully remains in his closet next to his dignity.

But I didn't get to experience all the daytime events, especially the festival I heard so much about. And now that it's coming back the day after, I look forward to that, to seeing the culture part of it.

I always thought about the Pride Parade as what you see usually on the 700 Club. They always throw those two guys in the leather and in the denim pants with a leather vest, no shirt there, looking like '70s porn stars just kissing up on the float. And it's evolved more from that, just, well, porn on wheels.

JACK VALINSKI: Because some of us have been doing this for a long time. There's all these different elements of the community that you don't want to hide. You don't want to tell them, you can't be in the parade. And we have been very successful in trying to incorporate all these different things in the parade and that nobody was not welcome.

And that has taken-- and I'm not saying we're perfect on it. We certainly make our mistakes. But at the same time, the community is all these different elements. And luckily enough, the media, the mass media, the non-gay media, has over the years realize that we're all of this. And they have done better in showing the different aspects of the parade.

Two years ago, it was a disco ball, and they did an incredible job. That was our trademark, but we wanted to let people know we're more than just this disco ball in this party. The same thing with the parade. The parade is the biggest party. It's the biggest pride event in the Southwest. And the parade is the second largest parade in the city.

And Larry Bagneris, who helped start it, doing the parade back in '79-- it was the first year the parade was done-- he tells a story that when he first went down to get the parade permit and worked with the Houston Police Department, there is one officer that said to him, what's a nice little Mexican like you getting involved with a group like this?

And it is involved now when we sit down with the cops every year, the HPD, that it's like, how can we help you? How can we make this work better? They realize that this is an event that's not just for our community, but the entire city goes out, and celebrates, and have a good time, that the city recognize us, that we also bring people in from other cities, that this is a tourist event, that people come and spend money, and our money is just as good as everybody else's money.

CHRIS ARASIN: Oh yeah, and the fact I think that the event is so organized, and we haven't had problems that you may see at other parades around the country. You get a large group of people like that together, and you have fears of different ideologies-- I just butchered that word-- different points of view, that you don't know what's going to start attention. But here's something. We get protesters who come in, usually two hours before the parade starts, and are gone before the first car comes down the road.

JACK VALINSKI: Well, we measure our success by the protesters. And the strange fact is they have to bus them in from 150 miles away from the city of Houston. And also, working with the police department, they have been nothing but professional. It costs us about \$1,200, \$1,300 for parade permits. And years ago, we used to get it for free, plead poverty.

Well, now that we've grown this big, we can't, and we need to pay our fair share. But at the same time, that \$1,300 does not pay for the 80 police officers that they put on duty that evening. And I'm not going to say everything is perfect. Occasionally, we have a little incident here and there. But overall, they are nothing but professional in the way they cordon off those protesters.

And also, pretty much the group that's in the parade, we try to talk to and say, we've got to respect people's differences, not only our different groups within the community but the fact that there's protesters out there. They have a right to be there. And you're not going to change their minds. Just try to ignore them.

And the reality is that by the time the parade starts, they're tired. They've been there all day. And the adrenaline doesn't kick in for the rest of us. And the parade just starts. We're all just having a great time.

And that's the important thing. It is a great time, but it is this incredible political statement, that we're walking. We're taking over the streets of our community, and those are our streets.

CHRIS ARASIN: Yeah, that's one thing. Shortly after I started going to the Pride Parade, my brother asked, why are you holding it down there in the Montrose area? Why isn't it downtown like every other parade we have here in Houston?

And I had to sit there and tell my straight brother that, well, we're celebrating a rebellion at a gay bar, protesting a police action, and we're down there in our community, in our neighborhood. The Pride banner, the rainbow flag banners that went up the last week, wasn't it--

JACK VALINSKI: Yes.

CHRIS ARASIN: --to mark off our area? And it's a growing community. We have so many different points of view of people who are coming into the community, who aren't necessarily gay. They just like the wonderful housing that we used to have in some places and are preferring the tacky townhomes that we have up now.