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parade, pride, year, community, people, call, houston, thought, committee, day, work, gay, talk, event, volunteers, grand marshal, part, realize, caucus, great

SPEAKERS

Gary Norman, Jewel Gray

J Jewel Gray 00:01

For images of a frank or sensitive nature that may be considered objectionable by some listener discretion is advised.

∅ 00:37

Oh yes, you've tuned into after hours queer radio with attitude right here on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. The crew of after hours is ready to bring you news interviews, dialogue and music geared for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people and their friends. Hear it after hours. We may be diverse, but we have one thing in common. We are all out of the closet and urge everyone to come out of their closet. That means standing up for yourself taking responsibility for your own life, and being proud of who you are. Realistically, we know not everyone can do that because of age job or frame of mind. That's okay, we're here for you too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of after hours.

∅ 02:00

had low Houston.

J Jewel Gray 02:02

That was good. That was very good. That was very good. That was not Jim Carper. That was Jim Vaughn. And this is Jewel gray and we welcome you this evening to the 166,000

∅ 02:19

Oh, it's the you know, January. What is it is the 16th now 617 617 Because

J

Jewel Gray 02:26

it's already the seventh edition. Well, that's right. Whatever.

♂

02:32

He always says the data to front to well, he's

J

Jewel Gray 02:34

not here tonight folks and doing the Hawaii thing. Probably. Honestly, surfboard. No. Well, we're jealous. So we're gonna talk about how I got my car. Did you get your card? I get a card every year. He's so sweet. Yes, me a card. One time he sent me a card about 10 guys lined up at a beach all butts up. Yeah. I thought was great. Well, do we have a cancellation or

♂

03:06

not? No. It says Jack Wolinsky is the is the lot that was in the lobby. Okay. Sure. Well, I kind of scooped that. Well, yeah. Yeah. We all knew Jack was going to be here tonight.

J

Jewel Gray 03:20

That's right. That's right. A big deal for me, because he got on the internet one day and, and offered me the pride committee. Newsletter, the pride committee of Houston newsletter. And I replied with. Yeah, I'll take that. Will you come on the show? And he said, Yes. So I said, Great.

♂

03:40

Well, he can come on in anytime. Anytime. That we I don't know if we have Nancy with us tonight.

J

Jewel Gray 03:45

Now that would be nice, wouldn't it? Yeah. But no, Nancy? No, Jim. So you have to hang on. Hang with us tonight. You know, you were talking earlier back to a movie. Was it Gods and Monsters Gods and Monsters, Gods and Monsters topping? Tell me some more about that thought that was funny.

♂

04:03

Well, it's about the Director of Corporate Well, we've already talked about it before, but it's about the director of Frankenstein and The Bride of Frankenstein Right? And the fact that he is

about the director of Frankenstein and the bride of Frankenstein right? And the fact that he is at his advanced to yours and such. And he's but he's still pretty horny old man. And he would have he would have these young reporters come over, ask him questions. And he would say, Well, okay, for every question I answer, you had to remove an article of clothing.

J Jewel Gray 04:33

That kind of guy. Sounds like one of those Kellogg Mets.

04:37

Yeah. And then he suffered a stroke and, and in his mind would not shut off. It would just keep, you know, we'd go 100 miles an hour all the time. Then in the past would just come flooding back and then and then he wouldn't remember what he said three minutes ago. You know, and it's just steadily getting worse and worse and worse. And

J Jewel Gray 04:58

well, I want to see that you said they did some good makeup.

05:01

Oh, yeah, yeah, that one's gonna it's gonna take some awards, I think. Yeah, definitely will.

J Jewel Gray 05:05

Well, I want to see that one. That's why I wanted to add it to Greenway. Yeah, anyway, I want to see that when I'm just not paying off enough. I'm gonna make effort of it.

05:14

Yeah, cuz that's one that's not out there. Just everywhere, but it's definitely at the Greenway. Well, that's

J Jewel Gray 05:19

one to catch. And there was something else I want to talk about. Oh, yeah. I want to just briefly here we got a letter. Oh, yes. No self portrait here. And it was from I believe, this is Roger. I think this is Roger. Who's a guest of the state? I'm not sure where, but it gets to the state somewhere. And Roger thinks I work for the prison system as they're out there. Because I've said a couple of times, and I work for the state. Roger, I do not work for the prison system. And we really appreciate your letter. And we specially got a charge out of your self portrait. Did you have to use every inch of the paper? Is that really? Is that really? Roger?



06:08

I think you just put it on the paper and just drew



J Jewel Gray 06:11

it Outland around it. Well, Roger, you would win contest here telling you. But I wanted to assure you, Roger that we really appreciate hearing from you. And that I did not work for the prisons. Yeah.



06:27

If you don't work for the prison system. You work for the school.



J Jewel Gray 06:30

That's right. That's correct. That's it. There you go. Those are the two you work for I work for the school. But you know, I was going to talk to Nancy, I hope she comes in. I was going to talk to her about doing a piece for the triangle. Have you anybody everybody seen the new triangle? The format is really cool. Remember, she was talking about last time?



06:47

Oh, yeah. And we had that. The Poland? Yeah. That was here.



J Jewel Gray 06:53

Donna Garrett is on it. Yeah.



06:54

And she's that was the Yeah, that was the triangle, which I'm sure was Yeah. So she's on the cover there.



J Jewel Gray 07:02

Sure was. And you know, Nancy's doing the feature editing there. So I thought I'd you know, try to smooth smoother a little bit and see if I couldn't get



07:10

there. Michelle, working her way in here for some reason or another as she went to my con. Is that it? What, okay, hold on. Let me find you.

G

Gary Norman 07:22

I think that I think I'm here. Yeah, I hear you. I went out to get the papers and stuff. So I was listening on the way out and back. Just wanted to mention about gotcha monster set up for three Golden Globe Awards. In McKellar, he's the one who plays Jimmy Well, Jimmy well was lucky only out really out. gay man in Hollywood at the time. Wow. And in addition, in McKellar was one of the first big British actors to come out in England,

J

Jewel Gray 07:59

and then be knighted. Yes.

G

Gary Norman 08:03

Lynn Redgrave Payne Hannah, and she's up for Best Supporting Actress.

J

Jewel Gray 08:10

Oh, yeah. Before that was Lynn Redgrave.

G

Gary Norman 08:13

Yeah, and she actually is still open. And still, you know, nice tight skin and everything else. And she just did a fantastic.

H

08:23

I couldn't find ways is rather well, she's just

G

Gary Norman 08:27

body bigger. Yes. dowdy and wide, and all that kind of stuff. Oh, they're

J

Jewel Gray 08:32

being generous here.

G

Gary Norman 08:36

Yeah, I knew. When I saw it, I knew that she she was putting Hannah. I mean, I had read all about what, what part she was paying and why, you know, and all that. And I couldn't find her on the screen. I mean, I looked and looked. And

J

Jewel Gray 08:50

so she's at first award to best,

G

Gary Norman 08:53

our best support in that case, as is the movie for best movie. Great. And it was all written and directed by Bill Condon. And the different anyone who wants to know that was gay. And also the executive producer was Clive Barker. Wow. Yeah. I

○

09:12

mean, I expected you know, hell racer to come. Because sticking something in there, you know, forcing stuff.

G

Gary Norman 09:20

Let me go out and we're coming up, but I just thought I'd mentioned this movie. I thought it was fantastic. Go see it. It's at the Greenway Plaza theaters.

J

Jewel Gray 09:29

Well, there you have it. You can't have a better review of a movie.

○

09:32

Yeah, that's. It was. Yeah, it's quite good.

J

Jewel Gray 09:35

I have a review of something else. Oh 98.5. Another radio station. Way down the aisle. That's right. kind of far from us. Actually, not that far. Still in the 90s. Got a new format as of January one from what I understand. And it's that old disco once you call

○

09:55

it? The Wacka Jo funky stuff

J Jewel Gray 09:59

that I will say Given these Barbarella music, you know, Wacka Wacka Wacka that Barbarella music. It's great. A lot of disco Yeah, yeah, like a lot of disco. I guess that's what I live

♀ 10:12

for ring my bell.

J Jewel Gray 10:13

I've heard that several times.

♀ 10:15

I hate that song with a passion. I mean, I've never been so tired of a song

J Jewel Gray 10:21

acing. Yeah, yeah, they had. They do have they, they are repeating a lot, but it's kind of fun to listen to. And like we said earlier, I mean, they have a limited amount of stuff to work with.

♀ 10:32

Maybe that's what I got those. I'm tired of it. I heard it all back band. Together go

J Jewel Gray 10:37

over those what we who were who lived? who lived during that time called the forgettable years? Or forgotten years? Really? Yes. You got something going right there. What's that?

♀ 10:51

Driving blind. Just put some stuff in here. Maybe we can get some people shuffled in here and stuff while the music is on. And all that nifty business art number. If you want to call up big Roy and you know, shoe is here for a little bit. is sending to a 713 because you had to add that now. That's right. 713-526-5738. And oh, yeah, this is KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station. I already missed that, didn't I?

J Jewel Gray 11:20

Oh, that's right. But you got it within the half hour. Hey.

11:27

So we'll do that and come right back with Jack. Hopefully, hopefully.

11:39

And that was the tune cold fly from driving blind on the self titled disc and with us is Jewel gray. Yeah, it's on to

J Jewel Gray 11:51

clip. That's right. And I'm sitting here with Jack Alinsky. Someone that

11:57

is is a real strange seat for me. I bet because you're usually over there, aren't you? Oh, no, actually, I'm usually here. Oh, really? Yeah. You said you. And Leo Robinson now runs the board. So I, I've got a little bit easier now.

J Jewel Gray 12:09

Well, I've never run the board. And they could never teach me I've never run the board. I've always had to have somebody here. And I'm always grateful for that somebody.

12:18

Well, I don't know if most of our listeners know. But we actually do have some really good equipment here. And the building itself is falling apart. But the equipment and the fact that we're in College Station, and I guess there's going to be an announcement about something happening in Galveston Corsi, you know, which I guess officially can't talk about, because I don't really know. But, you know, this was the first time I've ever been on after hours. Well, yeah,

J Jewel Gray 12:46

it was quite quite exciting for me when you connected with me? And I thought, well, here's an opportunity, I'll just answer Jimmy's away. Right? Well, I, we I was not aware he was going to be away this time. And he was looking forward to seeing where I'm listening. Listen to the tape.

I'm sure he will many times probably just to see what I'm gonna do. Well, Jack, I asked you to come on. Because, you know, when it's always been something that I've thought about in the back of my mind, I just told you. And I tell everybody, if I had to list the 10 top people in the city who influenced the direction, the gay lesbian movement, here in Houston, I would put your name at the very, at least the top five. And you know, there would be Ray Hill and his activism. And you know what, I think you would probably be twice second then

13:36

Ray is definitely one of my mentors. And of course, nice Parker, you know, I actually ran, we ran against each other for board position. I remember a caucus and I lost and I think we're all better off for it. Because the nice is doing a wonderful job and I'm proud of her even even to distract. You know, her enemies, I think are admiring her. The enemies of our community are admiring what a good job she's

J Jewel Gray 13:58

doing. She's doing an excellent job, and I will be there recording next time too. So yeah, you were saying earlier that you were kind of an odd seat. Now I realize I just my mind wasn't clicking that you don't often have people interview you. You were usually sitting on the other seat interviewing people. That's true. As far as Yeah, that's what I was. Well, I was just clicking. That's about two minutes too late. But the thing that interests me about Jack Wolinsky, the person was that I knew that you were intimately connected with the prime committee, and that it was probably if you don't have any children like a child to

14:40

you. No two ways about it. It definitely is. When I first moved to Houston about I moved here the day Kathy wittmeyer was elected to office happened to be there. And I wasn't involved in the community. I wasn't really out. I wasn't out actually. And I started listening to this radio station listening to this guy named Ray Hill, always Talking Off mic. And I thought, well, maybe the only thing I can do is come down here and run the board because that's what I did professionally. I worked for radio station behind the scenes. And as I was doing as I started to get involved in Wildenstein, at the time, there was a lot of talk about the Political Caucus, the gay Political Caucus at that time. And at that time, the gay Political Caucus was really the people who put on the pride celebration, right. And this was in like, 1982, I started getting involved in the celebration in the parade. And I started doing the press relations. And we actually in those early days, and in the early 80s, we bought some airtime on some radio stations magic and way back then there used to be a station called Curley. And they almost didn't want to sell us time. And basically, it was just like, come out and celebrate because this is a wonderful celebration. And at that time, pride, gay lesbian pride, or gay pride, as it used to be called, was basically something that started up about February of each year, and would go on, and then in the early July, they would sort of sort of dissolve every year. And hopefully, they had a little bit of seed money to start up again the next year. I remember those years. And it was really tough. And I mean, we had some real battles over there in battles over whether the T shirts should say gay and lesbian out what a concept early, you know, the name of the group is gay and lesbian pride, and shouldn't your name be on the T shirts. The other side of the

argument, of course, was, well, we can sell more T shirts, and those T shirts be worn by people who aren't really out. And yet the activists were saying, yes, but we got to make that statement. Yeah, but we can sell more T shirts. So in fact, almost a one year, the entire group, except for Ray Hill resigned about two months before pride, because of the fight over what they should do and what they shouldn't do. So it's been a real interesting history. And it's been a real interesting struggle about getting money, about trying to keep the community together on this. And of course, actually, I guess pride in Houston sort of really started in 1977, with a Anita Hill March. Now, I wasn't here at the time. But I've been reading some history about it. And of course, every time you talk to Ray Hill, it gets a little bit richer over the history of what how this place was. And of course, when you look back back, it always looks like the good old days, but in reality, it wasn't always the good. That was here. It was tough, because people weren't afraid to we're afraid to be involved. And of course, you know, we had a lot of addictions. And we still do, of course, but you'd go to some of these meetings, and you'd almost be begging people to do something. And somebody would say, Oh, I'll do this. And they may not have any experience with it, which, you know, never stopped us from something because sometimes if you don't know your limitations, you don't know what you can't do, right. But as time went on, there were three things that really affected pride in the community. One, of course, was the economy that went really sour release. The other thing, of course, was a referendum, where we lost so badly, like 80 to 20, extra, I think it was C Yeah, 81 to 19%, where we lost that when, when it was voted on that and of course, AIDS. So those three things really sort of tore this community apart. And of course, in the long run, I mean, we lost a lot of people because of AIDS and HIV, but we've also sort of built a better community, for those who are around here. And it also, I think, really brought the women and men together in this community, because, boy, we couldn't have done it without you all. And it was tough. And I mean, there was times when they were saying, you know, should we really even have a parade? Because remember those years? No question. It's like, you know, this is a celebration. And, you know, I never was really a person to be like a party person. I'm much more of an organizer and a propagandist, I guess, of putting things together. But the parade and the celebration really has a lot more to do than just be a celebration. It's really an affirm nation. It's letting people go, know that we're out there. And I usually, I stole this, this thing from Ray Ray used to go around to everyone that contingents before the parade started. And I've sort of taken that role. And what we do is we basically thank everybody for being part of the parade. We tell people you know that to be when the parade starts in your in going through the parade, smile, let everybody know that we're very happy community. And that there may be somebody looking, you know, two blocks away who's afraid to be in the front line at the parade, who, you know, don't realize that, you know, this is our community. And of course, there's cameras out there too, and let them know that we're, you know, a good community. Doing Wildenstein, the first march in Austin in 1989. We came back and open up the phone lines, which we don't usually do on on my show. And we had some people calling

J

Jewel Gray 19:56

it's okay, we talk about your show a lot. That's why it isn't

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19:59

nice. Shall I was just I'm just trying to make it a little easier because it used to be called Wildenstein. And now it's called lesbian and gay voices. But at that time, after we came back from Austin, we opened up the phone lines. And we had a two young people, one female and

one male calling and saying, you know, we didn't realize there was a community out there until, as we were marching with 25,000 other people. And we turned me that corner onto Congress Avenue. And everywhere we looked, we saw gay and lesbian

J Jewel Gray 20:26

capital. And it was just, it was right to donate

♂ 20:30

them call on the radio and talk about it was just incredible. And we just sort of sat back back and said, We did our job,

J Jewel Gray 20:39

right and reach the ones that we need to reach. And,

♂ 20:42

you know, as wonderful as the internet is, and it is wonderful. And as wonderful as so many of the organizations in the community are hatch, and all those other organizations, this is still needed. Radio is still needed, because it's an outreach and, and that's what the parade is, it's an outreach to the community. And it's maybe a little bit less important as it was in the earlier days, because it was the one time of the year. And you know, the wonderful cops used to love to raid the bars either before Pride Week, before elections, almost religious. And what it really did was it just got the community cold. And people don't realize and I really wasn't part of it, then either that people would be arrested in the bars and they would just come in and you know, pull people over for PII, which is

J Jewel Gray 21:27

a bunch of people, I was standing in front of mirrors when they pulled down everybody one day.

♂ 21:30

And that's such a subjective thing, PII public intoxication, and, you know, that stuff used to happen. And, you know, and before that, then, you know, a few years before that people's names will be published in the paper, and they lose their jobs. And it's been a real tough struggle over the years. And maybe it's really interesting, because now in pride, we have this whole younger generation that's part of the committee and

J Jewel Gray 21:58

taking over. It's really, really good, because it's



22:01

like, we're saying, Well, we, we quit, we can't do this, because they're less like, well, we're gonna do it, we're gonna do it, nobody's gonna stop us. Although sometimes they don't always realize the history of the struggles we went through. And certainly the generation before me that went through those those incredible struggles. But as pride went on in the 80s, and we started to pick up as the economy got better, and we're starting to deal with AIDS and the political class get a little bit better. We have a nice Parker elected, we did a really, really strange thing about three years ago, we realized that the crowds are getting smaller, it's too hot out there. And it's miserable. The people, you know, who moved down here, we're not used to the heat, the people that lived down here were in the air conditioning all the time. So we had about three years ago, we decided, let's, let's think let's rethink this. It's going to take us about a year and a half, to figure out what we need to do. And we had a taskforce that I chaired. And we were looking at it, should we move it to the spring? Shall we move to the fall? Should we leave it where it is? Or should we do something completely crazy and try night parade? And I was totally against the idea, because of security, because of the insurance? Because of you know, can we even do it? Will the city even allow us to do it. And there is this crazy person out there, namely Harrington, and if you know if you've ever dealt with Lee Harrington, he's crazy. Lee will call you up on the telephone and go on for 10 or 15 minutes, or he'll leave a message on your machine for 10 or 15 minutes. But he wanted to do this because we saw some pictures of what they do in Sydney, Australia. They have down there what's called a gay Mardi Gras, which will be happening, I guess, in about a month because their seasons are reversed. And for some strange reason, I don't know why, when they decided to have a celebration, actually, I think it started out sort of as a riot, their parade and it had to be at night. And so they started this thing. And now it's the biggest event, not the biggest gay event, but it's the biggest event in Australia, the national television network that's known down there as ABC, this Australian Broadcasting Company, broadcast it live. And there are people that come from all over the world to be in that



Jewel Gray 24:09

parade that program on cable travelers. They sent those people down there to highlight it really? Yes. Oh, our program was really



24:17

great. And we've seen some pictures and being part of the International Association, I met with some of these people, we corresponded with them, and they gave us some really good advice. And, but but also, it's really interesting because pride in each city sort of reflects the way the city is unique. As always, there's been this thing from the days of Marian Coleman and Larry binaries and Ray Hill and some of the many other people they have always tried to have a very professional parade here, not a march, whereas it is in New York in San Francisco, but uh, put a parade and have the floats. And, you know, it's that influence from Sydney and the influence for New Orleans that we sort of, you know, did this night parade and it was a tremendous success. And, you know, I know I'm a little bit too close to the trees here sometimes and not

looking at the forest. But even my enemies and I do have some enemies. And this community came up to me and says it was an absolute thing. And the whole magic of it was 1997. Our first night parade was about 830. The parade starts at nine about 830, as I finishing my my propaganda speech to everybody, and we had protesters that year. And it was actually sort of an added attraction. They thought the parade was start at 2pm. And they were out there all day begging. And by the time and I told them, it is just as Yeah, she is wonderful. And basically, I said, just ignore them, because we're not going to change their mind. By the time the parade started, they sort of dispensed and realized there was nothing, you know, there's no way they're going to stop us or, or rain on our parade. But the magic happened about 830 Is it started to get dim and dark, and the float started lighting up. And it was just incredible. And we can't take all this credit, all the people on the pride committee can't take all the credit for the people who put the floats together. You know, we're sort of the producers, they're the stars. And the audience, of course, is the crowds out there. And And isn't it funny that you know, we decided to do the parade starts at nine o'clock and ends up at about 11. There's all these major TV stations that do not live news at that time. And, you know, we don't stage these things for the news media. But it's nice when it happens to be at the same time.

J

Jewel Gray 26:26

It really is. It's very, it was nice to see it because I came down here and watch the first part of that parade, and had to leave in the middle of it. And by the time I got home, I was watching the news, I guess it was the one o'clock version of the 10 o'clock news. And I saw the parade and it had a distinctly different feel about it. And when I was here, your right it was early. And it was starting to cool off. And when they started lighting up in line and started moving, I just there was just, I don't know, electricity went through me just a connection to like I was seeing it for the first time. Now of course it was dark, but it was like seeing it when I first saw it. That excitement, that connection. It kind of revitalized me. I felt really good afterwards. I was really sad. I had to leave but I've missed I've seen the what was it last year with Jimmy RIGHT. So it was Jimmy last year. It was Jimmy last year?

Ω

27:18

No, Jimmy two years ago, Jimmy was in the first nighttime parade as

J

Jewel Gray 27:22

the Grand Marshal. That's right. That's what I did. Who was it last year? Who was it last year?

Ω

27:29

The guy that was up with Jimmy Oh, man.

Ω

27:33

About button was Bob. Yes. Yes. And I should have this in front of me. But I don't.

Annotations have been kept intact after transcription

Sometimes those details just alter so many years.

J Jewel Gray 27:44

Well, I'll tell you grand marshal is one thing I was it's been always one of my things that I add to my, in my inside my edge personal resume was that I was once nominated to be Grand Marshal. That was a real big highlight for me. Just to be nominated. It was good because I've had this kind of respect for pride committee. I've been involved like we've been talking earlier. Just hit and miss I am ashamed to say. But where I had time and were things were available to me I could I could do and I did a few things. And that kind of involved that year. Some people I knew quite well, we're involved deeply and kind of got waylaid into doing this and that and kind of enjoyed it. So I've kind of touched it but never really been into it.

∅ 28:27

The people that do it the pride committee in the early years. Pride was its own organization sort of under the

J Jewel Gray 28:34

summit, just briefly limited remember to prime committee sounds like you know, usually when you hear committee, you got 10 or 12 people, this thing is really huge, isn't it?

∅ 28:42

Well, the way it's it is right now we have a board and there's about seven or eight people on the board. And the board is the one who makes sure that we have all the fiscal things and all the legal things and all that type of stuff. And the board works year round. Under the board is the committee that actually does the parade and the events surrounding it. Besides those events, there's a couple other things we do. We manage the lower Westheimer banner District, which is like one of the few in the city. So basically, if the rest time or street festival wants to put banners up there, they come through us. And the city gave it to us because we've been a lot we've have a longevity of doing things right and being you know, et cetera, et cetera. We also manage a mailing list of about 10 to 15,000. And we do a week a weekly calendar that is now on the Houston activist network, and eventually we're gonna get our homepage is sort of a little bit dormant right now we're gonna get back up, but we do those things, you know, including, you know, we have a 24 hour answering service that takes care of our phones. And so we're a very strong committee. During the day of the event, we have upwards of 100 volunteers and a A lot of this stuff was a struggle. But as we sort of got our bylaws and all that stuff sort of worked out, a lot of the other stuff fell into place. And what what really has worked out is that the people involved are very much not into titles, they very much sort of just do their work. And they sort of just have a really good time. And it just attracts more people to the committee.

J Jewel Gray 30:24

And, you know, what attracts me is that everybody seems to be having a good time. Absolutely. They are. They're really having

30:30

been out on a couple of those mailings. You know, with BioNet, all five of us, you know,

30:38

they're putting putting on a little stickers on all those mailings and everything, man, it's quite an operation.

30:44

But it you know, and this is something I learned from the caucus many, many years ago, the worst thing to do is have volunteers show up and nothing to do Oh, yeah, that's kissa do have to have it organized. And believe me, we haven't always done this, because believe me, there's been years that we've been on the the rallies about to go on, and this is missing it as missing and the committee is arguing with each other in front of the crowd. Well, we finally, you know, we finally figure out how not to do that. And we also have very responsible people that realize that these deadlines go on, for example, to put on the parade. And to put the pride guide together, there is an incredible calendar that that happens. And if you know somebody misses a couple of days, and there is some you know, of course, there's some fluff in in the calendar. But if people start missing their deadlines, it affects everybody else. So I'm doing a couple years and having the people who are responsible and professional and all that type of stuff is just incredible. The day of the parade, I remember watching one of our volunteers, you know, putting out the trash can smiling. And I thought, you know, this is really, really neat.

J Jewel Gray 31:52

This is the way it's supposed to be absolutely, absolutely. Well tell me. The reason I wanted you to come down here was to tell us a little bit about what, what pride was, when it was born. And kind of what pride is today, and maybe give us a little view of what you think pride committee will be doing in the future. I mean, surely, we can see growth in the parade and our committee and the organization and things that we'll be doing? Well, in the early

32:23

days, it was really part of the caucus. And one of the things that that we used to have is these wonderful rallies after the parade, my favorite and they were great. And the mayor used to show up, although she used you used to wait until 1030 After the TV cameras were gone. But what that that rally has sort of not it sort of fell apart. And we tried a couple of different things. Now that the parade ends at 1130, it's really, really tough to do it. And we're still dealing with the heat, if we do it earlier, or something like that. And Los Angeles and Long Beach have these incredible festivals that they raise upwards of half a million dollars that they put back into the

community, we can't even quite figure that out, we're going to try something if everything falls in place, we're going to try to have something near heb a little bit before and maybe after we're that hasn't been quite decided. But it from being that sort of organization that sort of you know, got together every year and hopefully we had a you know, this or that in 1991, we became our own organization, the pride committee of Houston nonprofit, and did all that type of stuff, we file our for our taxes and do all that type of stuff. So we've got the committee pretty well organized. And and basically, it's like people sort of start working the committee and then they move themselves up to the board. So that's there's that there's that longevity, and you know, I've been around maybe too long, but it works out because there's, you know, we have some history and stuff like that. So we're in good place right now. But really, to move forward, we're gonna have to hire some staff. I mean, we're not quite there yet. But the only way I mean, all this stuff is done volunteer. But you know, you look at something like the Thanksgiving Day Parade or the rodeo parade and all the people involved and putting that together we're skeleton compare that yet I think we put on just as good of an event. And that's something that needs to do. We have an office where the community center we this is so this is the second year that we've had an office and having an office is is really something because that's where you keep your records. That's where people show up to have committee meetings. And and the Community Center has been just a tremendous success. And I'm so proud of those people because, you know, it's sort of like this old gay house, and they're always working on it and trying to make it better. And we're so so happy to be there because they do everything to make it work for us. Where do we go in the future? I hope that we will be able to do things more year round and attract people and hopefully help foster some other cities. I mean, this year we went to Corpus they had their first parade and they call the Slike, the week before that was going on, they were so nervous and they were worried about this going on and that going on and, and the media and all this type of stuff. And, you know, we've been doing it for so long, and the media has sort of been used to us so that they're not there, you know, we do not discriminate in the parade, we want all parts of the community there, from the drag queens to the leather community to the log cabins, and all those people are there. And the media has finally realized that we just don't focus on one segment, we focus on the whole parade. And that's a success story in its own. And also we're no longer usually on the first page, we're sort of back in there with the events like any other parade, and that's that's success, too. And some of the other things we do is that, you know, when they're looking for a story, sometimes another year, they may call one of us because they know how to get a hold of us. And, you know, we may not be responding, but we may be able to help get the person to respond and helping other parts of the community out. Because what I always try to do, you know, between doing the radio show and the pride committee and working on a caucus list is just communicate, you know, spread the word that every one of us

J

Jewel Gray 36:09

is an ambassador. Absolutely,

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36:11

absolutely. And you know, we don't hide things either. I mean, we've made mistakes, and we try to fess up to them. And for example, one of the things this year that rainbow was really pushing for was the way we vote for grand marshals. And it used to be you had to come into a couple of meetings, and then you had to be at a meeting to vote. There's no absentee voting.

And some people says, you know, this community is so large and so much going on. It's difficult for people to show up for meetings. And in fact, we have less people showing up for meetings, probably because they think we're doing an okay job. And yeah, right. You know, people show up when, when there's when there's problems and controversy. So, this year, what we're going to do is the next newsletter that's going out, and then we're going to place these ballots out in the community. And then also on February 20, at the community center, there is going to be an open vote for Grand Marshal. So anybody in the community who either gets a newsletter, or goes to like crossroads, or Lobo, or basic brothers can pick up a newsletter, fill that out, send it in vote show up at the community center vote. And the only thing we're requiring a sort of some sort of ID so that we can make sure people don't vote twice,

J 37:22

kind of like the Well, that was kind of like the baseball. What is it the what is

37:29

the corridor? So does that today?

J 37:31

I'm thinking about baseball when you're talking about

37:36

superstar. That's all of our out of my realm.

J 37:40

What is it the super super well,

37:42

you know, I thought that the parade had had really made it when Alvin van black talked about the nighttime parade. The first parade, I saw him on the news, and he's talking about, you know, the parade.

37:56

But yes, I mean, we've become more of sort of, like, it's not this controversial thing that, you know, everybody's, it's a gay parade. But it's now like, well, this is an event as part of the community. And what we really want to do as we go forward is make this the premier events for pride in the state, that you know, we're going to have people in San Francisco, for example,

you cannot find a hotel room, you cannot find a seat on a plane, that weekend of their event, because everybody's going there. Well, we'd like to do that for the Southwest, you know, and get people to come in from Dallas and Austin. I mean, our primary focus is, of course, on the people in Houston. But we'd love to get the rest share with everybody and see this this incredibly professional. I mean, when you look at some of the things that go on, and that

J Jewel Gray 38:40

is on the party circuit. Yeah.

38:43

You know, and that's a little bit controversial, like the Gay Men's Health Crisis sort of backed away a little bit from the circuit parties. But um, I mean, when you look at some of these floats and things that the crew does, and the things that some that the parents said the game was being parents, they did this wonderful float of the kids on the swings underneath a rainbow. And tents like all lit, this is really something that we

J Jewel Gray 39:08

remember when we were pushing wheelbarrows down the road. Yeah, first couple of parades. And I can remember pretty well,

39:14

it doesn't necessarily take a lot of money, or professionalism. It's just a creativity. And I remember Carol Clark and I saying one day, you know, if we didn't do anything, if we didn't file for the permit, if we didn't do this, we didn't do that. Those people would still show up for the parade. And, and that was another example last year is that somebody called us and said, somebody knocked down a no parking and one of the temporary no parking signs that the traffic and transportation department put up and says, We're worried somebody may park there and they may get towed. And so we flagged down one of these trucks and we said this is what happens is oh, we'll take care of it. The city between the police department and the police department, and the traffic and transportation department have done a Wonderful job and working with us. I mean, this is like, you know, we are part of the city, we are somebody that they serve to do this. And, you know, we call Tony Robinson. And you know, she's been in all this hot heat about the Martin Luther King parade, because of all the controversy there, between the fraction of groups that are putting on different events, we have no problem. You know, she pencils in that event every year. And we, you know, we clean up the streets after ourselves and all that, you know, and believe me, the committee gets down their hands and knees to clean up the streets. So we really try to keep the streets clean, because it's our streets, our streets. But the fact that the city works with us so well is great. And Constable, jacoub Rusia provide security for us. And it's like, this is really, really great. This is our city. And we're part of it.

J

Jewel Gray 40:54

Well, I can't think of a better ambassador for Prime. I mean, you just everything you say is just, you know, said with such pride and such vigor, I can't think of a better ambassador for us. I really can't thank you.

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41:05

As an activist, do you find it difficult to get people in Houston to do things? I mean, it seems the town just doesn't seem to be.

J

Jewel Gray 41:18

I think it's cyclical, and it kind of rises and falls, believe

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41:21

me, Carol and I have put news to get letters together, mailed them out ourselves, you know, being up at 1112 o'clock at night sometimes and, and stuff like that. But it just seems that as we worked hard, and got the committee together and try to treat people professionally, believe me, we made mistakes, and try to treat our vendors and you know, working with the post office, and keeping the books, right and doing all this stuff. Getting it all the fact of the matter is, is our volunteer committee is a straight couple. And they are just in they went to us to Los Angeles for the International Association of pride coordinators, and treat it, you know, just like we treat them, you know, they're part of us, they're part of our community. And that has just really fostered it. And we do we thank our volunteers we have you know, when we do the mail outs now we usually have pizza or something like that, or the doughnuts are and we thank them we also have a thank you party after pride and the day of the events. I can't say we make mistakes too. But we tried to have some refreshments and food and stuff like that because believe me I forgot to eat the day of the parade so I was waiting for it to be over I was so burnt out at the end of the night but that was my own fault. But you know treating them fairly and giving them challenging work and and you know, letting them make some decisions to that all you know, we're all adults and but we also expect them to be