

DIANE WILLIAMS: Well, what do you do when you have that happen? I mean, do you have to look at their other politics and say, OK, well, you both like us so now what?

KEN WILK: Well, I mean let the chips fall where they lie. I mean, wouldn't it be great if all our elections were based on candidates-- Republican or Democrat-- that are both for our basic civil rights. Unfortunately, they're not. And there are Democrats that want to keep us illegal, as is there are Republicans. So we just need to have more friends in our community.

DIANE WILLIAMS: Yeah. Well, this-- I'm going back to a piece of paper here that talks about-- I think this is also from *The Voice*. It talks about the gay-baiting charge against Eckels. I'm going to read a little bit from this. It says-- let's see. It says, that you believe "Eckels record as a state legislator shows support for issues that are important to gay men and lesbians, although pressure from within the party keeps him from saying the right things," quotes.

The president of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus said that Eckels' statements during recent interviews and public appearances amount to no less than smug-faced gay-baiting. Terri Richardson said during a debate before the North Houston Chamber of Commerce last weekend, Eckels sidelined comments by Ryan regarding a recent article on the race in a local weekly by suggesting the paper caters to gays.

Eckels apparently attempted to discredit the weekly, *The Houston Press*, to distance himself from an unflattering portrayal in the article by Tim Fleck of *The Houston Press*. What do you think the issue is about that? I mean, you seem to think he's a good guy. Convince us.

KEN WILK: OK.

DIANE WILLIAMS: [LAUGHS] Basically.

KEN WILK: Well, politics is just like making sausage. I mean, you both like it at the end, but you don't want to see it being made. Things that are said at debates-- being that I wasn't there, I didn't hear it-- I mean, things can be taken out of context.

Robert Eckels, who's worked for hate crime legislation, when he spoke for our group, he said, on several occasions, he's worked with Glen Maxey. Now Glen Maxey is a wonderful man that's an openly gay representative. And Mr. Eckels says that a lot of Mr. Maxey's legislation, he put under his name and vice versa to help Glen get it passed.

So I mean, actions speak louder than words. I mean, so many times we want people to say, oh, we love you, we love you, we love you. But when we get them elected, they don't give us the time of day. Here's a man-- Mr. Eckels has worked on our issues and legislature has voted our way. He has worked on hate crime legislation. He's reaching out.

We can't give him money. We can't get him votes. All we can do is cost him votes. So he really can't cater to the gay community because, I mean, there's nothing to gain, everything to lose. But he does come to the Log Cabin Republican meeting. He spends an hour. In fact, he's one of my neighbors, so, I mean, I have a good feel for him.

And he's reaching out and saying, yes, as Harris County Judge-- and that is the most important position for gay issues. And I'll tell you why. The county judge controls the Ryan White AIDS money. Now if Robert Eckels gets elected, he has a line of communication with our community. So when we need to make appointments to that commission, we've got an entree. It's not going to be another Lindsay thing where it would be a dead end.

The Harris County Judge also controls the Harris County Hospital District. And I'll tell you what-- and this is a personal note-- I've done a lot of hospital volunteering over the years, and I've really looked at the Harris County facilities. And I remember when they opened that beautiful jail downtown-- I mean, state-of-the-art, spent millions of dollars, clean-- in the old ice warehouse building. I mean, that's impressive work the county does under Lindsay.

And then you go look at Thomas Street Clinic, what a gulag that is. Or if you go visit friends that have been down on their luck at Ben Taub, and you see this disgusting situation that it is. So there's where a man, a county judge, can really make a positive difference for our community. And that's why it's so important, whether Ryan wins or whether Eckels wins, that we both have a voice.

It's called representation. And if we think putting all our eggs in one basket is going to get us anywhere, it hasn't in the past. It won't in the future. It never will. We've got to be bipartisan and stay on gay issues. Forget Republican, forget Democrats. Let's work on gay rights, regardless of what side of the aisle you're on.

DIANE WILLIAMS: What do you think about this-- I know we've talked about him before. Also, we have a little article in here about Glen Maxey's life being threatened. How serious do you think that is, and what can you tell us about this issue?

KEN WILK: Well, I've been trying to contact Mr. Maxey on that issue. In fact, he's out of town this week. And I've talked to his roommate, and he's going to get back with me. I tell you what, if you ever read the book on Harvey Milk, I mean, gay elected officials can get killed. I mean, it's a shame. And so any time a death threat is made on a public official, it's got to be taken with the utmost seriousness.

DIANE WILLIAMS: So he-- there was a caller that called his house. And it was anonymous and he just said, I'm going to kill you, Glen. What did he say? Just about that?

KEN WILK: Well, basically, like I said, it's being investigated by the Department of Public Safety. And they're taking it with full seriousness. And basically, Warren Chisum is his number one enemy. I mean, Warren Chisum has got such a hatred for Glen Maxey. Of course, Warren Chisum is supported by the Democratic party. He's reelected time and time again. So I mean, this is a really unique situation where two Democrats are going at each other, but this--

DIANE WILLIAMS: And he's the president of the Texas Conservative Coalition and Young Conservatives of Texas groups. It says they were ones who led the fight within University of Texas in Austin which denied funding for a series of workshops aimed at homosexuals.

So I think that this is something that's pretty serious and that politics is serious business. And it's not something I think that we can ignore or think that is unimportant. Why would you tell people to get involved in politics right now?

KEN WILK: Well, because, like I said, government can't solve our problems, but they can prevent a whole lot of them. And a democracy only works when minorities are protected. That's what a democracy is. If we don't protect minorities, we will never have a true democratic society.

It's so important that when you're a minority, like the gay and lesbian community, that we are protected. And we're not being protected. And the thing is that we've got to use our energy to get elected officials that understand. I mean and we just don't have that right now. And I don't really care if we get a Republican elected or a Democrat. I mean, as long as they're pro-gay, I could care less what party affiliation they're a part of.

DIANE WILLIAMS: We're here at 90.1 KPFT on *After Hours* talking with Ken Wilk, who is the president of the Log Cabin Republicans of Houston. And we're here tonight talking about politics, the upcoming election, things that are happening up. And we have a gay Republican here-- gay Republican. Let me just say it again-- gay Republican.

And I want to ask you one-- I guess this is pretty much going to be a serious last question because this is a very serious issue to me. What do you think needs to happen within our local gay and lesbian political caucus? What do you think we can do to make that organization a stronger organization? What do you think are our strong points and our weak points within that organization? What do you think we need to be doing in the future?

KEN WILK: Well, being on the board and resigning from the board and leaving that organization, it's like competition.

DIANE WILLIAMS: What is?

KEN WILK: If Log Cabins can form a positive organization and get positive results, that could be a shining light for other political organizations to take our lead. I mean, we can go in and we can say, well, you're doing this wrong. And then they say, well, you all think you're better than us. That's not the message.

So instead of just talk, let's see results. Let's see the Log Cabins get a positive message. Let's see it get action. And then that will bring the caucus up to a higher level. I think, in many cases, the caucus has lost direction. The caucus is good. When you've got a Republican administration that hates them, like the Bush administration, I mean, it's really easy to take potshots at them.

And now dealing with friends, like the Clinton administration, we don't have the blatant hatred. They don't really have a lot going for them. But like I said, I think that if people would come to a Log Cabin meeting and see what we're about, and come to a gay/lesbian political caucus meeting, I think they'll have a better idea. I think we like to work with the gay and lesbian political caucus.

DIANE WILLIAMS: Do you think that, within the gay and lesbian political caucus, we're adequately representing both Republicans and Democrats? And do you think that we're being adequately represented by women and minorities and people of other races and ethnicities?

KEN WILK: No. Like I said, that was one of the things I've noticed working with the caucus. They do not a very good job. I'm not saying that they're not trying to do a better job. I know when I was there, I didn't really see any minorities. And that's a shame, but I know that they're trying to reach out to those communities.

I mean, Terri Richardson took over the organization from a very rough and tumble last couple of years. Unfortunately, AIDS has just wiped out a whole decade of our leaders. And it's hard to come over that. And a lot of people that used to work with politics are now working in AIDS charities and things like that. So there's been a tremendous void. And we're trying to regroup, especially after the Republican convention that really just attacked our community.

But you know what the nice thing about the Republican convention was? It finally brought us on a national level. I mean people are talking about it now. I mean, it's one thing to fight for gay rights. But if no one's talking about it, you ain't getting no gay rights. The Republicans have shot themselves in the foot with the televangelists, and things like that, by bringing it to a national forum.

This is like a Pandora's box. It's out. I mean it has caused the creation of Log Cabin. I mean, it's like they can't stop us. And like I say, we got-- the far right people just can't stand what we're doing. And they're trying to take shots at us, and so we must be doing something right.

DIANE WILLIAMS: Well, I wish you lots and lots of luck in the future. I know that this is going to be something that's going to go on ahead. And I wish you lots of harmony. That's what I wish to you. I wish you lots and lots of harmony within the community. And I hope that you and your organization takes great strides. I appreciate you being here. I know that it was taking up your Saturday night at midnight. So I'm glad that you're here talking with us.

KEN WILK: Well, I enjoy your show. I enjoy the outreach. And what this community needs is education. And like say, if they would just give me the time of day, listen to my side of the story-- I think that *The Houston Press*, *The Houston Voice*, they're starting to look at us. And I think if people look at us and give us a fair shake, I think they'd really be impressed with what our organization is all about. And I really do thank you very much.

DIANE WILLIAMS: Well, great. And like I said, we're glad you're here. Come back and see us any time. And thanks for listening out there. We've got lots more coming up. We've got news, news, news for days, news, more news, lots and lots of music. And we have Jimmy standing next to me right here with Yer Girlfriend, "We Won't Be Silent."

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes. Erasure, "Who Needs Love Like That." For a couple of reasons, and one of them is because there's a guy out there named Kyle with a three-ball voice who needs to get laid. And that was by special request from his good friend, the Big E. Now we're going to go to a piece of tape from *This Way Out* because, hey, *After Hours* is not that--

DIANE WILLIAMS: [COUGHS]

JIMMY CARPER: Thank you, Diane.

[LAUGHTER]

DIANE WILLIAMS: Thanks to the [INAUDIBLE].

JIMMY CARPER: Thank you there. Thank you, thank you. OK, you're on. You want to do that right into the mic there?

DIANE WILLIAMS: No.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. [LAUGHS]

DIANE I do that--

WILLIAMS:

WOMAN: Oh, now she's a lady.

JIMMY CARPER: [LAUGHS]

DIANE Excuse me.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: OK. Cool. Cool.

DIANE Because we can't talk right now. I have to drink.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. OK.

DIANE Because I have a sore throat.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. Well, we're going to play this little piece of tape here. And it's about-- hey, guess what? There is other radio besides *After Hours*.

DIANE No?

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

DIANE I don't believe it.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Besides *After* and *Lesbian and Gay Voices*. I mean there's radio besides--

DIANE Like in other places?

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Like in other places.

DIANE OK.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Like Western Europe.

DIANE I don't believe it.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Here we go. You're going to hear it. Maybe.

DIANE Hans? Hans [INAUDIBLE]. Hans?

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: OK, let's go. Are you ready?

DIANE [INAUDIBLE].

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: We're going to do this? OK.

DIANE Yeah.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. Uh-huh.

[LAUGHTER]

[AUDIO PLAYBACK]

- But first, the worldwide community radio boom is providing more and more opportunities for a breath of queer air. On a recent trip to Western Europe, *This Way Out's* Jon Beaupre found a lesbian and gay radio station broadcasting in Paris.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- [SPEAKING FRENCH]

- In a tiny, cramped apartment in a nondescript outer neighborhood of Paris, FG, which stands for Frequence Gaie, broadcasts homo-friendly programming at 98.2 on the European FM dial. I met up with FG's attache de presse, Christophe Vix, and asked him about the history of gay broadcasting in his country.

- The history of gay radio in France is a little bit the history of the French people. The French are on one hand somewhat individualists. They rarely consider collective actions. The French in the 19th century had five revolutions, but that doesn't always give them a hand in solving their problems. For waging war, for decapitating kings, for putting up barricades, they are there. But for coming up with positive solutions for their problems, that is rare.

Frequence Gaie, which means the gay frequency, has been, since 1982, a place on the radio where no matter what you are-- gay or lesbian-- you could come to speak. We are a radio of debate which had the image in the gay community as a big, crazy house. That is to say, there were some times, by 1988, when everyone was battling to be on the air. And no one was willing to be the boss to run the place professionally or had the capacity to lead. So we found ourselves thrown out on the sidewalk. The magazine *Gai Pied*, which had originally supported the station, abandoned it.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- And while FG has had a tumultuous history of staying on the air, their sassy attitude and catchy house music, the first such outlet in Paris, manages to keep a loyal and growing audience. I asked Christophe if he could describe his average listener.

- Our average listener is primarily male-- 60% men, 40% women-- 15 to 25 years old, and they live in the Paris region-- Paris and the the suburbs. They go out a lot. They are students or young professionals, and they are somewhat consumers of leisure products. They hang out. They go out a lot. They buy records and clothes.
- From your point of view, what are the biggest threats to the lesbian and gay communities in France?
- The problem is in organizing around common issues. That is to say, AIDS, discrimination, the problem of rights. Those are the three problems which affect us the greatest and divide us the most. The gay and lesbian community in France is very divided.
- Can you give us some examples of antiqueer discrimination in France?
- It's a long-standing discrimination. We have a new law in the Civil Code which authorizes anyone, it doesn't matter who, to go before a tribunal if they see a message, audiovisual or written, especially of minors, which they see as shocking.

This means that in trying to educate around the topic of AIDS and in our talk programs, we have to avoid using any shocking images. And that's the law that was promulgated by the left that was voted on by the right in the name of individual liberty and for the protection of minors. But people know this was done in the name of the family and in the name of the Christian right, like you also have in the US.

- As an officially licensed station, FG is able to accept advertising to support its programming?
- We have an officially privileged position from the state. We are charged with informing the public about the fight against AIDS and to be a source of information for the lesbian and gay community. We have the right to accept advertising, because without it, we wouldn't survive. We order programs, up to five hours of programming per week. If we weren't able to accept advertising, we couldn't buy those five hours of programming. The rest of the time is filled with musical programming.

Because we are a young radio station musically, we are in close contact with the disco techs, the party organizers, performing organizations, those groups which direct themselves to young groups and gay audiences, like the auto schools, commercial centers, travel agencies, the airline companies. Not really big advertisers, but we don't do too badly with general advertising. They are happy to advertise here because they know their message will be heard by the young and by a gay audience.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- And what is in the future for your station?
- We will be moving to a new location in the center of Paris. We are going to try to expand our contacts with the young and gay-oriented press and to jump right in and begin a program on the subject of drug abuse. And we are determined to develop a true editorial structure, like a newspaper, on lesbian and gay topics and employ professional journalists.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- While the station has over the past few years grown from a tiny, little station in a cramped apartment into a-- well, still a tiny, little station in a cramped apartment, the future does look bright for FG, Frequency Gaie, 98.2 FM. Reporting from Paris for *This Way Out*, I'm Jon Beaupre.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

- Hi, this is Sarah Schulman. As a fiction writer and a journalist, I know how hard it is to fight against the distortions of our imagery that are in the mainstream media. That's why I support *This Way Out*, the international lesbian and gay magazine. Hope you do too.

[MUSIC - SIMON & GARFUNKEL - "OLD FRIENDS"]

- In the state of Florida, retirement communities are about as commonplace as shopping malls. The newspaper ads for these homes in areas set aside for senior citizens will usually depict an older, white, heterosexual couple in a loving embrace, showing one and all how happy they are to be living at fill in the blank community. So why on Earth is a Southwest Florida man developing a retirement community for gays and lesbians? *This Way Out's* Susan Gage has the story.

- Bill Laing is a psychology professor and coordinator of the Palms of Manasota, a retirement community which will cater to people with alternative lifestyles. Laing says what he means by alternative lifestyles is people who are gay or lesbian or heterosexuals who simply prefer not to live in other retirement communities because they want to be around people who share the same interests in things such as art, theater, activism, or community service. But Laing says clearly, the crowd that seems to want a place like the palms are the people who find they don't fit into the setting of other retirement communities.

- I have two friends who are gay, and they're both in retirement homes. They are not a bit happy. They're terrified of being found out. They feel so uncomfortable because they say they have nothing to talk about with the rest of the residents. And they say, we have nothing in common with these people. And they're terrified to come out because they're afraid of being ostracized in the last years of their life.

- Laing says he's aware of many senior citizens who have not come out of the closet because they're afraid of what people will think of them or do to them. He says among the features of the Palms is 24-hour security to offer protection for the clientele. Even with that, Laing says the Palms will not be for every person within the gay community.

- I have some friends who wouldn't think of going into it because they say, no, we don't want to be segregated from the rest of the population. But I know some who say, I'm going in there and that's all there is to it. I'm going to be moving in there. And I personally don't give a damn what anybody says. Hey, this is my life. I pay my taxes and I have equal rights the same as everybody else. I'm not pushing my lifestyle off on anyone else. And this is what we have to get through to our residents, and we will be getting through. I think this is the type of resident we're going to be getting. This person is going to stand up for his rights and say, hey, I am here and this is where I want to live.

- Laing says the homes he's planning will be two bedroom, one bath units with an attached two-car garage. The style will be that of old Mexican architecture. There will be a community swimming pool, shuffleboard and tennis courts, horseshoe pit, and a large recreation hall. The person who sold the property to Laing also wants to have an art complex on the land.

The residents are the ones who will determine how the community runs and what activities will be available. They'll also determine who's eligible to be a member. Laing says the money a resident pays to live at the palms doesn't buy their house but buys their right to live in that house. After death, the resident's estate will receive half of the membership fee back. So if the home cost \$80,000, the member's estate will get 40,000.

Even if every lesbian or gay man in America wanted to live at the Palms of Manasota, Laing says they'd have to wait a while. He can only take about 20 applications at this time. And after attending a conference in Las Vegas and doing an interview with the seniors group AARP, he's getting inquiries from people all over who want to move in. Tough to do when he hasn't built the first house yet.

- I had originally planned a small 3 and 1/2 acres. But the response was so tremendous to this that 3 and 1/2 acres was not going to be near large enough. And now we have 15 acres which is going to take in 90 units, 90 homes.

- Laing says his dream is to make the Palms of Manasota a home for people who still want to live an active life. Since only one member of a couple has to be at least 50 years old, he anticipates that the Palms of Manasota community will be a young one. The Palms of Manasota should have its first homes finished by late fall.

- I wish you could visualize what I'm visualizing. It's going to be beautiful.

- For *This Way Out*, this is Susan Gage in Tallahassee.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[END PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

BETSY: This is Betsy at The Ranch. I'm over at Chances. We're having an excellent time over here on a Wednesday night. We're talking to KPFT Houston. Come out and visit us at The Ranch, or if that is not close enough, come to Chances on Westheimer.

DIANE And you listen to?

WILLIAMS:

BETSY: And I listen to KPFT Houston *After Hours*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JIMMY CARPER: Hello, Houston. It's Jimmy with the QMZ, the Queer Music Zone, just for you. And in the QMZ, we feature music by gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender artists. And tonight we're going to have some new stuff, stuff that actually, if you listened to *Lesbian and Gay Voices*, you heard Mary Helen play the song that I'm going to play right now. It's by Romanovsky and Phillips. It's off their brand new *Brave Boys, The Best and More*, which is a compilation of some live performances and some of their previously recorded music.

But this is something new, and it's recorded live and it's fun. I know that if you've listened to *After Hours* and the QMZ for any length of time, you know that piece we play, "Thank God He Made Me a Drag Queen." Well, this is kind of a takeoff on that. "If There Is A God, He's A Queen."