

[MUSIC PLAYING]

KIM SEVIER: Hi, I'm Kim Sevier.

SUZANNE And I'm Suzanne Anderson. And welcome to TV Montrose.

ANDERSON:

KIM SEVIER: Tonight, we are starting our series on the gay print media in the Montrose area.

SUZANNE First up will be the Texas Triangle.

ANDERSON:

KIM SEVIER: We think it's important that you get to see the people behind the words and the newspapers that you read every week.

SUZANNE And to see what it takes to put out a newspaper.

ANDERSON:

KIM SEVIER: TV Montrose is also a sponsor of the upcoming Empower 98. And as a part of our contribution, we're going to run a promotional video on Empower 98 that we produced once a month.

SUZANNE And at the end of the show tonight, we're going to make some announcements concerning TV Montrose.

ANDERSON:

KIM SEVIER: Well, let's get started, Suzanne. What do you think? Start with the story on the Triangle?

SUZANNE Let's roll it.

ANDERSON:

STEVE BAKER: Hi, we're coming to you from Dallas, Texas tonight. We're standing in front of the home office of the Texas Triangle. Texas triangle is, of course, located in Houston Dallas, San Antonio and Austin. We're here tonight because this office is the home office for the entire state operations for the Texas Triangle.

This kicks off our series on the gay and lesbian print media in Houston. And in a moment, we'll go inside and talk to the people who put together the Texas Triangle, and what it is that makes the Texas Triangle what it is.

RUBIN ROCHA: I think that the Triangle was an unusual animal when we first came on the scene. I don't think people quite understood what our mission was, what our plan was. But over a year-and-a-half has gone by and the paper's been seen every Thursday in stands all over the state.

And people are writing to us on a regular basis, telling us that they are enjoying the editorial, they're enjoying the viewpoints articles, and they're enjoying the fact that they have a voice really for the state. I mean, we're very particular here in Texas. I mean, I was born and raised here and this is the only gay and lesbian statewide weekly in the country and one of very few gay publications that has an audited circulation.

DAWN GRIMES: I create all the ads that are in the newspaper and I also do all the layout. I lay out the actual articles, and the pages, and the ads. We have a total Mac system and we're on an ethernet. Network and we are also linked with our other offices, the ones in Houston and in Austin. That way, I can get ads in either over email and I can also get articles in.

JC MICHELAK: Well, a news editor compiles all of the news that goes in the newspaper, whether it be state national, international features, that type of stuff, anything that's news-oriented. You find it from a gamut of sources.

You have-- obviously you have a network of people, sources, whether it be in City Hall, or in organizations, or you just have a wide variety of sources that you depend on. You depend on wire services and you certainly have to read a lot. You have to read a lot of national gay magazines, other gay papers as well, as mainstream newspapers.

TODD CUNNINGHAM: What we're trying to do now is to provide the news and information entertainment that the state needs. The gay and lesbian community across the state, I think, can be brought together via the Triangle where we can know a little bit about each other. And it makes travel between the cities. And also I think a general cooperation between the city's possible because we can use the Triangle as a vehicle for that.

RUBIN ROCHA: It's important to remember that we're trying to cover the main metropolitan areas first. And we've just recently expanded the circulation so that we're in 27 smaller cities like Midland-Odessa, Lubbock. My hometown, McAllen, Texas gets the Triangle. And some of these people have never seen a gay newspaper before. So with the sales will mushroom as people get accustomed to a statewide news weekly in some of these outer lying areas.

DAWN GRIMES: I build the ads in either Illustrator or cork in.

RUBIN ROCHA: And in this case, you notice we have the TV Montrose ad. That was just here by accident by the way.

DAWN GRIMES: Place it in.

RUBIN ROCHA: So there it is. So with this method, then it's like you have a space here for the black tie dinner. Would that work the same way? Is this like reserve space for an ad coming?

DAWN GRIMES: This one is actually a paste up ad. They sent in a negative. And so I designate that with a black box. And that way, our printer knows to put that ad in.

JC MICHELAK: And you do have to report a lot of the news. You want to try and be the first paper to report that news, but you don't want to cross the line of creating news. But there is news out there. You do have to look for it. And a lot of times, it doesn't just come to you.

RUBIN ROCHA: Well, I have an external face and an internal face. My external face is one that is a sales rep out in the field, as I mentioned earlier. And when I come into the office, then my primary contact is with Dawn, the art director, and who also does production.

And I'll take everything the reps give us, pieces of a puzzle, so to speak, of an ad, the ad copy, artwork, just basic ideas, and put them together for her in a little packet so that she has everything she needs in front of her to build the ad.

So I make sure that the copy is correct. If there's anything time sensitive, make sure that's been cleared up and make sure the artwork is something we can use, that can be scanned or can be altered in some way, and send it down the pipe into production. And then recover it on the other end and send the proofs out to the reps so that they can take it back to the client and get an approval.

STEVE BAKER: How do you decide how much of the paper is devoted to Houston, let's say, or Dallas, or San Antonio news?

TODD Really, the news takes us there. I mean, we don't go in on Monday morning and say, OK, it's going to be an all **CUNNINGHAM:** Houston issue, an all Dallas issue, an all San Antonio issue. It depends on really what's going on. What's in the news that week? If it's Houston pride, then we're probably going to cover a lot more of that. If it's Dallas pride, we're going to cover a lot more Dallas.

And on any given day or any given week, the news-- there may be more happening within the gay and lesbian community in one city than within another. So it really takes us there. We don't determine what's news and what the paper will be filled with. We just try to do as good a job of representing the entire state as we can.

RUBIN ROCHA: I'm anxious to see what the next year-and-a-half or two years will hold for the Triangle. If we're growing at this rate, I'm excited about the future and what we have to offer. And I appreciate the readers picking up the paper week-to-week. And our racks are emptying out every single week, which I think is a tremendous use for the advertising dollar, but it's also tremendous service for the readers.

DAWN GRIMES: It all comes together here in production, because we have the input the ad sales reps sending in the ad copy, ads have to be built. And then also our editorial people send in their copy. And it all comes together like in a central point in production. And it's all put together in two days time because we do have a deadline. And we are trying to cover breaking news.

JC MICHELAK: In my view, our job is to report the news. It's not to create the news. It is to report that news. And if that news is negative or has a negative connotation on the gay community, that doesn't mean we don't report it. We're no different than anybody else. There are negative aspects of our community, there are negative aspects of any community. And to not report it, I think, is irresponsible. Now, some publications don't believe that. But I think it's just a matter of personal principles.

TODD And the use of market has grown very fast for us just recently. And we're thrilled about that. What's happened is **CUNNINGHAM:** the number of advertisers from Houston has more than quadrupled. And also the number of readers, our readership is up in Houston by a vast, vast amount. I mean, it's at least quadrupled from what it was a year ago.

So our advertisers are getting response. They know that their ads are working in the Triangle. That it's a good place for them to be in. It's a smart buy for them. So they're using the Triangle and the Triangle is working for them. So I think-- and we're also seeing from the number of letters of the editor we get and all the comments and calls that we get that Houston as a whole is really picking up the Triangle and enjoying reading it.

STEVE BAKER: What's it like working for Todd Cunningham?

JC MICHELAK: It's very refreshing. It's extremely refreshing. Most people-- I mean, different publishers, managers, whatever have you, CEOs have-- they have certain management styles. Mine is pretty much in sync with Todd's.

Todd's philosophy pretty much is that he hires qualified people to do a job and he lets them do it. And I think that as an employee or professional, I think that you can't ask for a better type of boss than somebody that lets you do your job.

STEVE BAKER: Well, let's go back to Houston and join Fred Walters who's interviewing Nancy Ford.

JC MICHELAK: That sounds great.

FRED So Nancy, what do you do here at the Texas Triangle?

WALTERS:

NANCY FORD: Well, I'm features editor here at Texas Triangle. And that means basically paying a lot of attention to the organizations that affect the gay and lesbian, bisexual and transgender community throughout the state of Texas.

Just because we're located here in Houston where the office is, we don't dwell just on Houston issues out of this office. It's been, kind of, an interesting transition for me in various positions, various other jobs. It's always been very Houston-focused. The Triangle is different in that it is statewide-focused. We deal with people from Austin here in Houston, from San Antonio here in Houston. It's just a very widespread concerted statewide effort.

FRED The growth, you have had a lot of growth happened.

WALTERS:

NANCY FORD: We have. We're really proud of that.

FRED Tell me about that.

WALTERS:

NANCY FORD: Well, about a year-and-a-half ago, in March, April of '97, Angle Media, of course, bought the Texas Triangle from Barbara Wildermuth and Kaylon Cope in Austin. And since then, we have grown tremendously. We've nearly doubled our staff.

Certainly doubled our office space. We have absolutely established offices here in Dallas, Austin, and Houston, of course. We have a new news editor. We have a new arts and entertainment editor. And probably one of the most significant things in terms of our growth is, I'm really proud to say, we are the only audited publication.

FRED What does that mean?

WALTERS:

NANCY FORD: Gay and lesbian publication throughout the state of Texas. Audited means basically exactly what it sounds like. There is an actual accounting firm and auditing firm that comes in and tests our distribution to make sure that we are actually printing and distributing as many copies as we say we are. And I'm very proud to say that we are the only one-- only gay, lesbian publication in the state of Texas who can claim that.

FRED Great. Nancy Ford from the Texas Triangle, thank you for talking with us.

WALTERS:

NANCY FORD: That's all? That's it? I didn't get to dance? [LAUGHS] All right.

FRED Next week, look for our story on This Week in Texas also known as TWIT. This is Fred Walters Jr, signing off for

WALTERS: TV Montrose.

SUZANNE Kim, that was a great story of the Texas Triangle.

ANDERSON:

KIM SEVIER: It sure was. And next week, we'll take a look at the people behind the TWIT.

SUZANNE And on November the 7th, the gay and lesbian Chamber of Commerce Sponsors Empower 98, which kicks off at

ANDERSON: the George Brown Convention center.

KIM SEVIER: This is an important event for our community because it offers many opportunities for gay-owned and also gay-friendly businesses to promote who they are to the general public.

SUZANNE It really does. And I promise you Suzanne Anderson properties will be there. We've already got our booth space

ANDERSON: reserved. And if you have a business and you haven't reserved a booth yet, you watch the promo coming up and you'll have to pick up the phone and call them power hotline.

KIM SEVIER: Let's see why Empower 98 is so important.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

COY TOW: Welcome to the greater Houston Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, Empower 97. It's been a fantastic day. The turnout has been terrific in spite of the rain. And we're thrilled to death. The vendor support has been really incredible. Our sponsors, Shell, Texas Commerce Bank, and the other sponsors have been phenomenal. I think that is certainly one of the reasons why we've seen such a success.

MICHAEL Success today was phenomenal. It's an opportunity for Lobo to reach a clientele that maybe normally wouldn't

KAPHINGST: come in and see us. Maybe have preconceived notions about what Lobo is and what we have to offer. But today, we got to meet a lot of new faces, get a lot of new customers, and made some new friends. It was very well worth its time.

DEBBIE The advantage of the business being at Empower 97 is to let the gay community know that you support us, that

PHINNEY: you don't discriminate against us. And the gay community is very loyal to companies that are supportive of us. And I'm sure that all the companies that are here today are going to benefit for years to come from the visibility that they gain from this expo.

ANITA The gay community is a great consumer group. And these companies are going to reap the benefits of that. One

RENTERIA: of the key points of the expo is the fact that the gay community is very loyal. It's a wonderful thing to have a business know that I'm gay, accept that I'm gay, and actually seek out my business. That's the, kind of, business where I'm comfortable. And if I've got money to spend, which we all do, that's where I'll spend it.

BILL GREEN: It's been very, very good for us. And I'm very pleased with the turnout and the number of people who have come in. And I'm OK with that. I think people that I've known in a social way that now see me in a business way, and I think that that's been a very, very big factor in making it successful for us.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DEBBIE PHINNEY: We were very lucky with the corporate sponsorship that we received this year. Shell Oil was a major sponsor for us as well as the companies that are always involved in the gay community. The Gay and Lesbian Yellow Pages were one of the first companies to step up. But what we need is corporate sponsorship from big corporations to be able to fund this and to help out with the AIDS Foundation or whatever organization that we make the beneficiary of the next shows.

SUZANNE ANDERSON: This is a great opportunity, because this is the one place where the men and the women in this community can come together and we can promote our businesses and support each other. I know that we've spent as much time going around and dropping things in other people's little bowls, and talking to them, and just interacting and having a good time socially too. I mean, it's a unique opportunity. It's something that we wanted to do for years and years. And I know now that if somebody's done it and established it, it'll be here for a while.

MICHAEL KAPHINGST: I think the companies should really take a good look at Empower, because I'm sure the success far exceeded what anyone thought. Besides not only customers, you get to meet great other vendors, you get to meet other businesses, make friends, and make contacts within the gay community, which never hurts anyone.

ANITA RENTERIA: I think the vendors are very happy with the turnout that they've gotten and the traffic that's going through. So for next, year I think it'll be a lot easier to get it done. And I think that it'll probably be doubled in size. I think word of mouth is going to be very powerful for us. So this is a very, very good event.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SUZANNE ANDERSON: If you're not here this year and you need to jump on it next year. This is an opportunity that you don't often get. And it takes very little in the way of business to make up the small amount that they charge to exhibit here.

The Chamber of Commerce was very clever in the way that they promoted this. If you join the chamber, that membership comes off of the fee that you have for your booth. Anyway, it is an opportunity and it's something that we all should grasp.

CARY RUSSELL: And anybody who is anybody should be here. The reason why I'm here is to support the community and also for more business. All businesses should be here. The main reason for being here is to promote your business and create more business for yourself not only within the gay community, but within the whole community. Anybody who's anybody who's in business in Harris County should be here. If you're not here today, you should be here the next time, Empower 98.

COY TOW: We're all looking forward to the greater Houston Gay and Lesbians Chamber sponsored Empower 98. We all hope that you will look forward to that and that you will watch for the mailing and watch for the advertising for next year's event, because it's going to be bigger and better than ever.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SUZANNE ANDERSON: Booth locations at the expo on a first come, first served basis. So if you want a good location, you need to call the hotline right now. Well, joining me tonight is Steve Baker, our producer. Welcome, Steve. Nice to see you.

STEVE BAKER: It's great to be here out in front of the camera again.

SUZANNE I understand you have some big news for us. What's going on with TV Montrose?

ANDERSON:

STEVE BAKER: Well, for several months, we've been talking about a big announcement as far as a new corporate sponsor. Well, we've been after Chase Bank for quite some time. Finally, this last week, we did hear from Chase. And they do want to advertise on TV Montrose. And that sounds great. The only problem that we have is that they won't have a commercial ready that they want to present to the gay and lesbian community for several months down the road.

SUZANNE If Chase doesn't come into our immediate future, how does that affect the future of TV Montrose?

ANDERSON:

STEVE BAKER: One of the things that we've been faced with from the start of the show is making the show profitable. In other words, not necessarily profitable, just enough money to keep it alive and afloat. It's cash flow.

We haven't been able to attract enough new, small advertisers to fill the financial gaps. And with Chase, we thought that was worth having a corporation like that on board, that that would stop that financial bleed that we've been having with the show. But not getting them for several months down the road puts us back where we were to begin with.

SUZANNE If we have some people out there or businesses that are interested in assisting or want to be a part of TV

ANDERSON: Montrose, what do they do?

STEVE BAKER: Well what we're trying to do right now is we want to make up-- try and make up this financial gap that we're not going to be getting with Chase right now. What we really need to do is try and attract at least five new advertisers to the show. And within the next week or so, some commitment from people that they're willing to come on board to show.

What we're offering right now is a very good deal. Absolutely free commercial production and \$150 a week to air your commercial on the show if you just give us a six-week commitment. More details I can give the people that are interested, they want to give us a call at 713-523-6302. I can talk to you in more detail about the whole package. But quite simply to keep the show going into October, I need to get at least five commitments from five new businesses.

SUZANNE That's what I was going to ask. How important is it that you get new advertisers?

ANDERSON:

STEVE BAKER: Well, quite simply what it is, is I am basically the sole owner of TV Montrose with my lover, Russell. From the beginning, we have subsidized the show quite heavily. And it's just a quite simple matter of mathematics. As much as we love the show, care about the show, we just can't keep supporting it and we just need the new advertisers.

Chase would have helped it would not have solved the situation. It just would have bought us some more time to get the smaller advertiser on board. Now without Chase for several months, I need a lot of small advertisers right now.

SUZANNE OK, community, you've heard the request. And we're going to stay on the air. We need to hear from you. We
ANDERSON: need to hear from some businesses and we need some more commercials going.

STEVE BAKER: One thing that I would also like to add though, Suzanne, is that since making the decision that we needed to find some new advertisers right away, I've been lucky enough to see some support from people like Rich-- the Rich's staff. They've been out there in the neighborhood already in the past two days going to people that they know in business and trying to help me convince them that if they were ever going to advertise on TV Montrose, that they need to do it right away.

Quite honestly and basically, you're seeing this on September the 6th. By Wednesday, September 8th or Thursday, September 9th, I have to know if I can count on those five new advertisers. And it's not a deadline I'm imposing. It's something that, because of my arrangement with Warner Cable, I have to commit by mid-September to an October air date-- air dates. So and aside from just the financial picture, we've got to know something this week.

I want to thank all the guys over at Rich's and other people who have taken it upon themselves to beat the path for me this week. I hope it all pays out. And I do want to thank them and others that are out there working on my behalf.

It was created for the community. It was created for you, the viewers out there. It was created to show our community in a way that's never been done before. This has just been more of a personal project rather than business. It's been one that's been from the heart. It's been one that I thought was long overdue for our community. It is-- first, I'm very proud of the fact that TV Montrose is a history making show. It is the first commercially produced gay and lesbian TV show on the air in Houston, Texas, and I would suspect with very few exceptions across the country.

What I really want to hear also is not only from businesses that want to advertise now, but also would like to hear-- and it would mean a lot to me to hear from some of you, the viewers out there, is the show worth working for to keep on the air? Are you getting something out of it? Is all of this worth the effort?

That-- hearing from you, the viewers, those of you who tune in, those of you who have been at the events and seen us there with our camera and capturing things as never before done, does that mean something? Is that something that's valuable to you? If it is, I'd appreciate it if just you, the viewers, would pick up the phone and give me a call and let me know what you think. If you know people in business also, talk to them as well. Appreciate it. I love the show. And I hope we can keep it going.

SUZANNE We'll keep our fingers crossed. We're going to take a short commercial break and I'll be right back with Kim.
ANDERSON:

LEE BROWN: I'm mayor Lee Brown, and you're watching TV Montrose.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

NARRATOR 1: The Texas Triangle is a free weekly newspaper reaching over 60,000 readers every week. Available every Thursday throughout Houston Austin, San Antonio, and Dallas, and 20 other Texas cities, the Triangle offers the best and news features and entertainment.

A six-time award winner, it's the only gay newspaper to receive an outstanding journalism award from the National Gay and Lesbian Journalists Association. The Houston press writes for gay and lesbian news by far the best is the Texas Triangle. So pick up the Triangle every week. Quality makes a difference.

NARRATOR 2: Slash your wireless costs with phones and pagers from Premier Paging & Wireless. Premier guarantees the lowest advertised price on any prime co or aerial phone. Plus Premier has super low prices on pagers and airtime. Premier also carries a complete line of accessories for both pagers and phones. Premier Paging & Wireless with guaranteed low prices and the best service anywhere. There's no need to go anywhere else.

SUZANNE Don't even think about buying or selling a home without hiring a professional. A home is the biggest financial

ANDERSON: investment that you will ever make. And I am always amazed at how casually people select a realtor. They'll call the name off of a sign or take the name of a friend of a friend. To be a good realtor, you have to be a good listener. And I've listened to my clients and I customize my services to fit your needs. We listen, present creative solutions, and help you make decisions in buying or selling a home.

NARRATOR 3: Celebrating 15 years it's Houston's Premier alternative dance club. Rich's has a hottest music hits, the largest dance floor, four huge bars, and the wildest themed parties. Rich's is a place to be for fun and action.

The only New York style dance club for the gay and lesbian scene. Rich's is where the real world ends and your imagination begins. Be a part of the fun and Rich's this week. Rich's, where you can always be yourself.

DAYAN STEELE: Hi, I'm Dana Steele from 97 Talk and you are watching TV Montrose.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SUZANNE One of the things I think, Kim, that we deal with in the community is being invisible. And I think the benefit that

ANDERSON: we've gotten from TV Montrose, as I see it, is that it's put a face and a tie-- and a people together. It's put the gay and lesbian community, it's made them much more personal. I think it's really provided a great service to the gay and lesbian community.

KIM SEVIER: I agree it. Does create a cohesiveness within our community. And just the pure and simple plain fact that we know what's going on week-to-week, I mean, that's such a nice thing. It's been such a treat to be involved with the project from its inception. I really consider myself fortunate for that. And also the not for profit organizations. That was one of my favorite things. I really felt like I was playing a small part in doing a service to get the word out.

SUZANNE A lot of times I write a check for these nonprofits for ads, but I don't go to the events or at least not all of them.

ANDERSON: So it was fun seeing what goes on at some of these events. And I mean, some are an absolute. Hoot, I know what I watched him from *The Bunnies on The Bayou*. I thought, I got to go to that next year. What fun that was?

KIM SEVIER: I missed it this year. I love that one.

SUZANNE It really has been interesting to broaden, I guess, our knowledge of the community and become familiar with

ANDERSON: different aspects. And again, to-- there are a lot of people that are watching out there that aren't a part of the gay and lesbian community who now know I think a little bit more about us.

KIM SEVIER: Sure, sure. Until next week, I'm Kim Sevier.

SUZANNE And I'm Suzanne Anderson.

ANDERSON:

LANNIE Hi, I'm Lannie Griffith with 107.5, *The Buzz*. And you're watching TV Montrose.

GRIFFITH:

[MUSIC PLAYING]