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## SPEAKERS

Nancy Drew Meyer, Jimmy Carper, Sarah DePalma

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Nancy Drew Meyer 00:02

It's true, they are very organized. And part of why they're so organized is that they're very well resourced. They have a lot of money. But you know, something like a group, like the Christian coalition has about 1.5 million numbers, the Human Rights Campaign, although we're the largest lesbian and gay organization in the country, as 150,000 members, right there, you can see that they have far more resources to work with. And, and the other thing that I think that the the radical right understands better than perhaps our side does, and sort of the importance of getting involved in a local level. And one of the things I hope your listeners will do is, get involved get connected to a political group, because your voice really is very important. And that's something that that the opposition understands very well, they're quite able to flood Congress with letters, phone calls, emails, because they're very well networked, they get the word out very quickly. And they respond, they know that it's important that they call and they'll call early and often and make sure that their member of Congress is absolutely clear where they stand on these issues. And it's that level of commitment and involvement that the entire progressive community needs to be able to fight back some of these assault on the rights that we've come to enjoy and the rights that we don't yet have that we that we deserve.

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Sarah DePalma 01:22

It's really amazed me how well organized they aren't when we introduced a bill on the Texas Legislature. They knew within hours that the bill had been introduced. And the reason that we know this is because the our sponsor called us and said they had already heard from them. So these people, they know exactly what's going on and their pulses they're in and I want to back up with Nancy said, if you really want to do something, start at ground level and work as I like to use the example from the ecology movement, think nationally, but work locally?

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Nancy Drew Meyer 01:55

Absolutely, absolutely. I cannot. I cannot overestimate how important it is that all of our elected officials hear from us. And that you that you participate in an electoral process, it's very

important that people get out and about. You know, it's a responsibility and a privilege that we have as Americans. And I think it's really important that we exercise it at every opportunity.

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Sarah DePalma 02:20

Now, one of the things that people read about in the newspaper lot is dealmaking. And I think there's a feeling among people that that's all Washington legislators do. I guess maybe an example, it might be the hate crimes Reporting Act. I, we might talk about that a little bit as an example of how deals do get done. And then I guess the second part of the question is whether that would be considered a typical way of legislating in Washington?

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Nancy Drew Meyer 02:47

Well, one of the things that's true about Washington is, and I think it's probably true of most legislative bodies is that, you know, in the House of Representatives, you have 435 individuals, and you have people all the way from in the Senate, you have 100 in the Senate, a good example of sort of the diverse views that you have is everyone from a Senator Jesse Helms, to Senator Ted Kennedy from Massachusetts, who has been a real champion of the causes that we work on, we believe it. And there is this concept that in order to get enough votes together, you need to compromise and you need to come up with something that you can get a majority of people behind. And, you know, there's certainly every part of the spectrum between the Jesse Hansen under Kennedy. And, you know, they sometimes there's an old adage that lawmaking, a little bit like making sausage, you know, you put a whole bunch of stuff up and you grind it all out, you sort of see what comes out on the other end. And, indeed, it is not, it is not a pure process. And it is very, very rare that anyone, whether it's somebody on the liberal side of the spectrum, where the conservative side of the spectrum gets exactly what they want. And I think we've seen some of that with this Congress, and with Newt Gingrich is trying to get this sort of contract, Contract with America out. And they haven't been able to do it because they haven't been willing to compromise. And they haven't been able to forge a broad enough coalition to move legislation forward. So I think that while people are frustrated with that. It is a part of the process. And it's one that is always difficult, you know, one always has to decide how far one is willing to compromise. And whether the good that you get out of something is worth the peace that you didn't get. And, and that's a very tough issue for people, both in Washington and certainly around the country. In terms of the Hate Crime Statistics Act that you refer to, we're in the process now trying to reauthorize that legislation. That bill was first passed in 1990. And basically what it does is call on the FBI to collect statistics about crimes motivated by bias that it affected communities on the basis of race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation. And disability is actually also included in the bill. And we're now faced with a situation where the when the bill first passed, it required the FBI to do this reporting for five years, five years is now expired. And while the FBI is still continuing to collect, collect the statistics, they're not necessarily required to at this time, so we need to pass another law to say, Yeah, we wanted to do this for good, not just for some period of time, but this is a good thing, and they should continue to do it. And there are things about the bill that are problematic. Things like it's got anti gay language in the bill that says, you know, you can't use any money from this bill to promote homosexuality, which is crazy, you know, talking about how it was, was a gay community is brutalized in our streets, is not about promoting homosexuality, but they put that language in nonetheless, the transgender community is not included in this bill. That's the problem. There are some other women are not included this bill,

gender crimes motivated by gender are not included in this bill. But there is a sort of calculation that happens in Washington at the bill is really important legislation is really important and to, and it's very important that we pass this permanent, this permanent mandate that the FBI continue to collect these statistics. And so a number of groups, all of whom have concerns about the bill. Okay, we're going to work to pass this in this Congress, given how conservative this Congress is, in its current form, and we're going to agree not to try to amend this to fix some of the things that we see as problems. And, you know, that's sort of the kind of thing that happens in Washington. And you know, you're either typical or not, it certainly happens. And it probably happens more frequently than that. One group gets to sort of write their ideal bill, and that sort of sales throw, that really doesn't happen very often.

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Sarah DePalma 06:57

I know when I worked in Senator whackers. Office, we figured if we came out with 51%, of what we asked for it was different.

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Nancy Drew Meyer 07:04

Absolutely, absolutely. It's that kind of incremental approach that, you know, really frustrates people, but is really sort of how things function in Washington. And to the extent that it frustrates us because we don't get the things we want. It's a problem to the extent that it prevents really awful things that we wouldn't want that the other side would offer. It's a good thing. You know, you can also moderate some of the really bad stuff that comes through if you work the system. Well.

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Sarah DePalma 07:29

Now, I understand you mentioned Senator Kennedy, I understand that he's proposing some hate crimes legislation. How would that work with that all about?

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Nancy Drew Meyer 07:37

He is in the process of looking looking at some legislation, the bill has been introduced. There's some hate crimes laws on the books today that allows the federal government to come in and work with local law enforcement to investigate certain hate crimes, if the if the Justice Department feels that that's important. And there are some limitations around the conditions under which the Justice Department could do that, that we would like to see brought to Senator Kennedy was just too broad. And there's also some discussion about adding some other categories to that legislation. It's very much in its infancy, if you will, we're still sort of in the process of looking at the language and trying to figure out how, what the best approach is, and, you know, sort of, again, that sort of political calculus about what how much we can put in and still hasn't, we'll have an opportunity to move forward in this conference. And I suspect that we'll will not see a lot of that legislation until after we finish working on the hit physics act. So it's probably a few months down the road. In any case, depending on how fast the reporting, I don't know.

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Sarah DePalma 08:50

We of course, we spent a lot of time talking about into on this show the employment non discrimination act. And if you would like to give folks a little bit of an update, let them know where that stands.

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Nancy Drew Meyer 09:00

Sure. The Employment Discrimination Act has really been reintroduced into this Congress. It was first introduced in the last Congress, which ended at the end of 1994. Senator Jeffords is the lead sponsor on the Senate side. He's a Republican from Vermont. The bill is now sitting is now in committee in the Senate, labor and Human Resources Committee, which Senator Jeffords is a member as Senator Kennedy, who is the sponsor in the last Congress and one of the lead proponents in this Congress. Currently, there's no action scheduled in on the Senate side. We've done we've looked at the committee, you know, one of the things that happens when a bill gets introduced, is a committee gets an opportunity to act on it, they get an opportunity to amend it and then send it to the full Senate with a recommendation that the bill be passed. It's called marking up the bill. And we are one vote short of being able to mark up at the end in the Senate committee. So we've been trying to work very hard to, to move some of the Republicans on that committee, we have all the Democrats are with us on this bill in that particular committee to try and see if we can get to a point where we could actually have the bill move out of committee, which would be a huge step forward. It's not clear whether we'll be successful on that, but it's certainly something I'm working on. And on the House side, it's been referred to the Judiciary Committee. Where it also is, is sort of awaiting action. But in the meantime, it gives us an opportunity to encourage educate other members of Congress and try and get them to become co sponsors. And also to work out in the out of sort of outside the Beltway, as we say, with corporations and organizations and community folks, to help them understand the issue of employment discrimination, to help get the message out that there are no federal laws that protect people on the basis of sexual orientation, from workplace discrimination, and sort of build a grassroots of support that will help move the bill is perhaps a little bit friendlier Congress after this upcoming election.

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Sarah DePalma 11:07

Our audiences I think, is Howard has talked about this before that we have Shirin Stewart and Jesse Xavier has been working with high filoblu of the HRC trying to get the transgenders involved in in right now. That's very much a work in progress. But the HRC really has has been wonderful about that. In the we've talked to the audience before about that.

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Nancy Drew Meyer 11:31

That's great. Yeah, we are, we are working hard to come up with sort of the right language and how to how to do this sort of best legal approach to this. And we'll be working with the community, the transgender community to make sure that we get the education and all the work done on on Capitol Hill that needs to happen in the coming months and years.

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Sarah DePalma 11:50

Now, the few minutes we have left, we haven't talked at all about membership, or how to join. And as people in the audience have heard me say before I have joined the HRC. And I would suggest that others would too. But how would they go about that?

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Nancy Drew Meyer 12:05

Well, there's a couple ways you can do that, you can certainly give us a call. And that's probably the easiest way to do it. And our phone number is 202-628-4160. And the other thing you could do is visit our website for all of you who are cyber philic who are into cyberspace, we have a great website, which has a lot of information on it, it also has a way for you to join as part of the website. And we're at http, colon slash slash, www dot HRC usa.org. Again, at HRC, USA dot o RG. So you can either give us a call and ask for membership. Or go ahead and even if you're not sure you want to join, check out the website. It's got a lot of updates, really current information about what's going on in Washington. Good information about the defensive marriage act right now, as well as some other provisions on discharging HIV HIV positive servicemembers in the defense bill. So check it out, get some great stuff.

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Sarah DePalma 13:20

It's really been a pleasure talking to you. We've talked to the audience before about some of these things. But I really, I think it's important that people get to hear from folks who are working on their behalf in Washington and get a little different view and realize that yes, your money is actually being put to real use.

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Nancy Drew Meyer 13:38

Absolutely. I really, really appreciate the opportunity to be on the show, sir. This has been great and always want to make sure people know what's going on and how they can help because we need them all

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Sarah DePalma 13:48

Thank you very much.

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Nancy Drew Meyer 13:49

You're welcome.

S

Sarah DePalma 13:51

This is KPFT Houston, and KEOS College Station.

J Jimmy Carper 14:07

Huge voice huge for us. Absolutely. Melissa Etheridge, I hate to do a show without doing Melissa you know, I saw an MTV special when she she was singing with some some other females and Sophie B Hawkins and her did a duet on Damn I wish I were your lover. Wow. And they sang it to each other. It was hot.

S Sarah DePalma 14:31

Uh Melissa Etheridge is on the cover of the advocate this along with another person that I didn't recognize, but yeah, Melissa Etheridge her lover.

J Jimmy Carper 14:40

Is that her lover? That's her lover. Yeah, see, I didn't really yeah, she's a she's a filmmaker.

S Sarah DePalma 14:48

Well, yeap.

J Jimmy Carper 14:50

They looked happened dating together several years and they're looking to either have a baby or adopt. I mean, they're really serious.

S Sarah DePalma 14:59

We have fun I'm what a little less than when-.

J Jimmy Carper 15:02

In fact, Melissa, Melissa likes the idea that when she she goes to her concerts now and people in the audience scream house. I think her name is Julie has Julie. And she thinks it's really cool.

S Sarah DePalma 15:14

Well, I do. Yeah, we've got a little less than 20 minutes left. And I wanted to go out on the show talking about what it is that we have to be proud of. We're coming into Pride Week, for the first time ever transgenders are going to have air separate contingent in the Pride Parade. Well, It's about damn time. Yeah, that's what I thought too. I put out kind of a kick, butt. message to the

people in Houston community to transgender people in our community, I felt like I was, I heard every excuse I ever wanted to hear in a lifetime. But listen, and we got a wonderful message from Steve Walker who said, Sarah knows what she's talking about paying attention.

J Jimmy Carper 15:59

That sounds like Steve Walker. And I wrote backs, it's so nice to have friends. I was telling you, I think a little earlier that I remembered when Lowe was in their first year in the gay pride parade, because they were right in front of the switchboard. And that's lesbians over age 50. And BU, you know, this was a few years back. And that that was something for older lesbians to be out of the closet and into the street like that. And a couple of them were a little scared, they had five or six folks. And they've been in it every year. And there's more and more women every year. And I I'm sure that's what's going to happen with your contingent.

S Sarah DePalma 16:48

It looks like when it's all said and done, we might end up with perhaps 10, maybe 12. Good. If we end up with that, for our first year participation, I'll actually be very happy. It what it's going to take is is going to take the first 10 or 12 people marching in with the first year and the rest of the community seeing that nothing bad happens to us. The fear level in the community a Houston is just way, way out of proportion to reality has been for a long time. And I'm really hoping that once the community sees that, hey, cheese, we marched. We didn't turn up on CBS News. That nothing happened to us and that somebody asked me I was at the tax meeting today. And somebody said, Well, you know, what's it like? And I said, you know, marching, the parade is really hard. You have to show up about a half hour before the parade begins. You have to get out walk perhaps a mile maybe a little more. And let 10s of 1000s of people cheer for you.

J Jimmy Carper 17:50

You know, I can't imagine go home with this incredible self esteem.

S Sarah DePalma 17:54

Yeah, you go home and the buzz lasts you for a week. Oh, absolutely go home thinking even lift the apartment building.

J Jimmy Carper 17:59

You know, it's a drug. It's a drug it is you do your first one. And you've got to go back for more.

S Sarah DePalma 18:06

I was trying to describe the feeling of what happens to you when you walk down through Mary's

now. And I couldn't I couldn't explain that. You have to experience it. And so what it's going to take is those first 1012 brave people walking down through there anything going back at the community?

J Jimmy Carper 18:20

You missed it. Yeah, you should have been in the next year we'll hit with will.

S Sarah DePalma 18:28

And so I guess that's one of the first things I want to talk about is I'm proud of those standards.

J Jimmy Carper 18:33

And I'm proud that we're finally going to have that that's the first I think that's a sign of growth in our community. I've been marching since 1988. And I have not missed a year. I mean, a couple of years before that. I stood on the sidelines and thought, Gee, that looks like it might be fun. And it blew me away the first year and I it's a drug I'm telling you I have to go back every year. For more.

S Sarah DePalma 18:55

I was telling people to tats meeting today the first time I marched in the gay pride parade and here in Houston, I was the president of gay student services at Texas A&M. And we decided we were going to march and do an imitation of the Aggie band, one of the most revered institutions on the campus. So we practiced for two weeks and we did marching drills. And we had chants that we use with the crowd and the crowd really going into it. Oh yeah. In one of the the mascot for Texas A&M is a colleague, or none of us in the group only colleagues so we decided we would die this French poodle pink. We had the poodle come down to the room. Well, we won the prize for the best new marching group in the parade. Unfortunately, we also made the front page of Texas a&m You dig in honey. It was an interesting week on campus when I got home.

J Jimmy Carper 19:56

I can imagine but always strikes me that whenever the the contingent from A&M marches, they get the biggest round of applause, even if it's three or four people because it takes Ickes in the city takes on a lot of guts to be gay at A&M.

S Sarah DePalma 20:15

It does is in they're much more open than they used to be. Yeah, one of the things I'm really proud of, and that I hope the community is proud of, is that they have a voice now that they never had before. We're able to access media, where we never could once before. We are able

to access legislators, we're no longer shut out of the legislative process in Texas. We, as a community, we've made strides, incredible strides with the leap years, one year, yeah. And I hope that people are proud of that. And I hope that some of them have participated in that. It's, it's something to be proud of, to go from being unheard of, to being reckoned with in one year. And we've we've accomplished that, and a lot of areas really have, I think that's something good as a growth sign. I think I think it's a good sign that so many of the gay and lesbian leaders in Houston, have stuck with us through even the very tough times. I think that's something to be proud of. It's, we should be proud of the nice Parker's and the gray hills and the gym, carpenters and the other people who have stuck with us to the good times and bad times and have said, Yeah, inclusion matters.

 Jimmy Carper 21:26

It does matter. It doesn't matter.

 Sarah DePalma 21:28

I think that's something to be proud of. I think we ought to be proud of our history in our relations with the gay and lesbian community. I have been lucky enough to have an opportunity to actually speak with some of the drag queens who were at Stonewall. And I've had an opportunity to speak with them. And these were people who lived in drag. They were transgendered people.

 Jimmy Carper 21:45

We on gay pride night, the night before the parade, the show here, it will be the fifth. Well, actually the match. Actually, it's the week after, we will be playing the Stonewall tape. And that is a review of that, an interview with people who were at Stonewall. And it was done like 10 or 15 years afterwards, right. And you'll find out that the drag queens were actually people who lived in dress, right? We're talking transgendered people here.

 Sarah DePalma 22:16

I had an opportunity to actually meet them, I tried to get them on the show. And many of them are starting to get up there in years. And at this point, their whole attitude, that's old news, let's let it go. But I've had an opportunity to meet some of them. And they have, you know, it's very clear to me, the transgenders really did throw the first rocks at Stonewall. You got it, you got it. And I'm very proud that we are finally starting to reclaim that history. For a long time, transgendered people were shut out of the history as if we didn't exist. In it. That's finally that's getting, it's being changed. Finally, we're getting our place again. And I'm proud, I'm proud of that. And I'm proud to say that it's gays and lesbians who are majorly responsible for getting us included back into the history. You know, as gays and lesbian people who went out and say, Hey, wait a minute, you know, maybe this story is not quite right.

 Jimmy Carper 23:06

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Well, you know, you get tired of all these history rewrites, you know, let's get to the real you know, what really happened?

S

Sarah DePalma 23:13

Yeah. Yeah, I think so, too. I'm very proud. I'm very proud of the show. In I was attached today, and I discovered that the people in this community are very proud of the ship. I had several people who came up to me and said, You know, I've been listening to the show every time. So virtually since you've been on the air. I almost never hear the same subject discuss to shows and around. Well, that's right. They tell me that they've learned from the show. There was one person I won't reveal it in her name. But she told me that she listened to the show that we did about how to stay out of jail. Yeah, so happened. She had two outstanding warrants. Who heard the shout and she went down and she paid them good. Two days later, she got stopped by the police. And the officer said, you know, we have warrants for your arrest. You said no, you don't. I paid those and still had the receipts. We literally kept that woman out of jail. Wow. And so I was very bright. I was very proud of that. Very good. Today well, I started thinking about the guests that we've had on this show in the last year. And it reads like a who's who it really transgender and gay community.

J

Jimmy Carper 24:24

I have does I have had an a college education just from co-hosting a show with you-.

S

Sarah DePalma 24:30

Will see now I've gotten one from YouTube. But I was very pleased today to find out that the people in the community have recognized that why did people ask me to watch Kate Bornstein like, you know, what was? What did Gordini Kenzie really say that she wasn't on the year. So they've been listening and they've heard it. And that's that's something to be proud of. I'm very proud of the law conference. We're going they're going into their fifth year. Yeah, it's the only conference of its kind in the in the entire world was very, one of the things that We did on the show, we did an interview with Jane Langley, if you remember, we did that she was in. For those who didn't hear the show. Jane Langley is the Phyllis fry of Australia, right? The funny thing about that story is I sent her copies of the show, she took them to the Australian broadcast system. Wow. In a couple of weeks later, I got a phone call and did an interview with the Australian broadcast network. Because there it was inconceivable to them, that there could be an openly transgender radio host anywhere in the world, and especially Texas, because the Australians have a view of Texas that we still shoot in the end. Surprised? You know, and so it was it was it was really a fun interview. I've done interviews on the BBC, that I got interviews, I get emails from folks in London, who said, Boy, you Texans have an interesting accent. And I thought, I don't have an accent. But this, this little show has been heard all over the world. It's been heard places all over the country. And I think it's really good. That's something really to be proud of.

J

Jimmy Carper 26:10

You know, that's through your efforts that it was heard.

S

Sarah DePalma 26:14

Some of it some of it has been a lot of it has been word of mouth and people who've gotten on the internet and said, you know, there's this loudmouth in Texas that that's I think that's something to be proud of.

J

Jimmy Carper 26:28

We just got a letter from France. We got a letter from France.

S

Sarah DePalma 26:32

Yeah, that would tell that story. It's true. We just got a letter from France today. We just got a letter from France today from some French airlines steward. I have I just looked at, you know, give you a brief the person is the steward. Actually, I will soon be a steward s working for working for Air France. I had sent a copy of our show Wimmer, we had Arman Oh, Tim ski on the show. Yeah. Remember? Who was from Paris? Well, Armand, oh, Tim ski played this tape for his friends in Paris, who sent a letter to me wanting to know about the law in France. Law. I have no clue, but I'll find out. Yeah, no, it's amazing. So here we are in Houston, Texas, we send a tape to France. And the next thing you know, we have somebody in France say, well, what's the law here? Can they fire me in France? I have no idea. But I'll try and find out. I'll take it to the wall conference. Somebody will no good. Good. Okay. And that's, that's that's kind of fun. It's, it's amazing when you do a show. And it turns up in Paris and you get letters from them-.

J

Jimmy Carper 27:34

Amazing, amazing.

S

Sarah DePalma 27:36

Yeah, I and I think, overall the transgender more than anything else, but what the transgender community has to be proud of this year. Is growth in peace. Yeah. A year ago. This time, Jimmy and I were talking about a year ago at this time, I was talking about how we were going to do a protest the Human Rights Campaign. I know it. Tonight, we had, we had a representative from the Human Rights Campaign on the show, talking about the cooperation between us. It's amazing. That's That's great grill. A year ago, the National Gay Lesbian taskforce didn't know who we heard were. Melinda Paris is absolutely a transgendered woman. She lives in men's suits. Where's men's shoes? No question about it. Tada, you know, that it's, it's amazing to me how far this community has come in one year. And it makes me wonder how high is up for us? Yeah, how high is up? So for all of the people that who send me letters and say, Well, you know, that essentially says, well, she's my self esteem is on the floor. And, you know, I'm so terribly discriminated against, and, boy, my life is hell on wheels. Folks, it got better, amazingly, in one year, you ought to be proud of that. Stick around and you see what happens to us in the next

three years, the next six years. Be proud of who you are. Be proud of your friends in the gay lesbian community that have stuck out for you, and have helped you and most importantly, learn how to be proud of yourself. I got a letter. I got a letter and email message the other day from somebody who just basically felt like being transgendered was a death sentence. And I really thought long and hard about how to answer this person. And all I could really say to them is it's only a death sentence if you allow someone else to pull the trigger.

J Jimmy Carper 29:39

Exactly right. You don't it doesn't have to be it doesn't have to be that way.

S Sarah DePalma 29:43

Now, are there any more in so most of all, I hope that people did that people are proud of themselves. If you're not, you keep listening to the show. Keep watching. I'm going to start reading a monthly column in the Houston boys. Oh, good. Stick stick around you Watch what happens to the transgender community in three years, five years. We were at Congress. Last year we had 100 People with there are already close to 200 people signed up to go this year, almost 100% growth in one year. Times are changing, things are getting better. It's time for us to go home.

J Jimmy Carper 30:18

You've been listening. You've been listening to After Hours queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. And coming up in about one minute after the hour will be the BBC News followed by the return of the sons of musical chairs with Billy and Randy and Elmo. And on next week's show, Rob Nash is going to be here. He's starring in his own play 12 Steps to a more dysfunctional family part three, it's reopened that stages and runs Friday and Saturdays, eight o'clock and Sunday at three. It's running now through July 7, call 52-stage for tickets and information.

S Sarah DePalma 31:06

I heard there I read the reviews and then show other wonderful and the critic was falling over himself with laughter.

J Jimmy Carper 31:11

Rob, Rob's gonna be here and he'll probably do several of the characters that he does on the stage. And Monday, June the 17th Iea de Leiria will be playing at the laughs stop. And on Tuesday, June the 18th. Without positive and proud our own Kevin May a good friend of mine and Steve Moore, both HIV positive comedians will be will be here and that's that's it's kind of a pride thing. And the pride gods are out folks come and get them.

S

Sarah DePalma 31:45

And you know what, they look better than I've ever seen. well organized, leaner, well done. For those of people who are involved in getting that done this year. Congratulations. This is a usable guy. Yeah, it's great. It's great that they really did. They did great work this year. I looked through that and said, this is absolutely the best ever, isn't it? It is they did a great job. I guess we ought to get some music go as I'm Steve Kowalski now. And folks, as we go out. We want you to remember that we always end my show with when up when things repression becomes a change of dignity. The only dignity we have is to fight back. Good night, folks.