

The History of LGBT Radio (Part 8)



The first LGBT radio program in Houston was probably "Come Out Together Through the Hole in the Closet Door." It aired on alternate Sundays at 5:30 PM on **90.1 KPFT** back in 1972. The station only signed on March 1st, 1970, so the time window for an earlier program is narrow. The host was a woman named T. Sanders. He was succeeded by Chuck Berger who reworked the program into "Out of the Closet into the Streets." More [here](#). He in turn passed the program to Linda Lovell. A November, 1972 folio describes the original program:

"A gay survival program. It is the intent of this program to convey through music, interviews and documentaries, the situations confronting homosexuals in society today and alternatives to those situations. Such subjects as prison reform, oppression and rehabilitation, job discrimination, role-playing and more will be explored. We hope to produce high quality programs which can be used on other spots within Pacifica. This program will air every other Sunday at this time."

In 1973 they debuted a 5:30 PM gay talk show "Lunch" hosted by Jim Strong. Jim was their Arts Director at the time. But surprisingly in 1973 there was one other LGBT radio show in the Houston metropolitan area: Dave Lamble's Sunday morning talk show on **96.5 KAUM**. In January of 1971, **KXYZ** dropped easy listening and flipped to progressive rock. They added local DJs (including Lamble) and changed calls to **KAUM**. But Lamble was also a DJ at **KPFT**. Back in 1972 he hosted Funk Magazine, spinning funk jazz and reading black literature. He was later News Director at **KFWD** in Ft. Worth. (There Dave Lamble at **WRHU** is unrelated) More [here](#).



Then in 1975 they debuted a program that would last for decades. Ray Hill was one of the founders of Wilde N' Stein back in July of 1975 and Hill at least became a Houston gay community icon. By 1975 the program is listed as "Wilde N' Stein with Ray Hill and Friends." Their show aired Sunday nights at 10:00 PM to Midnight. I'll quote that article regarding the ground-breaking program:

"Wilde N' Stein with Ray Hill and Friends, on KPFT for nearly four years, is the longest-running gay program in the country. It is the only continuing gay program in Houston (Sundays, 10 p.m. - midnight). Host Hill utilizes a magazine type format on the program. The show provides listeners with varied segments of interest such as the Gay World Report and music of artists like Holly Near and Meg Christian. Periodically Hill accepts calls on the air. "Sometimes we get real live honkies in the wild." he chuckled." Back in 1968 Hill met KPFT pioneers Larry Lee and Don Gardener who told him of plans for a new station for the community. "It sounded strange but wonderful" ...

Hill spent some time in prison for burglary from October 1970 to March 1975. When released from prison for good behavior, the state of Texas gave him a \$100 check and sent him on his way. Hill endorsed his to Pacifica radio. Both of Hill's parents were labor organizers, his father with the AFL-CIO and his mother with the Teamsters. So it comes as no surprise that Hill became a political activist for life. In 1980 Hill even became the manager of KPFT. This probably lead to KPFT's proliferation of gay radio programs.

In 1987 KPFT debuted another LGBT radio show, After Hours which debuted on September 6th. Initially airing at 2:00 AM, it had a relaxed variety-show format. Host Buddy Johnston was joined by co-host Jimmy Carper in 1989. Carper took over in 1992. The show blazed a trail making airtime for the trans community in the 1990s. Trans activists Sarah DePalma, Vanessa Edwards Foster, and Monica Roberts all co-hosted in that era. The show ran for 30 years and came to an end in 2017 on their anniversary. Carper died of HIV in 2014. Producer Chris Arasin took the helm for the last 3 years on air. More [here](#).



On the heels of Wilde N' Stein was the lesbian/feminist program Breakthrough. It was directly tied to the feminist newspaper of the same name. The show ran from from 1979 to

1992, starting with original hosts Nancy Fleming and Rita Saylor succeeded by Pokey Anderson and Cherry Wolf. Wolf quit the show in 1991. Pokey had previously been one of the publishers of the feminist magazine *Mockingbird*, and then the LGBT magazine *Point Blank Times*. One of the Wilde 'N Stein regular co-hosts was Mike Miesch who came on in 1980.

He continued on the program until his death from AIDS in 1987. Jack Valinski joined Wilde 'N Stein in 1982 and after the death of Miesch he hosted the program until 1992, adding co-host Bruce Reeves in 1991. Then **KPFT** fired Buddy Guy, the host of *After Hours* in December of 1991. Apparently Johnston had some kind of conflict with Ray Hill, and live aired a few rambling diatribes and a possibly slanderous statement about the owner of a gay bar. Bruce Reeves left Wilde 'N Stein to keep *After Hours* going without it's long-time host.

It's probably worth noting at this point that Texas is one of four states (including Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma) in which gay sex is still illegal in 2020. The statute, Chapter 21, Sec. 21.06 of the Texas Penal Code was adopted in it's present form in 1973. The state revised its criminal code to end its ban on heterosexual anal and oral intercourse, specifically retained it's ban on homosexual anal and oral intercourse. In 1974 amendments to Section 21.06 included the removal of the criminal penalties for bestiality, making sex with animals now legal in Texas, but gay sex still illegal. I think that tells us volumes about the Texas legislature.



So when GM Barry Forbes abruptly reformatted **KPFT** in November 1992 and cancelled both Wilde 'N Stein, and *Breakthrough*, that regardless of his intentions, you can imagine how it might be perceived. *After Hours* wasn't cancelled but cut from 3 hours to 2. But those changes led to public protests. Pokey Anderson called it "a giant step backward" and resigned in protest. Ratings and listener donations dropped by over 30%. [[SOURCE](#)] The chaos is credited with bringing Barry Forbes career at **KPFT** to an abrupt end in 1994.



The protests and petition drives in 1992 also worked their magic and in March of 1993 Jack Valinski returned with a show under the name *Lesbian & Gay Voices*, which he re-named *Queer Voices* in January of 2002. It was co-hosted with Deborah Bell (also of Wilde &

Stein) until she left in 1995.

The show is still heard today **KPFT**, still hosted by Valinski on Mondays, 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM, coming up soon on their 30th year. More [here](#).