

Steve Ziminsky

2020-07-20

LIZ BRADBURY: And I'm also going to turn on my audio recording backup, when...

STEVE ZIMINSKY: (coughs) Getting louder on this end. Good.

LB: Oh, is it better? Can you hear me okay?

SZ: I see it says, "Recording."

LB: It does. And I actually have done a lot of these. This is my eighteenth interview. I've done eight for COVID-19 and ten for HIV/AIDS. And one of the AIDS I did, which was Rose Craig... I don't know if you know Rose Craig. She was involved in the AIDS Services Center. She was one of the people who directed it, in the eighties and nineties And I did her whole interview -- she's in Columbus, Ohio, actually, now -- and it turned out that there was a glitch at the beginning and it didn't record it. But luckily, I had an entire audio, separate recording of her. And the video wasn't very good, because her camera kept falling over. So [00:01:00] (laughs) I figured, "Aeh," you know, "at least I have the audio." So that was good. So how are you doing, Steve?

SZ: I can't complain. I'm one of the few successful ones, I think.

LB: If...

SZ: It's been three years since I retired.

LB: Yeah. So it's a...

SZ: So...

LB: Let me set this up. And then you can tell me everything you've been doing. Because I'm dying to hear. So let me say this. With this project, Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center and Trexler Library at Muhlenberg College will collaborate on forty years of public health experiences in the Lehigh Valley LGBT community, collecting and curating local LGBT experiences, from HIV/AIDS to COVID-19. My name is Liz Bradbury. And I'm here with Steve Ziminsky, to talk about his experiences in the Lehigh Valley community during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, as part of the Lehigh Valley LGBT Community Archive-- We're meeting on Zoom, on Monday, July [00:02:00] 20th, in 2020. Oh, it's 20-2020. Thank you, so much, Steve, for being willing to speak with us today. For the first part, could you please state your name and spell it for me?

SZ: Stephen, S-T-E-P-H-E-N -- and last name is Ziminsky, Z-I-M-I-N-S-K-Y. But people call me Steve.

LB: (laughs) Will you please share your birthdate?

SZ: August 29th, 1960.

LB: Okay. And you're in Allentown? Is that correct? You're...

SZ: West side of Allentown, technically not in the South Whitehall Township but I have an Allentown address.

LB: Okay! Okay. So do you consent to this interview today?

SZ: Yeah.

LB: (laughs) Do you consent to having this interview being transcribed, digitized, and made publicly available online in searchable [00:03:00] formats?

SZ: Yeah.

LB: Do you consent to the LGBT archive using your interview for educational purposes or in other formats, including films, articles, websites, presentations, or other future formats we can't even imagine?

SZ: Yes.

LB: (laughs) Do you understand that you'll have 30 days after the electronic delivery of this transcript to review your interview and identify any parts you'd like to delete...? And/or you can withdraw your entire interview from the project.

SZ: Yes.

LB: Okay. So I have to do a couple of identity things. So what's your ZIP Code where you are?

SZ: 18104.

LB: And what is your age? You were just telling me about that.

SZ: Oh, I'm fifty-nine right now.

LB: Okay. And how do you identify with the LGBT community, gay, trans, lesbian, bi, ace?

SZ: Gay.

LB: Okay. And cisgender?

SZ: [00:04:00] Yes.

LB: Okay. And so this is some stuff that we're going to talk about. So, in general, let's start with this. You... Let me just ask this first question, that I ask everybody. So are you in your house by yourself or do you have other people there?

SZ: Just my pet --

LB: Oh...

SZ: -- which is Atlas the pug, and me.

LB: (laughs) Atlas the pug. Great. And so talk about your work. You were saying, before we started this, that you were retired. So there's your pug. Oh, that's --

SZ: He's sitting with me, close.

LB: -- cute. (laughs) Good thing he's not outside. It wouldn't be good weather for him.

SZ: Oh, they don't do well outside.

LB: No. It's really hot outside. So talk about... So you're not working now. So that's a good thing, compared to other teachers, like.

SZ: I'm a retired music teacher, almost thirty-three years in music ed. But I'm also -- [00:05:00] am working my part-time job. The church never closed. So we're doing video services each week.

LB: Oh.

SZ: So we usually do them on Saturdays. I go out. And I get to play the piano, the organ. There's no choir involved. But there usually is special music involved. And so that keeps my playing, at least. Because all those other side jobs aren't.

LB: So you go to the church to do that, then.

SZ: Yes.

LB: And then they video you.

SZ: Yeah.

LB: What church is that?

SZ: Grace Lutheran, in Macungie.

LB: Okay. Okay. Yeah.

SZ: And I'll be starting my tenth year there in September.

LB: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. And so are there other people there, when you're doing that? Probably just the people with the...

SZ: Pastor. And now we have a person who's running the video part, and if there's special music.

LB: Uh-huh. Oh, you mean other people playing music?

SZ: Other people. Yesterday we had a violinist. And we're going to be having a flutist, coming up, and all sorts of different other people, and a number [00:06:00] of vocalists. Nobody wants to do it, then I do something.

LB: Like a vocal?

SZ: Like a piano solo.

LB: Oh, a piano s-- Oh, I see. Nice. So that's nice. So... Well, if the church is big and you can social-distance there, if you need to, and stuff like that... So that's good. It's a big space, isn't it?

SZ: Pretty big. It probably seats about one hundred and fifty. But it's excellent acoustics --

LB: Well, tha--

SZ: -- built about 1912, with a pipe organ and a nice piano. So. People enjoy hearing the organ. And we had just had it tuned and fixed up. So everything's working. And they're enjoying it.

LB: Yeah. Well, that's great! So h--? So you're working. And was that plan all -- that they would just continue, right away? Were they closed at all during that time, the church?

SZ: They really weren't closed. There was one week, March 15th, where it was kind of optional for staff, if we wanted to come. And [00:07:00] I just didn't feel right that day. So I thought, "I'll stay away." But ever since March 15th...

And we even did some Wednesday services. They're all on YouTube.

LB: Ah!

SZ: So every week, we've been doing something. And then I even got my vacation Sundays. And even though I'm not going anywhere... Anywhere I was going to go is all canceled or postponed to next year. But I at least got a chance to get some time off. And we had (inaudible) figure in advance. I did get some time off.

LB: Did you have a vacation plan?

SZ: The one week, no, and one week, yes. This coming Sunday, I probably would have been going... I was really thinking of going to New Orleans.

LB: Ah!

SZ: There's a convention that was going to be held there. And then we start seeing... New Orleans really had an outbreak there. And I didn't even buy the airline ticket. That's when, I think, you're really committed, when you buy the airline ticket. I'm so... And so they're talking next year. But they're also talking a video element to the convention. [00:08:00] So if you don't want to risk things and do that -- you can watch the key parts right online, like this.

LB: And that's a convention for people who are music...?

SZ: Well, actually it's a gay-related convention --

LB: Oh!

SZ: -- Black and White Men Together.

LB: Oh, oh! Okay. I... Good. So that's the -- Okay. Good. So...
Okay. So have you been communicating with a lot of people?
Like have you done other Zoom things and...? Probably ha--

SZ: Oh, plenty of Zoom things. In fact, the most unusual one is
I belong to several eating groups. We would get together
like once a month. And so now what we do is go out to a
restaurant or a place, bring something back, put it on our
desk here, and eat and watch each other.

LB: (laughs)

SZ: There's one through the church -- has done that now too.
And then there's different groups. Sometimes you sit there
and talk. And sometimes you sit there and talk and eat.

LB: Yeah.

SZ: And they haven't done the drinking ones yet.

LB: (laughs)

SZ: But that would be [00:09:00] interesting.

LB: What restaurant? What restaurant?

SZ: Well, you get to pick. The one time it was to get a burger.

LB: Oh!

SZ: And I'm-- one this past Friday but that one was to go to an
Indian restaurant and have Indian food -- but not together.
We'll just come back and watch it. But --

LB: Did you do that?

SZ: -- I didn't go to that one. But each month, there's usually something different.

LB: That's so interesting. So where did you get your burger?

SZ: Oh, Red Robin. I live right around the corner.

LB: Oh. Right. Yeah. Yeah. That's pretty close to Red Robin. So are you communicating with other people? Like...? Do you have family around and that stuff?

SZ: Not really in this area. I do have living family. But the parents are dead. The grandparents are dead. The cousins are spread all over the country. I think the closest one is up in the Poconos area. And I haven't really communicated there too much. And there's some in Florida. And on the other side of the family, one of the things that really kind of hit [00:10:00] was that one of my former roommates, as well as my aunt, who is now ninety-one... Sh-- I happened to visit her in early March. And then, all of a sudden, you know, no more visits anywhere, for either of those two. And then she was transferred to a different nursing home. And I'm not the power of attorney. But another one of my cousins is. And all of sudden, you found out, "Oh, by the way, she's been moved." So... She's kind of deaf -- profoundly deaf and really is very quiet. So she never got to see the new nursing home. They just put her in

a room. They bring the food to you. And it's been this way for several months. And then the same thing with the former roommate that was here for ten years. And he's over at ManorCare, in Bethlehem.

LB: Liam?

SZ: And -- Liam -- he's been there for over seven years now.

LB: And...

SZ: At least ManorCare is having these weekly video chats -- (dog coughing) and they usually are pretty good about.

[00:11:00] Thursday, the phone rings. And you get to see him, get to talk. And he did have COVID. I'm trying to think of some of those questions you had on your list there --

LB: Yeah.

SZ: -- so I can answer --

LB: Well, I have some questions.

SZ: -- half of them.

LB: I'll get to this, in terms of... That was your dog's coughing I hear there.

SZ: Yeah.

LB: He's close to the microphone.

SZ: He has the... But he's happy now.

LB: Okay. So Liam was sick?

SZ: Yes. And they gave him like... I think it was the third test he tested positive on. The first two, no. But he had always that, kind of... He's very weak. And so then they said he had COVID. And then they kind of moved him to a different room. And it turned out the whole place... They were sending out emails like a lot. And they were up to over one hundred people --

LB: Wow.

SZ: -- including patients and staff. And it's only a four-story building. And...

LB: Where is ManorCare? Is that in Allentown?

SZ: Bethlehem. ManorCare in Bethlehem, the 2029 building.

LB: Oh, golly.

SZ: There's two buildings, [00:12:00] right next to each other. We're not even talking about the other building, which is just as big. But the 2029 for a while didn't have it. And then, all of a sudden, it just hit. And it's not from the visitors, because there are not visitors. And we went -- just couldn't wait till each week. And they finally got a way to communicate. You could talk to them. And he's hoping to get back to his room. But again, he's moved to another room. The rooms are all the same -- the same floor. It's just down the hallway a little bit more. So, fine, you know?

LB: They moved him to a different room, because they thought the room was contaminated or something?

SZ: Well, he had it. And then his first roommate, who he's had quite a while --

LB: Oh, I see.

SZ: -- had to go to the hospital for something. And then they moved him to a different room. And then... They even had some kind of barriers in the hallway. And I think that was... So you had to get through the barrier to get into the room, so it wouldn't spread so much. And you should see what the nurses look like. I mean, they're [00:13:00] wearing their full PPE, whatever that is. And it was quite a scare there. But now they've said the entire floor where he i-- the fourth floor, is COVID-free. However, that means they still have some in the building. And even if they had none in the building, we're still not allowed to visit. So this has been over six months, and not visi-- And the aunt, I know which nursing home it is but, to get in there and do things, I don't know -- in the Reading area, that one.

LB: Ah. Well, Liam has other illnesses, doesn't he?

SZ: Yeah. He has quite a few things. And so he's kind of confined to his bed. But he is talking. I mean, his mind is fine.

LB: Yeah. Is he about your age?

SZ: Oh, no. He just had his birthday. He's sixty-seven now.

LB: Sixty-seven.

SZ: He just made his next birthday there. So...

LB: Close to my age. (laughs)

SZ: Oh!

LB: I'm not... I'm sixty-three. [00:14:00] But... But, yeah, people in their sixties, they're certainly at risk. But he had other health issues. That's why he was in there. Is that true?

SZ: Oh, yeah. That's where he'll be. The main thing is congestive heart failure.

LB: Oh, I see. Is that in...?

SZ: And so his heart gets weaker and weaker. So he can do less and less. And things begin to atrophy. And every time I would go in to visit, you'd always have to grab an arm and move his arm, move his legs. And the nurses would do that too. But he needed a lot of that. And he couldn't move anything. The only thing he'd do is -- just enough of the fingers to move the remote on the TV -- but couldn't use his cell phone, couldn't type on a computer, nothing.

LB: Wow. Ha! So you've been talking to him via like a Zoom thing or just on the phone or...?

SZ: It's called Duo.

LB: Oh.

SZ: Yeah. That's what they use. So I had to...

LB: [00:15:00] Oh, y--

SZ: It works, you know.

LB: What's your biggest concern about this? Are you concerned about you getting it?

SZ: I can't prove that I had it but I think I did.

LB: Oh, yeah?

SZ: And it hit as a big diarrhea episode, on the same day that I was *just* ready to leave on a bus trip to go to Philly --

LB: Oh, gosh.

SZ: -- with the retired teachers. And I thought I could get a nice breakfast in and we were going to leave around 11:30. And after breakfast, I had to get home for something, was li-- "I think I have to go." And it was like little bit unusual. And then, as I... And you hate to cancel. Because it was an expensive trip. It was going to be a day trip, a special restaurant opening just for us, the day, and see this show at the -- I think it was at the Kimmel Center -- and back. And I felt so bad. And so I kind of cancel. And I'm so glad I did, if that [00:16:00] wa--

LB: Yeah.

SZ: My family doctor can't prove I did. And I guess I can't prove I did. But when I looked at other people's symptoms... Which lasted most of January. But when you live

alone, you can stay at home and basically you're isolating anyway.

LB: So were you sick for most of January, then?

SZ: Yes.

LB: Did you have a sense of smell?

SZ: I don't remember that.

LB: They say...

SZ: But I do remember my appetite was down.

LB: Well, that's a big thing. Yeah.

SZ: You would barely eat like half a sandwich and it was like you could barely get through that. And then you'd have to wait a while and eat the other ha-- And normally, that's nothing. So that was one of the things. I did go to see the doctor twice. And my regular doctor was out for over a month. So I saw another doctor in the practice. And at first, she put me on strong antibiotics. And it seemed to help but, at the end of the antibiotics, it was kind of back to where it was. And I went back in the second. "Oh, we can't do that again. So we'll try prednisone."

LB: Oh, yeah.

SZ: And that seemed to [00:17:00] help a little. But I think, by that time, I was getting out of it. And knew it was some kind of viral thing and it was going around. But they

didn't have any name for it or anything. Just kind of stay, you know, quiet that way. And then that's what I did.

LB: Wow!

SZ: It got better by itself-- The biggest thing was the coughing. And there was one night of chills. I remember that.

LB: Well, it sounds like those are the symptoms. I guess that you could, at the hospital, have them check to see if you have antibodies in your blood.

SZ: Yeah, but... I have to wait for my next doctor visit. And at least it'll be in person. My last doctor visit was over like something like this.

LB: Yeah. Yeah.

SZ: And there are some nice things there too. You take a big blood test. So they know all the good stuff. But you don't have to get weighed. You don't have to, you know...

LB: (laughs)

SZ: They can't check your blood pressure or anything, which usually is good anyway. So it... [00:18:00] I have to wait a little bit that way but...

LB: Yeah.

SZ: I mentioned it to the doctor and she thought that, "No, you had something else, bronchitis of some kind." Well, it

could be that too. Because a lot of bronchitis symptoms are similar too. And I was really pushing it.

LB: I don't know. The things that you're describing, though, they're some... I've had bronchitis and I didn't have diarrhea from it.

SZ: But then there's some articles that have been published that say some people start there. Other people, no symptoms. Other people, it starts as a respiratory.

LB: That's true. Yeah, all sorts of ramifications of it. Well...

SZ: Well, luckily, I don't think I have any lasting ones.

LB: Well, if you had had it, you'd gotten on the bus with all of those people --

SZ: Yeah!

LB: -- you could have really spread that around. That would have been... Even with bronchitis... You can get that from other people too, of course--

SZ: Oh, I make a decision. I waited till the bus came. But then I told them, "I'm not going." They said, "Well, we have a seat right next to the bathroom, in the back of the bus."
[00:19:00] I said, "No."

LB: Really? (laughs) Oh, n--

SZ: And as it was, I went home and I took it real easy. And I could eat again. And everything kind of went back to being

fine. But I never had it where... All your insides were rumbling there, while we were waiting for the bus. It was...

LB: Well...

SZ: I don't want to chance this, so...

LB: Well, it sounds like, if you did have it, it wasn't too devastating. It went on for a long time but... I know a few people who've had it who've said it was absolutely soul crushing for them. And they said to me, "Do not get this." It was... You know, people who said, "If I had been by myself, I would have died. Because I couldn't even get to the bathroom. I couldn't even crawl to the bathroom, I was so weak." So. But then I know other people who've had it who have had no symptoms at all. And they were positive. So, you know, it's the thing. So what's your biggest concern during the pandemic, in terms [00:20:00] of the LGBT community? What do you think about that?

SZ: Well, we're all trying to survive. Yesterday I got to see part of the Reading pride festival online.

LB: Ah. Uh-huh.

SZ: And I didn't get to see the whole thing, because it turned out... I just found out at the time that there was a Black Lives Matter meeting in Emmaus.

LB: I...

SZ: I've been helping with those. I've been doing a lot of protesting lately, the past few months. And that's keeping me busy. And we always wear masks and do things. It started with that Tuesdays for Toomey --

LB: Yeah.

SZ: -- now kind of branched int-- Because officially, that group had stopped. But then there's a core bunch of the group that still meets at the same place and still... Now it's kind of turned into an anti-Trump group. And then... They meet at different places, not always at Toomey's office. There's some other places too. And then there was the Black Lives Matter. I was in that rally just last week, [00:21:00] walking through the city. We started at Seventh and Hamilton, ended up down at the jail.

LB: Saw part of that. Yeah.

SZ: Yeah. And so that was interesting. And I shared some pictures of that with Steve Libby.

LB: I saw that. Yeah, I saw some of those pictures. I really wanted to be at that march. But Trish is so at risk that I can't really take that risk. But I'm very proud of all of the people that spoke out about that. I've talked to a lot of them. And it was a well organized thing, I think, and effective. It was relatively effective, which I think is good. So how about being able to see Rachel Levine, on the

videos tha-- Dr. Rachel Levine, who's our Secretary of Health? That's been a pretty positive thing for me. I don't know about you. How do you feel about that?

SZ: Very positive. I don't watch every single day. But sometimes you're at your phone and, all of a sudden, "Oh, [00:22:00] the governor's coming on." And usually, Rachel's on. And she's very good. And it's a very public spot. And usually the advice is right. I'm very enthusiastic about the governor too. Because he's under a lot of pressure.

LB: What...?

SZ: But everybody has kind of agreed, that I've talked to, that you got to get the virus under control first, before you can really start opening things back up.

LB: Well, as a teacher or as a retired teacher... Because you were a teacher for a long, long, long time, in the Allentown School District, and from school to school. So you really traveled around from school to school. What do you think about opening schools?

SZ: They should stay online, no matter what it is. I know it's not as good as in person. And I was sharing some things on Facebook about this. But if I think of my last schedule that I had, I had two schools. I was six days at one school and two days at another school. And in eight days, [00:23:00] eight school days, you saw every child once. Now

imagine if, around day eight... You know, the first few days -- probably going to go really well. But then, all of a sudden, if one teacher even has it, you've now exposed the entire school --

LB: Yeah.

SZ: -- entire schools.

LB: Yeah.

SZ: And it's like, well, it wouldn't be everybody, because there's going to be some kids that are going to stay online, every day, anyway. But now, all of a sudden... And then all the other teachers were exposed. And the thing is a classroom teacher usually stays in the classroom. So they're being, you know, self-contained. But the way we work, where the art teacher, music teacher, phys ed, and library -- and they would go to the rooms. Well, a separate gym. They would go to -- the phys ed tea-- in the gym. But everybody else came to the room. And if somehow something got on your stuff... Then as a music teacher you're thinking, "Well, the most important thing is getting them to sing," in elementary school. Well, [00:24:00] you're not going to be singing too much with a mask. You're not supposed to be. You can't really do choral speaking. And then like, "All my rhythm instruments!" Well, maybe, if you bring two to each class and this class only uses these two

and this class uses these two and they disinfect them every day.

LB: Oh, gosh.

SZ: But instead of a whole bunch of instruments... I used to have a whole bag of stuff. Well, now it's like, and you could maybe do that. Now you're down to "Well, we could show videos" --

LB: (laughs)

SZ: -- "We could clap, I guess -- that's still okay -- and do things that way." You could talk about music. But you want to actually have them have a chance to perform, have a chance to try to sing. Because after elementary school, some of them aren't going to try anymore. That's their big thing. And then you think about in art, you kn-- "Oh, you want scissors. Oh, you want this. You want stuff that they're all going to touch?" You know. And then you go right to next class. There's no time. That forty-five minutes goes by pretty fast. And you got to get your materials back. You pack up. You [00:25:00] roll. And it might be on the other side of the school. It might be next door. And most times, it's in between. And it gets quite rough. So my hope is that they would stay at home. I know it's not as great and I know the parents have to worry about babysitting and everything. But it's still... Least

we're going to get them to survive. We're in survival mode right now.

LB: Yeah. What about...? Have you talked to...? Because you were talking about going with other retired teachers on a trip. So... Or... And this teacher that -- you were talking, before we got on Zoom today -- that you went for a walk with [inaudible], who's a current teacher?

SZ: Yes.

LB: Is that true? And does that person sort of feel the same way about this stuff? Is that somebody you worked with?

SZ: Yes. We were on a team together. And they go through so many teachers fa-- it's amazing -- that... You know, I'm -- only been out for three years and yet we're down to like maybe thirty percent of the teachers at my main [00:26:00] school are still there.

LB: Yeah.

SZ: And others have transferred to other schools. Some have retired. And some just left teaching, it got to be so bad, and so much pressure that way. But that is one of the few teachers that's still there. And we've known each other for many years. And so... But you hear about all the online meetings but nothing's been said. And it would be nice for them to know. Are we going to stay online? It would save the school district a lot of money. They have to go out and

buy this stuff and adapt the buildings. And then, "Oh, we're not doing that this year."

LB: I can't imagine that... I mean, if the guidelines for the state are that you're not supposed to be in a circumstance where there's more than 250 people... Well, really, a school, even though you have classrooms, the kids are circulating around, though. So I don't know if we have --

SZ: The...

LB: -- any schools that, [00:27:00] you know... I mean, plus it's kids! For heaven's sake! What teacher isn't, you know, exposed to illness all...? That's one of the reasons the teachers stopped teaching, because they're sick all the time. They have to develop that... You must have had a really major immune system, from being around kids singing in your face for the last thir-- the thirty-three years.

SZ: That too. I wasn't always in the classroom. I also did strings for twenty-five of those years too. Sometimes it was strings and a classroom. And sometimes it was... The last six years or so, it was just classroom --

LB: Yeah.

SZ: -- bringing along instruments. Imagine bringing bell sets now. That's not going to g-- Rhythm instruments. No. So you can't really do any instruments that you could pass to them. I guess you could bring instruments that, you say,

"Well, this is a tambourine. And this..." Yeah, but we don't play it. And you really can't do that.

LB: But [the?] thing is that, if there's a teacher that's seeing every student, [00:28:00] that teacher is potentially infecting every student.

SZ: Yes!

LB: So, I mean --

SZ: I've been hearing articles ab--

LB: -- how do you keep that from happening, even if they're wearing a mask or something, even if everybody's wearing a mask? The virt-- You know, when you talk about kid-- You can't keep kids from yelling. Y--

SZ: Or playing with their ma-- Or they forgot one today. Or they lost it somewhere. Or somebody stole somebody else's there. It begins... It sounds funny at first but it's like, "Yeah, this is..." And it's not just at elementary, can be all levels.

LB: Yeah. I don't see how they can do it.

SZ: I don't either.

LB: And with the numbers going up the way they are, it's impossible, I think, to... I mean, it's going to kill kids. And it's going to kill their families. And, you know, I know a young person who had it, who is a college student, actually, who [00:29:00] didn't have any symptoms, came

home from college. She was sent home from college. She was there with her family. And then she spiked a big fever and infected every one of her family members. Everybody in the house got it, including her grandmother, who is over 90. They all got through it. But it was incredibly hard. And someone said to me, "Is she all right now?" And I said, "She's all right now." I mean, she's physically all right. She feels weak -- the kid. But she's not going to be all right, if she just killed her grandmother --

SZ: No. And --

LB: -- never going to be alright.

SZ: -- they were mentioning what could happen, you know. Within the first two weeks or so, all of a sudden, you know, grandparents died at home, teacher died at school, and a lot of kids got sick.

LB: Yeah.

SZ: And, you know, everybody wants to go back. And I've talked to some teachers that want to go back. Yeah, but right now I'd rather keep the kids safe than anything else.

LB: [00:30:00] Is there any teacher that would think that they wouldn't be exposed? I mean, I can't *believe* that there are teachers who wou-- I mean, they see how easily it is to get sick in school, you know. They've closed schools just for flu, in the past, or for measles outbreak or for something.

SZ: Or today, for heat.

LB: For what?

SZ: Heat. Some of our buildings aren't air con--

LB: Oh, heat. I...

SZ: If you're in Florida there, it gets brutal!

LB: Yeah. Yeah.

SZ: And then some schools used to have it that, if a room was air conditioned, you could bring the kids down from the highest-temperature areas. Well, you got nothing done. After a while, it was like... When you're talking heat index over one hundred today... It was like, "No, that's not so..." Because we have several buildings in the district there's no air conditioning. Or it breaks. And then it's like -- or, "Oh, downtown says it's seventy in there." It's like, no, it's eighty-five and [00:31:00] there's nothing happening.

LB: (laughs) Yeah.

SZ: But the computer said... And appare-- Even the janitors can't move some of those things. Or you have to call downtown. And downtown will adjust the computer in your building.

LB: Gosh.

SZ: That's how it was when I was there. See -- right on danger...

LB: When I was in junior high, at a very affluent community in Connecticut, there was no air conditioning in our junior high. And kids would pass out, just be sitting at the chair and, all of a sudden, they'd get really red and fall on the ground -- especially if they were sitting near the windows. Because it was those 1950s buildings, with the big windows, that the... I think Union Terrace sort of liked like that. They were probably built --

SZ: That's the fifties. Yeah.

LB: -- yeah, built in the fifties. And just this glaring heat. It's like one hundred and two degrees. And somebody...

SZ: If you're on that sun side, you're just going to die.

LB: Yeah. Yeah.

SZ: And then what are you going to do, as a teacher? You know, are you going to present new material? Are you going to review what you did? At the beginning of the year, you [00:32:00] can't really review anything. Everything is new material. And you can't really do much. When afternoon comes, you're just stuck. Union Terrace was one of the schools that used to have it where -- there was a new addition put on -- some of the rooms had air conditioning but most didn't. And it never got rectified, that way. We had other buildings where they had a chance to put air conditioning. But there was always the excuse, that usually

came out to money. So they would put in air handlers. But that's not an air conditioner. That's just a fan.

LB: Yeah. So what that would do is create situations, particularly in September, when it can still be very, very hot, where they would try to move kids -- or normally they would move kids to rooms that had air conditioning. So it'd be more kids in one space.

SZ: But then there you are, as a... You're a kid in the air-conditioned room. And now other kids are coming to join you. And then, are they going to kick you out?

LB: Yeah. Yeah.

SZ: Or are they going to have two or three classes doing it? Or you could have a [00:33:00] video. And you got three classes in the air-conditioned room. Again, it's that social distancing stuff.

LB: Impossible.

SZ: It's not going to work. So... But I have one friend who is going to be seventy-four in December, and hasn't had it or anything. But his wife is very -- she has lupus -- much younger than him. His son is nineteen, just finished L-Tri-C and going to Kutztown. And if one of those gets it and brings it home, that could really... But he's had two heart attacks, got diabetes -- almost seventy-four. And,

oh, yeah, he wants to go back. Like, well... So there are some teachers, they want to go back. But it's like, why?

LB: Yeah. Really. It's unrealistic, I think. Anyway. I mean, I can understand why people want to resume school. Some kids are just devastated. They really want to be around their... They're missing parts of their life. [00:34:00] Where's the...?

SZ: The social development part.

LB: Yeah! And there's no question. And their parents have to go to work. And they can't go to work, because their kids are at home -- and their little kids -- you know? -- their seven-year-old kid at home. So...

SZ: And have like a daycare center, that would have a number of computers, that you could like have a big room and just like cubicles for the kids. And, "Okay... Oh, you're going to Harrison-Morton. Well, you watch this one. And you're going..." The kid could sign in, and be at whatever school. They could be...

LB: Yeah, but the problem is that the --

SZ: And they're daycare-ready too.

LB: -- yeah -- the problem is, though, that those kids will still infect each other. And --

SZ: They could. Yeah.

LB: -- it's impossible to not h--

SZ: A huge room and a lot of computers.

LB: I don't see how they could do that. I don't see how you could have a group of twenty kids in one room and not have them carrying an illness, no matter what they did. I mean, you just can't keep kids from... [00:35:00] It's like saying, "Well, you know, of course they'll wash their hands every single time they go to the bathroom."

SZ: And who knows what's going on at home?

LB: Exactly. Yeah.

SZ: Something could come in from home. Or something could go from school to home and now, all of a sudden, at home they're sick. And...

LB: So the... So let's see. So we talked about where it's... Oh, here's a good question. Have you spent any time on queer dating or hookup apps?

SZ: Not really. Because it doesn't matter if they're in another country or in your state or just down the road. The chance of actually meeting somebody, it's a bit of a risk.

LB: Yeah, that's true. That's true.

SZ: So...

LB: Yeah. I think that's affecting people.

SZ: Although I like what they did in England. They mentioned that, if you could get somebody that you knew and you could work out a roommate arrangement --

LB: Yeah.

SZ: -- that way you had the companionship, and you never... And as long as you were there for two weeks or more and you both k-- [00:36:00] Well, that was an idea -- from England!

LB: Huh! What's...?

SZ: But I didn't see anybody actually do that.

LB: You seem that you are having enough contact with people. But, you know, you do usually hang out with people. So...

SZ: And online I have a lot of people that I hang out with.

LB: Oh, that's good. That's good. That's a good thing. So in general, has it affected your life pretty significantly? What's the biggest effect that it's had on your life?

SZ: Well, biggest thing is you do have to stay in a lot more. And I had a piano-playing job in a restaurant.

LB: Oh, yeah.

SZ: That... The restaurant has kind of tried to open now. But the latest thing is they're down to twenty-five percent. And it really wouldn't pay them t-- In fact, it was on the latest thing, "No live music." And then several places in the area, about two weeks ago, they did have live music, when a number of bars opened and a number of restaurants opened. Now [00:37:00] it's -- no. So, and then I was think-- Last year... I also play trombone. And I'm hoping to play with some of the local bands as a substitute. I did

that last summer. Well, that's not happening either. And do have friends, retired teachers, who used to do a lot of playing. They're doing nothing.

LB: So you mean that they were playing the trombone with like the Palmerton, you know, band or the...?

SZ: Well, it could be. But we have four city bands in Allentown --

LB: Yeah. Right.

SZ: -- plus the Macungie band. There's a Catasauqua band. There's a number of o-- I play with a polka band. They're supposed to do something up in Coplay in September and October. And it's li-- I don't think that's going to be happening. But until it's canceled... Because if you think about how it is, it's a very tight, enclosed room, you know. And the people are all the at-risk ones. You're talking seventy on up. And, oh, yeah, it's nice. They all dance. And that's great. They're wonderful people. And they [00:38:00] know all their dances. It's kind of neat to play pieces and say, "These people actually know what the dances are."

LB: (laughs)

SZ: And they know this stuff. And that's very nice. And that's why we kind of keep the traditions alive. But it's like -- it's really unsafe now. Now, that same place has an outdoor

pavilion. But you're talking September, October? You know. That's kind of rough. And then we have a big job up in the Poconos, almost near New York State. And that's in October. And, yeah, we have a date. It's a beautiful facility. It's a beautiful area. But again you're talking probably several hundred people. Then they're going to bring in German dancers. I just don't think that's going to happen this year.

LB: Well, several hundred people. I mean, they've already said that, in Pennsylvania, it's going to be green for the rest of the year. And that's a maximum of two hundred and fifty people. So unless they think that it'd be less than two hundred and fifty, you really can't do it.

SZ: Or you'd have to limit how many people come. And that's a private party, that [00:39:00] one that's up there.

LB: No, like if you're saying... Two hundred people -- or two hundred and fifty people is dangerous but two hundred and forty-nine is not?

SZ: You have to cut it somewhere.

LB: Pretty unrealistic, to say... You know, what's the danger? Well, people could give it to each other, if there's two hundred and fifty people. Well, they're going to give it to each other if there's two hundred and forty-nine people too. They're going to give it to each other. Frankly, in a

dance like that, which sounds wonderful, actually... But people are breathing hard and singing and coming close to each other, moving in the same space over... It's just the worst possible thing you could do, I think.

SZ: Mm-hmm. So that's why I'm hoping it's going to not happen. And that's why I'm happy that the church is doing something. And then, with this cutback, we were, again, making plans to reopen in August. And now it looks like, well, maybe September or later. And as the church musician, I'm looking ahead and thinking, "What are we doing to do for Christmas?" And [00:40:00] all the things that happen around the Christmas season... It's like, well, I think we're just going to, you know... And then, when you find out and you have to go through the denomination, you have to go through the state guidelines too -- but when you find out what you can actually do in a church service, live, according to the official rule, there's not much at all. And so they're getting more to watch the video than they are if you actually showed up.

LB: Yeah. That's true. I've talked to a couple of people who have said that they've really enjoyed the video. In fact, at our community center we have a book group. And I think the most people we ever had come to the book group was eleven, maybe twelve. But we just had one that had fifteen

people there. And the... And I said to Trish that I saw somebody in the book group that I haven't seen for four years -- I said. And I think this person is just a little shy. [00:41:00] But this was really comfortable for them to come. In some ways, it's not a bad idea to occasionally run these things that way too now.

SZ: You mean like a Zoom meeting or...?

LB: Yeah. It was a Zoom meeting. And everybody's on the screen. It's like *The Brady Bunch*, you know. And you would -- people our age understand tha-- You know, and everybody's talking. And people take turns talking about what they... But it also is, if you're a person who doesn't want to talk, you just say, "Well, (laughs) I didn't read the book. I'm just going to listen." And everybody just lets them. I mean, there's no pressure, because you're not there, you know. So people feel more comfortable, I think. Now, we have some people who have said that they don't want to do it on Zoom. And Adrian has said, "Well, you know, some people won't do it on Zoom. They only will do it in public. So if we can open for the public for some of our support groups, that would be a good thing." But I don't know. Because, [00:42:00] you know, if we make somebody sick, it's going to look awful bad.

SZ: And if it stays in the air or got on something they touched and then somebody else touches it... Bathrooms...

LB: Yeah. The bathrooms are one of the most serious places, too. Because if you have somebody use a restroom and then... Especially, multiple-stall restrooms are really bad. We don't have those at the center. But that's a particularly bad thing. Because you're in that little cubicle. And then, you know, there's lots of people... Like a restroom on the highway is particularly bad. So...

SZ: Also at the park, at Lehigh Parkway. There's at least two that are open. But there's a whole lot more that are either boarded up or somehow closed.

LB: Huh.

SZ: And...

LB: Huh. So you've been going to the park a lot, to go for walks?

SZ: Two to three times a week.

LB: That's nice.

SZ: And sometimes the walking partner's there. Sometimes, if that's not available, I do it by myself. And sometimes what I've done als-- I live so close [00:43:00] to Trexler park. And sometimes I'll go there.

LB: Yeah. Do you feel safe, when you're walking around? Do you see people without masks or...?

SZ: Almost everybody now is not wearing a mask, at both parks.
And what used to bother me was the joggers (breathes
heavily) --

LB: Yeah.

SZ: -- breathing at you, you know. But there haven't been too
many joggers. And a day like this, it's like no. But today,
there was a lot of bicycles going around. But again, a lot
of them, they're not really huffing and puffing. They just
put in tenth gear or something. And they go flying past you
there. And that was it. And we do get off the road to let
somebody go by. You feel like a leper, unclean or
something. You see people get off the road there when you
walk by, and all that. But it's worked out well. I've done
this now for like almost six months. And I haven't gotten
anything from that. And you make sure... [00:44:00] If you
don't feel good, well, we're not going wa-- You really
wouldn't want to go walking. Even one of our regular walks,
of two miles, it's... If you're not feeling well, you're
not going to -- you have a hard time make that.

LB: Right. Right. That's two laps around Trexler park.

SZ: Yeah, it would be there.

LB: Well...

SZ: So I take it easy, when I'm by myself there. And I was going the wrong way for a while, there. You have to go clockwise.

LB: Yeah.

SZ: And I remember the old days, when I had my bike and you could go counterclockwise. And I kind of liked that way too. Because at the very end, you come to the bathroom.

LB: (laughs)

SZ: The other way, you start at the bathroom. It's like, "No, I don't need that." Then you have to go around more than once, to get back to the bathroom -- which is open, at Trexler park, which is nice. There is only one. And you get to see the general. And you get to see the nice view.

LB: Uh-huh. And Jack O'Diamond.

SZ: Oh, yeah! Yeah --

LB: That's Trexler's horse --

SZ: -- the horse.

LB: -- he's sitting [00:45:00] on. So what other qu--? So you were looking at the possibility of going to a convention, that was a queer convention, in New Orleans then, huh?

SZ: Well, actually, there was three conventions I could have gone to.

LB: Oh, that's the...

SZ: And they all were moved into next year.

LB: Ah. What were they?

SZ: Well, the one is called the American Theatre Organ Society. And they were going to go back to Indianapolis. And I'd been there. Just about like five, six years ago, they had it there too. And not much has changed, really --

LB: (laughs)

SZ: -- in Indianapolis in the past five or six years. But... And you have a small group. But there again, there was one up-and-coming person and he's from... Where...? It's not Ireland. Scotland. And I heard recently that, well, he's not doing concerts, he's no-- I hope he's keeping in shape. But he plays piano very well. Bu-- he took theater organ on the side, and was wonderful! [00:46:00] That was one of the big promising things. It's like now, well, you can't give any concerts, you can't do anything. And then another friend of mine, who plays theater organ as well as classical organ, he's not doing anything. If your church isn't doing... And we have churches in the area here that basically... They do it from home. It's like video mashup of something. I have another friend who used to be a pastor, who is now a church musician himself. And he brought a keyboard from church to his home. So he doesn't have an organ. He just plays this keyboard. And that gets put on their service somehow. And he hasn't been at his

church in six months. I had a substitute, recently, who confided in me that this person hasn't played the pipe organ in six months -- but did very well. But it's kind of like you get a rough time, when you can't get on an instrument.

LB: There's really nothing else like the pipe organ or the organ.

SZ: Yeah. [00:47:00] It kind of hel-- I have an organ at home. But I haven't really needed to use it. Because I get out to church-- And that was a nice thing. Because when this started in March, there was a special thing that you were allowed to be on the road to get out to church to practice. If anybody would have stopped me, you know... Because you were supposed to now... But there was a dispensation that you could... Well, then, if you're out at church, you could stop at a convenience store and get a little something to eat. And then that was... So you kind of could get out. But you had to -- yeah -- be careful of it that way. But then... So, luckily. But they've been clamping down, to say, "Look, the only people are there, the people that do these video. That's... And the church secretary. That's it." It's...

LB: Well, don't put people at risk. That's definitely the thing. So you were talking about... Do you know anybody...?

You did talk a little bit about people. And certainly you were talking about Liam, who's had this. Have you [00:48:00] known anybody else who has had the virus? You talked pretty much about that already, I guess.

SZ: One that I really knew was Liam. Other people --

LB: No.

SZ: -- really didn't actually get it. That's good. I mean, you don't want to know anybody that did. But you just... I thought that I might have had it. And the symptoms, I thought, sounded that way. But there's always different things. And until we have testing, nobody even knows. You're right. An antibody test *might* say yes or no.

LB: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

SZ: But then, that was many months ago.

LB: So how do you think this is -- think it's affecting your mental health? You feel different? I m-- do you feel despair or great hope or about the same? Or what do you think?

SZ: Overall, I keep so busy each day...

LB: That's good.

SZ: I'm kind of thinking that I'm kind of actually settling into retirement, the way it really could have been, you know. [00:49:00] The ideas... I'm still busy with teaching. I'm still a teacher advocate and trying to help the kids,

at least from this angle, and doing more protesting than I ever did before. And you're still playing. That's the important thing. You're still playing. Yeah. And that's ni-- I miss some of the other stuff I did before, [the dog knows that?]. . . I'm home a lot more. And that was something I worried about in the past too, that, with school and with all the playing stuff and the church stuff, you're never home. And how it's like, you know, I actually sit on my recliner and watch the TV --

LB: (laughs)

SZ: -- something I rarely did. And that's why I got rid of Netflix. Because I'm never home and I'm spending this money for this thing and. . . And now you could. But it's li-- I have enough, you know, going on that way. So. I keep busy, that way.

LB: What was the restaurant that you were doing a gig at?

SZ: Brick Tavern Inn, in Quakertown. And they have an outdoor [00:50:00] patio. And it's very nice. And they'd always talked about, you know, "You bring your own keyboard." And I'd be willing to do that. But now you're twenty-five percent capacity. And you're stuck on the weather. I mean, weather today is really hot. Other weekends, in the past, it's been really, you know. . . It's over a mountain. So the weather we have here, they may have the same thing or not.

And sometimes it comes really fast, because they're kind of close to the mountain. And, all of a sudden, there you are with your keyboard-- your electric keyboard and it starts to rain. Now what?

LB: Have they pretty much, then, not been open? Or are they...?

SZ: They were open for takeout. And then lately they tried to do something indoors and on the patio. And now it's the twenty-five percent thing. So I don't know. But I keep in touch there. And they know what I'm... I sent pictures along. Or I say, "Hi. How ya [00:51:00] doin'?" But... They had five musicians. So it's like I don't think that's coming back anytime soon.

LB: Oh.

SZ: And so... I feel sorry for my other friends that are in -- or play instruments like, say, drums. Well, you need a band. A drum solo is nice for two or three minutes at the most. And then you need something else. Or bassoon. Well, you need an orchestra. You need a small group. By yourself, that's... But piano's nice, because... Piano and organ, you can be your one-person band that way, and it's nice. At least I'm playing. That's the important thing. And that's what I'm happy about.

LB: Yeah, there's not a lot of bassoon-solo music to play, to entertain people.

SZ: A group, there is but not by yourself. But...

LB: No. Don't think that would work. And drums too. Can't have dining entertainment with just drums. So that would be an issue. So let's see. What do you think...? [00:52:00] Oh... Yeah, I think we've hit everything on here. Let me ask you this. If you imagine that this video, which is going into the archives at Muhlenberg...? And I've been doing a lot of these. I told you before that I did a bunch of AIDS -- ones about AIDS. And I did ten of those. And those were pretty interesting. Oh, and you were... You've already talked about some of your protesting stuff. I've asked everybody what they were concerned about with regard to Black Lives Matter and with regard to political --

SZ: The election.

LB: -- and the election. And you've talked about that. So someday, in the future, thirty years from now, somebody's going to look at this, maybe, or forty or fifty years, to see what it was like for individuals during the COVID-19 epidemic. What do you want to say to that person, to tell them what it was like and what it's like for your experience, at this point? And, you know, we're in the middle of the ep-- not even in the middle. [00:53:00] We're at the beginning of the epidemic. We don't even know what's going to happen.

SZ: Well, in the first wave.

LB: Yeah.

SZ: The only thing I would have... And this might not be the closest answer to thi-- Bu-- when I heard that this happened back in 1918, it kind of gave me a little bit of hope that, "Oh, we have been through this before." And some sources I looked at kind of said that it's almost like every hundred years, that there was something big in the 1800s, 1700s, 1600s, that there was some kind of plague or some kind of viral or -- infection that went and killed a lot of people -- but if you can actually go back quite a ways. So people have gotten through this.

LB: Yeah. Yeah.

SZ: It makes you wonder. It's like I... What...? We never heard, much, of a pandemic, you know? You heard about the *Titanic* but you didn't hear much about the pandemic. And so it's l-- we will get through this. There's been a number of -- I guess they're called memes --

LB: Yeah.

SZ: -- that have been on there. And one was saying that, [00:54:00] "Well, gee. It's like there's three things at once." We got the pandemic, we've got a depression starting, and we've got racial unrest, at the same time. Whereas before was one at a ti-- now you got all three. And

so it's made it a very trying time for everybody. Because it's not just... And this has been like a tornado, the way it hit. Some people hardly get hit at all -- and I would say I'm one of those -- and, I'm sure, some that got hit not at all and others that lost everything. And in the next little time, they're going to find out that there's no money for rent. And eventually they put this off. But it's going to be there. Is there another stimulus check coming or not? And what are the terms of that going to be? And you look at what other countries have done. You look what little has been done here. For the very rich, they've got billions of -- and that way. And certain brands, you've [00:55:00] learned now, it's li-- We're never going to that restaurant, never going to buy that brand of jeans -- and other things that way. And it's like, you know, you cons--

LB: Talk about the... I think this is an important thing.

Because Trish was just saying that somebody said that, when you go into a store right now, the only beans on the shelf are Goya. Because no one is buying them.

SZ: Good.

LB: And that's because, for people in the future watching this, the CEO of Goya made some very, very pro-Trump statements. And Goya is a brand... Twice, and unapologetically, and gave lots of money to his campaign. And then one of the

things is that Goya products is mostly purchased by Latinos, in the United States. And Trump has been particularly negative toward Latinos -- who are the people who buy these beans, or, you know, the other Goya products. So [00:56:00] there is an actual significant effect -- it's happening already -- that... Sometimes, you know, people will talk about a boycott and nothing really ha-- you know, it's not that much. Because there's so much going on. Boycott Amazon. But then everybody has to use Amazon, to be able to...

SZ: Or Facebook was another one.

LB: Boycott Facebook, yeah. But everybody's using Facebook. But the circumstance with Goya is that the actual demographic of people who use Goya... Also, there are absolutely substitutes for that that are not bad. So it'll be interesting to see, you person in the future, if the Goya company is affected by this or if they get rid of the CEO. I don't know what his position is. But... But it's an interesting thing that you brought up the beans. Don't buy those bean anymore!

SZ: Yeah. What I'll mention online too is that Ruth's -- Chris -- Steakhouse --

LB: Yeah.

SZ: -- a very fine steakhouse... And they try... And then they got caught. So they gave the money back.

LB: [00:57:00] Yeah.

SZ: That the conditions weren't all the... Oh, they knew. And there are plenty of other ones. But that was one that was really publicized. It's l-- S-- I know there's one in Philadelphia and there's several others. It's like, there's other steakhouses.

LB: Right. Right. And other people who've made that money. That's true. And it's bad. It's... What we're talking about is the huge stimulus to corporations that went to individual corporations. It was supposed to go to small businesses that were really struggling. And it was millions and millions and millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars, that ended up going to some big, enormous corporations, that really didn't need the money. And then they acted as though -- "Oh, well, we didn't know that this..." And some -- and you have to hand it to them -- some of them gave the money back. Others have...

SZ: Got shamed into it. Yeah.

LB: And so at least they did those things. They were a little bit more hip. But... Yeah. It's the interesting thing, about the beans, [00:58:00] or about the restaurants or whomever is doing stuff. But I think, you know, we have

to... It's an economic circumstance. Yeah. So that's a great thing to talk about for the future. And so is there anything else you want to say or toss in or talk about here?

SZ: Not really. It's been very nice talking with you.

LB: It's been lovely talking with you! I don't get to see you enough. And I've known you --

SZ: They too--

LB: -- for the twenty-five years, more probably than that. So it's wonderful to talk to you. And you look chipper and...

SZ: You like the color? Huh, huh, huh?

LB: Yeah! Yeah, I got the same shirt on, I think, as you, but just a different color. So there you go. And it's great to see your little doggie, who's happy. And I'm glad you have your dog, to be able to pet and hug while you're...

SZ: Oh, that helps. This is my sixth consecutive pug --

LB: (laughs)

SZ: -- since 1975.

LB: It's a pug-a-thon!

SZ: And this was a stray also too. And he was thin. And I went through the Pug Group. And ten people wanted this one.

LB: [00:59:00] Huh.

SZ: And I just keep after the person, and, it turned out, the person who was in charge of doing this. And somehow... He

was in the police department for a while. Nobody came to pick him up. And, all of a sudden, one day -- it was a Sunday afternoon -- I get this call -- was, "Well, I've decided to pick you." "Okay. And I'll come over to Easton." "Oh, no. We're coming over to you."

LB: Oh...

SZ: They wanted to check out the backyard, make sure you are who you say. And they had one of the K-9 police cars. And her husband came. Big car, big Ford LTD, and all the special stuff you'd have for the police car and this little pug in the back.

LB: (laughs)

SZ: And she brought him over. And so I had to give him a name. I had to think ab-- I didn't want to do Pugsley *again*. Every now and then, you'd think of the dog. You think Pugsley. And I've had two Pugsleys in a row. I didn't want to go for three Pugsleys in a row. So I had to pick a new name. I picked Atlas. Because he seemed much stronger. He seemed a little bigger than the other pugs. And... He was well-adjusted. [01:00:00] So there wasn't much to train or anything.

LB: Oh, that's good.

SZ: And he... They're very stubborn. They're set in their ways. And so you learn to adapt to him. It's usually easier to do it that way.

LB: Well, he's lucky to be in a... I would presume you have air conditioning, complete...

SZ: Oh, yeah. Got a new system, two years ago. And I'm so happy.

LB: Yeah. That was smart. I wish we had it. We have units. They're not -- or not in the house. I'm in the third floor and I don't think I can really cool it up here. I can make it not devastating. But I can't make it actually cool enough to just go, "That's cool." The second floor, we can do that. But we can't do it on the third floor. It's too hot. But anyway. So it's great...

SZ: When the electric bill comes...

LB: Pardon me?

SZ: When the electric bill comes.

LB: Yeah. This is the first day that we've used our air condition-- except in my office, in here, because it's so hot here. But, yeah. We can usually stand it pretty hot. But it was too much, last night, was over one hundred. [01:01:00] And it was just too much. We did run the air conditioner, to sleep by. It was so hot, though. Trish got up at five o'clock to water the garden --

SZ: Ah!

LB: -- because it was so hot outside. It was in the nineties in the night. So. It got down into the eighties. But... But it's supposed to cool off a little.

SZ: I'm hoping.

LB: Anyway, it's been lovely talking to you. I've really enjoyed it. It's been great to see you. You look great. And keep up the good work, Steve. You know, you've been such a loyal activist, for many, many years. I always think of you as kind of a Mr. Rogers voice, with the intensity of Mr. Rogers, as well, in terms of always being there to really make change. And I was just talking -- I just want to tell you that I've been interviewed for the archives, the oral history archives. I'm talking about all the stuff that we did for the ordinance and [01:02:00] passing the ordinance and everything. And I was talking about how we would go to the on-site things, where Frank McVeigh was, and that time that I called you and you and Tom [Enby?] came over really fast. We were at the Ag Hall. You were there like in *minutes*. And it was so terrific. And that we also went to the churches, to try to... Because they were getting...

SZ: Just thinking of tha--

LB: And how that guy was there with a video camera, because he thought, if he videoed us and we were representing the gay

side, that we would be embarrassed. And you and I both turned to the camera and waved. (laughs) And you've always been -- as a public school teacher, I've always pointed to you as someone who is so willing to be out and an inspiration to students. And terrific that you've done that. I mean, you know, you had letters to the editor, identifying yourself as a public school teacher, when we didn't even have the rights. So you were really out there. Good for you. I really [01:03:00] appreciate all that work that you did. Well, thanks!

SZ: Thank you.

LB: Well, you're welcome. So we'll see you around campus. And I'm going to turn the record off now. And thank you, again.

END OF VIDEO FILE