



Lavender Notes

*Improving the lives of LGBT older adults
through community building, education, and advocacy.*

November 2016

Celebrating 20+ years of service and positive change

Volume 23, Issue 11

Stories of Our Lives

Pamela G. Barnes

Pamela Barnes is a survivor. When she was barely six years old, she was whisked to the English countryside - out of harm's way - when the Nazis began their eight-month "blitzkrieg" over her hometown of London, as well as various other industrial and transportation targets in the U.K. In her 30s, she braved the difficult transition to New York City, participating with other pioneers in the first-ever LGBT Pride March in 1969 precipitated by the Stonewall uprising. In her 40s, she and a friend were sexually assaulted after being abducted in handcuffs from a roadside picnic area by men posing as police officers. And in her 70s, she suffered from cervical cancer as a result of human papilloma virus contracted during the sexual assault.

Through it all, she has been an outspoken advocate for women and women's rights.

Born the 2nd of two children to a brilliantly clever precision engineer and his hypochondriacal and frequently abusive wife, Pamela was considered an "*accident*", for her mother had been in denial about her pregnancy almost up until the birth. From an early age, she was considered a "renegade" with considerably more potential than her brother, who was two years older.

"My brother was actually quite 'dim'," Pamela recalls, "someone who couldn't fully understand the work our father was doing or much of anything else, though he was highly cosseted by their mother. So I was the one that father would occasionally take on the job with him. He would explain the intricacies of the projects he was working on, although this went against the grain, as I was 'just a girl'."

When she was a teenager, Pamela's father decided to build a seaworthy 40-foot cabin cruiser from scratch, which he intended to sail at least across to the continent. The do-it-yourself project took several years.

"Our maiden voyage in that craft wound up being a bit of a disaster, for there were no navigational gadgets beyond a compass in those days," Pamela explains. "By the time we got down the Thames to the estuary, my brother was deathly seasick. Then when we went out into the open sea, it was very stormy. The fuel-laden dinghy sank, my father lost his glasses and I was left to both navigate and steer, while both men threw up. My father urged me to beach the boat or send up a distress flare to bring out a lifeboat, both of which I refused to do. I followed the marker buoys until I found an appropriate inlet for the 90 horsepower engine to enter safely. It was a struggle dealing with the high sea and cross-currents, but I got us into quiet water. Needless to say, that was the last trip we ever made on the cruiser."

Pamela attended all-girls schools, where she had frequent crushes on female faculty and staff. As a teenager, she fell in love with her science teacher, Joy. When Pamela's mother discovered and read her diary about her feelings for her teacher, a giant mother-daughter battle ensued - including "the first time I ever slapped her back in retaliation for all the beatings she had ever given me". This resulted in Pamela moving out of the family home for good and residing for a few years with Joy, while she finished her schooling in both science and art. Meanwhile, Joy - who had been raised by nuns in a convent - decided to take divinity courses and became a nun, virtually ending their relationship, though they remained in touch via mail from time to time.

After secondary school, Pamela was awarded a major scholarship to attend University College in London, where she obtained a degree in anthropology and psychology. She got a job as a technician, the first-ever woman at the Oxford University Laboratories, working in animal physiology and chemical crystallography. Later she conducted research at Raddiffe Infirmary, studying human temperature regulation. In her late 20s, she traveled extensively around Europe on her Japanese motor scooter, but was drawn to the U.S., arriving in the Boston's Back Bay area where she got her first job as a graphic artist.

During her time in Boston, she received word that her father had been diagnosed with inoperable brain cancer and was in a hospice-type facility and given only a short while to live.

"I immediately flew back to be by his side, though he couldn't speak," she recalls. "So we played chess instead - we related to each other best on an intellectual level. And that was the last time I ever saw anybody in my family. He was, after all, the only one who was ever kind to me in that family. My brother married a woman who disliked me as much as he did - mostly jealousy, I presume - and I've had no interest in seeing them or any of their four children."

Soon after her father's death, Pamela moved from Boston to New York City, where she soon found a place on 49th Street near the United Nations.

"New York was where I finally acknowledged that I am a lesbian," Pamela recalls. "I met a gay guy who took me to some of the gay clubs, which checked you out like a speakeasy then. In 1969, I was exhilarated by marching in the first-ever gay pride march, where I met the amazing, unpredictable and brilliant Kathy. Although we lived together, shared a bed and had lots of adventures together, it was clear that she was a tad on the schizophrenic side, so it wasn't by chance that I next became involved in radio work."



Living in NYC (UN in background); Discovering the NY lesbian community; Hitting NY high-spots; Playing the tuba!

She became involved in radio after she met a woman who asked Pamela to take over her radio show on WBAI while she traveled overseas. What resulted was the "Merry Flowerpot Show", written and produced by Pamela, featuring adventurous skits, complete with sound effects, which became a prime-time hit. She was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts grant to distribute nationally. In addition, she developed many other amusing programs, particularly fun Christmas editions and a "Book at Bedtime" series focusing on "amusing authors".

In spite of her success in the NYC radio industry, Pamela never got accustomed to the extreme weather in New York - the "atrocious heat" in the summer and the "bone-chilling cold" of the winter there. July and August found her up in the cool pine forests of Maine, while January and February were spent camping in the Everglades. Someone suggested she might find California's climate more congenial. She flew to California in the mid-1970s and has never left since.

"One of the things I'm proudest of from my time here is co-founding the Sappho Project with my friend, Carol," she explains. "We both worked at the San Francisco Opera Scenic Arts Studio - she was the talented forewoman for scenic painting. With a grant from San Francisco Arts Commission, we built and installed an exhibit for the Hormel LGBT Library Collection of the SF Main Library, collaborating with another Carol, a gifted graphic artist, to honor the life and works of the Greek poet, Sappho. We invited the Greek consul, who attended the Grand Opening with his wife and daughter, lavishly praising the exhibition."

More about the Sappho Project can be found on the website, www.sappho-project.org.



Getting to Know the Pacific Coast in the 1970s-80s

Pamela's poetry and play-writing then took off. She won a poetry prize from the Winning Writers website, on her poem, "Sixty-Two Haikus on World War II". She has written and produced several plays, in collaboration with musician/composer extraordinaire, Ellen Hoffman - including the three-act musical, "Josephine the Pirate Queen", "Puss-in-Boots Meets Rapunzel" (both can be seen on-line), "The Mystery of the Missing Link" and "Tales of Good King Wenceslas: A Holiday Musical", both of which await production funding. In addition, she has a repertoire of nine "Presentations on Entertaining Topics" that she continues to offer to any interested Bay Area organizations and is a regularly-invited speaker at the Browning Society of San Francisco.



Part of Publicity for One of Pamela and Ellen's Dramatic Productions

In her not-so-spare time, Pamela researches and rubs designs from gravestones and knits wooly scarves for her friends.



Researching gravestones and various religious artifacts for her creative work

She frankly admits that one of the most disturbing issues in today's culture is the amount of sexual assault and date rape, including on the college campuses of the world.

"That was such a traumatic event in my life - not only the violation itself, but the subsequent cervical cancer that resulted from that assault," she recalls painfully. "Women are so vulnerable in this world and there's such a low prosecution rate that we can't really live a normal carefree life, which is just wrong!"

For two years, Pamela had a Friendly Visitor, who got a full-time job and is not able to provide that service anymore. Pamela is currently waiting to receive a replacement either through Lavender Seniors or its collaboration with the Rainbow Community Center in Concord.

Meanwhile, Pamela continues to live an active life in San Pablo, where she has a large vegetable garden to take care of. She definitely is a survivor!



Pamela (appropriately) tending to her fence-line of Lavender, San Pablo, October 2016

Book Review:

Fair Play: How LGBT Athletes Are Claiming Their Rightful Place in Sports

By Cyd Zeigler

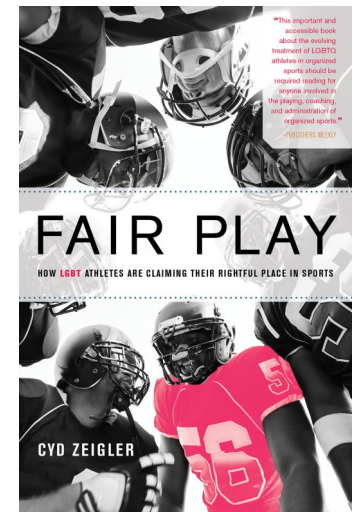
Zeigler co-founded the Sports Equality Foundation which helps gays coming out in sports. He is a graduate of Stanford University. He has a lover and two cats.

The death of Matthew Shepard transformed the political landscape. Homophobes were now on the defensive. A radical conservative named Hardaway declared that he hated gay athletes. The Democrats were supportive of gays but silent.

The author feels that there will never be a "gay Jackie Robinson."

Gay men were seen as weak and passive. It was said that "you're not pulling your weight on the team." Lavender men were only excited by musicals and Judy Garland songs.

Today lesbians are now widely accepted in sports, especially basketball.



Gay athletes are now leading the way and Zeigler inspires all of us who follow sports.

- Frank Howell



NEW CONSERVATORY THEATRE CENTER CELEBRATES 35 YEARS

2016-2017 Season Presentations

- + **CASA VALENTINA** Oct 7 - Nov 6, 2016
by Harvey Fierstein
Regional Premiere
- + **SONS OF THE PROPHET** Nov 11- Dec 18, 2016
by Stephen Karam
Regional Premiere
- + **AVENUE Q** Dec 2, 2016 - Jan 15, 2017
Music, Lyrics and Original Concept by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx, book by Jeff Whitty
- + **DANIEL'S HUSBAND** - Jan 20 - Feb 26, 2017
West Coast Premiere
by Michael McKeever
- + **LEAVING THE BLUES** Mar 3- April 2, 2017
A Play with Music by Jewelle Gomez
World Premiere
- + **EVERYTHING THAT'S BEAUTIFUL** March 17 - April 23, 2017
by Elyzabeth Gregory Wilder
World Premiere
- + **SORDID LIVES** May 12 - Jun 11, 2017
by Del Shores
SF Premiere
- + **WARPLAY** Jun 2- Jul 2, 2017
by JC Lee
World Premiere

Subscription Packages provide heavy discounts.
Go to NCTCSF.ORG/SUBSCRIBE for more details.
25 Van Ness Ave. San Francisco, CA 94102
415.861.8972

San Leandro Pot Luck

***Beginning again in January:

All Saints Episcopal Church Parish Room,
911 Dowling Boulevard, San Leandro, CA***

Second Saturday Noon-2:00

Mark your calenders....we have some great programs coming up!



Potluck starts at noon. Bring a friend! Share some stories!

Nov 12:

Because of scheduling issues, the Second Saturday potluck in November will NOT meet in San Leandro in November, but be combined with the Third Friday Lunch Bunch at the North Oakland senior Center to celebrate the 22nd anniversary of Lavender Seniors. Join us at the North Oakland Senior Center on the 3rd Friday, November 18th. **REPEAT:** We will not be meeting at All Saints in San Leandro in November; December is also still up in the air. We return to All Saints as of 14th of January.

Dec 10: December Lavender Seniors Potluck at the All Saints may be shifted to another location. The church is in need of its facilities. If you have any suggestions to where we can meet please let Barbara know: 510 755-5691 or bj_Patbond@yahoo.com. In the meantime stay tuned.

We are looking for ideas that may pique the interest of Lavender Seniors participants, send your suggestions to info@lavenderseniors.org.

CARA's recommendations...Senior Vote 2016



WHO WE ARE: The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) is a statewide nonprofit organization that unites retired workers and community groups to win social and economic justice, full civil rights, and a better, more secure future for ourselves, our families, and future generations. Join us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/californiaalliance). CARA is the official state affiliate of the Alliance for Retired Americans, www.retiredamericans.org.

Senior Vote 2016

<http://www.californiaalliance.org/doc.asp?id=3849>

Seniors Vote Tool Kit

http://www.californiaalliance.org/pdf/3886.Seniors_Vote_2016_Toolkit.pdf



FEATURED EVENT
Billy DeFrank LGBTQ Community Center ANNUAL MOVIE FUNDRAISER

WHEN: Sunday November 13, 3:30pm - 8:30pm

WHERE: Camera 7 at the Pruneyard Shopping Center, 1875 S Bascom Ave, Campbell, CA 95008

TICKETS: Must be purchased on-line and in advance from [HERE](#)



This is the 9th Annual Silicon Valley LGBTQ Movie Benefit for the Billy DeFrank LGBTQ Community Center.

Alliance companies' ERGs are producing this annual event! The hosts are from AT&T, Blue Shield of California, Cisco, eBay, GE Digital, Google, Hewlett Packard Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Hortonworks, Kaiser Permanente, KPMG, Lockheed Martin, Logitech, netApp, Oracle, PG&E, Pure Storage, Santa Clara Valley Water District, SAP, Texas Instruments, Veritas, Wal-Mart and Yahoo!.

Our exclusive VIP Reception sponsor is Kyoto Palace: Pruneyard Shopping Center, 1875 S Bascom Ave #2500, Campbell, CA 95008



LGBT Online Support Group for Caregivers

If you are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender and caring for someone with ongoing health problems . . . ***you are not alone!*** Family Caregiver Alliance's online LGBT Caring Community Support Group connects you with others facing the day-to-day challenges of caregiving. If you're assisting someone with Alzheimer's, stroke, Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury, or other chronic health problems, you can get support from the convenience of your home.

Share experiences, resources, and ideas in a supportive, caring environment. Available 24 hours a day, all you need is e-mail, and it's free! Visit www.caregiver.org.



Community Phone Calls

Just a few of the things offered:

LGBTQ Chat, 2nd and 4th Mondays, 10/10, 10/24, 11/14, 11/28, 12/12, 12/26 12:30pm - 1:30pm This group is open to all LGBTQ seniors and is an opportunity to connect with others socially in a supportive environment where participants can share individual and collective experiences. We will create an inclusive place to share our stories with each other and build a sense of community. Facilitated by Sylvia Vargas, Openhouse Friendly Visitor Manager

Cultural Literacy Meltdown Fridays, 10/14 - 1/6 5:00pm - 5:45pm Cultural literacy is the phrase coined by educators to describe a body of knowledge held in common by those brought up in a society. Few know every item but most of us know something about most subjects. Each week, we will pick thirty or so subjects from the Dictionary of Cultural Literacy to see what we know as a group. Participants are encouraged to bring topics of their own. Facilitated by Lynn Rayburn

Living with Chronic Pain Thursdays, 10/13 - 12/15 2:00pm - 2:30pm Those of us living with chronic pain know that it can affect every area of our lives - disrupting our activities, our appetite, our personal relationships, and our overall emotional health. Share your experiences, your challenges, and successes with others dealing with chronic pain in a supportive, caring environment. Facilitated by Tom Norris, Retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel, and American Chronic Pain Association (ACPA) Facilitator who has been living with chronic pain for over 25 years.

View the **Fall catalog** of community phone calls [here](#). To participate in these or other Senior Center Without Walls (SCWW) telephone activities, or to learn more about SCWW programs, call 877-797-7299 or email info@seniorcenterwithoutwalls.org.

[Third Friday Lunch Bunch, Friday, 18th November, 12-2pm](#)

Mothertongue Feminist Readers Collective Presents

This Lunch Bunch acknowledges the 22nd anniversary of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay this month. Three members of the Mothertongue Feminist Readers Collective will be on hand to perform at the celebration. The theme being explored will be ***Lost and Found***, the deep and funny challenges of aging.



Mothertongue Feminist Readers Collective began in 1976. Since then over 100 women have come together to tell our truths by talking about and writing the sweet and sour stories of our lives. We have performed in colleges, coffee houses, senior centers, music festivals and at conferences and community events in the Bay Area and beyond. Forty years later, we still find joy in telling our truths to each other and performing them for our audiences. At the end of every performance, we engage our audience in a discussion, inviting them to add their own stories and responses to the topic.

Our familiar and loved themes include Women and Food, Lesbian Erotica, Mothers and Daughters, Disability and Aging. Mothertongue is open to all feminists who have ideas and experiences to share. Our structure reflects our feminist principals of inclusion and is non-hierarchical. We accept all levels of writers and performers. We make decisions through consensus.

Performers for this occasion are Corky Wick, Judith Masur and Ruth Hurvitz.

The Third Friday Lunch Bunch is held at the North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MLK Jr Way (corner of 58th Street). Lunch is served at 12 noon, followed by announcements and Mothertongue performance beginning at 12:45pm or so.

20th in the Third Wednesday Film Series, Wednesday, 16th November, 1-3pm

The Page Turner

This 2007 French film (with English sub-titles) involves a young girl, Mélanie Prouvost, who aspires to be a pianist and auditions in front of famous pianist Ariane Fouchécourt for a place at a conservatoire. Ariane signs an autograph for an admirer during the recital, distracting Mélanie and affecting her performance. She leaves the audition with her mother, heart broken.

Some years later Mélanie, having studied hard, finds a work placement at a solicitors. Perhaps coincidentally we find the husband of the famous pianist for whom she previously auditioned. The story develops as the young woman ingratiates herself into the life of the family, becoming a holiday nanny of sorts for the young son whom the family hopes will follow in the footsteps of the mother as a famous pianist.



Befriending the boy, Melanie encourages him to prepare a full piano recital performance for the father's return to the family home after a business trip. She also manages to become indispensable to Ariane, both practically and emotionally. Melanie's perfectly timed page- turning, combined with her composure and apparent empathy, enable Ariane to recover a confidence in performance that she thought she had lost after a traumatic car crash.

A very close and intimate relationship is established between the two women, each becoming obsessed with the other - for various reasons. This psychological thriller has kept people on the edge of their seats in theaters around the world.



The 85-minute film will be shown at 1pm on Wednesday, 18th November, in the Lecture Hall at San Leandro Public Library, 300 Estudillo, a ten-minute walk up Estudillo from the San Leandro BART station - or a five-minute walk from the AC-Transit stop at E. 14th and Estudillo. For those with mobility issues, pick-up from the San Leandro BART station can be arranged (for 12:30) by e-mailing JohnDavid@LavenderSeniors.org or calling John David (510-532-8951) at least 24 hours in advance.

Lavender Seniors will provide popcorn, bottled water, Martinelli's apple juice (both sparkling and regular), plus miniature Reese's peanut butter cups. After the showing, there will be a brief discussion and evaluation of the film and the issues it brings up for LGBTQ Seniors and their allies.

For people who are driving, the library is on Estudillo two blocks below Bancroft Avenue in San Leandro. It is accessible via either I-880 or I-580, as well.

From I-880, get off at the Davis exit and head east toward the hills. Davis eventually becomes Callan, which passes the north side of the library two blocks above East 14th.

Coming on I-580, get off at the Estudillo Exit (#31B) and follow that street down toward the Bay until you reach 300

There is ample free parking - some three-hour and some two-hour - at the library.

Monthly Events



Out Standing Seniors, Hayward

November 1 & 15 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (1st and 3rd Tuesdays)

Hayward Senior Center, 22325 N. Third Street, Hayward

A safe and confidential space for LGBTQ seniors 50+ to share thoughts, feelings, resources, information, and support. FREE, though donations are welcome.

Lavender Seniors Advisory Board Meeting

November 9, 6:00-8:00 p.m. (Wed before San Leandro Potluck Lunch)

San Leandro Public Library, 300 Estudillo, Meeting Room C, San Leandro

A portion of this meeting is open to the public.

Queerly Aging Lesbians

November 3 & 17, 1:30 p.m. (1st and 3rd Thursdays)

The Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Avenue (at Derby), Berkeley

Find support and like-minded wonderful people!

San Leandro Potluck

No Second Saturday Potluck this month

All Saints Episcopal Church Parish Room, 911 Dowling Boulevard, San Leandro

Come relax for a couple of hours. Share the love, meet others, talk and laugh!

Rainbow Seniors

November 8 & 22 12:30-2:00 (2nd & 4th Tuesdays)

San Leandro Senior Center, 13909 E 14th St, San Leandro

A safe and confidential space for LGBT seniors 50+ to share thoughts, feelings, resources, information, and support. FREE, though donations are welcome.

Senior Men's Group

November 10 & 24, 1:30 p.m. (2nd and 4th Thursdays)

The Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley

Co-sponsor: The Pacific Center, 510-548-8283

Feel alone? Need to find space to be yourself and chat with others? Join us!

Lavender Seniors Film Series

November 16, 1:00-3:00 p.m. (3rd Wednesday of each month)

San Leandro Public Library, 300 Estudillo, lecture hall, San Leandro

This month's movie is: "The Page Turner" info above.

Our Space Intergenerational Community Dinner

November 17, 5:30-7:00 p.m. (3rd Thursday of each month)

Our Space, 22245 Main St in Hayward

Contact stephanie@baycyouth.org for information

Oakland Lunch Bunch

Sponsored by City of Oakland Aging & Adult Services

November 18, 12:00-2:00 p.m. (3rd Friday of each month)

North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland

This month's program: Lavender Seniors 22nd Anniversary with Mothertongue Feminist Readers Collective (see info above)

Women caring for their woman partners

Every other Friday at 1pm

Please R.S.V.P. to Patricia at patricia@LavenderSeniors.org (510) 574-2091

Facilitated by Dr. Shannon Dubach

2041 Bancroft Way, Suite 307 Berkeley

If you are a woman caring for a sick elderly or disabled woman partner, join us.

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay Board of Advisors

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Secretary: John David Dupree

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Victor Aguilar Jr.

Editor: Beckie Underwood

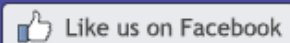
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Mike Trutner

Lavender Seniors

is a project of

LIFE ElderCare



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