



Lavender Notes

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

February 2016

Celebrating 20+ years of service and positive change

Volume 23, Issue 2

Stories of Our Lives - Lavender Seniors and WOFF Pioneers

Barb^{ONE} and Barb^{TWO} - The two Barbaras of WOFF Hall

They were called the two Barbaras - Barbara Konecny and Barbara Jue - because in their names, the work they did, as well as the playing they reveled in, they seemed to be inseparable for over a decade.

"Like the many committed couples among Lavender Seniors pioneers - including Marvin and Bill, Stella and Ina Mae, BJ and Meg, John E and his partner, Bev and Darlene, and others," Barbara Jue recalled, "if you saw one of the couple, you usually saw the other!"

"Barbara K - slightly older than me - would say 'I'm called Barbara Won, because I won over Barbara J!', meaning that I - the younger - was referred to as Barbara Two."

[Editor's Note: Having explained that age difference - and to avoid confusion - we will now refer to the two Barbaras as Barb^{ONE} and Barb^{TWO}, respectively.]



Barbara Konecny (Barb^{ONE}), left, and Barbara Jue (Barb^{TWO}), right, dressed gaily for social events.

"We met at a photography class on the Oakland Army Base in the early 1990s," Barb^{TWO} recalled. "While Barb^{ONE} was meticulous about following the instructor's instructions, I was not. In fact, we were a perfect example of opposites attracting!"

"For instance, I liked classical music, particularly Bach, which was definitely a counterpoint to her love of gospel and

country music. Each of us learned to appreciate each other's music, however, one of the unexpected results being my learning to love a certain Garth Brooks album, in spite of myself!

"Similarly, in the kitchen, we worked well together, because while she was a terrific cook, I played my part by pitching in on the set-up and the clean-up."

Barb **TWO** had just become a widow when the two women met. They shared a mutual interest in photography and, beginning with many photographic excursions, their association evolved into a more committed relationship. They remained together "til death do us part" for 13 years.

When the pair first got together in the early 1990's, Barb **TWO** told Barb **ONE** that she didn't think they would have many friends because they hadn't come out to their current friends and business associates. She warned that if they did come out to people in their lives, nobody would want anything to do with them.

Taking that fear as a challenge, they founded Women Over Fifty and Friends, (WOFF). At about the same time, the San Leandro Times announced that a group of concerned LGBTQ people were gathering together at the Bayfair Mall to talk about the lack of services for that senior community.

"We attended that first meeting," Barb **TWO** recalled, "And by the second meeting, Barb **ONE** had become the Lavender Seniors Social Director, a natural progression of the effect she had on people. Much to the delight of many of the pioneers, Barb **ONE** fell into her natural role of hosting and cooking meals for many of the initial social gatherings."

Since most meeting places for LGBTQ were in bars, Barb **ONE** acted on what she saw as a need for the community to meet each other, enjoy each other, and learn from each other in a safe and supportive environment outside the bar scene. The pair had previously explored Bay Area Career Women and a lesbian homeowners group but found they were either far outside their age group or had entirely different interests.

Initially, WOFF met as a potluck on the first Saturday of the month at Barb **ONE**'s Oakland home. After the two moved in together, the meetings were held at their joint San Leandro home. No hard liquor nor smoking was allowed on the premises. Fragrances were also restricted in order to provide a healthier environment for all attending.

WOFF became a social and educational gathering, sprinkled generously with health education from invited speakers. Since both Barbaras were strong proponents of diversity, they eagerly invited Black, Latina and Asian women to the events. Culinary offerings reflected that diversity. In addition, taking a cue from the talents of the attendees, subjects of interest to the participants were also focused upon. The home became a regular venue for discussion groups and games to occur simultaneously.

"Barb **ONE** was an outstanding social developer and loved sharing her southern-style dishes," Barb **TWO** recalled. "The meetings at her - and then our - home, picnics, and parties allowed her to demonstrate her incredible culinary prowess. Those LGBTQ community members who attended - whether for Lavender Seniors or WOFF events - came not only for the meeting agenda, but to enjoy her fabulous meals!"



The Two Barbaras in a Family Portrait, circa 2000

Themed parties became events for the seasons, Valentine's Day Dances in February, St. Patrick's Day celebrations in March, Halloween parties in October, and spring flings. Some of the women formed musical groups and played or sang at the potlucks.

"Under Barb **ONE's** guidance, if you had a talent, she encouraged you to share that talent with other LGBTQ community members to foster a sense of empowerment, Barb **TWO** recalled. "She provided a venue for the women to showcase their musical, poetic, dramatic and dancing talent. As a result, the women developed and presented an annual talent show. It was one of the best-attended events in the East Bay at the time."

As part of their social action commitment, WOFF women began a program called WOFF Fairies wherein a cadre of women would provide assistance to participating LGBT individuals suffering illness or, otherwise, in need of help.

In the course of their program activities, WOFF provided a safe enough means for lesbians to meet that Barb **ONE** happily noted that at least 10 couples met and formed permanent partnerships. As mentioned earlier, she was a strong advocate for racial and religious tolerance, actively encouraging Lesbians of Color to join WOFF and Lavender Seniors as participants in all their activities.

During the political periods of Prop 22 and other proposed anti-gay measures, she encouraged discussions, while activist attendees spoke to educate the women about the issues. The pair opened their home to fundraising for LGBTQ political candidates such as Kevin Dowling, GLOBE endorsements, and others.

Over the years, Barb **ONE** became well-known as a person of integrity, intelligence and savvy. She was president of the Rotary Club, and an extremely successful entrepreneur. She attracted money to WOFF and Lavender Seniors through donations simply because of her stature and credibility.

"Because of those donations, we established WOFF as a 501(c)3 charity," Barb **TWO** explained. "Barb **ONE** believed that women who donated to the monthly activity deserved accountability, so she published income and expenditures of the monthly donations in the WOFF newsletter. After her death in 2003, the published accountability ceased.

"Subsequently, in 2005, the existing four board members met without me, voted to replace me with one of their own and elected me to the position of President Emeritus. WOFF continues to hold potlucks on the first Saturday of the month at the homes of various participants."

Barb **ONE** received the GLOBE 2000 Pryor Conrad Award. Both Barbaras won recognition in separate Pat Bond Awards for founding and developing WOFF. Barb **ONE** was the recipient in 2002 (see photo below), shortly before her death.



Barb **ONE (far right), receiving Pat Bond Award 2002, with (Far left), another LS pioneer, Dottie Fowler; and 2nd from right, Marion Abdullah, frequent LS Participant active at North Berkeley Senior Center; second from left are Alice and Carol, owners of Mama Bears Book Store**

"When I accepted my award," Barb **TWO** recalled, "it was important for me to acknowledge my parents - both professionals - who instilled in me the values of citizenship and all the responsibility that comes with that birthright. In addition, of course, I had to acknowledge the courage to step up to the plate that I had received from my loving activist partner! She was an extrovert where challenges and changes were visible as she moved from one life event to another. I was an introvert and any movement of change came from within - with her help - and no particular visible markers like scholastic accomplishments."

There are many examples of the political activism the pair demonstrated over the years, separately and together.

In 1994, two female students kissed and held hands on the lawn of San Leandro High School. The event created a firestorm within the school district and the city. Barb **ONE** galvanized the LGBTQ community, the school system, and

San Leandro residents to rally and protest at school meetings vocalizing the concerns of LGBTQ residents and their allies. The events exposed the city of San Leandro to the existence of an active LGBTQ community within the city limits. With Barb **ONE** at the forefront, the two Barbaras, WOFF and Lavender Seniors members became a citizen force representing the newly-found empowerment of the local LGBTQ community.

When the Boy Scouts of America chose to build their official building in the city, the two Barbaras joined the LGBTQ community to demonstrate opposition to the Boy Scouts' policy of anti-gay discrimination, denying them membership in the organization.

The two Barbaras' early efforts of leadership and activism on behalf of the LGBTQ community helped paved acceptance by the City of San Leandro. In 2011, the mayor of the city walked in the S.F. Pride parade. In 2012, June was declared Pride Month as the Oakland East Bay Gay Men's Chorus sang at the San Leandro Main Library. A presentation to the Lavender Seniors of a proclamation acknowledging the contributions of the LGBTQ residents to the city was made, and the new Senior Center welcomed the Lavender Senior's Scrolls project which was exhibited in the lobby.

During the 2008 battle against Proposition 8 - five years after Barb **ONE** had passed on - Barb **TWO** found herself becoming active on the issue, because she knew that's what they would be doing if her loving spouse were still alive.

"During the Prop 8 fight, gaily dressed Polynesians with bold 'Yes on Prop 8' signs stood at the busy intersection of High and MacArthur. I was the only 'No on Prop 8' sign in the sea of 'yes' signs. The leader strongly suggested that I move to the opposite corner to express my opposition to Prop 8"

Barb **ONE** was born in the 1930s in Arkansas, where her father worked as supervisor in a coal mine. She was known to jokingly refer to herself as another famous "Coal-Miner's Daughter". Her mother was a stay-at-home parent, from whom she learned many of the skills of home-making and caring for others.

She was the eldest of 3 daughters. Her mid-life became one of caring for an ailing husband, 5 daughters, a disabled grandmother, and her aging parents. She was the major bread-winner, graduating from the Real Estate Institute and opening two offices, rare and daring for a woman at the time. As the economy changed, she adapted by creating a family business in property management. Two of her daughters are now brokers and carry on the family tradition.



Barb ONE as a Young Businesswoman in the mid-1960s

She was the mysterious Santa to some of her tenants' children as they received gaily-wrapped gifts during the Christmas season.

For her part, Barb **TWO** was invited to become co-president of GLOBE, a political organization seeking legislative changes on behalf of LGBTQ people. She is also a long-time advisory board member with Lavender Seniors of the East Bay, including during its time attached to Bay Area Community Services (BACS) and currently with

"Transgendered people rightfully are demanding that their needs be focused on to move them into equality within the LGBTQ political movement," Barb **TWO** recalled. "All members of the LGBTQ community must receive the same rights and protections as all other segments of society!"

"We need to promote empowerment of all individuals and groups to actualize their potential. I suppose my being in one of only four Asian families in school, beginning in elementary school, prepared me well to be an advocate for all oppressed minorities.

"I was born at a unique time in American history. There were major challenges with race, gender, sexuality, abilities and opportunities in everyday life after World War II. I believe our generation served as a bridging generation. We were at the leading edge of major social and technological change. Whenever that happens, there is an opportunity to set the stage for future generations. We have responsibilities to ensure as smooth a transition as possible."

Barb **TWO** chose a career in public service. She moved from one executive agency to another, gathering experience in the supply, contract oversight, transportation and medical fields. She worked as a government contractor at the NASA Ames facility during the intensive space exploration era. At one point, she served as Vice President for the Intergovernmental Council on the Technology of Information Processing (ICTIP), which presented educational forums to the broad spectrum of public agencies in the Bay Area on the then-new technology of data processing.



Though "flying solo" since 2003, Barb **TWO stays politically active, pictured here as an organizer of the Lavender Seniors Platinum Anniversary celebration, November 2014 (photo by vendor at 20th Anniversary Party)**

Upon her retirement, Barb **TWO** continued her quest for equality. She became an independent associate with LegalShield, an Oklahoma company formed to help make access to the judicial system affordable to the general public.

"Nobody should be bankrupted because they were - perhaps unjustly - sued or involved in some sort of accident," Barb **TWO** explains. "This new concept of legal service delivery should help people in their 'golden years' have equal access to legal protection and the sense of security that can provide."

The two Barbaras envisioned their next project a housing village for LGBTQ seniors, to include continuing care. Unfortunately, Barb **ONE** died before the project could be realized. She died in 2003 - at the young age of 67 - after a heroic 2nd battle with cancer.

"She left me with one of our grandsons to raise, plus a dog, a bird and the desire to bring our housing goal to fruition," Barb **TWO** recalls. "As a long-time board member with Lavender Seniors, it is one of my goals that affordable housing be at the forefront of our advocacy. We need more LGBTQ community members of all ages to be on board to help us with this issue.

"Lavender Seniors must focus on helping each other to pave a safe and secure future for ourselves and LGBTQ generations to come. This will require both seniors and younger generations of LGBTQ community members to make that happen. We don't need to re-invent the wheel, but we DO need to keep the wheel turning as time demands."

Thank you to both the "Barbaras of WOFF Hall", who have contributed more than their fair share to the progress of LGBTQ seniors in the East Bay.

Celebration of Life Memorial Service - January 30th



A memorial service for a wonderful and creative sister in the lesbian community, K.C. Frogge (August 31, 1955 - November 30, 2015), will be held on Saturday, January 30, 2016 at The Home of Truth Spiritual Center, 1300 Grand Street, Alameda, CA, from 2pm to 4:30pm, with a potluck to follow in the back building.

This is really a "Celebration of Life" that welcomes your contribution of music (keyboard and sound system provided) and readings of any type after the initial portion of the service. Let's each remember K.C. in our own way and receive closure together.

Here's a beautiful sentiment on the Facebook Memorial Page by one of K.C.'s good friends: "May she fly with the angels of our wonderful community." You are invited to write something there, too.

<https://www.facebook.com/KCFroggeMemorial1/>

Need more info? Contact me here:

Cate Larsen: catelarsen@earthlink.net , landline (510) 633-0713



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.

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is tickled pink to announce a \$7,000 grant from the Horizons Foundation!

This very generous grant means *a lot* to us. Firstly, it will allow Lavender Seniors to continue its crucial work with the LGBTQ Friendly Visiting Program - one of few like it in the nation. It provides culturally sensitive social support for LGBTQ seniors who are typically either homebound or living in a skilled nursing facility. The need within the latter group has increased significantly despite the fact that one might not expect it there; when elders are living amongst so many others. Establishing social connections can be extremely difficult for an LGBTQ senior who fears being "outed" in such a facility; not knowing if they would subsequently have to deal with increased isolation or disrespect. Now is the time to bring in more help; while facilities are still ramping up their own ability to assure a welcoming experience for *all* elders.

Funding will also allow Lavender Seniors to continue to provide two congregate meals a month so that LGBTQ elders can establish and maintain the very important social networks of support found there. Those who have seen the documentary *Gen Silent*, saw that one of the gay men featured in the film had quietly and with certainty planned to kill himself following his much-older partner's death. His partner had been his only confidante - and his world. The film

shows the man finding out about and then starting to attend meals just like the ones we host at Lavender. Slowly, he begins to realize there are many other people with whom he can relate, who understand him... and who celebrate him! After attending a few of these, you see him laugh for the first time in the film. He starts to write poetry and his emotions and thoughts come pouring out of him as if they had been stuck for 60 years. This seemingly inconsequential service literally saved his life. And not only saved it, but allowed him to open up and *truly experience his authentic self*; living life fully in a way he never done before. We applaud the Board and staff of The Horizons Foundation for having the wisdom to recognize the deep value that peer support holds within this demographic.

Lavender Seniors also anticipates this gift from Horizons to allow it to reestablish the Fremont-based congregational meal program that closed down 5 years ago when the funding was pulled. This summer, Lavender plans to host focus groups with LGBTQ elders in the Tri-City area to identify the current level of community need. We plan to hear from consumers what they are seeking and help reestablish a support group in an area of the county where currently there is nothing.

Finally, a key component of the organization has not been updated in several years: The Guide to LGBTQ-Elder Welcoming services and businesses in the Bay Area. Lavender receives at least 2-3 inquiries each week about this. While informally, we always provide guidance to those who ask, we haven't had capacity to be able to generate an updated guide. We hope Horizon's support will leverage other revenue to be able to oversee this project - which, of course requires significant human and financial resources. Creating an online guide as a complement to the print guide most of our stakeholders are still comfortable with would be ideal.

We are grateful to the core to once again be a partner of Horizons Foundation. And we are proud to act on their behalf in *making this county a safer, healthier and kinder place for all of us to age.*

For more info on Horizons Foundation see <http://www.horizonsfoundation.org/>

horizons foundation

Fueling the LGBT Movement



NEWS & NOTES

From the NRCLA Newsletter

Take the [National Resource Center on LGBT Aging Survey](#)! As we begin 2016, we want to hear from you. As the only [national resource center](#) dedicated to LGBT older adults, we develop content that provides you with the information you need as an LGBT older adult, caregiver, advocate, or professional in a senior service setting. **Please** take 10 minutes to help us set our **priorities** for the future by taking this [survey](#) today.

Tools You Can Use - One of the most common questions asked during [trainings](#), "What can our organization do to be more inclusive of LGBT older adults?" If this question sounds familiar, check out our [Top 10 Ways to Begin Creating LGBT Safety and Inclusivity for Aging Services](#).



Identifying and Dealing with Depression

Two soon-to-be-graduating nursing students will be on-hand at February's Third Friday Lunch Bunch to lead an after-lunch discussion on prevention, recognition and treatment of depression among seniors.

Mic Newhall and Cecilia So, completing the CSEB nursing program, have developed a presentation that helps lead people through the various stages of depression - more common among seniors and teens than other age-groups, for various reasons - and help explain what can be done about it.



They will cover the following:

- Definition of depression, latest statistics
- Recognizing depression (e.g., loss of interest in daily activities, trouble sleeping and other lesser-known signs and symptoms)
- What to do if you or someone you care about experiences these signs or symptoms
- Things to do to prevent depression (e.g., exercise, diet, lighting, fresh air)
- Things to do to treat depression (e.g., seeking medical/mental health services, reaching out to family and social networks, prescribed anti-depressant medications)

Cecilia and Mic have promised to include some sorts of games (with prizes!), as well as entertain questions from the participants.

They will also be available afterward to check blood pressure, pulse and breathing.

The Lunch Bunch is held at the North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MLK Way (at 58th Street) from 12 noon (when a free lunch is served). Community announcements will be made about 12:40-12:45, after which the educational presentation will begin.

Parking and entrance is in the back of the building (former Merritt College). Come and join us!

For further information, contact Kathleen at 510-574-2073 or via e-mail at Kathleen@LavenderSeniors.org.

Book Review: ***I Can Give You Anything But Love***

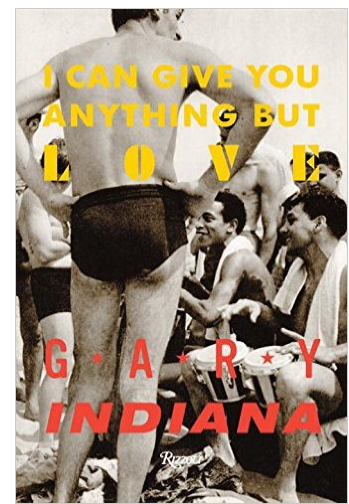
By Gary Indiana - Rizzoli Press - \$25.95-hardbound

Indiana describes his boyhood in New Hampshire. Then it's on to the Haight-Ashbury in the City by the Bay. In 1970 he lands in Los Angeles and then he moves to New York.

During the past 15 years he has reviewed his life work in Cuba. He has created several novels and numerous plays and essays. This has led to art shows in New York and Los Angeles.

The average reader may have to adjust themselves to his eccentric style and the effort is well worth it

- Frank Howell



11th in Lavender Seniors Film Series, Wednesday, 17th February, 1-3pm

Brother-to-Brother

In this 2004 film, LGBTQ history from the 1920s "Harlem Renaissance" and 21st century are melded beautifully into a compelling look at how things have changed - or stayed the same - in the African-American LGBTQ movement.

Described in the *Gay Times* as "A fascinating interpretation of an underdiscussed-chapter in gay history," the film focuses on our hero, Perry (played by Anthony Mackie - more on him later!) is a would-be painter struggling to find his voice as an artist and his identity as a black gay man. When his disapproving father kicks him out, he winds up in a homeless shelter where he meets a sympathetic gay poet named Bruce (Roger Robinson). As they get to know each other, Perry learns that Bruce was at the center of the 1920s and '30s Harlem Renaissance and faced many of the same prejudices and challenges in his day that Perry faces now.

This film introduces viewers to both 21st-century and early-to-mid 20th-century African-American experience of prejudice, double-whammied for members of the black LGBTQ community in both centuries. You will meet not only our two heroes from the first decade of the 2000's, but also depictions of well-known (and not-so-well-known) activists in the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s-30s, such as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, Wallace Thurman and Bruce Nugent.

The viewer will also be introduced to some of the ongoing complications of inter-racial relationships when Perry gets involved sexually and emotionally with a white classmate (more on that when the invitation comes out around the 10th of February).

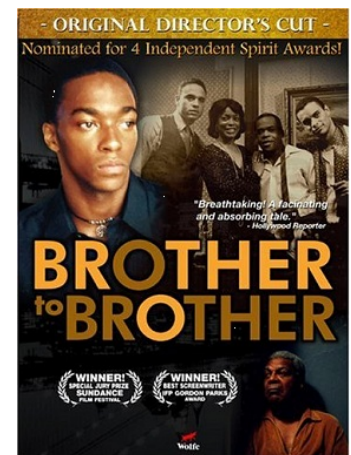
This film was only the third of Anthony Mackie's career, which has skyrocketed in the decade since, giving him starring roles in such recent films as the "Captain America/Avengers" series (2014, 2015 and 2016), where he plays "Falcon"; "Triple 9" (also 2016); and an upcoming Bio-Pic on Jesse Owens, African-American four-time gold-medal winner at the 1936 Olympics (much to Hitler's chagrin - in fact, Owens is credited by many as single-handedly crushing "Hitler's myth of Aryan supremacy" at a crucial time in pre-war Europe!).

"Brother to Brother" has won numerous film festival awards, both on the general and LGBTQ circuit.

The Lavender Seniors film series is being shown on 17th February (third Wednesday), 1-3pm in the Lecture Hall at the San Leandro Public Library, 300 Estudillo, San Leandro.

Lavender Seniors will provide popcorn, bottled water, Martinelli's apple juice and sparkling cider, plus miniature Reese's peanut butter cups. Following the 1-3pm screening, there will be a brief discussion/evaluation of the film and the issues it brings up for us as LGBT seniors.

The library is a ten-minute (five-block) walk up Estudillo from the San Leandro BART Station. For those with mobility issues, pick-up from the San Leandro BART station can be arranged (12:30-45) by either e-mailing David123Black@gmail.com or calling David (505-917-1616) at least a day in advance.



The AC-Transit 1R has a bus-stop at East 14th and Estudillo, which involves a 1.5-block walk up Estudillo to the library.

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 it until you reach 300 Estudillo.

There is ample parking at the library.



A Proving Ground for the
Future of Opera

The Merola Opera Program invites Lavender Seniors members to a special evening examining words and music.

On Monday, February 8, 7:00 - 8:30 pm, at the Herbst Theatre (401 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco), please join us for *Language, Music, & Meaning*, where we examine the complex and fascinating relationship between music and text. How does the choice of words by the librettist influence the composer and the performer?

The evening features Sheri Greenawald, Director of the San Francisco Opera Center, in discussion with Mark Morash, San Francisco Opera Center Director of Musical Studies, and Alessandra Cattani, Italian Diction Coach for the San Francisco Opera. Merola alums and current San Francisco Opera Adler Fellows perform selections. A complimentary wine and cheese reception follows.

Admission is free with advance registration. Seating is not reserved and on a first-come basis. Reservations that do not follow requirements will not be processed:

1. Please send your name (first and last) and organization you are affiliated with to DMeagher@merola.org.
2. You may bring one (1) guest. You must submit their name (first and last) plus their email. Each guest will receive a confirmation email.
3. Each guest will receive a confirmation email.

Please do not reserve unless you are 100% certain you and your guest can attend. Reservations accepted on a space-available basis until capacity reached.

For 58 years, the Merola Opera Program has been the cornerstone of San Francisco Opera's training and performance progression for promising young artists. Each summer, young artists from the United States and around the world are brought to San Francisco for 12 weeks of intensive studies and performance opportunities under the guidance of renowned teachers and performers. Merola alums include opera superstars Joyce DiDonato, Patricia Racette, Susan Graham, Thomas Hampson, Leona Mitchell, Anna Netrebko, Rolando Villazón, Deborah Voigt, and Dolora Zajick among many others. For information on the Merola Opera Program, click [here](#).

We hope you can join us for this exciting evening!

Dan Meagher

Director of Marketing

Merola Opera Program

dmeagher@merola.org

War Memorial Opera House

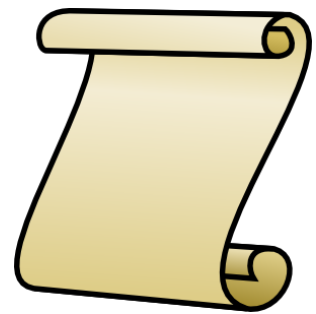
301 Van Ness Avenue

San Francisco, CA 94102

www.merola.org

Letters to the Editor

Tell us what you think of this new column. Send your letters to the editor to: info@lavenderseniors.org



Dear Lavender Notes Editor:

I want to thank Lavender Seniors - and particularly Karen Anderson - for the very informative piece in January's Newsletter regarding Measure G and Measure N. Since I didn't know previously about the waiver for Oakland homeowners over 65, I have since applied to receive the \$120 Measure N rebate for 2015-16. When you get to be this age, retired and on a limited income - though I was very active supporter of the Oakland school system when my son was in school - every \$120 rebate I can legally qualify for is very much appreciated!

Good Job! Keep up the good work informing us aging LGBTQ folks in the East Bay!

Jumaane C. Makalani
Active Lavender Seniors

[Editors note: In response to Kathleen enrolling Roy in the Fremont "Giving Hope" gift program, he wrote the following letter, which has been edited to fit into the space.]

My Dear Kathleen:

Happiest of New Year's to come to you, yours and every kind-hearted individual who was involved in any way, shape or form in such a wonderful sharing of the reason for the season. In a nutshell, the following feelings and thoughts shot through me as I absorbed the fact that the huge parcels - containing even MORE parcels - were for both Sadie and me.

I can't remember the last time I experienced that feeling of excitement at all the gifts for me AND the positive unexpected treasures picked for Sadie's enjoyment - be it for playtime fun, treats for rewarding her, or just "because"! The comfort and stylishness of the canine bed was "fan-darn-tastic", as were the toys galore! The hits just kept coming for my little girl!

Later that evening, at Kay's cozy Winter Wonderland, which smelled of a McKenzie Holiday supper with all the fixin's, still MORE presents from my **Lavender Seniors** connection were unveiled, delightful things obviously geared for Daddy! For whatever elf(s) assisted as to what I might need, all were direct hits! I squealed like a six-year-old! More gifts than I have received in over 35 years, I'm sure!

I had just given into the fact that I may not have quantity when it comes to friends, but most assuredly those I consider friends possess outstanding excellent qualities (quality transcends quantity when it comes to friends and acquaintances in my "circle"). Even those who did not know me personally volunteered their time, gifts from their and other resources.

The best and kindest gift is definitely knowing that there ARE caring, kind, concerned and helpful people remaining in my area. I am still overwhelmed by the Holiday helpfulness of all and, of course, a huge thank-you to all at **Lavender Seniors**.

Yes, Kathleen, there IS a Santa Claus and you have been instrumental in proving that to Sadie and me. By the way, Sadie spent the day smelling ALL of her new creatures - sooo cute - as well as enjoying harassing Daddy to play tug-of-war with each cuddly toy.

Lavender Seniors has been a major player in enriching my life, leading me to my friend, Bruce, and eventually a host of other good people, which is so important to me. It is very clear that human companionship is a top priority for my well-being and those peeps I've met in and through **Lavender Seniors** have been terrific!

I have always envisioned myself as the "giver/helper/volunteer" assisting other less-fortunate people. As frequently

happens, Life pulled a twist and BOOM, I became the lucky, VERY MUCH HUMBLER recipient of - no other words cover it better - pure concern, love and kindness from all you angelic folks. I appreciate very much those who gave time, perhaps giving UP time with others, in order to put smiles on the faces of those of us who could use them.

There is so much more I wanted to say, but right now THANK YOU ONE AND ALL kinda says it all, though not very original. God or who/whatever you consider as your "Higher Power" is surely pleased with everyone involved, as well as the unselfishness felt throughout.

Many hugs, kisses, tail- and butt-wagging presented to all from Roy and the one who keeps me grounded - my furry daughter, Sadie!

Roy

Lost & Found

A new column for items left behind at Lavender Seniors Functions

If you've lost or found something at a Lavender Seniors event or function, please send your inquiry including the event, date & description of what you found or lost to: info@lavenderseniors.org. Items found while the function facilitator or LS board member is present should be turned in to them.



Monthly Events

Out Standing Seniors

February 2 & 16 11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (1st and 3rd Tuesdays) (Japanese Theme Anniversary Pot Luck & tour of the Japanese Gardens in Hayward on the 16th)

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 !!! New More Accessible Location!!!

February 10, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

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

A portion of this meeting is open to the public.

Queerly Aging Lesbians

February 4 & 18, 1:30 p.m. (1st and 3rd Thursdays)

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

Find support and like-minded wonderful people!

Senior Men's Group

February 11 & 25, 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!

San Leandro Potluck

February 13, 12:00-2:00 p.m. (2nd Saturday)

Unity Church, 1420 Santa Maria Street, San Leandro (Corner of Joaquin & Santa Maria)

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

LGBT Film Series !!! New More Accessible Location!!!

February 17, 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: "Brother to Brother" see info above.

Oakland Lunch Bunch



Sponsored by City of Oakland Aging & Adult Services

February 19, 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 is: "Identifying and Dealing with Depression" see info above.

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay Board of Advisors

Chair: D'Anne Bruetsch

Secretary: John David Dupree

Treasurer: Carmen Chiong

David Dayog Black

Beckie Underwood

Frank Howell

Barbara Jue

Mike Trutner

Lavender Seniors

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