



Lavender Notes

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

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*Celebrating 24+ years of service and positive change
February 2019 - Volume 26 Issue 2*

STORIES OF OUR LIVES



Wayne R. Sylvia

Those of us who remember the Pacific Center Switchboard throughout the late 1970s and 1980s will likely recall one of its most stalwart volunteers. Wayne Sylvia was virtually a fixture in the little cubby-hole rolodex-and-resource-file-filled office at the right rear of the then-newly-upgraded building at 2712 Telegraph – after the move up from over a seedy bar on San Pablo. This was a volunteer who – if he said he'd be on a shift from 1-5pm on Tuesday – you'd see him there from at least noon until 6pm, as long as that phone was ringing! Never mind he might be sewing sequins on a lovely ball gown between fielding those phone-calls!

Many lonely or troubled East Bay residents – as well as people calling from around the country and around the world – have benefited over the years (including still today!) from the dedication and good humor of this month's featured "Stories of Our Lives" LGBTQ senior.

Wayne was born in New Bedford, MA, on 29th May 1940 to a mechanic and his wife, who worked at a dress factory near the family's Fair Haven home. His Portuguese-speaking grandparents were originally from the Azores. He was the younger of two sons and considered his life quite idyllic until age six, when he was visited by the first of several tragedies in his life.



Wayne, age 1, and Robert, age 5



Mom, Wayne (age 4) and Robert (age 8)



Grandma, Robert and Wayne

"My brother and I were ice-skating with some friends on a rather-forbidden pond behind a factory near our home," Wayne recalls. "Robert fell through the ice and drowned – in spite of the efforts of a friend to save him. My parents – well, our family, actually – never really recovered from my brother's death. With a six-year-old's understanding of life and death, I felt very bad for my parents, but was somehow comforted by the fact that he was with our grandparents up in heaven."

From an early age, Wayne felt more connected with his mother than with his father.

"My brother did all of the 'manly' things with my father – they would go to ball-games together or kill a chicken for dinner from our chicken coop," Wayne says, "but I would go screaming through the house at the very idea. I was much more inclined to be inside helping my Mom in the kitchen. I was so obviously a 'nelly, sissy' boy from day one. So – though I know Dad loved both of us – my brother's death was particularly devastating for him. He'd lost his chum!"

In spite of the fact that his parents and grandparents were raised Catholic, Wayne never felt particularly drawn to religion or politics.

"For instance, I could never abide the church teaching that babies didn't go to heaven; that because of original sin, they had to go to purgatory first," he recalls. "Or the supposed 'fact' that only Catholics were going to heaven and that we couldn't be friends with non-Catholics. Religion is just a guilt trip – and politics is even worse – people will promise anything to get elected and then they don't do it. I pay no attention to religion OR politics."

After his brother's death, Wayne spent six years trying to figure out where he fit into the family, newly-reconfigured by this tragedy.



Wayne setting off to school, age 8



Wayne, Mom and Dad – now a family of three



Wayne trying to be a happy sixth grader

Then, at age 12, Wayne suffered the second tragedy of his young life – loss of his mother.

“Mom had a stroke at age 42, while the three of us were eating dinner,” Wayne recalls sadly. “Medicine was not very advanced on stroke treatment at the time. We called an ambulance and she was rushed to a hospital. I figured she’d probably come home in a couple of days. I didn’t know she would never come back. My mother helped make me the personality I became for the rest of my life – losing her was beyond devastating to me! Now we were a family of two!”

With the family re-configured a second time, life was very unpredictable, not something you could count on anymore.

“By then, my Dad was the walking wounded – he’d lost his favorite son and his wife within six years!” Wayne recounts. “So, soon after my Mom died, he sold the house in Massachusetts – with all its bittersweet memories – and steered us west for the Centerville area of what is now Fremont to live with my mother’s sister, Aunt Eva, while he looked for a mechanic job.”

Wayne and his Dad only lived in Centerville for about one year. After his father located a mechanic job in Oakland, they moved there. Wayne attended Piedmont Avenue School, West Lake Middle School and Oakland Tech before it actually became a technical school.

“I knew at a very early age – certainly by age 10 – that I was only attracted to boys, not to girls,” Wayne recalls. “Though I had a lot of male and female friends and might attend the high school dances, I never dated boys or girls. I didn’t think about sex at all, really, I just knew I liked looking at boys! This era was when I discovered that people either love me or they hate me – I’ve been told I have a very strong personality.”

He was 15 when he first kissed anybody – his best friend.

“We played around for a couple years, though sex was never a big deal for me,” Wayne recalls. “I guess I sort-of ‘fell in love’ with another classmate, too, though we never did anything. I just admired him from a distance – or close-up if I could think of an excuse. I’d actually rather have a really good grilled-cheese sandwich – preferably made with Velveeta – than have sex. Sex is very over-rated and it takes a lot of work!”

What captured his imagination in his teens, however – and for the subsequent four or five decades – was that he loved wearing dresses, make-up and wigs!



Wayne's maiden voyage in drag - some of his best looks as a brunet

"I knew I was good-looking enough in men's clothes, but I looked FABULOUS in women's clothes!" Wayne recounts. "I never thought of myself as a transvestite – like that pathetic J. Edgar Hoover, for instance. I was a stunning drag queen who felt most at home with a pair of heels, a slinky gown, a string of pearls, perhaps long white gloves and a boa or faux fur stole! Since animals have always been my best friends – my 'angels' – I would never consider wearing the skin of some poor mink, ermine or chinchilla! In fact, animals are my passion! Anyone who would harm an animal or a baby should be executed – I know I'm way out of line in that respect – but animals and babies are just too precious!"



As a blonde (Wayne's natural hair color), in black, in white and modeling (in the mirror – middle photo) creative hairstyling skills

After graduation, he held a variety of jobs, including delivering drug sundries, being a florist, doorman at the Stud in San Francisco (for which he sometimes showed up in drag), and finally found his niche after going to school to be a hairdresser.

"I attended Lee Ann's Beauty Academy in Oakland, where I learned all the tricks of the trade," Wayne recalls, "which I used not only on my many happy clients over the years, but on myself, my face and the beautiful wigs I've worn. I LOVED the feeling of turning heads whenever I walked into a room! We were definitely a classy group of drag queens in my day!"

Unfortunately, Wayne encountered another in a series of tragic life events

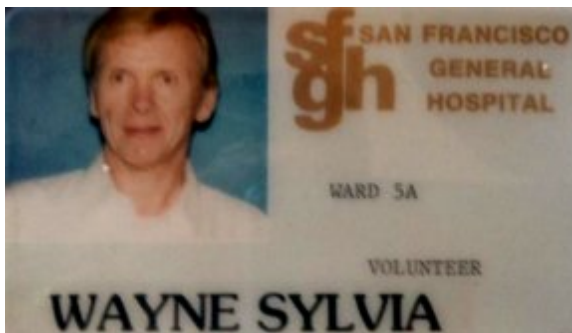
when he was 32.

"On May Day of 1972, I was in a terrible accident coming off the Bay Bridge in Oakland," he recalls. "I got crushed between two cars. In spite of all the efforts of Highland Hospital staff – including attempting to save my crushed leg using braces and so on – I lost my leg. Then I was taken out to Fairmont Hospital for a few months, during which time I was fitted for several prosthetic legs, the Hittenberger being the first, the best being made by a brilliant fellow also named Wayne!"

Wayne did not let that turn of events deter his activities in drag, however.

"No, I was never a 'boo-hoo, oh, woe is me' kind of a patient," Wayne says proudly and somewhat defiantly. "Though I certainly was not celebrating my new state of affairs, I was not going to define myself by my disability, but rather as an elegant and flawless – with a capital 'F' – drag queen who planned her outfits to emphasize her good luck rather than her misfortune! In fact, I relish my years as a beauty in the Alameda County Imperial Court!"

Wayne's volunteer activities have continued over the years, beyond his contributions to the Pacific Center Switchboard. For ten years during the AIDS epidemic – when the stigma attached to HIV was at its peak – he was a friend to many patients and their families as a volunteer on Ward 5A at San Francisco General Hospital. He then spent another ten years as a volunteer at Highland Hospital. And he is currently a Friendly Visitor Volunteer with Lavender Seniors.



Wayne spent a decade as a volunteer on SFGH's AIDS Ward



Wayne and two classmates from Lee Ann's Beauty Academy

Wayne also didn't let his disability hamper his desire to travel the world a bit, globe-trotting which had begun in his 20s.

"I saw much of Europe – both before and after the accident," he says, "spending quality time in places like Germany, Holland, Portugal and Italy. I flew to Hawaii in drag! I generally traveled by myself, taking advantage of my fine muscle tone and muscle control for many years – until quite recently. I've mostly lived alone, as well, with my 'angels', my dogs and cats."



Wayne on the couch with one of his "angels"...



...and with a good friend

Asked for any pearls of wisdom for other people looking for their niche in life, Wayne said:

"Take whatever the next step is and you'll eventually get there! For instance, being gay has been a blessing for me – I would likely be an awful person if I were straight! So, though it took me a while, I've embraced my gayness and my drag personas, in spite of some in society – particularly in this day and age - who would like to make me feel like a freak for that."

Thanks, Wayne, for your many ongoing contributions to the community over the years!



BOOK REVIEW

The Path To Gay Rights: How Activism and Coming Out Changed Public Opinion

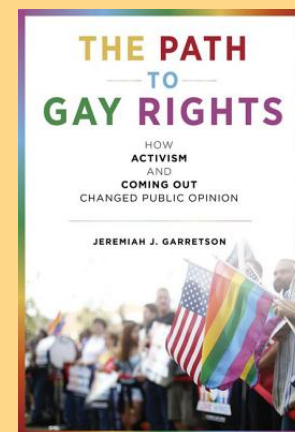
By Jeremiah J. Garretson

Garretson is Assistant Professor of Political Science at California State University, East Bay, Hayward.

In the 1980's and the 1990's public attitude toward gays began to change. The fear and stigma associated with AIDS leveled off somewhat by the turn of the century, with the advent of new life-saving drugs.

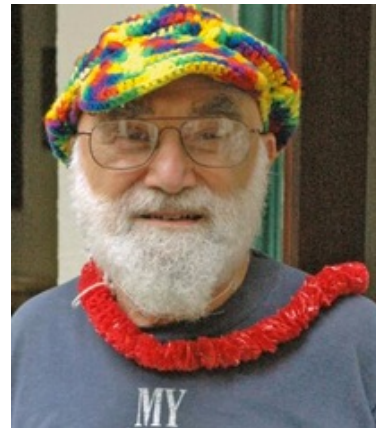
Daily exposure to gay & lesbian liberation is one of the key factors in that attitude change. When minority groups became legitimate in the eyes of the law, public opinion was transformed. Then came American acceptance of same sex marriage. In 1974, the American Psychiatric Association declared that gayness was no longer categorized as an illness.

The book is of interest chiefly to historians and college professors. Many members of the public already take it for granted



IN MEMORIAM – JERRY FISHMAN 1928-2018

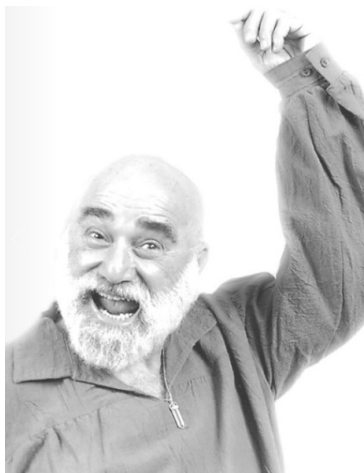
Jerry was born into poverty in St. Paul, Minnesota, and grew up in what he called a multi-racial slum. This early experience seems to have inoculated him against any traces of racism, because a number of his lifelong closest friends were black, Latino, mixed-race, or Asian.



His parents were refugees from the harsh anti-Semitic policies of Tsarist Russia, which continued into the Soviet period and persist even today in less overt forms. It was an era when America welcomed refugees. His parents met and were married in St. Paul. His father was a kosher butcher and served in France during World War I.

Jerry earned a Masters in social welfare at Cal State Fresno and was employed for about 30 years with the City and County of San Francisco, mostly in Adult Protective Services. He was a strong advocate of social justice and civil rights, and was a generous donor to the ACLU, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and Planned Parenthood. He also gave regularly to animal welfare and rescue charities.

He was the last person I've known who could speak, read, and write Yiddish, which is written in Hebrew characters



He was an enthusiastic runner and a major benefactor of Stagebridge, an Oakland-based performing arts group for older adults. He acted in a number of their productions of Broadway musicals, including "Hair," for which the cast wisely kept their clothes on.

He served on the Emeryville Commission on Aging and helped deliver Meals on

Wheels. He was also a volunteer Santa Claus for several annual Christmas events for children, seniors, and veterans.

We were introduced by mutual friends at the inaugural concert of the Oakland Gay Men's Chorus, in May 2000. Though we were both retired, I had found my life partner – an avid reader who enjoyed the arts – symphonic and chamber music, opera, ballet, theatre, and movies. We took some memorable trips together, including visits to Barcelona, Venice, and Rome.

He had a sunny, positive outlook despite numerous serious health challenges. He had been blind in one eye from childhood and had survived kidney cancer, bladder cancer, lymphoma, six knee surgeries, two heart valve replacements, back surgery, prostate surgery, two stent insertions, and numerous other unpleasant invasive hospital procedures. But he was always a pleasant, cooperative, uncomplaining patient, and his many hospital nurses were fond of him and treated him like a VIP.

In May, 2017, he was diagnosed with lung cancer, discovered from an X-ray in preparation for a heart valve replacement, planned for mid-July, which proceeded successfully. He had displayed no symptoms of lung cancer. He responded well to the pioneering cancer treatments based on immunotherapy to prime the immune system and DNA analyses of the tumor to target its vulnerable sites with oral chemo. Although the cancer was brought into remission, he was seriously anemic and short of breath from initial lung damage.

His love of reading and music helped to sustain him as his world began to contract through disability. We changed to accessible seats at the Opera House and at Davies Symphony Hall. When we could no longer use BART we used Uber.

Beginning in late August last year he suffered five falls, fracturing a rib and resulting in very painful internal bruising. The end came suddenly and unexpectedly in the early hours of December 13. He was getting oxygen at Summit Hospital, and we fully intended to return to my place in Berkeley. But as I held his hand his organs began to shut down, and he couldn't be saved.

His ashes were scattered in San Francisco Bay near the north tower of the Golden Gate Bridge.

We were together for 18-1/2 years and never fought. They were the best years of my life, and I consider myself the luckiest man in the world.

– Richard Riffer

The logo for StageBridge, featuring the word "STAGEBRIDGE" in a bold, white, serif font. The letters are set against a dark red rectangular background. The "S" and "G" are particularly large and prominent.

Uniting the generations since 1978



Memorial Service information for Jerry Fishman

Friends, family and community celebrated the
life of Jerry Fishman on January 20.

Jerry was a 35+ year foundational member of
Stagebridge, a beloved community member.

Jerry passed on
December 13th, 2018 at age 90.



Openhouse Event for LGBTQ Elders and People with Disabilities

SF Openhouse is celebrating the launch of a new LGBTQ Adult Day Health Program in partnership with SteppingStone on Friday, 1 February. The event is an informational and resource-sharing event with wine and hors d'oeuvres for community builders and service providers working with LGBTQ older adults and people with disabilities. Attendees will have the opportunity to network with other providers and let people know about any new services, programs or volunteer opportunities available through their organization.

When: February 1, 2019 1-3 pm

Where: SteppingStone, 225 Berry Street, 2nd Floor San Francisco

Elevator Access to the 2nd Floor

Gender-neutral and wheelchair accessible bathrooms on site

Low/Reduced scent environment

Contact Beck Epstein at Openhouse: bepstein@openhouse-sf.org

Phone: (415)296-899

CONNECTIONS



Have you moved out of the area, do you want to get in contact with other Lavender Seniors near you or someone you have lost contact with? [Email us](#) and we will try to help out. No information will be shared without your specific permission.

LAVENDER SENIORS FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM HAS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE.

Volunteers with the Lavender Seniors Friendly Visitor program are background checked, interviewed and trained, after which they are matched with a senior to visit regularly, usually for a couple hours each week. Visitors can share stories, chat about

mutual interests and current events, and if both are willing and able, volunteers can take their seniors out for a walk in the park, a bite to eat, a cup of coffee, shopping or maybe a movie or a trip to the museum.

We ask volunteers to make a commitment of at least six months.

If you are in need of a Friendly Visitor, we can help with that too!

Please contact karen@lavenderseniors.org and we will be in touch with you soon. Thank You!

San Leandro History Museum Special Event

The Un-Closeting of Lorraine Hansberry

Acclaimed author/playwright Lorraine Hansberry would have been turning 89 this year if she hadn't succumbed to cancer at age 34. Meanwhile, during her lifetime, she was closeted about her lesbianism and – only after her papers were “unsealed” in 2014 – was her affinity for women – and deep lesbian relationships – made public. Similarly, her close friend, author James Baldwin, is officially not to have his gayness “unsealed” until the year 2040, when many of his most ardent admirers may not be around anymore.



Hansberry wrote three plays, “A Raisin in the Sun,” (1959) “The Sign in Sidney Brustein’s Window” (1965) and “Les Blancs,” (published posthumously in 1970). Though “Raisin” deals primarily with racial injustice in Chicago, her last two plays included prominent gay characters.

A collection of her works, “Young, Gifted and Black,” released in 1969, inspired a Nina Simone hit (“To Be Young, Gifted and Black”) and a 1972 TV special of the same name, starring Ruby Dee and Al Freeman, Jr. Hansberry was a passionate artist, activist and intellectual who waged a battle against injustice.

The San Leandro History Museum is hosting a Hansberry-related double-feature at 11:15am on Saturday, 2 February, beginning with a film production of perhaps her most famous play on Broadway, “Raisin in the Sun” (1959), launching her celebrity and Sidney Poitier’s career.

Then at 2pm that afternoon, the PBS American Masters documentary, “Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart” (first aired one year ago) will be shown. This film deals with some of the reasons she felt she needed to be closeted during her lifetime – and why her ex-husband stipulated that her sexuality not be discussed publicly until 2014. The film reveals her work tackling race, human rights, women’s equality and sexual equality.

Details of the Hansberry double-feature schedule on Saturday, 2 February, includes:

Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun," (1961), 11:15am – 2 hours and 8 minutes
"American Masters", "Sighted Eyes/Feeling Heart", 2pm – 1 hour and 58 minutes

San Leandro History Museum
320 West Estudillo Avenue, San Leandro
(walking distance from San Leandro BART station, street parking available)
510-577-3990

For more information on Hansberry's life, one significant source can be found at <https://medium.com/@girlsinitouko/the-double-life-of-lorraine-hansberry-out-magazine-september-1999-a60c1d471d49>.



Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch February 9, Noon-2:00 pm

All Saints Episcopal Church
911 Dowling Blvd, San Leandro

Program: Showing of 28-minute film, "A Great Ride," screened at last year's Frameline International LGBTQ Film Festival. The film looks at older lesbians – Sally Gearhart, Brenda Crawford and several women who live in an LGBTQ-friendly retirement community in Santa Rosa – aging with dynamism and zest for life, determination and humor.

Interestingly, Deborah Craig, co-director of this short documentary film, is the daughter of Julie Craig, one of the now-deceased elders of Lavender Seniors. Deborah will be on hand to discuss the film afterward.



Directors: Deborah Craig & Veronica Deliz
2018 / USA / 28 minutes
Genre: Aging Elders / Documentary / Lesbian

A catered buffet luncheon will begin at noon, followed by announcements and the program at approximately 1:00. Feel free to bring a potluck dish to share if you wish.

Spring 2019 from Family Caregiver Alliance — 5 Classes for Family Caregivers



It Takes Two! A Refreshing Approach to Understanding and Coping With Dementia Behavior

This four-week class offers skills and tools for family caregivers, friends, or partners who care for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. It Takes Two! offers the opportunity to learn more about your relative or friend's ability to understand and communicate, as well as skills to handle troubling behavior and how to feel more confident and positive about your caregiving role.

WHERE: San Leandro Senior Community Center
13909 East 14th Street, San Leandro

WHEN: Thursdays, February 14, 21, 28, and
March 7 | 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Jo McCord, MA, Family Consultant
REGISTER: Calvin Hu, chu@caregiver.org,
(415) 434-3388 x 313

Funded by the Alameda Co. Dept. of Aging and Adult Services.

WHERE: San Bruno Senior Center
1555 Crystal Springs Road, San Bruno

WHEN: Wednesdays, March 20, 27, and
April 3, 10 | 10 a.m. to 12 noon

INSTRUCTOR: Christina Irving, LCSW,
Family Consultant/Clinical Supervisor

REGISTER: Christina Irving, cirving@caregiver.org,
(415) 434-3388 x 303

Funded by San Mateo Co. Aging and Adult Services.

Communicating and Advocating With Medical Professionals

Navigating our health care system for the first time can be a daunting experience, often leaving family caregivers confused and frustrated by an unsympathetic and bureaucratic system. This workshop will help to clarify the current realities of the health care experience for caregivers. Participants will learn to use effective communication techniques, and powerful communication tools to be a better advocate for the person for whom they are caring with health care professionals.

WHERE: Senior Coastsiders, 925 Main Street, Half Moon Bay

WHEN: Monday, March 25 | 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Christina Irving, LCSW, Family Consultant/Clinical Supervisor

REGISTER: Calvin Hu, chu@caregiver.org, (415) 434-3388 x 313

*Funded by Dignity Health
Community Grants Program.*

Burning the Candle at Both Ends:

Managing Stress for Family Caregivers

Stress is a normal physical response to the many challenges family caregivers face on a daily basis. Unfortunately, chronic stress can also lead to problems with your emotional and physical health. There are, however, ways to manage stress, by practicing techniques designed to boost resilience. At this workshop, family caregivers will learn about the sources of stress, how to manage stress, stress relievers and coping tools, and stress reduction techniques.

WHERE: Alzheimer's Association, Suite F-138
4340 Redwood Highway, San Rafael

WHEN: Wednesday, February 27 | 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Amanda Hartrey, LMFT, Family Consultant

REGISTER: Amanda Hartrey, ahartrey@caregiver.org,
(415) 434-3388 x 334

Funded by the Marin Co. Dept. of Aging and Adult Services.

WHERE: San Pablo Community Center, Community Room
2450 Road 20, San Pablo

WHEN: Friday, February 15 | 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Amanda Hartrey, LMFT, Family Consultant

REGISTER: Amanda Hartrey, ahartrey@caregiver.org,
(415) 434-3388 x 334

Funded by the Contra Costa Co. Area Agency on Aging.

Family Caregiver Alliance | www.caregiver.org

101 Montgomery Street | Suite 2150 | San Francisco, CA 94104 | 415.434.3388 | info@caregiver.org



Curious About Cannabis?

People who came of age in the 20th century – which includes all of us currently-surviving LGBTQ seniors! – lived in a time where “smoking pot,” “getting high,” or “picking up a dime bag of grass” were forced underground,

much like being homosexual was. You could be "busted" if you were caught with a "roach" in the ashtray of your car (or if you were a woman dressed in men's clothes); you could be put in jail if it was discovered that the plant under your grow-light was actually "Maui Wowie" or "Marvelous Mary Jane" (or if a guy was caught making out with another guy)! The fear of getting arrested, prosecuted or even jailed while in possession of "killer weed" was too risky for many of us who were not part of the "drug scene".

What was once an ancient medicinal herb, then a shameful black market commodity in back alleys, target of Nixon's "War on Drugs," or even subjected to raids under Jeff Sessions during his brief recent tenure as Attorney General, now claims a \$24 billion per year share of the U.S. economy – some cannabis marketing sites now listed on the stock market!

The successful movement to prohibit cannabis use begun in the 1930s was largely based on a racially-charged argument, putting forth some of the most anti-immigrant and inaccurate racist stereotyping our country has seen until recent times, including this quote from Harry Anslinger, first commissioner of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics:

"There are 100,000 total marijuana smokers in the U.S., and most are Negroes, Hispanics, Filipinos and entertainers. Their Satanic music, jazz and swing result from marijuana use. This marijuana causes white women to seek sexual relations with Negroes, entertainers and any others."

So what does any of this have to do with Lavender Seniors of the East Bay and its Third Friday Lunch Bunch in February?!

Curious about cannabis and CBD?



Join Octavia Wellness to learn how cannatherapies can help you and your loved ones.

Those who attend the 15th February Lunch Bunch will hear about the science of cannabis, particularly how it can be used in pain management and sleep disorders, both frequent maladies with us seniors. Information about the history of cannabis, its gradual legalization for, first, medical uses (with California leading the nation as first to legalize medical marijuana in 1996), then for recreational use – as well as how it can help seniors with various ailments – will be discussed by Carrie Tice, CEO of Octavia Wellness, an on-line dispensary dedicated to providing those new to cannabis with safe, effective cannatherapies.

"This will be an educational presentation about the medical benefits and uses

of cannabis, CBD and other cannatherapies,” said Annie Franklin, Octavia’s Director of Marketing. “Carrie will talk about the science behind the plant and how it can help relieve symptoms of chronic pain, insomnia, inflammation and anxiety. The presentation covers key terms like CBD, THC and whole plant full spectrum, along with methods of edibles ingestion, focusing on options that deliver the benefit of the plant without the ‘high.’”

The Octavia team may also pass out small samples of lip-balm and topical creams for those who might be interested, Annie said. And nobody will be in danger of a police raid, like they might have been when we were teenagers!

As usual, lunch will be served promptly at 12 noon (vegetarian options available), followed by a brief break for community announcements around 12:45. Then the program will be turned over to Carrie, followed by adequate time for Q&A. The team of Octavia consultants will be available afterward for answering any personal questions.

The North Oakland Senior Center is located at 5714 MLK Jr Way (corner of 58th Street). Ample parking and entrance are at the rear of the building off of 58th Street.



Just Charlie

Young soccer star Charlie has the world at his feet. With a top club desperate to sign him, his future is seemingly mapped out. But the teenager sees only a nightmare. Trapped in the body of a boy, Charlie is torn between wanting to live up to her father's expectations and shedding this ill-fitting skin. Charlie's next move threatens to tear the family apart.

Charlie (played brilliantly by newcomer Harry Gilby) gazes at her reflection in the mirror. She is in the locker room after soccer practice, not listening as her friends laugh and try to chat with her. On the ride home, she stares at herself in the side-view mirror, tuning out as her father (Scot Williams) discusses soccer scholarships and her future career. Charlie is reserved, speaking only when asked a question, and even then she responds with a simple yes or no. Her parents begin to notice that something feels off about the child they recognize as their son.

This 2017 film (released on DVD in 2018) tells the story of an accomplished and athletic adolescent



living with body dysphoria, or the feeling that they were born into the wrong body. Charlie feels a burning desire to dress in women's clothing, to wear make-up, and to appear feminine because she identifies as female, not male. Director Rebekah Fortune takes a detailed approach at depicting Charlie's struggle, focusing more on the intimacy of her journey. In the hands of such a capable filmmaker, Fortune knows that portraying the trans experience can be complicated; how to tell a story that feels inclusive yet insightful? Fortunately, what we are left with is a precise, heartfelt film that gives its audience space to understand and to learn.



Charlie in action on the soccer pitch



...and with Dad (who has ambitions for his son) looking out from the stands

Charlie's story is not an easy one to tell. Encompassing everything that is wrapped up in the trans experience would be impossible, but Fortune seems to have known how complex of a challenge this would be. Rather than trying to include every detail of one girl's transition, we learn as she learns, and we watch her grow over time. That is not to say the film is not detailed, of course. One crucial scene features Charlie and her mother talking to a doctor as they discuss their options for the future.

The film will be shown at 1pm on the Third Wednesday, 20th February, in the fully-accessible Carnegie Lecture Hall at the San Leandro Public Library, 300 Estudillo. Following the showing, there will be a brief evaluation and discussion of the film.

The library has made a laptop-driven projector and quality speakers available again for this month's showing. We are encouraging the San Leandro City Council – including Lavender Seniors President Victor Aguilar, Jr., as a newly-elected Councilman – to authorize replacing the Lecture Hall's no-longer-functioning projection system as soon as possible, so we can soon, hopefully, resume the problem-free theater-type experience of LGBTQ-themed films we've enjoyed there for nearly four years.

Attendees are reminded that the theater is frequently chilly, so that a sweater or light jacket is recommended. Library staff report that temperature is controlled automatically and cannot be altered for any one room in the facility.

The library can be reached via BART (five blocks above the San Leandro station), AC-Transit (two blocks above the E. 14th and Estudillo bus-stop), Bancroft Avenue, Highways 580 or 880. Ample two- and three-hour parking is available.



When

Saturday, March 2, 2019 from 5:30 PM to 10:00 PM
PST

[Add to Calendar](#)

Where

Pleasant Hill Senior Center
233 Gregory Lane
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523



[Driving Directions](#)

Contact

Rainbow Community Center
Rainbow Community Center
925-692-0090
events@rainbowcc.org

2019 Rainbow Community Center Crab Feed

Join us for the Rainbow Community Center's 13th Annual Crab Feed!

Enjoy delicious crab, pasta, salad, and dessert! The evening will also showcase fun raffle and auction items. Tickets are \$70 for an individual or \$520 for a reserved table of 8. Purchase them fast, especially if you would like to sit at a table with your friends.

Champagne reception from 5:30-6pm

Dinner & Program from 6-10pm

It'll be a terrific time with great food and friends to help out a very worthy cause. We look forward to seeing you!

[Register Now!](#)

[Click here to Check out the event on Facebook!](#)

Getting Involved Locally

To Count LGBTQ or Not to Count LGBTQ: That Is the Question

The controversial question of whether the national decennial census (next scheduled for 2020) should "count" LGBTQ individuals, couples and families has been an issue for decades.

Why does it matter? Meghan Maury, policy director for the [National LGBTQ Task Force](#), the country's oldest LGBTQ advocacy group, has a simple explanation:

"The census controls billions of dollars in federal funding ... If you don't have an accurate count, then resources aren't getting to people who need it the most,"

Maury says. "The census also controls redistricting, who's representing us in Congress, and at the state and local levels, it impacts what our school districts look like. LGBTQ folks are increasingly seeing their rights put on the ballot. So what redistricting looks like and who's representing us has a huge impact on our day-to-day lives."

In other words, when LGBTQ Americans are not counted in the Census, they're made invisible in the eyes of government decision-makers. If LGBTQ individuals, couples and families are not counted – and details of their lives are not documented – then when it comes to carving up the federal funding pie, these invisible populations do not get considered for funding.

One hypothetical example cited by Senators Kamala Harris, Tammy Baldwin and Tom Carper – plus Rep. Raul Grijalva – four of the strongest advocates for gathering more LGBTQ data:

"If a lawmaker wanted to ask for \$10 million in federal funding to help trans women of color – who **suffer disproportionately** from employment discrimination, homelessness, and violence – they have no data on how large the community is, how many are unemployed, or how many fall victim to violence. In effect, failing to keep track of queer Americans renders them invisible for purposes of legislation and policy-making."

The Obama administration was on track to begin collecting useful LGBTQ data, including a DOJ request that such data collection be included in the 2020 Census. One of the first actions taken by Jeff Sessions, when he became Attorney General, was to withdraw that request – it wasn't necessary anymore. Also, the Trump administration removed the only LGBTQ question in the National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants, a national survey of senior citizens who receive Title III benefits – benefits relating to social security and unemployment. This omission limits researchers' ability to identify the ways in which LGBTQ elders face inequality with regard to these services.

The Center for American Progress (CAP) recommends collecting the following responses, at minimum, from and about LGBTQ people:

- Sexual orientation/attraction/identity
- Sex assigned at birth
- Gender identity/expression
- Transgender status
- Relationship status
- Preferred name
- Gender pronoun

So how can we LGBTQ seniors get involved in helping resolve this issue, other than signing petitions, writing letters and making phone-calls to our local, state and national representatives?

Alameda County



Complete Count Committee

Here at the local level, Alameda County receives billions of dollars every year from the federal government to provide healthcare, education, housing, social services and more. These federal dollars, as well as our representation in Congress, are allocated based on one set of data: the decennial Census. The accuracy of this data depends on every adult, child, and baby being counted. Everybody counts so let's count every body!

Census 2020 faces many challenges: the first-ever digital questionnaire, a rise in distrust in government, fear about a proposed citizenship question, and skepticism toward data security. Counting everyone will be harder than ever.


That's why Alameda County is gearing up for the 2020 Census. The county is asking for our help. Our entire community benefits from an accurate count, so we'll need to come together to ensure we reach folks from every corner of our county. To help coordinate outreach effectively, the county is inviting members of the public to attend one of the many **Census Solutions Workshops** they're hosting this spring to brainstorm about the best ways to reach our hard-to-count communities.

Lavender Seniors is recommending involvement in two of the 15 sub-group workshops, one initial meeting of which we have, unfortunately, already missed:

- **Seniors Subcommittee:** Service providers, advocacy organizations, & individual leaders serving senior citizens. Friday, January 18 ~ 1 - 3pm (already passed) at United Seniors Oakland Alameda County, 7200 Bancroft Avenue - Suite #251 Oakland 94605. (Contact: Tanya.Washington2@acgov.org to find out about future workshops for this sub-committee).
- **LGBTQ Subcommittee:** Community organizations, service providers, and individuals advocating for LGBTQ folks. Meeting TBD. (Contact: Benjamin.Ulrey@acgov.org to be informed of this sub-committee upcoming workshops.)

The second meeting of the Complete Count Committee will be held from 1-3pm on Wednesday, 13 March, at a location to be announced.

For more information about this process, contact, Casey Farmer, Executive Director, Alameda County Complete Count Committee: casey.farmer@acgov.org, phone 510-393-0388.



RECORD YOUR LGBTQ ORAL HISTORY

Share your stories and document East Bay LGBTQ histories! These are one-on-one facilitated audio interviews. The 30-40 minute conversation will be recorded.

Participants get a digital copy of their interview and may be featured in a forthcoming queer history project.

PACIFIC CENTER
February 23, 2019
10-3pm

2712 Telegraph Ave. Berkeley

to reserve your spot:
elena.lee.bl@gmail.com
510-463-1957

Well Connected
Enriching lives and supporting
well-being.

(FORMERLY SENIOR CENTER WITHOUT WALLS)

Community Phone Calls

This award-winning program offers activities, education, support

groups, and friendly conversation over the phone or online.

Just a few of the things offered:

LGBTQ Chat 2nd and 4th Mondays, 1:00pm - 2:00pm

This group is open to all LGBTQ older adults to connect with others socially in a supportive environment where participants can share individual and collective experiences. Facilitated by Ariel Mellinger, ASW, Support and Wellness Coordinator, Openhouse SF

Music's Memory Lane Tuesdays, 6:00pm – 6:30pm

Each week we'll discuss a hit song, vintage television variety show, or a memorable musician in music history. From Big Band music to the Beatles, we'll dive into our recollections of concerts, lyricists, and pop culture. Facilitated by Steve Maraccini

Perplexing Questions Sundays, 2:00pm – 2:30pm

Have you ever wondered how a fly can walk upside down on the ceiling? Or how a camel can go so long without water? Find out the answers to some head-scratching questions. Facilitated by Sharon Schwartz

View the Current catalog of community phone calls [here](#). Check the [website](#) for more information. To participate in these or other Well Connected telephone activities, or to learn more about their programs, call 877-797-7299 or email coviaconnections@covia.org.



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 [LGBT Caring Community Online Support Group](#).





THIS MONTH'S EVENTS

Out Standing Seniors - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Feb 5 & 19 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. (1st and 3rd Tuesdays)
Hayward Senior Center, 22325 N. Third Street, Hayward

[Join Meet-Up](#)

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

Queerly Aging Lesbians

Feb 7 & 21, 1:30 p.m. (1st and 3rd Thursdays)
The Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Avenue (at Derby), Berkeley

Find support and like-minded wonderful people!

Older & Out Therapy Group - Berkeley - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Feb 1, 8, 15, 22 3:15 p.m. (Fridays)
North Berkeley Senior Center, 901 Hearst Ave, Berkeley

Free drop-in therapy group for LGBTQ community members age 60+

Older & Out Therapy Group - Oakland - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Feb 1, 8, 15, 22 2:15 p.m. (Fridays)
Oakland LGBTQ Community Center, 3207 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland

Free drop-in therapy group for LGBTQ community members age 60+

Older & Out Therapy Group - Hayward - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Feb 4, 11, 18, 25 1:15 p.m. (Mondays)
Hayward Senior Center, 22325 N. Third Street, Hayward

Free drop-in therapy group for LGBTQ community members age 60+

Rainbow Seniors - Sponsored by Pacific Center & Lavender Seniors

Feb 12 & 26, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. (2nd & 4th Tuesdays)
San Leandro Senior Center, 13909 E 14th St, San Leandro

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

Living OUT in Livermore - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Feb 12, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. (2nd Tuesdays)
Robert Livermore Community Center Senior Services, 4444 East Avenue,
Livermore 94550

[Join Meet-Up](#)

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

Lavender Seniors Board Meeting

Feb 13, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. (2nd Wednesday)
4300 Bermuda, Oakland

A portion of this meeting is open to the public.

Senior Gay Men's Group

Feb 14 & 28, 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 Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch

Feb 9, noon - 2:00 p.m. /
All Saints Episcopal Church, 911 Dowling Blvd., San Leandro
This month's program: "A Great Ride" (see info above)

Lavender Seniors LGBTQ Film Series

Feb 20, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. (3rd Wednesday)
San Leandro Library, 300 Estudillo, San Leandro
This month's movie: "Just Charlie"(see info above)

Island Pride Peer Support Group - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Feb 13 & 27, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. (2nd & 4th Wednesday)
Mastick Senior Center, 1155 Santa Clara Ave, Alameda
*A Peer Support Group is a safe & confidential space for LGBT Seniors
50+ to share thoughts, feelings, resources, information & to support
one another.*

Tri-Valley Rainbows - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Feb 21, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. (3rd Thursday)
City of Dublin Senior Center, 7600 Amador Valley Blvd., Dublin 94568
Join Meet-up
*A Peer Support Group is a safe & confidential space for LGBT Seniors
50+ to share thoughts, feelings, resources, information & to support
one another.*

Oakland Third Friday Lunch Bunch

Sponsored by City of Oakland Aging/Adult Services & Lavender Seniors of the
East Bay
Feb 15, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.
North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland
This month's program: "Curious About Cannabis?" (see info above)

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay Board of Directors

President: Victor Aguilar Jr
Second Vice President: Gwendolyn M.
Boozé
Treasurer: Carmen Chiong

Vice President: Akilah Monifa
Secretary: John David Dupree
Founding Member: Barbara Jue
Member: Windsor Young

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

Message: 510-736-LGBT (510-736-5428)

Mailing Address: 4123 Broadway,
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Oakland, CA 94611

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Beckie Underwood
John David Dupree
Barbara Jue

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