



Lavender Notes

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

[Volunteer](#)

[Donate with PayPal](#)

*Celebrating 25 years of service and positive change
February 2020 - Volume 26 Issue 2*

STORIES OF OUR LIVES

Mark P. Fickes, J.D.

Always aiming high, this month's "Stories of Our Lives" subject, Mark Fickes, is currently seeking to join the ever-increasing number of openly LGBTQ judges in California. Since 1979, when then-Governor Jerry Brown nominated Joe Quinn to the Superior Court as the first LGBTQ judge in the state, the numbers of "out" California judges is now approaching 60.

Born in San Francisco in March 1966, Mark was the only child of an architect and his wife, who was primarily a homemaker, but who was also a corporate recruiter. His parents were divorced when he was four, so he describes his childhood as "challenging".

"Both sets of grandparents played major roles in my life as I was growing up," Mark recalls. "My maternal grandparents fled the Nazi invasion of Austria prior to World War II. Dad died when I was nine years old and – though my Mom remarried – she struggled with substance abuse which limited her role as an attentive parent until I was grown. We're good friends now, though, of course, and she is a wonderful grandmother to my kids."



Mark as a 16-year-old exchange student in Switzerland

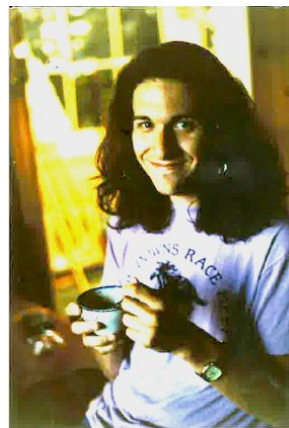
Early on, he struck a deal with his grandparents about his education.

"My grandparents offered to pay for me to go to boarding school down in Ojai," Mark says, "in return for my agreeing to work my own way through college. As a result, I consider myself fortunate to have had world-class education throughout my life. Because I had to work for it as a young adult, it has helped make me the man, the husband and the father I am today."

Mark majored in French at UC-Berkeley, receiving his B.A. in 1987. Then he decided to go across the country to earn his M.A. in French at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore in 1990. More importantly, however, Baltimore is where he met Billy, the love of his life.

"I was thinking of going on for a PhD in French," Mark recalls. "I had seen this cute guy around town and had my eye on him when I went to France for several months. When I returned, it seems that Billy had moved into an apartment downstairs from mine and we began running into each other in the hallways of the building. The evolution from neighbors to boyfriends to husbands is the story of our 29 years together! We soon decided we shouldn't be paying for two separate places, since we were always together – he moved in with me in March 1991 and we've been together ever since!"

By November of 1991, Mark had decided to shift gears a bit, applied at UC-Hastings College of Law, hoping that Billy – born and raised in Baltimore – would be willing to move with him after he was accepted. He was.



Mark as a 19-year-old undergraduate – and as a 22-year-old graduate student

"Billy's roots were all in Baltimore – his father a doctor, his mother an

innovative pre-school developer and a large extended Catholic family with 40 cousins – so I was initially worried he might not want to leave all that,” Mark recalls. “But he said there was never any doubt in his mind that he wanted us to be together wherever and forever. So we packed up our Tercel, our dog, arranged to load our few belongings into a shared moving van, headed west and began our new life back in the Bay area. We’ve had the odd challenge here and there, of course, but overall, it turned out to be a most auspicious move for us!”

He finished law school at Hastings and passed the bar (the first time!) in 1995. He worked as a Deputy District Attorney in Santa Clara County, where he stayed for five years. Then he joined a Palo Alto firm for 18 months, worked for a “boutique” law firm in Walnut Creek for two years, spent eight years in the Enforcement Division of the Securities and Exchange Commission, became a partner in a small law firm for two years, then became a partner in his current law firm in 2014. One of the reasons he left the SEC was that Billy was dropped from his health insurance because same-sex marriage wasn’t legal yet at the time.

Early in the 21st century, the couple began seriously discussing their desire to have a family. They embarked on a most exciting journey via Mark’s sperm, an egg donor and a surrogate mother.

“Our fraternal twins are almost 15 1/2 years old now,” Mark says, “bringing me to the most important post I’ve ever held in my life: father! Our daughter and our son are our pride and joy, fulfilling a dream I’ve held since my own childhood of being part of a full-time, loving nuclear family! At the end of each day, the four of us share the joys, sorrows and triumphs we’ve each experienced that day – as well as our hopes and dreams for the future. This is something that can’t be compared with anything else in my life!”



Two family portraits of Mark, Billy and the twins, 2010 and 2018

The twins call Billy “Daddy” and Mark “Poppa,” being in four-way touch at various times during each day. During this interview, for example, their 15-year-old son had to call Mark and tell him about a wrestling match he’d just taken part in at school. Their daughter is also an athlete, participating on the volleyball team.

“The kids have known from day one that their fathers are gay,” Mark explains, “and it’s no more an issue to them than our eye-color or shoe size! We’ve had to overcome some potentially awkward moments with our daughter, since we obviously don’t have first-hand experience with what an adolescent teenage

girl can be going through – physically, emotionally and socially – as she wends her way through life. But I think we’ve met all of those challenges well and continue being a very close-knit family.”

His own parents were not always as supportive about Mark’s sexuality as his friends, most colleagues and his children.

“I was 21 when I came out to my mother, step-father and some friends,” Mark recalls. “Since Mom had mostly lived and worked in San Francisco, she had gay friends. Of course, coming out in the middle of the AIDS epidemic complicated their responses, with concerns about it being a ‘harder way to live’ and fears about long-term health issues for the gay community. Sad to say, I never came out to my grandparents because I was fearful of their reaction. Maybe they would’ve been okay with it, but I wasn’t willing to take the chance. That’s something I regret to this day, as my grandparents all passed away within a couple of years of my coming out.”

Mark is actively involved with BALIF (Bay Area Lawyers for Individual Freedom) the oldest and largest organization of LGBTQ attorneys. His focus on public interest law was renewed in 2011 when he provided counsel pro bono during an elder abuse case. He realized he could make more of a difference in the lives of vulnerable people, than he did working at the SEC. That has contributed to his interest in becoming a judge.



Mark’s campaign poster portrait, 2019

“When the kids were little, I pretty much stayed out of politics,” Mark explains. “Now that they’re much more independent, the old man can start trying his wings again, also! When, for instance, Tara Flanagan first suggested I use my background to try for a seat on the bench as an openly-gay man, I thought she must be talking to somebody else. Soon, though, I began to see that my skills could be useful in helping oversee that justice is done in the community!”

So what would happen if somebody ELSE gets a clear majority next month and the election doesn’t go forward into the November ballot?

“Well, I’ll still have that most important job – fatherhood,” Mark responds, “as well as a loving husband, a successful law practice, my involvement with political groups in the community and my ongoing dedication in my synagogue, Temple Beth Abraham in Oakland.”

Mark was the first openly-gay president of the synagogue, 2013-16. He teaches sixth grade at the temple’s religious school. The twins had bar and bat

mitzvahs, but are less inclined to be heavily involved than he is, attending services or activities with him only a few times a year.

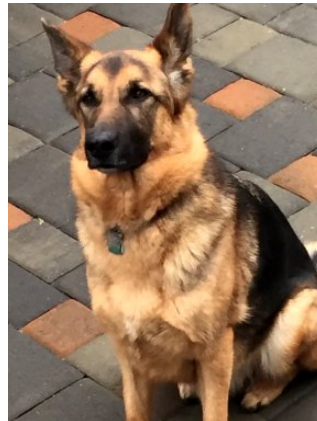
"When I was growing up, my family would not have been considered particularly 'observant,'" Mark says. "As an adult – and an out member of the LGBTQ community – it has meant a lot to me to have my faith community as a second family. It saddens me when I see or hear about people in the LGBTQ community who don't feel connected to such a second family. It has been a huge source of strength, inspiration and support for me."



The family continues being very active – at home and abroad!

The family still lives in their Oakland-Rockridge District home with their German shepherd, Jake. The couple got married in September 2013.

"We were hanging out in Tahoe with friends one day," Mark recalls, "and I suggested we ought to run to a local chapel and get married. My son thought we should have a formal wedding – not some quickie service in a Nevada wedding chapel. When the time came, we rounded up 40 or so of our friends and tied the knot and have never regretted it. Next year, we'll be celebrating 30 years together – I guess that's officially our pearl anniversary, right?!"



A family wedding photo from September 2013 – and faithful companion, Jake

Thanks to Mark, Billy and the twins for sharing your inspiring story. It's good to have your little family in our neighborhood!



BOOK REVIEW

The Journalist of Castro Street:

The Life of Randy Shilts

By Andrew E. Stoner

Stoner is an assistant professor of Communication Studies at CSU-Sacramento and the author of "Campaign Crossroads".

Randy Shilts was known mainly for his news columns. He struggled with alcohol and street drugs. He died of AIDS.

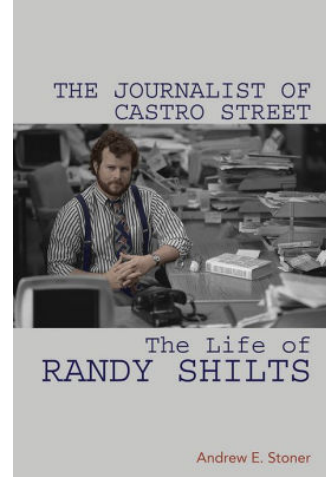
He appeared on ABC's Nightline and Larry King Live.

Some gay men rejected him and called him a "self-hating faggot".

Shilts left his hometown of Aurora, Illinois to find fulfillment. The Bay Area was perfect.

Historians and fans of gay history will savor every word.

- Frank J. Howell



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 us at karen@lavenderseniors.org or (510) 424-7240 and we will be in touch with you soon. Thank You!

Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch February 8th, 12-2pm

All Saints Episcopal Church
911 Dowling Blvd, San Leandro



Program: February's lunch will provide entertainment by young budding pianists.

The lunch will be catered by AI's Eats a homecooked meal with a Vegetarian selection as well.

The performance will precede the lunch and the lunch will be a very welcomed hot meal.

Please bring a side dish or dessert.

We will meet in the Fireside room. The performance is at noon with lunch shortly following.



****Please Note: Change of Venue for February and March****

I Do

This month, Lavender Seniors is shining a light on issues of LGBTQ immigration. The February presentation in the LGBTQ-themed film series (Wednesday, 19th February) is the 2012 film, "I Do", concerning the problems that can be involved when a gay man tries to stay in the U.S. via acquiring a green card. Two days later (Friday, 21st February) an El Cerrito-based immigration attorney will expand on those issues at the Third Friday Lunch Bunch (see blurb elsewhere in this newsletter).

"I Do", written by its star - and former Bad Boys Inc member - David W Ross is an earnest look at the lack of equality facing LGBTQ community members seeking green card status in the US, then and now.

Ross plays Jack, a gay British photographer who has lived in New York since he was 17. His brother Peter (Grant Bowler) is also living in the city, along with his newly pregnant American wife, Mya (Alicia Witt). The film opens with a tragic event, fast forwards seven years to a point where Jack has big family responsibilities and a big problem with his visa.



The only option to leaving the country, it seems, is to marry for a green card. Jack's best pal, lesbian Ali (Jamie-Lynn Sigler) has just split up with her lover. But is she prepared to risk jail to help her buddy out? Sounds like a bad idea, right? And that's before sexy Spanish architect Mano (Maurice Compte) enters the fray, complicating Jack's decisions by becoming the love of his life.

Ali's dilemma gives viewers the chance to explore her position as a pawn in the same-sex immigration game, though the director also seems to want to ensure that viewers get the message that married gay couples (in 2012) lacked rights under the law. The film theoretically becomes part of LGBTQ history with the Supreme Court's June 2015 Obergefell vs. Hodges decision making same-sex marriage rights "the law of the land". As is commonly known, of course, this decision is harder to enforce in some jurisdictions than in others, with the current administration threatening to undo some of the progress made in the area of LGBTQ rights.



Straddling two worlds: Jack is gay, married to and living with Ali, being in love with Spanish-speaking Mano

One of the nicest touches in the film is the character of Sam, played by long-time indie publicist and some-time actor Mickey Cottrell. He is the seen-it-all elder statesman of Jack's pals and gives a sense of how far the LGBT community has travelled in its struggle for equality even as much of the rest of the film shows how far there still is to go.

As mentioned last month, the San Leandro Public Library at 300 Estudillo is planning a two-month renovation of our usual film series venue (the Carnegie Lecture Hall). Though there was a one-month reprieve for the month of January ("Adam" was shown in that venue, though with some sound difficulties), February and March films are scheduled to be held in Conference Room B upstairs (access via elevator and stairs).

The film will be shown at 1pm on Wednesday, 19 February, followed by a brief discussion and evaluation of the film and its relevance to the LGBTQ community of 2020.

The library can be accessed via BART (five blocks above the San Leandro BART station), AC-Transit (two blocks above the Estudillo and E. 14th Street bus stop). Those driving to the film can access the library via Bancroft Avenue, I-580 and I-880. There is ample two- and three-hour parking available in both the adjacent parking lot and diagonal street parking.

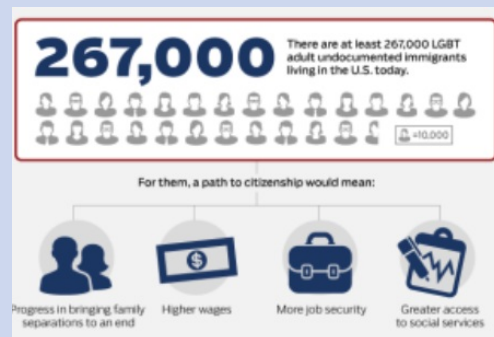


The State of LGBTQ Immigration in 2020

As many in the community know, LGBTQ immigrants/refugees/asylum-seekers face unusually difficult circumstances trying to enter the U.S., particularly during the current administration. Two transwomen have been known to die in ICE custody in the last two years alone and – depending on the source – between 20 and 40 immigrants (unclear how many of them are LGBTQ) of all ages have died in custody during the Trump administration alone.

Last week, 45 Democratic Congressional representatives - led by Rep. Mike Quigley of Illinois – contacted ICE demanding that all transgender individuals be released from custody.

Though the Supreme Court's landmark June 2015 Obergefell vs Hodges decision made same-sex marriage "the law of the land," there continue to be reports of problems for both single and married LGBTQ individuals getting visas, green cards and citizenship, moreso than under previous 20th- and 21st-century administrations.



On hand to discuss these and other LGBTQ-related immigration issues at this month's Third Friday Lunch Bunch will be Dustin Bankston, an El Cerrito-based immigration lawyer who works closely with his husband – also an immigration lawyer – and a knowledgeable staff of lawyers and paralegals to assist in the fight for equal treatment for all in our country's troubled immigration system.



Dustin C. Bankston, Principal Attorney -
dustin@bankstonimmigration.com - (510) 542-2900

Dustin is a member of the California State Bar and a Certified Specialist in Immigration and Nationality Law. He is an active member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). He also volunteers at community organizations in the Bay Area, including his active participation in the Oakland Gay Men's Chorus.

Dustin graduated with a juris doctor from University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento with distinction. While in law school, Dustin began training in immigration law by working in the immigration clinic and helping low-income individuals with their cases. After he graduated, he volunteered at the East Bay Sanctuary Covenant by attending asylum interviews with indigenous Guatemalans and LGBTQ asylum seekers.

Upon completing law school, he pursued his dream of opening an immigration law practice. He loves serving his clients and mapping out the best immigration options available according to each individual's situation. He is fully proficient in Spanish.

This month's Third Friday Lunch Bunch will be from 12-2pm on Friday, 21st February, at the North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MLK Jr Way (corner 58th Street). A nutritious lunch (including vegetarian options) will be served promptly at noon. After a brief period for announcements, the program will be turned over to Justin around 12:45.

The entrance and ample parking are at the rear of the building (off 58th Street).

Lavender Seniors Hops on the Census2020 Train

Lavender Seniors was notified recently by the United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) that it has been selected to be one of several agencies funded to assist in making sure members of the LGBTQ community are counted in the 2020 census. Since representation in legislative bodies and apportionment of available funds is based on numbers of people in a district, it is estimated that for every person NOT counted, his/her district will lose \$2,000/year, meaning that \$20,000 would be lost per uncounted person over the decade between 2020 and the next decennial census in 2030.

Nearly 150,000 "listers" have been knocking on doors since August 2019 to make sure the Census Bureau has a comprehensive list of all addresses – urban and rural – in the country. Each address will receive census information by mail in March 2020, after which enumerators will be dispatched between April and July 2020 to make sure everyone is counted.

Lavender Seniors will assist members of the LGBTQ community to make sure they are all counted, even though any specific references to sexual orientation and gender identity were promptly removed by the Trump administration in March 2017 from proposed census planning. This screenshot of how that planning process changed overnight is revealed in this graphic – dated 28 March 2017 – from the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force:

We've been ERASED!

Original	Modified March 28																				
<table><tr><td>Relationship</td><td>1880</td></tr><tr><td>Rent</td><td>1940</td></tr><tr><td>Rooms</td><td>1940</td></tr><tr><td>School Enrollment</td><td>1880</td></tr><tr><td>Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity</td><td>Proposed</td></tr></table>	Relationship	1880	Rent	1940	Rooms	1940	School Enrollment	1880	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	Proposed	<table><tr><td>Relationship</td><td>1880</td></tr><tr><td>Rent</td><td>1940</td></tr><tr><td>Rooms</td><td>1940</td></tr><tr><td>School Enrollment</td><td>1880</td></tr><tr><td>Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity</td><td>Proposed</td></tr></table>	Relationship	1880	Rent	1940	Rooms	1940	School Enrollment	1880	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	Proposed
Relationship	1880																				
Rent	1940																				
Rooms	1940																				
School Enrollment	1880																				
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	Proposed																				
Relationship	1880																				
Rent	1940																				
Rooms	1940																				
School Enrollment	1880																				
Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity	Proposed																				

A-2 Subjects Planned for the 2020 Census and American Community Survey

For information on why it is still important that LGBTQ seniors be counted in Census 2020, check out this two-minute YouTube video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHGHL4HZjYY>

[Editor's Note: Since enumerators are still being hired for the census, Lavender Seniors is trying to finalize someone from Census 2020 being on hand for five minutes at this month's Third Friday Lunch Bunch to describe how anyone can apply for the many posts still open in this process.]

FOUNDER'S CORNER- FEBRUARY 2020

by Barbara Jue, Co-Founder

In the waning days of 2019, Lavender Seniors of the East Bay was awarded the Community Leadership award from the Alameda County Psychological Association. Accompanying the award was a substantial donation. We are most grateful for the recognition. The award and the photograph of receipt is shown below.

We were honored by this award as it reflects the growing recognition of Lavender Seniors for its Community Leadership thru our direct service to LGBTQ seniors. Year 2019 was a banner year for Lavender Seniors East Bay for all the acknowledgments bestowed including the Resolution from State Senator Nancy Skinner, Oakland City Council, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, City of San Leandro and the presence of San Leandro Mayor Pauline Cutter and Congresswoman Barbara Lee at our 25th anniversary.

Of the grants for which we applied two were denied, two gave us less than we asked for, one was an unsolicited grant, one was specifically in support of a campaign effort for Census 2020, and the last was a fundraiser by the Alameda County Ducal Council.

The acknowledgements received from the distinguished organizations remind us that we as a leadership organization have the responsibility to go forward with greater effectiveness and approach collaboration with our sister and brother organizations creating a network of support for our community.

We receive requests from other cities, counties and even beyond our California borders for advice or assistance. The need for an organization such as ours addressing the needs of elder LGBTQ citizens is very much sought after; therefore, we must make our core programs much more robust and effective.

Caring for our LGBTQ Partners, Friends, and Ourselves program will begin in May 2020 at the San Leandro Community Center. Depending on funds available, we hope to enlarge the program. The Friendly Visitor program will grow with more training and effectiveness and as you, the community step up your volunteerism we strengthen the safety climate for all – those in residential care facilities for the elderly, and those choosing to age in place.

The Safe and Visible program will teach our health and residential care providers to be more culturally sensitive to our population thereby providing greater understanding and dignity as we age.

We are building our infrastructure for sustainability and growth. We very much appreciate your sustained donations for those continued funds make it possible for our work to continue.

Service, education and advocacy will be our focus to assure that LGBTQ seniors are acknowledged, respected and appreciated for the diversity that it brings to a community.

Help us with our work. Join us. Support the organizations which provide us grants, like the Alameda Ducal Council, the Horizon Foundations and other

foundations. The more that our service is visible, the more people will respond. We welcome your participation for we need feet on the ground in our Friendly Visitor program and our outreach events.

Complete the Census 2020 so that funding from the federal government can be distributed to our county as appropriated. Together we are stronger in having our voices heard and economic power applied. Consider Lavender Seniors in your will and provide legacy giving. Help us continue our leadership throughout the San Francisco Bay Area counties and help our network of care and concern for our elders be a large part of the LGBTQ community.



The award and the newly installed board of the Alameda County Psychological Association with 2 awardees

MAYA ANGELOU AND STILL I RISE

Documentary: 1 hour and 54 minutes
(2016 documentary)

San Leandro History Museum
320 Estudillo Avenue
510 577-3991



Saturday, February 1, 2020
Showings at 11:15am and 2:00pm
Free admission – no registration required

“And Still I Rise” presents Maya Angelou’s incredible life journey. A singer. Dancer, activist, poet, and writer, she inspired generations with lyrical modern African American thought that pushed boundaries. She gave people the freedom to think about their history in a way they never had before. This unprecedented film weaves her words with rare and intimate archival photograph and videos. From her upbringing in the Depression-era South to her work with Malcolm X in Ghana and her inaugural poem for President Bill Clinton, this film an incredible journey through the life of a true American icon.

Of particular note to the LGBTQ community, her role as an ally was cemented by her support for same-sex marriage and for being the first to ever use the word "gay" at an inauguration via her inaugural poem, "On the Pulse of Morning," for Bill Clinton's 1993 inauguration.

CELEBRATE CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR OF THE RAT



San Leandro Main Library
300 Estudillo Ave
510 577-3971

PLAY MAHJONG! -- FRIDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2020

3:00 – 5:00pm

LION DANCE with the TOI SHAN FAMILY ASSOCIATION

Friday February 7, 2020
5:15pm Inside Main Library

A poster for the 'Royal Hearts Title Competition Finale Event' featuring a central white box with text and logos, surrounded by a decorative border of red hearts and crowns. The text includes: 'THE ROYAL GRAND DUCAL COUNCIL OF ALAMEDA & CONTRA COSTA COUNTIES, INC. IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SPARKLING COURT OF MUSIC, DANCE & DIVERSITY ALONG WITH ROYAL GRAND DUKE MANNY SANTOS AND ROYAL GRAND DUCHESS VICKY SPARKLE TITZ', 'Royal Hearts Title Competition Finale Event', 'Feb 16, 2020', '4:00-7:00 PM', 'Hosted by Royal Queen of Hearts Miss Alabama Slamma', 'Raffle Drawing & Winner Crowning', 'The World Famous Turf Club', '22519 Main St., Hayward, CA, 94541', and 'NET PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE MONARCHS CHARITY FUND & THE RGD COUNCIL ADMIN FUND VISIT US AT ALAMEDA-DUCAL.ORG'. Logos for the Royal Grand Ducal Council, Sparkling Court of Music, Dance & Diversity, and The World Famous Turf Club are also present.

RAINBOW
COMMUNITY CENTER

Good Eats for Good Cause

Join us February 23rd at new Oakland pop-up **Popoca** to support the incredible work we do at **Rainbow Community Center**. Don't miss out - **Buy Your Tickets Today!** 100% of the



proceeds will be donated to Rainbow.

Popoca offers dishes - like pupusas and tamales made with seasonal ingredients and fresh-milled masa - inspired by traditional Salvadorian wood-fire cooking and recipes.

About the Chef: After building a career in fine-dining kitchens around the greater Bay Area, Chef Anthony Salguero is realizing his dream of sharing Salvadorian food with his home community in Oakland.

Tickets cost \$60-100 per person, wine included, for a multi-course, prix-fixe meal.

- 5:00pm Cocktails
- 5:30pm-7:30pm 1st Seating
- 8:00pm-10:00pm 2nd Seating

***If you are interested in a vegetarian option or have other dietary restrictions, please answer the question to request this alternative during the ticket purchasing process.

Event is hosted by: East Bay Eats

East Bay Eats brings community together to raise money for different non-profit organizations working in the East Bay (and SF!). Every other month - with pop ups in between - they host a family-style, community dinner at some of the Bay's most beloved restaurants. To date, their work has raised over \$300K for a variety of amazing organizations.

RSVP & Invite your friends on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1601753653305476/>

[Buy Tickets Now](#)

East Bay Eats - Rainbow Community Center at Popoca

Brown Paper Tickets - The first and only fair trade ticketing company!

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS INCREASES IN 2020

Sarah Kim-Lee, Social Security Regional Public Affairs Specialist & ACA Commissioner

Each year, we announce the annual cost-of living adjustment (COLA). By law, federal benefits increase when the cost of living rises, as measured by the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). Usually, there is an increase in the benefit amount

people will receive each month, starting the following January. Nearly 69 million Americans will see a 1.6 percent increase in their Social Security benefits and SSI payments in 2020.

Other changes that will happen in January 2020 reflect the increase in the national average wage index. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to Social Security payroll tax will increase to \$137,700 from \$132,900. The earnings limit for workers who are younger than "full" retirement age (age 66 for people born in 1943 through 1954) will increase to \$18,240. (We deduct \$1 from benefits for each \$2 earned over \$18,240.) The earnings limit for people turning 66 in 2020 will increase to \$48,600. (We deduct \$1 from benefits for each \$3 earned over \$48,600 until the month the worker turns age 66.) In December 2019, we will post Social Security COLA notices online for retirement, survivors, and disability beneficiaries who have a Social Security account.

You will be able to view and save future COLA notices via the Message Center inside the **My Social Security** website.

SAGE's National Resource Center on LGBT Aging Knowledge = Power

The NRC presented at
82 NATIONAL & REGIONAL CONFERENCES, reaching nearly 5,000 professionals.



The website **LGBTAGINGCENTER.ORG** hosts more than

900 LGBT aging resources and has had upwards of 1 million visits.



We've developed five **LGBT AGING BEST PRACTICE GUIDES** with nearly 150 tips for serving LGBT older adults. We've distributed over 15,000 print copies and

120,000+ collective downloads.



THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON LGBT AGING was established in partnership with the US Administration for Community Living in

2010



BUILDING RESPECT FOR LGBT OLDER ADULTS, the Administration for Community Living e-learning course that we host, has had almost

8,000 registrations over the past five years.



Established **COLLABORATING PARTNER NETWORK** with

18 members from Aging and LGBT leaders across the country.



Over the past 5 years, we've helped with nearly

800

REQUESTS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE to LGBT older adults, community members, and aging network professionals.



We've **PARTNERED WITH SAGECare** to train

648

ACL-funded organizations and 8,756 employees.

We've also awarded credentials to 84 State Units on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging over the past three years.



In 2014, we launched the **NATIONAL LGBT AGING RESOURCE CENTER VOLUNTEER AMBASSADOR PROGRAM**, which has recruited more than

300 volunteers from across the country.



SAGE's first **LGBT AGING CULTURAL COMPETENCY CURRICULUM**, which serves as the foundation for the SAGECare Training and Credentialing Program, began in

2012



sage

Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders

We refuse to be invisible

National Resource Center



ON LGBT AGING

LGBTAGINGCENTER.ORG

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:

(The times are no longer listed in the generic catalog, once you have signed up you will get a link to a catalog with times in your time zone)

LGBTQ Chat 2nd and 4th Mondays

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

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

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 4 & 18, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. (1st and 3rd Tuesdays)

Hayward Senior Center, 22325 N. Third Street, Hayward

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

LezBold Peer Support Group

Feb 6 & 20, 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 7, 14, 21, 28, 3:00 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 7, 14, 21, 28, 2:00 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 3, 10, 24, 1:00 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 11 & 25, 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. (2nd & 4th Tuesdays)

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

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

Living OUT in Livermore - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Feb 4, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. (1st Tuesdays)

Robert Livermore Community Center Senior Services, 4444 East Avenue, Livermore 94550

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

Lavender Seniors Board Meeting

Feb 12, 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 6, 13, 20, 27, 1:30 p.m. (Weekly on 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 8, noon - 2:00 p.m.

All Saints Episcopal Church, 911 Dowling Blvd., San Leandro

This month's program: "Music Interlude" (see info above)

Lavender Seniors LGBTQ Film Series

Feb 19, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. (3rd Wednesday)

San Leandro Library, 300 Estudillo, San Leandro

This month's movie: "I Do" (see info above)

Tri-Valley Rainbows - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Nov 20, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. (3rd Thursday)

City of Dublin Senior Center, 7600 Amador Valley Blvd., Dublin 94568

*A Peer Support Group is a confidential space for LGBT Seniors 50+
to safely 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 21, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

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

This month's program: "LGBTQ Immigration" (see info above)

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay Board of Directors

President: Victor Aguilar Jr

Vice President: Gwendolyn M. Boozé

Treasurer: Carmen Chiong

Secretary: John David Dupree

Founding Member: Barbara Jue

Communication Director: Melissa West

Member: Ana Bagtas

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

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

Friendly Visitor Program: (510) 424-7240 or

karen@lavenderseniors.org

Mailing Address: 4123 Broadway,

Newsletter Editorial

Board:

Beckie Underwood

John David Dupree

Barbara Jue

Ste 818
Oakland, CA 94611

Contact Us

Website: <http://lavenderseniors.org>

