



# Lavender Notes

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

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*Celebrating 25 years of service and positive change  
January 2020 - Volume 26 Issue 1*

## STORIES OF OUR LIVES

### Doris I. “Lucki” Allen, PhD

[Chief Warrant Officer 3, Retired, U.S. Army]

Since she spent the first 17 years of her life in El Paso, TX, and considerable time in and around the Tuskegee Institute (now University) in Alabama, there are people who refer to CW3 Doris “Lucki” Allen as a “southerner”. However, Lucki considers herself rather a citizen of the world!

Born in May 1927, Lucki was the youngest of five children, though one of her three older brothers died of aluminum poisoning when she was just one year old. Both her father and her uncle were barbers who served primarily white clientele.

“I’m not sure how it happened that their customers were mostly white,” Lucki says, “that’s just sort of how it fell out in those days. We spoke Spanish in our home, but never did pass for anything but ‘Negro’, though none of us picked cotton like some of the other black families around us. Since the black community didn’t have regular dance halls and other meeting places – outside of church – we frequently went to Latino clubs for dancing and socializing.”

Lucki attended elementary and secondary school in El Paso. Then at age 17, she followed in her older



sister, Jewel's, footsteps and went east to what was then called the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, where she majored in Physical Education.



"My sister was my heroine and my two living brothers were my heroes while I was growing up – and throughout my life, for that matter," Lucki recalls. "Our parents taught us all the importance of education – something nobody can take away from you. So we all sought out various types of education, wherever we were! Going to a Historically Black College like Tuskegee was particularly important to me. Seeing that campus monument to Booker T. Washington, lifting the veil of ignorance on our brothers and sisters, came to be our guiding light."

When they had graduated from Tuskegee, the sisters began teaching in Mississippi: first, Jewel at Alcorn College and, subsequently, Doris at Stone Street High School in Greenwood, a couple hours away. It was during that time in Mississippi that they acquired their nicknames.

"My sister, Jewel, three years older than me, had made what many considered at the time the outrageous decision to buy a brand new Ford convertible," Lucki recalls. "Outrageous, that is, for a black woman in the South. She was asked by the dealership sales staff how she could possibly pay for the car – the implication being 'as a single black woman!' – and she simply responded 'I'll be paying cash!' At one point, when we were driving together in her fancy new car, we stopped for gas, the attendant neglected to secure the hood after checking the oil and the hood came flying up when we were driving, a very dangerous occurrence! We had to pull over to the shoulder to keep from having a serious accident. One of the Good Samaritans who came along noticed that I had found a quarter on the ground, so jokingly referred to Jewel as 'Jinx' and me as 'Lucky,' that stuck with us for the rest of our lives. Indeed, life has been like that – each bad event in our lives has been followed by an equally or more positive event!"

Doris decided to adopt "Lucki" as her nick-name rather than the "Lucky" spelling that several other famous – and infamous – people were using.

Her stint teaching high school in Greenwood ended when she disagreed with the Principal.

"I was just 22 years old, in my first real job teaching high school and, for some reason, I think the Principal – who was also black – didn't like me," Lucki recounts. "Maybe he bought the myth that black women should just be pregnant and cooking dinner. But one day, a salesman from the Beech-Nut Gum Company came to make a pitch at the school. The Principal told the students in my class that they could chew some of this Beech-Nut chewing gum if they wanted to. I said I thought that was inappropriate and not a good way to enforce classroom discipline. When he wouldn't relent, I quit my job, went to University of Wisconsin in Madison for a while, but soon joined the military! In Greenwood, I had enjoyed meeting with the returning soldiers, being involved in a band and visiting a nearby café rather than sitting in the

sewing room and eating with the older teachers who seemed to have lost their zest for life. So I just left. That decision changed my life dramatically and permanently!"

So in 1950, Lucki began what would become a 30-year career in the Women's Army Corps and the U.S. Army, ending in 1980! During those three decades, she went a lot places, saw and did a lot of things for the first time – as a black woman in the military – nearly always keeping a cool head in the face of seeing atrocities, being discriminated against and often unappreciated. As fate would have it, early in her career, her commanding officer was her sister. Like the boy scout whose father is the scoutmaster, Lucki felt like she was sometimes singled out for rougher treatment, perhaps held to a higher standard than the others in the troop.

"Once, for instance, while at Camp Stoneman in California, I was one of five being promoted when we were in early-morning formation," Lucki recalls, "As my commanding officer, my sister called me out publicly for not having sewn chevrons on my uniform, indicating my being promoted from Corporal to Sergeant. Even as she was proud and praising me, she gave me one hour to sew on those chevrons and come to her office to prove it! That's the kind of leadership I learned from my sister!"



Though she was assigned to various posts around the U.S. and abroad, nothing affected her as profoundly as her decision to volunteer for three tours of duty in Vietnam, 1967-1970. Jinx (I) and Lucki

"I had so many skills, so much education and training being wasted in various posts around the country that I decided I wanted to make a difference in a high-action post like Vietnam," Lucki recalls. "One of the things I soon learned was how to speak up for myself, something that women didn't feel empowered to do much in those days. Many of the officers around me felt like women – unless they were nurses or secretaries – were just creatures to be protected – making their job harder – rather than equals who could contribute to the war effort. But I had to demand promotions and acknowledgment of my skills, since women were routinely overlooked in that regard back in the day."

On several occasions – including prior to the Tet offensive in late January 1968 – Lucki, as a trained Intelligence Officer – tried unsuccessfully to walk her assessment of imminent threats through the chain of command. This resulted in what she considers to be unnecessary casualties on the part of Americans and their allies in the field.

"Not only in the Tet Offensive, but in various other situations, we could have been better prepared if my intelligence had been heeded," Lucki recounts. "I don't know if it was because I was a woman, black or a non-commissioned officer – or some combination of those three – that my opinion was

discounted. But I do know that after I'd warned against a convoy leaving from Long Binh to Song Be and the predictable ambush claimed the lives of three soldiers, 19 were wounded and five trucks were destroyed, I decided I had to be more 'aggressively assertive' in making my superiors respect the intelligence I had gathered. As a woman in a man's world, I had to adopt that posture frequently in order to continue serving without bitterness!"



Lucki was one of the few black women in Vietnam during the height of the Vietnam War, 1967-70

Seeing all the wounded and the dead – many of whom she had become friends with during that conflict – caused permanent psychological damage, resulting in a PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) diagnosis for her later in life after years of nightmares and sleepless nights, too much time managing her pain with some kind of liquor. At the end of three tours, she left Vietnam with a heavy heart, but some sense of accomplishment.

She has continued her education – formally and informally – throughout her life. When she was posted in Germany, for example, on the advice of the woman who was the love of her life, she pursued a master's degree in Psychological Counseling.

"Interestingly, techniques I'd learned as a Prisoner of War Interrogator were extremely useful in working toward my master's degree," Lucki recalls. "The only master's programs they offered were English, math, science and psychology, so I opted to improve my counseling skills."

After her discharge, she decided to seek her Ph.D. in Psychology at the Wright Institute in Berkeley, which forced her to leap a few more hurdles than most.

"At first, they were clear that they didn't want me there," Lucki recalls. "They thought that – because I'd been in the military – I couldn't be empathetic enough to be an effective therapist. After that initial rejection, I went around the chain of command, contacted the institute's founder, Dr. Nevitt Sanford, audited a few of his classes and was finally accepted into the program. Those who doubted my abilities made me invoke the various commendations I'd received, the editorial and special agent duties I'd performed over the years and eventually received my degree at the ripe old age of 59, one of the few black people in the program."

Unfortunately, in August 1986, soon after achieving this milestone, Lucki was involved in a life-threatening accident. Her right leg was broken in five places, all 12 ribs on the right were broken, along with her right hip and serious internal injuries. The prognosis was not good – she was told she only had a 50% chance of surviving. Though she did survive, she is considered 100% disabled. But she hasn't let that stop her!



"Since that accident, I have worked as a private investigator, mentored younger psychologists and continue doing a lot of editing and proofreading," Lucki says. "Plus I am very active in my church, City of Refuge, an LGBTQ-welcoming congregation under openly lesbian Bishop Yvette Flunder. The Transcendence Gospel Choir pioneered the welcoming of transgender singers in the local black church. And I am proud to be a 'mother' of the church, open to spending time, listening to and advising any troubled members of our church or our community."

Lucki first fell in love with a woman while she was at Tuskegee in her 20s, although the family of that woman ended that relationship and insisted she get married.

"In spite of her forced marriage to that man," Lucki recalls, "we carried on for a number of years in seclusion, at hotels and so on. When she informed me she'd bought us tickets for the Montreal Expo in 1967, I finally made the decision that this sneaking around didn't work for me. I told her I would not be coming and ended it. Unfortunately, she later died of alcoholism."

While she was at University of Wisconsin, she embarked on a 36-year relationship with a woman, something very few people knew about.

"I've never really been closeted," Lucki says, "nor do I flaunt my preferences. I don't use the word lesbian referring to myself – nor do I think of my 36-year relationship as being with a 'lover,' but simply with a 'love'. When my sister and I were 25 and 28, I was hedging with her and she said, 'oh, don't worry, sweetheart, I'm gay, too!' When my father walked through the room where my sister and her partner seemed to be having a disagreement, he calmly said 'you two have been together too long to be bickering like that,' indicating that – though we'd never openly discussed gayness – he was not one to judge his daughters or anybody else."

Unfortunately, the love of Lucki's life wound up with slight dementia, dying in a rest home soon after having been beaten by a man who was also a resident there. She never recovered.

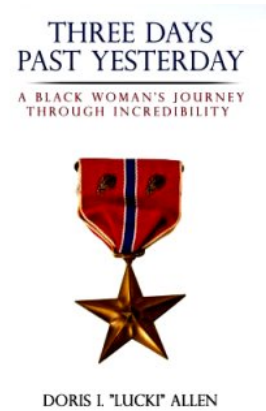
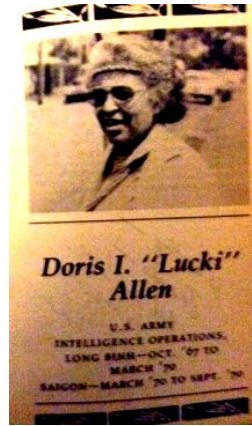
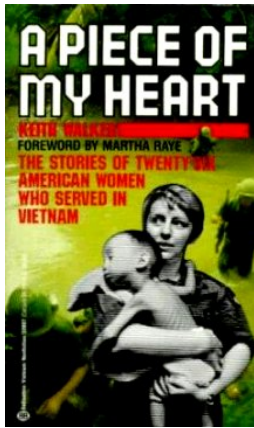
Lucki has received a number of honors over the years, including the Bronze Star with two Oak Clusters, the United Nations Service Medal and the Presidential Unit Commendation. One of the honors she's proudest of is her 2009 induction to the Military Intelligence Corps Hall of Fame at Fort Wauchuca, AZ, the first living black woman to be honored in that way.



Lucki Receiving a Commendation, Waiting to Speak and Happy to be Acknowledged

"In 1955, Mary Bowser – a freed slave with photographic memory – was honored posthumously for providing intelligence to the Union Army during the Civil War, Lucki says. "As a servant in the 'Confederate White House,' she would read papers on the desk of Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, and

relay information to the anti-slavery side of that war. She provided this vital service during that conflict in the 1860s. A century later, as another black woman, I was doing the same. I'm in mighty good company in that Hall of Fame!"



The 1985 Anthology, "A Piece of My Heart," Lucki's Section Page & her 2014 book, "Three Days Past Yesterday"

In 1985, Lucki was included in the anthology, "A Piece of My Heart" as one of 26 American women featured who had served in Vietnam. In 2014, to help deal with the various PTSD-related demons from Vietnam, she wrote a 30-vignette book, "Three Days Past Yesterday." She has been honored by the United Negro College Fund, was a keynote speaker for the Vietnam Veterans of Northern California, is a member of the National Association of Black Military Women (NABMW) and various other organizations too extensive to list here.

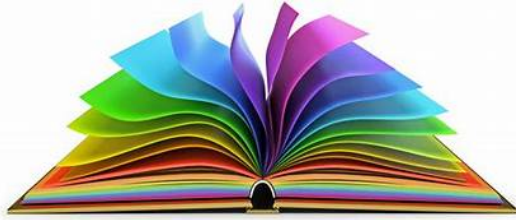
Playing music has always been a source of comfort and joy for Lucki. She and her sister played in various bands and musical groups over the years. Among the stash of instruments in her apartment are a classic trumpet, a tenor saxophone, two types of flutes and a harmonica.



Lucki (R) with sister, brother and mother, 1960s / Lucki trying out her lip on her trumpet, December 2019

At age 92+, Lucki remains active in her community and still widely-sought-after as a speaker, editor and even private investigator, from time-to-time. She continues inspiring younger professionals, mentoring psychologists, young people considering a military career and young women at various forks in the road. Thank you, Lucki, for your service to this country and to our community!

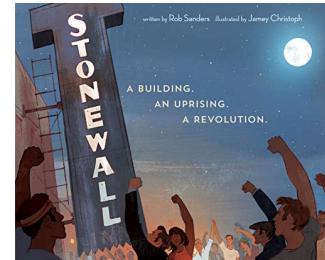
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## **Stonewall: A Building. An Uprising. A Revolution**

By Rob Sanders

Sanders stuns us with drawings that are brief but powerful.



June 28, 1969 - Stonewall riots in New York City are a turning point. Drag queens, gays, blacks, lesbians defied the police and the city government. The police ran for their lives.

Gay lib spread across the USA and the world at large.

In the 1950's, Greenwich Village poets and musicians played jazz and artists painted. The Beats arrived.

In the 1960's all the folks were warmly embraced and our culture flourished. But the police never stopped their harassment. The bars were raided.

1970 marked the first anniversary of the gay revolution. The Stonewall Inn was preserved. In 2016 it was declared to be a national monument. President Obama announced that the Inn neighborhood was the first national monument for the lavender community.

Sanders has overwhelmed us with his historic vision. Drown yourselves with the stunning photos.

- Frank J. Howell

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## **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.

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### **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](mailto:karen@lavenderseniors.org) or (510) 424-7240 and we will be in touch with you soon. Thank You!



## Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch January 11th

All Saints Episcopal Church  
911 Dowling Blvd, San Leandro  
(Just off the Estudillo/Dutton off-ramp of 580)

Program: DEATH CAFÉ – What is it? What will I learn from it?

Rev. Richard Carlini, RN BA C-RNPC, from Unity Ministry will hold a discussion on the DEATH CAFÉ and its ability to help us to think through this important facet of living.

Lunch will be prepared by Prof Al Shendan who kindly volunteered his time and cooking expertise to serve us a hot meal. Please bring dessert and drinks to share.

Lunch: Noon; Presentation: 1:00 pm



**\*\*Please Note: Change of Venue for Three Months\*\***

## Adam

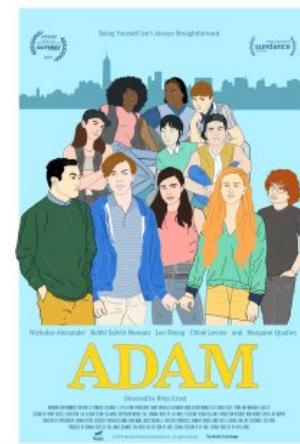
[please read disclosure below!]

Lavender Seniors' plan was to kick off the new year by showing a film in January focusing on transgender issues in our community. We struggled with whether to feature the ever-so-controversial film, "Adam," about an awkward teen who spends his last high school summer in New York City with his lesbian sister, who introduces him into the city's lesbian and trans activist scene. Billed as a 2019 American Indie comedy, directed by trans filmmaker-screenwriter Rhys Ernst – his directorial debut – from a screenplay by lesbian screenwriter, Ariel Schrag, based upon her novel of the same name, what could go wrong?!

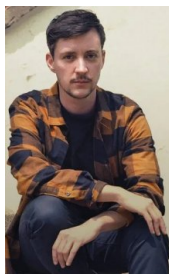
Since its well-received premiere at Sundance last spring (see photo below), it has received both rave and rant reviews, with some activist groups circulating petitions



to have it banned. Others have praised the film for featuring a diverse cast and crew, 40 percent transgender or non-binary, 30 percent cisgender and 30 percent some other variation along the queer spectrum. Its many supporters describe it as flipping the usual narrative to a point where the cis-gender heterosexual male is the outsider learning about and longing to be trans-masculine instead of the reverse: trans longing to be cis.



After viewing the film and reading various reviews – both positive and negative (see below), we decided it was best to prepare potential viewers for the controversy beforehand. Though it feels a bit like “protecting” adult members of our community from being able to make their own decision about the worth of this self-described “Indie comedy”, we are offering a list of five reviews (below) for people to read before deciding on whether to view the controversial film or not. Some might call any decision not to show the film as borderline “censorship” or “cancel culture,” while others might call it “maintaining good taste” or not supporting anything that could be accused of even the slightest measure of homophobia/transphobia.



Trans Director Ernst



LGBTQ+ (70%) Cast and one Cis male watching the “L Word”



Lesbian screenwriter Schrag – Director Ernst

The original purpose of this film series, when it was begun nearly five years ago, was to offer films with positive representations of the LGBTQ community for its senior members, many of whom had already achieved middle- or old-age status before they ever saw positive images of themselves on the small or silver screen. We have shown classic films like the 1986 Merchant-Ivory production of “Maurice,” based on E.M. Forster’s posthumously-published novel. We’ve also shown modern, present-day films like “Call Me by Your Name” and “Rocketman” (the Elton John bio-pic). In fact, we’ve deliberately focused largely on “happy endings” and avoided – for the most part – emotional or physical violence against the LGBTQ+ community, somewhat as if members of our community couldn’t cope with being reminded of the not-always-pleasant facts we have had to deal with historically.

We encourage everybody to read all of these negative and positive reviews before deciding whether to come and experience this film (and decide for) themselves.

<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/adam-movie-review-2019>

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/inside-adam-the-trans-movie-lgbt-activists-want-banned-and-the-perils-of-trans-storytelling-in-2019>

<https://www.indiewire.com/2019/08/adam-controversy-trans-movie-cancel-culture-lgbt-rhys-ernst-1202164026/>

<https://www.vulture.com/2019/08/rhys-ernsts-adam-why-are-people-boycotting-the-film.html>

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/shannonkeating/rhys-ernst-adam-controversy-transgender-queer>

The Lavender Seniors board had previously scheduled a two-day retreat the last weekend of this month to update its five-year-old strategic plan – the first such working retreat since achieving its own 501(c)(3) non-profit status in April 2018. Two professional facilitators – one from St. Mary's College and one flying in from back east – have graciously volunteered their time to help us make informed revisions to our Mission Statement and/or organizational goals during that retreat. This issue of whether there is value in providing monthly LGBTQ-themed films for viewing, discussing and evaluating as a group – in an era when Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, Apple TV, PBS Passport and all the rest can provide the same in the comfort and privacy of your own home – will definitely be on the agenda to be discussed during that retreat.

Anyone with opinions on this issue should forward them to [Info@LavenderSeniors.org](mailto:Info@LavenderSeniors.org), call a board member, leave a message at (510) 736-LGBT or send via post to our mailing address, 4123 Broadway #818, Oakland 94611, for consideration before Friday, the 24th January.

The other trans-focused film being considered for January was "TransMilitary," a powerful 2018 film on the struggle for transgender rights in the U.S. armed forces before, during and after the Trump administration assault on transgender troops in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard. This will likely be an ongoing issue in the upcoming 2020 election campaigns around the country. Stay tuned on that showing, probably in June or July.

The film will be shown at 1pm on Wednesday, 15th January (Martin Luther King Jr's actual 91st birthday, though the official holiday is celebrated the following Monday, the 20th) at the San Leandro Public Library, 300 Estudillo, San Leandro.

**PLEASE note** that – because renovations will be taking place in the Library's Carnegie Lecture Hall in January-February-March 2020, we will be meeting upstairs (elevator for accessibility) in Conference Room B, a bit of a challenge to find the first time (past Conference Room C from the elevator, in fact). Though the room is outfitted with a built-in screen, some policy or another requires that the lights remain ON at all times. Unless we can convince the City of San Leandro to suspend that policy for two hours per month during those three months, projection will not be optimal – plus seating will be straight-back chairs rather than more comfortable theater-type seats in the Lecture Hall. Meanwhile, we're hoping to look forward to April and beyond, when the built-in projector of the Lecture Hall will have been replaced, seats will have been refurbished and we'll be back to functioning on all cylinders. Please bear with us.

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.

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## Dealing with the Threat of Scams

Who of us hasn't heard of the "grandchild" who contacts his/her "grandparent" to send a few thousand dollars for help getting out of jail in Timbuktu after having passport/ID, etc., all stolen in some unseemly part of the world? Seniors are particularly vulnerable to the vagaries of such unscrupulous individuals who will prey on them, attempting to pilfer whatever precious and hard-earned funds they may have left in the bank or hidden in the coffee can up on the fridge.

Those attending January's Third Friday Lunch Bunch will be given some important information to secure themselves and their loved ones against such scams from a woman who has seen it from many angles in her legal career.

Cheryl Poncini, current President of the Alameda County Bar Association, is a Deputy District Attorney in the Alameda County District Attorney's Office, where she has worked for over 40 years in a variety of assignments in both the juvenile and adult divisions. Those assignments have included case review and charging, calendar departments, the law and motion unit, sexually violent predator unit and felony jury trials.



She is currently assigned to the Elder and Dependent Adult Protection Unit. Cheryl is a graduate of Santa Clara University School of Law, and received her Master of Public Administration degree from CSU East Bay in March 2013. She is also a member of the ACBA Legal Access Alameda (formerly VLSC) Board of Directors and a member of the Fellowship Grants Board of Founder Region Soroptimists, a community-based non-profit working to improve the lives of women and girls locally and internationally through education and economic empowerment.

A May '18 article in Bloomberg News reports that \$37 billion a year is likely an underestimate of the losses sustained by our nation's elderly. See <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2018-05-03/america-s-elderly-are-losing-37-billion-a-year-to-fraud>

Come armed with your questions and concerns, since Cheryl will be willing to address them all during her presentation and in a Q&A period afterward.

This month's Third Friday Lunch Bunch will be Friday, 17th January, at the North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MLK Jr Way (corner of 58th Street). A

nutritious buffet lunch (vegetarian options available) will be served promptly at 12 noon, followed by a brief announcement period before the floor will be turned over to our speaker.

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

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Want input? The goal this year is to update the Lavender Seniors website. If you have any comments or suggestions or are interesting in volunteering for one of the committee openings, please email: [Beckie@LavenderSeniors.org](mailto:Beckie@LavenderSeniors.org)

We are also looking for a new web guru to transition to as our current provider retires.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### A Very Active End-of-2019 for Lavender Seniors!

After hosting a fabulous 9th November sit-down lunch-dinner for over 250 friends of Lavender Seniors – replete with three terrific entertainments groups (Oakland Gay Men's Chorus, Mothertongue Feminist Theater Collective and Voices Lesbian A Cappella for Justice), receiving proclamations and giving awards to volunteers and long-time contributors – Lavender Seniors didn't just sit back and let any grass grow under its feet for the rest of the year!

First, on Saturday, 14th December, Lavender Seniors hosted 60 LGBTQ seniors, volunteers, friends and allies for a holiday gathering and "Senior Meal" at Harry's Hofbrau in San Leandro. Each person who had RSVP'd had a little pink-lavender bag (with their name on it!) containing special holiday gifts – and there were some extras just in case more people "popped in". We outgrew the space (only can accommodate about 35-40 people), so an extra 15-20 people had to sit in the "overflow" area outside the reserved area of the restaurant. Though – like at Eve's Waterfront Restaurant in November – it was inconvenient to be outside the mainstream event (for which we apologize), it can be seen as a positive thing that we are continuing to expand our services and our community since we received our own non-profit status in April 2018.



@Harry's – Some folks inside the Lavender Seniors space – Some of the folks in overflow – And after the party was over

That same night, a group of Lavender Seniors (board members, staff and



allies) headed south to the Turf Club, where there was another fund-raiser by the Ducal Council of Alameda County. They also had door-prizes, including a rich home-baked chocolate cake (won by one of our board members and used a few days later at the Third Friday Lunch Bunch!) and a very colorful drag show for all who attended!



Ducal Council of Alameda County Holiday Bake Sale and Drag Show

And at the Third Friday Lunch Bunch on 20th December, an overflow crowd was on hand to see a holiday performance of Stagebridge's "Never Too Late" troupe – dedicated to our/their beloved friend, Jerry Fishman, who passed away a year earlier. In addition to the usual nutritious meal provided by Fountain Café – under the auspices of the City of Oakland and Lavender Seniors – there were frosted mini-cupcakes and a rich chocolate cake (compliments of the Ducal Council of Alameda County) – during and after the performance. We are ever-so-grateful to this troupe and Stagebridge for this outstanding performance that kept everyone in the room rapt and, occasionally, on their feet singing/dancing along!



Stagebridge "Never Too Late" Troupe Performing for Third Friday Lunch Bunch, 20th December – with Rapt Audience

*The board, staff and volunteers of Lavender Seniors wishes all the best for the holidays, 2020 and beyond!*

*Let's make this the best Leap Year ever!*

## Founders Corner

by

Barbara Jue, Lavender Seniors Co-Founder

The year 2019 was filled with some of the most memorable achievements of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay's quarter-century in existence. It was also the first full year as a newly-minted 501(c)



(3) charitable/non-profit organization.

During this consequential year, our board added three new members: Melissa West, Ana Bagtas, and Janell Lee. Our President, Victor Aguilar, Jr. was newly-elected as the first openly gay City Councilman in San Leandro.

As 2019 became the staging year for Census 2020, board members participated in LGBTQ Focus groups. This event paralleled Alameda County's Survey of residents over age 55 to help determine priority funding of the county's social programs, inclusive of LGBTQ elders. Lavender Seniors distributed Alameda County surveys to LGBTQ organizations and senior residences. Census 2020 questions were argued with controversy over immigration and LGBTQ issues.

Besides the monthly LGBTQ-themed film series and two monthly congregant meals, one of our stalwart volunteers arranged for us to celebrate Pride month with a presentation by renowned comic Karen Ripley at the Emeryville Senior Center. For the second year in a row, Lavender Seniors Arranged for LGBTQ seniors to attend "OSF-Out Weekend" at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland, OR, including viewing of the first-ever LGBTQ version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's "Oklahoma!" and various other LGBTQ-themed plays.

Lavender Seniors sponsored another ten-session "Caring for our LGBTQ Partners, Friends and Ourselves" therapy/support group and provided speakers to events such as the Elder Conference at the Oakland LGBTQ Center with our Lavender Scrolls, which were also invited for exhibit at senior centers, residence facilities, health fairs and Pride events. We sent representatives to the Alameda County Conference on elder providers. Our Rainbow Seniors Peer group continued its twice a month meetings at the San Leandro Senior Center. Lavender Seniors was represented by Gwen Boozé and Karen Anderson, who participated in a speakers panel on Governor Newsom's initiative on older Americans.

Oakland Pride found Lavender Seniors tabling at two simultaneous venues. The Lavender Scrolls were displayed at the San Leandro Senior Center for the month of June.

We interviewed LGBTQ activist Brenda Crawford on stage at the San Leandro Library after showing of the "A Great Ride" a documentary on the life of LGBTQ activist Sally Gearhart, who, with Harvey Milk, among others, vigorously contended against Proposition 6, the anti-gay-teachers initiative put on the ballot by State Senator John Briggs in 1978.

Our Friendly Visitor Program has ongoing demands for volunteers, as needs of LGBTQ elders become more acute. It was apparent that as some of the volunteers age, they too, may need Friendly Visitors themselves!

Our two "Safe and Visible" training videos for medical, mental health and social service professionals, as well as staff of senior residence facilities and Residential Treatment Facilities, continue to offer sensitivities on how to be welcoming to LGBTQ seniors. These training programs can be accessed through our website or through requests to Lavender Seniors for on-site training, including continuing education units to some providers.

Lavender Seniors applied for and won several small grants to support our nine existing programs, and we continued to apply for others throughout the year.

In addition, board, staff and volunteers were busy making plans for the Lavender Seniors Silver (25th) Anniversary celebration and fundraiser on 9th November. Attended by over 250 LGBTQ seniors and their allies, this was one of the most successful events of the year. Many hours were spent by skilled members of the planning committee, working in conjunction with two contractors, Earp Events and Blue Arts, as well as with the generous support of various individuals, families, corporate and small business sponsors. Eve's Waterfront Restaurant was indeed the site of a charmed celebration including a sit-down meal, proclamations received and awards given, and outstanding entertainment by the Oakland Gay Men's Chorus, Mothertongue Feminist Theater Collective and Voices Lesbian A Cappella for Justice.

The occasion was graced with the presence of four of the aging – but still vital – co-founders: Dee Nagy, Shirley Dennett, Frank Howell and Barbara Jue. Co-founders Alan Pardini and Don Silva were unable to attend. San Leandro Mayor Pauline Cutter joined the festivities as she dropped off a substantial donation from the City of San Leandro, which reminded attendees that the City Council had issued Pride Month proclamations four years in a row to honor Lavender Seniors and LGBTQ contributions to the City.

One of the high points of the event – accompanied by several standing ovations! – was the visit by Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who smilingly gave letters of commendation to each of our honored Friendly Visitor volunteers, our former Friendly Visitor Coordinator and the pro-bono attorney who steered us through acquiring our non-profit status. We also received recognition from State Senator Nancy Skinner, and the Oakland City Council.

To cap a very celebration-worthy year, we received recognition from the Alameda County Psychological Association as the Community Leadership organization of the year. We also received an unsolicited grant from the Tiphane Fund, administered by the East Bay Community Foundation, for general operating expenses.

We also got word in December of a grant from the United Way of the Bay Area to continue publicizing and making LGBTQ seniors aware of how important it is to be counted in Census2020, on which funding decisions are made at the local, regional and national level.

Other events occurring in December of 2019 are documented elsewhere in this newsletter. We may be aging, but we will never forget the vitality of our community!

Even with the efforts of volunteers, grants, sponsors and board members, we could not have achieved as much as we did without consistent support of the Lavender Seniors community, the LGBTQ population and our many allies.

The year 2020 will be a very challenging and active year for the LGBTQ community. Lavender Seniors will continue improving programs in support of our mission. The political, economic and physical environments will demand more collaboration and more creative responses from our small organization.

We would like to know your thoughts and suggestions as we begin the new decade with a 366-day Leap Year. We also ask that each of us remember to take our civic responsibilities seriously as a new census, a new election and an uncertain future is faced in 2020.

Join us to work for a better tomorrow. There is strength in numbers for ideas, energy and donations. May each of you have a new year full of realized dreams and hopes for the future. We wish you all happy holidays, the best for 2020 and beyond, good health and long life!

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## **ESTATE PLANNING AND MORE FREE COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Course #15421

Thursday, January 16, 2020

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

San Leandro Senior Community Center  
13909 East 14th Street, San Leandro, CA 94578  
510-577-3462

Do you have questions about effectively planning for your future? A staff attorney from HERA (Housing and Economic Rights Advocates) will explain key concerns regarding planning to help you address your specific situation. Learn more about wills, living trusts, powers of attorney, advanced health care directives, transfer on death documents for certain types of accounts and more....

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### **Save the Date**

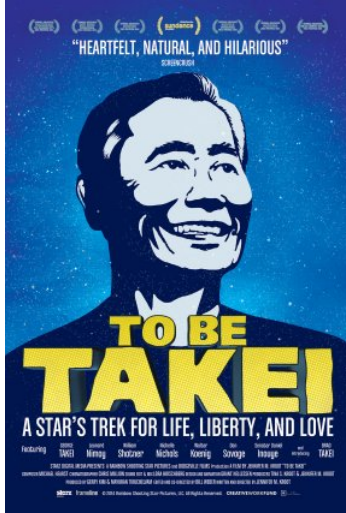
## **Discussion of Book by Gay Senior, George Takei, Japanese-American Actor/Activist**

George Takei (pronounced Tah-KAY), who played "Mr. Sulu" on television's "Star Trek" from 1965-69, has also recently written a book titled "They Called Us Enemy" about the "internment" of Japanese-Americans after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 when Takei was not quite five years old. He and his family were among the 120,000+ Americans of Japanese descent plucked from their lives and put into these camps for the remainder of World War II, losing their livelihoods, their dignity and everything that they previously owned.

Takei, now 82 years old and a long-time openly-gay LGBTQ activist, has been with his husband, Brad Altman Takei, since 1987, married since 2008 when the California Supreme Court opened up same-sex marriage for the six months prior to passage of Proposition 8 in November. He continues to be a spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign Fund and has had the courage to confront homophobia and racism at the local, regional, national and international level through creating PSAs and public comments against, for example, current immigration tactics, as well as participating in a nation-wide "Equality Trek" as part of HRC's "Coming Out Campaign."

He also appeared at the 2015 premiere of "To Be Takei," an award-winning documentary about his life at the Frameline International LGBTQ Film Festival in San Francisco. The 2015 Broadway musical, "Allegiance" – later released as a DVD, as well – is based on his life story.

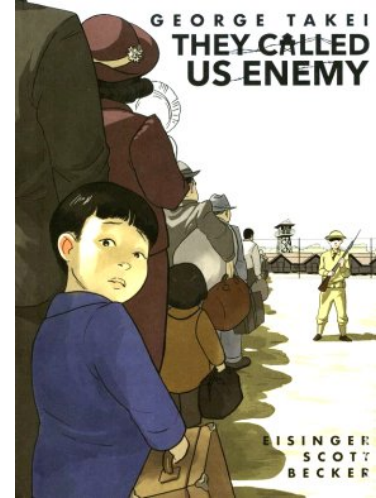




The 2012 Documentary



The 2015 Broadway Musical



The 2019 Book

On Tuesday, 4th February, from 6-8pm, the San Leandro Public Library and the International Rescue Committee are co-sponsoring an open discussion on Takei's book. This is part of its "Book to Action" Series.

The Library, 300 Estudillo, is easily accessible by public transportation and private vehicles. It is five blocks above the San Leandro BART station and two blocks above the Estudillo and E. 14th AC-Transit bus stop.

The library will offer a copy of the book to each person who attends, while supplies last. For more information, call 510-577-3971 or see website:

<https://www.sanleandro.org/depts/library/calendar.asp>

## 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 – 6:45pm**

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](#). (Winter catalog not online yet at the publishing of this newsletter.) 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](mailto: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**

Jan 7 & 21, 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**

Jan 2 & 16, 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**

Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 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**

Jan 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, 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**

Jan 6, 13, 27, 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**

Jan 14 & 28, 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**

Jan 7, 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**

Jan 8, 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**

Jan 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, 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**

Jan 11, noon - 2:00 p.m.

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

*This month's program: "Death Café" (see info above)*

**Lavender Seniors LGBTQ Film Series**

Jan 15, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. (3rd Wednesday)

San Leandro Library, 300 Estudillo, San Leandro

*This month's movie: "Adam" (see info above)*

### Tri-Valley Rainbows - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Jan 16, 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

Jan 17, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

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

*This month's program: "Dealing with the Threat of Scams"(see info above)*

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## 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

Member: Janell M. Lee

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John David Dupree

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