



# 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*

*November 2019 - Volume 26 Issue 11*

## LAVENDER SENIORS SILVER ANNIVERSARY



Going strong for 25 years and counting!

Eve's Waterfront Restaurant  
15 Embarcadero West, Oakland, CA 94607  
Saturday, November 9, 2019

11:30 am – 3:30 pm

MC: Peggy Moore,

Training and Development Director, California Democratic Party

### Live Entertainment:

- Oakland Gay Men's Chorus
- VOICES Lesbian A Cappella for Justice
- Mothertongue Feminist Readers Theater

### Great food (Sit-Down Meal Served at the table!):

- Chicken: "Eve's Brick-Pressed Roasted Chicken"
- Fish: "Seared Salmon"
- Vegetarian: "Stuffed Portabello Mushroom" (Vegan possible by request beforehand, according to the chef)

## Tickets Information

\$25.00 General Admission (No tickets sold at the door)

[PURCHASE TICKETS ONLINE](#) - Purchase Deadline, Monday, 4th November, 5pm

(pay via credit card)

[DOWNLOAD EVENT REGISTRATION FORM](#)

(pay via PayPal, check, or credit card)

## Sponsorship and Advertising opportunities are available!

In addition to helping underwrite the 25th Anniversary of Lavender Seniors, your generous donation also goes towards:

- Underwriting the attendance of Seniors who otherwise could not afford to attend.
- Supporting our Friendly Visitor Program.
- Providing Safe and Visible Training to healthcare, mental health and social service providers.
- Providing lunches for bi-monthly peer-supported and educational luncheons.
- Help afford booth setups at Pride Festivals and Health Fairs, so we can actively inform, support and be involved in the community.

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For more information please contact: [gwen@lavenderseniors.org](mailto:gwen@lavenderseniors.org)



**Gail "Pacifica" & Debra Valov**

Various adages have attempted to explain the inexplicable in relationships over the centuries. "Opposites attract." "Birds of a feather stick together." "May and December relationships are a set-up for failure!" "A real friend walks in when the rest of the world walks out." "Lesbian relationships just aren't sustainable."

Pacifica and Debra, a local lesbian couple in what some might call a May and December relationship, have just celebrated 35 years together, seeming to defy some of that "folk wisdom" and being the perfect examples of other such adages! Though they were born almost exactly 20 years apart, so much of their "formative years" paralleled one another. Both lost their fathers at a very young age – and both have had widely varied interests over the years! They both love traveling and are tuned-in to issues around disability, the environment and social justice.

## Pacifica's Story

Born in March 1941 in Honolulu, HI, Pacifica was the first of two children of an Air Force pilot and his wife. Pacifica was with her aunt at home on the military base on Oahu when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on 7th December 1941. Her parents were off camping with other officers and their wives on the big island of Hawaii.



Pacifica's parents at the beach, Hawaii; Pacifica, one year old, Hawaii, 1942

A few months after Pearl Harbor, the family returned to Portland where her brother was born. Her father then went to England to train fighter pilots and sadly, when she was two years old, her father's plane disappeared over the English Channel on a reconnaissance mission—neither he nor his plane were ever found. At the time, a missing person was declared dead after only one year. Three years later, her mother re-married, and her half-sister was born a year or so later.

"My step-father and I never really warmed up to each other," Pacifica recalls. "According to my mom, I tried playing and sidling up to him for attention now and then as a little girl, but she implied at one point that he seemed incapable of being warm and loving with me. I think my brother thought of him as his father until he became an adult and started asking more about our biological father. In fact, his research on our father has helped connect us with a few other World War II Orphans!"

Through much of Pacifica's childhood, the family moved up and down the west

coast – living in Portland, Santa Barbara, Pasadena, Altadena and back to Portland. She went through junior high school in Altadena, 9th grade in Santa Barbara and back up to Portland for 10th-12th grades where she graduated from U.S Grant High School.

“Since all of my family had gone to Oregon State University, I had to be different so I enrolled at University of Oregon,” Pacifica recalls. “After a perfectly-miserable freshman year, I returned home for a few months to a pretty unhappy situation. When a college roommate suggested we get an apartment together, I jumped at the chance! Not being at home with my step-father was like a breath of fresh-air!”

The two friends got odd jobs to pay the expenses and Pacifica attended Portland State for a couple of semesters. They planned to go to San Francisco State University together, but after her friend got pregnant, Pacifica ended up emigrating to the Bay area in 1961 with another friend whose sister lived in Berkeley and helped them get on their feet here.

“I celebrated my 21st birthday in San Francisco, while attending SFSU,” Pacifica recounts. “I had finally declared my independence, LOVED learning new things out of my step-father’s shadow.”

While she was at SFSU, she met a man who was finishing up his teaching credential, and who would become her husband and the father of her biological son and adoptive daughter. They lived in the Haight for a while before they were married, and eventually they bought a house in Oakland’s Rockridge neighborhood.

“When we bought that house, I was an idealist who was going to become the mother to millions of needy children,” Pacifica recalls. “By the time my daughter was about two, however, I realized I couldn’t take responsibility for raising another child. I was morphing into a feminist; I read the first *Ms.* Magazine and began to immerse myself in feminist literature. I began to become aware of tax-resistance as a form of protest, since I hated what was happening in the world, particularly regarding both women and war!”

It was during this period of rapid personal change that Pacifica began questioning her own sexual identity. She began reading provocative books like “Rubyfruit Jungle”.



Pacifica – on the cusp of self-discovery - with her husband, her son and her daughter, 1971

“Though I didn’t know it at the time, looking back, it’s clear I was slowly realizing that I was a lesbian,” Pacifica muses. “I actually went through a period of wondering whether I might be a ‘bisexual lesbian’! It was all very confusing to me at the time. I knew there were no open lesbians in politics or even in Hollywood at the time.”

Pacifica began spending time with lesbians.

“Once when I was practicing one of the moves I had learned in a self-defense class – while sitting on a woman friend – it occurred to me that this was a much more pleasant sensation than sitting on a man had ever been,” Pacifica recalls. “My husband and I had agreed to an open marriage, but when the reality of my becoming involved with women hit home with him, the ‘openness’ of the marriage began breaking down rapidly.”

The couple soon separated.

“I spent some time in a woman’s community in Cave Junction, OR,” Pacifica recounts, “but I realized that it was too hard being in the country with kids. Living in Oakland seemed the best solution so the kids could go back and forth between me and my husband, and return to their school and friends. I don’t think he ever forgave me for choosing women over him. I never felt like I was in the closet. I was just a late bloomer.”

Though Pacifica and her husband were married for 18 years, they only lived together for 12. They sold their house in 1977, splitting the proceeds. Not long after, she bought the North Oakland “fixer-upper” house where she raised her kids and has lived 3+ decades with Debra.

“If I had had better advice in those days, I might have been better off financially than I was,” Pacifica suggests. “But being a tax-resisting lesbian and living below the taxable level has been an essential part of my identity.”



Pacifica "holding up" the house being renovated – and putting in her garden – 1984, the year she met Debra

Coming out to her mother and siblings before she split up with her husband was complicated.

"My Mom's reaction was interesting," Pacifica recalls. "She said 'well, I've always known it's easier to be with women', though she did express some concern initially about the effect this might have on her grandchildren (my kids). My brother, however, who considered himself a devout Christian, wrote me a couple of letters basically declaring that I was going to burn in hell. He eventually came around toward the end of our mother's life, especially when he saw how Debra and I were caring for her."

Ah, so time for Debra's somewhat-parallel story!

## Debra's Story

Debra was born in January 1961, near San Bernardino, CA, the last of five. As the 'baby' of the family, she is 12 years younger than her eldest sister and 7 years younger than her next oldest brother. Her father – a state civil safety engineer – died before her sixth birthday of a heart attack, leaving her mother with five kids to raise alone. She never remarried.



Debra with her Dad, 1961; and "early warning signs of a cat person" at age 5

"I grew up in a Russian immigrant family associated with the Molokan

Church," Debra recalls. "As part of this pacifist Protestant sect, my ancestors were exiled to the Caucasus region in the early 1800s."

Her great grandparents and grandparents emigrated between 1904 and 1906 to escape the impending unrest and potential military conscription into the Czar's army.

"Our people mostly wound up in Los Angeles in The Flats along with many others from the church," Debra says. "The maternal side of my family soon migrated to Baja California, Mexico, to farm. That's where my grandmother was born and where a few aunts and uncles went on to marry local Mexicans whose families are still there. Some of them – like my grandmother whose parents relocated to the US side of the border in the 1930s – were migrant farm workers, or packed produce, up and down the West Coast. I didn't have much connection with relatives beyond my direct family line, especially after my dad died. And I didn't know anything about my Mexican relatives until I was in my 30's! I've since reunited with them."

A year after her father died, when Debra was seven, her mother packed her and her three brothers off to Mona Vale, in the north shore area of Sydney, Australia. It was a move that she didn't want to make. Her sister had recently married and so stayed in the US.

"There was supposedly a 'vote' on whether we would move or not," Debra recalls, "but, as far as I know, I was the only one who voted against it. Mom was devastated by Dad's sudden and unexpected death and she didn't want family interference from those who wanted to 'take care of' her as a single mother with four kids still at home. What better escape than to move half way across the world?"

Debra went from second to sixth grade in the local elementary school. She dealt with her unhappiness and feelings of disconnectedness from family back home by throwing herself into academics and sports, which had always appealed to the 'tomboy' in her. She became an accomplished athlete in several track and field sports, including the shotput, discus throw, and 100 meter sprint, as well as in softball, netball, swimming and body surfing.



"Wherever I went, I always felt like the outsider," Debra recalls. "I was the American kid in Australia and the Aussie kid in the U.S., since I'd definitely developed quite an accent in those years. Through sports, I learned about teamwork, sportsmanship, losing (and winning) gracefully. I was the fastest kid in the school, so whenever the boy-bullies approached the girls' side of the playground, they knew they would have to face me, who didn't even know yet I was a dyke-in-training!"

When she was 12, she declared once again that she wasn't happy in Australia, citing a family promise that if they didn't like it there, they could return to the U.S. after seven years. Debra came to stay with her eldest sister in California for nine months.

"During that time, I got to re-connect with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, all of whom meant a lot to me," Debra recalls. "I once again felt I'd found where I belonged and wanted to return permanently to the US. Once back in Australia I voiced my wishes to my mom. It was perfect timing, since her long-time boyfriend had been pushing to marry and proposed that in order to restore calm to their relationship they should send *me* away to boarding school instead of sending his juvenile delinquent son off to reformatory school!"

After her mother's resounding 'no!' to the boyfriend on both proposals, they relocated to the SF Bay Area when Debra was 14.

"When I started high school in Concord," Debra recalls, "I was very relieved to no longer be in the 'homemaking' track like I was in Australia. I wanted to be a doctor!"

Debra graduated from high school in Concord and headed to UC-Berkeley, where she continued to compete in athletics. She represented the school in handball and won a national championship in 1983. With her pre-med interests, she applied as a biology major, but soon switched to human physiology. Sadly, she found that students in the pre-med curriculum didn't reciprocate her sense of cooperation, so she decided – with the help of a school counselor – to pursue Occupational Therapy instead.

"As far back as I can remember, I was interested in disability issues," Debra recalls, "So this just felt like the most natural transition in the world to me! That was what I'd really been wanting to do all my life! I decided that – instead of going to med school – I would get a master's degree in Occupational Therapy."

Debra took two years off after college, working as an attendant and with the Association for Retarded Citizens. She saved enough – along with a school loan – to get her MS at San Jose State University. She worked for eight years in OT, mostly at Kaiser Rehabilitation in Vallejo, where she specialized in spinal cord and head injuries, as well as arthritis.



Debra's 'first long-term relationship,' Rosie, who died at 16; plus channeling her 'baby butch dyke' in the early '80s

Soon after she graduated from UC-Berkeley with her bachelor's degree, she finally found time to start exploring her sexuality. She met her first girlfriend at age 21.

"Though I had dated a couple of guys in high school and college," Debra recalls, "when my soon-to-be girlfriend kissed me for the first time, the bells went off loud and clear. I knew instantly that I had found what I wanted!"

When Debra came out to her mother, however, she initially 'flipped out'.

"In my family, growing up with three brothers," Debra recounts, "the girls were accustomed to grandma showing us the 'hope chest', which is where she kept all the things they'd need for their weddings. I knew that I didn't want to get married OR have children. When I wrote stories as a teenager, I always wrote about the guy who got the girl. Though I had no context at the time for what that meant, I knew I wasn't interested in having a family! Explaining this new wrinkle in my life was difficult for my Mom. At first, it was all about 'what did I do wrong?' But she's had years to get over it and now is fully accepting of Pacifica as my partner and spouse!"

Her brothers, on the other hand, were more inclined to laugh and say "Well, it's about time! We've known since you were a kid!"

## Pacifica and Debra's Story

As fate would have it, these two women – 20 years apart in age – both attended a Memorial Day party in 1984. Their lives have never been the same (which is a good thing)...! Both of them were personal attendants who worked with some of the same disabled women. They had crossed paths several times earlier, including at Thanksgiving and a joint March birthday party for several women. But they'd never had any one-on-one conversations before.

"At the Memorial Day party, when I realized we were alone and that Pacifica was coming on to me, I gulped and practically ran out of the room!" Debra recalls. "We met up at a group event about a week later. When she asked if I'd like a ride home afterwards – to her place – I could hardly speak but somehow managed to decline. I was scared to death. I was just a 'baby' of 23 and didn't have a clue what to do! The third time was the charm, again after a group gathering, on June 9th. I finally found the courage to say yes. And that was that. And here we are!"



Their first SF Pride in 1984 – Oakland Pride in 2015 – still crazy about each other after all those years

Both women place a very high premium on having their own space and time spent alone, though they spend plenty of time together.

“On and off during my childhood, I had to share a bed with my Mom,” Debra recalls, “so it’s always been important – to both Pacifica and me – to have our own bedrooms and the freedom to have our own friends, as well as mutual friends. This outlook is one of the things that has kept our relationship in such good balance over the years!”

Debra has helped in the renovation of their North Oakland compound. They converted one outbuilding into a one-bedroom studio, which they currently share. Pacifica re-did the two-story house before they met, with Pacifica’s 53-year-old “very helpful” son and his family living upstairs; the lower unit has been made wheelchair accessible and has always been rented at below market rate, as part of the couple’s ‘paying forward’ their good fortune. These two are definitely NOT all-work and no-play, however, as these photos attest:



Motivity trapeze (Pacifica below); Stilt-walking Pacifica and Debra with sign “Tall Older Women Turn Me On!”

After 24+ years together, they made an appointment to be married in June 2008 at the Alameda County Courthouse, making them one of the 18,000+ LGBTQ couples in California who took advantage of that interim period before Prop. 8 passed in November 2008, putting future such weddings on hold for a few years of litigation. They rode their bicycles to the wedding in downtown Oakland, then got takeout dim sum for an impromptu lunch with their guests at the Oakland estuary park. Pacifica’s son, daughter-in-law, daughter and her two kids, and a long-time friend attended. Here’s most of the wedding party, plus two photos with Pacifica’s family:



(Left: Wedding Photo) Daughter, Pacifica, Son, Debra and granddaughter (rabbit ears behind son)

(Center Photo) Mom, Brother, Pacifica and Sister

(Right Photo) Pacifica with two grandchildren

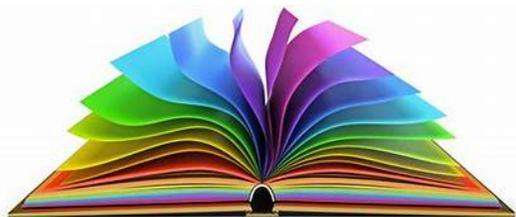
Due to accidents, surgeries and various other health issues, the couple has alternated providing care for each other, as well as caregiving and providing a home for Pacifica's mother during the last three years of her life. Among the more enjoyable activities that have come to the fore as their relationship has progressed are their nearly-annual trips to Baja California, Debra's interest in botany and both of their interest in the Spanish language and volunteering at a veterinary clinic in Mulegé. They have also been involved with Grupo Tortuguero, a Mexican coalition working on the protection and conservation of endangered sea turtles.



In Mexico: fooling around with 'reading glasses', enjoying the Baja Desert and fighting for endangered turtles

And Debra has become a field botanist and environmental educator, also putting her 2-cent's worth into botany research both in the U.S. and Mexico. She is working on a book on the desert flora of Mulegé, Baja California Sur, as well as volunteering at both the UC-Berkeley Botanical Garden and the UC-Jepson Herbaria.

No moss ever seems to be growing under their feet, that's for sure! Thanks for showing us it can all be done, Pacifica and Debra! Wishing you many more years and long life together!



## BOOK REVIEW

### Elderhood: Redefining Aging, Transforming Medicine, Reimagining Life

By Louise Aronson

Aronson has pulled together a massive amount of research on all aspects of aging. She points out,

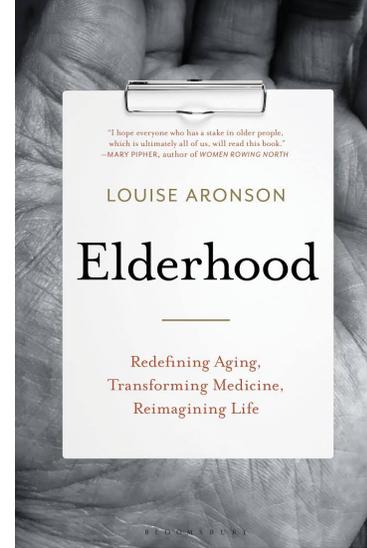
with much force, that aging will be more significant than ever before. Aging is a time of growth and hope, not a time of despair.

The efforts of nutritionists, physical therapists, and social workers are as important as family doctors. The young get a lot of attention and fanfare and seniors are sometimes cast in the villain's role.

In elders, the heart gets bigger and heavier, ears continue to grow, and the lens of the eye thickens. Aging can be difficult for seniors. Transgender folks are marginalized and have poorer health.

In summary, there is much here to absorb and think about. Don't pass this one up. You will cheat yourselves.

- 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.

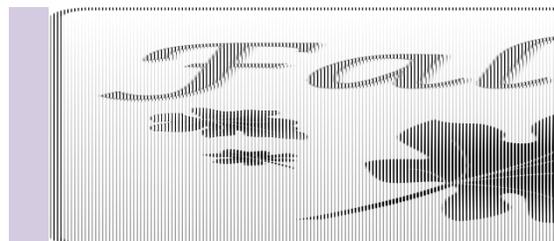
### LAVENDER SENIORS FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM HAS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE.

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



November 3rd...set  
your clocks back one  
hour!

Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch



No Rainbow Lunch this month...join us for the 25th Anniversary Celebration on the second Saturday, November 9th.

See info at the top of this newsletter.

As for 2nd Saturday in December (14th), we will observe our annual tradition of having a holiday and volunteer appreciation luncheon at Harry's Hofbrau, 14900 E. 14th, San Leandro from 12-2pm.

As usual, Lavender Seniors will pay \$5.50 toward the \$12.50 "senior meal" and participants will pay the \$7 balance. We will provide more information and ask for RSVP's in a mid-November e-mail blast and/or in the December newsletter (you may understand our focus on the Silver Anniversary Celebration has left a few December details undealt with so far).

Please mark the date on your calendar and join us there - celebrating together two months in a row!



There's No Place Like Home!



## Keeping Seniors Safe – and Connected! – at Home

Many of us have heard our own parents' plaintive plea, "Don't ever put me into one of those rest homes for old people!" And maybe we've begun to say such things to our own families and friends!?

Have you ever wondered, however, how you or a loved one will remain independent at home while "aging in place"? Fortunately, there's much more available to help make that happen now than in our parents' generation. Technology is being developed specifically for seniors to help create a safe and healthy environment, even as our needs – or those of vulnerable friends and family members – grow.

Those who attend this month's Third Friday Lunch Bunch will have a first-hand opportunity to learn about what tools are available, how to access them, how much it costs, etc., from a talented and knowledgeable team.

An Oakland-based not-for-profit initiative called **SeniorFusion** was established in December 2018 to do just that – to help connect seniors to innovative technology that will enhance their quality of life. These solutions include devices that alert you if you leave your stove on; in-home sensors to get help if you have a fall; and communication tools to keep you connected to family members and friends – even those at great distances from you!

Hands-on demonstrations and videos will be shown at this lively event. Bring your family and friends! Checking out this poignant one-minute video will give you an idea of the kinds of things that will be discussed:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/un5y8dxwotav45g/Sociavi.mp4?dl=0>

SeniorFusion is an initiative of the American Medical Women's Association, a national nonprofit that advances women in medicine and improves women's health ([www.seniorfusion.org](http://www.seniorfusion.org)). For further information, please contact either of the SeniorFusion co-founders: Doug Mosher at 415-297-7457 ([doug@seniorfusion.org](mailto:doug@seniorfusion.org)) or Carla Din at 510-717-2966 ([carla@seniorfusion.org](mailto:carla@seniorfusion.org)).

One of the current SeniorFusion collaborative initiatives is described in the story further down in this newsletter.

This month's Third Friday Lunch Bunch is on 15th November. The nutritious buffet 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 Carla and Doug, followed by Q&A. They 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.



## Rocketman

This month's Third Wednesday film (20th November) will be "Rocketman", a bio-pic about Sir Elton John. As it turns out, this was the decade for bio-pics about famous or infamous LGBTQ celebrities on the silver screen. Some had unhappy endings:

- The 2014 "Imitation Game", starring Benedict Cumberbatch as Alan Turing, the gay Brit who "broke the Enigma code" in World War II. Unfortunately, this man who is credited with shortening the war by two years and saving 14 million lives, wound up being persecuted,

prosecuted, threatened with imprisonment (he chose chemical castration with dastardly DES instead), humiliated and dead of cyanide poisoning at age 41 – all because he was “discovered” to be gay! Whether that ending was suicide (the official ruling), accidental or otherwise is unclear. Posthumous redemption came in 2013 when the Queen granted him a retroactive pardon for his conviction – and in July of this year when it was announced that his image will grace the new 50-pound note!



- The 2018 “Bohemian Rhapsody,” starring Rami Malek as Zanzibar-born Freddie Mercury (real name Farrokh Bulsara) whose meteoric rise to “Queen” super-star is fairly-well documented in the film. Though it grossed nearly a billion(!) dollars, many critics thought it glossed over the “seamier” (translated = gay) part of Mercury’s life. Either way, after re-joining “Queen” for the 1985 Live Aid concert at Wembley, he decided to complete one action from his remaining bucket list. He wrote the music for and recorded the hit crossover album, “Barcelona”, with Spanish soprano, Montserrat Caballé in 1988 – for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. He died in 1991, so never got to see/hear his work used repeatedly as the theme-song for the games. He lived the last six years of his life (1985-91) in relative seclusion with his lover, Jim Hutton, and – after several bouts in the hospital – died of HIV-related pneumonia at the age of 45.

[Editor’s Note: Lavender Seniors has both of these films, but hasn’t shown either during the Third Wednesday LGBTQ Film Series, because we tend to focus on happier endings – though we would be willing to show either if there was a demand.]

- And some have happier endings:
- The 2018 film, “The Green Book,” starring Mahershala Ali as Dr. Don Shirley and Viggo Mortensen as Tony “Lip” Vallelonga, the unlikely pair who toured the South during the JFK administration, using the “Green Book” guide for where black people could safely stay in the South. The fact that the two polar opposites (Dr. Shirley, a black gay pianist, had a posh ornately-decorated apartment over Carnegie Hall, where he was forbidden to perform because of his race; Tony “Lip” a bouncer at the Copa who was admittedly quite racist and homophobic) wound up life-long friends (they died within weeks of each other in 2013) is a testament to how we could be talking with each other and making some progress on the issues that divide us.



- The 2019 film, “Rocketman”, starring Taron Egerton as Sir Elton John (born Reginald Kenneth Dwight), who slowly shot to fame from a very restrictive childhood and made it big (having sold over 300 million albums). His well-known struggles with his sexuality, drugs and alcohol are depicted fairly clearly – and with his blessing – in the film that

we will be showing at the Lavender Seniors Film Series on the Third Wednesday in November. Suffice it to say that this bio-pic definitely has a happy ending. Sir Elton John and his husband, David Furnish, have been together for 26 years and are the proud fathers of two young sons, Zachary (9), and Elijah (6). His Elton John AIDS Foundation has made over \$300 million for causes to fight HIV/AIDS and its associated stigma.

[Editor's Note: Lavender Seniors also has "Green Book" available for showing if there is a demand, as is "White Crow, the bio-pic about gay Russian ballet star, Rudolf Nureyev, who defected to the West during Cold War 1961].

Following the showing, there will be a brief evaluation and discussion of the film.

Attendees are reminded that the theater can be chilly, so that a sweater or light jacket is recommended, just in case! Last month, the temperature was perfect, though library staff say that – if the room is too cold – there may be something to be done about it if it is reported to them immediately. Stay tuned on that.



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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## FOUNDERS CORNER

### *WORDS FROM LAVENDER SENIORS FOUNDERS/PIONEERS ON OUR 25th ANNIVERSARY*

From the hearty greeting by Dottie Fowler, Ina Mae Murri and Frank Howell as we entered the community church on Bancroft for our first potluck, we felt the warmth of LGBTQ community.

We introduced ourselves, shared stories, made new friends and reunited with old ones whom we had lost contact with through the years.

Since then, Lavender Seniors has come a long way, blossoming into a fabulous LGBTQ community collective of support on many levels thanks to the dedicated people who guided us in this journey.

After being together for 38 years, we as Founding Members want to thank all the many wonderful people that, over the past 25 years, have helped to bring this anniversary to fruition through their devotion to our community and for their hard work towards the betterment of a more perfect place to feel welcome.

As the years have passed, some of the original founding/pioneering members have left us for a higher place and we will always treasure their memory and their wonderful friendships. We look forward to enjoying the many same and new smiling faces that now make up our Lavender Senior community. Cheers

to the Lavender Seniors for the many years to come and a bright future!!!

## Happy 25th Anniversary Lavender Seniors!

Dee Nagy and Shirley Dennett



I gathered that the purpose of the organization was for mutual support and socializing. And of course to be a presence in the community. The major active founders which I remember are: Dottie Fowler, Natalie Zarchin, Frank Howell, Ina Mae Murri, Stella Lopez-Armijo, John Ellefsen, Marvin Burrows, Burt Miller, Peggy Shepherd, Barbara Konecny, and Barbara Jue.

Most people were probably unaware of such a 'rare bird' as a lavender senior. I learned the most from the speaker's bureau. Men and women who lived to tell the tale of the terrible discrimination they endured. The sharing of those stories told how badly we were treated and the pain that was inflicted upon us. The memories that affect us still.

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay was a much needed social service as there was nothing like it when we began. It brought community to our lives so that we became stronger rather than isolated. Our potlucks gave strength and companionship and we looked forward to each meeting. It was our anchor to the wind.

## Happy 25th Anniversary Lavender Seniors!

Carol Beth and Kathy McCarter



Twenty-five years! This is an important milestone, and one we should all be proud of.

I 'm thinking back those 25 years, to a gathering of LGBTQ elders at the Pacific Center. The purpose (was) to inform the annual plan of the United Way of the Bay Area. For the first time the needs and concerns of the elders in our community were intentionally considered.

From that initial meeting, a group of older volunteers kept meeting and voila! Lavender Seniors of the East Bay was born. We must have been on to something. As the group grew and clarified its mission; participation grew; programs for LGBTQ elders, caregivers, policymakers developed; and, importantly the needs of our community's older adults became a regular part of the social service infrastructure. This, coupled with impressive service and volunteer metrics, will help ensure the sustainability of all the good hard work over the next 25 years.

Looking forward, I see ongoing challenges, but far more opportunities for LSEB to continue its important work. With a strong program of services and committed, engaged volunteers, Lavender Seniors is well positioned to continue its important work.

My recommendation: Stay focused on the core mission- it's as important now

as it has ever been. Continue to work collaboratively with partner groups—this has been a significant contributor to LSEB's many successes. Oh yes, be sure to celebrate big accomplishments (25 years!!) and smaller wins.

I was honored to be a small part of the origins of Lavender Seniors and have watched with pride over these past 25 years. Here's to the next 25! With gratitude, respect, pride and love!

Alan Pardini



Lavender Seniors grew out of the early women's movement and gradually gay men were brought into the protest. Senior gays and lesbians confronted the Hayward City Council to amend rules for gay and lesbian equality.

We named ourselves the Lavender Seniors. Lavender was seen as a revolutionary color. Minorities must fight for human freedom not just in America but throughout the world. We need to give all people hope.

We must push LGBT people to attend governmental meetings to argue for our fundamental rights. We must push our folks to the polls at election time.

LGBT seniors created our own pioneering organization. As Lavender Seniors we must continue to fight for LGBT+ rights everywhere. Thanks to all for inspiring the fight for these rights.

Frank Howell



The Lavender Seniors of the East Bay began and remains a grass roots organization. The uniqueness of Lavender Seniors is that all genders and all races are welcomed to be a participant in our organization. Indeed Lavender Seniors embraces all colors of the rainbow.

From the desire to provide social services to the Elder LGBTQ constituents and to reach out and educate the general public about the LGBTQ community, we developed a mission statement that provided a framework which guides Lavender Seniors to set and reach those goals. The mission is to "improve the quality of life of older lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) residents of Alameda County through community building, education and advocacy. We strive to keep older LGBT adults connected to their communities."

We are grateful for the forward thinking and determined founders like Dottie Fowler, Frank Howell, Marvin Burrows, Ina Mae Murri, Stella Lopez-Armijo, Meg Bruynell, BJ Jarvis, and John Ellefsen, just to name a few, together with the newly formed board working with the very creative and innovative executive directors as Jeff Vessels, Barbara Faulkner, Dan Ashbrook, and Patricia Osage. As a result, we have through our 25 years developed and expanded to 11 programs.

We are a 99% volunteer organization counting on the greater LGBTQ community to provide the people power to support the programs. Without caring volunteers, we could not adequately serve the constituents who needed our services. We greatly appreciate them.

I am delighted that our programs have received 4 consecutive proclamations from the City of San Leandro. We have had continued support from the City of Oakland for our LGBTQ community allowing us to thrive. The City of Fremont provided us the opportunity to support our constituents through their facilities.

We have also received an award from the Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services for our innovative project Safe and Visible: Creating a Healthcare Practice welcoming to the LGBTQ.

We can be proud of our accomplishments and with your help we can continue to be the foremost LGBTQ organization working to provide services for our LGBTQ elders. There are many organizations who have given us grants along this journey and for them we are most grateful. The drag queens, leather corps, grass roots gay organizations that did fundraisers, the charitable foundations who gave us grants or provided collaborative partnerships, the government grants and you individually and as a group have helped to make the vision of the Founders a continued reality.

We need you still and we are grateful for all that which had been previously given and yet to be. There truly is strength in numbers.

Happy Birthday Lavender Seniors!!! May the next 25 years find you a robust organization and a continued leader in the LGBTQ community thanks largely to our staunch supporters and allies!! We ARE a community! Welcome as we launch upon another 25 years into the future doing good works!

Barbara Jue



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## Trans Awareness Week

### **“Man Made” at Piedmont Theater, 14th November**

In honor of Trans Awareness Week, the Frameline International LGBTQ Film Festival is proud to present Man Made. Man Made takes us into the heart of transgender male (FTM) culture, revealing unexpected truths about gender, masculinity, humanity and love. The free film will be shown at 7pm on Thursday, 14 November, at Oakland’s Piedmont Theater, 4186 Piedmont.



Four trans men (who like the film's director were born and raised female), take a variety of life paths toward stepping on stage at Trans FitCon, the only all-transgender bodybuilding competition in the world (held in Atlanta, GA). *Man Made* is a character-driven, intimate, and riveting verité-style competition film, but also a unique social justice narrative. It speaks to the ways in which we all choose to define and reshape ourselves, both figuratively and literally.



The strength on display in *Man Made* transcends the physical: Rese is a young father struggling with periods of homelessness; Dominic seeks out his family of origin, confronting an alternate history for himself; Kennie admits to himself and his loved ones who he is for the first time in his life; and Mason, a loving husband who struggles with mental illness, works daily to be the man he's always wanted to be – on both the inside and out. We follow these subjects' emotional and physical journeys as they navigate lives as the men they are, despite very real risks inherent in the current social and political climate. For the men of *Man Made*, it's not about winning – it's about being seen.

### Festivals

Atlanta Film Festival - Winner Best Documentary Jury Award  
Melbourne Queer Film Festival - Winner Best Documentary Jury Award  
Outfest Los Angeles - Winner Best Documentary Audience Award  
NewFest NYC - Winner Best Documentary Audience Award  
New Orleans Film Festival - Special Jury Mention

This venue is accessible to wheelchair users. Captions will not be available at this screening.

This free event is made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts, the California Arts Council, Grants for the Arts, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and Folsom Street Events.

## Beta Testers Needed for Fall Detection Trial – \$200 Gift

**SeniorFusion** is a nonprofit initiative whose goal is to improve seniors' health and safety and reduce social isolation through increased awareness of innovative technology solutions that are practical, effective, easy-to-use and cost-effective.

**SeniorFusion** is working with a technology startup that is developing a simple stand-alone fall-detection device that mounts on the wall and does not require any “wearables,” e.g. a medical alert pendant or watch. **Together, they are seeking motivated seniors who are living alone in the Bay Area in single-story homes and at high-risk of falling to participate in a 30-day trial.**



The activities involved will include a device installation in the home, brief daily habit check-ins verbally and remotely, weekly surveys and a group feedback roundtable session, among others.

People who have experienced a fall within the past year, have chronic conditions and difficulties with daily activities are particularly being sought.

Because this is a test for fall detection, the developers need to control for some extraneous factors. So, unfortunately, some seniors are not eligible for this trial, including the following:

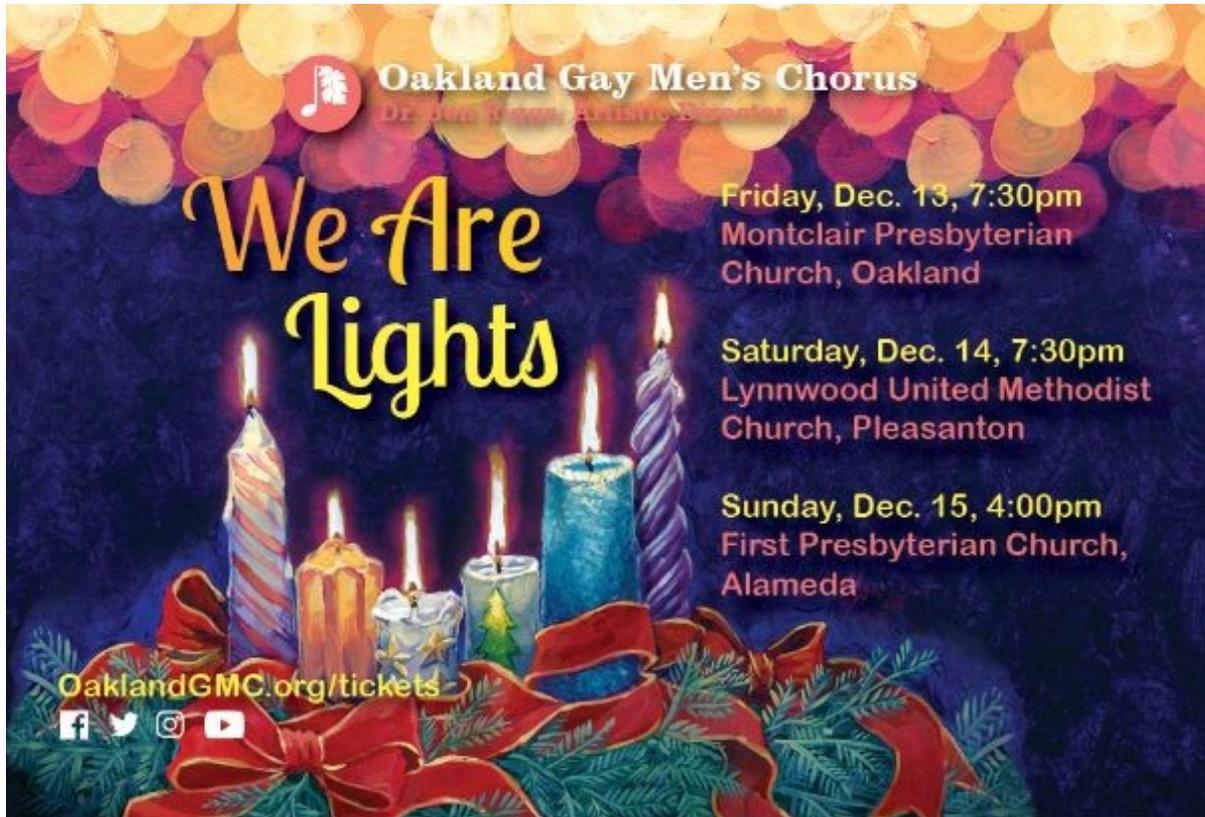
- Those with pets
- Those who have live-in caregivers
- Those in wheelchairs
- Those who have diagnoses of Alzheimer’s Disease, dementia, psychosis, schizophrenia, or bipolar disease
- Those suffering from deafness, legal blindness, significant speech impairment, or drug/alcohol abuse

The test will last 30 days after the device is installed in the tester’s home in November 2019.

**Compensation:** at the end of the beta test, testers will be given a \$200 gift card.

For more information: please contact Carla Din, cell: (510) 717-2966 or email: [carla@seniorfusion.org](mailto:carla@seniorfusion.org).

*Thank you for your interest!*



(Click anywhere on the picture to get tickets.)

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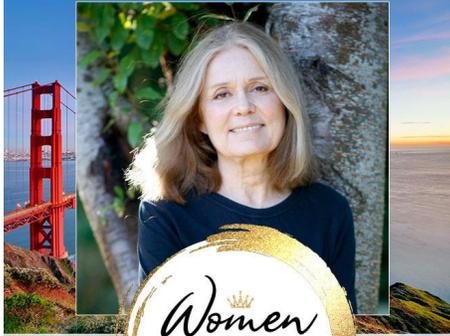
April 23-29, 2020

If you are interested in being part of a *Lavender Seniors Group* on this cruise, contact **Beckie**. If we get a group together of 8 or more, each person gets \$100 discount on their cruise.

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**Well Connected**  
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# 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

### **Noggin Joggin' Thursdays, 2:00pm – 2:30pm**

Let's get those dendrites going and spice up our brains! We will have exercises that may not always be easy but will be a fun way of joggin' our noggins. We're sure to have a great time along the way. Please join us! Facilitated by Nicolette Noyes

### **Pet Tales Saturdays 11:00am – 11:30am**

Share stories about your animal companions, past or present, with others who also appreciate furry, feathered, and gilled friends. Facilitated by Anne Sanabria and her dogs, Ringo, Butchie, Freddie, and Stevie

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](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](#).

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# November

# Save the Date

## THIS MONTH'S EVENTS

### Out Standing Seniors - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Nov 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.*

### LezBold Peer Support Group

Nov 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

Nov 1, 8, 15, 22, 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

Nov 1, 8, 15, 22, 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

Nov 3, 18, 25, 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

Nov 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

Nov 5, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. (1st 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

Nov 13, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. (2nd Wednesday)

4300 Bermuda, Oakland

*A portion of this meeting is open to the public.*

### Senior Gay Men's Group

Nov 7, 14, 21, 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

*No Rainbow Lunch this month, join us for our 25th Anniversary celebration on November 9th...see info at the top of this newsletter.*

*In December (14th), we will meet at Harry's Hofbrau, 12-2pm.*

### Oakland Third Friday Lunch Bunch

Sponsored by City of Oakland Aging/Adult Services & Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

Nov 15, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

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

*This month's program: "Keeping Seniors Safe and Connected at Home" (see info above)*

### Lavender Seniors LGBTQ Film Series

Nov 20, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. (3rd Wednesday)

San Leandro Library, 300 Estudillo, San Leandro

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

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

Nov 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.*

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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

## Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

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Friendly Visitor Program: (510) 424-7240 or

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Board:

karen@lavenderseniors.org

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Ste 818  
Oakland, CA 94611

Website: <http://lavenderseniors.org>

Beckie Underwood  
John David Dupree  
Barbara Jue

Contact Us

