



Lavender Notes

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

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December 2021 - Volume 27 Issue 12

In Loving Memory

Verne E. Nelson

Long-time Lavender Seniors participant, Verne Nelson, passed away on Wednesday, October 20th, after a valiant struggle against lung cancer. He was 79 years old. Prior to the pandemic, he regularly attended the Third Friday Lunch Bunch at North Oakland Senior Center, the Second Saturday Brunch Bunch at All Saints Episcopal Church in San Leandro, and the Third Wednesday LGBTQ Film Series at the San Leandro Public Library. During the pandemic – including up until shortly before his death – he joined his many friends on the Zoom version of Second Saturday and Third Friday, as evidenced here during various gatherings this year:



As an avid bird-watcher and brilliant bird photographer, Verne could frequently be seen exploring his beloved Alameda, Harbor Island, Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline, as well as in wooded parks, marshes and swamps in every direction up and down the coast. He was known by friends to wait patiently for hours for the perfect shot. Besides the examples presented here of his love for birds and photography, his flickr account is still available (for now) for all to peruse the pages and pages of photos he's contributed to the site over the years: <https://www.flickr.com/people/vnelson/>. The site has logged 1.5 million views of his photos since he joined in 2006.

He donated photos to such programs as his friend,

Lisa Owens-Viani's, Berkeley-based organization "Raptors are the Solution" (RATS), including this particularly dramatic photo of one of the majestic and stately Cooper's Hawks he tracked down during his adventures in the wild.



"I became friends with Verne while working for the local Audubon," Lisa recalls. "We bonded over photos he took of owls and other birds. He then very generously donated many wonderful photos to this nonprofit (RATS) that I co-founded. More importantly, I will always remember his presence at our intimate holiday parties and his gentle sense of humor and grace. I will miss him."



Like many other birding enthusiasts in Verne's life, Mark Rauzon remembers him sitting in a lawn chair among the fuchsias, patiently waiting for his colorful hummingbird friends to capture the perfect photo, like this one.

"As someone who sometimes frequented some of the funkier of local shoreline areas," Mark recalls, "Verne experienced something I was always worried about happening for myself. He is the only person I know to find a dead body in the Bay. As far as I know from the story he's told many of his friends, it didn't deter him from continuing his quest for the perfect bird photo. Though it might seem inappropriate to mention this in his tribute, one can only imagine what a shock it was for him to come upon such a thing when looking for a lovely bird in the perfect light."

Lavender Seniors board, staff, volunteers and clients will all miss seeing his smiling face and hearing his dry sense of humor.

"Verne loved solid chocolate Easter bunnies and Butterfingers," according to Gwen Boozé, Director of Lavender Seniors' "Communication Relieves Isolation" program. "In addition, you would almost always see him at Lavender Seniors events or – since Covid – at our Zoom gatherings!"

The caption on a final example from Verne's prolific flickr site demonstrates his ever-present and gentle sense of humor:



"Yipes! The snowy egret on the right didn't even get a warning!"

(But Verne – always at the ready! – caught the action with his camera!)

Verne's remains were cremated by the Trident Society. As of newsletter press time, no services had been organized.

Suffice it to say, we will all miss him terribly!



Khilynn Elise Fowler

The Lavender Seniors Board of Directors is pleased to announce via this month's "Stories of Our Lives" column one of the two latest additions to the board. Though transmen and transwomen have been board members since its inception, the current board has been painfully aware of the lack of transgender representation for the last three or four years, recruitment efforts being complicated, of course, by the 2020-2021 Covid pandemic.

Khilynn Elise Fowler, a San Leandro resident, was born in October 1983 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, her mother's only child and the second of six of her father's children. She describes her childhood in Tuscaloosa – a town of about 100,000 – as "challenging but fun"!

"I learned at an early age to be resilient in that town," Khilynn recalls. "I pretty much always knew who I was, though my family didn't always understand. My family was well-known throughout the region. Suffice it to say that as a child, the good outweighed the bad. That has stuck with me through the nearly-four decades of my life. And I always had fun – which made it easier for me to eventually transition."

Her strongest influences were her mother, her paternal grandmother and a most influential and inspirational first-grade teacher.

"Miss Cordello was one of the first people to recognize my potential," Khilynn says. "She breathed life into me to become the person I've become. Looking back, I think I was somewhat privileged, going to a predominantly white Northington Elementary School. It was clear to everyone that I was the 'teacher's pet', however, and that didn't earn me many friends."

Khilynn spent her childhood in Tuscaloosa, except for one crucial year in Pensacola, Florida.

"My Mom took a teaching job in Pensacola for one year," Khilynn says. "That was actually the year the 'real' Khilynn was birthed. During that year at Workman Middle School, I learned how to advocate for myself in a place that was, oddly enough, more progressive than Tuscaloosa. As I moved through adolescence that year, I started becoming the woman I am today!"

Upon the family's return to Alabama, Khilynn and her family resumed their previously-active participation in virtually every aspect of the Bethel Missionary

"I sang in the choir, was in the Youth Ministry and was the youngest person on the church's Planning Committee," Khilynn recalls. "Being an effeminate boy, I developed good friends and, certainly, some enemies. My two closest friends warned me about how important it was to stick up for myself – otherwise, people would disrespect me. One of the guys who teased me the most, as it turns out, is now married to a man. But I stood my ground with him. When he was sent to the Principal's office, he couldn't even explain what he didn't like about me. I'd say he just didn't like himself yet."

Khilynn's social life at West Lawn Secondary School and Central High School centered largely around what were called social clubs.

"I was in the Alpha Chapter of the high school social club," Khilynn recounts. "For teenage, middle-class black kids coming up, we were debutantes preparing for cotillion and grooming for the outside world. In the 9th grade, my god-sister and I helped organize a group called GAP, including t-shirts, parties, cookouts and activities where other social clubs were invited. That was when I first became aware of my desire to get involved in improving lives and becoming productive in a way that was bigger than just me! My motto for life evolved into being a leader with good intentions. When I was 18, I organized a community event where gay kids and straight kids would gather together and see what we had in common. I knew there were people who didn't agree with my goals – the fact that I was attracted to boys had been pretty obvious for some time. But breaching this gap has always been a goal – just because I'm not your friend doesn't mean I'm your enemy!"

It was in high school that Khilynn had her first long-term relationship.

"We were a thing for about six years – actually until my senior year in college," Khilynn recalls. "He definitely qualifies as the first 'love of my life'. Though he seemed a bit unsure of himself at first, he said I made him comfortable, though it was sometimes a struggle. We were actually engaged once. On our way back from Atlanta one day, he just announced he wasn't ready to get married, that he would only be marrying me because I wanted to get married. It's true, I somewhat selfishly really wanted to be a wife. As it turns out, we're still good friends today – he's lead electrical engineer for Georgia Power in Atlanta and I'm doing pretty well for myself, as well. I have no regrets about the time we spent together – and what I learned on the way!"

After graduation from Central High School in 2003, Khilynn enrolled at Alabama A&M University, one of Alabama's 15 HBCU's (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), located in the Normal neighborhood of Huntsville, AL.

"Alabama A&M felt like a mostly safe place," Khilynn recalls. "We would hang out at the student center and just have fun. I was definitely following a family tradition. Both of my grandparents graduated there, as did my father, mother and various cousins. Some professors had previously taught older family members



of mine. There were six of us transwomen on the campus. Unfortunately, only one of them survived – ME! The majority of transwomen don't have supportive families to advocate for them. A decision I had to make early on – when, for instance, black men seemed to be disrespecting me or one of my sister transwomen – I learned to say 'I'll respect you, but I demand respect in return!' As of my sophomore year, having put my foot down several times, everything changed – for the better!”

One of Khilynn's first moves toward her gender confirmation involved a trip to the family doctor in Tuscaloosa to start getting transition hormones instead of the less-effective hormones her ob-gyn had

erroneously prescribed.

“As hard as it may be for some to believe, my very-supportive devoted Missionary-Baptist grandmother went with me on this trip to the doctor's office,” Khilynn recalls with a mixture of amusement and slight traumatic memory. “The doctor's receptionist took my information and asked us to sit in the waiting room. Then she went to the phone, it seems, and called the POLICE! When the Sheriff – who knew my grandmother – showed up to enforce whatever law the receptionist thought we were breaking – he asked my grandmother to step outside so he could speak with her privately. Apparently, the receptionist was so ignorant of issues around gender dysphoria that she thought I was trying to pull off identity theft! But my grandmother – always one to defend her granddaughter – was not someone to be messed with, so we got what we came for!”

Her father has also been one of her strongest advocates.

“My father has always accepted me and given me good advice,” Khilynn recalls.” In fact he was the first person I ever told about my boyfriend in high school. He prepared my sisters for what was coming and encouraged them to be as accepting as he was. He has always been something of a jokester – very much fun to be around.”

Her name change has been formalized on her California ID and her Alabama Driver's License. To date, however, Alabama will not make the change on birth certificates, which she sees as a pattern of disrespect toward transgender people of all ages, particularly targeting trans kids.

After graduating with a degree in marketing, Khilynn worked at several jobs, including in the marketing department of a paper company and a fairly unsatisfactory one-year stint in Atlanta. Then she returned home to work in the family funeral home business for four years. Her first “corporate job” was working for two years at Instacart in San Leandro, where she lives now. She soon became well-known in the local transgender community.

“When I was asked to speak at a Transgender Day of



Remembrance, I suddenly knew what role I was destined to play in my community,” Khilynn recalls. “Some thought it was important to have a visible corporate transwoman. In my presentation, I tried to give credit to all who came before us in order to allow us to be open about our needs, demands for respect and equal treatment. It seemed clear that I wanted to help change the narrative, leading with good intentions. It’s important for us to reach back and help pull up our sisters, instead of simply basking in what successes we have achieved along the way. After all, the younger generations are going to be the ones caring for us as we age.”

Khilynn worked for the AIDS Project of the East Bay for eight or nine months, doing outreach in the trans community. She had been planning to launch a new program when Covid came along. When her mentor there left for Atlanta, she felt it added the impetus to move on to focus more specifically on providing services directly to the trans community. She started doing advocacy with the Family Care Network, a program of UC-San Francisco.



“I felt that transwomen were particularly vulnerable during the pandemic,” Khilynn says, “so I was on my feet delivering pandemic care packages. Then I got placed in my current position with San Francisco Community Health. I am a case manager, supervising trans services, helping people hook up with trans-affirming care. I started the SHE Boutique, where women can come to try on new clothes – not hand-me-downs, but donated by companies, big and small. Three major distribution centers donate to the program regularly. In fact, this program received a visit and a proclamation from Mayor Breed for the innovative work we’re doing. It’s a place that not only offers clothing, make-up, shoes, wigs, purses, jewelry and other fashion items in a safe place, but helps women enter care if they’re not already there and stay in care if they are. It also becomes a social activity and a place to get advice from others in a similar situation.”

(For more information on the SHE Boutique: <https://abc7news.com/she-boutique-san-francisco-community-health-center-trans-led-businesses-sf-shopping-for-women/10803092/>)

Khilynn is also targeting creation of a “Gentlemen’s Lounge” for transmen.

“We shouldn’t be excluding each other from anything,” she says. “We want to better serve all trans and non-binary people in the Greater Bay area. They belong to us, we belong to them and we all belong to each other! It’s important for us to pay attention to each other!”

Among the things on Khilynn’s dream bucket list are travel, relationships and politics.

“I definitely want to go to Rio de Janeiro at some point in the next few years,” Khilynn says. “I’d like to be in a mutually-satisfying relationship, where we

have good communication, understand each other's love language – you tell me how you want to be loved and I'll show you how I want to be loved. And, finally, I figure I'll wind up in politics some day. Though serving my community is where I need to be right now, I know my calling is way bigger than I can even realize right now. I want to help influence leadership locally, regionally, state-wide and perhaps even nationally and internationally. That leadership includes changing the narrative toward my community with integrity and good intentions.”

Thank you for sharing part of your story, Khilynn, and for joining the Lavender Seniors Board of Directors. I'm sure you will help us do a better job serving LGBTQ people of all ages and gender identities! Congratulations on the good work you continue doing!



BOOK REVIEW

Our Time Is Now: Power, Purpose, and the Fight for a Fair America

By Stacey Abrams

Abrams and her companions tell a compelling story. Part danger, part action, all are true: voter protection, identity politics, the census and moral international leadership: the next best vision of America.

Local control is basic to human freedom: school board meetings, PTA gatherings and church services of all denominations.

Long lines discouraged most voters from even trying. Voting by mail is the key to freedom.

America must heed the call for democracy. Stacey Abrams gives us this call and the key to democracy.

- Frank J. Howell



BONUS BOOK REVIEW

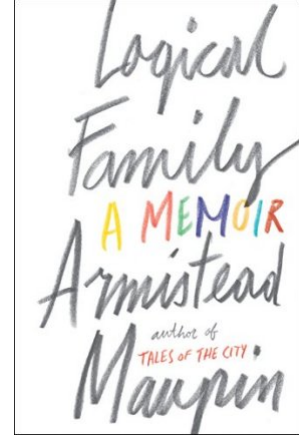
Logical Family: A Memoir

By Armistead Maupin

Perhaps best-known for his "Tales of the City" – originally a serial published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* – and the DVD series "Tales of the City",



“More Tales of the City” and “Further Tales of the City,” Armistead Maupin has penned 13 novels and three collections. This month’s Lavender review is of his 2017 memoir, “Logical Family”.



Armistead very cleverly provides a frontispiece-type photo at the beginning of each of the 19 chapters, ranging from infancy to the point in his mid-30s when he finally “claimed his truth.” He mentions in this memoir that it is only a small section of his youth, when he was still struggling to own up to who he really is.



The first of his chapter-beginning photos is this one of the baby Armistead and his Mom— in the actual first chapter of the book – when he was the newest member of a very conservative Republican family in Raleigh, North Carolina.

In these early chapters, he describes such things as being afraid the family would be locked in the local cemetery after their weekly post-church visits to honor the grave of his paternal grandfather. After all, the sign posted at the entrance to the cemetery said, “Gates locked at 6pm!” In the eyes of a child, who might not even have been able to tell time at his earliest memory of the excursions, that fear of spending an overnight in the cemetery became somewhat all-consuming.

The last photo in the book – beginning the Acknowledgments section – has a wedding photo of Armistead and his husband, Christopher Turner, as the happily-attached men married twice after four years together – once in Canada (2007) and again in neighboring Sausalito in 2008 – just for political and romantic good measure! Their second wedding, held at the home of Armistead’s friend and fellow novelist, Amy Tan, was conducted by California State Senator Mark Leno, one of those who fought so vigorously for same-sex marriage to become a reality, first in California and finally nation-wide.



This book – like all the others in Armistead’s extensive portfolio – is full of humor and grace, in spite of taking on such heady issues as homophobia, suicide, gay-bashing and all the rest. Those fans of “Tales of the City” – whether the serialized newspaper version or the three series made into best-selling DVDs shown on Showtime and PBS – will enjoy reading this story of various stages in the development of the author and the man he has become. For super-fans of the author, his three collections on Barbary Lane, novels on Michael Tolliver, Mary Ann Singleton or Anna Madrigal – in spite of their being beloved fictitious characters – are also “must-reads” on an interesting conglomeration of people we’ve all met somewhere in our lives.

CONNECTIONS



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

LAVENDER SENIORS FRIENDLY VISITOR PROGRAM HAS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE.

Volunteers with the Lavender Seniors Friendly Visitor program are background checked, interviewed and trained, after which they are matched with a senior to visit regularly, usually for a couple hours each week. Visitors can share stories, chat about mutual interests and current events, and if both are willing and able, volunteers can take their seniors out for a walk in the park, a bite to eat, a cup of coffee, shopping or maybe a movie or a trip to the museum.

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

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

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

Reminder: Lavender Seniors Birthday Program

Lavender Seniors' Friendly Visitor Program – in collaboration with its "Communication Relieves Isolation" program has organized a "birthday acknowledgment" activity with one of our volunteers sending birthday cards to LGBTQ+ seniors and their allies each year.

Anyone whose birthday (year of birth is not necessary, though it is appreciated) hasn't been acknowledged should provide their full name, mailing address and date of birth (with or without year) either via Info@LavenderSeniors.org or by leaving a message at +1-510-736-LGBT and your name will be added to the list. Also, any volunteers who want to assist in this program should make contact, as well.



Letter- and card-writing may seem like a lost art to some, since it appears that many of our grandchildren are not even being taught how to write in script anymore. Many of us aging "Palmer method" script-writers, however, still enjoy seeing a nicely-written card or letter in our snail-mailboxes! It's always nice to be remembered!



MINDFUL MOVEMENT

Join our Mindful Movement class that will include gentle stress reduction movements that will increase range of motion, pain reduction and build strength, all of which will be led with an emphasis in awareness.



Instructor: Susana Renaud, is a two-spirit, Xicanx, who has 34 years integrating the practices of Yoga and Mindfulness Meditation into her lived experience. She rejoins us after 6 months to help our adjustment to any current or ongoing stresses in our lives.

(Don't forget the effects of the lunar eclipse will be with us on and off till 2023!)

Here are the Zoom coordinates for Saturday, 11th December, from 12 noon until 2pm:

Lavender Seniors invites you to a scheduled **Saturday Rainbow Lunch** meeting on Zoom.

Topic: Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch: Mindful Movement

Date/Time: Saturday, 11th December, 2021 – 12 noon to 2pm Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89671026595?pwd=TGRtYkxaTzZGbWFFTTB1WWpQNkFpWZz09>

Meeting ID: 896 7102 6595 – Password: 153953

Dial by your location: +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 896 7102 6595 – Password: 153953

LAVENDER
SENIORS
of the East Bay

T H I R D

FRIDAY

LUNCH BUNCH

OAKLAND

Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa

Acknowledging December Holidays

Many seniors of a certain age may find themselves having espoused various faiths/religions, traditions and celebrations during their lifetimes. There are lapsed Catholics, Protestants, Jews and Muslims among us. There are devout or once-devout Missionary Baptists, Hassidic Jews or Tibetan Buddhists in our midst. How do we seniors face or at least acknowledge such end-of-year "celebrations" as Christmas, Hanukkah and/or Kwanzaa, whether we're living alone, with roommates, in a couple or an extended family?

Lavender Seniors is all-inclusive of community members in each of these various situations. So this month's Third Friday Lunch Bunch on 17th December will try to acknowledge the three major holidays traditionally celebrated at this time of year in the media, by religious institutions, couples and families in the local LGBTQ+ community. We will start with check-ins from each participant in the Zoom gathering, describing their current situation, plus an end-of-year memory from childhood, youth, adulthood or mature adulthood – positive or negative – having to do with end-of-year holidays. Then we will offer a playful game or puzzle about each of the three traditional holidays before we return to whatever our reality might be for ending 2021 and looking forward to a hopefully-less-stressful 2022!

In addition, we may have some members of the Stagebridge Storytelling program join us to share some of their creative ventures! They have suggested that each person who is willing prepare a 5 minute story about how they have been affected by the holidays.

Here are the Zoom coordinates for the Third Friday Lunch Bunch gathering on December 17th:

Lavender Seniors is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Third Friday Lunch Bunch: To Survive on This Shore – Museum Exhibition Tour

Time: Friday, December 17, 2021 – 12 noon Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85235825964?pwd=WmptRG5SU2RDVUNyQ1hFWGM2NlZOQT09>

Meeting ID: 852 3582 5964 – Passcode: 569546

One tap mobile

+16699009128,,85235825964#,,,,*569546# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location: +1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 852 3582 5964 – Passcode: 569546

We hope to see you at this Zoom gathering – celebrate from the comfort of your own home!

End-of-Year Plea(s) from Lavender Seniors

As LGBTQ+ seniors and their allies celebrate – or not – any of the several high holidays that occur at the end of the year, Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is facing another of those periodic existential crises that non-profit agencies inevitably confront. We need all of our constituents to do a bit of self-exploration and soul-searching to see if they might help ease one or more of these crises as 2022 rolls around. Hopefully, we'll soon be able to close the protracted Covid chapter we've been experiencing for almost two years. Meanwhile, here are a few of our urgent needs:

1. As an aging board, we need younger volunteers to jump on board and help keep this organization – serving LGBTQ+ seniors throughout Alameda and Contra Costa County for 27+ years – afloat for another few decades, at least. Hopefully, upcoming socio-political improvements will make aging in our frequently-marginalized community a more accepting/inclusive and less challenging experience. A board application can be e-mailed/snail-mailed to anyone interested by e-mailing Info@LavenderSeniors.org or leaving a message with contact details at (510-736-LGBT).
2. As one of our most popular newsletter columns, “Stories of Our Lives” needs to receive ongoing suggestions from our constituents of people along the spectrum of sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, ethnic background, etc., in order to continue that newsletter feature. Anyone with suggestions in this regard, please e-mail JohnDavid@LavenderSeniors.org or leave a message at (510) 736-LGBT with contact details and someone will get back to you.
3. We still have several unmatched Friendly Visitor clients, meaning we need to recruit more Friendly Visitor Volunteers who are willing to spend some time each week paying attention to LGBTQ+ seniors who have requested such assistance. In addition, we need volunteers for various other services (e.g., staff information tables at health fairs, Pride events, political and civic events in the East Bay. Anyone who would like to participate at any level should provide contact details via either Karen@LavenderSeniors.org or (510) 424-7240.
4. Finally, of course, we are always desperately in need of financial assistance to keep our services funded. Donations can be made via PayPal on the Lavender Seniors website: <https://lavenderseniors.org/donate/> or by sending a check to our mailing address:

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
4100 Redwood Rd, Ste 20A #240
Oakland, CA 94619

Anyone who wants to find out more about any of these urgent requests, please contact Info@LavenderSeniors.org or leave a message at (510) 736-LGBT and someone will get back to you.

Either way, Lavender Seniors wishes each of you all the best for the holidays, 2022 and beyond.

Observing World AIDS Day, 1st December 2021

On December 1, San Francisco’s National AIDS Memorial brings three powerful programs to the public for World AIDS Day that offer inspiration, hope, remembrance, and reflection. The programming, *free to the public*, includes a virtual national forum and observance, hundreds of community displays of the AIDS Memorial Quilt, and a magical evening display of lights in the 10-acre National AIDS Memorial Grove.

The National AIDS Memorial invites the public to join its **World AIDS Day Virtual National Observance** on December 1 at www.aidsmemorial.org beginning at 8:30 am PST. The forum includes a series of

conversations with national leaders on important topics about HIV/AIDS and health and social justice. Some of the featured speakers include *Dr. Anthony Fauci, White House National AIDS Policy Director Harold Phillips, U.S. Senator Raphael Warnock, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Paul Kawata, Executive Director, NMAC, history-making television series Pose co-creator and executive producer Steven Canals and co-executive producer Our Lady J, Toni Newman, Interim CEO, Black AIDS Institute, Leonard Valentino, M.D., President & CEO, National Hemophilia Foundation, and Suzanne Brennan Firstenburg, Curator, Covid-19 National Mall Installation.*

World AIDS Day Virtual National Observance
A DAY OF IMPACT & HOPE
December 01, 2021 aidsmemorial.org



In addition, heartfelt, personal and compelling conversations that will be presented throughout the day include: *The State of HIV/AIDS, Four Decades Later; Changing Hearts and Minds through the Power of Pose; The Impact of HIV/AIDS in the Black Community; Looking to the Future with Young Leaders for Health and Social Justice; HIV/AIDS and Hemophilia Survivors and the Emerging Crisis of an Aging Population; and How Memorials Have Helped our Nation Heal.*

For those interested in observing World AIDS Day internationally on 1st December, start with <https://www.worldaidsday.org/>, remembering that you need to subtract 8 hours from GMT (Greenwich Mean Time), three hours from EST (Eastern Standard Time) and two hours from CST (Central Standard Time) – which is how most of the streaming events there are listed – in order to set up your own streaming calendar.

Holidays & Commemorations

December LGBTQ+ Streaming/Films

December of 2020 saw a record number of LGBTQ-related films streaming for audiences world-wide who had been largely confined to their homes, outdoor restaurant patios and small gatherings or “pods” of mask-wearing, social-distancing friends and family members. With the advent of FDA/CDC-approved vaccines available – at least prior to the current fears of an omicron-related fourth surge – many have started returning to theaters, restaurants, planes/trains and larger gatherings of like-minded family and friends who have been fully vaccinated and, perhaps, “boostered” by now.

For any who are still somewhat reticent to be out in the pre-pandemic-level world, there are still a number of streaming possibilities for making the LGBTQ+ season bright. Some of them will be listed here, somewhat chronologically, though some will involve following links provided to get more information:

On the 50th anniversary of Norway’s formal legalization of homosexuality, the 375-year-old Norse Post Office created this fun (and acclaimed) 4-minute commercial celebrating the same-sex relationship “When Harry Met Santa”



<https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/santa-claus-gets-boyfriend-norwegian-christmas-commercial-rcna6734> (easy-to-follow subtitles)

Last year saw a **flurry of LGBTQ-inclusive holiday movies** from Lifetime, Hallmark and other networks or streaming services. The tradition continues in 2021, with films starring RuPaul, Michael Urie, Jonathan Bennet and more — plus appearances by gay favorites like Jennifer Coolidge. NBC has produced this fairly comprehensive list of LGBTQ-themed holiday films, some of which we will describe below.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-pop-culture/make-yuletide-gay-new-lgbtq-christmas-movies-rcna6910>



One of the potentially standout films — being shown on Netflix beginning 3rd December — is “Single All the Way,” starring Michael Urie and Jennifer Coolidge. Tony-winning director Michael Mayer (“Spring Awakening”) helms Netflix’s **first** gay holiday film, which sees perpetually single Peter (Michael Urie) begging his best friend, Nick (Philemon Chambers), to come home with him and pretend to be his boyfriend to put an end to his family’s constant meddling in his life. But the ruse is put to the test when his mother (another gay fave, Kathy Najimy) sets him up with her hunky trainer (“Brothers and Sisters” actor Luke Macfarlane). Kudos to “Single All the Way” and Netflix for casting three out actors as gay characters — and for casting Jennifer Coolidge, period.



Another hopeful in the competition is “The Jenkins Family Christmas” on BET+. After the death of the family patriarch, adult sisters Baneatta and Beverly (Regina Taylor and Kim Coles) try to continue family Christmas traditions despite long-simmering resentments. But the arrival of a previously unknown half-sister could put coal in everyone’s stockings. Baneatta’s gay son, Kenny (Anthony Chatmon II), brings his boyfriend, Logan (Derek Chadwick), home for the holidays but is given an icy reception. Will Logan’s pushing Kenny to stand up to his overbearing mother bring them closer together or drive them apart? Robin Givens directs this BET+ seasonal drama, co-starring Tammy Townsend and Robert Gossett.



The first Amazon Prime venture into the genre: “With Love” begins airing on the 17th December. This five-part miniseries is from Gloria Calderón Kellett, showrunner for Netflix’s reboot of “One Day at a Time.” Each episode is set during a different holiday in one year, following Lily Diaz (Emeraude Toubia) as she navigates a love triangle with hunky suitors Nick and Santiago (played by Desmond Chiam and Rome Flynn). The queer quotient comes courtesy of Lily’s brother, Jorge, (Mark Indelicato of “Ugly Betty”) — who brings his new boyfriend, Henry (Vincent Rodriguez III), home on Christmas Eve — and from trans model-actress Isis King, playing cousin Sol, who has a “potential blossoming

relationship" with a doctor coworker.



And finally (though the links above and below contain many more examples/synopses of LGBTQ-friendly films this season) is the Hallmark Channel's "The Christmas House 2: Deck Those Halls" beginning on the 18th of December.

Last year, after sparking outrage by pulling a jewelry ad featuring lesbian brides, Hallmark made amends by featuring the first gay couple in one of its many, many holiday movies: "The

Christmas House" scored more than 13 million viewings over the 2020 holiday season, so a sequel was a no-brainer. In the original, Bill and Phyllis Mitchell (Treat Williams and Sharon Lawrence) invited their adult sons home for the holidays, then drop a bomb that they're selling the family home. This time around, gay son Brandon (Jonathan Bennet) and his husband, Jake (Brad Harder), compete with Brandon's straight brother, Mike (Robert Buckley), to see who can create the most festively decorated Christmas house.

The LGBTQNation.com website has a half-dozen links to LGBTQ-themed holiday films, dating back from 2017 to this year's crop of queer holiday films, including:

From 2021: <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2021/11/jennifer-coolidge-steals-show-new-trailer-netflixs-gay-holiday-rom-com-single-way/>

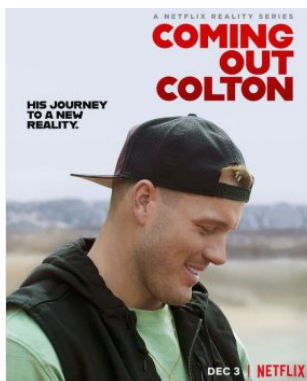
From 2020: <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/?s=Holiday+Films+2021>

From 2019: <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2019/12/dont-wait-hallmark-lgbtq-holiday-films-can-already-watch/>

From 2018: <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2018/12/top-10-best-lgbtq-holiday-movies-spice-season/> and

<https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2018/12/top-10-best-lgbtq-holiday-movies-spice-season/>

From 2017: <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2017/11/5-lgbt-movies-can-watch-netflix-youre-holidays-black-friday-shopping/>



Though there's no specific holiday connection, for some perhaps more controversial LGBTQ-related viewing, Netflix is airing a six-part series on Colton Underwood (former NFL player and "Bachelor" on ABC who later came out), beginning on 3rd December. Those who are interested might want to read this somewhat controversial story about Underwood's circuitous coming-out story before committing to the six-part series:

<https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2021/11/colton-underwoods-netflix-series-coming-released-week/?>

[utm_source=LGBTQ+Nation+Subscribers&utm_campaign=1729a4b7d9-20211129_LGBTQ_Nation_Daily_Brief&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c4eab596bd-1729a4b7d9-431833035](https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2021/11/colton-underwoods-netflix-series-coming-released-week/?utm_source=LGBTQ+Nation+Subscribers&utm_campaign=1729a4b7d9-20211129_LGBTQ_Nation_Daily_Brief&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c4eab596bd-1729a4b7d9-431833035)

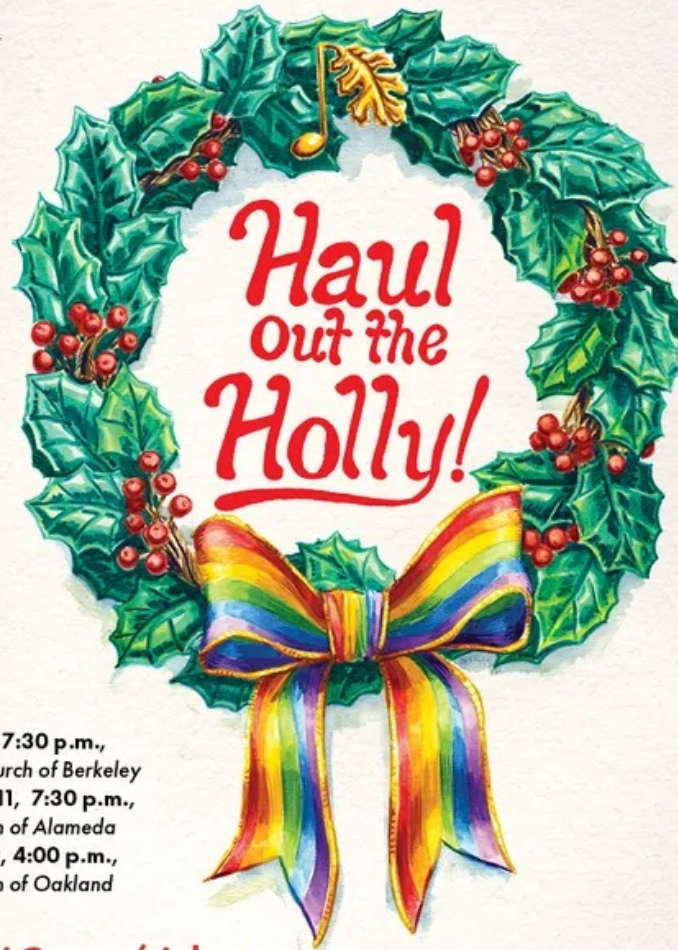
Wishing merriest of holidays and happiest of viewing to all! Maybe next year we'll all be back in the theaters and concert halls, in addition to meeting in a more relaxed face-to-face way with beloved family members and friends!



Oakland Gay Men's Chorus




The Pride of the East Bay
Dr. Ben Riggs, Artistic Director

PROUDLY PRESENTS



Friday, December 10, 7:30 p.m.,
First Congregational Church of Berkeley
Saturday, December 11, 7:30 p.m.,
First Presbyterian Church of Alameda
Sunday, December 12, 4:00 p.m.,
First Presbyterian Church of Oakland

OaklandGMC.org/tickets

    Contact@OaklandGMC.org



FAMILY CAREGIVER ALLIANCE®
National Center on Caregiving

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!

Well Connected

Enriching lives and supporting well-being.

(FORMERLY SENIOR CENTER WITHOUT WALLS)

Community Phone Calls

This award-winning program offers activities, education, support groups, and friendly conversation over the phone or online.

Just a few of the things offered:

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

LGBTQ Chat Wednesdays, 11/24, 12/8, 12/22

This group is intended for participants who identify as LGBTQ, and is an opportunity to connect with others socially in a supportive environment, where participants can share individual and collective experiences. We will create an inclusive place to share our stories with each other and build a sense of community. Facilitated by Jerry W. Brown, Covia Senior Director, Affordable Housing

Open Mic Thursdays, 11/25 – 12/30

All are welcome to perform, big talent not required. Singing, spoken word, stand-up comedy, play an instrument, read a poem, or tell a (clean) joke! Enthusiastic spectators are also welcome. Facilitated by Nicolette Noyes

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.



Save
the
Date

Out Standing Seniors - Hayward - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Dec 7 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. (1st Tuesday)

Meets via Zoom.

email outstandingseniors2@gmail.com for info.

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

Living OUT in Livermore - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Dec 7, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. (1st Tuesdays)

Meets via Zoom email Anne@pacificcenter.org for info.

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

LezBold Peer Support Group

Dec 2 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. (1st Thursday)

Meets via Zoom email lezbolddgroup@pacificcenter.org for info.

Find support and like-minded wonderful people!

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

Dec 2,9,16,23,30* 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. (Thursdays)

email Anne@pacificcenter.org for current meeting information.

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

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

Dec 1,8,15,22,29* 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. (Wednesdays)

email Anne@pacificcenter.org for current meeting information.

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

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

Dec 3,10,17,24,31* 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. (Fridays)

email Anne@pacificcenter.org for current meeting information.

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

Lavender Seniors Board Meeting

Dec 8 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. (2nd Wednesday) via Zoom

A portion of this meeting is open to the public.

Lavender Seniors Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch

Dec 11, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. ("Mindful Movement" - see info above for joining us via Zoom)

Tri-Valley Rainbows - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Dec 16, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. (3rd Thursday)

Meets via Zoom email Anne@pacificcenter.org for info.

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

Oakland Third Friday Lunch Bunch

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

Dec 17, 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. ("End-of-Year Holidays" - see info above for joining us via Zoom)

**check with the groups to see if they are meeting during Christmas & New Years weeks*

**Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
Board of Directors**

President: Victor Aguilar Jr
1st Vice President: Melissa West
Treasurer: Carmen Chiong
Secretary: John David Dupree (on hiatus)

Founding Member: Barbara Jue
Member: Khilynn Fowler
Member: Nolan Quinabo

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

Message: 510-736-LGBT (510-736-5428)
Friendly Visitor Program: (510) 424-7240 or
karen@lavenderseniors.org

Mailing Address:
4100 Redwood Rd, Ste 20A #240
Oakland, CA 94619

Website: <http://lavenderseniors.org>

Newsletter Editorial
Board:
Beckie Underwood
John David Dupree

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Us

