



Lavender Notes

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

[Volunteer](#)

[Donate with PayPal](#)

Celebrating 27+ years of service and positive change

October 2022 - Volume 28 Issue 10



Support Lavender Seniors when you shop at Amazon Smile. Click on the Amazon logo to get started. Always log into Smile.Amazon.com when you shop at Amazon to make sure your charity gets credit for your purchases.

Posthumous Thank You, Verne!

As we approach the one-year anniversary of his death on 20th October last year, Verne E. Nelson continues having a remarkable effect on Lavender Seniors. Though we have known since May about the bequest to Lavender Seniors in his 2016 trust, we have just received the \$30,000 he so generously left as his legacy to the organization!

In this anniversary month, it bears repeating some of the tribute we published in this newsletter last December. Verne 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:



An avid bird-watcher and brilliant bird photographer, Verne could be seen exploring his beloved Alameda, Harbor Island, Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline, as well

as various wooded parks, marshes and swamps up and down the coast. He was known 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 all to peruse the many photos he's contributed to the site: <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 a majestic and stately Cooper's Hawk that Verne 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.

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!)

We all continue to miss him terribly and are extremely grateful for his friendship and generosity – both while he was alive and by leaving this legacy for LGBTQ+ seniors in the East Bay!

James Philip "Jim" McCrea

October 5, 1940 – September 1, 2022

A memorial mass was held for our friend, Jim McCrea, on Saturday, 24th September, at Corpus Christi Church in Piedmont. In addition to being attended by Greg, his loving husband – and partner of 50+ years – family and friends, the mass was also live-streamed on YouTube.

Greg and Jim were long-time residents of Piedmont. Jim was born in Cuba City, Wisconsin, where another memorial service and internment will be held on 10th October. He was a few weeks shy of 82.

A graduate of Marquette University, Jim served with the U.S. Air Force for eight years. Then he moved to the safety of the San Francisco Bay Area. He worked in Human Resources until his retirement in 2003. He and Greg indulged their mutual love for travel by every conceivable means – road-trips, cruises, train-rides and frequent visits with friends around the planet.

Jim was known to express his strong opinions via a vast e-mail list, as well as regular "Letters to the Editor" in publications like the monthly *Catholic Voice*. He was particularly concerned about issues of equity and justice for racial, sexual and ethnic minorities.



Jim met Greg when he was 32 and Greg was 18, some calling it a "May-and-October" romance. Though Jim was diagnosed with cancer in February – and immediately started treatments – he was able to celebrate their 50th anniversary together in May. This artist's rendering of the couple together is a moving tribute to their many happy years together.

As an example of the kind of things Jim and Greg did together, here's a photo of them with three other intrepid LGBTQ+ couples and an equal number of (presumably) heterosexual seniors on a senior trip to Yosemite in 2016. Jim is the tall guy in the back, always watching out for others. He commented at the time that it felt good to be about half of the group rather than the 10% the LGBTQ+ community was usually presumed to be:

His husband, his family and his many friends will miss him, his caring about politics, religion and the future of the planet. The parish priest at Corpus Christi Church – during his homily – reminded those assembled for

Jim's memorial that his impact will be felt – not just by the congregation – but by people around the world. Amen to that!



Marlene Bonner

August 28, 1942 – September 22, 2022

A dear friend of Lavender Seniors – and co-founder of its long-time “We’re Still Here” support group – Marlene Bonner – passed away at her home in Berkeley on Thursday, 22nd September, just four weeks after celebrating her 80th birthday. She had suffered a stroke in late June, then underwent a few weeks of rehab before returning to her home. A slight setback sent her back to the hospital for a few days later in the summer, but she had seemed to be improving through the month of August, rebuilding her strength, becoming adept at transferring to and from her wheelchair. She apparently had a second stroke in early September, after which she deteriorated very rapidly. Hospice was called in and Marlene declared to dear friends that she thought she wasn’t going to make it. She died peacefully at home – per her wishes – with her long-time companion, Mary Turner, at her bedside.



Marlene (L) and Mary (R)
We’re Still Here Holiday Party

Marlene was born in Oakland. She and her four sisters, however, grew up in Berkeley, where the family moved when Marlene was about 8 years old. For the most part, she lived in Berkeley the rest of her life. She graduated from Berkeley High School in 1960, then went to San Francisco State University, where she earned her degree in medical technology. She worked for years in the medical technology field at hospitals around the Bay Area.

In 1984, however, she went back to school and got her degree and licensing as an MFCC. She worked for several years with troubled children in San Francisco.

In 1989, Marlene became focused on raising her nephew, Ryan, son of her sister, Marcia, who died about 20 years ago. Marlene was also involved with supporting Marcia’s other two children, Bentley (who pre-deceased her) and Ann. Two of Marlene’s sisters, Melba and Maxine, seemed to disappear from Marlene’s horizon some years ago. The fifth of the sisters, Karin, just died last year.

Marlene was actively involved in the local lesbian community. She was co-editor of *Onyx*, a black lesbian publication, and was on the board at Pacific Center for Human Growth. It was in the context of a lesbian gathering at the Pacific Center that she met her long-time companion, Dr. Mary Turner, 40 years ago. They worked together on *Onyx* and soon became close friends,

supporting each other and living together pretty much since then.

Marlene and Mary loved traveling together, particularly in the Caribbean. They were drawn to Jamaica – particularly Nigril – and spent a lot of time in the Cayman Islands, St. Thomas and their favorite, St. Johns. They also took a trans-continental round trip via train – the northern route going through Chicago to New York and DC; then returning on the middle route, enjoying the scenery from their sleeper cabin.

Marlene was an avid hiker, becoming a member of the Contra Costa Hiking Club. She was skilled in gardening, home maintenance and renovation, painting their house inside and out, doing whatever major and minor jobs needed to be done, though she left electrical and plumbing work to the professionals.

Marlene was a co-founder of the LGBTQ+ support group, “We’re Still Here,” which met at the North Oakland Senior Center the First Thursday of every month between August 2008 and the Covid lockdown in March of 2020 – it was Zoom after that. Her co-founder, Morris Simpson, pre-deceased her in March of this year, just three months shy of his 100th birthday. She particularly enjoyed the group’s meeting in December each year when they held an ecumenical holiday potluck at the North Oakland Senior Center.

One of her happiest times was when she and Mary joined three other LGBTQ+ couples on a hiking holiday in Yosemite National Park back in May 2016. This photo shows what an intrepid hiker she was, backpack and all.



Marlene on the right; Mary on the left –
nicknamed by Marlene the Lesbian-Gay Yosemite Hiking Club

The “We’re Still Here” group – still meeting on Zoom – will memorialize her during their October meeting. She will be missed by all who knew and loved her. She is survived by her long-time companion, Mary, her beloved nephew, Ryan, and many friends.

STORIES
OF OUR LIVES

Charles Franklin Swift
[“Charlie Frank”]

Some of our readers may have become fans of one (or more) varieties of Charlie Frank’s Pies – perhaps at a Pride event, farmers’ market, street fair or

the Monterey Jazz Festival. But there's a bit more to his story than his culinary skills in the kitchen or restaurant. Let's join him on a self-guided stroll down memory lane.

Charles Franklin Swift was born a "Grady Baby" at Atlanta's then-only hospital in March 1943 – the fifth of six children. He was born in a time of colored drinking fountains separate from whites. He had three older brothers, an older sister and a younger sister, who, unfortunately, passed away about eight years ago.



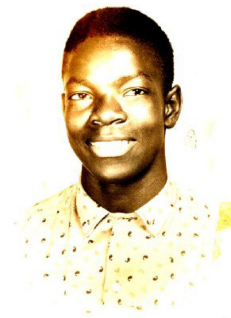
Charlie - Age 10 - Tom's River, NJ

"Though we would've been considered poor by any measure, I had a wonderful childhood," Charlie recalls. "My Dad died when I was so young, I hardly have any memory of him. But Mom was the rock for all of us. When I was two, my family moved to Tom's River, NJ. We lived in a small two-bedroom bungalow with an outhouse, kitchen pump that needed to be primed to pump water for cooking and baths. It was the best tasting water I can remember ever having. We lived on one small street with all black people residing there. It was an amazing place to grow up with lots of woods, ponds, trees and a nearby river where we caught lots of fish for our table. Wherever we were, our mother made us feel safe and secure. We had no idea how poor we really were, thanks to her."

Charles's mother was well-known in the Tom's River community and very active in the Church of God in Christ, a Pentecostal denomination.

"Though she was an avid, staunch member of her church," Charlie recounts, "she did not care what church we went to as long as we went to a church. She was a woman free of scandal, a woman of the highest integrity, who passed all the good stuff on to us. She was the backbone of our family and the community. She taught us to love one another."

As the only black student in his class through elementary and secondary school, Charlie became aware of racism. Charles recounts that on the little street where he lived, all of the children were very close and in a sense were like one big family.

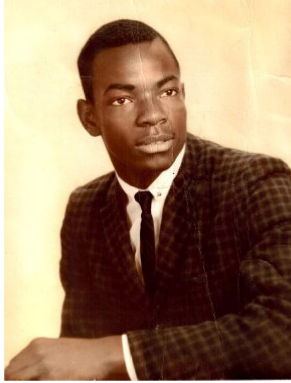


Charlie as a teenager

"On our short all-black street, there was not much traffic, so we played hide and go seek outside, jumped rope, climbed trees and had a very good life, oblivious to some of the ugliness going on in the outside world," Charlie says. "We really had it good in so many ways, compared with today. We all worked during the summer months picking blueberries, working at a nearby chicken farm, raking yards, doing errands for the neighbors and so on in order to help support the family. Mom was a domestic worker, but never focused on that and never let us be aware of how very poor we were."

Charlie pretty much focused on academics – plus participating in track and field – to keep himself sane in high school.

"I saw how dead-end it could be for black people –



High School graduation – 1962

especially black men – in Tom’s River,” he recounts. “I had a horrible experience when a guidance counselor told me as a freshman that I didn’t have the MENTAL APTITUDE to take language or math classes, that I should stick to industrial arts or auto mechanics. It was so depressing for me that I just couldn’t imagine living beyond age 19 – I had no future! The brightest spot on the horizon might be laying blacktop on roads or working as a mason’s helper, the kind of thing black men were accustomed to doing. Women could work year round as domestics, but men would have no seasonal income in

the winter months. In the 11th grade, however, we got a new guidance counselor who actually asked me what I wanted to do with my life and what the previous counselor had told me. He was shocked that my actual intellectual abilities had been quashed, so he guaranteed me he would find a college for me to attend. And he did!”

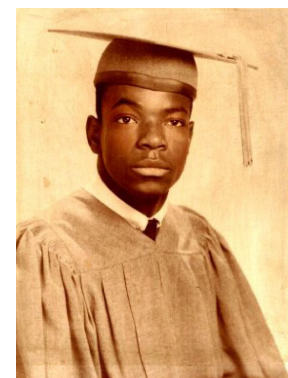
Though he had been held back one year – largely because of that first counselor’s low expectations – Charlie still graduated at 19 and headed for West Virginia State College in Institute, WV, outside of Charleston.

“This had originally been an all-black college that experienced reverse integration,” Charlie says. “Though white people attended during the day, the campus dormitories were all black. During the summer months, I worked three jobs and my family scraped together funds to help me be the first in my family to go to college! I worked for the business administration department, typing letters and working on communications, plus I worked at the school cafeteria serving meals. I ran track and field, becoming captain of the team in my senior year. Plus I sang second tenor in the glee club, which became famous, touring much of the northeast to high acclaim. I didn’t really have time for a social life, just focusing on studies and my extra-curricular activities to keep my sanity. Even then, I was determined to succeed after having the enthusiasm knocked out of me so seriously during my early high school years. I had to prove to myself and the world how wrong that first counselor had been about me!”

It was in college that Charlie first put the pieces together about his attraction for men, though he didn’t really have the words to describe what he was feeling.

“I attempted dating girls, but it just didn’t work for me,” Charlie recalls. “I never got into any mischief – no smoking, drinking or doing drugs – I was a very serious type who just needed to succeed. I knew I had a secret – that I was different from other guys – but it was very confusing. I knew little about homosexuality. Years later, it was only in my involuntary coming-out with my mother that I saw the pattern I’d been hiding, even from my

family. I was up on the ladder painting the ceiling in her house when she said – ‘I hear you’re a homosexual now!’ This initially blew me away, but in that moment I knew I had to proclaim to her that I was gay. I very calmly said, ‘Yes, I am and I’m proud of who I am and the family should also be proud of me.’ Her somewhat inhospitable response helped bring me full circle. She reminded me that when I was five or six years old, she had taken me and my



College graduation

younger sister downtown to buy Easter clothes. She bought this beautiful frilly white dress for my sister and I wondered why I couldn't have something so beautiful, too, instead of a dark suit. She implied that she should've known something was up with me from that point on. She said that was when that homosexual 'spirit jumped into me.' We never again brought up that subject."

Charlie considered himself somewhat arrogant about his sexuality after that encounter with his mother, so he didn't really discuss it with his siblings for many years. Once out of college, Charlie joined the Peace Corps.

"After volunteer training, I was posted to Costa Rica," he recalls. "It was a very exciting time. Though I was scheduled to stay there for two years, I only stayed a bit longer than one year. It was too complicated, since I was attracted to so many of the men there. It began to interfere with my work as an 'Ambassador' from the United States. I was primarily involved in helping schools develop gymnastics programs, so I traveled widely around the country, where I would help physical education instructors develop and implement those programs. I never got to spend much time in Puerto Limon, a largely-black settlement of ex-slaves, Chinese and Latin-language-speaking inhabitants on the Caribbean coast - such a beautiful multi-lingual city! I decided I just couldn't function openly as a gay man in Costa Rica, so I decided to leave early."

Charlie spent a couple of years trying various clerical-type jobs in Newark and New York, including a stint working in the Department of Floor Procedures at the NY Stock Exchange, writing up potentially illegal transactions that he or his team might have discovered. During his time in the "Big Apple," he had one of his first sexual encounters with a man.

"The man I met was everything I aspired to be: dapper, business-savvy and so on," Charlie recalls. "He took me home to his place in Washington Heights and - as it turned out - because of my lack of experience, I was so sexually inept that the guy said to me, 'Listen, kid, go home, learn about what it's like to be gay, then look me up in a couple years when you're more adept!' I was embarrassed at the time, but it contributed to my ongoing motto - it isn't what is done TO you, but what is done FOR you! I learned a lot from that rejection!"

Because he hadn't completed his full two-year assignment with the Peace Corps, however, he was soon drafted into the middle of the Vietnam conflict.

"My military years taught me so much about survival in the world," Charlie says. "You have to be smarter than those who would try to use you. Because I was a black man with a college degree, they decided I should go to Officers Candidate School at Fort Sill, OK, where I would be trained as a Second Lieutenant in artillery. What that actually meant was that I would be a 'forward observer,' as one of those who fly ahead in helicopters to scout out the enemy location and radio back to the artillery battery, which might be 60 or more miles away, so that they may adjust artillery fire onto the target. Of course, that meant we would be among the highest casualties in the war! I freaked out, convinced I would die, so I declined the commission. This put me at odds with the powers that be. There was a lot of pressure to change my mind. They finally came into the barracks at 2am, packed up my duffle bag when nobody could see and shipped me out in the dead of night for Ft. Lewis, Washington,

where I would be part of the build-up for shipping directly to Vietnam.”

Using his street-credibility built up over the years, he discovered that he could use his business skills to get a state-side placement instead of being shipped off to Saigon.



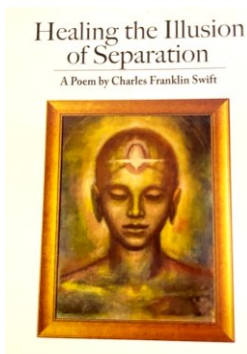
Receiving Army Outstanding Achievement Award

“Most of the black guys at Ft. Lewis wound up with kitchen or guard duty while they waited to be shipped out,” Charlie says. “One of the guys who was leaving the military suggested that – with my background – I could easily take his place as military stenographer or as it was called, the old man’s clerk. I hitch-hiked into town to take classes for beefing up my stenographic skills. When I became the Old Man’s clerk, I was forced to do kitchen and guard duty. I told a Command Sgt. Major – also an affirmative action officer – who told me he’d been having trouble getting blacks placed with 6th Army headquarters. He arranged for me to interview for that post and two weeks later I was at the Presidio working for a three-star General! Sometimes we have to be tenacious to make things happen in our world!”

Though he was initially assigned to a barracks, he was soon given off-base housing and began spending time prowling around gay San Francisco.

“I can remember walking past the Rendezvous a dozen times, fearful that the military police might catch me going in there to meet other gay men,” Charlie recalls. “Though I was scared for a while, I gradually got used to it. I met other gay men – including professional black men – and began to relax and accept myself. After leaving the military, I went to grad school in Anthropology at the University of Washington for a while, and lived for three years with a man who was working on his PhD at Brandeis. It was a mad romance! I dropped out of grad school – never went back, in fact, and – with the help of a Buddhist friend – began my life-changing introduction to meditation as a spiritual practice.”

He took his first meditation classes in 1980, becoming riveted by the teaching and the lessons.



“As a cultural anthropologist, I’d been exposed to Shintoism, Hinduism, Judaism and many lesser-known religions,” Charlie recalls. “I took classes at the Berkeley Psychic Institute. By 1999, I was meditating some 12 hours a day. It was in that context that the poem ‘Healing the Illusion of Separation,’ wrote itself through me. That spoken word CD is still widely available on the internet. It was also during this time that I re-discovered my love of cooking, especially pie-baking. At first, I created a recipe for sweet potato peach pie, which I gave as Christmas gifts. Those pies were so popular that I started ‘Charlie Frank’s Pies’ in 2005, figuring that God had given me that recipe and I should make the most of it!”

Though life was rolling along swimmingly with meditation and the pie business, Charlie had a couple unexpected encounters – first testing positive for HIV in 2016 and, secondly, being hit by a car while walking in a crosswalk near the Oakland YMCA. This accident resulted in a serious back injury and two broken bones in his right leg in 2018.



Charlie Frank's Pies Booth at a farmer's market

"Though it was a difficult decision, I felt I should tell my siblings about my sexuality and my HIV status," Charlie recalls.

"Though I asked them not to tell their children about the HIV, the result has been all are very supportive. I started spending a few weeks each year, visiting with each of them, being immersed in their lives and becoming closer. Since Covid, I have frequent phone conversations with them. Meanwhile, my back injury morphed into kidney infections, high blood pressure and any

number of other medical problems, so I began meditating on the situation. My physical challenges forced me to integrate my spiritual practices into everyday application. My kidneys are now my best friends, with my other vital organs playing a role in that friendship, as well."

Through his continued meditation during hard times, he's discovered important life lessons.

"It became clear to me that everything happening in my life happened FOR me and not TO me," Charlie says. "There was a lesson to be learned from every event in my life, both negative and positive. I would no longer be a victim. Each event was a teacher bringing soul-revealing lessons. I feel so blessed and grateful."

Asked about his bucket list as he approaches 80 in the spring, he has several plans.

"I plan to re-open my pie business in 2023, complete with a business plan and, hopefully, my own kitchen where people can pick up what they want," Charlie responds. "My website: www.charliefrankspies.com has been updated to include an online store. If all goes smoothly, we'll be offering the big four initially: sweet potato peach, coconut rum sweet potato pie, vanilla fudge sweet potato, Caribbean ginger sweet potato, as well as the key lime pie bar and various pound cakes. As importantly, I would like others to know about what benefits can be reaped with a personal meditation practice. We all have that need to find unity and forgiveness – both directions – which is something I like to think is evident in the love that comes out in my pies! Grace and peace."



Charlie decked out as chef

Thank you for sharing so much of your path with Lavender Seniors, Charlie – and best of luck with your many future endeavors!



BOOK REVIEW

A Love Letter to Frank Howell

from Lavender Seniors

Frank Howell, one of the co-founders of Lavender Seniors – who also served on its Board of Directors for many years – has been writing LGBTQ-related book reviews every month for this newsletter for the past decade or so. He has decided – having turned 84 in February – that it's time to focus more on his own personal work and his health. So for the first issue in a long time, this column in the newsletter is going quiet as of October 2022.



We want to sincerely thank Frank for not only his many years of extraordinary “library-ship” and support of LGBTQ+ issues at the Hayward Library and his participation in the formation of this organization, but also for his ongoing service through staffing many a Lavender Seniors booth at Pride events and Health Fairs, attending dozens of board meetings and helping our community keep

abreast of the finally-dynamic world of LGBTQ+ literature out in the world!

We're wishing Frank all the best as he starts a new chapter of his life – one less-tethered to this organization than he has been through this column, though he will always remain a vital part of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay!

Any of the many “literati” in the local LGBTQ+ community is welcome to continue Frank's good work of introducing our readers to some of the latest writing relevant to our community and around the world.

Thank you, Frank!

Bonus Book Review

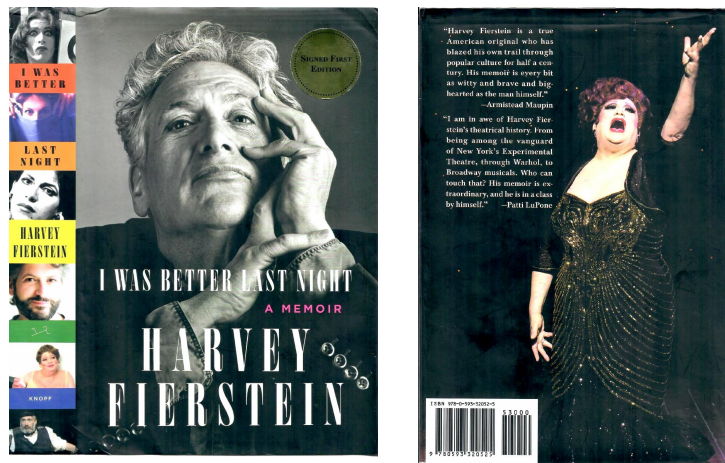


I Was Better Last Night: A Memoir

By Harvey Fierstein

The openly-gay man who collaborated on such classics as “Torch Song Trilogy,” “Hairspray,” “Mrs. Doubtfire,” “La Cage aux Folles,” “Kinky Boots” and many other LGBTQ+ plays, on stage, the silver screen and TV has written his sometimes-gritty memoir, released earlier this year, in time for his 70th birthday. The raspy-voiced activist, actor, author and icon managed to encapsulate those seven decades of life in 373 pages (plus acknowledgments

and index).



Front, spine and back cover of first edition hard-cover printing of this book.

The four-time Tony winner takes the reader on a vivid tour of his life, beginning as an effeminate Jewish kid in the Bensonhurst section of Brooklyn, NY, to his escapades on the summer theater circuit, on Broadway, in Hollywood and virtually everywhere in-between. The 59 chapters of his memoir include such intriguing titles as "Funny Things Happen when You Say Yes," "The Private Life of Jesus Who?", "This is a Job for a Drag Queen," "And They Call Him Sondheim" and "Strapping My Tits Back on."

There are a couple dozen photos (all black and white, unfortunately) depicting the various high and low chapters of his life.



Harvey Fierstein and Cyndi Lauper working on "Kinky Boots"

He does a good deal of "name-dropping" – which he, of course, has a perfect right to do, having hung out and collaborated with the likes of Madonna, Springsteen and Cyndi Lauper. A particularly creative and complicated set of four chapters – describing simultaneous involvement (2010-2012) in development of "Kinky Boots," "Newsies", "Casa Valentina," trans-Atlantic productions of "La Cage aux Folles" and a touring production of "Fiddler on the Roof." It boggles the mind that he could keep all of these characters straight, PLUS remember his lines when he's performing in "La Cage..." and "Fiddler..."

This reviewer believes that any gay man – or perhaps most straight men, as well – hearing the black Lola and white Charlie singing the duet, "I'm not my father's son" from the Fierstein-Lauper version of "Kinky Boots" will be moved – perhaps to tears, looking back on his relationship – good, bad or indifferent – with his father.

Though it may sound like stereotyping, it seems true that there are many extremely creative members of the LGBTQ+ community. We should be extremely proud of what this guy has accomplished in his first seven decades.

This reviewer strongly recommends this book for anybody interested in fun reading, as well as in putting our community's contributions into a certain kind of nitty-gritty perspective that wasn't around when we were growing up.

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!



MINDFUL MOVEMENT

As promised after last December's "Mindful Movement" session, we have asked Susana Renaud to guide us through another such session, helping us get into our bodies and minds simultaneously. Join our Mindful Movement class that will include gentle stress reduction movements intended to increase range of motion, help in pain reduction and build strength, all of which will be led with an emphasis on 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 has agreed to rejoin us after 10 months to help our adjustment to any current or ongoing stresses in our lives (not that there is anything stressful in our personal lives, or the upcoming mid-term election that threatens to decide whether democracy survives in this country or not).

Susana is a Behavioral Health Practitioner at Kaiser Permanente. She has facilitated our Second Saturday Rainbow luncheons on two previous occasions. We welcome

her leadership and healing presence during this time of post pandemic awareness and stress.

(Susana reminds us that the effects of the lunar eclipses will be with us on and off through 2023. The last for 2022 will be on that very same election day – 8th November; previous total lunar eclipse was in May and a partial solar eclipse is anticipated for later this month, 25th October!)

Here are the Zoom coordinates for Saturday, 8th October, 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, 8th October, 2022 – 12 noon to 2pm Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89671026595?pwd=TGR TbkaTzZGbWFFTTB1WWpQNFpWZz09>

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



RSVP If You're Going to Join Us This Month!

In-Person 3rd Friday Lunch Bunch Resuming This Month!

As mentioned in August and September newsletters, Lavender Seniors has been invited by the North Oakland Senior Center (5714 MLK Jr Way) to resume conducting its long-standing Third Friday Lunch Bunch in-person beginning on Friday, the 21st of October. After meeting on Zoom for 30 months, we are trying this bold experiment to see how many people might be interested in resuming this now-traditional activity face-to-face.

It is still unclear at press time what program – if any – will be offered other than a nutritious meal and time for getting re-acquainted, checking in personally with each other in the group. Staff from North Oakland Senior Center will be on hand to talk with us about the various programming available as they re-open their doors. We have invited staff from the Rainbow Community Center in Concord to come and talk with us about the many senior programs they have available there (see story on the Grand Opening and Ribbon-Cutting at their new office space). We have invited the Oakland Gay Men's Chorus and Lesbians A Cappella for Justice to join us on this initial return visit to the NOSC. We will notify our readers via an E-Blast as soon as

we know exactly what will transpire on the 21st. The most important thing is that we will finally be meeting together for the first time in a long time!

We **have** engaged Mothertongue Feminist Women's Theater to perform during the November Third Friday Lunch Bunch, a tradition that began in November four or five years ago. We are hoping to have either StageBridge, OGMC and/or Voices Lesbian perform as part of end-of-year holiday celebrations in December, if we aren't able to work something out later this month.

During past Third Friday gatherings – attended by anywhere from 20+ to 100+ LGBTQ+ seniors, their allies, families and friends – participants received a nutritious meal and a half-hour or so of social interaction eating together at round tables. Then, after five minutes for community announcements, the program would be turned over to presenters who might be offering education or entertainment (sometimes both) for 20-40 minutes, followed by a usually-robust Q&A period before closing out at/around 2pm.

The plan is to resume that program, if possible, but a bit more complicated given Health Department and City of Oakland regulations, as well as new considerations about providing food in a congregant lunch setting. Because we have been advised that some people are leery of gathering their food buffet style ("somebody else has been touching that spoon and digging into the lasagna!"), we've been advised that lunches should be individually wrapped. This will add to the expense incurred by this joint City and Lavender Seniors venture.

Therefore, we are requesting that people RSVP as *soon as possible* – no later than 5pm **Monday, October 10th**, to let us know exactly how many people we need to plan meals for. We need to have an exact count. Anyone who doesn't RSVP will not have a meal waiting for them if they join us that day. RSVPs should include at least the following:

- Full name
- Contact details (phone number and/or email address)
- Whether you need vegetarian or non-vegetarian meals
- Whether you have already registered with the North Oakland Senior Center or not

E-mailed RSVPs should be sent to Info@LavenderSeniors.org with the subject line: ***RSVP Third Friday Lunch Bunch***. RSVP message by phone should be left at (510) 736-LGBT (5428).

Because of scheduling issues, the meetings will have to resume at **12:30-2:30pm** instead of the former 12-2pm timeslot. The Center Director, Kayla Brown, has suggested that – weather-permitting – we hold the first meeting at tables set up outside on the patio just to begin easing our way back inside the facility for the winter months. If there is enough interest – and comfort – with meeting together again face-to-face, we would likely move inside to either the old dining room or to the larger Multi-Purpose Room, depending on level of interest. If, for instance, we only have 30 people show interest, our old meeting space might be sufficient. If we have more than that, we might need to pursue engaging the larger meeting space, allowing room for social distancing in the era of Omicron BA-5. We will repeat the City-mandated requirements here:

Requirements for participants:

- Mask must be worn throughout the Center, **except** when eating in designated area.
- Must be an active NOSC member (still-friendly cost of \$12/year), paid by check, money order or exact cash preferred. Credit cards not accepted, though reflected on form. Non- members would be welcome to set up an appointment or come to the Center M-F, 10am-2pm. A membership form can be found here: cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com (If the \$12 is a challenge, any person interested in attending is welcome to reach out to Kayla by email or phone and she will work with them directly and privately.)
- Must have proof of Covid-19 vaccination. Currently, boosters are not required, though that could change before October, depending on health department protocols.
- Must take temperature and check-in at the kiosk with their membership key tag when they come to NOSC.
- Contact can be made with NOSC/Kayla at: KBrown3@oaklandca.gov or 510-597-5085
- Questions to Lavender Seniors at: JohnDavid@LavenderSeniors.org or 510-736-LGBT (leave name, phone number and e-mail address, if available, to be contacted).

Following is the flyer NOSC has graciously developed to welcome us back in October.

Lavender Seniors
3rd Friday
**LUNCH
BUNCH**



Join us for community, connection,
lunch and fun!



3rd Friday's every month
12:30pm-2:30pm



At the North Oakland Senior Center
5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94609



Sponsored
by:



NOSC membership, proof of vaccination and mask
covering nose and mouth required in the building.

Questions?

email: johndavid@lavenderseniors.org or 510-736-LGBT (5428)
NOSC 510-597-5085, M-F, 9a-3p or nosc@oaklandca.gov



The lack of social and legal acceptance, both historically and currently, of LGBTQ+ people has had a profound impact on LGBTQ+ older adults. Without strong economic security, access to competent affirming healthcare, and social support, LGBTQ+ elders face more challenges when aging when compared with their non-LGBTQ+ peers (SAGE Project, NYC).

Several times per year Lavender Seniors of the East Bay offers a free 10-week group to explore issues of aging in the LGBTQ+ community. Through personal exploration, group support and education we discuss topics of interest for people caring for themselves or for someone else. Such topics include facing medical illness, caring for self while caring for another, planning for the future, and legal issues for LGBTQ+ elders.

Next Group is: **October 24-December 26, 2022**

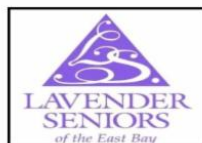
For program information and sign-up, Call: 1-510-736-5428 or email info@lavenderseniors.org (Write "Caring Program" on the subject line) leave your phone number, e-mail address, and full name. Someone from Lavender Seniors will call you to discuss the program.

"This support was critical to my success in caregiving, and critical to my personal well being physically and emotionally while caregiving."

"I hoped to break my social isolation, meet some new LGBT older adults, and focus on my self-care. My expectations were beyond met."

"Is it okay to have a fulfilling life as a LGBT+ senior? I learned that the answer is "Yes."

Group facilitator is Dr. Melinda Ginne. She is a clinical psychologist with a 40 year career specializing in geriatrics and the treatment of the psychological aspects of acute chronic and life-threatening medical illness. She is one of the founding instructors in the Professional Program in Aging and Mental Health at UC Berkeley Extension. She has been active in the LGBTQ+ community since 1975.



Sponsors: Amazon Foundation; Give Now Fund of Horizons Foundation;



Our Contra Costa County Sister/Brother/Sibling Organization

Rainbow Community Center Grand Opening

The Rainbow Community Center (RCC) in Concord had the official grand opening and ribbon-cutting at its new office space on Saturday, 24th September. Like everyone, the organization's operations were profoundly affected by the initial six-county lockdown in response to Covid in March 2020. In addition, rising rental costs, parking problems and a quest for a more appropriate space for LGBTQ+ services combined to make it essential to find their new location.

The RCC – originally founded in 1992 as a satellite office of Berkeley’s Pacific Center for Human Growth – evolved to its own independent non-profit status in 1995-96. Their Mission Statement continues to be:

Rainbow builds community, equity, and well-being among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning and Intersex (LGBTQIA+) people & our allies.

Information about the organization’s many and diverse programs can be found at their website: <https://www.rainbowcc.org/> or by calling the unchanged office number: (925) 692-0090. Their address is 2380 Salvio Street, Suite 301, Concord, CA 94520. Their hours currently are Monday through Friday, 10am-3pm. They are closed Saturdays and Sundays, except for special events.

The Older Adults and Senior Events offerings include such interesting programs as Farmers Market Meet-Up, Senior Lunches (on Fridays), Senior Coffee & Donuts Hours, Senior Jazz Nights and an every-other-week Senior Zoom meeting.



**SENIOR ZOOM
EVERY OTHER FRIDAY 1PM**

Join us for activities, discussions, guest speaker and fun!
email for more info: christopher@rainbowcc.org

A few photos from the 24th September Grand Opening event – provided by Lavender Seniors representative, Friendly Visitor Coordinator, Karen A. Anderson – follow here (including some Lavender Seniors participants who enjoy attending LGBTQ+ events in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties):



Rainbow-Festooned California
Flag



Peter and Larry – Lavender Seniors and RCC
Participants



Nearly-All-Inclusive Restroom



From Lavender Seniors: Best wishes in your new digs, RCC!!

LGBTQ+ Research Participant Opportunity

We have received the following inquiry from a UCLA-connected research company that we thought some of our readers might be interested in pursuing. We have not had the opportunity to check out the legitimacy of the research project, but anyone interested can check it out for themselves and perhaps report back next month if they actually participate! As you can see, they don't mention exactly what "qualifies" an LGBTQ+ person to be interviewed, but it might be one of those interesting life situations that turns out to be more rewarding than just a \$100 MasterCard! (The boldface-underlined portions are ours, not the researcher's, indicating why we think it might be of interest to our community).

Good afternoon,

My name is Cassidy and I work for Nichols Research, a nation-wide market research firm based in California. I am reaching out today on behalf of UCLA School of Public Health and the Public Health Institute for an upcoming remote research study regarding health among Californians in the LGBTQ+ community.

Sessions are taking place on Tuesday, October 10th through Wednesday, October 19th over the Zoom platform and will last for about an hour to an hour and half. Sessions will be in the format of an individual interview. If you qualify and are able to participate you will receive a \$100 MasterCard for your time.

If you or anyone you know may be interested in participating in this study please call (559) 226-3100, dial '0' for the operator, and reference study #4272C. Someone from Nichols Research will reach out to you to see if you qualify. Our hours of operation are Monday-Thursday 10AM-8PM PT, and Friday-Saturday 11AM-5PM PT.

Please feel free to forward this email to anyone whom you think may be interested. Thank you for your time and we look forward to including your opinions in our research study!

Cassidy Dore-Kalinauskas
Research Associate
Nichols Research
600 West Shaw Avenue, Suite 350, Fresno, CA 93704
Office: 559.226.3100 ext. 9035

FYI: In checking out Nichols Research (<https://nicholsresearch.com/>) we did discover that their main office is in Fremont, plus they have hubs in San Francisco, Sunnyvale and Fresno. That could explain why the Fresno subsidiary might have a stronger connection with UCLA than some of those offices closer to us in Northern California.



HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR

WE'VE GOT SOME *CHER* FOR YOU!

SFGMC rings in the holiday season with its much-anticipated annual tradition, *Holiday Spectacular*. The music will be joyous, the costumes will be fabulous, and the dancing will be thrilling. Audiences can expect the entertaining flair, fun, and heart that the Chorus always delivers.

There will be holiday favorites, including *Jingle Bells* and *I'll Be Home for Christmas*, classical choral works—including *Sure on this Shining Night*, and unexpected originals, including a holiday-themed Cher medley...yes, that Cher!

SAN FRANCISCO'S SYDNEY GOLDSTEIN THEATER

Friday, December 2 and Saturday, December 3

[GET TICKETS](#)

BERKELEY'S FREIGHT & SALVAGE

Sunday, December 11

[GET TICKETS](#)

ROHNERT PARK'S GREEN MUSIC CENTER

Saturday, December 17

[GET TICKETS](#)

CASTRO THEATRE

Saturday, December 24

[GET TICKETS](#)



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!

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

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, 9/28, 10/12, 10/26, 11/9, 11/23, 12/14, 12/28

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 Kay George

Music's Memory Lane - Tuesdays, thru 12/27 We'll discuss a hit song, vintage television variety show, or a memorable musician in music history. From Big Band music to the Beatles, we'll dive into our recollections of concerts, lyricists, and pop culture. We will then hear musical requests and discuss. Facilitated by Steve Maraccini

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.



Out Standing Seniors - Hayward - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Oct 4 12:30 - 1:30 p.m. (1st Tuesday)

Meets via Zoom email outstandingseniors@pacificcenter.org 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

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

Meets via Zoom email livingoutlivermore@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

Oct 6, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. (1st Thursday)

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

Find support and like-minded wonderful people!

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

Oct 4,11,18,25 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. (Tuesdays)

email olderandoutgroups@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

Oct 5,12,19,26 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. (Wednesdays)

email olderandoutgroups@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

Oct 7,14,21,28 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. (Fridays)

email olderandoutgroups@pacificcenter.org for current meeting information.

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

Rainbow Seniors

Oct 11 & 25 12:30 p.m. (2nd & 4th Tuesdays)

San Leandro Senior Community Center

email rainbowseniors@pacificcenter.org for info.

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

Lavender Seniors Board Meeting

Oct 12 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

Oct 8 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. (Mindful Movement - see info above for joining us via Zoom)

Tri-Valley Rainbows - Sponsored by Pacific Center

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

Meets via Zoom email trivalleyrainbows@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

Oct 21 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

North Oakland Senior Center (Please RSVP and join us on our return to in-person meeting this month!)

Aging in the LGBTQ+ Community

Mondays - October 24 thru December 26

pre-registration required (see flyer above)

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay Board of Directors

President: Victor Aguilar Jr

Vice President: Melissa West

Treasurer: Carmen Chiong

Secretary: Dr. John David Dupree

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

Contact
Us

