



Lavender Notes

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
a program of the
Oakland LGBTQ Community Center.

Volunteer

Donate with
PayPal

Celebrating 28+ years of service and positive change

February 2023 - Volume 29 Issue 2

amazon smile

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.

Bruce MacDonald

We are sad to report that long-time Lavender Seniors Friendly Visitor Volunteer, Bruce MacDonald, was found dead in his San Pablo apartment on Saturday, 21st January. Time and cause of death had not yet been determined by newsletter press time.



Bruce and his sister, Ruth, "during our 'big-hair' period in the late '60s and early '70s"

Born in Stratford, Ontario, home of Canada's Stratford Shakespeare Festival, in 1953, Bruce was four years younger than his beloved sister, Ruth Anne, whom he described as "my closest friend through the years." A breast cancer survivor, she died of lung cancer about twelve years ago. His life included many tragic losses, beginning with his mother, who died of brain cancer when he was just nine years old. His father died of colon cancer at age 55.

As a teenager, he realized he didn't fit in small-town Stratford (population 20,000 at the time), he moved to Toronto, where – as a young gay man – he could find "his people." Coming out to family was never a big issue for him.

While he was a teenager, he had a relationship with a Stratford police officer.

"We would make out in his cruiser and wind up in a hotel room, which was

clearly a risky thing for him to be doing,” Bruce recalled. “But after I discovered you could be openly gay in Toronto, I decided to let that ‘undercover’ part of my life go. I left and I’ve never looked back.”

After high school, Bruce hitch-hiked around Europe with friends, took little trips around the U.S. and worked in Provincetown for two summers. While vacationing in San Francisco in 1979, he met his first lover, Ron – a Spartanburg, SC, native – and moved to SF a month later. They began living together immediately. Their 13-year relationship ended with Ron’s death from AIDS in 1992, which was devastating to Bruce. He reported feeling “numb” for nearly a year.



Bruce (left) and Ron during the late '80s

They both worked for Bank of America in San Francisco. In 1987, Ron was transferred to Concord, where they lived the last five years of their life together. Bruce began working with Oakland Kaiser during that time – and for a few years after Ron’s death.

About a year after Ron’s death, Bruce met the man he described in 2016 as “the love of my life”, Joe Ray, a 13-years-younger Latino artist from Hagerman, NM. The pair connected on virtually all levels, including love of the arts, family and partying. They moved into a rented house in San Leandro, spruced it up and threw many lavish ‘theme parties.’



Bruce (right) and Joe Ray (left) with friends at one of their many parties

Unfortunately, though Bruce knew Joe Ray was HIV-positive when they met, he was certain that new treatment developments would prevent his losing another lover to AIDS. The pair lived life to the fullest – even after Joe Ray had to go out on disability. In 2000, he died at age 32 in Bruce’s arms, surrounded by his family and friends.

“After Ron died, I went through a period of wishing it had been me who died instead,” Bruce admitted in a 2016 interview. “But subsequently, my seven-

year relationship with Joe Ray was so intense – we had fallen in love so suddenly and deeply – that this second loss threw me into such despair that I seriously considered suicide.”



Bruce at home with
Tigger and Archie, 2016

Bruce began regular therapy and turned to Buddhism, which sustained him for many years. In addition to therapy and Buddhism, however, he searched out ways to volunteer and give back to his community. He saw an article in the *San Leandro Times* about Lavender Seniors, serving LGBTQ elders in the East Bay. He became a dedicated long-term Friendly Visitor volunteer for over a decade, ending in 2018.

“The way Bruce worked with clients was magical,” says Kathleen Miller, Friendly Visitor Coordinator until her move in 2016 to Placer and then Nevada County. “He, his friends and his clients were like a big family!”

Bruce suffered one of the last tragic blows in his life when he was preparing to move to Palm Springs with the man he described to friends in 2018 as his “soul-mate.” As fate would have it – even as they had begun packing for the move south – he had a stroke and took a serious fall.

“My husband and I sat with the couple in a booth at Harry’s Hofbrau during Lavender Seniors annual holiday celebration on 14th December 2019,” says Dr. John David Dupree, outgoing Lavender Seniors Board Secretary. “You could tell Bruce was having some minor speech and cognitive issues after his stroke. It was up-in-the-air that they would be following through with their plans to relocate to Palm Springs. But he was his usual cheerful and playful self. As it turns out, the plan didn’t work out and he lived the last few years in his San Pablo apartment. We were so sad to hear that he had passed – we’ve lost a guy with such a big heart”

At press time, there were no known memorial services planned. If we hear more follow-up, it will be reported in future newsletters or e-blasts.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Lavender Seniors – Oakland LGBTQ Community Center Update

Good News on the Transition!

After several months of negotiation and idea-exchanges between these two LGBTQ-focused organizations, a formal agreement was signed by Lavender Seniors of the East Bay and the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center on 12th January 2023. The good news for our community is that Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is transitioning into a program of the Center, with its own designated bank account and Lavender Seniors Advisory Council.



Jessie Ray Spivey, OLGBTQCC Staff

"We are thrilled with this win-win arrangement which promises to increase the effectiveness of both organizations in serving the LGBTQ+ senior community," says Joe Hawkins, CEO and co-founder of the Center. "We are transferring Jessie Spivey – currently our Director of Operations – into the role as Director of all senior services provided under our 'Aging with Pride' program. This will include already-existing senior services here at the Center, as well as Lavender Seniors and Pacific Center programs supported by the Center. We expect this transition to be complete by the end of March, just eight weeks after Jessie's taking the helm of this important post."

The outgoing Board of Directors at Lavender Seniors – several of whom will join the Advisory Council at least during this transition period – are very pleased with this development, which will result in carrying on the Mission Statement of the organization.

"Thankfully, the Center is determined to carry on several of the 'flagship' programs Lavender Seniors is best known for in the community," says Dr. John David Dupree, outgoing Board Secretary. "The Friendly Visitors Program, the Caring for our LGBTQ Partners/Friends and Ourselves program, the Third Friday Lunch Bunch, the Newsletter/Website and the Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch will continue uninterrupted. In addition, Joe and his Development team are committed to seeking additional funding to supplement those Lavender Seniors funds that have already been transferred to our dedicated bank account at the Center. If they generate extra funds, they may even be able to resume other vital programs like the LGBTQ-themed film series and the 'Safe and Visible' training program for medical, mental health and social service professionals, which promotes welcoming services for LGBTQ+ seniors."

A number of Lavender Seniors participants have expressed confusion and concern about the fate of the many services and activities they have been accustomed to over the 28+ years of Lavender Seniors' history serving the East Bay community.

"My Board of Directors, staff and I have been most impressed with the range of services we gain access to by joining forces with Lavender Seniors," says Hawkins. "We're hopeful that people will continue to participate in group activities like the Third Friday Lunch Bunch, apply to be Friendly Visitor volunteers, request Friendly Visitor volunteers, take advantage of the Caring group and give us regular feedback on how we're doing in this transition. We want to help provide the best and most effective services to this precious segment of our community!"

For those who might not be familiar with the many services – including the Glenn Burke Wellness Clinic – already available at the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center, check out <https://www.oaklandlgbtqcenter.org/> and, for more information, look for, fill out and submit the subscription blank on that website (example only, left below). For more information about Lavender Seniors, check out the website, <https://lavenderseniors.org/>, look for, fill out

and submit the subscription blank on that website (example only, right below).

Subscribe to our mailing list

E-mail Address

SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL LIST

Sign up now ▶

What to look for on the respective websites:
OLGBTQCC Mailing List Subscription (left) and Lavender Seniors Mailing List Subscription (right)

More information on the transition will be available in future newsletters of both Lavender Seniors and the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center. Meanwhile, anyone interested in joining the Lavender Seniors Advisory Council should contact Jessie Spivey at Jessie@OaklandLGBTQCenter.org or John David Dupree at JohnDavid@LavenderSeniors.org.

STORIES OF OUR LIVES

Wendy Clymer

Raised among three generations of musicians, this month's featured LGBTQ+ community member is always drawn back into music, evolving from music lessons as a child, marching and symphonic bands and orchestras in her youth, a chamber music/symphonic/teaching career as an adult and, most recently, to a new-found way of sharing her music in homes, hospitals, hospices and nursing facilities around the Bay Area.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio, 52+ years ago, in August 1970, Wendy Clymer was the first of two sisters born and raised within a very musical family. All four of her grandparents were classical choral directors, pianists/accompanists and/or woodwind players. Her mother's older brother was a violist who became a professional singer with the Frankfurt (Germany) Opera.



Dad & Wendy at piano, age 2 – Mom, Dad, Wendy & Jill, 1972 – w/both musical grandmothers, Jean & Marian, 1984

When Wendy was five years old, her family experienced a tragic event which has never really healed completely.

"Sadly, in 1976, my father took his own life, which reverberates around the family to this day," Wendy recalls. "Though everybody was doing the best they

could in dealing with my sister and me, I feel like I never got to really grieve the loss of our Dad. Throughout my childhood, I blamed myself somehow for his decision, feeling guilt that I'd either done something wrong or had NOT done something I should've done. That's a heavy burden for a little kid feeling she had nowhere to deal with that confusion. It definitely has colored my approach to mental health and end-of-life issues, grief and bereavement in my own life."

While their mother went through the inevitable shock and depression of her loss – living primarily on life insurance and Social Security benefits for a while – she was strategizing how to make things better for herself and her daughters. When the girls were in elementary school, she returned to work as a teacher and, subsequently, as a librarian, to improve their lives as much as possible. She was a role model of a strong, self-sufficient and independent woman.

"From my memory of those times, some of the most important things my mother chose to finance from her meager budget were music lessons for me and Jill," Wendy says. "I started out at age seven with piano lessons, then violin lessons at age nine. When my uncle gave me his viola, I switched instruments. We began vocal music in early elementary school, and I was involved with an annual performance called FAP – the Fine Arts Program – with choral music, singing, playing and dancing! Seeing older students playing violin inspired me to play that instrument. By fourth grade, however, the strings program had been cut. I didn't want to play a band instrument, so I continued in choir at school and took violin lessons outside of school."

When she began Avon Lake High School – in a town right on Lake Erie – she continued being immersed in music and the school's music culture: singing in and accompanying the choir, participating in youth orchestra outside of school and wherever else she could find a comfortable niche.



Wendy "marching trombone"

"All of my friends in high school were music geeks," Wendy says. "I was good in school and was considered to be musically talented. By my senior year, one of the things I wanted desperately, however, was to be in the marching band with my friends. The music director suggested that the marching band needed trombone players, so I learned a few notes and got to march with my friends. I thought of myself as 'marching trombone' rather than 'playing trombone'. I was also in the concert band, playing mallets in the percussion section, as well as playing the harp on an electronic keyboard. Also, my love for foreign languages was born in school."

Her high school social life outside of music was fairly limited.

"My longest-term boyfriend – a preacher's kid whose parents were both ministers – was the principal percussionist," Wendy recalls. "He confided in me that his Dad had come out as gay, an astonishing fact to me at the time. Unfortunately, since this was generally a secret in the community, his wife started telling my 16-year-old self about problems in their marriage, since she didn't have anybody else to talk to about it. Odd to me at the time for her to seek out a teenager as her therapist! I did attend the prom with my boyfriend

– in a puffy pink dress, no less! But my best friends remained girls, mainly other music geeks like myself, who did things like blindfolding me for my surprise 16th birthday party in a basement family room! We had great fun together. On another note from high school, my first ever-so-brief boyfriend - the first boy I ever kissed – turned out to be gay, as well!”

After graduation in 1988, Wendy didn’t get into her first choice for college, but was accepted as a second-semester freshman at Brown in Providence, Rhode Island, beginning in January 1989.

“Since I had to wait a semester to start college, I decided to go to Germany, where my opera singer uncle lived, to take German-language classes,” Wendy recalls. “Though I had studied French in high school, I was determined to also learn German and Italian, languages that would be useful for classical music. When I arrived at Brown, a whole new world opened up to me! That small town in Ohio had not introduced me to the wider world. I now had Jewish friends and friends from all over the planet. I majored in American Civilization, now called American Studies, an inter-disciplinary curriculum that allowed me to take literature, history, culture and music classes. I basically had a music minor, along with French and German.”

It was during her sophomore and junior years that she began to self-identify as bisexual.



Brown graduation, 1993

“I was 20 or so when I told my mother and sister,” Wendy says. “They both seemed to have non-reactions. Mom said ‘Oh, I’m not surprised’ and Jill said, ‘Well, who ISN’T bisexual?’ Mom later told me she’d been worried that I would be discriminated against. But all of my immediate and extended family has always been very supportive. Meanwhile, I had been very much in love with a friend, but it turned out she was basically straight. I thought gay people looked

and acted strange, so wasn’t able to embrace my lesbianism just yet. When I finally screwed up the courage to attend a gay-lesbian meeting on campus, I looked around and could see that most of them just looked ‘normal’, never mind one outspoken lesbian had a half-shaved head. It took a bit longer for me to stop being afraid of what people might think of me if they knew!”

After graduation from Brown in 1993, Wendy went to The Juilliard School in New York City.

“Coming from the liberal arts background of Brown, I wasn’t quite prepared for the intensity of Juilliard,” Wendy says. “I was principal violist in the Juilliard symphony and toured with the orchestra in Bermuda, but I experienced something of an emotional crisis, with lots of uncertainty about whether this was really what I wanted to do. So I dropped out of Juilliard and moved on to other adventures.”

Wendy stopped playing classical music, joined a rock band, became a student advisor at Columbia University – and began her first major relationship with a woman!

"I fell head-over-heels in love with a German woman I met at a birthday party in a New York City bar," Wendy recalls. "She was sitting across from me – appraising others in German with a gay man – and didn't realize I could understand what they were saying. I finally broke into their conversation, also in German, suggesting it was a bit rude to be speaking in German. Later, she asked me out on a date. A couple dates later, we declared our love for each other. After visiting her in Germany, I decided to move there to be with her, even though I had just found out she was still involved with another woman. The relationship was pretty rocky, but I loved living in Berlin, where I worked as a translator and tour guide and made life-long friends. After three years in Berlin, we decided to move to San Francisco together."

When they got to the Bay Area, Wendy found a job as a paralegal and supported her German girlfriend for about a year until she left Wendy for a neighbor woman and, subsequently, moved back to Germany.



Wendy as Walking Tour Guide
in Berlin

"While I was in Germany, I was politically active, helping to organize the Berlin Lesbian Week, an annual conference of workshops and cultural events. There was some controversy about whether transwomen were welcome in the lesbian community. Because of these controversies – including some anti-bi sentiment – I chose to be out as bi myself, even though I was fairly certain by that point that I only wanted to be in relationships with women. I also experienced a lot of self-doubt when my German lover left me – 'how could she fall in love with somebody else?' even though I should've known, since she did the same thing to another woman when I followed her to Germany initially."

Wendy's life took a somewhat chaotic turn after this break-up, since the plan had been that the pair would be in San Francisco for 2 years, then move back to Berlin. Wendy continued her work as a paralegal and struggled to make sense of her life.

"I was in a funk for a few months, confused, in therapy, partying and drinking a lot to help get me through this setback," Wendy recalls. "Giorgio, a friend from Brown days – who still lives downstairs with his long-term boyfriend in the same building – helped me get out and about during this dark period. Luckily, my paralegal job and circle of supportive friends gave me the stability and flexibility to explore where my life should be headed next."

In the early 2000s, Wendy made a gradual return to her passion of classical music. She started playing the viola again and attended chamber music workshops where she connected with a community of chamber music enthusiasts who gather at each other's homes to play music. With three friends she founded a string quartet, unofficially called "Lia and the Homosexuals," which rehearsed regularly and performed at house concerts. Rather than going to law school, which had seemed a natural step from her paralegal job, Wendy had an epiphany and decided to go back to music school.

In 2005, Wendy earned her master's degree in Music at the San Francisco Conservatory, then got a

fellowship to pursue her doctorate in Music at University of Oklahoma in Norman.

"That year in Norman was difficult," she recalls, "since I had not anticipated what it would feel like as a single lesbian moving to a socially conservative small town after living in San Francisco, Berlin and New York. I taught, played in a somewhat disappointing string quartet and came away inspired about teaching. When I returned to the Bay Area, I took music education classes at Cal State East Bay and earned my teaching credential at SFSU. I got a dream job teaching strings to fourth and fifth graders in the Lafayette School District, where I worked for five years."



Hiking in the hills, 2002

When Wendy's full-time music teaching job was cut to part-time, she began questioning whether this was the right long-term career for her.

"I became a victim of my own success," Wendy says. "More and more students wanted to take my classes, but I was gradually being paid less to do more. With continuous budget cuts, unsuccessful union fights about full-time equivalents, etc., I finally had to leave one of my all-time favorite jobs. I had already moved to the East Bay and have continued to teach at Berkeley's Crowden Music School."

Wendy had mostly short-term hook-ups and a fling with an Italian violinist in conjunction with a summer music festival in Italy, but also was in a four-year relationship.

"Marguerite – a Native Californian – and I enjoyed a lot of things together," Wendy recalls, "like snowboarding in Tahoe. But she wanted to have children and I did not. We actually split up over that issue, though we remain good friends. Incidentally, she does have kids. When I left Lafayette, I returned to part-time paralegal work, which gave me the freedom to explore my own performing, chamber music and other music interests."

Wendy met Nicole, the love of her life and now her wife, in 2014, through friends who knew she was longing for a long-term relationship with a kindred spirit.

"Nicole and I cleared the issue of children on our second date, agreeing that neither of us wants to be parents," Wendy says. "From that point on, everything got better and better. We were married at San Francisco City Hall in 2016. Our honeymoon to Montreal and Quebec City wound up in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We love traveling together, hiking, bicycling, cooking and playing pickleball! Nicole's father is generous to the family, previously planning a trip for all to Disney World – a great way to relive the childhood I never really had – and upcoming this summer an Alaskan cruise! On our one-year anniversary, we had what you'd call a wedding reception with both families, siblings, step-siblings, cousins and friends. In so many ways, this wave of support seems to be delightfully unlike what our society generally encourages."



Biking in Susanville, 2014



Wedding in SF, 2016



Vacationing in Maui, 2022



Wendy in Solo Performance

A few years ago, a friend's mother was on home hospice, and Wendy began playing for her.

"She loved the music that I played at her bedside," Wendy says. "Her caregivers noticed that the mellow string melodies soothed her, allowing her to rest on days when she had been agitated and struggling to breathe before I arrived. Playing music for her one-on-one was much different from performing before an audience in a concert hall, church or even classroom. From this experience, I knew I wanted to find a way to share my music with others in a healing way. During the pandemic, I completed a five-module on-line course on using music in healing and transition situations. This

training taught me to pay specific attention to each patient and play music appropriate for their condition, with the flexibility to change the music as the patient's condition changes. This is not music therapy, but rather in-the-moment comfort care, providing a healing environment in service to the patient. Next I will be doing a practicum at a local hospital so I will be certified to share my music in such a different way to help people suffering from pain, anxiety or transitioning, something I hadn't done before in my music career, but also something I find very rewarding."

[Editor's Note: Wendy will be presenting on this provision of bedside music, as well as performing on her viola at the Lavender Seniors Third Friday Lunch Bunch on 17th February. See more information on that event elsewhere in this newsletter.]

Meanwhile, Wendy continues solo performance, participates in chamber music groups and occasional symphonic performances, coaches chamber music, conducts a youth orchestra, and teaches violin and viola lessons. She and Nicole make frequent visits to both families, including Wendy's Mom – who moved from Ohio to Seattle after her retirement, closer to sister, Jill, and family. Mom turned 81 in mid-January!

"I am so grateful for my family, Nicole's family and a wide circle of friends, colleagues and members of the LGBTQ+ community who have been so supportive to me, to us and to our careers," Wendy says. "I think I may be too young to have a bucket list just yet, like some folks in their 70s or 80s might have, though I'd definitely like us to travel together to at least Germany – where Nicole's grandmother came from – and Sweden in the next few years."



Wendy & Mom on Washington beach, 2022



Wendy & sister, Jill, in Berkeley, 2007

Thank you for sharing so much of your life with Lavender Seniors, Wendy. All best to you and yours for the rest of 2023 and far beyond!

Book Review



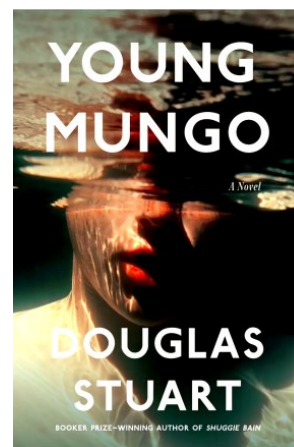
Young Mungo

By Douglas Stuart

The jacket of this 2022 book by a multiple prize-winning author sounds like it would be a great read for any adventurous literature purveyor in the LGBTQ+ community:

"A story of queer love and working-class families, *Young Mungo* is the brilliant second novel from the Booker Prize-winning author of *Shuggie Bain*."

After that opening salvo on the jacket, this second novel by Glasgow-born author, Douglas Stuart, continues to be described as "a vivid portrayal of working-class life and a deeply-moving and highly suspenseful story of the first love of two young men."



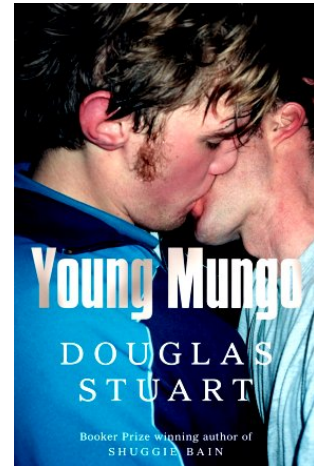
Having received the book for Christmas, this reviewer and his husband carted the hard-bound 390-page (heavy) tome with us to our winter home in Costa Rica, where we read to each other for a couple hours each day after breakfast. We were prepared to be transported to working-class Glasgow in the late 20th century to share in a story of redemption amidst all odds.

Instead, to borrow a term from a 3rd April 2022 rave review in the *New York Times*, we were taken on a "misery tour" with two very dysfunctional families and an ongoing Protestant-Catholic clash among residents of clearly-defined and uber-territorial high-rise tenement complexes. Our hero, Mungo, is a sensitive and alarmingly gorgeous 15-year-old, the youngest of three siblings: Hamish, 18, is the equivalent of an out-of-control Protestant warlord, a bully of the fourth order, who appears to derive pleasure out of torturing everybody,

including his younger brother. He symbolizes the “toxic masculinity” of the time and place. Sister Jodie, the middle child, hard-working and ambitious, plays the role of peacemaker in this war-torn family. The alcoholic mother, Maureen, also known as Mo-Maw, appears to be a loose woman always on the prowl for a new man to help support her. She’s also known to disappear for days or weeks at a time, leaving kids to worry about a gory ending to her life. In spite of her apparent lack of care for her children, Mungo is inexplicably devoted to her and agrees from time to time to her requests to crawl into bed with her to comfort her when she’s particularly depressed.

The author is a gay Scottish-American writer, now living in Manhattan with his husband, art curator, Michael Cary. It seems, however, he’s much more proficient (and rightly praised for) writing about the minutest details of grisly murders, repeated man-boy rapes, broken fingers, smashed faces, teeth knocked out and brick-wielding gangs who declare periodic “rumbles” (reminiscent of “West Side Story”) than telling even the slightest tender detail of the pre-proclaimed “love story” between two gay teenagers. Of the 28 chapters in this book, an educated (non-scientific) estimate is that only three or four of the chapters make any significant mention or have anything whatsoever to do with that touted “story of queer love”...

The betrayal that members of the LGBTQ community might feel comes full force when you see a second book cover that has been used for the book during the last year. This reviewer’s version was the one at the top of this review. That cover depicts the symbolic and physical near-death experiences – sometimes literally underwater – that he faces in about half of the book’s 390 pages. This second cover SO misrepresents what this book focuses on (there may be two or three instances of kissing between the two teens, but nothing remotely like on this cover!). So, it feels in many ways like the epitome of false/misleading advertising, at least in terms of any LGBTQ+ individuals who might be in the market for a good read. It’s a betrayal of sorts.



Hearing from avid readers in our lives that Stuart’s first Booker-Prize-winning book, *Shuggie Bain*, was a “difficult read,” we kept hoping this one would ease up on the violence and focus a bit on the sweetness the boys were able to steal surreptitiously. That never happened to the end. Deflation reigned.



Author Douglas Stuart

Because Stuart appears to be a talented writer – and defied the odds after his first book was turned down by nearly 30 publishers on both sides of the Atlantic – it is hoped that he will one day ply his writing skill in a way that does justice to the dreams, goals and coping mechanisms of real-life LGBTQ+ teens rather than spend so much time describing only the damage done by the toxic masculinity he describes so well.

-- John David Dupree (he/him/his), Tinamastes, Costa Rica

[Editor’s Note: Though there may be periodic LGBTQ-related books or films reviewed in future Lavender Seniors newsletters, this will be the last regular book and/or movie review submitted by outgoing Board

Secretary, John David Dupree. The editorial staff welcomes contributions/submissions from others in the community who would like to keep our readers apprised of relevant books or films – past, present and future! These can be submitted to Beckie@LavenderSeniors.org with the subject line 'Newsletter' to be considered for newsletter publication.]

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



Continuing on Zoom for at least Two More Months

Lavender Seniors Virtual Support Group

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay has finalized its agreement with the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center to become a program of the Center. That transition is expected to be complete by the end of March with the 1st February naming of Jessie Spivey, current Operations Manager of the Center, to the post overseeing all of the Center's senior-focused "Aging with Pride" programs, including Lavender Seniors activities.

As mentioned at last month's Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch meeting on Zoom, it is unclear whether that activity will continue in its current virtual form as an LGBTQ senior support group on Zoom or return to an in-person format at some facility like its former home at All Saints Episcopal Church in San Leandro or to a new home at some place like the Center itself or the nearby Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church in Oakland. Or it might be disbanded temporarily/permanently for lack of community

interest.

This activity, originally called the Second Saturday Potluck, was designed to provide a community social event for LGBT (no Q then) seniors who were unable to attend events during the work/school week. In 2016, some participants began to complain that they were feeling somewhat burdened by having to get up on a non-work/non-school weekend and throw together their latkes, five-bean salads or apple pies for this event. At that point, the Lavender Seniors board, considering that feedback, decided to drop the potluck format and begin providing a catered nutritious lunch on that Second Saturday each month. This offered a more relaxing social time followed by either education or entertainment programs scheduled by the coordinator(s).

When Covid turned all of our worlds upside-down beginning in March 2020, this program – like others – had to revert to virtual programs on Zoom. Attendance dropped off from the usual 20-25 in-person participants to 10-15 over the subsequent nearly three years on Zoom. With this transition, it is important to determine whether there is a need for continuing this regular Saturday tradition and – if so – whether it should be virtual or in-person (complete with real rather than virtual hugs?) for those who might still be unable to attend such events during the week, for whatever reason, whether work/school schedules, mobility, transportation, allergy or other health reasons.

Though the Zoom format will be continued for February and March (using Zoom coordinates below), it will fall to participants, Jessie and other Center staff and the Lavender Seniors Advisory Council to determine whether this is a worthwhile service to continue providing in the near- or long-term. As mentioned last month, the fate of this activity might depend on identifying program person(s) to take over (e.g., facilitating on Zoom; or arranging a program, reserving the venue, ordering and paying for the food, etc., if it were to go in-person again). The people who were performing those functions prior to Covid and the first three years on Zoom are resigning during this transition.

For the next two months, however, the Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch will morph into simply a virtual support group for LGBTQ+ seniors, similar to the one held every-other-Friday via the Rainbow Community Center in Contra Costa County (contact Christopher Holden or Christian Aguirre at 925-692-0090 for more information about that program).

Meanwhile, here are the Zoom coordinates for the February and March sessions of the Second Saturday Rainbow lunch:

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

Topic: Second Saturday Rainbow Lunch

Time: Saturday, February 18, 2023 - 12:00 Noon Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89671026595>

Meeting ID: 896 7102 6595

One tap mobile

+16469313860,,89671026595# US

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 896 7102 6595



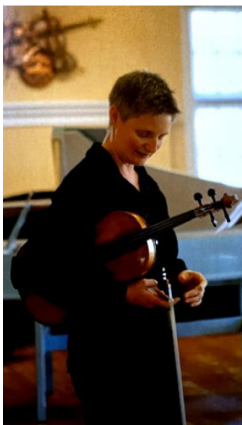
♪ The Magic of Music ♪

Using String Instruments for Joy, Comfort and Healing

Whether we think about it consciously or not, music plays a very important role in all of our lives. "That's our song!" or "Whenever I hear an old Roberta Flack song, I think of you!"

Whether we're drawn to pop, jazz, classical, country & western, hip-hop, new age, punk or acid rock, each of us can likely think of happy memories of a concert we attended, passing evenings with family listening to our favorite 78rpm, 45rpm, 33rpm LPs or, more recently, having access to higher-tech formats on CDs, MP3s, iPods, the likes of Pandora on our flat-screen TVs or Sirius XM satellite radio on our car sound systems! Music is even piped into our elevators!

Our presenter at this month's Third Friday Lunch Bunch has been involved in many aspects of playing and dancing to music from her earliest memories. She has dabbled in string instruments, brass, woodwind, keyboards and even percussion, taking a stint on mallets as a teenager in a high school symphonic orchestra. For much of her life, Wendy Clymer has settled on the viola as her instrument of choice, playing with symphonies, chamber music groups and in solo performances. (For more information about her, Wendy is featured in the "Stories of Our Lives" column elsewhere in this month's newsletter.)



Solo Performance, 2009

During this month's gathering at the North Oakland Senior Center, in addition to performing on her viola, Wendy will be discussing how she came to be involved in playing one-on-one at the bedsides of various individuals, some approaching end-of-life, some recovering from surgery, accidents or bouts with temporary – or perhaps permanent – debilitation and disabilities.

Many of our presentations during the last few years have focused on issues that become more and more important as we age. We've discussed powers-of-attorney, preparing wills and trusts, "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) documents, leaving legacies and considering end-of-life options. Wendy will describe how she feels she is giving back to the community by offering mellow viola music at the bedsides of people and their families who have requested it.

Those of us born in the 1930s and 1940s may not remember a time when the

concept of “hospice” wasn’t available. But prior to the 1960s, there was no such thing formally organized in the U.S. For those who might want to do a little study of the matter prior to the next two months’ Third Friday Lunch Bunches, the NHPCO (National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization) has developed a very informative timeline on hospice evolution (1963-2018) that might interest some: <https://www.nhpco.org/hospice-care-overview/history-of-hospice/>

On another note, the next month’s (March) gathering of the Third Friday Lunch Bunch will have a presentation on the concept of hospice from one of the East Bay’s hospice service providers.

Since we need to have individually-boxed meals until further notice (no more buffets for a while until Covid is finally gone, which doesn’t seem to be on the foreseeable horizon), it is important to have RSVPs from people interested in attending this gathering. The February menu choices will be vegetarian lasagna or meat lasagna. We just need to know how much of each to order from the caterer. Deadline for RSVP receipt is Monday, 13th February, in order to get the order to the restaurant on time.

- Those who are members of the North Oakland Senior Center should RSVP to NOSC@oaklandgov.ca or call 510-597-5085, making sure to mention which of the meal choices are preferred.
- Those not members of the NOSC should RSVP to Jessie@OaklandLGBTQCenter.org with “RSVP” in the subject line, making sure to mention email address, phone number and which of the two meal choices would be preferred.

The February meeting is from 12:30-2:30pm on Friday, 17th February, at the North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MLK Jr Way (corner 58th Street). The entrance and parking lot are at the rear of the building off 58th Street. Please be reminded that proof of vaccination is required for registering the Center, plus the City of Oakland has reinstated the mask mandate in all City facilities through 31 March 2023. Obviously, the mask can be removed while eating or drinking and then replaced back over both mouth and nose afterward.

Hoping to see you there!



Disney Pride in Concert 2023

DAVIES SYMPHONY HALL

Thursday, March 16 and Friday, March 17, 2023

Get ready for hit songs from *The Lion King*, *Aladdin*, *Peter Pan*, *Cinderella*, *Beauty & the Beast*, *Mulan*, *Hercules*, *Coco*, and so many more in our extraordinary spring production, *Disney PRIDE in Concert*. Disney has been dazzling audiences for 100 years—and the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus is




proud to celebrate our 45th anniversary with some of the most-loved music.

Music of such high quality is the hallmark of Disney Pride in Concert! We'll perform Disney's iconic songs alongside a 30-piece orchestra, celebrating themes including love, LGBTQ+ pride, and family ties. As well as showcasing Disney's globally acclaimed musical legacy, this program will also serve as a vehicle for our chorus members to share their personal journeys, and how this music has shaped their lives.

[BUY TICKETS](#)



Participate in a study on health & healthcare needs of LGBTQIA+ people living with Parkinson's Disease

-  Open to all adults living with Parkinson's Disease & their care partners
-  Study involves participating in a one-time 45-minute survey
-  Participation is voluntary & all information will be kept private
-  Receive a \$25 Visa E-gift card
-  Complete the survey by calling: **1-888-709-7689**

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR, JASON FLATT, PHD, MPH
702-895-5586



This study is supported by the
Michael J Fox Foundation for
Parkinson's Research





TheRiseRegistry.org

WHAT DOES RISE MEAN?

RISE stands for: Research Inclusion Supports Equity
RISE is the first federally funded registry of its kind.

WHY IS THERE A NEED?

LGBTQIA2+ people experience many health disparities that increase risk of Alzheimer's and Related Dementias later in life.

WHAT IS THE RISE REGISTRY?

The RISE registry is a national effort designed to connect participants to LGBTQIA2+ friendly resources and opportunities in research.

WHO IS THE RISE REGISTRY FOR?

- Identify as LGBTQIA2+
- Aged 18 and older
- Memory concerns or memory loss diagnosis
- Caregiver to someone with memory loss

THE RESEARCHERS INVOLVED

- Emory University
- University of Nevada, Las Vegas
- University of Tennessee, Knoxville



Scan the QR code or
click the link to register:
[bit.ly/RISE_Registry](https://www.theriseregistry.org/)

<https://www.theriseregistry.org/>

The Stonewall Generations Study

What is this study about?

- Memory, thinking, and health

Who is this study for?

- All adults aged 50 years or older who speak English
- Self-identify as LGBTQIA+ or non LGBTQIA+

For more Info:
Contact the principal investigator, Jason
Flatt, PhD, MPH

833-966-6974

rainbowsofaging@unlv.edu

*Participation in research is voluntary and
all information will be kept private.*

This study is supported by the Alzheimer's
Association

Interested in
participating? Call
the 800 number
below to complete a
1-time 45 minute
survey and receive a
\$25 gift card.



FAMILY CAREGIVER ALLIANCE®
National Center on Caregiving

LGBTQ+ Community Support: Caregiving for our Families and Friends

This online support group LGBTQ+ Community Support Caregiving for our

Families and Friends offers a place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender caregivers of adults with chronic health problems to discuss the unique issues of caring for their loved ones.

Subscribe to [LGBTQ+ 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)

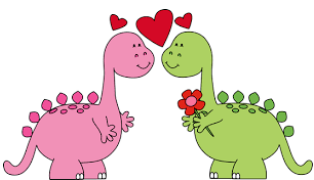
LGBTQ Chat Wednesdays, 2/8, 2/22, 3/8, 3/22, 4/12, 4/26

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

Noggin Joggin' Thursdays, 2/2 – 3/16, 4/13 – 4/27

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



Feb 7 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

Feb 7 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

Feb 2, 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 - on Zoom - runs in 9 week sessions

3:30 - 5:00 p.m. (Tuesdays) **email for start date of next group.**

Please email olderandoutgroups@pacificcenter.org for more information. No drop-ins. Intake is required for attendance.

Free therapy group for LGBTQIA+ community members age 55+

Older & Out Therapy Group - Oakland - Sponsored by Pacific Center - In-person at Oakland LGBTQ Community Center - runs in 9 week sessions

1:15pm - 2:45pm (Wednesdays) **email for start date of next group.**

Please email olderandoutgroups@pacificcenter.org for more information. Intake is required for attendance.

Free therapy group for LGBTQIA+ community members age 55+

Older & Out Therapy Group - Berkeley - Sponsored by Pacific Center - in-person at N. Berkeley Senior Center - runs in 9 week sessions

3:00 - 4:30 p.m. (Fridays) **email for start date of next group.**

Please email olderandoutgroups@pacificcenter.org for more information. Intake is required for attendance.

Free therapy group for LGBTQIA+ community members age 55+

Rainbow Seniors

Feb 14 & 28 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 Rainbow Lunch

Feb 11 12:00 - 2:00 p.m. (Second Saturday)

This month's program: (Virtual Support Group- see info above for joining us via Zoom)

Tri-Valley Rainbows - Sponsored by Pacific Center

Feb 16 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
Feb 17 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. (Third Friday)
North Oakland Senior Center
This month's program: ('Using Music for Joy and Comfort' - see info above)

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
A Program of the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center
Outgoing 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:
info@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**

