



Lavender Notes

***Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
a Program of the
Oakland LGBTQ Community Center***

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Celebrating 28+ years of service and positive change

June 2023- Volume 29 Issue 6

**STORIES
OF OUR LIVES**

Jenny Pardini, Diving Right In!



Jenny skydiving, 2012

"When do I get to join?" That was Jenny Pardini's first question when she heard about Lavender Seniors some years ago. She goes full-hearted into her passions. As a 1983-born gal, she has a few years to go yet, but she's already busy volunteering her services as a co-writer for Stories of Our Lives column.

Jenny's mother, Lois, thought she had the flu at first – a baby wasn't in the plan. She was going to finish her training as a nurse in the Army in San Antonio. When she realized she was pregnant, the Army gave her an honorable discharge, and she returned home to San Francisco to marry the police officer in training she had dated on and off during high school.

Jenny arrived on September 26, 1983, three months and two days after their wedding. Their large, extended Italian-American family included many cousins and grandparents living locally, which Jenny remembers enjoying greatly. Her brother was born three years later.



Jenny about 3 years old



Jenny with her cousins, 1986

"I grew up with all cousins. My cousin Marina and I were born 5 weeks apart. It was great to have her as an almost sister; we are very close. That's why Connie and I timed our baby's birth to be close to her cousins who were on the way."

Jenny remembers her growing-up years as happy, an ordinary middle-class upbringing in a close extended family. She loved learning French, partying and going to concerts with her absolute best friend, Dave.

"He was incredibly persuasive," Jenny recalls. "We would go stand outside the concert venue, and he'd talk to people coming in, saying that if they had a ticket they couldn't use, we'd really appreciate a donation. We saw SO many concerts that way! I couldn't believe how he could talk people into it."

Her family was primarily supportive when Jenny began exploring her sexual identity.

"Growing up in San Francisco, it was probably easier for me," Jenny says. "The family knew other queer people. My grandma's strike friend at work was gay. I'm sure I confused my parents. I brought home people of EVERY



Jenny with her dad as part of SF Police Pride contingent, 2013

gender. Just when they'd think they knew what was up, it would change. The only thing that really threw my dad, though, was the first time I dated someone trans. He just didn't know how to deal, and I told him, 'you're gonna have to figure out how to be okay.'"

Jenny attended Carlmont High School.

"I was very lucky my high school experience was so positive," Jenny says. "We had a joint drivers ed/sex ed class that my French teacher taught. During sex ed, she asked, 'Why don't we have a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) here?' So I started a chapter for our school during my junior year."

At that time, GSA was a somewhat new organization.

"They really helped me by pairing me with another young person in my area to help me get started."

She was so grateful that she decided to serve on the GSA Network Board from 2011-2016, and she remains a big GSA supporter.

After graduation, Jenny and her friends partied at Pride.

"We were wild crazy young!"

At 18, she hopped a standby flight and met her friend Dave in Bangkok – traveling with him further ignited her lifelong love of cross-cultural exploration and travel.



Jenny, Grad Night 2001

She wanted to attend San Francisco State so she could stay local. She and her girlfriend Brooke got an apartment and a teacup Chihuahua who went everywhere with them on the down low, hidden in Jenny's purse.

"College and the Castro!" she exclaimed. "So much fun, we went dancing all the time, really enjoyed ourselves."

Jenny joined the SF State Queer Alliance, majored in French and got her teaching credential. As part of her studies, she spent a year abroad in Paris.

"They had us take language placement exams, and I was right on the line," she recalls. "They tried to assign me to an English-language college, but I refused. 'I didn't come all this way and spend all this money to be in an English-language environment,' I told them. So they assigned me to Censier Paris Trois Sorbonne Nouvelle, where everything was in French. I LOVED it. It made a huge difference in developing my fluency. They also tried to make me live with the other American students. I said I'd just find a French roommate."

Now the culture there is that they will say, 'You can't do that.' I just did anyway!"



Jenny, friend Cristina, Dave
Paris, Dec. 2004

Later in the year when she lived with a different roomie, they agreed to speak just French, but it was so easy to slide into English. One twist – her Vietnamese-American roomie, Tina, had relatives there in Paris she'd lived with, so sometimes she'd forget...

"I'd say, 'Tina, you're speaking Vietnamese!' It was great living with her; she played flute, and she was very good."

Dave visited Jenny twice while she was in Paris, the second time a complete surprise and a real delight!

During her time in Paris, Jenny met a Welsh boy she brought home and married.

"My family was REALLY confused then, Jenny says." It didn't work out, and they divorced 18 months later.

Jenny began teaching high school French full-time. For nine years she was the only French teacher in those schools, so she had to teach all four levels. She was also working on a Masters in Sexuality Studies.

"Lots of late nights grading essays," she recalls. The last year she was split between two high schools.

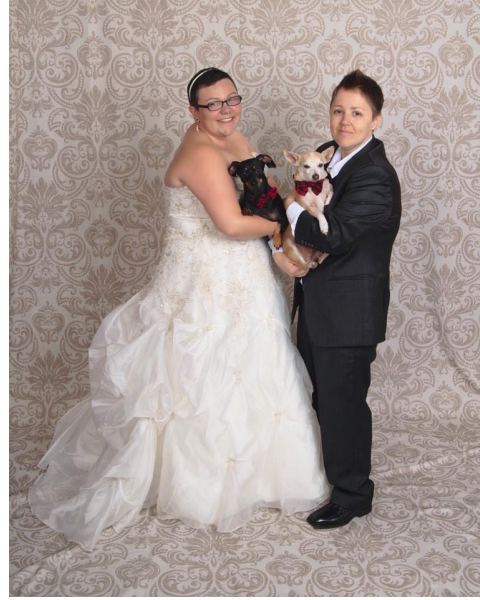
When her relationship with Connie Sorci got serious, though, she re-evaluated.

"We got married and wanted to have a kid," Jenny says, "so I shifted focus." There were also certain practical considerations. "People don't realize that as a teacher, you can't go pee when you want to – there always has to be a person with, a teaching credential in the classroom."

And when you're pregnant, the freedom to pee when you need to is important. She got a job as a receptionist at Olivia Travel in San Francisco, which she really enjoyed, travel fiend that she is.



Connie and Jenny Pardini, just married,
November 12, 2013



The brides with their pups

"Connie's dad was always saying I should marry a nice Italian boy," Jenny recalls. "In my teens when I came out to my 90-year-old great-grandma, she agreed it would be ok to marry a woman, 'as long as she's Italian...!'"

Connie was having some health challenges in 2014, and when the doctor recommended a hysterectomy, part of the counseling was asking how Connie would feel about not having her own child.

"Connie said, 'There's another uterus out there, no problem!' We decided I'd be the birth mom."

Jenny always knew she'd want to be a parent. As a teen, she wasn't sure whether she'd prefer to adopt – so many kids who are already here need a good home, why increase the population? She was also nervous about the physical part of giving birth.

Jenny's lifetime best friend, Dave, died in 2012, and when Jenny and Connie were ready to try for a baby, they decided to ask Dave's brother, Matt, if he'd consider being a donor. Matt was engaged at the time.

"We asked him, and said no pressure, he could take as much time as he wanted to think about it," Jenny says. "His mom told him, 'DO IT!' Then his fiancée was encouraging him as well. He decided, ok, why should I stop anyone else from being a parent? So a few weeks later we started the planning."

They had multiple discussions about how it would work structurally to be sure Matt and his fiancée would be ok with their plans. Jenny and Connie would be the parents. No co-parenting would be needed. Would Matt be ok with his parents being active grandparents to the Pardinis' child? They drew up a contract and all parties signed.

"After Matt and his wife got back from their honeymoon, we did our second try at a home conception, and it worked!" Jenny remembers. "Connie was so

proud she knocked me up – she'd brag to my dad, 'I did this!'"

Matt signed off on parental rights so that Connie could do a second parent adoption to cover all legal eventualities, i.e., a move to a jurisdiction with different laws.

Their daughter, Frankie, was born on Saint Patrick's Day, 2016.

"I had a great pregnancy, but I was scared about delivering. It didn't help when Matt (the donor) asked his mom – after I was pregnant – whether he had weighed 11 pounds at birth. The doctors induced labor, but Frankie is a party girl – she held out for two days and was born on Saint Patrick's Day. She's gonna have some terrific birthdays!"



Frankie, Jenny & Lois, first 3-generation
Mother's Day



Connie, Frankie & Jenny
Frankie's 2nd birthday

She's grateful they've been so lucky with grandparents – "We have five sets! Although it kind of cycles around, which ones are active – usually three of the sets are active at any one time."

Since most of the relatives are Bay Area local, Frankie gets to play with her cousins and see grandparents on a regular basis. Now that Frankie is in school, the Pardinis decided for an immersion experience – she's attending Francophone, the French immersion charter school in Oakland.

Although Olivia Travel had been a good place to work, by 2017 Jenny could see there wasn't a career ladder. A friend told her about an opening at Legal Assistance for Seniors, which was located in Oakland instead of San Francisco.

"Connie was happy to be the at-home mom, and I enjoy working – but with the San Francisco commute it was a very long day and I wasn't able to see much of my daughter. I was really happy with LAS, it was just a 7-hour workday and they were very flexible if something came up at home."

Jenny is the Community Education Coordinator, creating, researching and presenting programs to various senior groups on different legal and Medicare-related topics. You may have seen her at a recent Zoom on Medicare for Lavender Seniors! More are in the works.

The Pardinis continue to travel – they



Solene, Lina, Naya, Jenny, Frankie, Connie
The Pardinis in France, 2017

made sure to get in a trip to Quebec and Victoria, B.C., before Frankie turned two, as Jenny's mom, then working for an airline, could get free domestic tickets for under-two children. In March 2020 they were on a European tour, starting with visiting Solene (the French host sister Jenny has known for 25 years) and her children. The final leg was in Germany, where Connie wanted to visit World War sites – she's retired military.

The pandemic was heating up, and Jenny's travel buddy Cristina was monitoring the State Department travel website for best information on when to return.

"My dad wanted us back right away, but there were so many people in the airports that first weekend – it looked to me like a petri dish," Jenny recalls. "So we went on to Germany. Then my friend let me know we really should come back. By then, the airports weren't crowded. A better time to fly home! Connie says I owe her a re-do, though, because we didn't get to do what she wanted; we were limited to nature walks in Germany and staying in the condo. Since everything was shutting down, we decided to make arrangements to leave a day early."

"I see a lot of Dave's spirit in Frankie, and given my personality and his, she's gonna be so much trouble when she's a teen," Jenny says. "No one's ever going to be as ready as they want to be (to parent) – I'm working on my wisdom. I'm absolutely glad – it's so interesting and cool to watch her navigating through the world she's growing up in. She has friends who have queer parents to play with, and that's great. Our small charter school will be getting its third 2-mom family next year, and we've introduced Frankie to the new girl – since Frankie will be in second grade and the new one will be a kindergartener, I suggested that she needs to be extra kind and helpful. New schools are hard."

Frankie has plenty of cousins to enjoy, but she still asks for a sister.

"She understands that we moms don't have all the ingredients, and that Matt helped us make her," Jenny says. "We tried twice for a second child, but in August 2021 I miscarried at seven weeks. We may try foster-to-adopt. Frankie was talking to a friend who advised, 'you don't want siblings, they're the worst.' So we'll see. I'm so happy to have this sassy, smart, wonderful challenging child. Sometimes she'll try reasoning me into agreement, and I'll have to say, 'You're making a lot of sense, and we're still gonna do what I said.'"

We look forward to hearing a lot more from Jenny in the future, and thank her for volunteering to co-author this column!



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](mailto:info@lavenderseniors.org) 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 and we will be in touch with you soon. Thank You!



Pride Month Version of Lunch Bunch

Caregiving Options for Seniors

Those of us who have been the “middle generation” know what it’s like to feel responsible for taking care of both our parents and our children. Many of us prefer to think that neither we – nor any of our loved ones – will ever need in-home caregiving from somebody outside “the family”. But with the “Graying of America,” the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that, after age 65, 29 percent of adults develop severe LTSS needs and receive paid home care, 5 percent receive residential care, and 28 percent receive at least 90 days of nursing home care, including 13 percent who receive long-term Medicaid-financed nursing home care.



In response to that reality, Lavender Seniors – a program of the Oakland LGBTQ Center – has arranged for a presentation on this issue for this month’s Third Friday Lunch Bunch. Jessie Spivey, Elder Services Director, has arranged for staff from Comfort Homesake and Compassionate Care (www.comforthomesake.com) to present for us this month

Those staff members will include Marilyn Abibio and Kimberly Habi.

Ms. Ababio is a skilled administrator with over 25 years’ experience managing complex systems

infrastructure projects. Marilyn is a leader in the development of culturally relevant programs. She is a rare combination of visionary and architect. A graduate of UCLA and Occidental College, Ms. Ababio is a presenter and participant on issues of advanced health care planning and practices.



In order to ensure that enough food is ordered from the caterer, anyone intending to attend this program on Friday, 16th June, 12:30-2:30pm at North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MLK Jr Way (corner of 58th Street), should RSVP by Tuesday, 13th June, using the following link, noting preferences for vegetarian or non-vegetarian menu choices: <https://forms.gle/V9gUnhjssPseTteh6>. Check back on the RSVP link before lunch bunch for actual menu choices. Once you've completed the form, click on "submit" at the bottom to finalize your RSVP.

Those who don't have internet access should RSVP via contacting Jessie Spivey, Director of Elder Services at the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center: (510) 781-2926. For any other questions or concerns, he can also be contacted at jessie@oaklandlgbtqcenter.org.

Hope to see you there!



June Social Seniors Pride Edition

Friday June 30th, 2023 @ 12:30pm
The Watermark, 1440 40th St,
Emeryville, CA 94608 Please
contact Jessie with any questions:
jessie@oaklandlgbtqcenter or 510-781-2926.

Sign up [Here](#)

Some Comp Vouchers Available

Lavender Seniors Co-Sponsoring 2 Frameline Films

For the seventh consecutive year, Lavender Seniors has been asked by the Frameline International LGBTQ+ Film Festival – the largest and oldest such festival in the world – to co-sponsor two films. Because of this connection, Frameline will provide the usual complementary four passes to each of those two films, but, also – for the first time – is offering two passes to the Opening Night Film and after-party! Following are the three films, as well as the link for browsing the entire program of Frameline47:

<https://www.frameline.org/browse>, 14-24 June.

The opening night (in-person only), *Fairyland*, is based on Alysia Abbott's book about growing up with her gay dad in San Francisco during the AIDS epidemic.



Fairyland

In this evocative and poignant adaptation of Alysia Abbott's memoir, produced by Sofia Coppola, a daughter is along for the ride of her young life when her widowed father heads west to 1970s San Francisco to claim his authentic self in the exhilarating

early days of gay liberation. Scoot McNairy (*Narcos: Mexico*) is a revelation as amiable, well-meaning Steve Abbott, a queer poet trying to balance fatherhood and his writing with his enthusiastic exploration of his sexuality, as seen through the eyes of his child. Eight-year-old Nessa Dougherty is terrific in *Fairyland's* 1970s scenes, a sweet little girl rolling with life's changes and watching the Pride parade go by, while Emilia Jones reveals more complicated emotions as the older Alysia, a young woman struggling to come to terms with her bohemian upbringing and sometimes irresponsible father.

With a cast including Oscar winner Geena Davis, Adam Lambert, Cody Fern, Ben Attal, and Oscar nominee Maria Bakalova, first-time feature director Andrew Durham captures the heady sense of freedom and possibility of an era along with the shattering reality of AIDS as it sweeps in, destroying lives and upending community. Directed By Andrew Durham 2023 Usa/France 114 Mins

Expected Guests:

Andrew Durham, Director

Nessa Dougherty, Actor

Megan Carlson, Producer

Michael Musante, Executive Producer

After the film, at 9pm, the Frameline47 Opening Night Gala, Terra Gallery, 511 Harrison, SF.



Commitment to Life

A fascinating, emotional history lesson, *Commitment to Life* dives deep into the true, twisty story of the fight against HIV/AIDS in Los Angeles. Director Jeffrey Schwarz (*Vito*, Frameline35; *I Am Divine*, Frameline37; *Boulevard! A Hollywood Story*, Frameline46)

offers a densely researched close-up of people who devoted their lives to finding a cure for AIDS beginning in the early '80s, including the birth of APLA (Aids Project Los Angeles). As the deadly virus begins to spread, doctors, activists, and entertainment professionals navigate a society that's not ready to accept the reality of this mysterious disease.

Filled with captivating movie clips, in-depth interviews with the activists, and

personal stories of Hollywood heavyweights like Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor, and David Geffen, this documentary delivers an intense, comprehensive look at the impact of a global health crisis on the rich and famous, as well folks from less privileged backgrounds in Southern California.

Commitment to Life provides a sobering reminder that HIV/AIDS is not over, while offering a hopeful view of how people can make a profound difference when they come together.

In-Person: 24th June, 11am, Castro Theater

Streaming: 24th June through 2nd July

Expected Guest: Jeffrey Schwarz, Director



Rock Hudson: All That Heaven Allowed

Sweeping, lively, and packed with insight, *Rock Hudson: All That Heaven Allowed* offers an intimate look at one of film history's most magnetic stars. Mining the riches of Hudson's storied career, director Stephen Kijak (*Sid & Judy*,

Frameline43) deftly marries archival footage to a rich spread of interviews, reaching for the heart of its bygone gay star. While the film does investigate the wavering gap between Hudson as both person and persona, a life in the closet makes for just one piece of Kijak's portrait. Detailing Hudson's life from his origins to his queer friendships, his resonance with audiences, to his taste for decor, *Rock Hudson: All That Heaven Allowed* is a satisfying and thorough catalogue of Hudson's life and work.

Gilded with appearances from James Dean, Doris Day, and Jane Wyman, *Rock Hudson: All That Heaven Allowed* offers backstage looks at tabloid coverage and studio negotiations, even touching on Hudson's brief clashes with the FBI. Meditating always on stardom's joys and drawbacks, this robust look at Hudson's life never makes it feel anything but full.

In-person only: 22 June, 6pm – Castro Theater

Expected Guests: Stephen Kijak, Director and Carolyn Jurriaans, Producer

For those interested in any of the comp passes for these two films – or for the opening night film and gala, please email JohnDavid@LavenderSeniors.org. The passes will be distributed on a first-come/first-served basis. We will ask the person(s) who obtain the opening-night pass (14th June) if s/he/they would be willing to come to the Third Friday Lunch Bunch two days later and describe their impression(s) of that film and subsequent "gala."

Check out the whole program via the link (above). Anybody ready to be in-person in a group again might be the last group to attend Frameline at the Castro Theater, since there is a move to remove the seats and flatten the slanted floor of the renowned movie house. The SF Board of Supervisors is voting on the proposal on 6th June, so people can make their feelings – either

Well Connected

Enriching lives and supporting well-being.

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)

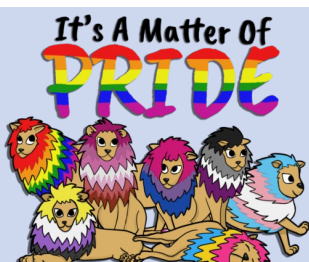
LGBTQ Chat Wednesdays, 6/14, 6/28, 7/12, 7/26, 8/9, 8/23

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

Life Story Workshop Wednesdays, 5/31 – 7/5

What did you get in trouble for when you were young? What's the greatest historical event you live through? We will guide you through sharing and preserving your life stories through facilitated new, engaging prompt questions every week. You will hear the amazing life experiences of your community members, while having the opportunity to share some stories of your own. Facilitated by Vita Story Club, vitastoryclub.org

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
June 6 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

June 6 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.

Older & Out Therapy Group - Hayward - Sponsored by Pacific Center Meets via Zoom Tuesdays 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

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+

Life after 40 - Gay & Bisexual Men's Group

Meets in person at Oakland LGBTQ Community Center every 1st Tuesday at 7:00pm & virtually every 3rd Tuesday at 7pm.

A support group for men over 40

Older & Out Therapy Group - Oakland - Sponsored by Pacific Center In-person at Oakland LGBTQ Community Center

Wednesdays 1:15pm - 2:45pm

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

Fridays 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Please email olderandoutgroups@pacificcenter.org for more information.

Intake is required for attendance.

Free therapy group for LGBTQIA+ community members age 55+

Rainbow Seniors

June 13 & 27 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.

Tri-Valley Rainbows - Sponsored by Pacific Center

June 15 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 & Oakland LGBTQ Community Center

June 16 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. (Third Friday)

North Oakland Senior Center

This month's program: ('Caregiving Options for Seniors' - see info above)

Social Seniors - Last Friday

June 30 12:30 p.m.

In person at:

The Watermark, 1440 40th St, Emeryville, CA 94608 (new location)

This month's theme: ('Celebrating Pride' - see info above)

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
a Program of the Oakland LGBTQ Community Center
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Dr. John David Dupree

Beckie Underwood

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