Choir Concert at Holiday Celebration

The December potluck meeting will be honored by a concert by the newly formed Gay Men's Chorus of East Bay. Their conductor is Dick Kramer, first conductor of the famous San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus. Mr. Kramer will be about 30 singers and musicians to entertain us. We can’t pay them for the concert but we can feed them well. Bring extra food. We will have about 30 extra mouths to feed.

Bring money to buy raffle tickets. Five prizes will be awarded to lucky winners. The prizes are CDs of the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus. The prizes were a gift from the choral program to Lavender Seniors.

We will conduct the Great Game again. Bring a wrapped gift with a value under $10. It can be a white elephant, a joke or useful item. Some of the joke gifts are more fun. Bring some extra gifts for our guests if possible. The game is a tradition at our holiday celebrations.

NEW INTERIM COORDINATOR
by Dottie Fowler

Joyce Pierson joined the staff of Lavender Seniors as Interim Site Coordinator for 9 weeks. She will be helping to move the funded program forward in accordance with the commitments the Lavenders have made with their funders. This means she will be doing intake and matching volunteers with participants for the Friendly Visitor portion of the program. Also she will be making contacts with care providing agencies in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, to make them aware of our existence and provide visibility for our program. In addition she will arrange presentations for these groups by our trained panel volunteers.

For many years Joyce worked for the GLOE program in San Francisco in the position of Co-Coordinator for Women’s Programs and just recently retired from that position. She also has worked for the Area Agency on Aging in other counties of California. She is ready to administer programs for the triple A. We are happy to welcome Joyce to the Lavender Seniors!

Joyce will be working with Dot Hallinan and Marvin Burrows, the Lavenders Volunteer Managers who have done such an exceptional job of getting the program off the ground. Maybe you could put it in right before the last line - we want to welcome Joyce.

RAFFLE RAFFLE

$1 per ticket - 6 for $5
Write name and phone number on the back ticket and return with your donation in the enclosed envelope. Send it quickly. Drawing is at the December meeting.

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE....

Why don’t you give me (Dot Hallinan) a call at the Lavender Seniors Office (510-667-9909) and find out more about what the Lavender Seniors can do for you... or you (as a volunteer) can do for the Lavender Seniors Volunteer Services Program in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Love to hear from you! I’m at the office most Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Marvin Burrows, who would love to hear from you too, is at the office most Tuesdays and Thursdays afternoons from 1 to 4.

Wish List for Volunteer Services Program
One Fax machine/ copier with a single sheet feeder. Volunteers (especially men) to help in the office a few hours each week.

DID YOU KNOW....

...there is now a PHONE TREE with ten Lavender Senior volunteers calling to remind us all of the monthly pot-lucks and to check in on how we are doing....in other words, building our community...

Lavender Seniors Volunteer Services Program, is expanding even further when a group of volunteers (Lavender Seniors and others) meet for a training session on November 1st to see if they would enjoy doing telephone outreach, friendly visiting, and volunteer work in our office.

The Lavender Senior Volunteer Services Program reach all the way to Contra Costa County and an AFTERNOON GROUP for retired LGBTQ seniors and other interested folks is beginning at the Rainbow Community Center in Pleasant Hill... for those of you who live on the other side of the tunnel.

Panels of Lavender seniors who are willing to tell their stories will begin training in November to make presentations to various agency and institutional staffs so that those staffs may become more aware and sensitive to the needs of the LGBTQ seniors they serve.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES PROGRAM NEWS
by Dot Hallinan
**Lavender Notes:**
The newsletter of:
Lavender Seniors of East Bay,
P.O. Box 6044,
Fremont, CA, 94538,
Voice Mail: (510) 247-2406

**MISSION STATEMENT**
The mission of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is to improve the quality of life of older gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered residents of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties through community outreach, advocacy and education.

**Founding Members**
Bill Baillie, Doreen Brand, Meg Bruynell, Marvin Burrows, Shirley Bennett, John Ellefsen, Dottie Fowler, Beverly Hickock, Frank Howell, Doris Fischer, Bobbie Jarvis, James Joslin, Barbara Jue, Barbara Konechy, Stella Lopez Armijo, Donna Montgomery, Ina Mae Murr, Camille Scontrino, Don Silva, Margaret Shepherd, Bill Swenor, and Natalie Zarchin

**Board of Directors Officers**
Dottie Fowler, President
Frank Howell, Vice President
John Ellefsen, Secretary
Bobbie Jarvis, Treasurer

There are no membership dues. All persons over 55, their partners, and guests are welcome. The cost of mail makes it necessary to request a donation of $12 per year to receive the newsletter. Visitors or persons interested in learning more about Lavender Seniors may receive the newsletter for three months without charge. None will be turned away for lack of funds.

**Lavender Notes** is mailed on the first of each month. Entries must be received by the last Sunday of the previous month. Entries may be edited for space or clarity. Send entries to:
Editor, Jim Joslin,
1311 Webster St., E213,
Alameda, CA 94501,
(510) 522-6395,
E-mail: joslin1@gte.net

**Monthly Advertisement Rates:**
$1 per line
$10 for business card size ads.
Subscribers: Half price.

Signed articles represent the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Lavender Seniors of East Bay.
Inclusion of a name in this newsletter does not necessarily indicate a person's sexual orientation.

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**SHORT NOTES** by Sidney Prisco

- **Natalie Zarchin** is doing well after her hip surgery. She is on crutches and getting around fine. She has no pain and hopes to walking on her own soon.
- **Dee Nany** asked me to say a special thank you to Dot for her wonderful work with the Volunteer Services Program. Dee is one of the volunteers who is participating in the telephone outreach program.
- **Ina Mae Murr** will be celebrating her 65th birthday at the January Potluck meeting. She has invited some of her friends to attend as her guests. She will furnish Turkey and Ham for the dinner and asks us to bring extra food for the guests. Let's give our Founding Mother a good party. Happy Birthday, Ina.
- The Lavender Seniors Board of Directors received a complaint that I was making fun of bisexuals a couple of editions ago. Sweethearts!! Where have you been?? We make fun of everyone here. Let's face it. This newsletter can get a little too serious sometimes.
- **Joan M** can explain this one: Two Dutch girls riding their bikes down the back streets of Amsterdam. "You know, I've never come this way before." The other girl says, "It's the cobblestones."
- **Ooh! Ooh! Joan, are you making fun of girls?... Girls on bikes?... Girls who ride on bumpy roads?.... with other girls?... Dutch dykes?.... Where will it end????
- The first class of volunteers has been trained and ready to start their work with isolated g/bt seniors. **Nancy Flaxman** of the Seniors Consortium conducted the training. The volunteers all reported a good reaction to the class.
- **Natalie Zarchin** has a house guest from Arkansas. She will be staying for three months. They will also travel to Hawaii for three weeks. Sounds like love is in bloom. Have fun!
- **Marvin Burrows and partner, Bill Swenor** sat down to their Thanksgiving dinner. Before eating, Marvin says, "Can I ask you a question, Bill!?" "Sure Marvin," Bill says, waiting to dig into his meal. "Has our 45 years of partnership made you grateful!?" "Yes, indeed!" Bill replied. "For the fifteen years I was a bachelor!"
- You're getting old when getting lucky means you find your car in the parking lot.
- What is the origin of the phrase, "Lickedy split!?" Is it a lesbian code or what?
- The Board of Directors is looking for new members. They are interested in a lawyer who can advise them on some issues relating to non-profit corporation status, personnel issues, etc. If you know anyone who might be willing to serve, contact one of the officers of the board.
- **Stella Lopez-Armijo**, brought a new puppy to the November meeting. She was a scene stealer..... and so was the dog.
- You're getting old when you're sitting in a rocker and you can't get it started.
- **Jim Joslin**, the editor of this rag asked me to thank Dee Nany for her kind words.
- **Jerry Hyman** returned from Barcelona, Bilbao and Palmas de Mallorca Valdenossa. (Chopin and George Sand lived in the monastery) He has a great time and is glad to be back. Glad you're back too, Jerry. How about submitting an few paragraphs about the trip?
- **Meg Bruynell** is recovering from an umbilical hernia repair last month. There was some extra skin which had covered the hernia so the doctor snipped that off. "You mean I get a free tummy tuck? a happy Meg asked. "Such a deal!"

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**The lovely thing about Christmas is that it's compulsory, like a thunderstorm, and we all go through it together.**

- Garrison Keillor

A little old lady, well into her eighties, slowly enters the front door of an erotic sex shop. Obviously very unstable on her feet, she shakily hobbles the few feet across the store to the counter. Finally arriving at the counter and grabbing it for support, she asks the sales clerk: "Dddoooo youuuu hhhhave dddiddldoss?"

The clerk, politely trying not to burst out laughing, replies: "Yes we do have dildos. Actually we carry many models."

The old woman asks: "Dddoooo yyyyouuuu hhhhave aaaa ppinnkk one, ttttenn inchnessss illlong aaand aabbott tttwoo inchnessss ttththhhiiickkk?"

The clerk responds, "Yes we do!"

"Cccecceccannn yyyyyouuuu ttteellll mmmmmeeeee.... hhhhowwww tttttooo ooottturrmmann iiiittttttt offff??"
We Get Mail

Lavender Seniors: Your name has appeared in the Oakland Tribune ever so often. I always mean to write then I forget...that will be remedied today. I live alone and like it but there are times when I wish I could talk to “someone” about “things”...this condo bldg is not a social gathering...I am a longtime widower, lost my wife and my sone in France in the late 1940's/ My background is found in the Bern and the Pays Basque regions of France,... Back to 1553 at least...

Banking was my business from 1946 to 1980 when I retired...a bit early, at 57. I will be 77 years young on Dec. 26. I am enjoying retirement. My hobbies are murder mysteries in book form, classical music, opera and a drink or two whenever I feel like it. My health is good, I am 5'6” if I stand straight, 142 pounds and enjoy meeting people...

I hope you will either call or write, my phone number is 510-653-7069 after twelve noon. Sincerely yours, Jean Renee Labrouche

... Dear Lord; Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when The alarm rings, thank you, Lord, that I can hear. There are many who are deaf. Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning light as long as possible, thank you, Lord, that I can see. Many are blind. Even though I hurdle in my bed and put off rising, thank you Lord, that I have the strength to rise. There are many who are bedridden. Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is burned and tempers are short, thank you, Lord, for my family. There are many who are lonely. Even though our breakfast table never looks like the pictures in magazines and the menu is at times unbalanced, thank you, Lord, for the food we have. There are many who are hungry. Even though the routine of my job often is hard, thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work. There are many who have no job. Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my circumstances were not so modest, thank you, Lord, for life. Pass this on to the friends you know. A friend is someone we turn to when our spirits need a lift. A friend is someone we treasure for our friendship is a gift. A friend is someone who fills our lives with Beauty, Joy, and Grace And makes the world we live in A Better and Happier Place. YOU ARE MY FRIEND AND I AM HONOURED! .... Hope your Thanksgiving was wonderful, and the the rest of the Holiday Season is even better!

------- Marvin and Bill and all our critters

Editor: I stole some time for myself yesterday and went off to see the gay-oriented British film called "Get Real." It is about a boy who learns very young that he is gay and suffers harassment for it. It deals also with his love affair with a fellow high school student and their encounters with a homophobic society and what it does to their relationship.

It spares no punches, and is the best first-class production of a serious-minded homosexually-theme film on the high school level ever made. It shows clearly how wrong-minded the general public remains in all matters pertaining to the gay experience, most especially in the absurd premise that there are no gay children.

Despite its message, it is not a heavy film and has a winsome spirit which delights the heart. As for me, it was a welcome relief from the universal assumption that heterosexual love is the only love that counts. I loved seeing otherwise "normal" young men in love with each other and behaving that way. - Ron J.
Creating Change Conference Report
(Press release from NGLTF)

With California emerging as a pivotal state on the year 2000 electoral map, the 12th annual Creating Change conference will focus more than ever before on the key components of successful political organizing. The conference will be held Nov. 10-14 at the Marriott City Center Hotel and Oakland Convention Center.

A central part of this new emphasis will be the Body Politic Workout, a series of day-long seminars that will focus on individual and team leadership development, fundraising, media skills, grassroots organizing, lobbying, electoral strategies and organizational planning. The entire Body Politic Workout will take place during the Creating Change conference, and is free to conference registrants.

"The Body Politic Workout reflects the core mission of Creating Change: to train and build the skills of the activists that staff the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender movement's many organizations and projects," said Sue Hyde, NGLTF field organizer and director of Creating Change. "Through increased training and organizing, we flex our collective political muscle. That is what the Body Politic Workout is all about."

Creating Change has evolved into the political hothouse of GLBT politics. It will feature plenary sessions on contemporary issues, 120 workshops and training sessions, and social and cultural events that bring out-of-town visitors in contact with Oakland residents. Creating Change has been the launching pad of many significant new projects and initiatives, including the launch of Boycott Colorado in 1992; the upsurge of the modern youth movement in 1993; the founding of the Federation of LGB&T Statewide Political Groups in 1996; and the kickoff of Equality Begins at Home in 1998. Equality Begins at Home was a campaign that witnessed 350 rallies and other events in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico during a one-week period in March 1999.

To register or learn how to get involved with Creating Change, please call 202-332-6483 or visit www.creatingchange.org. Journalists wanting to obtain media credentials should email delliot@ngltf.org.

NGLTF thanks the 1999 Creating Change Corporate Sponsors: Pacific Bell, Wells Fargo Foundation, Gay.com, PlanetOut, HERO Magazine, Harvey Milk Institute, BREATH-The California Smoke-Free Bar Program/A Statewide Project of the American Lung Association, the Advocate, and Olivia Cruises and Resorts. American Airlines is the official carrier for the Creating Change Conference.

NEW REPORT DOCUMENTS RISING TIDE OF ANTI-GAY BIGOTRY

Submitted by Natalie Zarchin

People For the American Way Foundation (PFAW Foundation) releases Hostile Climate, its sixth nationwide chronicle of anti-gay discrimination. This year's report details almost 300 incidents in 47 states, more than twice as many incidents as reported in the 1998 edition.

The states that report the highest number of incidents are California (31), Texas (18), Florida (17), and New York (15). Incidents related to marriage and family issues - such as same-gender marriage, adoption, child custody and foster parenting - more than doubled from 20 in 1997 to 42 last year. In the area of education, which includes incidents that occurred in secondary schools or colleges, the number again more than doubled, from 34 in 1997 to 76 in 1998.

The report further details incidents in the following categories: anti-discrimination ordinances (32), censorship (20), "culture wars" or incidents related to public events such as protests or parades (36), employment (36), politics and government (44), and religion (32).

This year's report also has a new feature: a series of 14 personal essays by people who have firsthand experience with anti-gay discrimination and the movement to end it. The essayists include: U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), California legislator Sheila Kuehl, filmmakers Arthur Dong ("Licensed to Kill") and Debra Chasnoff ("It's Elementary"), and activists such as David Mixner, a former adviser to President Clinton, and Jeff Montgomery of Detroit's Triangle Foundation. "Since Matthew Shepard's death, we have been asking ourselves, as a nation, 'How have we arrived at such a place, where someone could commit such a heinous, heartless crime?' The answer, as this book reveals, is that we start down this path whenever we deny people their basic human rights and dignity."

The hostile climate that lesbians and gay men face - with its powerful undertow of partisan rhetoric, public and corporate policy - fosters hate by validating and perpetuating discrimination," said Carole Shields, President of People For the American Way Foundation. PFAW Foundation has received support from the Gill Foundation, a leading philanthropic foundation focusing on justice and equality issues, to establish the "Hostile Climate Campaign," an aggressive program for distributing the report to state policymakers and colleges and universities. As part of the Hostile Climate Campaign, activists will hand-deliver copies of the report to state legislators at the beginning of the legislative sessions in early January.

Anyone with Internet access can get involved by visiting http://www.HostileClimate.org and donating a copy to a legislator, school or library.

"There's an old saying, 'Everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it.' Well, you can help change the hostile climate by sending this report to someone who really needs to understand the truth about discrimination against lesbians and gay men," said Shields.

"As the lives of gay and lesbian people and families become more visible through policy discussions on the state level - employment non-discrimination, hate crimes, same-sex unions and family issues - it is critical that the public, the media and policymakers have accurate information. Hostile Climate is one of the most comprehensive and well-documented catalogues of discrimination against our community," said Katherine Pease, Executive Director of the Gill Foundation.
BOOK REVIEWS

Families of Value: Gay and Lesbian Parents & Their Children Speak Out
By Jane Drucker
Plenum Press, 1998-$27.95
The best way to sweep away stereotypes and myths regarding gays in family groups is to actually look for yourself. Lavender groupings come in all sizes. In 1993 One and a half million gay mothers and between one to three million gay fathers were on the family scene. Children of gay parents represent the patter of six to fourteen million little feet. Ours is the age of the blended family, composed of gays and straights who are divorced or separated and deliberate efforts to create new families in our own images.

Jane Drucker, a marriage and family counselor in Los Angeles, confronts the nonsense about gay parents, i.e. gays don’t like children, gays molest kids, gays aren’t good parents. The evidence simply doesn’t exist for these irrational beliefs. Role models are generally furnished by the child’s peers rather than parents.

Drucker lets parents speak for themselves in over half the book. Gay families are alive and well but discrimination continues. The courts are full of pending cases that never seem to end. However these folks show how hard they are when it comes to the challenge of sheer survival.

A DIFFERING MEASURE OF SEXUAL PLEASURE

by Joel Achenbach
Submitted by Bobbie Jarvis
Q. Why is sex pleasurable? And why is that pleasure different for men and women?
A. We are going to make some generalizations here. Individual variations are stipulated in advance. Some restrictions apply. The entire column is void where prohibited.

What’s strange about the pleasurable of sex is that it’s not universal. Some people don’t like sex at all. Elizabeth Rice Angeler, editor of The Journal of Sex Research, studies what she calls “consensual unwanted sex,” in which one partner goes along with sex even though it’s not enjoyable.

Even for the majority of people who like it, sexual pleasure isn’t something you can always rely on. You don’t get sexual pleasure the way you get a soda out of a vending machine. Some people my think sex is like that—just put in the money and hit the button—but it’s usually not that simple.

Even what is pleasurable, exactly, is hard to predict for any given person. We’re all over the love map. That’s a human quirk. “The non-human species appear to be more hard-wired in terms of copulatory patterns,” says Allgeier. “They aren’t as varied in the ways they stimulate themselves.

There is some hardwiring that’s beyond our control. No one can command himself or herself to become aroused. It’s not like breathing. If you want to take a breath, you just take a breath. But you can’t just shout ignition! and find your body responding.

The involuntary nature of arousal is the direct result of how important sexual reproduction is. If through sheer willpower you could make yourself sexually excited you might be Panting and puffing all day long, which is bad for getting things accomplished and can lead to unwise genetic pairings.

"In some sense, natural selection, or Mother Nature, doesn’t trust human beings to be able, ever, to use their brains to decide when they should become sexually aroused," says James Weinrich, author of "Sexual Landscapes: Why We Are What We Are, Why We Love Whom We Love."

For men and women, sex is often such a different experience they might as well be in different rooms. For a woman, sex is more likely to be a romantic, spiritual bonding, an event that occurs in a meaningful context, an integral part of a relationship. For a man it might just be a seed-purging exercise. A sperm exodus. Men can be spiritual too. But they can also check in and then check right out. No context is necessary, strictly speaking. In a crunch a man is always willing to go through the drive-in lane.

Robert Francoeur, a biologist at Fairleigh Dickinson University, says there are differences in the male and female brain that account for why they experience sex differently. Basically a woman has a more integrated brain. Women have a much larger corpus callosum, the tissue connecting the two brain hemispheres. This is why women are more sensitive to touch all over their bodies, he says.

"In women, their brains are much better adapted and evolved to integrate and process pleasure sensations," he says. "The female orgasm is much more whole body. The male Orgasm is much more penile centered."

We expect some people out there might disagree. The issue of whether the male brain and female brain is different remains hotly debated. But in the meantime we asked Francoeur which sex he thought had the better orgasm.

"Personally I would say the female orgasm is better than the male orgasm. It’s more holistic."
CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

December 7, Tuesday - 6:30 p.m. - Board of Directors
ALL WELCOME Meeting at at Harry’s Hof Brau at 14th and Hesperian Blvd., San Leandro, (Across from Bay Fair) Meets monthly the Tuesday before the potluck meetings.

December 11 - Saturday - 12 Noon - MONTHLY MEETING

Holiday Celebration with Gay Men’s Chorus of East Bay

Meeting at
San Leandro Community Church, 1395 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro

If your name begins with the letters
A through H - Bring a Dessert
I through P - Bring a Main Dish
Q through Z - Bring a Salad

Bring extra food for our guests - a choir of 30 hungry singers.
Bring a wrapped gift for the Greed Game. Let’s bring extra gifts so our guests can play.

San Leandro BART station shuttle is available.
Call voice mail: 247-2406 to arrange pickup.

DECEMBER 4, SATURDAY, 1-3 P.M. - NO ON KNIGHT BENEFIT PARTY

SECOND SUNDAY - 5:30 - 8:30 P.M. - FELLOWS OF EAST BAY
Social Club for mature men and their admirers. Monthly Potluck dinner and social held the second Sunday of every month at the Parish Hall, Good Shepherd Episcopal Church (No affiliation), 1823 9th Street, Berkeley. Bring $3 door charge and food or drink to share.

VARIABLE DATES - WOMEN OVER FIFTY AND FRIENDS
WOFF, a social club for lesbians, has an active social schedule. Monthly potluck/planning meeting the first Saturday of each month at 6 p.m. For information, contact Barbara Konecny or Barbara Jue, 508 Broadmore, San Leandro, (510) 633-0398.

Happy Holidays