DEATH AND DYING WILL CHALLENGE US AT NEXT POTLUCK

Patrick Arbore, Director of the Center For Elderly Suicide will reach out to us at the next Lavender Seniors Potluck, October 14th. The potluck will be at noon and the program will commence at 1:00, after a short business meeting.

Arbore has a sparkling and provocative personality. His focus will be “Taking Control of Your Dying.” He feels that suicide is never the answer and that affirmative attitudes and actions can turn the tide. Patrick has the ability to draw an audience into intense discussions of our own personal experiences with the final years of loved ones. Be sure to join us for this unique program.

LAVENDER SENIORS NEEDS NEW BLOOD ON THE BOARD

Our board of directors needs help. We are swamped with the increasing demands of providing services to our elderly population. We need people like an attorney or folks with backgrounds in public relations or finance. We provide a stimulating environment where the board interacts with gay, lesbian, and transgender people who can be hard to reach. Many are trying to come out for the first time. This involves social work, educating the public, and fund raising. It can be quite an adventure and deeply rewarding. If you or a friend are intrigued with reaching out to a world beyond myself, please feel free to request an application form for the board of directors by writing to Lavender Seniors, 1395 Bancroft #10, San Leandro, CA-94577 or telephone 510-667-9655. People representing minority groups are especially welcome.

Transgender People Reveal Their World

Three charming folks from the world of ambiguous genders enlightened our group at the September 9th potluck. Tyler, a female to male gender person, Kalani, (male to female) and Janis, a cross dresser, revealed a world many of us are only dimly aware of. Much of our knowledge is vague and contradictory.

Our guests pointed out that they utilize their gender according to how they are dressed. The financing of sex change operations is difficult. Typically, medical plans cover only psychotherapy. Operations must be paid for from personal funds.

In many parts of the country it is still illegal to cross-dress. Some family members accept the transgender child and other totally reject any sign of sexual difference. Parents of Gays now accept transgender members.

Kalani concluded the discussion by humorously reminding us that we should never wear metal underwear when passing through a metal detector at the airport.

Senior Services Progress Report

The LGBT Senior Outreach Services (SOS) funded by the Bay Area Collaborative and being implemented by Lavender Seniors has been in operation since last winter. After a slow start in terms of reaching isolated elders, progress is now underway with Friendly Visitor and Phone Volunteers providing direct services to LGBT Seniors. A phone tree has been established that includes everyone who signs in at a Lavender Senior sponsored event such as the Saturday Pot-Luck, Coffee Connections, and special events. To date eight (8) persons have or are being visited by our trained Friendly Visitor Volunteers. Another vital part of our Senior Outreach is to provide community education about the lives and needs of underserved LGBT seniors to community groups and mainstream health and social services providers serving persons age 60 and older. The panel members tell about their lives and sexual identity, their struggles and successes, plus why it is important to recognize LGBT Seniors. The panel has met with Lambda Youth in Hayward, the Pacific Center in Berkeley, the National Conference of LGBT Catholic Clergy and Laypeople, and Alameda County Adult Protective Services. Lavender Senior panel members include: Carol Beth, Myra Williams, Dot Hallinan, Frank Howell, John Ellefson, Marvin Burrows and Dotty Fowler. The more visibility of the LGBT Senior Outreach Services, the more we will be able to increase Friendly Visiting and community connections to LGBT Seniors who can then overcome social isolation. You can be proud of every Volunteer in the program. There is a need to have more trained LGBT volunteers by the end of this year. If you are interested, please contact Joyce Pierson at (510) 667-9655.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES PROGRAM: Lavender Seniors provides a Volunteer Services Program to isolated gay and lesbian seniors. The program is coordinated by the Lesbian and Gay Senior Services Collaborative, a joint project with Gay and Lesbian Outreach to Elders in S.F. (GLOE), and Spectrum in Marin County. The collaborative is funded in part by the S.F. Foundation, Marin Community Foundation, East Bay Community Foundation, Horizons Foundation, Donor Circle for Queer Youth and Elders, Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights, Gateway Initiative, and Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.
SHORT NOTES by Sidney Poulite

Peggy Alices and Bert Hendrikson are now out of the hospital and ready to take on the world again.

One of our most faithful members Doris Fischer, is seriously ill. Send cards and keep her in our thoughts and prayers.

Marvin Burrows is steadily recovering from his walking pneumonia. As the cannibals say, you can’t keep a good man down.

The annual Mardi Gras was a smashing success and many people stopped by our booth. Natalie and Bea slipped over to another booth and obtained a domestic partners form (State of California) and legalized their budding relationship. Congratulations!

Charlene Shores of GLOBE managed to get her picture taken with Bill Clinton. This was not at the Democratic Convention, but at a previous political event.

During a break in the Mardi Gras, Frank, Dottie and John, managed to slip across the bay to a meeting of the 40Plus Club, which meets at the Unitarian Church in S. F. We attempted to spread enlightenment about the Lavender Seniors. G-40 is a social group for men over forty.

“Aimee And Jaguar” is the movie to see. This is a gripping account of a love affair between a German housewife, with a Nazi soldier as a husband, and a Jewish woman. Gives a picture of World War II Berlin.

The National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries just held their convention at the Marriott Hotel in Oakland. About 150 devout souls attended and we shared the story of gay seniors with seventeen members of the Catholic ministry.

One of the members of the group shared with us the gossip regarding Archbishop Laveda of San Francisco, who proudly announced that there were no more gay priests in his backyard. Shall we all go along with the gag? It would be cruel to disillusion the archbishop.

Natalie sent me this one Two executives working in the garment center are having lunch together. Goldstein says to his friend, “Last week was one of the worst weeks of my entire life.”


Goldstein moans, my wife and I went to Florida on vacation. It rained for seven days and seven nights, so my wife went out and spent thousands of dollars on the credit card. I came back to New York and found out that my rat brother in law accountant has been ripping me off for millions. And to top it all off, when I came to work on Monday morning, I found my son having sex with my best model on my desk!”

“You think you had a bad week? responds Birnbaum. ‘My week was even worse! I went to Florida on vacation with my wife and it rained for seven days and seven nights, so my wife went out and spent thousands on the credit card. Then, when I got back to New York, I found out that my rat cousin accountant has been ripping me off for millions. To top it all off, when I cam in to my office on Monday, I found my son having sex with my best model on my desk?’

How can you say that your week was worse than mine?” asks Goldstein. “It was identical!”

“You shmuck!” replies Birnbaum. “I manufacture menswear…”

Meeting note—The New Leaf Outreach to Elders and the Old Lesbians Organizing For Change (OLC) will sponsor a presentation by the Hemlock Society. The Hemlock Society believes that preparation is the key to achievement of a good death. The meeting will be held on Sunday October 15th, at 2:00pm at 145 Guerrero, San Francisco (Francis of Assisi). Both men and women are welcome.
Personality Plus-Natalie Zarchin  A Pioneer Feminist

Natalie has seen a lot during her 78 years. She was born in Brooklyn to a father who was a printer and a mother who labored as a practical nurse.

World War II opened up a broad new vista. She was swept up in the conflict as one of the first group of Waves to be trained. She was assigned to a storekeeper job in New York and Dover, New Jersey. Many of the wounded soldier from the Pacific Theatre went brought to her area for rehabilitation. There she saw first hand the brutal facts of war.

Natalie experienced two marriages, the second one produced a son and daughter. In looking back Natalie now realizes that her first husband was probably gay.

Her second husband fought for Israel during 1948-1950.

In 1960 Natalie and her family moved to San Diego. Seven years were spent in Los Angeles while her husband worked for the California State Health Department. Governor Reagan killed off much of the health department funding and the family moved to the Bay Area. Her daughter left to take up the hippie lifestyle.

By 1971 Natalie was on her own. She worked as a volunteer with the Berkeley Free Clinic. This led to her becoming a co-director for two years doing counseling.

In 1974 she made a deeply political decision and joined the Berkeley Feminist Collective. She underwent psychotherapy and explored the whole spectrum of bisexuality.

She practiced counseling for eight years at “A Safe Place”, a shelter for battered women. She retired from this job in 1985. She conquered cancer with major surgery and a year later had recovered.

Natalie continued her pioneering adventures when she became the first GLOE administrator. This was probably the first bay area group to reach out to gay seniors. Then came the “Lesbians Organized For Change” in 1987: At Pacific Center in Berkeley she was on the front again for “Slightly Older Lesbians. She led this rap group for fifteen years.

The pot of gold at the end of the rainbow-Natalie met her current partner Bea, the foxy lady from Arkansas. They met at the “Slightly Older Lesbians “ group. What a life! If there is more gold out there Natalie is sure to find it.

Annual Globe Dinner Honors Lavender Pioneers

Kay Wellington, Pastor of the San Leandro Community Church, where Lavender Seniors is headquartered, and Barbara Konecny, co-founder of Women Over Fifty and Friends (WOOF) will be recognized for their achievements.

GLOBE (Gays and Lesbians Organized For Betterment And Equality) will present this event at the Christ Lutheran Church, 100 Hacienda, San Leandro. Doors open at 6:00. Dinner will be served at 6:30. Cost is $25.00 at the door or $15.00 in advance. Mail checks to GLOBE, Box 56305, Hayward, CA-94545. For information call Charlene Shores, GLOBE co-president, at 510-538-9722. Date-October 13th
Commentary: Homosexuals deserve loving, sexual relationships
By Mary Olson

Minneapolis Star Tribune, August 11, 2000: I read Stephen J. Heaney's Aug. 5 counterpoint, "Human sexuality is about biology, not just about love," and felt a familiar nausea. The statements about God's grand plan, the right kind of relationship, the reproductive organ argument, the comparison of homosexuality to a disordered desire or addictive disorder. Yes, those darn homosexuals, trying to get us to dismiss their disorders and say they're all right so they can quit struggling to rectify their lives.

The big question is: Even if they wanted to not act on their feelings, what does that mean? That they spend the rest of their lives without a close, committed relationship? Or do they marry someone of the opposite sex, try to live a "normal" life and make their spouse miserable? Or is friendship supposed to be fulfilling enough for them? Would it be for you? Do they accept their homosexuality as a particular struggle God has given them, accept their misery on earth, and comfort themselves with promises of happiness they will one day receive in heaven? I don't understand!

My 14-year-old son is gay and every time I read about the Boy Scout controversy, Dr. Laura, church doctrine against performing gay commitment ceremonies, opinions about states that allow gay couples legal marital rights, and so on, it's like someone pounding on me, telling me my son is immoral and deviant and will not have the same rights as the rest of us upstanding citizens.

A big part of the problem is that the people who are so down on gays don't personally know any. I don't mean they don't know so-and-so in the office who's gay or haven't seen a gay character on TV. I mean they don't really know a gay person, an individual. If you know an individual, you know there is more to being gay than sex

My son has been called a girl, made fun of, and ostracized most of his life. He's a feminine boy, always preferring My Little Pony and Barbie to sports and trucks. So boys ask him to prove he's really a boy. They threaten to staple his tongue to his chin. In private, the straight boys flirt with him and touch him and try to get him to touch them. He thinks they really like him, until he's once again straignted in public. He changes for gym class in the office because the other boys stare at him, waiting to see if he can prove he's a boy or whether he makes a move where they can accuse him of looking at them. He spent lunchtime in the school library because no one would let him sit with them. He even got asked to move when he sat at a table alone.

I thought maybe my son was gay when he was 3 because of his feminine ways. Then I was angry at myself for that prejudice, knowing that not all gay men are feminine, and why can't a boy like bright colors and girlie toys? When my son told me he was gay at 9, I thought, no way, he's too young to know! Puberty hasn't even hit yet! He just knows he's different and the kids call him a girl and tell him he's a fag so he's just being affected by those taunts.

I played baseball with him more. I tried to get him to sign up for sports. I signed him up for karate so he could at least defend himself. I coached him in being more masculine. I called it being more assertive, told him to speak in a gruffer voice, told him not to flail with his hands when he was talking. I hated myself for trying to make him into something he wasn't, shaming him for the things he was, buckling under what society considered "normal" and therefore OK. But I was afraid he might end up beat up someday, maybe even dead. I'm still afraid of those things.

When my son at age 12 again told me he was gay, while he was crying and wishing he was dead, I didn't know what to do. I wanted to stop the pain. I wanted to grab all the people in the world who have hurt him personally or through articles like Heaney's counterpoint and drag them into my house and show them the results of their words and actions. Instead, I got my son antidepressants and therapy once a week.

The way my son is is the way he is. I can't change him. He's tried to feel attracted to girls but doesn't. Why do people accept other characteristics people are born with? We don't look at anything else in the same way that we look at homosexuality. Suddenly it's about God, and a threat to families and the institute of marriage. Is that because it has to do with sex? I don't get it!

People get upset because gays are in their face, having gay pride marches, protesting at the Republican convention. What? Once a year they get to openly walk the streets showing their affection for each other, something we do and take for granted every day. They are tired of being ignored and treated as less than human. They want to have health insurance, to have their partner receive their pension if they die, to have immediate family visitation rights in the hospital. These are all normal, responsible desires, but we won't even allow them that. This is about having legal, human rights. It is not a conspiracy or grand plot to make us all homosexual or bring on the downfall of society.

"Homosexual acts make no sense"? Because the organs fit together, does rape make sense? If a heterosexual couple does not want children, do their sexual acts no longer make sense or is it still OK because they have the organs-fitting-together thing going for them. I hate it when people call their opinions "the truth." Call it your truth, because it certainly isn't mine. God creating feelings in people that he then expects them to ignore? Now that doesn't make sense. It seems like some warped joke that only man could create, not God.

My son and I don't go to church anymore. Even though not all churches preach hatred, the institution has come to represent pain. God's name has been used so much to frighten and hurt people. So I keep asking God to please help people like Dr. Laura and Mr. Heaney see and understand what they are doing to God's children so all this can please stop. -- Mary Olson is a Twin Cities writer.
BOOK REVIEW
by Frank Howell

HOMOPHOBIA: A HISTORY
By Byrne Fone
Henry Holt & Company
$32.50-Hardbound

Who can say what causes the irrational fear of those who are different from the social norm? Many people seem to demand that all of us conform. Those who dance to a different tune are feared. The world is reduced to black and white.

"Homophobia" was first defined by psychologist George Weinberg in his 1972 book Society And The Healthy Homosexual. The same talk of hate crimes and the extremist types came pouring out of the woodwork.

The sad tale of homophobia has a long and brutal history. During the time of the Greeks and Romans same sex love had a fairly smooth sailing. The rise of Christianity in Europe brought the good times to a close. In 1292 the first sodomite was officially burned at the stake. Byrne Fone, a gay scholar at the City University of New York, has given us The Road To Stonewall and The Columbia Anthology of Gay Literature, views homosexuality as the ultimate threat to Western morality. The passage of time brought even more violence and threats.

During the reign of the Muslims in Spain, for 700 years, sexual tolerance was the rule. But the coming of Christianity ended all marks of peace.

The Renaissance brought a splendid ray of light in the arts and sciences but persecution of gays proceeded apace. But sodomy flourished anyway. Italy was seen as the "mother of sodomy."

In England (1533) Sodomy was legally taken away from the church and made a secular crime. The right to privacy was destroyed.

In the years to come sodomy was associated with evil and witchcraft. In the 1690's a Society For The Reformation of Manners was formed in order to hunt down gays and Society For The Reformation of Manners was formed in order to hunt down gays and other immoral types.

In the Victorian era (1885) the Gross Indecency Act was enacted which ended the death penalty but homosexual acts were still illegal. The legislation was nicknamed the Magna Carta for blackmailers.

During this same Victorian era the first struggle for gay rights was born. Gayness was now viewed not as sin but sickness. Homophobia had a new face.

The new face of prejudice also railed against the dangers of masturbation. Warnings against seduction were frequent. Dr. William Lee Howard (1911) Confidential Chats With Boys, preached caution in sharing a bed with members of the same sex.

"If you should be so situated that you find yourself in bed with a man, keep awake with your eyes on something you can hit him with. At the slightest word or act out of the way, HIT him".

During the McCarthy Era homosexuality was labeled as un-American and blamed on European influences.

In our own times the zealots such as Fred Phelps are still busy and some ministers still advocate the death penalty.

After reading Homophobia: A History we can readily appreciate the continued need for public education and enlightened legislation.

The fight never ends. Attention must forever be paid.
CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

DEATH AND DYING

Saturday 12 Noon-Monthly Meeting-Program at 1:00-October 14th

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

San Leandro BART station shuttle is available. Call voice mail: 667-9655 to arrange pickup.

COFFEE CONNECTIONSSOCIALS

TRI-CITIES AREA - Fremont, Newark & Union City
1st Wednesday every month: No meeting in October but will be held on November 1st.

BERKELEY, ALBANY, EL CERRITO, NORTH OAKLAND Area
3rd Thursday every month: 10 - 11:00 am. Call Doreen at (510)524-6206.

HAYWARD AREA
4th Wednesday every month: 1:30 pm; Senior Center, 22325 N. 3rd St., Hayward. Call John at (510)583-9638

Of special interest: Monthly newsletter mailing party

ENGLISH HIGH TEA-3:00-4:30-Third Sunday of each month:
Lighthouse Community Center, 1217 A Street, Hayward, CA 94541. (510)881-8167

Happy Birthday

Gwen Kelly-10/1
Kenneth Hamilton 10/6
Julie Lawyer-10/1
J J Van Dyck-10/6

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 Oak Center Towers, 1515 Market Street, Oakland. Bring $3 door charge and food or drink to share.

VARIOUS 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.