Transgender People: Their Hopes & Dreams

Those who seek to altered their gender are a mystery to many of us in the larger community. Ignorance breeds fear and suspicion. We older folk vividly recall the early 1950s when Christine Jorgensen burst onto the scene. She represented the first major exposure of the American psyche to people who rejected the sex that mother nature gave them. In some cases nature became confused and gave them organs of both sexes.

Members of the intersex are, historically speaking, the new kids on the civil rights block. They stand where gays were forty years ago. The androgens among us are just now emerging from their unique closets.

The transgendered will share their thoughts and experiences with us at the next Lavender Seniors potluck on Saturday, September 9th, at 1:00, San Leandro Community Church (Brancroft and Estudillo). We hope to see all of you there.

Personality Plus—Gerson Goodkind—Hard Knocks, Great Drama

Gerson Goodkind, born and raised in Chicago, has known tumultuous times. His parents ran a doll repairing business. The great depression struck them down and life was tough. Young Gerson frequently ran the business by himself. The doll repair was moved into their home. He can recall working at age fourteen for forty-five cents an hour.

After living in the Midwest for nineteen years Gerson moved to California where he resided in Woodland for a year. The time was 1951.

He joined the U.S. Army for three years. He came out during basic training. But this resulted in no particular problems. His fellow soldiers seemed to accept him. His good times with the opposite sex came about because he liked to dance at the USO. His heterosexual times were pleasant enough, but no significant sexual shift occurred.

Gerson recalls venturing to a bar in San Francisco with a straight friend who looked into what turned out to be “The Black Cat.” His companion remarked, “Look at all those queers in there just waiting for us.”

After leaving the Army in 1955 Gerson attended San Francisco State University. His life long ambition was to inspire students by teaching human physiology. He also ended up teaching mathematics and physics. He taught for one year at Lowell High School but finally settled at Lincoln High School for twenty-one years.

The years at Lincoln were filled with trauma. The school at one time was highly regarded in the academic world, but during the volatile 1960s, the earthquake of racism and the Vietnam War tore the school apart. Gerson can still hear Bobby Seale, the radical black activist inciting the students and teachers to riot and destroy school property. He even overheard a woman teacher urging girl students to rampage. Many of the black students rallied around Gerson as he struggled to maintain control.

In later years he met John Beckham, his partner of twelve years, who passed away in 1986. Like many of us, he lost countless friends from AIDS. He had located Johns name on a bulletin board located in a gay bar known as the “No Name Bar.”

During his mature years Gerson has coped with back surgery and a major heart attack in 1996. He has suffered a lifetime from arthritis.

But Gerson soldiers on, always open to new horizons and ways of viewing the world.
SHORT NOTES by Sidney Pasfield

Jim Joslin, our former editor, is in town for a few weeks then off to Seattle for a retreat. Then he will return to the Bay Area for a short time and return to his home in Palm Springs in October.

We are still taking names for the “Commitment Ceremony.” Call the Lavender Office and leave your name and contact number. The timeline is now scheduled for around Valentines Day in February of 2001. This will be a fundraiser for Lavender Seniors so instead of gifts for the couples a donation will be asked for in support of the Lavender Seniors program.

The story is told of a man working with his computer who needed to enter a password. He chose the word “penis” The computer replied in a typically straightforward fashion, “password rejected. Not long enough.”

Berney Ward of KGO Radio, after surveying the scene at the homophobic Republican Convention, suggested that a new type of P-Flag organization called Conservative Parents of Gay Children. The founding members would be Dick Cheney and Phyllis Schafly. Seed money would be generated by the Republican Party.

The new Gay and Lesbian Community center in Hayward has opened quite grandly. But on a recent Saturday morning P G & E shut the power off. Some misunderstanding about the bill. But Darsi Myers, who is the unofficial earth mother of the center, rode to the rescue and set everything aright. The next time a video is shown at the center perhaps we could show the new Julia Roberts film, “Erin Brockovich,” in which dear Julia battles the giant power company. On the other hand, PG & E, has been generous at the gay community on more than one occasion.

The recent Picnic at Cull Canyon Regional Park is probably the most successful one ever held involving the whole lavender community of this part of Alameda County. The whole affair was sponsored by GLOBE. Other groups involved included Lavender Seniors, Lambda Youth, and the San Leanders. Some sixty people braved the hot sun. A raffle was held and Chris Taylor (Lambda Youth) won the prize. A couple of local politicians were on hand to work the crowd.

Donna Montgomery has revealed that sometime next year she will probably move to the wilds of New Mexico to settle down with her beloved. They will reside in a structure called an “earthship,” which is constructed of tires and metal. Sounds quite ecological and adventuresome. Good luck to Donna! Ina Mae and Stella left on July 21st for a ten day driving trip to Idaho and Utah. This included a family reunion and visits to friends and relatives. Because of bad weather, a loaded car and climbing Donner Pass, the car overheated. They were towed to Reno and made it home ok. They were able to attend three concerts at GALC (Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses). Six thousand members of choral groups from around the world. The organization meets every four years. The event took place in San Jose. The music and crowds were inspiring. Ina Mae and Stella left again for Utah (July 27th) Once again the brave pair experienced car trouble, but they made it to Reno. On the drive home they were tortured with 103 degree heat and no air conditioning.

They hope to drive to New Mexico in September. New car perhaps?
From The Editors Desk

The Odor of Hypocrisy Prevails At Republican Convention

The Grand Old Party put on quite a show for the television audience. All the proper elements were in place, noble sounding platform, ethnic minority groups (Hispanics, blacks), and the announcement of a big tent that we can all crawl under.

But then reality checks intrude. The platform announces that gays be held in check in the military, that gays be denied basic civil rights, and that same sex marriage be denied.

Colin Powell calls our attention to the denial of abortion rights and the lack of affirmative action. Jim Kobe speaks for five minutes on international trade, but the Texas delegation wants to walk out in protest simply because he wants to be there. Instead they take off their hats and pray. One delegate remarked that innocent children watching the event on TV might actually see him and find out he is gay. They feel a wrong message is being sent to America.

The implicit communication is all too clear: we want your gay money and your gay vote but we don’t want you. Please make you donation, sit down and be quiet, The Log Cabin Republicans, desperate for even the slightest crumb of recognition, are thrilled. George Bush proclaims that he spent a meaningful hour with them. But the result is always the same.

At least the camel has his nose under the tent. Perhaps four years from now Gay Republicans will win another point.

Now the Democrats are upon us. Let us hope they will give us more than polite silence.

BOOK REVIEW
by Frank Howell

Frommer’s Gay And Lesbian Europe
By David Andrusia, Haas Mroue, Donald Olson & Todd Savage
Macmillan, paperback, $21.95-1st edition

The gay and lesbian travel industry has certainly arrived. You instinctively know this when Frommer finally takes us under his wing.

The authors point out historic sites that are of interest to our community. We are told about gay hotels and bars that have actually been visited. Lavender events are highlighted. We are also told of gay tour operators and travel agents.

The joy of a good travel guide is the little extras that are featured. In Berlin, for example, we learn the Germans have given us the only gay museum in the world. There is also a local gay sightseeing tour.: in Greece Athens is not especially friendly but some of the islands are, especially Mykonos.; in Italy couples will be given twin beds unless they ask for matrimoniale (for married couples).

Take this guide along for an enriched travel experience.

It is sad to note that apparently Our Family Abroad is going out of business this year. But others can be found on the internet via word search. I have searched in vain for a gay tour service for seniors, but none seems to exist.

There are some informative gay magazines for the globe trotter. (Our World, 1104 North Nova Road, Suite 251, Daytona Beach, FL-32117. Subscription is $35.00 per year
Notice from the Lavender Treasurer

After four years of “browbeating” you to make your checks payable to “Bobbie Jarvis, Treasurer,” we are finally a bona fide corporation and you can now make your checks payable to Lavender Seniors and mail your checks directly to the Lavender Senior Office at 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro, CA—94577.

The address is good for both your subscription payments and donations of goods, services and monies.
I thank you all for your patience and past participation in supporting “Lavender Seniors” and look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with “Lavender Seniors” and each one of you.
Bobbie (B. J.) Jarvis, Treasurer

Grand Ducal Ball is Memorable Affair

B J., Meg and John Ellefsen, attended the Ducal Ball on July 29th, at Centennial Hall in Hayward. The Royal Grand Ducal Council awarded us $1,000 as a result of their fundraising efforts. What a fantastic event! Such talented and beautiful people! Our sincere thanks to the Ducal Council (especially Don Silva (Mama Portugal) for the outstanding entertainment and the most generous gift to the Lavender Seniors.-Meg Bruynell

Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor:
I would like to make a correction to your August article on the grand opening of the Lighthouse Community Center in Hayward. I appreciate your mention of the colorful Deca-Dance display at the center, but I wouldn’t want your readers to get the mistaken impression that I was the creator of the project. The display was the wonderful brainchild of the Lambda Youth project, under the direction of Christina Cappelletti, as the theme for this year’s Gay Teen Prom in Hayward. She put out a call to organizations in our community to “sponsor” a decade and make a display board reflecting that decade in LGBT history. Lavender Seniors decided to sponsor the 1940s. I worked on the display and put it into final shape, but only with the help of Marvin Burrows, Ina Mae Murry, and other Lavender Seniors. As you know, some of us went to the Prom on June 10th to stand outside as supporters of the young women and men arriving at the dance at Centennial Hall, and to counteract the presence of the protesters who were also there in force. When the protesters started to “preach” and harangue too vociferously, the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Freedom Band would strike up the music and lift up all of our spirits! I’m looking forward to next year’s prom, and hoping that many more of us will be there to show our solidarity with our youth, for they indeed are our future,
Sincerely,
John Ellefsen

Lesbian Can Claim Head of Household Tax Status

A lesbian in California has been granted the right to claim head of household status on her taxes. The state board of equalization voted 3-2 to uphold the right of the woman to claim the status based on the financial support she provided to her partner of ten years while the partner carried the couple’s child. Previously head-of-household status was available in the state only to biological parents of a child. The woman plans to formally adopt her partner’s daughter, but adoption proceedings were not completed in time for the tax year in question.
Under the board’s ruling, adoption will no longer be required for gay and lesbian couples to file head-of-household status for their families. “The BOE’s decision ends this form of discrimination once and for all,” said Johan Klehs, a board member who led the effort to change the policy.

**SENIOR WOMEN'S SELF DEFENSE**

The Laurel School District of Oakland is offering a gentle, self protection and movement class for senior women. Reduce your risk of being attacked. The instructor holds a black belt and is herself an older woman dealing with arthritis and knee problems. You can benefit regardless of your physical condition.  
Class begins Thursday October 12th from 10:30am-noon. And continues every Tuesday and Thursday morning. Cost is $10.00 per class or $35.00 per month. For more information call 510-530-5043.

**Long Term Care issues**

Members of Lavender Seniors who are interested in knowing about Long Term Care legal issues regarding couples, what happens if a partner has to go into nursing home care, Medi-Cal coverage, etc. Priscilla Camp, Attorney and expert in Elder Law will be a speaker for the LGBT Alzheimer’s Caregivers Group on Wednesday, September 6th at 6:30 PM. Location: Alzheimers Resource Center, 2320 Channing Way, Berkeley. Please RSVP Joyce Pierson, 667-9655.

**East Bay Women’s Support Group**

East Bay Women’s Support Group – now co-sponsored by Lavender Senior and New Leaf Outreach to Elders for women age 55+. Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Fridays every month at the Pacific Center, 2717 Telegraph Street, Berkeley. Not a drop-in group, the Support Group is designed to be an ongoing commitment featuring topics of interest, sharing personal challenges and strengths, mutual support and occasional outings. Please contact Joyce Pierson at 667-9655 if you are interested.

**TV PLANNING 24-HOUR GAY - LESBIAN CHANNEL**

PALM SPRINGS—A television channel aimed at gays and lesbians and reaching a national audience with news and entertainment is a broadcasting company’s goal. Palm Springs Triangle MultiMedia Ltd.Inc. is planning to launch the 24-hour channel via cable and satellite on Oct. 1.

Dick Weiner, executive vice president of Triangle and the company’s TV station, Palm Springs Television Studio, said the network would broadcast gay and lesbian movies, sitcoms and a daily news show. Weiner said he is in negotiations for the rights to air gay and lesbian movies filmed primarily in London, as well as a sitcom produced in Los Angeles. Palm Springs Television Studio would create the network’s new show.

Plans call for the channel to broadcast daily 12 hours of fresh programming that would be repeated twice a day, Weiner said.

"It's and idea that's long overdue," says Scott Seomin of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation in Los Angeles. "We hope it catches on and it is a success, and with success comes copy-catting.

Palm Springs has a large gay and lesbian population, he added, calling it un-surprising that such a channel would emanate from the desert city.
CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

Transgender People-Their Hopes & Dreams
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

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

COFFEE CONNECTIONS SOCIALS
TRI-CITIES AREA - Fremont, Newark & Union City
1st Wednesday every month: No meeting in September but will be held on October 4th.
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: Plan to review Lavender Seniors history, pictures, events, media, etc.

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
Chester Curtis-9/19
Jerry Fishman-9/25
Larry Butttwick-9/6
Alan Pardini-9/19

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.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT MEETING
There is a need for more friendly visitors and telephone outreach. Fifty calls are needed each month a training will be given in early October. Leave your name and number in September. The is need for Oakland volunteers. Call office at 667-9655.