



LAVENDER NOTES

Newsletter of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

Volume VI, No.12 – December 2001

A Volunteer Services Program — project of The Tides Center

• 1395 Bancroft Ave. • San Leandro, CA 94577 • (510) 667-9655 •

President's Report

By John Ellefsen

I hope you were able to come to our November potluck, when our Senior Services Coordinator, Joyce Pierson, presented a good example of the funded services we've been providing now for about two years.

In the first part of the potluck program, we heard and saw what the Speakers Panel does when it makes a presentation at the staff meetings of mainstream senior service providers. At each of those outreach trainings, Joyce makes an introduction, explaining why we are there and what we hope to accomplish. Then members of the Speakers Panel tell something about their lives and experiences. At the potluck, two panel members, Myra and Frank, told a bit of their histories.

As anyone on the Speakers Panel will testify, at first it's not easy to speak to an audience of people you haven't met before — and most of whom are straight — about our personal experiences as LGBT seniors. However, that way of talking from the heart about the realities of our lives is remarkably effective in terms of helping social and health care providers see us — not as an abstract category or a type — but as we are: complex, fully-rounded human beings. The ultimate purpose of the training is to help social and health care workers give better services to the LGBT seniors who come to their agencies. Then Joyce ended that part of the program by going over some of the simple, cost-free, but effective changes that any agency can do to make its services more accessible and welcoming to LGBT seniors.

That part of the potluck program was followed by hearing one of our Friendly Visiting participants, Peter, tell how he came to need Friendly Visiting services after a serious accident he suffered about a year ago, which at first left him virtually helpless, though up until that point he had been a very active, independent person. As we are all acutely aware, accidents and serious illness can happen to any of us at any time, and most especially as we get older. For Peter, it's been a slow, difficult, often discouraging recovery.

But a part of that recovery has been the contact Peter has had with his Friendly Visitor, Bob. As Peter put it, being able to talk and go out on excursions with Bob has made him feel

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Senior Outreach Services

By Joyce Pierson

Endings and beginnings — December marks a yearly milestone in our daily lives and the business of the day. And it's a time to take stock of what's been accomplished and what still needs to be done. For the Lavender Seniors Outreach Services, the end of 2001 shows growth and new challenges.

The major goal of the services is to reach isolated lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender elders who need help in their daily lives, folks who need and deserve the community-based health and social services available. Since 1995 when Lavender Seniors was begun by a dedicated cadre of volunteers, the mission to improve the quality of life for aging LGBTs living in the East Bay has grown steadily to now include a range of social activities and services: the monthly Potlucks and their entertaining and educational speakers, holiday events, community building with other LGBT organizations, gay pride, theater outings, and friendship networks.

In 1999 the Senior Outreach Services began to reach out to identify hidden, isolated, physically impaired LGBT elders to provide friendly visits, outings, telephone contact and very importantly, community education about the presence and needs of the LGBT communities throughout the East Bay.

In 2001, Lavender Seniors secured funding from the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and is now officially a senior service provider in the local network of senior services. This funding is provided by the Older Americans Act from the federal government to the local community. Originally enacted in 1965, the Act funds senior nutrition centers, home-delivered meals and a myriad of social services. The AAA contract covers July 2001 through June 2002, requiring 27 unduplicated elders for in-home visits totaling 520 hours, 67 hours telephone reassurance calls, and 80 hours of shopping/errand assistance. As reported last month, we have 11 of the 27 elders being served since last July.

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Volunteer Services Program

Lavender Seniors provides a Volunteer Services Program to isolated gay and lesbian seniors. It also presents LGBT educational panels to care providers who offer services to all seniors. Lavender Seniors is a member of the Lesbian and Gay Senior Services Collaborative along with New Leaf Outreach to Elders in San Francisco, Senior Spectrum in Marin. Lavender Seniors is funded in part by Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, the East Bay Community Foundation, Horizons Foundation, Gateway Initiative of the SF Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund and The Nathan Cummings Foundation. We gratefully acknowledge this support and that from all other donors.

LAVENDER NOTES

is the newsletter of
Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
 1395 Bancroft Avenue
 San Leandro, CA 94577
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 fax 510-667-9909
 lavender seniors@email.msn.com

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.

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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 \$15 dollars 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.

Signed articles represent the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay.

Inclusion of a name in this newsletter does not necessarily indicate a person's sexual orientation. §

Senior Outreach Services

The challenge in the next six months is to ensure targeting services to persons age 60 in the greatest economic need, persons 75+ needing help with daily living, and ethnic minority elders. To meet this challenge, the Lavender Seniors Outreach Services recognizes that the LGBT senior community includes the diversity of LGBT African Americans, Latinas, Asians — older Americans of all races and creeds.

A major milestone was accomplished in 2001 when the National Office On Aging recognized the inclusion of LGBT seniors as an underserved senior population across the nation for the first time. Alameda County is a model for richness in diversity including sexual orientation that includes all cultural identities. A major goal for 2002 is to provide outreach to LGBT elders within all diverse ethnic groups. A place to start is within ourselves where we can face those invisible barriers that cause separation, and to remember that as members of society who have suffered discrimination because of who we love, we can bring our personal experiences to bear in becoming more inclusive of all LGBT elders who need Lavender Seniors' Outreach Services!

Best wishes to all for the holiday season, good health and a peaceful 2002.

—Joyce Pierson
 Outreach Services Coordinator

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Monthly Senior Outreach Volunteer Meeting

Saturday, December 15
9:30 – 11:30 A.M.
 (3rd Saturday every month)

Training Meeting: *Access to South County Senior Services*
 and

Film Showing:
Complaints of a Dutiful Daughter

Location: 1395 Bancroft Avenue
 San Leandro Community Church

Subscription Renewals

When renewing your subscription, please make the check payable to **The Tides Center/Lavender Seniors**

(from page one)

Property Tax Postponement Program Summary

The Property Tax Postponement Program, administered by the Division of Collections, State Controller's Office (SCO), enables eligible homeowners to postpone payment of their county property taxes. Repayment is due when the home is sold, the homeowner dies, title is passed to an ineligible person, or senior liens are allowed to become delinquent. Interest is computed on the postponed taxes monthly and is added to the amount of the state lien.

The homeowner must file for postponement each year and provide supporting documentation.

This program is separate from the Homeowner Assistance Program, administered by the Franchise Tax Board. Homeowners may participate in both programs if they qualify.

To obtain more information about the Property Tax Postponement Program: Call (800) 952-5661 or (916) 327-5587 or Visit the SCO's Web site at <http://www.sco.ca.gov> (click on Tax Information), or e-mail the program at postponement@sco.ca.gov.

From State of Calif. "2001 Property Tax Postponement Application and Instructions – for Senior, Blind or Disabled Citizens"

This newsletter is available in Adobe Acrobat Reader via E-mail; request: hendriksen@aol.com
 510-652-6906

BOOKS

Out in The South

Edited by Carlos Dews & Carolyn Law
Temple University Press-Paperback

The South is a curious place in the minds of many Americans. We are lured by the exotic locale, but repelled by the bigotry and narrowness of view. Gay Southerners admit the place also drives them crazy but they are drawn back as they mature and gain perspective. There seems to be a certain magic that defies explanation. But we still wonder: have there ever been novels about the South that finally give us a sense of hope?

In "Women's Festivals on the Front Lines," Bonnie Strickland takes a look at the role of lesbians and music on the cutting edge of female sexuality. It is mainly the saga of Wanda and Brenda Henson in Overt, Mississippi, where they have attempted to provide a place of refuge for women living in desperation. Camp Sister Spirit has been forced to battle for its life against the forces of intolerance. The camp appears to survive.

David Knapp Whittier probes a small town where we find two gay bars, one for blacks and the other for whites, in "Race & Gay Community in a Southern Town." Again we find the usual tiresome racial patterns. The black bar is not listed in the standard gay guides and the white bar has all the economic advantages.

The influence of a famous writer on the cultural scene below the Mason-Dixon line is outlined in "Tennessee Williams Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Hypocrisy, Paradox, and Homosexual Panic in The New Old South," By James Keller. The residents of Columbus, Mississippi enjoy basking in the limelight of their native son, but want to keep his lavender side under wraps. On one occasion the local university attempted a program on Williams. There were the usual bomb threats and public protests but the forum still succeeded.

The Gospel Hour is a long running drag show in Atlanta ("Looking For A City: The Ritual and Politics of Ethnography," by Edward Gray) that manages to bring marginal gays into the local church scene. These are people who could not be reached on any other level, "where kindness replaces condemnation."

Carson McCullers and Lillian Smith were the pioneers in revealing the underlying psychology of men keeping women down. ("Lines I Dare: Southern Lesbian Writing," by Mab Segrest.) Dorothy Allison was also a strong influence. The Southern woman was kept in a cultural prison for generations. She was either a sainted white woman or a slut with no redeeming features.

Carlos Dews is Associate Professor of English at the University of West Florida and Carolyn Law is a Dissertation Advisor at the Northern Illinois University. They have performed a strong labor of love in bringing this collection together.

—Frank Howell

Roommate Wanted

Room for rent in elderly Gay Man's charming home, \$250/mo in exchange for help with shopping, meals and some chores.

Wants mature, reliable male tenant. No drugs, alcohol, smoking. Must like cats. Call Samuel: 510-412-3313. Richmond area.

Room to Let

Norman Levesque, Lavender Senior and Royal Grand Duke IX, has a large private room for rent in his 3-bedroom house in San Leandro. Full house privileges, off-street parking, large yard, storage space, and other attractive features. \$600 + 1/3 utilities and household charges. For more information, call Norman at 510 351-7985.

President's Report

(from page one)

"like a human being again," has enabled him to rejoin the community. After Peter told his story, Bob described his experience as a Friendly Visitor volunteer, which has been equally rewarding for him. As is so often the case, helping others provides unexpected and deeply satisfying benefits for all concerned.

In presenting this potluck program, it was our hope that everyone present would get a better idea of what Lavender Seniors as an organization does beyond our monthly potlucks. We could not maintain a corps of dedicated and trained volunteers for Friendly Visiting and the other associated individualized services that we do, such as telephone assurance and shopping assistance, nor could we arrange the meetings that the Speakers Panel goes to, and do all the training and scheduling that's involved in that without the work of our skilled and dedicated part-time Coordinator and Administrative Assistant. That's the part of Lavender Seniors that needs on-going funding. As you know, we were pleased to get funding for the first time this year from the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, and we are also very thankful for the grants we've been awarded from the foundations and organizations listed on the front page of Lavender Notes. Your president, in fact, is currently very busy writing more grant proposals.

But federal funds and grants from foundations alone cannot sustain us. We need your help, too, as individual supporters of Lavender Seniors. We very much appreciate the past help that has been given by you, our loyal individual donors, including the money collected "in the hat" at each potluck. This month, you will be receiving a special end-of-the year letter. Please remember the services that we provide — which no other organization in the East Bay is providing to LGBT seniors — and respond with as generous a donation as possible.

—John Ellefsen, President

Internet Info

www.glma.org/home.html

Gay and Lesbian Medical Association

For information and chat rooms:

www.seniornet.com

www.seniors.com

For caregivers info & resources:

www.eldersearch.com

Government sources:

www.ssa.gov (Social Security)

www.aging.state.ca.us (Local assistance & links to other sites; Calif.

Dept. of Aging)

www.va.gov (Veterans' affairs)

If you have any Website recommendations to share, please let me add them to a future list.—*Natalie Zarchin*
NZarchin@cs.com

Great JOB Opportunities

for people who are 55 years and older, are looking for part-time work (20 hours a week) live in Alameda, Castro Valley, Dublin, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Newark, Pleasanton, San Leandro, San Lorenzo or Union City, and are within the income limits set by Federal Register.

Some positions available:

Cashier, Customer Services Aide, General Office Clerk, Kitchen Aide, Office Clerk, Receptionist, Sales

Limited Openings Available

Call (510) 881-0300

Spectrum Community Services, Inc.
1435 Grove Way, Hayward, CA 94546

Senior Employment Department

*A nonprofit organization serving
Alameda County since 1971*

¡Happy Birthday!

Richard Riffer

December 3

Hope J. Greene

December 7

Nance Rogers

December 8

Carly Rivers

December 9

Mel Scontrino

December 11

Jim Junkin

December 13

Joyce Pierson

December 15

Bonnie MacKenzie

December 20

Tom Eyring

December 22

Bobbie Jarvis

December 23

Gerson Goodkind

December 24

John M. Rasche

December 25

¡Feliz Cumpleaños!

Donor Acknowledgments

Eric Larson

Jess McVey

Diane Nagy

Monroe Pastermack

We appreciate your support!

Fitness and the Older Adult

by Dan Chisholm

This article is for adults who have never engaged in a formal exercise program before and people who have had little experience with exercise. This is a bit of practical wisdom when beginning a fitness program.

Studies emerge every year promoting exercise and the effects of working out for everyone, including the older adult portion of America. Now is the best time to begin fitness.

Cardiovascular fitness is the number one killer of Americans, surpassing cancer, AIDS related deaths and even murder.

With the addition of computers and machines into Americans' daily lives, people have been constantly doing less since the Industrial Revolution over one hundred years ago. As society changes into a more health conscious and fitness-prone group, the more significant changes need to come from the older adults and their perception of exercise.

People over the age of 55 were raised in an era when exercise was something to be done in private, if at all. Women were considered "unladylike" if they exercised and even sports teams thought of free weights (dumbbells and barbells) as something that would slow the team down in speed and agility.

Defining exercise and fitness, in the first place, turns some individuals off to the idea completely. Olympic power lifters, body builders, and TV actors are not the only facet of health and fitness – although most people who are not involved with fitness only see these people in movies and advertisements. Vigorous activity is great if a person feels comfortable with it; however even a walk around the block or mall puts a person in the right mindset for a better lifestyle.

Get moving! Take the stairs instead of the elevator, park a few spots further down the parking lot than usual, and order the filet mignon instead of the porterhouse next time steak is on the menu. Some other great calorie burners: start or maintain a garden, go swimming at the local pool, and ride a bike around the park. The body is a magnificently lazy machine and will try to do as little work as possible.

While growing older is an unavoidable process, the quality of a person's life will be extended and improved through the addition of exercise in as little as ten minutes each day. To be active, one must **stay** active.

From Pride Senior Network

Presentation of the Month:**Ventriloquist to Entertain Lavender Seniors**

Ronald Coulter, who has toured this country and the Orient for the State Department, taught college theater and directed workshops and productions. Ronald will introduce us to his wooden friend, Sidney Star. They will match wits with each other for 30 minutes as part of our annual Christmas party at the San Leandro Community Church.

Saturday, 12 Noon • Monthly Potluck Meeting • Program at 1 P.M. • December 8

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 day before: 667-9655 to arrange pickup.

Health Notes**What About Cholesterol?**

Why should one be concerned about cholesterol levels? First, try to remember that cholesterol in itself is not bad, and is in fact, necessary to the body's survival. Cholesterol, considered a cousin of "fat," is a substance of waxy consistency manufactured by the liver. Its primary purpose is to help build cell membranes, as well as brain and nerve cells. Because cholesterol is produced by the liver, we don't actually need to supplement our diets with cholesterol. Nevertheless, most Americans consume foods containing dietary cholesterol, found in foods of animal origin (i.e. meats and dairy products).

We need to be concerned about cholesterol levels, because the excess can accumulate and then harden within the walls of the arteries. The result is a blockage in the blood flow; and this ul-

timately can lead to a stroke or heart attack.

When evaluating your cholesterol levels, it is important to consider the following:

- 1) Fat is essential for growth and storing energy for the body. Unlike its cousin, fat is not generated by the body and hence, must be furnished by diet. However, controlling the types and amounts of fat in one's diet is the first step in controlling cholesterol.
- 2) Cholesterol-rich foods can certainly elevate cholesterol levels, but studies show that foods high in saturated fats are even more powerful in raising cholesterol levels. Unsaturated fats, such as olive oil carry a lower risk.

- 3) High cholesterol levels tend to run in families; anyone with such a family history should check in with his/her physician regularly.
- 4) Blood cholesterol levels tend to increase with age.
- 5) Try to limit dietary cholesterol to 300mg per day.
- 6) Talk with you doctor to get more information!

from Emeryville Senior Center bulletin,
September 2001

Our Mailing List Lavender Seniors does not lend, sell or give away its mailing list to any outside organization.

Your support is crucial to enable the *Lavender Seniors* to continue its role as a vital resource to our community. Please take a moment and send your donation today.

Here's my gift of: \$10 ____ \$25 ____ \$50 ____ \$75 ____ \$100 ____ other ____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Home Telephone _____

E-mail address _____

Please make checks payable to
The Tides Center/Lavender Seniors
and mail to:
Lavender Seniors
1395 Bancroft Avenue
San Leandro, CA 94577

Thank you for your generosity!

☐ Please contact me about including Lavender Seniors in my will. ☐ Please contact me to volunteer.

Calendar of Activities

East Bay Women's Support Group

Meets 2nd & 4th Fridays each month

December 14: Noon – 3 P.M.

Special Event (667-9655 for location)

December 28: 1:15 – 3 P.M.

Pacific Center,
2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley

Women Over Fifty and Friends WOFF

Meets **Saturday, December 1**

Pot Luck is one hour earlier, starting
@ 5 P.M.

San Leandro Community Church
Fireside Room
1395 Bancroft Avenue
San Leandro

Senior Men's Afternoon 1:30 – 3:30 P.M.

2nd and 4th Thursdays

December 13 and 27

**2712 Telegraph Avenue,
Berkeley**

Co-sponsored by *Pacific Center*
and *Lavender Seniors*

Alameda County Leather Corps

presents the 9th Annual "Santa's Slave Auction" on Saturday, December 8, 6 – 10 P.M. at the Turf Club 22519 Main St., Hayward. There will be entertainment, an auction, and a 50/50 drawing and the beneficiaries of this fund-raiser will be the SAFE (Shelter Against Violent Environments) and the In Memory Foundation.

Hosting: Cam & Cheryl (530) 432-4860
Iris (510) 841-4776

Directions: From 580 East to Dutton / Estudillo exit, drive (0.3) merge onto MacArthur (0.4) turn (R) onto Estudillo (0.5) turn (L) onto Bancroft. From North or South 880 go to Davis St., drive (1.0) to E. 14th/ International turn (L) (0.1) to Estudillo turn (R) (0.5) to Bancroft turn (R).

Fellows of East Bay

Second Sunday, 5:30 – 8:30 P.M.

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 food and drink to share and a \$4 donation.

Gallery Talk

**Saturday Dec. 8, 2 P.M.
Photolab Gallery**

2235 Fifth Street (near Bancroft)
Berkeley

Changing the World, Building New Lives: 1970's Photographs of Lesbians, Feminists, Union women, Disability Activists, and their Supporters

Join Cathy Cade to hear stories behind the photos. Bring your stories and your questions for an informal gathering.

Exhibition dates extended to
December 21

Gallery open M – F, 8:30 – 6:30
Saturday 9 – 3

SENIOR INFORMATION and ASSISTANCE

1-800-510-2020

Provided by

**Alameda County
Area
Agency on Aging**

This Senior Information & Referral toll-free number can be used anywhere throughout California. You can receive information regarding senior services and how to reach the appropriate agency to help you.

Local listings of Senior Services can be found in the Yellow Pages under Senior Citizens' Services and Organizations.

