Psychologist Addresses Aging and Human Sexuality

Merle Jost

a well-known psychologist and licensed marriage, family, and child counselor, will explore the joys and dilemmas we face as father time pushes us forward into the golden years.

Some gays and lesbians may be plagued with doubt as they confront issues of intimacy and ageism. Am I still attractive to people my age? We can't be young and beautiful forever! Can I still be sexual in my old age and should I quietly retire to knitting and the shuffleboard court?

Come to the next Lavender Senior Potluck and we'll stare this nagging question in the face. The event will be Saturday, February 10

Calls for Joyce P.?

Joyce Pierson will be on vacation from January 29 to February 21. Please refer any calls for Joyce to Dot Hallinan. Aloha!

There will always be someone begging you to isolate one piece of yourself, one segment of your identity above the others and say, "Here, this is who I am."

Resist trivialization. I am not just a lesbian. I am not just a poet. I am not just a mother. Honor the complexity of your vision and yourselves.
—Audre Lourde, 1989

Progress Report from the President

As we head into 2001 it is a good time to update our Lavender community about what's behind us and what's ahead for our organization.

We are making transitions which our Board of Directors and I believe will protect the future of our program. We've passed our 6th birthday — and, as some of our early members recall, it all started in an empty storefront in a shopping mall in San Leandro. After several get-togethers our monthly potluck meetings began at the San Leandro Community Church when a lesbian member of the church's congregation brought the church and the Lavenders together.

The church was an open and affirming congregation of the American Baptist denomination; they have since lost their standing nationally over disagreements about just who was going to be welcome to enter their doors. Support for our project from Kay Wellington, the pastor, and others from the parish has been unflagging.

Our funded program began two years ago when, after a year of negotiating, we joined forces with two other LGBT agencies (Spectrum of Marin and GLOE in San Francisco) to form a Collaborative of Bay Area Services designed for seniors. These talks were held under the auspices of the Horizons Foundation in San Francisco; Horizons has been a constant supporter of this effort since it began and has awarded the Collaborative grants for developing the program.

A principal outcome of this Collaborative has been the formation of Lavender Seniors as a funded program. The other two member agencies have been operating for some years; Lavender Seniors is in an area of the East Bay which has never before offered these services dedicated exclusively to our senior population.

The first grant was put together for the new Collaborative by several supporters and was submitted to the Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights, who awarded the three agencies a grant of $25,000 which helped leverage further funding from other foundations, grants written by a development consultant and services at all three sites began in February, 1998.

... have written ... three proposals and ... awarded two grants ...

The design of the program called for recruitment, training and appreciation of a group of volunteers who would act as friendly visitors and phone supporters for the isolated, frail members of our community; the second portion of this program is an outreach component wherein trained volunteers appear in small groups as a panel, talking about their lives as gays and lesbians through much of the 20th century.

The panels have presented at various mainstream senior service agencies and centers to social workers and others as an effort to educate care providers about the lives of people in our community. The panels have been an outstanding success and plans are to expand these training efforts.

'President's Report' on page 2
Lavender Notes

is the newsletter of
Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
1395 Bancroft Avenue
San Leandro, CA 94577
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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

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

Board Members-at-large are marked (*) above in Founding Members.

Site Coordinator Joyce Pierson
Admin. Assistant Nancy Fugett

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 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.

Bert Hendriksen, Editor
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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.

President’s Report
(from page one)

Starting up a program like this meant hiring a coordinator, finding office space and setting up documentation systems. Our board gave enthusiastic support and the church agreed to rent us a small office and we were off and running!

For the Collaborative the success of this program became obvious as did the need for continuous funding. Last fall the governing board of the Collaborative concluded that the program aspects were an outstanding success and would be continued by the three agencies.

...the church... an open and affirming congregation...

Fiscally it had become impractical to develop continuous funding from foundations without first addressing issues of sustainability as an independent entity. We have written and submitted three proposals and have been awarded two small grants. We will prepare another to the Alameda Commission on Aging which, if successful, will be awarded in July 2001.

Our end-of-year fund-raising letter brought in over $1,800. So we have a long way to go. We have applied to the Tides Center to be one of their sponsored projects; in other words, they would become our fiscal sponsor for one year; then a new evaluation.

2001 means the beginning of a new phase of development for us. Many thanks to our valued contributors — to the volunteers, board members, staff, church people, folks who attend the potlucks — we’re just at the beginning of our future.

Stay with us for the ride!
—Dotty Fowler, President

Newsletter Mailing Party
Tuesday, Feb. 27, 10:30 A.M.
1395 Bancroft Avenue
San Leandro Community Church

Call Dot Hallinan if you would like to help: 667-9655

Subscription Increase:
Effective January 2001 the annual subscription rate is raised to $15, owing to increased costs of reproduction and distribution.

This newsletter was created in Adobe PageMaker 6.01; a PDF file is available to be viewed in Acrobat Reader.

Send E-mail address to the editor: hendriksen@aol.com
When Love Lasts Forever: Male Couples Celebrate Commitment

Book Review

Merle Jost has compiled an inspiring collection of living testimony by fourteen gay male couples who are still traveling the distance on the road of intimate companionship. The men cover a range of life situations: young couples, old-timers, men with AIDS.

Jost decided early on to insist that couples use their real names when they wrote their stories. They speak for themselves. Problems are not concealed or glossed over. This is life.

Lavender folk of all ages desperately seek role models. There is a tangled web of half truths surrounding gay and lesbian couplings: They have nothing but sex on their minds, the relationships are sick, shallow, and will never last past the end of the month.

I was struck by the story of Terry Colbert and James Mason, an older couple. They touch on the heart of marriage:

One of the reasons so many marriages fail, my parents told me, is that young couples misunderstand the nature of love. They think that it is a state of rapture, going on and on, day after day... The truth is that rapture comes and goes... but love itself is something else.

Couples of both sexes will discover much of themselves in these pages. What we need now is such a collection featuring women and their lives together. It is always challenging to compare the psychology of male and female sexuality. Calling all lesbian psychologists!—Frank Howell

Gay Rights Pioneer Died at 83

The gay rights movement has lost an important historical figure with the death of Hal Call, who in the 1980s was one of the first people in the nation ever to publicly and unrepentantly identify himself as homosexual. He died recently of congestive heart failure in a hospital in Daly City.

As the late writer Randy Shilts put it, San Francisco got “its first permanent gay activist” the day Mr. Call arrived from the Midwest in the fall of 1952.

“He was one of the top 10 most influential people in the early days of the gay rights movement,” said James Sears, a South Carolina scholar and visiting professor at Harvard University who is writing a biography of Mr. Call.

Since the ‘30s, gay men had been gathering secretly in Los Angeles and other cities. Drapes were drawn, passwords needed for entrance. Police often lurked outside. The Mattachine Foundation (it later became the Mattachine Society), one of the earliest gay rights organizations, operated in total stealth, modeling itself on Communist cells and embracing a radical left liberationist philosophy.

Mr. Call and Don Lucas, a close associate, set a new course of public education, helping build services to aid gays who were thrown out of their homes, arrested, blackmailed and persecuted. They started the Mattachine review, one of the first gay or lesbian publications in the country, from an office at Third and Mission streets, that became a kind of community center.

They sought out religious leaders who supported them and founded the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, whose New Year’s Day ball at California Hall in 1965 drew a police raid and became San Francisco’s own Stonewall rebellion — four years before a police raid on the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village led to three nights of rioting and began the gay liberation movement.§
**Does It Matter?**

My father asked if I am gay.
I asked, Does it matter?
He said no, not really.
I said Yes.
He said Get out of my life.
I guess it mattered.

My boss asked if I am gay.
I asked, Does it matter?
He said no, not really.
I told him Yes.
He said You’re fired, faggot.
I guess it mattered.

My friend asked if I am gay.
I said, Does it matter?
He said no, not really.
I told him Yes.
He said Don’t call me your friend.
I guess it mattered.

My lover asked Do you love me?
I asked, Does it matter?
He said Yes.
I told him “I love you.”
He said, Let me hold you in my arms.
For the first time something matters.

My God asked Do you love yourself?
I said, Does it matter?
He said Yes.
I said, How can I love myself?
I am Gay.
He said, That is what I made you,
Nothing again will ever matter.
—anonymous (high school student)


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**Answers about Your Computer and the Internet**

Saturday, February 24, 1 – 5 P.M.

Can’t get answers about computers that a normal person can understand? Do you feel like you’re in the ditch on the information super highway? What do they mean by the Internet? Are you frustrated by techno-babble?

This Saturday afternoon event is for non-technical people, beginning or future users, and anyone who just wants to ask questions. We promise to answer all questions in everyday language.

Volunteers at the center include professional computer users, professional educators, computer students, and a wide variety of beginning, intermediate, and experienced computer and Internet users. Bring your questions – get answers you can readily understand.

Are you interested in building your own Web page but don’t know where to start? We will be hosting an event for real people (not programmers) who are interested in learning how to build a Web page. Web Page Basics will be Saturday March 17 from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. at the Lighthouse CC. Interested individuals are advised (but not required) to attend both events. For more details contact the **Lighthouse Community Center**, 1217 A Street, Hayward, (510) 881-8167. www.haywardlcc.org

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**GLOBE-al Invitation**

**GLOBE** — Gays and Lesbians Organized for Betterment and Equality — is having a program on Tuesday, February 20, 7 P.M. at the Lighthouse Community Center on the subject of *Whose Votes Count?* In light of what happened in Florida in the recent election, Mary Lavelle, from the San Mateo County Registrar of Voters, and Brad Clark, from the Alameda County Registrar of Voters will talk on how California counties examine ballots and count votes. Refreshments, too.

1217 “A” Street, Hayward

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**Ms. Alameda County Leather 2000**

Bianca Vigil Presents *Cupid’s Arrow*, a Pleasure Party & Beer and Soda Bust, featuring demonstrations by Riske Business; Saturday, February 10, 6 – 9 P.M. at the **Rainbow Room**, 21859 Mission Blvd., Hayward.

Shot Special: Pleasure and Pain. Hot Auction and Raffle Items. Proceeds for this event will go to: 95% to the Lighthouse Community Center and 5% to the Alameda County Leather Corps.
Lighthouse News

Afternoon Support Group a Success

Friday, January 12, the Lighthouse Community Center (for the GLBTQ community) held its first afternoon social group for seniors and handicapped in the Hayward center. It made history in that it was the first such group held in the Hayward area. Ten people attended, including one woman; three came from as far as Martinez, in Contra Costa County. Facilitators for this and subsequent group sessions are Lester Marks and Paul Dalwig.

The LCC provided tea and cookies and the attendees brought a lot of animated conversation. The group decided it would meet the second and fourth Fridays each month from 1:30 to 3 P.M. We considered various activities that we might pursue in the future: games, movies, group outings, etc.

At the start we introduce ourselves and tell a bit about our interests and then it goes from there. Some of us would like to spend the time sharing our immediate concerns, although the group is not intended nor is it a therapy group; it is a setting where we can share our thoughts and experiences with new acquaintances.

The topics and/or games will be chosen by the participants. We have but three rules: 1) anonymity of the participants; 2) confidentiality—whatever is said in the group stays in the group; and 3) respect for other people’s opinions. The facilitators have extensive experience and are there to help keep the group moving smoothly. In short, it is a SAFE environment for us to meet, talk and make new friends.

We invite those of you who have these Friday afternoons open (second and fourth) to please come and join us. We realize that each of those who come may have to overcome some reluctance in being “out there” and making the effort to meet new people. We especially encourage those with disabilities and seniors, men and women, to attend. (Lighthouse Community Center is very easy for disabled people to get around in.)

If you need ride sharing call (510) 881-8167 and ask for someone from the Social Group to call you back. The Lighthouse Community Center is located at 1217A Street in Hayward. Call us for directions and we will make every effort to accommodate your transportation needs. The next meeting is Friday, February 9 – 1:30 P.M. We look forward to seeing and meeting you there.—Paul Dalwig

Senior Services

Year-end Review

We now have 27 volunteers providing Friendly Visiting, Telephone Outreach, and Panel Presentations who meet monthly for training, mutual support, case consultation and community building among themselves.

All of us working in the Senior Outreach Services acknowledged recently that not only does the work of this project build community among the unknown Senior Gay, Lesbian, Bi and Transgender folks living throughout Alameda County and parts of Contra Costa County, but being a Senior Outreach Volunteer also enriches our being a part of the LGBT community in ways most of us did not expect.

During January, two more Senior Participants have been matched with a Friendly Visitor, bringing the total number to 12. From February 2000 through January 2001, the Lavender Senior Outreach Services has met its first goals. Currently Berkeley, Oakland, Hayward, Union City, Fremont, San Leandro and El Cerrito have trained volunteers. This March the Shanti organization will be providing additional training for lead volunteers to do team outreach in specific areas, plus we are eligible for on-site technical assistance.

Now there are 74 agencies and their professionals who know about Lavender Seniors and the Outreach Services. Networking among the various aging service providers throughout Alameda County has been a major focus, especially by our presence at the Commission On Aging’s bi-monthly Information and Referral Round Table meetings.

Plans for this year are very promising and we are confident that the Senior Outreach Services will touch even more LGBT Seniors who are isolated and need assistance. For further information on how you can become a Volunteer, contact Lavender Seniors at (510) 667-9655. Leave your name and phone number to be contacted by Joyce Pierson after February 21.

—Joyce Pierson, Coordinator
Presentation of the Month: Merle Yost, Psychologist, Addresses
Aging and Human Sexuality

Saturday, 12 Noon • Monthly Meeting • Program at 1:00 • February 10

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.

Coffee Connections
Socials

Tri-cities Area
(Fremont, Newark and Union City)
First Wednesday every month
10 – Noon
Call Donna (510) 651-7305

North Oakland Area
(Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito)
3rd Thursday every month
No social this month.

East Bay Women's Support Group

Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays each month
February 9 and 23: 1:15 – 3 P.M.
Meets at Pacific Center,
2721 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley

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 $3 door charge and food or drink to share.

Southern Alameda County Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
2001

March 9 & 10 – 7 P.M.
Chabot College’s Little Theater
$10 General Admission
$8 Youth & Seniors
Complimentary Refreshments
For more information call Darci Meyers at (510) 247-8215
Movie Titles Available Soon

Women Over Fifty and Friends WOFF

A social club for lesbians, WOFF has an active social schedule. Monthly potluck-planning meeting the first Saturday of each month at 6 P.M. For information, contact Barbara Konecný or Barbara Jue, 508 Broadmore, San Leandro, (510) 633-0398.

Newsletter of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
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Volunteer Services Program • 1395 Bancroft Ave. • San Leandro, CA 94577 • (510) 667-9655