



LAVENDER NOTES

Newsletter of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

Volume VI, No.7 – July 2001

A Volunteer Services Program — project of The Tides Center
• 1395 Bancroft Ave. • San Leandro, CA 94577 • (510) 667-9655 •

President's Report

As I write this report, we're working our proverbial tails off putting together a grant proposal for a project that we hope will be funded by the Department of Aging, Health, and Human Services in the City of Oakland.

The goal of our pilot project, called *Opening Doors*, is to work in collaboration with the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum, now headquartered in Oakland, and other LGBT organizations and senior services providers, in order to reach out to isolated and under-served African-American elders in Oakland, and to find out how we can make Friendly Visiting and other services more relevant and accessible to those seniors. We realize that there are many racial, ethnic, cultural, and class barriers within the LGBT community, as there are in society as a whole, and that those barriers are not easily bridged. In short, we have a lot to learn.

We hope that the project will eventually help us reach out to other ethnic groups in our area as well. As everybody knows, the Bay Area is one of the most diverse in the country and becoming more so as time goes by. We are excited by the prospect of working on this important, groundbreaking project and especially appreciate the cooperation and enthusiasm of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum.

KQED sent a letter to Lavender Seniors thanking us for the help we gave them in their pledge drive on Sunday June 10. Nine of us helped raise over \$28,000 for KQED in the four hours we were in the studio. We're not sure if viewers saw enough of us—in our new Lavender Seniors T-shirts—to bring much more visibility to our organization, but we look upon it as a community service that was a unique and enjoyable experience.

Several of us are continuing to work on putting together the Bay Area Community Elder Day Conference on Thursday August 30 at the First Unitarian Church in Oakland at the corner of 14th Street and Castro. Parking is available and the church is near the 12th Street (City Center) BART Station. The conference takes place in conjunction with the ILGA Gay Global Summit that is going on the entire last week of August, ending with East Bay Pride festivities.

'President's Report' on page 3

Put Your Money Where the Hat Is

The girl in the flowered dress was born March 21, 1934 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. There were six brothers and three sisters. Her mother married in 1922 and died in 1989; she had 14 pregnancies.

During World War II the family moved to Oakland where so many jobs were opening up because of the war. Papa worked in the Oakland shipyards. Later, in 1958, father committed suicide in a car, in a parking lot, by attaching a hose to the exhaust pipe. A nun found him: "the candles went out" and our mystery girl thought it was her fault even though "I was a good girl; but mother was embarrassed."

Papa was a carpenter and he built her a doll's house. When she was pregnant with her own child he'd said, "I hope you have a girl." Three days later was when the candle went out. She went to Hayward High and loved sports, especially baseball and volleyball.

"I went to work at Owens-Illinois glass container factory at eighteen. I was just going to work for a few months while I was waiting to enter the convent. I had my papers all filled out, but when my friend who was going in with me got married, I backed out." She worked for Owens-Illinois for 27 years, working on continuously rotating shifts — there were four shifts a day.

She saved all the silver dollars she could find to buy a house and after marrying Harry they moved to Castro Valley with their kids. She gave birth to one boy and three girls, all within three years and eight months.

There were poker parties every Friday night. Hers was a typical Mexican family, "they loved to have a good time." When Harry started drinking too much, she decided enough was more than enough and broke up with him in 1967. In the Catholic church there is no divorce and Harry was obedient, generous with her. He gave her the house and the TV.

'Put Your Money' on page two



Don Jose Cardinas and me. He helped raise us younger kids. I hated to have a dress on (New Mexico, 1940).

A 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. 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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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

Carol Beth, Bill Baillie, Doreen Brand, *Meg Bruynell, *Marvin Burrows, Shirley Dennett, John Ellefsen, Dotty Fowler, Dorothy Hallinan, Beverly Hickock, Jerry Holmes, Frank Howell, Doris Fischer, Bobbie Jarvis, James Joslin, Barbara Jue, Barbara Konecny, Stella Lopez Armijo, Bonnie Jean MacKenzie, *Donna Montgomery, *Ina Mae Murri, Diane Nagy, Ray Robb, Camille Scontrino, Don Silva, Margaret Shepherd, Bill Swenor, and *Natalie Zarchin

Advisory Board Officers

John Ellefsen, President
Frank Howell, Vice President
Ina Mae Murri, Secretary
Bobbie Jarvis, Treasurer
 Board Members-at-large:
Eugene Marangoni, and
 marked (*) in *Founding Members*.

Project Director *Dotty Fowler*
Site Coordinator *Joyce Pierson*
Admin. Assistant *Nancy Fugett*
Newsletter Editor *Bert Hendriksen*

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.

Lavender Notes is mailed on the first of each month. Entries must be received by the third Sunday of the previous month. Entries may be edited for space or clarity.

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. §

Put Your Money

(from page one)

After that Jack, a gay guy, lived with her for years. He lived free for taking care of the house. "He had dinner ready when I came home; he looked like Elton John but he started drinking too much, too." She began to go out with women from work and they started going to bars. "I turned into a slut, picking up women at bars, I had a house and a car, they liked me because I had all that stuff."

On June 29, 1980 she met Ina — at the Gay Pride Parade in San Francisco. Ina was working for Affirmations, the gay Mormons, at the Parade. They exchanged phone numbers. At that time she was going with two women and, "I broke up with both of them." She had a job, didn't drink, had a house. They started going to the SOL (Slightly Older Lesbians) at the Pacific Center and formed a group they called the ROL (Really Old Lesbians). After two years she said "I love you" to Ina. At first she was afraid of Ina's family, what they might think about her but it turned out that there was nothing to be afraid of — "they were great."

Her own kids were OK about her being a lesbian, she talked to each one separately about it. Even her daughter, after she dried out, was OK about it.

She and Ina have been doing activist acts for years — like putting chains on themselves and marching around the Mormon Temple in Oakland. She's finding her later life to be happy. "I love the flowers in my garden and I love garage sales and if I want to be alone I go to the garage for awhile. And you know what, one time in the Catholic Church when they said 'peace be with you,' I turned around and kissed Ina." Many of you will know by now that I am writing about *Stella Lopez Armijo*, expert hat passer and raffle ticket hustler for Lavender Seniors.

Many thanks for all you do for us, Stella! — *Dotty Fowler*

Editor's Note: The source of the photograph on page one is:

A Lesbian Photo Album
 The Lives of Seven Lesbian Feminists
 by Cathy Cade
 Water Women Books, Oakland 1987

Senior Outreach Volunteer Support Meeting

For all Friendly Visitor and Phone Volunteers
 Thursday, July 5, Noon – 2 P.M.
 Bring a Bag Lunch
 Drinks and Dessert provided
 1395 Bancroft Avenue

See Joyce's *Outreach Update* on page 5.

Subscription Renewals

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

Saturday Support Meeting

For all Friendly Visitor and Telephone Volunteers who cannot attend a workday meeting.
Saturday, July 7, 10 A.M. – Noon
 Upstairs Office
 1395 Bancroft Avenue

See Joyce's *Outreach Update* on page 5.

This newsletter is available in **Adobe Acrobat Reader** via E-mail; send E-mail address to the editor: hendriksen@aol.com
 (510) 652-6906

BOOKS

Reviewed by
Frank Howell

The Essential Guide To Lesbian & Gay Weddings

By Tess Ayers & Paul Brown
Alyson Books – \$17.95, Paperback

Equal Rites: Lesbian & Gay Worship, Ceremonies and Celebrations

Edited by Littredge Cherry & Zalmon Sherwood
Westminster John Knox Press
Paperback

It is summertime and thoughts of marriage pop into our hearts. But if you are a gay or lesbian couple how does one go about it? We turn to the expertise of those who have pioneered the territory.

Tess Ayers, a former TV producer and Paul Brown, who has produced a number of special events provide a finely detailed guide to every possible question you may have: types of wedding rings, locations, what to wear, food, gifts, music. What makes this gay mentor especially useful is that it is based on the testimony of other gay couples and how they did it; mistakes they made and how they were resolved. So we have the distilled wisdom of many minds. This is backed up by a selection of handy sidebars and illustrations.

The second volume on equal rites is a totally different animal. Kittredge Cherry has wide experience as a public relations officer at Metropolitan Community Church and once worked in MCC, San Francisco. Zalmon Sherwood is an Episcopal priest. This widely ranging collection of articles considers not only gay and lesbian wedding ceremonies (or whatever term you prefer) but also rites centered around the blessing of a motor bike, holy communion, funerals, and celebrations of gay pride.

Here you will find the complete texts of ceremonies such as the one used by Rev. Troy Perry at the 1993 March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights in the nation's capital city.

So, what are you waiting for? A glittering array of celebration awaits you!—*Frank Howell*

Help With The Tables

At the end of each potluck, help is needed to fold up the tables and put them away. Folks have a tendency to flee the building and leave one or two people struggling with all those tables. Help would be greatly appreciated!

Thank you very much!

President's Report

(concluded from page one)

Highlights will include a morning workshop on multicultural issues, featuring a panel of speakers from various ethnic communities, a legal issues workshop with Kate Kendall of NCLR, and a roundtable discussion of model programs serving LGBT seniors, including our own local award-winning Collaborative and SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), which has offered a variety of programs for LGBT seniors in New York City for many years.

Included in the \$20 pre-registration fee (no one will be turned away for lack of funds) is lunch, free tickets to East Bay Pride weekend activities and, during the conference, refreshing breaks with Purple Moon exercises and a Mother Tongue performance. After the conference is over at 5 P.M., head for a free performance by Gwen Avery at the City Center Plaza. For more information and to pre-register, to volunteer, or for special needs, call John Ellefsen at 510-583-9638 or Marian Abdullah at 510-223-1533.

—*John Ellefsen, President*

July Theme

The July potluck program will feature Lani Ka'ahumanu, who will discuss the subject of **Bisexuality**. Lani is a long-time nationally recognized activist, organizer, and writer in the bisexual community. As a chosen identity, bisexuality still stirs up controversy. It took considerable struggle to add the name "bisexual" to gay and lesbian organizations and events. Yet many of us, perhaps even most of us, have some kind of bisexual history, even if we don't claim bisexual as our primary identity. Are bisexuals "confused," "sitting on the fence," "trying to play on both sides of the street," "not fully accepting their homosexuality," "in just a passing stage," "oversexed"?

Or, alternatively, are bisexuals genuinely (if differently) attracted to both women and men? Is it just about sex? Or is there more to it? Is everyone potentially bisexual (or, as some psychologists have insisted, is everyone in their unconscious essentially bisexual)? What is the history of bisexuality? How many varieties of bisexuality are there? Is dividing the human race into heterosexual / homosexual categories too rigid, restrictive, unrealistic?

What are the political and social ramifications of having bisexuality as a viable option? The questions and issues are almost endless — very provocative. Come with questions, comments, observations, and an open mind!

*Why is it that doctors call what
they do "practice"?*

EX-GAY MOVEMENT EXPLORED

There has been an explosion of controversy in recent years centering around the so-called efforts by fundamentalist religious groups to convert gays and lesbians to the straight and narrow.

At the June potluck of Lavender Seniors Todd Ferrell and Bill Byrd related the rise of this curious new movement.

Todd has interviewed several people who experienced the ex-gay meetings and the pressure to change. His research reveals that Exodus International began in 1976 and established chapters at both the national and international levels. In 1980 at their fifth national conference the group officially declared that homosexuality is a sin and cannot co-exist with Christian faith.

Exodus moved to a permanent location in San Rafael and adopted the more popular name "Love in Action." At one time the homophobic movement began to die out but was abruptly revived by the emergence of AIDS. In 1995 the Marin County office was invaded by the Lesbian Avengers who dumped thousands of crickets on the conservative group.

Many causes of gayness were attributed to demon possession, child molestation, peer rejection and weak fathers and dominant mothers.

Those who are really serious about converting are required to live at the San Rafael location for two years. They are subjected to intense Bible study, rigid thought control, and ex-gayers are forbidden to go to places of temptation like San Francisco. Radio and television watching is tightly controlled.

One man was even advised that it was better to take his own life than continue living the gay life. He tragically followed the deadly directive.

Bill related his own ordeal of being shunned by members of his church because of his gayness. He emphasized the use of homophobic Bible verses called Clobber Passages as a means of driving home the point.

Bill pointed out that a number of Web sites are available for those seeking additional information, such as www.dispellingthemyth.com.

It is essential that everyone be aware of how the anti-gay movement views the world and puts their beliefs into action.—*Frank Howell*

Lighthouse Anniversary

After our Potluck on Saturday July 14, drop by the Lighthouse Community Center to help celebrate the first birthday of the Lighthouse, which opened its welcoming doors exactly one year ago! There will be refreshments, entertainment, and a raffle.

The Center is located at 1217 "A" St. in Hayward (near 2nd Street and next door to the "A" Street Café). The party starts at noon, but will run until 4 P.M., so there's time to enjoy both events that day. For more info, call 510-881-8167.

August Picnic

Come out to the great outdoors! Join Lavender Seniors, GLOBE, the Lighthouse Community Center, Lambda Youth, East Bay Network, and GLSEN at the annual Pride Picnic.

This year it will start at 11:00 A.M. on Saturday August 18 at Anthony Chabot Regional Park in Castro Valley.

Directions and more details will appear in the August issue of *Lavender Notes*. It is a great way to meet other local folks and share food, conversation, and fun in the sun and shade by the shores of Lake Chabot!

Happy Birthday!

Carol Parker

Jerry Washington

July 1

Bill Swenor

July 6

Dick Colton

July 11

Patricia Sousa

July 12

Bea Howard

July 13

Tom Long

July 15

Emiko Dare

Nancy Fugett

July 16

Cynthia Dunn

July 19

Grant Brown

July 25

Patricia Mahaffey

July 28

Rick Bolton

July 31

What do you think?

Should these *birthday folks* receive recognition each month at the potluck luncheon?

**HE IS THERE FOR US – LET'S BE THERE FOR
JOHAN KLEHS
FOR STATE CONTROLLER**

Thursday July 19, 2001

**CARPENTER'S HALL IN HAYWARD
Attorney General BILL LOCKYER
SPEAKER**

No Host Cocktails 6:00 P.M.

Dinner 7:00 P.M.

**\$25.00 DONATION REQUESTED
DIRECTIONS TO CARPENTER'S HALL**

Take I-580 South and take Hayward Off-ramp;
at first stop light, turn right onto Mattox.
Carpenter's Hall is 1060 Mattox. If you reach
Mission Street, you have gone too far.

**RSVP & TICKETS CONTACT:
CHARLENE SHORES 510-538-9722
OR MARVIN BURROWS 510-5378731**

SENIOR OUTREACH UPDATE

I am mostly recovered from my accident and have been getting back into my usual work and trying to catch up on phone calls and upcoming activities.

As most of you are aware, Lavender Seniors is now officially within the Alameda County's Older American's Title III Social Services network. A grant for \$10,000 to provide LGBT Senior Outreach Services has been allocated for the fiscal year July 2001 through June 2002. This federal funding will help us continue Friendly Visiting, Phone Outreach and Community Education and to extend services to diverse LGBT elders throughout the county.

The Area Agency On Aging of Alameda County administers the Older Americans Act Senior Nutrition and Social Services programs. In the coming month there will be an on-site visit with Lisa Ho, the program analyst assigned to Lavender Seniors. She will provide the Outreach Volunteers training on the various Senior Resources available and how to make referrals. The date will be announced.

The grant calls for the Outreach Services to serve 30 new Seniors. To date, we have provided Friendly Visits to 15 persons in their homes and the number of seniors who have received telephone outreach totals 189. Each month I remind folks of the need for more Friendly Visitor Volunteers to be trained by this Fall. One new volunteer joined in May plus two new inquiries are pending. There is a need for some Lesbian Volunteers in the Hayward-Castro Valley areas. If you would like to join the Speaker's Panel there will be a training in August for new volunteers.

My office hours are sporadic, but do leave me a voice mail and I will return your call within 24 hours. Thanks to all who sent me good wishes during my convalescence last month.

—Joyce Pierson, Senior Outreach Coordinator

NOTED

by Sidney Pouffe

Julie Craig, Kathy McCarter, and Carol Beth were part of the receiving line at the Hayward gay prom in June. It was a fun and rewarding thing to do and Carol Beth and Kathy can't think of a better way they could have spent their 24th anniversary. They did get to dinner just a wee bit late, but for such a worthwhile event, no complaints were heard.

It seems that Marvin looked really marvelous in his tux!

Hope more lavender seniors will join them next year!

Social Events in July

The reign of Royal Grand Duke IX Norman Levesque and Royal Grand Duchess Cseneca Greenwood comes to a spectacular end on the weekend of July 6 – 8. The festivities begin Friday evening July 6 at 9 P.M. at the Rainbow Room at 21859 Mission Blvd. in Hayward with a Royal Grand Roast of His and Her Highnesses.

No charge for the event, but you can help the Ducal Council raise funds for local charities by thinking of the wittiest, campiest, or meanest ways to roast the Duke and Duchess at \$1 per minute (anything goes!) or if you insist on saying only nice things about them you can get by at the flat rate of \$5.

On the next evening, Saturday July 7, comes the Grand Ducal Ball at Centennial Hall in Hayward on Civic Center Drive behind the Safeway shopping center. Doors open at 6 P.M. and the show starts promptly at 7 P.M. A free buffet, no-host bar, plenty of entertainment, and some of the most extravagant drag outfits to be seen all year will be there. The admission is \$25 at the door. Dress up or down and come prepared to meet, greet, and party with a host of other organizations and businesses in the East Bay LGBT community.

Since the ball has to end at 11 P.M., that's plenty of time to get your beauty rest and come to the Victory Brunch at the Rainbow Room at 11 A.M. on Sunday July 8. \$10 for all you can eat and a royal send-off of Norm and Cseneca for their year-long labor of love and support.

Leather Corps

The Alameda County Leather Corps presents its annual Title Contest Show on Saturday evening, July 14 at the Hill and Valley Club, 1808 "B" St., Hayward, \$20 admission. Doors open at 6:30 P.M. and the show starts at 7. Free finger food, silent auction, and cash bar. The theme of this year's show is "Shock" and the contestants for the titles of Mr. and Ms. Alameda County Leather will be put through their paces in speech, leather image wear, leather erotic wear, and fantasy presentations. The judges will include some of the leading representatives of the Bay Area leather community. The Grand Prize Drawing is for a portable DVD/Video CD/CD Player worth \$1000 and the winner need not be present.

Calendar of Activities

Presentation of the Month:

Bisexuality is the subject.

Lani Ka'ahumanu is our presenter. *Lani* is a long-time, nationally recognized activist and organizer.

(Please see 'July Theme' on page 3 for enticing preview of the subject.)

Saturday, 12 Noon • Monthly Potluck Meeting • Program at 1 P.M. • July 14

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.

Senior Men's Afternoon

1:30 – 3:30 P.M.

2nd and 4th Thursdays

July 12 and 26

**2712 Telegraph Avenue,
Berkeley**

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

T-shirts

Lavender Senior Logo

Lavender Seniors has an array of new T-shirts available with the special LS logo on them. They come in all sizes from M to XL.

This is one way the group raises funds and brings visibility to our program efforts, so join the gayday crowd and get your outfit ready for June! \$15 each.

Shirts are always available at the potluck meeting, and by arrangement: 667-9655.

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 \$3 donation.

Board Members Needed!

Take on a new and challenging role. Become a board member of Lavender Seniors. Help our organization to reach out into the broader community. Call the Senior office for further details: 667-9655.

Let the Lavender voice be heard in the San Francisco Bay Area.

East Bay Women's Support Group

Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays each month

July 13 and 27: 1:15 – 3 P.M.

Meets at *Pacific Center*,
2712 Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley

Women Over Fifty and Friends

WOFF

is a social club for lesbians and 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.