



LAVENDER NOTES

Newsletter of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

Volume VII, No.4 – April 2002

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

The 'Prez Sayz'

During the past several months, I've been working on a number of projects, including requests for funding from various foundations, so that Lavender Seniors can continue and slowly expand the services we are now providing.

One proposal was recently submitted to **The California Endowment**, a charitable foundation created a number of years ago when Blue Cross of California changed from a non-profit to a private, for-profit organization. The proposal asks for funding to expand our new Service Coordinator's hours, to make it possible for Enid Stern and the Speakers Panel to do significantly more presentations and trainings to mainstream senior service agencies. We have not been able to do nearly as many training sessions as we would like because the current limit of 15 hours per week on the Coordinator's job simply doesn't afford enough time.

In reviewing our proposal, the program officer at The California Endowment showed interest in our program and asked us to supply more information on how we would evaluate the results of the trainings. So in response, we have been working on developing a set of questions, to be given to those in attendance at the trainings, which will measure what we hope to accomplish with that particular service. In short, one of our aims is to increase our services and at the same time make them as useful and effective as possible.

Another interesting project recently came our way when **Ombudsman, Inc., of Alameda County** was awarded a grant to translate information about various services offered to seniors and their caretakers into four different languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Farsi (the language used by Afghan-Americans). Ombudsmen, along with Legal Assistance to Seniors, asked us join them in this project. In the initial meeting that Dotty Fowler attended, along with representatives from those ethnic communities, it became clear that the cultural and religious traditions of those diverse ethnic populations must be taken into careful account in terms of how we describe our services. Using terms such as "lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender," which many of us are accustomed to using openly and proudly, would only frighten away or alienate the very people we are hoping to reach. So we have to find other ways to describe our services.

'Prez Sayz' continued on page 4

Born in Jersey City

Lavender 'PunK' (Person unKnown) of-the-Month

Born in Jersey City in 1936, "*PunK*" was the first child of two, born to Irish immigrants Richard and Anna who came to the U.S. when still a teenager. Anna, the mother, was one of 14 kids, her dad one of nine. Separated from their families, Anna and Richard were sent to this country under the sponsorship of distant relatives. After they came here they always sent money back to their parents in Ireland. Later other siblings arrived, too.

The family with their two young children moved to Bayonne near the shipyard because there was work there for immigrants. Many immigrants lived in a close knit Catholic community, building churches, attending school where everyone knew each other – the whole community worked together.

After finishing high school (at age 17) she and ten of her friends entered the convent as young postulate nuns; *PunK* entered an order called Helpers of the Holy Soul, a French group with four or five convents in the U.S. For young working-class women it was a way to get away from home, into a world of one's own. She was sent to Chappaqua, New York and trained for social work, then was sent to college in Chicago where she majored in psychology, then on to Marquette University for an M.A. in theology.

In 1962, after spending a year in France polishing up her French, she returned to Chappaqua to teach French and theology, then in 1963 she was sent to San Francisco to become the assistant to the Superior at a convent across from UC Extension doing group encounters at the Extension and teaching theology.



It was the 60's, things were changing in San Francisco, the world and the church. Nuns began wearing lay clothes and moved out into the community more. In a parish in south San Francisco where she began teaching religion to teenagers she met Carol Martin who had left the convent two years earlier. Carol was also working with the teenagers and they started doing fun things together with the kids – like skiing. She said that once on a ski trip the kids yelled at her "snowplow, sister, snowplow" (nuns are not supposed to ski).

'PunK-of-the-Month' on page 4

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, Gateway Initiative of the SF Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, Horizons Foundation, The Jay Cohen Philanthropic Fund, The Nathan Cummings Foundation, and "100 Lesbians and Our Friends." We gratefully acknowledge this support and that from all other donors.

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is the newsletter of
Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
 1395 Bancroft Avenue
 San Leandro, CA 94577
 510-667-9655
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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.

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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. §

Outreach Report

Greetings Dear Friends & Volunteers,

It's not often that you come into a new position and are so warmly welcomed, thanks to all of you who have made my first month at **Lavender Seniors** a great experience. I am still getting my bearings and getting my feet firmly on the ground.

To my Friendly Visitor Volunteers, I apologize for any miscommunication or unclarity that I may have caused in this first month. I want to take this opportunity to tell each of you that the **Monthly Volunteer Meetings** will resume on the 3rd **Saturday** of each month starting in April.

The agency is making strides at obtaining more visibility among the mainstream elder services providers. For those of you who may not know we are a contractor for Alameda County Area on Aging, a division of the county of Alameda Social Services. With more visibility comes more accountability, which means we will need to document our activities much more closely. I say all of this to emphasize, please, each of you mark your calendars now so that you can be in attendance at our next meeting on **April 20**. We will meet from **10:00 – 12:00** at the San Leandro Community Church. We will address some key issues around documentation and we will have a basic volunteer training.

It is our intention to increase our outreach and service provision in the coming months and it will take the concerted efforts of each of us to achieve our goals. We provide a service to a community that has too long been neglected. The many LGBT brothers and sisters who have paved the way are now deserving of our loving time and attention, and no one can do that better than we.

Peace & Blessings

—*Enid Stern*, Site Coordinator

Old Dyke Awards

On March 3, we attended the PAT BOND MEMORIAL OLD DYKE AWARDS at St. John's Presbyterian Church in Berkeley. What an afternoon! Three of this year's five **Extraordinary Lesbians Over 60** are members of the Lavender Seniors! We were so proud to share the day with them!

Member *Marion Abdullah* has been active in the Women's Building, PFLAG, Oakland Mardi Gras, East Bay Pride, and OLOC, organizing their yearly Conference for Elders.

Member *Dotty Fowler* is a founding member and volunteer program director of Lavender Seniors since its inception. She has been active in the gay community since the 70's and was an original board member of many LGBT organizations.

Member *Barbara Konecny* is a longtime community activist and is the founder and nurturer of WOFF which has created a vibrant older lesbian community in the East Bay.

Alice Molloy and *Carol Wilson*, owners of **Mama Bear's Bookstore** for over 30 years, were the other two honorees.

Comic Karen Ripley and musician Gwen Avery kept us laughing and dancing in the aisles; and last of all – the Hors d'oeuvres Reception was terrific! Our hat is off to the Pat Bond Committee and New Leaf Outreach to Elders.

—*Bobbie Jarvis and Meg Bruynell*

Subscription Renewals

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

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

Money, Myths And Change:**The Economic Lives of Lesbians And Gay Men**

By M. V. Lee Badgett
University of Chicago
Press, 2001 – \$40.00

Most gays and lesbians I know are people of average means and they are tired of hearing from the radical right about the manner in which we roll about in unlimited wealth and splendor. Ms. Badgett, Professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts (and research director of the Institute For Gay and Lesbian Studies) is also growing impatient with this ceaseless propaganda.

Our lavender economist has plowed through all the charts and graphs and has concluded that many of us just manage to pay our bills each month. The credit cards get a good workout. Folks like you and me are frequently referred to by researchers as DINK (double income, no kids). The trouble seems to stem from the questionnaires submitted to queer inhabitants by the Advocate and other such publications. Those who respond tend to be upper middle class, well educated men and women.

Those at the lower levels are usually left out. What we need is a true random sample of the pink population and not just the curious who enjoy filling out surveys. This would be like doing a study on blacks and relying strictly on magazines such as Ebony, Jet or Essence. One study found that gay men, on average, made less money than straight men, but lesbians earned more than their straight counterparts. But it is difficult to get a decent sample because of people hiding in the closet. But our intrepid investigator has other fish to fry. She only devotes the first part of her work to the income question.

Badgett then explores the percentages involving job discrimination. In 1987, 191 Alaska employers were polled regarding the hiring of gays and lesbians. 27% of the bosses would not hire people like us; 26% would not promote gays; 18% would fire them. Another survey of gays and lesbians found that 16% – 30% reported discrimination. Domestic partners rights are a prime concern these days. But many don't sign up for fear of exposure. Employers are hesitating on this issue because of the cost and possible backlash from customers. They also fear that high AIDS costs might emerge. Other people might try to be included such as relatives and other who are the genuine partners. But so far costs do not appear to be out of line.

Gay historian John D'Emilio feels that capitalism made our supposed lavender clout possible through niche marketing. The Internet has also been a major factor. The gay and lesbian periodicals are also a factor in creating this prosperity. Circulation has reached over one million. Of course, making dollars tends to predominate. We now wonder if there is a role to be played by gay economic pressure; boycotting of certain products has yielded mixed success. Perhaps we can take a hint from conservative Christians who refuse to invest in corporations who offer domestic-partner benefits. But this too has limited possibilities.

Another area to consider is gay political pressure. About 100 million has been donated to gay organizations, but as a group queers give less than one per cent of their incomes to the lavender causes. There is an awesome potential there yet to be tapped. Thank god for Ms. Badgett. We certainly need more authentic data to counter homophobic claims. The research potential has yet to be tapped. The next time Jerry Falwell preaches to his flock that we have unlimited economic power in the market place, reach for this book.

—Frank Howell

T-Shirts with Logo

We have Lavender Seniors T-shirts for sale at the office. Our attractive logo is imprinted on a lavender triangle on a white T-shirt. Cost is only \$15 and they come in all sizes. Time to suit up for Gay Month!

The T-shirts are available at our potlucks, or if you need to make special arrangements to get one, call the office at 510-667-9655. *Dare To Wear*, we suggest, because it's a good way to start a conversation about our organization and services.

Islamic Gays/Lesbians

The featured speaker at the next Lavender Seniors Potluck, Saturday April 13, will be Faris Malik, who represents the Al-Fatiha Foundation which is attempting to bring gay and lesbian liberation to the Muslim world.

The foundation reaches out to gay, lesbian and transgender Muslims everywhere and attempt to provide a safe place for those who do not fit into the traditional Islamic concept of marriage and family.

Al-Fatiha has sponsored four conferences since 1998 in Boston, New York, London, and most recently, in San Francisco. Thirty-five members of the group marched in the most recent SF Gay Pride Parade. The emergence of the new group has come none too soon. Islamic countries have increased drives against gay Muslims in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Gay men have been imprisoned and even beheaded.

Faris Malik converted to his new faith after being raised as a Christian. As head of the local chapter of Al-Fatiha, Mr. Malik spearheaded the recent demonstration against the Egyptian Consulate. He has a Website (Born Eunuchs Home Page) which presents homosexual identity in ancient Western history and religion. He attends a traditional Sufi mosque in Oakland.

(E-mail: queerjhd@well.com)

\$200 Each!**'Winners' at Film Festival**

Lavender Seniors, in conjunction with Lamda Youth held a successful raffle at the recent Southern Alameda County Lesbian/Gay Film Festival. A total of \$200 each for Lavender Seniors and Lamda Youth was collected.

Tickets were enthusiastically sold by Stella Lopez-Armijo. Prizes included stuffed animals, knitted Afghans, a can crusher and other smaller items.

Lavender 'PunK' (Person unKnown) of-the-Month

(from page 1)

The *PunK* encountered more difficulty when she signed a petition against the Pope's position on contraception — she was called on the carpet and told not to counsel anyone about contraception. Finally in 1968 she told the church authorities she was leaving — with about \$200 to her name! She moved in with Carol, worked for awhile, then returned to school for an M.A. in counseling and became a school psychologist.

She had never heard the word "lesbian" and she and Carol were both dating men. One night two women friends came over for dinner and one of them said, "Are you two lesbians, too?" She and Carol worked through it all, over time, and after much introspection/process became partners; coming out was a challenging experience for them both. Our "*PunK*"-of-the-Month is **Dot Hallinan**, retired in 1998 and she's appreciating retirement. She said, "Life is such a gift. It's a miracle to be able to



Dot and Carol (left and right)

be retired and have a pension, choose what we want to do. I was born in the Depression, had to work whether I liked it or not. If you didn't marry somebody you really had to work. We can relax now and choose what we want to do. I'm enjoying retirement. Enjoyment — I got that from my Irish background."

—Dotty Fowler

'Prez Says'

(from page one)

Many of us have struggled long and hard to come out of the closet, and we wish that all of our brothers and sisters could do the same. But we should remember that many seniors **must** keep their sexual orientation and love life secret or pay the penalty of complete rejection by their families and communities and as a result suffer terrible isolation. In reaching out to those communities we need to stress very strongly the confidential nature of our contacts with potential participants. Thus, producing a new, special brochure to be translated into those four languages is a big challenge. However, we are very enthusiastic about this opportunity to offer our services to a more diverse group of seniors. We hope to make our friendly visiting services available to same-gender-loving seniors in **all** communities and at the same time respect their vital need for privacy and confidentiality.

—John Ellefsen, President

Cohorts Sought for Study of GL Seniors

Studies on Gay and Lesbian Seniors are few and far between. Dr. Brian deVries and his graduate assistant David Megathlin are eager to conduct a study on the dynamics of friendships among gay and lesbian seniors; as David explains, "he and I are now exploring differences in how older gays and lesbians (over 55 years of age) view friendship. We want to see if there are differences between the LGBT community and the heterosexual community."

The research will require a 40 minute interview. Questions will concern such matters as "What is your definition of a friend?" "Do you consider your friends your family," and "Do you believe friendships are more important to gays and lesbians than to heterosexuals?" The study is being conducted at Gerontology Department at San Francisco State University: 759 Font Blvd. Apt. A-115, San Francisco (94132). Telephone: 415-405-8429, cell phone 415-225-7048.

¡Happy Birthday!

Glenn Cummins

April 2

Earle Brown

April 5

Dorothea Carter

Don Green

Gordon Osser

April 7

Ray Robb

April 12

Tracy O'Kates

April 13

Julia Craig

April 14

Dorothy Chevalier

Iris Crider

April 15

John Ellefsen

April 24

Kate Rosenblatt

April 26

Amoi Leung

April 29

Free Workshop

Join our collaborative partner Spectrum for a free workshop on creating a caring community for LGBT seniors on Monday,

April 29, 10 A.M. – 2 P.M.

Lunch included. Call Nancy at 415-457-1115 ext. 213

Presentation of the Month: Faris Malik – of the Al-Fatiha Foundation

*The Al-Fatiha Foundation is attempting to bring gay and lesbian liberation to the Muslim world.
(See page 3 for more informaton.)*

Saturday, 12 Noon • Monthly Potluck Meeting • Program at 1 P.M. • April 13

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.

AARP Tax-Aide Offers Free Tax Preparation Assistance

Free Assistance in tax preparation and free electronic filing are available through AARP Tax-Aide. To qualify, you need a copy of your tax returns from the previous year. AARP Tax-Aide volunteers are trained by the IRS to help middle- and low-income taxpayers of any age, with special attention to those 60 years or older.

AARP Tax-Aide operates nearly 10,000 sites across the country, most located in banks, malls and libraries. Eight hundred of these sites can file your taxes electronically at no charge.

To find a site year you log on to www.aarp.org/taxaide or call toll free (888) 227-7669. AARP Tax-Aide is administered by the AARP Foundation in cooperation with the IRS.

Where to get more information:

The IRS offers help on preparing and filing your 2001 taxes: BB Answers to tax questions: Call (800) 829-1040, from 7 a.m. - 10 p.m. Monday-Friday and 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Saturday.

For IRS taxpayer help and education online go to www.irs.gov/plain/tax_edu/index.html.

Copies of forms and publications: Call (800) 829-3676, or go to www.irs.gov/plain/forms_pubs/index.html.

A Wake-up Call on Losing Bone Mass

More older American women than previously suspected are showing signs of osteoporosis, the thinning of the bones that can lead to life-threatening fractures.

A study of 200,000 healthy post-menopausal women found that almost half of them had low bone mass, and 7 percent had full-blown, but previously undetected, osteoporosis.

“Nudge your doctor,” advises Ethel Siris, M.D., head of the Toni Stabile Osteoporosis Center at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York. “If you’re 65 or over, get tested. Now.”

Advancing age is “the prime risk factor,” Siris tells the AARP Bulletin.

Some protective measures:

- Take 1,200 to 1,500 milligrams (mgs), of calcium daily.
- Take 600 to 800 mgs of vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium.
- Do strength and balance exercises to help prevent falls.
- Learn about drugs that can treat or slow osteoporosis.

Siris and her colleagues reported on the National Osteoporosis Risk Assessment study in the Dec. 15 Journal of the American Medical Association.

Source: AARP newsletter, February 2002

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.

Community Listings

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.

April 14

East Bay Women's Support Group

Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays each month

April 12 and 26: 1:15 – 3 P.M.

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

Senior Men's Afternoon

1:30 – 3:30 P.M.

2nd and 4th Thursdays
April 11 and 25

2712 Telegraph Avenue,
Berkeley

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

Alameda County Leather Corps
presents a

"Bear Weekend"

"A Fuzzy Boy Production"

"Briefs, Boxers, and Bears
Underwear Party,"

Friday, April 5, 7 – 10 P.M.

Meet and greet the contestants of
the first ever

"Mr. Alameda County Bear
Competition"

Saturday, April 6, 7 – 10 P.M.

Come out of hibernation and join
us as we select the first ever Mr.
Alameda County Bear. On both
evenings there will be entertain-
ment, auction, boot black, food,
prize drawings, etc. 100% of the
proceeds will go to
two beneficiaries:

In Memory Foundation and
Camp Sunburst

(for kids with AIDS). Make tracks
to the **Turf Club**

22519 Main Street, Hayward

Women Over Fifty and Friends WOFF

Meets Saturday, April 2

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

San Leandro Community Church
Fireside Room
1395 Bancroft Avenue
San Leandro

Hosting:

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

The Royal Grand Ducal Council
of Alameda County, Inc.,
invite you to attend the Event of
the Year! Hosted by Royal Grand
Duke IX Norman Levesque and
Royal Grand Duchess IX Cseneca
Greenwood

"Divas vs. Royal Knights"

Saturday, April 13, 7 – 10 P.M.

Cabel's Reef

2272 Telegraph Ave, Oakland
Show, Auction, Raffle. Proceeds to
the Ducal Charity Account.

Memorial Services for

Mary Kathryn Friebe

Saturday, April 6
11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Aquatic Senior Center
890 Beach Street
San Francisco

All friends invited.

Further information:
510 632-2821

East Bay Lesbian/Gay Democratic Club

2002 Annual Meeting
and Comedy Night

This is a 'Fundraiser' on
Friday, April 12

'Campaign for Equality'

7 p.m. – Annual Meeting
Comedy at 8 p.m. requires a paid
admission of \$15 per person

Montclair Women's
Cultural Arts Club

1650 Mountain Boulevard
(at Thornhill) in Oakland

(510) 466-5050

(If you wish further information)

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