Lavender ‘Punk’ (Person unKnown) of-the-Month

Born in Klamath Falls, Oregon, our Punk-of-the-month was the first of five children and born in her grandmother’s house. Because her father was in the lumbering business, the family moved frequently. After high school in Oregon, she was anxious to leave her rural life behind and moved to California where she attended Chico College. She married soon after graduating and raised four children in the Tahoe-Placerville area. In 1973, after 20 years of marriage, she was able to tell her husband of her struggles with lesbianism and divorce followed.

She began working for the County of El Dorado in senior programs. She did paralegal work for elders and set up a community information referral system. Then she became the Director of the Area Agency on Aging there. While she had remained closeted during this time, she “began to feel her double life was catching up with her.” So, in 1983, she moved to Santa Barbara to work as the County Coordinator of Santa Barbara’s AAA.

Our go-getter member found few large groups of lesbians in southern California until she connected with a lesbian network on the west coast that became the forerunners of OLOC. They were inspired by the death of a much loved lesbian librarian researcher in a nursing home in the 1950’s to see what could be done for old lesbians. In 1984, leading a workshop with this group, she met her future partner, Kate, a drama writer and theatre person. They met and began a long-term relationship.

It was only when she went to live with Kate in Solano Beach that she came out as a lesbian – and with a bang! Our very active friend now founded a radical lesbian newspaper for the San Diego environs and attended a course in women studies taught by the well known Bonnie Zimmerman. She was excited too that 50-60% of her classmates were lesbian.

Outreach Project Report

Springiest Part of 2002

It’s this time of the year when the weather warms up and the flowers bloom along every street that it’s hard to stay indoors. But the staff at Lavender Seniors is still going strong on our funded project.

The program of Friendly Visiting by our loyal band of volunteers continues as does the outreach program by our courageous panel-presenter volunteers who venture out into the world of senior care providers to tell the stories of their lives. There has been a change in the Site Coordinator position for the Lavenders; due to health problems Enid Stern will no longer act as Coordinator. We wish her well for the future and thank her for her work with us.

Susan Kalmus has recently been hired as our program Coordinator. She brings to Lavender Seniors a background in volunteer management for social service agencies such as the Boys and Girls Club and St. Vincent DePaul. And she is one of the few citizens of the United States who was born and brought up in New York City. Her dad was a pioneer in the television business as a publicist for Sid Caesar and Bob Hope and her mother was a political activist in New York City. She has two grown sons. You’ll be hearing more from Suzy as she moves into her new job at our offices in San Leandro.

More good news: We received word that Lavender Seniors has recently been awarded a fifteen thousand dollar grant from the Goldman Fund specifically earmarked for our community education outreach program. We look forward to increasing the coordination hours for this activity. Focusing our attention on fund-raising through grant writing has helped bring in the necessary funds to continue our programs at this time. However it is becoming more clear that we must diversify our funding base in order to reduce the risk of becoming too dependent on one type of income. Also foundations cannot support our project forever. For these reasons we will be putting more attention on developing the donor base for our organization which means we will be reaching out to our community for more support in the near future.

‘Outreach Project Report’ on page 3
**Lavender Notes**  
is the newsletter of  
Lavender Seniors of the East Bay  
1395 Bancroft Avenue  
San Leandro, CA 94577  
510-667-9655  
fax 510-667-9909  
lavenderseniors@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.

**Advisory Board**  
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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.

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**Be Mindful of Summer Sun**

To help protect your skin, take these sun-smart steps from the American Academy of Dermatology and Steven L. Swengel, MD, chief of dermatology at Kaiser Permanente’s Santa Teresa Medical Center.

1. If you’re planning to be outside for more than 20 minutes, apply sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes before heading out the door. Use a sunscreen that has a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and that protects against UVA and UVB rays (both are harmful ultraviolet rays).

Reapply sunscreen every two hours when outdoors, especially if you’ve been swimming or sweating.

2. When outdoors, wear protective, tightly woven clothing, such as a longsleeved shirt and pants. To see if a piece of clothing blocks out the sun, hold it up and check whether you can see the outline of the sun through it. If you can’t, that clothing should protect you from virtually 100 percent of the sun’s rays, Dr. Swengel says.

Also, wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses with ultraviolet (UV) protective lenses.

3. Avoid reflective surfaces such as water and snow. They can reflect up to 85 percent of the sun’s rays.

4. Limit the time you spend in the sun during the middle of the day (from about 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.) when the sun’s rays are most intense. If your shadow is shorter than you are, you may come home with a sunburn.

“Avoiding and limiting the total amount of sun damage to your skin over your lifetime is what will give you healthier skin long-term,” Dr. Swengel says.

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**May 18**  
Lavender Seniors  

**Monthly Volunteer Meetings**  

3rd Saturday, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.  
San Leandro Community Church

Come to meet other volunteers, the coordinator and to share your friendly visiting and panel presentation news.

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**GAY MUSLIMS EXPLORED**

At the April Lavender Seniors Potluck Faris Malik gave an informative talk on the nature of the Islamic religion and how it relates to the gay and lesbian world. The Koran has often been held up as a major homophobic document. Gays are now suffering harassment and even death in third world countries such as Egypt.

But Malik, who converted from Christianity to the Moslem religion, emphasized that his faith has always been tolerant of other life styles and that current views of homosexuality are distorted.

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

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

In 1988, she and Kate relocated to the more political Bay Area where she was able to pursue graduate studies in feminist psychology and attain her MA in clinical psychology. She was employed by the GLOE program as their Women’s Director in 1993 and became very active in LGBT activities in San Francisco and the greater Bay Area. She and her partner have settled in Oakland at this time. Our honored member came to the Lavender Seniors as Coordinator of Volunteers in 1999, and in the spring of 2001, started working where she is now with the National Center for Lesbian Rights in SF as the Elder Law Project Coordinator. All the while, she was pursuing her MFT license.

Coming out has been a long process for this activist, from teen years and through mid-life. It was a struggle with societal imperatives and expectations. In her work at GLOE, she had to overcome internalized homophobia in coming out to mainstream agency people who she was pleased to find very receptive. The Women’s Movement, too, had supported and given her courage to become her own person and to find a larger community of women like herself. Experiencing her own struggles has given her a special sensitivity to the needs of elders who are isolated and not participating in the larger community because of their sexual orientation. She appreciates the independent spirit of those who refuse the oppression of letting professionals tell them what they need or being satisfied with playing Bingo in their old age. She admires “the old lesbians dealing with ageism and the gay and lesbian movement in the Bay Area who bring a new vitality to senior services.”

Our Punkt is, of course, our own Joyce Pierson who is happy now to have more time to spend with her nine grandchildren, ages 6 to 28 years, and their parents in Oregon. She enjoys being a member of Lavender Seniors now and pursuing lifelong ambitions, enjoying as well her freedom to garden and take short trips along the California coast with Kate.

—Dot Hallinan

Outreach Project Report

We are pleased that the following statement was included in Area Agency On Aging plan for the upcoming year: “The Area Agency On Aging Assistant Director will participate in a task force on how to better serve Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) elders in Alameda County so that we can ensure that isolated GLBT elders receive the services they need to remain in the community.” If this weather continues it will soon be summertime and we’ll have such pleasurable events as San Francisco Gay Day the last Sunday in June, then the August 17 East Bay picnic and East Bay Gay Pride Day after that — and everything that happens in between. Stay tuned and enjoy.

—Dotty Fowler, Project Director

Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder

This is how AAADD goes:
I decide to do the laundry, start down the hall and notice the newspaper on the table. OK, I’m going to do the laundry — but first I’m going to read the newspaper. After that, I notice the mail on the table. OK, I’ll just put the newspaper in the recycle stack — But first I’ll look through the pile of mail and see if there are any bills to be paid. Yes, now where is the checkbook? Oops. There’s the empty glass from yesterday on the coffee table. I’m going to look for that checkbook — but first I need to put the glass in the sink.

I head for the kitchen, look out the window, notice my poor flowers need a drink of water, I put the glass in the sink and there’s the remote for the TV on the kitchen counter. What’s it doing here? I’ll just put it away...But first I need to water those plants. I head for the door and – Aaaagh! Stepped on the dog. Dog needs to be fed. Okay, I’ll put the remote away and water the plants. But first I need to feed the dog.

By the end of the day, laundry is not done, newspapers are still on the floor, glass is still in the sink, bills are not paid, checkbook is still lost, the dog ate the remote control — and, when I try to figure out how come nothing got done today, I’m baffled because... I KNOW I WAS BUSY ALL DAY! I realize this condition is serious... I’d get help, but first...I think I’ll check my e-mail!

(Netted by Natalie Zarchin)

Norma Ramos on May 11

Norma gives much credit for wanting to work with seniors because of her very loving relationship with her grandma and mom. Ms. Ramos is a graduate of Loyola Marymount University who used to work in radio in Los Angeles. She has has co-produced and hosted a radio show at KPFA in Berkeley for International Women’s Day and loves to sing.

Her hobbies are bike riding near the bay and watching her partner work on the house. Norma lives in Oakland with her partner, Susanna, an RN-turned-electrician. They have two big dogs, five cats and help to feed and spay and neuter all stray cats in the neighborhood. They have season tickets to Stanford Women’s basketball and try to attend all the local college women’s games.
Book Review

Behind The Screen:
How Gays And Lesbians Shaped Hollywood, 1910-1969

By William J. Mann
Viking — $29.95

There has been a rash of tomes lately detailing sagas of gay and lesbian stars and their notorious behavior. But no account of Hollywood has ever looked at the folks behind the scenes — the set decorators, costume designers, directors, and producers. They also deserve a share of the spotlight.

Bill Mann, author of the acclaimed biography The Life And Times of William Haines, Hollywood’s First Openly Gay Star, brilliantly surveys the first fifty years of the silver screen. During the 1920’s gay stars were well integrated into the social and working world of the film factory. Odd behavior was tolerated. One of the early film personalities, totally forgotten today was J. Warren Kerrigan, a cowboy hero of the World War I era. But his downfall was sure and swift when he looked down his nose at his adoring public and declared, “I will go, of course, if my country needs me, but I think that first they should take the great mass of men who aren’t good for anything else...Actors, musicians, great writers, artists of every kind — isn’t it a pity when people are sacrificed who are capable of such things — of adding to the beauty of the world.”

Dorothy Azner was a noted firm editor of her day, and an obvious lesbian. She was one of the few women allowed to work in an important position behind the scenes. When sound invaded the film business the atmosphere changed. The great depression arrived at the same time. Realism became the sign of the times. More masculine, less sensitive people came to dominate the scene. More subtle methods were employed. Characters required depth and not the broad overacting of the silent screen.

Straight men ruled the roost in the area of set building and painting. But in departments such as art and costume the lavender set ruled with such names as Orrey-Kelly and Cedric Gibbons. As Mercedes De Acosta remarked, “The era when many young women wanted to look masculine and many young men wanted to look feminine” never changed completely. But the new censorship rules stressed rigid gender roles and traditional morality. Gays were either quite nelly or played arch villains – Graddy Sutton, Franklin Pangborn and Edward Everett Horton. Old maids and evil vamps were often lesbians – Agnes Moorhead, Judith Anderson, Marjorie Main, and Hope Emerson.

But in their off hours the gay community often flaunted itself in local Hollywood bars and nightclubs. The Cafe Gala was one notable establishment. During the post war era the anti-communist witch hunts tore through the entertainment business like the Asian Flu. Super conformity was the mode of survival. Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons, the queen of the gossip columnist felt no shame in questioning the loyalty of queers or anyone else who did not toe the line.

It is ironic that the tabloids of the 1950’s such as Confidential, warned future generations that gays could become politically powerful. “Don’t sell the twisted twerps short.” Newspaper man Paul Coates told readers that homosexuals could “swing tremendous political power.” How times have changed! For years there were rumors about stars such as Clifton Webb, who never married and always appeared with his mother in tow. Sounds like J. Edgar Hoover.

But in the 1960’s the studio system declined and the gay community gradually opened up. Ross Hunter, producer of slick soap operas for Universal Pictures represented the last of the old time closet queens, according to Mann.

Read Behind The Screen and relish it. There is probably no end in sight. Glamour never grows old. In some form or another the silver screen will always survive. — Frank Howell

¡Happy Birthday!

Jan Faulkner
Jim Joslin
May 1

Peter Hart
Don Silva
May 2

Edward Majul
May 6

Shirley Dennett
Angela Hunkler
May 9

Bill Baillie
Mickey Barker
May 13

Tita Caldwell
Berni Miller-Ibarra
May 20

Joe Horsington
Norma Metz

Myra Williams
May 21

Carol Martin
May 23

Lynn Rayburn
May 26

Shirley Sarton
May 28

Joan Emerson
May 29

Frances Franco
May 30

¡Feliz Cumpleaños!
Presentation of the Month: Norma Ramos

City of Berkeley’ North Senior Center

The featured speaker for the potluck on May 11 will be Norma Ramos, who represents the City of Berkeley’s North Senior Center, which serves more than 200 seniors a day. The City of Berkeley Senior programs are dedicated to promoting a dignified, healthful quality of life for older adults by advocating for vital services, being a safe and accessible community resource, providing opportunities to develop meaningful fellowship, offering lifelong learning activities, and recognizing the continued and varied accomplishment of older adults.

Saturday, 12 Noon • Monthly Potluck Meeting • Program at 1 P.M. • May 11

If your name begins with the letters A through H — Bring a Salad
I through P — Bring a Dessert
Q through Z — Bring a Main Dish

San Leandro BART station shuttle is available. Call voice mail day before: 667-9655 to arrange pickup.

Important New Information about HMOs

There is a new government regulation that limits beneficiaries’ ability to change Medicare plans. More than ever, it is critical that you take the time to make an informed choice about various Medicare plans because beneficiaries may now switch plans only once before June 30, 2002. After this date, you are “locked in,” meaning that you will not be able to change your plan again until 2003.

To assist you in getting the correct information, the Consumers Union and the California HealthCare Foundation have released the new 2002 edition of the Guide to California Medicare HMOs: All Medicare HMOs are NOT alike. Go to your local senior center to obtain a free copy. Lavender Seniors has about 20 copies which will be available at the next potluck. If you do pick up a copy, please be sure to read the content very carefully, and if it is not clear to you, ask someone for clarification.

HAVING PROBLEMS WITH LOW-INCOME HEALTH BENEFITS?

The Healthy Seniors Program, a partnership of Legal Assistance, for Seniors and Life Long Medical Care, has been developed to help older adults sort out issues related to Medi-Cal eligibility, Medi-Cal coverage, and other low-income health benefits.

This free program can:
- Give you information about enrolling for Medi-Cal and the Medicare Savings Programs
- Help you apply for available low-income health benefits
- Assist you with problems you may have with low-income health benefit eligibility, coverage, or coverage

For personal assistance, please call the Healthy Seniors Hotline at: (510) 704-6010, x265 or 1(800) 311-5258

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 ________

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

Women Over Fifty and Friends WOFF
Meets Saturday, May 4
Pot Luck is one hour earlier, starting at 5 P.M.
San Leandro Community Church
Fireside Room
1395 Bancroft Avenue
San Leandro
Hosting:
Cam & Cheryl (530) 432-4860
Iris (510) 841-4776

East Bay Women’s Support Group
Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays each month
May 10 and 24: 1:15 – 3 P.M.
Meets at Pacific Center,
2712 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 food and drink to share and a $4 donation.
May 12

The Royal Grand Ducal Council of Alameda County, Inc.
Together with
Royal Crown Countess Margaret Ramirez and Royal World
Ambassador Frank Salerno
Invite you to
‘A Cinco de Mayo Celebration’
Sunday, May 5, 4 – 8 P.M.
Rainbow Room
21859 Mission Boulevard
Hayward
There will be Food, Show, Auction and Fun

Please help us maintain a scent-free environment at our meetings.

Antiques for Sale
Oak hall tree, captains desk, nickel plated cash register, grocer’s scale, armoire, water pitcher & bowl, end table, desk, and more.
Audrey Tillmann,
510 531-2729

“And this one’s for homophobia.”

Senior Men’s Afternoon
1:30 – 3:30 P.M.
2nd and 4th Thursdays
May 9 and 23
2712 Telegraph Avenue,
Berkeley
Co-sponsored by Pacific Center and Lavender Seniors

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 • lavenderseniors@email.msn.com