November 22 “Lavender Pioneers” event to celebrate founders

Lavender Seniors will honor and celebrate its founders at a special event on November 22 entitled “Lavender Pioneers—A Celebration of Pride.”

“Lavender Pioneers” will take place 1-4 p.m. at 1395 Bancroft Avenue in San Leandro, at San Leandro Community Church. The program will include special recognitions for the founders, delicious food, and entertainment by the Oakland East Bay Gay Mens Chorus and by Mary Watkins, well-known, eclectic Oakland-based pianist. Linton Johnson, popular reporter from NBC11-TV, and Regina Stoops, well-known Bay Area comedienne, will serve as co-emcees.

Admission is a $25 suggested donation per person, although sliding-scale gifts are welcome and no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

There are two additional ways to support the event and the ongoing work of Lavender Seniors (see back page for details):

- All well-wishers can have their personal message to the founders printed in the event program booklet.
- Sponsorship opportunities are available for individuals, organizations, and businesses. Each sponsorship level includes special benefits.

A special, upcoming edition of Lavender Notes will highlight the contributions of our founders and will list the event’s sponsors.

Lavender Seniors was created in November 1994 by about 30 older lesbian and gay activists concerned about the challenges of ageism and heterosexism and the absence of services in the East Bay for LGBT seniors. That same year, the Alameda County Senior Needs Assessment found that LGBT seniors had unique needs that were not addressed by any agency.

Lavender Seniors began sponsoring monthly potlucks and a monthly newsletter to reduce isolation among LGBT seniors. Since then, programs have grown to include the Friendly Visitors program to match volunteers with seniors in the community for social and household support, a Speakers Panel program to educate mainstream health and human service providers about LGBT seniors, a project to assess and address issues of concern to LGBT seniors of color, and a website. The staff includes four part-time employees, including a Director, Administrator, Senior Services Coordinator, and Outreach Specialist. At the heart of the organization is a committed corps of volunteers.

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is funded by individual donors as well as Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, Alameda County Leather Corps., The California Endowment, City of Oakland, Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, The Horizons Foundation, The True North Foundation, Royal Grand Ducal Council of Alameda County, and The San Francisco Foundation. We gratefully acknowledge the support of all ‘Friends of Lavender Seniors.”
Newsletter editor sought

Lavender Seniors seeks an editor for its monthly newsletter, Lavender Notes. The editor should be interested in LGBT senior issues and have experience and skill in layout using any one of the most common computer programs. The editor’s chief responsibility is laying out the newsletter using provided materials. The Director suggests edits and has final authority over content. The newsletter editor is a volunteer position. Interested persons should contact Jeff at (510) 667-9655 or jeff@lavenderseniors.org ▲

Email addresses change

To serve you better, our primary email address has changed to info@lavenderseniors.org
Each staff person now has an individualized email address as follows:

Jeff Vessels: jeff@lavenderseniors.org
Suzi Kalmus: suzi@lavenderseniors.org
Peggy Moore: peggy@lavenderseniors.org
Nancy Fugett: info@lavenderseniors.org (same as our general email address) ▲

Lavender Seniors Wish List

- Reams of white and color copy paper (letter size).
- Computer printer ink cartridges, HP inkjet printer cartridge #23 (color) and #45 (black).
- Sodas, bottled water, and paper and plastic items.

Thanks, Ina Mae and Stella, for donating the reusable mylar wall calendar! ▲

What We Do ...

Founded in 1994, Lavender Seniors of the East Bay provides the following:

▲ The Oakland Outreach Project, to improve access to health and human services to LGBT seniors in the African-American, Latino, Native American, Asian, and Pacific Islander communities.

▲ Friendly Visitors Program, to match volunteers with isolated, frail LGBT seniors for social support, light household and shopping assistance, and telephone assurance.

▲ Speakers Panel Program, to educate service providers and urge them to change policies and practices to make services more accessible and culturally appropriate to LGBT seniors.

▲ Potlucks on the second Saturday of each month, to provide a safe and welcoming social environment and information from invited speakers.

▲ Monthly newsletter, Lavender Notes.

▲ A website at www.lavenderseniors.org

To get involved as a participant or volunteer, contact us today at (510) 667-9655 or info@lavenderseniors.org
New domestic partnership law: Broader rights and bigger responsibilities  
by Jeff Vessels, Director

After months of dating, you are convinced the object of your affection is “the one.” So you start thinking about popping the question: “Will you be my domestic partner?”

Now, that question might be accompanied by several others: Do I need a pre-domestic partnership agreement to protect my assets? Does my domestic partner have debts for which I might have to assume legal responsibility? How will my domestic partner’s finances impact my eligibility for programs? And if the relationship doesn’t work out, might I have to pay domestic partner support?

Governor Gray Davis’ signing of AB205 on September 19 put California on the forefront of domestic partner rights. It also brought vast, new responsibilities that couples now must consider as they contemplate registering as domestic partners.

AB205’s language is simple yet profound: “Registered domestic partners shall have the same rights, protections, and benefits, and shall be subject to the same responsibilities, obligations, and duties under law...as are granted to and imposed upon spouses in a civil marriage.”

Domestic partners who are already registered with the state under previous, less sweeping laws will have an opportunity to decide whether to drop their registration or continue it under AB205.

Lavender Seniors is planning an informational seminar to help understand AB205. But based on a recent seminar at the San Francisco LGBT Center (sponsored by the Castro district State Farm Insurance office of Hollander and Stephens and featuring attorneys from Wang & Kashou, LLP), it’s clear that the decision to enter into domestic partnership shouldn’t be taken lightly.

According to seminar presenters, AB205 has many potential advantages, including the following:
- Paid leave or sick time to care for an ill partner.
- Joint auto and health insurance coverage.
- Rent control protections.
- Inheritance if a deceased partner had no will.
- Right to sue in cases of wrongful death of a partner.

Potential disadvantages include the following:
- Joint assessment of assets when a partner is applying for government assistance programs.
- Increased tax liabilities.

Some provisions that could be an advantage or a disadvantage include the following:
- 50/50 split of assets or income earned – or debts incurred – while living with a domestic partner.
- If the domestic partnership ends, requirements for domestic partner support and child support.

Is domestic partnership registration right for you and the one you love? Watch for an upcoming Lavender Seniors seminar that might help you decide. ▲

Book Review

Before Stonewall: Activists for gay and lesbian rights in historical context  
Edited by Vern Bullough

Reviewed by Frank Howell

The past looms over everything we do in the gay rights movement. We follow a trail plowed by those who came before us. Without them we would not be enjoying the life we have today.

So it is fitting that we look back before we go forward. Let us not reinvent the wheel. Vern Bullough possesses a distinguished record of academic achievements. He served as a professor at California State University, Northridge for some twenty years. He has been associated with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and is the author of A Short History of Homosexuality.

What is so engaging about this stimulating collection is the little known facts about each pioneer we look at. Kinsey found that "gays tend to want and get sex sooner and have more of it than straights, from adolescence all the way through old age."

We learn that Phyllis Lyon once worked as a newspaper reporter and interviewed Eleanor Roosevelt. This is what makes history live and breathe.

A vivid parade of brave personalities is found here from Harry Hay, Pearl Hart, an attorney who defended gay men when most attorneys ran for cover, Dale Jennings, who was the first gay to challenge the police in open court, Hal Call, early publisher of the Mattachine Review, Frank Kameny, who battled the federal government and its fear ridden attempt to hound queers out of their jobs. We must not neglect Barbara Gittings, editor of the early lesbian journal, The Ladder, who appeared on the Phil Donahue Show in 1970.

Then there is Dr. George Weinberg, author of Society and The Healthy Homosexual, who coined the term, "homophobia." And finally there is Christine Jorgensen, Jose Sarria, and Troy Perry, founder of Metropolitan Community Church. ▲
Outreach Specialist Update  by Peggy Moore

On October 2, the first Town Hall meeting for our new project that focuses on LGBT seniors of color in Oakland was a success. Members from the community representing all ages and diversity showed up to take part in this historic movement.

Making opening remarks were Danny Wan, Oakland City Council Member; Frank Rose, Chairman, Oakland Commission on Aging; and Brenda Crawford, community leader and member of the Commission on Aging. These three played roles in encouraging the City of Oakland to fund this project, and I'm glad they did.

The heart of the Town Hall Meeting was the panelists. This panel of six outstanding individuals told their personal stories from the heart. It's interesting sometimes to think about how much we don't know about each other. Brendalynn Goodall talked about services that the city offers to improve the life of seniors; she is the manager for the aging and health services for the city of Oakland. She also talked about her life with her partner Nancy Hines, who was also on the panel. Nancy talked about what her life would be like if she was not in a relationship -- how she would probably be isolated and alone.

When Shannon Smith talked about her life with Olga, her partner of 41 years, she talked about how she

(continued on page 6)

Senior Services Coordinator Update  by Suzi Kalmus

Well, fall is definitely upon us...up in the Hope Valley basin of the Eastern Sierras. The leaves are turning, the aspens blindingly bright, such beautiful hues of autumnal color. There's a chill in the air, almost making me wish for New York City (but then I think, 'do I really want to experience the WHOLE winter? No!')

We are busyly planning for our special 'Lavender Pioneers' event on Saturday afternoon, November 22. You'll be receiving your invitations in the mail soon. It will be a wonderful event, with delectable refreshments, entertainment and the best part of all: the camaraderie of friends and community. If you'd like to volunteer on the day of the event, or even in these last planning stages, please let me know: suzi@lavenderseniors.org.

Also in the planning stages is another Speakers Panel training at our office. set for Thursday, November 13, at 10 a.m. If you would like to come, or if you would like to be a speaker and haven't yet been trained, just let me know.

We have participants who could use some visiting: a few men in the Oakland/Berkeley area, one man in Richmond, two women in Oakland, and another woman in Hayward.

(continued on page 5)

Become a “Friend of Lavender Seniors” today!

Your support is crucial to Lavender Seniors’ continuing role as a vital resource to our community.

Become a “Friend of Lavender Seniors.” Please take a moment and send your gift today. Your annual giving entitles you to a subscription to our monthly newsletter, Lavender Notes.

Here’s my gift of: $15 $25* $50 $100 $250 $500 Other:_______

(*Please give this amount or more if possible.)

Name: ______________________________

Address: ___________________________________________

City/State/ZIP: __________________________

Home Telephone: ____________________________

Email Address: ____________________________________

☐ Please contact me about including Lavender Seniors in my will.
☐ Please contact me about participating in your programs and/or volunteering.
☐ Please do not list me in Lavender Seniors publications as a “Friend of Lavender Seniors.”

Lavender Seniors never lends, sells, or gives away its mailing list.

Please make checks payable to:
Tides Center / Lavender Seniors

and mail to:
Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
1395 Bancroft Avenue
San Leandro, CA 94577

Thank you!
Monthly Potluck
Saturday, November 8
Meal at Noon ▲ Program at 1 p.m.
Your name begins with the letters
A through G — bring a Main Dish
H through M — bring a Salad
N through Z — bring Dessert/Fruit
Shuttle from San Leandro BART station is available.
Call Lavender Seniors one day ahead to arrange pickup: (510) 667-9655

Look out — here comes 2004!
As 2003 comes to a close, Lavender Seniors is looking forward to another successful year in 2004. At the November potluck, we will discuss ideas for 2004. What would you like to see at upcoming potlucks? What speakers, entertainers, and issues might interest you? What other activities are important to you? How can we improve all of Lavender Seniors’ programs? Come ready to share your ideas!

LGBT rights work in Sacramento explored at October Potluck
By Frank Howell

There was a time when lavender representation in our state capitol simply didn’t existed. Efforts were weak and poorly organized. The one lobbyist we had was so poorly paid he was forced to sell his blood each week.

In the mid-1990s an organization known as CAPE appeared. The group has recently renamed itself Equality California.

Kevin Dowling, gay city councilman for Hayward, currently works as a legislative aid to County Supervisor Alice Li-Bitker. He recently joined the board of directors for the new lobbying effort and spoke at our potluck.

The crowning achievement for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people, under Governor Gray Davis, is the Domestic Partner Rights and Responsibilities Act, AB-205. AB-17, an equal benefits bill, has also been signed into law.

But Dowling cautioned against undue optimism. Right wing Christian groups are now circulating a petition to place a proposal on the March, 2004 ballot to repeal the domestic partners bill. So the fight continues.

The potluck audience was quite receptive to Dowling’s talk, and literature about the work of Equality California was made available. ▲

Happy Birthday!
Fred Jennings
November 1
Dot Hallinan
November 6
Dotty Fowler
November 8
Robert Yates
November 11
Nancy Thompson
November 12
Grant Peterson
November 13
Jay Hoollworth
November 17
Roger Dougherty
November 20
Edd Dundas
November 22
Betty Dudley
November 25

Senior Services Coordinator Update: continued from page 4

We have two new participants and a number of new (potential) volunteers. Welcome! We’re also involving volunteers with other projects.

We’re losing a dear friend and participant, who has sold her home and will be moving to southern California. She will certainly be missed. Our former coordinator has been under the weather, so let’s all put out some energy for her to get better SOON.

Keep your eyes peeled for announcements regarding the American Society on Aging/Lesbian and Gay Aging Information Network conference in April. There will be a plethora of activities and fun for us all, including workshops, receptions and booths to visit. Check out the website to find out more: www.asaging.org/lgain.

That’s it for now... hope all of you are well and happy. ▲
Community Listings

East Bay Women's Support Group
Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month, 1:15—3 p.m.
November 14 and 28
Meets at Pacific Center,
2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley
Co-sponsored by Lavender Seniors and Pacific Center

Seniors Men’s Afternoon
2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, 1:30—3:30 p.m.
November 13 and 27
At Pacific Center,
2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley
Co-sponsored by Lavender Seniors and Pacific Center

Senior Support Group at Lighthouse Community Center
in Hayward
Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, 5—7 p.m.
November 11 and 25
Co-leaders: Frank Howell and Fred Banuelos
Call Frank for more information:
(510) 489-0932

Fellows of East Bay
2nd Sunday of each month, 5:30—8:30 p.m.
November 9
Social Club for mature men and their admirers. Monthly potluck dinner and social held at Oak Center Towers, 1515 Market St., Oakland.
Bring food and drink to share and a $4 donation.

Research Study Opportunity
Dr. Judith Barker and Kris Scott Marti of the UCSF Dept. of Anthropology. History and Social Medicine are seeking volunteers age 60+ for a pilot study among elders gays and lesbians to understand the informal social support (friends, families, community-based organizations, etc.) they experience and how they anticipate changes in the future. For more information, please contact Kris at (415) 573-7554 or kscottmarti@yahoo.com

Seeking Larry Darling
Stephen Hunt of Chicago, formerly of the Bay Area, seeks information about a friend from his past. Larry Darling. Mr. Darling was a full-time counselor in the Oakland School System and was originally from Michigan.
To reach Mr. Hunt with information, please email infreade2@aol.com

Advertising rates* for Lavender Notes

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* Individuals and non-profit organizations who have made an annual contribution of $25 or more are entitled to discounts of 50% on classified ads and 20% on ads of other sizes. Lavender Seniors reserves the right to accept or reject any ad submitted.

Outreach Specialist Update: continued from page 4

still has to deal with doctors who ask "who’s next of kin"? Now that’s crazy but true. She has also gone over to friends’ houses only to find they had been dead for a week or more. (Isolation is our biggest killer.)

Pain filled the room when Fred Banuelos talked about losing his partner in his arms. He lost his relationship with his children when he came out. Blackberry has always been out, and proud of it. He carries so many memories of our community. He talked about the art of our community, and how he could go out and find a place to perform almost any night of the week. That has changed because of the lives this community has lost. Lea Arellano, the only non-senior on the panel, reminded us that it is our responsibly as a community to take care of our elders.

After the panelists, we opened the floor for questions. The producer of Club Rimshot, Joe Hawkins, started it off. He seemed at a loss for words at first but simply said “Thank you,” that his life had been changed and he would do anything to help with this project. Rose White, an elder in the community, stood up and said, “I want to get involved.” As an elder herself, she was moved by the story of her peers.

I am so proud to lead this project and I know that we are just getting started. Thank you, John, for writing this grant. Thank you, Dotty, for breathing life into Lavender Seniors. ▲
“Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

“Lavender Pioneers – A Celebration of Pride”
November 22, 1-4 p.m.
1395 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro, CA

“Lavender Pioneers” Response Form

Your name: ________________________________

Organization (if applicable): ________________________________

Address: ________________________________

City, State, ZIP: ________________________________

Telephone: __________________ Email: __________________

Event RSVP

☐ YES! I / We would like to reserve a place(s) at “Lavender Pioneers.” Enclosed is a check or credit card information for $______ for ____ person/people. (Suggested $25 gift per person, though sliding scale gifts are accepted and no one will be turned away for lack of funds.)

☐ I / We won’t be able to attend, but enclosed is a gift of $______ to support the event and to help Lavender Seniors continue its vital work.

Personal Message

Have your personal message to the “Lavender Pioneers” printed in the program booklet, which will be distributed at the event. Your message must be 25 words or less.

Example #1: “Congratulations, Lavender Seniors! Thank you for all you do. – Jocelyn Smith.”
Example #2: “We are indebted to the Lavender Seniors founders for all you have done to make the East Bay a better place. – LGBT Company of Oakland.”

☐ $10 – personal message in the program booklet. My message of 25 words or less is as follows:

Sponsorships

All individuals, organizations, and businesses sponsoring “Lavender Pioneers” will be listed in the program booklet, in a special edition of our newsletter, on our website, and on a placard at the event. Additional benefits are listed below for each sponsorship level:

☐ Idol ($10,000) – Includes 10 event tickets and a full-page ad in our monthly newsletter for a year.

☐ Role Model ($5,000) – Includes 8 event tickets and a half-page ad in our monthly newsletter for a year.

☐ Hero ($2,500) – Includes 6 event tickets and a quarter-page ad in our monthly newsletter for a year.

☐ Trailblazer ($1,000) – Includes 4 event tickets and a business card size ad in our monthly newsletter for a year.

☐ Leader ($500) – Includes three event tickets.

☐ Advocate ($250) – Includes two event tickets.

☐ Supporter ($125) – Includes two event tickets.

(Continues on back)
Payment Information

My / our gift is for the following (as indicated on the front of this sheet):

$_______ for event RSVPs.

$_______ for a support gift to Lavender Seniors.

$_______ for a personal message to the Lavender Pioneers, to be printed in the program booklet.

$_______ for event sponsorship.

$_______ TOTAL

☐ Enclosed is a check payable to Tides Center/Lavender Seniors.

☐ Charge my Visa / MasterCard / American Express (please circle one) in the above amount.

Card number________________________________________ Expiration date ____________

Signature__________________________________________

Additional Information

I / We would like more information about:

☐ Monthly or Quarterly Giving.

☐ Bequests / Planned Giving.

☐ Volunteering.

☐ Having Lavender Seniors do a training for my organization.

☐ Participating in a Lavender Seniors program.

⇒ Please return this sheet with payment information in the provided envelope or to the address below by November 15.

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay
1395 Bancroft Avenue ▲ San Leandro, CA 94577 ▲ (510) 667-9655
email: info@lavenderseniors.org ▲ www.lavenderseniors.org
Improving the quality of life of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors in the East Bay since 1994.