



LAVENDER NOTES

Newsletter of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

Volume VIII, No.3 – March 2003

A Volunteer Services Program — project of The Tides Center

• 1395 Bancroft Ave. • San Leandro, CA 94577 • (510) 667-9655 •

Aging in the 21st Century

By Stephen Laird, LMFT

Between 2600 BC (the Bronze Age) and 1900 AD, the last four thousand and five hundred years, life expectancy increased 27 years. Way back then, an individual lived to about 20. Imagine how much you would have missed if you didn't get the chance to experience all that you have since your twentieth birthday. Between 1900 and 1990 life expectancy increased by at least another 27 years. That is a 54-year increase in 4600 years.

At the turn of the last century, approximately 4 percent of the US population was over 65. Today, 13 percent are over 65. This population group has grown three times its size compared to all other groups in less than a century. Not too shabby for city folk!

The fastest growing segment of our population is the old-old, those people over age 85. The absolute number of older persons within the overall population has increased eleven times compared to its number at the turn of the twentieth century. Why are we seeing these phenomena?

There are a few reasons for this shift in longevity. One is the reduction in infant mortality and death rates. Another is the decline in death rates among middle-aged and older persons. Well, that makes sense! You live longer if you don't die.

But why aren't we dying? If you are reading this, you are likely taking much better care of yourself than you may have had you lived in the past. Also, science and medicine are taking better care of you. "So, what!" you say.

Well, consider this. Science has discovered an interesting pattern that occurs in almost every species. The oldest age achieved in those species observed by scientists is about six times the length of time from birth to maturity. Depending on how one defines maturity, the argument for a potential human life span is between 108 (18 x 6) and 120 (20 x 6). Perhaps 126 if you are a late bloomer.

"Who in their right mind would want to live that long? And what would we call them? The very old-old? The Ancients?"

The issue is **how** we live, not how long.

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Profile in Drag

Larry, A Man of the World

We have all noticed Larry at one time or another – outspoken and tall are adjectives that must be applied to Larry Buttwinick. He has been around the Lavender Seniors, Men of the East Bay and the Lighthouse Community Center – where he has volunteered for desk duty – for many years.

Larry is a native Californian, having been born and raised in Southern California. He attended Los Angeles City College and later transferred to University of California in Berkeley. He received a teaching credential and taught 5th and 6th grades in elementary school for a number of years. He also taught folk dancing and took kids to the opera.

Larry has traveled widely and once spent three months in Europe.

He even managed a one week romance in Italy. All did not always go well. On one occasion, at a bar in Rome, he was drugged into unconsciousness and robbed of all his money. A sympathetic woman took him in while he cabled home for money. Such is the life of a nomad! Extensive travels took Larry to many parts of Asia, as well as Europe. He holds fond memories of China. He vividly recalls shooting a film of the Great Wall in the pouring rain. In Shanghai he was surrounded by eager Chinese men who wanted to practice their English on him. The crowd became so large the police ordered them to move on. His newly found companions took him to a local café. Larry has also explored Russia and enjoyed touring Eastern Europe with a gay choral group.

Larry met one of his lovers while cruising Lake Merritt, so he was no stranger in the East Bay even before coming to reside in Hayward in 1990.

Larry once enjoyed a brief fling with a noted French composer, who taught composition for many years at a local college in this area. And he lived with one lover for some twenty-eight years. Unfortunately his companion died of a brain tumor.

He has done lively drag for years and was last observed at
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LAVENDER NOTES

is the newsletter of
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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.

www.lavenderseniors.org

Coordinator's Report

"Hope all of you enjoyed our last potluck, with an informative talk about Rainbow Community Housing. We had a very successful volunteer training that same morning, and hope to have more such trainings on a more regular basis.

The GOOD news is that Nancy Flaxman will be working with us on our program. In addition, we will be putting together a training here at our site, to which we will invite many different agencies. Hopefully, many representatives will participate. The plan is to have this at the end of April (probably the 30th). More details will follow.

We have three new volunteers, and one of them (Chris Dunaway) has already visited Audrey Tillman. Way to go Chris! I bumped into Chris at the Phyllis and Del film at the Castro, and she said she'd had a wonderful visit.

Audrey's "regular" visitor, Dorothy Chevalier, has been away for a month or so, so Doreen and Bev have been kind enough to pitch in, and last week when Chris Dunaway agreed to visit and help . . . well that was wonderful!

Our numbers are up again; we've gained two new participants, and three new volunteers. Hopefully, everyone will be matched and we'll be closer to our goals with the Area Agency on Aging. During the month of January, we had 34 "units" of visiting. I'm also working on contacting the new participants so that we can match them appropriately.

Hope to see you all soon, at the next potluck. Don't forget the next volunteer meeting on Saturday, March 8th at 10 A.M., in the coffee room. I'd love to see some new faces!

Take care and be well. *Suzi* (Susan Kalmus, Senior Services Coordinator)

Berkeley and San Francisco Governments Endorse Same-sex Marriage

SAN FRANCISCO, CA –

Marriage Equality California (MECA) commends San Francisco Board Supervisor Tom Ammiano and Berkeley City Councilman Kriss Worthington for sponsoring a resolution urging Governor Davis and the State Legislature to end discriminatory marriage laws that prevent same-sex couples from having the same rights and responsibilities provided to their opposite-sex counterparts. Berkeley and San Francisco governments join West Hollywood and Santa Monica city councils in endorsing a statewide educational campaign supporting same-sex couples' access to civil marriage.

"MECA applauds Tom Ammiano and Kriss Worthington for their leadership in showing support for this much-needed protection for the estimated 400,000 gay and lesbian residents of California," said Molly McKay, Board Member of MECA. "These resolutions reflect the growing trend of support for equality for same-sex couples in California."

Marriage Equality California notes that AB 205, the comprehensive domestic partner bill, extends to domestic partners all state rights provided to married couples. However, anything less than marriage, is less than equal. "Why should

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Subscription Renewals

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 request: hendriksen@aol.com
 510-652-6906

Hate Crimes Revisited: America's War on Those Who Are Different

By Jack Levin & Jack McDavitt
Westview Press – \$17.50, Paperback

The murder or harassment of another human being for reasons connected to ideological views has created a good deal of public comment in recent years. There has been the murder of Mathew Shepherd, the brutal torture and death of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas, and the recent death of a transgender teen in Newark. All of these cases are tied together by a single common element: fear of those who are different from the common herd of humanity.

Jack Levin and Jack McDavitt, professors of sociology and criminology at Northeastern University have conducted extensive research on those who dislike minority groups. They are associated with the Brudwich Center on Conflict and Violence and have appeared as expert witnesses before congressional committees. The authors tell us that hate crimes share certain common features:

- The attacks can be excessively brutal.
- Strangers are chosen at random for no apparent reason.
- These types of men are basically cowards and need group support for their actions.
- The cover of anonymity is provided.

These ambassadors of malice feel cut off from the community at large. They see themselves as the last hope of white America. They are powerless and boiling with frustration. They have not reaped the benefits of capitalism. They frequently use humor as a putdown of racial and sexual minorities. Rap music stars such as Andrew Dice Clay and radio talk show hosts use such devices. These crimes are mostly committed by those under twenty five. They feel morally superior to their victims.

Gays and lesbians are the most vulnerable to attack. They are sometimes easy to locate in certain parts of a city. They constitute a threat to feelings of masculinity. Gays are afraid to report crimes due to fear of exposure. (This is secondary victimization).

Gay and lesbian teenagers are four times more likely to be victims of attack. Such crimes are often not reported.

On college campuses homophobic violence is not unknown. Levin and McDavitt report that, "During Gay Pride Week at the University of Oregon, a number of men burst into a movie being watched by a gay group on campus and then blocked the exits to the room. When the intruders tired of holding the gay students hostage, they surrounded a shuttle van carrying female students and shouted antilebian remarks at them." Fraternity organizations are frequently responsible for these attacks.

The authors suggest that the label of hate crime is an effective way to involve politicians who otherwise might ignore us. There is little protection at the federal level but forty-nine states now have some type of legislation to cover these acts of violence. Laws against homophobia apply in only twenty-seven states.

There are legal difficulties when the hoodlums are brought to justice. Juries are frequently confused. They hesitate to impose additional penalties. In Boston 452 incidents occurred. Only five convictions were obtained.

Community education programs are needed to make the public aware. Los Angeles and the state of Massachusetts have excellent programs in place. We have just begun to deal with the hate crimes issue. Much remains to be done with legislation and public consciousness. Reading this book can be a step in the right direction.—*Frank Howell*

Profile in Drag

(continued from page 1)

the Lighthouse Center's Masquerade Ball at Halloween time last October, in a fetching black gown which became the talk of a fun-filled evening. A friend of mine was quite impressed; he thought the mask Larry wore was particularly stunning. I had to point out that it was no mask but Larry's *real* face. Appearances can deceive! He has worn drag for years but all of his outrageous costumes were created by close friends.

The lavender scene is provocative and fun simply because Larry Buttwinick is among us.

—*Frank Howell*

Drug Benefits

Please spread the word about this great new service for people over the age of 55 – it can save them a lot of money!

The National Council on the Aging is proud to announce the launch of BenefitsCheckUpRx, a free confidential screening tool that provides seniors with a comprehensive and personalized listing of their eligibility for over 240 prescription drug savings programs covering nearly 800 medications. The service is fast, free, and completely confidential.

By visiting www.BenefitsCheckUp.org, older Americans, their families and caregivers can now quickly determine what prescription savings programs a senior qualifies for and how to claim them.

Once users complete a brief questionnaire, the service displays a personalized report specifying all the programs they are eligible for and detailed instructions on how to enroll.

Aging in the 21st Century

(con't from page 1)

What are the factors that are helping us to live healthier lives? There has been a dramatic reduction in three areas of health and behavior among the overall population that affect quality of life: high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels and smoking. These, more than any other variable contribute to the incidence of chronic illness in seniors. More important than having an illness is how an illness affects one's ability to function. In other words being able to take care of oneself on a daily basis. Because the functioning of older adults has so markedly improved, there are 1.4 million fewer disabled older adults. In fact, older people are more likely to age well than to become decrepit and dependent. The idea that to be old is to be sick is a fallacy.

Mental function is a concern for all adults. Another fallacy is that to be old is to be senile. We now know that regular physical activity, a strong social system and a positive attitude contribute to maintaining a razor sharp mind. It is widely accepted that the older adult retains his/her intelligence and is capable of learning, just not as quickly.

"So, I have smoked all my life, eaten lard cakes for breakfast, salt is my favorite spice, and I never broke a sweat. It's too late for me!" Not so fast, our bodies are very resilient. The negative effects of smoking are reversible, although it does take about 15 years for the lungs to recover to a non-smoking status. Start exercising today. Ease up with the saltshaker. These life style changes lead to significant reduction of heart disease and stroke, with the added bonus of increased physical performance and improved mental and social functioning.

Not everything that runs in a family is genetic. Only about 30 percent of physical aging can be blamed on the genes. As we grow older, genetics become less important and environment and behavior becomes more important.

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Mayor Presents \$500 To Lavender Seniors

by *Larry Butwinick*

My dear friend, Mayor of San Leandro, Sheila Young, surprisingly appeared at the pot-luck, February 8th. I hadn't seen her for some time – what with her busy schedule. We hugged a bunch, then she told me why she was there.

Mayor Young raises private funds through a golf tournament which she disperses to worthwhile causes. Dotty Fowler and our Advisory Board had sent her a note suggesting we could use some funds. And there SHE, as we call her, responded.

During our 30-year friendship, I've seen her chase those golf balls from Hawaii to Florida. I am so proud to know this extremely competent and dedicated **lady!**

About Reverse Mortgages

Q. I received an ad in the mail saying a reverse mortgage could give me extra income in my retirement. How do these mortgages work? And how can I learn more about them?

A. A reverse mortgage is a way to get money out of your home without having to leave it. It's a loan against the equity built up in your home that is repaid – with interest – when you die or leave or sell the property.

Reverse mortgages are available only if you're a homeowner 62 or older and only on your main residence. Although some of these loans are offered by state or local governments, most are underwritten by mortgage companies.

Some people find a reverse mortgage a good way to make their later years more comfortable. You should be aware, however, that such a loan can entail significant fees.

AARP explains the subject in detail in a free booklet, "Home Made Money: A Consumer's Guide to Reverse Mortgages" (order #D15601). It's available by calling (800) 424-3410 or going online at www.aarp.org/revmort.

(From a recent AARP newsletter)

March Birthdays

- 4 Charles Betcher
 - Kelly Van Meter
 - 5 Patricia Sarant
 - 6 Brendalynn Goodall
 - 7 Rita Kresha
 - 9 Laurence Stickney
 - 11 Jerry Holmes
 - 12 Barbara Gould
 - 16 Bob Davis
 - 20 Arlene De La Mora
 - 21 Stella Lopez-Armijo
 - 22 Phina Tobin
 - Daryl Halverson
 - 23 Carrie Oyama
 - Thomas Packard
 - 24 Dee Nagy
 - 25 Glenn P. Lee, Jr.
 - 26 Bert Hutchison
 - Doreen Brand
 - 27 Robert Carr
 - Rob McCallum
 - 28 Ken Bradley
 - 29 James H. Thomas
- ¡Feliz Cumpleaños!**

Saturday • 12 Noon • Potluck Meeting
• Program at 1 P.M. • March 8 •

Your name begins with the letters

A through G — Bring a Salad

H through M — Bring a Dessert/Fruit

N through Z — Bring a Main Dish

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

Aging in the 21st Century

(continued from previous page)

Hub-a-Hub-a! Old age and having a sex life are not mutually exclusive!! One word dispels that notion. Viagra!! Men and women continue to have very active and mutually satisfying sexual experiences.

“So if we end up living into 12 decades, what are we to do with ourselves?” Society is facing a major challenge with what to do with an aging population. This is a question facing all countries, not just America. Society needs to challenge its concept of what it means to be an older adult. Some view older adults as “old fogies,” decrepit or useless. However, it seems, attitudes about aging are changing. This new attitude is the realization that the older adult is a source of untapped potential.

A positive image of aging needs to be embraced by all, including the older person. Each person, regardless of age, is vital, has talents to share and untapped potential.

Your spirit is ageless; let it soar!

Stephen Laird is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT) hired in December 2001 by the City of Fremont. He will serve as the clinical supervisor for a staff of nurses, social workers and counselors who serve seniors in the Tri-City area.

(From Fremont Sterling Times Issue 9)

Brenda Crawford at Potluck

On March 8 Brenda will bring us up to date about the LGBT political landscape in Oakland. Seems that many, being squeezed economically from the west bay, are finding a home in Oakland.

Brenda has been involved with the LGBT civil rights movement for over thirty years. She came out as a lesbian thirty-nine years ago. Many of her close friends refer to her as a pre-women's movement out lesbian, which Brenda has stated on many occasions, just means that she is an “old dyke.” Her list of accomplishments, volunteer activities and political involvements are many – both local and national.

San Francisco AIDS Foundation Black Brothers Esteem Project for Outstanding Work in HIV in the Black Community

Marlon Riggs Community Leadership Award – Oakland Black Pride

Outstanding Woman of the Year in Community Service – Inducted in the Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame –1999

Congressional Certificate of Recognition – Outstanding Work in The LGBT Civil Rights Movement

Certificate of Appreciation from United States Senate in Recognition of Outstanding Community Service-1999

East Bay Pride - Assemblywoman Carole Migden's Award for Political Activism -1998

The National Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund Award for Political Activism

(This is a partial list from Brenda's curriculum vitae.)

Same-Sex Marriage

(cont'd from page 2)

gay people have a different word and a separate system for the same rights? If gay people are good enough for some family rights, why not all?” asks McKay. Unitarian minister Rev. Ernie Pipes spoke in favor of the resolution noting “I have performed hundreds of weddings for same-sex couples, the difference is they don't walk away with a state license like everyone else.”

Founded in 1998, MECA is a nonprofit grassroots organization solely devoted to securing access to civil marriage for same-sex couples. MECA can be contacted through our website at www.marriageequalityca.org or 415-875-3204.

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
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 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

Yahoo.com

is now **unblocked** for editor
Bert (hendriksen@aol.com).

Especially to WOFF and to
Marvin B. I send my apologies!

Editor

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change

(OLOC, age 60+) will meet on Sunday,
March 23, 2:30 – 4:30 P.M., at Francis
of Assissi Community room, 145
Guerrero, San Francisco. Marge Nelson
talks about early feminists, and an
NCLR attorney updates us on domestic
partnerships.

Dr. Do Asks You

Dr. Do, who writes a health column for
the *Foghorn*, the monthly newsletter for
the Lighthouse Community Center, is
especially eager to receive medical
questions from **older lesbians**. Ladies,
here is your chance to explore some vi-
tal new areas of interest. Email your
questions to DrDo@cognisynth.org or
write to **Ask Dr. Do**, Lighthouse Com-
munity Center, P. O. Box 447, Hayward,
CA 94541.

Senior Men's Afternoon

1:30 – 3:30 P.M.

2nd and 4th Thursdays

March 13 and 27

2712 Telegraph Avenue,
Berkeley

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

East Bay Women's Support Group

Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays each
month

March 14 and 28: 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.

March 9

The 6th annual Southern Alameda Gay and Lesbian Film Festival

March 7 and 8, 2003 at 7:00 P.M.

[Doors open at 6:00 P.M. on both nights.]

Chabot College Little Theatre

25555 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward, CA 94545

\$10 General admission – \$8 Youth & Seniors

Hosted by the outrageously funny

Regina Stoops

And now for our Feature Presentations. . .

Friday, March 7

'Big Eden'

Sometimes when you finally let go, you
find something worth holding on to. . .
and the shorts **'Blue Haven'** and **'Coffee Date'**

Saturday, March 8

'A Family Affair'

The course of true love doesn't always run straight. . .
and the shorts

'The Parlor' and **'Lambda Youth Video'**

Complimentary refreshments!

Hayward Area Historical Society Search for Memorabilia

To members of the community—

My name is Beth, I work for the Hayward Area Historical
Museum, and I'm a lesbian. We have thousands of photos,
hundreds of newspaper clippings, and an extensive archive.
But our file on the Gay/Lesbian/Bi/Trans community has only
about five items in it. Our community is still basically invis-
ible. Anyone looking through our archives in 100 years will
think that the entire Hayward area was inhabited by straight
people.

I am asking everyone to dig up photos, event fliers, sports
league schedules, anything you can think of that indicate that
we are here. We do not need to keep your original photos –
we have a scanner at the museum and I can copy your photo
while you wait. We would especially love photos of commit-
ment ceremonies, but we will be very happy with photos of
couples in their living rooms, groups at parks, etc.

Please contact me at the Hayward Area Historical Mu-
seum at 581-0223 or BethHhahS@aol.com

Hayward Area Historical Museum
22701 Main Street, Hayward, CA 94541