Royal Grand Ducal Council

Many, many thanks to the Royal Grand Ducal Council of Alameda County, Inc. for presenting Lavender Seniors a $1,000 check at the Council’s Ball on July 19 in Hayward.

We are truly fortunate to have support from the Council, which has given several substantial gifts to Lavender Seniors in recent years. Your support is vital and inspiring, dear friends!

Celebrate LGBT Pride!

This year’s LGBT Pride events have taken on special significance in light of the U.S. Supreme Court’s June 26 decision striking down sodomy laws and recognizing the right of privacy for LGBT people.

Here’s a summary of upcoming events in the East Bay:

Pride Picnic

When: Saturday, August 9, Noon – 5 p.m.
Where: Cull Canyon Regional Park in Castro Valley, in the swimming lagoon area at the Cabana.
Fee: $2.50 for seniors and youth, $3.50 for other adults.
Free parking and swimming.
More Information: Visit GLOBEinALAMEDA.org

Lavender Seniors traditionally has a large contingent at the Pride Picnic.

This is a potluck event – bring your favorite picnic dish to share – that takes the place of our regular Lavender Seniors monthly potluck.

Sistahs Steppin’ in Pride

When: Saturday, August 23
Where: Lake Merritt, in Oakland (near El Embarcadero and Grand Avenue).
Fee: Free

More Information: Call 510-551-8330 or email sistahssteppin@sistahssteppin.org or visit www.sistahssteppin.org

Report from Senior Services Coordinator

by Suzi Kalmus, Coordinator

We have received yet another two referrals for friendly visitors, and another woman has been signed up for the program and is waiting for a visitor. In addition to personal referrals, we have been receiving referrals from agencies where we have conducted trainings. Thanks to the “Over 60 Health Clinic!” They are consistently asking for more brochures so we know there’s interest there. Our training program works, we know that much! We do need more volunteers so that I can match participants shortly after I do the intake, so that they don’t have to wait.

We have a number of participants who have been very patient, and I’d like to have matches for them all. Just an hour or so per week would work; but of course if you can spare more time that would be wonderful, too. Many of our seniors would just like a ride to the potluck. That way they can connect with us and see how wonderful we all are – and they don’t remain so isolated and lonely.

see page 3 for continuation
Commentary

Sodomy Laws: The Long View
by Frank Howell, Co-Chair

When we behold the struggle for human rights, we realize the need for patience and courage. Ask any black person who has worked for his or her civil rights. Over 100 years was consumed in gaining the right to vote and marry a person of another race. Social scientists call this cultural lag. The same rule applies with gay and lesbian civil rights.

In 1961, all 50 states outlawed sodomy. Illinois became the first state to break the mold. The American Law Institute recommended that other states follow suit. State by state, we hacked our way through the jungle of ignorance and fear that said laws can’t be changed because it has always been that way. Change was unthinkable.

We gradually wore the enemy down. Fundamentalist Christians employed the “slippery slope” argument: if you allow any form of gay rights, then other disasters are sure to follow. As George Bernard Shaw once observed, this was like arguing that if we observed a performance of Oedipus Rex, we would all rush out of the theater and try to marry our mothers.

Conservatives pleaded that bestiality and plural marriages would result. They also pleaded that morale would suffer if black people were integrated into the armed services. Clearly none of these fears were realized.

Repeal of the sodomy laws can spill over into other areas such as marriage and the passage of ENDA (federal law which insures basic civil rights for gays and lesbians).

So let us all take pride in our progress since the dark days of the 1950s, when gays were not allowed to assemble in public. Now we need patience for the next struggles to come. ▲

Lavender Seniors Wish List

Make a difference. If you or anyone you know can help us with any of the following items or services, please contact us. Thanks!

Goods:
- Paper and plastic items (plates, napkins, cups, plastic utensils, etc.).
- Reams of white copy paper, 20 lb., 8-1/2 x 11.
- Sodas and bottled water.
- Computer printer ink cartridges, HP inkjet print cartridge #23 (color) and #45 (black).
- Reusable mylar wall calendar.

Services:
- Volunteer for our Friendly Visitor program and be matched with an LGBT senior who has requested in-person and/or telephone support. (Volunteers can be of any age.) Or sign-up if you would like to be matched with a volunteer.

• Work with our Senior Services Coordinator, Suzi Kalmus, to arrange and produce Speakers Panel presentations about LGBT senior issues.
• Interview LGBT seniors and Lavender Seniors volunteers and write an article for our newsletter.
• Work with our Director, Jeff Vessels, to research grant opportunities and prepare grant applications.
• Inquire about positions on our Advisory Board. To expand our diversity, we are particularly seeking candidates who are male, of minority race or ethnicity, and who may have non-profit board experience. ▲

Advertising rates are $1 per line on a three-column page, $10 for a business card-size advertisement; 50% discount for subscribers.
Property Tax Ruling

[Editor's Note: This letter was received by one of our participants.]

Thank you for writing about the proposed Property Tax Rule amendments that would affect the assessment of property held by surviving domestic partners. I am very pleased to report that the Board of Equalization voted earlier today to adopt new Property Tax Rule 462.040 and Property Tax Rule 462.240.

These rules provide that non-spouse joint tenants may pass on their property interests to each other using a will or trust without reassessment at the time of death; and provide that a surviving registered domestic partner may inherit property from his or her registered domestic partner by will, trust, other prearranged estate plan, or intestate succession, without property tax reassessment.

As a long time advocate for fair and equitable treatment of all persons, regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, or personal preference, I view these rule amendments as an important step forward. These modest and compassionate amendments will assure that surviving domestic partners – in their time of greatest grief – will not have to face the unwelcome prospect of an increase in the property tax assessment of their homes.

These newly adopted rules will become effective after they are reviewed by the State Office of Administrative Law (OAL), and are then promulgated to local county assessors throughout the state. This final review process should be completed by the end of this year.

As always, I look forward to your comments and advice on this and any other issue.

Very truly yours,

John Chiang
(Member of the State Board of Equalization)

Kudos to Frank H.

At its Third Birthday Celebration in July, the Lighthouse Community Center (LCC) in Hayward dedicated its LGBT Borrowing Library to Frank Howell for his generous, sustaining support. A dedication plaque at LCC reads, “In appreciation – The Frank J. Howell Library.”

Friend and fellow LCC and Lavender Seniors volunteer Marvin Burrows said that at one critical point, Frank provided a gift in order to keep LCC’s doors open and lights on. “Without Frank, LCC would be a very dull place,” Marvin said. “Frank is a very busy and dedicated person.”

Because he is a founder and current co-chair of the Lavender Seniors Advisory Board, we also are fortunate to know Frank and his kindness and generosity. On behalf of the entire Lavender Seniors family, congratulations to Frank for his latest well-deserved honor.

Celebrate LGBT Pride!

(from page 1)

The gathering will begin at 9:30 a.m. in front of the pillars at Lake Park Drive.

The march, which starts at 10 a.m., will be from Lake Park Drive to Snow Park at 20th and Harrison streets.

The festival in Snow Park will begin with an Opening Ceremony at 1 p.m. and will include speakers, comedy, and live entertainment until 5 p.m.

This is the second year for this event, which drew nearly 300 people last year.

Seventh Annual East Bay LGBTI Pride Celebration
When: Sunday, September 7, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Where: Ogawa Plaza/Oakland City Hall (14th and Broadway)
Fee: To be announced; children under age 10 enter free when accompanied by a paid adult.

More Information: Visit www.eastbaypride.org

The largest Pride celebration in the East Bay, with 7,500 attendees expected, includes three stages of live entertainment, more than 100 exhibitors, and an all-new food court.

Hayward Pride
When: Saturday, September 13, 6 – 11 p.m.
Where: Main Street between A & B Streets (two blocks from the Hayward BART station), in Hayward.
Fee: To be announced.

More information: Visit www.eastbaypride.org or visit www.geocities.com/haywardlcc/ (Lighthouse Community Center website)
Wide Open Town:
A History of Queer San Francisco to 1965
By Nan Alamilla Boyd
University of California Press

Reviewed by Frank J. Howell

San Francisco stands apart from other American cities. A cultural climate flourishes here that would be widely condemned in other parts of the country. The Queen City of the West encourages an atmosphere that is distinctive in morality. This atmosphere was no doubt created by the gold rush against the background of a seaport town. The Barbary Coast set the tone until the big crash down in 1917. A series of vice crusades have ebbed and flowed over the years. The gay bars as we know them today began to emerge during the 1930s with Finocchio’s, the infamous drag lounge that catered to tourists.

During the McCarthy era the San Francisco Police began to harass the bars but a major decision from the California Supreme Court (Stoutman vs. Reilly) established the right of bar owners to serve gays.

Jose Saria founded the League For Civic Education which later became the Society for Individual Rights (SIR).

During the 1940s bars were established (Mona’s) that catered exclusively to gays and lesbians. Gay life found itself bathed in a sea of alcohol from the very beginning. The darkly lit bars with painted over windows were the only game in town. Much of this unique decoration dates from the Prohibition Era.

New palaces of entertainment emerged such as the Paper Doll, Tommy’s 299, Miss Smith Tea Room and the Cooper Lantern (restroom decorated with pages from the Kinsey Report). A new era of anxiety and political pressure bubbled to the surface when the San Francisco Examiner ran articles warning of “a marked influx recently of homosexuals.” The United States Senate attempted to implicate Tommy’s 299 in a sex scandal. Once again the community fought back and won another significant decision (Storemen vs. Reilly) that meant that gays could assemble and socialize.

Major George Christopher launched a crusade to run the lavender menace out of town. The Alcoholic Beverage Control Act gave renewed power to the homophobic element. (Kissing, hand holding and dancing were prohibited.)

During the early 1960s two political and social forces emerged – the bar owners and the newly organized homophile organizations (Mattachine Society, Daughters of Bilitis). The groups emphasized a conservative, law abiding approach. The Tavern Guild was formed by bar owners who attempted to give out legal advise to patrons and hire attorneys. SIR held dances since they were not allowed elsewhere. They were hugely successful. In 1961 the Vagrancy Law was repealed. The police were now partially handicapped.

The epic battle with law enforcement and gays boiled over when the Council on Religion and The Homosexual held a fund raiser in 1965 where police attempted to photograph and frighten those attending the event. The raid backfired. The arm of the law was chopped off at a court hearing and a new era commenced. The men in blue were now clearly on the defensive. Membership in SIR exploded – over 1,000 in 1965. CRH issued “A Brief of Injustices.” Nan Boyd, an assistant professor of Women’s Studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder, has also included a series of oral histories from pioneers such as Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin, Jose Sarria, and George Mendenhall.

Celebrate the Sodomy Decision. Rush out and buy this compelling social history.
Attention: Note the change in venue for August only!

Potluck Event ... Pride Picnic
bring your favorite picnic dish to share –
- Cull Canyon Regional Park in Castro Valley –
- Swimming Lagoon area at the Cabaña –
(same as last year)
Saturday, August 9 Noon – 5 p.m.
East Bay Regional Park entry fee is:
$3.50 Adults, $2.50 Seniors & Youth
Free Parking ... Swimming (not au naturel)

Directions: From I-580 eastbound in Castro Valley, take the Center St. exit; go north on Center to Heyer, right turn on Heyer to Cull Canyon Rd. and on the left is park entrance. From I-580 westbound, take the Castro Valley exit and continue west on Castro Valley Blvd. to Crow Canyon Rd.; turn right on Crow Canyon, then turn left on Cull Canyon Rd. and continue to park entrance on the left.

Your generosity keeps Lavender Seniors going
Thanks to those who responded to our June letter. So far, we have received nearly $1,700! As you know, Lavender Seniors can exist only with your gifts of time and funds. Without your help, we could not match frail and isolated LGBT seniors with much-needed volunteers, or train mainstream service providers on how to meet LGBT seniors’ unique needs.

Those sending gifts recently and permitting us to print their names are:
Bruce Alexander
Bill Baillie & Don Silva
Meg Bruynell & Bobbie Jarvis
Dr. Suzanne Dibble & Jeanne DeJoseph
John Ellefson
Geraldine A. Farmer
Jerry Fishman
Elwood Gerrits
Michael T. Gifford
Sheila Goldmacher
Gerson Goodkind
Dot Hallinan
Beverly Hickok
Frank Howell
Duaine Imhoff
James Joslin
Eva Lilly
Bob Lindeborg
Angela Niles
Sue Parsell
Richard Riffer
Teri Robinson & Amy Guy
Patrick Russell
Frederick W. Schadick
Mel Scontrino
Lyn Strewalt
Audrey Tillmann
Lee & Arlene Williamson

For Laughs
On the way to Nags Head, North Carolina from Virginia there is a sign for a seafood restaurant that says, “I get my crabs from Dirty Dicks.”

On a hospital door to the colonoscopy unit: “To expedite your visit, please back in.”

On a plumber’s truck: “We repair what your husband fixed.”

On the trucks of a plumbing company: “Don’t sleep with a drip. Call your plumber.”

Pizza shop slogan: “7 days without pizza makes one weak.”

Sign over a gynecologist’s office: “Dr. Jones, at your cervix.”

Another pizza shop slogan: “Buy our pizza. We knead the dough.”

At a tire shop: “Invite us to your next blowout.”

concluded next page

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!
Community Listings

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

Senior Support Group at Lighthouse Community Center – Hayward
Meets the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays of each month, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
August 12 & 26
Frank Howell & Fred Banuelos
are the leaders
For information call Frank at
510-489-0932

East Bay Women’s Support Group
Meets 2nd and 4th Fridays each month
August 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.
August 9

Welcome, Peggy!
Peggy Moore hired as Outreach Specialist
Lavender Seniors has hired Peggy Moore as its Outreach Specialist. A resident of Oakland with a history of LGBT activism, Peggy will work to learn more about and establish closer relationships with Oakland’s LGBT senior African American, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American communities.

Our goal is to ensure that Oakland’s diverse LGBT senior communities receive needed services from Lavender Seniors and mainstream agencies.
The Outreach Specialist position is made possible by a grant from the City of Oakland.
Look for a more comprehensive story in the next edition of Lavender Notes.

RICHMOND HOME TO SHARE
I’m looking for a congenial male housemate who can prepare my dinner and drive my car to appointments and shopping in exchange for free rent.
I have a 3 Bedroom, 1½ bath house with garden and laundry in a safe neighborhood.
I have six indoor cats.
Share utilities, cable and phone.
No smoking or drugs.
Call Sam @ 510-412-3313

For Laughs
(continued from page 5)
Door of a plastic surgeon’s office: “Hello. Can we pick your nose?”
At a towing company: “We don’t charge an arm and a leg. We want tows.”
On a taxidermist’s window: “We really know our stuff.”
In a podiatrist’s office: “Time wounds all heels.”
At a car dealership: “The best way to get back on your feet – miss a car payment.”
At the electric company: “We would be de-lighted if you pay your bill. However, if you don’t, you will be.”
In a restaurant window: “Don’t stand there and be hungry. Come on in and get fed up.”
In the front yard of a funeral home: “Drive carefully. We’ll wait.”
At a propane filling station: “Tank heaven for little grills.”
And don’t forget the sign at a radiator shop: “Best place in town to take a leak.”