



LAVENDER NOTES

Newsletter of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

A Project of the Tides Center

Volume IX, No. 2

February 2004

1395 Bancroft Avenue ▲ San Leandro, CA 94577 ▲ 510-667-9655
 email: info@lavenderseniors.org ▲ www.lavenderseniors.org

Calendar of Events

▲ February 14, Noon-2 pm
 Lavender Seniors monthly potluck. The new domestic partners law: what does it mean for LGBT seniors?

▲ March 28, 2004
 Pat Bond Old Dyke Awards. For more information, visit www.patbondawards.com or call 415-392-6267, ext. 321

▲ April 17, 10:30 am
 Senior LGBT Community Forum, sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Aging Network of the American Society on Aging. Free. Hilton Hotel, San Francisco. More information to come.

(Note: Monthly potlucks are held at 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro.)

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Moving Forward Together

BY JEFF VESSELS, DIRECTOR
 The new year is off to a quick start, and the holiday season is a nice memory.

As we transition into 2004, we are seeking your feedback and ideas with the enclosed survey. Your thoughts are very important to Lavender Seniors' Board and staff, and to foundations and others who provide funding for our programs. Please take time right now (about 10 minutes) to complete and mail the survey back to us. If you would rather call our office, we'll conduct the survey over the phone with you. If no one is in the office, please leave a message, and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

Our first potluck of the year was another tremendous success. The first openly gay Oakland City Council Member, Danny Wan, provided very interesting insights into the city's workings and important perspectives on services for seniors and the LGBT community. Thanks go to Council Member Wan and to Oakland Vice Mayor Henry Chang and Commission on Aging Chairperson, Frank Rose, who stopped by as the potluck was concluding, for sharing time and conversation with us.

Our Seniors of Color project, funded by the City of Oakland, is moving forward swiftly. Staff member Peggy Moore is in

the midst of conducting focus group discussions and interviews. The purpose of this first year of the project is to learn more about issues impacting Oakland's LGBT seniors of color, so we can address these issues in the future. If you would like to participate, please contact Peggy at the office: 510-667-9655

We have three new participants in the Friendly Visitors Program, in Hayward, Oakland, and San Leandro, who would like to be matched with volunteers. Please call the office if you think you might want to be a Friendly Visitor, and we'll mail you a Volun-

teer Application Packet. If you have access to the Internet, you can now download the application from our website:

WWW.LAVENDERSENIORS.ORG
 In addition, three Speaker's Panel presentations are already scheduled for the directors of Oakland's Senior Centers, City of Fremont employees and the Lambda Youth project of Lighthouse Community Center. These presentations educate others about LGBT seniors and encourage changes in policies and practices at other agencies so that services are more accessible.

This month we are starting the "Lavender" (Continued on page 4)

Gay and Gray, A Difficult Mix

by Paul Levy, Minneapolis Star Tribune, 6/27/2003

Many of Cathy Croghan's older friends need medical attention, housekeeping help or meals delivered. But they don't dare ask for help. "As soon as you ask for help, you're vulnerable," Croghan said Thursday. "That's hard enough for a straight person. Now imagine what it's like to be a senior in the gay community."

GRAY AND GAY
 There are an estimated 27,500 gay seniors in the Twin Cities area, said

Croghan, chairwoman of GLBT Generations, a group that studies the needs and concerns of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender seniors.

While Gay Pride Weekend is celebrated in downtown Minneapolis and other locations, many gay seniors will stay at home—and in the closet—wondering if nursing homes, meal-delivery programs or insurance companies will accept them for who they really are.

"Society makes a point of ignoring old people—

(Continued on page 3)

The programs of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay are made possible by individual and corporate 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."

Lavender Notes

is the newsletter of
Lavender Seniors of the East Bay



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is to improve the quality of life of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors (age 55 and older) residing in Alameda and western Contra Costa counties through community outreach, advocacy, and education.

ADVISORY BOARD

Frank Howell & Ina Mae Murri, Co-Chairs
Jeanine DeBacker, Secretary
Bobbie Jarvis, Treasurer
Meg Bruynell, Dotty Fowler, & Natalie Zarchin, members at-large

NEXT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, February 10, 7 pm, at our office.
Interested persons are welcome; public comments will take place at 7 pm.

STAFF

Jeff Vessels, MSSW, Director
Peggy Moore, Outreach Specialist
Nancy Fugett, Administrator

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Charles A. Aiken

Lavender Seniors welcomes all persons age 55 and older, their partners, and guests. The cost of production and mail makes it necessary to request a minimum \$15 annual donation to receive the newsletter. Visitors and others may receive the newsletter for three months without charge. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.

When making a gift, please make checks payable to: Tides Center / Lavender Seniors.

Signed articles represent the opinion of the authors and not necessarily those of Lavender Seniors. Inclusion of a name in this newsletter does not necessarily indicate a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

We're All Ears

Got something to say?
We hope so. Enclosed with this edition of *Lavender*



Notes is a brief survey to get feedback on Lavender Seniors' programs and your ideas for improving and expanding what we do. We take your comments very seriously and so do those who fund us. Please take a moment now to complete and mail your survey. Thanks!

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 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 discussion groups**, co-sponsored and hosted by the Pacific Center (see back page for schedule).
- ▲ **Monthly newsletter**, *Lavender Notes*.
- ▲ **A website** at

WWW.LAVENDERSENIORS.ORG

To get involved as a participant or volunteer, contact us at 510-667-9655 or info@lavenderseniors.org

Gay and Gray (Cont'd from pg 1) especially our group," said Annalee Stewart, 75, of Minneapolis. Stewart is a member of *Old Lesbians Organizing for Change*, a national group based in Houston that has perhaps a dozen Minnesota members.

"Old lesbian women go back to the closet" when they need help and are afraid they'll be rejected, Stewart said. An estimated 1 to 3 million Americans over age 65 are gay, and many are afraid to let their sexual preferences be known.

Nearly half of the *National Association of Area Agencies on Aging* affiliates that were surveyed nine years ago said that GLBT elders would not be welcome in their facilities. Those agencies provide the bulk of federally supported social services for seniors. Many gay seniors don't know where they will receive care if they need assistance—and two-thirds of a sample of gay seniors in New York said they did not know who would care for them if they became disabled, according to a *Pride Seniors Network* report.

When a transgendered woman suffered a stroke at Spirit of the Lakes United Church of Christ in Minneapolis, an unofficial hub of GLBT activity, the woman had to revert to her male self before caregivers would treat her, said Barbara Satin, 69, a transgendered woman who helped create GLBT Generations.

"But it's different between the lesbian community, where there's a strong social

network and a great respect for age, than it is with gay men," said Satin, 69, who created GLBT Generations with Roger Youngs, a gay man, and Rebecca Voelkel, 34, a minister at Spirit of the Lakes Church.

Youngs, 60, said he cringes at the stereotype of men who frequent gay bars—"young, energetic and obsessed with appearance."

REJECTED BY MANY

"What about people like me?" Youngs asked. "Men my age are much more closeted than young people. I met a man who lived with another man for 60 years. After [the man's partner] passed away, the man said he didn't even know there was a gay community out there for him. He said he didn't know of any gay community for people beyond their 20s."

"I've been rejected by Christian friends. I lost a lot of friends in Vietnam. AIDS came along and I lost friends to that. When you're gay and 60, you've already lost so much."

Aware that many gay seniors felt isolated, Margaret Dousseit, 69, of Minneapolis helped found Gay and Lesbian Elders Active in Minnesota (GLEAM) in 1989.

But members of Spirit of the Lakes thought more was needed. The church will host the third annual GLBT Elders' Pre-Pride social event from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. today at the church, 2930 13th Av. S. The GLBT Generations also does sensitivity train-

ing at nursing homes and other senior service providers.

"We wanted to get beyond the stone-wall generation and remind some of our congregants in their 50s and older that they are still vibrant members of a community," said Voelkel.

While some of the gay congregants "grew up in a time when, for many of them, it was impossible to be out," aging gay baby boomers are more likely to come out and stay out of the closet, Satin said.

"They have a different mindset because they've grown up with the idea of enforcing human rights," Satin said. "Others have felt that way, too. But things change when you are dependent on somebody else. If you're afraid of what they might think, are you willing to bring legal action against them?"

Jo Hiner, 77, a member of Old Lesbians Organizing for Change, said she thinks attracting attention to issues would make life easier for aging gays and lesbians.

"I've been out for 30 years," said Hiner, who is long divorced and has five children. "Was it hard to come out? No. But I know people who are afraid because of their religious, even their racial backgrounds."

"The aging process alone is enough to contend with. Gay and lesbian people need to make things easier. But sometimes, you wonder if anyone knows we're here." ▲

UPTOWN

BODY & FENDER

Giovanna Tanzillo

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UPTOWN@UPTOWNBODY.COM

Did you know...

▲ **66% of LGBT seniors live alone**, compared to 33% of heterosexual seniors. Seniors who live alone are far more likely to live in poverty, feel depressed, have poor nutrition, and move into an institution.

▲ **20% of LGBT seniors have no one to care for them** if they become ill, compared to 2% of heterosexual seniors. LGBT seniors oftentimes cannot rely on their birth families, faith communities, and other sources of support on which heterosexual seniors typically rely.

▲ A 2001 report by the federal Agency on Aging found that the double stigma of **discrimination based on age and sexual orientation often prevents LGBT seniors from seeking or accepting needed health and human services.**

Moving Forward (Cont'd from pg 1) Reassurance" program. Just call the office with the name and contact information of an LGBT senior who is ill or otherwise going through a challenging time, and we'll make sure that person gets a call or card from Lavender Seniors. If you could use some support yourself, give us a call. We're more than happy to talk or connect you with a volunteer.

Watch for more information soon about a new social program that we are starting very soon.

"Lavender Lunch Bunch" will be a lunchtime alternative and supplement to our usual monthly Saturday potlucks and will take place at various locations in Oakland.

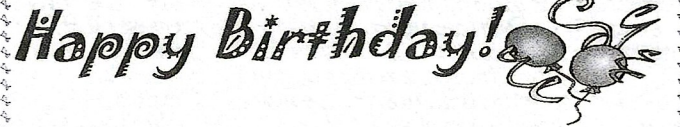
With this edition, we welcome Charlie Aiken as the new editor of Lavender Notes. Thanks, Charlie, for stepping forward and volunteering your time and

expertise. We also extend our warmest wishes and lots of lavender love to Charlie, whose mother passed away during the holiday season.

Charlie follows in the footsteps of our past editor, Bert Hendriksen, who is still helping with our website. Thanks, Bert, for your continuing service. Additional thanks to Jim Silva, who prepares the newsletter for mailing every month, like clockwork.

As you can see, advertising in Lavender Notes continues to grow. Please consider patronizing our advertisers and thank them for their vital support of Lavender Seniors and the community.

It's amazing what we can accomplish together. ▲



February Birthdays

Anna S. Johnson
February 2

Frank Howell
February 6

Eric Larson
February 7

Renee Watkins
February 7

Gerald Hyman
February 8

Lynn Riordan
February 9

Ann C. Smith
February 9

Jess McVey
February 12

Barbara Jue
February 15

Marvin Burrows
February 19

Duaine Imhoff
February 20

Ellen Levin
February 20

Cathy Cade
February 24

Carol Squires
February 24

Gene Windels
February 26

Elizabeth Ruth
February 29

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.)

Enclosed is a check made payable to Tides Center/Lavender Seniors

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Please contact me about including Lavender Seniors in my will.

Please contact me about participating in Lavender Seniors' programs and/or volunteering.

Please do **not** list me in Lavender Seniors publications as a "Friend of Lavender Seniors."

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

Thank you!

Monthly Potluck

Saturday, February 14

MEAL AT NOON ▲ PROGRAM AT 1 P.M.

If your name begins with the letter

- A through Gbring a Main Dish
- H through M.....bring a Salad
- N through Z bring a Dessert/Fruit

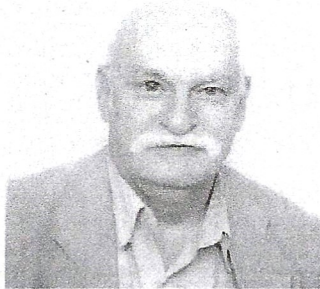
Shuttle from San Leandro BART station is available. Call Lavender Seniors one day ahead to arrange pickup: 510-667-9655

The New Domestic Partners Law: What Does It Mean for LGBT Seniors?

With passage of AB205 last year, LGBT people face new questions when considering whether to register with the state as domestic partners. With new rights come sweeping new responsibilities not included in previous laws.

Whether you are in a relationship, considering one, or simply interested in the advance of LGBT rights, this discussion with a panel of experts is sure to be interesting and informative. ▲

Book Review



FRANK HOWELL

Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin

BY JOHN D'EMILIO

FREE PRESS \$35

REVIEWED BY FRANK HOWELL

Revisionist historians are busy these days going back in time and paying tribute to those early pioneers of the movement who only receive their due after death. Bayard Rustin definitely belongs in this category. He became a force to be reckoned with early on in the peace movement and went to prison during World War II.

He came from a poor, unstable family where he learned that his sister was really his mother. His father was seldom seen. In high school he stood out from the crowd as a football and track star and an outstanding student.

His charismatic allure brought him into contact with many influential personalities

like Paul Robeson and A. Philip Randolph, but an arrest for sex in the back of a car in 1953 in Pasadena would follow him like a shadow for the remainder of his life. Those in the civil rights movement tried to keep him on the sidelines because of his gay affairs, but in 1963 he abruptly reemerged as the chief architect of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s March on Washington. The he was pushed into the shadows once more. But he did gain access to the Johnson White House and he also toured India in his never-ending crusade for world peace.

D'Emilio captures the era of repression and taboo of the late 1940s and early 1950s. "It was an era in which homosexual and heterosexual cooperate in an elaborately choreo-

graphed dance of discretion." He serves as professor of history and women's studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He is the co-author of the groundbreaking *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*.

Unfortunately Rustin did not live long enough to actively participate in gay liberation as we know it today. It was only in his final years as the older lover of Walter Neagle that we became aware of their lavender struggle. But throughout his life he brought a lavender sensibility and edge to all of his efforts.

Lost Prophet brings Bayard Rustin and the civil rights struggle to life in a masterly fashion that really makes us proud to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender. ▲



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C O M M U N I T Y L I S T I N G S

<p style="text-align: center;">East Bay Women's Support Group</p> <p>has been suspended, due to low turn-out. We hope the group revives in the future. Watch this space for future updates.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Seniors Men's Afternoon</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, 1:30—3:30 p.m. February 12 and 26</p> <p style="text-align: center;">At Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Co-sponsored by Lavender Seniors and Pacific Center</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Senior Support Group at Lighthouse Community Center in Hayward</p> <p>Meets 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month, 5—7 p.m. February 10 and 24</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Co-leaders: Frank Howell and Fred Banuelos</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Call Frank for more information: 510-489-0932</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Fellows of East Bay</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2nd Sunday of each month, 5:30—8:30 p.m. February 8</p> <p>Social Club for mature men and their admirers. Monthly potluck dinner and social held at Oak Center Towers, 1515 Market St., Oakland.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Bring food and drink to share and a \$4 donation.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Vintage Video: Pat Bond in <i>Lorena Hickok & Eleanor Roosevelt —A Love Story and Gerty, Gerty, Gerty is Back, Back, Back</i> February 7, 2-5 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Francis of Assisi Community, 145 Guerrero St., San Francisco February 22, 2-5 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst St., Berkeley</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$10-\$25 No one turned away <i>Presented by the Pat Bond Committee</i></p>	

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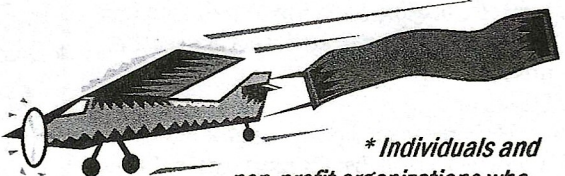
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Business card	\$25	\$65	\$125	\$235
Quarter page	\$40	\$100	\$185	\$350
Half page	\$75	\$185	\$350	\$650
Full page	\$135	\$350	\$650	\$1,200



* 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.