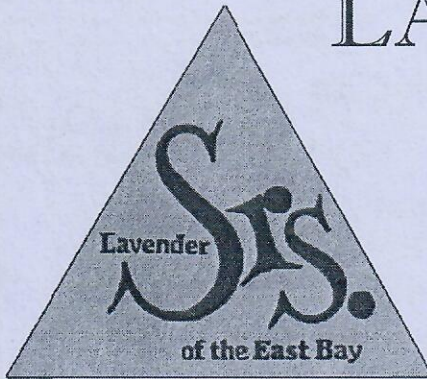


LAVENDER NOTES

Official Newsletter of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

A Project of the Tides Center



1395 Bancroft Avenue
(510) 667-9655

San Leandro, CA 94577
info@lavenderseniors.org

www.lavenderseniors.org

Volume IX, Issue 7

July 2004

CELEBRATING OUR TENTH YEAR!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 10, Noon-2 p.m.: Lavender Seniors monthly potluck. 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro. "Recognizing and Stopping LGBT Elder Abuse and Neglect," a presentation by Ginny Garrett, social worker from Alameda County Adult Protective Services. Next month: Transgender Issues. Potlucks are second Saturday of each month.

July 15, 12:30-2:30 p.m.: Lavender Lunch Bunch. Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue, in Oakland. Catered food; free. Co-sponsored by Oakland Department of Human Services. Open to all LGBT seniors.

Now through July 15: "The SF Dyke March: A Photo Exhibit" by Jane Cleland and Cathy Cade. Hormel GLBT Center, Main Public Library, San Francisco.

Now through December 31: "Queer Eye: The Photographs of Crawford Barton." International Museum of GLBT History, 657 Mission St., Suite 300, San Francisco, 415-777-5455, www.glbthistory.org

August 17 & 22: Second Annual Oakland International Black Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Film Festival. Parkway Theater, Oakland. www.clubrimshot.com

August 21, Noon-5 p.m.: East Bay Pride Picnic. Cull Canyon Regional Park, Cabana at the entrance of the Swimming Hole Area. The park charges \$3.50 entrance; the picnic is free. Please bring a dish to share.

August 28: Sistahs Steppin' in Pride: An East Bay Dyke March and Festival. Lake Merritt, Oakland. www.sistahssteppin.org

September 10-11: Seventh Annual Southern Alameda County Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. Little Theater at Chabot College, Hayward.

November 14: Celebration of Lavender Seniors' Tenth Anniversary.

Lavender Seniors Begins Survey for LGBT East Bay Residents of All Ages

Got an opinion about LGBT life in the East Bay? We want to hear from you.

Lavender Seniors is surveying LGBT East Bay residents of all ages. Supported by a grant from the City of Oakland, the survey is designed to learn more about life in the LGBT community and collect opinions about the type of community we want to live in as we grow older.

"What are the best and the worst aspects of being LGBT in the East Bay? We want to know," said Jeff Vessels, Director of Lavender Seniors. "Our goal is to collect information so we can work with others to build a stronger LGBT community for all of us, especially as the population ages."

The confidential survey is available on the Lavender Seniors website, www.lavenderseniors.org and takes less than 15 minutes to complete. Those without Internet access can call the Lavender Seniors office

(Continued on page 7)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

July Birthdays	3
Book Review: Peninsula of Lies	4
Facing Life After 40	5
Tip of the Month	6

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, The San Francisco Foundation, and Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. 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) through community outreach, advocacy, and education.

Advisory Board

Frank Howell & Ina Mae Murri, Co-Chairs
Jeanine DeBacker, Secretary
Bobbie Jarvis, Treasurer
Meg Bruynell and
Natalie Zarchin, Members at-Large

Next Advisory Board Meeting

July 6, 7 pm., at the office. Interested persons are welcome; public comments 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. Cost of production & mail makes necessary a request of \$15 minimum annual donation to receive the newsletter. Visitors & others may receive the newsletter for three months without charge. No one is turned away for lack of funds. For gifts, make checks payable to *Tides Center / Lavender Seniors*. Signed articles represent the opinion of the authors & 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. ▲

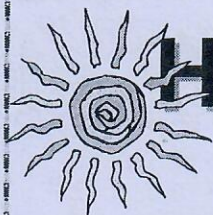
United Way Donors, Remember Lavender Seniors!

Do you donate to United Way of the Bay Area? You can support Lavender Seniors by designating your pledge or gift for us. No special code is necessary—just write in “Lavender Seniors”!

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 and/or 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.
 - ▲ Lavender Lunch Bunch, a social gathering with food and drinks provided, on the third Thursday of each month.
 - ▲ Lavender Juniors, to organize support from LGBT non-seniors and guide inter-generational programming.
 - ▲ 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. ▲



Happy Birthday!



July 1
DON HANCOCK
JERRY WASHINGTON

July 15
TOM LONG

July 6
BILL SWENOR

July 16
ABEL FOSTER
NANCY FUGETT
MARIE KOCHAVER
EMIKO MIDORI

July 25
GRANT BROWN

July 11
DICK COLTON
VERN NELSON

July 26
JENNIFER SPRINKLES

July 12
PATRICIA SOUSA

July 19
BETTY CARLETON
CYNTHIA DUNN

July 27
THOMAS A. DANIELS

July 13
BEA HOWARD

July 24
SUSAN DENAULT

July 28
PATRICIA MAHAFFEY

July 31
RICK BOLTON

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
- Please charge my (circle one): AMEX Mastercard VISA

Card #: _____ Expires: ____/____ Signature: _____

Name: _____

Home Telephone: _____
(____)____-_____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____
____@_____

City/State/ZIP: _____

- 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!

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

July Book Review

PENINSULA OF LIES

A True Story of Mysterious Birth and Taboo Love

by Edward Ball. Simon & Schuster. 271 pp. \$24.
reviewed by Evelyn C. White

That a young Strom Thurmond had sexual congress with his family's black maid did not curl the hair of those who've long understood the earthy passions that disrupt the South's storied miscegenation taboo. Now comes Edward Ball with a saga about a British transsexual (male to



idea where the [toilet] might be, the chair created a link between this stranger and me, through the warmth of the seat, you might say," he writes.

Upon further investigation, Ball discovered that Simmons (whose death in 2000 precluded their meeting) had been born male in England, in the early 1920s, of servant-class roots he found it painful to acknowledge. Then named Gordon Hall, he eventually made his way to New York

Ball takes readers on an uninspired trek through a famous Charleston cemetery where ...many putative practitioners of "same-sex love" are interred.

female) who landed in 1960s South Carolina and married a black laborer with whom she claimed in 1971 to have a child. Yet for all the race-mixing, gender-bending, miracle-birth angles of *Peninsula of Lies*, Ball's narrative, like the Thurmond story (thus far), leaves readers hungry for a deeper probing of love, lust and rebellion in Dixie.

Ball is the author of *Slaves in the Family*, an acclaimed 1998 book that chronicles the mixing of bloodlines in his socially prominent South Carolina family. As he tells it, *Peninsula of Lies* was inspired by a query he received, in 1999, about "the Ball commode chair," an 18th-century family heirloom that the letter writer, Charleston socialite Dawn Langley Simmons, claimed to have once owned. "Although I had no

where, at age 30 and conflicted about his sexuality, he became an intimate of an unmarried, 69-year-old heiress to the Whitney fortune (of cotton gin fame).

Ball quotes a friend of the "December-May" pair: Gordon "became the accommodating male whenever Isabel [Whitney] needed a companion...He went everywhere she wanted to go that she needed an escort—and in exchange, Isabel gave him a place to live, and paid his expenses." When Whitney died in 1962, Hall inherited a cache of stocks, real estate, jewelry, art and antiques valued today at about \$6 million.



Evelyn C. White

Accompanied by his pets (a parrot and two Chihuahuas), Hall soon left for Charleston in a car driven by a uniformed chauffeur. "Within a few weeks...[Hall] had followed the custom of the showy rich, hiring a black cook...and an elderly black butler," the author writes.

Here Ball blows the chance to discuss, if only briefly, the intriguing stories of other wealthy American women who bequeathed major

Kenneth G. Bradley

◆ Caregiver Reliever

◆ Respite for Caregivers

HIV/AIDS/Cancer

East Bay
Reasonable

Bonded
Daily/Weekly

**22685 Seventh Street
Hayward, CA 94541 510-885-1397**

(Continued on page 7)

FACING LIFE AFTER 40, OLDER GAY MEN BATTLE FEARS OF ISOLATION, INVISIBILITY

excerpted from an article by Kathi Wolfe
The Southern Voice, June 4, 2004

One night eight years ago, Tim Bergling, a journalist and television producer, was in an America Online "m4m" chat room. He says he was just shooting the breeze, not looking for an online hook up.

But when Bergling told a younger guy that he was 36, the man instantly ended their chat, "Too old. Bye," he said.

"Apparently, this young fellow wasn't remotely interested in where I lived, what I did for a living...if I did drugs...beat up my boyfriend when I was pissed off...Just 'How old?' as if my age defined me in total," Bergling says.

That was Bergling's first encounter with ageism among gay men. The 1996 experience wasn't unique, say Bergling and other experts on aging.

It was like someone pointing out your first gray hair, he says. This "rude awakening" stuck in his mind as he wrote magazine articles on topics ranging from gay youths to retirement.

Deciding to explore aging issues more in depth, Bergling wrote *Reeling in the Years: Gay Men's Perspectives on Age and Ageism*, published earlier this year.

To learn about gay male attitudes toward aging, Bergling surveyed about 2,000 gay men in person and another 250 (more in depth) online. The respondents ranged from teenagers to the octogenarians. Bergling learned from the surveys that ageism cuts across the spectrum of generations.

Many young gay men don't like being around older gay men, he says. They think older men, those identified as at least 40 years old, either have nothing to say or just want sex.

"Older guys? Forget it," Jamey, a 24-year-old movie store manager in Detroit, told Bergling. "I get bored out of my skull if one of them walks up to me and tries to start a conversation, even if he isn't hitting on me, which he probably is."

This generational disdain is often mutual, Bergling says. Many older gay men who responded to his surveys said that they had

(Continued on page 6)



UPTOWN

BODY & FENDER

Giovanna Tanzillo

TEL: (510) 251-8009

FAX: (510) 251-0605

401 TWENTY-SIXTH STREET

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94609

UPTOWN@UPTOWNBODY.COM



Saint Cuthbert's Episcopal Church

7900 Mountain Blvd.
Oakland, California 94605

*A warm, diverse, inclusive, joyous, loving
alternative family where you are welcome!*

Sunday Worship 8 & 10 a.m.

Sundays @ St. Cuddy's, 7 p.m.

Potluck & Bible Study, Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

StCuddy@aol.com

510-635-4949

Elizabeth Callaway Trust Services

your local fiduciary

Trustee * Executor

Conservator of the Estate

Bill Paying & Organizing Help

I can do it all or provide crucial help

510-530-1720

elizcall@earthlink.net

OVER 40...

(Continued from page 5)

little use for young gay guys.

"All those younger guys...think older guys like me just want to get them all into bed," Rick, a 45-year-old software consultant in Mansfield, Ohio, told Bergling online. "Please. What an utter waste of time would that be? They could never keep up, and good lord, what the hell would we even talk about?"

American culture as a whole, regardless of sexual orientation, remains youth-oriented, but it's even more evident among gay men, Bergling says.

The first step aging gay men should take is to avoid beating themselves up over the dilemma, says Raymond M. Berger, author of *Gay & Gray*, a groundbreaking work on gay men and aging first published in 1982.

One reason why there are so many myths about aging—older people aren't sexy; people over 40 don't have relationships; elders don't enjoy life—is the lack of "homosocial" contact between older and younger gay men, says Michael Shernoff, a New York City psychotherapist. Because of this lack of inter-generational contact, Shernoff says young gay men don't often get to see older gay men as "sexy or graceful."

Robert Kertzner, a psychiatrist and adjunct associate research scientist with Columbia University in San Francisco, has studied gay men and middle age. He says gay men have some of the same aging-related issues as straight men and women.

"Regardless of sexual orientation, men and women, as they get older, spend more time reflecting on [their] identity," Kertzner says. "There can be a natural distancing from the world of young people."

Finances, health and sexual functioning are concerns for a majority of older people, but gay men also struggle with isolation and invisibility, he says.

"Gay men as they get older, are less likely to have children, less likely to be partnered, than straight men," Kertzner says.

The men who were less fearful about aging were those who don't want or expect a relationship, Hostetler says.

There is this ideal "developmental life course pathway" for gay men which involves finding partnership in their 30s and then pairing off to

TIP OF THE MONTH

Senior Summer Health Hazards

Summer for seniors holds risks from heat that may strike more often than for the general population. Seniors are affected by heat waves over 90°F with high dew points. Age, disease & medication are factors. High blood pressure & heart disease medications are diuretics that remove salt & fluid volume from the body. Perspiration from high temperatures plus diuretics can lead to dehydration, which can lead to discomfort, confusion, damage to major organs, & even death.

As we age, our thirst mechanism is not as finely tuned as when we were younger. For those having suffered a stroke, Alzheimer's or other brain disease, the thirst mechanism is even less likely to direct the consumption of enough fluids. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of fluid daily helps prevent dehydration. Salt tablets are not advised.

Heat exhaustion & dehydration are often a sign of confusion as our aging bodies gradually lose the ability to regulate temperature. Frail seniors should be checked on frequently to ensure adequate fluids intake, properly ventilated homes & normal mentation. When behavioral changes or fever from heat occur, get to urgent care immediately for possible heat stroke & dehydration.

Whether gardening or exercising, ease into it gradually to build endurance. If possible, take walks, do gardening or other light exercise. It may improve balance, build muscle mass, lower blood pressure, improve cardiac health, and provide other emotional & physical health benefits. Watch the heat & fluid intake and enjoy summer in good health. ▲

do the "domestic thing," he says. "To the extent that there's ageism in the community, one part of it is that gay men are afraid of not finding Mr. Right—of being old and alone."

Ageism among gay men isn't likely to go away any time soon. But there are signs that attitudes toward aging are changing.

"Every year, at least one of my gay male students befriends me. He's not hungry for sex. He wants to have a mentor," says Shernoff.

Gay activism is a wonderful venue for younger and older gay men to meet, he says.

"Older gay men have an obligation to bequeath a better world to younger queers," Shernoff says. "And younger queers need to make the world safe for older queers." ▲

SURVEY...

(Continued from page 1)

(667-9655) and leave a message to schedule a telephone interview.

After asking about your demographic characteristics, the survey asks about your relationships, general health, degree of being "out," and experiences with health and human service providers. The survey then delves into the greatest fears, hopes and needs of current seniors and those who will someday be seniors.

After collecting survey information through July, Lavender Seniors will issue a community report. The survey information will also be very helpful in seeking resources to sustain and expand activities and programs.

If you would like to email a survey link to your friends and colleagues, please contact Jeff Vessels at jeff@lavenderseniors.org ▲

JULY BOOK REVIEW...

(Continued from page 4)

portions of their estates to men who had befriended them in their waning years; artist Georgia O'Keeffe and tobacco heiress Doris Duke come immediately to mind. Instead, Ball takes readers on an uninspired trek through a famous Charleston cemetery where, he notes, many putative practitioners of "same-sex love" are interred. "This man was gay," effuses Ball's local graveyard guide, noting a towering, phallic-shaped tombstone. But as a reconstruction of Southern sexual scandals, *Peninsula of Lies* is hard pressed to trump *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, John Berendt's rousing 1994 book about homosexuals and society life in Savannah, Georgia.

That John-Paul Simmons—"a skinny, happy black guy who looked like he'd stumbled into a good time"—does not appear, in full flesh, until page 163, bespeaks the major problem with Ball's book. After all, Ball suggests, this is the person (variously described by others as a gardener, deliveryman, mechanic, fisherman and "Negro steward") for whom Gordon Hall, in 1968, underwent an operation that

enabled him, as Dawn Pepita Langley Hall, to marry a black man. (The Supreme Court had overturned anti-miscegenation laws in 1967.) More egregiously, Ball introduces readers to Simmons (in his late fifties and mentally unstable) for the most part through secondary sources.

Testimony here, from one of Hall's upscale friends, is typical of the "dish" the author chooses to relay: "John-Paul spent money, and went through that income—millions of dollars!...[He] was ugly as sin. He didn't have enough intelligence to get out of a shower of horse manure....I think Dawn was trying to do anything to attract attention, but [she] went about it the wrong way....If [she] had picked up with a white boy and done this thing, nobody would have paid a bit of attention. But it was the way it was done....It just put a bad taste in people's mouth." Ball belatedly summarizes the brunt of the scandal: "She'd gone from man to woman, but when she 'married black,' Dawn crossed another threshold."

But there was more to come! Two years after her marriage to Simmons, Dawn began to show signs of pregnancy. In October 1971, after a brief trip to Philadelphia, she informed friends and family that she'd given birth to a seven-pound daughter. Her relationship with Simmons was steadily deteriorating, so Dawn soon moved with the light-skinned infant (christened Natasha) to upstate New York.

Medicated and accompanied by a psychiatric aide, John-Paul Simmons eventually met with Ball and shared memories of his life with Gordon/Dawn Hall. Ball writes: "When he talked, his mind came alive, and his story carried strong emotions—shame, amusement, curiosity—all of which he still felt. I could see him shaking off the sedation, like a man coming out of the waves, trying to breathe, and holding his truths above the water."

Indeed, for all the bad-mouthing he endured, John-Paul, while clearly flawed, emerges as the honest broker in *Peninsula of Lies*. To his credit, Ball also includes the valiant voice of Natasha Simmons. Now in her mid-thirties, she is a determined young woman who, as readers will come to know, was rightly cherished by the unorthodox couple she loved as mom and dad. ▲

COMMUNITY LISTINGS

Seniors Men's Afternoon

2nd and 4th Thursdays
of each month, 1:30—3:30 pm.

July 8 & 22

at Pacific Center,

2712 Telegraph Ave.,
Berkeley.

Co-sponsored by Lavender
Seniors and Pacific Center

CATHY CADE

PERSONAL HISTORIES, PHOTO ORGANIZING & PHOTOGRAPHY

Record Your Life Story
Organize Your Photographs
Have Fun with Me Making New Photos

**NATURAL LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY
IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME**
510-532-3545 www.CATHYCADE.COM

Fellows of East Bay

2nd Sunday of each month,
5:30—8:30 pm.

July 11

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.

LAVENDER LUNCH BUNCH

Join The Fun!

July 15, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Lakeside Park Garden
Center, 666 Bellevue, at
Lake Merritt, in Oakland.
Co-sponsored by Lavender
Seniors and Oakland De-
partment of Human Ser-
vices. Enjoy a free meal, fun,
and friendship! This month,
we'll be sharing in some
games and more. The
planned presentation on
Japanese floral arranging
has been postponed to an-
other time. ▲

MONTHLY POTLUCK

Saturday, July 10

Meal at Noon ▲ Program at 1 p.m.
If your name begins with the letter

A through G	bring a Main Dish
H through N	bring a Salad
M through Z	bring Dessert/Fruit

San Leandro BART station Shuttle available. Call one
day ahead to arrange: 510-667-9655

THIS MONTH'S POTLUCK FEATURES...

Ginny Garrett, a social worker with Alameda County
Adult Protective Services, will speak on the topic of
Recognizing and Stopping LGBT Elder Abuse and
Neglect. Ginny, who is a friend of our organization, will
give us practical tips on how to protect ourselves and
one another. ▲

Advertising Rates* for LAVENDER NOTES

Ad Size	1 month	3 months	6 months	12 months
Classified ad	\$2 per line (per month) on a 3-column page			
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 submitted.