

LAVENDER NOTES

Official Newsletter of Lavender Seniors of the East Bay

A Project of the Tides Center



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www.lavenderseniors.org

Volume IX, Issue 8

August 2004

CELEBRATING OUR TENTH YEAR!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 14, Noon-2 pm: Lavender Seniors monthly potluck. 1395 Bancroft Avenue, San Leandro. "The T in LGBT: Transgender Life in the East Bay." A panel presentation. Potlucks are second Saturday of each month.

August 14, 1:05 pm: Out at the Ballpark, Network Associates Coliseum. The A's versus the Royals. For tickets, go to www.eastbayvoice.org/tickets. Order a Lavender Seniors T-shirt on the East Bay Voice website, and we receive a portion of the proceeds.

August 16-22: Third Annual Bay Area Black in the Life GLBT Pride Week Celebration. Celebrations and gatherings. Go to www.BBITL.net for details.

August 19, 12:30-2:30 pm: 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. Featured presentation: ... Third Thursday of each month.

(Continued on page 6)

Lavender Volunteer Days Begin at Office

Do you have some time to give to Lavender Seniors, and want to have fun, too? Lavender Volunteer Days might be just right for you.

Every Monday and Wednesday are now designated as Lavender Volunteer Days, a time when volunteers come to the Lavender Seniors office to make check-in calls with some of our more frail and isolated members, call people about upcoming events, help with mailings, and even do some computer work. And we plan to have fun at the same time!

Lavender Volunteer Days are designed for volunteers who don't want to be a Friendly Visitor and who would enjoy spending time doing office tasks with others. Our staff will be there to guide, and free refreshments will be provided.

To be part of Lavender Volunteer Days, just call our office to learn more: (510) 667-9655. We prefer that you call ahead—at least the first time. No experience is required—only a love of our family. All ages are welcome. Please note that getting to our office requires climbing about 15 steps. We can also arrange work space on the ground floor, with advance notice. ▲

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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

August 10, 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

<i>AUGUST 1</i> Patrick Russell	<i>AUGUST 9</i> Karen A. Anderson	<i>AUGUST 18</i> Richard L. Hicks
<i>AUGUST 2</i> Mary Jane Sepulveda	<i>AUGUST 10</i> Meg Bruynell	<i>AUGUST 20</i> Peggy L. Alices
<i>AUGUST 4</i> Natalie Zarchin	Robert Tharp	<i>AUGUST 22</i> Ruth Michaels
<i>AUGUST 6</i> Cam Janeck	<i>AUGUST 14</i> Howard Curtis	<i>AUGUST 24</i> Martha Walker
<i>AUGUST 8</i> Josef Prochnow	<i>AUGUST 15</i> Norma J. Ramos	Ron Wong
	<i>AUGUST 16</i> Kathleen Bucher	<i>AUGUST 30</i> Jerry Latimer
	Barbara Marques	

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

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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!

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

August Book Review

FLOOD OF BOOKS ON GAY MARRIAGE

reviewed by Frank Howell

In recent years there has been renewed controversy over the issue of lavender nuptials. I have chosen to briefly survey five of the leading titles that have emerged. Others are sure to follow. What follows is a mere sampling:

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE: PRO & CON, A READER
edited by Andrew Sullivan

Random House —paperback—\$14.00

Andrew Sullivan, from the conservative side of the spectrum, has assembled a wide ranging collection of opinions on same sex marriage. Here we have excerpts from ancient time to the



Columbia University Press—paperback

My lover and I were interviewed by Ms. Lewin in her studies of gay and lesbian couples. Her research took place from 1993-1996. She is a professor of anthropology and women studies at the University of Iowa.

Lewin talked with 22 male couples and 30 female lovers. She witnessed eight ceremonies. The study was primarily conducted here in the Bay Area. The celebrations took highly original formats, like country western, Asian, and leather bears. Lewin concludes that "The enactment of gay and lesbian weddings outside the context of convention endows them with an aura of sin-

...non-marriage keeps us in a childish state where few demands are made on us. If we're not members of the club, why obey the rules?

present—Plato, Montaigne, court decisions, Bishop John Selby Spong, conservative Catholics. There is a special section on the "slippery slope" argument, gay parenthood, and the Hawaiian court decision. The book is dated 1997 but there is still much meaty material for heated discussion.



**RECOGNIZING OURSELVES:
CEREMONIES OF LESBIAN AND GAY COMMITMENT**
by Ellen Lewin

cerity and authenticity that often eludes heterosexual couples."



WHY YOU SHOULD GIVE A DAMN ABOUT GAY MARRIAGE
by Davina Kotulski

Advocate Books—paperback—\$12.95

This publication was obviously designed in the heat of the moment to take advantage of current developments.

Kotulski is an activist clinical psychologist who lays out the battle plan to fight the good fight. She covers in detail a variety of issues, especially those relating to financial advantages enjoyed by straight couples, including the 1,000 goodies sponsored by the federal government. She also tackles immigration, separation of church and state, senior citizens, and queers in the military. This is a good handbook for cocktail arguments.



(Continued on page 7)



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TRANS ISSUES IN AGING:

by T.M. Witten, A. Evan Eyster and Cathy Weigel
 excerpted from *Outword*, newsletter of the Lesbian & Gay
 Aging Issues Network of the American Society on Aging

Although they are often invisible to professionals in the field of aging—and indeed to society in general—transgender (TG) and transsexual (TS) individuals clearly form a more than negligible percentage of the U.S. population. These elders not only require the same care as all older adults, they also need care—and face obstacles—specifically related to their gender status.

Female-to-male (FTM) transsexuals and transgenders usually self-identify during their teens, 20s or 30s, often following a long period of self-identifying as a lesbian. By contrast, male-to-female (MTF) transsexuals and transgenders more often attempt to suppress their gender identity for years or decades, first expressing their variance socially or seeking sex-reassignment services during midlife or older age.

Quality-of-life issues for all TG/TS individuals at midlife and in old age may be affected by a range of medical and social considerations. These issues in some cases are similar to those encountered by all older adults, and in many other cases are distinctive to those who are making or have made a gender transition.

People who undertake gender transition through hormone therapy or full sex-reassignment surgery during midlife or the older years are more likely than their younger peers to face obstacles related to physical health. Aging-related conditions, especially cardiac or pulmonary dysfunction, may make an individual ineligible for surgical procedures—including breast or genital reconstruction—that medical professionals deem elective.

Because of prejudice and rigid gender expectations on the part of service providers, TG/TS elders can encounter problems in gaining access to healthcare and personal assistance services. Older post-operative transsexuals who can “pass,” even when nude, have the least difficulty. (Due to the current differences in the outcomes of reconstructive surgery for female vs. male genitals, this advantage is overwhelmingly experienced by MTF individuals.)

For TG/TS older adults who face varying degrees of difficulty in passing, the apparent mismatch between their genital anatomy and their social gender can result in difficulty in obtaining medical care, practical nursing assistance and even mortuary services. In addition, many

medical personnel consider transgenderism, transsexualism, and cross-dressing to be evidence of psychiatric pathology. As a result of such mistaken notions, healthcare professionals may make inappropriate psychiatric referrals.

Middle-aged and older cross-dressers often experience difficulty in obtaining healthcare services due to privacy concerns. For example, most MTF cross-dressers remove leg and body hair in order to appear as genetic women while dressed as women. When they need medical assistance, they face the dilemma of either disclosing their cross-dressing behavior or attempting to postpone services until the body hair has regrown. Such delays in obtaining medical care can have serious health consequences.

The physical phenomenon of aging may facilitate social gender transition for TG/TS older adults. Women and men share more physical similarity during elder years than at any other time after childhood. For example, loss of facial skin tone produces a softer appearance for many genetic males—a change that helps MTF elders appear more female. Similarly, genetic females experience a shift toward androgynization of the hair follicles as they age. For FTM transsexuals, this encourages beard growth that produces a more male appearance.

Furthermore, the loss of muscle mass and the increase in body fat experienced by all elders often results in women and men appearing more similar. These physiological alterations are clearly advantageous for TG/TS individuals who begin the transition process later in life, as they may obviate the need for weight reduction for genetic males, body building for genetic females and minor cosmetic procedures for both.

The greatest obstacle to sexual expression among older adults, particularly heterosexual women, is the lack of suitable partners. A single MTF transsexual who undertakes gender transition later in life is more likely to experience sexual deprivation than would have been the case had the individual continued to be perceived as male. Because the genitals of few FTMs look and function the way genetic men's do, FTMs face the daunting prospect of having to come out to potentially rejecting or hostile new sexual partners.

On the other hand, most transsexuals experience a positive development of personal sensuality when they finally are able to live in congruence with their deepest perceptions of their own gender.

This article is available in a longer version with citations. Contact T.M. Witten, ILTTAR Institute, 12846 Maple Park Dr, San Antonio, TX, 78249 ▲

CALENDAR OF EVENTS cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

August 17, 6-9 pm, and August 22, 3-6 p.m.: Second Annual Oakland International Black Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Film Festival. Parkway Speakeasy Theater, 1834 Park Blvd., Oakland. \$8 admission. www.apeb.org

August 21, Noon-5 pm: East Bay Pride Picnic. Co-sponsored by Lavender Seniors. 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 21, 8 pm: Fifth Annual Invitational Pride Concert. Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, 3534 Lakeshore Ave., Oakland. Oakland-East Bay Gay Men's Chorus, Voices: Lesbian Choral Ensemble, Out on a Clef, and the Lesbian/Gay Chorus of San Francisco. (800) 706-2389 or www.oebgmc.org

August 22, 3:30 pm: Barbara Price Productions presents Montclair Women's Big Band Concert. Montclair Women's Cultural Arts Club, 1650 Mountain Blvd., Oakland. Swing party Sunday afternoon dance, featuring performances of classics from the 30's and 40's. \$27 online or \$28 at door. (510) 339-1832 or www.eastbayvoice.org/tickets

August 28, 10 am-6 pm: Third Annual Sistahs Steppin' in Pride: An East Bay Dyke March and Festival. Gather at Lake Merritt between Grand and Lakeshore off MacArthur and march to Snow Park. (510) 551-8330 or www.sistahssteppin.org

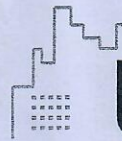
September 10-11: Seventh Annual Southern Alameda County Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. Little Theater at Chabot College, Hayward.

October 10, 4 pm: Envision Pride in Oakland. A public celebration to envision opportunities for an LGBT neighborhood. Live music, information booths, food, children's activities, and walking tours.

www.business2oakland.com/parkwaypride

November 14: Celebration of Lavender Seniors' Tenth Anniversary.

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 ▲



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August Book Review...

(Continued from page 4)

GAY MARRIAGE: WHY IT IS GOOD FOR GAYS, GOOD FOR STRAIGHTS, AND GOOD FOR AMERICA

by Jonathan Rauch

Times Books

Rauch is totally pro-marriage. It benefits straights, so why not us? Rauch argues that non-marriage keeps us in a childish state where few demands are made on us. If we're not members of the club, why obey the rules? Conservative Christians attack us for being wild and irresponsible. This is rather overblown, but if we approach matrimony, they claim we are undermining society. Rauch demonstrates in a most rational fashion that fundamentalists can't have it both ways. He argues that states rights may well fade away on this issue and Congress and the Supreme Court will have the final say.



SAME SEX MARRIAGE?: A CHRISTIAN ETHICAL ANALYSIS

by Marvin Ellison

Pilgrim Press—\$24.00

Ellison is a professor of Christian Ethics and argues that marriage as an institution has evolved massively over the centuries. Congress likes to plead that wedded

bliss has been immutable and must not be disturbed. But at one time interracial marriage was taboo and women were simply regarded as property. Ellison questions the whole concept of contemporary marriage. But he runs widely off the charts when he advocates plural relationships.

Ellison argues that marriage is not the ultimate objective of society but curing injustice. ▲

HAVE YOU DONE IT YET?

Your participation is important in a survey Lavender Seniors is conducting for LGBT East Bay residents of all ages. By participating, you will identify issues that are important to the LGBT community and help Lavender Seniors seek resources to continue and expand our activities and programs.

The confidential survey is available online 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 (667-9655) and leave a message to schedule a telephone interview.

The survey is supported by a grant from the City of Oakland.

Do it today! ▲

Commission on Aging Visits Lavender Seniors

Twelve members of the Alameda County Commission on Aging visited Lavender Seniors on July 20 to learn more about our work. We treated them to a presentation about our programs and gave them a taste of what our Speakers Panel does.

Many thanks to all who participated in this important visit, including Fred, Marvin, and Rose, who gave a dynamite Speakers Panel performance with expert facilitation from Peggy Moore, our Outreach Specialist.

A special thanks to the Commission on Aging for your interest in our work on behalf of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender seniors. ▲

City of Oakland Commits for Another Year!

The City of Oakland Department of Human Services has agreed to continue co-sponsoring Lavender Lunch Bunch at least through June 2005.

This is a major commitment from the City. It means we will be able to continue offering free food, and the City also picks up the tab for renting the gathering space.

Lavender Lunch Bunch is on the third Thursday of each month, 12:30-2:30 p.m., at the Garden Center in Lakeside Park, 666 Bellevue Avenue, in Oakland.

Thank you, City of Oakland! We appreciate our growing partnership with you. ▲

COMMUNITY LISTINGS

<p>Seniors Men's Afternoon</p> <p>2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, 1:30—3:30 pm.</p> <p>August 12 & 26</p> <p>at Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley.</p> <p>Co-sponsored by Lavender Seniors and Pacific Center</p>	<p>CATHY CADE</p> <p>PERSONAL HISTORIES, PHOTO ORGANIZING & PHOTOGRAPHY</p> <p>Record Your Life Story Organize Your Photographs Have Fun with Me Making New Photos</p> <p>NATURAL LIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME</p> <p>510-532-3545 www.CATHYCADE.COM</p>	<p>Fellows of East Bay</p> <p>2nd Sunday of each month, 5:30—8:30 pm.</p> <p>August 15</p> <p>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.</p>
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LAVENDER LUNCH BUNCH

Join The Fun!

August 19, 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Lakeside Park Garden
Center, 666 Bellevue, at
Lake Merritt, in Oakland.
Co-sponsored by Lavender
Seniors and Oakland Depart-
ment of Human Services.
Enjoy a free meal, fun, and
friendship!

Join us at this month's
Lavender Lunch Bunch for a
special showing of a film about
Ruth Ellis, one of the oldest
known "out" African-American
lesbians. Be inspired. Feel
proud. Come join the fun. ▲

MONTHLY POTLUCK

Saturday, August 14

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

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

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


THIS MONTH'S POTLUCK FEATURES...

"The T in LGBT: Transgender Life in the East Bay."

Join us for this fascinating panel discussion led by
Chris, Jamison, and PK, local transgender commu-
nity leaders. Learn about transgender life in the East
Bay and the continuing struggle for equality. ▲

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.*