

Lavender Notes

A Project of the Tides Center

SENIORS
of the East Bay

1395 Bancroft Avenue

San Leandro, CA 94577

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Lavender Seniors Group in Stockton!

On Saturday November 15th I had the delightful experience of attending a Lavender Seniors Luncheon in Stockton. That's right! A group of Stockton LGBT seniors are getting together every other month under the direction of Alan Cook from the United Methodist Church. The group has not officially called themselves Lavender Seniors but they have identified their luncheons as the Lavender Lunch Group. Sound familiar? This is very similar to how Lavender Seniors started.

The afternoon turned out to be ground breaking! I was able to share with our San Joaquin Valley brothers and sisters the story of Lavender Seniors, how we provide our services, and the challenges to doing outreach to the LGBT senior community. The Scrolls were shown during my presentation which really inspired the group. Alan Cook was kind enough to show The Scrolls to the church's congregation the following Sunday. Attending the luncheon was San Joaquin Human Service Agency Division Chief Donna Anderson who was thrilled at the opportunity to learn about outreach to the LGBT senior community. Donna has invited me to work with her on how to serve LGBT seniors in this county. I am excited about developing these relationships while we share our valuable experience serving the LGBT senior community with our inland valley friends. This experience is greatly needed in San Joaquin and Lavender Seniors looks forward to exploring the possibilities. Maybe one day we will see a Stockton chapter?

Dan Ashbrook, Director



New Years Resolutions Quotes

A New Year's resolution is something that goes in one year and out the other.

-Anonymous

Youth is when you're allowed to stay up late on New Year's Eve. Middle age is when you're forced to.

-Bill Vaughn

Good resolutions are simply checks that men draw on a bank where they have no account.

-Oscar Wilde

Many people look forward to the New Year for a new start on old habits.

~Author Unknown

Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each new year find you a better man.

~Benjamin Franklin

Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us.

~Hal Borland

Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right.

~Oprah Winfrey



Ring out the old, ring in the new, Ring, happy bells, across the snow: The year is going, let him go; Ring out the false, ring in the true.

~Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1850

Lavender Seniors of the East Bay is funded by individuals as well as Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, Alameda County Leather Corps, California Council for the Humanities, The California Endowment, City of Oakland, City of Fremont, Contra Costa County Area Agency on Aging, East Bay Community Foundation, Gay Chemists Support Fund, Horizons Foundation, Royal Grand Ducal Council/Alameda County, San Francisco Foundation, Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights, and Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. We gratefully acknowledge the support of all Friends of Lavender Seniors.

LavenderNotes

is the official 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 through direct service, community outreach, advocacy, and education.

Advisory Board

Mike Mora, Chairman D'Anne Bruetsch, Vice-Chair Mitch Foudray, Secretary Bobbie Jarvis, Treasurer

Marvin Burrows, Gabriel Delgado, Meg Bruynell, Frank Howell, Ina Mae Murri, Pat Skillen, Tomi Smith Members-at-large

Next Advisory Board Meeting

Jan 7th - 7PM. Call 510-667-9655 for more information. All are welcome; public comments take place at 7PM.

Staff

Dan Ashbrook, Director Melissa Taylor, Outreach Coordinator Tomi Smith, Project Administrator

Alpha Mulugeta, Intern

Newsletter

Tomi Smith, Editor D'Anne Bruetsch, Layout

Webmaster

Bert Hendriksen

Lavender Seniors welcomes all LGBT persons, their partners, allies, and guests. Cost of production and mail makes necessary a request of \$20 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 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.

ARE YOU CONFINED TO YOUR HOME OR YOUR ROOM?

If you are or you know someone who is, let us know. We have Friendly Visitor volunteers who want to meet you!! Call Melissa, 510-667-9655

What We Do...

Founded in 1994, Lavender Seniors of the East Bay provides the following:

LGBT Seniors of Color: Improves access to health and human services to LGBT seniors in the African-American, Latino, Native American, Asian, and Pacific Islander communities.

Friendly Visitors Program: Matches volunteers with isolated and /or frail LGBT seniors for social support, light household and shopping assistance, and telephone assurance.

Cultural Competency Training: Through LGBT Senior panelists, educates service providers to comply with state laws to change policies and practices to make service more accessible to LGBT seniors.

Monthly Informative Social Gatherings: Help build informal social networks and individual's knowledge of issues affecting seniors at the Monthly Potluck in San Leandro, Lavender Lunch Bunch in Oakland, and South County Lunch and TalkAbout at the Fremont Senior Center.

Community Involvement: Engages in community building and partnering processes with local governments in order to insert LGBT elders' needs into their planning efforts.

Monthly Discussion Groups: Coming Out
Again, Fellows of East Bay and Seniors Men's
Afternoon co-sponsored and co-hosted by the
North Berkeley Senior Center and Pacific Center (see back page for schedules) provide
LGBT support group settings to elders in the
North County.

Monthly newsletter: Lavender Notes.

Website: http://www.lavenderseniors.org
To get involved as a participant or volunteer,
contact us at 510-667-9655, press 1, or go to:
http://www.lavenderseniors.org

January Birthdays

Jan. 13th Jan 24th Jan. 1st Godfrey W. Ed. J. William P. Jan 25th Dec. 2nd Jan. 14th Peg P. Ann B. Bob C. Jan. 15th Sr. Clarice S. Jan. 6th Jan. 27th George C. Ina Mae M. Susan V. Jan. 11th Jan. 17th Fran K. Ellen G. R. D. Jim A. Jan 22nd Ann R. M.

Donate to Lavender Seniors online! Now you can go to www.lavenderseniors.org and click the Donate Now link. This is an easy way to make a difference in your community.

MONTHLY POTLUCK

Saturday, Jan. 10th - 12 noon to 2pm

Program: Speak Out-Oakland LGBT Seniors Theater Project

A thru K

bring a Dessert/Fruit

L thru R

bring a Main Dish

S thru Z

bring a Salad



Become a "Friend of Lavender Seniors" Today! Lavender Seniors of the East Bay need your help! LGBT seniors are among the most overlooked and underserved population. Your donation provides general operating support for programs that help LBGT seniors live better lives by addressing issues of stigmas based on age and sexual orientation, limited biological families and social support, health disparities, insensitive health and human services providers, and economic insecurity exacerbated by ineligibility for spousal or survivor's benefits. 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: □ \$20 □ \$35* □ \$50 □ \$100 □ \$250 □ \$1000 ☐ Other **Annual Courtesy Giving Levels** Lavender Leader \$10,000 ☐ Lavender Supporter \$5,000 ■ Lavender Friend \$1,000 (* 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: E-mail Address: City/State/ZIP: _ Referred by: 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

REMEMBER THAT YOUR DONATIONS TO LAVENDER SENIORS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE

VOLUNTEER CORNER

A Friendly Visitor Experience

by Mitchell Foudray

Johnny and I met our Lavender Senior friend in June of 2003. We have been visiting Mr. R. for over five years! It's great that my partner and I share friendly visiting duties because if a conflict in our schedule arises, either Johnny or I can visit. Usually we both visit every Sunday evening. We phone once or twice a week to check in and see if he is in need of further assistance.

Early in our visits we would go out to a café for tea and dessert. About a year after we met, however, Mr. R. fell gently out of a chair and broke his hip. He spent several weeks in the hospital and then several months recuperating in a skilled nursing facility. These were dark times for a man who had always lived by himself, with books and music at hand and the objects of his small world arranged precisely according to a system only he understood. During these visits, we commiserated while he related horror stories about the loud, careless attendants upon whom he was dependent. He was especially depressed when he thought he might not ever go home.

But Mr. R. did get back to his small studio apartment which is in a subsidized senior residential building in Berkeley. He is in such fear that another fall will send him back to a nursing home that he rarely gets out of bed. Our Sunday evenings are now spent around his bedside, discussing literature, (he is a great fan of Collette and other early 20th century European writers), and listening to music on the neat stereo system we helped him shop for. I cut his hair about once a month, (he is the perfect guinea pig because he has refused to look at himself in a mirror ever since his neck began to sag). He always has a supply of almond cookies and apple juice. Sometimes we bring soup or chocolate or a pot pie from the farmer's market.

Mr. R. moved into his apartment in the early 1980's and immediately began collecting books and dust. Being a late sleeper, he covered the windows with blankets to keep the light out. It always took a moment to adjust our eyes and lungs to his dark, stale room. A couple of years ago, he was offered a larger, corner studio apartment. Johnny and I, along with two lesbian neighbors, packed and moved and unpacked Mr. R.'s entire apartment in five hours one Sunday. It was a magical transformation because the new apartment was freshly painted, with a new carpet and we talked Mr. R. into leaving his most threadbare furniture behind. Shortly after the move he was notified that he had been overpaying his rent for years and was reimbursed \$5,000.00! Because he was getting Medi-Cal benefits, he had to get his bank account below \$2,000.00 within a month. We helped him hire a decorator who refurnished the entire studio in three weeks. It looks fabulous! He has "discovered" nature

and opens the newly operative curtains to the light that floods in through the trees outside his wall of windows. A caregiver brings fresh flowers every week.

Mr. R. has other ailments that are keeping him in bed these days. But even though his world is quite small, it is rich in all that he finds important. He is exposing us to classical music and French pop music of the 40's and 50's. His walls are lined with bookshelves where he can direct you to any book's exact location. Johnny and I introduced a friend of ours who share's Mr. R.'s passion for classic movies. He counseled Mr. R. on the purchase of a flat-screen T.V. and we signed him up with Netflix. I should be well informed about European and American film from the 1930's to the '60's within a year.

Mr. R. worries that stories of his life bore us, but Johnny and I find them fascinating. In the same way, he delights in following the day to day doings of our busy lives. We take great pleasure in the comfortable friendship that has developed. I hope he treasures our relationship as much as we do.

Volunteer Appreciation/Awards Buffet!

The heart of Lavender Seniors has always been its dedicated cadre of volunteers. Our volunteers give over 2,500 hours of service a year to the LGBT senior community and that is why we are honoring them with a special awards ceremony and buffet on Sunday, January 18th from 4:00PM to 6:00PM at the San Leandro Community Church, 1395 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro. Everyone is welcome to come recognize these community heroes for their efforts to improve the lives of LGBT seniors through in-home support, advocating to health and human service providers, office support, website maintenance, newsletter mailings, outreach events, and facilitating meal programs. Volunteers will be receiving invitation letters and follow up phone calls. Mark your calendar for this important event!

That's Sunday, January 18th, from 4:00PM to 6:00PM.

A Little Sharing

I was at a brunch for elders this morning at my Oakland Unitarian church. As I was getting to know the woman artist seated next to me, I mentioned Lavender Seniors. She said teasingly, "Oh, do women go from pink to lavender as they age?" I replied, "Only if you're lucky." She smiled in appreciation.

- Cathy Cade

"As I got older I developed furniture disease. My chest fell into my drawers"

-Loretta LaRoche

LGBT History

Mercedes de Acosta (1893-1968)

Mercedes de Acosta was a poet, play-write, screenwriter, and costume designer. She was a devotee of Eastern mysticism, the occult, and vegetarianism long before any of these pursuits became fashionable. But if she is remembered at all today, she is remembered for her love affairs with some of the most glamorous and visible women of her time.

Acosta was born in New York City on 1 March 1893, to a wealthy Spanish-Cuban émigré family. Her mother, a descendant of the Duke of Alba, raised her as a boy, calling her "Rafael" and dressed her in boy's attire. After the death of her father in 1907, however, Acosta's mother became concerned about her lack of femininity and dispatched her to a convent school in France, from which she was removed after an incident involving two nuns who were apparently lovers.

While in her early twenties, Acosta became involved in the lesbian theatrical circles of Broadway, particularly the salon of Bessie Marbury, a powerful producer and literary agent, and Marbury's lover Elsie De Wolfe, the prominent interior decorator. Among Acosta's early lovers were actresses Maude Adams, Alla Nazimova and Katherine Cornell, as well as dancer Isadora Duncan.

In 1920, Acosta married the wealthy socialite and dilettante painter Abram Poole, whose proposal her mother, concerned with appearances, accepted before she could reject it. Acosta, ironically, spent her wedding night with her mother. Moreover, even as she married Poole, she was deeply involved in an affair with actress Eva Le Gallienne, for whom she wrote two plays, Sandro Botticelli (1923) and Jehanne d"Arc (1925). Neither play was a critical or commercial success, and the expensive failure of the latter play, combined with Acosta's controlling personality, led to a split between the two women.

Marbury recommended Acosta to the RKO film company as a writer, and in 1929, she moved to California, where soon thereafter, she met Greta Garbo and almost immediately became her lover. The affair with Garbo was an intense and stormy one, and Acosta frequently found herself in rivalry for the aloof Garbo's affections, with men as well as women. Indeed, one of the more curious of these triangulations, one that lasted for over two decades involved Acosta, Garbo, and photographer Cecil Beaton, who, though for the most part homosexual himself, was nonetheless obsessed with the enigmatic screen idol. After a highly emotional split with Garbo in 1932, Acosta began an affair with Marlene Dietrich, which lasted, on and off, for the rest of the decade, although she continued to be Garbo's lover intermittently through those same years, Poole, from whom she had been separated for many years, sued for divorce in 1935. World War II and the McCarthy witch hunts of the 1950s effectively brought this particular circle of Hollywood Sepphism to an end. Lesbian actresses either hid in ostensibly heterosexual marriages or faced blacklisting and the loss of their careers. Others, like Garbo, simply faded from the scene. Acosta immigrated to Paris, where she lived during the 1950's. By 1960, Acosta had returned to New York, destitute and in poor health. To relieve her situation, she published her autobi.

ography, Here Lies the Heart. While the book is often considered the great lesbian "kiss-and-tell" memoir, Acosta was careful to avoid directly specifying the sexual nature of her relationships with some of the most famous women of her day. Garbo nonetheless terminated all communication with Acosta as a result of its publication.

Although Acosta published three volumes of poetry in the early 1920s, had several plays staged, and wrote various film treatments, none of these brought her the success she sought, and it is through her memoirs—and her affairs—that she has achieved a level of lesbian immortality. She died, alone and virtually forgotten at seventy-five, in New York City.

- Patricia Juliana Smith

Linkages

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For more information call (510) 238-3931 Monday through Friday 8:30 A.M.—5:00 p.m.

Program Funded By: Alameda County Area Agency on Aging &

Jan Book Review

Crisis: 40 Stories Revealing the Personal, Social, Religious Pain and Trauma of Growing up Gay in America Edited by Mitchell Gold, Greenleaf-\$23.95

When toiling my way through high school during my last two years, I struggled with exploring my teenage gay sexuality. I was writing a book in secret about lavender love and in desperation reached out to my English teacher Mr. Heniford. He read some of my humble literary offerings and gave me valuable support. I will never forget him.

Mitchell Gold, a prosperous furniture dealer who runs Faith in America, (countering homophobia) has lovingly compiled a collection of coming out stories of adolescent gays and lesbians who usually found a hostile environment, to say the least.

There are several notable people included in these stories, such as Dr. Mel White, Congressman Barney Frank, Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, Ambassador James Hormel, actor Richard Chamberlain, and Rev. Gene Robinson. But I find the stories related by lesser known folks to be the most compelling.

Rev. Irene Monroe, from the Harvard Divinity School, was rejected by her foster mother when her lesbian leanings were revealed. But she struggled and finally thrived. She points out that homosexuality was not mentioned in Bible translations until 1946.

Or let's take the case of Alexander Robinson, head of the National Black Justice Coalition. His parents refused to allow their son to pursue his avid passion for music because it might cause him to be less than masculine. His father bombarded him with homophobic scare stories and he was ex-communicated from his black church.

Jody Huckaby, was put through the anti-pink ringer. His parents rejected his three gay brothers, but the gang survived, the family appeared on Oprah's TV show, and he is now executive director of Parents of Gays.

Matt Comer, age 22, was rejected by his Southern Baptist Church. The local public library was his only place of comfort. But Matt founded a gay support group at school and now edits a gay newsletter.

Brandon Rolph Kneefel was thrown out of the house by his parents. The family of one of his close friends took him in and became his parents via power of attorney. Today he is the proud recipient of a scholarship from the Point Foundation, which provides financial aid to gay and lesbian students.

Jacob Breslow, a former bully who loved to harass gays, declared, "I'm so tired of reading about the doomed gay teenager," finally did a complete turn around and is now working for GLSEN. He is an East Bay student.

Elke Kennedy, founder of Seans's Last Wish, started a memorial to the memory of her son, who was murdered in a vicious hate crime. At the trial Sean's killer received a mere slap on the wrist (ten months in prison and probation) 700 people attended his funeral. Following his death many of Elke's friends from church stopped socializing with her.

I've only scratched the surface of these 40 compelling sagas. I urge all discerning readers to pick up Crisis. It would make a great surprise gift for those who are still licking their political wounds from the recent passage of Proposition 8. -Frank Howell

Casino Night

Fundraising event for the Lighthouse Community Center.

When: January 24, 2009

Where: Hayward City Hall Rotunda

Time: 6:30 PM Tickets: \$25.00

Featuring prizes for casino game playing, including black jack and poker, dealt by professional card dealers from the Hayward Card Club.

Call Mary at 538-7044 for tickets.

The Importance of Estate Planning

Everyone who owns anything has an estate. This includes a home, cars, bank accounts, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, life insurance policies, retirement plans, business interests, furniture and collections.

A will and other estate plans can include provisions to minimize the expenses of settling an estate and perhaps save on taxes. Unless stated in a will or other legal documents, a person would be unable to leave a gift to a charitable organization because state laws only distribute estates to next of kin.

Legal experts advise reviewing estate plans when changes in relationships or economic circumstances occur. They also may need to be changed when tax laws change. Beneficiary designations on retirement savings plans and life insurance policies also need to be reviewed periodically to make sure they are current and not in conflict with provisions in a will or other legal documents. Errors in beneficiary designations can lead to the disinheritance of heirs, delays in providing for the financial needs of loved ones and unnecessary expenses and tax payments.

Source: National Endowment for Financial Education, www.nefe.org

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65

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African American Lesbians 40+

Monthly meetings for social activities, potluck, card & board games, theatre outings and sports events.

For more Information email tsmith3565@comcast.net

January 2009

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2	3
	4	5 Coming Out	6	7 Board Meeting	8 Sr Mens	9 Womens Books	10 Potluck Fellows
	11	12	13 PFlag Newark	14	15	16 Lunch Bunch	17
A STATE OF THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN	18	19	20	21	22 Sr Mens	23 South County	24 Casino Night
	25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Schedule of Events

Jan 5th -.1:00 PM to 3:00PM–Coming Out Again Group – (1st Mon.) 1901 Hearst Ave. Berkeley, Dining Area, Co-Sponsored by Lavender Seniors and North Berkeley Senior Center.

Jan 7th- 7:00 PM to 8:30PM – Lavender Seniors Board Meeting – (Wed. before Potluck) 1395 Bancroft Ave., San Leandro.

Jan 8thand 22nd - 1:30PM to 3:30PM - Seniors Men's Group. (2nd and 4th Thurs.), 2712 Telegraph Ave. Berkeley at the Pacific Center Co-Sponsor: Pacific Center 510-548-8283

Jan. 9th – 2:00PM to 4:00PM – Lavender Women's Book Group -- North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MKJ Jr. Way, (58th St.) Oakland – Reading: Miss Lucy's School for Girls (Handout)

Jan 10th– 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM –Lavender Potluck (2nd Sat.)1395 Bancroft Ave, San Leandro; Program:Speak Out-Oakland LGBT Seniors Theater Project.

Jan 10th - Fellows of the East Bay (2nd Sat.) 1823 9th Street (at Hearst), Berkeley. Social Hour 5:30, Dinner 6:30.

Jan 13th– (2nd Tues.) **PFLAG Meeting, 7:30PM,** Holy Redeemer Lutheran, 35660 Cedar Blvd., Newark

Jan 16th - 12:30 to 2:30 PM - Lavender Lunch Bunch, (3rd Fri.) North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 MLK Jr. Way. (58th St.) Oakland. Sponsored by City of Oakland Aging and Adult Services. Program: Speak Out-Oakland LGBT Seniors Theater Project.

Jan 23rd – 12:00PM to 2:00PM – South County Lunch Bunch and Talk About, (4th Fri.)40086 Paseo Padre Pkwy, Fremont. Program: Speak Out-Oakland LGBT Seniors Theater Project. FREE LUNCH for LGBT Residents. Sponsor: City of Fremont, Human Services Dept. For more info. Contact Ina Mae Murri 510-490-5425.

Jan 24th– Casino Night, Lighthouse Fundraiser. See page 6

ADVERTISING RATES* FOR LAVENDER NOTES

Ad Size	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year			
Classified Ad	\$2 per line (per month) on a 3-column page						
Business Card	\$30	\$75	\$140	\$250			
Quarter Page	\$50	\$125	\$225	\$400			
Half Page	\$90	\$220	\$400	\$750			
Full Page	\$200	\$450	\$800	\$1400			

- * Individuals and non-profit organizations who have made an annual contribution of \$25 or more are entitled to discounts of 40% on classified ads and 20% on ads of other sizes. Lavender Seniors reserves the right to accept or reject any ad submitted.
- * A one-page insert to Lavender Notes for one month may be purchased for the fee of: Non-Profits, \$250; For-Profits, \$500; ½ half page inserts are the same amount. Must be received by 10th of preceding month.