

sagematters

S U M M E R 2 0 0 7

GRIOT CIRCLE TALKS TO SAGE

>> Directors of SAGE and GRIOT Circle discuss their organizations' goals, challenges and collaboration. See page 3.

SAGE LOBBIES NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE

>> SAGE travels to Albany to advocate for increased state funding. See page 4.

GLBT ELDERS AROUND THE COUNTRY VISITS MILWAUKEE

>> A growing SAGE-Net organization in this Midwestern city is enhancing opportunities for GLBT elders. See page 10.

What Does Gay Pride Mean to You?

BY BETH KLING



Mary

Gay pride is the only day we can express our true feelings, and we're all together. Years ago, if they saw you at the parade, you could get fired from your job. Now it's no big deal; everybody comes out. In fact the whole month of June is our month.



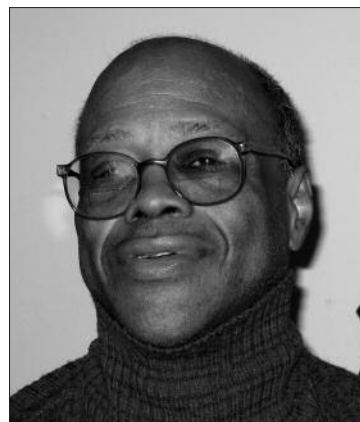
Pauline

The parade means we pushed back at Stonewall; it means we're here and we're going to stay. And every year it gets bigger and bigger. I've been marching since 1977. I march with the Butch-Femme Society, and there's a huge selection of groups to march with. We don't all have to look the same.



Jerry

Gay pride is a day to be in the world's face. From the nelliest queen to the butchest dyke, it's the day when we say, "This is who we are." At the first march, we were threatened with bombs and shootings; we went up Fifth Avenue so fast they called it "the first run." What was so amazing was seeing it grow as we went.



Gregory

I've been involved since the beginning, and I remember all the different characters who have made the parade a festive event. It means that we're proud, and I believe many straight folks must appreciate that we're not backing down, and that makes me proud.



Marlene

I've been marching since 1933 when my mother brought me in my stroller to marches on May Day. In 2004 I marched for Kerry; I've been marching forever. And this is really one of the only movements that has actually seen progress.

Gayby Boomers Fight Retirement Discrimination in New Mexico

BY MIKE NADEAU AND MICHAEL ADAMS

There's been a lot of speculation about whether a new generation of GLBT older people — the Gayby Boomers — will shake up the world of aging. As columnist Deb Price asks, what will happen when "the first generation of gay Americans to have spent much of adulthood outside the closet hits retirement — and runs smack into a retirement world not used to dealing with gay people prepared to speak up for themselves?"

Of course, the current generation of GLBT seniors has its share of individuals ready, willing and able to speak out for GLBT rights. But the impending retirement of the Baby Boomers might be the start of a much larger scale of activism. One example of the coming surge can be found in New Mexico, where three lesbian couples are the plaintiffs in an ACLU lawsuit demanding that healthcare benefits for the domestic partners of retiring government employees continue, just like they do for heterosexual spouses.

The couples, all recently retired or facing retirement, include Ellen Novak and Linda McCreary and Havens Levitt and Rebecca Dakota, who were interviewed for this

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

SAGE Expands Services in Harlem for HIV-Positive GLBTs over 50

BY BETH KLING

One in three New Yorkers living with HIV today is over age 55, a result of rising infection rates, as well as greater numbers of people growing older with the disease. Many years ago, SAGE recognized that HIV was not just a young person's disease when in 1988 the organization started SAGE Positive, a program for HIV-positive men over age 50. SAGE Positive continues to offer support and information to members of the older population living with HIV. In recent months, SAGE has begun to expand services for people living with HIV in Harlem, the neighborhood second only to Chelsea in rates of new infection for HIV cases.

"When you consider the aging of the epidemic and the high rates of infection in Harlem, at the intersection is a population that SAGE serves — GLBT elders living in Harlem," said Tom Weber, director of community services at SAGE. "A disproportionate number of GLBT elders living in Harlem are HIV-infected."

The high rates of HIV infection in the general Harlem population are widely recognized in the community, and agencies operate all over Harlem to provide HIV-related services. But when you add GLBT identity and aging to HIV infection, the capacity to offer needed services and support becomes much more difficult.

"Many GLBT elders in Harlem have a complicated approach to their identity in the community, so there are challenges in connecting with them to provide services," said Doreen Bermudez, community organizing manager at SAGE. Bermudez pointed out that the stigma around HIV similarly keeps people in Harlem silent, isolated, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

SAGE Offers Services for Aging GLBTs

SAGE is the oldest and largest organization in the country dedicated to meeting the needs of GLBT people as they get older. SAGE provides dozens of activities, groups, and programs to ensure the voices of GLBT older people are heard and to encourage GLBT seniors to connect with each other and the community.

Through direct services and a wide variety of enriching, life-enhancing programs, SAGE is creating a better aging experience for GLBT seniors in New York City. Through education and advocacy, SAGE is contributing to a better future for older GLBT people throughout the United States.

Support Groups

Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group
SAGE Positive HIV 50+ Support
Bereavement Group
Caregiver Support Group
Gay Widowers Support Group
Men's Coming Out
MS Support Group
Older Than Springtime – Men's Support Group
Women's Support Group

Discussion Groups

Conscious Creative Aging
Life Issues: Beyond Retirement
Men 40+ Rap
Men 50+ Rap
Savings & Investments
Senior Elders: 75+ Support
Tuesday Daytime Discussion
Women: Our Spiritual Journeys

Community Meetings

Monthly Drop-In Community Meetings
Monthly HEAT (Harlem Elders Advocating for Themselves) Meetings
Upper West Side Programming Planning Meetings

Art & Culture Programs

Acting Class
Art Studio
Booklovers' Discussion Group
Book Readings
Creative Writing Workshop
Discounted Theatre Tickets
Morning at the Opera
Movies
Women's Music Salon

Social Activities

Brunch Bunch
Bus Trips
Dating & Relationship Workshops
Daily Drop-In Center
Drop-In Monthly Birthday Party
Drop-In Parties
Gay Pride Activities
Holiday Parties
SAGERCIZE
Scrabble & Bridge
Socials
Walks
Women's Monthly Birthday Party
Women's Dances
Women's Parties

Helping Services

Benefits Counseling
Friendly Visitors
Legal Clinic
Lend-a-Hand

Informational Programming

Health and Wellness Presentations
Heritage and History Presentations
Legal Issues Presentations
Money & Finance Presentations

Women's Programming

Women's Dances
Women's HIV+ 50+ Support Group – Harlem
Women's Monthly Birthday Party
Women's Music Salon
Women: Our Spiritual Journeys
Women's Parties
Women's Support Group

Clinical/Counseling Services

Case Management
Individual Counseling
HIV Related Counseling
Group Counseling
Benefits Counseling
Legal Counseling
Walk-In Social Services Clinic
Help Finding a Safe & Friendly Long-Term Care Facility
Help Finding Homecare

SAGE Communities

SAGE Harlem NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community)
Monthly HEAT (Harlem Elders Advocating for Themselves) Meetings
Social Activities
Informational Presentations
Information & Referral
HIV Services

Upper West Side Neighbors

Monthly Socialization Programming

Education & Advocacy

National Conference on Aging in GLBT Community
HIV and Aging Advocacy
SAGE Curriculum: "No Need to Fear, No Need to Hide"
SAGE Matters Newspaper
Website www.sageusa.org

Services for Caregivers

Respite Services
Caregiver Support Group
Financial Assistance for Caregiving Needs
Subsidized Home Care
Subsidized Adult Day Services

SAGE Positive Programming

HIV Counseling
HIV 50+ Men's Support Groups – SAGE at the Center
HIV 50+ Men's Support Group – Harlem
HIV 50+ Women's Support Group – Harlem
HIV Testing w/GMHC – Harlem
HIV Prevention & Education – Harlem

Volunteer Services

Friendly Visitor Trainings & Support Meetings
Monthly Volunteer Orientation

For more information about SAGE's programs, call (212) 741-2247 or visit our website at www.sageusa.org

sagematters The Newspaper on GLBT Aging

PUBLISHER: Michael Adams. **EDITOR IN CHIEF:** Beth Kling. **EXECUTIVE EDITOR:** Adrian Mayer. **EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:** Liz Ferris, Mike Nadeau, Garrison Phillips, Trumbull Rogers, Eduardo Sanchez, Tom Weber. **DESIGNER:** Ken Pfeifer. **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Lawrence N. Chanen, Esq., *Co-Chair* • Judith E. Turkel, Esq., *Co-Chair* • Carol Garcia, *Treasurer* • Jon Nathanson, *Secretary* • Phillip A. Saperia, *Member-at-Large* • Peter Catenacci • Herbert I. Cohen, M.D. • Brian C. Craig • Mark D'Alessio • Bonnie Edwards, Esq. • Beth Jones • Joan Koenig • Howard D. Leifman, Ph.D. • Kate Morrison • Ralph Michael Randazzo, Esq. • Cindy L. Schwartz • Frank Stark • Michael Adams, *Executive Director*.

Published three times per year by SAGE, Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders, 305 7th Avenue, NY, NY 10001. www.sageusa.org. sagematters@sageusa.org. SAGE is supported in part by the United Way, New York City Department for the Aging, New York State Department of Health, and through the generosity of foundations, corporations, and individuals. ©SAGE 2007.

sageSM

Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders

To learn more about SAGE, please call (212) 741-2247 or visit www.sageusa.org

GRIOT Circle Talks to SAGE

Directors of SAGE and GRIOT Circle Discuss Challenges, Goals and Collaboration

GRIOT Circle, a community-based organization in Brooklyn that provides services for GLBT elders of color, has been collaborating with SAGE for a number of years. Several years ago, the two organizations joined with SAGE Queens to form RAAP, the Rainbow Aging Alliance Partnership, and won a multi-year grant from New York State to support programming for GLBT seniors. Recently, Glen Francis, GRIOT Circle deputy director, sat down with Michael Adams, SAGE executive director, to talk about some of the challenges and goals of each organization, as well as the benefits of collaboration. *SAGE Matters* moderated the conversation.



Glen Francis (left) of GRIOT Circle joined Michael Adams of SAGE in a discussion about two organizations that share some common goals and challenges.

SAGE Matters: Let's start by talking about some of the challenges faced by both SAGE and GRIOT Circle.

funding. We are looking at different strategies in terms of increasing funding, [but] it is always tough. We've been here for 10 years, and still don't have name recognition when we go out into the community, and so therefore, that is part of my job, to make sure that foundations know who we are and what we're about, and are able to buy into the mission of the organization.

Glen Francis: I could talk about a hundred things that are issues and concerns for GRIOT Circle, but I think our priorities are funding, space, and engaging our membership. We're happy, we just need more space, but that requires

Michael Adams: At SAGE we have very similar kinds of challenges, including funding. In theory we should be able to go to mainstream foundations that are accustomed to funding aging work and get them to support us, and we should be able to go to GLBT foundations that are accustomed to funding

GLBT work. But we don't seem to fit comfortably in either the aging funding world or the GLBT funding world, so there is a lot of educational work that has to go on.

SAGE Matters: What are some goals for each organization?

Glen: Part of my goal is to increase our capacity to provide services. And included in that is looking at how our mission relates to the kinds of service needs in our community. One of the things we do every year is a survey of our membership, to find out where are we, and where are they (the members). We use this survey to basically redesign our programming.

Michael: With SAGE, there is the issue of changing needs. SAGE is 29 years old, so it's built programs over a long period of time. How do you have the programming continue to grow and evolve so that it serves the needs of our older constituents as well as our younger-older constituents?

SAGE Matters: SAGE and GRIOT Circle have been working separately and in collaboration to provide services to GLBT seniors. Can you speak a bit about the experience of working together and still maintaining each organization's identity?

Glen: I think one of the things with GRIOT is that we have a very clear vision of what GRIOT Circle is and what GRIOT Circle can do, so we are very focused on that, which is why we've built collaborations with organizations that can provide the services that we cannot. There is no way we are going to try to make GRIOT into a SAGE, not because we can't, but because we shouldn't. GRIOT is unique in itself, and so, the collaborations we do together have built both of our communities.

Michael: I'm really glad to see that the collaboration SAGE has with GRIOT Circle and SAGE Queens and the RAAP program is getting stronger, and we are doing more things together. There is no reason for SAGE to do what GRIOT Circle does, or vice versa; but if we work together, we can do some really exciting things.

SAGE Matters: How did you each get involved with SAGE and GRIOT Circle?

Michael: I've been here about 8 months, and before being at SAGE I was at LAMBDA Legal. I was the director of education and public affairs, and before that a deputy legal director. But I have had a real interest in SAGE and the kind of work it does for a very long time, since my first Pride parade in New York City over 20 years ago, when I

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Christopher Street Financial

GAY MONEY. STRAIGHT ADVICE.

- Financial Planning • Estate Planning
- Wealth Management
- Retirement Planning • Investments
- Business Strategies
- Insurance • Tax Planning
- Planned Giving Strategies

Securities and Investment Advisory Services offered through Walnut Street Securities, Inc.
Member NASD & SIPC.

Christopher Street Financial and Walnut Street Securities are unaffiliated entities.

212.242.2800 800.262.6644 christopherstreet.com

A Rainbow Appears on the Capitol

GLBT Service Providers Lobby in Albany

BY TOM WEBER

Every year, in the waning days of winter, a rainbow converges on the state capitol when the Health & Human Services Network travels to Albany to pay their legislators a call. A coalition of over fifty GLBT service providers from around New York State, this network includes the Rainbow Aging Alliance Partnership (RAAP), comprised of SAGE as the lead organization, with SAGE Queens and GRIOT Circle.

Also in the network are other senior GLBT service providers, like SAGE Upstate (Syracuse), along with GLBT community and health centers and agencies serving youth, victims of violence and people of color.

SAGE and other members of the network make an annual trip in February on what is called Advocacy Day to lobby for government funding as the legislature begins the process of hammering out the next

year's budget. The Empire State Pride Agenda (ESPA) convenes the network and coordinates the activity that enables these groups to receive some of their most significant state funding.

The network decided this year to ask for a substantial increase from the New York State Assembly, which had not raised its level of support for several years despite the growth in service needs and in the number of network member organizations seeking funding. With a promise of increased funding controlled by Governor Elliot Spitzer, the network hoped that the assembly would step up to the plate and increase their share too.

In fact, Governor Spitzer's support for the network made a substantial contribution to the entire Advocacy Day experience this year. A two-day event comprised of one day of training and a second day

of meetings with legislators, Advocacy Day usually includes a reception for participants at the end of the first day.

This year, the governor, a supporter of the GLBT community who has appointed several openly gay agency heads, hosted the reception for the network. Governor Spitzer and Lieutenant Governor David Patterson (a longtime supporter of SAGE) were both on-hand — something that hasn't happened in many years — to officially welcome the group.

In addition, SAGE and our sister GLBT aging groups had an opportunity to make direct contact with many important agency representatives, including the new leadership from the State Office for the Aging. We see these early contacts as the beginning of a relationship with the Spitzer Administration that we look forward to building

in the years ahead.

The next day, delegations of network members set off to meet with legislators from their districts to ask for the funding increase. The RAAP partners split up as GRIOT Circle met with Brooklyn assembly members and SAGE Queens met with members in Queens. SAGE met with legislators from Manhattan, including Assembly Members Danny O'Donnell, Jonathan Bing and Linda Rosenthal, and with aides for Deborah Glick and Dick Gottfried.

It was a busy day, with groups of GLBT people scouring the capitol building to find their assembly members' offices and then crowding into them as best they could. Fortunately, we met with overwhelming support. Deborah Glick and Danny O'Donnell had already started circulating a letter through the assembly asking members to sign on for increased network

funding, and all the members we spoke to expressed their support for our cause!

Advocacy Day was a busy but highly satisfying event. As the RAAP partners traveled back to the city together, we replayed the two days and talked about what had been accomplished.

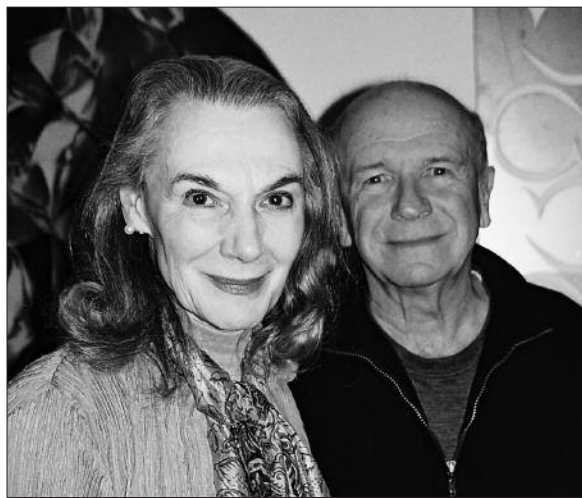
There is more work to be done, of course, but the success we had in explaining our concerns and the warmth and receptivity we experienced convinced us that the atmosphere in state government has really improved for our communities (meeting with openly GLBT assembly members and agency heads helped matters as well). We felt lucky to be living in a time of opportunity for GLBT people.

We hope a rainbow is rising in Albany, and we intend to do whatever is necessary to make that hope a reality. ■

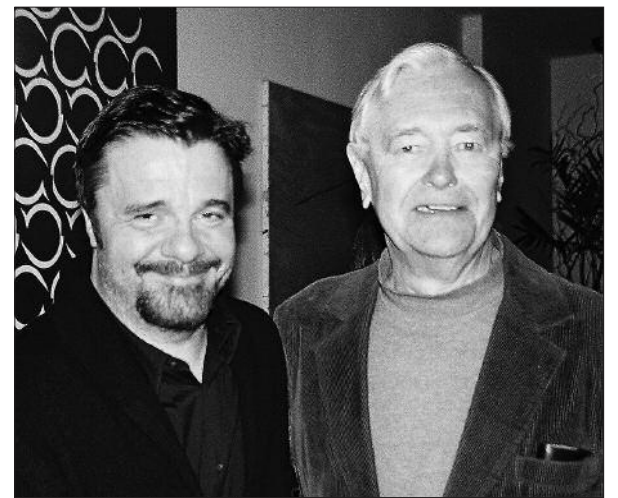
McNally's *Some Men* Supports SAGE



SAGE Board Member Brian C. Craig with Marin Mazzie and Tom Kirdahy



Marian Seldes and Terrence McNally



Nathan Lane and Erik Falkenstein

SAGE joined award-winning playwright Terrence McNally in hosting an evening of cocktails and culture to raise funds for the organization. The evening featured a showing of McNally's new play *Some Men* at the 2nd Stage Theatre. McNally said SAGE played a major role in the development of the play, which explores the lives of different generations of New York gay men.

Special friends Nathan Lane, Marian Seldes, and Marin Mazzie were on hand to support SAGE at a pre-show dinner, as was Tom Kirdahy, McNally's partner and fellow SAGE Award honoree. Kirdahy was awarded SAGE's Ken Dawson Advocacy Award and McNally received a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004.

Gayby Boomers Fight Retirement Discrimination in New Mexico

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

article, as well as Mary Meyer and Hope Miner. All of the couples face financial hardship due to discrimination in the current retirement system.

McCreary, a self-employed realtor in Albuquerque and a native of New Mexico, was covered for many years under Novak's state health plan. Novak, who spent twenty-five years working for the New Mexico Department of Children, Youth, and Families, retired in 2004. At that point, McCreary was notified that she was no longer eligible for benefits under Novak's plan, even though she would have continued to receive coverage if she and McCreary were married.

Dakota faces the same fate when Levitt, a lifetime resident of New Mexico, retires from her position as a teacher with the Albuquerque School District. Dakota, who conducts statewide tobacco education programs through her consulting firm and is also the part-time director of the Albuquerque Independent Business Alliance, doesn't get health coverage through her work.

Discrimination in retirement benefits imposes huge and unfair burdens on these couples. For example, the high costs of purchasing just catastrophic health coverage would force them to make painful financial and health tradeoffs not required of heterosexual spouses of retired government employees.

Fortunately, they've decided to stand up for themselves. "We have a responsibility to fight, both for ourselves and for the gay men and lesbians who are a generation above us who feel too afraid to say who they are," Novak recently told the *Detroit News*.

Novak and her plaintiff colleagues have put their struggle before the public eye, facing media coverage and reactions from their community. Fortunately, much of the feedback has been quite supportive. Levitt found solidarity among her teacher colleagues, as well as some positive reactions from her students. McCreary tells of a former client who, upon learning about the lawsuit, called to tell her and Novak that, "We are all behind you."

The couples pursuing this important lawsuit are optimistic that they will prevail in the end, partly because they have faith in their state. Levitt and Dakota proudly point out that New Mexico is one of the few states that has not adopted the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). And McCreary emphasizes the state's early enactment of the Equal Rights Amendment and support for a woman's right to choose.

But, from SAGE's perspective, what New Mexico most has going for it is the strength and courage of a new generation of GLBT older people who are determined to find their place in the world of retirement. ■

Web Site Educates about Marriage Rights Through Stories of Ten GLBT Couples

The website www.10couples.org provides a glimpse into ten gay and lesbian couples whose lives are affected by their inability to marry legally. The site is set up to simulate an average living room with each couple telling their own story through a video clip, describing how the

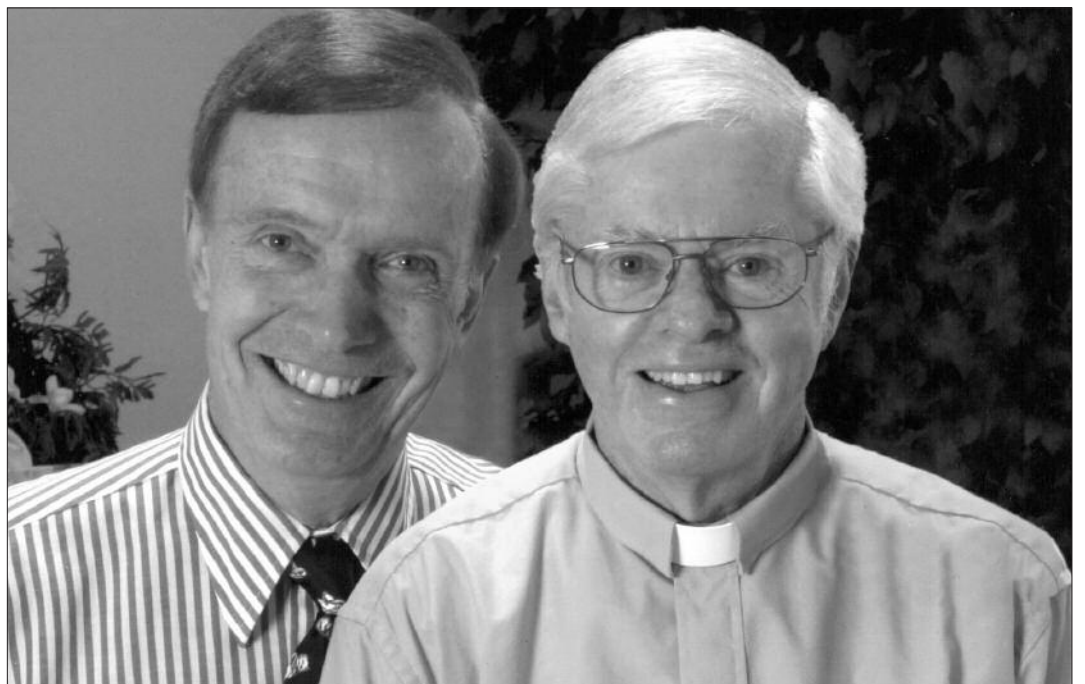


denial of state and federal marriage benefits affects healthcare, inheritance taxes, immigration and various other issues.

The site, sponsored by the ACLU, provides a link to send to friends and family to help them see the impact of marriage inequality on everyday people like themselves. It also contains information on what you can do to advance the struggle for marriage equality.



Heather and Carol are featured in a video clip on www.10couples.org. Heather (above right) tells about being denied the right to make a critical healthcare decision for Carol because their healthcare proxy papers were at home. "The fact is if I walked in and was a male and said I was Carol's husband, you guys wouldn't be hassling me like this," she told the emergency room doctors treating her partner.



The story of Dick and Bob (pictured above) is included on www.10couples.org. They have been together since 1955, yet have no spousal benefits whatsoever. "Legally we are nothing to each other," says Bob, "even after 50 years."

Retirement Planning Is Important for GLBT Couples and Singles

BY TRUMBULL ROGERS

There seems to be more and more talk these days about retirement planning. Some people say that GLBT singles need to be especially motivated to make a move in this direction, on the theory that they may not be as focused on the future as are couples. It's not quite the grasshopper attitude, but couples may end up talking about the future more, and retirement may seem a long way off to some singles.

Whether you are a GLBT single or a couple, the first and perhaps most important thing you need to do is find a financial advisor to help you with your retirement planning. It shouldn't be just any financial advisor, but one with whom you feel completely comfortable.

The person you choose must be able to get inside your head and understand how you feel about financial matters. In order to help him/her to do this, you need to be completely honest in detailing your likes and dislikes.

According to Thomas J.

Walling, a financial advisor with Tower Square Securities, who provided the majority of the information for this article, "There are many important factors when considering retirement if you are an aging member of the GLBT community."

One involves investments. Walling advises that you consider reassessing the aggression level of your investments, because there isn't as much time for your assets to recover. Alternately, in the case that you are not going to hit your goal, you may want to take more risk in the shortened period.

Another thing to do is to check your retirement account beneficiaries. Not all pensions allow domestic partners to be beneficiaries, so check with your pension provider before making any retirement plans. You also need to make sure your estate plan works in concert with your financial plan. Your financial advisor is best suited to help you with these matters, as well as with determining

how much retirement will cost you.

One reason retirement planning is especially important for singles is that they have only one income to build a stable retirement around. If you want to travel, you might want to consider working a couple of years beyond your target retirement date and putting the money away for this purpose.

Caregiving is something else for singles (and couples) to think about. In order to be sure there is someone to care for you if you fall ill, it is a good idea to explore your options early on. And since recent research shows that gay people end up being the caregiver for ailing parents just as often as their heterosexual siblings, it is important to have protection for aged family members (e.g., long-term care insurance to help with financial costs) so that this cost doesn't eat away at your own retirement funds.

Finally, there are lifestyle issues to consider, such as owning your own home

versus renting, which will have an impact on your retirement.

Couples have some additional things to consider. First, legal protections for same-sex couples who break up are incomplete. When buying life insurance, look for companies that offer gay-friendly policies, such as policies that include automatic insurable interest for beneficiaries in domestic partnerships and gay marriages. Since most mutual fund companies do not aggregate contributions for gay couples, look for companies that aggregate household accounts. That way you can save on the entrance fee (load).

As we age, health insurance becomes increasingly important. Most people are eligible for Medicare once they turn 65, but Medicare on its own will probably not cover all your healthcare expenses. If you have health insurance at the place where you work, Cobra will continue it for 18 months after you retire. But after that, if your

company does not offer a retiree health plan, you will have to find supplemental coverage.

In addition, you should explore disability and long-term care (LTC) insurance. When considering disability insurance, check the ratings of the companies and go with a firm with a solid reputation.

LTC insurance can be expensive, but there are more options available today than ever before. For example, you can save by choosing an LTC policy just for home care or just for care in a facility. Also, look for companies that offer same-sex couples' discounts on LTC policies; savings can be significant. Again, investigate the options and make your determinations with your financial advisor.

Thomas J. Walling has offered workshops on retirement planning at SAGE. He can be reached at (518) 878-1294. ■

Judith E. Turkel Is New Co-Chair of SAGE Board

SAGE recently announced the exciting news that prominent lesbian attorney Judith E. Turkel has been elected co-chair of the SAGE Board of Directors.

Turkel brings a wealth of critically important experience to her new position. She is a partner in the widely respected law firm Turkel Forman & de la Vega LLP; her practice has a special emphasis on the needs of GLBT people and others in unrecognized or non-traditional families. Turkel's areas of focus include real estate, family law, wills and estates as well as advance directives like health care proxies and powers of attorney.

Turkel has been a leader in the GLBT community for many years, and has held leadership positions on the boards of some of the community's most prominent institutions. She served as the president of the board of the LGBT Community Center from 1995 to 2000, vice president of the board of the Paul Rapoport Foundation from 1993 to 1996, and co-chair of the



board of Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund from 1987 to 1989. She was one of the founding members and first vice president of New York City's GLBT Bar Association — LeGal. Turkel joined the SAGE board in 2005.

"I am thrilled to be taking on this important new leadership role for the nation's oldest and largest organization serving and advocating for GLBT seniors," Turkel recently told *SAGE Matters*. "The challenges faced by older members of our community are of great concern to me, and SAGE is the place where those challenges get addressed," she added.

Turkel assumes her leadership role at a critical time in SAGE's history, with the ranks of GLBT older people swelling as Baby Boomers start to enter their senior years. "I couldn't imagine a better candidate than Judith Turkel to help lead our board into a new era," said SAGE Executive Director Michael Adams.

"Judith's extraordinary experience as a

community leader, her many years of board service, and her deep commitment to this community's seniors make her invaluable — she's like a dream come true," Adams added.

Turkel's new leadership role reflects SAGE's continued commitment to serve older women in the GLBT community effectively. SAGE is in the process of changing its by-laws to require that one of its two board co-chairs be a woman, and in the years ahead hopes to continue strengthening its programming of special interest to women.

Says Turkel: "It's important to me that any organization I help lead be deeply committed to the women of our community. I know that commitment is there at SAGE, and that's part of what inspires me to do this work."

Turkel joins fellow SAGE Board Co-Chair Lawrence N. Chanen, a senior vice president in the legal department at JP Morgan Chase. Chanen is starting his second year at the SAGE board's helm. ■

SAGE Volunteers Recognized for Years of Service

BY LIZ FERRIS

Long-time volunteers Jerre Kalbas and Phyllis Seigel were recognized in February for their work with SAGE by the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). They were each named a "Sweetheart of a Volunteer" at a Valentine's Day breakfast sponsored by RSVP and Con Edison.

I recently spoke with Jerre and Phyllis, both of whom first came to SAGE many years ago and are still very involved with the SAGE family. SAGE seems to have been as important to both of their lives as they have been to the life of the organization.

I reminded Phyllis, 72, that I had once profiled her in the SAGE newsletter but couldn't remember the year. "I wasn't nearly as interesting back then," she told me, but I can attest she's a pretty engaging person today.

The once very reserved Phyllis used opportunities offered at SAGE to break out of her shyness. "I was painfully shy before I discovered SAGE," she tells me. "So I decided to join a committee. Gradually I learned to speak up and found that people listened. SAGE brought me out, out of myself," she tells me.

Over the years of her involvement with SAGE, Phyllis has been on numerous committees. She was on the board for four years

and was a member of the SAGE Women's Task Force for two years. Today Phyllis works on the SAGE Women's Dance Committee.

"I work the front door, hand out tickets, flirt, cruise and make people laugh. Through SAGE I learned just how much I love meeting and greeting," which explains all the years of hosting SAGE's Volunteer Orientation with Dick Leonard. She also likes to help with ad hoc events when she gets the call.

Phyllis is one of the most optimistic people I've ever met. She has terrific friends, whom she describes as "people of honesty and integrity," and is still very close to her long-time friend and one-time partner, Connie Kopelov. "I love my life," she says. "I can't wait to get up in the morning."

Jerre Kalbas reminds me that it was 1983 when I first profiled her in the SAGE newsletter, after which people sometimes recognized her as she walked around the Village. She's 89 now, but on the phone I still hear the youthful sixty-five she was back then. Over thirty years ago Jerre had breast cancer, long before Betty Ford shocked the nation and took the disease out of the closet.

During this low point in her life, feeling shunned by women who ignorantly



Jerre Kalbas (left) is a SAGE pioneer. She participated in some of the organization's earliest planning meetings and remains an active volunteer with the SAGE Socials Committee and the SAGE Women's Dance Committee. Phyllis Siegel has been a vital member of the SAGE family since she started volunteering over 15 years ago. For several years, she hosted SAGE's Volunteer Orientation and served on the board of directors. Both women have been honored as SAGE Volunteers of the Year.

feared it was catching, she happened to meet SAGE founder Chris Almvig, who invited her to a meeting. Jerre went on to become an active member of the new organization. "I thought it was a great thing, great for me at that time in my life, and I was kept very busy. We did a lot of good even at the beginning," she tells me.

After all these years, Jerre is still on the SAGE Socials Committee. For years a regular fixture in the kitchen, she now conducts the raffles. The socials are held only four times a year now, and Jerre misses the

days when they took place every month and were attended equally by men and women, young and old. She also runs raffles four times a year for the SAGE women's dances. "The Dance Committee is the greatest and I'm having a lot of fun doing it."

Jerre and Adrian Mayer, long-time SAGE newspaper editor and board member, were the first co-hosts of SAGE's Drop-in Center. She regularly worked the SAGE flea markets. Later, when SAGE moved into a new office, Jerre, a virtual jack of all trades, pitched in with plastering, painting

and wiring.

Jerre had a successful hip replacement sixteen years ago and has arthritis in her knees, but despite that, she continues many of the activities she always enjoyed. She swims for exercise. She continues to design and make silver jewelry.

Jerre doesn't feel she needs SAGE services but keeps in touch with the SAGE social worker. "It's mostly been a social thing for me," she says. "But some day I might need it and it'll be there for me." ■

GRIOT Circle Talks to SAGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

saw the SAGE contingent and was very moved by it. So I've had a place in my heart for SAGE and this organization's work ever since then. Put that together with having done GLBT work for almost a decade before coming here, it just seemed like a really wonderful place to be able to come and work, so it has been a very exciting opportunity for me.

Glen: I think GRIOT is kind of providence for me. I remember as a young boy, always being comfortable around elders. I always looked to the elders for inspiration; I never had friends my age. All the experience I've had throughout the years has basically culminated into this position. Regina [Shavers, GRIOT executive director] and I knew each other back in the late 1980s labor union days. We were part of the Dinkins' Administration and the first Pride at Work organizing in New York, so we have a long-standing relationship of collaboration. When this organization was reaching out for a program director, Regina looked to me to become that, and so it was just organic from that point on. ■


THIRD EYE ASSOCIATES, LTD.
Intuitive Life Planning Solutions

*Integrating Your Life
and Your Money*

Beth Jones &
Susan Simon, RFC
Financial Consultants

bjones@thirdeyeassoc.com

New York City • Red Hook, NY • Washington, DC
646.375.2226 • 845.752.2216 • 202.667.2266

Securities and Advisory services offered through Commonwealth Financial Network
Member NASD/SIPC, a Registered Investment Advisor

Let's Re-think Aging: Boomers Move into Spotlight at ASA Conference

BY MICHAEL ADAMS, SAGE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Recently SAGE Clinical Director Catherine Thurston and I traveled to Chicago to attend the Joint Conference of the American Society on Aging (ASA) and the National Council on Aging (NCOA). Aptly titled "Let's Re-Think Aging," the conference had its eyes set on the future. After all, the Boomers are coming!

Offering workshops with names like "Money, Boomers & the New Retirement," much conference energy was focused on the evolving demands on organizations, like SAGE, that are dedicated to serving and advocating for older people. It wasn't possible to be in Chicago that weekend (or at least anywhere near our conference hotel) without being constantly reminded that organizations focusing on seniors occupy one of the most dynamic and fastest-changing sectors of our society.

The ASA/NCOA conference was amazing partly because

of its sheer size. It welcomed more than 4,000 participants and featured over 900 sessions. The sessions were divided into tracks on everything from "housing and aging" to Alzheimer's Disease to healthcare to "retirement issues and financial planning."

And yes, there was a track of workshops on "Gay and Lesbian Aging Issues." This is one of the reasons why it was so important for Catherine and me to be there — to remind the "mainstream" aging world that GLBT older people are an important part of their constituency, and that our numbers are growing!

Fortunately, SAGE is no longer as lonely a voice as it once was at conferences like this. In fact there was a small but spirited contingent of GLBT activists, policy advocates, social workers and other professionals on hand in Chicago. We got to spend some great time with our cadre of colleagues from around the

country (including a visit to the impressive new space of SAGE's latest affiliate — SAGE at the Center on Halstead).

Nonetheless, SAGE continues to play a unique role at these gatherings because we are the oldest and by far the largest organization dedicated to serving the needs of GLBT older people. If anything, the miniscule number of people representing GLBT programs underscored that SAGE is more important than ever.

As recognition grows of the need to make a space for GLBT older people throughout the country, so grows the demand for training and technical assistance from SAGE. Our pioneer programs serving GLBT seniors in New York City have always forged new directions and created new models for other communities to adapt and replicate. As other communities across the country gear up to serve and support their

older GLBT constituents, finding new ways to share SAGE's vast body of experience is crucial.

We're fortunate to have the American Society on Aging as an ally in SAGE's work. For years the ASA has shown a strong interest in GLBT issues. SAGE was one of the founding members of the ASA's Lesbian and Gay Aging Issues Network (LGAIN), which helps make sure that GLBT issues are not forgotten in national policy and program discussions about aging. I'm pleased to be an active member of LGAIN's Leadership Council, and we continue to identify new ways for SAGE and ASA to work together for the benefit of GLBT older people.

But there is still so much work to be done. At the Chicago conference, most of those attending the gay and lesbian workshops were, guess what GLBT people. While we *like* to talk to our friends, we *need* to talk to those who don't

know us yet. That's how we're going to build a world that's more welcoming to older people without regard to their sexual orientation or gender identity.

At SAGE we're already working on new strategies to break down more walls in the year ahead, including at the next ASA conference. We'll bring mainstream senior agencies into the discussion of GLBT issues, and we'll take the discussion to them whenever possible. That's why I am excited to be one of the featured speakers at this summer's AARP Diversity in Aging Conference.

Some day, there may not be a need for a special "gay and lesbian" track at conferences like this. But we have a lot of work to do before we get to that great day. Until then, SAGE will continue to ensure recognition and support for GLBT older people. ■



In March, SAGE played host to Dr. Douglas Kimmel, one of the organization's founding members. Kimmel was in town to present his new book, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Aging: Research and Clinical Perspectives*, which he co-edited with Tara Rose and Steven David.

Published by Columbia University Press in 2006, the book includes a chapter on SAGE.

See page 11 for a review.

REMEMBER SAGE IN YOUR WILL



For more information,
call Alan Francisco-Tipgos at (212) 741-0381

Senior Artists Find Joy and Community through Their Art

BY BARRY CHERIN

Mort Silk (age 85) and Sonja Bay (age 83) have a lot in common. They are not only gay and lesbian senior citizens who meet at SAGE once a week to express their artistic sides. Their art, too, has qualities in common even though each paints in a different medium.

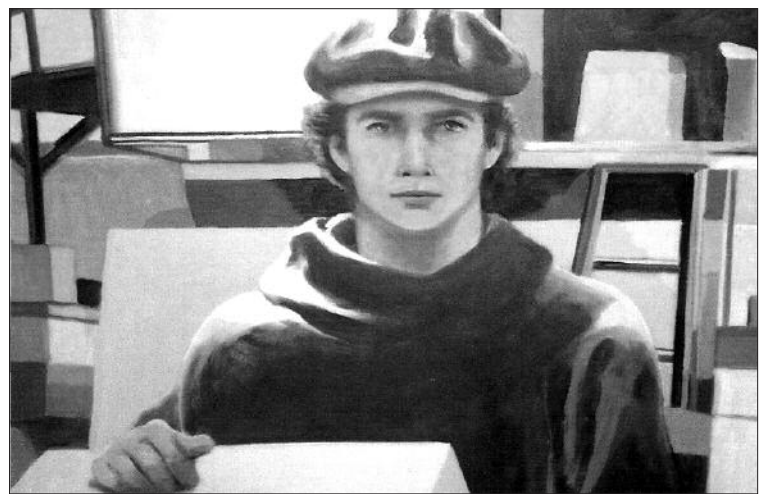
Silk paints in oils and Bay paints in watercolors but most of their art work uses basic, bright primary colors and shows an optimism that reflects their personalities. Neither paints at home but only at SAGE's space at the LGBT Community Center.

About eight years ago, Joe

Wolins, a scenic designer, began instructing and inspiring a group of nine artists who met regularly at SAGE. Silk and Bay remain from that original group — they meet at SAGE every week to encourage each other in their painting. Their persistence (and that of Robert Gable, long-time



Mort Silk and Sonja Bay meet weekly to create art in SAGE's space at the LGBT Community Center.



A painting by senior artist and SAGE member Robert Gable. SAGE sponsored an exhibit of Gable's work entitled "Bodies Beautiful — A Retrospective" at the LGBT Community Center.

Barbara Gittings, Long-Time GLBT Activist, Passes Away

SAGE mourns the passing of Barbara Gittings, a pioneer in the 20th century struggle for gay and lesbian rights. Gittings was active in the early homophile movement of the 1950s and 1960s, and founded the New York chapter of the Daughters of Bilitis in 1958. She challenged some of the early movement's assimilationist policies when she participated in one of the first pickets of the White House in 1965 to fight anti-gay discrimination in federal employment.

Gittings later joined with activist Frank Kameny in his campaign to have homosexuality removed from the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental disorders. In 1971, the two sat on a panel at the annual APA convention to debate the topic and invited a gay psychiatrist wearing a disguise to read a statement. In 1973, their campaign succeeded when the APA Board of Trustees removed homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.

Gittings also worked tirelessly to make GLBT literature more accessible for readers and researchers. Although she was not a professional librarian, she became a crucial part of the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association, which emerged in the early 1970s. In 1986, the year she stepped down as coordinator of the Gay Task Force, she announced the success of her efforts to make the Gay Book Award an official award recognized by the ALA.

In 1997, Gittings received a SAGE Award in honor of her many years of leadership on behalf of the GLBT community.

Gittings died of breast cancer on February 18, 2007, at age 74. She is survived by her partner of 46 years, Kay Tobin Lahusen. ■

SAGE member whose paintings were recently exhibited at the LGBT Community Center) is inspiring SAGE to launch a new artists group in the months ahead.

Silk, who worked for the board of education for 30 years as a teacher and later, a principal, used photography as a hobby and got artistic fulfillment from printing his photographs in various ways.

He then moved to a different artistic medium by painting from his own portrait photography, eventually branching out into non-representative art. Some of his current works include a lesbian breastfeeding her child and a lively rendering of musical notes on a scale very much in the tradition of Disney's "Fantasia."

To would-be artists who don't have the courage to take that first stroke, Silk advises, "If you want to paint, you just need a

canvas and paint supplies. Life is short and if this is what you enjoy doing, do it."

Bay, who was born in Holland, was an art historian at Yale and then the Guggenheim. Her work, sometimes using collages, shows the childlike innocent side of a very sophisticated woman.

"I started with this group after I retired," says Bay. "I thought it would be interesting to express myself in color. Painting doesn't involve courage; it just means making time to do one's art. People think they have to be artistic to do this but it's not necessary. It is a relaxing thing to do for fun and fulfillment."

Both Silk and Bay have had their work exhibited at the LGBT Community Center and, while neither ever expects to make it to MOMA, they are inspiring examples of seniors who have found joy and community through their art. ■

GLBT ELDERS AROUND THE COUNTRY

GLBT Seniors in Milwaukee Have a Place to Be Old and Gay

BY BETH KLING

A moderate sized city of approximately 1.5 million people, Milwaukee has a pretty active GLBT community. The city hosts two annual GLBT sports tournaments, the Holiday Invitational Bowling Tournament and the Dairyland Classic Softball Tournament.

Milwaukee also has an LGBT community center and three local universities with active gay/straight alliances. In recent years, aging GLBTs have a voice in the community and a place to be older and gay thanks to SAGE Milwaukee, an organization that is growing tremendously.

The story of SAGE Milwaukee's founding, by a man named Eldon Murray in 1994, is a testament to the power of individuals to make a difference in the life of a community by working to improve their own lives. And it's a demonstration of how SAGE's work in New York City can have a positive influence on the lives of GLBTs around the country.

Eldon Murray was an activist in the community long before he founded SAGE Milwaukee. Murray had helped to form the Gay People's Union in Milwaukee in the 1970s and was later recognized as one of the most influential leaders in the national

movement for GLBT rights. He also founded an STD clinic in Milwaukee, and helped to start the Milwaukee AIDS Project, which exists today as the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin.

But when Murray retired at age 65, he was facing a

Murray gathered over 50 members of the Milwaukee GLBT elder community to present what he had discovered — that becoming a senior doesn't mean you stop living, that older people should take ownership for their own aging process, and that the elder commu-

worker, and three years later he obtained a grant from a major foundation to hire a full-time executive director for SAGE Milwaukee. Since then, SAGE Milwaukee's services, programming, and participation have grown exponentially.

"When Murray formed and grew this organization, he opened a million doors for gay seniors," said Bill Serpe, who was hired as SAGE Milwaukee's executive director in 2004. "Milwaukee is not nearly as big as New York, and it's a lot more difficult to be out on the street here than in a big city. This gives elders in our community a chance to be out and themselves with people who are like them."

In 2004, SAGE Milwaukee held approximately 50 events that drew about 500 people; in 2005, the numbers of events and participants literally doubled. Serpe said 2006 saw a 20 percent increase above 2005 numbers.

But larger numbers are not the only indication of SAGE Milwaukee's growing influence. The organization is helping to integrate GLBT elders into Milwaukee's gay community by serving on the Rainbow Community Committee of Milwaukee. The committee, comprised

also of PFLAG, the Lesbian Alliance, the youth group Project Q, and others, has sponsored holiday and summer events that bring old and young GLBTs together.

SAGE Milwaukee is also working to ensure that GLBT people continue to be at the table among mainstream aging community services in Milwaukee. Through Murray's work with the Milwaukee Department for the Aging, Serpe has secured a seat on the board of directors of one of the major components of that agency. As Serpe explained, Milwaukee has a vibrant mainstream senior community with five major senior centers around the county, and GLBT seniors can make greater use of these services.

Eldon Murray passed away at age 77 on March 5, and a memorial was held in his honor at the Washington Park Senior Center in Milwaukee on March 31. He will always be remembered for his tremendous contributions to Milwaukee's GLBT community and for the significant difference he made in the lives of GLBT seniors through SAGE Milwaukee. ■



Eldon Murray, founder of SAGE Milwaukee.

future in a city with nothing to offer older GLBTs like himself. So he began to search for other resources for gay seniors around the country, and in the process he discovered SAGE in New York. After contacting SAGE, he flew to New York City to see firsthand the kinds of services and programming SAGE provided.

After he flew home,

nity in Milwaukee needed to form an organization of its own. In January 1994, Murray founded SAGE Milwaukee.

Throughout the 1990s, Murray headed SAGE Milwaukee with the help of about 25 other volunteers. Six years ago, Murray secured funding from the Milwaukee Department for the Aging to hire a part-time professional social

Take Control of Your Health and Life Decisions



M Make a free appointment at SAGE's legal clinic today. We'll provide information on all of the legal documents you will need to protect your healthcare and legacy.

Call 212-741-2247.

sage

HIV Services in Harlem

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

lacking the services they need. “We provide GLBT people in our Harlem program with a safe environment to be who they are, and that’s what we are trying to do for aging GLBTs with HIV.”

SAGE has begun developing programs for this population, including separate support groups for women and men. SAGE is collaborating with Harlem United to provide an ongoing support group for gay and bisexual HIV+ men over 50. SAGE is teaming up with FACES, Forging Ahead for Community Empowerment and Support, to develop a support group for HIV/AIDS-infected lesbian and bisexual women over 50. These groups provide emotional support that lead to stronger coping mechanisms for people with HIV. SAGE is also doing some collaborative work with Gay Men of African Descent (GMAD) to help older men initiate more conscious decision-making and negotiate safer practices in their sex lives.

Additionally, SAGE is working to connect GLBT older people with HIV to treatment and services in Harlem. In March, SAGE collaborated with GMHC to provide a day of testing for women in Harlem that brought such a great response it was offered again in May to both women and men. And SAGE is offering programming to reach Spanish-speaking communities, including a lunch-time discussion on HIV and safer sex, presented in Spanish at the Leonard Covello Senior Center in Harlem.

In addition to collaborating with other agencies to provide programming, SAGE is involved with both the Central Harlem HIV Care Network and the East Harlem HIV Care Network, associations of community-based groups offering prevention programs and services for people affected by HIV. In addition to participating in a group raising community awareness about HIV programming, SAGE served on the planning committee for the East Harlem Profile HIV Conference in March.

Both Weber and Bermudez agree that the goal of collaborating with other Harlem-area organizations is to integrate SAGE’s services for GLBT seniors into the existing networks of HIV programs in Harlem.

“SAGE’s goal is to help a group of people — GLBT older people — who sometimes get left behind when it comes to HIV programs. We don’t want to duplicate services; we want to build on what already exists,” said Weber, who explained that SAGE plays the crucial role of being the only organization within the HIV care networks that concentrates on GLBT elders.

“People tell us they’re glad we’re involved because no other organization has this focus. Our goal is to offer that perspective and to connect older GLBTs with HIV to services they feel comfortable accessing.” ■

RainbowVision Club Condo

Beautiful, new two-bedroom and two-bath unit for rent in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Upgraded amenities for 1200 sq.ft. unit include fireplace, kitchen, W/D, AC, backyard patio, security, parking, among others.

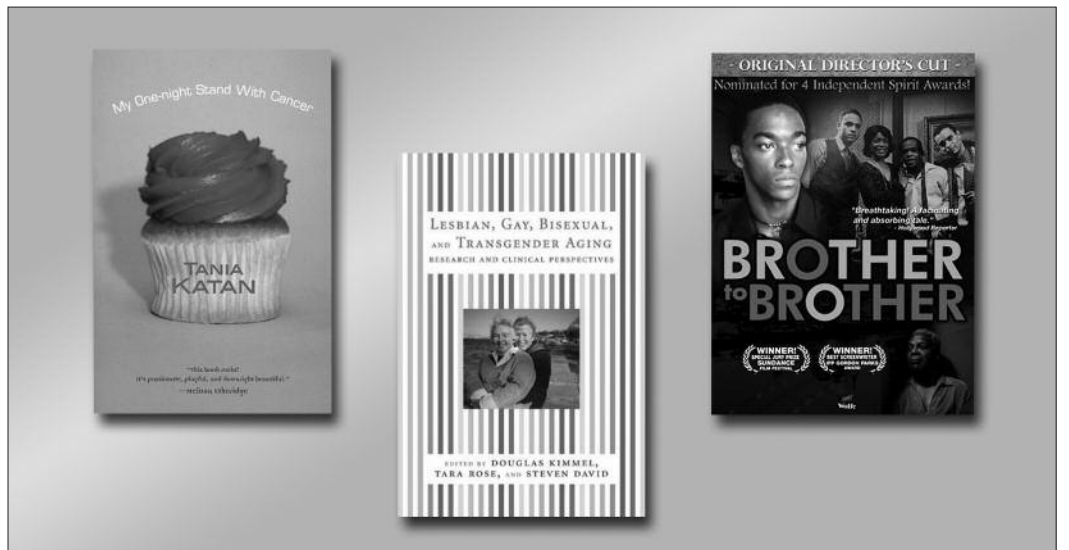
Two options to rent:

- (1) with RainbowVision membership (meal plan, fitness center & spa, among others) for \$2400/month, or
- (2) without membership for \$1500/month.

RainbowVision is located in a unique, prime location in beautiful Santa Fe, close to downtown shopping, arts, healthcare and other facilities.

If interested, please call (212) 875-8833 for more information.

REVIEWS



My One Night Stand with Cancer

Tania Katan

275 Pages, Alyson Books, 2005

I laughed so hard I cried while reading this smart, quirky, charming, and hilariously funny memoir about, of all things, breast cancer. Tania Katan recounts her two-time struggle with the disease — first, at the shockingly young age of 21 and again at age 30 — in a deftly written narrative that offers a young queer perspective on a disease that usually afflicts older women.

Katan takes us through tales of the two “toxic” girlfriends who discovered each lump, several insensitive and sometimes inappropriate health care workers, and the countless fears, anxieties, and indignities experienced by anyone who deals with serious illness. But Katan has the genuine support of her family through her illnesses, and a couple of very caring girlfriends along the way. We also get to read about how Katan runs a 10K race topless. It’s this image I like best, Katan baring her breastless torso and showing off her scars (she opted for “tattoo surgery” rather than reconstructive surgery). Revealing her pain and her strength is something she does to great effect throughout the book.

— Beth Kling

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Aging: Research and Clinical Perspectives

Edited by Douglas Kimmel, Tara Rose, and Steven David

303 Pages, Columbia University Press, 2006

This book was developed following a symposium on GLBT aging at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association (APA) in 2002. Even though some of the information has been superseded and updated by new legislation (e.g., some new state laws), the book is a gold mine of information on GLBT elders, covering such topics as trans and bisexual aging, sexuality in the lives of aging lesbian and bisexual women, gay men and aging, legal concerns for GLBT elders, end-of-life issues, and SAGE, to name some. Since the chapters are mostly written by researchers in the various areas listed, the writing can be dry and clinical, but no other book has brought together such an inclusive range of topics focused on GLBT elders, making it a unique and comprehensive source book on the subject. If you have concerns on any of these topics, *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Aging* is a good place to start looking.

— Trumbull Rogers

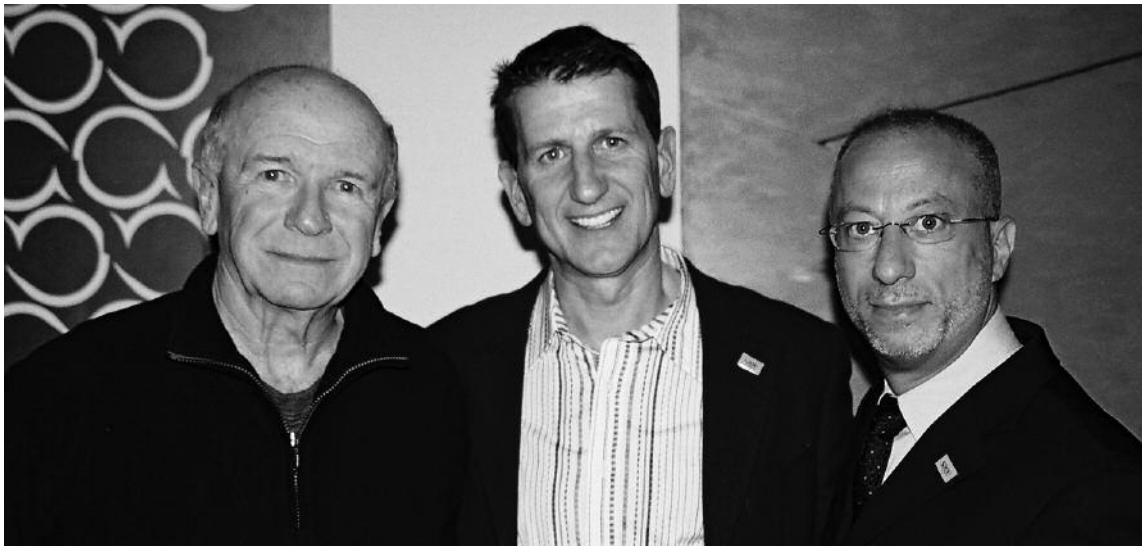
Brother to Brother

2004, 94 minutes, USA

A beautiful and touching film about an intergenerational friendship between two African-American gay artists. Perry, a young art student thrown out of his house by a father who won’t accept his homosexuality, meets the aging and still eloquent Richard Bruce Nugent, famous artist and literary icon of the Harlem Renaissance. Bruce recounts his memories of this vibrant and celebratory period in American literary history that brought together such luminous figures as Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Wallace Thurman. The two develop a deep connection as Bruce unearths the proud and passionate legacy of the Harlem Renaissance, helping Perry to build a stronger sense of self-respect and pride in his own art and identity.

— Beth Kling

Faces of SAGE



305 Seventh Avenue, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10001