

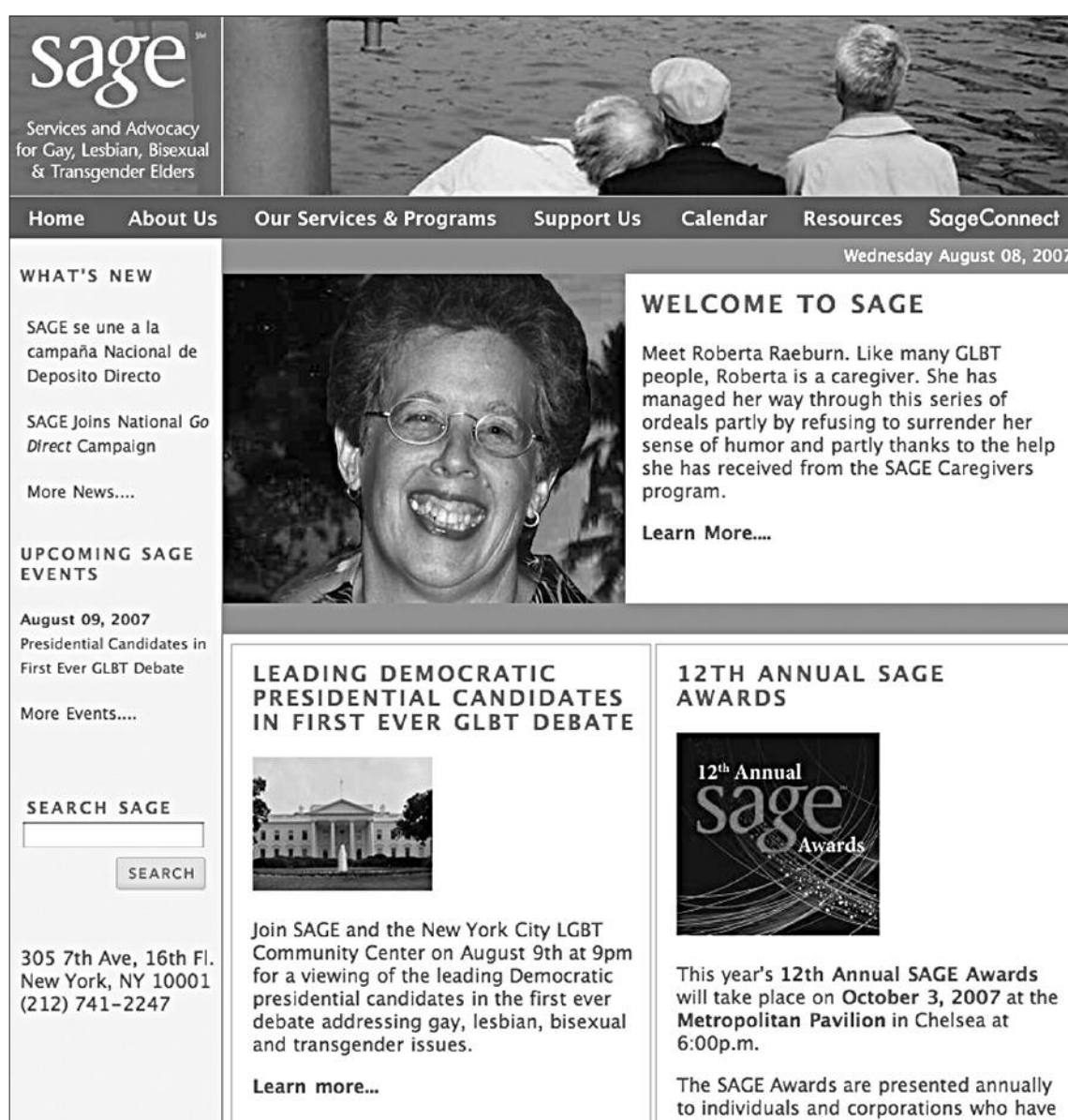
>> Michael Adams and Matt Foreman discuss how SAGE and the Task Force can work together to advocate for LGBT senior issues. *See page 3.*

>> A volunteer-led organization, Azteca Project, is working to serve senior Latino GLBTs in the San Diego area. *See page 8.*

>> Websites and blogs of interest
to the SAGE community.
See page 9.

SAGE is pleased to announce the launch of its new web site, www.sageusa.org

There's no better place to be on the world wide web
than sageusa.org!



Celebrating at SAGE



**See page 6 for more photos
of SAGE's summer events.**



Remembering Adrian Mayer: A Dedicated Leader of SAGE

BY BETH KLING

Adrian Mayer, SAGE member, volunteer, and former board president, passed away on June 3. Adrian would have been 85 years old on August 15, and friends and family gathered together at the Cornell Club on his birthday to celebrate his truly amazing life.

SAGE held a tribute for Adrian at the LGBT Community Center the night before, to honor his life, friendship, and commitment to the organization he joined over 25 years ago. Adrian was a legendary leader in the SAGE community — he will be sorely missed by the many friends he made.

Howard Oboler, Adrian's friend of 40 years, remembers that when Adrian committed himself to something, he stayed with it forever. That helps explain his tremendous devotion to SAGE over more than two decades.

Adrian served on the SAGE board for over 10 years, starting in the late 1980s, including a stint as board president. He was editor of SAGE's newsletter for about two decades. He also worked as SAGE's first Drop-In host (with Jerre Kalbas), was a vital part of the 75+ group, and carried the SAGE banner for many years at the GLBT Pride Parade. And I'm sure he did many other things I'll never know about, too many to count.

Adrian was also an active public representative for SAGE, speaking at hospitals, schools, senior centers, and conferences about the organization and his life as a gay senior. At SAGE-sponsored events, Adrian was often called on to

address the gathering, whether it was a volunteer recognition party or a gay pride celebration.

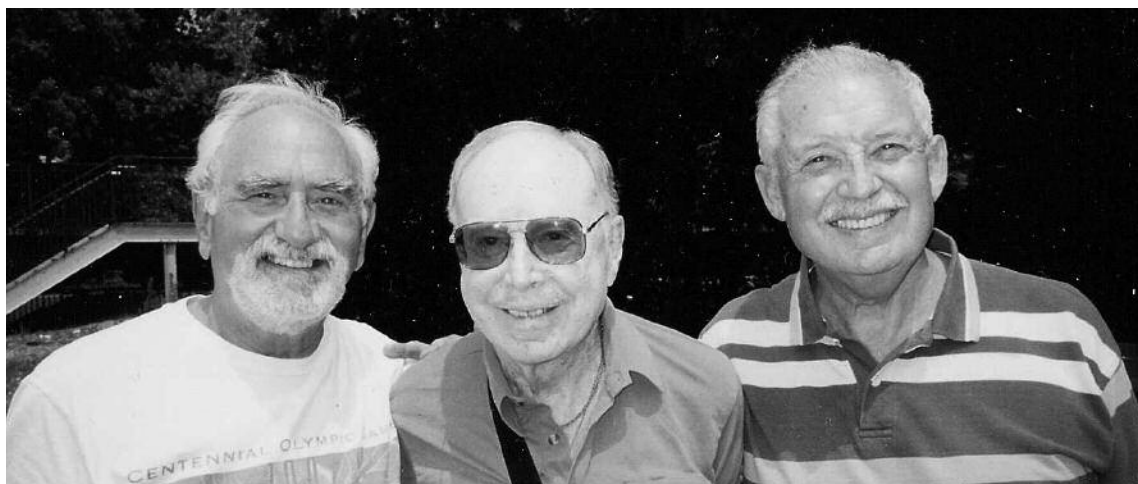
It was at one of those events that I first saw him in the late 1990s. He was wearing a blue blazer, an open collared shirt, and a stylishly knotted ascot, and he spoke with an ease and grace that matched the elegance of his attire. To me, he seemed like an elder statesman.

That Adrian took on this role is astounding, since he had kept his gay identity a secret throughout his work life. Adrian was extremely close to his family, including his two sisters, his niece

Jim Lomax, who served on the SAGE Board of Directors with Adrian, called him a "true blue and stalwart supporter" of SAGE, who was generous with his time and willing to do anything to help the

tising throughout his career. He was an avid theater-goer who loved to travel. A man of grace and quiet elegance, Adrian was known for his kindness, gentle consideration and respect for other people.

also had style and a sense of humor. Long-time readers of the newsletter may remember that in every issue he ended his columns with an alliterative sendoff, such as "Have a savory September" or "Have a



Top: SAGE honored Adrian at a membership meeting in 2004, and his family came to celebrate with him. Above: Adrian with close friends Howard Oboler (right) and Bob Gorman (left).

and nephew, and his grand nieces and grand nephews. But he didn't come out to them until after he became involved with SAGE, when he appeared on the Sally Jesse Raphael program with a group of SAGE seniors in the 1980s.

Family members were very supportive when they saw him on the show, and this experience seemed to pave the way for him to become more proud of his identity. He gave many more years of service to SAGE and worked to improve life for GLBT seniors.

organization.

Even before his involvement with SAGE, Adrian contributed his time and energy to helping others. During his work life, he spent every Monday night for 30 years volunteering with an organization called Volunteers of the Shelter to help pre-adolescents with reading problems. He was also dedicated to the organization Caring Community. And he was proud of his service fighting on the front lines during the Second World War.

Adrian worked in adver-

He was a true gentleman in every circumstance — always courteous, supportive, and kind.

I had the great honor of working with Adrian for several years when he was editor of *SAGE Matters* (and of the earlier "SAGE News & Events"). He hosted all of our editorial meetings in his apartment and was always extraordinarily welcoming. He was a vital member of the committee, dedicated to producing a publication that would inform SAGE members about important news. He

jaunty January."

During the last two years of his life, Adrian became very sick from Parkinson's disease, with which he had been diagnosed more than a decade before. Yet he always rose above his illness, said his friend David Brandenburg. He continued to attend SAGE's 75+ group and received tremendous support and care from his family, as well as lots of visitors.

Former SAGE volunteer coordinator Susan Levine and I visited Adrian a few months before he passed away. He was, as always, gracious and kind, even through the pain and infirmity he was experiencing. He was himself to the end — as concerned about us as we were about him.

Adrian's spirit lives on with all of us who had the great pleasure to know him. And his great works live on in SAGE — the organization that he loved so much. ■

sagematters The Newspaper on GLBT Aging

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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

SAGE and NGLTF Look to the Future

SAGE's Michael Adams Talks with Task Force Executive Director Matt Foreman

Advocating for LGBT seniors has been SAGE's work for almost 30 years, and is also a priority for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. Now, the two organizations are looking for new ways to work together to push for more progress. SAGE's Michael Adams and Task Force Executive Director Matt Foreman recently discussed these issues.

Michael Adams: SAGE has been working for almost 30 years to ensure that seniors in our community have the support and the voice they need to get older with dignity, and to keep on enjoying life to the fullest. We've faced a lot of challenges in doing this work, especially when it comes to resistance from the "mainstream" retirement world.

But to be honest, it hasn't always been so easy to get the attention of other LGBT organizations either. But the Task Force is different — for many years now it's shown a strong interest in LGBT aging issues. Why does the Task Force make aging issues a priority?

Matt Foreman: The Task Force has always understood the critical importance of the contributions

made by early LGBT activists. You don't turn your back on these courageous leaders simply because they're older.

The concerns of our community don't solely comprise issues affecting younger LGBT people — they also include people



Matt Foreman (left) has been executive director of the Task Force since May 2003. He and Michael Adams (right), executive director of SAGE, discussed future collaborations between the Task Force and SAGE.

who are middle aged and elderly. The Task Force is dedicated to creating grassroots power from the ground up — and that includes LGBT elders.

Michael Adams: One of the most successful joint efforts of SAGE and the Task Force in recent years was at the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA).

I think we accomplished a lot — getting SAGE named as the first official

LGBT delegate to the conference and working closely with people of color organizations around "diversity in aging." We were able to secure critical language and recognition of our community in the final WHCoA report. What do you see as the most



important progress we made?

Matt Foreman: Securing a place at the mainstream aging policy table and creating policy opportunities for LGBT seniors are both extremely important, and we had a bit of both at WHCoA.

We valued the opportunity to work closely with SAGE to create and organize the Diversity-in-Aging Coalition, which fought to bring a range of issues to the 2005 WHCoA policy table.

But equally critical was the *Make Room for All* counter-summit we organized during the opening day of the WHCoA, which brought together the first historical partnerships among LGBT aging groups and other underrepresented communities in the aging world, including women and communities of color. This work helped plant the seed for a more inclusive aging agenda, and we're now starting to see some progress on that front among mainstream aging organizations.

Michael Adams: At SAGE we've seen what a difference it can make to have a Mayor or a Governor who is LGBT-friendly. It's had an impact on the availability of public funds for programs for LGBT seniors, and it's opened up doors so we can start to change public policies that assume all seniors are straight. With a potential change in Administration coming in 2008, do you see opportunities for progress on federal policies affecting LGBT seniors?

Matt Foreman: The Task Force is excited at the possibilities we see federally if there's a continued shift in

power in 2008. We think it could have a positive impact on policy, funding and research that concerns and affects LGBT elders.

This includes possibly strengthening the Older Americans Act so it protects more vulnerable seniors (including LGBT seniors); getting LGBT elder issues included in federal research projects; possibly expanding and modernizing the original footprint of Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare; and enlarging the federal funding we can bring into our communities for work on LGBT aging issues.

And finally, the Task Force knows that we will be working around the entire question of universal health care, which is so critical to so many parts of our communities, especially our elders.

Michael Adams: SAGE held its first national conference on LGBT aging issues in 1998, and our fourth national conference is slated for 2008. Past conferences have focused on a wide range of topics — everything from social work to activism to policy advocacy.

If the Task Force were to be one of SAGE's partners in the next conference (we

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Remembering Willet Fields

BY TOM WEBER

Willet Fields, the oldest active volunteer at SAGE, died on July 5 just short of his 93rd birthday. It's telling that Willet died right after the Fourth of July, because he was an authentic patriot who spent a good portion of his life as a proud American military man. Willet was drafted into the military in World War II, and then made a career for himself there.

But Willet was also very proud of being gay. He found no contradiction in those two identities. Instead, he was a proud and out gay World War II vet — every year he marched in both the Gay Pride Parade and the Veteran's Day Parade.

But those of us at SAGE know Willet first and foremost as our every other Tuesday Drop-In host, where he could always be counted on to make the coffee and buy the cookies. In fact, many Drop-In community meetings were punctuated right in the middle by Willet's declaration of "Last call for coffee!"

We also knew Willet as a passionate bridge player. In fact, more

than any other person Willet was responsible for bridge coming to SAGE. And what a skillful and graceful dancer! It was wonderful watching him cut the rug at the SAGE socials and sweep his partner around the dance floor.

Willet had admirers on both coasts. In addition to his SAGE family in New York City, Willet was much beloved by his family of origin, who live in California. Every year they flew Willet out to see them, and he would come back brandishing many photos and stories. For his 90th birthday, they threw him a huge bash, which he talked about for months.

At SAGE we will remember Willet above all else as our good friend — sweet-tempered (though he knew how to get mad when it was called for), gregarious, kind, generous, and fun-loving. Willet cared deeply about SAGE and we cared just as deeply about him. All of us who had the pleasure of knowing Willet are richer for it. ■

First GLBT Feature-Length Documentary Shocked 1970s Audiences

Thirtieth Anniversary DVD Slated for 2008 Release

BY LIZ FERRIS

In 1977 when it opened in theaters across the country, the documentary “Word is Out” was considered radical and even shocking. Here on screen were real men and women openly declaring their homosexuality and talking about being gay or lesbian or cross-dressing in a homophobic world. The gay rights movement was just taking hold in the 1970s and a film like this, showing perfectly ordinary people speaking out about their lives, had never been seen before. It gave the movement a needed shot in the arm.

A new 30th Anniversary Commemorative DVD of “Word is Out” is planned for distribution early in 2008. Also, the original negative is being restored and re-mastered as part of the Legacy Project for LGBT Film Preservation by Outfest and the UCLA Film

& Television Archive and will be shown at public events and theater festivals in Los Angeles and San Francisco.

After that, the film’s long-time distributor, New Yorker Films, will make it available internationally. The DVD will include new interviews with members of the original cast and crew and will pay homage to Peter Adair, the producer of “Word is Out” who died of AIDS in 1996.

The documentary profiles 26 men and women in simple sit-down interviews. This is not fancy filmmaking by today’s standards, although producer Veronica Selver says, “It was deceptively complicated” to make. The participants are all ages, black and white, Hispanic and Asian, and they tell their stories of fear, frustration, discrimination, and the long hard road to self-discovery

and acceptance.

Although the participants are not named or identified as to occupation or where they live, they clearly represent a cross-section of American life. Surprisingly, some of them at the time didn’t realize the film would be shown at theaters or on television, suddenly finding themselves “outed” in a very public way.

Some faces will be recognizable. The late gay activist Harry Hay, founder of the Mattachine Society, sits reminiscing under a tree with his lover. Pat Bond talks about her experiences in the army, surviving the witch hunts, being a femme in the butch/femme era bar raids and, in spite of everything, her feelings of nostalgia for those days.

A c c o r d i n g t o www.patbondaward.com/bio.html, “Pat’s performance in this film . . . stole

the show and her career as an actress and storyteller was launched. In the 1970s and 1980s, she performed her four one-woman shows in small theaters, colleges and universities across the country. She was the first lesbian performer that many young gay people saw.”

A young Hispanic lesbian, nervously perched on the edge of a bed with her partner, displays an amazing amount of wisdom about life and relationships. A middle-class white woman in her twenties describes her unhappy high school years as a cheerleader and straight A student. We meet Achebe (Betty) Powell and feminist activist Sally Gearhart, and many others in this very moving film.

An exciting bonus of the DVD will be its new interviews. At the time of this writing in mid-2007, about

16 of the original participants have been located. Those re-interviewed were asked three questions: Why did you agree to be in the film? How did you experience seeing the film? Were there any consequences to being in “Word is Out” for you? It has not been decided if they will be identified by name.

“Will the film still resonate in 2008?” Veronica Selver wonders. “Will people today be able to appreciate the impact it had thirty years ago?” Or in a time when gay marriage is an ongoing subject of national debate, even legalized in Massachusetts, will these 26 simply-told stories from 1977 seem merely quaint? Only time will tell.

For more information, see www.wordisoutmovie.com, where you can also add your own story to the “Word is Out” blog. ■

When and How Did You Come Out?

SAGE members, volunteers, and friends recently told their coming out stories in honor of National Coming Out Day, which is celebrated October 11.



Gary Payne
Back when I was going to school, I didn’t even know what gay or homosexual was. I just knew that I was different. I had a couple one night stands and decided what the story was, and then went to New York and met Dick. I came from upstate New York — Niagara Falls. That’s why I came to New York City. I figured it was the only place for me. (Gary and Dick have been together for 50 years.)



Carol Demech
I was 25 years old and it was in 1972. I was living with lesbians but dating a man. After he and I broke up, one of their friends asked me out. So I thought, “Why not?” I was a hippie, I’d try just about anything. So I started dating this woman. I still went out with men for about five years, women and men, and then finally I said, “That’s it.”



Connie Kopelov
First I had to come out to myself, and that was a little late. It was about half a century ago. It was difficult because then there were no organizations. There was certainly no SAGE. Until SAGE came along, I kind of stumbled around trying to find a community and then SAGE appeared. Of course, I wasn’t exactly old then, but there were many young people at SAGE and I joined. That was a wonderful, supportive, happy thing.



Albert Mcgrigor
I didn’t have to come out. I don’t come from an environment in which I was ever threatened for being myself. I think I always knew I was gay, and I was encouraged to flourish as myself. So I’m one of those few lucky ones who never had to face the coming out experience.



Jan Martinez
I came out in 1961, when I was about 26 years old. I left home (Chicago) and went to Philadelphia and I met a lot of people that would come over to New York to party. I just discovered that I wanted to be gay all the way. Before that, I was hiding, but in 1962 I moved to New York. When I came here, I played on the women’s softball league. I met a lot of women. That’s where you meet them.

SAGE Members Advocate for GLBT Issues

Recently, SAGE members and staff participated in Senior Advocacy Day, joining Dan Tietz of ACRIA and Glen Francis of GRIOT Circle, pictured far right. The annual event provides an opportunity for advocates to lobby before the New York City Council for funding initiatives to benefit seniors. This year, their efforts really paid off! The City Council passed an initiative sponsored by Council Member Maria Del Carmen Arroyo that provides \$1 million in funding to help address the growing rate of HIV among people over 50.



In addition, a band of SAGE members joined SAGE staffers to travel to the New York State capital for the annual Equality and Justice Day, sponsored by Empire State Pride Agenda. The event gathers advocates from all over the state, who meet with Senate and Assembly members in Albany to talk about legislation protecting the rights of GLBT people.

Photos by Tom Weber

Losing a Lover: A Self-Interview

BY LESTER STRONG

On November 9, 2006, my partner of thirty years, Ted Rauch, died at St. Luke's hospital in Manhattan, from complications of pneumonia and septic shock. At age 72, Ted was twelve years older than me, and we always assumed he would go first. But nothing prepares you for the pain of seeing someone you love being hospitalized with a seemingly curable infection only to die a week later from complications no amount of intensive care is able to cope with.

What do you say when you lose a lover?

As a writer, I'm usually not at a loss for words. On this topic, however, it's easier to cry than to speak. What I offer here is an extremely condensed version of an inner dialogue I've held with myself over the months since the loss of Ted.

Question: What was the hardest thing about Ted's death?

Answer: The anguished week watching him lie unconscious at the hospital, knowing there was nothing I could do to affect the outcome.

Question: It sounds like you expected him to die.

Answer: After the first day or so when he was in intensive care, I didn't hold out much hope. Ted was always a fighter. He had heart problems for many years, undergoing two triple bypass operations, a mitral valve replacement, and the implantation of a pacemaker. Each time he bounced back. During his last illness, there was no bounce.

In ICU they kept him unconscious to deal with the discomfort of the breathing tube he needed to keep him alive. The first day he was there, I squeezed his hand and told him I loved him, and I felt a faint squeeze back. I did the same thing on the following days, but there were no more squeezes back. It was hard to believe he was in the land of the living anymore.

Question: What was your biggest challenge after Ted's death?

Answer: Coping with his absence. Suddenly it wasn't "we" or "our apartment." It was "I" and "my apartment." I still don't feel comfortable saying "my apartment." Instead I usually opt for "the apartment" or "this apartment."

It's also difficult coming home alone at night to an empty apartment. Usually I leave a light on so it looks cheerier when I come in the door. And it's been hard to reestablish connections with restaurants, movie theaters, and other places Ted and I enjoyed going to together. It's made



Lester (right), with his partner Ted in 1982.

me realize that "my life" is not the same thing as "our life," that I have to rechart a social life based on my needs alone. But I'm not always sure what my needs alone are.

Question: Have you kept in touch with friends and family?

Answer: Yes. And they've kept in touch with me. I feel very fortunate to have the friends and family I do — including Ted's family. People phone me regularly, and

those in New York invite me to dinner, movies, plays, and museums, for walks and other outings.

Those out of town have visited me, and have invited me to visit them. This has spanned sexual orientation. Ted and I were totally open about our relationship, and everyone in our lives clearly appreciates the fact that I've lost a spouse with whom I lived happily for most of my adult life.

I've made some new friends, too. SAGE, for example, sponsors a Gay Widowers Support Group twice a month, where I've met some very interesting people. I've also joined a Bereavement Group run by SAGE.

Question: How has the SAGE Bereavement Group helped?

Answer: It's hard being a widower, and not easy exploring feelings of loss and loneliness. I feel like a vital part of my life has been severed, and the bereavement group is helping me examine what's left. It's not a fun activity. Still, it feels very necessary.

In recent months, I'm reacting to my loss differently, and have started exploring my life again as something I want to participate in. I'm sure this is related to being part of a group whose members have suffered the same kind of loss I have, and where I don't have to feel embarrassed about sharing my pain, my struggle to readjust, and my hesitations about starting a new life without Ted.

It's curious. I expected to be the only gay man in the group whose partner didn't die of AIDS. Instead none of our partners had AIDS. It's surprising to learn just how many ways gay men can die these days aside from AIDS.

Question: So what do you say when you lose a lover?

Answer: You have to write the script of your life anew. And after thirty years, that's no easy task.

Lester Strong is a writer and visual artist. He's a regular contributor to Out magazine, A&U, and The Gay & Lesbian Review. ■



Cherry Grove

Celebrating at SAGE

The GLBT Pride Parade, the Harlem Pride Party, the Fire Island Pines Event, and the Cherry Grove Celebration were just some of the opportunities available for SAGE members and supporters to gather over the summer months.



Pride



Cherry Grove



Pride



Harlem Pride



Pines Event



Pride



Pines Event



Pines Event

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
Friendship Circle
Gay Widowers Support Group
Men’s Coming Out
MS Support Group
Older Than Springtime - Men’s Support Group
Women’s Coming Out Group
Women’s Support Group

Discussion Groups

Conscious Creative Aging
Life Issues: Beyond Retirement
Men 40+ Rap
Men 50+ Rap
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 & Cultural 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
Wonderful Wednesdays

Uptown SAGE Neighbors

Monthly Socialization Programming

Education & Advocacy

National Conference on Aging on GLBT Community
HIV and Aging Advocacy
SAGEConnect
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

Do They Have *That* at SAGE? Services You May Not Know SAGE Offers to GLBT Elders

Does SAGE offer services for Spanish-speaking people?

Yes, SAGE Social Worker Emily Vargas provides clinical services in Spanish. Emily works with GLBT elders who are bilingual or exclusively Spanish-speaking to link them to resources and to advocate for needed services and entitlements. She makes home visits and provides counseling in Spanish. Emily also refers Spanish-speaking clients to SAGE’s Harlem HEAT program, which offers bilingual socialization and advocacy opportunities. SAGE’s website (www.sageusa.org) is also accessible in Spanish.

¿Ofrece SAGE servicios para personas que hablan Español?

Si, Emily Vargas es una trabajadora social en SAGE que provee servicios clinicos en español. Emily trabaja con la clientela que es bilingue o que exclusivamente habla español. Ella sirve de guía y conexión para poder abogar por servicios que nuestra clientela necesite y tambien para programas/servicios de la tercera edad. Además, Emily refiere a nuestros clientes bilingues a nuestro programa de SAGE Harlem HEAT. Harlem HEAT ofrece programas para oportunidades de socialización y abogacia. Para más información por favor visite nuestro sitio en la red a www.sageusa.org, haga click “En Español.”



Does SAGE have group support for older GLBTs?

Yes, SAGE offers several support groups for older GLBT men and women. Senior Social Worker John Genke facilitates a group called “Older than Springtime,” which enables older gay men to support one another in leading positive, meaningful lives as they age. John also facilitates one of SAGE’s HIV peer support groups for older men. Group members help one another to address the difficulties of aging with HIV as they work to enhance quality of life.

“In addition to helping members deal with relevant issues, SAGE support groups give them a sense of belonging and often help them find a new voice,” says John. “And these groups give people a chance to have fun and laugh with each other.”

SAGE also offers support groups for people coming out later in life, and support groups specifically for women.



For information about all SAGE services,
please call the SAGE office at (212) 741-2247.

GLBT ELDERS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Azteca Project Reaches Out to Senior GLBT Latinos in San Diego

BY BETH KLING

"I don't want people to think if they're gay, if they're senior, and if they're Latino, it's like the three strikes law — that they're doomed," says John Acosta, invoking California's draconian life imprisonment law for three-time offenders to dramatic effect.

Acosta is working to improve life for Latino GLBT elders in San Diego through the Azteca Project, a clearinghouse that provides education, information, and support in both Spanish and English to a population that is often isolated and closeted because of cultural stigma and a lack of culturally sensitive services.

Acosta started the Azteca Project in 2003 after his work in the community made it clear that senior gay Latinos are grossly underserved in San Diego, where the Latino population is over 25 percent and growing. Senior centers for Spanish-speaking people are designed for the heterosexual community and more often than not are not gay-friendly. And the few services that exist for senior GLBTs in San Diego are not offered in Spanish. To make matters worse, services available to gay Latinos tend to ignore the existence of older people.

"A lot of advertising about AIDS prevention and other things is focused on youth. You see pictures in safe sex ads and there are no seniors in them," says Acosta, who points out that older GLBTs are just like anybody else — still at risk because of unsafe sexual practices.

Part of Acosta's mission is to educate them about the need to protect themselves, and to connect them with clinics and other services providing HIV testing, treatment and safe sex materials. The Azteca Project also offers information about other health, economic, and quality of life services, including

transportation, discounts on medicine or food, places to volunteer, nutrition centers, and housing.

Acosta faces formidable obstacles in reaching the people he is trying to help because a cultural stigma against homosexuality in Latino communities still keeps many people closeted and fearful of accessing services. For a time, the Azteca Project tried to hold

that it's okay to address the caller as gay. He says he understands many elder Latino GLBTs need to maintain the appearance of heterosexuality even when talking to him.

"People call me, and they say they have a friend. So I tell them, 'This is what you need to tell your friend.' Even though we both know what we're talking about, I try to have an

understanding of where they are coming from," explains Acosta.

Yet increasingly, he says, more GLBT seniors are acknowledging their sexuality after their kids grow up and leave the house. And in some cases, grown children approach him for help because they believe one of their parents may be gay.

Acosta's choice of the name Azteca Project is consistent with the sense of confidentiality and discretion he feels he must maintain to reach his target population. "Azteca" doesn't indicate lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender identity; it is an indigenous Mexican name that is neither male nor female. A large percentage of the Latino population in San Diego is Mexican or Mexican-American.

Acosta works hard to let people know about the Azteca Project, providing workshops at senior centers and distributing fliers at health fairs, telling people to pass his phone number on to anyone they know who might be GLBT and in need of help. He is also working to educate staff at mainstream day care

centers and nursing homes about the need to offer a welcoming space for Latino GLBT seniors.

Still, the effort to improve life for San Diego's senior gay Latinos is hampered by the persistent lack of services specifically designed to meet their needs. There exist neither senior centers nor social venues that openly welcome this population. Azteca Project's long-term goal is to establish a gay Latino senior center where seniors can go for socialization, support, and services.

In the meantime, Acosta continues his work to create spaces within existing gay and senior venues to welcome Latino GLBT elders. One noteworthy accomplishment is his creation of a rest area for seniors along the route of the San Diego Pride Parade, offering couches, coffee, and information for the population. In addition to providing an excellent amenity, this has proven to be a great opportunity to advertise Azteca services.

"I always get a lot of calls at the end of July and August," says Acosta, "after San Diego Pride." ■



All Azteca Project services are free of charge to anyone who needs them. You do not have to be Senior, GLBT, or Latino to receive assistance or information.

<http://aztecaproject.org>
[http://aztecaproject@hotmail.com](mailto:aztecaproject@hotmail.com)
 (619) 426-6736
 Azteca Project
 P.O. Box 7678
 Chula Vista California 91912

meetings at the GLBT center in San Diego, but people refused to go there for fear they would be seen entering or leaving the facility and would thereby be identified as gay.

"They're really sensitive because of the machismo, the culture, the religion," says Acosta. "Most of the Latino community is Catholic, and they think if they're gay or homosexual they will go to hell." Periodically, Acosta will meet one-on-one with a person at a mainstream senior center or in a coffee shop, but most of the assistance he provides is over the phone or through e-mail.

Even over the phone, Acosta uses a discrete approach, not assuming

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INTERNET NEWS

High-Speed Internet Service Beneficial for Seniors

SAGE Volunteer Advocates for More Affordable Access

BY GARRISON PHILLIPS

Last May, I was asked to testify before the New York City Broadband Advisory Committee and several members of the New York City Council about the need for affordable broadband Internet access.

The hearing was held at Brooklyn Borough Hall and was sponsored by City Council Member Gale A. Brewer, Chairperson of the Committee on Technology in Government and long-time supporter of SAGE. I represented both SAGE and OATS (Older Adults Technology Services, Inc.), an organization that provides technology training

to seniors in order to close the “digital divide.”

There is a worldwide effort to provide affordable broadband, or high-speed connection to the Internet, and seniors are one of the groups who could benefit from gaining access to this service

As Tom Kamber, executive director of OATs, explained at the hearing, the Internet can offer seniors increased opportunities for communication with family and friends, shopping, research, and access to games which serve not only as entertainment but as brain exercise, or so the

medical community now informs us.

Lester Johnson, another OATS volunteer, was also asked to testify. He spoke of his need for employment to supplement his retirement income, how helpful OATS has been in teaching him computers, and how he can now use the Internet to search for work.

I was able to speak as a volunteer for both OATS and SAGE. I first heard about OATS in the *SAGE Matters* newspaper. Since then, I have taken two of the OATS training courses and now help with the

building of the web site “Senior Planet.”

Because of my volunteer work with SAGE I was able to refer to the SAGE web site and call attention to the many seniors who use the SAGE Drop-In room at the New York City LGBT Community Center and the services SAGE provides to the senior community. I also tried to educate New York City Council members by providing them with statistics on the limited retirement income of many of SAGE members.

OATS and SAGE are currently exploring ways that the two organizations

might collaborate so that GLBT seniors have the opportunity to get special training in how to effectively navigate the Internet.

I’m excited that these two very important organizations are joining forces, and was thrilled to represent both SAGE and OATS before the New York City Council. Stay tuned for more news about how SAGE and OATS will work together to close the “digital divide” for GLBT seniors.

What is a Blog?

Online Journal Writing that Encourages Feedback

BY MIKE NADEAU

Traditionally, journal keeping was a private, solitary endeavor between a writer and his or her notebook. In the age of the Internet, however, keeping a diary has become a more public activity. Blogs, or web logs as they were originally known, have become a widely used forum for expression and communication about a variety of interests and activities, from politics to personal matters.

When they first appeared, blogs were nothing more than web pages with links to other sites for Internet users to visit. Before long, the link gathering phenomenon evolved into personal journal keeping with bloggers publishing their private thoughts and musings for others to comment on. Unlike traditional journal writers, bloggers encourage feedback, often providing links for readers to leave comments that can then be read (and further commented on) by other blog readers.

Many blogs provide news or political commentary that isn’t covered in the mainstream media. In the early days, several blog writers came under fire by established journalists, who regarded them as irresponsible correspondents with no accountability. In recent times, however, these views are changing and some blogs are earning a reputation as reliable sources for information.

You can search for blogs on topics of interest by using blogsearch.google.com. While everybody’s tastes are different, and no blog is for everybody, some of the following blogs might be worth a look. (Also, see page 11 for a review of blogger Wayne Besen’s book, *Bashing Back*.)

www.pamshouseblend.com has been honored for the past two years as Best LGBT Blog by the Weblog Awards. It is written by Pam Spaulding, who lives with her wife in North Carolina and spends considerable time in New York City. The blog describes itself as being “focused on current political events, LGBT and women’s rights, the influence of the far right, and race relations.”

www.designerblog.blogspot.com is written by a blogger named Will, a theatrical designer who until recently was living in Massachusetts with his husband and working as an arts administrator at MIT. Will’s posts give an inside view of his activities, including building a retirement home with his husband in New Hampshire.

www.senior-living-tips.com/blog offers postings on a wide range of topics including retirement, travel, and dating. The blog provides links to articles of interest posted on other web sites including a recent gay.com story about the Barbary Lane Senior Community, the first private senior housing development for GLBT people in Oakland, California.

Web Sites of Interest

www.seniorplanet.org

Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) has recently launched a new web site which they call a “digital community for older adults.” Still in its early stages, www.seniorplanet.org, offers a Resource Exchange listing, an Events Calendar, and a link to blogs written by seniors.

The Resource Exchange provides access to a wide variety of web sites of interest. Visitors can browse the sites alphabetically, by category (e.g., employment, health, and travel) or by location. The travel category, for example, includes a link to the Elder Hostel web site, www.elderhostel.org, where users can find information about more than 8,000 different worldwide educational travel programs for senior adults.

The Events Calendar page offers information on activities throughout the boroughs of New York City. The Senior Blogs section provides a forum for users to exchange ideas and opinions on a wide range of topics. The site currently contains two new blogs, Shop Talk, and Everyday Strolls, edited by *SAGE Matters* contributing writer Garrison Phillips. In a recent post on Everyday Strolls, Garrison ponders the significance of the number seven in mythology and literature.

Senior Planet is sponsored by JC Morgan Chase and encourages ideas, entries, and comments.

www.MyPartTimePRO.com

Retirement does not always mean the end of employment. Many retirees are drawn back into the job market in order to supplement their retirement income and want to find work that is interesting yet flexible enough to allow for the leisure time they looked forward to in retirement.

Philadelphia based entrepreneur Ilyse Shapiro recognized this growing market and created the web site www.MyPartTimePRO.com. The site is designed to help retired, educated career veterans identify “meaningful and legitimate” part-time job opportunities.

In addition to part-time and seasonal jobs in the New York City area, telecommuting jobs, or “virtual” job opportunities, may also be found on the site. Registration is not required to search jobs. Shapiro is planning to expand the web site to include nationwide employment opportunities later this year.

— Mike Nadeau

Professor Marjorie Cantor: Renowned Researcher in Field of Aging

Recent Work Focuses on Caregiving in the GLBT Community and HIV Among Older Adults

BY GARRISON PHILLIPS

When SAGE needed statistical figures on aging in the Senior GLBT Community, we turned to Dr. Marjorie Cantor, Professor Emerita and Brookdale Distinguished Scholar of the Graduate School of Social Service of Fordham University. She is also scholar in residence at The Lighthouse International and past president of the Gerontological Society of America.

Professor Cantor is an internationally recognized leader in the field of aging and has published over 70 articles, books, chapters and papers which have been presented both here and abroad. She has visited China on two occasions as an invited participant at the International Forum on Aging hosted by the Chinese Government in Beijing.

Participating in both the 1980 and 1995 White House Conferences on Aging, Professor Cantor joined hundreds of delegates from around the country to influence federal aging policy at a



Professor Marjorie Cantor (left) with City Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo, chair of the Aging Committee.

conference held once every decade.

Co-author (with Mark Brennan) of the book, *Social Care of the Elderly: The Effects of Ethnicity, Class and Culture*, Professor Cantor has reported extensively, and been widely published, on aging issues in the inner city, including matters affecting black and Hispanic populations.

Her work covers a wide range of aging issues, including housing, caregiving, finances, family concerns (e.g., grandmothers raising children because parents are

working), and even the transportation difficulties elders face.

Professor Cantor's work in the GLBT community began almost a decade ago with a request from SAGE to gather research and information about GLBT seniors — this data had never been collected or presented prior to that time. Her involvement grew when she served as an advisor for SAGE's first National Conference on GLBT Aging in 1998. Professor Cantor also participated in SAGE's 2004 national conference.

That year her research on over 400 seniors in the GLBT community was published in the study, "Caregiving Among Older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender New Yorkers," which she co-authored with Mark Brennan and R. Andrew Shippy. The report was sponsored by the NGLTF Policy Institute, along with the Pride Senior Network and Fordham University Graduate School of Social Science. Sean Cahill, managing director for public policy of Gay

Men's Health Crisis, notes that this study has produced dozens of articles and book chapters and continues to be relied on as an important resource to this day.

Professor Cantor has also conducted extensive research on AIDS and the elderly with the AIDS Community Research Initiative of America (ACRIA), serving as chair of an advisory committee to produce the enlightening "Research on Older Adults with HIV" (ROAH).

Published in 2006, ROAH is a comprehensive research study of almost 1,000 people over the age of 50 living with HIV in New York City. According to Steve Karpiak of ACRIA, Professor Cantor's work among seniors with HIV has had worldwide impact through exposure in the radio, television, and print media.

Professor Cantor graduated from Hunter College, received a Masters Degree in Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University and did graduate work in

Economics at Harvard University. She has two children, a daughter who is Chancellor of Syracuse University and a son who is a prominent real estate broker in New York City.

Professor Cantor's honors and awards are countless. For example, she was a 1989 recipient of the prestigious Donald P. Kent Award — The Gerontological Society of America; was named Senior Fellow at the Brookdale Foundation; and was recognized by both the City of New York and the New York State Society on Aging with the Walter M. Beattie, Jr. Award for Distinguished Service in Aging.

And of course, her pioneering work on GLBT seniors has made Professor Cantor a hero to SAGE. Remarkable achievements, all, and she is still going strong at the age of 85! ■

This article is part of our occasional series about individuals who have made significant contributions to the GLBT community.

Direct Deposit – The Safer, Easier Choice for Your Benefits

Go Direct campaign helps seniors sign up for direct deposit, saves taxpayer dollars

If you could make life safer and easier for yourself or a loved one with just one phone call, wouldn't you?

Switching to direct deposit is a small but important way that people who get Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) checks can improve their lives. And it just takes a few minutes to sign up.

SAGE is proud to partner with **Go Direct** — a campaign sponsored by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Banks to inform people who receive federal benefits about the advantages of direct deposit and help them sign up for it.

With direct deposit, you have:

- The safest method of receiving your payment
- An easier, more convenient way to access your money
- Control over your money and your time



Plus, **signing up is quick and easy** — just call (800) 333-1795 or sign up online at www.GoDirect.org

Direct deposit eliminates the risk of stolen checks and forgeries and helps protect seniors from identity theft. It also gives you more control over your money. Furthermore, direct deposit provides you with immediate access to your money from virtually everywhere, which can be vitally important in the case of a natural disaster or a major life change.

Direct deposit also saves taxpayers millions of dollars. If every person who gets federal benefit checks in New York were to switch to direct deposit, it would save taxpayers more than \$5 million dollars a year. Almost all the money saved remains in the Social Security Trust Fund — a benefit to all Americans for years to come.

If you or those close to you are still receiving Social Security or other federal benefits by check, SAGE urges you to look into switching to the safest, easiest option — direct deposit — today! **Go Direct!** ■

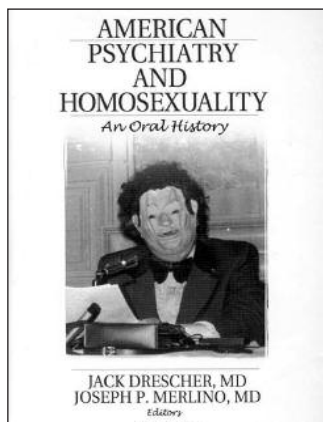
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BOOK REVIEWS



American Psychiatry and Homosexuality: An Oral History

Jack Drescher, M.D. and Joseph P. Merlino, Editors
299 Pages, Harrington Park Press, 2007

The title of Michael Moore's latest documentary — "Sicko" — could serve as the focal point of departure for this collection of profiles and interviews. The dividing line for pre-and post-"sicko" is December 15, 1973, the date when the Board of Trustees of the American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality from its official listing of mental disorders.

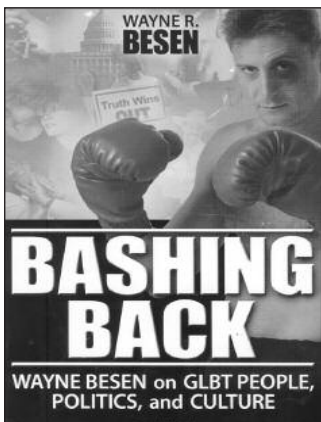
No longer was homosexuality considered an "antisocial disorder" and a "perversion" requiring the healing of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts.

This collection of individual profiles and interviews (17 in all) highlights the painful and often threateningly frightening pre-"sicko" experiences of those seeking to enter the psychiatric and analytic professions and who were forced to hide or deny their true sexual identities in the process. And it also charts new opportunities and directions for psychiatry as a result of post-"sicko" realities.

Here you will find profiles in fear, courage and ingenuity. You will meet the first gay psychiatrist to address a gathering of the American Psychiatric Association in 1972, wearing a fright wig, an oversized mask and too large tuxedo, and billing himself as Dr. H. Anonymous (actually Dr. John E. Fryer). You will learn the identity of the Roman Catholic prelate whose televised diatribe against psychiatry nearly scuttled the construction of St. Vincent's Hospital's Reiss Pavilion. And you will be both reminded and informed concerning how it used to be not so long ago.

A cautionary note: the plethora of abbreviations for psychiatric organizations, journals, caucuses, and titles sometimes leaves the reader feeling like he or she is drowning in a vat of alphabet soup. But it is worth taking the plunge for the overall nourishment you will receive.

— James R. McGraw



Bashing Back

Wayne Besen
207 pages, Harrington Park Press, 2007

In his oral history interview, Dr. Charles Silverstein described his personal gay liberation experience as follows: "That I am not going to be covered by the bullies out there, whether it is society, the law, religion, or the psychiatric profession. . . I'm going to wallop the bastards in the face." Wayne Besen is pursuing a similar project against the same targets!

Bashing Back is a collection of 73 Besen columns from PlanetOut.com, Gay.com, and the *Washington Blade* targeting a full range of cultural and political opponents of GLBT people and progress. Besen believes that "equality for gay men and women is the civil rights issue of the new millennium. . . In essence, gay rights are the canary in the coal mine for freedom and prosperity. Unfortunately, the bird is hacking, signaling a period of increased oppression and a dangerous erosion of freedom. It is up to us to rescue this nation from the hazardous, retrograde path it is now on."

With grit and wit Wayne Besen pursues his rescue operation, tossing his most pointed barbs toward frauds and hypocrites in both church and state. Besen admits to having "little faith in most organized religion. It tends to have undesirable side effects such as Crusades, Inquisitions, witch burnings, and the election of George W. Bush." "Conservatism," Besen writes, "is no longer a mantra, but a mask, hiding hypocrites and concealing closets. . . Glance at who is running the GOP and it looks like a Harvey Fierstein cocktail party."

Besen also takes aim at the pious who continue to insist that homosexuality is pure choice and the "ex-gay" advocates who insist sexual change is as possible as it is desirable. Citing Swedish scientific studies of the hypothalamus portion of the brain, Besen concludes, "Now that it appears that sexual orientation is biological and connected to smell, it is time that opponents of equality acknowledge that their oppressive behavior stinks. And to those who try to challenge gays to go straight: Give it up and stop wasting your time. You can't pray away a God-given brain. But you can start using it."

There's much, much more in *Bashing Back*, and much knowledge and inspiration to be garnered from reading it.

— James R. McGraw

Conversation with NGLTF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

hope you will!), what are some of the things you would like the program to focus on?

Matt Foreman: The SAGE conference is one of a kind and we look forward to being a partner in that event. We know that SAGE is doing some of the most important HIV/AIDS work anywhere and that is an area that the Task Force feels strongly about. Too often these days there is a separation between AIDS work and LGBT work. The Task Force wants to help rebuild a bridge between groups and organizations that connect HIV/AIDS and LGBT concerns.

As a national LGBT advocacy and political organization, we will also look forward to strengthening links across LGBT aging organizations and programs and increasing coordination of the work, with SAGE in a leading role. The conference is an opportunity to identify some places where we can make real progress if we set smart priorities.

Michael Adams: As the oldest and largest organization in the country dedicated to serving and advocating for LGBT seniors, SAGE has tried to share information to help other organizations serve older LGBTs in their communities — we'll be stepping up that work in the year ahead. We've also done our best to help organizations across the country connect around LGBT aging issues. But we agree there's still a lot more that needs to be done to build a national network of LGBT aging organizations and advocates. Would such a network be helpful when it comes to federal policy advocacy or national politics?

Matt Foreman: Absolutely — the old adage that 'all politics is local' is absolutely true. Most elected officials have never thought about the needs of LGBT elders, and I'm sure we would find many sympathetic ears. The challenge is coordinating educational and other efforts toward a common goal, such as changing federal policy. And, that's exactly where an effective aging network could come in.

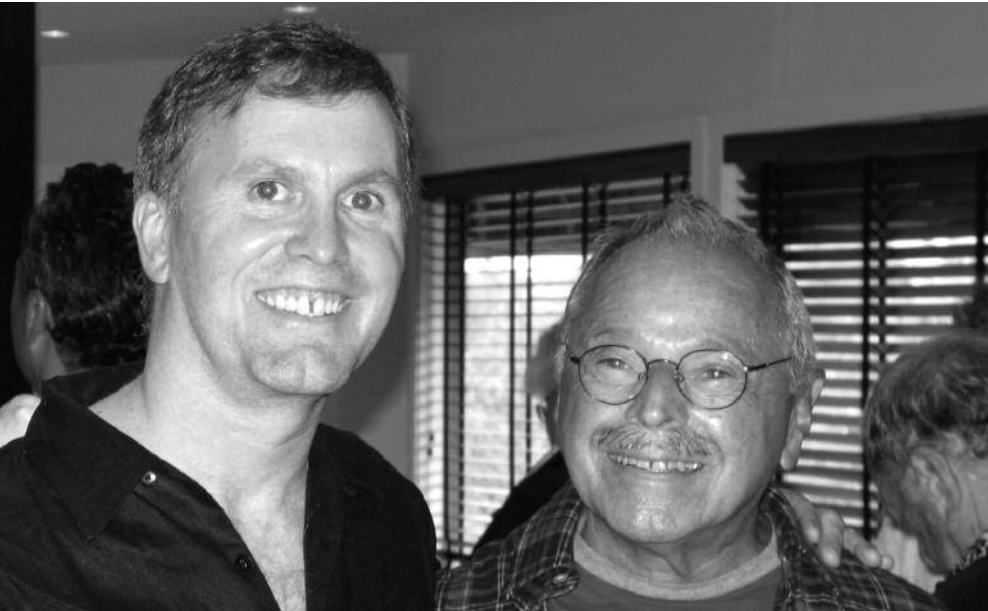
Former SAGE staffer Amber Hollibaugh has helped us convene the National LGBT Aging Roundtable to bring together LGBT aging advocates from around the country to compare and coordinate their activities and identify shared national priorities. We're looking forward to strengthening the roundtable with SAGE as a key partner.

Michael Adams: At SAGE, we love the idea of working closely with the Task Force. It's such a natural partnership. SAGE has the expertise that comes from almost 30 years of serving and advocating for LGBT seniors. And we've learned a lot about local and state advocacy. But we don't know the ins and outs of D.C. politics and federal policy advocacy, and organizing and capacity-building aren't our core competencies. What kind of opportunities do you see for SAGE and the Task Force to work together and complement each other?

Matt Foreman: The Task Force also sees our working closely together as an extraordinary opportunity. We're excited about the possibilities, including working together with SAGE to develop more LGBT aging work at our Creating Change Conference (February 2008) and getting help from SAGE to create the new edition of "Outing Age," a groundbreaking report on LGBT aging issues produced a few years ago by our Policy Institute.

SAGE comes to this partnership with an extraordinary — indeed, unsurpassed — record in service delivery and expertise. We bring hard core grassroots organizing experience and expertise in the D.C. world of funding and federal policy. Working together we can make great things happen! ■

Faces of SAGE



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