



SENIOR Wingspan's Elder Voice FORUM

Volume 10 Issue 10
October 2014

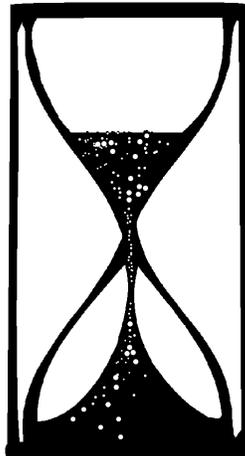
Editor: Rick Jorgenson

Southern Arizona Senior Pride - Serving the LGBT Community — www.wingspan.org

Meandering Down Memory Lane With Wingspan

When I first moved to Tucson in June of 2005, I called Wingspan to volunteer and was told to call back around July 10th as Wingspan was in the process of moving to their 7th Street address across the street, in the big brick building, from their 2014 location. I did call back and after a volunteer orientation with Luanne Withee, the Volunteer coordinator, I started volunteering at the front desk. As a senior, I joined Senior Pride and started coming to the meetings hosted by Pat Woelke, the Senior Outreach Specialist. And what fun meetings they were planning for senior events which included: an ice cream social with the Eon kids, a costumed Halloween party, the Thanksgiving party prepared and hosted by Tucson's PFLAG organization, and the special Valentine Tea Dance the following year.

Early in the meetings, I had suggested that we Adopt-A-Park through Tucson Clean and Beautiful's organization. And we did adopt Iron Horse Park. We went every 2 weeks to clean the park but, as I have aged and had some medical issues, I am no longer able to do it. Up until now, the park has been cleaned by two senior members but I fear that has come to an end with SAAF's merger with Wingspan. Then there was the talent show put on by some staff members of Wingspan and I laugh every time I think of Luanne Withee and Cathy Busha doing the song "Going to Kansas City"; Cathy dressed as a cowboy and Luanne as a saloon gal with that gorgeous blue dress cut low, a white stole, and her Dolly Parton wig and made up



beautifully. And how about Jess Knutson's Speaker Bureau Orientation so, as a panel, we could relate our "Coming Out Stories" to students at the U of A with Jack and Karen Kressley presiding? Then our struggle to defeat Prop 107 with our dear straight allies Ray and Kathy Green. which we were able to do thanks to the voters of Pima County. I loved the computer classes taught by Rick Jorgenson, and thank him so much for keeping the Senior Pride Newsletter going in spite of the economic recession which hit Wingspan in 2008. I cannot forget cheering and rooting for our women's softball team, The Eagles, even though they did not win many games. Geovanna De La Rhee as coach and her partner Audrey Harrison, a player, entertained us.

There are numerous other stories I could share.

I spent the last 4 days at Wingspan's location, before the move, packing and shredding info. Meeting new friends among Wingspan's former staff and those who went on to SAAF was a pleasure. So with bitter/sweet thoughts and teary-eyed, I said "Goodbye" to the Wingspan I love and alas, would not be again.

We're hoping to inaugurate a new series with this article submitted by Dea Brasgalla. Please feel free to submit similar remembrances if you like - we would welcome the memories of anyone who wishes to share some stories about their own experiences at Wingspan and the effect it has had on your lives. If you have a story to share, send it to Editor Rick Jorgenson at seniorpride@wingspan.org.

Interview

with **Lavina Tomer** by Dea Brasgalla

Anti-Violence Program: The Anti-Violence Program (AVP) was started by Lavina Tomer back in the day and she was honored by Governor Janet Napolitano with a bench that is located in a park setting near the UA Presents building.

Mission: The Wingspan AVP Program (now located within SAAF'S organization) is a social change/service program that works to address and end violence in the lives of lesbians, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Dea Brasgalla: Who is Lavina Tomer? Tell me about yourself.

Lavina Tomer: I am an Arab-American woman, a lesbian, a significant partner, a sister, a sister-in-law, an aunt, a great aunt, a great, great aunt, a friend, and a godmother. I am an advocate, an activist, a feminist, the founder of Wingspan's Anti-Violence project, a volunteer, and I attend Cornerstone Fellowship. I am a retired massage therapist (35 years) who's lived in Tucson for 42 years. I am also a survivor of same-gender domestic violence, childhood rape and paternal alcoholism. I have wrestled with chronic depression and am grateful to have medications that work.

Supporting friends, family and strangers nourishes me and makes my life worth living. I appreciate being quiet and introspective and love to laugh and make others laugh. I was born into a Lebanese-American family and community. Living within and being molded by strong ethnic people, from the "old country," speaking Arabic, and living out their freedom, hardship, courage and fear, influenced my sense of being one of a tribe whose contributions and actions mattered to the whole.

DB: What inspires you? Where does your passion lie?

LT: I am inspired by nature in all of its forms.

And, by those who have the courage to face seemingly insurmountable obstacles and fight for their rights and the rights of others to live their most creative, productive, safe and loving lives. My passion lies in my love of humanity and my love of God.

DB: If you could wave a magic wand, what would the LGBT world look like in 5 years?

LT: My magic wand: The LGBT community will be strong, united, increasingly visible, sensitive to our own differences and able to have productive discussions about hard internal issues (i.e. intimate partner violence, sexual assault, HIV/AIDS, addictions, class issues, and more). It will be focused on fiscally supporting LGBT projects, departments and organizations. We will have well attended LGBT integrated social events and established and stable services for all of our health, well being and safety. We will have continued assimilation into society as well as consciousness that we need to continue to gather and organize separately. We will have more impressive political clout and out politicians, and increased pride in our history, in who we are, and what we contribute to our communities and to the world.

October: Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Paint Pima Purple takes place in October as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This month-long campaign serves to raise awareness and to enlist the community's help in putting an end to domestic abuse. October 17 is Wear Purple Day. A purple ribbon folded like we have folded AIDS/HIV Awareness ribbons for decades will also honor survivors and victims of intimate partner violence.

The National Resource Center on LGBT Aging surveyed 2,560 LGBT adults age 50 - 95 in order to close the gap in awareness and resources for the health and well-being of LGBT seniors. Forty-four percent were ages 50-64, forty-six percent 65-79 and 10% 80 and older. Participants were from diverse

continued on pg 3

October: Domestic Violence... from pg 2 economic, ethnic, HIV/AIDs and racial backgrounds. Abuse and violence within relationships occur frequently. Most incidences go unreported. LGBT seniors reported verbal, psychological, economic and physical abuse and intimidation in their intimate partner, family and close friend relationships. Elder abuse at the hands of institutions, paid caregivers, and healthcare providers also continues to harm, marginalize, decrease visibility, and erode our health. Relationship violence remains a scourge in our society and LGBT seniors are not immune.

WE ARE NOT ALONE. There are resources that are open, respectful and available to the LGBT Community. If you are frightened of your partner, family member or friend, have been assaulted, stolen from, refused medication, or verbally attacked please call for help. If you suspect your friend or family member is being abused you can call the resources below for support.

Emergency/Emergencias - 911

Wingspan Anti-Violence Project - 24hr.
Bilingual Crisis Line/Linea de Crisis 24 horas:
520-624-0348 or 1-800-553-9387

Pima County Attorney Victim Witness - 520-740-5525

Emerge! Center Against Domestic Abuse - 1-888-428-0101; 520-795-4266

Southern Arizona Center Against Domestic Violence (SACASA) - 24/7 Crisis Line: 1-800-400-1001

Pima Council On Aging (PCOA) - HELPLINE:
790-7262

Davis Monathan Air Force Base Family
Advocacy: 520-228-2104

Wingspan Anti-Violence Project will sponsor a Domestic Violence Awareness Event: Saturday Oct. 25, 2014; 4-8PM.
Location: Cornerstone Fellowship Social Hall, 2902 N. Geronimo (and Laguna..near First Ave. and Glenn) Entertainment, Food, Free Raffle, Information Tables about agencies

who provide domestic violence services to the LGBT Community. Please Join Us.

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC), Planning meeting Friday Oct. 17, 2014 at 11:00AM. At Cogborn Rooster/Ostrich Farm on I-10 going toward Casa Grande. Get off at Picacho Peak, drive 11/2 miles on south side of the exit. Bring lunch and beverage to eat at a table. Make a few decisions, get to know each other, decide if we want to continue, if so when and where. contact Janet Stetser at 520-732-9413 or footloose@powerc.net

A New Look for Senior Pride

As we said, things are changing at Wingspan, Senior Pride and with our Senior Forum newsletter. We don't know how things are going to end up, but we are starting with a new logo to identify ourselves. We will now include all of southern Arizona and will be know as Southern Arizona Senior Pride.



We plan to add a new classified section to the newsletter, hopefully by the Dec. or Jan. issue (this will also be available online at Wingspan.org). The categories for the advertisements, at this point in time, are: **Community, For Sale, Housing, Personals, Services.**

Individual and Business listings are welcomed for a \$10 suggested donation. You may use up to 15 words including your response address, email or phone. Please contact Gary at 520-510-7835 or glart13@aol.com with any questions or additional suggestions you may have.

October 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Iron Horse Park Cleanup 7:00 AM	8	9	10	11
12 Tucson AIDS Walk	13	14 Wingspan Senior Pride Meeting Himmel Park Library 2:00 PM	15	16	17 Wear Purple Day OLOC meeting Casa Grande (see newsletter)	18 40s and Better Breakfast Group Royal Sun Best Western Restaurant 9:30 – 11:00 am
19	20	21 Iron Horse Park Cleanup 7:00 AM	22	23	24	25 Senior Pride potluck 12 Noon Cornerstone Fellowship Hall
26	27	28	29	30	31 Halloween	

Due to space limitations in the calendar, see the newsletter itself for complete information for some activities.

Wingspan Cocktail Party

On Thursday, September 25, 2014, from 5:30 to 7:00 P.M., A Wingspan Cocktail Party was held at the Marriott University Hotel on 2nd St. in Tucson, Arizona and hosted by SAAF (Southern Arizona Aids Foundation). There were a roomful of attendees. Delicious Appetizers were served along with iced tea and water and a bar set-up was available for those who wanted alcohol and sodas.

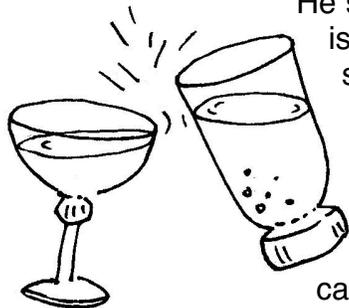
Ethan Smith Cox, Director of Program at SAAF opened by greeting guests and announcing the speakers. Paul Guerro, President of Wingspan's Board of Directors gave a brief history of Wingspan since the 2008 crash and the reasons it had to close. He explained that SAAF had offered to house the Eon Youth Program and the Anti-Violence Program (AVP) and Wingspan as a partnership. Staff members and clients of both programs spoke as well.

The last speaker was Wendell Hicks, Director of SAAF, who told his coming out story which started in rural East Texas and how he came to arrive in Tucson. He related his vision for Wingspan as a separate entity that would transition into a LGBT Cultural Center as well as a Community meeting place.

He stressed that Wingspan is part of SAAF's 3 year strategic plan and that it would take time to accomplish this..so please be patient.

This goal will thoughtfully and carefully be planned to assure success. He has established

a Task Force of well-known community members who will do a needs assessment which would include the following: what is wanted?, what is needed?, and will the community support it? He also mentioned that lesbians would be included for programs since they had banded together to help out the gay community at the onset of the AIDS epidemic. His messages were well received by attendees. He ended by announcing that the Wingspan dinner will take place on February 14, 2015, details to follow.



October Events

Meander in Tucson Meetup Group

List of events for lesbian women
<http://www.meetup.com/MeanderinTucson>

Monday Mah Jongg

Every Monday (except holidays), 12:00 noon to 3:00 PM at Himmel Park Public Library branch, 1035 North Treat Ave.

Tuesday, October 7 & 21

(1st and 3rd Tuesday) 7:00 AM

Adopt a Park Iron Horse Cleanup

Iron Horse Park 10th Street between 3rd and 4th Avenue



Tuesday, October 14 (2nd Tuesday)

Senior Pride Planning Meeting

2 PM at Himmel Park Library
1035 N. Treat Avenue (off Speedway) ph. 594.5305

Saturday, October 18

(every 3rd Saturday of the month)

40s and Better Breakfast Group

A welcoming network of lesbians
Royal Sun Best Western Restaurant SW corner of Speedway and Stone
9:30 - 11:00 AM

Phone contact: Carol Ehrlich
520.584.0339



Saturday, October 25

Senior Pride Monthly Potluck

(every 4th Saturday of the month)

Cornerstone Fellowship - Fellowship Hall
2902 North Geronimo (and Laguna.....near First Ave. and Glenn) 12:00 noon - 2:00 PM
Phone contact: Lee Roden 520.398.6826



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Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.

~ George Bernard Shaw

If there is no struggle, there is no progress.

~ Frederick Douglass

I hope everyone that is reading this is having a really good day. And if you are not, just know that in every new minute that passes you have an opportunity to change that.

~ Gillian Anderson

You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself.

That is something you have charge of.

~ Jim Rohn

To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often.

~ Winston Churchill