

SAGE CELEBRATES ITS 30TH BIRTHDAY
AARP SPONSORS THE 2008 SAGE CONFERENCE

☛ *David Singleton*

AARP is not the only organization celebrating a big birthday this year. While AARP marked our fiftieth anniversary with numerous year-long events, SAGE (Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders) blew out thirty candles to honor three decades of pioneering programs and services for the older LGBT community.

AARP helped SAGE commemorate its big milestone by sponsoring for the first time SAGE's National Conference on LGBT Aging, this year entitled "It's About Time: LGBT Aging in a Changing World," which was held October 12th-14th in Brooklyn, New York. Several AARP staff, including ERG leaders **Imani Woody** and **Chris Boardwine**, were on hand



Alejandro Garcia (AARP National Policy Council) with comedienne Kate Clinton and SAGE honoree (and AARP Fitness Ambassador) Martina Navratilova.

to lend support, learn the latest about LGBT initiatives for older people, and lead conference panels and discussions. AARP President **Jennie Chin Hansen** delivered the rousing keynote address during the conference, and later that night at the 30th Anniversary Gala & SAGE Awards, SAGE honored Professor **Charlotte Brunch**, Village Care of New York, and AARP's Fitness Ambassador **Martina Navratilova**.

The SAGE Conference garnered significant coverage, through external media such as *Newsweek* and the *Associated Press*, several LGBT publications, and *cont'd page 2*

Hope

☛ *Imani Woody*

I have been thinking about what it means to be me: an older, African American, out lesbian working at AARP and living in the United States. The words of President-elect Obama's book come to mind, *The Audacity of Hope*. Merriam Webster defines audacity as the "quality or state of being audacious, as intrepid boldness, or bold or arrogant disregard of normal restraints (as in 'he had the audacity to defy his boss')." Hope on the other hand is described as "to cherish a desire with anticipation (as in 'she hopes for a promotion'), or to desire with expectation of obtainment." In the vernacular, it could be: *You have got some nerve to hope*. Well, I do have some nerve to hope.

I was born in a segregated Washington, DC. A time when non-whites couldn't eat in dining establishments, including Woodies or Hechts (both now defunct Macy-like department stores); when people of color could receive medical treatment from only two hospitals: DC General, the city hospital, or Freedman's, the hospital for Negroes; and when my parents would have to go "home" to North Carolina to vote, because there were no voting rights for the city. And at the time, being a retired professional could mean living out back in the chicken coop, and being outwardly gay meant being diagnosed with a sociopathic personality disturbance.

Fast forward to the 1960's. Mary Church Terrell has won her law suit and leads a successful movement to desegregate public facilities in Washington, DC; Bayard Rustin, an openly gay black man and confidante to Dr. King, is the key

organizer of the 1963 March on Washington; citizens of DC can vote in presidential elections; AARP aggressively fights for the rights of retired people. And me, I think I like girls too. The audacity of hope...*that things can change*.

The 70's bring marriage and a son, who I tell can be anything he wants to be if he works hard enough. I start an independent school for young black children in my community that provides tutoring and a sense of self. DC has its first gay pride march. The American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its diagnostic manual.

The 80's see the enactment of the MLK, Jr. Federal holiday (remember Stevie Wonder's HAP-PY BIRTHDAY TO YA?) It's in the '80s that I recognize my love for women, come out to my son, and divorce my husband. I learn about AARP.

In the 90's, I have an increased commitment to advocate for people of color, elders, women and children. I volunteer and sit on the boards and committees of organizations to promote safety and inclusion of people who look like me. The audacity of hope.... *that things can change*.

In the new millennium, the DC City Council adds gender identity and expression to its Human Rights Act, and I come to AARP. It takes me two years to seek out Chris [Boardwine] and volunteer to become a co-chair for the LGBT ERG. We build upon the audacity of people like PRISM members Marci LeFevre, Ken Dean, Terry Worman, Jim Wordelman, and Rob Denk, and see E-Team members Tom Nelson and Ellie Hollander visibly include us in the fabric of the Association, and an Office of Diversity and Inclu- *continued on page 8*

"You have got some nerve to Hope."

PRiSM Network and State Offices Reach Out During Pride Month

JUNE 2008 – The PRiSM Network had our first booth at D.C. Capital Pride, one of the largest Pride Festivals in the country.

Sponsored by AARP D.C., members, family and friends of the PRiSM Network and AARP D.C. spent the day representing AARP as an organization inclusive of LGBT employees and members, with a strong focus on gathering signatures for Divided We Fail.

To prepare for this outreach, we developed two LGBT resonant brochures (one on AARP, the other about Divided We Fail; see page 8). With the Office of Diversity and Inclusion's huge help in expediting their approval for public distribution, we not only were able to offer Pride attendees information about AARP and DWF that was LGBT targeted, but we now have pieces can be used by anyone at AARP when doing LGBT outreach.

Other state offices participated in Pride festivals as well, and the PRiSM Network supported those offices by coordinating a common print run and then sharing

the LGBT resonant AARP and DWF brochures.

Under the leadership of PRiSM Network co-chair Scott Melton, AARP Florida had a booth at St. Petersburg and Ft. Lauderdale Pride festivals. PRiSM Network member Kelley Neal, and other AARP Ohio staff and volunteers, participated in the Pride festival in Columbus with both a booth and a float. Likewise, AARP Texas took part in festivities in Houston with both a booth and a float.



PRiSM Network members and friends at D.C. Pride (top); AARP Texas at Houston Pride (bottom)

This was certainly a successful Pride month for the PRiSM Network. In addition to building upon AARP's brand of "what we do, we do for all," well over 1500 DWF signatures were gathered between various locations.

Marla Turner, AARP Texas reported, "The greatest thing is that we have made a HUGE entrance to the LGBT community in Houston. We were received extremely well. At first people were surprised

that AARP would be there but once the word got out about DWF health care issues and our diversity agenda, people were actually standing in line to sign our pledges and pick up information on DWF. We actually got at least a couple of volunteers and some people took extra copies of the pledge to have friends sign and return to us."

or allies, the PRiSM Network launched the AARP PRiSM Network ONLINE community on AARP.org.

Currently with just over 100 members as of this writing—the majority being AARP members—staff and members discuss issues important to older LGBT people. The site has also been a great

SAGE CELEBRATES...

> *cont'd from page one*

all AARP publications, including *AARP the Magazine*, *AARP Bulletin* and *AARP Bulletin Today*, *AARP Segunda Juventud*, and our website, AARP.org.

In a *Newsweek* article prior to SAGE's conference, AARP Chief Diversity Officer **Percil Stanford** commented on the reasons for AARP's sponsorship, "When we look to the future, we know we cannot progress if we don't bring in these other communities. The [gay and lesbian] community is quite often invisible and overlooked."

To say the least, this focus on making the older LGBT community less invisible is coming at an opportune time. Over the next quarter century, the number of older Americans is projected to grow from 12% to 20% of the total population, and various estimates indicate that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered individuals will comprise 7% to 10% of that older population. By the year 2030, the LGBT community age 65 and above is expected to almost double from 2.5 million to as many as 4.7 million.

Needs for aging baby boomers of all stripes are growing, especially in the areas of health, finance, housing, and living your best life at 50+. But as SAGE notes, the current older LGBT generation differs from heterosexual counterparts in profound ways. Older LGBT people are twice as likely to live alone; half as likely to have significant others; half as likely to have close relatives to call for help, and four times less likely to have children to help them.

Since this older generation is also the first truly out and open LGBT generation, much of the SAGE Conference was focused on innovative ways to help older LGBT avoid some very real

way to convey LGBT-related news from AARP and point members to LGBT-resonant content on AARP.org

We encourage PRiSM Network members to join the group and to spread the word to others. You can locate the site at www.aarp.org/community/groups/AARPPRiSMNetworkOnline.

PRiSM Network on AARP.org

Ever wonder about the AARP members who are LGBT? Of course we don't really know (yet) how many members are LGBT, but having an understanding of their issues and their reasons for becoming and remaining AARP members is important.

In order to encourage dialogue between AARP staff who are LGBT (or an ally), and AARP members who are LGBT

potential pitfalls, from specific health issues to long term housing worries to financial concerns. For example, same-sex couples may face discrimination from providers and other residents when they need to enter assisted living facilities, nursing homes, or other long term care settings intending to live with their partners. Coupled or alone, some older LGBT face pressure to return to the closet.

We need to find solutions now so that when the time comes, our community will be better prepared to fight the marginalization and invisibility that has historically plagued older members of the LGBT population.

AARP's founder Ethel Percy Andrus said, "What we do, we do for all." To realize this goal, our initiatives need to reflect the diversity of our society, which requires that we recognize and embrace older Americans in ways that are culturally meaningful and effective. AARP's sponsorship of the SAGE conference moved us further in that direction.

For an upcoming AARP Radio program, I interviewed **Martina Navratilova** about her work as an out and outspoken advocate for gay rights and equality and her involvement with both SAGE and AARP. You can hear that interview soon - along with a frank discussion with Executive Director **Michael Adams**



SAGE Exec. Director Michael Adams, AARP Policy Council member Alejandro Garcia, AARP President Jennie Chin Hansen and Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Percil Stanford at the conference.

about SAGE's pressing challenges - online at www.radioprime.org.

In my interview, Michael reinforced what I've heard from colleagues and noted in media coverage: AARP's sponsorship sent a message to the LGBT community and advocates that AARP is paying attention to LGBT needs to minimize discrimination and ensure equality as people age in America. Our presence reinforced AARP's position that the interests of all segments of the population—across race and ethnicity, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, and gender identity—are reflected and included in our efforts to serve and advocate on behalf of our expansive 40 million membership and the 50+ population at large.

That kind of birthday present should make us all proud.

Dave Singleton is a member of the PRISM Network and works in AARP Publications as Director of Planning and Promotion.

A First for LGBT Members and Staff at Life@50

☛ **Matthew Philips**

On September 5, the PRISM Network hosted its first event for AARP LGBT members, volunteers, staff, friends, and allies during the 2008 Life@50 national event in Washington, DC. The 90-minute gathering attracted over 60 people, including members as far away as California and Massachusetts and allies from HRC, the Task Force, and Primetimers. Welcoming the group was PRISM Network co-lead Imani Woody, who spoke of the welcoming environment for LGBT members and staff at AARP. AARP President Jennie Chin Hansen also greeted the crowd and talked about AARP's commitment to inclusiveness of all members. Also addressing the group was Chief People Officer Ellie Hollander, who spoke of AARP's commitment to diversity in its employment practices. After the speakers' remarks, members, staff, and friends all spent time networking and enjoying each others company, the food and the jazz. Member response was extremely positive, and the attending members thanked staff for organizing this first-time event.

Matthew Phillips is a member of the PRISM Network and works in ASI as a Program Manager, Passport and Privileges.

Out in the States: Ohio

Imagine My Surprise

☛ **Sharon Deevey, Diversity Volunteer Outreach Specialist for LGBT Aging**

Older LGBT people continue to be invisible because of closeting, ageism and homophobia. Even those who advocate for older people are often surprised to learn about Old Lesbians Organizing for Change (OLOC), Prime Timers, and the Transgender Aging Network.

I am a member of OLOC and first applied to volunteer for AARP Ohio in response to an email recruiting issue specialists. I was distressed by the invisibility of LGBT people in AARP publications. I had been an AARP

member for 12 years, and hoped an organization as influential as AARP would not be the last to know about LGBT aging.

My initial interview with Kelley Neal and Rebecca Wheeler-Grieve was an eye-opening delight. I learned about PRISM and AARP's progressive benefits for LGBT employees and found support for mutual goals: Kelley and Rebecca appointed me officially as AARP Ohio's volunteer Diversity Outreach Specialist for LGBT Aging. They have introduced me, with my title, to many other AARP volunteers.

During 2008, we had an AARP float and booth at Pride, where we were greeted with cheering amazement. We are spon-

soring lunches across the state to network with others interested in LGBT aging and to explain the Divided We Fail initiative. After the first lunch meeting in Toledo, two participants coordinated an LGBT aging workshop scheduled for April 2009, which AARP Ohio is co-sponsoring. I also attended the first PRISM LGBT reception at the 2008 membership meeting in DC.

I hope every state will appoint a volunteer Diversity Outreach Specialist for LGBT Aging. I look forward to the first joint meeting of PRISM and these 50 volunteers, say by 2012?

Share the details of your state office LGBT Outreach: email us at PrismNetwork@aarp.org

Out-Standing

Thanks to all who contribute to our success...

Albeit a little late in coming...

A big Thank You to all of you who made this past Pride Month a resounding success! To **Linda Warshoff** for coordinating policy author and Professor Nancy Polikoff's lecture on *Beyond Straight and*

Gay Marriage: Valuing All Families Under The Law. This was very valuable in helping us formulate future policy recommendations. Thank You to the AARP DC and the volunteers at our first booth at DC Pride! We collected so many DWF signature and gave out so much AARP goodwill! A round of applause to **Jane Lincoln** who stepped up to co-chair PRISM and be responsible for its successful online presence. Much thanks and appreciation to all of you who supported and presented

at the SAGE 4th Conference on LGBT Aging, another historic step for all of us. Huge Kudo's to those who made our first reception for LGBT staff and members at the Life@50 an historic success, especially **Matthew Phillips** and **Chico Rosemond!** And, to our President, **Jennie Chin Hansen**, members of the E Team, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, **AARP Texas** and all those allies throughout AARP who so selflessly gave of their selves to include all of us: a Most Sincere Thanks!

Out & About

PRISM Network at Out & Equal Summit

☛ *Jane Lincoln*

AUSTIN, TEXAS, SEPT 10 -13 — "Start with 'Bring your colorist to work day!'" This was one of Carson Kressley's suggestions for making workplaces more LGBT friendly. He's the queer eye who helped the fashioned-impaired straight guy look his best on cable TV. He was also one of the many compelling, delightful, and inspiring plenary speakers at this year's Out & Equal Summit in Austin, Texas. Additional ideas, gaily offered, included these: order glitter and smiley faces for office supplies, put frozen margaritas in the water cooler, and make the gay Christmas, aka Halloween, a mandatory holiday. I'm not entirely sure he was joking.

When I wasn't laughing out loud, I was learning. Out & Equal has been around for a decade, championing "safe and equitable workplaces for

lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people." The founder, Selisse Berry, shared her story of how she came to start Out & Equal. She'd felt called to ordained ministry in the Presbyterian church and was in the seminary when she realized she was gay. That meant no ministry in that setting, but to the benefit of all of us, her ministry took another for: Out & Equal.

The plenary speakers were uniformly excellent. Michael Guest is a former American diplomat who finally resigned rather than allow his partner to be treated as an afterthought on his next diplomatic mission. Megan Wallent was known to the world as Michael until November of 2007. She shared her journey as a prominent member of Microsoft management who was supported through transition and beyond. Keith Boykin is a man of many talents in political and progressive spheres, with books and television shows to his record, all while being an out black man. We were also treated to comedian Kate Clinton, who declared that we all have "mad vow disease" since California was added to the list of states that marry gay people. Gay ally and influential blogger Arianna

Huffington finished us off with rousing encouragement to get out the vote.

Hurricane Ike was bearing down on Texas the week of the conference, which lent an air of adventure to each day. Ultimately it passed us by, allowing those of us who didn't flee early the chance to learn and share so much important information about workplace justice for LGBT workers. In the exhibit halls and in the vast hallways of the Austin Convention Center, there were herds of brightly shirted "Raytheon" or "Deloitte" shirts with corporate logos plus rainbows. ERGs from hundreds of companies and organizations were represented. It was inspiring.

The best workshop I attended was the first one: an all day seminar called "LGBT Leadership Development." I'll boil Paula Jones' message down to one sentence—the skills and moxie it takes to be out and proud are the same qualities needed to lead others: openness, inspiration by example, vision, and hard work. These qualities have been shown by our PRISM co-chairs through the years. I thank them and AARP for sending me to this provocative gathering of leaders.

What I Liked, and Ike

The Out and Equal conference was a resounding success with the exception of Hurricane Ike which sent me flying back to Colorado a little earlier than expected.

A wide range of topics were discussed. One that I found most interesting was marketing to the GLBT community, a group that has to-date been pretty much ignored

despite having the highest possible per capita buying power. The GLBT community has the ability to positively impact the current financial market, and AARP is missing out on a valuable consumer group if we do not focus some marketing dollars in this direction. Another enlightening workshop was presented by COLAGE,

a national movement of children, youth, and adults with one or more lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ) parent. Attendees saw a moving documentary titled, "In My Shoes," which highlighted the daily joys and struggles faced as a child of an LGBTQ parent. — *Jeremiah Mora, AARP Colorado*

Marci is a Workforce Issues Project Manager in Outreach and Service with the Social Impact Group, where she develops and manages content for the AARP.org Work channel, a resource for jobseekers 50+, and the Employer Resource Center; an online clearinghouse for employers on research and best practices for recruiting and retaining older workers.

Marci joined the Association in 1999 as a campaign manager with Public Benefits Outreach (PBO). While her work at AARP has focused primarily on economic security and work issues, she has had the opportunity to leverage internal and external partnerships to elevate and address issues affecting aging LGBT persons.

While working with the PBO team, Marci collaborated with AARP NY State Office staff, SAGE and area community organizations to jump-start a PBO campaign to enroll low-income LGBT persons living in New York City's five boroughs in public benefits programs. In addition to assisting those in need, this effort fostered the growth of AARP partnerships with organizations serving and advocating on

behalf of LGBT people.

The PBO partnerships cascaded into other opportunities to work with LGBT organizations and community leaders. Marci organized an internal workgroup and spearheaded the Association's first Gay Pride month in 2001. LGBT leaders from SAGE, HRC, and

organizations and community leaders. Marci organized an internal workgroup and spearheaded the Association's first Gay Pride month in 2001. LGBT leaders from SAGE, HRC, and

From left: Marci, and her partner Katie, with their son, Evan.



NGLTF shared research on the primary challenges aging LGBT persons face in the areas of work, financial security, health, and housing. She also convened a public policy summit at AARP with PPI and LGBT community stakeholders to assess public policy issues affecting LGBT older adults. This collaboration spurred AARP's welcomed role in reviewing and commenting on policy recommendations in a seminal NGLTF report, "Outing Age: Public Policy

Issues Affecting GLBT Elders."

Five years ago, Marci assembled an internal work group and wrote a business case for AARP to embrace LGBT persons 50+ as a viable market segment for AARP. Some recommendations in the business case, such as using inclusive language in membership materials, have been adopted and convey the Association's commitment to diversity.

Before joining AARP, Marci was the director of the Southeast Senior Housing Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping older adults age in place in their homes and communities.

Marci lives in Hyattsville, MD, with her partner of eight years, Katie, and their two-year-old, son, Evan. She and Katie enjoy seeing the world anew through the eyes of a curious toddler, sharing their passion for the outdoors with Evan (who took his first big hike in the White Mountains this summer – piggyback style), gardening, and spending time with family and friends.

Are you Out at AARP? *Share your story and help to build an inclusive culture, educate our colleagues about our true diversity, and present a friendly face to others who may be somewhere else on the "out" continuum. Email your bio and photo today to Jane Lincoln (jlincoln@aarp.org).*

About the PRiSM Network and The SPECTRUM

The PRiSM Network is an AARP Employee Resource Group. We are dedicated to fostering within AARP an understanding of issues of importance to both AARP lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and ally (LGBTIA) staff and LGBTIA older adults, with a greater goal of advancing recognition, acceptance, inclusion, and equality of all LGBTIA people and our families.

The PRiSM Network respects and honors everyone's decision to be out or not, or at any point in-between. We do

not share information about participation or affiliation with the PRiSM Network without permission. All members are strongly encouraged to adhere to the same standards.

The SPECTRUM is produced by and for PRiSM Network members for the purpose of sharing our individual and group experiences, ideas, and insights on topics ranging from LGBT and Ally workplace issues to LGBT aging issues.

Be sure to share your stories, re-caps

of events, news of upcoming events, and other ideas with your fellow PRiSM Network members by emailing them to PrismNetwork@aarp.org.

The Spectrum Committee: Co-chairs Chris Boardwine, Imani Woody, Scott Melton, and Jane Lincoln, with editing support from member Kate McEvoy, and with contributions this issue from PRiSM Network members Imani Woody, Jane Lincoln, David Singleton, Jeremiah Mora, Matthew Phillips and Marci LeFevre.

Out-Look

Keep your eyes open for...

What's Up in 2009? Yes, 2008 was quite a successful year for us. So, what will 2009 and beyond be like for the PRISM Network? In spite of the current financial challenges, we believe that the PRISM Network can and will be relevant and a valuable resource for AARP.

The Co-Chairs and core members are busily working out plans for next year that support our goals, while ensuring a wise use of Association resources. As we finalize them, we will share those plans with all members. Of course, we always welcome suggestions, participation and input from any and all members and friends.

Stonewall @ 40 June 2009 will mark the 40th anniversary of the 1969 Stonewall Riots, possibly the single most important event in LGBT history and liberation. How or will the PRISM Network commemorate this? We certainly would like to participate in D.C. Capital Pride again. If you have other ideas on how to mark this anniversary in ways that are in-line with the AARP mission, then we would love to hear from you.

Out-'sources

RESOURCES YOU CAN USE...

Groups for older LGBT people

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change
www.oloc.org

Prime Timers
www.PrimeTimersWW.org

Transgender Aging Network
www.forge-forward.org/TAN

LGBT in the Workplace

Out & Equal Workplace Advocates
www.outandequal.org

HRC Workplace Project
www.hrc.org/issues/workplace

Do you have some interesting LGBT aging or workplace resources to share? If so, be sure to email us at PrismNetwork@aarp.org.

Out-portunities

How "out" do I have to be to participate in the PRISM Network? No matter where you are on the "out" continuum, we can help you find ways to contribute that are comfortable for you. Email us at PrismNetwork@aarp.org

Writers and Reporters Looking for PRISM members who can commit to regularly soliciting or contributing content for specific columns in *The Spectrum* (on a quarterly basis). To participate, contact Chris Boardwine, cboardwine@aarp.org

Out & Equal DC Affiliate Liaison The PRISM Network seeks a member to represent the PRISM Network with the DC Out & Equal affiliate. The affiliate and committees meet monthly to coordinate quarterly programming among the dozens of DC Metro area LGTB ERGs and affinity groups who are active with Out & Equal. For more information, contact Chris Boardwine, cboardwine@aarp.org

One-Time Project / Event Coordinators Local festivities during Pride Month were a great way for the PRISM Network to represent AARP and DWF in our community. Our first reception for LGBT and ally attendees of the Life@50 member event was a resounding success. We think we should build upon these successes in 2009 but need members to help coordinate and support these efforts. If you have an interest in helping out, be sure to contact Imani Woody at iwoody@aarp.org.

For AARP LGBT Outreach

First developed for use during Pride Month 2008, these two LGBT-resonant brochures



—one focusing on AARP and LGBT, the other on DWF and LGBT, can now be used by anyone at AARP when doing outreach to the LGBT community. You can request these print-ready files and production instructions by emailing Chris Boardwine at cboardwine@aarp.org.

Hope

> *continued from page one*

sion extraordinaire led by Dr. Percil Stanford support our vision.

One audacious moment was the first ever LGBT reception at the Life@50 Member Event. Another was the successful SAGE conference that AARP sponsored. I wish all of you could have been there. To be at a conference where the issues that effect LGBT people are discussed and resolutions are proposed was phenomenal. Workshops included addressing policy issues, research on the methodological challenges in transgender aging and transgender life course, dialogue on cultural competence within organizations, instruction on program evaluation; roundtable for people of color issues, research on older adults with HIV and the importance of an LGBT ERG. Our president, Jennie Chin Hansen wowed the crowd with her personal experiences and reiterating AARP's commitment to this group. (Check out more highlights at www.sageusa.org.)

This brings me again to the *audacity of hope...* that things can and do change. As an older, African American, out lesbian working at AARP and living in the United States I see it. The US just elected its first African American as its 44th president. Mary Church Terrell's name is on a building which would not serve her. AARP includes *all* families in our employment policies and benefit offerings. I keep a picture of my honey on my desk. This is the audacity of hope that things do change. I see it in my father's face, my son's face, my spouse's face, in the faces of my friends and colleagues and most importantly in the face of the woman in the mirror.

Imani Woody is a co-chair of the AARP PRISM Network and was recently re-signed from AARP Foundation to Office of Learning and Performance.