

Serving Older LGBTQ+ people in CNY area

March 2024 Vol 28 #3

This Month @ SAGE:

- CNY Gay 5K Registration opens 3/2
- "Be Prepared" 6-wk series starts 3/12
- Crafting: Plate Painting 3/12
- Pitch 3/19
- The Holdovers 3/21, 3/28
- Johna Talks 3/28
- Mahjongg 3/29
- Chili Cook Off 3/30
- Syracuse, Utica, Oswego Potlucks
- 2nd Round of Dance Classes
- ...and all of our regularly scheduled programs. See calendar p .4

The attack on LGBTQ rights and how to address them



Maurice Cunningham
 March 21, 2024
 7:00 - 8:00 pm on Zoom

Join us on Zoom for this discussion
 Get the Zoom link at: sageupstate.org
 or contact Leslie at 315-478-1923 ext 2
 or llamb@sageupstate.org

Sponsored by the SAGE Upstate
 Advocacy Committee
See page 5 for details

We welcome our new Neighborhood Advisor



Masani Tyler was hired as Neighborhood Advisor in late February. She will pick up where Trish Johnson left off when she went to a new job in October. The position connects older LGBTQ people to benefits and services to support independent, healthy aging, and is funded by the Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services.

The services of Neighborhood Advisors are free and confidential. Neighborhood Advisors assist with the completion of medical applications and other forms as well as assist in locating services.

Masani joins us with relationship building, management, and organizational skills-- all important components for the position. Stay tuned for more news about her outreach as she begins work in our community.

CNY Gay 5K: Registration opens March 2



Registration for the CNY Gay 5k is open this month, and there's an **early bird discount between March 2 and March 15**. After that, registration for adults is \$30 through June 12. Kids 12 and under can register for \$15 throughout.

Join us on Saturday, June 15 for the 9th Annual CNY Gay 5K at Longbranch Park in Liverpool. We expect 400 participants or more at this family friendly event that raises money for SAGE Upstate.

Business and organization sponsorships are available, and sponsors will reach the LGBTQ community and our Allies.

For more information, please visit cnygay5k.org. Funds raised will support programs for older LGBTQ people in CNY.

CHILI COOK OFF March 30

Will you be one of our Chili Cooks?

Let us know! We're asking for your best pot of chili: traditional, with or without beans, white bean chicken, vegan cashew -- whatever kind you make. Participants will vote for the best chili. To enter your chili, contact Leslie 315-478-1923 or llamb@sageupstate.org.

Or maybe you're more of a taster ..

Come and try a variety of Chilis and vote for your favorite. If you're not bringing the chili, you are judging and enjoying! Suggested donation is \$10 but for any donation, you can try all the chilis--and some cornbread -- and go back for seconds as long as they last!

Saturday, March 30, 2 - 5 pm, 2nd Floor Ballroom, 431 E Fayette St. in Syracuse.

SAGE Upstate Board

Bob Bezy, Chair
Willard Doswell, Vice-Chair
Jenny Gluck, Treasurer
Rita Gram, Recording Clerk
Mattie Cerio
Barb Genton
Susan Horn
Jerry Reed
Liz Stehl

Contact the board at
board@sageupstate.org

SAGE Upstate Staff

Executive Director: Kim Dill
Program Director: Leslie Lamb
SocialMedia/Office Coordinator:
Johna Melius
Neighborhood Advisor: Masani Tyler
Office Assitant: Carol Notar

Ambassadors

LGBTQ BIPOC Communities
Tim Lattimore
Trans Communities
Johna Melius
Oneida, Madison, Cortland Counties
Dori Colvin & Robin Latham

SAGE Upstate News is published monthly and features articles and resources on issues affecting older Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) people in Central New York. SAGE Upstate is a not-for-profit organization that promotes the health and well being of GLBT people in Central New York as they age. SAGE Upstate board meetings are open to the community. For more information contact Kim Dill at 315-478-1923 or kdill@sageupstate.org.

All SAGE Upstate activities are accessible unless otherwise noted. Interpretters and large print publications are available on request.



Why do we need your demographic info?



Grant Reports: Our funders, who make it possible for us to do the things we do, want this info.



Outreach Info: We need to know who we are reaching and who we are missing.

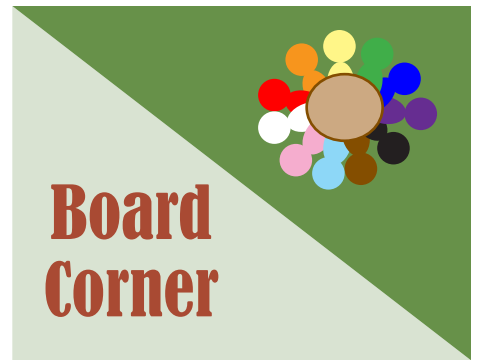


Birthdays! With your permission, we'll share the date of your special day.

PS: We really need the year too ... and we will keep it totally confidential. We know it's tempting to keep it a secret, but it's important information for funders and SAGE outreach. We need to know if we are reaching older adults of all ages. And, it's nice to celebrate our age, and all of the wisdom that comes with it!

You can complete the survey at sageupstate.org or contact Johna: 315-478-1923 ext 3 or jmelius@sageupstate.org

SAGE Upstate is funded by the New York State LGBT Health and Human Services Initiative, the Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services, generous individual donors, fundraising events, and business sponsors. Specific program funding comes from SAGE USA, the Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, the CNY Community Foundation, and the Emerson Foundation.



Board Corner

As the Treasurer of SAGE Upstate, I chair the Finance Committee and we worry about aligning and maintaining our ongoing budget to enable our staff, volunteers, and the board's abilities to improve health and reduce isolation for aging LGBTQ+ people in CNY and neighboring communities. Fortunately, our stellar community helps us with funding by attending activities such as dances, the Community Dinner, and the 5k race. We also depend on our government for funding; for example, we rely on grants from the Department of Health and others to keep our activities going year after year. Our financing provides wellness programs, social support programs, and education opportunities for our community and other support organizations. Please consider donating to SAGE Upstate. :-)

For me, SAGE Upstate is a safe place to learn from others without the risk of judgment, to share my skills, and to take part in all the activities I couldn't do while working full time.

Lately, I've been working in the Advocacy Committee on bringing Maurice Cunningham as a speaker so we can better educate ourselves on well-funded organizations working to take away trans communities' rights. I hope you will attend the Zoom conversation on March 21 (see page 5).

You can contact any board member by emailing board@sageupstate.com or calling the office at 315-478-1923.
— Jenny Gluck

SAGEVets Veterans Spotlight: Rita Gram

I grew up in Pittsburgh. I was the second oldest in a family of seven. Several family members, including my dad, brother and uncles served in the military. After high school I became a USO volunteer then eventually decided to join the Air Force. This was during the Vietnam war and although I never had to serve in Vietnam, I am a Vietnam Era veteran. My job was an administrative clerk for a flight squadron at Norton AFB in San Bernardino providing support for the war. During my service, I married another airman from central New York who was getting out after serving his four years. I was able to transfer to Syracuse to serve my last year of active duty at Hancock Field in the SAGE building.

With my honorable discharge in hand and I got a civil service job working for the Armed Forces Entrance Station. There I helped to process men who had been drafted into the Army since the war still ongoing and so was the draft. I needed to supplement my income so I enlisted in the NY Army National Guard, joining the 391st training Battalion; at that time the unit was located in Mattydale NY. I was a weekend warrior for just under two years before receiving my second honorable discharge.

Civilian life consisted of working for the government and eventually having two children with my husband. Fast forward 10 years after my second child was born and the United States had become involved with the first gulf war—I felt an overwhelming sense of patriotism and reenlisted with the 174th Fighter Wing, JAG Office, NY Air National Guard out of Hancock Field.

I was hired initially as an information specialist and then a paralegal which was the same as my civilian job. During that time gays were still not allowed to serve in the military—it was before Don't Ask, Don't Tell. I didn't identify as gay when I enlisted but I had friends who were lesbians and eventually I started to identify as such. For this reason, I couldn't see how I could stay married. Except for the military, I was "out" so it wasn't too long after that when someone turned me in and I was asked by my Commander to resign. His recommendation for involuntary discharge came with an Honorable Discharge. It wasn't a witch hunt but it was a betrayal and a devastating blow for me. I was told I could never reenlist and it was hard for me to comprehend how I could serve my country, enlisting three times only to be asked to leave because I was a woman who loved another woman.

After my discharge I pulled away from all things military and veteran for many years. Prior to my discharge I was heavily involved with the Vietnam Veterans of America and a local women veterans group. I felt such shame by my circumstances that I pulled away from these wonderful organizations.

My job as a paralegal with Legal Services was being cut due to lack of funding so I took the opportunity to finish my college degree. I earned a BS in vocational education from Oswego State but that was not enough for me to teach High School—I needed a Master's degree. I attended Elmira College and earned a dual Masters in General and Adult Education. I worked for a few years as a substitute teacher with several districts but never got a full-time position with a school district so I eventually took a part-time position as an adjunct at Bryant and Stratton College teaching Sociology. I taught there for ten years.

During that time, I returned to Legal Services as a paralegal and later was hired by Syracuse City Court. I loved my job as a Court Clerk in the criminal division and finally as a supervisor and head of Operations for the Chief Administrative Judges Office, Fifth Judicial District covering six counties. It was a good career.

I married Sue Friedland in 2010 and in 2017 I retired from my Court position. Since then, I have been enjoying spending time with my wife and best friend of over 28 years. I have also become involved again with the Veterans community. I am an active member of SAGEVets and the Salt City Women Veterans Unit 80 of Military Women Across the Nation (MWAN), as well as Clear Path for Veterans. My affiliation with these groups has helped me to regain the pride I felt as a member of the military and it has helped to erase the shame I felt after being asked to leave the Air National Guard.



March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 11 am Fitness Class 3 pm 1st Friday Social	2 2 pm Utica Social
3	4 11 am Fitness Class 6 pm Men's Group	5	6 5:30 Writers 7:00 Knitting & Fiber Arts	7 10 am Walking 6pm Dinner OUT	8 11 am Fitness Class	9 11 am Utica Walking group 11-4 Drop In hours
10 2nd Sunday Potluck 3pm social time 4pm program dinner after	11 11 am Fitness Class 6 pm Men's Group	12 5:30 Crafting	13 5:30 Writers 7:00 Knitting & Fiber Arts	14 10:00 Walking 9:30 Breakfast OUT	15 11 am Fitness Class 6:30 pm Men's Night Out	16 2:00 pm Gender Blend Drop In hours: 11- 7 pm
17 2:00 pm Oswego Potluck	18 6 pm Men's Group	19	20 5:30 Writers 7:00 Knitting & Fiber Arts	21 10 am Walking Group 12:30 Lunch OUT Theater Thursday 3 pm <i>The Holdovers</i>	22 6:00 pm Learn to play	23 11 am Utica Walking group
24 31	25 11 am Fitness Class 6 pm Men's Group	26 6 pm SAGEVets	27 5:30 Writers 7:00 Knitting & Fiber Arts	28 10 am Walking Group 5:30 pm Board Meeting	29	30

Crafting: Join Leslie and your SAGE crafting friends every 2nd Tuesday at 5:30 in the SAGE Upstate Center.	Men's Night Out: This month join SAGE guys at Wolf's Den, 617 Wolf St. at 6:30
Dance Classes with Susan Shockey -- 2nd floor Ballroom	Oswego Potluck, 3rd Sunday at Trinity Methodist; 45 E Utica St in Oswego. Bring a dish to pass if you're able
First Friday Social, at 3:00 in the Center-- games and socializing.	SAGE Vets: Social and program for LGBTQ Veterans-- 4th Tue 6:00
Fitness Classes are held Mon/ Fri, 11 am. Join us in the SAGE Upstate Center or on zoom (details at sageupstate.org)	Second Sunday Potluck: Social time at 3 Program starts at 4, potluck follows program-- bring a dish to pass if you are able.
Gender Blend, the new Trans Social, 3rd Saturday, social/support for Transcommunity. In person and on Zoom (details at sageupstate.org)	Super Bowl party in the center (see front page)
Knitting & Fiber Arts, Wednesdays at 7 pm. Fiber arts & conversation. In person only. For fiber artists of all skills	Tea Dance, 2- 5 pm February 17, see front page for info
Lunch and Learn: 11:30 am. Please RSVP in advance (share dietary restrictions) llamb@sageupstate.org or 315-478 1923 Free, lunch provided. This month: Mental Health	Utica Potluck 1st Sat. 2- 4 pm at Utica Unitarian, 10 Higby Rd. Potluck-- bring a dish to pass if you are able.
Meals OUT -- Dinner on the 1st Thursday, Breakfast on the 2nd Thursday, and Lunch on the 3rd Thursday, See details next page.	Walking Group Syracuse: The group meets at the benches by Panera at Destiny on Thursdays at 10 am
	Walking Group Utica: Meet at Sangertown Mall on the 2nd and 4th Saturday
	Writers Group, Wednesdays at 5:30 pm: All genres and experience levels welcome. Offered on Zoom only-- link at sageupstate.org

The Attack on LGBTQ Rights and How to Address Them

The journey to equality and equity for LGBTQ folks of all ages, races, and abilities is not over. Yes, we have made progress, like marriage equality, the Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act (GENDA), and gender-affirming care for trans youth in NY state. BUT ... this progress is under attack from a well-funded national effort to enact anti-LGBTQ laws and policies in legislatures and schools.

Consider the "Don't Say Gay" legislation in Florida, the 100 bills attacking trans people in state legislatures since 2020, and the efforts to ban books in school libraries.

The presentation will help participants learn about Moms for Liberty (M4L). This far-right organization is part of the modern 'parents rights' movement that opposes LGBTQ and racially inclusive school curricula and advocates for banning books.

Maurice Cunningham will lead a conversation about these efforts to attack

our rights, our identities, and really our humanity. The talk will teach us about resistance to those efforts, about collective struggle, and about hope. Together, we can develop strategies to protect our communities.

Maurice T. Cunningham, Ph.D., J.D., is author of *Dark Money* and the *Politics of School Privatization*. He retired in 2021 as associate professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. His work has been distributed through the Independent Media Institute, the Network for Public Education, and many other sites. In "Merchants of Deception" he analyzes the barrage of new parent groups that insist on challenging policies, curriculum, and practices regardless of community norms – groups like M4L.

Join us on Zoom, Thursday, March 21, 7:00 - 8:00 pm. Visit sageupstate.org for the link or contact Leslie at 315-478-1923 or llamb@sageupstate.org

Theater Thursdays:

We will be watching "The Holdovers" this month. From acclaimed director Alexander Payne, *The Holdovers* follows a curmudgeonly instructor (Paul Giamatti) at a New England prep school who is forced to remain on campus during Christmas break to babysit the handful of students with nowhere to go. Eventually he forms an unlikely bond with one of them — a damaged, brainy troublemaker (newcomer Dominic Sessa) and with the school's head cook, who has just lost a son in Vietnam (Da'Vine Joy Randolph).



Thurs 3/21
3:00 pm

Thurs 3/28
6:00 pm

Meet your SAGE friends for a meal!

To RSVP, Contact Kim at 315-478-1923 or kdill@sageupstate.org. Your info will be sent to Ron, the group leader This month:

1st Thursday Dinner: 3/7, 6:00 PM, *Camino Real*, 3811 Bremerton Rd. North Syracuse, 13212

2nd Thursday Breakfast: 3/14, 9:30 AM, *The Egg Plant*, 5781 Bridge St. (in Chimneys Plaza). East Syracuse, NY

3rd Thursday Lunch: 3/21, 12:30, *Firekeepers Restaurant*, 3879 Frontage Rd. Nedrow, NY

2nd Sunday in Syracuse



Rabbit Races: We'll create paper cup rabbits race them. Bring your creativity or just root on your favorite.

No betting ... unless we happen to be looking the other way. Sunday, 3/10, 3 pm social time, 4 pm program followed by shared supper. Bring a dish to pass pass if you are able.



Games!

Join us for Pitch on 3/19, and Mahjongg on 3/29, both at 6 pm.



Crafting: Painting Plates



Join us on the second Tuesday – 3/12. We have a stockpile of Syracuse China plates that are waiting to be painted. or us to utilize. Let's see what good we can do by putting our creativity to good work! Plates for a purpose!!!

All supplies will be provided. We ask that you R.S.V.P by 2/9 to assure we have enough supplies/snacks.



by Leslie Lamb, Program Director

Will March come in like a lion and out like a Lamb? It will if this Lamb has anything to do with it! Let's hope for good weather so that you can all come out for the great programming SAGE has to offer!

Ballroom Dance Classes Waltzing Wednesdays, the second round of Ballroom Dance Classes has started. Participants in this 6-week sessions of classes will be learning how to waltz. The classes will be held at 3 pm through 4/3/24. You do not need a partner to attend this class.



SAGE programs help isolated older adults find each other and services they need. SAGE also offers programs that improve health and well-being. Can you help? Our February-March appeal ends 3/15. If you are able to make a donation, please use the form on the back of this issue.



Each month Trans Ambassador (and Social Media/Office Coordinator) Johna Melius will speak on topics related to gender identity, pronouns, and all things trans. This program will be informal and participants will have the chance to educate themselves and openly ask questions. Join us on March 28, 3 pm for a session on "Trans 101." Are there topics you'd like to know more about? Let Johna know. You can reach her at 315-478-1923 x3, or jmelius@sageupstate.org

We hope you enjoyed our Black History Month series. We profiled 29 LGBTQ BIPOC individuals and organizations-- one for each day in February. In Tim's words: "These people are the storytellers, griots, artists, creators, teachers, poets, volunteers, activists, organizers, behind-the-scene contributors, and founders, just to name a few, who have stepped up and spoken out in many different ways to educate, advocate, recreate, and punctuate the importance of change." Watch for updates on the IDENTITY group for LGBTQ BIPOC communities.

Be Prepared: A Healthy Aging Series

This month we kick off our Lunch and Learn Series on Healthy Aging, which is funded with a grant from the Emerson Foundation. Join us on Tuesdays @ 11:30.

- 3/12 Scams 101:** Learn about Impersonator Scams, Romance Scams, Tech Support Scams, virtual Kidnapping Scams, "You've Won" Scams, Check Scams, Charity Scams and many more... presented by the Upstate Elder Abuse Center at Lifespan of Greater Rochester.
- 3/19 Planning: what comes next:** John Murphy Jr. ESQ. from Safe Harbor Wills & Trust will talk to us about things such as assets protection, trusts, wills, Medicaid planning, estate planning, etc. He will be available after the presentation to answer any questions you may have.
- 3/26 Elder Abuse and Gambling:** Presented by Elizabeth Toomey, Team Leader of the Central Problem Gambling Resource Center.
- 4/9 Mindful Eating:** Nutrition Education from the Onondaga County Department of Adult and Long Term Care Services.
- 4/16 Staying Strong and Independent:** Services and Support to remain healthy and independent, presented by NY Connects.
- 4/23 Financial Literacy:** Understanding credit and Identity Theft. Presented by Elizabeth Silliman form Community Bank

Please RSVP to Leslie (llamb@sageupstate.org or 315-478-1923 x 2) so we can make sure the meal will accomodate all. Let us know about dietary restrictions.

Thank You Emerson Foundation!

Volunteering

It's more than setting up an event. Or folding a newsletter. Or sitting, either at a SAGE table for an event or on a committee to plan activities. Our volunteers are much more than the tasks they accomplish. It's who they are. There is no part of SAGE Upstate that does not depend on volunteer contributions. Simply put, if there are no volunteers, there is no SAGE Upstate.

I've had the honor of working with hundreds of people donating their time and energy to keep SAGE Upstate strong. Hundreds? You may think that I'm exaggerating, but I've worked with 109 volunteer board members alone.

There have been so many others, who have helped with potlucks, dances, 5K races, dinners, picnics, and other events. Another gang has helped mail out the newsletter. Still others have staffed tables for SAGE, or made phone calls, sent cards, picked up ice, folded tables and put them away ... the list goes on.

And then there are the group leaders. They come in, set things up, pass around the sign-in sheet, and make sure everything is in place before they lock the door.

There are also the planners. People who sit on committees and come up with great ideas for events. They also set things up and make the event run well.

The board is a special group of volunteers. They agree to serve a term to oversee the operations of our organization. They create the budget and keep us within it. They look at big picture issues such as the mission and messages we need to get out there. They are constantly working behind the scenes to make sure that SAGE is running efficiently and effectively.

What do all of these people have in common? Yes, they are generous with their time, and sure, they show up and do what they need to do. But there's

another thing. They all believe in SAGE. They believe in what we do so much, that they ensure it will continue by extending themselves to meet the challenges. They would probably also feel that the word "volunteer" describes who they are, not just something they do.

The other thing about volunteering is that it helps the volunteer. Research tells us that the act of volunteering offers mental and physical benefits – *especially for older adults*.

Here's what the experts say:

The Mayo Clinic: People who volunteer have lower mortality rates; older adults who volunteer report better health than those who do not.

Harvard School of Public Health: People who volunteered spent 38% fewer nights in the hospital than nonvolunteers (as reported by Habitat for Humanity).

The Atlantic: "People who volunteer lead longer, healthier lives. Some public-health experts believe the time has come for doctors to recommend it alongside diet



and exercise."

Volunteering keeps your body moving and your mind thinking. It fills your brain with endorphins that reduce stress and relieve anxiety. This in turn reduces your risk for physical problems such as heart disease, stroke, and other health issues.

Many volunteers find that it gives meaning to their lives. Working with other volunteers nurtures new and existing friendships too. It counters isolation with connection.

So it's a win-win situation. Volunteers are good for SAGE and volunteering is good for you! For these reasons, I hope you will participate in our first quarterly Volunteer Social on Tuesday April 16, 6:00 pm. Let us know if you can make it – contact Kim:

JOIN US FOR THE 1ST QUARTERLY VOLUNTEER SOCIAL

Agenda

1. Share a meal
2. Express our undying gratitude
3. Share news on what's coming up

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 6:00 PM

FOR ALL WHO VOLUNTEER ...

AND ALL WHO ARE INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING!



431 E. Fayette St. Suite 050
Syracuse, NY 13202

Address service requested

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage Paid
Syracuse, NY
Permit 1930



No one should feel alone when SAGE can help. But isolation is common in our community, which can lead to anxiety, delaying health care, or becoming sedentary. Isolated older adults may have nowhere to turn to in a crisis. With your donations, we can beat isolation. And, there are other ways to help love too: volunteering, participating, serving on our board. Any way you give to SAGE will make a difference for older LGBTQ+ people. Thank you for supporting SAGE Upstate!

**I want to
reduce
isolation
in our
community**

Name:
Address , City, State, Zip:
Phone:
Email:
Credit Card #:
Exp: CVV _____

Choose One

Please accept my one
time gift of \$ _____

I pledge \$ _____
per month

- Check enclosed
- Bill my card one time
- Bill my pledge monthly until I stop

Can we recognize your gift in
SAGE Upstate publications?

Yes No

Campaign ends March 15, 2024

Mail to SAGE Upstate, 431 E Fayette St. Syracuse, NY, 13202