

'You've got a friend in me...'

AARP has proven itself a valuable LGBT ally

by Matt Comer :: matt@goqnotes.com

Anti-gay religious organizations and activists have derided the AARP, formerly known as the American Association of Retired Persons, for their support of the LGBT community. Despite their childish antics and whining, AARP has forged on with cooperative partnerships with LGBT organizations and seniors.

Here are just a few of the steps AARP has taken to reach out to LGBT seniors:

- In the past decade, AARP has routinely worked with several LGBT organizations, include Services and Advocacy for LGBT Elders (SAGE), the now defunct Pride Senior Network, The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign.
- AARP has funded several LGBT initiatives, including work by SAGE, through its Andrus Foundation.
- AARP was a sponsor of SAGE's 2008 conference and said at the time: "AARP is paying attention to LGBT needs to minimize discrimination and to ensure equality as people age in America."
- The organization's publication, *AARP The Magazine*, regularly features LGBT-related stories and features on LGBT leaders and movements.
- In 2009, AARP conferred an Andrus Award to David Aronstein, a Massachusetts resident and founding member of Stonewall Communities, a non-profit charged with supporting educational, housing, social and support programming and services for LGBT seniors.
- In 2009, AARP celebrated with the LGBT community the 40th anniversary of the



historic Stonewall Riots. You can view the special and in-depth coverage, including articles, a history timeline and radio and TV features, at aarp.org/stonewall.



Resources for LGBT elders

Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender Elders (SAGE)

A national advocacy, public policy, education and support organization for LGBT seniors. sageusa.org

LGBT Aging Issues Network (LAIN)

A constituent group of the American Society on Aging, LAIN is an educational and awareness building coalition of professionals and seniors. According to their website, LAIN "seeks to foster professional development, multidisciplinary research and wide-ranging dialogue on LGBT issues in the field of aging through publications, conferences, and cosponsored events."

asaging.org/networks/LAIN/

Also of interest is the American Society on Aging's LGBT Aging Resources Clearinghouse at asaging.org/larc/ ::

Navratilova says she has breast cancer

Openly lesbian tennis star, AARP spokesperson speaks out

by Matt Comer :: matt@goqnotes.com

Born at the very tail end of the Baby Boomer generation, Martina Navratilova has become one of the LGBT community's most outspoken advocates for health and equality.

On April 7, the international tennis star spoke to several news outlets and said she was diagnosed with a non-invasive form of breast cancer. She said her prognosis was good, after learning of the diagnosis after a routine mammogram in February.

Navratilova, 53, who now works as a spokesperson for AARP, said the news shocked her.

"It knocked me off my ass, really," she told *People* magazine. "I feel so in control of my life and my body, and then this comes, and it's completely out of my hands."

The cancer, ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), is the most common form of largely non-lethal breast cancer. Nearly 70,000 or more women are diagnosed with the cancer each year.

"The good thing for [Navratilova] is that she doesn't have what's called an invasive breast cancer, meaning that the cancer invades into the tissue," Victoria Seewaldt,

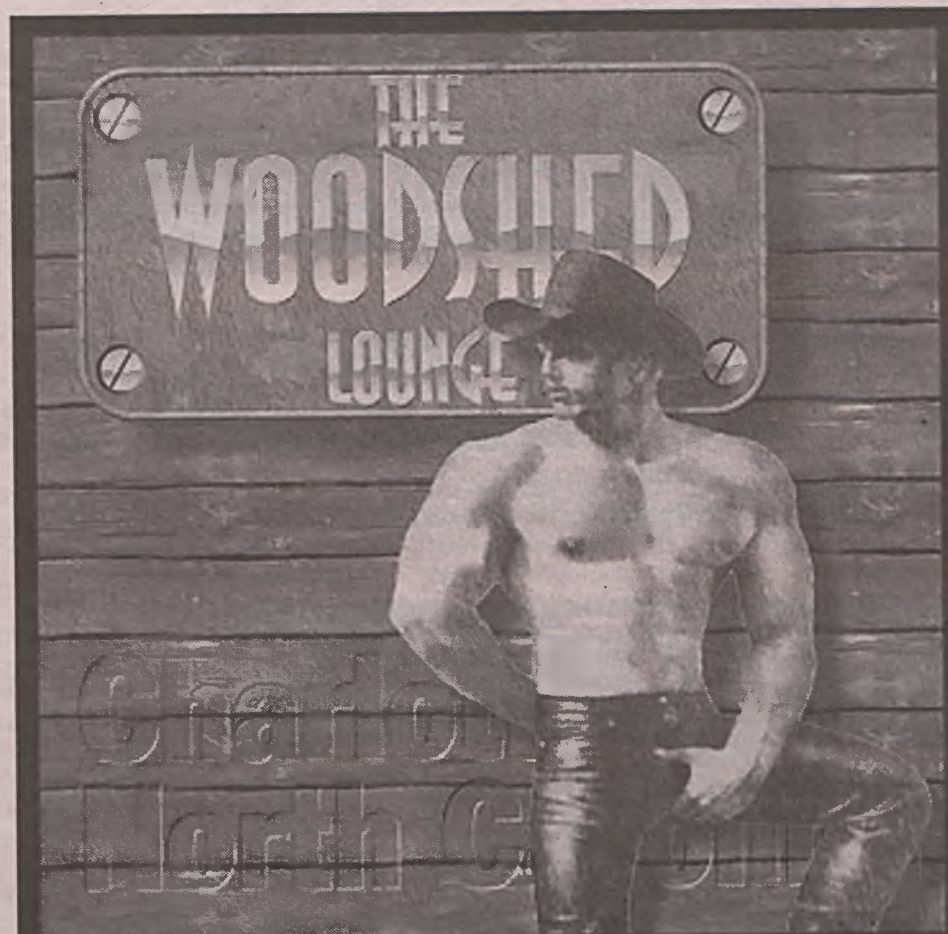
a Duke University professor of medicine and breast and ovarian program leader for the Duke Comprehensive Cancer Institute, told Bloomberg News.

"While nobody wants to get a diagnosis of DCIS — and it's treated very seriously as cells that have potential to become cancerous — this is a really good prognosis," Seewaldt said. "Most of the time, women who have DCIS do really well and are typically cured."

Navratilova was born in Prague but joined American tennis in 1975. She became a U.S. citizen and came out in 1981.

It is commonly thought lesbians are at a higher risk of developing breast cancer and some research points to increased risks of anal cancer in men who have sex with men. In a late March release, however, the American Cancer Society said more research is needed.

"Unfortunately, cancer research in the LGBT population is rarely conducted or published," the organization said. "Perhaps due to the lack of focus on cancer in the LGBT community, awareness of the risks of cancer within this population is surprisingly low." ::



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