

# Old Lesbians Organizing for Change



The planning continues for the National Gathering to be held at the Hacienda Hotel In Los Angeles, CA from July 30, to Aug 3, 2008.

In addition to the illustrious Keynoters, Gaye Adegbalola and Jackie Goldberg, (who we highlighted in our last issue of the *OLOC Reporter*) we are delighted to be able to announce that award winning author Jewelle Gomez will also be keynoting our Gathering! Jewelle is a writer and activist and the author of the double Lambda Award-winning novel, *The Gilda Stories*, as well as a critic and poet. We can't wait to hear all of the keynoters!

Another new addition to our program is the venerable Mother-tongue Feminist Readers Theater. This Bay Area group has been writing its own material for many years and will be presenting a new piece for us this year. We are very fortunate to have them!

Our Mistress of Ceremonies Saturday night, will be Robin Tyler, who always leaves the crowd laughing. The Gathering is also proud to host The Los Angeles Women's Community Chorus and The OLOC Chorus, both led by Sue Fink and a concert by Jazz/Blues Artist Gaye Adegbalola. There will also be many workshops on topics relevant to Old Lesbians and our lives.

## California Dreaming Building A Better World For Every Old Lesbian by Mina Meyer, 67



Jewelle Gomez



Jackie Goldberg



Gaye Adegbalola

Of course we haven't even mentioned our Saturday night Banquet and Dance with a wonderful DJ spinning the songs to which you love to dance. This will be the highlight of the Gathering for many of us!

If you have questions or want to do a workshop that fits in with our theme of **California Dreaming: Building A Better World For Every Old Lesbian**, write to the OLOC mailing address, email to [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org) (please put "attn: Planning Committee" in the subject line), or call Mina at 562-420-3555.

Keep on watching this column in future *Reporters* for news updates on the 2008 Gathering! And don't forget to save the dates:

**July 30 to August 3, 2008**

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## New Reporter Feature: Ageism in Action

As you page through this issue of the *OLOC Reporter*, you'll find several entries entitled Ageism in action. (The first is on page 4.) We want to enlist your help in gathering examples of ageism so we can share them with everyone. If you see examples anywhere, send them to us at [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org) or mail them to OLOC, POB 5853, Athens OH 45701.

## OLOC Members in the News and Out and About

- OLOC Member **Connie Kurtz's** art and bio are featured on a website. Connie is a collagist who enjoys working with "a variety of materials ranging from fabric, paper, watercolor, acrylics and objects in nature. She only uses the best materials and relishes in the chance to be creative by recycling. Flamboyant with her paintbrush and imagination, Connie's collages are full of color and life." Look under the "miscellaneous" category to see Connie and some of her collages on [www.clematiscoffeehouse.com/](http://www.clematiscoffeehouse.com/) and then e-mail [ruthconnie4@bellsouth.net](mailto:ruthconnie4@bellsouth.net) if you want to know more.
- OLOC subscriber **Cathy Njoroge** has an organization in Kenya called African Senior Lesbians Resource Network for Lesbians aged 55 and above. The Nov/Dec 2007 issue of Lesbian Connection includes a letter from Cathy about her work. She tells about the dismal legal position of Lesbians in her country, with the possibility of 14 years in prison and 18 strokes of the cane if they are found out. The members of her organization are respected feminist scholars aged 55 and above. The group seeks to be the voice for the many Lesbians languishing in prison. For more information email Cathy at [canjoro@yahoo.com](mailto:canjoro@yahoo.com) or send a letter to OLOC c/o Wiseheart, HC 73 Box 169C Drury MO 65638 and I will forward it to her.
- The November, 2007 issue of *Curve* magazine features **Arden Eversmeyer**, director of OLOC's Oral Herstory Project, in the Out in Front section, along with two other Lesbians. The story gives some of Arden's background (Civic Club officer, a Houston Zoo docent, the PFLAG Houston archivist, a founder of Lesbians Over Age Fifty, a member of OLOC (Old Lesbians Organizing for Change) and a mayoral appointee to the Houston area's Agency on Aging) and goes on to describe her work with the Oral Herstory Project with details on some of the stories she's heard. "The sense of urgency never leaves as this generation of amazing women disappears," Eversmeyer says. "It is important that these women become a documented part of our history."



Pick up a copy of *Curve* and/or go to [www.curvemag.com/Detailed/878.html](http://www.curvemag.com/Detailed/878.html).

## We Want To Know More About You

Don't forget to contact [susan@oloc.org](mailto:susan@oloc.org) to give us your birth date, disability status, ethnicity and, here is a new one!... skills you can offer OLOC. We will refine that last one as time goes on, but for right now, send whatever makes sense to you. Remember that we use the information for the disability status and ethnicity only for internal looks at our diversity and for grant applications. We don't attach names to the information at all and never share names or contact information with anyone else. We use age that way, too, but we also send birthday cards!! The skill information would be used if we are looking for help with a project and want to know who might be able to offer it.

*Have you, or another Old Lesbian, been in the news lately? Let us know about it and if space allows, we'll mention it in an upcoming issue of The OLOC Reporter.*

OLOC provides Old Lesbians with the chance to meet like-minded women in our common struggle to confront ageism, to share mutual interests, and to experience the joy and warmth of playing and working together.

**What Is (or Are) Your Symbols?**

Several weeks ago I was stunned by a bit of United States history that I had never been exposed to before. It set me to thinking about symbols and the subversion of symbols.

The subject was the District of Columbia and why it exists as an area separate from any of the states. The story, as told on the radio, is that the founding fathers decided we should have a goddess and named her Columbia. The District of Columbia was then set aside as an almost sacred place for contemplation and discourse by elected representatives. The idea being that, just as entering any holy place, all individual or ego concerns are left outside, and one enters into a place that nurtures a higher consciousness and conscience.

My first response was, WOW! No wonder we're in such a mess! We are a full 180 degrees from any notion of relying on feminine energy or using feminine principles in doing the business of our nation.

My second response was to dig a little deeper, which is not that easy to do. There is a very long tradition of using the female form to represent continents.

There has been much written about both the sense of considering the earth to be female and the parallels in attitude and treatment of the earth and women.

America was first represented as a female native in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. She gradually became lighter skinned and more gentrified as the continent became more colonized. By the eighteenth century she looked very much like a Greco-Roman goddess. She was named Columbia around the time of the writing of our constitution, allegedly in honor of Christopher Columbus.

There was, in fact, much debate about



## THE MEDICAL CORNER

*Dr. Jean Eckerly, 70*

***America was first represented as a female native in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. She gradually became lighter skinned and more gentrified as the continent became more colonized.***

naming our country Columbia. As other Colombias came into existence, the idea was abandoned (or so the story goes). When we decided not to call our nation Columbia, our goddess became known as Lady Liberty, which seems to be less of a personality and more of a generic

representation. She does and did have a fairly ubiquitous presence. You see her holding a variety of objects, from domestic to military and there is never any doubt that she represents powerful female energy. The Lady appeared on all of our coins, being removed from the penny in 1853 and the nickel in 1913, the male "Indian" appearing instead. She was replaced by George Washington on the quarter in 1930 but survived the dime until 1946 and the half-dollar until 1947. The minting of a dollar coin was suspended in the 30's and did not resume until the early 60's. Ap-

proximately a half million coins were minted with the Lady on them, but were quickly recalled and melted down. (It is a crime to own one.) Dwight Eisenhower dollar coins were then issued. We all know what happened to subsequent coinage depicting heroic women.

So what do these everyday symbols say to us about ourselves and the times within which we live? A picture is worth a thousand words in the medical corner as well. Asclepius (Aesclepius, Asklepios) is the personification of medical or healing art. He basically replaced any goddess of healing (Medicine, Hygeia, and Panacea) who were subjugated to positions as his daughters. He was said to be a mortal physician who was so good that he was deified as the son of Zeus and Corona. His great powers led to his being killed because it was feared that he could or would make men immortal. His symbol is the staff with a single snake



coiled around it. This symbol of medicine is used worldwide. However, we, in the U. S. use the caduceus, which is the winged staff with two snakes wound around it. This is the symbol of the magic wand of Hermes (Mercury), messenger of the gods, inventor of incantations, conductor of the dead and protector of merchants and thieves. It is a symbol of heralds and commerce and implies temporality, perishableness and senility.

Hygeia (Salus) is the best-known female survivor and is considered the goddess of health, cleanliness and sanitation and later, the moon. As Salus, she was considered the goddess of the public welfare of the Roman people. Her symbol is a cup or chalice with a single snake wound around it or emerging from it. The serpent represents resurrection and the cup, medicine. The pharmacists have adopted this symbol. The symbols we choose are a significant part of our identity, or how we wish to be perceived. I believe they reveal a great deal about us.

What is or are your symbols?

### Ageism in Action: Example 1

*HealthDay News* ran an article entitled *Best Breast-Cancer Care Eludes Older Women*. According to the article "many older women are being under-diagnosed and under-treated for the disease.... Often, age -- rather than health status -- is the deciding factor in determining how to care for the 80-and-older set." The author of the study said he felt that a lot of physicians have biases about treating anyone over 80... that some doctors function with a "How much time can they possibly have left?" attitude.

To view the full article, go to [OLOC.org](http://OLOC.org) and click on Ageism in Action. If you don't have internet access, mail a self-addressed stamped envelope, with a note indicating which article (or articles) you are requesting, and we'll send you a copy.

## Sinister Wisdom Journal Call for Guest Editor(s)

Sinister Wisdom, a multicultural Lesbian literary and art journal, is seeking Lesbians with the desire, passion, will, and skills to guest edit an issue of the magazine.

Skills needed:

1. Awareness of and commitment to Lesbian culture, herstory, and community
2. Awareness of, appreciation of, and enthusiasm for Sinister Wisdom
3. Open, honest and direct communication skills; flexibility
4. Good organizational skills; attention to detail
5. Good time management; good problem solving skills
6. Openness to diverse writing styles, language usage, tone, and perspective
7. Basic computer skills

If you are interested in more information, please contact Fran Day at [fran@sonic.net](mailto:fran@sonic.net) or write her at SW c/o Fran Day, POB 1180, Sebastopol, CA 95473-1180.

The current issue of Sinister Wisdom featured writings by dozens of women on the topic of Utopia. Pick up a copy and you'll notice many of the articles are by OLOC women including Shaba Barnes, Susan Wiseheart, Ruth Mountain-grove, Alix Dobkin, and Ida VSW Red.




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*So much has been said and sung of beautiful young girls, why don't somebody wake up to the beauty of old women?*

*Harriet Beecher Stowe*

## Sally's 70th Birthday Celebration by Sally Tatnall, 70

I often think we do not recognize, reward or celebrate what we have done often enough. So I decided to celebrate my 70th birthday by recognizing all the women in my community and celebrating what we have accomplished over the years.

I rented a nice space, ordered plenty of food, and provided a disc jockey, the mainstay of any Lesbian party.

Then I went back through the years and on a nice piece of art paper wrote each name of all the organizations we have been a part of. There were over 50 organizations. I hung these papers all around the room and attached as many old photos as I could find. Of course I had help with this. As is the way with what women do, most of these organizations do not even

exist now. I saw that part of my own herstory has already been erased.

The night of the party, all the women/Lesbians were thrilled. They spent time looking at the photos and going down memory lane. During the party, after everyone was full and seated, we had a program. I asked the women in each decade starting with 30's to rise and say their name. Then I congratulated and



Sally speaking at 2006 Gathering  
(Photo courtesy of C. Cade)

honored them for their years of social justice work and we all clapped, cheered, and drummed. Thirty year old people were cheered for 10 years of work, Forty year old people got cheered for 20 years of work and so on.

I don't need to tell you how loud the cheers were for the women over seventy years and their over fifty years of social justice work.

Then I had everyone under 30 stand, say their names and welcomed them into their social justice community and network. We all cheered.

There were 150 Lesbians/women in attendance. It was the highlight of the social season, (laugh out loud!) . I will remember it for a long long time.

It was also a fundraiser for OLOC and we raised \$2400.

### The OLOC Reporter

The OLOC Reporter is published by Old Lesbians Organizing for Change:

- [www.oloc.org](http://www.oloc.org)
- Email: [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org)
- Post Office Box 5853 Athens, OH 45701

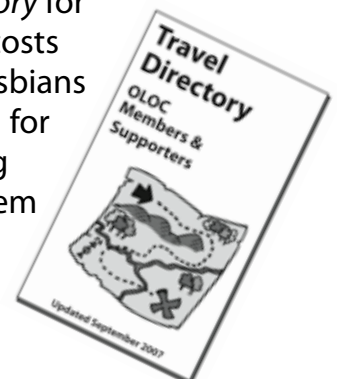
This Newsletter Brought to You By: Jan Griesinger, Margaret Purcell, Susan Wiseheart, Ruth Debra and all of the writers plus the mailing crew.

**Let your voice be heard.**

Deadline for the next issue is February 1, 2007.  
Send articles to OLOC: [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org)  
or OLOC, PO Box 5853, Athens, OH 45701

## Travel Directory

OLOC has a *Travel Directory* for Old Lesbians on the road. It costs \$3.00. You can contact the lesbians who have agreed to be listed for information if you are visiting their city or area. Some of them even enjoy providing sleeping accommodations. Send orders to OLOC, POB 5853, Athens OH 45701.



## Apology Accepted

*Persimmon Tree Magazine* ([www.persimmontree.org](http://www.persimmontree.org)) is "An online literary magazine by older women" and it is excellent. In many reader letters in the second issue, the topic of age was raised. I wrote to say that we at OLOC prefer old to older and briefly quoted Shevy and Nan's statement from the 80s about it. Wouldn't you know it, when they published my letter they referred to us as Older Lesbians Organizing for Change? Well, of course I wrote right back to complain and not only did they quickly correct it and apologize to me, the editor also wrote the following letter and published it in issue 3:

*Dear Susan Wiseheart and OLOC Members,*

*In the Summer 2007 Letters section, I inadvertently represented your organization as Older Lesbians Organizing for Change, rather than its correct name, Old Lesbians Organizing for Change. Once you brought this to my attention, we corrected it on the website (the beauty of on-line publishing!). But some readers might have seen the wrong name and been confused since your point was "to the degree that we deny our own aging, we cripple our ability to live. By naming ourselves 'old' we give up the attempt to pass. And as we thus break our silence, we empower ourselves and each other." (from a speech by Shevy Healy, OLOC founder.)*

*I apologize again for my mistake.*

*Nan Gefen, Berkeley, CA*

## Memorial

### Mattie Tippit

Born in 1922 in Ft Worth, TX, Mattie was the daughter of a funeral director. I first met her about four years ago when I went to do an oral herstory interview with her. An imposing woman at well over six feet, she was also articulate, warm and funny. After high school graduation she attended nursing school in Dallas, and then the University of Texas for a nursing degree. During WW2 rumors floated around that nurses would be drafted, so she joined the navy to avoid the draft, and nursed in San Diego. After the war she remained in California for eight years, earned a degree in Radio and TV, and was a film director for Channel 13 in Hollywood. She then moved back to Dallas and got a Funeral Directors and Embalmers license to work for her father for ten years in Tyler. She then moved to Orange, TX and taught school. It was here she met her long-term life partner. They moved to Lubbock, Mattie finished her MA in Nursing, and started teaching at the Methodist School of Nursing in 1971. She retired in 1988, and her partner died in 1990. She had a loving support system of young Lesbians and gay men.



*(Memorial submitted by Arden Eversmeyer, moving force behind the Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project. She adds: I have attempted to keep in touch with most of the almost 100 Old Lesbians I have worked with in the past ten years. All of us Old Lesbians have a story to tell, and these wonderful women certainly have enriched my life).*

## Research Gatekeeper Sharon Raphael

One of my beliefs is that Lesbians should be doing their own research on Lesbians. This follows the long held tradition of OLOC founders who thought we should think for ourselves and study ourselves.

My PhD. dissertation, completed in 1974, was titled "Coming Out": The Emergence of the Movement Lesbian. It was based on research data I collected with Anne Hensley at the Gay Women's Service Center in Los Angeles in 1972. At the time, what I did was considered very unorthodox. I was acting as an "insider sociologist" doing research on a sub group of the population of which I was myself a member.

Most researchers at the time frowned on this as a practice. In fact, before Gay Liberation, mainstream researchers did not accept the idea of Lesbians or gays studying themselves. We know that historically straight researchers, with a few exceptions, described LGBT persons as 'disturbed and perverted'. Today this type of "insider" research is encouraged. Insider researchers have a better grasp of "what is really happening" and "an easier ethical sense" of how data can be used on behalf of the group being studied.

As OLOC designated Research Gatekeeper, one of the things I require is that those who do research on Old Lesbians be "out" Lesbians themselves and that the research be relevant to the lives of Old Lesbians. The completed research should have practical implications that demonstrate it is of value to Old Lesbians and that it will positively affect our lives.

The OLOC guidelines that were developed attempt to follow early OLOC founders and organizers in their admonitions that we not allow our lives to be exploited by people who are not part of our group. "Nothing about us without us", a quote from the disability rights movement, applies to Old Lesbians, too.

For step-by-step guidelines for conducting research under OLOC auspices and/or to give me input on what you want research to do for you and what kinds you prefer or do not prefer, contact me at [SMRaphael@aol.com](mailto:SMRaphael@aol.com).

### Ageism in Action: Example 2

*Crankshaft* is a cartoon billed as "a comic that reflects modern times." The strip shown here recently appeared in papers across the country and it stirred up a bit of commentary.



One blogger wrote "I'm unable to come up with a reading of the joke that doesn't hinge on the woman no longer needing to protect herself from assault because she's older and not as good-looking anymore." Another wrote: "Why would anyone advocate that after a certain age you should stop worrying about defending yourself." Another blogger points out the ageism in wording in the middle panel alone, "You're sixty-eight, Lois..."

For more comments about this comic strip, go to [OLOC.org](http://OLOC.org) and click on Ageism in Action. If you don't have internet access, mail a self-addressed stamped envelope, with a note indicating which article (or articles) you are requesting, and we'll send you a copy.



## Reporting on the Southeast Regional OLOC Get Together

### Old and Proud Lesbians on the East Coast Attend Get Together in Lanham, MD *By Linda Ryan*

A group of about thirty Lesbians gathered September 7-9, 2007 to discuss first steps in developing a local OLOC group. Sally Tatnall from National OLOC presented OLOC's mission and goals and solicited ideas on what support National OLOC could provide to a local group. Discussions included numerous topics including: possible goals for a local OLOC group, outreach methodologies for **all** Old Lesbians, how national and local OLOC groups could work together to reach common goals and the next steps for organizing a local group.

Everyone thought the socializing and networking was "good for the soul." They especially enjoyed the band that performed at the dance. Lesbians traveled from far and near to attend this 'get-together'. States represented included MD, VA, WV, OH, PA, NY, FL, SC. This event engaged all who attended. Some are already talking about hosting another east coast get-together in the future.

### SE Regional One More Step *by rainbow williams, 73*

A comfortably intimate group of around thirty gathered outside Washington DC in September. I joined them, representing one of nine states. I found fascinating feminist conversation all weekend, at every table I joined. Saturday night we danced to an awesome band of Black Lesbians from DC, who had not played together before. Breeze is their name, and we are hoping to bring them to our South Carolina 2009 summer event. They are also the prettiest band ever!

And, we held some great Consciousness Raising circles! If you don't know what CR is, I hope you can experience this technique where we sit in a circle, with each one taking equal time to speak her personal truth on a specific topic, and come to focus on our common experiences as a basis of action/decisions. It's more democratic than almost any form I can think of.

The Washington gathering moved us one more step toward a stronger Eastern support system and the summer 2009 South Carolina meeting is now being planned.

### Regional OLOC Group Contact List

OLOC would love to have regional groups form all over the country! If you're interested in helping form a group, email us at [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org) or write or call Jan or Sally. (see Steering Committee contact list)

New York City	Myra Brahams	212-535-9633	<a href="mailto:myra@oloc.org">myra@oloc.org</a>
Hudson Valley New York	Alix Dobkin	845-679-7586	<a href="mailto:alix@oloc.org">alix@oloc.org</a>
SouthEast	Olivia Cammack	301-920-2043	<a href="mailto:olivia@oloc.org">olivia@oloc.org</a>
Ohio	Sally Tatnall	216-932-0977	<a href="mailto:sally@oloc.org">sally@oloc.org</a>
Minnesota	Annalee Stewart	612-724-6541	<a href="mailto:annalee@oloc.org">annalee@oloc.org</a>
St. Louis	Charlotte Ellis	314-962-2188	<a href="mailto:charlotte@oloc.org">charlotte@oloc.org</a>
Northern Colorado	Cindy Bear	303-258-9424	<a href="mailto:cindy@oloc.org">cindy@oloc.org</a>
Southern California	Mina Meyer	562-420-3555	<a href="mailto:mina@oloc.org">mina@oloc.org</a>
San Francisco Bay Area	Joan Emerson	415-388-5001	40 Camino Alto #12209 Mill Valley, CA 94941
Portland, OR	Mary Beth Brindley	503-286-3575	<a href="mailto:marybeth@oloc.org">marybeth@oloc.org</a>
Puget Sound Area/WA	Mary Henry	253-565-0829	<a href="mailto:mary@oloc.org">mary@oloc.org</a>



## OLOC Southern California Old Lesbian Picnic by *Mina Meyer, age 67*

On Sunday, Sept. 9th, over 35 Old Lesbians came together for an end of the summer picnic at Heartwell Park in Long Beach. Advertised locally, the picnic brought us 14 new members to our local chapter!

The Old Lesbians attending this picnic represented a full range of ages with equal numbers in their 80's, 70's and 60's. The oldest women particularly appreciate being in a group with other Lesbians their own age.



*Gwen Harris and Mina Meyer*

In addition to sharing stories, making new friends, playing cards, and of course eating, we were interviewed by a reporter from the *Long Beach Press Telegram* which the next day ran photos and a large article, titled "They're old, they're lesbians and they refuse to hide" about our "Old Lesbian Picnic."



*Sandra Tignor and Donna Cassyd*

### November 5, 2007

#### OLOC Ohio Update by *Sharon Deevey, 63*

Since marching together in the June '07 Pride event, the central Ohio OLOC group has met three times on our every other month schedule. We have 10-15 regular attendees, ranging in age from 63-79, including both couples and singles, who have come out at various stages in our lives.

In July, two members shared their homes and boat for our summer recreation and planning meeting. In September, we discussed end-of-life issues, and in November, with five new participants, talked about health and social life as we age. Several members are networking with other groups, including CLOUT (Christian Lesbians OUT), the Stonewall Union Health Initiative, and AARP Ohio. One group project is development of a workshop on LGBT elder issues, including both ageism and homophobia, for presentation to caregivers in the aging network. Sally Tatnall is planning to start a second Ohio OLOC group, based in Cleveland.

#### New Video for Loan

Beth Wydallis of Columbus, OH has donated a DVD copy of *Mrs. Stevens Heard the Mermaids Singing* for the OLOC video library. It is a movie adapted from the novel by May Sarton and a winner of the audience award for the best Lesbian feature at the Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival and the Brussels Lesbian and Gay Film Festival. To borrow this video for a local event/viewing, contact [susan@oloc.org](mailto:susan@oloc.org) or write to OLOC, POB 5853, Athens OH 45701 for details on how to order it for the cost of postage and for titles of other films we have for loan.

We had a great "Introduction to OLOC" party on Sunday, September 01, 2007! The crowd was quite varied, agreeable, and fun. Women frolicked in the pool, chatted, laughed, and munched to pleasant, unobtrusive music, and enjoyed being together in such a lovely place on a perfect day. A plentiful variety of snacks and beverages were eagerly consumed, and although it was not a potluck (OLOC supplied the snacks), a few Dykes came with edible contributions because some of us just can't help ourselves.

After getting everyone's attention, I explained a few things about OLOC, where we come from, what we do now, and that we were forming a Hudson Valley chapter. We had what I thought was a wonderful round of Consciousness Raising when everyone stated her name, age, where she lived & what she thought about being old. Most live in the area, a few split their time between New York City and the Hudson Valley. Ginny Appuzzo, president of the Board of our new, beautiful LGBTQ Center in Kingston invited us to use the center for our meetings, saying that is exactly the purpose of the building.

More than half of the

## **OLOC Hudson Valley NY** *by Alix Dobkin, 67*

46 women who showed up signed the mailing list . . . of those, 23 are 59+ (old enough to join OLOC as 59 marks the 60th year). There were two 58 year old women, and one who stated her age as "58 1/2". Kesii, the oldest there, wrote "92" but she really doesn't remember how old she is. This party rejuvenated Kesii and many women who thanked me for bringing them together, which was entirely my pleasure and also my job, as a member of the Steering Committee and part time Field Organizer. There is lots of enthusiasm for OLOC, for our community, and what we can do as individuals and as a group.

I started out facilitating the discussion, but they took over. This is a crowd of tough, feminist veterans bursting with spirit, ideas and projects. We have been around the track and are more than ready to do something together, and OLOC strikes me as the right vehicle. There appeared to be a consensus that we miss Consciousness Raising and want feminism back in our lives.

So, on Friday, 12 October 2007, 17 Lesbians gathered

at the Kingston LGBTQ Community Center for the first meeting of the new OLOC Hudson Valley Chapter. In the future, meetings will be held on the first Friday of each month.

All but 3 of the women were unfamiliar with OLOC and so I mentioned what I love about the organization, read the Mission Statement and raved about our Policy & Procedures Manual, clearly the result of many years of grueling, tedious work from many smart, Old Lesbians.

After introducing our interests, and ourselves we discussed plans for our future – plans, such as dues, refreshments, minute-taking (Bonnie agreed to do it "just this one time!"), facilitating meetings (rotating) and the autonomous operation of each chapter. We decided that the facilitation job will be rotated as well as minute-taking. Suzanne wrote a list of topics on large paper from the women who named actions including, but not limited to: offering meals & transportation to Old Lesbians who need it, increasing visibility (a banner!), contacting Old Lesbians without email, helping Old Lesbians get computers and instructions, writing letters to local

...Hudson Valley article, concluded

publications, and having a social component to meetings. Everyone is interested in health care. Many miss feminism and our old activism.

Women volunteered to work on public relations, visit people in residential facilities, develop a report on what's being done in health care, make up a local resource list and work with the Center, which is also compiling a list. Some women will meet with the Office of the Ageing, and others volunteered for a speakers' bureau. Contact Alix at [alix@oloc.org](mailto:alix@oloc.org) or write her at the OLOC mailing address for details on the next meeting.

### OLOC Mission Statement

OLOC, Inc. is the national organization of lesbians of all races, age 60 and over, and will:

- Support, respect and empower Old Lesbians.
- Recognize and challenge ageism in our lives and in society.
- Celebrate our strengths, our talents, our experiences, and document our lives.
- Convene national gatherings for Old Lesbians.
- Encourage, establish, and support local groups and regional events.
- Provide educational materials and consciousness raising about ageism.

## OLOC Washington State Chapter Fall Retreat by Gloria Stancich, 72

On October 11, twenty-two Lesbians from the Washington Chapter of OLOC participated in a week-long retreat to the ocean at Pacific Beach, WA. At least five of us were there for the entire seven nights. (The 7th night was "free"!)

Others stopped by for one or two, three, four or six days. We used two RV spaces, two rooms at the main lodge and two houses...both with good views of the ocean.



Diedre Knowles, Gloria Stancich and Mary Henry show off their handicrafts at the Puget Sound retreat.

Several women were attending their first Puget Sound OLOC gathering. We had too much food, some scintillating conversations and exchanges of ideas. We watched some well-done and informative DVD's, including *Radical Harmonies: The History of Women's Music, Before Stonewall* and *After Stonewall*, all of which generated some lively discussion. We played cribbage, some non-competitive Scrabble, and put together some pretty complex puzzles. There were lots of walks on the beach; lots of bird watching and a couple of us "scooted" around the neighborhood. There were drives up and down the coast, and shopping at gift, thrift and "kitchen" stores. We had sunshine for at least parts of each day until the last one, when a storm whipped in sometime after midnight on Wednesday. Those few of us left, finished packing in wind and heavy rain. There were a few adventures on the way, but all made it safely home. There is even talk of another retreat in the spring!

## On The Road With The Oral Herstory Project *by Arden Eversmeyer, 76*

It has been a very busy fall for the Oral Herstory Project (and Arden and Charlotte). September saw me flying to St. Louis. The trip yielded four fine stories, but the special part was an evening and potluck with the St. Louis OLOC group. What a great group of women. I stayed with our OLOC pal, Gini Morton.

In October we flew to Massachusetts for a combination of four more good stories and a chance to attend some activities during Women's Week in P'Town. We stayed with Sally Duplaix, a former OLOC Steering Committee member. While there, we nearly OD'ed on wonderful women, wonderful food, and the fall colors in that beautiful area.

No sooner had November arrived than we were off to Arizona. There we stayed with Vera Martin, former OLOC Co-Director. We have been going there for many years, and as a result have many friends. But of importance is that 27 of the 110 stories are women who live at least part-time in the Phoenix/Scottsdale/Mesa/Apache Junction and Tucson areas. It has become increasingly difficult to see our friends and do additional interviews in our allotted time. So, this year we hosted two luncheons – one in Mesa and one in Tucson. We invited every woman whose story we have

(and her partner) to be our guest for lunch. Of course they couldn't all be there, but it was great fun seeing those who could. And we managed to visit two who are experiencing severe health challenges. We brought home six new stories, two courtesy of Phoenix Wheeler in Tucson.

It is through the referrals of you good women out there that I find many of the women I interview. I really appreciate your help, and hope you continue to send names and information to me.



*Pictured at luncheon in Mesa, AZ, left to right. Seated: Ocie Perry, Jean Wilson, Vera Martin, Nelda Majors. Standing: Charlotte Avery, Pat Wilson, Ellie Gobrecht, Arden Eversmeyer, guest Nancy, and Barbara Sciacca.*

### Ageism in Action: Example 3

The following headline appeared, prominently displayed, on the front page of the Tacoma News Tribune: **Critics Say Lakewood Mayor Too Old**. Unfortunately, too many readers only look at headlines, but those who read beyond the headlines discovered the critics, and the newspaper itself, took issue with employing the "too old" tactic in a campaign to unseat the mayor. On a positive note, two weeks later, the 78 year old, African American, female mayor, Claudia Thompson, soundly defeated her 38 year old opponent! To view the full article, go to [OLOC.org](http://OLOC.org) and click on Ageism in Action. If you don't have internet access, mail a self-addressed stamped envelope, with a note indicating which article (or articles) you are requesting, and we'll send you a copy.



**“No, I’m not Barbara Hammer”**  
**Donna Cassyd, 67, Co-Producer of High Heels on Wheels**

I was sitting at Outfest, at the Directors’ Guild of America, the other night, waiting for a film to begin, when a woman came up to me with a big smile and said, “Barbara, so nice to meet you!”

“Did you think I was Barbara Hammer?” (Pioneering maker of lesbian films) I asked. She did. “Well, we went to school together, but I’m not.”

I told my friend, Betsy, about this interchange, after the movie was over. She started to introduce me to some friends. “Oh, Donna Deitch (filmmaker of *Desert Hearts*)!” said a woman. “No,” I said. “But she did used to visit a friend in our building.”

I turned to walk out of the theater when an Outfest official came running up to me. “I’m so glad to meet you!” he said, grabbing my hand. Now I had a dilemma. Which old filmmaker did he think I was? “Do you think I’m Barbara Hammer?” I ask. He did, explaining that he’d overheard part of my conversation with Betsy.

Moral: All old lesbian filmmakers do not look alike. Donna adds: “My film was at the OLOC gathering a couple of years ago, and in Outfest in ‘05. I am sometimes unaware that people don’t see me, but see the stereotypes they carry of older women. Thought what happened to me was sadly funny. I have to remember Barbara Macdonald’s saying, “Look me in the eye.”

**This phrase keeps coming to my view:**

**Code Pink**  
**by rainbow williams, 73**

Code Pink is a women-initiated grassroots peace and social justice movement working to end the war in Iraq, stop new wars, and redirect our resources.

It is spreading like wild pink fire. OLOCers Sandy (Miami) and Myra (NYC) say they find it exciting and inspiring to work in the pink, explaining that Code Pink has a house near our nation’s capitol and they stage actions from there, keeping them very in the face of our chosen, frozen representatives.

When I googled it, I found a Wikipedia link to a Molly Ivins article that she wrote last summer. Molly Ivins died on January 31, 2007. She was a big fan of Code Pink.

Good friend Sally Willoughbee, whose Quaker mom is famous for going to jail at her ripe age, has enthusiasm for Code Pink and the Pinkers, and says that they inspire her art and her life.

Old Lesbians Organizing For Change is the perfect venue for me these days and I am pleased to see the rapid spread of Code Pink to our ranks.

It’s outrageous! It’s everywhere! It’s us and we are it! Think Pink. <http://codepinkdc.blogspot.com/>

**Pen Pals**

We’ve had a few requests for pen pals, but since OLOC does not provide that service, we suggest that you contact Golden Threads: send SASE to:

Golden Threads  
PO Box 1688  
Demorest, GA 30535 email:  
[goldenthreads@earthlink.net](mailto:goldenthreads@earthlink.net).

For more details and a sample copy of their publication, send \$5.

**Do You Visit OLOC.org?**

We are interested in how many newsletter readers have computers and whether or not you go to the website, [oloc.org](http://oloc.org) Please email [susan@oloc.org](mailto:susan@oloc.org) if you have a

computer and tell me whether or not you use it to go to the website.



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**Steering Committee Meeting  
 by Susan Wiseheart, 66**

The October 2007 meeting was the first one I attended and I was the taker of minutes, part of my job as administrative assistant. My impressions after the three days were over are as follows:

This is a group of competent and dedicated Lesbians who are intent on doing the immense amount of work it takes to keep us all connected, provide places for us to meet, and do whatever they can to be sure all of the forms of oppression that might affect us are kept conscious in all they do.

Ageism is a top priority, but that does not leave out any of the other isms. The next Gathering (July 30- Aug 3, 2008) will specifically address racism and classism as well as ageism. Attempts to make it as accessible in all ways as possible are at the top of the Steering Committee's list of priorities. Other oppressive factors that might be part of the lives of some or all of us will also have time and space for discussion.

I came away with huge respect and admiration for these Lesbians and the provisional members and guests who attended the sometimes-grueling meetings. And we managed to have a few good laughs, some delightful meals and the wonderful opportunity to get to know each other better, too.

*Age does not protect you from love, but love to some extent protects you from age.*

*Jeanne Moreau*

**Upcoming Events**

From the Nov/Dec 2007 *Lesbian Connection*: Notice of an upcoming conference that may be of interest to some of our subscribers: *World Pride and Power Conference* for LGBT people of African descent. Feb. 21-24, 2008, in Torrance, CA. [www.worldprideandpower.com](http://www.worldprideandpower.com) 303-799-0506. [pridepower2@aol.com](mailto:pridepower2@aol.com).

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## OLOC Subscriber/Supporter Form

Lesbians 60 and over: We urge you to subscribe to *The Reporter* as an expression of your commitment to be with old Lesbians in your own area, working to confront ageism. If no such group exists, become an OLOC Contact Woman and work with a mentor to start a local group. If you are not yet 60, we welcome you as a Supporter. By giving OLOC your generous financial contribution you can show your commitment and support for challenging ageism.

### Please check all that apply:

\_\_\_\_\_ I am (we are) 60 or over and wish to subscribe (or renew) my (our) current subscription to *The Reporter*.  
\$25 to \$50 for a one-year subscription.

\_\_\_\_\_ I (we) want to receive *The Reporter* but I (we) can contribute only \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am (we are) not yet 60 but want to Support OLOC. Enclosed is \$30 to \$60 for a one-year subscription to *The Reporter*.

\_\_\_\_\_ I (we) want to keep OLOC alive and strong. Please accept my (our) tax-deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or my (our) pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ / month.

\_\_\_\_\_ I (we) want to purchase the *Travel Directory*. Enclosed is \$3 for costs.

\_\_\_\_\_ I (we) want my (our) names to be included in the *Travel Directory*.

\_\_\_\_\_ I (we) would like to give a \$25 gift subscription to the name(s) listed below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please send a sample of *The Reporter* to the name(s) listed below.

### OLOC Endowment

An additional way to help OLOC grow is through the OLOC Endowment. It was created to receive bequests from OLOC Subscribers and Supporters. The bequest can be an outright gift listed in a will or a percentage of assets. If you are interested and would like additional information, please send for a copy of the OLOC Endowment Fund Brochure.

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Date of birth enables us to keep accurate Subscriber/Supporter records for grants and other purposes. Your Ethnicity and disability status is requested as part of our ongoing awareness of and commitment to diversity. **OLOC's mailing lists are for OLOC's use only and not available to any other persons or organizations.**

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**2008 OLOC**  
**National Gathering**  
*California Dreaming*

**July 30th-August 3rd, 2008**  
**in Los Angeles, CA**