

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change



OLOC Regional Gathering a Huge Success *By Judy Benson, 1946*

The OLOC Regional Gathering got under way in Columbia, South Carolina, on Friday afternoon, July 17, with a mixer led by Dr. Jean Boudreaux (Shewolf). This informal activity invited women to connect with new people, to set meeting times, and to gather contact information.

After dinner, we were welcomed by a representative from Columbia's mayor, followed by an inspiring address by Harriet Hancock, who spoke on "Activism as We Age." Harriet, who was instrumental in forming South Carolina Pride, PFLAG, and the Harriet Hancock Center (which supports LGBT programs), told her story of being awakened to LGBT concerns through her gay son's coming out process.

OLOC's Carole Stoneking was presented with the prestigious "Order of the Pink Palmetto Award," and Paige Averette from East Carolina State University summarized her online study of Old Lesbians. The day concluded with an inspiring concert by Barbara Ester and Beth York. Old Lesbians deserve a good time, and day one delivered.

Saturday opened bright and early with a line dancing workshop led by Sally Tatnall. With our energy level high, we enjoyed a panel discussion on "Old Pride" presented by steering committee members, Myra Brahms, Carole Stoneking, Ruth Debra and Sally Tatnall. Small-group discussions followed, with everyone being given the opportunity to connect with

our pride and share stories about our accomplishments.

The afternoon offered a variety of workshops. Sally led a presentation and discussion on learning how to resist the untruths about ageism. Carole showed us the benefits of a relaxing massage. Barb Ester and Beth York discussed the power of women's music, including a journey into music of the 40s, 50s and 60s. Chris Roerden, author of *Don't Murder Your Mystery*, explained the mystery of writing and publishing our stories.

After a late afternoon of unwinding in the pool and

...continued on page 2



Judy Benson, Lavender, Chris Roerden, Mandy Carter, Sally Tatnall

The Reporter ... A quarterly publication of OLOC

September 2009 VOLUME 19 ISSUE 3

OLOC is a nonprofit 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization.

Regional Gathering, concluded...

chatting with friends, we danced and partied to the music of DJ Tammy Rast, and singer Carol Brooks treated us to a performance of a song she had written and dedicated to Harriet Hancock.

The final day of the Gathering began with a large and varied brunch, followed by a panel discussion on the importance of activism, led by Mandy Carter. Panel members, Chris Roerden, Sally Tatnall, Judy Benson, and Lavender talked about the impact activism has made on our physical, mental, and emotional health.

The final activity of our weekend was a bus tour of Columbia that included a visit to historical sites, theaters, and the L Word, Columbia's Lesbian bar.

Thanks to our planning committee for an excellent regional conference, and I hope to see you all next summer at the National Gathering in Cleveland, Ohio.

OLOC Del Martin Old Lesbian Pride Award Seeks Nominations

April 15, 2010, is the extended deadline for nominations for the first Del Martin Old Lesbian Pride Award. In honor of this outstanding Lesbian pioneer, OLOC has established an award recognizing the contributions of other wonderful Old Lesbians. You can nominate any Old Lesbian, 70 or older, whose life and work you think are deserving of this honor. Your nomination should be limited to 500 words or less and should reach us by 04/15/10. The nominee must be alive at the time of nomination. Her life and work can be in any field of endeavor worldwide and should make a significant contribution to the visibility and welfare of Lesbians. The first award will be presented at the 2010 National Gathering in Cleveland OH.

Send your nominations by e-mail to: info@oloc.org, or by regular mail to OLOC.

OLOC is supported in part by grants from the Arcus Foundation and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice.

Old Lesbian Pride in July, 2010

Plans for our July 14-18, 2010 national gathering in Cleveland are coming together. If you have ideas you want the Steering Committee to consider, please get them to us no later than September 25, 2009. The event will include speakers, workshops, entertainment, a dance, and the amazing experience of being surrounded by old, proud Lesbians.

We are proud to have scheduled Vera Martin as the first of our keynote speakers with more to come. Vera, 86, is a co-founder of OLOC from Apache Junction, AZ. She's a big-time activist working against ageism and for social justice and is of African descent.

Alix Dobkin, 69, a Jewish Lesbian pioneer singer/songwriter, whose memoir titled, *My Red Blood* is due out this fall, will both read and sing to us.

Put the dates on your calendar now and watch the website, *The Reporter* plus your own e-mail and postal mailboxes for further details.

Mission Statement for OLOC

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change is a national organization for Old Lesbians age 60 and over, and will:

- Promote Old Lesbian Pride.
- Educate, support and empower Old Lesbians.
- Challenge ageism in our society and educate the general public about the effects of ageism and oppression.
- Celebrate our strengths, our talents, our experiences, and document our lives.
- Convene National Gatherings of Old Lesbians.
- Encourage, establish, and support local chapters and regional events

OLOC Salutes Two Recent Additions to Steering Committee

Ruth Debra, 1944. After beginning the process in October 2006, Ruth joined the OLOC Steering Committee in the spring of 2008. She is a lifelong feminist and activist and has a strong belief in OLOC's mission. She has been a part of founding numerous organizations including Desert Women for Equality and the Coachella Valley chapter of OLOC.

Myra Brahms, 1942. After attending her first OLOC Gathering in Durham, NC in 2006 and her first Regional in Washington, DC, in 2007, Myra decided this was the organization she wanted to put her feminist, Lesbian energy into. She is a retired special education and reading teacher in New York City. As a proud new member of the OLOC Steering Committee, she was one of the organizers of the 2009 Regional Gathering in Columbia, SC.

Billy Jean King recently received the 2009 Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honor. She is the first open Lesbian to be so honored.

Conferences

Simi Litvac's article titled "An Outsider's View of 4th Annual Black Church Summit of the National Black Justice Coalition," which was published in the June 09 issue of *The Reporter*, was edited to fit the space available and some information was omitted. If you would like to read the entire article as submitted, you can request an e-mail copy from info@oloc.org or a print copy from Susan Wiseheart at HC73 Box169C, Drury, MO 65638.

Lesbian Couple Celebrates 70th Anniversary

A Lesbian couple, Caroline Leto, 96, and Venera Magazzu, 97, celebrated their 70th anniversary together on Aug. 17, 2009, in Dania Beach, Florida. They met in 1939 at a party in New York City. According to an article by Ihosvani Rodriguez in the South Florida Sun-Sentinel (July 18, 2009): "Caroline thought Venera was stylish and Venera thought Caroline was funny." During most of their lives together, they remained closeted, with only a few close friends and family members aware of their relationship.

Rodriguez reports that Venera said she often fought the urge to tell others but feared what "outsiders" would think. "I think most people had their suspicions, but they didn't really make a big deal about it because it was just two women. They didn't ask, and we just didn't talk about it."

In 1996 the couple finally registered as domestic partners in New York City because they felt the need to let people know about their relationship. In 2006, Venera put their story in a self-published book titled *Young and Gay at 90: An Unadulterated Story*. Have your local bookstore order a copy (the ISBN is 978-1412083003. It is also available through Amazon.com.

Contact List for Current Steering Committee Members

Co-Directors:

Jan Griesinger, 1942, Athens, OH
Mina Meyer, 1940, Long Beach, CA

jan@oloc.org (740) 448-6424
mina@oloc.org (562) 420-3555

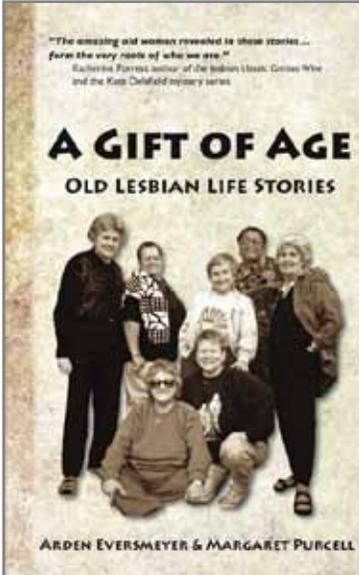
Steering Committee Members:

Alix Dobkin, 1940, Woodstock, NY
Myra Brahms, 1942, New York City, NY
Ruth Debra, 1944, Palm Springs, CA
Sally Tatnall, 1937, Cleveland Heights, OH

alix@oloc.org (845) 679-7586
myra@oloc.org (212) 535-9633
ruth@oloc.org (760) 318-6794
sally@oloc.org (216) 862-0598

Exciting Times for the OLOHP *By Arden Eversmeyer, 1931*

It's been quite a year for the Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project. This year alone has seen five trips, two by air and almost 9,000 miles by auto. And three more are scheduled. There are now 175 life stories in the collection. In March our website, www.olohp.org, went up. Mary Henry in Tacoma, WA, is our web mistress. It's a fun website with lots of information about the project as well as featuring some of the stories in the collection. Mary has added samples of the voices from the original interviews to the stories and is currently adding more women.



And (insert a drum roll here please!) we now have a book titled *A Gift of Age: Old Lesbian Life Stories*. The book features condensed versions of 22 life stories as well as other material. Both the book and the website are answers to the most frequent question asked about the Project, "Is there any way for me to read the stories?" If you'd like to order a copy of the book, you can do so via the website (click on the About the Book page) to download an order form. We'd also be glad to e-mail or mail you an order form if you'd prefer. Before long, you'll also have the option of using PayPal to order your copy on our website. The e-mail address is info@olohp.org and the mailing address is OLOHP, PO Box 980422, Houston, TX 77098.

Puget Sound OLOC Reporting In *By Mary Henry, 1939*

OLOCers in the Puget Sound region have been busy this summer. We started it out by attending Weekend in the Woods, an event put on by the Pacific Northwest Lesbian Archives. About a dozen of us joined the group of 100 or so women of all ages (20-somethings to 90-somethings) and spent the time networking and learning about the efforts of other Lesbians in this area. The goals of PNLA mesh in many areas with those of OLOC, especially in the area of preservation of herstories and ephemera. The archive has recently moved into their new quarters at the Washington State History Museum. The event was a wonderful opportunity to interact and was described after it was over as a "warm weekend of sisterhood-in action."

We have participated in two area Pride events, a parade in Olympia and a festival in Tacoma. We also enjoyed a beautiful afternoon together in a Hootenanny, singing songs that had been hand-picked for our group, including "Ode to a Gym Teacher" by Meg Christian and "Singing for Our Lives" by Holly Near.

And, last but certainly not least, Gloria Stancich, a long-time activist and leader in the local LGBT community and a driving force in our local OLOC group, received a Diamond Hall of Fame Award from the Pride Foundation.



Sherry Orlob, Donna Douglass, Mary Henry and Gloria Stancich

News from San Francisco Bay Area

By Joan P. Emerson, 1935

We have check-ins at our weekend and all-day meetings. We have started to pose specific questions that each woman may answer as well as talking about how she is feeling and issues that she needs to let go to be fully present at the OLOC event. Some possible questions are: What were your wishes and aspirations as a child? Tell about creative work you have done. Tell us something you learned to accept about yourself. Looking back, when did you first have feminist ideas?

Ida Red, who has theater training and experience, leads us in dramatizing our stories. A woman tells an incident from her life. Sometimes the story is a few sentences; sometimes there is lots of detail. Ida chooses women to act out the parts, gives suggestions, and experiments with various modes, such as pantomime and opera. As much as we laugh at the humor, particularly that provided by the hams among us, we also are moved by the sadness, courage, and other feelings engaged.

OHIO Chapter Report

Ohio OLOC marched in Pride parades in Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus with our big OLOC banner and our Old Lesbian puppet "Sinister Wisdom." Marchers included between three and seven OLOC members. The photo here represents what we think might be a first: --an OLOC Mom joins a Pride march. OLOC member Bev Brubaker and her mother were part of the march in Dayton. As usually happens, the OLOC delegation received cheers, a few "oh my god" chuckles when folks see the word "old," a few hugs and requests from younger folks to have their picture taken with us.

Jan Griesinger, OLOC Co-Director, attended the annual meeting of the Ohio Conference United Church of Christ and gave a 90-second "speak-out" on reclaiming the word "old" to a male/female audience of about 200, about half of whom were over 60. The response was incredibly positive, indicating the readiness of folks to hear OLOC's message about ageism. Just to see the smiles on the faces of old people was amazing—they had never before heard such a thing! In addition, one middle-aged male pastor loved the idea of using the book *Learning to Be Old* by Margaret Cruikshank, an OLOCer, in his church. This book title was used as the topic of a workshop at OLOC's recent Regional Gathering, led by Sally Tatnall. We highly recommend it.

More Bay Area Chapter News

By Tita Caldwell, 1931

We had a great retreat mid-May with forty women. The workshop on class and the CR format meeting on Disability were very good. The highlight was a workshop led by Ida Red, where we dramatized personal stories through improvisation. It was very funny and touching.

Cathy Cade received a special awards at a "Celebrating Aging" event in Oakland, organized by the Department of Human Services. Hers was for "photographing Lesbians for 40 years." Six OLOC members were there, wearing our shirts and visors, and cheering loudly when Cathy named our group as being one that supported and encouraged her work. Fun!!!



Standing: Ruth Murray, Joann Jones, Donna Voelkel, Bev Brubaker Seated: Helen Brubaker (Bev's mom)

OLOC Hudson Valley *By Suzanne McHugh, 1948*

The 2007 opening of the Hudson Valley LGBTQ Community Center in Kingston, NY, was the motivation we needed to start an OLOC chapter in the Hudson Valley. Of course, it helped that OLOC Steering Committee member Alix Dobkin lives here and started the ball rolling.

We have been meeting monthly for almost two years and have done a lot of consciousness-raising about issues of concern to Old Lesbians: ageism, care giving for even older parents, health care, and heterosexism in nursing homes, to name a few. We have coordinated some efforts with our local SAGE (Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders) chapter, CenterSAGE, as we share many common concerns. We hosted a joint meeting with CenterSAGE to show the video, *Project Visibility*, produced by the Boulder County Aging Services. The event was well attended, even drawing several people from the local Office for the Aging. We also cosponsored a meeting with CenterSAGE in which the audience was able to pose questions to the Commissioner of the Ulster County Department of Social Services.

The synergy created by the presence of both OLOC and CenterSAGE in our community has resulted in a number of activities, even though the OLOC chapter itself is not directly responsible for these activities. For example, reaching out to the Department of Social Services resulted in several Center members training to do intake at the Center for emergency services such as food stamps and heating assistance. The Center has also offered cultural competency training about LGBTQ issues to local health and human services agencies, a program that has been well attended and very successful. One of our members has even trained to be a volunteer Ombudsman at several local nursing homes. Several of us are involved in the Center's effort to create a directory of health-care practitioners who are sensitive to the needs of the LGBTQ community.

Our chapter continues to meet the first Friday of every month at the LGBTQ Community

Center at 300 Wall St. in Kingston, NY. We start our meeting at 6:30 with a shared potluck meal, followed by a discussion of general interest, a consciousness-raising session, a film, or a special event. We have had several meetings where we had open dialogs with younger Lesbians in the community and hope to continue to share with our younger sisters at future meetings.

Recently, we discussed what we wanted from our local OLOC chapter. The consensus was that the social aspect of our meetings—the shared meal and the opportunity to get out and be with others of our age—is the most important. As we continue to meet and learn more about each other and our needs, we feel that more direct, and indirect, action will result from our shared experiences. If you're in the Kingston area on the first Friday of the month, feel free to join us. Check the Center's website (www.lgbtqcenter.org) for our monthly event.

Southern California Chapter News *By Mina Meyer, 1940*

The Southern California Chapter has had a busy summer. In May we gathered together under our large and beautiful banner for the Long Beach Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade. At our June meeting, a representative from the June Mazer Lesbian Archives came and shared information about the archives and told us about all the exciting programs going on there. Then, in July, we were invited to a fabulous Sunday Brunch at Bixby Towers, the Senior Residence where we hold our monthly meetings. Thirteen of us were able to attend and were served prime rib, ham, shrimp salad, and much, much more. We are currently planning our program for the fall and want to invite women to join us. We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 3737 Atlantic in Long Beach at noon until 3pm. Bring your own lunch and a beverage. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or write.

In Memoriam: Judith Cantor by *Kathe Rauch, 1951*

Judith Cantor was born in 1949 and died in 2009.

Although Judy and Kathe had learned about OLOC at the Atlanta Lesbian Conference in 1991 and wanted to join, Judy had just become eligible for membership this year and planned to attend the Southeast Regional Conference held in Columbia, SC. Kathe did attend with a good friend and found compassionate support among OLOC members.

Judy grew up in Johnson City, TN, and graduated from Interlochen Center for the Arts High School in Michigan. She spent a year in Israel, and then earned her BA in Business. She achieved her CPA, and was always a professional accountant.

In New York City, Judy was an active member of the National Organization for Women and the Salute to Israel, among other groups. In North Carolina, she founded The Computer Lab in the Research Triangle Park area.

With her life partner of 30 years, Kathe Rauch, Judy enabled hundreds of students to earn computer certifications for jobs. Judy earned her Masters in Accounting at NC State University, and taught accounting classes at NCSU. She taught and mentored many students.

Judy had finally achieved one dream: enrollment in a graduate engineering program. She had been barred from architecture and engineering in her college years. She had also just achieved a second dream: a full-time position teaching accounting at Peace College in Raleigh.

Judy loved music and was active in many organizations. Most recently, she played bass clarinet, and was an active supporter of the North Carolina Pride Concert Band and the Lesbian and Gay Bands of America. She marched with the NC Pride Marching Band for many years, once as a fully-uniformed drum major. She was a member of SWOOP (Strong Women Organizing Outrageous Projects) and helped start the Raleigh Business & Professional Network. At NCSU, she was a mentor with the GLBT Student Center.



Research Gatekeeper

Are you doing research about Old Lesbians? Sharon Raphael, our Research Gatekeeper, has guidelines for researchers (available at www.oloc.org) and is happy to help think it through. Nothing about us without us! You can reach her at sharon@oloc.org or at our post office box. Is someone asking you to be a research subject? Contact OLOC if you want to know if we have approved the research.

"Memory is paradise from which one cannot be banished." Quote sent by Emma Joy Crone, 81, of British Columbia who attended one of the very first OLOC gatherings. She also sent us a copy of the Older Feminist Network newsletter from England—we are everywhere!

A Few Housekeeping Details

E-mail subscribers, please keep us up-to-date on your e-mail address.

If you and a partner both read the newsletter, please give us both of your names and demographics when you renew. It helps us with our grant applications to include statistics (unattached to any names) for all of our readers.

We are also hoping to make this newsletter available on audio disc for those who find reading it hard or impossible. Please let us know if you or someone you know might like this service.

Alix's Book

Alix Dobkin's long-awaited *My Red Blood: A Memoir of Growing Up Communist, Coming Onto the Greenwich Village Folk Music Scene & Coming Out in the Feminist Movement* will be published by Alyson Books in October, 2009. Go to: <http://www.alyson.com/9781593501075.html> for information.

Sinister Wisdom

HELP! *Sinister Wisdom* needs donations (tax deductible) to help with printing and mailing #78 Old Lesbians/Dykes II, scheduled for Winter 2009-2010. This exciting issue has almost 200 pages! Please make checks payable to *Sinister Wisdom*, Inc and mail to Fran Day, P. O. Box 1180, Sebastopol, CA 95473-1180.

Legal Issues

The National Center for Lesbian Rights has just released a new resource "Planning with Purpose: Legal Basics for LGBT Elders." Topics include finances, health care, long-term care, relationship recognition, elder abuse, and inheritance. You can download this free of charge on their website at www.nclrights.org

The OLOC Reporter

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

- www.oloc.org • E-mail: info@oloc.org
- Post Office Box 5853 Athens, OH 45701
- 888-706-7506

This newsletter brought to you by: Jennice Thomas, 1940, and Susan Wiseheart, 1941, Editors; Malinda McCain, 1940, and Nancy Krody, 1939, Proofreaders and Copy-editors; Mina Meyer, 1940, and Jan Griesinger, 1942, Content Review; Margaret Purcell, 1951, Design/Layout; All of the writers and the mailing crew

Let your voice be heard.

Deadline for the next issue is November 1, 2009. Submission guidelines: copy due by Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1 and Nov. 1. Limit submissions to 500 words.

Articles may be edited for clarity and length.

Send articles to OLOC: info@oloc.org
or OLOC, PO Box 5853, Athens, OH 45701

Dialogue Topic

Lavender, who is from Australia and attended the OLOC regional event in SC, told us about a group with a great name—see if it will work in your location for a dialogue topic: "Feminist Intergenerational Sisterhood."

NAACP Forms New LGBT Task Force in Partnership With The National Black Justice Coalition

The NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) has just unveiled a Task Force on Gay Issues as a joint venture with NBJC. Called the LGBT Equality Task Force, and announced in July at the NAACP Centennial Convention in New York, it is a historic event that will, according to the NBJC press release, move NAACP forward as it recognizes LGBT rights within the governing body.

OLOCer Mandy Carter is a Founding Board Member Emeritus of and very involved with NBJC. The National Black Justice Coalition is a civil rights organization dedicated to empowering Black Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. Their mission is to end racism and homophobia.

The new Task Force is comprised of seven members and co-chaired by NAACP National Chair Julian Bond and California NAACP Chair Alice Huffman, both of whom have track records as champions of LGBT rights. The work of the Task Force is strongly supported by NBJC, which provided background research on LGBT issues such as Hate Crimes, ENDA, Safe Schools, and HIV/AIDS. OLOC looks forward to working with this new task force.

National Black Justice Coalition www.nbjc.org
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People www.naacp.org/

Confronting Our Fear of Change

By Jackie Grover, 1943

The (universal) fear of change can immobilize any of us, as I realized again after reading a fascinating book titled *Who Moved My Cheese?* by Spencer Johnson, MD. In this book "cheese" is used as a metaphor for what people really want in life. Once we've found "it," we tend to settle into it as if it's always going to be that way. This can lull us into a fake sense of reality or a set of delusions we begin to believe. However, if we don't stay alert for signs of change in ourselves, we miss the opportunity to stay current with our present reality needs.

What I realized was that this book was about me! My current reality was that I was alone and miserable in a beautiful home in a lovely gated community with a really big swimming pool. But, I was far from both my GLBT community and my beloved ocean and I hate to cook! It suddenly occurred to me that I would die there if I didn't make some different choices. Fearing the great "what if" of change, I gathered up my courage. I began to look at my changing physical conditions and what my "cheese" looked like now.

With this new insight I plotted out the locations of various affordable senior-housing facilities that were 1) close to the ocean, 2) in a city with a large GLBT population, 3) with GLBT or GLBT-friendly staff, 4) in a cool, dry climate, 5) pet-friendly, and 6) serving restaurant-quality meals. Knowing that everything in life costs time, energy, or money, I was aware I had some difficult choices to make. But, I'm very happy with the results of those choices.

Thus I would encourage all Old Lesbians to take a bold look at what their needs are NOW. Sometimes our beliefs grow outdated and old emotional reactions can dull us into delusions about our current physical reality. Several Old Lesbians have told me: "Being 79 (or whatever) is not really that old! Sure, I may get winded now but I can still wield a tool with the best of them." Or I'll hear my favorite: "I'm just a loner.

Besides, I don't want to live around men."

My rejoinder to this is "True, men are around me but not in my place unless I invite them." Also I've discovered that being "out" here allows other people to feel freer to talk about their Lesbian or gay friend or relative.

Confronting these excuses for maintaining the status quo can allow you to re-evaluate your current needs and priorities, thus helping you to move on to where your current abilities and joys can better be served. If you'd like to talk about this article, feel free to call me, Jackie, 66. I'm on the West Coast of California (Pacific Time Zone) at 562-424-9925.

Good luck and get going!

We're Listening!

We want more input from our OLOC sisters. We suggest:

- Brief letters to the editor responding to something written in the OLOC newsletter. We won't have room for the kind that begin "here is an event you might want to attend" or "please contact your members of Congress on this issue." Letters of this variety can go on our website forum.
- News from OLOC Chapters about your activities.
- News about OLOC members in your area.

OLOC cannot afford the space to print everything we receive and we may need to edit what you send. But we really want to hear from you.



Drawing by
Diane Germaine

OLOC Chapter Contact List		Help form an OLOC chapter in one of our regions. Write to the Ohio address or e-mail susan@oloc.org		
South West	Northern CO	Cindy Bear, 1947	303-258-9424	cindy@oloc.org
	Southern CA	Mina Meyer, 1940	562-420-3555	mina@oloc.org
	Coachella Valley/ Palm Springs, CA	Ruth Debra, 1944	760-318-6794	ruth@oloc.org
	San Francisco Bay 40 Camino Alto #12209	Joan Emerson, 1935 Mill Valley, CA 94941	415-388-5001	pelicanpansy@ yahoo.com
	North Coast CA	Jane Herman, 1948	707-528-4554 (11 am to 11 pm PST)	
Sandy Tate, 1935		12sandy12@gmail.com		
North West	Portland, OR	Mary Beth Brindley, 1939	503-286-3575	marybeth@oloc.org
	Puget Sound/WA	Gloria Stancich, 1935 Mary Henry, 1939	253-851-9864 253-565-0829	gloria@oloc.org mary@oloc.or
South East		Carole Stoneking, 1937	803-748-9490	stonekg@aol.com
North East	New York City	Myra Brahms, 1942	212-535-9633	myra@oloc.org
	Hudson Valley NY	Alix Dobkin, 1940	845-679-7586	alix@oloc.org
So.Central	St. Louis, MO	Charlotte Ellis, 1943	314-962-2188	charlotte@oloc.org
North Central	Cleveland, OH	Judy Benson, 1946	216-227-1243	judb@cox.net
	OH except Cleveland	Jan Griesinger, 1942	704-448-6424	jan@oloc.org

Why Old? By Tita Caldwell, 1931

I came out in 1976, at the age of 45, in Venice, California. It was a wonderful, exciting time to be a Lesbian feminist. But for me there was a problem. Almost every woman was at least 10 years younger than I was. I did what I could to find Lesbian feminists my age but wound up feeling discouraged and invisible.

I discovered OLOC four years ago, at the age of 74, and it felt like coming home. Here were the old women I had been looking for: my peers, those who understood what it had been like for me coming out in my 40s, those who remembered what surviving married life in the 1950s was like, those who had been affected by the same books and movements as I. This is what OLOC means to me.

Since 2005 there has been a great influx of women in their early sixties into OLOC: their attendance at SF Bay Area meetings has almost doubled, and hardly any of these new women are over 70. At the same time we have lost the

participation of some of our oldest members due to illness and death. Each year the percentage of women over 70 shrinks and there are only a few women over 80 attending our meetings.

Although it is exciting to see so many Lesbians eager to join OLOC, bringing new energy and skills, I also fear losing what has become so precious to me: the presence of my peers, and of the women who are older than I am.

We have implemented new practices to ensure that the voices of our oldest members be heard, and we continue to search for new means of doing this. We now do our check-ins by age, starting with the oldest woman, and make sure each gets the time she needs. At our last meeting, which was a workshop on class as well as our current financial situation, we broke into small groups by age, and we all felt good about it. We will continue to find new ways of adjusting to the changes; after all, that is what we've been doing all of our lives.

If you want to receive *The Reporter*, please let us know even if you can't contribute.

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 chapter. 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:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am (we are) 60 or over and wish to subscribe (or renew) my (our) current subscription to <i>The Reporter</i> . \$25 to \$50 for a one-year subscription. | <input type="checkbox"/> I (we) want to purchase the <i>Travel Directory</i> . Enclosed is \$5 for costs. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I (we) want to receive <i>The Reporter</i> but I (we) can contribute only \$ _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> I (we) want my (our) names to be included in the <i>Travel Directory</i> . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am (we are) not yet 60 but want to Support OLOC. Enclosed is \$30 to \$60 for a one-year subscription to <i>The Reporter</i> . | <input type="checkbox"/> I (we) would like to give a \$25 gift subscription to the name(s) listed below. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I (we) want to keep OLOC alive and strong. Please accept my (our) tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____ or my (our) pledge of \$ _____ / month. | <input type="checkbox"/> Please send a sample of <i>The Reporter</i> to the name(s) listed below. |

Also Available:

**OLOC T-Shirts • Denim Shirts
Sweatshirts • And More!
Cloisonné OLOC Lapel Pins, Buttons
(e-mail, check oloc.org or write for details)**

OLOC Endowment

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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 and not available to any other persons or organizations.

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