



An International
Community of
Lesbian Elders

The Reporter

A quarterly publication of Old Lesbians Organizing for Change:
An International Community of Lesbian Elders

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Steering Committee Meeting Report

By Jacqui Lewis, 1949

The Steering Committee recently held its first face-to-face meeting (some members attended by Zoom) since 2019. It took place over four days; members discussed the myriad of topics to keep OLOC operating, as well as planned for the upcoming National Gathering, scheduled for October 26–30, 2022.



*Michiko Bailey Thorne, 1953 • Alí Marrero Calderón, 1948
• María Cora, 1953, in Tempe, Arizona*

Michiko Bailey Thorne, 1953, was voted a full-fledged member of the SC. We continue our search for other members; if you are interested, please let an SC member know.

Discussions continue surrounding the steps needed to make OLOC a bi-lingual organization. At this time, we are not. We are translating our newsletters into Spanish, but to become truly bi-lingual, we must have the capacity to translate and interpret all OLOC programs. The cost of securing translation/interpretation machines was discussed and will be researched.

Fundraising considerations were a large part of the meeting. Recent GivingTuesday support focused funds to assist in meeting translation costs. Fundraising is an important component of OLOC sustainability.

We considered holding regional vs. National Gatherings. The theme next year is “The Focus Is Lesbian” and workshops will center around “Mind, Body, and Spirit.” If you’re interested in presenting, contact Jacqui Lewis or María Cora. Application forms will be available in the E-News.

We also discussed the Martin–Lyon Old Lesbian Pride Award criteria and a keynote speaker and entertainment. Bethsaida Ruiz, 1957, will once again facilitate LOC (Lesbians of Color) Day.

Registration will begin July 15; forms will be in the E-News.

Sylvia Brown, 1939, Coordinator of the Arizona Chapter, attended the last day of the meeting to tell us about the Chapter and regional resources. We hope that someone is interested in putting together the souvenir program book for the Gathering.

If there are no volunteers, we will not have a program book. Please come join us!

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change:
An International Community of Lesbian Elders

PO BOX 100129 • Cranston, RI 02910 **NEW!**
Phone: 888-706-7506 (toll-free)

EMAIL: info@oloc.org
www.oloc.org

Who We Are: OLOC is an organization of Old Lesbians and our supporters. We are dedicated to preserving and enhancing the Lesbian voice as well as increasing Lesbian visibility in a world that stifles it and threatens to erase it.

OLOC's Steering Committee welcomes feedback and suggestions from members by way of mail, phone, or email. Please let us know if you would like a response.

The OLOC Reporter is published by Old Lesbians Organizing for Change: An International Community of Lesbian Elders.

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This newsletter is brought to you by:

Editor: Sheryl, 1954.

Content review: Ruth Debra, 1944; Sally Tatnall, 1937; and Susan Wiseheart, 1941.

Spanish Proofreader and Copy-editor: María Cora, 1953.

English Proofreader and Copy-editor: Nancy Krody, 1939.

Design/Layout: Connie Rose, 1948.

All of the writers and photographers.

Deadline for the next issue is February 1, 2022.

Limit contributions to 300 words.

Memorial announcements only: send in name, birth and death years, and city and state of the Lesbian who died. See E-News for life stories.

We may edit articles for clarity and/or length. Send articles to OLOC: reporter@oloc.org or PO Box 100129, Cranston, RI 02910.

The *Reporter* is available both electronically (PDF) and in print. To switch or add formats, please email susan@oloc.org; write to PO Box 100129, Cranston, RI 02910; or phone 888-706-7506.

Steering Committee Meetings

The National Steering Committee is meeting regularly—most often on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:00 P.M. ET—by Zoom at this time. The next in-person meeting will be March 16 to 19, 2022 in Tempe, Arizona. If there are topics you want the Committee to address, contact the Steering Committee by email at info@oloc.org; a note to the PO Box in Cranston, Rhode Island; or a phone call to 888-706-7506 (toll-free). Be sure to say if you want a response.

The Steering Committee welcomes members as guests at SC meetings. Guests will be excluded from discussion of personnel issues (contract workers and new SC members moving from provisional to full membership). For in-person meetings, there will be a maximum of three in-person guests and four virtual guests. For virtual meetings, there will be a maximum of six guests. Guests are welcome to listen but not to verbally participate, including in decision-making. Questions and comments are to be sent in email to info@oloc.org before or after the meeting. Meeting dates and times will be made available to members. Requests will be approved in the order they are received, and a link or invitation to the meeting will be sent to those who are approved. To request attendance, contact the email address above and indicate the date of the meeting you want to attend.

 Groups

Supporter/Members: Are you in National OLOC's online forum? It is a great place to have discussions with other members.

To subscribe, go to
<https://groups.io/g/nationalOLOC>.

If you have any problems, contact
susan@oloc.org.

***The mission of OLOC is to eliminate the oppression of ageism
and to stand in solidarity against all oppressions.***

OLOC is supported in part by grants from the Carpenter Foundation and Resist.

News From OLOC

OLOC's New Tagline

By Sally Tatnall, 1937

During the strategic planning process, many ideas came up. We looked at all the ways OLOC works in the world. One of the issues that has been around for decades is the use of the word “old.” OLOC has always confronted the use of “old” in our culture because it is used to demean us. “Old” sets us apart from the so-called valuable people in America. “Old” is seen as decrepit, losing it, out of touch. OLOC challenges that idea.

OLOC has always been about changing how we ourselves think about “old.” There is also the fact that many Lesbians don't join us because they don't like the word “old.” They don't feel old; they don't want to focus on whatever “old” means to them.

We want to expand what OLOC is in the world. We want to recognize all the ways our supporters/members act in the world. We want to honor who we all are and the reach we all have. We want to value our own life experience.

With this in mind, we have added a tagline to how we represent ourselves in the world. From now on you will see: “Old Lesbians Organizing for Change: An International Community of Lesbian Elders.” Look for it—wherever you see OLOC spelled out, you will see the tagline.

We hope you all will embrace this expanding view of OLOC.

Announcement

For those of you who receive the Reporter in print, if you want both English and Spanish and have not told us so by phoning 888-706-7506 (toll-free) or emailing info@oloc.org, you will only get one or the other. Unless you have told us you want Spanish, you will receive English.

It's Not Too Late to Participate in GivingTuesday!

By Alí Marrero Calderón, 1948

OLOC's National Steering Committee is happy to announce that we've started a long-term process toward becoming a bi-lingual organization, which will help us be more accessible to our Old Lesbian sisters whose primary language is Spanish. As you've probably noticed, we've provided the latest issues of the *Reporter* and E-News, and the member/supporter form, in both English and Spanish. We will be exploring how to expand this bi-lingual effort to include, not only written translation, such as for the website, but also real-time interpretation services to other areas of OLOC, such as Zoom events and Gatherings. The endeavor is a sizable financial cost to OLOC, and, as part of our commitment to the strategic plan, we focused our fundraising effort on GivingTuesday, November 30, toward this goal.

You can participate until the end of the year by using your credit card or PayPal account by going to <https://oloc.org/> and clicking the yellow “donate” button on the right side of the page. You can also use your credit card over the phone by calling Ruth Debra at 760-318-6794, or send a check to OLOC, PO Box 100129, Cranston, RI 02910. *Please indicate that your gift is for GivingTuesday so we will be sure to use it for this project.*

It is because of you, our members and friends, that we are able to continue to provide our resources and support to Old Lesbians. You are all so valued and appreciated. Thank you.

For the online versions, you will always have a choice to read it in one or the other or both languages by clicking the buttons of the one(s) you want on the cover email.

Seeking Nominations for Martin-Lyon Old Lesbian Pride Award

The 2022 Martin-Lyon Old Lesbian Pride Award will be presented at the next National Gathering, in Tempe, Arizona. We are now seeking nominations.



The Award is named for OLOC members, activists, and pathfinders Del Martin, 1921–2008 (right in photo), and Phyllis Lyon, 1924–2020 (left in photo). The pair, who, among many other things, advocated for marriage for same-sex couples, were married in 2008 after 55 years of loving partnership.

Del and Phyllis were out, proud, and unapologetic when few were. They forged an enduring image that continues to inspire generations of Lesbians around the globe.

The \$500 Award will be presented to a Lesbian 70 years or older whose life and work has impacted and will continue to impact the lives of Old Lesbians.

OLOC will pay the registration fee, domestic travel, and lodging, but not meals not covered by registration, for the winner and her partner or caregiver, if any, to attend the Gathering next year.

Guidelines for nominations:

1. Nominations should describe the outstanding accomplishments and/or achievements of the nominee in 500 words or less. Send by email to info@oloc.org (preferred) by February 7, 2022, or regular mail to PO Box 100129, Cranston, RI 02910.

2. Nominations must be postmarked (if mailed) by February 1.

3. The Award will be given to an Old Lesbian age 70+ at OLOC's National Gathering, to be held in Tempe, Arizona, October 26–30, 2022.

4. Nominations are worldwide and for an Old Lesbian in any field of endeavor.

5. Nominee's life and work must positively impact the lives of Old Lesbians.

6. Nominees must be alive at the time of nomination.

7. Only OLOC member/supporters may contribute nominations.

8. Those who have been nominated before (except winners) may be nominated again.

We look forward to receiving your nominations. Thank you for helping to ensure that we keep Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon's legacy alive!

Passings

Chernah Belah Coblentz, 1952–2021, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Harriet Marks-Nelson, 1933–2021, Desert Hot Springs, California

See the E-News for more about these Lesbians.



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National Zoom and End White Dominance Events

OLOC and Racism

By Patty O'Donnell, 1956

“History is not what happened; it’s who tells the story,” Sally Roesch Wagner from *Without a Whisper*.

After ending my paid working years in environmental, land use, and transportation planning, where I incorporated equity and justice in my work, I wanted to do more in social issues. I grew up in the Detroit area and was taught by the Catholic nuns in the late 1960s and early 1970s to be active in social and environmental issues. One of my work experiences was with a Tribal government, where I witnessed the Tribes and First Nations being consistently left out of the environmental decisions by the United States and Canada. Their decisions affected regional areas such as the Great Lakes, the states and provinces, and even the local level. One experience I had

at a binational meeting was the non-Native government people acting awestruck when an “Indian” attended a meeting, but then ignoring the Tribes and First Nations anyway.

Prior to joining the OLOC End White Dominance Planning Group, I had attended a couple of the series’ events where I learned more or confirmed what I knew. I then wanted to be an active participant. Having had the time now to do research, read books, and watch webinars on racism, equity, Lesbians, and women, I learned even more and wanted to share with others. I do not want to perpetuate “normal” or status quo—it has not worked for everyone in the past and is not working now.

Racism in this world intersects with us Old Lesbians, and, through our End White Dominance series, we can all share and learn! Come join us at our Zoom series events, suggest a topic to cover, be a presenter, be a part of our Planning Group.

National Zoom Events

OLOC’s Zoom Crew and End White Dominance Planning Committee have both been developing many exciting free events to keep us all connected during the pandemic. The Zoom Crew is organizing and implementing three types of events: large group panels/presentations, support/discussion groups, and open house informal get-togethers. The End White Dominance Planning Committee is coordinating and facilitating a monthly series of events designed to further educate OLOC supporters about systemic racism and what we can do to interrupt it.

Coming events include:

Liberation Starts with L: An Olivia Records Story
Thursday, December 9, 4:00–5:30 P.M. ET

Experiences of Old Lesbians Without Children: Our Stories
Monday, December 13, 4:00–5:30 P.M. ET



Winter Holiday Reflections

Sunday, December 19, 3:00–4:30 P.M. ET

End White Dominance—Topic: End White Dominance Reviewed

Friday, December 24, 4:00–5:30 P.M. ET

New Year Open House

Saturday, January 1, 3:00–4:30 P.M. ET

Landykes: Women’s Land Communities, Part 2

Thursday, January 20, 3:00–5:00 P.M. ET

End White Dominance—Topic: Anti-Semitism

Friday, January 28, 4:00–5:30 P.M. ET

Upcoming topics include: “How to Romance an Old Lesbian,” “Women of the Harlem Renaissance,” “Writing Memoir,” “Lesbian Books and Movies,” “Caregiving for Alzheimer’s or Dementia,” “Lesbians with Disabilities,” further discussion on ageism, and much more!

(continued on page 6)

National Zoom Events (continued)

Ongoing groups include:

- Lesbians of Color Discussion
- Lesbian Widows Support
- Caregivers Support
- Old Lesbians with Disabilities Peer Support
- ASL Chat
- Radical Lesbian Feminists

Additional programs will be announced soon and all the details you need will be posted on our website at <https://oloc.org/zoom-schedule/>.

You can see videos of the past Zoom Crew events, with resources such as reading lists, transcripts, and participant reviews, at <https://oloc.org/past-zooms-2021/> and <https://oloc.org/past-zooms-2020/>. The End White Dominance past events will be posted soon.

If you have questions, please contact susan@oloc.org (End White Dominance only) or Zoom@OLOC-Chapters.groups.io (Zoom crew only).

Welcome to the Steering Committee, Michiko!

I'm Michiko Bailey Thorne, born in 1953. I am Japanese and Black; was born in Japan and made the final move to the US just before my 13th birthday. I'm the mother of three fabulous children and have been with my spouse, Stephan Thorne, for 27 years. I came out relatively late, at the age of 30. Since then, I have been involved in various LGBTQ organizations. I'm excited about becoming more involved in OLOC—a Lesbian organization! I'm looking forward to working to support OLOC's growth in becoming a more diverse organization.



The Practice and Legacy of a Black Lesbian Feminist

After a year, the Special Issue of the *Journal of International Women's Studies* (JIWS) devoted to Dr. Angela Bowen's work is live. Pioneering Black Lesbian feminist scholar, activist, artist, teacher, and OLOC member Angela Bowen, Ph.D. (1936–2018), was a friend



Angela Bowen

and early scholar of Audre Lorde, and examples of her writing about Audre are included. The Special Issue contains sample materials from Angela's archive, including writings, audio and video of speeches, and photos documenting her career as a dancer, her activism on Black Lesbian and gay issues, and her other career in Women's Studies, among diverse topics.

This is a rich and inspirational representation of Angela's archives being housed at Spelman College and The Jerome Robbins Library at the New York Public Library. The editors hope that you will share this Special Issue with your friends, colleagues, writers, students, and all the warriors who you know nationally and internationally. Audre Lorde always hoped her work would be used. We all wish the same for Angela's.

One of the highlights is M. Jacqui Alexander's tribute to Angela: *Praise Song for Angela Bowen*. The current issue will be housed in the Special Issues Collection of JIWS in perpetuity.

You can also see the film *The Passionate Pursuits of Angela Bowen* at <https://www.kanopy.com/product/passionate-pursuits-angela-bowen> or by borrowing it from OLOC's Media Library, where it is free, with a donation requested for postage.

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Member Contributions

Looking Back

By Marlene Stewart, 1946

One day I was standing in front of the mirror, and I took a serious look at my arms and legs. They were slender, but soft and somewhat flabby. Often, I didn't feel strong and I tired easily. I had always kept my weight [where I like it] and ate healthily. What happened? This "ah ha!" moment drove me to do some serious research.



Marlene Stewart

The first concept I uncovered was a term called "sarcopenia," a condition characterized by loss of muscle tissue and strength. It is a natural part of the aging process. What?! When did this happen? Those answers are not as important as the solution. It doesn't matter how old you are, if you are physically challenged, or even in a wheelchair; you can make this change now!

The first thing to examine is your diet and eating habits. Even though we don't seem to have large appetites as we get older, that makes it even more important to make sure what we eat is high in quality protein. An average daily breakdown is 1.0–1.2 grams per pound of body weight or 25–30 grams per meal. If your diet falls below this, don't stress; you can increase it gradually.

The other factor to reclaiming your muscle strength is exercise consisting of gentle stretching movements. I work on my neck, shoulders, back, arms, and legs. These are gentle repetitive motions; however, they are very effective. After my "workout," I feel energized and happy. When I miss a day or so, I feel droopy and draggy.

Join me on this journey to strengthen our muscles and increase our energy and stamina. Let's not just accept this fate. Let's fight back! You are worth it! I'm worth it! Let's be the "New Face" to "This Is What an Old Lesbian Looks Like!"

In all OLOC communications and events, you are responsible for your own contribution. Please use respectful and considerate language at all times. OLOC supports civil discourse and reflective listening. Individual opinions do not necessarily reflect the beliefs or attitudes of OLOC as a whole.

OLOC Small Group Invitation: Art and Writing Share

Art and Writing Share: Show and Tell with Old Lesbians! Show off art and crafts you have created, or read your writings, to a supportive group. Chat afterward and make new friends! Email Clove Haviva, 1960, at clove.haviva@bastyr.edu with questions and/or saying if a monthly gathering, third Thursdays at 2:00 or 8:00 P.M. ET, works for you. Also let her know if you are interested but can't do either of those times.

In order to provide you with more exciting articles, reviews, stories, and news, effective this issue, the member/supporter form will no longer be included inside the Reporter.

If you want forms, here is how you can get them:

- Go to <https://oloc.org/support-oloc/>
- Call us at our toll-free number (888-706-7506)
- Email us at info@oloc.org
- Write us at our PO Box

However you get the form, fill it out and send it back to us either electronically or in print.

That's all there is to it!

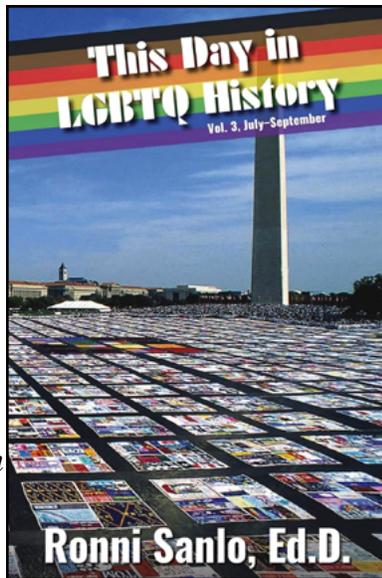
Member Contributions

This Day in LGBTQ History

By Ronni Sanlo, Ed.D., 1947

When I was young, I scoured my school libraries, from elementary to high school, to find a reflection of myself as a young Lesbian, though that wasn't a word I knew. In 1962, I finally found an entry in an encyclopedia that thinly described gay men and Lesbians: *homosexual—a man who has sex with other men; Lesbian—a woman from the Isle of Lesbos*. I was lost ... and what did the Isle of Lesbos have to do with me, anyway???

Decades later, when I began work as the LGBT Center Director at UCLA in 1997, I created—and then expanded—a 400-square-foot library in the Center so that students would have a place to find reflections of themselves and to learn their histories. Finally, young people could find accurate representations of who they are and on whose shoulders they stand!



We have a long, rich history, we LGBTQ people. As a retired educator and LGBTQ professional, I know we didn't just jump out of a bar last Thursday night. LGBTQ folks came before us, paving the way for our freedom, though they likely weren't aware of that. Our history informs us about who we are, from where we came, and perhaps where we're going. As queer journalist Masha Gessen wrote, "The future is history."

My newest book project is a four-volume compilation titled *This Day in LGBTQ History*. It is just that: daily information about people, places, and events that brought us to here. It offers hidden stories that we never learned in school, and it may teach us that the LGBTQ community is far more diverse than we ever imagined! Our heroes and sheroes and they-roes call to us to remember. I hope you find them in these pages. Signed copies are available from Ronni@ronnisanlo.com.

Sometimes Genealogical Sleuthing Turns up a Lesbian or Two

By Mary Jean Mulherin, 1951

I am a second-generation European Lesbian living in the US, and, after years of sleuthing for my not-to-be found Irish foremothers in the Irish records, I happened upon a second cousin once removed in California, born in Switzerland with an English mother, whose father is my father's first cousin born in Ireland!

Genealogy is a lot of puzzle pieces, and while some go missing entirely, like those death records of my great- and great-great grandmothers, others are found with a simple DNA test done on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean and across the US.



My new California cousin introduced me to the rest of her family in England, and here I learned how I am related to Anne Choma of *Gentleman Jack* fame. Anne is the aforementioned California cousin's first cousin and daughter of my second cousin. Now that *Gentleman Jack* has reached the US and is all the rage here, I've learned that in Halifax, England, where Anne Lister resided, they are planning her next birthday celebration week in April 2022. Lesbians are already booking rooms in hotels and cottages in the area. You can learn more about this on Facebook by joining ALBW OWLs.

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Chapter News

New Mexico Chapter

By Susan Buchler, 1946

August: Elizabeth Berrey, 1945: “Ageism.” What is it? Do we do it to ourselves or others? Examples were liking (or not) comments such as “You look so young” or “senior moment.” There is internal ageism we practice on ourselves, such as how we criticize our age and say we can’t do anything anymore. As Lesbians, we already don’t fit in with society; ageism adds another layer of discrimination that amounts to feeling that we are not valued or visible, i.e., we are dismissible. There can also be disability. We were challenged to stay authentic to ourselves and to articulate all the different dynamics we are dealing with. Ageist comments can cause fear of growing old. They are a form of oppression to our vibrant self-reality. [Editor: look for more on this in the December E-News.]

September: This was a “bring-your-own-food” potluck and social gathering in the back yard of Hari Sheppard, 1950, and Susan Buchler, 1946, on a perfect September day. We sat in the shade amidst towering amaranth and sunflowers, where we could glimpse birds, hummingbirds, bees, and even a few butterflies amongst wildflowers in the pollinator garden.

OLOC Chapters as of December 1, 2021, are Arizona (meeting in greater Phoenix); Coachella Valley/ Palm Springs, California; San Francisco Bay Area, California; Colorado; WMass, Massachusetts (formerly Pioneer Valley); St. Louis, Missouri; New Mexico; Hudson Valley, New York; Central Ohio; Rhode Island; Vermont; Puget Sound Area, Washington; and Tri-State (West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky).

October: “Show and Tell–Crafters/Artists.” Paula Fisher, 1951, highlighted the women in New Mexico OLOC and their crafts and art— what they do, how they do it, and what moves them to be creative. Women brought their artwork. There were mosaics, a COVID-19 mask quilt and witch wall hanging, an image of a Hopi hunting kachina, and a talking Old Lesbian puppet from New Jersey named Jed. We saw underwater videography taken while snorkeling in Hawaii. One artist used Japanese techniques for making boxes from various multi-colored exotic hardwoods. There was intricate laser art using digital graphics of New Mexico maps on wooden boxes. Lastly, a member read her poetry.



Rita Noe, 1943



Elia M., 1961



Sandy Smith, 1949



Carol Eagleheart, 1944



To find OLOC on Facebook, go to

www.facebook.com/NationalOLOC



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Colorado Chapter

By Katherine Wood, 1954

Colorado OLOC has been meeting in person for the past three months, but we went back in November to Zoom. We had our annual OLOC retreat the first weekend of October, returning to the cottages in Manitou Springs where we have stayed before. We feasted on the best calzones in Colorado and tried several other new restaurants in the area. The leaves were turning, and the wild turkeys were in the mood to visit. We also watched three Lesbian movies. Naturally, we booked again for next year.

In September, we were visited by a person running for University of Colorado Regent-at-Large. Our October meeting this year was about Medicare, and November was with representatives from Bankers Life about extended care.

Western Mass

By Emily Greene, 1946

The fall has been a busy time for WMass OLOC, and we started out with a great program, “Valley Lesbian Authors Read and Discuss Their Work on Zoom” on September 12. This was organized by Edie Daly, 1937, who is one of our local OLOC members who read her writings, along with our Co-Coordinator, Connie Barrett, 1945. Celia Lang also read her writings and is new to our OLOC group. It was quite thrilling to see so many local authors, and I must report that I ran into Sally Bellerose in Provincetown at Womencrafts, who was another local author. We had a wonderful array of fiction, poetry, memoir, and stories of Old Lesbians, and a lively Q & A.

In October, we organized our fifth OLOC mini-Michfest, this time going to Eastham, Cape Cod. Twelve happy Lesbians, from Western

Massachusetts, Vermont, Boston, Lexington [Massachusetts], and Connecticut, arrived at their cottages for a week of total fun and relaxation on October 9. Once there, the activities were spontaneous, and a text group was set up for connecting. We gathered at each others’ cabins three different times for activity planning and eating. It was Women’s Week in Provincetown, and we were all delighted to see some of the Lesbian movies, stroll up and down Commercial Street, and visit our favorite Lesbian store, Womencrafts. Of course, walks on the beaches were very popular. That is eight of our 12 in the photo at Marconi Beach.

We are all getting ready for winter, and our November program was “Challenging Racism,” presented by Shari Pergricht, 1958. I headed for Alapine Lesbian Village in Alabama on October 26 to participate in a memorial for OLOC member

Ellen Spangler, 1934–2021, who passed on August 8.

We are very grateful for the support of National OLOC.

L to R, Rosemary Trowbridge, 1943; Laura J. Kaye, 1945; K.D., 1955; Sue Reamer, 1942; Jane Aulisio, 1942; Chaia Mide, 1949; Anne Perkins, 1943; Emily Greene, 1946.



Want to start an OLOC Chapter in your area? Contact Jacqui@oloc.org if you are east of the Mississippi or ruth@oloc.org if you are west of the Mississippi.

Member Contributions

Dykes Dealing with COVID-19 in Old Age

By Sharon Raphael, 1941

From what I have read and my own research on Old Lesbians, dealing with COVID-19 in our old age has undermined the one thing that has kept us mentally healthy: our creative friendship and social networks. For many Lesbians who were born in the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s, creating alternative friendship networks to replace nearly absent family connections was important.

Then there are the Dykes described as the “young old” (ages 60-74) caught in the middle, straining to walk the tightrope between generations. COVID-19 added the fear that staying in close physical contact with grandkids or adult children might not be a good idea. The fast tracking of home tests and shots has lessened the need to stay apart as much.

Outstanding New Lesbian Historical Novel

By Peg Cruikshank, 1940

Liberty by Jay Tavener was set in the 1780s. It is an Amazon e-book. Can a Quaker from Salem find love with a free-thinking French aristocrat? There are exciting scenes, rich detail, and memorable characters. It is exceptionally well-written. The author’s other names are Jane Traies, 1945, (OLOC member) and Jacky Bratton. Highly recommended!

Mary Jean Mulherin’s Genealogical Sleuthing (continued from page 8)

Anne Choma is not my only known Lesbian cousin, as I have another second cousin in the Buffalo, New York, area related on the other side of my father’s Irish family.

My Irish grandmother, while standing on a chair and changing a light bulb at the age of 76, retorted to my brother who offered to help her, “I can do it myself. I’ve lived like a man all my life.”

It’s good to remember the strength of our foremothers and know we are related to a herstory of Lesbians.

Lesbians/feminists are learning new ways to cope and inventing as we go along. I thought the idea of “bubbles” (choosing one friend to be safe with during COVID-19) was a great idea.

Gay Community Centers and Lesbian hangouts are just getting back in operation. Lesbian social life before COVID-19 was diminishing, in any case. So many bookstores and feminist institutions that catered to Lesbian-identified women closed. Zoom sessions have served as an outlet to relieve tension and lessen loneliness but are not the same as being with our dyke cohorts in “real life”: touching, hugging, sitting together, being us.

I am so looking forward to the Gathering in 2022. One difference about being old, especially for those of us over 75, is we have to think about our mortality, compared to when we were young and thought we would live forever. As our friends leave us and we sort out medical appointments, we still have another kind of survival on our hands: keeping our dyke spirits alive in the face of Lesbian erasure. We must keep OLOC strong and be ever vigilant.

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