

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change



Founded
in 1989

The Reporter

A quarterly publication

of OLOC

June 2020

Vol 30 #2

Responses to *What Do You Think?*

In response to Jan Griesinger, 1942, asking in the March issue, "What is best about getting old? What is worst about getting old?," Jan answered her own questions:

Just sending some comments about *old*. My comments when someone says *old* in a bad way: "What is the alternative to getting old?" "*Old* is not a four-letter word."

BEST about getting old: we are still living, eating, enjoying chocolate (my favorite), visiting with friends, singing (I love my Calliope Feminist Choir), petting pets (I love my cat and am allergic to her; she makes my nose run), seeing winter change to spring, seeing sunrise and sunset, hearing the news (not always good).

WORST about getting old (for me; yes, make a list of what is worst for you): not always able to attend everything we'd like, if it is too loud, too inaccessible, or too far from home; not being allowed to drive anymore; not walking as well as I once did (with swollen feet); living in Assisted Living where I don't know anyone else who lives here and they never have my favorite food (Thai food, Indian food), only boring food; having trouble putting on socks and shoes.



Jan Griesinger



Virginia Mollenkott

We received two additional terrific responses (below and page 2) and would love to see more. Send yours in to reporter@oloc.org by August 1; no more than 300 words, please.

Old Age: The Worst and the Best

By Virginia R. Mollenkott, 1932

What's worst about growing old? Well, to my mind, worst of all is losing the companionship of lovers, friends, and family as some of them slip away into another level of reality. Additionally, it's no fun to lose abilities once taken for granted: walking, running, hearing and seeing clearly, speaking easily and audibly. It is also no fun to discover that one has forgotten the names of good friends, or even the nouns that identify familiar ideas and actions. And then there is the loss of being able to eat and calmly digest almost any food that might appeal to our taste buds. More and more, life becomes a matter of maintenance, maintenance, maintenance.

By contrast—what's best about growing old? For me, best of all is the discovery that many people are full of gratitude and willing to express it—such as folks who were in my college classes 60–70 years ago and come to visit me. Or letters and phone calls from people of faith who tell me that my books have encouraged them to honor themselves and their Creator. Also lovely is to discover cooperation with talented people eager to share their crafts—such as the many residents of Cedar Crest retirement community in Pompton Plains, New Jersey, where I live, who learned to write outstanding plays when two theater professors moved in and shared their wealth of knowledge. And then there is the joy of

Continued on page 2

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



Continued from page 1

experiencing an amazing new kind of love: grandparent love and great-grandparent love. Not to mention the pile of memories of people and places we have known and loved.

Furthermore, old age is full of surprises because we understand more what we do not grasp in our youth—that we truly don't have a clue about what a day may bring forth.

More Worst and Best about Old Age

By Pat Gowens, 1944

The most difficult physical part of aging for me has been the loss of physical capacities. I can no longer squat flat-footed to do many tasks. Climbing stairs has become a huge pain. Losing the freedom to ride a bike has been a huge inconvenience. Mysterious physical ailments that don't go away and appear to have no remedy are also a frustration and worry.

Of course I am lucky that my physical limitations are not more serious. Yet.

Other irritations are more maddening. I am so sick of people telling me that I am "not old" and that I must NEVER claim to have any type of limitation due to my age. Just last night, a woman said, "Don't ever say that." ("I'm old.") Other maddening stupidity that women tell me is that age is "all in the mind" or that age "makes no difference." And that anyone can do anything regardless of age if we just eat properly and exercise. Women have actually told me "Don't be negative" if I speak about any age limitations!

Another problem with being an elder is the treatment by people in general. I am often invisible, and ignored, or women are uncomfortable around me.

My greatest problem is the lack of a sex life and companionship due to the difficulty of meeting Lesbians and being accepted by or attractive to the few Lesbians I do meet.

It's hard to come up with benefits of old age. The best part of being old is that I feel justified in slowing down the work I do to report on women's resistance to injustice. After all, I should be able to retire at some

point! But the urgency is great. And giving up is impossible, especially with women on the front lines of all wars on the poor.

The Political is Not Personal

By Sally Tatnall, 1937

Being in OLOC, I often hear from other Old Lesbians they don't want to be part of OLOC because they don't like the word "old" and don't think of themselves as "old."

The same is true of racism. White women don't want to be called racist because they don't feel they are racist and think they are good people.

I could go on about all the kinds of oppression we know, but here's the deal: *It is not about you.*

Here's the news—To old women: younger people see you as **old** and all of the bad terminology that goes along with it—out of touch, not "getting it," infirm, etc. Younger people see you as getting in their way. If you doubt this, ask a younger person about her life and see if she asks you anything about your life.

To white women: Women of Color know you have wildly more benefits from this racist system than they do. This has been proved. Women of Color are tired of our denial because we don't feel like bad people. How a white woman feels is a distraction from understanding the social structure of racism and the imbalance of power that keeps it in place.

This personalizing of the political structure we all were conditioned to believe in is the biggest mistake we will ever make. This will keep us apart and we will not win this war against women.

This "identity politics" is not working for women. We must let go of our personal feelings and get back to understanding the oppressive structure under which we all grew up.

And once we "get it," maybe we can work together as real equals and win.

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 Reporter is published by Old Lesbians Organizing for Change:

- www.oloc.org; email: info@oloc.org
- PO Box 834, Woodstock, NY 12498
- 888-706-7506 (toll-free)

This newsletter is brought to you by:

Editor: Sheryl, 1954.

Proofing/Copy-editing: Nancy Krody, 1939.

Content Review: Alix Dobkin, 1940, Sally Tatnall, 1937, Jan Griesinger, 1942, and Susan Wiseheart, 1941.

Design/Layout: Malinda McCain, 1940.

All of the writers and photographers.

Deadline for the next issue is August 1, 2020. Limit general contributions to 300 words. Memorial announcements only name, birth and death years, and city and state of the Lesbian who died. See E-News for life stories.

Contact us for the style guide (revised November 2018). The opinions expressed in OLOC's newsletters do not necessarily reflect the views held by all members. We may edit articles for clarity and/or length. Send articles to OLOC at reporter@oloc.org.

Steering Committee Members Contact List

Co-Directors:

Alix Dobkin, 1940, Woodstock, NY,

alix@oloc.org, 845-679-7586

Sally Tatnall, 1937, Lyndhurst, OH,

sally@oloc.org, 216-912-8627

Steering Committee Members:

Ruth Debra, 1944, Operations

Coordinator, Palm Springs, CA,

ruth@oloc.org, 760-318-6794

Bonnie Wagner, 1942, Woodstock, NY,

bonnie@oloc.org, 845-679-7710 or
845-417-1481

Alí Marrero-Calderón, 1948, Bayamón,

Puerto Rico, ali@oloc.org,

510-365-6745

María Cora, 1953, San Lorenzo, CA,

maria@oloc.org, 510-366-8630

Who We Are: OLOC is an organization of Old Lesbians. 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 Mission Statement

To eliminate the oppression of ageism and to stand in solidarity against all oppressions.

OLOC Vision Statement

OLOC will be a cooperative community of Old Lesbian feminist activists from many backgrounds working for justice and the well-being of all Old Lesbians.

Del Martin Old Lesbian Pride Award Has a New Name

Since 2010, OLOC has given the Del Martin Old Lesbian Pride Award to honor eight members who have made particularly outstanding contributions to the well-being of Old Lesbians. The Award is presented biannually to one or more Lesbians age 70 years or older whose lives and work have impacted and will continue to impact the lives of Old Lesbians.



Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin

Del Martin, 1921–2008, and Phyllis Lyon, 1924–2020, first met in 1950. They were activists and mentors long before there was a movement or a community. With others, they co-founded the Daughters of Bilitis, the first Lesbian rights organization in the US, in 1955. They also published the groundbreaking monthly newsletter, *The Ladder*, the first nationally distributed Lesbian publication. The couple co-authored two influential books that would later be celebrated as cornerstone works on Lesbian feminism: *Lesbian/Woman* and *Lesbian Love and Liberation*.

After 56 years together, filled with activism, community-building, and love, Del died in 2008. And now, sadly, Phyllis died in April. To honor the two of them equally as the partners they were in everything they did, the OLOC Steering Committee has decided that Phyllis's name should also be on the Award, because they did their work together. The newly renamed Martin-Lyon Old Lesbian Pride Award is presented at our National Gatherings. The current winners are Ruthie Berman, 1934, and Connie Kurtz, 1936–2019. The previous winner, Carol Anne Douglas, 1946, presented the Award to Ruthie at our Columbus Gathering in 2019. The plan is for Ruthie to pass it on to the next honoree in Phoenix in 2021.

PASSINGS

Ariana Manov, 1946–2020, Highland Park, California
Carmah Lawler, 1929–2020, Lakewood, Colorado
Phyllis Lyon, 1924–2020, San Francisco, California
Shewolf (Jean Rose Boudreaux), 1932–2020, Melrose, Florida

See the E-News for more about these Lesbians.



Chapter News

Rhode Island Chapter

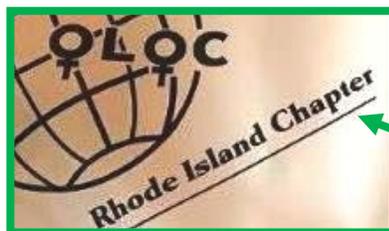
By Mev Miller, 1955

We started 2020 full of new hope and energy. Our main project was to do voter registration through the spring and summer. Sally H., 1950, had researched a schedule of events and created a sign-up sheet for us to take turns to register people and increase OLOC–Rhode Island visibility. She put together a traveling bag of forms, directions, and handouts (including candy). We attended three events in January and February and seemed well on our way.

We have been committed to always stay focused on doing feminist/activist work (social, but not primarily). But then the COVID-19 pandemic radically changed our direction. As a result, all voter registration activities stopped as organizations one by one cancelled their events. Rhode Island went into “shut-down” in mid-March. Our next meeting was scheduled for March 29 and we thought we might have to cancel it. But no worries—we discovered Zoom and started using it regularly. Even those who were nervous or skeptical have bravely embraced using it, and we decided to meet biweekly rather than monthly.

We are more “social” at the moment—checking in and making sure we are all ok. We are a steady group of 10 (with close to 20 on the regularly invited mailing list). As we are acclimating to the change, our conversations are becoming more political. Our next meetings will grapple with questions such as, “How will OLOC–Rhode Island continue to be politically active? How do we take action while staying safe?”

On a lighter note: At our February meeting (our last face-to-face), we agreed on the final touches of the banner we had been designing. We wanted a sturdy banner to take with us to events. It finally came in late April. Once we have our next in-person meeting, we’ll proudly hold it and send another picture!



Pioneer Valley Chapter

By Emily Greene, 1946

The world has changed drastically since we last wrote a report for *The Reporter*. Here in Massachusetts, we went into shelter-in-place by March 13, none of us knowing how long this would last nor the severity for the people in our age group who would be impacted. By March 18, all businesses that were considered nonessential were shut down, including hair salons, and was I glad to have just gotten my hair cut!

I participated in my first Zoom meeting on March 20, and before long most groups were meeting online. Our OLOC group had its first Zoom planning committee meeting on March 26, where we decided to continue our regular monthly meetings with Zoom. On March 1, I gave a presentation about my visit to Cuba with Code Pink in December, with Jean Frances, 1943, and Anne Perkins, 1943, joining in to share about their visits to Cuba a little over a year ago. That was our last in-person gathering. On April 1, Roberta Pato, 1946, held her first Zoom dance with six of us dancing our hearts away. She is doing this every two–three weeks.

On April 5, we had a great Zoom program on dementia with Angel, a local nurse practitioner, and all agreed it was fun to do online and we learned some new things. We are now going to have, between monthly meetings, a Zoom gathering. We are all grateful for the chance to see each other on the screen. I have now posted my videos of Pagoda and Alapine on the Lesbian Home Movies Project at lesbianhomemovieproject.org/collection/emily-greene-collection/. LHMP is doing an incredible job of archiving amateur home movies of Lesbians to be passed on for present and future generations. We wish everyone well, and stay safe.



More Chapter News

New Mexico Chapter

By Susan Buchler, 1946

February 15, we had the program “An Interview with a Bee,” presented by Joyce Depow, 1941, and her bee puppet, based on (for the most part) real facts of bee life. All women in the audience had a part in the play. They held figures of flowers or drones. Bees are female; the queen is female. So are the nurses, foragers, tasters, and soldiers. Drones—male bees—have one purpose: to mate with the queen. Then they die. How they die, how the queen lives on, and who makes hives and honey is part of the hilarious show. “Bees are considered aerodynamically designed NOT to fly. Bees, not knowing this, fly anyway and make honey.”—Anonymous

There’s been enough written and reported about the virus throughout this country. Since this is New Mexico’s entry, here are a few words about how we are faring in our state. Just to be clear, the following is solely the impression of this writer (Susan Buchler, 1946).

Our governor, Michelle Lujan Grisham, was among the first to respond to and take on this virus. She’s tiny, but a determined dynamo when attacking a problem! We have had stay-at-home orders in place for some time, and this week [April 19], rather than lessening these or beginning to open up our state, stay-at-home orders were increased to extend through May 15, of course wearing masks and practicing social distancing. This writer has complete confidence in our state’s leadership.

A recent problem is that there have been large numbers of people from other states invading New Mexico because of our open spaces. They enter with warnings and hopes that they will comply with New Mexico dictates.

We all look forward to the time when we can meet with our OLOC sisters again. Stay well, everyone.

OLOC Membership (as of 10-23-2015):
National OLOC welcomes as members Old Lesbians who have reached their 60th year.

Colorado Chapter

By Katherine Wood, 1954

We canceled our March meeting because of COVID-19 but will make up the scheduled program in June. We got a Zoom.com account and held three practice sessions so we could have our April meeting virtually. Our speaker was Rex Fuller, the new director of the Denver LGBT Center. After questions and answers, Rex exited, and we did check-ins with each woman. Twenty of us were present, some on their computers and some by phone. We plan to meet virtually for the time being and have asked our speakers to plan for that. Roberta Welch, 1943, captured the spirit of the meeting in these photos.



OLOC Support: Anyone who agrees with our purpose is welcome as a supporter.



How to Fight Entrenched Racism?

By Jean Taylor, 1944

Australia was founded on the lie of *Terra Nullius* ["nobody's land," a principle sometimes used in international law to justify claims that territory may be acquired by a state's occupation of it]. During the Federation of Australia in 1901, the White Australia Policy was made law and many hundreds of Chinese people were shipped back to China. Post WW2 and Greeks and Italians arrived in the thousands, and despite blatant racism and discrimination, very quickly established themselves as vitally important members of Australian society, as did succeeding waves of migrants.

After the war in Vietnam, many Vietnamese arrived by boats, giving rise to the derogatory term "boat people," but again, the Vietnamese have added immeasurably to the cultural and economic well-being of Australia.

Much later, in response to some racist demands from the electorate, the Australian government policy was to turn back the boats and finally incarcerated refugees indefinitely on Manus and Nauru islands.

Every time there is a new disaster, like the demonising of Muslims after the US declared war against terrorists in 2001 and womyn wearing hijabs were targeted on the streets, migrants have suffered.

And more recently, with the PANdemic of COVID-19 that started in China, some people became so frightened and discriminatory, they stopped going to Chinese restaurants. Like the stockpiling of toilet paper, this made no sense whatsoever.

The point I'm trying to make is that much like the former English colonies of Canada, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the USA, in Australia racism is so entrenched towards Indigenous people, migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, it's difficult to know where to start to combat the atrocities that many of us feel sickened and ashamed by. But that ought not to stop us, even as we self-isolate in lockdown, from doing the anti-racism work that is sorely needed.

The *Reporter* is available both electronically (PDF) and in print. To switch or add formats, please email susan@oloc.org, write to OLOC at PO Box 834, Woodstock, NY 12498; or phone 888-706-7506.

Feminist Amendments to the Equality Act

By Pelican Lee, 1947

After reading the article by Jodi Glass in the March 2020 *Reporter* about asking her state senator for an all-inclusive Equal Rights Amendment, I want to bring our attention to the proposed Feminist Amendments to the Equality Act. The Equality Act passed the US House and is before the US Senate. The current version of it expands civil rights protections for Lesbians, gays, and bisexuals, but it equates sex with "gender identity," which erodes women's rights by eliminating sex-based protections for women and girls. It also explicitly requires that transgender identified males—any males who claim to be women—be admitted into women's facilities, including domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers, women's prisons, bathrooms, locker rooms, and changing rooms. Because male supremacy and male violence against women and girls still exist (duh!), this is extremely harmful.

Feminists in Struggle, desiring a better bill that protects everyone's rights and does not pit one group's rights against another's, has written Feminist Amendments to the Equality Act. The Amendments preserve women's sex-based rights, including the right to female-only spaces and programs, while adding strong prohibitions against discrimination based on sexual orientation and sex stereotyping. The Feminist Amendments allow for establishing "gender neutral" facilities so long as availability and access to single-sex facilities for women/girls are not diminished. The Amendments protect transgender people, Lesbians, gay men, and all gender non-conforming people from discrimination without compromising the fight against oppression based on sex and while preserving the sex-based rights of women and girls. For more information about the Feminist Amendments, see feministstruggle.org/faea/.



How Janis Shows Her Love for OLOC (and You Can, Too!)

By Janis Sommers, 1951

I decided to donate monthly because I have a very small income. I can painlessly have the money removed from my checking and sent directly to OLOC via PayPal. If I was to receive a membership charge annually, most likely I would not be a member. But I love OLOC. I want to help it sustain itself and grow. I also give small amounts monthly to a couple of other political and social justice organizations. Reciprocity feeds the soul. What I received from attending the OLOC Gathering last August is still feeding me. If I did not give back some of what I received, I could be a very depressed Old Lesbian. I encourage every member to donate monthly.

Thank you, Janis. We deeply appreciate your support of OLOC!

If you would like to join Janis as a monthly supporter, please go to our website at www.oloc.org, where you can click on the yellow Donate button. If you have questions, please contact Ruth at Ruth@oloc.org or 760-318-6794. As little as \$5 each month will get you into this very special group of OLOC-lovers who provide a regular source of income for us (and you don't need a PayPal account to do this), while also helping to ensure that OLOC will continue to be there for Old Lesbians, now and in the future.



Lesbian Film Reviews

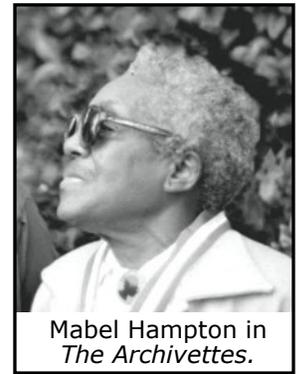
By Jean Taylor, 1944

I'd been looking forward to seeing *The Archivettes*, a documentary about the Lesbian Herstory Archives in Brooklyn [New York], which was screening as part of the 30th anniversary of the Melbourne [Australia] Queer Film Festival. It was expected, because Covid-19 had already caused a number of events to be cancelled, but still a shock when it was announced a couple of days into MQFF that the rest of the program was cancelled due to concern for everyone's health and safety.

Fortunately, we did manage to see two excellent Lesbian films. The French film, *Two of Us*, directed by Filippo Menegitti and starring Barbara Sukowa and Martine Chevalier, tells the poignant story of two Old Lesbians who have been closeted lovers for 20 years and live in opposite apartments in Paris. Just as they're planning to sell up and start a new life together in Rome, one of them has a stroke. Oblivious to the couples' situation, the middle-aged daughter and son immediately take on the responsibility of caring for their mother, who needs physical rehabilitation and can no longer speak, and it takes some time of skulking around and considerable grief before the two Lesbians are eventually reunited.

T11 Incomplete, by director Suzanne Guacci, starred Karen Sillas as a carer with problems of her own, a son whose marriage is on the rocks, and a grandson she adores, and Kristen Renton as her patient in a wheelchair who has broken up with her Lesbian lover and lives with her overprotective brother. The sex scene is tender and believable and one of the best Lesbian sex scenes I've seen on screen. Even so, it takes some considerable introspection before the two lovers can finally sort out who they are and whether they want to be together.

Both films are highly recommended.



Steering Committee Meetings

The National Steering Committee is meeting regularly by Zoom (online video conferencing) at this time. If there are topics you want the Steering Committee to address, contact them by email at info@oloc.org; a note to PO Box 834, Woodstock, NY 12498; or a phone call to 888-706-7506. Be sure to say if you want a response.

Members: Are you in National OLOC's online group? It is a great place to converse with other members. To subscribe, go to groups.io/g/nationalOLOC. If you have any problems, contact susan@oloc.org.



Review of Movie about Emily Dickinson

By Diane Germain, 1942

Wild Nights with Emily sets the record “straight” with Lesbianity. Madeleine Olnek writes and directs this “corrective biography.” It took many decades to scrape off the patriarchy corrupting our view of Emily, the poet, lover, Lesbian. So many worked against her—men who would not publish, men who brutally erased beautiful phrases in their rough hateful editing, men who amputated delicate, energetic, erotic lines.

A woman worked to publish Emily’s poems after her death but conspired with Emily’s brother, Austin, to erase Susan’s name in the love poems and replace it with men’s names. They thought there would be more acceptance and approval of the poems that way.

In spite of revealing all those misdeeds, the film was amusing and charming as Emily and Susan plot ways to get together for afternoon and evening romps on the floor, on party guests’ coats, and in bed. The best twist was when Susan agreed to marry Emily’s brother so that she could live next-door to the Dickinson family home forever and be near her girlhood lover.

They wrote notes to each other several times every day. They were delivered by Susan’s daughter for many years during her childhood. This clever girl knew what was going on and eventually was an important factor in clearing up the truth about her mother and Emily as passionate lovers. I feel so relieved to know that Emily had lightness, giggles, and deep kisses in her life that gave birth to these wonderful words that we can enjoy today.

Wild Nights—Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild nights should be
Our luxury!
Futile—the winds—
To a heart in port—
Done with the Compass—
Done with the Chart!
Rowing in Eden—
Ah—the Sea!
Might I but Moor—tonight—
In thee!



A scene from *Wild Nights with Emily*

OLOC works for change by supporting:

- comprehensive immigration reform
- elimination of violence against women
- enactment of universal single-payer healthcare for all
- an end to corporate “personhood”
- an end to any curtailment of voting rights
- the Black Lives Matter movement
- the Say Her Name! movement
- the civil rights of all indigenous people
- efforts to achieve net zero CO2 emissions
- efforts to reduce climate crisis impacts that fall disproportionately on the poor and vulnerable

The last two issues in the right column were suggested by participants of a workshop led by Laura Kaye, 1945, of Pioneer Valley OLOC (Massachusetts) at the August 2019 Gathering and later approved by the Steering Committee.



Year-End Financial Statement OLOC 2019

Income

Donations	\$ 56,569
Grants	\$ 15,000
National Gathering	\$ 42,038
Gain on Investments	\$ 15,352
Miscellaneous	<u>\$ 5,604</u>
Total Income	\$134,563

Expenses

<i>Reporter</i>	\$ 16,895
E-News	\$ 3,060
Website	\$ 6,874
National Gathering	\$ 65,837
Steering Committee	\$ 15,902
Administration	\$ 16,172
Miscellaneous	<u>\$ 3,687</u>
Total Expenses	\$128,427
Net Income	\$ 6,136

OLOC and Your Birth Year

As many of you know, OLOCians identify ourselves with our birth years as part of our commitment to anti-ageism. It is about proudly declaring our age, instead of hiding how old we are. Some people have expressed concern that this may not be wise for safety reasons. We checked with a techie-geek type knowledgeable about computer security matters, and, after some consideration, we decided that we believe it is safe to include this information. We will continue to use birth years unless a writer specifically asks us not to. We do not feel there is significant reason to worry about identity theft resulting from using birth years, but we will certainly honor your request if you are concerned. When you send in material for our newsletters, website, or other source, simply tell us that you don't wish your birth year to be included. Simple enough!

Get merchandise here!
t-shirts tanks sweatshirts
buttons and pins

Check out the beautiful
shopping webpage at oloc.org/shop/.




Not All Old Lesbians Are Sitting Home

By Mary Jean Mulherin, 1951

Donning my face mask and wearing my winter mittens—for most days are still cold in Minnesota—I venture out to the weekly solidarity presence at the Bishop Whipple federal building, where Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) holds bond and deportation hearings, now on hold due to the virus. For me, this is “essential work.”

Even though the courts are silent presently, a few of us still maintain our vigil because over 400 people are still in ICE detention in Minnesota county jails and are in danger of contracting the virus. One county jail in Minnesota holds 300 detainees. Holding ICE detainees is a lucrative business for county jails. In our modern age, many could be otherwise and more safely housed with their families or outside of detention centers with the use of electronic monitoring. All these things are doable in our society with the right resolve. Tragically, when people are seen as “other,” as not deserving human dignity, the government—which is “us”—will have blood on its hands, just as it did during the AIDS epidemic.

Even if you dare not go out of your secure space, you, too, can witness for the incarcerated. You can call your Department of Corrections, your Governor, your county sheriffs who maintain jails, and your state legislators to free as many prisoners/detainees as they possibly can. Overcrowded jails and prisons are ripe for deaths from the virus.

On a recent Zoom call when asked to identify which organization I belonged to, I included Old Lesbians Organizing for Change. As the quote from Mahatma Gandhi on my dining room wall proclaims: “Be the change you want to see in the world.”



Mary Jean on right



Pagoda Stories Sought for Book

By Rose Norman, 1949

Every day there is a song, every night a gift of love, every moon a celebration.

With that quotation on their letterhead, a handful of Lesbian feminists ran a Lesbian intentional community and cultural center, the Pagoda, in St. Augustine, Florida, from 1977 until the end of the 20th century. The Pagoda produced scores of Lesbian musicians in its 50-seat theatre, plus original plays, art exhibits, workshops, and more. Kay Gardner performed there, as did Alix Dobkin, Ferron, June Millington, Jamie Anderson, Holly Near, and many lesser known performers. It was a cultural phenomenon with a story that needs to be better known.

That's why I'm writing a book about the Pagoda, documenting its herstory and stories of the founders and the Lesbians from all over the world who experienced it. Originally a motel

consisting of 12 small cottages, a two-story duplex, and a two-story building that became Pagoda-temple of Love, the property was remodeled as The Pagoda Motel around 1970. By 1988, Lesbians had bought all the cottages, the duplex, the swimming pool, the Center building, and five vacant lots. In 1999, Pagoda-temple of Love sold the Center building and pool to another Lesbian group, which tried to keep it going, unsuccessfully.

That is a précis of the much more complicated and interesting Pagoda story. So far, I have interviewed 24 Lesbians who lived there, plus 17 performers, guests, and visitors. I am eager to locate and interview more people who knew Pagoda, especially from the early days, such as Suzy Chance, Deane Brittingham, and the playwrights Trudy Anderson (*An Afternoon of Sophie and Myrtle*), and Anna Rallo (*Princess Cinderella*). If you know how to reach them or have a Pagoda story you would like to tell, write me at rose.norman@gmail.com or call me at 256-539-0723 by June 30.



To Anonymous's Response to Class Articles

By Sally Tatnall, 1937

Firstly, I was thrilled that you took the time to send in your thoughts [March 2020] on my articles [June and December 2019]. Thank you so much.

I agree with everything you said. Individual journeys are fraught with struggles that may have nothing to do with class background.

Your last sentence, "Your values and what you learned when young are not the same as the resources or income you have now, particularly as an Old Lesbian," is important to what I was saying.

We don't lose the values and what we learned as children. Those follow us into old age. As we learn more about living in the world, we can shift how we think about those values, but we don't get rid of the basic treatments we had as children.

In general, people who were never hungry growing up do not suddenly fear not having enough to eat, even as old people. In fact, they tend to expect they will always have enough to eat. That is not true for those who grew up hungry, even though they may not be hungry today. The possibility of hunger stays with you.

My comment about asking for financial assistance is along those same lines. Middle- and upper-class Lesbians think it is perfectly natural to ask for what they want. This is not an accusation; it is simply the idea that what they want is OK to ask for.

Being raised working class or poor means you work for what you need or you don't get it. You also may believe you don't even deserve to get work that will meet your needs, and you certainly don't ask for something like an almost free ride to a Gathering. You just don't ask.



Postcard used by the Pagoda motel between 1970 and 1977



To find OLOC on Facebook, go to www.facebook.com/NationalOLOC.



Old Lesbians Organizing for Change OLOC Supporter Form

To join us in promoting the well-being of all Old Lesbians, send us this form. If you are an Old Lesbian, let us know and you will be considered a member as well as a supporter. This form makes you active for one year. Each form is valid for one person. For couples, send a form for each. If you need a second copy, write to info@oloc.org, call 888-706-7506, or download one from the page at oloc.org/join-support/. Although we rely on your financial support, if you can't send money now, you can still be a supporter and, if eligible, a member.

Name: _____

Street/PO Box: _____

City: _____ State or province: _____ Zip or postal: _____

Out of United States? Country: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

New to OLOC? Yes No

I am a supporter.

I am a supporter and member.

I am not sending money at this time.

I am sending _____ for support (suggested donation is \$35 to \$100 per year).

Your demographic information (not ever used with names attached) will help us with grant eligibility and maintaining our diversity. We never give out names of supporters to anyone outside OLOC.

Birthdate: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

Race and Ethnicity: _____

Any disability? If so, describe. Grantmakers sometime request this information. _____

I would like to receive the quarterly *Reporter* as print copy electronic both neither.

I would like to receive the monthly E-News by email (see my email address above). Yes No

Skills I could donate to OLOC: _____

I already belong to the following OLOC chapter or group: _____

I would love to have an OLOC chapter near me and could help work toward establishing one. Yes No

I found out about OLOC from: _____

If you have a different address during different seasons of the year, please give us details as the post office will not forward your newsletters and OLOC will have to pay to have them returned to us.

To make a payment:

By check: Make check out to OLOC. Send to POB 834, Woodstock, NY 12498.

By PayPal: Use the Donate button at oloc.org on right side near top of the page.

By credit card through PayPal: Use the Donate button at oloc.org on right side near top of the page.

If you want to pay with a credit card but not go through PayPal: Send a message to Ruth Debra at ruth@oloc.org or phone her at 760-318-6794. If you get a recording, give her a way to contact you.

OLOC

PO Box 834

Woodstock, NY 12498

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

*Time to Renew? Check
your label* →

If it says 2020.06 (meaning
June 2020) or earlier, your
membership or support has
ended and it is time
to renew.

Stay safe

