Bay Area OLOC All-Day Gathering

Sunday, January 26, 2020 - 10:00 am to 3:30 pm

Connect with old friends and make new ones!
Francis of Assisi Community, 145 Guerrero St, San Francisco, CA 94103

**PROGRAM**: After a welcome and announcements, we will each have time to share what’s happening in our lives. What’s on your mind ... how are you?! Then lunch (details below) and an opportunity to mingle, followed by our afternoon discussion topic:

**Coping with the Winter Blues?... Plans and Hopes for 2020!**

We will enjoy a short introductory skit, followed by four brief speakers offering diverse perspectives. Then we’ll break into smaller groups talking about our individual feelings and reactions to the new year. We’ll reconvene to share insights and end with a closing at 3:30. Help with clean-up is always appreciated!

**SNACKS AND LUNCH**: Bagels and cream cheese, coffee and tea will be available in the morning. We always provide a hearty, diverse lunch buffet including vegetarian and gluten-free options. This time it will be a “Chinese banquet” catered from a local restaurant. Lunch/snack cost to OLOC is $12/person; pay what you can.

**Please RSVP by Wednesday January 22 so we know how much food to order.** Email mslaura@earthlink.net or call Laura at 925-980-3842 (cell/text/messages). Thank you! (If you discover you are available at the last minute – come anyway!)

**Getting there**: The Assisi Community is between Duboce and 14th St, a few blocks from Market. Street parking can be a challenge sometimes, and we are happy to help set up
carpools. If you need help with transportation please contact Ginny Garrett, ginnygarrett@hotmail.com or call, text, or message her at 510-495-4285. We’ll do our best to assist you.

Join us for this event! We have all-day gatherings three times a year and do our best to offer a variety of entertaining and thought-provoking content. All our events are wheelchair accessible and sound amplified. We hope you’re able to attend.

**NOTE: This gathering had been announced for the East Bay, however much to our disappointment, none of the locations we identified were available. PLEASE let us know if you are aware of an East Bay location that might meet our needs for future events! Contact Ginny Garrett with location leads (see Ginny’s contact information above.)**

**November 17th all-day Gathering**
By Ginny Garrett

Our site at Francis of Assisi felt familiar and friendly –we’ve met there many times over the years. Women pitched in to help with set-up and clean-up. The “check-in” circle always offers an opportunity to get to know each other better and sparks individual conversations on shared interests throughout the day. The catered lunch, southern-style fried chicken and greens from Hard Knox Café, was plentiful and some said delicious. Thanks to Susan Chacin for the mac and cheese, Tara Sterling for corn muffins, and Laura Tow for the green salad. The weather was quite nice and hospitable for eating in the lovely garden.

Many women agreed on their evaluation sheets that the exercises and laughing yoga led by Vickie Lew were welcome and helpful. Some asked for a little exercise at each meeting. Gathering feedback via short evaluations at the end of the day is really helpful to the event planners. It’s also encouraged by our funding agencies. Eighteen women took the time to comment on what they liked, what they’d change, and ideas for future activities.

Above all, women loved the opportunity to talk and laugh all day long.
Lesbian and Feminist Diversity and Intersectionality
By Susan Chacin

I have been thinking about how the women’s movement, and its lesbian feminist component in particular, have arrived at our current situation. My point of view is that of an OLD white Lesbian and I know I may be out of step with current academic and movement thinking. But I cringe when I hear the opinion that “second wave” feminism (early 1960s into the 80s) was all white.

Bay Area OLOC founder Marge Nelson, 1928 – 2018, recommended the book Separate Roads to Feminism to me. It provides an in-depth look at ways that women of color organized feminist projects in their own communities. White women’s biases and unconscious racism have been serious and damaging to relations among feminists. However we must also honor genuine efforts by both white women and women of color to build diversity and raise consciousness in the women’s and Lesbian movements.

The Combahee River Collective, active from 1974 to 1980 voiced African American Lesbians’ intersectional identity. The Collective authored a radical manifesto taking to task racism among white women, and advancing a radical agenda for struggle. The statement stands as a major achievement of the women’s movement. It can be accessed at a number of websites.

Two examples of anti-racism work done in the “good old days” of the feminist movement are documented in relatively recent books. These projects were sponsored by largely white feminist groups aware of the need to struggle against racism. You can read about these efforts in The Feminist Bookstore Movement: Lesbian Antiracism and Feminist Accountability by Kristen Hogan published by Duke University Press in 2016, (a substantial interview with Kristen can be viewed at https://vimeo.com/164760844) and Califia Women: Feminist Education against Sexism, Classism, and Racism by Clark Pomerleau, University of Texas Press, 2013, documenting a “long-running Los Angeles based grassroots alternative education group formed in the mid-1970s.”

But what *IS* the current status of diversity in our community?

A large percentage of movement white women are theoretically opposed to white oppression but have relatively little idea about how to overcome our own roles in it. OLOC has committed to work on these issues at the national and local levels, though progress is at best slow. From the outside, I see Old Lesbians of Color as cautious about accepting welcoming overtures, having been “burned” by past experiences with organizations and individuals who have been unaware of their own biases and ignorance. Caution abounds on
all sides and is certainly warranted on the part of Lesbians of Color. This state of affairs makes it difficult to initiate change.

Over the years that the so-called “second wave” of the women’s movement has been in existence, there have been statements and actions by white women that can be identified as outright racism, but there have also been disconnects of a more subtle nature. These ideas and attitudes have made for different world views about our movements.

I have heard white women in OLOC say that they found Betty Friedan’s book The Feminine Mystique groundbreaking in identifying their oppression. Friedan famously identified sexism as “the problem that has no name.” But Friedan’s solution, for women to pursue careers and work outside the home, was often seen as invalid or at least irrelevant for many women of color. Working class women of color had been employed outside their homes, often cleaning and caring for white women’s children, for generations. Staying home to care for one’s own family was a privilege unavailable to many women of color. Class differences and economic inequality were often invisible to middle class white women adopting the women’s liberation ideology.

Another significant disconnect was the insistence by white women that gender oppression – patriarchy – was a more fundamental inequality than any racial or ethnic subjugation. After all, went the argument, women have been oppressed in every culture for millenia. Did that prove that women’s liberation was more essential than racial equality? But the lived experience of women of color often showed that their lives, and the lives of their families, had been damaged much more severely by racism than by sexism.

And what about the men and boys in our lives? I believe the early tendency of radical white lesbians toward separatism put up barriers for many lesbians of color. By insisting that righteous lesbians should avoid contact with men, separatists denied the importance of the racial solidarity that was the backbone of the civil rights movement.

This is the second article on diversity and intersectionality I have written for the Bay Area OLOC newsletter and I stress that I am only presenting my own opinions. Please contact me if you are interested in working toward greater diversity in OLOC at susanchnew@gmail.com, call or text me at (510) 332-8569.

An Update on Bay Area OLOC’s Financial Health

For many years, we have sent a letter to everyone on our mailing list in November, requesting financial support for our programs and activities. Historically your end of year donations have contributed substantially to our financial stability.
We did not send out an annual letter in 2019 for the best of reasons. We have been the recipient of recent grants from the Horizons Foundation and the “Society for Community Work,” a program of the San Francisco Unitarian Universalist Society. Additionally, over the last couple of years, we received a generous bequest from Susan Levinkind, an active Bay Area OLOC member for many years, our bookkeeper, and a leader in our chapter. Many of us have loving memories of Susan’s humor and care for others.

Given these generous sources of support, our financial reserves are such that we decided not to send out our annual appeal letter. Of course, if you would like to make a donation, it can help us continue to offer all our events to all Old Lesbians without regard to ability to pay. You can send a check to Bay Area OLOC % Pat Cull, 70 Yosemite, Apt 105, Oakland, CA 94611. If you are planning your will, a bequest to OLOC will certainly be put to good use!

We thank everyone for your past donations, and for continuing to contribute when you attend our events – your donations are the base and bedrock of our financial solvency.

Bay Area OLOC gratefully acknowledges ongoing financial support from the Horizons Foundation and the First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco, Society for Community Work.

Remarkable WWII Rosie

Exhibition with Artwork by Carol Witten
Don’t miss this! Carol Witten exhibits 60 Digital Prints (diptychs) from her historical essay Remarkable WWII Rosie in the Jewett Gallery. Witten developed this oeuvre while traveling cross country to Rosie Conventions and attending local Rosie Rallies. She interviewed and photographed women in their 90s, many 100 and older. This exhibition reveals Witten’s style of combining traditional portraiture with a narrative. We hear the hammers and watch the soot fall as the danger, sexism, and racism Rosie endured and overcame created the most beloved women in America.

On view now through January 26th, 2020, at the Jewett Gallery, San Francisco Public Library.
MEMORABLE IMAGES OF WOMEN IN 2019
(Photos borrowed from the New York Times, with comments by Susan Chacin...)

Democratic women wore white to their congressional swearing-in, celebrating their numbers and commemorating the suffrage movement.
Photo by Erin Schaff

Nancy Pelosi may not embody all our values, but she led an impressive process in the impeachment of the (not my) President!
Photo by Erin Schaff

Fans waited along Broadway in lower Manhattan for the ticker tape parade up the “Canyon of Heroes” in honor of the victorious US Women’s World Cup team and their capitan, out Lesbian, Megan Rapinoe.
Photo by Damon Winter
Time magazine’s Person of the Year for 2019 was Greta Thunberg. World leaders are still reeling from Greta’s righteous indignation over their climate crisis inaction: “How dare you!”

Photo by Elisabeth Ubbe

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It takes a team and our newsletter needs you!

This newsletter is the product of a few loyal members: Susan Chacin functions as editor, Ginny Garrett consults, Laura Tow corrects, comments, and proofs, ReeAnn Dixon helps process the mailing list, and we use Pat Cull’s mailing address. **BUT...**

**We really need your help.** The next edition will be prepared in mid March, so there’s time to get our heads together. Send articles, pictures, art, and announcements or volunteer to help! Please call or text Susan, the editor at (510) 332-8569, or send email with “OLOC Newsletter” in the subject line to: susanchnew@gmail.com.

**National OLOC membership is available to all on an ability to pay basis** - We encourage you to join. Benefits include an electronic newsletter with notices from Old Lesbians around the country – and a few from abroad! Go to [https://oloc.org/](https://oloc.org/) for more information.

**Is there a movie you want to see or an exhibit you’re dying to catch?**

You can reach out to other Bay Area OLOC women to go places or share resources. Subscribe to the list-serve called BA-OLOC. It is separate from the “regular” emails you receive from us. You can sign up at: [http://groups.queernet.org/index.fcgi/subscribe/ba-oloc](http://groups.queernet.org/index.fcgi/subscribe/ba-oloc).

Once you sign up, you can post announcements or requests or organize you own mini-event (movies, museum, etc.). And you’ll get posts from others. Reply to posts by just replying to the woman who sent it; if you “reply all” it will go to everyone on the list. You can unsubscribe at any time. Try it! Problems, questions? Email patcull70@gmail.com.
If members want another OLOC dance, they need to organize it...
The Bay Area OLOC Social/Program Committee has declared that it does not have the “band width” to organize a dance this spring (Valentines or…?) We stand ready to help a group of committed volunteers with providing contacts for space, DJ, and other logistics. Contact Ginny Garrett at 510 495-4285, ginnygarrett@hotmail.com, if you are willing to help your sisters “shake a tail feather.”

Bay Area OLOC – YOUR OLD LESBIAN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION – is run by a volunteer Coordinating Council (CoCo). Meetings are open to all Old Lesbians. CoCo meets on the second Tuesday of the month from 12 noon to 1:30 pm at the South Berkeley Senior Center, 2939 Ellis St. (corner of Ashby 2 Blocks from the Ashby BART station.) Upcoming CoCo meetings are:

January 14, 2020
February 11, 2020

Come to this friendly leadership council and help us build our Old Lesbian community!

2020 OLOC Events

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<td>May 1 -3, Friday-Sunday</td>
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<td>Napa</td>
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<td>July 19, Sunday</td>
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<td>Berkeley</td>
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