

Bay Area OLOC



Old Lesbians Organizing for Change

Newsletter – March, 2020

This group of old dykes is about empowerment and visibility, moving into the next phase of our lives with panache and activism, talking about taboo and difficult topics including our inevitable deaths, long-term planning, community and connection. Open to old lesbians 60 and over.

Bay Area OLOC All-Day Gathering

Sunday, March 22, 2020 - 10:00 am to 3:30 pm

Connect with old friends and make new ones!

Note East Bay location!

Redwood Gardens, 2951 Derby Street, Berkeley 94705

PROGRAM: After a welcome and announcements, we'll do our usual check-ins. What's on your mind ... how are you?? It's a way for us to get to know a little more about one another. Then lunch and an opportunity to mingle, followed by our afternoon activity:

“Self-Protection in Public Places”

In prior meetings we have focused on caring for ourselves indoors; today's focus is on being safe and protecting one's personal space in outdoor or public situations, maneuvering through crowds, keeping one's balance, alertness/awareness, deflecting intrusive actions, etc. We will learn and practice; questions about specific situations will be welcome. Our presenter, **Lisa Hirsch**, operates a Jujitsu and self-protection school for students of all ages and abilities in Emeryville: <https://www.opendoorjujitsu.com/>. We'll re-gather at about 3:00, when there will be an opportunity for feedback and then our formal closing.

LUNCH: Pizza! -- including gluten free and vegetarian options, plus a big green salad, fruit and desserts. Coffee and tea will be available all day. **COST:** Lunch cost to OLOC is \$12/person; pay what you can. A basket for lunch contributions will be on the table at the door along with name tags and other printed material.

Please RSVP as soon as you can so we know how much food to order. We appreciate early RSVPs! At the latest, let us know you will be attending by **Wednesday, March 18**. RSVP to Laura at msslaura@earthlink.net, or call (925) 980-3842 (cell/text/messages). Thank you. (If you discover you are available at the last minute, come anyway!)

A note about our location: This is the second time we have met at Redwood Gardens– it’s a large senior cooperative with courtyards, trees and gardens. Our private meeting will be in their community room.

Getting there: There is street parking at this site. The closest BART station is Rockridge. AC Transit, bus number 79 starts at the BART station and there are stops on both sides of the street at the site. **If you need help with transportation**, please let us know and we’ll do our best to assist you. Contact Ginny Garrett, ginnygarrett@hotmail.com or [\(510\)495-4285](tel:5104954285).

Join us for this all-day event! We have all-day gatherings three times each year. At these get-togethers we do our best to offer our sisters a variety of entertaining and thought-provoking content. We hope you can attend. **See you there!**

January 26th All Day Gathering

By Barbara Cleveland

OLOC members trotted into a new decade with refreshing energy at the daylong gathering on Sunday January 26th. We mingled and used our ingenuity to address our topic of “Coping with the Winter Blues - Hopes and plans for 2020.” Throughout the day, we wove our adventurous tales, desirous dreams, festive fantasies into a herringbone tapestry for comfort as we enter a new decade. During our morning check-in we cantered around the circle, each holding the new microphone the right way, and spoke about how we felt on that sunny day in San Francisco. Aging aggravations were released.

For lunch we feasted on healthy Chinese food, fortuitously planned to celebrate Chinese New Year. This is the Year of Rat. The Rat energy gives us the diligence and ingenuity to carry out our hopes and plans in 2020.

SuSu Parness cajoled us into the mood for our topics of the day by a “Coping with the winter blues” tongue-in-cheek want ad for polyamory people (only during the winter) and a powerful “dump Trump” plan for 2020. (SuSu’s rap is featured below.)



A panel of three –Terri Keith, Simi Litvak, and yours truly, Barbs Cleveland--shared our strategies for coping with winter blues and our hopes and plans for the year to come. Terri’s information about being helped by a Verilux Happy Light was a big hit with women

who feel SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) during the winter. See www.verilux.com for info on this unit. Similar devices are available for less (and more) money.

Simi said she has found benefits from a vegan diet. It has helped her counter depression and given her more energy. Painting, collage, beading and art work all were mentioned as ways to cope. Creating community to renew us as we age was a desire. Plans for the new decade included more political work, a census job and a desire to form a creative salon. See more information below.

We broke into small groups and talked about various hopes and plans such as European travel, painting in Golden Gate Park, starting a new business, and loving jigsaw puzzles. Gratitude, radical compassion, and “be here now” evolved out of the small groups as ways to cope. One group discussed how we learn to be positive or not from our childhood. We gathered for a closing and then we pranced home with regenerative ideas, plenty of doable plans and leftovers of Chinese food.

“Coping with the Winter Blues” (Susu’s Rap)

By Susan Parness (aka “SuSu” as pronounced at OLOC’s January 26th all-day gathering)

“I was instructed to skit about coping with winter whites, i.e. blues. I immediately thought of smoking, doping, toking, coking, then lapsing into cynical joking, moping, even croaking. But I got into a wokeing stage. **Polyamory for Winter**, i.e. December through March – perhaps through April if the weather permitted.

“I said to myself – besides coping with WB (i.e. Winter Blues – I like to use i.e. and initials), I’d be working on my jealousy insecurity factor, de-fuse my lethargy, meet some Jews, recuse myself from boredom and ennui – lose my inhibitions, get a new muse, stop reading the damn news, have some new humans call me “Sooze”- have Tuesday trysts, refigure my jaded views and as an extra benefit correct my English and stop saying youse, and finally visit some pandas in the Chinese zoos with my new amours.

“To acquire these jollies, I decided to put an ad in the NY Times Western edition. (I have no use for computers.) “82 year-old lesbian – looks 81 – desires to meet a few humans for polyamory winter relationships – can be any age but must look 81 – can use any pronoun they wish to identify themselves but not be annoyed if I use the wrong one. Prefer humans with at least one joint issue and thinning hair in both places. Would love someone with 3 eye diseases to match mine.

“Must have Physicians Orders for life sustaining treatment on fridge. Must never ask to look at my will, must never come over with a cold coming on. Must think I’m adorable, but you don’t have to like me. Do not care if you’re not adorable, must ply me with small but adorable gifts, i.e. 1 sunflower, an unusually delightful piece of candy, or a bottle of Kahlua will do.

“Must be highly neurotic and idiosyncratic, must not drop in without calling – no texting unless you buy me a smart phone. Must be OK with toe fungus. Must not like to process, pretend I am always right. No talking after 7 p.m., as I enter into my mute stage. Do not expect me to be interested in your colonoscopy results. Snorers encouraged. Sentence diagramming skills optional.”

“As for plans and hopes for 2020: Very Easy:

Dump Trump

by removing the sump pump
from the White House,

drowning the chief louse.

Install Klobuchar and Liz

and voila – tis

the year to be jolly.

“I had 3 – 5 minutes, I believe I used 4, so gentlewimmin – I yield back my time to the House manager.”

Support the Schools and Communities First Initiative!

As a member of the California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA), OLOC is being asked to endorse the **Schools and Communities First initiative**. CARA and other labor and social justice organizations are gathering signatures to place a revised version of the initiative on the November 2020 ballot. We encourage you to sign it if you are approached to do so.

This initiative reforms Proposition 13, passed by California voters in 1978, by requiring that commercial and industrial properties be taxed based on their current value. **This initiative does not affect ANY residential property – rentals, condos, and all private homes would still be taxed based on their value when they were built or purchased.** Small businesses are also exempted.

The reason this reform is needed is that residential property changes hands much more often than commercial and industrial property. Because property values have been soaring, the total taxes paid by private homes and rentals have increased rapidly while taxes on major commercial and industrial properties statewide have remained low. Corporate landlords have also found sneaky ways to shield themselves from tax increases even when property is actually changing ownership. In the years since Prop 13 passed, the ratio of homeowners’ and renters’ taxes to industrial and commercial taxes has increased dramatically. **In other words, homeowners and renters are carrying more than their share of taxes, and some major corporate taxes (like Disneyland!) have been kept artificially low.**

The **Schools and Communities First initiative** will increase funding for public schools, community colleges and local government services. It will not change the protection

afforded any residential property. It will reclaim \$12 billion per year for local needs. Property tax revenue goes directly to counties, cities, and school districts so we do not have to worry about the state legislature allocating it.

The opposition to this reform has already begun to attack it by mailing out absolute lies, **particularly targeting seniors**. Their argument is that this change is the “foot in the door” leading to higher taxes for residential property: **NOT TRUE**. If you have gotten such mailings, and many of us in CARA and OLOC have, please be assured they are trying to scare you into voting “No” with falsehoods. In November, vote YES on this reform, and before then, invite CARA to speak at your senior center, housing group, church, or any other location. Contact Windsor Young at 510 666-4852, or Sheila Goldmacher at 510 666-1351 to arrange for a CARA speaker to make a short presentation.

Diversity and Intersectionality: Where Does Bay Area OLOC Go from Here?

By Susan Chacin

Bay Area OLOC has been making modest progress in our quest for diversity. We’re a long way from where we would like to be, but more Women of Color are participating. Several have said they would like to encourage other Lesbians of Color to come. In our last newsletter, I talked about some of the reasons why Women of Color have organized separately in the past or not felt drawn to join largely white Lesbian feminist organizations. Some of those issues persist to this day.

In today’s political climate, there is growing awareness that bias, prejudice, and outright racism is everyone’s problem. We are also benefitting from decades of struggle on this front, and we have learned more productive ways to interact on it. There is growing awareness that “calling out,” i.e. shaming and denouncing people who behave in ignorant or biased ways, is not likely to produce the progress we hope to see. White people and people of color as well are all subject to human fallibility. My hope is that every one of us sees ourselves on a path toward greater understanding and better behavior toward others.

The language we use when talking about this topic can be problematic. “Diversity,” “women of color,” “race,” and many other terms are not acceptable to all of us. That’s probably healthy; progress in important areas usually involves stresses and changes in vocabulary. So just know that we’re on a rocky road in this regard and stay tuned to the intent even if the language upsets you.

In thinking about all this and talking to a number of OLOC members about these topics, I have gleaned some points that may be helpful moving forward:

- 1) **We are better off working to be more diverse and appropriate, even if we make mistakes.** For example, white women often fear they will not be welcome if they attend

events held by women of color. One response from women of color is “Get used to it!” Women of color who come to OLOC are out-numbered unless it’s a specifically women of color event. One woman of color at the national Gathering said she worried she didn’t have the right clothes to come!

If white women don’t venture out of our comfort zone, we will have no chance to learn and make new connections.

- 2) **In working to become more diverse, OLOC must listen to our non-white members when they share their opinions.** No matter how much some of us want to be supportive, we are not walking in our sisters’ shoes. It may take a while before Lesbians of Color speak up and out, but that’s up to them. The rest of us shouldn’t be silent; speaking about discrimination and diversity is important. When a Woman of Color does speak however, we must listen. We should also remember that she is speaking from her own point of view. Our process will be more authentic if we pay close attention to comments and opinions freely given.
- 3) **It is difficult to deal with diversity because our reality is complex.** The situation before us can’t be reduced to just “Blacks and whites.” African Americans’ treatment in the U.S. has included huge, horrific abuse. But the terrain of “race” has featured terrible discrimination toward Latinx people, Asian Americans, and Indians. Each of these categories can also be “unpacked” to reveal many national origins, forms of discrimination, and stories of heroism and resistance. To deal with reality, we have to avoid assumptions.

Too often, I have heard the assertion “we don’t have any women of color here!” when I know there are non-white women in the group.

Bay Area OLOC stands ready to support Old Lesbians of Color organizing in their own way. Our Coordinating Council has funds available for a get-together to talk about ideas. What kind of activities would be most attractive and engaging in this respect? So far, various Lesbians of Color who have attended recently have said that they are willing to help. Now we need someone to offer to coordinate a meeting – it could be at dinner or...? I am willing to be an initial point of contact. If you are a woman of color and would like to discuss how Bay Area OLOC could facilitate Old Lesbians of Color getting together, contact me. (If you send email, put “Old Lesbians of Color” in the subject line so I can catch it.)

This is the third 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. Women of all backgrounds are welcome to 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.

Meet One of Our Funders!

In February, Horizons Foundation celebrated 40 years of grantmaking at a luncheon with grantee partners, donors, sponsors, and foundation partners. Horizons exclusively funds LGBTQ groups and projects both locally in the Bay Area and internationally. OLOC has received Horizons grants several times. A panel of current and former Horizons staff discussed the foundation's grantmaking over the decades. The luncheon provided an opportunity for the members of the Horizons family to mingle and exchange information about their roles



Ginny Garrett (right) with Clara Basile at Horizons 40th Grantmaking anniversary luncheon

in the foundation. Bay Area OLOC was represented by Ginny Garrett, who had a lovely time despite her initial misgivings. Our grantwriter par excellence, Susan Chacin, was unable to attend as planned. We look forward to continuing as grantee partners with Horizons Foundation.

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



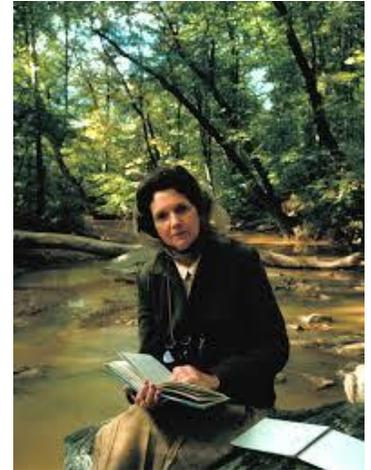
The Earth Pledge

By Lilith Rogers

I pledge allegiance to the Earth
On which I live
And to all Her Creatures
Large and Small
And to Her Water, Air, and Soil.
One World, One People
Undivided
With Food, Shelter, Health
Peace and Freedom
Love and Justice
For All.

This pledge is being distributed to support THE RACHEL CARSON PROJECT which includes workshops, environmental networking, and RACHEL CARSON RETURNS: The Life and Work of Rachel Carson, a one-woman show I am presenting. Rachel Carson, the author of *Silent Spring*, is the founding mother of the modern ecology movement. I believe her message, that we must protect the earth and all her creatures, needs to be spoken again NOW!

To contact me about the project, please call me at 707 310-8456, email me at Rachelcarsonreturns@gmail.com, or write to P.O. Box 2455, Sebastopol, CA 95473. Watch “Rachel Carson Returns Lilith” on YOUTUBE.



Rachel Carson

Note: We recited *The Earth Pledge* in call and response at Bay Area OLOC’s January all day gathering for our formal closing.

LET’S DANCE! – Saturday afternoon June 6, 2020

Bay Area OLOC is planning a Pride dance this year – and inviting women of all ages! We have sponsored two women’s dances, in fall 2018 and spring 2019. Both were well attended and fabulous.

We’re overdue to heat up the dance floor once again – so **SAVE THIS DATE** and look forward to a wonderful time. Same venue (Unitarian Fellowship in Berkeley), same DJ (Judy Graboyes), great music, great munchies. Can’t wait!

FOR YOUR CALENDAR! --

Enchanted Hills Napa 3-day OLOC Retreat is May 1-3, 2020

Each year in the spring and fall, Bay Area OLOC offers its members three wonderful days in the wooded hills outside Napa at a special camp, Enchanted Hills. Our newsletter in early April, will have all the details. Meanwhile, hold that weekend – we hope you can attend!

Current ideas for discussion topics include: The impact of the culture/ancestors you were born into; sharing about your favorite books; and political issues important to you right now. As always, attendees will get updated on Bay Area OLOC news and be encouraged to post topics for informal, small group discussions. There will be free time each day; you are welcome to participate as much or little as you wish. It’s a precious getaway!

The heated pool has a female lifeguard; swimsuits are now required. Meals offer options for various needs. We can hike and stroll throughout the grounds, the camp is all ours. We expect a minimum of 30 women to stay Friday through Sunday. If you need more information before early April, please email Laura at msslaura@earthlink.net or call/text 925-980-3842.

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 comments and proofs, ReeAnn Dixon helps Pat Cull who keeps the mailing list. **BUT...We need your help.** The next edition will be prepared in early April. Send articles, pictures, art, movie reviews, and announcements to Susan, the editor, at susanchnew@gmail.com and put “OLOC newsletter” in the subject line, or call/text your info (510) 332-8569. It’s a great way to reach over 500 local lesbians.

National OLOC membership is available to all on an ability to pay basis!

Benefits include an electronic newsletter with notices from Old Lesbians around the country – and a few from abroad! Go to <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>. Try it! Problems, questions? Email patcull70@gmail.com.

Bay Area OLOC 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:

April 14, May 12, and June 9 (no meeting in March)

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

2020 OLOC Events		
March 22, Sunday	All Day Gathering	Redwood Gardens Berkeley
May 1-3, Friday-Sunday	Retreat Enchanted Hills	Napa
June 6, Saturday	Women’s Dance	Berkeley
July 19, Sunday	Annual Picnic	Berkeley
September 11-13 Friday-Sunday	Retreat Enchanted Hills	Napa
November 22, Sunday	All Day Gathering	To be announced