



An International  
Community of  
Lesbian Elders

# The Reporter

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

DECEMBER  
2022

Vol 32 #4

## Today's *Dyke in the Streets* Question:

### “What Did You Think about the Zoom Gathering?”

*A belated and heartfelt THANK YOU to the Steering Committee and all who created the online weekend OLOC Gathering; it was a pleasure and a treasure. **Kiesa Shoshana Leneae, 1961***

*This was my first OLOC Gathering and I wished it would have been in person; I very much appreciated that it was still held on Zoom. I enjoyed the entire Gathering; it was hard to leave at the end like many of the other Lesbians also felt. **Patty O'Donnell, 1956***



Melanie DeMore at the Zoom Gathering

*I came in late and missed much of the Gathering on Zoom. But for the events I attended late Friday and most of Saturday, I was delighted. What an amazing effort by the tech team to bring us all together to celebrate our Old Lesbianhood.*

*And seeing Melanie DeMore smiling at us, so up close and authentic, reminded me why I celebrate being a Lesbian every day. So thank you,*

*OLOC Steering Committee, tech team, and all who made this happen. **Rand Hall, 1945***

*I loved last night's Gathering and especially Melanie DeMore's keynote; look forward to hearing her music. I especially loved what she did at the end, asking us to name the women whose music changed our lives from the culture of women's music we all have in common. **Tina Minkowitz, 1958***

### OTHER COMMENTS SHARED BY GATHERING ZOOMERS:

- *So good to see all of you wonderful Old Lesbians again.*
- *Loving seeing all of the faces of women-loving-women!*
- *Wonderful talk, Melanie; I can't stop grinning (keynote address).*
- *Fantastic. I was spellbound!!! (Hick, the play).*
- *It is so awesome to see all these magnificent Old Lesbians.*
- *Wow, I can't believe I've never heard of Bernice Bing. Thank you! Moved to tears by your beautiful movie (The Worlds of Bernice Bing).*
- *I'm grateful for the opportunity to be at home yet have the ability to interact with other Lesbians.*

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

**Old Lesbians Organizing for Change:**

An International Community of Lesbian Elders

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We have English and Spanish editions of the E-News and *Reporter* (in both electronic and print formats). If you receive print, right now we assume English. If you prefer Spanish or want one of each, let us know by phoning 888-706-7506 (toll-free) or emailing [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org).

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This newsletter is brought to you by:

Editor: Sheryl, 1954.

Content review: Sally Tatnall, 1937, and Susan Wiseheart, 1941.

Translated to Spanish by Google Translate via Sheryl.

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, 2023.

Limit contributions to 300 words. Memorial announcements only: send in name, birth and death years, and location of the Lesbian who died. See E-News for life stories.

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

**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 affiliates by way of mail, phone, or email. Please let us know if you would like a response.

**Steering Committee Meetings**

The National Steering Committee is meeting regularly by Zoom—most often on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:00 P.M. ET. If there are topics you want the Committee to address, contact the Steering Committee by email at [info@oloc.org](mailto: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 OLOC affiliates as guests at its meetings.

Contact [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org).



**Affiliates: Are you part of National OLOC's online forum? It is a great place to have engaging discussions with other affiliates.**

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

**If you have any problems, contact**  
**[susan@oloc.org](mailto:susan@oloc.org).**

***IMPORTANT FOR ALL OLOC INTERACTIONS***

For 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.

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*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.*

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## Gathering Updates

### Report on OLOC's First Gathering on Zoom

From October 27 to 29, OLOC held its first-ever International Gathering on Zoom, after cancelling the in-person event in 2021 and again this year because of the pandemic. By most accounts, it appeared to be highly successful and a wonderful experience for those who participated.

A unique hallmark of it being on Zoom was that Old Lesbians who could not travel—because of health/mobility issues, finances, concerns about traveling/gathering during COVID-19, or time restrictions—were able to attend and connect with other Old Lesbians. One reported, “I connected with one dyke I hadn’t seen for 30 years and another dyke who, in 1965 in a bar, uttered lines that I never forgot and put in my play and also in a shorter article.”

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372 Lesbians registered. Of these:

- ❖ 234 Lesbians attended (63%).
- ❖ 258 affiliates/supporters registered.
- ❖ 173 affiliates/supporters attended (67%).
- ❖ 114 inactives registered (former affiliates).
- ❖ 62 inactives attended (54%).

### Events included:

- ❖ Lesbians of Color Day
- ❖ Native American blessing
- ❖ Welcome from the Steering Committee
- ❖ Posthumous presentation of the Del Martin-Phyllis Lyon Old Lesbian Pride Award to Elana Dykewomon, 1949–2022
- ❖ Premiere of the 2019-2022 memorial slide show
- ❖ Keynote address by Melanie DeMore
- ❖ 22 discussion groups on spirituality, health, Lesbian lands, political issues, writing/art, books, our aging bodies, OLOC committees, and our herstory
- ❖ *Hick*, a play by Terry Baum
- ❖ Film, *The Worlds of Bernice Bing*
- ❖ Concert by Melanie DeMore

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We received \$3,989.24 in donations during the Gathering. Between when it ended and November 3 (five days), nine Old Lesbians joined as new affiliates and seven renewed.

**We hope that those who attended enjoyed it, learned new things,  
connected with old friends, made new friends,  
and will plan to go to Tempe next year,  
for real or virtually!**

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### OLOC is Having a Contest!

By Alí Marrero-Calderón, 1948

Thank you to those of you who attended our first virtual OLOC Gathering! At every Gathering, we have a Focus and a Theme. This year is The Focus is Lesbian (I think this is always our Focus), and our Theme, “Body, Mind and Spirit,” was brought to us by Jacqui Lewis, 1949, who was on the National Steering Committee, and is an affiliate and co-founder of the OLOC Chapter in West Virginia.

We on the Steering Committee thought it would be a great idea to have a contest for the best Theme for our next in-person Gathering. The Old Lesbian who comes up with the best Theme will receive a \$100 discount to our next Gathering, which is scheduled for November 15-19, 2023! Your ideas must be submitted by **December 31, 2022** to [info@OLOC.org](mailto:info@OLOC.org). The winning Theme will be posted on our website, in the E-News, and in the *Reporter*. Our next Gathering will be held at the DoubleTree Hotel and Conference Center in Tempe, Arizona.

## Thank You, Zoom Techies! We Need You, Volunteers!



While it's tempting to give credit to the Zoom techies for the success of the Gathering, in fact, it was the entire Zoom Planning Crew who made this event possible. The Crew consists of 12 active participants—Christine Pattee, Connie Barrett, Deirdre Knowles, Janet Holstine, Janet Stetser, Judy (JR) Raphael, Kathe Rauch, Mev Miller, Retts Scauzillo, Rose Norman, and Sue Reamer—including a liaison from the Steering Committee, Michiko Bailey Thorne.

During the Gathering, seven Crew members served as techies and/or support facilitators. Additionally, Nyla Dartt helped with tech/facilitation for the discussion groups, and gypsy provided tech for the Lesbians of Color Day.

*Thank you, all of you, for your blood, sweat, and tears to make the Zoom Gathering happen, and bring us all together—from a distance—for three wonderful days. We appreciate you!*

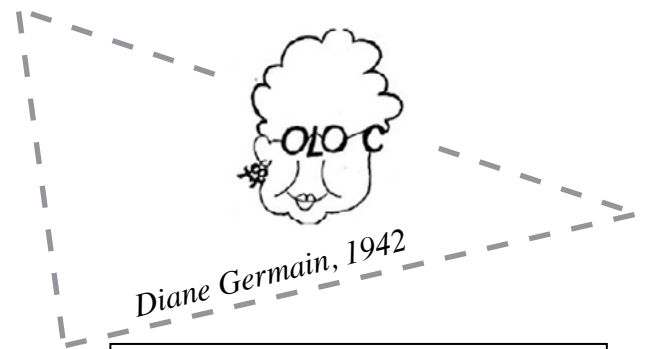
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**Would you like to join them? Or another OLOC Crew or committee?** If you attended the Gathering, you heard numerous times (and saw in the program book) that OLOC runs on volunteers. To continue our work, we need more support, on the Steering Committee and with other on-going activities. The Gathering for 2023—whether it will be in-person, on Zoom, or both—will also need many more additional volunteers. **We encourage you to get involved.** We accept both short-term and long-term commitments. Please let us know your interests by completing our volunteer form at <https://bit.ly/3pL2IvCvolunteer>. Thank you!

### Message from Your Editor

OLOC maintains a mailing list for *Reporter* writers and wannabes, to which we send quarterly deadline reminders for articles and photos. This list is always open to new contributors. We send out a message one month before each deadline, and again 15 days later. There is no other traffic on the list, and it is not used for anything else, including spamming you! No one can see your name or address on the message. We send out a total of eight messages per year, and they contain some helpful information about how to take and send photos. This does not obligate you to write articles, and you do not need to respond. It simply lets you know when the next deadline is, if you are interested in sending in a story. If you would like to be added to this list, please write to [susan@oloc.org](mailto:susan@oloc.org), and she will take care of it! Thank you.

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



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**Want to start an OLOC Chapter in your area? Contact [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org) for information.**

### Steering Committee Statement for Solidarity

By Sally Tatnall, 1937; Alí Marrero-Calderón, 1948; and Michiko Bailey Thorne, 1953

Ti Grace Atkinson once said, “Feminism is the theory; Lesbianism is the practice.”

In every country around the globe, in many cultures, in every religion, and in every government, women are second-class citizens at best and at worst available for rape, abuse, and even murder.

In every country around the globe, in many cultures, in every religion, and in every government, Lesbians are not even second-class citizens at best and at worst available for rape, arrest, abuse, and even murder.

Women everywhere are in the same boat. Lesbians everywhere are in the same boat. If we cannot all

stand in solidarity as women and Lesbians we are doomed.

As Lesbians, we believe that it is our job to lead the way to choosing Lesbians first. Lesbians recognize the brilliance, creativity, and power of being female. The patriarchy is terrified of us. That has everything to do with all the recent anti-female laws and language changes being made.

What will it take to join in solidarity as Lesbians to challenge this practice?

What will it take to stop telling another woman what she should do and just recognize our sisterhood?

What will it take to stop believing in practices, values, expectations, that don't raise us all up, and see each other as being essential for our own survival?

As Melanie DeMore said, “We must lift each other up and walk side by side.”

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### End White Dominance and OLOC

By Patty O'Donnell, 1956, End White Dominance Planning Committee

It has been over two years since the murder of George Floyd and the uprisings that occurred. More and more white people got involved and stood with Black Lives Matter, marched, and supported. They began to learn through books, videos, webcasts, podcasts, etc., and became educated on the many People of Color atrocities that have happened and continue to happen. Think about where we are now personally and as a society, especially having gone through COVID-19 and “returning” to our everyday lives. Are we still learning, changing ourselves, taking action in some form?

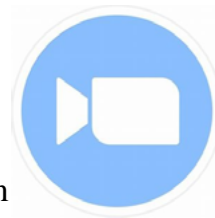
OLOC continues to honor the commitment to our members to become a more equitable organization. We work on incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through the work of the Steering Committee, the End White Dominance monthly sessions, the Lesbians of Color [discussion] group, the National OLOC Antiracism White Group, and through the OLOC *Reporter* and E-News for our affiliates.

End White Dominance has had many sessions that have covered many topics regarding systemic racism—Conversations on Race, Interrupting Racism, Housing, Economics, Education, Healthcare, Insurance, Transportation, Voter Suppression, Indigenous People, Anti-Semitism, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Environmental Racism, the Latina Community, Women of Color Suffragists: Voting and Racism, Middle Eastern Communities, Poverty, the Interconnectedness of Dominance, and more. We thank all the presenters for time and teachings! For those who have attended our sessions, we hope that you have gained some knowledge and within yourself are changing in whatever way to help work toward a more equitable society.

But, there is still so much more to unlearn and learn! Please join us for our monthly End White Dominance sessions by watching your email for the session invitations and registration. If you would like to present a topic or be involved in the planning of these sessions, please contact Patty O'Donnell at [pattytothepines@gmail.com](mailto:pattytothepines@gmail.com).

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## National Zoom and End White Dominance Events



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

### Panels and Presentations

The Unfinished Revolution

Wednesday, December 7, 3:00–4:30 P.M. ET

End White Dominance—Topic: Interconnectedness of Dominance, Part Two

Friday, December 23, 4:00–6:00 P.M. ET

### Open Houses

Nothing scheduled at this time but check again next issue!

### Support/Discussion Groups

Ongoing groups include:

- Lesbians of Color Discussion
- Lesbian Widows Support
- Caregivers Support
- ASL Chat
- Radical Lesbian Feminist Discussion
- Death and Dying Discussion/Support

Check out 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 reports, at <https://oloc.org/past-zooms-2022/> <https://oloc.org/past-zooms-2021/> and <https://oloc.org/past-zooms-2020/>.

End White Dominance videos of past events will be posted as soon as the necessary technical steps are completed.

If you would like to receive notices about OLOC Zoom Crew events (including registration information), send an email to [mev@oloc.org](mailto:mev@oloc.org) with the subject heading “Zoom events” and message body, “Please add me to the Zoom event email notifications.”

<p>If you have any questions, please contact <a href="mailto:zoom@OLOC-Chapters.groups.io">zoom@OLOC-Chapters.groups.io</a> (National Zoom events) or <a href="mailto:susan@oloc.org">susan@oloc.org</a> (End White Dominance programs)</p>
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## Do You Have an IRA?

With the end of the year coming up fast, you may be starting to think about gift giving. An affiliation to OLOC could be perfect for some of your Old Lesbian friends. If you happen to be over 72 and have an IRA, and you haven't taken your RMD (required minimum distribution) for this year yet, you could consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). Just ask the company that holds your IRA to send a donation directly to a qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit, such as your favorite Old Lesbian organization, OLOC! This way you won't owe taxes on that part of your withdrawal (up to \$100,000). It doesn't count as income for taxation purposes, but also it cannot be counted as a deductible contribution. Win-win and everybody is happy!

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## Check Out This Movie!

**Life of OLOC Member Bo Brown, 1947-2021.** Bo was extremely helpful during the 2014 Gathering, before she became ill. For a wonderful film about her life, watch <https://julieperini.com/The-Gentleman-Bank-Robber-The-Story-of-Butch-Lesbian-Freedom-Fighter>. This is a great film to see. Susan Wiseheart, 1941.



Bo Brown

# Chapter News

## New Mexico Chapter

By Susan Buchler, 1946

**August 20:** This month was a “check-in” for everyone. A sewer line was replaced; a missing skylight was replaced; fostering dogs and pitfalls; how to keep multiple exotic tortoises; and a frustrating tale of delays/excuses in getting a new refrigerator. Many have traveled and attended theater, and pickleball is a current obsession of one member. One of us is actively training for an athletic multi-event competition. We also discussed the current political landscape and the need to get out the vote.

**September 17:** This “social” potluck was held in the back yard “pollinator” garden at the home of Hari Sheppard, 1950, and Susan Buchler, 1946. The food was wonderful and the weather was perfect. The artistic skills of those in attendance were shared [see Hari and her “Zozobra” in photo]. We briefly discussed our Chapter’s future plans and generally just got to know each other better.



L-R: Joanne Magalis, 1942; Elaine Davidson, 1959; Mary Jean Mulherin, 1951; Lorie Dwinell, 1940; Susan Buchler, 1946; Carol Eagleheart, 1944.

Hari Sheppard, 1950, and her “Zozobra.”



**October 15:** Tia Donaldson [built on May’s presentation and] gave us a more “user friendly” description of how tests with mice can aid in general knowledge and treatment of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. She educated us on the various types and where they strike in the brain. Since Alzheimer’s is by far the most prevalent, it was the primary focus of the presentation. Tia gave us more information on clinical studies that she is involved with, how they work, what’s happening, and general discoveries in the study of cognitive deterioration. We observed a healthy brain versus a brain containing unhealthy plaques and tangles. While there is some treatment for early diagnosis, it only slows the progression. After that, there is only treatment of symptoms currently available.

## Colorado Chapter

By Katherine Wood, 1954

Colorado OLOC has had a busy fall. **September** was a review of Lesbian history in the Denver area. We spent **October’s** meeting writing postcards through Make Every Vote Count to voters, and we had our annual weekend retreat in Manitou Springs. October also brought OLOC’s National Gathering online, and several members attended. **November’s** meeting was spent on election reflection and organizing for 2023. Katherine Wood, who has been our Chapter Coordinator for seven years, is handing over leadership to a wonderful group of people to carry on. The program committee is surveying membership as it plans for the coming year. Our annual **December** luncheon will be catered this year.



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[www.facebook.com/NationalOLOC](https://www.facebook.com/NationalOLOC)

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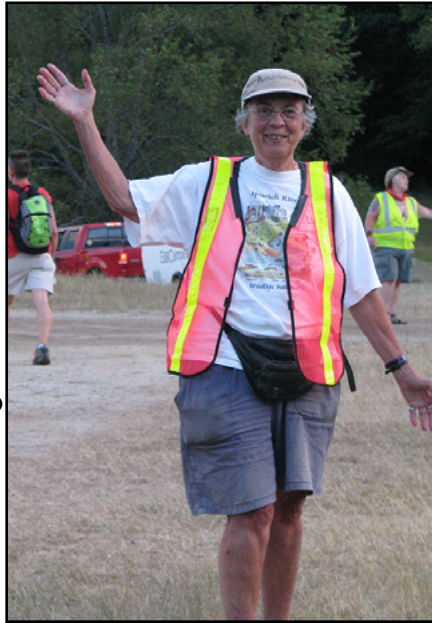


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## Western Mass Chapter

By Emily Greene, 1946

What a fall and what a year this has been. We were all really involved with the last three months of one of our OLOC members' life, Ellen Dickinson, 1943. She went into the hospital for 39 days on July 14, and then I found her a home in my town, Greenfield, at Buckley Nursing Home for the last five weeks of her life. She chose hospice instead of chemo for her Acute Leukemia, and she helped many to see how death with dignity is possible.



*Ellen Dickinson, 1943,  
at Michigan Festival, 2015.*

For our **September** program, we showed a documentary that Wraye, 1941, put together of our caravan to the 40th and last Michigan Women's Music Festival in 2015. I brought my computer over to Ellen's room and we watched together. She was thrilled to do that and said a hardy hello to all who were at the program. Ellen left us on October 1, and I'm ever so grateful that the hospice nurse was there with Ellen and me when she left.

Our **October** program was a well-planned-ahead intergenerational gathering led by Edie Daly, 1937, and Mary McClintock, 1957, with a great sharing of stories and a commitment to continue doing a yearly get-together. [Editor: watch for a report on this event in the December E-News.] Sunday, October 30, we threw a party for Ellen and had many in attendance, including her New York City friends who were there in 1976 when Ellen started an outdoor group called Hikin' Dykes, which is still going after 40 years. All her friends send her good wishes for this next journey of hers.

## Rhode Island Chapter

By Nancy, 1953

We have spent the last few months meeting outdoors at different members' houses and having incredible potlucks. We have devised a structure for meetings, with an opening "ice breaker." These are questions that can have short answers but give us more knowledge of each other and a way for new members to get to know everyone.



*Top row (L-R): Sally, 1950; Thea, 1954; Deb, 1952;  
Jodi, 1953; Dee, 1957; Dorcey, 1957; Lisa, 1952;  
Nancy, 1953.  
Sitting (L-R): Cathy, 1946; Marge, 1932; Mev, 1955.*

In **June**, we had a spirited discussion about how to handle "urgent" emails where the sender wants us to sign on OLOC-Rhode Island as an organization. Many concerns were expressed about both content and process. In principle, there are many things we DO agree on as a group and as individuals. But we all have different lenses and experiences and may need some "back story" about situations and organizations that need deeper consideration. Some of us may not want to sign onto certain proposals. By consensus, we made several process decisions on how to handle such requests.

Our **July** meeting was a road trip to see Mev's display of Wanderground Lesbian Archive at the Providence Public Library. We met for a bite to eat first, then saw the curated presentation.

In **August**, we passed around a list of "shared responsibilities" of OLOC-Rhode Island. We all

(continued on page 9)



## Chapter News (continued)

### Rhode Island Chapter (continued)

signed up for different items so that one person was not doing everything related to the Chapter. This seems to be working out well.

We have developed a list of topics and who will facilitate the discussion for the next few months and decided to alternate between Zoom and in-person 'til December. It has been a very productive summer for us.

### More Gathering Thanks

Thank you to the original program planners of the cancelled 2022 in-person Gathering, and Steering Committee liaison Alí Marrero-Calderón. Bonnie Wagner, Retts Scauzillo, and Diane Sabin did the early work on arrangements for Melanie DeMore, Madeleine Lim and Kebo Drew (Bernice Bing film), and Terry Baum to be part of the program.

## You Can Now Join an OLOC Chapter, Wherever You Live!

By Janis Sommers, 1951

As of September, there were 788 affiliates of OLOC. Two hundred were in Chapters. I, as one of the 588 not in a Chapter, thought it might be good to form what I call an At-Large Chapter. With help from Steering Committee member Sally Tatnall, 1937, and all of the tech Lesbians who assisted with organizing our Gathering 2022, I was able to offer a breakout session to discuss this as a possibility. The response from the large attendance has indicated that we move forward to form the OLOC At-Large Chapter.

It is open to anyone who is an affiliate, regardless of local Chapter membership and involvement. Email me your interest and I will see that you are included at our first organizational meeting and try to answer your questions. We were informed that OLOC Chapters have rules to follow! One is that we cannot endorse candidates. I think, though, that we CAN protest them. Sally will set us straight on that one! The initial group decided on one rule already: that is love and kindness regardless of our differences. My email is [janis02642@gmail.com](mailto:janis02642@gmail.com).

## Healing from COVID-19, Lesbian Style: Food is Medicine

By Eme, 1962

I got COVID-19 and am now on the medication Paxlovid, a medicine that is not only fast-tracked but experimental, so for once, as a Lesbian, I am part of the preliminary testing. COVID-19 doesn't discriminate by sex or sexual orientation. For me, Paxlovid causes a feeling of dissociation, a constant buzzing in my head, an indescribable dystonic [tremor-like] feeling. A nurse gave me pointers about water intake and drug interactions, but I wanted more: I wanted to know what food-medicines I should eat while taking Paxlovid, and which ones to avoid. As a Lesbian, I know that I cannot rely on the medical system for all of my needs, as I am invisible to it. I need to help my body with medicine from all sources: sunshine, water, food, friends, music, sweet smoke, and my little dog who floods my body with healing endorphins.

Nothing food-related came up when I asked the 'net "What to eat while taking Paxlovid for COVID-19," but

I DID learn that Paxlovid can sometimes increase our cholesterol by up to 20%! This was not shared with me during my medical consults, despite the fact that I have borderline high cholesterol! Could the ear buzzing and unbalanced feeling be a result of elevated cholesterol? Perhaps higher blood pressure, narrowed arteries? Yikes!

I Googled "foods to lower cholesterol," threw away the half-eaten bags of cookies and chips I'd been munching on, and embarked on a week-long minimal-cholesterol meal plan that involved no sugar or sweeteners, low levels of protein, no caffeine, lots of greens, white and black beans, tofu, oatmeal, fresh fruits and veggies, and carrot juice. I found my medicinal meal plan, along a convoluted path that I cut myself, Lesbian style, and the strange symptoms are going away. Two days left on Paxlovid; feeling much better. Be well, sisters!

# Affiliate Contributions

## Radical Feminism in Action

By Rena Grasso, 1944

On September 1, 2022, feminist Barbara Ehrenreich died at 81. Like many originals, her background was eclectic and interdisciplinary, combining physics and cell biology with social justice, feminist research, writings, and intersectional activism.

At present, she is most known for *Nickel and Dime*, *On (Not) Getting by in America* (2001), a work that reflects her deep commitment to the working poor. Ehrenreich went undercover for two years working at minimum wage jobs: house cleaner, waitress, Wal-Mart. She tried to live on her wages and experienced first-hand the traps, stresses, and indignities of poverty.

But, Ehrenreich was also a pioneer. In the same vein as *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1970), she developed feminist knowledge, contributing to feminist analyses, and catalyzing activism for women's health.

In 1972, Ehrenreich, with Deidre English, wrote *Witches, Midwives, and Healers: A History of Women Healers*, an iconic pamphlet that spread like fire through feminist circles; it brought to light long-buried women's history as it scrutinized the male-dominated health care system.

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## A First Draft of My Obituary

By Sandra Butler, 1938

For most of my life, "What do you do?" was the first question I was asked when meeting someone. I often responded by identifying as a writer. Decades were spent thinking about incest, death, mothering, and global politics, and finding the best language to communicate them to as wide an audience as possible. I think back with pride at the young, then middle-aged woman I was, finding her voice, her confidence, and the work she felt was urgent.

But at 84, the question has shifted to "What have you done?" That's the one I need to answer now. It's a much harder question to answer than what I do,



In 1973, Ehrenreich and English published *Complaints and Disorders: the Sexual Politics of Sickness* and, in 1978, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of Experts' Advice to Women*, documenting sexual politics' incalculable harms to women's health and self-esteem.

Women who did not live before the movement are hard-pressed to realize the dark ages from which these feminists delivered us. But the backlash has buried Ehrenreich's feminist achievement. Few media manufacturers of fame and fortune—left, liberal, or right—recognize her; those that do, omit her feminism. Amy Goodman's *Democracy Now* focused exclusively on *Nickel and Dime*; Wikipedia mentions none of her feminist writing.

I write to accord Ehrenreich her place of honor among feminists, am sending this to Amy Goodman, and will edit feminism into Wikipedia. Feminism that doesn't act is not feminism.

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which, as I age, is less and less. But, the me that remains has become more and more, and my books turn out to be far down the list of accomplishments.

In a conventional obituary, I would be leaving two daughters, a son-in-law, a godson, and a rich and varied community of women. But, what is it that I will have left them?

My love. That is something I did. I do. I've loved my friends well. Loyally. Attentively. At least in the

## A First Draft of My Obituary (continued)

past 40 years. Before that, I was still learning how to be a person, and how to love well is always the hardest lesson.

So, how about this as a first draft of my obituary, hopefully not to be relevant soon:

Sandra Butler spent most of her life trying to become the woman she wanted to be. This meant releasing all the ways she was not even close. She mostly succeeded, raising two remarkable daughters, nestled in a community of women, wrote books, and tried to be of use. Once she stopped drinking, she got better at everything. The older she got, the better she was. She died knowing she had a good run.

## Surviving Cancer—What Now?

By Juanita Malouf, 1953

In December 2011, the lump was discovered by a Lesbian doctor during my annual checkup. I was comforted by her and felt I was off to a good start.

I remember the gentleman's phone call after my breast biopsy. "You have cancer; god bless."

I never cried. I went to tumor meetings, where I got updates from my team. Carol, my spouse of 22 years at that time, took all the notes and tracked the medical plan. She came with me to every appointment and every infusion. I just followed all directions and did no comparison between myself and others' cases.

I went in for the lumpectomy, not my first breast surgery. They had removed the cancer and 26 lymph nodes, seven of which were cancerous. Upon waking up, I remember Carol crying and telling me that when I get better, we will return to France and visit with the family. My heart broke for her in that moment but still no tears.

I followed my nurse navigator with calls and updates. Time to begin chemo every Wednesday for six months. Took all my anti-nausea meds; never got sick. Bloodwork every Tuesday.

I still did not cry. After six months, just before my final infusion, I got peripheral neuropathy in my

fingers and feet. Not too bothersome now, ten years later, but at the beginning it was a big shock to have this potential long-term painful problem. Then six weeks of radiation!

I spent the next ten years wondering when I would die. Every day.

Today, I have put all those cancer fears behind me. Now I am taking remedies from my Lesbian homeopath/psychiatrist, sharing all my fears with her. Turning it all over to her care.

I still never cried, but I live.

## Passings

Ann Valliant, 1945–2022,  
Berkeley, California

Carol Grosvenor, 1949–2022,  
LaVerne, California

Martha Jacobs, 1942–2022,  
Moriarty, New Mexico

Pat Norman, 1939–2022,  
San Francisco, California

Ellen Dickinson, 1943–2022,  
Hatfield, Massachusetts

Arden Eversmeyer, 1931–2022,  
Houston, Texas

See the E-News for more about these Lesbians.

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Print it out and send it in!



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