

Alix Dobkin, 1940-2021. More in the next Reporter and the E-News.

“Old” Age By Alix Dobkin, 1940

The discussion about changing OLOC’s definition of “old” from 60 to something else has gone on since our beginning. As always, we considered many things from many angles, but now there seem to be more complications: what a member is and what benefits does “membership” bring. Are chapter members automatically counted as National members? Some chapters accept 55-year-old members or don’t have age requirements.



Alix Dobkin

Does “old age” mean more infirm and less able? Some of us have daughters who are over 50 and we do not consider them to be “old” (nor do they). So, what’s the answer?

Our mission is to fight ageism rather than define what “old” means; a 50-year-old who loses her job has to face the very same ageism as older women. However, the perception of “age” has changed since our founding. We are not the same now at 60 as we were way back then because more of us are living very active, productive lives. Therefore, some believe that 65 is a more accurate definition and would like to increase the age.

The latest iteration evolved from discussions about strategic planning that the Steering Committee has undertaken. In them were proposals

to lower the age, particularly in light of the lowered life expectancy for those Old Lesbians experiencing the effects of poverty.

Of course, we all want to sustain OLOC, and some of us think that, because we are old and will die sooner rather than later, we need younger members to keep us going.

Others point out that so far the current age of 60 has supplied OLOC with the energy to keep us alive and well enough to offer terrific programs and provide excellent resources for Old Lesbians.

Not only that, there has been a perception of a lack of transparency about our process, and that there has been little input from our members about lowering the age. However, we solicit feedback all the time in the *Reporter* and E-News, though it hasn’t been focused on age. We survey the Chapter Coordinators, but most OLOC members are not in a chapter. Members can observe Steering Committee meetings in action but are not able to participate in the discussion or vote. The dates of the next meetings will be posted soon.

These discussions have never been easy, and after much exhausting back-and-forth, when confronted with a stalemate and too many questions, we eventually compromised with a consensus to lower the age of membership in OLOC to 55.

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'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.

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
- Committee to address, contact the Steering
- Committee by email at info@oloc.org; a note to
- the PO Box in Woodstock, New York; or a phone
- call to 888-706-7506 (toll-free). Be sure to say if
- you want a response.

The OLOC Reporter is published by Old Lesbians Organizing for Change:

- <https://oloc.org/>; email: info@oloc.org
- PO Box 834, Woodstock, NY 12498
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This newsletter is brought to you by:

Editor: Sheryl, 1954.

Proofreader and Copy-editor: Nancy Krody, 1939.

Content review: Ruth Debra, 1944 (Guest); Sally Tatnall, 1937; Jan Griesinger, 1942; and Susan Wiseheart, 1941.

Design/Layout: Connie Rose, 1948.

All of the writers and photographers.

Deadline for the next issue is August 1, 2021.

Limit contributions to 300 words.

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

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: reporter@oloc.org or PO Box 834, Woodstock, NY 12498.

National OLOC Statement

By Jacqui Lewis Miller, 1949, on behalf of the Steering Committee

OLOC is NOT a white organization and we continue to make every effort to encourage the participation of our Sisters of Color.

As you may know, we have been meeting and working to identify and diminish the structures of white dominance within OLOC. This is and will be an ongoing process because racism is so deeply rooted in our culture. We are all affected negatively by the debilitating and unjust parameters of white dominance.

Any woman acting out any form of discrimination will be called on it immediately. This type of behavior will not be tolerated. OLOC is organizing for change! We are the change! First!

Input from Lesbians throughout our membership has made it known that we must work to address the oppression of Lesbians in all areas of our lives.

We are committed to making participation in OLOC comfortable and hopefully enjoyable to all our current members and those to come!

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

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



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OLOC Addresses the Isms

Ageism

By Sally Tatnall, 1937

Ageism is a word that describes systemic oppression based on someone's age. It allows people of one age to discriminate against someone of another age.

The structure of ageism gives power to people of one age over people of another age. Our language uses words to put people down because of age.

"You are too young to ..." "You are too old to ..." "Why don't you act like an adult ..." "Act your age ..." Ageism judgments happen at every age.

Ageism is so prevalent that no one gets past its power to make you feel bad at some point in your life. Age has nothing to do with how you feel about yourself or anything else. However, ageism allows others to determine how you feel and what you think. It also can make you feel bad about yourself.

Ageism at a later age is probably the most destructive. The word "old" is used to eliminate whatever you experience of reality.

If you are **SEEN** as old, the following judgments will prevail: you are frail, forgetful, out of touch, strange, incapable, weak, absent-minded, worn out, an old maid, an old geezer, confused, senile, and even demented.

It is no wonder that, if people see you in that light, they will stay away. It is important to understand that, although you do not feel "old," you are **SEEN** as "old."

HOWEVER, OLOC members are the **ELDERS** and we will tell you what "old" means. OLD is exciting. OLD is smart and creative. OLD is gracious and passionate. OLD is full of rich stories. OLD is respected and respectful. OLD is generous. OLD is helpful. OLD carries our past even when YOUNG tries to eliminate it. OLD understands and forgives. OLD is lucky to still be here.

There are only two responses to freedom.

One is trying to control everything.

The other is to be creative and take risks.

— Alix Dobkin, 1994

End White Dominance Series Update

By Susan Wiseheart, 1941

Since its inception, OLOC has addressed racism. Right now, among many other things, we hold regular Zoom events. The current End White Dominance series—planned by Sally Tatnall, 1937; Ruth Debra, 1944; Bonnie K. Clark, 1952; and me—covers topics to further educate us about what needs to be done to make change in policies and practices of systems and institutions and how to go about it.

So far, we have focused on housing, economics and banking, education, healthcare and insurance, and the prison-industrial complex. We plan to continue every month and may change format or focus.

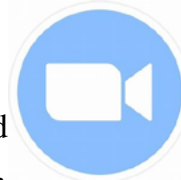
We began with two meetings planned by Ms. Vyk Hodges, 1951; Sally Tatnall; and me called "Conversations about Race," where those attending each spoke of her own experience, followed by discussion.

Next was a two-part workshop led by Shari Pergricht, 1958, on confronting individual racist comments or actions in our daily lives. OLOC member Delores Walters, 1944, will be presenting her acclaimed talk on Margaret Garner, the enslaved woman who killed one of her children in the 1800s and wished to kill all four to keep them from being captured on a run for freedom. Toni Morrison based her novel *Beloved* on that story. It will take place on June 10 and 17 at 12:00 ET. On June 22, Patty O'Donnell, 1956, will lead us in talking about the transportation system and its white dominance.

Some chapters have also been holding educational events and workshops and working with local groups to help end white dominance. In addition, we include useful information, stories, and resources in every issue of our newsletters.

The Old Lesbian population in the US and the world is a mix of many "races." Without doing the work of ending white dominance everywhere, we contribute to it. Passive antiracism does not exist.

Upcoming National Zoom Events



Did you know that OLOC has a Zoom Crew that has been developing an exciting series of free events to keep us all connected during the pandemic? They are busily planning and implementing three types of events: large group panels/presentations, support/CR groups, and open house informal get-togethers. All events are closed captioned. Start times are listed in ET; please use this Time Zone Converter (<https://www.thetimezoneconverter.com/>)

*Please do not share information about upcoming OLOC Zooms on social media.
Thank you for helping to keep the Zooms a safe space for all of us.*

This event is open to all Lesbians:

Thursday, June 24, 4:00 ET

*Behind the Scenes in Women's Music
and Culture, The Early Years,
Part 2: Distribution*

Panel Discussion facilitated by Margie Adam, 1947.

This event is open to members only:

Friday, June 25, 4:00 ET

*End White Dominance—
Topic: Transportation*

Presented by Patty O'Donnell, 1956.

*Invitations will go out to all National OLOC
members. Be sure to register if you want to come.*

Write susan@oloc.org with questions
about this event only.

Questions about any of this?

Contact Zoom@OLOC-Chapters.groups.io.

**These events are open only to OLOC
members (participants can come and go
at any time):**

ASL Weekly Chat

Meets every Sunday at 7:00 ET.

Send your email address to lrwintberger@gmail.com
or call 919-754-7006 to get an invite.

*Old Lesbians with Disabilities
Peer Support Group*

The first group is full. Second group is in
formation; watch for details.

This event is open to Old Lesbians:

Thursday, June 10, 2:00 ET

What Does Pride Mean to You?

LGBTQ Pride has different meanings for each of us. For some, it's a celebration, a party. For some, it's a protest in honor of the Stonewall uprising. For some, it's the way they came out. Let's get together to talk both in a large group and then smaller groups.

News from the Zoom Crew

By Mev Miller, 1955

Thanks to everyone who responded to our March/April survey. We received 258 responses (a HUGE 33% return rate), containing lots of new ideas and helpful suggestions. We're grateful for the positive response to OLOC Zoom programming. We've heard you: "YES—keep them coming!" And so, we will. The Zoom Crew

is busily working to develop a variety of options for the months of July–December. We're also working on mixing up days and times so dykes around the country (and world) have more access.

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Note: All Zoom events require pre-registration.
The registration link for each event is usually released by email at least two–three weeks before the date. Please watch the E-News and special email announcements for registration information.



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News from the Zoom Crew (continued)



We'll likely take the summer "off," but there will be some programming. Watch for more information:

- **June 22–Basic Zoom Class**
(*"I got on Zoom; now what do I do?"*)
- **July–Open House/discussion**
(*with facilitator*): *"Let's talk about S-E-X"*
- **August–Open House: Old Lesbians Organizing for Change or Community?**

The Zoom Crew is a group of dedicated volunteers. We appreciate your support and gratitude. You may send your suggestions to:
Zoom@OLOC-Chapters.groups.io

From September through December, watch for events such as "Let's Laugh" (Lesbian humor), "Coming Out as OLD and Confronting Systemic Ageism," "Lesbian Land," "Lesbians without Children" (discussion), and more. We are also developing an Intermediate Zoom class/group for those who want to do more with Zoom tech facilitation.

The End White Dominance workshops will continue each month [see Susan's article on page 3]. We are also developing additional support groups such as Caregivers and Lesbian Grandmothers, and a second group for Lesbian widows. We have heard a suggestion to offer a discussion group specifically for Lesbians of Color. Any Lesbians of Color interested in facilitating or starting this group, please let us know.

Being Light in a Broken World By Mary Jean Mulherin, 1951

On a recent visit to George Floyd Square in Minneapolis, I found, amidst the multitude of flowers and placards honoring his life, the powerful lines from Amanda Gordon's poem, as inscribed on the photo.

I was reminded that *our efforts matter* when I listened for two hours to one after another family member speak to the murder of their loved one at the hands of police in our country. The lead presenter, Toshira Garroway, told us that the *mere act of listening matters* to the families and helps them heal because they know they are not alone in their grief.



You may not have the stamina to stand out on an afternoon, nor wish to risk potential germs, but you can raise your voice through Zooms and letters to the editor and messages to your Senators and Representatives, and if you're an artist: *draw*; if a writer: *write*; if a musician: *create music*.

Enough is enough. Urge the US Justice Department to investigate your police departments and state patrols. We need to demilitarize our police forces. We need to reimagine our criminal justice and mental health systems. Our largest mental health system is found within three jail systems in the United States: Los Angeles County, Riker's Island (New York City), and Cook County (Chicago).

Don't be immobilized by the enormity of the needs of our times. Wherever you live, whatever your ability, there is something you can and must do. Healing is a communal venture. *Listen. Act. Heal.*

Check out our website for ways to get involved, donate, or purchase OLOC gear.

www.oloc.org



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

To subscribe, go to

<https://groups.io/g/nationalOLOC>.

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

Chapter News

Hudson Valley Chapter By Retts Scauzillo, 1953, with help from Bonnie Wagner, 1942

What's Up?

Thank goodness we are over the pandemic—well, sort of. Hudson Valley OLOC co-sponsored “John Lewis Voting Rights Day of Action” in Kingston, New York, on May 8. We were very excited about this event and marched and participated in every way.

We have been meeting every Thursday night on Zoom. That has been a life saver during the pandemic. Retts has been sending National OLOC Zoom registrations out to chapter members, and many of the Old Lesbians in the Hudson Valley have attended the events.

In September, we hope to be meeting in person the last Thursday of the month at the R & R Lounge in Woodstock for a much needed in-person social gathering. And on the third Thursday, we hope to have our monthly business meeting at the LGBTQ Center.

President Biden said we should all be vaccinated and ready to resume outdoor family activities by July 4. So, we have decided to have our annual OLOC pool party on Saturday, July 3. All Old Lesbians are welcome.

Western Mass Chapter (formerly Northampton/Pioneer Valley) By Emily Greene, 1946

Hello from Western Mass, as we watch spring bursting forth, and are we ever glad! Many of us have started our gardens in the last week [late April] and we're chomping at the bit to get together in person. This will have happened for the first time in over a year in May when we had a picnic outdoors in Ann Perkins', 1943, back yard, still being careful with masks and social distance when needed.

We have been focusing on racism over the past three months with a program in February with National

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

OLOC, and then I set up an April program with a speaker I knew from a book circle last fall, Sarah Pilzer, a younger Lesbian, who led us in a deep look at *Me and White Supremacy*, by Layla Saad. We really had a chance to look at many terms, such as white centering, white privilege, and others as they show up in ourselves. There is a real desire to understand the role that we play as white Lesbians in racial injustice. To say the least, we were all really glad to see the decision and justice for George Floyd and hopefully for all the Black men and women killed while unarmed.

Our March program was the beginning of getting to know each other more, as we shared our lives from birth to age 20. Womyn brought in a picture or two from those years and told us how their lives started out. Often there was laughter and a real enjoyment and desire to continue on this journey of discovering each other.

Rhode Island Chapter By Mev Miller, 1955

We're still here—meeting monthly by Zoom. We've had a number of interesting presentations by our members in the past few months. Elda Dawber, LICSW, 1944, provided some current information on “Bullying in Senior Communities.” Bullying has been increasing in senior centers, nursing homes, and living communities. Her presentation provided some insight into what to look for and how administrators and allies can intervene.

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Chapter News *(continued)*

Rhode Island Chapter – *(continued)*

Jodi Glass, Au.D., 1953, presented on her work as a board member for a local senior/assisted living community working to create LGBTQ senior housing in Rhode Island. Based on her presentation, we had a spirited conversation on what needs to happen in Rhode Island for safe housing options for LGBTQ seniors.

In May, Mev Miller, Ed.D., 1955, presented on her new project called Wanderground: Archiving Lesbian Legacies, Words, Creativity in Rhode Island. Mev has received a one-year research grant from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities to pursue this work. You can see more on her website, Wanderground.org. Her survey has launched in both English and Spanish. She would love to hear from any Lesbian who lives—or has lived—in Rhode Island.

All of our active members are now vaccinated. We're hoping to take the big plunge and meet outdoors face-to-face sometime in June (weather permitting)! Woohoo! We will do so cautiously but optimistically.

Central Ohio Chapter By Pam Jackson, 1941

The Central Ohio group was to meet in person for the second time, since we all have our shots. We were going to discuss the book *White Fragility* and report back on our reading assignments from the last meeting. I am going to suggest to the group that we read up to Chapter Three in *White Fragility* because there is so much to digest. Each meeting we can discuss another portion. We also invited a woman who is working on affordable housing and community for Old Lesbians to speak about her program at the meeting. However, we had to cancel and re-schedule our meeting until May 22 because of winter weather in April. We didn't have anyone else with a big living room to host the meeting. I was going to hold it in my backyard. We will report on the meeting in the next issue of the *Reporter*.

New Mexico Chapter By Susan Buchler, 1946

February 20, 2021: Facilitator Debby Oscar, 1955

Presenter Ginger Gaffney is a Lesbian author and horse trainer. Her memoir, *Half Broke*, is about the first year she worked at a prison alternative ranch with prisoners and their herd of dangerous horses. Most of the residents at the ranch are multiple offenders with mental health issues. Gaffney worked with the horses and the residents while weaving in her own personal story as a queer child growing up in the early 1970s. Lesbian author Melissa Febos calls *Half Broke* “a love song to the broken ones, be they human or beast, and all the ways they find to mend.” She writes beautifully of the horse-human relationship and seems to understand a horse's mind as well as she understands her own.

March 20, 2021: Facilitator Susan Buchler, 1946

“All About Pollinators.” Kristin Thompson, expert gardener, presented a program identifying all the different pollinators, focusing on bees, and identifying butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds that we have in New Mexico. She covered how they live, habitats, what they eat, predators, threatened environments, life cycles, and identification, and what we can do to help them survive and thrive, providing food and shelter. She has an extensive slide collection that illustrated her talk.

April 17, 2021: Facilitator Canyon “Carol” Scott, 1954

“Relationship Evolution,” on child development, was presented by authority Canyon Scott herself. Our brains were wired for relationships in our first 2,500 days of life. Maybe your early wiring included essentials like the capacities for trust, mutual respect, and negotiation; maybe not. The relationship evolution offers development do-overs on those first seven years in order to get along better in the adult sandboxes in which you play. Canyon shared the seven self-aware success strategies: trust, independence, faith, negotiation, vision, compromise, and acceptance. We all need them!

Chapter News *(continued)*

Colorado Chapter By Katherine Wood, 1954

The Colorado Chapter of OLOC is continuing to meet on Zoom each month, but we are getting our vaccines and are hoping for a park picnic in June or July where we will be serenaded by a professional violinist, Mindy Anderson.

We had another wonderful program by Rebekah Shardy, 1956, in March. This one was about our Mother Earth and was quite inspirational, “The Earth Speaks: Stories of Elder Wisdom and New Science.” Contact Rebekah at rebekahshardy@yahoo.com if you’d like her to Zoom this program with your group.

In April, we conducted a memorial service for Gail Klock, who was a long-time member of our group, but no longer active at the time of her death. We also enjoyed a program on ageism written by the founders of National OLOC.

In May, Cayden Stice discussed his research study for the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado’s Queer Political History. Many of us participated in his interviews and were interested to hear his findings.

Plans are underway for our second annual Colorado OLOC retreat. We are again headed to Manitou Springs to some cabins for a long weekend in October.

Passings

Carmen Vasquez, 1949–2021, New York, NY
Madge Sutter, 1941–2021, Desert Hot Springs, CA
Ivy Bottini, 1926–2021, West Hollywood, CA
Judith Ann Hunter, 1939–2020, St. Louis, MO
Dorothy Ann Cottrell, 1938–2020, St. Louis, MO
Madeline D. Davis, 1940–2021, Buffalo, NY
Sherry Dowd, 1957–2021, Las Vegas, NV, and
Long Beach, CA
Patricia Elaine Gilmore, 1934–2021, Bodega Bay,
CA

See the E-News for more about these Lesbians.

San Francisco Bay Area Chapter

By Molly Martin, 1949

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic left us Old Lesbians feeling isolated, frustrated, lonely, anguished, worried, and terrified that we would get sick. Taking no chances, we stayed home and forswore seeing friends and family.

But Zoom saved us! Our little support group of 15–20 San Francisco Bay Area OLOCers has been meeting every Tuesday at 11:00 A.M. all year, and what a year it’s been!

We helped each other cope with depression, anxiety, loneliness, and despair. Some of us felt trapped in our living quarters, especially those who live in a single room. These weekly Zoom meetings felt like a lifeline and helped us stay sane in the maelstrom of pandemic and politics. Zooming allowed us to include women from all around the Bay Area, as well as OLOCers who had moved out of the area. By the end of the year, we had become a family.

Once we got the hang of it, we convened other Zoom events. We organized four book groups to read about and discuss white supremacy and racism. We also hired a facilitator and held two workshops on white supremacy. We organized Zoom meetings for declutterers and a support group for partners who are caring for a spouse with dementia. We also held a curated salon in May and a discussion group about the end of life. We participated in the excellent National OLOC Zooms, too (thank you to the organizers!).

We plan to keep the Zoom groups going, but we also plan to see each other in person. We haven’t given up hope that we will be able to hold a picnic this summer and a retreat this fall. With the support of our Lesbian sisters, we look forward to life after COVID-19.

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

Book about African Lesbians

By Peg Cruikshank, 1940

Free to Be Me consists of oral histories of African Lesbians seeking asylum in England and the stories of Manchester Lesbians who help them. It was edited by OLOC member Jane Traies, 1945, and published by Tollington Press in Wales. Although not available in the US, it is such an important book that I want OLOCers to know about it. Jane's earlier book, *Lives of Older Lesbians* [UK], is still available.

Australian Women March For Justice

By Lavender, 1945

Many Lesbians joined the 42 Women's Marches for Justice held across Australia on 15 March demanding an end to violence, abuse, sexism, harassment, misogyny, dangerous workplace cultures, and lack of equality in politics and the community at large.



Women everywhere were outraged, angry, and demanding justice following allegations of a historical rape of a 16-year-old girl by the commonwealth Attorney-General and of sexual assault and oppression of women by males in Parliament House.

Mostly you'll hear about marches in Canberra and the state capitals, yet in regional Australia, women were out there. I was with 800 others in the pouring rain in Lismore, a northeastern NSW [New South Wales] city. The program included two Bundjalung women speakers (the Bundjalung people being our regional Aboriginal tribe) and a performance of the Chilean Women's Chant. Marching along, we shouted our demands: "Out with masculinity, violence, patriarchy, male sense of entitlement, and silencing." Friends had the Lesbians Ignite banner,

and I was on one end of the Fearless Feminists banner. Lesbian energy still fuelling resistance!

I acknowledge the Bundjalung people, the traditional custodians of the land on which this march was held.

North to Alaska?

By Ms. Vyk, 1951

I'm kinda feeling the urge to write about my quest to go "North to Alaska" this summer but not sure if it will be of interest to Old Lesbians.

I have never been there and it has been on my "bucket list" for decades. While I would love to see the Northern Lights, I would not do well in the cold, dark, long nights that are supposed to be the "best time" to see this natural phenomenon. So that leaves between now and September. It rains a LOT in August. I hate rain. June feels "too soon." So that leaves July. Why go at all this year? I figure folks are still feeling wary of traveling, haven't gotten vaccinated, or want to wait for cruise lines to re-open. In my mind, this makes it ideal to go now when it might not be so crowded.

I want to travel solo. Trying to find reasonable rates for accommodations is impossible. I am almost 70. I am not looking to cruise through the Indoor Passage. I do long to see the icebergs, glaciers, and fjords, as well as the wildlife that supposedly abounds in Denali National Park. I know WHAT I want to see and do (cruising small inlets, taking the train to Denali, viewing fantastic vistas, seeing wild animals, taking easy strolls), and what I DON'T want to do or see (fishing, panning for gold, a lot of museums).

I don't want to spend a ton of money. I want to be comfortable. I'm not trying to sleep in a tent or a cabin with no running water, or travel "off the grid." I don't want to hitchhike or rent a car or ATV. I'm not that kind of gal.

So, the quest continues. Maybe I'll just rent a travelogue about Alaska.



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Stop Black Deaths in Custody By Jean Taylor, 1944

Opening my Facebook page on 10 April 2021, I noted that a demonstration had been organised outside Parliament House in Melbourne to Stop Black Deaths in Custody because it was the 30-year anniversary of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and the situation had become a lot worse. The latest stats show that Indigenous people are only 3% of the Australian population but make up 30% of the prison population; since the Royal Commission, another 474 Indigenous people had died in police custody.

Back in 1986, a campaign was started to bring attention to the numbers of Aboriginal people who were not only being jailed in higher proportion to their numbers in the general population, but were also at higher risk of dying while in custody. I went to the Black Deaths in Custody Rally organised by the Aboriginal Rights Solidarity Group in Melbourne on 28 September 1986, before marching to the Fitzroy Gardens.

The Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody commenced on 16 October 1987. However, even while hundreds of witnesses and hours of testimony

were being heard over three years, Black deaths in custody were continuing to happen at a faster rate than they were able to be dealt with. When the Final Report was presented on 1 May 1991, not one person was found to be responsible for any of the deaths; no charges were laid; and **the 339 recommendations for changes to the system were largely ignored.**

I knew I just wasn't up to being at the demo this year, a difficult thing for an ageing radical Lesbian feminist activist to come to terms with, but on the eve of my 77th birthday, I needed to support this worthwhile cause in other ways.

End White Dominance: Healthcare Report By Marie Emee, 1962

Thank you, Sally Tatnall, 1937, for your April 23 presentation, "End White Dominance: Healthcare and the Insurance Industry," and to Ruth Debra, 1944, and Susan Wiseheart, 1941, for moderating a lively discussion.

Many instances of structural racism codified into law were illustrated, including the creation of racist psychiatric diagnoses created exclusively for Blacks, exclusionary and predatory research practices, and lack of adequate medical/psychiatric care within the prison-industrial system.

A salient point is that the US did not even acknowledge the existence of disparities in healthcare until the

1985 Report of the Task Force on Black and Minority Health. If the disparities are nonexistent in the eyes of policy makers, there is no support for these "invisible" populations built into law and national policy. That the most recent census data is considered by many to grossly undercount People of Color is proof that the battle for justice continues.

Systemic problems with access to health insurance and care were discussed, especially for those who do not qualify for Medicare or Medicaid. The high cost of healthy food, disparities in clean air and water, and the racist underpinnings of many states' refusal to expand Medicaid were discussed.

Some solutions were pondered: one woman suggested that we re-read Barbara Ehrenreich's book, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses*, and spearhead a movement for women and People of Color to take back the healthcare system. The for-profit nature of the system was agreed to be a source of multiple problems. Many agreed that it would be beneficial to fight for more socialized medical and insurance systems like Medicare. One woman suggested that we fight for expanded community health centers. The pandemic has shown us in no uncertain terms that we will all suffer if some of us do not receive quality medical care. What will we do with the lessons?



Check out our website www.oloc.org



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, aged 55 or older, 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 in the same household, send a form for each, but you can pay as a unit instead of as two persons. 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: _____ Date: _____

Street/PO Box: _____

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

Out of United States? Country: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

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.

New to OLOC? Yes No

I am a supporter. I am a supporter or member age 55 and older.

I am not sending money at this time.

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

My partner who is also a supporter or member/supporter is _____

I am including a separate form for her and sending \$_____ together.

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 sometimes 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: _____

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 page.

By credit card through PayPal: Use the Donate button at oloc.org on right side near top of 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, INC. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your donation may be tax deductible.

OLOC
PO Box 834
Woodstock, NY 12498

Time to Renew? Check your label. →

If it says 2021.06—meaning June 2021—
or earlier, it is time to renew.



Alix Dobkin, 1940-2021

More in the next *Reporter* and the E-News.