# Old Lesbians Organizing for Change



# California Dreaming: Building A Better World For Every Old Lesbian By Mina Meyer, 67

The excitement is growing as we move toward our next national Gathering at the HACIENDA HOTEL IN LOS ANGELES, CA. next year from July 30, to Aug 3, 2008. The Hotel is lovely and convenient, and offers free rides to and from the Los Angeles Airport. The hotel itself has 4 restaurants including a 24 hr. coffee shop, and of course a swimming pool.

We will come together, learn, grow, see old friends, make new friends, and build a better world for every Old Lesbian!

We have invited two extraordinary keynote speakers. Virginian Gaye Adegbalola is well known as an inspiring speaker, teacher, jazz and blues singer and Lesbian activist. Besides speaking, Gaye will give a short concert. Jackie Goldberg, retired from 22 years of elected office in California, was responsible

for passing many of the LGBT rights bills in California. Both dynamic keynoters are actively involved in their communities.

Our own Shaba Barnes will once again lead a Memorial event to honor those we have lost this past year. See our web site (oloc.org) for info on Memorial Plagues.

Robin Tyler, Comedian/Activist, will be the Mistress of Ceremonies Saturday night, keeping us well entertained. And, the Los Angeles

Women's Community Chorus, Sue Fink conducting, is coming together again after many years to sing for us at the Banquet before the dance. We are thrilled!

Our Plenary Sessions will focus on Race and Class: Building a Truly Representative Community. Many other important issues will be addressed in the various workshops and sessions throughout the Gathering. If you wish to do a workshop that ties in with our theme, please contact info@oloc.org. For subject, put in Planning Committee.

ATTENTION ALL: OLOC is working hard to raise funds to cover the costs for those who otherwise could not afford to attend. Our application form will include how to let us know if you need financial help.



Pictured getting ready for the Pride Parade: Saundra Tignor, Mina Meyer, Sunne Mahood, Mickey Clifton, Silvia Russell, Zalota Russell

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#### **OLOC Field Organizing**

OLOC Field Organizers Sally Tatnall and Alix Dobkin have split up the job of helping new chapters get started. Sally and others have organized the regional get together in September in Maryland. Alix now is taking on the NE and Philadelphia area while Sally is working with helping all other groups east of the Mississippi. She also stays in touch with all of the organizers of new groups everywhere (except the one in the Long Beach area, because Mina is handling that one and doing fine). Over a dozen areas are working to organize chapters.

#### **Donation to Oral Herstory**

Deb Wehman and Jo Passet, who are not yet Old Lesbians but will be one day, heard Arden speak about the project at the National Women's Music Festival in July. They were able to examine several of the books that she created after her interviews and were quite impressed. Jo is writing a biography about, in her words "Jeannette Howard Foster (1895-1981), who was a lesbian author, educator, librarian, poet, and scholar, best known for Sex Variant Women in Literature, which she self-published in 1956. This pioneering work, which was reissued in 1976 and 1985, raised awareness of the lesbian presence throughout history". Jo's extensive research brought home to Deb and Jo how easily the words of Lesbians are lost. As a result, Deb decided to donate \$5000 to the project, in the name of Jeanette Howard Foster. Thank you, Deb!

#### **Be Careful About Research**

OLOC subscriber Caroline Werner, MSW, wrote us that: "A post-retirement employment survey is being conducted by someone claiming to be collecting data for a dissertation. The e-mail address for this person is mlsdissertation@ameritech.com. We don't know how this information is being used and exactly by whom at any future date..." Unless you find out it's legitimate, don't respond. For everyone's information, all research requests directed at OLOC members should go through the OLOC Research Gatekeeper, Sharon Raphael, smraphael@aol.com. She will send out OLOC's Research Criteria for Conducting Research.

#### English Group Connection Tricia Jones, 69

Hi there and a cheery greeting from all of us at SWALLOWS (South West Older Lesbians in Exeter, England).

We were first introduced to OLOC by one of your members, Charlotte Ellis, the co-coordinator of the Missouri Chapter.

We have circulated your web address to our members so are able to keep up to date with your many events and projects.

If any of your members find themselves in our vicinity at the time of one of our regular monthly meetings, we would wholeheartedly welcome a visit.

You will find us a very caring and sharing bunch of gals!

There is also the magazine, Outskirts (for all age Lesbians), which has a Letters Page.
Should any of your members feel they would like to make contact, the canny editor is always on the lookout for more copy for possible publication.
Outskirts, PO Box 15 Tiverton, Devon EX16 6YW or email devon.outskirts@virgin.net

SWALLOWS swollows@hotmail.co.uk phone # is 07792933162

OLOC provides Old Lesbians with the chance to meet like-minded women in our common struggle to confront ageism, to share mutual interests, and to experience the joy and warmth of playing and working together.



Since our last article, Michael Moore's new film "Sicko" has been playing in many theaters. If you haven't seen it, I highly recommend that you do. This is an

important film because it explodes a number of tightly held American myths.

Primary among them is the myth that a government run health plan is "socialized medicine" and is unsatisfactory to patients because it delivers inferior quality of care in an untimely manner. In the four systems the film examines, apparently any diagnostic or treatment service that the practitioner deems necessary is covered. The film also seems to put the question of timeliness to rest.

Another myth, which has been used as a major fear tactic against universal coverage, is that "their taxes are high". "Their" taxes, like ours (to some extent) are based upon income. In the US you pay taxes and, if you can afford them, health insurance premiums (which are not based on income). In the plans Moore looks at (Canada, UK, France and Cuba) no one (including non-citizens) is denied coverage and there are no premiums.

Another myth exposed in the film is that the US has the best health care system in the world. Not true. Links to the facts about life expectancy, infant mortality, etc. can be found at www.michaelmoore.com.

The most important lesson in this film concerns cost. There are literally billions of dollars benefiting the industry that supports health care, such as pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, buildings, insurance companies, and the myriad of administrative personnel it takes to run all of it, not to mention obscene CEO salaries. Any compromise

to a completely government based system is doomed. Any plan that preserves this cadre of "middlemen" will simply result in the medical-congressional-industrial complex, which will function the same way the military-industrial complex does with tax dollars lining those pockets.

Trying to regulate health care companies will not work. They have already escaped or ignore current regulations.

In the US we do have some governmentsponsored programs. Medicare is universal in the sense that it covers anyone over 65 years of age, but (as most of you know) services and therapies are not universally covered, and there is great effort to undermine these programs by cutting compensation to practitioners so access for patients becomes more and more difficult. Medicaid requires proof of destitution in order for someone to be eligible. All active "regular" military personnel are universally covered (the same does not extend to the National Guard). However, this coverage is not as full once a person is discharged from the military, as we have seen recently in scandals regarding our wounded veterans. The film also indicates that Guantanamo prisoners have universal access, although quality of care is not mentioned.

Another government health care program covers the elected and (I'm assuming) appointed federal officials. It is seemingly common knowledge, although I have not been able to verify it. If true, it seems that again we have the double standard; the politicians treat themselves much better than they seem to consider treating 99% of us.

The film touches only very tangentially on the real issue of the medical model. Moving to a more equitable system of health care coverage is only a small portion of this battle. We need a system that reviews all research

with integrity and gives balance in reporting all significant findings. We need a system that is searching for the truth about what keeps us healthy or makes us ill, not a system based on profit.

I am in regular communication with an international group of physicians, all of whom are working to alert the world that the model of "health care" with all of its "preventions", "risk factors", and prescriptive treatments is under the direct influence of corporations (largely pharmaceutical). "Health care" recommendations are based on manipulated data. So, even though the myth that doctors don't like to work in national health care systems is dispelled in this film, these doctors, the same as our doctors, are under undue pressure to embrace certain practices. The incentives are bonuses and the threat is revocation of one's license. All of the "experts" in any given field of medicine are financially supported by the industry. These experts influence the health recommendations and regulations of all western nations, whether they have private coverage or universal governmental coverage.

## Why We Ask for Statistical Information

As a non-profit organization writing grant applications, sometimes we are required to provide statistics on age, ethnicity/race and disability. We do not ever attach that information to anyone's name when we provide the demographics, but we need the information on as many of us as possible. Also, as an organization committed to diversity, we often take internal looks at how we are doing in these areas. If you are not sure if we have your information, please email it to Susan at susan@oloc.org Include: birth date, ethnicity, and disability status.

# The possession of knowledge does not kill the sense of wonder and mystery. There is always more mystery.

**Anais Nin** 

#### **OLOC Mission Statement**

OLOC, Inc. is the national organization of lesbians of all races, age 60 and over, and will:

- Support, respect and empower Old Lesbians.
- Recognize and challenge ageism in our lives and in society.
- Celebrate our strengths, our talents, our experiences, and document our lives.
- Convene national gatherings for Old Lesbians.
- Encourage, establish, and support local groups and regional events.
- Provide educational materials and consciousness raising about ageism.

#### OLOC News from St. Louis Charlotte Ellis, 63

In May our group held a movie night and potluck and invited some of our younger supporters to join us. We watched and then talked about the movie "If These Walls Could Talk - 2". We hope to have more of these intergenerational meetings from time to time.

At Pridefest, women who are trying to start an LGBT center here invited us to sit in their booth for 2 hours and talk to people. We left some of our brochures in their literature rack for the duration of the festival.

Four women from our group went to the Midwest Wimmin's Festival at the Lake of the Ozarks, MO. We had a small OLOC get together and met women from Kansas City and southern Missouri as well as some from farther away.

In July I attended the National Women's Music Festival where I did a networking workshop for OLOC. The women were from various cities in the mid west and expressed interest in having groups in their areas.

#### **Regional OLOC Group Contact List**

OLOC would love to have regional groups form all over the country! If you're interested in helping form a group, email us at info@oloc.org or write or call Jan or Sally. (see below)

New York	Kostya B. Sudice	718-638-1361	kostya@oloc.org
SouthEast	Olivia Cammack	301-920-2043	ocammack@aol.com
Ohio	Sally Tatnall	216-932-0977	sally@oloc.org
Minnesota	Annalee Stewart	612-724-6541	annalee@oloc.org
St. Louis	Charlotte Ellis	314-962-2188	charlotte@oloc.org
Northern Colorado	Cindy Bear	303-258-9424	cindy@oloc.org
Southern California	Mina Meyer	562-420-3555	mina@oloc.org
San Francisco Bay Area	Joan Emerson	415-388-5001	40 Camino Alto #12209
			Mill Valley, CA 94941
Portland, OR	Mary Beth Brindley	503-286-3575	marybeth@oloc.org
Puget Sound Area/WA	Mary Henry	253-565-0829	mary@oloc.org

### NYC OLOC Chapter Meets Alix Dobkin, 67

Eighteen Lesbians showed up at a Lower East Side Senior Center on a gorgeous Sunday afternoon in May to discuss "Racism Among Old Lesbians." OLOC Steering Committee member Kostya Branwyn Sudice hosted a Potluck Lunch & CR Session. Eunice Samuels—one of two African American Lesbians to attend—and I (Alix Dobkin) were designated facilitators.

We aired and listened to stories, strategies, successes, failures, and lessons white women had drawn from the experience of attempting to practice anti-racism.

We told our tales and listened intently. "When a woman of color says something is racist, that's it, it's racist, no arguments." "Diversity has to happen in the beginning, in the planning stages." "It's not the job of women of color to educate white women about racism," and "We have to go to women of color and not expect them to come to us; why should they? What can we offer them"? OLOC wants to increase diversity and move forward. We

talked about new strategies and discussed co-sponsoring events with organizations such as Griot, a NYC group of and for Lesbian and gay people of color; and an event with SAGE in Harlem.

There have now been three meetings, and after a summer break they will continue.

We believe in an ongoing effort to practice anti-racism and decided to hold regular meetings on the second Sunday of the month. OLOC NYC will also sponsor a tea dance in December while continuing to work on creative ideas to broaden OLOC in New York City.

#### The OLOC Reporter

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

- www.oloc.org
- Email: info@oloc.org
- Post Office Box 5853 Athens, OH 45701

This Newsletter Brought to You By: Jan Griesinger, Margaret Purcell, Susan Wiseheart, and all of the writers plus the mailing crew.

#### Let your voice be heard.

Deadline for the next issue is November 1, 2007. Send articles to OLOC: info@oloc.org or OLOC, PO Box 5853, Athens, OH 45701

#### Ohio Pride Marches Mary M. Morgan, age 81



Beth Wydallis and Ruth Murray carrying the OLOC banner.

Four Ohio OLOCers bravely decided to participate in the Dayton, Ohio, Pride Parade on Saturday, June 2nd

The four of us carried our rich purple banner, some literature and our water bottles. Our initiative gave us enough courage, and experience to plan for the really big state wide Pride Parade held in Columbus, the Ohio capital, on June 23rd.

We turned out in force in Columbus--seven of us with the OLOC banner. The march was very long and the streets were lined with people, nearly all of whom cheered when they saw who we were. We are just puffed up with pride at being interviewed and videoed by Q National radio. See a link to the video at bottom of first page of www.OLOC.org.

#### More on the Columbus March

"I know that part of the welcoming reception we got was just because we were so visibly old, so visibly active, in a community that has not in the past been able to see its elders, has not been able even to imagine its own aging." **Sharon Deevey, age 63** 

"We walked behind the gay volleyball team and, truth be told, we Old Lesbians stole the show from the young players. The clapping, cheering and picture taking was constant throughout the parade route. Marching in a parade was way outside my comfort zone but now I can't wait until next year!"

Gigi Kent, age 63

"I think that our visibility among the marchers showed that we are a force to be reckoned with and that we aren't going away. We are old lesbians!! Next year they will be looking for us!!!" **Ruth Murray, age 73** 



Pictured: Pam Jackson, Jan Griesinger and Helen Eier

#### News From the Sound Gloria Stancich, 72

The Puget Sound (Washington State) OLOC chapter held its 1st meeting in January of this year. After several meetings, we've grown to nearly 90 members. We have an active Yahoo! email list where we share information and resources and plan our outings and strategies. We've made our presence known with brochures and attendance at the LGBT Forum on Aging in Seattle in June, and by taking our banner and fliers to march in Pride parades and attend festivals in Olympia, Tacoma and Bremerton, WA.

Several of us have just attended a Women's Camp on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, and two of us are presenting an "OLOC 101" workshop at the BOLD conference (Bold, Old, Lesbians



Gloria Stancich, seated, answering questions for women at the Kitsap Peninsula Pride event.

& Dykes) in Vancouver, BC in September. Nearly 2 dozen chapter members are registered at this 3rd annual get-together.

In October, we'll have a weeklong retreat on the Washington Coast. There, we'll plan more activities and gatherings. For more info on our great group, email gloria@oloc.org or mary@oloc.

# OLOC-Southern California Parade Participants Make The News Mina Meyer, 67 PHOTO ON FRONT PAGE

Old Lesbians from the Southern California Chapter rode in four convertibles in the Long Beach Gay Pride Parade and were warmly welcomed by cheering crowds as well as the local daily newspaper, the Press-Telegram, that made us the lead in their front page coverage of the event.

The Parade is the 2nd largest public event in Long Beach each year. Eighteen women rode in cars that were decorated by the entire chapter. For many of the women it was the first time they had ever been "out" in public, and it was an extraordinary experience for them. One of the women told me after the Parade that she started off wearing a large hat pulled down tight so her face was obscured, and by the time we had gone one block she removed the hat and was waving at everyone!

One outcome of our having been in the Parade is that Old Lesbians saw the coverage in the newspaper, contacted us to ask when and where we meet and have joined us! As a consequence, we have outgrown our first home. Beginning with our Oct meeting, we are moving to a room that will hold 60 instead of 20.

Our meetings are still the 2nd Tuesday of each month, from noon to 3 pm. Questions? Call or write me at MinaKay@aol.com 562-420-3555 Mina Meyer, 67

#### **Contact List for Current Steering Committee Members**

#### **Co-Directors:**

Jan Griesinger, Athens OH	jan@oloc.org	(740) 448-6424
Mina Meyer, Long Beach CA	mina@oloc.org	(562) 420-3555

#### **Steering Committee Members:**

Sally Tatnall, Cleveland Heights OH	sally@oloc.org	(216) 932-0977
Alix Dobkin, Woodstock, NY	alix@oloc.org	(845) 679-7586

It's not how much you do but how much love you put into the doing that matters.

Mother Teresa

#### In Memorium

#### **Dorothy Hoogterp**

Dorothy (Terpie) Hoogterp was 90 when she died on July 3, 2007.

Dorothy served on the OLOC Steering Committee in the early 90s. Arden Eversmeyer remembers: "Terpie hosted the SC in Lansing in April 1994." A daughter, at a post-funeral gathering, said that Terpie was 76 when she came out.

Terpie was a registered nurse, a worker for the rights of all people, a peace activist, a poet, and mother of 13 children, all of whom survive her. She was active in the civil rights struggle of the 1960s, and became an advocate for the rights of the poor, gay people, prison inmates, students, the mentally ill, and women.

Her Lesbian daughter, Angie, said her mother was getting a bit bored after her 90th birthday and told Angie she was going to enroll in college full time. She died with 11 of her children surrounding her, singing "We Shall Overcome."

I do not understand how anyone can live without one small place of enchantment to turn to. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

#### In Memorium

#### Janá La Gasa

Janá (Virginia) La Gasa was 68 when she died in Tacoma, WA. on July 22, 2007.

Janá enjoyed gatherings and celebrations. She discovered OLOC when she turned 60 and attended several national gatherings. She was the motivating force in the establishment of the new WA State chapter of OLOC and had begun working on the National OLOC Steering Committee as a provisional member.

Janá was a staunch and active supporter of fair and equal legal and societal treatment for all people. Her career included work for several social service agencies

Janá received many special awards and honors, and displayed many of them on her bulletin board along with treasured pictures of her family and many friends.

She worked hard and at first alone to establish "Pride At Work" as part of the AFL-CIO union and to gain non-discrimination clauses in the WA Federation of State Employees' constitution.

We will miss Janá outspoken, nononsense approach to civil rights activism. She leaves a solid legacy of work on which to build a more compassionate, peaceful and just future for all of us.

#### OLOC Memorial Program by Shaba Barnes, 72

It has been awhile since we have shared information on our Memorial Plaques. We presently have two Plaques and each Plaque holds 24 plates. The second plaque has 7 names on it to date. Here are the names we have received this year:

Nancy Palmer: Died March 31, 2007, age 90; remembered by Mary Jo Lackaff and Brigitte Mengelberg. Music Rocker, Carol MacDonald: Died March 12, 2007, age 63; remembered by Alix Dobkin. Dorothy Hoogterp, (Terpie): Died July 3, 2007, age 90; remembered by Susan Wiseheart and Arden Eversmeyer.

The Memorial Program has it's own budget and pays for itself. Each person who submits a name for the plaque donates what she can, from \$10.00 up. This covers the maintenance, the engraving and the needs for the Memorial Ceremony at the Gatherings. 2008 will be the 4th Gathering where we have recognized our departed sisters. We are presently also working on updating our Memorials on our website, oloc.org

Help us by letting OLOC know of any Old Lesbian over 60 years old who has died. Just send us a small donation, a picture if available, and information regarding the person to whom we may send a sympathy card or letter. If you do not know of such person, we will be pleased to send the card or letter to you. The Memorial Plaques are displayed at each Gathering.

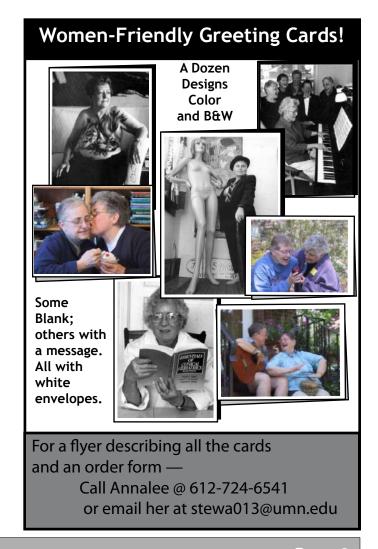
#### Sinister Wisdom #71 Open Issue

OLOC was well represented in the most recent issue of the Lesbian Multicultural Journal, Sinister Wisdom. Shaba Barnes wrote an article about our age policy. Win Weston related her experience taking a photo for the OLOC note cards. Saundra Tignor's Welcome Ye Comely Daughters of Africa was included and in Sandy Tate's bio she proudly claimed her long association with OLOC. Go to sinisterwisdom.org for information on how to subscribe or to order issue #71.

#### From Robin Tyler via Alix

Does your group know about this site from the National Council on Aging? This provides information on more then 1,550 public and private benefit programs for seniors in every state and the District of Columbia. http://www.benefitscheckup.org/

What matters most is that we learn from living. Doris Lessing



#### How to Use the Website Forum By Mary Henry, 68

On the OLOC website, www.oloc.org, we have Forums to use to talk with each other. In a Forum someone posts a question or comment in one of the categories and others can read it and, if they wish, reply.

The Forum is divided into Topics. Anyone can start a new topic and comment on it or ask a question for others to read and answer. When enough of us participate, it can become a lively conversation. The Forum is a place for us to ask about issues important to us as Old Lesbians; housing, community, networking, travel, medical issues, and caregiving. It is also a way for us to communicate with like-minded women for social reasons.

Here is how to join the Forum. First go to the OLOC website at www.oloc.org, then click on the purple link "OLOC Forum". You will see the Forum Index. You can read the posts in the various categories without being registered, but you will need to register if you want to post (ask or answer).

In order to have a secure site where only those we have identified as "us" can post messages, we have a registration process and passwords. To register, just click on the word "Register" near the top of the page. In the "name" box enter a screen identification for yourself - perhaps a nickname you've used before or something new you made up just for the occasion. You just have to be able to



remember what it is! You can have fun with it and make anything you like, but it would probably be best if you chose something short and easy to type for your own convenience.

Then invent a

password. It can be a combination of letters and numbers and is case sensitive. That means if you use a capital letter, you must always use a capital letter or it won't work. If it is easy to remember, you won't have to write it down on your end. We can give you another one if you forget, but that takes an email and someone having time to do it. It is not an automated process on our site.

To read and write in the Forum, click on "Login" in the line below the welcome. In the next window type in your screen name and password. Your real name won't work here unless you used it as your screen name. Some people do. If your computer is set up to accept cookies (which hold information on the times and dates you have visited web sites), you can click the little button that says "Remember Login", so that whenever you use the same computer it will put the information in for you. If you don't accept cookies, you will have to type it yourself.

The Forum's automatic system will email you to tell you when someone has posted a reply to you.

For The Profile, you must fill out your actual name and email address. You can give more information either at once or later. If you decide to wait until later, when ready, just click on "Personal" on the navigation bar at the top of the page. At the My Profile page, click on "Edit Profile" in the left-hand column. Fill out what you want to say.

If you want to keep your email address hidden when you reply to postings, you will see that there is a button in the "Contact" area that says "Hide". If you check (click) this button, your email address will not show up when you post.

If you have trouble, just email me at mary@oloc.org and we'll talk about it.

#### **OLOC Subscriber/Supporter Form**

Lesbians 60 and over: We urge you to subscribe to *The Reporter* as an expression of your commitment to be with old Lesbians in your own area, working to confront ageism. If no such group exists, become an OLOC Contact Woman and work with a mentor to start a local group. If you are not yet 60, we welcome you as a Supporter. By giving OLOC your generous financial contribution you can show your commitment and support for challenging ageism.

	Please check a	ll that apply:		
I am (we are) 60 or over and wish to subscribe (or renew) my (our) current subscription to <i>The Reporter</i> .  \$25 to \$50 for a one-year subscription.  I (we) want to receive <i>The Reporter</i> but I (we) can contribute only \$  I am (we are) not yet 60 but want to Support OLOC. Enclosed is \$30 to \$60 for a one-year subscription to <i>The Reporter</i> .		I (we) want to purchase the <i>Travel Directory</i> . Enclosed is \$3 for costs.  I (we) want my (our) names to be included in the <i>Travel Directory</i> .  I (we) would like to give a \$25 gift subscription to the name(s) listed below.  Please send a sample of <i>The Reporter</i> to the name(s) listed below.		
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Telephone	Ema	ail		
Ethnicity	Disabili	_ Disability		

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#### **Mark Your Calendars Now!**

#### 2008 OLOC National Gathering California Dreaming

July 30th-August 3rd, 2008 in Los Angeles, CA

Save the dates!