



An International  
Community of  
Lesbian Elders

# The Reporter

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

DECEMBER  
2024

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## It's Coming! The 2025 OLOC National Gathering!

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OLOC's next National Gathering will be held August 20–24, 2025, at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Columbus, Ohio! (It is not the one by the airport.)

Mark your calendar now! Much more information will be coming in this space.

**The theme is:** *Prevailing: Old Lesbians United for Our Future.*

Keep this in mind as you consider your workshop proposals  
(we will let you know when the call goes out).

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### The schedule is shaping up to be exciting!

#### So far, we have:

- ♀ Lesbians of Color Day
- ♀ Workshops and plenaries
- ♀ Keynote speaker and entertainment
- ♀ Talent Show and DJ dance
- ♀ Presentation of the 2025 Old Lesbian Pride Award
- ♀ Premiere of the 2025 memorial slide show
- ♀ Opening and closing ceremonies
- ♀ Meeting for Gathering virgins and newbies to OLOC
- ♀ Caucus time, Chapter Coordinator meetings, and Chapter meetings

Other things to look forward to include: buffet meals, food trucks, chocolate-covered strawberries, cash bar, 50/50 raffle, auction, new t-shirts (new design!), and much more!

The hotel where we will be meeting, <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/cmhcees-embassy-suites-columbus>, offers 224 guest rooms, six of which are accessible with features such as roll-in showers; free made-to-order breakfast; complimentary daily evening reception; a restaurant for dinner; indoor and outdoor pools; an accessible fitness center; and an accessible business center; plus furry family

members are welcome (feline and canine only, maximum two per room, extra charge). In 2020, Hilton published a Hilton Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, <https://cr.hilton.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Hilton-Slavery-and-Trafficking-Statement-2020.pdf>.



Lower L clockwise: Michiko, Alí, guest, Sally, gypsy, guest, Pam (guest), Vanita (guest), guest, guest.

In October, the Steering Committee had a great meet-up in Columbus with several members of the local Chapter (see photo). They are excited about the Gathering being in their city again and are committed to planning and doing the work of anything we—and they—come up with!

We hope you will be able to join us!

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### Old Lesbians Organizing for Change:

An International Community of Lesbian Elders

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Editor: Sheryl, 1954.

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1953.

Design/Layout: Connie Rose, 1948, [imagesnatural@gmail.com](mailto:imagesnatural@gmail.com).

All of the writers and photographers.

Deadline for the next issue is February 1, 2025. Limit  
contributions to 300 words.

We may edit articles for clarity and/or length, and  
we reserve the right to decide which contributions to  
publish. Send articles to [reporter@oloc.org](mailto:reporter@oloc.org)  
or PO Box 100129, Cranston, RI 02910 (indicate  
“for the Reporter”). If anonymous, send to [sheryl@oloc.org](mailto:sheryl@oloc.org)  
and say it is to be anonymous.

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To join OLOC online, go to <https://oloc.charityproud.org/Membership/Signup>.

To join by mail, download the form in PDF at  
[https://oloc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/  
FORM-Affiliate-Fillable\\_8-25-22-EN.pdf](https://oloc.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/FORM-Affiliate-Fillable_8-25-22-EN.pdf)  
(English) or [https://files.constantcontact.  
com/e3e24b82801/0270ec22-fabb-4522-ac0a-  
66e1916a14cc.pdf](https://files.constantcontact.com/e3e24b82801/0270ec22-fabb-4522-ac0a-66e1916a14cc.pdf) (Spanish). Print it out,  
complete it, and send it in!

**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.

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### National OLOC Steering Committee

- ▶ Sally Tatnall, 1937, Lyndhurst, OH,  
[sally@oloc.org](mailto:sally@oloc.org), 216-406-7208
- ▶ Alí Marrero-Calderón, 1948, Bayamón,  
Puerto Rico, [ali@oloc.org](mailto:ali@oloc.org), 510-365-6745
- ▶ Michiko Bailey Thorne, 1953, Oakland, CA,  
[michiko@oloc.org](mailto:michiko@oloc.org), 510-325-4374
- ▶ gypsy, 1952, Sacramento, CA, [gypsy@oloc.org](mailto:gypsy@oloc.org), 281-571-9393
- ▶ Patti Kardia, 1959, Harrison, MI,  
[patti@oloc.org](mailto:patti@oloc.org), 734-395-5311

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### Steering Committee Meetings

The National Steering Committee meets regularly  
by Zoom—most often on the 2nd and  
4th Tuesday of each month at 1:00 P.M. ET.

If you have a proposed agenda item, send it by  
email to [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org); a note to the PO Box;  
or a phone call to 888-706-7506 (toll-free).  
Please indicate if you want a response. The  
Steering Committee welcomes OLOC affiliates as  
guests at its meetings. Contact [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org)  
for details.

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### Passings

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zana, 1947–2024  
Tucson, Arizona

Dorothy Allison, 1949–2024  
Guerneville, California

See the E-News for more about these Lesbians.

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**Mission:** OLOC represents Lesbian Elders in a spirit of inclusiveness to promote  
Lesbian visibility. We come together to preserve our herstory, to confront social injustice,  
and to give and receive support for our later years.

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**Vision:** OLOC is an inclusive, multicultural rainbow of Lesbian Elders  
working in community for social justice, maintaining a Lesbian focus.

# Introducing the Gathering Keynote Speaker

The 2025 Gathering keynote speaker will be Washington State Supreme Court Justice G. Helen Whitener.

Justice Whitener was appointed to the Court in 2020 and subsequently elected by voters twice to retain her position. Before becoming a judge, she was a prosecutor and defense attorney for 14 years.

She was born and raised in the beautiful Caribbean island nation of Trinidad and Tobago. Educated in the British system, Justice Whitener arrived in the US at the age of 16 to attend college. She is the first Black woman to serve on the Washington State Supreme Court, the fourth immigrant-born Justice, and the first Black L/G Supreme Court Justice in the nation. Justice Whitener identifies as having a disability and speaks often on human rights and access to justice.



Justice G. Helen Whitener

Justice Whitener is well recognized by the legal community for her commitment to justice and equity. She has received numerous awards for having the distinction of being many firsts in her field, a true trailblazer for Black Lesbians and women judges.

She initiated a program called Color of Justice that encourages girls to consider legal and judicial careers by bringing them together with judges and lawyers and providing them with resources to pursue their goals.

She came to our attention as a speaker at the Black Women Rise events in West Palm Beach, Florida, in 2017–2018. Two of us thought she was dynamic and amazing; she talked about People of Color and gave real-life situations and how to react or handle ourselves to get the most positive assist from the judicial system. One OLOCian remembers “calling many of my friends, saying ‘Hey girl, did you know that if ‘that’ happens, we need to do ‘this’?’”

We are thrilled that she has agreed to join us as we gather together!

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<https://oloc.charityproud.org/Donate>



Affiliates: Are you part of National OLOC’s email forum? It is a great place to have vibrant 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).

*Please consider including OLOC  
in your will if you have,  
or plan to create, one.  
Bequests help keep us going.  
Thank you!*



# Old Lesbians Zoom

## Zoom Events

The Zoom Crew organizes and implements special panels and presentations, Open House informal get-togethers, and support and discussion groups. The *End White Dominance* Planning Committee coordinates and facilitates a series of events designed to educate OLOC affiliates/supporters further about systemic racism and what we can do to interrupt it. The *Confronting Sexism: Fighting for Our Lives* series focuses on the oppression of women and how it affects us as individuals and as a group.

## Special Panels and Presentations

Watch the E-News, the [website](#), and your inbox for upcoming events! To receive monthly Zoom event announcements, email request with your address to [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org).

## Ongoing Series

***Confronting Sexism: Fighting for Our Lives—  
Topic: Women and Patriarchal Religions***  
Tuesday, December 17, 3:00 P.M. ET

***End White Dominance—Topic: Detour Spotting for  
White Anti-Racists #2***  
Friday, December 27, 4:00 P.M. ET

***Confronting Sexism: Fighting for Our Lives—  
Topic: Women and Politics***  
Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 3:00 P.M. ET

***End White Dominance—Topic: TBD***  
Friday, January 24, 4:00 P.M. ET

***Confronting Sexism: Fighting for Our Lives—  
Topic: TBD***  
Tuesday, February 18, 3:00 P.M. ET

***End White Dominance— Topic: Detour Spotting  
for White Anti-Racists #3***  
Friday, February 28, 4:00 P.M. ET

## Open Houses

Watch the E-News, the [website](#), and your inbox (to receive monthly Zoom event announcements, email request with your address to [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org)) for upcoming events!

## Support and Discussion Groups

- Lesbians of Color Discussion
- Lesbian Widows Support **NEW!** (contact [hadasrw@yahoo.com](mailto:hadasrw@yahoo.com) or [bethfeckter@gmail.com](mailto:bethfeckter@gmail.com); contact [sheryl@oloc.org](mailto:sheryl@oloc.org) for names/phone numbers)
- Caregivers Support
- Radical Lesbian Feminist Discussion (waiting list: email [olocccZoom@gmail.com](mailto:olocccZoom@gmail.com))



**Needed for new groups: Co-facilitators and those with Zoom tech skills.** Interested in either? Contact [olocccZoom@gmail.com](mailto:olocccZoom@gmail.com).

Check out the full schedule at <https://oloc.org/zoom/>. You can see videos of past events in the [affiliate portal](#), with resources such as reading lists, transcripts, and participant reviews. Questions? Please contact [zoom@OLOC-Chapters.groups.io](mailto:zoom@OLOC-Chapters.groups.io) (Zoom Crew events), [susan@oloc.org](mailto:susan@oloc.org) (*End White Dominance*), or [renagm@aol.com](mailto:renagm@aol.com) (*Confronting Sexism*).

**Dialogue Etiquette:** For all OLOC communications and events, you are responsible for your own contribution which means using “I” whenever possible. Each OLOC affiliate and supporter is to do your part in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all through your words and actions. Please use respectful and considerate language at all times, which includes not using racial, ethnic, or any other slurs. OLOC supports civil disagreements between participants and promotes reflective listening. Please note that individual opinions do not necessarily reflect the beliefs or attitudes of OLOC as a whole. (02/11/24)

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# Old Lesbians Write About Being Old Lesbians

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## Job Hunting While Gray

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*[In the September E-News, OLOC asked for your stories of experiences with ageism. This was the response we received.]*

By Ruth Rogow, 1957

Actually, only patches of gray graced my temples while the rest remained my natural black. I was a mere 61, but I looked my age and never benefited from those biases that favor “classic beauty.”

Sitting before a panel of half a dozen nurse midwives, all hovering around 30 years of age, I felt confident enough to deliver my eloquent answers in a relaxed manner. With over three decades of experience, I was extraordinarily well qualified for the Kaiser nurse midwife job. My work record was spotless, and I came with glowing recommendations.

But, as eight more 30-year-old midwives and nurses filed in to join my interview, I began to sense a certain tension in the room. I looked into each of their faces, lips slightly pursed, eyes squinting a bit, and other expressions or smells or something else intangible in their body language that quietly screamed, “You

remind me too much of my mother!” Staying grounded, I chuckled to myself, “You should be so lucky.”

As expected, the call came a few days later to tell me that they were not hiring me. When I asked why, I was told that “it wasn’t a good fit.” Pushing a bit and taking advantage of this midwife’s vulnerability at the end of her long night shift, I asked, “How am I not a good fit?” to which she replied, “We don’t think you could keep up with the pace.” There was no other reason offered.

Now, they had an abundance of evidence contrary to that assumption, that I was currently working in an environment that demanded as much from me as this job would. It was nothing but ageism. They could not have said, “We don’t think someone your color would fit in,” but “We aren’t comfortable working with someone your age” was acceptable to them. In fact, they repeated this discrimination with another mature midwife a few months later.

I went on to work in a position in which my extensive experience is valued.

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## A Gift of Age

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By Z, 1951

I was never happy like this when I was younger, a moment like a deep pool in a quiet old stream. Not wild ecstasy, but an inreaching intense current of contentment. I was going to have a sit and read, but somehow ended up looking out the window at the glory of the fall sycamore that keeps me company daily. The tree dances, as trees will, with the wind. The brazen colors combined with the subtle patterns of the reds, yellows, pinks, greens, and browns. The flirty flashes of the shining white tree bones beneath the cloak of leaves. All cast against the luminous blue of the sky and the puffy playfulness of the clouds.

My chair is comfortable; nothing in my body hurts at this moment. And then there is the “be here now” role model of the cat, curled on my chest, purring in my ear, arching this way and that so that I might rub her in just the right way in just the right spot. So tender and trusting. The velvety quiet, in which I hear only the soft snoring of my beloved in the next room.

Things in my sightsphere delight me with rich memories, built of beauty and meaning from the tapestry of my past. I remember the unassuming wisdom of my mother-in-law, whose ashes rest in a blue marble paper-covered urn on the shelf. Or they flash at me with promise of experiences to come. The music recording I have not yet heard, the book I have not yet read, the croissant I have not yet tasted. Fanciful stories play through my brain.

Why are the joyful Haitian ladies above my kitchen table dancing? Who are they to one another? What mischief is the mask of the Balinese joker planning? Where are the graceful birds on the gourd vase flying, and are they exulting in flying free along the current in the air? At this stellar moment, I am peaceful, not yearning or striving. Contentment. I imagine I had to swim the riptides and rapids of my preceding life drama to reach this fine and precious deep magic pond.

I am grateful for this gift of age. Who knew?

## Old Lesbians Write About The ‘Isms’

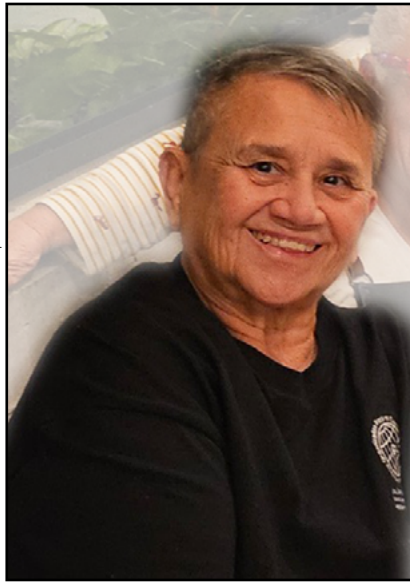
### From Puerto Rico to California and Back Again

By Alí Marrero-Calderón, 1948

We came to Puerto Rico after I had lived in California for over 50 years. My wife Doris and I decided that the cost of living and trips back and forth to take care of my mom were taking a toll on our wallets. Doris had a condo she had inherited from her mom, so it was a no-brainer to move.

I was greeted by friends of Doris and Old Lesbians whom I had met at the OLOC Gathering in Tampa, Florida, in 2017. Here on the Island, it is not much different from being in the US, except we all speak Spanish and our politics are different. The politics here are more LGBTQ-community-oriented (all-inclusive) than focused on Lesbians. SAGE/WAVES Ahead is the LGBTQ Center on the Island with a focus on trans issues. There are LGBTQ-friendly places. There is more visibility for young queer couples than for Old Lesbians.

The saying here is “Soy Lesbiana de la Casa.” There is a place that is owned by women who are Lesbians and they are Old, and they say that they’re Lesbians of the home. Old Lesbians who are single and without partners are just as isolated here as they are in the States. Wimmin, such as some of the Old Puerto Rican Lesbians who attended the LOC Days at the



Alí Marrero-Calderón, 1948.

Gatherings, are trying to start a Chapter here. They’re waiting for me to start the first meeting.

Puerto Rico is a colony of the US, and even though we’re considered US “citizens,” we’re treated as a third-world country. Some Old Lesbians here have a political stand toward the US because of the colonization of the Island.

Racism here is just as relevant as it is globally. I think Lesbians talk about it, but it really is not that prevalent in the LGBTQ community here. Within the Lesbian community, we are mostly of mixed ethnicities, so the racism

is not as big an issue as it is in the States. Puerto Ricans have historically been seen as People of Color. Here on the Island, People of Color are Black or Afro-Boricua, and many of us identify that way. My ancestral family came from the Canary Islands, Indigenous, and Northwest Africa. I identify as mixed race.

I miss California, but I wouldn’t leave this Island home.

(‘Isms’ continued on page 8)

## Help OLOC Honor Old Lesbians Who Have Left Us

OLOC is committed to remembering the lives of Old Lesbians, particularly our affiliates. We have a memorial slide show that is updated for National Gatherings, mostly by collecting names and photos from memorials published in the E-News. The 2025 show will premiere at the upcoming Gathering. However, we collect names and photos year-round.

The **2023 show** is 20 minutes long and is up on our website. The 2019 show is on the same page and includes all the Old Lesbians we have up to that Gathering, while 2023 consists of those we have received since August 2019. You have to scroll down on the page to find them both. There is music, which is instrumental only, except for Alix Dobkin singing “Bright Morning Star,” and its lyrics are included on the screen as she sings.

You can memorialize your Old Lesbian friends, lovers, and mentors who have died, no matter

how long ago. We may be missing someone or have incomplete information or no photo for a Lesbian. If you can help us, please let us know. We would like the years of birth and death, if possible; where she lived (for the *Reporter* listing); a maximum 200-word life story (for the E-News); and the most recent photo available, but we are happy to accept what you have, even if it is not all of those things. We can also try to get the rest of it ourselves. Thank you for helping us to honor Old Lesbians who had a connection to OLOC (perhaps through you) and/or were particularly significant to our community.

Send information and photos by July 25, 2025,  
(for inclusion in the slide show) to  
Old Lesbians Organizing for Change  
PO Box 100129  
Cranston, RI 02910  
or email [sheryl@oloc.org](mailto:sheryl@oloc.org).



# Chapter News

OLOC Chapters as of December 1, 2024, are: San Francisco Bay Area, California; Colorado; Western Mass, Massachusetts; Hudson Valley, New York; Central Ohio; Rhode Island; Vermont; Puget Sound Area, Washington; and Online At-Large (virtual).

Want to start a Chapter? Contact [info@oloc.org](mailto:info@oloc.org) for information.

## Western Mass Chapter

By Roberta Pato, 1946

### *Western Mass OLOC Hikes Wildlife Refuge*

In **September**, Roberta (Bib) Pato, 1946, and Celia Lang, 1953, organized a local hike in response to a recent meeting where OLOC members expressed interest in more outside gatherings. Fourteen women



*L to R: windflower, 1948; Tory Rosen, 1985; Roberta Pato, 1946 (front); Grace Edwards, 1948; Judy Raphael, 1943; Laura Kaye, 1945; Celia Lang, 1953; ?; Nyla Dartt, 1944; Blue Duval, 1960; Emily Greene, 1946.*

from the Chapter hiked the trail that loops around the gorgeous National Fish and Wildlife Refuge in Hadley, Massachusetts. The weather was perfect, with beautiful field and forest views. More than a dozen Eastern Painted Turtles were sighted, sunning themselves in the marsh. It was an afternoon of great conversations, and afterwards we went for ice cream at a nearby dairy farm.

The consensus of the Western Mass Chapter is, in addition to Zoom check-ins and online programs, to add an in-person event every other month. These will be volunteer-led, and women are encouraged to volunteer to lead a meet-up at political rallies, museums, music concerts, and other creative venues of interest.

## Colorado Chapter

By Elisabeth Borden, 1950

Our **August** program was “Laughing Yoga.” After an excellent potluck lunch and personal sharing, Kathy Riley, 1947, facilitated a laughter yoga session. Kathy is a long-time practitioner and member of the Denver Laughter Club. One description of laughter yoga is “Laugh for no reason but always with a purpose—fun, health, and community.” We explored what this means and how intentional laughter can be beneficial without any need for humor to inspire it. We stood or sat in chairs in a circle with a large space in the center and Kathy led us through a number of laughter exercises.

At our **September** meeting, we wrote postcards encouraging people to vote in the then-coming election. The postcards do not endorse candidates. Rather, they urge people to vote early to avoid long lines and other Election Day hazards. Kathy



*L to R: Katherine, 1954, and Roberta, 1943.*

Riley, 1947, coordinated our postcard writing and mailing. We used our Chapter treasury to pay for the stamps. About 20 people wrote postcards, completing about 275 cards that day. Our meetings also always include a fine potluck lunch, personal sharing, collecting donations for a group we support, announcements, and acknowledgment of birthdays.

### Colorado Chapter (continued)

At our **October** meeting, we had a large and spirited group (26 womyn!) discussing Colorado's statewide ballot initiatives. Most of the discussion focused on Proposition 131 ("All Candidate Primary and Ranked Choice Voting"), Amendment H ("Judicial Discipline Procedures and Confidentiality"), and several other issues. Several people shared documents and online links to other resources and opinion pieces about the different amendments and propositions. We are hopeful that two other amendments on the ballot that are of the greatest interest to us will pass: one guaranteeing the right to abortion and another that removes the current constitutional ban on same-sex marriage.

### Rhode Island Chapter

By Nancy, 1953

Rhode Island OLOC Chapter Coordinator and National OLOC Support Coordinator Mev Miller, 1955, was honored by the Girl Scouts of Southern New England with a Leading Women of Distinction Award. Mev was one of eight honorees. The ceremony was held **October 31**, the birthday of Juliette Gordon, founder of the Girl Scouts. There was a nice breakfast, and each honoree was able to say a few words. Mev spoke about how working toward a variety of badges gave her the skills and foundation to succeed professionally in her chosen work. As it was Halloween, Mev also spoke about a costume she created in the 1980s to attend a Halloween party: a purple sash, Lesbian movement pins, and an Amazon hat declaring herself an Amazon Lesbian Scout!

Rhode Island OLOC members and friends attended to help Mev celebrate. It was a good morning.



### Please Read This if You Think Disabilities Have Nothing to Do with You

*[This is an excerpt/adaptation of an article originally written by Sheryl, 1954, in 1984. Sometimes, the more things change, the more they stay the same...]*

Disability is an issue that is often ignored in our society and its various subcultures. Disabled people share a commonality of struggle with other oppressed groups for full rights and participation in society. In the 1960s, a political and legal revolution began because there was a significant population that had to sit at the back of the bus. Today, there is a significant population that cannot even get on the bus. Disability is a civil rights issue.

Oppressive attitudes are more of an obstacle to disabled peoples' full participation in society than physical barriers are. Attitudes are important because they help shape and direct actions. Oppressive attitudes include assumptions, myths, and stereotypes; for example: all disabled people use wheelchairs; people with specific disabilities can't do specific things (fill in the blanks); disabled people are helpless, or, on the other hand, superhuman. These attitudes are harmful because they give no consideration to individual abilities, interests, and differences.

It is important that these myths be cleared up with accurate information. Many nondisabled people are unaware that they are very likely temporarily able-bodied (TAB). No one is immune from becoming disabled, temporarily or otherwise.

Language has a great deal of effect on attitudes. Terms such as birth defects, invalid, crippled, afflicted, confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair bound, turn a deaf ear, blind to the truth, emotionally disturbed, crazy, and idiot are offensive to many disabled people. Disability is real, not an easy metaphor.

It is the responsibility of TABs to make disability an issue that is dealt with, to educate yourselves, and to stop your oppressive behavior. Access means creating an environment in which everyone has the opportunity to participate. It creates choices and equal options.

Communicate with disabled people and find out what is needed. Interrupt offensive language and insensitive jokes. If you are confronted with a charge of being oppressive, do not get defensive or resistant. You need to get beyond that for change to happen.



# Old Lesbians and Young 'Uns Soak Up Lesbian Culture Together

## Another Fabulous Women's Week in Provincetown!!

By Emily Greene, 1946

October 13 to 20, Western Mass OLOCers Roberta, 1946; Laura, 1945; Grace, 1948; Wraye, 1941; Sheryl, 1958; Edie, 1937; and Celia, 1953, went to this fabulous event. Please, Western Mass OLOCers, forgive me if I left any of you out. Though the numbers of us this year were fewer, we kicked up our heels and loved every minute. Roberta and I stayed in the Cape Colony Inn to be able to walk into downtown P-town when we had the energy and to hit the beach every day.



At Suede concert, L to R: Diana; Roberta, 1946; and Emily, 1946.

The performances were great, including Suede, Diana Nyad, a Carole King tribute, *Fade Away Adventure* (a great play about a Lesbian who is dying and asks her childhood friend to be there with her), Rita Mae Brown, and Kate Clinton. These were just a few that we saw. We did get to see the 18-minute documentary about Kate Clinton's partner, Urvashi Vaid, 1958–2022, an incredible activist.

The most different and interesting event was a hike in the National Park on a trail [the late Lesbian poet] Mary Oliver often hiked on. The Mary Oliver Hike led by Lesbian National Park Ranger Alicia was attended by two of us OLOCers, Roberta and me, and was beautifully done with stops every 15–20 minutes to talk about Mary Oliver's beginning life and its path to Provincetown.

To start, Alicia had each of us give a short introduction as to who we are. I mentioned being so grateful for having lived in St. Augustine, Florida, on the Atlantic Ocean, and in the mountains of Northeast Alabama and Western Massachusetts. As we started to hike, Alicia came up to me and asked, "Do you know Mary Lou Preston?" I said "yes," and to my surprise, Alicia is her niece. We are everywhere!!

*[To see more reports about this event, check out the November E-News.]*

*Fourth from left: Roberta in rainbow scarf with Alicia the Lesbian park ranger behind her.*



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

## New Book by OLOC Affiliate

### ***Lesbian: Politics, Culture, Existence***

*A history of Australian feminist and Lesbian thinking from the 1970s to the present.*

Across almost 50 years of writing, Susan Hawthorne's essays on Lesbian culture and politics take the reader on a journey through the concerns of radical feminists engaged in the Women's Liberation Movement. Not only does she trace the experiments of Lesbians creating a vibrant woman-loving culture, but she also traces the backlash against Lesbians and a history of violence perpetrated by the state, corporations, and individual men.

She begins with a recollection of a rape in her pre-feminist days, followed by a critique of the institution of heterosexuality and the role of Lesbian feminism as a strategy. She is soon asking questions about Lesbian existence. The essays span reflections on Lesbian literature and the development of Lesbian culture, including the politics of physical expression in circus.



Susan Hawthorne writes about cultural appropriation, depoliticization, and the erasure of Lesbian inventiveness. She researches violence against Lesbians, including rape, torture, and murder, and the way in which this violence is ignored and often distorted by the media.

Her investigations include Lesbian refugees, Lesbian economics, violation of Lesbian human rights, and the impact of the transgender industrial complex on the existence of Lesbians as a

political force.

September 2024 | ISBN 9781925950984 |  
Paperback | 152mm x 228mm | 360 pages.  
For more information, go to [https://www.spinifexpress.com.au/shop/p/9781925950984?mc\\_cid=def795ee69&mc\\_eid=3d4146165d](https://www.spinifexpress.com.au/shop/p/9781925950984?mc_cid=def795ee69&mc_eid=3d4146165d). For US/Canada/Mexico info, or if you would like to review the book for OLOC, contact [sheryl@oloc.org](mailto:sheryl@oloc.org).

### **Lesbians of Color: Your Opportunity for Your 15 Minutes of Fame!**



OLOC is looking for more Lesbians of Color for the "This is What an Old Lesbian Looks Like" page of our website, <https://oloc.org/this-is-what-an-old-lesbian-looks-like/>. If you want to join the illustrious Old Lesbians already up there, send your photo with your name and year of birth to [olocwebweaver@gmail.com](mailto:olocwebweaver@gmail.com). Make sure that everyone in the photo has given permission to publish. That's all there is to it!



# Old Lesbians Write Our Stories

## What Does Women's Basketball Have to Do with Memory Loss and Old Lesbians?

By Connie Rose, 1948

It was “somebody—I can’t remember who” who I overheard. This is how I open most of my stories these days. “SOMEBODY, SOMEWHERE, I CAN’T REMEMBER WHO!” I do remember she was a tall, gorgeous, media personality, maybe such as Robin Roberts. She was interviewed and asked, “How do you like this Pac-12 women’s basketball tournament here in Las Vegas?” Her response: “What’s not to like with all these tall beautiful Amazons around you?” I also was thinking, “What’s not to like with all these tall, beautiful Lesbians around you?” as I walked through the MGM Grand.

This year was an Olympic year and there was lots of women’s basketball: from college, to the WNBA (Women’s National Basketball Association), into the summer Olympic teams, back to the WNBA

championship games, and now into the new college basketball season and leagues. If you’re not a women’s basketball fan, well, you might enjoy it for the eye candy alone.

Aside from the players, I see more women coaches wearing their pride and politics on their t-shirts. My favorite is: “We The People ... and that means everyone!” (I see you, Cheryl Reeve [head coach of the Minnesota Lynx]!) Or enjoy the casual way the announcers mention Lesbians, with fiancés, wives, children! Another world! A better world!

I’m in my glory and I’m not the only one! What the dykes were to the bars in the 1970s–1980s, the Lesbians are to the women’s basketball scene today. Yes, it’s another world from the days of my stationary guard position on the six-player team in the 1960s, forced to wear skirts and make-up on campus so we didn’t have a hint of gayness about us. We trod the path for this better world.

You’re welcome, baby dykes!

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## Arithmetic Lessons

By Henri Bensussen, 1937

In May of 1942, I turned six. That summer, I lost the piano I’d been learning to play for the previous two years. It and our house were sold; my little brother and I were dropped off at a boarding school; and our parents disappeared. Within days, due to a measles outbreak, we were taken to a friend of my mother’s, who ran a military kind of household. I didn’t fit in well. Dad had a compassionate side, and when I whispered to him, on a visit, to “get us out of here,” he listened.

I learned many things those months before we reestablished ourselves at a new house in Los Angeles, such as how to adapt to new situations, how to escape bad ones, and how to bear up under unfair circumstances. I was “learning the math.” Maybe that’s why, at age 87, I was attracted to a library book titled *Mathematica: A Secret World of Intuition and Curiosity*, by D. Bessis.

We learned arithmetic in first grade, which led to a world of rational thinking. Numbers could literally be counted, and never lied, so different from mere words. My mother disliked my being a “tomboy,” a continuing fight over my bodily integrity that went on for years. What made me a tomboy in her eyes? I had to match words to actual behaviors.

Bessis writes that “human language is structurally incompatible with logical reasoning ... contrary to what Descartes claimed, ‘the things we conceive of very clearly and distinctly’ are not always true.” Words can describe, but our own experience is required to really understand what we talk about. I learned the word “Lesbian” by age 19. It took years of personal experience to understand that I was one.



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