

Bay Area OLOC



Old Lesbians Organizing for Change

Newsletter - October 2024

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

Bay Area OLOC Post Election Zoom

Who knows where we'll be?

Sunday, November 17, 2024 - 1:00 to 3:00 pm

Your Bay Area OLOC Organizing Committee has decided our next event will be a Zoom conversation on November 17th. While Zoom doesn't allow us to hug each other, this medium is accessible to a wider group of our members than in-person meetings. As we head toward the end of 2024, we'll have a chance to see each other's faces and share reactions to whatever is going on at that point.

It's hard to imagine what the results of the November 5th elections will be. We don't even know how long we will have to wait for a definitive count! Will we be celebrating the election of Kamala Harris and Tim Walz or facing a second Trump presidency? Will congress be full of sane people, deadlocked again, or set to attack our rights and benefits? How will LGBTQ+ rights be faring in this new landscape? Thanksgiving and the holidays at the end of the year will be approaching fast by mid-November, This event will offer space for our Old Lesbian community to gather virtually and discuss how the elections are playing out at that point.

After a short welcome and check-in, we'll split up into discussion "rooms" so everyone has a chance to speak. Then we'll reconvene as a group and hear comments from our conversations.

The Organizing Committee hopes you will join us for this event!

To join this event on Zoom with a computer or smartphone, use this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/45hede25>

To join the meeting by telephone, call 1 (669) 900-9128 and enter

Meeting ID: 819 4288 3265 and Passcode: 804666

My First Bay Area OLOC Retreat

By Marian Bailey

As I packed my travel suitcase for the Bay Area OLOC (BAOLOC) retreat, I wondered if I was overdoing it. Did I really need all these clothes in the middle of rising temperatures? How was I going to stay on my food plan and oh boy...how would my fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue be in this new setting?

I also felt some apprehension because I can be shy in social situations where I don't know many people. But, I reasoned with myself, this was mitigated by the fact my older sister and a few people I knew would be there. I had no idea what the cabins would be like and I thought of the tent cabins my friend lived in as a Yosemite summer worker nearly 50 years ago. I hoped there weren't any bears or bugs!

The ride from Vallejo, using Google maps directions took me on a beautiful but very curvy road. I actually saw some young quails with their little plumes bobbing in front of them as they walked.

On arrival, there was a huge parking lot covered with several arrays of solar panels. Wow, solar energy...great! BAOLOC had two very busy greeters at a podium surrounded by a bunch of us with much stuff. Eventually, bags were tagged and rooms assigned for the nearly 50 attendees! Electric trams carried us down to our rooms.



I was delighted to find the rooms weren't tent cabins a la Yosemite many years ago. They were very modern and I didn't see any bugs in the room. I was assigned to a room with accommodations, i.e., a hand held shower, electrical outlets close to the beds and nightstands. There were four beds and we used every one the first night. The thing I noticed about the room when I first arrived in it, was there was a bed immediately in front of the door. Feng shui calls this the 'death' or 'coffin' position.

EEKS! Not a bed I would take, so I settled on one furthest away from the door. I hadn't factored in that someone else might need to be located there as I discovered that evening. After getting my bags settled, I was able to catch the electric tram down to the swimming pool. I was happy to see so many women enjoying the pool and playing together. It really felt good to see us comfortable in our bodies.

Later, we went to the new dining hall for dinner. The view was magnificent! The dining hall was built with a wall of large open windows inviting your eyes toward the redwoods and sky. Dinner was delectable enough to ditch a protein powder shake any day! The coffee/drink bar was something I hadn't seen before, and my coffee was perfect. The long walk back to the cabins tested my reserves, but I was proud to make it back to the room and join my fellow sisters in the large meeting room.



We each gave personal check-ins and introductions. I was surprised there were so many of us, with a wide range from newly 60 years old to over 90 years! We represented a rainbow not only in colors, cultures and ethnicities, but also in abilities and challenges. BAOLOC valiantly attempted to accommodate everyone. After lunch, we talked about what we are doing that gives us joy. The warm weather provided the perfect incentive to head to the pool for relief and fun after the discussion groups.

On Saturday afternoon, we were greeted with the news that the solar power had failed and would remain off until after the retreat ended. The staff scrambled in a valiant effort to save stored food and supplies and somehow feed us too. We had delicious tacos and sides for dinner. I was lucky enough to have power in the cabin I had moved to. I hope everyone else did too.

Later at the evening "Salon," women shared their gifts and talents. I was able to pick up a wonderful vase crafted and gifted by Judith L and buy a beautiful pair of earrings from Terri K. I heard a shofar (see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shofar>) played like a musical instrument for the first time ever! I listened to women reading their stories and written words, talk about their artwork, and more.

By Sunday morning my physical reserves were empty and I headed home early. I was happy I came to the retreat and worked through some of my fears. I marvel that we come together and brave our challenges, all in an effort to be part of, to connect, and to feel and be seen as Old Lesbians organizing for change.

The September retreat at Enchanted Hills was a success!

By Susan Chacin

Over 50 women participated in Bay Area OLOC's fall retreat. We enjoyed menus geared to accommodate food needs and preferences, played games, got to know each other better in structured and informal ways, hiked, swam --with and without bathing suits - and generally enjoyed being in the company of OLD LESBIANS! Saturday afternoon we talked about what activities give us joy. The Saturday evening Salon, emceed by Molly Martin, showcased art, music, poetry, and stories. A group of vocalists led us in singing "The Old Lesbians' Picnic. (The lyrics appear below.)



The facilities at Enchanted Hills have been upgraded with mixed results. There is a beautiful new dining hall but most of us had to use the camp's tram to get there. The schedule for the tram left a few women waiting too long and the Organizing Committee is working with the camp to improve this service. The camp's electricity went out on Saturday, but their generator was able to power areas for us to use for the rest of our stay.

THE OLD LESBIANS' PICNIC

(Sung to the tune of The Teddy Bears' Picnic)

If you go out to the woods today, you're in for a big surprise.
 If you go down to the woods today, you better go in disguise.
 For every dyke that ever there was will gather there for certain because
 Today's the day Old Lesbians have their picnic!

Picnic time for lesbians, these elder Lesbians are having a lovely time today.
 Watch them catch them unawares as they picnic on their holiday.
 See them gaily dance about, they love to play and shout, forgetting about their cares.
 At 6 o'clock their younger lovers will take them home to bed because they're tired Old Lesbians.

If you go down to the woods today, you better not go alone.
 It's lovely down in the woods today, but better to stay at home.
 For every dyke that ever there was will gather there for certain because
 Today's the day Old Lesbians have their picnic!

Every old lesbian who's been good is sure of a treat today.
 Lots of fabulous things to eat and wonderful games to play.
 They use the trees where nobody sees to hide and seek as long as they please.
 That's the way Old Lesbians have their picnic.

Picnic time for lesbians, these elder Lesbians are having a lovely time today.
 Watch them catch them unawares as they picnic on their holiday.
 See them gaily dance about, they love to play and shout, forgetting about their cares.
 At 6 o'clock their younger lovers will take them home to bed because they're tired Old Lesbians.

(The singing group "Out on a Clef" adapted the "Teddy Bears' Picnic" lyrics to create the "Lesbian Picnic" song. Ginny Garrett modified it further with "Old," "younger lovers," and other changes to make the song ours.)

Judith Dambowic led a healing exercise class in the pool at the retreat, and she has offered to present another class at our May retreat. Judith teaches a Feldenkrais inspired Senior Water Aerobics class at Berkeley's West Campus Pool on Wednesdays and Fridays at 10:00 a.m. To attend, buy a pass online at the Berkeley City Aquatics website.

Upcoming Bay Area OLOC Activities in 2025:

Valentines Dance

February 15th, 3:00 – 5:30 p.m. – Berkeley United Universalists Fellowship Hall, Berkeley
Plans are underway to hold our annual Valentines dance in February. (We're not competing with Super Bowl Sunday again!) If you would like to help plan it or volunteer the day of (decorations, DJ and live band recommendations, refreshments...) contact Pat Cull on the Organizing Committee. (See contact info at the end of this Newsletter.) We'd love your involvement! This party will be open to women of all ages, it would be a good introduction to OLOC for a younger friend.

Retreats at Enchanted Hills:

Spring / May 2nd - 4th

Fall / September 12th – 14th

Plan ahead so you can spend three days in the beautiful Napa hills next May and September. The kinks we experienced this past September should be ironed out by then, and all are welcome on a sliding fee basis.

OLOC will support QWOCCMAP'S Annual Film Festival again in 2025

Bay Area OLOC volunteers and donates as a community partner at the Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project's annual free film festival. QWOCCMAP has been offering free film-making workshops to queer women of color for over 20 years. Wonderful short films produced by queer women of color will be shown at each of the screenings. QWOCCMAP also offers screenings of films that have been shown at past festivals. If you are interested in organizing such a show, let the Organizing Committee know.

Old Lesbian Picnic - July 20th, 2025 – Live Oak Park, Berkeley, 12:00 to 4:00 pm

Bay Area OLOC will hold our annual picnic again at the site outside the Berkeley Art Center. The event is a pot luck and a great way to reconnect with old friends and meet new ones. Paratransit service is available and we don't do any grilling so there's no smoke to contend with.

OLOC National Gathering – August 20th – 24th, 2025

Embassy Suites, Columbus Ohio

Old Lesbians from all over the country, and a few from around the world, will gather in Columbus Ohio next August. The theme this year is **PREVAILING: Old Lesbians United for Our Future**. Wednesday, August 20th will feature groups for Lesbians of Color and White Lesbians to continue OLOC's process of overcoming White dominance. If you haven't attended a national gathering, believe women who report it being a wonderful new

experience. If you have participated in one, you may remember the excitement of seeing old friends and making new contacts. National OLOC and Bay Area OLOC collaborate so Old Lesbians who want to go have resource support to be there. Be sure to affiliate with National OLOC so you receive updates. In 2025, there will be a call for women who would like to present a workshop to pitch their topics, and there is always time for groups of Lesbians who share a common interest or concern to meet. Stay tuned and mark your new calendar.

Sign Up as an Affiliate with National OLOC

Access More Old Lesbian Resources

National OLOC offers a wonderful assortment of support groups, Zoom events, and other resources. Joining is easy, and dues are on an ability-to-pay basis. Members of national OLOC are termed “affiliates,” and you have to be connected as an affiliate to receive notices and links to their events. The website to gain access to all this is www.OLOC.org

Your Local Newsletter Editor is Susan Chacin susanchnew@gmail.com . Laura Tow and Ginny Garrett help with proofing and suggestions. Send articles, poems, artwork and photos to Susan for upcoming editions. (Please put BA OLOC Newsletter in the subject line.)

The Bay Area OLOC Organizing Committee meets on Zoom monthly to plan events and stay in touch with our 300+ mailing list. We welcome ideas for future meetings and volunteers - get in touch with us by contacting Pat Cull at patcull70@gmail.com , (415) 637-5002 .