

# Bay Area OLOC

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change



Newsletter – August, 2025

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

## Come to Bay Area OLOC's Fall Retreat! Friday September 19 – Sunday September 21, 2025 3 Days & 2 Nights in the Napa Woodlands

Old lesbians, their partners, and caregivers are all warmly invited to Bay Area OLOC's fall retreat. We will be enjoying Enchanted Hills Camp again, owned by the Lighthouse for the Blind. The wooded setting is ideal for a restful getaway. Women who come for the first time consistently report feeling welcomed. Many meet old friends and everyone finds new connections. There are a variety of sleeping accommodations, a central building for group discussions, and a dining hall accessed by shuttles. We meet, play games, schmooze, take walks, and swim in a large heated pool. All facilities are wheelchair accessible. Typically about 40 Lesbians 60 and over attend. OLOC takes over the whole camp, *it's just us!* (Plus the helpful staff.)

**The sliding scale registration means that all who wish to attend are welcome. It covers lodging including linens for Friday and Saturday nights, and six meals.** Arrival begins Friday at 2:00 pm. The pool will be open from 3:00 – 5:00; dinner will be served at 5:30. Friday



evening is informal with crafts (bring supplies of any kind!) and a variety of games.

Structured activities kick off Saturday morning at 10:00 after breakfast with our traditional check-in circle. **“How are you? What is going on in your life now?”**

Our afternoon topic will be **“How to Advocate for Vulnerable Populations, including Ourselves.”** Three panelists will share their

personal experiences, then we'll break into small discussion groups to talk about our own advocacy experiences and concerns. There will be time to reconvene for insights and reflections before we head off to rest or swim before dinner.

**Saturday evening is our Salon**, an opportunity to share music, spoken word, art, skits, WHATEVER! ***Bring your writing, paintings, and musical instruments!*** After the Salon we can play games, have a sing-along, put on dance music and/or hang out with snacks.

***After Sunday breakfast***, we'll hear from several women who attended the August OLOC National Gathering in Ohio – their highlights, challenges, favorite memories and how the Gathering embodied OLOC's vision. Together we'll plan future Bay Area OLOC events and activities. There will also be a bit of entertainment and a closing circle. After lunch, the pool will be open and participants will be welcome to enjoy premises until 3:30 pm.



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Throughout the weekend participants are welcome to initiate small group discussions during free time. Groups can self-organize to hike, or discuss topics such as caregiving, creativity, bereavement, or politics.

**COST:** We ask everyone to pay what is comfortable on a sliding scale of \$0 to \$300 for the full weekend. BA OLOC's cost is \$275 per person. BA OLOC covers EVERYONE'S registration on a sliding fee scale thanks to generous donations and bequests in the past.

**LOCATION:** Enchanted Hills Camp is outside Napa. Driving time is about 90 minutes from San Francisco and 75 minutes from Berkeley. *If you can provide a ride, or if you need a ride, please note that on your registration form.*

**FOOD:** All meals will be provided by the Camp starting with Friday supper through Sunday lunch. There will be vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options at all meals. Women with other food concerns are welcome to bring items they will need to supplement what is offered. We will have the use of a refrigerator and microwave.

**LODGING:** The sleeping accommodations are shared rooms (2-3 beds to a room) with shared baths. There are wheelchair accessible rooms and bathrooms available. You are welcome to request a particular roommate. Women who wish to camp will have space to put up a tent or to park and sleep in a vehicle. The registration form asks if you snore or use a CPAP machine. Earplugs will be available at camp on request. Please contact Laura (see registration form for contact details) if you have any sleeping accommodation needs not addressed above.

**POOL:** The pool will be open Friday 3:00 - 5:00, Saturday 3:45 - 5:30 and Sunday 1:00 -3:00 pm. We will not have a lifeguard on duty but a member with CPR training will be present. The pool is located down a short hill - we will have transport available to and from the pool. There is a built-in pool lift. Everyone who wishes to will able to enjoy the pool!

**NOTE:** A recent Enchanted Hills policy change requires swimsuits in the pool – no nudity is allowed on the grounds. Thank you in advance for respecting this new stipulation so we can continue to be welcome as Enchanted Hills guests.

**If you plan to come, see “More information for Retreat Participants” and “Retreat Registration” at the end of this newsletter. Registrations are due by September 4<sup>th</sup> WE HOPE TO SEE YOU AT ENCHANTED HILLS!**

## OLOC's Annual Summer Outdoor Potluck

By Jeannine Toussaint

Picnic tables groaned with food, more than enough for everyone, and delicious! It was a party, one where old friends meet after a few weeks or months apart, where on-line friends get to hug in-person, where new friendships begin. Live Oak Park in Berkeley was the venue again this year, and again, its trees shaded the circles of women talking, laughing, eating. Attended by more old lesbians than ever, the count at the end of day reached 65. A scan of the crowd showed more racial diversity than in the past, too, confirming that OLOC's on-going goal to attain greater diversity among its members is yielding results. Brava! At the end of the afternoon, all of us, well fed and replenished, both nutritionally and socially, exchanged warm hugs and warm wishes. A wonderful day, indeed!



## What Does *Girlfriend* Mean in Lesbianland?

By Molly Martin

In lesbianland, the word *girlfriend* carries a lot of weight, and a lot of meanings. It can refer to a platonic friend, a lover, or something in between. Back in the day, it usually meant lover. There simply weren't enough words to describe us dykes or the nuanced ways we related to each other. For a while, we adopted *partner*, but that often got confused with *business partner*. Very few of us used the word *wife*, and I never liked it. As a budding feminist, I wanted no part of marriage. Wives, in my mind, were helpmeets, baby factories,

second-class citizens. Property. In some states, it was still legal to kill your wife for adultery. Spousal rape wasn't outlawed. Until 1974, women in the U.S. couldn't even get credit in our own names.

Some lesbian couples still use the term *girlfriend*. They let their friends know they don't like the term *wife* and don't use it to refer to each other. Others in my Boomer generation have come up with alternatives. One couple calls each other *spouse* and *spice*. But I've become a *wife* convert.

I've been married three times. My ex, Barb, and I went to Vermont after it became the first state to legalize same-sex civil unions in 2000. But in 2004, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom opened the doors to same-sex marriage. Thousands of couples--ourselves included--flocked to City Hall. Queer couples, dressed in their finest, stood in a line out the door in all weather, waiting for a marriage license. Bouquets, cakes and good wishes arrived from around the country. The whole city felt like a wedding party.

Barb, then the San Francisco fire marshal, arranged for the SFFD chief, Joanne Hayes-White, to officiate our wedding in City Hall. In every room, in every hallway, people were saying vows. It was beautiful chaos. As we walked through the metal detectors and the guard called me "sir," I turned to Barb and said, "Well, I guess I get to be the husband." That was not fair. With her crew cut, she got misgendered as often as I did. Neither of us really wanted to be a wife. But in this country, being legally married means access to health insurance, tax benefits, hospital visits, and death benefits. There were--and still are--good reasons to marry.

The road to legal gay marriage was long and convoluted, culminating with the 2015 landmark civil rights case [Obergefell v. Hodges](#). But in 2013, *United States v. Windsor* overturned key parts of DOMA, reinstating same-sex marriage in California. (Thank you, Edie Windsor!) By then, Barb and I had broken up. But because of legal limbo, we hadn't been able to divorce. When the Supreme Court's decision came down, we all ran to

the Castro to celebrate. People held signs that read "Freedom to Marry." For us, it was also the freedom to divorce.

Holly and I were married in 2014, at Muir Beach--the site of our first date. The wedding was officiated by our gay cousin Richard, dressed in the robes of his Episcopal priest friend who had been defrocked for gayness. Witnesses were my brother Don and his husband John.



I love introducing Holly as my wife. It's a simple, meaningful word. A word I once rejected. And, frankly, it helps when talking to straight people, and still sometimes provides a bit of shock value. Everyone knows what *wife* means.

## **DOROTHY ALLISON'S BOOKS ON SALE**

Dorothy Allison, beloved Lesbian author, bequeathed her book collection to her local library. These and other books will go on sale at the River Friends of the Library Book and Bake Sale, **September 4 – 7, 2025**. Besides Allison's books, they are selling signed books she admired.



**Sale hours are 10:00 am – 5:30, Thursday – Saturday, and 1:00 – 5:00 on Sunday.** The Guerneville Regional Library is located at 14107 Armstrong Woods Road, 95446, (707) 869-9004. Contact: [riverfriendsofthelibrary@gmail.com](mailto:riverfriendsofthelibrary@gmail.com) *Photo Credit: Paige Green*

## **Upcoming Bay Area OLOC Activities:**

### **Autumn Tea Dance, Berkeley**

**Saturday, October 25, 2025**

Jessie Ortiz and her band Old Soul will be performing in person again following rave reviews from our Valentines Dance.

### **Bay Area OLOC sponsors monthly Sunday afternoon Games**

Sign up with Karen Orlando at [korlando1007@gmail.com](mailto:korlando1007@gmail.com) to get on an email notification list for face-to-face games events.

### **QWOCMAP's Annual Film Festival is streaming for free September 10 - 16!**

OLOC is a community partner of Queer Women of Color Media Arts Project (QWOCMAP). We volunteered, watched, and donated at this year's festival in San Francisco in June. Now all the films that were shown will be available online for a week. Go to [qwocff.org](http://qwocff.org) and click on the button "Register to Watch Online!" Don't miss this opportunity!

## Bay Area OLOC's Organizing Committee:

A small Organizing Committee meets monthly on Zoom to keep Bay Area OLOC running. Members include: Pat Cull, Laura Tow, Ginny Garrett, Jeannine Toussaint, Jan Herzog, Susan Chacin, and Michiko Bailey Thorne

### Newsletter:

**Photo Credits:** Outdoor potluck picture are by Sandy Morris , other photos by the editor, Susan Chacin.

**You are invited to send** articles, poems, and other items for the newsletter to: [susanchnew@gmail.com](mailto:susanchnew@gmail.com) . (Please put OLOC NEWSLETTER in the subject line.) The newsletter and an occasional Bulletin come out periodically to announce upcoming events.

**Most women on our mailing list receive the newsletter by email.** A number have asked to also receive it by “snail mail.” If you are getting the newsletter in the mail and don't need a paper copy, let Pat Cull know. If you don't get it by mail but would like a paper copy, let Pat know that too. If we have your email, you'll get the newsletter by email unless you tell us otherwise. Contact Pat at: [patcull70@gmail.com](mailto:patcull70@gmail.com)

## More Information for Retreat Participants

**To register for the retreat**, fill out the form that appears on the last page of this newsletter. **The DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF REGISTRATION by mail is no later than Thursday September 4, 2025.** This is a firm deadline, needed to plan food, staffing and lodging details. We would appreciate receiving your registration as soon as you can send it in! Late registrations will be put on a wait list. We cannot accept telephone or email registrations, and ask that you send a check in with the registration. If necessary, the check can be post-dated.

**If you plan to come to the retreat, please read the following information carefully and keep it handy for reference as you pack!** Registrants will also receive an email with last-minute information.

**Several OLOC members deal with chemical sensitivity. PLEASE DO NOT USE SCENTED PRODUCTS BEFORE COMING OR AT THE RETREAT!** This includes hair products, deodorant, and fabric softeners. It is awkward to have to address this issue in person, however women's health is at risk when someone attends wearing or bringing scented items. Thank you for your assistance.

**GETTING THERE: Enchanted Hills Camp's address is 3410 Mt Veeder Rd, Napa, CA 94558.** You can find directions on Google Maps. The route from the East Bay takes Hwy 80 east to

exit 33 for CA 37 west toward Napa. Turn right at exit 19 for CA 29 (Sonoma Blvd) toward Napa. Take exit 18-A toward 1<sup>st</sup> Street. At the traffic circle, take the 3<sup>rd</sup> exit onto 1<sup>st</sup> Street which becomes Browns Valley Rd, then it becomes Partrick Rd. Turn right onto Browns Valley Rd, then turn left onto Redwood Rd. and continue onto Mt. Veeder Rd. The camp is on your right.

**ARRIVAL & LOGISTICS:** The parking area and an unloading zone are clearly marked. Start at the welcome building, where you'll get a map of the camp, a name tag, handouts, and baggage tags. All rooms will have been preassigned to the best of our ability, reflecting information from your registration form. Staff will deliver you and your baggage to your sleeping area. Linens will already be in each room.

**BRING:** Swimsuits! Writing, artwork, music, or whatever you would like to share at the Salon on Saturday evening. Also bring games, musical instruments, dance music, ideas for discussions or activities, etc. **ALSO** bring soap, flashlight, sunscreen, bug spray and something warm to wear for cool evenings. If you have clothes, books, jewelry, or posters that you would like to give away, you may bring them, but **please commit to taking home anything that is left at the end of the retreat.**

**COVID:** Masks are optional. We recommend taking a home test prior to coming. **Please test if you feel unwell** and do not come if you test positive. (Your registration fee will be fully refunded.)

**PLEASE provide an OFF-SITE emergency contact on your registration.**

**PHONES:** In an emergency, the camp phone is (415) 526-7111. Cell phones mostly work at camp, but you may need to ask where to find the best reception.

**SMOKING is only allowed in one designated area.** Fire danger is high, and others' health and welfare is a concern. This policy will be strictly enforced and applies to cannabis as well as tobacco. We request that cannabis vaping be done privately for the comfort of all.

**Enchanted Hills is peanut free.** The camp serves a wide range of people including many children. Please take this seriously, do not bring granola or candy with peanuts, crackers containing peanut butter, etc. A few crumbs left in your room could sicken the next occupant.

**GENERAL RETREAT & TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS:** Contact **Ginny Garrett at 510-495-4285** or email her at [ginnygarrett@hotmail.com](mailto:ginnygarrett@hotmail.com).

## RETREAT REGISTRATION FORM

September 19 - 21, 2025

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM** (OR WRITE ALL THE INFORMATION ON A SHEET OF PAPER) **AND MAIL IT WITH YOUR CHECK TO THE ADDRESS BELOW. Please print clearly.**

**The deadline for receipt of your registration is Thursday, September 4, 2024**

(We appreciate receiving registrations early. We've never exceeded the camp's capacity but it could happen.) WE CANNOT TAKE TELEPHONE OR E-MAILED RESERVATIONS. Thank you!

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE(S)** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_ **CITY** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MY EMERGENCY OFF-SITE CONTACT PERSON IS: Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Relationship:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FEE: Sliding fee scale is \$0-\$300** for Friday through Sunday including meals.

(Our cost is \$275 / person - Please pay what you can, DONATIONS ARE APPRECIATED.)

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED:** \_\_\_\_\_ Make check payable to "Bay Area OLOC"  
Please note if you are post-dating your check.

**REFUNDS:** Your registration will be refunded in full if you are unable to attend

**RIDES:**  I need a ride  I can offer a ride to \_\_\_ women

**BEDROOMS:** Do you have medical or physical disability requirements for sleeping accommodations? Please describe: (See LODGING paragraph on page 2.)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Do you use a CPAP machine?**  Yes  No

**Do you snore?**  Yes  No  Sometimes  I don't know

**Is someone else attending whom you would like to room with?** (Make sure she registers!!)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Please plan to be fragrance-free all weekend, thank you!**

**DO YOU NEED A RAISED TOILET SEAT?**  Yes

**FOOD RESTRICTIONS:**  Vegetarian  Gluten-free  Vegan

**MAIL REGISTRATION FORMS to:**

**Laura Tow, 881 Coachman Place, Clayton, CA 94517**

Registration questions? Call/text (925)-980-3842 or email [msslaura@earthlink.net](mailto:msslaura@earthlink.net)