

Age Limit for OLOC by Tita Caldwell, 1931

I want to explain how I feel about the OLOC age limit. I came out in 1976, at the age of 45, in Venice, California. It was a wonderful, exciting time to be a lesbian feminist. But for me there was a problem. Almost every woman was at least 10 years younger than I was. I did what I could to find lesbian feminists my age, but wound up feeling discouraged and invisible.

I discovered OLOC four years ago, at the age of 74, and it felt like coming home. Here were the old women I had been looking for: my peers, those who understood what it had been like for me coming out in my 40's, those who remembered what surviving married life in the 1950's was like, those who had been affected by the same books and movements as I. This is what OLOC means to me.

There has been a great influx of women in their early sixties since 2005: our attendance at SF Bay Area meetings has almost doubled, and hardly any of these new women are over 70. At the same time we have lost the participation of some of our oldest members due to illness and death. Each year the percentage of women over 70 shrinks and there are only a few women over 80 attending our meetings.

We have implemented new practices in order to ensure that the voices of our oldest members be heard, and we continue to search for new means of doing this. But it isn't always easy or successful. That is why I personally do not want to make exceptions to the rule of having to be 60 in order to join.

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