

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change



Making Connections with Old Lesbians

By Kitty Sorell, age 71

Here we come: Old Lesbians richly rewarding ourselves with a super-duper Regional Gathering in the deep south of Columbia, South Carolina. The Clarion Hotel at 165 Gervasis Street will be the gathering place from Friday, July 17, to Sunday, July 19, 2009.

The Clarion is a landmark, comfortable "southern-belle" hotel located in the heart of Columbia. Nearby restaurants and stores are easily accessible for walking. Bring your bathing suit for the pool!

Friday afternoon we will be gathering to register, meet, greet, and begin to enjoy new and old friends and music. Our Plenary session kicks off Saturday morning, to be followed by small-group discussions on empowering Old Lesbians to become activists for change, promoting Lesbian visibility and pride throughout LGBT communities across the country, and strengthening our individual growth. Additionally, there will be a choice of diverse workshops for Saturday afternoon. These will focus on utilizing our strengths to fight ageism, racism, and oppression within our own as well as the larger communities of Lesbians.

Saturday night, beginning at 7:00 PM, we will join together for a wonderful banquet dinner, with romantic and lively dancing throughout a fabulous evening celebrating the '60s. Dance to the rhythm of the disc jockey and a special treat of a talented Lesbian singer.

Sunday in the late morning we will embark on an optional unique bus tour of Columbia's Lesbian and African American community and its surrounding environs. Among the stops included are the South Carolina Pride Center to meet our Lesbian sisters, then on to The Hunter Gatherer (eating place), the 'L' Word (Lesbian club) for lunch on your own, and several other historical sites such as the African American History Monument and the Mann Simmon Cottage. This bus tour offers another opportunity of "Making Connections" before the Gathering concludes.

A limited amount of financial assistance for registration only is available (no hotel or travel). To apply, use the form in this issue. To register for the OLOC Regional Gathering "Making Connections," use the form in this issue. If you need more than one, copy first or you can print them from: <http://oloc.org/news/registration.pdf>

Ageism - Do They Get It?

At the OLOC National Gathering in 2008 we held a CR session that has been edited for use with OLOC groups and the general public. Several Old Lesbians share their experiences with ageism and reflect on its effect throughout society. It is available for loan or purchase from OLOC; use our contact phone, e-mail, or mailing address. One copy is free to OLOC chapters. Individual OLOCers can purchase a copy for \$5.

**Next OLOC
National Gathering
will be held in the
summer 2010
in Cleveland, Ohio**



Mandy Carter is scheduled to speak on Sunday at the Regional Gathering

The Reporter ... A quarterly publication of OLOC

March 2009 VOLUME 19 ISSUE 1

OLOC is a nonprofit 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization.

More on the OLOC Del Martin Old Lesbian Pride Award

The award will be given to a Lesbian 70 years or older whose life and work have impacted and will continue to impact the lives of Old Lesbians.

Del was out, proud, and unapologetic when few were. She and her lifetime partner, Phyllis Lyon, forged an enduring image that continues to inspire generations of Lesbians around the globe. In 1955 they co-founded *The Daughters of Bilitis*, the first U.S. Lesbian organization, and in 1972, co-wrote the equally ground-breaking, *Lesbian/Woman*. In 1976 Del's book, *Battered Wives*, first shattered the silence surrounding domestic violence. Her writing and tireless activism on behalf of women earned much praise, many awards, and an invitation to the White House, and drew upon the great strengths of Lesbian tradition, advancing our visibility and pride and carrying that heritage forward.

Award Guidelines:

1. Nominations are not to exceed 500 words describing the outstanding accomplishments and/or achievements of the nominee to be sent by e-mail or regular mail to: info@oloc.org, or OLOC's address.
2. Nominations must be postmarked by December 31, 2009.
3. The award will be given to an Old Lesbian over the age of 70.
4. Nominations are world-wide and for an Old Lesbian in any field of endeavor.
5. Nominee's life and/or work must impact the lives of Old Lesbians.
6. The first award will be presented at the 2010 National Gathering in Cleveland OH, USA.
7. Nominee must be living when nominated.

**A "sound byte" definition of ageism:
The beliefs and practices that follow from
believing that young is better, more beautiful,
more useful, more desirable, more healthful,
more productive, and more worthy than old.**

Mary M. Morgan, 1925

THE MEDICAL CORNER

Dr. Jean Eckerly, 1937

I've been working on or at these periodic articles for about eight years. At the onset, I tried to focus on some common medical/health problems and give some suggestions based on basic physiology.

Over the years, the corporatization of "medicine" has accelerated rapidly to the place where it is now commonly known as "the health care INDUSTRY." In a very real way, that is all that needs to be said. In my mind the accompanying result has been the rapid deterioration of health care, in both substance and availability. For most of us, Medicare has at best provided many of us with some availability and, at worst, limited our options as patients.

The change also limited my options as a practitioner, causing me to close my practice because it was based in using my knowledge with common sense. I cannot make sense of the majority of prescribed therapies as being at all helpful. In fact, I know many of them to be potentially, and some even consistently, harmful. As a result, I have felt at a loss to provide any sort of "medical advice," and the articles have shifted more toward political and economic opinion on our existing system.

As we watch the collapse of our economy, we are watching the collapse of our "health care" system. Ultimately, this is probably a good thing, even though the transition will be difficult. It is our right to have a system that reduces the number of patients (because people are becoming healthier), instead of creating more of them (because that is profitable).

I've arrived at the place where I truly do not know if I have anything more to say on the subject. So unless any of you have a direction you think is worth pointing me toward, I'm retiring from the Medical Corner.

I'm grateful to have had this opportunity.

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.

The Reporter Gets New Editor

Jennice Thomas, 1940, has volunteered to serve as a copy editor for the OLOC newsletter. For this current issue she has been receiving training and assistance from Susan Wiseheart, 1941, and hopes to take over the copy responsibility for the June 2009 issue. You can send your articles and announcements for the June issue to jenn-gt@hotmail.com with cc to susan@wiseheart.com. Remember that the deadline for submissions is May 1, 2009.

OLOC is still looking for a photo editor. Contact Susan at susan@oloc.org for details.

OLOC Budget Report *By Jan Griesinger, 1942*

Our fundraising letter sent in early December has raised over \$5,000 thanks to so many of you wonderful Old Lesbians. Raising our own funds is crucial as we demonstrate to foundations and other funders that we do have significant support among our own folks.

INCOME		Budget	Actual
Individual donations		24,000	26,613
Grants		21,750	41,817
Local chapters		1,000	1,541
Sales, T shirts		250	4,507
Grant for Bay Area OLOC			2,000
Transfer from reserves		1,000	1,000
National Gathering	registrations	24,000	32,448
	financial assistance	2,500	15,056
	program book ads	4,500	2,880
	auction	2,000	2,523
	banquet/meals	2,500	2,247
	raffle		599
	bus trip		1,425
	other		2,062
Misc		550	2,213
Total		84,250	138,931

EXPENSES		Budget	Actual
Admin	Rent	1,500	1,528
	Supplies, equipment	1,800	2,775
	Admin. Coord.	12,000	20,926
Steering Committee mtgs		16,000	16,983
Grant for Bay area			2,000
Outreach Educational	Newsletter	2,700	3,550
	Delegates to confs	1,600	5,465
	Advertising	2,000	1,961
	Web site/internet	500	698
Field Organizing		6,300	8,724
Oral Herstory		5,000	9,424
Stipends Co-Directors		5,400	5,400
Sales, T shirts		500	2,179
National Gathering	hotel, food	12,000	20,492
	leadership	1,500	2,407
	financial assistance	7,000	17,728
	disability services	3,000	4,653
	printing, supplies	2,200	3,837
	other	1,300	2,129
Misc		1,950	3,122
Total		84,250	135,886

Contact List for Current Steering Committee Members

Co-Directors:

Jan Griesinger, 1942, Athens OH	jan@oloc.org	(740) 448-6424
Mina Meyer, 1940, Long Beach CA	mina@oloc.org	(562) 420-3555

Steering Committee Members:

Alix Dobkin, 1940, Woodstock, NY	alix@oloc.org	(845) 679-7586
Myra Brahms, 1942, New York City	myra@oloc.org	(212) 535-9633
Ruth Debra, 1944, Palm Springs CA	ruth@oloc.org	(760) 318-6794
Sally Tatnall, 1937, Cleveland Heights OH	sally@oloc.org	(216) 862-0598

NYC: Gay Life Expo in NYC

By Myra Brahms, 1942

The NYC OLOC made a strong showing at the Gay Life Expo at the Javits Center on November 15 and 16. I was able to get a free booth for the weekend. Six of us staffed the table, handed out literature and talked to many men and woman, young and old, about OLOC and our position on seeing old as a positive.

We had signs on the back of the booth and our wonderful banner across the front of the table. In addition, I spoke to many of the vendors, who wanted literature for their Lesbian daughters. I also spoke with the woman vendor selling anti-aging health care items and explained the use of the term "pro-aging" instead. We collected names and addresses to add to the NYC and national mailing lists. In the spring we will try to secure another booth for free at the Gay Business Expo.

Hudson Valley, New York

By Alix Dobkin, 1940

The OLOC Hudson Valley Chapter is active in our (wonderful) local LGBTQ Community Center in Kingston, NY, where we meet on the first Friday of the month. We love consciousness-raising but don't always get to it. In November we hosted a highly successful cross-generational (Old Dykes/Young Queer Women) conversation and will follow up with another in May 2009.

Bay Area, California

From the Bay Area OLOC Chapter newsletter:

Bay Area OLOC has received its second grant of \$2,000 from the Horizons Foundation. They also received \$2,000 from the First Unitarian Church of San Francisco to offer a new consciousness-raising group on ageism in the East Bay.

The chapter provided \$1,180 in financial assistance for their members to attend the summer 2008 OLOC National Gathering in Los Angeles.

They will try a new check-in system (time for each person at a Gathering to update others on their lives and concerns), where the older decades speak first and women may ask for extra time.

Southern California Chapter

By Jackie Grover, 1943

Mina recently asked me to chair our monthly OLOC meeting while she and Sharon were gone to NYC. After reading Jan's article (June 2007 *Reporter*) on the use of "still" (when used to address older people), I hoped she wouldn't mind that I decided to turn it into a poem (giving her credit, of course!) to see what discussion it generated. After I read my version of what she'd written, the members of our group turned our meeting into quite a lively discussion.

Here is how it looked as a poem:

An Analysis of the Word "Still"

By Jan Griesinger, 1942

Are you ageist or just being polite? The implications are unclear. Oh, I'm glad to see you're — still doing well

- still working
- still out and about
- still active
- still playing tennis

Wow, you are

- still gardening?
- still mowing your own lawn?
- still going to exercise class?
- still eating spicy foods?
- still taking classes?

Do you mean "glad to see you are still among us" as an expression of joy or surprise?

To me and other older people you sound shocked I'm not in a rocking chair or dead.

An Interesting Phone Call

By Mary Henry, 1939

OLOC recently arranged a conference call to share challenges, successes and ideas that included women from local chapters from all over the country. There were women from groups in Oregon, Colorado, Washington and Missouri, and two groups each in New York, California, and Ohio.

Everyone seemed to feel it was a productive experiment, and plans are to repeat it as often as possible.

Puget Sound WA Chapter *By Gloria Stanchich, 1935*

Happy 90th Birthday to Ruth Silver, one of OLOC's beloved founding mothers! Ruth is a Summer Sunbird visitor to the Puget Sound area, and we are always delighted to get together with her when she is here. Wish we could all be in Apache Junction to help celebrate, but we'll have snow-bird representatives there to give hugs and best wishes.

Yes, we're referring to ourselves as an OLOC chapter for now, though we're still not sure what all that entails. While we have quite a few women interested in participating, their reasons for doing so range from simply wanting the interaction with other Old Lesbians to those that are interested in and willing to work toward OLOC's goals. A core group of us from around the Sound met in Tacoma at the end of January and formed a leadership group that we are tentatively calling the Queer Crone Coordinating Council.

We're finding that our Yahoo list e-mail is a wonderful way to communicate over this wide geographic area. During this unusual and seemingly unending harsh winter weather, when so many of us have been isolated and unable to get out, we've been able to share stories, resources, words of support, and even rugulech recipes!

We would also like to congratulate National Steering Committee member Alix Dobkin on her excellent article on Lesbian Culture in the new issue of *Sinister Wisdom*. The article will make a great discussion base as we go about creating our own Lesbian Heaven. Thanks, Alix, for articulating so well what we are about.



Marcia Perlstein, 1945, and Ruth Silver, 1919, at an event at Marcia's home in Port Townsend, Washington

Mission Statement for OLOC

Old Lesbians Organizing for Change is a national organization for Old Lesbians age 60 and over, and will:

- Promote Old Lesbian Pride.
- Educate, support and empower Old Lesbians.
- Challenge ageism in our society and educate the general public about the effects of ageism and oppression.
- Celebrate our strengths, our talents, our experiences, and document our lives.
- Convene national gatherings of Old Lesbians.
- Encourage, establish, and support local chapters and regional events

Blues Music Award Nominee Gaye Adegbalola

Gaye Adegbalola, 1944, who performed, spoke, and gave a workshop at the 2008 OLOC Gathering in Los Angeles, and who is an enthusiastic OLOC member, has been nominated for a Blues Music Award (formerly the W. C. Handy Award) for Best Contemporary Female Blues Artist. She says she feels humbled to have been found worthy. You can see all of the nominees for awards at www.blues.org/bluesmusicawards.

Note that the list includes other wonderful Lesbian and women blues artists in several of the categories. To help Gaye win the award, you can join the Blues Foundation at www.blues.org and get in on the voting.

Old Lesbians in a Diverse Retirement Community

By Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, PhD, 1932

Deciding to move into senior housing is never easy, and being a Lesbian couple does nothing to smooth the path. But on September 26, 2008, my partner, Suzannah Tilton, (73) and I made our move from a mountain-lake paradise to an apartment in Cedar Crest, an Erickson Retirement Community in Pompton Plains, NJ. Our declining mobility and isolation during wintry weather were the factors that forced us to get moving.

Like many residents, we chose Cedar Crest to be near our children and grandchildren, but also because the community offers independent living, assisted living, and nursing home care on the same campus, and because the sizable entrance fee returns to our heirs when we have moved on into eternity.

How did we handle the Lesbian issue? During our very first interview, I stated openly that we are a Lesbian couple and asked whether that would pose any problem. I was assured that other gay people were among the residents and that all sorts of diversities are welcome here. I noticed that an African American resident who had just received a good report concerning her cancer was sincerely and warmly congratulated by the staff, and that provided at least some reassurance. Not that I was particularly worried. Suzannah and I have been so open about our orientation and so self-accepting that most people seem to respond positively to us.

When we moved in, immediately we decorated the next-to-our-door hallway shelf with a ceramic rainbow-colored cross and an angel holding a rainbow flag. So far the only overt response came from a female security officer who admired our rainbows but did not seem to be sending any subtle message.

The worst so far has been the difficulty to discern who is Lesbian amidst a horde of elderly women, many of whom are widows palling around with other widows. (I used to have excellent gaydar, but have you noticed that people appear more androgynous as they age?) That makes my own transgender "masculine

woman" appearance easier. I simply smile when people who can see my name badge nevertheless call me "sir." But the frequently butchy appearance of old women does not help in signaling which of them might be Lesbian.

So although we have met some delightful women and men--gay friendly enough to be very upset about the same-sex marriage bans in several states during the presidential election--we have not yet found any Lesbians. But we have declared ourselves to many of our dinner partners, and we see it as our calling to put ordinary friendly faces on Lesbianism for people who may previously have believed some of the stereotypes about us. It might be nice to live in an LGBT retirement community, but we have always loved diversity, and we are instinctively teachers devoted to social change. Cedar Crest provides us with the opportunity to practice our calling.

Dr. Mollenkott authored *Sensuous Spirituality, Out from Fundamentalism, The Divine Feminine* and many other books and articles.

The OLOC Reporter

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

- www.oloc.org
- E-mail: info@oloc.org
- Post Office Box 5853 Athens, OH 45701
- Toll-free 888-706-7506

This newsletter brought to you by: Susan Wiseheart, 1941, Editor; Jennice Thomas, 1940, Editor-in-Training; Malinda McCain, 1940, Nancy Krody, 1939, and Susan Howe, 1933, Proofreaders; Mina Meyer, 1940, and Jan Griesinger, 1942, Content Review; Margaret Purcell, 1951, Design/Layout; and all of the writers and the mailing crew.

Let your voice be heard.

Deadline for the next issue is May 1, 2009. Submission guidelines: copy due by Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1 and Nov. 1. Limit submissions to 500 words. Articles may be edited for clarity and length.

Send articles to OLOC: info@oloc.org or OLOC, PO Box 5853, Athens, OH 45701

In Memorium: Marie Mariano

Although Marie was unable to travel to Gatherings, she was interviewed for the Oral Herstory Project of OLOC and contributed money to OLOC for years. Born in 1921, Marie died in 2008.

Marie went to nursing school and nursed on reservations for the Indian Service. She spoke Shoshone, Peyute, MASHO, and Blackfeet. As a midwife she nursed on dogsled with the Indians in Alaska for the Indian Service. She nursed on horseback in Nevada. She then joined the Army Nurses Corps in 1944 and served three tours of duty in Korea.

During her years in the army she was assigned to several Texas bases, and her nursing speciality became psychiatry and neurology. She went to work at Methodist Hospital in Houston because they would let her work around her school schedule and take advantage of the G.I. Bill. She spent 36 years at Methodist and created the neuro nurse specialty. She wrote the book, created the program, and taught the course that is still in place today. When she retired, she did hospice work, which she loved.

Although she identified as gay in junior high school, she stayed single. An army buddy was her best friend and roommate. She met Sarah in Houston, and they embarked on an old-fashioned courtship. They were together 30 years when Sarah died in 1987. This began Marie's "public coming out." She became involved in community activities and created for herself an amazing support network. Marie was much loved and respected.

Submitted by Arden Eversmeyer, 1931, Director, Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project



In Memorium: Lois Heindselman

Lois Heindselman was born in 1936 and died in 2009. She was a member of the Tacoma OLOC Brunch Bunch, and her herstory is archived with the Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project.

Lois fell in love with the bass player in an All Women's Band that was playing a gig in Tacoma in 1957. She joined the group as a way to be with her new love. She learned to play the drums as she went along. With this group, she toured much of the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, and then toured with a USO troupe in Mexico,

Europe, and Asia. Her stories about these days on tour are filled with adventure, fun, a few instances of danger, and great memories. After nearly 10 years on the road, Lois returned to settle in the Tacoma area. Not sure what she wanted to do, she took a mail-order course to learn how to tune pianos and began a new career. Lois developed into an expert piano tuner, a founder of the local Piano Tuners' Guild, and a beloved and highly respected member of a once all-male profession. Lois was in high demand as a skilled technician and traveled around the area with her tools of the trade for over 35 years before retiring in 2005.

Submitted by Gloria Stancich, 1935

OLOC is supported in part by grants from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation, the Arcus Foundation, and the Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice

Slippery Slope *By Margaret Mann, 1945*

I slipped recently at a swimming pool and broke my left tibia. I spent the next 11 days in the hospital, protecting my kidneys from the blood generated by this type of break. My accident was further complicated because I have a spinal cord injury and use a wheelchair to get around. Trying to maneuver around with my leg sticking straight out in front was quite a challenge.

But it was not the only challenge. This incident with my leg and my recent move into senior housing has left me pondering the slippery slope of aging as a person with a disability. The hospital assigned me to the skilled nursing ward, where all the other patients were very elderly and decrepit. It was a visit from the ghost of Christmas future. At 62 with a spinal cord injury, I am already incontinent, have limited mobility, and live in pain 24/7. I dread to think what will happen as I age over the next 10 years. My "golden years" have a dark lining.

I normally am quite independent, but with my leg in a cast, I could not get into my bathroom or kitchen. I was dependent on home health aides to empty my pee bucket, to provide me with water for washing, and to fetch things that were out of my reach. If anything happens to me that further limits my mobility, this would become my daily routine.

My lack of mobility isolated me. I was now

dependent on friends stopping by to see me and had to wait until they had time in their schedule. I could no longer get on my scooter and go shopping. If I wanted something from the store, I had to wait until someone could go get it. What was worse, I had to ask for every little thing.

I feel like I have slipped down a notch on the slippery slope. Not so long ago I lived in a three-bedroom Victorian house, and now I live in a government-subsidized studio. In the same not-so-long-ago, I earned \$50,000 a year; now SSDI provides me \$15,000 a year. Not long ago, no one looked over my shoulder; now SSA tells me how much I can earn, an inaccessible world limits my mobility, and the senior residence has six pages of rules, single-spaced. I have control over very little now, except of course, how I feel about it.

Don't get me wrong, I am not sitting around waiting for the other shoe to drop. Most days I am happy, content, and appreciative of the delicious irony of it all. I am just acknowledging the slope. I know that staying present and dealing with reality instead of wishing things were different will help keep me from codgerville. I do call the Handivan service and get out. I swallow my pride and make the call to my friends to do things for me. The Buddhists teach us that dependence and independence are just different sides of the same coin. Maybe so.

Ageism, Hearing and Old Age Pride *By Jan Griesinger, 1942, with Mary M. Morgan, 1925*

"Old people don't like loud music--why do they have to be so cranky and behind the times?"
It's all our fault as usual--why don't we get with the program?

I am no expert on hearing, since mine is generally pretty standard, though I have to quickly put my fingers into my ears when a sound system emits a loud piercing screech. But I do know that aging changes the brain and that affects what our ears hear and how they work. So it's really not about what we "like" but how normal changes in our body affect us.

Being accused of crankiness frames the subject, making it appear as one of choice, not need, and if we would just "lighten up" we could accept the prevailing "norm."

Who sets the norms? Who decides how fast we should move when boarding or getting off a bus? Why do we apologize for gripping the handrail and watching very closely where we put our feet? At what age do we become "normal?" At what age do we become "abnormal?"

Getting old is, once again, something bad and something we should just "take control of." If we eat right, exercise, and play word games to stay alert, we should be just fine, meaning like those who are much younger, more powerful, and setting the standards for everyone else.

It's time to say "I am old, I am changing, and I am OK." Well, maybe a lot better than OK. Indeed, we're old and proud.



Pictures from the 2008 Gathering. Upper left: Coralee Webb, 1946 and Lanna Rodgers, 1941. Upper right: Linda Jupiter, 1944 and Kate Ullman, 1938. Middle left: Ardy Tibby, 1941, Jean Taylor, 1944, Alix Dobkin, 1949, and Diane Germain, 1942. Center: Mary Midgett, 1935. Middle right: Jean Taylor, 1944. Lower left: Ivy Bottini, 1926. Lower center: Jane Herman, 1948 and Sandy Tate, 1935. Lower right: Sandra Tignor, 1937. Photos by Cathy Cade

Lesbian Grandmothers' Group

By Linda Quinlan 1947

One Saturday afternoon, as I was working on a poem about my grandmother, I thought how nice it would be to have a Lesbian Grandmothers' Group. I was a Lesbian grandmother myself and I knew there had to be others in the community (Montpelier, VT), so I put together a small blurb about the group and advertised in the local papers.

I can proudly say, three years later, that the Lesbian Grandmothers' Group has been very successful. We are primarily a social group, though over the past few years we have also become a source of emotional support. Our activities have included kayaking, camping, dinners, bowling, sleigh-riding, corn maze walking, and spending weekends at a bed and breakfast.

Some of our grandchildren have been involved in activities, but mostly they just march with us at Gay Pride in Burlington.

For more information about the group, or to start a new chapter of the Lesbian Grandmothers' Group in your community, please e-mail bellinghambell2003@yahoo.com.



The LGBT Grandparents Gathering By Alix Dobkin, 1940

On November 15th, Stonewall Communities Lifelong Learning Institute produced a "Gathering of LGBT Grandparents" at Wheelock College in Boston. Of the 27 participants, 19 were Lesbians.

We were warmly welcomed by Alice, Sue, and Dave of Stonewall Communities, who introduced Nancy Orel, Associate Professor and Director of the Gerontology Program at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Her PowerPoint presentation covered her groundbreaking studies of LGBT grandparents and the consequences of being or not being out to their children and grandchildren. Apparently, no other studies have been done on this subject. Among many other findings, the most interesting point to me was that grandparents' being out improved the relationships of grandchildren with their parents.

We broke up into small groups to discuss the suggested topics: What is the best thing about being an LGBT grandparent? Describe the conversation you had with your children about what your relationship with your grandchildren was going to be. What has been your experience coming out as a grandparent to your LGBT friends?

I injected OLOC into the discussion as often as I dared. I gave out much information and took

a bunch of e-mail addresses for a mailing list. No one expressed an interest in forming an OLOC chapter. However, I did arrange a Boston appearance for Feb. 8th, 2009, at a community center, where I hope to get one started.

The many co-sponsors of the event testify to the breadth of mainstream support for this day long event and include AARP, Fenway Health, Central Boston Elder Services, the Hebrew Senior Life, Brookline Council on Aging/Senior Center, the Massachusetts Association of Older Adults, the Northampton Council on Aging Senior Center, the Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services, the Executive Directors of the Massachusetts Association of Older Americans, Inc. The Osher Lifelong Institute, National Resource Center, also took part.

Nothing would disturb and ruffle the patriarchal powers more than happy, old, vocal women demanding change and spreading their knowledge and wisdom like an infection to the younger generations.
from Vol. 37 #4 *off our backs*, "Permanent Optimism" by Dawn McCaslin

Creating Change *By Jan Griesinger, 1942*

OLOC was represented at the 20th annual conference of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force called "Creating Change" by former Co-Director Shaba Barnes and me (current Co-Director) as well as Colorado OLOC veterans Carmah Lawler and Kathy Glass and other chapter members. It was held January 28 through February 1 in Denver, with over 2000 attending.

For the first time, OLOC was involved in the planning of the full day session on aging and ageism. Both Shaba and I spoke during the event, and I started the practice of stating your age when you introduce yourself. It caught on. In fact, one Old Dyke said at the end that she praised OLOC for this idea and that she plans to do this in writing workshops she attends where she has come out as a Lesbian but will now proudly announce her age.

I also spoke on a panel called "Gay and Gray: Advocating for the Rights of LGBT Seniors." We both attended many other workshops and were outspoken about OLOC's goals and activities. Over 200 copies of OLOC's newsletter were distributed, as well as many brochures and business cards, to delegates attending from across the country. OLOC member Emily Lewis led a workshop on "Project Visibility," using the wonderful video featuring LGBT seniors in retirement and nursing homes speaking out on their experiences and needs.

Sixteen Old Lesbians, all but four of us were from Colorado, attended the OLOC caucus and enjoyed a good dinner and wonderful conversation together.

It was a very successful instance of national OLOC visibility among LGBT activists. Next year we are lobbying for an Old Lesbian as a keynote speaker, which has yet to happen.

OLOC Approves

Sharon Raphael, our Research Gatekeeper, has approved another study. If you are on our e-mail list, you may already have completed it. If this is new to you and you have computer access, the researchers would be grateful if you would complete it.

Lesbians 55 and Over: A National Online Survey We are conducting a study on the experiences and needs of Old Lesbians. There is very little current information and we hope that you will help us inform researchers, practitioners, and policy makers about your needs. Paige Averett and Carol Jenkins, East Carolina University School of Social Work. To participate, go to oloc.org and click on the survey link on the opening page.

Contact Sharon Raphael, 1941, OLOC Research Gatekeeper, before doing or participating in research about Old Lesbians. Nothing About Us Without Us. Write to her care of the OLOC post office box or e-mail her at: smraphael@aol.com

OLOC Media Library

The Media Library List has been updated. We've added an section about OLOC Herstory with videos provided by our videographer, Cristina Vegas. These are wonderful DVDs about the Gathering in Los Angeles in the summer of 2008 plus some from events as far back as 1989 that are full of wisdom, laughs, and glimpses of many Old Lesbians. To see the list, check the Resources section of oloc.org, or send an SASE to Susan for a copy. Susan Wiseheart, HC 73 Box 169C Drury MO 65638

Publications

Rain and Thunder: A Radical Feminist Journal of Discussion and Activism has lots of wonderful articles and ideas for activism that OLOC members would love. The fall 2008 issue, their 10th anniversary issue, printed a poem by OLOC member Marj Norris from Buffalo. Their address is PO Box 674, Northampton, MA 01061, www.rainandthunder.org

Sinister Wisdom is seeking donations (tax deductible) so we can give free copies of our upcoming issue #78 Old Lesbians/Dykes II to Lesbians 80 years and older. Make checks payable to Sinister Wisdom, Inc. and mail to: Fran Day, Editor, Sinister Wisdom Journal, P. O. Box 1180, Sebastopol, CA 95473-1180

Ageism Is the Hatred of the Old, in Our Case , Old Women

Quotes from the discussion led by Marge Nelson. **Compiled by Simi Litvak, 1942**

"There has to be a balance between encouraging people to take steps to improve their health and situation vs. blaming them for not doing it."

"Recent New Yorker article 'Mine is larger than yours' is about boomers competing to see who lives the longest."

"Autopsies of old people show a higher than 2% prevalence of Alzheimer's." (Marge pointed out that just because you forget something does NOT mean you are headed for Alzheimers)

"We can do a lot to improve our health. I was told I just have to accept my limitations as a person with a brain injury. I ignored what the doctors and my family said. Met other people with brain injuries. We challenged each other and developed ways for each of us to work on our brains. It's hard work. You can't be lazy and accept how you are."

"Even with a progressive disease, there are ways to improve one's health. It is damaging to give up and accept the dictates of the medical profession."

"Western medicine dictates to us, but healing is individual. There is no universal, just the universal possibility for healing."

"We have lots of choices when we age. The judgments of family and friends come from fear. They can box us into feeling that what has happened to us means the end."

"In the past, doctors said brains don't develop and bodies don't increase strength and function as we age. That assumption has been proved wrong. We are the first generation to grow older without that assumption. No one knows what will happen."

"Those who don't exercise and get stimulated go downhill."

"Medication affects consciousness and memory. As we grow older, we may have more difficulty resisting the effects of medications. We have lots of questions regarding the use of drugs."

"Ageism affects health care. 'Granny Bashing', a new AARP term, means withholding care because we are seen as too old or not worth the effort. People of color get the least and poorest health care."

(Part two of a three-part series about the Bay Area OLOC Retreat Discussion on Ageism – MAY 2008 - from the Bay Area Chapter Newsletter.)

Ageism in Action Old Ladies Blamed

By Mary Henry, 1939

In the Oct. 22, 2008 issue of *Newsweek*, I came across an opinion article titled "Bad? It's Just a Flesh Wound." The question raised by the article is: Who are the 10% of the public in surveys saying they are "satisfied" by the way things are going in our country?

In searching for an understanding of who might be in that 10%, the journalist says: "The obvious guess is that the responders [of the survey] misunderstood the question. So maybe a few old ladies thought the nice *Newsweek* pollster said, 'Are you sad it's tied?' And they said, 'yes' because they thought their guy had a big lead."

Making a joke at the expense of old women by stereotyping us as confused and hard of hearing is ageist, sexist and fails to be very funny.

A Charitable IRA rollover can be used to make an outright gift to OLOC that excludes that income from taxes. If you have an IRA and you are taking the income out of it that is required after age 70 1/2, consider using it as a gift to OLOC. Contact Jan for more information: jan@oloc.org or call 740-448-6424

OLOCers in the News

Winnie Adams, 1942, and Barbara Moore, 1942, two OLOCers living at Alapine, were featured in a recent New York Times story about Lesbian Land that appeared in the newspaper on Feb 1-2, 2009, and on the internet at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/01/fashion/01womyn.html?_r=1

OLOC's 2009 Regional Gathering "Making Connections"
July 17-19, 2009 in Columbia South Carolina

Registration Form

Date _____

Name _____ Age _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____



Phone _____ E-mail _____



Cost: Registration for the Gathering includes Saturday night dinner & dance and Sunday brunch.

Pre-registration for the Gathering only: \$150 before April 30, 2009,

\$160 before May 31 \$170 before June 30.

After July 1st it is on-site only and \$180.

Add \$20.00 for optional Bus Tour and check here _____

Circle your amount.

Some financial assistance is available for Gathering Registration only. To apply, use the form in this Reporter. (see reverse side of this form)

Donation to the Financial Assistance Fund. Enter amount _____

To pay by PayPal or credit card through PayPal (you do not need a PayPal account for credit card payment) go to oloc.org and click the donation button. Be sure to spell out what your payment covers.

Check here if you **do not** want to be included on the attendee list to be given to those in attendance _____

Meal Preference: _____ Meat
 _____ Fish
 _____ Vegetarian

Mail completed registration and financial assistance applications to:



Myra Brahms, 235 E. 80th St. 3A, New York City, New York, 10075
Phone: 212-535-9633 E-mail: MYRABRAHMS@aol.com

Hotel Accommodation: Reservations must be made directly with the hotel:

Clarion Hotel, 1615 Gervasis Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29201, 803-771-8711

Please make your own reservation. Be sure to let them know that you are with OLOC for the best rate.

OLOC Regional Gathering Program (more details coming soon)

The program will begin July 17, Friday afternoon at 1:00 PM and continue through Sunday afternoon.

Friday afternoon at 1:00 PM: Registration, hospitality, program begins, Meet and Greet, Music

Saturday morning: Plenary, small group discussion and workshops,

Saturday night: dinner & dance, singer

Sunday morning: Brunch, Guest speaker Mandy Carter.

Sunday afternoon: Optional bus tour. \$20.00

Financial Assistance Form

OLOC is committed to making it possible for every Old Lesbian who wants to attend an OLOC South East Regional Gathering to be able to do so. If you live and/or are a member of an OLOC Chapter east of the Mississippi River who is unable to pay all or part of the registration fee, please fill out this form and return it to us no later than June 1, 2009.

OLOC's 2009 Regional Gathering "Making Connections" July 17-19, 2009 in Columbia South Carolina

Step 1. Tell us about you

Name _____ Date/Year of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone(s) _____ E-mail _____

How much assistance do you need with the registration fee? _____ How much can you pay? _____

Is there anything else you'd like the Financial Assistance Committee to know about your situation?

Remember, we need to receive this form by June 1, 2009, at the latest.

The Registration Form (on the reverse of this page) has to be completed by everyone planning to attend. Extra copies of that form are available by emailing info@oloc.org, or downloading a copy from www.oloc.org. Mail both the financial assistance form and the registration form to:

Myra Brahms 235 E. 80th St. 3A NYC, NY 10075 — or call for questions: 212-535-9633

Chapter Contact List		Help form an OLOC chapter in one of our six regions. Contact susan@oloc.org or write to the Ohio address on the front of this newsletter.		
South West	Northern CO	Cindy Bear, 1947	303-258-9424	cindy@oloc.org
	Southern CA	Mina Meyer, 1940	562-420-3555	mina@oloc.org
	Coachella Valley/ Palm Springs, CA	Ruth Debra, 1944	760-318-6794	ruth@oloc.org
	San Francisco Bay 40 Camino Alto #12209	Joan Emerson, 1935 Mill Valley, CA 94941	415-388-5001	no e-mail available please call or write
North West	Portland, OR	Mary Beth Brindley, 1939	503-286-3575	marybeth@oloc.org
	Puget Sound/WA	Mary Henry, 1939	253-565-0829	mary@oloc.org
South East	(no chapters yet)	Carole Stoneking, 1937	803-748-9490	stonekg@aol.com
North East	New York City	Myra Brahms, 1942	212-535-9633	myra@oloc.org
	Hudson Valley NY	Alix Dobkin, 1940	845-679-7586	alix@oloc.org
So. Central	St. Louis, MO	Charlotte Ellis, 1943	314-962-2188	charlotte@oloc.org
North Central	Cleveland, OH	Judy Benson, 1946	216-227-1243	judb@cox.net
	OH except Cleveland	Sally Tatnall, 1937	216-862-0598	tatnalls@yahoo.com

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 all that apply:

_____ I am (we are) 60 or over and wish to subscribe (or renew) my (our) current subscription to *The Reporter*.
\$25 to \$50 for a one-year subscription.

_____ I (we) want to receive *The Reporter* 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 *The Reporter*.

_____ I (we) want to keep OLOC alive and strong. Please accept my (our) tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____ or my (our) pledge of \$ _____ / month.

_____ I (we) want to purchase the *Travel Directory*. Enclosed is \$5 for costs.

_____ I (we) want my (our) names to be included in the *Travel Directory*.

_____ I (we) would like to give a \$25 gift subscription to the name(s) listed below.

_____ Please send a sample of *The Reporter* to the name(s) listed below.

OLOC Endowment

An additional way to help OLOC grow is through the OLOC Endowment. It was created to receive bequests from OLOC Subscribers and Supporters. The bequest can be an outright gift listed in a will or a percentage of assets.

A copy of the OLOC Endowment brochure is available by calling 888-706-7506 or by emailing info@oloc.org.

Also Available:

OLOC T-Shirts • Denim Shirts

Sweatshirts • And More!

Cloisonné OLOC Lapel Pins, Buttons

(e-mail, check OLOC.org or write for details)

Date of birth enables us to keep accurate Subscriber/Supporter records for grants and other purposes. Your ethnicity and disability status is requested as part of our ongoing awareness of and commitment to diversity. OLOC's mailing lists are for OLOC's use only and not available to any other persons or organizations.

Name _____ Additional Name _____

Date of Birth _____ Additional Date of Birth _____

Ethnicity _____ Ethnicity _____

Disability _____ Disability _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Out of United States? If so, additional address: _____

Telephone(s) _____ / _____

E-mail(s) _____ / _____

New Subscription _____ or Renewal _____

I prefer: a print copy via U.S. Mail _____ or a PDF via e-mail _____

Skills you can offer OLOC: _____



OLOC
PO Box 5853
Athens, OH 45701

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID
ATHENS, OH
PERMIT NO. 82

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

If your label says 2009.03
(meaning 2009 March) or earlier,
then your subscription has ended
and it is time to renew.



E-mails

If you have not received any e-mail from OLOC in the past few months, we may not have your correct e-mail address. If you have changed it, please send it to susan@oloc.org so we can keep you informed. Thanks.