

The OLOHP Insider

#54, June-July 2023

The Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project



Margaret Checking In

Hope you all are doing well. On our end, we're continuing to move right along, telling each other that if we simply follow the proverbial "one foot in front of the other" adage, we will eventually get things done. You'd think that we'd be pleased each time we could check something off our towering to-do list, and most of the time you'd be right, but not always.

Case in point was the celebration of Arden's life, a Zoom event. It took place on April 4, which would have been her 92nd birthday. It took a considerable amount of time and energy to put it together, and yet once it was done and off our to-do list, instead of relief, it invoked a feeling of melancholy. It wasn't that Arden was further away than she had been during the weeks leading up to the event, but completing that one task seemed to shift the world a little more off-kilter, almost adding an urgency to all that Arden had been working on and that we'd pledged to complete. For anyone who missed the Celebration, or anyone who would like to watch it again, there are details on how to access a recording of that event on page 2.

Most of you know Arden and I had established an ending date of April 2023 for the seeking out and conducting more interviews for the Project. Here we are in June and despite April having come and gone, we are, nevertheless, still working on the backlog of last-minute requests to be included. As of right now, we have at least a dozen more interviews pending,

and we are finding it hard to say no when another opportunity arises to add yet one more story to our collective Herstory. As you might imagine, doing dozens of new interviews over a short period of time means we've now got an impressive backlog of audio recordings that must be transcribed, but we're starting to make significant progress on that front. As interviewing has slowed down we have a bit more time to work on transcribing as well as various other tasks that were set aside during these past months.

A few weeks ago several of us had the opportunity to hear the Emma's Revolution in concert. As they sang these lyrics, we couldn't help but think of Arden and *The OLOHP Insider* which we've now sent out for more than a dozen years:

Has anybody seen the choir?
I want to preach to the converted
I want to see them rising up
Don't wanna see one gaze averted
Don't wanna have to prove a point
Just wanna know they're on my side
Just wanna smile and inspire
Has anybody seen the choir?

You all were part of Arden's choir. She, and all of us continuing her work, take comfort in knowing you understand the work she was doing, and that you are on our side!

Margaret

OLOHP: Gathering the Unique Life Stories of Lesbians 70 and Older

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Arden's Celebration Recording

Here is a note from Barb K. with details on how to view a recording of Arden's Celebration:

We have put together what amounts to a large video of the entire event. Because Arden's wonderful musical artist friends generously granted permission for their songs to play during the loop of photos and webinar admin information, we have kept that 15 minute pre-webinar piece. We also added comments posted on Arden's [legacy.com](#) obituary page from the Brian-College Station Eagle. The total length of this video is just under 100 minutes (1 hour, 40 minutes), please plan your viewing accordingly. Below you'll find an instruction page with the URL link to watch the video. Please read all of it carefully before clicking on the URL link.

Some computer software may generate a security notice; we have vetted and tested the recording, please click "Allow" to continue to the video. Please notice the video volume setting when the video opens, it may be muted/off. Follow the instructions page. You may scroll through the video to skip portions, if you desire. Remember there are musical tributes to Arden during the loop lead-in, as well as at the very end when the comments from [legacy.com](#) are displayed. We are thankful for the gifts of song from the talented artists: Gaye Adegbalola, Tret Fure, Renee Janski, Deidra McCalla and Lucie Blue Tremblay.

Again, my utmost appreciation and massive thank yous to the team who worked long and hard to build the webinar, donate their webinar license usage and construct a smooth flowing tribute to our beloved Arden Eversmeyer. I believe we all felt Arden's presence as the Celebration came together. In loving Sisterhood, with hugs, Barb

The URL below may not be live in this newsletter, or it may not work with your setup -- as a precaution, we'll also provide this tiny URL: <https://tinyurl.com/2nkd6v9y> The link goes to a copy of the video in the OLOHP Dropbox. Problems? Reach out to us.

Two More 90th Birthdays!

The two photos below came to us recently and they were just too good not to share. Both women shared their stories with us.

Gini Morton, interviewed at age 70 by Arden

From a piece Gini wrote:
My mother taught me how to plant potatoes. Even today I do not understand why or how a piece of potato can turn into something to eat if it's planted in the earth but, if you leave it on top of the earth, it turns into garbage. Whenever I feel as if the struggle is about to get the best of me and take me under, I tend to think of my mother. In order to survive I bring back the memory of my dear, sweet mother's planting and harvesting rituals with the potato pieces and in a short while I emerge a whole and healthy person, My Mother gave me the power to be who-ever and what-ever I wanted to be in life and I am eternally grateful to her for the gift of self.



Kathy Knowles, interviewed at 82 by Gloria S.

When her interviewer pointed out that Kathy seemed to be a risk-taker, her reply was: *It's a pretty firm belief of mine that unless you are willing to be vulnerable, nothing good is going to happen. It doesn't mean that everything that happens will be good. It just means that nothing good is going to happen unless you let it happen. I have more than once told people that these are the happiest years of my life. I have never before in my life known so many people that I like so much, really loved, cared for, respected, delighted to be with. Happy to see. It's great!*



At a recent 90th BDay party, every table sported at least 4 or 5 pictures of Kathy from her childhood on. The photos had been provided for her Herstory and made for great conversation!



How to Watch Archived Celebration

- 1**
Click on this URL to take you to the registration page:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/4742523934617289475>
- 2**
Fill in your first name, last name and email address. Then select the Register button. It should really say "Unlock Video" because that's what it does.
You are not really registered which means you need to fill out the form each time you want to watch.
- 3**
Video should start to play automatically. If you don't see it play, click on the play arrow.
- 4**
Touch the bottom edge of the video to reveal the video controls. Tap or click on the sound icon to unmute sound.

★ First Fifteen Minutes
First 15 minutes contains a loop of slides that were displayed prior to the event start. However, since it contains four wonderful songs from four wonderful musicians, we have included these minutes for you to enjoy.

Yes, Stuff Happens, But Even Then...

We've probably all watched a foot race where everything was going smoothly, then right before the finish line, the runner who was doing great just up and falls for no obvious reason. Well, in a way, we did the same thing. After successfully recording at least 50 interviews being conducted on Zoom, we managed to skip one important step: to say Record! Stomachs sank as the interview ended and when we went to push End Recording, we realized we'd never started it. Our apologies and our thanks go out to Dottie and her friend Laura for their patience in allowing us a do-over. Looking for a bright side, the do-over was not only easier, but because we'd done that practice run, things went more smoothly. Having had time to think about what all was shared in the first attempt let us know where to ask the follow up questions, or when to tread lightly. Yes, we know stuff happens, but that doesn't mean we have to like it. Instead, even this late in the interviewing game, we try to learn from it.

Volunteering... It's a Good Thing

Margaret here. I've been thinking a lot of late about the practice of volunteering. There is no end to places that would benefit from your donating your time. In fact, learning how to say no can be a challenge. For me, the key to feeling satisfied with what I was volunteering to do was a bit complicated. Of course, I wanted to find what spoke to me – it's much easier to donate your time to something you believe in and that you feel really matters. But it's also a matter of working on something that matches your abilities. I also think you need to look for balance. That can mean taking on several volunteer tasks that require different skills, exercising different parts of your brain. And lastly, I think it's important that whatever you take on, no matter how important or pressing the work is, you make sure it doesn't take precedence over life with the people closest to you.

In my case, I didn't know what I was looking for. I'm not even sure I was looking. But I met a woman who knew clearly what she wanted to spend her time doing. I met her at a meeting I wasn't even supposed to be attending. That was Arden. My involvement started small and it went from there. I'd found something that spoke to me... or maybe it found me.

I was lucky. Not only did working on the Project interest me, but my offer to help was welcome. It drew on skills I had, allowed me room to hone those skills, and encouraged me to learn things I'd never thought about doing.

Best of all, the Project also spoke to Mary, my most important person, and to quite a few of my friends. Or at least, that's what my friends tell me. It could be they roll their eyes behind my back when I start going on, once again, about a story I'm working on, but I'd prefer to think they don't!



Messages from Friends



Before I even open the latest *Insider*, I want to thank you and everyone else for putting the newsletter together and for sending it to me.

Betsy T.

The OLOHP is Woman-treasuring as our stories will be known and can never be extinguished. Thank you for the gift of yourselves!

Kathy P.

Thanks. Margaret, I got a copy, then got it again, so read it again! Thank you.

Rand H.

When transcribing a piece of audio from the interview with Annalee, I realized my regret for not having known her.

Aganita V.

I thank you so much for your excellent work on my personal Herstory Project. I am very honored to be entered in the records of Old Lesbian Herstories! As I look through it, I continue to smile and be very pleased with the outcome. You interpreted the photo/history relationships beautifully and I thank you for your care and effort in doing so. Again, a big hug and gratitude for your work.

Tiska B

We've recently learned of the passing of quite a few incredible women who were a part of the OLOHP. We'll do our best to share a bit about all of them over the next few issues. To start us out, here are a few.

Joann Jones, born 1932
Interviewed in 2006 by Arden

It didn't take long for me to recognize that I was falling in love with Bev. I didn't fall out of love with my husband. I just fell in love with her. He said that I would have to forgo my relationship with her or he would file for divorce and take the custody of the children, which was quite a threat. At that time I didn't feel that I had any choice in the matter other than to continue with the recognition that I was gay, and I had not dealt with that all my life. I hadn't recognized before what those feelings meant. As our psychologist put it, it moved a simmering pot off the back burner onto the front burner of the stove. There was no way of getting around the fact that I needed to deal with who I was.



Jackie Mirken, born 1931
Interviewed in 2004 by Arden

My first awareness was my first time sleeping with a woman. I knew from sometime in my teens that I would form these crushes on older women. My relationship with my mother was so difficult that I, as a junior psychologist, convinced myself that what I couldn't get from my mother, I was going to get from these other women. I had just enough information to make a diagnosis. But at the same time it always seemed to me that there was something different here. These feelings are so intense, you know. But those were the days when there wasn't anybody to talk to. No information available. Even after I got involved with this woman, there was no information. All the words that I didn't even know at that time.



Jan Griesinger, born 1942
interviewed in 2015 by Kathy Prezbindowski

I was married for four years. That's all. But then, after that, when I was in seminary, there was another man in my life, and we spent two or three years together. Then I heard about the job here in Athens. When I was offered the job and it was time to move here, the person in my life that I knew I wanted in my life was not this man that had been around for a while. It was a woman that had co-founded Dayton Women's Liberation, Mary Morgan. She just died four months ago and I am very, very unhappy without her in my life.



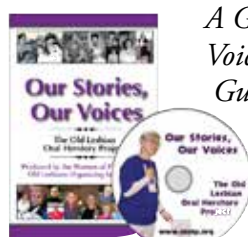
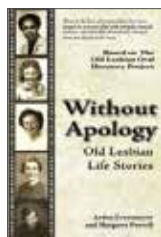
Elsie Markley, born 1932
Interviewed in 2015 by Barb Kucharczyk



I liked men, I still like men. I don't want to sleep with them, but I like them. The first time I had any inkling that I might be different? I had a job in a furniture factory and one of the girls that worked there, her name was Jean Lynn. And we became good buddies and she was gay – well, I didn't know that but she was my first girlfriend. And that's how I found out "Oh! Hey. You know what?" Let me see. That was probably around 1950.

Gail Winston, born 1937 *Interviewed in 2013 by Sherry Fulton*

Bars. In those days, that was the only place you could meet anybody. Although I didn't drink that much, that was the meeting place. Everything in those days was so clandestine, you know? You had to be very careful. You didn't broadcast anything. Even in the Bay Area. I was involved with San Francisco Pride but that was years and years later.



A Gift of Age, Without Apology, and the DVD Our Stories, Our Voices: The Old Lesbian Oral Herstory Project (and the Companion Guide to the DVD) can be ordered at www.olohp.org

Thank You to the Kellett Foundation
for your support of the OLOHP!

