

# OWL

The Voice of Midlife and Older Women



## San Francisco Chapter Newsletter

Web Site: [www.owlsf.org](http://www.owlsf.org)  
Email: [owlsanfran@juno.com](mailto:owlsanfran@juno.com)

July-August, 2007

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**OWL is the only national membership organization to focus exclusively on critical issues facing women as they age. We work together to improve the status and quality of life for midlife and older women through national, state, and local networks.**

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July OWL SF Meeting  
**ANNUAL POTLUCK PATIO PARTY**  
July 28, 2007  
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Ahh....summertime! This is traditionally one of the favorite chapter “programs”. It’s pretty nice to sit in the sun (usually), eating, and socializing with other OWLs on the patio of Shirley Sidd's North Beach home. ***Please bring a dish for six, to share.*** There will **not** be an auction (as there was in past years).

Please RSVP the office at (415-989-4422). Space is limited to the first 28 callers; upon acceptance, we will return your call with address and directions.

## ELDER ABUSE.....BE AWARE!!!

At our June 23 meeting, Helen Karr, elder abuse specialist with the District Attorney's Office reported on the highlights of a week-long Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse Conference, "From Detection to Prosecution". The facts: Since January 1, 2006, every six minutes a Baby Boomer is turning 60. California is the most senior-populated state with 3.6 million aged 65+. By the year 2020, 20% of the U.S. populations will be 60+. Seniors are targeted: What can each of us do to prevent elder abuse?

### What is Elder Abuse? It includes:

*Abandonment* (desertion or "willful forsaking" of an elder person by a caregiver).

*Financial Abuse* (taking or keeping an elder's property for "wrongful use" or "with intent to defraud").

*Isolation* (Preventing a senior from receiving mail or telephone calls or from contact with family and friends).

*False imprisonment* (Using violence, menace, fraud or deceit to hold a senior against his or her will).

*Psychological abuse* (behavior intended to create mental suffering, fear, agitation, confusion, etc)..

*Neglect* (failure to adequately assist senior with personal hygiene or provide food, clothing, shelter or medical care by a caretaker).

*Physical abuse* (assault, battery, unreasonable physical restraint, sexual assault, use of chemical restraint, etc).

These definitions are important and, unfortunately, many mandated reporters (including physicians) consider only physical abuse in assessing the need to report abuses to Adult Protective Services (APS). Criminal neglect has not been looked at as elder abuse. The police are also

mandated reporters of abuse and should be called in cases of where a cross-report would be helpful.

Helen emphasized that only a small percentage of seniors require long-term nursing home care; abuse is more prevalent in for-profit nursing homes; and abuse is often due to lack of proper training (too expensive), new and temporary employees during holidays, stressed-out employees, and the occasional "pathological offender". Nursing homes need more and better-trained staff, and better background checks. Any abuse of nursing home residents should be considered "violent". Abuses should be reported to the ombudsman who is required and designated in each facility. The ombudsman will investigate, interview the patient and intervene.

A short film on financial abuse raised the need to be aware of unsolicited phone calls, investment scams and "you have won" cash prizes. Banks are now required to report financial abuses to Adult Protective Services.

Several OWL members raised questions regarding abuses regarding housing, landlords being unresponsive, etc. Phone #211 was suggested as a human service response to senior problems. (I tried it....it works).

What can we do? OWL has agreed to participate in the Court Watch. Volunteers will be present at court sessions involving elder abuse cases; to be a "presence in the court". It's an opportunity to learn and make a difference. For more information, call Marcia, 415-661-8019

*Marcia Soffer*

## SAN FRANCISCO OWL BOARD

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Newsletter – The Committee,  
(415) 989-4422

**SF OWL Board meetings:** first Monday of the month, 3-5 pm, 870 Market St.; *Check website/ OWL office for the location*  
Visitors welcome.

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**Ready or Not?**  
***Preparing for a Disaster***

The Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989 was a wakeup call for many of us, but the Katrina hurricane and flood revealed how particularly devastating a disaster can be for the elderly and infirm. At the May monthly OWL meeting, a representative of the American Red Cross, Ms. Nicole Combs-Walker, presented some guidelines for disaster preparation, whether you are evacuated or stay in your home. Assemble three days' supply of essential items in an easy-to-carry container. Medical supplies include: a first-aid kit; prescription medicines; list of medications (including dosage); list of any allergies; extra eyeglasses and hearing aid batteries; list of the style and serial numbers of medical devices (such as pacemakers, medical insurance and Medicare cards); and list of doctors and relatives/friends who should be notified if you are injured. General supplies include: a battery powered radio; flashlights with extra batteries; change of clothing; rain gear and sturdy shoes; blanket or sleeping bag; and, personal hygiene supplies. Store one gallon of water per day per person in your household; non-perishable ready-to-eat nutritious foods; special diet foods; pet food and supplies; and a manual can opener.

A complete guide for disaster preparation and response—including specifics for an earthquake—is on the Internet at [www.72hours.org](http://www.72hours.org), and in a booklet which can be obtained by calling San Francisco Office of Emergency Services at (415)503-2072.

Seniors and persons with disabilities need to take extra precautions in disaster planning. Designate someone to check on you in an emergency to help with evacuation or shelter-in-place (if you have three people to check on you, even better—in case they are all not available to help).

San Francisco has a Disaster Registry Program (DRP) for seniors and persons with disabilities. DRP maintains a listing of seniors and disabled persons who would like to be checked on following a disaster. Call (415) 355-2632 for more information.

You can receive text-based emergency information if you have a wireless device such as a cell phone, pager, PDA, BlackBerry or e-

mail account. Sign up for the AlertSF Notification System at [www.72hours.org](http://www.72hours.org).

If you receive assistance from a home health agency or in-home support provider, find out how the provider will respond in an emergency. Designate backup or alternative providers that you can contact in case of emergency.

If you use assistive devices (hearing aids, cane, wheel chair, for example) make sure they are accessible near your bed at night. Keep a whistle handy and use it if you need to attract attention.

Make an emergency health information list for your refrigerator door or other places where rescuers can find it. Include your name, address, telephone number, local and out-of-area emergency contact people's names and phone numbers, your primary care physician and phone number, health insurance carrier, medications and dosages taken, allergies and other special needs. Keep a copy of this list with your evacuation supplies as well.

If you would like to be trained as a disaster preparation volunteer, contact one of the following organizations: American Red Cross at (415) 427-8000; Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT—free training by the SF Fire Department) at (415) 970-2022; or Neighborhood Watch (crime prevention education) at (415) 553-1984.

*Rosemary Bacy*

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**Thesamary Johnson OWL-CA President**

Thesamary Johnson (1936–2007) joined OWL in 1980, when she saw that its goals meshed with hers as widow raising nine children on Social Security.

At the time of her husband's death in 1971, she had a high school education and no job experience. She worked as a waitress and eventually earned two college degrees. With OWL, Thesamary became an outspoken advocate for women's issues of universal health care, Medicare, nursing home reform and Social Security. She served as a member of the OWL National Board and was president of OWL/California. Her untimely death came only a few days after she led the OWL/CA legislative day in May. As she often told her children, "To

effect real change, you have to get involved and stand up for what you believe in.”

Rosemary Bacy

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**Residential Care:  
Affordable for Seniors?**

Some older residents of San Francisco have the security of rent-controlled apartments that are limited to annual cost of living increases. However, elders who live in licensed residential care facilities are, by state law, exempt from rent control; they face annual rent increases of 5%, 6% or more—a hardship for many living on pensions, annuities and Social Security. Seniors forced out of residential care facilities because of increased costs may lose quality care, and be forced to move some distance from their families and communities.

Sunrise at Golden Gate Park, a licensed residential care facility, is located at the old Shriners' Hospital Building on 19th Avenue; residents there are leading an effort to amend state law so that such facilities can be brought under rent control. On May 17, 2007, representatives of many senior organizations addressed the Rules Committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors; about a dozen Sunrise residents described hardships created by annual rent increases; they were joined by spokespersons from: OWL; Gray Panthers; United Educators of SF (Retired Division); California Alliance of Retired Americans; and other groups.

The Rules Committee members-Supervisors Tom Ammiano, Aaron Peskin and Sean Elsbernd-passed a resolution asking the delegation to the state legislature-Leland Yee, Carole Migden, Mark Leno and Fiona Ma-to sponsor legislation repealing the rent control exception for senior residential care facilities. The following week, the full board passed the resolution, 11-0.

This effort to protect seniors at residential care facilities has just begun, and should result in many subsequent advocacy activities.

Rosemary Bacy

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**ASK AN OWL**

What are some other things the letters “O” “W” “L” could represent, which might describe us, other than “Older Women’s League”? Two members especially “got into this”: Phyl Smith and her thesaurus and Ruth Strassner, who got suggestions from her whole family.

To start us off, Phyl Smith developed a list of some possibilities and some suggestions:

*ole' ogle omen oops other organize  
offer offering omnipotent only onward  
outstanding over open outward  
opportunity overall optimist options own  
owner*

wow we way whiz whole wonderful  
wonder word work walk world wise win  
winning won wit witty worth worthy wind  
will won't way(s) wage wand wave wax  
wane women week want what why?  
*look leaders light lighten lightly lively  
laudable leap learn legion letters level  
liberty life lives lucky like limber  
limitless link lovely loop lolly luster land  
lane lead luck lore lot love later lustrous*  
Offering Wonderful Leaders  
Omnipotent, Wise, Linking  
Outstanding Women Linking  
Ole' Women Leaders !  
Our Worthy Living  
Onward We Lead  
Oops! We Leaped

Ruth Strassner's family members:

Her children:

Obstinate With Lace  
Obstinate Women's League

Her grandchildren:

Oasis of wisdom and Learning  
Onions Without Layers

And Ruth herself:

Only Wild Ladies  
Obviously Whimsical Ladies

Catherine Pinkas:

Older, Wiser Leaders

Nan McGuire:

Organized Women Leaders

And Sarah Goldman concludes in down-to-earth fashion:

“I like Older Women's League. Don't go much for cute.”

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**NEXT “ASK AN OWL”**

We hope every OWL has a chance to see “SICKO”, the Michael Moore movie, stressing the need for universal health care. **What were you impressions of the movie?**

Please send responses to [kpiccagli@gmail.com](mailto:kpiccagli@gmail.com) or by regular mail to the office.

### Universal Health Care

At this writing: SB 840—the single payer universal health care program—has passed in the Senate, but its companion financing legislation is stalled in committee. SB 840 now moves to the house. (The Perata and Nuñez bills do not provide the universal single payer system supported by OWL, but they *would* increase insurance coverage. The Perata bill passed in the senate, and the Nuñez bill passed in the house; a compromise bill merging the two has been developed and will work its way through the Legislature. Governor Schwarzenegger's plan has not been introduced in the Legislature.)

#### Related OWL SF Activities

The Women's Working Group for Universal Health Care—a coalition to which we belong—held an “educational summit” on May 10. Most of the summit focused on educating over 100 women (and a few men) about what “universal health care” really means. It was emphasized that health care is particularly important to women, since they are the largest consumers and make most health care decisions for their families. The keynote speaker, Tangerine Brigham, also included discussion of the new SF plan.

Several SF OWL's (and more from Sacramento) have gone to two hearings on SB 840 in the legislature at the state capitol. I also went to hear Michael Moore at the capitol where he was an outspoken and inspiring advocate for universal health care. (I eagerly await his movie, “Sicko,” which I hope you've all seen by the time this goes to print.)

*Kathie Piccagli*

#### OWL/CA Mother's Day–2007

On May 10, Rosemary Bacy, Jacqui Snowden and I represented our chapter in the OWL-CA Annual Mother's Day/Legislative Day program at the state capitol in Sacramento. We were among 50 OWL members from various chapters around the state. (As you may recall, each year we send a Mother's Day message, in the form of postcards signed by constituents, to the governor and members of the state assembly and state senate. This year's message was focused on universal health care.)

Acting as a team, we three visited the offices of our own representatives: Senator Carole Migden, Assemblymen Mark Leno and Leland Yee. Both houses were in session—so we were unable to speak to them directly—but their staff people confirmed that these legislators are supporters of Senator Sheila Kuehl's SB 840, Universal Health Care legislation.

In a discussion with the administrative aide of a republican assembly member from southern California, we learned that the representative was opposed to this particular legislation, but his aide agreed that our health care system needs renovation; this conversation was valuable because it gave us a unique chance to talk about the legislation and publicize OWL.

In addition to the task of delivering the Mother's Day cards, we were treated to a speaking program dealing with health issues, and lunch; this was all presided over by OWL-CA President Theresamary Johnson, in her usual exuberant, passionate manner. Just two days after this wonderful experience, Theresamary—who approached life with great enthusiasm—suffered an aortic aneurysm and died. We are all sorry for the loss, and extend our sympathies to her family. We must also agree that we would wish all our loved ones and ourselves such an ending. Imagine! Chairing a meeting of over 50 people, clearly enjoying the occasion, and then—two days later—nothing. So be it.

*Shirley Sidd*

#### Coming Up for Universal Health Care

This is a very active time for universal health care advocates. The mood is high—people want action, and we hardcore advocates feel like some progress may finally be made.

Following are just a few of many activities happening around universal health care, with many others surely to follow. If you are interested in any of these—or others not yet announced—please contact [kpiccagli@gmail.com](mailto:kpiccagli@gmail.com), or call the OWL office.

- 1) More chances to take the chartered bus to Sacramento for future hearings on SB 840 (may include advocating!). Watch for e-mail alerts.
- 2) August 8: San Francisco's day in the “One Care Now” 365 city-per-day campaign across California; includes rallying, educating.
- 3) July 11 & monthly thereafter: planning meetings of the Women's Working Group for Universal Health Care. UCSF Center of Excellence in Women's Health, 2356 Sutter St.

*For more information, email Kathie Piccagli at [kpiccagli@gmail.com](mailto:kpiccagli@gmail.com).*

## BULLETIN BOARD

### We are delighted to welcome these New Members!

Jeri Fetzer  
Jonee Levy  
Ann Ruud (*gift from sister DeLana Ruud,  
Auburn OWL*)  
Helen Sherman  
Niqui Bott (*also our volunteer keeper of the  
books!*)  
Judith Levy-Sender (*in memory of Betty Lou  
Treguboff*)  
Ellen Harris  
Phyllis Schneider (*returning member*)  
Muriel Brotsky  
Amy Hittner, PhD  
Frances Johns  
Bette Levin  
Carole Isaacs

### Book Group

Have you read a book recently that got you excited? Something that stimulated your thinking, whether you agreed with the author or not? A book you would like to talk about with other women? Then you would be welcome at the monthly OWL Book Group. On the other hand, if you haven't been reading much lately and need a little encouragement, you would be welcome too.

The Book Group was started with much enthusiasm after the planning meeting over a year ago. We have a core of faithful members, but we're at a point where new members would strengthen our group.

The July meeting will be on July 20 in "The Living Room" (Room 911 in the Flood Building, 870 Market Street near Powell), 12 noon to 2:00 pm. We will be discussing "Kingdom Coming: the Rise of Christian Nationalism", by Michelle Goldberg. Subject (according to SFPL): Christianity and politics, intelligent design, political uses of homophobia. 242 pages.

On Aug. 17, we will meet to discuss "The Greatest Story Ever Sold: the Decline and Fall of Truth from 9/11 to Katrina", by Frank Rich.

If you have any questions, please call Rosemary Bacý at 415-665-0380.

### OWL Garage Sale A Big Success!

OWL's first garage sale, fueled by donations from OWL members, was held on Saturday, May 11 at the home of Eunice Rosenberg, and netted an impressive \$693 for the OWL Treasury.

Special thanks to: Ruth Strassner & Nan McGuire (organization); Sheila Malkind (publicity); Gloria Garcia (for estate items); Lorraine Honig, Shirley Sidd & others (pricing); Mary Goode, Jane Swinerton & Rosemary Bacý (flyer posting); and Sheila Mullen (cash box). Rosemary Bacý has volunteered to hold another OWL garage sale at her house on Saturday, September 15; so please contact the OWL office if you can donate additional items, or are able to volunteer, for the next sale.

*Nan McGuire*

Member **Leda Sanford** is featured on the front page of a new online magazine [www.eldr.com](http://www.eldr.com) .

### Wanted

The next newsletter will be the September-October edition, and you are invited to submit articles! Articles should be sent to [kpiccagli@gmail.com](mailto:kpiccagli@gmail.com) by August 15.

# CALENDAR

(For a more complete and current listing, see the website: owlsf.org [click “calendar”])

- July 2            Monday – **OWL Board Meeting**, 3:00 pm, 870 Market St., Room 1185.
- July 20          Friday – **OWL Book Group**, 12:00-2:00 pm (see page 6)
- July 29          Saturday – **OWL Patio Party** (see page 1)
- Aug. 6           Monday – **OWL Board Meeting**, 3:00 pm, 870 Market
- Aug. 17          Friday – **OWL Book Group** (See page 6)

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## OWL/CA Council Meeting

The June Council Meeting was held on Sunday, June 3 at the Best Western Grosvenor Hotel at the SF Airport. Because of the sudden death of State President Theresamary Johnson, Vice President North, Rochelle Goldman and Vice President South, Evie Kosower shared the duties of chairing the meeting. Considering that this responsibility fell to them only within the past two weeks, the two women rose to the task with amazing ease.

As usual, one of the most important ideas on the agenda was the report from California Public Policy Director, Betty Perry, on the status of various pieces of legislation of interest currently in the State Legislature. As one of our Chapter representatives, I brought to our own Board meeting on June 4, requests to reach out to legislators on two particular bills, one dealing with strengthening Ellis Act restrictions and the other with aid in dying for the terminally ill. This is one more example of how OWLs continue to have a voice in important legislation.

The next meeting, the annual, will be held October 5, 6, and 7 in Sacramento. All OWLs are invited (and encouraged) to attend.

*Shirley Sidd*

Highlights: 1) Our Mother’s Day report, “Give “Em Health; Medicare-for-All Revisited”. This is an excellent report, issued with much publicity in May. (It is available through our office or online at [www.owl-national.org](http://www.owl-national.org).) 2) Extensive contributions in Mental Health for the aging population, including development and distribution of kits to chapters, 3) Ongoing major representation with women’s and aging groups. 4) Major participation in issues relating to OWL’s mission.

Please consider joining National Board members for a “Lobby Day on Capitol Hill”, at the end of October.

*Kathie Piccagli*

## COMING THIS FALL

### More Personal Health Programs

In the last newsletter, there was a report on the very successful “Heart Smart” program held at the end of April, which OWL SF co-sponsored with the Center for Excellence in Women’s Health at UCSF and The Transition Network. Since that time, we have met with our partner organizations to review evaluations of Heart Smart, as well as to begin planning for more meetings focused on individual health for midlife and older women. The topic most frequently selected by those who attended Heart Smart for future programs was cognitive health and the aging brain, so we are beginning to develop program around that, planning for a program in the fall.

*Allyson Washburn*

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## OWL National

Returning from a National OWL Board meeting (June 23-24), I am always SO enthusiastic. So many great ideas...such dynamic board members AND staff...so much happening.

**YES! I WANT TO JOIN OWL!**

*The Founding of OWL*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
City State ZIP

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues of \$50 include \$15 SF OWL, \$10 State OWL and \$25 National OWL. Members receive SF OWL monthly, OWL CA bi-monthly and National OWL Observer quarterly newsletters. *When you pay dues to the San Francisco Chapter, you automatically become a member of State and National OWL.* No one will be turned away if unable to pay the full amount.

**Make a check out to and mail to:**

Older Women’s League, SF Chapter  
870 Market Street, Room 905  
San Francisco, CA 94102

OWL  
San Francisco Chapter  
870 Market Street, #905  
San Francisco, CA 94102

*OWL was born in 1980 in Des Moines, Iowa, during one of the pre-conferences held around the county in preparation for the third White House Conference on Aging, which was held in 1981 in Washington, DC. At the pre-conference in Des Moines, TISH SOMMERS noted that little attention was being paid to the ways in which aging was different for women. She called for a special “ad hoc” meeting to discuss this concern. OWL has been a voice for the special concerns of midlife and older women ever since.*

**Comments or questions?** Please contact the SF OWL Office at (415) 989-4422; FAX: (415) 989-4050; e-mail: owlsanfran@juno.com

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