



Web Site: <http://www.owlsf.org>

July - September 2019

Email: owlsf@owlsf.org

OWL focuses 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.

OWL Summer Potluck Luncheon

**Come Together To
Celebrate Friendship!**

**Bring a Dish: Appetizer, Salad, Main Dish or Dessert,
Drinks to be provided, no alcohol
Book Swap: Bring a book you have enjoyed to exchange
Entertainment and Conversation**

When: Saturday, July 27th 11am to 1pm

**Where: GOOGLE Community Space
188 Steuart Street, between Mission and Howard**

Ring doorbell, then mention OWL Event

Muni & BART at Embarcadero Station
(2 and half block walk)

Also Uber, Lyft and car pooling

**RSVP Requested by 7/23
Voicemail: 415-712-1695**

OWL SF * 870 Market Street, #905, San Francisco, Ca. 94102
Phone 415-712-1695 * Web site: www.owlsf.org

Take up the mantle – Light your torch – Sing and breathe

Excerpts from this year's Pride Sunday sermon delivered by Reverend Joann Lee of Calvary Presbyterian Church, San Francisco:

Just as Elijah, in today's scripture (2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14), left his mantle to Elisha, we have been given the mantle, and we must choose to take it up. This mantle was not the source of Elijah's power; it was the symbol of it. And it held within it the history and the story of the liberation of the Israelite people; it parts the waters of the Jordan River, just as Moses did at the Red Sea . . . We are all Elisha. The Elijahs who've gone before us have left us work to do. But we do not have to do it alone. We do not carry the mantle by ourselves. We can share this work together.



Gloria Steinem has said: "You know, people often ask me, at this age, who am I passing the torch to?" The torch she speaks of here is the mantle in today's scripture lesson, isn't it? And here's how she replies, "... I always say, first of all, that I'm not giving up my torch, thank you very much . . . I'm using my torch to light other people's torches. Because the idea that there's one torch-passer is part of the bonkers hierarchical idea—and if we each have a torch, there's a lot more light."

I love that concept, that there's not just one torch being passed from one person to the next. But that we all each have a torch, and we share the light from that torch with others. And that way, if one of us falls, if one of us gets exhausted or our flame burns out, there are so many others who can help us relight our torch.

Friends, I know we are living in oppressive times. Human rights violations bombard us daily.

Michael Moore shares this one. He says:

"This morning I have been pondering a nearly forgotten lesson I learned in high school music. Sometimes in band or choir, music requires players or singers to hold a note longer than they actually can hold a note. In those cases, we were taught to mindfully stagger when we took a breath, so the sound appeared uninterrupted. Everyone got to breathe, and the music stayed strong and vibrant."

He continues: "Yesterday, I read an article that suggested the administration's litany of bad executive orders is a way of giving us 'protest fatigue' — we will literally lose our will to continue the fight in the face of the onslaught of negative action. Let's remember MUSIC. Take a breath. The rest of the chorus will sing. The rest of the band will play. Rejoin so others can breathe. Together, we can sustain a very long, beautiful song for a very, very long time. You don't have to do it all, but you must add your voice to the song."

Friends, the work of justice is on-going and will go on for a long, long time.

But we are called to it. And the God who created us is co-creating a new and different world where justice, and peace, and love reign.

So take up the mantle. And let others hold it, too.
Light your torch; And share your light with someone else.
Sing. And breathe. And sing again.
Amen.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Michelle Burton
Louise DiMattio

Board Members
Maxine Anderson
Joan Downey, Treasurer
Melanie Grossman
Amy Hittner
Glenda Hope, President
Margaret Lew
Sheila Malkind
Tina Martin
Sy Russell
Betty Traynor, Secretary

Newsletter
Margaret Lew, Editor

Political Advocacy Committee
Glenda Hope
Melanie Grossman
Co-Chairwomen

OWL SF Board meetings: first
Monday of the month, 4:00-6:00 pm,
870 Market St.
Phone: (415) 712-1695
Email: owlsf@owlsf.org
Web: www.owlsf.org
Mail: 870 Market St., Room 905,
San Francisco, CA 94102

CARA Update

Join CARA and Evolve to learn about

The California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act

This act will restore over \$11 billion per year to California's senior services, parks, libraries, schools, community colleges, health clinics, and other vital local services by closing corporate loopholes that were part of Prop 13, while maintaining protections for all residential properties. This proposal will be on the November 2020 ballot.

Tuesday, July 23, 2019 2pm-4pm
Sf Main Library (Koret Auditorium)
100 Larkin St., San Francisco
Free. Refreshments provided – You Must RSVP!
Call Michael at 415-215-7575 / Door Drawing!

Summer Events

Now that summer is officially here, it's time for fun, sun, BBQs? and California Alliance of Retired Americans (CARA)! CARA is continuing to offer trainings, forums, fundraisers, and more. These events are happening all around the state. You must RSVP at 877-223-6107. See the CARA web page for the calendar of events and more information. <https://californiaalliance.org/events/>

Register for CARA's 16th Annual Convention

The biennial statewide CARA convention will be at the Sacramento Masonic Center, 1123 J Street on October 22-23. I've been to many CARA conventions, and they are always interesting, and I am always glad I attended. There will be speakers and workshops on Social Security, Medicare, single payer (Medicare for all), and the climate crisis, as well as on many State issues relevant to seniors. The evening of the first night is usually topped off by some good entertainment.

There are registration forms at each OWL meeting, or you can register online at californiaalliance.org. Or you can call the CARA office at 510-663-4086. A bloc of rooms at a nearby hotel has been reserved, so reserve a room if you are staying overnight. There will be a bus to take you to and from Sacramento, and lunch is provided both days. (Nan McGuire and I are both going, and we'd love some OWL company.)

—*Kathie Piccagli*

Get Social With CARA. Did you know that CARA is on Facebook? Learn about our local activities and meetings, town halls and about other news affecting retirees. Be sure to like our CARA Facebook page here <https://www.facebook.com/California-Alliance-for-Retired-Americans-CARA-278762992149134/> Every like and share helps spread our message.

You can contact CARA at:
CARA, 600 Grand Ave. #410, Oakland, CA 94610
510-663-4086 • 510-663-4099 (fax) • jreid.
cara@gmail.com (mailto:jreid.cara@gmail.com)

OWL SF PAC Update

On June 27th OWL's Political Advocacy Committee resumed its regular monthly meetings after a break. The focus of the meeting was to clarify our mission and to decide on priorities.

As in the past, the committee hopes to work on educating ourselves and others on issues important to older women, to advocate for those issues by lobbying, visiting representatives and participating in demonstrations supporting important causes, and by joining with other groups who are effectively working on important concerns.

Chosen priorities for this year were: the environment, the feminization of poverty; women's health, including autonomy for women over their own bodies, and insuring quality and accessible medical and long term care.

The Political Advocacy Committee will meet on the fourth Thursday of every month at 4pm in the OWL office, 870 Market St., #905, SF. Please join us and add your ideas and your energy to our efforts for a better world.

—*Melanie Grossman*

New Phone Scams Prey on Seniors What You Can Do

The May 6th *San Francisco Chronicle* carried an excellent article detailing Social Security fraud calls. Unfortunately, it was in the business section which not everyone reads. Moments before sitting down to write this for OWL, I received another one of those calls—saying that there had been “suspicious activity related to your Social Security Number and it is urgent that you contact us immediately or your Social Security could be suspended.” Not the first time I have received this call. I just hung up the phone which is what we all must do.

The *Chronicle* reported that if you do not hang up you will be instructed to give up a lot of personal information, especially that which will “confirm your Social Security number.” The Caller ID on these scam calls will have a number resembling a government phone line. You may also be told to send money in various forms to the scammers. This vicious scam is a follow-up to the IRS scam which most of us received.

If you receive one of these calls, just hang up. But don't give up. Call Social Security's real number – 800-772-1213 – and tell them you want to report this fraud. You might include the number given on your Caller ID used by the scammers. You might also contact the Federal Trade Commission <https://www.ftc.gov/>, using their complaint website dedicated to Social Security scams, to report this. It is important that legitimate authorities are helped to track down these scammers who prey on our Senior citizens.

—*Glenda Hope*

A Deck of Cards at a Workshop on Death and Dying

The words “death cards” may conjure up images of Carmen or Tarot cards, but the death cards introduced to us at the SF Public Library on June 6, 2019, were ones to help us RIP, rest in peace!

They were to help us start the conversation with ourselves and with those closest to us about what matters to us most as we face death. As Bernard Shaw said, “The greatest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

The cards we were given helped us clarify our priorities for ourselves so that we can communicate our wishes to those who need to know.

We were given 37 cards and asked to put them into three stacks—what mattered to us most, what was secondary in importance, and what mattered the least to us. Then we were asked to take only three from the first pile. Some of our choices were these: To have family with me...to have close friends near...not dying alone...to be at peace with God...not being connected to machines...to die at home...to be free from pain.

After we created our piles, we were paired up to discuss our choices and to listen without being judgmental. (“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak and also what it takes to sit down and listen,” we were advised.)

What is a good death? A good death is what you want. How do we get to talk about it? With cards.

The speakers at this session of the Death and Dying series included Nancy Belaza, Paul Piccinelli, Jeff Draisin, and Anita Ho--everyone from a licensed family therapist to someone in bioethics.

One positive action that sounded very compelling to me was to ask your spouse what s/he thinks your choices would be. According to the speakers spouses sometimes don't know! We all need advocates to be present to protect our wishes, but they have to know what our wishes are.

We started the conversation and were encouraged to continue it because “even if you don't talk about it, you're going to die.” We were shown a map and made aware that there is a commonality in the world after all: 100% of the people in every country in the world eventually die. We need to start the die-alogue now.

The series on Death and Dying continues at the SF Public Library on July 9 with “Sitting with the Dying: Rituals and Resources, August 6 with “Talking to Children About Death,” and on September 10 with “Grieving a Pet's Death - Before and After.” The workshops are always on a Tuesday from 5:30 to 7:30 in the Latino/Hispanic room at 100 Larkin Street and they're free.

—*Tina Martin*



Participants choose cards to help begin to talk about death. Photo by Tina Martin.



Presidio Exhibits Explore Exclusion

There are 2 wonderful exhibits in the Presidio now. Both are open to the public and free of charge.

Exclusion: The Presidio's Role in World War II Japanese American Incarceration The exhibition invites visitors to investigate the choices – both personal and political – that led to this dark chapter in American history. How did leaders arrive at this decision? How did Japanese Americans respond to the violation of their civil liberties? And what, as a nation, have we learned ?

Tuesdays to Sundays through June 2020, 10am to 5pm, Presidio Officers' Club. For more information see <https://www.presidio.gov/officers-club/exhibitions/exclusion>.

Then They Came for Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the Demise of Civil Liberties examines the terrifying period in U.S. history when the government scapegoated and imprisoned thousands of people of Japanese ancestry. This multimedia exhibition draws parallels to tactics chillingly resurgent today featuring imagery by noted American photographers Dorothea Lange and Ansel Adams, alongside works by incarcerated Japanese American artists Toyo Miyatake and Miné Okubo.

Wednesday to Sunday through September 1, 2019, 10am to 6pm, 100 Montgomery Street (a short walk from the Presidio Officers' Club). For more information see <https://thentheycame.org/>

—*Joan Downey*

Community Living in San Francisco What are the Options?

At its May meeting OWL SF sponsored a panel on Community Housing, with many of its possibilities from sharing a room in your home to living in a co-op to connecting with your neighbors, and remaining in an affordable place.

Charles Higgins, organization director of the San Francisco Community Land Trust (SFCLT), told us how his organization creates permanently affordable, resident-controlled housing for low- to moderate-income people (up to 120% AMI) in San Francisco through community ownership of the land. The Land Trust acquires small apartment buildings and assists the tenants with forming housing cooperatives through which they share ownership of the building, while SFCLT maintains ownership of the land to ensure permanent affordability. They currently have 13 multi-unit buildings, from three to 21 units (total of 107 units now), in the Mission, Tenderloin, SoMa, Richmond district, and Chinatown. The land trust model helps people who are renting stay in their homes at affordable rents as long as they want. If you hear of a building for sale, let them know, as they may be able to purchase it using funds from the Mayor's Office of Housing, small sites program, and other sources to preserve low cost housing that is not-for-profit, truly affordable, and organized and managed by the residents. For more information. <https://sfclt.org/>

OWL member, Betty Traynor, who lives at St. Francis Square Co-op in the Western Addition spoke about residential cooperative living, an alternative to the traditional way of acquiring a place to live where you are not a tenant, nor a condo or single family homeowner, but rather a member of a cooperative community. Buying into a co-op, you become a member/shareholder in a common interest corporation that owns the property; you own one share in the whole co-op. Residential cooperatives began in the U.S. back in the 19th century, in New York city, and in other large cities like Chicago, Washington DC, Boston, Philadelphia, and more, including San Francisco where there are over 40. There are both limited equity co-ops where the resale price is controlled so they remain affordable to the next co-op member, and market rate co-ops which tend to be more affordable than condos. The benefits of living in a co-op are being part of a community of caring people with resident participation and control, with a democratically elected board of directors. Basically, it is a self-governed intentional community that benefits the membership. See www.coophousing.org.

Janet Crane, co-founder and board chair, told us about NEXT Village SF, a neighborhood non-profit in the northeast part of town that works to build a caring community where people help each other live independently in their own homes as they age. It serves the neighborhoods of North Beach, Telegraph Hill, Polk Gulch, Russian Hill, Northern Waterfront, the Marina, Nob Hill and the Financial District. A small staff and many volunteers provide practical assistance to people such as health check-ins, rides to appointments



The Panel: Karen Coppock, Glenda Hope, Janet Crane, Betty Traynor and Charles Higgins. Photo by Margaret Lew

and assistance with errands, help with small tasks in the home (such as turning a mattress or changing a ceiling lightbulb), plus have informative talks, and social activities and more. Next Village is part of a nation-wide system of villages with a goal to help seniors age in place and reduce isolation. It is a way seniors can stay in the community they want and enjoy activities together. See all they do on their website www.nextvillagesf.org.

Our own Rev. Glenda Hope talked about her desire to connect with her neighbors in Cayuga Valley (just east of City College) when she retired from her work in the Tenderloin. There is no senior or community center in the area, so she started getting together with neighbors in each others' houses, and later at a local church, Bethel Lutheran. When they started the Always Active exercise classes twice a week things really got going and many seniors started showing up. From then on with the help of the non-profit Community Living Campaign community connectors program, and live wire Patti Spaniak, plus funding from then Supervisor John Avalos, activities grew rapidly to engage the senior community. In addition to the exercise classes, there are multi-lingual hearing screenings, presentations on brain fitness, home health care, overcoming depression, recognizing signs of elder abuse, de-cluttering, preparing for emergencies to name a few, plus opportunities for fun: potlucks, sing-alongs, yard sales, painting at Cayuga park, and other events that bring together neighbors of all ages. For more information, see "Community Building" at <https://www.sfcommunityliving.org>

Karen Coppock, director of Home Match San Francisco that helps homeowners with extra rooms connect with room seekers who need an affordable place to live, described it as something like the show "Golden Girls" where one woman shares rooms in her home with other seniors, who have shared experiences while living together. Home Match is not limited to seniors, any homeowner can apply and receive the benefits of extra income and/or help with chores. Home seekers who live, work, or study in San Francisco benefit from affordable rent and an agreeable place to live. The Home Match staff screens applicants through interviews, background checks, and home visits, helps potential matches design a comprehensive Living Together Agreement, and offers on-going support after the match is made. In seeking a match the primary criteria is personality and life-style compatibility. Contact Home Match SF at (415) 351-1000. For more information see <https://homematchsf.org>

—Betty Traynor

9th Annual Legacy Film Festival on Aging September 20-22, 2019

Three years ago, when I was 79, I wrote in the 6th Annual LFFOA film booklet, that I could not wait to be 80. And last year, c'est arrivé (it happened)! Now, approaching 81 this September, I still look forward to new challenges with excitement, wonder, humility, and some caution. In my 80th year, I had my cataracts removed and replaced with fresh lenses, and I upped the sound on my hearing aids. I feel twinges that make me eat more greens for calcium, and try to walk vigorously for an hour a day – most days. This is why I continue to organize the Legacy Film Festival on Aging: to present these inevitable older years as an ongoing adventure, with its lighter and darker moments; to experience the challenges that we hadn't foreseen; to see people like ourselves who turn the challenges into triumphant moments or days; or to experience health problems that we learn to deal with and surmount.

Many films focus on an intergenerational themes:

51, a romantic Italian documentary shows a couple married 51 years, who are still in love, and have an almost symbiotic and caring relationship with their adult children. And Italian opera plays its part in the film, as well! A very unusual Mexican film (with English subtitles): *América*, both the film name and that of the 93-year-old grandmother who is remarkably well-cared for by her three 20-something grandsons in Colima, Mexico. *Phil's Camino: So Far So Good*, the Opening Night film, the true story of a man with stage 4 cancer who dreams of walking the Camino de Santiago, a 500 mile spiritual pilgrimage in Spain. Unable to travel he does the next best thing: he makes his own Camino in his backyard, and tackles facing his own mortality.

A Chance To Dress is a touching portrait of one man's journey towards acceptance and openness as a cross-dresser. The films encompass so many themes dominant in later life, but also about Life: Caregiving, Family, Friendships, Love, Sexuality, Grief, Joy, and Memory. There are 8 full programs, some shown during the day; others early evening; a mix of documentaries, and a few 'narratives,' which means 'fictional' in the film industry. Our hope is that audiences both older and younger, will be inspired to use their own potential to create a 'good' old age. See you at the movies!

—*Sheila Malkind, OWL SF Board Member, Director www.legacyfilmfestivalonaging.org*
e-mail: info@legacyfilmfestivalonaging.org

Roots of Immigration

At OWL's June 22nd meeting, Amy Argenal, director of Service Learning at Urban High School and Professor in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco, recently returned from Honduras, presented touching stories of the migrants who have been twice displaced – first from villages and rural communities to the cities of their home countries and from these danger filled cities to United States. We learned about local organizers and actions against the displacement in their countries; and about the dangers and hardships of life in the cities that the migrants experience that force them onto the long road to our border. After the presentation, Argenal encouraged an active Q&A exchange among attendees.



Amy Argenal, OWLs Michael Lyon and Kathie Piccagli. Photo by Tina Martin

Calendar

For a complete and up to date listing see the OWL website: <http://www.owlsf.org/calendar/>

July 1 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm (Flood Bldg. Room 665)

July 27 Saturday — OWL Summer Potluck Luncheon 11:00am-1:00pm
(Google Community Space) (See cover for details.)

August 6 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm (Flood Bldg. Room 665)

September 2 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm (Flood Bldg. Room 665)

September 28 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 10:00-Noon Ballot Issues
(San Francisco Public Library (details to come))

What Are You Reading?

Let the Great World Spin by Colum McCann. A most unusual and well written tale of disparate lives changed by the decisions of one individual they had never met. Some reviewers wrote: “grand in its scope, so close in its observation of human longings and desires, it is a reminder to look up – and to look into one another’s eyes”; “his prose is achingly beautiful”; “a gorgeous book, multilayered and deeply felt...one of the greatest ever novels about New York”; “a spectrum of the painful, the beautiful, and the unexpected.”

The Lying Game by Ruth Ware. A bestseller and rightfully so. She leads us in exploring life, love, loyalty, and long-lasting guilt. She finally poses so powerfully that always probing question with an elusive answer: What is truth?

The Redbreast by Jo Nesbo is part historical novel, part psychological thriller, and part murder mystery. How someone could dream up all these plot twists and interesting characters is the biggest mystery to me. Who knew so many Norwegians fought alongside the Germans during World War II and what happened to them afterwards? This is an integral and interesting strand of this well woven story.

—Glenda Hope

I recommend two interesting, well-written, short books about Japanese by American author Julie Otsuka:

When the Emperor was Divine is a historical fiction novel about a Japanese American family sent to an internment camp in the Utah desert during World War II. The novel, loosely based on the wartime experiences of Otsuka’s mother’s family, is written through the perspective of four family members, detailing their eviction from California and their time in camp.

The Buddha in the Attic is about Japanese picture brides immigrating to America in the early 1900s. This reads like an epic poem.

—Joan Downey

The Revolution of the Moon by Andrea Camilleri. Her rule lasted 27 days – one cycle of the moon. This is the remarkable account of an exceptional woman who rises to power as Viceroy in 17th Century Sicily and brings about sweeping changes that threaten the iron-fisted patriarchy. An imagined novel based on a *true* story by an author, who is best known for Commissario Montalbano who solves contemporary Sicilian crimes.

—Margaret Lew

A Personal Take on ***Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging*** by Sebastian Junger. Before I headed for a 55th class reunion in Columbia, South Carolina, the friend hosting me recommended *Tribe*, which her step son, very disillusioned by the war after serving in Afghanistan, had sent to the family. His mother, the ex-wife of my friend’s husband, was conducting a discussion on it at the church both mothers attend, so we three would be together with others in the same discussion group—a tribe? *Tribe* has only 136 pages, so I could have read it on the flight there, but I read it ahead of time and learned a lot.

Because Junger talks so much about the camaraderie in the military, I was afraid he was going to glorify war, but he really doesn’t although he may idealize military camaraderie beyond what it really is. His major point is that when people serving in the military come back, they return to a society without tribal values. They miss a uniting common cause, a common place to meet and even to sleep.

If they’re united in committing war crimes, I wondered, is that a good thing? But Junger focuses on our need to be useful and to feel connected to a community. Describing a tribe as the group of people with whom we’d share the last of our food, he cites the “self-determination theory,” which says that human beings need three basic things to be content: To feel competent at what we do, to feel authentic in our lives, and to feel connected to others. These intrinsic values, studies show, outweigh values such as beauty, money, and status.

He describes a phenomenon of which I was previously unaware: English settlers in our colonies were often drawn to the Native American tribes, and even when they were taken captive by the tribes and then rescued by the English, they often wanted to return to the tribes. Junger also describes catastrophes like earthquakes and mining accidents, when people work together as a “tribe” and fare better than when there are no catastrophes. That made me think of the Loma Prieta earthquake of 1989, when people were helping one another in high-crime areas, lowering the crime rate for a few days.

To show a tribal sensibility, he describes an employer named Martin H. Bauman, who cared enough about his employees when the company was failing to take no salary until the company was once again out of danger. Junger contrasts Bauman with CEOs who take bonuses when the employees are laid off and the investors impoverished, as in the 2008 financial crisis, “when almost 9 million people lost their jobs, 5 million families lost their homes, and the unemployment rate doubled to around 10 percent.” He points out that people worry about welfare cheats, who cost tax payers millions, while they lionize the corporate cheats who cost tax payers billions of dollars more.

He makes other comparisons I think you’ll find interesting if you read this book, so I recommend it not as a carefully researched book but as one that can stimulate conversation.

Since this is a personal review, I’d like to close with part of the invocation my friend gave at our 55th class reunion (in South Carolina, a Red State) because I think it relates to Junger’s attraction to tribes. “Let this food nourish us so that we may serve others and find meaningful ways to contribute our talents and resources. We want to continue to make a difference. We want to matter.”

—Tina Martin

YES! I WANT TO JOIN OWL SF!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY STATE ZIP

TELEPHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Annual dues of \$50 are recommended. (If you are unable to pay the recommended amount, OWL has established a sliding fee scale from \$50 –\$5.) Members receive the quarterly OWL SF Newsletter.

OWL SF will not share or sell our membership list or any information about our members.

Make a check out to and mail to:

OWL SF
870 Market Street, Room 905
San Francisco, CA 94102

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San Francisco, CA 94102

The Founding of OWL

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) 712-1695;
e-mail: owlsf@owlsf.org