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.

Join OWL-SF for

Clearing Out Our Clutter

Learn about hoarding and de-cluttering from members of the Peer Response Team of the Institute on Compulsive Hoarding & Cluttering of the Mental Health Association of S.F.

Hear practical tips from Lorraine Luna, a de-clutter consultant and clearing facilitator in San Francisco.

When: Saturday, April 28th — 10 am to Noon

Where: Northern Police Station Community Room

1125 Fillmore Street at Turk Street
(No parking in police parking lot)

MUNI # 5, 22, 31 & 38 (4 block walk)
Wheelchair Accessible

OWL SF * 870 Market Street, #905, San Francisco, Ca. 94102
Phone 415-712-1695 * Web site: www.owlsf.org
Be an Informed Voter
March Membership Meeting

OWL members gathered on March 24th to hear a presentation by staff from the San Francisco Department of Elections. The presentation began with an explanation of ranked choice voting, a procedure difficult for most of us to grasp even though it has been many years since this was voted into being. Perhaps the clearest message we all gained was this: it does not help your candidate if you vote for the same person 3 times. Other than that, I can say that I understood what we were being told but I could not repeat it!

We had asked the speakers to explain briefly 5 different ballot propositions on the local ballot, which they did. We then divided into smaller groups to discuss these among ourselves. As always in an OWL meeting, we were blessed with some women who know the background of particular issues – how did this come to be on the ballot? who proposed it?, etc. – and were able to share their knowledge with the rest of us. Of course, the speakers were not able to share that kind of insight.

Several OWLs who were present told me they came because they love OWL but basically expected this meeting would be dry and boring. They left very glad that they had been there and much better informed about the votes we will be asked to make in June.

You are encouraged to contact the San Francisco Department of Elections Speakers Bureau to arrange such a meeting for your own group. They are available 7 days a week at no charge, they prefer minimum number of attendees to be 15-20.

If you were not there, you were missed and you missed out. Hope to see you April 28th.
—Glenda Hope

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OWLs gather to propose, hash out and vote on topics for the membership meetings of the new year. photos by Tina Martin
Social Security + Medicare = Social Justice

Social Security and Medicare were the topics of a presentation sponsored by At Home with Growing Older in February 2018 at the San Francisco Main Library, with guest speakers Kevin Prindville, Executive Director of Justice in Aging and Carroll L. Estes, Sociologist, UCSF School of Nursing. Social Security and Medicare, among other benefits, are often called “entitlements” and we are entitled to them, but both speakers emphasized that they are truly earned benefits from our years of work meant to meet our basic needs—we contributed to these social insurance programs as did our employers. There are approximately 62 million on Social Security in 2018 providing an average income of $1,360 per month, and most seniors (61%) rely on Social Security for the majority of their income, and some for their entire income. “It is the best anti-poverty program we have,” said Kevin Prindville, keeping 22 million people out of poverty. Of these 22 million, 7.1 million are seniors living in poverty in the U.S., especially women, people of color and those in the LGBT community, due to our current social policies.

Continuing this support can be strengthened by putting more money into the Social Security Trust Fund by
1. **Raising the Social Security tax rate** from the current 6.2% by a small amount.
2. **Lifting the Cap**, increase the earnings subject to the tax which as of 2018 is $128,400. Those making a higher salary, say $250,000 or $500,000 per year, pay Social Security tax on only the first $128,400 earned, not any salary earned above that. Raising the cap or eliminating it altogether would bring in trillions of dollars to the Social Security Trust Fund.
3. **Opening immigration** rather than limiting it, bringing in new workers to contribute to Social Security;
4. **Thinking outside the box**, like looking at paying Social Security tax on additional income beyond earned wages, such as real estate income.

Speaker Kevin Prindville predicted that due to the tax break for the wealthy, more money will be demanded from the rest of us, and congressmen (like Paul Ryan and Marco Rubio) will be going after benefit programs that are important to seniors. Social Security and Medicare that are very popular will most likely not be threatened now, but programs such as Medicaid, CalFresh, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Social Security Disability are targets. We must remain vigilant, watching for any changes and reductions in all of these related programs.

Both speakers called on us to educate ourselves and then take action by contacting our (and other) representatives in Congress, electing representatives to Congress who will make positive changes to benefit policy, and working on campaigns of candidates who commit to senior and disabled anti-poverty programs. They were encouraged by the nascent social movements of the last few years, Black Lives Matter, MeToo, Indivisible, the Immigrant movement—“Outrage plus empathy” said Carroll Estes, “will lead to structural change.”

Some groups to contact for more information and action:
Justice in Aging, [www.justiceinaging.org](http://www.justiceinaging.org)
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, [www.ncpssm.org](http://www.ncpssm.org)
Social Security Spotlight, [www.socialsecurityspotlight.org](http://www.socialsecurityspotlight.org)

—Betty Traynor

### Medicare Card Scam Alert

On April 1, 2018 Medicare will begin a year-long project to replace all current Medicare cards for beneficiaries, replacing the current ID number (your Social Security number) to alphanumeric ID numbers.

**Important:**
Your new Medicare card will come to you in the mail. You do not need to request it or do anything. It will show up in your mailbox. Medicare will never call you unless you ask them to. Medicare does all communications by mail unless you ask them to call.

**What is the scam?**
Somebody pretending to be from “Medicare” will call telling you that you are getting a new Medicare card, but until it comes you will need a temporary card.

They will ask for personal information, bank account or credit card so they can process your temporary card. They will charge a fee for the card of $5-50 dollars.

**How can you protect yourself?**
First of all, spread the word. Feel free to share these notes. Use your answering machine to screen calls or just don’t even answer a number you don’t recognize. Do not share your personal information with callers who say they are “Medicare” or that they are working with Medicare to get you all the benefits you are entitled to.

If it has happened to you or your friends or loved ones and personal information had been given out (which happens more often than you would think) — don’t feel bad or stupid — immediately take action to protect yourself against identity theft.
Whose Turn is it to Look After the Chickens? 
Building Community in an Urban Environment

I live on one of those lovely cul-de-sacs on Russian Hill where there are five private homes and the back side of three small apartment houses. It seemed like a perfect spot to create a community of neighbors. However, try as I might, things never seemed to come together. There were arguments over parking spaces, use of our common area, storage of garbage bins, you name it. The neighborhood never jelled.

Then one of my neighbors got chickens. We saw the chicken coop being built on their postage stamp sized patch of yard. Three grown hens, Pumpkin, Lavender and Petunia, were brought in. Everyone was typically skeptical (and critical).

By and by, the owners went out of town for a few days and asked a few of us to keep an eye on the chickens: feed them table scraps, take them out of their coop and let them roam for a while, and, best of all, check for eggs. At first we just glanced at them as we got in and out of our cars, but before long, we were hooked. The chickens had personalities: Pumpkin was maternal, Lavender, cute, and Petunia, bossy.

Soon, everyone was gathering there at the coop. We were changing the water, taking out table scraps and letting the chickens out for exercise (free range, of course). Best of all, we collected fresh eggs. Everyone loved it. We exchanged telephone numbers and created a rough schedule. Texts flew back and forth about any changes noticed. The children, the little ones fascinated, the older ones helping, also joined in. Before long I knew everyone’s name and names of their kids.

People we had never met come down out of the surrounding apartments to look at the chickens and to smile when they scratched and pecked around the common area. They never go far. Now, Lavender is nesting and sitting on her eggs. We are excited about it. No one wants to go out of town. The owners set up a camera, and we can click on the link to check on the hatching process.

The chickens have turned us into a community. Like a small town, we know whose chickens are roaming outside our window and whose children are laughing on the patch of dirt in front of the coop. This spring, I for one feel more intimately connected to nature and to my neighbors. And soon we will have baby chicks!

—Melanie Grossman

Jonée Levy Remembered

Jonée Levy Hacker, long-time OWL member, SF (and beyond) activist, died February 2nd, age 72. Jonée was the co-founder, 8 years ago, along with her friend, Janet Crane, of NEXT Village, a nonprofit agency devoted to creating a supportive community for seniors in North East San Francisco who wish to age in place.

She was a smart and forceful woman, also much involved in local campaigns and issues, who retained her southern-born charm, but could also tell it like it is. An example years ago: as board member in charge of publicity, I phoned her twice to remind her to contact someone. Her brief response: “* **** off,” and hung up. Conversely, she had a generous and kind spirit. When she learned that I wanted to create the nonprofit Legacy Film Festival on Aging in 2010, without any hesitation she sent me all the relevant paperwork of NEXT Village’s beginnings that most other organizations would’ve been reluctant to share.

A memorial gathering honoring Jonée was held Sunday, March 18th, in her beloved Telegraph Hill neighborhood. She is survived by her art buddy, duo piano-playing, loving husband of 32 years, architect Harvey Hacker. Donations to NEXT Village are welcomed. Website: http://www.nextvillagesf.org/——Sheila Malkind, OWL SF Board Member

In the March-April 2009 issue of the OWL Newsletter I found a short sketch welcoming Jonée to membership on the OWL SF Board. Her background of creative involvement and leadership was impressive and varied – from running Whiskey Creek Pottery and Jonée Levy Associated Mills (designing fashionable socks), participation on the SF Recreation and Parks Open Space Committee, Board of Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Center, North Beach Neighbors, District 3 Democratic Club to the Aging in Place Committee/Telegraph Hill which was the seed for NEXT Village that she founded with friend Janet Crane. I remember her cheerful, positive and frank presence from the OWL Board meetings and was sorry when she resigned to concentrate on the growing needs of NEXT Village. What a meaningful legacy she leaves San Francisco. She was an OWL who made a difference.

—Margaret Lew

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Lynda Lepage

Vickie Lew

Hearts connected and in a circle—
We share and listen.

by Sally Love Saunders
A Toast to OWL

With this picture of Day Owl Rosé (and the bottle itself if the occasion presents itself) I’d like to raise a toast to OWL, a group I first saw in action at the San Francisco Main Public Library on September 23, 2017 at a workshop called “Reframing Age: What It Means to Grow Old in America.”

Janet Lam introduced Glenda Hope, who gave an OWL alert, saying that there was an assault in D.C. on older adults: Social Security and Medicaid were in danger. Then Diane Kratz facilitated the workshop, including a role play of “seniors” (we know now we’re Perennials!) being ignored or condescended to at an urgent care clinic. I think Betty Traynor played the doctor, and was it Sheila Malkind who insisted upon being seen in a fair and timely fashion? We saw a TED talk by Ashton Applewhite, author of “This Chair Rocks,” and that was impressive and inspiring, but no more than were the members of OWL! I’m sure the students from USF, attending through Lisa Wagner’s intergenerational class, were also impressed.

Glenda Hope made the comment that she had learned growing up among Southern women that “we have to promote ourselves.” She made the very good point that we’re always asking other family members about their activities, but we really need to let them know what we’re doing so they don’t dismiss people our age(s) or fear getting older themselves. She also mentioned some organizations that were new to me then but are now familiar: Community Living Campaign, California Alliance for Retired Americans, and Senior and Disability Action.

We were put into small discussion groups to answer “What brings you here today? I think Kathi Picaggli and I were in the same group. I also learned about the Legacy Film Festival on Aging and met Sheila Malkind, the Executive Director and also a member of OWL. I wanted to know more about this group called OWL! I’d never joined a group based on age, but I was so impressed by the good energy coming from OWL members that I decided to make a donation, and for the purpose of keeping in touch, I also became a member. But I didn’t plan to attend. For one thing, OWL meets every fourth Saturday of the month, which is when son Jonathan and I usually have our monthly online meeting of the JoMama Book Club with a discussion from 9 to 12:00.

But I got mailings—the OWL newsletter, e-mail messages, postcards—that showed how well-organized you were and how connected your concerns were to mine, so when a holiday party was scheduled for the third Saturday in December, I couldn’t resist, and I wasn’t disappointed. I especially enjoyed the book trade, but both hours were engaging. I enjoyed hearing what other people were reading and how and why their books were of interest to them. Most of all, I enjoyed the vitality that emanated from the group.

I didn’t want to miss the meeting in January, so my son agreed to move our book discussion from the fourth Saturday to Sunday. The January 27th meeting was to determine the rest of the year. Members made suggestions on topics and then we checked our priorities, all of which interested me.

Since then I’ve joined OWL members at the MOAD and back at the police station for a presentation on the June ballot members--time well spent!

So I’m saving this bottle of Day Owl Rosé, which someone gave me without even knowing about YOU. Maybe you can help me figure out what to do with it. In the meantime, here’s to OWL. No group of people could better illustrate the sustaining power of perennials!

—Tina Martin

Civil Grand Jury Seeks Volunteers

Want to make a difference in your community? Volunteer to serve on the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury. San Francisco Superior Court is seeking volunteers for the Civil Grand Jury. The Civil Grand Jury is the “watchdog” for the City and County of San Francisco. The Civil Grand Jury investigates the operations of City government, including officials, departments, and agencies. Each year, the Civil Grand Jury issues reports based on its findings. Those reports are heard before the Board of Supervisors. The Civil Grand Jury will serve from July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. Help make government more efficient! The application deadline is May 18, 2018.

Eligibility Requirements:
• 18 years of age or older and a United States citizen.
• San Francisco resident for at least the past 12 months.
• Able to commit time consistently throughout the term.
• Desire to work together with other committed San Franciscans.

For more information and an application, please visit http://civilgrandjury.sfgov.org
Volunteer with Every Meal

Does the word “vegan” make you cringe? It did me. As soon as I heard “vegan,” I thought “picky eater! Fussy person. No fun. Too obsessed with health food. Not enjoying life. A pain to be around.” It never occurred to me that people who ate a plant-based diet were doing volunteer work for the environment and for animal welfare with every meal.

I enjoyed eating meat, and when my sister became vegetarian in 1972, soon followed by my mother and her partner, and later by my own son in 1987, I accepted their choice and always offered a vegetarian option when we were together for a meal, but I continued to eat meat. Then one day in 2001, someone put a brochure in my locker at the Stonestown YMCA, I took a look at the horror of factory farming and never ate another piece of meat. But I continued eating eggs and dairy. I wasn’t an extremist, after all. Then I found out that dairy animals weren’t treated any better than other factory-farmed animals. Chickens were also brutalized and “cooped up” in a way much less amusing than a play on words. There was no romping around happily on factory farms, and the rare places where animals were allowed freedom of movement were not sustainable on a planet with more than seven billion people. I realized that we needed to move towards a plant-based diet for animal welfare. Frances Moore Lappé wrote about it in Diet for a Small Planet back in 1971, but it took me more than forty years to get the message.

I chose an easy time to “go vegan.” Now there is a plethora of books explaining how. There are lots of restaurants offering vegan options, strictly vegan or vegetarian. There are lots of recipes out there too – online, in libraries and book stores. To my surprise, it’s possible to eat a variety of delicious dishes without contributing to animal suffering and to the degradation of the environment.

I made traveling as a vegan my purpose on a pilgrimage in Northern Spain, testing the possibilities of not eating meat, eggs, or dairy in that meat-heavy region. European friends joined me in Madrid and in Paris, we ate exclusively at vegan and vegetarian restaurants, and we ate well – something that wouldn’t have been possible forty years ago. I made a very low-tech “talky” of this experience:*Plate to Plate Vegan Pilgrimage. I have a blog, too, Hi! My Name Is Vegan Freak, a title taken from a very interesting book by Bob and Jenna Torres, Hello. My Name Is Vegan Freak: Being Vegan in a Non-Vegan World. There are some documentaries too, but beware, some of them have what is called “junk science.” Some of these documentaries exaggerate the wonders of a plant-based diet. I think it’s wonderful without exaggeration.

So now, when I hear the word “vegan,” I no longer cringe. I relate. I realize that vegans have the privilege of doing volunteer work for animal welfare and for the environment with every bite.

—Tina Martin

*Plate to Plate Vegan Pilgrimage:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDaHfw8tD0
Traveling Vegan in Madrid with Friends who Eat in Many Languages: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHdyHu2eI5
A Vegan in Paris with Friends Who Eat in Many Languages: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dhsmnMbw

SAVE the DATE
OWL SF Calendar 2018

May 26
Keeping up with the Environment
June 23
What’s Available at the Institute on Aging
July 28
Summer Party
August 25
Long Term Care and Aging in Place
September 29
State and Local Ballot Issues for November Election
October 27
Livable City: Pedestrian Safety, Housing, MUNI
November 17
Herbs, Natural Remedies, Cannabis
December 15
Holiday Party

Details will come via postcards and announcements on OWL SF website. Mark your calendars and join us, bring a friend!

Meet San Francisco Mayoral Candidates

Senior and Disability Action is co-sponsor with OWL SF and many others interested in protecting Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, affordable housing, long term care and other issues of importance to seniors and people with disabilities.

Thursday, April 12 1:00 to 4:00
Unitarian Universalist Church
1187 Franklin Street
RSVP as space is limited: 415 546-1333 or e-mail: ligia@sdaction.org
light refreshments provided

The Dignity Fund Coalition invites you to a San Francisco Mayoral Candidate Town Hall to hear about issues of importance to seniors and people with disabilities.

Thursday, April 26 10:30 to Noon
Herbst Theater
401 Van Ness Avenue
Participating candidates: Angela Alioto, London Breed, Jane Kim, Mark Leno
For more information see: www.sfdignityfund.org/
OWL SF Budget 2018

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—Submitted by Joan Downey, Treasurer

All Women’s Issues Were Not Resolved In 1920
All Women Activists Are Not Wild–Eyed Radicals
Women’s Health Care Is Not Adequately Covered
Women’s Economic Security Is Not Based On The Charity Of Men
Everything You Need To Know About “The System” Was Not Taught In School

Calendar
For a complete and up to date listing see the OWL website: [http://www.owlsf.org/calendar.php](http://www.owlsf.org/calendar.php)
April 2 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm (Flood Bldg. Room 665)
April 12 Thursday — Meet Mayoral Candidates, 1:00-4:00 (Unitarian Universalist Church, details p.6)
April 26 Thursday — SF Mayoral Town Hall, 10:30-Noon (Herbst Theater, details p.6)
April 28 Saturday — OWL General Meeting 10:00-Noon (Northern Police Station, Community Room, 1125 Fillmore at Turk Streets) see cover for details.
May 7 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm (Flood Bldg. Room 665)
May 26 Saturday — OWL General Meeting 10:00-Noon (Details to be announced.)
June 4 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm (Flood Bldg. Room 665)
June 23 Saturday — OWL General Meeting 10:00-Noon (Details to be announced.)
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 any information about our members.

Make a check out to and mail to:

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

Comments or questions? Please contact the SF OWL Office at (415) 712-1695; e-mail: owlsf@owlsf.org

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.

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