



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

*January - March 2021*

*Email:* [owlsf@owlsf.org](mailto: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.

**Join OWL on Zoom for  
Activating our Resolutions for 2021  
Putting Our Values Into Action!**

**Saturday, January 23, 2021  
11 AM to Noon**

- *What are my priorities for OWL?*
- *Advocacy, education, social?*
- *What are my priorities for myself?*
- *How I can use my voice in the coming year?*
- *Other strategies to translate my 2021 resolutions into action?*

**Zoom Meeting with telephone access  
Link to follow in e-mail or  
For more information see page 2**

OWL SF \* 870 Market Street, #905, San Francisco, Ca. 94102  
Phone 415-712-1695 \* Web site: [www.owlsf.org](http://www.owlsf.org)

## January Planning Meeting OWL Needs You and Your Input!

January's meeting is traditionally devoted to choosing the year's monthly program topics. What topic is important to you? Come to the meeting to add it for 2021. We welcome your participation in a meeting on your chosen topic but it's not necessary to have a speaker or organization in mind, OWL will help. Here is a list of past meetings presented by OWL. Some are worth repeating, but what can we add for 2021? It is your choice!



- Forum on SF Police
- Cleaning up Clutter
- Clean Air
- Pedestrian Safety and You!
- Legacy Film Festival on Aging
- Aging and the Brain: A discussion with Mary Demay from UCSFs Memory and Aging Center
- Muslim Women In Today's World
- How Can We Grow Old and Stay In San Francisco?
- Fracking and Water: The Environmental Impact on Our Lives and What To Do About It
- What's the Latest on Medicare And Social Security?
- Empowered Elder Workshop
- Women and Money
- Considering End of Life Wishes
- Medicare And Medical Are Under Attack... And Social Security Is Next!
- Is San Francisco A Liveable City?
- Update on Planned Parenthood!
- Women's Breast Cancer Resources!
- Kitchen Herbalism
- Herbs and Teas As Part Of Your Health Program
- The Immigration Debate
- Docent Led Tour At MOAD: Museum Of African Diaspora
- Age On! Exploring Resources with The Institute On Aging
- Advocating for Important Legislation Issues Affecting Older Women
- Community Housing In San Francisco: What Are the Options?
- Making Sense Of What's Happening At City College
- The Planet We Are Leaving Our Grandchildren
- Examining the Issue of Racism in America
- A Discussion About Relationships...Why Bother Making Friends



### OWL Alerts: Just One Action A Week Taking About 10 Minutes

Almost every week, an OWL Alert is sent out by email briefly describing a situation OWL members may want to address. The Alerts also suggest possible action and provide information about people, such as elected officials, who have the power to respond to our concerns. Board members rotate responsibility for selecting the issues but everyone is encouraged to contact the Board President with suggestions.

It is hard not to be overwhelmed about the many societal concerns we are aware of, to resist a sense of helplessness in the face of them. The more we allow

ourselves to give in to this, the more inertia sets in and takes over. But the members of OWL are all people who care about the world in which we live. Indeed, OWL was founded on that caring.

The OWL Alerts were started 4 years ago to give us a way to focus on certain concerns rather than being overwhelmed by the magnitude of need, to know we are acting in concert with others who share our values, and to provide some ideas for doing just one thing each week for the causes of justice and compassion, especially as they impact the lives of older women.

—*Glenda Hope, Board President*  
[sfnm@pacbell.net](mailto:sfnm@pacbell.net)

**Board Members**  
**Glenda Hope, President**  
**Maxine Anderson, co-VP**  
**Louise DiMattio**  
**Joan Downey, Treasurer**  
**Melanie Grossman, co-VP**  
**Lela Harris**  
**Margaret Lew**  
**Sheila Malkind**  
**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. Currently held on Zoom, link available on request

**Phone:** (415) 712-1695  
**Email:** [owlsf@owlsf.org](mailto:owlsf@owlsf.org)  
**Web:** [www.owlsf.org](http://www.owlsf.org)  
**Mail:** 870 Market St., Room 905, San Francisco, CA 94102

## Political Advocacy Committee Report

Looking towards 2021, there are many issues to choose from for our work with the Political Advocacy Committee. To make these important choices, I hope all OWL members will come to the January 23<sup>rd</sup> membership zoom meeting to share their 2021 ideas for New Year's resolutions pertaining to OWL and to themselves personally.

In 2020, the Political Advocacy Committee addressed numerous issues: City College's drastic cutbacks to classes and jobs, social justice issues, the environment, affordable housing, and many other subjects. Once the Covid-19 hit California, our work also included crisis care guidelines to make sure that seniors and vulnerable populations were not overlooked; holding care facilities accountable for strict infection control, staff training, testing for both patients and staff; holding the City accountable for providing safe housing for the homeless; and continued City funding for disappearing programs serving at home seniors and others. This work is not ours alone. We continue to collaborate with other like-minded agencies, including Senior Disability Action, CARA and Community Living Campaign.

For 2021, we look forward to your input in defining new areas needing our attention. Our committee welcomes your ideas for advocacy and actions. Please join the Political Advocacy Committee, come to OWL's January 23<sup>rd</sup> membership meeting, or just let us know about the issues you are most interested in for 2021. The Political Advocacy Committee meets on the Third Thursday of the month at 3:00pm on Zoom. Contact Melanie Grossman for Zoom link. [melanie.d.grossman@gmail.com](mailto:melanie.d.grossman@gmail.com)



## OWLS and Friends Gather to Thank Our Postal Workers

A few OWLS and others, Chris Dillon (on right) and Glenda Hope, gathered in November to give some well-deserved feedback to the USPS for delivering our personal mail and election ballots. "Post office staff were so excited" reports Glenda. Photo by Patti Spaniak

## OWL SF Board News

### Introducing new Members Louise DiMattio and Lela Harris

Louise DiMattio was born and raised in Massachusetts in a small city just outside of Boston. She attended college and nursing school in St. Louis, Missouri during the tumultuous years of the early 1970's. It was during that time that she became aware of the Catholic Worker Movement and its commitment to social justice. After college, Louise move to San Francisco and began working as a psychiatric nurse at the Langley Porter Institute/UCSF and lived in the Haight Ashbury neighborhood with other social activists who were living and working there at the time. Louise soon met and married pianist William Corbett-Jones, a professor of music at San Francisco State University. Louise and Bill have lived for many years in the Ingleside and have one daughter, and now two grandchildren, who live in Hawaii.

Louise retired from her position as Nurse Manager of the Birth Center at San Francisco General Hospital, a place Louise calls "truly holy ground," in 2014. She subsequently trained to become and was ordained as an Interfaith Chaplain in 2017. She has worked as a chaplain in the Labor and Delivery and Neonatal Intensive Care units at CPMC and continues to be involved in spiritual care and social justice work through the Mercy Center in Burlingame. She is looking forward to becoming more active with OWL and the causes it supports in our community.

Newly elected OWL Board Member Lela Harris, is a transplant from Alabama to the San Francisco Bay Area, where she has resided for forty-eight years. Prior to coming to the Bay Area, Lela received a B.A. degree from Tuskegee University, a HBCU college, and thereafter received a J.D. degree from Stanford University and an L.L.M. in Taxation from Golden Gate University. Lela is a happily retired lawyer who also worked for twenty-six years as an Administrative Law Judge. Lela is passionate about education and elder rights. Along with other family members she established a charitable corporation in 2015 in memory of her mother who died at 101 years that awards scholarships in her hometown to deserving high school seniors. She also works through her church to provide assistance to seniors in numerous ways. She is a legacy life member of The National Council of Negro Women which was founded by Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, a civil rights activist and educator. Lela enjoys movies, dance, plays and other artistic offerings. She actively participates in an art club. Having traveled to about 30 countries, she's ready to hit the road again when it's safe.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

**Maggie Bafalon**  
**Jeanie McNulty**  
**Jeanie Poling**

## Thoughts from OWL's November Program on Gratitude

For my 75th birthday on November 15, I decided that instead of having a super-spreader gathering, I'd write 75 thank you letters to people who make me feel good about life when world events, including this year's pandemic, aren't so wonderful, so I had a special interest in OWL's November program on the subject of gratitude, with Maxine Anderson hosting but with no one muted. I enjoyed the back-and-forth that made it seem more like a discussion, not a series of monologues, although some of the anecdotes shared are worthy of individual attention.

I was grateful to have the chance to thank a couple of our members for their participation. Leslie Stafford, who's the webmaster for the California League of Women Voters and set up all the candidate forums before the election, had gone to OWL's Facebook page and answered the question about gratitude, saying that she was grateful for so many things that she didn't know where to begin. Kathy Mata, the founder and director of the Kathy Mata Ballet, has sent us wonderful videos, whose links you'll find in this issue of the OWL Newsletter. She said she had 300 dancers to be concerned with during this pandemic, and she was grateful for us for raising her spirits. (Kathy is the one who made the news headlines <https://www.sfoxaminer.com/news/71-year-old-woman-among-4-seniors-robbed-in-sf-over-single-day/>)

Here's some of what I took away from the discussion: We can increase our mindfulness so that we are more aware of the beauty around us, like a flower on our path, and heighten our feeling of gratitude. We can choose our focus so that we make "brain stops" at places of interest around us instead of parking our brain on a worry.

We can choose the window we look out of, and if there are challenges with relatives through one window, we can get relief by looking out another. A member pointed out that the way the brain works, we can't be negative and depressed when we're feeling grateful. Pain and pleasure activate the same part of the brain. She also mentioned the Harvard News Letters about the better health of people who practice gratitude. We can express our gratitude to health workers by wearing masks and following other guidelines and to service providers by giving much larger tips than we would normally give.

If we find a wallet, we can take one twenty-dollar bill from it to mail it back to the owner, but we should include the change! If we enjoy good health, we can be grateful for that and for the good health of friends. We can be grateful to people who show us something new, as one member related a friend of hers had done, pointing out the trail around Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park, which she, a native San Franciscan, had never taken until her friend pointed out the way and showed her the pretty bridge. (Since then I've shown this route, new to both of us, to a friend.

We can be grateful for the upside of a holiday during which we can't all gather together—not having to cook for twelve people...being able to wear pajamas all day...watching football instead of cooking and not having to do a lot of dishes. We can be thankful that there are now many choices for entrees that aren't Tofurky for Thanksgiving and other holidays for people who are moving towards a plant-based diet for the planet and for animal welfare. We can be grateful for the rain and the sun that returns after the rain.



If we must shelter in place, we can think of the passengers quarantined on the Princess Cruise, stuck in their cabins, and then make a part of our home our "cabin," as one of our new members did, putting up travel pictures and having our own at-home excursion. We can make our apartment into a health spa, as she did later.

We can be grateful for OWL, where we can be with like-minded people. One member spoke of her sister is in Louisiana, where she's relieved that Biden has won but had no one to share in her relief and joy. We can be grateful that on walks we pass people wearing masks and see windows with signs saying "Black Lives Matter", "We believe Black Lives Matter/Science is REAL/We Are All Immigrants/Kindness Means Everything"/Not All Cops Are Bad... One favorite: "I'm wearing a mask to be sure I'm alive to vote on November 3.")

We can be grateful for people who are working for a better world, like one member's friend who's written 300 postcards to Georgia hoping that the run-off election there on January 5th will lead to a better-balanced Senate with an Ossoff and Warnoff victory and whose great-niece has been part of an encampment outside the Burlington Police Station to protest the death of a young man and to ask for racial justice—even if she does think that 23 days is a long time to work towards that end.

We can be grateful that we have a new president-elect. But as one member said, "We have a lot of work to do. Almost half of the nation voted for Trump. We've got to find a better way of communicating." I then shared what I was told by a friend from Russia, who is a Trump supporter. When she saw the Walgreens on Van Ness and Market from her window where people were trying to break in by smashing the glass, she called the police, and no one came. She saw them looting, coming out with their stolen merchandise. She called the police again, but no one came. When we 'progressives' talk about defunding the police, this makes people like her feel very unsafe. According to nationwide surveys even Blacks who have been unjustly treated by police in too many incidences say they don't want fewer police in their neighborhood.

A member said she'd read why conservative people vote the way they do, and fear is a major reason. They're afraid of being hurt and they're afraid of change. Slogans like "Defund the Police" don't help.

Another member said we should stop speaking in slogans, and there were a lot of nods of agreement to that. We need a more nuanced way of communication. I quoted Maya Angelou's statement that "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

I'm grateful for Steven Pinker's book *Enlightenment Now*, which offers data proving that even though we still have a long way to go, we've come a long way because of activism. The knowledge that much has gotten better in our world even in these pandemic times should give us hope as we stay active and feel grateful. As another member said, "I'm grateful to be hearing all this."

—*Tina Martin*

## Make 2021 the Year for Improved Medicare for All in California

Improved Medicare for All has been gaining greater traction over the years and while the odds of passing legislation at the Federal level improve every day, the more likely path is probably through the states — in California we are in a unique position to lead the way. How is that?

1. During the primaries, California voted for a progressive candidate who made Medicare for All a campaign and election touchstone.
2. Exit polls show that a great majority of voters want single payer healthcare, specifically without the interference of insurance companies.
3. We have a governor who campaigned on the value of a single payer system.
4. The new national HHS nominee Xavier Becerra is a longtime single payer supporter. The head of HHS is the one who would grant the federal waivers for the states to implement state-single-payer systems.
5. Gov. Newsom requested the Federal waivers from the Trump administration, so we are petitioning for him to ask the Biden administration for those same waivers.

Our first step in winning Improved Medicare for All in California is getting Governor Newsom to request a waiver for California to develop a state based system.

Please sign the petition <https://bit.ly/CARA-Healthcare> and share it with friends, family, unions and community organizations. Spread it far and wide. The campaign for a Healthy California Now is aiming for a **million signatures**

—*Kathie Piccagli*

## OWL Readers Contemplate The Immigrant Experience

What is it like to immigrate to the United States? How do those who want to come here view our "culture"? How does an immigrant's country of origin influence their personal experience once they arrive on our shores?

These and many similar questions are being discussed by the OWL Readers who meet virtually once a month on Saturday morning prior to the monthly OWL meeting. We are reading short stories from a volume entitled *Immigrant Voices, 21st Century Stories*. Each story is written by an author who has had direct experience with immigration and so tells a personal story. Thus far, we have read a Filipina writer (M. Evelina Galang), a Peruvian writer (Daniel Alarcon), an Iranian writer (Porochista Khakpour), and a Bosnian writer (Aleksandar Hemon). We are building a basis of comparison of the immigrant experience as we go.

One element, among many, of these stories that is fascinating to me is how each author portrays the picture of America in her/her imagination. Galang describes her character's dreams of an America full of luxury, peopled by a supportive Filipino community where they "won't work like dogs" and can "sleep in a big soft bed". Our Iranian author's character imagines America as "basketball courts in every yard, restaurants where you can eat endlessly for a one-time fee, child entertainers who made ten times what the president did." One wretched Bosnian immigrant arrived and found something entirely different: she "hated America and Americans, their provincialism, their stupid, rootless culture of cheeseburgers and cheap entertainment". A Peruvian artist desperately wants to stay in New York even though his thoughts would seem to belie that desire: "Americans always feel bad. They wander the globe carrying this opulent burden. They take digital photographs and buy folk art, feeling a dull disappointment in themselves, and in the world. They bulldoze forests with tears in their eyes."

I look forward to our Zoom gatherings in 2021 when we will discuss short stories written by authors from India, Nigeria, Dominican Republic, South Korea, and many more. Each story brings us into a different world and helps to shape our view and personal experience of the country we call our own.

—*Louise DiMattio*

*We don't stop playing because we grow old;  
we grow old because we stop playing.*  
—George Bernard Shaw

## Add Activity to Your Day: Zoom Classes and Workshops

For classes and workshops from exercise to writing to cooking to arts and crafts to tech help and much more, check out the Community Living Campaign's zoom events, Monday through Friday at <http://www.sfcommunityliving.org/events>

**Save the Date**  
**February 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**OWL Presents**

**Navigating the Hospital System and Beyond**

I thought I knew a lot about this until a recent illness requiring several days in the hospital revealed the extent of my ignorance about patient's rights, Medicare, discharge planning and more. Add in that I felt awful physically and it was tough. For example, after several hours in ER, I was told "we are holding you for observation." Whoa! I had a vague memory from an earlier OWL program that this was not the same as being actually admitted and could adversely affect Medicare coverage but I did not know what to do and hadn't the energy to do anything. It turned out to be irrelevant but I need to know against a time when that would not be the case.

I was grateful that I have an Advance Directive and named "medical agents" who will both fight for me or follow my wishes for ending treatment. The former proved to be my need this time. It is so crucial that we have this document in place, available to the hospital, and the named people contacted and knowledgeable about health care.

The discharge process was difficult. No need to go into why but it was a clear example of having in place people who are committed to my best care and who know enough to fight for me.

For the February OWL zoom meeting program, we will have a presenter who can outline some of the most important patient's rights. At some point in the future, everyone of us will need to know these things and have those "medical agents" in place. There will be time for questions, too, so have yours ready and join us on February 27<sup>th</sup>. Watch for instructions on how to join in.

—*Glenda Hope*

## **Witnessing History and Telling Our Story**

Witnessing History and Telling Our Story was the theme of the OWL program for October, when members shared "turning points" and certain "epiphanies." Many experiences related to racial justice (or injustice), and members also shared experiences with gender inequality and new organizations like the Peace Corps that were turning points in their lives .

A member of the board spoke of growing up without a single friend of any other race until she entered grad school in Richmond, VA. in 1958. There she became friends with a Black woman, who like her was enrolled in a Presbyterian seminary. Waiting for the bus into Richmond, the two friends talked as they boarded the bus. She sat down, sliding over to make room for her friend, not thinking about race until that friend walked past to the back of the bus. It was a mind-blowing awakening, preparing her for what came next! Later, doing required field education on a college campus, she joined with other seminary students in convening a weekend retreat for all five Richmond colleges, including the all-Black student body of Virginia Union. The first sit-ins had just occurred in Greensboro, NC, and they spent the weekend talking and praying about this. Returning to campus, she asked the Dean of her seminary if she could organize a meeting of seminary and VA. Union students to discuss picketing of a discriminatory department store in Richmond. She said she knew this could have repercussions for the school. He replied: "This school was started in the Providence of God and will continue in the Providence

of God, but only if people like you follow as you believe God leads. Go ahead." The resultant meeting led to many white and black seminary students joining the picketing. The Dean's words changed our OWL friend's life forever. She said: "They became the watchword for me as so many times I was lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time with they right people who led me on."

Never think your encouraging words of justice-seeking to another are unimportant. Last June, at age 84, this OWL member organized a weekly Black Lives matter vigil on a busy avenue which continues to this day.

This led another member, a Black woman, to say "I didn't know any white people. We lived on our own land, and I never experienced segregation until we went to the city." She recounted a 1964 law that said there would not be separate cafeterias. She had noticed that the cafeteria in the front of a bus station was clean, but the one at the back was dirty. Then she realized that the inferior one was meant for people who were Black. Rather than integrate the bus station, they closed it down. She was only eleven years old that year, but the experience made a lasting impression. She went to a traditional Black college in 1970, when "Black is Beautiful" was the prevailing message, and she didn't feel out of place again until she went to Stanford for law school in 1974 and was with people who were both white and rich.

Another member, from Louisiana, said that she remembered that the municipal pool in Louisiana was an important part of her life growing up, but when they were ordered to integrate it, they just did away with it

*continued p.7*

entirely. She grew up playing with the children of the people who worked for her mother's business, and many of these children were Black.

Another attendee spoke of growing up on Long Island and realizing that there was redlining—definite segregation there-- a realization that was a turning point, bringing her to San Francisco in the late 1970s because she sought and appreciated the diversity here.

Still another member said that she grew up in Daly City and attended Mercy High School in the 1960's. Her first contact with Black kids was through her church, St. Michael's, and when masses were held in private homes, the African-Americans invited people into theirs.

Another woman wrote about growing up in Chicago, where every ethnic group had a different neighborhood. She went to a catholic grammar school, but she was aware of Chinatown, the Italian Mafia, etc. She made Black friends in the choirs she sang in and at summer camp in art school. When they traveled to Birmingham, Alabama, the bus made a stop, and she used the restroom, which seemed unusually small and not kept up. Then she realized that she was using the "colored" restroom, and she noticed the colored water fountains, too. Separate and unequal.

A couple of members said that there was less hypocrisy in the South than in other parts of the nation. Most people expressed the belief that racism is systemic, and the system isn't only in the South.

A Black woman spoke of growing up in Chicago's West Side when all the "smart Black people were on the South Side." It was one of the most segregated parts of the city. She paid attention to the War in Vietnam only because her brother was serving in the military there, and after Bush's election in 2000, she thought the nation needed help, so she supported Howard Dean, who invited her to a grass roots gathering. That's when she started to understand that individuals needed to work with other individuals, and even if their candidate is defeated in the election, the ideas won't go away. She became active in Democracy for America and said that policies and laws make a difference. She is now the Director of the League of Women Voters of California.

Another woman related the violent end to her marriage, when she lost everything including her own ballet business and was helped by an African-American choreographer, Alonzo King, the director of Alonzo King LINES Ballet, who took her as a teacher into what he called his family. This was a turning point for her as well as for Black American choreographers, and it was at the same time as the Alvin Ailey.

Two OWL members remembered turning points for women at work in the 70's. OWL member Barbara Gersh worked for Bechtel Corporation in the mid-seventies, and was part of the group that formed Bechtel Women for Affirmative Action (BWAA). Their major issue was for job listings to be posted. At the time, open positions were filled by the "old boys network" before women or minorities even knew an opening existed. In the course of her activism, she was actively

harassed, including having her bosses changed frequently, each one more critical of her, despite a history of outstanding performance reviews and promotions. Several of the women involved in BWAA turned out to be "finks" who reported everything to Bechtel management. In one instance, less than a minute after a conversation with one of these women, she received a threatening call from a Bechtel attorney. The woman she'd spoken with was later rewarded with a promotion to an HR position, as were most of the other "finks." Since she realized that her career at Bechtel would progress no further, she left a few months later. After leaving, she joined a class action, and her share of the settlement paid for her first car!

Many of the women at companies like Bechtel, Chevron and Bank of America were also active in Women Organized for Employment (WOE) which was pushing for open job listings and other opportunities for women across companies. At demonstrations organized by WOE, they only participated at companies other than their own, in order to protect their jobs. After a few years of sustained organizing, most companies began posting open positions.

Glenda Hope conducted women's awareness training for a group of Standard Oil of CA (SOCAL) women in the early 70's. After a year of monthly sessions, she pushed our future OWL member Joan Downey and others out of the nest. The women formed SWAA: SOCAL Women for Affirmative Action, had a newsletter and monthly meetings. Feeling empowered, they spent the next year writing a position paper on the changes they wanted to give women an equal footing with men in the company. At the time, there were 1000 executive level men in San Francisco and 6 women. Open job posting was at the top of the list. At that time, open positions were filled by managers (white males) asking their colleagues (more white males) who they wanted transferred into the open job. As employees, the women had nothing to say about it. It took a number of years of perseverance, but that, along with other changes they demanded, happened.

Hearing JFK's words at his inauguration, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country," a member said her life was changed leading to her becoming part of the Peace Corps and going to India. This prompted another member to describe how the creation of the Peace Corps saved her from having to marry three men for cross-cultural purposes. Since the age of twelve, she had fantasized having three foreign husbands in different parts of the world so she could immerse herself and her three children (one from each of these foreign husbands) in the language and culture of each country. She knew she would have to break a law or two to do this, so she was relieved when the Peace Corps was founded and she could immerse herself in the culture and language of another country as a Peace Corps Volunteer

—*Tina Martin*

## What Are You Reading?

Gail Collins, a New York Times columnist, has been a favorite of mine for books about the history of women in this country. Her last book, *No Stopping Us Now* is subtitled *The Adventures of Older Women in American History*. If you ever get to thinking older women haven't made much progress, her books quickly disabuse you of that notion. It's hard to even imagine from this vantage point what it must have been like to be an older woman in earlier centuries, not to mention our grandmothers' and mothers' eras. Older women are a distinct subset of women in general.

Collins always has a light touch, so it's fun. She chronicles women from politics to entertainment - from Eleanor Roosevelt and Betty Friedan, to Mary Tyler Moore and Helen Gurley Brown. I've lived long enough that I kept recognizing women's issues I'd forgotten; one example is pantsuits. I was even surprised to come upon some information about the formation of OWL, its founders and founding and some of the reasons behind its creation. Do yourself a favor and read this. It's full of information and an easy read. And Collins has a wry sense of humor, making it even more fun to read.

—*Kathie Piccagli*

*The Cutting Season* by Jessica Locke uses the genre of a murder mystery to engage us in history past and present in some surprising ways. You will like the characters. You will find the plot intriguing and the ending not what you expected. One critic wrote: "Taut, hauntingly resonant, and beautifully written,

*The Cutting Season* is a thoughtful meditation on how America reckons its past with its future." Dennis Lehane said of the author: "I'd probably read the phone book if her name were on the spine." Read this book and I predict you, too, will become of one of her fans.

—*Glenda Hope*

*Spirits of San Francisco: Voyages through the Unknown City* by Gary Kamiya, illustrations by Paul Madonna, came out in early October 2020, which was also when I found out that my son Jonathan, who had been living in New York City for twelve years, would be moving back to San Francisco. I've mentioned (perhaps ad nauseum, because it means so much to me) that Jonathan and I founded the JoMama Book Club in November 2007 and have monthly book discussions—usually on Google Chat and in written form so that we'll have a diary of these exchanges through the years. We read Gary Kamiya's *Cool, Gray City of Love: 49 Views of San Francisco* in 2013, when Jonathan was visiting and were able to explore places like Grandview Park, the mosaic steps at Moraga and 16th, and the beautiful stairs all over the city.

I was thrilled that a new Gary Kamiya book on SF would be available when Jonathan moved back to the area on November 1st. Meanwhile, I left shelter-in-place long enough to visit Jonathan's new neighborhood on Telegraph Hill twice—once by myself and once with a friend. He had looked online at about a thousand places and this was the place that most

appealed to him. We found out that Frida Kahlo had lived there briefly, in the apartment below his, although that wasn't mentioned in the book, as I realized when I sat down to read it and looked at Paul Madonna's illustration on the front. It looked like Calhoun Street, the extension of Union Street where Jonathan would be living. So I looked at the index and found 9 pages about the history of that street. Sure enough, it was the one on the cover! The spirits include "the haunted balcony" and a character from the Gold rush days, Doc Robinson. There have also been movies made there at the intersection.

I had the perfect welcoming gift for Jonathan! I wrote an inscription to him, underlined key passages (because we know from the book *Marginalia* that it increases the value of a book), and got it in the mail the Friday before his Monday arrival. Would I recommend the book? If you have a son whose block is depicted on the cover! Seriously, if you know the city really well and are hungry for new tidbits, yes. But if you haven't yet read *Cool, Gray City of Love: 49 Views of San Francisco*, I recommend starting with it. Kamiya also writes "Portals of the Past," a Saturday column every two weeks in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and gives guided tours.

—*Tina Martin*

Good books were shared virtually at OWL's December Holiday meeting:

*All Blood Runs Red: The Legendary Life of Eugene Bullard - Boxer, Pilot, Soldier, Spy* by Phil Keith with Tom Clavine. Bullard was the first Negro combat pilot in World War I, a daredevil ace who was made a member of the French Foreign Legion...and there was much more to this man's life.

*The Overstory* by Richard Powers. The novel is about five trees whose unique life experiences with nine Americans bring them together to address the destruction of forests.

*Elizabeth is Missing* by Emma Healy. Maud, an aging grandmother, is slowly losing her memory - and her grip on everyday life. Yet she refuses to forget her best friend Elizabeth, whom she is convinced is missing and in terrible danger. Although the recent tv production of *Elizabeth is Missing* was well done, the book tells a much richer and satisfying story of love and loss.

*No Man's Land: The Trailblazing Women Who Ran Britain's Most Extraordinary Military Hospital During World War I* by Wendy Khadijah Moore. In September 1914, a month after the outbreak of the First World War, two British doctors, Flora Murray and Louisa Garrett Anderson, set out for Paris. There, they built a makeshift hospital in Claridge's, the luxury hotel, and treated hundreds of casualties carted in from France's battlefields.

## December Holiday Meeting We Celebrate on Zoom

OWLs gathered in Zoom to elect new board members Louise Di Mattio and Lela Harris, to recommend books (see previous page), to remember holiday traditions and recipes and spread some cheer. We looked forward to the close of a difficult year and to plans in January for work in the new one.

## The Little Man of January

Growing up in rural Louisiana, the holidays weren't over until Le Petit Bonhomme Janvier, or the little man of January, made his appearance on the Eve of Epiphany, celebrated on January 6th, 12 days after Christmas. In preparation for le petite bonhomme, excited children hung their stockings to be filled with apples, oranges and candy. The next day, Epiphany was a holy day and the whole family went to church to celebrate the Magi's (or the three wise men's) visit to the newborn Jesus. On that day, Jesus was recognized as the Son of God, fully human as well as fully divine.

The custom of Le Petit Bonhomme Janvier is fading in our modern world, unable to compete with the more glamorous and materialistic Santa Claus who made his appearance in Louisiana in the late 1800's. For those living in the rural, French speaking southern part of the state, Santa was introduced even later, so Le Petit Bonhomme Janvier remained the delight of small children well into the early 1900's. He is still honored in some homes, but fewer and fewer. It is sad to see this custom fade away. The little man of January was a simple reminder that the festivities, no matter how joyful, are not complete until we take a moment to remember that children are at the heart of the holidays and to contemplate the divine within each and every child.

—Melanie Grossman

## Visit OWL SF on Facebook!

<https://facebook.com/OWLSF/>

It's another place to keep in touch with OWL SF. Take time to check out the activity on our Facebook page. Add comments and suggest posts. After a bit of a face-lift our page is more active than ever with new photos, news and events added often.

## Holiday Recipes Kugel

From Melanie Grossman a Hanukkah dish to try.

1 lb. Medium noodles (boiled and drained)  
1 stick butter—add to noodles and mix after noodles are drained

Add:

1 lb. Cottage cheese  
1 cup sour cream  
1 cup milk combined with 6 beaten eggs  
½ cup sugar

Mix all ingredients together and pour into large buttered casserole. Sprinkle with cinnamon-sugar and top with crumbled corn flakes.

Bake at 375 for 45 minutes to an hour or until center is firm.



## Robin's Marinated Mushrooms

A favorite appetizer at our holiday meals from Margaret Lew.

1 to 2 pounds medium-sized white button mushrooms  
Juice of 2 or 3 Meyer lemons  
1 Tablespoon salt

Zest of the lemons  
1 tsp peppercorns  
1 bay leaf  
4-5 cloves of garlic, crushed  
sprigs of parsley  
fresh oregano (optional)  
red pepper flakes (optional)

Jar with lid – mayonnaise or large pickle jar (abt. 1 qt.)

Clean the mushrooms and blanch them in boiling water for 3 minutes. Drain them in a colander.

Layer mushrooms and pickling ingredients in the jar. Dissolve the salt in the lemon juice and pour over the mushrooms. If the juice does not come to the top of the mushrooms, add a little water to cover them. Put the lid on the jar and marinate the mushrooms in the refrigerator for 3 days. Turn the jar several times during the three days.

## Calendar

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

January 4 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 5:00-6:00pm (via Zoom)

January 23 Saturday — OWL General Meeting 11-Noon Resolutions for 2021 (via Zoom)(details on cover)

February 1 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-5:00pm (via Zoom)

February 27 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 11:00-Noon Navigating Hospital and Beyond (via Zoom)

March 1 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-5:00pm (via Zoom)

March 27 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 11-Noon topic to be announced (via Zoom)

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 –\$10.) 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

OWL SF  
870 Market Street, #905  
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](mailto:owlsf@owlsf.org)