

OWL

The voice of mid-life and older women

NEWSLETTER

San Francisco



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

July - September 2022

Email: info@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.

LET'S DO LUNCH !!!



The Board Of OWLSF is very pleased to invite Members to a complimentary, in-person gathering for lunch and camaraderie on Saturday, July 23rd at noon. You may bring one guest as well.

Where: Northern District Police Station Community Room,
1125 Fillmore (cross street, Turk).

Food: Box lunches from Angelina's Deli.

RSVP by July 16th: info@owlsf.org, or (415) 712-1695, specify one or two attending, and preference for vegetarian or non-vegetarian lunch.

PLEASE JOIN US! WE'D LOVE TO SEE YOU!

OWL SF * PO Box 170622, San Francisco, Ca. 94117
Phone 415-712-1695 * Web site: www.owlsf.org

Protecting Social Security and Medicare June 2022 OWL Membership Meeting

On June 25, OWL welcomed back Jodi Reid, Executive Director of California Alliance of Retired Americans, and longtime advocate for older citizens in the Bay Area and California. Always well informed and very willing to share her expertise with Older Women's League, Jodi updated OWL members on new developments with Social Security and Medicare. There was indeed no shortage of interesting developments!



An important new Social Security bill, H.R.5723, promises to benefit Social Security recipients in several ways: 1) raising the threshold on non-Social Security income to \$50,000 (\$100,000 for couples) before Social Security income can be taxed, 2) increasing benefits for current and new beneficiaries by 2%, 3) improving the annual cost of living adjustment formula to provide protection against inflation, and 4) protecting low-income workers by establishing a new minimum benefit set at 25 % above the poverty level rather than below it.

H.R.5723 would also strengthen the Social Security Trust Fund to ensure solvency for years to come by gradually increasing the contribution rates and raising the cap at which payroll taxes are no longer collected from the present \$147,000 to \$400,000. A payroll tax reallocation would also ensure the solvency of the Disability Insurance Trust Fund.

OWL members can take action to support H.R.5723 by calling their representatives in Washington using the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and asking them to support H.R.5723 and by spreading the word about these important adjustments to Social Security among friends and family living in other parts of the US.

Our speaker then turned to Medicare and the threat of privatization through ACO-REACH (Accountable Care Organizations Realizing Equity, Access, and Community Health). Under this model, traditional Medicare beneficiaries, frequently without their knowledge, are moved out of traditional fee for services Medicare plans into programs run by for-profit investment groups.

With this new program, Medicare pays enlisted for profit healthcare corporations a fixed amount of money (in advance and per person) for the delivery of health services. They are then allowed to keep as much as 40% of the Medicare payment as profit. Once enrolled in an ACO model, it is difficult for patients to return to traditional Medicare, where the patient, and not a corporation, is in control. Whether equity, access and community health can be realized by this corporate model is also doubtful.

President Biden can put a halt to this program, which has flown under the radar with little or no action from our elected leaders. An OWL Alert has already gone out on this, but for those who haven't seen it, call President Biden at (202) 456-1111 and demand he use executive action to end ACO- REACH today. Also, OWL members can sign a petition on this at <ProtectMedicare.net/REACHPetition>.

Additionally, Medicare's 57th Anniversary will be celebrated at the end of July (actual birthday is July 30th). There will be an in-person event in front of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid office in San Francisco on July 29th at 11am. Look for an OWL Alert on this or check the OWL website as more details are available.

OWL members had many comments and questions following this electrifying presentation. Jodi Reid suggested OWL members sign up for future updates on these topics by emailing her at <jreid.cara@gmail.com>.

—*Melanie Grossman*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Carla Kraus
Diana Taylor

Board Members
Maxine Anderson, co-VP
Paula Barber
Louise DiMattio
Joan Downey, Treasurer
Melanie Grossman, co-VP
Glenda Hope
Margaret Lew
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, 4:00-5:00 pm, Zoom link available on request

Phone: (415) 712-1695
Email: info@owlsf.org
Web: www.owlsf.org
Mail: Post Office Box 170622, San Francisco, CA 94117

Meet New Board Member Paula Barber

In 2016, after 30 years, I retired as executive director of the Center for Family Counseling, a non profit family counseling organization in East Oakland.

I moved to California in 1973 from Kansas City. I attended college at William Woods College and graduated from Drake University, Des Moines Iowa in 1969. Following graduation I spent 2 years in the Peace Corps teaching English in Bangkok, Thailand.



When I returned to the States I worked in downstate Illinois as a county coordinator for McGovern for President, but we all know how that turned out. So I came to San Francisco to visit a Peace Corps colleague and have been here ever since.

My first job here was at Union Carbide where I had the good fortune to meet Glenda Hope who facilitated a women's group. And through Glenda I met Joan Downey. While at Union Carbide I had my first daughter. However upon her birth I was fired and was forced to sue them, fortunately successfully, and with the settlement bought a house and moved to Oakland.

After that I worked a variety of jobs in the non profit sector and property management until I began working at the Center for Family Counseling, first as a program director and then as executive director, until my retirement. My second daughter was born during that period.

My oldest daughter has married and I have two grandchildren, six and two. She and her family live in the house compliments of Union Carbide and I live in "grandma's house" the converted garage. My younger daughter lives nearby in Oakland with her partner, an Oakland firefighter.

Since my retirement I enjoy spending time with my grandchildren as well as reading, activities like OWL and the League of Women Voters, walks with other retired friends and some traveling (before the pandemic).

No General Meeting in
August, OWL will be
On Vacation.



Save the Date

OWL's November Ballot Measures Meeting

September 17th
11am to 12:30pm

*Latino/Hispanic Room
San Francisco's Main Library
Civic Center, 100 Larkin Street.*

After a hiatus of almost two years due the Covid 19 pandemic, the Older Women's League will hold an *in-person* membership meeting this September. The meeting will focus on selected ballot measures for the upcoming November elections and will feature OWL's traditional "for and against" format to hear both sides of each selected measure. Note, due to availability of the room, this meeting will be held on the 3rd Saturday of September, rather than the usual 4th Saturday of the month.

We look forward to seeing all of you there!

Do You Stream?

I've been streaming a lot more these past couple of years and would love to hear what others are watching and would recommend. Here's a few I enjoyed:

Mrs. America (9 episodes on Hulu) It's about Phyllis Schlafly's fight against the Equal Rights Amendment movement during the 1970's. All the characters from the women's movement are there: Gloria Steinem, Bella Abzug, Shirley Chisholm, Betty Friedan. I'm not sure that it's factually correct, but it's fun to watch.

North Country (movie on Prime) A fictionalized account of the first major successful sexual harassment case in the United States, Jenson vs. Eveleth Mines, where a woman who endured a range of abuse while working as a miner filed and won the landmark 1984 lawsuit.

Borgen (38 episodes on Netflix, in Danish with subtitles) A political drama about a prime minister's rise to power, and how power changes a prime minister.

Money Heist (41 episodes on Netflix) An unusual group of robbers attempt to carry out the most perfect robbery in Spanish history - stealing 2.4 billion euros from the Royal Mint of Spain.

What's your favorite?

—Joan Downey

Political Advocacy Report

The Political Advocacy Committee continues to focus on national, state and local issues of concern to older women. Some issues are ongoing, such as housing, the environment, immigration, long-term care, and many others. Then, of course, Social Security and Medicare are always on our radar. Read more about both important programs in this month's newsletter.

Two ongoing concerns in the forefront recently are the closure of parts of JFK to cars and the continued cuts to classes, services and jobs to San Francisco's City College. OWL continues to push for a compromise solution on JFK Drive, which would allow JFK to remain open on weekdays and closed on weekends only, making access to all sights in Golden Gate Park available to the elderly and the disabled at least some of the time.

The campaign to restore the original mission of City College to serve all San Franciscans and communities has been another ongoing effort. A determined attempt is underway to gather signatures for ballot measures on both issues. Time is limited, so be on the lookout for signature gatherers in your neighborhood to support these ballot measures that benefit seniors and the disabled.

A new concern of many of San Francisco's senior advocacy groups, including OWL, is the threatened closure of Laguna Honda Hospital (LHH). This threat has been precipitated by the regulatory crack-down and recertification process imposed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) following safety and other violations at LHH. The violations occurred following the SF Department of Public Health's institution of its "Flow Project," which moves SF General Hospital patients no longer needing acute care into Laguna Honda Hospital for care and rehabilitation.

In the past, LHH evaluated all patients referred, deciding if admission was appropriate in terms of its ability to meet patients' needs, provide suitable programs and keep everyone (patients and staff) safe. With the Flow Program, patients were discharged to LHH automatically, even when special programs and staff to treat those with addictions and mental illnesses were not in place. The number of traditional nursing home patients dropped, hurting older women particularly since women historically occupy a higher percentage of nursing home beds. Safety and other violations occurred, causing Medicare and Medicaid certification to be withdrawn.

As a result, LHH can no longer accept new patients and must begin to relocate all its 760 patients, an impossible task, and a cruel one for patients who call LHH home and might face out of county transfers. At the same time, LHH must embark upon an arduous recertification process. The City has engaged consultants to help with this, and if all goes well, LHH may be out of danger by 2023. Sadly, this whole costly disaster could have been avoided. What is long overdue is a city-wide plan to deal with the problems of addictions, mental illness, lack of coordinated services and housing so that patients discharged from hospitals and in need of short or long term care and rehabilitation have a safe place to go. Such a plan is long overdue!

—*Melanie Grossman*



Virtual Summer Activities

Community Living Campaign of San Francisco offers a great choice of activities for your summer months. Contact: <https://sfcommunityliving.org/event> to see details for participating in these events and to view the entire calendar of online and in-person activities.

Qigong, Chinese Yoga with David Wei, Mondays at 4-5pm, Fridays at 2:30pm. Good circulation good health.

Dance for Strength with Kyra, Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10am, low impact senior-friendly.

Always Active Senior Exercise Class, virtual classes Monday Wednesday and Friday 10-11am until we can all meet again in person.

Writing for Remembering with Marina, Wednesday 1-2:30pm. Have you begun your memoir yet?

Wednesday Android Help Desk, 3:30-5:30pm for those of you with a cellphone or other Android device and questions about its features and/ or problems.

Art with Elders: Painting and Drawing, Mondays 2:15-3:45pm.

Drama with Friends: Three Short Plays, 6:45-8:30pm Monday, July 18 and third Monday in August. Exercise your acting chops or just listen to the 3 short plays by Bay Area playwrights. If you want to read a part contact Judy Goddess (judygoddess@gmail.com).

Investigating Accessibility In Golden Gate Park

Disabled activists in the United States courageously gained rights for people with disabilities in the 1970s and continue to advocate for people who are not able-bodied. OWL, CARA, and SDA are among the organizations that have spoken out against the closure of the Great Highway and 1.5 miles of JFK Drive to traffic because they want the same access-by-cars that they have had in the past.

Unfortunately, they didn't show up to demonstrate the difficulties posed by the closure when several accessibility tours were announced last September 2021. Melanie Grossman and I went to one of the accessibility tours that month, but no one who showed up at Fulton and 8th Avenue was disabled except for a woman who said she felt safer with JFK Drive closed to traffic. At a couple of CARA meetings we talked about a contingent of disabled people showing up with their walkers and their wheelchairs, but it never happened.



Meanwhile, environmentalists and organizations for pedestrian safety tout the closure, and Parks and Recreation officials say they're making sure that people with mobility issues will have access.

Are they?

The ill-will of opposing sides has gotten so strong that an inflammatory letter was passed on from a group of advocates for people with disabilities that made them look like hate-mongers, showing a photo of bicycles around a shuttle bus and purporting that it was evil bicyclists deliberately blocking disabled people in transit. It sounded like the kind of right-wing stuff we get from Trump supporters who are sure that progressives are intent on destroying the nation. Once questioned, the writer checked and found out that it was children on bicycles who had been brought to Golden Gate Park by the staff of the de Young Museum. Glenda wisely reminded us that we need to check out purported facts before passing them on. Glenda Hope, Kathie Piccagli, and I plan to check out JFK Drive on July 5th, when I'll drive to the handicapped parking area at the end of Nancy Pelosi Drive across the street from the Conservatory of Flowers, where we'll see the Dahlias. Then we will take a shuttle to get to another part of the park. Will we find a parking place? Will we make it to the Dahlias? How long will we have to wait for the shuttle? How hard will it be to board?

We'll take pictures every step of the way and let you know in the next OWL Newsletter.

—*Tina Martin*

Worlds in Collision

Worlds in Collision, the title of the art show of Filipino artist Carlos Villa at the Asian Art Museum in Civic Center, is very much worth seeing. The show of about 15 of his works from the 1970s show his emergence as a multicultural artist who wanted to get away from the European art that was expected of him. He makes this very clear in the short video shown with his works—recommend watching it.

Born in San Francisco's Tenderloin in 1936 to immigrant parents, Carlos Villa took his first art lessons from a cousin and spent some time in NYC pursuing his artistic career but returned to SF in 1969 where he changed his artistic direction completely.

He based his new works on traditional sources from Africa, the Americas, and Oceania, especially influenced by the indigenous peoples of the Pacific, a return to his ethnic roots. He used natural materials, feathers, bones, hair, even blood, and coiled serpentine forms appear in many of the works. Also see the work "Tat2" from his Tatu series—did he really put all those tattoos on his face?—see how he did it.

Worlds in Collision, the title of the show, is actually taken from a course he taught for many years at the San Francisco Art Institute that aimed to decolonize art history's white, Eurocentric focus. He definitely succeed in this in his own works and paid "utang" meaning tribute through his artwork to those who came before him and had to find their way as artists as he has done.

In addition to the show at the Asian Museum through October 24, you can walk a couple blocks over to the Veterans Building on Van Ness and McAllister and see more of Carlos Villas artwork at the S.F. Arts Commission's main gallery until August 20.

—*Betty Traynor*

Where were you in 1950?

This year the US Census of 1950 is available for us to see our families at home 72 years ago. What can you learn about your family in the Census? The information in these records is fairly slim: Persons in a household are listed with street address, first and last names, age, gender, race, relationship to head of household, marital status, citizenship, place of birth, occupation and employer. Additional data was collected for some: parents' place of birth, residence location in prior year, level of education, amount of income, military service.

In a monthly Zoom meeting of the SF Genealogy group at the SF Public Library I learned about the 1950 Census project at FamilySearch.org and joined the volunteers (around 130,000) to work on the index of names generated by computer. The completed index will allow everyone to search for people in the Census and to see and copy the original digitized US Census records online – free. Working online we compare computer-scanned index entries with an image of the original Census page to verify or correct the scanned data. Sometimes “decoding” handwriting of the original census enumerators adds a little challenge to computer scanners and us as well. A page in a neat hand is a joy, but there were many scrawls to make up for that! I am reviewing households which involves making sure data for a person and his or her house mates (family, boarders, friends or other residents) is correct. A single person or family may be a household, and sometimes a household consists of all the residents of a hotel, prison, hospital or military base.

Why am I doing this? I am curious about my family and places we have lived. We can't choose locations to work on more precise than a city, I've chosen to work on San Francisco and I have learned a lot about the ethnic and economic make up of varied neighborhoods 70 years ago. My husband's family lived on Grant Avenue and I got very close to seeing them at one point, drawing a page on the exact block but finding all the households to verify at addresses on the opposite side of the street! Enumeration pages are given to us at random.

Doing genealogy research has changed over the years, but the aim is always to find original records. When I began that meant lots of email and correspondence, and trips to libraries and archives to see the microfilmed US Census records. Now many vital records are digitized and available online. There is a bit of a thrill to see your great grandparents names written in a 19th century hand by someone who sat with them to take down data. I'm looking forward to seeing myself, my parents and other relatives in 1950 when we volunteers are finished with our work and I can do a search from my desk.

—Margaret Lew

Go Out and See More this Summer

Discover & Go is a program provided by the SF Public library that offers free and low-cost passes for museums, science centers, zoos, theatres, and other cultural destinations. You must meet your library's minimum age requirement and live within your library's service area to use the Discover & Go Service.

How do I get a Pass? Log in with your library card credentials (<https://sfpl.discoverandgo.net/>) and browse for passes by date or attractions. Make your reservation and print or download your pass shortly before your visit. You can have two active reservations per library card. If you reserve a pass and do not use it or cancel the reservation, the unused pass will count towards your limit. Remember that once you print or download your pass you cannot cancel your reservation. Pass is non-transferable. Valid ID is required.

These passes may be available from libraries in other cities, so contact your local library to find out.

Missed an OWL Meeting? Listen to Audio Recordings

Audio recordings of OWL's monthly membership meetings are now available on the OWL SF web pages for our more recent Zoom enabled events: go to Events find the meeting, where you will find a link to the audio recording made for you.

Cleaning up? Downsizing?

Take your items to the
Community Thrift store
623 Valencia Street
(on the corner of Valencia and
Sycamore, near 17th street.)
(415)861-4910



Access the loading dock from Mission onto Sycamore between 17th and 18th. Tell them: ***These are for the Older Women's League of San Francisco.*** OWL SF receives 40% of anything that sells!

What Are You Reading?

The Righteous Mind by Jonathan Haidt

Is it possible that we progressives are getting as reactionary and narrow-minded as the right wing we scorn? Social psychologist Jonathan Haidt, author of *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided in Politics and Religion*, shows some evidence that we are. In fact, we may not even consider that people of differing political views are good people. We are the righteous ones. We even pride ourselves on not listening to anyone who's not like-minded because we're determined not to compromise. We fear that if we keep an open mind, our brains will fall out.

This very good book shows a nation polarized into paralysis and suggests that we start to listen to people who have different views so we can form fact-based opinions and make decisions that are based on reality instead of preconceived notions. Haidt, an atheist and a liberal Democrat, shows evidence that religion can actually bring people together in a positive way and Conservatives can have ideas worth listening to. He also gives fascinating facts about how and where we form our opinions and shows evidence that we are not born as a blank slate but rather with a "rough draft" that can be revised by our experience. I learned so much from this book that I recommended it for two months of the JoMa Book Club discussion!

—Tina Martin

Riccardino by Andrea Camilleri

A friend of my sister asked us to recommend authors who write with humor and I thought of my long favorite Montalbano series. Andrea Camilleri's Montalbano mysteries are pretty serious on the crime level, but also full of humor. Best thing about the books: you get into Montalbano's mind and sometimes into his dreams.

The latest and last book in the series is *Riccardino*, a complicated mystery of a killing for Montalbano to solve. Now Montalbano's world is further complicated by the author's phone calls to him to compare his investigation with how he operates in the Montalbano tv series and to offer annoying advice on how to improve. It was sad to read the last pages of this book, aware that its author has died and left no more stories of this little corner of Sicily.

—Margaret Lew

OWL Bookclub News July, 2022

As we come, haltingly, gingerly, to the end of the pandemic, I am reflecting on the wonderful experiences I have had throughout these many months while leading the OWL Book Group. It has been a pure pleasure in every way. The short selections in our text, *Immigrant Voices, 21st Century Stories*, have been powerful ones, full of pathos as well as humor and even frustration as we contemplated the vagaries of the human condition under the stress of the unknown. We spent time reflecting on our own responses to the conundrum that the whole topic of immigration presents to us every single day. These shared stories made everything about this issue very personal and immediate.

Now, with a view to the Autumn, I have suggested that the book group move on to a volume entitled, *Her Own Accord, American Women on Identity, Culture and Community*. Some of the many authors in this volume include Toni Morrison, Tillie Olson, Sandra Tsing Loh and Native American Poet Laureate Joy Harjo. Author and Activist Roxanne Gay asks us to consider whether it is enough to define feminists as "just women who don't want to be treated like shit." All of the selections are short and full of things to discuss.

I am fortunate to have been able to procure copies of this volume for OWL members as well as for those of our group who consider themselves Friends of OWL but live some distance away from San Francisco. At this time, I am not certain when we will resume our meetings. I can assure you, though, that the group will continue to meet on Zoom because of the convenience of Zoom and the ability for women in the East Bay and the North Bay to join our conversation.

We will send out an OWL Alert just as soon as I know our plans for OWL meetings in general and for the book group in particular. I hope to "see" you online. I already miss you!

—Louise DiMattio

Like OWL SF on Facebook!

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

Calendar

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

July 4 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, cancelled

July 23 Saturday— OWL Summer Luncheon Noon See Cover Page for details

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

August — No General Meeting

September 5 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-5:00pm

September 17 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 11-12:30 November Ballot Measures

(See Page 3 for details)

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 \$10 –\$50.) Members receive the quarterly OWL SF Newsletter, advocacy Alerts and invitations to monthly meetings.

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
PO Box 170622
San Francisco, CA 94117

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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: info@owlsf.org