



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

October - December 2020

Email: owlsf@owlsf.org

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

**Join OWL on Zoom for
WITNESSING HISTORY**

Telling Our Story

Historical Events of the Past Sixty years

The 60s to the Present

- What events do you remember most vividly?
- How did events shape your values and principles?
- How did this time period shape the person you are today?
- What do you want the younger generation to know about this time period?

**Saturday, October 24th
11 AM to Noon**

ZOOM Meeting with Computer and Phone Access

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

Tipping Points, Share Yours at the OWL October Membership Meeting

My great-niece (strange term but it works for her) is a college student in Vermont. She recently emailed that she is part of an encampment outside the Burlington police station protesting the death of a young Black man and calling for far-reaching racial justice. She is not anti-police any more than we who joined into the Civil Rights Movement (for me that was 61 years ago) were. But she knows now, as we did then, that major changes need to be made in policing policies and culture as part of sweeping changes needing to be made in eliminating systemic racism. I know now that we white people in the South were focused on eliminating the Jim Crow laws and the discrimination they had fostered in so many ways. A worthy but limited goal. Emily and her young friends see much more than that.



Emily emailed: “We have been doing this for 23 days. This is taking too long.” Though I love her and am so proud of her, I had to laugh. Dear OWL friends, we have felt both that impatience and know how foolish it is because we have a much longer view. At the same time, let us pray for those encamped people in Vermont –and for all of us– to be patiently persistent and passionate in working for justice and love.

The October 24th OWL zoom meeting, Witnessing History, will be a time for the sharing of those change points—tipping points—turning points—in our own times which opened our minds and hearts to become no longer simply spectators but active agents of change toward justice. Our actions to date may be large or small, bold or restrained, consistent or episodic but they are important and become foundations on which to build the structures of “liberty and justice for all.” Join in on October 24th to share your story and to be inspired by those of others.

—*Glenda Hope*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Carole Glosenger
Sanae Kelly
Lisa R. Mandelstein

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

Newsletter
Margaret Lew, Editor

Political Advocacy Committee
Glenda Hope
Melanie Grossman
Co-Chairwomen

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

But Does It Make A Difference?

One hears this question voiced aloud and in print more and more. The answer, I think, is we don't know. At least we don't know immediately and may never know in our lifetime. But we do know that if we do not act on our beliefs we will not make a difference. We do know that silence equals consent to the status quo.

Several OWLS gather weekly with others as part of silent vigils for racial justice. They bring signs saying BLACK LIVES MATTER or addressing this movement in other ways such as "We are not trying to start a race war. We are trying to end one."

You are welcome to join in:

Every Thursday, 5-6, Geneva at San Jose Avenue

Every Friday, 4:-4:45, Geary at Laguna

Every Saturday, Noon, Potrero at 16th St.

Or, organize such a silent Vigil somewhere else.

Gloria Steinem, at age 86, reminds us: "It is not enough to press Send. You must put yourself out there." Find your own way to put yourself out there. Whatever else you decide to do, please also respond to the carefully chosen OWL Alerts and take action. Most of them take 5-10 minutes out of the 10,080 minutes we have each week.

—*Glenda Hope*

When I rise up
Let me rise up joyful
Like a bird.

When I fall
Let me fall without regret
Like a leaf.

—Wendell Berry



An OWL Writes to the Editor, San Francisco Chronicle October 7, 2020

Shocked, I watched the televised White House Rose Garden ceremony on Sept. 26, as President Trump introduced Supreme Court nominee Amy Coney Barrett to an audience of perhaps 100 people sitting side by side, with only one or two people wearing masks. Then followed the hail-fellow-well-met intermingling, people seeking friends, talking closely, again without masks.

My question: Does anyone know who the brave mask-wearers are? I want to congratulate them.

—*Sheila Malkind, San Francisco*

Masked OWLS Meet in August

OWLS joined for a virtual party on August 22nd via Zoom on computers and telephone to escape the pandemic doldrums.



Some of the masked OWLS on Zoom. Screenshot by Tina Martin

Many arrived in masks, funny, home made, artistic. One OWL was disguised in a wig. There was a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Vote with a quiz on Women's Suffrage led by Joan Downey. Some experiences were shared about our first cars (some hilarious, some alarming), voting stories, first time we voted, when, where, for whom, including humorous ones – Sy's driving a reluctant first time voter to the poll a block and a half away (will she do it again this year?) Margaret registering to put a 3rd party (Peace and Freedom) on the ballot but deciding not to vote for the candidate in the end. We missed the oldies music that Melanie had put together (technical problems) but maybe it will work out for December's party. As Tina remarked, it almost felt like we were physically together, and we were certainly together in spirit!

—*Margaret Lew*

Tech toddler

So wanting to walk
the walk of technology
reaching for it – smiling
but then BOOM!
I tumble flat
on my face
Tech Daddy Greg again
helps me up
and steadies me
and I try again
laughing
only to fall –
I cry
stamp my feet
But! Merrily try again
to do the tech walk.
Someday
I will be grown up
techwalker,
But for now I am a tech toddler.

—Sally Love Saunders (80 years young)

September Ballot Issues Meeting A Success

OWL's annual ballot issues meeting was held on Zoom on September 26th with an attendance of 33 including the speakers for three California state propositions and two San Francisco City and County issues, and 7 OWL first-time Zoom participants. Q&A was augmented by using "chat" where additional information and links were recorded by the speakers. The virtual meeting was judged a success, with speakers complimenting OWL on the civility and organization of the meeting.

Issues covered:

State of California

Proposition 15 Schools and Communities First: Changing Tax Assessments on Commercial and Industrial Property Pro: Rachita Rawal, Con: Catherine Baker

Proposition 16 Reinstatement of Affirmative Action Pro: Amy Wiwuga, Con: Richard Sander

Proposition 21 Local Rent Control
Pro: Susie Shannon, Con: Jennifer Hodgkins

City & County of SF Proposition D Oversight of Sheriff's Department
Pro: Barbara Atter, Con: Howard Epstein

Proposition B Split off street cleaning, sidewalks and sanitation from Public Works Dept, and create separate agency Pro: Jasper Wilde, Con: Howard Epstein

The speakers provided these links for further information:

From Catharine Baker
Op-Ed Supporting Prop. 15: <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2020/07/19/opinion-split/>
Op-Eds Opposing Prop. 15: Willie Brown <https://www.ocregister.com/2020/04/15/changing-prop-13-will-harm-small-businesses-especially-those-owned-by-minorities/>
Don Perata <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2019/10/20/opinion-prop-13-remains-a-revered-citizen-sponsored-initiative/>
Association of County Assessors (who will be charged with implementing it) <https://www.eastbaytimes.com/2020/06/28/opinion-costly-split-roll-initiative-wont-deliverpromised-revenues/>

From Amy Wiwuga
Yes on Prop 16 info Women's Roundtable with icons Gloria Steinem and Dolores Huerta
<https://fb.watch/LhVr1JrDn/>
Facts website: <https://voteyesonprop16.org/why-prop-16/facts/>
Full endorsement list: <https://voteyesonprop16.org/endorsements/>

From Jennifer Hodgkins
More information on Prop 21 <https://noonprop21.org/facts>

And Now, Contact Tracing Scams

The latest scam involves contact tracing. As states launch robust contact tracing programs, scammers are taking advantage. Scammers are sending texts with links or making robocalls claiming the recipient has been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19. Their goal? To pry sensitive personal information from people to steal their money or their identity. As the pandemic marches on, it's giving unique opportunities for scammers to get between you and your money. Please keep yourself - and your money - safe.

A contact tracer will never ask you for:

- Your social security number, financial or bank account information, or personal details unrelated to COVID-19.
- Photographs or videos of any kind;
- Your passwords; or
- Money or payment.
- Your personal information or send you any website link via a SMS/text message.

A contact tracer will ask for:

- Verification of your date of birth, address, and any other phone numbers you may have; and
- If you have already tested positive for COVID-19 they may also ask the date of your test and the name of your insurance company as additional verification.

—*Glenda Hope*

Proposition 25 Referendum on SB 10 Abolition of Money Bail

Senate Bill 10 (SB 10 replacing cash bail with risk assessments) is not, in its final form, the legislation we hoped for. However, the fact that we got legislation addressing the issue of money bail through the legislature was something; and, since it did go through the legislature there is always the opportunity to fine tune it, especially as it's recognized that it's not perfect.

Remember, the issue is: should someone be held in jail just because they don't have the means to pay bail? If you are well-heeled you can get out. If you make minimum wage you are stuck in jail because you can't pay the bail fees. Let's be clear, not being subject to money bail for a low level offense doesn't mean you don't have to show up in court for trial. It just means that you won't be housed in jail waiting for a hearing on a traffic offense or even a shop lifting offense just because you can't make bail. And for those talking about the organized shoplifting rings, remember the leaders of these have the money to make bail its their minions who'll be sitting at the jail.

For those who are fighting for criminal justice reform SB 10 is just an incremental step. If it's overturned than the chances of our moving forward and keeping people out of the criminal justice system will suffer a set back. Finally, it was the insurance industry, that stands to lose millions if we abolish money bail, that funded this ballot measure.

—*Maxine Anderson*

The Equal Justice Initiative: OWL's July Monthly Meeting

“Defendants are eleven times more likely to get the death penalty if the victim is white than if the victim is Black, and twenty-two times more likely to get death if the accused is Black and the victim is white.” That was just one of the fascinating and disturbing facts presented to OWL members on July 25, when our focus was on the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), the organization behind the action and activism in the book and film *Just Mercy*. Maxine Anderson, OWL member, who introduced Breana (Bre) Lamkin, said that she had first learned about EJI when it was featured on *60 Minutes*.

Bre Lamkin, an EJI Project Manager, gave us an overview of the need for reform in the criminal justice system and what EJI is doing to create that reform. Founded in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson, EJI is headquartered in Montgomery, Alabama, described by Lamkin as “the cradle of the Confederacy.” EJI is a non-profit organization. It has between five and eight attorneys in New York City and San Francisco. With 25% of executions happening in Alabama, there is no state-funded defense system. She explained that the public defender offices might give a capital case to an attorney trained only in divorce law and with no experience in criminal cases, so the accused have no equal protection under the law. For this reason, EJI will represent anyone on Death Row for free. Too often the guilty verdicts are race-based and class-based, she said “Our death penalty system treats you better if you’re rich and guilty than if you’re poor and innocent.” One out of nine of those executed is later exonerated. “Imagine if one of nine planes were to crash,” she said, pointing out that there should be the same outrage for the former that there is for the latter.

EJI also wants a focus on rehabilitation—not just punishment—so that when people are released from prison there will be less recidivism. There is now a Post-Release Education Program (PREP), a long-term supervised release program that concentrates on the needs of formerly incarcerated people who were children when they entered prison. Minors have sometimes been given life without parole, left to die in prison. EJI now has a campaign “All children are children,” emphasizing that they are vulnerable and need protection and help, not severe punishment and incarceration.

Lamkin also spoke to us of prison conditions, which are violent, under-funded, understaffed, and crowded. “There is a culture of violence in Alabama, which brought an investigation by American Civil Liberties Union in 2016.” In one case, a client was impregnated by a guard. Private prisons, where there is a profit motive, tend to be worse than public ones.

The subject of the money bail system was also brought up. Those who can afford to post bail are allowed out of jail until a hearing but those too poor to post

bail have to stay in. This November, Proposition 25 a referendum on abolishing California’s money bail system, will be on our ballot. (See article on page 4)

Also mentioned was Alabama Governor Kay Ivey’s proposal for a huge new prison complex. Lamkin was asked whether the prison problems in Alabama were representative of problems in all “justice” systems throughout the nation. The United States locks up more people than any other country in world. It has 5 percent of the world’s population but more than 20 percent of the world’s incarcerated population. 10% of US prisons are federally run and 90% are state run. EJI is not a prison abolitionist, but Blacks make up a much larger percentage of the prison population than they do the general population. Lamkin also pointed out that money we spend on prisons impacts our schools and communities.

Lamkin told us about the Legacy Museum, founded in 2018. The National Memorial for Peace and Justice documents the era of racial terror lynching between 1877 and 1950, and the Monument at the Peace and Justice Memorial Center honors victims of racial terror lynching or violence during the 1950s. There is now a soil-collecting project to commemorate the Black people who were lynched between 1872 and 1950. Soil is collected from the sites where they were lynched and the name of the victim is put on the jar containing the soil. Lamkin compared the soil-collecting project with the Stolperstein, the commemorative stones for the Jews whose lives were taken by the Nazis. These people—and the crimes against them—will be remembered. EJI’s Montgomery museum has also installed twenty-one historical markers acknowledging lynchings and giving the details. There will be another five this year.

During the question-answer period, one OWL member mentioned, in reference to the prison system, that San Francisco’s Juvenile Hall is going to be closed, and another mentioned the effort to stop the building of new prisons and the slogan “No New Jails.” Still another mentioned the way prisoners were forced to pay for their reading matter. (See the article by Barbara Gersh on page 8.)

Lamkin remarked that Emmett Till’s funeral was a turning point in awareness of the crimes against Blacks when Emmett Till’s mother made the decision to keep the casket open so people could see how her son had been mutilated for having whistled at a white woman. Another turning point in our nation’s awareness was the killing of George Floyd when, on Memorial Day 2020, he was held under the knee of a police officer for more than eight minutes as he was pleading for his life and shouting “I can’t breathe.” The killing of George Floyd was the immediate reason for OWL’s planning our June meeting with Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ), and this July meeting with the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI). Racial justice is one of our ongoing concerns. <https://www.owlssf.org/>

—Tina Martin

I am an Immigrant!

I cannot hide that I am an immigrant. As soon as I open my mouth, my accent gives me away. I have tried to get rid of it. So early on I took accent correction classes but without success. In my profession as a city planner I felt that my accent was sometimes a handicap, for example when I had to present projects to the public. With time, I came to the point to disregard this disadvantage and just to be as good a planner as I could be.

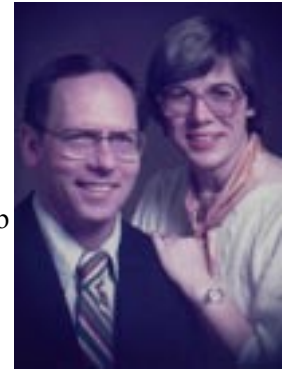
I was a little surprised to find out that some Americans hold grudges against immigrants when much of the population either descended from immigrants or are immigrants themselves. I noticed that the acceptance of immigrants has changed over the years and especially in the past four years under the current president who desires to limit or prohibit immigration to the US. Many Americans actually think this to be un-American, as America was built on the contributions of immigrants, refugees and slaves from all over the world.

Before I will talk about my personal immigration experience I would like to clarify my use of the terms “immigrant” and “refugee.” Immigrants are those who leave their home country voluntarily, often in search of better conditions or following their dreams or their husband as in my case. The receiving countries distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants depending on the conditions under which a person has entered the country, and treat them according to their perceived merits. Generally, immigrants can return to their home country for a visit or for good. On the other hand, refugees are persons who flee their country to escape prosecution, war, poverty, domestic violence, and other conditions under which they cannot live. Generally, it is very difficult for them to return to their country of origin unless there are great changes in their country allowing their return.

Now I would like to write about to my personal experiences of immigration. I met my husband, Marvin Horton, an American engineer, on vacation in Copenhagen, Denmark, in the youth hostel. A few years later, after I had graduated from the Technical University in Berlin in architecture and Marvin finished working in Finland and Turkey, we got married and lived in Milan, Italy, where Marvin had found a job, a short-term job in engineering design. In my opinion this was not really an immigration experience because we did not plan on staying.

We also lived in Al Khobar in Saudi Arabia for a year until the construction of a television station which Marvin superintended, was completed. Although Saudi Arabia was a totally new experience, to live in the sandy desert under palm trees with camels and having a house boy for the domestic work, we had no intention to stay there and bear the heat of more than 100 degrees in the hot season. There was always the possibility of packing up and flying home to Germany to my parents who had a spacious house and could accommodate us. We liked experiencing different

countries and, after Marvin’s job ended, traveled with our two-year old daughter Tina through Iran, Lebanon, Crete, and Italy back to Germany. As the economy had become more difficult in the early 1970s, Marvin decided to look for a job in the United States, and after a few months in his hometown, San Jose, California, he found a position in Butte, Montana, where he superintended the construction of an ore crusher. I bravely followed him and, as a new mother, did not pursue my own career.



Marvin and Inga, 1970.

The move to the United States was the beginning of my immigration. I had left Germany for good and started to feel homesick despite having a family with a lovely daughter and husband. My Father had coaxed me to pack my belongings and ship them to San Francisco. Besides making new friends, improving the command of the English language, and joining clubs, I started to invent my personal way of “developing my roots” by exploring the architecture and architectural history of the places where we lived.



Inga, 2015.

In Saudi Arabia I traveled with friends to a few old cities with local architecture, to oases and also new towns. I started to write an article about it, but it was never published.

The ghost towns of Montana had a special attraction for me. First I could not understand why Americans traveled all the way to Europe when they could enjoy these fascinating treasures in the Rocky Mountains. Actually, thinking about it, traveling to Europe or other places of origin seems especially important for US immigrants who want to stay connected with their roots, with their ancestry. And I am still homesick for Germany, for instance, when I walk on Ocean Beach and an airplane flies above me on its way to the East Coast and Europe, I wish I could be a passenger. Being homesick is a profound feeling many immigrants have, and I was lucky to be able to return home on vacations. Although I have lived now almost fifty years in the United States, the feeling of homesickness has not disappeared but has weakened. I automatically pay special attention to anything related to Germany, be it an item on the News, an article in a store made in Germany, or a German conversation overheard on the street.

My immigration experience was a little different from that of typical immigrants because I did not plan to resettle in a different continent trying to connect with relatives who had immigrated earlier or to pursue a place of my dreams or a new life. I just followed my

husband as his job search was the major determination for our new residence. I was also pretty privileged being well educated with the equivalent of a Master's degree in architecture and not having to seek education or employment at that time.

After Montana, we stayed again for a while in San Jose, California while Marvin looked for a position in a difficult job market. Because the situation was not promising and I was expecting our second child, I returned home to Germany to my parents. A few months after the birth of Kimberly, I started to look for a job hoping that Marvin would follow me to Germany. That did not happen. On the other hand, I was very lucky: I found a job as an Assistant Editor with a well-known architectural periodical, *Bauwelt*, in Berlin and got an offer to share a flat with a friend of a friend and her two young girls. It was not easy but with the help of a babysitter I managed. One of the problems was that Tina, my older daughter, was longing for her father and often cried: "I want to be with my Papa". Fortunately, he found a job with a big construction company in San Francisco and the family could reunite and settle down. We bought a modest row-house in the Sunset district near Ocean Beach where we still live today. Owning a house and - over time - remodeling it and making it "ours," certainly helped me feel at home in San Francisco and not longing to move back to Germany. After the death of my parents, the desire to visit Germany is less urgent although now my younger daughter Kimberly lives there and probably will not move back to California.

In addition to finding good friends and joining groups of interests there is one thing which has helped me significantly to "find my place" in California. That was attending graduate school at UC Berkeley, becoming a city planner and then working as a planner in the Bay Area. I loved that job, researching the built environment and exploring parts of the city, developing solutions to accommodate residential and commercial activities, and the contact with colleagues and citizens, some also from other parts of the world just like me. However, what I have come to love even more is working on my own as an architectural historian and researching issues which interest me. Since my retirement twenty years ago, I have researched and written a book *Early Women Architects of the San Francisco Bay Area - The Lives and Work of Fifty Professionals, 1890-1951*. Although it was published ten years ago and I focused on other topics in the meantime, the history of women architects in Northern California is still very close to my heart.

With all this said, I hope you will understand that I still consider myself an immigrant even after living and participating in the American way of life for about 50 years. And the fact that my younger daughter did immigrate to Germany, and my older daughter spent ten years in Nicaragua and married a Nicaraguan but returned to California with her two children. These are the reasons why I blurted out that I would be very interested in reading and discussing *Immigrant Voices - 21st Century Stories* in our book group.

—*Inge S. Horton*



Whooo Wants to Know

What are you doing during this pandemic? Has it changed your life a lot? A little?

Judy Goddess (editorial staff of *Senior Beat*): I work more than I ever did. I've learned to use the phone and connect over Zoom. Photos, a necessary adjunct to reporting, are hard but doable. Zoom has opened new possibilities. Lectures I wouldn't normally attend, our writers' support group, Drama with Friends, over my head but not without its pleasures. The library can never be replaced. I miss it so.

Alexandra Nickliss (CCSF history professor and author of *Phoebe Apperson Hearst: A Life of Power and Politics*): Students are yearning to get back into the classroom, and so am I, for face to face instruction. I've been spending so many hours on the computer, and it's frustrating because of tech issues. People are tired, but we have to keep plugging. I take walks around Stowe Lake, walking around it three times.

Leslie Stafford (active LWV planner and webmaster): I have become an expert in ordering everything we need online. We haven't been in a store since early March. Fortunately, we live in a building with 24 hour Security so packages are safe. The most unusual thing so far we've had to order was a new toilet flusher handle mechanism. Thank goodness for Amazon! It arrived in less than 2 days! Who knows what will be next?

Marty Maricle (retired federal government worker): I'm avoiding doing what I should be doing. I'm reading a wonderful book, Brunelleschi's *Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture*. It reminds me of my days living in Europe and traveling around in the late fifties. Italy, France, and other places. Really, the smoke from the fires bothers me more than the pandemic.

Mattie Alpert (What would you like me to write here? Retired X?) I'm a member of a lot of organizations and of Temple Emmanuel. I used to go to Fromm almost every day, but now everything is online. I have my daughter upstairs and another daughter in Alameda and I have family and friends around, so I'm not complaining.

Whooo's asking? Behind the mask is **Tina Martin** who will pose a new question for the next Newsletter.

What Are You Reading?

A Force of Nature by Jane Harper is an intriguing novel of combined mystery, trust, and betrayal. It lays bare the corrosive effect of long held resentments and secrets. If you are like me, you read mysteries with an eye toward solving the crime and exposing the perp before the book reaches that point. That, along with interesting character development, provide me with a basis for critiquing the book. Did I solve or was I totally surprised by the denouement? I recommend this novel. It could help a reader to examine her own secret resentments, consider their effects on others, and seek release and healing. Or, it could just be an entertaining read.

—*Glenda Hope*

A Word A Day and Longreads

A word a day: Something good for word lovers, curious readers and writers. The New York Times calls it “The most welcomed, most enduring piece of daily mass e-mail in cyberspace.” Every week a theme introduces odd, unusual and even familiar words to you with definitions, origin and earliest documented usage. This week has been “Words coined after mythical creatures” and today’s word is snark (snahrk) noun; 1. A mysterious, imaginary animal. 2. Something or someone hard to track down. [Coined by Lewis Carroll in the poem “The Hunting of the Snark” in 1876. Earliest documented use (outside the poem): 1879.] and today’s usage: noun: A snide remark. verb intr.: To make a snide remark. Other words this week: unicorn, bunyip, gremlin, bigfoot. Subscribe at: <https://wordsmith.org/>

Have a few minutes to read? None of us can subscribe to everything! *Longreads* features the best storytelling on the web from hundreds of publishers. Story picks include longform journalism, short stories, in-depth interviews, and more. Topics: Business & tech, Essays & criticism, Science & nature, Arts & culture, Crime, Food, Sports, Books, Current events, Profiles & interviews and Unapologetic Women. Subscribe at: <https://longreads.com/>

Save these Dates!

OWLs will gather on Zoom

**November 21st
To Share Gratitude,
11-Noon
and
December 19th**

**For a Winter Holiday Party
11-Noon**

Details for both these meetings
will be sent by postcard and e-mail.

Prisoners Charged to Read: Profiteering in American Prisons

At our last meeting (via Zoom), I was very excited by the energy of our presenter, Breanna Lamkin from the Equal Justice Initiative. With young women like her on the case, I have lots of hope for the future! During her presentation, she covered a number of issues, and one that struck me in particular is the relatively recent practice of charging to read books in prison. I was already familiar with the issue of prisons and jails charging excessive rates for phone calls, but, as a former librarian, the issue of charging to read books seemed equally outrageous!

Following the meeting, I did a bit of research and discovered that prisons are not charging fees for checking out books from prison libraries, but have contracted with private companies who provide tablets to prisoners. While it’s beneficial that prisoners can sometimes use the tablets to communicate with loved ones, the tablets are often the only way they can access reading material, and they are charged per-page. Often, prisons profiting from this service also restrict or eliminate access to free physical reading material. This article in American Libraries magazine describes the situation: <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/prisoners-pay-to-read-prison-tablets/>

One of several organizations working to end prison profiteering is Worth Rises, and there are several campaigns where you can take action. More info at: <https://worthrises.org/aboutus>

During the meeting, I mentioned an organization in Florida, Florida Rights Restoration Coalition, that is working to assure that citizens returning from jail are not denied the right to vote because they can’t pay outstanding fines. Here’s an article by their Executive Director, Desmond Meade: <https://link.medium.com/YvPj6fJWp8>

If you’re able to, consider making a contribution to their fund: <https://floridarrc.com/about/>

—*Barbara Gersh*



There are only two days in the year that nothing can be done. One is called *yesterday* and the other is called *tomorrow*, so *today* is the right day to love, do and mostly live.

—*Dalai Lama*

Questions for Quiet Reflection

A person I love and admire just gave me a mask imprinted with likeness of RBG and a quote from her: “Fight for the things you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you”

For young and old some questions for quiet reflection:

- What would your best friend say about who you are?
- What are your hopes and concerns for your family, your community, your country, the world?
- What sense of purpose/mission/duty guides your life? How do you impart this to others?
- How do the political divisions in our country impact your life at this time? How are you helping to heal these hurts?
- What would be the best first (or next) step for you?
—*Glenda Hope*

Whooo Wants to Know asked:

What was your take-away from OWL’s June and July meetings on racial justice?

Kathy Mata (founder & director, Kathy Mata Ballet) What stood out for me is Black Lives Matter and Bre (Lamkin) and her agency (EJI) working hard to change these current ideas of racism.

Glenda Hope (president, OWL Board) This was a good beginning to a long delayed conversation but it must not be the end of that conversation. We all need to get beyond individualizing the concept of racism with it resulting defensiveness and work to grasp the magnitude of white privilege. What changes - massive changes - would this make in societal and personal life?

Barbara Gersh (Cinephile—and see article on prison libraries) I was so inspired by Bre’s energy & articulation! (see her article on page 8.)

Melanie Grossman (Vice-President, OWL Board) My biggest take-away was the idea of how far we have come since I was a girl growing up in a very segregated town in Louisiana. Equally, we have a very long way still to go. It brings me hope and frustration.

CA Property Tax Postponement

It’s available again for eligible people, including those living in single family homes, condos or co-ops in California.

This program allows senior citizens (age 62+) and disabled persons with an annual household income of \$45,000 or less (and other criteria) to apply to defer payment of property taxes on their principal residence. Those who do this pay it back with interest (5%) when they move, sell, or title to the property is conferred to another.

See California State Controller’s Office: Property Tax Postponement for more information or contact the Controller’s team at (800) 952-5661 or postponement@sco.ca.gov for an application for the 2020-21 tax year. Application period is October 1, 2020 - February 10, 2021. First come, first served, so best to apply early.

—*Betty Traynor*

SIP Cleanup 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!

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.

Calendar

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

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

October 24 Saturday — OWL General Meeting 11-Noon *Witnessing History* (via Zoom) (details on cover)

November 2 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-5:00pm (via Zoom)

November 21 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 11:00-Noon *Gratitude* (via Zoom)

December 7 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-5:00pm (via Zoom)

December 19 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 11-Noon *Holiday Party* (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