



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

October - December 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.

OWL-SF presents:

Creativity

October 22nd

11am to 12:30pm

ZOOM meeting with phone access

Creativity is good for the soul! We celebrate creativity in this meeting which begins with a showcase of some of OWL's talented members followed by participant discussion on creativity and what it adds to our own lives.

Sheila Malkind, founder of the Legacy Film Festival on Aging, will talk about how and why she created The Legacy Film Festival on Aging and treat us to trailers from films in the upcoming 2023 Festival.

Tina Martin will read from her Memoir, *Everything I Should Have Learned I Could Have Learned in Tonga*.

Kathy Mata will share a short video of her career as a dancer and her current work teaching dancing to young people.

Fran Johns will read from her most recent book, *Marshallville Stories*.

Judy Goddess will introduce us to Drama with Friends, how she started it and what it gives to her and others.

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

Fall 2022 Political Advocacy Report

The September Ballot Measures Meeting was a major focus for the PA Committee this summer and Fall. Our first in-person membership meeting in over two years, it sometimes felt like we were reinventing the wheel. But in the end, the 2022 Ballot Measures meeting was a wonderful start to resuming some in-person OWL meetings. Many thanks to our committee members who worked tirelessly to make this event happen, especially in finding knowledgeable “for” and “against” speakers to support or oppose the ballot measures chosen for presentation. It was exciting to come together as a group, to continue the OWL tradition of presenting both sides of each selected measure, and to participate in face-to-face discussions on important issues.



Our committee continues to follow events regarding the threatened closure of Laguna Honda (LHH). There is some good news: On October 12, the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicare Services (CMS), the California Department of Public Health, and the City and County of San Francisco released a joint statement of an agreement reached allowing Medicare and Medicaid payment to continue until November 13, 2023. Additionally, the transfer and discharge of current residents will remain paused until February 2, 2023, with the possibility of further extensions if LHH complies with settlement agreements.

Although this is a welcome respite from the impending November 3, 2022 closure, there is still much work to be done to insure that LHH is recertified and that all deficiencies are corrected to insure the health and safety of all residents. Additionally, two important issues were not addressed by the agreement and still need our attention.

First, CMS regulations now require the three-person suites with shared bathroom at LHH be reduced to two persons per bathroom. This would mean a cut of 120 beds available to San Franciscans who need the specialized care and support. LHH is a relatively new facility, built just before the CMS regulations were implemented. An appeal to have the facility grandfathered in as others have been is in order, so that all 260 beds are preserved for the vulnerable patients who need them.

Second, the DPH’s “Flow Project” allows patients to be discharged automatically from San Francisco General Hospital to LHH without evaluation regarding patient safety, staffing and availability of appropriate drug rehabilitation and mental health treatments. The Flow Project should be suspended to allow LHH to have the same ability as other rehabilitation centers and nursing homes to evaluate patients regarding their appropriateness for their facility. This emergency has highlighted San Francisco’s lack of services to safely care for all its elderly and disabled citizens. We need more nursing home beds in the City and services for those who need more care than currently available to continue living at home. Drug rehabilitation and intensive mental health services are also urgently needed.

What can OWL members do?

- Email or write to your representative and make your voice heard about what still needs to be done at LHH and the lack of appropriate services to manage patients safely who prefer to remain in their own homes.
- Contact Xavier Becerra-Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, email xavier.becerra@hhs.gov, or call 1-877-696-6775
- Email or call your State and Federal Senate and Assembly members
- Email or call Gov. Newsom and tell him of your concern
- Watch OWL alerts for public hearings. Attending hearings and speaking out really makes a difference.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

D’Anna Alexander
Eve Menger-Hammond
Evelyn Graham

Board Members
Maxine Anderson, VP
Paula Barber
Louise DiMattio
Joan Downey, Treasurer
Melanie Grossman, President
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

JFK Drive and the Great Highway

We have been told that great bunches of people, adults and especially children, are enjoying the blockage of JFK Drive. Hmmmm. A September 27th article in the Chronicle revealed “a project to *lure* (emphasis mine) more people to JFK,” which includes installing three seven-foot tall Doggie Diner heads along JFK plus “food trucks, places to grab coffee, areas for buskers, and even a small beer garden.” Imagine what this does to one of the loveliest parts of Golden Gate Park, not to mention the inevitable trash generated by it.

Meanwhile, since we are no longer able to park along this lengthy stretch of roadway as we once did, thousands of elderly and disabled people find it very difficult or impossible to get to some of the best features of the Park including the dahlia and rose gardens, Conservatory of Flowers, museums and more. One thousand free public parking spaces have been eliminated, including spaces for handicapped placard holders. Yes, there are some of these spaces behind the band shell but that is much too far for people using crutches or walkers or who struggle with MS or Parkinson’s or (like me) with arthritic knees, heart problems, and endurance lost to years of wear and tear. Yes, we could wait for shuttles where there might or might not be shelter from sun or rain. Shuttles do not accommodate everyone, purportedly run every 24 minutes and might or might not be headed for where you want to go.

Last week, I tabled for Prop I during a fair at 37th and Pacheco. There I heard multiple stories about the effects of shutting down the Great Highway. People living on nearby parallel streets are angry and worried about the diversion of thousands of cars onto their narrow residential streets, sitting in gridlock and spewing fumes. Worse – they cite the big trucks rumbling along or sitting in that gridlock on streets not designed for this volume or kind of traffic. Beachgoers’ cars are parked on these streets, occupants dash across the Highway anywhere, scrambling and sliding up and down the fragile dunes, often damaging the nests of endangered birds. Of course, there have always been some heedless people damaging the dunes, but people parked in the beach parking lots are more likely to use designated walkways and stairs.

Cars which once drove through the Park or along the Great Highway, now clog other roads in the park (esp. Chain of Lakes Drive) as well as residential streets such as Fulton and Lincoln. These closures are unlikely to actually reduce driving. People will just go another—probably longer—way to reach their destination creating even more gas fumes. The “law of unintended consequences” is at work here. Public transit and electric cars may one day suffice—one can only hope and work for that—but I doubt it will be in my lifetime and certainly not for so many others who are elderly and/or disabled.

Some attribute the need for closures of JFK Drive and the Great Highway to cars, citing a need for kids to safely play. But there are places all over our city for that including inside GGP a length of Middle Drive and a skate park above the Conservatory, both of which have been closed to cars since the Compromise of 2007 and still are. That stretch of Middle Drive has just been repaved. In addition, how about the 14 acre Presidio Tunnel Top, Crocker Amazon, McClaren, Noe Valley Center, Glen Park, Cayuga and so many more. Why must we put all these proposed eyesores along JFK to “lure” people to use it when these other parks are available and using them can be done without depriving elderly and disability challenged people of some of the most beautiful places in the Park?

Accident rates on JFK Drive are given as a reason to close it to cars. Have more crosswalks—raised to double as speed bumps, brightly striped, fitted with lights flashing when someone is crossing—been considered? This could also decrease jaywalking. All could be done without depriving thousands of elderly and disabled people from real access to so much of our beloved park. NB: Bike lanes already exist there.

Proposition I offers a compromise which would render the currently closed JFK Drive open to cars on certain days and closed on other days. Proposition J would render the current closures permanent. The OWL Political Advocacy Committee studied this situation and voted: Yes on Prop I; No on Prop J.

—*Glenda Hope*

Good News

Once again grassroots power has brought California new nation-leading disclosure laws against Big Money’s playbook for dominating politics—thanks to all of you who took action!

The Ballot DISCLOSE Act, AB 1416 (Santiago), is the first bill in the nation to ensure all voters know who’s really for & against measures on the ballot—no matter what Big Money’s millions in ads say.

The Disclosure Clarity Act, SB 1360 (Umberg-Allen), is the first bill in the nation to require the flood of online political graphic ads to clearly list their top funder—vital because this fairly new type of ad exploded because it did not require disclosure.

Also signed by Governor Newsom is the Lobbying Transparency Act, SB 459 (Allen), a bill sponsored by California Common Cause that will impose important new disclosure requirements on issue lobbying ads.

September Ballot Issues Meeting

On September 17th OWL welcomed members and the public to the SF Main Library for the presentation of selected San Francisco ballot issues in November's election. Melanie Grossman, OWL President and Chair of the PAC, introduced Bill Grossman, who graciously agreed to be our time-keeper, and Glenda Hope, our moderator, who explained that the purpose of this meeting was education and not endorsement of the issues. Below is a brief summary of points made by the speakers in their presentations.

Prop. M Tax on Keeping Residential Units Vacant

Pro: Patrick Cochran, Campaign manager for Prop M, said there were as many as 58,000 empty homes in S.F. with 8,000 homeless and many working class people priced out of home here. Housing is a human right so Democratic Socialists of America, Faith in Action, and Supervisor Dean Preston worked to get Prop M on the ballot. The vacancy tax would affect owners of residential buildings with three or more units for units kept vacant over 182 days in a tax year where no exemptions apply. This proposition does not apply to single family homes or two-unit buildings. He said too often people thought of houses as an investment opportunity, and people are being priced out at a time when SF needs to create 82,000 new units. This type of tax exists in cities such as DC and Vancouver. It projects an income to the City of \$38 million that would be used for affordable housing and rent subsidies for low income seniors and families.

Con: Noni Richen with the small property owners of S.F., owner of a four-unit building in S.F., said this proposition would hurt small property owners like herself who may keep a unit off the market for eventual use by an adult child or other relative, or for other reasons. She gave as an example : her son and family live in one of her units, having no lease, thus the occupied unit is considered vacant. She also said this is the wrong time for new taxes, the measure does not bring in that much money; many landlords are converting rental units to tenancy in common (TIC) and this measure could accelerate that trend.

Prop. O Additional Parcel Tax for City College

Pro: Alayna Fredricks, Executive Director of the City College faculty union AFT 2121 said City College resources are not addressing its core mission and needs more money; in the last five years college enrollment has been declining; 1,500 classes have been cut from the schedule, and many faculty and staff laid off. This tiered parcel tax on owners of property in the City, would be a minimum of \$150 per year for one residential unit/single family home; \$75 per year per unit for two or more units. Larger properties in size will pay more. Units owned by those 65 and older as a primary residence are exempt from this tax. Funds will be used for four specific purposes outlined in the proposition with an oversight committee.

Con: Noni Richen also spoke in opposition to Prop. O saying it is the wrong time for new parcel taxes as home owners are moving out of the City, and this will affect tenants as landlords pass through added property tax. She also called City College leadership "disastrous," having eight chancellors in recent years, with no fiscal responsibility.

Continued next page.



Cara's Recommendations on State Ballot Measures

CARA's Board and Legislative Committee reviews all measures qualifying for the statewide ballot, making decisions to support, oppose or take no position on them. In order to support or oppose a position, the measure must have a direct impact on seniors and our families, and be approved by CARA's leadership. This year, of the seven measures on the ballot, we were unable to get to consensus or even a clear majority on three of them, so are taking no position on them. CARA's position on the other four measures listed below is Yes.

Proposition 1 Right to Reproductive Freedom Protects the fundamental right to abortion and to reproductive health by adding these rights to the CA State Constitution.

Proposition 28 Art and Music K-12 Education Funding Initiative Provides additional funding for arts and music education in public schools – bolstering funding for our grandchildren and future generations.

Proposition 29 Dialysis Clinic Requirements Will help ensure dialysis patients receive safe treatment in dialysis clinics under the care of a doctor or another highly trained clinician in case of emergencies, without risk of infection and without discrimination.

Proposition 31 Flavored Tobacco Products Ban Referendum Protects kids, grandchildren and Californians of all ages from Big Tobacco by ending the sale of candy-flavored tobacco products including e-cigarettes and minty-menthol cigarettes. Saves lives and taxpayer dollars.

CARA's new mailing address P.O. Box 23754, Oakland, CA 94623 / 1-877-223-6107 / www.californiaalliance.org

Prop. I: Vehicles on JFK Drive in Golden Gate Park and the Great Highway

Bill Bruckner spoke in favor of Prop. I and in opposition to Prop. J. He called Prop. I “Access for All,” emphasizing it will provide access again for people with disabilities and people living far away from Golden Gate Park, in the Bayview, Excelsior etc. with difficulty getting to the park on limited bus service and needing to drive and park there free. It will open JFK Drive to cars all days except Sundays, holidays, and Saturdays half of the year, and open the Great Highway every day of the week. He said many people with disabilities and seniors cannot get to the popular park features easily. Closure of JFK Drive and the Great Highway was to be temporary for recreation during the COVID pandemic, but now they are not being reopened. As for environmental damage, traffic is now routed through the neighborhoods, increasing air pollution there. The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed to give everyone rights, and S.F. should not be taking rights away from people. A question was asked about a compromise, and Bill said Prop. I is the compromise. There can be other areas in GGP where cyclists could ride free of cars, plus people can ride bikes and walk on all the new slow streets in the City.

Prop. J: Recreational Use of JFK Drive in Golden Gate Park

Sara Barz with Kid Safe SF spoke in favor of Prop. J and in opposition to Prop. I. She said Prop J would “maintain the status quo,” keeping JFK Drive free of cars as voted by the Board of Supervisors a few months ago. Prop. I is not a compromise; things have changed in last 15 years with more people coming to the park with kids, riding bikes; why eliminate their access? Sara also said that the Golden Gate Park Safety and Access Program was responsible for the improvements in access like the 20 additional blue zone parking spaces behind the band shell area, and the supervisors had voted as they did with the stipulation that accessibility be improved. She also said that since the closure to cars, the number of visitors to GGP is up 36%. She added that the Recreation and Park Dept. is committed to have new accessible shuttle buses and has signed a contract to get them; she does feel RPD should do more, and we should demand more accessibility in GGP from them.

Prop. N: Golden Gate Park Underground Parking Facility (No one spoke against Proposition N)

Pro: Tina Martin, OWL PAC member explained that Prop N, which transfers jurisdiction of the GGP underground parking garage from the GGP Concourse Authority to the Recreation and Park Dept., has no argument against it, is supported by Mayor Breed, and analyzed as something that could help the city financially as the cost of the garage construction could be refinanced, but most importantly the city could subsidize parking for people with disabilities and people with low incomes. Tina asked the speakers for Prop I and for Prop J if they wanted to add anything, and both said, “Yes on N!” Agreement!

—**Betty Traynor and Tina Martin, OWL PAC members**

.....
Save the Date for
OWL’s December Holiday Party
In person Luncheon
Location to be Announced
Saturday, December 17th
Join us for good company, and good cheer!
Details to follow.

Save the Date
Saturday, November 19th
OWL’s November Membership Meeting
The Environment
11am to Noon
Via Zoom

Every Vote Counts!

Help get out the vote for the November Elections by assisting family members, friends and neighbors who need help with their mail-in ballots. Elders and others with poor vision, movement disorders, difficulty walking, dementia and physical and mental disorders may find it hard to complete the voting process. Most people have opinions on issues, but may have difficulty locating, marking, sealing, signing and mailing their ballots in a timely manner. Just a little help could give some elders the opportunity to continue to vote in every election.

Contact the SF Department of Elections if you have any questions about how to assist others to vote. Phone: (415) 554-4375; email SFVote@sfgov.org

Be a San Francisco Election Poll Worker

The San Francisco Department of Elections needs your help for the November 8, 2022 General Election. Poll workers serve an important role in preserving our democratic process by assisting voters at the polls and protecting their right to cast a ballot. Poll workers receive training and materials to make sure they are well-prepared to perform their duties on Election Day. Poll worker responsibilities include setting up the polling place at 6:00am sharp; checking in voters using a precinct roster and issuing the correct ballots; troubleshooting voter issues; accepting ballot drop-offs throughout the day; closing the polls and transferring custody of voting materials by 10:00pm. Upon completion of their Election Day assignment, poll workers receive a stipend of \$225 to \$295. To apply: <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/serving-poll-worker> or call (415) 554-4375.

—**Betty Traynor**

Checking Out Accessibility in Golden Gate Park

Accessibility on JFK Drive was the focus in a written “preview of coming attractions” in our July-September *OWL Newsletter*. Glenda Hope, Kathie Piccagli, and I were going to investigate how to access the beautiful dahlias by the Conservatory of Flowers when the eastern part of JFK Drive was closed to traffic and celebrate Glenda’s 85th birthday.

Proving the adage, “Life is what happens to us while we are making other plans,” Glenda couldn’t make it—though I’m happy to report she saw the dahlias later on her own—so Kathie and I carried out our “mission” without Glenda on July 5th. We entered Golden Gate Park at 19th Avenue, turned right on Martin Luther King Drive, and went onto Nancy Pelosi Drive to the handicapped parking spots right across the street from the Conservatory and Dahlia Gardens. We found two spots not yet taken, but because we didn’t have a DP (Disabled Person) placard, we parked instead about a block away. It’s a distance from JFK Drive to the dahlias, but the accessibility path took us there directly. We saw a couple of people in wheelchairs there, and I wish I’d asked them how they came in, but we admired the dahlias and followed an accessible path to see just how people with disabilities would get to the Conservatory of Flowers. The path is less direct than the one to the dahlias. The road behind the Conservatory of Flowers is open to traffic, but the path is much too steep for someone with a disability. Now that the closure of JFK Drive to cars has put more attention to accessibility issues, maybe something can be done about making that path less steep.

Since that day in early July, I’ve gone back on my own several times as well as once with a disabled friend who uses a mobility scooter and once with a friend who uses a rollator, a walker on wheels.

Plot stealer: The most notable accessibility issues have nothing to do with the closure of cars on the eastern part of JFK Drive although I hope an accessible path can be created behind the Conservatory of Flowers or more blue parking zones added across the street on Nancy Pelosi Drive. Then it would be just a question of crossing the road.

Rumor has it that people could no longer access the de Young Museum and the Japanese Tea Garden because cars couldn’t get through to Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive. While waiting for the shuttle bus, I counted 30 vehicles coming through, and after making inquiries, I found out that cars can enter the garage at Fulton and 10th and drive through—free for 15 minutes—accessing Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive to drop off passengers in front of the de Young Museum and drive on to the free 20 space DP accessible parking lot behind the Music Concourse bandshell. It can also be accessed by entering at 9th Avenue and going to Music Concourse Drive.

About that shuttle bus. It’s not ADA compliant. The Recreation and Park Department has signed a contract for shuttles that are, but they haven’t arrived yet. For



A covered shelter for the park shuttle, near the Japanese Tea Garden. Photo by Tina Martin.

those without severe disabilities, it’s workable, and there’s a sheltered waiting place with seats. (More on the seats later.) The signs say that it comes every 15 minutes starting at 9:00 am on weekends and every 20 minutes starting at noon on weekdays. I started waiting at noon on a weekday, and the first shuttle I saw arrived at 12:24—four minutes late. Apparently the shelter with seats was not its starting point. The sun was bright and so were my hopes as the bus went past the Japanese Tea Garden and into the accessible free blue zone and around to the California Academy of Sciences, Dana King’s Monumental Reckoning (1619) sculpture and SkyStar Observatory Wheel and onto JFK Drive, where it’s permitted as an authorized vehicle. The drive made stops wherever anyone wanted off or on—at the Conservatory of Flowers, McClaren Lodge, and on to Stanyan and Haight, where a small group of women our age got on. I watched the friendly exchange between the leader of the group with the bus driver and felt good that there was so much positivity and community spirit. Then the leader greeted me, and when I didn’t recognize her in her mask, she said, “OWL!” It was Gloria Garcia, a very active community member! That made my first trip on the shuttle bus as close to perfection as any ride can be. My next two rides, taken a few days later, also on a weekday, were not as good. I had to wait much longer and one of the drivers was very unwelcoming to a group of people who wanted to do the round-trip just to see it all (as I was doing). But a week later when I was on JFK Drive with a friend who uses a mobility scooter, we saw the shuttle come through many, many times—at least every 15 minutes, a reassuring contrast to what I’d experienced on my second weekday trial.

David, my friend using a mobility scooter, commented that the road on JFK Drive was smoother than the accessible paths and favors closure because it’s more peaceful, safer, and better for the environment—the way a park should be. Patricia, my friend using a rollator, is against the closure, but most of the problems we contended with after entering the accessible parking lot were not related to the closure of JFK Drive. As a member of the JFK Drive subcommittee of Transit Justice, I’d offered to check out the path from the

Continued next page.

Accessibility cont.

accessible parking area to the audience seats in front of the bandshell, and she'd offered to go with me. Because of her muscle loss, the distance was much too far on the accessible path, and she was exhausted. She wants to use her rollator because exercise is the only way of warding off a worsening of the muscle loss she's faced for several years, but we've decided that a wheelchair might be an answer to getting around more comfortably when visiting a museum, and I learned that wheelchairs are available from coat check or the admissions counter in the de Young Museum and at the Academy of Sciences. Patricia says that the benches are not ADA compliant. The best seats on Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive are the ones in the shelter at the bus stop between the Tea Garden and the de Young, but Patricia says they should be two or three inches higher to accommodate people like her who have trouble getting up from a seated position.

People have differing views on the closure of GGP streets to cars with the associated removal of accessible parking. If Prop N passes, which is likely, the city will be able to make the garage less expensive for people with disabilities and people with low incomes, and that will mean a shorter walk to the accessible paths. I hope you'll check these out for yourselves. In the meantime, it's good that the accessibility issue is getting attention in areas other than those on JFK Drive.

—Tina Martin



Save the Date for The
**11th Legacy Film Festival
On Aging**

Friday January 6th - Sunday January 15th 2023

For more information:
<https://legacyfilmfestivalonaging.eventive.org>

Explore Creativity: Art With Elders

Art With Elders (AWE) uses the power of art, creativity, and community to enrich the journey of aging. AWE engages older adults in senior residential communities, senior centers, and living independently in weekly fine art classes with a view to exhibiting their work. Weekly art classes are the core of what we do. We offer free introductory classes for individuals, residential communities, and senior centers. Online and in person options available. Contact us at info@artwithelders.com for more information.

AWE believes in showcasing students' artistic achievements. Please join us on October 23rd at 2:00pm Pacific Time for The AWE 30th Annual Exhibit Opening Event, our biggest event of the year! We will celebrate the artists of the AWE program together with a video presentation of artworks created in AWE classes, and more! The event will be held online, join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83339137806> Meeting ID: 833 3913 7806

Protect Yourself

Our phones are inundated by scam robocalls and texts telling us that our car warranty has expired; our Medicare account has been suspended; a friend needs money NOW!

Here are some ideas from the Bay Area Consumer's Checkbook to protect yourself.

Look for red flags. Does the caller ID show that a call or text is coming from your phone number? That's a common trick to get you to take the crook's call or respond to their text. And the Social Security Administration will never call you out of the blue. Should there ever be a problem with your account, they'll send a letter via the U.S. Postal Service.

Don't answer. If you don't recognize a number, let the call go to voicemail. If they leave a message claiming to be with your bank, credit card company, Apple, Amazon, etc., don't call the number provided; instead, call a number or visit a website for the company that you know is legitimate, such as one on a statement or credit card, to find out what's really going on.

Don't click on links. The hyperlinks criminals include in their scam texts often lead to a website they've set up to look like a legitimate online portal for a familiar bank or company. Their goal is to get you to share your user account, password, or other personal info. Never click on links sent via text or email; instead, go to the company's website or call its customer support line.

Don't share. Never give out personal information such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, mothers' maiden names, passwords, or other identifying information in response to unexpected calls, or if you are suspicious.

Don't pay up. Banks, retailers, and the federal government won't insist you pay via Bitcoin or other cryptocurrency, or use a peer-to-peer app (such as Venmo or Zelle), or ask you to buy gift cards.

Use available tools. Most phone companies offer apps for your mobile phone or VoIP devices that can help block unwanted calls. The Federal Communications Commission has detailed information about robocalls and robotexts at www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/stop-unwanted-robocalls-and-texts. The FCC also has a list of call blocking resources available from phone companies, phone manufacturers, and third-party screening services at www.fcc.gov/call-blocking.

Not sure? Call for help. AARP's Fraud Watch Network Helpline is a fantastic resource at www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/. If you get a call and don't know what to do, you can call 877-908-3360 for advice. You do not need to be an AARP member to use it.

Dangerous woman

July 31 was the birthday of the woman Teddy Roosevelt once called “the most dangerous woman in America” when she was 87 years old. Mary Harris Jones was born to a tenant farmer in Cork, Ireland, in 1837. Her family fled the potato famine when she was just ten, resettling in Toronto. She trained to be a teacher and took a job in Memphis, where on the eve of the Civil War she married a union foundry worker and started a family. But in 1867, a yellow fever epidemic swept through the city, taking the lives of her husband and all four children. A widow at 30, she moved to Chicago and built a successful dressmaking business—only to lose everything in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Jones then threw herself into the city’s bustling labor movement, where she worked in obscurity for the next 20 years. By the turn of the century, she emerged as a charismatic speaker and one of the country’s leading labor organizers, co-founding the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

She traveled the country to wherever there was labor struggle, sometimes evading company security by wading the riverbed into town, earning her the nickname “The Miner’s Angel.” She used storytelling, the Bible, humor, and even coarse language to reach a crowd. She said: “I asked a man in prison once how he happened to be there and he said he had stolen a pair of shoes. I said if he had stolen a railroad, he would be a United States Senator.” Jones also had little patience for hesitation, volunteering to lead a strike “if there were no men present.” A passionate critic of child labor, she organized a children’s march from Philadelphia to the home of Theodore Roosevelt in Oyster Bay, New York with banners reading, “We want to go to school and not the mines!” At the age of 88, she published a first-person account of her time in the labor movement called *The Autobiography of Mother Jones* (1925). She died at the age of 93 and is buried at a miners’ cemetery in Mt. Olive, Illinois.

She said: “Whatever the fight, don’t be ladylike.”

Source: Writers Almanac

A Poetry Weekend

The Great Books Council of San Francisco will hold its Annual Poetry Weekend, November 12—13 via Zoom. This year’s theme is “Why Poetry?” What distinguishes a prose poem from prose? Why choose poetry over prose or vice versa? These questions and more will be the focus of the upcoming Poetry Weekend with accomplished poet and teacher Dorianne Laux as a guest presenter. This poetry-filled weekend includes small group discussions, an interactive seminar as well as a reading by author of *The Poet’s Companion* and numerous volumes of award-winning poems. There’s also an Open Mic where participants can share their own or a favorite poem.

Saturday, November 12: 10 am to 12:30 pm; 2:00 to 4:00 pm and Sunday, November 13: 10 am to 12:30 pm; 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Tuition \$50.

For details and to register see the GBSF webpage: <https://www.greatbooksncal.org/poetry-weekend>

Movie Review:

The Woman King

I don’t see many movies, but I was happy to accept an invitation to see a movie with friends from the Bayview. We saw *The Woman King*, a triumphant and thunderous film about women who are heroic, fierce, and sometimes tender. This blockbuster production (cast of thousands, sweeping views of Africa, thrilling storyline about good winning over evil) manages to also tell us a story that is intimate, personal, and touching.

Set in the 1800’s, and loosely based on historical facts, the movie includes a great deal of artistic license to fill in the details of the women characters. It focuses on the Agojie warriors, an all-female group of soldiers sworn to honor sisterhood in the West African Kingdom of Dahomey. They fight for their King, who sells enemies defeated in battle into the transatlantic slave trade. The leader of the warriors, General Nanisca, who herself was once a captive and a slave, objects. She confronts the king, saying, “What happens to one of us, happens to all of us.”

There are lots of gory battle scenes in this movie, but since it was the women who did the fighting, and winning, I must say they were a little more palatable. However, we also see the cost of battle with women caring for one another’s injuries and burying their dead when the fight is over.

The choreography, music, and cinematography were stirring. The main character, General Nanisca, played by 56-year-old Viola Davis, portrays an older woman, battle scarred and tested, but also wise and who looks ahead to the consequences of their actions. After winning a decisive battle over a neighboring kingdom doing business with unscrupulous slave traders, she is declared King for her valor, leadership, and vision of a future without bondage. She is a heroic character, charting her own destiny, and that of those around her. It is also a story still relevant to today and one that inspires older women in particular to stay strong and keep fighting for what they believe in. Don’t miss it.

Playing now at local theaters such as Century Theatre on Market St., AMC Metreon on 5th St., Kabuki Theatre on Post St. and Century Theatre, 1901 Junipero Serra Blvd, Daly City, among other locations.

—Melanie Grossman

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?

God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine, by Victoria Sweet. Laguna Honda reminds me of City College of San Francisco: It's an institution that our community desperately needs, but it's been beleaguered for decades, threatened with closure, and sometimes rescued by voters, who see the need for its continued existence.

The title *God's Hotel*, comes from the French *Hotel-Dieu*, where nuns cared for the ill in the Middle Ages. Laguna Honda is the last of its kind.

I now have the print edition because as I was listening to it on Audible books, there were a lot of passages I wanted to mark! But one advantage of the audio edition is that it's read by the author herself, Victoria Sweet, a doctor who worked at Laguna Honda for twenty years. If you listen, please help me describe the way she reads. To me it sounds like a brave forbearance, an ironic brightness, a wry humor-in-restraint as she reads her own words like these: "The closing of the state mental hospitals was particularly disastrous, the result of an unwitting but agreeable collusion of Left and Right; the Left being convinced that institutionalization of any kind was harmful, and the Right, that institutionalization of any kind was expensive."

In addition to her descriptions of what goes right and wrong, she vividly describes the personalities of doctors, nurses, patients, and the buildings themselves in a way that's captivating and unforgettable and includes her Camino to Compostela walk in France and Spain (between appointments) and fascinating details of Hildegard, the Benedictine nun and medical writer and practitioner of the Middle Ages who is considered the founder of scientific natural history in Germany. Quite a bonus! Most of all, *God's Hotel*, published a decade ago, (in print and on audio both available from the SF Public Library) can help us understand the Laguna Honda of today.

—Tina Martin

.....
: Need a Holiday Gift Idea for a Friend? :
: Why not a membership in OWL for 2023. :
: It's a gift for OWL and a friend as well! :
:
.....

The OWL Book Group Returns!

After a long hiatus, the OWL Book Group will reconvene in November with a new time and a new book but with the same great discussions to be held, once again, on Zoom. The group welcomes new members at any time.

Here are the details:

Time: 10:00 – 11:30 on the second Tuesday of the month, beginning in November

Where: On Zoom

What: Our new volume is entitled *Her Own Accord, American Women on Identity, Culture, and Community* and was published by the Great Books Foundation in Chicago in 2016.

This marvelous book of readings includes sections on "Identity," "Family," "Relationships," "Work," and "Politics." Readings include short stories, short essays, and poetry by women speaking in their own words and from their own experience. Examples of authors whose works are included in this text are Toni Morrison, Adrienne Rich, Tillie Olsen, ZZ Packer and many more.

Leader: Louise DiMattio, OWL Board member and longtime Great Books Leader in the Bay Area. Louise uses the Shared Inquiry Method to facilitate participation by all group members.

Please contact Louise at ladimat@aol.com and provide your mailing address in order to receive your copy of this new (to us) book. Louise has obtained a grant to cover the cost of this book for OWL members. You may join the book group at any time. A Zoom link will be provided a few days prior to each discussion.

It is very appropriate that our first meeting will be held on Election Day, November 8th, 2022. In her Introduction to our new volume K. Sujata writes: "In a world that is often at odds with the presence of women, it is a matter of survival to believe in 'us.' To fiercely hold on to our right to exist, not just as mothers, daughters, sisters, nieces, and wives, but simply as who we are and who we desire to be—as individuals, who also happen to be women."

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/>

- October 3 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-5:00pm (via Zoom)**
- October 22 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 11:00-Noon (via Zoom) (See Cover Page for details)**
- November 7 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-5:00pm (via Zoom)**
- November 19 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 11:00-Noon The Environment (via Zoom)**
(See Page 5 for details)
- December 5 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-5:00pm (via Zoom)**
- December 17 Saturday— OWL General Meeting Holiday Party (In Person) (Details to be announced)**

YES! I WANT TO JOIN OWL SF!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY STATE ZIP

TELEPHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Annual dues of \$50 are recommended. (If you are unable to pay the recommended amount, OWL has established a sliding fee scale from \$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

OWL SF
PO Box 170622
San Francisco, CA 94117

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