



The voice of mid-life and older women

NEWSLETTER

San Francisco



October - December 2023

OWL-SF 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

Minutes Matter With a Stroke: The Life You Save May Be Your Own!

Saturday, October 28th

11 AM to 12:30 PM

Zoom Meeting

Important information you need to know:

- * How to identify the risk factors of stroke
- * How to take prevention measures to avoid a stroke
- * How to recognize and identify the signs and symptoms of stroke
- * How and when to take immediate medical action at the first sign of a stroke

Speaker: Arete Nicholas. R.N., M. is a registered nurse with over 25 years of experience in clinical care management, consulting, health education and staff training in both long term care and acute care settings with a specialty in geriatric care management. She lives in San Francisco and is a Master Gardener.

Zoom link to follow

Political Advocacy Committee Report September 2023

The Political Advocacy Committee continues its focus on issues affecting older women, and Medicare is always on the top of our list. The September Membership Meeting, “Help I’m Lost in the Medicare Maze,” organized by PAC member Glenda Hope, featured knowledgeable speakers who discussed what Medicare does and does not pay for, how to plan for long term care, and where to go for information and services now and in the future. Despite many educational membership meetings on Medicare, recent California legislation, particularly SB 770, raised awareness that we still have much to learn, especially about Universal Healthcare and its effects on our Medicare coverage. Look for continued information on Medicare on in the future.



Monitoring ongoing progress in recertification of Laguna Honda Hospital continues. There is some good news: Medicaid/Medi-Cal recertification has been approved. But Medicare certification has not yet been accomplished. Advocacy goals for LHH are: timely and full recertification; no bed cuts; resumption of admissions; transparency in policy and practice to avoid another loss of certification; and a city-wide commitment to sufficient mental health and home care services to accommodate those who wish to remain in their homes safely while ensuring the viability of Laguna Honda for those who need inpatient skilled nursing care.

Other issues taken up by the Political Advocacy Committee are accessible public transportation and safe streets. OWL was asked to partner with Vision Zero in a letter sent to Governor Newsom asking him to sign AB 645, which he signed on October 13. This bill will allow San Francisco and other cities to participate in a pilot program promoting safe streets by using cameras to reduce speeds and prevent traffic light fatalities. Gathering information using license plates has the additional benefit of reducing racial profiling.

Public transportation accessibility was an issue on our radar this month, thanks to PAC member Tina Martin. OWL was asked by the Transit Committee of Senior and Disability Action to sponsor, along with CARA and others, and to help support the rally at Hallidie Plaza on 5th Street, held on Wednesday, September 27th protesting a non-working elevator at the BART station there. A contingent of OWL members attended the rally and it was great to get back to the pre-COVID days when OWL showed up in person to express support for causes that affect older women.

At the September Political Advocacy meeting OWL member Lela Harris recommended we support AB 360, a bill that will bar the use of non-medical terms like “excited delirium” which is frequently used in police reports, records, and coroners reports to justify harsh or even deadly responses to people in police custody. This bill would require that correct medical terminology be used to record injuries or cause of death in police custody, rather than euphemisms or generalizations that obscure the facts.

OWL’s Political Advocacy Committee meets on Zoom on the third Thursday of each month from 3 to 4 PM. We welcome new members and meetings are open to all who wish to come and see what we are all about.

—*Melanie Grossman*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mukulla Godwin
Wanda Jung
Kay Walker

Board Members

Maxine Anderson
Paula Barber VP
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

CARA Update

Make Our 20th Anniversary A Success! Don't Miss This Great Event

Our 20th Annual Convention on October 25th is fast approaching and we want to extend an opportunity for all members, partners, and allies to participate in the festivities as we celebrate 20 years of CARA! We have two events this year, the Annual Convention from 10am-4pm at the Teamsters Oakland office located at 7730 Pardee Lane, Oakland CA 94621 and the Dinner Celebration at the Hilton Oakland Airport from 6:30pm-9:30pm. Registration is required to attend each event and can be completed on CARA's homepage. (<https://californiaalliance.org/>)

Congratulations – We did it! All 6 of our priority bills have been passed and signed. Thank you for your calls and advocacy.

AJR 4 (Schiavo): Stop Medicare Privatization Resolution
AB 449 (Ting): Hate Crimes
AB 751 (Schiavo): Elder Abuse Training and Enforcement
AB 1286 (Haney): Stop Dangerous Pharmacies Act
SB 253 (Wiener): Climate Corporate Data Accountability Act
SB 770 (Wiener): Unified Healthcare Financing

Thank you to our Legislative Authors, Co-Sponsors and YOU! All six of our 2023 Priority Bills passed and were signed by the Governor. And many other bills that CARA supported have been signed – and others vetoed. We will continue to work on those. One thing we know for sure is that none of this would have been possible without the incredible work of CARA's Legislative Committee, CARA Action Teams, our Board, our staff and our incredible members. This is a huge achievement and makes our 20th Anniversary celebration even more special.

Mailing address: P.O. Box 23754, Oakland, CA 94623
Phone: 510-663-4086 / Tollfree 1-877-223-6107
Website: <http://www.californiaalliance.org/>

Good News For Seekers Of Owl Wisdom: Video Recordings

A New Service from OWL-SF— OWL-SF takes great pride in offering Members monthly meetings on informative and frequently crucial topics. Our speakers are always hyper-knowledgeable, and the gathering of minds to solve challenges contributes to the high quality of our meetings. From September forward, we are now very pleased to offer recordings of these meetings on our website. Got a scheduling conflict? Wish friends and colleagues could have been there? Worry not! Just go to www.owlssf.org, choose "EVENTS" from the drop-down menus, and you will find recordings of these enlightening sessions in chronological order beginning with the most recent meeting. Enjoy the meetings, and share them with friends!

Why do Vegans Eat What They Eat?

As someone who once dismissed vegans as "Picky eaters," I want to pose the question: Why do vegans eat what they eat?" Of course, health concerns can lead to this choice, as is pointed out in the article "Vegan after 60/Older Adults Find Health Benefits, Sense of Community in Plant-Based Switch." <https://gradynsource.uga.edu/vegan-after-60-older-adults-find-health-benefits-sense-of-community-in-plant-based-diet-switch/>



Also many people including seniors are alarmed by the suffering of farm animals in cages and the grim horrific hours of the people who work in factory farms, most of whom are from low-income and/or immigrant families) and have statistically high incidence of injuries. <https://ffacoalition.org/articles/dangerous-conditions-factory-farms/>

Some seniors "go vegan" for the environment, knowing it will lower their carbon footprint, as illustrated in the answers to a quiz published in the New York Times showing that along with using renewable energy, avoiding unnecessary flights, and living car free, eating a vegan diet is the way we can most effectively lower our carbon footprint. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/12/15/opinion/how-reduce-carbon-footprint-climate-change.html>

But to meat eaters and vegetarians in love with cheese, can a vegan diet be appetizing? The World Veg Fest shows that it can be. This year on Sunday, October 22, from 11 am to 5 pm you can see—and taste—for yourselves. Held in the SF County Fair Building at 9th Avenue and Lincoln, right next to the Botanical Gardens in Golden Gate Park, it features renowned educational presenters, demonstrations from top vegan chefs, free samples of delicious vegan food, exhibits and vendors.

—Tina Martin

<https://worldvegetariandy.navs-online.org/>

Special Offer for 2023 Help OWL-SF Grow

Starting in April 2023 your OWL membership renewal entitles you to invite one other member to join —Free!

Simply send an e-mail to info@owlssf.org with contact information of your Plus One.

How to Be an Activist but Not an Obstructionist

I have no concrete answer to “How to be an activist but not an obstructionist.” But I often pose the question to myself and sometimes to others.

In the past month, I’ve spoken at a rally on Polk and Van Ness to discourage the California Public Utilities Commission from giving free reign to robotaxis and at a the broken elevator on Market Street between Fifth and Powell to urge investment in transit accessibility. I didn’t feel like an obstructionist at these two rallies, nor did I feel any conflict about participating in a rally in Sacramento to urge Governor Newsom to sign AB 316, to keep a human driver in robo-trucks weighing 10,000 pounds or more.

But I also took part in a rally for the Farmers Market and at a celebration for Kapuso, a new development with 131 affordable homes. There should be no conflict there. We all love the Civic Center’s Farmers Market and will do what we can to support it. The same for affordable homes—if they’re not in our neighborhood, when we become obstructionists.

The rally for the Farmers Market was in support of the farmers and of the people in the Tenderloin who depend upon the Farmers Market for fresh produce. But I was alarmed when one resident, being interviewed by a CBS journalist, said she was at the rally because “I love the Farmers Market and they are shutting it down.” I gasped, turned to an activist next to me, and said, “They’re not shutting it down!” and he shrugged, as if moving it a block west were equal to doing away with it. I was relieved when the leader of the demonstration, David Elliot Lewis, Co-Chair of the Tenderloin People’s Congress, said into his megaphone, “Let’s be clear. They are not shutting it down.”

But I worried that the woman really thought they were. I think it’s wonderful to mobilize people, but I think it’s essential that we make sure they understand the issue at hand. In this case, it might have been a problem of language since the woman was not a native English speaker.

I looked at the flyer for the rally. “Save the Farmers Market/City relocating and downsizing our 42 year Heart of the City market.” I had read that the market was moving one block, from the United Nations Plaza to the Fulton Street Plaza, where it would have 10,000 square feet more of space. I had also read the justification for the move.

The drug dealing, illegal vending of stolen merchandise, and generally unsavory goings-on there were getting out of hand the five days the Farmers Market couldn’t be at the United Nations Plaza, and Mayor Breed and other city officials thought they could create a more wholesome atmosphere there seven days a week by creating a playground for skating, playing chess and Ping-Pong, and working out at exercise stations.



Gloria Garcia saves the day giving out tubes of frozen ice, I was able to use them to cool off my iPhone and continue taking pictures!

Of course, I knew of the upcoming convention of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) in November, which would bring world-wide attention to San Francisco streets.

After our rally moved from the United Nations Plaza to City Hall, an activist-friend commented to me with contempt, “It’s for the APEC they’re moving the market.” I’m sure that had a lot to do with it. But I don’t think it’s a crime to care about the impression our city is making to the rest of the world as long as city leaders care too about the people in the Tenderloin and other areas. My concern was that the farmers and the people who depend upon the market be informed and included in the process of the move. I don’t want to be an obstructionist, making change more difficult. I think the reason for moving the Farmers Market was justified. I question the process.

As for the 131 affordable homes at Kapuso, I cheered as the carpenters who had done the building were acknowledged and when State Senator Scott Wiener was praised for SB 35, which had expedited the process. I hope that when housing in my neighborhood comes, I’ll rally to support it rather than to obstruct it, but I still wonder about living wages for the builders. We don’t want more unhoused people due to wages that are too low. Still, I applauded, hoping that by not being an obstructionist of speedier development, I was not betraying unions!

On our way from the rally at the Farmers Market on August 30, we had passed the Exploratorium exhibit, which so well illustrates “my side bias” in one of its interactive displays. “How do you look into a topic?” it asks, inviting us to choose a topic we care about and get information about it from a drawer. One topic is Universal Health Care, pros and cons. Of course I went directly to the pros, anxious to confirm my beliefs, not to understand what concerns were on the other side.

Maybe there should be one for city politics, too. “Moving the Farmers Market One Block West: Pros and Cons.” Maybe we should look at both sides. Keeping an open mind doesn’t mean our brains will fall out.
—Tina Martin

Comments on My Profile in Senior Beat

I am very grateful to Jan Robbins and *Senior Beat* for the article they recently published online about me and my addiction to Show tunes—an addiction that began with 78 rpm records and MGM musicals of the 1950's. I'm a fan of *Senior Beat* ("Smashing Aging Stereotypes through Storytelling") and impressed by all that Jan writes, and I'm happy that our interviews gave us a chance to become acquainted.

That said, I suggested to the dedicated editor of OWL, Margaret Lew, who was willing to reprint the whole piece in an issue of the *OWL Newsletter*, that we just give the link and a few of my comments to save space.

I would like you to know that Kili, who was a charming 10-year old Tongan child when I was in the Peace Corps in Tonga 1970 & 1971, now has twenty-nine grandchildren!

I didn't really think I was going to marry three men from different countries. It was just a fantasy. Polyandry was made unnecessary when the Peace Corps sent me abroad and I was later able to live in Spain and in Algeria before taking on even one husband.

There's a picture of me in Algeria in the snow, which may modify the image of Arab countries as being all desert.

Studying Arabic taught me humility, a good reason for studying a non Indo-European language. French and Spanish were much easier.

It was with self-mockery that I said my idea of a great woman was Helen of Troy and Isadora Duncan. By the time I joined the Peace Corps, Gloria Steinem was my idol. Now Barbara Lee is.

In terms of activism, of course OWL, CARA, and the AFT 2121 Faculty Union Retirees Chapter are important to me. But I'm also very dedicated to supporting public transit and advocating for accessibility for all, and two other major concerns are animal welfare and the environment, so I'm a member of SF Veg Society and Mothers Out Front. As a I vegan, I do volunteer work for these causes with every bite (though I still need to cut down on my purchase of produce in plastic bags).

My father's thriftiness and many other things are elaborated upon in my memoirs *Everything I Should Have Learned I Could Have Learned in Tonga*, *Letters from Algeria and the Day Everything Changed*, and *Letters of Apology for my First Memoir*, which also sneak in some pieces of fiction.

—**Tina Martin**

Editor's note: Now satisfy your curiosity by going to Senior Beat to enjoy the whole story! *Love of Broadway Musicals Brought Peace Corps Volunteer English Teacher and Would Be Expat Back to Settle in America*
<https://sfseniorbeat.com/2023/07/10/love-of-broadway-musicals-brought-peace-corps-volunteer-english-teacher-and-would-be-expat-back-to-settle-in-america/>



Tina in the Peace Corps, Tonga 1970-71.



Good cheer, good food, good books as OWL friends, old and new, Met at the July summer luncheon in St Marks Lutheran Church. Photos by Tina Martin



OutofEdenWalk.org

The National Geographic has funded Explorer Paul Salopek's 24,000-mile Out of Eden Walk for 10 years. Paul is retracing our ancestral dispersal out of Africa in the Stone Age. Along the way he is covering the major stories of our time—from climate change to technological innovation, from mass migration to cultural survival—by giving voice to the people who inhabit them every day. Read about his fascinating journey and insights at OutofEdenWalk.org.

He's sometimes asked "How do the big issues of the day look – from the boot level?" He writes: "The most corrosive injustice encountered, up close, in every single human culture I've walked through? That's easy: the shackles that men lock, cruelly, arbitrarily, on the potential of women. (Who's always underpaid? Who's typically undereducated? Who wakes up first to a morning of toil? Who's the last to rest?)"

—Submitted by Joan Downey

Lost in the Medicare Maze? September Membership Meeting

Help! I Am Lost In The Medicare Maze!

What will Medicare pay for? How do I know if this injury or illness or condition calls for rehab, assisted living, skilled nursing or in-home care? How do I find the "good places"? Where can I go to find guidance for myself or my loved one in this crisis time? I just cannot navigate all this online stuff. I need a real human being helping me.

If you have not experienced this kind of panic, chances are that you or someone you know will in the future. Don't wait until you are in a crisis to gain this knowledge.

Chris Dillon presented information about the free resources provided through The Hub of the Dept. of Aging and Disability Services. Chris is a retired nursing home administrator and serves on the Advisory Council of DAS. She is a decades long activist in the Cayuga Terraces neighborhood. HiCap is a non-profit providing individualized guidance.

OWL SF's September Membership meeting helped us begin to map out ways to navigate the Medicare maze. If you missed this important meeting a recording of it is available on the OWL website www.owlsf.org/events. In addition to the recording you can read Dillon's detailed informative report of her presentation.

Community Living Campaign

A wealth of opportunities, information, and activities wait for you at Community Living Campaign. Connect with their social media channels, visit their website, subscribe to their newsletter, attend in-person classes, learn technical skills, find employment and more.

SF Community Living Campaign: <https://sfcommunityliving.org>

Stop Junk Mail

Today, junk mail is a lifeline for the post office. In 1970, Congress withdrew taxpayer dollars for the agency... directing it to act like a business by covering its costs. Desperate for money, the Postal Service opened the floodgates by granting marketers preferential access to your mailbox at one-third the cost of standard mail.

This takes a heavy environmental toll. The typical American receives about 41 pounds of junk mail each year...and much of it ends up in landfills. The Sierra Club estimates that 80 million to 100 million trees are cut down each year to print junk mail and \$1 billion tax dollars are spent each year to collect and dispose of it.

Here are three steps to stop junk mail.

Stop most advertisements: The Association of National Advertisers' DMAchoice.org. This service lets you stop delivery of catalogues, magazine offers and other junk items from charities, banks and national brands. DMAchoice says this will stop 80 % of promotional offers since marketers would rather contact people willing to receive their mail. Register online for \$4, or by mail for \$5, to stop deliveries for 10 years.

Stop credit card and insurance offers: The 1996 Fair Credit Reporting Act created OptOutPrescreen.com. You can to opt out for five years online or by calling 888-567-8688. To stop offers forever, you can sign and return the Permanent Opt-Out Election form.

Stop mail from specific businesses: For that, I turned to services able to take my name off mailing lists of individual retailers, marketers and charities. Companies you've done business with in the past few years may still be allowed to contact you, charities may sell your name, and some just slip through the cracks.

CatalogChoice.org is a nonprofit organization with a list of 10,000 businesses and charities. Send an opt-out request to specific companies by searching the website's pre-populated company list, a click of the mouse sends a request on your behalf. Best of all, it's free.

For convenience, I wanted a smartphone app. So I bought an annual subscription to *PaperKarma* for \$24.99. You can also buy a monthly plan for \$3.99. You take a photo of the mailed item, then algorithms try to identify the sender based on the brand or logo on the envelope. You can manually correct any errors, and you can instantly send the advertiser an opt-out request via the app.

Source: **How to Keep Junk Snail Mail Out of Your Mailbox Forever**, Michael J. Coren, Climate Advice Columnist, *The Washington Post*

Readers: What are you reading?

Share your reviews and recommendations, send them to the editor: Email: info@owlsf.org

What Are You Reading?

The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court by Jeffrey Toobin

Someone left this book in my little free library box or I would never have noticed it anywhere, let alone picked it up and read it. But I did.

It is fascinating. Not the kind of book that will keep you up at night reading but definitely one that you will find keeps your interest. The author, Jeffrey Toobin, has meticulously researched and footnoted this book. Unfortunately, it ends with the 2007-2008 term and a whole lot has happened since then, as we know. I found myself wanting a sequel.

In the September 18th *San Francisco Chronicle*, page A12, there was an OpEd, a kind of sequel, by Aaron Tang who is a law professor at UC Davis and a former law clerk for Justice Sonia Sotomayor. Tang is the author of *Supreme Hubris: How Overconfidence is Destroying the Court and What We Can Do About It*, it sounds both chilling and challenging. I am now in search of it in the library.

The Nine is good background and I recommend it. I will review Tang's book later assuming I can locate it.
—Glenda Hope

You can read Tang's SFChronicle opinion piece here:

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/openforum/article/supreme-court-ethics-scandals-18362718.php>

Love and Murder in the Time of COVID by Qiu Xiaolong
Joan is Okay by Weike Wang

COVID-19 plays a part in these two novels, one a mystery set in Shanghai, the other in New York City. *Love and Murder in the Time of COVID*, follows a police investigation into murders near a hospital in Shanghai as the Chinese government's lock down policies create growing pain and misery among the population. Qiu Xiaolong's master detective and his loyal, adoring associate solve the crimes, though not easily in the high tension of suspicion and surveillance.

Joan is Okay. In a New York City hospital ICU during the height of COVID-19, Joan, a thirty-something Chinese-American attending physician faces a crisis of her own, her happy solitary life is upturned by the death of her father. It is not the loss of a parent but the increased focus of her remaining family, mother and brother, whose expectations and advice/interference on one hand and the hospital HR department's placing her on a month's bereavement leave and limited hours put her world out of tilt. How will she convince everyone around her that she is okay being herself? I liked Wang's writing so then read the author's first novel *Chemistry*, which had been on the best sellers list for a long time. I would recommend it too! In *Joan is Okay* I learned a little about the composition of Chinese characters which is a long-time interest of mine. That was a nice surprise.

—Margaret Lew

The OWL Book Group

We meet every month on the second Tuesday. We welcomed a new member in October! Join us by contacting Louise DiMattio who will send you the current book being read: *Her Own Accord, American Women on Identity, Culture, and Community*, a collection of short stories and poems. Louise will provide you with the ZOOM connection. You can participate by computer or by phone call.

Discussion time is one hour 10:00-11:00AM. Meeting dates: November 14, December 12.
Contact: Louise DiMattio ladimat@aol.com

Calendar

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

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

October 28 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 11:00-Noon (via Zoom) *Minutes Matter with a Stroke* (See Cover Page for details)

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

November 18 Saturday— OWL General Meeting 11:00-Noon (via Zoom) *Tech* (Details to be announced)

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

December 16 Saturday— OWL Holiday Luncheon (Time and Location 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-SF has established a sliding fee scale from \$10 -\$50.) Members receive the quarterly OWL SF Newsletter, advocacy Alerts and invitations to monthly meetings.

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.

OWL-SF will not share or sell our membership list or any information about our members.

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