OWL is the ONLY national membership organization to focus 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-SF in
A Discussion about Relationships

Why bother making friends? Let’s talk about the importance of relationships in our lives!

• What are the health benefits of relationships?
• What do friendships add to our lives?
• How can we sustain old relationships and make new ones?

Facilitator: Melanie Grossman, PhD, LCSW
Dr. Grossman is a certified, licensed social worker who has worked with the Institute on Aging’s Friendship Line for the past 10 years. She has over 25 years of experience in the field of aging.

When: Saturday, October 28th 10 AM to Noon
Where: Northern Police Station Community Room
1125 Fillmore St. at Turk St.
(No parking in police parking lot)

MUNI # 5, 22, 31 & 38 (4 block walk)
Wheelchair Accessible

Co-Sponsored by The Community Living Campaign
OWL Alerts

The people who operate the Friendship Line report that they logged more than 1,200 more calls in July of 2017 than in July of 2016. People who call this line are anxious, isolated, lonely, worried, etc. and are mostly seniors. They talk about worries for Social Security/Medicare/Medical, climate disasters, economic insecurity, resurgence of hate groups, wondering if we are going into a war with North Korea, etc. This underscores other reports from psychotherapists and other professionals that more and more people are experiencing this level of distress since January of this year.

The Southern Poverty Law Center lists 917 hate groups in the USA and by no means are they all in the South.

As Joan Baez famously said: “the best antidote to despair is action.” OWL members are encouraged to use the weekly OWL ALERTS to direct their action in concert with many others. Get your friends and neighbors involved, too. It may not seem like much, but it is essential that people of goodwill speak up. Elie Wiesel reminded us that “there will be times when we are powerless to stop injustice. But there must never be a time when we are silent.”

—Glenda Hope

California Disclose Act
Signed into Law

Governor Brown signed 31 bills on Saturday, October 7th and among them was the California Disclose Act, AB249. This caps 7 years of grassroots efforts to identify who is really paying for political ads for initiatives placed on our ballots. The California Disclose Act provisions in brief:

- Lets voters know who really is paying for political ads — on the ads themselves.
- Ballot measure ads will have to clearly and prominently list their three largest funders.
- “Follow-the-money” disclosure stops ads from deceiving voters about who pays.
- Applies to television ads, radio ads, robocalls, and print advertising.

Congratulations to all who worked on this including OWLs who made OWL Alert phone calls and sent postcards!

—Margaret Lew
CARA Update

California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) Convention

CARA’s biennial state convention (every other year there are regional conventions) was held in Sacramento September 26-27. Every year for a decade, I’ve been reporting that the CARA convention was extraordinary; this year was no exception. (I guess “extraordinary is losing its meaning. CARA conventions are consistently “outstanding”.)

My only regret is that more OWL SF members don’t attend these uniformly wonderful conventions. This year, there were over 300 attendees. I think you are unlikely to attend a conference with greater diversity or a more personally welcoming crowd. CARA, like OWL, gives aging a good name, with people who know a lot, think a lot, and do a lot around a very broad range of issues, many of which affect us directly.

There was an introduction to other politically active groups, like Indivisible, Working America, Our Revolution, and the CA Labor Federation. Very interesting workshops were offered on affordable housing, using social media, and SB 562—the Healthy California Act. Tom Steyer was a thought-provoking keynote speaker. We had a chance to meet some of the candidates for statewide office, and the after-dinner entertainment was terrific with the fantastic singer, Rhonda Benin, and her backup musicians.

In terms of priority issues, we didn’t even consider Social Security and Medicare, since they are assumed to be at the top of the list. The issues which are then secondary priorities for the next year are housing, including rental housing, and Prop 13 reform (getting corporations to pay their fair share). I think OWL shares these priorities, so these were fortuitous choices!

At the end of the convention was an optional action. Many of us joined a picket line at the local AT&T cellular, demanding a stop to outsourcing jobs to India and other places and a new contract (not in place for over 6 months). OWL has traditionally supported unions and I, personally, think a strong union movement would dramatically improve our country.

Oh yes, we also elected board members, and I am privileged to be OWL SF’s representative for the next three years. Thank you!

—Kathie Piccagli

Political Advocacy Committee Update

Alzheimer’s Unit at CPMC Threatened with Closure

On September 28, 2017, at 10 AM, the San Francisco Planning and Health Commissions held their annual compliance review of the Sutter Health/California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) development agreement with the City regarding the building of the Van Ness Avenue medical center and the rebuild at St. Luke’s Hospital in the Mission. During the public comment portion of the hearing, the planned closing of the Irene Swindells Alzheimer’s Residential Care Program came to light.

Families of the 22 men and women housed at the Residential Care Program, located at CPMC’s California Campus, 3700 California Street in Pacific Heights, protested the proposed shutting of the program so that the building could be sold. The families were given notice on August 8, 2017. There are no plans to relocate the unit to another CPMC campus. The closure of the Swindells program is a shocking loss to the families who rely on CPMC for the care of their loved ones and to the patients who are being evicted.

This is another indication of the shrinking services in San Francisco for some of its most vulnerable citizens. The closure at St. Luke’s of skilled nursing beds, as well as the closure of the last subacute unit within the city limits (now delayed because of protests by family members and other advocates, including OWL), will mean that very sick patients, such as those on respirators and in need of around the clock care, will be moved out of the city in order to receive appropriate care.

CPMC’s actions are heartless, but the solution calls for a comprehensive city-wide answer so that older citizens can remain in the city where they have worked and paid taxes for decades. This issue, which is one of fairness and justice, affects all of us and is one that OWL’s Political Advocacy Committee will continue to monitor.

—Melanie Grossman

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Natasha Jabari
Tina Martin
Alexandra Nickliss
Lisa Wagner
Climate Change and You

I just read an article on the Climate Reality Project webpage saying that “only 19 percent of Americans hear someone they know talking about the climate crisis at least once a month.” I find this quite distressing, and I want to be sure you’re in the 19%.

Worldwide and nationally it doesn’t take much to see some of the negative influence climate change is having on the environment – from hurricanes like Irma, Harvey, and Maria to the many terrible wildfires throughout the western United States. Not to mention the more “subtle” effects like famine and other climate change effects fueling migration and war.

More locally, the state of California has taken a lead in this country and around the world with a consistent effort to promote renewable energy in the electrical grid, electrification of vehicles, and an overhaul of transportation to promote clean energy goals. (By the way, have you signed up yet for Supergreen from PG&E? If not, go to cleanpowersf.org, and do it right now to receive all your electricity from renewable sources.)

One of the most important things you can do is to recognize the importance of the climate crisis and direct attention to the issue. Demand attention from the press and other media. Demand action from your legislators. Talk to your friends and family – don’t let them be among the 81% whose friends don’t discuss climate change and related environmental issues. Friends don’t let friends ignore climate change.


—Kathie Piccagli

Cookies and Mortality:
The Death Café Movement

Everyone knows that someday their life will end. Still, many of us can relate to the Woody Allen quote, “I’m not afraid to die; I just don’t want to be there when it happens.” A new movement, started in England in 2011, is on its way to changing such attitudes. Death Cafes are turning a taboo topic into a conversation over tea and cookies in the living rooms of ordinary people, in libraries and in community rooms all over the United States and beyond.

A death café isn’t a physical space, but a coming together of like-minded people to talk about some of the thorny issues that arise over illness, death (one’s own or that of a loved one) and loss. It is not a grief support group or a counselling session. It is a discussion group about death with no agenda or objectives except to come together to talk about anything on your mind related to the topic.

It can be an oddly cheerful space. Smiles appear when participants learn they are not alone in their concerns, fears or wishes. There are funny stories; people laugh. When tears are shed, Kleenex is passed. Unless asked for, advice is not given; it is mostly about listening and learning.

By creating a safe place to share our thoughts about death, it becomes easier to think about, to make choices and to make plans. When we acknowledge the fact that someday everyone will die, it ends up being about equally about how we want to live as well as our mortality.

There are a number of death cafés in San Francisco. One can be found at the Zen Hospice Project, 273 Page Street. Their $5 fee covers snacks and drinks. Contact Diane Mailey at diane@zenhospice.org for more information. Another death café is held at the North Beach Library, sponsored by Next Village. For more information, inquire at infor@nextvillage.org. See you there, and save some cookies for me.

—Melanie Grossman

Save the Date
OWL SF
November 18th
Membership Meeting:

Make it Fair

Join OWL SF to learn about Make it Fair — A California State Constitutional Amendment that closes the $9 billion commercial property tax loophole by assessing under-valued commercial properties at their actual value.

When: Saturday, November 18, 2017
10 AM to Noon
Where: Northern Police Station
Community Room
1125 Fillmore St. at Turk St.

The OWL SF Holiday Party and Election of Board Members
Will be held in December.
Bring a brunch dish and Good Cheer!
Date and location to be announced.
Watch your mailbox for the postcard – check the OWL SF web site for details.
Reframing Aging
A Lively Exchange of Views

On September 23rd, OWL SF presented a well-attended membership meeting at the Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library. The topic was Reframing Aging: Confronting and Transforming Society’s Current Images, Biases and Prejudices, a workshop by Diane Krantz.

A trained facilitator, Ms. Krantz has been fighting ageism and helping older adults thrive for the past 10+ years through her work as an independent consultant for social sector organizations committed to serving all populations. She engaged our group in a lively discussions embracing both the head and the heart.

In addition to short videos: a TED talk by Ashton Applewhite, and on-the-street interviews with people who voiced common ageist views and fears; OWL members staged a skit illustrating the plight of an older woman waiting for treatment at an urgent care clinic – and we broke into groups of 5 or 6 to share our personal experience with either getting older, or in some cases, being younger. The attendees included a good range of ages, which enriched the exchange.

Some comments left on evaluation forms collected after the meeting underline the success of this event:

“got me tuned in to my own ageist biases and made me willing to confront ageism in myself and others”
“This exceeded my expectations! It was really stimulating and pro-active. I want to join OWL!”
“I arrived with no expectations, only curiosity. The workshop was informative and enlightening”
“The facilitator was excellent – she navigated the agenda well, was informative and had a sense of humor”
“Open and non-judgemental!”

—Margaret Lew

Learn more about reframing ageing:
Ashton Applewhite, *This Chair Rocks*,
https://thischairrocks.com/
Ashton Applewhite, *Yo Is This Ageist*,
http://yoisthisageist.com/
Frameworks Insitute, Aging Research,
http://frameworksinstitute.org/reframing-aging.html
Project Implicit, Age Bias test,
https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

Like OWL SF on Facebook!
https://facebook.com/OWLSF/
What Are You Reading?

*Evicted, Poverty and Profit in the American City*, by Matthew Desmond is a fascinating read and non-fiction (sadly). Social justice, particularly relating to women, is at the core of this book and, thus, makes it particularly relevant for OWL.

My focus on eviction, here in San Francisco, has been on eviction to serve the cause of gentrification and what it does to evicted renters. Gets them out with no place to go, since the rental market is sparse and costly.

But this is about rental housing and eviction in trailer parks and poor urban, run-down neighborhoods. People go, after lengthy searches — and a lot of camping out with friends or at homeless shelters — to other low-income rentals. The book takes place in Milwaukee, but it could be any city. Landlords are not trying to get renters out to improve facilities to make a profit; they are intending to remain in the landlord business, continuing to rent the same run-down properties to the same demographic. They just want renters who pay their rent and don’t make waves. A multitude of problems make this elusive.

Thus there is a spiraling problem as people are forced to move often. The poor renter spends an inordinate amount of time and energy just trying to keep a roof overhead, trying to balance rent, food, health care, and other necessities. The eviction treadmill is a time, money, and energy sapper. The time and energy necessitated to find and keep housing takes away from jobs, school, education — life, in general.

Women often are most vulnerable; single mothers have it worst, since children are potential problems to landlords, not to mention making mothers’ lives more complicated. I had never thought of fear of eviction being a reason not to report domestic abuse, because it brings unwanted attention to the property. Or a relatively minor problem with a child can bring increased, unwanted scrutiny.

The author brings up the issue of whether adequate housing is a basic human right and this book certainly seems to support that. Unreasonable housing issues help to perpetuate a cycle of poverty, making just surviving much more difficult.

It is easy to see why *Evicted, Poverty and Profit in the American City* is a Pulitzer Prize winner. It is illuminating, fascinating, poignant, and very angering. Desmond manages to personalize his well-researched social science, so that you feel greatly for the people in the book. Highly recommended.

—Kathie Piccagli

A reading idea from our September OWL Membership meeting on Reframing Ageing: *This Chair Rocks, A Manifesto Against Ageism* by Ashton Applewhite, traces her journey from apprehensive boomer to pro-aging radical, and in the process debunks myth about later life.

Robots on Our Sidewalks?

Sidewalks are the only dedicated space that is solely for people walking — and it should stay that way.

Now, companies are starting to operate delivery vehicles on San Francisco’s already crowded sidewalks. These delivery robots clog sidewalks, block curb ramps and create hazards for children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

San Francisco has consistently prioritized its sidewalks for the use of pedestrians, restricting bicycles (with riders over 12 years old) and skateboards from monopolizing this pedestrian space. In addition, Walk SF members helped win the precedent-setting passage of the first law in the nation to ban Segways from using the sidewalk.

Now it’s time to take action again!

Speak up to preserve the limited street space that belongs to people walking. Tell the City to prioritize the safety and comfort of you, your family, and your friends.

Support the Ban
After you urge the Board of Supervisors to protect the public right-of-way by banning autonomous delivery vehicles from San Francisco’s sidewalks. Help spread the word about this petition and Yee’s legislation: Snap a picture of a rogue delivery bot and post the petition with the hashtag #saveoursidewalks on Twitter or Instagram.

The petition can be found on the Walk SF webpage: http://walksf.org/save-our-sidewalks/

Cleaning Out Closets, Redecorating or 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! You receive credits for a tax-deductible donation!

OWL SF has a new telephone number: (415) 712 - 1695
Summer of Love Garden Party
July OWL Potluck

For the OWL Summer of Love Garden party we gathered around a bountiful potluck lunch and shared good memories and good food. It was fascinating, as well as sometimes hilarious, to hear stories about where our friends were and what we were doing in the years surrounding 1967. Maxine remembered the excitement of being a college student. Some remembered first real jobs. Joan told of organizing for women’s rights in her company, preparing a position paper which was widely circulated, and being harassed into resigning from that company. Glenda remembered involvement in the Peace Movement, memories echoed by others. Some said this was the time they were giving birth to their children.

It is always good to deepen friendships in this way in such a relaxed, convivial setting. Also, someone has said that telling stories about our lives is a way to weave the disparate parts of life together into a coherent whole. The psychologist Eric Erickson posited that “integrity - developing a positive wholeness of life” is our final developmental task. It is also a way to pass along our wisdom to each other and to those coming along behind us. All true but, essentially in July the gathered OWLS just had fun.

—Glenda Hope

I complimented my cousin on her positive attitude after many ups and downs following a bone marrow replacement for leukemia. She wrote:

As Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “Women are like tea bags. They function best in hot water.” I like to think I would make a good cuppa

—submitted by Joan Downey

Calendar

For a complete and up to date listing see the OWL website: http://www.owlsf.org/calendar.php
October 2 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm (Flood Bldg. Room 665)
October 28 Saturday — OWL General Meeting 10:00-Noon (Northern Police Station, Community Room 1125 Fillmore at Turk Streets) see cover for details.
November 6 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm (Flood Bldg. Room 665)
November 18 Saturday — OWL General Meeting 10:00-Noon (Northern Police Station, Community Room 1125 Fillmore at Turk Streets) see p4 for details.
December 4 Monday — OWL Board Meeting, 4:00-6:00pm (Flood Bldg. Room 665)
December Saturday OWL Holiday Party & Election of Board Members (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 $50 –$5.) Members receive the quarterly OWL SF Newsletter.

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

Make a check out to and mail to:

OWL SF
870 Market Street, Room 905
San Francisco, CA 94102

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

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
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San Francisco, CA 94102