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Kathie Piccagli, At-Large Rep.

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OLDER WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA

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OWL-CA NEWSLETTER, SPRING, 2009

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Dear OWL-CA:

Good News! The audio equipment is found so we should have a loud and clear session in June! It will be great to get together again and review what we have been doing.... and thinking. We will want to know what you have been doing especially on the topics of health and expanding our membership. Even if what you have been doing is only in the planning stage, we will be glad to hear it. We'd like to know who has been tabling and for what kinds of events; have you been passing out brochures to friends; what kinds of health information have you been highlighting with speakers or discussing in your groups. Include it all. Remember to make a flyer if you have a speaker and get it out to senior centers, libraries and any place you can think of where there may be interest.

Recently at our MeDIC meeting with our consultants, there was some discussion regarding where we look for money. We have in the past frowned on money from pharmaceuticals and HMOs, but just what are our principles around this? When the money is offered from such sources, but no strings at all are attached, is it permissible to accept? We might want to take some time at the Council meeting (15 or 20 minutes) to discuss this, to think about what principles we can agree to follow. Then we could turn it over to our Policy Review Committee to work on and bring back to our October meeting. It may be time to reassess this issue. Give it some thought.

It has been exciting to see that Ashley Carson has been representing us at important events in Washington. We hope everyone is getting the OWL National News online. If some of you haven't been receiving the National news, be sure to send your e-mail address to the OWL National office. Kathie Piccagli suggested that someone in each chapter could take the responsibility of sending National the e-mail addresses for their members.

Ashley Carson recently presented OWL pins to Nancy Pelosi and Michelle Obama at the recent signing of an Executive Order creating the White House Council on Women and Girls. OWL sponsored two sessions at the Aging in America Conference in Las Vegas in March and was well represented by presenters in ten other sessions there. Let's get OWL-CA in the news by making a big splash at our Mother's Day event in Sacramento in May!

Ruth Kletzing and Evie Kosower

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Health Reform Movement

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

MAY 7- MOTHER'S DAY AT THE CAPITOL

JUNE 6&7 - OWL-CA COUNCIL MEETING
AT THE PARK PLAZA HOTEL, 150
HEGENBERGER RD., OAKLAND, 94621
PH:510-639-7891

Come to the Capitol on May 9 to Celebrate OWL's Mother's Day Program

Mother's Day is rapidly approaching. This means it is time for OWL-CA members to tell the Governor and their legislators about a particular problem affecting older women. This year we are addressing the problem of Elder Abuse, a theme OWL is implementing nationally. Here in California we will specifically deal with the cut back of monitors for the ombudsman programs in nursing homes and residential care facilities. These programs are managed by a relatively small paid staff. Volunteer ombudsmen monitor and investigate thousands of abuse cases reported to them annually. They have the legal right and obligation to report unsatisfactory care in nursing homes and residential care facilities.

As we point out the failings of nursing homes, we must not overlook the good care that many people receive. When we concentrate on nursing home weaknesses, we are aiming at making them safer. The ombudsman program has been invaluable in implementing good care. We were represented on the recent review of SB1629, the nursing home law which we had supported in 2005; it was up for review the year. Now with the removal of the funds for the ombudsman program, we are focusing on their work.

The Ombudsmen need to monitor complaints from residents. Their absence has made people even more aware of the contribution that the program makes to improve care in nursing homes. Long term care facilities are only given little oversight without an adequate ombudsman program. OWL believes

ombudsmen provide an important way to prevent elder abuse and bring peace of mind to nursing home residents and their families.

How can you support this effort? Sign the Mother's Day cards. Have your friends sign cards and send them to them to the office at 1230 N Street, #201, Sacramento, CA 95814 by May 1. We are including a flyer in this newsletter for you to complete for coming to our May 7 event. OWL will treat for the lunch, but we need to know that you will be with us to order your lunch.

This will be your day to make a significant contribution to improve this important issue. We will gather in the Eureka Room in the basement of the Capitol. Before we begin our distribution of cards, our consultant, Roberta Battle, who is a volunteer ombudsman, will tell us about their work. Members will take the cards to the legislators' offices and briefly describe the issue. Then everyone will return to the Eureka Room for lunch and additional speakers. -See flyer in this newsletter.

After lunch we will have an update on health legislation and Beth Mann, the former State Ombudsman and now President of the Culture Change Coalition, will tell us about new ways for caring for nursing home residents.

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Caption: Betty Perry with web team Margie Metzler and Roberta Battle

California Public Policy Report, March 29, 2009 Older Women's League of California

Betty Perry, Public Policy Director

As older women we know the problems of spending money wisely. After you look at all of the problems California has been having, I think you will agree they should start listening to us. A budget was passed after weeks of anguished negotiations. Almost immediately a series of initiatives have been proposed supposedly to make the budget work. Our question, will they make it worse? It should be remembered that these initiatives are constitutional amendments and they can only be changed by a vote of the electorate.

First there is **Proposition 1A**, the only proposition on which OWL has taken a position.

1. It creates a "Rainy Day" fund. This sounds good for a state that is running out of money almost every year, but read on. The "Rainy Day" fund will divert money from the budget even in bad years. Guidelines for use of the fund are not clear. It allows the Governor and the Legislature to spend the proceeds of new tax increases without regard for 1A's limits on placing money in the rainy day fund. It does not take into account the growth of the needs of vital services for a growing, aging population, rising health care costs and global warming. It gives unilateral budget powers to the Governor with no checks and balances.
2. It encourages unlimited tax increases, not stopping them. It limits what the Governor and the legislature can spend from existing revenue, but it places no limits on future tax increases. By putting so much of existing tax revenue into the rainy day fund, it will increase pressure to raise taxes.
3. This initiative would place extraordinary unilateral power over the budget into the hands of the Director of Finance, a person appointed by the Governor. He decides when revenues can be placed in the rainy day fund with no checks or balances from the legislature.

After consulting with a majority of our Board, The Older Women's League joins many groups who work for a strong, healthy California in opposing 1A. The other Initiatives cover issues we have worked on before. We urge you to read more about them and decide for yourself how to vote. If 1A is defeated, it will have a negative affect on some of the other initiatives.

Proposition 1B is to create supplemental payments to local school districts and community colleges to make up for recent budget cuts. It will only go into operation if Proposition 1A passes. It will make supplemental payments instead of those payments required by present law. It allows the governor and the legislature to decide how the payments will be divided between K-12 and Community Colleges.

Proposition 1C, The Lottery Modernization Act -This is aimed at modernizing these procedures of the lottery: increasing payouts, improving marketing and effective management. The state will continue ownership of the lottery and additional accountability measures will be put in place. It will protect current funding levels for schools. Increased lottery revenues will be used to address the current budget deficit and reduce the need for additional tax increases and cuts to state programs. It will allow \$5 billion in borrowing to help balance the state's budget and allow borrowing.

CARA REPORT *By Kathlie Piccagli*

The New Year began with several members attending CARA's community action meetings held in Berkeley, Richmond and Martinez as well as an all day training on Feb. 18. CARA's primary objectives at this time are single payer health care as well as revenue enhancements for the CA budget rather than cuts, which severely impact seniors.

CARA holds monthly meetings in many counties in California. To find their schedule of meetings: www.calliforniaalliance.org and click on Calendar of events.

SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 7 & 8 COUNCIL MEETING

Submitted by Joyce Miller

Present: Mary Lou Anthony, Rosemary Bacy, Roberta Battle, Lucille Blass, BJ Bryan, Glenda Cheesman, Ida Curtice, Ellen Doerfer, Shirley Harlan, Joan Hunnicutt, Joyce Kamian, Ruth Kletzing, Evie Kowoser, Kathleen Lane, Diane Latco, Eleanor Luce, Eunice Lycke, Nan McGuire, Margie Metzler, Joyce Miler, Martie Millhone, Carolyn Negrete, Betty Perry, Karen Raasch, Christine Shields, Jacqui Snowden, Jerry Stout, Janet Vandre

MINUTES OF MEDICARE PART D SESSION & PUBLIC POLICY 2/7/09

Betty Perry reported on the projects completed and in progress with the use of grant monies, and the fiscal year ends June 30, with a reminder that the objectives of the grant are to:

*Monitor and help improve the implementation of the Part D grant;

*Educate and inform policy makers and inform leaders about senior issues;

*Strengthen the health advocacy capacity of senior organizations.

Mary Lou Anthony, Treasurer, reported grant balance is now \$19,000.00 plus.

MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Margie Metzler spoke about the web site, www.owl-ca.org that allows sending the newsletter electronically. With the next newsletter, everyone will get a hard copy, but subsequently they need to ask for a hard copy if they are on the Internet.

Send MEDIC reports to Betty Perry using grant forms.

June Council Meeting will be in Oakland at Park Plaza Hotel, 150 Hegenberger Rd. We have yet to choose a place for the Annual meeting in October. Will check with Nan McGuire on using the Mercy Center in Burlingame. A possible program for this meeting would be a play about Jeanette Rankin.

Kathie Piccagli, Membership chair presented a packet of information materials prepared by Roberta Battle of Sacramento Chapter as a new OWL packet.. It was M/S/P that we compile 100 of these to dispense at tablings and meetings. Board needs to recommend Glenda Cheesman as the new treasurer and Joyce Miller as the third recording secretary, to replace Ellen Doerfer at the Council meeting.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING 2/8/09

Meeting called to order by Co-Presidents Ruth Kletzing and Evie Kosower at 9:30 AM. The minutes of the October meeting were approved as corrected.

Voting: Glenda Cheesman - elected as treasurer of OWL-CA, and Joyce Miller as third recording secretary.

National Board report see page 5.

Political issues to consider for 2009: Betty Perry - **AB 324 Beal** - The Elder Economic Security Act to update the national poverty guidelines; an initiative to change state and local government workers' pensions, with an unknown affect on current retirees was opposed by unanimous vote of the Council.

Policy Review & Bylaws - Joyce Kamian distributed notebooks containing bylaws, minutes, and parliamentary procedures.

Treasury Report - Mary Lou Anthony - distributed proposed budget for 2009 with \$15,000.00 projected expenses. The Medic grant has helped with our cash flow. Glenda Cheesman will take over as treasurer. She will take the data to an accountant, who prepares our federal and state taxes. It was M/S/P to accept the budget.

Endowment Fund - Ruth Kletzing - Has \$21,000 in it. It needs to reach \$25,000 before we can use it, except in dire circumstances.

Editorial Committee - Ellen Doerfer - reported the Deadline for June newsletter is Friday, April 13.

Resolutions - BJ Bryan reported none.

CARA - Kathie Piccagli, OWL Rep. - Their very active legislative committee publishes 12 newsletters per year - ten on line and two printed. OWL will pay for our members to go to their leadership academy training. They have a one-day training in Martinez on Feb. 8.

Membership - Kathie Piccagli - Every chapter has lost membership every year. Membership has also declined in other organizations with a similar population. National OWL needs more members if it is to grow. They have had 20,000 members in the past, but now are at 4,000. They will eventually move to on-line membership and are preparing a new dues structure at \$5 to \$50 on a sliding scale.

Update on website - Margie Metzler, our web consultant demonstrated how it works. See Newsletter heading for current web and e-mail addresses.

Chapter Reports - See page 8

TREASURERS REPORT *Mary Lou Anthony*

At the end of December OWL of California had \$43,107.82 in its General Fund and \$19,492.62 in its Medicare D Advocacy Fund. Our money is held in one checking account, two savings accounts and three Certificates of Deposit. Included in the total is our Endowment fund, which has grown to \$21,004.02 in the less than ten years since it was established at the urging of Ruth Kletzing. Our Laurie Shields Scholarship Account now has more than \$13,000.

We had some unusual expenses last year so we spent about \$3500 more than we had budgeted for and, accordingly, we have made some minor changes to our 2009 budget.

The "D" Grant is winding down. There will be another grant of \$20,000 in August of this year and a final \$5,000 next year. There is still plenty of money to reimburse chapters for activities, which meet the criteria—principally health education and chapter development.

Betty Perry continues to chair the committee, which reviews the applications for funding; she also makes the necessary reports to our funding source.

Our new Treasurer, Glenda Cheseman of Sacramento, took over her duties at our February meeting, so this is my last report. I have enjoyed being Treasurer, and I thank everyone who helped me over the past four years, especially our Associate Treasurer Jan Vandre.

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT OF OWL

NATIONAL *Southwestern Region Representative covering California, Arizona, Hawaii and Nevada. Submitted by Shirley Harlan, PO Box 2275, San Bernardino, CA 92406, E-mail vlldy@aol.com PH: 909-882-4057*

NATIONAL OWL BOARD MEETING ON January 31st – February 1, 2009

Submitted by Shirley Harlan, SW Regional Rep.

The weather was cold in Washington DC but the OWL board was warm as it started its new term with seven new members joining the incumbents. Outgoing President Ellen Bruce reviewed the past accomplishments of her six years and welcomed new officers. They are President, Donna Wagner, VP, Margaret Huyck, Secretary, Johnetta Marshall and Treasurer, Lilo Hoelzel-Seipp. Our new President Donna Wagner led an orientation that covered our history, agenda, mission, and fiduciary responsibilities of board members.

Executive Director Ashley Carson presented her report. The board was amazed at the accomplishments given that OWL has only one full time paid staff person. She has on board part time assistants for program, health policy, outreach, mental health and communications. The reports of these staff persons some who are interns were outstanding and informative.

Recent accomplishments are many including website improvements, successful move to new office in Washington DC, favorable legislative and court passages on Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act and Fitzgerald v Barnstable case, E-Alert implementation_(cont.)

and lost important visibility on coalition, conferences and briefings on our agendas.

The two most important concerns for our chapters and members at large are membership and dues structure. Chapter presidents need to watch their mail and e-mails for details. The new IRS regulations for non-profits require that your national board request more standard methods for accountability.

The recognition of the importance of the Internet, e-mail and website as we move forward was constantly highlighted. The best example is the OWL alert, headlined: VICTORY. This alert was about President Obama signing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. The new board President, Donna Wagner, was invited to the signing. If you did not get the alert, it means that the Washington OWL office does not have your e-mail address. We urge you to get OWL alerts, please let me know and I will forward your e-mail to them.

Check your the website, www.owl-national.org, and *BLOG*. For those who are not into this virtual world you will still receive information snail mail. Organizations are moving toward email not only to cut expenses, recruit new members but also to be able to mobilize our voices and activities in the ever-changing legislative arena.

Mother's Day Report 2009 will focus on Elder Abuse and the Elder Justice Act.

Chapters please send your newsletters and Members At Large your OWL accomplishments to the Washington DC office for inclusion on website and the two Observer publications this year. This shared information provides program ideas and encouragement for membership and most importantly unites our OWL organization. If you wish more detail, contact Shirley Harlan.

FAMILIES USA CONFERENCE 2009

Submitted by Christine Shields

At the end of January, Nan McGuire (San Francisco) and Christine Shields (Ohlone) joined about 900 other advocates at the Families USA Health Action 2009 Conference in Washington D.C. (National OWL was one of the many sponsors.) It was two days of

speakers, panel discussions and workshops – almost more than one can absorb. We will give you a quick review of what we did absorb.

Unfortunately, **single payer health care** – didn't seem to be high on the agenda; although all agreed "universal health care" was absolutely necessary.

Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) was one of the first speakers. He is on the Senate Finance Committee with Senator Kennedy. He said most are in favor of getting those uninsured or underinsured into programs that are already available. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer stated the obvious: those with health insurance subsidize those that don't.

One of the points that were emphasized by most of the speakers was that we must keep the pressure on now and that the stage is set for health care reform. "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste." (Paul Begala)

Princeton University economist Uwe Reinhardt stated that at present 9% of a U.S. household's income goes to health care; if there are no changes in 10 years this will change to 50% of the income. Cong. Henry Waxman (D-CA), chairman of the House Energy Committee said that any health care measures in the stimulus package would be temporary and that any health care reform must address long-term care. Bob Ross from the California Endowment stated that we couldn't sustain a livable economy without health care reform. "Continue the work!"

Harvard School of Public Health professor, Dr. Atul Gawande, stated most countries have universal health care except the United States. His solution was to build upon what we have now. However he did say the Medicare Part D is a catastrophe and good examples of health care programs are those for Veterans and Federal employees.

Two speakers gave historical perspectives of health care reform. David Blumenthal of the Massachusetts Institute of Health Policy told us that in the past leaders have been affected by the health care problems of family members. He also said that there are tactical lessons to be learned from former efforts: campaigning, uses of this transition period, use publicity, delegate the

details and manage (work) Congress. Paul Begala, CNN commentator and former member of Clinton's health care reform team talked about the mistakes they made during that campaign: more money was spent against the proposal than promoting it; Congress was left out of the discussions (after, all they do legislate.); their bill was too complex; Clinton threatened to veto if one word of the bill was changed; they did not get congressional leaders on board to push the bill. He said he sees a change in attitude toward reform, that compromise is possible. Obama is learning from past mistakes and has a great capacity to empathize.

Joe Trippi (campaign manager for Howard Dean) was adamant that we have to stop talking to one another and talk to press etc. as individuals who are and will be affected by the necessary changes. He feels newspaper folks tune out when we go forward as x,y,z organizations and not as people from main street. Some will undoubtedly disagree with him but Nan thinks it is something to think about. Some of the topics discussed at the workshops were:

- Keeping people front and center in the health care debate -- change debate from the financial cost to the human cost. Personal health "horror" stories are important.
- All aboard: making coverage available to all – discussion of the Massachusetts plan, Maine and California's efforts at universal coverage.

Back from the precipice: taking Medicare in the right direction – negotiate with drug companies, longer enrollment periods, expand Medicare to more people, change the Advantage plans, close the waiting period for Medicare Disability, include catastrophic coverage.

- In the trenches: making Medicare changes work for beneficiaries – discussion of the changes that were made in 2008: in hospice regulation, no payments for hospital acquired illness, lower cap for therapy, phase down of mental health payment.

PRES. OBAMA SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER

Ashley B. Carson, Executive Director, OWL

I am honored to tell you that President Obama signed an executive order on March 11, creating the White House Council on Women and Girls. He signed in the presence of First Lady, Michelle Obama, speaker Nancy Pelosi, newly confirmed Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis, Senator Barbara Boxer, and many other notable women leaders.

I was invited to attend the signing on behalf of OWL. It was incredible to be in the presence of all of these amazing women and President Obama. I was able to give the First Lady two OWL pins, one for her and one for her mother. She was very gracious.

CHAPTER REPORTS

OHLONE EAST BAY CHAPTER REPORT

By Diane Latko

In November, Ellen Doerfer and Mary Lembke hosted a tea for a dozen women in Rossmoor for the purpose recruiting new members. We discussed our goals and agenda. We obtained four new members as a result of this event.

Fran Johns from Compassion and Choices spoke at our November meeting about end of life issues, and she counseled us on the preparation of our advanced health directives. She urged us to "have the conversation now" with our entire family about what we want in the final days of our lives.

In December Joanna Kim-Selby arranged for a workshop to be held at the Korean-American Senior Center for the purpose of explaining Medicare D to Korean seniors. Ninety-four persons signed up for Medicare D as a result of her efforts. Election of officers at our annual meeting: Diane Latko and Eleanor Luce will continue as Co-Presidents, Chris Shields will continue as treasurer, Evelyn Hendricks will be the new board secretary and Irma Zuckerman the new chapter secretary. The new reps to OWL-CA will be Joyce Kamian and Mary Lembke.

The New Year began with several members attending CARA's community action meetings held in Berkeley, Richmond and Martinez as well as an all day training on Feb. 18. *(Cont.)*

CARA's primary objectives at this time are single payer health care as well as revenue enhancements for the CA budget rather than cuts, which severely impact seniors.

Ohlone has begun making plans to see all legislators in the east bay (In both Alameda and Contra Costa counties).

Chris Shields attended the Families USA conference in February in Washington DC (see article on page 6). On March 14 we wrote letters to our legislators at the home of Cleo Berkun.

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER REPORT

Submitted by Evie Kosower

San Diego had a meeting in February to discuss what to do about low member turnout at meetings and the future of the group. It was agreed that we would meet occasionally at our same time and place for now, and plan to present a meeting in coalition with another group of general community interest in the fall to which we could invite potential members. AAUW and LWV and other issue-oriented meetings will be announced monthly to OWL SD members for participation. We will subsidize certain events, such as San Diego's Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and OWL-CA events

SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER

Submitted by Nan McGuire

Our Chapter has been spending a lot of time on the issue of Aging in Place. Our October meeting, which was cosponsored by the Osher Lifelong Learning Center of San Francisco State, drew a large audience and much interest in how one can age and remain in your own domicile or share a domicile with others. Speakers included a representative from Mercy Housing, which develops low-income housing for seniors across the country, an example of shared housing and information gathered by a representative of the U.C.. Berkeley's Center for the Advanced Study of Aging Services.

In January we hosted our annual Planning meeting, which was ably facilitated by Judi Sahagen who is new to our board. The morning was spent reviewing our

accomplishments of last year based on the '08 planning session, looking at the effective programs held in '08 and setting the objectives for this session. Key topics that were brainstormed were: What do you want to learn (within OWL's priorities)? What types of things would you like to do with other OWL members? After a catered "free" lunch, we solicited priorities for the Chapter out of all the topics covered in the morning session.

Another new Board member provided February's program, Leda Stanford of Sausalito, CA. Leda had a successful career in editing and publishing in New York City, before moving to California to work with Ken Dychwald on Elder Issues. The topic of her presentation was Making More of More and she has written a delightful book "Look for the Moon in the Morning: Making the Most of Your Freedom in your golden years", which I highly recommend. It is a collection of essays published by Elder Academy Press.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY CHAPTER

Submitted by BJ Bryan

We had the election of officers in January and decided to continue with each meeting being lead by the program facilitator as we did in 2008. The program featured a specialist attorney in family law who talked about Estate Planning. She answered many questions for our members.

February's program was on Energy Medicine presented by our member Mary Ann Dahle. It was most interesting and generated a lot of participation.

March included a short skit "Sweetie and Dearie" on the effect of ageist language. This was followed by Jean Embree who presented a description of Tarot Card and their use. Jean did readings for those who were interested.

April will be our joint meeting with WILPF and the topic is Shared Leadership. Hopefully we will discover what we are doing right and how to fix what needs changing.

Always be nice to your children because they are the ones who will choose your rest home.
Quote from Phyllis Diller

OLDER WOMEN IN PRISON

Submitted by Shirley Harlan

This report begins with a few facts: National growth trends from 1997 to 2004 show the number of women serving sentences of more than a year grew by 757%. Arrests of women were up 13% and the number of women behind prison bars rose by 53%. Female inmates are the fastest growing segment of the total prison population. When we look at the California 2004 growth trends, we find the female imprisonment rate of 61 prisoners per 100,000 residents is the 22nd highest in the country.

In 1995 a study profiled the Needs of California's Female Prisoners in California. It was found that 71% of incarcerated women experienced ongoing physical abuse prior to the age of 18. For 62% of those women the abuse continued after 18. 41% of women reported experiencing sexual abuse before and after turning 18.

In the state of California, 9.7% or 1145 women of the 11,753 incarcerated women as of December 31, 2006 were age 50 and over. * Prisons are over crowded and prisoners are aging and we are concerned!

I learned these facts attending a Symposium 2009: Different Faces of Poverty on Saturday, February 14, 2009 in Los Angeles. Suzanne Jabro, CSJ, Director Women in Prison Project led the workshop, Wisdom without Walls: A Crossover. I participate with her coalition at California Institution for Women. Three women shared their experience of crossing over from inside to the outside. It was clear that the outside community must become more aware and active in providing not only support but also home-type settings for rehabilitation. When you have been incarcerated for more than 19 years, returning to society is challenging!

In California, Governor Schwarzenegger is denying parole to women who have been recommended for parole by the Board of Prison Hearings. He appoints these commissioners. The Board of Prison Terms recommends only 5% of those eligible for parole. The Governor then denies 85 to 90% of

these women their freedom. These women have been deemed to be no risk to society. These women have support and job skills. Only 1% of those released return to prison for violations.

There are currently over 200 women at California Institution for Women serving indeterminate sentences. The unofficial cost for women in California prisons is about \$36,000 per year. For seniors (55+) medical costs exceed \$70,000 per year. There are two other Women's Facilities in California.

We are contacting Governor Schwarzenegger to follow the recommendation of his Board and release the older women. Contact me for California current women who are deemed eligible for parole. Find the "crossroads" facility in your area and volunteer! Find the aging women prisoners, and help them find their voice to live outside the walls!

Note: The Governor since 1988 has the right to review and overturn parole recommendations made by the Board of Prison Hearings that he appoints. There has been consistent overturning of their decisions, leading to a situation in which thousands are now effectively serving without possibility of parole despite their demonstrated suitability for release.

**Ref: Action Committee for Women in Prison: Fact Sheet for Women in Prison www.acwip.net/id19.html (accessed on June 18, 2007)*

Health Care Conference Call

Submitted by Ashley B. Carson

National OWL is very excited to begin holding monthly conference calls for members on Health Care. We will discuss a variety of topics and have a chance to exchange ideas and events from DC and around the country. The calls will be led by Natale Zimmer, OWL Health Policy Director. We hope this will keep members more informed about what's (Cont.)

going on in Washington and help grassroots and the DC office work together.

Health care conference calls will be held on the first Tuesday of each month, at 2:00 PM EST. The next call will be on May 5 at 2 PM EST. The call number and pass code will remain the same, and we will send email reminders

To join us on this call, dial 1-270-696-1555 and follow the directions to enter the pass code 892633.

We are excited to offer these calls as a new service for membership. We welcome all OWL members, but we can only let you know if we have your email address! Please spread the word in your chapters and have members submit their email addresses to Elizabeth Lamme at elamme@owl-national.org to be added to the communications for this and other membership offerings.

TRIBUTE TO MARY CRONIN WHO PASSED AWAY RECENTLY

Compiled by Ellen Doerfer

QuickTime™ and a decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Mary Cronin wrote these words in the memory book of OWL's 20th anniversary:

"I look back on the beginnings of OWL and the too brief times we shared with Tish and Laurie and I am grateful for the experience. My life has been enriched beyond measure. The "OLDER" part of OWL is still not a popular description. It requires us to focus on the evitable downside of aging but those who do find strength in joint effort, the joy of companionship and the realization that we can all be WOW's (Wonderful Older Women)."

Mary described herself as a traditional military wife and mother of five children who found her self at 50 years old alone and needing to make ends meet for the rest of her life. She tells her story in a video. About OWL, she says, "there's nothing you can't do if you are part of a good group where people have something important in common". And her passion was about pensions.

Who can forget that first training session at Mills College that brought together women from all over the country, galvanized by the message and the promise of OWL? Who can forget the first time she heard Tish speak at a Mid-Life Women's Conference, promising to lead us on a charge up the "hill" to take on Congress. Who can forget the excitement of the Reagan delayed White House Conference on Aging and participating in the strategies of the Leadership Council and seeing Claude Pepper at work.

Who can forget Mary Cronin? Not her granddaughter, Nicole Van Beurden who knew of her passionate work for OWL. Nicole wrote "that she never told us about that video. Knowing grandma, she didn't think it was a big deal, especially since we knew the information in it already. But somebody thought it was a contribution to be proud of since she received a trophy for it. Receiving this DVD after her death was a bittersweet surprise. It was so nice to hear her voice again. Especially when she was younger."

Mary was very important to the beginnings of OWL. She was on the first national OWL board. She was our first OWL/CA president. She was one of the women on the slide show: 'Three Women.' She received the Golden OWL in 1992. She was an inspiration to all of us who knew her.

We don't accomplish anything in this world alone --- and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something.

A quote from Sandra Day O'Connor, Supreme Court Justice

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS TO OWL/CA FROM JANUARY 2009 TO MARCH 2009.

Your donations help us to further the work of OWL and to advance the quality of life for mid-life and older women.

We recognize the following people:

Endowment Fund

Isabelle Persh
Virginia Baker
Betty Jean Stallings
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TRANSPARENCIES

By Janet Çarncross Chandler

As I grow older
It seems to me that other people
know better what is in store for me
than I do. It's disconcerting!
I thought wisdom suffused the old.

My voice grows rustier, less dependable.
"A natural part of aging,"
says my ENT specialist.
"The vocal cords don't close
as well as they once did."

Always accident-prone
I now fall more easily and when
I attribute this to some dark
psychological etiology
I'm assured it's what happens----

My nearly-smooth-as-ever face belies
wrinkles crisscrossing my body.
All I have to do to find
an expert who knows about wrinkles
is to mention it to friends. You guessed it!

Funny, nobody suggests age
As the reason I can laugh at myself now
Always a sober sides before
I've learned to survive loss by floating____
Until will and strength flow once more

QuickTime™ and a
decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

