

OLDER WOMEN'S LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA

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OWL-CA NEWSLETTER, WINTER, 2009

OWL-CA COUNCIL, 2009

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Shirley Harlan, SW Regional Rep.

San Bernardino

Kathie Piccagli, At-Large Rep.

San Francisco

PRESIDENTS' MESSAGES

On the national scene, one of the major issues we must keep in focus is health care reform. It is on the horizon, but will it be universal single payer? The new Democratic leadership will soon review some health care proposals that will "expand coverage and slow the growth of health care costs" (Robert Pear, NY Times). Senator Max Baucus wants to guarantee health care insurance for all Americans by facilitating sales of private insurance, expanding Medicaid and Medicare and requiring most employers to provide or pay for health benefits. Senator Edward Kennedy is working on what is essentially Obama's articulated plan. Baucus' plan goes further: he would make Medicare available to the 55 to 64 year old age group who do not have a health plan (about 4 million people), Medicaid would be available to everyone below the poverty level (adding 7 million more) and SCHIP would be expanded to include more children. Baucus has wisely said, "Health reform is an essential part of restoring America's economy and maintaining our competitiveness." He would create a "health insurance exchange" which would include private insurance policies and a new public plan. **Then there's H.R. 676, originally sponsored by John Conyers. It's the single payer plan** with 88 Democrats signed on as co-sponsors at the time of this writing (mid November). Let's continue to be strong in our support for single payer, the only economically sensible choice, but watch carefully the progress of the various bills to be offered, so we will be well informed when our stand might make a difference.

Evie Kosower, Co-President

Even though the economy is not doing well and there is much worry about our horrendous state cuts being made in just about every senior service, as well as so many other services, we have to feel some hope that come 2009, we will have a new administration. Things will not change overnight but they will change and we can know that there is someone managing things that is going to surround himself with good counsel and much thought will be part of the process. We will have change!

We must think about our approaches to what is happening in our state and our local areas. It was suggested at our organizational MEDIC meeting here in Sacramento that we work together with CARA, the Congress of California Seniors, Gray Panthers, OWL-CA and other senior organizations to show a united front that takes a more offensive position, as opposed to defensive. These cuts are all on the backs of poor, disabled and seniors and they have reached the limit of humaneness. We will have to let the population know en masse that government has gone too far. It seems to me that we must collect stories of people who have been truly hurt together with stories of unfairness on the "upper" side, such as the people who buy yachts being able to take them offshore and not pay taxes. Let's get angry, but sensibly angry!

Ruth Kletzing, Co-President

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NEW OFFICERS FOR 2009

Presidents: Ruth Kletzing - Sacramento
Evie Kosower - San Diego

V-President North:
Rochelle Goldman - San Mateo

V-President South:
Ernestine Beare - San Diego

Treasurer : Glenda Cheesman - Sacramento

Associate Treasurer: Jan Vandre - Sacramento

Recording Secretary: (3)

Joyce Miller - Sacramento

Ellen Doerfer, Walnut Creek

Rosemary Bacy - Los Gatos

Parliamentarian: Joyce Kamian - Lafayette

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

By-Laws - Joyce Klein Kamian

Finance - TBA

Editorial - Ellen Doerfer

Endowment - Ruth Kletzing

Medicare D - Betty Perry

Membership - Kathie Piccagli/Joyce Miller

Policy Review - Joyce Klein Kamian

Public Policy - Betty Perry

Resolution - Pearl Caldwell

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

COUNCIL MEETINGS - 2009

February 7&8 Sacramento (See Insert)

June 6&7 Ohlone East Bay

October 2-4 San Diego or San Bernardino

CARA MEETINGS:

For information on local "CAT's" 415-550-0828 or

E-mail: <mailto:jreid@retiredamericans.org>

MOTHER'S DAY AT THE CAPITOL

Thursday, May 7, 2009

IMPORTANT RESOURCE

OWL National moved in December 2008

New office address is 1828 L Street N.W.

Washington DC 20036

OWL Info # the same: 1-800-825-3695

E-mail: <mailto:mowlinfo@owl-national.org>

Web: <http://www.owl-national.org>



Co-presidents Evie Kosower & Ruth Kletzing

OWL-CA PUBLIC POLICY REPORT

Betty Perry, Public Policy Director

November 15, 2008

Please note the date of this report. Publication problems make it imperative that the report be sent well ahead of the day you receive your newsletter. And this time of year the political situation changes often, so it is important that you follow the issues in the press.

Right now we are struggling with proposals to cut the budget. The population that is most vulnerable is Californians with low incomes, with health problems and who receive aid from the state. This was best exemplified by the story that one of our members sent to me.

A friend received notice that MediCal will not pay the \$95 for her healthcare premium starting next month. Her Social Security income is \$1200 per month so next month it will be \$95 less to cover part B. Also, she received information that for her medicines her share of cost is \$600. Her rent is \$800 and that leaves her \$300 for food and utilities for the month. She has in the past contacted HICAP for consultation. The question our members sent was "Are we doing anything on the budget crisis at this time?"

We wish we had a magic wand to do something about the budget crisis. We will not find a solution by being silent. We must inform the administration and the legislature of the significance of every cut. As older Californians we are a very diverse group. Some continue to have very good health. Some are suddenly stricken by a combination

of health problems. Some have insurance that covers their illnesses; others have incomplete coverage. The tragedy comes when a person is without adequate care.

What can we do after we learn about the woe that is befalling us or our friends and neighbors? First, we must look at the benefits we have. Is our insurance coverage in force? Have we taken full advantage of Medicare D for our drugs? Then we must do everything we can to try to stay healthy. Of course, no advice helps when you are confronted by the diagnosis of a serious disease.

How can we as OWL members make our voices heard? Gather your facts and then begin to plan how to share the information. If the problem affects you or someone in your senate or assembly district, prepare a letter and make a call at the legislator's district office. The benefit from stories of specific cases is the most powerful way to review the harm of the cuts. Although for our purposes in this newsletter, we chose not to use names, it may be necessary to be specific with your legislators about what is happening in their district. It is important that you get permission from the person whose story you are telling.

How can California react? In addition to the overall economic problems that the country is facing, California has been funding our programs inadequately. For years OWL has suggested supporting small, fair tax increases. Now, I fear, things seem so desperate that the increases may be large. We have always opposed a sales tax because it is the least fair; however, at this time we must consider all alternatives. You do realize that fiscal bills require a two-thirds vote to pass. The Republicans have been adamant opposing any increase in taxes. We will continue sharing our stories of people in pain with all of our representatives and we will be watching for California's law makers' solutions for these troubled times.

One of the signs of passing youth is the birth of a sense of fellowship with other human beings as we take our place among them. Virginia Woolf



Betty Perry, Margie Metzler, & Roberta Battle

OWL NATIONAL BOARD REPORT

Shirley Harlan, OWL National Southwest Regional Rep

The mood of the Washington DC OWL board meeting was hopeful for the future and very serious in content discussion.

Hopeful when Executive Director Ashley Carson reported the activities accomplished on a very tight budget, we applauded the outreach, attendance and visibility OWL has in Washington DC. We will be more visible and closer to elected officials when we move the office quarters December 1st, 2008 from Virginia to Washington DC.

The board welcomed seven new members in January 2009. Kathie Piccagli and I have been re-elected Member at Large and Southwestern Regional Representative (California, Hawaii, Nevada and New Mexico). The 2009 incoming officers will be President Donna Wagner, Vice President Jonetta Marshall, Secretary, Margaret Hellie-Huyck and Treasurer, Lilo Hoelzel-Seipp.

Nan Miller, CPA, of the Miller Group, which prepares our audit, educated and sobered us with all the changes to the IRS Form 990 and new guidelines governing nonprofit organizations with emphasis on our fiduciary responsibilities as board members.

We approved the 2009 Budget. Chapters and Members at Large look for the \$20,000 Challenge Year-End Appeal letter in November and do be as generous as you can. The Board acknowledged the OWL-CA Council and

appreciated the \$5000 Owl-CA contribution toward the challenge grant.

President Ellen Bruce reported the results of the questionnaire regional reps completed with chapter treasurers to address membership dues standardization. A new policy was adopted and will be distributed to chapter leaders for the New Year.

Amended OWL-CA by-laws changes were reviewed by committee and approved.

We have a window of opportunity with a new government administration to further our healthcare and social security concerns for mid life and older women. This opens the door for new members to join us. Ask why OWL is passionate for women from a women's perspective? And to our credit there are other organizations pursuing our issues as well. Keep informed with your weekly Power Line, 1-800-825-3695, www.owl-national.org or www.owlnational.blogspot.com. Plan your programs in conjunction with these current issues so we HOOT with one voice across the nation.

New OWL National office address is 1828 L. Street N.W. Washington DC 20036

OWL'S CAPITOL HILL "BRIEFING" ON UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

Kathie Piccagli, National OWL Bd. Rep.

On Friday, October 24, several of us CA OWLs (Shirley Harlan, Roberta Battle, Kathie Piccagli) were in the audience for a "briefing" on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., organized by the OWL-National office. The briefing was about how all women (of different ages and circumstances) need universal health care. It was attended by many OWLs from across the country, as well Congressional staff members and representatives from other women's and issue-centered organizations.

First, three women of different ages talked about the health care needs that they have experienced, and the impact insurance or universal health care would have. This often poignant, as well as factual, presentation was made by Joan Bernstein (representing the older woman's viewpoint), Laurie Young (midlife), and Ashley Carson (young adult).

Thereafter, presentations about the need and mechanics of likely universal health care proposals were provided by Judy Waxman of the National Women's Law Center and Doneg McDonough, from HCAN (Health Care for America Now) and representatives from the Committee to Preserve Social Security, and AARP.

The National OWL office has recently hired an experienced and respected Director for Health Policy, Natale Zimmer. OWL will continue to play a role as new efforts working toward universal health care are developed in the new administration. The move "toward" universal care, while not actually developing a universal, single-payer system is a compromise with which we in California are all too familiar.



Kathie Piccagli

THE CHANGE WE NEED FOR SENIORS

Rosemary Bacy, Recording Secretary

President-elect Barack Obama's web site gives his priorities for seniors and Social Security, among other major issues. The Obama/Biden plan would strengthen retirement security by protecting Social Security for current and future beneficiaries. Retirement savings would be strengthened by reforming corporate bankruptcy laws to protect workers and retirees, requiring full disclosure of company pension investments, eliminating income taxes for seniors making less the \$50,000, creating automatic workplace pensions, expanding retirement savings

incentives for working facilities and preventing age discrimination. The next priority for seniors is affordable health care: providing cheaper prescription drugs, protecting and strengthening Medicare, providing transparency to Medicare prescription drug plans and strengthening long-term care options. Finally, to protect and honor seniors, Obama and Biden will ensure heating assistance and will support senior volunteer efforts. Details for Obama's major issues are at www.barackobama.com/issues, where there is also a link for sending an email to Obama with your suggestions and priorities.

How well will these priorities hold up in the face of competing priorities and a shaky economy? We need to follow the Obama administration closely and remind him of his commitment to seniors as time passes.

HEALTHCARE ISSUE

Shirley Harlan, OWL National Southwest Regional Bd.. Rep.

What are the next steps to securing Universal Health Insurance for All Californians? This was the topic of the forum I attended November 15, 2008 in Claremont, CA. Gathered were over 50 activists to engage in the dialogue sponsored by The American Institute for Progressive Democracy (501(c)(3) think tank. We listened to nine panelists address the first two questions: What main obstacles block achievement of affordable universal health insurance and what do your constituencies have to contribute to overcome these obstacles? The third question engaged all of us: What strategies to achieve affordable universal health insurance can we agree upon?

We did not agree. Those who support the 'gold' standard SB 840 still held ground. Those who felt strongly about a current window of opportunity on both state and the National level promoted for compromise for short term and long-term goals. Over and over again we hear the fact that our healthcare is costing more, but how do we get more value for our dollar? For all our great technology and delivery systems, we are below other countries in the quality of care, as measured by outcomes such as longevity and live birthrates.

We need to continue this dialogue in OWL. We participate in coalitions and with many other stakeholders and it is great that more have agreed upon affordable, quality and universal coverage. We have had a successful movement and people want the healthcare issue acted upon now. The more we educate the more we realize how complicated the present mix socially and politically really is! We need to risk a change!

I did observe and spoke up that the group present was made up of mid-life and aging persons, lacking diversity and youth. There was positive response that these groups needed recruitment and on our part we needed to be more open to listen and respond to their modus of operation. This reminded me of our membership struggles.

The Institute will be publishing a summary of this forum. Let us know if you want a copy to spark a discussion in your chapters.

CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS (CARA) NEWS

Kathie Piccagli, OWL National Bd. Rep.

CARA continues to be the most visible presence organizing for seniors in the State. CARA has led many groups in support of needed legislation (such as SB 840), as well as protests opposing budget cuts affecting seniors and families. CARA tracks and lobbies concerning legislation that influence seniors and priority issues, such as universal health care. The CARA website contains updated information: (www.californiaalliance.org). OWL continues to be a strong partner with CARA. Betty Perry is a member of their extraordinary legislative committee and many OWLs attend CAT (Community Action Team) meetings in their communities. (I hope this partnership will be expanded with the new OWLSF membership of Hene Kelly, chair of the CARA Legislative Committee.)

The **CARA Annual Convention** was held in San Francisco October 12-13. As usual for every CARA event, it was interesting, informative, and inspiring. George Lakoff was the keynote speaker, talking about the language we use for policies, the societal structure suggested in our political decisions--- and how our brain circuitry is changed by it. A

workshop about the recently passed California budget made it clear just how much seniors got screwed by Gov. Schwarzenegger's final budget---seniors were the group MOST hurt by the Governor's "blue-lining" (discretionary elimination by the Gov, after the budget passed in the legislature). The second day featured another highlight, a "Candidate's Forum"; candidates for the upcoming election (or their representatives) discussed their viewpoints on issues affecting seniors. OWL-CA had a table filled to capacity, with representatives from Sacramento, Ohlone, and San Francisco Chapters.

ELDER WOMEN'S INITIATIVE SPEAKOUT

Submitted by Kathie Piccagli

The **Elder Women's Initiative Speakout** in the Bay Area on Sept. 12 was one of three speakouts held around the state. The Elder Women's Initiative is sponsored by the Woman's Foundation, the California Endowment, and four other organizations to "build the movement led by elder women and their allies to build a California where we can all age [in place] with well-being, dignity and economic security." The Speakout was to identify concerns and possible directions. Three OWLs, Eleanor Luce, Rochelle Goldman, and Kathie Piccagli gave oral testimony, and at least four others in the audience provided a substantial OWL presence. Several other OWLs attended the two other speakouts.

Quoting a Women's Foundation newsletter: "Women offered powerful testimony about issues facing the elder community, including isolation, ageist discrimination, poor treatment of incarcerated elders, the lack of culturally appropriate services and language interpretation, inequities for women in the social security system, the need for universal health care and LBT-specific concerns, such as being forced to hide one's sexuality or gender identity while living in a group home. Kathie Piccagli of the [Older Women's League](#) urged attendees to acknowledge the differences among the aging.

"The issue that a sixty-five year old is concerned about may not be the issue that a ninety-two year old is concerned about," Piccagli said. "The one constant that I think will remain is economic security." Piccagli noted that women have extra needs as they age since they are likely to have had caretaking responsibilities for their families and to have earned less income."

CHAPTER REPORTS

OHLONE/EAST BAY REPORT

Submitted by Diane Latko, Ohlone Co-Chair

In May Eleanor Luce, Nancy Sampson, Ellen Doerfer and Mary Lembke hand delivered hundreds of post cards to state legislators to mark Mother's Day. At the same time Evelyn Hendricks and Diane Latko were in Burlingame in leadership training sponsored by the CA Alliance of Retired Americans (CARA).

As OWL is an affiliate of CARA 10 of us joined with them in June rallying for single payer universal health care outside the Moscone Center where the health insurance companies were holding their annual meeting. Also in June, Diane Latko testified before the CA Commission on the Status of Women as to how impending cuts to the state budget would severely hurt older people.

At our summer potluck luncheon Irma Zuckerman was given the WOW award (Wonderful Older Woman).

In September five of us attended the first meeting of the Elder Women's Initiative-- Women Speak Out: Changing the Way Californians Age sponsored by the Women's Foundation of CA. Co-chair Eleanor Luce spoke for the passage of single payer universal health care (currently SB840) here in CA and asked the audience to call or fax the Governor urging him to sign SB840 which had been passed by both parts of the state legislature. Also in September speakers from the League of Women Voters came to our chapter meeting to discuss propositions, which would be appearing on our November ballot.

In October five of us attended CARA's 5th annual convention held in San Francisco

where we heard keynote speaker George Lakoff, went to workshops and heard from several people running for office.

Author Fran Johns from Compassion and Choices spoke at our November chapter meeting counseling us on the preparation of our advanced health care directives and urging us to "have the conversation now" with our families about our wishes for our final days.

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER

Submitted by Evie Kosower, President

Every two years the County of San Diego sponsors an Aging Summit. This year, the one-day conference, which is attended by professionals in the field and many organizations with older members, as well as individual members of the community, was held on July 26th. Buzz Aldrin was the keynote speaker. Many groups had tables to educate and advocate. This year OWL had a table and was kept busy talking with some of the people who stopped by of the 1200 who attended. We had our brochures, articles from National OWL and reprints of other timely information "compliments of OWL". It was an excellent place for exposure. We have followed up with a number of people who seemed interested in our organization.

SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER

Submitted by Nan McGuire, Representative

With the passing of Shirley Sidd in September, the Chapter Newsletter baton has been passed to me. We all miss Shirley terribly, and recall with pleasant memories our pot luck patio party, at Shirley's in July, and blessed with glorious sunny weather and our usual atmosphere of congeniality.

In June, the Service and Housing Committee mailed 104 surveys to our membership and they received an amazing 52% (54) return. The purpose of the survey was to get a better sense of the membership's demographics, and to learn of their interests in terms of future OWL programming. Our Board members will follow up the survey by calling all members to connect with those who did not respond, and to further refine the responses of

those who did. Stay tuned for the results of the follow up calls.

Our August program "Older Women Stand Tall" featured Wendy Katzman, UCSF physical therapist and Dove Model. In addition to an overview of the skeletal benefits of physical activity she demonstrated some exercises to improve posture by aligning muscles, joints and ligaments. An added highlight was her experience as one of five models in the international Dove campaign emphasizing aging gracefully. Getting a call from a friend traveling in Europe saying, "I think I just saw you posing nude on a billboard" was a bit unsettling but true. She showed us the poses and they were truly beautiful.

In September the program featured Fran Johns from "Compassion in Dying" who spoke on "Living for Now, Preparing for Later" and was well received.

SACRAMENTO CAPITOL CHAPTER

Submitted by Ida Curtice, Representative

In June, Margie Metzler, Owl member, and Charlene Jones spoke on single payer universal health care. Some members attended a banquet honoring out-termed Senator Sheila Kuehl in August. Carolyn Negrete worked hard on this event and continues to work for SB 840. Also, members tabled at the August Peace Event and the Women's Equality Event at the Capitol. Later that day, the annual potluck and auction were held at the Kletzing home. A guest was the winner of one of two scholarships given to an American River College student. In September, we heard an elder law attorney discuss estate planning and a young woman on money management. The end of September was our biennial Wonderful Older Woman Event held along the Sacramento River. The ten nominees were introduced. Betty Perry presented posthumously the Carolyn Mullin Award to Joan Lee, a strong leader of the Gray Panthers and also an OWL member. Carolyn Negrete accepted the honor since Joan's husband was unable to attend. The OWL Membership Award was presented by Jan Vandre to Phoebe German who faithfully does our publicity. The Tish

Sommers/Laurie Shields Award was presented by Ruth Kletzing to a Jewish Family Service worker. The WOW Award was given to the co-founder of Loaves and Fishes.

PLACER COUNTY CHAPTER

Submitted by Bea Graham, President

June marked our regular luncheon meeting when we concentrate on interaction between members. Some of us are Charter members and others we see only at monthly meetings. It is important to include these newer members in our circle.

July and August are months we do not meet. In early September, letters go out to members and potential members. We welcome them back to the 4th Friday in September meeting. Our speaker was Catherine McGregor, RN, Palliative care RN coordinator for Sutter Auburn Faith Hospital and Sutter Roseville Center. Palliative Care aims to achieve the best quality of life for the patient. The emphasis is to clarify the goals of care in the context of the individual's definition of quality of life. One of the most important elements is to assist the patient in the completion of an Advance Directive document. Catherine had a group activity that allowed everyone to explore their own needs. She had Advance Directives available. Attendance was good and everyone gained insight into their own wishes for the ends of their lives. We highly recommend the program.

The October meeting was devoted to the coming election. Members brought their ballots while Marion Faustman went through all the propositions.

December is our very festive Christmas potluck with spouses and friends. It usually takes place at the lovely home of Marion Faustman.

GOLDEN OWL AWARD

Submitted by Rosemary Bacy

The Golden OWL award is made each year to an OWL who has made an outstanding contribution to our organization. This year's award was made to posthumously to Shirley Sidd, San Francisco Chapter. Sadly, Shirley

passed away on September 25, 2008, after a brief illness. She had served as OWL/CA treasurer for several years and even longer as treasurer of her chapter. But her contributions went far beyond her nominal responsibilities. She was a problem-solver with practicality and imagination. Besides her numerous OWL contributions, Shirley was active in Democratic politics and a volunteer with ACLU. At the Annual Meeting, Kathie Piccagli, National Board member, made the Golden OWL presentation to Shirley's daughter, Diane Sidd-Champion. Kathie noted how Shirley seldom said "No" when asked to take on some responsibility. She was a model for us all in the art of growing older with grace and dignity, and a never-failing sense of humor.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by Mary Lou Anthony

INCOME: We have had a lot of donations, which have helped our income this year; however at three-quarters of the year our income is a little low (\$9725) when we hope to bring in a total of \$16,050 by the end of the year. Dues are on track but we budgeted to receive \$1000 income from Fundraising and have only raised \$21 so far. Quite a bit of money in registrations and donations came in after September 30 and that will be counted in the end-of-year report.

EXPENSES: At three-quarters of the year, we have spent a little more than half of the money budgeted for expenses, so we are being fiscally conservative. We did pay a big bill from the hotel at our annual meeting (which will show in our final end-of-year report). Some of that will be charged to our Medicare "D" fund.

BALANCES: As of September 30, 2008, OWL of California had a total of \$82,882. Our money is in three different banks, with two checking accounts, two savings accounts and three CDs. Our general fund is now at \$49,870. Our endowment fund is now over \$21,000; there is \$33,012 in the Medicare "D" grant fund available for chapter events and activities relating to health education; our Laurie Shields scholarship fund is worth over \$12,000—and about \$1700 of that is available for scholarships to attend OWL/CA meetings. We

have scholarship funds available from Medicare “D” as well. Anyone who is unable to attend a meeting because of the cost is encouraged to contact one of our co-chairs to apply for a scholarship.

ANNUAL OWL-CA MEETING **SUMMARY** *Rosemary Bacy, Recording Secretary*

On Friday, October 17th, Betty Perry gave a status report for the MeDIC grant. She said that there have been few requests for funds under the grant. She suggested that one person from each chapter develop proposals. Activities such as letters to newspaper editors, articles in a chapter newsletter, a chapter meeting on Medicare Part D, tabling for Part D re-enrollment, or getting a Part D success story could be funded at \$100 to \$200 each.

Friday evening the Santa Clara Chapter hosted a get acquainted party, compete with delicious hors d'oeuvres, games, joke telling and topped off with a 25th anniversary celebration cake (really our 28th!), and a good time was had by all. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to let our hair down and have an enjoyable time getting to know each other better. Many thanks to Meg Bowman for making this happen. She also arranged for the famed 'Raging Grannies' to entertain us after lunch on Saturday. What a treat!

On Saturday, October 18th a panel with Ellen Bernstein, National Board President, Ashley Carson, OWL Executive Director, Joyce Kamian & Christine Shields from the Ohlone Chapter on: **OWL's Mission; Is There a Place for Service?** Joyce and Chris, from the Ohlone/East Bay Chapter, reviewed the history of OWL and expressed concern about diluting our advocacy and educational efforts. Ellen and Ashley presented the view that it is legitimate for OWL to do some direct service and that it does not detract from the advocacy mission of the organization. Particularly, service thus far has been funded, with monies drastically needed by OWL for survival.

Four workshops were held, two each concurrent in the morning and afternoon: “Healthful Living to 100”, with Ronald Benson, DC, How Corporations Run the World”, with Lois Fiedler, PhD, “Health Costs of War”, with

Robert Gould, and “Propositions—November 4th Election”, an open discussion.

At noon, Ashley Carson, Executive Director of OWL, reported on OWL National activities. OWL partners with like-minded organizations on many issues. Google has provided a \$10,000 grant for advertising OWL on Google, which will allow advertised links to OWL in searches related to OWL's priorities.

The evening banquet featured retiring Assembly member Sally Lieber as principal speaker. She described issues which affect not only California, but also the United States and the rest of the world: sustainability, global warming, and a growing population. Dealing with these issues requires patience, determination and an eye to the long view. The passage of SB840, the Universal Health Care Act, by the Legislature resulted from years of patient effort and raised related issues like the denial of health care by insurers. Women legislators have been responsible for much progressive legislation on health, minimum wage and global warming. Ms. Lieber believes that state legislatures are changing for the better with more intelligent, determined women being elected, though she does expect that reform of the California legislature will have to come through ballot initiatives.

The Council meeting convened on Sunday morning, October 19th. Present were: Evie Kosower, Ruth Kletzing, Kathie Piccagli, Shirley Harlan, Ida Curtice, Rena Modell, Carolyn Negrete, Joyce Miller, Roberta Battle, Margie Metzler, Betty Perry, Nan McGuire, Ellen Doerfer, Nancy Sampson, Diane Latko, Eleanor Luce, Christine Shield, Joyce Kamian, BJ Bryan, Martha Millhone, Ashley Carson (Executive Director of OWL), Ellen Bruce (President of OWL's Board of Directors), Pearl Caldwell, Jerry Stout, Glenda Cheesman, Audrey Barth, Ernie Beare, Mary Lou Anthony, Cleo Berkun and Rosemary Bacy.

The Treasurers Report was given by Mary Lou Anthony. (*See Treasurer's Report*) The nominating committee presented the slate of officers for 2009. C0-Presidents: Ruth Kletzing & Evie Kowoser, Vice President North: Rochelle Goldman, Vice President South: Ernestine Beare, Corresponding Secretary:

Audrey Barth, Recording Secretaries: BJ Bryan, Ellen Doerfer and Rosemary Bacy. They were not able to identify a candidate for Treasurer. Suggestions for filling this vacancy included getting a professional accountant to serve pro bono. The slate was approved as presented.

There was a consensus that the shinier paper for the last newsletter was not that different than what we used in the past, and not worth the extra \$100 cost, but there was agreement that we should be printing it on recycled paper.



Meg Bowman and the Raging Grannies entertained at lunch on Saturday

Our society must make it right and possible for old people not to fear the young or be deserted by them, for the test of a civilization is the way that it cares for its helpless members.

Pearl S. Buck

NEW!!! OWL BLOG

Submitted by Shirley Harlan

By now, I hope you all have checked out OWL-National's website. If you haven't, you're missing a very good site, www.owl-national.org -an inclusive site we can be proud of, developed almost entirely by our Executive Director, Ashley Carson. It has ten or twelve sections with everything from mission and issue statements to photos and an "in memoriam" section.

Now we are even more current and interesting with a BLOG. Members are

encouraged to read it and contribute to it. To access the blog, go to the owl-national.org website. In the upper right hand corner, click on the box indicating "OWL blog". Enjoy reading the posts there.

To comment on one of the posts, click on "comments" after the post, and then fill out the comment box. If you want to submit a new post, please send it to Ellen Bruce (ellen.bruce@uma.edu) or Ashley Carson (acarson@owl-national.org) for posting it.

Let's do our part to make this a success. Read it, be stimulated, and contribute.

DONATIONS TO OWL-CA

Submitted by Audrey Barth, Corresponding Secretary

Thank you so much to all you generous donations to OWL/CA from March 1st to November 2008

Your donations help us to further the work of OWL and to advance the quality of life for mid-life and older women. Mary Lou Anthony, our Treasurer reports that we received a total of \$4633.80 from March until November. This includes \$138.80 from the Silent Auction.

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OLDER WOMEN IN PRISON PROJECT *Submitted by Shirley Harlan*

The aging population in our prisons is a heavy money burden at this time and those elders who have more than served their time are trying hard to return to society to make a difference. A proposal made by prison inmate, Jane Dorovik, has been given to Warden Davison to create a "writ writer" position at CIW. (California Institution for Women) This proposal would recruit four inmates who are willing, trained and motivated to assist other inmates in writ writing and legal filing of these technical documents. Presently inmates are without such assistance because of lack of funds to hire a lawyer, or the education to perform these duties. Therefore, they suffer disproportionately. A writ can benefit prisoners who have been granted paroles, but have had their paroles vetoed by the governor. A writ approved by a judge can free the prisoner immediately.

As part of OWL's support of women in prison, please send a letter to Warden Davison to consider this proposal to: California Institution for Women, 16756 Chino-Corona Road, Corona, CA 92880. If you need more information, contact Shirley at: vldy@aol.com or 909-882-4057

BOOK REVIEWS: STANDARD OF CARE *By David Kerns*

Submitted by Ellen Doerfer, NL Editor

This dramatic insider's look at the dark side of our health care system is a gripping and cautionary tale for America, where being in the wrong hospital at the wrong time can cost you your health - or your life.

David Kerns gives his perspective on how to solve our health care crisis making it very clear that we must first have campaign finance reform to prevent the lobbyists for the health care industry influencing the legislators.

He talked of European countries being a model for how to reform our system to a universal health care plan that over time could morph into a Medicare-for-all type of system. These countries did not start with a health insurance system, but it began as a right for all the citizens. They pay more taxes than we do, it is true, but even though we pay more for health care, our health care is not as good as many countries, using many parameters. - Eg. Infant mortality and overall death rates.

To quote Oscar London, MD, author of [From Voodoo to Viagra and Kill as Few Patients as Possible: "Standard of Care](#) is a frightening portrait of for-profit health care run amok, and an uplifting odyssey as Kerns' hero, everydoc Dan Fazen, becomes David to the Goliath of the hospital mega-corporation in the era of managed care. You can order the book on the internet at www.davidkerns.com

THE RED LEATHER DIARY- RECLAIMING A LIFE THROUGH THE PAGES OF A LOST DIARY *by Lily Koppel*

Submitted by Cleo Berkun

In October 2003, the author walks by an old apartment building in Manhattan. She comes upon old trunks that had been stored there, and were now on the sidewalk. Burrowing through one, she finds an old red leather diary. Reading the diary, the author, a young writer for the New York Times, discovers life as it was lived and experienced by a teenaged financially privileged girl during the Great Depression.

Ms. Koppel, with the aid of a private investigator, finds and contacts the writer, Florence Howitt, nee Wolfson, age ninety. Through quotes from the five-year diary and Florence's memories, Ms. Koppel recreates life in and the atmosphere of NY during those years. She also brings the reader up to date about Florence, still a vibrant, active person at age ninety-two. The book not only explores the angst of a brilliant girl, but also brings to life Manhattan as it was then, with its rococo buildings and vibrant culture.

Perhaps this book spoke strongly to me, because through it I relived growing up in New York, with many concerts for the grand fee of

22 cents a ticket (e.g. Paul Robeson, Marion Anderson), hours spent in the museums (free) and just walking the streets while trying to figure out LIFE. Well written, this book is a delight to read and evocative of any girl's girlhood and what we become as we age.

JOIN OWL NOW, OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IF YOU ARE AN AT-LARGE MEMBER. Chapter members pay their state and national dues to their local chapter treasurer. All OWL-CA members must be members of OWL National.

OWL-CA dues \$10 OWL National dues \$25
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**NEXT OWL COUNCIL MEETING
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OAKLAND, CA**

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