

# OPAWL



**Emilia Sugiyama**  
*President*

I bid you good-bye. This will be my last message as President of OPAWL. It has truly been an honor to be President of OPAWL for 3 terms and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for coming along this journey with me. And a thank you to the ladies that served on the board with me this past 1½ years.

My journey with this organization started out, as many of you have already heard, with a knock on my door over 16 years ago. I opened my door to find this fireball, small-framed lady who turned out to be Lois Widly. She was my brand-new neighbor who lived a few houses down from me. In fact, she continues to still be my neighbor and we speak frequently to this day. I was invited to a holiday party shortly after moving into my home. My husband and I attended the event and from that moment on, I was hooked on our community. Meeting so many wonderful people, amazing ladies, and neighbors that just loved this community. Within months of moving to my home in OPA I signed up to be a member of the women's league. Somehow over the years I went from being a member to being on the board, to eventually being president of the organization.

I have struggled to sit down and write these words. Not because it is the last time I will interact with you ladies, but because the leadership in this organization is missing some key officers and I fear that without the positions being filled, the future of this nonprofit 503C organization is unsure. I don't mean to scare you from not resuming your membership with this women's league, but we are almost in the same position that we were a year and a half ago. However, back then several of us ladies raised our hands up and took on the responsibility of continuing the legacy of this organization. It was the efforts of these strong ladies that rebuilt the organization to what it is today. This group has brought me so much joy over the years and I've had the opportunity to create so many wonderful friendships, and I for one would love

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*For newsletter contributions  
send your content to  
[opawomen.org@gmail.com](mailto:opawomen.org@gmail.com)*



**ORANGE PARK ACRES  
WOMEN'S LEAGUE**  
Encouraging Friendship, Philanthropy & Community

*President's Message (cont.)*

nothing more than to pass that on. I urge you to raise your hand and help carry on the legacy of OPAWL. We need a new President and a new VP of Communications. The great news is that many of the current officers are remaining on the board so should you want to join the board, you will be encouraged and supported by these strong women. I do hope it is you that fills the position. I will hold on to the faith that we will continue to thrive and have the leadership that we need. This community needs OPAWL.

**2023 – 2024 Elected Officers**

President: open position  
Vice President: Emilia Sugiyama  
Secretary: Sharon Butterfield  
VP of Membership: Andrea Blasco  
Treasurer: Donna Aidekman  
VP of Ways & Means: Carolyn Aliotta  
VP of Communications/Publicity: open position

**2023 – 2024 Appointed Officers**

OPA Liaison: Kate Spain  
Sections Leader: Lisa Shuss  
Marketing Director: Jenny Holland  
Sunshine Chair: Judy Denton  
Historian: open position

Moving on to a lighter note, did you attend the Cinco de Mayo eve Fiesta? It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces and new faces and even some hubbies who joined in on the festivity. The tacos were tasty, the margaritas were slushy, and the dessert was scrumptious. I for one enjoyed my time with all the guests that attended. After expenses for the food and other items, I'm happy to report that we ended up netting over \$738. I would like to extend a big thank you to all the ladies that worked hard on decorating and cleaning up afterwards! It is appreciated. You will read more about it later in this newsletter.

Our sections continue to thrive with lots of activities. Our Membership drive is on full throttle with lots of renewals and even some new members. So please continue to renew if you have not done so already. It's easy...just visit our Membership page on our website at [www.opawomen.org](http://www.opawomen.org).

Summer is quickly approaching which means the 4th of July parade is just right around the corner. Over the past few years, I have participated in the parade, representing OPAWL. But this year we are seeking out volunteers to take on the float. As we get closer to the date keep an eye out for communication for those of you that are crafty and want to take this project on.

Congratulations to all the graduates as we celebrate them on their accomplishment. You will also read about this year's OPAWL Scholarship recipient. Keep reading on.

So, I close my message with once again stating the importance of this organization and my hope and desire that the legacy continues for generations to come. Thank you for your partnership.

– Emilia Sugiyama



# FUN FIESTA MEMBERSHIP SOCIAL

If you missed the Spring Membership Social in May, you missed great food, great conversations, and tasty margaritas!

It was hosted by the Woman's League President, Emilia Sugiyama at her home. Since it was scheduled the day before May 5th, we called it Cinco de Mayo Eve. Emilia's home is a unique Hacienda Style which was easy to decorate for this event.

It was a nice turnout with over 60 ladies and gents attending the event. As guests entered the backyard, they were greeted by OPAWL's Treasurer, Donna Aidekman and Estevan Sugiyama (Emilia's son). Once checked in, the guests made their way around the pool deck to the covered patio where Spanish music immediately transported everyone to a hacienda in Mexico. At least that was the vibe we were aiming for. Banners known as papel picado designed with different patterns in assorted bright colors were strung from end to end on the covered patio ceiling, creating a festive atmosphere.



A hot taco cart was provided by Erik of Happy Time Tacos. He grilled around the pool with your choice of meats and all the fillings. Then a couple of steps back up to the patio there were three really long tables, all decorated with colorful Serapes, candles, macarenas, and white roses from Emilia's garden where guests sat and enjoyed their freshly made tacos. A margarita machine at the bar was quite popular, serving frozen strawberry margaritas and regular margaritas. We also had red and white wine on hand and the taco man served watermelon agua fresca. Jan Diaz made Margarita Cupcakes which disappeared really fast and there was also fresh fruit with tajin and limes for a lighter bite.



Off to the side of the patio, the membership sign-up tables were nicely decorated, and each section was represented with décor and fun items. Andrea Blasco and Carolyn Aliotta did a great job of making it easy for members to find a section they had interest in and sign up on the spot.

After dinner Emilia gave a speech; it was from her heart as she is the outgoing President after three terms. Post Covid Quarantine, The Women's League was unsure it would survive. She held a meeting

*Fiesta Social (cont.)*

at her house about a year and a half ago with existing members and some non-members. She questioned what we wanted, or if we should even continue. Lucky for us we have Emilia... her professional guidance and endurance prevailed. We added some new leadership and went forward. We even survived two resignations from top level officers! But Emilia never wavered; she somehow knew we would continue on. With her commitment to the Women's League we came out stronger than ever this year with over 134 members! And she did all this while she herself was involved in two OPAWL Sections and she was the leader of one of the Sections, a full time job and a son in Jr. High!!!

Emilia will continue to be the leader of Entertaining In Pearls and she has agreed to be the next Vice President of the Women's League. Thank you, Emilia!

Additionally, I will be moving on to another post and leaving this position as your Membership Chair; but you're in good hands with the new Membership person. I know her well....she is my daughter, Andrea Blasco.

On a personal note I wanted to thank Emilia for her friendship and her guidance as a Team Leader. There was never a day or time when Emilia wanted full credit for anything. She led us as a group (which probably seemed like a Girl Scout Troop at times), but she did it gracefully, with class and giving us all credit! A rare find in a leader.

Thank you to the decorating and clean-up crew of Nancy Flathers, Julie Maurer, Karen Ashford, Jennifer Troncale, Emilia Sugiyama, Kate Spain and Andrea Blasco.

– By Carolyn Aliotta



Visit the OPAWL Face Book  
page to see the more  
event photos.

[Click Here](#)



# CAKEWALK SUCCESS!



The League sponsored an old-fashioned carnival cakewalk at the OPA Family Picnic & Fair held on April 29th at the Salem school yard. Hands down, we were the most popular entertainment at the fair and everyone had a good time.

To the delight of the crowd, over 40 winners went home with sweet prizes and big smiles. Ashley Henderson's daughter, Quinn picked out the coveted unicorn sprinkle cake and a happier child there never was.

Our fair contribution was well supported by a small army of member volunteers who offered cakes, cookies, and helping hands. Many thanks to all who participated. We couldn't have done it without all of you!



[Click here for a quick tour of the Cake Kitchen.](#)



# OPAWL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

The Women’s League is pleased to announce that this year’s recipient of the Santiago Canyon College scholarship award is Suzan Kesbeh. The \$2,000 scholarship is the League’s largest single sum awarded thus far. We wish Suzan all the best as she makes her way through her academic career. Here is a brief biography:

Suzan Kesbeh is a second-year political science student at Santiago Canyon College. She has maintained an impressive academic record, earning a 4.0 GPA and completing the Honors Program while being involved in hands-on courses such as Model United Nations and Speech and Debate. In addition to her academic achievements, Suzan has also been involved in numerous extracurricular activities, serving as the Commissioner of Equity for SCC’s Associated Student Government and the Director of Outreach for the Empowering Women of Color Club. She is also the lead student ambassador at the Hawk’s Nest Food Pantry and on the board of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor’s Society. Suzan will be transferring to UCLA in the fall to continue her bachelor's degree. She then plans to attend a top law school and become a human rights attorney.



## MEMBERSHIP DUES

The Women’s League membership year begins in the month of June. With your support our community of women will stay united and strong. It is through you that we will continue to stride into the future.

If you haven’t already done so, please pay your \$75 dues now. Visit [OPAWomen.org](http://OPAWomen.org) to pay online or make your check out to OPAWL and send it to OPAWL, P.O. Box 2696, Orange, CA 92859.

If you are a new member, wish to update your contact information, or change your section activity interests, please download a membership form and include it with your dues. [Download Here](#) Thank you for your support!



# SECTION NEWS & HAPPENINGS

## Entertaining In Pearls



Our section is about having fun while learning how to pair wines with food, create a show-stopping charcuterie board, put together a table scape for a simple dinner, do arts and crafts, AND doing it all while wearing your fabulous pearls!! Typically the group meets once a month from 6:pm to 7:pm. For more information, contact leader Emilia Sugiyama, (310) 569-4662.

## Pack Walkers

Women’s League Dog Walking!! April and May have been good for our dog walks!! Nice people! Good dogs!! Nice time to socialize yourself and your dog!!! The weather has been nice and it’s staying lighter longer! Walking Wednesday and some Thursdays, 6:30pm at the corner of Randall and Stallion! Any questions, just text Julie Shaw, 714-329-3447.



## Pickleball



Even though there is currently no official section leader, the pickleball group remains fully engaged and enthusiastic—pretty amazing considering they are running on auto pilot! They stay connected almost daily through the GroupMe app and manage to find courts, partners, and play time all week.

For general questions, contact Karen Ashford, (714) 496-6102. She is one of the more active players. If you are not yet connected to GroupMe, you can download a free app to join here: <https://groupme.com> → Pickleball is looking for a new section leader. Interested? Contact Sections Coordinator, Lisa Shuss, (714) 235-7906.

## Bunco Babes

Hello Ladies! Our next BUNCO game night will be Thursday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at Mahtty Najari's home. Mahtty will be serving up a taco bar for us all! Just a reminder... an invitation and a confirmed RSVP are required to attend. For more info or to join in on the fun, contact Jamie Spence, (562) 708-9309, [jlpainospence@hotmail.com](mailto:jlpainospence@hotmail.com) or Karen Ashford, [Klasa7506@gmail.com](mailto:Klasa7506@gmail.com), (714) 496-6102.



# SECTION NEWS *Cont.*

## Hot Trotters!

It's time to dust the cobwebs off your horse trailer as we look to trails beyond OPA. Irvine Ranch Conservancy has amazing local destinations to offer. We'll check them out and put a plan in motion for a fun activity very soon. Watch your email for an adventure.

The OPA 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade is right around the corner. Be thinking if you would like to ride in the parade as a group representing the Hot Trotters.



We are looking forward to seeing you on one of the Sunday rides! For more info on the section, contact co-leaders, Julie Maurer, (714) 742-1617, or Sarah Holtz, (714) 487-0155.

## Bridge

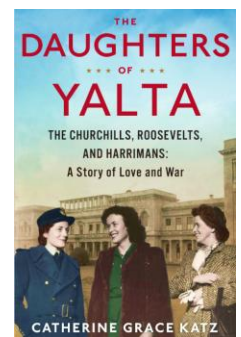


Bridge meets every third Monday at 11:am inside at Moreno's Mexican Restaurant. Contact Donna at [djaidekman@aol.com](mailto:djaidekman@aol.com) to join this section. --We are very patient players.

## Literature Group

We are meeting Tuesday, May 30<sup>th</sup> this month. We will be discussing Daughters of Yalta by Catherine Grace Katz.

You are invited to pick up our monthly book of choice to read and then meet with the group for a lively discussion the following month. We meet every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, from 4:pm to 5:pm. We will continue to meet in the summer months. We do not meet in November and December. For more info call leader Kathy Manulkin, (714)639-8686.



## Homestead & Garden



The Art of Self-Reliant Living ~ Vintage skills like food preservation, soap making, gardening, and even simple home cooking are seeing a resurgence. If you're striving to add a bit of simplicity and self-reliance to your life, join us in embracing old-fashioned simple living for the modern era.

This group typically meets every month for an enjoyable activity. Watch your email for the next planned event. For information, contact section leader, Pamela Sapetto, (714) 815-7771.



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# CELEBRATIONS & EVENTS

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## Remembering Those Who Served



- JUNE** ▪ 2023 OPAWL Membership Year Begins
- JUNE** ▪ OPA Shred Day, 6/24
- JULY** ▪ OPA 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade



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## April Birthdays

- 4 Sheree Haavik
- 9 Marion Levitt
- 10 Susie Nolen
- 14 Stephanie Stringer
- 23 Kayla McMahan
- 27 Marcie Dial
- 27 Faith Grimm

# ★ Shred Day ★



Sponsored By Orange Park Association



**Saturday, June 24, 2023**

**9am – Noon**

**Salem Lutheran Church and School Parking Lot**

**OPA Members – FREE**

**Non Members - \$5.00 per box fee**

**Not An OPA Member? Join Now → [Orangeparkacres.org](http://Orangeparkacres.org)**

**Help The Community & Enjoy The Benefits!**

Max 5 banker boxes (size 12x15x10) per household. Workers from Shred Wise will assist in getting items from your car and shred right on the spot. Paperclips and Staples are okay! File folders with ACCO fasteners okay! CANNOT SHRED: Plastic, Metal, Wood, Metal Binder Clips, Hanging file folders (pend-a-flex), 3-Ring Binders, Glass, Food, Styrofoam, Trash, Toner Cartridges, X-Rays, Media, CDs, or Hard Drives