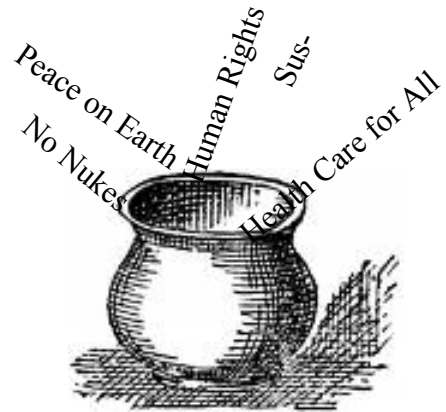


GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

HOLIDAY PARTY POTLUCK

Saturday, December 15, 11:30—3:00

**Gray Panthers office
1182 Market, Rm. 203
Bring a dish to share
and your Panther growl.**



GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & EVENTS

All meetings and events take place at 1182 Market, Rm. 203, unless otherwise noted.

Board Meeting 12:30 PM
Wednesday, December 5 & January 2
All SFGP members welcome.

Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, December 6 & January 3

Human Rights Committee
Call the office.

Middle East Study Group 11:00 AM
Tuesday, December 11 & January 8

Health Committee 1:00 PM
Tuesday, December 11 & January 8

Book Club 11:00 AM
Tuesday, December 18
Shock Doctrine by Naomi Klein

Committee for Life on the Planet
Call the office.

War & Peace Committee
Call the office.

**Come celebrate with us.
Bring your favorite dish
and wish
Saturday December 15
11:30—3PM**

November General Meeting

Our November meeting was a lively—and grim—description of injustice in the City. Opening speaker Jennifer Friedenbach of the Coalition on Homelessness drew a graphic picture of the criminalization of poor people nationally and locally. Starting with the Carter administration in the 1980s, funds for public housing have been cut 80%. In place of housing—policing. Locally that means: living on the street, camping in the parks, sitting on the sidewalk, loitering are all crimes. Convicted—fined—nonpayment—lose disability—lose their place on the list for public housing—jailed for being too poor to afford a place to live. The City has stopped counting how many are turned away from shelters and how many have died on the street. All by their own choice, of course. One new submarine costs more than is spent on all federal public housing.

On a different front in the fight for justice in the City is the SF 8 case. As reported most dramatically by Kiilu Nyasha of the Free the SF 8 defense committee, in August of 1971, a SF policeman was killed. Eight Black Panther Party members were accused of murder. Amid assertions of torture and COINTELPRO threats, the case against them was dismissed in 1975 on grounds of coercion. In 2003, then Attorney General Ashcroft reopened this case in a general review of cases where police were killed. Six of the original eight were called before the Grand Jury, refused to testify, and were indicted and jailed for refusing. In an almost unprecedented move, six of the original eight have been released on bail. The next hearing is December 3 at 850 Bryant, with a rally starting at 8 AM.

Make a Difference: Join the Board!

In this scenario, the “show” is the San Francisco Gray Panthers and the “who” are the people *you* nominate and elect to our Board of Directors. All nominees must be paid-up members of the SF network. Nominations are now open and the elections will be held at the holiday potluck party on December 15th at the office.

Board members are elected for a two-year term and may serve two consecutive terms before they are off the Board for at least a year. (Network by-laws). Current ongoing Board members are Caty and Gretchen (2nd year of first term) and Ila and Rhoda (2nd year of second term). Not eligible for the Board next year are Barbara, Bob, and Marshall, finishing their second term, and we thank them for their service. Finishing their first term and eligible for election to a second term are Patricia, Sonia, Bea and Natalie. Nominated so far are Deetje, George, Kay, Michael, Mitzi, Natalie, Patricia, Shirley and Sonia.

We really need some new faces on the Board. C’mon—nominate yourself and someone you admire as an activist. Get more involved. Make a difference in our world.

They Want to Do It Again!

History teacher Ms. Cantrell, Frances Payne of Experience Corps, the Everett Middle School Principal—and especially the students—are keen to repeat their experience of a public reading of the UDHR. Ideas: Peace Day at Everett;, and the City event on Martin Luther King Day.

HUMAN RIGHTS are not currently a priority of our society. We should remember the American tradition of respect once paid to the importance of providing everyone with housing, food, education and medical service. Sixty years ago the USA led the United Nations to the unanimous ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is beyond time that everyone receive those rights.

Interested in working with young people? Help coordinate this program. Call us, 552-8800.

No ENDA in Sight

For decades, LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender) people and allies have fought for an act in the US Congress to protect LGBTs from employment discrimination. While California has laws prohibiting this discrimination, there are still 31 states which do not. Perhaps the Democrats, attempting to fulfill their obligations for the victory people gave them in congressional races nearly a year ago, decided it was time to make ENDA (Employment Non-Discrimination Act) the law of the land. Yet, when confronted by right-wing opposition, Rep. Barney Frank, a gay man himself, pandered to the pressure. His proposed compromise was to strip protection and rights of transgenders from the bill. This response is similar to the compromise in the early 90s made with Bill Clinton's "Don't Ask Don't Tell."

Even with the threat of certain veto by Bush, congressional leaders took the low road: sacrificing some "for the good of all." Every progressive and all progressive movements understand that we never ask for crumbs; we want the whole meal! If we accept incremental rights, somehow our full rights are never achieved. This is as unacceptable as giving Bush money for more war, and calling for bringing the troops home a year from now!

Over 300 LGBT organizations across the country responded with resounding Nos: No accommodation; No leaving out part of the community; No rights at the expense of others' oppression.

Once again, Democrats seem afraid to speak truth to perceived power. Passing confirmations of Southwick, a homophobic judge, Mukasey, a supporter of increased Presidential powers, granting



increased military spending; all betray the mandate we gave our representatives. When they listen to the people they will hear that 89% of us want fair employment for gay people,

68% want us out of Iraq, 63% do not want any nuclear weapons. Our strength and resistance grow as we keep speaking our truth, demanding justice and peace.

Plastic, Plastic, Plastic

Have you read about the Great Pacific Garbage Pile? This is an endlessly swirling 1500-mile-across toxic soup of garbage, 80% plastic, out in the middle of the Pacific between San Francisco and Hawaii. It has been described as a toilet that never flushes. Worse than its current and apparently everlasting existence is the fact that it is getting bigger by a factor of ten every decade since the 50s, according to the California Coastal Commission's Chris Parry. Perhaps someone with mathematical smarts can figure out how soon the GPGP (hate the use of those initials for this mess) will be lapping at Pier 39. How will the grebes and sea lions and scoters and Dungeness crabs like it, assuming that they survive the current petroleum-related unpleasantness in the Bay?

It looks like we need to totally *eliminate* plastic that does not biodegrade from our lives and get it out of the waste stream. We have made a start in San Francisco by getting rid of plastic bags in major grocery stores as of November 20—thank you, Ross. Now we need to get



started on the rest of the plastics that are so ubiquitous in this culture. ALL plastics need to be made from nontoxic and biodegradable materials ASAP, no kidding. Even if we recycled 99% of all the plastics we now use, which of course we don't and never will, the last 1% would inundate us eventually. (In 2004, Worldwatch Institute found that only 0.6% of plastic bags in the US are recycled.) The bright spot is that as petroleum gets scarcer and more expensive, the cost advantage of petroleum-based plastic will vanish. But we can't wait; we need to outlaw non-degradable plastics and the sooner the better.

Meanwhile we need to recycle as much existing plastic as we can, and cut back on our use of the current petroleum-based stuff. In fact we could start using good ole waxed paper and Pyrex dishes and glass jars, like we did back in the day. We also need to support research on methods to clean up the mess that exists now. Mushrooms and plastic-eating bacteria are promising avenues to explore.

Act NOW for Impeachment!

Nancy Pelosi has advised Cindy Sheehan that if she (Nancy) receives 100,000 cards/letters from citizens demanding that Dick Cheney be impeached, she would let Kucinich's Bill H.R. 333 be released from the Judicial Committee and allow it to be voted on by the House. The address is:

**Rep. Nancy Pelosi
c/o Cindy Sheehan for Congress
1260 Mission Blvd., SF 94103.**

Let's get behind this and make it happen! Tell everyone you know!

—Mill Valley Seniors for Peace

Healthcare According to Sacramento

The California legislature is in special session to come up with something to alleviate the crisis in paying for health care. To date (Thanksgiving) nothing has been forthcoming. According to the press, this is what the legislature and the governor are considering:

All Californians must have health insurance, provided by employer health plans, government sources (Medicare, Medical) or individuals. Those employers who don't offer health care coverage would pay a fee to the state. Any bill must somehow contain the skyrocketing costs of health care. Suggestions to do that address insurer inefficiency and individual preventive care. Proposals so far would limit the ability of insurers to discriminate against the sick and guarantee that everybody would be offered coverage.

How the Legislature and Governor Disagree.

Paying the bills: employers fees. The governor proposes up to 4%, the legislature up to 6.5% of payroll. The governor suggests lottery money, the legislature wants a higher tobacco tax. Subsidies for those who can't afford private health insurance: the legislature wants subsidies for employees whose employers pay fees instead of offering coverage. The governor suggest income tax credits up to \$2000 for families with incomes up to \$72,000; the legislature says up to \$92,000.

What is Wrong with These Proposals? There is no mention anywhere of single payer, universal →

care (SB 840). There are no controls anywhere on insurance company rates, no protections to guarantee affordability, no limits on co-pays and out-of-pocket costs. The proposed ways of paying for it are totally inadequate. Income tax credits are no substitute for cash in hand and may well be meaningless to many people. Skyrocketing health costs will not be controlled by correcting insurer inefficiency and urging people to live healthier lives. They will be controlled only by controlling profits.

There are no rules about what health care plans must offer to be real coverage. Not only do these plans not do away with insurance companies, insurance **must** be bought from private companies. The health insurance industry might as well have written these proposals. (Maybe they did!!!) *Health Care for Profit Is for Profit, not for Health.*

What do the Gray Panthers Want? SB 840—single payer, universal health care, provided like social security through payroll taxes, with **NO** insurance company premiums. **NO** private health insurance companies taking over 30% of health care money. Who needs them? We want fair treatment for health workers. Adequate staffing. Decent pay. Recognition of their skills. Affordable in-home & long term care. Accountability and quality assurance. Doctors first, not business managers. People care, not bottom line care.

Transit First!



Now that the voters have passed Proposition A, our favorite transit system may receive some much needed funds. Also in the interest of making Muni better, Howard Vicini has created a blog, MUNIOutrage.com, to which you can post your best Muni horror stories, hopefully to be read by movers and shakers who will realize just how much we denizens of this fair city care about our rides.

Let us not forget what a bargain that seniors have here—able to ride all over town all month long for the princely sum of \$10. Including on the cable cars, J-Church and F-Market trollies, really fun rides. We need to do all we can to encourage more and better mass transit. Not to mention that it helps the planet!

GPs at Public Health Association

GP Health Committee member Michael Lyon went to the annual convention of American Public Health Association (APHA). He and friends organized a session on devastating cuts and closures to public hospitals and clinics, with speakers on: the movement of poverty to suburbs with less safety-net healthcare, the closures of Philadelphia General Hospital and New Orleans' Charity Hospital, and the closure of half the neighborhood clinics in Chicago's Cook County.

ER doctor James Moises, described how hundreds of doctors, nurses, other health workers, and soldiers worked almost around the clock, cleaning, disinfecting, and renewing the first four floors of New Orleans Charity Hospital, and were ready to re-open only five weeks after Hurricane Katrina.

But Charity's owner, Louisiana State University, was dead-set against the hospital's re-opening, and threatened to arrest the health workers. LSU then entered Charity, overturned file cabinets and furniture, completely trashing the place, and invited the newspapers and TV cameras in for a press conference saying the hospital could never re-open.

LSU's reason? LSU had been trying for years to tear down Charity and replace it with a new private hospital. If LSU has its way, New Orleans, which is desperate for healthcare, particularly mental healthcare, will have to wait ten years for a new hospital, and that hospital will not serve poor, minority, or uninsured patients.

New Orleans shows the free market's most savage face, with perfectly good public housing and public schools being destroyed and replaced with mixed-income housing and charter schools. Now we see it's true for public healthcare also.

SF Gray Panther member Carroll Estes, a Nursing School professor at UCSF and founder of UCSF's Program on Aging, gave a presentation on how the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act threatens to reduce Medicare funding and to drive all but the sickest and poorest seniors out of Medicare and into private plans, ultimately bankrupting Medicare. Her arguments were like the ones we present in our video "Privatize Medicare? NO WAY!"

San Francisco single-payer activist Don Bechler was also at APHA helping his partner present a photography exhibit "UnEmbedded: Four Independent Photojournalists on the War in Iraq." These photos are so powerful and disturbing that Michael could not go on after seeing the eight year old boy sitting by his mother watching her die. A book of the photos can be seen at the office. The exhibit was also important because it was shown in the AFL-CIO headquarters.



An 8 year old girl killed in the 21 day bombing of Baghdad that preceded the US ground invasion.

For years, APHA members have organized anti-war sessions and passed resolutions against the oil wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but APHA leadership has refused to publicize these positions or have their leaders articulate them. In addition, APHA leadership has resisted members' calls for an end to military recruiting in the convention's Exhibit Hall. Anti-war APHA members leafleted the Opening Ceremony, and held a march through the Exhibit Hall and picketed the military recruiters there. Next year, APHA meets in San Diego, and the theme is "Public Health Without Borders."



Gray Panthers of SF

1182 Market Street, Room 203
San Francisco, CA 94102-4916
415-552-8800
graypanther-sf@sbcglobal.net
http://graypantherssf.igc.org

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We believe ALL people are
entitled to certain fundamental
rights:

meaningful employment
economic security
decent and affordable housing
quality health care
a life of dignity from birth to
death free from fear and abuse
a world in peace



Age and Youth in Action

Call the office for membership information.

Labor Donated

December 2007

Actions and Events

Thursday, December 6, 7:30-9:30 PM

Venezuela Rising & Cuban film On the Hillside of the Himalayas, ATA, 992 Valencia at 21st
ANSWER Coalition film series. \$6 donation.
Info 821-6545

Tuesday, December 13, 1 PM

Demonstrate: the Medicare Part D Crisis and Single Payer, Rep. Nancy Pelosi's office
450 Golden Gate, info SAN 546-1335

Tuesday, December 18, 9-11:00 PM

An Unreasonable Man, film about Ralph Nader
San Francisco KQED, Channel 9

Thursday, December 27, 6-7:00 PM

Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, Chief Justice of Pakistan discusses democracy & the rule of law.
World Affairs Council, 312 Sutter, Suite 200
\$15-\$5 Students, Info 293-4656

Monday, December 31, 10:00 AM-12:00 Noon

Ring Out the Old and Ring In the New with Alcatraz Ferry workers at Pier 33, Embarcadero, at the foot of Bay Street, F Market or Muni #10
Working Class Solidarity Rally

