

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



Youth Gangs



Programs or Punishment?

General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, January 15, 12:30—3:00 PM
Unitarian Universalist Church
1187 Franklin at Geary

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, January 2 & February 6
All SFGP members welcome.

Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, January 3 & February 7

Human Rights Committee
Call the office.

Middle East Study Group 11:00 AM
Tuesday, January 8 & February 12

Health Committee 1:00 PM
Tuesday, January 8 & February 12

Book Club 11:00 AM
Tuesday, January 15
Shock Doctrine by Naomi Klein

Committee for Life on the Planet
Call the office.

War & Peace Committee
Call the office.

Holiday Party Plus

Elections to the Board of Directors of the San Francisco Gray Panthers network were held at the holiday potluck party on December 15. Approved by unanimous acclamation were new members Kay, Shirley and Virginia; second term members Patricia, Sonia and Natalie; and past members returning to the Board for a new first term Deetje, Michael and Mitzi. They join ongoing members Caty, Ila and Rhoda. Our thanks to Barbara, Bob and Marshall for their



four years of service, and to Gretchen, who has resigned because she and Dick are moving out of town.

The first Board meeting of 2008 will be Wednesday, January 2, 12:30 PM at

the office. Officers for the year will be selected. All interested parties are welcome to attend and participate in discussions. Only Board members can vote.

Gray Panthers Against AIPAC

Several members of our Middle East Study Group went to a protest against a fund-raising dinner for AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee), the powerful lobby which the New York Times says is most responsible for US support of Israel's brutal occupation of Palestine, which is contrary to international law and many UN resolutions. AIPAC influences all of US Mid-East policy, supporting war in both Iraq and Iran. Over the next ten years, the US will give Israel over \$30 billion in military aid, largely used against Palestinian civilians in home and orchard demolitions and collective punishments like the siege of GAZA. Other groups at the anti-AIPAC rally included Jewish Voice for Peace, Women in Black, Mid-East Children's Alliance, and Global Exchange.

January General Meeting: Gangs

What are they, who are they, what do they do, why are we demonizing them, what should our city do? The following report is background information.

The Community Speaks

There were no surprises on December 10 at the Public Safety hearing when a spillover crowd confronted City Attorney Herrera regarding the failure of gang injunctions. The Bayview Hunters Point, Mission and Western Addition communities voiced their concerns at the session before Supervisors Maxwell, Mirkarimi and Daly.

Speaker after speaker expressed objections to the gang injunction process. The primary issues: no community input before or after promulgation of the injunction; unknown and arbitrary basis for labeling someone a gang member; and no procedure for being removed from the gang list. Did tattoos, being a friend of a gang member or color of clothing designate gang membership? Speakers declared these standards flimsy and ridiculous. Other speakers asked why the Sacramento and Los Angeles Police Departments could set itemized and clear criteria for designating someone a gang member and San Francisco could not.

Matt Dorsey, spokesman for Herrera, who failed to attend the hearing, said that the City Attorney had the right to say what was cause to bring an injunction against a "gang member" and what was not. He said the charge could not be removed for any cause from the person's record—a lifetime label.

Time and time again, strong statements were made demanding real solutions to the gang problem. Several persons asserted punitive measures are not the answer: jobs and job training, affordable housing, drug rehabilitation programs, after-school centers for children and youth, and equitable education were needed. Early in the hearing, Supervisor Maxwell questioned the need for black on black crime statistics. This issue and others led some of the attendees to wonder if the whole gang injunction imposition might be race-based.

This was an especially good example of community involvement.

People United Will Never Be Defeated

Whenever repressive administrations take control of our government, those of us not included in the ruling-class dominating sector of our society become the scapegoats. Lies emerge like “illegal immigrants are taking away our jobs.” The number of hate crimes increases, racial profiling increases. Activists end up on watch lists and no-fly lists. Backward bigots are emboldened in the current atmosphere of fear created intentionally after 9/11. The ground work for repression began with the Patriot Act, grew with the Military Commission Act, the deletion of habeas corpus, and most recently with the “Violent Radicalization and Home-grown Terrorism Prevention Act.”

This back drop of repression and fear is the setting in which the SF 8 are dragged in chains to hearings with no evidence; the Jena 6 held in contempt; along with the reappearing rising number of nooses around the country. African Americans encounter this intensified repression on top of the racial oppression that has always existed in this country. Aware that all of us have attitudes or have taken actions that were insensitive, GP members, at our December board meeting, held an intensive, productive discussion. We examined our attitudes and our anti-racist work as an organization. Several members suggested we intensify our efforts and recommit to our Gray Panthers specific pledge: *we are anti-racist*. We agreed to form a committee, an anti-racist task force, which can recommend actions for the Gray Panthers, and suggest regular . We also agreed to educational work with a coalition opposing gang injunctions.

Our work will continue in an atmosphere of concern and respect for one another [cont. top right]

[cont] and for our Gray Panthers organization. We are convinced that we can guard against falling into fear, isolation from each other, from other organizations, and from our allies. Seeking to become a more diverse organization, we will uncover, admit to, learn from and change attitudes. We can move forward gaining trust and growing stronger as diverse peoples. Our unity is the strength that can dissolve repression and can create for All people, as Gray Panthers believe “a country free of racism” and “the world as a place in which the young can look forward to growing old.”

California Health Bill AB 1X

As reported in the last month’s newsletter, the Governor and Assembly have produced a health bill that requires everyone to have insurance through employers, government programs or insurance companies. If it passes the State Senate, it will be voted on in November’s election.

Get ready for a fight. This is not only a thoroughly rotten, inadequate bill in every way—it totally ignores the fight for single-payer—it will be used in the same way the defeated, convoluted health proposals were used in the Clinton years, to paralyze any action toward real health coverage.

You Are Invited...

...to join the newsletter staff. If you want to report on an event, express an opinion, research a favorite topic and talk about it, critique someone else’s work, learn to publish on the computer, or just help in the nuts and bolts activity like folding and sealing for a couple of hours in good company—this is your opportunity. We meet the day after the Board meeting each month at 12:30 and plan—join us.



Gray Panthers at the SF-8 Hearing

Ten Gray Panthers turned out for the December 3rd court hearing for the San Francisco Eight. The SF 8 are eight former Black Panthers on trial for the killing of a SF police officer in 1971. In 1973 several Black Panthers were tortured by New Orleans police into making confessions, as part of the FBI's COINTELPRO program. Police tortured them for several days with beatings, sensory deprivation, asphyxiation with plastic bags and blankets soaked in boiling water, and electric shocks and cattle prods to genitals and anus. Charges based on the forced confessions were dropped in 1975, but reinstated as part of post-9/11 repression, so now, 36 years later, the SF-8 are on trial here.

The case has been discussed several times on "Democracy Now," and four Nobel laureates have demanded the charges be dropped and the torture be investigated. Lynne Stewart gave a passionate defense and appealed for people to put up property for bail, as she did. This information is all available from the SF 8 page of our website: <http://graypantherssf.igc.org/SF8.htm>

On December 3, we all shouted loudly at a rousing picket line that stretched over half the width of the Hall of Justice, and then sat through the morning's hearing, where we were amazed that the State would have the nerve to prosecute a murder case against eight men in the absence of any proof.

In spite of 36 years and 150,000 pages of evidence, prosecutors cannot produce the alleged murder weapon or records of its whereabouts, or records of what happened to shotgun shells allegedly linked to a gun allegedly found in a defendant's home, or documentation of fingerprint analysis which the prosecution concedes do not show the defendants present at the killing. DNA analysis of specimens from the murder scene do not match the defendants' DNA. In addition, the prosecution's chief witness is one of the tortured Panthers, who sometimes implicates the defendants and other times claims the testimony was forced by torture.

Gray Panthers who came were a great mixture of old members, new members, and older members who have become active again. It really made you proud to be a Gray Panther. Our turnout was at

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



least partially due to a serious and soul-searching discussion of racism at our Board Meeting. It was also helped by our new phone tree, inspired by a new member who ran the phone tree for the anti-apartheid picketing of South African ships in 1984.

We believe the SF 8 must be supported because their prosecution is part of a new wave of racist repression including increased police killings, gang injunctions, and Jim-Crow justice such as the Jena 6 case. The SF 8 prosecution represents the beginning of a new wave of repression to counter future resistance to spreading Mid-East oil wars, more severe cuts in vital services at home, and intensification of the wealth gap.

Come to the next hearing: Thurs, Jan. 10, 9:30 AM, at 850 Bryant St, (at 7th St.), Dept 23, 3rd. Fl.

Stand Up and Be Counted (All Six)

Dear Members of the House:

Yesterday I was reading HR 1955, the Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act of 2007, and what I'd like to know is this:

When you define 'violent radicalization' as "...the process of adopting or promoting an extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious, or social change," have you considered what an apt description this is of our current government's drive to control the world's oil supply and thereby make the world safe for (US) investment and domination of world markets? It's all there: the extremism, the ideologically based violence, the efforts to bring about political, religious, and social change. So I say, bring on the special prosecutors and let's go after these radicals!

And as to 'homegrown terrorism,' the "use, planned use, or threatened use, of force or violence by a group or individual born, raised, or based...within the United States...to intimidate or coerce the United States government, the civilian population of the United States...in furtherance of political or social objectives,"—I mean, our guys in the executive branch are the *masters*, right? Look how they've intimidated all of you! Only six, repeat *six*, members dared to vote against this bill! Now, it's true that they weren't threatening to call out the dogs, or, heaven forefend, the waterboards...but they didn't have to, did they? Because you already know they're capable of it. So I'd say this constitutes "threatened use," or maybe even "planned use," though of course any documents relating to the plan couldn't be released without compromising national security. Still, I definitely think we have the basis for some action here.

So here's what I propose: You who voted against this, take a page out of the Senate's book and filibuster until other members come to their senses. There's six of you, after all—that's only four-hour shifts. And then you could move on to the Warner Act, which authorizes use of the armed forces for domestic 'emergencies,' the Protect America Act, the Patriot Act, the plan to create the National Applications Office for spying and reconnaissance inside the US, and...and...and...*ad nauseum*.



The Gray Panthers joined SAN, OWL, CARA and others in a lively, afternoon demonstration December 13 at the Federal Building in support of single-payer universal health care and HR 676, the House bill to enact it. We urged Rep. Pelosi to act on the wishes of her constituents for real health care.

CARA Annual Convention

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA), of which we are a member, held its fourth annual convention in late October. Michael, a CARA Board member, attended.

California Nurses Association has joined CARA. CARA continues to place strong emphasis on community organizations, and SF OWL's Kathie Piccagli is now a Board member. There will be more emphasis on local CARA Action Teams (CATs) and local actions. The SF CAT meets the 2nd Thursday of the month, at 1 PM, on the 7th floor of 965 Mission Street.

On February 13, 2008, there will be a Northern California training and planning meeting for local actions on: (1) Health Care (single-payer, Medicare, drugs, and hospital discharge protections), (2) Housing (protecting rent control and eviction abatement), (3) Pension Protection and Social Security, and (4) the 2008 election. Call office for details.

Dr. John Abramson, author of *Overdosed America*, gave a blockbuster talk on how specialty doctors, hospital chains, and particularly the drug industry has completely debased medical science, so that it's almost impossible for clinicians to get real clinical information. The book is available for borrowing from the Gray Panther office.

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

January 2008

Actions and Events

Wednesday, January 9, 6:30-8:00 PM

Banished, a film by Marco Williams on 3 counties that banished African American families 100 years ago, and panel on displacement & gentrification
SF Main Library, Koret Auditorium, 100 Larkin

Thursday, January 10, 9:30 AM

Next court appearance for SF-8. (See story, page 4.) 850 Bryant St, Dept 23, 3rd Floor

Thursday, January 10, 1:00 PM

CARA Action Team meets second Thursday
965 Mission Street, 7th Floor

Wednesday, January 30, 9:00 AM-9:00 PM

Thursday, January 31, 9:00 AM-6:00 PM

Two-day Focus the Nation Climate Change Conference, SF State, 1100 Holloway, Jack Adams conference Hall. Speakers, Panels, Booths Live Webcasts, Free CFLS etc. Contact: Woody Hastings, 405-0326

Happy 2008
Everybody

Come to the Movies

5 PM at the office, Friday January 26

Sacco and Vanzetti

“A wonderful film, as timeless as the struggle for human justice, as relevant as today’s headlines” - Ken Burns



Join Us!!!