

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

PARTY, POTLUCK

&

The Power of Song

(biography of Pete Seeger)

July General Membership Event

Saturday, July 19, 12–3:00

Gray Panther Office

1182 Market Street, Room 203

Bring a Snack to Share

GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & EVENTS

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

All members are welcome.

Board Meeting 12:30 PM
Wednesday, July 2 & August 6

Middle East Study Group 11:00 AM
Tuesday, July 8 & August 12

Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, July 3 & August 7

Health Committee 1:00 PM
Tuesday, July 8 & August 12

State Meeting

Six California Gray Panthers networks enjoyed the hospitality of the Southern Alameda network at the quarterly meeting of GP networks on May 24 in San Lorenzo. Present at the meeting chaired by Betty Moose, Southern Alameda convenor, were representatives from Berkeley, Sacramento, Marin, Central Contra Costa (CCC), San Francisco, and Southern Alameda. From San Francisco—Sonia, Patricia and Mitzi.

One of the highlights was a salute to Ralph and Doris Copperman, retiring as convenors of the CCC network, recognizing their long, valuable and devoted service to the GP nationally and locally. Unfortunately this was accompanied by an announcement of the dissolution of the CCC network, unable to maintain activity because of members' advanced age and illness.

Joan Lee is the "Sacramento liaison for legislation" person. She reported she represents us on the state strategy committee for SB 840 and in the T4CF (Together for California's Future) coalition of some 45 organizations working on the state budget. And that we proudly stood firm with CNA (California Nurses Association) against the (defeated) Schwarzenegger-Nunez bill that would have mandated that everyone buy private insurance. Other nominally single-payer advocates caved in and supported the bill as a lesser evil.

All the networks but SF nominated Margot Smith, Berkeley convenor, for the GP National Board. In line with our stance that decisions need to be made democratically from the bottom up, not from the top down, SF refused to sign on the nomination without first discussing it with our Board and our members. (Our Board subsequently discussed and sent in a separate SF nomination of Margot.)

SF again presented our arguments against a legislation-dominated, top-down state organization and for locally-discussed, issues-specific joint projects—as reported in this newsletter and at membership meetings, and illustrated by the nomination of Margot. A heated, at times acrimonious discussion led nowhere. Nevertheless we will continue to attend and even host these quarterly meetings.

We all agreed on the June 19th demonstration.!

Yes to Single Payer

It was a very hot day but thousands came out to say *Yes* to healthcare, *No* to insurance companies. On June 19, Gray Panthers joined nurses, union groups, senior groups, health-care activists and



doctors. We covered the sidewalks on both sides of 4th Street from Mission to Howard and around the Howard Street side of Moscone on all four corners. Attendees to the conference—of American Health Insurance Providers (AHIP)—had to walk past lines of protestors crying "Shame On You."

The theme of the protest—supported by protests in other cities across the country—was "What Is a Life Worth?" A coffin-shaped display and surrounding panels showed pictures and told the stories of people who had died after being denied health care by their insurance carriers. Speakers included Sheila Kuehl, author of California's single payer bill SB 840, and Don Bechler, Chair of the CA Universal Health Care Organizing Project, a prime mover of this demonstration.

Earlier on June 19, Mayor Newsom signed Tom Ammiano's resolution supporting HR 676, the national single payer insurance bill. The resolution was passed by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, June 17. San Francisco, some days you rock!



After speeches and chanting, St. Gabriel's Celestial New Orleans-style Brass Band took over and led us in a ritual march past the "coffin" to drop daisies and carnations on it in remembrance of those who were not present. Then we departed to a livelier beat.

Flash Update: On Monday, June 23, the US Conference of Mayors, meeting in Miami, unanimously passed a resolution in support of HR 676.



National Convention—2008

Detroit will echo with Gray Panther growls on the weekend of September 27 when delegates from networks all over the US gather to determine policies for the next four years. National conventions decide the objectives we aim for, prioritize the issues, and recommend activities. Networks then plan their local programs within these parameters.

One of the issues the SF network will bring to the convention is immigration. This is an issue we have discussed previously in this newsletter and at several meetings to get input from our members.

Below is the resolution that we have sent to other networks, posted on our website, and will submit to the convention, abridged for space reasons.

1. Gray Panthers affirms the rights of all persons, whether citizen or immigrant, to protection of the Constitution, including the Bill of Rights, and due process, as well as equal access to public resources. We support the redirection of the nation's resources toward the building of a healthy society for all members.
2. Gray Panthers demands full legalization and unconditional amnesty for immigrants, an immediate halt to ICE raids, and the release of all who are incarcerated on immigration charges.
3. Gray Panthers opposes measures which criminalize immigrants, and programs to use legalization as an incentive to join the military.
4. Gray Panthers opposes immigration policies such as "guest worker" programs, which create new categories of immigrant workers who are more vulnerable to economic exploitation.
5. Gray Panthers supports a living wage and dignified and safe working conditions for all workers, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

6. Gray Panthers supports local and regional efforts of unions to organize workforce sectors with high concentrations of immigrants along democratic principles, regardless of their documentation status and whether or not their jobs are temporary.

7. Gray Panthers opposes free trade policies such as NAFTA and CAFTA, which create poverty abroad and drive immigrants into the US, providing employers an opportunity to lower wages and working conditions here.

8. Gray Panthers opposes militarization of the borders, the construction of border walls, and the use of police in border or interior regions to enforce immigration regulations

9. Gray Panthers urges its members to participate in marches or demonstrations for international solidarity between immigrants and citizens.

Rights of Immigrants

"The fundamental civil liberties protections of the Constitution apply to "persons," not just citizens. Every person in the United States has a right to due process and equal protection; to freedom of speech, religion, and association; to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures and from cruel and unusual punishment. These basic principles generally apply regardless of an immigrant's legal status. In addition there are many laws, such as labor laws, that apply to people regardless of citizenship or immigration status."—ACLU immigration expert and staff attorney, Julia Harumi Mass (*ACLU News*, Winter 2008)



Budget Cuts: Off the Table!

In an overflowing Koret auditorium, speaker after speaker rose to tell the horrors of Mayor Newsom's proposed budget cuts. At the end of the June 9 rally, community organizations, non-profits service providers and SEIU Local 1021 joined forces and pledged to stop Newsom from cutting \$20 million from health and human services all across the city. These cuts would force community non-profit organizations, Department of Public Health services, Human Service Agency programs like domestic violence, substance abuse, and suicide prevention to lay off staff, reduce services and in some cases to face forced shut downs, as Buster's Place did two months ago. Many of the programs facing cuts provide unduplicated services that are unavailable anywhere else in the city.



The fight against budget cuts this year is more unified than years past, with union activist and non-profit organizations joining and community groups standing together. Organizers include the SF Human Services Network, Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, SEIU 1021, People's Budget, Living Wage Coalition, Housing Justice Coalition, HIV/AIDS Providers Network, CASE, (Coalition of Agencies Serving the Elderly), with others joining as the movement builds. Another rally is planned for June 26.

In the interim, Board Supervisor Peskin is requesting the City Attorney to draft two ballot measures for November to increase city revenue:

- Increase the tax rate on transfers of all real property above \$1 million. Give a rebate on the tax increase on residential property that either did seismic retrofit work or installed solar panels. This is estimated to generate between \$20 to \$40 million for this year's budget (depending on real estate sales).
- Institute a tax on business partnerships, such as lawyers, accountants, architects, consultants, etc.). Estimated to generate \$20 to \$40 million annually, and would be obtained for next year's budget. The gross receipts business tax repealed in 2001 excluded these incomes.



Newsom, inside a locked and gated police station in Bay View, delivers his budget, sacrificing our city's most vulnerable. Photo by Cindy Chew/*The Examiner*.

Under Newsom's Knife

Some of the services threatened:

DPH community programs: Loss of services to over 18,600 clients

Quan Yin Healing Center: 100% funding loss of medical care to people living with HIV

Domestic Violence: \$519,000 eliminated, reducing funds to levels of 10 years ago

Tenderloin Health Resource Center: All funds cut for the only homeless resource center open every day of the year

Substance Abuse programs: 30% cuts to all programs; elimination of HIV/AIDS complementary therapies

Caduceus Outreach Services: All funding cut for homeless people with psychiatric conditions

Child Care: \$17.1 million cuts to oppressed neighborhoods.

Closure of Ella Hill Hutch Center: Eliminate homeless shelter (130 mats)

Larkin Street Youth Center: \$546,836 cut

Project Open Hand: Meal deliveries \$481,934

Shanti Project: \$363,291 primary care/assessments

New Leaf Services: \$387,000 mental health & substance abuse programs

Progress Foundation: \$500,000 mental health services

Haight Ashbury Clinic: HIV + women's program, services to inmates of county jail; **on and on.**

**These Budget Cuts Are Unacceptable
Call your Supervisors!**

Update on Mumia

We have been periodically reporting on Mumia Abu Jamal, the Philadelphia journalist convicted in 1982 of the murder of Police Officer David Faulkner in a famously flawed trial, and sentenced to death. (See the April newsletter or our website.) In March the US Court of Appeals denied a motion for a new trial but vacated the death sentence. In June defense attorney Robert Bryan asked for a rehearing for a whole new trial on the grounds of racism in jury selection, misleading prosecutorial arguments, and the trial judge's unconstitutional jury instructions. Bryan will also be filing a petition to the Supreme Court claiming the prosecution falsely manipulated eyewitness testimony and used fabricated evidence.

Non-deductible contributions for Mumia's defense can be made to the National Lawyers Guild Foundation marked for Mumia and sent to Committee to Save Mumia Abu Jamal, PO box 2012, NY, NY 10158-2012.

Twenty-six years on death row and counting. What price justice?

Let's Hear It for Habeas Corpus

In more upbeat legal news, on June 12, the Supreme Court recognized the right of those detained at Guantanamo Bay to challenge their detention in the US Courts in a 5/4 decision in *Boumediene v. Bush*, thus granting those prisoners habeas corpus. Habeas, the "Great Writ," has been a crucial safeguard to liberty for hundreds of years. With habeas, you or a lawyer for you can go to court and be heard. With habeas, (Latin: "you have the body") a king, dictator or president cannot simply lock you, or me, or us, up and throw away the key.

At Guantanamo Bay, men and boys have been locked up for years now. Is it possible that history will judge this situation as harshly as, say, the internment of Japanese-Americans in WW II? Hopefully the Supreme Court decision will begin to move the US back toward the rule of law.

It is scary that the case was decided on a single vote. But thank you Supreme Court!

♪Democracy Is Coming to the USA♪

(in the words of Leonard Cohen)

The movement to impeach both President Bush and VP Cheney continues to gain momentum defying the Democratic leadership. On June 9, Rep. Kucinich stood up for four hours reading into the Congressional Record his 35 Articles for Impeachment of President George Bush: HR 1258. Coincidentally? Shortly afterward the Kucinich web site mysteriously went down. Rep. Wexler of Florida supported Kucinich's call for impeachment and was immediately attacked by the largest newspaper in his district. Rep. Barbara Lee and Rep. Lynne Woolsey are also co-sponsors of HR 1258.

Impeachment Must Be on Our Table

As Rep. Kucinich stated in Congress, "*We must not only create an historical record of the misconduct of the Bush Administration but we must make sure that any future Administration is forewarned about the Constitutionally proscribed limits of executive authority and exercise of power contravening the Constitution,*" Rep. Kucinich will not let efforts to impeach President Bush die a quiet death in committee, and he'll bring his resolution back in 30 days if the Judiciary Committee doesn't act on it. Resolution HR 333 to impeach Vice President Dick Cheney was introduced in May 2007 and now has 27 co-sponsors.

Daily, more corruption and in fact criminal acts by this administration are uncovered. Former Press Secretary McClellan, an insider in this administration, testified before Congress that Bush and Cheney purposely and continuously lied to us.

Call your Congressperson; demand support for HR 1258 and HR 333!



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 **July/August 2008**

Actions and Events

Saturday, July 5, All Day

Global Day of Action against Starbucks
Protests Around the World and Locally

Saturday, July 5, 7:00—8:30, 9:00—10:30 PM

Victoria Theatre, 2960 26th @ Mission
It's a Free World, dir. Ken Loach Cont. \$8
Laborfest Opening Night

Laborfest events continue through the entire
month of July. For information or complete
schedule: 415-642-8066 laborfest@laborfest.net

Saturday, July 12, 12 Noon—1:00 PM

Hyde Street Pier Concert/Show as Living History
Players Re-enact the 1901 Waterfront Strike.
Another performance at 3:00 PM. Free

Wednesday, July 16, 5:00—7:00 PM

International Museum of Women Speaker Series
Malalai Joya, "Bravest Woman in Afghanistan"
Omni Hotel, 500 California Street, 487-6447

Sunday, July 27, 11:00—3:00 PM

Festival of the Chariots Parade, GG Park, JFK to
Sharon Meadows for Festival of India

Thursday, July 31, 7 PM—Midnight

Laborfest Closing Party, Naps, 3152 Mission @
Precita, Angry Tired Teachers Band, Donation

DAY AT THE MOVIES

"Pete Seeger: The Power of Song"



This month, our movie
night will be in the day. As
part of our annual summer
party and potluck from
12:00 noon to 3:00 PM on
July 19, we will show "Pete
Seeger: The Power of
Song," which chronicles the
life of this legendary artist and activist. Bring
food to share.