

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



Whose Bailout? Whose Economy? Where Do We Go From Here?

SF Gray Panthers Discussion on the Current Crisis
Speaker: Jeff Mackler, Socialist Action

General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, November 18, 12:30—3:00 PM
Unitarian/Universalist Center, 1187 Franklin (near Geary)

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, November 5 & December 3

Middle East Study Group 11:00 AM
No Nov. mtg.—call office for December

Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, November 6 & December 4

Health Committee 1:00 PM
Tuesday, November 11 & December 9

Book Club 10:30 AM, Monday, November 24 & December 22
Book to be announced—call office.

Report on October Meeting

Convention News—Ballot Views: On Tuesday, October 21, for the first hour we were treated to a lively reportback on the National Gray Panther convention, by Virginia and Barbara. They even sang us a song.

All of our seven resolutions, which we have been featuring in past newsletters, were passed at the Convention. The main areas of interest which the Convention voted to focus on were: 1. healthcare, 2. the environment 3. peace and civil liberties and 4. political integrity.

The second hour was dedicated to the upcoming November ballot issues, as vetted by Mitzi.

For those of you who haven't yet voted and have not filled out your sample ballot—do it now! Don't wait until November 4th, election day, or the night before and discover to your despair how numbingly complicated it is. This is your chance to have your say on many important (and some not-so-important) issues and your vote does count.



To help you decide, we offer this advice on the propositions:

Be sure to vote NO on State Prop. 4 (parental notification) and NO on 8 (eliminate same-sex marriage). Be sure to vote YES on county Prop. H (city energy), YES on U (troops out of Iraq), and NO on V (reinstitute JROTC in high schools). These are the recommendations of our Board of Directors.

State Propositions: Our membership meeting discussion favored a YES vote on 1-A, 2, 3, 5 and 12; a NO vote on 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

County Propositions: YES on A, B, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, O, S, and especially M, N, Q, T, and U; NO on I, L, P, and V. No consensus on C and R.

There are summaries of the propositions starting on Page 24 of the City and County book and a sample ballot on Page 269. Page numbers may be different in your book as they vary by supervisory district.

November Meeting

Whose Bailout? Whose Economy? Where Do We Go From Here? At our November general meeting, we'll discuss some questions suggested by the current crisis:

Is "the economy" just the stock market and the financial sector, as it's been pictured for years? Is it worth saving an "economy" that can revive itself only by creating another boom that will then go bust? What would happen if we didn't save it? What would it take to get fairer or more sustainable ways to save the economy? Is the problem greedy and short-sighted financiers? What are the similarities and differences between now and the 1930s? What role did ordinary people take? Where does the need for renewed infrastructure, affordable housing, improved education, and universal healthcare come in? Does the money have to be based on debt?

Panthers at the CARA Convention

California Alliance for Retired Americans celebrated its 5th Annual Convention; three of our members were there. For two of us, it was our first extended contact with CARA, and we were favorably impressed. Though CARA's roots go back to labor, community groups are increasingly important in the workings of the state-wide organization and especially in the local CARA Action Teams. CARA and the SF CAT, for example, were prominent in the June 19 demonstration against the private health insurers convention in San Francisco.

Our main contribution has been to start a discussion about how Social Security could become gradually privatized through bipartisan consensus, and coming moves to stop the growth of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. This discussion merged with another discussion on pushing for a return to Defined Benefit retirement pensions, as opposed to Defined Contribution Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs). Retirement accounts have lost \$2 trillion over the last 15 months. We submitted a Resolution against Efforts to Privatize Social Security, Pensions, Medicare and Medicaid, which you can find on our website's home page, or phone the office to have it mailed. These issues were voted high priority at the CARA convention.

Immigrants and Youth Under Attack

The San Francisco area has become a focal point in the nationwide reign of terror against immigrants and youth, despite strenuous work of their supporters and an official Sanctuary City policy. Gray Panthers consider these attacks an outrage, and have actively worked with groups opposing them. We urge all our members and others to join.

Examples: (1) 436 arrested in Northern California in a recent 3-week surge of raids by the Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE), (2) ICE sweeps through immigrant residential areas in Richmond, (3) Emeryville hotel workers seeking minimum wage threatened with deportation, (4) ICE arrests of 60 El Balazo restaurant workers, (5) Police checkpoints where cars of unlicensed drivers are seized, (6) A Gang Injunction Program and police Gang Task Force targeting black, Latin, and immigrant youth, and (7) Ongoing gentrification pushing black, Latin, and immigrant families from their homes.

San Francisco's 1989 Sanctuary Ordinance was to allow undocumented residents access to city services by prohibiting City employees from helping Immigration with investigations or arrests unless required by federal or state law. In 2006, unprecedented marches, student walkouts, and demonstrations pressured SF City Government to implement the Sanctuary Ordinance, and also to issue Municipal ID cards to immigrants and citizens.

Now, the right wing is fighting back, with anti-immigrant groups' lawsuits, racist *SF Chronicle* articles equating immigrants with drug dealers and murderers, and racist Minutemen demonstrations at City Hall. The Mayor's office and City Government are giving tacit approval, bringing in hard-line former federal prosecutor Kevin Ryan as head of the Office of Criminal Justice.

Sanctuary City is being largely reversed. Police are making sweeps of immigrant neighborhoods and arresting youths, who are then turned over to ICE and deported before it is determined whether they actually committed any crime, or whether they would qualify for asylum based on the dangers they would face if deported. Many of these youth left their countries on their own because of

starvation, or violence, and have no family or support here. Others have no family or support in the countries they are deported to, and often do not even speak the language. Even documented youth are arrested and interrogated about their family and friends. This information is then used to make further arrests.

Juvenile Probation Department policy had been to give immigrant youth offenders the same opportunities that citizen youth offenders get for family, guardian, or group home placement, but Newsom's new policy prohibits this. In fact, the City violated a Juvenile Court order mandating that a 14-year old Honduran drug suspect be put in a group home while seeking asylum, because the boy had been regularly beaten by gangs in Honduras. Instead, probation officials held the boy long enough for ICE to pick him up.



The exploitation of immigrant labor is looking more and more like the 20th and

21st century version of slavery. Instead of families being broken up forever on the auction block, they are now broken up forever by ICE raids. Instead of laws making it a crime to harbor runaway slaves as in the 1800s, we have laws making it a crime for citizens to offer state services to undocumented immigrants.

Government and business cannot solve "immigration reform" through laws because they want to have their cake and eat it too. They want laws allowing immigrant labor in the US to be exploited as "guest workers," but they also want to terrorize and repress immigrant labor by laws outlawing immigrants. Unable to resolve this problem by top-down legislation, they are resorting to the bottom-up terror of ICE raids.

SF Gray Panthers is working with groups demanding equal rights and services for all regardless of documentation, and an end to raids, detentions, and deportations. We are also working with groups demanding housing, education, and real jobs for all youth, and an end to Gang Injunctions. It is a great learning experience. Please join us.



SAN Protests State Budget Cuts

Balancing the state budget by picking the pockets of the poor: The governor and the legislature couldn't manage to raise taxes on higher incomes—but the governor had no problem when it came to quietly cutting programs and, in effect, raising taxes, that benefit seniors and poor people. Senior Action Network (SAN) held a rally October 22 to protest the governor's actions eliminating the renters' rebate and tax credits for senior homeowners, cutting funds for HIV/AIDS education, the Department of Aging, and Ombudsman program to investigate nursing home abuse, among others.

The governor is expected to call a special budget session. Be prepared to fight the cuts.

Our Statement on the Bailout

We believe the current economic crisis is the inevitable result of economic deregulation dating back to the 1990s which resulted in the biggest wealth disparity in US history and the dismantling of social programs, even before the current economic crisis. We demand:



1. An end to foreclosures and evictions.
2. New Deal scale programs for jobs, housing, infrastructure, healthcare, education, secure retirement, safe food, and safe environment.
3. No taxpayer-based bailout of Wall Street.
4. Return of US troops from Iraq and Afghanistan to the US.

...and the Poor Get Poorer

What does it mean to have an unemployment rate of 6%? It means 9½ million people in the civilian labor force are seeking work and can't find it. If the unemployment rate rises to 10%, as many economists expect, 15.8 million will be pounding the pavement. This does not include the 7½ million people who are underemployed—involuntarily working part-time or below skill level. Nor does it count the 79.2 million people considered outside the civilian labor force (students, retirees, disabled, disheartened), of whom 4.8 million say they want a job. (Note the word civilian: all those young men and women who joined the military because they couldn't find work are not included.)

In the second quarter of 2005, 637 homes in California were lost to foreclosure. In the third quarter of 2008, it was 79,511. Pretty astounding. Nation-wide, the foreclosure rate is expected to be 2½ to 3 million in both 2008 and 2009.

Meanwhile, "our" government has spent an estimated \$1 trillion on the war in Iraq and just given \$700 billion to Wall Street. Who *are* these guys, anyway?

Last Laugh?

"This economy is crazy. Are you with me on that one? This is what I saw today. I saw a Lehman Brothers executive walking around town wearing a sign that read, will work for a seven-figure bonus."--Jay Leno



Standing Up to the Madness **A Book by Amy and David Goodman**

After nearly eight years of the most invasive, all encompassing attack on our civil liberties, we are familiar with these obvious violations:

The Patriot Act, FISA amendments opening new avenues of surveillance, NSA expansion of wire-tappings, spying and infiltrating into activists organizations, no-fly lists, the Anti-Terrorists Act, etc. But what of the less obvious incursions into our rights? The right to "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness" would seem to include some power in the allocation of our tax money. The recent \$700 billion giveaway by Paulson to Wall Street friends constitutes a theft of our money. As observed by Paul Craig Roberts, former Assistant Secretary of the Treasury Department in the Reagan administration and a former associate editor of the *Wall Street Journal*, "If you control the financial system, you control the economy. And that, of course, is state capitalism or fascism."

Even when legislation is passed by Congress and is sent to Bush, he negates our rights with "signing statements," having made more of them than all former presidents combined.

The pursuit of Liberty includes our right to fair elections. Yet, even after proof of fraud resulting in the stolen presidential elections in the years 2000 and 2004, we still see evidence of fraudulent attempts to control this 2008 election. We discover the purging of voter lists, increasing calls for voter ID's, illegal mailings to voters with incorrect information. We see new attempts to suppress people of color and poor voters with investigations of voter registration by the grass roots organization, ACORN. Here in SF, the Cindy Sheehan campaign was sabotaged when previously arranged campaign robo calls developed a mysterious "glitch" making them illegal.

"When the people lead, the 'leaders' will follow." We can stand together. We can stand up individually as did a librarian who said NO to the FBI demanding names. The conclusion of *Standing up to the Madness* calls out, "Speak truth to power. Fight for those who can't. Demand peace, and end the bloodshed. Stand up to the madness." This book can be borrowed from the GP library. Amy Goodman speaks in SF on Nov. 15 (see page 6).



Civil Liberties Brunch—Great Food

On Monday, October 6, we were honored to have Lynne Stewart, her husband Ralph, and attorney Jeff Mackler as our guests at a potluck lunch at the office. Lynne is the NY defense attorney who was scapegoated in the national attack on civil liberties that occurred after 9/11, for so-called illegal actions before 9/11, while representing her unpopular Egyptian Sheik client. Her conviction and sentence of 28 months in prison are on appeal. We proudly supported this admirable woman, who has spent her lifelong career in defense of people's rights.

Jeff was in town helping to publicize the new book by J. Patrick O'Connor, *The Framing of Mumia Abu-Jamal*. The latest (10/18) report from Robert Bryan, Mumia's lead counsel, indicates that he will present a petition to the Supreme Court on December 19 on issues of racism in jury selection and prosecutor's misrepresentations. The prosecution is also working to reinstitute the death penalty for Mumia. This may be the end game, stay tuned.

Another guest was Dee Allen, activist accused of spitting at a police officer (yes!) during a counter-demo at City Hall protesting the appearance of the Minutemen in this "Sanctuary City." *This* miscarriage of justice nearer to home we can do something about. His trial is set for November.

**Demonstration to support Dee
Hall of Justice
850 Bryant
Friday, November 14, 11:00 AM**

Gray Panthers of SF

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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 **November 2008**

Actions and Events

Tuesday, November 4, 4:00—5:30 PM

LGBT Senior Discussion Group
Mission Creek Senior Community
225 Berry Street

Friday, November 7, 1:00 PM

New Deal Film Festival: *Grapes of Wrath*
North Oakland Senior Center
5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland
(near Ashby BART)

Saturday, November 8, 3:00 PM

Physicians' Report on the State of America's Health
Report on APHA and Physicians for a National
Health Plan conferences on latest policy trends for
national health care.
Mission Cultural Center
2868 Mission Street, near 24th St.

Friday, November 14, 1:00 PM

New Deal Film Fest.: *Artists at Work: Public Art*
North Oakland Senior Center
5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland

Friday, November 14, 11:00 AM

Demonstration to support Dee Allen (see p. 4)
Hall of Justice, 850 Bryant

Saturday, November 15, 10:30 AM

Meeting, Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal
Freedom Socialist Party/Radical Women office
625 Larkin near Eddy

Saturday, November 15, 7:00—9:00 PM

Amy Goodman: *Standing up to the Madness*
First Unitarian/Universalist Church
1187 Franklin near Geary

Friday, November 21, 1:00 PM

New Deal Film Festival: *The New Deal, Our Hope
for the Future*
North Oakland Senior Center
5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland

