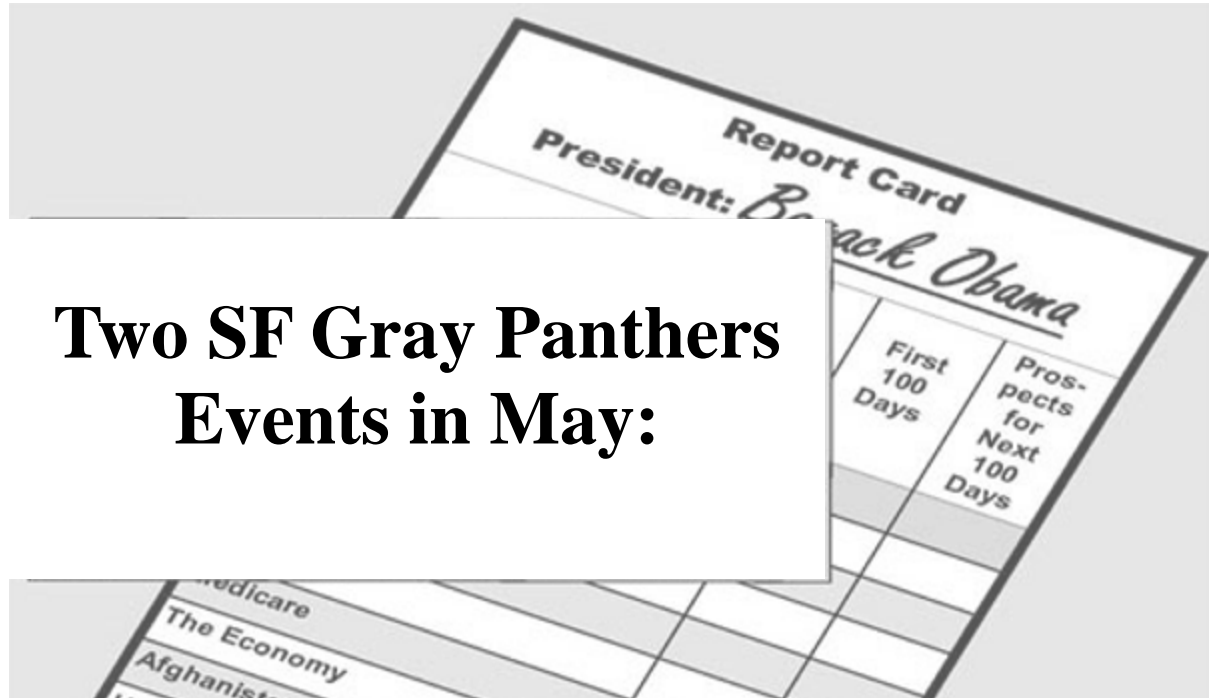


GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



Two SF Gray Panthers Events in May:

Obama's First 100 Days with Norman Solomon

A Joint Presentation with Unitarian//Universalist Forum

Sunday May 3, 2009 9:30 AM

First Unitarian Universalist Society of SF, 1187 Franklin (near Geary)

Breakfast contribution \$3

AND

Follow-up Panther Roundtable on President's First 100 Days

Tuesday, May 19, 12:30—3:00 PM

Unitarian/Universalist Center, Fireside Room, 1187 Franklin (near 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, May 6 & June 3

Program Committee 1:00 PM
Wednesday, May 13 & June 10

Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, May 7 & June 4

Middle East Study Group 11:00 AM
Wednesday, May 20 & June 17

Health Committee 1:00 PM
Tuesday, May 12 & June 9

Book Club: 10:30 AM
Monday, May 25 & June 22

Gray Panthers Discuss the Economy

Gray Panthers gathered on April 5 for a pot luck and lively discussion of the current economic melt-down. We bounced between our disappointment with Obama's economic advisors, and the hope of making changes working as youth and age together. We



We talked of being more active and militant; trying such creative ways, as one member suggested, of wearing a panther costume at demos! The Gray Panthers was founded on the strong principle of speaking truth to power. A more visible presence of GPer confronting foreclosures, layoffs, unemployment and budget cuts could possibly increase our membership. People are angered by attacks on our very means of survival. Here in the city we deplore the injustice of proposed budget cuts. Cuts at the state level as well reflect callous indifference to services for elders, youth and people with disabilities.

We briefly discussed past governmental and social alternatives such as socialism, communism and intentional social communities. Several books were suggested for reading: *The Road Not Taken*, Katherine Austin Fitz; *The Color of Politics*, Michael Goldfield; *Low-Wage Capitalism*, Fred Goldstein.



Obama's First 100 Days

In collaboration with the Unitarian Universalist Forum, the Gray Panthers will present a program featuring Norman Solomon, a nationally syndicated columnist on media and politics and author, most recently, of *Made Love, Got War: Close Encounters with America's Warfare State*. Solomon, who lives in Marin County, was a California delegate for Obama to the Democratic National Convention. His talk will evaluate the first 100 days of the Obama administration. The program, which includes a \$3 breakfast for those who want it, begins at 9:30 AM on Sunday, May 3 at the Unitarian Universalist Center, 1171 Franklin.

The SF Gray Panthers May General Meeting will be a follow-up discussion of Solomon's talk beginning at 12:30 on May 19 in our usual location in the Fireside Room, Unitarian Universalist Center. All are welcome, whether or not you've been to Solomon's talk. As usual, bring a snack to share if you wish.

April Meeting

Discussions of the city and state budgets don't have to be terminally boring. Our April meeting focusing mainly on city affairs was anything but boring. Led by Colleen Rivecca of St. Anthony's Foundation and our co-convenor Michael Lyon, both of whom are on the steering committee for the Coalition to Save Public Health, it dramatized and personalized what the ongoing cuts in the budget really mean in terms of the city safety net. GP member and RN Dianna Hartman described what is happening at San Francisco General's Women's Clinic: 4 of the 12 RNs laid off and replaced by lesser trained, inexperienced medical assistants; all 6 clerks laid off and then rehired at 20% pay cut; everything done chaotically with no advance planning.

Ways to fight back were outlined, both in the short term making the cuts in the least harmful ways and in the future to frame the debate in terms of increasing revenue instead of slashing safety nets. These include a local tent city as the city's solution to homelessness (see p. 5), a Hunger Action Day in Sacramento on May 20 to protect food stamps and school meals, and a megamarch in June on budget cuts. Stay tuned.

Prop 1A—NO NO NO

Why, in a time of economic hardship in one of the worst-hit states in the country, would the governor and legislature put a permanent cap on spending on the state ballot? Under Prop 1A, spending could increase only in step with the Consumer Price Index or with increased population. In other words, freeze into permanence the brutal cuts already in place, whether or not the economy recovers. And never mind the 11.2% unemployment rate (plus underemployed, plus those who've given up looking), the desperate need for job retraining programs, the ever-lengthening lines at food banks and homeless shelters, the anticipated near-doubling of the over-65 population.

It takes honesty and courage to find revenue sources to support state services. It might mean taking on the anti-tax fanatics who've dominated the state economy for so long. It might mean asking business to pay its share. It might even mean cutting non-essential, environmentally damaging state spending (more freeways, anyone?).

The San Francisco Gray Panthers say:
Vote NO on Prop 1A.

Fun with Lynne and Ralph



As part of their whirlwind Bay Area tour to support Mumia and the SF 8 and honor progressive lawyer Stephen Bingham, Lynne Stewart and Ralph Poynter found time to drop by the Panthers office and show the rough cut of a movie about her case, *Lynne Stewart—An American Story*. Seven years after her original arrest, Lynne remains in legal limbo, out on bail as she appeals her sentence of 28 months for breaking regulations that had generally been ignored until 9/11. The 28 months was an astonishing reduction handed down by the judge, no doubt influenced by thousands of letters sent by supporters. The Justice Department had recommended 30 YEARS, and is also appealing. Lynne now does out of court what she has spent her life doing in court—fights for justice and civil rights.

Donations urgently needed for Lynne and the film:
Lynne Stewart Org., 350 Broadway, Suite 700,
New York, N.Y. 10013,

SFGP Board Recommends:

Prop. 1A—NO

Prop. 1C—NO

Prop. 1D—NO

Prop. 1E—NO

Prop. 1F—YES

To Sacramento for Single Payer

On April 15, we got on a deluxe bus at a lenient hour of the morning. We were: Single Payer Now members, Gray Panthers, CARA, Wellstone Clubbers, Raging Grannies, Health Care for All proponents, and Churchwomen United. We were joined in Sacramento by our all-occasion stalwarts, the California Association of School Employees. Cheery, debonair Don Bechler gave us our instructions over the mike on the way up. Once we arrived we had a delicious lunch.

But O, woe! Normally the Capitol is a quiet paradise, warm in the sun, cool in the shade, sumptuously accessible. But this was a Tax Day Tea Party for the Howard Jarvis rebels. They mobbed the steps and esplanade, with balloons, drums, music—people choc-a-bloc, jumpin' and jivin'—so that our bus could barely park. Of course they, in their carnival misrule, had every bit as much right to be there as we did! They are hard hit by all the taxes dumped on them by the snooty top 5% who, in the Eisenhower era, paid their fair share!

We lobbied both strongly sympathetic and “wobbly” state senators, and in the chamber later, we attended the first Senate hearing of SB 810 (formerly Sheila Kuehl's SB 840), levelheadedly presented by Senator Mark Leno. (Since the governor has vetoed the bill twice, the effort had to start again in the Senate with an introductory hearing.) Mark cited sources and figures, his passionate message being that health care is a human right. He mingled with us later for our questions.

It was a festival for us, a beautiful day for making history. Gray Panthers, feel welcome to join us next time!

Will Obama Take a New Foreign Policy Direction for Latin America?

While our eyes are on the new Obama administration and its response to our own financial crisis, let us not forget the quieter policy decisions that impact our southern neighbors in equally or more devastating ways -- policies that undermine sovereignty and self-determination and fuel poverty and violence. With a new U. S. administration we can hope to right many wrongs imposed under the Monroe Doctrine ideology.

Our government uses many tools to assure that southern nations act on behalf of 'our' interests. The School of the Americas trains their military on how to control their own people. International financial institutions impose debilitating conditions, such as privatization, on loans. USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) use U.S. taxes to help elect Latin American officials who will cooperate. Under guise of a drug policy, military equipment, training, and dollars are used against the people. Free trade and free markets relegate countries to providing exports for the United States rather than developing a self-sufficient economy and agriculture.

The change we should demand is that we use these tools to truly become a good neighbor by implementing a Latin American policy that includes respect for human rights, acceptance of each nations' sovereignty and self-determination, social justice, and a development policy focused on basic human needs not military build-up. Instead of fifty percent of our economic aid going to their military and police while economies stagnate, let's repurpose that money for education, food sustainability, public health, microcredit, local agriculture and violence prevention.

Listen closely! Are the words and actions of the Obama administration treating Latin Americans as equals and partners—not as a backyard full of resources to be used only on behalf of ourselves and our close friends? Will his policies lead to a time foreseen by President Correa of Ecuador when he said “The day will come when Latin America doesn't have to worry about who is in the presidency of the United States, because it will be sovereign and autonomous enough to stand on its own two feet.”

Come to SF May Day, 2009

San Francisco's May Day, Friday, May 1, continues the alliance between labor and immigrants. The demands are (1) stop the raids and deportations, amnesty for all, (2) no bailouts for financial institutions, (3) massive funding for jobs, health-care, education, and housing, and (4) stop the war and bring the troops home now.

The San Francisco Immigrant Rights Defense Committee demands a true Sanctuary City:

(1) stop ICE raids and police collaboration, (2) stop impounding immigrants' cars at traffic checkpoints, (3) stop racial profiling by police, (4) stop turning over arrested youths to ICE without hearings to determine if they were falsely arrested, and (5) no cuts to city services needed by families and immigrants.

SF Gray Panthers plan to meet at noon at the Dolores Park Café across from Dolores Park, 18th and Dolores Streets, and to distribute Coalition to Save Public Health leaflets showing how planned cuts to the Public Health Department and Human Services Agency will hurt immigrant families.

Capitalism's bubble has burst yet again, causing the highest unemployment since the Depression, yet the government spends trillions of our money to save the financial sector instead of our jobs, housing, food, healthcare, and education.

Twelve million undocumented immigrants are driven here by poverty and wars from US trade policy, working here under slave-like conditions. Yet the government terrorizes them with racial profiling, ICE raids, detentions and deportations. And war in Afghanistan and Pakistan ramps up.

Mission Youth Protest Cuts

Hundreds of young people, supported by Gray Panthers, the Coalition to Save Public Health and other groups, marched along Mission St. on April 2 protesting cuts to education and social services.



Mother's Day Vigil at the White House

As the Obama administration ramps up troop levels in Afghanistan and slows down withdrawal from Iraq, more and more Americans are calling for an end to war in these beleaguered countries.

On Mother's Day weekend, May 9-10, Code Pink will hold its second annual 24-hour vigil in front of the White House calling for "our troops to come home from Afghanistan and Iraq so that no more mothers will suffer the unbearable grief of losing a child to these wars."

Mother's Day was not originally a Hallmark moment of chocolate and roses, but a call for peace and disarmament after the Civil War:

"Arise then...women of this day! Arise, all women who have hearts! From the bosom of a devastated Earth a voice goes up with Our own. It says: Disarm! Disarm!" —Julia Ward Howe, Mother's Day Proclamation, 1870



Gray Panthers Protest the Bailout

On Saturday, April 11, several hundred spirited protesters, including Gray Panthers, marched and rallied in front of the SF Federal Reserve



Bank at 101 Market Street. The demo was called by a new group called, appropriately, A New Way Forward. Organizers called for the nationalization, reorganization and decentralization of banks, saying that it is not enough to try to patch up the current system.



The SF protest was part of a nationwide movement to demand a major overhaul of US banking. Rallies were also held in Sacramento, Santa Cruz, Redding and Eureka. Signs called for "Bail Out the People, Not the Banks." Signs of the times!

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Economic Teach-In

On Saturday, May 9, labor groups around the Bay Area are sponsoring a teach-in to kick off organizing for a massive solidarity movement supporting bail out for working people, not the banks. Speakers from labor, academia, and the immigrants rights movement will address demands for massive jobs programs, increased taxes for the rich, single payer health care for all, affordable housing and tenants' rights, moratoriums on foreclosures and evictions, funding for services and infrastructure not for war, ending ICE raids and deportations and legalization for all.

The teach-in has been endorsed by progressive groups across the area, including San Francisco Gray Panthers, and will be held at the Plumbers Hall, 621 Market Street (at Franklin) from 1:00-5:00 PM. \$10 general admission, \$5 senior. No one turned away for lack of funds.



City Hall Rally Against Homelessness

Homeless people and their advocates set up an outdoor drop-in center in front of City Hall on April 22 to spotlight cuts to programs for the poor and homeless of San Francisco. Across the street, the protesters set up tents on the lawn and labeled them as the city's plan for homelessness. "These are not times to cut any services," said Laura Guzman, director of the Mission Neighborhood Resource Center, where visits have increased by 1500/month since the downturn began.

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

MAY 2009

Actions and Events

Complete listing at <http://graypantherssf.igc.org/calendar.htm>.

Friday, May 1, All Afternoon

International Workers Day March for the rights of
all workers. Assemble Dolores Park, 2 PM March
to Civic Center. 4 PM Demonstration

Saturday, May 2, 10:00 AM—6:00 PM

Cinco de Mayo Festival, health screening, arts,
crafts, entertainment and more
Dolores Park, 18th and Dolores

Saturday, May 2, 1—6 PM

“Not Just Change but Justice!” Joint Latin Ameri-
can/North American Congress Conference on
US Trade Policy & its Impacts on Food, Land &
Immigration. Panel, Workshops, 110 Barrows Hall
nr Telegraph & Bancroft, UC Berkeley Campus

Friday, May 8, 6—8 PM

Report on the Trial of the Triple A, criminals of
Argentina’s “Dirty War” by Carlos Petroni, key
witness/plaintiff, Editor SF Frontlines
522 Valencia

Saturday, May 9, 1—5 PM

SF Labor Council Crisis Committee’s Teach-in on
their Workers Economic Recovery Campaign
Plumbers Hall, 1621 Market opposite Franklin

Thursday, May 14, 7:30—9:30

“Waging a Living” labor film, ATA Theater,
992 Valencia/21st, ANSWER Coalition film se-
ries. \$6 Donation, no one turned away

Friday, May 15, 7:00—9:00 PM

*How to Win a Cosmic War: God, Globalization
and the End of the War on Terror*—Reza Aslan,
award-winning writer & scholar of religions
discusses latest book. Unitarian Universalist
Church, 1187 Franklin & Geary

