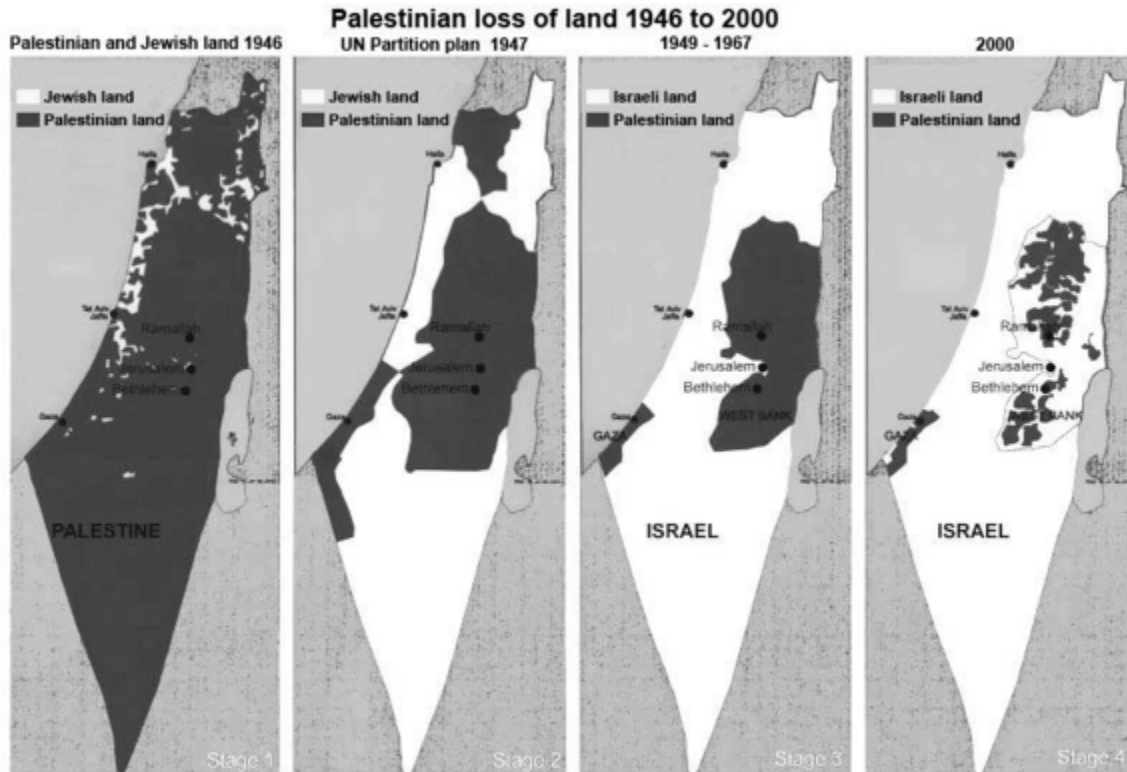


# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



**Reportback on West Bank**  
GP Member Arla Ertz's recent trip  
and  
**The Israeli Peace Movement**  
Joel Frangquist, Jewish Voice for Peace  
**Tuesday, September 15, 12:30 PM**  
Unitarian/Universalist Center  
Fireside Room, 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.

**Board Meeting 12:30 PM**  
Wednesday, September 2 & October 7

**Civil/Human Rights Comm 11:00 AM**  
Wednesday, September 9 & October 14

**Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon**  
Thursday, September 3 & October 8

**Program Committee 1:00 PM**  
Wednesday, September 9 & October 14

**Health Committee 1:00 PM**  
Tuesday, September 8 & October 13

**Middle East Study Group 11:00 AM**  
Wednesday, September 16 & October 21

**Book Club: 10:30 AM, Monday, September 28 & October 26**

## Too Big To Fail—The Mime Troupe

If you haven't yet seen this year's Mime Troupe offering, their last performance in SF parks will be on Labor Day Weekend—September 5<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> at Dolores Park. And if you have seen it, go see it again. You will enjoy it the second time as much as the first.



Many of us saw it at Yerba Buena gardens on August 16<sup>th</sup>. We had hoped to have a group site and a Gray Panthers group presence. That didn't work out but most of the Gray Panthers there sat together, Michael and Sonia passed out our leaflets on the Medi-Cal suit, and Patricia took pictures.

## California Gray Panthers Meet Featuring National Board Chair Judy Lear

The San Francisco Gray Panthers Network will host the September quarterly meeting of state GP networks on Saturday, September 12, from 9:30 until 3:00 PM at the UU Church on Franklin and Geary. All Gray Panthers are invited to breakfast with us from 9:30 until 10 AM, learn what we have been doing for the last three months nationally, statewide, and locally, and join in making plans for acting together for the next three months.

Judy Lear, Chair of the National Board of the Gray Panthers, will be the featured guest and describe GP participation in United Nations activities as an accredited NGO (non-governmental organization). Bring a brown bag lunch. and join us for an interesting Saturday.



## September General Meeting

On Tuesday, September 15, we will have the chance to hear firsthand from Arla Ertz about her recent trip to the West Bank. Arla is program director for Drawbridge, an arts program for homeless children in Palestine. She will be presenting a slide show as part of the meeting.

Also on the agenda for a not-to-be-missed event, Joel Frangquist, of Jewish Voice For Peace, will discuss the growing peace movement within Israel.

## Gray Panthers Reach Out

Los Angeles GP Ruth Prinz moved to the Coventry Park retirement community here in SF and recently convinced the Activities Director to invite the SF Gray Panthers to a residents' meeting to learn about us. We spoke to an overflow crowd about our programs and objectives. Our literature was enthusiastically snatched up. We returned two weeks later to show our Medicare Modernization Act slide show. Let us know of other senior centers who would welcome our presentations.

## We Couldn't Agree More

The following is part of a Letter to the Editor from the SF Chronicle of Aug 19.

In the Chronicle's editorial "On the threat of a BART strike: Wrong-way thinking," (Aug 15), the real wrong-way thinking was on the part of the newspaper's editors.

The members of the Amalgamated Transit Workers Union had the courage to stand up and say no to the take-back contracts being foisted on workers everywhere during the recession created by the reckless speculation of Wall Street bankers. ....

All of us who are affected by the draconian cuts to education, public services, and our livelihoods, need to fight back. History shows that our strongest tool for this is our ability to organize and strike. It gave us the eight hour day, benefits, and safe working conditions, and it is what will enable us to keep them.

Robert Price  
San Francisco

## Is Life Optional for Medi-Cal Patients?

Sight, sound, taste, touch, smell. The five senses, but four are optional if you're on Medi-Cal. So says the state of California, which is trying to eliminate "optional benefits" for vision coverage, hearing testing and speech therapy, dentistry, and podiatry. Sanity is also optional with elimination of psychological services. Pain, however, is mandatory, at least the sort that might be relieved by optional benefits for chiropractic and acupuncture, which are being cut. Don't worry, your sense of smell is not yet an optional benefit. You should have no trouble smelling the cruelty and corruption emanating from Sacramento.

You find this hard to believe? You say the federal government has given California a two-year increase in matching funds from the Stimulus Act, but only on condition the state doesn't cut benefits, so how could it be cutting benefits? On August 19, lawyer Lynn Carman of the Medical Defense Fund posed exactly this question in federal court on behalf of the Gray Panthers and others in their suit against the state of California. Carman asked



for a preliminary injunction to temporarily stop the cuts until a more extensive trial can bring a ruling on the case. About 40 focused and passionate activists including Gray Panthers rallied outside the courthouse in support of the suit. Speakers from other organizations thanked us for organizing the rally and acting as plaintiff in the suit. KQED-FM, Channel 2, Sin Tao newspaper and Channel 48 covered the rally.

On the same day, however, the US District Court denied our request for a Preliminary Injunction against stopping the benefits, and deferred a decision on the bulk of the case. Lynn will now file an appeal to the 9th US Circuit Appeals Court. Our ultimately successful suit against California's planned 10% cut in payments to Medi-Cal doctors was also denied at this stage and later overruled at the Appeals Court level, so we are not discouraged by the ruling of the 19th. More news to come!

Note to Sacramento: Life and health are NOT optional benefits for Medi-Cal recipients or anyone else on the planet.

## Terminator Two Step

Step one: hold the legislature hostage forcing cuts and concessions to social services programs, making state workers take unpaid holidays, then put on the "No Taxes" dance. Step two: if bullying fails,



dictate more slashes with one-man, damn-the-concessions, full-eviscerations-ahead vetoes. Then our Governor makes sure no public access is allowed to a state whistle-blower web site revealing state government waste.

Evidently his conception of waste, as demonstrated by his line item vetoes: \$6.2 million in Medi-Cal cuts to two programs for elder and disabled home services; \$3 million cut from Public Health funding for support programs for African American mothers and pregnant women; \$16.3 million elimination of funds for domestic violence programs; a \$52 million cut to AIDS prevention and treatment; a grand total of \$489 million *additional* cuts before signing an already unacceptable budget.

## Budget Reality from a Member

In June Governor Schwarzenegger put his hand in my pocket (and in the pockets of all seniors and disabled people living on Social Security and SSI); he stole \$37. Then, that being so easy, starting in July he now steals \$57 a month. I was able to get by on \$927. Having the governor steal almost half of my SSI throws me into a panic—can I survive on only \$870 a month? At the same time as this theft of \$57 a month, my Medicare costs were increased 750%: from \$1.20 a month to \$8.64.

How much money did the governor save by stealing from the poorest of the poor? In 2008, 1,270,223 people received SSI; with an average reduction of \$50 per person per month, the state saved \$63.5 million a month, \$762 million a year. However, Governor Schwarzenegger in his first week on the job cost the state \$3.8 billion a year by slashing the car tax from the 2% rate that had applied for half a century.

The biggest winners from this roll-back were luxury car owners. The Terminator's actions show that he is depriving the majority of California citizens to profit his class, the wealthy.

## News Items You May Have Missed

### ***In the Americas:***

El Salvador: On June first, Mauricio Funes and Salvador Sanchez Ceren of the FMLN took office as the first leftist President and Vice President in the history of El Salvador. (FMLN—Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional). They joined a growing bloc of progressive Latin American governments. For more information go to [www.CISPES.org](http://www.CISPES.org).

OAS (Organization of American States) lifted a decades-old ban on Cuba's membership in the group, toppling an enduring Cold War landmark. Cuba has repeatedly said they will not rejoin the OAS, an organization they have looked upon as a tool of the US.

Honduras: the military continues to hold power in Honduras after deposing and exiling democratically elected president Manuel Zelaya. Zelaya insists he will return (shades of Haiti's Aristide?) The Honduran military forces were mostly trained at the US School of the Americas.

### ***In Africa:***

Nigeria: "Royal Dutch Shell agreed to pay \$15.5 million in compensation to the Ogoni people of the Niger delta to end a long-running court case brought against the oil giant by nine plaintiffs including relatives of Ken Sara-Wiwa, a slain environmental campaigner. They accused Shell of complicity in Sari-Wiwi's execution by the Nigerian government in 1995. Shell denies any wrongdoing. It described the money as a 'humanitarian gesture'." This is a quote from the *Economist* of June 13, 2009. The suit was filed under the Alien Tort Claims Act by the Center for Constitutional Rights, attorneys for the Nigerian plaintiffs.

### ***In the US:***

Chevron: In July Fortune magazine released its list of the 500 largest corporations in the world. Chevron moved from the sixth to the fifth with \$263 billion in 2008 revenues. By revenue, Chevron is the largest corporation in California, the second largest US oil corporation, and the third largest corporation in the nation. In November, Richmond, California voters passed Measure T to tax Chevron. Chevron sued, challenging the new tax. Chevron has also repeatedly blocked state initiatives to impose a severance tax on oil and repeatedly lobbied to keep →

← ← initiatives to increase corporate taxation off the table in the state's budget negotiations.

### ***Bankers' Bonuses:***

A report from the office of NY Attorney General Andrew Cuomo detailed bonuses paid in 2008 by nine banks that received bailout funds from the Troubled Assets Relief Corporation (TARP). Bank of America paid \$3.6 billion, including a combined \$121 million to four top employees. Citigroup gave 738 employees at least one million dollars each, with \$43.7 million going to its top four employees. JP Morgan Chase gave 1626 employees at least one million dollars each. Its top four recipients got a combined \$74.8 million."

### ***San Francisco:***

The SF Board of Supervisors passed a non-binding resolution in March adopting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention states that children have a right to things such as education, housing and health care. It also has implications for the City's sanctuary policy. SF currently calls federal authorities when an undocumented immigrant is arrested on suspicion of a felony. Critics say this policy violates due process because a person does not have to be found guilty before deportation proceedings are started.

In August Supervisor David Campos proposed legislation that requires undocumented *juveniles* not be turned over to federal immigration authorities for possible deportation or arrest unless they have been *convicted* of a felony. Federal law says that a local government cannot prohibit its employees from providing information about an individual's immigration status. State law requires authorities to notify the federal government when an undocumented person is arrested for a variety of drug crimes. The San Francisco sanctuary ordinance was passed in the late 1980s to protect refugees from Central America's civil wars from arbitrary deportation by the feds and was a direct challenge to existing national and state laws. The Campos resolution, supported by 8 of the 11 supervisors, protects juveniles under the aegis of the Convention on Children, one of the policies that resulted from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (UDHR). The San Francisco Board of Supervisors has ratified the UDHR. The United States has signed, but the Senate has never ratified it.

# Members Opinions

## Maggie Kuhn:

### Single Payer versus a National Health Service

With the hullabaloo being raised about the Single Payer health insurance plan now being proposed in Washington and supported by a number of activist groups such as CARA, as well as many Gray Panthers, it is worth remembering that Gray Panthers founder Maggie Kuhn did not believe any *national health insurance* plan was adequate and probably would have opposed Single Payer as it is now envisioned. Instead, her vision was of a *National Health Service* which would provide direct care, without the excessively complicating, expensive, and frequently discriminatory intercession of an insurance bureaucracy, whether private or governmental.

In 1973, in a “Gray Panthers Statement on Health Care,” Maggie told the members of a Senate Sub-Committee on Health, “In our view, the only model is a National Health Service. It would provide for a single progressive system of financing to replace hundreds of insurance and governmental sources of funds....The existing patchwork quilt of health programs—one for older people, one for the poor, one for children, etc. . . . is completely inadequate. *Halfway steps* like National Health Insurance are not better. The people as a whole must own and through their representatives control the health system if it is to serve all of them.”



Four years later, in the book *Maggie Kuhn On Aging: A Dialogue* (1977), Maggie was asked, “What about corrective legislation, like National Health Insurance?” Maggie’s reply was: “...I don’t see it as a public policy to correct the excesses of the medical-industrial complex and its monopoly over health care. I see all the current bills as increasing the medicalization of life. A major exception is proposed legislation to create a National Health Organization, controlled by consumers, which delivers comprehensive health care and supplementary benefits provided by salaried health workers and emphasizing health maintenance and the prevention of disease.”

## Is Single Payer Enough?

Thanks to the Gray Panthers member for his article “Maggie Kuhn: Single Payer versus a National Health Service.” It is particularly relevant now that it’s clear that business and government want healthcare “reform” for cost containment, rather than insuring the uninsured. Well, then, what *could* contain costs?

Obama has suggested reforms such as emphasis on prevention and primary care, comparing drugs and treatments for effectiveness, medical homes, aggressive and evidence-based standardized treatment of chronic diseases, and electronic charting. These would greatly improve patient care and we need them, but they do not save money, says Marcia Angell, former medical journal editor.

Three things are necessary to cut healthcare cost:

- (1) Single-Payer: no insurance companies, along with their profits, administrative and marketing costs, and costly paperwork for medical providers.
- (2) Putting doctors on salaries, so they are no longer private businesses and therefore have no incentives to either over-treat us or under-treat us.
- (3) Requiring the government to control drug prices, possibly by withdrawing drugmakers’ patent rights on the drugs they produce,

These three can best be accomplished by a National Health Service, like Britain’s, where the government runs all clinics and hospitals, and where healthcare providers are salaried government workers.

A National Health Service could solve other problems, for instance: there are not enough doctors to treat everybody. NHS could address shortages and imbalances of trained clinicians and inequalities of access, by equalizing primary care and specialist doctors’ pay, low-cost medical training, and incentives to practice primary care and in under-served locations.

Since business and government have realized healthcare costs are unsustainable, but are unwilling to even begin cutting costs with Single Payer, perhaps we should advance beyond Single Payer and advocate for a National Health Service.

## 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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death free from fear and abuse  
a world in peace



*Age and Youth in Action*

Call the office for membership information.

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## Actions and Events

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

### Wednesday, September 2, 7:00—8:30 PM

*A Paradise Built in Hell: The Extraordinary Communities That Arise in Disaster* by Rebecca Solnit, book signing. Green Arcade Bookstore, 1680 Market @ Haight

### Monday, September 7, Noon—3:00 PM

Slow Food SF sponsors an Eat-in Potluck to support the “Time for Lunch Campaign” to get real food in schools. Picnic in Civic Center Plaza. Bring a dish to share and your own plates/utensils

### Thursday, September 10, 10:00 AM—Noon

SAN General Meeting with Dr. Margaret Flowers, Single Payer activist arrested on Capitol Hill. UU Church, 1187 Franklin Street. Lunch \$1.50

### Thursday, September 10, 6:00—7:30 PM

OWL joint meeting with League of Women Voters to discuss the national health care scene. Main Library, Grove at 8th Street

### Friday, September 11, 7:30 PM

Charles Durrett, architect, author, founder of co-housing in the US, presentation and book signing *The Senior Cohousing Handbook: A Community Approach to Independent Living* at Builders Booksource, 1817 4th Street, Berkeley

### Saturday, September 12, 9:30 AM—3:00 PM

California Gray Panthers State Meeting. UU Church, 1187 Franklin/Geary

### Tuesday, September 15, 7:30—9:30 PM

“Palestine Blues” film and discussion. ATA Theater, 992 Valencia nr 21st. ANSWER Coalition film series. Donation \$6

