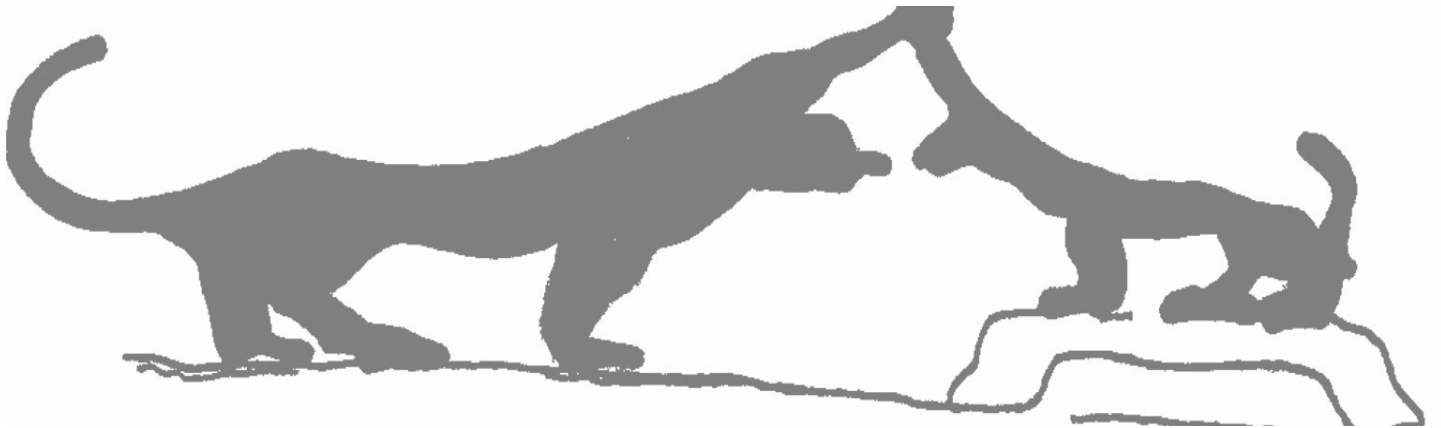


GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

**CELEBRATE ACTIVISM
COME AND PARTY!**



**Come Celebrate at Our Annual Holiday Party
Saturday, December 19, Noon—3:00 PM
Western Parks Apartments, 1280 Laguna Street
Potluck—Bring Your Favorite Dish**

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, December 2 & January 6**

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

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

**Civil/Human Rights Comm. 11:00 AM
Wednesday, December 9 & January 13**

**Program Committee 1:00 PM
Wednesday, December 9 & January 13**

**Book Club 10:30 AM
Monday, December 28 & January 29**

November Meeting

California, especially the Bay Area, has led the country in promoting eating locally, cutting waste, growing organically. In November, Brie Johnson from the Straus Family Dairy gave us an overview of their efforts in the direction of sustainability. Straus aims to “put back more than they take out.” They create 90% of their electricity needs from a methane digester and compost the rest of the cow waste. What feed they don’t grow, they import from within a hundred-mile radius. Glass milk bottles are recycled an average of eight times, keeping eight plastic bottles out of the landfill (or the Great Pacific Garbage Pile, a 3-mile wide plastic soup in the middle of the ocean). Each cow has two acres to roam. The company does no-till planting to prevent erosion. Need we say no genetically modified feed? Strauss is also mentoring other dairies on the Pt. Reyes peninsula in sustainable practices.

Lisa then led a lively discussion on the problems of the organic standard and how shaky it is. Food is a huge topic and we hope to revisit it soon.

What? Another Election?

Yes—Our Own

No Lobbyists Involved

No PAC Money Needed

As we reminded you last month, nominations are now open for members of the Board of Directors of the SF Gray Panthers network. Members are eligible to serve two consecutive two-year terms.

Current (2009) Board members Natalie, Patricia, and Sonya, are finishing the second year of their second term, and thus are not eligible for re-election. We thank them for their service. Barbara, Inda, Marshall and Winslow are on-going members who are finishing the first year of their first term and Caty is finishing the first year of her second term. Finishing their first two-year term are Michael, Deetje and Mitzi.

Nominations can be made by calling or e-mailing the office. Nominated to date are Ila, Lisa, Anne, Earl, Arla, Michael, Deetje and Mitzi. We welcome new faces and new ideas. Nominate your friends. Nominate yourself. Be a proud activist mover and shaker.

Great Food! Good Company! Entertainment!

Our annual Holiday party will be held this year at our favorite venue: the Western Park Apartments. As a special added attraction, the Civil/Human Rights Committee will be presenting for the first time in public, a staged reading on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (remember the Patriot Act reading?). The cast will be asking for feedback. The Committee hopes to take this to schools, senior centers and other appropriate places. Also we will be electing next year’s Board of Directors. Join us in celebration.

Members:

We are trying to do our bit to bridge the digital divide. Do you use email? We would like to hear from you if you *don’t* and therefore need to hear from us by the Post Office. Please give us a call at the office 415-552-8800 and leave a message if you would like to be on our snail mail list for occasional notices.

CARA Convention

CARA just had its sixth annual convention. It passed our resolution expressing alarm that health reform’s cost will be born largely by Medicare, and demanding all Medicare recipients get preventative and chronic disease care and continuity of care. Michael was re-elected to the CARA Board.

Workshops focused on healthcare and the California budget. CARA will use the 2010 election to publicize budget issues, especially revenue. Possible Nov. 2010 ballot measures include term limit reform, closing corporate tax loopholes, eliminating the 2/3 budget requirement, and a marijuana tax. California Single-Payer (SB 810) should be pushed as a fiscal as well as a moral and health issue, since balanced budgets are impossible without single-payer.

Welcome home to our co-convenor, Sonya, who went to Palestine with eleven others on a trip organized by the Presbyterian Ministry of San Anselmo, the Methodists, the YMCA, and the YWCA to help in the olive picking and take a first-hand look at what is going on in the West Bank. We hope to get a report from her soon.

Death by Drone

It is hard to imagine living in a place where silent, unmanned, aerial vehicles can target and kill you (and any nearby companions) from 16,000 feet above, but that is the world occupied by many in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and our turn may not be so far in the future.

According to Jane Mayer in a 10/26/09 article in *The New Yorker*, the US has two increasingly utilized drone programs, one run by the Pentagon, the other by the CIA. The former is publicly acknowledged and attacks enemies of US troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. The CIA's is secret and operates in countries around the world, Pakistan among them. Drones for the military are 'flown' by Air Force crews in Tucson, Arizona and the Nevada desert. The CIA outsources much its work. Obama has authorized more drone attacks in nine and a half months than Bush did in his last three years in office, and Predator and Reaper drones are in such high demand that San Diego defense contractor General Atomics can barely keep up.

This trend of using unmanned killers in the sky raises a host of questions: *Who decides on the (live human) target?* The military has a list of presumed Al Qaeda members, authorized by Obama. Recently, 40 Afghan drug lords were added. Only a select few know how the CIA's list was formulated—but it's been reported that Pakistani president Zardari is permitted to nominate candidates. *How reliable is the information that the person targeted is actually the intended target?* It depends, at least in part, on the reliability of on-the-ground informers. *How accurate is the kill-by-drone technology?* According to Mayer, it seems to have taken 16 missile strikes and 14 months for the CIA to kill Baitullah Mehsud in the mountains of Pakistan. Somewhere between 207 and 321 people were unintentionally killed in the hunt.

Robotic weapons are particularly chilling because they so distance us from the suffering of war—but this will not always be the case. Already, China, Russia, Israel, Pakistan, Georgia, and Iran have drones; they are comparatively inexpensive and could be produced by small groups. As Tom Engelhardt puts it, "the skies of our world are filling with round-the-clock assassins." Is there a way to stop this madness?



National GP Supports H.R. 2404, 3699

In an email of October 22, 2009, the national organization of the Gray Panthers made clear its unqualified opposition to escalation of US military involvement in Afghanistan:

"The National Gray Panthers supports H.R.2404, legislation sponsored by Rep. James P. McGovern (D-MA), that calls for establishing an exit strategy in Afghanistan by this December. Gray Panthers also supports H.R. 3699, sponsored by Rep. Barbara J. Lee (D-CA), to prohibit any increase in the number of members of the United States Armed Forces serving in Afghanistan.

"It is time to let our leaders know that we have had enough—Enough blood shed! Enough of our millions of dollars wasted! Enough of this war! Escalation in Afghanistan is not the answer!"



Sanctuary City—What Does It Mean?

In 1989 SF approved an ordinance that bans the use of city funding or city employees to aid immigration enforcement. It was meant to protect refugees fleeing Central American civil wars from federal policies that denied them political asylum.

The current fight between Mayor Newsom and the Board of Supervisors concerns only juveniles (18 or under). In August the Board passed a resolution adopting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as SF law. Their resolution included a stipulation that undocumented youth must be found guilty of a felony before being reported to ICE.

Last year Mayor Newsom unilaterally changed city policy to reporting to immigration authorities (ICE) juveniles arrested on *suspicion* of committing a felony. Until then reporting was done only after conviction—not arrest—of a drug felony. In October, Sup. Campos proposed legislation amending Newsom’s policy so that ICE is notified only if a juvenile is convicted of a felony. That legislation was adopted. The Mayor vetoed it. The Board overrode the veto, making it law. The Mayor says he will ignore the law. That is where things stand as of mid-November.

In effect the Mayor’s policy lets the police determine who gets referred to ICE. No judicial hearing, no due process, no innocent until proven guilty. The police arrest juveniles on a variety of charges from minor sins like fighting in school and graffiti to possibly major crimes involving drugs and guns and book them upon arrest at any level from misdemeanor to felony. These arrests are disproportionately minorities and are often connected with sweeps against “gangs” and gang activity which the police generally view as felonious. (Establishment groups like the Boy Scouts and the CYO are not gangs but youth organizations.) The vast majority of those booked as felonies are either reduced to misdemeanor or dismissed altogether, but meanwhile those kids are reported to ICE and in danger of deportation. Supervisor Campos says, “The whole point of having a sanctuary ordinance is that we choose not to be in the business of federal immigration enforcement. We are not an arm of ICE...” The SF fight is an opening salvo in the national effort for immigration reform.



Lynne Stewart speaking at a San Francisco Gray Panthers fundraiser

Lynne Stewart’s Appeal Denied

After a long career representing the poor, oppressed and unpopular, radical attorney Lynne Stewart has been sent to jail. On November 17, a federal appeals court upheld her 2005 conviction of conspiracy and providing material support to terrorists and ordered her bond revoked. It also faulted District Judge John G. Koeltl for failing to issue a finding on whether she had committed perjury, and ordered him to review the mitigating circumstances that led him to sentence her to 28 months rather than the 30 years requested by the government. .

In the many years since charges were brought against her, the Gray Panthers have participated in nation-wide support and fundraising efforts for Lynne. In a typical political analysis of the events, she said the decision’s timing, “coming as it does on the eve of the arrival of the tortured men from the offshore prison in Guantánamo,” carried a message. “If you’re going to lawyer for these people, you’d better toe very close to the line that the government has set out.”

To send Lynne a letter, write:

Lynne Stewart, #53504-054
MCC-NY
150 Park Row
New York, NY 10007

Emerson asked Thoreau in jail, “Henry, what are you doing in there?” Thoreau replied, “Waldo, the question is what are you doing out there?”

Public Power to the People

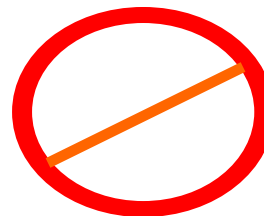
As the movement for public power grows, PGE rolls out rate increases and pays \$3 million to subvert public power. Their latest deception is a ballot measure called “*New two-third requirement for local public electricity providers.*” It would amend the constitution to require a 2/3 *yes* vote before any public power agency could add new customers, or any local agency could even enter into the public power business.

PGE views us consumers as their cash cow. Year after year, PGE requests and PUC gives rate increase on top of rate increase. Their latest rate increases with their economic impact would amount to \$787 million, added to the \$644 million we paid to PGE for services last year.

Our PGE rates are the highest in the country; 20% to 40% higher than cities with public power. In Sacramento, SMUD public power rates did not increase over an eleven year period! Los Angeles’ publicly owned Department of Water and Power had NO blackouts during the deregulated melt down in California. Los Angeles utility rates are 16% lower than PGE rates. PGE does not want San Francisco joining L.A., Seattle, Cleveland, San Antonio. Public power is not even a “new” idea; the first public power systems existed over 100 years ago in this country.

Homes and businesses constructed in the 493-acre former Naval Shipyard in Hunters Point will have public power electricity provided by SF PUC. In fact, PUC has been buying and supplying competitive, alternate electricity for decades to Treasure Island, the Police, Fire and Public and Health Departments. A state law authorizing CCA, *community choice aggregation*, allows communities to choose public power over a PGE monopoly. Supervisor Mirkarimi, long-time advocate for public power, this October led the Board of Supervisors in implementing a CCA program to purchase electric power and to accelerate renewable energy and conservation. Currently Mirkarimi is working with Marin County on a joint public power collaboration, which would mean even cheaper rates. PGE would still supply the grid. We need to remain vigilant, for among those who replied to the request for CCA power were Citicorp Global Markets and Shell Energy of North America.

Stay informed on CCA (Community Choice Aggregation) DO NOT sign the PGE backed initiative!



DO NOT SIGN
PGE Scam
Ballot initiative:
*“New 2/3 requirement
for local public electricity providers”*

GPers Sit In for Single Payer

About a dozen single payer activists, including three Gray Panthers, sat in at Rep. Nancy Pelosi’s SF office on November 3rd, demanding she honor her promises on single payer. Pelosi had promised that the House health reform bill, HR 3962, would include the Kucinich Amendment, allowing states the option for single payer and the Weiner Amendment, allowing a full House debate on substituting HR 676 (Conyers national single payer bill) for the entire House bill being proposed.

Our immediate demand was that staff reach Pelosi or her chief aide in Washington by phone, and that we talk with her. We said we would stay until this happened. Some three hours later, we were arrested for failing to follow directions to leave. The arrests were ordered by Pelosi aide Dan Bernal, whom we remember for calling the GP office several years ago demanding apology for our newsletter article attacking her votes for war funding.

Pelosi’s position as House Speaker is largely based on her ability to raise huge sums for Democratic electoral campaigns, so she stands at the intersection between political power and big money. It is particularly galling that she uses that power to stall implementation of single payer in California, which twice passed the legislature of the state she is supposed to represent.

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

ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED

Call the office for membership information.

Labor Donated **DECEMBER 2009**

Actions and Events

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

Thursday, December 3, 7:00—9:00 PM

“Wherever There’s A Fight” Book Launch and Virtual Radical History Tour of civil liberties hot spots in SF by authors Elaine Elinson/ Stan Yogi
Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia

Thursday, December 3, 7:30—9:30 PM

“The Battle for Whiteclay” film on native American struggle today by Oglala Sioux, intro by Tony Gonzales of American Indian Movement
ATA, 992 Valencia/21st Street
ANSWER Coalition, info 821-6545

Sunday, December 6, 3:00—7:00 PM

24th Bay Area Holiday Fundraiser for 16 political prisoners including Mumia Abu Jamal, Leonard Peltier. Abolish the Death Penalty
Women’s Building, 3543 18th, near Valencia

Saturday, December 19, 3:00 PM

Single Payer Now Holiday Potluck
Celebrate our work in 2009 and get ready for lots more in 2010
St. Mary’s Cathedral, 1111 Gough/Geary

Here’s What We Want—NOW

Peace

Afghanistan, Iraq and everywhere else

Health

Single Payer and expand Medicare

Freedom

for Mumia, Lynne, Leonard and the rest

Happy Holidays

