

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



Photo by Marc Norton

Surviving in the City

First in our new series

KEEP MUNI ALIVE!

**Hear a Muni driver, a transport activist,
and a representative of a driver/rider unity group.**

General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, May 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.

**Board Meeting 12:30 PM
Wednesday, May 5 & June 2**

**Civil/Human Rights Comm. 11:00 AM
Wednesday, May 12 & June 9**

**Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, May 6 & June 3**

**Program Committee 1:00 PM
Wednesday, May 12 & June 9**

**Health Committee 1:00 PM
Tuesday, May 11 & June 8**

**Book Club 10:30 AM
Monday, May 24 & June 28**

PG&E: Go Straight to Jail

Now why would PG&E spend \$35 million of rate-payers' money to bankroll a state proposition requiring a 2/3 majority vote to approve any municipal public utility program? Because, their Prop. 16 campaign literature says, they just want to protect the taxpayers' right to have the final say in the decision about where their money is spent. Not that PG&E asked us about that \$35 million.

Some cynics believe PG&E wants a monopoly in its service area. Eric Brooks, of Our City, who spoke to our April general meeting about Prop. 16 and community power in San Francisco, would have to be counted as one of them. Back in 2002, according to Brooks, California voters passed Community Choice Aggregation to enable communities to stop buying power from for-profit utilities and instead form their own nonprofit cooperatives for buying and generating electricity.

In 2007, the SF Board of Supervisors did just that, setting up a project called Clean Power SF, which will shift the City to cheaper, more reliable energy by developing solar, wind power, efficiency and conservation measures to meet 50% of the City's electricity needs by 2017. Clean Power SF will become the largest green energy project for any single city *in the world*—an example to the entire planet of real solutions for climate change.

STATEWIDE CAMPAIGN

NoProp16.org



No Rate Hikes
No Monopoly
No Prop 16

The City is currently in contract negotiations with clean energy providers. If Prop 16 passes, and the contract is not yet signed, we're back to square one. Prop 16 would require reconsideration of the whole shebang and approval by a 2/3 vote. So, swift action is needed on two fronts:

- 1) **Defeat Prop. 16** and PG&E's effort to monopolize the field. PG&E's energy mix is less than 10% renewable; it has just asked the PUC to approve \$6 million in new electricity rate increases to pay for three new fossil fuel power plants and a 30-year extension of nuclear power production at Diablo Canyon.
- 2) **Tell the Mayor and the Supervisors we want clean power.** Brooks and Our City suggest an

May Meeting: Surviving in the City

With our May meeting about Muni, we begin a new series that focuses on our daily lives: our transportation, our food, everything we need to live and thrive in San Francisco. We welcome ideas for these meetings from all of our readers.

We will hear from a Muni driver, a longtime transit activist, Fran Taylor, and a representative of the newly formed alliance of transit workers and riders which we support. Workers and Riders Unite! Please join us.



Thursday, May 13, 9:30—12:00

Call to Action

**Protect Social Security/Medicare/Medicaid
City Services for Seniors
Speakers and Discussion**

**Unitarian/Universalist Center, 1187 Franklin
Sponsored by SAN, CARA, Gray Panthers,
OWL, United Educators, and CASE
\$2 lunch by reservation 546-1333**

email or letter asking them to “guarantee a Clean Power SF project that will run San Francisco on 50% renewable and locally generated electricity by 2017, and will use the energy savings created by these local renewables to pay for the project, so that it meets or beats PG&E rates.” Send your comments NOW. It is critical the contract be signed before the June primary, so if Prop 16 passes, Clean Power SF will not be affected.

Opposition to Prop 16 is increasing by leaps and bounds. The California Democratic Party and the Green Party oppose it, most major newspapers including the *Chronicle* and civic groups oppose it, Mayor Gavin Newsom opposes it, even other California utilities companies oppose it. But, more of our money may be in PG&E's pipeline, and another blitz of ads could be on its way. Tell your neighbors, tell your friends, to write the Mayor and Supervisors and **Vote NO on Prop 16.**

Pachamama



Forty years ago twenty million people participated in Teach-Ins across the country and forged our connection to Mother Earth. On Earth Day in 1970, so many people came to Washington DC that both houses of Congress shut down in awe of the response. This movement brought passage of the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts, and San Francisco began treating sewage water *before* dumping it into the ocean. The EPA was established; of course its effectiveness still depends on our watchful eyes. We leverage these laws to demand accountability for criminal actions, like the recent Massy Corporation Coal Mine murders. We recycle our cans and garbage more, and thanks to Rachel Carson, we banned DDT. But true climate change cannot be left to corporate green washing. Wall Street has already issued several hundred reports on possible opportunities arising from global warming.

And, what of the global ramifications of nuclear weapons and their waste? Global climate catastrophe will not be solved with proliferation of nuclear power in any of its forms. The recent Nuclear Summit produced an agreement with Russia to reduce stockpiles of potential disasters. Then, our administration announced a policy of *limiting but not banning* our possible "first use" of the bomb. We used the first WMD on over 200,000 Japanese people in 1945. World-wide recycling, even when we achieve it, is naught when measured against the threat and waste produced with nuclear development. We face the daunting tasks of stopping both the burning up and the blowing up of our planet!

World People's Conference on Climate Change and Rights for Pachamama

People representing 192 countries engaging in 18 work groups came to Bolivia to do what Copenhagen would not. People called for the creation of an International Climate Tribunal and a UN Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth (Pachamama). Thousands of people pledged to bring in a future that cares for human life and all life on earth. Voices of indigenous people now living with our climate catastrophe will be heard! (The report on the conference in Bolivia will be continued in the June newsletter.)

A Day to Remember, To Build On.

On Wednesday, April 21, hundreds of teachers, students, workers, and parents reached Sacramento. On foot. Some had walked over forty days, from Bakersfield, 365 miles away. Thousands greeted them, including a busload of supporters from San Francisco. The marchers had deliberately chosen to walk the length of the Central Valley, California's region of most grinding poverty, most cruel neglect, and most reactionary politicians. California, the richest state of the richest nation, has nine of the most depressed counties in the US; the march went through three of them. This is what free-market politics of corporate tax breaks, service cuts, and union-busting has gotten us.

Along the way, they slept in local peoples' houses, ate with them, and had rallies, demonstrations, and meetings with the message "This must stop!" In Sacramento, the anger in their voices was palpable.



March for California's Future

One marcher wrote "In Fresno, we came upon a 10 block long area of homeless people sleeping in the middle of the sidewalk flanked by rows and rows of tents, their only possessions being their sleeping bags and the clothes on their backs. They are surrounded on all sides by boarded up foreclosed homes that many once occupied....Local government has fenced off the area, imparting a concentration camp feel to the entire project. They have nowhere to go; no jobs, no prospects, and apparently no help of any kind. Where are the public services that could give them a fresh start and a helping hand? The retraining and rehab centers? The medical clinics? The supportive services?...I grew up in the San Joaquin Valley...people used to go out with their kids on Sundays and walk around town window shopping or taking in the sights.... Poverty and hardship have become a way of life here now, while prisons and casinos are currently the only game in town."

The near-term aim of the march is to elect legislators who will restore education and social services and restore taxes on corporations and the rich. But many participants will also be moved beyond electoral politics to confront the forces that are moving

Look Before You Vote

June 8 is primary election day. Here is a summary of state measures on the ballot, and, when available, recommendations by the Gray Panthers Board of Directors.

State Propositions:

Prop 13: Seismic retrofits would not be considered new construction and so would not lead to higher property taxes. CARA says SUPPORT.

Prop 14: Open primaries. Currently primary elections give *only* registered members of a political party the chance to select that party's candidates from members of *that* party and that candidate then competes with candidates from other parties in November. This proposition would allow candidates to run on every party ballot, not just their own, without listing their own party affiliation. Only the two candidates getting the most votes would then run against each other in November.

This would make campaigns even more expensive, limit voter choice in November when more people vote and destroy minor and independent parties.
VOTE NO



Prop 15: Voluntary public financing for candidates for Secretary of State. A pilot project for 2014 and 2018. CARA says SUPPORT.

Prop 16: Requires local public electricity providers to get approval by 2/3 of the voters to expand services or form community choice programs. A PG&E power grab (see page 2).
VOTE NO.

Prop 17: Lets auto insurance companies raise rates on drivers who have had a lapse of coverage for 90 days, or who missed a payment. Financed by Mercury Auto Insurance Company.
VOTE NO.

In the June newsletter we will review the seven local measures and there will be an open discussion of the ballot at the May meeting.

Sanctuary City Under Attack! What Do We Do?

In 1989 a voter-approved ordinance declared San Francisco to be a "Sanctuary City," which means that City employees are NOT required to behave as partners with Federal immigration officers in the matter of rounding up undocumented immigrants. The original impetus for the ordinance came from the many refugees fleeing from Central American violence. Recently, perhaps a sign of the times coinciding with rampant unemployment and cuts to services, attacks on our Sanctuary City status are escalating.

At the State level, AB 2631 (Logue) would *void* any local ordinance or directive which prohibits law enforcement agencies or their employees from reporting someone who is undocumented.

AB 2580 (Logue again) would *require* an arresting agency to notify the feds whenever they suspect someone arrested for any felony charge might be undocumented.

And AB 2333 (Emmerson) would prohibit a county probation officer from placing a person in a residential facility in another county if that person is believed to be an undocumented immigrant.

Each of these bills is a direct attack on the protections offered by the Sanctuary City concept.

In San Francisco, the Mayor is refusing to follow the Campos ordinance of Oct. 27, 2009, passed by the Board of Supervisors, vetoed by the Mayor, passed over the Mayor's veto. The ordinance says that juveniles can be turned over to ICE only after being *convicted* of a crime, not when merely *accused* of a crime. Standoff! What will the Supes do to get the Mayor to follow the law? Stay tuned.

The SF Gray Panthers Board of Directors voted in April to join a coalition opposing any and all threats to our Sanctuary City status.

"The corporate grip on opinion in the United States is one of the wonders of the Western world. No First World country has ever managed to eliminate so entirely from its media all objectivity—much less dissent."—Gore Vidal

“But such is the irresistible nature of truth, that all it asks, and all it wants is the liberty of appearing.”—Thomas Paine

Public Outcry over Comcast Ruling Reaches the FCC

By Tim Karr, April 15, 2010
www.SavetheInternet.com

The public outrage over last week's appeals court decision against an open Internet reached Washington this week.

People are doing all they can to stop a decision that would effectively give phone and cable companies power to control Internet content and undermine the open architecture that has transformed the Web into a democratic force in society.

The reaction has been swift, with more than a hundred thousand people contacting Washington since the court issued its ruling for Comcast and against the FCC's ability to protect our online rights.

Congress to FCC: Act Now

The outrage spread to Capitol Hill Wednesday. During a hearing of the Senate Commerce Committee, Chairman Jay Rockefeller pressured FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski to move quickly "to protect consumers [and] make the hard choices" to deliver an open Internet to everyone.

Sen. John Kerry wrote here that the FCC needs to fight "to make sure the Internet stays in the hands of the American people, that we get to set the rules to benefit all of us, not just a few huge corporations."

Later in the day, Sen. Byron Dorgan took to the Senate floor to urge the FCC to reclassify broadband and to reassert its authority to safeguard Net Neutrality. "The FCC is the referee," Dorgan said, "and I want it to have the touch that's necessary to protect the interests of American people and the citizens that use the Internet."

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Bring Back the WPA

On May 6, 1935, Franklin Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration by executive order, bringing hope and jobs to most of the 10 million unemployed. By the time the WPA ended in 1943, it had employed 8½ million people on highways and building construction, slum clearance, reforestation, rural rehabilitation, and the Federal Writers, Arts, and Theatre Projects. All across the country, the WPA left its legacy in bridges, roads, trails, murals, forests, public buildings, parks, and airports. It changed the landscape, and it changed the lives of the people who worked for it.

Today, there are 15 million people unemployed, nearly half of them jobless for more than 27 weeks. Another 9.1 million are involuntarily working part-time, and an additional 2.3 million are what the government likes to call "marginally attached" to the labor force—meaning they had not looked for work in the four weeks preceding the survey. Altogether, that's 26.4 million people unable to support themselves and their families. Where are the jobs programs for them?

In 1933, Congress passed legislation that established the Civilian Conservation Corps, proposed by Roosevelt in his first 100 days in office. *Three months later*, 250,000 young men were employed by the CCC, implementing the first resource conservation program in the nation's history.

It can be done and it should be done. The time to act is NOW! Call the President. Call your representatives. Demand a jobs program. Demand an end to this needless suffering.



Civilian Conservation Corps Company 288, at Fort Hancock, 1930s

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 2010

Actions and Events

Friday, April 30, 9:00 AM

Rally & Action to Fight Fare Raises & Route Cuts
MTA Hearing for Muni 2011 Budget
City Hall, Room 400

Saturday, May 1, Noon

May Day March for Worker & Immigrant Justice
Rally at 24th and Mission (GPs @ McDonalds)
3:00-7:00 May Day Party @ Dolores Park

Saturday, May 8, Noon

Bail Out the People! Jobs Now! Nationwide
WPA 75th Anniversary demonstration/celebration
New Federal Building, Mission @ 7th Street
actioncenter-SF@peoplesmail.net or 738-4739

Sunday, May 9, 11:45-1:45

Take Mom to the Bridge, Not to Lunch
Reclaim Mothers Day Anti-War March
Following Julia Ward Howe's vision and words
we say "Disarm, Disarm"
Gather at parking lots at either end and
March Across the Golden Gate Bridge

Thursday, May 13, 9:30 AM– Noon

Town Hall Meeting, A Call to Action
10:00: No Cuts to Social Security, Medicare,
Medicaid, No Privatization
11:00: No Cuts to City Services for Seniors
UU Center, 1187 Franklin and Geary

Monday, May 17, 7:30 PM

Ecology Emerges #4: Economies of Nature Panel
Can there be sustainability in a growth-based
Economy? Rebecca Solnit, Dick Walker, others
SPUR, 654 Mission @ 3rd. Free, Donations

Saturday, May 22, 10:00 AM—Noon

OWL: Moving Around the City: Let's Stay Active
For both those with limited mobility & the highly
mobile. Panel with Muni staff and bicyclers
Mechanics Institute, 57 Post St, nr Montgomery

