

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



Surviving in the City

A discussion of three measures on
the local ballot in November:

Sit/Lie
the Adachi Proposal
Elsbernd's Muni Measure

General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, September 21, 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, September 1 & October 6

Civil/Human Rights Comm. 11:00 AM
Monday, September 13 & October 11

Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, September 2 & October 7

Health Committee 1:00 PM
Tuesday, September 14 & October 12

Program Committee 1:00 PM
Wednesday, September 8 & October 13

Book Club 10:30 AM
Monday, September 27 & October 25



Happy 40th Birthday Gray Panthers

That’s what we said at our July potluck as we cut the decorated birthday cake (thank you, Barbara). Close to 40 of us crowded into our office to eat, drink, sing with Faith (as always, thank you troubadour Faith Petric), toasted 40 years of GPs working for peace and justice, and pledged to continue the good fight for a better world. Many thanks to Barbara for her overall event organizing.

Of course, since this was a GP affair, we included a serious discussion—the dire plight of our fellow fighters Lynne Stewart and Mumia Abu Jamal. Jeff Mackler brought us up to date on the unjust war-on-terror, ex-attorney-General Ashcroft-inspired prosecution of Lynne Stewart. As we have reported many times in these pages, people’s attorney Lynne Stewart was convicted of breaking the rules on representing her client by publicly reporting his advice to a group in Egypt (long before 9/11) and sentenced to 28 months in prison. On government appeal, the sentence was sent back to the judge for re-sentencing and he increased it to an outrageous 10 years. For shame. The Obama Department of Justice continues in the footsteps of the Bush Department of Justice. Nearly \$350 was collected for the Lynne Stewart Defense Fund, which will appeal the sentencing. And Mumia—on death row for these many years—had another appeal refused and again faces execution. More later.



On a happier note, the national GP office asked each network to nominate a local GP of the year. Our Board nominated Caty. Much applause from the assembled partiers when we announced this.

Stand Up, Fight Back!

The September meeting is another installment in our examination of Surviving in the City. Last May we talked about Muni. This month we will discuss three local issues on the November ballot: Sit/lie, Adachi’s pension and health care cuts proposal, and an update on Elsbernd’s efforts to blame Muni’s problems on the bus drivers.

Happy 75th Birthday Social Security



Many GPs joined CARA and the SF Labor Council in an exuberant celebration of Social Security and a firm determination to “protect it, preserve it, and pass it on,” complete with balloons, the Raging Grannies, our signs and banners, and birthday cake. Many happy returns.

“Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, and today is a gift; that’s why they call it the present.”

Eleanor Roosevelt





Logo of San Francisco Community Congress

On the Prowl—Community Congress

Several GP's attended the SF Community Congress, August 14 & 15. The congress was initiated by some of the City's progressives and all gathered pledged to create a city where people can live, work, and prosper together. People divided into breakout groups to discuss policy recommendations in four main areas: Tenants Rights & Affordable Housing; Community Based Economic Development; MUNI & Public Transit; Health & Human Services. We discussed, debated, augmented and amended the original draft recommendations.

Financing & Promoting Local Development:

The first and key recommendation is to establish a *Municipal Bank of San Francisco* by amending the City's charter. This idea has been circulated for several years, most recently in the platform of Matt Gonzalez' mayoral run. Given recent failures, scandals, bailouts in the private banking sector and the continuing lack of credit, this may just be an idea for which the time has come! Consider: a City-owned bank, probably organized as a credit union, could fund affordable housing, small businesses, clean energy, local farming projects, a fiber-optic network and other projects benefiting all, especially low-income, residents. Instead of the current process in which large projects are funded by bonds which pay interest to wealthy, often out of town bondholders, projects funded by the City-owned bank would capture interest—wealth—back to San Francisco and residents for future projects. The bank would be overseen by local community councils.

Housing: Recommendations included: increased tenant representation; limitations on PG&E pass-through costs to renters; protection of rental stock for long-term tenants; imposition of stronger vacancy control; reform of condo conversion laws; the banning of all TICs that are 50% owner-

occupied from condo conversion; higher relocation benefits on temporary displacement for tenants due to capital improvements; passage of a Right to Remain Act for public housing in Hope SF properties; prohibition of utility shut-offs in residential housing; first right of refusal to buy to renters of property put on the market by owners; creation of a permanent source of funding for affordable housing development; creation and funding for small site acquisitions; encouragement of housing cooperatives and community land trust conversions.

Land Use: Securing of benefits from the CPMC (California Pacific Medical Corporation) development on Van Ness to address displacement of the area's lower-income residents.

Homeless & Supportive Housing: opposition to Prop L, (sit/lie); removal of shelter housing from the Care Not Cash definition; development of more affordable housing and supportive housing for homeless families. And more.

Stay tuned. We will be following this process. In this period of collapsing capitalism and global climate catastrophe, a parallel local, democratically controlled economy is necessary for survival, but we also must envision and usher in a new system. The power and will to create new ways of living require inclusion of more voices to bring visions greater than mere policy changes and pressuring politicians. Who will carry the Community Congress further? How do we as GPs guide and contribute? Do we dare to dream of a brighter future for our City? www.sfcommunitycongress.wordpress.com

“The corporate revolution will collapse if we refuse to buy what they are selling—their ideas, their version of history, their wars, their weapons, their notion of inevitability: remember this: We be many and they be few. They need us more than we need them.” Arundhati Roy

Shortage of SF Skilled Nursing Beds

San Francisco has a severe shortage of Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) beds that accept Medi-Cal. Skilled Nursing Facilities treat patients with strokes, heart and circulatory disease, hip fractures, cancer, respiratory diseases, and severe kidney diseases after they are discharged from hospitals.

A 1998 Health Department study predicted the City would add 92,000 more residents over age 65 between 2000 and 2020, and there would be a shortage of 2,380 SNF beds, if none were lost. Since then, 732 SNF beds have been lost. The City's own Laguna Honda Hospital stopped taking SNF patients in January 2008. Now, California Pacific Medical Center is planning to close its Skilled Nursing Facility with 180 beds, which would raise the total of closed beds to 912, a 24% drop since 1997.

These SNF beds are almost entirely used by poor elderly or disabled patients on both Medicare and Medi-Cal. Without sufficient SNF beds in San Francisco, these patients will have to be placed in out-of-county facilities, away from the support of family and friends. Also, the care at stand-alone, contracted-out facilities is often inferior to care in SNFs close by hospitals. In short, closing already-scarce SNF beds in San Francisco will hasten deaths for low-income San Franciscans.

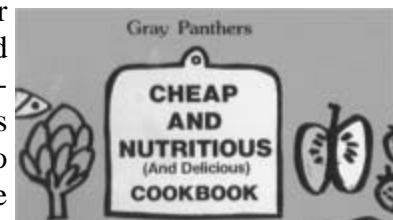
CPMC has said it will replace the 180 SNF beds it plans to close, but specific plans are lacking beyond 38 beds at Davies and a commitment to establish an additional 62 beds somehow, somewhere. This promise, if fulfilled, would still only replace 55% of our badly needed SNF beds.

San Francisco Gray Panthers stands behind the California Nurses Association, community advocates, and elder advocates in demanding that CPMC issue specific, irrevocable plans for replacing all of the closed SNF beds, and that the new SNF beds be located in close proximity to acute care facilities. We also demand that San Francisco not approve CPMC's City-wide plan until these demands on SNF beds are met, as well as community concerns over the future of St. Luke's Hospital and the impact of CPMC's planned mega-hospital on the Cathedral Hill neighborhood. **Attend the Planning Commission hearing. See p.6**

Some Gray Panthers History

Maggie Kuhn, in her autobiography, *No Stone Unturned*, speaks of looking back on the era of the 50s and 60s as "testimony to the irrepressible power of the grass roots." She, with other professional women all facing retirement, "wanted to continue to be involved in social action bearing on the important public issues of the day." (p. 130) The group they formed in 1970 became the Gray Panthers, and this "new name gave us a sense of urgency." (p. 138). The Gray Panthers' policy was always "age and youth in action." (p.133) "Early on the Gray Panthers believed the health system was in crisis...Concern over the 'bottom line' had replaced the Hippocratic oath." (p.156). Maggie's advice to anyone who wants to change the system was, "Go to the people at the top." (p. 159) The Gray Panthers are insistent that there will be enough money for all necessary social programs "if the federal government ends its love affair with military hardware and extravagant tax breaks to the rich." (p.208)

The GP network of SF was formed in 1974 and immediately set about reforming the world. Our earlier activities included an active Media Watch campaign against stereotyping elders as greedy geezers or doddering fools. We opposed the Vietnam and subsequent wars and nuclear weapons; we fought for peace. We initiated nursing home reform, which led to Bay Area and California nursing Home Reform (BANHR and CANHR). We offered Medicare counseling to clarify the then impenetrable Medicare language and the formation of HICAP. Our Social Security counseling led to the Institute on Aging. We work for health reform and Single Payer healthcare. We led Cheap and Nutritious demonstrations citywide on how to eat well on the cheap, even in one room studios. The accompanying cookbook won nationwide publicity and distribution. We wage fights against racism and limitations on civil rights and liberties.



Our actions are determined by our members' interests. The real basis of democracy is citizen participation in civic life, not just voting. We are an or-

Corporations, Especially Banks

“The essentially sociopathic nature of modern corporations worldwide is easy to explain when one remembers it originated in the needs of professional opium traffickers, viz, the British East India Company under Clive. To see it as anything other than the expression of a criminal mindset is catastrophically naïve. The long term effect? The destiny of the world has been handed over to Gamblers Anonymous.” (p.184).

This paragraph from an historically accurate and devastatingly perceptive rant by author John Burdett in his novel *The Godfather of Kathmandu*, highlights the situation the USA is enduring as described by Johnson and Kwak in *13 Bankers, The Wall St. Takeover and The Next Financial Melt-Down*. All the following quotes are from this book.

The horrifying reality is that Presidents Obama, the Bushes, and Clinton all have believed that we need **this** financial system, “a system dominated by the thirteen bankers who came to the White House in March 2009.” (p.4) These banks with their mega profits effectively fight reform. Even more dangerous, both Democrats and Republicans agree with the ideology of Wall St.: ”that unfettered innovation and unregulated financial markets are good for America and the world.” (p. 5)


Although the public became furious when American International Group, rescued by \$180 billion in taxpayer money, paid out \$165 million in bonuses to the executives of the division that had nearly caused the company to collapse (p.3), no effective remedy followed.

Deserved fury, but no changes, for at the time of the March meeting, Bank of America’s assets were 16.4% of the Gross Domestic Product, followed by JP Morgan Chase at 14.7% and Citigroup at 12.9%. That is, 44% of the GDP was in the hands of these 3 banks. (p.12) The failure to regulate derivatives and other financial innovations “made possible a decade-long (90’s) financial frenzy that ultimately created the worst financial crisis and deepest recession the world has endured since World War II.” (p.10)

“Like the last crisis, the next one will cause mil-

lions of people to lose their jobs, homes, or educational opportunities; it will require a large transfer of wealth from tax-payers to the financial sector; and it will increase government debt, requiring higher taxes in the future.” “The alternative is to reform the financial system now, to put in place a modern analog to the banking regulations of the 1930’s that protected the financial system well for over fifty years. A central pillar of this reform must be breaking up the megabanks that dominate our financial system and have the ability to hold our entire economy hostage.” (p.13)

If you haven’t yet seen it, catch the Mime Troupe’s 2010 production of *Possibilidad or Death of a Worker*, presented free in Bay Area parks through Labor Day. They might well have taken their script from the book quoted above and jazzed it up with music, dancing, romance, pathos, and eventual redemption thru workers’ collectives. Street theater, hardly subtle, highly effective, that says Stand Up, Fight Back, Another World is Possible.



Wealth Tax Anyone?

This month we highlight hedge fund managers. According to the New York Times of April 1, 2010, the top 25 managers averaged one billion (\$1,000,000,000) each in 2009. Hedge funds are elite, lightly regulated investment vehicles open to a restricted range of investors. Their earnings are treated as capital gains, taxed at 15%, rather than income, taxed up to 35%. Here are a few:

David Tepper—Appaloosa Mgt.—\$4,000,000,000
George Soros—Soros Fund—\$3,300,000,000
James Simons—Renaiss. Tech—\$2,500,000,000
John Paulson—Paulson & Co.—\$2,300,000,000
Steve Cohen—SAC Capital—\$1,400,000,000
Carl Icahn—Icahn Capital—\$1,300,000,000

\$24,000,000,00—Twenty-four billion dollars.
How many homeless could that house?

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.

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Actions and Events

Thursday, September 9, 10:00—NOON

Senior Action Network (SAN) General Meeting
Unitarian Universalist Church, 1187 Franklin

Thursday, September 9, 7:30—9:00 PM

“Faubourg Treme—The Untold Story of Black
New Orleans.” Answer coalition film/ Discussion.
\$6 donation requested. ATA, 992 Valencia.

Saturday, September 25, 10:00 AM—Noon

OWL Meeting on November Election Madness:
Adachi Pension Measure, Muni Amendment, Sit/
Lie Initiative, State Propositions re redistricting
Hispanic Room, Main Library Lower Level,

Save the Date: September 23

On Thursday, Sept. 23, 1:30 PM, CPMC’s whole
Long Range Development Plan to centralize its
facilities into the wealthy Cathedral Hill area will
come before the City’s Planning Commission, in
City Hall, Room 400. Be there for health justice!

See article on Page 4

Raging Grannies for Social Security

Tune: Battle Hymn of the Republic

We’ve reached the age of 65, our golden years are
here. They tell us that the age begins a happy new
career. For now our Uncle Sam becomes our per-
manent cashier. As we go marching on.

Chorus: Holy Moley it’s our MON-ey (3x)
We paid when we were young!

And when each month a check arrives, we’re
happy it’s been sent. Enough to buy a BIT of food
and maybe pay the rent. And after that some folks
are broke and left without a cent. But they go
bravely on!

Chorus: Holy Moley it’s our MON-ey (3x)
We paid when we were young!

