

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

## ROCK THE VOTE THE NOVEMBER BALLOT



**General Membership Meeting**  
**Tuesday, October 19, 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, October 6 & November 3**

**Civil/Human Rights Comm. 11:00 AM**  
**Monday, October 11 & November 8**

**Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon**  
**Thursday, October 7 & November 4**

**Health Committee 1:00 PM**  
**Tuesday, October 12 & November 9**

**Program Committee 1:00 PM**  
**Wednesday, October 13 & November 10**

**Book Club 10:30 AM**  
**Monday, October 25 & November 22**

## September Meeting

“If you tell a lie big enough and keep repeating it, people will eventually come to believe it” (Joseph Goebbels)—so quoted Muni driver and rank and file activist Vic **Grayson in describing the lies that proponents of Prop. G** are spreading in their attack on Muni workers. Grayson views this as part of a world-wide attack on working people, which, in the US, is part of a huge effort to roll back reforms that have provided a safety net for decades.

Muni drivers make \$27.91/hour, plus benefits—not something you get rich on. To Grayson, the Muni workers are a trial balloon for attacking unionized city employees and scapegoating them for the recession. Muni’s problems stem from a lack of funding, which in turn stems from a refusal to tax downtown business and the rich.

Grayson was followed by Barbara Lopez, who works with La Voz Latina and is an activist in SEIU Local 1021. Lopez spoke somewhat ruefully about Jeff Adachi and Prop. B. Billed as “pension reform,” Prop. B is actually an attack on city employees, most of whom make less than \$50,000/year. The pattern of lies Grayson discusses above is repeated in the argument that the pension fund actually needs saving (it is fully funded and doing well) and that city employees themselves will not be hurt by cuts to dependent health benefits—which in fact could take as much as \$5000/year out of their paychecks. to cover the cost.

The consensus of the audience discussion was to put our energy into revenue-raising measures such as Prop. J and progressive income taxation. Downtown business interests need to shoulder

### More About Muni

Muni bus drivers’ base pay is \$28 per hour, which amounts to \$58,000 a year. In 2009, 13 top brass in the police department made from \$235,960 to \$516,118 per year; 17 top brass in the fire department made from \$236,373 to \$294,123 per year; and the head of Muni made almost \$300,000 a year. Maybe the bus drivers aren’t the main problem. Also, why is Muni still budgeting millions for a 1.7 mile central subway, money which could be used to save the current Muni system?

## October Meeting: Be an Informed Voter

Our October meeting will continue our discussion of and recommendations on the state and local propositions on the November ballot. Bring your voter handbook, sample ballot, and this newsletter to better follow and participate. Bring your own ideas: what would you propose as your number one ballot item?

### 7th Annual CARA Convention

The annual convention of the California Alliance for Retired Americans on October 12-13 is on strategies for protecting social security for the future: “Social Security: Protect It, Preserve It, Pass It On.” Gray Panthers will be sending delegates who will report back to the general membership. Look for a report in the November newsletter.

**"SENIOR ACTION NETWORK:  
Twenty Years of Action for Social Justice"  
Seniors & Youth Saving Social Security**

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2010, 9 AM—2 PM  
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH**

**Join us at the Gray Panthers table for this annual meeting. \$10 donation welcomed.**

### Happy Birthday, Faith

On September 11, friends, musicians, and vaudevillians celebrated with Faith Petric on her 95th birthday. The crowd at Freight & Salvage laughed and sang in harmony over chocolate cake.

### Hail and Farewell



**Bob Yragui, 1935—2010  
Long-time Postal Union activist, Gray Panther,  
and student of American history.**

## State Ballot Measures



The Board of the SF Gray Panthers has taken the following positions on state ballot measures:

**Prop. 19:** Legalized marijuana—regulate and tax. 21 years and older. **YES**

**Prop. 20:** Redistricting commission. Extends duties to include Congressional districts. **NO**

**Prop. 21:** Vehicle license surcharge *dedicated\** to State parks. **YES**

**Prop. 22:** Prohibits the state from taking local *dedicated* funds. Redevelopment vs. safety net. **NO**

**Prop. 23:** Suspends air pollution control laws. **NO**



**Prop. 24:** Repeals corporate tax breaks. **YES**

**Prop. 25:** Changes legislative vote on budget from two-thirds to simple majority. Retains two-thirds vote for taxes. **YES**

**Prop. 26:** Increases vote requirements to two-thirds for state levies and charges **NO**

**Prop. 27:** Eliminates redistricting commission. **YES**

*\*An important note about **dedicated** funds:*

*By law, money from a dedicated fund can be used only for the purpose for which it was voted—i.e., state parks get that money even if people are starving because of the shredded safety net. On the other hand if dedicated money goes to the state parks, then less or no money might be taken from the general fund for the parks, thus potentially strengthening the safety net. This applies to any dedicated funds.*

## SFGP Recommendations County Ballot Measures

- Prop. AA:** Vehicle Registration Fee. \$10 *dedicated* to transit costs. **YES**
- Prop. B:** Pension Reform Initiative (Adachi). See p. 2, “September Meeting.” **NO**
- Prop. C:** *Requires* mayor to attend supervisors’ meeting once a month for “question time.” **YES**
- Prop. D:** Non-citizens can vote for School Board members. **YES**
- Prop. E:** Same Day Voters Registration. **YES**
- Prop. F:** Health Services Board. **No Position**
- Prop. G:** Eliminates Pay Guarantees for Muni operators. See p. 2, “September Meeting.” **NO**
- Prop. H:** Bans elected officials from being elected member of Party Central Comm. **NO**
- Prop. I:** Saturday voting before Tuesday election. Part of national “Why Tuesday” movement. **YES**
- Prop. J:** Hotel Tax—Supervisors. Increases by 2%. Closes airline and on-line tax loopholes. **YES**
- Prop. K:** Hotel Tax—Mayor. No tax increase. Closes on-line loopholes. If more votes than Prop. J, invalidates Prop. J. **NO**
- Prop. L:** Sit/Lie. Further harassment of homeless. So-called problem covered by laws. Political grandstanding by Supervisor Elsbrendt. **NO**
- Prop. M:** Police Foot Patrol Program—if gets more votes than L, would nullify Sit/Lie. **YES**
- Prop. N:** Real Property Transfer Tax. A graduated tax on sale of properties over \$5,000,000. **YES**



**Budget cuts forced New Leaf, a non-profit agency providing health services to LGBT youth and elders, to close its doors.**

**We appreciate the 35 years of services to the LGBT community and the commitment and contributions of a devoted staff.**

## **Solidarity with Immigrant Workers and Families: Submitted to CARA 2010 Convention by SF Gray Panthers**

WHEREAS during periods of high unemployment and assaults on all working families' rights and living standards, there are frequently attacks on undocumented immigrants, accusing them of stealing jobs, overburdening social programs, and threatening national security, and

WHEREAS, anti-immigrant rhetoric is being used to hide the real cause of unemployment, namely free trade and the inevitable collapse of bubble economies based on speculation; and the real cause of shortages of public services, namely 40 years of tax cuts and loopholes for corporations and the rich, and 20 years of wars for US control of oil and pipelines for oil and gas, and

WHEREAS the Obama Administration, which had promised more humane immigration policy, has actually (1) increased raids, detentions, and deportations far beyond the Bush administration, and (2) initiated Secure Communities, a program where all arrestees' fingerprints are shared with immigration police, regardless of how trivial the charges are, or whether they are later dropped, and

WHEREAS the Obama Administration actively promotes immigration reform that (1) makes legalization of undocumented immigrants extremely difficult because of wait times, fees, fines, and language requirements, (2) requires all US residents, citizen and immigrant alike, to carry biometric national identity cards or face arrest, (3) keeps undocumented immigrant workers and their families in constant fear from increasing raids, detentions, deportations, and border security, while (4) allowing employers increased freedom to hire contract immigrant Guest Workers who labor in a state of virtual bondage because they are "legal" only while working for the employer they were contracted to, making it harder for them to organize unions, raise wages, and defend their rights, reminiscent of the hated "bracero" program of the 1950s, and

WHEREAS, free trade agreements such as NAFTA and CAFTA cause the extreme overseas poverty that drives immigrants into the US, as well as allowing companies to ship US jobs overseas,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that CARA re-affirms the age-old truth that wages, working conditions, and living standards of ALL workers and their families are dragged down by increased exploitation and intimidation of the most vulnerable sector of workers, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that CARA affirms the rights of all persons, whether citizen or immigrant, to protections of the Bill of Rights, due process, access to public resources, as well as living wages, dignified and safe working conditions, and the right to organize unions, and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that CARA opposes NAFTA, CAFTA, and immigration reform based on border militarization; delayed and burdensome legalization of undocumented immigrants; increased raids, detention, and deportation of undocumented immigrants; and importation of contract Guest Workers, as proposed by the President, and

FURTHER RESOLVED that CARA apprise national ARA of this resolution and the reasons for it.



## The Price of Privatization

### New Orleans Haiti Iraq

Let's call out globalization for what it means: "privatizing the globe" or twenty-first century colonialism. In all of the natural and unnatural disasters occurring, funds for recovery are overwhelmingly shuffled into private, corrupt hands. In *The Shock Doctrine*, author Naomi Klein explains how the "free market" exploits disaster-shocked people and countries by privatizing public services at a time when people are too devastated to respond.

Take New Orleans, where five years after Hurricane Katrina more than half the public schools have been turned into charter schools, the only public hospital has never re-opened, public transportation has been reduced by 80%, and public housing entirely untouched by the flood has been condemned and torn down in favor of private development. The result? New Orleans has lost over 100,000 in population, over 50,000 properties remain blighted or have no structure on them, public school enrollment is down by 43%, and 95,000 jobs have disappeared.

Of course, the damage to New Orleans was not exclusively a "natural" disaster. As Harry Shearer describes in his documentary, *The Big Easy*, the disappearance of wetlands that might have helped protect the Gulf coast can be laid at the feet of the Army Corps of Engineers' flood control projects on the Mississippi and the oil companies' canals and pipelines. The combination converted 23% of wetlands to open water since 1956. Moreover, investigators have found that levees the Corps was supposed to build 14 feet high were only 10 feet high, and pumps intended to keep water in the canals at safe levels failed safety testing but were installed anyway. In an interview on *Democracy Now*, Shearer says that the head of the UC Berkeley team evaluating the event believes "had the right kind of hurricane protection been offered to New Orleans, the worst Hurricane Katrina would have done to New Orleans is, quote, 'wet ankles.'"

In Haiti, post earthquake, more than 1.7 million people barely survive in inadequate camps with poor sanitation, unclean water and only a small

number in tents for shelter. But the Finance Minister promises, "Port-au-Prince will have electricity 24 hours a day, and many big hotels, with luxurious houses facing the sea." Obviously these luxury hotels will not

be housing for the two million Haitians who are left homeless and face another season of hurricanes. Recently, 125,000 Haitians marched and protested camp conditions. Local farms are not being recovered and Haitians are forced to rely on US subsidized corporate food aid. Meanwhile, US textile manufacturers plan to expand their operations in Haiti after passage of a bill in Congress which exempts Haitian textiles from import duties. They have extracted promises from the Haitian government to freeze wages at \$3/day—too low for workers to feed their families—but tout their expansion as humanitarian assistance toward Haiti's rebuilding.

Like New Orleans, Haiti's "natural" disaster was compounded many times by human intervention. Once the land of plenty, the most profitable colony in the world, the "jewel of the Antilles," Haiti now is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere thanks to colonialism and imperialism. Poverty and substandard housing laid it low in the earthquake. Privatization and corruption have kept it there in the months since.

Where are all the results of private money? It did not restore sewage plants, electricity, clean water and housing in Iraq. Iraqi people still suffer under the lie of recovery after 13 years of sanctions and seven years of war and occupation. Today in Baghdad raw sewage runs in streets, there may be electricity only a few hours of any day in temperatures well over 100 degrees. Beyond the trillion dollars squandered on this war, billions of which went to private contractors Halliburton, Bechtel, and Blackwater, is a legacy of over half a million children's deaths and a generation lost.

How much of this vast amount of money actually went to the people who needed it—and what could have been done with it if it had?



Photo: Stephen Chernin/Getty Images

## 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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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 **OCTOBER 2010**

## Actions and Events

### Friday, October 1, 6:00—9:00 PM

Dinner and Forum on Emerging Autonomous  
Movements in Cuba  
Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia  
\$20-\$100 donation-dinner & drinks. No one turned  
away. Co-sponsored by San Francisco IWW

### Saturday, October 2, 10:30 AM

Part of National Action for Jobs, Housing, Justice,  
Peace, Hands off Social Security and Medicare/  
Medicaid. Ogawa Plaza, Oakland, 12th St. BART

### Wednesday, October 6, 6:00—7:30 PM

Afghanistan: Nine Years and Counting...  
Protest and Mourning the Victims of the War  
Speakers: Daniel Ellsberg and others  
Unitarian/Universalist Center, 1187 Franklin

### Friday, October 8, 6:00 PM

Global Exchange Open House  
Celebrate over 10 Years of Activism & Change  
2017 Mission Street, 2nd Floor nr. 16th St. BART

### Sunday, October 10, 11:00 AM—5:00 PM

CCOSF;s Sustainable Living Fiesta.  
Learn to make adobe bricks, solar cookers, acorn  
bread. School Farm at School of the Arts. 555  
Portola, Muni 36,44,48 & 52

### Tuesday, October 12, 7:00—9:00 PM

Politics & Culture in New Orleans pre & post  
Katrina: Dave Eggers and Jordan Flaherty in  
conversation.  
Modern Times Bookstore, 888 Valencia

### Thursday, October 28, 7:00—8:30 PM

Ingrid Betancourt, Columbian ex-Senator,  
Activist, talks about her memoir: *Even Silence  
Has an End: Six Years of Captivity in the Colum-  
bian Jungle*, Schwab Center, 211 Main/Howard

