

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Nuclear Update



General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, October 18, 12:30—3:00 PM
Unitarian Universalist Center
1187 Franklin (near Geary)
Speaker: Scott Yundt, Tri Valley Cares

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 5 & November 2

Civil/Human Rights Comm. 11:00 AM
Wednesday, October 12 & November 9

Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, October 6 & November 3

Program Committee 1:00 PM
Wednesday, October 12 & November 9

Health, Healthcare, Environment Com.
Info: call 215-7575

Book Club 10:30 AM
Monday, October 31 & November 27

GP September Meeting

We viewed a video of a talk given by Michelle Anderson on her book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness*, followed by group discussion. (See page 4 for more on the book and the prison industrial complex.) We spoke to the need to stay in alliance. As part of the discussion we heard an update on the Sacramento legislative hearing held by Tom Ammiano on the need to correct the use of SHU (Security Housing Units i.e. solitary confinement) in California prisons. Rallies for the hunger strikers locked down in Pelican Bay Prison SHU resumed September 26. We heard about the upcoming 16th national day of protest, September 25, to stop police brutality, repression and the criminalization of a generation. The October 22 group is calling for an independent investigation of the killing of Richard Hill, brutally beaten by police at a MUNI/ BART station. Demonstrations continue weekly by the group Anonymous. This meeting was seen as a start to educate ourselves on the relationship between the prison industrial complex and the permanent disenfranchisement of prisoners, primarily African Ameri-

Witch Hunting 2011

In October, the US will have been at war with Afghanistan for ten years. October 15-22 has been declared a week of antiwar and pro civil liberties solidarity, opposing that war and the subsequent attacks on our civil liberties. The Northern Section of the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) has asked the Gray Panthers Civil Liberties and Human Rights Committee to sponsor a reception featuring Stephen Downs of Albany, NY, and Jess Sundin, of Minneapolis/St Paul. Downs is a civil liberties attorney and a leading national spokesman against Islamophobia and government-promoted repression against Islamic-American communities. Sundin is a midwestern antiwar activist facing felony charges of conspiracy to aid and abet terrorism. Jeff Mackler will bring us an update on Lynne Stewart. Donations will be accepted.

Join us Saturday, October 15, at 2:30 at the office.

Protest government targeting of peace activists and Muslim-Americans, the witch hunt of 2011. Bring fruit, cheese or sweets.

Fight Truth Decay!!!



October Meeting

Our October meeting will feature the huge subject of nuclear power. Scott Yundt, Staff Attorney for Tri Valley Cares, will give us an update on the ongoing tragedy of Fukushima and talk about the connection between nuclear energy plants and nuclear weapons. We will also discuss how to shut down San Onofre & Diablo Canyon in California.

Join us for this very important meeting.

Hunger Strike Resumes

On September 26, the hunger strike that began last July and was joined by prisoners around the state has resumed. The most important demands of the prisoners have not yet been met.

Call to support these demands: Governor Jerry Brown, 916-445-2841 or Sec'y Matthew Cate, Dept. of Corrections, 916-323-6001

Letter from the GP Board to MUNI

September 8, 2011

Dear MTA Directors,

We understand a call has been made by the POWER organization for free public transportation for San Franciscans up to the age of 18 years. We, the San Francisco Gray Panthers, support this idea. We urge MTA to accomplish this without making such an action divisive and pitting one group against another.

That said, the youth of our city should be encouraged to know their city and to be able to travel freely on public transportation without harassment. We believe this can be facilitated by making free passes available to San Francisco youth and distributed through the school systems.

Searching for Gold in our Golden Years CARA Eighth Annual Convention

The 2011 CARA Convention is October 18th and 19th in Long Beach California. As community members of CARA, we will have two delegates—Michael and Sandra. We have submitted a resolution on nuclear power for the delegates' approval. (See September's newsletter.)

Media Watch Revived Fight Social Security Truth Decay

One of the first projects the newly organized Gray Panthers took on in 1970 was Media Watch. Then they emphasized counteracting negative ageism. Now the National GP office is starting a new Media Watch campaign to expose and challenge lies about Social Security. Their watchword is *Fight Truth Decay*. Their target is lies about Social Security (We have a lot of *Fight Truth Decay* buttons for you at the office.)

Lie 1: Social Security is going bankrupt.

Truth: Social Security is solvent, with a 2.6 trillion dollar surplus.

Lie 2: Social Security contributes to the deficit.

Truth: Social Security pays for itself with its own fiscal system and has never contributed to the federal deficit—unlike wars, tax cuts for the wealthy, and Wall Street bailouts.

Lie 3: Benefit cuts are the only way to “fix” SS.

Truth: SS doesn’t need “fixing.” It is solvent. But it can always use strengthening. The fairest way to do that is to raise the tax on wages subject to the SS tax—currently \$106,800.

Lie 4: The SS Trust Fund is full of useless IOUs.

Truth: The Fund is full of US Treasury bonds.

Lie 5: Illegal immigrants are collecting SS benefits

Truth: Illegal immigrants pay SS on their wages, but cannot collect because they are undocumented.

Lie 6: Reducing the COLA allowance will make sure that SS is there for future beneficiaries.

Truth: SS is solvent. The way to strengthen it is to raise the cap.

Our job is to refute the lies every time we see or hear them. And it’s an easy job that can be done from home. Set aside a brief time every day to challenge at least **one** of the false statements. Write a letter to the editor exposing the ubiquitous lies as exposed above. Call the radio and TV talk shows to challenge their statements.

Lies that are not exposed become accepted truths. We must overwhelm them with the facts. If we all speak out we will be heard.



Free Public Transportation for Youth

Speakers at a press conference organized by POWER youth, Sept 20, on the City Hall steps called public transportation a right.



Supervisors Campos, Mirarimi, Mar, Kim and Avalos all signed a pledge to support free passes for youth. MTA commissioner Ramos

immediately after the rally introduced a measure to the MTA Commission to support this action. SFUD superintendent Garcia said students have a right to make the city their campus!

The cost of fast passes for youth have increased 100% in recent years. Too expensive, especially in families with several children, living in SF where over 60% of students are enrolled in the free or reduced lunch program, and \$28,000 for a family of four is considered at poverty level. Added to the transportation problem is an upcoming 50% reduction in yellow school busses. That means more youth will ride to school on MUNI. As a result, many youth risk riding without passes or fares and face possible fines of \$100 and dangerous confrontations with MTA and SFPD officers. GP’s have called for the end of armed SFPD officers boarding buses or checking passes at MUNI stops, and has asked MTA to grant free passes for youth. This is already done in Portland and New York.

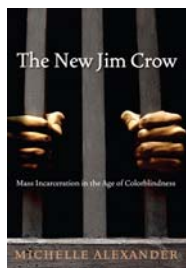
With the broad base of community organizational support including POWER, Chinese Progressive Assoc., Chinatown Community Center, Filipino Community Center, Jamestown Community Center, the SF Youth Commission, free passes for youth could happen.

Vermont Health Care System

The Vermont Legislature has passed a bill creating a path toward a universal publicly funded health care system. One of the groups supporting it is the Vermont Workers Center. Speakers from the Center will discuss the Vermont experience on Saturday, October 22nd at 10 AM at St Mary’s Cathedral, 1111 Gough. What can we learn from them?

Book Review: *The New Jim Crow*, by Michelle Alexander

In this stunning and scholarly book, Michelle Alexander describes how the War on Drugs, begun in 1982 by the Reagan administration at a time when drug use was actually falling, offered police departments across the country a rich source of funding and the Republican Party the opportunity to use racially coded appeals on crime and welfare issues to attract white voters. More importantly, it also offered a mechanism for re-establishing Jim Crow laws.



Through highly selective enforcement of drug laws in black urban neighborhoods, more severe criminal charges, longer sentences, and more restrictive parole requirements for blacks—all well-documented in Alexander's book—millions of African Americans, particularly young black men, were brought into the criminal justice system. Once they were labeled as felons, “the old forms of discrimination—employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal.” A new racial caste system was created.

“In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don't...we use our criminal justice system to label people of color ‘criminals’ and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind.” The intention, in Alexander's view, was to put massive numbers of African Americans under correctional control—jail, prison, probation, or parole—and marginalize them for life.

Alexander is former director of the Racial Justice Project of the Northern California ACLU and former law clerk for US Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun. Step by meticulously documented step, she has built an irrefutable case for the new racial caste system: “Like Jim Crow (and slavery), mass incarceration operates as a tightly networked system of laws, policies, customs, and institutions that operate collectively to ensure the subordinate status of a group defined largely by race.”

The Prison Industrial Complex

Mass incarceration: an institution created to lock away people, to isolate them in small, sunless, concrete cells, to place them on death row. The prison system in this country institutionalizes racism. California prisons contain the largest number of prisoners in the world, including one of the largest women prisoner populations.

Prisons not only provide capital punishment, but offer an avenue to real capital. Corporate privatization of prisons is considered a good investment on the stock market. For-profit prison companies have their own trade lobbyist, the Association of Private Correctional and Treatment Organizations (APCTO). Corrections Corporation of America, (CCA) for 28 years has operated over 60 private jails, prisons, and detention centers. Michael Quinlan, former head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons is a CCA senior executive. To make a profit off of already dysfunctional institutions, CCA employs fewer prison workers at low wages, provides fewer resources for prisoner trainings, and inadequate medical care. CCA had to settle a civil law suit with an Ohio prison for wrongful deaths. CCA is also intertwined with the Koch Brothers and American Legislative Exchange Council, (ALEC) which acts in concert with legislatures to pass their right-wing agendas. ALEC brought us the Three-Strikes law!



We as a people can do better. We must end murdering human beings as the state of Georgia did to Troy Davis, September 21, 2011. Since 1973, more than 130 people have been released from death row because of evidence that they were wrongly convicted. Troy

Davis was murdered despite evidence about his innocence. Prior to his death, Troy said, “There are so many more Troy Davises; we need to dismantle the death penalty city by city state by state, country by country.” Two-thirds of the world's nations have done away with the death penalty. Already 16 states in the US have abolished the death penalty. Everybody who believes in what is just and right can work to end capital punishment.

We are all Troy Davis

STOP THE MACHINE!

Create a New World

October 6, 2011

Freedom Plaza, Washington, D.C.

The October 2011 Movement

In support of the Washington protest

SF Rally from 3 to 6 PM

Federal Building, 7th & Mission

It is time to turn the Arab Spring into the American Autumn and begin a movement to remove corporate power and militarism from control of our government.

“Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience. Our problem is that people all over the world have obeyed the dictates of leaders...and millions have been killed because of this obedience....Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world in the face of poverty and starvation and stupidity, and war, and cruelty. Our problem is that people are obedient while the jails are full of petty thieves...(and) the grand thieves are running the country. That’s our problem.”

Howard Zinn



Gray Panthers joined city workers and retirees picketing against Props C and D on September 24th.

Why is the Labor Council supporting reducing city workers pensions and weakening the Health Service Board?

Exercise Your Right to Vote

November 8, 2012

There are eight propositions on the November ballot. Prop A and B are bond issues—A for schools, B for street repair and safety. As we have pointed out before, bonds are the most expensive way to finance government programs because the interest paid to the buyers of the bonds is added to and markedly increases the cost of the projects. Ideally, money for schools and streets should come from the General Fund. In today’s climate, that is highly unlikely to happen.

The next 3—C,D, and E—are charter amendments. C and D are measures reducing the pensions and health benefits of city employees. City workers did not cause the current economic crisis and reducing their benefits will not solve it. Our Board of Directors recommends—NO—on both proposals. E strengthens the ability of the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors to amend or repeal previously voter-approved initiative ordinances and policy declarations. Is this anti-democratic?

Propositions F and G are ordinances, laws that are not part of the City charter. F is an almost incomprehensible measure about campaign consultants, current rules governing them, and the in our opinion toothless Ethics Commission. It sounds like political posturing and probably will make no difference from current rules and the influence of consultants and lobbyists. G proposes to increase the City’s sales tax. Recently for various reasons the sales tax was reduced, and this will reinstate part of that reduction. The sales tax is a regressive tax falling equally on rich and poor, unlike a progressive tax that increases with higher incomes.

Prop H is a declaration of policy which means it is a non-binding expression of the voters’ preference. It calls for a “return” to neighborhood schools in student assignments. It is a part of the perennial attack on school desegregation. The teachers union strongly opposes it.

When you get your Voters Handbook, read the arguments, look at the proponents and opponents, be an informed voter.

This is our City, let’s keep it progressive.

Gray Panthers of San Francisco

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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

OCTOBER 2011

Actions and Events

Monday, October 3, 6:00—7:30 PM

In 6 Minutes, 40 Seconds: How to Design a Sustainable Future, designers, business leaders, poets, techies, scientists & politicians tackle this issue.
Levi's Auditorium, 1155 Battery Street

Thursday, October 6, 8:00 AM—8:00 PM

Human Needs, Not Corporate Greed—month-long Protest Encampment in D.C. Freedom Plaza, 13th Street & Pennsylvania Ave. NW

Thursday, October 6, 3:00—6:00 PM

Support the Washington protest in San Francisco, Federal Building, 7th and Mission

Thursdays, October 6 & 13, 5:00—7:00 PM

Solidarity Action Vigil with prison hunger strikers
Oct 6—UN Plaza, 7th and Market
Oct 13—24th & Mission

Friday, October 7, 4:30—6:30 PM

Protest 10 Years Blood for Oil. End all the Wars & Occupations. New Federal Bldg, 7th & Mission

Thursday, October 13, 9:00 AM

Senior-Disability Summit: Creating a New Movement. Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin/Geary

Thursday, October 13, 1:00 PM

CARA CAT Monthly meeting
ILWU Headquarters, 1188 Franklin/Geary

Saturday, October 15, 2:30 PM

Opening event of United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) Witch Hunting 2011 Tour. (see page 2) Stop targeting of Peace Activists and Muslim Americans. Stephen Downs, civil liberties atty & Jess Sundin, antiwar activist, Gray Panther office, 1182 Market #203 Snacks/Donations accepted

Saturday, October 15, 7:00 PM

UNAC Tour continues. Downs, Sundin, speakers, 518 Valencia, near 16th. \$10, no one turned away

Saturday, October 22, 10:00 AM

CA Health Care Justice Tour w. James Haslam of Vermont Workers' Center, St Mary's 1111 Gough