

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



## **Planning for the Future Where are we Going? How do we get there?**

**General Membership Meeting  
Tuesday, January 17, 12:30—3:00 PM  
Unitarian Universalist Center  
1187 Franklin @ Geary**

### **GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & EVENTS**

**Board Meeting 12:30 PM  
Wednesday, January 4 & February 1**

**Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon  
Thursday, January 5 & February 2**

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

**Civil/Human Rights Comm. 12:00 noon  
Wednesday, January 11 & February 8**

**Program Committee 1:00 PM  
Wednesday, January 11 & February 8**

**Book Club 10:30 AM  
Monday, January 30 & February 27**

## December Holiday Party

Good cheer, good friends, good food, a great raffle where everyone won something that raised over \$30 for Gray Panthers, and the election of 2012 Board members—our end of the year potluck had everything except not a big enough crowd. Special thanks to Patricia, Barbara, Michael, and Harriet for all their hard work.

New Board of Directors members elected by acclamation are Denise, David, Harriet, and Caty. Elected for a second two-year term are Ila, Joanne, Earl and Ruthanne, who joined ongoing Board

members Marshall, Barbara, Patricia and Sonia. Off the board are Michael, Mitzi, and Deetje who were termed out, Lisa who declined to run for a

second term and Sandra who resigned. We thank them for their service. Happy New Year to all.



## SAN Holiday Celebration

The Senior Action Network end-of-the-year get together on December 8th was full of music, good cheer, review of the year's activities and achievements, recognition and appreciation of volunteers and warm feelings for everyone there. We are always impressed by the reflection of our diverse community represented by attendees at SAN meetings. 2011 programs singled out for special pride were: the Senior University, seven sessions of four weeks each on different themes of local concern with over 150 participants; and the ongoing study of single room occupancy, community care and aging in place. The SF GPs are organizational members of SAN. We urge you to attend their meetings on the second Thursday of each month. They always include lunch for \$2.00

## January Meeting

Since Maggie Kuhn first “convened” the Gray Panthers, the world has changed dramatically. Now we “occupy” a new century with all our civil and human rights increasingly attacked by a powerful corporate-dominated leadership. At the same time we face a world-wide depression and ecological collapse. But we also see a new generation, increasingly tech and media savvy, increasingly engaged in politics. Last year we saw the possible beginning of a worldwide fightback, spearheaded by this new generation.

So how is the Gray Panther organization relevant in this new era? ARE we relevant. How can we connect to the youth who are the future? And how can we sustain the organization financially if we think we ARE relevant?

Come to the January meeting, for starters, to discuss these issues and start a dialog.

## Days of Action—



Above: With the Occupiers  
Right: Dec 2nd Demo  
Below: Dec 17th March



## Why We Occupy!

*Why?* Two million homes in California face foreclosure from sub prime mortgages. San Francisco has a 6-month waiting list for public housing, highest in the nation. 267 families on lists with only 59 spaces wait for long-term shelter rooms. Schools report not enough funds to cover MUNI passes for our 2,170 homeless students. Mayor Lee has not responded to requests by the Homeless Coalition for a meeting; Director of Human Services, Trent Rohr said no emergency exists because he didn't see people sleeping on the sidewalk! Developers propose condominiums, just blocks from Justin Herman camp, with units from \$2.5 to \$10 million.

*Why?* ICE (Immigration Customs & Enforcement) breaks up families with deportations. Education cuts continue, student debt increases, threats to Medicare and Social Security, anti-voter laws target people of color and youth, while \$5 trillion was spent for “terrorism”

*Why?* B of A slapped a \$5 service charge on customers' debit cards, and gave 2 executives an \$11 million parachute. After massive protests, and over 1/2 million people canceling BofA, Chase and Wells Fargo accounts, BofA rescinded the charge.

This movement does the work cities do not do for homeless, holds discussions not held on universities since the Free Speech Movement. It has taken us out of despair. Every day hope manifests in marches against bank bailouts, foreclosures, with veterans, student marching against police brutality, with marches for jobs. 27 cities have take-back foreclosed homes organizations.

Native American and African American activists have raised the insensitivity of the word “occupy” associated with colonizing people. Albuquerque now uses UnOccupy”, Seattle Decolonize-Occupy and discussions continue in Oakland to reflect consciousness and recognition of First Nations' struggles. Occupy can evolve by acknowledging the U.S. colonized the land of indigenous nations, and has not honored treaties. The movement can continue as a focal point for united action addressing issues that affect all people and create a living model of the possible.

## Ballot Measure to Label GMO Foods

Help make California first in the U.S. with a measure requiring labeling of Genetically Modified foods. Petitions to help qualify will be available in January in the office and at [www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org) 50 countries already label GMO foods

## Due Process in Grave Danger

It is a rare occasion when the GPs find themselves quoting Senator Dianne Feinstein with approval. But, we quote here from her article, “Every Accused Citizen Deserves A Trial”, in the SF Chronicle, December 12.

“One of the fundamental principles of American Democracy, dating back to the Bill of Rights, is due process of law.

So it came as a shock to many that the Senate failed to reaffirm that right during debate this month over whether American citizens-even through captured on US soil-can be detained indefinitely without charge or trial...

During the Senate debate over the National Defense Authorization Act this month, there was fierce argument to reinstate a policy of indefinite detention of American citizens.

In the end, the Senate adopted a compromise amendment, leaving it to the Courts to decide whether American citizens captured inside the United States can be held without charge or trial.”

This compromise that both our senators voted for places our civil liberties in peril. We find no comfort in the amendment which leaves decisions of our indefinite detentions ultimately in the hands of the Supreme Court!

## Alert!

Numerous tax measures are in the pipeline for next year. Some of them are extremely regressive. We will be reporting more fully on them in upcoming newsletters.

## A First Step Victory—Mumia No Longer On Death Row

The Philadelphia District Attorney announced on December 7th that prosecutors are giving up their 20 year attempt to execute Mumia Abu Jamal and will settle for a life sentence without parole. This major victory is a result of the national and international protests against the railroading of a Black Panther activist-journalist for the death of a policeman at the height of anti-Black Panther hysteria in racist Philadelphia in 1981.

Removing the threat of imminent death of the state is only the first step for Mumia's supporters. They will continue to fight to reverse the original jury decision and prove him innocent. Mumia has steadily insisted that the original trial was rigged, that eye witness accounts were "handpicked", that the jury was predominantly white, that the judge was openly racist and the instructions given to the jurors were prejudiced, that the court refused to question another man who confessed to the shooting, and that new studies of the evidence proves his innocence. The fight to free Mumia continues.



## Happy (!) Birthday, Bradley Manning

Bradley Manning appeared in public for the first time in 19 months on December 17th, his 24th birthday. (19 months in army detention without a hearing. Due process? Habeas corpus? The US Constitution? Ignored.) The occasion was a military hearing before an army court on an army base before a presiding army officer to determine whether the army prosecutors have enough evidence to bring him to trial on charges of leaking classified documents to Wikileaks. His defense team are also army lawyers. Is the fox guarding the henhouse? Hundreds of Manning defenders marched on that day in San Francisco to publicize their support.



## The 1% Report

Bank of America earned \$6.2 billion in the 3rd quarter of 2011 and reported \$2.21 trillion in assets. They also cut 30,000 jobs in the quarter.

According to the Bloomberg News as reported in the Chronicle on November 29, the Treasury Department's Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) bailed out the biggest banks with 700 billion dollars. But the Federal Reserve quietly loaned them \$1.2 trillion. Supposedly the loans were paid back, but the banks involved earned an estimated 13 billion dollars on that money by taking advantage of the Fed's below-market interest rates. "Total assets held by the 6 biggest US banks increases 39% to 9.5 trillion dollars on September 30, 2011 from 6.8 trillion on the same day on 2006, according to Fed data."

And from the same source on December 9th, "Wells Fargo and Company has agreed to pay \$148 million to settle criminal and civil claims for conspiring to overcharge state and local governments on investments, becoming the fourth bank to enter a settlement in the case.... Wall Street banks conspired with local governments and financial advisors to reap excessive fees on investment deals by rigging auctions and carving the market up among themselves. J.P. Morgan Chase, UBS AG, and B of A Corp previously settled similar cases."

The banks get bailed out. We get sold out. Occupy Wall Street!

## Lynne Says It's an Honor

The SFGPs made Lynne Stewart an honorary member of our network to emphasize our support. She wrote back from prison, "Quite an honor to become a member of your dedicated and intelligent group of genial, gentle Rowdies." Lynne's appeal of her conviction and sentence will be heard on February 29th by the 2nd District Court of Appeals in New York.



## Dismal No Change Conference

The U.N. Climate Change Conference or, “COP 17” in DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA ended with the Durban Platform: to wait until 2015 to *start* negotiations for a legally binding climate treaty—in effect, the 1% kicks the can down the road. This delay is absolutely inadvisable—and *then* whatever agreement is made is not to be enforced until 2020. The U.S. has played an extremely negative role in this process historically,

- \*by not having signed the Kyoto Protocol,

- \*by basically abandoning the Bali Action-Plan which was to scale up financing for developing country needs.

- \*by not signing the *second* commitment period under the Kyoto protocol, which will continue “only as an empty shell” (Kate Horner).

- \*by facilitating an exit strategy from Kyoto for Canada, Russia and Japan whereby they refused to put new low level targets on the table.

- \*by refusing to talk about innovative, creative sources of financing, such as the micro tax on trade and currencies, stocks and derivatives.

- \*by advancing the role of the private sector in the Green Climate Fund.

(Developing countries resist that because of their bad experience with existing international financing.)

The wealthy world, the biggest polluters, play politics with the viability of the planet. The U.S. has “weaseled out of every promise it has made;” and contributes majorly to the problem.

The “exceptional” U.S. is indeed 1st, with the highest carbon footprint per capita in the world, which comes to **20 tons per person per year**; whereas China, which we happily accuse of being the biggest polluter with a population four times ours, is 80<sup>th</sup> per capita in world polluters. A developing country like South Africa has about 1.2 tons per capita. So we not only contribute hugely to this problem, we have the effrontery to claim an important milestone in building a climate regime.

In effect, all of this shifts the burden to developing countries. Climate change threatens the ecology of India, whose water supply is compromised by Himalaya glacier melts, which produces but one-tenth of the U.S. emissions; of the Nile, fed by the Rwenzori mountains (16,000 feet above the tropics) that span the border between western Uganda and Eastern Congo. Africa, which tends to be ignored in the media, has only one-sixth per capita the emissions of the United States: we hear of floods in Pakistan and floods and fires in Russia, but we don’t hear of Africa.



Activist writers say the rest of the world is letting Africa “Cook,” one writer; “Burn,” says Bobby Peek (on Democracy Now). The famous glacier that dramatized Kilimanjaro in Tanzania no longer even exists. The Tuni and Condoriri glaciers, main sources of Bolivia’s drinking water, are shrinking and the country is suffering drought due to climate change. But because Bolivia is one of the two countries (along with Ecuador) that did not sign the Copenhagen environmental accord, the U.S. State Dept has threatened to cancel \$3 million in climate aid to Bolivia and \$2.5 million to Ecuador.

## Hollow Victory

The passing of Proposition C not only besmirched the reputation of our Labor leaders but collaborated with the 1% billionaire Warren Hellman and the Chamber of Commerce, but it also made possible the election of Ed Lee as Mayor. None of the unions backed Lee’s candidacy. However, by the groveling support of Prop C, the unions unwittingly made Lee look like a diplomat who could bring diverse people together for the benefit of the City of San Francisco. The unions will learn forthwith that Lee is no friend of labor and will use his victory of Proposition C and the mayoral post to demand even more concessions from labor....Proposition C is even worse than Prop D since it has the potential to raise healthcare rates and reduce services—especially for families.

Excerpted from a letter by Denise D’Anne to the SEIU 1021 2011 newsletter.

# 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*

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REQUESTED

Call the office for membership information.

Labor Donated **JANUARY 2012**

## Actions and Events

### Saturday, January 7, 3:00 PM

Single Payer Now's Annual Potluck to Campaign For Medicare for All in California and the US. Speakers including Mark Leno, author SB 810. St Mary's Cathedral, 1111 Gough St. & Geary. info 695-7891.

### Monday, January 9, 9:00 AM

Bus to Sacramento to rally for Single Payer. Lunch on bus. Contributions welcome. Don Bechler @695-7891 for location/reservations

### Wednesday, January 11, 7:00—9:00 PM

Laborfest Commemoration of 100th Anniversary of Bread and Roses Strike in Lawrence, MA. Concert/Show, ILWU Local 34, 801 2nd Street/Embarcadero, by AT&T Stadium. Potluck, \$10 Donation, no one turned away

### Thursday, January 12, 10.00 AM

SAN Monthly Meeting, Unitarian Universalist Center, 1187 Franklin/Geary, Lunch \$2.00

### Thursday, January 12, 1:00 PM

CARA CAT Monthly meeting  
ILWU Headquarters, 1188 Franklin/Geary

### Friday, January 20, 7:00 AM—7:00 PM

Move to Amend Occupies the Courts! A one-day occupation of Federal Courts including Supreme Court to protest Corporate Personhood. Stay Tuned for time and place in San Francisco

### It Ain't Over Til It's Over

Left behind in Iraq: 16,000 American contractors. The largest Embassy in the world. Bigger than the Vatican. Six billion budget to operate.

