

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



## **Discuss How We Can Be Part Of an American Spring with Terence Yancey of Occupy SF State**

**General Membership Meeting  
Tuesday, February 21, 12:30—3:00 PM  
Unitarian Universalist Center  
1187 Franklin @ Geary  
Bring a Snack to share**

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

**Board Meeting 12:30 PM  
Wednesday, February 1 & March 7**

**Civil/Human Rights Comm. 12:00 AM  
Wednesday, February 8 & March 14**

**Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon  
Thursday, February 2 & March 8**

**Program Committee 1:00 PM  
Wednesday, February 8 & March 14**

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

**Book Club 10:30 AM  
Monday, February 27 & March 26**

## Gray Panthers Were Here



Protesting proposed State budget cuts on the steps of the State Building, at noon on January 10th.

## And Here



Jan. 11, Demanding the closure of Guantanamo and the end to torture. Free Bradley Manning.

## And Here



Jan. 20, Van Ness and Geary, fighting CMPC's Projected hospital for the 1% on Cathedral Hill.

## February Meeting

Come to the February general meeting to tell us how Gray Panthers can be part of the Occupy movement. What Occupy actions would you want to participate in? Foreclosures? Actions to save Social Security? Come talk about how you believe youth can relate to elders: how elders can relate to seniors. What are the issues and actions you would like Occupy to take up and act on? How is this movement like other social justice movements you have been part of in the past? How is it different? We now have, at last, a chance to make a different world. What kind of world do we want?

**Freedom is never given: it is won.**

**A. Philip Randolph**

## 2012 GP Officers

The 2012 Board of Directors met January 4 at the office to elect officers and plan actions for the coming year. Patricia and Earl are our new Co-convenors, Caty our Secretary and Ila our Treasurer. Michael will continue his role as communications coordinator and invites you to help him keep our website up to date and our office machines functional. Current members of the Board are: Denise, David, Harriet, Katy, Ila, Joanne, Earl, Barbara, Patricia, Sonia, Marshall and Ruthanne. All of whom were present except Marshall and Ruthanne, who are on medical leave. All GPer and supporters are welcome to participate at Board meetings but only Board members can vote.

## Help us Spread the Word

Civil/Human Rights Committee

The flyer enclosed in this newsletter has been sent to middle and high schools in SF. Our aim is to present our programs on the UDHR and the Bill of Rights to Social Studies classes, to educate students on their civil and human rights, and with the cooperation of their teachers to involve them in discussions of current developments. If you know any students or faculty, give them this flyer to post. Or send us their names and we will reach out to them directly. Join us in updating our old scripts, writing new ones, and presenting them to young and old audiences.

## To Be? How To Be?

Those were the questions asked at our January meeting. For some years we have been living on two hefty bequests. At this rate, we will run out of money in about three years. Do we go on as usual and when we go broke, ride gloriously off into the sunset? Or do we divert some of our time and energy into active money-raising, drastically cut expenses, launch a membership drive, and plan realistically for our survival?

Arguments for To Be: Major name recognition and reputation. Singular position to push the center to the left. Strong educational articles in our newsletter and website. Unique outreach on human rights, a multi-issue voice for progressives.

Arguments for Not To Be: Reality check: Our membership has not grown, except older. We have fewer, less energetic activists. Other organizations now exist to absorb our activists and offer a voice to progressives. We have not recruited many retiring boomers. Who will do the necessary money-raising? Will it detract from core programs?

So far in our several meetings, To Be has been the clear winner. That brings us to How To Be.

Recruiting: The key to our survival is new members. People join us when they see us actively promoting the issues that are important to them. Our activities should emphasize GP visibility, leadership, materials, cultural and political activity. Money will come with recruitment.

Money-raising: Raise dues. Sell GP items (T-shirts, hats, pins) at every occasion. Collect lapsed dues. Ask for contributions especially from non-active members. Sizeable well-organized fundraising events—we have members interested in doing this. House meetings including money-raising. Social evenings at food or drink places. Community Thrift Store (111) and Cole Hardware (21453). Legacies. Grant money.

Money Saving: Some or all volunteer staffing of, or share the office. Find a free meeting place. In extremis close the office.

We need our members to speak up on these questions. So far, those who have spoken up have overwhelmingly opted for To Be and are willing to work to make that happen. Are you with us?

## Payroll Tax Holiday? Shove it!

Forty-six million Americans and 25% of US kids are in poverty. Job creation barely matches population growth. Job-generating programs like Community Development Grants are being cut. And what are we offered as a corrective? More tax breaks. Worse yet, it's tax breaks that cut at the heart of Social Security's independent funding and sustainability.



Social Security has resisted Congressional attempts to cut its financing because it is funded by payroll tax contributions from workers and employers. In 2011, Obama made a deal with Republicans to “temporarily” reduce the workers’ part of the payroll tax by 1/3. Now Obama wants to perpetuate this cut, and cut the employers’ part of the payroll tax by 1/2! Together, this is a 42% reduction in Social Security revenue from payroll taxes.

This lost payroll tax revenue will be replaced by money from the Federal General Fund, but Congress can cut that money off, especially if it is portrayed as being in competition with other hard-pressed Federal programs. Social Security is being set up for the kill.

Tax cuts are not the way to generate the tens of millions of jobs we need, but if Obama wanted to reduce the tax burden on workers, he could have proposed reducing income taxes or renewed the Make Work Pay tax rebate that was dumped in 2011. Instead, he put Social Security at risk.

The government is trying to decide how to replace this lost revenue. Republicans want layoffs and pay cuts for Federal workers. Democrats talked about an additional tax on earnings over \$1 million, but the latest news is they’ve dropped that.

CARA held a press conference to attack the notion of the Payroll Tax Holiday as stimulus. We need to be more aggressive in 2012. Payroll Tax Holiday? Take it and shove it.

## **KXL Pipeline/TransCanada and Canada/US Oil: Dilemmas, Disasters and Spill Overs** **First in a series. Environment next, Politics after that**

Most of us are just hearing about “Tar Sands and “KXL.” “Tar” is colloquial for the fossil sediment, bitumen, basically an impracticably thick crude oil.

In TransCanada lingo, K stands for Keystone pipeline that *already* inhabits our Midwest. It stretches from Alberta to Kansas, forks to Illinois and Oklahoma. The term Keystone XL stands for TransCanada’s plan to extend that pipeline from what is presently the hub—Cushing, Oklahoma, to refineries on the Texas Gulf Coast.

The Keystone extension is slated (no pun intended) to go through agriculturally and environmentally sensitive areas like the extremely important source of drinking and agricultural water, the Midwest Ogallala aquifer. “Syncrude” is the colloquial term for bitumen that has been processed so it can be fluid enough to run through the 36” pipelines, and it contains toxic elements. We are forewarned by all the recent oil disasters about what will surely happen: the major pipeline spills into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan

To back up a little bit, humans have been using oil sands (bitumen mixed with sand) since the Neolithic age for sealing canoes, ships, and for gas beginning in the 18th century, for roads, fuel and other coal-like uses since the Industrial Revolution.

Athabasca oil sands are the largest single area of tar sands in the world, covering an area larger than England, some 54,000 square miles; and Canada reputedly has more bitumen-based oil than any country in the world. Athabasca tar sands boast an estimated yield over time of some 1.75 trillion barrels, and constitute 97% of Canadian oil reserves.

The main Canadian player in the current KXL pipeline issue is TransCanada of Calgary, Alberta, whose efforts with pipelines began in 1951, and who has expanded and prospered exponentially since then. TRP runs pipelines across Canada, along the Great Lakes, to the northeast US, through the Dakotas and Nebraska to Oklahoma. At issue now is not should there be pipelines but their expansion to the Texas Gulf Coast.



Laris Karklis/The Washington Post

Input energy for excavating and processing tar sands oil requires natural gas, of which Canada has an abundance. A TransCanada company, ANR, operates one of the largest natural gas pipelines in the US. It delivers more than 1 trillion cubic feet of natural gas annually.

We consume more oil than any other country in the world (about 19 million barrels of oil per day, two-thirds of which is imported), and Canada is our largest supplier. Canada holds enormous oil reserves, but 95% of this oil is in sand deposits, which makes the oil extraction process difficult and expensive.

The President has refused to approve the pipeline expansion and has refused to let it go forward. We have not heard the end of this issue because of the vastness of the deposits of tar sands, the huge investments held over 60 years by innumerable companies, their power, the need for oil and the voraciousness of the players.

## Don't Scab on the ILWU!

ILWU longshoremen have won a contract that guarantees them \$55,000 a year, a decent living.

The Bunge Co. is attacking the ILWU by contracting with the Operating Engineers Union in Longview, WA, whose members work at less pay and have no job guarantees, to scab on the ILWU.

The multi-national corporation, Bunge Co. is one of the four companies that control the export of wheat, soybeans, corn and food oils throughout the world. It opened a new port facility, built with taxpayer funds, in Longview, which Bunge calls "state of the art" which will ship wheat to China. It also owns 50% of Phu My Port in Vietnam. Its legal HQ is in Bermuda. The actual HQ is in White Plains, NY. As the Bunge Co. says, "It is doubtful whether courts in Bermuda will enforce judgments obtained in other jurisdictions, including the US" That is, Bunge Co. is above the law.

Bunge Co. also ships soybeans from Argentina and Brazil. Bunge is currently building its fourth oilseed processing plant in China and a soybean processing and oil refining plant in Vietnam. In Brazil, Bunge owns eight sugar mills and 1567,000 hectares in sugar cane plantations. It is the leading producer of sugar and ethanol made from corn.

The Obama administration has authorized the US Coast Guard to send ships to protect Bunge ships docking at Longview. The Coast Guard operates under the Department of Homeland Security. This is direct intervention by the government on the side of management.



## Fighting Back and Winning

Amy Goodman and her *Democracy Now!* colleagues reached a settlement with the cities of Minneapolis/St Paul and the US Secret Service in their federal suit against their police departments charging unlawful arrest and excessive force while reporting on public protests and political dissent during the 2008 Republican National Convention. The settlement includes \$100,000 and a training program for officers on First Amendment rights with respect to police operations.

## Protect The Right to Vote

The Obama campaign, dissatisfaction with the Bush administration, the endless wars and the state of the economy brought tremendous numbers of African Americans, youth, and progressives out to vote in 2008. As early as 2006, Karl Rove anticipated the Republican loss and began allusions to "voter fraud" to lay foundation for new voter ID laws. The largest grass-roots voter registration organization, ACORN, was destroyed by false innuendos and entrapments.

Today's voter ID laws are the modern version of the poll taxes of the Old South. They attempt to reverse federal and state laws that prevent disenfranchisement. NAACP estimates 1/4 of African-Americans don't have documentation to meet these new voter ID laws. A study at New York University School of Law found state changes to voting laws requiring picture ID or a birth certificate would create difficulties for more than five million eligible voters! The League of Women Voters declares, "This is the most significant cut-back in voting rights in decades. The League opposes creating barriers like photo ID, or proof-of-citizenship that block voter participation."

Half of the young black men in the U.S incarcerated, on parole, or on probation face disenfranchisement and legal discrimination for the rest of their lives. Michelle Alexander in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* says prisons continue Jim Crow. That ghost haunts the voting booth as many states strip the right to vote from people with felony convictions: a minor drug conviction can label you as a felon for life.

31 states require ID to vote and 15 now require photo ID. These laws disproportionately affect young people, seniors, people of color, the disabled and the poor. Recently, the U.S. Department of Justice denied South Carolina's request for pre-clearance of its voter ID law, and found the law discriminatory because the state's minority voters are 20 percent more likely than white voters to lack a photo I.D. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed into law after years of civil rights actions across the south. People died for the right to vote. We must protect that right today.

# 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 **FEBRUARY 2012**

## Actions and Events

### Wednesday, February 1, 7:00—9:30 PM

“Where Soldiers Come From” film screening. Vets for Peace & Iraq Vets Against the War bring a documentary about American teen soldiers going to fight in Afghanistan. Discussion afterwards. AMC Van Ness, 1000 Van Ness. Tickets \$9

### Thursday February 2, 12:00 Noon

*Carmen Jones*, A 1950s version of the Bizet opera, new lyrics and an African-American cast. Main Library, Koret Auditorium. Free

### Thursday, February 2, 5:30—6:30 PM

Label GMOs signature gathering training workshop, Stand up to Monsanto, save our seeds. Ocean View Library, 345 Randolph/Ramsell

### Monday, February 6, 13 & 27, 1:30—3:30 PM

Mental Aerobics. Exercise your brain in fun & creative ways, in association with Older Adults Department of City College. Main Library, lower level, Latino/Hispanic Community Mtg. Room.

### Thursday, February 9, 10:00 AM

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

### Thursday, February 9, 1:00 PM

CARA CAT Monthly meeting  
!LWU Headquarters, 1188 Franklin/Geary

### .Wednesday, February 15, 7-9 PM

SF99% Coalition Forum: Which Way Forward For Progressive Change? Rocky Anderson (3rd Party), Margaret Flowers (Direct Action), Tom Gallagher (Demo. Party), Dave Welsh (Strike Actions). Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin/Geary. Donation \$10. No one refused.

