

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



WAR ON WOMEN And The Fight Against It

General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, April 17, 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, April 4 & May 2

Newsletter Committee 12:00 Noon
Thursday, April 5 & May 3

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

Civil/Human Rights Comm. 12:00 PM
Wednesday, April 11 & May 9

Program Committee 1:00 PM
Wednesday, April 11 & May 9

Book Club 10:30 AM
Monday, April 30 & May 28

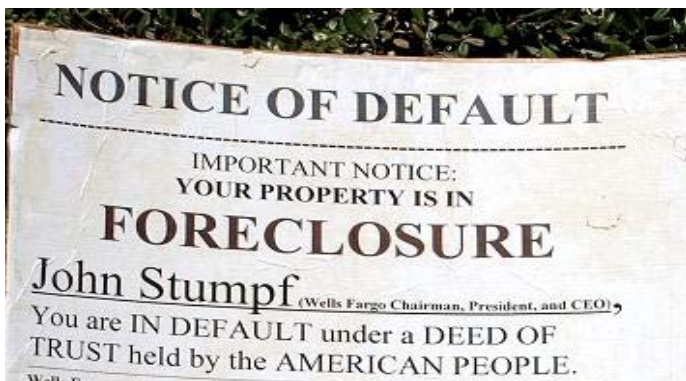
March Meeting

At our membership meeting for March, Karena Oberman, of Nonprofits Talking Taxes led us in an interactive discussion on supporting taxes for the common good that reflect our values. Reforming the commercial property tax portion of Prop 13 would generate \$2-6 billion; passing merely a 6% oil severance tax would give us \$1 billion yearly!

Jim Araby of the California Federation of Teachers brought us an update on the Millionaires' Tax initiative. Our board endorsed this initiative. Members attended trainings and collected signatures. Many supporters were surprised by the news that CFT and other organizations in the initial coalition had entered into a compromise agreement with Governor Brown. For a full report on the lively discussion and questions raised, [see page 3](#).



We were there March 6 protesting Simpson-Bowles attacks on Social Security and Medicare



We joined Occupy Bernal in a mock foreclosure giving Wells Fargo's John Stumpf a taste of his own medicine.

April Meeting

Our membership meeting on Tuesday, April 17 at the UU Center features a discussion of the war on women and how we fight back.

What war? Cut backs on the social net hits women and children the hardest. Attacks on abortion rights are the worst they have been in years. Attempts to defund Planned Parenthood because they promote family planning. Come and add your two cents.

Celebrating International Women's Day

How did you celebrate International Women's Day? The Wild Old Women of Bernal Occupy celebrated with their weekly picket of BofA and added greetings of "Happy Women's Day" to all passers by. In addition to usual signs about foreclosures women sang songs to celebrate. And a woman just out of the hospital insisted her friend before taking her home, drive by the WOW picket line to give her cheer of support!

Students Uprising

In SF on March 1, we joined students, labor and community groups at the rally at Civic Center to protest cuts to education and call for the Millionaire's Tax.

Four days later 10,000 students occupied Sacramento and several hundred sat in at the capitol building until the CHP arrested 50 of them. These actions have forced legislators to introduce several bills: AB 1500 and 1501 calling for cuts to tuition, and AB 1502 affordable text books bill, for text books to be priced at \$20 or less.



The Safe SF Civil Rights Ordinance

On March 13, the SF Board of Supervisors passed the Safe SF Civil Rights Ordinance by a vote of 6 to 5. What is this Ordinance and why do we care?

The Ordinance covers the conditions under which the SF Police Department cooperates with the FBI Joint Terrorism Task force (JTTF). Those conditions include the right to privacy, full knowledge of actions taken to be provided to the SF Office of Citizens Complaint (OCC), compliance with the SF City of Refuge Ordinance, steps against suspected terrorism that are clearly based on criminal activities, written authorization required from the SFPD, annual public reports to the Board of Sups of all actions undertaken with the JTTF, and either amendment of the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the FBI and the SFPD to conform with these provisions or termination of the MOU. The aim of the Ordinance is, "to insure the protection of civil liberties and civil rights, avoid profiling, avoid use of City staff and resources in federal immigration enforcement, uphold supervision and accountability procedures...guarantee civilian oversight, provide transparency...and enhance public confidence."

Supervisor Jane Kim proposed the Ordinance at the behest of the Asian Law Caucus, the ACLU, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, and other civil rights groups who said their members were under surveillance and being interrogated solely on the basis of racial and religious profiling and country of origin. Supervisors Kim, Chiu, Campos, Avalos, Mar, and Olague supported the legislation. Police Chief Greg Suhr said he would recommend to Mayor Lee that he veto it. Tell your Supervisor and the Mayor where you stand—two phone calls for civil rights.



“Under democracy, the party always devotes its chief energy to trying to prove that the other party is unfit to rule—and both commonly succeed and are right.” H.L Mencken

Taxation Without Representation

Outrage over service cuts, rising tuitions, and corporate crimes fueled the Occupy movement to demand taxes on millionaires. In California, people called for a Millionaires’ Tax initiative, and GP endorsed the campaign. Then in mid-March, we were surprised and disappointed when the CFT announced a compromise with Governor Brown.

Prior to the compromise several competing income tax initiatives had been proposed. But the competition came down to the Millionaires’ Tax and Gov. Brown’s. As people learned the differences between the two, polls showed the Millionaires’ Tax favored at times by over 70%!

The original Millionaires’ tax proposed 3% on incomes \$1-2 million and 5% above that. It would *never expire*. It contained no regressive sales tax. It gave 40% of funds for education K-14 including CSU & UC (as opposed to Brown’s K-14 only), and the remaining 60% would restore services for seniors, children, public safety, and infrastructure. Of course, the best tax revenue would come from taxes on corporations and their profits.

The What and Why of the Compromise

CFT called the compromise a victory for their union because the initiative faced opposition from Brown, larger unions, CTA and SEIU, also CFT lacked funds to continue. Brown’s original regressive, 3/4 cent sales tax *now* in the compromise is 1/4 cent for 5 years. On incomes above \$1million, a 3% tax to is now to last 7 years, (originally 1% on 250,000 2% over \$500,000 for 5 years.) When CFT agreed to back the new initiative, Brown promised to raise \$8 million to support it. He will however continue to collect signatures for his original.

Questions remain: Was this a plan to sabotage the Millionaires’ Tax? ?Does the new initiative include Brown’s plan to use 15% of the funds for Charter schools? Will there even be time to collect 800,000 signatures? What happens to 350,000+ already gathered? Shouldn’t we keep gathering signatures for the Millionaires’ Tax?

Is it an inevitable reality that money governs the possibility of a better initiative reaching the ballot? Stay Tuned.

Looking at Fossil Fuels

The main message of ecologist Sandra Stein-graber's newest (2011) book, *Raising Elijah: Protecting Our Children in an Age of Environmental Crisis* is:

"Fossil fuels will continue to be dug out...and burned as long as they are the cheapest form of energy and nobody has to pay for using the atmosphere as a dump site. We need a strategy that makes them uncheap in comparison to the renewable alternatives. This means ending subsidies for, levying taxes on, and collecting carbon fees from fossil fuels." (pp. 178-179) According to the most reliable estimates, we require a very rapid 80% cut in fossil fuel emissions in order to avoid...temperature changes that would tip us, within the lifetimes of our children, into total calamity." (p.181)

The central conclusion of the British Medical Journal Lancet review (used by the EPA as a starting point for its database) is "The combined evidence suggests that neurodevelopment disorders have created a silent pandemic in modern society." (p.201) Child neurodevelopment disorders leave economic tracks. "At 77.3 billion per school year, special educational services consume 22% of U.S. school spending."

"An estimated 5.4 million children suffer from ADHD (attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder), a condition that affects impulsivity and self-control as well as attention span." Learning disabilities now affect 10% of U>S> children. From 2002 to 2006, "the prevalence of autism spectrum disorders increased on average, 60% among boys and 48% among girls."

The sooty chemicals released from tailpipes and power plants (PAHs) are the main cause of damage to children's cognitive development. (p.222) "Coal extinguishes intelligence by a second route: through its release of mercury into the atmosphere, which then finds its way into the brain cells of children through the medium of fish." (p.223) In August 2009 the U.S. Geological survey reported finding mercury in every fish in streams across the nation. (P.204)

Book Review

Here Comes Trouble: Stories From My Life.
by Michael Moore. Grand Central Publishing
Hachette Book Group, New York, NY

This is a book you will enjoy reading. It is a somewhat tongue-in-cheek telling of various episodes in Moore's life before *Roger And Me* made him famous. He is always the wide-eyed innocent do-gooder whose best intentions land him in unanticipated predicaments. Easy reading, interestingly contemporary, often laugh-out-loud funny and when you have finished it, you realize you have just had a lesson in the moralities and ethics of the last fifty years.. Highly recommended.

Justice For Trayvon

We gathered on the steps of SF's Hall of Justice to send our condolences to the family of Trayvon Martin. Mothers Denika Chapman and Mesha Iri-zarry spoke of losing their sons to gun violence. We questioned why George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch captain who became a "self-appointed vigilante," followed Trayvon as he walked home from a store and confronted him with a 9-millimeter handgun. On Feb. 26th, in Stanford, FL., 911 recorded a murder. We hear shouts for help then a gun shot. Zimmerman, who had called 911 earlier to report a "real suspicious" person—Trayvon—was told to cease following him but kept on. Zimmerman was taken into custody, released, not arrested or tested for gun residue, and remains free as of this National Day of protest day, March 26.

Why, 60 years after the murder of Emmitt Till, are children still gunned down as "suspicious" for lacking a MUNI pass, or judged guilty for the innocence of walking in a neighborhood?

The parents of Trayvon Martin and their attorney will deliver 100,000,000 petitions to the city commission of Stanford. More voices are needed; sign the petition at www.change.org. The Department of Justice has announced that its Civil Rights Division and the FBI will investigate Trayvon Martin's death. Continue to stand up and demand justice.



Update on Recent Newsletter Articles

November Newsletter—Greece: Greece has been on the verge of defaulting on its international debts to private bondholders (banks and other financial institutions). In 2010, the European Union bailed them out with a loan of \$145 billion. In February, 2012, Greece got another bailout of \$172 billion



in exchange for further harsh austerity measures and a “write-down” of the 53.5% of the nominal face value of its privately held debt. Austerity measures include shrinking the public sector by 150,000 people, lowering the minimum wage by 22%, cutting pensions and selling off publicly owned companies. Rapacious unfettered capitalism—the 1% get paid, the rest pay for it.

December Newsletter—Honduras: On February 14, a prison fire in Honduras killed 260 people. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights had previously ordered changes in Honduras’ prison system, orders that were ignored by President Porfirio Lobo. The police prison guards refused to unlock cells during the fire, shot at prisoners trying to escape, and twice teargassed relatives of the victims. In 2009, a military coup ousted elected president Manuel Zelaya and led to the widely questioned election of Lobo. Since then, Lobo has passed anti-gang and anti-terrorist laws that criminalize poverty and dissent, leading to further overcrowding of already overcrowded prisons. Last year the US Department of Defense spent more than \$50 million dollars on US bases in Honduras... in Nicaragua Daniel Ortega was reelected president with 62% of the vote...in Guatemala, Attorney General Claudia Paz y Paz filed charges of genocide, torture and terrorism against Gen. Efraim Rios Montt for atrocities committed while he was dictator in the 1980s.

February Newsletter—Spain: Spanish Judge Baltasar Garzon is famous for investigating international human rights cases like Chilean dictator Pinochet. In Spain he dared to probe into right wing atrocities against civilians during and after the Spanish Civil War, in spite of an amnesty law

passed two years after Franco’s death in 1975. For this latter sin he was accused of “overstepping his jurisdiction.” In February the Spanish Supreme Court acquitted him on that charge but lower courts convicted him of similar charges in a domestic corruption case. His supporters claim he is a target of right wing political enemies trying to silence him.

Updates Continued

Ongoing coverage—Fukushima: March 11, 2012 was the one year anniversary of the Fukushima disaster. Since then, all but two of Japan’s 54 commercial reactors have been shut down. Nuclear power once generated one third of Japan’s electricity. Prime Minister Noda wants to restart reactors but has promised none will be activated without the approval of local community leaders. Around 19,000 people died and at least 300,000 remain homeless, and there is widespread public distrust of the government and the nuclear industry.

Ongoing— nuclear weapons: The Obama administration nuclear weapons budget request for next year is the largest in history. It includes increased funds for the Uranium Processing Facility in Tennessee, for training nuclear weapons engineers at Livermore Lab and for trucking plutonium from Los Alamos in New Mexico to Livermore in the East Bay. If you object to this ask our Senators to CUT the nuclear budget, not increase it.

Nuclear Plants—In California, the San Onofre nuclear reactor Unit 3 has been shut down indefinitely because of suspected faulty steam generated tubes. Unit 1 was decommissioned in 1992 and is encased in concrete and steel. Unit 2 is currently off line for maintenance amid questions about its steam



tubes. San Onofre is about 45 miles north of San Diego on the coast. It is owned by the equivalent of PG&E (Southern California Gas and Electric) and the City of Riverside. Now would be a good time to decommission the whole place.

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
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Call the office for membership information.

Labor Donated

APRIL 2012

Actions and Events

Sunday, April 1, 11:00—5:00 PM

Annual Bay Area Anarchist Book Fair, Literary summit, theoretical conference and radical family reunion. SF County Fair Building, 7th & Lincoln

Sunday, April 1, 2:00—4:00 PM

April Fool's Day Right to Exist Public Space/Anti-Criminalization, national gathering, dancing, music, April Fool's day fun with march to secret location, Union Square at Powell/Ellis Streets

Tuesday, April 3, 1:00 PM—5:00 PM

MTA Board Vote on Free MUNI for Youth, Room 400 City Hall. Rally afterwards on City Hall Steps following hearing. Support our kids, make downtown businesses pay for all the services they get.

Tuesday, April 3, 5:30—7:30 PM

CWA Video/Panel Discussion, *Activist Blogger: The Josh Wolf Story*, on Josh Wolf's 226 days of jail for upholding the independence of the 4th Estate, Main Library, Latino/Hispanic room

Wednesday, April 4, 5:45—7:45 PM

The Economics of Happiness special screening describes a world moving in two opposing directions: Globalization/Corporate power vs. rebuilding on a human scale w/Vandana Shiva, others. Koret auditorium, Main Library, 100 Larkin Street

Tuesday, April 10, 6:30—8:30 PM

Continuing Labor's Fight for Healthcare Justice: the 2012 Elections and beyond with Mark Dudzic of Healthcare Now! 518 Valencia

Thursday, April 12, 10:00 AM

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

Thursday, April 12, 1:00 PM

CARA CAT Monthly Meeting
ILWU Headquarters, 1188 Franklin/Geary

