

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



Save City College of San Francisco General Membership Meeting September 18, 12:30-3PM Unitarian Universalist Center 1187 Franklin @ Geary

GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All meetings and events take place at 1182 Market, Rm. 203, unless otherwise noted.

**Board Meeting 12:30 PM
Wednesday, Sept 5 & Oct 3**

**Civil/Human Rights Committee, Noon
Wednesday, Sept 12 & Oct 10**

**Newsletter Committee, Noon
Thursday Sept 6 & Oct 4**

**Book Club 10:30 AM
Monday, Sept 24 & Oct 22**

Celebrating Woody Guthrie



A standing-room-only crowd enjoyed our GP July 14 Woody Guthrie birthday fundraiser at Dorothy Day Community Center. The Rockin' Solidarity Labor Chorus and Occupella led us in some Woody songs, got a visit from Frances Perkins (aka Caty Powell), and munched on organic food donated by Rainbow Grocery!



We signed up 15 new members and ended the day with almost one thousand dollars. Thanks for making the day: sponsors, CARA, Carroll Estes, The SF Living Wage Coalition, SEIU 1021, Senator Mark Leno, Denise D'Anne, Earl Harju, Marie Jobling; committee members & worker bees: Harriet Sebastian, Denise D'Anne, Lisa Forman, Michael Lyon, Patricia Jackson, Sonja Siegel, Susan Lyon, Barbara Lee, Mitzi Raas, Audrey Clayman, Jack Frolich, Zoe Kastl, Tess Welborn, everyone who came out to support us. And a special thank you to Dorothy Day Community Center.

You Can Fight City Hall

Opponents of the outrageous condo development at 8 Washington were told it was a done deal! They refused to accept City Hall's bland assurance and gathered over 31,000 signatures, more than enough to qualify a measure against this development on the November ballot.

September Meeting

What is happening at City College? Speakers will discuss the threat to accreditation. City College has some 90,000 students. It is *the* path for youth to get a higher education, provides classes in ESL, vocational training, and a space for community organizations like the Labor Chorus. What can we do to protect this major resource for our community?

Honorary GP Member Lynne Stewart

With heavy hearts, we inform the Gray Panther community that on June 29, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit confirmed the 2010 sentence of 10 years imprisonment for Lynne Stewart. In 2005, Lynne was convicted of 5 counts of conspiracy to aid, abet, and provide material support to terrorism. Her crime? Representing the "blind Sheik", Omar Abdel Rachman, convicted of conspiracy. Lynne violated a court-ordered Special Administrative Measure (SAM) barring her from revealing her client's opinions. The press release Stewart issued stated his views on how Egyptian Muslim oppositionists should react to the ongoing crimes and murders of then President Hosne Mubarak. The penalty for violating a SAM traditionally had been a mild slap on the wrist with a warning not to repeat said violation and barring attorney-client visits for a few months. We will continue our struggle to free Lynne.

CARA Regional Convention September 20, Burlingame 10AM-3PM

Registration: \$25 includes lunch & materials A special presentation & discussions about Aging in Place in our communities. (See pg 6 for details). If you want to attend as a GP member, call our office.



Gray Panthers enjoyed the SF Mime Troupe's play, *For the Greater Good, or The Last Election*, Aug 19.

Stop Fracking our Water!



Fracking uses millions of gallons of water mixed with undisclosed toxic chemicals, pumped deep underground at high pressure to release trapped pockets of oil or gas.

The process has contaminated groundwater across the country. Since 1999 more than 90 percent of the natural gas wells in the country have used the fracking process. The process poisons the water tables with chemicals including benzene and radioactive contaminants, and contaminates the air with “frac smog causing respiratory issues. Fracking triggered earthquakes in Arkansas, and sets tap water on fire— illustrated in the documentary, *Gasland* by Joshua Fox.

The oil and gas industry eyes the potential to frac California’s Monterey shale that stretches from Monterey County, the Central Valley to the Northern Los Angeles area and contains up to 64% of U.S. deep-rock oil deposits. The Western States Petroleum Association estimates their companies fracked 628 oil wells in 2011. Of the tens of thousands of oil field injection wells with potential fracking use in our state, only 78 sites are listed on the national fracking registry. In February 2012, the Environmental Working Group released documentation showing that hydraulic fracturing had taken place in at least six California counties: Kern, LA, Monterey, Sacramento, Santa Barbara and Ventura.

The California Department of Conservation maintains that the hydraulic fracturing here is different from much of the US, and The Division of Oil, Gas & Geothermal Resources stated last May: “The division is unable to identify where & how often hydraulic fracking occurs within the state.” It then *clarifies*, “fracking is used for a brief period to stimulate production of oil & gas wells.” The form used here, underground injection control (UIC), meets minimum federal standards. California Petroleum Association insists fracking is not a form of UIC, not requiring regulations or permits. Yet, in 2011, the federal EPA found problems with the UIC method and failures to meet EPA requirements. The EPA informed Derek Chernow,

then head of the Department of Conservation. Gov. Brown then fired Chernow for his refusal to relax UIC regulations. Brown received \$250,000 from Occidental Petroleum for his tax measure, Occidental Petroleum had complained that processing of drilling permits was too slow. In 2011 notices to drill new natural gas wells in Northern California were received at a pace not seen in over twenty years **Currently, California has no tax on oil extractions.**

Energy firms across the country consistently lobby against regulations. Halliburton and other fracking companies spend millions of dollars every year on fake studies and public relations campaigns to cover up facts. Cheney exempted fracking from federal regulation in *his* 2005 energy bill. Even under California’s proposed AB 591, energy firms, notably, Halliburton, objected saying chemicals are trade secrets. Even in case of an emergency spill or blowup, responders are still bound afterwards by confidentiality on “trade secrets.”

Legislation & People’s Petitions

There are numerous other bills pending: AB 972 to bar issuing oil and gas well permits for hydraulically fracturing until regulations governing its practice are adopted (passed in Senate in July), SB 1054, a very weak bill to require notification to the legislature, and AB 591 (mentioned in above paragraph.) Two bills are currently in Congress: Fracturing Responsibility & Awareness of Chemicals Act (FRAC) would close oil and gas industry loopholes in the Safe Drinking Water Act and require disclosure of chemicals used during hydraulic fracturing, The Bringing Reductions to Energy’s Airborne Toxic Health Effects Act (BREATHE) would eliminate a loophole in the Clean Air Act.

This May, Food & Water Watch, *Gasland’s* Josh Fox, Environment California, Citizens Coalition for a Safe Community and CREDO called for a ban on hydraulic fracturing in California, and collected signatures of 50,000 Californians who signed petitions supporting a ban.

How about reviving our Friday Night at the GP office with a showing of *Gasland*? Call our office and let us know.

State Screwing Poor Aged and Disabled

Under pressure from state budget shortfalls and the Obama Administration, California is rushing head-long into a cost-saving experiment of forcing 1.2 million low-income seniors and people with disabilities on both Medicare and Medi-Cal into “managed care.” It means care for poor aged and disabled people would be managed by private insurance companies or county agencies with little experience with these people and with very little accountability or grievance procedure built in. The agency is paid a set amount per patient, so any care not delivered means more profit or less loss.

Worse yet, these private insurance companies and county agencies would also manage IHSS, Meals-on-Wheels, many senior centers, and the other vital services that let frail seniors and disabled people stay at home and not be put into institutions.

California started forcing the younger, non-disabled Medi-Cal-only population onto managed care last year. Already there are State hearings on patients separated from their doctors and cancer treatment and dialysis interrupted. Some of the worst Medi-Cal only managed care providers would manage care for the aged and disabled.

For aged or disabled patients, a workable relationship with the right doctor is important, yet patients could lose access to their doctors if they are arbitrarily assigned to a plan their doctor is not in. People just getting by on the number of state-paid hours of home care could have those hours cut even more by the managed care plan and be forced into nursing homes. The State already plans a 7% cut in IHSS hours with no exemptions.

One might expect such basic decisions, with such life-changing medical and social consequences for so many people, would be slowly and carefully deliberated. Not so! Crucial elements are built into Gov. Brown’s budget. The State plans to start in 2013 and quickly expand to cover 8 counties and 80% of the people on both Medicare and Medi-Cal.

California justifies this deadly program as “integration.” If they’re so eager to unify, and save money, **WHY NOT SINGLE-PAYER!**

Occupying the Civic Center Post Office

On June 25, Gray Panthers, as members of SF Coalition to Save the Post Office, joined the national support for postal workers across the country. This movement is fighting the proposed elimination of 220,000 living-wage jobs and closing 3,700 post offices including 4 in SF.



Our rally at the Federal Building kicked off with speakers from the coalition including coalition GP member, Michael Lyon who spoke of the effects on seniors and the importance of keeping these good wage jobs traditionally held by people of color. Anne from Living Wage told of the necessity of keeping the PO open for folks to receive Social Security checks. Angela, a postal carrier, asked what can Congress be thinking by allowing the lay-off of 220,000 people when hundreds of thousands of workers already unemployed. After the rally, people marched through UN Plaza, took the streets and continued to the Civic Center PO chanting;

The 1% full of greed Don't let them take away what the people need!

Our Post Office is a People's Institution; It's been around since the Constitution!

The National Postal & Letter Carriers' Workers Union passed a resolution to investigate the possibility of post offices acting as a depository bank, a postal savings bank. This practice is done in other countries currently, and was practiced in this country from 1911-1967. Today's public mistrust and the criminal practices of predatory banking today make a sound case for the postal savings system, a public entity serving millions of people. There are 9 million people who do not have bank accounts and 20 million who use check-cashing services that charge exorbitant fees. Of course, a postal savings geared toward serving people and communities would not happen with a privatized system.

There will be more actions by the Save the Post Office Coalition. Check our web site for further information:

<http://graypantherssf.org/>

Trampling out the Vintage: Cesar Chavez and the Two Souls of the United Farm Workers by Frank Bardacke, Verso Publishers



Did you boycott grapes in 1960? Do you remember the mass farm worker 400 mile

march up the Central Valley to Sacramento for the right of agricultural workers to organize? Do you still get regular appeals for financial support from the UFW and maybe still send them money? Whether you did or didn't and do or don't, you will find Bardacke's book a fascinating history, a clear discussion of theories of organizing people for effective action, a description of top-down versus bottom-up leadership in union and other groups, a gripping story of the people involved, of Mexican-American workers, culture, and religion, of ultimately heart-breaking defeat.

The "two souls" are the boycott soul and the farm worker soul which in theory should work together but in practice deteriorated into a struggle for power between the leadership and the workers in the field and ended in the destruction of the union as a union and the organization became a "successful cross between a farm worker advocating group and a family mail business."

Bardacke himself was one of the few Anglos who worked in the fields—in the Salinas Valley for 6 years. This is a BIG book, 740 pages of text and 100 pages of documentation, and well worth the effort. It is available from the public library, which has many copies and a long waiting list. Don't let the size discourage you. This is a terrific book, Highly recommended.

(For a longer, more comprehensive review see the SF Chronicle book section, December 18, 2011 by Eric Brasil, a reporter who covered farm labor issues for more than 30 years. He is frequently cited in the book.)

Update on Previous Newsletter Articles

Nuclear Power in Japan—and California

After the Fukushima nuclear plant meltdown last year, Japan shut down all 50 nuclear reactors, leaving the country without nuclear-generated electricity for the first time since 1970. Despite huge protests 2 reactors at the Ohi nuclear power station were restarted in July. In Tokyo hundreds of thousands of people have repeatedly demonstrated against nuclear power, demanding its total abandonment and accusing the government regulators of collusion with the plant operators.

Meanwhile in California, one of the two nuclear power plants in the state has been closed down since January because of damage to tubes carrying radioactive water. At least \$165,000,000 has been spent trying to correct the malfunctioning and to pay for replacement power. It is estimated that it will cost at least \$25,000,000 to restart one of the two units shut down. (Environmentalists call San Onofre a disaster in the making.)

National Defense Authorization Act NDAA and the SF 99% Coalition

On July 29, the SF 99% Coalition sponsored a meeting at the UU Center on Our Vanishing Civil Liberties highlighting how its provisions violate the Constitution. Those provisions allow the *military* to arrest, indefinitely detain, and deny a trial or a day in court to anyone accused of a belligerent act or any terror-related offense—as defined by the *military*. This violates Article 1 of the Constitution (habeas corpus), the 1st Amendment (free speech and association), the 4th Amendment (unreasonable search & seizure), the 5th Amendment (due process), the 6th Amendment (right to challenge evidence and confront one's accusers), the 14th Amendment (due process), and the Posse Comitatus Act (Domestic deployment of the military). It gives the federal government unchecked power to silence critics, deny the right to trial, and override the presumption of innocence. It removes the courts, part of our system of checks and balances, from any participation. Any action can be labeled terrorist. There is no definition of terrorism and the FBI and law-enforcement agencies have long treated peace, environment, and anti-tax actions as terrorism-prohibited in the name of combating terrorism. The UU audience broke into groups to discuss actions to oppose NDAA.


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 September 2012

Actions and Events

Monday-Wednesday, September 1-3, 2PM,
Mime Troupe, Dolores Park final performance in San Francisco

Saturday, September 22, 7PM
Dave Welsh's CD Release Party, Fellowship Hall, Unitarian Universalist Center, Berkeley, 1924 Cedar St. [at Bonita] **Note date change!**

Wednesday, September 12, 7 PM
Richard Wolff & David Barsamian present
Occupy the Economy: Challenging Capitalism
City Lights, 261 Columbus Avenue at Broadway

Thursday, September 13, 10:00AM
Senior and Disability Action (formerly SAN and PECC) UU Center, 1187 Franklin/Geary

Thursday, September 13, 6:30– 10PM
Art Auction '12, Celebrating 25 Years of Coalition on Homelessness, SOMArts 934 Brannan

Thursday September 13, 1PM-3PM
CARA SF CAT meeting, ILWU Headquarters 1188 Franklin/Geary

On-Going, through October 14,
Yerba Buena Center Exhibition of Occupy Bay Area posters

