

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



**Save Our Office Save Our City**  
**Tuesday, March 19, 2013, 12:30 PM**  
**General Membership Meeting**  
**Unitarian Universalist Center**  
**1187 Franklin @ Geary**  
**Bring a Snack to Share**

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

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

**Board Meeting Wednesday, 12:30 PM**  
**March 6, April 3 location TBA**

**Newsletter Committee Thursday, 12:00**  
**March 7, April 4 location TBA**

**Civil Liberties/Human Rights Wednesday, 12:30, March 13,**  
**April 10 location TBA**

**Book Club Monday, 10:30 AM March**  
**25, April 29 location TBA**



**MAY DAY MAY DAY HELP US FIND A NEW OFFICE**

## Why Are They Giving Our City Away

All you “Google” buses come on, clog our city streets, bring the high-pay techies into the city, and drive up our rents. Put Silicon Valley deeds above seniors’ needs. Build expensive condos, supply them with granite-top sinks and hot tubs, Ellis Act out renters, cater to TIC owners, foreclose on elders. Destroy 1500 homes in Park Merced to build more unfamily-friendly high rises. Use our tax dollars to fund billionaire Larry Ellison’s yacht race rather than our youth, and then privatize our City College. Build a 14-story monster on the Bay for a few Warriors’ games a year, and give them \$120 million of our public money to do it. Turn South of Market and Mid-Market into Twitter territories with tax breaks. Then get rid of the non-profits’ office spaces by jacking up the rents.

All this has escalated under Mayor Lee. Just a few weeks after “Run, Ed, Run” he received contributions totaled \$748,008. The contributor list includes realtors, contractors, construction firms, venture capitalists, tech workers and numerous city government employees.” There’s a lot of people who have an interest in how The City is run,” said Jim Ross, political consultant for Gavin Newsom’s mayoral campaign.

Since 2001 the City has lost at least \$50 million annually after 52 large downtown corporations sued to overturn the last gross receipts tax. The current one is complicated and convoluted with little in the way of a coherent explanation available. But since it was pushed by Ron Conway, the billionaire funder of Lee’s mayoral campaign, the tech sector, and the aptly-named Chamber of *Commerce*, we can assume whatever revenue is gained, it won’t be enough to offset our losses.

So, when our landlords Shorenstein-Hayes & Nederlander hit us with a new rent of \$1,750 a month, we felt it was time that people organized as non-profits together; raised our voices and shouted out our windows



**“We’re fired up, mad as hell and we won’t take it any more!”**

## March Meeting

As we struggle to find office space, GP is mounting a campaign exposing attempts to make SF a city for only the rich and forcing out grass-roots non-profits. 43% of nonprofits in the city, as GP, have budgets of \$25,000 or less; 17% are foundations giving money to vital programs. Nonprofits account for 8% of all wages paid in San Francisco, (2009 SF Foundation Center report). What will be the plight of the nonprofit sector, some of the most important and longest-running political, cultural, and service organizations in the city?

### Gray Panthers in Action

Feb. 19th, we discussed actions taken and initiated others. GP responded to the notice of rental increase, April 1, by owners and requested a negotiation. We received no reply. Friends and supporters held a strategy meeting and took these steps:

*A letter of support addressed to SHN by other organizations and to the Board of Supervisors*

*A team of people is searching for office spaces*

*We are seeking contacts for legal advice  
Contacted Mayor’s Office, Central Market Partnership, and the Economic Workforce and Development*

*Members have met, and/or are meeting with various SF Supervisors*

*Drafted a letter to call on Twitter suggesting support for the community in exchange for tax breaks*

*We will appear before the Board of Sups to address the plight of rent increase on non-profits*

*We are contacting Mark Leno and Tom Ammiano*

*Planning press conferences and street theater*

*Contacting KALW radio Your Call, Tim Redman of SF Bay Guardian*

*Talks have been given at SHAC of SDA, and the Harvey Milk Democratic Club*

## Protect City Workers' Pensions

A defined benefit pension plan is a plan in which an employer promises a specified monthly retirement benefit predetermined by a formula based on the employee's earnings history, tenure of service and age. Congress created the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) to provide a pension for civilian federal employees in 1920. Social Security, established in 1935, left out state and local workers, and many states developed their own employee retirement systems. By 1961, 45 states had retirement systems in place.

In November, 2011, SF voters approved Prop C, a pension reform measure, although less than 40% of registered voters went to the polls. Prop C adversely affected city & county employees' supplemental COLA. Protect Our Benefits (POB), a political action committee of the city & county employees, works to protect health benefits and pensions of retirees of the San Francisco Employees Retirement System (SFERS.) POB believes Proposition C is unconstitutional and benefit reductions are an abridgment of the vested rights of public employee retirees. It initiated legal proceedings asking the Attorney General of California for permission to file a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Proposition C; permission was granted and lawyers immediately began to move the case to Superior Court. As the case moves forward, POB will inform the public about the significance of the City's actions, and underlying principles of fairness and equity on which the lawsuit is based.

In 2011, a typical CCSF retiree pension was \$30,000 a year; 41% earned less than \$25,000, 23% less than \$15,000. Most employees contribute 7.5% of their salary to the retirement system with new safety employees now at 9%. Those "big" pensions cited in the media go only to upper management. The city is required to set aside funds, but contributed nothing to the retirement system for seven years in the late '90s to early 2000, leaving inadequate funds to offset the financial losses of 2008/09. Attacks continue on public employees world-wide as austerity results in economic collapses of entire countries' economies. We, the 99%, did not cause the economic crisis and that burden must now shift to those 1% responsible—individuals & corporations not paying any taxes!

**Demand SF City Government  
Help City College  
Thursday, March 14, 4-6 PM,  
Mass Rally City Hall Steps**

## SF City Government: Save City College!

SF City Government needs to help City College continue as a vibrant \*community\* college. Outside manipulation of City College's affairs is even diverting \$14 million in City Proposition A revenue that SF voters approved by a 73% margin to save City College classes, programs, and staff.

City College (CCSF) is a great community college. The NY Times says it's number 11 in the nation. It helps students get their GEDs, prepares them to transfer to 4-year colleges, and graduates students in food preparation, nursing, radiology, fire-fighting, and other fields. Thousands of immigrants learn English, older adults take special courses, and unemployed workers learn new skills.

City College is under threat, not of closing, but of losing its accreditation unless it bows to the private Accrediting Commission and the state-wide Community College Chancellor's Office, and narrows its mission to full-time students planning to transfer or get vocational certificates. No low-income students working while studying, no Lifelong Learning programs for older adults, no Diversity programs specializing in communities of color, no programs for people with disabilities—in short, no community in Community Colleges. They want to do this to ALL California Community Colleges, starting with San Francisco because it's the biggest and most successful.

San Francisco City Government needs to:

1. Make sure Prop A is followed, since the CCSF Trustees won't do it.
2. Give CCSF a bridge loan until Prop A and Prop 30 funds arrive; or better, use City reserves. City College *is* a City public school.
3. Reverse the cuts to CCSF programs, classes, and staff.
4. Resist the privatization of City College, which would be the result if students were forced into private, for-profit schools and vocational training programs by cuts to programs at CCSF.

## March: Women's History Month

International Women's Day (March 8) is a day of recognition marked by women's groups around the world. People on all continents, often divided by national boundaries, by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to celebrate. International Women's Day (IWD) commemorates the stories of ordinary women who make history. In March 2011, we celebrated 100 years of our struggle for equality, justice, and peace.

International Women's Day arose after a terrible fire killed 146 women working in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory of New York City, many jumping to their death as a last resort. Steel doors were routinely locked, and women and children kept imprisoned for 10- and 12-hour days. Years before the tragedy, 20,000 shirtwaist workers called a strike, marched, and protested these working conditions.

The world has recognized this day for over 100 years, but in the USA, IWD has not achieved its due. Our Congress still has not passed the Equal Rights Amendment, signed on to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, or even the Convention on the Rights of Children. Our work continues.

### One Billion Rising



On Feb 14, over 7000 events took place in 200 countries to raise world-wide awareness about violence against women (see our January newsletter). The founder of this day, Eve Ensler, spent V-Day in the Congo, where 500,000 women caught in the rage of war over control of minerals have been tortured and raped. This story of horror is suppressed because those minerals are sold for great profits around the world.

In SF the mayor usurped the celebration with a staged performance at City Hall. The main celebrations took place in Oakland with a march around Frank Ogawa Plaza followed by Break the Chain flashmob and community speakers.

## Drones, Kill Lists and Machiavelli

Following is Letter to the Editor of the New York Times, published Feb. 12, 2013

I am deeply, deeply disturbed at the suggestion in "A Court to Vet Kill Lists" (news analysis, front page, Feb. 9) that possible judicial review of President Obama's decisions to approve the targeted killing of suspected terrorists might be limited to the killings of American citizens.

Do the United States and its people really want to tell those of us who live in the rest of the world that our lives are not of the same value as yours? That President Obama can sign off on a decision to kill us with less worry about judicial scrutiny than if the target is an American? Would your Supreme Court really want to tell humankind that we, like the slave Dred Scott in the 19th century, are not as human as you are? I cannot believe it.

*I used to say of apartheid that it dehumanized its perpetrators as much as, if not more than, its victims. Your response as a society to Osama bin Laden and his followers threatens to undermine your moral standards and your humanity.*

DESMOND M. TUTU, winner of the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize, is archbishop emeritus of Cape Town.

### Here At Home

The Alameda Police Department urges the use of drones. Police Chief Suhr in San Francisco urges the "limited" use of tasers. Do these military instruments bring the war home? Are these actions accompanied by erosion of civil liberties?

### The Book Club Is Reading Gore Vidal

Historian/novelist Gore Vidal's *Inventing A Nation* explains the differing personalities and politics of the founders: the stoical Washington, Anglophiles Hamilton & Adams, Francophiles Jefferson & Franklin. It illuminates the division in USA politics between the Federalists & Republicans - Hamilton, interested in establishing a national debt and Jefferson, first to declare our rights to life, liberty & the pursuit of happiness. Another Vidal book, *Lincoln* is particularly relevant in view of the current movie, *Lincoln* and the use of executive powers.

## Gray Panthers Say No to NDAA

At a press conference, February 12, GP joined the 99% Coalition along with 25 organizations to call on the Board of Supervisors to pass a resolution



condemning the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The NDAA has provisions that define the United States as an active war zone, allowing the military to indefinitely detain or render any US citizens suspected of terrorist connections and subject these individuals to arbitrary detention without trial, denying the Fifth Amendment's guarantee of due process and Sixth Amendment rights to challenge evidence and confront one's accusers. The NDAA also endangers First and Fourth Amendment rights, expanding on the Patriot Act's definition of "material support for terrorism" to include crimes of speech and association even by defendants who neither committed nor ever intended to support violence.

Currently 18 cities have passed resolutions against the NDAA and 15 states have introduced legislation seeking to nullify the "indefinite detention" provisions of the Act.

The rally and press conference honored the "Day of Remembrance" February 19, the 71st anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066, the indefinite detention of Japanese Americans during World War II. Speakers connected this atrocious time in our history with the dangers today of the NDAA today.

Supervisor David Chiu introduced the resolution, co-sponsored by Supervisors John Avalos, London Breed, David Campos, Jane Kim, and Eric Mar. The final vote is to take place February 26.

## CEQA Under Attack

The California Environmental Quality Act, (CEQA) is a statute that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impact of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts if feasible.

Supervisor Scott Wiener has proposed an amendment to CEQA Chapter 31. Currently Chapter 31 fulfills the requirement to address irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources. Irreversible impacts are those, through direct or indirect effects, that cause use or consumption of resources in such a way that they cannot be restored or returned to their original condition even with mitigation. Also, under Chapter 31, any person who has submitted written or oral comments on a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) may appeal the Planning Commission's certification of the EIR to the Board.

Amending Chapter 31 would eliminate the public's right to appeal CEQA determinations made by the City Planning Department or the Planning Commission, any other department or entity.

Following are a few examples of projects where an EIR certified by the Planning Commission could no longer be appealed to the Board of Supervisors:

America's Cup, Treasure Island, 8 Washington; 555 Washington, 110 Embarcadero, the de Young Museum, Central Subway, Park Merced and California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC).

Those who favor of amending the regulatory process are the same forces who want to fast track development, like hydraulic fracking and the high-speed rail. Gov. Brown has stated that we need to rethink and "streamline" CEQA. He has also promoted lessening restrictions for oil companies in their process of fracking. Californians passed CEQA in 1970. Soon after our CEQA, the US federal government passed a national environmental policy (NEPA).

Opposition to amending CEQA- those of us who wish to protect our environment!

Prosperity & Sustainability NOT Austerity  
Our rich nation can afford it!

## Gray Panthers of SF

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ADDRESS SERVICE  
REQUESTED

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*

Call the office for membership information.

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## Actions and Events

**Friday, March 8, International Women's Day**

**Saturday, March 9**, The 2nd Anniversary of Fukushima Meltdown Nuclear |Whistleblowers, Health & Safety, Teach-In, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
CCSF Mission Campus Rm 201 1125 Valencia St.

**Sunday, March 10, Day light Savings begins**

**Thursday, March 14, 9AM to 12PM**, Save Social Security, Medicare & Medicaid –Town Hall Meeting SDA & CARA Unitarian Church, 1187Franklin. Lunch available \$2(after meeting) Must RSVP 415-546-1333

**Also Thursday, March 14**

**Mass Rally** City Hall Steps, 4-6PM, Demand SF City Government Help City College!

**All Of Us Or None**, 7PM,518 Valencia @ 16th Street,SHAC7 -Josh Harper Hunger Strike Coalition -Azadeh Zohrabi, Jenny Esquivel  
Sacramento Prisoner Support -Jenny Esquivel

**Wednesday March 13, 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM**  
Healthcare Action Team (HAT) Bayanihan Center, 1010 Mission 6th St., #14 bus

**Wednesday March 20, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM**, Senior & Disability Action Housing Collaborative (SHAC) 1390 Mission St, (2nd Floor)

**March 11-31 ALERT:** anticipating our office move—volunteers needed Sorting, packing, Call the office, 415-552-08800 for updates.

