

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



**Tuesday, May 21, 2013, 12:30—3PM**

**Goodbye to our Office**

**Come Celebrate Great 25 Years of Our Office on Market Street**

**Refreshments**

**1182 Market Room 203**

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

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

**Board Meeting Wednesday, May 1 and  
June 5 12:30 PM**

**Civil Liberties/Human Rights Wednes-  
day, May 8 and June 12 12:30,**

**Newsletter Committee Thursday, 11:00  
May 2 and June 6**

**Book Club Monday, May 27 10:30 AM  
June TBA**



**Latest News on Lynne Stewart page 4**

## Our April Meeting

We learned more about the Robin Hood tax from our guest speaker, Kay McVey of CARA. See the article on pg 5.

## Panthers on the Prowl



We attended a fundraiser at El Rio for the Idriss Stelley Foundation, a grassroots organization that courageously addresses issues of police brutality. It changes lives and raises public awareness about police brutality, racial profiling, police violence against seniors, people with physical and mental health disabilities, and especially the unjustified use of deadly force.



Photos Terrie Frye

GP has worked with La Me-sha Irizarry, on many issues. Her son, Idriss was murdered by the SFPD on June 13, 2001. Nine police shot him 48 times as he stood unarmed, alone in the SF Metreon Movie Theater.

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GP board member, David Young Allen, has an on-going art exhibit through May 30 at the Visual Aid Gallery, 57 Post Street. Call 415-777-8242 to schedule a viewing.

GP co-convenor Earl Gilman has returned from a trip to Argentina and living in the midst of revolution! We will have a talk from Earl soon.

GP Board co-convenor Patricia Jackson has completed her book, *Takes An Uprising: A Memoir in Lesbian Parables*. [takesanuprising@sonic.net](mailto:takesanuprising@sonic.net)

## Office Update



Our search for an office continues. However, we were able to negotiate an extension until June 15 and avoid paying the huge rent increase due to have taken effect the first of April. But, the building owners were not willing to rent us a smaller space in the building.

## Where Will Market Street Be Without Gray Panthers!

After 25 years, we will be forced out of our office on Market Street, so let's remember and celebrate! Our first party will be Tuesday, May 21, in our dear old office *in lieu of our regular general membership meeting*.

Gather at the office 12:30 - 3PM with refreshments and go through many items that will not be making the move: videos, books, file cabinets, desks, bulletin boards, card tables, old reading glasses, file folders, chairs, and some free things, too! Donations for items will be sent to help Lynne Stewart, and our moving fund.

## Divestment Campaign & Prop C Lawsuit

A coalition of current and retired San Francisco City and County employees have presented the San Francisco Employee Retirement System (SFERS) Retirement Board with motions to protect our retirement funds from illegal, predatory, and discriminatory bank lending and foreclosure policies. Wells Fargo, JP Morgan Chase, and Bank of America are the market leaders in foreclosures and related evictions here in San Francisco and statewide. Many of us are city retirees, so let's support this effort.

Contact: [herb.sf@gmail.com](mailto:herb.sf@gmail.com) or SEIU 1021.

May 20, the Superior Court of SF will hear the petition filed by city retirees' Protect Our Benefits (POB) requesting the court to declare invalid the part of the 2011 Prop C charter amendment prohibiting Supplemental COLA for to pensions. All cases before this Court hearing begin 9:30 lasting until 11AM.

## Keep Watching the Homeless Bill of Rights

Assemblymember Ammiano's the Homeless Person's Bill of Rights & Fairness Act has passed out of committee and now goes to the full Assembly.

You might ask what it takes to remember  
When you think that you've heard it before  
How governments lie to their people  
And now nations are driven to war  
*Richie Havens (1941-April 22, 2013)*

## **Who's Behind Threat to City College?**

SF City College students, faculty, and supporters, including Gray Panthers, are fighting to keep CCSF a community college for lifelong learning.

The private Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) threatens to pull City College's accreditation, needed to collect state and federal money, unless CCSF cuts classes, programs, and wages, and limits enrollment.

ACCJC is partly funded by huge foundations seeking educational downsizing and privatization: \$1.5 million from the Gates Foundation (promotes charter schools) and \$1 million from Lumina Foundation (made \$1 billion from student loans, and is a member of notorious right-wing lobby ALEC).

From 2003 to 2008, the ACCJC sanctioned 37% of Calif. Community Colleges compared to 0-6% elsewhere. 25% of Calif. Community Colleges are now under sanction. But in 2006, Berkeley City College forced ACCJC to back down, threatening a lawsuit. See <http://tinyurl.com/a79cd7d>.

## **Moving Forward in CPMC Fight**

Amazingly, we have largely pushed back CPMC's plans to build a mammoth hospital on Cathedral Hill, close or gut St. Luke's Hospital, gentrify part of the Tenderloin, freeze out its labor force, and ignore needs of housing and hiring local workers.

Now the focus is changing. CPMC will almost surely drag its feet on implementing its agreements on covering Medi-Cal patients, charity care, hospital/clinic prices, and hiring and advancement of local residents. There needs to be a legal mechanism by which advocates can monitor and enforce compliance.

Also, CPMC has agreed to reduce Cathedral Hill and enlarge St. Luke's, but there is a 50% reduction in the number of CPMC's Medi-Cal patients. How will the rest of the City deal with the increased Medi-Cal patients it now must serve? How will the City deal with the decreased number of psych beds, mental health treatments, and Skilled Nursing beds for after-hospital care? We a need community-based health policy commission.

## **Social Security and Estate Taxes: Steal from the Poor, Give to the Rich**

In early January Obama signed a new estate tax law. Rich people are now entitled to an estate-tax exemption of \$5 million, more than double George W. Bush's \$2 million. And because this new estate tax exemption is indexed to protect against inflation, the exemption will keep growing bigger year after year. Fewer than 4,000 very rich people will pay the estate tax.

On the other hand, Obama's reduced Social Security cost-of-living index, the "chained-CPI," is designed to reduce Social Security benefits and to get worse in future years. This is not about reducing the debt; it actually increases debt. The estate tax cut is expected to give the rich twice as much as the chained-CPI takes from seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and children and spouses of people who die. See <http://tinyurl.com/cs5de6y>.

The "chained-CPI" is a different measure of inflation, a different Consumer Price Index, which aims to reduce our Social Security benefits by underestimating price increases, saying we will switch to cheaper alternatives. For the 2/3 of seniors that depend on Social Security for at least half their income, and for the 40% whom Social Security lifts above the poverty line, the chained-CPI would be a disaster for two reasons. (1) Each year's cut would be added to previous years' cuts, so that retirees in their 80s would be losing a month's benefit each year. (2) Most seniors use a high proportion of their small incomes on healthcare, housing, and energy, for which there are no cheaper substitutes. ("Maybe I should only get a double by-pass instead of a triple"). Yeah, right. In fact, the current CPI doesn't adequately estimate cost-of-living increases for seniors and people with disabilities.

Representative David Cicilline (D-RI) introduced H. Con. Res. 34 with 81 co-sponsors in the House, opposing the use of the Chained CPI. Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) introduced a resolution opposing the use of the Chained CPI (S.CON.RES.15). Contact Pelosi, Boxer & Feinstein (1-877-762-8762) and tell them to co-sponsor these resolutions.

## Let's Get Lynne Stewart Out of Prison

On April 26, Ralph Poynter, Lynne's Stewart's husband, informed supporters that the warden at the FMC Carswell Prison in Ft. Worth, Texas recommended Lynne's immediate compassionate release! (*Stewart was sentenced to ten years in prison on charges of conspiracy to aid and abet terrorism because she issued a press release on behalf of her client the "blind" sheik, Omar Abdel Rachman*). Lynne's case will now pass through a series of hurdles – from the Justice Department and the original Judge John Koeltl, and perhaps even to President Obama himself.

The Carswell warden said that he could not deal with the over 11,000 petitions he received to date



and therefore recommended the release. The successful campaign to win compassionate release must continue until Lynne is finally free!

The Gray Panthers of SF signed on as an organization. Urge all of your contacts to sign the petitions. Go to [www.lynnestewart.org](http://www.lynnestewart.org)

Since her imprisonment in the Federal Prison in Carswell, Texas, her urgently needed surgery was delayed for 18 months – so long that the operating physician pronounced the condition as “the worst he had seen.” Now breast cancer, which had been in remission prior to her imprisonment, has reached Stage Four. The prison trips to physicians required Lynne to walk with 10 pounds of shackles on her wrists and ankles.

Lynne Stewart sends her appreciation to petition signatories. “I want you, individually, to know how gratifying and happy it makes me to have your support. It is uplifting, to say the least, and after a lifetime of organizing it proves once again that the People can rise.”

As long-time friends and supporters of Lynne, we rejoice in this victory!

**Check for updates of Lynne's release at <http://graypantherssf.igc.org/>**

## A Real Earth Day

Greenaction brought together 70 environmental justice, community, indigenous, and civil rights organizations for an Earth Day Action for Environmental and Climate Justice on Monday, April 22nd at the US EPA Region IX office in San Francisco. They brought Earth Day Coalition Demands to President Obama, US EPA and California EPA. Before the demonstration, representatives met with EPA officials with a challenge to comply and enforce their own civil rights and environmental laws and environmental justice policies, and to deny permits to chronic polluters. Protesters then marched to State Department offices at One Market Plaza demanding the Obama Administration reject the Keystone XL Pipeline.

### Continuing Campaigns

Richmond residents are demanding Chevron replace aging equipment. They blasted the lax government oversight that caused the fire in August 2012 that sent thousands to the hospital.

Residents from Bayview Hunters Point, West Oakland, Livermore and other communities are demanding the long-overdue prompt and safe cleanup of toxic contamination sites near homes.

Residents from the San Joaquin Valley farmworker town of Kettleman City, which suffers from birth defects, infant deaths and childhood cancer, are demanding the denial of permits to expand the violation-plagued Chemical Waste Management hazardous waste and PCB landfill. The community also has contaminated water from pesticides, diesel pollution and fracking.



Indigenous people in solidarity with the First Nations of Canada will lead the call for the Obama Administration to reject the Keystone XL Pipeline that would transport dirty crude oil from environmentally destructive tar sands in Canada through the US. They are also demanding an end to desecration of sacred and culturally significant sites.



## Are You Part of This World?

### Tesla Anyone?

Now that you have dutifully paid your income taxes, you can use all that money you have left to buy a new car. To save the climate (maybe) we recommend a Tesla Model S electric sedan. Unfortunately, Tesla no longer offers its cheapest version, which cost \$59,900, because there wasn't enough demand. The current cheapest base price is \$69,900. Tesla says its stated goal is to make electric cars for everyone, not just the rich.

### Pity The Downtrodden Executives

Chevron Corporation Chief Executive John Watson had \$520,000 cut from his bonus in 2012 because of Chevron's abysmal safety record. (How much do you suppose his bonus was before the cut?) But don't weep for him. In 2012 his overall compensation was \$32.2 million, according to documents filed in April with the Securities and Exchange Commission. His salary was \$1.67 million plus stock awards and options. His total take is almost double what he made in 2010. Meanwhile Safeway CEO Steve Burd made a trifle less in 2012 than in 2011. His total take was only \$9.91 million, which included \$1.5 million base salary. But it seems he also gets incentive pay, which dropped to \$1.3 million from \$2.2 million and Visa chief John Partridge retired in March but will be paid \$50,000 a month as a consultant. In 2012 he had a salary of \$750,000 but received a total compensation of \$5.58 million, including a \$1.82 million cash bonus.

### Pity the Corporations

In 1946 the US corporate income tax was 5.5% of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product). In 2011 it was 2.6%....In 2012 83 large US companies increased their offshore cash holdings by \$183 billion to \$1.46 trillion. GE had the most - \$108 billion. It is a way to avoid paying taxes. According to the Government Accountability Office, US corporations received \$181 billion in income tax breaks in 2011, as much as they paid in taxes. It was the largest total of corporate tax breaks since 1986.

*Talk about terrorism— May 31, 2009, abortion provider Dr. George Tiller was killed by an anti-abortionist. No one called him a "terrorist."*

## Robin Hood Tax

Our April meeting featured Kay McVey of the California Nurses Association presenting the CNA discussion of the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT), familiarly known as the Robin Hood Tax. The current bill before Congress is HR 1579, the Inclusive Prosperity Act. As proposed by Representative Keith Ellison, the Congressional sponsor, this would be a tax of \$.50 on every \$100 of trades - 0.5% - on the buying or selling of stocks, essentially a sales tax on Wall Street financial transactions. It would insure that the currently under-taxed financial sector pays a greater share of the costs of the economic crisis that it's actions caused. The US used to have a FTT but Wall Street successfully lobbied for its removal in 1966. In 2011 40 countries had such a tax. The sponsors claim it could raise up to \$300 billion a year and slow automated high-frequency trading by making it less profitable, thus reducing commodity speculation. We are all for any tax on Wall Street speculators.



***Defend Global Need Not Corporate Greed!  
Support the Robin Hood Tax!***

## Domestic Workers Bill of Rights

On Wednesday, April 24, the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, AB 241 introduced by Assemblymember Tom Ammiano, had its first Assembly hearing. A busload of San Franciscans went to Sacramento to demonstrate for it. The Bill has six provisions: overtime pay; meal and rest breaks; workers compensation; uninterrupted 8-hour sleep for live-ins; use of kitchen facilities; paid days of rest. These seem like minimum standards everyone should have. Last year a similar bill was vetoed by Governor Brown. Revisions were made to meet the Governor's objections. The Governor should be a nanny or a caregiver for a day or a week to learn a little appreciation of what they do day in and day out. Senior and Disability Action devoted its April meeting to a discussion of AB 241. Gray Panthers sent our letter of support to legislators.

## Gray Panthers of SF

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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*

Call the office for membership information.

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## Actions and Events

**Mondays-Fridays through May 30**, “Strange Opinions, Time Travel and Reckless Contact with Electric Eels,” an exhibition by Gray Panther David Young Allen, Visual Aid Gallery, 57 Post St. Call 415-777-8242 for appointment.

**Every Thursday in May, Noon, a Michael Moore movie. Koret Auditorium Main Library.**

**Saturday, May 4, Cinco de Mayo, 10AM-6pm, Dolores Park.**

**Wednesday, May 8, 11AM**, Healthcare Action Team (HAT) Meeting, Bayanihan Center, 1010 Mission, (at 6th St., #14 bus).

**Thursday, May 9**, Global Exchange 11th Annual Human Rights Awards, honoring Noam Chomsky, Crystal Lameman of Cree First Nation, Julian Assange and Wikileaks. Information: [humanrightsward.org](http://humanrightsward.org).

Thursday, May 9, 1-3PM, CARA CAT, ILWU Headquarters, 1188 Franklin #38 bus(not 38L)

**Thursday, May 9, 10AM– Noon**, SDA General Meeting, Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin.

**Saturday, May 11, 4-7PM**, Root Division 3175 17th St., “New Growth 2013 Coming Up Color,” artwork by students & instructors. Youth Education Programs. Live performances. Free healthy snacks & refreshments.

**Thursday, May 23, 2PM & 7PM**, State Office Building, 505 Van Ness, California PUC hearing on PG&E request for rate increases. Public comment welcomed!

**Saturday, May 25, 10AM-Noon**, “Changes for Women: the 1960s to the Present.” SF OWL Meeting, Flood Building, 870 Market St., Rm. 1185.

