

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

We will greet you at the front door. Celebrate in our office 2nd Floor!



## Our December Holiday Party December 21, Noon - 2PM Celebrating Winter Solstice In the Redstone Building

### GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & EVENTS

All meetings and events take place at 2940 16th Street 200-4, unless otherwise noted

Board Meeting Wednesday, December 4,  
12:30, at the office!

Newsletter Committee Thursday, Decem-  
ber, 5, 12:00

Book Club Monday, December 30  
10:30 AM –Noon,  
Celtic Café, 142 McAllister,  
(between Hyde/Leavenworth)



*Keep Calling For compassionate release of Lynne Stewart*  
Director of Bureau Prisons Samuels (202) 307-3250/3062, Attorney General  
Holder(202) 353-1555, President Obama (202) 456-1111

## Our November Meeting

We discussed the proposed new SF Jail. Chief Deputy Matthew Freeman spoke on behalf of the “new” jail, making the case for replacing the old, seismically unsafe building at 850 Bryant with new buildings including a jail. When confronted with the idea that jail population is down, Freeman countered, “It’s not about beds: it’s about programs.” According to a member of GP’s audience, however much they extol programming, the guards continue to brutalize inmates.

The other speaker was Rafael Sperry, speaking for Californian’s United for Responsible Budget (CURB) argued that the diminished populations indicate that we do not need a new jail. According to CURB, “75 % of those in SF County jails are awaiting trial and most of those are there because they can’t afford bail, meaning they are there because they are poor. With appropriate bail reform, *all* of these people could be released.” The Mayor is asking for \$290 million from the General Fund, which CURB suggested does not include the additional debt which would be occurred. Roma Guy, Tax Payers for Public Safety, suggested that since tax payers funds are involved, we should have a say in how these funds are spent. The Board of Supervisors will be discussing this in early January. Tell them not to expand jails, but that we want community services that help keep people out of jails and keep families together. *Prevention, not Incarceration!*

### Faith Petric ;Presente!

Folk singer, proud radical, Gray Panther, guiding light of the San Francisco Folk Music Club for 50 years, and frequent inspiring performer at Gray Panther affairs. Died Oct. 24 at age 98. Farewell, good friend, and many thanks.



Faith led us in singing at City Hall for a GP Universal Declaration of Human Rights celebrations.

2007

## December Gathering

We will hold our holiday party this year, Dec 21, Noon– 2PM, at our office in the Redstone Building, 2940 16th Street, (between Mission/South Van Ness at corner of Capp St.). The Redstone building played a significant role in the 1917 United Railroads Streetcar Strike and the SF maritime strike that led to the 1934 SF General Strike. Redstone is now a SF historical landmark. Many folks have not had a chance to visit our office since we moved into our space, so come visit and catch up with friends  
Bring a dish to share if you can.

### Gray Panther Board Elections

Last month's newsletter described in detail how our Board of Directors is constituted and elected. On-going members for 2014 are Patricia, Sonia, Lynn, Jack, Michael and Mitzi. Nominated for a second 2 year term are David and Denise. Also nominated so far are Kay, Rhoda, Art, Norma We welcome new, active members. Nominations are open until our December. Party. Nominees are usually elected by acclamation at the party.

### \*December Board Meeting at the office\*

#### Happening At Fukushima? Wind Farms

A March 2011 earthquake and tsunami triggered multiple meltdowns of the Fukushima nuclear power plant. That disaster had at least one positive result. Japan is looking at other sources of energy. One is wind farms, off-shore wind powered turbines, and non-nuclear, clean, renewable energy sources. In November Japan switched on the first turbine at a wind farm 12 miles offshore at Fukushima. Meanwhile all Japanese nuclear power plants are closed for safety inspections.

*The History of Journalism Dept, S F State in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act seeks interviews with protesters from the April 1977 504 refusal to leave the SF HEW office at UN Plaza. A delegation later went to Washington, DC to negotiate changes to the Act. Help tell the history and your story of this incredible campaign!  
contact Sue Englander 415-902-9358 or englande@sfsu.edu.*

## Whose City? Our City!



On Nov 7, we joined other groups determined to save our City from Twitter—the center piece of hi-tech gentrification in Mid-Market.

Twitter announced its IPO, Initial Public Offering, on the NY Stock Exchange, raised \$1.8 billion to become one of the largest Internet IPOs on record and brought its value to \$31 billion. Rally speaker asked: what is Twitter's IPO to SF? Mayor Lee exempted taxes on all those stock options, and had exempted tech firms from payroll taxes for 10 years. What happens when some of the tech companies in SF fail? Twitter shares fell 7.2% a day after the it went public. In our old GP office neighborhood, NEMA, the luxury tower, rents a one bedroom apartment for \$3,400 and offers amenities of dog grooming, car parking, fitness center, pool, car wash, and a staff of 40 people at your beck and call. No doubt those workers will not be living in the City at the wage NEMA pays. Another tower in the area is planned for early 2014. Currently, 36 development projects are under way on Market Street in our city of metal cranes. And, last summer, Google offered \$600,000 to Mayor Lee to allow it to install and operate a Wi-Fi network in 31 open spaces around the city. Is that the reason for that Google barge off shore? What will Lee give away in return?

### Twitter Doesn't Trickle Down

San Francisco is rated the most unaffordable city in the nation for renters and homeowners. A one bedroom apartment at the current outrageous monthly \$2,000—\$3,500 rent takes 6 full-time jobs at minimum wage. What about the so-called increase in jobs? 9,000 youth, 18-24, are unemployed, and most lack adequate education, or access to internet connectivity in order to learn skills for tech jobs. Tech companies like Twitter are self-contained units for their employees. They have 24/7 food supplied, indoor gyms, some even have bowling alleys for entertainment. Most techies jump on the Silicon Valley bound busses in the morning and return late at night. They order books, computers, etc. from Amazon not the local stores.

## Housing Not High Rises!

The SF electorate in November soundly defeated Props. B and C, in a definite statement against gentrification of our city. This was a slap in the face to Mayor Lee and Gavin Newsom, the Chamber of Commerce, and the rampaging high-rent building industry. The next fight will be to prevent the Warriors from building a sports stadium on the waterfront. Warrior plans include more luxury condos & a luxury hotel. Where is the BCDC, which is supposed to oversee waterfront developments and limit its projects to those connected to enjoyment of the SF bay.

### Whose Homes? Our Homes!

The anti-eviction movement is growing to push back the epidemic of foreclosures, and greedy landlords selling property to real estate speculators. Ellis Act evictions were up 145% between September 2012 and September 2013, compared to the prior 12-month period. The Ellis Act is a state law and difficult to fight locally. Renters make up 63.6% of units in SF, and 42.5% of all these households are "rent burdened", meaning people are paying more than 30% of income on rents. Tenants Together and activists in the Mission are calling for a 61 day moratorium on evictions and rent increases to bring about at least time to catch a breath and give time to organize. Supervisor, David Campos heard the people in District 9 and declared a housing crisis in the city. He is calling for a moratorium on Ellis evictions, at a 12-year high, to double the amount of relocation assistance required for displaced tenants under the Ellis Act to \$10,000, and to monitor landlord buyout offers to tenants under threat of the Ellis Act. But we also need to demand a moratorium on all condos for the multi-rich, and only build low-income housing—not market rate or so-called affordable housing. The Mayor's Office of Housing is pushing RAD, Rental Assistance Demonstration, a proposal to HUD which will ultimately mean the privatization of public housing in San Francisco. "They are selling public housing stocks off to private investors as mortgages, which means they can't guarantee what private investors do with their investments", said Paul Boden from WRAP, the Western Regional Advocacy Project.

*Reminder GP Board Meeting, Dec 4 at our office!*



## GP at National Health Meetings

Gray Panthers attended the national meeting of Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP). PNHP is going beyond the costs and profits of insurance companies and focusing more on the costs and profits of healthcare delivery: the doctors, hospitals, and drug/medical technology companies. Marcia Angell, former New England Journal of Medicine editor, said these profits are even worse than insurance profits. She said that unless we can cut these delivery system profits, healthcare cost containment will jeopardize the care we get.

Government is dropping the more traditional *Fee-For-Service* payment, where doctors and hospitals are paid for each procedure performed, and the business incentive is to *over-treat* the patients who can afford it.

Instead, government wants *Capitated* payment, where the doctor or hospital is paid a fixed amount per patient per year, so the business incentive is to *under-treat* patients, because the provider is already paid and any care delivered is lost profit.

Integrated Health Systems, and Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) are the new buzzwords of healthcare reform, but they're basically HMOs on steroids, paid capitated fixed payment per year per patient, with the incentive to under-treat. ACOs, part of Obamacare, are newly-forming combinations of hospitals, physician practice groups, insurance companies, pharmacies, nursing homes, etc. They've lead to hospital consolidations into huge chains, like Sutter Health, charging higher prices. Cost-containment backfired here. Hospitals charge higher prices and insurance companies just pass the cost on as higher premiums.

Could ACOs reduce costs without hurting patients by improving efficiency? Probably not. Marcia Angell testified to Congress: "initiatives such as electronic medical records, disease management, preventive care and comparative effectiveness studies, may improve care, but experts agree that they're unlikely to save much money."

Once again, unless healthcare delivery profits are attacked, medical cost-containment will cut into the healthcare we get. **Single Payer Now!**

## More on the Affordable Care Act

*(If you are on Medicare ACA Does not apply)*

After the initial roll out of the federal website, *healthcare.gov*, where people could shop for health insurance under the ACA, there were multiple apologies and explanations for its disastrous debut. James Kahn, M.D., M.P.H., is a board member and past president of the California chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program. According to Dr. Kahn, "The problem is that the law is inherently complex. When an applicant contacts the exchange, he or she has to demonstrate identity, eligibility, and what subsidies he or she might be allowed to get.



"For identity, he or she provides a social security number, and that goes to the social security administration, and also to the Department of Homeland Security to de-

termine immigration status. In order to determine eligibility, the applicant has to be checked against databases maintained by the veteran's administration and the Peace Corps and other agencies, to be sure that he or she doesn't already have insurance. And then to determine the subsidy, he or she has to provide income information, which has to be checked with the IRS. Once all of that's accomplished, only then can the applicant look at the health insurance plans and make a decision about which one to apply for. That leads to information being sent to the health insurer about the applicant and his or her family. That has to be then checked at the health insurer. And it turns out that process is full of errors. The insurers are complaining that the information that they're getting from the federal exchange site has mistakes such as a child being listed in the spouse category, and many other kinds of mistakes. Those are being manually fixed right now. But as the volume goes up, manual checking will be really difficult. And what's more, once this is finally done, it won't be finished, because next year people will have to apply again, have to provide income information to determine the subsidy, and if they want to change plans they'll have to repeat the process."

*So this will be a gift that goes on giving?*

## **Mercy Killers**

Those of you who were not at Michael Milligan's powerful monologue *Mercy Killers* on Nov. 14 missed a tour-de-force on why we need single payer. *Mercy Killers* personalized the crisis of the US dysfunctional medical care system. Milligan spoke as the man of an ordinary middleclass couple who faced cancer and, even though they had insurance, ended up denied adequate care by the insurance companies' maneuvers to avoid paying what they legally and morally owed to their policy holders and by the impossibility of handling their problems alone. His wife's cancer wasn't treated until too late, the couple was emotionally devastated and financially destroyed. As he had promised, the husband helped the cancer-ridden wife to die - mercy killer - and now faced murder charges. This could happen to anyone.

The dramatization was presented by the Campaign for a Healthy California, a coalition of groups including the Gray Panthers, with the goal of achieving expanded and improved Medicare for All by 2017. In 2014 they plan to set up commissions all over the state to determine the most efficient way to provide health care for all fully covered single payer. In 2015 they will present their findings and agree on action. And in 2016 fight to get it realized. There are single payer groups organizing all over the country and looking to California to lead. No private insurance like Obamacare - no out of pocket extras - full coverage womb to tomb, sperm to worm, cradle to grave.

### **Social Security and COLA**

COLA stands for Cost of Living Adjustment. If the COLA goes up you get an increase in your monthly social security payment. COLA is based on the Consumer Price Index, CPI. It is based on the whole population, not on seniors CPI. Seniors generally have a different price index, much more dependent on health costs, assisted living housing, rent increases, home help and the like. HR 3118 - the Strengthening the Social Security Act. - introduced by Rep Linda Sanchez would increase SS benefits by modifying the formula used to calculate them. It would also eliminate the payroll tax cap on who pays SS taxes. Urge Pelosi (415-556-4862) to co-sponsor it.

## **We fought Racism From the Beginning**

The very beginnings of Gray Panthers were middle-class elders, in the "Consultation of Older and Younger" Adults. In 1971 they reached out to students at Philadelphia area colleges to dialog with them on areas of mutual concern: ending the war in Indo-China and resisting the draft.

They then became involved in the planning of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, -- a Presidential sponsored event composed of politically appointed delegates across the country. GPer's protested the racial and social makeup of the delegation which did not reflect the diversity of the older population. "There was a lot of concern that the special needs of minority elders were not going to be represented at this conference, and that seemed a form of double discrimination."

Gray Panthers began working with another new group, the National Caucus on the Black Aged, to plan what they called the 'Black House' Conference on Aging, at the same time as the White House Conference. Within weeks, they put together a national planning meeting consisting of scores of mostly black gerontologists, social workers, and other senior advocates. A few weeks later, on November 13, 1971, they were able to hold a much larger meeting, more like a convention, with 700 black senior advocates to plan a response to the White House Conference later that month.

Leaders of the White House Conference contacted National Caucus on the Black Aged, and tried to get some of them to come. The Caucus refused, saying the course of the White House Conference was already set to ignore minority issues, and the Caucus participation would only be tokenism. The Black House Conference on Aging ended with a march on the White House demanding attention to the problems of black seniors at the White House Conference. They also demanded a guaranteed income, more extensive Medicare coverage, removal of the income ceiling for some Social Security recipients, and an end to the war in Vietnam. They were met by mounted Park Police who forced them back, arresting the moderator of the conference, 72-year old Fannie Jefferson. Read more: <http://tinyurl.com/melecuj>

## Gray Panthers of SF

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We believe ALL people are  
entitled to certain fundamental  
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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

**Wednesday, Dec 4, 7:30PM, Eric Quezada Center for Culture and Politics, 518 Valencia,** Remembering Los Siete, heroes of San Francisco's left and Latino political ferment in the 1970s.

**Thursday, Dec 5, 7PM, City Lights Bookstore, 261 Columbus Avenue,** City Lights at 60 series **Roxanne Dunbar, discussing book, *The Great Sioux Nation: Sitting in Judgment on America.***

**Friday, Dec 6, 3-5 PM, 1360 Mission, 4th Fl.** Film for Movie Friday will be *The Power of 504*, about the month-long sit-in of the San Francisco Federal Building by disability activists.

**Friday, Dec 6, 1:00PM, JCC, 3200 California,** **In Their League: Women's Suffrage in CA.**

**Tuesday, Dec 10, 7:00PM, JCC,** International Human Rights Day: Advocating for Women & Girls

**Thursday, Dec 12, National Call-In Day to Congress:** No Cuts to Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid! Stop the Sequester! Call 415-556-4862

**Friday, Dec 13, 1360 Mission 4th Fl, 3-6 PM,** **Holiday Party, Senior & Disability Action**

**Saturday, Dec 14, 4:00-7:00PM, Living Wage Coalition party, 4029 16th Redstone Building**



Happy Holidays!

Winter Solstice Kwanzaa Hanukkah  
Christmas

