

GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO

Membership Meeting
May 20



**Prison
Or
Justice**

Speaker

**Roma
Guy**



Lynne Comes to The Bay Area

Fundraiser for Lynne Stewart

Friday, May 2, 6PM

518 Valencia

Helping Lynne Heal

Tuesday, May 20 General Meeting

12:30–3PM

Unitarian Universalist Center

1187 Franklin @ Geary

GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & EVENTS

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

Board Meeting Wednesday, May 7 12:30
at our office, 2940 16th @ Capp St

Book Club Monday, May 26, 10:30 AM –
Noon, Celtic Café, 142 McAllister,
(between Hyde/Leavenworth)

Newsletter Committee Thursday, May 8,
12:00 in the office



Fundraiser for Lynne Stewart joined by her husband, Ralph Poynter, Pam Africa, International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, and Ramona Africa, The Move Organization. May 2, 6PM, 518 Valencia

Our April Meeting

Michael Lyon described Campaign for Healthy California's goals to achieve single payer. He also discussed the Patients' Bill of Rights pending in Sacramento. We will have a detailed article on these issues in the next issue.

A Fair Tax Deal

April was income tax month. We assume that as "good Americans" if you owed taxes you paid them. So, did the richest 2%? When you write the tax laws, as do the rich, you end up with all kinds of tax breaks, or pay no tax at all. Here are some of suggestions CARA thinks we might change the tax laws.

- *End the Bush Era tax cuts for the top 2%.
- *End preferred tax rate for income from stocks, bonds & other assets.
- *Increase income tax on the rich, a 5.6% surtax on incomes over \$1 million.
- *Restore the estate tax.
- *Establish a Robin Hood tax, a financial transaction tax on Wall Street.
- *Move the 57% from \$ military budget to Health, Housing, and Education budget
- *Scrap the cap on taxable income for Social Security. In 2013 income no tax on \$117,000 & up.

In Past Mays

- 1838**—May 23 Cherokees begin the Trail of Tears forced march across the country to Oklahoma.
- 1846**— May 13 U. S. declares war on Mexico
- 1886**— May 4-11 People killed in the Chicago Haymarket Massacre fighting for the 8-hour day
- 1895**—May 22 Eugene Debs goes to prison for his part in the Pullman RR strike
- 1945**— May 8 Victory in Europe with the defeat of Nazi Germany
- 1954**—May 17 Supreme Court outlaws segregation with the Brown vs. Board of Education
- 1970**—May 4 Kent State & Jackson State students killed by National Guards.
- 2009**—May 31 Abortion provider, Dr. George



Our May Meeting



We will hear Roma Guy speaking on the alternatives to incarceration. Roma is a social justice activist & policy leader on homelessness, public health, poverty, immigrant rights, and women's rights. Currently, there are several bills in the CA legislature for prison reforms. These will be discussed especially keeping in mind our goals for true justice.

Lynne's Battle for Medicare

"Little did I think that when I arrived in Brooklyn I would need to become locked in ferocious battle with the forces of Medicare and Medicaid. First, Medicare told me that when I went to jail in November, 2009, they had continued to pay my Health Insurance provider until 2011. When they "notified" (?HOW?) me that I needed to enroll again in Medicare; I did not respond. (of course not, being in Texas). Therefore, not having opted then to get this entitlement, I could not now get coverage until July 2014. They suggested that I sign up for Medicaid administered by the state of NY. After many trips and many documents Medicaid finally (2/22) declined to cover me, because Ralph and I have income (our social security payments) that exceeds their monthly limit. We are now hoping that we will be able to enter into a program whereby they will accept a different accounting, a pay in, and I will be covered through July. Sloan Kettering Hospital, my choice for treatment, has allowed me to pay with Medicaid. So, we are working on it and I want to say Loud and Clear that poverty is hard work. We still advocate for Single Payer! No-one should have to jump through these hoops to get treatment, especially when they are not feeling all that well or energetic. Finally..., I now have Medicaid coverage effective Feb 1 extending to July 2014."

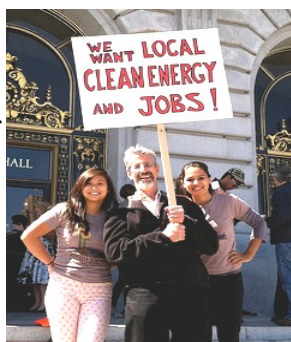
Help Lynne with her medical treatment.

*Fundraiser May 2 6PM 518 Valencia
And visit with her and Ralph*

Time for CleanPowerSF!

For 10 years, we have been trying to build an alternative to PG&E's strangle grip on our public utilities. In 2002, AB117 created Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) allowing communities to take control of their energy choices—an alternative to PG&E. CleanPowerSF is our local effort and was approved by the voters of SF in spite of a multi-million dollar campaign by PG&E to defeat it. CleanPowerSF will provide SF with a 100%, CA-certified renewable energy alternative. It will give electricity consumers a choice between CleanPowerSF or PG&E. PG&E's power portfolio is dominated by oil, coal, hydro, and nuclear energy, only 20% CA-certified renewable. Opponents to CleanPowerSF include Mayor Lee, his appointees on the SF Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), IBEW Local 1245, and of course, PG&E. All have launched various campaigns against CleanPower and at times outright lies. But the latest outrageous act was revealed to us at a recent Board of Supervisors meeting. SF Gray Panthers and other community members spoke at the hearing demanding an end to political favors trumping the need for strong action on climate. Sup. Avalos showed us the City's Climate Action Strategy report in which reference and explanation of CleanPowerSF had been deleted, figures redacted! When Avalos asked about the omission, the mayor replied, "I don't think I have a real answer for that."

We have an answer: Community Choice law puts city councils and county boards legally in charge of such programs, not mayors. Promoters of CleanPowerSF have made numerous compromises and changes. The newest proposed rates for CleanPowerSF are now fully competitive with PG&E, and the SFPUC's staff (before the mayor intervened) made unprecedented progress on the local clean energy installation plans. Eric Brooks CleanPowerSF activists, "CleanPowerSF is entirely self funded by revenue bonds based on clean energy installation and purchases paid for (but at the same billed rate) by the customers themselves. No tax or rate subsidies are involved at all. There is no Shell deal anymore."



We Believed You, Anita

Anita, A Documentary by Freida Lee Mock

On Oct. 11, 1991, we watched one brave African American woman speak her truth to an all-white, male Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on a Supreme Court nominee confirmation. Anita Hill testified on the sexual harassment she experienced while working under Clarence Thomas in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). It was she, however, who was put on trial, her character questioned, called a liar, and endured humiliation under 9 hours of grueling graphic testimony. A Senate panel, chaired by Joe Biden, had no idea what sexual harassment meant to women and was not open to hearing or understanding. Anita's supporters offered experts to speak about sexual harassment, but Senator Biden refused to call them or Angela Wright who could also testify to Mr. Thomas's harassment of her.

Ms. Hill and others who had worked with Mr. Thomas were contacted by the FBI in a routine vetting of a Supreme Court nominee. Ms. Hill sent a letter to the committee, which she believed would be confidential. The letter was ignored by the committee. When it became apparent to Ms. Hill that Mr. Thomas might be confirmed, she believed it was her duty to come forth with the information regarding the harassment she had endured. The committee refused to take her testimony.

A group of women Representatives marched from the House to the Senate demanding that Anita be able to testify. Rep. Mikulski asked what message is sent to young women: "Nobody's going to take you seriously, not even in the United States Senate!" The Representatives were turned away, told they were "out of order." Huge numbers of women then demonstrated daily in front of the Senate building. The committee was forced to allow the dignified law professor from Norman Oklahoma to testify, the first time a woman spoke out so publicly to challenge her boss for harassment. After the hearing, 1,244 claims of sexual harassment were filed with the EEOC, an increase of 71%. Anita Hill stood up for all women who had been harassed and today still experience sexual harassment. Anita Hill is still an activist speaking around the country on empowering women. *Clarence Thomas sits on the Supreme Court.*

Save the People's Post Office

Across the country, nearly 60 historic post offices have been sold or are in danger of being sold. This mania began with a 2006 manufactured “budget crisis” caused by the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act. It required US Postal Service (USPS) to pre-fund its future health care benefit payments to retirees for the next 75 years—no other government or private corporation is required to do so. This act placed a \$20 billion debt on USPS and created the opportunity to privatize our public post offices and do away with thousands of union jobs. USPS used to be a government department, the Post Office Department, founded in 1792. President Nixon changed that in 1970 in response to a postal workers’ strike. The new USPS would become an “independent” agency with a board of 9 members appointed by the President which then would choose the Postmaster General.

Who Buys Who Sells Who Exploits

In 2011, USPS hired CBRE as exclusive real-estate agency to sell post offices, warehouses, & land at or above fair market value. CBRE decides both appraising and selling, a conflict of interest. A conflict which doesn’t bother Senator Feinstein whose husband Richard Blum, investment banker, serves on the board of CBRE. Post office supporters picketed Staples as the company installed make-shift post offices with their non-union employees. CBRE’s Robert Sulentic serves on the board of directors for Staples. Koch brothers owns Staples stores across the country.

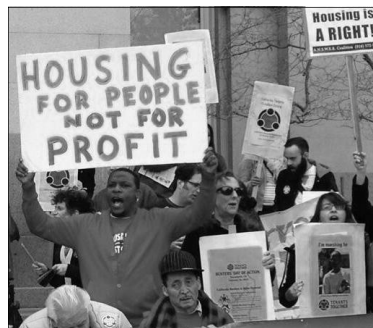
UPS & Fed-Ex put large sums of money into the campaigns of Congresspersons who support privatization of post offices. They both are members of ALEC, the Right Wing group, which pushes busting the National Assoc. of Letter Carriers union.



UPS was forced to rehire 250 union drivers it had fired for protesting working conditions. In summer of 2013, activists set up tents outside the

Berkeley post office to stop the sale of the people’s PO. Thus began a continuing campaign.

Gentrification of The City



Lotta Garrity, long-time resident of the Mission and a retired nurse, faces an eviction from her apartment on Guerrero. She comes out to support other families who are being evicted from a 7-unit bought by Google’s Jack Halprin. A small Victorian just sold on Capp St. for \$ 3.5M!

The Transbay Tower will be called, *Salesforce* in a naming rights agreement made with the mayor. The 61-story skyscraper is to be completed in 2017. Salesforce’s Marc Benioff adds this skyscraper to his nearby 50 Fremont building of 500,000 square feet, and a not-yet-finished 30-story building at 350 Mission, where Salesforce plans to fill every floor by 2015. Benioff calls this his “dreams of a San Francisco campus.”

Tenants Continue Confronting Greed

We remind the developers, & speculators that in 1986 we passed Proposition M. It states that planners must keep the cultural mix of the neighborhood when constructing new homes for any neighborhood. Now the industry uses increases in rental prices, Ellis Act evictions to “recreate” an area by driving out low income people and claiming a new “cultural mix.” This is why we must maintain our neighborhoods.

The 16th Street Coalition continues to challenge the 16th/Mission Maximus development. Tenant activists published a “Dirty Dozen” list of landlords who have abused the Ellis Act, with detailed accounts of each eviction, business affiliations and holdings, and photos. On March, 22 GP joined others at a protest & occupation of the Realtors’ Assoc. office.



Maximus, the 16th St./Mission developer, begins to put up fences to stop public gatherings in our neighborhood.

Not Chosen by the Senate

Debo Adebile won't be our Chief Civil Rights Attorney. In March, President Obama nominated Debo Adebile for the job. Adebile is the litigation director at the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund who successfully argued before the Supreme Court that the death sentence imposed on Mumia Abu-Jamal should be overturned because of discrimination in jury selection. [Successful—getting rid of the death sentence—Mumia is still serving a life sentence without parole from that skewed jury.] The Senate refused to confirm Adebile's nomination because he had represented a client accused of being a cop killer. But the Senate had no trouble confirming John Roberts as Supreme Court Chief Justice in spite of the fact that he had been part of the representation of a Florida Death Row inmate convicted of killing 8 people. Double standards? Will Obama fight for his nominee? So far, there has been no public action from the White House.

Chelsea SF Pride's Grand Marshall

US Major General Jeffrey S Buchanan denied clemency for Chelsea Manning and upheld the former soldier's 35-year prison sentence for providing secret files to WikiLeaks in the biggest breach of classified materials in US history, according to the Army. His decision to uphold the findings of Manning's 2013 court-martial will automatically send the case to the army court of criminal appeals. Manning's request for leniency followed an application for a presidential pardon filed last Sept., where her defense team maintained that she had released information to the media for the public good. Manning's sentence was the longest ever handed down for turning over secrets to the media.



Here in SF, Chelsea Manning has been chosen as an Honorary Grand Marshal for 2014 San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Pride March this June. Last year the Pride Committee rejected the community's call to honor Chelsea Manning as a Grand Marshall. Chelsea thanked the SF Pride Committee for her honor.

Hands Off Medicare!

The threats to Social Security are temporarily over, as Obama backed off his Chained-CPI. In fact, SB 567 (Harkin) and HR 3118 (Sanchez) would strengthen Social Security by (1) increasing benefits, (2) compute COLAs based on our actual expenses, and (3) phase out the regressive cap on payroll-taxable income. Feinstein? Boxer? Pelosi?

Meanwhile, several toxic ideas are bubbling to the surface for cutting Medicare, which unlike Social Security, *is* part of the Federal Budget and is a potential target for deficit-cutting. (Info from CARA)

Increase Eligibility Age to 67: Seniors, with most chronic conditions and least likely to have jobs with health insurance, would be forced onto private plans on the exchanges, which allow up to 3 times higher costs for seniors.

Increased Means Testing: Incomes requiring higher Medicare Part B and D premiums would drop from \$85,000 (5% of recipients) down to \$47,000 (25% of recipients).

A Single \$550 Deductible for both Part B (doctor visits etc.) and Part A (hospital) vs. today's \$147 (Part B) and \$1216 (Part A). For the 80% of Medicare folks who don't need hospitalization, the deductible for doctor's visits is increased 3.7-fold.

Limiting Medigap: People buy supplementary Medigap policies to cover the 20% co-pay that patients must pay for doctor visits etc. under Medicare Part B. Proposals are to either make Medigap policy holder still pay all for the first \$500 and half of the next \$5,000 in Part B co-pays, or to increase Medigap policy premiums.

A Smart Idea: Medicare Drug Discounts: Medicare Part D law prohibits Medicare from bargaining for lower prices, and also forces Medicare+Medicaid patients onto Part D, so government pays more, as well as patients on Medicare alone. Just restoring Medicaid-level rebates for low-income and Medicare+Medicaid patients could save \$141 billion over 10 years, far more than the cuts to Medicare patients proposed above. HR 1588 (Waxman) and S 740 (Rockefeller) propose this. Feinstein? Boxer? Pelosi?

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

Thursday, May Day, May 1, International Workers' Day 4:00 pm, Action & March 24th and Mission, ANSWER Coalition 415-821-6545

Friday, May 2, 6PM, 518 Valencia, Lynne Stewart fundraiser for helping with medical expenses in her fight against breast cancer. Co-sponsors: Gray Panthers, Nat'l Lawyers Guild, Freedom Archives

Saturday, May 3 10AM–6PM Valencia between 21st–24th, family-friendly, alcohol-free, cultural celebration by Mission Neighborhood Centers, Inc.

Monday, May 5, Reclaiming Cinco de Mayo, 6PM-10PM, Redstone Labor Temple 2940 16th, Room 302. Benefit for Living Wage Coalition

Monday, May 5, Folio Books 3957 24th Street in Noe, 7:30PM, Gray Panther Frances Payne reading from her book, *They Make Us Dangerous: Bolivia 1996-1980*

Saturday, May 10, 2:00 PM, Main Library, Latino-Hispanic room, Gray Panther, Patricia Jackson joins others in a Lesbian *Shero*es reading.

Thursday, May 8, 9-12, Senior Disability Action UU, 1187 Franklin, Topic: State & Local Budget

Thursday, May 8, 6-8:30 PM The 2014 Human Rights Award, The Palace of Fine Arts 3301 Lyon St. Benefit for Global Exchange, 415-575-5543

Happy Birthday KPFA 94.1 FM

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