

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



**June Meeting**  
**Trapped in the Two-Party System**  
**Tuesday, June 17, 12:30 –3PM**  
**Unitarian Universalist Center**  
**1187 Franklin @ Geary**

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

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

**Board Meeting Wed, June 4, 12:30 PM,**  
**in our office.**

**Newsletter Committee, Thurs, June 5,**  
**noon, in our office.**

**Book Club Monday, June 30, Café, 142**  
**McAllister, between Hyde/Leavenworth**



**Mark your calendar, Wed, July 30, for Medicare 49th Anniversary!**  
**Join the campaign! - Save It - Improve it - Expand it to cover everyone!**  
**4:00 PM: Rally at Social Security Office, Valencia at 22nd St.**  
**4:30 PM across the street: Launch of SF Campaign for Medicare for All!**

## May Meeting

Roma Guy, of Tax Payers for Public Safety, gave a complete overview of the strategy and activism to redirect \$620 million from building a new jail in SF to alternatives. Two of the six SF County jails are unsafe or closed; the remaining CJ1 is a holding cell and CJ2 has 1,200 mixed prisoners including transgenders. There are about 1,200 to 1,300 empty beds in the SF jail and the crime rate is decreasing. Of those currently jailed 38%-40% have issues of mental health — not a criminal condition—and 75% are awaiting trial and unable to make bail. (This used to be called “debtors’ prison”). With alternative proposals—programs for housing, jobs, and mental health—the rate of recidivism would be reduced. Housing alone would cut the rate of recidivism by 100% for women. Alternatives include bail reform, risk assessment tools and pretrial diversions. Roma gave explanations for each of these and the feasibility of achieving them if we take actions. Our board will discuss possible ways for GP to engage in this prison justice movement.

### Plaza 16th Coalition Conference

On May 15, neighbors and supporters filled the Victoria Theater to find ways to stop Maximus Developers from building a 10-story high-rise, high-cost condo at 16th & Mission that would destroy the Plaza, stores, and block the sun from Marshall School and the Redstone Building. More detrimental is the continuing gentrification of the Mission and most neighborhoods in SF. There will be a full day of action, Sat., June 14 in the 16th St. Plaza. [Plaza16.org](http://Plaza16.org) more information.



### APWU Honors Dave Welsh

Gray Panthers attended the APWU Event

The retirees of the American Postal Workers Union honored Dave Welsh at their annual meeting, May 19. Dave has a long activist history including being one of the originators of the on-going fight to save our post offices from privatization. He recently *honored us* by singing at our fundraiser at AgeSong, and delighting all the residents.

## Let’s Talk About Alternatives June Meeting

Say you can’t get no satisfaction...even living with Democrats in control of the City and Sacramento! Who’s really in control? How can we take back the power?

Come to our June meeting to talk about the latest election results and how we might go where no one has gone before. Barry Hermanson, who is challenging Representative Pelosi for office, will be our guest speaker.

### CARA Lobby Day

Over 300 CARA members visited their State Assemblymember and/or State Senator at their district office on May 16th, part of CARA’s State-wide Lobby Day. CARA focused on 2 priority bills: SB 391 (DeSaulnier) – the *Affordable Housing and Jobs Act* to create a state fund to support the development of affordable housing and create jobs, and SB 1014 (Jackson) the *Drug Take Back Bill* (amended to create state guidelines on the collection of unused and expired medications). The State Budget was addressed also, and CARA urged legislators to use some of the \$2.5 billion surplus to restore essential programs and services!

### Howard Grayson LGBT Elder Conference Day of Information and Action Sat, June 14, 2014, 10AM - 4PM, LGBT Center, 1800 Market (at Octavia)

This year’s theme: **Housing & Health for All.**

**10:30-noon:Housing Panel: Tommi Avicelli  
Mecca, Seth Kelbourn and Brian Bassinger,  
Grace Lawrence**

**12:30-3:00pm—Health Panel: Celia Gomez,  
Miss Majors, Scott Haitzuka, Susan Pfeifer**

**Snacks**

**Movie: *Screaming Queens* with talk by director,  
Victor Silverman**

*Gray Panthers is a proud co-sponsor and will have a table at the conference.*

## CleanPowerSF Now!

In our May issue we suggested that our Supervisors use the Community Choice law, AB-117, to circumvent the mayor and his hand-picked appointees on SFPUC. According to that act, passed in 2002, City and County boards can be legally in charge of local clean power programs. The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a program to study the possibility of SF joining the Marin Clean Energy program. It also requires SFPUC to compare the Marin renewable energy program to the City's proposal and to implement the best option. Another option proposed by the Local Agency Formation Commission, which Supervisor Avalos heads, would investigate the possibility of the City building its own clean power program. Mayor Lee has egregiously attempted to destroy CleanPowerSF, appointing his clean power opponents to the PUC board, removing data on the program from the City's Climate Action Strategy (it had previously been included), and proposing to "steal" from funds set aside for the program for other projects. Supervisors were not consulted before hearing his intentions and were shocked. Avalos said, "Since the Board of Supervisors set up the reserve funding, the board should determine how it gets appropriated."

## Sutter Attacks St. Luke's Hospital

On March 12, CPMC & Sutter Health announced layoffs at St. Luke's Hospital Diabetes Center. Those workers with a combined 55 years of experience also are bilingual, serving the Spanish-speaking people of the neighborhood. CPMC instead replaced these experienced workers with non-Spanish speaking technicians from the California CPMC campus. Sutter says this is a "cost-cutting" measure. Sutter CEO Pat Fry's salary is \$5 million yearly, and Sutter made a profit of \$90 million in 2013. There were other ways of cost cutting. Sutter's action can only be interpreted as racist, and renegeing on the Development Agreement for CPMC that community, labor and health care organizations fought for to save St Luke's,— an agreement passed by the Board of Supervisors. Other hospital programs have been reduced. The community is meeting and organizing to answer this violation of our agreement. **Keep St. Lukes alive, thriving, and meeting community needs!**

## Panthers on the Prowl!

*Welcoming Lynne Stewart to the Bay Area*  
May 2



*Ralph and Lynne dance with the Brass Liberation Orchestra,*

*Barbara for the Panthers*



*April 28*

*Joining Berkeley GP's in Pelosi's office to speak about the threats to Post Offices*



*April 26 at AgeSong*



*Dave Welsh sings to residents at our fundraiser*

## Healthcare Is Our Right

Medicare, while a model for universal single payer health care in the United States, has many drawbacks. Representative John Conyers (Democrat from Michigan) has sponsored a bill that addresses many of these deficiencies.

Under HR 676 all those residing in the U.S. are insured from cradle to grave. How undocumented residents will be treated will be up to the secretary of HHS. Coverage is not tied to either employment or citizenship. There are no deductibles or co-pays. Coverage includes primary care, preventative care, inpatient, outpatient and emergency care, prescription drugs, durable medical equipment, long term care, mental health services, dentistry, eye care and substance abuse treatment.

Funding for HR 676 will come from maintaining the current federal and state funding for existing healthcare programs, establishing a 5% health tax on the top 5% income earners, 10% tax on the top 1% of wage earners, establish a tax on stock trades, a surtax on household incomes over \$225,000.00, a tax on income from capital gains, dividends, interest, profits and rents, an increased payroll tax, closing corporate tax loopholes, repealing the Bush tax cuts and taxing income from gambling, capital gains and lotteries. Currently HR 676 has 87 co sponsors. There is no comparable bill in the Senate.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders introduced S 703, The American Health Security Act, in 2009 but it did not gain the needed support to move forward. Healthcare-NOW! says that HR 676 has aspects that are preferable to S 703. For example, HR 676 builds on the existing structure of Medicare, which should allow for an easier, quicker, and less expensive transition to universal single-payer. Also, the taxing structure set up in HR 676 is preferable—a more equitable split between employer and employee, plus the higher tax on the wealthiest 5% and the small transfer tax on stocks and bonds transfers helps to address the huge gap between the rich and working class & poor. HR 676 legislation is inclusive of ALL residents, which emphasizes our mission of a health care system that respects health as a human right."

**SINGLE PAYER NOW**

## New Patient Bill of Rights

We are members of the Campaign For a Healthy California, which will sponsor a ballot measure for Single-Payer healthcare for California in the Presidential Election in November 2016 or 2020.

Part of our campaign will be a Patient Bill of Rights, highlighting the worst abuses of healthcare under the "Affordable" Care Act. We have bills in Sacramento that reduce their impacts, but we know the limitations of the bills show we need to totally eliminate health insurance companies and their stranglehold on medical care. The abuses:

**Charity Care:** "Non-Profit" hospitals like Kaiser and Sutter Health make billions yet avoid billions in taxes by saying they provide charity care. Much of it is marketing schemes like health fairs, speaking tours, or patient hand-outs. Meanwhile, public hospitals that do provide care to the uninsured have their budgets cut. (AB 503, Bonta)

**Narrow Choice of Docs and Hospitals:** Insurers cut their costs by restricting members to a few docs and hospitals which the insurer has a discount deal with, putting docs and hospitals under pressure to reduce prices and cut corners on care. Patients may wait long periods for medically necessary services, but if they use outside docs or hospitals, they get huge "balance billing" charges. (AB 2533, Ammiano)

**Hospital "Observation" Areas:** Patients get shunted to "observation" areas of hospitals where they are treated, but not formally admitted. Since these areas are technically outpatient, inpatient nurse staffing ratios don't apply, creating unsafe care. Also patients' insurance for hospital, post-hospital, and hospital drug coverage don't apply. (SB 1269, Beall)

**Undocumented Immigrants:** They are totally excluded, and cannot even use their own money to buy insurance on the exchanges, flying in the face of justice, public health, and economic sense. (SB 1005, Lara)

**No power to stop huge rate increases:** Insurance Commissioner can review but not regulate rates. (Rate Regulation Initiative on November Ballot.)

## Corporate Subsidies vs. Minimum Wage

The federal income tax rate on the profits made by US companies is 35%. Citizens for Tax Justice compared this rate with what the companies reported they actually paid. The Citizens group considers the difference a Congressional *tax subsidy*. Such tax breaks include stock options, accelerated depreciation, write-offs for oil drilling, making video games, building NASCAR race tracks, making movies. (Thank you, corporate lobbyists!). Wells-Fargo paid taxes from 2008 to 2012 at a rate of 12.2%, the gas and electric utilities rate was 2.9%, 26 corporations including PG&E, GE, and Boeing paid no tax at all. Facebook used the stock option break to pay no income tax on a billion dollars of US profits in 2012.

Meanwhile, Congress stalls over updating the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour. In SF recent studies have shown that to survive with the basics, a minimum wage would have to be almost \$30 an hour. Every one deserves not just a minimum wage, but a living wage! Still, raising the national minimum to \$10.10 would reduce the number of people living in poverty by 4.6 million. The average age for the minimum wage worker is 35 and more than 1/4 are parents. A full-time worker at current \$7.25 earns \$15,080 a year. The 2014 Federal poverty level is \$23,850 annually for a family of four. Fast Food workers led demonstrations around the world for a minimum of \$15 an hour!

### Pass Oil Extraction Tax



Sen. Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa) has proposed a tax on oil pumped from the ground in California, saying the \$2 billion it would raise annually could help restore higher education and improve social services and parks. The legislation would levy a 9.5% tax on oil companies. California is the only major oil-producing state in the country that does not have such a tax. The bill would give the University of California, California State University and California Community College systems 50% of the funds to share equally, health and human services 25% and state parks the remaining 25%.

## Thanks to our Whistle Blowers

Thank you, Edward S. Snowden. The London Guardian and the Washington Post were awarded journalism's coveted Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for their reporting on the NSA's secret surveillance as leaked by Mr. Snowden

Thank you, Chelsea Manning, from us, not the US Army. PFC Manning was sentenced to 35 years in prison for providing over 700,000 government files to WikiLeaks. What did the files show? A US helicopter attack in Baghdad in 2007 that killed civilians, abuse of detainees by Iraqi officers under the watch of US forces, a significant undercounting of civilian deaths during the Iraq war, numerous misdeeds of the US military, all things the Army didn't want the US public to know about. She will be eligible for parole in around 8 years. She has already spent over 3 years in custody.

### In Past Junes

**1788 June 21**—The United States Constitution goes into effect when the State of New Hampshire ratifies it.

**1872 June 6**—Susan B. Anthony fined for voting.

**1876 June 25**—Custer's last stand. Sioux defeat him at Little Big Horn, Montana.

**1905 June 7**—IWW (Wobblies) founded.

**1912 June 19**—US employees get 8 hour day.

**1924 June 2**—Indians (Native Americans) declared citizens by Congress.

**1941 June 20**—Ford signs first union contract with United Auto Workers.

**1950 June 24**—Korean War begins.

**1963 June 17**—Supreme Court bans mandatory bible reading in public schools.

**1966 June 13**—Supreme Court passes the Miranda rule.

**1967 June 13**—Thurgood Marshall is the first black justice appointed to the Supreme Court.

**1969 June 28**—Stonewall Rebellion in New York City kicks off gay right movement.

**1981 June 5**—First case of AIDS reported.

### Feinstein, Boxer & Pelosi

Support S.567/H.R.3118 to improve Social Security COLA by using a formula that includes true costs of goods and services used by older beneficiaries to keep pace with rising expenses.

## 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*

Go to website or call for membership  
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## Actions and Events

**Tues, June 3, 12:00-1:30 PM**, “Thin Ice—The Inside Story of Climate Change,” Free, Koret Auditorium @ Main Library, 100 Larkin.

**Thurs, June 12, 10 AM**, Senior & Disability Action Mtg., Unitarian Ctr, 1187 Franklin, MLK Rm.

**Thurs, June 12, 1 PM**, CARA SF CAT Mtg., Unitarian Ctr., 1187 Franklin, Fireside Rm.

**Sat, June 14, 10AM-4PM**, 3rd Annual Howard Grayson Elder Life Conference, “Health & Housing for All,” 1800 Market, LGBT Center.

**Also, Sat, June 14, Full Day of Celebration in the 16th St/Mission Plaza**, sponsored by 16th Street Coalition to save the Plaza from Maximus Development’s 10-story high-rise condos.

**Wed, June 18, 7-9PM**, Glenn Greenwald, “The NSA and Edward Snowden,” Nourse Theatre, 275 Hayes St. \$6 Tickets at City Box Office (415) 392-4400, or [info@cityboxoffice.com](mailto:info@cityboxoffice.com).

**Sun, June 22, 9:30 AM**, Unitarian Center Forum Sunday Morning Series, “The Slave Trade, Oil, and Globalization in the Niger Delta” with UC Berkeley Dr. Nwokeji. Light breakfast snacks. Unitarian Ctr., 1187 Franklin, MLK Rm.

**Sun, June 29, LGBT Pride March No Eviction Contingent**, Tommi Avecolli Mecca, Grand Marshall, invites GP to join the contingent. Information on location and assembly time will be available next month. Check with the GP office or Facebook page at <http://tinyurl.com/p7drtr2>.

**Wed, July 30, 4-6 PM**, Medicare’s Birthday and Launch of SF Campaign for Single Payer! See the front page of this newsletter.



**Tell your Representatives you want them to pass SB 1381 to label all GMO foods**

