

# GRAY PANTHERS OF SAN FRANCISCO



## GRAY PANTHERS COMMITTEE MEETINGS & EVENTS

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

**Board Meeting Mon, Dec 8, at GP office.**

**Gray Panthers and Friends will read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on City Hall Steps, Wed, Dec 10, Noon! Join us, and help us read it!**

**Newsletter Committee Fri, Dec 12, Noon, in the GP office.**

**Book Club Mon, Dec 29, Noon, Celtic Café, 142 McAllister, (betw Hyde/ Leavenworth).**



**Nominate Gray Panthers for Board Election (details page 2)**

**Come to SFERS Board Meeting, Dec 3, 1PM, 1145 Market, 6th floor—Stop investment of City workers' pensions into hedge funds! (details page 3)**

## Our Right To Know

(A full report in January newsletter)

Ray Hartz gave us a full accounting of the SF Sunshine Ordinance along with powerful examples from his own experiences from his dedicated attendance at each and every one of the City's commissions. This document is a tool to empower us.

### 66th Anniversary of UDHR

At noon on Wednesday, Dec 10, Gray Panthers will read the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the steps of City Hall. David Campos will introduce our resolution for annual readings of the UDHR, affirming commitment to inherent dignity & equal rights of all people. **Call the office to be a reader!**



### GP Board Nominations & Election

The SF GP is governed by a Board of Directors, elected for 2-year terms. If reelected, they may serve another 2-year term before going off the Board for at least 1 year. The board may have up to 25 current, dues-paying members. Duties include determining programs & activities, and most importantly, active participation. The Board will be elected at the December holiday party. At its January 2015 meeting the Board will select officers for the year. The Board meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month, at 12:30 PM. Meetings are open to all, but only board members may vote.

**We alerted everyone in the last newsletter about upcoming GP Board elections. We misreported some of the current board members and their term status. Current GP Board members are: Patricia, Sonia, David, Denise, Lynn, Michael, Mitzi, Frances, Kaye, Deetje, and Rhoda.**

Patricia & Sonia are not eligible for 2015. We thank them for their service. Ongoing members are David, Denise, in the 2nd year of their 2nd term, Frances, Kaye in 1st year of 1st term. Eligible and nominated for a 2nd term, 2015, are Lynn, Michael & Mitzi, Ruthanne has also been nominated. Nominations through December. Anyone can nominate a SF GP member including themselves, by mail, email or phone or telling any Board member.

## Holiday Party

Our holiday party will be Sunday, Dec. 21, 1-3 PM, at the Age Song Terrace, on the 6th Floor of 624 Laguna, between Grove & Hayes. It's across Laguna and a half block North of where our fundraiser with Dave Welch was. Take the 21 bus. The Age Song Terrace is beautiful, open and airy, with a great view. Bring a smile and a dish to share.

### Our GP Member Gretchen Davis

We just received our copy of Gretchen's novel, *Blacklisted: A Family Targeted by McCarthy*. It will be reviewed in an upcoming newsletter, and we'll tell how you can get your copy!

### In Decembers Past

- Dec. 21, 1620** Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock  
(Thus begins genocide of American Indians)
- Dec. 16, 1773**, Boston Tea Party (the real one)!
- Dec. 15, 1791** Bill of Rights Adopted
- Dec. 18, 1865** Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery in US.
- Dec. 31, 1865** Ku Klux Klan formed in Tenn.
- Dec. 29, 1890** 150 Sioux killed by US troops at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.
- Dec. 10, 1898** Spain cedes the Philippines, Puerto Rico & Guam to US.
- Dec. 7, 1941** Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.  
( US had prior knowledge; more than we gave Hiroshima & Nagasaki)
- Dec. 11, 1941** Italy, Germany declare war on US.
- Dec. 10, 1948**, UN adopts the UDHR, spearheaded by Eleanor Roosevelt
- Dec. 4, 1969** Chicago police murder Black Panthers Fred Hampton & Mark Clark.
- Dec 29, 1970** Congress passes Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA).
- Dec. 12, 2000** US Supreme Court stops Florida presidential recount in Gore vs. Bush before all votes are counted.

## Retirees Fight Hedge Fund Investments

Join Gray Panthers at the S.F. Employee Retiree System (SFERS) Board meeting, Dec. 3, 1 PM, 1145 Market, 6th floor, to protest and testify against the SFERS Board plan to invest pension money into hedge funds! Retirees have been opposing this SFERS Board plan for months. (See Nov. GP newsletter). At SFERS Nov.12 meeting, retirees & current employees repeatedly asked the Board why they were not listening to them. The retiree organization, RECCSF, presented petitions signed by members questioning such investment. Speakers also pointed out that the board is mandated to make prudent investments. Local 1021, representing 14,000 workers, has asked for clarification and an independent consultant, but the board has not yet responded to their request. A 2012-2013 Civil Grand Jury Report Jury questioned the appropriate level of risk of public funds, and was highly critical of the lack of transparency with SFERS' high-risk and volatile investment policies. The Grand Jury's report was largely ignored by Mayor Ed Lee and the Retirement Board. Hedge funds are very volatile and high risk investments with large fees and not recommended for pension fund plans which are required to make monthly payments to retirees.

### IN FEAR WE TRUST

The U.S. spent \$4.4 trillion to fight Global Terror. So-called global terror has killed 2 Americans per year a over a 15-year period, (not including the 9/11 tragedy). Why not a War on Automobiles that kill 33,000 a year, or on Firearms which kill 16,000 a year? (Source Randolph T.Holhut, Progressive Populist, Oct 15, 2014). *Hope is the fuel that makes people work. Fear is the prison in which we put ourselves.* Tony Benn, British Parliament

### Workers Call for Full Time & \$15 Hour

The Waltons, owners of Walmart, have more net worth than 4 out of 5 black peoples' combined. OUR Walmart, a group of workers seeking better pay and working conditions held sit-downs on Black Friday, Nov. 28. The sit-down protest was the first of its kind by Walmart workers, and in the tradition of sit-downs and lock-ins of the '30s.

## Vision Zero



On November 7th, Vision Zero held a memorial honoring the latest people whose lives were lost in tragic street accidents. Each pair of shoes represented a person

lost to traffic deaths. Vision Zero, a coalition including SDA, OWL, Lighthouse for the Blind, PODER, SF Bicycle Coalition, & many neighborhood groups, is calling on actions to make safety improvements on the most dangerous streets in the City, as well as stronger regulations for professional drivers.

### Honor for Gray A Panther

Carroll Estes, a long-time member of OWL and Gray Panthers, was honored by the National Senior Citizens Law Center, and her life story was shared at the annual fall reception at The National



Press Club. Estes said, "*Older women are the backbone of American life and families. Yet climbing mortality rates and chronic economic insecurity are growing problems, especially among low income women and women of color. These are the groups who require NSCLC's pioneering and persistent leadership more than ever.*"

### What Excuse Now, Mayor Lee

The latest report refutes all Lee's excuses, and states that CleanPowerSF's plan to build \$2.4 billion worth of solar, wind and geothermal projects would create more than 8,100 construction jobs. The proposal, which has wide support among City's Supervisors, would allow San Francisco to generate or purchase its own clean energy and deliver it to consumers through Pacific Gas and Electric's existing transmission network. The idea is to offer a cleaner alternative to PG&E. As one member of the SFPUC leaves, the Board of Supervisors must block any Lee appointee who does not back CleanPowerSF.

## Update on 16th Street Development

(A report from Plaza 16th Coalition)

People in the Plaza16th coalition have been tabling at numerous venues with petitions to oppose the developer, Maximus, from building a huge condo in the 16th St. Plaza. Marshall School parents and activists recently met with School Board Commissioner Matt Haney to express the negative effects the project would have on the community and the school. He indicated his support for the coalition position. Meetings with Commissioners Hydra Mendoza, Emily Murase and newly elected Shammann Walton are being arranged. The Coalition is encouraging the School Board to reject the project, regardless of any community benefits the developer promises the school.

The development process of this project is anticipated to be finished in February, 2015. The next step is the Planning Commission. If the School Board rejects the project, it's unlikely that the Planning Commission would approve it. A policy committee has begun working with lawyers should legal representation be needed as the approval process unfolds.

The Coalition's list of endorsers has reached nearly 100 organizations, individuals, businesses and union locals. Coalition activists regularly meet with organizations throughout the City, presenting their goals and asking for endorsements. Weekly steering committee meetings are Wednesday at noon at PODER offices, 474 Valencia. [plaza16.org](http://plaza16.org).

### Justice Denied



It was not the Grand Jury's task to determine if Darren Wilson was guilty or not. A trial would determine that, and he should face the consequences as any one else who had committed murder. Thousands are marching across the country, black people, brown people, First Nation people, Asian people, white people, young & old people, people with children; people on bikes and some with canes & walkers. All with signs "END RACISM NOW". We were printing this newsletter when the news broke. All of us feel anger and frustration. What can we Gray Panthers do? Keep the pressure, join others to build a new system of true justice..

## Thank you, Kathleen McCowin



Kathleen McCowin, President of Soccer Parents and Coaches for Grass in Golden Gate Park, decided to stop construction of the Beach Chalet Soccer Fields project. Even before Nov 4 election results was certified by the Department of Elections, and with Prop H

behind by less than 13,000 votes with 61,000 ballots still out, Rec. & Park moved construction equipment into the Beach Chalet fields area, put up fencing, bulldozed part of the fields, and cut down at least five large trees.

Kathleen spent a night and morning in jail for standing up for us all. The SF District Attorney said no charges will be brought against her.

A statement by Kathleen included, "*We believe that playing on artificial turf and ground-up tire waste infill poses a serious risk to the health of our children. This is the core reason why last week I stood down approaching construction vehicles, held my ground while having my outstretched palm hit multiple times by a charging pickup truck, stood fast while being verbally threatened with being run over, and ultimately went to jail.*"

Watch this video of Kathleen and her arrest  
<http://tinyurl.com/nyovfqc>

An appeal by the Sierra Club of the Beach Chalet Fields Environmental Impact Report could be heard by the courts soon. Perhaps Rec and Park is so afraid of what the courts will say that they decided not to wait, and to destroy everything as quickly as they can.



Bulldozing trees on Nov 6, before the official vote was announced.



## SF Taxicab vs Tech “Ride-Sharing”

As of 1990, by the Americans with Disabilities Act, all public accommodations are required to be accessible to all customers. But disabled people, their service animals, and their canes—which signal “disability”—are avoided by ride-sharing companies like UBER and Lyft. UBER skims the cream off the top, and cherry-picks riders.

SFMTA, which regulates real SF cab companies, says those cab companies are “the greenest cab fleet in the country; 97% low emission vehicles.” Their regulations encourage cabbies to serve the disabled. You cannot portray yourself as a cab company if you do not follow the same regulations as cabs do. SFMTA is the first agency in the US to have challenged UBER. According to a former MTA board member, SFMTA has been told to “back off”.

If a disabled person calls Lyft for a ride, they get a “text” message, for which they need a computer, to “contact private and public services equipped to serve them. “Lyft’s policy stems from their finding that the demographic of people in wheelchairs and obviously disabled (canes, service animals) does not make business sense. “The necessary market density is lacking in this category.”

According to SDA nearly 20% of SF’s is either senior or disabled; in the Tenderloin about 1/3 of the population as some kind of disability. Paratransit says almost 30% of its customers are wheelchair riders (4,000 of 13,457). Wheelchair riders using paratransit say you have to wait a lot, and according to a Gray Panther when asked if paratransit serves her needs to get around town, said, “No.” Also, 80% of paratransit riders do not have a computer.



As ride-sharing takes riders away from regulated cab companies and taxi cab drivers are drawn to ride-sharing companies, fewer cabs specified for people with disabilities and trained drivers will be available to serve this population.

Meanwhile, SF & LA will seek legal actions unless major changes are made by Uber, Sidecar & Lyft to comply with recommendations made.

## Strengthen SSI/SSP!

There’s a new California campaign to Strengthen SSI/SSP, the Federal/State program for poor older or disabled people who either can’t get Social Security or whose benefit is unlivable. SSI/SSP *badly* needs strengthening. The current California benefit for single adults is \$877 per month, 10% below the raw Federal Poverty Level that doesn’t include actual living costs. Cost-of-living increases were eliminated four years ago, and recipients can’t get food stamps.

Supplementary Security Income, SSI, is a Federally-funded income support program; SSP is a state supplement, but in Calif. it has been reduced to the lowest legal amount. From 2008 to 2012, \$4.6 billion was taken from Calif. SSP, reducing SSP payments by \$77 per month for 1.3 million SSI/SSP recipients. Some of the State SSP cuts have been offset by Federal SSI increases, but today’s total monthly payments are still \$30 less than five years ago, and eliminating cost-of-living raises is an additional \$161/month effective loss.

When accounting for actual living costs, California has the highest poverty rates in the US, 23% overall and 25% for seniors. 56% of California seniors live under twice what’s needed for bare existence, counting actual costs, and available government assistance. For example, a studio apartment rent is over half the SSI/SSP payment in all California counties, and over the full payment in 13 counties.

California needs to cough up \$1.2 billion to restore the \$77/month cut and retroactively restore the COLA. This would barely lift SSI/SSP folks above the raw Federal Poverty Line. They also need to add \$100/month to substitute for food stamps, which SSI/SSP is supposed to cover. (For technical reasons, adding \$100/month is better for most recipients’ nutrition than restoring food stamps itself.) See <http://tinyurl.com/l724x9r>.

Jerry Brown and the Legislature will say they can’t afford it, and that the \$4 billion 2014 revenue surplus must go to repaying the same banks and corporations whose tax breaks made it necessary to borrow from them in the first place. Hell no! If you want to join the fight, contact Colleen Revecca at 415-592-2729 or at [crivecca@stanthonysf.org](mailto:crivecca@stanthonysf.org).

## 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

### **Wednesday, Dec. 3, SFERS Board meeting.**

1 PM, 1145 Market, 6th Floor. Stop Investment of City Retiree Money into Hedge Funds!

### **Tuesday, Dec. 9, SF Supervisors meeting.**

2 PM, City Hall. Super. David Campos introduces GP Resolution to declare every Dec. 10 as Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Day.

### **Wednesday, Dec. 10, Gray Panther Reading of the UDHR. Noon, City Hall Steps. Be a Reader!**

(call 415-552-8800)

### **Thursday, Dec. 11, SDA General Meeting.**

9 AM-Noon, Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin, MLK Room.

### **Thursday, Dec. 11, CARA SF CAT Meeting.**

1-3 PM, Unitarian Center, 1187 Franklin, Fireside Room.

### **Thursday, Dec. 11, Global Exchange Fair**

**Trade Store & Celebration.** 5-8 PM, 2840 Col-lege Ave, Berkeley, 510-548-0370.

### **Dec. 13-Jan. 26, Annual Openhouse Art Show,**

**“Vantage Points,”** with 30+ senior LGBT artists. 2 - 5 PM, LGBT Center, 1800 Market.

### **Now through Jan. 4, Ohlone Elders & Youth Re-**

**storing a California Legacy.** SF Main Library, Lower Level.

### **January 2 - 25, HICK: A Love Story.**

The romance of Lorena Hickok & Eleanor Roosevelt. Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant St. Berkeley. Thurs, Fridays 8 PM Saturdays 2 PM & 8PM Sundays 5PM & pay-what-you-can-every Thursday! Get tickets at <http://tinyurl.com/lxzrcm2>

### **Through Jan. 4, 2015, play at Berkeley Reper-**

**tory Theatre, Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins.** .berkeleyrep.org/ (510) 647-2900.

*Call the office, 415-552-8800, leave message of your GP nominations to the 2015 GP Board. Or send email to [graypanther-sf@sonic.net](mailto:graypanther-sf@sonic.net)*